



The NAGA exhibitions in Basel and Zürich



Report by P. Dollfus and F. Jacquesson
for the Brahmaputra Project.
April, 16th. 2009.

Two important and very interesting exhibitions about the NAGAS can be seen in Switzerland.

One in Basel, *Naga. A Forgotten Mountain Region Rediscovered*

Museum der Kulturen, Münsterplatz 20.
until May 17, 2009

One in Zürich, *Naga, Schmuck und Asche*

Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich, Pelikanstrasse 40
until September 6, 2009.

These two exhibitions complement each other very nicely.

Basel

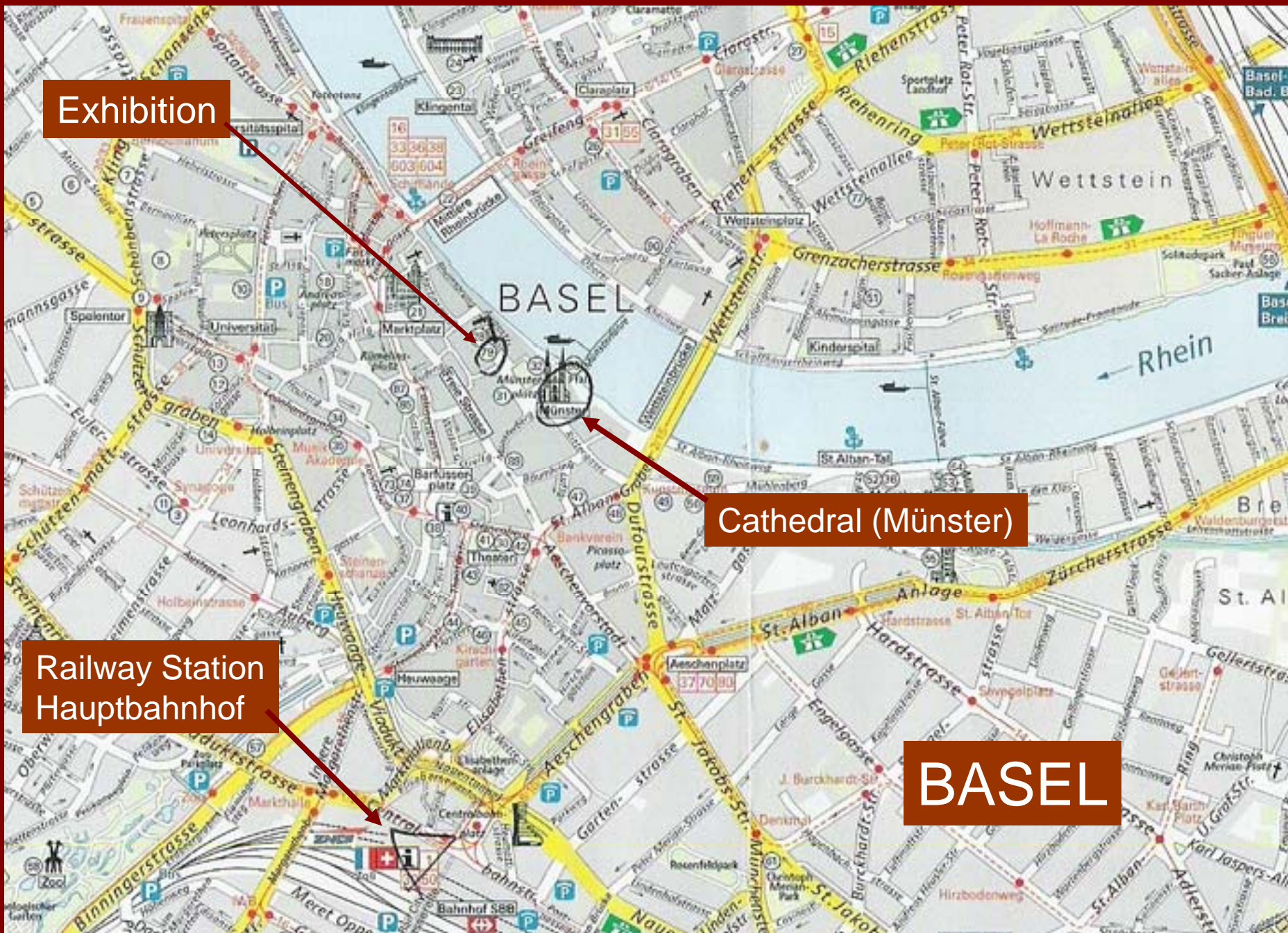
Exhibition

BASEL

Cathedral (Münster)

