

**RESISTANCE TO COLONIALISM IN
THE LUSHAI HILLS**

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**RESISTANCE TO COLONIALISM IN
THE LUSHAI HILLS**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, 'Resistance to Colonialism in the Lushai Hills' submitted by Thangminlian for the reward of Doctor of Philosophy is a research work done under Dr. Hmingthanzuali as Supervisor and Prof. Jagdish Lal Dawar as Joint Supervisor.

The thesis submitted by him has not formed the basis for the award to the scholar for any degree or any other similar title and it has not yet been submitted as dissertation or thesis in any university.

It is also hereby certified that the thesis represents an objective study and independent work of the scholar.

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DECLARATION

I, Thangminlian, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the content of this thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in other University or Institute.

This is being submitted to Mizoram University for award of the Doctor of Philosophy in History.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CC – Circle Chaprasi

CI – Circle Interpreter

CHT – Chittagong Hill Tracts

CrPC – Criminal Procedure Code

FEAP – Foreign Department External A Proceeding

NAI – National Archive of India

NCO – Non Commissioned Officer

NMML – Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

MNF – Mizo National Front

MSA – Mizoram State Archives

SLI – Sylhet Light Infantry

SoS – Save Our Souls

TRI – Tribal Research Institute

UT – Union Territory

VC – Village Council

GLOSSARY

angpûka – unintelligible talkative man

awlan – guns manufactured in Holland

awmpui – attendant; relatives who stay and attend the need of the family

bawhbel – big log place horizontally at the entrance of the *zawlbûk*.

bâwi – attendant or maid; were freer than bonded labourer or slave.

bawlpui – *puithiam* dealing with malevolent spirits

bazar – trade mart

châi – a kind of dance

chaw rel hnih – twice an amount of rice cooked by a single family

chikhur chhiah – salt tax

chhungpuifa – legitimate child/progeny out of legal marriage

Lal – Chief; village chief

lalmantu – arrester of chiefs

chaprasi – attendant or messenger who assisted Circle Interpreter (colonial agent)

Changsîl – Bepari Bazar

chempui – *dao*

Chhimtuipui - Kolodyne

Darlung Zâi – A song of different beat composed by Lallula in between 1793 and
1798

fanodawi – ceremony for healthy agricultural crop

fathang/buhchhun – paddy paid as tax to the chief

hnamchawm lal – individual appointed as chief by the colonial government.

hnatlâng – common public work

hmêi – concubine

hmêifa – illegitimate child/progeny with a concubine

hremhmun – place with punishment, later equated with hell by the civilising mission

huai – spirit/evil spirit

Hringchar – Silchar

khawchhiar – village writer, colonial official

khuang – drum, Mizo/Lushai drum

kawngpuiisiam/kawngpuihawn – ceremony to please the spirit of wild animals

khâp – khâp is a distance from the tip of the thumb and the middle finger when stretch

khawpêr – tributary village/feudatory

khawthen – ceremony organised in case of natural disasters/to please angry spirit

Khawthlangtuipui – Karnaphuli

kheddah – Elephant trappers

khuai chhiah – honey tax

khûl/chhinlung – cave in South China which was ancestral home of the Mizo

kohhran upa – church elder

kuli/coolie – supplied labour

kuli pui – large labour; work that require larger labour

kuli te – small labour; work that require lesser labour

kumpinu – the Queen / Her Majesty / the Company

kumpinu sorkar – Great Britain/Her Majesty Government

Lal insak – construction of the chief's house by free labour (*hnatlâng*)

Lal thirdeng – chief/royal blacksmith

luhkapui – elevated platform in front of the house

lung sahuak – stone chute

Lushai Hills – Mizoram

mei – fire

meithal – gun/firearms (*mei* – fire; *thal* – bow)

mihlim/hlimsang – revivalist

mim kût – festival for the ordination of maturity/attainment of adolescence

muchhip – ceremony that yearned for healthy human lives

pasaltha – hero, courageous, valiant, altruistic individual

Pathian – God/supreme being

Pathian thuawi – those who obey the word of *Pathian*, earlier reference for Christians

pawikhawih bâwi – persons who became *bâwi* because of their criminal deed.

Pawtlak – December

pialral – the next world/life after death

pianpui bâwi – person who became *bâwi* as they could not provide for themselves, they were wrongly called *inpuichhung bawi* by colonial agents

pilnam – ceremony for protection during clearing of the jhum, health of the crops and the cultivators, and a rich harvest

pranki – guns manufactured in/by France

puithiam – priest or exorcist

pûm sa pek/thirdeng sa – share given to the blacksmith when an animal is caught/trapped

Rala Tlâng – Raletkhang

Ralau – Sabalong

Ralauchhuah Bazar – Sabalong Bazar

ram – land

ramhual – advisers as to where the jhums shall be cut

ramri lehkha – boundary documents; the document that demarcate the area of the Lushai chiefs

ran lu kima ai – ceremonial solemnisation with full representations of animal heads.

Rengte – near Kolasib

rûn – raid

Rûn/Gûn (Lui) – Chindwin (River)

sa chhiah – flesh tax

sadawt – chief/royal priest

sai ramchhuahna – place where subsistence are collected/hunting grounds

sakhua – belief system of the traditional Lushais/Mizos society.

seer – a system of units used to express the weight of something

seluphan – a trophy, a prize asset, (head of *Sial (bros frontalis)* put in the top of a pole in front of a house)

skul sen – literally ‘red school’, one of the earliest school established in the Lushai Hills

salâm – fees bear by the losing party; expenditures of the court

Samat – Kassalong

sanad – agreement, actually it was a recognition from the British to native ruler

Satikang – Chittagong

sa-ui-tan – agreement

sawn – children born out of clandestine relationship

Sazâi – Chengi

Sazek – Burkul

sial – *mithun/bros frontalis*

Shendus – Lai or Mara; Lai and Mara

sidah/sidak – tax collected by the Chief from the traders

thal – bow

tlahpawi – *sadawt*'s (priest) assistant

tlawmngaihna – Lushai/Mizo code of ethics

thlangkawrvai – foreigners in the plain; plain people

thangchhuah – person living a successful life; one that can enter *pialral*

thingtam – famine that occurred due to blight of bamboo species known as *rawthing*
(*bambusa tulda*)

thirdeng – blacksmith

Tlabung – Demagiri

tlangau – village crier/messenger

tlawmngaihna – Lushai code of ethics, austerity

Tlawng – Dhaleswari

tuikhur – village's waterspring

tuikhur/tuitler – ceremony that sanctify the village's waterspring

Tuirial – Sonai

Tuiruang – Barak

Tût – Pakwa

Tûtchhuah – Pakwamukh/Goturmukh

upa – members of the Chief's Council; village elders

vailen – intrusion/influx of foreigner (it is a contraction of *vai*-foreigner and *lian*-horde/big)

vanram – abode in the skies, later equated with paradise by the civilising mission

vantlâng sakhua biak – ceremonies performed for/by the whole villagers.

val upa – elder(s) that guide and supervise the youth

zalên – group/section that can be approach by the chief in hour of need and emergency

zawlbûk – bachelors' dormitory located near the chief's residence

zu – homemade (mainly from rice) liquor

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION – COLONIALISM AND RESISTANCE

I. 1 Introduction

The current work title “Resistance to Colonialism in the Lushai Hills” is a descriptive analysis of what colonial expansion and domination had encountered in the Lushai Hills.

British colonialism subdued India, including the Lushai Hills. And as they claimed, they brought civilisation to the land they conquered. The land they conquered had to be ‘pacified’ before the indigenous settlers could be ‘civilised’. The civilisation argument was projected to justify the savagery of colonial subjugation and control. Here, the transmission of civilisation did not imply the absence of resistance.

Patterns, practices, policies and philosophies of conquest of the coloniser were of different dimensions in different regions. The forms and content of colonialism is one of the most interesting aspects in the study of history. This interest is further boosted by the fact that the conquest of India occupies an important juncture in the history of colonialism. Under colonialism, the colonial society is in subordinate or subservient position to the metropolis. ‘Unequal exchange’ and ‘unilateral transfer of social surpluses’ are the basic features of colonialism.

