

REPORTS ON AN EXPLORATORY TOUR UNDERTAKEN IN THE UPPER
SUBANSIRI AREA AND THE TSARI CHU VALLEY BY L.R. SAILO, ASSISTANT
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EAST FRONTIER AGENCY DURING THE PERIOD FROM 21-1-57 TO 29-3-1957

INTRODUCTION

Under the instructions contained in the North East Frontier Agency Administration's Secret D.O. Letter No.CGA.193/56 dated the 9th November 1956, I was given a task of exploring the hitherto unvisited areas of the upper SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU valleys upto the international borders on the west and north respectively of LIMEKING (our last Outpost in the main SUBANSIRI valley) during the cold season of 1956.

HISTORY

Being unvisited neither from Tibetan nor from the Indian side of the border, our knowledge of these areas very limited in spite of the accounts gathered from the people of LIMEKING area who have frequent contact with the border people of both the valleys in courses of their barter trades and on the occasions of the DOLO pilgrimage, the route of which passes through the TSARI CHU and the upper SUBANSIRI valleys.

Neither the explorers like Mr. F.M. Bailey accompanied by Captain Morshead, Survey Officer nor the well-known explorer-cum-Botanist Mr. F. Kingdon Ward accompanied by Mr. F. Ludlow who visited the Tibetan Frontier villages of LUNG and MIGYITUN, practically did not leave any accounts of the areas which remained terra incognita.

During the cold season of 1952-53 a Survey party under Captain Thukral visited the SUBANSIRI valley and two of the Survey Assistants reached upto LIMEKING and returned without proceeding further up. On

their return journey Captain Thukral was accidentally shot by a Tagin with poisoned arrow near KODAK village, a few miles from TALIHA but he luckily escaped death.

In October 1953, a group of Lower Tagin village in TALIHA area ambushed and massacred official touring party with Assam Rifles escort at a place known as AENGMORI on the left bank of the SUBANSIRI, about 8 miles from TALIHA. As a result of this incident, a strong expedition was sent to the Tagin country and the ring-leaders were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The expedition was immediately followed by establishment of outposts at DINEKOLI and TALIHA with a view to tightening up control over the Tagin country.

In early 1956, Maj. S.M. Krishnatry accompanied by Mrs. Krishnatry and other officials visited the area beyond TALIHA and established an outpost at LIMEKING and returned without proceeding further towards the border.

In January 1957, prior to the arrival of the exploratory tour party, KUMAR Superintendent, LIMEKING, who was instructed to undertake the reconnaissance of the route upto the confluence of the SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU managed to reach the objective and proceeded as far as lower NA settlement and returned leaving the task of exploration upto the international border for the main party.

The exploratory tour party left TALIHA on 21-1-57 and after successful exploration of the borders with NA and MIGYIYUN settlements, return to TALIHA on 29-3-57.

OBJECTS OF THE TOUR

The main objects of this exploratory tour in brief are: -

1. To attempt to solve by aerial reconnaissance the detailed problem posed by Maj. S.M. Krishnatry regarding the exact location of

LIMEKING and the courses of the Western branch of the SUBANSIRI river and of the TSARI CHU which originates from MIGYITUN.

2. To prepare a sketch map showing the locations of villages or settlement and the courses of rivers.
3. To establish population figures of the various villages and settlements.
4. To explore upto the international borders with MIGYITUN and NA settlements with the policy of friendly border relations with the Chinese and Tibetans across the border and not to involve in any definite commitment in the event of any border dispute raised by them and to avoid armed clash at all costs.
5. To do everything possible to develop friendly relationships with the settlements of lower NA and make them look towards our Administrative Center at LIMEKING.
6. To submit recommendations after completion of the tour the correct administrative setup required including Headquarters of the Assistant Political Officer for the Tagin area, some sort of administrative center in the general area of LIMEKING and suitable places for establishment of Police Check Posts to safeguard the integrity of our border along the SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU, or any other passes which might be found as the area is explore.
7. To handle tactfully during the tour, various problems such as, slavery, inter-village raids particularly in the case of inter-village feuds, south of LIMEKING on the water-shed with the RAMLA valley and to collect as much information as possible about the villages and passes in this area to help the Political Officers, ZIRO and the additional Political Officer, APORIJO to assess the administrative requirements for the KAMLA valley and whether this should be under the Political Officer ZIRO or under the Additional Political Officer, APORIJO.

8. To collect and send as much intelligence as possible regarding the Chinese activities across the border including international border matters, on the law and order situation, on geographical discoveries and any important any important matters which could be obtained during the tour.

PLANNING

Due to lack of detailed information's either at ZIRO or TALIHA, it was not an easy task to finalise planning of this exploratory tour till my arrival at LIMEKING where I could only make the appreciation of the real local situation. To be on the safe side, I, however made a programme of the tour for a period of three months during which I hoped to be able to complete exploration of the hitherto unvisited portion of the upper SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU regions and also explore the unvisited portion of the area on the left bank of the SUBANSIRI on my return journey from LIMEKING to TALIHA.

Even having a Base Camp at GELENSHINIAK, 3 days march up from LIMEKING, a trip from there to the border near lower NA settlements and back would easily require 14 days, and almost the same number of days for exploration of MIGYITUN border plus the number of days to return from Base Camp to TALIHA. Due to absence of any human habitation on both routes the party had to traverse, detailed arrangements such as, porters for the duration of the tour, rations for the party including casual porters, party's reserve rations to be kept at the Base Camp for the journey to MIGYITUN border and back, arrangement of runners to carry wireless batteries between Base Camp and LIMEKING and several other problems had to be worked out in details. The urgency of completing the exploration with the least possible delay also had to be borne in mind so that the porters could be sent back for their jhum cutting works for which they had already clamoured from the beginning. All these factors had to be thought out and

planned carefully before the party set out from LIMEKING for its journey to the unknown land.

The most pity of the arrangement was the impossibility of taking wireless charging engine which we found later to be suicidal to carry on the track between LIMEKING and GELENSHINIAK due to extreme difficult nature of the country. Loads had to be made small and light so as to enable the porters to move more freely to avoid accidents of falling down the khud which was reported to be frequent occurrence on the routes that we had to take. Due to this difficulty, the question of taking the Charging Engine was wisely ruled out and that the Wireless party should be stationed and function at Base Camp, GELENSHINIAK the confluence of the SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU from where exploration of the upper SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU valleys had to be undertaken. Some Agency Service Corps porters with one Sirdar also had to be stationed at the Base Camp for carrying batteries backward and forward between Base Camp and LIMEKING so that at least a few messages could be sent to the Headquarter informing the progress and the whereabouts of our party. To move out in the unknown land without armed escort and wireless set was considered somewhat risky but could not be helped due to the prevailing difficult circumstances.

ACHIEVEMENT OF TASKS

The exploratory tour has successfully achieved its given tasks as noted below: -

- (1) The location of LIMEKING vis a vis the international border has been determined.
- (2) The exploration of the SUBANSIRI westwards of LIMEKING upto the international border beyond Lower NA settlements has been completed and the confluence of the SUBANSIRI and the YUME

CHU has also been ascertained to locate at Mo 4691 and not at MO 6593 as shown on the existing quarter inch map.

- (3) Having determined the precise location of the confluence of the SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU which locates at MO 6892 and not at MP 1097, the TSARI CHU valley has been explored upto the international border with MIGYITUN settlements.
- (4) A sketch map of the area has been prepared with estimate of the locations of villages or settlements, the courses of rivers, mountains, and important routes Names of various villages with population figures have also been established as far as possible.
- (5) The exploratory tour has been carried out with the policy friendly border relations with the people across the border and friendly relationship has been developed with the people of Lower NA and MIGYITUN settlements.
- (6) Reliable and confirmed informations regarding the Chinese activities across the border have been obtained during the course of the exploratory tour.
- (7) The exploration of the upper SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU Valleys up to the international borders has enabled proper assessment of the administrative setup required for the Tagin area and checkpost for the integrity of our international border on the SUBANSIRI sector.
- (8) After completing the exploration of the upper SUBANSIRI region, the village lying in the area between the KODUK and the SEBAR rivers on the left bank of the SUBANSIRI which have so far been unexpected have been visited on the return journey to TALIHA.

GEOGRAPHY

General description

The Tagin area lies roughly between latitude 28' 15' and 28' 25' North and longitude 93' 15' and 94' 20' and covers an area of about 2000 square miles.

