

A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF KOHIMA

Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfilment for the award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in History

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Dedicated to my parents and sister



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the research data presented in this accompanying dissertation titled, **A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF KOHIMA** has been carried out by Ms. Khyulano Ezung bearing Regd. No. 648/2015 under my direct guidance and supervision. The present work is original in its content and has not been submitted in part or full for any other degree or diploma in any other University/Institute.

It is further certified that the candidate has fulfilled all the conditions necessary for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History under Nagaland University.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tiatoshi Jamir", is written over the printed name.

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DECLARATION

I, Ms. Khyulano Ezung, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Nagaland University for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

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Khyulano Ezung

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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

More than fifty years have passed since the Second World War ended, and historians have spent extensive time and space in studying and sharing with humanity the causes and origins of the war, while it is observed that there are not many explanations available in reviewing the Second World War in terms of general reasonings of war. Reasoning the evidence and drawing inferences from the events in a way that shows clarity that can logically only be made sensible by comparing across cases, a general theory of war that has been logically studied and authenticated gives the sound validation that the explanation is identifying essential causes from distinctive and perhaps contemporaneous factors (see Vasquez, 1996).

Most wars begin raggedly. In the minds of the Englishmen, 4 August 1914 is unshakably fixed as the date when the First World War began; yet by then France and Germany had been at war for twenty-four hours, Russia and Germany for three days, Serbia and Austria-Hungary for almost a week. To some, “The Second World War was vaguer still in its opening; the Russians date it from 22 June 1941, the Chinese from November 1937, the Abyssinians, I suppose, from October 1935, and the Americans from 7 December 1941. The American date is the most sensible. The war became truly worldwide-much more so than the first World war-only after Pearl Harbor” (Taylor, 1961, p.1).

Hitler answered it repeatedly that it was not his intention, like Stresemann or Brüning, merely to dismantle the Versailles Treaty – a task that the Depression had half done for him even before he became Chancellor. Nor was his ambition to restore Germany to her position in 1914. Hitler’s goal was different. Simply stated, it was to enlarge the German Reich so that it

embraced as far as possible the entire German Volk and, in the process, to annihilate what he saw as the principal threats to its existence, namely the Jews and Soviet Communism (which to Hitler were the same). Like Japan's proponents of territorial expansion, he sought 'living space' in the belief that Germany required more territory because of her over-endowment with people and her under endowment with strategic raw materials. The German case was not quite the same, however, because there were already large numbers of Germans living in much of the space that Hitler coveted. When Hitler pressed for self-determination on behalf of ethnic Germans who were not living under German rule – first in the Saarland, then in the Rhineland, Austria, the Sudetenland, and Danzig – he was not making a succession of quite reasonable demands, as British statesmen were inclined to assume. He was making a single unreasonable demand which implied territorial claims extending far beyond the River Vistula. Hitler wanted not merely a Greater Germany; he wanted the Greatest Possible Germany. Given the very wide geographical distribution of Germans in East-Central Europe, this implied a German empire stretching from the Rhine to the Volga. Nor was that the limit of Hitler's ambitions. For the creation of this maximal, Germany was intended to be the basis for a German world empire that would be, at the very least, a match for the British Empire (see Ferguson, 2006).

Hitler invested much to build up the rearmament program and when it did not succeed, it left a huge financial depression in the German economy. Hitler desperately needed a driving force to recover his failed programs. Conquering new territory, specifically the regions that possess the resources, he needed to advance his program that provided a ray of hope to Hitler. Out of concern for self-sufficiency, Hitler knew the only way to survive was to apply the policy of expansion of territories. By early 1939, all groups were focused to build up their military forces and munitions. Britain, in response to the probability of war, took up major matters like the expansion of airpower and decided to form a military expedition. It also introduced

peacetime enlistment into the armed forces. By 1939, France had set an impressive momentum (see Vasquez, 1996).

Empirically, the military build-up moved each nation nearer to war, thus extending support for the general war-proneness explanation. Moreover, this was done in a manner consistent with the rationale of the explanation, namely, the inability to reach an agreement on disarmament in the 1932-34 conference and to control new technological developments led to a race in air capability (Ibid., p.167). The rise in the crisis created new concerns of competence on the British and French side, the Rhineland crisis, Munich, all these increased activities and sense of probable war by early 1939 highly encouraged the former. All these activities and efforts put into build-up reflected concerns that even though there may be no immediate outbreak of war, they must prepare themselves to face the last resort, war.

Though the war eventually broke out in September 1939, none of the nations were fully prepared, Hitler's rearmament program was still struggling to achieve sufficiency. The military build-ups seem to have had three effects: initially, when coupled with the Rhineland crisis, rearmament produced a sense of threat to the British and French sides, particularly since Britain and France expected Germany to begin by opening negotiations rather than just moving troops into the Rhineland (see Barkawi, 2004). All these crises intensified British and French hostility and caused a sense of insecurity and push toward an increase and expansion in military expeditions and preparations. Hitler and Mussolini pushed forward their military build-ups gearing up for big battles. When war broke out, all sides sought to resort to arm force and make the most out of the situation.

Technically, these series of military build-ups from each side linked with the crises that occurred in the later period of the 1930s determined to produce such kind of war that developed a sense of threat adequate to produce more typical policies to get the better of the French and British disinclination to war and strings linked with militarism. To lose a war and regard the

effort as unworthy promote adaptation to or compromise the worth or cost of losing the war. Similarly, when one side wins the war, it becomes worth the cost and adheres uncompromisingly to this belief or notion. Different situations produce discrepancy, when war is seen as “worth the cost”, it is formidable and influential. On the contrary, when Germany lost the war, it was considered as worth the cost.

In such a contrary response, hard-liners stick to their policies instead of compromising the loss. In Germany, the situation was just the opposite: the war was lost, but seen as worth the cost, so hard-liners would be expected to prevail. This occurred, with hard-liners accusing accommodationists of having stabbed Germany in the back in 1918. Hard-liners can be seen as engaging to power with Hitler in 1933. With the success of their rearmament program, and their use of threats and force, the total number of heads increased. eventually converting the reluctant military and preventing the disinclined who are reluctant to take risks, also those group that seeks to compromise with an opposing point of view.

They urged and pursued extensive help from the people to expand Hitler’s foreign policy. Witnessing the German arms build-up, the British and French military establishments felt highly insecure and it compels them to walk toward a hard-liner plan of action before the situation becomes progressively worse. Technically, France was more prone to the attack by Hitler, it took its steps way faster than Britain. The anti-fascist coalition of the Popular Front removed a natural accommodationist representative.

The concern to form alliances continued and the Soviet Union became the main focus. For a long time, Stalin had adhered to the anti-fascist attitude, bearing popular front coalitions throughout Europe and extending material support to the Republic in the Spanish Civil War. He and Litvinov, the foreign minister's effort of united anti-German alliance with Britain and France did not succeed and failed to achieve their intention. This would also have provided a

way of combating the Anti-Comintern Pact, which faced the USSR with the prospect of a two-front war (see Vasquez, 1996).

After the military occupation of Munich, Stalin's view on Britain took a new turn as he became doubtful and assumed that Britain wanted to pursue Germany to work against the East. The Anglo-German agreement that was formed to ease all problems through discourse; subsequently, agreement to issue the German-French Declaration, and in addition, the most distrustful action which aroused the suspicious in Stalin was the Anglo-Italian agreement on the Mediterranean in early 1939. Thus, when the situation was favorable to turnaround the relations with Germany and the chance to expand the territory that might be useful later in case of outbreak of war, and also gain back the lost areas after the First World War; Stalin decided the best out of this good chance and signed the Non-aggression Pact with Germany in August 1939. In reaction to this big step taken by Germany and Russia, a lead-in was made by Britain and France after Prague, between April and August 1939, but it was too late to pacify the situation. Germany also gave his word to Russia for a territorial extension. Japan was not seen in all these activities until 1940, because its leaders wanted the alliance to be moved toward the Soviet Union, which was strongly against Hitler's immediate plans. The Tripartite Pact constituted a major turning point in foreign policy and hinted at a further estrangement between Japan and the United States of America (see Judge, 2009). The Tripartite Pact, which was signed to great fanfare in Berlin on 27 September 1949, shook the foundations of global politics. It alerted US public opinion to a looming catastrophe in the Pacific and created the atmosphere in which US President Franklin D. Roosevelt aligned more closely with the British. It provided the context in which Japan seized an expanded empire in Southeast Asia by force of arms. Moves that would have been impossible without the Tripartite Pact ultimately embroiled Japan in an all-out war in Asia-Pacific (see Yellen, 2016). Japan's blustering and explosive Foreign Minister, Matsuoka Yosuke, further envisioned expanding the Tripartite

Pact to include the Soviet Union, thus completing a revisionist bloc opposed to the Anglo-American world order (see Toland, 1970). The other lines of reasoning maintain that “the alliance was indeed to counter the growing Soviet threat in East Asia, or to help Japan settle the China incident, the undeclared Sino-Japanese war that had been raging non-stop since 1937” (Barnhart, 1987, p.139).

Japan had already drawn up a grand plan in 1940 called, ‘Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere’. The Co-Prosperity Sphere included China, the Pacific Islands, French Indo-China, Thailand, British Burma, and the Dutch Indonesia (see Sen, 1988). Japan, a powerful member of the Axis powers, became the biggest threat to the British colonies in the East (see Joll, 1990). In the process of its new foreign policy, Japan’s Foreign Minister Matsuoka declared Japan’s willingness in alliance with Germany to gained influence in Southeast Asia. The rise of Japan as an economic and military power during the second half of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century had surprised not only the Asian nations but also the Western powers. Japan defeated Russia in 1905 and achieved the status of a ‘Great Power’ after the First World War when she became a permanent member of the Council of the League of Nations. But even before Japan came to be regarded as an imperialist power, the Kurile Islands, South Sakhalin, Korea, Formosa, part of South Manchuria, and the former German Islands in the Pacific north of the Equator were already under military occupation. Japan’s foreign and military policy towards China was for territorial and economic gain, especially in Manchuria. Therefore, throughout the First World War and the 1920s, Japan’s relation with China always remained tense, stormy, and sometimes, deceptively calm. The conquest of Manchuria by Japan in 1931 followed by the creation of the Manchukuo Government gave out a clear indication of growing military control over the civilian government in Japan. This conquest was carried out by the Japanese Military leaders without approval from its Government (see Blackburn, 2010). The aforesaid factors explain how the Second World War

expanded and the consequential effects that brought in diverse conflicts across different nations.

1.1. The Second World War and North-East India

The Second World War conflict involved every part of the world, and intensely ever fought during the years 1939-1945; the humiliation foisted by the victors of World War I upon the defeated nations by the Treaty of Versailles, the successive crises, and the struggles of subjected nations were the main causes that led to the Second World War. It was the first kind of war where global conflicts were fought with equal intensity on both sides of the world. Second World War was a combination of three quite separate wars which eventually became linked together. The first of these wars was the German-Polish war of 1939 which involved Britain and France. Russia was involved as well because Stalin chose to forge an alliance with Hitler on the eve of the war. This war led to the fall of Poland.

The phenomenon of the first conflict naturally accompanied the second one. The Soviet Union attacked Finland in 1940 after the fall of Poland to secure her northern flank against what was generally considered to be an inevitable double-cross of the Nazi-Soviet pact by Hitler. Bits of territory were taken from Finland, mainly to protect Leningrad against an eventual German attack and to effectively counterbalance Finland for the course of the world war ahead. The third conflict was a war that began years before the second world war started and which continued after it had begun. This was the Sino-Japanese war which began on 7th July 1937. Though the Axis and Japan were allies, they were so for namesake. Each had its policies of invasion.

The attack on the American naval base Pearl Harbor ignited the series of conflicts into World War II. As such, "The entry of the US into the Pacific transformed the war in Asia from merely a wide-scale local conflict to a struggle for supremacy throughout the whole of East

Asia and the Pacific. Following the outbreak of War with the Japanese in December 1941 that the Japanese war machine began to roll westwards through South East Asia in the quest of their so-called Co-prosperity Sphere” (Chasie & Fecitt, 2017, p.43). The Japanese immediately overran the whole of Southeast Asia, ran through the western Pacific, and within four months were at the peripheries of India, “From 1942 onwards the Northeast region (along with Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and Eastern U.P.) was converted into a massive military base, for Allied offensive operations against an impending Japanese advance towards India, and as a crucial link for ensuring American supplies to China. It was the infrastructure developed in this region, and the battles fought at Kohima and Imphal, determined the fate of the war in Burma and South East Asia” (Jackson, 2006, p.351).

The formation of the South-East Asia Command necessitated a reorganization of the system of command of the land forces. Until then, the Eastern Army had been under the command of the Commander-in-Chief, India, who was responsible for the conduct of operations in Burma and Assam. The assumption of command by the Supreme Allied Commander entailed the formation of 11 Army Group Headquarters and of Fourteenth Army Headquarters, which then assumed command of the operations. In early 1944, the British were preparing to launch an offensive to retake Burma with General Slim’s Fourteenth Army, at the time consisting of the XV Corps in Arakan, the IV Indian Corps in Assam, and General Stilwell’s Chinese-American forces in the Ledo area. British intelligence had identified that the Japanese were preparing an offensive with the 15th Army comprising the 15th, 31st, and 33rd Divisions and an Indian Nationalist Army Division. The Japanese had decided to launch an attack into Assam before the British forces could mass for their offensive. The British assessment was that the Japanese attack would begin on or about the 15th of March. Slim, in discussion with Commander IV Corps, Lieutenant General Scoones, agreed that the Japanese

objectives would be, first to capture Imphal, and second, to breakthrough to the Brahmaputra Valley to cut off the Northern Front and disrupt the air supply to China (see Slim, 1956).

Slim had three broad alternatives: To anticipate the enemy offensive by crossing the Chindwin and attacking him first; to hold the Japanese 33rd Division in the Tiddim area and fight with all available forces on the Chindwin, hoping to destroy the enemy as he crossed the river, with part of his forces on each bank; to concentrate IV Corps in the Imphal Plain and fight the decisive battle there on the ground of his choosing. Slim decided to adopt the third course of action, to gain a decisive success, he wanted to concentrate against the Japanese a force superior both in numbers and armament (Ibid., p.223).

The Imphal and Kohima Campaign has widely recognized in the Japanese historical context that it was one of the worst battles during the Second World War. More soldiers lost their lives during their retreat than during the actual battle. The surviving war veterans published their accounts in the post-war to provide an idea of how dreadful the situation was. The central argument of the veteran's account primarily focuses on the incompetent military leaders who enforced the battle regardless of opposition, and how the soldiers suffered under the tyranny. The survivors described the horrifying experiences during their retreat, where countless soldiers lay sick or dead, also how the dead bodies were covered with maggots every ten meters. Their narratives focus on the pain incited by the war to themselves. Some scholars point out such attitudes as "victim consciousness", the tendency of people to see their experiences primarily as victims. Their accounts provide unimaginable sufferings of the war, yet there is a certain aspect that has been overlooked: the local people's involvement in the battle. When the Battle of Kohima broke out, Naga people were compelled to leave their homes either because homes had been destroyed by detonating of bombs and munition or forced to evacuate their homes as they were target zones. This created shortages of food and water, the basic needs for daily physical sustenance. It was monsoon season which is a blessing season

for the Naga people as their sole dependence in existence was agriculture farming. In 1944, they experienced the reverse effects of the rainy season. Under the incessant rain conditions, not just the fighting soldiers but the local inhabitants faced water-borne diseases, like diarrheal disease, cholera, malaria, etc. No health-care centres made the situation even more difficult, especially for the Naga people though they yearn for desperate treatment. The folly of war indirectly included the citizens as a target to fulfill military demands.

During the Battle of Kohima, families were separated or displaced in the process of evacuation. How would one emotionally react to such a situation? Separation from loved ones or members of a family who went missing would be as though one's life has upturned. In the blink of an eye, this became the reality of the Naga people, and their lives changed and went through the most unexpected unimaginable transitional stage. The Burma terrain was a very difficult one to intrude, it required jungle skills and tactics to get through the challenging terrain, Kohima was no less. Nonetheless, two well-matched superior Imperial forces between British and Japan fought the most intense hostilities in the Battle of Kohima. Two powerful nations, therefore, came to the less known Naga Hills and fought one of the greatest decisive battles of the Second World War at Kohima. The growing zeal and power of Japan made her more ambitious to expand her territory and also wanted to drive out the British from India. The war between the British and Japan killed many Nagas, also caused huge loss and misery to the Nagas (see Nagi, 2019).

The Indo-Burmese frontier, from where it leaves the sea in Arakan, near Maungdaw, until it joins the Sino-Tibetan frontier on the Salween river north of Myitkyina, follows a series of mountain ranges which extends from north to south. The main features of these mountain ranges are their precipitous sides and the fast-flowing rivers in the deep valleys. These mountains are at their maximum heights at the north-east end of the frontier, where they rise to heights of ten to twelve thousand feet and more. Their height gradually declines as the ranges

run south-wards, though in the Naga and Chin Hills there are many peaks of 9,000 feet, until they reach the lesser ranges in the Arakan where the maximum heights are seldom over 2,000 feet. The main spine, however, of this range continues southwards, parallel to the coast, towards the mouth of the Irrawaddy and finally disappears just north of the town of Bassein. Throughout these ranges the hillsides are for the most part covered with jungle so dense that it is not possible to move without cutting paths. In the whole length of this mountain system there are only three roads, none of them of good quality, over which the wheels can pass. These are the Ledo-Myitkyina road, the Dimapur-Imphal-Tamu road and the Taungup-Prome road, none of which has been completed to a standard (The London Gazette, 1951).

Emphasizing the role of nature as an active agent during the war, the onset of monsoon and the probable diseases during such seasons emerged as an important cause on the nature of the war. Edmund Russell (2005) discusses various nature's roles in war, one of the listed roles is a *fortuitous ally*. Throughout history, weather and especially disease have caused far more casualties than battle. Russia's winter and disease, rather than its armed forces, defeated the armies of Napoleon Bonaparte and Adolf Hitler.

The climate of Burma is affected by the two monsoons, the North-East in the winter and the South-West in the summer. The influence of the former produces fine dry weather with little cloud and conditions are good for operations both on land and in the air. The South-West monsoon on the other hand, blowing as it does across the Bay of Bengal, is heavily charged with moisture which it discharges over Burma and East Bengal during the months of May to October. Precipitation of rain, especially on the Arakan coast, is extremely high, reaching in places as much as 200 inches. The climate varies too, according to the altitude, the temperatures above 3,000 feet being reasonably low and above 5,000 feet cool and invigorating. In the lowlands along the coast, the temperatures are high, with a high humidity which makes campaigning in those areas exhausting (Colvin, 1994). The impact of the environment during

war added an unavoidable challenge to the already existing military offensive. One of the difficulties faced by both forces during the entire Burma Campaign was its topography. Dense jungles, terrain mountains, and the monsoon rainfall caused inconveniences. Malaria is endemic throughout the region, the Kabaw Valley is reputed to be one of the worst malarial valleys in the world. There are two seasonal increases in the rate of infection, one at the beginning of the monsoon in May, and the other at the end of the monsoon in October and November. In such a climate there are other diseases which are products of the conditions: dysentery, skin diseases of various types especially during the rainy season, and scrub typhus which is endemic in various areas. While the South-West monsoon has a bad effect upon the health of troops and causes them also acute discomfort from rain, its really worst effect is upon the communications in the areas. The heavy rain turns Arakan, a rice growing area, into a muddy swamp quite impassable to wheeled vehicles unless the roads have proper foundations and surfaces capable of withstanding heavy rain (see Clark, 2003). In Assam and Burma there is very little stone, most of the hills, which are clothed in forest or bamboo being composed of a soft shale used for road making. The making of roads is, therefore, very difficult as they have to be built to a high standard in order to stand up to the torrential rains which fall between May and October. The heavy rains also make the ordinary native tracks very nearly impassable as they get so slippery on the steep hillsides. Heavy rains make the rivers and streams into formidable obstacles, all of which have to be bridged to allow the passage of troops and transport (The London Gazette, 1951). Indeed, campaigning in the monsoon in Burma may be said to be one of the most arduous military operations.

Air power played a significant role in the battle, and Slim put the reliance on airpower which made a striking difference between the Japanese and British commands. Slim emphasized the importance of Air Power in fighting against the Japanese occupation during the Burma Campaign. The military tactic of Air Power proved effective in winning the Battle

of Kohima. As convenient it may sound to secure military operations through this technique, the negative impact and destruction caused by air power are difficult to be compensated. The atomic bombing of Japan during the Second World War strongly demonstrated the strength of airpower. The proximity of airpower also indicated the destructive might of nuclear weapons, how in a matter of scarce duration of time it can cause massive scale deaths, loss of properties, and livelihood. The severity of the nuclear attack is worst and most brutal than land offensives (see Salmi, 2014).

It was in April 1944, while Europe and her Allies were intensely engaged in blowing off the Nazi, Germany, South East Asia, the commanding force was created under Admiral Louis Mountbatten to counter the Japanese movement. General Slim, commander of the 14th Army was given the responsibility to look after the Japanese into India. The Japanese under the leadership of Lt. Renya Mutaguchi entered India mainly to cut off Allied supply lines to China. Besides Burma and the China border, thousands of soldiers were marching towards the North East region, initially unaware of the kind of battle ahead which will turn out to be historic, fought for a larger purpose, the Second World War. After the start of the War in 1941, the purpose of the Japanese troops advancing to Imphal Kohima in India was to overthrow the British Commonwealth Army's counterattack base against Burma; blocking China support routes; together with INA, to liberate India from British rule.

Aside from going to Imphal, it was impossible to send two divisions (around 30,000) of troops from Burma to Kohima and northern Imphal. Since there is no air superiority, there can be no air transportation. Because of this, many Japanese soldiers died of starvation and war illness. The Japanese Army robbed local Indian people of food and livestock. Presumably, this occurred as the result of a Japanese military commander (Lt. Gen. Mutaguchi) dismissing the chief of staff of a supply expert and forcing an attack. This action got the approval of the

Imperial Headquarters (Emperor). However, in the end, the operation failed and destroyed Burma's defence itself.

The Japanese occupation of Burma and their imminent invasion in India gave serious consequences, one of which that had fallen upon the Nagas was that the British government raised forced labor from the villages based on clans for the widening of vital Dimapur-Imphal road linking with the Assam-Bengal railway and the other, road-building works for the smooth mobility of the Allied troops. Accordingly, thousands of Nagas who were employed as forced workers suffered and died of different diseases arising from the effects of the dangerous and unhygienic conditions prevailing there with insufficient food and medical facilities not available in time due to transport difficulties.

The conditions of the refugees streaming on the Dimapur- Imphal road were horrible and pathetic. The tide of war began to turn against the Axis powers when the Allied powers put all risk to advance offensive battles against the former. Meanwhile, another dimension was added to the fighting strength of the shaken Japanese by the Indian extremist nationalism led by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, a western educated, robust Bengali patriot, who escaped incognito from India to Germany with a single, strong determination to liberate India from the British rule with his favorite slogan: "Give me blood and I promise you freedom" (Swüro, 2005, p.15).

Aided by the Axis, he formed an Indian National Army (5th July 1943) composed of thousands of Indians most of whom were war prisoners of the Japanese in Singapore, and started upon his march to Delhi 'Delhi Chalho' (Ibid., p.15). In September 1943, General Kawabe, Japanese Commander-in-chief in Burma, and Subhas Chandra Bose, the Supreme Commander of the INA decided to launch a determined attack on the Chin Hills, Manipur, and Naga Hills.

1.2. The occupation of British administration in Naga Hills

The Nagas are tribal inhabitants and they had their established customs and laws from the origin of their existence as a section or group of tribal people. The Naga people possess rich cultural diversity and every Naga tribe speaks its dialect and has its cultural etiquette and customs. In the 19th century, the British overtook the administration in the Naga Hills. Previously, the Naga people were also in contact with the Ahoms, now, known as Assam. The relation between the British administration and the Naga people did not take off easily. The independent attitude of the tribal Nagas was not to live under any outsider intervention. They always carried the attitude to fight back against any authority who raided the Naga hills. Several expeditions and raids took place before the British could achieve their desired result. A phase of non-interference was therefore adopted by the British government because it became almost impossible to establish a satisfactory administration in the Naga territory. However, gradual march and approach led to the consolidation of British rule in the hills. When India got its independence in 1947 from the British Raj, the Naga people no longer remained under the British administration. The expectations to stand as an independent territory could not be materialized and the Naga inhabited area was made a centrally administered area in 1957. It was officially named the Naga Hills Tuensang Area and was administered under the Governor of Assam. Later, in 1963 it was renamed Nagaland and officially given the status of a State. From the year of its initiation till date, the people of Nagaland observe Statehood day on 1 December.

According to J.P. Mills (1922), an authoritative ethnographer, the territories inhabited by the Naga people may be roughly defined as bounded by the Hukong valley in the northeast, the plains of the Brahmaputra valley to the north-west, of Cachar to the south-west and the Chindwin to the east. In the south, the Manipur valley roughly marks the point of contact between the 'Naga' tribes and the very much closely inter-related group of Kuki tribes- Thado, Lushei, Chin, etc. The three massive mountain ranges link from north to south- the Barail, the

Naga, and the Patkai rising from 2000 ft to Saramati, the highest peak which is 12,663 ft. above sea level in the Tuensang area of the Patkai range overlooking Burma. The land is rich with varieties of flora and fauna. The climatic conditions of Nagaland are generally cold. Kohima, which is about 5,200 ft. AMSL is the capital of Nagaland (see Mills, 1922).

Most contemporary dialogue on the early history of the Nagas suffers from a lack of information or minimum information about the pre-colonial and pre-Christian periods (Aier, 2018, p.1). Generally, the Nagas bear Mongolian physical features and cultural traits. They speak their tribal languages and dialects which vary widely from one another. The structure of the Naga society in rural, and likewise, the political institution had been the sovereign village-state which has different forms of government. Agriculture and animal husbandry have been the basic occupations of the Nagas since time immemorial. Rice is the staple grain of the Nagas. Terrace and jhum cultivations are the two main methods of cultivation. It is difficult to give a precise account of the culture of the early Nagas since very little of it is known due to the limited written records.

The early history of headhunting distinctively varied in their respective tribe's culture, custom and tradition derived a common name as the Nagas. Great diversity exists between the diverse tribes, also within the same tribe, and it is found that there is diversity in dialects, attires, and ancestral customs. The traditional value of the oral tradition of the Nagas has been passed down from generation to generation, much before the colonial and Christian eras. Elders who were always proud of their rich culture prided in traditional knowledge and history of their ancestral past. However, their wealth of traditional knowledge has been unintentionally lost due to the absence of written records, and due to the absence of formal education like other civilizations, it was impossible to expect written records from the former generation.