Another important feature of colonialism is foreign domination which plays a crucial role in the colonial structure. The British imperial expansion in India was completed in the nineteenth century. This period coincided with the beginning of

British conquest of Northeast India including the Lushai Hills – presently known as Mizoram.¹

Subjugation of any forms is vehemently opposed by any social set up. The process of domination was hobbled at every turn. The quantum of these opposition are however subjective. Every society would give their utmost sacrifice to defend its native land from imperialist exploitation. This resistance in the Lushai Hills is the major theme of the study.

The first imperialist military intrusion into the Lushai Hills was known as the First *Vailen* (1871-1872)². This British invasion was a failure due to the wisdom and sagacity of some Lushai chiefs. The recalcitrant nature of the tribes rendered the invasion into a mere expedition. The thesis revolves around the British conquest and subsequent resistance that it had encountered. The final thrust of British military and administrative expansion in the Lushai Hills was after the success of the Second *Vailen* (1888-1889).³

In 1760, Mir Kasim – the Nawab of Bengal ceded Chittagong to Robert Clive of the British East India Company.⁴ In 1765, the British East India Company invaded the Districts of Cachar and Sylhet. This heralded their first contact with the ‘Zo’ people.⁵ Change was to come to the Lushai Hills albeit, gradually with the coming of

¹ Imperial expansion in northeast India started with the annexation of the Garo foothills along Mymensing and Goalpara in 1822. See, David R. Syiemlieh (ed.), *On the Edge of Empire – Four British Plans for North East India, 1941-1947*, New Delhi, SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2014, p. 1.

² The word *Vailen* is a Mizo term, a compound of two words *vai* and *len*. *Vai* is translated as ‘foreigner’; *len* is a contraction of *lian*, which means ‘large’, ‘great’ or ‘increase in size’. See., J. H. Lorrain & F. W. Savidge, *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Lushai Language (Dulien Dialect)*, Shillong, Assam Secretariat Press, 1898, p. 63, 136 & 220. Thus, *Vailian* or *Vailen* means the ‘influx of hordes of foreigner’. It was called ‘the Lushai Expedition’, (1871-1872 & 1888-1889) in colonial literature.

³ This was the infamous Chin-Lushai Expedition.

⁴ This cession had drastically changed the Lushais world. It led to the opening of trade centres in the Lushai border, which heralded the interaction of the Lushais with the outside world.

⁵ B. S. Carey, & H. N. Tuck, *The Chin Hills, Volume I*, 1896, New Delhi, Cultural Publishing House, Reprint, 1893, p. 12. ‘Zo’ is an ethno-generic term that includes each and every community, clan and tribes of the Chin-Kuki-Mizo group.

the British. The British ruled through the contemporary chiefs as they were reluctant to destroy the traditional power structure completely.⁶

The British did not really abandon their conquest of 'new' land, even after their second conquest of India.⁷ They aimed to extend their imperial expansionist policy even in the 'uncharted frontier' lands lying between Bengal and Burma. To achieve this, competent officers, both military and civil were sent out.⁸

Despite the presence of vehement resistance to colonialism, why was the Lushai Hills 'more' receptive to colonial rule? What policies did the British adopted in order to chide the recalcitrant tribes? How did, within a short span of time, the British control the hill tribes?

In a backdrop of the degree to which the Lushais developed as the ambivalence of their colonial master, it is generally assumed that colonial domination was an easy accomplishment.⁹ The fact that many were not even aware of the presence of imperial and colonial resistance demonstrated the British mastery in their policy of maintaining colonial control and dominance. However, the absence of writing in many secondary literature of this vehement opposition to imperialism in a 'hilly frontier' region makes the present research relevant.¹⁰

⁶ Dr. J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram, 1890-1954 (The Bureaucracy and the Chiefs)*, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 2007.

⁷ The suppression of the Revolt of 1857 by the British was seen by many as a second British conquest of India. The British rule in India is assumed to begin with the Battle of Plassey, 1757. It was only in 1857 that the British had faced revolt against its unwanted rule in India. If the British had failed in suppressing this revolt, it would result in the demise of British Empire in India.

⁸ However, it was Queen Victoria's assurance in her Proclamation after the Revolt of 1857 that there would be no more annexation following the Revolt.

⁹ The settlers of the Lushai Hills were recorded and called as 'Lushais' by the British. However, this was not accepted by the settlers themselves. The ethnological term was later changed to Mizo. Thus the term 'Lushai' and 'Mizo' are the same. Both the terms and more importantly, 'Lushai' is heavily used in the work.

¹⁰ The Lushai Hills was a part of the erstwhile colonial Assam. The three authoritative books on the erstwhile Assam had not mentioned or make a passing remark on colonial resistance or colonial rule in the Lushai Hills. See., H. K. Barpujari, *Assam in the Days of the Company*, Shillong, First North-Eastern Hill University Edition, 1996; R. M. Lahiri, *The Annexation of Assam*, Kolkata, Firma KLM Private Limited, Reprint, 2003; Priyam Goswami, *The History of Assam – From Yandabo to Partition, 1826 – 1947*, Kolkata, Orient Balckswan Private Limited, Reprint, 2016.

The thesis aspires to bring fresh understanding on how 'modest' indigenes rendered considerable resistance to British imperialism and colonialism. This is also a concurrent theme on studies relating to nationalism in different parts of the world.

The subjugation of the entire Lushai Hills was completed with great hurdles whereby the settlers rendered wholehearted opposition. Looking at the indigenous side, it seems that their heroic deeds and maneuvers were not decently documented. The reason was the absence of literary traditions among them. Therefore, in this work, an attempt is made to reconstruct the nature and course of colonial resistance from the available sources.

The area of study covers the present day Mizoram known to the colonial master as the Lushai Hills. Thus the terms 'Mizoram' and 'Lushai Hills' complement each other. However, the term 'Lushai Hills' is used in this thesis. This is more appropriate as the work covers the era of the Lushai Hills, when the name was not yet changed to its present name. Furthermore, the earlier writers in both primary and secondary sources recorded it as Lushai Hills.

Other areas of the north-eastern areas of Bengal — Singpho, Naga, Manipur, Khasi, Jaintia, Garo Hills, Hill Tipperah, Chittagong, Cachar, etc. already acted as the East India Company's *ryots*. The Lushai Hills was the last to withstand British imperialist onslaught and thus 'the last frontier'.¹¹

In the Anglo-Burmese War, the British troops under Archibald Campbell seized Rangoon. Later, the King of Ava made a peace proposal. The Treaty of Yandaboo was signed on 24 February, 1826. After this war, 'the principality of Assam and its dependencies' and the neighbouring states of Cachar, Jaintia and Manipur were annexed by the East India Company.¹² The Lushai Hills still remained an 'unchartered frontier' for the mighty British.

¹¹ The British annexed Assam in 1826 (after the Treaty of Yandaboo), the Khasis were defeated in the Anglo-Khasi War of 1829-1833, and Cachar was annexed in 1835. Upper Assam was returned to Purundhar Sinha in 1833, but was snatched again by the British in 1838. See, David R. Syiemlieh (ed.), *On the Edge of Empire*, p. 1.

¹² H. K. Barpujari, *Assam in the Days of the Company*, p. 1; Priyam Goswami, *The History of Assam*.

In dealing with different principalities and chieftains, the British applied different strategy for 'peaceful' Lushais' frontiers like non-interference and conciliation. But to the surprise and dismay of the colonial officials, these policies bore little results in the case of the Lushais. Later, they either befriended them or crushed them with their military might and granted rewards for their cooperation.

I. 2 Concepts

I. 2. 1 Colonialism

Colonialism has been viewed by different scholars differently. Some see it as a historical phenomenon.¹³ The meaning and implication of the word 'colonialism' is closely connected with 'empire' and 'imperialism'. The meaning itself has undergone profound changes. Moreover, there is an existing assumption that colonialism was carried out by the European nations through a process called imperialism.¹⁴ Colonialism when it was carried out tended to expand and results in the consolidation of the colonial empire. In several cases, it encompassed colonialist settlement among smaller ethnic groups.¹⁵

Colonialism is a problematic category. It is by definition transhistorical and unspecific.¹⁶ It is often used in relation to different kind of cultural oppression and economic control. Moreover, the experience of colonialism in different areas was not the same. However problematic it maybe in definition, the concept of colonialism is crucial to a critique of the past and to the study of history.

