

The Art of Warfare in Northeast India

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the strategies and tactics that were used and adopted by the hill communities (tribes) of Northeast India. Through this, an attempt has been made to bring the military history of the region into focus—a subfield of writing history that has and have continued to remain in the periphery of history writing. Besides the focus, the article goes beyond the battle-centric narratives of events (new military history). This has been done by studying the ways of waging war, defence and offence policies, and cultural meanings that were attached to the battles and wars. By doing so, this article highlights the reciprocal impact of social life of communities of Northeast India on war and vice-versa, thus, providing a holistic understanding of the interactions between the two. These interactions can be seen on the village defences, site selections, dormitories and weapons among other things.

Key words: Northeast India, (new) Military History, Defence and Offence Strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Warfare is one of the most pervasive activities throughout human history. Over the years, the military preparations and its organizations have been responsible for the socio-political structure of human societies. Thus, war can be viewed as a medium which connects communities and helps them in interacting with one another.¹ As an integral part of human existence, warfare, therefore, offers a lens via which historical events can be examined. The warfare stress on social structures can reveal the strengths and weaknesses of their institutions and even the unity (or lack of it) of communities in ways only few others can. However, even with impact of facilitating broader perspectives, the study of warfare (or military history of the region) remains an under-explored study in the field of global history. Similarly, in the Indian context, such an under-exploration of the field of military study is also seen in the literatures that deal history of Northeast India. The available literature that deals with the field of military too, needs to go beyond the traditional understanding of military history and broaden the field by incorporating socio-economic, cultural, and institutional contexts of the region. While the studies on the tribal history of Northeast India are growing and ever increasing, the tribal method of warfare and their socio-economic and cultural impacts needs to be linked and its impact needs to be explored holistically.²

The village was the smallest unit of warfare in Northeast India. Due to the absence of common authority to hold power among all groups, each tribal group behaved independently which resulted in intra and inter tribal feuds. These intra and inter warfare compelled the tribal groups to remain prepared for warfare—thus, the dominance of dormitory and geographical importance in the site selection for selecting locations for villages. However, despite their isolations and independent nature, the weapons and warfare practices of the tribes of

¹ Morillo, S., Black, J., & Lococo, P. (2008, p. ix). *War in world history: Society, Technology, and War from Ancient Times to the Present: Volume 1*. McGraw Hill. New York.

² There is dearth of historical research in the area of Tribal warfare of Northeast India. Besides, S., and Dutta, B (eds.). (2006). *Martial traditions of north east India*. Concept Publishing, New Delhi, India— which deals with the warrior tradition of the region, there is hardly any detailed study in this area of study in the region. It has been argued by scholars that the absence of the studies on the technology of the tribal people is mainly because of the success of industrial revolution in Europe and the consequent political hegemony that followed: Thakur, A. K. (2012). *Native genius and resource utilization: The Adis of Arunachal Pradesh*. In *Souvenir Gooying Liidung, Poju Mimak Centenary Celebration* (pp. 13-16).

Northeast India shared similarities. This has to do with the geographical impact on the nature of warfare and very close socio-cultural resemblance of tribes to one other. Due to this shared similarities, a general observation allows the categorization of wars into four types: 1. declared war (formal battle/attacks); 2. war of challenge (ritual attacks); 3. un-declared war (raids for women) and 4. single combat or goliatic war (revenge attacks).³

The main reasons for the first kind of battle – declared war or formal attacks have been the need to ensure the survival of the groups. In this battle, two groups of warriors engaged in attacks, until a few warriors have been killed, wounded or taken captives. The social organizations of the two groups are influenced by the frequency of this kind of attacks. Thus, we see, due to higher frequencies of such attacks, the villages were often fortified and structured to provide maximum defence and protection. In the second form of war- war of challenge or ritual attacks, the customary laws to convicts who had committed offenses like murder or assault was applied. These customary laws often involved use of weapons to inflict harm and the accused was expected to face the consequences without backing down. The main cause for the third kind of war- undeclared war was usually centered on kidnapping of women. P. T. Carnegy (1873) documented such kind of warfare among the Nagas⁴ in which inter tribal relations turned violent due to the complexities that emerged out of inter-marriage. He writes:

