

MY NATIVE COUNTRY

The land of the Nagas

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V.K.Nuh

My Native Country comes from the pen of a dedicated and senior Naga who has been through a long period of turmoil on his home turf.

Nature has been extremely kind to the area known as Nagaland to the outside world. The Naga people consist of a number of tribes, some well known and others not so. Endowed with much natural beauty the area is undoubtedly the next tourist paradise, once lasting peace is achieved in this long disturbed State, which is situated so strategically.

Much has been written about the current insurgency in North-east India, but to understand the same fully, it is required to gain a deep insight into the Naga imbroglio. For it is here that the problem began, and obviously once peace is achieved here, all the states of the region will benefit. All eyes and ears are now glued to the peace talks abroad.

Documenting the historical background and continuing with a step-by-step analysis of events, the book portrays the simplicity of the people and how they have moved from primitiveness to modernity in the short span of some five or six decades.

The book includes a playscript which the author hopes, like-minded Nagas the world over would like to enact, to bring home the chronology of happenings that will end in a lasting peace.

Finally, the book is a moving saga of the Nagas whose description by the late Verrier Elwin in his book *Nagaland* is also quoted elsewhere in this book.

ISBN 81-87502-48-7



A true ambassador for Christ **Rev. Dr. V.K. Nuh** is presently General Secretary of the Council of Naga Baptist Churches in Nagaland. From humble beginnings as an evangelist, he later became a Chaplain in the Naga Army, and in spite of being jailed as a political prisoner in Imphal Central Jail, his enthusiasm never waned. Serving as Headmaster in a Bible School he went on to become a Pastor of the Baptist Church. He served as Field Director of the Chakhesang Baptist Church Council from 1971 to 1992 where he was conferred with the honorary title of 'Executive Secretary Emeritus'. Subsequently he was also awarded with the 'Honorary Doctor of Divinity' at Gurukul Theological Seminary, Madras.

A vital spokesman of the Naga society, which is characterised by much traumatic socio-political upheaval, Rev. Dr. Nuh's accomplishments are many. With the genuine love for his motherland and his vision he still leaves no stone un-turned to further the cause of the people. Member of the recent peace and goodwill mission to neighbouring Assam, Rev. Dr. Nuh has authored several books, some of which are:

- Nagaland Church and Politics
- My Country My People
- Crusade on Naga Morality
- Theological reflection on Naga Society
- Revive us again.
- Struggle for Identity in North-east India

His *magnum opus* entitled "Naga Chronicles" is under compilation and is due to be published soon.

Rs 330

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Rev. Dr. V.K.Nuh

SPECTRUM PUBLICATIONS
GUWAHATI : DELHI

Published on behalf of **CNBC Research Wing,**
Kohima, Nagaland

by **SPECTRUM PUBLICATIONS**

- Panbazar Main Road, Post Box No 45, **GUWHATI-781001.**
Tel.(0361) 520361. **Email:**spectrumpub@sify.com
- 298-B Tagore Park Extn., Model Town-1, **DELHI-110009.**
Tel.(011) 713-5299. **Email:**vinmedia@bol.net.in



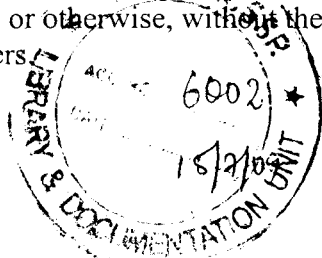
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First published 2002

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Cover design: **Spectrum Studio**

Photo courtesy: **Colo Mero**

ISBN 81-87502-48-7

Sole Distributors:

united publishers

- Panbazar Main Road, Post Box No 82, **GUWHATI-781001,** Assam.
Tel.(0361)517059. **Cables:** unipub. **email:**unipub@sancharnet.in
- LG-6 Akarshan Bhavan, 23 Ansari Road, **NEW DELHI-110002.**
Tel.(011)324-1471 & 724-1674. **email:**unitedpublishers@sify.com

Published by Krishan Kumar on behalf of Spectrum Publications and printed in India at D.K. Fine Art Press, Delhi-110052.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Preface	ix
Introduction	xi
Illustrations(Photographs)	xv
Part I	
1.My Ancestors were of a sea-faring Origin	1
2.My Beautiful Land	4
3.Oh! Nagaland (Poem)	8
4.My fore fathers tradition	9
Part II	
1.What They Said About Us	12
2.Love of One's Country	15
3.Naga Age Old Polity	17
4.Behold, The New Has Come!	19
Part III. They fought because they Believed	
1.The man who fought for you	20
2. The Powerful Impact of Christianity	22
3. Proclaim His Wondrous Deeds	25
4. My Native country (Playscript in xxxv scenes)	26
Part IV The Nagas political struggle (1929-1956)	
1.Nagas are Politically active	35
2.Formation of the Naga National Council	36
3.Political struggle with British India	38
4.Nagas' meet Mahatma Gandhi	45
5.India's response to the plebiscite	55
Part V The Naga people today	
1.Historical Facts about the Nagas	75
2.Nagaland Statehood	76
3.Shillong Accord Agreement	78
4.A Matter of concern	79
5.The Prevailing Situation today	80
6.A Family Member of yours	82
7.Great Injustices In Our Land	83

