

EASTERN NAGA DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (ENDO)



Naga log drum.

Introduction

The world knows about the Naga people of Northeastern India, but little is known about the Nagas in Eastern Nagaland on the other side of the India-Burma border in a remote area of Northwestern Burma. Eastern Nagaland is in the Sagaing Division and adjacent townships in Kachin State. It is an isolated and forbidden place since foreigners are generally not permitted by the Burmese Government to visit this land of the Eastern Naga people.

The only time that foreigners can travel to Eastern Nagaland is during annual Naga New Year Festival held in January. This festival is sponsored and tightly controlled by Burmese government. Only a limited number of foreigners are allowed to observe the festival. Even then, they are escorted to the festival site and not permitted to visit other villages in Eastern Nagaland. Consequently, foreigners have no opportunity to see firsthand the very poor living conditions of the Eastern Naga people.

The purpose of this book is to introduce the Eastern Naga people and the work of the Eastern Naga Development Organization (ENDO) to readers throughout the world so that they understand the background and present situation of the Eastern Naga people and the work of the ENDO to better the lives of the Eastern Naga people. Through this, it is hoped that the international community will support the Eastern Naga people in their quest to prevent human rights abuses by the Burmese government, govern themselves and their resources according to their traditions, and to uplift their lives through access to educational opportunities to the university level, adequate curative and preventive health care, and sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families.

Background of Nagas

The origins of the Nagas remain a mystery. What is known about them is that they are one of the Mongolian racial groups who migrated overland through China to the present day Nagaland (Northeastern India and Northwestern Burma). Otherwise, their origin remains a mystery.

Without the knowledge or consent of the Naga people, their original lands were divided, along the Patkai Range in 1914, by the British among India and Burma with the larger portion being made part of the present-day Indian state of Nagaland. The remaining Naga lands, given to Burma, are located in the Sagaing Division - Homalin, Khamti, Leshi, Lahe and Namyun townships - and the adjacent Shingbwi Yang and Tanai townships in Kachin State.

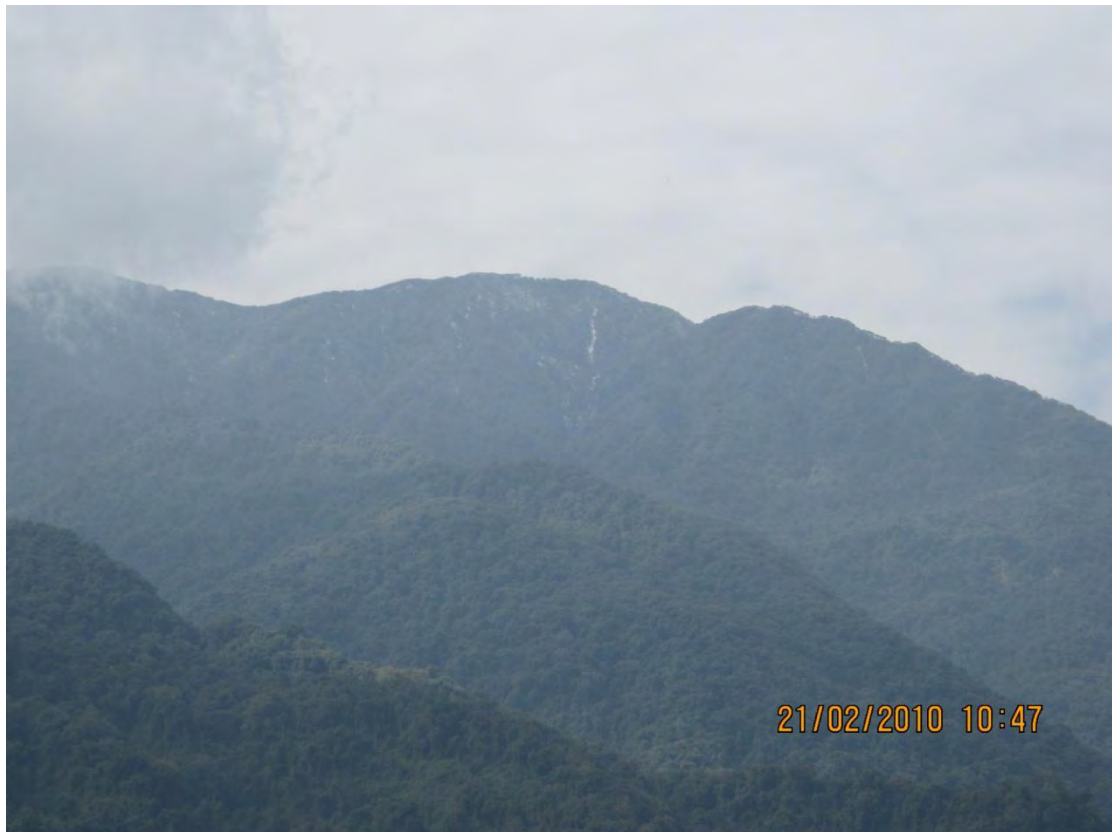
Prior to the 1974 Constitution of Burma, the areas of Eastern Nagaland in the Sagaing Division were called the Naga Hills District. Then with the 1974 Constitution of Burma, the Naga Hills District was replaced by and divided into five townships - Homalin, Khamti(Singkling), Leshi, Lahe and Namyun. In the recent 2008 Constitution of Burma, Homalin and Khamti(Singkling) Townships (plains areas) were carved out and the remaining three townships of Namyung, Lahe and Leshi (hilly areas) were re-designated as the Naga Self-Administered Zone. These changes were made without the consent and against the will of the Eastern Naga people and represent an administrative confiscation of integral parts of Eastern Nagaland by the Burman ethnic majority.