‘... enemy of different tribes seems to intermarry... this was even the case between the Bordoobyas and Mekilais until a short time ago when a party of men from the latter tribe escorted a woman of their village to be home of a man of Bordoobyas who had to take her to wife. These men were hospitably entertained and made drunk, then when on their way home again were set upon and killed’.⁵

The revenge attacks⁶ were aimed to punish an entire community for the actions of one of its members. In this kind of attack, the opponent villages were visited nocturnally, and the culprits were usually strangulated or poisoned and killed. The revenge attacks were seen derogatorily as compared to the other forms of attacks. It was derogatorily remarked as ‘the one who takes the throat’.⁷

THE WEAPONS OF WAR

The weapons of the hill people of Northeast India comprised of spears, crossbows, double bladed curved heavy swords, arrow spears and shields.⁸ The Garos (hill tribe on the west of Khasi hills, now Meghalaya) weapons of war were straight swords, crossbows made of bamboo and the arrows made with fox skin covered with leaves and quivers, and also, lozengic shaped spears with iron tips. A *dao* which was carried with a string on the back, was the prime offensive weapons of the hill tribes. It was of different shapes and lengths. It was used for different purposes, starting from domestic works, hunting, to fighting. The Naga and Adi tribes were armed with *dahs* (*dao*). *Dah* was long knife or broadsword which was curved. A. Hamilton and P.T Carney highlight the use of *dah* by the Naga and Adi (hill tribe along the border of north Brahmaputra. They inhabit the outer ranges of the eastern Himalayas through which flows the Rivers- Dihang and Lohit, which merged with Sadiya and together united with the Brahmaputra river) tribes. They wrote:

³ Singh & Dutta (2006, p. 34)

⁴ The Nagas are people from Naga Hills, situated in the north banks of Brahmaputra River (now Nagaland). Naga here is used as a generic identity which includes Ao, Angami, Sengma and others tribes from Nagaland.

⁵ Carney, P. T. (1873, July 10). Demi official letter to the Deputy Commissioner of Sebsaugor [Letter No. 45]. Jarehaut.

⁶ Alexander Mackenzie writes about the raids organized by the Garos (residing on the central hills of the Northern Bank of Brahmaputra River, currently an ethnic community of Meghalaya) into the neighbouring areas in the plains and hills under the leadership of their nokmas in the olden days. He writes in the year 1807, the Garos burnt 3 villages which killed 27 persons, in 1813 they burnt 2 villages which killed 24 persons. This number rose incomparably to burning 150 villages in 1816 which killed 94 persons. For details Mackenzie, A. (1884, pp. 246-24). The North-East frontiers of India. Mittal Publication. New Delhi, India.

⁷ One such revenge attack has been reported by C.G. Bayne. “Unknown Sana Kachins near Kamaing attacked Gurkha cow-keepers house on the hill near paddy fields on 28th October about 12’ o clock. Two men and one woman murdered. Reason of crime-revenge”. Proceedings, File No. (1900, January). Department of Foreign Affairs, Branch External A. National Archives of India. Subject: Murder of three Gurkhas by Sana Kachins near Kamaing. (Nos. 65-66).

⁸ Egerton, W. (1986, p. 90).

‘The Nagas..., armed with spear and *dhao*... the *dao* being the weapons on which they mainly depend for real hand to hand work...’⁹

‘The Adors (Adi) in addition to ambushes rely on their prowess as spearman and bowmen...they have also adapted wielding heavy *dhaos*, which are of different length- between 1-4 feet’.¹⁰

The knives were short, about half feet long, pointed, one-side edged with a thin blade. Its handle was made of wood or bamboo, painted with strips or cane and iron tube, and was carried in a case by a sling.¹¹ Amongst the Khasi (dwellers in the hills of Surma Valley) and Garos, one of the principal weapons was a two- edge sword called *milam*,¹² a double-edged sword fashioned from a single piece of iron, encompassing the hilt to the point. A cross-bar separated the hilt from the blade, which was secured to a bunch of cow’s tail hair. Originally, yak’s tail hair from Tibet was used, but was later replaced by cow’s tail in course of time.

