



UNSUNG HEROES OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH:

Tribal Resistance Movements

Project commissioned by
Government of Arunachal Pradesh

Report prepared by
Department of History, Rajiv Gandhi University



Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh


Tribal Resistance Movements

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prepared by Department of History, Rajiv Gandhi University.



**Brig. (Dr.) B. D. Mishra
(Retd.)**
Governor
Arunachal Pradesh

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Governor,
Arunachal Pradesh


सत्यमेव जयते

RAJ BHAVAN
ITANAGAR-791 111

MESSAGE

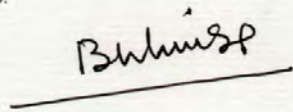
I am very happy to know that the Department of History, Rajiv Gandhi University, was assigned the onerous task of research and recording of the contribution of the 'Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh'. It is a memorable moment in the history of the State that the contribution of our great, albeit so far unidentified, Heroes is being documented.

The brave people of Arunachal Pradesh, over centuries long British Rule in India, have always put their society and country before self. Even the British Chroniclers have acknowledged the grit and élan of the Arunachali martyrs, the freedom fighters and the people of the State at large.

I am told that, for this research work, all the nooks and corners of the State have been covered by four sub teams of Researchers from Rajiv Gandhi University. They have conducted field surveys, interviews and studied documents and references at different libraries and archives across the State, the country and abroad to identify our Freedom Fighters and the Unsung Heroes and glean out the stories of their heroic deeds. Despite the terrain difficulties, in the vast territory of Arunachal Pradesh and the limitations of the scanty records, the Researchers have dealt with the task in its entirety with utmost care and eye for details.

The flawless methodology and the intuitive approach adopted by the RGU Teams, for this research, are commendable and confidence inspiring. This work, on all counts, is a great achievement for the teams of the Researchers and a great treasure for the people of Arunachal Pradesh. I deeply appreciate and happily commend the laudable efforts of all those involved in this programme. I wish them all success in their similar future endeavours.

I hope that the names of all Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh would now be etched in Golden Letters in the history of our State.



Brig. (Dr.) B. D. Mishra (Retd.)



Pema Khandu
Chief Minister
Arunachal Pradesh



**CHIEF MINISTER
ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to note that finally the 'Report on Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh', for which we have been waiting with bated breath is ready for publication.

On behalf of the families, descendants and admirers of our unsung heroes; who despite contributing to the freedom struggle of our country, many with their lives, remained unrecognized and did not make it to our country's glorious history; express gratitude to Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Shri Chowna Mein Ji, who as the Chairman of the Core Committee of the State Chapter of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, painstakingly researched and compiled the list of all indigenous freedom fighters of our state.

Our gratitude and appreciation also goes to the Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, and its Department of History headed by Prof Ashan Riddi and his Research Committee team members. This report on unsung heroes of our state who fought against British invasion is the result of their hard work, dedication, and many sleepless nights.

These unsung heroes, in their own way, fought for the nation's freedom and most of them died in the battle for Independence. But their stories have remained unknown and their contributions unrecognized even as India celebrates 75 years of Independence. This will now change good.

Rest of the country and the world will now know, appreciate and take pride of the brave patriots from the Land of the Rising Sun. Now on, our own unsung heroes will no longer be 'unsung' but find paths into many songs of patriotism and nationalism waiting to be written.

As we celebrate the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, this report will be an apt tribute to those who sacrificed their lives for freedom of their motherland from external invaders.

With best wishes and compliments,

(Pema Khandu)



Er. Taba Tedir
*Minister (Education, Cultural Affairs
& Deptt. of Indigenous Affairs)*
Arunachal Pradesh

Er. Taba Tedir
*Minister (Education, Cultural Affairs &
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DO No. MIN (EDN) – 24/2023

Dated Itanagar, the 14th Feb, 2023.

MESSAGE

The history of Indian's struggle for independence is filled with the glorious names of heroes and heroines who have sacrificed their happiness and life at the altar of the nation; yet there are innumerable names that are yet to find their glorious position in the galaxy of freedom fighters and martyrs. The state of Arunachal Pradesh has never been lacking in terms of sacrifice and patriotism but due to the lack of proper research and availability of records, the names of these heroes have remained unsung. In this context, the efforts put in by the Dept. of History, Rajiv Gandhi University is laudable and directed in the most-appropriate direction.

The immense amount of research that has gone towards locating, documenting and compiling the records of the unsung heroes of Arunachal Pradesh has been a tedious and daunting task for the team of researchers but with great perseverance and labour they have been successful in successfully completing it. I congratulate all the members for their hard work and dedication put in this task.

The information has been collected from archives from various libraries within India and abroad and the result has been a glorious compilation of the martyrs and heroes of Arunachal Pradesh who have played their part well in resisting the advancement of the British and thwarting their colonial design. This compilation very rightly establishes the claim of the unsung heroes to their rightful position of high regard and honour.

I am sure that this great effort by the researching teams and Rajiv Gandhi University will go a long way in widening the perspective of independence struggle in our State.

I once again congratulate the Dept. of History, Rajiv Gandhi University and all the team members.

J. Tedir

(Er. Taba Tedir)



Chowna Mein
Deputy Chief Minister
Arunachal Pradesh

CHOWNA MEIN



**DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER
ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

**Itanagar
30-01-2023**

Foreword

This collection of the life and story of the 'Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh' is a jewel that needs to be preserved for ages to come. It is foreseeable that this document is going to inspire and set a benchmark for more such works that may come up in different fields of research and adjoining areas. The Department of History, Rajiv Gandhi University has successfully completed a much-needed and awaited task of researching and compiling the contribution of the torchbearers of the state. This compilation places our State on the glorious map of the struggle for independence and resistance towards the British and re-affirms our love for independence and patriotism.

I understand that it is a tribute to the glorious contribution of Arunachal Pradesh towards the struggle for national independence. The recognition due to the martyrs and heroes of Arunachal Pradesh has been long due and this will be a fitting tribute to their sacrifice. Therefore, it is a matter of great fortune that this year when the country is celebrating 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' in its 75th Year of Independence, the Unsung Heroes of our state should receive their glorious recognition.

I am delighted to express my heartiest gratitude to all the members of the related teams who have left no stone unturned to unearth all relevant information not only from different parts of Arunachal Pradesh but also from different libraries from India and abroad. Their pain-staking efforts are worthy of high praise. The efforts put by the Dept. of History, Rajiv Gandhi University with the team of researchers deserves applause for their far-sightedness and sincerity. I place on record my sincerest appreciation of their hard work.

This compilation will go a long way in immortalizing the deserving heroes of our patriotic state.

Chowna Mein

(Chowna Mein)



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The findings of this research project are divided into six chapters.

Chapter one deals with the report of the Research Sub-Committee-A. The Research Sub-Committee A was entrusted to study and find out unsung heroes who fought against the British from Tawang and West Kameng Districts. The team was able to locate unsung heroes in Tagi Raja who fought for Aka supremacy in the foothills of Balipara against the British colonial authorities. Other unsung heroes in this regard are Medhi Raja and Chandi or Sonji who fought in the Anglo-Aka War 1883-84.

Research Sub-Committee-B was entrusted to look for unsung heroes from East Kameng, Pakke Kesang, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Kamle, Kra Dadi and Kurung Kumey Districts. Its report comprises our second chapter. The team has been able to identify unsung heroes in Tana Nanna and Techu Gubin (Amtolah Conflict of 1873) and Langha Poja and five martyrs who fought against the colonial forces of the Miri Mission, 1911-12.

Chapter three consists of the findings of the Research Sub-Committee-C covering the districts of Lepa Rada, West Siang, Siang, Upper Siang, Lower Siang, East Siang, Dambuk Sub-Division of Lower Dibang Valley and Namsai. Many unsung heroes from these districts have been identified in relation to conflicts and wars against colonial forces. Notable examples in this regard are Bachi Doye, Matmur Jamoh, Chaupha Planglu alias Ronua Gohain and Towa Gohain. The list includes scores of warriors

and fighters who either laid down their lives or were put into jail while in their struggle against the colonial forces. We have also included many unsung heroes who actively took part in the Congress movement led by Moji Riba, Moje Riba and Ligin Bomjen in 1947-48.

Research Sub-Committee-D covered the districts of Lower Dibang Valley, Dibang Valley, Lohit, Anjaw, Tirap, Changlang and Longding. Its report appears in chapter four. Dozens of unsung heroes have been identified who fought against the British forces in major events like the Wancho Resistance of 1875, the Anglo-Mishmi conflicts and the Anglo-Singpho wars. Prominent names in this regard are: Khunjing Wangham, Wangchin Wangsapa, Taji Dele, Ponge Dele, Ningru Thumung, Bom Singpho and Beesa Gaum.

In chapter five, we have included some unsung heroes who were involved in the attempted revolution of 1934 to overtake the important colonial military outpost cum administrative centre, Sadiya.

Chapter six consists of the gist of our recommendations. Obstacles and field diaries appear in the appendices.

In all, our list of UNSUNG HEROES consists of eighteen HEROES, seventy-six MARTYRS and 128 FREEDOM FIGHTERS, making the total number of individuals in the list of unsung heroes to two hundred twenty two.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Department of History, Rajiv Gandhi University is thankful to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh for commissioning the project and entrusting us with a rare privilege to carry out an important academic exercise. We express our admiration for Shri Chowna Mein, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister (DCM), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, who is also the Chairperson of the Core Committee on Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh (CCUHAP), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, for showing genuine eagerness on the theme. Shri Mein provided leadership to the project; rounds of review meetings were held in his private and official residence at Itanagar as well as at Namsai to facilitate and accelerate the pace of the research.

Shri Taba Tedir, Hon'ble Minister, Education, Government of Arunachal Pradesh and Shri Tai Tagak, Adviser to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Arunachal Pradesh enthusiastically attended all the review meetings and were very keen that the research is carried out in time. Shri Dani Salu, Secretary to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh and also the Member Secretary of the CCUHAP, has been involved in the project with special interest. He ensured that files related to the project travel in the State Secretariat at an accelerated pace. We found similar experience with Shri Ajay Saring, the PRO to Hon'ble DCM, who, along with one of his colleagues, Chow Bilaseng Namchoom, APRO to the DCM, ensured that communication between the University and the government always remained quick and effective.

We feel proud to take the name of Prof. Saket Kushwaha, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi University, for his constant encouragement and support to the research team. The Vice-Chancellor always ensured that there is no administrative hurdle before the research team. Special orders were issued requiring files and correspondences relating to the project to be returned to the originating table within twenty-four hours; this indeed helped a lot in the progress of the project within such a short duration. Wherever necessary, Prof. Kushwaha, who is also a member of the CCUHAP, would attend the meetings of the CCUHAP along with the research team and his colleagues from the University. We also are thankful to Prof. Amitava Mitra, Pro-Vice-Chancellor; Dr. N.T. Rikam, Registrar; Shri Hage Kojee, Assistant Registrar (Project) and his colleagues in the project cell; Mr. Vishnu Sonar of the Registrar's office and the staff of the Vice-Chancellor's Secretariat for their support to the research team.

The External Members of the Advisory Committee, especially the late Prof. (retired) S. Dutta, former Professor, Department of History, RGU and Dr. Joram Begi, former Registrar, RGU participated in the deliberations and guided the Research Committee in various ways. Prof. Kumar Ratnam, Member Secretary, ICHR, New Delhi also participated in Workshop-I and gave valuable inputs. We record their names with a thankful heart.

We also record our gratitude to the knowledge-bearers, village elders, community leaders and local intellectuals for sharing their time, resource, knowledge and private records, papers, artefacts, etc. with the research

teams. Many of them kindly accepted our invitation and participated in Workshop II and Workshop III, held at RGU campus and at Pasighat, Dambuk, Namsai and Longding respectively. The District Administration of the respective districts and the Deputy Resident Commissioners, Government of Arunachal Pradesh at Guwahati, Kolkata and New Delhi also provided logistical support. We gratefully record the names of the following individuals and offices for their support to the research teams in various ways.

From West Kameng and Tawang district:

Shri Japu Deru, Ex- Minister, Govt of Arunachal Pradesh; Shri D. K. Thongdok, Ex- Minister, Govt of Arunachal Pradesh; Shri Thupten Tempa, Ex-Minister, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh; the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Bomdila; Shri Sang Phuntsok, Deputy Commissioner (DC), Tawang; Shri Labi Dususow, Vice-President, Aka Shotuko-kunu (ASK) (Aka Apex Body); Shri Ajay Sidasow, District Art and Culture Officer (DACO), West Kameng, Bomdila; Shri Sangja Khandu, Principal, Govt. College, Bomdila; Shri Lobsang Tsering, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Tawang; Shri Nawang Chota, District Information and Public Relations Officer (DIPRO), Tawang; Shri Sonam Tsering, DACO, Tawang; Dr. Yeshe Gyesen, Principal, Dorjee Khandu Govt. College, Tawang; Smt. Tsering Lhamu, RGU alumni and woman intellectual from Lumla.

Prabhu, Head of Nikamul Satra, Tezpur; Mr. Miali Sidisow, an Aka intellectual; Mr. Dama Miji Zongluju, a school teacher working on the history and culture of the Aka community; Duba Dususow, an elderly Aka resource person; Queen Nugom Ruson Dususow, belonging to one of Tagi Raja's descendant-family; Mr. Dibru Dususow, a member of the Tagi

Raja's clan and an Aka intellectual; and Mr. Kalo Dususow, a descendant of Tagi Raja's brother, Sigi Raja.

From East Kameng, Pakke Kesang, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Kurung Kumey, Kamle and Kra Dadi districts:

Mr. Tana Jerjo, Gaonburah, Kokila Village, Balijan Circle; Mr. Kara Kakap, Ex-ASM of Dev Village, Sagalee; Mr. Tana Kapa, Gaonburah, Upper Geram Village, Toru Circle; Mr and Mrs Tana Sania, EX-ASM, Balapu Village, Sagalee for great hospitality and facilitating for conducting scheduled interviews; Mr. Techu Lug, Rigo Village, Sagalee Circle; Mr. Tana Senda, Gaonburah, Laptap Village, Toru Circle; Mr. Taniam Techu, Pakro Village, Pijeriang Circle; Mr. Talam Techu, Pakro Village, Pijeriang; Mr. Rasu Techu, Pakro Village, Pijeriang Circle; Ms. Khoda Oniya, Circle Officer, Sagalee; Mr. Langha Tapak, Gaonburah of Langha Village, Tali Circle; Mr. Sorang Takuk, Gaonburah of Tedung Village, Pipsorang Circle; Mr. Langha Tadu, Langha Village, Tali Circle; Mrs. Dai Kiochik Gungli, ZPM, Loa Village, Tali Circle; Mr. Langha Sanjay, Ex-ASM of Langha Village, Tali Circle; Mr. Sorang Tania, ZPM, Zara Village, Pipsorang Circle, for his valuable support and logistic assistance during the field work at Tali and New Palin Centre; Mr. Higio Tala, Deputy Commissioner, New Palin, Kra Daadi District; Mrs. Yame Higio, Additional Dy Commissioner, New Palin, Kra Daadi District Arunachal Pradesh; Mr. Jina Bagang, Circle Officer, Tali Circle; Mrs. Api Nungnu, Circle Officer, New Palin; Mr. Dayum Davi, President of Gungli Welfare Society, for great hospitality and logistic assistance during the field study at Tali Circle; and Mr. Nangram Nana, Ph.D. Scholar, Department of History, RGU for rendering assistance and support during the field study.

From Lower Siang, Lepa Rada, West Siang, Siang, East Siang, Upper Siang and Lower Dibang Valley districts:

Mr Gomar Basar, Secretary General, Galo Welfare Society; Mr. Marpak Chiram, Retired Director, Igo Valley, Dari; Dr. Jomi Loyi, Principal, Model College, Basar; Mr. Duly Kamduk, DC Lepa Rada; Mr. Kabom Dabi, village elder and a public leader, Namey Village, Nari Circle, Lower Siang District; Mr. Imar Lombi, Tai Village, Tirbin; Mr Kali Yomcha, Yomcha Village, Yomcha; Dr. Dakli Lombi, Assistant Professor, Govt. College Doimukh; Tayi Taggu, DC East Siang; Atul Tayeng, DC Siang; Taduram Darang, Chairman, Adi Freedom Fighters Recommendation Committee (AFFRC); Abu Saring, Secretary, Bongal Yapgo Preservation Committee; Ibrahim Pajing, AE cum DACO, Siang District; Tajir Siram, Social Worker; Tanyong Taloh, Secretary, Nugong Banggo Kebang; Gandhi Darang, Director, Ane Siang Tours and Travels; Takeng Tamuk, Member, AFRCC; Kaling Darung, Assistant Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru College (JNC), Pasighat; Bani Perme, Social Worker; Augusti Jamoh, DACO, East Siang; Mannong Tayeng, DACO, East Siang; and the family members of the Unsung Heroes.

From Dibang Valley, Lower Dibang Valley, Tezu and Changlang districts:

Shri Ginko Linggi, President, Idu Mishmi Cultural and Literary Society (IMCLS), Roing; Shri Rao Dele, Secretary IMCLS, Roing; Shri Bafrenso Pul, Chairman, Cultural and Literary Society of Mishmi (CALSOM), Tezu; Shri Suraj Tayang, Secretary, CALSOM; Late Ethadu Dele and Smt.

Wuthu Lingi, Ithili village, Roing; Dr Razzeko Dele, Assistant Professor, Jomin Tayeng Govt. Model Degree College (JTGMD), Roing; Dr Rajiv Miso, Assistant Professor, JTGMD; Dr Dimso Manyu, Tezu; Shri Sole Linggi, Roing; and Shri Adule Linggi, Dambuk; Mr. Manjee La Singpho, Chairman, Singpho History Research and Analysis Wing (SHRAW); Mr. Rajiv Ningkhee Singpho, General Secretary, SHRAW; Mr. Ongyun Maio Singpho, Adviser, SHRAW; Shri Ligai Jawkhong, Adviser, SHRAW; Shri Mayoung Maio, Adviser, SHRAW; Mr. Ongdu Lagang Singpho, Coordinator, SHRAW; Mr. Rajesh Gudung, Member, SHRAW; Mr. Ningda Tang Singpho, Member, SHRAW; Mr. Gumshowng Lagang Mirip, member, SHRAW; Mr. Ongla Umbon Singpho, member, Singpho Literary Committee (SLC); Mr. Nongown Maio Singpho, member, SLC; Mr. Duwa Ningru Zauja, Singpho chief; Mr. Jawlung Bisa Singpho, decedent of Beesa chief; Mr. Thingnong Umbu Singpho, Member, SLC; Mr. P. Kanmai, Former Chairman, Singpho Literature Committee; and Mr. Debotang Yupang Singpho, District Research Officer, Changlang district.

Namsai and Longding districts:

Chow Kalingna Mannoi, Secretary, Tai Heritage and Literature Society, Namsai; Chow Anuradha Mantow; Chowpha Nawing Namchoom, Chief of Momong; Chow Sajan Namchoom; Chow Sutacha Namchoom; Chow Wating Namchoom; Chow Siha Namchoom; Chow Sanjay Mein; Chow Moromi Namchoom; Chow Sajan Namchoom; Chow Jenia Namchoom, ZPM Chowkham; Chow Khoi Namchoom; Dr. Chow Kedar Namchoom; Chow Kemmang Namchoom; Chow Nipeng Lungkieng; Chow Sijanta Mansai; Chow Jilai Manlai; Chow Kohana Chowpoo; Chow

Kyawon Singkai; Chow Chiktiya Munglan; Longwang Wangham, Chief of Nginu Village; Banwang Losu, Executive Director, Wancho Literary Mission; Sompha Wangsa, President, Wancho Council; Sanwang Wangsa, President, Wancho Cultural Society; Nokchai Boham, Taifa Wangsa, Lemgang Gangsa, Khalak Wangsaham, Pangwang Wangsa; and Lohpong Wangham, ZPC, Longding.

Dr. Tade Sangdo and Mr. Nepha Wangsa generously donated copies of archival materials from their personal collections.

The list will be incomplete without acknowledging the cooperation of the various archives and their staff, notably the National Archives of India, New Delhi; Arunachal Pradesh State Archives, Itanagar and the Assam State Archives, Dispur for enabling the Research team unhindered access to the old records and documents available with them. Dr. Satyabrata Chakrabarti, General Secretary of The Asiatic Society and National Library, Kolkata helped the research team a lot during their visit to Kolkata. We would also like to acknowledge the gesture and promptness of the staff of the British Library, London for their help in accessing India Office Records and many old and rare photographs archived there. We also thank the National Archives, London and the Royal Geographical Society,

Dr. Tajen Dabi

Dy. Coordinator

London for facilitating the research team who went there to search and collect relevant materials/documents related to the project. Mr. Zanjeer Ahmed, a close friend of DCM, facilitated the research team's stay in London; Mrs. Vibha Joshi helped with the research team's visit to Oxford.

This report is a result of the collective endeavour of our colleagues and research assistants spread across the Research Sub-Committees A, B, C and D. This project report is the outcome of extensive fieldwork and intensive empirical data collected from the irrefutable custodians of oral records and verbal testimonials from across the state. We take this opportunity to express our deep sense of gratitude to them. All of them, without exception, displayed professionalism and put in hard work to come out with their part of report within the stipulated time. This would not have been possible without being motivated by a deep sense of responsibility as well as privilege in bringing to completion an important academic assignment relevant to the society and nation given the constraints of time and the burden of heavy workload in an academics' day-to-day life. We thank Dr. Miazi Hazam, Associate Professor, Department of English for extending assistance to proofread the text of the report at the eleventh hour. If any error in language or context is still there, the blame lies on us.

Prof. Ashan Riddi

Coordinator

INTRODUCTION

The Project

The *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav* is an initiative of the Government of India to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of India's independence and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements. This Mahotsav is dedicated to the people of India who have not only been instrumental in bringing India this far in its evolutionary journey but also hold within them the power and potential to enable Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of activating India 2.0, fuelled by the spirit of Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Of the five themes under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Freedom Struggle Events/Commemorating milestones in history, unsung heroes, etc. is one.

The State Chapter of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is headed by a Core Committee for Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh (CCUHAP) under the Chairmanship of Shri Chowna Mein, the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. Members of the Core Committee include Shri Taba Tedir, the Hon'ble Minister of Education, Government of Arunachal Pradesh; Shri Tai Tagak, Adviser to the Chief Minister, Government of Arunachal Pradesh and Prof. Saket Kushwaha, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU), Doimukh. Shri Dani Sulu, Secretary to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, is the Member Secretary.

The notification regarding the project 'Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh who fought against the British' (hereafter UHAP) was published on 27th October 2021 by RGU whereby the Department of History was entrusted to carry out the research and documentation on Unsung Heroes from Arunachal Pradesh. The Department of History convened its 84th Department Council Meeting on 28th October 2021 at 11:30 am to discuss the UHAP and the following day the Project Proposal was prepared and forwarded to the Registrar, Rajiv Gandhi University.

Workshop-I of the Project was held on 12th November 2021 in the Conference Hall of the Institute of Distance Education (IDE) on the basis of which the Administrative Committee, the Advisory Committee, the Research Committee and the four Research Sub-Committees A, B, C and D were constituted vide Notification No. RGU/VC/USAP-463/2021/324 dated 15th Nov 2021. The conceptual and methodological framework of the research was discussed and laid out during this workshop. Aside from academics and officers from RGU, late Prof. (retired) S. Dutta, former Professor, Department of History, RGU and Prof. Kumar Ratnam, Member Secretary, Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), New Delhi also attended the meeting.

During the months of November-December 2021, the respective Research Sub-Committees undertook the first pilot surveys in the districts. With meetings facilitated by the district administration, the research team interacted with the community leaders and local intellectuals who were

briefed about the objective of the research and the upcoming field surveys related to it.

Thereafter, the research team undertook archival work and visited the National Archives of India, New Delhi, Assam State Archives, Dispur, the Directorate of State Archives, West Bengal and the National Library of India, both located in Kolkata, in the months of January-April 2022. The second round of field visits to the districts was undertaken during the same period.

On 7 May 2022, a meeting of the Core Committee on the UHAP was held at Namsai. The meeting was chaired by Shri Chowna Mein, the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Government of Arunachal Pradesh and the Chairperson of the committee. Accompanied by Prof. Amitava Mitra, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Prof. Sarit Kumar Chaudhuri, Dean, Faculty of Social Science, the Project Coordinator Prof. Ashan Riddi made a power-point presentation on the progress of the project. It was tentatively agreed during the meeting that a Status Report on the project would be submitted to the government before August 2022 and that the research work can continue till November-December 2022 based on which a comprehensive report can be prepared.

The next meeting of the Core Committee was convened on 4 June 2022 at the official residence of the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Government of Arunachal Pradesh at Itanagar. The meeting fixed the date for the submission of the Status Report by 15 July 2022. It was also decided that a team of researchers consisting of the respective Coordinators of Research Sub-Committees A, B, C and D and officials from the state government would visit archives and libraries in the United Kingdom to collect more archival data and primary records relating to the project.

On 8 July 2022, the Review Meeting-II of the Advisory Committee was held as per the decision of the Research Committee Review Meeting-VII held on 14 June 2022. Of the five out-station members of the Advisory Committee, Dr. Joram Begi, former Registrar, RGU participated in the deliberations. Workshop-II was held on the same day. Representatives from the Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), clan organizations, community-level research committees, intellectuals from the communities, women and youth leaders were invited to seek inputs before submitting the status report to the government. Research Sub-Committees A, B, C and D met the community representatives from the districts in separate meeting halls and held discussions with them. About 150 participants from across the districts attended and participated in the workshop.

A STATUS REPORT on the tentative findings of the research committee was submitted to the government on 18 July 2022.

A delegation of the research committee consisting of the respective Coordinators of Research Sub-Committees A, B, C and D Professors Dr. Shyam Narayan Singh, Dr. Tana Showren, Dr. Ashan Riddi and Dr. Sarit K. Chaudhuri; Mr. Nepha Wangsa, Research Assistant; and Mr. Ajay Saring, PRO to DCM visited London w.e.f. 2-17 September 2022 to collect more archival data.

Workshop-IV was conducted w.e.f. 18-25 November 2022 whereby consultative meetings were held with CBOs and local community members at Pasighat, Dambuk, Namsai and Longding. A final round of field trips was undertaken by Research Sub-Committees B and C to Kra Dadi, Papum Pare, Lower Siang, East Siang, Lepa Rada and West Siang in the first and second week of December 2022 to record oral narratives of the

village elders and knowledge bearers on specific events. Details with regard to field trips and visits to the archives appear in the tour dairies appended to this report. In total, the Research Committee conducted two Advisory Committee meetings, three Workshops and eleven internal Review Meetings apart from numerous field trips and visits to archives and libraries.

Tribal Resistance to Colonial Incursions

The tribal communities constitute about eight per cent of the total population of India. They have their distinct social organisation, livelihood patterns, cultural practices and religion. Most of the tribal communities all over the country encountered some form of colonial expansion in their regions. They resisted such colonial intrusions. Examples of tribal resistances are Bhil Uprising (1818-1831), Ramosi Uprising (1822- 1829), Kol Rebellion (1832), Santhal Uprising (1855- 1856), Khond Uprising (1837-56), Munda Rebellion (1899- 1900) and Koya Uprising (1879- 1880). Arunachal Pradesh is a tribal state inhabited by different tribal communities. In spite of being located in the remotest North Eastern part of India, the people of Arunachal Pradesh have taken an active part in the anti-colonial resistance activities and movements.

Prior to the establishment of British rule in Assam, the Ahom dynasty ruled Assam for many centuries. They could successfully establish their control over the plains and the hills of Assam after their arrival in the year 1228. However, despite their military superiority and economic power, they were unable to penetrate the hills of Arunachal Pradesh and

expand their administration there; rather the people of Arunachal Pradesh claimed the plains adjacent to the foothills and sometimes resorted to forceful extraction of taxes from the inhabitants of the foothill plains. Therefore, the Ahom King Pratap Singha (1603-1641) had to toil hard to establish harmony between the people of the plains and hills by introducing certain policies and institutions. The grant of *posa* to the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh was started. It also established the institution of *Kotoki* to negotiate and establish diplomatic ties with the tribes. During the turmoil caused by the Moamaria rebellion, the Khampti occupied the Ahom province of Sadiya and assumed the Sadiya Khowa Gohain. After the Treaty of Yandaboo (1826), the British acquired Assam.

Therefore, the British inherited altogether different kinds of relationships between the Ahoms and the hills tribes. Initially, the British attempted not to disturb the existing hill-plain relationship and instead cultivate a friendly relationship with the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. However, the discovery of tea and extraction of natural resources like rubber, timber, ivory, fishing and gold washing in the foothills led to a strained relationship between the British administration and the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The tribes of Arunachal Pradesh took aggressive postures when they did not get what they felt as due taxes from the plains of the foothills, whereas the British decided to protect the people of the plains against the raids from the hill tribes. They established police outposts in the foothills, and from time-to-time imposed blockades and made punitive expeditions into the hills. Hence, the establishment of the British administration in Assam drastically changed the relationship between the people of the plains and the hill tribes.

The tribes of Arunachal Pradesh attacked the colonial officials and armies in different locations and periods. However, their contribution and sacrifices have not been given proper and due recognition and the saga of their struggle against foreign intrusion and invasion in their regions has remained unsung and unknown so far. During the course of the research, we came to know that many clans and communities had been approaching the state government through written submissions to get the freedom fighters recognised.

Hence, under the aegis of the state government, a Core Committee for Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh was formed under the chairmanship of Shri Chowna Mein, Deputy Chief Minister, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. The Department of History, Rajiv Gandhi University was given the task of carrying out the research and documentation for finding out the Unsung Heroes, so that the contribution and sacrifices of those unsung heroes can be given due recognition.

Based on the suggestions of the Advisory Committee; the sentiments of the families, clans and communities concerned; and in line with the theme of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav under which Freedom Struggle Events/ Commemorating milestones in history, unsung heroes were to be documented and celebrated, we have organised our list of unsung heroes into three categories: Heroes, Martyrs and Freedom Fighters. We feel that this justifies the context of the times and circumstances of the events in which the unsung heroes led or participated. We may have missed some persons and events buried within the dark corners of history that we were not able to unearth during the short duration of this research. It is expected that our brief survey will provide some useful yardstick for future endeavours in this regard. With a sense of pride, we submit this report to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh with the hope that the findings of this research will fulfil the aspirations of the communities and the government as well as win the approval of the academia.

Resistance Movement I The Aka

Chapter

O

REPORT OF THE RESEARCH SUB-COMMITTEE-A

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The Aka

The Akas (Hrusso)¹ live in the south-eastern part of the Bichom valley in West Kameng district with their concentration in the Thrizino, Jamiri, Buragaon and Balupong circles. The Kutsun and the Kuvatsun are two major clans. They live nearest to the plains so they used visit Assam during winter annually for trading purposes.² The word ‘Aka’ means ‘painted’ in Assamese and the Assamese and British administrators named them as Aka because of their custom of painting the face of their women.³ Captain Neufville makes a mention of this tribe in 1828 as “an excellent and most interesting people and are capable of great improvement”.⁴ One of the earliest publications on the Aka tribe is dated back to 1884 brought out by the Asiatic Society of Bengal.⁵ A good coverage of the land and people of Arunachal Pradesh was also given in the 1961 Census.⁶ We also find good number of research articles published on the Akas in various editions of *Resarun*, a journal of the Department of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. A scholarly work on the Akas by Gibji Nimachow published in 2011 also provides us with a good account of their social, economic, demographic and cultural history.⁷

Nothing concrete is known about the origin and migration of the Akas. As per their tradition recorded by Verrier Elwin, Sibji Sao and Sibjim Sam born out of the union of a man Awa and a woman *Jusam* a beautiful daughter of the sun are regarded as parents of all mankind.⁸ R.S. Kennedy, quoting from a legend prevalent among the people, said that they believed

themselves to have descended to the earth “by golden and silver ladders.”⁹ He wrote that the Assamese and Akas of the royal blood came down by a golden ladder; the remaining Akas had a silver ladder; the Tibetans and Monpas were given an iron ladder; the Nyishis and the Adis had to be satisfied with a bamboo ladder.¹⁰ All these people arrived on earth together on a hill called Longkapur in the Lohit Valley and scattered in search of land. The Akas at first settled at Bhalukpong and later they migrated from south to north, from the plains of Assam to the hills. They trace their royal lineage from Bana Raja, who ruled the area from Balipara in Assam to Bhalukpong in Arunachal Pradesh in 10th or 12th century approximately.¹¹ After him, Banasura Raja then Bhaluka Raja and during the British occupation of Assam.

The Akas belong to the Mongoloid stock and they speak the Aka dialect which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family of languages.

The community does not maintain any social hierarchy, but they are divided into a number of exogamous clans and sub-clans. The clans regulate their marriage alliances. While clan exogamy is strictly adhered to, there are exceptions to the rule of community endogamy.¹² The Akas have matrimonial relations with the Mijis. Inter-community marriages are being seen these days. The selection of a girl is done by performing a ritual called *jchikhruw* to determine the indications of ‘yes’ or ‘no’ remarks in the liver of a sacrificed fowl

¹ Verrier Elwin, A Philosophy for NEFA, published by NEFA, Shillong, 1959, p. 2.

² R. S. Kennedy, Ethnological Report on the Akas, Khoas and Mijis and the Monbas of Tawang, Shillong, 1914, p. 1.

³ K. S. Singh (Ed.), People of India: Arunachal Pradesh, Vol. XIV, Seagull Publishers, Calcutta, 1995, p. 135.

⁴ J. B. Neufville, On the Geography and Population of Assam, Asiatic Researches, 16, 1828 as quoted in Singh (Ed.), People of India, p. 135.

⁵ C.R. Macgregor, Notes on Akas and Akaland, Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1884.

⁶ B. K. Roy Burman (Ed.), Census of India, 1961, Demographic and Socio-Economic Profiles of the Hill Areas of North-East India, Delhi, 1970.

⁷ Gibji Nimachow, The Akas: Land and People, Commonwealth Publishers, New Delhi, 2011.

⁸ Deepak Pandey, History of Arunachal Pradesh, Bani Mandir Publication, Pasighat, 5th Ed. 2012, p. 37.

⁹ Kennedy, Ethnological Report on the Akas, p. 1.

¹⁰ Kennedy, Ethnological Report on the Akas, p. 1.

¹¹ Dama Miji Zongluju, ‘Unsung Heroes of Aka (Hrusso) Community’, The Arunachal Times, 05.04.2021, p. 5.

¹² Singh (Ed.), People of India, p. 136.

by the *mugow* (priest).¹³ The marriage gets settled by the *Mukhow* (mediator) on the recommendation of the priest. The most widely practiced marriages in the society are marriage by negotiation and marriage by capture.¹⁴ Bride price is essential for marriage and is paid generally in the form of *mithuns* (fu), pigs (vo), *endi* clothes (*gemsoatra*) and iron hearth stands (*ukro*). With the changing trend, the beads (*giisen*), silver ornaments (*shii-liimu*), brass plates (*bela*), and swords (*humovetsii*) are presented to the groom's parents in exchange to the items presented to the bride's parents and relatives. Divorce as an incidence is found rare in their society. The women folk look after their children, bring fuel and fodder and prepare food and drinks for the family members. They also contribute to the family income by taking part in the agricultural activities.

The Akas have a number of pre-and post-delivery rituals. An offering is made by the village priest to appease the deity when a child is born. The burial takes place on the same day as the death, with the priest performing the funeral rites. A separate place is earmarked for burial in the case of an accidental death. They believe in the transmigration of soul, and the priest prays that the soul be reborn in the same family.

The Akas believe in a number of deities and spirits both malevolent and benevolent. They worship the forces of nature which are believed to reside in space between the 'Nyezi' (Sky) and 'No' (Earth). It is also believed that all natural calamities, illness and epidemics

are caused by the action of the evil spirits which can be propitiated by sacrifice of animals. The major festival is Nyetriidow, celebrated generally in the second week of November every year.

The Akas are a community of agriculturists and their major economic resources are land, forests and river. The land is owned by the clan, but the forests and rivers are owned by the villagers. They practise *jhum* (shifting cultivation) and some used to adopt terrace and wet rice cultivation as well.

Their traditional village council, *mele* is responsible for maintaining law and order in the village. It takes decisions on all kinds of village problems, such as land disputes, thefts, elopement, adultery and divorce. Since the introduction of Panchayat system, all village disputes are decided by the *gaon-bura* in consultation with the Panchayat members. It too looks after the development activities of the village.

EVENT NO.1: THE ERA OF TAGI RAJA

Tagi Raja, a dynamic and extraordinary leader of Aka tribe was recognised as Raja by the Ahom rulers and held several treaties regarding collection of taxes and Posa from the plain as well as maintaining the peaceful relation between the people of hills and plains.¹⁵ Relations between the Akas and the people of plain got worsened when Assam was annexed by the British after the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826.

The British introduced certain new and stringent policies in Assam which were somehow not acceptable to the hill tribes including Akas. Besides, the British established many outposts in the territory to execute their policies which created more problems for Akas in manging their day-to-day life since the Akas had right to collect taxes from the plains upto Charduar and also had the right to collect Posa. Sometimes the Akas carried away servants from the plains and brought them to the hills for manual labour.¹⁶ Tagi Raja, being a leader of Akas wanted to bring back their rights from the British. For that, Tagi Raja with his few followers came down to the plains upto Charduar and collected taxes from the ryots as usual. In some cases, Akas also raided the government establishment. When the news of collection of taxes by the Akas reached to the British, the latter declared the Akas as outlawed. Soon the British further declared that the whole plains of Charduar area were under the British control and the right of collection of taxes by the Akas in the plains was illegal and punishable.

Besides, during the Ahom period, according to an understanding between the Akas and Ahoms, collection of taxes was shared from an area between Charduar to Tezpur. The Akas were allowed to collect taxes during winter while the Ahoms collected during summer. From 1826 onwards, Akas were stopped from collecting taxes from the areas earmarked by the British.¹⁷ In fact, the British started encroaching the Aka land in Charduar area whereas, Tagi Raja thought that it was his right of inheritance to collect taxes from the Aka land under his control.¹⁸

Thus, difference arose between the British and Akas on collection of taxes as well as on border issues. None of them were ready to bow before each other. Hence, frequent raids by the Akas in the plains were made during 1826-1828. Consequently, the Akas were restricted from entering into the plains without permission of the British which the Akas did not receive well and found it to be an open challenge for them.¹⁹

In 1828, Tagi Raja visited the plains for his personal purpose where he got information about a person named Mudziw²⁰ who was the main culprit behind the entire clan war between Dususow and Dibisow of Jamiri in 1828 where from the Dibisow clan came out victorious. And Dususow clan in due course was found almost extinct. But Tagi Raja and his father named Pario²¹ made it tactfully to escape. When Tagi Raja came to know that Mudziw who divulged the plan of Dususow to the Dibisow clan was the main agent of the Dibisow clan, he was determined to kill Mudziw. He made an attempt to kill him in the hills, but Mudziw escaped toward the plains of Assam. Tagi Raja chased Mudziw, finally killed him²² and succeeded in running away from the scene. Later the family members of Mudziw and ryots under him lodged complaint against Tagi Raja. The British tried their best to arrest Tagi Raja but failed. They sent numbers of *Kotokis* (intermediaries) to Aka hills for negotiation with Tagi Raja but it did not materialise. Miali Sidisow, an Aka intellectual rightfully puts:

¹³ Nimachow, The Akas, p. 57.

¹⁴ Nimachow, The Akas, p. 58.

¹⁵ Extracted from scheduled interview with Dibru Dususow, Descendant of Tagi Raja and General Secretary, Aka Shotuko-Kunu, Buragaon, 15 May 2022, 12:00 noon.

¹⁶ Extracted from interview with Miali Sidisow, a village intellectual, Bhalukpong, 13 May 2022, 10:00 am.

¹⁷ Dibru Dususow Interview.

¹⁸ Dibru Dususow Interview.

¹⁹ Dama Miji Zongluju Interview.

²⁰ Extracted from interview with Duba Dususow, a village intellectual, Buragaon, 14 May 2022, 11: 30 am.

²¹ Dibru Dususow Interview.

²² Dibru Dususow Interview.

*Tagi Raja refused to accept the British suzerainty, because he considered the territory the British claimed to be theirs was his only. He stood firm on his stance and hence was invited by the British for negotiations, but he was betrayed, arrested and put in the Guwahati jail. Prior to his arrest, the British had got lots of inputs against Tagi Raja by the Sherdukpens who had also been invited to place their points of grievances before them. Even the Sherdukpens plotted conspiracy against Tagi Raja for collecting taxes unlawfully from them. So, the delegation of Sherdukpens requested British authority to punish Tagi Raja and jointly make conspiracy against him.*²³

Joint conspiracy of the Sherdukpens and British led to the arrest of Tagi Raja at Balipara when Tagi Raja visited one of his ryots in 1829. In connection with the arrest of Tagi Raja, Kalo Dususow said:

In 1829, Tagi Raja out of his dissatisfaction against the British for their incursion of his land, started attacking them. Once he was in Assam and taking shelter or hiding in one of his friend or Ryot's house, and somehow the information was reached to the British. The British arrived there to arrest Tagi Raja, but he chased them away. Tagi Raja unintentionally destroyed his friend's paddy fields

*while fighting with the British, then his friend could not bear to see destroying his own field, so he removed his turban and threw upon Tagi Raja. In this way, Tagi Raja was tightened and arrested.*²⁴

Tagi Raja was sent to Guwahati Jail for three years from 1829-1832. He was treated there as outlawed or *Bagi* and punished as per the British justice. In due course of time, the British came to know that Tagi Raja had very strong leadership quality as well as great personality.²⁵ In the jail, Tagi Raja met a Vaishnavi Guru, got impressed by his wisdom, was said to have been converted to Vaishnavism and led an obedient and disciplined life in the jail. It is also said that Tagi Raja got married to an Assamese girl in the jail and had two daughters.²⁶ The British government also offered him manual job within the premise of the jail. Tagi Raja was released from the jail in 1832 before expiry of his term due to several petitions filed by the Vaishnavi Guru.²⁷

After his release from the jail, he returned to the Aka hills and met his family and fellows. During this time, he came to know that there was a conspiracy hatched against him by few Sherdukpen Rajas. While recollecting this incident Labi Dususow, one of the members of the Aka Elite Society says: “some Sherdukpen kings were involved behind Tagi Raja’s arrest. The Sherdukpens even requested the British authority not let him come back to his native land and rather keep Tagi Raja in jail for life time. The Sherdukpens called Tagi Raja as tiger and believed if he got released, then they would all

be destroyed.”²⁸ Further he also highlights that when Tagi Raja came to know about the conspiracy between the British and Sherdukpens, he immediately called all his fellow Akas and planned to make raids on Sherdukpen villages. He did it and took away all the valuables and goats owned by the Sherdukpens.²⁹

Thus, Tagi Raja with his fellow Akas, made an attack on the Sherdukpen villages to avenge his conspirators. But, the news of his attack reached to the Sherdukpens and they escaped somewhere. But the cattle of the Sherdukpens were either killed or taken away by the Akas and more than five Sherdukpen villages were ravaged.³⁰

The most stunning and daring act of Tagi Raja’s career was his attack on the police outpost at Balipara in February 1835. The post was cut up and burnt, and had suffered a number of casualties. Around seventeen police personnels were killed in the massacre. Further, he set fire to the house of a Patgiri, Madhu Saikia at Orung in the month of April, 1835.³¹ Such act of violence and repeated attacks on Balipara and Charduar areas caused by Tagi Raja continued unabated.

In between 1836-39, Tagi Raja with his fellow made more than thirty-eight³² raids on the plains. In 1837, Tagi Raja raided the plains and carried off several persons as captives to the hills. Yet another raid by the Akas under the leadership of Tagi Raja in 1841 proved serious matter of concern for the British to safeguard the newly established territory in Assam.³³

However, tension between the British and Akas was at its zenith when Tagi Raja again raided in October, 1841 where

Tagi Raja with his eighteen Aka fellows captured around ten workers (ryots) and carried them off to the hills.³⁴ Thus, Assistant Agent Officer of North East Frontier, Darrang District, Assam wrote a report to Junior Assistant to the Agent of Governor General asking him to give order for attack on Aka hills. But it was not granted and hence he ordered to desist from any expedition into Aka hills.³⁵

Therefore, the British were concerned over Tagi Raja and were planning to send an expedition to Aka hills to capture him, because every effort on the part of British to capture him proved abortive. But before expedition the British blocked the passes and strengthen their outposts with more guards. The Akas were strictly prohibited to visit the plain and at the same time the British began to send *Kotokis* (interpreters) regularly to Aka hills for negotiations.³⁶

The British were seriously thinking to send expedition to Aka hills in 1842, but unexpectedly, news arrived that Tagi Raja was willing to surrender with some conditions. The Kotokis played important role in bringing about the surrender of Tagi Raja.³⁷ Thus, Tagi Raja appeared before the British with his followers and Kotoki on 30th March, 1842.³⁸ The Assistant Agent to Governor General, North East Frontier wrote in his report to Agent to Governor General, North East Frontier that Tagi Raja agreed to the points as follow:

²³ Miali Sidisow Interview.

²⁴ Extracted from interview with Kalo Dususow, Descendant of Tagi Raja and a village intellectual, Jamiri, 15 May 2022, 09:30 am.

²⁵ Dama Miji Zongluju Interview.

²⁶ Dama Miji Zongluju Interview.

²⁷ Duba Dususow Interview.

²⁸ Extracted from interview with Labi Dususow, Descendant of Tagi Raja and a village intellectual, Bhalukpong, 12 May 2022, 05:10 pm.

²⁹ Labi Dususow Interview.

³⁰ Dibru Dususow Interview.

³¹ H.K. Barpujari, Problem of the Hill Tribes: North East Frontier (1822-42) Vol. 1, Lawyer's Book Stall, Guwahati, 1970, p. 122.

³² Extracted from interview with Kalo Dususow, Descendant of Tagi Raja and a village intellectual, Jamiri, 15 May 2022, 10:30 am.

³³ Pandey, History of Arunachal Pradesh, p. 265.

³⁴ Political Department, File No. 78, 1841 National Archives of India, New Delhi.

³⁵ Political Department, File No. 78, 1841 National Archives of India, New Delhi.

³⁶ S. Dutta Choudhury (Ed.), Arunachal Pradesh District Gazetteers: East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang Districts, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1996, p. 49.

³⁷ Choudhury (Ed.), Arunachal Pradesh District Gazetteers: East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang, p. 49.

³⁸ Political Department, File No. 115, 1841, National Archives, New Delhi.

- i. Tagi Raja with his few followers agreed to maintain peace with the British and people of the plain.
- ii. Tagi Raja agreed to have good relation with the ryots of the plain.
- iii. Tagi Raja agreed to act as mediator between the hill tribes and the British/people of plain.
- iv. Tagi Raja also agreed to protect the Charduar front-line ryots from Booteahs, Daflahs (Nyishis) and other bordering hill tribes.