Even in the present study, the absence of a proper written account of the Naga elders who witnessed the Battle of Kohima may raise a feeling of incompleteness while relying on

oral sources. Nonetheless, the stories and accounts shared by the war veterans act as the keeper or guardians of a significant military offensive that remained a hallmark in the history of World War.

1.3. Overview of the Battle of Kohima

The Battle of Kohima, during the Second World War, was fought between the Japanese and British/Indian forces from April 4 to June 10, 1944. Recognized by historians as one of the turning points of World War II, it was an epic encounter between two well-matched enemies and a devastating event (Figure 1). Kohima, then a small hill station, was severely hit by the widespread devastation. ‘The Ridge’ which extends from the Imphal Road and south of the Dimapur road was the main location of the war. Whoever controlled The Ridge effectively controlled Kohima.

The Japanese reached Kohima on April 4, 1944, and they far outnumbered the defenders which consisted of a battalion of the Assam Regiment. Lt. General Renya Mutaguchi, 15th Japanese Army was confident that the capture of Kohima would not be a tough fight, conversely Lieutenant-General Slim, 14th Army too assumed that less than 1000 forces will suffice to defend Kohima. Ironically, the nature of the battle turned into a deplorable and desperate situation for both forces. Naga’s loyalty to the British was absolute. This tended to make them adopt a hostile attitude towards the Japanese at times. However, the Japanese and the Nagas were not foes but the latter remained steadfast and true to the former till the end. Few elderly Nagas who knew the tragedies of war stayed somber. While some, out of curiosity, were thrilled to witness the fight between the two contingents. The Nagas witnessed a bloody war that changed their lives forever.

The course of the war and the irony of the epic siege of Kohima 1944 is a story of human endeavor and suffering. In the soil of the Nagas lies a heart of humanity, compassion,

sacrifice, loyalty, and forgiveness. The pitiless nature of war which was lived by the Naga people has too long been veiled in memories. However, if these painful memories diminish over time, important accounts in the history of the Nagas will be lost.

1.4. Oral narratives in Naga history

Oral history has always been central in reconstructing the early history of the Nagas. Likewise, such sources are also vital for rewriting the account of the Battle of Kohima. Although the legitimacy of oral history is challenging, it still plays an important role in documenting a particular history of a state or community where print sources are least available.

The available literature on the Battle of Kohima from the Naga perspective has been gained mainly from the oral history of war survivors. Stories uncovered may not necessarily be accurate, there could be the act of altering out of its original or natural state. Therefore, the selection of versions of the event is examined through the narratives from other interviewees. Surprisingly, when the narrator chooses to remain silent or refuse to share the whole account, this act of silence further provides insights unusually that further deepen the understanding of the past and the present state.

Most social historians of World War II whose interview methodology was driven by concerns about class, gender and race largely eschewed investigation of how participation in the war effort stimulated patriotic attitudes (Horowitz, 1995, p.617). Jan Vansina, in the opening chapter of his widely read and cited *Oral Tradition and Historical Methodology* (1965) state, “Oral traditions are historical sources of a special nature. Their special nature derives from the fact that they are ‘unwritten’ sources, couched in a form suitable for oral transmission, and their preservation depends on the powers of memory of successive generations” (Vansina, 1965, p.3).

In the scholarly realm, oral history and its variations across disciplines are thus often understood as a source of data, and the focus, particularly in the social sciences, is on method. The rhetoric used to explain its value has often been framed in terms of “uncovering unknown stories” or “giving voice to the unheard, the secret,” making it, in effect, a form of exposé or evidence where no other is available (see Hamilton & Shopes, 2008).

1.5. Review of Literature

The account of the Battle of Kohima has been written in different perspectives by foreign authors mostly in the military perspective and discussed the arms and munitions, military tactics and strategies of war, a hard-won battle, etc. Few have talked about the loyalty of the Nagas towards the British and Naga memories of the war. Several others have acknowledged the support from the Nagas which have been an important factor in winning the war. The non-Naga Indian writers have talked about the battle narratives such as the loyalty of the Nagas to the British and the Japanese. The Indian writers also highlighted British policies during the war and post-war. They have also written on the different aspects of the battle. Naga writers have mentioned how the battle brought changes in the Naga society on all sides. They have also recorded the voice of the many Naga people who expressed thoughts of betrayal and lamented that despite losing everything for the sake of the British, the latter left them in a state of despair after the war.

The earliest writers like the well-known anthropologist C.V Fürer Haimendorf (1939), William Slim (1956), and Verrier Elwin (1961) refer to the contribution and loyalty of the Nagas during the War. In the book *The Naked Nagas*, Haimendorf notes that the Nagas never lost strength in their loyalty towards the Allied Forces and he accredited this sincere loyalty of the Nagas to the popularity of the British officers, their lenient rule, and also the satisfaction of the Nagas concerning the British administration.

Slim was the commander of the British Fourteenth Army who led the Allied army in the Battle of Kohima. In his book *Defeat into Victory* (1956), Slim said that even in the most depressing times of the invasion, Nagas loyalty had never faltered despite all the hardships. He discussed new aspects of the Battle like the routes, weapons, plans, and strategies of both the British and the Japanese in the Battle and also the role of the Royal Air Force and air superiority over the Japanese Air Force. Slim also brought to light the topographical and the climatic condition of Kohima and how it affected the nature of the Battle.

Robert Lyman (2006) in his book *Kohima 1944, The battle that saved India* wrote a detailed account of one of history's greatest conflicts, detailing the command strategies, tactics, and battle experiences of the opposing forces throughout the crucial stages of each campaign. Verrier Elwin through his book *Nagaland* (1961) mentions that the war had a devastating effect on the Nagas. He highlighted that the Nagas gave valuable support to the Allied Forces and some of them even received rewards for their services.

Through the work of John Colvin (1994) and Arthur Swinson (1966), we get to know about the role that the Nagas played in the Battle in different capacities as guides, stretcher-bearers, porters, and informants. John Colvin further says, "Irrespective of the tribe or sub-tribe, the record of the Nagas during the Japanese occupation was one of extra-ordinary loyalty to the British." (Colvin, 1994, p.97). John Colvin highlighted that some of the Nagas employed in the Assam Regiment and were awarded Indian Police Medal. Arthur Swinson also brought to our understanding the reason for the loyalty of the Nagas to the British. He said that it was because of the submissive character of Charles Pawsey that the Nagas remained loyal to the British and undertook difficult and dangerous work. John Colvin briefly discusses the ill-treatment of the Nagas and points out that "the members of the Indian National Army, the JIFFs (Japanese Indian Fighting Forces) behaved disgracefully, far worse than the Japanese themselves. All cases of rape reported were found to have been committed by this rabble and

not by the Japanese” (Colvin, 1994). Swinson (1966) also describes the Japanese retreat and says that the Japanese in the Battle of Kohima suffered the greatest defeat in the history of the Japanese Army. He records that in June 1965, when a journalist approached colonel Kunji Kato for an account of his experience in the war, he courteously but firmly said, “Not Kohima... not that great bitter Battle” (Swinson, 1966, p.102).

C.E Lucas Phillip (1966) in his work *Springboard to Victory* stated that the Nagas were devoted to the British and knowing that the British were their friends, undertook deadly risks for them. Though the author here presented some accounts of the Nagas, yet it did not undertake how it impacted the socio-political aspects of the Nagas post-war. War comes with a price and what price the Nagas paid for their loyalty, the socio-political impact, and its implication need further elaboration.

The work of Fergal Keane (2010) presents a detailed narrative giving the account of both the British and the Japanese especially the painful and bitter experience of Japanese retreat. His book, *Road of Bones* which is based on the original research in Japan, Britain, and India, is a story of an extraordinary struggle against all odds and offers a realistic portrait of a defining moment in the destiny of two great powers. The author highlighted how the Japanese military was confined to the policy of economic expansion, not simply as an observation of historical providence but as a way out to the more delicate issue of limited national resources. To the Japanese, the retreat was ‘the road of the bones’. The author mentioned that Kohima is a story of empires colliding in a world where high imperialism was already an anachronism, and where defeat might have profoundly altered the story of the end of the British Raj. He also said that the continuous passage of modern armies back and forth across Kohima, and the hunger and disease as an outcome of the fighting led to lasting shock to the traditional communities. The war introduced new weapons into the hills; for the first time. The book also talks briefly about the aftermath of War like the political crisis in the Naga Hills and the

reconciliation effort of the veterans. The British were intensely engaged in the war and could barely comprehend the political scenario of the hills after the war, the rising wave of nationalism. This book is necessarily subject to the author's idea of what was compelling and significant on the account of the siege and relief of Kohima. The Nagas side of the story may need discussion in further detail; the reaction of the local populace towards the War and how they manage the new occurrence need to be analyzed.

The work of Kazuo Tamayama and John Nunneley (2001) highlighted the Japanese soldiers and gives an account of them, the kind of suffering they had to go through in the Battle. *Tales by Japanese Soldiers* has 62 tales told by different Japanese soldiers of their experience in the Burma campaign in which Kohima was also a part of the offensive. It shows a new perspective on the difficult and burdensome war as it records the personal experiences of the Japanese soldiers in the Burma campaign and illustrates how they had to suffer starvation and hunger due to lack of supplies. It also brings to our understanding how the soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army sustained, fought, and died in the terrible offensive, and the insurmountable challenges to fight in a country, far away from home, experiencing short of weapons and rations, and facing death from diseases and starvation as well as from enemy's attack. This book shows the pain and despair of the Japanese soldiers as they retreated from Kohima after the war. *The Battle of Kohima* (2007) discusses how the Burma Campaign, 1944 converted the sleepy township of Kohima into a battleground. Most unexpectedly, the response of the Nagas in this battle was to be a major role who will carry home the victory, the Allied Forces or the Japanese. This decision was also to affect the course of World War II in totality. This book attempts to preserve the history of the war through oral narratives deposited from the memories of the veterans.

One of the latest works on the Battle of Kohima can be found in the accounts of Charles Chasie and Harry Fecitt (2017) and Easterine Kire (2010). *The Road to Kohima* by Chasie and

Fecitt account is the earliest expanded work written from the Naga perspective, a unique collaborative work. It is historical documentation of the participation and experiences of the Nagas in the Battle but limited itself with the end of the war and the later socio-political development of the Nagas as a result of the war and weaves together the greater picture with these personal experiences. Kire in her work *Mari* (2010) gives an overview of Nagaland and also highlights the Nagas in the colonial period to the attainment of statehood. She also mentions the condition on the eve of the Battle where a large number of Nagas were engaged on things like road constructions. The post-war relevancy and the socio-economic changes that came about were also briefly discussed. The political development after the war is also mentioned in the book.

Rhakho (2019) in his doctoral thesis *The Battle of Kohima (1944) and its consequences on Naga Society* looked into the socio-economic and political life of the people and the consequences that took place after being engaged in these changes. The local perspectives have been incorporated in this work. The work also tried to look into the awareness of Naga consciousness leading to the rise of Naga nationalism. Further, it studies the event not necessarily from the 64 days' Battle at Kohima alone, but within the larger picture of World War II which culminated from various factors like territorial ambitions, economic interests, and ideological differences, besides the role of the INA and the Nagas respond towards them. While dealing with the Battle of Kohima, the events in the Indo-Burmese frontiers during WW II has been outlined.

Nagi (2019) in his book *Reminiscing the battle of Kohima 1944* recorded the good and bad events during the battle of Kohima from the local perspective. The book gives a better insight into how the Naga people served Great Britain and how the Japanese lost the battle. Metha (2018) in his doctoral thesis *Battle of the Allied Forces and the Japanese-INA Alliance in the Naga Hills 1942-1945: Response and Participation of the Nagas* discusses the process

of the Japanese-INA attack in the Naga Hills and the response of the Allied forces, and the Nagas' relation with the Japanese and Subhas Chandra Bose-INA force.

Ltu (2019) book *World War II in Northeast India: A Study of Imphal and Kohima Battles* is a comprehensive study of the role of the local population of Manipur and the Naga Hills during the great attempted Japanese invasion of India. The book discusses the Japanese invasion of India that was motivated mainly by three factors i.e., to defend and to keep hold of Burma from the British; to wipe out the British or Western Imperialists from the Asian countries; and importantly, because Japan needed to boost her morale which was low due to their loss in the Pacific and Guadalcanal. The Japanese were not at ease with the British in India, as they feared that the British would attack them and recapture their conquered territories. Japan, therefore, wanted to expel the British from India. With the removal of the British from India, there would be no threat of a British invasion, and the Japanese Co-Prosperity Sphere would be kept intact.

1.6. Statement of the Problem

The accounts of the war from the British and Japanese experiences have been documented by several writers, but not much research has been done to record the account of the Battle of Kohima from the Naga war veterans' perspective. The study intends to document the war experiences of the Naga war veterans, and also investigate how the war changed the lives of the Nagas. Accounts of the past have relevancy with present times, and therefore, realizing the importance to record the past event, the present study unfolds the hidden memories and analyzes the importance of the battle from the narratives of the Naga veterans. The Nagas fought a war caused by two powerful nations which brought a transition in the society. Post-war changed the lives of the Nagas from traditional settings to western influence which has a positive and negative impact. These changes are incorporated into the study. Reconciliation

leads to a new beginning after every bitter event, likewise, the reconciliation between the Nagas and the British, Japanese are discussed in the study.

1.7. Scope of the study

This study will contribute to understanding the Battle of Kohima from the narratives of the Naga war veterans. The post-War impact which is also one of the focus in the present study will help to connect the importance of the past event in the present Naga society. The war brought in new changes in the most unexpected way. There are many accounts of the Second World War, the local account of the Battle of Kohima, which gives new insights and data to discuss the importance of the War.

1.8. Area of study (Figure 2)

The area of study is concentrated mainly in Kohima and its neighboring villages, with some sampled villages from Phek district and Wokha district. Efforts are made to visit sites of battle and museums within these districts. Important landmarks and memorials erected or built-in memory of World War II around the battlefield areas are also targets of field visits.

1.9. Objective of the study

The objective of the study is to highlight the narratives gathered mostly through interviews to document the past experiences of the battle. The Battle of Kohima is considered a turning point in the military history of the British and the Japanese. Therefore, recognizing the involvement and contributions made by the local people during the War is crucial to gain insights into the Naga people's perspective. Local accounts have enabled us to expand the understanding of the battle which has been least discussed in other written sources of the Battle of Kohima.

1.10. Methodology

The study is essentially based on primary and secondary sources. Primary sources such as archival materials, interviews, personal records connected with the event, etc. are utilized, while secondary data from various sources such as books, published and unpublished works, journals, magazines, Souvenirs, and articles published in newspapers related to the study are incorporated. Tour Dairies of colonial administrators, their personal accounts, autobiographies, etc. are also utilized in the present research.

Vestiges of war connected with the historical event housed in both private and government museums, visit to war memorials, historical places, and access to audio-visual information available in the form of documentaries and films provides additional insights into the Battle of Kohima. The use of oral history as a source has been vital in the study. Numerous accounts utilizing oral historical methods are retrieved from sites of memories where the event took place lying embedded in the local narrative. The work necessitated visiting libraries and archives across India and overseas, even in countries such as Japan. Further field investigation is undertaken in Kohima, Phek, and Wokha districts of Nagaland relating to the research. Villages under Kohima and Phek districts are chosen for study to collect primary source as these areas are important sites where the presence of Japanese troops are reported. Wokha district, in particular, is also sampled for the present study as the accounts of the War from the District has been is least known and unreported in all previous works.

1.11. Significance of the study

The battle of Kohima which was fought intensely across the Naga Hills was a war uninvited by the local inhabitants. An unexpected event swiftly crippled their lives which led to severe consequences. The nature of war was demanding, and individuals and communities came forward to support the British Allied force from the occupation of the Japanese.

Eminent personalities namely Dr. Imkongliba Ao, First Chairman, Interim Body, Nagaland was deputed to the war front for John Stillwel Indo-Burma Road emergency duty placing in charge of Garo, Nepali, and Chinese Labour Corps. T.N Angami, the First Deputy Chairman, Interim Body, former Speaker, and Chief Minister of Nagaland also joined the Indian Army and served from 1941-1946. Vizol, First Leader of Opposition, Nagaland, and former Chief Minister of Nagaland, too joined the Royal Indian Air Force during the Second World War and served from 1941-1946. Zopianga, the 5th Chief Secretary of Nagaland, braving harsh conditions brought upon by the Second World war was determined to move forward despite the post-war realities. Post-war offered a life of hopelessness, distress, and deep pain.

The account of the Battle of Kohima is incomplete without addressing the support of the Nagas. The present study intends to address the Nagas' participation in the battle and their role which helped the British Allied Force to win the battle . The general aim of the study is to record the experiences of the war witnessed by the Naga veterans. It aims to emphasize the lesser-known aspects of the Second World War at Kohima, and shed light on the events and experiences which cast their shadow on the present as never before.

Much is already known about the rise of Hitler and Nazism, the former quest for expansion or territory and power. The involvement of the Europeans and the Allied Forces is also equally talked about. However, less is known about the Pacific which has played a fair role in the cataclysmic struggle. Narrowing down from the whole of the Pacific, Kohima, situated in the corner of North-East India has its own part of their history to share as it was once a part of the expanse of the Second World War. Their homeland turned into smoke and ashes speaks of extreme heroism and extreme bravery of the Nagas. No human may ever want to witness such a terrifying conflict. Never would have they thought that they would be victims of a great conflict. It is, therefore, important to re-visit the past of the Nagas because therein lies a heart of humanity, compassion, sacrifice, sufferings, loyalty, and forgiveness.

According to Admiral Lord Mountbatten, “the battle of Kohima will probably go down as one of the greatest battles in history” (Swinson, 1966, p.11). For the record, in the Burma campaign, 1941-1945, the Battle of Kohima stands as distinctive for the British Imperial Forces in their take against the Japanese Army. The Japanese forces entered Burma, thence India, and captured the land and further expanded their authority until a twist of fate took place in the hill station of Kohima. The victory in Kohima was a significant achievement by the British Imperial Forces and this followed with more victory and the withdrawal of the Japanese troops. Therefore, the Burma Campaign is a significant event in world history that ended in Kohima.

There are many records mainly oral that are yet to be unfolded. The present study will, therefore, be a contribution to the Naga society and its people to know its past, connecting past and present. Extensive research on such a target area will create a strong awareness in understanding an important event of the Second World War. The narratives of the battle from the perspective of the Nagas have been least represented in the literature written on the battle. There exist only a few Naga writers who have documented personal accounts passed on by the war veterans. The study of the past broadens the knowledge of a particular event or period and it enables the discovery of new facts about the past. War history shows the horrible destruction it does to people’s lives. It also shows how it affects the psychology of men and the threat of environmental catastrophe. Knowledge of the past is essential to understanding and judging current events and participating in current debates (see Stricker, 1992).

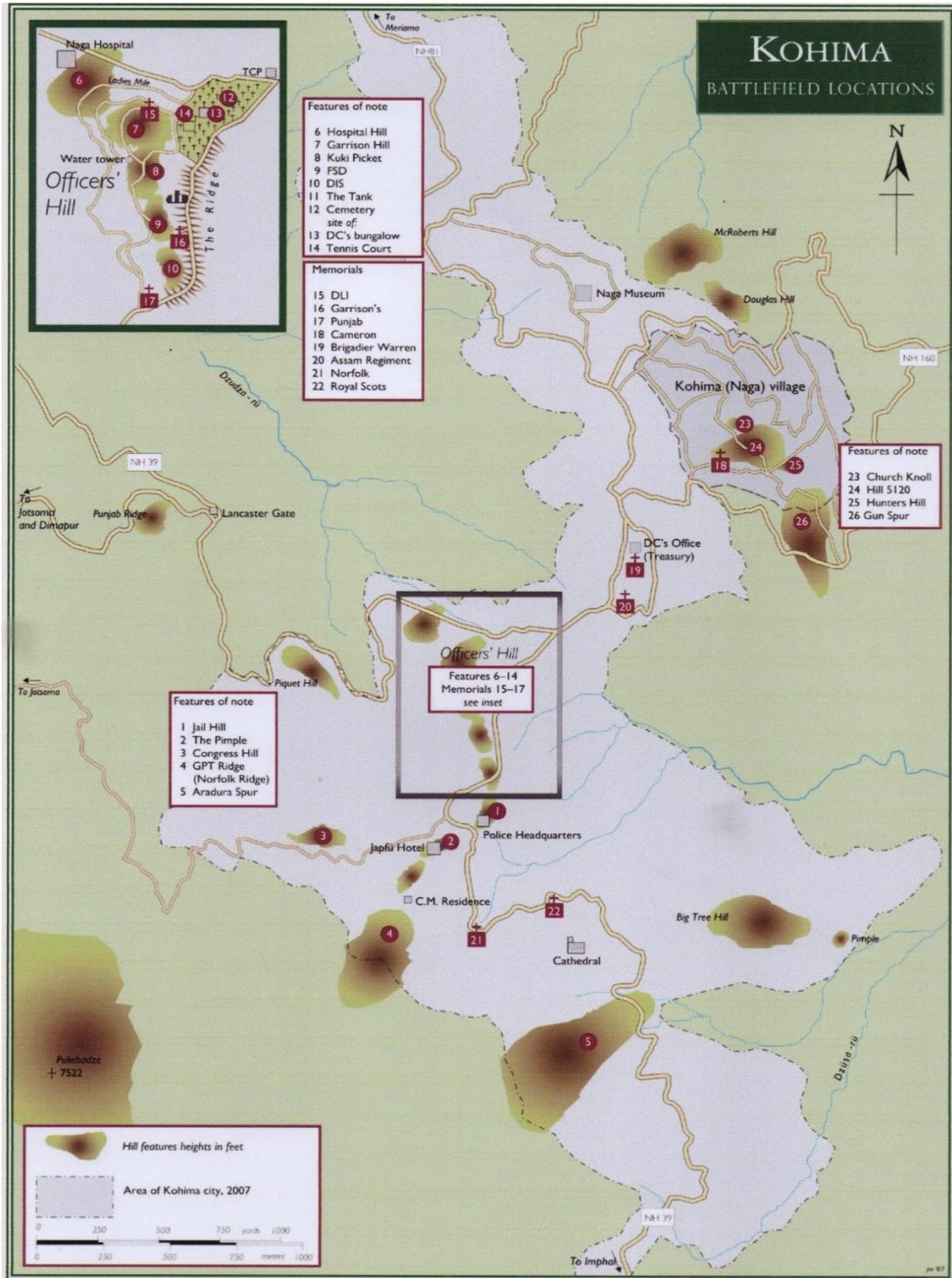


Figure 1: Kohima Battlefield Locations.

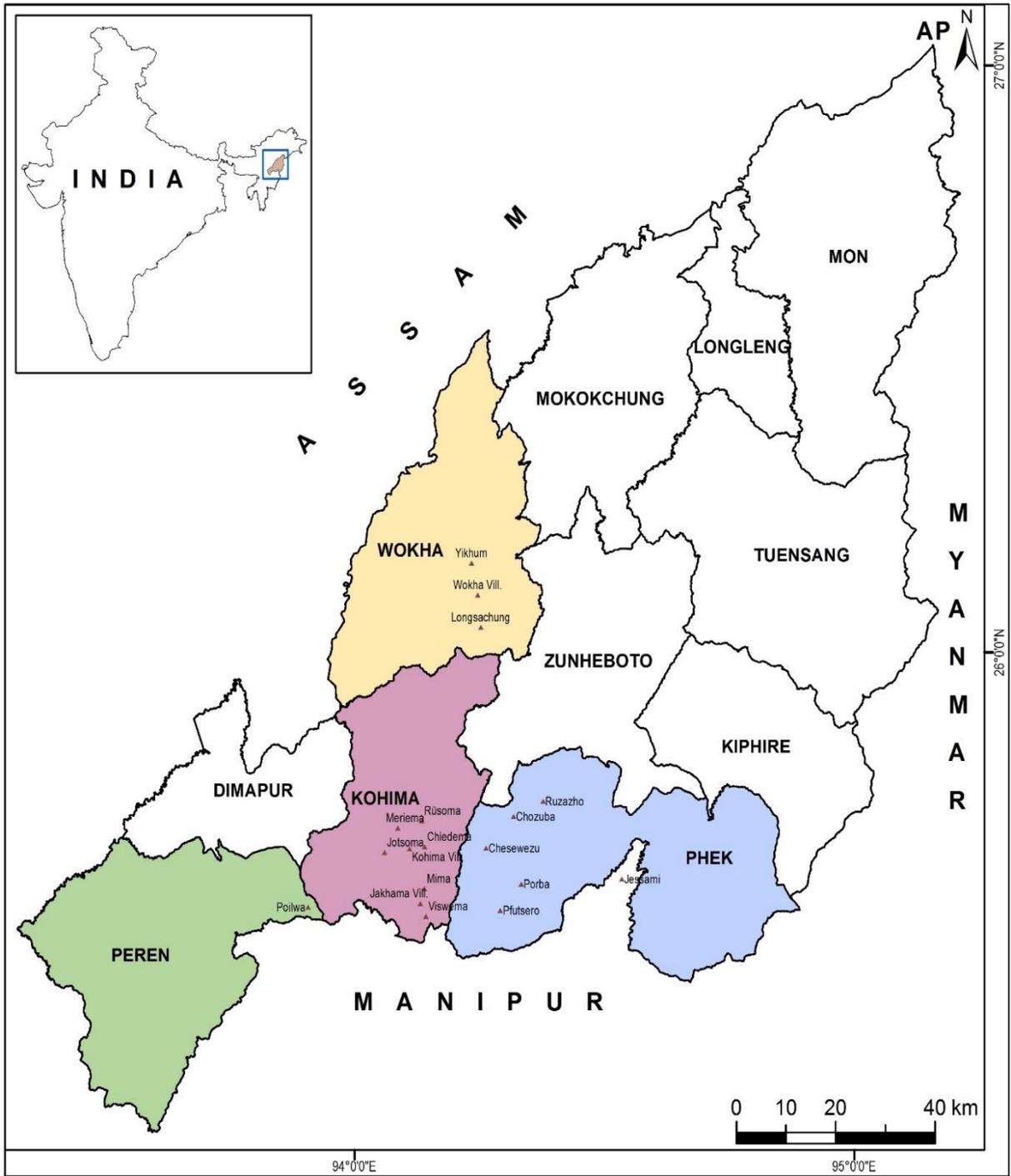


Figure 2: Area of Study.

CHAPTER-2

NATURE AND CAUSES OF THE BATTLE OF KOHIMA, 1944

The battles of Imphal-Kohima were major military operations initiated by the Japanese in 1944. Operation U-GO was formed to mount towards Imphal in India through the Burma route and attack the British and destroy them to establish a strategic power station in North-East India, Imphal as the station. Meanwhile, Operation HA-GO concentrated in the Arakan region to overtake the British dominion, this operation was processed before Operation U-GO at the beginning of February 1944 and ended by the end of it. Though it started with a hopeful victory, the Japanese failed to complete this operation. This was followed by Operation U-GO. Imphal became the main focus for both the military forces.

