



Blood Feud in the Eastern Himalaya

An Account of a Forgotten Massacre of Police Personnel in NEFA, India

Rebecca Tamut

Abstract. – This article brings to attention an event that occurred in January 1963, in which Indian police personnel were murdered by Nyishi tribesman in Chayangtajo, a remote administrative Circle in the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA), today known as Arunachal Pradesh, India. This paper uses oral sources to illuminate how the event unfolded and how it was perceived locally. I will show that this deadly event was the consequence of an on-going tribal feud. By allying themselves with the wrong clan, the police force was considered the enemy of a group of clans among which they intended to establish an administrative outpost. *[India, Arunachal Pradesh, Nyishi, tribal feud, oral history, NEFA]*

Rebecca Tamut, a PhD student at Central Asian Seminar, Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany. – MA in Ethnology from Heidelberg University (2009). – Recent fieldwork deals with orality and dispute resolution among the tribal Nyishi Community in Arunachal Pradesh, India. E-mail: rebeccatamut@gmail.com

Introduction

In 1953, when a group of the neighbouring Tagin tribe killed 47 members of the Assam Rifles, a paramilitary force, close to the Indo-China border in NEFA (North-East Frontier Agency), all of India and beyond were horrified (Rustomji 1971: 183). The event became known as the “Achingmori Massacre.” Official accounts of the event and the punitive actions which followed were as numerous as were references and comments on the event in historical writings on the area. However, when a similar event was repeated ten years later among a related tribe a few valleys further to the west, in which at least 12 officers lost their lives –

among them seven constables of the CRP Force – the public seemed not to have taken any notice of it and official records mentioned the incident only briefly.

During my research in the local Arunachal State Archive in Itanagar I could not find a single document mentioning the event nor any later reference on it. One of the few written accounts in existence can be found in the 1963 Annual Report of the Ministry of External Affairs, Delhi, which outlines the event.

On 31 May 1963, Dafla [Nyishi] tribesmen overpowered the small administrative centre of Chayeng Taju [Chayangtajo] and killed twelve officials including policemen. Law and order was immediately re-established. All the culprits and all the weapons taken by them were captured, or surrendered, with the help of village elders, under the influence of the Political Officer. The reasons for the raid were purely local (MEA Report 1963–64: 11).¹

Today, Chayangtajo is the administrative headquarters of the Chayangtajo Circle in the East Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh, India. The inhabitants of that area belong to the tribal Nyishi communities and the less numerous Puroik tribe. Built on a hilltop, Chayangtajo, also written as Chayang/Tajo, is located in the foothills of the snow-covered Himalayas, which peak to the northwest. This hill station has long been one of the most remote outposts of NEFA (now called Arunachal Pradesh), with the international border

1 <<https://mealib.nic.in/?pdf2490?000>> [10/31/2018]



Fig. 1: Chayangtajo (05.12.2011, Rebecca Tamut).

with China (Tibet) merely 50 kilometres away. Today, much has changed. A road, 81 kilometres in length, connects Chayangtajo with the larger town of Seppa. Governmental development projects, education, and Christianity have left their marks on the town.

Earliest Exploration and Administration of the Eastern Kameng Area

Little has been published on the early administrative history of this eastern Kameng region of NEFA. British administrators visited this area, perhaps for the first time, in 1914 as part of the Aka Promenade and their visit to the Tibetan Buddhist area of Tawang. Captain George Augustus Nevill, accompanied by Captain A. M. Graham and G. D. Mathew, was given the task to establish friendly relations with the inhabitants of these areas. Reaching the area of today's Longri Riang and Effa villages, west of Bameng, the reception of their party was a bellicose one, as the villagers resisted the intrusion by outsiders (Reid 1983: 283).

Following the Abor and Miri expedition, the area of today's East Kameng District became part of the Western Section of the North-East Frontier in 1913 (Reid 1983: 269). In 1919, this area became part of the Western Section of the Balipara Frontier Tract of the North-East Frontier Tract. All these reorganisations were of little consequence to the people living in the hills, as no administrative outpost of any sort was set up there until the early

1950 s. The administration at this time was restricted to maintaining peace in the Assam Valley and to monitoring the border area. In the summer season, with its monsoon rains, the administration was fully cut off from the hills.

A first outpost was established deep in the hills of the Kameng region in a village called Liyak, which two years later, in 1953, was shifted to nearby Bameng. The early years of this administration were concerned with the consolidation of their administrative control over the area, which was no easy task. In a report from 1952, this uncertainty about the attitude of the local people towards the newly arrived administration was clearly articulated.