The Naga people have been living independently since time immemorial. In the past, Nagas had no overall king or a government to rule over all of the Naga people. Each village had its own independence as a village republic and was ruled by a village chieftain. No village or community was subjected to another village or community.

The Nagas had no contact with the outside world until the Second World War when the British fought against the Japanese in the Naga Hills (Eastern Nagaland). The Nagas also did not know about the Burmese, except for their immediate neighbors like Kachins. Only after the 1950s did the Nagas come to know the Burmese when the Burmese government claimed that Eastern Nagaland was an integral part of Burma. The Burmese government has appointed village chairmen, but they are simply regarded by the Naga people as a village representative to the Burmese government with no authority to rule their assigned village.

Land

These lands of the Nagas in Burma are hilly with tropical forest. The only plains are along the banks of the Chindwin River. There are no vehicle roads, except one from Khamti to Lahe which is under construction. However, vehicles will only be able to travel on it during the dry season. The Ledo Road, a vehicle road constructed by the Allied Forces during the Second World War from India to the Yunnan Province of China, has not been repaired since the end of that war. Therefore, transportation in Eastern Nagaland is only over foot or bridle paths. There are no telephone communications in this area.



Eastern Nagaland is hilly with tropical forest.

In most of the Naga villages, the land belong to the village community and in other villages, the land belongs to the founder of the village. Yet once land is cultivated, it then becomes the private land of the cultivator and it passes on to the next generations of the cultivator. From time immemorial, the Nagas have paid no land tax to any government.

Economy

The Eastern Nagas are the poorest people in Burma. Their economy is solely dependent on shifting cultivation with the exception of the Somra Region where they have developed terrace fields.



Eastern Nagas are solely dependent on shifting cultivation.

In the Namyung and Lahe townships, the villagers are not only dependent on shifting cultivation, but also grow poppy crops for their income.



The villagers grow poppy for their income.

As a consequence, most of the Naga men have become opium addicts irrespective of age, and Naga lives, family, and culture are being destroyed.



Lives are destroying with opium.

The Burmese government is doing nothing to deal with these problems of poppy growing and drug addiction. Moreover, the roads from Burma to India, especially from Khamti to Noklak, the Pangsau Pass to Nampong, and Tamu to Moreh, have become drug trafficking routes

Education

Education in Eastern Nagaland began in 1950 by Christian missionaries. When General Ne Win declared military rule in 1962, all the missionary schools were closed. However, no government schools were established in the Naga townships of Sagaing Division in place of the closed missionary schools, except for five primary schools built in the villages around Burmese military camps in the Naga townships of Sagaing Division



The poor condition of school which is built by the villagers.

In 1964, a high school was established by the Kachin Baptist Mission for the Nagas in Shingbwi Yang, but later the Burmese government closed down that school. Finally forty years later in 2007, the Burmese government established a high school in Shingbwi Yang.

Then in 1976, some Naga national workers were able to start basic education for Naga youths by opening a few primary schools in Khamniungan, Lainong, and the western part of the Heimi Region. Yet it was only after 1980 that primary schools were opened by the Burmese government in some villages that had no Burmese military camps. However, villagers had to provide for the rations of the teachers.

Many students stopped their education after primary school because their parents had no income to support them for further studies. Only few students have been able to manage to attend high school. It was, and still is, a far dream for them to attend college and university. Thus, the Eastern Naga people have remained very backwards in their remote corner of Northwestern Burma and the Burmese government has offered no plans to change this situation.

