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IMAG(IN)ING THE NAGAS
The Pictorial Ethnography of Hans-Eberhard Kauffmann and Christoph von Förer-Haimendorf
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Author: Alban von Stockhausen

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Back cover illustration: Ao woman from Mirinokpo village. 11th February 1937. HEK (Section of 24–35).
Frontispiece: The Konyak girl Henlong of Wakching. 17th April 1937. HEK (Section of 42–37, FA).
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Chronological Index of the Naga Expeditions in 1936/37

Acknowledgements
preferred pictures on which the people could be clearly seen in good lighting conditions, and the most helpful images in this respect were actually the anthropometric photographs taken by Kauffmann. The people immediately understood the principle of a person being photographed from the front and side and they often compared the two views in the identification process to make sure they got the person on it right. In this way the anthropometric photographs which today anthropologists usually respond to with a negative attitude actually enjoyed great popularity in the field.

One day I was looking at the photographs from Mokokchung village in one of the village households. When I reached the picture of a woman there was suddenly a lot of giggling and laughter. I couldn’t see the reason. She was neither particularly naked – which was usually a reason for giggling – nor was anything else particularly funny about her in my eyes. The people explained to me that this woman – they didn’t know her name though – must be from such and such family. “Why?” was my question and I supposed it had something to do with her dress. But I was wrong: “Look at her teeth!” they exclaimed, “they still have the same kind of teeth in that family!” A few minutes later, one of the watchers had just identified an old man by name and clan. “But”, the wife of the house owner said, moved, “that would mean it’s my grandfather!” She had no personal memory of him and was very happy to see him on a photograph. Everything was done to organise somebody with a data stick in the village so we could copy the image for her. A few days later we were walking around Mokokchung town and popped by chance into an informal meeting of the Mokokchung village elders. They were sitting on a roof top drinking tea. Were we the people with the photographs? we were asked. Yes, but we didn’t have the laptop with us at that moment. No matter, they replied, they would send somebody to the lodge. Of course they knew everything already, where we came from, where we were staying, who was travelling around with us and who was to be seen on the photographs. Having providently obtained permission from the archive to give the pictures to the village council, we actually received a visit the next day from an elderly man carrying a data stick. The village council requested the pictures of their village for archival purpose – and for a small publication of the village.

In the urban areas, especially in Kohima, this was a common reaction. The educated young people who knew how to handle a computer often asked whether we could give them

8 On most of my research trips, I travelled together with the anthropologist Marion Wettstein.
A Methodological Framework for this Study

We did not have permission to leave the entire collection there, but usually we gave a few images of the Fürer-Haimendorf collection in a similar resolution to the one available online from the videodisc. In a short time many came up with the idea that we should make an exhibition with the pictures. The idea was developed further into the plan of organising a touring exhibition in Nagaland that shows specific images of the region in each place where it would be shown. This idea is still being pursued and I hope that I will be able to organise such an exhibition as part of a joint initiative with a number of people from Nagaland.

It was fairly rare that old people recognised themselves on photographs. Indeed I met one man only who could positively state that the child on one picture was definitely himself, Immerenba Alsongchanger Ao of Mokokchung village. He had been a young boy of maybe 10 years of age when the photograph was taken. It was an anthropometric photograph that was taken by Kauffmann on 3rd Feb. 1937 and I asked Immerenba whether he could remember the photographer and what type of person he was. The old man explained that he never really met the photographer. They – which means he himself and a few others from the village – had been summoned from the fields for the photograph by the dobashi; they were ordered to stand there, the photograph was taken, and then they were sent away again. That was it. There was no personal contact between the photographer and the photographed in this case. He also could not remember being ‘measured’ by the anthropologist. But Immerenba remembered that the reason why he and others had been called was that the visitor wished to meet representatives from different clans and social positions in the village.