Kingkung,² Tafey³ and a portion of Wei⁴ Villagers are still hostile and quite unwilling to come under administration.

Besides these, towards North East there are many Villages which have to be brought under Administration. So far tour could not be extended towards that side due to the heavy works for the establishment of new out post and consolidation of the surrounding villages. Tour towards the interior can be possible only by the end of this year.

Before opening this Outpost the people used to have a free life. Everyone were [sic] Independent to act according to his own will. Since the opening of the Outpost gradually effective checks are being put on their previous habits.

2 Now written as Gekung.

3 Now written as Taffo.

4 Now written as Waii.

At present nothing can be said for certain about the attitude of the people towards us. Though the villages have been brought under administration, yet such instances [sic] have occurred that whenever our men happened to pass by their village they threatened them by taking out their Daos [machete], arrows and bows. However, they are gradually realising that we do not mean any harm to them but are there to help them (*An-nual Report on Sela* 1952: 6).

In the decade leading up to the fateful events in Chayangtajo, this expansion of administration continued; creating an outpost north of Bameng for the Indian government was a necessary step to take full control of the land and, in particular, of those areas close to the McMahon Line, India's contested border with China.

By 1954, the North-East Frontier Tract had been renamed as the North-East Frontier Agency, known as NEFA, and no longer was administered by Assam anymore but rather directly by Delhi with the aim of establishing an independent administration. Consequently, in 1972, NEFA became a separate Union Territory and later the Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh. This progressive alienation from Assam (Guyot-Réchard 2013: 33) meant that administration and police personnel, including those men who were killed in Chayangtajo, were not drafted from the region of Assam but rather from all over the Indian subcontinent.

The events of the Sino-Indian War in the autumn of 1962, immediately prior to the massacre, did not have any noticeable effect on the eastern Kameng region. The temporary absence of the few officers posted in the area was not uncommon, even in normal times. According to oral sources,⁵ there was no Chinese presence in Chayangtajo. Villagers did not flee to Assam, as was the case in the western Kameng or Siang areas, and life during the months of this international agitation remained relatively uninterrupted.

The Event as Recalled in Nyishi Oral History

All these factors contributed to a situation in the eastern Kameng region, in which the administrative staff was inexperienced and in which the local population of these very remote areas was not fully informed about the intention and purposes of the arriving foreign personnel. As can be seen in

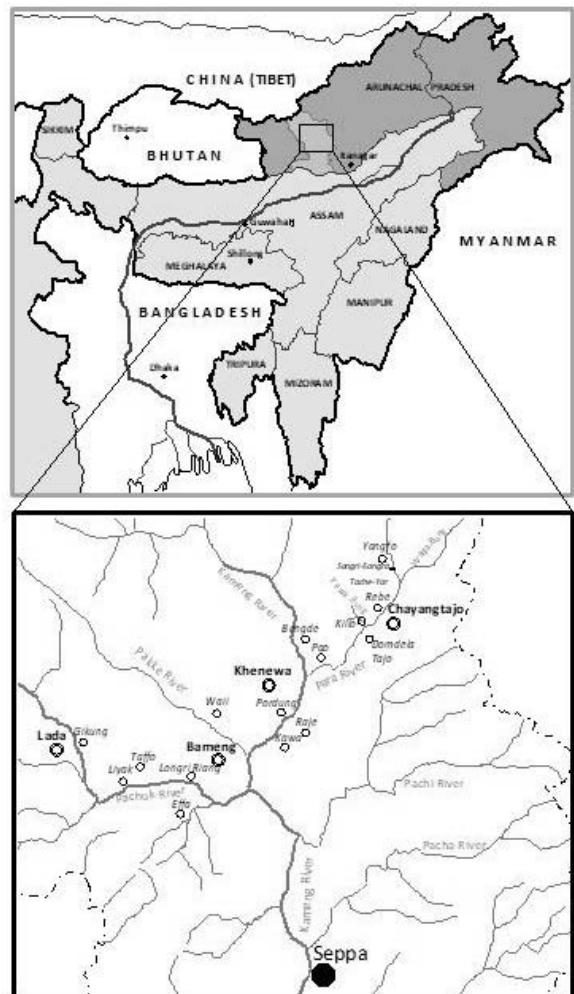


Fig. 2: Northeast India and the mentioned villages in the East Kameng District (R. Tamut).

the orally transmitted story, the local population at no point had any ideas about India, nation-state, or citizenship.⁶ For them, all these new people arriving were *hareng*. *Hareng* is a derogatory term denoting all outsiders with South Asian appearance, in contrast to the tribal people from the hills with their distinctive East Asian physical features. Today, this term also is a synonym for the Indian administration, because much of the early administrative personnel were not locals but officers from mainland India.