2.1. Battle of Kohima: Nature and Outbreak

The Japanese started the military operation in the first week of March. Lieutenant-General Mutaguchi deployed the 33rd and 15th Divisions to capture Imphal and the 31st Division headed by Major-General Sato was commanded to cut off the British retreat and LoC at Kohima. On the side of the British force, the structure laid out to counterattack the Japanese seems to be inadequate, and initial strategic decisions taken by Slim did not work in favor of the British Allied Force. The Dimapur-Imphal road was perfect and the other numerous bridle paths were turned into tracks capable of taking motor traffic to increase the mobility of the army in the Naga Hills and Manipur. The Tammu road opened for Field Marshal Alexander's retreating army in the rains of 1942 was kept on by the Naga laborers.

In 1944, the Allied forces operating from Assam constructed a 478-mile supply road called Stilwell or Ledo which finally connected with the 681-mile Burma Road built from

Kunming in China to Lashio in Burma in 1939 through mountains, swamps, and jungles. A new oil pipeline 750 miles long from Calcutta to the rearward communications in Assam was put to the requirements of the troops, a greater span than the famous desert pipeline from Iraq to Hafia. The IV Corps under Lieutenant-general Scoones with its three Divisions (17, 20, and 23) along with Assam Zone 'V' force, commanded by Lt. Col. Binney and Royal Air Force were already in action. The three Divisions were respectively commanded by Major General Cowan (17), Major General Gracey (20), and Major-General O.L Roberts (23) while Assam Zone 'V' force and 33 Corps commanded by Lieutenant General, M.G.N. Stopford was in the Dimapur-Kohima area.

In all, the Allied forces composed of 1,189,000 ground troops and 73,000 airforce men were heaped in South-East Asia for offensive and defensive operations against the Japanese. In March 1944 the advancing Japanese waded through mountains, roads, and tracks made by the British forces in Manipur and Naga Hills. A Japanese patrol column at Ukhrul cut the Indo-Burma Road near Kangpokpi and from that day till June 23, the plains of Manipur remained without contact with the outside world. The Japanese were ready to invest in Imphal and asked Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to deliver a radio broadcast on the emperor's birthday, offering him Imphal as a present.

In the Naga Hills, the Japanese met stiff resistance at the beginning from the Assam Force. Before reaching the Jessami ridge, a column of 31st Japanese Division which was advancing northwards via Ukhrul to Karasom, and thence westwards through Lai to Tadubi on the Dimapur-Imphal road was enraged in a bloody battle with the Assam Regiment for hours together, in the hill-strip of Arahou or Sajouba village, Mao Naga Hill in Manipur, near which a tabooed, gnarled pear tree stands, and where according to prophecy, there would be the battlefield, thence would flow a blood-river, was caused by the heavy rainfall on along with mysterious rustlings. The Kohima battle was the worst of its kind yet chronicled in the annals

of war. Sato's 31st Division troops were eventually smashed with a scene of horrible carnage and the remainders had to retreat from the Naga Hills. Otherwise, before their defeat at Kohima, the Japanese had occupied practically the whole of Nagaland and Manipur.

One of the most well-known battles in the history of the Second World War, the Battle of Kohima is considered by historians as one of the fiercest battles in war history. The battle was fought between British/Indian forces from April 4th to June 10th, 1944. 'The Ridge' which extends from Imphal road to south of the Dimapur road was the main location of the war. With such rigorous nature, the closeness of the attacks on the battlefield is recorded 18m (20 yards). According to available sources, the first encounter between the British and the Japanese took place at Aradura (Kohima) on the night of 3rd April 1944. The following day, the battle began between the two strongholds when the Japanese attacked an Assam Rifles camp located in General Purposes Transport (GPT) Ridge, presently the official residence of the state Chief Minister. So intense was the fighting around the Tennis Court that no sleep was possible; men were 18m (20 yards) at the most from the Japanese; good at grenade throwing range and the attacks were relentless.

For the defenders, the enemy was in exhaustion, the tidal waves of fatigue that rushed in without warning to swamp men's consciousness in oblivion. But surrendering to this meant certain death. By catching precious doses of sleep, measured in minutes rather than hours, men seemed just about able to go on. Their waking hours were filled with preparing grenades, reinforcing and repairing damaged trenches, completing ablutions in the disgusting conditions, and making sure that weapons were clean so they didn't malfunction when most needed. The whole position now smelt of faeces and the putrid, sickly sweet odor of bodily decay from the many hundreds of blackening corpses and body parts that lay mingled on the ground amid the shattered remains of the once-luxuriant forest. Under cover of darkness, Winstanley's much-

reduced company was replaced by men of the Assam Rifles, and they crawled back through the mud to higher ground.

During a lull in the fighting, Private Peacock from A Company dropped off, exhausted with fatigue. When he came round, he discovered that he was sharing his trench with a Japanese officer who had assumed that Peacock was dead. Unable to find his rifle Peacock leaped at the officer and strangled him after a fierce struggle with his bare hands. Then, to make sure, he ran him through with the man's hand. Corporal Bob Blenkinsop of the Durham recalled that at dawn: We rushed to meet them coming forward. The battle was very intense and very bloody. I found myself in the middle of hand-to-hand fighting with a Japanese soldier. I knew if I did not kill him, he would kill me without another thought so my survival instinct came to the front and I plunged my bayonet into the Japanese soldier and moved on to the next. There were a lot of wounded but we could not help them as we had to keep fighting. This lasted until the sun started to shine at the first glimpse of dawn (see Chasie & Fecitt, 2017).

Tough and determined Japanese soldiers held no ambition other than to die for their emperor, and to trade their lives for the highest price. With few exceptions, the Japanese gave in only when they were dead. Every conscious man who could lift a weapon fought until he collapsed. Their strength of mind and willingness to fight to the death demonstrated the highest physical and moral courage and won the grudging admiration of their enemies.

On 23rd May Sato in an exhortation entirely unimaginable to a British army, had ordered his men: 'You will fight to the death. When you are killed you will fight on with your spirit.' The obstinate Japanese just did not know when they were beaten, and British soldiers begrudged having to lay down their lives merely to teach them this lesson. Then, on Thursday 22nd June a final surge linked the men of the 2nd Division with the defenders of the Imphal pocket. At Milestone 108 Captain Sean Kelly of the Durhams saw the tanks accompanying the advance guard of his battalion identify approaching troops of the 5th Indian Division. 'We sat

alone in the sunshine and smoked and ate.’ The most desperate and bloody struggle in the entire war on the South Asian land mass had ended. It has lasted 79 days, and had seen some of the most obdurate fightings of the war, and cost the British around 4,000 men and the Japanese over 7,000 casualties.

The British constructed pathways for their horses from Kharasom to the Wahon border to enter Burma, another route was from Jessami to Matikhrü, Lephory to Kangjang, Mollen mountains to Burma (see Nagi, 2019). The Japanese took these routes to enter India to take over the British. Eyewitnesses from Sakraba village said that the Japanese entered through the Jessami route and reached Pfütsero. They used mirror reflection to communicate with one another when they reach a certain mountain and continued to communicate this way until they reached Pfütsero and built a base camp. Base camps were set up whenever they visited new villages, they also gathered food from these villages. The soldiers crossed over Lanye river and marched towards Phek, Chozuba, and Kijümetouma, though not certain about their entry to Lazami. Further, they marched towards Tuophema.

2.2. The Battle of Kohima and the accounts of Naga War Veterans

The surviving Naga war veterans are not many and they seem to be losing their memory with time. For them, to experience such an enormous happening is recalled with mixed emotions; laughter, fascination, pain, grief, and most importantly, their survival. To have survived is the biggest relief for any victors. Ironically, the Naga veterans would comment that despite the Japanese outer feature which very much resembles us, did not create any feeling of brotherhood. For them, they were enemies and so they aimed to kill them. The British won for they were in a better position and well equipped, while the Japanese were drained out of their needs. The British after the war went back home victoriously and also left India after the

declaration of India's Independence, 1947. As for the Nagas, it was the beginning of the long march of Naga Nationhood.

Account-1

Sovehu Nienu who was part of the 1st Assam Regiment recounts how they fought against an innumerable tough enemy. He said that while he and his troops were trying to overtake the Aradura Spur from the Japanese, they would shout and scream to terrify the enemy. The battlefield was a horrible sight to gaze on, and could easily sink any vague heart, yet it was his faith in God alone that gave him the strength to push forward.¹

Account- 2

The Japanese came to Kohima on 4th April 1944 around 4:00 pm. Zhavilie Huozha was around 18 years old when the war started. When the village was bombarded, the villagers packed their immediate needs and ran off to the jungle and stayed for a month (April). By May, the British troops called back the villagers to the village and assured them of their safety. British brought and distributed rations to the villagers. The Britishers built canvas tents in the village. They offered arms and ammunition to the villagers but the latter rejected the offer as they were not skilled to use the items. The British intention behind giving out the munitions was to keep an eye on the Japanese troops. Later, Zhavilie and along with him, four men accepted the rifles and went to Kohima and stayed for three nights in search of the Japanese troops. Zhavilie was given a grenade as well which exploded due to a lack of knowledge to handle the item. Zhavilie got injured which resulted in the loss of his fingers on his right hand. The Assam rifles took him to the British infirmary for treatment. A British officer honored his bravery with the title of Captain. The British government offered lifetime aid. This was officially mentioned in a written

document. But later the document was seized by the Indian Army after Naga Hills came under the Indian government.

After Indian independence, the Indian government assigned Dobashis to every village in search of injured persons in the war. Zhavilie also received aid from the Indian government. The Japanese came from the Southern region, precisely from Imphal, and entered Kohima and then Meriema. Around those periods, Meriema consisted of only 200 houses. Unlike the British, the Japanese did not possess extra goods to please the villagers. Rather, they were empty-handed concerning material possessions. The Japanese and the native residents did not show any hatred or dislike toward each other. They rather tried to adapt the means of livelihood of the villagers. Kevichusa was the then Deputy Commissioner, and the villagers used to report the coming of the Japanese to the Deputy Commissioner. The villagers reported not out of ill-intention but out of loyalty towards their superior, the British.

The British troops would often give away material goods to the villagers which impressed the latter, and this was one way to win their hearts. The British camps and tents were far from the native residents and this was done so to avoid troubles. Womenfolk mostly remained indoors and they never went near the camp. However, menfolk visited the camp and interacted with the British troops, and they would learn to speak English as well as goods.

The initial peaceful atmosphere took a shift when Meriema village was bombarded. The Japanese troops retaliated not only toward the British troops but also to the villagers. They ransacked the granaries, slaughtered the animals for their survival, and even molested the women. The Japanese had no such intention in the beginning but in due course of the war, the Nagas joined hands with the British troops.

When the village (Meriema) was bombarded by war planes, two villagers were killed. The man was inside his house when the incident took place. The other was a pregnant woman, both the baby and the mother were killed. When a person is killed in such an unfortunate

condition, no proper burial rites are observed. The husband of the deceased wife buried his wife and the baby in the very place where their bodies lay. The British troops enjoyed drinking the local beer as well as the local chili chutney. People starved for days when the village was attacked by a bomb. The condition was a tragic one and had to suffer a lot.²

Account- 3

Interview with Niza, non-combatant during the Second World War, the battle of Kohima. Born in the year 1933, October, He is 84 at present and belongs to Viswema village. He was around 12 years old then. His first comment on the battle was about the Japanese praising them for their good morals. The Indian sepoy were mostly with bad morals. They would chase women folks and misbehave; at one time, then, even Niza's mother was chased by the Indian sepoy but she managed to run away from them. The Japanese joined themselves on the trees and would shoot at their enemies, which was a good fighting tactic. Many Italian women nurses were seen, and some German nurses too. But all women were dressed in men's uniforms, representing The Red Cross, presumably, they were not fired by either group. His Father's name-Vipon was a signatory of the Simon Commission and a contractor during the war. His father used to be a reporter for the Allied forces during the war. He donated 10,000 rupees towards the Hydro Electric Project constructed at Viswema during the Second World War. Horse carriers were used a lot, especially at night time. When the Japanese entered Viswema, the villagers prepared food for them since they were out of rations. *Ghagra*, a wild vegetable leaf was fondly eaten by the Japanese.

Niza fondly remembers that the villagers would wear the clothes of the Japanese and use mosquito nets brought by the Japanese. When the villagers received the information that Viswema was to be bombarded, all the villagers escaped to Jakhama for shelter. K Khel was mostly burned down, Z Khel was half burnt. R Khel was not destroyed yet people were killed

because of firing. Jakhama was not bombarded but firing was there. Kohima was severely bombarded but details about the battle fought at Kohima seem to be unfamiliar. The Japanese set up a school in Jakhama under Kohima district during the second world war.³

Account- 4

Interview with Chingchungba, 93 years old, Changki village. He joined the Allied forces at the age of 17 and after three months from his joining, the battle of Kohima broke out. He worked as a runner and interpreter during the war. He would deliver messages from Kohima-Mokokchung-Wokha. His salary was rupees twelve per month. There was no case of starvation because the British troops were well equipped with granaries and storehouses.

When asked if they faced any discrimination, there was no room for ill-treatment or discrimination. He does not have many details to share on the account of the battle, yet, the outburst of bombarding of bombs and planes hovering in the sky fascinated and amazed them. He recalled that many INA troops were seen with the Japanese. However, some of the INA troops surrendered to the British Army. Among the many British officers, he remembers Lt. Col. Brown. He remarked that the British were pretty good men; the Japanese were good in conduct with the Nagas and which led them to offer them a helping hand when the Japanese asked for granaries. He was adorned with the rank of Knight; won the Indian Independence medal, Kashmir medal, and Burma medal.⁴

Account- 5

Interview with Shitozu Sema, 93 years, Litsami village under Atoizu, Zunhebphoto. Hirohito was the President of Imperial Japan, then; mentions Shitozu. He was a sepoy but didn't take part in the actual war. However, he was trained to fight the war whenever the need arose. The training was held at Elephant Falls Shillong and later shifted to Happy Valley, Shillong. Capt.

Heimengliana Lushai was the second in command. No position above the rank of Captain was permissible for Indian officers. There was no incident on ill-treatment. When he returned from Shillong after the war, Kohima was completely bombarded. There was peaceful relation with the Indian Army after the war until the birth of the Naga National Movement.

Zuheshe, the father of Shitozu was assigned to the Labour Corps during World War I. He along with several other Nagas formed the Naga Club, later to be known as the Naga National Movement. Shitozu was tortured severely by the Indian Army on the matter of the Naga National Movement in the year 1956. Shitozu's personality seems somehow outstanding compared to his contemporaries; he completed his M.Div at the age of 83.⁵

Account- 6

Interview with K.N. Pusha, non-combatant, Viswema village. He was 18 years old when the war broke out. Before the year of the outbreak of war, he was at his 3rd standard residing at Mission Compound, Kohima. Burmese refugees came to Kohima in search of shelter, with the ongoing fights in Burma, they were compelled to flee from their native land. Yet, they couldn't find any hospitable hosts which made them flee downwards Dimapur and march towards Assam. The "Burma Camp" colony in Dimapur was where many of these Burmese refugees were re-settled. The name is given, then, is still in use. He heard that the Japanese were marching towards Imphal without crossing the main town. The Japanese normally passed through the Eastern regions of the Naga Hills- Zunhebphoto, Kiphire. On 3 April 1944, the Japanese reached Viswema village. He described that they were short yet fair with clean uniforms. Even Japanese women folks were present but they were not easily recognizable.

Prior, to 2nd April 1944 the British forces withdrew from Burma and reached Viswema, and they headed to Kohima. On April 4th, 1944 at 4:00 pm the war started. INA joined the Japanese and reached Kohima to fight the battle. During the war, the Japanese had no rations,

no re-enforcement; the Viswema villagers provided food for them. The village was one of the ration stations. At Viswema, the Japanese established their ration headquarters at Mr. Vinol's house. The villagers from the nearby village also brought their paddy and other food essentials at Mr. Vinol's place as rations for the Japanese. Interestingly, local sources mentioned the use of paper money, where the denominations in use were 50 paise in notes and ₹1, ₹2, ₹5, and ₹10. It has been recorded that this war-time paper money was printed by the Japanese in the villages of Viswema and Jakhama.⁶

Account- 7

Unaware of the fate of the battle, the Japanese were in a hurry to reach Kohima and win over the British troops. Pukoho Rol from Jakhama heard the Japanese say, "Tomorrow Kohima finished, overcome Khonoma!" Undoubtedly, the Japanese had heard of the Battle of Khonoma (1879-1880). Here, the people of Khonoma fought against the British. Captain Richard Kirby Ridgeway of the Bengal Staff Corps who fought in the Battle of Khonoma was awarded the first Victoria Cross from the region of North East India. K.N. Pusha also mentioned the British troops surveyed through their binoculars the area situated towards Mao and Chakhesang before they proceeded to Kohima. The Japanese reached his village, Viswema on 3rd April 1944, and they left for Kohima the same day.⁷

Account- 8

A lot of Burmese refugees died on the way as they escaped the horrendous war. Neilao of Kohima Village witnessed these painful experiences of the refugees. Their feet bleeding after tirelessly walking from the place where they were dropped off by the trucks. Due to improper burial, many dead bodies were eaten by the jackals, also, many were dug into different

locations. The present Naga Bazaar church, Sokriezie, the DC's office, and the Hospital area are some of the places where the dead bodies of the refugees were deposited.

Lieut. General Kotuku Sato, Commander of the 31st Division along with his army troop stationed at one of the bungalows at Sokhaphezu, Jakhama. He worked out all necessities from there. Charles Pawsey was the then Deputy Commissioner. Dzukou-Khonoma-Zubza were main centres of informations for the Allied forces. Elderly people in the village gave away the reports to the British officials about the Japanese whereabouts. Heavy bombs would be bombarded from Zubza.

On April 16th, 1944, bombs were thrown at some of the Mao villages. The conversations between the Nagas and Japanese were spoken in Hindi and English. The whole month of July the villagers took shelter at Jakhama. The Japanese were almost exhausted keeping up the morale of the war at Kohima, and also the global arena; the attacked-on Hiroshima and Nagasaki led to the final blow of their relentless efforts and they finally withdrew from the war.

The British troops' suggestions to their authority were to fight the battle in the plains, yet, Charles Pawsey was determined to retain in the hills and face the war. He comforted the local inhabitants not to panic. After the war, DC Pawsey ordered all unused rifles to be surrendered. Local organizations within the tribes of the Nagas were established. The hospital was set up at the present Japfu Christian college, Viswema.

John Govt. Middle English school was established in memory of John from Viswema who contributed so much for the welfare of the villagers. A hydro-Power station between Viswema-Jakhama was also constructed. Later on, this hydro power station was destroyed by some men from Imphal. Food compensations and construction materials were given away to the villagers.

Zhavilie Huozha, recalls the first question asked by the British forces, "Where are the Japanese hiding?". When they told them the exact location, information was immediately sent

to Zubza and from there it hit the exact spot in Merema. Zhavilie Huozha instinctively believed that the British will win because the Japanese came without any support, no airplanes, no sufficient supplies. Whereas the British were well equipped. The British forces gave goods to the villagers and would also pay them whenever the villagers do laundry for the British troops.⁸

Account- 9

Zhovire, of Jakhama village, was around 11 years old when the Japanese reached his village. He described that a long-haired officer with his soldiers camped at their village and they came to their house and other houses in search of food. Some amongst the soldiers were starving famished, and unhesitant they ate the food cooked for pigs. Since the arrival of the Japanese in the village of Jakhama, the villagers pounded paddy grain and fed them. Gradually this kind gesture became difficult for the villagers to continue as their granaries were descending day by day. It provoked rebellious emotion among womenfolk as they had to daily pound and clean the grains and provide the Japanese troops and their horses too. At a certain point in time, the villagers secretly killed the horses.⁹

Account- 10

Nohol Khatso, Jakhama village worked as a driver and mechanic for a long time at the British motor vehicle workshop. His wife, Vingotsore Khatso, then, was about 20 years old and she remembers delivering paddy grain three times to the Japanese ration headquarters at Viswema. General Sato HQ was set up in the village and since the village was under Japanese authority, it was necessary to supply rations and fulfill other given responsibilities. A roster was set up by the village authorities and accordingly, the clans and *khels* carried out the tasks.

Nohol Khatso continued to work for the British even after the arrival of the Japanese in Jakhama village. He maintained his utmost loyalty to his superior, yet, he was also considered

to be friends with the Japanese. He did so to survive! He further narrated that whenever the British planes cross their area, the Japanese would hold them tightly so that no sign of movement would be seen by the British. Thus, giving the British a negative impression. Khatso was one of the delegates in the Naga delegation to the Allied Victory Parade in Delhi in 1945.¹⁰

Account- 11

Vingotsore Khatso expressed her dislike over the Japanese troops forcefully laying hands on their food items. The crops which were gathered to feed the family for a year were given away to the horses and this behavior hurt her a lot. She further says that taking away food and making people starve is considered an extreme taboo.

Pukoho Rolnu said a man from Jakhama village complained to the Japanese authority that their horses had eaten away all the grain in his field but the authority was least interested to compensate for his loss. Instead, the authority wanted to punish him and show it as an example for the rest of the villagers. The village authority came forth and pleaded with the Japanese authorities and told them the man was mentally ill and therefore, pardon him from further punishment. This plead saved man's life.

The Japanese ate almost all the plants available in the areas they resided. Through this the locals also started to have these plants raw or cooked, some even have medicinal value. The Japanese also brought plants with them and planted them in many Naga villages. The plants were to feed their horses as well as for their use.¹¹

Account- 12

A well-known elder, Besuvei Swuro of Cheswezu village, Chakhesang area narrated, the Japanese made the villagers kneel and threatened to behead them when there was deficient in the availability of food. One villager was killed in this matter.

The Japanese became difficult men to deal with, unlike the initial days. Swuro is known to be a friend of Subhas Chandra Bose, the leader of the Indian National Army. There are similar stories of the Japanese shared by villagers of Khonoma village, Western Angami area, in Northern Angami area, Rüsoma village. In all the Naga areas the Japanese entered, they were received by the villagers as guests, partly because of fear of being harmed by the Japanese. The Japanese Force informed the villagers they encountered that they were elder brothers of the Nagas. The initial period was manageable for the locals to share their food with the Japanese but later on, it became burdensome and exhausting from feeding them and their horses.

Upon the arrival of the Japanese, the daily chores of the villagers shifted from the usual one to care for the accommodation of the former. The locals were also forced to do labor duty, help in carrying war ammunition and goods. Local accounts said the Japanese stressed the racial similarity between the Nagas and the Japanese, the latter wanted a favor from the locals to win over the British. The INA (Indian National Army) and the Japanese forces assured the locals to liberate them from the British authority. Indeed, they have come to their land for this very reason, they affirmed to the locals.

The forceful action by the Japanese out of desperation to survive and face the war, this very nature became intolerable for the local folks. Nevertheless, the clean and decent moral nature of the Japanese is worth the mention. As for the INA soldiers, several accounts of their ill behavior made it difficult for them to please the heart of the local men. The Nagas generally did not prefer to show affection or inclination toward the non-locals.¹²

Account- 13

On a particular day, when the Japanese arrived in Pfütsero, Neikhalo Kapfo and peer groups were feasting, some amongst them hurried in receiving the news of their arrival to carry the

loads. On contrary, they came back harshly beaten by the Japanese soldiers. Presumably, this error was caused due to the inability to express their kind intention.¹³

Account- 14

Khetso Pienyü, Chedema village, when told by the Japanese that they were elder brothers of the Nagas, intimidated by these words he decided to help the Japanese. He recalls an incident with a particular Japanese officer with whom he fought after the officer failed to pay him for a few kilos of rice. He managed to take the money forcibly from the officer, yet he regretted his forceful action. Years later, he made an effort to return all that he has taken from the officer and sent it through a Naga traveling to Japan. In return, he received Japanese items and this gesture was much appreciated.

One can only imagine the weary conditions in the Naga areas as these local accounts are delivered to our knowledge. The coming of the Japanese and the INA to the Naga Hills area served as an advantage for Naga Nationalist leader, A.Z. Phizo was told through a local account that he agreed to help the Japanese and in return, supposedly after the victory of the Japanese in the Naga Hills, they will help the Nagas to be free from the British authority. This could be a probable reason why the Japanese confidently assured the locals to liberate them from foreign (British) rule.¹⁴

Account- 15

Vimese Tsochü of Mima village recalls his encounter with the Japanese with fond memories. Four Japanese soldiers stayed at his place and they would leave for Kohima during the night and return in the morning. The Japanese soldiers would sing for them and teach them numerically in Japanese. One soldier excitedly shared with them that he could kill many British

Indian soldiers with his sword. When the Japanese troops left his home, Commander Hamoto gave his family a shirt as a souvenir.¹⁵

Account- 16

For Mr. Khriezotuo Sachü, Kohima Village who is a retired educationist, the Japanese were pleasant and polite soldiers. He and the villagers already knew about the Japanese violent acts, hence, they were surprised by their pleasant behavior. The villagers agreed to help them as they offered to pay them for their work and help. However, this good feeling lasted for a short while. Noumvüo Khruomo maintains that when the war started, the villagers buried their grain and hid in their fields. Later on, they learned that in their absence the Japanese ate their grain and also killed domesticated animals. On the other hand, the British bombarded the village and everything went up in smoke.¹⁶

Account- 17

Neilhou Dzüvichü worked as a porter to both the British and Japanese. He narrated how the Japanese killed their domesticated animals and took away their grain. He found the forcible action of the Japanese brutal. They even forced men to carry their bulky loads,¹⁷

Account- 18

Khusoi, Porba Village in the Chakhesang area often visited the Japanese camp. With delight, he recalls his experiences, and according to him, his visits to the Japanese camp gave him the chance to collect the internal organs of the animals thrown away by the Japanese. He would take it back home and relish this delicacy with his family.¹⁸

Account- 19

According to Heuzieteusing Rao of Poilwa Village, he was paid ₹2 for his work by the Japanese. He used to collect hay. He and the rest of the villagers were shocked to see a huge number (3,000) of Japanese along with Indian National Army soldiers when they first entered the village. The Japanese were fond of the Naga rice beer prepared by the villagers. He recalled how the Japanese were amused when stung by the sharp tingling nettle plant. All this amazement was cut short when the British drew nearer to the village, the villagers were told by the INA soldiers to dig bunkers or trenches as their hideout. Never have they done such a thing or used such a tactic in their previous warfare this seemed alien to them.¹⁹

Account- 20

According to Pastor Kiezotuo of Rüsoma village, the Japanese asked for their clothes and pretended to be Nagas when the British visited the village. He also narrated one Japanese officer who fell in love with a woman from his village. Her name was Rüzëü. The woman and the Japanese officer communicated through sign language. The Japanese officer lived in the house of Rüzëü and they stayed happily until when he left for war in Dihoma village and he never came back. She waited for him for the rest of her life as the officer told her that he will come back. The Japanese officer was Iwaichi Fujiwara as told by one of the village elders. He played an active role in the formation of the Indian National Army (INA). According to records, he retired as Lieut. General in 1964.²⁰

Account- 21

In Wokha district, the Japanese reached Yikhum village. The villagers who witnessed their coming mentioned a place which was named Japan *Sukchopen* (a steep area located nearby the village which the Japanese soldiers traveled to enter the village). Here, it is important to know

that the Japanese avoided the normal road constructed by the British. Though it is not certain, the villagers mentioned that some Japanese soldiers got injured along the way and were taken back instead of taking shelter in the village. Some of the soldiers who managed to enter Yikhum village spent a night at the Inspection Bungalow

The Japanese reached the village at night time and were in a group. There is no strong evidence about the death case or no specific area where Japanese objects were found. The British were stationed at Sanis (Wokha district) when the Japanese landed at Yikhum village. Four local spies were appointed by the British and were paid Rs. 15 per month. These four local men were Mr. Nzio, Mr. Wosumo, Mr. Hakao, and Mr. Tsenchamo. The villagers could differentiate between a British soldier and a Japanese soldier from their physical features and military uniforms.

