



Exploration of Region in Colonial North-East India: Construction of 'Naga Hills'

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Abstract

This paper mainly focuses on map-making and its implications because the map is the perfect example of the deployment of technology and power over region. By analyzing some of the colonial maps of the nineteenth century in North-East India we shall illustrate the historical processes of the making of the 'Naga Hills' as a distinctive place identity for the Nagas by the end of the century. The purpose is to see how a distinctive place identity called 'Naga Hills' came into existence. It is to be noted that how the colonial official views the 'long strip of hill country' as a barrier and how a place called the Naga Hills was established by this time. Once spaces were explored, surveyed and mapped by locating and naming places and people, as part of its knowledge-power nexus, the next colonial project was to translate their discourse into a political language - the acquisition of 'territory'.

Keywords: Naga Hills, Territorialisation, Naga Identity, Angami Naga.

Introduction

The British colonial rule and its implication in India is one of the vast historical phenomena in Indian history. Colonial cartography is one of the key aspects in the understanding of North-East region in India. It focuses on map making and its implications as the map can be treated as the perfect example of the deployment of technology of knowledge and power over space. Maps are not mere representations of space, they have the power to locate and define the boundaries of places and people and thereby assume the power to delineate and symbolize the social, political, cultural and geographical boundaries of the people inhabiting it. It analyzed the maps and discourses of the 19th century and illustrated the historical processes of the making of *Naga Hills* as a distinctive place identity by the end of the century. The purpose is to see how a distinctive place identity called '*Naga Hills*' came into existence. Before the Anglo-Burmese war in 1824-1826, the region called 'the North East Frontier' was *terra incognita* to the British. The 19th century map indicates how the colonial rulers transformed the 'blank spaces' in the map into several territorial units or division by the close of the century. In the early 19th century the colonial maps depict this region as 'blank spaces' and sometimes mentioned as the 'Hills' or 'Country'.

Division of North-East India

Prior to the colonial demarcation of the North-East region, there were many groups of people inhabiting specific areas with political control over a limited territory. Edmund Leach¹ rightly comments that 'in this region the indigenous political systems which existed prior to the colonial expansion were not separated from one authority by frontiers in the modern sense and they

were not sovereign National States'. People or groups of the region established and held definite territorial areas and control over the land and its resources. According to R. Gopalakrishnan², just before the British rule, the territorial arrangement of the region could be discerned in the following broad division: i. The Bodo-Kacharis, Ahom and the Aryan element in the Brahmaputra valley; ii. The Tibeto-Burman groups and sub-groups in the hilly periphery of the Brahmaputra valley; iii. The Mon-Khmer group and sub-groups in the south of the Brahmaputra valley; and iv. The migrant communities from the Ganga-Brahmaputra delta and Central India, in the Brahmaputra valley, Cachar, and Tripura.

According to some scholars, British annexation of the region in 1826, gave a definite scope to the various territorial groups and sub-groups which firmly established themselves without the fear of having to move to newer locations. The consequent delimitations of respective areas, provided an adequate basis on which these groups in the ensuing periods (particularly after the Indian Independence in 1947) were able to assert their distinctiveness, first, within the area they occupied, later at the regional and finally at the national level³. This argument does not hold water for those communities of the region who were already firmly established in central areas and fought against the British to preserve any infringement of their territorial rights.

In the early nineteenth century, the colonial power significantly called Naga Hills as *The Frontier of Eastern Bengal*. They loosely employed terms like 'Abor', 'Dafla', 'Sinphos', 'Miri', 'Garrows', 'Naga' to describe the communities inhabiting the unexplored and unknown mountainous ranges. The many groups that inhabited this region conformed to the general pattern and conditions in terms of their material culture and

socio-economic affinities. The reason for the similarity in form and pattern of their societies was not difficult to sketch. As already pointed out, it was the ecology and historical conditions that produced similar, though not the same, mode or pattern of society and culture. This easily led the colonial writer to label clusters of people under one generic term - "tribes" - the example relevant to my study were the "Naga's".

Colonial Exploration of Naga Hills

In the early nineteenth century the colonial maps depicted some blank spaces and sometimes inscribed these blanks with '*Unexplored Hilly country inhabited by the Naga Tribes*⁴, a clear reference to the Naga Hills. These maps reflected the colonial lack of geographical knowledge of these spaces. The significance of these maps is that they sharply indicated the gradual colonial expansion into the region. This political expansion turned the unknown spaces into colonial territory. One of the earliest colonial records of the term 'Naga' is found in the Welsh's *Report on Assam* in 1794. Here, Welsh mentioned that the 'Suddia, Miree, Duffala, Orika, Botan, Naga, Koparee, Jointa, and the Garrows paid tribute to the Monarch of Assam'⁵.