In lieu of the above-mentioned points the Britishers also agreed upon some points as follow:

- i. The British agreed not to arrest Tagi Raja and allowed him to return to the hills.
- ii. The British agreed to provide allowances to Tagi Raja.³⁹

Hence, Tagi Raja and his followers were allowed to return to their hills after signing the agreement. The British concluded this agreement because they neither succeeded in catching Tagi Raja nor sending expedition to the Aka hills. Further, the main objective of the agreement and specially providing allowances to Tagi by the British was to encourage him to take an interest

in keeping all the hill tribes quiet and peaceful.⁴⁰

With regard to agreement between Tagi Raja and the British, Deepak Pandey writes:

Since Jenkins, the Agent to the Governor General, was keen to establish peace in the region, pardon and pension were offered to Tagi Raja through the Kotokis. He came to the plains and surrendered to the British authority and was released on a solemn oath that he would desist from further aggressions. A monthly salary of Rs. 20 was granted to him and three of his chiefs - Seemkolee, Sooma and Nisul. An agreement was executed to this effect in 1842. Subsequently, other chiefs came down and accepted pension from the Government. Captain Gordon, the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang District granted annual pension to four Aka chiefs in 1844 and five others in 1848. The total amount of pension amounted to Rs. 360 per year.⁴¹

Thus, the relation between the British and Akas began to improve after the grant of pension to the Tagi Raja and other chiefs. The amount of Posa and pension were also gradually increased and raised to Rs. 668 per annum. The Akas also received 18 puras of land for their temple in Darrang District. But in 1857, the Tagi Raja wanted further rise in their Posa claims on the plea that the price had been increasing and with

their Posa money, they were getting less quantity of goods.⁴²

Therefore, the British Government immediately stopped the payment of Posa and closed the market of the Duars for the Akas. Hence, it brought the protesting Akas to their knees and one after another almost all of their chiefs including Tagi Raja submitted to the British. And thereafter the payment of Posa was resumed because during these years the Akas did not commit any raids.⁴³

Tagi Raja, one of the pioneers of Aka tribe led many raids in the British territory and was arrested for several years, but did not surrender. He continued in raiding the British territory after his release from the jail, even killed many British soldiers in Balipara under Darrang District. The British were not be able to arrest him again, but faced trouble from him from 1832 to 1842. During these years, the British sent many Kotokis to appease Tagi Raja for negotiations. But, Tagi Raja neither surrendered nor came to negotiations.

But finally, he came down to the plains and negotiated for his people and hill tribes with conditions. Thus, in his entire life, he struggled against the British administration for the safety of his people as well as to safeguard his territory. He collected Posa from the plain, received pension from the British Government which shows that, he was a great leader as well as great ruler of his tribe. He breathed his last in 1873 and there ended the adventure of his glorious life.

EVENT NO.2: ANGLO-AKA WAR, 1883-84

1. Causes

i. Boundary dispute and Denial of free access to Plains

The dispute between Medhi Raja and the British started after the death of Tagi Raja in 1873, and they remained hostile till the year 1884. According to available sources the root cause of hostility seems to be the land demarcation between British and Aka territory. As per the British official records, an official land demarcation was drawn between the Aka and British territory in 1872-73 under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Act, 1873.⁴⁴ However, Medhi refused to recognise the boundary and claimed the land between the hills and the Brahmaputra, bounded in the east by the Bhoroli and on the west by the Rhotas⁴⁵ as Aka territory.

With an objective to negotiate the Aka-British boundary dispute, the Chief Commissioner of Assam along with fifty men of the 42nd Native Infantry met Medhi Raja on 21st June 1875, where the Commissioner explained the boundary between the two parties in detail. After some resistance, Medhi agreed to accept the

³⁹ Political Department, File No. 115, 1841, National Archives, New Delhi.

⁴⁰ Political Department, File No. 115, 1841, National Archives, New Delhi.

⁴¹ Pandey, History of Arunachal Pradesh, p. 266.

⁴² Choudhury (Ed.), Arunachal Pradesh District Gazetteers: East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang, p. 50.

⁴³ Pandey, History of Arunachal Pradesh, p. 266.

⁴⁴ Dama Miji Zongluju, Arunachal Times, Itanagar, 04 April 2021, p. 6.

⁴⁵ Letter from the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, Posa allowances to the hill tribes of Darrang, Assam Secretariat, File No.181J of 1882, (pt.4751) dated 2 August 1882, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Letter from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner to the secretary to the Government of India, Claim of Akas to certain lands in the Darang Frontier, Foreign Department, Assam Secretariat, File No. 121J of 1875, (pt.4224) dated 08 November 1875, p. 11.

boundary demarcated by the British and stated that, 'he had no desire to disturb the existing friendly relations with British, he had further nothing to say and was willing to obey the orders of Her Majesty'. Henceforth, Bhai-bahini Hills, indicated by Colonel Graham was recognised as the boundary mark between Medhi (Aka) and British territory.⁴⁶

Medhi was never happy with the boundary line, he refused to accept the boundary made by the British. He appears to look at it as an imposed agreement and remained discontented even after the settlement was made through mediator.⁴⁷

He felt deprived and insulted, he pondered on the subject thoroughly, he wanted to stop British from penetrating into his land, although the British administration gave him pension but his concern was his land and dignity, for which he was even ready to surrender the allowances he was receiving from the British Government. His sentiments are evident from the statement made by him (translated from Bengali);

I do not know what so great fault I have committed that the Government is year by year going to take possession of our land. This has caused great grief to my mind. Be that as it may, I have no wish to make war with the Government. My present request is as follows The land of the Aka

*maharajas, on the east the BorDikrai, on the south the Brahmaputra, on the west the river Reta (Rowta), and on the north Panipota; if the land within these boundaries is given up to me, I will give up my claim to the yearly pension I receive from the Maharani. It is well-known that the money given to me by the Maharani does not provide in the very least for my expenses.*⁴⁸

He felt deprived and insulted, he pondered on the subject thoroughly, he wanted to stop British from penetrating into his land, although the British administration gave him pension but his concern was his land and dignity, for which he was even ready to surrender the allowances he was receiving from the British Government. His sentiments are evident from the statement made by him (translated from Bengali):

But after continuous efforts from the British Government, Medhi Raja was compelled to recognise the boundary line proposed by the Government in 1875.

After the introduction of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Act, 1873, most of the plain areas were brought under the British administration and were declared as the government forest reserve and restrictions were imposed on the Akas, which mandated that the Akas had to take permission from the British authority to enter the Assam territory. They started feeling that all their rights had been snatched as they could not enter the plains on their own will. Activities like hunting, cultivation and tapping rubber were strictly banned. In

addition to that, they were scrutinised whenever they entered into the British territory, all their arms had to be submitted at the gate. Only after unarming, they were allowed to go inside Assam. Medhi Raja and the Akas could not bear the humiliation and discriminatory treatment of the British Government which is evident from the following statement of Limboo Aka Hajarikhoa Raj, Misadu Aka, and Miju Aka:

*If Medhi Raja sent down man for some eating things (rice, &c) then their path was obstructed by the Chaprasis of Khola Babu of the Jungli Sahib, and they were not allowed to come and go, and if they come, they wanted to discharge guns at his men. The boundary has been removed to the vicinity of our chang by encroachment. We have been put in want of the place for shooting deer, catching fish, and collecting firewood.*⁴⁹

To express his discontentment, Medhi met British officers, for instance he met Captain Boyd, the then Deputy Commissioner of Darrang District, and objected to the boundary line and also reminded him about the allotment of 100 *puras* of land for cultivation and a plot of land for the Kachari priests to build temple in Charduar which was promised to the Akas by the British. But the British refused to listen to his demands and made several excuses not to entertain the matter. Further, the British Administration refuted the claim of 100 *puras* of land which according to them was fixed at 36 *puras*.⁵⁰

ii. Denial to collect Taxes

Before the British invasion of Assam, the Akas had good diplomatic relations with the Ahoms. They had enjoyed privileges under the Ahom rule, as they were given power and authority to collect taxes from the *ryots*, known as *Nyiksitro*, meaning a tenant. The taxes from the plain were collected by the Akas during winter season, as the climate was suitable to go down to the plains. The Ahoms collected tax during the six summer months when it was rainy and weather was not suitable for expeditions, military or otherwise. None of the available materials and field data suggest any interference of the Ahom kings in the internal affairs of the Akas. The Aka lived an independent autonomous life settling all disputes through their customary norms. In addition to that, the Ahoms had an appeasement policy with neighbouring hill tribes which is popularly known as *Posa* system, the system proved to be very effective as it successfully prevented conflicts and differences. The system of *Posa* helped in establishing a peaceful relationship between the hill tribes and the Ahoms.

As mentioned earlier, Medhi had never been satisfied with the policies that the British adopted and implemented in Aka territory, he was looking and waiting for the favourable time to show his discontent against the British.

⁴⁷ Dama Miji Zongluju Interview.

⁴⁸ <https://historyofmonyul.wordpress.com/2017/12/31/historical-notes-on-the-the-hrussos>

⁴⁹ Letter to Dharmaraj Praja Palak (king of virtue and supporter of subjects), Attitude of the Akas, Assam Secretariat, File No. 184], 23rd Kartik 1884, p. 8.

⁵⁰ Letter from Captain M.O. Boyd, Deputy Commissioner of Darang to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Claim of Akas to certain Lands in the Darrang Frontiers, Assam Secretariat Proceeding, File No. 121]. of 1875, 02.04.1875, p.10.

iii. Resentment against Raja and Rani being asked by the British to be part of Exhibition at Kolkata

The Anglo-Aka relationship became more hostile from 16th October 1883 onwards, when the British sent a team headed by Lakhidar, *Mauzadar* (a magistrate) and twelve men to Medhi, to ask Raja and Rani to be a part of exhibition in Kolkata. It took eleven days to reach Medhi's village.⁵¹ The official team wanted to meet Medhi Raja, however Medhi refused to meet them as he had undergone a ritual ceremony. They conveyed their purpose of visit to the villagers, who asked them to stay there for five days, so that required specimens for exhibition could be collected. Later the team held a meeting with the villagers, but during the meeting all the members of British team were taken captive. Medhi Raja accused Patgiri as the person who deprived the Akas, and made the Akas lose two mouzas of Balipara. Medhi also suspected *Patgiri* to be a spy of the government and felt that the purpose of his visit was to inspect the Akas and annex their land.⁵²

As per the information from the statement made by Limboo Aka Hajarikhoa Raj, Misadu Aka and Miju Aka,⁵³ the Akas were ready to send the ornaments for exhibition but did not agree to the demand of the mauzadar who was insisting for an Aka couple especially the

Raja and Rani to be sent as exhibits in the Calcutta exhibition, this according to the Aka was forbidden as per their custom. The demand offended the Akas and they considered it a deliberate attempt from the British side to humiliate them and undermine their ethos and culture. So the Akas held a council and took decision to punish them for their misconduct and arrested the *Mauzadar* and his men.⁵⁴

iv. Removal of Medhi from the post of Mouzadar

The present Akas and descendants of Medhi Raja have different opinions on the issue leading to the incident of 1883. According to them, Medhi Raja had personal enmity with Lakhidar, Patgiri of Tezpur. After the death of Tagi Raja, Medhi Raja was appointed and deputed as Mouzadar of Balipara against his father's post. He was given the power and authority to collect taxes and had 50 percent share on the revenue collected from areas under his jurisdiction, so long as he was Mouzadar he had no dispute with the British Government. But later on, he was dismissed from the post, and it was believed that Lakhidar Patgiri of Tezpur was the person behind his dismissal, who hatched conspiracy against him and removed him from the post of Mouzadar. So, he felt insulted and humiliated and went back to his native village and since then he had been longing for the revenge against Patgiri, Lakhidar.⁵⁵ However, the claim that Medhi Raja was a Mouzadar is not reflected in any of the British documents referred so far.

As mentioned earlier, according to the oral narrative of Akas, the real cause of discord was removal of Medhi Raja from the post of Mouzadar. It was stated that Patgiri first informed Tagi Raja of Hajarikhoa Aka of Jamiri for the collection of specimens for the Kolkata Exhibition but somehow the information was intercepted by Medhi Raja. So Medhi requested Tagi Raja of Jamiri to send Patgiri to his village so that he could take his revenge, therefore when Patgiri reached Gohainthan with his team, they were arrested. Patgiri and his servant were sent to Khawagaon and the Buguns were instructed to kill the Patgiri. The Buguns followed the order and as per the instruction when the Patgiri's servant had gone for collection of firewood, they killed Patgiri by damaging his testis in order to avoid marks or bruises on his body, this way they convinced the servant that his master died of fever or a natural death.

2. Expedition(s) led by/its composition/result

On 10th November 1883, Medhi sent his younger brother Chandi (Sonji in Aka) to Balipara to kidnap Mr. Campbell and Koylash Babu. Chandi along with hundred Aka warriors undertook the task, at first, he surveyed the area, when he could not find Campbell and Koylash Babu he took off a forest ranger, a clerk and two rifles from the Balipara Forest division.⁵⁶

Chandi was a literate person, who studied in Tezpur under the expenses of British government. As per the British record

he was paid Rs. 15 per month as stipend. As far as the informants could remember, he finished his vernacular school with one more Aka student then he went further for English medium, while the other dropped out. He also dropped his studies when he felt that he had learnt enough and went back to his native village.⁵⁷

The kidnapping of British subject by Chandi made the British government desperate and anxious and they wanted immediate release of the captives. So, they sent intimidating letters and warned the Akas about the consequences, if they refused to surrender the hostages immediately.

*The Sahibs and sipahis are all assembled at the Maj Bhoroli. In the hope of meeting you I have halted here two days, but have been disappointed. For this reason I am sending to you four Kotokis. The three captives please make over them; if, however you feel disinclined to make the captives over to the kotokis, please bring to me yourself in person. At MojBhoroli I will meet you in conclave. If you do not come to me, I shall have to advance on your village with the sipahis and fight you. Your loss will then be great. And I am averse to cause you and Aka people injury; it is for this reason I am writing you to surrender the captives quickly.*⁵⁸

⁵¹ Letter from Captain H. ST. P. Maxwell, Political Officer, Aka Field Force to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Shillong, Raid Committed by the Akas, Assam Secretariat, File No. 116J, 20.02.1884, p. 17.

⁵² Letter from B.G. Geidt, Esq., C.S., Personal Assistant to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Raid Committed by Akas in the Darrang District, Assam Secretariat, Ibid, File No. 154J, 26.11.1883, (pt. 38t), p. 12-14.

⁵³ Letter to Dharmaraj Praja Palak (king of virtue and supporter of subjects), Attitude of the Akas, Assam Secretariat File No. 184J, 23rd Kartik 1884, p. 8.

⁵⁴ Letter to Dharmaraj Praja Palak (king of virtue and supporter of subjects), Attitude of the Akas, Assam Secretariat File No. 184J, 23rd Kartik 1884, p. 8.

⁵⁵ Extracted from interview with Dibru Dususow, Jamiri, 14 May 2022, 10:00 am.

⁵⁶ Statement of Kedarnath Chakrabatti, son of Thakur Das Chakrabatti, Harinabhi district Forest Clerk 24-Parganas, Raid Committed by the Akas in the Darrang District, Assam Secretariat, File No. 116J of 1884, 29.01.1884, p. 8.

⁵⁷ Letter from Captain H. St. P. Maxwell, Political Officer, Aka Field Force to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Shillong, Raid Committed by the Akas, Assam Secretariat, File No. 116J, 20.02.1884, p. 16.

⁵⁸ Letter from the Political Officer to the Medhi Aka Raja, dated Moj Bhoroli, the 21st December 1883, Raid Committed by Akas in the Darrang district, Assam Secretariat Proceedings, Judicial Department, File No. 116J of 1884, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁹ Note by C.J.F. More, Esq., Officiating Extra Assistant Commissioner, Attitude of the Akas, Assam Secretariat Proceeding, File No. 184J. of 1884, 15.11.1884. p. 16-17.

But Medhi ignored their letters and he was not willing to surrender the captives without conditions and settling the discord. He was looking forward for a negotiation and his demands were: reconsideration of all the previous agreements between the Akas and the British, increment in his yearly pension from Rs. 240 per annum to Rs. 20,000 per annum, 200 *puras* of land in Charduar for their temples and rectification of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Act, 1873, in order to draw a new boundary line between the Akas and the British Government.⁵⁹

As they could not establish a settlement through dialogues, both the parties started preparing for the war.⁶⁰ Medhi Raja invited all the Akas and Mijis to support him in the war. More than four hundred men gathered, a big council was called and two Mithuns were killed at Medhi's village, and all of them agreed and took decision to go for the war. Firstly, they ambushed in the advantage points, installed various traps on the path like sharpened pointed bamboo, fastening stones in the tree branches which could have been loosened and dropped when required, collecting huge boulders on strategic locations of the passage, and construction of small and delicate bamboo and cane bridge with narrow passage over the Tengapani river so that passing British soldiers could be ambushed right on time.

On the other side, the British government despatched one hundred fifty sepahis of 43rd Native In-

fantry, and fifty Assam Frontier Police under Major Beresford with all supplies. But force had to suffer setback from cholera and geographical challenges, as two coolies died of cholera, and also, they could not cross the river as they ailed to use the cane-ropeway used by the Akas. "Cholera showed itself in camp, and two transport coolies died and four more were taken ill", writes the Political Officer on the Akas and that:

*The Akas cross the river by a cane, which is stretched from bank to bank and fitted with loops, -placing their bodies into a loop they pull themselves across by the cane. Only persons accustomed to this mode of gymnastic exercise can succeed in passing over, and for our operation this bridge was useless until greatly improved, and then it was only available for crossing supplies.*⁶¹

After experiencing all these difficulties, the officer in command Captain Maxwell decided to settle the dispute through dialogue, so he sent four Assamese *Kotokis* to Medhi. But all his efforts could not improve the situation. The *Kotokis*, while returning, encountered eighty Akas in war-paint, assembled on a hill, and the path had been stockaded and embellished with stone traps, they informed this new development to Captain Maxwell. At night at Maj Bhoroli, the Akas along with Mijis initiated a surprise attack on them, where two British soldiers were killed, six were wounded and two rifles were taken away from the British soldiers by the Akas. British claimed

that they drove away the Akas with heavy loss, however there was no casualty on Akas side.⁶²

On the following morning, 24th December, Captain Maxwell advanced his troops towards the Akas, the Akas retreated and abandoned their stockades and purposely installed stone traps in the passage route so that the British advance could be delayed. However, on 26th December, the British troops managed to reach Tengapani and encamped near the bank of the river. The opposite side was held by the Akas with good number of fighters. They held the advantage point and were ready to ambush the British troops in the hills and jungle. From the hills they could observe the movement and activities of the British troops. Therefore, on 27th December when the British tried to advance, two British soldiers were killed by the Akas, one was shot to death on the spot and another one was injured by the poison arrow, who later succumbed to his injuries after fainting for some hours. So, the British could not make any progress as the Akas showered arrows on them.⁶³

After many casualties, Captain Maxwell dropped the idea of advancing with small troop, so he thought it better to retreat to their previous camp. They requested for reinforcement, so after two or three days Brigadier General Hill with a large number of troops, ammunitions and two mountain canons reached the spot. The British bombarded and heavily shelled on the Aka posts. Meanwhile, the Akas had exhausted all their ammunition in a week of intense fight, they seemed ill-prepared or perhaps didn't expect such level of highly intensive war. So, with the help of Brigadier General Hill, the British

overpowered the Akas. When they reached Medhi's villages, they found the village empty and deserted. The Akas had already fled to jungle, so, to cause loss, they ravaged their houses, killed their cattle and burnt their corns.⁶⁴ But the present Akas claim that they did not lose the war, actually after exhausting their ammunition they dispersed to different villages to collect tools and ammunition. It was only luck of the British Army that they reached the village and no one was there. So, they just simply declared victory and blindly fired bullets in the forest to declare their victory.

To sum up, it is obvious that Medhi Raja was a far sighted, visionary leader and a warrior who was well aware about the intention of British, so he united the Akas and established a diplomatic relation with the neighbouring tribes, so that in time of need he could get support from them. He was an honest and patriotic leader, who was even ready to sacrifice his yearly pension for the dignity of his people. He was a brave man, who boldly refused to accept those policies which were against his people's interest. For the first time in the region, he faced a fullscale war against the British government. In that war he caused a great damage to the British soldiers without suffering any casualty on his side which brings out the fact that the Aka fighters were highly skilled and trained. Though he lost the war but he could remove the prejudice of British, that the hill tribes are less disciplined and incapable to face the modern and advanced army.

⁶⁰ Statement of Annada Charan De, son of of Munshi Akhiram De of sylbet (Habiganj), Forest Ranger, Assam Secretariat Proceedings, Raid Committed by Akas in the Darrang district, Judicial Department, File No. 116J of 1884, p. 7.

⁶¹ Letter from Captain H. St. P. Maxwell, Political Officer, Aka Field Force to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Shillong, Raid Committed by the Akas, Assam Secretariat, File No. 116J, 20.02.1884, p. 18.

⁶² Letter from Captain H. St. P. Maxwell, Political Officer, Aka Field Force to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Shillong, Raid Committed by the Akas, Assam Secretariat, File No. 116J, 20.02.1884, p. 18.

⁶³ Letter from Captain H. St. P. Maxwell, Political Officer, Aka Field Force to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Shillong, Raid Committed by the Akas, Assam Secretariat, File No. 116J, 20.02.1884, p. 18.

⁶⁴ Letter from Captain H. St. P. Maxwell, Political Officer, Aka Field Force to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Shillong, Raid Committed by the Akas, Assam Secretariat, File No. 116J, 20.02.1884, p. 18.



Image 1 (above): Available sketch of Tagi Raja, in 'A sketch of Assam: With Some Account of the Hill Tribes' by an officer in the Hon. East India Company's Bengal Native Infantry in the civil employ, London, 1846.

We may like to submit that Medhi Raja was an extraordinary person, like his illustrious father Tagi Raja, with a great personality and capability to look after his society and defend his territories. He is an unsung hero in a true sense, as he stood for the welfare of the society and sacrificed his wealth and power to defend his territory from the British aggression.

3. People involved

In the archival documents only the number of people who participated in the raid and subsequent war are mentioned. Also, during the field work the team could not generate any information regarding the individuals who had actively fought along with Medhi Raja. However, the name Chandi is reflected in documents relating to the raid of 1883. The research informants clarified that Sonji has been misspelt as Chandi in British documents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. HEROES

1. TAGI RAJA

Tagi Raja, the son and successor of Aka Chief Pario was one of the most extraordinary tribal leaders in the

history of Arunachal Pradesh. Hailing from the Aka tribe of West Kameng, Tagi's position was recognised by the Ahom rulers. Relations between the Akas and people of the plains worsened after Assam was annexed by the British. Fighting for his customary rights to collect posa from the plains, Tagi conducted many raids into the British territory. The most stunning and daring act was his attack on the outpost of the 1st Assam Light Infantry at Balipara in February 1835. The colonial police outpost was burnt down and around 17 (seventeen) police personnel including their families were killed in the attack. In between 1836-39, Tagi with his fellow warriors made more than 38 (thirty-eight) raids on the plains. Tension between the British and Akas was at its zenith when Tagi Raja again raided in October, 1841 where Tagi with his 18 (eighteen) Aka fellows captured around 10 (ten) workers (ryots) and carried them off to the hills. Tagi breathed his last in 1873.

2. MEDHI RAJA

Medhi Raja, an important figure in the history of Aka community occupying a crucial position in the Anglo- Aka relations and the Aglo-Aka war of 1883-1884, hailed from the Kuwatson group of Akas also referred to as Kapaschor Akas.⁶⁵ The literal meaning of the word 'Raja' is a king in Hindi, but if we see the meaning through the Aka lens, the position and powers of Raja are like that of a chief, so it may be appropriate to consider him as a chief of the Kuwatson Akas. He was from Nyetrida village which is also referred as

Gohain than by the people of the plains or Assam. He was the eldest son of Tagi Raja, after the death of Tagi Raja in 1873, he became the leader of the Akas, he was a wealthy and powerful man, his daring initiatives and gallantry made him an important person among the Akas. The British admired him for his eloquent language, and in some documents, he has been described as a fine looking, formidable and sharp minded person.⁶⁶ He became a prominent leader after 1873.⁶⁷ The present Akas (Hrusso) admire him as a revolutionary leader, who rebelled against the foreign invaders to secure the interest and security of the Akas.

B. MARTYR: NONE

C. FREEDOM FIGHTER

1. CHANDI OR SONJI

Chandi, known to the Akas as Sonji, was the son of Tagi Raja and the younger brother of Medhi Raja. In 1842 and 1848, Tagi Raja arrived at an agreement with the British, which included to provide education to young Akas in Assam apart from other clauses. So, under this provision Medhi sent Sonji in Assam for schooling, where he did his schooling both in vernacular (Assamese) and English medium. However, he left school after some years.

The significance of Sonji in the Anglo-Aka war of 1883-84 is his attack on Balipara. After Medhi's negotiation with

British failed, he felt that he can force the British to negotiate on his terms by kidnapping British officials. Therefore, he sent a group of Aka warriors under the command of Sonji to bring Mr. Campbell and Koylash Babu as captives. Sonji reached Balipara on 10th November 1883, and visited all the important offices but he failed to trace the targeted subjects. Therefore, he might have taken the decision to carry away the subordinates. So, in the evening he entered the residence of Forest Ranger of Charduar post and took him as captive. On the way they carried away a Forest clerk from his residence. From this raid they carried away two British subjects and two rifles.⁶⁸

It appears that although Sonji did not engage with the British forces in any other significant manner, his daring raid and taking two British officials as captives on the order of Medhi Raja, entitles him to a glorious position of that of a freedom fighter. Accordingly, Sonji may be considered/declared as a freedom fighter from the Aka community.

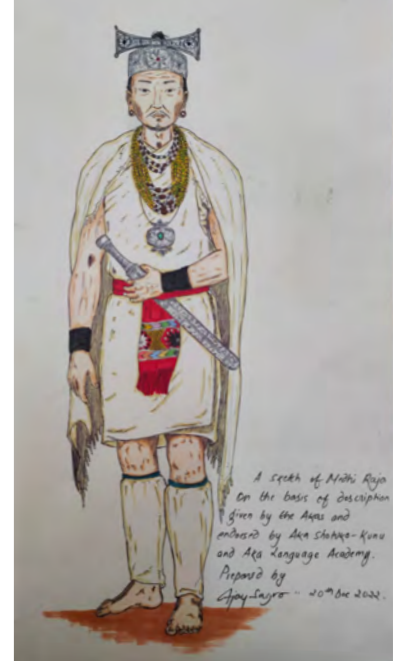


Image 2 (above): A sketch of Medhi on the basis of description given by the Akas and endorsed by Aka Shotuko-Kunu and Aka Language Academy.

⁶⁵ British used the sobriquet Kapaschor in order to denote a group of Akas which hid itself behind the plants of Kapas before launching their guerrilla attacks over the British. It's worth noting here that this group of Akas had nothing to do with theft of Kapas etc.

⁶⁶ Letter from B.G Geidt, Esq., c.s., Personal Assistant to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Secretary to the government of India, Foreign Department, Raid committed by the Aka in the Darrang District, Assam Secretariat Proceeding, File No. 154J of 1883, 26.11.1883, p.11.

⁶⁷ Dama Miji Zongluju, Arunachal Times, Itanagar, 04.04.2021, p. 6.

⁶⁸ Statement of Kedarnath Chakrabatti, son of Thakur Das Chakrabatti, Harinabi district Forest Clerk 24-Parganas, Raid Committed by the Akas in the Darrang district, Assam Secretariat, File No. 116J of 1884, 29.01.1884, p. 8.

Resistance Movement II

The Nyishi

Chapter

02

REPORT OF THE RESEARCH SUB-COMMITTEE-B

Prof. Tana Showren, Coordinator • Prof. Nabam Nakha Hina, Member • Dr. Tade Sangdo, Member
• Ms. Teli Umra, Research Assistant • Mr. Tana Rangbia, Research Assistant • Mr. Dodum Natung, Research Assistant

Introduction

Since the early days, North East India witnessed a chequered political and historical trajectory under different rulers who came from outside the region. From a historical perspective, the Brahmaputra Valley was virtually a colony shed by different rulers starting from the Pala Dynasty. They were believed to have come from the Nalanda region of modern-day Odisha. Most of the classical Brahminical literature mentioned the region as Pragjyotisa and later Kamarupa, attached with the various sobriquet of flowery explanations indicating the different rulers and dynasties who ruled the region. It was probably the natural decadence of the last weak Pala king Sumudrapala who faced the brunt of repeated invasions of the Muslims paved the way for the establishment of the new dynasty of Kamata as early as the thirteen to fourteenth century A.D. Establishment of a new ruler did not remain without the assertion of various local chieftains who were longing for suitable opportunities to break away from the centrally controlled authority. As such, we could see the establishment of a number of small principalities under several local chieftains who often competed with stiff rivalries had facilitated the way for the Ahom to colonise the Upper Assam in the early thirteen century. Now the classical name of the region; Pragjyotisa was gradually relegated to a new name like the Brahmaputra Valley in the medieval period and later under British Raj as the Eastern Frontier of Bengal while dealing with the history and culture of the people of North East India. These several waves of rulers encountered various indigenous tribes

of the region and recorded their names and history in the official chronicles either in inaccurate or distorted history and culture which is now haunting as a derogatory vestigial epithet in the recorded documents on these tribes. Exceptional to these writings, the Nyishi¹ name was recorded with misnomer nomenclature and for which tribe has struggled to bring a Constitutional amendment to substitute the derogatory word in the Indian Parliament to get the rightful and correct name.

The present areas of research cover predominate tribes like the Apatani, the Nyishi and other migrated populations of various tribes of the State. The research areas cover right from East Kameng, Pakke Kessang, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Kurung Kumey, Kra Daa-di, Kamle and Upper Subansiri Districts. They belong to Paleo-Mongoloid stock and speak the Tibeto-Burman group of language. They are the descendant of the Aabu Thanyi (Legendary Forefather). Undoubtedly, a few tribes including the Nyishi played a significant role by way of contributing to the history and culture of North East India in particular and the country as a whole, for a long period thereby earning themselves a noteworthy place in the annals of tribes of India. It is said that the from beginning of the colonial occupation of the Brahmaputra Valley, the Nyishi gave much trouble to the British and many fruitless efforts were made to induce the tribe² in a progressive manner. The present research work is to study the tribes who directly or indirectly fought or resisted with the British during India's

¹ The earlier official documents and records mentioned the 'Nyishi' as 'Dafla' which was inserted in the Scheduled to the Constitution of India (Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950, in Part XVIII relating to the Tribe. The Tribe struggled to get rid of this derogatory nomenclature for several decades and in 2008, amendment was enacted by the Parliament of India to amend the Part XVIII of the Constitution of India (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 by substituting 'Nyishi' word in place of 'Dafla' in the Scheduled Tribe List of Arunachal Pradesh. Hereinafter, the Tribe will refer to as 'Nyishi' in place of erstwhile term 'Dafla' except direct quotation sentences.

struggle for Independence. In the course of fighting against the British Raj there could several unknown and unsung heroes who bravely fought against the British and their sacrifices are still remain under-recorded or under documented are to be researched to establish as unsung heroes.

On the basis of hard-core facts and documentary evidence collected through field study and archival record who fought or attached the British during the imperial power are discussed under different rubric of the following headings:

EVENT NO.1: AMTOLAH CONFLICT OF 1873 WITH THE BRITISH

1. Causes

It was during the winter months of 1871-72 under the British controlled territory in Gohpur and Kullungpore Mouzas of present-day Assam an epidemic related diseases like whooping, coughing and cholera spread over in the foothills of duars. These epidemics spread further and finally engulfed some of the Nyishi Villages beyond the British controlled territory infected particularly Jote and Nimte Villages which are located in the

modern day under Sagalee Administrative Centre and taken the toll of several lives of the villagers. The outbreak of this epidemic and bringing to interior hills villages were assigned to several compounded factors and this was the last of such cause in which the hill Nyishi blamed Nyishi of Narayanpur Mouzah for bringing epidemic and spread to their village. Accordingly, the several villagers of the hills proposed to convene the Nyelv (Traditional Council) and settle the matter under customary laws. In a way, the hill people also demanded an appropriate compensation for the loss of lives and properties from the plain Nyishis³ who originated the disease. Hence, one influential man named Tana Nanna from Jote Village and Techu Gubin sent a messenger to Assam to convey the message to the people of Amtolah, Gomiri, Gohpur and Kolabari for conducting a Nyelv (Traditional Council) at Dubia Village to settle the matter but plain Nyishi denied to hold a Nyelv and refused to take responsibility of disease. In an effort to settle the matter amicably on February 7, 1873, Tana Nanna again sent a messenger to the headmen of Amtollah and nearby villages. In response, Amtollah, Gomiri and Kalahari Villages sent their representatives in the traditional meeting Nyelv but the matter could not be resolved due to the disaffection positions of the accused villagers. Even after lots of discussion the people of plain villagers were not ready to compensate and the matter went out of hand which was the ultimate caused of the Amtolah Conflict of 1873 with British subjects.

Due to subsequent failure to settle the matter Tana Nanna and Techu Gubin organised to attack and take revenge of all the lost lives of their areas. So, ultimately on February 12, 1873 a

large number of Nyishi from hill people under the leadership of Tana Nanna and Techu Gubin attacked the villagers of Amtolah, Gomiri and Kalahari under the Narayanpur Mouzah. During this attack, it was recorded by the colonial official that two persons were killed, wounded three and captured 44 persons as captives into the hills. Out of these 44 persons captured during the attack 12 person were kept by Tana Nanna, 4 persons by Techu Gubin, 7 people by Pakfi, 4 persons by Tajen and all remaining 17 persons were kept by different villagers who participated in the attack.

2. Expedition Ensued Aftermath Attack of February 12, 1873

The British India Government was informed about the attacked into the British territory and massacred the British subjects. Instantly, the police force was ordered to chase and intercept the attackers. However, the force could successfully intercept one member named Soh who was the team of attackers and the old woman who was under his captive was rescued. Soh was imprisoned in North Lakhimpur jail. But most of raiders had already made their way into dense forest hills with their captives. The British realized that display of coercive measure would be counterproductive and hence decided to open negotiation with attackers by deputing Kotokis (Public Interpreter) as messengers from the British India Government to contact the leader to settle the matter with the help of local resident of Lokra and Amtolah. In this way, the British could identify the leader of attackers including Tana

Nanna, Techu Gubin and Taloom, and demanded them to surrender all captives before the British authority and stop the hostile posture. But Tana Nanna and allies were adamant of their points of the first payment of compensation against the loss of lives and then they would release the captured British subjects. Demands of compensation included four numbers heads of *svbv* (*bos frontalis*), bracelets, beads and brass bells and a lump sum of Rs. 120/- were to be paid them first as a stiff condition to engage in negotiation and subsequent release of captives.

When the overture efforts made by the British with the attackers did not succeed and then resorted to economic blockade in all *Duars* (Passes) of the foothills as a measure to force the hill people to surrender. After procrastinating official correspondences and exhausting all punitive measures, the Viceroy and Governor General-in-Council's request for a military expedition against Tana Nanna and Allies was approved from the British Government and authorised the Commissioner of Assam to issue the troops for the purpose. The expedition was commanded by Brigadier-General W. J. F. Stafford and his team consisted of 30 British Officers and many other fields Force. The British Forces around 100 men of the 43rd Regiment with a small party of police were sent in advance to blockade the passes. Another party of British force around 40 men of the 42ND regiment was dispatched to close the eastern passes

² Alexandar Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India* (originally published under the title: *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal* in 1884), reprinted in 1979, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, p. 27.

³ Political Proceedings (Bengal), January, 1873, Nos. 17-19.

where the Nyishi obtained supplies from Assam. The Police guards were deployed in the Nyishi villages in Assam for defence of the Nyishi villages. This military mobilisation was to signal coercive military posture towards the Nyishi and compelled them to surrender before the British⁴ by the leaders of the attackers and allies without any further resistant.

After meticulous military intelligent reports and assessment about the exact village of Tana Nanna and Techu Gubin, the full military expedition was ordered under the command of Brigadier General W.J.F. Stafford to proceed towards the Nyishi Hills. Accordingly, in the month of November 1874, this military expedition started from Narayanpur of the present day, Assam and same day they reached at Hurmuty and made Hurmuty as the expedition-based camp. From Harmuty they moved towards hills through Pare River and made further camp at Sibv stream, the present-day Tigdo Village under Doimukh Administrative Circle, District Papum Pare. The expedition column moved upwards Sibv stream and camped at Horro Yarnv (Mountain) and finally reached to the Kheel Camp. From Kheel they moved towards south bank of the Pare River and reached Nimte Village and later stayed at Korra Happa. From this camp Brigadier General Stafford sent an official letter to Tana Nanna and Techu Gubin and their allies to come to the camp and present their view points

about the Amtolah attack. This expedition involves a huge military force as well as cost of materials. After long haggled mediations and negotiations between Tana Nanna and Brigadier General W. J. F. Stafford, Nanna accepted to come to the camp at Korro Hapa to present his long list of grievances as why he attacked the British subjects. Finally, on January 19, 1875, the 44TH Regiment of British expedition team occupied Tana Nanna's new village and got released of all captives and on the 29 January, Tagen Gam surrendered before the British.⁵ He was sent to recover the remaining captives, whom he had sold to Booya Gam of present day Ompuli Village. In order to release the remaining captives Booya Gam and his son was kept under the custody of British.

Meantime, Captain Palmer and Lieutenant R. E. Hume were sent to occupy the Village of Tagen Gam and retrieved the looted properties and captives. Therefore, they arrested the three headmen of the village and three svbv (bos frontalis) and also destroyed the village defence system which was made of barricade against the roads with make ship. Finally, with the active interpreter role of the Kotokis Tana Nanna, Techu Gubin, Techu Eka, Tana Hacheng and Tagen were to submit before the Brigadier General W. J. F. Stafford, the commanding charge of the Military Expedition with standard terms of compensation accepted to pay and reached an agreement on February 10, 1875.

3. People Involved in the fighting with the British

The attack on the British territory at Amtolah on February 12, 1973 by dua Tana Nanna and Techu Gubin was the ultimate display of strong resistance against the colonial power in the foothills of the Brahmaputra Valley. The native hill people who never lived under any political master had already felt disgruntled with the colonial administration who often used their coercive brutality towards the tribesmen. It is said that Tana Nanna had acquired a plot of land and constructed a house to settle gradually was destroyed and snatched by the British subject who settled in the foothills. As Tana Nanna did nothing any harm to the British but his temporary camp house was destroyed and humiliated. Secondly, due to the British subject unwanted interference with his dominated territory led to bring of a deadly dysentery epidemic. On breaking out of this disease four people died in the Tana Nanna areas, and he felt due to expansion of colonial rule caused the death of his people. So, in order to show his strong resistance against the free mobility in the plain and death his people he decided to attack the British territory to avenge the loss of lives and to teach a lesson not to interfere in the foothills where he used to collect annual posa. An attack on the British territory was organised and led by Tana Nanna and Techu Gubin, along with all the neighbouring relatives and clan members. The following table shows the list of fines imposed on each leading members of attack:⁶

| Name of Nyishi imposed fines | Bisons (svbv) | Bells | Gongs | Swords |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Tana Nanna | 14 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Doripo | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Techu Eka | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Tana Hachang | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Tagen | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 |

The next table shows the conversion rate of value of the traditional items with Indian currency value of fine imposed on the leaders of the Amtolah attack:

| Item | One svbv (bos frontalis) @ Rate ₹ 40 ⁷ | Total Amount. |
|------------------------------|---|---------------|
| 21 Bison | ₹ 40 each | ₹ 841 |
| 11 Bell | ₹ 17 each | ₹ 187 |
| 2 Gong | ₹ 08 each | ₹ 16 |
| 2 Swords | ₹ 10 each | ₹ 20 |
| Total values of fine imposed | | ₹ 1,064.00 |

⁴ Political Proceeding-A, July, 1874, Nos. 11-26.

⁵ Political Proceedings-A, September, 1875, Nos. 79.

⁶ Assam Secretariate Proceedings, Judicial Department, File No.82J of 1875, p. 15.

⁷ Assam Secretariate Proceedings, Judicial Department, File No.82J of 1875, p. 15

The Amtolah Conflict of 1873 with the British Raj was a landmark event which was firmly asserted by the Nyishi with strong resistance against the British rule and their interference in the natural resources. The attack was undoubtedly led by Tana Nana and Techu Gubin of Nujuk Happa of present-day Jote Village situated under modern-day Sagalee Administrative Circle, District Papum Pare, Arunachal Pradesh and died at present-day Deb Village of the same Administrative Circle of the State.

Recommendations

A. HEROES

1. TANA NANNA

Tana Nanna showed an act of outstanding exemplary courage and bravely fought against the British Raj with simple traditional weapons to defend their territory and compelled the British to come to the term, and succeeded in stopping further interference in their dominated territory in the foothills. They bravely fought against the British and successfully defended the territory; therefore, Tana Nanna irrefutably deserves to be recognised as the HERO. So, recommended the construction of the WAR MEMORIAL in the name of TANA NANNA at Dev Village, under Sagalee Administrative Centre.

Brief Ethnographical Information of TANA NANNA

TANA NANNA was the son of Tana Tem of erstwhile Nujuk Village (now named as Jote Village) under Sagalee Administrative Centre and was one of the leading oratory and expert persons in traditional jurisprudence and powerful nyub (supernaturally ordained priest). He was also one of the richest men in the area with thousand heads of svbv (boss frontalis), and had of the garden of the tongueless valuable bell was treasured by him. Tana Nanna later migrated to present-day Dev Village, which is also under the Sagalee Administrative Centre. He lived here for more than one and half decades and breathed his last at Dev Village, and was buried here. The graveyard of Tana Nanna is still identical at Dev Village, and people still fondly remember the event. His great-grandchildren and legal heir are Mr. Tana Jerjo, son of late Tana Sajj is settled in Kokila Village under Balijan Administrative Centre, Papum Pare District of Arunachal Pradesh and serving as the Gaonburah of the said village.

B. MARTYRS: NONE

C. FREEDOM FIGHTERS: NONE

EVENT NO.2: *MIRI MISSION, 1911-12*

1. Causes

The British administration, along with the platoon of 5th Gurkhas Rifles launched an exploratory expedition into the Nyishi territory to survey the feasibility of establishing the British Administrative outpost at Tali Lopo (present Tali Administration Headquarters). The native population were suspicious of the intentions of the British and decided to fight with proper planning with simple weapons under the leadership of Sorang Dangpo of the present Pipsorang circle and Langha Poja (Gungli).

2. Expedition

This famous Miri Mission 1911-12 was commenced under the Political Officer-In-Charge, Mr. Kerwood, I.C.S., Officer Commanding Escort Captain A.M. Graham, 5th Gurkhas Rifles of the Lushai Hills Military Police. The Political Officer decided to move from Lakhimpur to the entire Kurung & Kume Valley. On March 1, 1911, the British moved from Lakhimpur, and on February 9, 1912, they reached and instantly camped at Tali Lopo. When the British expedition team headed by Capt. A. M. Graham along with his soldiers reached Tali Lopo, many villagers informed to Sorang Dangpo (Tapo), who was the influential headman of the Village that the British army reached

here to capture their land and also to kill them. On confirming of this threat Sorang Dangpo mobilised all the neighbour village headmen and organised a secret meeting to chasing away the intruding British army and sent out messengers to all the relatives of neighbouring villages to fight against the British army at Tali before they reached to Pipsorang territory. Accordingly, Sorang Dangpo succeeded in mobilising the people and selected the finest warriors available in different clans gathered from the present-day Giba Administrative Circle of Upper Subansiri District and from in and around the Tali Administrative Centre. After conducting several reconnaissance to know the exact sleeping tent of Mr. Kerwood, ICS Political Officer and Captain Graham, Officer Commanding Escort, attacked the British camp in the wee hours of February 14, 1912, at Village with spears and arrows and killed Captain A.M. Graham and Mr. Kerwood escaped under the garb of invisibility and inflicted huge casualties to the British. In this rare display of bravery, the British army shot him at closed range and killed him on the spot. During that encounter, the British army fired and killed 6 Nyishi fighters and 15-20 warriors were injured who tried to retaliate against the British army. As the Nyishi had only traditional simple weapons of spears, swords, bows and arrows to fight against the modern weapons of rifles. In the course of a fierce battle to defend their own territory from the British incursion, the Nyishi had sacrificed their finest warriors at the hands of British soldiers but succeeded in

safeguarding their own territory from the clutch of the British Raj. The following were the names of warriors who were martyred during the action to defend their own motherland.

3. People Involved in the Fighting

The following persons were martyred during the fighting between the Nyishi and the British:

1. Warrior Langha Poja, S/o late Langha Tapo from Langha Village under Tali Circle, Kra-Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh.
2. Warrior Rigio Saki, S/o late Rigio Tasa from Gyapin Village under Pipsorang Circle, Kra Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh.
3. Warrior Yarda Dangpo, S/o late Yarda Tadang from Yarda Village under Tali Circle, Kra-Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh.
4. Warrior Yora Nakio, S/o late Yora Tana from Lodekore Village under Tali Circle, Kra-Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh.
5. Warrior Rangpu Kiado (Marok), S/o late Rangpu Takia from Bate Village under Giba Circle, Upper Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh.

6. Warrior Tate (Markio) Niangsa, S/o late Tate Tariang from Ruhi Village under Tali Circle, Kra Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh. 18

7. Late Sorang Dangpo, S/o late Sorang Tadang, Tedang Village, Pipsorang Circle, Kra Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh.

This attack was a clear assertion of the Nyishi against the British interference in their territory, and they fought valiantly against the well-armed British soldiers with traditional made javelins, swords, bows and arrows. After this attack, the British called off the Miri Mission and withdrew from the territory of Tali.

Recommendations

A. HERO

I. LANGHA POJA (GUNGLI)

Langha Poja had shown extremely brave and fought with the British army and killed the Commanding Escort, Captain A.M. Graham, on the spot and successfully defended territory, and hence recommended to recognise him as the HERO. So, recommended the construction of the WAR MEMORIAL in the name of LANGHA POJA (GUNGLI) at Langha Village under Tali Administrative Circle. The legal heir of a warrior of Langha Poja (Gungli) is Mr. Langha Sanjay(Gungli), son of late Langha Taniya of Langha Village, PO/PS Tali, Kra Daadi

District, Arunachal Pradesh.

B. MARTYRS:

The following warriors are recommended as the MARTYR and the construction of the WAR MEMORIAL in the names of these MARTYRS:

1. Warrior Rigio Saki, S/o late Rigio Tasa from Gyapin Village under Pipsorang Circle, Kra-Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh. Rigio Tagang Bagjam is the legal heir of Gyapin Village, Pipsorang Circle, Kra Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh.
2. Warrior Yarda Dangpo, S/o late Yarda Tadang from Yarda Village under Tali Circle, Kra-Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh. His legal heir is Giah Makey (Dangpo) of Yarda Village, under Tali Administrative Circle, Kra Daadi Yarda District, Arunachal Pradesh.
3. Warrior Yora Nakio, S/o late Yora Tana from Lodekore Village under Tali Circle, Kra-Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh. His legal heir is the Giah Rokey (Dangpo) of Village Lodekore, Kra Daadi District, Tali Administrative Circle, Arunachal Pradesh.
4. Warrior Rangpu Kiado (Marok), S/o late Rangpu Takia from Bate Village under Giba Circle, Upper Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh. Dungman Ringpu Rago (Marok) is the legal heir of Bate Village, Giba Circle, Upper Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh.

5. Warrior Tate (Markio) Niangsa, S/o late Tate Tariang from Ruhi Village under Tali Circle, Kra-Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh. 18 Legal heir is Mr. Tate Markio Danu of Ruhi Village, Tali Circle, Kra Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh.