The land of the Nagas

Part VI

1. Proposed Modality Toward Naga National Reconciliation 86
2. Naga Public And Church Opinion Over The Situation 87
3. Points For Consideration /Basis for unity 89
4. Nomenclature 90
5. Proposed Reconciliation 92

Part VII

1. The Concept of Sovereignty 93
2. Kinds of Sovereignty 94
3. On Sovereignty 95
4. The Nagas and their Religion 96
5. The Location of Naga Homeland 97
6. Sovereignty and Human Rights in Nagaland 98
7. Human Rights 99

Part VIII

1. Where can the Nagas meet? 101
2. Points for Consideration 102
3. Integrity & Good Faith of India, Great Britain and Nagas 103
4. Bearings on the future of Nagaland 106

Part IX

1. The Peace Missions Proposals 113
2. Naga Declaration of Peace 120
3. Personal Opinion for Lasting Peace in Nagaland (R.Suisa) 122
4. A lasting peace in Nagaland (L.S.Mhasi) 123
5. Statement of the Naga Goodwill Mission Abroad 124
6. Re-interpreting the Thimpu Principles. 126
7. New Vision. 129
8. Re-interpreting Terms. 131
9. Brief Sequence of Naga Political Milestones 133

Part X Proposals for Settlements in Nagaland

1. A profound misunderstanding. 140
2. An illusion. 141
3. The meaning of Union. 142
4. Consequences of failure of present talks. 143
5. Plan of settlement. 144

My Native Village 146

Bibliography 148

Index 150

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the outbreak of the Naga political struggle, many young people were led to the frontline of the ferocious battlefield and tens of thousands of them have sacrificed their lives. Seeing the miserable condition of the people, the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) had formed a peace mission to intervene in the given situation. It had invited some of the very trusted and prominent personalities of the time, such as, Mr. Bimala Prasad Chaliha, Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan and Rev. Michael Scott to supervise the peace mission. Within five months, they had worked tirelessly and brought about a cease-fire between the Government of India and the Federal Government of Nagaland, which was signed on the midnight of September 6, 1964. Unfortunately, the peace talks ended in a deadlock.

Once again the situation went from bad to worse for thirty-three years. Then the second cease-fire agreement was signed between the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) on August 31, 1997. Now the Government of India has signed another cease-fire agreement with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang group (NSCN-K) on April 2, 2001. However, till today no real progress appears to have been made through their political dialogue towards a final solution of the Indo-Naga problem. Above all, the factional killings among the Naga underground are going on unabated creating a more complicated situation than ever.

In this prolonged Naga political problem of fifty-five years the Naga people have been enduring insurmountable sufferings.

The land of the Nagas

The Naga churches, the Naga public, and the NGOs have been tirelessly working for national reconciliation and a peaceful settlement of the vexed Indo-Naga political problem. Every possible effort has been made to express the opinions and suggestions of the people from all walks of life with the hope that this will help both the Government of India and the Naga national workers in their efforts to bring about a final solution of this age old problem.

If, by good providence, the Naga people achieve their sovereignty through any organization of the Naga national movement, nobody will oppose the settlement, because that will be the fulfillment of the Naga aspiration. However, if any organisation arbitrarily brings about a settlement, which is short of full sovereignty, without the mandate of the Naga people as a whole, they will be automatically branded as betrayers of the Naga cause.

National reconciliation is our top priority before any other thing, because there are so many heart-rending stories, which have accumulated during the prolonged freedom struggle for a Naga nation. Therefore, there must be healing of those wounds through forgiveness and national reconciliation for a final settlement of Naga political problem.

Though the burden and concern over the suffering of the people is so intense, our ability to extend help is so limited. The Naga people in general have become tired and have begun to have an indifferent attitude towards the situation. Moreover, nobody dares to take risks for the sake of the people. Because, freedom of choice is not given to the people.

I have written this book with the conviction that the right of self-determination cannot be pushed aside by the powers-that-be. Is it so easy to forget all the supreme sacrifices of many

MY NATIVE COUNTRY

precious lives of the Naga people, lost to realise their dream. The book is written at a time when the Naga people are passing through a very crucial period. I humbly admit that I have never been trained to write books by using scientific techniques or using an academic approach to the problem. However, by virtue of my personal involvement and experience in the conflict situation for many years as a peace worker, I am one of the few church leaders who have been involved with the peace mission since 1964. I have walked among the desperate, the rejected and even angry mobs. I have conducted funerals for hundreds of Naga patriots who were killed in the battlefield of the Naga freedom struggle. And I have come to the logical conclusion that no rifle or bomb can bring any solution. That is why, today, the choice of the Naga people is a non-violent struggle which Mahatma Gandhi believed in, and which achieved freedom for India. I do not understand why the Government of India cannot solve the age-old Naga political problem for so long. There are people, who do not bother about the situation, and believe to go slowly and wait for the gradual changes to come. But most of us, who are watching and living the situation, cannot wait any longer.