With the arousal of consciousness in the latter half of the nineteenth century, colonialism started to be viewed as critical to the growth of the colonial society. Until then it was regarded in a laudatory manner and does not have pejorative

¹³ Hans Kohn, 'Some Reflections on Colonialism', *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 3, July 1956, pp. 259-268.

¹⁴ Robert van Neil, 'Colonialism Revisited: Recent Historiography', *Journal of World History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1990, p. 109.

¹⁵ This has been true with the British occupation of Indian and gradually of what now is North-eastern part of India including Mizoram (Lushai Hills).

¹⁶ Stephen Slemon, 'Unsettling the Empire: Resistance theory for the Second World', *World Literature in English*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 1990, p. 32.

meaning.¹⁷ This was because the colonial society was rather stagnant and lacked in most area of growth. Whatever maybe the case, colonialism heralded forces of change that emanated from the policies, practices, and administration of the colonial master.

In simple terms colonialism can be defined as foreign rule imposed upon an indigenous society. It was the form of domination of a territory by one entity on another. In the Marxist interpretation, this form of domination resulted in the economic exploitation of the dominated territory. Moreover, this was followed by culture-change for which the dominant group employed different agencies. In most of the cases, coercion of one kind or another was employed for the establishment of colonial control. And, this does not imply the absence of unconscious change.

The changing concept of colonialism contributes to its complexity in understanding it. It can be the colonisation of a geographical area was for exploitation or a laudable enterprise undertaken for a noble purpose.¹⁸ How people conceived about colonialism is the best way in grabbing its connotation. However, this too is vague as most colonial powers may not regard themselves as imperialistic power. On the other hand, they condemn other powers as imperialist power. From a general point of view, countries including Britain and other western countries are imperial and colonial powers.

The significant difference between colonialism and imperialism seems to be the presence or absence of migrant settlers from the colonising power to the colonised territory.¹⁹ The domination of Latin and North America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the Asian part of the former Soviet Union all involved the migration of permanent settlers from Europe. These places were colonised. On the other hand, most of Africa and Asia were imperialised but not settled.

¹⁷ Hans Kohn, *The Review of Politics*, p. 259.

¹⁸ Ronald J. Horvath, 'A definition of Colonialism', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 13, No.1, February 1972, p. 45.

¹⁹ Ronald J. Horvath, *Current Anthropology*, p. 47.

The above two categories of countries are different today because of the difference in the nature of the domination process. Therefore, the form of domination in which settlers from the colonising power migrated in large number to the colony can be termed as colonialism. Imperialism, on the other hand, is the form of domination where in a few or no permanent settlers are involved.²⁰ However, the two terms are closely linked and mostly used to denote the same as was seen in the case of India.

Hans Kohn had divided colonies into two different kinds – those of settlement and those of mere dependence. Those that the colonialist had settled were more detrimental for the natives. Clear examples for this were those settlements by the United States where settlement practically means the extermination of the indigenous settlers. In the second kind, the establishment of colonies did not eliminate the natives. In this case, they were reduced to a position of subordination. An example for this was India of the British Raj.

Ronald J. Horvath had classified colonialism and imperialism in terms of relationship between the dominant and the dominated.²¹ He based his classification on the pattern of domination of one group over the other. He considered three basic relationships – extermination, assimilation and relative equilibrium, i.e., neither extermination nor assimilation. These relationships generates six logical types – three of colonialism and three of imperialism.

The first type of relationship between the two is extermination. In its extreme sense, this type of relationship indicates total annihilation or eradication. There are examples where total extermination of the dominated society occurred. A case for example can be the European occupation of Tasmania and some of the Caribbean Islands and vast areas of America, Australia, and Canada.

The second type of colonisation is in which assimilation is the relationship between the dominant and the dominated. Examples in this category are the Hispanicised Latin America and the Philippines, the Islamicised Middle East and

²⁰ Ronald J. Horvath, p. 47.

²¹ Ronald J. Horvath, p. 47.

Southeast Asia. In the examples cited here, the dominant acted as a 'donor' culture and the dominated acted as a 'host' culture. There was a vast amount of cultural transfer that occurred between the donor and the host culture.²²

The third type of relationship is in which the dominant neither annihilate nor assimilate the indigenous settlers. In this case, the dominant and the dominated live side by side or apart. There was lack of wholesale acculturation or annihilation. However, this was not to deny that cultural changes occurred due to colonisation. Examples of this type were former European colonies like Algeria, Rhodesia, Kenya, South Africa, and Indonesia.

The fourth type is imperialism with extermination. This rarely occurred in history. In this category were the punitive military expeditions. This included imperial system where the goal was to extract or achieve certain goals and where the local population could not be forced in accordance with their will²³.

The fifth type is imperialism with assimilation of the dominated people by the dominant society.

The sixth type is imperialism with neither extermination nor assimilation. Most of the European-dominated Asia and Africa are example of this type. Among which Horvath had described, this type is the most common type of relationship that existed between the dominant and dominated society. When there were no involvements of permanent settler form the dominant society, annihilation, and assimilation are less likely to occur.²⁴

Imperialism implies, "thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others. For all kinds of reasons it attracts some people and often involves the misery of others."²⁵ After insemination of a territory occurred, colonial occupation ensued. Colonialism is a

²² The concept of donor and host culture were first developed to understand the cultural process operating in Mexico during the early colonial days, but are equally applicable elsewhere.

²³ An example that can be cited in this case is the early years of Belgian Congo, where the local population cannot be forced by the colonial power to provide labour supply.

²⁴ Ronald J. Horvath, p. 48.

²⁵ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1993, p. 5.

repercussion of defeat of the native by a superior military, political and economic alien entity.²⁶ To further subjugate and control the defeated native, the foreign powers employed what Nicholas Dirks calls “cultural technologies of rule”.²⁷

The period from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century was what Eric Hobsbawm described as ‘the age of empire’. It was a period when Western powers had acquired and accumulate territories at an astonishing scale. Said had cited Harry Magdoff and described this scale as, “that in 1800 Western powers claimed 55 per cent but actually held approximately 35 per cent of the earth’s surface, and that by 1878 the proportion was 67 per cent, a rate of increase of 83,000 square miles per year. By 1914, the annual rate had risen to an astonishing 240,000 square miles, and Europe held a grand total of roughly 85 per cent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions, and commonwealth.”²⁸ Thus, there was no power that was as dominant and hegemonic as the Western powers in that age.

The colonisation of India was a long process. It was achieved through military conquest and diplomatic manoeuvres. The British East India Company was successful in transforming itself from a trading organisation to a territorial power. The void left by the power struggle among the Indian princes was utilised by the British in their becoming of a dominant power.²⁹ It was for about two centuries that the British Raj was entrenched in India.

The Indian rulers had failed to present a united front against British intrusion. The only exception was the Battle of Buxar, 1764 where the Mughal Emperor, the Nawab of Bengal and the Nawab of Oudh jointly fought the British. Every Indian prince with an exception of Tipu Sultan had sought military help from the British in

²⁶ Awadesh Kumar Singh, (ed.), *Discourse of Resistance in the Colonial Period*, Creative Books, New Delhi, 2005, p. 12.

²⁷ According to Dirks colonial knowledge enable conquest and this knowledge further enabled colonial supremacy. The colonial powers have successfully employed census, mapping, etc. for the maintenance of colonialism. It was modern empires that had invented the most sophisticated technology of governance.

²⁸ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 6.

²⁹ K. N. Panikkar, *Colonialism, Culture, and Resistance*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 1-2.

order to defeat their Indian enemy. They were trapped in dynastic interests and ambitions.

It was this that had obviated the Indian princes from presenting a united front against the imperial power. The British, on the other hand, were cautious and meticulously calculated their moves. Many Indian powers had fought the British singlehandedly and were ousted, while several others chose to be subordinate allies of the British.³⁰ However, one must also bear in mind the military inferiority of the Indians, especially in artillery as compared to their British counterpart.