On the north it is bounded by TSANGPO province of Tibet and MECHUKA area of the SIANG FRONTIER DIVISION, on the south by the KAMLA and the SIPI Valleys, on the east by the SIANG FRONTIER DIVISION and on the west by the TSANGPO province of Tibet.

The whole area is drained by the SUBANSIRI and its tributaries which flow through narrow precipitous gorges. A belt of dense jungle thinly inhabited on both banks of the SUBANSIRI from its confluence with the SIPI River continues until the border area is reached, when, the tangled jungles give place to pine and rhododendron covered slopes. The general physical feature of the country is mountainous, greatly cut up by water courses and difficult of access. The mountain valleys are mostly covered with jungle and the crests of the ranges are hidden in snow. The steepness of the slopes and the density of the jungle render it extremely difficult country both from the point of view of the movement of troops and road-making, particularly from NABA and upwards. The movement along the valleys is confined almost entirely to the track which follows partly the river banks and steep slopes above the river bank and it is almost impossible to climb out of the valley except up the large streams. Unlike some other big hill rivers, the SUBANSIRI has practically no flatledges, probably due to the steepness of the country through which it flows with swift speed.

Mountains

On the north and on the left bank of the SUBANSIRI three high mountain ranges stand out prominently, viz, the TAKPA SHIRI, the KERU mountain (PT.15787) and the MELAYERBA (PT.14541).

The TAKPA SHIRI mountains which originates from Tibet runs from the direction of north west to south east forming the watershed between the YUME CHU and the TSARI CHU.

The KERU mountain range runs almost north to south forming the watershed between the TSARI CHU and the MENI River.

The MELAYERBA mountain range also runs roughly from north to south forming the watershed between the KOBU and the MENI River.

On the south and on the right bank of the SUBANSIRI, We have a long chain of high mountain range running from east to west forming the watershed between the SUBANSIRI and the KAMA Rivers. The highest peak of this mountain range, south east of Lower NA settlements is called DADU Mountain (Pt. 18583). The second highest peak south east of the confluence of the SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU is called RITEMINGBE. (Pt.16142). The high mountain ranges forming the watershed of the MENGA and the SELU River are called DADI and NAYI.

Rivers

The SUBANSIRI- The CHAYUL CHU and the CHAR CHU meet and form the SUBANSIRI about a few miles near the Tibetan Frontier village of LUNG, from which the SUBANSIRI flows almost due east till it gradually turns to the south near TALIHA and debouches on the plains at DOLUNG MUKH. The SUBANSIRI flows in a gorge over a series of rapids which altogether prohibit navigation. The bed, composed of gigantic boulders, is from 100 to 150 yards wide. The banks rise steeply and often precipitously for thousands of feet from the water's edge. The flood level is normally 20 to 25 feet above low water, rising to twice that height in exceptional seasons. It is nowhere fordable but crossing by temporary bridges can be made above LIMEKING during the cold weather. Rafts are used in places where level water is available, normally, below its confluence with the SEBAR River.

Tributaries of the SUBANSIRI

The TSARI CHU (or GELEN) is the biggest tributary of the SUBANSIRI in the Tagin country. The direction of the flow of the TSARI CHU is wrongly shown on our present map. The TSARI CHU originates from TSANGPO province of Tibet and enters the Indian territory near MIGYITUN from which it flows almost due south till it falls into the SUBANSIRI at GELENSHINIAK, about 17 miles up from LIMEKING. During cold season the river is fordable from a point about 6 miles up from GELENSHINIAK.

The other tributary known as YUME CHU is also wrongly marked on the map. The YUME CHU originates from Tibet and falls into the SUBANSIRI at DURUSUGA at which point the international boundary runs through.

Other tributaries are the MENI, the KODUK, the KOBU, the SEBAR, the SICHI, the SILIN, the KOTEH, the KOJOK, the GIO, the SAW, the JAW, the NAW, the MENGA and the SIPI.

The affluents of the SUBANSIRI flow in very pronounced gorges littered with great boulders and detritus. They are all swift. Those which are snowfed rise rapidly and are very unreliable in their behavior. During the cold season they present no great obstacle to the construction of temporary bridges. Timber is always available on the banks and advantage can often be taken of big boulders in their beds to facilitate the construction.

Hot spring

There is one Hot spring near TONGBA known as MASI Hot spring. The water is so hot and almost at boiling point. The local people say that meat also can be cooked by keeping for a couple of hours. The water gives a strong smell of sulphur. The tribals believe that skin disease can be cured by bathing with the hot spring water.

Villages

The villages are generally of small size and much scattered, and are connected with one another by rough tracks. In the main SUBANSIRI valley they are for the most part situated at heights varying from 100 to 3000 ft above river. The grounds around the villages are normally cleared by Jhum cultivation. The most densely populated areas of the country are both banks of the SUBANSIRI between TALIHA and NALO. (List of villages and other particulars are shown in Appendix 'A' to this report.)

Climate

The climate ranges from tropical heat in the low lying valleys to extreme cold in the upper regions and headwater of the rivers.

There are two seasons – the rainy season from May to October, and the cold season from October to April. It is not uncommon to have frequent slight showers even in December, January, February and March in the upper SUBANSIRI valley. During the rains, hills and valleys are shrouded in cloud.

The temperature varies with the altitude. Frosts occur at night in the winter as low as 5000 ft. The Tagin village of LONGJU (One of MIGYITUN settlements) which situates at an elevation of 9300 ft from sea level is the coldest and highest settlement in the Tagin country.

The heat is never extreme, but in the summer the humidity renders disproportionately trying in the lower regions.

During winter months heavy mist forms at nightfall in the river valleys and hang approximately between 2000 and 4000 ft level upto 9 to 10 o'clock in the morning.

Health

The most common diseases among the Tagins are skin disease and Malaria. Dysentry and diarrhea are also common. Skin diseases and Malaria

are common in the lower region whereas goiters and blepharitis are more common in the upper region. Small pox and venereal disease appear to be practically non-existent among the Tagins.

The entire country is infested with leeches which are at their worst during rainy season. Even during winter one gets leeches with slight rainfall. Ticks and dimdams (a kind of blister flies) also cause much annoyance but dimdams are comparatively few in the upper region.

Several kinds of stingy plants are found in the jungle, some of which cause intense pain and inflammation which may last for several days.

Poisonous snakes are seldom encountered during the cold season.

Foot and mouth disease among the domestic animals is rare and practically unknown in the upper region.

TRADE ROUTES AND PASSES

The following are trade routes and passes between the Tagin country and Tibet.

1. SUBANSIRI main Route:- The route starts from Lower NA settlements to LUNG- 2 days' march. The route leads to CHAYUL DZONG and SANGA CHOLING. This route is opened throughout this year.
2. YUME CHU-CHIKCHAR Route:- The route leads Tibetan village of CHIKCHAR in 5 days' march from TAKSING, one of the Lower NA settlements with the following stages TAKSING-OJUMADU (Jungle Camp) – TUMDANG (Jungle Camp)-YUME (Tibetan village)- CHUSAM (Tibetan village)- CHIKCHAR. The route is opened throughout the year.
3. SAGAM LA-CHIKCHAR route- The route which starts from TAKSING takes 8 days and passes through LENBA (Jungle Camp), where yaks are kept during summer- TAMELAMKONG (Tibetan village)- SAGAM LA (Jungle Camp) MIBA (Tibetan village)- TUMLA (Jungle Camp)- CHIKCHAR. The route is opened only from May to August.