Another colonial account on the Nagas in the early nineteenth century occurs in F. Hamilton's *Report*, written in 1807. Here, one has to bear in mind that the colonial rulers only came into contact with the hills people in the mid-nineteenth century. F. Hamilton thus recorded: On the side of the Brahmaputra ... are said by the native of Nogang to dwell a people called Abor, and further up another tribe called Tikliya Nagas, both of whom are extremely savage. They are indeed said by the Brahman of Bengal to be cannibals, and to have little intercourse with the people in Asam [sic], although the two territories are adjacent⁶.

Walter Hamilton's *Report on the Kingdom of Assam* (1820) described the locations and the boundaries of different places and peoples inhabiting the North Eastern hills. He mapped the 'Gorrows', 'Bouta' 'the Kingdom of Nepaul', 'Sikkim', 'Cachar', 'Manipur', 'Jaintia Hills', 'Khamptis'⁷, 'Dophlas', and the different districts of 'Assam'⁸. In the *Report on the Kingdom of Assam*, Hamilton wrote:

This remote country adjoins the province of Bengal at the north-eastern corner, about the 91° degree of E. longitude, from whence it stretches in an easterly direction to an undefined extent; but it is probable that about the 96° degree of east longitude, it meets the northern territories of Ava, and is separated by an intervening space about 180 miles from the province of Yunan in China.... [its greatest dimensions Assam may be estimated at 350 miles in length by 60 the average breadth; divided into three provinces, Camroop on the west, Assam proper in the centre, and Sodiya at the eastern extremity.... The present territory of Assam Raja nowhere reaches the northern hill, the Deb Raja of Bootan having taken possession of all the territory adjacent thereto⁹.

The conjecture of the colonial construction of native geography is clearly reflected here. Most of the above descriptions were based on imagination rather than objective ground survey. Hamilton's use of the word 'probable' and 'undefined extent' is an indication of his incomplete knowledge of the region. It is important to note how Hamilton located the area by describing the neighboring territorial boundaries with other places. He wrote that, the 'country' or region 'meets the northern territories of Ava, and is separated by an intervening space about 180 miles from the province of Yunan in China'. This statement revealed how the colonial understood the area in the early nineteenth century—it was imagined as a space that connected with other places— as a barrier, as a vital bridge.

He further wrote that 'Assam Proper, the middle province of the kingdom, is of greater extent than the western; but no European having penetrated far beyond the capital, Gowhati...' the area needed new expeditions to uncover unfamiliar terrain, obviously for reasons of consolidating power over this region. This statement thus also revealed the speculative base of Hamilton's account. While admitting the unknown or 'undefined' spaces, Hamilton assertively noted that 'on the north, Assam is bounded by the successive mountainous ranges of Bootan, Auka, Dufaia, Miree, and on the south by the Garrow Mountains which rise in proportion to their progress eastward, and change the name of Garrow to that of Naga'¹⁰. Interestingly, the names referred to a geographical entity, and did not bear any relation to human communities. This suggests that the linkage of place names to the names of communities in the colonial construction of identity within the region occurred at a slightly later period.

In 1828, Hamilton, in one of the first Gazetteer on the *East-India* defined the Nagas thus: A singular race of hill people in India east of Ganges, who extends from the north-western extremity of Cachar to Chittagong between 93.8 and 94.15 degree and principally between Banskandy on the frontiers of Silhet and Manipoor. The Naga villages are perched on the most inaccessible peaks of the mountains, from whence they can perceive and guard against danger. Their dwelling consist of extensive thatch houses from thirty to fifty feet long, resting on posts but almost on the ground, whole constructed in a solid and compact manner. Their country is nominally divided between the Cachar and Manipoor states¹¹.

Hamilton's account presents a colonial spatial imagination and an apparent knowledge of the places and people without any firm factual base. Even with this paucity of data, the location of people within specific areas, deploying the technology of longitude and latitude for the drawing up of boundaries of that area, gave an impression of precision and exactitude. This naming of the spaces and locating people through their approximation of spatial reality was the first step in the process of colonization of the native land and the construction of place identity in the region. This is also the beginning of the process of the natural link between place and people's identity.

Hamilton's terminologies and description of the Nagas need some emphasis here. The first is the naming of the space into place that is, the naming of the mountainous ranges as 'Naga Hills'. The second is the locating of the Nagas within a bounded place with boundaries with 'the Cachar and Manipoor states'. With these assumptions, he conveniently defined the term 'Nagas as a 'singular race'. It is, in fact, an irony that Hamilton, like Max Weber's accounts of India, easily created places and people without having any direct, personal knowledge of either the place or the people. This was indeed, the invisible, knowledge-based power of the colonial state.