Railway Station
Hauptbahnhof

BASEL



Most of the information below is available thanks to Richard Kunz, who very kindly guided us. He is one of the curators of the exhibition along with Vibha Joshi,

The show presents collections from

- Ethnologisches Museum Berlin
- Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde München
- Museum der Kulturen Basel,

which were assembled between the late 1870s and the early 1990s.

This rich exhibition also hosts works by the Swiss artist Cristina Fessler from her work-cycle « Nagaland-Transfer 1992-2008 »

As most of the museum being now closed for renovation, the exhibition had to be adapted on three levels in a special part of the building.

In order to respect current museum rules (light, temperature and humidity, etc.), the rooms are rather dark; all objects are displayed in showcases, highlighting their esthetic value.

The origin of the collections and the personality of the collectors are described and put into a historical context, as far as possible in a few lines,.



Introductions and labels are in German and English

The first part of the exhibition - *Agriculture, the basis of Naga society* focuses on agricultural tools, household goods and cooking utensils, as well cloths, jewellery and ornaments that were used in the context of feasts of merit



The second part - *Status and Prestige through success in War* - focuses on the ornaments, embellishments and insignia that relate to bravery and success in war, as well as various weapons used for either hunting or warfare, and objects associated with death and burial practices.

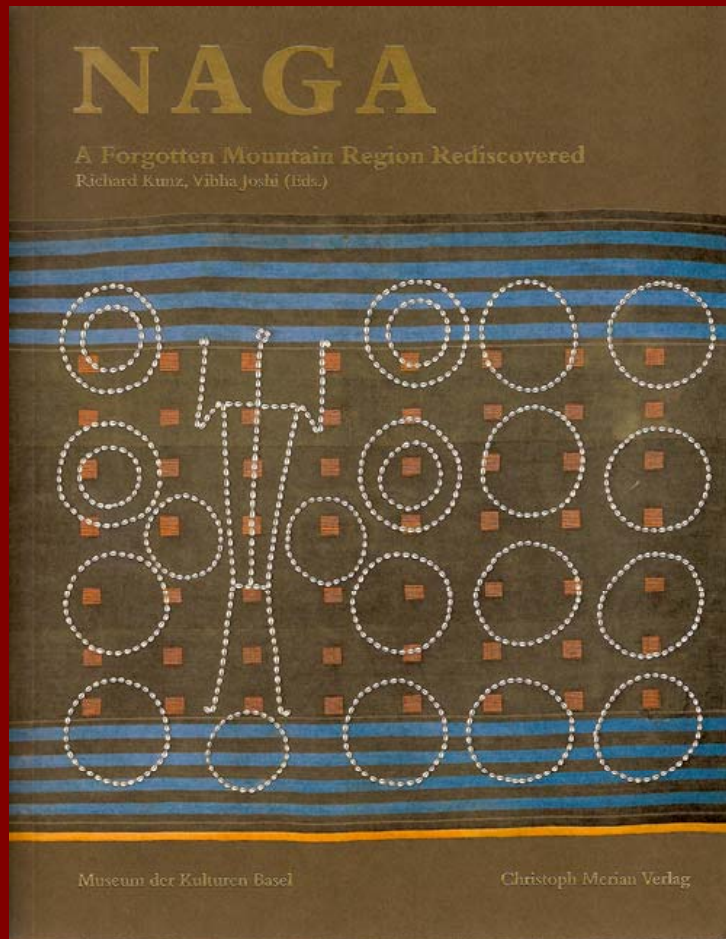


Comparison with the modern world and the daily life of the Nagas are shown through films and slides

The exhibition was accompanied by several cultural events. Numerous representatives of Naga communities were invited.



