

GAZETTEER OF
NAGA HILLS
AND
MANIPUR



B.C. Allen

A Mittal Publication

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PREFACE

The Gazetteer of the Naga Hills district should only be regarded as a supplement to the monographs on the various Naga tribes, which are now under preparation by Mr. A. W. Davis, C.S. Similarly, much interesting information, which might under other circumstances have suitably been incorporated in this work, will be published separately in various monographs on the Manipuris and the hill tribes subject to them, which are now engaging the attention of Mr. Hodson. It will be observed that there is no directory appended to this Gazetteer. Apart from the headquarters stations there are, however, no towns or places of sufficient size or importance to demand a separate description. I am indebted to Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell, C.S.I., for his kindness in examining the Gazetteer of Manipur, and to Mr. Davis and Mr. Reid for criticising the Gazetteer of the Naga Hills.

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B. C. ALLEN.

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL FEATURES.

Area and Boundaries—Mountain system—River system—Geology—
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THE district of the Naga Hills lies between 25°2' and 26°47' N. and 98°17' and 94°52' E. and covers an area of 8,647 square miles. On the north it is bounded by Sibsagar; on the west by Sibsagar, Nowgong, and the North Cachar Hills; on the south by the native state of Manipur; and on the east by mountain ranges inhabited by independent Naga tribes.

Area and
boundaries

The district consists of a narrow strip of hilly country, and has a maximum length as the crow flies of 188 miles, and an average breadth of about 25 miles. The Barail enters it at the south-west corner and runs in a north-easterly direction almost up to Kohima. As far as Berrima there are three main ranges of hills lying parallel to one another, the most northerly of the three being the largest and the most important, and containing several peaks over 6,000 feet in height. To one approaching the district from the

Mountain
System.

north, this range stands up like a great wall. For, though there are from ten to twelve miles of hilly country between its lower slopes and the flat valley of the Dhansiri, these outer hills are, for the most part, only from 1,500 to 2,000 feet in height. Near Kohima the Barail is merged in the mountain ranges which have been prolonged through Manipur from the Yoma of Arakan, and the main range assumes a much more northerly direction. This range is considerably higher than the Barail. Overhanging Mao Thana, on the southern frontier of the district, there is a mountain whose summit is 9,808 feet above the level of the sea, and a few miles further north stands Japvo (9,890 feet), the highest point in the British Province of Assam.* These are, however, only the highest points in a chain most of whose peaks between Mao Thana and Kohima are considerably more than 7,000 feet above sea level.

North of Kohima, the main range gradually declines in height. Merama peak is only 4,900 feet above the sea, and Nidzukru and Thevokeji a little above 5,700 feet, but Thebzothu or Wokha Hill is 6,600 feet in height. A little to the north of Wokha the range is pierced by the valley of the Doiang, which here makes a sudden bend and runs south-west to Lungkung. From Lungkung a chain of hills runs north-east till it is stopped by the Jhanzi, almost on the northern border of the district. This range is an unusually straight and level one, most of the hills being between 2,000 or 3,000 feet in

* The Daphabum on the eastern frontier of Lakhimpur is 15,000 feet above mean sea level, but it lies outside the Inner Line.

height, but at Munching it rises to 4,234 feet. An outer range runs parallel to it on the west, which has a general height of between 1,500 or 2,500 feet, and a third range lies between the two northern sections of these chains of hills. The Japvo range throws out numerous spurs towards the east and west, and the same phenomenon is to be observed in the hills which traverse the Mokokchung subdivision north of the Doiang. The general north-eastern tendency is still discernible, but the country, as a whole, consists of a tumbled mass of hills, most of which are between three and four thousand feet in height.

In their natural state these hills are covered with dense evergreen forest. Most of the easier slopes, up to a height of about 5,000 feet, have, however, at one time or another, been cleared for cultivation. Where this has been done they are covered for the most part with scrub, bamboo, and grass, and the larger forest trees have disappeared. In the country inhabited by the Angamis the hill sides have been cut out into terraced rice fields and there is comparatively little jungle to be seen. Nowhere, in fact, is there much timber still remaining except in the bottom of the river valleys and on the summits of the hills. The slopes of Japvo are covered with primeval forest, huge trees tower into the air, and there is comparatively little undergrowth beneath their over-shadowing limbs. Near the summit, the forest is almost entirely composed of rhododendrons, whose trunks and boughs are buried in thick moss and lichen. The actual peak is a mass of tumbled rocks, which, towards the south, fall away in a sheer precipice

General
appearance
of district.

over a thousand feet in depth. Some of the higher hills near Japvo have steep grassy slopes, studded with rocks and boulders, and are almost entirely destitute of tree growth; a characteristic which is still more strongly marked in the portion of the range that lies beyond the frontier of Manipur. In the neighbourhood of Kohima the valleys are broad, the slopes of the hills are fairly easy, and have, to a great extent, been brought under cultivation, and the scenery is, for a hill district, unusually tame. The lower hills are not so healthy and are in consequence but sparsely peopled. The outer ranges on the north are for the most part covered with heavy jungle, and the intervening valleys afford a home for elephants and other varieties of big game.