British conquest of India marked the emergence of a new phase of colonial domination. The natives were controlled and dominated through what was euphemistically called the civilising mission. This presumably called for the liberation of the natives from their 'uncivilised' moral and material conditions. The conquests had been sanctioned by divine dispensation. It was a thrust given by god to the British to snowball moral progress and cultural modernity in the orient. It was a justification to rescue the natives from what they christened as oriental despotism.³¹ The conquests were justified as liberation of the natives from the faulty system of oppression. This 'mandate of heaven' however, was a vision for political domination.

After their conquest, the British pursued the task of cultural transformation of the local settlers. And this was tinged with racism and the 'moral superiority' of the White race. This sense of superiority as suggested by Albert Memmi was derived from three major ideological components – the gulf between the culture of the colonialist and the natives; the exploitation of these gulf by the colonialist for their own benefits; and the utilisation of this gulf as standards of absolute facts.³²

Many of the conquest of the British, if not premeditated, evolved as a result of their trading interest. Internal ideological differences did persist among the British

³⁰ The Marathas, Mysore and the Sikhs who command large army fought the British on their own, while the Rajputs, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nawab of Carnatic functioned as a subordinate allies of the British.

³¹ The government system of the East was considered oppressive by the enlightened West. This was regarded as a reason for the lack of progress in the East. The West took it as their duty to institute progressive change. And, the means for this was colonialism.

³² K. N. Panikkar, *Colonialism, Culture, and Resistance*, p. 3.

administrators. However, the strive to become the enunciator of civilisation provided convenient rationale for further conquest. In most of the cases, they applied the cultural gulf as logic for their conquest. They believed that it was the civilisational logic of history that entrusted them the ethical duty to emancipate the uncivilised from their cultural backwardness. It was this conviction that had absolved the British from the sense of guilt of the uncivil or unprincipled method of conquest. Many of the natives were transformed into the image of the coloniser and several of them emerged as collaborators in the upkeep of the empire.

The study of colonialism and its resistance should also consider the pre-colonial division that had existed in the host society such as collaborators and internal resistance. It must take into account how they were transformed and how concerted engagement between the colonial agents and local actors and collaborators reconfigured the pre-existing relations of power.

I. 2. 2 Resistance

The most important form of resistance to a dominant power is produced from within the community that is dominated by that power structure. Resistance is an act, or a set of acts, that is designed to rid or rescue a society of its oppressor. It is also a movement or act launched to save the people from an unwelcomed intrusion or programmes. Resistance literature that emerged is a category of literary writing that emerges as an integral part of a struggle or resistance against an oppressor or dominant power.³³

From the point of writing history, this definition of resistance is important but is located in an unstructured position too. While the term is pervasive, what it means and evokes remain murky. There also is a political concern that is embedded in it. The notion of centre versus periphery, the dominant against the dominated tend to “serve an institutional function of securing the dominant narratives”.³⁴

³³ Stephen Slemon, *World Literature in English*, p. 36.

³⁴ Jenny Sharpe, ‘Figures of Colonial Resistance’, *Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Spring 1989, p. 139. Sharpe article reconsidered the work of theorist including Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Abdul JanMohamad and Benita Perry. They have worked to correct the critical “tendency to presume the transparency” of literary resistance in colonial and post-colonial writing and have

There are important differences in how theorists define literary resistance. Jenny Sharpe had noted two key points. First, that it is never easy to locate the sites of anti-colonial resistance – since resistance itself is always in some measure an “effect of the contradictory representation of colonial authority” and never simply a “reversal” of power.³⁵ Secondly, because of this the first resistance itself is never purely resistance. Therefore, it never simply exists in the text or among the interpretative community. It always exists in the notes that it seek to transgress. Sharpe agrees that the dominated society was not located outside the frame of acculturation but was rather situated in its trajectory. She put it as, “the colonial subject who can answer the colonizers back is the product of the same vast ideological machinery that silences the subaltern.”³⁶

What Sharpe said is that theory of resistance must recognise the inescapable partiality, the incompleteness, the untranscendable ambiguity of literary or indeed any contradictory or contestatory act, which employs the medium of the dominant to study the resistance of the dominated.³⁷ A study on colonial resistance must always acknowledge and recognise the reach of the colonial power.

The coloniser is always a powerful force, dominating the colonised in every mould of lives. It wanted the ‘other’ to forget their past, as it immortalises their misdoings. The past whatever it maybe has to be reclaimed although it might be painful. The colonised society recovered their genuine identity by recovering their past which rather was a record of resistance against imperial and colonial authority.

The study of historical resistance is thus a recollection of memory that undertook struggle against hegemonic power by a dominated society. It is an emancipatory project of the present.³⁸ It is a fight to reclaim the living past and

collectively worked to examine the ways in which resistance in writing must go beyond the mere questioning of the dominant authority.

³⁵ Stephen Slemon, p. 36. Jenny Sharpe takes an example of British India and interpret a sites of resistance those ruptures in the representation of British colonialism as a civilising mission.

³⁶ Jenny Sharpe, *Modern Fiction Studies*, p. 143.

³⁷ Stephen Slemon, p. 37.

³⁸ Awadesh Kumar Singh, (ed.), *Discourse of Resistance*, p. 12.

coming to terms with the past. It is a contest to reveal the moral dignity of the oppressed past.

The thesis offers a study of resistance to this oppressive authority from the dawn of its incursion in the Lushai Hills. Resistance as studied here is against an imperialist and tyrannical authority that exploits the subjected for its ends.

The cultural technologies of colonial rule and other reasons for colonisation were unacceptable to the natives. It had given unsettled equations everywhere and in all walks of lives. It was unacceptable to India and the Lushai Hills, because it was alien, tyrannical and oppressive.

The social and cultural arena was much a political arena. It was no more an apolitical space. The British were a master in their utilisation of this arena for maintenance of their paramountcy. In the Lushai Hills, this had resulted in bringing fundamental changes in social, religious and cultural mores. However, colonial interventions did not imply a complete departure from traditional cultural practices. The resistance to these interventions is integral to the search for identity and reclamation of one's past. Nationalism sought to claim its voice in this resistance to colonial inflictions. The dynamics of post-colonial socio-political formations in the Lushai Hills can be best understood through the study of this resistance and struggle.

It was the British who introduced modernisation in India and other places. This was through the introduction of steam engine, spinning mills, improved means of transport and communication, education, among others. The benefits of this have persisted beyond the colonial period. However, these were not without its negative aspects. An important feature for its introduction was to fasten colonial domination through colonial import.³⁹

The colonial accounts reduced the indigenes as 'timid race' and this was due to their propagation of the colonial doctrine. And, thus the 'native are transformed from subservient beings into inferior humanity'.⁴⁰ Such is the success of the 'civilising mission' or the 'cultural technology of rule' and the subsequent social

³⁹ Edward S. Said, p. 201.

⁴⁰ Edward S. Said, p. 203.

engineering. The coloniser in such and other ways dictated the thinking of the colonised. This ideological homogenisation of the coloniser encountered vehement resistance in African writings. It had flourished into Indian writings and started to penetrate recent writings in Mizoram (former Lushai Hills).⁴¹ The recovery of a geographical territory by the natives from the coloniser had always been preceded or followed by the charting of a cultural territory.

“Primary resistance abstractly defined, connotes the forcible, instinctual attempt of an unmodified traditional structure to extrude a foreign body”.⁴² It is explained by Edward Said as literally encompassed of fighting against outside intrusion.⁴³ In the Lushai Hills, several entities headed by the chiefs had reacted against foreign penetration. It was often sporadic and were mostly xenophobic reaction.

There is a term ‘post-pacification revolt’ which was used by John Iliffe.⁴⁴ He uses the term to distinguish it from primary resistance. There are important factors that differentiate the two.

