

ACCULTURATION IN TANÖ NIHA (THE ISLAND OF NIAS)¹

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Acculturation on Nias is discussed with special attention to religion and the role of missionaries as agents of change. The traditional social organization and religion are reviewed, followed by an examination of the processes of Dutch colonization and missionization by German Protestants. The role of an indigenous revitalization movement in the Christianization of Nias is discussed at length. Finally, the Nias case is placed within a broader framework of acculturation and change. (acculturation, Christianity, colonialism, culture change, culture contact, Indonesia, Nias, religion, revitalization movements)

I. INTRODUCTION

The topic of this paper is acculturation on the island of Nias. Nias is a small island of 4,000 square kilometers, located off the west coast of Sumatra in the Republic of Indonesia. By acculturation I mean what Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton, and Melville J. Herskovits (1936) defined as: "Those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups." I shall discuss acculturation in terms of the culture of the indigenous people of Nias on the one hand, and the cultures of immigrants originating outside the island, Westerners as well as non-Westerners, on the other. The Westerners include Dutch and British colonial officers (civil as well as military) and German Protestant missionaries. The non-Westerners include other Indonesian ethnic groups, such as the Atjehnese traders and slavers, Minangkabau traders, Buginese migrants,

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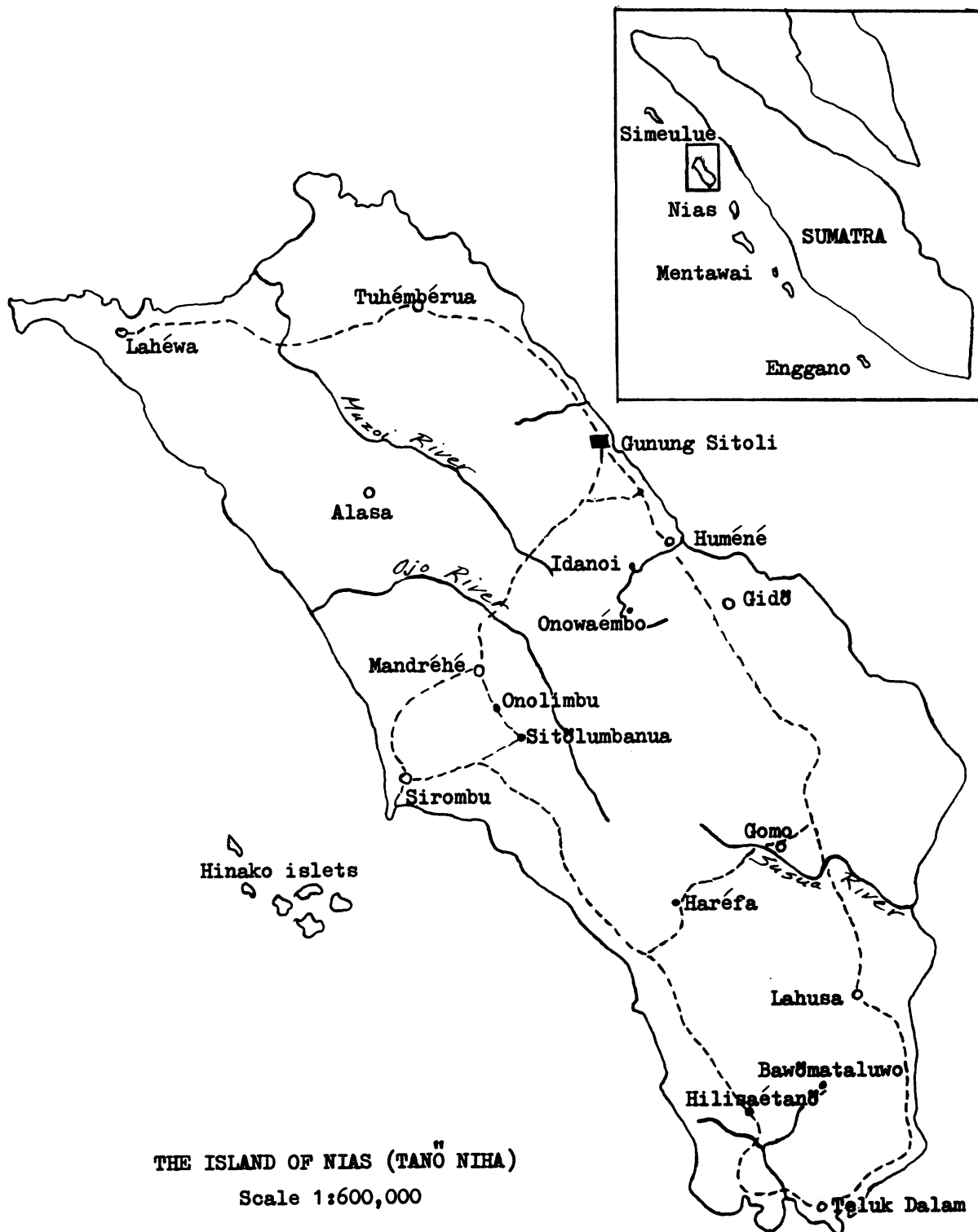
Indonesians of Chinese descent, and non-Indonesians such as Chinese migrants and Indian merchants.