This leads to the important fact of the actual collection of information. The colonial power got the requisite data from the people of Bengal or Assam where they had already established political control. From the writing of Martin, who had extensively described Eastern India in the 1830's, one can also see the sources of information and the manner in which these terms were interpreted and deployed. In *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India*, Montgomery wrote that 'the following account was collected partly from several natives of Bengal, who on different occasions visited Asam; and partly from natives of that country, who were fugitives in Bengal'¹²,

Once spaces were explored, surveyed and mapped by locating and naming places and people, as part of its knowledge-power nexus, the next colonial project was to translate their discourse into a political language - the acquisition of 'territory'¹³. Drawing from Ian Barrow's definition of 'territory', we shall now discuss the century long process of transforming the Naga Hills into the British territory. Barrow defined 'territory' as the attempt 'to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationship, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area'. He argues that for the colonial rulers 'to bring both legitimacy and sovereignty to their rule in India, it was crucial that land be transformed into territory'. Colonial expeditions¹⁴ in the region were the first attempts in the processes of 'territorialization'. Here, we shall trace the colonial expedition into the region and their establishment of control over it. The establishment of the colonial authority in the native land was the logical end of the process of colonial territorialisation.

In 1832, British officers Captain Jenkins and Captain Pemberton went into the Angami area to explore the nature of communication relating to the 'dependant state of Muneepoor, the frontier province of Kachar and the Kingdom of Ava'¹⁵. They marched from 'Manipur, via Popolongmia and Samaguting, to Mohandiju on the Jamuna River. They were accompanied by an escort of 700 Manipuri sepoys, and during the whole of their march, met with continuous and stubborn opposition'¹⁶. This was followed (1833) by a local endeavor - Raja Gumbheer Sing of Manipur -who joined up with the Manipur Levy under Lieutenant Gordon: both of them then marched from Manipur to Assam through a different route. The

troops faced stiff opposition and even attacks all through their journey across the Naga country. After realizing the intention of Gumbheer Sing of conquering the Naga Hills, the Government interpreted his intention as a threat to 'Upper Assam', an area under British control. Therefore, he was ordered to subjugate the Nagas, but forbade him to descend into the plains on the Assam side'¹⁷. After Gordon's expedition, the colonial power proposed to give up to 'Manipur ... all the hills between the Doyeng and Dhunsiri'¹⁸. Interestingly, in 1835, the hills between the Doyeng and Dhunsiri 'were declared to be the boundary between Manipur and Assam'¹⁹. In 1832, Cachar was formally annexed to British territory and the 'tracts lying between the Doyeng and Dhunsiri, the Naga Hills and Jumoona' were placed by the British under the jurisdiction of Tularam, the king of Cachar. Incidentally, Tularam 'protested earnestly that he had no control over the Nagas or any means of checking the raids'. But, the British Government had no intention 'to take over Naga country' and so the Government again called upon 'Manipur to occupy the country of the Angamis'²⁰.

The contents of the Robinson's volume are worthy of study as it reflected the colonial concern centering round geography and the mapping of people and places. It informs us how the colonial rulers perceived the geography and environment during those times. The outline of the Volume is in the following order; Chapter I entitled 'General Outline and Aspect'. Here, the author located 'Asam' in a larger area, indicating its boundaries with the other powers of the regions. Then, he dealt with the derivation of the name, the rivers, the hills and mountains of the province. The title of the following chapters and sub-titles were 2, 'Climate and its effects on Man'— 'Climate', 'Effects of Climate on Man'; 3, 'Natural Geography'—'Geology', 'Botany', 'Zoology'. The next is a long note on The Tea Plant'. 4, 'Historical Geography'; 5, 'Political geography'; 6, 'Productive Industry'; 7, 'Civil and Social States' 8, 'Local geography'. Under the last chapter Robinson had described the following: 'Kamrup, or Lower Asam'; 'Durrung'; 'Nowgong'; 'Sibpur'; 'Lakimpur'; 'Sadyia'; Another Note was entitled The Hill Tribes'. Here, he includes The Butias'; 'Akas and Kapachors'; The Duphlas'; The Miris'; The Abors and Bor-abors'; 'Mishnis and Bor-Mishnis'; The Khamtis'; The Singphos'; 'Naga Tribes'; 'Kachar'; The Khassias'; 'Garos'. Robinson described the 'Nagas' and their habitat or location in detail:

The next border tribes that come under our notice are the Nagas. That large extent of mountainous countries bounded on the west by the Kopili river, the great southern bank of the Barak, and the eastern frontiers of Tipperah, in nearly east long. 83°; on the north by the valleys of Assam; on the east and south-east by the hills dividing Assam from the Bor-Khamti country in long. 97°; and the valley of the Kyendrens; and on the south by an imaginary Sine, nearly corresponding with the 23rd degree of north latitude is inhabited by numerous tribes of Highlanders, known to the Assamese, Bengalese, and Manipuries, by the general name of Naga, and to the Burmese by the term of Kakhyyens²¹. Here then, is a classic example of the colonial

mapping of the people and place by demarcating the boundary and locating it accurately with the longitude and latitude of the place. He described the boundaries of the place thus: 'bounded on the west by the Kopili river, the great southern bank of the Barak, and the eastern frontiers of Tipperah, in nearly east long. 83°; on the north by the valleys of Assam; on the east and south-east by the hills dividing Assam from the Bor-Khamti country in long. 97°; and the valley of the Kyendrens'. Mapping people and place and establishing a relation with other places therefore was an important process in the construction of a place identity.