The main narrative of the unfolding events was provided by Katok Killo. He narrated the story to me on 24 July, 2015. His father, Seme Killo, was one of those imprisoned for the shooting. Seme

5 Katok Killo and Solung Sonam, personal communication in 2016.

6 This important aspect was pointed out to me by Zilpha A. Modi in personal communication.

Killo narrated the whole incident to his son, just before he died in 2010. The narration of Katok Killo was audio recorded and, then, on the following day, detailed notes on this story and additional information were provided to me by Solung Sonam. This information was complemented by that provided by Pacha Tajo and a follow-up interview with Katok Killo, which was conducted on 24 July, 2016. The following account is based on these notes and interviews.

The chain of events that led to this fateful incident in the year 1963 had begun much earlier. One person from Raje Village killed a person from Kawa Village. Pordung Village was related by marriage to Kawa Village. Consequently, Pordung also got involved in the *nyimo*, a feud, against Raje. Pordung and Raje villages are not far from each other but on the opposite sides of the mighty Kameng River. In this feud, Raje villagers killed a person called Solung Pordung as he was catching fish with an elaborate bamboo construction in the Kameng River. Members of Raje Village shot him with a poisonous arrow from the other side of the river. The murdered Solung Pordung had cousins among the Tajo clan and because of this kinship connection now the Tajo people also were enemies and ready to take revenge on any villager from Raje or any person related to that village.

In the Nyishi society of these remote Kameng areas, punishment for any crime was the responsibility of one's own clan. Nyishi society as a whole is acephalous and has no institution to enforce punishment. Traditionally, justice is restored only after long debates, called *yallung*, between the disputing clans or villages. Whoever is determined to be guilty is required to pay large fines, usually in the form of great numbers of *mithun*, a type of gaur cattle very important to the Nyishi and other Tani tribes. Any crime can be compensated in such a way, even acts of murder. Feelings of rage and the necessity to revenge any wrong are socially expected. Acts of retaliation are done in defence of the clan's prestige. In the early 1960s, this chain of village feuds and the system of retaliation was not fully understood by the Indian administration.

At that time, the Central Reserve Police Force, referred to as CRPF, was stationed in the outpost in Khenewa, in between Seppa and Chayangtajo. The CRPF is a paramilitary force in India, under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which had come into existence in 1949.⁷ It was

only shortly before the incident in Chayangtajo that the CRPF and not the more experienced Assam Rifles had been entrusted with the responsibility to maintain law and order in NEFA.⁸ The Assam Rifles, the oldest paramilitary force of India with a long history of employment in the hills surrounding the Assam Valley, recruited mainly Gurkhas who, according to Nari Rustomji, "... being hillmen and Mongoloid, resembled the tribals and blended naturally with the landscape of the mountains and forests" (1983: 129). The CRPF personnel in Chayangtajo, however, was comprised of Punjabis and officers from the wider Delhi area, who were in appearance, clothing,⁹ and outlook utterly different from the local people.

This change in policing personnel was a result of a general administrative change. The Central Indian Government (i. e., the Ministry of External Affairs [MEA] as well as the Ministry of Home Affairs [MHA]) had taken over the direct administration of NEFA in the middle of the 1950s from the earlier arrangement of NEFA within the Assamese administration.¹⁰

The CRPF personnel arrived in Chayangtajo just after the Sino-India War came to an end. "Chayang" was the name for the hunting ground owned by the Tajo clan close to their village and which was to be the place of the future government outpost. The combination of both became the name of this outpost: Chayang/Tajo, also written Chayangtajo. When the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) first arrived, they were accompanied by a P. I. (Political Interpreter) named Pada Wahge. The duty of a "Political Interpreter" is not just the linguistic translation aiding the CRPF, but

⁸ "As the Assam Rifles, the traditional frontier constabulary, were now required entirely for border security duties, four battalions of Armed Police were inducted for normal policing" (MEA Report 1963-1964 [01.01.1963]: 10).

⁹ It can be assumed from pictures provided by the CRPF that at least two CRP men, Shri Krishna and Tara Singh, wore turbans, something very foreign to the local people in NEFA. <http://crpf.nic.in/writereadda/images/Warriors_Remembered.pdf> [27.04.2016]: 16-18.

