The AO Naga Tribe of Assam

W. C. Smith

A MITTAL PUBLICATION

This volume is the first comprehensive study of the Ao-Naga Tribes of Assam. It deals with the Habitat and general characteristics of the people personal appearance and artificial adornments, domestic life, social organization, religion and magic, the place of the Ao Nagas in the human family and the changes through contacts with more advanced peoples. J.H. Hutton in the introduction to this book says, "The importance of Prof. Smith's work is firstly the comparative point of view from which he has approached his subject, and more particularly in his treatment of the Sociological problem which the acculturation of the Ao tribe presents. Although upto now no one of the monographs published has attempted to throw much light on the subject of acculturation, there can be no question but that the greatest service which an anthropological study of a backward tribe can perform for the people is to aid officials and educationalists in the measures to be taken and to be avoided when the tribe in question has to be brought into any scheme of modern administration. We have been given in this volume such a sketch of the Ao tribe as was necessary to the appreciation of the ethnological and sociological matter contained in it. The author and myself do not always agree on all the points raised, either of fact or of inference. The subject of the Ao tribe is one of great complexity."

As a whole this volume describes the life of the Ao Nagas, set them in their proper place in the human family and indicates the processes of bath personal and social disorganization and reorganization observed among them due to their contact with people who have moved farther along in the scale of civilization than they.

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THE AO-NAGA TRIBE OF ASSAM

William C. Smith

With an introduction by
J. H. Hutton

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INTRODUCTION

ACCORDING to the proverb, "It never rains but it pours," and though we have waited long for a monograph on the Ao Nagas, yet while Professor Smith's manuscript was first in my hands, the manuscripts of two other treatises passed, or were passing, through them. Each of the three contained material absent from the other two, and all were written from different points of view. The author of one was a Hindu doctor, of another a British official, of this, the third, an American sociologist, who had been a missionary in the Ao country. The first-mentioned of these three manuscripts, a short account of the Aos by Dr. Surendra Nath Majumdar, M.B., has, I hope, already been published in India during my absence on furlough.[1] The longest of the three, a most exhaustive and authoritative account of the tribe by Mr. J. P. Mills, is just nearing completion as Professor Smith's monograph goes to press.

While it is to Mr. Mills' work that we shall ultimately turn for a detailed account of the customs and beliefs of the Ao tribe, the importance of Professor Smith's work is firstly the comparative point of view from which he has approached his subject, and more particularly in his treatment of the sociological problem which the acculturation of the Ao tribe presents. Although up to now no one of the monographs published by the Government of Assam has attempted to throw much light on the subject of acculturation, there can be no question but that the greatest service which an anthropological study of a "**backward**" tribe can perform for the people studied is to aid officials and educationalists in the measures to be taken and to be avoided when the tribe in question has to be brought into any scheme of modern administration.

[1] This has been published in *Man in India*, Vol. IV., Nos. 1 and 2 (March–June, 1924).

The cynical view that in any case it matters little what is done, since an uncultured people is sure to perish when brought into sudden and intimate contact with civilization, is scarcely more disastrous than the view that whatever is regarded as good by or for the human product of the latter-day West must *ipso facto* be good for a pre-literate folk accustomed to totally different conditions of life, and must therefore be thrust upon them as quickly as possible. Captain Hocart, in a witty paper on "Psychology and Ethnology," [1] which is full of value to the practical anthropologist, touches on the evils wrought by the two schools of thought, which he describes as the "damn' nigger" school and the "little brown brother" school, and the latter school he regards as the "more insidious because it is kinder in intention." Any treatment of the question, therefore, which is likely to help us to guard against causing unforeseen evils, of which we cannot know, by our groping attempts to remedy those we think we see, is of the greatest value to us, and still more to the tribes whom we are trying to benefit. It is in this respect, as it seems to me, that Professor Smith's monograph is of most value. We are too apt to blunder in like fools where we should tread, if at all, in an angelic fear of the results our most cautious ministrations may produce, and this volume contains [2] material to show us something of the nature of a problem the very existence of which has in the past been all too little recognized.