A comprehensive account on the region was written by R. B. Pemberton in 1835 with the aim to give 'a general description of the great chain of mountains, which run from the southern borders of the Assam valley, in lat. 26.30°, extends to cape Negrais, the extreme southern limits of Arracan, lat. 16° north; and form a barrier on the east, along the whole line of the Bengal Presidency, from one extremity to the other'. He further wrote that the purpose was to describe the nature of the passes and countries, which this great mountains chain had been penetrated, and to facilitate lines of commercial and military operation²².

At this time the colonial rulers had little knowledge of the topography and natural environment of the region. The lack of knowledge of this region therefore demanded the urgency of collecting any information of the region. In his *Report on the countries on the Eastern Frontier of British Territories*, R. B. Pemberton wrote: [O]f the several pass into the territories of Ava, we had but the most imperfect and unsatisfactory accounts previous to the late war and to the very existence of some, we were wholly ignorant. The mountains through which they lead were known to be inhabited by fierce and unconquered tribes,... at the commencement of the Burmah war, our ignorance of the whole frontier became manifest, and it was found that the records of the Government furnished no information that could ... facilitate the advance of those armies, which it became evident were to preserve the integrity of our dominions²³.

On the people inhabiting the frontier of Assam, Pemberton wrote: There are few circumstances more calculated to arrest attention in considering this chain of mountains, than the number and variety of the tribes by which it is inhabited. Of these, the principal are the Murams, who occupy the tract of the country between Assam and Muneepor; the Kupooees, known in Bengal by the term Nagas, who resides on several ranges of hills between the latter country and Cachar²⁴.

In his *Account of the Mountain Tribes on the Extreme N. E. Frontier of Bengal*, John McCosh wrote in 1836 that: This valuable tract of country is inhabited by the various races, several of which have acknowledged our authority, some that of Burmese and others that of China; but a considerable number have sworn allegiance to no power; and maintain their independence of these tribes the most considerable are Miris, Abors, Mishmis, Kangtis, Bor-Kantis, Sinphos, Muamarias, and Nagas²⁵.

In November 1845 Captain John Butler, Principle Assistant of Nowgong was deputed to the hills for 'conciliating the tribes and mapping the topography'. When Butler demanded of the village chief of Kono-Mah (Khonoma) to 'deliver up the persons who were concerned in the surprise and destruction of the outpost at Lunkae, in October, 1844, for which a portion of the village of Kono-mah had been burnt by Mr. Sub-Assistant Wood, in January, 1845, but all in vain'. But after convincing himself that the incident was carried out without the knowledge of the chiefs and when the chiefs 'begged that their tribute and submission' be accepted. Butler decided to go for conciliatory tactics with the chief which was also a 'primary object of the mission'²⁶. In 1846-47, an expedition was sent to assess the establishment of an outpost in the Naga Hills with the aim to deter the Nagas from conducting some 'raids on the plains'²⁷. Samaguting was selected and 'the post was entrusted to Bhogchand Daroga', a local representative²⁸. However, Bhogchand was killed in a dispute between two groups of the Mezoma village and this led to the next expedition in 1849.

In March 1850, Lieutenant Vincent returned to the Angami Hills, went to the Jakama village and 'burnt it to the ground, because of their alliance' with the enemy. Vincent also constructed a stockade at Mazumah and was stationed there for six months to capture the fort of Nilholey's group located beyond the Konomah village. 'To prevent the enemy from having access to the village of Konomah' a stockade was built to confine the enemy within the fort. The strategy was to sever the enemy from all resources and compel them to surrender. A long engagement and the effort to demolish the fort were accompanied by much practical problems and Vincent decided to withdraw from Konomah in August 1850. At this juncture, Vincent described the reasons for his withdrawal:

I do not consider my position at Mozumah, even with an increased force...and noting should have induced me to withdraw it had I not been convinced of treachery from within; for though our troops can withstand...it is impossible to expect them to be prepared against treachery at their very threshold²⁹.