To the villagers, the battle of Kohima was known as Japan Rhitso (Japan War). The local spy out of compassion warned the Japanese that the British were stationed at Sanis. Interestingly, Mr. Hakao Odyuo reported to a British official about the coming of the Japanese in the village. As he was unable to communicate in English properly, he simply said Japan 3, rifle 1 (it means three Japanese soldiers and one rifle). The British official reacted impatiently and looked around for the Japanese, however, the Japanese had already left. The British official was so angry, and when Hakao noticed this expression of the British official, he hurriedly said, "I am a Christian". The mood of the officer was concealed after this confession.²¹

Account- 22

The Japanese visited Longsachung village under Wokha district before the war in Kohima. They came in a group of around ten or so. They voluntarily took away rations from the kitchen of the villagers such as rice beer, water, chicken, and other meat products. They did not stay in the village and headed toward Wokha. They came through the Kohima route and presumably

they might have wanted to go to Assam. Here, the informant also mentioned that there was news of a Japanese soldier being killed. The villagers and the Japanese soldiers communicated in physical action; the former did not ask them about the British. The advanced group of the Japanese soldiers reached up to Longsachung village in the Lotha Naga area. The group has been stationed in the residential compound of Lt. Shampothing Ezung, GB of Longsachung village for a night. The group then left the village for Wokha HQ (Zula) and proceeded toward Assam, and reached up to Wokha Chanchi (Wokha view hillock), presumably the last destination. Thereafter, their return journey and whereabouts of their movement remain unknown. This narrative was recorded as described by Mr. S.S. Ezung of Longsachung village. He was around 13-14 years old when the Japanese arrived at their village.²²

Account- 23

Mr. Chumdemo Murry of Wokha Village joined the army in 1942. He narrated that they were informed of the coming of the Japanese, and he along with his village mates went to Wokha to check on the Japanese. They were around 6-7 Japanese soldiers, and they asked the villagers whether the British came to Wokha. The Japanese soldiers rested for a night at Mr. Mhonchumo Yanthan's residence located in E Khel (Tungoe), Wokha Village. An incident was narrated where the Japanese unintentionally cooked the chicken in a pot that was used to dye clothes. They headed toward the Vankhosung area, and march up to a location known as the horse resting place which is located above Yikhum, and stayed for two nights. Thereafter, headed to Yikhum village to inspect the British soldiers.²³

Account- 24

Nyimchamo Odyuo, son of Lt. Nzuo Odyuo was born in 1926, Pyangsa village under Wokha District, Nagaland. He joined the 1st Assam Regiment in Shillong, 1944. He went to Burma

under British control in 1945 by ship from Calcutta (Kolkata) to Rangoon (Yangon). He narrated how he witnessed the roads, bridges, and homes damaged by the bomb. He had seen many Japanese soldiers both men and women arrested and imprisoned by British soldiers. He said the British soldiers are strict in discipline. Once, as he and his troops were traveling from Makilie to Mai Maio town, their vehicle got into an accident and stoop downwards to 200-300 sq. feet. However, by God's grace, they were all saved. He stayed in Burma for two years. In March 1947, they returned from Rangoon (Yangon) to Goa from the ship. Furthermore, he was also assigned to go to Manipur and participated in the fight against the king of Manipur and his kingdom, he recollects putting up the Indian flag after Manipur agreed to become an Indian state. He got retired in 1955.²⁴

Account- 25

After the battle, during the period 1975-1978, a Japanese group visited Kohima intending to collect the human remains of the fallen soldiers. Mr. Vilasielie Pienyü along with Mr. Petenilhou Shüya who were Scout officers accompanied the Japanese group and visited the Pfuchatsu Khel where a hospital was constructed for the Japanese soldiers during the war. The bones collected were taken back to Japan. During the excavation, a young Japanese officer from the repatriation group found his father's bones, he never met his father as he was killed before he was born.²⁵

2.3. Japanese account on the Battle of Kohima

Account- 26

According to Jun Shimada, regarding the last war, "I think it was a mistake for the Japanese Army to advance to mainland China in 1937. It is inconsistent to invade China in same Asia to free the Asian colonies from the United States, Britain, the Netherlands, and France".²⁶

Account- 27

Nozomi Tokuma commented that the Battle of Kohima and the Battle of Imphal was like the recently concluded Tokyo Olympics. Most of the Japanese citizens realized that holding Olympics in Tokyo in this condition, the pandemic is wrong, yet it was unstoppable due to the decision from the leaders in position.²⁷

Account- 28

According to Haruna Watabe, Shizuo Maruyama joined the 33rd division, known as Yumi Division in April 1944. Despite being a journalist, he was not allowed to send news back to Japan nor had any modes to send the news due to the military regulations. Rations were scarce but he chose to stay back with the division to witness the war. During this campaign, there was strict press censorship, and journalists were counted as “war coverage attendants”. Each newspaper publishing company and news agency were designated to a specific post to cover, and each team consists of a journalist, cameraman, technical radio operator, and liaison. Maruyama followed the Yamamoto force from the 33rd Yumi division, which was an auxiliary unit for the Yumi and Matsuri (15 division) division.

The Imphal campaign was based on the idea of a “surprise attack”. By the time Maruyama reached Chamol, ration, weaponry, and medicines were scarce. Moreover, the monsoon was approaching. Artillery, tanks, air force back up was limited, and commanders fell sick one after another. The Imphal campaign was at a complete standstill. Attacks by the British were quite accurate, and rains of bullets continued every day.

Since it was not allowed to write about the battle, Maruyama used to write stories of the soldiers, INA, local people's life, and nature. The rain in this terrain was uttermost. Even thick tents will get submerged. In Japan, people will fuss about 100mm/day of rain, but here in Assam, there will be 1000mm/day of rain. There was a poisonous plant called *Cirsium*. It had

prickly leaves, which once touched, the skin will get swollen, One Naga chief was surrounding his house with this plant for defense purposes. Nagas also put tattoos on their forehead, chin, and legs. Angami tribes residing near Kohima had hairstyles that resembled Japanese, Shiema tribe (Sema) will have a bob hairstyle, and the Renko tribe will leave a small portion of the hair on the top of their head.

A strong sense of male chauvinist ideology is pervading society, and women work very hard. Every housework is done by women, and men will only go hunting. Nagas love singing. On many occasions they sing while fetching water while working, and while mourning. The area was partially ruled by British India, but the British administration was rarely implemented and rather ruled by the local Kings. The King's order was unquestionable; moving the village, allocation of land, court, it was all up to the King. Other locals were the Chin people who inhabited the Chin hills.

In the Burmese language, Chin meant "naked". They followed shifting cultivation and reared piglets and chickens. People were kind, humble, and modest. Outside influence was quite rare, so Indian Hinduism or Burmese Buddhism did not reach this area, and the Nagas followed their tradition faithfully. The area was called 'Paradise in Jungle'. The intelligence group from the Japanese army first attempted to contact the locals. Once they got to know one member, it will easily spread to their friends, acquaintances, their family, and gradually they expanded their contacts.

Meanwhile, they also gave medication, clothes, kitchen tools, and researched the village council administration, population, power relations among the locals, and opened a voluntary army, watch group, Japanese schools, and travel clinics. There was a saying among the Assam people that there will be a savior from the east, therefore the intelligence group used to convince them as "We Japanese are the savior from the East.". However, the influence of the intelligence group was enormously dependent on the Japanese army's performance in the war. Once the

British Indian started to gain power, the V force members or any other spies on the British Indian side became quite active, and the Japanese influence gradually decreased. By no time the locals start to side with the British. The fall of our Imphal campaign meant the fall of our intelligent web.

General Mutaguchi, the propeller of the Imphal campaign had high confidence that the campaign will be completed by April 29th, the Emperor's birthday which will fall right before the monsoon season. He disregarded any opinion that was unfavorable to him, and the deadly campaign was executed. The initial part was carried out as planned, each division made it to the outer ward of Imphal valley but immediately after, the attack by the British Indian army began, and the Japanese army was stranded. All three division commanders questioned the further execution of the campaign, but General Mutaguchi expelled all three commanders during the campaign which was unprecedented in Japanese military history. It had to wait till July for the campaign to be aborted, and the entire retreat ended up in a catastrophe. The main miscalculation was disregard of the terrain, and neglection of ration/ammunition supply. The concept of "Ration from the enemy territory" tormented the soldiers, uttermost the 31st division.

Maruyama retreat route started from Chamol from Chin hill, then to Kabaw valley. The second part was going through the Kabaw valley and approaching Sittang which is known as the "road of bones", then the last part was crossing the Chindwin River, Shwebo, and reaching Maymyo. The main group will retreat immediately after the commanding officer's retreat, then come the stragglers, mildly ill patients who can stand on their own, and then the critically ill patients who cannot walk. Those will be left behind, which meant that any walkable soldiers will wander around the heaps of corpses all around, or those critically ill patients' bodies will be wriggling around the ground. There were several big rivers among the Kabaw valley and that was the most challenging part for us. The question was how to carry as many soldiers as

possible and how to cross in the limited time frame without being seen by the British aircraft? This turned out to be a test of humanity among the soldiers.

There was no shame nor ostentation, real human face showed up with the vice, irrational and odious side. But on the other hand, the beauty of humanity, righteousness, and toughness can show up. The retreat road was the theatre of both loss and reinstatement of humanity. Packing his belongings while carrying all the deep emotions, one Lieutenant came to visit his tent. He gave him a small portion of rice. It was not even one cup, but that made him speechless. Maruyama lost count on how many days have passed since he last ate rice. He cooked the rice in the dark, but the woods he has kept in the tent was damp which made it difficult to make fire. With the Lieutenant's kindness and the smoke from the fire, he could not stop crying. The rice was shining in the dark like snow. Maruyama ate feverishly.

Maruyama packed everything in one backpack, it had all his possessions and ration; a water holder, and one bag of dried biscuits. Gaining energy from that rice, he decided to cross the bridge that connects Moreh and Palel. That was July 20th, 1944. Saying goodbye to his three months tent life, he started his journey. The sunlight was still weak, and the Assam valley was asleep in the damp green. There were occasional attacks by the enemy. Hiding under the bush, drainage pipe, or any pipeline to wait till the situation calms down. When he reached the bridge, he found exhausted INA soldiers hiding from the attack, waiting to cross the bridge. Maruyama joined them and waited together. When they decided to cross, the mud on the bridge caught their legs. It was almost like swimming in the mud. With the fear of another attack and an angry river below us, they crossed in a hurry. Right after the bridge, there was an uphill.

The sunlight shining between the monsoon clouds was painful. Breathing heavily, they finished the uphill. Heavy backpack and empty stomach made us nearly faint. There was one sick soldier before them, who was wandering around in an awful condition. Somehow, he was fully dressed which was already rare at that time, and soon Maruyama noticed he was one of

the soldiers who was staying near the campsite. We started walking together but he was still meandering the road. According to another soldier accompanying him, he only made 1000m for five hours. He refused to leave any of his belongings, although that was making it difficult for his sick body to walk.

During those days it was regarded as a crime to lose any of your military belongings. He was probably still hanging on to that idea. With his speed, we realized we will not reach Moreh, so we had to leave him behind. He answered happily that he will follow behind, and he even said some jokes. Later we got to know that he collapsed after around 100m we parted, still fully dressed. The psychiatrist would say it is due to extreme fatigue and malnutrition, stress from the battle, and mental abnormality. There were many cases as such, but for this soldier, that was not the only reason, remarked Maruyama.

Malaria, Beriberi, starvation...a soldier who is close to death carrying all his equipment while retreating, who even manages to say some jokes. It almost felt like he was trying to protest against the military or the war. Or maybe it was a comedy to demonstrate by his own body the idiocy of the Japanese military. We were exhausted and desperate. Many rumors flew about the British Indian army, and it made our dark face darker with fear. Roads were washed out; no cars could pass by. The only never-ending white road was ahead of us. No food nor water was available, no shed was there to protect us from the rain. After a while, we found one light. It was a casern. They offered us water and leftover rice. Then one truck drove by. We asked if they would take us and they allowed us. Finally, we reached Moreh, it was 5 am.

Several field hospitals were found across the valley, and critically ill patients were all over the ground. Those were “abandoned” patients who didn’t have friends to carry them forward or had no hope for them to recover. They were simply waiting for the British Indian’s attack or waiting for death. All the soldiers who came to Moreh were expecting to get some food supply, but in reality, we had to go another 1 km from Moreh. Many were too weak to

walk further, and they collapsed on the ground. Dead bodies were overlapping each other. Soldiers were digging a hole in the ground to bury them, and interestingly, they looked much healthier. For the hope of getting food, we all advanced. Crossing rivers were quite a task with many soldiers rushing their way and trying to avoid the attacks. Many days passed waiting to cross, but after one river, there will be another one. Dead soldiers and mentally ill soldiers were all around. Once, two military horse was accompanied by a soldier. Those were both General Mutaguchi's horses but had already been abandoned by him since he retreated earlier. Those were the last horses that made it from Kuntan. Their beautiful brown hair was shining, and they looked healthy the contrary to us soldiers. In the Japanese military, horses were valued highly, and their ranks were considered to be higher than soldiers. The idea was that the horses are not easily replaceable compared to the soldiers. Hence, we let the horses cross the river first. One soldier got on the boat and pulled the reins, and another soldier slapped the horses' back, but the horse was having difficulty swimming. Shortly, the horse snorted once, and gradually the body drained. Regardless of us cheering, the ears went below the water, and the reins had to be released. Another horse came into the water once but was unable to swim and ran off to the road it came from.

Endless retreat and the fear of being found by the enemy pressured Maruyama to walk in a hurry. The mud was so thick that his legs got caught deeply, and he was nearly attacked by a plane once. The retreat route, especially getting his legs caught in the mud had haunted him, and he used to dream about it in post-war. Many soldiers were wandering like dead corps while the jungle was thick, deep, and silent. Then one day, he saw a big white line, shining in the dark. It looked as if it was floating away in further distance. Someone shouted, "It's Chindwin River!". Maruyama thought he was dreaming but he was not, it was true. Now we can all go home alive...I gazed at the river with hope.²⁸

Account- 29

Takao Isobe joined the 33rd division, 215 infantry regiment as a flag bearer. The national flag was considered the symbol of the emperor; therefore, his duty was regarded as highly important. May 1st, 1943, Isobe reached Kalaw where the 33rd Division Commander Yanagida was stationed. As narrated by Isobe, from Kalaw we took a truck and boat to head to Monywa, which was occupied by our regiment during that time. We received the national flag there and we advanced in the night to avoid attacks.

The British army was trying to get Burma back in their hands, and their ambition could be felt from their aggressive attacks. The national flag was made by high-quality *habutae* silk, and there was a gold chrysanthemum emblem on the pole. Our regiment name was handwritten by our emperor in the margin. The flag and the cover weigh a few kilograms, which made it difficult to carry especially when it rained. This flag was a symbol of the emperor and had to be taken with the utmost care, and it can never be touched by the enemy. Therefore, any flag bearer was equipped with gasoline, dynamite, grenade, and any sort of arm in case of an emergency, so he can explode himself with the flag before it falls into the enemy's hand.

The Imphal campaign was announced on January 7th, 1944. Based on that order, the 15th army started the preparation and each division conveyed the orders. Regardless of some opposition, General Mutaguchi convinced the Imperial Army for seizing Assam. "Take rations from the enemy" was his motto which was questioned by other generals, yet General Mutaguchi managed to convince the Major General to begin the campaign. Cows and sheep were taken for both transportation and consumption purposes. As a farmer, I know that cows are quite slow walkers, but somehow cows were chosen and trained for purpose of carrying the rations.

In the book published by the Ministry of Defence, it is written that the cows were trained by the locals and they had no issues taking them together, but I did not encounter any cows

during the campaign and neither did I hear stories concerning that from other regiments. Our 33rd division had to go from Kalewa via Mt. Fort White which had proper roads towards Tidim. The temperature was unstable, and it was freezing at night. The people residing in Kohima areas were called the Nagas, and they were siding with the British, and non-cooperative with the Japanese. The southern Chin people in the Chin hills were friendly to the Japanese forces. Both the Nagas and the Chins were living on slash and burn to farm, and they were quite poor. Despite our intelligence webs, the enemy side had acquired all the information about the Japanese quite accurately.

Our regiment's advance route to Imphal was the longest among the other divisions. It is estimated that we walked around 470 kilometers long. Carrying two weeks of ration and all other types of equipment such as helmet, clothing, hand grenades, and other weaponry which comes down to around 30 kilograms. Once you sit down, you cannot stand up by yourself. Under such conditions, we had to fight against the enemy as well. How impractical this campaign was? On March 8th, our regiment started our way from the west coast of the Manipur river towards Shingel. The battle held in this surrounding area was quite fierce, and we lost one whole battalion and many soldiers from different squadrons. The number of rations they had, the countless arms, and huge cans of petrol were simply extraordinary. However, soon after seizing the territory, the attacks from the air were nonstop, which damaged our regiment immensely. We were unable to hold on to the captured territory and retreated without being able to collect our fellow soldier's bodies.

Ammunition was scarce so was the ration, and we couldn't expect any supply. Having heard all the damage, Division Commander Yanagida telegraphed General Mutaguchi, to suggest stopping the attack and concentrate on the defense. By no surprise General Mutaguchi was outraged by this telegraph and responded immediately, stating to continue. With an

exchange of telegraphs, General Mutaguchi decided to make the Army Chief General Tanaka take over Division Commander Yanagida.

On 25th April, we saw our aircraft flying above Bishnupur and attacked the enemy territory. It was a mere few minutes of the attack and they left immediately after two of the aircraft were shot down. That was my first and the last encounter of seeing our Japanese aircraft. In contrast with our air force, the enemy had complete control over the air, and they were supplied with red, blue, and white parachutes. The disparity between our air force power with them was tremendous. The monsoon season was expected to come earlier this year. The 31st division around the Kohima area was struggling to win over the enemy, and Division Commander Sato had telegraphed General Mutaguchi concerning the ration supply. The ammunition was becoming less day by day, and the situation was not favorable to the division. However, General Mutaguchi pushed Division Commander Sato to continue the attack and hold on to the area, which made Sato to decide take action by himself. He began their retreat towards Fumine, where they expected to receive some rations.

General Mutaguchi ordered the 31st division to move towards Ukhrul, but Division Commander Sato refused to obey and continued the retreat. The refusal of the order by the General is equivalent to insubordination towards the emperor. Therefore, it must have been a tough decision for Division Commander Sato, yet the situation compelled him to take the last option. It had to wait till July for the Imperial army to finally decide to abort the campaign, however, the casualties were already too high.

This whole campaign was planned based on General Mutaguchi's dream of advancing towards Assam. Japanese imperial army did not have enough information about the enemy's movement nor their tactics, in contrast to this, the enemy was fully prepared for the war. Their supply was stable, they were ruling over the air, and were completely ready for the Japanese advance. Japanese had applied the same tactics they applied in Burma, whereas the British side

had learned and researched all the methods of how to defeat the Japanese. All those who raised reluctance on the campaign were expelled in the early stage, and those who had doubt did not speak out to stop the campaign to commence. Therefore, I conclude that the Imphal campaign was an impractical battle. In every aspect, we were inferior to the enemy, yet it took too long to notice that mistake and, in the meantime, many soldiers lost their lives. Nevertheless, General Mutaguchi never accepted his failure.

During the period of war, and after the ejection of the Japanese from Manipur and the Naga Hills, relief works in the forms of food, medicines, house-building materials, and cash was provided by the British government as a debt of gratitude for Nagas role in the war and as a measure of reconstruction of the areas under the scheme of relief measures. Later on, compensation was also given to the war-affected villages of the Naga Hills and Manipur. A detachment of the Naga famous for the help they rendered to the Allies against Japan was called in Delhi to participate in the victory week in March 1946. A large number of modern rifles, ammunitions, unexploded shells, and grenades were left behind by the Japanese and British forces in various Naga villages, although the government through local administrators had taken them substantially on the traditional fashion of oath-taking that they had not possessed the unauthorized rifles, etc. in their houses. Yet, they hid many rifles and ammunition and through which the Nagas had learned how to use modern weapons.

The standard of living of the Nagas in ease and comfort became higher than the other tribes of Assam on receipt of higher wages or earnings and in the purchase of indigenous products by the Japanese and Allied troops in cash and compensation for the war services. The centuries-old isolation of the Nagas and other tribes of the northeast of India and Burma from the outside world was broken off. They were galvanized within a transient period into modern streams and conceptions of life, humanity and made known to the outside world. The opening and improvement of the rapid communications by road, railway, and air linking them with the

parts of India and Burma for the military also need to be transformed tremendously the economic, social, moral, and cultural life of the Naga people. It led to the intercourse among the Nagas themselves and that they gave up the traditional feuds, and try to learn from the history about the rise and fall of nation-states with the idea of nationalism. They talked of unity and nation. The war impacted political commotion among the Nagas and in particular the ones affected by the war.²⁹

2.4. Role of Airpower

The role of airpower or air transport has been instrumental in the success of Allied air mobility operations in theaters of war even in remote battlefields in the Pacific and it is also evident in the victory of the Burma Campaign. Field Marshal Viscount Slim, a veteran of air transport operations acknowledged the strength and effectiveness of airpower. It is observed that in the Burma theater of war, air supply was implemented as the main tool of the whole campaign. Airpower was made the absolute method of this operation. The first Arakan campaign, in December 1942, desperately indicated the need to enhance air mobility and superiority of the Allied force. The Japanese already had firm control of the skies. Strong airpower contributed to their successive victories, whereas, the Allied force was yet to set up effective air transport.

The first barrage balloons to fly over Burma are those of No.2 Mobile Balloon Flight, which are being used to guard the Bailey Bridge over the Chindwin River near Kalewa, the longest pontoon Bailey bridge ever built in any theatre of war. The picture shows one of the balloons guarding the 360 yards long pontoon Bailey bridger over the Chindwin. Records showed, by the end of 1943, Japan's aircraft numbered up to 740, of which 420 were based in Burma and Siam (Thailand). Amongst the 420, 250 were assigned as fighters, 110 light and medium bombers to hit enemy targeted fields, and 60 surveying aircraft. The second Arakan Campaign was launched in January 1944, Slim's thought on air transport was not to look at

this as an alternative backup but as a transport readily accessible like roadways, waterways, and railways. He gained insights through painful experiences from the first expedition where they barely managed to keep the Japanese under their control (see Judge, 2009).

Arakan was located in a difficult spot and it became a necessity to establish easy and convenient air transport besides the other means of transport. The slim distinct vision of “air-mindedness,” explains that being air-minded is to see this transport as a normal vehicle and not and not just as a war weapon or a war technique or simply an airplane. His air-minded approach to outflanking the Japanese forces became an important element in the second Arakan campaign. By the early part of February 1944, the British forces began to march down the Arakan seaboard. The 7th Indian Division was outflanked by 10,000 abled Japanese soldiers and they expected the Allied Forces to retreat and assumed they were sure to secure this coastal line of communication. However, Slim’s expounded his air-minded vision to great effect and the Japanese failed to secure their position. There was no need for the retreat of the 7th Indian Division. This new strategic shift in the Burma theater countered the Japanese encirclement tactics (see Salmi, 2014).

The effectiveness of air transport made resupply of food commodities and ammunition convenient for the Allied forces. Airpower critically shifted the dimension of the battle. Imperial Army forces continually struggled with a shortage of food and ammunition and it became difficult to withstand the offensive. The 7th Indian Division and the 81st West African entirely depended on air supply throughout the operation. Another accountable air campaign led by Maj Gen Orde Wingate’s Chindit expedition deserves special mention.

The Japanese soldiers were abled jungle fighters and could endure physical hardships unlike the Allied forces, and their ground movement tactics were most commendable. Wingate's approach to using the air supply to off-balance the Japanese troops demonstrated the ability of airpower. The Chindit expedition goaded the mind of the 15th Army commander,

General Mutaguchi to launch an offensive at Imphal. Mutaguchi planned to invade India via Imphal. Despite the visible unstable position of the Imperial forces, with approval from high command in Tokyo, the Japanese officially launched the offensive against Imphal on 10th March 1944. Slim also positioned the IV Corps personnel near Imphal and Kohima situated to the north. By 29th March 1944, Imphal was completely occupied by the Japanese. The IV Corps of the Allied force under the command of Lt Gen Geoffrey Scoones was left with no possible option for resupply other than air transport. Six operational airstrips around Imphal airlifted 14 million pounds of rations, around one million pounds of gasoline, more than 1,000 pounds of mail, and 40,000 cigarettes. The minimum requirement of supplies per day was 540 tons, of which much was air-dropped at Kohima (see Lyman, 2004).

The flexibility of airpower also validated the absolute tactic in counterattacking the larger-than-expected Japanese forces. The siege ended in June 1944, Joe Taylor, the foremost expert on Burma air supply operations, commented that “Imphal was the final testing ground for air supply. The experience gained in the NCAC [Northern Combat Area Command] area, in the Arakan, in 3 Indian Division operations, and at Imphal convinced air and ground commanders that air supply could sustain an offensive of great enough magnitude to drive the Japanese from Burma. The pursuit of the remnants of the Japanese Fifteenth Army began immediately, and with the end of the rains, Fourteenth Army lunged forward to finish the war in Burma” (Salmi, 2014, p.44).

Slim in his written accounts, post-war, expounded the values of air battle which needs well-organized plan to execute the mobility of air transportation; study the visible risks and taking right decision to counter it correctly and most importantly, the confidence, enthusiasm, and discipline of the team as the main contributor to the success of air battle. Air supply does not support that it is superior to the other usual means of supply. However, Slim’s vision and

confidence to use air supply in the difficult war theater, undoubtedly, the Burma campaign stood as the perfect reference of air mobility.

