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EXTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL OF MR. BRONSON.

Tour to the Nám Sáng Nogá Mountains—Salt Spring—Reception by the Nogás.

The Nám Sáng Nogás occupy lofty ranges of mountains, lying south-easterly from Jaipúr, in lat. 27° 15' north, and in lon. 95° 40' east. Mr. Bronson having with much difficulty collected a small vocabulary of words in the Nogá language, was desirous of correcting the same, as well as to enlarge his stock of Nogá knowledge. He hoped also to be benefited by the cool air of their mountains, and at the same time "to leave a favorable impression on the minds of the people in favor of a God and a religion they had never heard of." An interesting young man, who had been brought up among them, and had great influence, accompanied him as guide and interpreter.

Jan. 7, 1839. At 12 reached Labang Kulá Potár. It is a fine rich field, and has a small stream rushing from the adjacent hills into it, which rendered the path very wet, and often muddy. For a long time we were obliged to make our way where the water was knee deep. At 1 o'clock came to a small stream, that runs through the famous coal mines discovered recently by Capt. Hannay. On the very road which I passed, appeared beautiful specimens of coal, and several springs of rock oil. At 3 P. M. reached the Nám Tippam Páni, a small stream emptying into the Búri Dihing. Here we stopped for the night, having pitched my little India rubber tent, which I found of the greatest service. The road here is crowded with salt traders, going to or coming from the Nogá háthe, for the purpose of bartering va-

rious articles for the salt made at the Nogá Hills, by which means I shall have a large company of poor ignorant heathen with me all the way.

8. Tuesday. Having had a refreshing sleep, rose early and pursued my journey. Our road led through a dense forest. On every side of us appeared the footsteps of the huge elephant, the buffalo, and the tiger, who roam here unmolested, and are not a little dangerous to the unwary traveller. Toward evening we reached the Nám Sisá Páni, having passed a most beautiful variety of hill and valley. This stream winds its way in so serpentine a course, that in travelling in a due easterly direction two hours, we crossed it no less than twenty-one times! We stopped on the bank of the same stream for the night, enclosed on every side by high hills, giving the place an appearance of the greatest security and romance. This whole valley is lined with rocks.

9. Rose early, and sent a man forward to inform the Nogá chief of our approach. This seemed to be the more necessary, as we heard they were in a state of the greatest excitement at the coming of the white face, and suspected the motives I had in coming. Our road to-day has led through the most interesting and varied scenery I have beheld in this country. We were at one time passing through the narrowest defiles of steep and rugged mountains, and at another gazing into some deep valley that lay at our feet. Yet along this very height lay our only path, not exceeding six inches in width, whence one mis-step would have precipitated us upon the craggy cliffs far below. At another point rose several beautiful peaks of mountains, of moderate height; and further on, the moun-

tain-tops were lost in the clouds, but covered, as far as the eye could reach, with richest verdure. Many times, as I passed along, I involuntarily exclaimed, "How manifold are thy works, O Lord of Hosts!"

At 1 o'clock reached one of the salt springs, worked by the Nogás. The water was drawn from deep wells, by a bucket of leaves, and poured into large wooden troughs near by, for the purpose of boiling. Their mode of boiling is rude, and to one who had not seen it, would appear to be perfectly impracticable. They build a long arch of stone and clay. On the top, single joints of bamboos, cut thin, and spread open like a boat, are placed closely together. These hold from two to three quarts each. These boats are kept full of the brine, and a large fire kept blazing under them, without injury to the bamboo. On this arch I counted sixty boats, which they said would give, when boiled away, twenty or twenty-five boats of salt for the market. Thus their ingenuity has made them quite independent of the expensive furniture required at our own salt-works. One man to attend the arch, one to bring the brine, and four to gather wood, are all that is necessary to complete the establishment.