In this paper I will restrict my discussion to culture contact between the indigenous people of Nias and German Protestant missionaries. The principal reason for this restriction is that the missionaries were the only outsiders who came to the island of Nias with the primary purpose of changing the religion of the indigenous people, and to a large degree their efforts were successful. Missionary activities also affected other aspects of the indigenous culture such as social organization and art. As agents of change they succeeded because they lived among the people of Nias for a long period of time and thus maintained continuous first-hand contact. Although acculturation may have affected the culture of the missionaries as well as that of the indigenous people, in this paper I have focused exclusively on the change in the indigenous culture. I am especially concerned with the results of the contact in terms of the categories of acceptance, adaptation, and reaction (Redfield, Linton, Herskovits 1936). In addition, I will try to evaluate the effects of this contact on the indigenous people of Nias.

II. TANŌ NIHA IN THREE PERIODS: BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE COMING OF THE GERMAN MISSIONARIES

A. TanŌ Niha before the coming of the German Missionaries.

The island of Nias is the largest of the row of islands located off the west coast of Sumatra (see map). The native name for the island is TanŌ Niha (land of man). The word Niha was transformed by the Dutch



into "Nias". The culture of the Ono Niha (child of man), the people of Nias, is not greatly influenced by either Indian or Islamic civilization. Before the coming of the Europeans, the Ono Niha had a megalithic culture -- a culture thought to have originated in mainland Asia during the Bronze Age.² Based on this megalithic foundation, Nias society reflected a different cultural tradition than that of other Indonesian ethnic groups such as the Javanese, Batak, and Minangkabau. Tanö Niha material culture was characterized by magnificent architecture (big wooden houses such as in Bawömataluwo and Hilisimaétanö in Southern Nias), intricate sculpture of wood, bronze, and stone, and large stone monuments. Unlike similar megalithic cultures on other Indonesian islands³ or in South Asia, in Tanö Niha pig sacrifice replaced cattle sacrifice.

Although the Batak of North Sumatra contend that the Ono Niha are descended from them,⁴ nothing positive is known about the peopling of the island because there are no written records. The people of Nias themselves trace their ancestry back to the gods. Although it is difficult for us to trace with certainty the origin of the Ono Niha, we will tentatively hypothesize that their ancestors came from Southern China or Vietnam on the basis of similarities in physical traits such as skin color and the epicanthic fold.

The population of Tanö Niha in 1914 was 135,000 (Schröder 1917:678), while at the end of 1967 it had grown to 320,179.⁵ Of this number 318,164 are Ono Niha, and the rest are Indonesian citizens of Chinese ancestry, Chinese who are not Indonesian citizens, and Europeans.

Table I: Population of Nias in 1967

Indonesian		Foreigner		Total
Indigenous ⁶	Indonesian of Chinese Descent	Chinese	European	
318,164	769	1,196	50	320,179

Quoted from the Census and Statistic Department of the Regency of Nias in 1968

The Ono Niha's subsistence economy was based on swidden agriculture (rice, taro, yam, sago, and maize) supplemented by river fishing, hunting, gathering of forest produce (such as resin and ratan), and trade. Pork and palm wine were also consumed at feasts, and betel was chewed throughout the island by men and women of all ages.

The traditional kinship system was based on patrilineal descent. The smallest social unit in the Ono Niha kinship system was the sangambato sébua or the patrilineal extended family. This kin group was also a household, members living under the same roof and eating from the same kitchen. Several sangambato["] sébua, descended from the same male ancestor, composed a larger unit or maximal lineage, which is called the mado in Northern, Eastern and Western Tanö Niha["] and gana in Southern and Central Tanö Niha["]. Each mado had a special surname, such as Hia, Daéli, Hulu, Dachi, Géa, Haréfa, Gulö["], Télaumbanua. According to Ono Niha mythology, all the mado in Tanö Niha["] are the descendants of five demi-gods who were sent down to Tanö Niha["] from Tétéholiana'a (Ono Niha's heaven) by their father, Sirao. In former times the mado was the most important

social unit in Tanō Niha society conducting all social and economic activities such as the regulation of marriage, which is mado-exogamous, and the conduct of economic mutual aid.

One of the most important stages in an Ono Niha's life cycle was marriage, marked by the paying of high bowō, or bride price. On such occasions extravagant feasts were held where hundreds of pigs were slaughtered. Marriage was therefore seen as too important an event to be left entirely to the choice of the younger and less experienced persons.

A second important event in the Ono Niha's life cycle was death, especially if the dead one was the head of a patrilineal extended family. Elaborate ceremonies were held in which pigs, a form of family wealth, were slaughtered and distributed among the villagers, and sometimes also to the neighbouring friendly villagers. The purpose of this mortuary ceremony, the fanōrō satua, was not only to liberate the deceased man's soul, but also to enhance the status of the deceased's extended family or maximal lineage. According to local belief, all the pigs and the slaves sacrificed during the mortuary feast would go with the deceased to Tétéholiana's and become his property in his other life. On this occasion stone monuments were erected.