We have also been given in this volume such a sketch of the Ao tribe as was necessary to the appreciation of the ethnological and sociological matter contained in it. The author and myself do not always agree on all the points raised, either of fact or of inference, and he has therefore sometimes included a dissenting note of mine on the grounds that, as the last word on some of these questions has not yet been uttered, it is better to give both opinions, and in this, at any rate, I am in agreement with him. The subject of the Ao tribe is one of great complexity. My own view is

[1] *Folk-lore*, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, June 1915.
[2] I refer in particular to Chapters VII and VIII.

that the tribe affords a pretty clear case of the comparatively recent fusion of two racial groups, but that it is most unlikely that either of these was even approximately pure when the fusion took place. The Mongsen Aos probably represent in a greater degree the pre-Ao population of what is now the Ao country, and although there seems to have been a more or less complete assimilation physically and psychologically between the Mongsen and the Chongli groups, a distinction between the two survives to a considerable extent in language and custom. The Mongsen appears to be more nearly related to the Konyak tribes of the north-eastern Naga Hills, whereas I suspect the Chongli of stronger affinities with the Sema, the Kuki and the Manipuri. Probably the Shan element is present in both groups, for it is likely that the Shans penetrated at a very early date into Assam, and that there were Shans there long before the Ahom conquest. The later-comers, however, are perhaps preponderatingly Tibeto-Burman (the Kachins are still spreading southward into Burma), while the earlier inhabitants seem to have comprised, apart from the aboriginal negroids, an element which may have been Dravidian, but was not Mongolian at all.

Professor R. B. Dixon of Harvard University, in analyzing the composition of the Khasi,[1] finds four main factors in the population of Assam, viz. the Brachycephalic-Leptorrhine, the Brachycephalic-Platyrrhine, the Dolichocephalic-Leptorrhine and the Dolichocephalic-Platyrrhine, which he conveniently abbreviates as B.L., B.P., D.L. and D.P. The B.P. he regards as Austro-Asiatic in origin and as having pressed into Assam from the east and north-east, bringing with it the Mon-Khmer language stock and driving back and in part assimilating the D.P., the earlier and aboriginal negroid population. The B.L. type he regards as Alpine, which has pressed south from the Himalayan region and the great plateaux of Central Asia. The D.L. factor he looks upon as Aryan and the latest of all to penetrate Assam.

[1] "The Khasi and the Racial History of Assam," *Man in India*, II. (1922).

These conclusions agree well enough with local tradition in so far as it is definite enough to build on. Many tribal origin stories point to the south-east, and the Mon-Khmer element survives in the shouldered hoe,[1] for instance, now of iron, but once of stone, and in occasional traditions. Such a one is that of the chief who caused his female servants' heads to be shaved so that their hair should not fall into his food, thus originating a clan whose women shave their heads all their lives. This story is told of a clan of Konyak Nagas, and is recorded by Scott and Hardiman [2] as a Palaung story, the Palaungs being of Mon-Khmer stock. The language of that stock also seems to survive in occasional Naga words, such as the Konyak *am*, meaning "stream." I suspect, too, that the use of the buffalo in the Naga Hills, both as a domestic animal and as an emblem in carving, is to be associated with this Austro-Asiatic stock, as also the practice of terracing (I do not imply irrigation necessarily) the hillsides, and perhaps of making permanent settlements in villages with shifting, but not migratory, cultivation. It may be added that the circular tonsure of the Ao and of some other Naga tribes seems to have extended at a comparatively recent date from Siam to the Ganges valley.[3] The Kuki type, whether it be Alpine or not, is clearly a later arrival, and seems to have come from the north down the Chindwin valley [4] and then pushed westwards through the Chin Hills [5] and Arakan; thence it came northwards again into Tripura, the Lushai and Naga

[1] *V.* Gurdon, *The Khasis*, p. 12; Peal, "Traces of the Kol-Mon Anam" (*J.A.S.B.*, 1, of 1896), and Hutton, "Two Celts from the Naga Hills" (*Man*, xxiv. 2, Feb. 1924).

[2] *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, I. i. p. 492.

[3] *V.* La Loubere, *Royaume de Siam*, I. 102, and illustrations at pp. 90 and 154; Ralph Fitch, *Travels in India* (Hakluyt).

[4] Fryer, "Note on the Khyeng People of the Sandoway District, Aracan," *J.A.S.B.*, No. 1 of 1875.