Lieutenant Vincent then recommended for more troops 'of not less than four or five hundreds bayonets' and 'the assistance of the Muneepoor Government' to crush down this hydra-headed rebellion³⁰. This led to the tenth expedition to the Angami Naga Hills. The Government sanctioned 'the assembling of a large force of 500 men' under Major Foquett to capture the Fort of Konomah. In December 1850 the troops left Mozumah and attacked the Fort of Konomah. Captain Jenkins wrote: thus 'fell one of the strongest Forts ever seen in Assam'³¹. This defeat, however, brought about a change in the policy of the colonial rulers in the Naga Hills. This new policy was not to interfere in the internal problem of the Nagas. Jenkins suggested that 'we have driven the enemy from his stronghold, and he must now be sensible to our power, and it is the question to be considered whether it would not be advisable not to interfere with the

internal affairs of the Nagas³². The British troops were then withdrawn from the hills in 1851 and the Government adopted the policy of what was called the 'Non-Interference' policy with the Nagas. Lord Dalhousie in his Minute on the British relation with the Nagas clearly set the rule to be followed in the Nagas Hills: I dissent entirely from the policy which is recommended of what is called obtaining a control, that is to say, of taking possession of the hills, and of establishing our sovereignty over their savage inhabitants. Our possession could bring no profit to us, and would be as costly to us as it would be unproductive. The only advantage... is the termination of the plundering inroads which the tribes now make from the hills on our subjects at the foot of them. But this advantage may more easily, more cheaply, and more justly be obtained by refraining from all seizure of the territory of these Nagas, and by confining ourselves to the establishment of effective means of defence on the line of our frontier³³.

Captain Yule's observation is relevant to this study in many ways. Firstly, Yule's exploration intended to map the spaces into territory. In the process of mapping, Yule, like many other colonial explorers, imagined the Himalayan chain as a barrier that bound India all along the north-western and north eastern frontiers. This was a typical colonial geo-political imagination of the sub-continent, which reflected their attempt to construct the frontiers from a political and military point of view. Yule's statements revealed the colonial explorers' concept of maps and its importance in the power/knowledge nexus. He said that 'the southern, a chain of far less altitude and celebrity, and of no name, is co-extensive with the valley which it limits and defines, can conveniently be termed the Assam chain, as it has been, I believe in some atlases³⁴. This statement suggests how the colonial geo-political discourse was practiced. The southern chain, which had 'no name' and so, it had to be named in map and thus translated into British territory. This chain, Yule said, can 'conveniently be termed the Assam chain', suggesting the colonial construction of spaces into places in order to transform them into imperial territory.

The second point that we can draw from Yule's statement was the mapping of places and people. He mapped the spaces that were until now having no names and therefore was blank in the colonial maps. This mapping of the people and placing them in the longitudes and latitudes of the globe was an important part of the colonial map making. This was particularly so because once they were mapped into the imperial map they acquired their fixity as place. Here, Yule placed 'the Naga country, between longitude 93° and 95° and described 'it as a great multiple mass of mountains ... southwards from Assam chain'.

By the 1860s, the local officers declared their disapproval to the 'non-interference' policy while the Government of India was reluctant to advance its control over the Naga Hills. The local officers were constrained by what they called 'raids' by the Nagas in the British territory. The reason for these activities disturbed the colonial intention of expanding its tea

garden into the hills. The Commissioner of Assam justified the 'forward policy' in the following statement:

It is not creditable to our Government that such atrocities should recur annually with unvarying certainty, and that we should be powerless alike to protect our subjects or to punish the aggressors. It is certain that our relation with the Nagas could not possibly be not a worse footing than they are now. The non-interference policy is excellent in theory, but Government will probably be inclined to think that it must be abandoned³⁵.

A consensus was not there among the colonial officers in relation to the policy to be pursued in future. In 1862, Lieutenant-Governor Sir Cecil Beadon suggested three schemes—Either the Government should abandon the hill tracts inhabited by the Nagas by 'strictly' adopting the non-interference policy or advance into the hills and 'place special officers in charge, and maintain them there by force of arms'; or to remain in the plains and 'cultivate political relations with the neighbouring clans and bring their Chiefs into stipendiary police relations' with the Government³⁶. The colonial government was however not decisive as to what course of action was to be followed, the willy-nilly attitude stretched on till 1866. In opposing with the Government policy, Sir Cecil Beadon predicted that 'in the course of few years Assam would be divided among the Bhutias, Abors, Nagas, Garos, Mishmis and other wild tribes: for exposed as Assam is on every side, if petty outrages were to be followed by withdrawal of our frontier, we should very speedily find ourselves driven out of the province³⁷. This is another reason why the colonial rulers adopted the forward policy of extending their control over the hills to sustain the economic activity in the plains of Assam,

Approving the recommendation of the Lieutenant-Governor, the Government of Bengal succinctly justified its new policy of subjugating the hills of Assam: In regard to the policy to be pursued towards the Angami Nagas... the only course left to us with the duty we owe to the inhabitants of the adjoining frontier district as well as to the Angamis themselves, who were torn by internecine feuds for want of a government...is to re-assert our authority there, and bring them under a system of administration suited to their circumstances, and gradually to reclaim them from habits of lawlessness to those of order and civilization...Even if the right of the British Government is less clear than it is, the existence on its border of a savage and turbulent tribe, unable to restrain its members from the commission of outrages, given up to anarchy, and existing only as a pest and nuisance to its neighbours, would justify the Government in the adoption of any measures for bringing it under subjection and control³⁸.