¹⁰ This becomes obvious in the different reports of the Ministry of External Affairs 1954-1955 and the report from 1957-1958. In the earlier report, it says: "The Governor of Assam continued to administer the Agency as the Agent to the President, under the Ministry of External Affairs" (MEA Report 1954-1955 [01.01.1954]: 6). Three years later, in the report from 1957-1978, the MEA stated: "In the domestic sphere it [the Ministry of External Affairs] is responsible for the Administration of the North East Frontier Agency and the Naga Hills and Tuensang Area and for matters of policy relating to former French possessions in India" (MEA Report 1957-1978: 1). – See also Guyot-Réchard (2013: 24).

⁷ <<https://www.crpf.gov.in/>> or <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Reserve_Police_Force> [25.10.2018]

also to act as a go-between and to mediate between the police force and the local population.

An office like that of the “Political Interpreter” did not exist only since the British Colonial Government in Assam but already during the earlier administration of the Ahom Kingdom (1228–1826) in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. The Ahom used officers called *kataki* or *kotoki* to keep their government informed about unlawful acts or other significant incidents in the tribal hill areas surrounding the Assam Valley (Gait 1906: 117, 236).¹¹ During the early British administration, *kotokis* were considered Assamese agents and were used as messengers in the tribal areas.¹² The position of the P. I., created by the British Colonial Administration, continued this practice of *kotoki*.

The CRPF personnel then faced the same problems as the Ahom and British administration had earlier: They had to rely on the P. I. for much of their information. Consequently, the position of a P. I. was one that gave the office holder a key role in the distribution of resources. It might well have been that the Tajo clan had some idea about Pada Wahge’s position, including its powers. Pada Wahge, however, had kinship relations with the Raje Village. Consequently, not just he, but also the CRPF personnel whom he introduced to Chayangtajo were considered enemies of the Tajo clan. By having chosen the wrong local guide, the Indian administration was doomed, heading into the disaster, which was to follow.

As part of this on-going inter-clan feud, Pada Wahge was killed by the inhabitants of Chayangtajo using the *damlo*, a chopstick-like bamboo stick in the Nyishi *padam* headgear. Nonetheless – and against the expectation of the local villagers – the CRPF continued to stay in Chayangtajo. Later, a person from the Tajo clan of Chayangtajo called Solung Tajo organised all the members of the villages Yangfo, Killo, and Rebe to take action together with the Tajo people. He convinced them that it would be dangerous for them if these CRPF people continued to stay, arguing that they were killing their domestic animals and interfering with their lives. While the main reason for this conspiracy against the police personnel was the on-going feud, it seems that material considerations and the fear of losing influence was at least to some extent the reason for surrounding villages to join in the

planned attack. They conducted a chicken-liver-divination-ritual, the *rovena*, to predict the future outcome and, then, decided that January 26, 1963, which is the Republic Day in India, would be the appropriate day for the attack. They rightly reasoned that, at that time, there would be a party, including the playing of football and volleyball, and the CRPF personnel would not be alert.

According to the oral sources, there were 30 members of the CRPF posted in Chayangtajo, of which seven were in Khenewa to get supplies, thus, leaving 23 at Chayangtajo. While the distance between Khenewa and Chayangtajo as the crow flies is only 14 kilometres, the mountainous terrain makes it a long strenuous march. The Nyishi carried out a detailed survey of the CRPF’s regular routine. One local man, Chungni Tajo, was employed as assistant/staff cook for the CRPF and he informed his clan members that during certain hours in the evening, the CRPF would usually deposit all their guns in one storeroom. On the day of attack, 26 January, 1963, one Tajo man guarded the room where the guns of all the CRPF personnel were kept and, then, the villagers attacked them from all sides without warning. Those who rushed towards the storeroom to pick up their guns were cut down by the man who guarded it with the *chegee*, the local machete. In total, 22 people were killed and one was fortunate enough to escape. According to the oral narrative, the CRPF member who escaped was a tall man, and with huge jumps he went down to the river-side crossing Bengde Village, Pao Village, and other villages to deliver a *dori-pata* (literally meaning “air-bird”), i.e., to send a telegram in order to alert the CRPF comrades who were stationed at Khenewa.

At the same time, the remaining seven CRPF personnel were already on their way from Khenewa to Chayangtajo with the supplies. The news never reached them and they were unaware of what had happened. This journey takes several days of trekking through the jungle and they were supposed to stay one night in the house of the *gaonbura* Logo Killo. Logo Killo was the brother of Seme Killo. The Tajo people led by Solung Tajo reached Logo Killo’s house one day before the CRPF personnel and stayed there at night, where they had a long discussion with Logo Killo. Logo Killo was married to a Tajo lady and, therefore, was obliged to side with the Tajo clan. The Tajo convinced Logo Killo to kill the remaining seven CRPF personnel, arguing that those were their common enemies and that he should not disclose this to the CRPF. The next day, the CRPF

11 “The *katakis* acted as agents for the king in his dealings with foreign states and with the hill tribes ...” (Gait 1906: 236).

