



CHAPTER VI.

THE ABOES AND MIRIS.

The Akas and Duphas are, according to ethnologists, one in race with each other, and with the tribes of Abors* and Miris inhabiting the hills north of Luckimpore, of whom it is next necessary to speak.

Close connection between the Abors and Miris.

The information available to us does not indeed show that any social or political connection subsists now

between the Akas and the Duphas, and until very recently there was no evidence of intercourse between the Duphas and the Abors, their neighbours to the east. It seemed as though all along the frontier the several tribes were entirely independent of their respective neighbours on the east and west, while owing subordination to the more remote races behind and to the north of them. Even now we have very little definite knowledge of the inter-tribal relations of these sub-Himalayan highlanders: and it is as historically accurate as it is convenient to treat most of them as distinct and separate peoples. The Abors and Miris may, however, be considered an exception to this rule. Coming no doubt originally from the same habitat, they are still so alike in all material respects as to warrant us in calling them earlier and later migrations of the same tribe—the Abors as the last comers retaining more of their pristine savagery and hardihood, while the Miris have been to some extent influenced by free association with the plains and the settled habits of civilization. The intercourse between Abors and Miris is nevertheless constant and intimate.

The Miris were found in 1825, by Captain Neufville, inhabiting

Their local distribution.

the plains and lower hills, along the north bank of the Brahmaputra from

the Sisi District of Luckimpore as far as the Dihong river. The Abors he places further east in the hilly country between the Dihong and the Dibong, the Bor Abors† occupying the inner and more lofty ranges.

* The term 'Abor,' signifying barbarous and independent, is by the Assamese applied very indefinitely to all the independent tribes on both sides of the valley, but it is more especially the appellation of the great tribal section which this chapter deals. The word in Assamese is opposed to Bori, which means dependent. (*Dalton*.) According to Wilcox 'Bor' = bara, great. The Abors, however, call themselves "Padam."

† In a report by the Deputy Commissioner of Luckimpore, dated 8th October 1861, the Bor Abors are put "in the hills extending from the Semsere river to the Dihong, covering an area of 200 square miles, and numbering about 10,000 souls." The Meyongs are placed in the hilly tracts from the Dihong to the Galee Sootee, an area of 200 square miles, and their numbers at 14,000. From the Galee Sootee to the Runga Nudi are placed the other Abors and Chang Miris over an area of 600 square miles, and numbering 10,000 souls or more. This information is, however, of very doubtful value.



This division may be taken as approximately correct. To the westward of the Dihong Abor villages may be found here and there among those of the upper hill Miris. No Miri villages are, however, situated between the Dihong and the Dibong, and no Abor villages exist among the Miri settlements on the plains near Luckimpore. The Miris of the plains are here claimed by the Abors as their dependents and runaway slaves; and under the Assam Government the Miris acted, and they do now to some extent act, as the go-betweens of the Abors and the traders of Assam.

In the hills west of the Dirjmoo and to the north of the Sisi and Damaji mouzas of the Luckimpore District, Dalton places the Ghyghasi tribe of Parbatia or Hill Miris, who would seem to be in nowise subordinate to the Abors. North of Bordoloni, and on the course of the Subanshiri, he puts the Sarak Miris, and on the same river the Panibotia and Tarbatia, all branches of the Hill Miris.⁽¹⁾ These tribes were visited by Dalton in 1845, and a full description of their habits and village sites is given by him in his "Ethnology of Bengal". He also mentions a tribe called Anka Miris or 'Tenaë' living to the north-west of the Hill Miri country on a stream which is probably an upper course of the Sundri River. These Anka Miris have never been seen on the plains.

The Abor or Padam country was visited in a friendly way in 1825-26 by Bedford and Wilcox, and by Dalton in 1855. The right bank of the Dihong was found occupied by the Pasi and Meyong Abors, the left by the Padoo, Siboo or Silook, Meybo, and Goliwar Abors. Membo was the most important of the settlements. This village was built on a range of hills rising from a small stream called the Shiku, about four miles from its confluence with the Dihong, and numbered probably over 800 houses.

The Hill Miris, commanding by their position the cultivated tracts of Bordoloni, Sisi, and Damaji, had acquired an acknowledged right to *posa* similar to that asserted by the Duphas, Akas, and Bhutias. So far as can be gathered, the Abors, though much more powerful than any of these tribes, had no such rights. This was owing no doubt to their comparatively remote situation, cut off as they were by the great river Dihong from the cultivated country along the Brahmaputra Valley. Rights, however, they had of a somewhat different kind, which were more difficult to settle even than those arising out of the *posa*.

The Abors claimed, as I have said, an absolute sovereignty over the Miris of the plains, and an inalienable right to all the fish and gold found in the Dihong River. Early notices of the Abors and Miris. The Miris for many years acknowledged the Abors as their masters. They were quite ready to accept their position of go-betweens of the rude hillmen and the Assamese traders. It was on the whole a profitable one, and the more so while

(1) Political Proceedings, 2d May 1845, Nos. 145-47.



the unsettled state of Assam under its Native Government made simple agriculture a somewhat precarious pursuit. The Assamese Government also, anxious to conciliate their highland neighbours, had long since relieved these Miris of all revenue charges, acknowledging thereby the subjection of that tribe to the Abors, whose interpreters they were officially recognized to be. During the Burmese invasion, and after the British annexation of Assam, more than one community of Miris found it to their advantage to move away from the vicinity of their Abor lords, and one of the earliest notices of the Abors outside of geographical memoirs is an account of a demand made by the 'Duba' tribe of Bor Abors in February 1830, that the British authorities would send back a village of Miris who had moved away to the detriment of the Abor trade.⁽¹⁾ The Government of course could not coerce the Miris into returning, but it sanctioned certain expenditure by the Political Agent, with a view to induce these or kindred tribes to settle where they could minister to the wants of the Abors in the way of trade. Eventually the original Miri village returned to its old site, and the Agent induced the Bor Abors to undertake to leave them free of exaction for two years, two Chiefs of the lower Abors becoming surety for their good treatment. The Abors are curiously enough described in the correspondence as "far the best disposed of the hill tribes, though the most powerful, and never known to commit an act of unprovoked ravage or outrage on the villages of the plains."

The first impression made on the Abors by our local officers would seem to have been also favourable, for early in 1836 a body of 200 Abors⁽²⁾ came down and offered to settle on the Dibong. They were willing to submit to our criminal jurisdiction, but objected to pay taxes. The local officers were afraid that they might prove dangerous neighbours, but the Governor General's Agent, viewing them as little other than Miris, a tribe which had long since proved itself amenable to order, overruled the opposition. Two years later⁽³⁾ he urged upon Government, without success, the deputation of a special officer to conciliate the hill Miris and Abors. It is probable that the Abors, as a warlike race, were expected by the local officers to act as a counterpoise to the Khamptis, Singphos, and Mishmis, who at this time were giving cause for anxiety. In 1840, indeed, the Abors did take the side of Government unmistakably, when the Khamptis, in alliance with the Mishmis, were fighting against us.⁽⁴⁾

Besides asserting their sovereignty over the Miris, the Abors claimed, as above stated, a right to all the fish and gold found in the streams that flowed from their hills. In the islands of the Brahmaputra, and along the lower courses of its northern feeders, were numerous

Abor claims to revenue from gold-washers and fishermen.

(1) Political Proceedings, 7th May 1830, Nos. 47-48.

(2) Political Proceedings, 9th May 1836, Nos. 7-8.

(3) Political Proceedings, 23rd August 1838, Nos. 62-63.
Political Proceedings, 29th August 1838, Nos. 90-91.

(4) Political Proceedings, 16th March 1840, No. 112.



villages of Hindu gold-washers and fishermen called Becaahs or Beheeahs, who had, perhaps, themselves originally been driven from the hills by the Abor-Miri advance. In the pursuit of their avocation these Becaahs were wont to frequent the Dihong, Dibong, and other tributaries of the Brahmaputra, and from them the Abors were always in the habit of receiving, if not regular black-mail, at least frequent conciliatory offerings and acknowledgments of superiority. The Assam Government, which derived no small portion of its revenue from the gold-dust of the rivers, had an interest in keeping stationary these Becaah settlements, even when the occupation of gold-washing became much less remunerative than it once had been. Under British rule the Becaahs became their own masters, and many of them, like the Miris, moved lower down the valley. The few who remained soon found out that the new⁽¹⁾ Government had different ideas on the question of protecting its subjects from those of the imbecile administration it succeeded, and they began to repudiate the claims of the Abors to restrict their movements on the Dihong and elsewhere. The Abors in revenge carried off to the hills such of the refractory Becaahs as they could lay hands upon.

Their feelings towards us do not appear to have as yet been actively hostile, for in 1847 Captain Vetch, the Political Agent, had a most friendly conference with the Pashi, Meybo, and other Padams, who to please him voluntarily released all the captives they had taken. Negotiations for the establishment on the Dihong of a trading store under Government protection were at this time set on foot, with a fair prospect, as it seemed, of ultimate success.

Unfortunately, however, this promising commencement of intercourse was never regularly followed up, and a year or so⁽²⁾ later we were brought into hostile collision with a neighbouring tribe of Dhubas or Dubba Abors lying west of the Dihong. The facts were these: Captain Vetch had gone to the hills with a small party of troops to demand the restoration of a body of Cachari gold-washers carried off by these Abors. The captives were restored, but his camp was attacked by night, and the Abors were only beaten off after hard fighting. To punish this treachery, Captain Vetch burnt their village—a step which led to the submission of the offending tribe, but which, however righteous an act in itself, tended greatly to disturb the generally harmonious relations hitherto subsisting between the Assam officials and the wild tribes in this quarter. Not that friendly intercourse⁽³⁾ was openly broken off, for early in 1851 a large body of upper Abors came down and settled on the Dirjmoo, advances being made them by Government to enable them to purchase implements of husbandry. But from

(1) Political Proceedings, 24th March 1848, Nos. 190-201.

(2) Political Proceedings, 23th April 1848, Nos. 105-6.

Political Proceedings, 23rd June 1849, Nos. 23-24.

(3) Revenue Proceedings, 12th March 1851, Nos. 61-62.



this point we begin to find frequent notice of outrages committed by the Abors and of remonstrances offered by the British officials.

At the very time of the settling of the Abor village on the Dirjmo the clause on the Further unpleasantness on the Abor Frontier. Dihong were renewing their depredations on the gold-washers. As Government now farmed out the right of gold-washing (for the vast sum of Rs. 80 per annum), it felt bound to protect the Beahs from such encroachment⁽¹⁾, and orders

Measures of conciliation ordered by Government. were given that an escort should accompany them to the Dihong, and a guard be permanently stationed at the mouth of that river. An effort was still, however, to be made to establish an annual fair for the conciliation and profit of the Abors; and a proposal to tax the Miri⁽²⁾ villages near the Dihong, north of the Brahmaputra, was negatived as being likely to annoy the paramount tribe. These measures were designed to combine the advantages of a strong and of a conciliatory policy; but they were not fully or fairly carried into action. It is doubtful whether their intention was ever properly made manifest to the tribes concerned. The guard only remained on the Dihong for one season, and the Abor trade was lost sight of amid the pressure of other more urgent matters.

In 1855 (as already noted) the village of Membo⁽³⁾ was visited by Dalton, then Principal Assistant to the Governor General's Agent in Assam. An account of his expedition was published in No. XXIII of the Bengal Selections, and has been incorporated by him in his work on the Ethnology of Bengal.

In 1858 occurred the first serious Abor outrage.⁽⁴⁾ On the 31st January of that year the civil station of Debroogurh was startled by the news that the Beeah village of Sengajan, only six miles distant from the station, though on the north of the Brahmaputra, had been cut up by Abors from the hills. Inquiry soon made it tolerably certain that the Kebang clan of Bor Meyongs were the perpetrators of this atrocity. It was designed apparently to punish the Beeahs for having some years before deserted their village, and for a recent refusal to pay the dues or tribute which the Abors demanded of them. An attempt was made to follow up the raiders to the hills, but, owing to the extremely inaccessible character of the country and various mischances, which need not be specified in detail, the troops did not succeed in overtaking the Abors or in reaching the village of Kebang. It was indeed with difficulty and with some loss of credit to those in command that they got back to Debroogurh. Emboldened by their impunity, the Kebang men took up a more advanced position threatening the plains; and it

(1) Judicial Proceedings, 30th April 1851, Nos. 166-68.

(2) Judicial Proceedings, 4th March 1852, Nos. 127-29.

(3) Judicial Proceedings, 3rd January 1856, Nos. 31-34.

(4) Judicial Proceedings, 10th August 1858, Nos. 262-84.

now became evident to Government that if it wished to prevent a state of chronic outrage along the border, a serious effort was necessary to convince the hillmen of our power to punish. An offer of the Meybo Abors to act as mediators had no practical effect. Government could only accept an unconditional submission, which the Kebang people were in no mood to offer.⁽¹⁾

Preparations for an expedition into the hills upon a somewhat imposing scale were put in hand with vigour. No doubt was entertained as to the propriety of invading the Abor territory to punish the authors of a crime so flagrant as the massacre of Sengajan. The safety of our own civil stations was at stake. Indifference would, it was felt, lead only to more daring attacks.

The civil officers of Debroogurh spared no pains to get together the information necessary to render the military operations successful; and if the results of their inquiries proved eventually of less value than was anticipated, that fact may serve as a warning and a lesson for future enterprises of the kind. While the military authorities were settling the character and strength of the force to be employed, the Deputy Commissioner of Luckimpore had, as he believed, fixed the precise *locale* of Kebang, and the best way of reaching that village. From the report of a Pashi Abor scout, it appeared that Kebang lay on the Yembopani, a tributary of the Dihong, only four and half days' direct journey from the plains. Such, however, was the difficult character of the country that it was considered better to convey the force in canoes by the route of the Dihong than to attempt the trackless hills between the Brahmaputra and the Yembopani. This determined, the Deputy Commissioner went on in advance to make arrangements for food depôts, and to conciliate, if possible, the intermediate clans. At Pashighât, opposite the junction of the Sikoo with the Dihong, deputations from the Pashi, Meybo, and Pado

The expedition and its progress.

** Naval Brigade.*

- 1 European Officer.
- 15 Do. Gunners.

Local Artillery.

- 1 Native Officer.
- 15 Privates.
- 2 12-pr. howitzers, with 50 rounds per gun.

Native Infantry.

- 3 Native Officers.
- 11 Non-Commissioned Officers.
- 3 Buglers.
- 88 Sepoys, with 100 rounds each.
- 1 European medical man.

communities presented themselves, professing friendship and promising not to oppose the advance of troops. The Deputy Commissioner appears to have relied too confidently upon these protestations. He conversed freely about the approaching expedition, and gave, it was afterwards feared, by far too many indications of the route which it was intended to follow. By the 19th March a force of the strength shown on the margin* had arrived at Pashi under the command of an officer of the rank of Captain.⁽²⁾

(1) Judicial Proceedings, 27th January 1859, Nos. 88-100.

(2) Judicial Proceedings, dated 19th August 1859, Nos. 262-34.



On the morning of the 20th the advance began into the Abor Hills. As far as Pangee, an Abor village fifteen miles upstream, the force proceeded in boats. The guns were for some distance carried on elephants along the bank, but the hill ranges between Pashi and Pangee proved to be so precipitous and came down so close to the river that this mode of conveyance had to be abandoned, and the guns were eventually taken on board the boats. At Pangee it was discovered by the civil officer that the coolies supplied by him at Debroogurh for carrying food had through some mistake of the military commander been discharged soon after leaving that station. He had, however, a body of 70 coolies with him, and these were pronounced sufficient for Commissariat purposes as the guns were to be left at Pangee to guard the boats, which had there to be abandoned owing to the occurrence of dangerous rapids that could not be stemmed. On the 22nd March the troops, numbering with officers 104 fighting men, broke ground at Pangee, marching by the left bank of the river over a steep hill four miles to Ruttoomi Ghât, a point above the rapids, where the river had to be crossed on rafts of bamboo. There, it was found, the Ruttoomi Abors had, as a measure of conciliation, prepared in anticipation, though not in sufficient numbers. The Ruttoomis also offered to find guides, and professed the most remarkable hatred for the Kebang Abors, the object of attack.

The Deputy Commissioner, who had accompanied the force so far, remained with a guard of 12 men at Ruttoomi Ghât, while the rest set out on the morning of the 24th for the final advance on Kebang, supposed to be only 12 or 14 miles distant. Next morning two messengers came back to Ruttoomi Ghât with a note from the Commanding Officer asking for meat and liquor for the Europeans to be sent by the bearers, and containing in a postscript the words "Rice, rice". The next day the Deputy Commissioner sent at once, while he proceeded to hurry up supplies of rice from Pangee and Pashi, at the same time sending coolies with two respectable Assamese acquainted with the Abors to ask rice from the villagers of Ruttoomi. In a few hours two of this party came running back, crying that the rest had been set upon and made prisoners by the Abors. Other signs of hostility soon manifested themselves. A party of 12 bringing up provisions was attacked between Pangee and Ruttoomi, and 7 were killed.

Meantime nothing had for two days been heard of the advance force. At last, on the morning of the 27th firing was heard, and the little column appeared on the heights under Ruttoomi hard pressed and pursued, but keeping the enemy fairly in check. The force had failed altogether to reach Kebang, though there was afterwards reason to believe that it had got within 800 yards of that village. The troops had had to fight almost every step of the way; had lost a European and three Native soldiers besides coolies, the only wonder being that the losses were so small; and had had to retire without effecting the object of the advance, owing as it seemed to the entire want of any proper arrangements for keeping up a supply of provisions from Ruttoomi.