The Allied ground campaign in Burma from mid-1943 to its conclusion in 1945 was underwritten by air supply. Supposedly, had there been the absence of air mobility, the Wingate expedition would be unknown; the second Arakan offensive would have failed similar to the first; the fate of the Allied Forces post-war would have differed; and most probably, an amphibious military operation would have led to the capture of Rangoon. Slim's successes were made possible through the inclusion of air flexibility power.

2.5. Indian National Army and the South-East Command

The Indian National Army (INA), a shibboleth that evokes different responses in India to this day. Its Commander-in-Chief, Subhas Chandra Bose, and his army are often eulogized as the second front of the Indian Freedom Struggle. On contrary, there are discussions that the INA did not play such a significant role in India's military history. The INA was formed during February-September, 1942 by Fujiwara Iwaichi who was a Japanese intelligence officer, and Mohan Singh, a captured Sikh Captain of the Indian Army. The main purpose of this formation was to remove the British from India. However, Singh was arrested in December 1942 for not extending cooperation to the Japanese leadership and the Indian ex-pat leaders in Southeast Asia (see Sundaram, 2015).

In 1940, Bose traveled to Germany after he escaped British custody in Calcutta. He intended to obtain Nazi support to drive out the British from India. But later on, he realized this plan has no chance of succeeding or being effective. By this time, the Japanese authority was upon Southeast Asia. Subhas Chandra Bose nervously hurried toward the East in mid-1943. Bose formed the Provisional Government of Free India after returning from Germany, giving new energy to strengthen the INA force. Bose wanted the INA to play a prominent combat role,

his vision, “March on Delhi,” arouse his expectations that the British-Indian Army would be willing to join the INA force. Bose missed out to understand that the British Indian Army who opposed the INA were better-skilled forces and possess commendable equipment, morale, and logistics as compared to the troops in 1941-1942 (see Swüro, 2005).

The INA deployed in North-Eastern India was called the Bose brigade which was inducted as a support system, if their performances expand, more INA units would be deployed to the region. One setback of the INA was the lack of trained officers. Due to a shortage of supplies, the INA soldiers suffered from various diseases and starvation, the same condition faced by the Japanese troops. The Imphal and Kohima battle in 1944 witnessed one of the worst land battles of the whole war. Major PS Raturi, Commander of the first battalion of the Bose brigade managed to raise the flag of Bose’s Provisional Government in the minute village of Mowdok. Later on, this was withdrawn due to the defeat of the Japanese (see Sareen, 2004). Despite the painful defeat at the Imphal-Kohima battle, Bose's energy to keep going forward with his unit is evident in the INA’s participation in the Japanese defense in Central Burma (February-March 1945). Here too, the INA suffered an overwhelming loss.

2.6. The Emergence of the Burma Campaign

The Burma offensive was a long war, overwhelmingly tiresome, difficult, and bloody struggle; it was intense, and the operation was fought under great effort and exertion. The demanding geographical terrain and the weather conditions aggravated the enfeebling conditions of the soldiers, the Allied Force as well as the Imperial Japanese Army. The Allied force consists of men from different countries, a variety of races and creeds, clubbed together and fought under one command. Burma was surrounded by typical wooded mountains, dense jungles and lowlands, broad desert-like plains, and broad rivers fed by countless streams that were steep narrow channels when dry and fast-moving streams in the rain.

There were few dug roads, and the road mobility was weak, and not capable of accessing support to military supply and movement. Railroads were unseen; practically nonexistent. The weather conditions were another overwhelming matter, the heavy monsoon rain did not allow any extensive military operations during its duration and this became exceptionally challenging for both sides. Another painful burden for the soldiers was the undesirable widespread occurrence of disease: malaria, typhus, skin infections, and the most unwanted whip, dysentery.

By early 1942, the wave of Japanese conquest, having easily secured into eastern Burma, was alarming to capture the entire region, defeating weak, unprepared, and pitifully led British forces. Slim had to pick up the task of leading a fighting retreat of those shattered units by the Japanese, delaying the movement of the enemy as much as possible, falling short of necessary defensive tactics, they managed to enter India with whatever forces feasible. He learned some unforgettable lessons during this ignominious retreat.

Despite the discreditable retreat, he conducted exceptionally well considering the undesirable circumstances he was obliged to do it. The Japanese victory in Burma left them in absolute authority, while Slim was left with the tough task of restoring the strength, logistics, morale, and combat excellence. He had to revive back his dispirited troops. He worked with determination and enthusiasm, teaching new skills to his men and expanding the strength of his forces and rebuilding their confidence, and igniting the weakened spirits. He also constructed supply lines, accumulated food items, and ammunition, and established an advance medical system. He also inducted a much-needed program for air evacuation of the forces.

Around the fall season of 1943, Slim became commander of the Fourteenth Army, assigned with the responsibility for the defense of Northeastern India and the recapture of Burma. With the support of Stilwell's American-supported Chinese forces and British-Indian units, a new offensive was launched. The British-Indian units were deployed to central Burma

and the Arakan. The Japanese, aware of the Fourteenth Army's offensive and movement of the Allied force, too reacted ambitiously and in the early part of 1944 launched a counterattack offensive to defeat the British. Their primary target was the hilly Imphal-Kohima regions of Northeastern India eastern which was under Assam province. It was expected that victory there might provoke further movement into India, encouraging an uprising of Indian nationalist forces who desperately wanted the British to leave India for good.

The Japanese began the offensive, initially making efforts to distract the attention of Fourteenth Army forces moving into the Arakan. However, Slim, having by now learned how to respond to the Japanese tactics, remained alert and refused to be distracted from the tricks of his enemy. Slim was informed by ULTRA and other Intelligence support about the Japanese movements and plans, likewise, he made his plans to trick and defeat the enemy. But he wrongly judged the timing of the Japanese assault and with great constraint managed to release the Fourteenth Army units caught off-balance in forwarding action. Slim and his men successfully cleared off Japanese intention to take Imphal, but initially paid less attention to the area around Kohima, which he faced great inconveniences to defend. Slim's vision of airpower which he was able to execute successfully resulted in the mobility of airlift reinforcements and supplies. Air superiority gave Slim a critical advantage over the enemy. Slim confidently moved forward against his enemy as he now procured a significant advantage in men, food, and ammunition. In the Imphal-Kohima offensive, Slim performed better than the Japanese and fewer mistakes than the latter (see Murray, 2007).

Writings of Slim indicate that he admitted his shortcomings and expresses full acknowledgment to his subordinate, superior, and supporting commanders. Slim was honored with knighthood and his victories gained great fame. By the end of 1944, Slim pursued the retreating Japanese into central Burma, the wide plain between the Chindwin and Irrawaddy Rivers. Though it was not easy to get hold of the Japanese, Slim used deceptive and tricky

tactics to get the attention of the enemy. He aimed to capture the major Japanese supply base at Meiktila. The mission was successful and by April 1945, the Japanese in Burma were completely defeated. After the war ended, Slim became commandant of the Imperial Defence College and then, as field marshal, chief of the Imperial General Staff. The last official post he held was Governor-general of Australia. Slim died in 1970.

2.7. In memory of Lieutenant General Kotoku Sato, Commander of the Imperial Japanese Army, 31st Division, 15th Army (Figure 3)

Lt. General Kotoku Sato was the Commander of the 31st Division of the Imperial Japanese Army. During the battle, he disobeyed his superior, General Mutaguchi's order to advance, and instead pulled his troops back to the nearest food and ammunition dump to save his men from starvation, deadly diseases and dying from their wounds. Not long after this the British Allied Force regained the Naga Hills, thus ending the Imphal operation. Mutaguchi had a military doctor examine General Sato and he was deliberately diagnosed as insane, purely because he refused to sacrifice his men in a battle, he knew was impossible to win. Then Mutaguchi demoted General Sato and transferred him to the Philippines as a punishment for disobeying his orders. Mutaguchi did not have General Sato court martialled because he did not want his own incompetence in planning and executing the mission to be scrutinized in a courtroom, thus General Sato never had a chance to clear his name and show how his men were sent into the battle with insufficient food, ammunition, medicine, etc (<http://www.kohimamuseum.co.uk>)

During the ensuing battles of the II World War, the Japanese high command decided to focus on the south-ward located region Burma/ Myanmar in the far east of Asia, to strengthen and reinforce the defense protection system of the area. Imphal played an important role as a strategic British stronghold /fort (which housed the IV corps) within the territory of British India in that area. Hence it was seen as a strategic move for the Japanese forces to plan a

program against this particular British stronghold in Imphal. To carry out this plan, the Japanese troops were to ferry across the large Chindwin river and maneuver through the many mountains of the vast Arakan mountain range, carrying the huge supply/ration of rice and war supplies for the army. It was a foolhardy and reckless military strategy.

Accordingly, the top executives at the helm who were gauging to recover from the inferior position of the war situation, to enforce this war strategy, gave out an order for three army divisions, with a total of 67,500 men/ personals to move into that area. It was to be a decisive battle of brief duration which would strike the enemy allied forces from further offensive plans for that year. In such a state, the person nominated to be the divisional commander of the troops was lieutenant-general Kotoku Sato of the 31st regiment of the Mountain Artillery (of Shonai town under Yamagata prefecture). On their backs, each soldier of the divisions was to carry 20 days' worth of food provisions and war ammunition, bullets, medicines- first aid, and so forth, which came to a staggering weight of 40 kgs, and that too, across such harsh terrain. To compensate for the air superiority which the British had, they traveled on foot day and night without stopping and proceeded towards Kohima to occupy it, to cut off Imphal from supplies and reinforcements. However, the strategy for the allotted food supplies and ammunition to be carried by each soldier was completely inadequate Compared to the enemy's equipment, corps, the wave of offensive strikes. The rough and unwelcoming terrain made the situation much worse in the absence of any roads through the mountainous terrain, waterfalls, and waterways overflowing due to the rainy season, etc. With such difficulties, it took all of 40 days for the journey.

Lieutenant general Kotoku Sato well-perceived danger in the sight of the indolent and demoralized army at his command (resulting from such overwhelming odds against them). He duly intimated the higher-ups on the present situation and gave the proposal to withdraw his men from the Kohima battle due to the lack of supplies, ammunition, and medicines. He

subsequently disobeyed his general's command (which was unprecedented and against Imperial military code) to stay and fight, fully holding himself responsible for the action. The higher-ups weighed the outcome of the evacuation. However, the state of starvation, injured personnel, and the physical evacuation of the sick amidst continuing rain was dangerous and the planned mobilization was ruled to be disastrous or calamitous. The roads were more often than not non-existing in the mountains and this route eventually came to be known as the 'highway of bones'/ later called as white bone road' because of the overwhelming casualties of personnel under such extreme conditions. Even in the annals of world history, it is marked to be one of the most disastrous campaigns. Despite such readings, the headquarters dismissed/suspended the divisional commander undergrounds of insanity(?). He was directed to undergo psychotic treatment (that was the charge on which he was suspended). Division commander Kotoku Sato was relegated to a subordinate position thereafter.

Having been forced to leave his office under such sad and disreputable circumstances (dishonorably dismissed), he could not defend clear his name throughout his career. Yet it was his decision that prevented the total annihilation of the division. In the post-war period, ten thousand people, among them officers, came out to sympathize and support this decision. After 40 years, division commander Kotoku Sato's remains at the Jokeiji temple were commemorated /honored by raising a monument tower in his memory. Today his memory is being cherished and given due reverence.

The epitaph on the monument reads:

“Here lies an exceptional man/soldier of courage whose life-saving determination and decision, even at the cost of questioning the authorities/ his superiors, to save lives, ended in his condemnation. We extend our overwhelming feelings of gratitude to him who brought men alive from the gates of hell”.

The establishment of the town library

The Town Library built inside the campus of the Akane Elementary-High School was constructed through large donations made by the wealthy persons of the town. A book collection drive for the library made rounds in the Hamlet and surrounding places. This was a drive for an excellent library to encourage and propel the reading habit in the townspeople. This initiative even garnered the support and commendation of the ministry of education, culture, sports, science, and technology (*monbushou*). It was finally inaugurated to take over as the official Shonai town library. In addition, this was to be a center of training in social sciences and social justice. This training center needed to have teachers who will not arbitrarily misuse their role or take on an authoritarian path. Towards this cause, a principal with an exceptional skill who would rise to this expectation was required; who would not only be well accustomed to Yamagata prefecture but also possess an awareness of the country and world at large. Under the right headmaster, the institution built up a steady reputation. The intensity of the lectures, ingeniously designed and the oratorical skills were fascinating to the audience. This initiative, begun in the 8th year of the Taisho era (1912-1926), was nationally recognized and the day's cabinet ministry took an official interest in it. The headmaster took charge of the high-grade high school and oversaw it in the same year (?). With a resolute and single-minded focus, the educational planning was being carried out when the headmaster came down with a sudden illness and abruptly passed away on the 14th Taisho era on 24th July. He was only 41 years of age.

The sudden passing of the respected headmaster came as a great shock to the townspeople who decided to send him off publicly in honor of his meritorious service to the town. The convening of an official funeral ceremony for an educator was unprecedented. On the appointed day of the funeral service, 2000 townspeople paid homage to this wonderful educator despite rainy weather. On the second year of his passing in the second year of the

Showa era (1926-89), the arm of the Amane elementary school association erected a memorial tower/stone in honor of Sensei Saitoku Shichirou/ko inside the temple precinct of the Jokeiji temple at Plum branch mountain. From Shonai town has come up such a sterling educator who is the pride of the country.

Overview of the origin of Anbo

The first generation of the house of Anbo were samurai warriors who lived in the Muromachi Period (1333-1573 CE) during the Warring States era and served as a vassal of Ko no Moronao, who was, in turn, the steward of the first Ashikaga Shogun, Ashikaga Takauji. Anbo belonged to the House of 'Red Earth' which was part of the Musashi Seven party; from generations the Minamoto family/ Genji clan/ North passage clan. Anbo served as a military commander under the Ashikaga shogunate and distinguished himself through meritorious war services.

The house began its expansion outwards into wider territories, hence, Chiujiitsu was the second son of Anbo Hikari Tai. He was sent off to the peripheral countryside of the city and was accordingly bestowed those areas as his principality. His house increased and found prosperity by the fifth year of the Ouan Era (1368-1375) and came to be established in terms of property and family. The manor hall was accordingly inaugurated in a public ceremony and the house came to be formally established. Again, from that period until 12 years, his reign saw a peaceful and benevolent phase. In acknowledgment of the blessings that had come from his ancestors, Anbo Chiujiitsu made preparations to hold a memorial service through the Jokeiji Mountain temple, under Fukui Prefecture.

The head of the Umeyama religious order came and duly inaugurated the memorial on request. The Zen order that had been honored by the imperial court of the nation accorded the formalities and recognized the temple and its precincts as a memorial to Chiujiitsu's ancestors and family. Unfortunately, Anbo died during the Sengoku/ Warring states period while defending his allegiance to his superiors. At the passing of Anbo Chiujiitsu and in memory of

his good governance, the residents of the area mourned and paid homage to him. After 472 years, in the Tempo era (1830-1844), the residents in the vicinity of the manor hall, recognizing the legacy and contributions of the Anbo family, erected a memorial tower in honor of Anbo of the 16 eras, with the help of the area's youths³⁰



Figure 3: Pamphlet in memory of Lieutenant General Kotoku Sato

2.8. The transition in the Naga Hills

The British appointed administrative officers to govern the Naga Hills in 1873. By 1879, Naga Hills was recognized as one of the administrative districts under British rule in India. As the British gained authority in the Naga Hills, changes were inevitable. American missionaries were allowed to enter the Naga Hills and the good news of the gospel to the local inhabitants who were nature worshippers. The American missionaries also helped in the establishment of schools to educate the Nagas. These changes were attributed to the improvement of the lives of the Nagas, and this period can be regarded as a transitional phase in the history of the Nagas.

The coming of the Japanese in the Naga Hills was an unexpected entry, and the event which led to the coming of the Japanese eventually brought a shift in the lives of the Nagas. Japan's primary objective in conquest Burma was to gain economic possessions through the occupation of territories, also cut off the link from Burma Road to Lashio which was used to supply munition to the forces of Chinese Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek fighting against the Japanese. According to eye witnesses' account, before the arrival of the Japanese in the Naga Hills, there were rumours across the region for two three years that the Japanese were to soon arrive in the region, though they were not aware of the reason, they expected it would be for good reason. Some Nagas who were in the Assam Regiment went to Burma fought with the Japanese, and their bravery amazed the Naga soldiers. When they returned home from Burma, these Naga soldiers talked about the bravery of the Japanese soldiers to the villagers. The villagers who heard about the stories of the Japanese anticipated their arrival in the region.

By March 1944, the Japanese had reached Jessami and begun to wage war against the British. Mr. Zhovil from Viswema village and Mr. Kehonesia from Jakhama who took part in the war against the Japanese in Jessami shared war stories with the villagers. A few days later, villagers from neighboring villages like Viswema and Jakhama heard the sound of gunshots and mortars coming from the Mao area in Manipur. On April 2 and April 3, 1944, the Japanese

entered the villages Viswema, Jakhama, and finally Kohima. The Japanese soldiers hid in the thick jungles as they crossed several villages, and on April 4, 1944, Kohima became the main target of the war.

Naga loyalty to the British is best summed up by a witness of the battle from Kohima village, at the time of the war she was just 13 years old, “One thing strikes me as I recall the War; the sincere loyalty of the Naga people to their superior, the British Administration which tended to make them adopt an impulsive attitude towards the Japanese soldiers often. The latter were not our enemies but we chose to remain steadfast and loyal when the hard times came”.

The Battle of Kohima was an intensive operation fought between well-matched two superior nations and was a major turning point in World War II. The battle which affected the Nagas so profoundly had never been considered as a Naga fight by the Naga people and they did not think this was a part of their history (Chasie & Fecitt, 2017, p.19). However, the importance and recognition of the Battle of Kohima in the military history of Britain and Japan changed old attitudes, and the new Naga perspective has strengthened the study on the Second World War. The focus on the Naga perspective points to the Naga's participation in the War, and the changes the War brought into the Naga society.

End Notes

- ¹Interview with Sovehu Nienu, Age: 99 years, Phek district, Date: 18 May 2015.
- ²Interview with Zhavilie Huozha, Age: 90 years, Meriema village, Date: 16 March 2016.
- ³Interview with Niza, Age: 84 years, Viswema village, Date: 6 April 2016.
- ⁴Interview with Chingchungba, Age: 93 years, Changki village, Date: 10 June 2016.
- ⁵Interview with Shitozu Sema, Age: 93 years, Litsami village, Date: 14 May 2016.
- ⁶Interview with K.N. Pusha, Age: 90 years, Viswema village, Date: 6 April 2016.
- ⁷Interview with Pukoho Rol, Age: 88 years, Jakhama village, Date: 23 July 2016.
- ⁸Interview with Neilao, Age: 88 years, Kohima village, Date: 20 September 2016.
- ⁹Interview with Zhovire, Age: 93 years, Jakhama village, Date: 23 July 2016.
- ¹⁰Interview with Nohol Khatso, Age: 92 years, Jakhama village, Date: 23 July 2016.
- ¹¹Interview with Vingotsore Khatso, Age: 86 years, Date: 23 July 2016.
- ¹²Interview with Besuvei Swuro, Age: 93 years, Cheswezu village, Date: 14 October 2016.
- ¹³Interview with Neikhalo Kapfo, Age: 90 years, Pfutsero town, Date: 16 October 2016.
- ¹⁴Interview with Khetso Pienyü, Age: 91 years, Chedema village, 14 March 2016.
- ¹⁵Interview with Vimese Tsochü, Age: 90 years, Mima village, Date: 16 April 2016.
- ¹⁶Interview with Khriezotuo Sachü, Age: 88 years, Kohima village, Date: 18 May 2016.
- ¹⁷Interview with Neilhou Dzüvichü, Age: 90 years, Date: 18 May 2016.
- ¹⁸Interview with Khusoi, Age: 90 years, Porba village, Date: 20 October 2016.
- ¹⁹Interview with Heuzieteusing Rao, Age: 91 years, Poilwa village, Date: 26 September 2016.
- ²⁰Interview with Kiezotuo, Age: 89 years, Rüsoma village, Date: 12 March 2016.
- ²¹Interview with Raben Odyuo, Age: 90 years, Yikhum village, Date: 10 October 2018.

²²Interview with Chenisao Lotha, Age: 92 years, Longsachung village, Date: 10 October 2018.

²³Interview with Chumdemo Murry, Age: 90 years, Wokha village, Date: 16 June 2017.

²⁴Interview with Nyimchamo Odyuo, Age: 91 years, Pyangsa village, Date: 16 June 2017.

²⁵Interview with Vilasielie Pienyü, Age: 72 years, Kohima village, Date: 13 March 2018.

²⁶Interview with Jun Shimada, Tokyo, Date: 16 April 2019.

²⁷Interview with Nozomi Tokuma, Guwahati, Date: 20 January 2021.

²⁸Japanese account translated by Haruna Watabe, Date: 7 September 2019.

²⁹Japanese account translated by Haruna Watabe, Date: 7 September, 2019.

³⁰Japanese account translated by Kutoli N, Date: 10 May, 2018.

CHAPTER-3

AFTERMATH OF THE WAR

The Japanese plan of attack divided their force into three. In the south, the 33rd Division was to surround the British 17th Division, cutting off its communications with Imphal. In the centre, after crossing the Chindwin, the 15th Division was to move against the Imphal Road to the north of the Imphal Plain. Whilst in the north, the 31st Division, commanded by Lieutenant General Sato, was to cross the Chindwin and advance over a formidable mountain range to capture Kohima. The neat bungalows of Kohima stood 5000ft above sea level where the road from Imphal took a sudden turn west towards the key town of Dimapur which controlled the north-south railway between Ledo and Calcutta, “The terrain around Kohima was a multitude of steep thickly wooded peaks and ridges. It was the peacetime headquarters of the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Charles Pawsey, much beloved by the local Naga tribesmen and devoted to their welfare” (Allen, 1984, p.228).

The Nagas Hills District was under the administration of Assam from 1866 till the end of the British era in the Indian Sub-Continent, 1947. The Naga Hills District formally came to be known as Nagaland on December 1, 1963. Findings and records show that the British intervention and command in the Naga Hills was already in existence by 1881. It is important to know that the Nagas, until the coming of the British, lived without any knowledge or contact with outside civilization. When these tribal people came into contact with the British people, it certainly was the most unimaginable transition in the history of the Nagas.

3.1. Consequences of the Battle and the Nagas

The Battle of Kohima, a chain of the great Second World War led to a life-changing impact on the Nagas. From the period of colonial authority in the Naga Hills, the British policy brought about changes in the reasoning ability and adaptation to new thoughts and transition from typical livelihood to civilization. After several tough conflicts, the British managed to take control over the Naga Hills. The Nagas remained loyal towards the British, and this is an important factor and undeniable fact that the loyalty of the Nagas played a major role during the battle of Kohima which led to the success of the British allied force against the well-matched competitor, the Japanese.

As per the record in the Census of India, 1951, “During the decade, Naga Hills suffered the worst catastrophe in its history in the shape of the Japanese invasion of India. The Japanese came as far as Kohima town in April 1944”. In their attempt to dislodge the Japanese from the hill strongholds into which they had dug themselves, the allies subjected Kohima and neighboring villages to heavy aerial bombardment repeatedly. As a result, most of the houses in Kohima and elsewhere were destroyed or damaged. The district has not yet fully recovered from the ravages of the Second World War, e.g., the previous residence of the Deputy Commissioner in Kohima is now a cemetery. Many brave allied soldiers are buried here with the following and arresting tablets:

“When you go home
Tell them of us and say
For their tomorrow
We gave our today”.

According to Slim (2014), “These were the gallant Nagas whose loyalty, even in the most depressing times of the invasion, had never faltered. Despite flogging, torture, execution, and the burning of their villages, they refused to aid the Japanese in any way or to betray our troops. Their active help to us was beyond value or praise. Under the leadership of devoted British

political officers, some of the finest types of the Indian Civil service, in whom they had complete confidence, they guided our columns, collected information, ambushed enemy patrols, carried our supplies, and brought in our wounded under the heaviest fire -and then, being the gentlemen they were, often refused all payments. Many a British and Indian soldier owes his life to the naked, head-hunting Naga, and no soldier of the Fourteenth Army met them will ever think of them but with admiration and affection” (Slim, 2014, pp. 334-335).

Though the battle is considered significant in history, the aftermath of this war was an unpleasant one, especially the economy of the Nagas. The conditions of the Nagas reached a critical juncture after the war; to start over their lives post-war seems an impossible task. They were desperately in need of rehabilitation and reconstruction of houses from scratch. The most basic needs, food to eat, and shelter to dwell in were the most immediate requirements. During the war, domesticated livestock was either forcefully taken away by the Japanese as they suffered from the shortage of food or given away by the villagers to the former when they came asking for food. By the end of the war, most of the domesticated animals were consumed and this immensely affected the daily sustenance of the people as, then, the Nagas were mainly relying on agricultural cultivation and domestication of animals. The Japanese were not in the position to offer any kind of compensation toward the Nagas. Exhausted and dismayed, physically and emotionally Japanese troops suffered unimaginable conditions as they retreat from Kohima. Kohima and the nearby villages were covered in flames and smoke due to the air raid and the land battle. Conscious enough, the British offered rations in good portions to the Nagas. Medicines, clothes, materials to build houses were supplied by the British, even to the extent of agricultural equipment which was previously thrown away by the Japanese, that the Nagas may not use as a defense mechanism.

The extent of the impact of the Second World War on the Nagas was lucidly expressed by J.H. Hutton (1946), “In Kohima, the biggest collection of houses in the administrative area

of the Naga Hills, not one house was left standing after the Japanese invasion, and in the District 12,000 houses altogether needed to be rebuilt...This does not sound much as compared with the damage in this country...This impact of the war prevented the planting of rice at the proper season and the people have therefore to be fed. The pigs, the staple flesh food of the country, have disappeared. There have been some 100,000 persons in urgent need of relief...But the purely material effects of the attempted Japanese invasion of Assam hills will probably, in the long run, prove to be far less important much less profound, than its moral and psychological effects..." (Sema, 1991, p.127).

Relief centers were established to care for the loss. According to records available, Khonoma village was the first relief center in the Naga Hills. Food Supply Depots were opened at various places like Kohima, Phesama, and Khuzama (see Chasie & Fecitt, 2017). A good amount of assistance was offered to Kohima Village who suffered a loss of properties. It is reported that 913 houses in Kohima Village were destroyed, accordingly, they received compensation to rebuild their homes. Figuratively, the war destroyed 318 houses in Kohima town, 293 in Viswema, 217 in Chizami, 62 in Khonoma, and 34 in Phesama. The number of houses destroyed in other villages is comparatively lesser in figures. People who lost their houses and who were looted by the Japanese were given ₹400 and ₹200 by the British (see Chasie & Fecitt, 2017). It was not possible to re-locate or restore everything the people has lost, yet, the British provided a good level of assistance to enable the people to rise steadily. The British also provided paddy plants to be readily planted in the fields, and inventive processes to withstand from insufficiency of rice.