**River
System.**

The Barail and the Japvo range of mountains form the watershed of the district, and, as they are seldom more than ten or fifteen miles from the western boundary, none of the rivers that come tumbling down their slopes have time to attain to any considerable dimensions before they enter Sibsagar or Nowgong. Almost as far north as Mokokchung, the whole of the drainage of the north-western face of the hills ultimately finds its way into the Dhansiri. The Dhansiri itself rises in the south-west corner of the Naga Hills, below the Laishiang peak, and flows a north-westerly course for about fifteen miles. It then turns at right angles to the north-east, and as far as Dimapur forms the northern boundary of the district. As it flows along a few miles from the outer range of hills it receives a large number of tributaries. But, with the exception of the Diphupani, they are all of them small and unimportant,

and even the Diphupani is barely thirty miles in length.

The next river worthy of mention is the Rengmapani which falls into the Doiang; but the Zubza, as the Rengmapani is called when flowing through the hills, is, after all, a very inconsiderable stream. The only river of any importance in the district is the Doiang. It rises near Mao-'Thana and flows a north-north-easterly course for five and forty miles, when it suddenly turns to the north-west, and pierces the main chain of hills. After flowing for twelve miles in this direction it again turns at right angles and flows for twenty miles to the south-west. Here it turns sharp again to the north-west, and, shortly after emerging from the hills, it is joined by its largest tributary, the Rengmapani. The Doiang receives all the drainage of the main range between the Rengmapani and Wokha, while its tributary the Bagti, a stream about twenty-five miles in length, drains the valley between the inner and outer range of hills between Bhandari and Sonigao. The Doiang is only navigable for a few miles within the hills, as the channel is blocked with rocks at Nabha. If these were blasted, canoes could probably go as far as the Mokokchung Wokha road.

North of the Doiang, the principal streams are the Disai and the Jhanzi, which ultimately fall into the Brahmaputra, after flowing through the Sibsagar district. The northern frontier of the Naga Hills is marked by the Dikho, which is navigable for a short distance within the hills, though the head hunting proclivities of the tribes living on the further bank might render the voyage rather a risky undertaking. The principal river in

the territory which has recently been annexed is the Tizu, with its tributary the Lanier, which falls into the Chindwin. With the exception of the Doiang all of these rivers are mere mountain streams, which make their way towards the plains by fairly easy gradients. There are no waterfalls of any importance on any of these rivers, and there are no lakes or *jhils* within the boundaries of the district.

Geology.

Generally speaking the Naga Hills are said to be composed of pretertiary rocks overlaid by tertiary strata. Oldham in 1883 described the hills, for about 20 miles north of Mao and east of Kohima, as axial, while to the west of Kohima lay a tract of tertiary country, with dun or gravel deposits immediately to the south and east of Nichuguard.* The hillsides are formed of a treacherous grey shale, which is very liable to slip after heavy rain, and which forms a stiff hard clay when cut out into the terraces on which rice is grown. There are deposits of limestone rock imbedded in the shale, ranging in colour from a light gray to a deep blue, which make an excellent building stone. A certain quantity of tufa lime has recently been discovered in the valley of the Sijju east of Kohima, and there are strings and nests of lignite in the hills near Nichuguard. Coal is also found in the hills through which the Disai debouches on the plains, and near the village of Anakey in the Mokokchung subdivision. But the most important coal fields in the Naga Hills lie outside the borders of the district, and have in consequence

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XIX, Pt. 4.

been described in the Gazetteers of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

During the winter time the climate of the higher hills is cold and bracing. The days are generally bright and sunny, but frost at night is by no means uncommon. At the hottest season of the year the thermometer seldom rises above 80° Fahrenheit in a well-built bungalow at Kohima, but, as the air is surcharged with moisture, the climate is sometimes found a little enervating. The low ranges of hills that adjoin the plains are far from healthy, and Nagas who settle there suffer much from fever, and generally deteriorate in physique. The average rainfall at Kohima is only 76½ inches in the year. It is considerably lower than that recorded further east, Wokha returning over, and Mokokchung nearly, one hundred inches. Kohima is, however, sheltered to some extent by the high range of Japvo.

Climate and
Rainfall.

Nearly four-fifths of the total rainfall at Kohima is precipitated during the four months June to September, and the fall in April and May is unusually low for Assam. The monthly rainfall at Kohima, Wokha, and Mokokchung will be found in Table I. Strong winds blow from the north-west in February and March, but destructive gales or tornadoes are not common.

There is very little game in the Angami country, but wild animals are still to be found in the hot unhealthy valleys, lying between the outer ranges of hills. The list includes elephants, bison (*bos gaurus*), buffalo, tigers, leopards, bears, the sambur (*cervus unicolor* and the barking deer (*cervulus muntjac*). The serow is occasionally found on the higher mountains, and

Fauna.

the flying lemur (*galeopithecus volans*) is sometimes met with in the woods. Game birds include wild fowl (*gallus ferrugineus*), partridges, pheasants, including the horned variety (*tragopan blythii*), and woodcock. The wood duck (*asarcorius sentutatus*) is also occasionally seen. Elephants are fairly common in the western part of the district, and in 1908-04, 18 animals were captured by a gentleman who had been allowed to hunt this tract. A small herd also makes its home in an elevated valley near the village of Khonoma. The scarcity of game is illustrated by the fact that in 1908 only one person was killed by a wild animal in the Naga Hills, and rewards were only paid for the destruction of 4 tigers, 14 leopards, and 1 bear.