4. TSARI CHU- MIGYITUN Route- The route starts from GELENSHINIAK (the confluence of the SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU) which locates approximates at MR MO 6893 and wrongly shown on our present map. GELENSHINIAK is three stages from LIMEKING and MIGYITUN is 5 days' march from GELENSHINIAK with the following stages- LANGIN-GELENMORIDING-YANAPAKA-MIGYITUN. The route is opened throughout the year and is the most popular trade route of the Tagins in their barter trade with the Tibetans.
5. MENI-SHIA (LANGONG) Route – This route takes 8 days from DOGINALO village to reach the Tibetan village of LANGONG known by Tagins as SHIA with the following stages – DOGINALO-AKECHINGRI – (Jungle Camp) – ROTENE (Jungle Camp) – MEGI (Jungle Camp) – RALO (Jungle Camp) – DORO (Jungle Camp) – YUKGRO (Jungle Camp) – KOJO (Jungle Camp) – SHIA. The route is reported to have been much affected by the great earthquake of 1950 before which Tagins with normal loads of trade goods could cover in six days. The route is opened only from May to August.
6. KODUK – SHIA (LANGONG) Route – The route starts from HACHO village. It takes 8 to 9 days' to reach from NACHO to SHIA whereas before the earthquake of 1950 it was reported to be only 6 days' March. The stages are as follows: - NACHO-POBA (Jungle Camp) - NGORAK (Jungle Camp) – RAIK (Jungle Camp) – BOKO (Jungle Camp) – DADNE (Jungle Camp)- NINGING (Jungle Camp) – HANGRU (Jungle Camp)- SHIA. The route is opened during the months of July and August only.
7. KOBU – NAPE Route – The Tagins used to go through this route from BOSI village which locates on the left bank of the KOBU River. The route is 11 days' March from BOSI, and one has to pass through jungle camps namely GAWA, RAGIA (cross high mountain), GIATFLUKPUK, POTR, LENGTE, RIOLUNG, YANAKANGKIA, AGULAKING, PARKI and JORUNG

before reaching NAPE. The route is opened only for three months from June to August. One can go from PARKI either to SHIA or NAPE in 2 days.

8. SEBAR-MECHUKA-The SEBAR River has a route leading to MECHUKHA and from there to Tibet. The route is opened from April to November. From Tagin village of MOCHU one takes 6 days to reach MECHUKHA using the following stages:- RABA (village)-IKE (village)- NINTE (Jungle Camp)- PIALAP (Jungle Camp)- MENI (Jungle Camp)- MECHUKHA. NINTE AND PIALAP involve marching on high mountains usually covered with snow or frosts. The route follows the left bank of the SEBAR River.
9. SICHI-MECHUKA Route. The route follows the right bank of the SICHI River and takes 6 days to reach MECHUKHA from Tagin village of PAKPU using the following stages – NUNE (villages)- SENA (Jungle Camp) – AMPU (Jungle Camp) – DEDUM (Jungle Camp) – RAPUM (RAMO village) – MECHUKHA. One has to pass through snow – capped mountain DEDUM and RAPUM. The route is opened from June to November.
10. SILIN-MECHUKHA route is no longer used these days and since abandoned after the great earthquake of 1950.

The following are at present known routes from the KAMLA and the KHRU valleys to Tibet.

1. RUBA- LUNG/NIARE Route. Ruba, a Bangni (Dafla) village situates below the confluence of the KAMLA and the TAPA. To go to LUNG (Upper NA) the Tibetan village of NIARE from RUBA, one has to pass through the following stages – TEPA (Jungle Camp) – FULI (Jungle Camp) – KARU (Jungle Camp) – PIBO (Jungle Camp) – LUTEN (Jungle Camp) – NIARE or LUNG. The route is opened from APRIL to September.
2. RUBA-BIDA Route – To go to upper KHRU valley from RUBA in the upper KAMLA valley, there is one route which leads to Tibetan village of BIDA. One has to follows the following route-PISA (BINGRU village) –

CHELONI (Bangni village)- SINGKOPINCHI (Bangni village) TADER (Bangni village) – SAPE (Bingru village)- MALONI (Bingru village)- YAGLANARI (Bingru village) – thence following the headwater of the KHRU for 6 to 7 days till the Tibetan village of BIDA is reached.

The route is opened from July to August only.

IMPORTANT INTERNAL TRADE ROUTE

1. Lower NA (SUBANSIRI) – KAMLA valley route- The Lower NA settlements have regular contact with the Bangni villages of the upper KAMLA valley through the following routes: - TONOBA (Tagin village, one of Lower NA settlements)- PAIBO (Jungle Camp)- PIGRI (Jungle Camp)- FURAK (Jungle Camp) – RUBA (Bangni village) – CHATENO (Bangni village) – DAMIN (Bangni village)- SAITAM (Bangni village)- TABA (Bangni village)- KARJI (Bangni village)- TAKOGU (Bangni village)- HINGIU (Bangni village) – GAMTELATE (Bangni village) – MINGJONO (Bangni village)- AKINOSINGFA (Bangni village)- KAMDIKTALO (Bangni village)- LINGKONGNIO (Bangni village)- FANIO (Bangni village) – TALI (Bangni villages)- JUGI (RUGI? Bangni village). The route is opened from May to September.
2. LIMEKING – SORENG – LENGPU – KAMLA VALLEY Route. It takes 4 days to reach SORENG or LENGPU from LIMEKING using the following stages – RIJANG (Jungle Camp) –SIRIPOKLEN (Jungle Camp) – HAI (village) or NYAPUNG (village) - SORENG or LENGPU. The route is opened from April to October.
3. KOJIN-SORENG LENGPU Route – It takes three to four days to reach SORENG from the confluence of the SUBANSIRI and the KOJIN. The stages are DACHI (Jungle Camp) – SARBING (Jungle Camp)- OUM (Jungle Camp) – LENGPU (village)- SORENG (village). RAGMI village and other villages on the left bank of the KOJIN also use this route. This route is opened for 7 months from March to September.

4. TADAK GIO –GADU- SORENG – LENGPU Route- The lower Tagins of TADAK GIO River valley have contact with GADU, a village at the headwaters of the MENGA river and from there to SORENG and LENGPU. It takes 3 days to reach GADU and another 3 days from GADU to SORENG or LENGPU. This route is opened for 7 months from March to September.
5. MENGA – GADU Route – This route is used by people of the SIPI and the MENGA valleys. Starting from TALIHA it takes 4 days to reach GADU. The stages are POGA MARA (village) – NATEM (village) - TUNGI (village) – GADU (village).

Season for touring

The touring season in the Tagin country is from the middle of November to the end of March. Although this period is regarded as dry season, yet, officers touring the areas must be prepared to face frequent showers of rain.

Owing to frequent of rain even during the cold season, adequate change of clothes including warm clothing, short convenient waterproof cape, spare boots including canvas boots, leech-proof stockings made of ordinary markin or long cloth, tarpaulins for camp shelters are desirable. Hutting materials are always available and there is no real necessity of carrying tents.

THE PEOPLE

Origin and language

The people of the area under report call themselves Tagins but they normally prefer to describe themselves as men of a certain village or settlement. The Tagins undoubtedly belong to Tibeto-Burman origin.

The Tagins claim their origin from one named TANI. In the matter of genealogies the Tagins have good memories and almost all sensible grown

up persons can trace their accounts from TANI. While accepting their origin from TANI, the upper Tagins in LIMEKING, NA and MIGYITUN settlements claim their descent from NIDO (rain). Unlike other Tagins, those who claim their descent from NIDO (Rain) do not eat chickens. Tagin as a tribe is one without any broad divisions but the tribe is made up of several clans. They speak one dialect known as Tagin dialect. There are slight variations in the dialect of the Lower and the Upper Tagins but the Lower Tagin can easily understand the Upper Tagin and Vice Versa. The dialects of the Gallongs of the SIANG FRONTIER DIVISION, the MIRIS and the BANSNIS of the KAMLA and the KHRU Valleys also seem to be very similar to Tagin dialect. A genealogical chart is given in Appendix 'B' to this report.

Habitat

The Tagins mostly inhabit the main valley of the SUBANSIRI and its tributaries from the SIPI River upto the border with Tibet. The Tagin villages of LUNG (1 house) and BURLABRANG (3 houses) fall within the Tibetan side of the border. SORENG, LENGPU and several other villages on the watershed between the SUBANSIRI and the KAMLA rivers are also considered by the Tagins of the SUBANSIRI valley as the villages of their own tribe.

Villages and Population

There are now 183 known Tagin villages with approximate population of 14,000. The number is likely to be increased as we explore the Kamla and the Sipi Valleys.

Physique

As a race Tagins are short, active and sturdy, of fair complexion with wellknit figures. As a rule their features are of soft Mongolian cut but are

sometimes almost Aryan. The upper Tagins near the Tibetan border are comparatively taller and more robust in their physiques.