[5] Thus the Maring Nagas of Manipur seem to link up with the Angami and Tangkhul Nagas and the Poi Chins on the other, according to their own traditions, suggesting that a body of Kuki-Chin people may have been thrown off near the Kabaw valley in the course of the migrations down the Chindwin and have penetrated across the Manipur valley to the Assam side of the watershed. My authority for the Maring traditions is information supplied by Mr. C. Gimson; cf. also *The Angami Nagas*, p. 112.

hills.[1] It has thus possibly confused the local origin myths by adding fresh traditions of a south-eastern origin. There are, however, an appreciable number of origin stories which point directly to an origin from the north-west from the far bank of the Brahmaputra river,[2] showing that there has certainly been immigration from that direction also, irrespective of the Chindwin valley immigrants, who, as the Kachins, are still pressing south, or, as the Thado, still trying to penetrate north again. I believe it to be a Tibeto-Burman factor associated with this immigration that has substituted the mithan (gayal) for the buffalo as the principal domestic animal, and been responsible for carvings being spoken of as "mithan heads" though they represent palpable buffalo horns.[3] The Thados, as we know them, clearly have much that is to be associated with the Mon and Tai, but are distinguished from the elements that preceded them in the Naga hills by being essentially migratory, and practising a vastly more wasteful method of cultivation, though in arts of manufacture they are ahead of the Naga tribes

The last of the immigrant peoples in Assam, according to Dixon, are his D.L. factor, the so-called Aryans, and it seems possible that it was this element that brought in rice and irrigated cultivation, perhaps adapting it to pre-existing terraces such as those still used by the unadministered Konyak tribes, who are unacquainted with the cultivation of rice, but have millet as their staple cereal like the hill tribes of Formosa.[4] It may be added that in another part of the Konyak country taro, as in the Pacific, is the staple food. Dixon, however, regards this factor as having had virtually no influence in Assam racially except among the Syntengs, but one wonders whether further investigation of the Angami and perhaps of the

[1] *V.* Lewin, *Wild Races of S.E. India*, pp. 21, 73, 74, 76, 82, 138.
[2] Cf. Mills, *The Lhota Nagas*, p. 3; Hutton, *The Sema Nagas*, p. 378.
[3] It was Mr. Henry Balfour who first pointed out to me that many of the carved "mithan" heads, so called, in the Angami country were obviously derived from the buffalo type, though I have come across the converse of this, an obvious mithan head being spoken of as a buffalo.
[4] McGovern, *Among the Head-hunters of Formosa*, pp. 183 *sq.*

Manipuri might not lead to the conclusion that the D.L. factor is as strong in their areas as in the Jaintia Hills. It is perhaps worth notice in passing that the Angami method of treating and planting out rice seedlings, though differing from that of the intermediate Assam valley, is identical with the system used in Maimansingh in Bengal.[1]

The negroid factor, indicated, no doubt, by the thick lips and frizzly hair often seen in individual Aos, is, according to Dixon,[2] shared in an equal degree by the Khasi, Manipuri, Mikir, Kachari, Abor and Miri, though in a less degree by the Naga tribes, while the Alpine element he regards as more or less equal in all these tribes, including Nagas, though less prominent among Kachins and Shans. The Austro-Asiatic type he considers to be present in a much greater proportion than it is in the Khasi (despite their Austro-Asiatic language), in the Ao Naga, the Mikir, the Kachari, Tippera and Kuki tribes, together with the Chakma and Magh of the Chittagong Hill tracts, and all the Burmese peoples.

The net result of this is to conclude that the Ao tribe is composed of a substratum of Negroid with Austro-Asiatic and Alpine elements superimposed, and although I do not feel convinced that it contains the whole story, it is a very plausible conclusion, based as it is upon anthropometrical data, but agreeing with what we are able to infer from the historical, traditional and ethnological material available. Incidentally it links the Ao more closely than other Naga tribes with the Khasi on the one hand and with the Manipuri on the other, a conclusion which, in the latter case at any rate, is supported by the striking similarity between the physical appearance of the women of the two tribes, while the cephalic indices of Naga tribes taken by me[3] show that of the Ao as appreciably higher than that of the neighbouring tribes measured. In passing it may be noted that the Shan title *Tsawbwa* appears in the titular names

[1] My authority for this statement is a personal communication from Major J. L. Sen, I.M.S., M.C., who is acquainted with the methods used in both Maimansingh and the Angami country.

[2] *Loc. cit.*

[3] *The Angami Nagas*, p. 437.

Chaoba and *Choba*, so common among the Manipuris and the Aos respectively.