12 See the Arunachal Pradesh State Archive: B-1875-Duffla Expedition (1874–75: 8).



Fig. 3: Looking down on the Para River and the two parts of Killo Village (05.12.2011, Rebecca Tamut).

people arrived and Logo Killo pretended to accompany them on their way to Chayangtajo.

In the photo above (Fig. 3), the Para River runs along the bottom of the valley. In the centre of the photo and somewhat more to the right side, two larger settlements can be seen. Both settlements are part of the Killo Village. In-between the two village parts a small rivulet runs, which is called Pawik-Bung. On the photo, the rivulet only is recognizable by a line of green vegetation on both sides of it. Today, at the point where the Pawik-Bung flows into the Para River, the Government Primary School of Killo Village is located. According to the oral tradition, as narrated by Katok Killo, it was at that precise point – where the Pawik-Bung flows into the Para River – that the remaining seven CRPF personnel were attacked and killed.

Thus, according to the oral narrative, only one out of the 30 CRPF personnel escaped. The one who escaped sent a telegram to Assam. Then the Assam Rifle forces came via helicopter. They first landed at Pao Village and enquired about the issue. Because Pao people said that they did not kill anyone, the helicopter flew to Killo Village and landed there at the school area, a place called Tajo Sangchang Warang, and which was owned by Nyebi Tajo. But this place was not deemed good for a counterattack and so they decided to land at Chayangtajo itself.

As the Assam Rifles' helicopter landed in Chayangtajo, the Tajo people ran down the hill and across the Para River to take refuge in Killo Village. Between the villages of Chayangtajo and

Killo is a deep gorge without any bridge and so the people from both sides of the gorge started to fight each other. According to oral sources, the fight lasted for two weeks, whereby the oral history further informs us, that the Tajo and Killo people used the light machine guns (LMG), which they had taken from those they had killed, to fight back the Assam Rifle forces. The Killo and Tajo people had been trained in shooting by Chungni Tajo. In earlier times, Chungni Tajo had worked with forces at various places as staff assistant and so had some knowledge about the use of guns. However, their ammunition was limited. Therefore, the Tajo and Killo people discussed and finally decided that one team would continue to shoot from the Killo side to keep their enemies engaged, meanwhile another team would circle around the enemy and attack them from the opposite direction.

This second team walked north towards Yangfo Village and crossed the Para River at a bridge called Sangri-Sangda. Circling clockwise around the deployment of the Assam Rifles in Chayangtajo, they secretly entered from the backside, an area locally referred to as Cheri La in Domdila-Tajo and fired at the Assam Rifles forces from the opposite direction from where those had expected them. The Assam Rifles ran downside towards the Para River, and stayed at a mountainous area known as Tache-Yar, between Rebe Village and Yangfo Village.

The news had reached the central government, which was planning to bomb the area, but Daying Ering, the representative of NEFA at that time,

convinced the government that these were just “innocent tribal people” who committed such things out of innocence and that their punishment should not be too harsh. Taniang Welly went to negotiate together with B. A. Sab¹³ and some Political Officers (P. O.). They were helped by Chakang Phasang, a P. I. who was married to a Tajo woman and, therefore, could represent the Tajo side.

The Killo/Tajo party and the *hareng* party gathered at the Kampu-Yerbe area, a place close to Killo and Rebe villages. During that meeting, Hassang Male (Tajo) fired a gunshot into the air. The Assam Rifles were scared and picked up their guns, ready to shoot. However, Taniang Welly interfered and convinced the Killo and Tajo people to give back their LMG guns and assured them that they would be treated well. So, they handed over their guns.

But later on, after discussions, the Killo and Tajo people were handcuffed and jailed at the Dambawa area, today located on the southern edge of Chayangtajo. They were imprisoned there for two years. Two people were tied together, so they could not run away. Nonetheless, half of those imprisoned managed to escape. Some ran towards the deep gorges, but a person named Koru Killo ran straight ahead and was shot and killed by the CRPF personnel. The rest were taken on a long march west, out of the jungle: first to Bende, then passing Kabyeng and Khenewa to Bamang, Lada, Bomdila, and Kalakhtang. All these places are situated in today’s East Kameng District and West Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh. There, at Kalakhtang, Solung Tajo died and the others went further south to Tezpur jail, located in the plains of Assam.