There were two other rites significant in an Ono Niha boy's life. One was the famoto or incision rite, accompanied by pomp and the slaughtering of pigs. This rite was held when a boy reached his sixth year of age. The other was initiation when a boy reached adulthood at the age of

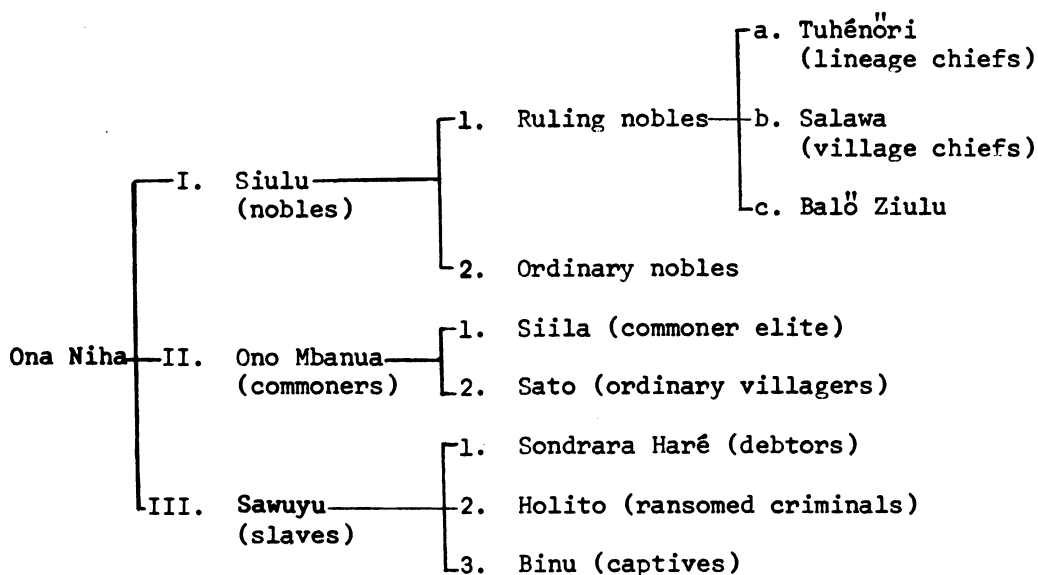
eighteen. The young male candidate and his friends of the same age had to prove their manliness by participating in a head-hunting expedition. Before initiation, they were trained in the arts of fighting and high jumping. High jumping was particularly important because the villages of Nias were surrounded by high stone walls. People today still believe that their ancestors were able to jump two meters high. One can still see stone piles formerly used for jumping training in the middle of the village square.

In former days Ono Niha's society was made up of three strata: siulu or nobles, ono mbanua or commoners, and sawuyu or slaves. These three strata were further divided into smaller sub-strata. The siulu consisted of two sub-strata, the ruling nobles and the ordinary nobles. The ruling nobles were the Tuhénori (mado chiefs), the salawa (village chiefs), baló ziulu, and adat law authorities. Balo ziulu, or Balugu,⁷ were nobles who had performed four kinds of owasa or status-getting feasts. Only members of certain traditionally powerful extended families could give the last owasa to become a baló ziulu. Other members of the nobility could give only the first three owasa. By completing those owasa they were entitled to use the Tuha title, and might only become a salawa or village chief. Ordinary nobles were those who had never given any owasa.

Ono mbanua or commoners formed the majority of the population of Tanó Niha. Commoners were divided into two groups: the siila and the sato.

The siila were the elite of the commoner groups. In former times they were the commoners who had given the first two of the four owasa feasts.⁸ A member of the siila sometimes became the assistant of a Tuhénori or the salawa, but this was the highest position to which he could aspire. Sato were ordinary villagers. Sawuyu or slaves were divided into three sub-strata, the sondrara haré who could not pay their debts, the holito who had been sentenced to death and ransomed by a noble, and the binu who had been defeated in war or been kidnapped during a raid. Nias social stratification can be summarized as follows:

Table II



Besides these three groups, there was one more special group of people based on occupation in Tanö Niha. This group could be placed between the nobility and the commoner strata. This special group of people was the éré or priests and priestesses of the traditional religion

(molohé adu). The éré were the ones who led the important religious ceremonies and owasa and acted as witch doctors.

The religion of the Ono Niha in the past was molohé adu, an animistic religion that included the worship of spirits, ancestor spirits, and supernatural power. To worship their ancestor spirits, the Ono Niha made wooden idols which they called adu. The adu that represents the ancestor was called adu zatua. An ancestor adu was made when a member of the household was very ill. The first adu made for that occasion was in the image of their father, and an éré (priest) was then invited to perform the ceremony. With the help of the éré the father's spirit occupied the image. If the sick one did not recover, a second adu in the image of the grandfather was made, and if the result was still negative, a third adu in the image of the great-grandfather, and so forth. The adu thus made were kept and worshipped indefinitely. If a member of a household took ill after having a house full of adu, the household was said to have neglected its adu by not having cleaned them or served them with food, especially if it had reaped a good harvest. If an adu was bored by a bug, the hole had to be filled with gold lest the ancestor spirit become very angry.

According to the followers of molohé adu religion, every man has two kinds of bodies, the material and the non-material. The material body is called the boto. The non-material body consists of two parts: the noso, or breath; and lumölumö, or shadow. When a person dies, his boto rots and vanishes, his noso returns to Lowalangi (One Niha's God), and his lumölumö becomes a dead man's spirit, or bechu. A human

lum^olum^o occasionally takes leave of its host's material body when he is sick or dreaming but only leaves the owner for good when he is dead. A bechu can go to Tétéholiana'a (heaven) only after his family has given a mortuary feast; otherwise it will roam around his gravesite or village causing much concern to the family. To reach Tétéholiana'a the bechu first has to cross a bridge. A bechu who has never received a mortuary feast is unable to cross that bridge because it is constantly watched by a god armed with a toho (lance) and baluse (shield), and accompanied by a fierce-looking mao (cat), which will push the uninitiated bechu into the chasm beneath. Death need not be feared because it is seen as only another passage in the life cycle. Life in Tétéholiana'a will be better than the life in this world, for Tétéholiana'a means a place full of gold, and everything sacrificed during the mortuary ceremony and other owasa is regained in the afterlife. This may be the main reason why in the past the Ono Niha, especially the nobles, loved to stage owasa feasts, and go on head-hunting expeditions.