Ghat. In the end the officer in command had become distrustful of his guides, would not believe that Kebang was anywhere near, and turned back at the very moment when a little perseverance would probably have carried everything. The only excuse for his action is, that in the absence of reliable information it is very difficult on such expeditions to say how far perseverance should be carried.

The whole of the Abor villages round, seeing the discomfiture of the expedition, now made common cause against it; and without attempting to punish Ruttoomi for its treachery, the force returned as fast as possible to Pangee, Pashi, and the Brahmaputra.

The relations between the civil officer and the officer in command of the troops had unfortunately, from the outset, not been cordial, and the return of the expedition in this ignominious plight was the beginning of much recrimination, fruitless correspondence, and departmental bickering. The Government could not but hold that both parties were in fact to blame. The Deputy Commissioner had been too ready to trust to his powers of negotiation, and believed that he was in this way winning allies when he was only revealing his plans to enemies. The military commander did not see that his supplies were secure, but recklessly led his men into the hills, trusting to the civil authorities to provide all that he required. But, above all, it was clear that for an advance into a hostile territory, physically difficult and quite unknown, the detachment of troops sent was altogether inadequate, either to cover its own communications or to force its way. But for the individual bravery of those concerned—a quality which is nowhere more conspicuous than in these frontier expeditions—the troops would never have returned to tell the tale.

The Bor Meyong Abors of Kebang and other villages rendered bold by the repulse of the expedition took up a still more advanced position towards the plains, stock-

The second Abor Expedition, 1859.

ading themselves at Pashi, with which village they were now in offensive and defensive alliance. After⁽¹⁾ much anxious consultation, it was held by the local officers and by Government that it was absolutely necessary to devise some means of punishing their insolence and protecting the district from outrage and attack. Proposals for establishing a line of posts from Sisi to Pobah Mukh were taken into consideration, but the plan which commended itself to all as politically essential was that of another expedition on such an effective scale as should infallibly command success.

Rumours that some such step was contemplated soon reached the hills, and a deputation⁽²⁾ from the Meybo Abors (a neutral clan) came to the Deputy Commissioner, professing their own feelings of friendship,

(¹) Judicial Proceedings, dated 25th January 1859, Nos 88-100.

(²) Judicial Proceedings, 27th January 1859, Nos. 88-100.

Judicial Proceedings, 24th February 1859, Nos. 108-9.



and offering to become mediators with the Meyongs. They were civilly treated, but their overtures were on this occasion not entertained.

While⁽¹⁾ the expedition was preparing, the orders of the Secretary of State upon the former *fiasco* arrived in India. He forbade the undertaking of any second expedition, "save upon trustworthy information, and with an adequate force." This instruction was not held to interfere with the course of action already determined upon.

The expedition was upon this occasion of the strength shown on		the margin. On the 26th February 1859 it reached Pashi, where the Abors had entrenched themselves in great force. On the 27th the troops stormed the village, which was perched on a hill, and defended by eleven stockades, nine of which were obstinately held by the hillmen till they were driven from each
<i>Indian Navy Brigade.</i>	<i>Assam Light</i>	
2 Buglers.	<i>Infantry.</i>	
60 men.	6 Native Officers.	
4 European Officers.	13 Havildars.	
<i>Native Artillery.</i>	14 Naiks.	
3 Havildars.	5 Buglers.	
2 Naiks.	211 Sepoys.	
1 Bugler and 50 men.	1 European Officer.	
2 12-pounder howitzers.	1 European Non-Commissioned Officer.	
2 4-2-5 mortars.		
1 European Officer.		

successively at the point of the bayonet. The neighbouring village of Kingkong was taken in like manner. Our loss was 1 killed and 44 wounded, chiefly by poisoned arrows. After halting for a few days to show that they were complete masters of the position, the troops burnt the villages and retired leisurely to their boats.

Later in the year a strong reconnoitring party passed along the whole Abor frontier between Sisi and Lallee Soota; but no attempt at hostile demonstration was made by the tribes.

The Pashi Abors, with other clans in their neighbourhood, would seem after this to have made up their minds not⁽²⁾ to provoke the Government further, for in July 1860, they came in to make formal overtures of friendship, which were of course accepted. The Meyongs still continued hostile, and towards the close of 1861 they again cut up a Beeah village, situated this time on the further or south side of the Brahmaputra 15 miles from Debroogurh. These Beeahs were part of a body of ryots who had deserted the north side of the river after the former Meyong massacre in 1858, and the present raid appears to have been designed partly to show them that they were not yet beyond the reach of their Abor lords, and partly to take vengeance for aid rendered by the Beeahs to the troops in the campaign of 1859.⁽³⁾ Inquiry seemed to show that the Abors had been assisted in planning these daring attacks in the neighbourhood of a military station by information received from the

(1) Judicial Proceedings, 7th April 1859, Nos. 75-83.

Judicial Proceedings, 22nd September 1859, Nos. 87-89.

(2) Judicial Proceedings, August 1860, Nos. 417-19.

(3) Judicial Proceedings, January 1862, Nos. 305-8.

Miri villages lying between them and the Brahmaputra, and a proposal was brought forward by the local authorities that all the Miris on the line of the Booree Dibing should be deported far south of the Brahmaputra, in order thereby to deprive the Abors of the covert help rendered them by these allies. The Miris of this neighbourhood were however, it was admitted, by no means dangerous in themselves. They had for years been quietly cultivating the soil and paying rent to Government for their fields. Their extreme subservience to the Abors was the result not of love but fear; and Government, seeing clearly that its duty lay rather in giving them efficient protection than in punishing them for a very natural timidity, refused to move them from their village sites,⁽¹⁾ one reason for leaving them alone being that their labour was necessary to carry through any works of frontier defence that might be resolved upon.

The question of defending the country from further raids was then anxiously discussed. Those who best knew the frontier advocated the opening of a line of road and the establishment of fortified posts between Sisi and Lallee Soota, or along the face of the Abor tract. Others maintained that no merely defensive line of the kind would be sufficient, but that, until roads were run into the hills themselves, making the hill villages accessible at all times, no hope of security could reasonably be entertained. The occupation of the Abor hills for a whole season by a strong military force was, as a still more thorough scheme, advocated by some. A chain of forts had in fact been sanctioned by the Local Government after the first Abor massacre; but their erection was stopped on financial considerations by the Public Works Department of the Supreme Government. The present repetition of outrage had the effect of compelling the Local Government to act irrespectively of such formal sanctions. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, as now advised, held that he was bound either to abandon the extensive tracts in Luckimpore lately assigned to tea planters, or to give efficient protection to an industry already directly encouraged by the State. The cost of compensating the tea interests would, it was argued, to put the case on the lowest possible grounds, be more than the cost of organising a proper frontier defence. Accordingly, the local Public Works Department was ordered to complete the forts at once by convict labour. The road along the frontier to Pobah Mukh was to be opened and maintained; and a scheme was laid before the Supreme Government for "retaining by means of troops, forts, and roads, effective military command" of the whole Abor marches.

The bustle of all this preparation and defensive energy did not fail to attract the notice of the Abors, who, doubtless interpreting matters by the light of their own fears, made overtures for general reconciliation.

(1) Judicial Proceedings, April 1862, Nos. 646-48.



The Government directed that any such advances should be favourably received, and endeavours made to bring the Chiefs to enter into a binding agreement for the preservation of order along the frontier. Small stipends were to be allowed to those who would undertake to prevent hostile aggression by their own or kindred clans, to keep up a tribal police for the prevention of marauding, and to surrender criminal refugees. An annual meeting between the civil officers of Luckimpore and the covenanting clans was suggested as an important matter to have secured. No relaxation of military preparation was permitted during the pendency of these negotiations. After what had happened in 1859, the Government could only afford to conciliate while it was materially strong. At length, in November 1862, the Deputy Commissioner met the Meyong Abor deputies in solemn conference at Lalee Mukh, and after a prolonged *palaver* extending over seven days, an agreement was concluded between the British Government and eight communities of Meyong Abors, a copy of which will be found below.* In lieu of money stipends to Chiefs, the treaty provided for payments in kind of

* Whereas it is expedient to adopt measures for maintaining the integrity of the British Territory in the District of Luckimpore, Upper Assam, on the Meyong Abor Frontier, and for preserving peace and tranquillity; and whereas, by virtue of a letter, No. 11 of 11th October 1862, from the Officiating Commissioner of Assam, transmitting orders from the Government of Bengal, conveyed in a letter, No. 256T., dated the 8th August 1862, from the Officiating Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal, the Deputy Commissioner of Luckimpore has been authorized to proceed in this matter, and an engagement to the following effect has been entered into with the Meyong Abors this 5th day of November A. D. 1862, at Camp Lalee Mukh :—

First.—Offences commenced by the Meyong Abors in a time of hostility towards the British Government, and for which the assembled heads of villages have sued for pardon, are overlooked, and peace is re-established.

Second.—The limit of the British Territory which extends to the foot of the hills is recognized by the Meyong Abors, who hereby engage to respect it.

Third.—The British Government will take up positions on the frontier in the plains, will establish stations, post guards, or construct forts, or open roads, as may be deemed expedient, and the Meyong Abors will not take umbrage at such arrangements, or have any voice in such matters.

Fourth.—The Meyong Abors recognize all persons residing in the plains in the vicinity of the Meyong Hills as British subjects.

Fifth.—The Meyong Abors engage not to molest or to cross the frontier for the purpose of molesting residents in the British Territory.

Sixth.—The communication across the frontier will be free both for the Meyong Abor and for any persons, British subjects, going to the Meyong villages for the purpose of trading, or other friendly dealings.

Seventh.—The Meyong Abors shall have access to markets and places of trade which they may think fit to resort to, and on such occasions they engage not to come armed with their spears and bows and arrows, but merely to carry their daos.

Eighth.—Any Meyong Abors desiring to settle, or occupy lands, in the British Territory, engage to pay such revenue to Government as may be fixed upon by the Deputy Commissioner, the demand, in the first instance, to be light.

Ninth.—The Meyong Abors engage not to cultivate opium in the British Territory or to import it.



articles that could be distributed among the whole community. The democratic nature of the Abor system of government made this course advisable, and the plan has the advantage of giving each leading member of the clan a personal interest in keeping the peace. Numerous other societies of Abors have given their assent to similar engagements. Among others our old enemies of Kebang executed an agreement of this nature in 1863.

Since these forms of agreement were instituted, the Abors have given but little trouble. They are a sulky, intractable race, and it is possible that some day they may break through the restraint which self-interest at present puts upon them. But it is reasonable to hope that

Tenth.—In event of any grievance arising or any dispute taking place between the Meyong Abors and British subjects, the Abors will refrain from taking the law into their own hands, but they will appeal to the Deputy Commissioner for redress, and abide by his decision.

Eleventh.—To enable the Meyong Abors of the eight khels or communities who submit to this engagement, to keep up a police for preventing any marauders from resorting to the plains for sinister purposes, and to enable them to take measures for arresting any offenders, the Deputy Commissioner, on behalf of the British Government, agrees that the communities referred to shall receive yearly the following articles :—

- 100 Iron-hoes.
- 20 Maunds of salt.
- 80 Bottles of rum.
- 2 Seers of Abkaree opium.
- 2 Maunds of tobacco.

Twelfth.—The articles referred to above, which will be delivered for the first year on the signing of this engagement, will hereafter be delivered from year to year to the representatives of the eight khels or communities of the Meyong Abors, as aforesaid, on their meeting the Deputy Commissioner at Lalee Mukh, or at any other convenient place on the Meyong Dwār side.

Thirteenth.—On the occasion of meeting the Deputy Commissioner the Meyong Abors, in earnest of their continued friendly feeling, engage to make a tribute offering of a pig and fowls, in exchange for which they will obtain usual suitable acknowledgments.

Fourteenth.—In event of the Meyong Abors infringing, or failing to act up to any of the provisions of this engagement, it will be considered void and will no longer have effect.

Fifteenth.—The original of this engagement, which is drawn up in English, will remain with the Deputy Commissioner of Luckimpore, Upper Assam, and a counterpart or copy will be furnished to the subscribing Meyong Abors.

Sixteenth.—In ratification of the above engagement contained in 15th paragraph, the Deputy Commissioner of Luckimpore, Assam, on behalf of the British Government, puts his hand and seal, and the recognized Headmen or Chiefs of the eight khels or communities of the Meyong Abors affix their signatures or marks this 5th day of November in A. D. 1862.

H. S. BIVAR, Major,

Deputy Commr., First Class, Luckimpore, Upper Assam,
and Agent, Governor General, N. E. Frontier.

[Here follow signatures of 34 Chiefs on account of 8 different Khels.]



every year of quiet, every visit paid by them to the markets of Sadiya, renders this more improbable. New wants are being created and new ideas imbibed, which cannot fail to have effect. At the same time the local officers feel that they must be ever on their guard lest opportunity lead to outrage, and the fruit of years be lost in a moment of unbridled savagery. Much tact is required in dealing with them. They are in manner insolent and rude beyond all other tribes of this frontier.⁽¹⁾ In 1863, for example, the Meybo Abors went off in a temper from the annual meeting, refusing to take their presents, because the Deputy Commissioner would not allow them to treat him with impertinent familiarity. Again in 1865 the Meyong Abors absented themselves from the meeting, alleging as an excuse the prevalence of small-pox and cholera on the plains.⁽²⁾ It transpired, however, that they were really indignant because the price of salt had risen in the Sadiya bazar, and that they had in spite eaten the agreement entered into with the Deputy Commissioner, and shown in various indescribable ways their low opinion of that officer and his superiors.⁽³⁾ In 1866 they were again absent, but sent in a demand that the posts at Pobah Mukh should be abandoned. Of course this only led to the stockades being strengthened, and the Meyongs by degrees came round to a better frame of mind. The Bor Abors, a very influential clan, attended the meeting of 1866, and entered into agreements. This may have had a good effect on the rest, for there has been no open disturbance or dissatisfaction since. There is reason to believe that the Miris form very unsatisfactory agents between the local authorities and the Abors. It would be of great advantage to secure some Abor lads to educate as interpreters.

In 1876-77 the tribe showed symptoms of hostility consequent upon the advance of a Trigonometrical Survey Party into the hills, and it was thought expedient to discontinue these operations. The local authorities subsequently proposed a military demonstration along the frontier to overawe the hillmen, but this was negatived by the Government of India. The aggressive attitude taken up by the Bor Abors towards the Chulkatta Mishmis led, however, 1881 to a forward movement on our part: the fear being that if the Bor Abors were once allowed to cross the Dibong, they would establish themselves in the plains and seriously threaten Sadiya. Troops were advanced to Bomjur and Nizamghât, and the object in view was attained without opposition, the Bor Abors withdrawing to their own hills. The occupation of Nizamghât has served up to date to impose a salutary check upon the Bor Abor villages. But the Assam Report for 1881-82 contains an account of an outrage committed by Borkheng, the Chief of Pado, upon two Miris and a Native Sepoy, which had not up to the close of the year been properly explained.

(1) Judicial Proceedings, November 1863, No. 166.

(2) Judicial Proceedings, May 1865, Nos. 119 to 121.
Judicial Proceedings, June 1865, Nos. 72 and 73.
Judicial Proceedings, September 1865, No. 10.

(3) Judicial Proceedings, June 1866, Nos. 6-7.

It is to be regretted that the effect of direct and unofficial intercourse with these Abor clans in their own villages has not been more thoroughly tried. They are not unamenable to kindly treatment, for in 1855-56 the Reverend Mr. Higgs, a worthy clergyman of Debroogurh, obtained a considerable influence over them, and was wont, it is said, to pay annual visits to their hamlets under the escort of their young men.⁽¹⁾ He also settled some Abor immigrants near Debroogurh. It would perhaps be now a desirable thing to procure and educate some Padam youths who might hereafter become missionaries of civilisation and of higher things to their uncouth brethren in the hills. The Abors, however, still want their Cleveland.

(¹) Judicial Proceedings, 21st February 1856, No. 123.



CHAPTER VII.

THE MISHMIS.

Beyond the Abors eastward lie the various tribes of Mishmis. Local distribution of the Mishmi Tribes. Roughly speaking, it may be said that the whole of the hills which close the north-east corner of the Assam Valley are occupied by these tribes. From the Dibong to the Digaru, in the ranges to the north of Sadiya, are to be found the Chulkatta or "crop-hair," the most dangerous of all the Mishmi clans, who derive their cognomen from their fashion of cutting the hair square across the forehead. From the Digaru river westward, and on both sides of the Brahmaputra, reaching up the frontier of Thibet on the north, and as far as the Nemlang river on the south, are various other sects of Mishmis known as the Tain, Mezho, and Maro clans. Dalton gives their habitat as 96° to $97^{\circ} 30'$ E. Long., $27^{\circ} 40'$ to $28^{\circ} 40'$ N. Lat. "The Mishmis to the west of the Du river, an affluent of the Brahmaputra above the Brahmakund, trade with the British possessions, and are in the habit of constant intercourse with us;" these are the Tain or Digaru. "The tribes to the north-east of the Du trade only with Thibet;" these are the Mezho or Miza Mishmis. The Maro are those to the south of the Brahmaputra whose settlements are scattered and mixed up with Khampti* and Singpho villages.