Primary resistance engages only the power structure of traditional societies, while post-pacification revolt engages the whole society. This is because the traditional power structures have succumbed to, removed or profoundly modified. New forms of leadership therefore emerged from different ideology or sources. It can also stem from the remnants of the traditional power. A general revolt that possibly ensue is bound to be a loose uprising of different units bound together only by a common hatred for a foreign entity. Prof. Iliffe further reiterates, “Ideology will express that hatred and supply the link that produces concert, but the fight will

⁴¹ Lalnunchanga, C., *Pasal̄thate Ni Hnuhnung*, Aizawl, C. Lalrinmawia, Second Reprint, 2019; David Lalrina. *Ramhuai be hnam kan ni em?*, Vanlalzapi Ngente, Aizawl, 2016; Lalhmingchhuanga Zongte, *Savun Kawrfual*, Ophel, Aizawl, 2017, are important writings that can be mention under this category.

⁴² Eric Stokes, ‘Traditional Resistance Movements and Afro-Asian Nationalism: The Context of the 1857 Mutiny Rebellion in India’, *Past & Present*, No. 48, August 1970, p. 104.

⁴³ Edward S. Said, p. 201.

⁴⁴ John Iliffe is a Professor of History at St. John’s College, Cambridge. He specialise in the history of Africa.

resolve itself into a series of conflicts in which the leadership will vary according to the uneven pattern of development.”⁴⁵

Eric Stokes on his closer analysis of the Revolt of 1857 assumed that it bears all the outward signs of a post-pacification revolt. It falls between the primary resistance of the formal power structure of traditional society and the secondary resistance of enlarged scale through pacific secular and religious associations.⁴⁶ The structures of traditional apparatus have wholly or partially succumbed at pacification.

Colonial control engages society more directly and is bound to evoke more reactionary elements should any impasse occurs. However, this reaction will be a conjunction of different elements, reflecting difference. They are loosely held together by hatred of foreign control expressed in the form of religious or other ideology.⁴⁷ It could be partial, involving a section of the society or a specific geographical area.

The ‘secondary resistance’ is the period of ideological resistance, and in this period efforts are made to reconstitute a ‘shattered community, to save or restore the sense and fact of community against all the pressures of the colonial system’.⁴⁸ Although the colonial power was successful in the creation of its collaborators, armed resistance persisted in different parts of the country almost till the end of the colonial rule.⁴⁹ The resistance of the displaced settlers and later by section of the western educated people in the Lushai Hills were an example. The system that was established by the colonial administrators had tremendous repercussion on the lives

⁴⁵ Prof. Iliffe had given his argument on the basis of his expertise in the history of Tanzania. J. Iliffe, *Tanganiya under German Rule, 1905-1912*, Cambridge, 1969; J. Iliffe, ‘The Organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion’, *Journal of African Studies*, VII, 1967. Both cited in, Eric Stokes, *Past & Present*, p. 104.

⁴⁶ Eric Stokes, p. 108.

⁴⁷ The Revolt of 1857 was a peasant grievance, sanctified and extended by religious hatred for the foreigner. It finally crumbled as crisis compelled on fundamental loyalties to kin, religion, principalities and kingdoms. Peasant grievances in this context as stated by Stokes imply, “a combined action of economic and governmental pressure strong enough to induce decisive social change and the displacement of traditional leadership”.

⁴⁸ Basil Davidson, ‘Africa in Modern History’, p. 155. Cited in Edward S. Said, pp. 252-253.

⁴⁹ K. N. Panikkar, *Colonialism, Culture, and Resistance*, pp. 1-2.

of several sections of the natives. Resistance against colonialism was mainly against this systematic domination.

Imperialist powers often used the traditional lines of tension and conflict to their advantage. This could be division in the lines of ethnicity, tribal division, and religion. In the case of the Lushai Hills, clan variance was exploited by the British. It was also that some section of the local groups incorporated with the alien power and attempted to manipulate the coloniser for their own benefit. Colonialism can only be explained by studying how the alien intruders successfully exploit the prevalent relations of power.

I. 3 Review of Existing Literature

The study largely relies on primary documents published by the British Government of India. Secondary sources in the form of books, journals, and newspapers, are also used. Though the literature reviewed below is diverse. Existing works related to the theme of study have also been mentioned.

Colonial records written by officials of the colonial government and other agencies of colonialism are mostly found in the archives. They are also found in the form of published books, memoirs, autobiography, biography, and reports and in the pages of newspapers. They are one of the most widely use sources for the construction of the history of the Lushai Hills.⁵⁰

Col. E. B. Elly, *Military Report on the Chin-Lushai Country*, first published in 1873 is on the earliest encounter between the Lushais and the colonial power.⁵¹ However, it covers only up to 1889.

T. H. Lewin was the foremost ethnographer on the Lushai Hills. He wrote two authoritative books, *Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein* and

⁵⁰ This is because; it was the colonial officials who first put down the stories and history about the Lushai Hills into writing. Before, them the art of writing had not prevailed among the Lushais.

⁵¹ E. B. Col., *Military Report on the Chin-Lushai Country*, Calcutta, Reprint, 1978.

Wild Races of South Eastern India.⁵² He was the earliest to put Lushais oral traditions into writing.

Alexander Mackenzie's works, *History of the Relations of the Government, with the Hill Tribes of the North Eastern Frontier of Bengal*, is the most extensive secondary work on British administrative relations with the frontier tribes.⁵³ However, the book deals with the period up to 1844. Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, was first published in 1942.⁵⁴ It is on the British administrative and military exploits in the frontier regions of Assam. It deals beyond the period covered by Alexander Mackenzie.

Robert Gosset Woodthroe, *The Lushai Expedition, 1871 – 1872*, is on the Lushai Expedition, 1871-1872 or the First *Vailen*.⁵⁵ Woodthroe was from the Topographical Survey of India attached to the Left (Cachar) Column of the said expedition.

Col. Leslie Waterfield Shakespear's *History of the Assam Rifles*, is on the founding of the Assam Rifles and their adventure during the powerful resistance that arose in 1891.⁵⁶ John Shakespear's *The Lushai-Kuki Clans*, is an ethno-political study of the Lushais and their cognate tribes in modern Manipur.⁵⁷ A. G. McCall's, *The Lushai Chrysalis*, is also another important source on the Lushai Hills during the era of national independence struggle.⁵⁸

⁵² T. H. Lewin, *Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein*, Calcutta, 1869; T. H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South Eastern India*, London, 1870, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1978.

⁵³ Mackenzie, Alexander, *History of the Relations of the Government, with the Hill Tribes of the North Eastern Frontier of Bengal*, Home Department Press, Calcutta, 1884, photographically re-produced as *The North East Frontier of India*, New Delhi, Mittal Publication, 2003.

⁵⁴ Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, (culled from 'History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam'), First Edition: 1942, Aizawl, Reprint, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), 1978.

⁵⁵ R. G. Woodthroe, *The Lushai Expedition, 1871-1872*, London, 1873, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1978.

⁵⁶ Shakespear, Col. L.W., *History of the Assam Rifles*, UK, 1929, Gauhati, United Publishers, Reprint, 1980.

⁵⁷ Carey, B.S. and Tuck, H.N., *The Chin Hills, Vol. I*, New Delhi, Cultural Publishing House, Reprint, 1983.

⁵⁸ McCall, A.G., *The Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 2003.

Colonial Assam under the British encompassed the Lushai Hills and thus a study on the history of Assam was essential. There are numerous books on the expansion of British Empire in Assam. Among these, H. K. Barpujari, *Assam in the Days of the Company* (1996); R. M. Lahiri, *The Annexation of Assam* (Reprint, 2003); Priyam Goswami, *The History of Assam – From Yandabo to Partition, 1826 – 1947*, (Reprint, 2016) are the most authoritative. However, these books focused on greater Assam and not the Lushai Hills only. Although they mentioned various issues of colonial or greater Assam, they were deficient in relation to the Lushai Hills. Nevertheless, they are important sources for pre-colonial history of Assam. Their passing references on the Lushai Hills were much valuable.

P. C. Joshi's *1857 in Folk Songs* fulfilled the lamentable lack of historical materials from the Indian side. These folk songs constitute an important tool in constructing the 'real' history of the Revolt of 1857.⁵⁹ It gives an idea on the employment of folk songs in the construction of the history of the Lushai Hills. Folk songs or lamentations or oral sources are used in the writing of this thesis.