Dress

A Tagin man normally wears a short-rimmed cane-hat or hat made of animal skin, folded cloth slung round on both sides of the shoulders from the back and fastened with pieces of short pointed sticks or safety pins above the collar bones covering the body upto half of the thighs and tied firmly on the waist with belt, a small leather bag for keeping a pipe, tobacco and friction match. He carries daos (long & short) with scabbards, bows and arrows. Besides these, he wears a cane haversack on the back with or without fibre rain-proof and penis sheath made of cane or wood or bamboo root or animal horn. The Tagin men normally cut their hair upto their necks whereas some Tagin in the upper SUBANSIRI and the KAMLA valleys wear hair-knots in Apatani style. Being practically all smokers, men usually wear long metal pins for poking their pipes, the metal pins are tight round their necks with strings or metal chain, usually dog chains which seem to be very popular. Only a few people near the Tibetan border wear lengta (piece of cloth) and foot-wears, the clothes they commonly wear are Tibetan woolen clothes they obtained through their barter trade.

A Tagin women wears a cloth in single length tied on the waist covering the legs upto the knees whereas top end of the cloth is fastened above the breasts or on the shoulders almost like that of man but allowing the cloth to fall loosely round the waist. Strands of Cane straps are worn round the waist allowing the strands to hung round the buttock to secure the cloth-skirt below. Tagin women normally cut their hair but keep slightly longer than men and part them in the middle. They wear ear-ornaments and beads more heavily than men. Some women wear Tibetan bells round their

waists. The people in the border areas dress themselves in Tibetan style with foot-wears and caps.

Characteristics

The Tagins who were at one time known as warlike savage are at present a peaceful and law-abiding people, but they are thriftless, litigious and lazy. Men do little work leaving greater share of both field and house works to women. Inter-tribal or inter-village feuds were formerly of frequent occurrence and the spirit of revenge is usually passed down from generation to generation. The wealth of a Tagin is calculated in wives, slaves and cattle. The laziness of the average Tagins will undoubtedly stand on the way of their future economic development. In spite of freedom upheld in the Tagin society, the moral standard of men and women is not low.

Habits

Practically all Tagins, both adults and children smoke tobacco with pipes made locally of bamboo roots and metal. They grow tobacco in their fields. Men while-away their time in idle trading trips even during the busiest weeding season and leave the women to do the greater share of the cultivation.

Social System and custom

Each village has its "nite" or "gam" (headman). He is chosen for his wealth and debating power and the office is not hereditary. All questions of importance concerning the village is referred to the village council. Before the advent of our administration, the village council was competent to try and settle all cases including murder. Cases are normally settled in a form of payment of compensation to the aggrieved party. The compensation may be

ranging from payment of minor fines to mithuns. Murder and adultery are considered as serious crimes.

Polygamy is widely practiced, but a man seldom has more than four wives. Marriage is generally by purchase, but if a man's father should die, his son may marry all or some of his step-mothers but not his own mother. There is no rigid price fixed for the marriage but normally a price of a girl is valued at one mithun but more mithuns and other properties may be paid in the marriage between the well-to-do people. Co-habitation before marriage is common but chastity is strictly enforced after marriage. Marriage is normally arranged among the well-to-do people when boys and girls are quite young but the girls go to their husbands only when all the prices are paid up. The same condition applies to adult marriage also.

Slavery is common among the Tagins. Slaves may be originally prisoners of war or poor people captured by unscrupulous persons or children and wives sold by the head of the household. Tagins are often willing to sell their own wives and children as slaves. A Tagin slave is the absolute property of the owner and the general treatment he receives from his master is not very happy except in a few cases. Slaves are paid as marriage price or as part of marriage price.

Tattooing is not practiced by the Tagins. They normally bury their dead but in the case of dysentery or other epidemic as a result of which several people die, they may throw the dead bodies into the jungles, or precipices or caves.

It is not considered impolite for a young person to refer and call his elders by name.

The Tagins follow patriarchal system and as such, as in the cases of other hill tribes following the patriarchal system, consider women to be holding a lower status in the society but average men treat their women well.

A Tagin parents prefer a son as the first issue and a twin is considered as unlucky and unhappy issue.

Orthodox and superstitious parents perform a small ceremony for naming their new-born child by calling a priest (NIBU) who breaks the egg and selects names he considers to be good for the new-born child. If a child is borne during the bad month or season, names like TAMA, TAIUM etc are usually given to male, and YAMA, YAGM, YARU etc to female. A posthumous son is called TAPEN whereas a posthumous daughter is called YAPEN. In the case of difficult child-birth, a son is named TADIK and a daughter YADIK. Illegal son is called TAPA whereas the illegal daughter is called YAPA.

Theft is rare among the Tagins and practically unknown among the upper Tagins.

Head-hunting is not practiced by the tribe but a warrior who kills his enemy in battle kills a chicken and keeps on a pole to signify his act of bravery.

A treaty of friendship known as DINDU and LENGDI are practiced by the Tagins. DINDU is a bigger rite concerning treaty between two communities or villages whereas the LENGDI rite is meant for treaty between two individuals. Stone is usually erected to signify the treaty.

A Nilak rite (known to Apatanis as Rope) is practiced by the Tagins. The Gallongs also practice the same rite under the same name and almost in the same manner as the Tagins. The hand of the enemy is out and kept on a tree where ceremony for the defeated enemy is performed. In some cases where the actual taking of hand is found inconvenient, a substitute, a dummy hand may be made out of split cane or bamboo.

BOBO is also practiced by the Tagins like the Apatanis.

RELIGION

The Tagins believe in UTS (spirits). They believe that UIS like LARIKAILING or LIRUMORU (for fighting and raid), SI (for jungles and jhums), KASING (for trade), UROM (for death), TATUNG (for marriage), YULO (for mithun), RINTE (for crops), TONIN (for general sickness), TAKRO (for headache), PHIRU (for dysentery and diarrhoea), NIKI (for eye trouble), AYE (for labour pain), etc are all ill-disposed to mankind and must be appeased.

Spirits of all the dead persons are believed to go to SERONGBITCH, NILIMORENG and JOJOPIKO from where spirits of good and wealthy people will follow TATUTARKPPI path till they reach a good place called LEPUNGKALO while the spirits of the bad and poor people will follow TAGOMO path till they reach a bad place called SOTEMOCHIR or RAMPIKU.

Food

The staple food grains of the Tagins are maize, job's tears, millet and rice which they grow in limited quantities. Due to their less work, they normally have adequate food to eat only 4 to 5 months during the year, and for the rest they have to depend mostly on jungle produce such as – TABE (a tree-fern), jungle yams, wild bananas, and edible jungle roots and leaves as a result of which dysentery in epidemic form always occurs taking a heavy toll annually.

They eat practically any meat they can get but, normally they do not eat intestinal parts of animals while the upper Tagins who claim their descent from NIDO (Rain) do not eat chickens.

Relation with Neighbouring Tribes

To facilitate their barter trade, the Tagins normally maintain good relationship with their neighbouring tribes including the Tibetans across the

border. In view of this fact serious inter-tribal feud with their neighbouring tribes rarely occurs whereas inter-village feuds are of frequent occurrence.

Occupation

The Tagins are agriculturists but work very much less as compared to other north east frontier tribes who attain self-sufficiency in food. Excepting a few people in the Tibetan border, the Tagins do not weave and have to depend largely on woolen clothes obtained in their barter trade with the Tibetan border villages. The Tagins normally undertake trading trips to Tibetan border villages every winter by following river routes and barter with their split canes, creeper-dyes, skins and rice which they produced in limited quantities.

RESOURCES

Agriculture

The chief crops raised by the Tagins are millet, job's tears, maize and rice. They also grow cucumbers, beans, gourds, pumpkins and tobacco. Potatoes are grown in the border villages of Lower Na and MIGYITUN settlements. Cotton is grown in limited quantities by a few villages in the lower region.

The live-stocks of the Tagins consists of mithun, pigs, goats and chickens, Yaks, cows, sheep and goats are kept by lower NA and LONGJU settlements in the border.

Local Supplies

As the Tagins do not produces enough crops even for their own consumption, one cannot depend on local supplies.

Jungle produce

Fuel for cooking purposes is obtainable everywhere Bamboo-shoots and cane-shoots are available during the season and they can serve as vegetables. Edible jungle fruits are very few in the entire area. Takins and mountain deers are available in the higher altitude. The flower of wild plantain which are always found in the jungle may also be used as vegetable. The centre of the stem of the fern-tree (Tachi) is edible when cooked, and is often eaten by the inhabitants when no other food is available.

Fish used to abound in the SUBANSIRI and its tributaries but the floods after the great earthquake of 1950 has been reported to have considerably depopulated.

No survey has yet been undertaken to find out the mineral resources of the area. Mica seems to be abundant in the area.