The affinities of the Ao, however, go much farther afield than the continent of Asia. Professor Smith has shown the Ao connection with Indonesia, but it goes further than that too. The anthropology of the Ao offers a number of strikingly close parallels with New Guinea and with Fiji, and with the Pacific generally, the resemblances being rather with Melanesia than with Polynesia, but extending nevertheless to New Zealand, and possibly even to South America. It is not possible to go into the evidence for these affinities here, though there is some hope of making a start in Mr. Mills' forthcoming monograph.

It was high time that a beginning was made of studying the Ao tribe, for it is changing very rapidly, and the younger generation, sophisticated and self-sufficient as it is only too apt to be, sets small store on the wisdom of the ancients, so that customs, traditions and beliefs are all being negligently allowed to slip into oblivion. As may be inferred from Professor Smith's monograph, it is clear that the change is by no means entirely for the better, and it is yet a matter for discussion whether the good there may be in it even outweighs the bad. We may, however, be permitted to hope that the light thrown on the question in the pages that follow may help, if not to turn the scales in favour of the former, at least to read the balance truly and estimate shortcomings.

The Aos are pleasant people to live among, very hospitable, and with a strong sense of humour. Conspicuous, however, among their weaker points is a certain captiousness, which causes them to strain at a gnat where they will on other occasions readily swallow a camel if need be, a disposition which inclines them to unnecessary litigiousness in petty matters and a pettifogging spirit in religion, bickering over by-issues instead of settling their differences amicably. The same rather pharisaic spirit is to be seen in the Manipuri, who is a recent convert to Hinduism, and who displays, as a Hindu, the same sort of captiousness that the Ao shows as a Christian, and will burn down his house as defiled if a

white infidel lean a bicycle against it, an act of super-Hinduism quite uncalled for from a Hindu in many respects distinctly lax. It may be that all this is merely the old and satisfying plan of compounding for sins we are inclined to by damning those we have no mind to, but I am disposed myself to regard it as the result of some particularly pragmatical tendency inherent in the race. The Chang tribe and the Angami tribe are noticeably different in this respect, and in the latter the same sort of dispute, arising out of differences in religious practices between the Christians and the Ancients, rarely seems to come into court.

Otherwise, the Ao, as I have said, are a very pleasant folk, and although they can be at times exasperating, the task of an official working among them and settling their disputes is an enviable one, lightened as it is by their friendliness, hospitality and humour. The day never passes without some "source of innocent merriment" arising, and I may perhaps fitly conclude this introduction with an instance of the sort of happening that enlivens routine.

Horses before the British occupation were unknown in the interior of the Ao country. Recently, however, there has been a boom in ponies, for shortly after I left Mokokchung in 1917 the head interpreter there bought himself a pony to ride, and his example caught on quickly. Among others who followed it was an Ao interpreter named L——, who, having bought a terrible old screw to start with, determined to sell it and buy a pony that would be of some use. Simultaneously the pastor of the village of Ch—— obtained authority to buy him a horse the better to serve the spiritual needs of his flock, concentrated as it was at the top of a precipitous hill, and to demonstrate himself a person of importance and socially "in the swim." Hearing that L—— had a pony for sale he went to see him. "Is it true," says he, "that you have a pony for sale? And what might the price be?" "I have a well-trained and very experienced pony," says L——, "and the price I am asking is only eighty rupees." He had paid Rs.60 for it when he bought it. "Be content," says the other, "take an hundred and ten, for, sure, 'tis the Church will pay for him, not I."

"Well now," says L——, "I couldn't take a hundred and ten for him, and he not worth it, but let you give me ninety."

The ascent to Ch—— is very steep, the weather was very hot, and when asked to carry his new owner up the pony dissented, so he was led. Half-way up he lay down. On this the flock was called upon to carry him in. They fetched long bamboo poles, tied the pony to these, and the new owner arrived in triumph on foot with his pony borne before him like the ass in Æsop's Fables. The unfortunate animal died next day, but not before it had at least done its share towards relieving the monotony of life in a Naga village.

J. H. Hutton.

FOREWORD

It was the writer's privilege to spend some time in the Naga Hills District of Assam, where he was connected with the Mission Training School for the Ao Nagas at Impur. Practically all of his first year's residence was devoted to language study in preparation for school work. It was not long before it became evident to him that in learning an Oriental language it was not sufficient to learn the meanings of disconnected words from a dictionary; neither would some well-formed sentences suffice. Since language is essentially an instrumentality for the expression of thought, it becomes necessary to go back of the vehicle to the idea which the word seeks to convey. We must know something about the social experiences which have given a meaning to the particular form; in short, in learning a Naga language it is necessary to try to "think Naga."