The first mention of the Mishmis in the Bengal records dates from⁽¹⁾ 1825, when Lieutenant Early visits to the Mishmi country. Burlton, in exploring the upper course of the Brahmaputra beyond the Noha Dihing, reported that the "Mishmah" Hills were occupied by tribes "who were very averse to receive strangers." In 1827 Lieutenant Wilcox succeeded in persuading the Tain Mishmis to pass him through their villages on to the country of the Mezhos. He found that there were then three Chiefs (brothers)

* These facts have, for the sake of convenience, been taken from "Dalton's Ethnology," but a full account of the habitat of the Mishmis, so far at least as it was known to early explorers, will be found in XXIII. of the published Selections from the Bengal Records, and in Volume XVII. of the Bengal Asiatic Society's Researches. A report by the Deputy Commissioner of Luckimpore in 1861 places the Mezho-Mishmis in "the hilly tract east and north between the Wapah Bhoom and the Dillipani, a tributary of the Brahmaputra, over an area of 800 square miles, and numbering 12,000 souls; the Digarus are put between the Dillipani and Digaru river, over 200 square miles, and numbering 6,000 souls; the Chulkattas, between the Digaru and Senserepani, over 200 square miles, and numbering 5,000 souls." This information is, however, by no means certain to be correct.

(¹) Secret Proceedings, 29th April 1825, No. 2.



ruling over the Tains, by name Krisong, Ghalum, and Khosha. Of the Mezhos, one Chief, called Ruding, gave a certain amount of assistance to the travellers; but the principal Chief, Jingsha, would not receive them, and they only escaped from a treacherous attack by a hasty retreat overnight. They succeeded in penetrating "to the point where the Brahmaputra in its hill course, after flowing nearly due south from Thibet, suddenly changes its course and flows in a westerly direction."

In October 1836⁽¹⁾ Dr. Griffiths paid a visit to the Mishmi Hills; he only succeeded in penetrating to the village of Ghalum on

Dr. Griffith's account.

the Lohit, and though he was kindly received by the Tains, they absolutely refused to pass him on to the Mezo-Mishmi country, stating as their reason that, just before his visit, the Mezhos, aided by a force of seventy Lamas, had invaded their country and done much damage. He found that the Singphos, and especially the Duffa Gam, had considerable influence over the Tains. They were most anxious to come to Sadiya to trade. The Mezhos, Dr. Griffiths thought, to be descended from the crop-haired Mishmis of the Debong, but, like the Tains, they preserve their hair. The Tain population he estimated at 460 only in the seven villages he saw near the Lohit. Ghalum, Khosha, and Prinsong were now the principal Chiefs. With the Chulkattas it was said both the other tribes were at constant war.

In 1845 Lieutenant Rowlatt penetrated to the Du, and up that river in a northerly direction to the village of Tuppang, where he met Thibetans.*

Early in 1848⁽²⁾ Government received intelligence of the murder, by Mezho Mishmis belonging to Jingsha's and other villages, of a

fakir, Permanund Acharjya, who had tried to make his way from Assam to Thibet. Rewards were proclaimed among the neighbouring tribes for the apprehension of the murderers, and it was afterwards reported, or rumoured, that the Lamas or Thibetans had punished the guilty persons, but no reward has ever been claimed on this account.

In 1851 M. Krick, a French missionary, made his first journey into these hills under the guidance of a Khampti Chief of Sadiya, the Choukeng Gohain. Avoiding Jingsha's village, he reached in safety the Thibetan Settlement of Oualong, where he was well received. Beyond that village, as far as Sommen, he found extensive cultivation and a well-peopled tract along the open valley of the Upper Brahmaputra. On his return he stopped at

Murder of French missionaries by Mezho Mishmis.

* Dalton *in loco*. Bengal Asiatic Society's Journal, 1845.

(¹) Political Proceedings, 6th March 1837, No. 67.

(²) Political Proceedings, 18th February 1848, Nos. 122-125.



Jingsha's village, where he would have fared but badly had it not been for his medical skill. In 1854 he returned to the hills with a colleague, M. Bourri, and, under the escort of the Tain Chief Khosha, was brought safely through to Thibet. He was, however, followed across the border of that territory by a Mezho Chief of the Menong clan, named Kai-ee-sha, who murdered both the missionaries and carried off their property and servant in utter disregard of the Thibetan authorities of Rima, a small post near which the travellers had encamped. The news reached Assam in November. It seemed almost hopeless to attempt to punish the murderers. But both the local officers and Government felt that, if possible, something in the way of retribution should at least be attempted. Lord Dalhousie, moreover, was not the man to trifle with such a matter. The neighbouring Mishmis, who appreciated our bazars and dreaded their closure, undertook to assist the passage of any avenging force, and their offer was accepted. In the end of February

Eden's expedition into the hills. 1855 a small party of twenty Assam Light Infantry, with forty Khampti volunteers and a few hill porters, marched from Sadiya under the command of Lieutenant Eden. For eight days this little band pressed on by forced marches, swinging across dangerous torrents on bridges of single canes, climbing for hours at a time without water and in bitter cold, till 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. Such an exploit did not fail to astonish and awe the tribes around. Kai-ee-sha was hanged at Debroogurh, but not before he had in prison killed two of the guards appointed to watch him. A son of his named Krosho, who had, owing to his youth, escaped the fate of his brothers, was present, a peaceful purchaser, at the Sadiya fair of January 1871.

The Tain Mishmis are keen traders, and they appreciate so highly the advantages of our markets that they never give any trouble to the authorities of Luckimpore. That they have inter-tribal feuds with the Mezhos has been already noted; but they suffer most from the ferocity of the Chulkattas, who have also been to us most unpleasant neighbours, and to whom the narrative must now refer.

Between Sadiya and the hills inhabited by these savages, lie Troublesome character of the Chulkattas. twenty or thirty miles of dense forest through which run the paths used by the hillmen when frequenting the markets of the plains. The Chulkattas were wont to take advantage of these routes to surprise frontier villages and travellers and carry off captives. In April 1855 they took away three servants of Lieutenant Eden's. When the hue and cry was raised, the Bomju Abors sent in to offer their aid to intercept the raiders, but the message was received too late to be of



any practical good.⁽¹⁾ Some information was, however, at this time gathered about these Mishmis from the other tribes. There were, it appeared, at least four clans of Chulkattas known as Apelong, Ahompo, Nossa Mega, and Goroi Mechai. The offenders in the present case were Apelongs, who had acted apparently without any concert with the rest, for the Nossa Mega people as well as the Ahundi section of the Tains gave information against the Apelongs, and the former eventually succeeded in recovering the captives for us. These savages thus seem to be more under the influence of inter-tribal jealousy than bound together by any common bond of union. It is right to mention, however, that some pressure was no doubt brought to bear upon the whole of the clans in this instance by our closing all the paths leading to our markets, save two adapted only to the convenience of notoriously friendly clans.

Towards the close of the same year the Apelongs made a sudden attack upon a village near Sadiya, killing two and capturing others of the inhabitants.⁽²⁾ Again friendly Mishmis undertook the task of recovering the captives and, curiously enough, of punishing the aggressors. In January 1857 a third daring foray was made by the Apelongs who cut up a village within earshot of the sepoy guard at Sadiya. Fear or carelessness prevented the sepoys from making any attempt at rescue or pursuit. Measures were upon this concerted for a punitive expedition, but the Sepoy Mutiny broke out in Upper India, and all such petty matters were put on one side for a time. The last raid was instigated, it was reported, by relatives of Kai-ee-sha.

In October 1857,⁽³⁾ the Chulkattas again sacked an outlying homestead, and in the month following they massacred the women and children of a village belonging to the Khampti Chief, Choukeng Gohain, while the male inhabitants were absent with the Assistant Commissioner establishing outposts to check these very Mishmi raids. The excuse which they took the trouble to put forward for this atrocity was that some of their clan had died of cholera when visiting the Gohain. This outrage roused the spirit of the Khampti villagers in their own defence. They armed, and shortly afterwards drove back with loss a body of Chulkattas whom they detected stealing down upon their settlements.

In 1861, and again in 1866, these Mishmis attacked Choukeng Gohain's village on the Koondil, and though beaten off with loss, yet did some damage. The Khamptis had by this time received arms from

(1) Judicial Proceedings, 10th January 1856, Nos. 244-45.
Judicial Proceedings, 21st February 1856, Nos. 123-25.
Judicial Proceedings, 17th April 1856, Nos. 158-60.

(2) Judicial Proceedings, 16th July 1857, Nos. 168-72.
Judicial Proceedings, 10th September 1857, Nos. 120-23.
Judicial Proceedings, 31st December 1857, Nos. 182-84.
Judicial Proceedings, 25th February 1858, Nos. 351-60.



Government, and proved as a rule quite able to defend their own. The frequency of these Chulkatta raids, which threatened the prosperity of the settlements round Sadiya, induced the local authorities to inquire whether an extension of Khampti colonies would not form a screen round that important frontier post.⁽¹⁾ Further supplies of arms were accordingly promised, and a monthly payment of one rupee was guaranteed to each Khampti who accepted arms and took up a site for cultivation to the north of the Brahmaputra. This frontier militia proved a success. A strong colony occupied a position towards the Dikrang, and the Chulkattas have not since attempted to give trouble.

In March 1868 Kalood, a Chulkatta Chief, came to visit the Deputy Commissioner at Luckimpore. He was taxed with the numerous raids

committed by his tribe since 1841, but with cool effrontery denied them all. He⁽²⁾ said that he was at feud with the Tains and his other neighbours, and was anxious to settle under our protection in the valleys of the Dikrang, Koondil, and Diphoo, two days' march from Sadiya. After some discussion he was allowed sites for his people at Habba in the Koondil Valley, where he would be fairly under supervision, and he undertook forthwith to bring down 200 houses of his clan to this place.

In February 1872 the Chulkattas visited the Sadiya fair in large numbers bringing India-rubber, wax, and skins for sale. They behaved well, but on their way home murdered a worn-out Naga slave

of their own, whom they had hoped to dispose of at the fair and did not think worth taking back when they failed to sell him. The enquiries consequent upon this led to the discovery of the fact that an extensive system of slave dealing prevails among the hill tribes, in which the Singphos are understood to take an active share. The Tains (or, as they are now generally called, Digaru) and Chulkattas, have given no serious trouble of late years. Occasional offences by individual member of the clan must of course be expected; but the Chiefs as a rule do their best to maintain order and assist in the apprehension of criminals. During the cold season of 1878-79 some Mishmis of the Bibegia clan committed two small raids into the plains during the cold season, killing, in one instance, two Assamese of the village of Potia Pathar, and in the second killing two Khamptis and carrying off four others, whom they found cutting rubber in the country twenty miles beyond Sadiya. The captives were afterwards ransomed by their friends. The reason alleged for the murder of the Assamese was an old feud dating from 1865, when the Mishmis stated that some of their people had been killed by British subjects, and in the other case it was stated that the Khamptis had on some previous occasion killed some of their people;

(1) Political Proceedings, February 1866, Nos. 11-15.
Political Proceedings, July 1866, Nos. 45-49.

(2) Political Proceedings, May 1868, Nos. 56-57.



but the Deputy Commissioner thought that plunder was quite as much the object of these outrages. The raiders were promptly pursued by the Frontier Police, with some men from the military guard at Sadiya, as far as Jerindamkh, where the dead bodies of their victims were found, but the murderers were not overtaken.

The advance of our frontier outposts to Nizamghat and Bishemnagar, and the opening of a patrol-path between them, will, it is hoped, put a stop to such marauding expeditions for the future, or at least will afford greater facilities for promptly punishing the offenders.

In 1880 Kaladoi, one of the leading Chiefs of the Chulkattas, formally professed allegiance at the Sadiya fair. Fighting between the Digarus and the Tibetans in the interior hills was reported during the cold weather of 1879-80.



CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL REVIEW OF POLICY ON THE SUB-HIMALAYAN BORDER.

We have seen that as regards those tribes who had long established claims upon the plains, the policy of Government has been one of fair and equitable dealing. While maintaining a force strong enough to punish any wanton aggression, it has refrained from creating unnecessary foes, and has scrupulously made good to the hillmen all that they appeared fairly entitled to claim. We have, however, made them clearly to know that the payment of their dues is contingent on their good behaviour, and that the strong arm of British power is for ever interposed between them and the ryots they once oppressed. At the same time we have welcomed them as cultivators in the plains, and we have seen whole communities of border bandits settle down into peaceful tillers of the soil. Not a trace of a policy of "extermination and repression"* can be found by any one who takes the trouble to enquire into the facts. The sound sense on which these arrangements are based is stamped, moreover, with the seal of success. Kamroop and Durrung for long years were as undisturbed as the 24-Pergunnahs. It is true that while these pages are passing through the press the Akas have, after nearly half a century of good behaviour, broken out into open hostilities, but it will probably be found that for this there has been some special irritant cause which might with care have been avoided. Sir George Campbell's wise instructions may perhaps have been forgotten. Both Akas and Duphis *may generally be trusted* to behave properly, so long as their *posa* is paid and they are not unduly interfered with by Forest regulations. Nor is the case much altered when we come to the wilder tribes living near Luckhimpore. Even as regards the Abors, a fierce and uncouth race with whom we have been brought into sharp conflict, there is little to criticise in the policy pursued. It is the work of time to make such savages understand a policy of conciliation, and the time has hitherto been short. In dealing with them the first necessity is to ensure that they should not despise us. Hence the punishment for any outrage must be, and usually has been, summary and severe. But our aim as a whole has been conciliatory. Some are disposed to scoff at the concomitants of this policy, and to deride the Government for endeavouring to conceal what these critics call a weak system of bribery under the name and pretence of payments for police service. Now, it

* The general charges of this character which unfortunately found eloquent expression in the Political Dissertation, prefixed to Hunter's Comparative Dictionary of Non-Aryan Languages, were officially refuted by the Government of Bengal in 1860.

will be remembered that the payments to the Abors at any rate are not money payments to the Chiefs, but payments in kind to the whole community. Where the constitution of a tribe is patriarchal or aristocratic, payments to the Chiefs suffice. There is no difference in principle, but the variation in the expression shows what the principle really is. It may be, and no doubt is, true that with the sums or for the sums so paid no organized Police Establishment is kept up by the Abors. It was never expected that they would appoint constables in red turbans and locate them in well found station-houses. It was simply intended that they would adopt their own rude means of securing a quiet frontier, and would take such steps as were in their judgment necessary, and in accordance with their tribal organization, to prevent the evil disposed among them from doing any act which, in conformity with the understanding under which the payment is made, they are bound to prevent. As a matter of fact, we have evidence from the mouths of the Abors themselves that the desired effect was produced in the very first year of the agreements, and an attack on Sadiya proposed by some tribes was prevented by the rest. The following passages from a Bengal Report shew how the policy of thus dealing with these tribes was explained by Government in 1865 :

"The essential difference between 'black mail' and the annual allowances paid to the Abors is this : that in the one case the forbearance of the savage tribe is made by them conditional on payment of the stipulated allowance, and in the other the payment of the allowance is made by us conditional on the good conduct of the tribe. The one is initiated in an aggressive spirit, the other in a spirit of conciliation.

"It is an arrangement of this kind which was made in the last century with the aborigines of the Rajmehal Hills, who had previously been the terror of the surrounding country, whom successive military expeditions had failed to subdue, but who, under the operation of an annual payment conditional on good conduct, have remained perfectly quiet and peaceable ever since. It is true that the amount of the allowance paid to the Rajmehal Hill Chiefs is considerably greater than the value of the presents made to the Abors, but the principle is the same and is as certain to be efficacious in one case as it is in the other, provided the allowance be sufficient to compensate the tribe in their own estimation for the advantage they might gain by the occasional plunder of a border village—an advantage which they well know is materially qualified by the risk of reprisals.

"It is very desirable that the younger men of the tribe should be induced, if possible, to take service in the police, and that the hill tribes generally should be employed in this manner, for after a certain degree of training and education, not only are they by their physique better qualified than the people of the plains for most of the duties required of the police in frontier districts, but their employment sets free the labour of others accustomed to industrial occupations.

"What is of the utmost importance in dealing with uncivilized tribes is patience. No one supposes that their civilization is to be



effected in a few years, and no one expects that in endeavouring to conciliate them the Government will not meet with occasional disappointment, but the policy is none the less on this account sound and intelligible."

With the majority of the Mishmi tribes we have had none but casual trading intercourse. They are too remote to interest us directly, and they do not in any way molest us. The Chulkattas have of late years been coming down more freely to the Sadiya markets, and seem disposed to maintain more friendly relations. They still require, however, to be very closely watched.

It is not open to us on the Abor frontier to have recourse to the policy of permanent occupation and direct management, which we shall find successfully carried out in the Naga, Garrow, Cossyah, Jynteeah, and Chittagong Hill Tracts. To annex the Abor Hills would only bring us into contact with tribes still wilder and less known, nor should we find a resting place for the foot of annexation till we planted it on the plateau of High Asia; perhaps not even then.

Our immediate border we might do much to secure by running roads along the river lines into the interior, but the cost would be enormous, and while there is such a demand for communications within our settled districts, we should not be warranted in carrying even one such *cut-de-sac* into the Abor or Mishmi Hills.

I have said enough to show that on this frontier the policy has been from the beginning not a policy of coercion and "contemptuous devastation," as it has sometimes been erroneously described, but a firm and kindly policy of defence and conciliation.