There were three prominent gods in Tan^o Niha in the past: Lowalangi, the king god in Tétéholiana'a; Laturadan^o, lord of the underworld and an elder brother of Lowalangi; and Silewe Nasarata, wife of Lowalangi and the patron goddess of the éré (priests and priestesses).

Ono Niha believed in dynamic forces occupying family heirlooms, such as lances and swords. They also believed in ghosts such as the béla hogugéo, the forest ghost, whom hunters had to placate with offerings before entering the forest, and in omens, especially in dreams. For

example, if an Ono Niha dreamt of a big fire, then this was a sign that there would occur an epidemic with a heavy toll of life. Dreaming of people who were overly dressed up meant that the person was going to be very sick and eventually die.

Molohé adu religious functionaries, the éré, were both men and women who got their knowledge in either of two ways: inheritance from his parents, or from the teaching of a ghost who in his life was an éré. It is believed that all the magic power the éré had came from their patron goddess: Silewe Nasarata.

The Ono Niha also had a kind of oral literature which they called the hoho. A hoho was a chant, a type of monophonic singing or reciting in free rhythm (Winick 1961:108). This chant was used during sacred rituals and other important occasions such as life cycle ceremonies and owasa. The hoho dealt mostly with the mythology of Tanó Niha, such as the genesis of the world, the universe, the gods, and the ancestors of the Ono Niha.

According to Ono Niha mythology, the universe and all its contents were the creations of Sihai.⁹ After creating the sky, which was composed of nine layers, Sihai created the tree of life or tora'a. This sacred tree then bore two fruits. A golden spider also created by Sihai, then hatched these fruits and a pair of baby gods were born. The names of these gods were Tuhamora'aangi Tuhamoraana'a, the male god, and Burutiraonana'a, the female god. These gods were the first gods in the Universe, and their progeny subsequently became the inhabitants of the

nine layers of the sky. One descendant of this pair, Sirao Uwu Zihono, Sirao for short, became the king of Tétéholiana'a, located in the layer of the sky that was nearest to the earth.

King Sirao had three wives and nine sons, three by each wife. When Sirao was old and wanted to retire, there was turmoil in Tétéholiana'a over which of his sons was to succeed him as king. To solve the problem, Sirao organized an adroitness contest for all his sons. Each participant was asked to dance on the points of seven lances which were planted on the palace square. This contest was won by the youngest son named Luo Mewona, or Lowalangi, who subsequently became the king of Tétéholiana'a. To appease the other sons, Sirao granted their wish by sending them down to "earth" or Tanö Niha. To accompany his brothers to the new place, Lowalangi sent his own eldest son Silogu. Of the eight sons, only four landed safely on Tanö Niha, and with Silogu became the ancestors of the mado of Ono Niha. The four remaining sons of Sirao had accidents during the descent to Tanö Niha, and, as a result, failed to turn themselves into mortals.

B. Tanö Niha during the coming of the German Missionaries.

The discussion above describes conditions in Tanö Niha before the coming of the European, particularly the German missionaries. Culture contact between the Ono Niha and the non-Ono Niha began, however, long before the coming of the European. Mention was made of Tanö Niha in ancient Arabian and Persian travel accounts. The Persian merchant Soleiman (851 A.D.) wrote about the head-hunters of Niyang (Nias). Schröder said that the Northern Nias term for gold, gana'a, was obviously

derived from the Sanskrit word kanaka, which also meant gold (Schroder 1917:59). For many centuries Tanö Niha served as a source of slaves, which were imported to the west coast of Sumatra. During this period the Ono Niha came into contact with Atjehnese slave drivers and traders, Minangkabau traders, Buginese seafarers and migrants, Indian traders, and Chinese traders and migrants. Some of their culture traits were undoubtedly syncretized into Ono Niha traditional culture, but in this paper I shall not deal further with these issues.

In the seventeenth century the Dutch gained a foothold on the island, and it became part of the East India Company. In 1756 the English planted their flag in several parts of the northern districts, but in 1825 the English posts were again taken by Holland. By the beginning of the present century the island had been brought completely under Dutch control and Dutch civil law. Since then many of the Ono Niha have been converted to Christianity, and, via Christianity, westernization has come to Tanö Niha. Although Dutch merchants began trade with the Ono Niha chiefs in Laraga (in the district of Gunung Sitoli in Eastern Nias) in 1669 and occupied Teluk Dalam (a district in Southern Nias) in 1693, it was not until 1840 that they secured their power by founding military posts in these two places, Laraga and the Hinako islets. This occupation was made possible when local chiefs asked for protection against Atjehnese slave raiders. Although the occupation took place without resistance from the Ono Niha, there were many uprisings from that time on including an uprising led by the traditional chief Balöhalu in 1900, the famous "Huruma Lalai" uprising (1911-1915) led by Nitano Lowalangi assisted by

Balöhalu, the Hiligéó-Hili Simaétanö war in 1908, the Moro'o war under the leadership of Tuha of Moro'o, and the resistance movement of Balugu Tuhalai from Lahömi-Sirombu. To subdue the natives, the Dutch not only used force but also employed "penetration pacific", especially after they had subdued a village by military means. To smooth their way, the Dutch colonial officers complied with the German Protestant missionaries' request to teach the gospel to the indigenous people.