Hira Singh's, *Colonial Hegemony and Popular Resistance – Princes, Peasants, and Paramount Power* is a book of general interest on agrarian history and politics.⁶⁰ It deals with the complex relations between the landlords and the peasants in the presence of paramount power in the background in the major princely states of Rajputana. *Confronting Colonialism – Resistance and Modernization under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* is an edited book by Irfan Habib.⁶¹ It was copyrighted in 1999 by the Indian History Congress in commemoration of Srirangapatna 1799. It encompassed the feats and exploits of the two great Sultans of Mysore. Awadesh Kumar Singh, (ed.), *Discourse of Resistance in the Colonial Period*, is filled with

⁵⁹ P. C. Joshi, *1857 in Folk Songs*, New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1994.

⁶⁰ Hira Singh, *Colonial Hegemony and Popular Resistance – Princes, Peasants, and Paramount Power*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1998.

⁶¹ Irfan Habib (ed.), *Confronting Colonialism – Resistance and Modernization under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, New Delhi, Tulika Books, 1999, Third Reprint 2012.

literary theory of resistance.⁶² The books are helpful in giving an imaginative idea on the formation of the work.

Traditional structure and system of the settlers of the area of study is provided by vernacular writers and books. Chhawnmanga, *Mizorama Michengte* (1985) is one of the earliest works on the present Mizoram (Lushai Hills) by a writer from southern Mizoram.⁶³ It gives an impetus for a new idea on the theme of the research. C. Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo Nun* (1998), is another dominant work of the traditional life-world of the Lushais (Mizo).⁶⁴ L. B. Thanga, *The Mizos: A Study in Racial Personality*, (1978) is an early work on Mizo or Lushais ethno-generic history in English.⁶⁵ These works, as ethnocentric as they are, do not provide any information related to colonial resistance in the Lushai Hills. However, they made invaluable contribution for the work.

Ngurthankima Sailo's, *Essays on the History of the Mizos* (2004), Sangkima's, *Mizos: Society and Social Change (1890-1947)* (2006); Dr. J. Zorema's, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram, 1890-1954 (The Bureaucracy and the Chiefs)* (2007); R. Rualthansanga's, *Traditional and Representative Institution in the Lushai Hills* (2015), are modern academic writings with several aspects of Lushais (Mizo) society.⁶⁶ They deal with the Lushai society from the pre-colonial period to the changes that followed. However, they did not sufficiently provide the history of colonial resistance in the Lushai Hills. As such, deeper contextual analysis is necessary in order to grab the whole picture of resistance in the Lushai Hills. For example, Dr. J. Zorema's works is more on the British administration carried out

⁶² Singh, Awadesh Kumar, (ed.), *Discourse of Resistance in the Colonial Period*, New Delhi, Creative Books, 2005.

⁶³ Chhawnmanga, *Mizorama Michengte*, Aizawl, Hnamte Press, 1985.

⁶⁴ C. Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo Nun*, Aizawl, Mizoram Publication Board, Second Edition, 2000.

⁶⁵ Khup Za Go, *Zo Chronicles – A Documentary Study of History and Culture of the Kuki-Chin-Lusai Tribe*, New Delhi, Mittal Publication, 2008. L. B. Thanga, *The Mizos: A Study in Racial Personality*, Gauhati, 1978.

⁶⁶ R. Rualthansanga, *Traditional and Representative Institution in the Lushai Hills*, Guwahati, EBH Publishers (India), 2015; Sangkima, *Mizos: Society and Social Change (1890-1947)*, Guwahati, Spectrum Publications, 2006; Ngurthankima Sailo, *Essays on the History of the Mizos*, Guwahati, Spectrum Publications, 2004; Dr. J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram, 1890-1954 (The Bureaucracy and the Chiefs)*, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 2007.

through the chiefs in which the obligations of the chiefs were incorporated to suit the convenience of the colonial power.

C. Lalthlengliana's *The Lushai Hills – Annexation, Resistance and Pacification 1886-1898* included a study of colonial resistance in the Lushai Hills.⁶⁷ However, the study ends with the period of the British subduing of the revolt in south Lushai Hills. The current study goes beyond 1898. Far more important is that, armed or military subjugation by a superior power does not implicate the absence of resistance. Resistance is a structure and not an event. Resistance is negation and negotiation within the vast dominant structure and much beyond armed resistance of the colonial power.

Works related to Christianity in the Lushai Hills are numerous. The Christian missionaries had done invaluable works in the Lushai Hills. They were important tools for dissecting different areas of colonialism and colonial control. C. L. Hminga, *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram* (1987), Lal Dena, *Christian Missions and Colonialism – A Study of Missionary Movement in Northeast India with Particular Reference to Manipur and Lushai Hills 1894-1947*, (1988), Frederick S. Downs, *History of Christianity in North East India in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century (History of Christianity in India, Volume V, Part 5)*, (1992), J. M. Lloyd, *Harvest in the Hills* (Reprint, 1991), R. A. Lorrain, *Five Years in the Unknown Jungles* (Reprint, 1988), Rev. Lalsawma, *Revivals – the Mizo Way* (1994) are some of the most well known works.⁶⁸

These publications are devoid of any critical analysis. They are important sources of information that serve as one-sided reports. The works can be taken only

⁶⁷ C. Lalthlengliana, *The Lushai Hills – Annexation, Resistance and Pacification 1886-1898*, New Delhi, Akansha Publishing House, 2007.

⁶⁸ C. L. Hminga, *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, Serkawn, Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1987; Lal Dena, *Christian Missions and Colonialism – A Study of Missionary Movement in Northeast India with Particular Reference to Manipur and Lushai Hills 1894-1947*, Shillong, Vendrame Institute, 1988; Frederick S. Downs, *History of Christianity in North East India in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century (History of Christianity in India, Volume V, Part 5)*, Bangalore, The Church History Association of India (CHAI), 1992; J. M. Lloyd, *Harvest in the Hills*, Aizawl, Synod Publication Board, (Reprinted as *History of the Church in Mizoram*), 1991. R. A. Lorrain, *Five Years in the Unknown Jungles*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1988; Rev. Lalsawma, *Revivals – the Mizo Way*, Aizawl, Rev. Lalsawma, 1994.

at face value as the authors mainly were the missionaries or those who were directly influenced by the missionaries.

In spite of the presence of numerous literatures, there is no single work that has specifically dealt with colonial resistance in the Lushai Hills. Many, even among the Lushai or Mizo, assumed that the British were a welcome guest during their rule. However, the truth is the opposite. Hence, this work explores, evaluates, and empirically analyses the legions of resistances that colonialism had encountered in the Lushai Hills.

Jem. Thawnglinga's *Chin-Mizo Chanchin*, is one of the most recent books published on the Zo people.⁶⁹ It is an ethnohistory encompassing the traditions of the people. He was the Chief of Sialhau, Burma (Myanmar) and served in the British army from 1936 to 1947. He passed away on 4 October, 1975. Documentary sources on the Lushai Hills were written mainly by the colonial officials and western missionaries who did not have an in-depth knowledge of the socio-cultural practices. The first generation of Lushai writers (early educated elites) had trodden the path of the colonial master. Thus, there is a lack of ingenuity in their writings. This void has been filled to a great extent by Jem. Thawnglinga's book. Local writers from the Chin Hills have more comprehensive knowledge on the Lushai and other indigenous settlers. As the settlers of the Indo-Myanmar border belong to the same ethnic and stock of people, they were called 'transborder tribe'.⁷⁰

I. 4 Methodology and Approach

The theme of this work mainly focuses on resistance to colonialism in the Lushai Hills. It is a descriptive analysis based on the earliest available records to the latest publications. The National Archives of India (NAI) and Mizoram State Archives (MSA) played a crucial role in the collection of early written records. Books republished by the Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Aizawl also offered a great help. Relevant micro-films available in Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

⁶⁹ Jem. Thawnglinga, *Chin-Mizo Chanchin*, Aizawl, Prof. Orestes Rosanga, First Edition, 2019.

⁷⁰ H. Kamkhenthang, *The Paite – A Transborder Tribe of India and Burma*, Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1988.