Pursuing our course, we came to a very steep and rugged mountain, and as the sun was pouring down his meridian rays upon us, my feeble strength, on gaining the summit, was quite exhausted. We here passed several dangerous precipices, but soon had the pleasure of seeing the rude houses which the Nogás had prepared for our reception. They stood near the háthe (salt market,) at which was a large collection of traders. A gentle ascent on every side formed a splendid amphitheatre of the valley. Here we were met by two of the chief's sons, and a numerous train of his warriors, who bade me welcome—expressed their pleasure that I had come, and declared the country mine, and themselves my subjects. In return, I assured them of my best wishes and good intentions; and although no white man had ever before ventured among them, that I felt the greatest confidence in them, as my brethren and friends. We then proceeded to the rude huts they had prepared for my use during my stay among them, and which, upon inquiry, I was sorry to find, were at quite a distance from their villages. They doubtless wish to be better as-

sured of the object of my visit, before they admit me to their villages; although the alleged reason was, that there was no water on their mountains, and that this would subject me to great inconvenience. They have hitherto allowed no one to know much of the interior of their country.

I spent the most of the day with these people, conversing particularly upon my object in coming among them. I lost no time in telling them, that the great God who created them, had made it the duty of his creatures to love and pity each other; that I was a teacher of his holy law, of which they were entirely ignorant; and that I had heard of them in my native land, and had come across the great waters to give them books in their own language, that they might read the law of God, and become a wise and good people. Their great fear was that I was a servant of the *Company*. Being weary, I dismissed them, requesting that the chief and his attendants would meet me the next day, as I had important words to speak to them. They promised to do so, and very courteously left me.

Interview with the Chiefs—Visit to the Nogá village.

10. About 11 o'clock the kingly train made their appearance, rushing like so many wild beasts from the tops of the highest peaks, and having their heads and ears ornamented with shells, precious stones, and many fanciful representations of battle. They halted a few rods from my house, and stuck their spears into the ground, together, where they left them during their visit. They then came in a very respectful manner, and seated themselves before me, on mats that they had brought for the purpose. Their names are as follows:

*Burá Kumbou, and his seven sons—
†Bor Kumbou, acting chief, Maji Kumbou, Latung Dekhá, †Telem Dekhá, Tengisi Dekhá, Kanyá Dekhá, Kapsam Dekhá and Goguy Kumbou, son of Bor Kumbou. Tengisi Dekhá is an interesting young man, and is the only Nám Sáing Nogá that can read or write. He has a desire to learn to read all our books, and his opinions are favorably received by the people.

*Burá signifies aged, or old.

†Bor signifies great, or chief.

‡Dekhá is a term equivalent to youth, or young man.

Having now before me all the influential persons among the people, I entered again into a familiar explanation of my object in visiting them. I told them that there were many good people across the great waters, who had compassion on them, and had sent me up into their mountains, where no white man had ever before been, to teach them how to love God and go to heaven when they died. Bor Kumbou, through my interpreter, renewed the objections urged yesterday. They feared that I was a servant of the Company, come to spy out their roads, sources of wealth, number of slaves, amount of population, and means of defence, and the best methods of taking the country. Others feared that I might live peaceably among them for a time, and afterward get power and influence, and make them all my people. It was in vain that I told them of another country, beside the English, across the great waters. They replied, "Is not your color, your dress, your language, the same; and what person would come so far, merely to give us books and teach us religion?" Some of the more enlightened, and, I was happy to find, influential among them, appeared to be satisfied that my object was to benefit them, and began arguing in my favor.

The object of my visit having been pretty thoroughly explained, I called upon the chief to state, in the presence of his people, whether he thought education would be advantageous, or disadvantageous to them: also, whether he would give me his approbation and assistance in learning their language and teaching them. He promptly replied, that "if the people learned to read in their own language, it would be well; but the Nogás were like birds and monkeys, lighting on this mountain, and stopping on that, and therefore no white man could live among them to teach them; that as soon as their boys were old enough, they put into their hands the dá (hatchet) and spear, and taught them how to fight and to make salt,—aside from that they knew nothing,—and how could they learn books?" To all this I had a ready answer, either speaking directly to him in A'sámese, or through my interpreter. The day being far spent, I presented a few useful articles that I had brought for the purpose, without which I should have been considered extremely disrespectful. With these they appeared much pleased, and after in-

timating to Bor Kumbou my intention of visiting his village, they very courteously retired.