A fashion contest in Nagaland, a video film in the exhibition.



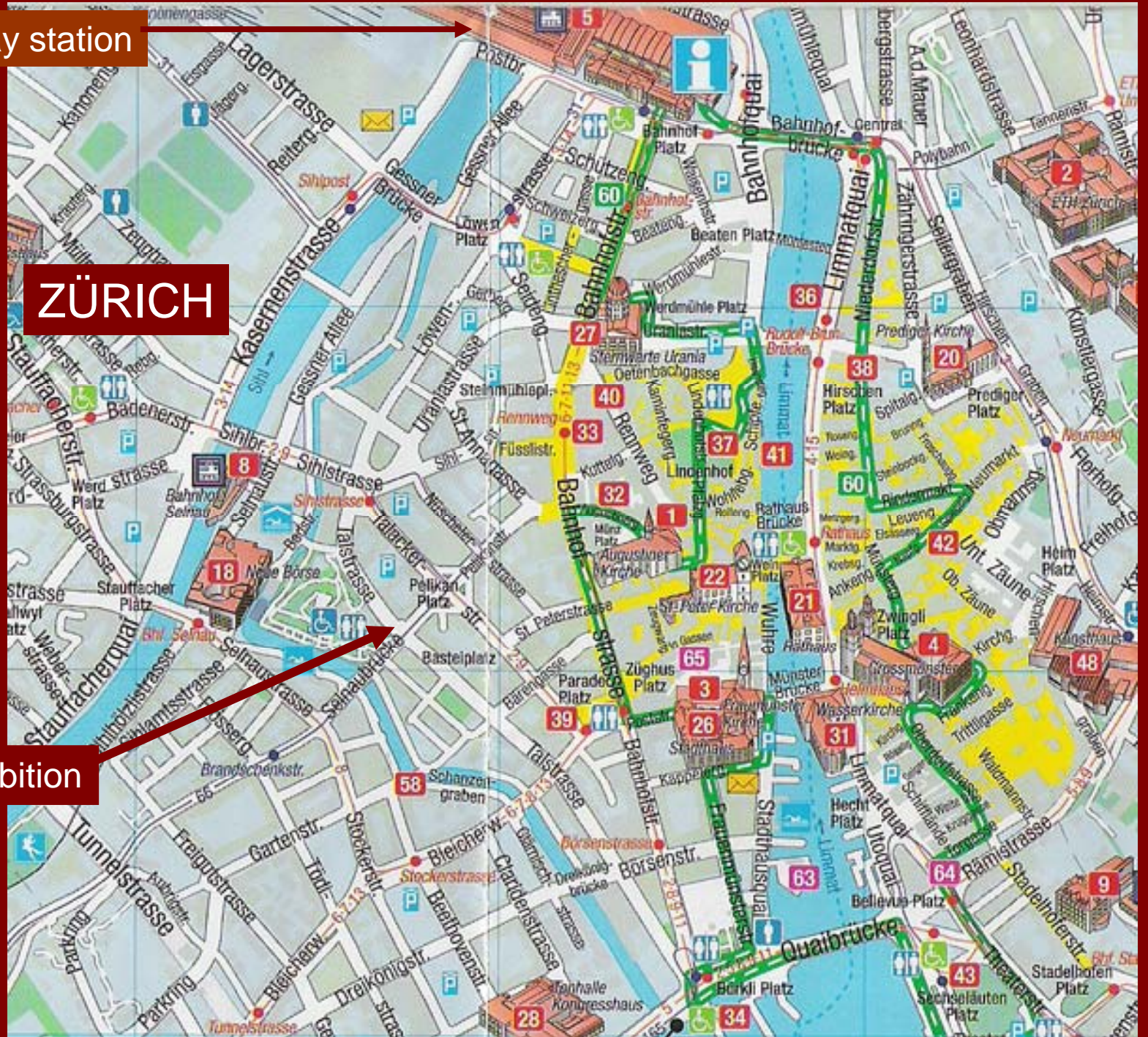
Richard Kunz, Vibha Joshi (Eds.)
Naga - A Forgotten Mountain Region Rediscovered
Christoph Merian Verlag / Museum der Kulturen,
Basel, 2008,
200 pages, 22,5 x 28 cm, 350 colour plates
ISBN: 978-3-85616-379-2