Those who were put into jail in Tezpur were: Seme Killo, Sono Yangfo, Laniang Male (Tajo), Taram Male (Tajo), Tayeng Tajo, Hassang Male (Tajo), Solung Tajo, Kioro Killo, Mara Tajo, and Taram Tajo. These ten men were imprisoned for around 14 years until 1977. They were visited by Daying Ering and also some of their relatives. While in jail, they negotiated with the superintendent of the jail to allow them to continue to do some craft work as they were used to do in their village. They also got training in new handicrafts. Additionally, some basic medical training was given to them. When finally they returned to their village, they not only had gained some useful knowledge, they also got a lump sum from those products they had sold. When they were released from prison, they were given government jobs to

provide for them and to ensure that they would not indulge in killings again, and in this context, Chayangtajo became a full administrative Circle.

Oral History in the Light of the CRPF Records

To know something more about these men killed in the remote hills of East Kameng, documents from the CRPF, available online, are illuminating. Their “Martyr Book”¹⁴ in Hindi mentions the details of eight CRPF men who died in Chayangtajo and a summary in English is also available online.¹⁵ These men were:

Roshan Lal, born on 26 August, 1926 in Khangra, Himachal Pradesh;
 Joginder Singh, born on 20 July, 1924 in Hoshiarpur, Punjab;
 Daan Singh, born on 24 March, 1931 in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand (now called Uttarakhand);
 Tara Singh, born on 5 August, 1942 in Amritsar, Punjab;
 Shri Krishna, born on 10 May, 1942 in Najapgarh, Delhi;
 Baldev Raj, born on 15 April, 1943 in Amritsar, Punjab;
 Kalu Ram, born on 20 March, 1939 in Mahendragarh, Haryana;
 Jogram, died in Heta.¹⁶

All of them had joined the CRPF in the year 1960 and were serving as constables in the 9th Battalion, which was active during the Chinese aggression as well as during the early restoration of Indian administration in Central NEFA (Dogra 2004: 157). All victims were among the first 40 people of the CRPF who ever have been killed. These details are important, because they show two facts: First, all the personnel were relatively new and inexperienced; and second, they came from faraway places with little idea about the cultural complexities of the hill tribes. It could be speculated whether this fatal incident would not have happened if the more experienced Assam Rifles forces instead of the new CRPF had been stationed in Chayangtajo.

14 <<http://crpf.nic.in/images/pdf/MARTYEBOK.pdf>> [10.04.2016].

15 <<http://crpf.nic.in/images/pdf/SUMMARYOFMARTYREDOFCRPFSSINCE1946.pdf>> [10.04. 2016].

16 Little information is provided on this person and the place of his death is given as an unknown location called “Heta” and not “East Kameng,” as mentioned for the case of other seven police officers. However, he was from the same battalion as the others and he also is listed among those who died in the Chayangtajo in some publications of CRPF, e.g., <http://crpf.nic.in/writereaddata/images/Warriors_Remembered.pdf> [27.04.2016]: 16–18.

13 B.A Sab, administrators who have a B.A. degree.

Some information in the “Martyr Book” of the CRPF disagrees with the information provided by the oral sources from the Nyishi community. The events surrounding the counter attack by the Assam Rifles remain somewhat unclear and they are not mentioned in any documents I could access. However, these discrepancies illuminate the contrasting value systems and perspectives on this event and the difference in the timeline may well be due to the terrain, which made any effective communication very difficult.

The death of the seven officers is described each time with the exact same words, here given in its English translation: “He died during fights with Adivasis in Chayangtajo on 31 May 1963.”¹⁷ The oral sources, however, expressly speak about the Republic Day, January 26, 1963. Their detailed descriptions include the festive mood of the officers on this very day. In my view, it seems more likely that, regarding this point, the oral sources as remembered by the people of Chayangtajo are correct. One possible explanation for the different dates could be that in the absence of any knowledge of the precise day of murder a later date was given, which might be the day on which the death of the police personnel was confirmed or when the news of the murder became registered. These differences in dates show the great problem of communication, which hampered all early administration of NEFA.

Oral history remembers those details important to the local population who is retelling the stories now already over two or three generations, whereas the CRPF documents present the information important for their institution. The names of villages, part of the preceding feud, are culturally important to the Nyishi society, so they are remembered in detail as are the names of those Nyishi men who were sent to prison in Tezpur. Their fight with the *hareng* as well as their journey from Chayangtajo to Tezpur is remembered in great detail. What is not part of the narrative are “random facts,” such as the names of those *hareng* who were killed, where they came from, or even the exact number. The CRPF force, however, did remember their names, where they came from, and when they had joined their force, putting their institution at the centre of those men’s life. Besides the information provided by oral history, no archival information on the counter attack of the Assam Rifles could be found. In the absence of any records from the administration, the events

surrounding the counter attack still remain shadowy.