The colonial claim to establish 'order and civilization' to the people 'who were torn by the internecine feuds for want of government' thus justified their economic and political interest in controlling the Nagas. The colonial government ordered

Lieutenant Gregory to station at Samoogooding 'to bring that portion of the hills tract adjacent to the plains into order'. The Orders further pointed out that 'he will remember that our main object in having any dealings with the hills people is to protect the low lands from their incursion. Instead, therefore, of exerting himself to extend our rule into the interior, he will rather refrain from such a course'³⁹. The disinterest of the Government in extending its control in the hills for want of economic incentives clearly directed their policies. The Orders had thus clearly declared: Should the plan thus sketched succeed, and hillmen be gradually reclaimed to our rule and civilized, without much cost to the British Treasury in the process, it will be a good work well accomplished. But His Excellency in Council cannot admit that we are bound to attempt more in their behalf than the resources of the empire can reasonably afford⁴⁰.

In 1869, Captain Butler was appointed as the Political Agent and 'exploration and survey were diligently pushed forward'⁴¹. Captain Butler, the Political agent of the Naga Hills, in his *Rough Note on the Angami Nagas and their Language* (1875) revealed the colonial mapping of unknown space and classification of people and places in order to territorialize the space. Commenting on the lack of knowledge of the colonial officers on the regions towards the east, Butler said '[this, however, I think, not at all improbable, for, having held aloof, as we have done for years, from holding any direct communication with the tribes, we cannot possibly hope to know much about what is going on in their hills, and we have only to recall the fact that an armed party of Shans did actually visit the neighbourhood of Changnoi in 1846, thus clearly proving that there must be a more or less well-known route in that direction']

Butler admitted the confusion and the uncertainty that surrounded the identity question, and the British officer asserted that the 'question of identity of these tribes is at present difficult to decide ... and theory propounded at present stage of our knowledge must be more or less based on conjecture ...'⁴² By 1870's, after many deliberations, the Supreme Government accepted Lieutenant-Governor Sir Campbell's proposal in dealing with the Naga tribes. He suggested a gradual 'establishment of political control and influence over them without any assertion of actual government'⁴³. As a result of this policy and to make it effective, 'extensive explorations were proposed, and the clear definitions of boundary lines and local limits was postulated as essential to any proper working of the scheme'⁴⁴. Several expeditions and survey parties were deputed to explore the 'unknown country' during the 1870's. Major Godwin-Austen was deputed in 1872, to explore the areas between the Brahmaputra and Irrawaddy rivers, the area considered to be the boundary of the Manipur on the north⁴⁵. The explorations was 'carried up to the Telizo Peak and a considerable area of unknown country was surveyed'⁴⁶. In 1873-74, Captain Badgley followed up the work started by Major Godwin-Austen, the main aim of this expedition 'was to trace the Lanier either to some point in the Saramethi range or

northwards into the Dikkoo'. Here, it is important to know why the government deputed Captain Badgley with this aim. According to Mackenzie:

Major Godwin-Austen was of the opinion that the Lanier river maintained a northerly source, and emerged from the Naga country as the Dikkoo which flows past Sebsaugor into the Brahmaputra. But it was possible, on the other hand, that Lanier and Dikkoo might be separate rivers, and that the Lanier might be, in fact, an affluent of the Irrawaddy. The question involves was one of considerable importance. If it turned out that the northern range was, in fact, the watershed dividing the affluents of the Brahmaputra from those of the Irrawaddy, and if we determined to adhere to that watershed as the boundary, Manipur would be at liberty to annex the whole tract of Naga country lying between the eastern bank of the Doyeng and along the southern frontier of the Sebsaugor District⁴⁷.

Some interesting observations can be made from the above statements that correspond to our arguments that the colonial rulers first surveyed and mapped the spaces into order to control the space and transform it into their territory. The policy of gradual expansion of their control over space demanded the knowledge of geography of the areas; this resulted into many expeditions and survey of the areas. From Captain Badgley's operation, it can be seen that the colonial rulers considered the physical features as important markers in the construction of state boundaries. The objective Captain Badgley suggested was that the explorations and survey were important for the colonial drive toward territorializing space. It was a tool for the colonial state to impose its knowledge over others and control the space with all its natural resources and its people. This clearly reflects the link between knowledge and power in the colonial project of territorialization.