In 1872-73 the Statute 32 and 33 Vic., Cap. 3, which gives a power of summary legislation for backward tracts to the Executive Government was extended to Assam.

The Inner Line Regulation.

The first use of the power of summary legislation given by that Act was to pass a regulation for the frontier districts.

It had been found that there was pressing necessity of bringing under more stringent control the commercial relations of our own subjects with the frontier tribes living on the borders of our jurisdiction. In Luckimpore specially the operations of speculators in caoutchouc had led to serious complications, not only interfering with the revenue derived by Government from the India-rubber forests in the plains beyond the line of our settled mehals, but threatening disturbances with the hill tribes beyond. The spread of tea gardens outside our fiscal limits had already involved the Government in many difficult questions with the hillmen, and on the whole the Government came to the conclusion that it was necessary to take special powers and lay down special rules.

Accordingly a regulation was drawn up by the Lieutenant-Governor, and approved by the Governor General in Council, to give effect to this policy. This regulation gives power to the Lieutenant-Governor to



prescribe a line, to be called "the inner line," in each or any of the districts affected, beyond which no British subject of certain classes or foreign residents can pass without a license. The pass or license, when given, may be subject to such conditions as may appear necessary. And rules are laid down regarding trade, the possession of land beyond the line, and other matters, which give the executive Government an effective control. The regulation also provides for the preservation of elephants, and authorizes Government to lay down rules for their capture.



CHAPTER IX.

THE KHAMPTI CLANS OF SADIYA.

Mention has been already made of the Khamptis of Sadiya, and although in Assam not strictly a hill tribe, they may fairly claim a more detailed notice on account of the important part they have played in frontier history. The Khamptis were originally immigrants from Bor-Khampti, the mountainous region which interposes between the eastern extremity of Assam and the valley of the Irrawaddy. They are of Shan descent and adhere to the Buddhist religion.* When they first came to Assam they settled on the Tengapani, but in 1794, during the troubled reign of Gour Sing, probably in consequence of pressure from the then invading Singphos, they crossed the Brahmaputra, ousted the Khawa Gohain, or Assamese Governor, of Sadiya, the Khampti Chief usurping his titles and dignity, and reduced the Assamese ryots to a position of subservience if not of actual slavery. The Gowhatti Government was compelled to acquiesce in the arrangement, and, after the annexation, the British Government found the Sadiya tract entirely under Khampti management.

Mr. Scott, the Governor General's Agent, recognized the Khampti Chief "Chousalan Sadiya Khawa Gohain" as the local officer of the Assam Government, permitted him to collect the poll tax of the Assamese of the district, and entered into arrangements under which the Khawa Gohain, instead of himself paying taxes, undertook to maintain a contingent of 200 men, to be armed by the British Government. In 1824 the Khamptis rendered such material aid in the campaign against the Singphos, that Mr. Scott was led to urge upon Government that in any arrangement made for handing over Upper Assam to a Native prince, the country inhabited by the Khamptis should, with that of the Muttucks, be kept apart.

The relations which subsisted between the Sadiya Khamptis and their brethren in Bor-Khampti led, however, at times to much uneasiness and doubts as to the loyalty of the former. In 1830, for instance, a body of Singphos and Bor-Khamptis invaded the tract south of the Brahmaputra, but were dispersed by troops under Captain Neufville.†)

* Pemberton, page 76. See accounts of visits to Bor-Khampti by Wilson and Burlton in XXIII. of the Bengal Selections. See also Dalton *in loco*.

†) Political Proceedings, dated 7th May 1830, Nos. 7-8.



The current rumour in Assam at the time was that the Khawa Gohain was in league with these, though the local officers discredited the report. It certainly appeared to be the interest of that Chief to cultivate our friendship, but it is impossible to trust absolutely to a *priori* argument of that kind where semi-savages are concerned.

In May 1835, a fresh immigration of 230 Moonglary Khamptis took place. They came wishing to settle under the British Government, and asking for arms and exemption from taxes for 10 years. They were refused fire-arms, but were told that they would be allowed to live free from all dues for three years. The Government seems at this period to have been much impressed with the advisability of inducing colonists to take up land at the head of the Assam Valley, provided that their doing so did not interfere with the area reserved for tea cultivation.⁽¹⁾ What was wanted was a cheap and effective barrier against future invasion from Burma, the dread of which long continued to trouble the Government and explains much of the policy in regard to Upper Assam, Manipur, and this frontier generally.

It was unfortunate that just about this time the arrogance of Chowrangfat Sadiya Khawa Gohain (the son of the man we had found in office, who died early in 1835) compelled the Government to remove the Khamptis from the position of pre-eminence which they had hitherto occupied, and which had doubtless acted as an attraction to their tribe in Bor-Khampti. A dispute had arisen between the Khawa Gohain and the Bor Senapati, or Chief of the Muttuaks, in regard to a tract of land called Chukowa, on the south of the Brahmaputra. The British officer in charge of Sadiya, to prevent collision, attached the land, and ordered both parties to refer their claims for his consideration. The Khawa Gohain in defiance of this order took forcible possession, and treated all remonstrances with open contempt. The Governor General's Agent was compelled, in vindication of his authority, to order first the suspension, and thereafter the removal of the Khampti Chief from the post of Khawa Gohain, which had indeed come to be looked upon by his tribe less as a dignity conferred or ratified by our Government, than as an inherent attribute of their Chief as a tributary power. If any proper control was to be maintained over the Sadiya tribes, the authority of Government certainly needed at this time to be re-asserted. The Khawa Gohain was therefore removed to a station down the river out of the reach of temptation to intrigue, and his post was abolished, the duties being made over to the British officer stationed at Sadiya in charge of the troops, who was to collect the capitation tax from those cultivators who paid it, and to administer justice to the Assamese either directly or by a punchayet. As regards internal management, the Singphos and Khamptis were left to their own Chiefs.

(1) Political Proceedings, dated 1st June 1835, Nos. 4-5.



No change was made in their relations to Government, and no taxation was in fact ever imposed on them. The British officer in charge was, as far as they were concerned, left to interpose or mediate only in serious cases or where members of different tribes were parties to the dispute.⁽¹⁾

At first the minor Khampti Chiefs seemed satisfied with these arrangements. They did certainly good service immediately afterwards

The Khampti insurrection. against the Singphos—so good indeed that the Government rather rashly rewarded them by permitting the ex-Khawa Gohain to return to Sadiya in a private capacity to live among them.⁽²⁾ They were not, however, really content. They had lost their profitable position of control over the Assamese. Their slaves had been released. They knew that proposals for bringing them under regular assessment had been more than once mooted.⁽³⁾ Many incentives to revolt were secretly rankling in their minds. In 1837, the local officers were warned that the ex-Khawa Gohain was intriguing to form a combination of tribes to attack Sadiya, but no tangible proof was obtained, and the warning was disregarded.⁽⁴⁾

At length in January 1839, the long meditated plot developed itself in action.⁽⁵⁾ On the evening of the 19th of January, Colonel White, the officer in command at Sadiya, had held a durbar at which the Khampti Chiefs attended, to all appearances as friendly and loyal as they had hitherto outwardly shown themselves. That very night, a body of 500 Khamptis under their Sadiya Chiefs advanced upon the post from four different directions, surprised the sentries, and made for Colonel White's quarters and the sepoy lines, firing the station as they rushed through. The surprise was complete, and their enterprise was fatally successful. Colonel White was butchered, eighty others were killed or wounded, and all the lines but two were burnt to the ground.

Had the Khampti Chiefs now shown resolution equal to their skill in combination, they might have done serious damage to our position on this frontier. As it was, their hearts failed them after the capture of Sadiya. They retreated with all their adherents without waiting for attack, and deserting their villages took refuge with their leaders, the Tao and Captain Gohains, among the Dibong Mishmis. A rising among the Khamptis south of the Brahmaputra was

(1) Political Proceedings, dated 13th March 1835, Nos. 1-8.

(2) Political Proceedings, dated 24th November 1835, No. 11.

(3) Political Proceedings, dated 9th February 1836, Nos. 2-3.

(4) Political Proceedings, dated 15th May 1837, No. 12.

(5) Political Proceedings, dated 20th February 1839, Nos. 105-10.

Political Proceedings, dated 27th February 1839, Nos. 152-63.

Political Proceedings, dated 6th March 1839, Nos. 119-23.

Political Proceedings, dated 20th March 1839, Nos. 31-32.

Political Proceedings, dated 3rd April 1839, Nos. 116-18.

Political Proceedings, dated 10th April 1839, Nos. 160-61.

Political Proceedings, dated 10th July 1839, Nos. 61-62.



put down by the troops. The Singphos, Muttucks, and Abors at once offered their aid in punishing the insurgents. The Khamptis had no friends among those they had so long oppressed. Treachery too soon at work in their ranks. One Chief, the Chouking Gohain, came in and surrendered, and then led a party of troops into the hills who drove the Tao and his followers from their Mishmi refuge. This defeat of the rebels set free a number of Mooluck Khamptis, 200 in all, who had been compelled by the Tao to follow him into the hills after he had murdered their Chief for refusing to join in the attack on Sadiya. Soon after, about 900 Khamptis laid down their arms and were removed from Sadiya to sites in Luckimpore lower down the river.⁽¹⁾ In the cold weather of 1839-40 a second and a third expedition into the Mishmi hills again and again dispersed those who still remained in arms. But it was not till December 1843 that the remnant came in and submitted. These were settled above Sadiya to form a screen between the Assamese and the Mishmis.

(2) In 1844 the position of the Khamptis in Assam was this: one body had been settled at Choonpoorah above Sadiya under the Captain Gohain, cousin of the late Khawa Gohain. The few Moonglair

Dispersion of the Khampti Settlement.

Khamptis formerly on the Tengapani were located near Saikwa to the south of the Brahmaputra. A third party under Chowntang Gohain were settled at Damadji, while a fourth was placed under Bhodia, son of the late Khawa Gohain, to the west of Luckimpore. By this dispersion they were effectually prevented from doing any further mischief. They ceased from that time to be of any political importance.*

* All the information that the Deputy Commissioner of Luckimpore could give regarding them in 1871 is contained in the following extract from a report of his dated 9th May of that year:—

8. *The Khamptis*.—In the year 1839, owing to their misbehaviour, the Khamptis

On the north bank of
Brahmaputra.

Narainpore.
Bunglang.
Dikrong.
Dhamage.
Sadiya.

On the south bank of
Brahmaputra.

Bogyarah.
Sessee.
Mankatta.
Choykhawah.
Derack.
Makoom.
Jorpore.
Nidopani.
Tengapani.
Dehing.
Morowapani.
Kopahatoli.

were removed from the villages of Tengapani, Makoo Derack, and Sadiya, where they had till then resided, and were sent to Narainpore in North Luckimpore, Majain, and Debrooghurh. Since then persons have come down from time to time from the Bor-Khampti country and settled in the villages or settlements marginally given.

The population of these settlements is estimated to be 3,330 souls, of which 1,870 are estimated to be male, 930 female adults, and 1,130 children of both sexes. Besides,

there are four khels known as Monglong, Panangpan, Chamangthee, and Manobo, who live with the Singphos, and have the same relations with Government as the Singphos. They number, it is estimated, 400 souls, 130 being male and 150 female adults, and 120 children of both sexes.

The Khamptis have also taken to agricultural pursuits to some little extent. The settlers at Sadiya, Derack, Nidopani, Tengapani, Dehing, Morowapani, and Kopahatoli do not pay any revenue, the rest pay revenue, and are much on the same footing as the other ryots of the plains.

(1) Political Proceedings, dated 26th December 1839, No. 67.

(2) Political Proceedings, dated 20th January 1844, No. 61.



CHAPTER X.

THE SINGPHOS OF SADIYA.

Of the Singphos we possess an admirable account from the pen of Colonel Hannay, whose knowledge of the North-Eastern Frontier and of Burma was singularly extensive. In giving a general summary of the origin of this people, I cannot do better than follow him, turning to the records for their later history. He considers the Singphos to be identical in race with the Kakus or Kakhyens of Burma, whose chief habitat was on the great eastern branch of the Irrawaddy. They extended nearly as far south as N. lat. 24° , while touching on the north and east the borders of China in lat. $27^{\circ} 30'$. With the break-up of the Northern Shan kingdom, the Kakhyens entered on a career of aggression and conquest, which practically placed in their hands the whole country lying between Upper Assam and Bhamo.

Such is the account of the origin of this people put forward by the best critics; but the Singphos* of Assam will by no means allow themselves to be classed as Kakus or Kakhyens, though they do in fact call their eastern and southern brethren by that name, and maintain the same family titles and divisions of clans as prevail among the more remote tribes. The following are the designations of the principal clans:—(1) Tesan, (2) Mirip, (3) Lophæ, (4) Lutong, and (5) Mayrung. Each clan has a Kaku and a Singpho branch. Besides these there is a clan of Lattora Kakus called Lessoo, on the east of Assam, who originally came direct from the Chinese frontier.

The different members and branches of Singpho⁽¹⁾ clans and families are thus distinguished:—*Gam* is the affix indicating the elder branch or member of a family; *Noung*, the second; *La*, the third; *Thu*, the fourth; *Tung*, the fifth, &c. We have thus Beesa Gam, the head of that clan; Ningroo La, the third branch of the Ningroo family; and so on. In Assam (with the exception of the Pisi Gam, Kudjoo, and Jagoon, who appear to be distinct families, and Tang Jang Tung of the Mayrung clan), the whole of the resident Singphos are of the Tesan division. They are sub-divided into three clans, called Tenghai,

* Singpho is merely the Kakhyen for 'man.'

† Dalton errs apparently in making *La* = the *second*.

(1) Political Proceedings, dated 12th June 1837, No. 64.

General Proceedings, dated 29th March 1848, No. 25, and 19th July 1848, No. 29.



Mayho, and Nimbrong, and including the elder branch, comprise the following heads of families :—

1	2	3	4
Tenghai.	Mayho.	Nimbrong.	(Elder branch in
Shiro.	Gakhen.	Beesa.	Hookong, from
Ningcoop.	Latao.		whom the others
Poongeen.	Ningroo.		separated years
Kumchang.	Seecong.		ago.)
Tsanla.	Tsoopkonk.		Imbon.
Kottah.	Duffa.		Undooptun Sah.
Kenah.			Laloung.

The first appearance of the Singphos in Assam was during the troubles following on the Moamariah rebellion in the reign of Gourinath Sing. They drove out the Khamphtis from the lowlands under the Patkoi hills, and settled themselves on the Tengapani east of Sadiya, and on the Upper Booree Dehing, in the tract called Namrup. At first they were welcomed as deliverers by the Assamese peasantry, and, under their Chief Gakhen Thu, restored order to the country devastated by the Moamariahs. But when the Burmese invaded the province in 1817, an era of plunder and misrule supervened, and every petty Chief, who could get together a following, pillaged the Assamese on his own account. Thousands of Assamese cultivators were carried off as slaves; and the whole of East Assam was well nigh depopulated.

There are, as has been already stated, no full and authentic accounts of this troublous period in the later history of Assam, and if this is true even of the lower and more civilised portions of the province, it cannot be expected that there should be found in the records of Government any information of value regarding the remote and savage frontier of Sadiya. The first notice of the Singphos as yet brought to light in our records dates only from 1825, when it would appear that a fresh incursion of the tribe from beyond the Patkoi drew the attention of the British Government to the fact of their existence.

Secret Proceedings, 15th April 1825, No. 12. The Burmese had but lately been expelled from Assam. The Khamphtis were still in charge of Sadiya. Secret Proceedings, 20th May 1825, No. 228. The Government had not made up its mind as to its future policy in Assam. It was unwilling to undertake the defence of a tract so remote as Sadiya. It shrank from interfering with tribes so uncouth as those of the Patkoi and sub-Himalayan ranges.

At this crisis the Singpho bands, numbering in all about 7,500 men—as frontier rumour reckoned them—shut up the Sadiya Khaw Gohain within his stockades, and attacked the Bor Senapati in his own territory. The Khamphtis called in the Abors to their aid, and both



Khamptis and Moamariahs sent praying for British assistance, recognizing thereby the position of Government at that time as arbiter of the destinies of Assam. Assistance was given for defensive purposes only, strict injunctions being laid down that no advance was to be made into the country undeniably held by the Singphos, and that no offensive operations should be attempted against that tribe.

The Singphos seem early to have conceived a respect for the British arms. Very shortly after the issue of the orders above described, they made advances to our local officers, and negotiations were entered upon with the view of inducing them to surrender their Assamese captives, and refrain from plundering the Sadiya villages. Enquiries were also instituted as to whether they would undertake to hold the passes of the Patkoi against the Burmese. The character of their tribal organization, not perhaps at that time fully understood, rendered the ultimate success of any such negotiations very uncertain. They were not ordinarily, or save for combined aggression, a united tribe, but an aggregation of independent petty cantons each under its own Chief, and each jealous of the other, and quite ready to attack its neighbour, if need were or interest prompted. Hence it was almost impossible to deal with them as a whole, though it was by no means difficult to attach temporarily to our interests any individual Chief who thought he saw some advantage to be gained therefrom. They seem to have had serious fears lest the British should proceed to expel them as they had driven out the Burmese. Considerable tracts of land had been occupied by them and were cultivated by slave labour. These they were anxious to retain. They also hoped, it was found, that by being on good terms with the British they would be protected from the Burmese—an expectation which, when known, rendered somewhat futile the proposal that they should themselves shield Assam from the incursions of that power. The main difficulty, however, which lay in the way of a permanent understanding with the Singphos was the uncompromising attitude taken up by Government with regard to the retention by them of captives and plunder.