Religion

The Naga were animists until American Baptist missionaries brought Christianity to the Naga people in Western Nagaland (India) in 1872 and then to Eastern Nagaland (Burma) seventy years later after World War Two in 1946. Now a majority of the Eastern Naga people are Christians.



A Christian Church in the village.

However, after the 1990s, some Naga Christians were forced by the Burmese military to convert to Buddhism. Those who converted to Buddhism are given many benefits such as financial support, clothes, rations, and exemption from forced labor, portering, and mikein (daily duties of the village). Only those Nagas who are Buddhists are allowed to become government servants, army officers, or Police officials. Hence, the Burmese government is practicing discrimination against Eastern Naga people along religious lines.

Health Care

Today, the Eastern Nagas are living in extremely vulnerable circumstances with the constant threat of contracting dreaded diseases, such as AIDS from Burmese soldiers and workers at the jade and gold mines in Eastern Nagaland. Many villagers are dying from treatable diseases and conditions due to the lack of access to medical treatment, clean water, proper sanitation, good nutrition, maternal and child care, and health education. The only dispensaries and hospitals are found at the headquarters of the Burmese military in Eastern Nagaland and not in the villages where they are needed the most. There is also a lack of medicine in Eastern Nagaland, and any medicine, that is available, is sold at exorbitant prices to the Eastern Naga people.



A villager is suffering from curable disease.



The villagers have no proper sanitation.

Human Rights Violations

The Nagas are simple, innocent, sincere, truthful and hard-working people. They do not know international human rights principles, yet they have no class distinctions or discrimination, and no one is deprived of the right to worship or own property including land. Even in the jungle, if someone finds anything such as a bees' honey nest, logs, and even land, and it is not owned by others, they can make a sign (i.e., a cross) on it, and they will then own it; no village chieftain or others will take it by force.

Thus, the Nagas do not understand and are disgusted as to why the Burmese, who claim to be civilized people, treat the Nagas with such disrespect and brutality. The Burmese soldiers and government officials intimidate the Nagas, rape and molest Naga woman, and beat and torture Naga people for no reason. They forcibly recruit young Naga youth, including those less than 18 years of age, into the Burmese army, confiscate Naga land and property without permission or compensation, and force Nagas to become porters or workers without payment. The

following are just a few of the many instances of human rights abuses committed by the Burmese military against the Eastern Naga people.

In May 1990, two sisters from Langnukniu Village were taken away by Burmese soldiers as porters. During their time as porters, they were repeatedly raped by the soldiers for nearly one month. They were finally released after they reached the soldiers' headquarters in Khamti.

In April 1992, Mr. Lomsa, a pastor from Aungmye Village, was lying on his bed because of a high fever. Burmese soldiers entered his house and took him away as a porter. They would not listen to his pleas that he was sick. Whenever he was unable to carry their loads, the soldiers beat him. When the soldiers reached Longsok Village and took a rest, Mr. Lomsa laid down to also rest. A soldier then came up to him and kicked him down to the ground from the house. Pastor Lomsa died on the spot.

In 1993, Burmese soldiers came to Taungkungtha Village to get porters. They kicked the village headman, Mr. Satok, to death when he said he could not be a porter because he was sick.

In November 2005, Mr. Chaida, a pastor of Chawang Nukwuk Village, was beaten black-and-blue continuously for three days. While he was being beaten, the Christian members of his village were forcefully converted into Buddhism. When the pastor was finally released, he was maimed for life from his beatings. Also Lumnu Church Pastor Wingap was brutally beaten by the same Burmese military group under the command of Major Khaing Htun Naing. When he was released and sent back to his village, he was forbidden to preach to the villagers. The pastor of Chamkok Village, Mr. Rego, was arrested and kept in an underground dungeon for weeks. One day when he was temporarily brought out from his dungeon, he managed to escape. While he was running for his life, soldiers fired several rounds at him. But by the grace of God, he escapes injury from the bullets.

The Burmese government has tried to control the religious life of the Eastern Nagas. In that respect, the Burmese government has had a program beginning in 1990 to convert the Eastern Nagas from Christianity to Buddhism. The Burmese military has burned and locked some churches, imprisoned and beat pastors, and committed many other forms of religious persecution of the Eastern Naga people. Also as previously mentioned, no Eastern Naga can become a government officer unless they convert to Buddhism. Despite this persecution, only a few Eastern Nagas have converted to Buddhism.