For want of 'accurate information' the government, in 1874, deputed Captain Badgley and Captain Butler to explore the areas with the instructions that 'the boundary when laid down would be between Manipur and Nagas, not between Manipur and British territory'⁴⁸. It also mentioned the extent the government chose to extend its frontier southwards, which was still a matter for further consideration and had nothing to do with Manipur. This survey provided a vivid example of the colonial knowledge and the mapping of places and people, and it is important to give an extensive quote.

Of all the tribes inhabiting that enormous tract of mountainous country hemming in Assam on the south, the "Nagas" are one of the most numerous.... If we now turn to the map accompanying Captain Yule's work, we find the respective positions supposed to be occupied by the several tribes inhabiting the great range of mountains which, commencing at cape Negrais, extends up to and beyond the head water of Irrawaddy very carefully noted down upon it. Thus taking the most southernly first, and proceeding north, we meet with the "Karens," "Khyens" and wild Khyens," after which we come upon the "Looshai," Kom

Naga," "Arong Naga," "Kutchu," and "Anghami Naga," and finally the vague, general term 'Naga tribes,' ...and due east of this tract, south of the Hookong Valley, we find another tribe here called the "Kakhyens," and north of them again we have the "Singpho". And... with regards to the inhabitants of this huge tract, we are equally in dark.... However, under present circumstances, it is merely a matter of another season's hard work to clear up the whole mystery.... I will therefore, now content...myself with the so-called British Territory. But before doing so, I beg first of all to invite special attention to the accompanying copy of a map which has just been very carefully compiled in the Surveyor General's Office...and upon which I have very carefully noted down (in red) the geographical position of every tribe along the frontier of which we have any knowledge, To commence then from the south-western corner, the first Naga tribe we come in contact with is the "Arung" a small and peaceful community inhabiting the North Cachar Hills.... We next fall in with the "Kuki" or "Naia Kuki", a powerful community consisting of the "Thado," "Changsen," and "Shingshon" clans who inhabit that portion of the Barail mountains.... The next tribe we met with are the "Kutchu" or "Mejhameh" Nagas who inhabits the slopes on both sides of the water-parting line of Barail mountains, north towards the Dhansiri, south towards the Barak, a country very similar in many respects to that just spoken of, the most marked difference being that the Barail watershed from the Naga village of Lakmah east to Tenepu Peak forms a most precipitous and almost impassable barrier chain.... The next tribe we have to deal with is the turbulent Angami, by far the most powerful and most warlike of all the Naga tribes we have yet met.... Roughly speaking the country they inhabit may be described as a fine, open, rolling mass of mountains, bounded on the east by the Sijjo River, and towards the south and west, as regards the high land, by the range on which the peak of Japuo, Suvemuchikha and Fcedinba rise up. On the south-east corner of the Angami country we come upon a small compact community generally spoken of as the "Sopuomah" or "Mao" group of Nagas. Due east of the tribe above alluded to, are the seven villages of the "Khezami" or "Kolia" Nagas. Across the Kopamedza range we come upon the Zami Naga, a group of only villages.... North and north-east of the Angami we come upon the "Semah Nagas," regarding whom we at present know very little.... Immediately to the north of these Semah Nagas we have only very lately discovered the existence of another tribe called the "Mazamah" or "Rengmah Naga." We now come upon what are generally called the Sebsaugor Nagas', inhabiting that strip of hill country bordering Sebsaugor on the south, of whom we really know very little indeed.... Commencing from the west, we have the "Lhotas Nagas," who are sub-divided into the "Paniphatias" consisting often villages, and the "Torphatias" or "Doyongias" with eleven villages; we next have the "Hatoghorias," who have only six villages; and next to them we come upon the "Assyngias," also possessing six villages; then again are followed by the "Dupdorias" with twelve villages; and finally we have the "Namsangias" group of but four villages⁴⁹.

Butler cited Captian Brodie's remarks as the already worked-out position of a responsible British officer speaking from experience and knowledge of the frontiers, "beyond the Dikhu to the southward lies the great range which separates Assam and Burmese dominions". In 1875, the British headquarter was shifted to Wokha from Samuguting to exercise control over the Lotha areas and protect the districts of Nowgong and Sibsagar of Assam. But, in 1978, the headquarter was again shifted to Kohima.

Here, it is interesting to note that in the 1872 Memorandum of Instruction, Cunningham explained to his assistant that the name of places should be included. Among the six points that Archaeological Reports should always be included, the very first, is '[t]he various names of the places and their origin or derivation'⁵⁰. This suggests the colonial concern of the name of places in their attempted to territorialize the space. Again, in 1875, the Chief Commissioner Colonel Keating advocated the 'gradual and systematic prosecution of the survey of the hills', in the words of Mackenzie, 'not for mere purposes of exploration but as a continuation of our political occupation of the hills'⁵¹. This statement clearly reflects the basic premise of this study that the colonial project of mapping of spaces was a primary object in their attempt to claim sovereignty over alien space and its inhabitants.