When I stated before that mostly people did not relate so strongly to headhunting dances, it is not surprising that there was one region that is an exception. In the Konyak villages where Fürer-Haimendorf did his research – and especially in the villages to which he had brought pieces of heads back from his trip to Pangsha (cf. chapter 4.2) – the headhunting dances evoked many memories and prompted a lot of stories to be told. As for instance in the village of

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9 The Fürer-Haimendorf images are now published online for public use under a ‘Creative Commons’ licence.
10 His name was also recorded on Kauffmann’s photo-list.
11 Many of the old Naga people questioned could not give precise information about their age, due to the lack of written records.
12 Official government interpreter
4.3 Travels to Naga Areas in 1962 and 1970

Fürer-Haimendorf planned to return to the Nagas already in 1939, but the war and his internment in Hyderabad kept him from accomplishing this wish. Even though he spent some time in 1944/45 only a short distance north of the area in the Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh (the then called NEFA), it would not be until 1962 before he could enter Naga areas again and visit the Wancho Nagas. Not before 1970 did he return to Wakching to meet his old Konyak friends again.

The Wancho Visit in 1962

After the independence of India, the political climate in the Naga Hills worsened considerably and changed into open conflict, in which the Indian government tried to suppress an independence movement of the Nagas. The Naga areas were completely closed to foreigners. Therefore, the only way to study Naga people was to stay outside their core areas and to visit Naga groups that had settled in other – freely accessible – areas. During spring 1962, Fürer-Haimendorf got the chance for a short visit to groups north of the Konyak, which are closely related to them: the Wancho (also Wanchu) and the Nokte, a subgroup that settles in the Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh. They reminded him vividly of the Konyak Nagas he had visited in 1936/37. Together with Sonu Lovraj, the political officer in charge of Tirap district, he drove through the district that was in large parts accessible by road. Fürer-Haimendorf notes: "The age of great expeditions such as our tour to Pangsha in 1936 was clearly over and on reflection I believe that that expedition into unexplored Kalyo-Kengyu country was probably the last of its kind." Among the Nokte, they visited the village of Khonsa and some smaller places without staying there for longer time spans. They continued to the Wancho areas where they visited the villages of Niaunyu (Niaunu) and Mintong. Only a few photographs, some of them in colour, and some short films as well as tape recordings were made during this trip.

79 Fürer-Haimendorf 1976: 214
80 This paragraph is largely based on his accounts of the journey in Fürer-Haimendorf 1976: Chapter 26.
Corpse platform in the forest near the Wancho village of Niaunyu. Arunachal Pradesh, March 1962. CFH (471–05/A).

Log drum players at the Wancho village of Mintong. Arunachal Pradesh, Spring 1962. CFH.
Sha-long, the ang of the Konyak village of Zu-nyu sitting on the ground. He is wearing a white cloth round his head, shell discs with red coloured tassels from his ears, and rattan wristlets. His face is tattooed. A white cloth is wrapped round his shoulders. He came to Wakching with his entourage to ask Mr. Blah, a British official at Wakching for help because the son of one of his sub-angs had been imprisoned in Jorhat on the charge of having taken part in a headhunting raid. Fürer-Haimendorf recorded him and his entourage in 25 images. 30th July 1936. CFH (021–35).

Profile of a man with curly hair and a small pigtail. Shiong, 20th Dec. 1936. CFH (054–36).

Profile of a Konyak man with a ‘basin’ haircut – apart from a longer piece of hair at the back. He is wearing a metal head pendant – most probably a traded-in Buddha head originally made for a make-up box, a practice commonly found among the Konyak. Wakching, 14th Feb. 1937. CFH (064–31).
Portraits

The ‘telephoto’ (zoom) lens Fürer-Haimendorf had mounted on one of his camera bodies allowed him to create portrait photographs of people without drawing their attention to the camera by getting too close to them.

The reasons why he took such portraits seem to differ from image to image. At times the sheer fascination of the beauty of the person or the situation seems to have triggered his interests, at other times it was an interest in their body decoration or jewellery or even in physical features which he thought were worth documenting.

The two daughters of the ang of Oting, Khotngam and Pheam/Naotho, with heavy jewellery around their necks which marks them as belonging to the ang clan. Oting, 9th Oct. 1936. CFH (029–08).

Man with a palm leaf and a spear, part of the entourage of Sha-long, the ang of Zu-nyu. Wakching, 30th July 1936. CFH (022–08).
Imagining the Nagas

Henlong, 'The Belle of Wakching' as Fürer-Haimendorf called her, one of the most famous photographs Fürer-Haimendorf took of her. She has crossed her arms behind her head and is pushing out her breasts, a pose known by many popular erotic dancers in the Europe of the 1930s. 27th April 1937. CFH (087–37).