The first missionary to come to Tanö Niha was L. E. Denninger,¹⁰ who arrived in Tanö Niha on November 27, 1865. Prior to coming to Nias, Denninger had been a missionary in South and Central Kalimantan (Borneo). He worked with the Rheinische Mission Gesellschaft (R.M.G.), a Protestant mission from Barmen, Germany. A native insurrection led by Prince Hidajat, in which some whites, including several R.M.G. missionaries, were killed forced Denninger and his fellow missionaries to leave Kalimantan and to abandon the Christianization of the Dyaks. They then shifted their attention to the Christianization of the Batak people in Northern Sumatra. Unfortunately, when Denninger arrived in Sumatra his wife was taken ill, forcing him to stay in Padang (capital of West Sumatra) and to cancel his mission to Tapanuli in North Sumatra.

In Padang, in 1862, Denninger happened to meet some Ono Niha immigrants, inspiring him to work in Tanö Niha. On November 27, 1865 (Schröder 1917:755, Krüger 1959:203) Denninger arrived in Gunung Sitoli (capital of the Regency of Nias), which was then the only place fully under Dutch control. Other R.M.G. missionaries such as J. W. Thomas, W. Koding, and F. Kramer followed.

Compared to the Christianization in Batak, the Christianization in Tanö Niha was very slow. This was mainly because Ono Niha villages were located in places difficult to reach and the natives were very fierce. It took nine years before the first Ono Niha was baptized. A total of nine persons were baptized on that occasion, Easter Day 1874, the date taken as the birthday of the Nias Church.¹¹ In 1890, twenty-five years after the arrival of Denninger, only 706 Ono Niha had been baptized.

Improvement occurred only after the Dutch succeeded in subduing the whole of Tanö Niha and began to build inland roads. By 1915 the missionaries had succeeded in working in all Tanö Niha, and 29,500 persons were baptized. The "yield" up to 1915 was considered very good indeed by the missionaries. But something unusual happened after that period, for the number of Ono Niha converted to Christianity suddenly jumped to 135,000.

This sudden increase was not so much the result of the work of the missionaries as it was the result of a local "revitalization" movement, a deliberate, conscious, organized effort by the members of the society to create a more satisfying culture (Wallace 1956:265). The Ono Niha called this movement fangésa dödö (for further description, see Krüger 1959:203-208), which means the "great penitence". The movement originated in Huméné, twelve kilometers from Gunung Sitoli, by a group of Ono Niha Christians who were not spiritually satisfied and wished to look for a more truly spiritual happiness. The prime mover of the fangésa dödö movement was an assistant preacher named Filémo, who suffered from tuberculosis. The fangésa dödö movement impressed the Ono Niha so

greatly that they consider it a special epoch in their history. Today they use the fangésa dódó as a point of reference in time.

During this period many Ono Niha were afflicted by a kind of obsession to confess their sins before a preacher in public, or in church. One person even confessed to having stolen a neighbor's chicken twenty years before. The obsession was so great that many became sick and recovered only after confessing. As a result, many more wanted to become Christians. This throng of potential converts overwhelmed the missionaries. The Christian converts were eager to spread the great tidings to their pagan relatives and friends. To the missionaries this was very important, because the initiative of Christianization shifted from the missionaries to the natives themselves. In five years' time (1916-1921) the number of converts had multiplied from 500 to 28,000 persons. In 1929 it reached 84,000, with 23,000 more waiting to be baptized.

Although the missionaries were pleased by this sudden escalation in the number of converts, their enthusiasm was tempered by the accompanying emergence of local prophets, males as well as females. Their prophesies, in the form of dreams, greatly appealed to the newly converted Christians. Followers of these prophets became possessed in an ecstatic way, their bodies shaking and trembling, their lips twitching rhythmically, with interruption of hiccoughing and uncontrollable weeping.¹²

Native preachers, known as the sinéngé or "apostles", also emerged in the period. They were the ones who shaped the present Nias Church, by composing special Nias Christian songs which are now used in the Sunday worship service. The term sinéngé has since become a synonym for village preacher.

The fangésa dödö movement never died out. Twenty years later, during the Second World War, fangésa dödö flared up once more, although with different goals. The aim at this time was not salvation by means of penitence, but the search for spiritual reward. During this period there emerged also a group of tukang fangésa dödö, or fangésa dödö "specialists". This group acted as miracle healers, and are still found in some parts of Nias, such as Sitölubanua-Lahömi in West Nias, where the tukang fangésa dödö are called fakaké (holy man). They include men as well as women and are members of the Nias Church. In Sitölubanua they are the assistants of the sinéngé. The fangésa dödö rite is held by a sinéngé every Thursaay after Bible study at a participant's home or whenever there is a very sick person. During the rite every fakaké and some of the participants become possessed in an ecstatic way. This state is induced by singing monotonous Ono Niha Christian songs and clapping. To become a fakaké, a person must be pious and able to fall into a trance. According to villagers, the fakaké heal people miraculously. This movement is not prohibited, but supervised by the Nias Church.¹³

The coming of missionaries to Tanö Niha brought not only Christianity but also Western systems of education and sanitation. In 1865, for instance, Denninger opened the first school in Tanö Niha. The courses taught at that school were theology, reading, writing, and arithmetic. In addition to primary schools, the missionaries opened a religious seminary in Ombolata to train native preachers. By 1919 there were already 137 primary schools and 9,717 pupils in Tanö Niha, all run by the R.M.G. missionaries. Sixty-eight native teachers were trained in the missionary

school, as well as 201 assistant teachers. The missionaries also opened a home economics high school for girls in 1930.