C. FREEDOM FIGHTERS:

I. SORANG DANGPO

Sorang Dapppo, son of late Sorang Tadang of Tadung Village, under Pipsorang Administrative Circle, Arunachal Pradesh, is recommended to recognise as the FREEDOM FIGHTER for his courageous mobilization of the people to fight against the British. A legal heir is Mr. Sorang Taha (Marha), son of Mr. Sorang Taram of Tadung Village, under Pipsorang Administrative Circle, Kra Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh. Further recommended for the construction of the WAR MEMORIAL in the name of SORANG DANGPO at Tadung Village under Pipsorang Administrative Circle.

Conclusion

On the conclusion note, it is pertinent to mention here that the aforesaid conflicts, incidents and attacks were planned and launched by the Nyishi of the hills region, who were not part of the bonafide subject of the British. Their territories and homestead were beyond the Inner Line of the colonial administrative establishment and control. As mainstream researchers are often suspicious of the role played by the hill tribes of the Brahmaputra Valley and justify their argument on the objectivity and subjectivity of the nation-state concept to develop the idea of freedom and independence against the British Raj. It is important to note here that the Research Committee of Group B could not find any plausible archival records, proceedings and reports to show the role of the Apatani and other tribes which come under the study areas. So, we could not present or describe in our report and recommend to recognise. We must objectively focus on the subject matter that all the British subject Nyishi of erstwhile may now be the citizens of free India to share and live at the same homesteads or territory, which must not impede the construction of the past history of the British Raj who successfully manoeuvred the policy of dived and rule.

Notes and Reference

1. Primary sources

- (a) Details of Tour Dairy Reports
- (b) List of informants of Tali tour.

1. Langha Tapak, aged about 80 years, is a GB of Langha Village under Tali Administration Circle, District Kra Daadi, held a scheduled interview on December 15, 2022.
2. Sorang Takuk, aged about 70 years, is a GB of Tedung Village under Pipsorang Administration Circle, District Kra Daadi, held a scheduled interview on December 15, 2022.
3. Langha Tadu, aged about 73 years, is a Public of Langha Village, Tali Administration Circle, District Kra Daadi, held a scheduled interview on December 15, 2022.
4. Dai Kiochik, aged about 35 years, is a ZPM of Loa village, Tali Administration Circle, District Kra Daadi held a scheduled interview on December 15, 2022.
5. Langha Sanjay, aged about 48 years, is an EX- ASM of Langha village, Tali Administration Circle, District Kra Daadi, held a scheduled interview on December 15, 2022.
6. Sorang Tania aged about 41 years, is a ZPM of Zara village, Pipsorang Administration Circle, District Kra Daadi, held a scheduled interview on December 15, 2022.

List of Informants of Sagalee Field Study

1. Tana Jerjo, of aged about 65 years, is a GB Kokila village of Baliyan Administration Circle, District
2. Papum Pare held a scheduled interview on December 19, 2022. He is also the descendant of Tana Nanna.

3. Kara Kakap, of aged about 62 years is an Ex- ASM of Dev village, Sagalee Administration circle, District Papum Pare, held a scheduled interview on December 19, 2022. He is the present landowner of Tana Nanna Burial.
4. Tana Kapa aged about 76 years, is a GB of upper gram village, Toru Administration circle, District Papum Pare held a scheduled interview on December 19, 2022.
5. Tana Sania aged about 46 years, is an Ex- ASM of Balapu Village, Sagalee Administration Circle, District Papum Pare held a scheduled interview on December 18, 2022. He is the descendant of Tana Nanna.
6. Techu Lug, age about 65 years, is a public Rigo Village of Sagalee Administration, District Papum Pare, held a scheduled interview on December 19, 2022.
7. Tana Senda of aged about 45 years, is a GB of Laptap Village, Toru Administration circle, District Papum Pare, held a scheduled interview on December 19, 2022.
8. Taniam Techu of aged about 51 years, is a Public of Pakro Village, Pijeriang Administration circle, District Pakke Kessang, held a scheduled interview on December 21, 2022. He is the descendant of Techu Gobin.
9. Talam Techu of aged about 40 years is a farmer of Pakro Village, Pijeriang Administration Circle, District Pakke Kessang, held a scheduled interview on December 21, 2022.
10. Rasu Techu of aged about 32 years is a public of Pakro Village, Pijeriang Administration Circle, District Pakke Kessang, held a scheduled interview on December 21, 2022.

2. Secondary sources

1. The earlier official documents and records mentioned the 'Nyishi' as 'Dafla', which was inserted in the Scheduled to the Constitution of India (Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950, in Part XVIII relating to the Tribe. The Tribe struggled to get rid of this derogatory nomenclature for several decades and in 2008, the amendment was enacted by the Parliament of India to amend the Part XVIII of the Constitution of India (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 by substituting the 'Nyishi' word in place of 'Dafla' in the Scheduled Tribe List of Arunachal Pradesh. Hereinafter, the Tribe will refer to as 'Nyishi' in place of the erstwhile term 'Dafla' except in direct quotation sentences.
2. Alexander Mackenzie, History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal & reprinted in 1989 titled; The North-East Frontier of India, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1989, p.27.
3. Political Proceedings (Bengal), January 1873, Nos.17-19.
4. Political Proceeding-A, July 1874, Nos.11-26.
5. Political Proceedings-A, September 1875, Nos. 79.
6. Assam Secretariate Proceedings, Judicial Department, File No.82J of 1875, p.15.
7. Assam Secretariate Proceedings, Judicial Department, File No.82J of 1875, p.15.
8. Secretariat Administration Report the Operations of the Miri Mission, 1911-12, Printed at the Government Monotype Press, 1912.



Image 2 (right): The picture is the Langha Village under Tali Administrative circle where the British stayed by makeshift camp during the Miri Mission 1911-12. The circle marked local house is the burial spot of Langha Poja Gungli and Captain A.M. Graham 5th Gorkha Rifle on February, 14, 1912.



Image 3 (right): The picture is the Rigam Village under Tali Administrative circle where the British Army open fire here from their camp at Langha Village to intimidate the villagers during the Miri Mission 1911-12.



Image 4 (left): The picture is the present-day Tali ADC HQ which was the British tried to establish outpost under the colonial government. This ambitious objection was led to Miri Mission 1911-12 toward the Tali Lopo which was fiercely resisted by the People and repelled the British.



Image 5 (left): The Research Team Group B had a photo session with the villagers after listening from their oral version of information on the Miri Mission 1911-12 at Tali.



Image 6 (right): The Research Team Group B had a meeting with public of Balapu village regarding unsung heroes-Tana Nana and Techu Gubin during Amtolah Conflict 1873.



Image 7 (right): The picture with red marked area is the first base camp established by the British troops before they reaching Nimte Village during the Amtolah Conflict 1873.



Image 8 (above): The picture with red marked area is the resident place of Tana Nana before his martyred during Amtolah Conflict 1873 at Nujuk village present day Jote.



Image 9 (above): Tana Nana's Burial Place at Dev Village under Sagalee Administrative

Resistance Movement III

The Galo and Adi

Chapter

03

REPORT OF THE RESEARCH SUB-COMMITTEE-C

Prof. Ashan Riddi, Coordinator • Dr. Tajen Dabi, Member • Dr. David Gao, Member • Ms. Ringam Rebecca Bam, Research Assistant • Mr. Ngamtong Naam, Research Assistant • Mr. Nepha Wangsa, Research Assistant

LEPA RADA, WEST SIANG, SIANG, UPPER SIANG, LOWER SIANG, EAST SIANG, DAMBUK SUB-DIVISION OF LOWER DIBANG VALLEY (LDV) AND NAMSAI DISTRICTS

Galo

A SHORT INTRODUCTION

The Galo is a tribe residing in central Arunachal Pradesh. The term ‘Galo’ is an exonym given probably first by their eastern neighbour, the Adis. The term gained currency in the late nineteenth and twentieth-century colonial official correspondences to generically refer to people living between Siang and Subansiri rivers. Names like ‘Doba Abor’, etc. were used to indicate the names of clans or sub-groups living near the foothills of the two rivers whom the colonial explorers and officials came into contact with.

The clan and extended household is the primary unit of Galo society. Till the second decade of the twentieth century, the Galos remained in a state of freedom from interference by state systems. Establishing *nyida* (matrimonial ties), *nyin* (relatives) and *ajen-arum* (friendships) were the usual practices of Galo social life.

Life in the mountains was difficult. The number of people in deprivation and difficult circumstances appears to have been more than those in prosperity. Epidemics and crop failure were the major causes of this. More stable and larger colonies/settlements were flourishing in valleys like that of Siyom (Yomgo).

Around the time the colonial officials began to explore the Galo areas (after the Abor Expedition, 1911-12) *yarii* (hunger); *sichin-doma* (diseases and epidemics); and *yalu-yachu*

(conflicts) resulting from control of trade routes and *nyimak* (raids) on rival clans against pending grudges; the dominance of the *nyite* (rich) and *nyigam-nyiga* (the mighty and powerful) over *open* (weak and poor), etc are reported. Emphasis on such reports can reflect colonial bias to indigenous lack of order and discipline. However, since the Galo society was clan-based, there did not exist authority above a household or clan. And that way, especially contrasted to the *Kebang* of the neighbouring Adis, where village solidarity existed, it makes some sense to follow this line of thinking. This can give one explanation as to why the colonial authorities or their representatives, who presented themselves as one capable of maintaining order, gained entry into the Galo area without any active resistance (except for the 1848 incident). Understandably, the *nyite* and *nyigam-nyigas* (traditional elites) were recruited by the frontier officials to do their bidding.

The Galo shaman, called *nyibo*, have been reported to have possessed much occult power. They attended to various rituals (usually sponsored by a family or household) directed at specific gods and deities for meeting various needs ranging from good harvest to defeating an enemy.

Notable ethnography on Galo includes Dunbar’s ‘Abors and the Gallongs’ (1915), Srivastav’s *The Gallongs* (1962) and Nyori’s *History and Culture of the Adis* (1993).

EVENT NO.1: AMBUSH ON CAPTAIN VETCH'S EXPEDITION, 1848

Causes

The first recorded collision between the British colonial troops and tribes of the Siang area occurred in 1848.¹ Before Assam fell to the East India Company (EICO), a section of people, most probably the Doye and Riba clans living in the Igo valley, enjoyed some amount of suzerainty in the neighbouring plains, an arrangement the Ahom rulers were compelled to accede to in order to keep peace in its borderland.² Igo Valley, located between present Basar and Likabali, was an important crossroad for hills-plain barter trade around the time. After the annexation of upper Assam in 1838 by the EICO, the Beheas (gold washers and fishermen), etc. and others began to refuse to pay their annual conciliatory offerings to the Igo people.³

The expedition and its result

Enraged Igo resorted to the usual tactic prevalent in the hills. A group marched down to the plains and

brought back ten Beheas, including their head 'Rungman' Mauzadar, who were kept hostage for a bargain.⁴ The locals remember the apprehended leader as 'RomenSaikia', who was obviously a government functionary at the local level. The place where the hostages were kept has been named and known thereafter as *Rongman Paata*.⁵ The participating villages in the capture and the planned attack (that did not eventually happen) were Taaku-Liba, Rilul, Tapo and Dari.

In 1848, the Bengal government dispatched a punitive expedition led by Captain Hamilton Vetch, the political agent at Sadiya and commanded by Captain Babbage. The team was able to get the captives released without facing any resistance. But that was during the daytime; things changed during the night.

The camp of the colonial force was attacked at night forcing the team to retreat early the next morning.⁶ There was one casualty and some injury. Alarmed, the colonial forces went back releasing precautionary blank fires. In between, two stray bullets hit an unrelated person's leg and an aluminium plate respectively at different villages. The hasty retreat is corroborated by the absence of any attempt on the part of Captain Vetch to punish the locals, say, for instance, burning the village.⁷ People we talked to do not recollect a house or village being burnt. The act of burning down of even a house, forgetting about a village, by an enemy will never be forgotten. A local historian argues that the Igo people were later compensated and given permission to dwell in the foothills of Simen Valley.⁸ In colonial narratives, this collision is viewed to have greatly disturbed the "generally harmonious relations hitherto

harmonious relations hitherto subsisting between the Assam officials and the mild tribes in this quarter"⁹

Local narratives unanimously recollect that the attack was a premature 'misadventure' by Bachi Doye who was sent, along with a companion, on a recce to mark the colonial forces who were camped at the confluence of Hida and Igo River (the place is known as Tirbi Rijo). The actual plan would have been a wholesome massacre: men of ability summoned, omens checked for a successful attack and customary ritual feast



Image 11 (above): At Igo valley, Dari, Leaparada. It is the place where Cap. Hamilton Vetch was attacked. Date 7 April 2022

partaken.¹⁰ The adventurous Bachi quickly exhausted his patience and launched a one-man attack on the tired drowsy sepoy guarding the camp.

Family, as well as local narratives, recollect Bachi as a fearless, one-man person. Had a person of a different character been sent on the recce, Captain Vetch might well have become one of the first colonial military officers to have been massacred in the NEFT.



Image 12 (above): With Smti. Jiyo Riba Jini (daughter of Moji Riba) at her residence, Naharlagun. Date 23 April 2022

¹ Mackenzie, *The North East Frontier of India*, p. 36.

² Tai Nyori, 'Early Influences' in *One tale two stories, a memoir on Tomo Riba*, Centre for Cultural Research and Documentation (CCRD), Naharlagun, 2015, p. 10.

³ Mackenzie, *The North East Frontier of India*, p. 36.

⁴ N. N. Osik, *British Relations with the Adis (1825-1947)*, Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p. 39.

⁵ Rongman after the principal detainee and 'Paata' is a swamp in local language.

⁶ Nyori, 'Early Influences', p. 11.

⁷ Mackenzie, *The North East Frontier of India*, p.36 talks about the burning down of a village as a punishment.

⁸ Nyori, 'Early Influences', p. 11.

⁹ Mackenzie, *The North East Frontier of India*, p. 36.

¹⁰ The oral narrative on Bachi is well known in the area. The research team spoke to people from diverse background and contesting opinions. There is unquestionable similarity in their description of the event as well as Bachi's role. Interview with Tomo Doye, Marpak Chiram, Gokar Riba, Dari village, 7 April 2022. A brief bio on Bachi was compiled for us by Marpak Chiram.



Image 13 (above): With Tojen Lombi, Grandson of Kangu Lombi at Tirbin, 5 December 2022



Image 15 (above): Interviewed Tabin Karlo, Likabali, 24 May 2022



Image 14 (above): With the family members of Kargo Basar at Basar, 8 April 2022



Image 16 (above): During the field visit at Kombo Village, 9 April 2022

People involved

1. BACHI DOYE

BachiDoye was born in circa 1815 to Daba Doye at Reri Pajo (now in Basar, Leparada District). He was the youngest of four brothers. He spent his childhood at Reri Pajo before his parents migrated to Togo Yago (now at Pagi village in Leparada district). He spent his youthful days at Togo Yago where he married and had four sons: Chire, Chira, Chie and Chimar. Thereafter, his parents again migrated to Taku Liba (in the present Dari Circle of Leparada district) where he spent the rest of his life. The attack on Captain Vetch's team happened after he settled at Taku Liba. Bachi passed away in the 1880s at Pujo where the mortal remains of the impatient brave soul lay buried.¹¹

EVENT NO.2: ABOR EXPEDITION, 1911-12

Two Galo persons fell to the bullets of the Ledum Column of the Abor Expeditionary Force of 1911-12: Nyidak Kakki and Kombu Bagra. According to the narrative of the Sido people collected during our field study, Nyidak Kakki was shot dead when he had come to Sido (from his village Kakki) to get his goat. Nyidak apparently thought that he would not be harmed since he did not belong to the belligerent party. Kom-

bu Bagra was a Sido resident. We were told by the family of Pakling Siram that Kombu, Pakling and Pakling's elder sibling were sent to check the Sido stockade. The colonial forces, who had unexpectedly made an early arrival and was waiting for the enemy, shot at Kombu when the latter tried to have a look at any probable enemy movement below. Kombu lay instantly dead. Alarmed, Pakling was able to cut one pre-tensioned rope and released a bunch of stones before being injured by another shot from the forces. Pakling ran into the nearby jungle; his corpse was recovered by the villagers after about a month. Left alone, Pakling's elder sibling also cut one pre-tensioned rope before leaving for the village to break the news of the enemy's arrival. Official records generally support the above description.¹² What could not be cross-verified with archival records (as none we have in our possession explicitly suggests so) is presented below.

During the course of fieldwork, the elders of the Dabi clan¹³ claimed that two of their ancestors, Nyajum Dabi and Yoyi Dabi, while defending the incoming colonial force shot down at least two sepoyats a place called KOPIR LEBA located between Sido and Dordi. Dordi was their joint village with Kakki at that time. They used the 'kanji' gun of Lupir Saroh¹⁴ of Sido, who was presently taking shelter in their village, to shoot two sepoyats. Chased by the sepoyats, Nyajum and Tayi (Yoyi) took a detour via Piira Putu (the settlement of the clans of Padu, Radeng, Pago and Ragi).

¹¹ Compiled by Marpak Chiram and Bamo Doye.

¹² The relevant archival sources and oral narratives are shown in the report on the 1911-12 the Abor Expedition.

¹³ Interviews with Kabom Dabi, age about 70 years and ex-ASM, Jumba Dabi, age about 80, Tarik Dabi, age about 70 and GB (gambura), Jumkar Dabi, age about 82 and GB, Tari Dabi, age about 55 and GB, Mikut Dabi, age about 60 years, et.al. Scheduled interview at the residence of Kabom Dabi, Namey Village, Lower Siang District on 23 May 2022 at 11 am.

¹⁴ According to Jumba Dabi, Lupir had earlier earned or purchased a gun when he was associated with plains/European people for trade purposes. Lupir was the grandfather of Dibo Saroh, a known man of neighbouring Ledum, the village after which the western flank of the expeditionary force was named. Lupir's son was Bokut whose son is Diboh. Jumba claims that the veracity of this incident can be cross-verified with Diboh. Kopir Leba, the place where this incident happened, Jumba and his clansmen claim, can still be verified as there is an identifiable rock there. The Dabi elders jointly recollect that Nyiji Yoyi (Tayi Dabi who accompanied Nyajum in shooting two sepoyats) used to narrate this incident in his old days. Jumba, the main narrator of the Dabi version, is known as 'Ramayan' in his village in deference to his exceptional memory: he has intimate knowledge of almost all the plots of the two epics and can recollect happenings and events of almost each day of his life and his clan and villages' during his lifetime.

Tricked by the *ledu* (footprints) leading to the Piira Putu, the colonial forces burnt down Piira Putu where-by three houses of the Padu, three of the Radeng, one of the Pago and one house of the Ragi families were reduced to ashes.

Dakir Ragi, whose grandfather's house was among those burnt down at Piira Putu, recollects that their village was indeed burnt down at dawn.¹⁵ Dakir is not aware of the KOPIR LEBA incident if at all it had happened. Also, Piira Putu would most probably have been burnt first before the forces proceeded to Sido/Doshing or Mishing, according to Ragi.

Talu Saroh, one of the grandsons of Lupir Saroh (Talu says that Nyopir is the appropriate name of Lupir), says that his grandfather indeed owned a gun at the time. Talu could not vouch for the act of his grandfather's gun being used by the Dabi; he, however, did not deny the possibility of it.¹⁶

A fuller account of the Dabi version appears in our tour report.

We find dissimilarity in the narration of Dabi with that of Ragi; and the testimony of the Saroh family is not too convincing, making it difficult to establish the claims of Dabi purely from oral sources also.¹⁷

Documents and published memoirs available with us on the Ledum Column of the Abor Expedition speak about one 'Kaking' village once. The context explicitly is with reference to taking the Sido/ Doshing stock-

ade. We also could not trace documents speaking about the burning of a village in the area between Ledum (which itself was not burned), Sido/Doshing and Kakki, the most probable location of the Piira Putu (Dakir's village). So, there is inconsistency between what we could trace from records with the version of one of the affected families (Dakir Ragi). Also, from Ledum, the Ledum Column marched to and stationed at Mishing wherefrom it carried out various recon missions and patrolling. Meaning, if Piira Putu was indeed burned it would most probably be after taking of the Sido/Doshing stockade, a period when the Kopir Leba incident would have happened, if at all it happened.

We compared the accounts of another local historian on the Ledum Column who talks about two columns being sent from Mishing campto the 'Gallong country'.¹⁸ Our analysis does not give a clear picture on this.

We are including the narrative of the Dabi elders in our report since it is an alternate and enriching local perspective on the important historical event.

EVENT NO.3: DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT, 1947-48

Causes

(i) 'anti-British' feelings:

According to a recent study¹⁹ the Galo, living west and beyond the 'jurisdiction' of the Political Officer at Pasighat, had taken pride in their status of being free from any outside authority. But soon the intrusion began through the recruitment of local elites in the lower bureaucracy of the frontier administration.²⁰ We might recollect that the protagonist of the Dipa Congress Movement was from the same area where Col. Vetch's team was ambushed in 1848 - exactly a century earlier. On many occasions, locals appear to have taken offence to the behaviour of the touring colonial officials.²¹ The memoir of one of the participants in the Dipa Congress movement goes like this: "British people treated us not like human beings. We were looked down, we had no right to wear any pant, smoke and speak loudly before British men."²²

A former political interpreter also writes:

During the late 1930s, we came to know that the development activities, enforcement of rule of law etc. is done by Sarkarie (the Government). However, along with it came the menace of the Halik-Libbors. Actually the

halik-libbors were the people who apprehended people on behalf of the government. They used to extract illegal fine from the offenders in both criminal and civil cases. As we had never seen any government officials in our lives, these halik-libbors took full advantage of our ignorance. They used to carry a piece of paper showing it as the government sanction for their acts. These tricksters were accompanied by the Alkola (government messenger). The alkolas were the government couriers who carried written messages and orders of government. They commanded the halik-libbors. Both, in unison, used to harass the people. There was no one to control them. Most of the time they conversed in Minyong and Padam dialects as most of them was appointed from Sadiya and Pasighat. The Galo people did not understand the language used by them which always led to apprehension about these people.

We may safely presume that many of the local elites who were recruited as political jamadars, interpreters, etc. misused their influence and position. Such a scenario was bound to create two things: repulsion for the existing authority or/as well as a competition to earn the patronage of the authority. The latter position is argued as the cause of the congress movement by sections of the Galos by Pandey.²⁴

¹⁵ Dakir Ragi, aged about 60 years, now permanently resides at Nari town. Telephonic interview conducted by Dr Tajen Dabi on 19 December 2022 at 8:30 am.

¹⁶ Talu Saroh, aged about 80 years, Head Gambura of Niglok village, Ruksin circle, East Siang district. Telephonic interview by Dr Tajen Dabi on 19 December 2022 at 8:00 pm. Talu lamented that his recently deceased uncle, Dibo, would have known more about incidents relating to the Abor Expedition in Sido/Doshing/Kakki sector.

¹⁷ Prof. Ashan Riddi was told by Tadoram Darang, Chairman, Adi Freedom Fighters Recommendation Committee over text message as follows: QUOTE. I have asked one Talut Siram, Ledum village (originally from Sido village) who has a good knowledge about the Anglo-Abor war 1911-12 in that area. He said Tapir Saroh was the grandfather of Dibo Saroh. But he has know (sic) knowledge about owning of a rifle by Tapir Saroh and the history of killing of British sepoy by Nyajum Dabi and Tayi Dabi. He said that the Kopir (pronounced as Ko-ir by Adi Minyong) Étpang is a precipitous hill ridge located west of Pireng Yapgo (which we had visited) near Sido village. UNQUOTE.

¹⁸ Osik, British Relations with the Adis, pp. 92-93.

¹⁹ Geri Koyu, "New Patterns of Tribal Leadership: Moji Riba and the Aborted Congress Activity in Lower Siang, 1947-48", MPhil dissertation, Rajiv Gandhi University, 2021.

²⁰ Takir Zirido, aged about 79 years, lone survivor who witnessed Moji Riba's arrest as a child, a permanent resident of Naharlagun under Papum Pare District, Arunachal Pradesh, held scheduled interview on March 2, 2020 at 7:25 pm. Interview as cited in Koyu, New Patterns of Tribal Leadership, p. 48.

²¹ Lijum Ete, Boken Ete: An Odyssey, Dupu Ete, Aalo, 2011, p. 11.

²² Memoir of Kore Bagra from the private collection of German Bomjen, son of Ligin Bomjen (unpublished).

²³ Lijum Ete, Boken Ete: An Odyssey, published by Dupu Ete, Aalo, 2022, p. 11.

²⁴ B.B. Pandey, Leadership Patterns in a Tribal Society: A Case Study of the Gallong Tribe of Siang Districts, Arunachal Pradesh, Spectrum Publications, Gauhati/Delhi, 1991, p. 69.

(ii) Porter Conscription and the defiance of Bagra²⁵

During World War II, Political Interpreters (PI) and Political Jamadars were sent to recruit porters from the present Aalo area who were to be sent to the Burma theatre to support the British war effort.²⁶ Rokom Moyong, PI visited Bagra for the purpose.²⁷ Kore Bagra led the people in defying the orders of PI²⁸ and when insisted chased the PI away threatening to kill them.²⁹ Bagra's defiance led to cut off of the supply of salt to Bagra for five years. Bagra was prohibited from coming down to the plains for trade.³⁰

(iii) Moji-Moje's obdurate demand for an APO post at Dipa

According to Boken Ete, one of the influential political interpreters whom James compelled to get Moji arrested, the duo of Moji-Moje used the platform of Dibrugrah Congress in demanding a post of Assistant Political Officer (APO) at Dipa. James, as per Boken, unsuccessfully tried to reason that opening a new headquarter was a government decision, an important one beyond the purview of his office. To trouble James and to coerce a favourable decision, Moji-Moje then threatened to ignite a sensitive boundary demarcation between the Gallongs and the Minyongs.³¹ James used the same pretext to coerce Boken, Kali Lombi and Tomi Basar to get Moji to Pasighat.³²

(iv) Official version

We get the official position of the time on the activities of Moji-Moje from the tour report of the Political Officer, Abor Hills, Pasighat to Ramle w.e.f. 4 to 19 December 1947. Having made 'tentative councils' for the various Galo area (except the Paktu area) during the tour, James reports that the Galo councils' "outlook to Moji and Moje was that they were nothing but a couple of adventurers out to make money and position for themselves." Further, James notes:

*It would seem that Moji and Moje have a small following in Daring and Basar. In addition some of the Eastern lower Gallongs are helping them. It is also believed that two of the big Gams of Angu and Bagra are also helping them. This I believe is the sum total. Quite differently, the vast majority of the RibaGallongs are against them. As also the two largest tribes in the Gallong hills viz., the Paktu and the Karka-Lodu-Bogum-Dokke lot. The Yeyi-Yego and western lower Gallongs are also virulent in their condemnation of Moji and Moje's activities.*³³

James unmistakably sees Moji-Moje as a nuisance who uses "the backing of the Congress Secretary in Dibrugarh", and who if not controlled, could lead to the breakdown of order in the 'Gallong hills'.³⁴

(v) Personal interest of P.L.S. James

The observations of historian Tai Nyori as to the causes of the congress movement generally agrees with the above reasons. Nyori talks about an 'immediate cause' in which he blames the personal interest of the political officer in keeping the 'Abors' as a 'pro-British' protectorate. Thus, a section of the 'Abors' exposed to the national movement rose against him.³⁵ Koyu takes a somewhat similar position and argues that James deliberately painted Moje-Moji in bad light in order to discredit their movement.

A Note on Memoirs of the Participants and other sources

Moji's personal diary written in Assamese reflects the dates to March 1973. This means the notes themselves are later recollections, not a contemporaneous recording of the events.

The rest of the documents submitted to us by the participants from Angu, Bagra and Kombo appear to come from the souvenir of the state congress centenary celebration in 1995.³⁶ The condition of the photocopied matters submitted to us is scanned in such a way that the page numbers and other details are missing. For example, a thirteen-page memoir with the first page missing, most probably written by Ligin Bomjen, also appears. Next, there is a two-page account in the name of Damin Lolen, thereafter a three-paged one for Kore Bagra, a one-page for Dagi Angu, and finally a two-paged one by Gotu Bagra. Of these, Ligin's memoir is the

longest. These narratives are personal recollections and underline a single theme, that is, the participation of the authors in the Dipa Congress Movement.

A related, slightly less reliable and probably inspired by the above publication brought out by the Congress in 1985, are the submissions we received from the families of the participants. Some of these are typed single-paged accounts in English with thumb impressions in lieu of signatures. All of these show the date as 23.12.85. Attached to these documents are affidavits signed before the judicial magistrate, Along, West Siang dated a year or so later (the photocopies of the documents are almost illegible) declaring themselves to be freedom fighters. We also received photocopies of handwritten as well as typed personal narratives; these are not signed and appear to be drafts of memoirs earlier planned to be published or submitted to the government.

The earliest published account on the Dipa Congress Movement appears to be that of C.R. Borpatragohain's brief article in a government periodical in 1972. Titled 'An untold Story of India's freedom struggle' it was published in the *Arunachal News*, 25th Independence Jayanti Issue, August 1972. Borpatragohain, improvises the narration a few years later in the same periodical.

Four persons have so far given academic attention to the Dipa Congress movement. The earliest is

²⁵ This part is mainly adapted from Koyu, "New Patterns of Tribal Leadership".

²⁶ Tai Nyori, History and Culture of the Adis, Omsons Publications, Delhi, 1993, pp. 124-125.

²⁷ Memoir of Ligin Bomjen from the family records of German Bomjen, son of Ligin Bomjen (unpublished).

²⁸ Pandey, Leadership Patterns, p. 77.

²⁹ Memoir of Likar Bomjen.

³⁰ Memoir of Likar Bomjen.

³¹ Ete, Boken Ete: An Odyssey, pp. 38-39.

³² Ete, Boken Ete: An Odyssey, pp. 38-39.

³³ Tour Report of the Political Officer, Abor Hills, Pasighat to Ramle w.e.f. 4 to 19 December 1947, Arunachal Pradesh State Archives, Itanagar, pp. 2-3.

³⁴ Tour Report of the Political Officer, Abor Hills, Pasighat to Ramle w.e.f. 4 to 19 December 1947, Arunachal Pradesh State Archives, Itanagar, p. 4.

³⁵ Tai Nyori, A Freedom Movement in the Twilight: Tribal Patriotism in the North-Eastern Frontier Tracts of India, Nation Press, Delhi, 2021, pp. 52-65.

³⁶ Congress Centenary Celebration 1886-1985 Arunachal Pradesh, published by Convenor, Congress Centenary Celebration Committee, Congress Bhavan, Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh.

that of Pandey. We found the *Leadership Patterns in a Tribal Society: A Case Study of the Gallong Tribe of Siang Districts, Arunachal Pradesh* (1991) to be more academically oriented than Pandey's later publication titled *Arunachal Pradesh: Village to Statehood* (1997). For example, in the latter work, Pandey merely copy-pastes Motilal Zagirdar's account of the revolutionary activities in Sadiya/Tinsukia without acknowledging or revealing the original source. There is an attempt to dramatize the events relating to the Dipa Congress movement. Also, in analysing the Dipa Congress movement, Pandey frames James' action from a religious point of view,³⁷ a position he is silent about in his earlier book.

The next work is by Dabi and Singh (2011)³⁸ which tries to see the Dipa Congress activity by keeping James' reorganization of Kebang as a reference. Tai Nyori's *A Freedom Movement in the Twilight* was published in 2021, the year Geri Koyu submitted his M.Phil. dissertation on Moji Riba titled "New Patterns of Tribal Leadership".

We have tried to corroborate the information found in these documents with other sources. Where not hinted, the personal details of the participants and their roles have been adapted from these memoirs and personal interviews with their respective families.

³⁷ B.B. Pandey, *Arunachal Pradesh: Village to Statehood*, Himalayan Publishers, Delhi, 1997, pp. 92-96.

³⁸ Tajen Dabi and S.N. Singh, "Congress Activities in Siang area of Arunachal Pradesh (1947-48): A Perspective", *Proceedings of North East India History Association (NEIHA)*, 32nd Session, Agartala, 2011, pp. 366-376.

³⁹ Letter to the Deputy Commissioner, West Siang District by Lalit Hazarika dated June 21, 1988, from the personal collection of German Bomjen, son of Ligin Bomjen.

Events

It is difficult to locate the exact origin of the congress movement. What is clear is that the inspiration came due to exposure with mainstream ideas and political events of the time. Many from Galo area had such kind of exposure: those who attended schools in the plans (like Tamik Dabi, Bojir Zirido and Moji Riba); those engaged in trade and who frequented to trade and administrative centres in the plains like Majombari, Dibrugarh, Sadiya, etc; and those who worked as porters in World War II (locally known as Borma Juddo; the Assamese 'juddo' explains the exposure and contacts many were having with the world outside their villages), etc. Ideas were getting exchanged thick and fast in the mid-forties. There were talks about Gandhi, Congress; there were rumours that 'Jam-Saab' (Peter Loren Seton James, political officer, Pasighat) and the 'Biirtish' will be leaving soon; there were talks of some Bordoloi. Something seminal was in offing; something had to be done. Quickly.

The leaders of this frenzied movement were many, for many people were involved. The prominent ones were Moji Riba, Moje Riba and Rimo Riba from Dari and DagiAngu and Kore Bagra from Aalo area. We have given the full list possible later in this report below.

Moji Riba, being the person with education, exposure and contacts with the world outside, went to Dibrugarh in order to recruit the support and patronage of the Congress. They met Lalit Chandra Hazarika, the General Secretary of Dibrugarh District Congress Committee.³⁹ Hence, in circa

1946 they organized and formed the Dipa Congress Committee at Dipa.⁴⁰ The Dipa Congress Committee also started venture school at Dipa.⁴¹ Nari Rustomji, the Lakhimpur DC who had visited the Dipa Camp with Lalit Hazarika during the inauguration of Dipa Congress camp writes:

*The Adis, according to Lolit, had been grossly neglected by the British. They were being denied education and deliberately segregated so that they should not be infected by the freedom movement but remain, in perpetuity, a British preserve. The administration of the tribal areas was a special responsibility of the Governor, who acted, not on the advice of the popularly elected Ministry, but, in constitutional parlance, 'in his discretion'... A school had already been opened for them through private effort, and we should now proceed to organize medical and other social services also in the area.*⁴²

Obviously, these steps were not viewed favourably by the political officer, Pasighat; Moji and his team were on a war-path with James. James got the ring leaders arrested and brought to Pasighat where they were compelled to agree to not to start the Dipa Camp. In April, 1949 James was replaced by Bharat Chandra Bhuyan as the Political Officer of the Abor Hills District. With the adversary gone, the movement came to a close.

Another issue related to the Dipa Congress Committee was the visit of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee and the

response of the Galo people to it. The earliest record related to this the research team came across is that of Barpatragohain.⁴³ We paraphrase Barpatragohain and offer a summary of it as below.

On 1 April 1947, J.H.F. Williams, the political officer of Sadiya issues a communication informing people about the proposed visit of the Gopinath Bordoloi sub-committee. On 25 May 1947, an eighteen-member team from 'Abor Hills' met Mr. Bordoloi: Moji Riba (Dari village), Moje Riba (Dari), Tojir⁴⁴ Zirido (Zirido), Margum Carlo⁴⁵ (Bomte), Jikom Riba (Zirido);⁴⁶ is reported as serving as Deputy Director, Cultural, Govt of Arunachal Pradesh, Toju Bomjen (Mane; reported as 'since died'⁴⁷); Gado Ringu (Kora), Doka Zirido (Zirido; 'since died'); Tai Kamdak (Kamdak), Nopo Taipodia (Ilihiru, 'since died'); Tabom Padu (Kora); Tari Sisi⁴⁸ (Sisi; 'since died'); Yimi Kadu (Kadu; 'since died'); Margum Zirido⁴⁹ (Zirido); Tage Doye (Doye, VLW; 'since died'); Tatum Mara (Bigi); Tukka Dabi (Takogitu); and Rimo Riba (Dari; 'since died').

Galo surnames are indicative of the clan it belongs to. The extensive list of surnames in Barpatragohain's list probably indicates the attempt to rope in representatives from as many clans as possible to make the delegation as inclusive as possible.

Barpatragohain says that the delegation pressed for the development of Dipa area on the bank of Simen and make it a centre of trade and education. Bordoloi

⁴⁰ Koyu, "New Patterns of Tribal leadership", p. 96. The place where the office was established and the tricolour unfurled is now located in Assam, about a couple of kilometres south of present Dipa village under Likabali Sub-Division. Locals recall that the whole area between Dipa and Brahmaputra was a dense jungle with few Mishing families living on the banks of the river.

⁴¹ The second chief minister of the state, Tomo Riba, also attended this school. One Tale, Two Stories (a collection of memoirs on Tomo Riba), Centre for Cultural Research and Documentation (CCRD), Naharlagun, 2015, p.3.

⁴² Nari K. Rustomji, *Enchanted Frontiers: Sikkim, Bhutan and India's Northeastern Borderlands*, Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1973, pp. 68-69.

⁴³ C.K. Barpatragohain, "An Untold Story of India's Freedom Struggle", *Arunachal News*, Vol. 1, No. 6, August 1972, pp. 5-6. The of the author is possibly a Khamti. The research team did not get time to establish the identity of the author. The event and the list of names are not related to Khamti, thus making this a distant, an unattached observers' unbiased report. Barpatragohain does not reveal his informers or the source (for preparing the list). Pandey, *Arunachal Pradesh: Village State to Statehood*, p. 92 also speaks about a delegation of Galo people going to Sadiya to meet the Bordoloi Sub-Committee.

⁴⁴ Actual name is corroborated as Tajir, Bojir being the more popular name.

⁴⁵ Actual name is corroborated as Marngu Karlo.

⁴⁶ Jikom is from Dari.

⁴⁷ Of the eighteen people Borpatragohain (1972) lists, seven are reported as 'since died'. We cross-examined this with the families during our field visits and found this to be fairly correct.

⁴⁸ The surname is spelled as 'Chisi' by its bearers.

⁴⁹ The identity of this person could not be established. People from Zirido and the neighbouring villages we met told us that they do not know a person by this name.

is said to have responded favourably and the Governor of Assam also visited the area thrice to look into the demand. Upon the Governor's advice, the people set up a school themselves and hoisted the Indian tricolour in the school compound. The political officer Sadiya got the flag removed and canvassed the people of Siang not to join the union of India. Moji, Moje, Rimo, et. al. are said to have met Bordoloi at Dibrugarh again along with 200 people and appraised the misgivings of the political officer, Pasighat Mr James.

Variants of Borpatragohain's narrative circulate amongst the members of the families involved in the Dipa Congress Movement. Based on archival data, family records of the participants, memoirs of NEFA officials like Rustomji, and oral narratives what we could deduce are the following:

- a. that there were subdued grievances against the new order in the Galo areas;
- b. that there was a nascent movement in the name of Congress which targeted the last European political officer of Pasighat, Mr P.L.S. James. With its office located at Dipa, the movement did approach Dibrugarh Congress and was provided patronage and support;⁵⁰
- c. that the Galo people met some committees in Sadiya and Dibrugarh around the time the Bordoloi Sub-Committee was visiting places in the northeast (Feb to July 1947), which may

have been in direct contravention of James' policy or choice of the delegate to meet the same;

- d. that the participants of the Congress movement were harassed and its ring leaders arrested for some time at Pasighat pending a meeting; and
- e. many people were involved in the movement, mainly from Dari, Bagra, Angu and Kombo villages. The support of many influential people from the remote Galo areas such as Takogitu, Kora, Kadu, Chisi, Gensi, Tirbin, Liromoba and Yomcha were also sought and they appear to have participated in some meetings.⁵¹ However, their active participation in the Congress movement is not to be found either in the narratives of the Ligin and BokenEte (of which we have published account) or by the oral narratives of the members of the respective families. The latter source is clear that these influential men of their time did frequent Sadiya and Dibrugarh around the time. The core of the short-lived movement was the Dipa-Dari-Angu-Bagra-Kombo complex.

Recommendations

Based on our study, we are recommending three names in the 'Hero' category, two names in 'Martyr' category and the rest in 'Freedom Fighter' category. The three leaders of the Dipa Congress Movement of 1847-48 are well known and have already been decorated with tamrapatras by the

government: Moji Riba (in 1972 by the government of India; presented by PM Indira Gandhi), Moje Riba (in 1974 by the NEFA; presented by Lt. Governor KAA Raja) and Ligin Bomjen (1988, GoAP; presented by B.C. Bharati, DC West Siang).

The research team has received documents from some of the families of the participants of the Dipa Congress Committee which shows that their appeal to the government (both state and the centre) for similar recognition as freedom fighters is yet to be heeded. We are of the opinion that all the people involved in it should be given some sort of recognition by the government. Without the active co-operation and participation of people from Basar, Bagra, Kombo and other villages, it would not have been possible for Moji-Moje to create a momentum sufficient enough to challenge James. It appears that Moji-Moje, for example, did not visit Basar, Bagra or Kombo even once. They relied on leader and participants from the respective villages. Our list of freedom fighters in the context of the Dipa Congress Committee, therefore, is fairly long. And it should be, given the challenges of the time.

A. HEROES

1. MOJE RIBA

Moje Riba was born in Dari village (presently in the Lepa Rada district) probably in the 1890s. Moje had no formal education, the only way he got exposure to the outside world

was through frequent trading expeditions to Assam he took during his youth.⁵² This not only made him catch the Assamese language but also exposed him to the reports about the freedom movement that was going on in India.

Moje believed that the British government had been curtailing development in their area such as the building of roads and schools⁵³ and that it needs to be overthrown. Moje was the President of the Dipa Congress Committee.

Later on, because of his experience and leadership quality, he was appointed as the Gam (village head) of his village. Moje also presided over the Bogum Bokang Kebang many times.⁵⁴

Moje Riba was awarded TAMRA PATRA in 1974 at Shillong by K.A.A. Raja, the then Chief Commissioner, on behalf of Government of India for his contribution to the Indian National Movement.⁵⁵ Moje was much respected in his village and by the society at large. This was due to the leadership he provided during the Congress movement as well as his personality. Moje passed away on 22 January, 1980.⁵⁶ During an age when elites tried to win the trust of the government and enter into its service, Moje, despite his prestige and influence, took an opposite path and led, along with Moji and others, an unusual movement, albeit brief, in parts of the Galo areas.

⁵⁰ Confidential Reports on Formation of Abor Tribal Council, File No. A/508/1947, State Archives, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.

⁵¹ This view is also supported by Pandey, *Leadership Patterns*, p. 95.

⁵² Nyori, *A Freedom Movement in the Twilight*, p. 156.

⁵³ Pandey, *Arunachal Pradesh: Village State*, pp. 93-94.

⁵⁴ Nyori, *A Freedom Movement in the Twilight*, pp. 163-165.

⁵⁵ Geri Koyu, "New Patterns of Tribal Leadership", p. 80.

⁵⁶ Nyori, *A Freedom Movement in the Twilight*, p. 167.

2. MOJI RIBA

Moji Riba was born in the year 1911 to Gomo Riba and Nyapu Riba at Dari village present Lepa-Rada District of Arunachal Pradesh.⁵⁷ In 1923, the age of twelve he took admission to the Baptist Missionary School at Sadiya and studied there till 1927. Again, in the same year he joined Mission High School at Jorhat⁵⁸ where he studied till 1931 up to class seven. While he was studying in school at Jorhat he got to know about the freedom fighters from Assam like Maniram Dewan and Piyali Phukan and also heard about Mahatma Gandhi and his movement against the colonial rule. The stories about the Indian Nationalists and Indian freedom movements were told by the Indian teachers in the school in Jorhat. These stories and events inspired Moji. Moji's exposure, education and network became the main engine for the Dipa Congress Movement.

That is how Moji-Moje and others set up the Dipa Congress Committee at Dipa, a foothill village on the right bank of Simen river where they constructed eleven houses for different purposes: conference hall, Congress office, school, etc. Hence, in 1946, the first Dipa Congress Conference was held and the first Congress Organizing Committee was constituted with Moje Riba as the President and Moji Riba as the secretary.⁵⁹

After the conclusion of the Congress movement, Moji came back to his roots in Dari and was appointed as the Gam (village head). He also later on served as the Bango Secretary of the Ego Bango – a remnant of James' innovation which he was initially opposed to. For his leadership during the Congress movement against colonial rule, Moji was honoured with TAMRA PATRA on 15, August 1972 and got recognition as a freedom fighter. He received the award from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. On 11 October 1973, at the age of 62, Moji took his last breath at his native village Dari.⁶⁰ In an age when elites tried to win the trust of the government and enter into its service, Moji, despite his modern education, took an opposite path and led, along with Moje and others, an unusual movement, albeit brief, in parts of the Galo areas.

3. LIGIN BOMJEN

Ligin Bomjen was son of Chabli Bomjen. He was born in March, 1926 at Bagra village of West Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh. During his tender age he accompanied his friends and elders to Assam for trading.⁶¹ During his time at Assam he learned about Mahatma Gandhi which he preached among his villagers, this proved instrumental in 1943 when village of Bagra defied the British Official's order for recruiting porters from their village and hence as punishment their village was banned for procuring salt.⁶² Ligin along with his friends Gotu Bagra and Mormek Bagra managed to smuggled salt to his village, but eventually they had

to give up and served as a porter in the second world war.⁶³

After serving as a porter and spending considerable time outside of his village Ligin learned about the Indian National Movement. Young Ligin travelled to Dari to meet Moji to know more about the freedom movement.⁶⁴ Ligin Bomjen, Dagi Angu and Kore Bagra were given the responsibility to organize the movement in the upper Galo region and Moji Riba, Moje Riba and Rimo Riba would do the same in the lower region.⁶⁵

Later on, when N.K. Rustomji became the Adviser to the Governor in place of Walker, Ligin was taken to Shillong by Rustomji, who knew him well and was fond of him, to teach him the Abor language.⁶⁶

For his participation in India's Freedom Movement, the government of India recognized Ligin Bomjen as a freedom fighter and awarded him the Tamra Patra in 1988. He received that prestigious award from the hand of B.C. Bharati, D.C. Along, West Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh on behalf of the Government of India on the Republic Day, 1989.

B. MARTYRS

1. KOMBU BAGRA

During the Anglo-Abor war of 1911, Kombu Bagra had come to Kakki to visit his Adi relative who took refuge in that village. Kombu joined the Siram brothers, Pakling (younger) and Paksing, in releasing the stones at Pireng Yapgo at Sido. After Pakling, the first to attempt to cut the ropes of the

stone chutes was killed, Kombu also joined to cut the rope so that stones are released. Kombu met a similar fate instantly. It was Paksing who was able to release the stones.

2. NYIDAK KAKKI

During the same Anglo-Abor war of 1911, a man from the village of Kakki named Nyidak Kakki was asked by his Adi friend Duli Padu, who was taking refuge in Kakki village, to bring his goat from Sido village. Duli thought that the British were at war with the Adis and hence they won't harm a Galo person. However, upon reaching Sido, Nyidak was mercilessly killed by the British troops. Nyidak was son of Raknyi Kakki.

Sometimes after this incident, the British troops had come to Kakki village to ask about the route to Yemsing and Rottung village. But the Kakki village people were furious over murder of Nyidak and hence they prepared local wine for the troops and mixed poison in it which killed many British sepoy.⁶⁷

C. FREEDOM FIGHTERS

1. BACHI DOYE

Bachi Doye was born in circa 1815 to Daba Doye at Reri Pajo (now in Basar, Leparada District). He was the youngest of four brothers. He spent his childhood at Reri Pajo before his parents migrated to Togo Yago

⁵⁷ Nyori, A Freedom Movement in the Twilight, pp. 143-155.