Early in 1825 the four chief cantons under Luttera Gam, Latta Gam, Beesa Gam, and Duffa Gam, made definite advances, and were assured of the quiet possession of their lands if they would only restore their Assamese slaves and give up their Assamese booty. We had good reason at this time to encourage their overtures, for the Burmese were expected daily to show themselves on the Patkoi, and early news of their advance could come to us only through the Singphos.⁽¹⁾ No pains were, however, taken to protect

Submission of four Chiefs—Burmese Invasion.

(1) Secret Proceedings, 10th June 1825, Nos. 21-28.
Secret Proceedings, 2nd Sept. 1825, Nos. 16-24.
Secret Proceedings, 23rd Sept. 1825, Nos. 8-11.
Secret Proceedings, 30th Sept. 1825, No. 14.



them from the invaders, and accordingly they with prudent alacrity made over their stockades to the Burmese forces, when these did appear, and professed to their new allies the most perfect contempt for the far away English at Sadiya, though they sent at the same time messages to us expressive of their anxiety to be rid of the Burmese. In June Captain Neufville advanced up the Noa Dehing, and by a series of gallant as-

Neufville's Expedition.

saults expelled the Burmese from the villages of the Beesa and Duffa Gams, and eventually from the plains altogether. The Singpho Chiefs, doubtful of our intentions, having been unable to resist the temptation of taking an active share in the fighting, and unfortunately for them on the wrong side, fled to the hills. Their villages were therefore destroyed, and 3,000 Assamese captives restored to freedom. Captain Neufville after this set himself to pacify the whole low country round Sadiya. But first he summoned the Bor Senapati, the Khamptis, and the Miris, to aid him in making a progress through the other Singpho villages, in order to release all the Assamese slaves that yet remained there. He was only partially successful. The Singphos of that day did no manual labour, and as their very subsistence depended on their slaves, they made (even the most friendly of them) strenuous exertions to conceal these useful chattels. His operations resulted, however, in the surrender of the Beesa Gam and other Chiefs (September 1825). The Beesa Gam was permitted to move the site of his village from the pass on the Noa Dehing, hitherto occupied by him, to a more accessible place near Borhath, on the Booree Dehing.

In June 1826 Mr. Scott, the Governor General's Agent, visited

Submission of the Singphos.

Sadiya, when sixteen out of twenty-eight Singpho Chiefs entered into engagements with the British Government, agreeing to give up captives and assist the British troops in case of future need, and promising to refer disputes to the arbitrament of the local officers. Hostages were given for the due fulfilment of these engagements.

Altogether Captain Neufville had released 6,000 captives. The loss of this wealth was severely felt by the Singphos; and to give them some equivalent, Mr. Scott proposed to create a trade between Assam and the Upper Irrawaddy, which should pass through their hands. It was settled that the Beesa Gam should have a general control over the rest of the tribe who had submitted, and that the twelve Chiefs who still held out should be warned that if they did not come in within two months they would not be allowed to settle in Assam. It does not appear that the idea of opening up a trade across the Patkoi ever came

to anything, or indeed that any active steps were ever taken to develop it. Mr. Scott's hands were full, and his letters everywhere teem with large ideas and proposals that he could never himself have hoped to carry out, but which testify to the genius of the man, and have lain many of them in obscurity from that day to this. (*) Four

(*) Political Proceedings, 14th May 1830, Nos. 29-30.



years later, in 1830, an attempt was indeed made to create a trade at Sadiya itself, by the opening of a Government dépôt, and a Mr. Bruce was appointed to the charge of it on a salary of Rs. 100 monthly with a share in the profits. The idea was a good one, and, if properly developed, might have had a very marked effect upon our relations with savage tribes all round the frontier. How long the experiment was persevered in it is impossible to say. Like many other points of interest in the older records, it drops out of sight.

The refugee Singphos were in no hurry to come in and respond to our overtures. Perhaps the policy adopted of treating the Beesa Gam as paramount Chief of the tribe tended of itself to keep away the Duffa Gam, ⁽¹⁾ his life-long rival, who took advantage of the disturbed state of the frontier to carry on a continued series of raids out of Burma on the Beesa Gam and his dependent villages. The Duffa Gam indeed seems to have had his hand against every man, for we read of his siding with the Shans against the Burmese, a confederacy which the British officer at Sadiya was at one time invited to join.

In February 1830 the Agent reported the prevalence of rumours that the Khamptis and Singphos would unite with their brethren beyond the frontier to expel us from Sadiya. ⁽²⁾ Nor were the rumours without some basis; for before the month was out, the Beesa Gam reported that large bodies of Singphos and Khamptis had crossed the Booree Dehing and invaded the plains. They made the village of Luttora Gam on the Tengapani their head-quarters, and presently set out on rafts down that river for Sadiya. Captain Neufville attacked and dispersed them, and afterwards drove them out of Luttora back to the Bor Khampti Hills. Rumours were current that the invaders had been called in by the Sadiya Khawa Gohain; ⁽³⁾ but Captain Neufville attached no importance to this, holding that such treachery was opposed to that Chief's interests—an argument by no means in itself conclusive, looking to the history of this frontier. Be that as it may, certain members of his family who rendered very efficient aid were rewarded by grants of land, and his own conduct was highly spoken of in the despatches. The Beesa Gam had throughout these operations shown himself loyal to his engagements.

In 1831 rumours were again afloat ⁽⁴⁾ that a large Burmese force was about to invade Assam, and every arrangement was made for

(1) Secret Proceedings, 10th November 1826, Nos. 20-21.
Political Proceedings, 13th December 1833, Nos. 85-93.
Political Proceedings, 25th February 1834, Nos. 23-24.

(2) Secret Proceedings, 5th March 1830, No. 3.
Secret Proceedings, 12th March 1830, No. 34; 16th April 1830, Nos. 6-10.

(3) Political Proceedings, 7th May 1830, Nos. 7-8.

(4) Political Proceedings, 18th February 1831, Nos. 23-32, and 18th March 1831, No. 4.



repelling such an attack, even to calling on Gambhir Sing, the Raja of Manipur, to hold his levy in readiness to march across the hills.

Mr. Scott at this time submitted an elaborate report on the Government of Assam, advocating, as he had done before, the establishment of a Native Government in Central Assam as the best means of providing employment for the nobles and contenting the people.⁽¹⁾

He also proposed to concentrate the friendly Singphos in one settlement near Borhath, and to compel all the rest to leave the country. Government was, however, very unwilling to retain the Sadiya tract in its own hands if a Native Government was to hold Central Assam; and it was even debated whether it would not be wise policy to ask Manipur to extend its dominion so as to take in all that frontier. The difficulties involved in any settlement of this matter of a Native raj in Central Assam were so great, that the question was again and again re-opened, only to be set aside for future consideration.⁽²⁾ In February 1833, Government at length determined to make Upper Assam a Native State under Purunder Sing. The result of that experiment has been already noticed in Chapter I. In carrying it out, as we have seen, the country about Sadiya and Muttuck was reserved by Government in its own hands, but I cannot discover that any attempt was made to introduce a comprehensive policy of dealing with the tribes of Khamptis, Singphos, and others who occupied that portion of the Province. In April 1832, the Agent had reported⁽³⁾ that the country of Sadiya was tranquil. But neither Khamptis nor Singphos had settled to agriculture, spending their time in hunting and catching elephants. They had been deprived of most of the slaves who tilled their fields, and were as yet too proud to stoop themselves to manual toil; and although trade was said to be developing, and enterprising Indian merchants had opened stores at Beesa, there was much in the situation to render the frontier officers anxious.

Notwithstanding all that had been done, we still hear of Assamese⁽⁴⁾ slaves among the Singphos in 1833. Some of these were runaways from Burma, and many were released by the exertions of our Native officials at Sadiya. In July 1834, a European officer was posted at Sadiya permanently; and the chances of any Singpho Chief retaining his slaves became smaller than ever.

There was indeed work and anxiety enough at this outpost for a permanent officer of exceptional qualifications. The Duffa Gam by his restless intrigues and constant raids or feints of attack was a

(1) Political Proceedings, 10th June 1831, Nos. 50-59.

(2) Political Proceedings, 4th February 1833, Nos. 123-24.

(3) Political Proceedings, 8th October 1832, No. 78.

(4) Political Proceedings, 30th March 1833, No. 110.

Political Proceedings, 30th May 1833, No. 117.

Political Proceedings, 6th June 1833, No. 14.

Political Proceedings, 24th July 1834, Nos. 78-79.



standing trouble to us and all the frontier.⁽¹⁾ In 1835 he made a sudden foray from across the Patkoi, and cut up Beesa's village, killing some 90 persons, including women and children. Later in the year, he again appeared, built stockades as though he meant to stay for months, and drew to his side most of the Gams who had been made subordinate to the Beesa Gam in 1829. A party of troops, however, drove him over the hills again, and all the Chiefs save the Luttora Gam returned to their allegiance. We had to treat such defections and re-submissions as things very much of course. It would have been useless resenting them too violently. We gave our subject Chiefs no adequate aid or protection, and could not blame them over much for saving themselves from outrage by temporary submission to an invader.

In February 1837, the Luttora Gam, who next to Duffa was the most powerful of the contumacious Chiefs, submitted.⁽²⁾

The Government, anxious for a settlement, about⁽³⁾ this time addressed the Court of Ava, urging it to restrain its subjects (for such the Duffa Gam now claimed to be) from such attacks. After some trouble the British Resident succeeded in getting leave for Captain Hannay to accompany the Burmese Governor of Mogoung to that quarter, there to see what could be done. The Duffa Gam, thus beset as it were behind and before, placed himself in the hands of the Burmese,⁽⁴⁾ and it became a question whether we should claim him from them as a recusant British subject, and if we got him, what to do with him. It was determined ultimately to leave him in their hands. The Duffa Gam returned with the Burmese to Ava,⁽⁵⁾ where he was received with honours, which gave great umbrage to the Governor General in Council, who ordered the Resident in Burma to report upon the facts.

The result showed that our representative at Ava had acted weakly at the outset in not pressing on the Burmese Government the correct view of matters, and the Government of India contented itself with urging the despatch of a second Burmese deputation to the frontier, with a view to making a final settlement of Singpho affairs. To this the Ava Government at last consented.

- (1) Political Proceedings, 21st September 1835, Nos. 1-2.
 Political Proceedings, 1st October 1835, Nos. 3-4.
 Political Proceedings, 3rd August 1835, Nos. 10-11.
 Political Proceedings, 17th August 1835, Nos. 3-4.
 Political Proceedings, 10th September 1835, Nos. 1-2.
 Political Proceedings, 27th April 1836, Nos. 41-42.
 Political Proceedings, 26th September 1836, Nos. 47-48.
- (2) Political Proceedings, 6th March 1837, Nos. 33-34.
- (3) Political Proceedings, 12th January 1836, Nos. 1-2.
- (4) Political Proceedings, 20th June 1836, Nos. 14-15.
- (5) Political Proceedings, 23rd January 1837, Nos. 24-28.
 Political Proceedings, 6th February 1837, Nos. 17-19.
 Political Proceedings, 20th March 1837, Nos. 81-83.



Mr. Bayfield accompanied this embassy, with the Duffa Gam in Second Burmese embassy to the Patkoi frontier. It was arranged that an officer from Assam should cross the Patkoi to meet them. Major White, Captain Hannay, and Dr. Griffiths accordingly proceeded from Sadiya for this purpose. Want of provisions compelled Major White to fall back, but the other two went on and met Mr. Bayfield on the Patkoi. While Major White was moving down from the Patkoi, he came across a band of Nigrang Singphos from Burma, who were attacking certain Naga tribes living on the north face of the Patkoi.⁽¹⁾ As all north of this range was British territory, he compelled the Singphos to give up their captives and make peace. After Major White left,⁽²⁾ the Burmese Governor appeared and advanced a most insolent claim to the whole of Upper Assam as far as Jeypore. Captain Hannay and Mr. Bayfield of course treat this demand with ridicule, upon which the Burmese officials set off on their return to Burma.

It would seem that nothing was settled about the Duffa Gam, for, shortly after the termination of this fruitless embassy, it was reported that that Chief was about to make fresh attempts on Assam.⁽³⁾ A military post on the Booree Dehing was established in consequence, and orders were given to prevent his entering the province on any pretext whatever.

Early in 1838 the Assam Singphos began to quarrel among themselves, the Peeshee Gam attacking the villages of the Lat Gam. The troops went out to restore order, and were opposed by the Peeshee and Luttora Gams, who now again made common cause against us.⁽⁴⁾ It

Further Singpho disturbances. was evident to all the local officers that the Singphos were in a most disturbed and discontented state, and that further trouble would yet be given by this tribe. In 1839 we had indeed both Singphos and Khamptis on our hands, and risings of both tribes had to be put down by military force. In suppressing the Khampti rising, a strong body of troops passed through the Singpho country.⁽⁵⁾ This had a good effect, for it led apparently to the

Submission of Ningroola. submission of Ningroola, a Chief of influence, hitherto attached to Duffa Gam. This man was now induced to undertake the cultivation of tea near his villages, where the plant was indigenous. Although his village had been burnt by

(1) Political Proceedings, 10th April 1837, Nos. 120-23.

(2) Political Proceedings, 24th April 1837, Nos. 103-4.

(3) Political Proceedings, 19th June 1837, Nos. 57-58.

Political Proceedings, 3rd July 1837, Nos. 48-49.

Political Proceedings, 14th August 1837, Nos. 77-78.

Political Proceedings, 25th Sept. 1837, Nos. 111-113.

(4) Political Proceedings, 4th April 1838, Nos. 117-118.

(5) Political Proceedings, 27th January 1840, Nos. 59-60.

Political Proceedings, 13th April 1840, Nos. 132-133.



the troops before his submission, he seemed honestly anxious to behave loyally for the future, and among other proofs of his good faith he revealed the existence of a store of brass cannon of Hindustani make,⁽¹⁾ that had been buried in the jungle in the days of the Mogul invasion of Assam, and never before discovered by the Authorities, though long known to the tribes.

An attempt was made at this time to bring all the Singpho settlements within reach of surveillance, by insisting on their being transferred within the line of our stockades from Ningroo to Chykoa. No information is given as to how far the attempt succeeded; but for a year or two we find very little notice of the Singphos in the records.

In the cold weather of 1841-42, Captain Vetch visited the Singpho and Naga frontier, and found every thing quiet; so quiet, that Government⁽²⁾ transferred the management of the tract from the Political Department to the Revenue and Judicial Departments of the Bengal Government. The slave difficulty had not, however, entirely died out, for it would appear that the local officers had again referred it to Government,⁽³⁾ which now ordered a neutral course to be observed. The slaves were not to be assisted to run away, but no force was to be used to bring them back if they escaped.

Peace did not last long. On 10th January 1843,⁽⁴⁾ a party of

Fresh general outbreak of Singphos.

Singphos from Burma attacked our outpost at Ningroo in large numbers and killed seven men. A simultaneous and successful attack on the guard at Beesa was reported, and Saikwah was threatened by a large body of combined Khamptis and Singphos. The movement was evidently concerted and extensive. The Tippun Raja from Hookoom was said to be in it, and both the Beesa Gam and Ningroola were suspected of having been accomplices at least. This latter fact was a great surprise and disappointment.⁽⁵⁾ All the Singphos on the Noa and Boree Dehing joined in the revolt. No time was lost in marching troops against them. Ningroola surrendered at the outset, and the Beesa Gam soon after. They protested their innocence, and offered to serve against the Burmese Singphos who were under Seroola Sain and the Lat Gam. The remaining Singphos and Nagas of Assam quickly returned to their allegiance, and gave vigorous assistance against the foreign invaders. The Lat Gam was beaten and surrendered.⁽⁶⁾ Stockade after stockade was taken; but still the war dragged on for months, as jungle warfare often does.

(1) Political Proceedings, 20th April 1840, Nos. 87-88.

(2) Political Proceedings, 17th August 1842, Nos. 187-89.

(3) Political Proceedings, 9th November 1842, Nos. 86-87.

(4) Political Proceedings, 1st February 1843, Nos. 94-100.

(5) Political Proceedings, 22nd February 1843, Nos. 162-64.

(6) Political Proceedings, 31st May 1843, Nos. 75-86.