Compared to the Dutch Colonial Government, the R.M.G. mission did an outstanding job in the education field. During their period of colonial rule, the Dutch opened only three public schools. The first was opened in Gunung Sitoli in 1874 with 172 students and fifteen teachers. Most of the teachers were recipients of missionary scholarships to the teacher training school in Depok, West Java. (All the four-year primary schools before that time employed the Malay language or Ono Niha language as the medium of instruction). On the initiative of some alumni from the mission school and a Javanese physician, a seven-year Dutch private primary school called the Eerste Particulare H.I.S. was opened in Gunung Sitoli. The people who initiated this effort were V. S. Géa and Dr. Koeslan, among others. These efforts were followed by others who opened additional H.I.S. (Hollands-Indische School) or Dutch primary schools.

During the Japanese occupation no new schools were opened. Upon Indonesian independence however, new primary schools as well as junior and senior high schools, junior and senior training schools, a technical training school, and most recently, in 1968, a private teachers' college in Gunung Sitoli were opened. The instructors in this college are mostly Ono Niha who received their M.A. in Java or Medan (North Sumatra) and abroad.

All this is the result of the pioneering work of the R.M.G. missionaries, later carried on by the Nias Church, or B.N.K.P. (Banua Niha Keriso Protestan), and the local government of Tanö Niha. After

independence Catholic missionaries were also active in opening schools in Gunung Sitoli and Teluk Dalam (Telaumbanua 1968:6). At present, according to 1968 statistics, there are 38,926 primary school pupils, 1,661 primary school teachers, and 1,288 school buildings (293 of these are permanent buildings, while the rest are semi-permanent buildings of wood and bamboo).¹⁴

In the field of publishing, the missionaries published a native language weekly "Sura Duria" (Newspaper) from 1914 to 1940 when the German missionaries who managed it were interned by the Dutch, then at war with Germany. Other newspapers such as "Nias Berita" (1924) and "Oragu" (1941) have appeared since then. The missionaries also published school books in the Nias language and composed a Nias-German dictionary (by H. Kahler and W. L. Steinhart).

To maintain the health of the Ono Niha, the missionaries opened medical clinics on the island. Today there is one in Gunung Sitoli, and another in Hilisimaetan-Teluk Dalam in Southern Nias. Both are maintained by the B.N.K.P. with the help of the R.M.G. There are no longer German missionaries in Tanö Niha, but some German physicians and engineers are working for the R.M.G. on the island. The most prominent German physician in Tanö Niha is Dr. Thomson, who, accompanied by his wife, who is also a physician, had worked in Tanö Niha for more than thirty years. Their presence in Tanö Niha is important because the Indonesian government is still too busy fighting for its economic survival. At the present time the R.M.G. still gives technical aid to Tanö Niha through the B.N.K.P., such as providing boats for the maintenance of inter-island communication.

C. Tanö Niha after the coming of the German Missionaries.

As the result of the missionary effort, Tanö Niha is at present a Christian island. Out of a total population of 354,588, 319,709 are Christians, and out of that number 295,224 are Protestants and the rest Catholics. Of the remainder of the population, 30,163 are Muslims, 228 Tri Dharma (syncretism of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism), and 4,448 molohe adu followers.¹⁵ The Muslims are mostly of Atjehnese descent, and nearly all the Protestants are members of the Nias Church or the B.N.K.P. In other words, the Christian population forms 90% of the island's population, while only 3.5% still follow the ancestral religion (molohe adu).

At present Ono Niha society is no longer tribal but has changed into a society that can be designated as "peasant"; it is an old and stable population, which depends upon agriculture, is integrated into a larger political unit, and subjected to its law, has been exposed to urban influence for a long period of time and has borrowed from other rural areas, and yet has managed to integrate the new traits into a relatively stable culture pattern (Lewis 1956:149). Tanö Niha has changed from a highly stratified, status-seeking society of warriors into a peaceful society of Christian peasants.

The Ono Niha today no longer have a megalithic culture. At present the people of Tanö Niha almost never conduct the prestige-seeking owasa feast. With the disappearance of the owasa, no more stone monuments are built. In Northern, Western, and Eastern Nias nearly all the stone monuments and stone images have been destroyed by overzealous missionaries and their Ono Niha followers. All the wooden adu were either burned or

thrown in the river, and the bronze images were melted down for metal. Ruins of the megalithic culture are presently found only in some remote spots in Eastern Nias (in Onowaémbö-Idanoi), Western Nias (among other, in Onolimbu-Lahömi), and in Southern Nias (especially in Bawömataluwö and Hilisimaétanö). Except for those in Southern Nias, all are in very bad condition. The grandeur of Gomo, a place in Central Nias which according to tradition was the center of Nias megalithic culture, is gone. Nowadays the Ono Niha have forgotten the art of sculpture, at which their ancestors were masters. (See Schröder 1917, especially Vol. II, for photographs and descriptions of the former material culture of Nias).