⁵⁸ Koyu, "New Patterns of Tribal leadership", pp. 73-120.

⁵⁹ Memoir of Likar Bomjen, from the family records of German Bomjen, son of Ligin Bomjen (unpublished).

⁶⁰ Interview of Jiyo Riba, the second daughter of Moji, A-Sector, Naharlagun, 23 April 2022.

⁶¹ Nyori, A Freedom Movement in the Twilight, p. 177.

⁶² Koyu, "New Patterns of Tribal leadership", pp. 87-89.

⁶⁵ Memoir of Ligin Bomjen.

⁶⁶ Nyori, A Freedom Movement in the Twilight, pp. 184-185.

⁶⁷ Tajir Kakki's recollection on Nyidak Kakki in Gooying Liidung: 100th Year of Poju Mimak, Paator Gumin Heritage Preservation and Research Foundation, Kebang, undated, p.39. Tajir Kakki is Head Gaon Bura, Kakki village and General Secretary, Gaon Burah Association, Koyu Circle. A similar narrative was earlier recorded by Osik, British Relations with the Adis, p. 92.

(now at Pagi village in Leparada district). He spent his youthful days at Togo Yago where he married and had four sons: Chire, Chira, Chie and Chimar. Thereafter, his parents again migrated to TakuLiba (in the present Dari Circle of Leparada district) where he spent the rest of his life. The attack on Captain Vetch's team happened after he settled at Taku Liba. Bachu passed away in the 1880s at Pujo where the mortal remains of the impatient brave soul lay buried.⁶⁸

2. RIMO RIBA

Rimo Riba from Dari village was the first person to join Moji and Moje in their quest to launch a Congress cum freedom movement in the hills.⁶⁹ When Dipa Congress Committee was formed, he was made the Joint-Secretary of the committee.⁷⁰ Rimo was an active and very close aide of Moji-Moje. Rimo's lack of education and the subsequent 'ordinariness' of his direct descendants probably led to the comparative lack of public acknowledgement of Rimo's role.⁷¹

3. KORE BAGRA

Born in Bagra village, Kore Bagra grew up to become so well-known that he became the doyen of not only his own village but also several others, including Darka, Angu, Doji, Nyorak, and others.⁷² He was appointed as the Gam of his village and is still remem-

bered as a person who was adept at resolving disagreements and disputes. Many would seek his protection from enemies and violence.⁷³

When some political interpreters come to Bagra to recruit porters, Kore asked people not to co-operate with the colonial authorities.⁷⁴ We have already narrated the result of Bagra's defiance earlier.

Kore attended all the three Dipa Congress Conferences. During the movement Kore had to evade the government authorities and work underground since the APO ordered the Political Interpreters, Gams and Kotokis to obstruct their movement.⁷⁵ When the APO released an arrest warrant for Kore for his activity against the authority, he absconded his arrest and took shelter at Dibrugarh under Lalit Hazarika, the General Secretary of Dibrugarh Congress⁷⁶ and he continued his participation in the Congress movement until the British APO was removed from his post.

4. DAGI ANGU

Dagi Angu was from Angu village and was Angu's most conspicuous leader.⁷⁷ Dagi belonged to a lineage of Nyi-te (respected, rich person in Galo society); his grandfather Yonyi was the wealthiest man in the Angu village and his father Nyidag inherited that wealth which was later handed down to Dagi. Dagi was married to Moji Riba's elder sister Mongam Riba. A strong matrimonial alliance was already in place between Dagi and Moji.⁷⁸ Therefore, the matrimonial alliance led to Dagi's participation in the Congress cum free-

dom movement that was led by Dipa Congress Committee.

Dagi Angu joined the movement after he was appointed as the Gam of Angu village in 1945.⁷⁹ As a result of his involvement in the movement, the Political Officer at Pasighat, dispossessed Dagi of his official red coat and his position of Gam which was later given back to him after the independence. Dagi was popular and much respected by the people; he was the most popular *nyite* of his area. He had a very strong physique and a very charismatic personality. People looked up to him to such a degree that he had the influence to gather and address large masses at a short notice. That was how he propagated the congress cum freedom movement among the people and rallied a good number of people for the movement against the colonial authority. Later in his life, Lalit Hazarika gifted Dagi a traditional Assamese kettle as a token of his contribution in the Congress movement.

5. KARGO BASAR

Kargo Basar was born in the 1890s at Gori village in the Lepa Rada district to Henkar Basar and Dagbi Angu Basar.⁸⁰ He was popularly known as Anya Bogo. Kargo showed leadership quality since an early age and became recognized leader in his village. It was due to his leadership quality that he was appointed as Gam sometime in the year 1945. Kargo was also a widely travelled person, he was involved in cane business and for that he travelled to places like Sadiya, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Majonbari, Doom Dooma, Pohumara etc. in Assam. It was during these visits to the plains of Assam that

he came to know about the freedom movement against the British Raj by the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

Kargo's indignation towards the colonial authority started when he felt that in comparison to places in Assam that he had visited, there were no developmental work in his place. He perceived it as the colonial authority intentionally keeping their area backward.

Kargo was a knowledgeable person, he had the idea that some leaders in Dari village specially Moji Riba who was an educated person had proper knowledge about the freedom movement. So, when the people from Angu-Bagra area came to him asking about the freedom movement he relayed them to Moji Riba at Dari.⁸¹ He was an active member of Dipa Congress Committee and played a vital role as a co-ordinator of Dipa Congress Committee for mobilizing the people of Basar. As per the family narrative, Kargo had recently lost his young wife (mother of Goto who is now a retired civil servant) when he was kept on confinement at Pasighat.

6. TOMI BASAR

Tomi Basar of Gori (Bumpek) village was a very close associate of Kargo Basar during the Dipa Congress Movement. His father's name was Mito. According to Tomi's family, Tomi, Chijum Basar and Chie Basar took active part from Basar area in the Dipa

⁶⁸ Compiled by Bamoy Doye.

⁶⁹ Ligin Bomjen's memoir and the published works noted earlier regularly notes Rimo's contribution in the Congress movement. Written and oral submission from the family members also claim the same. Gojum Riba, aged about 40 years, resident of Dipa village, Lower Siang, scheduled interview held on 23 May 2022 at Dipa Village.

⁷⁰ Written representation by Gokar Riba, grandson at the meeting held in the Conference Hall, Basar on 4 December 2021.

⁷¹ Interview with Marpak Chiram (aged about 70) and Gokar Riba

⁷² Personal information relating to Kore Bagra is adapted from an interview and a written submission with/by Reke Bagra, son. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence interviewee at Higi Bagra village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

⁷³ Pandey, Leadership Patterns, p.77.

⁷⁴ Pandey, Leadership Patterns, p.77.

⁷⁵ Memoir of Kore Bagra.

⁷⁶ Confidential Reports on Formation of Abor Tribal Council, File No. A/508/1947, State Archives, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.

⁷⁷ Pandey, Leadership Patterns, p.78.

⁷⁸ Ikir Angu, aged about 58 years, son of Dagi Angu is a permanent resident of Angu Village under Bagra Administrative Circle, West Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh. Scheduled interview held on 8 April 2022 at the residence of Ikir Angu at Angu Village.

⁷⁹ Memoir of Dagi Angu from the private collection of German Bomjen, son of Ligin Bomjen (unpublished).

⁸⁰ Interviews: (a) Goto Basar, second son of Kargo, aged about 80; (b) Gopek Basar, GB of Gori-III and former junior associate of Kargo; and (c) Karken Basar, whose father was also a close associate of Kargo held at Circuit House Basar on 4 Decemeb 2021. We also received a short biography of Kargo from his grandson Kenmar.

⁸¹ Memoir of Ligin Bomjen.

Congress Movement.⁸² In recognition of his ability and influence, Tomi was later on selected as Gam after Kargo passed away.

7. GOTU BAGRA

Gotu Bagra was one among the key person who was also involved in the salt smuggling after the salt ban due to Bagra's non-cooperation and also in the Congress cum freedom movement of Dipa Congress Committee where he worked along with Ligin Bomjen and others actively.⁸³

Gotu was a widely travelled person and since 1928 he started working at Assam. Later on after the salt ban at Bagra he was also recruited as a porter for British war effort. After coming back working as porters, he along with Ligin and Mormek travelled to Dari village where he they met Moji Riba and it was decided to join the INC to start a movement in the hills. Similarly, Gotu attended the Dipa Congress Conferences and actively participated in the movement. He travelled to villages like Nyorak, Tabasora, Rime, Karbak, Kamba, Kamki, Wak, Beye, Jeli, Eshimoku, Kugi, Bene, Pobdi, Paya, Pakam, Kombo, Tadin, Ngomdir, Bagra, Angu, Doke etc. and propagated about the Congress movement and urged people to join it.

⁸² Written submission to the Research Committee by Mikar Basar/Mibom Basar, GB Gori, and son of Tomi Basar received on Circuit House Basar on 4 December 2021.

⁸³ Personal information relating to Gotu is adapted from interview with Tumar Bagra, son. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh. Tumar told the research team that it was the local Bagra-Lollen people who carried on the movement as Moji-Moje never came to Bagra-Komba area during the time.

⁸⁴ Personal information relating to Gamjum Bagra is adapted from an interview with Jummor Bagra, son and also on the basis of some documents submitted by the Jummor. Scheduled interview held on 8 April 2022 at Higi Bagra village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

⁸⁵ Personal information relating to Mopo is adapted from interview with Poi Lollen, son. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

8. GAMJUM BAGRA

Ligin Bomjen, Gotu Bagra and Mormek Bagra convened a meeting at Dere in Bagra village and propagated about Mahatma Gandhi and the freedom movement that's been going on in India. Upon hearing it Gamjum was impressed so much with this information which was very new to him and it was appealing. So, he joined the Congress team. Gamjum, like other Congress followers, was asked to mobilize the people of the village to join congress, which he did enthusiastically.⁸⁴

9. MOPO LOLLEN

When Ligin Bomjen reached the village of Kombo to propagate the Congress cum freedom movement, Mopo along with many others joined him. He along with others joined the movement for which they were being targeted by the colonial authorities. As per the oral narratives of the families of the participants the research team met at Kombo, the Congress members of Kombo hoisted the tri-colour flag at their village. At the order of A.P.O. Pasighat, the flag was removed by PI LimiLollen.⁸⁵ To report this action they travelled to Dipa where another P.I. Rokom Moyong arrested them and took them to Pasighat.

10. MARNYA LOLLEN

Marnya was among those Congress members from Kombo who were arrested while they were on their way

to Dipa as per the oral narratives.⁸⁶ The arrested members were taken through Jomlo village, then to Pangin through the Sangam bridge where they were made to stay for four days and then spent a night at Rattu. From there they were taken to Pasighat and Marnya along with others were locked up in the quarter guard.

11. JUMKI LOLLEN

Jumki Lollen was also among the Congress members of Kombo who participated in the movement and was later arrested for his activities in the freedom movement. As per the oral narratives of the families of the participants the research team met at Kombo, the Congress members of Kombo hoisted the tri-color flag at their village. At the order of A.P.O. Pasighat, the flag was removed by PI Limi Lollen.⁸⁷ To report this action they travelled to Dipa where another P.I. Rokom Moyong arrested them and took them to Pasighat.

12. NYOI LOLLEN

Nyoi Lollen was also among the Congress members of Kombo who participated in the movement and was later arrested for his activities in the freedom movement. As per the oral narratives of the families of the participants the research team met at Kombo, the Congress members of Kombo hoisted the tri-color flag at their village. At the order of A.P.O. Pasighat, the flag was removed by PI Limi Lollen.

To report this action, they travelled to Dipa where another P.I. Rokom Moyong arrested them and took them to Pasighat.⁸⁸

13. RETUM LOLLEN

Retum Lollen was also among the congress members of Kombo who participated in the movement and was later arrested for his activities in the freedom movement. As per the oral narratives of the families of the participants the research team met at Kombo, the Congress members of Kombo hoisted the tri-color flag at their village. At the order of A.P.O. Pasighat, the flag was removed by PI Limi Lollen. To report this action, they travelled to Dipa where another P.I. Rokom Moyong arrested them and took them to Pasighat.⁸⁹

14. NYISEN DIYUM (YUMPU)

Nyisen Yumpu was also among the congress members of Kombo who participated in the movement and was later arrested for his activities in the freedom movement. As per the oral narratives of the families of the participants the research team met at Kombo, the Congress members of Kombo hoisted the tri-color flag at their village. At the order of A.P.O. Pasighat, the flag was removed by PI Limi Lollen. To report this action, they travelled to Dipa where another P.I. Rokom Moyong arrested them and took them to Pasighat.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Personal information relating to Marnya is adapted from interview with Nyamar Lollen, son. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

⁸⁷ Personal information relating to Jumki Lollen is adapted from interview with Duda Lollen, nephew. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

⁸⁸ Personal information relating to Nyoi Lollen is adapted from interview with Tunge Lollen. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

⁸⁹ Personal information relating to Retum Lollen is adapted from interview with Jumba Lollen. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

⁹⁰ Personal information relating to Nyisen Diyum is adapted from interview with Henre Diyum. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

15. MARI LOLLEN

A meeting was called in Kombo village where it was informed that people of Angu and Bagra are joining the Congress and the freedom movement against the British and that they should also join them. Inspired by the proposal, Mari with many other went to Dipa to join the Dipa Congress Committee. Thereafter Mari joined the freedom movement and was later on arrested by Rokom Moyong along with others from his village for participating in the Congress cum freedom movement.⁹¹

16. KOTE SORA

Kote Sora hailed from Taba Sora village in West Siang District who later also became the gam of the same village. In the year 1937-38 Kote went away from his village to Assam and worked as a labour under some European trader. While at Assam he got much exposure and learned about the national movement. Since Kote was a widely travelled person, his fellow villagers came to him to know more about Congress. Kote became an active member of the Dipa Congress committee.⁹²

17. KIRDAK RIME

Kirdak Rime hailed from Rime village. When Ligin, Mormek and Gotu reached Tabasora village,

Kirdak organized meetings at his village and tried to convince people to join Congress. Kirdak reached Dipa after walking for 4 days, where he stayed for some days and helped in the construction of the camp.⁹³

18. DAMIN LOLLEN

Damin Lollen, who hailed from Kombo village, was guided by Ligin Bomjen to join the Congress. He was selected as the congress secretary of his village. It was under Damin's leadership that for the first time Congress flag was hoisted at Kombo village.⁹⁴ Which was reported to the APO and the P.I. LimiLollen was sent to remove the flag. To report this to Dipa, Damin with others set out for Dipa but they were caught by P.I. Rokom Moyong, they were arrested and brought to Pasighat where they were kept locked in a quarter guard.

19. HORMEK (MORMEK) BAGRA

Mormek was Ligin Bomjen's friend who had travelled with Ligin to places.⁹⁵ Mormek also appears to have worked as a porter in Burma. Mormek accompanied Gotu and Ligin to Dari to meet Moji Riba. Mormek was instrumental in spreading the movement in Aalo area.⁹⁶

20. MARGAM BAGRA

Margam Bagra was also among the people who joined Dipa Congress Committee in the Bagra area. His partic-

ipation in the movement also led to his arrest along with others.⁹⁷

21. NOPO TAIPODIA

According to oral narratives, Nopo Taipodia, from the present-day Tatamori village under Gensi circle of Lower Siang District took active participation in the Congress movement. Nopo's clan members who interacted with the research team told us that he was the brother-in-law of Moje Riba, which makes his participation most likely.⁹⁹

Nopo is the grandson of Ligo and Bamo Taipodia. The research team was told by Nopo's family that Ligo and Bamo were arrested by the colonial authorities circa 1860-1920 for disobeying colonial laws in the foothills. Another incident which the Taipodia sources narrated to us was that Dukom and Marngo Taipodia of Gensi killed some British sepoy, who were surveying their area, somewhere in the first decade of the twentieth century. Due to the paucity of time of the project work under which this research work is being done and the time it takes to dig out old records and corroborate narratives, it was not possible for the research team to explore these two themes further.

We were also told that to their surname 'Tai' the Ahom Kings, impressed with the knowledge and warlike character of the Taipodia, suffixed 'podia' (meaning one who shows the path, one who leads in a war) to it. Given our knowledge of framing of Tani/Galo genealogy and pending further research, we tend to not disagree with the interesting

etymology of the Tai-podia. It is quite possible, and if so, indicates the multiple ways in which tribal histories can be studied. Our objective in including these narratives and claims in our report is to record suggestive pointers on this count.

22. TUKKA DABI

Tukka's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya. He was then residing at Tako-Gitu near Laimekuri where he lived for a couple of years with his clans-people before shifting to Namey where his descendants live now. No diary or memoir of Tukka survives. Son of Tamik, Tukka served as village head for about three decades before he passed away in 1989.⁹⁹ The version of the family of Tojo Bomjen clearly indicates that Tukka did attend some meetings at Dipa and Sadiya.¹⁰⁰

23. JUMKI AMO

Jumki Amo was among the people from Kombo who participated in the Congress cum freedom movement launched by the Dipa Congress Committee which led to his arrest during the movement. As per the oral narratives of the families of the participants the research team met at Kombo, the Congress members of Kombo hoisted the tri-color flag at their village. At the order of A.P.O. Pasighat, the flag was removed by

⁹¹ Personal information relating to Mari Lollen is adapted from interview with Nyamar Lollen. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

⁹² Details relating to Kote Sora is adapted from interview with Liyom Sora. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at Hotel Aagam, Aalo, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

⁹³ Details relating to Kirdak is adapted from interview with Tumar Bagra, son of Gotu Bagra. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

⁹⁴ Personal information relating to Damin Lollen is adapted from interview with Minkir Lollen and some documents submitted by Minkir. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

⁹⁵ Scheduled interview with Melli Bagra, son, aged about 69 years, permanent resident of Lipu Bagra, Aalo circle at Hotel Min-Ta, Aalo on 9 April 2022.

⁹⁶ Pandey, Leadership Patterns, pp. 85-86.

⁹⁷ Scheduled interview with Gamjom Bagra, son, aged about 51 years, permanent resident of Pigi Mengo Bagra, Aalo circle at Hotel Min-Ta, Aalo on 9 April 2022.

⁹⁸ Scheduled Interview with Pakchi Taipodia, male, aged about 65 years, who was accompanied by Sengo Taipodia and Dr Senpe Taipodia, on 23 May 2022 at Tao Porup, Likabali, Lower Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh.

⁹⁹ Details relating to Tukka Dabi (family name Mikshi) is adapted from interview with Mikto Dabi, son of Tamik, aged about 80 years and other senior members of Dabi clan. Scheduled interview held on 23 May 2022 at the residence of Kabom Dabi, Nari circle, Lower Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

¹⁰⁰ Scheduled interview with Jomi Bomjen, aged about 70 years, son of Tojo Bomjen, another participant of the Dipa Congress Movement, held in Lumpo Village, Nari Circle, Lower Siang District on 3 December 2022.

PI LimiLollen. To report this action they travelled to Dipa where another P.I. Rokom Moyong arrested them and took them to Pasighat.¹⁰¹

24. MARGE LOLLEN

Marge Lollen was also a congress member from Kombo who was also arrested during the course of the movement. As per the oral narratives of the families of the participants the research team met at Kombo, the Congress members of Kombo hoisted the tri-color flag at their village. At the order of A.P.O. Pasighat, the flag was removed by PI Limi Lollen. To report this action they travelled to Dipa where another P.I. Rokom Moyong arrested them and took them to Pasighat.¹⁰²

25. IMIN BAGRA

When talking about people from Bagra village who participated in the movement launched by the Dipa Congress Committee, Imin Bagra was also one among those who participated in the movement against the British authority.¹⁰³

26. JIKOM RIBA

Jikom's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya. Jikom was the son of Moje Riba. Jikom must have participated in the movement

as a youth following the footstep of his father. Later in his life, Jikom rose to prominence as an IAS officer and had a successful career.

27. BOJIR ZIRDO

Bojir's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya. Bojir Zirdo was an influential person in the Gensi-Zirdo area around the time and a close associate of Tamik. We have given more details about Boji in the context of the Revolutionary plan to capture Sadiya (1934). Due to his position in society then, Bojir was part of the Congress delegation to Sadiya.¹⁰⁴

28. DOKA ZIRDO

Doka's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya. Doka was an influential person in the Gensi-Zirdo area around the time. Due to his influence and position in society then, Doka was invited to take part in the Congress delegation to Sadiya.¹⁰⁵

29. MARNGU KARLO

Marngu's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya. Marngu came from a rich family wielding considerable influence in the Gensi-Zirdo area around the time.

Due to his influence and position in society then, Doka was invited to take part in the Congress delegation to Sadiya.¹⁰⁶

30. YOMRI CHISI

Yomri's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya. Yomri came from a rich family wielding considerable influence in the Gensi-Zirdo area around the time. Due to his influence and position in society then, Doka was invited to take part in the Congress delegation to Sadiya.¹⁰⁷

31. TAI KAMDAK

Tai Kamdak's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya.¹⁰⁸ Tai was from Kamdak village strategically between the Basar plateau and the Igo valley. Kamdak's presence in the delegation, as also the presence of people from clans outside the core of Dipa Congress movement, probably indicates the attempt to rope in representatives from as many clans as possible.

32. REGE DOYE

Rege's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya. Rege¹⁰⁹ was one of the grandsons of Bachi Doye, the impatient warrior who killed one of the sepoy's of Captain Vetch's team in 1848 at the Igo valley. Like Tai

Kamdak's case, Rege's presence in the Sadiya delegation indicates the attempt to rope in representatives from as many clans as possible. Rege worked as VLW in the post-independent decades.¹¹⁰

33. TATUM MARA

Hailing from Bigi village, Tatum Mara was an influential person from Gensi area.¹¹¹ Tatum's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya. Tatum's presence in the delegation, as also the presence of people from clans outside the core of Dipa Congress movement, probably indicates the attempt to rope in representatives from as many clans as possible.

34. TOJO BOMJEN

Tojo's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya from Mane village. We interacted with Tojo's son and could gather that around the time (1947-48), Tojo lived in Takogitu along with Tamik's family.¹¹² The two families shared close affection at the time and hence it is not unlikely that Tojo travelled together with either Tamik or his son Tukka to congress meetings. Takogitu is on the foothills (near Laimekuri) midway between Murkongselek and Dipa. Tojo's inclusion in the delegation would have made it more representative.

¹⁰⁶ Scheduled interview with Marri Karlo, youngest sibling, aged about 85 years ('Theory', as Marri is affectionately known, was accompanied by Dr Jayom Karlo, nephew) held at the office of the Director, Institute of Distance Education (IDE), Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh on 11 December 2022.

¹⁰⁷ Scheduled interview with Yomdak Chisi, younger sibling, aged about 75 years, Kenjum Chisi, aged about 60 years, Tumjum Chisi, grandson, aged about 40 years, Kalin Chisi, grandson, aged about 60 years and Ngukar Ngucho, aged about 55 years held at the residence of Kenjum Chisi, Chisi Village, Dari Circle, Lepa Rada district, Arunachal Pradesh on 6 December 2022.

¹⁰⁸ Scheduled interview with Ibom Kamdak, son, retired defense personnel, aged about 66 years and Ego Kamdak, son, aged about 60 years at the residence of Ego Kamdak, Medical Colony, Basar town, Lepa Rada district on 6 December 2022.

¹⁰⁹ Bachi-Chire-Rege.

¹¹⁰ Scheduled interview with Marnya Doye, grandson, aged about 50 years, permanent resident of Jime Village, Dari circle and Tomo Doye, nephew, aged about 65 years at the residence of Tomo Doye, Igo Camp, Dari Circle, Lepa Rada district on 4 December 2022.

¹¹¹ Scheduled interview with Tayom (Tumyom) Mara, son, aged about 65 years, permanent resident of Gensi town, Gensi circle held in the residence of Tayom Mara, Liru Village, Likabali, Lower Siang District on 6 December 2022.

¹¹² Scheduled interview with Jomi Bomjen, son and Gam (GB) Lumpo village, aged about 70 years, permanent resident of Lumpo Village, Nari Circle held in the residence of Jomi Bomjen, Lumpo Village, Nari Circle, Lower Siang District on 4 December 2022.

¹⁰¹ Personal information relating to Jumki Amo is adapted from interview with Kore Amo. Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

¹⁰² Personal information relating to Marge Lollen is adapted from interview with Kenli Lollen (grandson). Scheduled interview held on 9 April 2022 at the residence of Minkir Lollen, Kombo Tarsu village, Aalo circle, West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

¹⁰³ Scheduled interview with Minjom Bagra, son, aged about 70 years, permanent resident of Upper Colony, Aalo Circle at Hotel Min-Ta, Aalo on 9 April 2022.

¹⁰⁴ Scheduled interview with Tagi Zirdo, younger sibling, aged about 80 years and Kendo Zirdo, aged about 50 years, nephew, at the residence of Tagi, Lipu village, Likabali, Lower Siang district on 6 December 2022.

¹⁰⁵ Scheduled interview with Goka Zirdo, grandson, aged about 60 years and Kago Zirdo, son, aged about 75 years at the residence of Kenjum Chisi, Chisi village, Dari Circle, Lepa Rada district on 6 December 2022.

35. YIMI KADU

Yimi was from Kadu village lying further west of Tene and Ramle area. Yimi's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya from Mane village. Coming from a rich family and influential family, Yimi's inclusion in the Sadiya delegation added another name from the Kakki-Kadu clans of Ramle-Zirido area. For his times, Yimi was a widely travelled person concerned with larger issues of society.¹¹³

36. GADO RINGU

Gado Ringu's name appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya from Kora village. Gado was a powerful person from the Ringu-Riso group of clan and hence an influential person in the area. Due to this, he frequented meetings held in villages and outside (in Assam).¹¹⁴ Gado's village is the neighbouring village of Ledum where the British colonial forces had already come in 1911-12 during the Abor Expedition. Thus, Gado came from a family where he was bound to be updated with affairs of the time.

37. TABOM PADU

Tabom Padu's name also appears in Borpatragohain's list (1972) as one of the Congress delegates to

the Bordoloi Sub-Committee at Sadiya from Kora village. The research committee was informed that Tabom was Gado's makbo ('husband of sister') and it is very probable that Mr. Padu would have accompanied Gado to any meeting outside the village, especially one which involved travelling for days as that in Sadiya. Tabom in his own right was an influential person from the Pago-Panor-Padu clan of Kora. His presence in the delegation would have added weight to the strength of the group.¹¹⁵

38. TAMIK DABI

According to Nyori, Tamik was removed from the post of Political Jamadar due to his involvement in anti-British activities.¹¹⁶ We have given more details of Tamik's role (as well as some more aspects of his life) in the revolutionary activities section in the last chapter. According to Pandey and Nyori, Tamik also joined the freedom-cum-Congress movement led by Moji and Moje Riba and he is said to have led a delegation of the Congress leaders to Shillong in order to meet Gopinath Bordoloi.¹¹⁷ We are including Tamik's name in this list on this basis.

39. IMAR LOMBI

Imar was a rich and influential man of Tirbin area.¹¹⁸ His name appears in both Pandey¹¹⁹ and Nyori's¹²⁰ list of people who attended an important Dipa Congress meeting. Our field study and cross-verification of written and oral narratives indicate the participation of these influential people in

at least one meeting either in Sadiya or Dibrugarh or Dipa.

40. KANGO LOMBI

Kango was a rich and influential man of Tirbin area. His name appears in both Pandey¹²¹ and Nyori's¹²² list of people who attended an important Dipa Congress meeting. His family name is Perbi Lombi. Our field study and cross-verification of written and oral narratives indicate the participation of these influential people in at least one meeting either in Sadiya or Dibrugarh or Dipa.¹²³

41. MINDE GADI

Minde was one of the leading men of the Gadi-Gako clan of the Karkas around the time. His name appears in both Pandey¹²⁴ and Nyori's¹²⁵ list of people who attended an important Dipa Congress meeting. Our field study and



cross-verification of written and oral narratives indicate the participation of these influential people in at least one meeting either in Sadiya or Dibrugarh or Dipa.¹²⁶

42. KAJE YOMCHA

Kaje was a rich and powerful men from the Yiyom-Yinyo branch of the Karkas. It is to be noted that the Karka area was still a remote, feared place of the colonial officials at the time. Kaje's name appears in both Pandey¹²⁷ and Nyori's¹²⁸ list of people who attended an important Dipa Congress meeting. Our field study and cross-verification of written and oral narratives indicate the participation of these influential people in at least one meeting either in Sadiya or Dibrugarh or Dipa.¹²⁹

Image 14 (left): Members of the research team with Shri Talar Doye, former President, APCC, Seren Village, 4 Dec 2022

¹¹³ Scheduled interview with Marken Kadu, grandson, aged about 60 years, permanent resident of Kadu Village, Koyu Circle, Lower Siang District held in the residence of Marken Kadu, ESS Sector, Itanagar on 3 December 2022.

¹¹⁴ Details relating to Gado is on the basis of scheduled interview with Dosen Ringu, son, aged about 60 years, permanent resident of Kora Village, East Siang District held on 4 December 2022 at the interviewee's residence.

¹¹⁵ Details relating to Tabom Padu is extracted from the scheduled interview with Dosen Ringu, family relative, aged about 60 years, permanent resident of Kora Village, East Siang District held on 4 December 2022 at the interviewee's residence.

¹¹⁶ Nyori, A Freedom Movement, p. 172.

¹¹⁷ Pandey, Leadership Patterns, p. 95 and Nyori, A Freedom Movement, p. 82.

¹¹⁸ Marngu Lombi, son, aged about 60 years, permanent resident of Tai Village, Tirbin Circle, Lepa Rada District Schedule Interview held on 4 December 2022 at the interviewee's residence.

¹¹⁹ Pandey, Leadership Patterns, p. 94.

¹²⁰ Nyori, A Freedom Movement, pp. 79-82.

¹²¹ Pandey, Leadership Patterns, p. 94.

¹²² Nyori, A Freedom Movement, pp. 79-82.

¹²³ Tojen Lombi, aged about 65 years, permanent resident of Lutak Village, Tirbin Circle, Lepa Rada District Schedule Interview held on 5 December 2022 at Tourist Lodge, Tirbin.

¹²⁴ Pandey, Leadership Patterns, p. 94.

¹²⁵ Nyori, A Freedom Movement, pp. 79-82.

¹²⁶ Dejar Gadi, son, aged about 60 years, permanent resident of Deke Gadi Village, Tirbin Circle, Lepa Rada District Schedule Telephonic Interview held on 13 December 2022.

¹²⁷ Pandey, Leadership Patterns, p. 94.

¹²⁸ Nyori, A Freedom Movement, pp. 79-82.

¹²⁹ Jeka Yomcha, son, aged about 85 years, permanent resident of Lipu Yomcha Village, Yomcha Circle, West Siang District Schedule Interview held on 5 December 2022 at the permanent residence of Jeka at Lipu Yomcha.



Image 15 (above): Members of the research team with Shri Nyodek Yomgam, former MP, Oyan Village, 14 Dec 2022



Image 15 (right): Members of the research team with Shri Jeka Yomcha, Lipu Yomcha Village, 4 Dec 2022
(from L to R: Prof. Ashan Riddi, Shri Jeka Yomcha and Dr. Tajen Dabi)

Adi

INTRODUCTION

Adis are settled in Upper Siang, Siang, Shi Yomi, East Siang, Lower Dibang Valley and Namsai districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The Adis were earlier referred to as the Abors, a term originating from the Assamese.¹³⁰ In records it is also said the termed 'Abor' signified 'barbarous' and 'independent',¹³¹ but the word 'barbarous' is not justifiable to explain the meaning of any term used to address any group of independent tribes. However, the earliest colonial records refer to them as Abar,¹³² which has no local equivalent meanings or terms. Colonial records also categorized them as the Bor Abor, Pasi Abor, Menyong Abor, and so on. But they call themselves the Adi. The Adis are also descendants of Abo Tani (legendary ancestor to the Tani tribes). Prior to the arrival of the British, the Adi have been visiting the plain of their foothills at Saikhowa and Sadiya for trading their products in exchange for salt and other essential commodities for life. The Adi claimed their rights over all the resources found in the rivers and jungles on the foot of their hills. Ahom kings also acknowledge the Adi suzerainty over sections of plains people like the Beeahs and gold washers.¹³³ After the British annexed Assam, the fishermen and gold washers found themselves safer to move away from the reach of their Adi masters and settle far away from the hills under the protection of the British laws.¹³⁴ Sometimes, these people who were under control of the Adis found themselves in safe haven under British humanitarian laws but

for the Adis it was their legitimate right to extract taxes from their plain subject. Whenever they failed to get their due shares, the Adi resorted to extreme means to extract taxes which led to clashes between the Adis and the colonial government. One such classic case is the Adi (Kebang Villagers) raid against the Beeah village of Sengajan on 31st January 1858. A beeah had deserted their village and refused to pay dues which Adis were demanding.¹³⁵

In December, 1835, Adi Gam with two hundred of his kinsmen came down from the hills and tries to settle at bank of Dehing River; but the British official considered it to be dangerous to allow them to settle near Sadiya. Hence, they returned to the hills.¹³⁶ It seems that the first Adi village that the British officials saw was Bonjir (Bomjir) on the bank of Dibong (Dibang) river.¹³⁷

Therefore, the Adi claim of absolute control over people and resources at foothills as their legitimate rights and Britishers determination to administer the territory claimed by the Adis and to enforce their laws ensured the clash between the colonial state and the independent Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. In this way the Adis and the British fought a series of wars namely, the Anglo-Abor War 1858, the Anglo-Abor War 1859, the Anglo-Abor War 1894 and the Anglo-Abor War 1911. These wars were also locally known as the Bitbor Mimak 1858, Bongal Mimak 1859, Nijom Mimak 1894 and Poju Mimak 1911 respectively.

¹³⁰ John Butler, A Sketch of Assam with some Account of the Hill tribes, Smith and Co., London, 1846. p. 110.

¹³¹ E. T. Dalton, Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, 1872, p. 22.

¹³² W. W. Hunter, A Statistical Account of Assam (vol. I), Turner & Co., London, 1874, p. 332.

¹³³ Mackenzie, History of the Relationship of the Government with the Hill tribes, pp. 34-35.

¹³⁴ Mackenzie, History of the Relationship of the Government with the Hill tribes, pp. 34-35.

¹³⁵ Mackenzie, History of the Relationship of the Government with the Hill tribes, pp. 34-35.

¹³⁶ Butler, A Sketch of Assam, pp. 112-113.

¹³⁷ Dalton, Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, p. 22.

After the Sengajan attack of 1858, the British government sanctioned the punitive expedition against Kebang village under the command of Captain Bihar. The battle was fought between the British army and the Adi Warriors at Gooying Liidung near Kebang village on 26 March 1857. In this battle, the British lost the war and retreated¹³⁸ with a loss of four soldiers and many coolies.¹³⁹

The failure of Captain Bihar's expedition compelled the British authority to send a second expedition under the Command of Col. Hannay. A fierce battle was fought at Romkang stockade on 27 February 1859. In this battle, the British suffered 52 casualties including Lieutenants. So, without punishing Kebang people they again retreated back.¹⁴⁰

It was in 1893, a group of Adis raided one Miri village and captured the boats and carried them off.¹⁴¹ They then attacked a patrolling military police on 27 November 1893. Accordingly, on 14 January 1894 an expedition under J. F. Needham, the Political Officer, Sadiya and Capt. R. M Maxwell were sent to punish the people of Bomjir, Dambuk and Siluk villages.¹⁴² However, after a series of battles with the Adi warriors, with a heavy loss of lives and casualties, Needham had to retreat from camp just beyond Duku village on 27 February 1894.¹⁴³

Finally, it was due to the increasing military power of China which could become a cause for concern for the British interest in North Eastern Frontier that com-

elled the British officials to undertake aggressive exploration missions to the hills. The objectives of expedition were to:

- i. Ascertain the influence of the Chinese officials on the hill tribes;
- ii. Explore new trade routes to Tibet and China;
- iii. Cultivate friendly relations with the tribes; and
- iv. Ascertain the fall of Tsang-po.

In 1908, Noel Williamson succeeded J. F. Needham as the Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya. Immediately after assuming office, in 1908, he visited the fringe of the hilly villages like Ledum, Yagrung, etc. Again in 1909 he toured up to Kebang village.¹⁴⁴

In 1911, Williamson, along with Dr. J. D. Gregorson and a team of coolies, helpers and sepoy made another venture into the Adi Hills. But only three of them could return to Sadiya. All of them including Williamson were killed in Adis hills. Thereafter, the British Government decided to send a punitive expedition to punish people and villages involved in the killing the officials. The expedition was sent against the Adis on October 1912 under the command of General Hamilton Bower.¹⁴⁵ A series of battles were fought between the Adi warriors and the British forces. After two months of war, the Adi lost the war to the British power in the battles of Kekar Monying and Kebang.

The Adis had fought many wars against the British to defend their territory from the invading colonial state. In the process of their resistance to colonial invasions and fighting

wars, many Adis lost their lives and many suffered various degrees of punishment at the hand of the colonial authorities. Here an attempt has been made to give due recognition to their contributions. The list is not final and is subject to further research and corrections.

EVENT NO.1: ANGLO-ADI WAR 1858-1859

The Anglo-Abor War which took place in 1858 - 1859 called as the Bitbor Mimak for expedition of 1858 and BongalMimak for the 1859 expedition by Adi were the earliest encounters by the Abors with the British forces. On 31 January 1858, Adi people from Kebang village attacked Sengajun village which was located six miles to the North of Dibrugarh in Assam. In this attack, they killed twenty villagers and wounded six more. After Sengajan attack of 1858, the British government sanctioned the punitive expedition against Kebang village under the command of Captain W. H. Lowther. Captain H. S. Bihar accompanied the expedition team up to Rottung village. The battle was fought between the British army and the Adi Warriors at Gooying Liidung near Kebang village on 26 March 1858. In this battle, the British lost the war and retreated with a loss of four soldiers and many mortars.

However, on account of non-availability of documents in colonial records as well as in oral traditions, names of many

persons who had played prominent role in the war are missing in this report. Both Gooying Liidung (huge stone) and standing Bongar Laane (jackfruit tree) are the living testimonies to the valour and strength with which the Kebang people had fought against the mighty British force on 26th March 1858.

The failure of Captain Bihar's expedition compelled the British authority to send a second expedition under the Command of Col. Hannay. This expedition left Sadiya on 21 February 1859 and arrived at Pasighat on 26th February 1859 and marched towards Kebang on 27th March 1859. A fierce battle was fought at Romkang stockade on 27 February 1859 between the combined warriors of Kebang, Mongku, Romkang and other villages and the British force.

British force succeeded in capturing some stockades and burnt down Mongku and Romkang villages in the foothills. However, Adi warrior steadfastly resisted the advance of the British force and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. In this battle, the British suffered 52 casualties including Lieutenant Davies and Lieutenant Midshipman Mayo, and the Adi lost three fighters. They engaged in uninterrupted hard fighting for 7 hours. So, without punishing Kebang people they again retreated back. While defending one of the stockades, Lomgum sustained a bullet injury in one of his thighs. He was taken to Romkang Dere and fortunately survived the bullet injury.

¹³⁸ L. W. Shakespear, History of Assam Rifles, Military Press, Firma KLM, Calcutta, 1929, p. 42.

¹³⁹ Tduram Darang, 'From the Desk of the Chairman', Souvenir Poju Mimak Centenary Celebration, 2011-12, Kebang (1911-12 to 2011-12), Paator Gumin Heritage Preservation and Research Foundation, Pasighat, 1912.

¹⁴⁰ Shakespear, History of Assam Rifles, p. 44.

¹⁴¹ L. W. Shakespear, History of Upper Assam, Upper Burmah and North-East Frontier, Macmillan and Co., London, 1914, pp. 115-116.

¹⁴² Robert Reid, History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam 1883-1941, Assam Government Press, Shillong, 1942, pp. 194-200.

¹⁴³ W. R. Little, Report on the Abor Expedition 1894, Government Central Printing Office, Simla, 1895.

¹⁴⁴ Frontier and Over-Seas Expedition from India, Official Account of the Abor Expedition 1911-1912, Government Central Branch Press, Simla, 1913, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴⁵ A. Hamilton, The Abor Jungles: Being an Account of the Abor Expedition the Mishmi Mission and the Miri Mission, Eveleigh Nash, London, 1912, p. 71.

Image 16 (right):
Attending Azadi ka
Amrit Mahotsav at
Bongal Yapgo, Dam-
buk, 6 May 2022



Image 17 (right):
At Dambuk Guest
House (from Left to
Right): Dr. David
Gao, Sh. Abu Saring,
Prof. Ashan Riddi,
Er. Taduram Darang,
Sh. Nepha Wangsa,
Dr. Tajen Dabi, Sh.
Ngamtong Naam, 24
November 2022



Image 18 (left):
On a field visit at
Bongal Yapgo, Dam-
buk, 5 May 2022



Image 19 (left):
At Bongal Yapgo (stone stockades) of
Anglo-Abor War of 1894, Dambuk, 5 May
2022

Image 20 (right):
At the site of war
memorial dedicated
to Kengki Megu
at Dagem Liireng,
Upper Siang District,
8 May 2022



Image 21 (Above): At the site of war memorial of Lutnyung Megu, Silluk, East Siang, 8 May 2022



Image 22(above): At Midu Lireng, Yeling-Yetek, on the way to Bodak, East Siang, 8 May 2022



Image 23(above): Research team during the field visit to Abor Lireng at ayeng Village, East Siang, 8 May 2022



Image 24(above): Booby Traps of Anglo-Adi War 1894



Image 24(above): Interviewed Dr. N. Lego at Pasighat, 12 May 2022

Image 25(left): Sketch of Bongal Yapgo, Anglo-Adi War 1894 (Dambuk Stockade)

Recommendations

A. HERO: None

B. MARTYRS

1. SELTUM YOMSO

Seltum Yomso was the eldest son of Kyasel Yomso. He was from Romkang Village (left abandoned in 1912). Seltum sacrificed his life on 27 February 1859 while defending his village against the advancing British troops. The British troops under the command of S. F. Hannay and Col. Reid arrived at Pasighat from Assam via Koboghat and attacked Romkang, the second oldest village of Pasighat. On the fateful day of 27 Feb 1859, Seltum Yomso was engaged on duty to guard entry of foreigners at BoyingYapgo at Pasighat. According to the oral narratives SeltumYomso attacked three British sepoy and in the process he shot death at Yabgo. After defeating SeltumYomso and his team at BoyingYapgo battle, Col. S. F. Hannay and Col. Reid moved to Romkang where they faced another group of Warriors at 2nd stockade called Romkang Yapgo.

2. LOMGUM DARANG

Lomgum Darang was the third son of Lomkom Darang of Kebang village. Like his father, he had also played prominent role in the resisting against the British interventions in their right in the plains. He was the one who led Kebang men in attacking Sengajan village near Dibrugarh on 31 January 1858 for refusal to pay taxes to Kebang people.

3. SELTUM YOMSO

Basing Moyong was the youngest son amongst the three siblings of Li-bang Moyong and was born at Sikel village to the west of present Mongku village. Basing Moyong was also the brother-in-law of Seltum Yomso and was associated with the killing of British forces that were advancing to storm the Romkang village under the command of S. F. Hannay and Colonel Reid on 27th February 1859. In the process Basing Moyong laid down his life. As per the oral history Basing Moyong shot at many Britishers while defending the Romkangmimak Yapgo. After valiantly defending the Romkang Yapgo, Basing was shot dead by the sepoy.

C. FREEDOM FIGHTERS

1. LOMKOM DARANG

Lomkom Darang who was a valiant freedom fighter led the warriors of Kebang village to victory over a British punitive expedition led by Captain Lowther in the first Anglo-Adi war of 1858 which is popularly known as Bitbor Mimak. Lomkom Darang was the second eldest son among the three sons of Tayor Darang. He was a war veteran in inter-village warfares who had led warriors of Kebang village during various inter-tribe wars during those days. Liyung Taki of Rottung village, the guide of the British troops who escaped and ran up to Kebang village on 26th March 1858 to informed them about the motive of the advancing British troops. Lomkom Darang lead the Kebang warriors to confront the advancing troop and ambushed them in Gooying area. In the ambush Lomkom Darang shot dead the Bugler in the chest with a poisoned arrow. Thereafter the fighting between Kabang Warrior and British force started and lasted till late night until the British force retreated. The

sepoy indiscriminately fired at the huge boulder called Gooying Liidung perhaps thinking that some Kebang men were hiding behind it.

Unable to withstand the persistent attacks from Kebang men, Captain Lowther abandoned the plan of attacking Kebang village next day but ordered his troops to retreat in the night itself.

2. LIYUNG TAKI

Liyung Taki is also one of the central figure during Anglo-Abor War of 1858. He was a very energetic young man who acted as a local guide to the British expedition led by Captain Lowther against Kebang village. When Captain H.S. Bivar and Captain Lowther, reached HitumPigo (river crossing point of Siang river) on 22nd March 1858, people from Rottung village provided Hutpi (raft made of Bamboo). In the morning of 24th March 1858, Captain Lowther moved to Kebang village taking Liyung Taki of Rottung village as a local guide. Midway, Captain Lowther's force halted for two days near Hideng river. At nights in that camp Liyung Taki overheard the purpose of the British expedition when there was discussion between Mishing guides and porters.

On 26 March 1858 at Girlek Yingkong, (plain patch of land) he performed mock Adi war dance to the amusement of the troop and when they reached near the edge of small stream, he escaped to Kebang and informed them about the plan of the British. Because of his tactical information, the Kebang warriors made counter plan and successfully ambushed the expedition party, otherwise the British would have attacked Kebang and killed the people and destroyed the village.

3. KUTPAK SIRAM

Kutpak Siram hailed from Sissen village which is in present Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. He was well built and a very courageous person and was an expert in traditional warfare while also being a good orator.

The punitive expedition against Kebang village moved via Pasighat on 20 March 1858 and crossed Siang river below Pongging. From Pongging camp they marched up to Hitum Pigo between Pongging and Sissen villages on 22 March. Then they crossed Siang River to the right bank by bamboo rafts at HitumPigo. On 24 March they moved further to Kebang.

Meeting was held at Pongging Dere which was attended by the people of Sissen village. When KutpakSiram was delivering speech in meeting, one LodunTaloh of Sissen stood up and said to Kutpak that there was no point in giving such bombastic speeches when the enemy had already crossed Miilek Yorbé, (hill ridge between Pongging and Sissen). When he learnt about arrival of British force KutpakSiram ran back to his village through Millek Yorbé to attack the enemies. Kutpak and some other men of Sissen village reached at Hitum Pigo, porters of British were resting near Sipam stream. He attacked the porters and killed seven of them. Kutpak Siram took a Nora Eyok, (dao) which was thrown at him by one of the British porters as a memento to his village.