Bows were made of bamboos and were of different sizes. Usually in warfare and hunting bows of big sizes were used. Their strings were made of cane or fiber of creepers. The arrows, also made of bamboo, fell into three categories: iron-tipped, un-tipped, and ordinary arrows. Occasionally, arrows were poisoned by applying a poison over cane and fiber bound around the area of arrowhead insertion. A. Hamilton observes:

‘...the poison spread is very rapid... sometimes it takes less than an hour and hardly more than six hours. Violent convulsions are set up, and tetanus supervenes’.¹³

Arrows were kept in a quiver or bamboo tube. It could accommodate 15-20 arrows at a time. This was the only- near range weapon of the tribes which could hit an object at a distance of one hundred yards. The spears were made of sturdy wooden shafts which had dual-pronged designs along with a sharp pointed blade and iron spiked butt at the base of the spears. The spears were used for close range attacks, usually, within a distance of 30 yards. A poison sap was used to enhance the lethality of the spears. The tribes also used shields¹⁴ which were made of animal hide. It was reinforced with a frame and a handle in the centre. The shields had rectangular, conclave and bent designs. Some shields were also made from bamboo, with interlaced cane strips that provided durability. The shields were usually held by the left hand while the *dao* in the right hand, which was protected by a covering made of dried animal hide from the wrist to the elbow. Additionally, a waistcoat made from thick animal skin was also worn to protect the chest and back against arrow and sword attacks. Along with the shields and waistcoat, helmets also worn as battle attire. These helmets were made of cane peelings of bamboos and could protect from blow of the *dao*, throw of spears, pelted stones, rain and heat. This complete battle attire made of traditionally available materials and use of animal skins highlights the understanding of the hill tribes of their geography and also reflects their sophistication in understanding the warfare mechanism of combat and defense.

THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF DORMITORY

Amongst the hill tribes of Northeast India, the dormitory of boys¹⁵ were known by different names- *Mosup Kas* amongst the Adis, *Morung* or *Long Shim* by Nagas, Mizos called it *Zawlbuk* and *Nokpante* amongst the

⁹Carney, P. T. (1873, July 10); Also, Barpujari, S. K. (1970, pp. 79-88). Fire-arms traffic and use in Naga Hills in the nineteenth century. Proceedings of Indian History Congress, 32(II).

¹⁰ A. Hamilton description the Adi war weapon. Hamilton, A. (1983, p. 26). In the jungles of North-East India. Mittal Publication. Delhi, India.

¹¹ ‘The Khasi sword is of considerable length, and possesses the peculiarity of not having a handle of different material from that which is used for blade. In the khasi sword the handle is never made of wood or bone, or of anything except iron or steel, the result being that the sword is most awkward to hold, and could never have been of much use as a weapon of offence’. For details: Gordon, P. R. T. (1990, pp. 23-24). The Khasis. Low Price Publication. Delhi, India.

¹² Sangma, M. (1984, pp. 134-135). History and culture of the Garos. In L. S. Gassah (Ed.), Garo Hills land and the people. Omsons Publication. Gauhati, India.

¹³ Hamilton, A. (1983, p. 24).

¹⁴ Shields were of two types among the Garos. The one made of wood was called *sepi* and the other made of bear skin or cowhide stretched on wooden frame.

¹⁵ As no one knew when the raiders attack the village and hence all the young unmarried men of the village would sleep in a house.

Garos. It served as the hub of warfare. It imparted lessons for fighting the enemy and precautions steps in guarding the village. The dormitory also functioned as guardhouse and served as 'safe-houses' for its members from the attacks.

Besides its military significance, one of the many important roles that dormitory played was in socialization of young men and women of villages. It offered guidance in diverse activities which includes art and crafts, dance, music, etiquette, wrestling, morality, ceremonial practices and discipline. Thus, Verrier Elwin was apt when he described, the institution of dormitory as the 'dear nurse of arts'.¹⁶ His analysis highlighted the role of dormitory in fostering the artistic and cultural expressions amongst the tribes.

DEFENCE AND OFFENCE STRATEGIES

The Interplay of Terrain and Tactics in the Village Defence

The defence of village was the most important priority of the tribes during the time of attack. The defense arrangement of the village began with the selection of a site against any external surprise and planned aggression. The first defence arrangement of the village was strategic planning and selecting the site of steep precipice and summit of a hill. When new sites were selected, elaborate arrangements of defence were made by making and placing the stockades, bamboo spikes or *panjies*, stones chutes or booby traps, long drum, the dormitory for men, look-out platform, and a fortified gate. The failed mission of R. Campbell's to seize grain stores in the heights above Konomah in Naga hills has been attributed to the 'strongly fortified heights on every accessible point by strong breastworks, ground rough which was thickly studded with *Punjies*'.¹⁷

