

General Reference

Nagas-Tribe

NAGAS

The mountainous border between India and Burma is the home to a tribe that goes by the name of "Nagas." The half a million or so population of Nagas were isolated until the mid 19th century. Influences of India and Burma haven't made a dent in their own culture and religious beliefs. They all live in villages situated upon hilltops and ridges. The houses in the villages were large and very well built with elaborate and complex carvings. These carvings aren't just amazing works of art but also a sign of status. The close societies of Nagas also construct ritual centers and dormitories for their village. Most of the villages are under the control of a council but some are under the rule of a Chief. The council debates what is acceptable and law down the law. The council also punishes people and enforces the observance of the taboos they hold dearly. If an earthquake to occur for example, the council would enforce rules that say no one is allowed outside for two days because of the dangerous magic. Not all villages look out for the people; the chiefs look out for themselves. The uncommon villages under the influence of an autocrat have complete power of the village. People obey not out of respect but out of fear of the chief's magic. This fear is stark enough to frighten someone that looks into the chief's eyes.

One legend that the Nagas believe is the idea that a man at death splits into several entities. The soul sets out on a journey to the Land of the Dead. At the end of this lengthy journey the soul must answer questions given by a spirit before they are allowed into the Land of the dead. One of these entities remains attached to the skull and helps the living. The skull of a friend and foe alike are seen as boons and are often fed. Other beliefs that the Nagas have include a deity whose name means "Sky-Earth". This deity is a vessel for incredible power and hurls lightning at the Earth, blesses men and is the guardian of morals and order. This religion is slowly fading away however as Christianity has taken a hold of the Nagas.

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