The time has come to break the silence: "Where do we go from here? The question is not that what will happen to me if I do this (?) but, what will happen to him if I do not do this (?)". As a believer in Christ and Minister of His gospel, I have a high sense of public responsibility. Therefore, with my deep concern for the prevailing situation, I have laid out in this book some suggestions and proposals as to the outcome of my inter-action with various social leaders and organisations. Whether the Government of India and Naga national workers will accept or not but, I believe that the truth cannot be crushed and trampled upon for ever because it will rise again. I have written what I have seen and learned. There may be errors, incoherency and unsystematic presentation of the issues dealt with in the book. But, they are left to the reader's best judgement.



Konyak warrior

Illustration from the book Nagaland by Verrier Elwin. Reprint 1997.



1. The legendary World War II Commonwealth War Cemetery at Kohima.



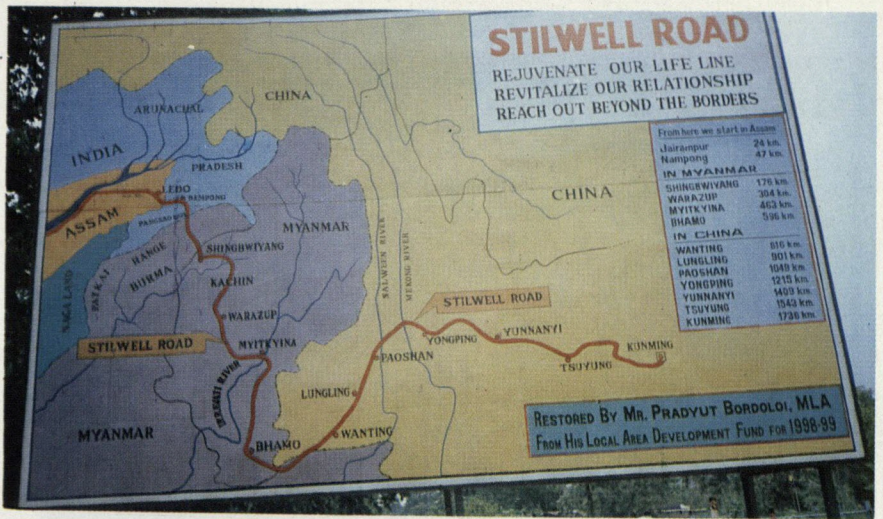
2. Kohima, capital of present-day Nagaland State.



3. The last batch of American lady Missionaries to North East India with the author.



4. The serpentine River Barak in Poumai Naga country.



5. The legendary Stilwell Road which leads from near the tri-junction of Assam, Arunachal and Nagaland through Myanmar to Kumming in China.



6. A Naga national workers' prayer centre in Myanmar.



7. The legendary village Khezakenoma from where the Naga people dispersed.



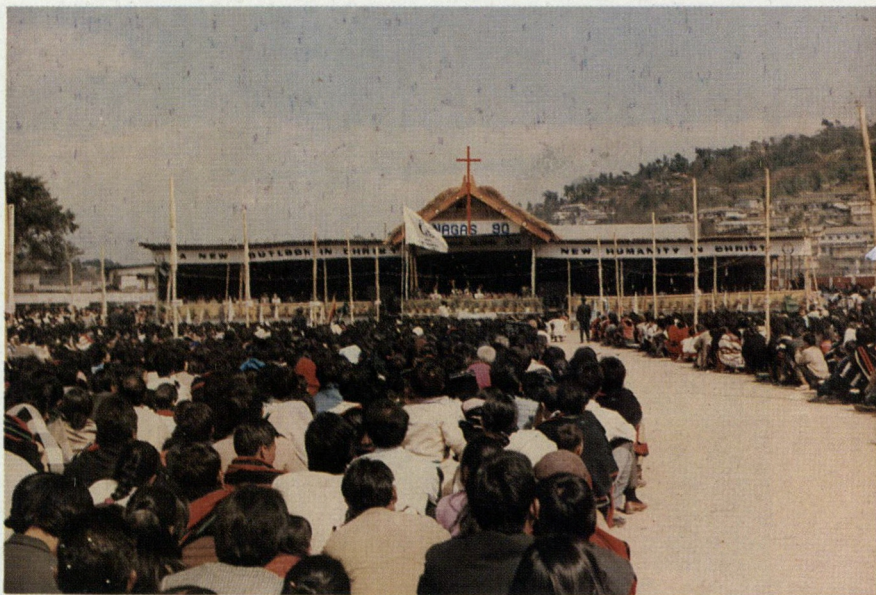
8. Beaming Zemi youth from Kohima district.



9. Pochury youth getting all set for a celebration.



10. Exhibiting the art of warfare (Phom Nagas).



11. *Nagas '90*. The first mammoth meet of Naga families.



12. Konyak lady carrying basket with implements and wearing necklaces for festive times.



13. Young people from Losami village at a Youth Conference in Phek Dt.



14. Kabui Naga youth at a Conference in Senapati District.



15. Perhaps the world's tallest *Rhododendron* from the Mt. Japfu range near Kohima.