R. Campbell (1849) describes the resistance that his expeditionary party faced by the Nagas. He writes that his party was-

'assaulted by innumerable stones rolled down and thrown at them from different peaks on the height which were crowded with Nagas. They were exposed to a small crossfire of musketry from the two peaks, which but for the jungle would have caused much loss... His party remained in the peak all day trying to 'pacify' the hill, but the Nagas art of warfare and their terrain, rendered their efforts useless. Three soldiers were wounded by bullets, many others by stones and *panjies*'.¹⁸

Similar arrangement of village defence in Naga hills was also highlighted by Alexander Mackenzie while describing the Angami Nagas. He writes:

'The Angami village is strongly fortified with deep ditches, massive stone walls, stockades and sides of hill thickly padded with *panjis*. In some cases, the sloping of the hill is cut to form a wall in perpendicular angle. The ways to the village are narrow, covered and **torturous and is only wide enough to admit one man** at a time. These approaches would lead to wooden gates of the village which has a post for sentry to lookout and guard the villages when the villagers are at fields. Many times, these ways are steep, and the only means of entry to the village is by means of ladder which consists of a single pole, 15-20 feet high, cut into steps'.¹⁹

The Adis' war tactics was a blend of defensive and offensive strategies. The Adis adopted a range of techniques to stop the advance of their adversaries which included the use of natural obstacles like felled trees and rugged terrain.²⁰ Additionally, they utilized arrows fired from the jungle flanks to harm and disorient their opponents. Upon approaching the first stockade, the Adis resorted to a defense-in-depth strategy, employing a series of concentric stockades that required the attackers to breach each successive barrier. The Adis' use of arrows and musket shots from the stockades, combined with their deployment of troops on the steep banks of the river, shows their understanding of the terrain and its potential for ambushes. Furthermore, the Adis' ability

¹⁶ Quoted in Horam, M. (1992, p. 73). Social and cultural life of Nagas. Low Price Publications. Delhi, India.

¹⁷ Campbell, R. (1849, January 5-25). Diary of Lieutenant R. Campbell highlighting his proceedings in the Angami Naga Hills.

¹⁸ Vincent, Lieutenant. (1850). Diary of the expedition to the Angami Naga in 1849 [File No. 639]. Assam Secretariat, Guwahati.

¹⁹ Mackenzie, A. (1994, p. 144).

²⁰ Shakespear, L. W. (1977, pp. 43-46). History of the Assam Rifles. Firma KLM Private LTD. Calcutta, India. L.W. Shakespear was involved in 1858-59 Expedition again the Adis.

to adapt to changing circumstances is evident in their decision to abandon the final stockade without a fight, thereby conserving their forces and retreating to a more advantageous position. The Adis' exhibition of defence and offense strategies in their fighting qualities in this expedition highlighted their proficiency in combining different techniques to achieve strategic objectives.

J. Coggin also observes that Adi villages were fortified with short bamboo palisades and *chevaux-de-frise*, while strong log and stone stockades protected the approaches. The village sites were often selected for their natural defences, such as inaccessible cliffs.²¹ Similarly Hamlet Barey notes that the Khasi and Jaintia villages, like Nongbah, Iapngar and Mawmluh, were surrounded by strong stone walls to ensure safety against invasion.²² However, unlike the other hill communities of the region, the Khasis did not build their villages on the extreme summits of hills, but a little below the tops, generally in small depressions, to protect against strong winds and storms. In fact, the Khasis believed it was a taboo to build houses on hilltop, as this would compromise their defense strategies.²³

Stockade and Defence

The construction of stockades involved planting sturdy tree trunks into the ground and securing them with canes. The posts were sharpened and the structure's height was designed difficult for crossing. The bamboo stockades were temporary fortifications, primarily used for field defense. In some cases, large stone boulders were also used to build stockades. Usually, the stockades encircled a village, unless the natural terrain made it unnecessary. Remnants of these stone walls, ditches, and wooden gates can still be seen in many villages in Northeast.