The end was however from this date certain, and Government appointed a Commission (Colonel Lloyd and Mr. Stainforth) to inquire into the causes of the revolt. Both these gentlemen were prevented by delicate health from undertaking such an arduous duty in a bad climate, and the inquiry was eventually entrusted to Captain Jenkins, the Governor General's Agent on the spot. That officer declared the causes of the rebellion to be three, viz. :—(1) encroachments on the lands and privileges of the Singphos; (2) the seizure and punishment by local officers of some members of their tribes; (3) the orders of the Tippum Raja, now Chief of the Hookoom province under Burma. The Governor General in Council in reviewing the report set aside the last two grounds, as it was certain the orders of Tippum, if ever given, would have had no effect unless they had fallen on willing ears; and as to the second point, it was shown that no Singphos had been punished save under the terms of their engagements, and in accordance with established usage. The real cause Government sought in the first point noticed. Although the Singpho agreements made with Mr. Scott are personal rather than local, yet it was clear they were meant to apply within certain limits, that is, within the ordinary habitat of the tribe. Unfortunately no such limits were ever regularly defined, and of late the extension of tea cultivation had made this omission of serious consequence. Just eight days before the insurrection broke out, the Deputy Commissioner had submitted a sketch, in which three lines were drawn from a common point at the mouth of the Noa Dehing diverging south. The most westerly was the limit of the Singpho tribes in Scott's time; further east was the limit of their cultivation now; while still further east from the Noa Dehing Mukh to Ningroo was the line to which Captain Vetch in future proposed to limit them. This showed clearly, the Government thought,⁽¹⁾ how the action of the local officers was gradually pushing back these tribes from territories which they once had occupied. (The Beesa Gam had, in 1842, complained bitterly of the loss of lands. The factory of a Mr. Bonyng, which had been a prominent object of attack in the late rebellion, actually stood on forfeited Singpho territory.) Add to this the accumulated grievances arising from our forcible release of their original slaves, and our continued care to prevent their acquiring others, and sufficient causes for rebellion seemed to be established, the Singphos being what they were. On these views of Government, the Agent was invited to submit further report. It was proposed to have a line laid down as in Scott's time, on which no encroachment was to be allowed save under definite and fresh concessions. The right of taxing to Government dues Assamese voluntarily resident among the Singphos, which had never been enforced, was to be definitely given up. A new convention was to be made. But all captured rebels were to be brought

(1) Political Proceedings, 12th August 1843, Nos. 90-106.



to trial. The Beesa Gam was found guilty of rebellion, and imprisoned at Debrooghur for life.

The Agent in his⁽¹⁾ final report contended that the main cause of the Singpho insurrection was the loss of their slaves. The Beesa Gam was the Chief who had suffered most by this. He had also been irritated by our communicating with the other Chiefs direct, and not through him; though his own intrigues had rendered this necessary. He had appointed one Seeroo-la-sen to be his successor, and this man was irritated by the imprisonment of a cousin of his for selling an Assamese; so he joined and led the insurrection. A son-in-law of the Beesa's, Jugundoo, had been imprisoned for cattle stealing. He also rebelled. The Lat Gam, a Kaku, was another dependant of Beesa's; and he was afraid of punishment from us for putting slaves to death for witchcraft. In this way the action taken by the Beesa Gam and his family was held to be explained. The rebellion of Ningroola and his sons was less easily accounted for. Probably loss of slaves and temporary irritation caused it. Ruffandoo joined the rebels, because he was not allowed to raid on the Nagas. All the other Chiefs who took part in the outbreak were from Burma.⁽²⁾ Captain Jenkins was now certain that the loss of lands had nothing to say to it. No lands had ever been granted to the Singphos, or recognized as theirs, or been claimed by any of them till lately, when the Beesa, instigated by Tippun Raja, set up such a notion. The Agent in conclusion held that the loss of their slaves would soon compel the Singphos⁽³⁾ to settle down and engage personally in cultivation as many of them had already done, and then he said, we could assign them definite lands and limits. Meantime that matter might be left alone. There were possible other minor grievances that had helped to irritate the Singphos, such as demands for forced labour to build stockades for our troops, but, on the whole, the Agent believed that in the slavery question lay the secret of this abortive rebellion.

Government accepted this report, though it is hardly, perhaps, satisfactory upon some points. To educate the Singphos into civilisation a school was ordered to be opened at Saikwah. Ningroola and his son were pardoned and released. On the question of slavery the Government was fully committed, and no retrograde policy could be entertained. Nothing was to be done to encourage the Singphos to believe that slavery would ever be winked at. With these orders the memory of the Singpho insurrection was allowed to die away.

(1) Political Proceedings, 9th March 1844, No. 142.

(2) Political Proceedings, 26th April 1848, Nos. 103-104.

(3) Political Proceedings, 23rd March 1844, Nos. 89-91.



The Singphos have of late years given absolutely no trouble. They are indeed of great use to us in restraining and keeping in order the Naga tribes of the Patkoi.*

* The following extract from a report by the Deputy Commissioner of Luckimpore, dated 9th May 1871, shows all that is locally known of the present state of the Singpho cantons :—

2. *Singphos*.—The names and sites of the principal settlements of the Singphos are given in the margin.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Tengapani. | 10. Dehingpani. |
| 2. Morowapani. | 11. Borooan Pattar. |
| 3. Peehela Mookh. | 12. Kherimpaul. |
| 4. Dissopani. | 13. Dhekori Doobie. |
| 5. Menaboom. | 14. Monking Tap. |
| 6. Naginipaul. | 15. Temp Mookh. |
| 7. Merippaul. | 16. Noyan Pattar. |
| 8. Tangon Joop. | 17. Nangdoe Pattar. |
| 9. Mamoidan. | 18. Jingthopaul. |

These settlements contain forty-eight khels or sections, numbering about 3,435 souls, of which 1,120 are estimated to be male, 1,180 female adults, and 1,135 children of both sexes.

3. The arrangements made after the Singpho rising of 1843 have been carried out to good purpose, and they may now be reckoned as peaceful and friendly neighbours.

4. The Singphos have settled down to agriculture, and do now for themselves what formerly they depended on their Assamese slaves to do for them. They apparently, however, only cultivate sufficiently to meet their own consumption for a portion of the year, the remaining months they live upon wild yams and other jungle products, and what they can procure from other places.

5. The Government has no fixed relations with them; they are generally obedient, and in such way recognize British supremacy.

6. There are a handful of Singphos—ten or twelve only in number—who have settled in the villages of Tegee and Koolie in the Megela mouzah of this district, who pay revenue, and are on precisely a similar footing as the other ryots of the mouzah.

7. The Singphos meet the Government officer yearly at the mela held at Sadiya, and they are in the habit of visiting the officer in military command at that place. Further than this there is no material intercourse.



CHAPTER XI.

THE MOAMARIAHS OF MUTTUCK.

Some account of the Moamariahs has already been given in the first chapter, but a brief notice of the part they have played in the history of Upper Assam since the British annexation is necessary to the completeness of our subject, as several allusions have been made to them in the foregoing chapters.

The district known as Muttuck in Luckimpore, inhabited by the Moamariah, Moram, or Morah tribe, Early history of the Moamariahs. was bounded, according to Pember-ton, on the west and north by the Brahmaputra, on the south by the Booree Dehing, and on the east by a line extending from the Dehing to a point nearly opposite the mouth of the Kondil Nullah. The area of this tract was about 1,800 square miles. The original Moamariahs are supposed by some to have been a rude tribe who settled before the Ahom invasion on the Upper Debroo, in the district of Moram. What were known among them as the "upper nine families" claimed certainly to be descended from such a race. "The lower nine families" of Moamariahs settled on the Lasa were proselytised Ahoms. The whole tribe embraced Hinduism, rejected the popular worship of Siva, and professed themselves sectaries of the *Vishna-vishnu* caste. Their persecution by the Ahom Kings of Assam and their rebellions have been noticed before.⁽¹⁾ To the last days of Raja Gourinath they maintained their independence, although when beaten by Captain Welsh they admitted in general terms the supremacy of the Gowhatty Raja. They gained many adherents from among the Assamese and Ahoms.

At the time of the Burmese invasion, the Bor Senapati, as the Relations with the Burmese and British. Moamariah ruler was called, assisted the Burmese with provisions and labour, but not with troops. On the British annexation he at once acknowledged our supremacy and entered into engagements with Mr. Scott. By these he undertook to contribute an armed contingent of 360 gotes of paiks, of whom only one-third or 300 men should be called out at one time.⁽²⁾ He was to pay no revenue himself, but was to be responsible to the Government of Upper Assam, whether British or Native, for the poll-tax of any ryots emigrating into his territories. Owing to the easy terms on which he was thus allowed to hold the country, the Bor Senapati was able to leave his people under a very moderate

(1) Political Proceedings, 6th October 1839, No. 89.

(2) Political Proceedings, 13th April 1835, Nos. 4-5.



assessment. The men of his own tribe paid little or nothing. From the other cultivators the Senapati and his seven sons, each of whom managed a district, realized about Rs. 22,000 yearly, where under the British fiscal system over Rs. 50,000 would have been collected. Hence there was naturally a constant influx of emigrants into his territory not only from Lower Assam but from the tract over which we eventually placed Purunder Sing. It is true that the Senapati was bound to account for these immigrants, but the facilities for concealing, and the difficulty of tracing such mobile assets were very great. The desertions from Upper Assam became so serious at last that Purunder made it the chief excuse for his failure to pay the tribute assessed upon him by the Government. For these and other reasons it was frequently proposed that the Bor Senapati should be brought under regular assessment. The tract which he managed was strictly an integral part of Assam, and there was, it was argued, no obligation resting upon Government compelling it to recognize in him any absolute rights of sovereignty in the country which he had usurped.⁽¹⁾ It was felt, however, that it would be more equitable and politic to allow the arrangements made by Mr. Scott to continue during the life-time of the old Senapati, and the only change made was in 1835, when the obligation of furnishing 300 gotes of paiks was commuted for a payment of Rs. 1,800 annually—the sum offered by the Senapati himself.

On the 24th May 1839, the Bor Senapati died. Before his death he had tried to obtain the recognition of his second son, the Majoo Gohain, as his successor. The Government, however, had declined to sanction this arrangement; and on his decease, holding that the Majoo Gohain had no claim to be treated as a tributary prince, or as anything but a revenue settlement-holder under Mr. Scott's management, it decided to propose to him a settlement on revised terms. He was offered the management of the country with the same civil authority exercised by the Bor Senapati, provided that a proportion of what might be exacted from the paiks in money or service was paid to Government, on the basis of a fresh census every five years; the paiks to have the option of rendering service or commuting for money on the same terms as in other divisions. The occupied jungle tracts were to be at the disposal of Government, and the Muttuck Chief was to have no authority over tea gardens. The above arrangements were to apply only to the lower nine families of Muttucks and not to the upper nine of Morams, (for so the older and the later members of the tribe seem to have been distinguished) who had declared their wish to be under direct British management.⁽²⁾ The proportion to

(¹) Political Proceedings, 19th December 1833, No. 8593.
Political Proceedings, 20th February 1834, Nos. 23-24.

(²) Political Proceedings, 14th August 1839, Nos. 10-56.
Political Proceedings, 16th January 1839, Nos. 47-48.
Political Proceedings, 30th January 1839, Nos. 63-66.
Political Proceedings, 20th February 1839, 67-68.



be taken by Government and the terms of commutation were at first left open; but a preference was to be given to the exaction of personal service, as roads were much required in Upper Assam. The terms of commutation were eventually fixed at Rs. 2 per paik.

None of the Senapati's sons would engage for Muttuck unless the upper Morans were included in their settlement, so the tract was eventually taken into direct management by the British officer in charge of Upper Assam. The sons continued for some time to live in the country, but were removed to Gowhatty in 1840 for intriguing against the Government; and Muttuck ceased to be a separate State.*

* The condition of the Muttucks, both politically and fiscally, is, according to a recent report, good. They are friendly with the other tribes. The population is estimated to be about 25,067 souls, of which 8,347 are estimated to be male, 13,220 female adults, and 3,500 children of both sexes. The followers of the Tepook Gossam pay a poll-tax; those of the Dingoi and Gorpooa Gossams pay a land-tax. The Gossams are mouzadars in their ilaqtas. This means in effect that the Meamarihs are now merged practically in the ordinary cultivating population of Assam.



PART II.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NAGA TRIBES. A.—THE PATKOI NAGAS.

I have now to give some account of a group of tribes inhabiting part of the great mountain system which lies to the south of the Assam valley—tribes many in number and differing in characteristics—but which extend under the generic name of Naga from the Bori Dihing River and Singpho country of Luckimpur west to the Kopili River in Nowgong, and south to the confines of Manipur and Cachar.

Dalton in his *Ethnology of Bengal* draws a line of distinction between the Nagas to the east and those to the west of the Dhunsiri River, asserting that traces of a common origin are to be seen in all the tribal dialects found between the Bori Dihing and Dhunsiri, while these radically differ from the dialects of the clans bordering on north Cachar. He further states that the Nagas east of the Doyeng (the eastern affluent of the Dhunsiri) are divided into great clans under influential hereditary Chiefs or Rajas, while those to the west of the Doyeng are more democratic in character, electing elders from time to time to serve as spokesmen in debate or temporary leaders on the warpath, but yielding no certain or regular obedience to any recognised head. Our knowledge of the Naga tribes though of late years fast extending is still very incomplete, and we shall find it more convenient to group them rather with reference to their political relations to our frontier districts than in accordance with any supposed ethnical differences. As an introduction to a survey of the Naga tract, the following paper by Captain Butler, who in 1873 was Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, may here be reproduced. I have given it complete, although some passages in it were of only temporary interest, because it is a comprehensive survey of the whole Naga country by an officer who had devoted special study to the question:

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.

Roughly speaking, they may be said to extend from the Kopili River on the west to the Bori Dihing on the east. Towards the north they occupy the whole hill country bordering upon the plain districts of Nowgong, Sebsaugor, and Luckimpore.



In a southerly direction we now know positively that they not only extend up to, but actually cross over, the great main watershed between the Irrawady and Brahmaputra, how far, however, they really go down and extend into the valley of the Kaiendwen or Ningthi has never yet been clearly ascertained. Indeed, we know that the country in that direction extending from the north-eastern corner of Manipur up to the south-western portion of the Patkoi, and lying south of that narrow strip of comparatively low mountains explored by Brodie, and roughly mapped out by Messrs. Bedford and Thornton in 1842-43, has never yet been visited by any European; and hence almost everything that has been said and written regarding it has been pure conjecture.

Captain Yule, who went as Secretary to the Envoy to the Court of Ava in 1855, in his interesting narrative of the mission, very graphically summarises (from the accounts of Hannay, Griffiths, Bayfield, Wilcox, and Pemberton), almost all we know about the country in and around the tract above alluded to as follows. He says—

"The northern chain, the Himalaya, stretching far beyond Assam, bounds that valley, but as it bounds all India with its awful barrier of unchanging snow. 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, and may conveniently be termed the Assam chain, as it has been, I believe, in some atlases.

"Rising suddenly from the plains of Eastern Bengal, as from a sea, about 220 miles north-east of Calcutta, it stretches eastward in a broadening chaos of woody spurs and ridges, and grassy undulating table-lands, taking successively the names of the races which inhabit it, Garos, Khasias, and Nagas of many tribes; ever increasing in the elevation of its points, from 3,000 and 4,000 feet among the Garos, to 6,000 among the Khasias, 8,000 and 9,000 in the region north of Manipur, till sweeping north-eastward in a wide mass of mountain, of which the general direction only is known, it emerges to knowledge again as the Patkoi, traversed by the Burman armies in their Assamese inroads; further on, abreast of the Brahmakund, rises to a height of 12,000 and 14,000 feet, and then coming in contact with the spurs of the waning Himalayas, lifts itself into the region of eternal snow, and stretching still eastward embraces its northern rival, and forms that amphitheatre of snowy peaks, glorious, doubtless, but unseen as yet by European eye, in which the Brahmaputra has its earliest springs.

"This lofty prolongation of the southern chain, known now as the Langtang, sends down from the snows of its southern face the head-waters of the Irrawady. Beyond the eastern sources of the river it strikes southward a great meridian chain, snow-capped in places like the parent ridge,

and from old time the bounding wall of China to the westward. It is called by the Singpho tribes, which cluster round the roots of all these mountains of northern Burma, the Goolansigoung, and its offshoots stretch with a variety of breaks and ramifications, of which we know nothing precisely, but ever tending southward, between the Irrawady and the Salween, till one of its great spurs almost reaches the sea near Martaban, where it parts the Salween from the big-mouthed Sitang. Nearly abreast of Toungoo, and 170 miles north of Martaban, this chain is known to attain an elevation of 8,000 feet.

"The snowy range of Langtang projects its shorter spurs between the branches of the Irrawady, and this side the westerly branch it sends down an offshoot called the Shwe-doung-gyi, separating the Irrawady from the springs of the Kyendwen.

"Still further westward in the Naga country, between longitude 93° and 95°, a great multiple mass of mountains starts southwards from the Assam chain. Enclosing first the level alluvial valley of Manipur, at a height of 2,500 feet above the sea, it then spreads out westward to Tipperah and the coast of Chittagong and northern Arracan, a broad succession of unexplored and forest-covered spurs, inhabited by a vast variety of wild tribes of Indo-Chinese kindred, known as Kookies, Nagas, Khyenes, and by many more specific names. Contracting to a more defined chain, or to us more defined, because we know it better, this meridian range still passes southward under the name of the Arracan Yuma-doung, till 700 miles from its origin in



the Naga wilds, it sinks in the sea hard by Negrais, its last bluff crowned by the golden Pagoda of Modain, gleaming far to seaward, a Burmese Sunium. Fancy might trace the submarine prolongation of the range in the dotted line of the Prepara, the Cocos, the Andamans, the Nicobars, till it emerges again to traverse Sumatra and the vast chain of the Javanic Isles.

"Between these two great meridian ranges that have been indicated—the one eastward of the Irrawady and the Sitang, the other westward of the Kyendwen and the Irrawady—lie what have been characterised above as the first three divisions of the Burman territory. * * * * *

"The tract enclosed by these ranges is not to be conceived of as a plain like the vast levels that stretch from the base of the Himalayas. It is rather a varied surface of rolling upland, interspersed with alluvial basins and sudden ridges of hill.