The expansion of the Second World War reached the most unexpected region, the Naga Hills where the people had no knowledge or exposure to the modern war fought with modern military warfare, a total contrast with the traditional war strategy and tactic of the Nagas. The Naga Labour Corps participated in the First World War, however, the battle of Kohima fought

on their soil brought the biggest transition, and lives were never to be the same after the war. A war, not of their choice but since they were left with no option, they faced it with utmost loyalty toward the British authority. The Nagas did not consider the Japanese as their enemy, they had to choose either of the two, the decision to support the British is mainly due to the former Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, C.R Pawsey, who is remembered as a true friend of the Naga people.

The Naga elders who witnessed the war expressed their amazement in seeing airplanes for the first time. Hutsonyu Chuzo from Phek said, “Japanese planes came...from Burma side. Since people saw the plane for the first time...thought it was a big bird. Since it was an extraordinary sight, the next day was declared taboo (Penie) to work in the fields” (Chasie & Fecitt, 2017, p.96). The economy of the Nagas improved, especially after 1940. The amount paid to the people increased over time and this impacted their economic growth. The traditional houses built with thatch were replaced with tin sheets, making of fire with dried cow dung were replaced with match sticks. Until the occupation of the British Raj in the Naga Hills followed by the battle of Kohima, the Nagas were living in proximity with their traditional customs and culture. As mentioned, their houses were built with thatch, agriculture was their main source of livelihood, thus there was a certain routine of uniformity in their daily activities.

According to available records and accounts from Naga elders, it indicates that the introduction of money brought a massive shift in their mundane activities. The value of money was first introduced by the British Colonialists. Other instances were salaries received during WWI by the Labour Corps. But the advent of the 2nd World War, introducing War Economy, with no thoughts of inflation or possible after-effects on traditional Naga economy/Society, did the real damage in a society that had till now survived largely on Barter Economy. A new class of moneyed Nagas, earlier unknown, soon emerged (see Chasie & Fecitt, 2017).

3.2. Impact of money power

The rise of money power comfortably took the lead to divert the wholeness of traditional ethics and morals. In the Naga tradition, the rich offer “feasts of merit” to their fellow community, and there was no atmosphere of competency from the ones who could not afford it, rather they took delight and appreciated whoever do so. However, as money became a driving force to acquire wealth, the focus centered more toward the individual rather than the community. Though the value and need of money are inevitable, the shift of tide from traditional values to the consciousness of money power practically played a negative impact on society, “The community-based livelihood began to look more like individual importance and distinctiveness. The money would slowly become all-important and reduce everything, even people, to “purchasable” commodities” (Chasie & Fecitt, 2017, p.99). With the increase in access to money, the budding Naga society invested their money in the education of their children. Emphasizing the importance of education was to look at an as treasured possession, a new kind of property or valuable asset.

The value of education visibly replaced the traditional culture in the continuity of ancestral commitment and legacy. Nevertheless, besides the negative impact money brought upon the people, one good aspect of acquiring quality education allowed many Nagas to step beyond their homeland and get packed with knowledge from good educational institutions, benefiting not only the individual with employment opportunities but also through sharing of thoughts and knowledge led in quest to preserve the identity as a Naga in a new perspective, the wave of Naga Nationalism. Asoso Yonuo (1974) remarked that subsequently, a tiny petty-bourgeois class of the native people who had made their fortunes out of the profit of the battle had risen on the modern capitalistic basis (Yonuo, 1974). Before the war, education was given the least importance; there was no proper road construction, no proper medical facility, absence of eligible native leaders. Many of the natives who witnessed the war, expressed that if not for

the coming of the Japanese, the Naga people would not have progressed much. It was an unexpected event like the war that brought one of the greatest transitions in the lives of the Nagas.

3.3. Post-war transitional changes

One of the post-war developments from the Japanese to the Naga people was the construction of the Kohima Cathedral located in the Aradura area. This Cathedral was built as a symbol of peace under the initiative of the Japanese war veterans. Many people from different nations generously offered monetary support towards the construction of the Cathedral. The Nagas participated in a war started by an outsider, and were compelled to go through the grievances due to loss of lives and properties. Kohima was covered in ashes after the war. For the first time, they saw modern warfare and weaponry, airplanes, tanks, machine guns. They witnessed the effectiveness of modern warfare tactics and weapons. These experiences remained embedded in their aging memories of the war veterans. The guns and munitions were distributed in the villages and the villagers were told by the British and were told to kill any Japanese who enters the village. But the villagers revoke this command, instead use the given guns to shoot wild birds and wild animals.

However, the freedom of using guns was suspended when an order was issued by the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills that all arms and munitions were to be surrendered to the government. It is said that before the villagers gave away their guns, they blew off most of the bullets consistently and it sounded like corns popping out of the pot. Salt was used as a means of exchange for a gun. Salt was essential for cooking and the value of salt outweighed the importance of the establishment of schools, road construction, electricity connection, and water. With the coming of the British, the Nagas were introduced to a lot of aspects of civilization. There was a decrease in inter-tribal conflicts. Essential commodities especially salt

was conveniently available through the British. Gradually, the Nagas worked as laborers in the road construction which increased the economy of the Nagas. The participation of the Nagas in the war was a life-changing experience that increased their psychological reasoning on the importance of preserving identity through nation-building.

After the battle, Kohima was in an incomplete dysfunctional state. The scenic green surroundings were burnt down and the place was covered with the corpses of dead soldiers. The battle of Kohima left the native people in a state of total despair, agony, and shock. It is believed that quite a several war munitions were left unattained or failed to surrender to the British authorities as per the command from the British officials. In the case of the Japanese soldiers, they left behind most of their weapons, and they barely managed to physically return home. It is said that the guns of the Japanese soldiers were used by the Nagas who were involved in the Indo-Naga offensive.

Another after-effect of the battle of Kohima was the general rise in the monetary level of the economy in the region. During this period of development, there was an unparalleled course of money to the native who mostly worked in the form of laborers. The issue of inflation became a concern to the Government. Speaking of the economic effect of the Second World War on the region, in June 1943, the Governor of Assam wrote to the Viceroy of India, while war has its inconveniences and damages it has phenomenally pleasant effects on their pockets.

For this is all of the worst spots for inflation in the corner of India that is feeling inflation most. In Manipur, for example, the ordinary price of a new bicycle is Rs. 650 to Rs. 700. As such as Rs. 1000 has been paid for one and second-hand one's fetch Rs. 400 and more, "On the Nagas, to whom five annas a day was wealth before the war, can still earn up to five rupees a day in places, despite the reduced work...the populace has now more money than it has any use for" (Sema, 1991, p.150). Besides the monetary impact, Naga's contacts with the British

Allied Force and the Japanese force brought about changes in the socio-political scene in the region.

As the war came to an end, the Japanese troops returned to their homeland, whereas the British administration was also engaged in the process of decolonization from the Indian Sub-Continent. The Nagas lost almost all they have; houses, fields, and livestock. Though it may seem least important in the eye of many, it meant everything for the Nagas. Their main concern for the Nagas, after the war was, how to recover the losses, mainly their houses and agricultural fields. The condition of the Naga people was a critical juncture, as the villagers ran to different villages for shelter and also lived in jungles or fields.

3.4. Emergence of the Naga National Council

Naga People's Convention aimed to give a concrete shape to the dream and aspiration of the Naga people. The Naga people in the present generation are neither primitive nor head hunters. The Naga people have made progressive achievements in various fields in the national and international standards. The Nagas were not dependent in their existence on any authority or subjugated under any foreign dominions until the occupation of the British. They lived in the jungles foraging for food as a means of survival. Consisting of different tribes, they were not aware of their identity or oneness and would often engage in inter-tribal warfare, inter-village warfare for honor, and land for cultivation. When the British came forward to occupy the Naga Hills during 1830-32, the British authority established Samaguting (Chumukedima) as the capital of Naga Hills District in 1886. The British came to Wokha village during 1873-75 and secured Wokha Station. Captain Butler with his men reached Pangti village under the Wokha region on December 25, 1875. Unfortunately, Butler and his men were attacked and killed by a Naga spear. After the death of captain Butler, Pangti village was occupied, burnt down, and subjugated under British authority. The whole Lotha region was annexed and became a part of

the Naga Hills District in 1875. The district headquarter was shifted to Kohima from Samaguting in 1878. The different Naga tribes in their respective regions fought against the foreign invader but eventually, they were captured and subjugated under the dominion of British rule. Considering the distinctiveness of the Naga tribes different from the rest of the tribal areas under the British Raj, the authority decided to keep the Naga administration under the excluded area (see Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 2014).

The Nagas who went to France during the First World War returned home with new thoughts and share their contention in uniting the different inhabitants in the Naga Hills district as one. With this intention, the Naga Club was formed in 1918. They aimed to represent the voice of the collective Nagas before the British Government. Reacting to the Simon Commission, the Naga Club submitted a memorandum stating to the British to allow them to function their territories independently. When the talk for Indian Independence was blooming, the Nagas thought they would also get independence. The proposal for a Crown Colony initiated by Sir Robert Reid and some other politicians was rejected as the Nagas had no intention to live under any power. The fate of the Nagas was left under the Assam province even after India got its independence in 1947.

In 1946, the Naga Club and the Naga Hills Tribal Council were formed into Naga National Council (NNC). Its formation took place at the Government Middle English School, Wokha. In June 1947, Sir Akbar Hydari, Governor of Assam gave the assurance that the Nagas will be given the status of autonomous State after 10 years. The 9 Point Hydari Agreement did not work out because India slipped away from its commitment. The Naga leaders encouraged by the words of Gandhi hoisted the Naga flag on 14th August 1947, a day before the independence of India from British rule. The United Nations was also informed about the declaration of the Naga independence, yet, India forcefully continued to keep the Naga Hills under its administration and political authority.

A.Z Phizo organized the Naga Plebiscite on 16th May 1951 in all the areas of the Naga Hills and 99.9% put their thumb impression in favor of freedom for the Nagas. As the unfulfilled contention of the Nagas to be an independent nation prolonged, it led to the rise of various political activities. The freedom struggle which started with a peaceful attitude took a different turn as they have begun to show defiance to the Indian Government. The Indian Army was deployed in the Naga Hills as a defensive attack against the Naga political movement. The military forces burnt down Naga villages across the Naga Hills district, the villagers were made confined under the stockade and were not allowed to move out, and it caused many inconveniences to the Naga underground workers. The Indian Army persecuted the Church leaders and forcefully used the churches as rest camps. They would gather the native inhabitants in the church and torture them, young girls and women were molested and raped by the military forces (see Yonuo, 1974).

Amid despair and hopelessness, the Naga People Convention was formed composed of Naga Government Officers and members of overground Naga co-operation group from all the Naga tribes who were determined to work between the Naga Underground and the Government of India for the peaceful co-existence of the Naga Hills. The Liaison Committee failed to reach the underground leaders for negotiations with the government of India. The NNC decided to push forward its proposals with the Indian government. Dr. Imkongliba Ao, President, Naga People Convention, and NPC delegates submitted their resolution on 26 July 1960 to the Government of India. Accordingly, a separate state was granted to Nagaland as per the 16 Points Agreement. In addition, three years of Interim government were granted before the full Statehood. During the Interim government, they were often attacked by the underground as a sign of retaliation and opposition for negotiating with the Government of India. Despite the consistent opposition they worked persistently and completed a 3-year term on 30th November

1963. The acceleration to full Statehood was officiated on 1st December 1963 by Shri Radhakrishnan, the President of India (see Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 2014).

The emergence of the Naga National Council is strongly believed to be a development that occurred after the War ended. The British government appreciated the commendable loyalty of the Nagas during the War. Lord Wavell, Governor-General of India wrote to Amery, the Secretary of State, "I have written to Clow (Governor of Assam) asking what can be done to reward the staunchness of these people, both immediately and later. It will probably be difficult to do very much for them, but I feel we must try" (Sema, 1991, p.137). Furthermore, the British officials who built close relations with the Nagas wanted the native people to live with their own distinct identity. C.R. Pawsey who served as the Deputy Commissioner during the war was considered a close acquaintance of the Nagas. He was known as a mentor to the Naga leaders who visited him regularly at his official bungalow and exchanged mutual political ideas and desires. These frequent meetings gradually led to the existence of the Naga National Council. The Naga Hills District Tribal Council was established by C.R. Pawsey, then Deputy Commissioner, in 1945. This council was constituted with the desire to bring the Nagas under one umbrella, and also take care of the damages caused by the War. A later development, however, strongly suggests that these two objectives were closely followed by the British policy of helping the Nagas to have local self-government within the province of Assam (Ibid., p.151). Formerly known as Naga Hills District Tribal Council it changed its nomenclature to Naga National Council on 2nd February 1946, at Wokha. The aim and objective of this Council were to develop the welfare of the Nagas and embrace its social necessities. On 19th June 1946, the NNC had its general meeting at Wokha and the members drafted the following resolutions which were approved by the house:

1. This Naga National Council stands for the solidarity of all the Naga tribes including those of the unadministered areas;

2. This council strongly protests against the grouping of Assam with Bengal; and
3. The Naga Hills should be constitutionally included in an autonomous Assam, in a free India, with local autonomy and due safeguards for the interest of the Nagas, and the Naga tribes should have a separate electorate (Op cit., p.154).

The political aspiration of the Naga National Council was to secure local autonomy for the Naga Hills within the territory of Assam and to skill the Nagas for self-government. The above-mentioned resolution was forwarded to Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, the then President of the Indian Congress Party, and in his response, he acknowledged the resolution of the NNC and poured down his views that the Naga Hills should have local autonomy within the province of Assam. Nehru appreciated the NNC for their concern of all the Naga tribes including the unadministered areas, and also supported their decision that the Naga Hills should be constitutionally included in an autonomous Assam in a free India with local autonomy and due safeguards for the interests of the Nagas. However, Nehru expressed his uncertain view on the matter of a separate electorate and shared the need for proper representation if recognized as an autonomous territory. The NNC developed its strength by engaging the tribal councils which consisted of every Naga tribe to administer local affairs amongst their tribes. Initially, the NNC consisted of 29 members. Later on, when its popularity increased the inclusion of its members extended to the youths and women as well (see Elwin, 1961).

Eventually, every Naga regardless of age and gender was considered a member of the council. Through the establishment of the tribal council, it enabled to keep the Nagas them united and grow further as a community. The NNC worked fervently whose leadership and decision-making were supported by the local mass. The motive of the NNC was to secure a separate Naga country and sustain with their abilities and brilliance. Nonetheless, the NNC wanted the Nagas to remain connected with India and receive support in matters of development, defense, finance, and all that might be necessary for the welfare of the Nagas. In December 1946, Imtiliba, the then president of the NNC declared at Kohima: "The NNC stands

for the unification of all the Naga tribes and their freedom...our country is connected with India, connected in many ways. We should continue that connection. I do not mind whether future India is a Congress Government or a League Government. But as a distinctive community, as I stated before, we must also develop according to our genius and taste. We shall enjoy home rule in our country, but on broader issues be connected with India. We must fight for it, we must get it, keep on watching” (Sema, 1991, p.140).

When the transfer of power between the British and Indian sub-continent drew nearer, the NNC also felt the need to make clear its motive and demand for full independence. The then president of the Indian National Congress, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru responded to the anticipation of the NNC that the Nagas were backward people and the geographical dimension was small enough to stand on their own in all aspects. Therefore, it would be best for the Naga people to become an integral territory of India. The NNC continued its efforts to claim full independence for the Nagas, and sent a memorandum to the then Prime Minister, Mr. Clement Attlee, and also to Lord Simon and Mr. Churchill on 29th March 1947. However, this memorandum was not acknowledged. A.Z. Phizo led a delegation and met Lord Mountbatten, the then Governor-General of India, and suggested that the independent Indian government be made as to the guardian power of the Nagas for 10 years after which the Nagas would be free to conduct their political structure. He did not give any assurance but simply suggested that this matter be made known to the advisory committee. On the other hand, in April 1947, in his private letter to the Earl of Listowel, Secretary of State, Mountbatten wrote: “The Naga National Council in their reference to an interim Government meant an interim form of British rule. The placing of the hill tribes under a Central Indian Government would mean that they would be subject to politicians at Delhi, who would be even more unaware of their needs than the politicians in Assam, and to whom they would have no access. If they can be brought with suitable safeguards within the framework of the Assam Constitution, they can themselves

expect some share in the Government there and will have access to and influence over the government...But the main problem is the protection of these people from exploitation and the preservation of their way of living” (Yonuo, 1974, p.228).

During the sub-advisory committee in Shillong, Naga representative Mr. Temjenliba Ao refused to sign the contract to join the Indian Union. The NNC and the sub-committee held talks in Kohima and the former insisted on 10 years of guardianship, after which the Nagas would be allowed to separate their ways from India. This the sub-committee commented that they will not be able to take this matter to the Indian Constituent Assembly. It led to another declaration from the NNC that the Nagas already has their existing constitution, and so an additional constitution was not necessary or acceptable. When the NNC approached Sir Akbar Hydari, the then Governor of Assam, he assured that the Nagas would be treated fairly with the rest of the Indian Union. He also added that the British successor, the Indian government had no menacing attitude toward the Nagas. Furthermore, he mentioned that the Nagas would be given full opportunities for development according to their kind of life and brilliance. All these consistent talks led to the formulation of the nine-point agreement signed between the Government of India and NNC. The most important provision was Article 9, which ran as follows:

“The Governor of Assam as the Agent of the Government of the Indian Union will have a special responsibility for ten years to ensure the due observance of this agreement; at the end of this period, the Naga National Council will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people be arrived at” (Elwin, 1997, p.133).

This led to the division of views and opinions within the NNC and created a critical atmosphere within the Council. Phizo and a section of the council refused to accept this arrangement as it said that it was formulated without proper discussion. Phizo and his delegation met Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Muslim League leader, Jaipal Singh, the Adivasi leader, and Mahatma Gandhi

on 19th July 1947. On hearing the NNC desire to state themselves as an independent country, Gandhi replied: “Why not now? Why wait for August 15? I was independent when the whole of India was under the British heel. You can be independent and if you have non-violence in common with me, no one can deprive you of independence” (Sema, 1991, p.123). Encouraged by the words of Gandhi, the NNC declared Naga Sovereign Independence on the 14th of August, 1947. This meant that Naga Hills had been an independent country even before India achieved its independence. The NNC made known to the U.N.O about the Naga Independence and the latter acknowledged its decision. The NNC decided not to form a government until a proper solution was made with the Indian government. They opt to settle the problem through a peaceful channel. Ironically, before this problem could be settled, India got its independence on 15th August 1947.

CHAPTER-4

WAR ARCHIVES AND NARRATIVES OF THE WAR

The War Archives and Narratives of the War discuss the military accounts and post-war activities with the use of photographs from archival sources and personal collections, thus exhibiting the importance of the battle in the Second World War history. During the Second World War, the world's press faced the difficult task of recording the horrific scenes of conflict, death, and destruction they had witnessed across Europe. Often these scenes were so incredible that many reporters found it impossible to articulate what they had seen into words and turned to photographers to translate the horrors into visual images (see Hilditch, 2018). The war photographs, therefore, took on the crucial role not only of historical documents but also as a means to inform, provoke, shock, and remind (Ibid., p.214).

Generally, for a war photographer, the practical and active challenge is not essentially documenting the atrocities of war destruction and human suffering dealing with the philosophical undercurrent that images of war necessarily implicate. The main issue is having the sense and understanding to interpret the terror in both the photographic and philosophy of the word and more importantly, having the insight to encompass the past and future significance and purpose of the images and the value of the subject matter that they disclose. According to David Bathrick, "Visual representation of the Holocaust has proved to be an absolutely integral but also highly contested means by which to understand and remember the Nazi atrocities of the Second World War" (Op cit., p. 209).

Kohima, then a quiet little town, was surrounded by numerous hills. Before the War, its existence was barely known; after the War, it became an important location in the study of

the Burma Campaign and the Second World War (Plate 1-2). The Battle of Kohima began on April 4, 1944, when large numbers of Japanese attacked a series of defensive positions west of the Imphal road and south of the Dimapur road, known as “The Ridge” (Plate 13). Whoever controlled The Ridge effectively controlled Kohima. The Japanese far outnumbered the defenders. They had travelled the roadless mountains and jungles from the Chindwin River, one hundred miles to the east, faster and greater force than the 14th Army Command had anticipated. The intensity of the battle around the Tennis Court located at the Deputy Commissioner’s Bungalow was so intense that no sleep was possible; the Allied soldiers were 18m (20 yards) at the most from the Japanese. The bungalow looked helplessly ruined after much heavy fighting (Plate 3), also Kohima town after the battle (Plate 4).

The most prominent Kohima War Cemetery is located on the battle site of Garrison Hill (Plate 7-8). It was constructed under the initiative of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The cemetery contains 1,420 burials of the war and one non-war burial. At the highest point in the cemetery stands the Kohima Cremation Memorial commemorating 917 Hindu and Sikh soldiers whose remains were cremated following their faith. At the lower end of the cemetery, near the entrance, is a memorial to the 2nd Division. It bears the inscription; - “When you go home tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today.”

Ellen Hannay was the widow of L/Sgt Robert Bell Hannay of the 1 Queens Own Cameron Highlanders. He was killed in action at Zubza - just 10 miles short of Kohima as 5 Brigade of the British 2nd Division advanced up the road to relieve the Siege of Kohima. The photograph of Ellen kneeling by her husband’s grave was taken either on Christmas or Boxing Day 1945. This makes Ellen probably the very first British War widow to visit the war cemetery at Kohima. Ellen visited her husband’s grave another 8 times over the years and her ashes were finally laid in this spot when she passed into the light in 2009. Her ashes were laid by her nephew Jim Gibson (Plate 9).

The Head Quarters of the 2nd Division of the British Army was established at Shohuza, Jotsoma. The Japanese troops moved into the ground between Kohima and Jotsoma on 8 April 1944 and cut off the 161st Brigade from assisting the defense of Kohima. The 2nd Division and 161st Brigade troops joined hands at Jotsoma on 16 April 1944 and helped 161st Brigade to advance towards Kohima. Though the Japanese made several attempts to occupy Jotsoma, they failed to do so. Major General John Malcolm Lawrence Grover, MC (Military Cross), the General Officer Commanding of the 2nd Division of British Army established his Divisional H.Q. at Shohuza, Jotsoma, and activities planned and executed important War strategies. A good number of war relics have been found from the Jotsoma area and kept under the custody of the village council authority (Plate 25-30).

The account of the capture of DIS (Deputy Issue Store) features Kohima by 4/15 Punjab Regiment is an important account of the battle. DIS was a defensive position on the features which dominate The Ridge. On May 10th, 1944, the 4th battalion 15th Punjab Regiment received orders that they were to capture and hold D.I.S. feature, Kohima. Adjoining this feature to the immediate left was a feature F.S.D (Field Supply Depot) on which were known Japanese bunker positions and on the right of D.I.S was a feature known as Jail Hill which was held by the enemy. The Divisional plan was that the Royal Berkshire Regiment would attack F.S.D Ridge just before the attack with the 4/15 Punjab Regt on D.I.S. feature and 1 Queens Royal Regiment on to Jail Hill.

The D.I.S. feature was approx. 250 yards in length and from the forward edge of the feature to the rear edge about 125 yards. On the left side of the feature were several half-demolished buildings. The approach to the feature from the west entailed climbing up a very steep incline. The forward edge of the feature was bounded by a Jeep track and the rear of the feature was bounded by the main Kohima – Imphal Road. The attack was planned to start at 0440hrs on 11th May 1944. The battalion plan was to attack the feature with two companies,

with one company moving close behind as a reserve with the task of mopping up. The Battalion moved from its harbor area to a Forming Up Place some 500 yards to the west of D.I.S. feature at 2000 hrs on 10th May. The start line for the attack was approx. 300 yards from the F.U.P. and 200 yards from the D.I.S. feature.

AT 0300 HRS 11th May 1944, the preliminary preparations for the attack started, and "A" Company (Sikhs), who were to attack the left half of the feature (North Buildings Area) and 'C' Company (Jats), who were to attack the right half (South Area) of the feature, both sent patrols forward on to the start line. By 0440 both companies were ready and forward on the start line. The Artillery and 3" mortar barrage commenced and carried on for 10 minutes when the barrage paused for 4 mins to encourage the enemy to occupy his positions. During this pause, both "A" and "C" Companies closed right up forward, and when the arty barrage recommenced at 0454 hrs the most forward troops of the two companies had closed to within some 50 yards of the barrage which continued for a further 6 mins until 0500 hrs.

At 0500 hrs, the barrage lifted and 'A' Company on the left with two Pls forward and one reserve and 'C' Company on the rights with three Pls forward charged at their respective objectives. On reaching the objective the Sikhs on the left came under intense Japanese M.M.G. fire from bunkers ahead and bunkers on F.S.D. Ridge. No1 platoon which was the right platoon of the forward two platoons suffered heavy casualties and was reduced to the platoon Commander and 7 other men. No.2 Platoon on the left also suffered severe casualties and the platoon commander was severely wounded. The 8 men of the No. 1 platoon advanced throwing grenades and firing at a forward Jap bunker. They reached the rear of the objective but by this time the platoon had been reduced to two men. They remained covering a bunker and called out to the company Commander to send forward the reserve platoon to help No.2platoonwhich he did. The Company Commander in doing this was himself wounded in the leg but he saw the reserve platoon on to position on the left before he returned to battalion HQ to ask for the

reserve company to move forward to assist. "B" Company (Khattaks) - the reserve company then moved forward suffering casualties and took over the ground so gallantly secured by No.1 platoon of "A" Company.

During this period, "C" Company on the right had charged their objective and had also come under heavy enemy opposition from both forward bunkers and a bunker and snipers in the area of Jail Hill Buildings. The Company Commander and two platoon commanders were wounded by enemy grenade fire in the initial onslaught and the company suffered considerable casualties. The Company Commander was seen by his company to charge forward alone at a Jap bunker shouting his company war cries and hurling grenades until he fell mortally wounded.