4. JORIN PERME

The Abor were expecting another war with the British, so a stockade was built at Yapgo (present Yapgo Village) by Romkang people for both offensive and defensive purposes. The stockade was guarded by Makro Lamkang (warriors) of Romkang Village comprised of different clans on rotation basis. On 27 February 1859, the advancing British force attacked the Yapgo Stockade. A fierce battle was fought between Romkang Adi and British at Yapgo. In the

battle both the parties suffered many casualties. The British lost one sepoy and 44 were wounded by poison arrows. But oral sources says Jorin Perme and Seltum Yomso killed 9 British soldiers and injured many including Davis and Midshipman Mayo. Jorin Perme was shot dead in the fight. Before succumbing to his injuries, Jorin Perme handed over his yoksa (sword) to Seltum Yomso and asked him to handover his family and Seltum gave his family. The Yokes is still in possession of the close families of Jorin Perme.

The British took one Lenong (brass plate) Joring displayed it at Musup/dere (Community Hall) as the symbol of victory and punishment. The partially damaged Lenong is still in possession of the close family.

EVENT NO.2: *NIZAM GHAT RAID 1882*

In spite of peace and friendship agreement, in 1862 Adis from Dambuk and Bomjir raided into Mishmi hills and came down across the Dibong river into plains and claimed dues from the plain settlers. Hence, British government 1876 established Military Posts at Nizamghat and Bomjir to check movement of the Adis. In 1882 Borkeng Tayeng from Padu village along with his son Kebok Tayeng attacked the military posts at Nizamghat, seriously wounding sepoy and carried off two Mishings for harbouring his runaway slaves. Therefore, he challenged the colonial state for preventing the Adis' access to the sources in the plains and British intervention regarding the owning of slaves.

Recommendations

A. HERO: None

B. MARTYRS: None

C. FREEDOM FIGHTER

1. BORKENG TAYENG

Borkeng Tayeng was one of the powerful and strong men from Padu village (Ayeng). He, along with his son Kebo Tayeng, attacked the British Military outpost at Nizamghat and seriously injured the Sepoys and carried away the rifles. He also captured some British subject imprisoned for sometime. He contritely took hostile position against the British Government and threatened the stability of the British position at Sadiya.

EVENT NO.3: *ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894*

During 1882, Borkeng Tayeng attacked the Military outpost at Nizamghat and injured the sepoy and carried away some Mishings. Again in 1893, a group of Adis raided one Mishing village and captured their boats and carried them off. They then attacked a patrolling military police on 27 November 1893. The British Government decided that if these acts of Adis were left unpunished, the Adis would be emboldened to conduct more raids into the plains and it would certainly diminish their power and authority in the North East Frontier Tracts. Accordingly, on 14 January 1894 an

expedition under the command of J. F. Needham, Political Officer, Sadiya and Capt. R. M. Maxwell was sent to punish the people of Bomjir, Dambuk and Siluk villages. However, after a series of battles with the Adi warriors, with a heavy loss of lives and casualties, J. F. Needham had to retreat from camp just beyond Duku village on 27 February 1894.

Recommendations

A. HERO: None

B. MARTYRS

1. KENGKI MEGU

Kengi Megu was a popular archer and was the second son of Pangkeng Megu of Damroh village in Upper Siang district. He was of fair complexion, tall and well-built man. He died on 25 February, 1894 with two others at Dagem-Liireng near Sijon stream, present Mopom Circle of Upper Siang. He died while fighting against the British force of Abor Expedition of 1894. Evidently, Kengki Megu, before being martyred, shot many British sepoy and seriously wounded Lieutenant East with a poisoned arrow. The British force had to retreat back due to the tough resistance of Adi Warriors under Kengki Megu.

2. KOYI LEGO

Koyi Lego was born at Damro Village in a humble family and was the only son of Mutko Lego. Koyi Lego was just above 20 years old when he along

with Kangki Megu and Jonkeng Pertin volunteered and fought against the British force near Sijon stream at Dagem Liireng under Upper Siang District. Koyi Lego along with other villagers from the adjoining villages resisted the advancing Britishers with bows and arrows. He was fatally wounded in fighting the British and died on 25 February 1894.

3. MUTLING PERME

Mutling Perme was one of the assailants in Bodak (Yeling-Yetek) Massacre of 1894. Having confided with the people of Ayeng and Mebo, the British made an advance base camp in Bodak and left some sick porters and ration at there.

Mutling Perme was assigned the responsibility of blowing a whistle as soon as he found the moment of opportunity to the best of his judgement, while the rest were asked to wait silently with the utmost alertness. On 2 March 1894 Bodak was attacked and a massacre took place.

4. KEBANG PERME

Kebang Perme also taken part in the Bodak Massacre of 1894.

5. KETONG PERME

Ketong Perme was the brother of Kabang Perme who took part in the Bodak (Yeling-Yetek) Massacre of 1894.

6. KEBO TAYENG

The British expedition team led by Mr. J.F Needham and Captain Maxwell decided that base camp be set up at Bodak because firstly some of the sepoy were sick, injured and wounded as they already covered considerable

distance for the military expedition started from Sadiya. Secondly, for supply of ration during the campaign.

To guard the Bodak camp the command was given to one native Subedar and under him 17 Sepoys and 44 coolies were placed. Meanwhile, on 2 March 1894, the Abor of Ayeng village led by Kebo Tayeng son of Borkeng Tayeng attacked the base camp. Abors of Ayeng came to the camp in the guise of coolies (porters) and killed the guard. Thereafter, they killed all except two persons and destroyed the camp.

7. LUTNYUNG MEGU

Lutnyung Megu was the eldest son of Balut Megu of Silluk village. According to his great grandson, Shri Dukpok Megu of Kiyit village, LutnyungMegu laid down his life on 28 January 1894 at Delang Yapgo near Mime Sipo, now Silluk village while fighting the British force of Abor Expedition of 1893-94.

8. MATLEM BORANG

Matlem Borang was as brave and strong as any other and because of his immense love for his motherland, he went to the war and fought against the intruding British force along with other comrades. Matlem Borang was badly injured by the bullet shots of the shell fire unleashed upon the villagers and he succumbed to his injury after eighteen days.

9. TONGKYAP BORANG

Tongkyap was the son of TumtongBorang of Remsing village (presently known as Milang village, Upper Siang) and he was the youngest of the five siblings. Tongkyap Borang along with his parents and brothers migrated to Lupong village, Dambuk. Tongkyap Borang actively participated in village

activities and was instrumental in creating the famous stone stockade of Bongal Yapgo. He was badly injured by bullet shots of the British while he was on an advance patrolling duty against the invading troops and succumbed to the injuries.

10. MUTTUM DARIN

Muttum Darin, son of Pamut Darin took part in the Anglo-Abor War of 1894, popularly known as Bongal Yapgo Mimak at Bongal Yapgo under Dambuk Circle of Lower Dibang Valley District of Arunachal Pradesh. Muttum Darin migrated from Bine village (Adipasi), presently in Mopom Circle, Upper Siang District and settled at Lupong Village of Dambuk Circle, Lower Dibang Valley District.

It is narrated by the elderly people of the society that the warriors of Bomjir, Dambuk, Mimesipo, Siluk, Ayeng, Bodak, Silli, Padu, Adipasi, Milang and Komkar in their attempt to resist the entry of armed British troops during their Abor expeditions at Bongalyapgo, made supreme sacrifices by giving their lives. Mutum Darin was one of the great souls who gave his life for his motherland in Anglo-Abor War of 1894. Tumkeng Darin, the son of Muttum Darin did not have any son of his own. So, the children of Mutko Darin have succeeded as inheritance and are presently residing at Kiyit village under Mebo Circle of East Siang District.

11. BANGKIR BORANG

Bankir Borang was the eldest son of Punbang Borang. Bangkir was fearless and adventurous by nature. Being adventurous he kept on moving from one place to another in search of a suitable place for settlement. In doing so, he with his brother, visited Sadiya and neighbouring Mishing villages. Bangkir Borang settled at Bomjir. As per oral history handed down through gener-

ations and as narrated by village elders of Dambuk, Bangkir Borang took a very active role in the Anglo-Abor War of 1894 at Bongal Yapgo, Dambuk. In the midst of the war, he was killed by the British soldiers at Bongal Yapgo.

His dead body was brought to Ayeng village by his father and brothers as Bangkir Borang did not have any family members at Bomjir.

12. DANGKOM PERTIN

He was the son of Banabyong Pertin and was killed at the age of 24 years in the battle of Bongal Yapgo at Dambuk in Lower Dibang Valley district during 1894 Anglo-Abor war. Dangkom Pertin was the son of Banabyong Pertin and was a man of short stature. He was not only courageous but he was also an ambidextrous and skilled swordsman. He attained martyrdom in the Anglo-Abor War of 1894 while fighting against the mighty British Troops at Bongal Yapgo (Dambuk). He was only 24 years of age when he died in the battle field.

13. TONYONG PERTIN

Son of Poktong Pertin, Tonyong was one amongst the unsung heroes of Anglo-Abor War of 1894 at Bongal Yapgo. He was a tall man of about 5 ft 10 inches. It is said that his fighting tactics was unmatched and unique from other warriors. He was an ambidextrous (able to use both hands equally). He was deeply injured during the war but managed to escape. He succumbed to his injuries after a few days.

14. JONGKENG PERTIN

Jongkeng Pertin was the son of Komjong Pertin of Damroh village, Upper Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh. He had 3 (three) brothers, namely;

Jongkut Pertin, Jotum Pertin and Jorin Pertin. He was of tall stature and was very courageous and brave. He was also a man of social-minded nature and was always ready to help the needy and helpless people of his time. A stalwart, he was patriotic, very good archer, knew handling of swords skillfully and the use of shield to fight against his foes and defend himself from attacks of his enemies. Jongkeng Pertin was one of the forefront fighters who led the warriors of Damroh and adjoining villages to fight against the British forces at Dagem Lireng. He attained martyrdom on 25 February 1894 while bravely fighting against the British soldiers along with his brave compatriots, Kengki Megu and Koyi Lego in Anglo-Abor war at Pimpu Dota, popularly known as Dagem Lireng near Sijon stream between Damroh and Padu villages in present Upper Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh.

During the Anglo-Abor war of 1893-94 in the left bank of Siang River the British forces wanted capture Damroh village. The British faced stiff resistance from Adi warriors of Bomjir, Dambuk, Silluk, Mebo, Ayeng, Bodak, Sili &Padu Villages which are extended villages of Damroh. However, despite stiff resistance the Abor were defeated and the strong British armed forces marched towards Damroh village. The Abors erected forts of stone and bamboo pilings at Sijon; a narrow gorge in between Padu and Adi-Pasi. The fighting with British forces was multi-pronged approach - frontal attacked men with bows and arrows, swords and spears and side by side with stone and wooden pilings. There were strong punitive actions by the British armed forces but the courageous warriors of Damroh and adjoining villages defeated the forces of the British in between Padu, Adi-Pasi and Damroh villages despite of their well armed gun fires and ammunitions at Dagem Lirem.

15. SIPANG PADA

Sipang Pada was born in the year 1856 at Siluk Village which is presently under Mebo Circle of East Siang District. He was the eldest son of Yorsing

Pada. He migrated to Dambuk area of Lower Dibang Valley. He was shot dead in the Anglo-Abor war of 1894 which is popularly known as the Bongal Mimak.

16. KETONG SARING

Ketong Saring was from Silluk village and was a very smart, courageous and a short statured person. He was expert in using indigenous weapons like swords (Yoksa) and spear (Gining) in his youthful days. Abors from Silluk village came to know that after defeating Abors of Dambuk, the British troops were advancing to Silluk village on their expedition mission to Damroh, the headquarters of Bor Abors. The Abors of Silluk village built a stockade at the vicinity of Delang Stream to prevent British from entry into the village.

The British troop under J.F. Needham, the Assistant Political Officer of Sadiya entered the Delang stockade gate on 28th of January 1894. KetongS aring along with many brave sons of Adis jumped out of the stockade, rushed to the approaching British troops and killed one British personnel and while killing the second personnel a Naga Police threw a spear at Lt. Ketong Saring and it pierced his chest. Ketong Saring fell to the ground with the spear in his body and died on the battleground. Thus, Ketong Saring met martyrdom after killing 02 (two) British personnel at Delang Yapgo, Silluk. Ketong Saring was very young at the time of his death.

17. KOTRIN SARING

Kotrin Saring was a very humble and a loyal youth of Dambuk in Lower Dibang Valley district. He was also great archer and a keen observer too. During Anglo-Abor War at Dambuk, Kotrin and his compatriots shot many British sepoy. The Britishers could not guess where from the arrows had been shot. To locate the place of shooting arrows, some of them climbed

on the trees but they were shot down. Many British sepoy were killed and many injured because of the poison-tipped arrow. The British attempted to capture Kotrin but he managed to escape. Later, he was caught and beaten to death. In this way, Kotrin Saring was killed in the hands of cruel British sepoy. Kotkir Saring and Kotrin Saring did not have any offspring because they met their end at a young age. His brother Kottem Saring took the dead body of Kotrin and buried.

18. BANGKI LEGO

Bangki Lego was the son of Kebang Lego of Dambuk under Lower Dibang Valley district of Arunachal Pradesh. He was shot dead by the British Sepoy in the 1894 Anglo-Abor War at Dambuk. His dead body was traced after a few weeks.

19. JORAN MODI

Joran Modi was also born to Mutjo Modi of Lupong-Ebung village of present-day Dambuk in Lower Dibang Valley. Both Jotema and Joran were brothers. Joran Modi fought valiantly at the front along with the village resistance group and was killed by bullet shots on the 2nd day of Anglo-Abor War 1894 at Bongal Yapgo..

20. BASING TAYENG

Basing Tayeng was the son of Molbang Tayeng, Dambuk in Lower Dibang Valley. He was crushed to death by British elephant while fighting with the British forces at Bongal Yapgo in 1894 Anglo-Abor war.

21. SAMAT TAYENG

Samat Tayeng was the son of Pasang Tayeng. He was from a village called Ebung which is presently known as Dambuk in Lower Dibang Valley district. He was shot death by the Britishers at Bongal Yapgo during the Bongal Mimak or the Anglo-Abor War of 1894.

22. KELO BORANG

Kelo Borang was the son of Tumkeng Borang who was born at Damro Village, Upper Siang and on migrated to Dambuk in Lower Dibang Valley. He was killed by the British force at Bongal Yapgo Mimak in Anglo-Abor War 1894. Kelo Borang had only one son named Lomin Borang.

23. PANGKUT LEGO

Pangkut Lego was the fifth son of Lipang Lego and also the younger brother of Pamut Lego who was shot dead while on patrolling duty. Pangkut Lego was also a swift, strong and witty youth of Dambuk who was also one of the members of the Advance Patrolling Party where they were ambushed under a big banyan tree locally named as “ABRIK ROTNE”. Pangkut Lego was also shot dead in this ambush along with his elder brother Pamut Lego, Keemut Pertin and Toro Saring who miraculously survived in the shooting. Pangkut Lego was a bachelor when he faced his martyrdom.

24. PAMUT LEGO

Pamut Lego was the son of Lipang Lego of Dambuk village under Lower Dibang valley district of Arunachal Pradesh. They were five siblings viz: Pasong Lego, Pajong Lego, Pamut Lego, Panong Lego and Pangkut Lego. Pamut Lego was tall, strong and had a wellbuilt physique. When the Adis

got the information about the Britishers encamped at Bomjir, they formed advance patrol groups with swift, strong and witty young men to check the movement about the enemies. While on their patrol duty at about 3 to 4 Km. south of stone stockade at Bongal Yapgo, the British soldiers ambushed the patrol teams below a big banyan tree. The big Banyan Tree was named “Abrik Rotne” which means the tree where the Adi youth deputed on patrol duty were ambushed. In this ambush Pamut Lego along with his brother Pangkut Lego, Keemut Lego was shot dead in this ambush. Toro Saring was shot at his headgear but survived and ran away from the spot and he informed the Adis about the incident at base camp – Bongal Yapgo.

25. KEMUT PERTIN

Keemut Pertin was one of the most fearless and courageous warrior/fighter of the Adi Tribe who fought against the British soldiers in the Anglo-Abor war of 1894. He was a robust man with a height of around 5 Feet 8 inches. His father’s name was Kongkeng Pertin. He had two brothers and two sisters.

Keemut Pertin was a skilful man in handling weapons such as spears, swords and shields, etc. Above all, he was an excellent archer. It is said that he always used to keep his quiver full of arrows. He was regarded as one of the best archers of his time.

In the year 1894 when British soldiers attacked the Adi inhabited place called Yapgo (Dambuk), Keemut Pertin and his friends defended strongly against the advancing British troops. During the above-mentioned war a bullet shot one of the Abor fighters who was marching ahead of Keemut Pertin and the bullet penetrated the body of the warrior and hit Keemut Pertin at the same time. However, Keemut Pertin didn’t succumb instantly but he was seriously wounded and maimed. Somehow, he managed to escape and hide in the dense forest for two days. Being seriously injured, ultimately Keemut

Pertin succumbed to his injuries after two days and became one of the martyrs among those who laid their lives in the fight against British army.

Keemut was only 35 Years old at the time of his death. At a very young age of 35 he left his wife Opung Pertin along with one son and a daughter.

26. TAMAT LEGO

Tamat (Kemat) Lego was the son of Matkeng Lego who fought the intruding British Police valiantly during the 1894 Anglo-Abor war. While fighting he was brutally killed at Bonga Yapgo by the British elephant and he died on the spot.

27. JORIN YIRANG

Jorin Yirang was the son of Kiduk Yirang of Dambuk. Jorin Yirang fought the Britishers bravely in the battle field during Anglo- Abor war, 1894, Dambuk. It is narrated that Jorin Yirang, along with other Adi warriors, hid himself at the gate of the war stockade and watchfully waited at the gate. When the British used the elephant to demolish the stone stockade, Jorin Yirang cut off the trunk of the elephant. Eventually, the injured mighty elephant panicked and ran back and stamped over the British soldiers resulting into many casualties among the British.

28. TAKENG LEGO

Takeng Lego was the son of Matte Lego and was a brave man from Dambuk village. In the Anglo-Abor War, 1894, at Bongal Yapgo, Dambuk, he courageously fought the British soldiers. It is narrated that in the peak of the war, Takeng Lego climbed up a tree risking his life and had shot poison-smearred arrows injuring many British soldiers. When the British soldiers saw him

shooting arrows from the tree, they shot him down resulting into Takeng's death. Takeng Lego died at a very young age and was not married then. His dead body was taken care of by his elder brother Tapyang Lego.

29. LUNGSEL NGUPOK

Lungsel Ngupok was the youngest son of Ponlung Ngupok and also the younger brother of Lungkong Ngupok of Dambuk Village in Lower Dibang Valley district. Lungsel Ngupok gallantly fought the British soldiers with his indigenously made bows, arrows and swords. He along with Abor Warriors repelled the British soldiers for days together. Ultimately, the British Soldiers shot him dead.

30. LUNGKONG NGUPOK

Lungskong Ngupok was the son of Ponlung Ngupok who was a smart, medium stature and an expert local Archer. He took part in the Anglo-Abor War, 1894, Dambuk. He bravely resisted the intruding Britishers in Dambuk and in the process he was ultimately shot dead by the British sepoy.

31. MUTYI LEGO

Mutyi Lego was the son of Kemut Lego; of Ebung village (Dambuk). He fought the British Soldiers at Yapgo bravely and was shot dead by the British sepoy at the battle field in the 1894 war. He was a bachelor at the time of his death. His closest blood relatives are residing at Dambuk presently.

32. NGYANGBUNG LIBANG

Son of Agyang Libang of Ebung village, Dambuk was a smart and a skilled

swordsman. He was killed at Bongal Yapgo by the British Force. He was killed on 20 January 1894 in the battle of Bongal Yabgo at Dambuk. After the British Force moved towards Siluk village for their further invasion, the family members of Ngyangbung Libang recovered his dead body from Bongal Yapgo.

33. KESUNG LIBANG

Kesung Libang was born to Lingkeng Libang of the Ebung village, Dambuk in lower Dibang Valley District. Kesung Libang was shot to death by the intruding British force at the bank of Dibang (Sikang) river near Bomjir village. His other friends manage to escape and have narrated the story to the villagers of Ebung village.

34. JOTEM MODI

Jotem Modi was born to Mutjo Modi of Lupong-Ebung village of present day Dambuk. He had leadership quality. He fought bravely in the Anglo – Abor, 1894 at Bongal Yapgo at Dambuk. In course of fighting he was grievously injured but he somehow escaped from the site crippling and returned to his own village but he succumbed to his injuries.

35. TARO SARING

Toro Saring was the son of Ketong Saring of Dambuk village. Toro Saring was a stout body, strong, smart young man. He was expert in rhapsodies also. When the Adis completed erection of the Stone Stockade in the present location, they sent some smart youths for patrolling in Dambuk area. When the youth groups went down 3-4 kms towards Bomjir from the Stockade, suddenly the British Army ambushed them under a big banyan tree and shot dead few of his friends on the spot. Toro Saring was shot at his headgear

and he fell down on the ground. When he came to his senses, he quietly ran away from the spot and informed the Adi warriors about the invading army. However, he was killed by the British Army in the battle. His dead body was taken by his brother Tobang Saring.

36. POKKENG LEGO

Pokkeng Lego was from Padu Village. On 28 February 1894 the warriors from Padu Village attacked the retreating British forces at Koke (Kemaal Moonying area of Padu). In the engagement, Pokkeng Lego attacked the British soldiers with his lingkang (Stone- shoot) he was also shot dead on the spot.

37. NYOKLUT LEGO

He was from Padu village. On March 1, the British forces killed Nyoklut Lego.

38. KINGKYANG LEGO

He was from Ayeng Village. On March 6, 1894, the British forces killed Kingkyang Lego at Dumpop Korong (Dumpop stream in Ayeng area).

C. FREEDOM FIGHTERS

1. SIMAR PADA

Simar Pada was from Silluk village. His elder brother Sipang Pada was shot dead by a British Sepoy at Dambuk in 1894. Therefore, Simar Pada determined to avenge by killing the Britisher. Simar Pada along with Patel

Lego went to Bodak and hid the near artillery Godown of Britishers at Yetek Yepu near Bodak village. One day one British Sepoy came to the artillery Godown, both Simar Pada and Batel Lego immediately attacked the sepoy and killed the British Sepoy.

2. BATEL LEGO

Batel Lego was the youngest son of Libang Lego from Dambuk. Batel Lego was a very ferocious fighter, unable to bear the loss of his elder brother Bangki Lego, who was shot dead by the British soldier at the battle ground named Loklung-Yapgo in 1894. In order to revenge his brother's death, Batel Lego hid near the Godown at Kodak camp and when the tall British sepoy came near the Godown he immediately attack the sepoy with his sword resulting into battling. Meanwhile, Simar Pada chopped off one of Britisher's leg that helped Batel Lego to kill the British.

EVENT NO.4: ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12

The Anglo-Adi War of 1911-1912 is the most devastating war that the British and the Adis have ever fought. In the earlier three wars i.e. 1858, 1859 and 1894 the British had to suffer stiff resistance from the Adis and failed to subjugate the Adis under their dominance and influence. Till 1908, the British India Government followed a kind of non-interference policy regarding affairs of the hill tribes. However, the increasing military power of China and Chinese activities at Rima drew the attention of the British Government. They perceived threat of their interest in North Eastern Frontier that compelled

the British officials to undertake aggressive exploration missions to the hills with the following objectives:

- i. to ascertain the influence of the Chinese officials on the hill tribes;
- ii. explore new trade routes to Tibet and China;
- iii. cultivate friendly relations with the tribes; and
- iv. ascertain the fall of Tsang-po.

In 1908, Noel Williamson who succeeded J. F. Needham was appointed as the Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya to oversee the affairs of the tribes in the Hills of the Frontier. Immediately after assuming office, in 1908, J. F. Needham visited the fringe of hill villages like Ledum, Yagrung, and others. Again in 1909 he toured up to Kebang village. In 1911 Williamson, along with Dr. J. D. Gregorson and a team of porters, helpers and sepoys made another venture into the Adi Hills. But only three of them could return to Sadiya. All of them including Williamson were killed in the Adis hills. Thereafter, the British Government decided to send a punitive expedition to punish people and villages involved in the killing the British officials. The expedition was sent against the Adis on October 1912 under the command of General Hamilton Bower. Two columns, one towards Ledum and the main column towards Kebang to punish the Adis were sent. A series of battles were fought between the Adi warriors and the British forces. After two months of war, the Adi lost the war to the British power in the battles of Kekar Monying and Kebang.

The Britishers ransacked various Adi villages and burnt them down as a consequence of which the Adis had to submit to the British colonial power. Though most of the names who sacrificed their lives during this war could not be ascertained during the process of our research, however some names which so far have been found through the British records and the oral histories from the Adis during the field visit has been presented below.

There have been submissions from the Komsing villagers for the names of Tai Tapak, Tahan Tapak, Goyeng Taki, Taroyo Taki, Taman Taki, Yungkom Mayung, Tami Siram, Tosing Darang and Lomdu Darang to have participated



Image 26(above): At Goying Lidung (large rock) in Kebang, 10 May 2022. It is the rock which was fired upon by the British troops in 1858 mistaking it to be the stones stockade.

during the killing of Noel Williamson at Komsing on 31 March 1911. However, since no substantial evidence could be accessed on time to corroborate their claims, these names are subject to future research.



Image 27(above): Picture taken at Okok Dumbang of Renging village during the field visit, 10 May 2022. It is a place where a letter carrier and three sick coolies working for the Britishers were murdered by the Adis.



Image 28 (right):
On a field visit to
Pireng Yabgo, Sido
Village, 9 May 2022



Image 31 (right):
Interviewed Taku
Siram, Head Gam
of Rottung at Egar
Yabgo, 10 May 2022



Image 32 (left):
Epitaph of Noel
Williamson, Koms-
ing village. Site
visited on 11 May
2022



Image 29 (right):
With former Vice
Chancellor of RGU,
Prof. Tamo Mibang
(extreme left) at his
residence, Pasighat, 9
May 2022



Image 30 (left):
Interviewing
the Grandson of
Matmur Jamoh
(third from left) at
Yagrung Village, 9
May 2022



Image 33 (right):
Road constructed
near Egar River by
the Britishers during
their expeditions. It
is located between
Rottung Village and
Renging Village. Vis-
ited on 10 May 2022



Image 34 (left):
At Kekar Mony-
ing where the last
Anglo-Adi War of
1911-12 took place.
Visited on 10 May
2022

Recommendations

A. HERO

1. MATMUR JAMOH

Matmur Jamoh, born to Matdung Jamoh (in the part of 19th century) of Yagrung Village in East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. He was the Gam of his village when in 1908 Noel Williamson, the then Assistant Political Officer at Sadiya, was touring the Adi hills. When Williamson arrived at Yagrung, Matmur received and presented him with gifts. However, Williamson not only refused to accept the presentation but also abused and insulted Matmur and the people of Yagrung village. Since then, Matmur was determined to avenge this insult by killing Williamson. Consequently, he started plotting the revenge with his friends namely, and Popiom Jamoh and Lucian Talon from Yagrung, Bisong Tabing from Bosing and Lunrung Tamuk from Panggi village.

In March 1911, when Noel Williamson along with Dr. J. D. Gregorson and 44 others visited Adi hills, Matmur secretly planned and followed Williamson along with his accomplices followed him to Komsing Village. On 31st March 1911, Matmur along with Namu Nonang and Lunrung Tamuk killed Williamson and his coolies. Matmur gave clear instructions to all his accomplices.

All his co-accused have given statements that they have killed British official on the instruction and direction of Matmur Jamoh. Therefore, it was Matmur Jamoh who led and mobilised the people against the touring colonial official and acted with premeditation and resolution. Matmur was arrested

from the hills in February 1912 and was tried before a Military Court on 3 April 1912, where he was convicted and sentenced to life transportation to Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Till date Matmur's last days are not known. His great grandson, MatmurJamoh (junior) is presently living at Yagrung village in east Siang District and still in possession of the sword which was used in killing Noel Williamson at Komsing.

B. MARTYRS

1. KONGKIR SIRAM

The last battle of Anglo- Adi war was fought on 3 December 1911 at Kekar Monying. During this time, Kongkir Siram of Babuk village was guarding the Kekar Monying Yapgo. He was shot dead by British sepoy on spot. Thus, Kongkir Siram laid down his life while protecting his homeland.

2. LAMUK PADUN

Lamuk Padun was the son of Tintok Padun. He was from Mishing Village. He was entrusted to spy the every movements and activities of the British troops and also to poison the water in order to kill the British soldiers. He along with other Adi warriors poisoned the sources of water from where British force was using for drinking. In the process they were attacked by the British army at *Apka Goiing* (big stone) in Dekam Goiing area and finally he was killed at Apka Goiing.

3. PAKLING SIRAM

The villagers of Sido village had been waiting for the Britishers at

PIRENG-YAPGO, the actual place where the war took place. It was the only entrance to Sido village. The villagers readied the stone shoot at the stockade on the hill. The British attacked Pireng - Yabgo on 5 November 1911, injured Pakling Siram while he was trying to cut down stone shoots and shot death Kombu Bagra. After bullet injury Pakling Siram escaped to the jungle where he succumbed to his injury. His skeleton was found by the villagers near a big tree. Paksing Siram the elder brother of Pakling Siram cut loose the stone shoot which injured some British sepoy. The sword used by Pakising Siram used in cutting stone shoot at Pireng-Yapgo is still in possession with Talut Siram of Ledum village of East Siang district.

4. KOMBU BAGRA

Kombu Bagra was from Sido (Doshing) village in East Siang district. Kombu Bagra's father, Dekom Bagra was born at Meko-Mero near present Doje-Jeko village, Bagra Circle, West Siang District. Kombu Bagra was born at Yemsing village. He along with others migrated to Sido village in early part of 20th century.

The main stockade of Sido village was built above Píreng stream, a tributary of Sido River, which is popularly known as Píreng Yapgo. A large numbers of stone chutes (Língkang) were also built and hung at Píreng Yapgo by the inhabitants of Sido village.

Major Lindsay's party left Miihing Camp at 5:45 A.M. on 5 November 1911 and after many difficulties reached below Píreng Yapgo and noticed stone chutes above at 11:55 A.M. On seeing the movement of Adi warriors, the scouts of the Major Lindsay's party started firing up with their rifles. Kombu Bagra was hit on his head by one of the bullets when he, along with a few others, was trying to locate the movement of advancing British troops and thus died on the spot.

5. NANGGOM NONANG

Nanggom Nonang was born at Kebang village in around 1870s. He was the son of Takong Nonang. Nanggom Nonang was smart, stoutly built and courageous with a stubborn nature. He sacrificed his life while fighting the British at Torne Adi during Anglo-Adi War of 1911.

When the Ledum Column attacked Mishing village, Nanggom Nonang moved towards Mishing with all his weapons and when he reached Torne Yorbe, he lay in wait for the enemy at Torne Yapgo (Stockade). And while he fought single-handedly against the expeditionary force from his hideout, a war dog of the troop came to his hideout and was about to attack him. He was unaware of such breed of dog, mistook it to be a wild animal of canine family and shot it with an arrow, then the dog run back with cries. Hearing the cries of the dog, the troop fired at his hideout and killed him on the spot.

6. TASA PAJING

Tasa Pajing was the son of Tading Pajing and was one of the Adi warriors engaged in resisting the invading force at Kekar Moonying on 31st December 1911. He was one of the men in-charge of the Lingkum Paket Likna (Chutes Team).

During that day, Tasa Pajing along with many Kebang warriors was guarding the Kekar Yapgo at Kekar Moonying. The main British force coming via the side route of the river from below was blocked by the Kebang warriors who gave them stiff resistance with their bow, arrows and with ready to release stone shoots. Tasa was shot in the forehead by an enemy bullet and died on the spot.

7. TAYI DARANG

Tayi (Ridong) Darang was from Rengging village. The British troops made their advance against the Rengging on 2 October 1911 and halted at Raami Dumbang near Raami Korong. The Rengging village at HelekKumting was burnt. In retaliation, the Rengging men attacked a group of Telegraphic coolies who were laying telegraphic cables near Okok Dumbang in which Taper Darang killed one of them and another one was seriously injured. In the retaliatory firings by British sepoy, Tayi Darang and Namaying Nonang were killed.

8. MINJONG TAMIN

Minjong Tamin was from Jorsing village in Siang District. He was one of the bravest warriors of the Adis. On 3 December 1911, the British forces led by Captain Coleridge succeeded in crossing Siang River from Hitum Pigo below Rottung village. The Adi warriors were waiting for the British troops at the Tumying Yapgo (stockade) near Tumbung stream but the British troops moved up along the river bed of the Siang river. The Adi warriors heard the coughing sounds of the British troops who were then moving up along the jungle path of Mereng Yorbe (ridge). Therefore, the Adi warriors led by Minjong Tamin ran fast reached where the weary British troops were taking rest. Minjong Tamin attacked the British troops with Yokha (sword) and cut down two sepoy to death and inflicted injuries upon two sepoy. But when the British troops fired indiscriminately in all direction, the other Adi warriors ran for their safety. Minjong was killed in the firing. His mortal remains were found in a decomposed state. Later on, the remains were taken in a bamboo basket to his native village of Jorsing and buried there.

9. BINGIN TABING

When it was known that the British troops were advancing towards Rengging, the Adi warriors of Kebang, Rottung and Rengging went down to the foothills to defend Sile Yapgo near Pasighat. Bingin Tabing was one of those who were sent as makro (spy) to observe the movement of the advancing British troops. While on such spying duty, the Adi Makro team came face to face with the British troops and there were exchanges of bullets from the British sepoy and arrows from the Adi warriors. Bingin Tabing was shot by a British sepoy. He ran back with bullet injuries along the jungle; however, he succumbed to his injuries. His dead body was found covered with wild plantain leaves later on by the Adis after a frantic search. Thus, Bingin Tabing of Rottung village had laid down his life at Sile Yapgo near Pasighat while defending his motherland.

10. MESANG AJE

Mesang Aje was son of Rammeng Aje who hailed from a village called Rottung. He laid down his life while fighting the British forces. Mesang happened to know that the first British troop had arrived in Rottung area and were stationed near the mouth of Sireng stream. He hid in the jungle waiting for the right moment to strike and he single-handedly attacked the British troop with bow and arrows but he was shot down by the British soldiers.

11. YAKKONG PADUNG

Yakkong Padung was from Yemsing village in Siang District. In order to punish the Yemsing villagers for assisting Kebang village, General Bower dispatched a large troop under the Command of Colonel Murray against Yemsing village on 13th December 1911. The British force reached Yemsing village on 14 December and burnt down the village. Yakkong Padung was shot

to death during this attack. It is said that the dead body of Yakkong Padung was found after 5 days in a decomposed state.

12. DUTE PADUNG

While Ledum column was moving up towards Miihing (Mishing) village near Dekam Korong (stream) the Adi warriors of Miihing village attacked them. In retaliatory firing Lamuk Padun of Miihing village, who has hiding behind a big boulder near DekamGoing (suspension bridge) was killed. After Lamuk's death, the suspension bridge was known as ApkaGoing.

When the troops were about to reach the site of the Camp, the advance guard of the troops came under heavy arrow shootings from Adi warriors. The troops retaliated with gun fires. In that retaliatory firing by the British force, DutePadung of Miihing village was shot dead. Thus, Dute Padung laid down his life while defending his motherland.

13. POGER TAGI

Poger Tagi was from Kebang Village but migrated to Kallek. Poger was entrusted with resisting the invading British army in between Rottung and Kallek Village. While he was shooting at the British soldiers from behind big Dumdik Lipik (cave), he was shot dead.

14. TAJONG TAMUK

Tajong Tamuk was said to be born around 1880 and was the son of Tatum (Tutum) Tamuk from Panggi village. He was shot dead at RomkongYorbe of Sisen village. He was an excellent archer, an expert boat man and gifted with all qualities of warrior and leadership

After killing Tamin the Britishers stationed at Romkong Yorbe (Sissen Hill) of Sisen village while closely observing the Abor movements shot down the Abors with highly sophisticated guns from Romkong Yorbe (Sissen Hill). Tajong Tamuk along with many Adi brave fighters were shot and killed in this incident. The dead body of Tajong Tamuk was brought back to Panggi village and buried there.

15. DENGKEP TAMUK

Shri Dengkep Tamuk was born in around 1860 at Rottung village, Siang District. He was the son of Tanying Tamuk. Dengkep Tamuk was in his agricultural field at Boam area when the British were marching toward Komsing. He tried to resist the British forces but was killed in the process.

16. DENGKEP TAMUK

Tamaying Nonang was son of Tadang Nonang from Kebang village. He was a born orator with leadership quality and one of the best warriors of his time. During the Anglo-Adi War of 1911-12, he was killed by the Main column Expeditionary Force at Rengging village. He along with Tayi Darang of Rengging village led the Rengging villagers to resist the Expeditionary Force. He along with Tayi Darang was engaged in spying the activities of the Expedition column and preparing strategies for attacking the expeditionary forces, but unluckily the British force caught and shot them dead at Rengging. In his leadership, the Rengging people murdered the telegraph man and telephone team of British Expeditionary force.

C. FREEDOM FIGHTERS

1. NAMU NONANG

Namu Nonang was born at Bosing village in around 1890s in East Siang district. He was one of the murderers of Noel Williamson in 1911 at Komsing village. He was very young. He along with Matmur Jamoh followed Williamson and his party from Sissen to Komsing.

Namu Nonang was arrested in February 1912. He was put in trial under Military Court. He was found in guilty of killing Noel Williamson. However, keeping in view that he was much younger than Matmur and acted largely under Matmur's influence; he was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for ten years. Namu Nonang after spending ten years in Cellular Jail in Andaman and Nicobar Islands returned back at home safely in the year 1922.

2. LOTIYANG TALOH

Lortiyang Taloh was from Yagrung Village. He also took part in killing Noel Williamson and his party at Komsing. He was also part of planning to kill touring British officials. As per oral sources Lotiyang Taloh killed two porters of the Noel Williamson. But as per official reports, he did not kill anyone, but admitted that he was an accessory to the murder and acted under instructions from Matmur Jamoh. He was also arrested in February 1912 and on 3 April the Military Court convicted him being guilty of abetment of murder. Therefore, he was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for one year.

3. LUNRUNG TAMUK

Lunrung Tamuk was born in 1860s at Pangi Village in Siang District. He was son of Lunking Tamuk and Kutter Siram Tamuk. He was simple, straight forward and honest character with inborn oratory skill. Lunrung Tamuk was also part of planning to kill British officials and played important role in attacked Williamson and his party at Komsing village.

Matmur Jamoh sought help of Lunrung Tamuk and shared strategy to attack Noel Williamson to him. Lunrung Tamuk agreed and suggested him that they should pretend to establish friendly relations with the British and kill them in a treacherous manner. Lunrung Tamuk, Matmur Jamoh and Namu Nonang accompanied Noel Williamson to Komsing village. In the morning of 31 March 1911 at Komsing, Matmur Jamoh, Lunung Tamuk and Namu Nonang killed Noel Williamson as per their strategy. In retaliation the Government sent a punitive expeditionary force to punish the murderers in October 1911. After defeating Keban, Commanding Officer General Bower issue letter to all the neighbouring villages giving them chance to make peace by surrendering or face the wrath of the British army. Hence, on 18 December in the evening, two Gams of Panggi village namely Lunung and Lungkep arrived at Yemsing, but they were interrogated on 19 December. On 21 December Lunrung Tamuk was given responsibility of bringing Gams of Kebang and Babuk. On 26 December Lunrung brought Takot Taloh, the old deposed Gam of Kebang from jungle of Komsing and Tokot brought other Gams of Kebang. Therefore, although Lunrung was one of the murderers of Noel Williamson, he was not arrested and brought in for trial.

4. LOMLO DARANG

Namu Nonang was born at Bosing village in around 1890s in East Siang district. He was one of the murderers of Noel Williamson in 1911 at Komsing

village. He was very young. He along with Matmur Jamoh followed Williamson and his party from Sissen to Komsing.

Namu Nonang was arrested in February 1912. He was put in trial under Military Court. He was found in guilty of killing Noel Williamson. However, keeping in view that he was much younger than Matmur and acted largely under Matmur's influence; he was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for ten years. Namu Nonang after spending ten years in Cellular Jail in Andaman and Nicobar Islands returned back at home safely in the year 1922.

5. DITER TAMUK

Diter Tamuk was born in the year around 1870 at Pangi village in Siang District. He was son of Kekep Tamuk and Yalong Jamoh Tamuk. When Lomlo Darang, Bapok Jerang and Kutkam attacked Dr. Gregorson at Sissen, Diter Tamuk and other warriors hid behind big boulders and huge trees at Tempot Gate. When the British Sepoys fled in panic towards the Tempot Gate, Diter Tamuk shot the British sepoy at his chest with the poison arrow, the injured sepoy threw his rifle aside and ran to escape but Diter Tamuk overpowered and killed the sepoy. He took the rifle of the sepoy and deposited at Pangi village community hall.

6. KUTMOR SIRAM

When the news of escaping of survival from Komsing attacked spread, Kutmor Siram of Sissen village along with others went to intercept fugitives at Aaming Rapak near Sissen village. When they found some British sepoy taking shelter under a tree, Kutmor Siram offered them food with his left hand while hiding the YOKSA (sword) on his right hand behind his back. Kutmor Siram drew his sword and attacked them but they quickly retaliated

and he was shot dead with a Martini-Henry rifle by Vichey, the Naga servant of Noel Williamson. It is said that the bullet hit the metal bangle worn by Kutmor Siram plunging it deep through his chest.

Thus, Kutmor Siram laid down his life while fighting with the British troops at Aaming Rapak area near Sissen village.

7. PAKSING SIRAM

Paksing Siram was the elder brother of Pakling Siram from Sido village. Adi warriors were waiting for the Britishers at Pireng-Yapgo. When the British army attacked and open fire, killing Kombu Bagra and injuring Pakling Siram and other fled away from gun fires. Paksiung Siram cut down few stone chutes which caused injuries to some British Sepoys.

8. MATYENG JAMOH

Matyeng Jamoh was from Pangi village and son of Tamar Jamoh and Yater Tamuk. Matyeng Jamoh is also associated with attacked on Guak Camp where Dr J. D. Gregorson was killed. To attack the Guam Camp, the warriors divided themselves into two groups, first group under Lomlo Darang, Bapok Jerang and others were to attack the camp from the southern side. The second group under Diter Tamuk and Matyeng Jamoh and others would take position approximately three hundred metres away from the camp on the track to Komsing village. The first group attacked the camp and the second groups to attack running away person from attack at Tempot Gate where Matyeng Jamoh cut the right hand of one sepoy who was holding a rifle. The frightened sepoy ran and threw the rifle into the Siang river with his left hand and jumped for his life, but MatyengJamoh shot several arrows and killed the sepoy.

9. BAPOK JERANG

Bapok Jerang was from Kebang village in Siang District. He was the one of murderers of Dr. J. D. Gregorson at the Guak Camp. Lomlo Darang, Bapok Jerang and Kutkam attacked Gregorson and killed him on spot. He surrendered in May 1912 and was put into trial at the Court of the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhumpur on 18 May. He was found guilty of murdering Dr. Gregorson, so was sentenced to death, but later on his death sentence was commuted to transportation for life by the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

10. TAPER DARANG

He was from Rengging village and was son of Talem Darang. On 8 October, the British troops marched against Rengging and burnt down. However, Taper Darang ambushed telegraphic coolies while laying telegraphic line at Okok Dumbang and killed one of them with an arrow and another was seriously injured. The place where Taper Darang killed the telegraphic coolie was named "Coolie Col." by the British troops. The incident is said to have occurred on 13th October 1911. After killing the telegraphic coolie, Taper Darang hid himself in the upstream of Sirpo River which was beyond the reach of the British troops.

11. BISONG TABING

Bisong Tabing was born to Birung Tabing of Bosing village, now called Taki Lalung. Bisong Tabing was also part of making the strategy to attack and kill the visiting British Officials. He killed a Kotoki, who was who was running away after being attacked. He took part in killing on instructions of Matmur Jamoh. He was arrested in February 1912 and put into trial on 3 April 1912. He was found guilty of killing Kotoki and sentenced transportation for life in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

12. DUYUM PADUNG

Duyum Padung was from Yemsing village in Siang District. He was shot to death during the British attack on Yemsing village on 14 December 1911.

13. JOTER TAMUK

Joter Tamuk was born to Tareng Tamuk of Sisen Village, East Siang district but migrated and settled at Rottung. Joter was the Gam of Rottung village during the time of attack on Noel Williamson at Komsing. Joter gave orders to kill the letter carrier and three others at old Regging. Three sick coolies and one Mishing letter carrier were sent back to Pasighat. While passing through Rottung village the Missing told to Rottung people that he was going to bring up sepoy and that Sahib would burn Rottung on his return. Therefore, Joter ordered ten Rottung men to intercept the Mishing and killed them all.

14. YEYAK JAMOH

Yeyak Jamoh was from Pangi village in Siang district and was son of Yebung Jamoh and Yadi Tamuk Jamoh.

At Gebung-Guak camp in the confluence of Debik Siang river, Dr. Gregorson was attending sick coolies. Lomlo Darang, Bapok Jerang and Kutkam attacked Gregorson, then some of his party run towards the Tempot Gate where Matyeng Jamoh, Yeyak Jamoh and others were hiding behind a huge Kochon tree trunk, there Yeyak Jamoh cut the right hand of a sepoy who was holding a rifle. The sepoy ran and threw the rifle and jumped into the Siang river, but they shot with arrows and killed him.

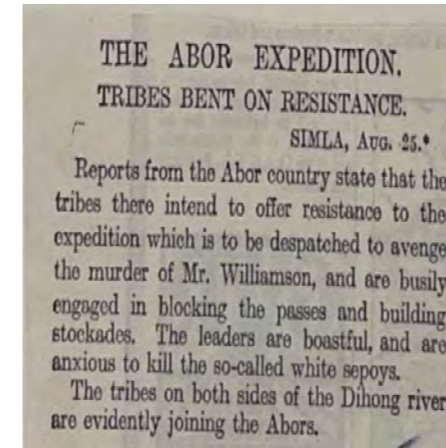


Image 35 (above): Newspaper clip of the Abor Expedition

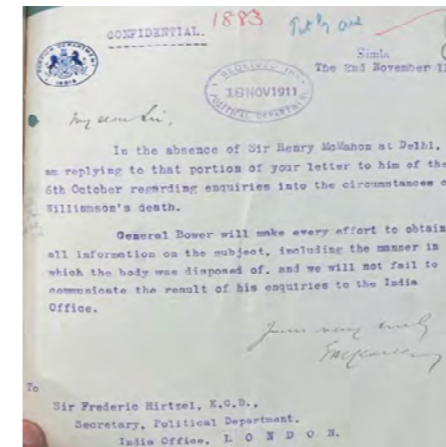


Image 36 (above): A correspondence on the murder of Noel Williamson



Image 37 (left): Digum (Tagun), a runaway slave, who became the guide to General Bower during the Expedition of 1911-12



Image 38 (right): Setting up of camp during the Expedition of 1911-12



CONVOY CROSSING A STREAM IN THE ĀBOR COUNTRY.

Image 39 (above): Expeditionary forces crossing a stream



JANAKMUKH POST, DIHANG RIVER, AND DISTANT ĀBOR HILLS.