The best way to learn a language like this is through a study of the customs, traditions, superstitions and beliefs of the people; these are the real things which seek to express themselves, and without an understanding of these the words cannot convey their real import.

A knowledge of native customs and beliefs throws light upon many expressions which otherwise would be dark sayings. *Aksü* is a tax levied on the people of a village. When we analyse the word it means "dead hog," and we wonder what might be the relationship existing between a tax and a "dead hog." But when we learn that it is customary for a village to provide a feast of pork for visitors who come from other villages, and that each household in the village is assessed to defray the expenses, then the meaning becomes clear. *Motongtaker* is the word for cholera.

Literally it means "that which causes one not to arrive." Cholera is quite prevalent in the Brahmaputra valley, and, at times, when the hillmen go down to the markets they contract cholera and die before they reach home. *Temenen* means "sin," but it is far different from current Western ideas. A family is held to be sinful and unclean if some calamity befall a member, such as being killed by a tiger, by a snake-bite, by a fall from a tree or if he in any way meet with a sudden, accidental death. This would be positive proof that the family was sinful and that the wrath of deity had visited the home.

In addition to the fact that such a study of the folk-ways and *mores* of a group is an aid to the acquisition of the language, it gives an approach to the people and proves to be invaluable in dealing with them. By taking an interest in their beliefs and practices their attention is secured, while sneering at these customs will only antagonize them and close the way of approach. The Westerner must remember that the beliefs of these hillmen mean as much to them as our own mean to us; and for that we must give them credit.

It was in connection with this language study that the collection of the materials presented in this monograph was begun. In addition to the information secured from the people themselves, other sources were also used. It was the writer's privilege to examine the diaries of several of the early officials of the district, and these were found to contain much valuable data. There is also some fragmentary information scattered through the Census reports of India. Dr. Clark's *Ao Naga Dictionary* contains much valuable material, but its use is practically limited to those who have a knowledge of the Ao language. There are fragments scattered about in various periodicals also, but these are more or less inaccessible. To all of these sources the writer acknowledges his indebtedness.

This monograph does not claim to be exhaustive. These people have no written records, and everything has been transmitted by word of mouth; hence there are many variations in their traditions. The variations appear mainly

on the outskirts of the tribe, where the influence of neighbouring groups is felt, as, for example, the Lhota on one extremity and the Konyaks on the other. It has been the endeavour of the writer to record the most general and outstanding elements which would tend to be characteristic of the entire tribe.

In studying this simple group it became evident that the same process was going on here as in many other similar situations, namely, that where two groups on different cultural levels come into contact, the one on the lower level tends to become disorganized and the old agencies of social control cease to function efficiently.

According to the annals of the Ahoms, when the Ahoms invaded Assam in A.D. 1215, the different Naga tribes were settled in their present habitat, and from all that we can gather they were the same Nagas which the British found when they took possession of Assam several centuries later. The Nagas were isolated in the hills and had no outside contacts except for their raids into the Brahmaputra valley and the counter raids which were dispatched into their territory. In 1885 the British Government assumed suzerainty over the Ao Naga tribe, and since then the Nagas have been coming into contact with the more advanced peoples in the Assam Valley and with the Europeans. With these contacts, changes have come and disorganization has set in. It is the purpose of this study to trace the changes which have taken place in this group. In the concluding chapter some materials have been brought together from other groups to show that the situation as found among the Ao Nagas is not an isolated phenomenon.