11. Rose early, having slept but little, from anxiety about my future path of duty. Unless I can secure the confidence of the people sufficiently to live familiarly among them, I cannot expect to benefit them. Nor would it be wise for me to *presume* upon the kindness or integrity of a rude tribe of mountaineers, many of whom never before saw a white face. I endeavored to commend my way to God, and seek his direction.

Being pretty well satisfied that it was fear merely, that made them hesitate to receive me at their village, I despatched my interpreter with a small present to Burá Kumbou, who I understood was favorably inclined to me, saying that I felt much disappointment and chagrin in not finding my houses built near him and his people; that I had come a great way to see them, to hear their language, to give them good words, and to teach them God's law; and that I wished to come up into their village, and live among them as brothers and friends. He soon returned, saying that there was a great fear in the village at my coming; that they considered me a divinity; that if I remained where I was, it would be very well, but it was the order of Bor Kumbou, that if I wished, I might come up into their village. This was all I wished. Without his approbation I should not have felt safe in going. I immediately made arrangements for going the next morning.

12. An early breakfast, and we set out for the Nogá village, on the top of the mountain. It had rained for twenty four hours previous, and the path was steep and slippery. After winding our way over several hills for two hours, we reached a fine open space, commanding a most lovely prospect of hill and valley and winding streams. Several hamlets could be distinctly seen at once, and the report of a gun from this place was the signal for collecting their respective inhabitants. Here, hidden from all the civilized world, this people roam among the beauties of nature, and behold the grandeur of the works of God. From this place I found a wide and well prepared road, pursuing which for two hours, we reached the village. The houses are numerous, large, and generally raised from the ground. The whole village is embowered by trees

of the richest evergreen, and the walks are adorned by various beautiful shrubbery, among which I saw oranges, lemons, a great variety of citrons, and the blackberry. The cool fragrant air, as it breathed briskly through the thick foliage, made me forget all the fatigues of the journey, and every breath I inhaled, imparted to my languid frame new vigor.

I was kindly received at the village, and directed to a large, comfortable house, which they had prepared for my reception, and where several chiefs were assembled to meet me. My wants were immediately inquired into, a fire was made, one of their springs of water given up to our company, eggs, milk and potatoes brought in abundance, and a small cook-house put up, in so short a time that I had no occasion to order any thing. Such was the generous hospitality of these wild mountaineers.

But this was no sooner done, than a long council was held concerning me, (no less than six similar consultations have been held concerning me and the object of my visit;) and the whole day has been spent in answering their objections. They were inquisitive about the great countries across the waters, and quite incredulous at my description of a passage to this country.

13. Sunday. Was much affected in comparing my present circumstances with past privileges. Once I hailed the welcome Sabbath as

"Day of all the week, the best,
Emblem of eternal rest."

Once, "I was glad when they said, 'let us go up to the gates of Zion.'" How many Sabbaths have I spent in listening to the gospel's joyful sound, or in proclaiming it! Now how changed! No Sabbath bell, no house of God, no messenger of salvation, no converse with the saints, not one fellow-pilgrim with whom to mingle in sweet communion. Far away from them all, on the rugged peaks of these mountains, this Sabbath finds me with a people rude and wild as the untamed beasts. For a moment I felt some misgivings of heart, but was soon enabled to think of Him who was without a home, or place to lay his head, who dispossessed himself of infinite riches to accomplish man's redemption, and felt that I could rejoice in the deprivation of these privileges, might I but be the instrument of saving the souls of any of

these rude mountaineers. Endeavored to observe the day with some regard to its sanctity, but was much disturbed by numerous visitors.—In the evening a large fat pig was brought to me, as an expression of the kind feelings of all the villagers.

14. This morning I received a visit and present from Bor Kumbou. Spent most of the day in answering the curious inquiries of many visitors.