Henlong transformed into a cartoon character, on the book wrapper of the 1946 Indian edition of “The Naked Nagas”. Illustration by Barbara Lawrence.
Henlong and ‘The Naked Nagas’

One of the best known images of Fürer-Haimendorf’s career was the photograph of a young girl of Wakching named Henlong that was printed in The Naked Nagas as well as in many other popular articles Fürer-Haimendorf published after his return to Europe. It was usually subtitled as “The Belle of Wakching” or similar. The Konyak girl Henlong is pictured bare-breasted on it, with her hands behind her head, in a pose reminiscent of poses known from Josephine Baker and other popular dancers of the 1930s. For the slightly enlarged Indian Edition of The Naked Nagas, the image was even worked into a cartoon-like figure that was printed on the dust jacket. Henlong was used as a symbol for the notion of nakedness and inherent eroticism that was usually associated with ‘archaic’ tribes by the European public.

After the ‘discovery’ however of the Kauffmann photographs in Munich, new insights became possible into the context of how this picture was made: Kauffmann had photographed the same scene from further away. It quickly becomes clear that Henlong’s ‘nakedness’ and her pose were set up by Fürer-Haimendorf – perhaps already with the title of his planned book in mind.

Kauffmann’s images suggest the story like this: a few moments before Fürer-Haimendorf took his shot, we see Henlong, wearing a shawl around her upper body, standing with her parents and another man, probably a helper of the anthropologists in the field (film 42, frame 33). Then on the next frames we see her giggling with her hand covering her mouth while somebody to the right of the photographer is talking to her (frames 34 and 35). It seems as if Fürer-Haimendorf is asking her to remove her shawl because in the next frames by Kauffmann we see her portrayed with a bared upper body while the photographer seems to be kneeling in front of her (frames 37 and 38).

116 cf. frontispiece
Places in the Naga Hills District related to the photography of Hans-Eberhard Kauffmann in 1936/37

All measurements and locations are approximate. Placenames and names of ethnic groups are given according to the namings used in the 1930s. The font size does not indicate the size of the respective ethnic group. This map is not exhaustive. Errors and omissions excepted. (AvS)
by Lorenz Lößler, who remained and studied the region for the rest of his life.\textsuperscript{71}

In 1958 Kaufmann moved to Munich\textsuperscript{72} and in 1960 started working at the Institut für Völkerkunde\textsuperscript{73} of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, where he was given the title of honorary professor by the philosophical faculty.\textsuperscript{74} The institute had been founded shortly before by his friend Hermann Baumann with whom Kaufmann had been in close contact since his time in Vienna.\textsuperscript{75} Baumann, who was known for his sympathies towards the ideologies of the Third Reich, had taken over the professorship of Koppers in Vienna in 1939, and in 1945 ‘fled’ to Berlin.\textsuperscript{76} He remained a disputed personality ever since. During his time at the institute, Kaufmann gave lectures on the cultures of South and Southeast Asia. In 1967, the same year like Baumann, Kaufmann left the institute due to poor health.

After his retirement Kaufmann continued to travel and in 1970 published a German-Thai dictionary. Other travels during the 1960s and 70s took him to India, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia (Bali), journeys that were only covered in few publications.

Hans-Eberhard Kauffmann died childless in 1985, at the age of 87 in Munich. His ashes were buried in his hometown Mannheim.\textsuperscript{77} After his death, his entire archive was given for storage and archiving to the Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikanistik in Munich, where it was largely forgotten until 2004, when it became partly catalogued and sorted in the context of a ‘Master’ thesis by a student at the Institute.\textsuperscript{78}

5.2 The “German Naga-Expedition” of 1936/37

Hans-Eberhard Kauffmann reached the Naga Hills five months after Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, with whom he had planned the trip earlier in Vienna. Unlike Fürer-Haimendorf, Kauffmann didn’t focus on a single group of villages but covered a wide range of groups during his visit. Even though he was clearly influenced by the Malinowskian school,\textsuperscript{79} his research trip did not include longer stays in one locality but was strongly adapted to his approach of collecting data for certain topics which could be used for comparative studies. In continuation of the topic of his literature-based doctoral thesis, Kauffmann focused his studies on aspects of agriculture, economy and other facets of Naga culture which he believed had been overlooked by other scientists such as Mills and Hutton.\textsuperscript{80} After his return from the expedition in 1937, Kauffmann wrote:

“The main focus of the expedition was placed on a broadened knowledge of the economic basis of the Naga tribes and the Kuki. As is known, agriculture and animal husbandry is practised everywhere in the hills, and a lot of new material could already be collected on this and a lot of pending questions answered. Part of this work also included pressing of all kinds of crop plants in order to have their botanical names identified later (...). The other branches of material culture, especially craft and trade will be taken into consideration if possible.”\textsuperscript{81}

Kauffmann’s expedition was well planned and methodologically embedded in the theories he had brought with him from his studies in Zurich and Vienna. His methods included taking anthropometric measurements of people, recording oral traditions, especially songs, and the systematic collection of artefacts: “A collection of ethnographic objects is being created, with great importance attached to giving a typical cross-section of the material culture of

\textsuperscript{71} His last and most detailed ethnography on the region being published in 2012 (Lößler 2012).
\textsuperscript{72} Personal communication Josepha Kauffmann by Katrin Fess, May 2004. (In: Fess 2004:37)
\textsuperscript{73} After 1964 called ‘Institut für Völkerkunde und Afrikanistik’ and today ‘Institut für Ethnologie’.
\textsuperscript{74} HEK KO 1959–60: letter by the dean of the University of Munich, dated 30th March 1960
\textsuperscript{75} HEK KO 1937–41: letter to H. Baumann dated 19.2.1940
\textsuperscript{76} Braun 1995: 41, Linimayr 1994: 166, 190f
\textsuperscript{77} Personal communication Ingo Boehringer, 2011
\textsuperscript{78} Fess 2004
\textsuperscript{79} He was later even called “an important representative of the method of participant observation on the Indian subcontinent” (Kathöfer 1989:321), which is definitely taking it a bit far.
\textsuperscript{80} Kauffmann 1937b: 163
\textsuperscript{81} ibid.: 166
Colour Photography (‘Kornraster’-Film)

Quite late in his research, in spring 1937, Kauffmann received a number of 35 mm colour films, of the first ‘Kornraster’ generation made by Agfacolor. They were already on the market in 1932 but in 1936 replaced by ‘Agfacolor NEU’ which had less grain and better colours than the ‘Kornraster’ material. Kauffmann used the latter and produced the first colour images of the Nagas, a few months earlier than Fürer-Haimendorf, who received his colour films only a few days before he left the Naga Hills in June 1937. Both film types were far less light-sensitive than the black and white films and all of the photographs taken with them had therefore to be done in bright sunlight. Some of the ‘Kornraster’ images taken by Kauffmann, characterised by their strong film-grain, are presented here. When they were developed into positives, Kauffmann mounted some of them directly into slide frames so as to show them during talks. Many of the colour images were also done at the same time in black and white, probably with Kauffmann’s other camera, as he obviously lacked the experience of working with this new, less light-sensitive material.

“...the village Chief Yanghöse, wearing a cane hat of cane dyed red and orchid stalks, turning bright yellow when being dried with a bunch of goat’s hair dyed red on the crest. He is distinguished as a reknowned warrior by the Ao-cloth ‘tsungkotepsü’ which he is wearing slung around the shoulders: red & blue stripes with a white centre-stripe on which black symbols of human & gayal heads indicate that he took enemies’ heads and sacrificed gayal at Feasts of Merit.” (HEK D 1: 8, description of corresponding black and white image 45–27). Alisopör, Northern Sangtam Naga. Late Spring 1937. HEK (Fo4–18).

Imagining the Nagas
Dancers during the oulingbu festival in the Konyak village of Wakching. “Some paint themselves with white clay colour, which gives them an especially fearful look. The blades of the slasher-knife decorated with red and black hair sparkle in the sun when it is spun around its own axis during the dance.” (HEK V 1938/1). 24th April 1937. HEK (F03–05, 13).