Transport

The only means of conveyance in the area is portering by human beings. The Tagins are good porters but they require tactful handling. The standard load per porter is 25 Srs (50 lbs) but in difficult track it is desirable that a porters load should not exceed 20 seers (40 lbs).

Some Agency Service Corps porter are kept at the Government expense but these porter can hardly cope with the normal requirements of various official movements Due to thin population in the main valley movement of party requiring more than 100 porters at a time must be planned well ahead and not exceed at any rate 200 for a single movement.

The Tagin porters usually make their own arrangements for their provisions and carriage of their food for movement within the inhabited areas, but movements in the uninhabited regions requires proper planning and would probably be better to recruit porter on contract basis with

necessary provision of rations, preferably rice and salt on scales for the duration of the tour.

Due to difficult transport problems, in the area, air-supply will have to be resorted to for some years to come.

Water

The entire area is covered with net-work of rivers and torrents, all of which afford drinking water. Besides these, there are several spring waters. No ill-effect seem to be noticed from drinking this water, but is adviseable to drink after boiling it.

Excepting takins and mountain goats and deers which are frequently found in the higher attitude, birds and other wild animals are comparatively few in the area. The best time for using fishing tackles is during the monsoon. The most common fish found during winter is trout.

Industries

There are no industries in the proper sense of the word among the Tagins. Baskets, pipes, fibre rain cloaks, canehats and crude type of agricultural implementing are made on a small scale, but only for private use. The out of pottery is known to few Tagins but they prefer to buy aluminium pots which they obtain either from Indian bazaars or from Tibetan border villages.

COMMUNICATION

Our expansion and consolidation of administration in the Tagin country being of recent occurrence, the line of communication is still at an infant stage. We have fair-weather Dakota landing ground at DAPORIJO, which situates at the southern extremity of the Tagin area on the right bank of the SUBANSIRI. No proper porter track has yet connected DAPORIJO with

TALIHA, and beyond TALIHA right upto the international border the track is practically non-existence although it is possible to pass through during the cold season by following river-bank routes, a considerable portions of which submerge under water during the monsoon. The present tracks are steep and dangerous in several places. There are no navigable rivers in the area. Porter are the only and indispensable form of transport whereas Wireless Telegraphy is the only means of inter-communication with the outside world.

Due to its extreme hilly nature, there are no suitable flat open ground for landing ground in the entire Tagin country and to find suitable Dropping Zones is also a problem.

The local people normally use Rope Bridge which consists of 4 to 5 stands of stout canes attached at the extremities only, and lying loosely side by side. A cane ring lubricated with wild plantain supports the small of the back of the traveler who lies with his head towards the sky and employs his hands and feet in crossing the bridge. River crossing by this means is slow and very uncomfortable.

Raft ferries can be used in the SUBANSIRI River but only in the lower region where level waters are available at odd places.

Tagins are extremely skilful in constructing cane suspension bridges over the rivers and in fixing ladders, foot-holds and hand-holds on cliff-faces by using jungle materials which are always available on the spot.

MILITARY

Tribal organisation and policy of the Tagins

There is little or no tribal or clan organisation among the Tagins although they may combine against a common enemy within certain narrow limits. It is improbable however that such combination would result in any form of combined organisation as each village is the unit and completely independent of its neighbor. Although certain Headmen possess influence

even outside their villages, it is more than unlikely that they would be able to combine inhabitants more than a few groups of settlements into a fighting force.

Fighting Characteristics

The Tagins are more warlike than most of their neighbouring tribes but they have fully realized the authority and power of the Indian government since the operation as a result of ACHINGMORI incident. Villages are small and are very seldom put in a state of defence. Their chief defence lies in the difficult nature of the country.

Weapons and Tactics

The Tagins are armed with long, spears small knives, bows and arrows poisoned with aconite. Only a few people possess Tibetan flintlock muskets. The effective range of their arrow is 80 to 100 yds. They wear strong cane helmet which prove against a sword-cut. The Tagin tactic by an ambushade and surprise attack. It is unlikely that they will put up a strong defensive stockade when a better armed troops are met although they may lay panjis on them. It is also very unlikely that any organized Tagin force stand against the attack of a well-armed Rifle Company.

Supply and Transport

In view of limited porter being available in the SUBANSIRI valley, all supplies such as rations, equipments, ammunitions etc of the troops must be airdropped for any operation in the area.

Season for Military Operations

The best season for military operations in the Tagin country is from November to March.

Sites for Posts and Defensive Positions

(a) DAPORIJO with its Landing Ground, with at present be the most suitable for Base of operation.

(b) TALIHA and DINEKOLI, about 30 miles from DAPORIJO, situating at an elevation of about 2300 ft. from sea level on the right and left bank of the SUBANSIRI, respectively with their Dropping Zones will be good defensive positions for the SUBANSIRI Valley. At present porter tracks connect these two place but it will not be a problem to convert them into muleable tracks.

(c) NALO (on right bank) and MOCHU (on left bank) which locate a few miles below the confluence of the SEBAR and the SUBANSIRI command the routes leading to Tibet along the SEBAR and KOBU Rivers are also suitable places with the possibilities of Dropping Zones in both places. The two places situate at an elevation of about 3000 ft. from sea level and are at present connected by porter tracks. The distance from TALIHA and DINEKOLI will be approximately 20 miles. Mule tracks can be constructed to NALO and MOCHU without much difficulty.

(d) NACHO (on right bank) commands two routes leading to Tibet along the MENI and the KODUK Rivers and is at present connected with the left bank by cane suspension bridge just below the confluence of the SUBANSIRI and the KODUK. NACHO is a good camping ground with good water supply and possibility of Dropping Zone. NACHO situates at an elevation of about 3000 ft from sea level and it is about 42 miles from TALIHA. NACHO is connected by porter track at present but the existing track can be converted into mule track.

(e) NABA (on right bank), about 59 miles from TALIHA also provides a good camping ground with its emergency Dropping Zone. There is possibility of construction mule track up to NABA.

(f) LIMEKING and GING (on right bank), about 7 miles from TALIHA command the main routes to TIBET along the SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU. GING is about 3 miles from LIMEKING towards the border. The present Dropping Zone at LIMEKING can be improved by making a new D.Z. above the station. There is possibility of fairly good Dropping Zone above GING village but water point is rather far. GING and LIMEKING are connected by porter track with TALIHA. The entire track requires improvement for movement of troops and the nature of the country seems more difficult from road making point of view from NABA and onwards.

(g) TAKSING (on right bank of SUBANSIRI) and LONGJU (on left bank of the TSARI CHU) one of Lower NA and MIGYITUN settlements respectively are suitable sites for opening Border Check Posts. TAKSING is about 46 miles and LONGJU about 48 miles from LIMEKING. LONGJU situates at an elevation of 9200 ft from sea level whereas the elevation of TAKSING is estimated to be about 7000 ft. The international boundary is roughly 1 mile from LONJU and about 4 miles from TAKSING.

TAKSING and LONGJU have good Dropping Zones while at LONGJU there is a possibility of constructing otter Landing Ground.

There is neither regular track nor traffic from LIMEKING to TAKSING (Lower NA) and LONGJU (MIGYITUN). Contact with the two places is at present confined to winter season only. There is, however, possibility of constructing porter track to TAKSING along the right bank of the SUBANSIRI and crossing the SUBANSIRI somewhere near CELENSHINIAK (the confluence of the TSARI CHU and the SUBANSIRI) along the TSARI CHU valley to LUNGJU.

The nature of the country on our side of the border along the SUBANSIRI sectors is extremely difficult whereas the Tibetan side of the border is comparatively easier and more open with regard to air and road communications. The difficulty has been greatly increased by absence of

human habitations between LIMEKING and the Lower NA and MIGYITUN settlements.

Relation between the Tagins and the Tibetans

The relation between the Tagins and the Tibetans across the border in general is good. This good relation seems to have been established as a result of annual barter trade between the Tagins and the Tibetans and also a diplomatic relation which Tibet has to maintain with the Tagins on the occasions of the DOLO (12th year) pilgrimage, the route of which passes through the Tagin country. In spite of contact since long time past, the Tibetan influence on the social, economic, cultural and religious life of the Tagins on the whole is very poor.