Lives after the Massacre

The clans of Chayangtajo adapted to the new situation. Those who had been imprisoned in Tezpur, Assam, were released in the 1970s. Oral history remembers the imprisonment in Tezpur as humane. While in jail, the inmates were taught useful handicrafts, thus, earning some money, and after their release it is said that they got government jobs and returned to their homes to live peaceful and socially productive lives.

Seme Killo, the father of Katok Killo, for example, was given a government job and worked as a *chowkidar*, a caretaker, at the Government Primary School in Killo, the same place where some of the CRPF men had lost their lives. He had three wives and 11 children. Some of his children were born to him before his imprisonment and some, as in the case of Katok Killo, after his return from jail. After a few years, Seme Killo was posted away to Pao Village, again as the caretaker of the school there. His son Katok, born in the early 1980s, also came to stay with him in Pao and finished class 10 in a local government school. The story of the 1963 attack was a regular topic of conversation in the family of Seme Killo. However, his son Katok remembers that in the last days of his father’s life, he explicitly summoned his son to narrate him the story with all its details so that he could pass it on.

Katok Killo is a charismatic and engaging narrator himself. Speaking with a strong and clear voice, he can express himself well and attracts easily the attention of his audience. These are attributes, which among the Nyishi community are highly valued and praised. His social standing is further highlighted by the fact that he has three wives. Polygyny is highly esteemed among Nyishi society. It could be argued that Nyishi women are viewed as social and economic assets; only respected and economically well-off men can attract and afford multiple wives.

Conclusion

Not malice but ignorance from both sides and a number of misunderstandings hampered the early administration in the eastern Kameng region. One major problem seems to have been that India’s na-

17 <<http://crpf.nic.in/images/pdf/MARTYEBOK.pdf>> [10.04.2016].

tion-building project was never fully explained to the local population, who treated the *hareng* as they would treat any newly arrived clan. At first, each clan competed for resources with this *hareng* administration. Only later, when it became clear that the *hareng* could not be driven away but instead were a resource itself, each clan started to compete in establishing links of social obligations with the administration to tap its wealth. Conceptually, relationships to the government were modelled along kinship relationships. Government jobs were treated like marriage, opening up a completely exclusive network on which to build economic enterprises and alliances. The idea of a nation-state and citizenship was not fully translated. Instead of adopting the government's concepts, the government became part of the clan's strategy.

Oral sources not only illuminated an event kept silent by the absence of archival data, they also provided an alternative viewpoint on the causes and sequences of events. In this case, the oral sources revealed that the framework, in which the Indian administration was seen locally, was that of a social map of clan and villages and their alliances of kinship assistants and feud. The Tajo clan had assumed that the administration, by coming along as an ally of an enemy clan, was coming as their enemies. The idea of a common citizenship, in which all parts of the society take part together, had not been explained to them. As brutal as it sounds, the action of the clans of Chayangtajo was culturally appropriate. Like "lost in translation," both sides were unable to communicate with each other and lives were lost.

A last puzzle remains. Why did the "Achingmori Massacre" create so much sensation, while the Chayangtajo event is all but forgotten in the history books? Parts of the answer may lie in the timing of both events. The "Achingmori Massacre" came at a time when a maximum of internationally trained and highly idealistic civil servants – who also happened to be eloquent writers, such as Nari Rustomji and Verrier Elwin, were establishing a policy for NEFA. Achingmori was a defining moment, as it was the blueprint for future administration to act with goodwill and restraint (Rustomji 1983: 131).

Ten years later, the brutal armed conflict between India and China had crushed any earlier idealism. A shaken India was trying to regain its

composure as well as its control over these Himalayan border areas. Overshadowed by these frightful events in the autumn of 1962, the comparatively insignificant Chayangtajo incident in early 1963 did not make much impact. It also did not fit into the narrative of a brave NEFA, welcoming back the Indian administration after the war, as it is portrayed by Rustomji (1983: 139–141). The Chayangtajo event had not much effect on the policy-making of NEFA. A more Indian mainstream administration was already being set up, integrating NEFA fully with the rest of the country.

References Cited

Annual Administrative Report of the Sela

1952 Sub Agency for the Year 1952-53. P19/52. Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh State Archive.

Dogra, R. S. D.

2004 Nation Keepers. Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). New Delhi: APH Publ.

Gait, Edward A.