But the world does not know of such human right violations in Eastern Nagaland because of it being isolated and forbidden for travel by foreigners.

Environmental Protection

There has been no protection of the environment in the lands of the Eastern Naga people. Development has caused the loss of forests and the animals that lived in the forests. The lakes and rivers are polluted from mining and other developmental activities. The Burmese government does not take care of the natural heritage of Eastern Nagaland or consider the welfare of the future people of Eastern Nagaland; they only care about making money through their business interests and sold out the virgin forest of Naga hills to Chinese log merchants.



Logs are brought down to Chindwin River.



Logs are sending to China by Chindwin River.

Community-Based Organizations

Except for the Naga Yuya Committee (Naga Cultural Committee), no other community-based organization, such as youth, student, women, or human rights organizations, are allowed by the Burmese government to be established in Eastern Nagaland.

In 2002, the Naga Youth Organization-Burma (NYO-B) was formed in New Delhi, India by some Naga youths led by Eno (Mr.) Stheibung. In 2010, the NYO-B published a book detailing the human rights violations and political persecutions against the Eastern Naga people by the Burmese military junta. This was the first book ever published about Eastern Naga people by Eastern Naga people.

Later in 2004, Eastern Nagas formed the Eastern Naga Student Association in the nearby State of Nagaland (India). And in 2010, the Eastern Naga Women's Organisation was also established in Nagaland State.

For more than twenty years, many of the oppressed ethnic nationalities of Burma have had organizational presences in Thailand to tell the world about the plights and sufferings of their people at the hands of the Burmese government and to obtain humanitarian and developmental assistance. However until recently, the Eastern Naga people have had no organizations in Thailand to represent them, advocate for their cause, seek international assistance for them, and otherwise serve their interests.

Then in March 2009, an Eastern Naga leader with some Naga youths managed to cross Burma to reach Thailand and formed the Naga Youth Organization (NYO) in May 2009. On 6 October 2010, the Eastern Naga Development Organization (ENDO) was formed in Mae Hong Song Thailand, and with the financial assistance of American Lowang, who lives in Arizona in the USA, these Eastern Nagas could established the ENDO in Thailand with the hope and vision to work for the Eastern Naga people through peaceful means, joining hands with all walks of life. American Lowang has continued to provide much needed assistance to the ENDO to maintain its Thailand office. For this, the Eastern Naga people will remain eternally grateful to him.

Eastern Naga Development Organization

The ENDO was established to work for the Eastern Naga people by empowering Eastern Naga youth as leaders through training and practical experience in the fields of education, health care including drug addiction, human rights, environmental preservations, journalism, advocacy, information technology, poppy eradication/crop substitution, women rights, and other topics of concern to the Eastern Naga people. Through this training experience and ENDO programs these Eastern Naga young leaders will be able to serve their people with their utmost sincerity and truthfulness, promote the Eastern Naga society which is lagged far behind of other nationalities in Burma, and engage in careers which are meaningful and personally satisfying.

The organization is non-political and seeks to perform its duties and activities with utmost sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness in the interest of the Eastern Naga people. As such, the ENDO does not work for its own profit or organizational self-interests, but works to serve the Eastern Naga people with humility and charity.

The management and administrative structure of the ENDO was established under its Chairman Eno Shang Yung Wang with eleven members including with the General Secretary Eno Hangphuk and Coordinators. The founder of the ENDO, Eno Wondin, holds no official post, but remains as an elderly leader and adviser.

Our Major Objectives;

- 1; Provide access to a quality education through higher education level eastern naga youths and assist qualified young naga men and women to get university scholarships.
- 2; Reduce sickness and health among the Eastern Naga people and increase their access to primary healthcare.
- 3; Identify and support new means of livelihoods to reduce the poverty level and raise the standard of living among the Easter Naga people and over time, eradicate poppy growing in Eastern Nagaland through crop substitution.
- 4; Promote and protect human rights in Eastern Nagaland through

public education, and the documentation reporting of human rights violations.

5; Develop and mentor a new generation of young Eastern naga men and women to be leaders.

6; Protect and reclaim the natural environment of eastern nagaland through education, responsible land use, controlled development, and advocacy.

Our Vision; A peaceful, literate, healthy, drug-free, and prosperous Eastern Nagaland.

Mission; (a) Implement and coordinate healthcare, education, human rights, leadership, livelihoods, and environmental protection programs to improve the daily lives of the Naga people in eastern Nagaland.

(b) Train and empower youths Eastern Naga men and women to be able to involve in social activities (affair).