Image 40 (above): British Camp at the confluence of Sijon river and Siang river

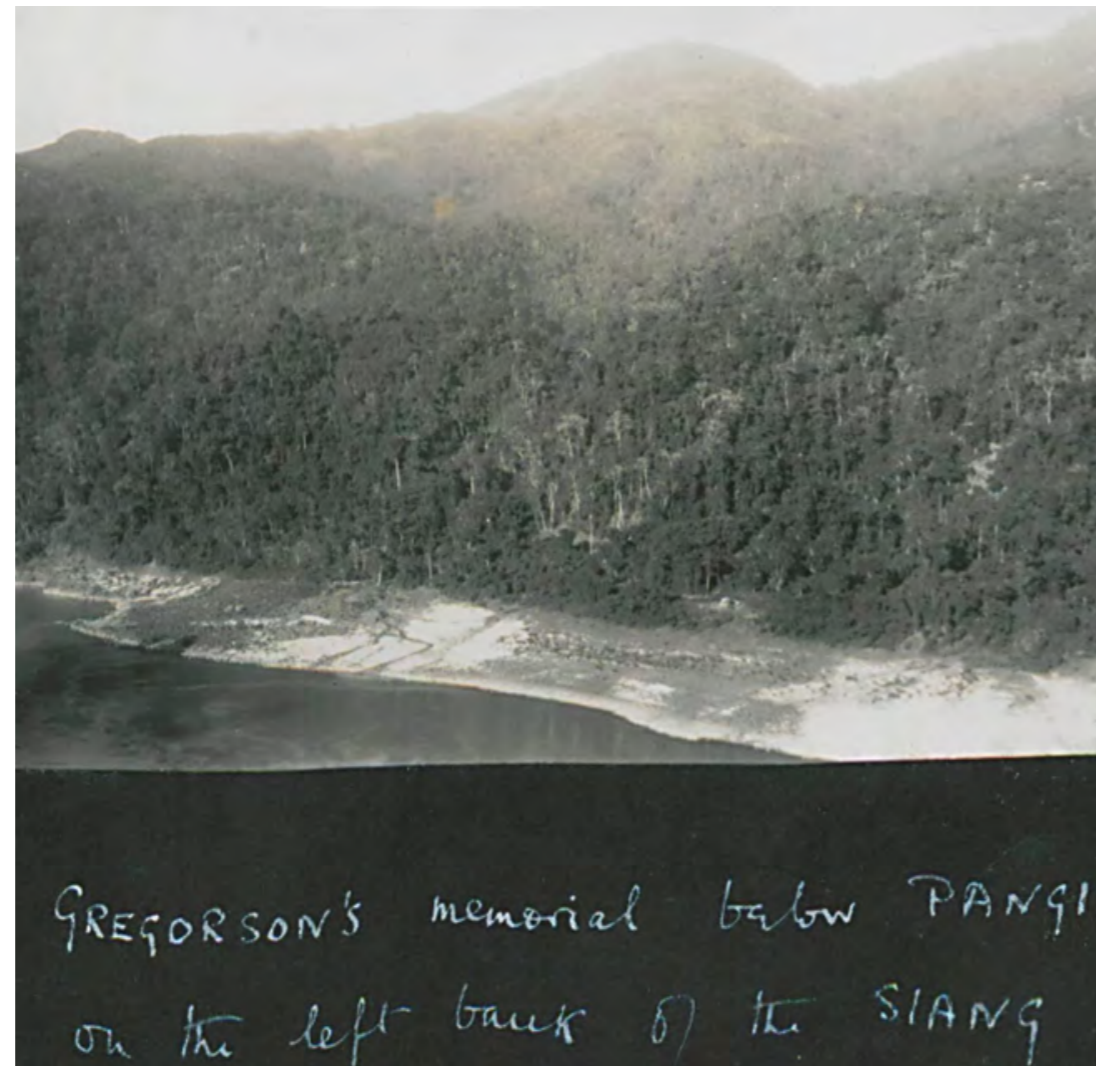


Image 41 (above): Gregorson's memorial below PangI on the left bank of Siang river



Photographer unknown. Pasighat 1912

Image 42 (above): Five persons convicted by the Military Court on 3 April 1912: Matmur Jamoh, Namu Nonang, Bisong Tabing, Lotying Taloh and Popiom Jamoh (name not in order of standing position)



Image 43 (right): Takot, old Gam of Kebang, was the first Gam from Kebang to surrender before Gen. Bower on 26 December 1911

Resistance Movement IV

The Mishmi Singpho and Wancho

Chapter

04

REPORT OF THE RESEARCH SUB-COMMITTEE-D

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DIBANG VALLEY, LOWER DIBANG VALLEY, LOHIT,
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DISTRICTS

Resistance to Colonialism in the Mishmi Hills

INTRODUCTION

The long nineteenth century was a watershed in the history of colonialism in South Asia. The tendency of a colonial state to expand its sphere of influence brought the paraphernalia of a modern nation-state to the doorsteps of other polities that existed on the frontiers. Such contacts were informed by the superior Eurocentric worldview that effectively made othering of the people in the borders tenable.

In mainland India, the annexation of kingdoms did oversee the use of all the exploitative techniques available in the toolbox that expressly involved extraction in the form of revenues of all kinds. On the contrary, the historiography of northeast India is checkered with the unavoidable element of a fractured international order that shifted over time and space. The security question remained at the heart of colonial policy in the region. Toward the north, beyond the tall mountain lines, lay the Tibetan sphere of influence, a volatile region that witnessed the extension of the Great Game in the highlands of Asia. On the contrary, down south to the hills lay the massive floodplains that oversaw the insidious penetration of the colonial statecraft.

The current exercise revolves around the brief history of interactions bathed in blood that supported the superstructure

of Pax Britannica. With a specific focus on four expeditions in the Mishmi Hills, a well-rounded narrative of resistance emerges that impinges on the nuances of colonialism in action.

Prior to British encounter, the Mishmi people, who had been living in the Mishmi Hills for centuries, had contacts with the Chutia kingdom (13th and 14th century), the evidence of which are now available in folklore, literary work of Shihabud-din Talish in 1660s and archaeological sources like Bishmaknagar fort and Tameswari Temple. Also, the chronicle Buranji lists numerous encounters of Mishmi and Ahom during the Ahom period. The Snake Pillar available in Guwahati museum bearing an inscription of treaty signed between Mishmis and Ahoms in 1532 symbolized the mutual adherence to non-interference in each other's independent existence and assistance.¹



The Sadiya Snake pillar, now at Guwahati museum, Assam

Source: Google.com



Bishmaknagar fort, L/D Valley, Roing

¹ Linggi, 2018. The Snake Pillar available in Guwahati museum bearing an inscription of treaty signed between Mishmis and Ahoms in 1532. It reads as follows:

I, Dihingiya Borgihain, do hereby declare on the strength of this stone inscription and copper table that the Mishmis with their wives and children will henceforth inhabit the entire hills near the Dibang River ... Should the other neighbouring tribes ever invade the Mishmis, they would become slaves of the Mishmis.

(Luthra, 1971: 1145)

Only in the early part of the nineteenth century, the Mishmi Hills were explored by Europeans in 1825 by Burton and Wilcox in 1827. In 1884, Mackenzie noted that the Mishmis were 'extremely reluctant to receive strangers.'² This was a widespread opinion among many of the earliest writers about the tribe. This might arise as a result of the Mishmis' continued vigilance over their territorial interests, which gave them a sense of safety, privacy, autonomy, and self-identity. This could be the reason they were hostile to outsiders. Many people also believe that the colonisers were drawn to the Mishmi Hills because it was a long-established, safe trading route to Tibet, China, and Burma. These routes were not only used by the Mishmis but also by their neighbouring tribes and people from plains of Assam frequented and carried out their trade.³ It is also claimed that the traders paid taxes to the Mishmis at several passes so that they would secure their safety and hospitality while passing through their country, establishing their own set of rules and regulations long ago.⁴

However, when the occidentals first encountered the natives, they believed their culture to be lawless and chaotic. As a result, ethnocentric mindset of the colonial authorities had created a hostile environment that had a significant impact on their relationship. At the same time, the colonial standards of conduct and laws were gradually imposed on the tribe and in the hills, although this was not well received by the tribe. To the colonial rulers, law of the land of the natives were

irrelevant, inapplicable, and, most importantly, repugnant. For the tribe, external authority was a threat to their freedom and autonomy. As a result of these concerns and distrust, the Mishmis rebelled in Sadiya in all forms, engaging in feuds, raids, and the murder of British subjects in 1855, 1857, 1861, 1866, 1879, 1884, 1899, and 1911.⁵ The Mishmis' persistent stand in reclaiming and defending their dignity, freedom, and territory led to numerous colonial expeditions that were primarily intended to punish or execute the Mishmi rebellions and fighters who resisted the colonial expansion and their authority over the region.

Therefore, this study explores and examines some of the prominent Mishmi unsung heroes who made significant contributions to the freedom struggle in India but whose names were never recognized in the historical records. The study is carried out on the Mishmi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh living in the Mishmi hills.

In the present day geo-political setup, they inhabit the Upper Siang, East Siang, Dibang Valley, Lower Dibang Valley, Lohit, and Anjaw districts of Arunachal Pradesh. A borderland community and a constitutionally recognized Scheduled Tribe, the Mishmis are approximately 45,000 in total. They are mongoloid and speak a Tibeto-Burman language family. Since ages, the Mishmi society exhibited the characteristics of patrilineal, patriarchal and patrilocal and has both nuclear and joint or extended family types. The basic rule of marriage is clan exogamy and often tribe endogamy, having the practice of polygyny. Although the majority of people in their religious community are animists, today conversions to larger religions

are becoming common, particularly to Christianity. They are known to others for their expert handloom and handicraft works. Their other day-to-day activities mainly revolve around agriculture, hunting, and gathering, fishing, and horticulture. The traditional system of administration of justice still exists and functions in accordance with long-standing traditions and customs.

In order to identify the Mishmi heroes, the research team travelled and spoke with a number of resource persons, close relatives, and government representatives from towns and villages like Tezu, Wakro, Roing, Dambuk, Ithili, Abali, Hunli,

and Elope, among others. The research team conducted fieldwork in the months of April and May 2022. After extensive research into the literature and fieldwork, the team was able to narrow the range of candidates down to three Mishmi heroes. The study used relevant field data and several archival materials, including books, articles, reports, communications, etc. as supporting evidence to construct the narratives surrounding Mishmi heroes, viz., Kaisha Manyu, Taji Dele, and Ponge Dele.

² Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, p. 47.

³ T.T. Cooper, *The Mishmee Hills: An Account of a Journey Made in an Attempt to Penetrate Thibet from Assam to Open New Routes for Commerce*, H.S. King & Co., London, 1873, pp. 230; T.H. Holdich, 'The North-Eastern Frontier of India', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 60(3092), 1912, pp. 379-92; J.G. Marshall, *Britain and Tibet 1765-1947: A Select Annotated Bibliography of British Relations with Tibet and the Himalayan States Including Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan*, London and New York, Routledge, 2005; and Razzeko Dele, 'Narrating the Tribe: Colonial Constructs and Voicing the Savage: A Post-colonial Study of the Colonial Writings on the Mishmis of Arunachal Pradesh', in Tarun Mene and S.K. Chaudhuri (Eds.), *Change and Continuity among Tribes: The Idu Mishmis of Eastern Himalayas*, Rawat Publication, New Delhi, 2018, pp. 15-28.

⁴ Dele, 'Narrating the Tribe'.

⁵ R. Miso, 'Mathun and Dri Valley: Memories of Trade, Tibetan Intrusion, Impasses and Retreat', *Reh Souvenir*, Central Reh Celebration Committee, Roing, 2015, pp. 1-23; Dele, 'Narrating the Tribe'.



Research Team with CBO members at Roing



Research Team with Late Ethadu Dele and Mrs Wuthu Linggi of Ithili Village



Research team with Senior elders of Pukhri Village



Research team with Gaon Bura of Pukhri Village



Workshop at AITS, RGU with Community members



Researcher with Shri Sole Linggi, Senior Mishmi member

The Event of Kaisha Manyu (Dob: Unknown, Death: 1855)

The dyad of God and guns extending the colonial state's power in the frontier is well exemplified in the Kaisha Manyu affair. Lieutenant Eden's expedition in early 1855 to punish Kaisha in connection with his ambush of two French Catholic missionaries in 1854. The question of why these missionaries visited a place as remote as the Mishmi Hills is open to debate. One of the recurring arguments suggests that the missionaries were interested in surveying the alternative trade route to Tibet and China. And to that effect, the Mishmi Hills offered a promising course via Walong, now located in the Anjaw district.

However, this argument is untenable because the colonial state machinery had many tools to expand its influence in the frontier. The role of religion with the tacit support of the state in the colonial project is often overlooked. The civilising mission (*mission civilisatrice*) had an indispensable ally in the religion. It could aid in hegemonic control of the people of the frontiers. In its long history, Christianity has been a 'religion of accretion which thrived on the absorption of other practices and cultural modes.'⁶ The role of Christian missions in expanding the empire is often critiqued as the precursor to direct control as Hobson argues, 'First the missionary, then the Consul, and then, at last, the invading army.'⁷

In the case of Kaisha Manyu, a reading of Mackenzie's work *History of the relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier* (1884) is a glaring window to the Eurocentric nature of dynamics involved as 'in the grey dawn of a misty morning Kai-ee-sha was surprised and captured in his village on the Du, his elder sons slain in open fight, his people dispersed, and the murdered *Frenchmen to the full avenged*'.⁸

In the description of the events, the tacit support of the British to avenge the death of the missionaries reeks of a masculine urge of the coloniser to discipline the other, the savage. However, the picture painted on the colonial canvas is somewhat incomplete without considering the oral narratives of the community. Notwithstanding the reasons the motives that drove missionaries to the hills, the colonial power was hand in glove with them in approaching the region with a safe bet: do not interfere but keep a close track of their activities to deflect the ire of the tribes 'averse to receive strangers'.⁹

Oral narrative collected from the field effectively ties up loose ends in constructing a fuller picture of the episode. As observed from the fieldwork, Kaisha Manyu was a person of reputation in the hills who travelled to and from Sadiya to participate in trade there. Mackenzie's work argues that Mishmis were 'keen traders and they appreciate so highly the advantages of our markets'.¹⁰ Since he would travel regularly, he had advanced knowledge of the region's terrains and, more critically, he was well versed in the dealings with the people involved in the value chain. He had no difficulty travelling across the region because of his goodwill over the years, Dimso

Manyu maintains.¹¹

In 1851, Krick would arrive on the scene and enlist Kaisha's services in travelling to the Tibetan settlement of Walong. Sokhep Kri argues that Kaisha's son drowned in a river while escorting the missionary on the journey.¹² The death of a person while under the employment of another person has to be compensated by the latter as per the Mishmi credo. And that calls for an elaborate system of rituals involving the transfer of Mithun and other forms of wealth to the family members of the departed, as maintained by Bailu Pul, an older woman from Hawaii.¹³ The missionary did not perform the rituals and therefore did not compensate for the loss Kaisha suffered, and their agreement broke down effectively.

Fast forward to 1854, Krick embarked on another tour of Walong to enter Tibet, accompanied by Bourri, a young fellow Catholic missionary. With knowledge of the region from his previous journey, Krick was successful in manoeuvring through the hills with his new company. Dimso Manyu, in the interview conducted in the field, argues that during their stayover at one of the places near Sameliang, the missionaries shot one of the Mithuns that belonged to Kaisha Manyu. In a recent paper, Razzeko Dele contends that the 'missionaries were engaging themselves in hunting spree wherever they went'.¹⁴

As suggested by popular memory, the compelling reasons for the ambush relate to the breach of trust and failure by Krick and Bourry to honour the law of the land. The archival records do not mention the two incidents narrated above.

On the contrary, these two incidents are the fulcrum of the public memory in the locality. In light of the gross disregard for the law of the land (the policy of the inner line and the outer line came to fruition much later in 1873), the missionaries were ambushed by Kaisha Manyu in late 1854.

The expedition led by lieutenant Eden in February 1855 brought Kaisha to the jail in Dibrugarh. However, the bravado of the prisoner was on display as he managed to kill two guards before being executed.¹⁵

The death of Kaisha Manyu was a watershed moment for the members of the Mishmi community across the hills. Kaisha's execution opened a new chapter in Mishmi-Anglo relations. The time-tested imperial design of divide and rule was instrumental in capturing Kaisha. The clan members regrouped together, marshalling people from the Dibang region to conduct raids in Sadiya over the years during the latter half of the nineteenth century (Mackenzie's work has a chronological list of aggression). The community members do not distinctly remember these raids. Still, they do have a definite idea of the alliances tailored during those times of colonial oppression to ward off the advancing agents of the colonial state.

⁶ B. Ashcroft, G Griffiths and H. Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: the Key Concepts*, 3rd edn. Routledge, 2013., p. 188.

⁷ J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, James Pott & Company, New Work, 1902, p. 204.

⁸ Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, p. 49; emphasis added.

⁹ Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, p. 47.

¹⁰ Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, p. 49.

¹¹ Interview conducted by Tarun Mene, 2 May 2022. Dr Dimso Manyu, male, age 48, of Tezu is a clansman of Kaisa Manyu.

¹² Interview conducted by Kamphuiso Pul, Research Assistant, 10 May 2022. Sokhep Kri is Director, Department of Indigenous Affairs, Government of Arunachal Pradesh and a prominent member of Mishmi Society.

¹³ Interview conducted by Kamphuiso Pul, Research Assistant, on 24 May 2022.

¹⁴ Razzeko Dele, 'The Unsung Heroes of Mishmi Hills: Kaisha Manyu', *Souvenir 50 Years of Arunachal Pradesh*, 2022, p. 21.

¹⁵ Shakespear, *History of the Assam Rifles*, p. 46.



Ponge Dele
DOB: Unknown
Died on 9th December 1920

Taji Dele and Ponge Dele

(DOB: Unknown, Death: 29th January 1918)

(DOB: Unknown, Death: 9th December 1920)

The three expeditions to punish Bebejiya Mishmis of the Dibang region form the pinnacle of resistance to the colonial state apparatus in the Mishmi Hills at the turn of the twentieth century. A lot had changed since 1855; the crown had become the *de jure* sovereign, and the inner line and outer line policy became operational. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the people to the south of the inner line had effectively become British subjects. Therefore, any raids carried by the Mishmis to the south of the inner line meant being at war against the Raj. In light of the shifting dynamics, the Mishmi-Anglo relations were marked by intermittent raids in Sadiya, as reported in the previous section.

On 4th May 1899, a party of six Mishmis conducted a ‘revenge raid on British subjects in Mitaigaon by the people of Abragon village for killing their clan member Thruso Dele.’¹⁶ Following a series of communique across the chain of command in the British administration based on Needham’s recommendations, the first Bebejiya expedition took off in the winter of December 1899. L. W. Shakespear’s work *History of the Assam Rifles*

describes the expedition’s logistics as a unit of ‘600 troops, 27 British officers, 6 doctors, 86 sappers and miners with dynamite, gun cotton and wire rope, and 2,000 coolies.’¹⁷ The force reached Hunli on 1st January 1900. They destroyed the properties that belonged to the villagers. The party could not capture the perpetrators of the Mitaigaon raid.

The force took Ponge Dele, Ekhroma Dele, and Malu Mimi as ‘hostages in exchange of main culprits.’¹⁸ However, en route to Sadiya, one of the hostages, Ekhroma Dele, overpowered the foot soldiers and jumped off a cliff to wrest his freedom.¹⁹ The two hostages were released on 16th May 1900, citing an apparent willingness to maintain a ‘clean slate in our (the Raj) political relations on this frontier.’²⁰

Handcuffing is analogous to surrendering to slavery in the Mishmi tradition, as held by the community’s elders in the interview conducted in the field. In those days, being handcuffed attracted wide social ostracisation argues Sole Linggi.²¹ In this episode, the imperial perfidy is apparent in dealing with the others who dwell on the frontiers, beyond the pale of the empire. The principle of habeas corpus flew out of the window when dealing with the tribespeople. Procedural justice did not apply as the accused were at large, and to capture them, the instruments of the empire sought to arrest innocent individuals. Needham rationalised the atrocities meted out in the villages on the following grounds.

- Even supposing that the whole tribe did not actually sanction the outrage, one and all would nevertheless glory in a feat of the kind, for these Mishmis are *in-*

nately bloodthirsty devils (emphasis added), and no one would raise a finger to seize the culprits, and hand them over to us for punishment unless perhaps compelled to do so by the arrival of a force in their midst which threatened to punish the murderers were delivered up within a specified time, for such a practice is against Mishmi custom.²²

- If it became known to all the tribes on this frontier that the whole tribe would be held responsible for outrages such as the one alluded to in this report, it is reasonable to suppose that they will take some steps to prevent any individuals in the tribe incurring our displeasure, especially after they have had a lesson of our power to harm them.²³

Ponge Dele avenged his imprisonment later on by raiding Sadiya in July 1905. Taji Dele accompanied him. The duo would kill British subjects in Dikrang Block House, now in Sadiya, and set military stockades on fire.²⁴ The British Raj reasoned it reasonable to not respond with another expedition but a blockade that lasted till 1909.²⁵

Captain Dundas and Nevil set on the second Bebejiya expedition in March 1914. They could not track the duo who raided Sadiya in 1905. The troops stayed in the village for many days carrying out destructions and returned.²⁶ The oral narrative from the field makes a visceral description of the exceptional leadership skills of Ponge Dele and Taji Dele during this expedition. They were instrumental in getting their fellow tribespeople to safety just in time to avoid casualties. The

popular memory is hazy, but one of the respondents, an octogenarian, Ethadu Dele, contends that the tribespeople hurried off into the hills away from Hunli hills in the east and north directions.²⁷ On being probed about the reason for the British expeditions being carried out only in the chilly winters, he held that during winter, families tend to live in the longhouse together since, in the summer months, they tend to move out to different locations for shifting agriculture. The argument is tenable because swidden cultivation is still the mainstay in the region in the twenty-first century. Winter called for regrouping the village following hard labour time on the fields, growing different crops during summer and monsoon months.

The final chapter of the Mishmi-Anglo conflict was set in motion in early December 1917 when the loyalists, in connivance with the colonial power, apprehended Taji Dele near Sadiya while on his route to the trade site. He was imprisoned and executed within a month in Tezpur jail on 29th January 1918.²⁸ In retaliation, Ponge Dele organised a raid on the military outpost in Nizamghat on 24th November 1918.²⁹ He was aided by Ekhroma Dele, Roshia Dele, and Bapo Dele. They killed a sepoy, injured several others, and destroyed the outpost.

The colonial state did not retaliate with a knee-jerk response. The third and final Bebejiya expedition would have to wait till December 1920. The troops under Captain R. P. Abigail and Lieutenant J. M. Grant descended on Elope on 9th December.³⁰ The tribespeople was ready

²² RNeedham, Report on the Bebejiya Mishmi Expedition, p. 5.

²³ Needham, Report on the Bebejiya Mishmi Expedition, p. 5.

²⁴ File 13-70. Political A 1907, pp 15-17. Dikrang village still exist and is located at present day Sadiya Sub-division of Tinsukia district of Assam.

²⁵ File 95 Foreign Political 1909.

²⁶ Shakespear, History of the Assam Rifles, p. 136.

²⁷ Interview conducted by Tarun Mene on 30 April 2022. Ethadu Dele, male, aged 90+, lived in Ithili village in Roing administrative circle, Lower Dibang valley district. While writing this report, it was informed that Ethadu Dele, who was one of the direct descendants of Taji Dele and Ponge Dele, died of his old aged related ailment.

²⁸ Assam Secretariat File, 1919, pp. 1-28.

²⁹ Assam Secretariat File, 1919, pp. 1-28.

³⁰ Dele, ‘The Heroes of the Bebejiya’, p. 27.

¹⁶ Razzeko Dele, ‘The Heroes of the Bebejiya Mishmi Expeditions’, Souvenir 50 Years of Arunachal Pradesh, 2022, p. 23.

¹⁷ Shakespear, History of the Assam Rifles, p. 210.

¹⁸ J. F. Needham, Report on the Bebejiya Mishmi Expedition, 1899-1900, Shillong, 1900, pp. 4-5.

¹⁹ Needham, Report on the Bebejiya Mishmi Expedition, pp. 11-18.

²⁰ Foreign Department, 1900.

²¹ Interview conducted by Tarun Mene on 28 April 2022. Sole Linggi, male, aged about 80, is from Roing and a prominent member of the Mishmi society. During his early days he was a social activist and a member of NEFA Sangam, a non-political organisation of NEFA during 1960s and 1970s.



Taji Dele
DOB: Unknown
Died on 29th January 1918

for an open collision with the behemoth. In an asymmetrical war like this, the outcome was predictable. Ponge Dele died on the battlefield. Shakespear accounts the fall of Ponge Dele as ‘the leader of the trouble.... was shot dead. Elapoin was duly destroyed, and two posts were left for a few months in that part of the country till all fines were paid up’.³¹

Conclusion

A close reading of the literature in tandem with the orality suggests many mutually inclusive factors inform the Mishmi-Anglo conflicts during the heyday of Pax Britannica. There is also a shift in the dynamics of the hills over those years. While the 1855 expedition was meant to punish Kaisha Manyu for killing the French missionaries, it is evident that the British administration colluded with them in dealing with the non-European other. Colonialism is loaded with ideological underpinnings of racism, a sense of superiority that had its oeuvre in the form of modernity to civilise the savages in non-European settings. A rejection of the non-European creed and culture is symbolic of the hegemonic arrogance of colonialism.

In the case of Ponge Dele and Taji Dele, it is indisputable that the colonisers had a dim view of the indigenous people. They punished the tribespeople en masse for the apparent crime of specific unruly indi-

viduals. The liberal philosophy went for a toss in the frontiers where ‘men (the pronoun is deliberate) can test themselves and where the effete weakness of the civilised can be bred into a renewed strength’.³²

The community valorise the efforts of these individuals. The stories of resistance in the face of asymmetrical dynamics offered by the tribespeople of the Mishmi Hills live on.

Recommendations

From the available literature/archival documents, not much information could be gathered with respect to the particulars of Malu Mimi, Rosha Dele, and Bapo Dele. Further research of the expeditions from the archives would help understand their contributions granularly. However, it is undeniable that they had significant roles to play in the resistance against the colonial regime, both symbolically and materially.

Based on the above report, we propose the following names from the Mishmi community for different categories as designed by the Committee on the Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh.

A. HEROES

1. TAJI DELE

He took part in a raid organised by Ponge Dele against the colonial authority in Sadiya in 1905.³³ During the second Bebejiya Mishmi expedition, he and Ponge Dele were instrumental in getting the whole village to safety. The expedition troops destroyed the village and returned.³⁴ He was arrested in December 1917; later executed in January 1918 in Tezpur jail.

2. PONGE DELE

He was the central figure in the historiography of the resistance in the Mishmi Hills. He planned, managed and executed resistance against the colonial state for two decades. He was arrested in the first Bebejiya Mishmi expedition in 1900.³⁵ His first raid was executed in July 1905.³⁶

During the second Bebejiya Mishmi expedition, he helped the village survive the might of incoming British forces by planning escape routes.

He led a team of tribespeople from the community to raid the Nizamghat outpost in November 1918.³⁷ The team managed to kill a sepoy, injure many, and destroy the outpost.³⁸

He led the village (Elope) against the British military expedition of the third Bebejiya Mishmi expedition in 1920. He was killed on the battlefield.³⁹

B. MARTYRS

1. KAISHA MANYU

Kaisha was taken prisoner in the expedition led by Lieutenant Eden in February 1855 for him ambushing two Catholic missionaries in 1854. He was executed in Dibrugarh jail.⁴⁰ However, Kaisha managed to kill two sepoys of the British authority before being hanged by the colonial power.⁴¹

C. FREEDOM FIGHTERS

1. EKHROMA DELE

He was arrested in the first Bebejiya Mishmi expedition along with Ponge Dele.⁴² However, he managed to free himself up by overpowering the sepoys en route to Sadiya. Later in 1918, he participated in the raid on the Nizamghat outpost planned by Ponge Dele.⁴³

2. MALU MIMI

He was from Rango village and was arrested during the first Bebejiya Mishmi expedition as a consequence of Mitaigaon massacre of 1899.⁴⁴

³¹ Shakespear, History of the Assam Rifles, pp. 138-139.

³² Ashcroft et al., Post-Colonial Studies, p. 100.

³³ File 13-70, Political-A, 1907, pp. 15-17.

³⁴ Shakespear, History of Assam Rifles, p. 136.

³⁵ Needham, Report on the Bebejiya Mishmi Expedition, pp. 4-5.

³⁶ File 13-70, Political A 1907, pp. 15-17.

³⁷ Assam Secretariat File. 1919, pp. 1-28.

³⁸ Assam Secretariat File. 1919, pp. 1-28.

³⁹ Shakespeare, History of Assam Rifles, pp. 138-139.

⁴⁰ Mackenzie, The North-East Frontier of India, p. 49.

⁴¹ Shakespeare, History of Assam Rifles, p. 46.

⁴² Needham, Report on the Bebejiya Mishmi Expedition, pp. 4-5.

⁴³ Assam Secretariat File. 1919, pp. 1-28.

⁴⁴ Needham, Report on the Bebejiya Mishmi Expedition, pp. 4-5.

3. ROSHA DELE

He participated in the raid on the Nizamghat outpost planned by Ponge Dele in November 1918 killing one British sepoy and injuring several others.⁴⁵

4. ROSHA DELE

He was from Elope village and has participated in the raid on the Nizamghat outpost planned by Ponge Dele in November 1918, killing one British sepoy and injuring several others.⁴⁶

5. AIYU MIMI

He was instrumental in the 1893 raid on Bomjur military outpost. On 27th November 1893, Aiyu Mimi organised a successful raid consisting of members of his clan on the Bomjur outpost. He was accompanied by Teli Mimi, Ditum Mimi, and Thosa Mimi. The team managed to kill 3 sepoys of the Military Police and captured their guns. The telegram dated 11th July 1899 (Foreign Department: 2) contends that Aiyu Mimi and his comrades could not be caught.

⁴⁵ Assam Secretariat File. 1919, pp. 1-28.

⁴⁶ Assam Secretariat File. 1919, pp. 1-28.

⁴⁷ S. Barua in K.S. Singh ed., People of India: Arunachal Pradesh, vol. XIV Seagull Publishers, Calcutta, 1995, p. 294.

⁴⁸ Gaum is the affix indicating the elder of a family; Noung, the second; La, the third; Thu, the fourth and Tung, the fifth & c. Thus, there are Beesa Gaum, the head of that clan; Ningru La, the third member of Ningru family.

⁴⁹ John Bryan Neufville, On the Geography and Population of Assam, 1828, pp. 338-339.

ANGLO-SINGPHO WARS

The Singphos

The word Singpho means “man” in Singpho language. Singphos are known by different names at different places; in India they are known as Singphos, in Myanmar they identify themselves as Kachins and in China they are called Jingphaw.

According to Barua:

*The Singphos are an endogamous community. They used to be divided into a number of groups, each with separate hereditary agvi (chief). Some of these groups were strictly exogamous. Now the whole community is under two chiefs known as Bisa Chief or Bisa Raja and the Ningru Raja. The chief has several privileges, but his authority is not absolute. The community’s clan organization is based on lineage or sub-lineage groups. Clan exogamy is the rule of marriage in Singpho society.*⁴⁷

Each clan is governed by its own chief called Gaum.⁴⁸ These clans didn’t have authority over the others but were of equal rank and authority. They “...acted separately, in concert, or adversely, as circumstances and inclination may demand: indeed, they seem to be held together by no bond of union or fraternity, and rarely to co-operate, except for some temporary purpose of plunder.”⁴⁹

Barua further added: “Generally the Singphos live in vertically extended families, but laterally extended families also exist among them. A misunderstanding among the members may lead to a break-up of the family... There exist strong links between the different families of the community. They work together in various socio-religious spheres to express community solidarity”⁵⁰

So far death is concerned, Singphos practice both burial and cremation of dead bodies depending on the nature of death and age group of the individual. In case of funeral they opt for Buddhist rites and rituals.

Like many other tribes of Arunachal, they are primarily engaged in settled cultivation though many of them have taken up new alternative avenues of occupation, like, business, contract works, government jobs etc. However, they have a long historical linkage with the cultivation of tea which brought them in contact with the Britishers or colonial forces.

According to Dalton,⁵¹ their traditional dress used to be a jacket, checkered lungi and a patso (clock) for the men. The women wore a jacket, petticoat and scarf. The married women tied their hair on the head with silver coins, chains and ornaments. Necklaces made by semi-precious stones were also worn.

As per the historical accounts, the Singphos were considered the most powerful tribe inhabiting along the Patkoi range and bordering Assam valley.⁵² They were valorous and courageous people who fought many battles against the British to protect their motherland. They were staunch-hearted warriors and their mode of warfare was unique and peculiar.⁵³

They used dahs, spears, cross-bows, and matchlocks to attack their enemies.

Origin and Migration History

As far as the myth of their origin or migration goes, Latham in 1859 wrote as narrated by the Beesa Gaum as following:

In the beginning, the Great Gosein (the Supreme Being) created man, and regarded him with especial kindness and favour. He gave him the whole of earth to dwell in and enjoy, but forbade him to bathe or wash in the river called Ramsita under a threatened penalty of being devoured by the Rakhas (Demon), and totally destroyed; as the forfeit of his disobedience. If, on the contrary, he refrained, the Rakhas should have no power over him, and he should inherit the earth eternally. Mankind, however, soon disobeyed the injunction, and the whole race was devoured by the Rakhas with the exception of a man called Siri Jia and his wife Phaksat. These were seated under a tree, when the Gosien caused a parrot, perched on a bough, to speak, and give them warning to avoid the north, and fly to the southward, by which they would escape the Rakhas’s hands. The man Siri Jia obeyed, but Phaksat took the other road, and fell into the clutches of the Rakhas. When Siri Jia saw Phaksat in the power of the Demon, he was divided from them by the river Ramsita, the forbidden stream, and forgetting, or dis-

⁵⁰ S. Barua in K.S. Singh ed., People of India, p. 295.

⁵¹ Descriptive Ethnology.

⁵² William Robinson, Descriptive Account of Assam, William Morrow and Co., London, 1841, p. 373.

⁵³ It is described in Frontier and Overseas’ Expeditions from India, compiled in the Intelligence Branch, Division of the Chief Staff, Army Headquarter, India, Govt. Monotype Press, Shimla, 1907, p. 189: “The Singphos’ mode of attack is peculiar. Governed with their defensive armour, a party will advance on all fours, in single file, forwards the point to be gained, armed each man alternatively with Dah and spear. At intervals they stop to listen, and, if there is any sign of danger, they throw themselves on the ground, covering their bodies with their shields. When close upon the point of attack they rise up and rush in at the door of the stockade, or house, and, if not resisted, pass through it, cutting and stabbing every individual they find.”

regarding, the prohibition; he immediately crossed it to her rescue, and was also taken by the Rakhas, who prepared to devour them. In the act, however, of lifting them to his mouth, a flame issued from all parts of his body, and consumed him on the spot, since which time no Rakhas have been seen on the earth, in a palpable shape. The Great Gosein, having then fully instructed Siri Jia and Phaksat in all useful knowledge, placed them on the Mujai Sangra-bhum hill, and from them the present race of men are descended.⁵⁴

According to their oral history, Singphos are believed to have first migrated from Hukawng valley, their original habitat situated in the northernmost part of Myanmar (erstwhile Burma) and settled along the Patkoi hills bordering the Brahmaputra valley. Subsequently, they moved down to the river bank of Tengapani east of Sadiya, Nao-Dihing and in the upper Bori-Dehing in the Namrup region. As per the historical records, the Singphos first came into Assam in the later part of 18th century during the troublous time following the Moamaria rebellion in the reign of Ahom King Gau-rinath Singha.

Today, the Singphos are found in Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Jorhat and Golaghat districts of Assam, and in Changlang and Namsai districts of Arunachal Pradesh. Their population (as per 2011 census) is approximately 25000 in India. The majority of the Singpho population are multilingual because of the prolong historical contact

with the people of Assam and introduction of formal education by the state.



Image 44 (above): Map showing territory of the Singphos (Source: Problem of the Hill Tribes North-East Frontier 1822-42)

Rebellion against the British (incident-wise narration)

The Singphos first came in contact with the British during Anglo-Burmese war in 1825. On 11th March 1825, Capt. Neufville, the Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master-General of the Assam Force was authorised to enter into the land of the Singphos. On 12th March 1825, it was reported that the Sing-

phos in strength of about 5000 to 6000 were attacking the Sadiya district. The Gohain of Sadiya was assisted by the Adis (erstwhile Abors), but they couldn't drive out the Singphos who were in great number. So, the Gohain of Sadiya sent two of his men to seek the support of the British. The British troops in several small groups were then immediately dispatched in gunboats to investigate the situation and give necessary assistance. With the support of the British troops, the Singphos were finally driven out of the Sadiya to their own country. The captured Burmese and Singpho prisoners were sent down to Goalpara on 14th March 1825 under the escort of 400 men of the 46th Regiments Native Infantry.⁵⁵

On 15th April 1825, Capt. Neufville came to an understanding with some of the Singpho chiefs to refrain from raiding the Assamese, Moamarias of Sadiya and other people who were alliance in alliance with the British, and not to assist the Burmese in any descent to Assam, but to inform the same to the British and assist them in expelling the Burmese.

On 16th April 1825, Lieutenant Jones, the Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master General reported that a party consisting of Havilder and 12 sepoy had attacked the Singphos near Rangpur. The Singphos were defeated and a number of Assamese prisoners who were being taken off to the hills were freed.

On 19th April 1825, Capt. Neufville reported that the Beesa Gaum (one of the powerful chiefs) of the Singphos was gathering men and colluding with his Burmese prisoner Boglee Phokun for a raid. Capt. Neufville thought that the Singphos would never come to terms unless the Beesa Gaum

was punished. To assess the situation, the spies were sent and it was confirmed the presence of a large number of Burmese men about 500-600 at Beesa and Gakhind, and more to follow from Burma.

On 7th May 1825, Boglee Phukon with his small number of Burmese men then attacked the British, but they were defeated by Capt. Neufville and his troops.⁵⁶

On 24th May 1825, Capt. Neufville received the news that a large number of Burmese and Singphos men were waiting at Bisa for attack. So, on the morning of the 5th June 1825, Capt. Neufville set out with 180 men to attack the Singphos at Beesa and Duffagong after leaving some of his 30 sepoy to protect the passage of the Tengapani near Dehingmukh. On 12th June 1825, the British troops reached Beesa and attacked the combined force of Singphos and Burmese. During the assaults, the British troop raided and destroyed several villages of the Singphos and nearly 3000 Assamese captives were freed.⁵⁷ The Burmese were also driven out of Beesa.

On 20th July 1825, Capt. Neufville was informed that the Singpho chiefs were not complying with the treaty⁵⁸ in releasing the remaining Assamese captives. So, he decided to attack again and sent a group consisting of 600 men to attack the Singphos at Beesa. As reported on 7th August 1825, the British troops managed to occupy Beesa after a heavy fight with the Singphos. Meanwhile, Capt. Neufville joined with his troops to crush down the Singphos. The Singphos fought bravely until they finally surrendered.

⁵⁴ R.G. Latham, Tribes and Races: A Descriptive Ethnology of Asia, Africa and Europe, Vol-I, Cultural Publishing House, New Delhi, 1859, pp. 133; also ref. in Neufville, On the Geography and Population of Assam as cited in North East Frontier of Bengal, pp. 417-418.

⁵⁵ John F. Michell, The North-East Frontier of India: A Topographical, Political and Military Report, Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, 1883, rpt 1973, Vivek Publishing House, Delhi., p. 140.

⁵⁶ As cited in Michel, The Singpho and Khamti Report, pp. 142-145.

⁵⁷ As cited in Michel, The Singpho and Khamti Report, pp. 142-145.

⁵⁸ As per the treaty, the Singphos were asked to release the remaining Assamese slaves which they captured during Burmese invasion and Moamaria rebellion.

⁵⁹ C.U. Aitchison, A collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads relating to India and Neighbouring Countries, Vol-I, 1892, pp. 302-303 records the text of the agreement like this:

Translation of an Agreement in the Assamese Language executed to the British Government by the Singphoe Chiefs on 5th May 1826 – "Whereas we, the Singpho Chiefs, named Bum, Koomjoy, Mejong Iow, Chowkhen, Iowrah, Iowdoo, Chow, Chumun, Neengru, Tangrung, Chowbab, Chamuta, Chowrah, Chowdo, Choukam, Koomring, & c., are under the subjection of the British Government, we execute this Agreement to Mr. David Scott, the Agent to the Governor-General, and hereby engage to adhere to the following terms, vis:-

1st – Assam being now under the sway of the British Government, we and our dependent Singphos, who were subjects of the Assam State, acknowledge subjection to that Government. We agree not to side with the Burmese or any other King to commit any aggression whatever, but we will obey the orders of the British Government.

2nd – whenever a British Force may march to Assam to protect it from foreign aggression, we will supply that Force with grain, & c., make and repair roads for them, and execute every order that may be issued to us. We should on our doing so be protected by that Force.

3rd – If we abide by the terms of this Agreement, no tribute shall be paid by us; but if any Assam Paeeks of their own accord reside in our villages, the tax on such Paeeks will be paid to the British Government.

4th – we will set at large or cause to be liberated any Assam people whom we may seize, and they shall have the option to reside wherever they please.

5th – If any of the Singphoes rob any of the Assam people residing in our country, we will apprehend the former and surrender him to the British Government; but if we fail to do so, we will make good the loss thus sustained by the latter.

6th – We will govern and protect the Singphoes under us as heretofore and adjust their differences; and if any boundary disputes occur among us, we will not take up arms without the knowledge of the British Government.

7th – We will adhere to the terms of this Agreement and never depart from them. This Agreement shall be binding upon our brothers, sons, nephews, and relatives, in such as the Agent to the Governor-General may deem proper. We have executed this Agreement in the presence of many.

After a series of wars, on Friday, the 5th May 1826, an agreement was signed between the British and the Singphos at Sadiya, in which, sixteen Singpho Gaums pledged to support and co-operate with the British government in case of war or disturbances. However, a large number of Singphos didn't take part in the signing of the treaty.

In the year 1828, Ningru Thumung under his leadership collected thousands of Singpho fighting men to wage war against the British. However, before he could execute the plan, the British Intelligence intercepted the move, and upon hearing the development of the situation in the region, the British Government swiftly acted upon the rebels and managed to crush the rebel group in early stage. Ningru Thumung, the leader of the rebel group was immediately taken into custody and sent to Jail in Calcutta. But he somehow managed to escape from the Jail and returned back to his homeland to rejuvenate the group and lead the revolt with renewed vigour. He reorganised the rebel group but this time again he was recaptured and sent to the gallows for treason against the British government in Calcutta.

In the year 1830, another war was fought between the British and the Singphos. Luttora Gaum, who was hostile to the British government invited Wakim Koomjoon (or Wackum Kunjan), a Singpho chief from the Hukawng valley to support him in fighting against the British. Wakim Koomjoon accepted the request, but prior to the attack, he paid an informal visit to Sadiya

to assess the situation. After returning, Wakim Koomjoon collected a large number of Burmese and Singpho armed men. Then, after a month of preparation, he marched with his band consisting of 3000 fighting men to attack the British at Sadiya. Luttora Gaum with his 800 Singpho men immediately allied with the advancing troop. Meanwhile, other Singphos of the surrounding villages of Tengapani also joined the rebel groups. Upon hearing the advancing troop of the Singphos towards Sadiya, Capt. Neufville, the Commanding Officer of the Assam Light Infantry, with his troop numbering around 300 men promptly advanced to attack the combined force of Wakim Koomjoon and Luttora Gaum. The British troops reached Luttora village before sunset and swiftly attacked the Singphos leaving 13 Singphos dead and several others injured. Luttong Senapati, a prominent Singpho leader was among those killed in the encounter. On the British side, two sepoy were killed and few others were wounded.

On 25 March 1830, Bom Singpho joined with the rebel group comprising of 400 men under the leadership of Peali Borgohain and advanced towards Rangpur (in Assam) and attacked the contingent of 30 sepoy under a Jamadar who were guarding the armoury depot. The guards retaliated with force, and meantime Capt. Neufville after intercepting the news of the revolt immediately dispatched the Assam Light Infantry (ALI) troops and repulsed the rebels. The rebels could no longer withstand the artillery power of the British troops, and thus retreated into the jungle. After following closely for days, the ring leaders of the rebel group including Bom Singpho were captured. Bom Singpho along with other rebel leaders were brought to trial for treason against the British govern-

ment in Sadar Panchayat Court at Sibsagar. Following a short trial at Joysagar Military Court, Bom Singpho was sentenced to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment for his involvement in rebellion against the British government.

In the year 1835, Duffa Gaum, who was extremely hostile to the British government carried out a sudden attack in the Beesa territory killing around 90 people. Capt. White was authorised to march from Beesa with his 246 combatants against Duffa Gam who was preparing for the attack under well-fortified stockades on the hills of Menaboon. Duffa Gaum and his force of 400 men vigorously attacked the British troops. It took more than an hour for the British troops to repulse Duffa Gaum and his men. During the encounter, Lieutenant Miller, the Officer-in-Charge of the mortars was seriously wounded and 1 Havildar and 10 Sepoy lost their lives, and 35 Singpho men were killed and 40 wounded. Duffa Gaum and some of his men, however, managed to escape into the jungle. The British government took stern action against the Singpho chiefs who were suspected to have aided Duffa Gaum directly or indirectly. They were severely punished by the British. Their villages were burnt and destroyed. The crops were damaged and their livestock and properties were seized.

In the beginning of 1843, numerous wars broke out between the Singphos and the British at several places. A number of Singpho chiefs collaborated with Tippum Rajah, a former Ahom noble from Burma and carried out numerous attacks in the British territory. On 10th January 1843, a major war broke out between the Singphos and the British. A group of Singphos led by Tippum Rajah from Burma in large number

carried out an attack on the British guards at Ningru post killing 7 men. Meanwhile, other Singphos from neighbouring villages on the river bank of Nao-Dehing and Bori-Dehing also joined in the revolt. Simultaneously, the Singphos carried out number of attacks on the British outpost at different places. They attacked the British guards at Beesa post. The British troop consisting of a Jamadar and 20 sepoy held out for nearly four days until they were overrun by the Singphos in great strength. A Jamadar and one Halvilder were put to death and nine of the sepoy were sold as slaves, some were taken off to the Burma and others were sold to the Bor Khamti. Beesa Gaum, Lat Gaum and Ningru La were the Singpho leaders who led the revolt against the British. To avenge the assaults on the British subjects, more British troops were immediately dispatched against the Singphos. The British troops went on destroying stockade after stockade and plundering village after village for months until the Singphos who knew well about the supremacy of the British artillery power were compelled to finally lay down their arms before the British. During the assaults, the Singphos were severely punished and many of their villages were burnt and destroyed.⁶¹

Set Gaum carried out the attack on the British subjects at Ningrang village situated at the foot of the Patkai hills and left after plundering the village. Upon hearing the news, in the last week of January 1843, Capt. Mainwaring, the Commanding Officer of a Detachment of the Assam Light Infantry was dispatched with 200 fighting men to suppress the rebels. The British troops

⁶⁰ Report on An Ethnographic Study of the Singpho Community in Assam, Institute of Research and Documentation of Indigenous Societies, Guwahati, 2015, pp. 13-15; also cited in Goken Geyi, 'Political Encounter between the British and the Singpho tribe of Arunachal Pradesh: A brief study from 1792 to 1829 AD', Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research, Vol. 8, Issue 5, 2021, pp. a631-a635.