Sepoy Bhanni Ram went forward under intense fire four times and brought wounded comrades back on his back. He was killed whilst returning with a fourth comrade on his shoulders. The attack had gone in and both the forward companies had secured the forward edge of their objective and with the help of "B" company they consolidated. During the initial attack by the two forward companies, battalion HQ had moved forward to a point some 150 yards behind them. In this position battalion HQ also came under heavy fire

At approx 1100 hrs 11th May, the Battalion Commander decided to get "D" Company who had been doing very great work as porters carrying ammunition and equipment and use them to try and get around the road near Jail Hill Cutting and clear a minefield on the main road behind D.I.S. feature, which was holding up the tanks and which were so vitally needed for destroying bunkers and assisting the infantry. Two Platoons of "D" Company moved round to the left under and only encountered minor fire from Jail Hill Cutting. At this time a message was received from the Brigade Commander stressing the necessity for clearing the minefield. The Adjutant took a party consisting of the battalion snipers, battalion police, and a mine detecting party and moved forward to the rear edge of the feature with the hopes of clearing

the minefield. The party came under heavy fire from a bunker on the rear of D.I.S. and took up a position only 10 yards away from the bunker where the tanks could be seen only 100 yds away on the road. A few minutes later the two Platoons of "D" Company who had come round the road joined this party from the rear and were forced to take up a position owing to heavy fire from the bunker ahead and from snipers and L.M.G fire which had now started from the direction of Jail Hill Buildings. Several casualties were incurred. The Adj. called back for a platoon to be sent forward to assault the bunker whilst it was covered by Bren gun and M.M.G. from his position. After 15 mins the platoon assaulted but suffered heavy casualties. The Adj. ordered the party to withdraw which was done successfully under heavy fire. Owing to this bunker the clearing of the minefield in front of the tanks proved unsuccessful.

The Battalion Commander was wounded in both arms but, after his wounds had been dressed, he continued directing throughout the whole operation. It was then decided that an assault by one platoon on the bunker after close covering fire by an M.M.G. might eliminate the bunker and allow troops to clear the minefield in front of the tanks. The attack was timed for 1430 hrs and an M.M.G. Was taken forward and mounted in the open, only 10 yds from the bunker under cover of smoke. The No.1 of the M.M.G was mortally wounded after firing a few bursts; the No.2 took over the gun and continued firing. At 1445 hrs the platoon was assaulted but came under heavy Japanese M.G. fire from a bunker on C.R.E. Ridge on the far side of the main road and also from snipers in the Jail Ridge Area. Heavy casualties were incurred. The M.M.G. Sub Sec was ordered to withdraw but the M.M.G. gunner implored to be allowed to fire the remaining ammunition at the bunker, which he did before the gun was pulled out. Since severe casualties had been incurred by the battalion, one company of 4/1 Gurkha Rifles was sent at 1630 hrs to assist in the operation. "A" Company was withdrawn from its position on the left end of the D.I.S. feature and sent into position near "C" Company on the Jail Road Cutting. "D" Company were unfortunately shelled by enemy guns and suffered 4 casualties

whilst digging in. The Company of Gurkhas was first of all ordered to dig in in the battalion HQ area, but later it was decided to push them forward of “D” and “B” Companies holding the left-hand forward edge of D.I.S. feature. The attack was put in in rain and mist and without covering fire. The attack was only partially successful but certainly meant a move forward because they managed to get within 15 yds of the basher area and consolidated. They suffered 1 killed and 6 wounded. Owing to the time of day and situation it was impossible to evacuate the wounded and remained all night without shelter in the lashing rain. At this time Brigade HQ phoned and asked the battalion to provide a platoon as a protection party to some British Sappers, who were to clear the minefield to the rear of D.I.S and enable the tanks to come forward.

At 0230 hrs on 12 May, the platoon escorted the Sappers who successfully cleared the minefield by 0530 hrs the following morning, which enabled the tanks to get around the road and ensured the complete success of the Brigade operation. The tanks got round the front of the D.I.S. feature by 0900 hrs 12 May and a plan was made in conjunction with the Royal Berkshire Regiment whereby the Royal Berks would assault a bunker on the F.S.D. The ridge was causing trouble to the 4/15th Punjab forward troops and whereby the Queens Royal Regiment would occupy Jail Hill Buildings and destroy any bunkers or snipers who had inflicted casualties on the left forward troops. As a preliminary to these assaults, the tanks were to fire for 15 mins on the Jap bunkers. The attack was planned for 1300 hrs but was postponed until 1500 hrs. One tank went to F.S.D. Ridge to deal with the bunkers in that area. Two tanks went to D.I.S. Ridge and a fourth tank went to the area of Jail Hill Buildings. Battalion 2 i/c went in the tank to the area of the Jail Hill Buildings and personally directed the fire of the tank onto the enemy positions. At 1500 hrs the tanks on D.I.S. Feature blasted the Japanese bunker positions some 20 yds in front of the Gurkhas with 75's and machine guns. After firing for 15 mins the Gurkhas went forward into the assault. Despite the wonderful work carried out by the

tanks the Gurkhas encountered severe opposition and suffered casualties. "B" Company moved behind collecting casualties and pushing forward ammunition under heavy fire. By 1700 hrs 12 May the Gurkha company consolidated forward with only one bunker more to eliminate. During the night 12/13 May, the Japs grenaded the forward companies but were heard leaving their positions.

At 0630 hrs on the morning of 13 May 1944, a patrol from "D" company 4/15 Punjab to the rear of D.I.S. found the position clear of the enemy. Many dead Japs were found along with many arms equipment and material. It was impossible to estimate the number of dead Japs, as many had been buried in the trenches and smashed bunkers. 4/15 Punjab was ordered to capture and hold D.I.S. D.I.S was captured and held after suffering 140 casualties in the Battalion alone. Every officer and man was proud to feel that he had taken part in the Battalion's Greatest Victory. After the battle, Commander 33 Ind. Inf. Bde (Brigadier F.J. Loftus Tottenham, D.S.O) sent the following congratulatory message:

Please convey down to the troops my great admiration and pride for their gallantry in the attack on Kohima. The 4/15 Punjab who held the D.I.S. in face of such difficulties, which must be seen to be believed. Troops of such calibre whether British, Indian, or Gurkhas have every right to consider themselves among the finest in the world.

The history of this operation would never be complete without the mention of the followers of the Battalion. Sweepers brought ammunition under fire to forward companies from the F.U.P. owing to lack of I.O.R.'S. Bhisties and sweepers carried wounded back from the R.A.P. to the A.D.S. Forward Companies were always supplied with hot tea and food. No words can express the devotion to duty and gallantry shown by the followers of the Battalion (Plate 10).

It was Good Friday, 7th April 1944. The sun was up, and it is apparent that the Japanese intruders were mainly concentrated in the Bakery area of the ridge. A company of the Royal West Kents set about removing the intruders pouring in small arms fire until the sappers rush in with pole charges. A series of explosions shake the hill and a sheet of flame engulfs the area.

Some of the intruders take refuge in the brick ovens on the hillside and are tackled with hand grenades, in all forty-four Japanese bodies are counted in the bakery area, and from one of the Officers is recovered a detailed survey map marked with deployments, supply bases, artillery positions, and objectives.

A notable event of the day is that a company of the 4th/7th Rajput rifles from the Jotsoma Box slips into the Kohima perimeter making a useful addition to the Garrison. The Japanese had cut the water supply on GPT ridge and rationing is imposing great ingenuity, it shows by dodging sniper and mortar fire to brew up chai (Tea). The constant shelling and mortar fire is destroying the foliage and ripping branches from the trees leaving the positions more exposed. The luxuriant growth of rhododendrons around D.C's bungalow is ravaged though some hardy bushes continue to bloom.

Snipers make any daylight movement within the perimeter a risky business and the number of walking wounded is mounting alarmingly. It is resolved to take out a party by the same route as the Rajput company had entered by I.G.H. Spur with Naga guides selected by Charles Pawsey, the District Commissioner. After sunset, the Japanese troops are heard forming up ready to attack DIS hill and defensive fire is called in from Jotsoma. The shelling disrupts the Japanese as it forms upon the tower slopes of Jail Hill. Despite the disruption, the attack comes in but is held with a small arms fire. Further attacks are made on the DC's bungalow but are held, during the night a new weapon is introduced when a loudspeaker is set up on Treasury Hill and an INA (Indian National Army) soldier speaking in Urdu, exhorts allied Indian soldiers to quit and join the Japanese force and liberate India. On 7 April the Japanese gained possession of the main water supply in Kohima. The Kohima Garrison henceforth depends on air supply for water as well as other supplies (Plate 12).

The battle of Vizwema Operation 10 June 1944. On 10 June 1944, another attempt was made with 1 Camerons to advance down the road but was unsuccessful due to fire from Shaving

Brush 545540 and Basha Spurs 545538... We are staying with 33 Ind Corps as they report the actions taken by 2 Division (Plate 14).

The Lee Grant Tank located at Officer's Hill, below The Heritage, Old DC Bungalow, Kohima is much acclaimed Second World War relics (Plate 5-6). On May 6, 1944, this tank, under command of Major Ezra Rhodes, was climbing the Kohima Ridge to support troops of the 2nd Division who were attacking Japanese positions at Garrison Hill. Under treacherous monsoon conditions, the tank careered down the hill, lost a track, and crashed against a tree, where it came under enemy fire. The crew jammed the triggers of the tank's machine guns to fire continuously, set the turret to rotate, and escape under fire back to British lines. After the battle, the 2nd Division requested that the tank remains in the exact position from which it had to be abandoned as a memorial to the heroism and sacrifice of all those who fought in the battle. The Inspection Bungalow (I.B) constructed by the British at Yikhum village, Wokha District are few amongst the remaining Second World War memories (Plate 11).

The Japanese started a school for young children in Jakhama village under Kohima district (Plate 35). As mentioned by the villagers, the Japanese were intelligent and smart people, and they taught the young people Japanese alphabets, numerical and few Japanese words. They were also taught Japanese war songs.

Temjenzungba Jamir from Mopongchuket village partook in the Great War under the well known 21st Labor Corps of the Great War awarded with 'the British War Medal' for his gallantry service in the WWI, also a Participant of Second World War and an awardee of War Medal 1939-1945, The Burma Star; WWII and the 1939-1945 Star (Plate 15).

Descriptions of Medals Received

British War Medal

The British War Medal is a campaign medal of the United Kingdom which was awarded to officers and men of British and Imperial forces for service in the First World War. Two versions

struck in –Silver and Bronze where the later awarded to the Chinese, Maltese, and the Indian Labor Corps by the Monarch of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions and Emperor of India for campaign service i.e., the campaign in the First World War having the eligibility to those British and Imperial forces established in 26th July 1919. The British have awarded 11, 0,000 Bronze medals and about 6,500,000 Silver British War Medal (Plate 16).

War Medal 1939-1945 which has been issued to all members of the armed forces for at least 28 days of war service. It is known as a Victory Medal as military campaign medal type, with the eligibility on full-time personal of all ranks and established on 16th August 1945 instituted by the United Kingdom for award to the British Commonwealth who had served full time in the Armed forces or the Merchant Navy for at least 28 days (Plate 17). The Burma Star is a Military Campaign Medal instituted by the United Kingdom in May 1945 for award to subjects of the British Commonwealth who served in the Second World War, specifically in the Burma Campaign War from 1941-1945 (Plate 18).

The 1939-1945 Star as a military campaign medal instituted by the United Kingdom on 8th of July 1943 for the award of subjects of the British Commonwealth for service in the Second World War – awarded by the Monarch of the United Kingdom and the Dominions of the British Commonwealth, and the Emperor of India. This comes with the eligibility for all ranks, known as the type of Military Campaign Medal, and awarded for 180 days of operational service or 60 days of operational flying (Plate 19).

The Naga War veterans represent an important generational link from the past to the future. They represent not only a link with Britain and the Japanese but also their values learned through tough experiences must go towards building a progressive society. With such beliefs, efforts were made to give the Naga veterans prominence during the commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima (Plate 31). The 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima was commemorated in 2019 which witnessed the coming together of the British, the Japanese,

and the Nagas building a relationship with the notion of remembrance, reconciliation, and rebirth (Plate 32).

Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom maintains good collections of the Burma Campaign (Plate 20-21, Plate 33-34). This museum is the only one in the United Kingdom to focus entirely on the Burma Campaign of the Second World War.

Japanese survivors of the bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki who lived through the war reflect how the atomic fallout had resulted from unimaginable consequences in their physical bodies and mental state. On 6 August 1945, the first nuclear weapon an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. The account written in Naval Captain William S. Parsons describes the nuclear weapon B-29, "Enola Gay" nicknamed as "Little Boy". The bomb weighed 9000 pounds, 120 inches long with a diameter of 28 inches. 43 seconds after the drop it exploded, releasing an estimated 50,000,000 degrees Celsius of heat. 1/10,000 a second later a fireball formed 180 feet in diameter with an internal temperature of 300,000 degrees Celsius. A shock wave raged through the entire city at 2.8 miles per second. Amplified by heat rays, it had the incendiary and destructive power of 20,000 tons of TNT. Some 20,000,000,000,000 (20 trillion) calories of energy were released. The Atomic Bomb Dome (Genbaku Dome) was the only structure left standing in the area where the first atomic bomb exploded on 6 August 1945 (Plate 24).

Post-nuclear consequences are threatening and paralyze the survival of men. With more advancement in the making of military warfare and munitions, with the sole reason to secure one's territories and borders, it seems like peace can be assured only when a State maintains powerful military technology. After the atomic bomb attack, there have been persistent pleadings and resolutions for nuclear disarmament.

The nuclear attack which was demonstrated in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a purposeful act, counterattack by their competent which is colossally destructive military

munition and still lingers in the memories of the survivors and their descendants. Despite awareness, the destructive strength of nuclear weapons, the development of the latter is fast advancing which indicates that it could lead to more mass destruction. The radiation side effects faced by men are condemnable. Inland battles, the conventional offensive, survival of men is comparatively higher than nuclear holocausts. The Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings emerged out of unabating vengeance after the attack on Pearl Harbour. The Peace Memorial Park features the Atomic Bomb Dome, museum and monuments. Its purpose is not only to remember the victims but also to create awareness for world peace (Plate 22-23).

A single atomic bomb indiscriminately killed tens of thousands of people, profoundly disrupting and altering the lives of the survivors. Through belongings left by the victims, A-bombed artifacts, testimonies of A-bomb survivors, and related materials, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum conveys to the world the horrors and the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons and spreads the message of “No More Hiroshimas”.

August 14, 1945, 10:00 a.m. the last Council in the Imperial presence was held. The Emperor said, “I hope for peace of the nation. I think it is impossible to continue the war. I request the Ministry to prepare the Imperial rescript on the end of the war as soon as possible”. By his determination, the decisive battle in our mainland was avoided. We should bear in mind that today, Peace and Prosperity are owing to the decision of the Emperor and the brave great work of attendants in “The Last Council in the Imperial presence”.

But, as there was no picture/photo about the last meeting, painter Shirakawa was requested to paint (Plate 39). After making much effort and taking many years he finished the painting. It gave a deep impression to many people and there were many requests to distribute its reprint. At last, it was decided to reprint the paint for distribution. By this painting, we considered this Picture as the end of the war and thank for today’s Peace and Prosperity and welfare of the Japanese people and the Peace of the world.

The aftermath of the War advocated reconciliation between the British and Japanese War veterans which led to the establishment of The Burma Campaign Society in March 2002 (Plate 36). The Society is committed to promoting understanding of Britain and Japan's encounters during the Second World War. From 1983, the late Masao Hirakubo OBE advocated reconciliation between British and Japanese soldiers who were previously enemies. It aims to extend the same to Burma (Myanmar) and India, and also any related nations involved in the Burma Campaign 1941-45. The IRIS Program, an initiative of the Government of Japan was announced by former Ambassador of Japan to India, Kenji Hiramatsu at the commemoration of the 73rd Anniversary of Battle of Imphal in May 2017, with the hope that the IRIS Program will create the opportunity to establish people to people contact between Japan and North East Region of India (Plate 37-38).

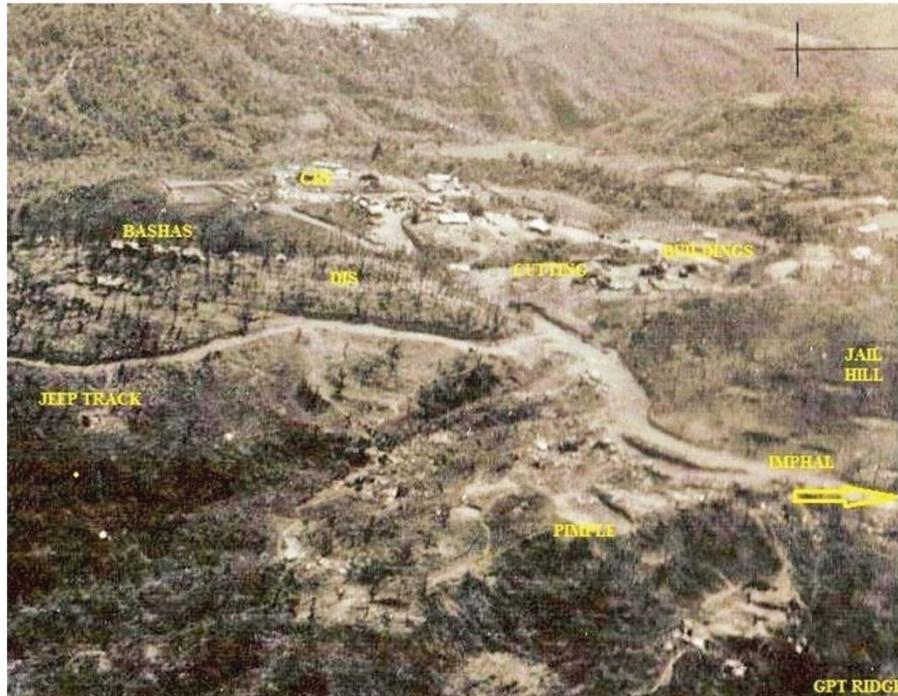


Plate 1: Aerial view of Kohima town during the war marked with strategic battlefield locations.
 (Photo Courtesy: Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 2: Aerial view of Kohima town during the war.
 (Photo Courtesy: Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 3: Scene post-heavy artillery battle at Deputy Commissioner's Bungalow, Kohima. (Photo Courtesy: Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 4: Ruins of Kohima after the battle in May 1944. (Photo Courtesy: Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 7: Laying out the Kohima War Cemetery. (*Photo Courtesy:* Commonwealth War Graves Commission)



Plate 8: An aerial image likely taken in the 1950s just after the construction of the Kohima War Cemetery. (*Photo Courtesy:* Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 9: Ellen Hannay. (*Photo Courtesy:* Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 10: The Punjab Regiment soldiers waiting to go over the top to attack DIS. (*Photo Courtesy:* Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 11: Inspection Bungalow located at Yikhum Village, Wokha District.



Plate 12: Friday 7 April 1944. (*Photo Courtesy:* Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 15: World War II Veteran



Plate 16: Frontal and Back view of the British War Medal; WW I



Plate 17: Frontal and Back view of the War Medal 1939-1945- WW II



Plate 18: The Burma Star; WW II



Plate 19: The 1939-1946 Star; WW II



Plate 20: British soldier and Japanese soldier military uniform in display at Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom. (Photo Courtesy: Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 21: Senior Japanese soldiers coming out from the aircraft to formally surrender on 26 August, 1945. (Photo Courtesy: Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 22: The scholar with Mr. Rajeshwor Yumnam at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, 2017



Plate 23: The Peace Memorial Park, Hiroshima, Japan.



Plate 26: War relics on display collected from Jotsoma area.



Plate 27: War relics on display collected from Jotsoma area.



Plate 28: War relics on display collected from Jotsoma area.



Plate 29: War relics on display collected from Jotsoma area.



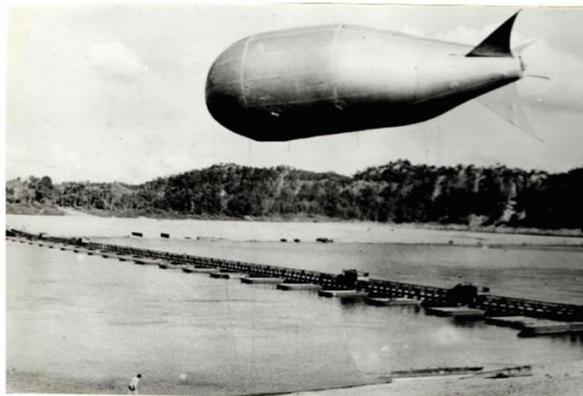
Plate 30: War relics on display collected from Jotsoma area.



Plate 31: The scholar with Naga Kohima Veteran, Sovchü Nienu during the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima.



Plate 32: The scholar with British Kohima Veteran, Mr. Richard Day (Right) and Dr. P. Ngully (Left), Chairman, Kohima Educational Society.



SE 1364

BURMA'S FIRST BALLOON BARRAGE
The first Barrage Balloons to fly over Burma are those of No. 2 Mobile Balloon Flight, which are being used to guard the Bailey Bridge over the Chindwin River near Kalewa, the longest pontoon Bailey bridge ever built in any theatre of war. Picture shows one of the balloons guarding the 360 yards long pontoon Bailey bridge over the Chindwin. 9.2.45.

Plate 33: Burma's First Balloon Barrage. (Photo Courtesy: Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 34: Recording studio in the jungle during the Burma Campaign. (*Photo Courtesy:* Kohima Museum, York, United Kingdom)



Plate 35: The Japanese set up a school in Jakhama under Kohima district during the Second World War.



Plate 36: The scholar with Mrs. Akiko Macdonald (Right), Chairperson, Burma Campaign Society.



Plate 37: The scholar with Mr. Kenichi Okuyama, former Deputy-Mayor of Shonai town, and his wife in Tokyo.



Plate 38: The scholar with Mr. Kasai Kiyoshi (Extreme Left) from Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) news channel in Tokyo, Japan.

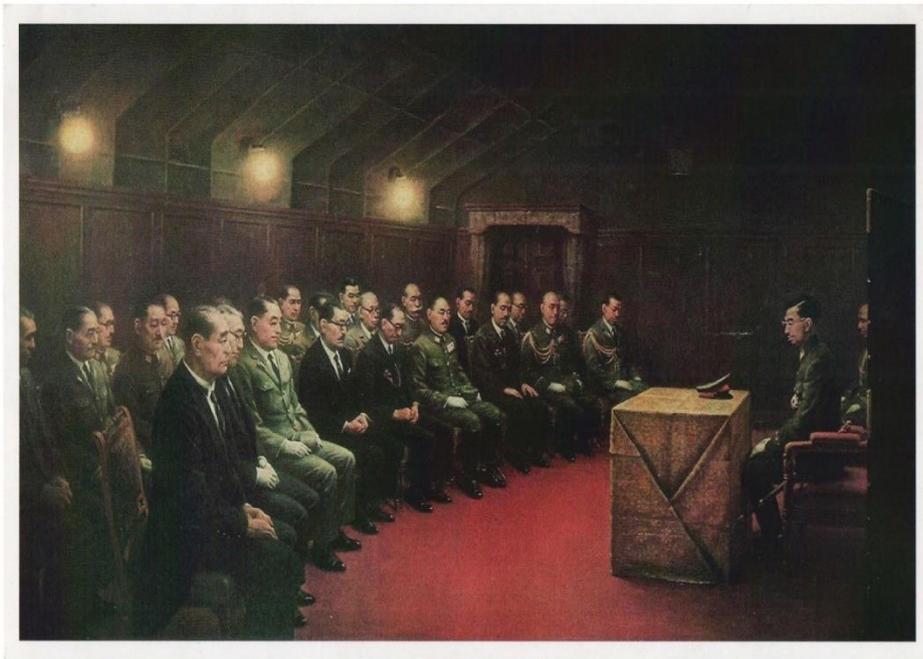


Plate 39: The Last Council. (Courtesy: Mr. Teisovilhou Tungoe)

CHAPTER-5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

From the time of the First World War, the rise in capitalism affected the phase during the Second World War. A leading characteristic of the situation since the Second World War has been that, for several reasons, the condition of the labor market has radically changed. The unemployed reserve army has shrunk compared with prewar days; and even where it has persisted, trade unions have been in a sufficiently strong position to maintain or even raise wages in the organized sectors of the economy (see Dobb, 1964). Practically, what causes war? Consistent occurrence of crisis triggers the use of force, war. It is most likely to exasperate to war if it is caused due to a strong emotional reaction of a physical threat to a territorial dispute; if it faces the same crisis for the third time in sequence with the same opponent, here the practical political is highly intense and hostile; it produces a bellicose opposition from both side in the emerging crisis; is such crisis there are the presence of decision-makers who adheres uncompromisingly to a set of ideas and policies. Interstate conflicts in the present day can be pointed toward two nations typically interacting over a border issue. When we look in the Indian context, the issue over the ownership of the Kashmir valley is still an active border issue between India and Pakistan. Supposedly, two major states entangled in a territorial issue, each engaged in forming affinity in opposition to its opponents and developing its military force would gradually lead to an outcome of a series of crises. Repeated crises and successive crises give way to the equals in their actions and approach, thus, war becoming highly unavoidable (on a detailed discussion on the crisis of war, see Vasquez, 1996).

Was there any sign of territorial disputes which led to the outbreak of the Second World War? A general explanation attempting to point toward an underlying basis that is significant, yet, not necessarily manifest or obvious outwardly will be further highlighted in the following narrative. Recall the cause which led to the immediate outbreak of the war, the sequence of related to militarized bound disagreements which was another factor that provokes the need for war; and the attack on the Soviet Union in 1941 led to the overwhelming use of force. As known, the war pushed forward because of certain specific territorial demands made by Germany on Poland, deliberating a state of assertion sprouting out of the Versailles settlement that pursues to employ every German under the dominion and ascendancy of the Third Reich.

By achieving autonomy, it intended to secure the militarization of the Rhineland, the Anschluss, and the engrossment of the Sudetenland, and all these intentions are to succeed sovereign control or transfer of territory. The prevailing norms of nationalism helped ease the transfer of territory before September 1939 (Vasquez, 1996, p.164). However, the Polish or Poles viewed the issue of territory as extremely important and legally significant as it points toward their existence and this stand could not be easily overtaken.

The general explanation of world war, however, suggests that there are further important systemic factors including the above-discussed conditions that generate expansion, and that will restrain the prevailing conditions, of which only selective expansion of war turns into world wars. The major defects were alliances and the foreign policy decisions of Hitler and Japan, who as allies took self-governing actions that brought about the restoration of their former position in the system, placing the two remaining major non-belligerents-the United States and the USSR-in an oblivious alliance with each other and with Britain. The conventional view of the war against the Axis admits the co-existence of official armies and the resistance, generals, and privates, rich and poor, but stresses their harmony and joint endeavor to end the evils of the Axis regimes (Gluckstein, 2012, p.207).

The procedure started with the signing of the Tripartite Pact in September 1940. The Pact enabled Hitler to provide a threat to Britain and the United States, putting before them the probability of a two-front war. The attacks on the Soviet Union and then on Pearl Harbor were catastrophic decisions for the Axis states. They destroyed Hitler's previous attempt to win through the salami-slice strategy through the divide and conquer process of threats to overcome opposition. Pearl Harbor stirred Roosevelt to enter the war legitimately and with full domestic support, this attack worked against Hitler. The Pact did not deteriorate the US effort in Europe, because Roosevelt was willing and could manage to back-burner the Pacific (see Vasquez, 1996).