(NMML), New Delhi are also used. The study also extensively uses reports of the early Christian missionaries and educated Christian Lushais (Mizo). Besides, books, journals, magazines, and newspapers are widely used.

The Internet Archive is of valuable use in this research.⁷¹ *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu* is the most valuable collection provided by the website in relation to the work.⁷²

Moreover, oral traditions compiled by early local historians are examined and interpreted in the context of resistance to colonialism in the Lushai Hills.

The documents and monographs of the British officials and administrators are replete with miss-transliteration and corrupted terms. Thus, there arises the need for crosschecking of the sources especially in relation to proper noun. This is because there are many lists of misspelled names in colonial records.

The research assesses the resistance to subjugation and domination by British colonialism by the people of the Lushai Hills. The thesis encompasses the various aspects of colonial resistance.

I. 5 Structure of the Study

The research is within the domain of military, political and cultural history. The role of relevant commanders and officials and other players are vastly indicated in the study. The thesis is divided into six chapters as follows:

Chapter I – ‘Introduction – Colonialism and Resistance’

The Introduction provides an overview of the topic, giving a generalised picture of the thesis. It reviews the colonial experiences of the Indian sub-continent and the Lushai Hills in particular. It makes an assessment and appraisal of ‘colonialism’ and ‘resistance’. It is from the perspective of Indian history and the Northeast in particular. The views of different scholars and historians are incorporated. It gives an outline on historiography of colonialism and resistance in

⁷¹ www.archive.org . It was founded in 1996 and has numerous historical web collections. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that aim to build an internet library.

⁷² <https://blog.archive.org/about/> (accessed 15 April, 2020).

India. It analyses the different forms of resistance to colonialism. It also gives an outline on the methodology, structure of the study and reviews some of the existing literatures relevant to the work.

Chapter II – ‘Background to the Understanding of the Lushai Hills’

The second chapter is a study that provides a background understanding of the Lushai Hills and the thesis as well. It is a brief sketch of different themes to the understanding of the region of the study. The main focus is on the chiefs as they were the central pillar before and after British colonialism. They were the main agents of resistance to colonialism too.

Chapter III – ‘Colonialism and Its Resistance in the Lushai Hills’

The third chapter deals with Lushais encounter with colonialism. It analyses the advent of colonialism in the Lushai Hills. It covers the period of early interaction of the ‘outsider’ or *vais* with the Lushais. The policies of British India in their attempt to conquer the Lushais are discussed. A study is made on the resistance of the Lushai on these interactions and engagements.

Chapter IV – ‘Colonial Control and Its Resistance in the Lushai Hills’

This chapter evaluates and examines the period after the establishment of colonialism and its resistance in the Lushai Hills. It was the chiefs who had played a central role in their resistance to colonialism in the Lushai Hills. There were many chiefs and *pasalthas* who remained unsung heroes till date.⁷³ They resisted colonialism from its nascent stage. The chapter divided the resistance into three main geographical divisions.

A revision is also made on the life history of Zakapa. He is a symbol of colonial resistance in the Lushai Hills. His uniqueness was that he was admired even by his adversaries i.e. agents of colonialism. The history of the Lushai Hills would

⁷³ V. L. Siana noted that a brave man is known for his contribution to the society, “bravely protecting the households during war; ready to aid and help friends during elephant hunts; when the village faced unforeseen calamities a *pasaltha* is not only brave but would also persevere in bearing his wounds or tackle any unforeseen matters or danger, is soft in heart and never selfish”. See, Orestes Rosanga, ‘Theorizing the Concept of Mizo Hero: An Indigenous Perspective’, *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Vol. XVIII, September 2017, p. 10.

have been completely different, if the force of resistance were successful in their bold manoeuvres.

Chapter V – ‘Colonial Consolidation and Its Resistance in the Lushai Hills’

This chapter lays emphasis on colonialism and its consolidation, its characteristics and consequences, and its resistance in the Lushai Hills. Attempts are made to draw what had been wretched by colonialism and the resistance that it had encountered. The impact and influence of colonialism, where traditions and customs were altered by colonial practices among the Lushais, are discussed. Also, the rise of modern intelligentsia and resistance, where-in negotiations to share power and authority in the realm of colonial super-structure is documented.

Chapter VI – ‘Conclusion’

The last chapter is the concluding chapter. It summarises and analyse the major findings of the research. The meaning and orientation of the word ‘resistance’ is trace back to its Latin root. It brings forth the idea that the assignment of ‘resistance’ as a single minded purpose of actions of the colonised subjects was a pervasive feature of colonial ‘othering’.

Chapter II

BACKGROUND TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE LUSHAI HILLS

II. 1 Introduction

According to the Imperial Gazetteer of India, the Lushai Hills was a district in Eastern Bengal and Assam. It had an area of 7,227 square miles.¹ It was bounded in the north by Sylhet and Cachar, and the state of Manipur; on the west by Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and the state of Hill Tipperah. It was bounded on the south by Northern Arakan and the Chin Hills; and on the east by the Chin Hills.²

British Military Police and Survey Party often frequented into the Lushai Hills. However, their explorations were superficial. Therefore, the Hills still remained largely unknown. A. S. Reid wrote in 1893 that, prior to 1889 the interior tract of country known as the Chin-Lushai Hills, was unknown and unexplored area.³ Reid believed that there would be several even among the educated of those days to whom the word, 'Lushai Hills' would convey little meaning.⁴

In the report of the 1840's, the British identified the Lushais as, "an independent and powerful tribe, occupying a tract north east of Chittagong and some

¹ *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*; Vol. XVI, Oxford, 1908, p. 213. Other colonial sources mentioned that it covers an area of about 6,900 square miles. See., *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, Vol. IV, North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes*, Simla, Government Monotype Press, 1907 (Compiled in the Intelligence Branch Division of the Chief of the Staff, Army Head Quarters, India), p. 231.

² The late existence of these present-day political boundaries has fragmented the settlement of the Lushais or Mizos kindred tribes. Parts of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Manipur, Hill Tipperah, Burma and Assam were settled by them long before the emergence of colonialism. It was the colonial authority who divided their settlement area, thereby denying them a united Country.

³ Reid, cited in, C. L. Hminga, *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, Serkawn, Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1987, p. 6.

⁴ Reid, cited in, C. L. Hminga, , *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, p. 6.

nine or ten days march south of Cachar.”⁵ The Raja of Tipperah also stated that, “The Lushais do not come under his authority.”⁶

In the Lushai Hills, the slopes were steep and level grounds even of short stretches are rare.⁷ During the preparation of the 1850 British expedition against Chief Ngura of the Lushai Hills, Lieutenant Colonel Frederick J. Lister mentioned that, “the country south of Cachar was dense jungle and very difficult to get supplies.” He had proposed to take what was required minimum.⁸

The Lushai Hills has moderate temperature. Winter has no rain and is thus pleasant. Summers are enjoyable as it is not really hot. The climate is bearable throughout the year. T. H. Lewin commented that the Lushai, “occupy a country of wood and dale having an almost Italian climate”.⁹

Before the British intrusion and their subsequent conquest and control, there was no demarcated or permanent boundary. There was no name or demarcated area for the territory as no written record of the contemporary settlers existed. It was an unadministered land beyond the British jurisdiction. One of the earliest references on the land was by T. H. Lewin in his, *Wild Races of South Eastern India* in which he refers as the, “Hills to the east of Bengal”.¹⁰

Rev. William Williams, the first Christian missionary to set foot in the Lushai Hills visited the Hills on March, 1891.¹¹ He observed that the Lushai villages were much bigger than the Khasi’s. In the Khasi Hills, a village with 100 to 200 houses were large village. However, in the Lushai Hills, village with 200 to 300 houses were

⁵ Suhas Chatterjee, *Frontier Officers in Colonial Northeast India*, New Delhi, Akansha Publishing House, 2009, p. 19.

⁶ Suhas Chatterjee, *Frontier Officers in Colonial Northeast India*, p. 19.

⁷ *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, Vol. IV, North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes*, p. 231.

⁸ Suhas Chatterjee, p. 19.

⁹ T. H. Lewin, *A Fly on the Wheel*, London, 1869, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1977, p. 287.