⁶¹ Frontier and Overseas' Expeditions, pp. 140-151; and Michell, 'The North-East Frontier of India, pp. 150-151.

attacked the Singphos who were quite unprepared for the attack. The troops killed 30 Singphos and wounded 40 of them. Many petty Singpho chiefs were captured, except Set Gaum, the main leader of the rebel groups who managed to escape to the hills. But after pursuing him for a week, Capt. Mainwaring finally captured Set Gaum with his family from a small Singpho village called Towkhel situated at the foot of the Patkai hills.

Causes for the rebellion against British

The resentment of the Singphos is clearly revealed from their representation to the Political Agent on the 3 February 1843 (vide P.C. 31 May 1843 No. 81):

We the undersigned Singpho Gaums viz, Lessora Singh, Rajah Jowpha Sesirong, Kotha Jowking, Beesa Jowpha, Thumprung Nabang, Ningroola Mow, Ningroola, Wakeel Dina and Notong state that Capt. Vetch having taken from us our land formerly granted to us by the late Neufville and Scott within the following boundaries from Dehingmookh, to Namsangmookh, the Papan Parbat, we have been driven to the present warfare. We are Singphos. Capt. Vetch has seized and taken our people. The Tippam Rajah ordered us to fight and we have to request that you will restore to us the lands from the Dehingmookh stockade, when we

*will return to Khem or Mookh but we shall not go without the lands are restored to us and you shall have an opportunity of burning down our villages as we have made up our minds to give trouble – you shall have enough of it.*⁶²

From the above representation to the British government, it is evident that the main cause for the uprising and revolt against the British was due to encroachment on the lands and privileges of the Singphos. The British wanted to expand their tea and other business. They wanted land for tea plantations and setting up of tea factories under the jurisdiction of the Singpho kingdom.

The Singphos were also utterly unhappy with the colonial rulers for their frequent interference and intervention in their socio-political affairs. The Gaums, in particular, were not happy with the British for depriving them their rights to keep the Assamese slaves for their domestic and agricultural work.⁶³ Since the time they came in contact with the British, thousands of Assamese slaves were freed and released.

Conclusion

From the very beginning, the Singphos who were living independently in their own country were not happy with the colonial regime for their intrusive intervention in the matter of the tribe. Therefore, when the colonial rulers were trying to suppress and subjugate them forcefully they revolted and carried out numerous attacks on the British subjects.

Looking at the historical sources, apparently the Singphos have given considerable trouble to the colonial regime throughout their rule in Assam. The British were attacked by the Singphos several times at Sadiya Post, Beesa Post, Ningru Post, Koojoo Post and many other places in between 1825 to 1843. It was only after 1843 that the colonial rulers were able to bring the Singphos under their control.

Recommendations

A. HEROES

1. NINGRU THUMUNG

Ningru Thumung⁶⁴ was the prominent member of the Ningru Gaum. He was born in Ningru Kawng (also known as Manmomukh). His father was Ningru Awnpha and Mother was Ningru Zauja. He was a brave and shrewd man who led the revolt against the British in 1828. Among the Singphos, Ningru Thumung is considered as one of the heroes who fought against the mighty British Empire to protect his motherland.

2. BOM SINGPHO

Bom Singpho was the prominent member of the Beesa Gaum. He was one the ring leaders who conspired and joined with some of the Ahom nobles to overthrow the British rule in the year 1830. He was captured and sentenced to life imprisonment at Decca (Dhaka) Jail.⁶⁵ As per the Court Judgement, all his possessions and properties were confiscated.



Image 45 (above): Ningru Thumung
(Courtesy: Nirupama Mazumder)

⁶⁴ S.K. Bhuyan, Early British Relation with Assam, Assam Govt. Press, Shillong, 1949, pp. 390; also cited in Report on An Ethnographic Study of the Singpho, pp. 13-15.

⁶⁵ The Criminal Court of Commissioner of Cherrapunji held on 6th August, 1830, Proceedings of the Criminal Court of the Agent, No. 70 as mentioned in H.K. Barpujari, The Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol-IV, Publication Board, Guwahati, 1992, pp. 24 and Elwin ed., India's North-East Frontier, p. 394.

⁶² Hemeswar Dihingia, Assam's Struggles against British Rule (1826-1863), Asian Publication Service, New Delhi, 1980, pp.146, Appendix-D.

⁶³ These causes for revolt were noted by Capt. Jenkins, the Governor-General's Agent during his representation to the British Government as cited in Verrier Elwin ed., India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century, Oxford University Press, London, 1959, pp. 394; and Mackenzie, The North-East Frontier of India, p. 70.



Image 46 (above): Bom Singpho
(Conceived by Manje La)



Image 47 (above): Beesa Gaum
(Source: Collected from brochure of Tea Tourism Festival 2005, Directorate of Tourism, Govt. of Assam)

3. BEESA GAUM

Beesa Gaum⁶⁶ was one of the influential and prominent chiefs of the Singphos who took active part during the revolt of 1843 against the British. He conspired and led the revolt against the British to protect the rights of his people and free them from the subjugation of the British regime. He was captured and brought to trial for rebellion against the British government. The Court found him guilty and was sentenced for life imprisonment at Dibrugarh Jail, Assam.

B. MARTYRS:

1. LUTTONG SENAPATI

Luttong (also Luthong) Senapati⁶⁷ was one of the prominent Singpho leaders who fought against the British during the revolt of Anglo-Singpho in 1830. He was born in Luttora (also known as Lutho) village currently situated near Chongkham in Namsai district. He was killed while fighting against the British.

C. FREEDOM FIGHTERS:

1. LUTTORA GAUM

Luttora Gaum was one of the powerful Singpho chiefs of the Luttora (or Lutho) village. He was one of the Singpho chiefs

who refused to sign the Agreement⁶⁸ in 1826 when sixteen other Singpho chiefs had signed the treaty. In the year 1830⁶⁹, he joined with other Singpho chiefs who were hostile to the British Government and led the revolt to oust the British.

2. DUFFA GAUM

Duffa Gaum was a powerful Singpho chief of Duffa village (or Duffadan). He was expelled from his homeland by the British in 1829. He was extremely hostile to the British for what they did to him. He conspired with other Singpho chiefs who were also dissatisfied with the British government to revolt against the British in 1835.

3. SET GAUM

Set (Satu) Gaum was a Singpho chief of Set village. He was a brave man who led and fought against the British during 1843 revolt. He was captured and punished for his involvement in rebellion against the British.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ The Agent to the Governor-General, Capt. Jenkins noted in his report that main cause of the Singpho insurrection was the loss of their slave. The Beesa Gaum was the Chief who had suffered most by this. As cited in Elwin, India's North-East Frontier, pp. 394 and Mackenzie, The North-East Frontier of India, pp. 70-71.

⁶⁷ Bengal Political Consultations (B.P.C.), 7th May 1830 Nos. 45-46 as cited in Dihingia, Assam's Struggle against British Rule, p. 58.

⁶⁸ Aitchison, Treaty, Agreement and Sanad.

⁶⁹ Dihingia, Assam's Struggle Against the British, p. 57.

⁷⁰ Bengal Political Consultations (B.P.C.) 31 May, 1843 No. 75. From Holroyd to Vetch (ibid, pp. 62).

WANCHO RESISTANCE TO ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUBJUGATION, 1875

Introduction

The Wanchos are people inhabiting Longding District. The district is situated at the eastern-most corner of Arunachal Pradesh. According to the Buranjis, Wanchos have been living in the region much before the Ahoms entered into Assam through the Patkai ranges in the early part of the 13th century. However, the Wancho came into the limelight after the NInu Massacre of 1875 at Ninu village.

The routes and date of migration of the Wanchos is in obscure as there was no written tradition among the Wanchos. However, according to their myths they are believed to have migrated from a place called Ophan-Tan, and towards the South - West beyond the Patkai hills or the Purvanchal Ranges; from where they travelled to present settlement via Tangnu and Tsangnu; villages in present day Tuenseng District of Nagaland. The community is divided into two ethnic groups on the basis of their migration. Those who came via Tangnu

are called Tangen and others who came via Tsangnu as Sanjen.

Every Wancho village has their own chief. However, there are paramount villages and paramount Chiefs. The institution of the chieftainship is hereditary. The eldest son of the chief for royal wife Wangcha/Wangtha inherit the chieftainship. Chiefs have the power and authority to the maintenance of law and order and to make decisions. He is responsible for developmental activities, and welfare measures and provides security to the village. He resolves disputes, decides the punishments, and enacts laws. He also decides the agricultural activities. Wancho people consist of two groups; the ruling class such as Wang (Wangham, Wangs and Wangsu) and commoners as Pan or Pansa and Wangpan. There is a dormitory known as Paa, which is an institution for men which serves in many ways like any other youth dormitory.

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the Wancho. They also do hunting, fishing, gathering and handicraft and handloom as subsidiary livelihood activities.

Wancho-British Relations

The first colonial official who travelled to the fringe of Wancho areas bordering plain was Captain Brodie from 1941- 42. They visited Banfera, Joboka, Milung, Jaktong, Tabong and Changno villages. They imposed annual payment of tribute to the government on these villages. The British also impose their laws and to enforce them Military police were deployed. However, the Wanchos were not ready to easily submit to British rule. Hence, the Wancho carried out a series

of attacks and murders. In April 1844, the Bar - Mithunias, a group of the Wanchos who called themselves Chopnu attacked Banfera village. The Banfera Wanchos committed a murder at a place close to the border of Sibsagar in April 1851 and fled to Joboka village. Again in March 1853, they committed another murder at a border near Sibsagar District. In 1869, it was also reported that the Wanchos carried off three labourers from a nearby tea-garden in plain.

Finally, in January 1875, the British Government decided to send an expedition to the Patkai ranges through the Wancho villages. The team was under the command of Lieutenant Holcombe, the then Assistant Commissioner of Sibsagar District.⁷¹ After a week-long trekking through the jungle and Wancho villages lieutenant Holcombe arrived at Senua village and decided to halt at Senua for five days.⁷² During the halt Sombang Wangham, Chief of Senua informed Lieutenant Holcombe about an intelligence report of the preparation of war and possible attack by the Nibang men.⁷³ However, Holcombe ignored the report and instead asked him to depute some men as guides.⁷⁴ On 1, February 1875 the expedition team encamped at *Sumjanuk*. Everyone was exhausted by the journey. They were shabby and unkempt; all wet with sweat and worn out.⁷⁶

During this period, Ninu as a village was one of the most powerful and formidable in the area. According to the oral sources, many villages paid tribute and allegiance to Ninu for security and protection against external threats. The expedition team entered the territory of Ninu when Ninu was mourning the death of a young Chief. The expedition team

were well equipped with arms and warfare artilleries and the news of the intruders into the dominion had become a conflagrated gossiping and sharp-sighted affair. The villagers were suspicious of the arrival of the team. They were welcomed with fear and suspicion because of their large number of men who had trespassed the soil without the prior approval of the village headman. The intrusion of the foreigners did not go well with the conscience of the people and they plotted to attack the team who had encamped in the vicinity of the village. As the team settled down the villagers watched every activity of the foreigners uniformed, who had their rifles slung across their shoulders appeared odd and peculiar.

Causes

The information about the list of survey team was passed to the Ninu by the Chief of Borduria prior to weeks before through lower Wancho villages⁷⁷ area such as Runu and Chanu villages. But Ninu people were not anticipated such a huge contingent outsiders in their land, so they opted to wait and watch for the moment.⁷⁸ However, Across the region, there were anguish over the illegal entry of outsiders and opinion was built up such that the Nibang as the sole group had the capability to drive out the foreigners. Many villages mocked at Ninu for not retaliating the intruding outsiders.

Lieutenant Holcombe walked up to village along with some of his men and were examining a typical lifestyle and culture of the people.⁷⁹ The foul-smelling

⁷¹ Henry Edward Landor Thuillier, General report on the Topographical survey of India and of the Surveyor General's Department for season 1874-75, Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, 1876, p. 51.

⁷² Foreign Dept. Political December 1875 Con. 91-99 (No 91.- No. 2345, dated Shil-long, 7 July 1875 Letter from H. Luttman Johnson Esq. Secy. To Chief Commissioner of Assam to C.U Aitchson Esq. C.S.I Secy. Of India Foreign Dept.

⁷³ Nibang: villages or people associated with Ninu village and who paid tribute to the Chief of Ninu were known as Nibang.

⁷⁴ Foreign Dept. Political Branch. Consultation no. 91-99, Naga expedition December 1875. (No. 92. No. 42 dated Samaguting, 30th April 1875, From Captain John Butler, PA, Naga Hills to H. Luttman Esq. Secretary to the Commissioner of Assam,) Appendix B, National Archive of India, New Delhi.

⁷⁵ Sumjanuk: was an abandoned agricultural Jhum land of Ninu village.

⁷⁶ Interview with Longwang Wangham, Chief of Ninu village and other elders at Nginu village in 2017.

⁷⁷ Foreign Dept. Political Branch. Consultation no. 91-99, Naga expedition December 1875.

⁷⁸ Interviewed with Ngota Pansa, elderly man in his nineties of Ngissa village in February 2022.

⁷⁹ Interview with Longwang Wangham, of Ninu village and other elders at Nginu village in 2017.

smoke from the platforms in the graveyard, a kind Lieutenant R. G. Woodthorpe, who visited Ninu in March 1875, described a grave in a Naga village drew the attention of the Britishers:

The dead was wrapped in mats and placed on platforms under small roofs, which are decorated with cloths and streamers, and have at each end a tall figure of wood dressed, painted, and tattooed after the manner of the men of the village, and carrying imitation spears and daos; gourds, basket, etc., being suspended above. At some villages the tombs are enclosed in small sheds with doors and are regular family vaults. These tombs are all just outside the villages. Cairns of stones are also erected, where the heads of departed villagers decorated with shells, beads, and bells are collected, earthen jar filled with the smaller bones being arranged beside the skulls. Each head is decorated so as to preserve its individuality.⁸⁰

While the villagers were observing customary vigil at the grave of the Chief's deceased son, one of the sepoys hit the corpse with his baton and sarcastically pointed towards the replica of the late Prince. The spectators could not believe their eyes and were horrified by the scornful attitude of the visitors. This disgraceful insult to their chief and culture as well. Touching a

corpse at the grave was an unimaginable sacrilege.

The whole villagers felt offended and in emotions and ran to the Chief for his orders; for no one could ever imagine such audacity in the land. The villagers assembled with the rhythm of the log drums which signalled a state of war. The signal echoed for alertness in other associate villages of Nisa, Longkai, Kaimoi, Kamhua, and others with runners reaching out with information⁸².

The chief's brother Wangchin Wangsapa⁸³, the most important person in the Chief's Council; holding crucial roles in the governance, ordered an assembly of all subordinate Chiefs, elders, and men at the Courtyard. The gathering was seething with anger and ready to strike at the offenders. The Shaman suggested that the outsiders who intruded into their soil had given sufficient reasons to be punished.⁸⁴

The *Wangsapa* deliberated the detail plans of attack; he would be the first to flash his *dao* (machete) to attack and all should wait for the sign of blood slash in his machete; then everyone should draw their *daos* together and attack upon the trespassers. By the twilight, the modalities of the attack were finalised. Young and old people discussed that the next day's venture could be a lifetime opportunity to bring trophies and get tattooed; which would formally recognised poerson as *Nowmai* (Warrior). That night the warriors were busy in sharpening their daos and spears for the war. The women, children and the old people were shifted to a safer place.⁸⁵

It was on 2 February 1875 around 06:00 hours; the visiting team was busy preparing for the survey. The sepoys at the Sentry Post suddenly saw group of men approaching toward their camp and alerted Lieutenant Holcombe. The Wanchos arrived in the camp and the interpreter informed to Lieutenant Holcombe that the Chief along with others have come. The Wanchos were halted at the Sentry Post and the British army took their position behind the Lieutenant Holcombe.

Captain Badgley in his accounts described how suddenly and swiftly Wancho warrior attacked on British survey team: "Sitting in my tent I heard one of the headmen say to Lieutenant Holcombe: 'the Raja (village headman) is there but is afraid of the gun.'⁸⁶ Lieutenant Holcombe took a rifle and gave it to the Chief, then the Chief placed the gun on his left solder and flashed the dao with his right hand and performed war dance and song which signal for attacks while one man handed a gong to the lieutenant Holcombe which he tried to blow. Then, Wanchos threw away their shawls under which each had a machete. Wangchin the Wangsapa cut down Lieutenant Holcombe. Within seconds with war cries the camp was surrounded by the Wanchos who attacked whomever they could.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 April 1875 published the report of attack of 20 February 1875 at page number 5 says:

Nagas were all about the camp, on the pretext of selling fowls, potatoes, & o. to the men two and three wherever

our men were. Suddenly one of the Nagas gave a shout, bill hooks were out, and each small group of Nagas struck at the heads of the men nearest to them and Lieutenant Holcombe was the first to receive his death-wound, a blow from a bill-hook he fell to the ground.

Captain Badgley was in his tent when four men rushed in and attacked him. Though wounded, he could retaliate by firing his revolver and thus escaped from the scene. Captain Badgley describes the scene of the attack:

I sprang up to draw my pistol hanging to the back of the pole, as several of them rushed in. Firing into them, I made my way out behind (my tent providentially being made to open at both ends), was followed by two of them, whose blows I avoided as well as I could, firing meanwhile, when at the moment I fired the fourth shot I tripped over a stump and fell. When I got on my feet again the men had disappeared, and a wail was rising from the camp instead of the cries and shouts of a moment before. Running to where Lieutenant Holcombe lay, I found him with two cross cuts on the right side of the head exposing the brain, the sentry near him with his head hanging by a strip of skin...⁸⁷

⁸⁰ Foreign Dept. Political A. Prog. December 1875. No 91-99, Appendix X, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

⁸¹ L.R.N Srivastava, Among the Wanchos of Arunachal Pradesh, Directorate of Research, Govt of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 2010, p. 102.

⁸² Interview with Longwang Wangham, Chief of Ninu village and other elders at Nginu village in 2017

⁸³ Wangchin Wangsa: was the brother of the chief of Ninu who led the Wanchos is described by British reports 'Vanting, the Vansa (Second chief) of Nibang.

⁸⁴ Interview with Longwang Wangham, Chief of Ninu village and other elders at Nginu village in 2017.

⁸⁵ Interview with Longwang Wangham, Chief of Ninu village and other elders at Nginu village in 2017.

⁸⁶ Thuillier, General report on the Topographical survey of India, pp. 51-53.

⁸⁷ Thuillier, General report on the Topographical survey of India, pp. 51-53.

⁸⁸ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/?term=the+massacre+in+the+naga+hills> US National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, The Massacre in the Naga Hills, H. K. McKay. Ind Med Gaz. 1875 Mar 1; 10(3): 81–82. PMID: PMC5170914.

⁸⁹ <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/.../assam-murder-of-lieutenant-holcombe> UK Parliament. Official report of Debates in the UK Parliament. Assam – murder of Lieutenant Holcombe – Question. 27th April 1875.

⁹⁰ <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/33105218/>. “The Times” (London, Greater London, England) 28th April 1875, p. 8.

⁹¹ Interview with Longwang Wangham, Chief of Ninu village and other elders at Nginu village in 2017.

⁹² shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/2478/7/07_chapter%203. Colonial period Chapter 3. pp. 89-90.

⁹³ Foreign Department, Political A, Govt. of India, March 1875, Nos. 480-498. Measures for punishment of Naga villages concerned in the attack of Lieut. Holcombe and his party. Rf. No. 491. p.7.

⁹⁴ Foreign Department, Political A, Govt. of India, March 1875, Nos. 480-498. Measures for punishment of Naga villages concerned in the attack of Lieut. Holcombe and his party. Rf. no. 495 p. 9, 10.

⁹⁵ Foreign Dept. Political Branch. Consultation no. 91-99, Naga expedition December 1875 (No. 92. No. 42 dated Samaguting, 30th April 1875, From Captain John Butler, PA, Naga Hills to H. Luttman Esq. Secretary to the Commissioner of Assam, Appendix B, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

The camp was then completely vanquished with headless mutilated bodies scattered with blood stains. Captain Badgley encouraged his team to search for the wounded, rice, arms, and ammunitions as he led them to the opposite side. The Wanchos continued to venture down the hills, the White men seemed handful and all nearly wounded.

Dr. H. K. McKay, the Surgeon in officiating charge of the 44th Sylhet Light Infantry treated the wounded. In his letter to the Editor of the “INDIAN MEDICAL GAZETTE” dated 1 March 1875, he wrote about the graveness of the attack, the nature of the wounds received, and the attack of the Wanchos that had befallen upon the team. On the 7 of February, the Surgeon reported that out of 197 men, 80 were killed, 51 wounded and 66 unharmed.⁸⁸ Lord George Hamilton,⁸⁹ the then Under Secretary of State for India confirmed the news of the attack at Ninu and informed of a successful punitive expedition in the UK Parliament proceedings on 27th April 1875. His official statement was published by the ‘The Times’⁹⁰ news daily in London on 28 April 1875.

The Wanchos after a successful venture rushed to their villages and hammered the log drums with the beats of victory. There were rejoicing for a victorious return. The Raja announced a banquet for the people. The Priest (gampa) got busy with the rites. There were cheers all around; while the men danced and sang the songs of victory, the womenfolk prepared indige-

nous beverages for them. Meanwhile, the elders treated the wounded and prepared graves for their men who died in the war. Amidst the feasting, an elderly man observed: “the White men are treacherous by their skills and seem that they have some roots; they may return”. A week later, the villagers were directed to organize themselves into their clans and construct rehabilitation huts beyond the mountains.⁹¹

Major W. S. Clarke, then Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur wrote about the incident to the Chief Commissioner’s office and then decided to send a strong army within a month to avenge the attack. In a letter dated 24 February 1875, J. J. Driberg,⁹² Personal Assistant to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, issued an instruction to send a large contingent of 500 strong Army to the Wancho villages.

The punitive expedition team was sent under the command of Brigadier Nuttall along with Captain Butler was to be conducted under the directions of Colonel Keatings, Chief Commissioner and Brigadier Stafford as instructed by Government.⁹³ The expeditionary force left Dibrugarh by 27 February. The team comprised of 400 troops from 42nd Assam Light Infantry, 44th Sylhet Light Infantry, Lakhimpur and 50 men of Naga Hills Frontier Police with 500 coolies.⁹⁴

They occupied Senua village without much resistance. The Raja of Senua admitted that about five men from his village were concerned in the Ninu incident; they had brought back four guns but no heads⁹⁵ and they surrendered three guns.

On 18 March they managed to cross the Tissa river. Ninu was about 3 hours march from bank of Tissa. The Wancho warriors were to fight and armed themselves with bows, arrows and daos. The Chief of Ninu had called upon all the satellite villages to join the war. Lieutenant R. G. Woodthorpe described in his accounts as:

As we marched along under a burning sun, we saw large numbers of Nagas, in full war-dress, coming down through the fields on our left, from Longkai. We turned a corner, and found ourselves only half a mile from Ninu, which the long grass had hither to hidden from our sight. As we continued on our way, a column of smoke rose slowly from some houses in front of us; at first we thought that the enemy intended burning their own village, and not making any stand, but seeing that these houses were a few detached from the main village, which would have afforded shelter to our skirmishers covering the attacking party, on the very strong stockade which surrounded the village itself, we gave them credit for their military skill, and hoped they intended to make a good defence, which hope was strengthened by their calling out “come on; we are quite ready for you” and at once opening fire on us. We had caught glimpses of the 42nd approaching up the other spur; they arrived almost as soon as we did, and were received on their side by a body of Nagas stationed outside the stockade with a volley. When we, on our side, were close up to the stockade the firing ceased, and again an ominous cloud of smoke, followed at once by flames

rose again, this time within the stockade, which the Nagas had now abandoned. Had they stood up a little more boldly and fire more carefully, we must have suffered severely, as our advance was necessarily made over open ground, up very steep approaches, very thickly planted with “panjees”. We clambered over the stockade without delay, but the Nagas were quicker, and before half-a-dozen of us were over, the greater portion of the village was in flames, the Nagas dispersing in every direction. After the fierce heat of the sun, the change to the fiercer heat of the burning houses closely built was not a pleasant one, and we ran through the village as rapidly as possible, our pace being accelerated every now and then as some large house subsided suddenly, threatening to involve us in its fall, and covering us with a shower of fire brands while the hot, pungent smoke blinded us. At last we were once more clear of the village, and could see the Nagas rapidly retreating along all the slopes in the direction of Nisa, a village four miles distant from Ninu.⁹⁶

After battle was over, the British Army split themselves in groups to attack other satellite villages. From Ninu village Colonel Nuttall sent a telegram to the Quartermaster-General, Simla on 27 March 1875 informing about successful operation against Ninu and other villages like Nisa, Upper and Lower Kamhua,

⁹⁶ Thuillier, General report on the Topographical survey of India, p. 61.

Longkai and Kaimoi which were burnt down.⁹⁷ The team then marched back and reached Dibrugarh on the on 11 April. Indeed, before the year was out another expedition had to be sent to destroy Ninu, which had been rebuilt.

Five men from Senua village Nokdon, Chunle, Mikbong, Janphua and Janchoi who were the guide of Lieutenant Holcombe and Choakat of Kamhua village were arrested and Sombang Wangham and Kali were kept as hostage.⁹⁸ The photograph of four prisoners taken by Oscar Jean Baptiste Mallitte⁹⁹ in 1875 is one of the visual evidence on Anglo- Wancho fight.

On 15 April 1876, another operation team led by Lieutenant R. G. Woodthorpe was sent to Ninu.¹⁰⁰ The punitive expedition team held many of the women folk of the villages as hostage during the entire campaign in order to ascertain the reasons behind the attack and for the surrender of their men. The women had to suffered from military atrocities.

Meanwhile, Ponghi of Senua, who was also an active participant in the war and also also a close aide of the Chief of Ninu, had taken refuge at Ninu. The British officials demanded his surrender but the Chief of Ninu refused. Lieutenant R. G. Woodthorpe records the words of Khunjing Wangham, the Ninu Chief: “If I give you up, on that day with the sun let my glory set; and when the moon sets may my glory set, and my name as Raja be forgotten on the face of the earth.”¹⁰¹ Thereafter, the British continuously send armies to

Wancho area, but the Wanchos never gave up in their fight against the British forces.

Recommendations

A. HEROES

1. KHUNJING WANGHAM

Khunjing Wangham was the son of Tumbang Wangham from Ninu village in Longding district. He was the paramount Chief of the area known as Nibang. The Chief of many satellite villages use to allegiance to him. In 1875, on receiving information from the Chief of Borduria and people from Chanu and Runu villages about visiting of foreigners in the Wancho areas. He decided to oppose and attack the intruding force. The British exploration team consisted of 197 persons commanded by Lieutenant Holcombe, the Assistant Commissioner at Sibsagar District of Assam. On 2 February 1875 at around 06:00 - 06:30 hours hundreds of Wancho warriors attacked the camp British at Sumjanuk in Ninu village. In this attack, Lieutenant Holcombe and about 80 British subjects were killed and 51 persons were wounded and Captain, W. F. Badgley survived with severe wounds. He resisted the two successive punitive expeditions against them. During the expeditions, Ninu, Nisa, Kaimoi, Longkai, Kamhua, Noknu - Noksa, and Niaunu villages were burnt down and many people were killed in the war. When the Britishers demanded a Senua man named

Ponghi for his surrender but he declined the demand. He sternly stated. It was he who planned the strategies of attack, mobilised the people for war and commanded the warrior during the war.

2. WANGCHIN WANGSAPA

Wangchin Wangsapa was from Ninu Village in Longding District. He was the son of Tumbang Wangham and the first brother of Khunjing Wangham. He was the most important person in the governance of under the Chief of Ninu’s Council. He was the person who shouldered the responsibility of carrying out all the orders of the Chief. Having received information about the coming of the British from Borduria Chief and Chanu and Runu villages, on the direction of the Chief he organized Wanchos to resist the entry of the Britishers in their territory. On 2nd February 1875, about 6:00-6:30 AM, he along with his elder brother (Khunjing) led hundreds of Wanchos into the camp of the British expedition team at Sumjanuk of Ninu village to drive out Britisher. He was the first person to lead the attack and the person who killed Lieutenant Holcombe in the war. He organized the Wancho warriors to fight against the successive British Punitive expeditions in March 1875 and April 1876.

B. MARTYRS

1. WANGKHAM PANSA (KHIHAM)

Wangkham Pansa was young warrior of Longkai village. The villagers under the leadership of Kophe Pansa are said to have taken part on the orders of the Chief of Ninu on 2nd February 1875. The villagers had sensed the coming of the punitive expedition in the area. On the 20th of March 1875, Colonel Sheriff, with a party of some sixty men from the Ninu Column had arrived at Longkai. Wangkham was in the line of duty at Paa (*Morong*); as soon as he saw the coming of the colonial forces, he hurriedly sounded the log drum and signalled the state of war. He was instantly shot by the forces soon after in front of the *Morong*.

2. PANGKHA PANSA (NAAM)

Pangkha Pansa was son of Banpang Pansa of Kaimoi village. He belonged to Naam clan as per the family lineage. He was a warrior who joined the chief of Kaimoi during the attack at Ninu on 2 February 1875 and later went on to the hills during the punitive expeditions. It is said that the villagers had constructed stockade in defence against the British expedition team. He was one of the men as sentry during at stockade. On hearing the news of the arrival of the British army he raised up to give an alarm to the Wanchos. He bravely went forward to ascertain the coming of the enemy and while doing

⁹⁸ Foreign Dept. Political Branch. Consultation no. 91-99, Naga Expedition December 1875.

⁹⁹ Michael Aram Tarr and Stuart Blackburn, Tribal Cultures in the Eastern Himalayas: Through the Eye of Time, Photographs of Arunachal Pradesh 1859-2006, Brill, Leiden, 2008, p. 104, fig. 85.

¹⁰⁰ Foreign Dept. Political-A consultation no. January 1877. 146/51 p. 18.

¹⁰¹ R. G. Woodthorpe, Report of the Survey Operation in the Naga Hills, 1875-1876, printed at Assam Secretariat Press, Shillong, 1876, p. 18.

so the soldiers spotted him and fired at him in the line of the stockade and he attained martyrdom.

C. FREEDOM FIGHTERS

1. SOMBANG WANGHAM, CHIEF OF SENUA VILLAGE

Sombang Wangham was son of Zangmaw Wangham and was the Chief of Senua village. Oral tale suggests that he led his villagers to attack the British expedition team who were retreating for Ninu village in 1875. He was arrested by the British punitive expedition and kept as hostage for surrendering Senua people who were taken part in attack. He faced untold misery and punishment for the incident of war inflicted by the British.

2. NOKDON WANGPAN

Nokdon of Senua village was recruited as a guide by the British expedition team. He was a Wancho warrior. He belonged to Pumao-am of Senua village. He complied with the preparation of the Nibang men to attack the foreigners and participated in the Wancho resistance of 1875. He was arrested and imprisoned with hard labour and in chains at Tezpur jail for seven years. He was released on 21 October 1881.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Foreign Dept, Pol-A, Prog. Nos. Dec 1881, No.149-149, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

¹⁰³ Foreign Dept, Pol-A, Prog. Nos. Dec 1881, No.149-149, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁴ Foreign Dept, Pol-A, Prog. Nos. Dec 1881, No.149-149, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁵ Foreign Dept, Pol-A, Prog. Nos. Dec 1881, No.149-149, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

3. JANPHUA KHANGAM

Janphua to be pronounced as Janpho Khangam was son of Somkhang Khangam of Senua Village. He was one among the five Senua men recruited as guide to the visiting British expedition team. He fought in the Wancho resistance of 1875 at Ninu. He was arrested and imprisoned at Tezpur for seven years. He was arrested and imprisoned with hard labour and in chains at Tezpur jail for seven years. He was released on 23 September 1881.¹⁰³

4. MIKBONG BOHAM

Mikbong Boham was among the five Senua men recruited as guide to the visiting British expedition team. He fought in the Wancho resistance of 1875 at Ninu. He was arrested and imprisoned at Tezpur for seven years. He was arrested and imprisoned with hard labour and in chains at Tezpur jail for seven years. He was released on 11 November 1881.¹⁰⁴

5. CHUNLE WANGSAPA

Chunle pronounced as Chonley Wangsapa was son of Zangmaw Wangham of Naitong-am clan was of Senua Village. He was among the five Senua men recruited as guide to the visiting British expedition team. He fought in Wancho resistance of 1875 at Ninu. He was arrested and imprisoned at Tezpur for seven years. He was arrested and imprisoned with hard labour and in chains at Tezpur jail for seven years. He was released on 4 November 1881.¹⁰⁵

6. JANCHOI THANGKHO-AM OR JANCHAI

Janchoi Thangkho-am was among the five Senua men recruited as guide to the visiting British expedition team. He fought in the Wancho resistance of 1875 at Ninu. He was arrested and imprisoned at Tezpur for seven years. He was arrested and imprisoned with hard labour and in chains at Tezpur jail for seven years. He was released on 13 May 1882.¹⁰⁶

7. KALI SON OF PONGHI OF SENUA

Village was kept as hostage along with Sombang Chief of Senua demanding the surrender of his father.

8. PONGHI OF SENUA VILLAGE

Ponghi was a Wancho warrior who participated in the Wancho resistance of 1875 at Ninu. He was present at Ninu during the war and is said to play a vital role in the incident. The British punitive expedition could not arrest him in spite of their best efforts. He had taken shelter at Ninu and the Chief of Ninu was adamant not to surrender him.

9. KIWANG WANGHAM

Kiwang Wangham was a junior chief of Ninu village. He played a vital role in the preparation of the successive wars. He assisted his elder brothers Khunjing Wangham and along with his brother led the war against the British expedition team at Ninu on 2nd February 1875.

10. KAPCHAI WANGSAPA

Kapchai Wangsapa was one of the brothers of Khunjing Wangham the Chief of Ninu. He was one of the leaders involved in planning and organising the war against the British expedition team at Ninu. He fought against the successive wars at Ninu on 2nd February 1875.

11. WANGPHO WANGSAPA

Wangpho Wangsapa was one of the brothers of Khunjing Wangham the Chief of Ninu. He was one of the leaders involved in planning and organising the war against the British expedition team at Ninu. He fought against the successive wars at Ninu on 2nd February 1875.

12. LOWANG WANGHAM

Lowang Wangham was son of Tumbang Wangham older Chief of Ninu village. He had migrated to be the chief of Nisa village. When the British expedition team entered the Wancho area, he was one of the leaders to assist Khunjing Wangham the Chief of Ninu to organise the war against the British expedition team. He led the villagers of the Nisa village and attacked the British team on 2nd February 1875 at Ninu.

¹⁰⁶ Foreign Dept, Pol-A, Prog. Nos. June 1882, No.253, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

13. KOPHE PANSA

Kophe was a leader from Longkai village who participated in the war against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875 at Ninu. The villagers under his leadership attacked the British team, because of which the Longkai was attacked by the punitive expedition in the later month.

14. HATWANG WANGHAM

Hatwang Wangham was chief Kaimoi village. He led the villagers complying with the orders of the Chief of Ninu and attacked the British team on 2nd February 1875 at Ninu.

15. PHAWKAM WANGSA

Phawkam Wangsa was Wancho warrior of Kaimoi village. He was one of the leaders who assisted the chief of Kaimoi in organising the war and bravely fought against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875 at Ninu.

16. CHAOKAT/KATPKHA OPOIAM

Choakat, also pronounced as Katpkha Opoiame, was of Kamhua Noknu village. He was about 24 years old. He was one of the warriors who fought against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875. He was arrested by the Punitive expedition team and kept as a prisoner.

17. TANGPA PHEAM

Tangpa Pheam was of Kamhua Noknu village. He was about 25 years old. He was one of the warriors who fought against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875.

18. NEWANG WANGSA

Newang Wangsa was a warrior of Kamhua Noknu. He was about 26 years old. He was one of the warriors who fought against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875. He was the younger brother of Sanban Wangsa, K/Noknu chief's family. He died in Mintong Wangkam (Chief house).

19. PONGPHA/ONGPHA WANGSA/PHOPHA LOSU

Pongpha was a warrior of Kamhua Noknu. He was one of the warriors who fought against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875. His identity was revealed by Chaokat while the latter was in confinement at the jail.¹⁰⁷

20. LEMCHUN WANGSAAM

Lemchun was a warrior of Kamhua Noknu. He was one of the warriors who fought against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875. His identity was revealed by Chaokat while the latter was in confinement at the jail.¹⁰⁸

21. LEMMCHEN WANGSAAM (Lemtun as per British records)

Lemmchen was a warrior of Kamhua Noknu. He was one of the warriors who fought against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875. His identity was revealed by Chaokat while the latter was in confinement at the jail.¹⁰⁹

22. GAUPHA GAUAM (Vaopha as per British records)

Gaupha was a warrior of Kamhua Noknu. He was one of the warriors who fought against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875. His identity was revealed by Chaokat while the latter was in confinement at the jail.¹¹⁰

23. CHINGTON GAUAM (Iton as per British records)

Chington was a warrior of Kamhua Noknu. He was one of the warriors who fought against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875. His identity was revealed by Chaokat while the latter was in confinement at the jail.¹¹¹

24. MANNANG LOSU

Mannang was a warrior of Kamhua Noknu. He was one of the warriors who fought against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875.

25. MANJACHINGSA-AM

Manjachingsa-Am was a warrior of Kamhua Noknu. He was one of the warriors who fought against the British expedition team on 2nd February 1875.

¹⁰⁷ Foreign Dept, Political Branch, Consultation Nos. 91-99, Naga Expedition December 1875, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁸ Foreign Dept, Political Branch, Consultation Nos. 91-99, Naga Expedition December 1875, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁹ Foreign Dept, Political Branch, Consultation Nos. 91-99, Naga Expedition December 1875, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

¹¹⁰ Foreign Dept, Political Branch, Consultation Nos. 91-99, Naga Expedition December 1875, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

¹¹¹ Foreign Dept, Political Branch, Consultation Nos. 91-99, Naga Expedition December 1875, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Resistance Movement V

The Tai Khamti

Chapter

05

Tai Khamti

INTRODUCTION

The Tai Khamti belong to the Shan or Tai group.¹ Now they are settled in Namsai District of Arunachal Pradesh and some pockets in Lakhimpur and Dhemaji Districts of Assam. They migrated from the mountain range at the source of the Irrawaddy river. During the reign of the Ahom monarch Rajeswar Sing the Tai Khamti migrated to the valley of Tengapani river in the year 1751.² According to historian Lila Gogoi, there are three versions related to the Tai Khamti migration. The term *Khamti* means 'land of gold'; *Kham* means gold and *Ti* means place. As per the second version, Sam-lung-pha, the king of the Shan state of north Burma, closed the Nai-Khoma Pass of the Patkai ranges forever so that the Shan people could live together peacefully after he successfully pushed back the invasion of a Tibetan King. This event marked the 'stick together' or adhere to (Kham) to one place (Ti) of the Tai Khamti people and hence their name, Tai Khamti. The third version says that the word 'Khamti' is a royal title given to the subordinate rulers by Mung-kang.³

From 1780 King Gourinath Sing faced political turmoil from the Moamaria Rebellion. In 1794, the Tai Khamti people took advantage of the administrative and political instability and occupied the Ahom province of Sadiya.⁴ The Chief of Tai Khamti assumed the title of Sadiya Khowa Gohain. Thereafter, the Tai Khamti Chief was acknowledged by the Ahom Kings and later on by the British Government.⁵

However, prior to the coming of the British in Assam from 1794 to 1817, many wars were fought between the Ahom Kings and the Tai Khamti.⁶

When they began their rule in Sadiya, people believed that their great Raja Chowpha Planglu, later popularly known as the Ronua Gohain (the Warrior) was born.

The Tai Khamti Chief was recognised as the Sadiya Khowa Gohain by the British after their occupation of Assam in 1826. Captain Neufville, allowed the Tai Khamti Chief Chausalan with power to govern themselves and they were also exempted from taxation. But they were to maintain an army equipped by the British to perform military service to the British when required. Revenue collection from the Assamese population and criminal and civil cases involving rupees fifty were to be disposed of by the British official in Sadiya.

Chae-teeh, the Tai Khamti chronicle, records that the Britishers had arrived at Sadiya with an appeal for plot of land measuring the 'size of a buffalo skin' for temporary settlement, but later on occupied a large plot of land deceitfully. This incident became the first instance of doubt of the real intentions of the British intrusion in the land. Since the early years of settlement, the Tai Khamti people witnessed the gradual imposition of their rule over their territory and subjugating attitude. These series of incidents made a young Tai Khamti Chief, Chowpha Planglu, and his sons and brothers to plot against the

¹ Hunter, A Statistical Account of Assam, p. 309.

² Butler, A Sketch of Assam, pp. 39-40.

³ L. Gogoi, The Tai Khamtis of North East India, Omsons publications, New Delhi, 1989, p. 33.

⁴ Butler, A Sketch of Assam, p. 40.

⁵ Hunter, A Statistical Account of Assam, p. 310.

⁶ Hunter, A Statistical Account of Assam, pp. 41-42.

British rule. From an early age, he had begun to dream to establish an independent state.⁷

ANGLO - TAI KHAMTI WAR, 1839-43

Causes

The resentment against the colonial rule was disseminating among the chiefs and people in Sivasagar, Jorhat, Saikhowa and Sadiya regions of Assam. Therefore, the chiefs of the Tai Khamti under the leadership of Chowpha Planglu planned to oust the Britishers from Sadiya. This is proved from communication between Peali, an indigenous renowned leader of Assam seeking the assistance of the Sadiya Khowa Gohain that:

*...if you wish for a Surgeedo and the restoration (to power) of the seven noble houses, you will not neglect to sent along with the youngman (Haranath) the soldiers under your orders. We also have taken measures. If you think that his is false, send your own man to inspect (our force).*⁸

In December 1834, the British authority issued instructions to carry out a census of the population. The census has to be renewed after every five years. Tax

was levied on Assamese population one rupees per head. The Khamtis were exempted from taxation but in lieu they have to provide military service to the British Government.

Further, in 1835, a strong and determined new Sadiya Khowa Gohain took over the reign Sadiya after death of his father. Hence, Captain Charlton, the Officer in Charge of Sadiya and Saikhowa Districts took measures to control the traffic of slaves and protect the Assamese population from the oppressive exactions of the Sadiya Khowa Gohain. The policies of the British made the Tai Khamti dissatisfied with the British intervention.

Besides, these new administrative measures which basically trimmed the role and powers of Sadiya Khowa Gohain. Charlton withdrew the muskets given to the Khamti by Captain Neufville.⁹

The Sadiya Khowa Gohain defied the intervention of the British in the dispute between him and the Chief of Muttock over Saikhowa by taking possession of Saikhowa and thus showed his anguish against the Government. In retaliation, the British government removed the office of the Sadiya Khowa Gohain from Sadiya and took control over the Sadiya province. The Sadiya Khowa Gohain was arrested and sent to Guwahati jail. F. Jenkins, the Agent to the Governor General, in his letter to W.H Macnaghten, Esquire Secretary to Government of Bengal dated 26th January 1835 intimated about his authorization to Major Adam White to suspend the Sadiya Khowa Gohain from his appointment and to send him to Guwahati prison.¹⁰ However, the colonial authorities on

realising about the growing resentment of the Tai Khamtis over the detention of the Sadiya Khowa Gohain released him but the damage was already done and the humiliation of the Gohain before his community could not be compensated.

The Tai Khamti domesticate buffalos for ploughing their agriculture field. The British soldiers killed many buffalos on the pretext of creating nuisances near the Cantonment area.¹¹ The presence of the British in Sadiya and their active interference in their internal affairs, particularly in cases of slaves and bondsmen, caused great dissatisfaction among the Tai Khamti.¹²

Chowpha Planglu/Ronua was determined to end the oppressive nature of the Britishers and wanted to avenge the insult inflicted by removing the office of Sadiya Khowa Gohain. Along with other chiefs Towa (Tao) Gohain and Captain Gohain (Kaptan) organized the rebellion.

In April 1837, there were intelligence reports on the plans of the Tai Khamti to drive out every European from the land. Based on this report the government strengthened its military establishments at Sadiya. Assam Light Infantry at Sadiya was reinforced by bringing more army, arms (Khaja), other weapons.¹³

Chowpha Planglu had been a skilled warrior and quick-witted strategist who carried his designs with the least suspicion and secrecy. To his advantage, the Tai Khamti spoke and wrote a language entirely unknown to the Assamese population or the troops of the Britishers.¹⁴

In January 1839, Colonel Adam White organized a Darbar at his official bungalow. He invited the Tai Khamti Chiefs and other native chiefs to attend the Darbar.¹⁵ Chowpha Planglu saw this invitation as an opportunity to execute his plan. He along with Towa Gohain gathered his men and planned for the attack. He summoned his messengers or ‘Tengso’¹⁶ to inform all the important leaders of his chiefdom to gather at his house. In the meeting, it was decided that if the Britishers do not accept their demands they should attack their camp and drive them out of Sadiya. They also took vows that if they win, they should occupy Sadiya and rule over it. If not, it should be left for the Britishers.¹⁷

They organised themselves into four groups and were given designated directions to march. They were imparted with the signals and sign languages for the attack and instructed to burn down every house on their way. Chowpha Planglu and Towa Gohain who had close relations with the missionaries asked his men to spare their lives which was acknowledged in their mission’s report later.

On the 27 January, it was Sunday and the day of Colonel Adam White’s Durbar; the strategies for the attack were finalised and the Tai Khamti warriors had strengthened their positions in the vicinity of Sadiya.

However, an unprecedented situation cropped up in the campsite; as in the afternoon Mr Brown, a missionary on his way to the neighbouring villages for

¹¹ Chowpha Nawing Chief of Momong Village, interview on Chowpha Planglu’s life based on Tai Khamti script records, ‘Cha te’. On 16/11/2021 at Momong Chief’s residence.

¹² Barpujari, Problem of the Hill Tribes, p. 79

¹³ Chowpha Nawing Chief of Momong Village, interview on Chowpha Planglu’s life based on Tai Khamti script records, ‘Cha te’. On 16/11/2021 at Momong Chief’s residence.

¹⁴ FOREIGN DEPT, 1839 Political Consultation: 27 February No. 159 Letter to H.J Prinsept Esqre, Secretary to the Government of India in the Political Dept. Fort William, National Archive of India, New Delhi.

¹⁵ Fort William political proceedings 11th March 1839 No. 16. (copy of a letter from Captain Jenkins)

¹⁶ Tengso: Indigenous designation for a messenger of Tai Khamti people.

¹⁷ Chowpha Nawing Chief of Momong Village, interview on Chowpha Planglu’s life based on Tai Khamti script records, ‘Chate’. On 16/11/2021 at Momong Chief’s residence.

⁷ Chowpha Nawing Chief of Momong Village, interview on ChowphaPlanglu’s life based on Tai Khamti script records, ‘Cha te’. On 16/11/2021 at Momong Chief’s residence.

⁸ H.K. Barpujari, Political History Assam, Volume-1 1826-1919, Publication Board, Guwahati, 2014, p. 24.

⁹ Butler, Sketch of Assam, p. 38.