Chinese activities

According to all available local informations, the development of Chinese activities in the Tibet region across the SUBANSIRI sector had increased both in tempo and importance since the later part of 1954. Their activities along this sector are reported to have confined to reconnaissance of the border regions by following the valleys of the NYE CHU, the CHAR CHU and the TSARI CHU with temporary post at LHUNTSE DZONG, CHAYUL DZONG, SANGA CHOLING, KONAM DZONG, CHIKCHAR and KYIMDUNG DZONG. The strength of Chinese parties in these posts were reported to vary from 100 to 400. Only a few Chinese were reported to have actually visited the frontier settlements of MIGYITUN and Lower NA.

During the later part of 1954, four Chinese soldiers visited MIGYITUN and returned to CHIKCHAR after staying only for a few days. In early part of 1956, another four Chinese (reported to be a medical unit) visited MIGYITUN and returned to CHIKCHAR like the previous party after halting for a few days. The Chinese were also reported to have carried on their propagandas

in various areas and as far as the frontier villages. They distributed propaganda picture magazines on development of the people of Communist China. (I actually saw some copies of the magazines still kept by villagers of Lower NA and MIGYITUN settlements. They looked the same as what we have seen in India except that they are printed in Tibetan Character).

The two parties were reported to have distributed to each house of MIGYITUN settlements a copy of propaganda magazines and asked the villagers to side with the Chinese people. They were further reported to have carried on anti-Indian propaganda and said that the Chinese (KUNDEN) and MIGYITUN people, being of the same stock were one whereas the Indians (JAGARS) were quite different with deep black eyes with long hairs on their bodies and even on their faces. This did not seem to be true when they carefully started at us when my party landed at MIGYITUN. Shri KELE, the Tibetan Headman of PAMPTE frankly said to us when we visited his house that Chinese description of the Indians was all wrong and that all the members of my party looked exactly like Tibetans and not as hairy as the Chinese described Indians to them!

MIGYITUN people were reported to have requested the Chinese of both the parties not to establish their post at MIGYITUN and should the JAGARS (Indians) come, they would make the same request. The Chinese were reported to have warned MIGYITUN people to immediately report news of Indian party's arrival or visit to MIGYITUN failing which they would be cut to pieces.

No Chinese visited MIGYITUN again after 1956 till my party's visit to MIGYITUN on 5th and 6th March 1956.

During winter 1954, two Chinese soldiers who came from the direction of LUNG (MR MO 3091) visited Lower NA settlements and stayed four days in the house of SHRI TALUK. The two Chinese distributed propaganda magazines to the villagers. During their stay at Lower NA they were reported

to have looked round the surrounding country. As the two Chinese did not have Interpreter with them, their means of conversation with NA people was limited and mostly confined to gestures. After staying four days they returned towards LUNG (upper NA).

In early part of 1955, one Chinese visited Lower NA and asked the villagers to show him the way to MARA (LIMEKING). This Chinese was reported to have told Lower NA people that he was Indian and wished to go to India via LIMEKING. The villagers of Lower NA told him that the track was too bad and that he would not be able to go to India via LIMEKING. He was reported to have proceeded up to a cliff known as PEBEBADA (approximate MR MO 5593) and returned to Lower NA without his boots and other equipments. Unlike the parties who visited MIGYITUN, the Chinese who visited Lower NA were without arms and for want of knowledge of the local dialect; their means of conversation was reported to be very limited.

No Chinese visited again Lower NA after 1955 till my party's visit to Lower NA from 18th to 22nd February 1957.

It is not a fact that the Chinese who visited PEBEBADA put a boundary mark by peeling the bark of a tree near PEBEBADA cliff. Neither the parties who visited Lower NA nor the parties who visited MIGYITUN claimed a particular area or put any boundary marks during their visits.

Most of the Chinese troops were reported to have been withdrawn from the above forward posts during the later part of 1956 leaving only echelon establishment of 4 or 5 persons at LHUNTSE DZONG. Unconfirmed report said that the Chinese withdrawal was due to fighting between the Chinese and the Tibetans in the KHAM area. Rumours of the fighting spread as far as the border villages of Lower NA and MIGYITUN settlements, that one old and influential monk told the people of KHAM area just before his death that those who would eat a piece of his flesh after his death would have die in the hands of the Chinese and their bodies would became proof

against any Chinese bullets! Believing what the dying monk said, several Tibetans were reported to have eaten the flesh and actually fought the Chinese in the KHAM area and killed several Chinese who, however, subsequently out-numbered the Tibetans. Unconfirmed report further said that the DALAI LAMA managed the Tibetans to lay down their arms and to stop fighting the Chinese till the period of 5 year agreement with the Chinese Government expires.

Confirmed report has been received to the effect that 100 Chinese with one officer reinforced LHUNTSE DZONG and summoned Tibetan Officials of CHAYUL DZONG and SANGA CHOLING for consultation in connection with construction of road between LHUNTSE DZONG and CHEDANG. No report on the Chinese intention of returning to their forward posts along the SUBANSIRI sector has so far been received.

The Chinese were reported to have distributed presents including cash lavishly wherever they first went in. The Tibetan Officials of CHAYUL DZONG and SANGA CHOLING were reported to have received Chinese Rifles, Radios and Gramophones as presents.

Apart from the report that substantial progress has been made in the construction of motorable roads and air-fields in LHASA areas, no confirmed report of actual making of motorable roads and airfields in the Tibetan region across the SUBANSIRI frontier has been received. The Chinese troops stationed at LHUNTSE DZONG are reported to have received their supplies by air-dropping.

Neither Chinese colonization of the areas nor intention of replacement of Tibetan officials by direct Chinese administration across the region along the SUBANSIRI sector has been reported. Rumours have, however, been received to the effect that several Tibetan boys and girls were collected and sent to unknown destinations without obtaining the consent of the individuals nor their parents, presumably for indoctrination. This rumour

seems to have increased the fear of Chinese in the minds of the Tibetans. If these rumours were true, the Chinese might try to establish schools in Tibetan region after completion of indoctrination of the boys and girls.

Frontier

According to the existing map, Lower NA settlements which locate approximately in the area of map reference MO 5090 definitely fall within the Indian side of the border and the international boundary runs through DURU SUGA, the termination point of the DOLO (RINGKHOR) pilgrimage route round the TAKPA SHIRI. DURU SUGA is a flat ledge between the SUBANSIRI and the YUME CHU and at the confluence of the two rivers. The confluence of the SUBANSIRI and the YUME CHU is wrongly shown on the existing map whereas the actual confluence locates at DURU SUGA (MO 4691) and not at MO 6592 as shown on map. DURU SUGA is approximately 4 miles up from TAKSING, the last village of Lower NA settlements towards the border. In view of the confluence of the SUBANSIRI and the YUME CHU being wrongly shown on the map and also to avoid possible confusion, it might be better and more adviseable to make a reference of DURU SUGA as the point where our international boundary passes through. The upper NA (shown on map as LUNG MO 4091 also known to Tagins as AIA NA) falls within the Tibetan side of the border with BUR LABRANG shown on map as RAPRANG MO 3898). The inhabitants of LUNG (1 house) and BUR LABRANG (3 houses) are Tagins like the people of Lower NA settlements.

According to the map, MIGYITUN with its Gompa is shown as a single village locating on the left bank of the TSARI CHU and approximately one mile north of the international boundary. The location of the Gompa is correct and the actual name of the settlement where the Gompa situates is called PARI, a Tibetan village. Slightly to the south west of PARI settlement, about a mile from PARI, there are two other Tibetan villages namely,

LAGELALE and PAMTE on the right bank of the TSARI CHU, and about a mile south of PAMPTE situates a Tagin village of LONGJU (5 houses). ... PURI TARING, a Tagin who fled to MIGYITUN started LONGJU settlement about 15 years ago.

The international boundary runs through between Tagin village of LONGJU and PAMTE from a high range immediately north-east of LONGJU and thence crossing the TSARI CHU at a point about half a mile from LONGJU and thence up a high ground one quarter of a mile south of PAMTE and thence following due west to the snow-capped mountain which forms part of TONGDA HARA (KAMRUL HAJING), pt. 18056.

The Tibetan villages of PAMTE, LEGELALE and PARI fall within the Tibetan side of the border whereas Tagin settlement of LONGJU falls within the Indian side of the border.

Attitude of Tibetans

The general attitude of the Tibetans across our border to the Chinese is not very happy. They have the Chinese in general and pay a high regard to Indians.

ADMINISTRATION

As a result of the ACHINGMORI incident of October 22, 1953, a strong expedition was sent to the Tagin country during the cold season 1953-54 and the area was brought under the administration by opening administrative centres at TAHILA and DINAKOLI.