R.G. Woodthorpe's article entitled *Notes on the Wild Tribes Inhabiting the So-Called Naga-Hills on our North-East Frontier of India* (1881) is interesting. Here, Woodthorpe identified the term 'Naga' as a place and not people. The '*so-called Naga Hills*' suggests that he was not sure of the term he employed but the used of the 'Hills' in capital 'H' certainly meant a place name and not a people. This, we shall argue, is the early colonial spatial construction of Naga identity. The toponymic identification of people is reflected in the article for he wrote that '[t]he Naga tribe inhabits the hills southeast of Assam dividing that province from the northeast portion of Burmese territory'⁵². The uncertainty, we can see, in the title and the name of the hills, the '*wild tribes inhabiting the so-called Naga-Hills*' become the Nagas. He asserted '[t]he Naga tribes inhabit the south-east of Assam, dividing that province from the north-west portion of the Burmese territory'⁵³. H. B. Rowney's remark on the Nagas suggests how settlement and mapping are closely related in the colonial construction of spatial identity in the nineteenth century. He said that 'As the Nagas are not a migratory people, like the other hill men around them, their villages are stationary and unchanging, and those marked in Rennel's maps of 1764 are still to be found'⁵⁴.

A clear indication of the colonial classification of space and the making of place in the context of the Nagas can be illustrated from map of the geographical areas of the Nagas provided by S. E. Peale in 1893. The map suggested the relation of the place and people in the colonial spatial understanding of the term Naga. The titled of the map is called 'Map of Naga Territory and Neighbouring tribes'. Peale further stated: TheS two main facts to remember first, however, are that the word 'Naga' has a definite

geographical limit, and that, secondly, the race so designated is subdivided into literally innumerable independent tribes, who are constantly at war with each other,⁵⁵ Peale defined the location of the Nagas and demarcates the boundaries of the Nagas territory. This is one of the examples of the colonial making of place and people in the Imperial map. This process of locating and mapping the boundaries of the people and places, this paper argues, constructed distinctive place identities by the colonial cartographers. Further Peale described the boundaries of the Naga Hills and located it within the modern geographical longitudes and latitudes.

The tract inhabited by the so-called Nagas lies mainly between lat. 25. to 27 deg. 30 min. N, and long. 93 deg. 30 min. E. to 96 deg. E. To the east lie the Singphus (Tsingpos or Chinpaws), who are a distinct sub-race, and have strongly marked differences in language, physique, and customs; they are called in Burma Kakyens. To the north of the Nagas Hills lies Asam, and to the west there are various tribes of Mikirs and Jyntias; while to the south the boundary is not clear, and the Nagas seem to merge more or less into the surrounding Turanian races about Manipur and to the east of it. The inhabitants of this tract, though called Nagas, are divided and sub-divided 'to such an extent that few parts of the world, I should suppose, can present such a minute tribal segregation'⁵⁶.

In the early twentieth century, J.P. Mills wrote in his report that '...The Naga Hills district is a long strip of hill country bordering the plains of Upper Assam ... To the east of this strip is a block of independent territory inhabited by wild tribes, between the Assam and Burma administrative boundaries. It is this which forms the barriers'⁵⁷. Here it is to be noted that how the colonial official views the 'long strip of hill country' as a barrier and how a place called the Naga Hills was established by this time.

Conclusion

To conclude, this paper argues that the map represents a distinct, bounded, connected homogeneity of the place and people. It is this representation that creates a sense of commonness and identity. It also produces certain elements of a sense of place. The mental image of a place through the visual representation is a particular sense of place. The place represented in the map is internalized and get imprint in the imagination of the people. The map then, becomes part of the realities rather than representation. This form of internalization of a sense of place through the map is also based on the construction of other places. The map reflects different places through the line drawn to demarcate places. This produces a bounded and connected place. It is this representation of place that creates a distinct identity of a place. One of the best example for the construction of place through maps and internalization of place as a distinct identity is the map of all nation-state. The construction of place through the map is also significant as it also connect the people and territory or land. The map produces a direct relationship of people and territory by

locating the people in that place. This creates an inevitable relation between the place and the people.

The conjecture of the colonial construction of native geography is clearly reflected here. Most of the above descriptions were based on imagination rather than objective ground survey. Hamilton's use of the word 'probable' and 'undefined extent' is an indication of his incomplete knowledge of the region. It is important to note how Hamilton located the area by describing the neighbouring territorial boundaries with other places. He wrote that, the 'country' or region 'meets the northern territories of Ava, and is separated by an intervening space about 180 miles from the province of Yunan in China'. This statement revealed how the colonial understood the area in the early nineteenth century—it was imagined as a space that connected with other places—as a barrier, as a vital bridge.

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