Objects of the mission approved—Nogá Vocabulary and Catechism.

15. By my request, Burá Kumbou came to visit me, accompanied by all his sons, and a large train of attendants. I laid out before him again the object of my visit, and found him evidently well disposed. He is the oldest man I have seen in this country, though as yet sprightly. He told me that he remembered the days of the first A'sámese kings. Although he long since gave up the government of his people to his eldest son, his advice is sought after, on account of his age and experience. I told him, that wishing to do him and his people good, I had been making Nogá books; but not knowing whether I had written their books correctly, I had come up to secure the benefit of his age and wisdom; for I knew that he could give me all the words I desired. He seconded all my plans; but he has two sons, who, if they had the power, would expel me from their village this very day. They then held a long consultation in their own tongue, some pleading in my favor, and others saying many bitter things to prejudice the people against me. Through the influence of my interpreter, and the advice of the old chief, the decision was favorable. He at length replied, that he was aged and could not sit all day with me, but would send two of his sons to teach me the language, when he could not come. He said that they would teach me all their language, build my houses, provide me with food, and assist me all in their power. I thanked them many times in return, expressed my best wishes for the prosperity of the Nogá people, and assured them that it was my intention to take nothing from them. Upon this they rose and left me.

16. Spent the day in correcting the Nogá vocabulary.

17. Spent the day in correcting the Catechism in Nogá. Had a large company around me, who had never heard the Ten Commandments before. They

eagerly inquired where such words came from. They may well be surprised, for they never were acquainted with any system aside from those of the superstitious brahmin and Hindú. I never before realized how directly the commandments aim at the complete destruction of heathenism. When I entered upon the explanation of the first and second commandments, forbidding the worship of idols in every form, they exclaimed, "good, good." The Nogás do not worship idols, but make offerings to evil spirits, of which they have a most superstitious fear. The like scene was acted over when I came to the eighth command, prohibiting theft. This crime is considered by them a capital offence, and punished accordingly. The disallowing of adultery was heard with a sneer. How truly has the apostle described the heathen in the first chapter of Romans!

After we had gone through the commandments, I entered into a fuller explanation of them, dwelling particularly upon the folly of idol worship; and I believe I never before was able to make myself so well understood on religious subjects, since I have been in the country. I find them extremely ignorant. They have no priests, no houses of worship, and no favorite creed. The brahmins have tried to rivet the fetters of their superstition upon them, but almost in vain. If they will receive books, and allow their children to be gathered into schools and instructed in the Christian religion, the brahmins will be able to do very little, and the gospel will work its way into the very midst of their country. A successful beginning here, will open the door to twenty-one other dependent villages, near at hand, where the same dialect is spoken.

18. Early this morning Burá Kumbou sent for my interpreter, and inquired if I was in want of provisions. By his attention I am supplied with many necessaries. I receive the kind feeling manifested by this people, as a favorable indication from the hand of God, and an encouragement to go forward.

19. This afternoon, received an express from Jaipur, giving information that there was supposed to be a large Burman and Singpho force advancing, and already within three days of Jaipur; that the sipahis had slept on their muskets for three nights, and many affrighted people were running

away. What course to pursue, I know not. If I leave now, I shall defeat, in a great degree, the object of my tour.

Having pretty good information that no Burman force is so near, and hoping that it will prove to be a false report, I have concluded to make arrangements for obtaining daily news from Jaipur, and remain until the reports are confirmed. It is one of my sorest trials, to leave my defenceless family alone in a country like this, where war is liable to break out every day.

Completed the first revision of the Catechism in Nogá this evening, having had the assistance of several of the heads of the people.

Funeral rites—Condition of females.

24. Received letters from my family to-day, informing me that little dependence is to be put upon the reports of war, and that probably there is no necessity for my immediate return.