Administrative problems

The Tagin country, being brought recently under the administration, still requires consolidation and attention to its various problems. The following are some of the important problems of the area.

Administrative set-up required for the Tagin area

- (1) Headquarters of Assistant Political Officer: - The main bulk of Tagin population being in TAHILA and DINEKOLI areas, TALIHA is the most suitable site for the Headquarters of Assistant Political Officer in charge of the Tagin area for control of the Tagins on both banks of the SUBANSIRI. TALIHA has the possibility of future expansion with good water supply and Dropping Zone. The elevation of TALIHA being about 2300 ft. from sea level, the climate is considered congenial enough from the health point of view. Apart from other advantages, TALIHA site is tactically sound. The station can be expanded towards TALIHA top also, but due to difficulty of water it will be better to concentrate downward from the present station to lower flat which is an ideal place for siting permanent buildings. If properly planned and sited, a beautiful township for a full-fledged Sub-Division with playground, probably suitable for pioneer Landing Ground can be constructed at TALIHA.

In view of the possibility of air-lifting C.I. sheets to DAPORIJO and portering up the same from DAPORIJO to TALIHA, it will be better to aim at semi-permanent type of buildings for TALIHA as this will pay us in the long run than temporary buildings. Timber and bamboos are easily available at TALIHA.

- (2) Administrative Centre between TALIHA and LIMEKING: - For the convenience of the people as well as for effective control of another bulk of population on both banks of the SUBANSIRI, roughly half way between TALIHA and LIMEKING, we need one administrative centre with base superintendent in the general area of AENGMORI, for which EBA, a village on the left bank, approximately 3 miles from AENGMORI seems to be most suitable site. There is good water supply and a possibility of good Dropping Zone. BA situates at an elevation of about 4000 ft. from sea

level and seems to be a healthy spot. Building materials are easily available in the locality.

The site at AENGMORI has no convenient Dropping Zone nearby except about 1½ miles up on the left bank of the SUBANSIRI which will be most inconvenient. The previous report on the possibility of Otter landing ground at AENGMORI flat (300 yds by 50 yds) does not seem to be a practical proposition after reconnaissance of the locality from both banks due to bad approach on both sides.

With the establishment of Administrative Centre at EBA, construction of reliable suspension bridge over the SUBANSIRI at a suitable point below the village will be required for contact with the right bank. EBA is roughly 30 miles from TALIHA.

- (3) Administrative Centre in MARA area: - The MARA settlements consist of three villages namely LIMEKING (4 houses), DELURING (4 houses) and GING (4 houses). MARA settlements are the last villages in the upper SUBANSIRI before reaching the border billages of Lower NA and MIGYITUN.

The Dropping Zone at LIMEKING is no doubt difficult and unsatisfactory but the post has the advantage of having a small population nearby which gives convenience for portage. GIRG village, about 3 miles west of LIMEKING also has possibility Dropping Zone but there is no convenient water-supply point like that of LIMEKING. There is no other suitable site in the general area of LIMEKING except NABA which will mean stepping back about 10 miles from LIMEKING towards TALIHA. In view of the necessity of moving forward right up to our borders and also the necessity of controlling the MARA people who have regular contact with the Tibetans across the border as well as the people of KAMLA valley through SORENG-LENGPU route, LIMEKING seems to be the

most suitable site for establishment of administrative centers in the upper SUBANSIRI area.

The present Dropping Zone at LIMEKING can be improved by shifting up to a higher ground about 1000 ft. from the present Dropping Zone. Having tried this, if the new Dropping Zone is still rejected, and if the fate of this strategic outpost is to be decided by its Dropping Zone, we shall have no alternative but to step back to NABA where we have a better site and better Dropping zone and building materials more easily available in the locality. Roofing materials and bamboos are hardly available at LIMEKING.

(4) Border Checkposts: - Along the main SUBANSIRI Valley, TAKSING, one of the Lower NA settlements, approximately 4 miles from the international border is suitable for establishing border Checkpost. TAKSING is the last village of Lower NA settlements towards the border and has a good water supply and Dropping Zone. The elevation of TAKSING is estimated to be about 6000 feet from sea level and the site is also tactically sound. TAKSING commands routes leading to Tibet through the main SUBANSIRI Valley the YUME CHU and the SAGAMLA.

Along the TSARI CHU Valley, LONGJU (Tagin village) one of MIGYITUN settlements is suitable for establishing border Checkpost. LONGJU situates approximately half a mile from the international boundary but the actual post may be sited some distance south of LONGJU settlement where there is Dropping Zone and a possibility of Otter Landing Ground. The Landing Ground will require hard labour and considerable expenditure. LONGJU situates at an elevation of 9300 ft. from sea level and there is snowfall till March.

At present, the routes to TAKSING and LONGJU are opened only during winter months (normally from December to March). Lower NA and MIGYITUN settlements have no contact with MARA settlements during

summer for want of tracks. There are no human habitations on the routes to these settlements from MARA. Hence, the necessity of constructing road communication from MARA linking the two settlements cannot be overemphasized if we are to establish Checkposts at TAKSING and LONGJU.

The only available building materials at TAKSING and LONGJU will be pinewood. Canes and bamboos are not available in the localities. The only solution will be plank which can be used for roofing, walling and flooring. Adequate number of sawyers, carpenters, nails etc will have to be arranged.

Due to absence of human habitations on both the routes to TAKSING and LONGJU, which at present 8 days' march each from LIMEKING, portorage will be a great problem and air-dropping will be the only solution.

The question of opening Checkposts on the less important routes along the MENI, the KODUK and the KOBU rivers can be examined only after actual reconnaissance of the routes by land. During my aerial reconnaissance of these routes, I did not find a single place suitable for Dropping Zone as the valleys are extremely narrow with high mountain mostly covered with snow.

Road communication and other Engineering problems:-

The urgency and importance of constructing roads from DAPORIJO to the border settlements of Lower NA and MIGYTUN cannot be over-emphasised. In view of the more favorable nature of the country, it will be easier and more economical to open our main line of communication along the right bank of the SUBANSIRI starting from DAPORIJO right up to Lower NA settlements which is roughly 150 miles and another road on the left bank connecting TALIHA to NACHO about 48 miles.

The estimated distance in miles of various place along the existing routes are as shown below.

	TALIHA	EBA	LIMEKING	GELENSHINIAK	TAKSING (Lower NA)	HARIKARU	LONGJU (MIGYITUN)
DAPORIJO	30	60	100	116½	146½	150½	148
TALIHA	30	70	86½	116½	120½	118	
LIMEKING		16½	46½	50½	48		
GELENSHINIAK		30	34	31½			

To start with, we may aim at mule track between DAPORIJO and TALIHA and the rest porter tracks. Between DAPORIJO and LIMEKING, it will be possible to construct roads and bridges by using local man power but tools, implements and other necessary stores will have to be arranged.

For want of human habitation beyond LIMEKING on the routes to Lower NA and MIGYITUN settlements, labours will be a problem and the lower Tagins, at present will be most unwilling to operate in the higher region due to its cold climate and the difficult nature of the country. The solution may lie in posting one platoon of Assam Rifles pioneers at LIMEKING to work up to GELENSHINIAK and two sections of Agency Service Corps each at TAKSING and LONGJU to work downward to GELENSHINIAK as supply dropping can be easily done at TAKSING and LONGJU. If emergency dropping can be done at a place known as GADUBO, about 5 miles from GELENSHINIAK on the way to Lower Na, it will be very convenient and save lot of troubles in portering rations and other equipments. GADUBO locates approximately at MO 6589 and it seems to be suitable for temporary camping ground.

About 4 miles from GADUBO, there is a place known as RICHIDEN which has a route on the left bank of the SUBANSIRI connecting LANGIN on the TSARI CHU Valley, approximately 4½ miles from GELENSHINIAK. The route is followed during the DOLO pilgrimage and it might be better to align MIGYITUN trace from RICHIDEN and avoid the difficult portions between GELENSHINIAK and LANGIN.

At present we have no proper staging huts even between DAPORIJO and LIMEKING and great inconvenience is being experienced for movements in the SUBANSIRI Valley. It is essential that staging huts are provided at least on the route between DAPORIJO and LIMEKING. Along with the construction of staging camps, the question of providing camp Chowkidors should also be taken up. The following are suggested places for construction of staging huts.