Principle (or) Motto;

WE WILL CORRUPT NO ONE.

ENDO Programs

- **Education:** Most of the Eastern Naga children and youth cannot attend school because of poverty, lack of teachers, and parents who do not understand the value of education. Even if they could attend the primary school, they would be unable to continue their education in middle or high school as they would be needed to provide financial support to their family. The ENDO wants to assist those young Eastern Nagas who are motivated and have high school marks, but lack financial support to further their education, especially at the university/college level. The ENDO will seek out scholarships for them and also provide guidance to help them apply for scholarships

provided by the international communities. In this respect, the ENDO wishes to encourage these young Eastern Nagas to become teachers and return to their communities to provide primary and secondary education.



The children who are not attend the school.

- **Health Care:** In many Eastern Naga villages, villagers are dying unnecessarily of curable diseases such as diarrhea, dysentery malaria, typhoid, malnutrition, child birth, and acute respiratory infections. To address these health problems, the ENDO is coordinating the basic medical training of young Eastern Naga men and women who are inspired to provide primary health care to their communities. These new community health care workers will offer both curative and preventive health care at village clinics, and through mobile health care teams which would serve remote villages.

In October 2010, the ENDO sent three Eastern Naga young people to Thailand for basic medical training. Upon the completion of this training, they were sent back to Nagaland to be a mobile health care team. Other Eastern Nagas are now undergoing basic medical training and will be similarly deployed back in Eastern Nagaland to serve as mobile community health workers.



The medical team of ENDO is providing medicines to the villagers.





The medical team of ENDO is providing medicines to the villagers.

- **Eradication of Poppy Growing and Drug Addiction:** Poppy cultivation is growing in Eastern Nagaland as is drug addiction, especially among Eastern Naga men. This is a very difficult situation because many Eastern Naga depend upon poppy crops for their livelihoods. The ENDO intends to work with various United Nations agencies, foreign governments, and international non-governmental organizations to find and implement sustainable crop substitutions to poppy growing. The ENDO will also use the medium of film to show the world how the Eastern Naga people are becoming increasingly bonded to poppy growing and drug addiction so that international assistance can be received to help deal with these two problems that are seriously affecting the lives of the Eastern Naga people. Additionally, the ENDO will work to develop education and implement programs to encourage Eastern Naga people not to begin to take drugs; and other education and health care programs to assist those addicted to drugs to become free of that addiction. Over time, the ENDO wants to make both the cultivation of poppy crops and drug addiction not socially, or otherwise, acceptable in Eastern Nagaland.



Opium addicted father do not take care of his son.



Opium smoking pipe and coking materials.

- Protection of Human Rights:** There are daily human rights abuses occurring in Eastern Nagaland. The Eastern Naga people must understand their human rights and learn appropriate methods to skillfully deal with soldiers to avoid or minimize human rights abuses. Additionally, human rights violations must be documented and reported so as to apply outside pressure to stop these abuses and to hold those soldiers who commit these abuses accountable. To these ends, the ENDO will institute programs to education Eastern Naga villagers about their human rights and methods to empower them when faced by soldiers. The ENDO will also establish the capability to systematically collect and report human rights violations.

- **Protection of the Environment:** The Eastern Naga people have historically and traditionally depended upon their natural environment to sustain their lives. However in recent times, poverty and development have been causing a major degradation of this environment, affecting the water quality, crop cultivation, ground cover, hunting, and fishing among other negative consequences.



The villagers are freely hunting and heads of prey are kept as their hunting trophy.

The ENDO will work to make the Eastern Naga people aware of the adverse consequences of not being mindful of their natural environment as well as to assist them with methods to minimize their impact upon the environment and to also improve the environment. Also the ENDO will promote responsible development that does not harm the natural environment, and lobby against and publicly expose harmful development. Finally, the ENDO will network with international environmental protection activists to help advocate for the protection of the lands of the Eastern Naga people, and to learn and apply new techniques to preserve and restore the natural heritage of the Eastern Naga people.

- **Leadership:** To protect and promote the interests of the Eastern Naga people, there must be effective leadership. Toward this end, the ENDO will foster leadership programs at all levels of Eastern Naga society. These programs will be at the grassroots village level up to and including representation at the national and international levels. Good leaders are needed in community-based organizations, public administration, and political parties. The training would be of those holding existing leadership positions and for new generations of leaders, especially women. In this latter respect, the ENDO will foster the creation of an Eastern Naga Women's Organization in Thailand with branches in Eastern Nagaland.