This has been a great day among the Nogás. It was the completion of the sixth month after the death of a wife of one of their chiefs. Their custom is to allow the corpse to remain six months in the house; at the expiration of which time the ceremonies I have this day witnessed must be performed. In the morning two large buffaloes, several hogs, and a great number of fowls were killed for the occasion. A kind of intoxicating drink, called modh, which I am sorry to say they have learned to distil in large quantities, from rice, was drank. About noon, numbers of Nogás from the neighboring villages, dressed in a most fanciful manner and equipped for battle, arrived. After beating several gongs of different sizes, so arranged as to form a sort of harmony, with the music of drums they marched to the house where the decaying corpse lay, each man bearing a shield, a spear, and a dá. They then commenced singing and dancing, with such a regularity of step and voice, as perfectly surprised me. They sang in the A'bor tongue, and my interpreter informed me that all their songs are borrowed from the A'bor, with whom they hold daily intercourse. I was allowed to attend, in company with two of the chiefs, who interpreted to me the song, the substance of which is as follows:

"What divinity has taken away our friend? Who are you? Where do you live? in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth? Who are you? Show yourself. If we had known of

your coming we would have speared you." The above was first pronounced by the chorister. The whole company then answered it by exclaiming, "Yes," at the same time waving their huge glittering spears toward heaven, in defiance of the evil spirit who was supposed to have occasioned the death. The chorister continues, "We would have cut you in pieces and eaten your flesh." "Yes," respond the warriors, brandishing their dás, as if impatient for the battle. "If you had apprised us of your coming, and asked our permission, we would have revered you; but you have secretly taken one of us, and now we will curse you." "Yes," respond the warriors. This is the substance of what they sang, though varied, and repeated many times.

25. The noise of music and dancing continued nearly all the night. During the greater part of this day, the ceremonies of yesterday were repeated. At the setting of the sun a large company of young women came around the corpse, and completely covered it with leaves and flowers, after which it was carried to a small hill adjacent, and burned, amid the festivities of the people. Thus closed this painful scene.

Considerable respect appears to be paid to the female sex. In this particular there is a striking contrast between the Nogás and the A'sámese. The A'sámese women are the most idle, worthless set of beings I ever saw. On the contrary, the Nogá women are proverbial for their industrious and laborious habits. This remarkable difference in favor of the Nogá women, is doubtless to be imputed to the anarchical state of the country, or rather to the number of independent chiefs, who, formerly, for the slightest offence, were disposed to wage war, and the worst of all wars, that which is covert and unsuspected. This made it necessary for the men to be always ready for an assault, and hence the custom that the women should cultivate the fields—the men prepare for, and fight in battle.

Conversation with Burá Kumbou—Return to Jaipur.

26. Took my interpreter and the Catechism which I had just completed in Nogá, and called on Burá Kumbou. I found him reclining on his cot, which he has seldom left of late on account of his extreme age. He received me kindly, and after passing the usual civilities of the country, I entered into

familiar conversation upon religion. I reminded him of his great age, and of the certainty that he would soon die, and asked him if he knew that there is a heaven and a hell. He replied that there is a heaven where all men and kings go, and to which he should go, but all men of common rank would remain upon the earth. I asked again, Do you not sometimes think about dying, and inquire where you will go, and what will become of you? He replied, "I know that I shall go and meet my ancestors in heaven." How do you know? I asked. "By dreams," said he. "In my sleep it has been often told me." But by what rule do you distinguish between dreams that are communications of the divine will, and those that are not, since you know that many dreams are absurd? If you could read that great book, which God has given to guide all men, if you believed it and obeyed it, you would be very happy at the thought of dying; and I have come up into your mountains for no other purpose than to teach it to your people. As he appeared to be interested, and rather astonished at such ideas, (which doubtless were new to him,) I drew from my pocket the Catechism, and read it through, often asking him if he understood it. He replied "Yes," and said that God gave those words, for they were all true and great as God. I then told him that I expected to go in a few days to Sadiyá, to print this and other Nogá books, that he and his people might no longer be destitute of the means of becoming a wise and good people; and that when I returned to visit them, I should bring them Nogá books, but I was afraid his people would have no mind to learn to read them. He replied that it was his wish to have his people learn to read them. I then told him that I knew of many good people in America who wished to do them good; and that some of their friends in *this* country had put into my hands money to support them in school for a whole year. This appeared to affect the people who were present, very much; and the old chieftain turning to them said, "If any of you will accompany the *sálib* to Jaipur and learn to read, I will support you." After some consultation with each other, he told me that he knew not what they could do on the subject, but they would consult and let me know the next day. I returned much pleased with the visit, as the conversa-

tion was in the presence of a large number of their influential men, some of whom had been disposed to receive me rather coldly.