SIPI	-	10 miles
RADING	-	8 miles
TALIHA	-	12 miles
DOYOM	-	10 miles
ATE	-	11 miles
AENGMORI	-	10 miles
NACHO	-	11 miles
DOGINALO	-	7½ miles
NABA	-	10 miles
LIMEKING	-	10 ½ miles

LIMEKING, being only about 70 miles which can be conveniently covered in 7 marches, should now be reduced to 7 stages and the existing porterage payment of Rs. 26/- (for 13 stages) be cut down accordingly to Rs. 14/- at the rate of Rs. 2/- per load per stage.

The question of constructing staging huts on the left bank route may also be examined when we establish administrative centre on the left bank.

Apart from several rivers to be bridged along the routes, construction of reliable suspension bridges over the SUBANSIRI will be required for easy contact with the left bank at the points near DAPORIJO, TALIHA, AENGMORI, NACHO, GELENSHINIAK and LOWER NA.

Economic and food problem

Ignorance and laziness are the root causes of general poverty among the Tagins. The latter is bound to stand on the way of their economic development unless we succeed in working out a healthy competition to eradicate it. Excepting a few groups of Tagins who work comparatively harder as a result of their contact and influence from their neighbouring Abor tribes, the average Tagin families have hardly sufficient food even for six months during the year. They work less and get less. The little food-stuffs they produce are consumed in no time and they have to resort to jungle produce such as yams, roots, tabs or tachi (tree-fern) and any edible things they can get from the jungle including meat they procure in hunting. The food they procure from the jungle are mostly consumed raw or just slightly boiled and as a result they get various diseases particularly dysentery which takes heavy toll annually. Their country is on the whole bad and difficult from agricultural point of view but jhumlands now available can produce easily sufficient food for them provided they are properly guided and made them to work harder, particularly the men-folks who leave practically the entire field works to their women.

The entire area seems to be too immature for carrying out any organized development schemes except in miniature scale and on experimental basis.

Their clothes, daos, cooking utensils, implements and ornaments of all sorts are mostly obtained from Tibet by barter trade with their split canes, dyes, skins and rice. Even the Tagins as far as the SIPI valley obtain such items of their requirements by carrying their barter goods for several days journey. Excepting a few villages near TALIHA, the rest of the Tagins do not grow cotton nor weave their cloths. Women of MARA, upper NA and MIGYITUN settlements know weaving but cotton cannot be cultivated due to adverse climatic conditions.

It will be possible to create a spirit of competition between various groups of settlements and thereby teach them to work harder to produce more food. Such schemes should be gradual and properly planned to suit their sentiments so as to create in them a spirit of healthy completion under proper guidance and encouragement.

For their gradual self sufficiency in clothes, we may encourage cotton cultivation and teach them weaving using the most simple equipments of handloom used in other hills areas, a set of which can be obtained and later on manufactured locally. The initial start in this line can be made at some administrative centres where officers and their wives may organize in a form of welfare centres.

Suitable clothes, daos, cooking utensils, ornaments, agricultural implements and other requirements may be arranged as C.P.O. items and made available for sale at convenient administrative centres. Unless such arrangement is made the present trade with Tibet will continue.

A craft centre at TALIHA for teaching weaving, smithy, carpentry, sawing, dyeing and terrace cultivation will be useful.

One central School at TALIHA for selected Tagin boys and girls also will be useful.

We may open experimental terrace cultivations NUI MORI and AINGMORI by giving adequate subsidies to a few influential men of the

localities and under close supervise by a seasoned Agricultural staff who really know the job.

Medical problems

One of the most important medical problems now facing the Tagin country is to find effective remedy for Tagin skin disease from which most of the Tagins are suffering. It will be a wonderful achievement if we can successfully save the people from this hateful disease by the new treatment with Cignolin which is being tried with very encouraging results.

Due to frequent occurrence of dysentery and malaria in epidemic form during the monsoon, arrangement of itinerant Doctors will greatly help in tackling these problems.

In spite of their sacrifices to their UIS (spi.... the general response to our medicines are good and encouragement.

Goitres are more common among the people in the border areas including village on the water-shed between the KAMLA and the SUBANSIRI. Arrangement of iodised salt and other preventive and curative measures will be a great help and appreciated by the people.

Slavery

Our policy on slavery is now known to the Lower Tagins except those villages in border area, particularly in Lower NA and MIGYITUN settlements where several slaves are reported to be still in bondage (particulars are given in Appendix 'C'). The slaves are mostly Tagins of SUBANSIRI area and Sulungs and Bangnis of upper KAMLA and KHRU valleys. At Lower NA settlements, a single householder keeps as many as 9 to 10 slaves in his house. Most of Tagin slaves were sold to MECHUKHA area through SEBAR valley route and in view of our establishment of

administrative centre at MECHUKHA, it becomes a regular feature that the slaves from SUBANSIRI valley run away from their masters and return to their original villages. Before the advent of our administration, villages like EBA and CHEKE used to obtain their requirements of clothes, daos and others by indulging in slave trade.

Provision of necessary funds for resettlement of deserving slaves who have neither home nor means of subsistence may greatly help in tackling the slavery problem which will be important feature in our administration of the Tagin area for some years to come.

Survey

The Miri Mission of 1911-12 visited a part of the left bank of the KHRU as far as TAKUM and the KAMLA valley up to TALI. But due hostilities met at TALI and also in accordance with the orders of government, strictly forbidding any advance against opposition, the party could not materialize its intention of moving further up the KAMLA and the SUBANSIRI valleys and had to return to the plains through the country of the Apatanis and the Daflas. The party did not penetrate far enough into the high ranges to settle the question of the headwaters of the KAMLA, the KHRU and the SUBANSIRI but from the general position of the snow ranges fixed by triangulated peaks and observation from the ROMTA mountain, the KHRU and the KAMLA did not appear to penetrate beyond the high snowy ranges whereas the SUBANSIRI breaks through the snow range near TSARI.

A small survey party visited the SUBANSIRI, Valley during 1952-53 but returned without proceeding beyond LIMEKING.

The exploratory tour of the upper SUBANSIRI and the TSARI CHU undertaken during January, February and March, 1957 confirmed that the

SUBANSIRI and its two tributaries, the YUME CHU and the TSARI CHU break through the high snowy mountains and have their sources in Tibet.

The courses of the TSARI CHU and the YUME CHU are wrongly shown on the existing map and the other important tributaries of the SUBANSIRI namely, the MENI, the KODUK, the KOBU, the KOTER, the KOJUK, the GIO etc are omitted. The course of the main SUBANSIRI (formed by the CHAYUL CHU and the CHAR CHU) seems to be fairly correct although various details yet to be furnished when properly surveyed.

As it is now possible to move upto our borders along the SUBANSIRI sector and even without armed escort, it essential that proper survey of this important area is made with the least possible delay.

Pending proper survey of the entire area, the sketch map prepared by me on the basis of the present quarter inch map may be used as a rough guide.

Presents

The Tagins being poor and lazy seem to have already expected too much of free gifts from Government or officials. It is essential that we are extremely careful in this matter at this stage and do not turn them into like that of the Mishmis.

From what I could learn from my sort experience in this area, I feel that presents to adult Tagins should be of carefully selected items which have real value to their daily life and which will induce them to work with. Amongst other useful items, the following are suggested for presents: -

1. Daos, felling-axes, hoes and other suitable agricultural implements are useful for individuals or group of villagers or villages as encouragement of jhum, road, and other works.

2. Coloured yarns and wool are suitable gifts for women who know weaving and knitting and those who are really keen to learn, as encouragement.
3. Big safety pins (about 2 inches long) are appreciated as they make a good alternative for their big bamboo or wooden pins which are used for fastening their cloths and cause damage.
4. Another cheap present which they appreciate is metal pins about 8 inches long fixed on chains to wear round their necks for use for poking pipes which practically all Tagins smoke.
5. Endi and woolen cloths are also popular but such gifts may be restricted to few deserving individuals.
6. Matches and tea leaves are also appreciated.

In view of the mentality which they have already developed in regard to presents, it is desirable that we proceed with caution and do away with the Political presents as soon as possible.

For the border people, we shall however require better type of presents amongst which the following may be included: - Fur-hats decorated with brocade, Tibetan sword with decorated ascabbards, Chinese or Tibetan cups (made of wood or China) superfine woolen cloth, preferably chocolate colour, wool and yarns of various colours, mirrors, nickel stainless tea pots, cups and spoons.

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