The kinship system remains basically unchanged and is still based on patrilineal descent. Formerly, when the population was still small, the most important economic unit was the mado (patrilineal maximal lineage). At present, however, the most important economic unit is the sangambatö sebua (patrilineal-patrilocal extended family). Marriage is still one of the most important stages in the Ono Niha life cycle and is still considered too important to be left entirely to the desires of the young couple, although they now exercise some influence in selecting a mate. This is one result of modern coeducation introduced by the missionaries. Marriage in Nias, especially among the nobles in some places in Tanö Niha, is still a costly matter. Bride price (böwö) in Sitolu Banua-Lahömi in 1968, for example, was at least a hundred pigs of predetermined size, the highest in all Tanö Niha. The continuation of the custom of bride price causes many difficulties among the young

people in Lahömi, and as a result there are many young people of marriagble age who are destined to remain old maids and bachelors. Many marriagable young men are said to have left Lahömi to try their luck elsewhere.

Christianization has affected Tanö Niha social stratification: of the three strata only two remain, the siulu (nobility) and the onombanua (commoner). Slavery in Tanö Niha was abolished in 1914.¹⁶ The éré have been replaced by the sinéngé, or village Christian preachers, who with the modern educated scholars and Indonesian administrators form a social stratum sometimes higher than the nobility. But since up until very recently only nobles have had the means to provide their children with modern education, this modern elite is in fact a part of the nobility. Prior to Indonesian independence the Christian ministry was a stepping stone to higher office. Some of the older Ono Niha leaders began their careers as preachers. Rev. P. R. Télaumbanua, ex-Governor of North Sumatra, and Rev. T. D. Télaumbanua B. Th., Vice-chairman of Nias Regency's Provincial Assembly, for example, are B.N.K.P. preachers. Nowadays, ambitious young Ono Niha use the armed forces and higher education for the same purpose. The present Nias regent, Major Mohamad Sani Zega, is an Indonesian National Army officer. During the Indonesian Revolution, Ono Niha was on the Indonesian side against the Dutch colonialists, and in fact financed the Indonesian delegation to the New Delhi Asian Relations Conference¹⁷ with their copra export income (Télaumbanua 1968:6). The B.N.K.P. has been in Ono Niha hands since 1940, when all the German missionaries were interned by the Dutch. The first native Nias Church's ephor was Rev. Atéföna Haréfa.

There are several political parties now in Tanö Niha, including the Partai Kristen Indonesia or Parkindo (The Indonesian Christian Party), Partai Nasional Indonesia or P.N.I. (Indonesian National Party), Nahdatul Ulama (Muslim Religious Scholar League), Partai Sarikat Islam Indonesia or P.S.I.I. (Islamic Association Party of Indonesia), Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia or I.P.K.I. (League of Upholders of Indonesian Independence), and Partai Katolik Indonesia (Indonesian Catholic Party). The most influential is Parkindo, the Protestant political party.

Although modernization, or more precisely westernization, was introduced to Ono Niha culture along with Christianity, not all sectors have changed. The subsistence economy of the Ono Niha, for instance, has not changed much from primitive swidden agriculture, using the traditional digging stick (taru) and belewa (a kind of heavy knife for cutting the underbrush). The hoe (faku) is still considered a luxury in Tanö Niha.

Even though they are Christians, the Ono Niha still practice the traditional famoto (incision) rite. There was an effort in the past by a German missionary to abolish it, but he was unsuccessful in his attempt, and was nearly killed by the enraged people. At present the peasants of Ono Niha still believe that they are the descendants of Sirao's sons or grandson, who came down from Tétéholiana'a. Even today we can hear the mythology of Nias chanted (hoho) on special occasions. Every Ono Niha, especially if a noble, still traces his genealogy straight to the gods. Some of the Ono Niha myths have assimilated the Christian ones. Lowalangi, for instance, has become identified with Jehovah. This error originated with Denninger, who mistook Lowalangi for Sihai the creator, in his effort to "niasisize" the term for God. Thus today

every prayer in the church is preceded by the words "O! Lowalangi" which means "Oh! God," and ended not by the word "amen", but by the Nias synonym "jaduhu". The term "Allah" which is popular among other Indonesian Christians is not used in Tanö Niha.

In the last ten years there has been a movement initiated by Ono Niha students in Gunung Sitoli and outside Tanö Niha (Djakarta and Medan) to revive some aspects of traditional culture, such as folkdances and folk songs and to popularize again the names Tanö Niha and Ono Niha instead of the corrupted word "Nias". The associations supporting this movement are K.E.S.M.I.N. (Kesatuan Mahasiswa Indonesia Nias) or "Nias Indonesian University Students' Union" in Djakarta, and G.P.P.N. (Gerakan Pemuda Peladjar Nias) or "Nias High School Students' Movement", and P.M.N. (Persatuan Masjarakat Nias) or "Nias Community Union" in Medan, North Sumatra.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, acculturation in Tanö Niha began long before the coming of the European, but the most **important** and far-reaching culture contact was that between the Ono Niha and the German Protestant missionaries. The German missionaries were the ones who came to Tanö Niha with the main purpose of changing the religion of the indigenous population, and they succeeded in this effort. By changing the Ono Niha traditional religion and introducing modern education and sanitation, the missionaries also affected the other cultural elements. The missionaries succeeded in their efforts, because the Ono Niha's revitalization movement "**fangésa dö'dö**" tended to favor adoption of Christianity on a wide scale.