The chief of the Konyak village of Wakching Shangkok (left side) and a gaombura sitting on the edge of a bamboo platform in front of a morung. Large stone monoliths can be seen in the background. Wakching, Konyak Naga. April 1937. HEK (F02–02).
Carved front of a rich man’s house with stylised mithun heads indicating feasts of merit in the Angami village of Nerhema. 6th Nov. 1936. HEK (10–02).
Carved mithun heads at a rich man’s house in the Konyak village of Tamlu. 1st May 1937. HEK (44–12).
An Ao woman of the Chungli speaking group of Mokokchung village wearing Jongmen (head spirals), Tongbang (ear ornament), Metsungsangshi and Chubakup (two types of carnelian bead necklaces), and an Etsungsü (blue shawl). Late spring 1937. HEK (46–06).
collected a very special piece in Wakching that consisted of an elephant’s ear.\textsuperscript{374}

Some men’s head coverings – which on first sight might look like small hats made of bearskin or other hair – look, when worn, as if they were the hair of the wearer. And this is intentional, for they were made as wigs “because people are ashamed in the very rare cases of baldness”, as Kauffmann relates.\textsuperscript{375} In some tribes it was not the hats, but the necklaces that were the artistic playground of male vanity. Hutton for example states for the Angami that:

“The beads worn by the Angami proper are numerous in the case of young men, but the Eastern Angami wears a huge necklace of from six to ten strings of conch-shell beads, black beads, and cornelian in rows threaded on the same pattern with the cornelians in front, the string passing through transverse pieces of horn or bone at intervals. These pieces of horn serve to keep the lines of beads apart, and are themselves decorated with geometrical patterns in black (...) round the neck beads of some sort are invariably worn, the kind made of an opaque red stone flecked with black and known to the Assamese as ‘deo-mani’ (...). The white beads made from the inside of conch shells, cornelian, and a black bead made by the Kacha Nagas from the seeds of a plaintain are also popular, while triangular pieces of conch shells are worn as well. With the exception of the varieties above mentioned, however, the wearing of beads is largely dictated by fashion, which is no less arbitrary in the Naga Hills than in Bond Street; the value of bead or similar ornaments is often decided by qualities apparently quite immaterial to its intrinsic beauty and in every way as unreasonable as the whims and fancies of civilised people; as the whim, for instance, of dog fanciers which rules a ‘dudley’ out of the show ring.”\textsuperscript{376}

Likewise the Ao Naga women also hold a specific type of bead necklace in great esteem. We can see a woman from Mokokchung village wearing a variation of it in the study Kauffmann took in his series of typological portraits. The necklace in its classical form is shown here in three variations: the first is called \textit{perumsuk} and is made of smooth oval cornelian beads (in contrast to those of the Angami, which are cut with edges), interrupted in some cases by dark blue cylindrical glass beads; the second type has small bells or trumpet-shaped brass pendants set between the cornelians and is called \textit{metsungsangshi}; and instead of bells the third type has longish, rectangle-shaped silver platelets on which the sign of three circles is engraved or modelled, and which is called \textit{chubakup}. Rich Ao women like to wear the perfect set of these necklaces adjusted in length, and we can see that the woman portrayed here possesses a variation in which the \textit{perumsuk} and the \textit{metsungsangshi} with little bells are joined together by small pieces of bone or shell. Underneath this she is wearing at least two more strings of \textit{metsungsangshi} with trumpet-shaped pendants. She is also wearing two strings of brownish beads with some bells, which are likewise a sign of wealth. As an ear ornament she wears the glass or crystal ear plugs that are very characteristic of the Ao and also tell us that she has to be a wealthy woman. However, these signs of wealth are all mere signs of economic wealth and not of feasts of merit. Anyone who can afford them can buy these at any stage of their life.

On either side of her head this Ao woman is wearing spiral brass rings which have been inserted through holes in the upper part of her ear and fixed with some strings running above her head. Among the Ao only the women of certain clans have the right to wear these rings. The rights differ from village to village but in general it is the Pongen clan or its equivalents or sub-clans who enjoy this exclusive right. The woman also has a bundle of black strings that holds her bun together, and she has a shawl over her shoulders which Kauffmann tells us in his photograph list is blue with dark blue lines forming a ‘tartan’ pattern.

Even if we do not know her name and have no information about the woman’s social status or clan-affiliation, she communicates a lot about herself through her dress: the

\textsuperscript{374} Kept at the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna (Acc. No. 126.412), see also Oppitz et al. 2008: 89
\textsuperscript{375} Kauffmann 1940: 333
\textsuperscript{376} Hutton 1921a: 22f