"The Burman is himself nowhere a dweller in the mountains, though thus girt round with a noble mountain barrier. * * * * *

"The river recognised throughout its course by the Burmans as the Irrawady comes, we may assume, from the snowy peaks which separate the valleys inhabited by the Shan race of Khamtis, from the head-waters of the sacred Brahmaputra, in latitude 28°. For nearly 200 miles below this the Burmese know little of it. In their forays into the Khamti country, they never took the river line, and they care not to meddle much with Singphos and savage Kakhyens, who live the mountain ranges on both banks. It receives a branch of size equal to its own from the eastward about latitude 26°, emerges into the familiar acquaintance of the Burmese at the mouth of the Mogoung River (in 24° 56'), where they turn off in their route to the so-called city of that name, once the head of a flourishing Shan principality, of which manuscript histories exist, professing to commence from the eighth year of our era, now a poor village in the centre of a damp, unhealthy, and dreary plain, scantily cultivated by the remnants of the Shan population. Mogoung gives name to a woonship or province, which nominally includes the whole breadth of Burma to the Assam Hills, and is the residence of the Governor of these northern tracts when he comes from court to express such revenue as they will yield.

"The Mogoung River is tortuous and sub-divided with occasional rapids, but boats of some considerable size ascend it, and several of its branches above Mogoung are navigable by canoes. One of its most considerable tributaries, the Eadan-Khyong, has its source in the Eadangyi, a lake among the hills, to which the traditions of the people assign a volcanic origin.

"Of the mineral traffic of the province, in serpentine and amber, we have already spoken. The greater part of the region is a howling wilderness, exhibiting levels of winter swamp and low jungle intermingled with low hills, and sometimes with belts of noble trees; the higher mountain range of the Shwe-doung-gyi (4,000 feet), running down on the eastward, and screening off the Irrawady from the head-waters of the Kyendwen. In the seclusion of its valleys Kakhyen villages are said to be numerous, but few or no habitations are seen in the open country north of Mogoung, till you reach the comparatively peopled valley of Hookong or Payendwen, the site of the amber-mines, seventy miles north of Mogoung. Even this plain does not show a population of more than ten to the square mile. It is the most northerly locality in which the Burmans venture to exercise authority. With the Singphos they rarely or never meddle, but they have sometimes enforced their claims on the remote Shans of Khamti. Passes lead from the Hookong plain into Khamti over the shoulders of the Shwe-doung-gyi, a distance of sixteen days' journey, and also direct towards China through the district east of the Irrawady, called Kakhyo-Wainmo. By this route the Lapai Singphos come to purchase amber. These living on the Chinese frontier have adopted a good deal of the Chinese dress and habits, and are by far the most numerous and civilized tribe of their nation. From this valley also the path



traversed by Dr. Griffith in 1837 leads over the Patkoi range to Sadiya in Upper Assam. The distance from Mainkhwon to the summit of the range, which is crossed at a height of 5,600 feet, is eleven stiff marches (130 to 140 miles), the greater part of which are through dense jungle or up the bouldery beds of rivers. Eleven more, but somewhat shorter stages (121 miles) bring the traveller to Sadiya. The path does not appear to be practicable for elephants. Other passes are said to cross

J. B.

the range a little further to the westward.

"Hookong or Payendwen produces salt, gold, and ivory in addition to amber. It was formerly occupied by the Shans, but they fled from Burman oppression, and the inhabitants are now chiefly Singphos, with their Assamese slaves. The villages generally consist of ten or twelve of the long barrack-like houses of the Singphos crowded together without order, and almost without interval, within a bamboo stockade, the extension of which for further defence is surrounded with small bamboo spikes stuck obliquely in the ground—a favourite defensive device among all these nations.

"The Kyendwen rises in Shwe-doung-gyi, north of Mogoung, and thence passes northward, north-westward, and westward through the plain of Payendwen, already a broad and navigable stream. After leaving the plains it curves round to the south and keeps its southern course till terminating in the Irrawady.

* * * * *

"Of the middle course of the Kyendwen, between the valley of the amber mines, in latitude $26^{\circ} 30'$, and the Burmese post of Kendal, which had several times been visited by our officers, both from Manipur and Ava, little is known. The Burmese, I believe, scarcely exercise any jurisdiction over the inhabitants, who are chiefly Shans along the river, the Kakhyens and other wild tribes keeping to the hills. The navigation is interrupted at several places by falls or transverse reefs, a series of which is known to exist some sixteen

J. B.

miles below the plain of Hookong, and another which first bars the traffic upwards, at Kaksa or Kat-tha, four days north of the head of the Kubo Valley, in latitude $24^{\circ} 47'$. Not far below this last it receives a large tributary in the Ooroo, near the sources of which, in a long narrow valley, are the You stone mines, which bring the Chinese trafficking to Mogoung. The lower part of the Ooroo Valley is said to be peopled and well cultivated. * * * * * below the Ooroo the narrow alluvial valley of the Kyendwen is also tolerably peopled, and affords occasional rice-grounds fertilised by annual inundation.

"West of the river, between the parallels of $22^{\circ} 30'$ and $24^{\circ} 30'$, stretches from north to south the valley of Kubo. * * * * * It is a long strip, not more than 10 to 15 miles in greatest width, separated from the Kyendwen by a range of uninhabited and forest-covered hills called Ungoching. The valley itself is, with the exception of sparse clearances for cultivation, a mass of forest abounding in varnish and wood-oil trees and in valuable timber, saul and teak, which, however, is not available for want of water-carriage; and though its inhabitants are remarkably hardy, it is notorious for jungle fever, most fatal to strangers. The northern portion of the valley, called by the Burmese Thounghwot, by the Kathés, or Manipurees Samjok, and the southern called Kalé, are still under the rule of the Native Shan Tsaubwas tributary to Ava, the only such who have maintained their position under the Burmese Government on this side of the Irrawady. The central portion, Khumbat, is under a Burmese Governor. Kalé is much the most populous part of the valley. * * * * * The hills on the west of Kalé are occupied by the Khyens, a race extending southward throughout



the long range of the Yoma-doung to the latitude of Prome." And here there comes a foot note telling us that "Colonel Hannay identifies the Khyens with the Nagas of the Assam mountains," and that "they must also be closely allied to the Kookies. * * *

Further on we are told that "the most interesting race in Southern Burma is that of the Karens; among the Burmese, but not of them, scattered up and down through all the wildest and most secluded parts of Pegu and Martaban, as well as Tenasserim and the western parts of Siam." And again later, in speaking of the Karen-ni, or red Karens, who inhabit the mountains separating the Sittang from the Salween, we learn that—"Their villages are generally perched on rounded knolls, or on tops of tabular hills. The population is considerable. In one part of their country, between the Salween and the Mepon, Dr. Richardson found the land cultivated to the tops of the hills, the valleys terraced in the Chinese manner, cross-roads in all directions, and villages so numerous that eight were visible at one time. * * *

These red Karens are the terror of all the adjoining Burman and Burma Shan districts on which they make their forays. * * *

They are also the receivers of slaves carried off in the mutual feuds of the numerous small Karen communities. * * * The nearest towns pay them black mail to purchase immunity for their inroads"—a description which exactly answers to the condition and state of affairs existing at the present day in the Angami country.

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 the Irrawady very carefully noted down upon it. Thus taking the most southerly first, and proceeding north, we meet with the "Karens," "Khyens," and "wild Khyens," after which we come upon the "Looshai," "Kom Naga," "Arong Naga," "Kutcha," and "Anghami Naga," and finally the vague, general term "Naga tribes," which latter words are written exactly along the course of what we believe to be the run of the main watershed; 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." But in Colonel Dalton's late work on the Ethnology of Bengal we are told that "*Karens* are sometimes called *Kakhyens*, which is a name applied to the Singphos," and that Latham thinks that word for word *Khyen* is *Karen*, and, moreover, that Mr. Mason tells us it is a Burmese word signifying *aboriginal*. Again Bayfield on the occasion of his expedition to the Patkai, speaks of passing the site of an "old Khyen village" north of the Hookong Valley, and finally Pemberton, generally considered one of our best and most reliable authorities on all matters connected with the Eastern Frontier, in speaking of that particular portion of the country regarding which we are now finding it so difficult to obtain

The "Maglung" is a river rising from the southern slopes of the Shiroifaru mountain, the most eastern point to which we penetrated this past cold season.

J. B.

River we have only the imperfect account

Of the geological structure of this tract our information is particularly incomplete and defective," and further on, after describing the several routes leading from Manipur into Assam, he adds—"East of these routes from the 25th to the 27th degree of latitude and between the 94th and 96th degrees of longitude is an extensive tract of mountainous country inhabited by tribes (the Tiklya Nagas of Buchanan) similar to those before mentioned, but with whom no communication ever appears to have been

I cannot help thinking this term "Tiklya" is merely a corruption of "Mekhla," an Assamese word meaning "petticoat" or "kilt," and which the latter often apply to the Angamis in speaking of them as the "Mekhla" or "Mekhla-pendin" Nagas (i.e., the kilted or petticoat-wearing Nagas).

J. P.

held by the people of Assam, Manipur, or Kobo, and nothing is in consequence known of the country beyond the fact of its mountainous character." And this remark, although written nearly 40 years ago, holds good up to the present day. Had I only received the slightest assistance from

Manipur, or indeed had I been simply left alone to my own devices, instead of being



harassed and opposed in every conceivable way, on the occasion of our late expedition, by far the greater portion of this very *terra incognita* would have been thoroughly explored and carefully surveyed, whereas, owing to the extraordinary action taken by the Raja, we had barely time just to dip into it. However, the views from Shirol-farar, Kopamedza, and the hill above Geziphemi, enabled us to obtain a very fair general idea of the lay of the country on ahead, which we distinctly saw to be a huge tract of high rolling mountains running away to the north and west in long parallel ranges, broken here and there apparently by the larger feeders of the Lanier, with lofty conical summits towering up to 12,000 feet above the sea level, the water-parting line apparently taking a north-easterly direction. A full and detailed account of the physical aspect of this tract, as far as it goes, has already very lately been given by Major Godwin-Austen in his report on the operations connected with the Manipur and Naga Hills boundary survey, and I therefore deem it needless to enter into any further details regarding it.

I trust I have now succeeded in clearly showing that our knowledge of a great portion of the Naga country really rests almost entirely upon "pure conjecture," and that beyond the fact of its mountainous character we know nothing at all about it up to the present date; for even the past cold season's work, although it cleared up a good deal, has still left it an open question whether the Lanier does flow north into Assam as all of us (Austen, Thomson, Ogle and I) concur in thinking, or whether it turns eastward and falls into the Kyendwen as Tongal Major and the Manipurees would have us believe. And thus the line of the main watershed may eventually either lead us along the Sarameeti range, as I have good reason to suppose it will do, or, on the other hand, it may take us down the Kopamedza ridge, according to whichever belief turns out to be correct. And finally, with regard to the inhabitants of this huge tract, we are equally in the dark; and indeed to such an extent does our ignorance go that we cannot even safely suggest any limit at all to the country occupied by the Naga race in this direction, for it is quite possible that we may yet some day discover that the Naga, Kakhyen, and Khyen, are in fact off-shoots of one and the same race; and, moreover, I think the balance of such evidence as we have got seems rather inclined to favour this view. However, under present circumstances, it is merely a matter of another season's hard work to clear up the whole mystery in which this question is still enveloped, and in the meanwhile I deem it would be simply a waste of time to indulge in theories so easy to propound so difficult to refute. I will therefore now content myself with giving a brief outline of the rest of the Naga country, restricting myself to 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 from the very latest information we have got on the subject, 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. The local distribution of the tribes in that portion of the country lying between the Kopili and the Doyeng as well as in that extending south and south-east across the Barak River into Manipur has been made under my personal direction, and may be accepted as correct. I cannot, however, take upon myself to vouch for the absolute correctness of that portion lying between the Doyeng and the Bori Dihing (in the Seebisaur Naga country), a tract which never has been properly surveyed, and which, if we put aside the very hasty short visits of only one or two days' journey into the hills, made by the missionary Mr. Clarke and the two tea planters, Messrs. Peale and Begg (the first of whom visited Deka Himong, whilst Peale went as far as Banpara, and the latter never got beyond Kampongia, all three villages situated close to the plains) has never been invaded by any European since Brodie's day (1842 and 1844). I think, however, it will be found to be pretty correct on the whole, at all events, as regards the relative positions of the several tribes and villages.

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, who never have given, and probably never will give, us any trouble at all, and so I need not say anything more about them beyond expressing an opinion,



that I believe this tribe is simply a branch of the Kutcha Naga. I have, however, personally seen very little of the "Arung," and cannot, therefore, speak with any great confidence as to the identity of the two races.

We next fall in with the "Kuki" or "Náid Kuki," a powerful community

The term "naia" new is given to these Kukies to distinguish them from the "parana" or old Kukies. The "Naia Kukies" are sub-divided into the Thádo, Changsen, Shingshon, Naithang, and Huokit clans, whilst the "Parana Kukies" consist of the Hangkhol, Bete, Chakaneep, and Langlon; besides which we have the Chiru, Kom, Kohen, Lhangum, Lushai, and Kamhuo tribes, who are all undoubtedly closely allied to the Kukies as a race.

consisting of the "Thádo," "Changsen," and "Shingshon" clans who inhabit that portion of the Barail mountains from which on the one side the head-waters of the Lanting and Dhansiri take their rise and go off towards the west and north; and on the other, the Chuline Makho and Jhiri Rivers spring and flow east and south; a

tangled mass of forest-clad hills, with comparatively low ridges thrown off from the parent range upon which the broad conical peaks of Angoolo and Laishiang rise up to nearly 7,000 feet above the level of the sea. On the last occasion when I had the census of this tribe taken in March 1872, it consisted of 21 villages, containing 718 houses, with a total population of 2,599 souls. These Kukies are the most clannish of all the tribes with whom we have come in contact on this frontier, and from being a bold and hardy race, well armed, mostly with muskets, besides which they also use the bow, arrow, and spear, and thoroughly under the control of their respective "Houshas," (i.e. Chiefs), bitter enemies but staunch friends, they were much feared by all their neighbours. This tribe is now, and has been for some little time advancing towards the west, in the direction of the Dhansiri Valley, and also towards the north-east, on which side I should not be surprised to find them very shortly pushing up to the head-waters of the Barak and Iril on to the southern prolongation of the Kopamedza range, a tract of country which, being thickly covered with forest, is well adapted to jooming—the only system of cultivation the Kuki indulges in, for he abominates the fine fields of terrace cultivation of which Angami is so proud. The village of Aimulkun is at present the most north-easterly point that they have yet reached.

The next tribe we meet with are the "Kutcha" or "Mejhamah" Nagas who inhabit the slopes on both sides of the water-parting line of the Barail mountains, north towards the valley of 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 Lakemah east to Tenepu Peak forms a most precipitous and almost impassable barrier chain, whereas west and south between Angaoh and Laishang in the Kuki country it sinks into a low saddle—back easily crossed in any direction. The "Kutcha Naga" tribe possesses 23 villages containing 1,284 houses, which, on a rough calculation of five souls to a house, gives us a population of over 6,000 souls. To a certain extent their dress, manners, and customs are a little like the Angami, with whom, in fact, they are closely connected, although possessing an almost totally dissimilar dialect. This tribe, although it gave us trouble in former days, has been very quiet of late, and would, I believe, be very glad indeed if the British Government would take over the active and actual control of their country, and protect them from the devastating attacks and extortionate demands of their more warlike neighbours the Angamis, who are constantly levying black-mail from them, in like manner as they used to do from the Kachari border villages—a state of affairs which has reduced the size of many of their chief villages enormously. Thus, for instance, the late General Jenkins tells us in one of his letters to Government that, on the occasion of his being deputed to explore a route through the Naga country in 1831-32, when his escort consisted of a force of 700 men from the Manipuri Levy, and his whole party numbered "1,300 people altogether," they were attacked by the people of Papolongmai, a village which he states then contained "about 900 houses;" whereas, on referring to the diary of my tour in the cold weather of 1869-70, when I had occasion to visit this very village, I find the following entry—"On walking over the village, I found it in a regular state of barricade and palisading thrown up in all directions, with a strong stockade surrounding the upper portion of the village, the sides of the hill cut down and steeply scarped with deep ditches dug right across the ridge of the hill, and the whole place so thickly



studded with *panjies* that one of my constables was accidentally wounded in two places by them, and I myself very narrowly escaped being struck in the same way. This is all owing to the Samemah Khel of Khonomah having made a raid upon this village, in revenge for the Merlamah Khel of Khonomah having attacked their allies in Tapuemah. Kenomah (*i.e.*, Papolongmai) only a few months ago was one of the most prosperous of the Kutchah Naga villages, containing 282 houses; but 72 were burnt to the ground in this last raid, and there only remain now 160 houses of the Samemah Khel and 50 of the Rehootzoomah." Thus it would appear that in the very short space of 33 years this village has been actually reduced to less than three-fourths of its original size, and I have little doubt but that many other villages have shared a similar fate.

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.