Zürich

Railway station

ZÜRICH

Exhibition



The Zurich exhibition is organized by Michael Oppitz, Thomas Kaiser, Alban von Stockhausen, Marion Wettstein.

The exhibition shows objects collected mainly by Ch.Fürer-Haimendorf and H.-E. Kauffmann in the 1930s, and kept in Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Völkerkundesmuseum der Universität Zurich.

It is also related to the extraordinary archives of Naga songs, the result of many years of research by the same team.



It is a University exhibition, in a University setting.
It has a more ethnographic turn.

While some objects are on open display,
others are presented in series and displayed in showcases,
with a decided effort to render a living context.




Comments and labels are only in German.





Small photos give examples of real-life occasions for this object or that garment.





Krieger mit Schild und Aquarell, 1874. Pitt Rivers, Oxford, 1914.5.2.83



Handgezeichnete Karte der Nagaberge, Repräsentanten der verschiedenen Stämme abbildend. Aquarell, Bleistift und Tinte. (Woodthorpe, 1875; Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford, 1983.7.11)

Zu den frühesten Quellen britischer Kolonialbeauftragter zählen die Aufzeichnungen von Leutnant, später Oberst und schließlich Generalmajor Robert Gossart Woodthorpe. Der ausgebildete Geodät gelangt als Soldat und Landesmesser 1874-75 in die Naga-Region, in seiner Freizeit zeichnet, aquariert und schreibt er.

Seine Leistungen als Berichterstatter und Feldforscher werden von den frühen Ethnologen des 20. Jahrhunderts mehrfach durch Zitate gewürdigt, seine außerordentlichen Beiträge zur visuellen Anthropologie Hinterindiens, indessen nur andeutungsweise wahrgenommen.


1874

Erste Bilder

In einem Lokalmuseum ausgestellt: Schwungrad der ersten Druckpresse im Naga-Gebiet, die 1883 vom Missionarsteppaar Clark für das Drucken von Bibeln in Lokalprachen ins Dorf Mokokchung gebracht wurde. (Foto: Alban von Stockhausen, 2005)

1874

Erste Bilder




THE WORDS THAT CHANGED THE HISTORY OF THE NAGAS

»Mein Album ist die Brust des Wilden, wo Dunkel brütet in Gefilden von Stürmen ohne jedes Licht; Den Namen Jesu dort zu schreiben, auf helle Welten hinzuziehen, dem Wilden im Gebet zu beugen, ist meine allerhöchste Pflicht.«

(M.M. Clark, 1907)

»Für den Missionar sind Heiden stets geeignetere Objekte als für Militärs; und Missionare kommen bei ihnen an.«

(R.G. Latham, 1859)



Die erste Bergkirche aber in Tistach. Foto: F. Bauh. Aus: N. Christ. Ko. de. T.

Gospelchor des NCSM auf Mission bei burmesischen Naga. (Foto: Heng Nyoung Lintner, aus: Jacobs, 1990)

A chronology retraces the history of the Naga hill tribes over the past 150 years, pointing out the 3 violent shockwaves :

British colonial rules, Christian missions, and the Indian state

This exhibition is accompanied by a 464 p. richly illustrated volume.

Naga Identities

Changing Local Cultures in the Northeast of India.

Michael Oppitz, Thomas Kaiser, Alban von Stockhausen, Marion Wettstein, Eds.



NAGA IDENTITIES

all details and summary at:

www.uzh.ch/musethno/shop/pd213180414.htm