To breach a fortified village, enemies faced significant risks. Narrow pathways leading to the village gate were lined with massive stone walls, approximately five to six feet high. A ditch, often embedded with obstacles, ran along the inner perimeter. During inter-village wars, the security and safety of the villages relied on these fortifications, including look-out platforms, sentry posts, and the strategic location of the village itself. In Naga villages, houses were built along ridges in two rows, providing villagers with a tactical advantage in case of attack.²⁴

A signal from one row would alert the entire village. The long drums were beaten to alarm the villagers. Thorny or itchy plants were planted around the village perimeter to slow enemy advances. Hide-outs played a crucial role in defensive strategies. The Lushai²⁵ *jowlbook* was a fortified stronghold situated in a strategic location. Its walls were built with arrow-proof materials and featured small holes for archers and musketeers to fire from safety. The fall of a *jowlbook* often signified the fall of the chief.²⁶

The Use of *Panjies* for Defence and Offence

Panjies were bamboo or hardwood spikes, ranging from eight to ten inches in length. It was sharpened to a needle-like point and fire-hardened. Its tips were coated with a fatal poison and the other end was inserted into the ground at an angle which would conceal the *panjies* among the grass or hot ashes. This was done to impale

²¹ Thus, from the above account it can be said that the placing of stockades were the principal elements of fortification of village which was common amongst all tribes. The earliest British operations, against the Singphos in Upper Assam, during the closing years of First Anglo-Burmese war were also invariably against the fortified villages and entrenched positions: Military Consultation. (1828, December 26). Nos. 28-29. National Archives of India, New Delhi.

The Khasis village Mawmluh in 1829-34, a mile west of Cherrapunjee was fortified to stop an invasion of the hills from Sylhet, the direction from which they correctly anticipated the advance of British forces. Imdad Hussain. (1991, pp. 359-372). Village fortifications in tribal North-East India: A preliminary note. In J. P. Singh & G. Sengupta (Eds.), *Archaeology of North-Eastern India*. Har-anand Publications. New Delhi, India.

²² Bareh, H. (1985, p. 317). *The history and culture of the Khasi people*. Spectrum Publication. Guwahati, India.

²³ Gordon, P. R. T. (1990, p. 33).

²⁴ Nshoga, A. (2009, p. 73). *Traditional Naga village system and its transformation*. Anshah Publishing House. Kolkata, India.

²⁵ Lushai hills is in the south of Brahmaputra.

²⁶ Chatterjee, S. (1985). *Mizoram under the British rule*. Mittal Publications. Delhi, India.

the unsuspecting intruders.²⁷

Unaware of the *panjies* locations, the attackers would often fell victim to them. The *panjies* were effective enough to penetrate soft boots or gaiters of the soldiers and coolies, often leading to instant death or severe injury. The *panjies* were in particular devastating for the barefooted coolies (tribal-peasant militia) carrying rations and ammunitions for the forward troops in small wars of Northeast India. The *panjies* can be categorized of two kinds on the basis of their design and functionality- the village based (permanent) *panjies* and the portable ones. The village based also the permanent *panjies* were approximately six inches long and was not thicker than a needle. The portable ones were made of bamboos, and were designed to break off inside the flesh, in order to cause maximum damage.

Not all the tribes of Northeast coated the *panjies* with poison. We have evidence of Adis using poison in their *panjies*. This evidence comes from 1893 when Lieut. R. A. East died fighting the Adis after being struck by a poisoned arrow.²⁸ A similar example also comes from Noel Williamson's²⁹ and his party massacre at Komsing in 1911 by the Adis. One of the Williamson coolies was found dead in the Dihang River after being struck by a poisoned arrowhead. The shaft was poised and the coolie died trying to pull out the arrow.³⁰ Amongst the Nyshi's and Galo's of Arunachal Pradesh, *croton tiglium* was the used poison. *Aconitum ferox* was used less frequently than the *croton tiglium* as it was not found in the Nyshi and Galo hills. It had to be imported from their neighboring tribe- Mishmis to the east. The *croton* poison was imported by the Adis from the Galongs. However, they preferred aconite for hunting where as a mixture of aconite and croton for warfare as croton was not easily available and had to be sourced from the neighboring tribes. The other cause can be the mixture of aconite and croton was more fatal than aconite alone. The aconite alone was considered ineffective if the poisoned arrow was quickly extracted and the wound be cleaned. The Nyshis obtained their aconite from snake-infested mountain to the north, while the Simong Adis imported it from the snowy range to the north of their territory. The preparation of the poison involved pulverizing it on a stone and mixing it with the juices of a creeper and a wild potato to create a paste.³¹ This paste was then applied thickly to the head of the arrow, just behind the point, to ensure rapid absorption. The arrows were also poisoned by thrusting them into decomposing carcasses. Besides, aconite and the croton plant, pig's blood, frog's skin, serpent's venom, and the fruit and juice of several plants were occasionally added to the arrow- poisons.³²