During the interwar period, Japan experienced political and economic turmoil, as well as agricultural and industrial problems. Her industrial economy relied heavily on imported machinery and natural resources. By the time of the Second World War, Japan's military had undergone a substantial expansion program and she had become an ally of Germany and Italy in an anti-communist pact. Japan's aggression was driven by a burning desire to expand its territory and gain access to natural resources. She aimed to acquire resource-rich Dutch and British colonies such as the East Indies, Malaya, and Burma and establish a defensive belt around these countries thus gaining such resources as oil and tin which her economy badly needed. Japan's expansionist effort was designed to create 'The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' (see Phillips, 1966).

Britain considered the recovery of Burma as a prerequisite for the regaining of Singapore and Malaya, and necessary to preserve the security of India upon which she had a vested political, as well as, military interest. However, this view was not shared by the other Allies; the United States and China. From March 1941, through to the end of the campaign, Burma began to play an increasingly important role in Anglo-American relations because it was the sole remaining link between China and its western, principally American, supporters

and suppliers. The primary regional objective of the US was to keep a road open into China to facilitate the US reinforcements of supplies, equipment, and personnel if Japan invaded. Naturally, China had a geographical interest in supporting a halt to Japanese expansionism and supported the Allies' efforts in stopping Japanese aggression. The contentious issue of Japanese wartime transgressions is perhaps no better represented than with the issue of "comfort women" - women throughout Asia who were forced into sexual slavery to serve Japanese troops during the Second World War (Kuki, 2013, p. 245).

The retreat from Burma in 1942 was a major blow to the Allies in all respects. The disaster, however, led to the foundations of the 1943-45 campaign being built. The conduct of the British counter-offensive illustrates how the application of command at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels are all interdependent and how military thinking and practice require easily understandable and practical tools. This battle is regarded by many as the siege of the small scratch garrison formed from many units and convalescents, which lasted for only two weeks. The battle raged for a further two months as only part of the British counter-offensive, during which time all operations of war were conducted. Thus, in one battle, the application, nature, realities, and requirements of war are studied and lessons extracted. The Allies fought more than just a mighty and efficient enemy. They had to recover from a crushing defeat and the hugely detrimental effect this had on morale. The conduct of joint and combined operations had to be mastered, and the low priority the theatre occupied in the war effort had to be overcome. By contrast, the Japanese, who had up until the 1943-45 campaign enjoyed a fearsome reputation resulting from overwhelming success, were faced with an increasingly formidable opponent.

The Imphal and Kohima Campaign has widely recognized in the Japanese historical context that it was one of the worst battles during the Second World War. The surviving war veterans published their accounts in the post-war to provide an idea of how dreadful the

situation was. The central argument of the veteran's account primarily focuses on the incompetent military leaders who enforced the battle regardless of opposition, and how the soldiers suffered under the tyranny. Their accounts provide unimaginable sufferings of the war, yet there is a certain aspect that has been overlooked: the local people's involvement in the battle. Kohima was neither the chosen battlefield nor a target of the Japanese in the Imphal-Kohima Campaign, 1944 according to the perspective of the British 14th Army. The target of the British 14th Army was Imphal, while the 33 Corps thought that the Japanese target would be Dimapur. At the initial stage of the offensive, the British army wrongly assessed the importance of the defense of Kohima, and they had to pay a heavy price. The Battle of Kohima turned out to be one of the last and greatest battles that were fought on the entire Burma front (see Slim, 2014). The intensely fought Battle of Kohima is compared with that of the Battle of Stalingrad and hence given the name as the 'Stalingrad of the East. The Battle of Stalingrad (Volgograd, located in the southwest of Russia) was fought between Germany and Russia from mid-1942-February 1943. This battle was intensely fought by the two powers and it marked the turning point of the Second World War in the European theatre. The Battle of Kohima, during the Second World War, was fought between the Japanese and British/Indian forces from April 4 to June 10, 1944. Kohima, then a small hill station, was severely hit by the widespread devastation. 'The Ridge' which extends from the Imphal Road and south of the Dimapur road was the main location of the war. The course of the war and the irony of the epic siege of Kohima 1944 is a story of human endeavor and suffering.

The present study reveals that the Nagas were in good relation with the Japanese and the INA at the early phase of their entry to the Naga Hills. The Nagas extended help to the Japanese as they thought of them as their own kind because of their physical appearances. As the war advanced and its nature more intense, the Japanese suffered from a lack of supplies of food and munition, this led to a change of attitude of the Japanese towards the Nagas. The

former forcefully took away domestic animals and food items from a good number of villagers, and this created unpleasant and bitter relations between the Japanese and the native people. The burden of lack of supplies aggravated the relationship as the local households were also running short of their storage. Nonetheless, several Naga villagers willingly gave their rice, livestock, vegetables to the Japanese, and the INA which helped them to sustain and hold their ground throughout the war.

When the Battle of Kohima broke out, Naga people were compelled to leave their homes either because homes had been destroyed by detonating of bombs and munition or forced to evacuate their homes as they were target zones. During the Battle of Kohima, families were separated or displaced in the process of evacuation. In the blink of an eye, this became the reality of the Naga people, 77 years ago, and their lives changed and went through the most unexpected unimaginable transitional stage.

The British administrator, C.R. Pawsey, Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills maintained a commendable friendship with the Nagas, and this was one good reason why the Nagas chose to remain loyal to the British. The Nagas never betrayed Pawsey in giving proper information about the Japanese whereabouts and activities. The Nagas considered the British as an enemy during the 19th century, but as a result of the relationship build between the two over the years, the Nagas stood by the British as loyal subjects during the war. After the war, the Nagas who participated in the war and other services were awarded distinguished war medals.

Another interesting reason the Nagas sided with the Japanese during the initial phase of the war is to do with the political liberation from British rule. Eyewitnesses of the war mention assurance given by the Japanese to the villagers when they first encountered their entry into the Naga Hills, to liberate them from the British authority. In the present study, it has been observed that many Naga villages, despite their harvest being taken away forcefully, in the

later phase of the war, continued to extend their support to the Japanese till their retreat from the Naga Hills. The study observed that the southern Angami region under Kohima district and Phek district (formerly eastern Angami area) extended much support to the Japanese-INA force. The supplies from these areas were distributed to the fighting troops in different locations around Kohima.

The war had caused the insurmountable loss, of varying degrees, in the Naga Hills. The Japanese occupied villages were severely attacked, burned down granaries, and houses by bombing or artillery fire. Many of the villagers lost their properties and were left with nothing after the war. The compensation for the damages caused by the war displays the severity and intensity of the war. The present research reveals that many Nagas not only suffered loss but were also separated from their families during the war, and sadly, many of these missing individuals were never reported to be found. The Nagas suffered excruciating pain and went through untold miseries and loss. Many accounts of the Japanese have been documented from the southern Angami region and several villages under the Phek district. The headquarter of commanding General Sato of the Japanese 31st Division was stationed at Jakhama village (southern Angami area), and impressively, none have commented of any untoward remarks on the morality of the Japanese and had no reports of any misconduct towards women.

The war increased the money economy in the Naga Hills, the inflow of money led to a transition within the society that was formerly dependent on agriculture for sustenance. The cash economy affected the mindset of the native people and brought about socio-economic changes, and swiftly changed the lifestyle and living standard of the people. The construction of roads attributed to the rise in commercial establishments, which also helped in broadening people-to-people contacts from various social and cultural backgrounds, and thus opened new opportunities for all-around development in the Naga Hills. Before the war, the Nagas remained

confined within their monotonous lifestyle, yet the war opened new dimensions unconsciously which impacted the people.

Another important impact of the Second World War in the Naga Hills was the birth of a new political ideology, the freedom struggle movement. The Nagas never intended to live as subjects under any authority, the independent mindset of the Nagas even before the advent of the British administration speaks the zeal of the people to live as an independent society. The culmination of the Second World War contributed more to the political turmoil and the armed struggle in the Naga Hills. Post-war, there had been an increase in the consciousness of the freedom struggle, becoming more conflictful and an increase in bloodshed for the cause of independence. It had witnessed individuals who had become pioneers of the Naga people move through their undeniable sacrifice and courage to gain political freedom for their people. Ironically, the current state of the freedom movement has become chaotic, unmethodical, and seems to be losing the original principles of political independence. The quest for independence no longer remained a uniform voice of the people but scattered in various groups with their specific ideologies and demands. Hence, it appears as though the Naga freedom movement has been drifted away from what its initial base set up by the former leaders.

There was a lack of progressive strategic planning and absence of coordination between the Japanese generals, General Sato, and General Mutaguchi that turned into a major cause for their defeat at Kohima. Lack of supply of ration, munition, and other basic provisions resulted in the number of deaths of the Japanese soldiers and affected the course of the war which led to their downfall in the Burma Campaign. As it was monsoon season during the war, tropical diseases also had an impact on the fighting at Kohima. The Japanese and the INA soldiers suffered miserable defeat from the British command. The war in China, Asia-Pacific, and the Arakan region had cost her resources, warplanes, military equipment, and supplies. The air support for the 31st Division was negligible and the heavy field artilleries that were left behind

in Burma, due to the unfavorable terrains in the Naga Hills, worked to the disadvantage of the Japanese at Kohima.

The environmental disruptions of international war began in the mountain region as early as 1937, shortly after the Japanese invasion of the Chinese mainland, which forced the Chinese Nationalist (Kuomintang) command southwest into Yunnan (Tucker, 2017, p.120). Burma was linked to India by the wild hills and forests of Assam and the state of Manipur. Both of these states shared common significant features: mountains, dense jungles, a very high rainfall during the summer monsoon, virulent malaria, and a very poor communications network. The climate and topography of Burma were significant factors to both Allied and Japanese commanders, they greatly limited movement, tactics, and resupply had considerable effect upon health, medical treatment, morale, and ultimately the outcome of the campaign.

Emphasizing the role of nature as an active agent during the Battle of Kohima, the onset of monsoon and the probable diseases during such season emerged as an important cause on the nature of the war. Slim who had by this time fought the length of Burma described the Indo-Burmese border country as ‘some of the world’s worst country, breeding the world’s worst diseases, and having for half the year at least the world’s worst climate’ (see Slim, 1961). Both sides in the struggle faced desperate disease problems, “In 1942, for every (British) man evacuated with wounds, 120 were evacuated sick. The common ailments were dysentery, jaundice, jungle sores, and, far worse than all the rest, malaria.” (Tucker, 2017, p.123). The struggle to control malaria was a huge challenge during the entire military operation. Mountbatten’s message to all the ranks on the Manipur road shortly after the battle echoes a sentiment that pervaded the conduct of the battle: “Only those who have seen the terrific nature of the country under these conditions will be able to appreciate your achievements and especially those of the infantry” (Swinson, 1966, p.246.). The impact of the environment during the Battle of Kohima added an unavoidable challenge to the already existing military offensive.

Under the incessant rain conditions, just the fighting soldiers from both sides faced water-borne diseases, like diarrheal disease, cholera, malaria, etc.

On war and armed violence, and their harm to the environment, in the account of the Battle of Kohima, there had been no severe consequences recorded, yet, there are cases of physical disabilities due to the use of arms and munition. Though the magnitude and scale of its impact are beyond the scope of the present study, it caused harm to the environment during armed conflicts. International Humanitarian Law prohibits anyone from making deliberate attacks against the environment. Today, over 80% of conflicts take place in biodiverse hot spots. These biodiverse hot spots support half of the world's plants and many rare species (<https://www.icrc.org/en>).

Even Wars have rules. Every day in our line of work, we see the Geneva Conventions in action. As long as conflicts remain a reality, International Humanitarian Law serves to limit suffering; and protect civilians, aid workers, and others not part of the fight (Ibid). It is said that the most problematic issue in the current generation, climate change, will affect everyone. Bu living in conflict zones will be extensively affected. The reason is not because of the conflixtions fightings but unavailability of limited resources to adapt the climate change. We understand how crucial effects or threat it could cause upon men toward sustainability and the environment. It is devastating.

The Japanese brought with them plants considered to be of medicinal value. The Nagas were not much aware of the local medicinal plants available in the region which were consumable, they learned from the Japanese the benefits of such plants which were either eaten raw or cooked. The 'water celery' was given to wounded people to consume, also used externally. Eyewitnesses said that the Japanese ate almost every plant available when they were completely left out of food. The smelly leafy plants like 'Zuna' and 'Rünu' were cooked and eaten, the water celery was a life-giving plant for the Japanese. Eating every plant available in

the areas they resided in is commonly spoken amongst the eyewitnesses. Surviving mainly with leaves while the British Allied force was fortunate to enjoy decent food made a big difference in the physical strength of the fighting soldiers which affected the course of the battle. They starved without proper food for months, while retreating the condition was even worse. Many times they ate half-cooked rice and meat.³¹

The Japanese soldiers smoke a lot, and when their tobacco would run short, they used the plant the local people used for smoking known as 'Khuprü' (*Nicotina tobacum*). This plant was used extensively by the soldiers and for this reason, the villagers numerously refer to this plant while recounting the war accounts. As known, the Japanese brought plants and planted them in the areas they resided. A particular plant known as 'Japannha' (*Eupatorium odoratum*) was commonly used in wounds to stop bleeding. The leaves were finely smashed into the paste and applied to the wounded parts of the body. There are also accounts of them eating the inner part of a certain tree which has a soft texture and is packed with medicinal value. They also ate insects like lizards, anguinae, crabs, and other kinds of insects found in the river. Plants to feed their horses were brought and planted by the Japanese as well as the British. The Japanese planted 'Werünha' (species of grass) and fed their horses. The British also planted a certain type of coriander which has spikes at the edge of its leaves. Many new plants were brought and planted by the Japanese as well as the British which helped the Nagas in adapting healthy livelihood.³²

The military tactic of Air Power proved effective in winning the Battle of Kohima. As convenient it may sound to secure military operations through this technique, the negative impact and destruction caused by airpower are difficult to be compensated. The atomic bombing of Japan during the Second World War strongly demonstrated the strength of airpower. It was in April 1944, while Europe and her Allies were intensely engaged in fighting against the Nazis, Germany, South East Asia, the commanding force was created under

Admiral Louis Mountbatten to counter the Japanese movement. When the refugees from Burma entered Kohima, the speculation on the outbreak of war became more intense and inevitable. The news about the Japanese invasion reached Kohima in no time.

A descendant of a Japanese war veteran mentions of the obligation his late father and other soldiers who adhered to the command to participate in the Second World War. As his late father was stationed in the Andaman Islands during World War II, Jun Shimada thinks he has a relation with India, in particular, North-East India. His father, the soldiers drafted in the last World War participated in the war as a national duty and order and hence could not refuse to go to the battlefield.

The most enjoyable moment the soldiers liked was eating. The Japanese soldiers had poor food, with only rice, miso soup, and a small side dish, and they were surprised at the good food of the Commonwealth Army when they occupied Singapore and Rangoon. It was something they could not eat even in Japan. When the Japanese soldiers headed to Kohima, it seemed to be terrible without supply. Their biggest goal was to occupy Imphal, Kohima, and preferably Dimapur, and have a full meal there. Of course, senior Japanese military officials said the noble goal was to aim for India's liberation from Britain.

The Japanese have also placed 'comfort women' in Burma for hard-working soldiers. They were Japanese (including many Korean people), Chinese, Burmese, etc. It was especially disastrous when Japanese soldiers withdrew from Kohima. They withdrew from India on a roadless road in the rainy season with no food. All soldiers cursed the military commander (Lt. Gen. Mutaguchi) who did not know the hardships of the front line and did not supply. Shimada further elaborated that; today's young Japanese are unaware of the Battle of Kohima and Imphal. They also don't know that the Japanese fought in Asia. Older people know the name of Imphal, but most people don't know "Kohima". There are two reasons; today, Japan does not provide much history education about the previous war. Because of the conflict between

the Right and Left-wing parties. The right-wing says that the Japanese army was right and that the massacre in Nanjing, China, and the military coercion of comfort women are fictional. The left-wing is against it. Therefore, to avoid trouble, the school rarely teaches the history of the previous World War. So many Japanese are indifferent or reluctant about the war. He wonders if they are 3/4 or more of all Japanese. The rest are the right and left wings. Another reason why "Kohima" is not known is that there is no Japanese memorial in Kohima. Imphal has many memorials of countries, but Kohima has only a magnificent British military memorial cemetery. It's a pity that there is no monument.

Oral history has always been central in reconstructing the early history of the Nagas. Such oral sources reflect the effectiveness and dependency on oral methodology and not only through printed sources, military strategies, and political interpretation. The use of memory has worked as a good source in this work. The application of memories gathers information and uncovers insights to create a texture of historical interpretations. It is essential to understand that the narratives drawn from oral sources should not be easily ignored or considered until properly verified. Oral historians have depended on oral interviews to understand post-Second World War consequences. Visible wounds and pain are easy to sympathize with, yet invisible psychological war wounds embedded in the memories need much attention as the former one. The undocumented oral narratives account for the experiences and perspective of the native support in the battle which has thus far been least recorded or ignored by the colonial records and literature on the Battle of Kohima.

The significant Battle of Kohima which was fought intensely across the Naga Hills was a war uninvited by the local inhabitants. The account of the Battle of Kohima is incomplete without addressing the support of the Nagas. The post-war transition in aspects of socio-economic and political dimensions also changed the former ways, from traditional to modern civilization. The devastating and unexpected account of the Battle of Kohima from the Naga

perspective has been discussed in this study, including war account from both the British and Japanese participants. The focus of the study had been the three participants – Nagas, British and Japanese.

To have survived is the biggest relief for any survivor. The idea or concept of nation-building was much learned through this event by the Naga political leaders. The Nagas participated in the First World War as Labour Corps and the Second World War was witnessed in their land. This exposure imbibed a sense of community togetherness and identity consciousness. Though it was not a war invited by the Nagas, the two superpower nations of the 1940s created a historic event for the Nagas. The transition from conservative tribal livelihood to western civilization is because of such unexpected events which none could ever imagine in their wildest imaginations. The British, as well as the Japanese, were temporary invaders whose chase for power and supreme authority influenced the Naga people that they were also no less than their invaders and it prompted them to consider themselves as an abled community.

However, herein lies a problem, that despite all these tributes and the recognition that the battle of Kohima and Imphal is the fiercest battles in British war history, the importance of the battle of Kohima does not loom large in the histories of World War II. For the Nagas, who hoped that they will be free from superior authority, this dream was shattered when the British Empire left India for good and gave way to India, which the latter attained her Independence on 15th August 1947. Is it not relevant to mention that during the need hour, the Naga population adhered to complete loyalty towards the British in defeating their opponent? Then, why is it that we were left unattained and uncared? These voices have been lingering on in the hearts of the Naga people and the atrocities and sufferings in the name of freedom remain conflicted. Is war a good or bad thing? Practically, war is evil yet it is inevitable because sometimes the call for war seems to be the only solution for a nation. The uncertain journey

between the British and Japan led to the victory of the British Allied force, and obviously which would have been impossible to overthrow superior Imperial Japan without the loyal support of the Nagas, the safest and most effective option voluntarily given to winning the battle.

In 2015, church leaders from Japan and Nagaland held a two-day program '*Christian Reconciliation and Revival Summit*' on 28th& 29th November 2015 at Khedi Baptist Church and NBCC Convention Hall, Kohima, Nagaland. The purpose of this summit was to seek forgiveness for the pain and loss the Japanese brought upon the Nagas during the Second World War. As an act of reconciliation between the Nagas and the Japanese, both sides repented their wrongdoings and forgave one another in God's name. Mr. Lhouvitsü of Kohima village expressed that the process of reconciliation is sacred in Naga tradition. The Naga - Japanese reconciliation began in 1975 when a team of Japanese came to Kohima in search of the bones of the fallen soldiers. They asked forgiveness from the locals on behalf of the soldiers and the nation and also sought the help of the locals to locate what is left of the Japanese human remains.

To maintain peace in the world and live without wars, the Kohima Cathedral was built and dedicated in March 1991 and still stands strong as the Peace Cathedral. Around 100 Japanese cherry trees were planted around the Cathedral which was sent by the Japanese War veterans under the leadership of Mr. Masao, a devout Catholic. In the process, many other nations also contributed to the construction of the Cathedral.

The Naga veterans, combatants, and non-combatants have expressed their unhappiness on how they have been ignored by the British and the Japanese post-war. The people of the Naga Hills gave their best to the British and they won the war, and the Japanese, though they did not offer their full support, Naga people were hospitable and willingly provided food supplies and water. There are also instances where out of care and concern, the Naga informants have warned or informed the Japanese of British whereabouts to save and protect them from

harm. Some Naga veterans have expressed concerns about the Japanese not visiting Kohima to look out for the remains of the fallen soldiers. In recent years, works have been carried out from the side of the Japanese to collect the remains of the soldiers, and mutual support is also extended from the Nagas in the recovery of the human remains of the Japanese. Human remains were discovered by some construction workers at a site of a Church in Kohima recently. A team of researchers from Nagaland University recently-collected human remains comprising of a fragment of the maxilla, the orbit, and femur, also a lighter bearing swastika insignia, and shrapnel fragments that were found next to the bones. Although a thorough analysis was yet to be conducted, it is suspected that the human remains be from the World War II era, presumably Japanese soldiers (<http://www.nagalandpost.com/human-remains-found-at-construction-site-in-kma>).

The problems of the post-war never can be resolved without a sense of peace and reconciliation. Post-war reconciliatory gestures by the Japanese government are commendable. The Japanese government initiated the search for the remains of former Japanese servicemen under the aegis of the Japan Association for Recovery and Repatriation of War Casualties (JARRWC). This team has been covering the Burma, Manipur, and Nagaland regions. In Nagaland the search operation began in 2019. Furthermore, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed an agreement with the Government of India to provide Official Development Assistance (ODA) Loan of 6,224 million Japanese Yen (approximately INR 400 crore) for "Nagaland Forest Management Project." JICA recognizes the significance of livelihood improvement and poverty alleviation in forestry areas, and the Project contributes towards ecological rehabilitation of Jhum cultivation areas and poverty alleviation in the state of Nagaland. It is envisaged that by implementing the Project, better nutrient recycling within forestry soil and increased production of fuelwood, fruits, and Non-Timer Forest Products

(NTFP) would decrease people's dependency on Jhum Cultivation and improve their livelihood” (<https://www.jica.go.jp>).

Also, an initiative was undertaken by Japan government, people-to-people contact between Japan and the people of Nagaland and Manipur since 2017, which has been an impactful policy. The IRIS program sponsored by the government of Japan to increase people-to-people contact between the people of the North- East, and Japan started in 2017. The present scholar has been fortunate to be selected in the first batch of the IRIS program and visited Japan and participated in a week-long study tour. Conversely, the Kohima Educational Trust/Kohima Educational Society which was founded by the British Kohima war veterans has also been consistently offering monetary help towards the education of Naga students besides other commendable activities.

The Burma Campaign Society is committed to restoring friendly relations between Japan and the United Kingdom through sharing of information, imparting education, and mutual sympathy. The Burma Campaign Society was established in March 2002 to promote understanding of Britain and Japan’s encounters during the Second World War. From 1983, the Late Masao Hirakubo, OBE, advocated reconciliation between British and Japanese soldiers who had previously been enemies. It aims to extend the same to Burma (Myanmar) and India and also any associated nations involved with the Burma Campaign of 1941-1945.

From the experiences of Japan’s Imperial soldiers, who maintain that war is nothing else other than killing. Any soldier with utmost allegiance and patriotic fervor desires to serve his nation. However, when one is met with such horrible crises where you are either killed or kill someone else, it jeopardizes the concept of humanity. A war crime is also another impact of war. During the Second World War, the murder of several million people mainly Jews by Nazi Germany, and the mistreatment of both civilians and prisoners of war by the Japanese,

prompted the Allied powers to prosecute the people they believed to be the perpetrators of these crimes.

Kohima became a target of the Japanese due to its geopolitical location. The military operation U-Go, the Imphal campaign along with the 31st Division was to occupy Kohima to give specific support to the Japanese 15th Division fighting into Imphal from the northeast of Manipur. The intention was to enter Kohima and terminate the Dimapur-Kohima-Imphal road. However, the Japanese and the INA forces were defeated by the British Allied force. The victory of the Allied forces in Imphal-Kohima led to the destruction of the western frontier of Japan's dream of creating 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. It enabled the Allied forces to destroy the Japanese threat in Burma, re-opened the supply route (the Burma Road) to China, and secured Northeast India. In the observation of General Mutaguchi, "the success of the British was mainly due to the ability of their commanders to select a promising course and then pursue it with resolute intent" (Higgins, 1985, pp.80-81). The Allied forces strong air support and supplies strengthened their position to victory. The promising support received from the Nagas played a major role in deciding the fate of the battle. The victory at Kohima gave a moral boost to the British who were defeated in the hands of the Japanese in Burma in 1942. Thus, 'The Imphal-Kohima victory paved the way for the British to exit from Southeast Asia with dignity' (Ibid., pp.80-81).

The study of the Burma Campaign would be incomplete without a description of the style of command displayed by Slim. After conducting the retreat in 1942, Slim quickly assessed and set about correcting the failures and shortcomings of his command. He learned that an army must be properly prepared and organized with suitable troops and air forces. He stressed the importance of an intelligence system based on the indigenous population. Most importantly, he learned the essential requirement of a properly thought out and disseminated strategic aim from which an operational aim would flow. These aims had a direct influence on

morale to which slim paid considerable attention to raising the fighting spirit of his men. Having established his foundations of morale, spiritual, intellectual, and material he took every opportunity to develop them, apply them and get them organized by the whole army (see Slim, 1956).

Through this study, the Battle of Kohima is discussed from the British and Japanese command, and most importantly the local account. The Nagas witnessed the good impact and also explored the negative outcome. Their contribution during the war proved to be of immense advantage to the Allied Force. A Naga survivor of the war recalled: “We stood upon a little hill in Meriema and wept as we saw black smoke over our beloved Kohima. The whole town was burning and we feared for our loved ones who had stayed on”. Second World War was like an avalanche that took the Nagas so suddenly and violently, and changed the world they knew forever.

End Notes

³¹Interview with Pukoho Rol, Age: 88 years, Jakhama village, Date: 23 July 2016.

³²Interview with K.N. Pusha, Age: 90 years, Viswema village, Date: 6 April 2016.

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Interview with Raben Odyuo, Age: 90 years, Yikhum village, Date: 10 October 2018.

Interview with Chenisao Lotha, Age: 92 years, Longsachung village, Date: 10 October 2018.

Interview with Chumdemo Murry, Age: 90 years, Wokha village, Date: 16 June 2017.

Interview with Nyimchamo Odyuo, Age: 91 years, Pyangsa village, Date: 16 June 2017.

Interview with Vilasielie Pienyü, Age: 72 years, Kohima village, Date: 13 March 2018.

Japanese account translated by Haruna Watabe, Date: 7 September 2019.

Japanese account translated by Kutoli N, Date: 10 May, 2018.