In an examination of the recent literature treating of the pre-literate [1] groups of mankind one is struck by the numerous statements which set forth the disorganizing effect of the contacts which are made with civilized men, whether they be with the trader, official or missionary. There is coming to be a dissatisfaction with the methods used in dealing with these peoples, and a number of danger

[1] The term "pre-literate" has been suggested by Professor Ellsworth Faris. Cf. *Journal of Religion*, IV., p. 261.

signals have been set up. That is perhaps all that we can say, for no telling research work has as yet been undertaken in this field. The ground, however, is being prepared so that in the near future far-reaching research work may be undertaken. In this connection the series of monographs on the different hill tribes of North-east India which have been published by the Government of Assam, and to which this work belongs, may be noted. In the earlier volumes of the series one gets but the faintest idea, if any at all, that such a process of acculturation has been going on. The writers of these volumes seem to be satisfied when they have recorded certain facts, and they do not indicate any need of further researches. But in the volumes of Dr. Hutton and Mr. Mills we find clear indications that there are problems which need further study. This monograph proposes to set forth some of the problems as they are found among the Ao Naga tribe. This, however, is a mere introduction. If the writer has in any way been able to suggest some of the problems and stimulate further research he will feel that his efforts have been well repaid. As yet no satisfactory technique has been adopted for carrying out such a programme. A number of writers who have had long acquaintance with certain groups have recorded their conclusions as based on their observations. But with that we cannot be satisfied; the "guesses" of the Westerner are not sufficient. There is grave danger that they assume they are viewing a certain practice exactly as the person under observation does. "The Western observer," writes Faris,[1] "thinks of religion in terms of doctrines and theologies and is able to report the beliefs and doctrines of the native in a way that is very complete and systematic and misleading. . . . For example, the natives are supposed to have a belief in spirits, which extends to everything they see in their world. The trees have a spirit, there is a spirit of the river, a spirit in the stones, and in every object in their world. Now the very difficulty that I found in getting a satisfactory word that would answer to the concept of

[1] *American Journal of Sociology*, XXIII., p. 606.

'spirit' leads me to question the statement.[1] And I can imagine a psychologically inclined Eskimo coming among us and reporting in a paper . . . that white people believe every chair to be inhabited by a spirit, proving his point by declaring that he has seen many a white man curse a chair after it had maliciously got in his way and caused him to stumble over it. (Missionaries in inland China report that the natives consider that the missionaries worship chairs, on the ground that they often bow down to them at family worship.) White people believe that spirits inhabit golf balls and billiard balls, and are frequently seen to offer short prayers to them in order to induce them to roll where they are wanted. They also imprecate them if they do not obey. They even believe that so small an object as a collar button has an evil spirit, and often swear violently when this little object rolls under the furniture—thinking that the action is caused by the mischievous spirit of the button." "Are we not too apt to interpret the workings of the primitive mind," writes Mr. Henry Balfour,[2] "as though they differed from those of our own minds merely in degree, and to forget that, to a very great extent, the primitive outlook is fundamentally different from ours? Is it possible from such data as we are able or likely to obtain fully to comprehend the mental processes of savages?"

A technique has for some time been in process of development which should produce the desired results. What we need is a revelation of these persons themselves instead of the mere "guesses" of the Westerner. The intimate personal documents such as the letter, diary and autobiography are invaluable for getting a person's attitudes which will help in understanding him. Materials of this sort were used by Thomas and Znaniecki in *The Polish Peasant*, by Park and Miller in *Old World Traits Transplanted*, and by Anderson in *The Hobo: a Study of the Sociology of the Homeless Man*. This method is also being applied in the Race Relations Survey which is being carried out on

[1] Professor Faris was for some years a resident in the Congo district of ica.

[2] *Folk-lore*, XXXIV., p. 15.

the Pacific Coast under the direction of Dr. Robert E. Park of the University of Chicago, and in which the writer has had the privilege of co-operating. A series of articles by Professors Park, Bogardus, Krueger and Bain in Volumes VIII. and IX. of the *Journal of Applied Sociology* set forth the methods used in a study of this sort. A forthcoming book by Dr. Emory S. Bogardus of the University of Southern California will bring together the methods that have been tried and tested in this survey.

The question may well be raised that the members of pre-literate groups cannot write letters, diaries or autobiographies. But that is not absolutely necessary, for a skilful interviewer can draw them out and record them, and already we have some samples of such documents. The Reverend Donald Fraser has translated for us "An African Autobiography," by Daniel Nhlane.[1] A. M. Hocart has rendered into English an essay entitled, "A Native Fijian on the Decline of his Race," [2] which was written by a native of Fiji. Dr. Paul Radin secured and translated "The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian," [3] which is very valuable. In the introduction to this document, Dr. Radin writes: "Unprepared as primitive man is to give a well-rounded and complete account of his culture, he has always been willing to narrate snatches of autobiography. Such personal reminiscences and impressions, inadequate as they are, are likely to throw more light on the workings of the mind and emotions of primitive man than any amount of speculation from a sophisticated ethnologist or ethnological theorist." Dr. Radin has also recorded another document, "Personal Reminiscences of a Winnebago Indian." [4] This, however, lacks the naïveté of the other and is correspondingly of less value. Another interesting document is an interview with an Igorrote chief [5] who was leader of a band of Igorrotes that visited Coney Island, New York, during the summer of