1906 A History of Assam. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink.

Guyot-Réchard, Bérénice

2013 Nation-Building or State-Making? India's North-East Frontier and the Ambiguities of Nehruvian Developmentalism 1950–1959. *Contemporary South Asia* 21/1: 22–37.

Martyr Book

2016 Central Reserve Police Force. Martyr Book. <<https://www.crpf.gov.in/martyr-gallery-list.htm>> [10.04.2016]

MEA Report

1954–1955 Report of Ministry of External Affairs (01.10.1954). <<http://mealib.nic.in/?pdf2481?000>> [12.04.2016]

1957–1978 Report of Ministry of External Affairs <<http://mealib.nic.in/?pdf2484?000>> [12.04.2016].

1963 Report 1963–64. Ministry of External Affairs. Part 1: Administration. <<http://mealib.nic.in/?pdf2490?000>> [25.10.2018]

Reid, Robert

1983 History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1883–1941. Delhi: Eastern Publishing House. [First Publ. 1942]

Rustomji, Nari

1971 Enchanted Frontiers. Sikkim, Bhutan, and India's North-Eastern Borderlands. (Bombay): Oxford University Press.

1983 Imperilled Frontiers. India's North-Eastern Borderlands. Delhi: Oxford University Press.



Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Potsdamer Str. 37, D-10785 Berlin
<http://www.iai.spk-berlin.de> Indiana@iai.spk-berlin.de

El Instituto Ibero-American (IAI) de la Fundación Patrimonio Cultural Prusiano en Berlín dispone de un amplio programa de publicaciones en alemán, español, portugués e inglés que surge de varias fuentes: la investigación realizada en el propio Instituto, los seminarios y simposios llevados a cabo en el IAI, los proyectos de cooperación con instituciones nacionales e internacionales, y trabajos científicos individuales de alta calidad. En la serie **Estudios Indiana** (anteriormente "Suplementos de Indiana") se publican monografías y compilaciones que representan los resultados de investigaciones sobre las sociedades y culturas multiétnicas, indígenas y afro-americanas de América Latina y el Caribe tanto en el presente como en el pasado. Reúne contribuciones originales de todas las áreas de los estudios americanistas, incluyendo la arqueología, la etnohistoria, la antropología socio-cultural y la antropología lingüística.



Volúmenes recientes:

Estudios Indiana 11

Objetos como testigos del contacto cultural. Perspectivas interculturales de la historia y del presente de las poblaciones indígenas del alto río Negro (Brasil/Colombia).

Michael Kraus, Ernst Halbmayer, Ingrid Kummels (eds.), Berlin 2018, 398 pp., ISBN 978-3-7861-2795-6.

Durante la conferencia internacional "Objetos como testigos del contacto cultural. Perspectivas interculturales de la historia y del presente de las poblaciones indígenas del alto río Negro (Brasil/Colombia)", que se realizó en 2014 en el Ethnologisches Museum de Berlín, se evaluaron críticamente las investigaciones recientes e históricas sobre la región multicultural del alto río Negro. Se reunieron y contrastaron las perspectivas de diferentes actores en base de sus respectivas especializaciones sobre la historia de contacto de la región, sobre la situación actual y sobre el significado de la cultura material en este proceso. Participaron por lo tanto representantes de los kotiria (wanano) y wira poná (desana), miembros de los museos, antropólogos académicos y activistas. Todos ellos contribuyeron con sus enfoques sobre el papel actual de las colecciones, los museos y las exposiciones para las comunidades indígenas y la ciencia.

Estudios Indiana 10

Diccionario k'iche' de Berlín. El Vocabulario en lengua 4iche otlatecas: edición crítica.

Michael Dürr, Frauke Sachse (eds.), Berlin 2017, 326 pp., ISBN 978-3-7861-2782-6.

El "Vocabulario en lengua 4iche otlatecas" es uno de los más importantes diccionarios del k'iche' de la época colonial de Guatemala. El diccionario contiene aproximadamente 2200 entradas principales e incluye información detallada en cuanto al léxico, la gramática y la cultura acerca de esa lengua maya.

La presente edición hace accesible por primera vez el manuscrito del siglo XVIII que se encuentra hoy en el Instituto Ibero-American en Berlín, para que investigadores de las lenguas amerindias, de la lingüística misionera o de los estudios mesoamericanos entre otros puedan aprovechar de ello. El estudio introductorio incluye una descripción detallada del manuscrito y analiza la relación entre el texto y otras fuentes misioneras lexicográficas del k'iche' colonial.

IINDIANA and Estudios Indiana are Open Access:

<https://journals.iai.spk-berlin.de/index.php/indiana>

<http://www.iai.spk-berlin.de/en/publications/estudios-indiana.html>