In his account, A Hamilton, detailed the standardized protocols outlined in Force Orders for the treatment of poisonous wounds resulting from arrow injuries. Noting the rapid action of the poison, A. Hamilton highlighted the importance of prompt intervention. To ensure timely and effective treatment, all hospital details were equipped with phials of crystals of permanganate of potash together with metal syringes. According to the directives of Force Orders, a multi-step approach was recommended for treating arrow wounds- first, the arrow was to be carefully pushed out of the body and subsequently, the wound track was to be thoroughly swabbed with pure carbolic acid, following by syringing with permanganate of potash.³³

Stone Chutes or Booby-Traps

The stone chutes or booby traps was a part of fortification system employed by the villages. It is posited that a significant number of villages were surrounded by the stone chutes, which were strategically positioned to be triggered by the enemy's advancement along jungle paths through the narrow defiles leading to the village.

²⁷ Kumar, A.K. (2006, p. 180). Technology and society in pre-colonial perspective of Arunachal Pradesh. In S., and Dutta, B (eds.). (2006). *Martial traditions of north east India*. Concept Publishing, New Delhi, India

²⁸ L. W. Shakespear, (1977, p. 120).

²⁹ Assistant Political Officer in the Districts of Sadiya and Lakhimpur.

³⁰ 'The Balek Abors called the croton berries morus and the aconite ammo. The toxic properties of croton are said to disappear rapidly when used by itself: it must be fresh, hence presumably the mixture. Dunbar, G. D-S. (1916, p. 47). Memoir on Abors and Galong: Notes on certain hill tribes of the Indo-Tibetan border. Asiatic Society of Bengal, 5.

³¹ The creeper and the root (that was taken for wild potato) were both cultivated. They called the former talo and the latter imane. The 'Daflas' (now Nyshis) are said to use pig's blood to bind the powdered poison.

³² Fraser, T. R. (1915). The poisoned arrows of the Abors and Mishmis of North-East India, and composition and action of their poisons. University of Edinburgh.

³³ Hamilton, A. (1983, pp. 26-27). In Abor jungles of North-East India. Mittal Publications. Delhi, India.

The stone chutes were placed and tied, allowing for a single cut in a rope or cane to release multiple chutes, thereby creating a successive barrage of stone projectiles to deter attackers. Furthermore, the jungles surrounding the villages were deliberately cleared to provide the stones with an unobstructed trajectory. This tactic is exemplified in the account of L.W. Shakespear, who recounted an attempt to reach Damroh (an Adi village), their movement was delayed by having to change their direction as the Adi's were using many great stone shoots which was built far up in the hills.³⁴

The intentional selection of village sites, as previously discussed, played a crucial role in the defense strategy employed by the hill communities. The approaches to the villages were often deliberately situated through narrow, winding paths or lanes, flanked by high banks or steep ravines, and occasionally traversing the bed of an old torrent. This deliberate placement of villages in inaccessible locations has been astutely observed, with the villages subsequently fortified by bamboo palisades or stockades constructed from tree trunks. Moreover, all approaches were meticulously *panjied* and flanked by chutes, rendering the village a formidable stronghold against potential attackers. Ultimately, the strategic placement of the village presented a significant obstacle to enemy forces, with the primary challenge being not how to engage the enemy, but rather how to access them.

CONCLUSION

This paper underscores the importance of studying military history beyond traditional narratives, emphasizing the need to explore the socio-economic, cultural, and institutional contexts of warfare. By exploring the intricate defense and offense strategies, as well as the cultural significance of combat practices, this article not only enriches our understanding of Northeast India's past but also highlights the resilience and sophistication of tribal communities in the region. Through a deeper exploration of military history, we gain valuable insights into the complexities of human interactions, the impact of warfare on social structures, and the enduring legacy of traditional combat practices in Northeast India.

³⁴ Shakespear, L. W. (1977, p. 118). History of the Assam Rifles. Firma KLM Private Ltd on behalf of Tribal Research Institute at Mizoram. Calcutta, India.