¹⁰ Fort William Political Proceedings, 13th March 1835 No.1 & 2.

preaching was nearing towards their hideout. The Chiefs cautiously sent his men to dissuade him from going further, but he did not listen and went ahead. The Tai Khamti men got on their guards to capture him if he came nearer to learn about their plans but to their great relief, Mr Brown returned after much persuasion.¹⁸

Chowpha Planglu ordered his men to prepare for the war. The Tai Khamti villages of Dirack, Monglong and Sadiya were intimidated of the strategy of the war. They moved up to Bojool road and then encamped in the paddy fields. They gradually dispersed to into parties and surrounded the Cantonment.¹⁹

On the 28 January of 1839, at about 2:00 AM the Tai Khamti warriors were ready to strike and execute their much-contemplated plan to out-throw the Britishers from Sadiya and had called on other inhabitants of the district of Sadiya to join in the war.

Numbering about 600 hundred armed men with daos, spears and muskets commanded their assaults from all sides, seized the magazine, set on fire the sepoy lines, killing everyone on the way men, women, and children. Major White while he was hastening from his bungalow to the military lines was cut to pieces. Amongst others killed was the Subedar Major of the Gorkha Regiment.²⁰

The Tai Khamti warriors marched into four directions, one advanced upon the magazine guard, which was placed over the side of the stockade. They killed

the bugler and wounded several sepoy, while the sentry was killed at the gateway of the Stockade. Witnessing the attack, the sentry at the Magazine inside the stockade of which they took possession up a fire on the Magazine guard. In the meantime, another group targeted the Bungalow of the 2nd in Command close on the left of the lines and attacked the left company lines setting them on fire then, they rushed to the front evidently to secure the Bells of arms while another group attacked the rear guard, cutting down the sentry and wounded three other sepoy. They passed off the centre of the lines to the Bells of Arms burning the houses and cutting down everyone that came in their way.²¹

Nearly the whole village and cantonments were in flames Capt. and Mrs Hannay, Lieut. Marshall, and the apothecary Mr. Pingault and wife, were roused from their beds by the Tai Khamti war-cry and on coming out found themselves surrounded. They however all succeeded in reaching the stockade safely. There they found the stockade already in the hands of the Tai Khamtis, but with the assistance of the sepoy, the officers succeeded to gain possession of the magazine. The warriors fought every standing man and let the flames destroy every building, with clothing and all the possessions of English officers.²² Chowpha Phanglu as he met Colonel Adam White, with a loud war cry cut him down while his men attacked with their spears. He was down dead and with wounds by spears in nine different places besides four by dha (dao) and was found dead by the Sergeant Major of the Regiment who came up a few minutes after the melancholic event.²³ The Tai Khamti men killed and wounded about 80 British subjects while they

lost 21 men. Miles Bronson, a British missionary recorded:

...had attacked Sadiya on Sunday night, had killed our esteemed friend Col. White and completely destroyed the place...and the RonuaGohain Chief of the Khamptis, the burning of all the houses at Sadiya, except the Stockade in which was the magazine...this they also held for a time; but in the very time when the RonuaGohain was beating his gong and drinking his wine in token of victory...²⁴

Captain Hannay immediately ordered a complete company under Lieutenant Marshall to proceed against the villages of Sadiya distance about 2 & ½ miles and the residence of one of the Chiefs, concerned in the attacked. He also sought help from Muttock Raja Madjoo Gohain, requesting the assistance of 500 men and any other assistance he could give the Station. The Bor Gohain, the eldest son of Late Senaputtee, arrived there with a few men and 5 elephants to march against the Tai Khamti Warriors. Captain Hannay announced a reward of 1000 Rupees for the apprehension of the Tao Gohain, 500 for his eldest son, and 500 for the Captain Gohain.²⁵

The Assam Light Infantry under Lieutenant Marshall followed down the Tai Khamti warriors led by Chowpha Planglu. He had escaped from their captive carrying his injured brother-in-law by jumping from a high wall into the drains and got injured himself. A group of fishermen known as *Doom*, who were his former slaves, revealed his location. He was then found near river Kundil; he could not move any

further with his dislocated hips. He then sat under a tree for prayers in a lotus position and untied his hair. He affirmed himself to die honourably rather than to be captured in the hand of the enemies. As they believed he had the protection of a divine grace ‘Talisman or Aka Lakpoi²⁶’ given by his mother, that would protect him from death; he removed the talisman and threw it in the river and waited for his enemies. As the Britisher Army called out to surrender, he was seated harmoniously until one of them came near him, skilful and valorous swordsmanship slung his swords and killed the sepoy. In retaliation, the army fired at him, and he died instantly²⁷ and made his supreme sacrifice. As they saw their Chief being attacked, the Tai Khamti warriors fought back the British Army but were overpowered with their superior sophisticated weapons. Captain Hannay, Commanding of Assam Light Infantry, in his report to Major Hamfrags, Major of Brigade, Sylhet on 29 January 1839 stated:

...succeeded in killing the Runnouwah Gohain who with his brother the said Gohain were the principal Chiefs concerned I have also ascertained that number of the enemy have been wounded the killed arguably to the number of bodies found up to his days date is 24.²⁸

¹⁸ Elizabeth W. Brown, *The Whole World Kin: A Pioneer Experience Among Remote Tribe, and other Labor of Nathan Brown*, Alpha Editions, 2020, p. 180.

¹⁹ Political Proceedings, Foreign Dept. Political, 12 June 1839 No. 75.

²⁰ Barpujari, *Problem of the Hill Tribes*, p. 150.

²¹ Federal-A Foreign 1839 Dept. Political Consultation 27 Feb. No. 162 No 22, Captain Hannay letter to Captain F. Jenkins, 30th January 1839, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

²² Brown, *The Whole World Kin*, p. 178.

²³ FEDERAL A FOREIGN 1839 DEPT. POLITICAL Consultation 27 February No: 160 Sudiya 30th January 1839, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

²⁴ American Baptist Mission, Sadiya. Miles Bronson Records, Reel No. 57, 3244, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

²⁵ Federal A Foreign 1839 Dept. Political Consultation 27 Feb. No. 162 No 22, Captain Hannay letter to Captain F. Jenkins, 30th January 1839, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

²⁶ Aka Lakpoi, a material based on an indigenous practice and belief for protection given by a wife to a husband when he goes for wars.

²⁷ Chowpha Nawing Chief of Momong Village, interview on Chowpha Planglu's life based on Tai Khamti script records, 'Cha te'. On 16/11/2021 at Momong Chief's residence.

²⁸ Foreign 1839 Dept. Political Dated the 19 June No. 66, From captain Hannay Commanding Assam Light Infantry to Major Hamfrags Major of Brigade Sylhet Sudeah 29th January 1839, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

The British sepoy beheaded the Tai Khamti warriors and brought the heads laid them in a row. A missionary Eliza Brown described that the sight had haunted her imagination for a long time, and she recognized Ronua Gohain whom she exclaimed as ‘venerable Chief’ of the Tai Khamtis and who have been friendly to them.

In the punitive expedition, the British Army managed to capture Towa Gohain but he escaped and started to reinforce his men to march against the enemies. After the death of Chowpha Planglu, Towa Gohain assumed the title of the Chieftainship of the Tai Khamtis.²⁹ For over the next five years the Tai Khamti men fought against the successive punitive expeditions. The new Chief of the Tai Khamtis Towa Gohain reportedly made his supreme sacrifice fighting the British forces in 1843.³⁰

The Tai Khamti-Anglo War of 1839-43 has great significance for the State of Arunachal Pradesh. In order to weaken the Tai Khamti and to prevent future rebellions, the British divided the Tai Khamti population and settled them in different places: Dhemaji and Narayanpur (in Assam now) and Sunpura and Tengapani (in Arunachal Pradesh). With this, the power of the Tai Khamti was never to be revived again.



Image 48 (above): Headman of Khamti Village

(Source: British Library, London)

²⁹ Foreign 1839 Dept. Political Consultation 12 Jun No. 84, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

³⁰ Butler, A Sketch of Assam, p. 56.



Image 49 (above): Research team with the Chief of Momong village Chowpha Nawing Namchoom (third from right), 6 June 2022



Image 50 (above): During the field visit at Narayapur, Assam, 13 July 2022

Recommendations

A. HEROES

1. CHAUPHA PLANGLU ALIAS RON UA GOHAIN

Chaupha Planglu was known as Chaupha Kon-Ming, meaning ‘King of the country’, in fond remembrance to honour and remember his valour, leadership, unrivalled personality and for being a patriot.³¹ He witnessed the gradual imposition of the British Administration rule over their territory. The many of incident of subjugating attitude over the people and interference in their internal affairs made him and his sons, brothers to plot against the British rule and establish an independent state. He was also once a Sadiya Khowa Gohain.³²

In 1838, Colonel Adam in his report dated 10th March to F. Jenkins, the Governor General’s Agent described about the character of the Chief of Tai Khamtis, as he states “Towa Gohain and Ronua Gohain again are unsophisticated Khampteers with less intellectual power, but their habits more are one warlike.”³³

He was the Chief of the Tai Khamtis who led about 600 warriors to ouster the British administration from Sadiya on 28th January 1839. In the attack the Tai Khamti warriors killed about 62 including Colonel

Adam White and dozens of others wounded.³⁴ He has been dignified by the British government as the principal instigator of the attack at the cantonment.³⁵ He made his supreme sacrifice fighting the British soldiers on 28th January 1839.³⁶

A missionary Eliza Brown described that the sight of the heads the Tai Khamti warriors had laid in a row haunted her imagination for a long time, and she recognized Ronua Gohain whom she exclaimed as ‘venerable Chief’ of the Tai Khamtis and who had been friendly to them.³⁷

2. TOWA GOHAIN

Towa Gohain was a Tai Khamti Chief of Dirak. He was a close aid of Ronua Gohain who planned, executed the attack against the Britishers. He was one of the leaders who led the Tai Khamti warriors to attack the British Cantonment at Sadiya on 28 January 1839. He was the man behind the organising the warriors to drive out the Britishers. Even, when the Mooluck Raja refused to join the war he had him killed.³⁸ After the death of Chowpha Planglu in the war, Towa (Toa) Gohain assumed the title of the Chieftainship of the Tai Khamtis³⁹ and he led the Tai Khamtis against the British punitive expeditions. Most of the punitive expeditions had been launched against him and disintegrate his followers.⁴⁰

In the punitive expedition, the British Army managed to capture Towa Gohain but he escaped and started to reinforce his men to march against the enemies. He fought against the successive punitive expeditions over five years until he made his supreme sacrifice in 1843.⁴¹

B. MARTYRS

1. CHAUTONG

Chautong was the brother in-law of Ronua Gohain, the chief of the Tai Khamtis. He was a warrior who took part in the Tai Khamti-Anglo War of 1839. He was severely wounded in the war and succumbed to his wounds.

2. CHOU PLANGNGON

Chou Plangngon was a military general as per the oral tales who fought against the British government at Sadiya. He was reported to have been martyred in the battlefield.

3. CHOU PLANGKHAM

Chou Plangkham was a military general as per the oral tales who fought against the British government at Sadiya. He was reported to have been martyred in the battlefield.

4. CHOU TAO SENG SON OF RONUA GO HAIN

Chau Taoseng was the son of RonuaGohain, the Chief of Tai Khamtis. He was a young warrior who accompanied his father and fought in the Tai Khamti-Anglo war of 1839. He was martyr along with his father in the battle field at Sadiya on 28th January 1839.

5. CHOU HUKPTI NGA KHAM

Chou Hukepti Nga Kham was a military general as per the oral tales who fought against the British government at Sadiya. He was reported to have been martyr in the battlefield.

6. CHAU AI LANGDOW

Chau ai Langdow was a Khamti warrior who was reported to have been martyr at the battlefield in the Tai Khamti-Anglo war of 1839.

7. CHAU KHANG KHAMPTEE

Chau Khang Khamptee was warrior who took part in the Tai Khamti-Anglo War of 1839. In the war he was severely wounded and was captured by the British soldiers. He had joined the Towa Gohain to fight against the British troops at Sadiya. As per his statement in the prison he was about 32 years old of Moomkong Khel (Clan) and a married man of Ghoomarah. He succumbed to his injury in the prison.

8. CHAULIK (SECOND SON OF RONUA)

Chaulik was the second son of RonuaGohain, the Chief of Tai Khamtis. He was a young warrior who accompanied his father and fought in the Tai Khamti-Anglo war of 1839. He was a martyr along with his father in the battle field at Sadiya on 28th January 1839.

³¹ Chowpha Nawing Namchoom, Chief of Momong village. Scheduled interview held on 6 June 2022 at his residence.

³² Chowpha Nawing Namchoom, Chief of Momong village. Scheduled interview held on 6 June 2022 at his residence.

³³ Foreign Dept. Political Branch, 18th April 1838 Consultation No. 56-57, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

³⁴ Foreign Political, 27th February 1839, Consultation No. 160, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

³⁵ Foreign Dept. Political Branch 27th February 1839, Consultation No. 162, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

³⁶ Foreign Dept. Political Branch 19th June 1839 Consultation No. 66, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

³⁷ Brown, The Whole World Kin, p. 177.

³⁸ Foreign Dept. Political 10 July 1839, Consultation No. 61, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

³⁹ Foreign 1839 Dept. Political Consultation No. 2, Jun No. 84. National Archives of India, New Delhi.

⁴⁰ Foreign 1839 Dept. Political Consultation No. 2, Jun No. 84. National Archives of India, New Delhi.

⁴¹ Butler, Sketch of Assam, p. 56.

C. FREEDOM FIGHTERS

1. CHOWKET SING KONG alias CHOWKET SING GOHAIN

Chowket Sing Kong was a warrior who took part in the Tai-Khamti-Anglo war of 1839. He was captured by the British soldiers in the punitive expedition and kept in prison. He was one of the ring leaders in the attack and who even stated that he was among the warriors to kill Colonel Adam White. He was found guilty for treason against the British government and recommended life imprisonment as punishment.

2. SHAM KONG

Sham Kong, son of Pokomla, was a Shan writer who participated in the Tai Khamti-Anglo War of 1839. He was engaged by Towa Gohain the Chief of Dirak. He was captured by the British expedition team and found him guilty. He is stated to have died with cholera along with his wife and children.

3. PALEN GOHAIN PHOKUN

Palen, son of Chowtang, was a warrior who participated in the Tai Khamti-Anglo War of 1839. He joined the war along with Towa Gohain of Dirak. He was found guilty of rising against the British Government and recommended for life imprisonment.

4. HANG TANGONSA ROTACK

Hang Tangonsa Rotack, son of Poong, was a warrior who participated

in the Anglo- Tai Khamti War of 1839. He joined the war along with Towa Gohain of Dirak. He was found guilty of rising against the British Government and recommended fourteen years of imprisonment.

5. NEEDOW KHAMPTI SON OF PAIZA

Needow, son of Paiza, was a warrior who participated in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He joined the war along with Towa Gohain of Dirak. He was found guilty of rising against the British Government and recommended seven years of imprisonment.

6. CHOWTANG KHAMPTI

Chowtang Khampti, son of Feen, was a warrior who participated in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He joined the war along with Towa Gohain of Dirak. He was found guilty of rising against the British Government and recommended seven years of imprisonment in irons with labour.

7. SOWYI MANSI PHOCUN

Sowyi Mansi Phocun, son of Sawkawphocun, was a warrior who participated in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He joined the war along with Towa Gohain of Dirak. He was found guilty of rising against the British Government and recommended seven years of imprisonment in irons without labour.

8. NATON

Naton, son of Paiza, was a warrior who participated in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He joined the war along with Towa Gohain of Dirak. He

was found guilty of rising against the British Government and recommended for life imprisonment.

9. SOWITANG BOOM

Sowitang Boom, son of Pleng Boom, was a warrior who participated in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He joined the war along with Towa Gohain of Dirak. He was said to have assigned to set the magazine guard on fire but was wounded. He was found guilty of rising against the British Government and recommended fourteen years imprisonment. He died of Cholera during the trial.

10. NEESSAONG

Neessaong, son of Pokomla, was a Khamti warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He was assigned as a Senuputtee or leader and asked to carry out the loot during the war. He was captured by the British Punitive expedition team and was imprisoned.

11. LISSO SYKEA ALIAS SINGPAN

Lisso Sykea, son of Polajoopong /Chowkong, was a Khamti warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He was also assigned to carry out the loot during the war. He was captured by the British Punitive expedition team and was imprisoned. He was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment.

12. NATOUNG DUFFA ROTACK

Natoung Duffa Rotack, son of Lakam, was a Khamti warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He was captured by the British Punitive

expedition team and was imprisoned. He had escaped with the Towa Gohain but was recaptured. He was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment.

13. TONLA SON OF LESSAM

Tonla was warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He was captured by the British Punitive expedition team and was imprisoned. He was found guilty and sentence to life imprisonment. He was reported to have died by cholera during the trial.

14. MOBY SEONG MEESHME

Moby Seong Meeshme joined the Khamti warriors and fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He was captured by the British punitive team and imprisoned. He was found guilty of war crimes and sentenced to life imprisonment. He died of cholera during the trial.

15. CHOWRUNG KHAMPTEE

Chowrung Khamptee, son of Puchoygee aged about twenty-eight years old, was a warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He belonged to Monmai Khel and was an inhabitant of Dirak. He accompanied Kaptan Gohain troops who later joined other Khamtis to attack the British cantonment.

16. POCHEE ALIAS PHAKUM SENAPUT'TEE KHAMPTEE

Pochee, son of Tangsoo, aged about 47 years old was a warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He belonged to the Longling Hatu Mooreeah Khel (clan), he was a married man and an inhabitant of Towa Go-

hain village. He joined the Towa Gohain's troop on the night of 27th January and later joined Ronua Gohain and other Khamti troops.

17. KAPTAIN GOHAIN

Kaptain Gohain alias Captain Gohain was a Tai Khamti chief at Sadiya. He was the cousin of Chaukungpha/Chaurungpha, the former Sadiya Khowa Gohain. He was one of the Khamti chiefs along with Ronua Gohain and Towa Gohain who organised the war against the British Government in Upper Assam. He was made to reconcile with the government to frequent the uprising against punitive expedition. Under his leadership, a group of Tai Khamti population was made to settle down at Chanpura in 1844.

18. WALLAH SINGPHO

Wallah Singpho was a warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He joined the Tai Khamti warriors in the war and was captured by the British expedition team.

19. CHOWTANG

Chowtang, son of Devga Gohain, was a warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He joined the Tai Khamti warriors in the war and was captured by the British expedition team.

20. KAROMONG CEGGETTEE GOHAIN

Karomong was a warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He joined the Tai Khamti warriors in the war and was captured by the British expedition team.

21. CHOROBA KHAMTI

Choroba was a warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He joined the Tai Khamti warriors in the war and was captured by the British expedition team.

22. POROMGAR

Poromgar, son of Dariahphokun, was a warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He was found guilty of rebellion and was captured alive and imprisoned.

23. SONGGAT BOORA

Songgat Boora was a warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He was found guilty of rebellion and was captured alive and imprisoned.

24. MONGJANG

Mongjang was a warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He was found guilty of rebellion and was captured alive and imprisoned.

25. CHOW

Chow was a warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He was found guilty of rebellion and was captured alive and imprisoned.

26. PAYEAH

Payeah was a warrior who fought in the Anglo-Tai Khamti War of 1839. He was found guilty of rebellion and was captured alive and imprisoned.

27. LAKUMJULLEE

Lakumjullee was a warrior who fought in the Tai Khamti-Anglo war of 1839. He was found guilty of rebellion and was captured alive and imprisoned.

28. SOW

Sow was a warrior who fought in the Tai Khamti-Anglo war of 1839. He was found guilty of rebellion and was captured alive and imprisoned.



Image 51 (left):
Andaman & Nicobar
Archives, 5 August 2022



Image 52 (left):
Entrance of Cellular Jail,
Port Blair, 3 August 2022



Image 53 (right):
Researcher Prof. Ashan Riddi with the Assistant Librarian of Cellular Jail Library, 3 August 2022



Image 54 (right):
Researcher Prof. Ashan Riddi with the staff of Andaman & Nicobar Islands Archives, 4 August 2022



Image 55 (right):
Workshop -III, Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh, Siang Guest House, Pasighat, 23 November 2022



Image 56 (right):
Workshop-III on Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh, Conference Hall, ADC Office, Dambuk, 24 November 2022



Image 57 (left):
Workshop-III on Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh, Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, Namsai, 26 November 2022



Image 58 (left):
Workshop-III on Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh, Conference Hall, Circuit House, Longding, 28 November 2022



Image 59 (above):
Research team at Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford dated 13 September 2022 (from L to R): Prof. Ashan Riddi, Mr. Nepha Wangsa, Prof. S.N. Singh, Prof. Tana Showren, Dr. Vibha Joshi, Mr. Ajay Saring and Prof. S.K. Chaudhuri

Image 60 (right):
Research team in London in traditional Tai Khamti dress, 2 September 2022



Image 61 (right):
The research team at British Museum, London, 14 September 2022



Image 62 (right):
The research team at British Library, Asian and African Section, London, 2 September 2022



Image 63 (right):
The research team at British Library, London, 2 September 2022



Image 64 (left):
From Left to Right: Er. Taba Tedir, Minister (Education, Cultural Affairs & Indigenous Affairs); Prof. Ashan Riddi; Prof. Tana Showren; Dy. C.M. Sh. Chowna Mein; Sh. Tai Tagak, Advisor to Chief Minister; Nepha Wangsa; Prof. S.N. Singh; Prof. S.K. Choudhary; Prof. Saket Kushwaha, Vice Chancellor, RGU; Prof. Nabam Tadar Rikam, Registrar, RGU



Image 65 (left):
Submitting the Status Report on the project "Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh" to Chowna Mein, Dy. Chief Minister cum Chairman, Core Committee for Unsung Heroes of Arunachal Pradesh on 15 July 2022

Resistance Movement V

ATTEMPTED REVOLUTION OF 1934

Chapter

06

Failed Revolutionary Plan to Capture Sadiya and the Tinsukia Mail Robbery, Upper Assam/Rima

Causes

This event was part of a planned extension of the revolutionary freedom movement, which emerged across the country from the second decade of the twentieth century, in Assam. Documents the research team could access during the short period of the project tenure suggest so. Revolutionaries from Bengal related to Surya Sen, inspired by the Chittagong armoury raid, for months planned a similar raid of the Sadiya military station, the easternmost British military outpost in Assam. Sadiya was also the meeting point of the various tribes of NEFT.

Event:

Our knowledge about the failed revolutionary plan to capture Sadiya and the related Tinsukia mail robbery (1932-35) comes from four sources: a published testimony¹ of a participant (Motilal Jagirdar); a court proceeding² of one of the leaders of the revolutionary plan; validation of the same by one local historian³; and circumstantial validation of the

event by oral narratives of Tamik's family and similar recollection by one of the families of a close associate of Tamik.⁴ Based on Jagirdar's account, the following is a brief description of the failed revolutionary plan of 1934 to take over Sadiya military station.

Well accustomed to and filled with revolutionary tactics of the freedom movement, Sanat Dutta planned a revolutionary uprising in eastern Assam. The aim was to overthrow the British from Sadiya. This was to be executed through the following successive steps: to establish Tinsukia as a centre of revolutionary activism; to smuggle arms and ammunition from Tibet, China and Siam; to win the confidence of the tribal leaders of the region like the Abor, Mishmi, Tibetans, Khampti, etc. and recruit their moral support and active participation (Sanat had learnt that though the tribal people were outwardly loyal, deep inside they nursed a grudge for the loss of their independence); and to create disaffection and mobilise the support of the personnel of the 2nd Assam Gurkha Rifles stationed in Sadiya.

To support him, Sanat brought his elder brother Ajit Datta (who was also a revolutionary) to Tinsukia. Ajit was priorly working as a lecturer in the Astange Ayurvedic college in Calcutta. In Tinsukia Ajit started his practice as a Kabiraj (medic) to camouflage his activities. Along with Anil Das and Motilal Jagirdar, they formed the core of Sanat's close associates. Jagirdar claims that he and Ajil were involved in Chandipur Mail Robbery (12th January 1932) just a couple of years back.

¹ Matilal Zaigirdar, 'Untold History of Revolutionary Freedom Struggle of North Eastern Region (Arunachal)', Arunachal Review, Vol. IV, No. 9, Independence Day Issue, 1995, pp. 15-20.

² Tinsukia Mail Robbery, General Department, File No. X-24 of 1935, Assam State Archives, Dispur.

³ Nyori, A Freedom Movement, p. 172.

⁴ Tagi Zirido, aged about 85 years and Kendo Zirido, aged about 55 years, residing at Lipu Village, Likabali. Scheduled interview held on 6 December 2022 at 6 pm.

To get arms, Sanat, Anil and Jagirdar reached Saim (via Burma) where Sanat was arrested for violating passport laws. Anil stayed in Siam, and Jagirdar came back to Tinsukia. In order to set up a centre at Sadiya, Jagirdar took up a job of a forest labourer. While working as a labourer, Jagirdar developed a friendship with the forest guard Krugar Marak Panth (who was not happy with the British despite being in its service). Afterwards, Krugar introduced many tribal people to Jagirdar, notably 'Abor Chief' Tamik Dabi, Khampti Chiefs Chowgan Gohain and Chowmongkheng Gohain. After his release, Sanat went to Rima where he would maintain communication with Tibet, China and northeast India and wherefrom he would affect the overthrow of Sadiya affecting a military coup there. Centres for dumping arms and ammunition were to be set up every twelve miles between Rima and Sadiya.

Bhadra Kanta Das (later on DySP of Silchar) and Hiranya Sen, head of the regimental office of Assam Rifles at Sadiya and a family relative of the famous revolutionary Surya Sen, helped Jagirdar.

The extended 'War council' held during the Par-suram Mela 1934 fixed the date of uprising to next the Durga Puja. To raise funds it was decided to rob the Tinsukia mail. Due to reports of increased government surveillance, the 'war council' decided to organise the rebellion on 15 June and to get the Tinsukia mail robbery done before that. Uma Sankar Patoa, Bipul Chaudhuri and Sachin Kuri arrived at Tinsukia to lead the robbery.

Tamik Dabi and Krugar⁵ were entrusted with the role of coordinators for the robbery.⁶ The Tinsukia mail robbery failed.⁷ As a result, the planned uprising and overthrow of Sadiya had to be abandoned.

The Arunahali and Tibetan people referred to in Jagirdar's account are as follows: 'Abor Chief' Tamik Dabi, Komjo Kuong, Khampti Chiefs Chowgan Gohain and Chowmongkheng Gohain, Tibetan Chief Kemeserin and Dounjo, and 'some belonging to Mishmi, Wancho and Tangsa tribes'.

PEOPLE INVOLVED:

1. TAMIK DABI

Tamik (Gomik) was the son of Nyago Dabi, who was the first from amongst the Galo to enter into the 'services' of the colonial authorities (as Political Jamadar) under the post-Abor Expeditions' loose political arrangement made by the Sadiya based colonial authorities. Between 1913-25 Tamik Dabi received education at Sadiya (upto class III), Jorhat (class VI) in the Christian missionary schools; he further continued his studies at Golaghat and Tezpur and later completed matriculation from St. Edmund's School, Shillong.

In 1923 he was appointed as the political Jamadar in the vacant post of his deceased father. According to historian, he was discharged from his post due to his involvement in anti-British activities.⁸ NEFA-time researcher officer Pandey

cites the same reason: being that Tamik along with other tribal leaders had joined the revolutionary leaders of Assam such as Sarat Dutta, Anil Babu, Motilal Jogindar and others as the Abor chief to fight against the British authorities.⁹

Tamik Dabi worked as the coordinator for the Tinsukia mail robbery and was a member of the 'War Council' of the revolutionary plan to capture Sadiya military station.¹⁰ Tamik's motivation for joining the revolutionary activity could be two: he nursed a personal grudge for removal from the post of Political Jamadar; and being an educated and person of exposure he was aware of the real nature of the colonial rule, especially the way the frontier officials treated the hill tribes in day to day life. Had Tamik's diary survived, since he must have maintained one, more details in this regard would have been possible.

Later on, Tamik worked at Sadiya as a Mohorer with a contractor from 1936 to 1941 and by that time he was imprisoned by the British authorities.¹¹ In 1942 he was appointed as Liaison Officer with the Allied Army and was posted at Sabua and then at Siyajuli. After leaving army service he worked as a teacher in the missionary school at Kolghar (Murkong Selek area) for a few years. Around 1945-47, Tamik established venture schools at Kakki, Kadu, Zirdo, Sibe (Gensi), Tirbin, Yomcha, etc. where he sent teachers from his family to impart modern education in the interior villages.¹² These schools were merged with government schools after independence. After leaving teaching Tamik also joined the Freedom cum Congress movement led by Moji and Moje Riba during the ending part of the movement where he led a delegation of the

Congress leaders to Shillong in order to meet Gopinath Bordoloi.¹³

After independence Tamik was appointed as Base Superintendent and was posted to Damroh and thereafter to Tagin area (where he worked as part of the reconciliation process to bring people closer to administration after the massacre of 1953 at Achingmuri). Later he worked at Basar, Gensi and Likabali. Tamik suffered from pneumonia while serving at Likabali/Gensi for which he was taken to Jorhat Christian Hospital after which he was brought back to Namey where he passed away.

2. CHOWPHA KANAN NAMCHOOM

Chowpha Kanan Namchoom, recorded as Chowgan Gohain in Zajirdar's account, succeeded Chowfartak and became a Tai Khamti chief. He was born in 1886 and died in 1947. He was cool in his temperament and very gentle in behavior and loved by his people.¹⁴ Chow Khamoon Gohain Namchoom, the first Member of Parliament (MP) from Arunachal, was his son. He was one of the active participants of the attempted revolution to capture Sadiya in 1934.

3. CHOWMONGKENG GOHAIN

Chowpha Kanan Namchoom, recorded as Chowgan Gohain in Zajirdar's account, succeeded Chow-

⁵ The younger of Tamik's son, Mikto, a retired teacher, still lives. Mikto told the research team that all documents relating to his late father has been lost in a fire accident except for few. Interview with Mikto Dabi, Kabom Dabi, Jumba Dabi, Tarik Dabi (GB), Tari Dabi (GB) Namey village 23 May 2022. While Tamik's work is well known in most Galo and many Adi areas, the train robbery part is not. Mikto recalls a former Khasi colleague of his late father, who was settled in Margherita, telling him about Tamik's participation in 'revolutionary' activities when Mikto had gone to Changlang to attend to a training programme some decade back. There is a possibility that this 'Khasi colleague' might have been Kruger himself or someone party to the revolutionary plan.

⁶ Zaigirdar, 'Untold History of Revolutionary Freedom Struggle', p. 19.

⁷ Tinsukia Mail Robbery, General Department, File No. X-24 of 1935, Assam State Archives, Dispur.

⁸ Nyori, A Freedom Movement, p. 172.

⁹ Pandey, Arunachal Pradesh: Village State, pp. 89-92.

¹⁰ Zaigirdar, 'Untold History of Revolutionary Freedom Struggle', p. 19.

¹¹ Nyori, A Freedom Movement, p. 172.

¹² Tour Report of the Political Officer, Abor Hills, Pasighat to Ramle w.e.f. 4 to 19 December 1947 mentions about 'Gallong Pandits mainly from the village of Tenne' serving in the venture schools.

¹³ Nyori, A Freedom Movement, p. 173.

¹⁴ Gogoi, The Tai Khamtis, pp. 334-35.

fartak and became a Tai Khamti chief. He was born in 1886 and died in 1947. He was cool in his temperament and very gentle in behavior and loved by his people. Chow Khamoon Gohain Namchoom, the first Member of Parliament (MP) from Arunachal, was his son. He was one of the active participants of the attempted revolution to capture Sadiya in 1934.

2. CHOWPHA KANAN NAMCHOOM

Bojir's name is not mentioned in Jagirdar's account. Bojir Zirido was an influential person in the Zirido-Gensi area around the time and a close associate of Tamik. Bojir's younger sibling Tagi and nephew Kendo recollect how they (Tamik and Bojir) would hold 'secret' meetings during the time Kendo believes must be 1930s; the duo would then disappear for weeks to places in eastern Arunachal like Chabua, Jorhat and Sadiya, etc. Kendo is of the opinion that Bojir's subsequent dislike for Congress was because of his erstwhile attachment to the revolutionary ideology. Even after electoral politics made entry into Arunachal, Bojir reportedly never joined the Congress party. This was despite the lure of office and material gains in the days of Congress rule in Arunachal. Kendo conjectures that the sidelining of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his ideology in mainstream politics in the post-independent period discouraged people like Tamik and his uncle Bojir who were Bose's "ardently followers". They were compelled

to keep their revolutionary past hidden in their heart and 'adjust' to the new order.

We are not in a position to confirm or reject Kendo's view. However, if it is true then it implies two strands of activism within the Galos: participation in secret revolutionary activities in the mid-war period and linking up with the Dibrugarh Congress and formation of the Dipa Congress Committee in 1947-48. In the latter movement, the participants of the revolutionary activities appear to have taken a backseat.

5. The person named as **KOMJO KUONG** and participants from **Mishmi, Wancho and Tangsa tribes** could not also be identified for the same reasons cited above for the two Khampti chiefs.



Image 66 (left):
Photo of Chowpha Kanan Namchoom alias Chowganan Gohain (standing R to the viewer)

Photo courtesy: British Library, London; shelf mark: mss_eur_e_278_88_(66)

Chapter

07

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. LIST OF THE RECOMMENDED UNSUNG HEROES
2. RECOMMENDATION FOR MEMORIAL STRUCTURES

I. LIST OF THE RECOMMENDED UNSUNG HEROES

LIST OF UNSUNG HEROES: HEROES

| | NAME | EVENT |
|----|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | TAGI RAJA | AKA SUPREMACY IN THE FOOTHILLS OF BALIPARA |
| 2 | MEDHI RAJA | ANGLO-AKA WAR 1883-1884 |
| 3 | TANA NANNA | AMTOLAH CONFLICT OF 1873 |
| 4 | TECHI GUBIN | AMTOLAH CONFLICT OF 1873 |
| 5 | LANGHA POJA (GUNGLI) | MIRI MISSION, 1911-12 |
| 6 | MOJE RIBA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 7 | MOJI RIBA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 8 | LIGIN BOMJEN | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 9 | CHAUPHA PLANGLU ALIAS RONUA GOHAIN | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 10 | TOWA GOHAIN | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 11 | MATMUR JAMOH | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 12 | KHUNJING WANGHAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUBJUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 13 | WANGCHIN WANGSA | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUBJUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 14 | TAJI DELE | MISHMI RESISTANCE AGAINST BRITISH INCURSIONS |
| 15 | PONGE DELE | MISHMI RESISTANCE AGAINST BRITISH INCURSIONS |
| 16 | NINGRU THUMUNG | ANGLO-SINGPHO WAR 1828 |
| 17 | BOM SINGPHO | ANGLO-SINGPHO WAR 1830 |
| 18 | BEESA GAUM | ANGLO-SINGPHO WAR 1843 |

LIST OF UNSUNG HEROES: MARTYRS

| | | |
|----|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | RIGIO SAKI | MIRI MISSION, 1911-12 |
| 2 | YARDA DANGPO | MIRI MISSION, 1911-12 |
| 3 | YORA NAKIO | MIRI MISSION, 1911-12 |
| 4 | RANGPU KIADO (MAROK) | MIRI MISSION, 1911-12 |
| 5 | TATE (MARKIO) NIANGSA | MIRI MISSION, 1911-12 |
| 6 | KOMBU BAGRA | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 7 | NYIDAK KAKKI | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 8 | CHAUTONG | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 9 | CHOU PLANGNGON | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 10 | CHOU PLANGKHAM | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 11 | CHOU TAO SENG | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 12 | CHOU HUKEPTI NGA KHAM | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 13 | CHAU AI LANGDOW | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 14 | CHAU KHANGKHAMPTTEE | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 15 | CHAULIK | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 16 | SELTUM YOMSO | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1858-1859 |
| 17 | JORIN PERME | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1858-1859 |
| 18 | BASING MOYONG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1858-1859 |
| 19 | KENGKI MEGU | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 20 | KOYI LEGO | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 21 | MUTLING PERME | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 22 | KEBANG PERME | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 23 | KETONG PERME | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |

| | | |
|----|-----------------|--------------------|
| 24 | KEBO TAYENG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 25 | LUTNYUNG MEGU | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 26 | MATLEM BORANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 27 | TONGKYAP BORANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 28 | MUTTUM DARIN | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 29 | BANGKIR BORANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 30 | DANGKOM PERTIN | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 31 | TONYONG PERTIN | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 32 | JONGKENG PERTIN | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 33 | SIPANG PADA | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 34 | KETONG SARING | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 35 | KOTRIN SARING | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 36 | BANGKI LEGO | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 37 | JORAN MODI | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 38 | BASING TAYENG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 39 | SAMAT TAYENG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 40 | KELO BORANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 41 | PANGKUT LEGO | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 42 | PAMUT LEGO | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 43 | KEMUT PERTIN | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 44 | TAMAT LEGO | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 45 | JORIN YIRANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 46 | TAKENG LEGO | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |

| | | |
|----|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 47 | LUNGSEL NGUPOK | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 48 | LUNGKONG NGUPOK | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 49 | MUTYI LEGO | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 50 | NGYANGBUNG LIBANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 51 | KESUNG LIBANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 52 | JOTEM MODI | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 53 | TORO SARING | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 54 | POKKENG LEGO | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 55 | NYOKLUT LEGO | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 56 | KINGKYANG LEGO | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1894 |
| 57 | KONGKIR SIRAM | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 58 | LAMUK PADUN | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 59 | PAKLING SIRAM | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 60 | KOMBU BAGRA | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 61 | NANGGOM NONANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 62 | TASA PAJING | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 63 | TAYI DARANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 64 | MINJONG TAMIN | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 65 | BINGIN TABING | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 66 | MESANG AJE | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 67 | YAKKONG PADUNG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 68 | DUTE PADUNG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 69 | POGER TAGI | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 70 | TAJONG TAMUK | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 71 | DENGKEP TAMUK | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |

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|----|-------------------------|--|
| 72 | TAMAYING NONANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 73 | KUTMOR SIRAM | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 74 | DUYUM PADUNG | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 75 | WANGKHAM PANSA (KHIHAM) | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUBJUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 76 | PANGKHA PANSA (NAAM) | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUBJUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 77 | KAISHA MANYU | MISHMI RESISTANCE AGAINST THE BRITISH |
| 78 | LUTTONG SENAPATI | ANGLO-SINGPHO WAR 1830 |

LIST OF UNSUNG HEROES: FREEDOM FIGHTERS

| | | |
|----|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | CHANDI OR SONJI | ANGLO-AKA WAR 1883-1884 |
| 2 | SORANG DANGPO | MIRI MISSION |
| 3 | BACHI DOYE | ATTACK ON CAPTAIN HAMILTON VETCH 1848 |
| 4 | RIMO RIBA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 5 | KORE BAGRA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 6 | DAGI ANGU | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 7 | KARGO BASAR | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 8 | TOMI BASAR | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 9 | GOTU BAGRA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 10 | GAMJUM BAGRA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 11 | MOPO LOLLEN | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 12 | MARNYA LOLLEN | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 13 | JUMKI LOLLEN | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 14 | NYOI LOLLEN | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 15 | RETUM LOLLEN | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 16 | NYISEN DIYUM (YUM-PU) | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 17 | MARI LOLLEN | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 18 | KOTE SORA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 19 | KIRDAK RIME | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 20 | DAMIN LOLLEN | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |

| | | |
|----|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 21 | HORMEK (MORMEK) BAGRA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 22 | MARGAM BAGRA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 23 | NOPO TAIPODIA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 24 | TUKKA DABI | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 25 | JUMKI AMO | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 26 | MARGE LOLLEN | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 27 | IMIN BAGRA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 28 | JIKOM RIBA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 29 | DOKA ZIRDO | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 30 | MARNGU KARLO | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 31 | YOMRI CHISI | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 32 | TAI KAMDAK | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 33 | REGE DOYE | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 34 | TATUM MARA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 35 | TOJO BOMJEN | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 36 | YIMI KADU | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 37 | GADO RINGU | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 38 | TABOM PADU | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 39 | IMAR LOMBI | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 40 | KANGO LOMBI | |
| 41 | MINDE GADI | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |

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|----|---|---------------------------|
| 42 | KAJE YOMCHA | DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 43 | CHOWKET SING KONG ALIAS CHOWKET SING GOHAIN | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 44 | SHAM KONG | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 45 | PALEN GOHAIN PHOKUN | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 46 | HANGTANGONSARO-TACK | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 47 | NEEDOW KHAMPTI | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 48 | CHOWTANG KHAMPTI | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 49 | SOWYI MANSI PHOCUN | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 50 | NATON | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 51 | SOWITANG BOOM | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 52 | NEESSAONG | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 53 | LISSO SYKEA ALIAS SINGPAN | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 54 | NATOUNG DUFFA ROTACK | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 55 | TONLA | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 56 | MOBY SEONG MEESHME | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 57 | CHOWRUNG KHAMPTI | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 58 | POCHEE ALIAS PHAKUM SENAPUTTEE KHAMPTI | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |

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|----|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 59 | KAPTAIN GOHAIN | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 60 | WALLAH SINGPHO | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 61 | CHOWTANG | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 62 | KAROMONGCEGETTEE GOHAIN | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 63 | CHOROKA KHAMTI | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 64 | POROMGAR | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 65 | SONGGAT BOORA | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 66 | MONGJANG | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 67 | PAYEAH | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 68 | CHOW | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 69 | LAKUMJULLEE | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 70 | SOW | ANGLO-TAI KHAMTI WAR 1839 |
| 71 | LOMKOM DARANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1858-1859 |
| 72 | LIYUNG TAKI | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1858-1859 |
| 73 | KUTPAK SIRAM | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1858-1859 |
| 74 | LOMGUM DARANG | ANGLO-ADI WAR 1858-1859 |
| 75 | BORKENG TAYENG | NIZAM GHAT RAID 1882 |
| 76 | SIMAR PADA | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1894 |
| 77 | BATEL LEGO | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1894 |
| 78 | NAMU NONANG | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 79 | LOTIYANG TALOH | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 80 | LUNRUNG TAMUK | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |

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|----|---|---|
| 81 | LOMLO DARANG | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 82 | DITER TAMUK | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 83 | PAKSING SIRAM | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 84 | MATYENG JAMOH | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 85 | BAPOK JERANG | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 86 | TAPER DARANG | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 87 | BISONG TABING | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 88 | JOTER TAMUK | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 89 | YEYAK JAMOH | ANGLO - ADI WAR 1911-12 |
| 90 | SOMBANG WANGHAM, CHIEF OF SENUA VIL- LAGE | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 91 | NOKDON WANGPAN | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 92 | JANPHUA KHANGAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 93 | MIKBONG BOHAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 94 | CHUNLE WANGSAPA | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 95 | JANCHOI THANGK- HO-AM OR JANCHAI | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 96 | KALI SON OF PONGHI OF SENUA | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 97 | PONGHI OF SENUA VIL- LAGE | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |

| | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|---|
| 98 | KIWANG WANGHAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 99 | KAPCHAI WANGSAPA | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 100 | WANGPHO WANGSAPA | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 101 | LOWANG WANGHAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 102 | KOPHE | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 103 | HATWANG WANGHAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 104 | PHAWKAM WANGSA | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 105 | CHAOKAT/KATPKHA OPOIAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 106 | TANGPA PHEAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 107 | NEWANG WANGSA | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 108 | PONGPHA/ONGPHA WANGSA/PHOPHA LOSU | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 109 | LEMCHUN WANGSAAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 110 | LEMMCHEN WANGSAAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |

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| 111 | GAUPHA GAUAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 112 | CHINGTON GAUAM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 113 | MANNANG LOSU | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 114 | MANJA CHINGSA-AM | ATTEMPTED COLONIAL SUB- JUGATION OF THE WANCHO |
| 115 | EKHROMA DELE | MISHMI RESISTANCE AGAINST BRITISH INCURSIONS |
| 116 | MALU MIMI | MISHMI RESISTANCE AGAINST BRITISH INCURSIONS |
| 117 | ROSHA DELE | MISHMI RESISTANCE AGAINST BRITISH INCURSIONS |

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| 118 | BAPO DELE | MISHMI RESISTANCE AGAINST BRITISH INCURSIONS |
| 119 | AIYU MIMI | MISHMI RESISTANCE AGAINST BRITISH INCURSIONS |
| 120 | LUTTORA GAUM | ANGLO-SINGPHO WAR 1830 |
| 121 | DUFFA GAUM | ANGLO-SINGPHO WAR 1835 |
| 122 | SET GAUM | ANGLO-SINGPHO WAR 1843 |
| 123 | TAMIK DABI | ATTEMPTED REVOLUTION OF 1934 AND DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |
| 124 | BOJIR ZIRDO | ATTEMPTED REVOLUTION OF 1934 AND DIPA CONGRESS MOVEMENT |

II. RECOMMENDATION FOR MEMORIAL STRUCTURES

1. The research committee recommends the construction of two types of memorials: war memorials at the actual sites of the wars and other memorial structures in ideal locations in honour of the unsung heroes, martyrs and freedom fighters.

2. A memorial structure to honour the legend of Tagi Raja and Medhi Raja would be a befitting tribute to the two Aka warriors who continually resisted the British and their expansionist inroads into their area. This memorial structure should be ideally located at Gohaithan which is believed to be the birthplace of both Tagi Raja and Medhi Raja. Tagi Raja died here in 1873 and he lay buried here. The memorial will not only expand the space of tourism in Arunachal but will also instil a sense of the glorious past of the Aka leaders who cherished and lived a life free from colonial domination.

3. We would also like to make a recommendation for a statue of Tagi Raja at the entrance gate of Bhalukpong, West Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh which is believed to be his ancestral place. It is held that Bana Raja, Banasura Raja and Bhaluka Raja, from whom Tagi Raja claimed ancestry, had ruled from here. In this light, it is necessary to give the place a notable landmark which celebrates the feats of an unsung hero, Tagi Raja. The foothill of Bhalukpong, which connects the rest of the western Arunachal Pradesh region is an important location for tourism and transit. The statue here will definitely instil a sense of history in the people crossing this place. Besides, the statue will also provide an identity to this place which was once dominated by Tagi Raja and Medhi Raja, both unsung heroes of Arunachal Pradesh.

4. It is recommended for erection of a war memorial in memory of LANGHA POJA (GUNGHI) and other martyrs may be constructed at Langha village in Tali administrative headquarters to glorify their sacrifices for the cause of the motherland.

5. We recommended the construction of the war memorial in the name of TANA NANNA at Dev Village, under Sagalee Administrative Centre. Another war memorial in the name of TECHI GUBIN should be constructed at Zaraso Village under Pakke Kessang District.

6. As per the wish of the community, a war memorial should be constructed at Bordumsa in Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. Since the original places where different Anglo-Singpho wars could no longer be located with precision, it is apt to propose a common place where such war memorials can be erected for the Singpho community in general. Thus, the above-recommended place is viable and suitable for the larger interest of the Singpho community.

7. Following the rationale argued in the case of Tagi Raja in no. 2 and 3 above, war memorials and memorial structures may be erected at all other relevant places contained in this research, namely: (a) Igo Valley at Dari village; (b) Gooying Lídung, a battle site of Anglo-Abor war 1858 (Bitbor Mimak); (c) Rébing Líréng, the proposed war memorial site near the erstwhile British IB, Yembung Camp at Kebang village; (d) Bongal Yabgo at Dambuk; (e) at Elope village in Hunli Sub-Division, Lower Dibang Valley; (f) at Namsai; (g) Bordumsa in Changlang district of for the various Anglo-Singpho wars; and (h) at Sumjanuk in Longding district.



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