This evening received letters from my dear family and C. A. Bruce, Esq., expressing fears that there may be truth in the existing rumors of war. It will therefore be my duty to hasten homeward as fast as possible. These reports will also prevent my getting any children for the school.

27. Sunday. Having informed the people that I must leave early on the next morning, nearly all the villagers came to visit me, and requested me to read to them once more the books I had prepared. I very gladly availed myself of the opportunity, to explain again to them the fundamental truths of Christianity. So eager were some of them to hear, that they remained until nearly midnight, when I dismissed them. All I can do now for them, is to commend them to God, that they may be kept from every false system, until the pure and peaceful influences of the gospel, now for the first time explained to them, shall have sway, and their hearts be melted and subdued to the reign of the Prince of peace.

29. Reached Jaipur about noon. Found my family in the enjoyment of usual blessings, though the inhabitants of the place were in a state of great excitement. We had but just seated ourselves at dinner, when several persons came rushing into the house, half breathless from fatigue and fright, saying that the Khamtis and Singphos had attacked Sadiya, and that another party of the enemy intended to attack us at Jaipur, and drive every white man from the country. This report we were unwillingly inclined to believe; and as we had no stockade, or means of defence aside from a detachment of forty sipahis, we felt that our situation was peculiarly dangerous.

From later communications we learn that the station had been mercifully preserved from the apprehended attack, and that the missionaries were still engaged in their work. (See p. 279.)

At the close of the preceding extracts, Mr. Bronson suggests several considerations in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the mission to the Nogás, such as, 1st, their present freedom from idolatry, in connection with the efforts of brahmins to introduce the brahminic faith,—2d, their attachment to their own language, and

disposition to receive instruction in that and no other—the brahmins wishing to introduce their language and their books,—3d, the salubrity of their climate, and 4th, their relation to the missions in Burmah, and particularly, their proximity to the Hukung valley, "crowded with Singphos and Khamtis."

France.

It was stated in our last report of the French mission, that Mr. Willard had been authorized to return to this country on account of Mrs. W's impaired health. We are gratified to learn that subsequently the symptoms of her disease were so far abated as to encourage Mr. W. to defer his return for the present, and try the benefit of a few short excursions. The following notices of the mission are from a letter of July 27, including a report communicated to Mr. W. by one of the native preachers stationed in the *département de l'Aisme*.

LETTER OF MR. WILLARD.

Visits to stations—Baptisms—Church constituted.

I accompanied M. Dusart to Bertry on the 6th inst. He thought we might accomplish more by going together, as we might assist each other in arranging some rather difficult affairs. It was also the *fête* of Bertry, and the brethren would be unoccupied by labor. We accomplished most which we wished to accomplish. I saw our br. Demoulin, of St. Waast, and had a long and interesting conversation with him. On Monday there was a church meeting, when br. Pruvots and his wife became members of the church, and a member for a long time suspended was restored. I did not preach at Bertry; my visit had quite another object. The little chapel was full to overflowing on Sunday.

After making divers visits during the week, M. Dusart went on Saturday to St. Waast, by the village of Vielly. On Sunday (14th July) he had a numerous meeting, baptized three persons, constituted a church of seven members, and broke bread to sixteen persons. Two of the persons baptized are members of the little church of St. Waast, the other of the Bertry church.

On the 19th I started for Lannoy, according to previous arrangement with M. Thieffry, to pass the third Sunday with him. As the weather was fine, Mrs. Willard accompanied me. We