[1] *Missionary Review of the World*, XLII., pp. 603–8, 683–6, 933–48.
[2] *Hibbert Journal*, XI., pp. 85–98.
[3] *University of California Publications in American Archæology and Ethnology*, XVI., pp. 381–473.
[4] *Journal of American Folk-lore*, XXVI., pp. 293–318
[5] *Independent*, LIX., pp. 779–85.

1905. In a naïve way the chief gave his reactions to the observations he had made during his short period of residence in the United States, and they are most enlightening. These documents are by no means models, but give us a hint of the possibilities if such persons had the direction of a competent research man in writing out their materials. The model document of this sort is doubtless the autobiography of a Polish peasant as presented by Thomas and Znaniecki.[1] Evans [2] tells how he secured a number of folk-tales from a certain group in Borneo. He began to relate some folk-tales to a group of men. This aroused their interest so that they began to talk. He ends by stating: "That night I got as many stories as I could take down." This method, no doubt, can be used successfully for securing other materials as well as folk-tales.

While the writer realizes the value of such documents he is now in no position to secure them. He hopes, however, that some of the materials brought together in this study will suggest to others the need for and the opportunity for collecting such documents. This will no doubt result in a better understanding of the pre-literate groups of mankind, so that better adjustments with the more advanced peoples can be worked out.

In this connection it is significant to note that under the direction of Professor Archibald G. Baker of the University of Chicago there has been organized "A Research Extension in Comparative Religion and Missions, devoted especially to the subject of cultural interpenetration as exemplified on the Mission field. This Extension consists first of a Central Council composed of five faculty members, representing those departments which are most intimately related to the study, namely, Sociology, Anthropology, Religious Education, Comparative Religion and Missions, and secondly of the missionary alumni and others who are interested in the investigations proposed and are willing to co-operate. It is felt that if a goodly number of men and women, labouring in the different Mission fields, and trained in approved

[1] *The Polish Peasant*, Vol. III.
[2] *Among Primitive Peoples in Borneo*, pp. 171, 172.

methods of research, can be enlisted in such an investigation . . . a very decided contribution may eventually be made to the efficiency of the missionary effort and to a better understanding of the probable future of the race." [1]

When the writer returned to America, the descriptive materials relative to the Ao Nagas were submitted to Professor W. I. Thomas of the University of Chicago, who suggested that they be prepared for publication. At a later date the document was submitted to Professor Frederick Starr. He was struck by the close resemblance of the Ao Nagas to the Dyaks of Borneo and to the Igorot of the Philippines, and suggested that this relationship be further investigated. The writer gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to him for the suggestion to work out this problem. To Professor Ellsworth Faris the writer is deeply indebted for many valuable and helpful suggestions and for encouragement in completing the study. The writer is also indebted to Professor James Main Dixon of the University of Southern California for his patient reading of the entire manuscript. Grateful acknowledgment is also made to my colleague, Dr. Clarence E. Rainwater, for several valuable suggestions. In order to bring the Ao names into conformation with the forthcoming monograph on the Aos by Mr. J. P. Mills, Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills District, I have adopted the spelling which he has used, a list of which he very graciously submitted to me. I am deeply indebted to Dr. J. H. Hutton, Honorary Director of Ethnography for Assam, for much valuable assistance. His knowledge of the Aos has come through intimate contact with them during his years of official service in the Naga Hills. This fund of information was brought to bear when he read the manuscript. Due to his criticism several changes have been made which were embodied in the text, but in many instances they were placed in footnotes. In certain instances where there was disagreement the text was not altered, but his dissenting opinion was placed in a footnote. Since the last word has not been said on some

[1] *The Journal of Religion*, IV., p. 63.

of these problems, it was thought best to introduce both positions because of their suggestiveness to others who might do work in the same field. Dr. Hutton's critical acumen has been brought to bear not only on the manuscript, but also on the proof sheets, which he has read as well. In addition to this I am under obligation to him for his mediation between the Government of Assam and the publishers of this volume.

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