

**HISTORY, TRADITION AND CUSTOM OF NAGA  
PEOPLE**

**Ph.D (DISSERTATION)**

**SI LINE**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
UNIVERSITY OF YANGON  
MYANMAR**

**MAY, 2016**

## ABSTRACT

The Nagas are ethnically belonged to the Tibeto-Burman family of Mongolian race. They live in northwestern part of Myanmar mainly in Khamti District of Sagaing Region. The same tribes of Naga can be seen in northeast states of India in Manipur, Assam, Arunachal and Nagaland. Few historical evidences of Naga people can be seen in the historical sources relating to the Late *Konbaung* period. During the colonial period, the history and culture of Naga tribes were explored. The British introduced their administration in some Naga areas, which are close to Myanmar Proper. However, the remote Naga areas were left as un-administrated areas. These administrated and un-administrated areas were formed as Naga Hilly District in 1939. This hilly district was reinstited into Khamti District in 1965. The two townships from Khamti District, Khamti and Homalin Townships are left as townships in this district and the rest townships of these districts, Lay Shi, Lahe and Nanyun are instituted as Naga Self-administered Area in 2008. Naga tribes have been lack of relationship with the other civilized tribes of Myanmar that they have been practiced their traditional customs and practices for years. Although some Naga tribes in government administered areas near Myanmar Proper have some changes of traditional customs and practices, Naga tribes from remote un-administered areas were waging wars among the tribes and they have not got any opportunity to have relations with Myanmar Proper. After independence, the remote un-administrated areas of Naga tribe were instituted with government administration that these areas had frequent relations with Myanmar Proper and their primitive traditional customs and practices are markedly improved. Buddhist and Christian missionaries also

helped for the rapid development of Naga tribes' customs and practices. However, some remote Naga villages, where no missionary arrived, stayed remain unchanged. This dissertation is an attempt to make comparisons of their ways of life, construction of housing practices, *Pan* practice, costumes, inheritance and marriage, *Paye* tattooing, funeral rites, traditional administration patterns and taboos between ancient time and contemporary. It is learnt that some ancient customs and practices of Naga tribes were completely extinct and some practices are mingled with customs and practices of other civilized tribes. It is revealed that traditional festivals of Naga tribes aimed to worship their traditional *nat* spirits and for relaxation after their works. However, because of the development of communication, health care service and education and the substitution of Buddhist and Christian festivals in Naga hilly region, it is in very difficult situation to survive Naga traditional customs and practices and their festivals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

# CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Abstract	iv
List of Abbreviations	vi
List of Tables	vii
List of Illustrations	viii
Introduction	xi
Chapter I      Historical Background of Naga People	1-42
Chapter II     Social Customs of Naga People	43-101
Chapter III    Traditional Festivals and Beliefs of Naga People	102-151
Conclusion	152-156
Appendix I	157
Appendix II	158-159
Appendix III	160-161
Appendix IV	162-170
Bibliography	171-187