This great division of the Naga race occupies a most charming country, enjoying a beautiful climate and a most fertile soil, well cultivated, drained, and manured, the hill sides being covered with a succession of terraces of rich rice, with numerous villages in every direction, some of them so large that they might justly be called towns. Thus, Kohimah, for instance, contains 865 houses, Khonomah 545, Viswemah 530, and even the much split up Jotsomah boasts of 434. 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 peaks of Japuo, Suwemuchikha, and Kedimba rise up, respectively, to a height of 9,952, 7,379, and 4,756 feet above the level of the sea. They, however, extend beyond this tract into the low country to the west, as far as the Samagooting and Sitekemah range. In the course of the last four-and-a-half years it has so happened that I have been fortunate enough to explore the whole of this tract of country thoroughly and repeatedly, and I am consequently now in a position to speak with all due confidence regarding it. I must here explain that among the people themselves the term "Angami" is utterly unknown except among those few who speak Assamese or Manipuri, and their own most widely used term is "Tengimah." The clans to the west towards Meziphemah and Samagooting, however, are generally spoken of as "Chakromah," whilst those towards the south-east corner, including the villages from Púchómáh to Kidimah, are in like manner spoken of as the "Chakhomah," and these groups are again divided and sub-divided under other names which it is needless to recapitulate here, especially as they all most undoubtedly form one great group, and it is much less confusing to speak of the whole under the one comprehensive term "Angami." There are altogether 46 Angami villages. The total number of houses (obtained by actual enumeration) is 6,367, which, at five souls to each house, gives us a population of 31,835 souls, which I believe to be rather under than over the mark; and this population covers a tract of mountainous country with an average length of 30 miles and an average breadth of 20, or only about 600 square miles altogether; from which figure we may assume that we have here got a population of something over 50 to the square mile, whereas on referring to the last Census Report of Bengal (1872), I see that the Khasi Hills have only 23 souls to the square mile, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts positively only 10, whilst Hill Tipperah is lowest of all, with only 3!

I have written so often and at such length regarding the Angamies and the glorious country they inhabit, that I deem it right to refrain from entering into any further details here; indeed, to do so would be to monopolize the space I wish to devote simply to giving a very brief account of the position and resources only of every tribe we have come in contact with, so far as our information extends; and it is perhaps needless for me to say that the political and social history of the tribe, with an account of their manners and customs, is not within the scope of this paper.

On the south-east corner of the Angami country we come upon a small compact community generally spoken of as the "Sopumah" or "Mao" group of Nagas. In former days the villages forming this group were looked upon by our officers as British territory; even so late as February 1851. Reed visited them, and found they were ill disposed towards him, and he could not in consequence obtain any rice from them,



he destroyed one of their villages, and we are told that "this had the desired effect, for early next morning the heads of clans of the whole of the villages came in and inquired what tribute was required; an ample supply of rice was then brought in for the troops." They are now outside the limits of our jurisdiction, and I need not refer to them further, beyond stating that, although using a different dialect, they are very like the Angamis both in dress and customs.

Due east of the tribe above alluded to are the seven villages of the "Khezami" or "Kolia" Nagas, another tribe scarcely to be distinguished from the Angami except by a practised eye and one long resident among them.

Across the Kopamedza range we come upon the Zami Nagas, a group of only five villages, evidently belonging to the great Lahúpá division, upon whom we come next. How far the "Lahúpá" extends has not yet been clearly ascertained; we know, however, that he occupies a great portion of the watershed between Kopamedza and Shiroifarar, and that in a southerly direction he extends down the Iril and Ilang Rivers, whilst towards the north he probably goes some way down the course of the Lanier.

I may here remark that the shades of difference dividing one Naga tribe from another, especially if that other happens to be a close neighbour, are often very slight indeed. Thus, if we compare an Angami of Mezomah with a Kutcha Naga of Paplongmai, or with a Khezami of Kezakenoma, we should probably say they were very much alike; but let us miss over the nearest link or two, and compare the Angami with the Zami or Lahúpá, and we then see how almost totally unlike they are. Portions of the dialect, manners, customs, and dress of any one tribe we may like to take up will constantly keep cropping up in other tribes as we go on, thus clearly proving the unity of the race.

North and north-east of the Angami we come upon the "Sehmah Nagas," regarding whom we at present know very little beyond the fact that they possess five villages on the left bank of the Doyeng, and probably extend across to the other bank as well.

Immediately to the north of these Sehmah Nagas we have only very lately discovered the existence of another tribe, called the "Mezamah" or "Rengmah Naga." This tribe, as far as I have yet been able to ascertain, possesses seven villages containing about 2,000 houses, which, roughly speaking, we may calculate to contain a population of about 10,000 souls. It was from this tribe that in olden time the Rengmah Nagas now inhabiting the hills between the Kolliani and the Jumnah emigrated owing to intestine feuds. These latter Rengmahs were persuaded to pay in a regular revenue to Government in 1847, but after paying it for two years they refused to do so any more, and were apparently left alone until early in 1870, when I visited them, and finding that they were well able to pay their quota, I assessed them again, since when they have given no trouble whatever.

I may here make the general remark regarding the country lying between the Rengmahpani on the west and the prolongation of the Kopamedza range on the east, that I have never seen a hill country so thickly populated, so well cultivated, and so overrun with such a net-work of capital paths.

We now come upon what are generally called the Seesaugor Nagas, inhabiting that long strip of hill country bordering Seesaugor on the south, of whom we really know very little indeed, and that little has to be gleaned from the old records of Brodie's time (1842 and 1844), and a short paper written by Mr. Peale (above alluded to) which was published by the Asiatic Society in their Journal, Vol. XLI, Part I. From these papers we learn that between the Doyeng and the Dikhu the Naga country is divided into six Dwars. Thus, commencing from the west, we have the "Lhotah Nagas," who are sub-divided into the "Paniphatias" consisting of ten villages, and the "Torphatias" or "Doyongias" with eleven villages; we next have the "Hati-ghorias," who have only six villages; and next to them we come upon the "Assyringias," also possessing six villages; these again are followed by the



"Dupdorias" with twelve villages; and finally we have the "Namsangia" group of but four villages. In like manner between the Dikhu and the Bori Dehing we meet with the "Tablungias," comprising thirteen villages, who are followed by the "Jaktoongias" with eight villages; next to whom come the "Mooloongs" with only five villages; these again are succeeded by the "Changnois," who are said to possess eight villages, after them come the small tribe termed "Joboka," which only comprises four villages; next we have the "Banparas," also with only four villages; and after them the "Mutons" or "Kooloongs," also with but four villages; next to this tribe are the Panidwarias with ten villages and the Bordoerias with eight villages; and, finally, we have the "Namsangias," also possessing eight villages, who, I may add, are in no way connected with the "Namsangias" who inhabit the low border hills on the left bank of the Dikhu, already alluded to above. In speaking of the country and tribes between the Bori Dihing and the Dikhu, Captain Brodie tells us that—"The portion of the hills we passed over may be described as a succession of steep ridges, our marches being generally up one side of a hill and down the other to a stream at the bottom; these streams generally forming the boundaries of tribes. The soil appears to be very fertile, and there is a very large portion of it under cultivation. * * *

"The villages seem without exception on the top of precipitous hills with commanding views of all the approaches to them. * * * The roads throughout are generally very good; near the villages they are sometime 20 or 30 feet wide. * * * The men are a stout athletic race; most of the tribes have their faces tattooed with distinctive marks. * * * At Tabloong, Konghan, and Jaktoong, they were in a state of nudity, their loins being lightly girt with a smooth rattan passed twice or thrice round the body. To the eastward a straight piece of cotton cloth of about 18 inches long and 9 broad is worn suspended from the middle."

Captain Brodie thinks the population of this strip of country lying between the Bori Dehing and the Dikhu cannot be less than from 40 to 50 thousand souls. He says, "the number of houses in the villages may vary from 40 to 300 or 400 in each," and he also mentions that "in the neighbourhood of Changnoi and Mooloong there are large herds of buffaloes and oxen," thus showing that they must be a wealthy community notwithstanding their intestine feuds.

Of the Western Nagas inhabiting the strip of country between the Dikhu and the Doyeng, Brodie gives us very little information indeed, and it is therefore very difficult to form even an approximate estimate of the population in this tract. I, however, gather from his report that both the people and the hills they inhabit are very like those to the eastward already described. One very marked difference which he notices is the great want of influence and power of the chiefs over their followers, which was almost nil upon this side, whereas, to the eastward of the Dikhu he had generally found that their orders were readily obeyed. I am myself, however, rather sceptical on this point, and am inclined to believe that the Naga nowhere really accepts a chief in our sense of the term. Chiefs they do have, but they are merely the nominal heads of each clan, men who by dint of their personal qualities have become leaders of public opinion, but without the least particle of power beyond that given them by the *vox populi* and that only *pro tem*, upon the particular question that may happen to be exciting attention at the time being. The Government of every Naga tribe with whom I have had intercourse is a purely democratical one, and whenever anything of public importance has to be undertaken, all the Chiefs (both old and young) meet together in solemn conclave, and then discuss and decide upon the action to be taken, and even then it often happens that the minority will not be bound by either the wish or act of the majority; and as to any one single Chief exercising absolute control over his people, the thing is unheard of.

I have already rather fully explained that we know nothing of the tribes lying behind and to the south of these Sebsaugor Nagas; and Brodie, I may here add, remarks that "beyond the Dikhu to the southward lies the great range which separates Assam from the Burmese dominions. The summit of this range could not be more than from 15 to 20 miles off. We could see roads and villages in many directions, and



the people of Changnoi seemed to know that there was a pass leading from thence to Burma, but they said they had little or no intercourse with the Nagas beyond them to the south, and could give no information as to the distance to the other side."

In another letter he says—"On referring to notes of my trip to Mogoung in 1835-36, I find a route was given me with the names of three stages towards Assam from the Shan District of Monpong on the Loungparoo, Loungseing, Sunionug, Lum-
aunglong. Kyendwen as per margin. I think there can be little doubt but Longba is Loung-

paroo, and from what the Nagas mentioned it would appear to be a sort of entrepôt between the tribes on both sides." * * *

"I find also that, although our friendly Nagas have little knowledge as to the relative position of Longba with regard to the nearest Shan villages, further than that they can be reached in three days I have ascertained from Dhoanniahs, long residents in the Mogoung, that from Moongdow, a Shan village situated on the Kyendwen at the mouth of the Namsee River, you can ascend to Longba in two days." Now as regards the route here alluded to, strange to say in the course of conversation with Itonias (or "Dhoanniahs," as Bradie calls them, although I believe they are really an offshoot of the Singphos), they have often assured me of the existence of a route across the eastern Naga Hills leading into the valley of the Khaiendwen, which they say is used (though not frequently) to this day, and I think in all probability the route here referred to must be that shown in our maps as the one by which the Burmese army invaded Assam some fifty years ago. I am, however, a little doubtful whether this route ought not to be placed a little further to the east, for Mr. Carnegie, the Assistant Commissioner at Jorehaut, tells us in a very late communication (dated 10th July 1873) that "the tribes of whom we have any actual knowledge inhabit merely the outer edge of the hills which extend from the southern boundary of the Assam Valley to Burma; none of the people we see come from villages more than three days' journey from the plains. * * *

"Of the tribes beyond, who are called Abors, but who are of course Nagas, we know nothing," and if communication is still kept up across the great range, as my informant (the Itonia) said, it is very evident our officers in the plains know nothing about it. This, however, is, 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.

And, finally, we have the route over the Patkoi, which was visited by Mr. Jenkins (a tea planter) in December 1868, and again in December 1869; and judging from the description given by him of this route, I should say it must be anything but a favourite one. Thus we learn that he was no less than nine days after he left the last Assam village before he reached the Namyooong village the furthest point to which he penetrated, and the consequence was that the day before he reached it he found that "there was barely rice enough in the camp to give each man one meal," and Bayfield and Hannay appear to have met with the same difficulty about supplies when they visited the same spot in 1837; so the country does not seem to have become more populous in the interval. The physical aspect of the country, however, offers no real obstacle, and the pass itself seems an easy one, as we learn that "the ascent was not steep," and no difficulty was experienced in getting ponies over it; but, owing to the old paths being no longer kept open, "the route has now fallen almost entirely into disuse," and Mr. Jenkins gives it as his opinion that "numbers of persons who leave Hookoong for Assam never arrive." "They lose the path; and wandering about in the jungles, starve to death or are killed by wild animals," and he therefore suggests that the opening up of a road would prove of no small value to the province of Assam—a question about which I think there can scarcely be two opinions.

The above note includes, I believe, in a condensed form almost all the information of any value regarding the Naga country which we possess up to date, and I trust it



may prove useful in throwing a little light upon that subject, which, as Mr. Mackenzie says, is "an anxious problem on which much thought has been spent and many official hopes been staked."

A.—THE PATKOI NAGAS.

Taking up the tribes then in the same order of geographical contiguity, which has been followed in the preceding part of this narrative, I have first to notice a group of Nagas living on the northern slopes of the Patkoi mountains with whom we first came in

First notice of these Nagas, 1835.

contact about 1835. In the correspondence of that period regarding the Singpho Chief, the Duffa Gam, mention is made of raids committed upon villages under our protection by Nagas of the Upper Patkoi Hills. The first impression among our local officers was that we had now in this quarter to reckon upon frequent incursions by Nagas as well as by hostile Singphos and Burmese; and orders were given by Government to retaliate sharply and severely upon all villages concerned ⁽¹⁾ in such outrages. But it was shortly afterwards discovered that these Nagas were themselves most peaceably inclined, and that if any of our villages had been attacked by them, it was only in mistaken retaliation for wrongs done to the Naga tribes by Sing-

Their sufferings from the Singphos.

phos either of Assam or Burma. The Singphos seem in fact to have sought by conquest of the Nagas to supply the deficiency of slave labour following on the annexation of Assam. In 1837 when a party of British officers was sent across the Patkoi to negotiate with Burma regarding the Duffa Gam, they encountered a war party of Singphos fresh from the sack of Naga Settlements and dragging along gangs of captives. In those days we ⁽²⁾ considered all upon this frontier that was not Burmese to be actual British territory, and our officers had no scruples about interfering to deliver the Naga captives. Subsequently it was proposed to give permanent protection to these Naga clans by establishing a post under a European officer on the upper waters of the Bori Dehing. It was hoped that such an officer would be able to take efficient political charge of all this Singpho-Naga tract. The Government, however, felt doubtful of the expediency

Proposals for their protection.

of assuming active charge of this sparsely-peopled wilderness; and indicated its preference for the plan of deputing an officer from head quarters occasionally to visit the tribes and settle disputes as they arose. A further series of Singpho outrages shortly after led to the temporary occupation of a military station on the Bori Dihing and to the deputation of Captain Hannay to report more fully as to what was feasible to give protection to the Naga tribes. But the result of his enquiries was to show that Government had taken the

(1) Political Proceedings, 24th November 1835, Nos. 32 and 33.

(2) Ditto, 10th April 1837, Nos. 120 to 123.



correct view, and that, unless the Nagas would remove their settlements within the circle of our posts⁽¹⁾ we could afford them no effectual protection. Their communities* were few in number and reckoned in all at under 5,000 souls. To protect by military defences a mountain territory 90 miles long by 40 miles deep inhabited by such a mere handful of people was clearly more than Government was warranted in attempting.

From this point the notices of these Patkoi Nagas are few and unimportant, and in later years their very existence seems to have been lost sight of or to have been confusedly merged in that of the greater tribes to the west who are ordinarily communicated with through the officials of Sebsaugor. At any rate in 1871 the Deputy Commissioner of Luckimpur reporting specially on the Nagas of his district stated their numbers at 14,383 living in 2,865 houses and belonging to ⁽²⁾ seven different clans, but the names of the clans as given by him are certainly most of them names of Sebsaugor clans, viz., Nam Sangia, Bor Dwaria, Dadum, Joboka, Banfera, Toopigonuja, and Holagonuja. The fact is that the Eastern clans of the Sebsaugor Nagas trade both with that district and with Luckhimpore.

The general character of the Inner Line Regulation has been described in Chapter VIII above.

The Inner Line.

The question of laying down the Inner Line for the Luckimpore district generally was taken up by the Chief Commissioner of Assam in 1875. South of Jaipur it was found necessary to enclose within it a tract of country which had not up to that time been subject to the formal and plenary authority of the district officer. The object of enclosing this tract was to bring into the ordinary jurisdiction the tea gardens of Namsang, Taurack, and Hukunjuri. For the Taurack Garden compensation was paid to the Mithonia Nagas. For the Hukunjuri and Namsang Gardens similar compensation was paid to the Namsang and Bordwaria Nagas.† The sums thus paid are of course recovered as revenue from the occupiers of the gardens.

Under the orders of the Government of India the 'Inner Line' is defined merely for purposes of jurisdiction. It does not decide the sovereignty of the territory beyond. The active control of the district officer need not necessarily extend up to the boundary, but it must under no circumstances be carried further. Beyond the line the tribes are left to manage their own affairs with only such interference on the

* The names of the settlements are given as follow: Takauk, Kengew, Tahoo, Kotoo, Hasang, Loongsang, Yahung, Tonging, Nekjuk, Kamban, Tiethah, Tiesoo.

† All Sebsaugor tribes.

(1) Political Proceedings, 8th May 1837, Nos. 64 to 66.
Political Proceedings, 19th June 1837, Nos. 57 and 58.
Political Proceedings, 3rd July 1837, Nos. 48 and 49.
Political Proceedings, 14th August 1837, Nos. 74 to 78.
Political Proceedings, 25th Sept. 1837, Nos. 111 to 113.

(2) From the Assam Commissioner, No. 379 T, dated 15th May 1871.