The positive reaction to Protestantism resulted from the introduction of this religion at the time of great social crisis in Tanö Niha. The immediate cause of this crisis was contact with a dominating Dutch colonial administration. The failure of the Ono Niha to expel the Dutch from their island appeared to the local population to indicate that their traditional culture was unsatisfactory. The response of the Ono Niha was to initiate changes in their culture system or, in Wallace's terms, "to reformulate their maze-way" (1968:15-16). A major result was the incorporation of Protestantism into the fangésa dödö movement. Protestantism was obviously a part of a powerful culture; this meant to the Ono Niha that it was superior to their religion (molohe adu). Protestantism attracted the Ono Niha because it was introduced with schools, technology and sanitation and, perhaps most importantly, because it was not introduced by the Dutch. Hostility to the Dutch colonial administration was so strong that it provided greater opportunity for non-Dutch missionaries, in this case German Protestants. The German missionaries were even able to convince the Ono Niha that Jehovah was none other than Lowalangi, one of their important gods. Gradually, the Christian god and the indigenous god were identified together.

Mission work among the Ono Niha was also greatly enhanced by an event in the life of the leader of the fangésa dödö movement, Filémo. He underwent a notable personality transformation occasioned by a serious illness, in his case tuberculosis. This can be related to Wallace's "mazeway" hypothesis in which a person assumes a new cultural role and

abandons an earlier one in order to reduce stress and conflict which could not otherwise be resolved if he stood pat (Wallace 1956:272). Protestantism became a kind of salvation for the Ono Niha in a culture that appeared inferior and seemed to be disintegrating under the force of acculturation. The result of this culture contact in Tanö Niha was what Robert Redfield et al. (1936:152) defined as adaptation. That is, although they have assimilated some foreign elements, they have reworked the patterns of the two cultures into a harmonious whole meaningful to the individuals concerned.

Lastly, although nobody can deny the service rendered by the German missionaries in Christianizing and modernizing Tanö Niha, no one can deny either that through their ignorance of Ono Niha traditional culture they destroyed much of the Ono Niha cultural heritage such as architecture and the art of sculpture. But compared to the gains, the losses are relatively small. It is the task of the Indonesians, especially the Ono Niha themselves, to preserve and revive this cultural heritage before it is too late. Indonesian cultural anthropologists and archaeologists can contribute to this end.

NOTES

1. My field research on the island of Nias was done when I participated in the "Jala Sengara I Expedition" in the middle of 1968. This expedition was organized by the Indonesian Navy's Directorate of History and Library, and was led by Lieutenant Bonar Siahaan. I am indebted to the Indonesian Navy, and wish to thank Lieutenant Fa'anö Daéli for acting as my guide and informant during the field research. I have also supplemented my field data with extensive library research, and am profoundly grateful to Dr. Jack M. Potter, Mr. Joseph Fischer, and Dr. Eric Crystal from the Departments

of Anthropology and Asian Studies, University of California at Berkeley, for their support, advice, and assistance in preparing this paper. With all this help, the remaining errors and deficiencies must clearly be mine alone.

2. At the suggestion of Dr. Soejono P.S., Head of the Archaeology Department from the Indonesian Ministry of Education, and Dr. H. R. van Heekeren, I tried to look for a neolithic adze, but failed to find one. When I showed one to the local inhabitants, none had seen one before. So for the time being we can say that when the ancestors of the Nias people came to Nias, they already had a megalithic culture.

3. Such as Sa'dan, Toradja, according to Dr. Eric Crystal, who did fieldwork in Toradja in 1968/1969.

4. Most of my Ono Niha informants opposed this view, because the Batak view is based on a very degrading legend which tells that the Ono Niha are the descendants of a Batak woman and a male dog.

5. Quoted from the Nias Regency's Census and Statistics Department.

6. In the statistics I got from the Nias Regency Office, the category of Nias natives includes those people belonging to other Indonesian ethnic groups such as Minangkabau, Atjehnese, and Batak, but they are few in number compared to the "real" Nias.

7. Balö Ziulu is the term used in Southern and Central Nias, while Balugu is the term used in Western and Eastern Nias.

8. Commoners were forbidden to give the last two feasts.

9. In another version, the name of the creator is not Sihai but Lowalangi, but the Lowalangi version is more recent and is already influenced by Christian missionaries. I believe the Sihai version (Horüfa 1939) is the authentic one.

10. Denninger was not in fact the first Christian missionary to come to Tanö Niha. Before him, in 1854, a Roman Catholic priest came to Tanö Niha, but died as soon as he arrived (Schröder 1917:755).

11. Three survivors of this original baptism attended the first church synod in 1936, sixty-two years after the founding of the church.

12. This kind of ecstatic state also characterized cargo cults in Melanesia: see Peter Worsley (1957).

13. At present there are also other movements which originated from the fangésa dödö movement, but do not have the approval of the Nias Church (B.N.K.P.). One of them is the fa'awösa. This movement began as a Christian weekly meeting at the participants' homes, but later changed into a syncretic religion.

14. Quoted from the statistics from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Indonesia, Regency of Nias in Gunung Sitoli.

15. Quoted from the Statistical Report of Chadir Masrun, Head of the Nias Regency's Religious Affairs Office at Gunung Sitoli, February 1968. If we compare this Statistical Report to that obtained from the Ministry of Education, Regency of Nias at Gunung Sitoli (see Table I), then there is a great discrepancy on the total number of Nias' population. I cannot give the explanation, except to say that the method of census-taking in Indonesia needs upgrading.

16. See Encyclopaedy van Nederlandsch Indië, tweede druk, derde deel, 1919:807.

17. The New Delhi Asian Relations Conference was a conference led by Nehru. This conference was held in answer to the plight of the Indonesian Republic after the second Dutch attack. The conference was held in January 1949.

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