¹⁰ T. H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South Eastern India*, London, W.H. Allen & Co. London, 1870, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1978, p. 275.

¹¹ Rev. William Williams was a Wales missionary stationed in Stella, Khasi Hills. Stella was located in the Bengal border of Sylhet. It was famous for fish and betal production.

regarded as small villages. There were villages that had 800 houses and some had 1000 houses.¹² Most of the villages were located on the top of a hill.

The first census of the Lushai Hills was taken in 1901. This census revealed a population of 82,434 living in 239 villages. The Hills was sparsely populated; and only support 11 people per square mile.¹³ Agriculture was the source of livelihood for 93 percent of the population in 1901¹⁴. The Government of India Act, 1935 classified the area as an “Excluded Areas” excluding it from the purview of the Constitution of the time.¹⁵

II. 3 From ‘Lushai Hills’ to ‘Mizoram’

When the British first came into the area during the later part of the nineteenth century, they recorded the inhabitants as ‘Lushai’. It is however difficult to identify when and how exactly the settlers were identified as Lushai.

Rev. James Herbert Lorrain, one of the pioneer Christian missionaries wrote, “The English people called the people as a whole “Lushai” while they called themselves “Lusei”. This was a mispronunciation of the word “Lusei”. They were a prominent clan of the ‘Lushai Hills’ that had resisted the British intrusion.¹⁶

L. B. Thanga, one of the earliest civil servants among the Mizo with a keen interest in history, pointed that, “there is no Mizo word as ‘Lushai’.” The term is purely a corruption of “Lusei”.¹⁷ According to him, the people never called themselves Lusei as a whole. The Lusei are one among the several clans among the inhabitants of the Hills.

¹² Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, *Zoram Vār̄t̄ian – Chanchin̄tha leh Thuziak Khawv̄ar Tan Dân*, Aizawl, Fineprints, 2008, p. 170.

¹³ *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, p. 212.

¹⁴ *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, p. 212.

¹⁵ It was declared under the terms of the Government of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) Order, 1936. See., Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, (culled from ‘History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam), First Edition: 1942, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1978, p. 66.; Dr. J. Zorema, Dr., *Indirect Rule in Mizoram, 1890-1954 (The Bureaucracy and the Chiefs)*, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 2007.

¹⁶ J. H. Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, p. V., Cited in., C. L. Hminga, *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, Serkawn, Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1987, p. 11.

¹⁷ L. B. Thanga, *The Mizos: A Study in Racial Personality*, Gauhati, 1978, p. 5.

The British adopted the term ‘Lushai Hills’ for their newly conquered territory. They called the people as the ‘Lushai’.¹⁸ In the absence of proper written records, we cannot veritably trace the origin of Lushai. The word ‘Lusei’ was erroneously written by the British as ‘Lushai’. And, they further mistakenly used the word ‘Lushai’ in their presentation of the whole tribes of the Hills. This colonial misrepresentation faced tremendous resistance from the era of decolonisation.¹⁹

The history of modern political administration in the Lushai Hills began with the establishment of British colonisation. It was in the year 1890 that the former Lushai Hills was divided into two administrative divisions i.e., the North Lushai Hills and the South Lushai Hills. The North Lushai Hills was a part of Assam and the South Lushai Hills formed one administrative division of Bengal. A Political Officer with administrative power was in charge of the North Lushai Hills.²⁰ The South Lushai Hills District was under the charge of the Superintendent. In 1898, the two Lushai Hills Districts were merged and put under Assam.²¹ Gradually, colonial administration in the Lushai Hills began to consolidate.

The Lushai Hills was then an excluded area in the governance of the British Empire. It was administered by the Superintendent.²² The incumbent was vested with the authority of sanctioning capital punishment. This Superintendent was directly responsible to the imperial British Government of India. The fulcrum of the British administration was to secure peace, law and order in the Hills. The traditional authority of the village chief was maintained. However, several rights were abolished to meet the exigencies of the colonial state.²³

¹⁸ This line was taken in the theme of the thesis as the study covers the period of colonialism.

¹⁹ One the successful result of this resistance was the change of name of the Lushai Hills District to Mizo Hills District in 1954. The name is further change to Mizoram with the attainment of the status of Union Territory (UT) in 1954. It was change to Mizoram because it is more culturally inclusive.

²⁰ He was instructed not to interfere much with the internal affairs of the indigenous settlers.

²¹ Alexander Mackenzie, the then Chief Commissioner of Burma (Myanmar), opposed the unification of the Chin-Lushai Hills. He however, persuaded the British Government of India to have least amount of intervention in the administrative control of the Lushais (Mizo).

²² It was not directly administered by the British Government of Assam.

²³ C. L. Hminga, p. 8.

The colonial government curbed any movement that seems to ride the tide against their rule. The first political organisation, the Mizo Union, was founded in the midst of this difficulty.²⁴ The Mizo Union demanded the setting of District Council before the end of November, 1947. They also demanded the abolition of the oppressive practices sanctioned by the government.

The Assam government hesitated to undertake drastic legislation and the Mizo Union launched a non-cooperation movement in late 1948. As a result, the Lushai Hills District got an Advisory Council prior to the formation of the District Council in 1952. The age-long traditional chieftainship came to an end with the setting up of the Advisory Council.²⁵ Subsequently, the name 'Lushai Hills' District was changed into Mizo Hills District by the Lushai Hills District (Change of Name) Act, 1954.

According to the 1954 Act of Parliament, the Mizo Hills District remained one of the autonomous districts of Assam. The villages in the district were governed by the Village Council (VC) members. Members were elected through universal adult franchise. The district was again upgraded to a status of Union Territory (UT) in 1972. It was renamed as Mizoram. It again attained statehood in 1986.

This in short, was how the former geographical region called the 'Lushai Hills' was rechristened to its correct name, 'Mizoram'. The word 'Mizoram' is an amalgamation of two words *Mizo* and *ram*, which means 'land of the Mizos'. Mizo is the name of the conglomerate of clans and tribes who inhabited the land (*ram*) since time immemorial. However, in larger part of the thesis, the colonial name 'the Lushai Hills' is used. This neither implies a denial of the new name 'Mizoram' nor an acceptance of a colonial construct.

II. 4 The Institution of Chieftainship

The most important traditional institution of the Lushais was chieftainship. This was because the lives of the people revolved around the chief. Every Lushai

²⁴ Its official name was Mizo Common Peoples' Union. It was more famous with its common name i.e. the Mizo Union. It was founded on 6 April, 1946.

²⁵ However, legislation was passed only in 1954.

village was ruled by independent *Lal* or Chief. From the pre-colonial times the Lushais were governed by these chiefs. The institution of chieftainship was the pivot of social fabric.

It is generally held that the compulsion of community life necessitated by constant raids and inter-village war hastened the emergence of village chief.²⁶ The Governor of Assam, Sir Robert Reid noted that the foremost thing that strengthened the chief was to be successful in raids and bring more followers and influence.²⁷

Chieftainship emerged out of the collective need of the villagers. The struggle against the vagaries of nature and safeguard from wild beasts compounded the emergence of able leader among the Lushais. It originated out of the physical power and intellectual ability of an individual to provide safety to the village life.²⁸

The probable year for the emergence of chieftainship was traced “at around 1500 A.D.”²⁹ In the war between the Lusei and Paite, the Lusei captured a Paite named Sihsinga. Zahmuaka was the son of Sihsinga. Sihsinga was thus, the progenitor the Sailo.³⁰

Being afraid of wild beasts and other enemies, no one wanted to become the leader of the village. They were further aware that they would not have an administrative control in the absence of people supporting them. In such circumstances, Zahmuaka, who had six sons, was invited to be the chief. Zahmuaka gladly accepted the invitation, and this was, according to oral traditions, the origin of chieftainship among the Lushais.

²⁶ There was mention of war between the Sailos i.e. Lalpuithanga versus Suakpuilala and between the Sailo and Zadeng in which Siallam Gong and Haizang Gong were taken from the Zadeng as ransom fee. See., *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, March 1903*, printed by B. C Das at the Dina Nath Press, Sylhet, published by Mr. A. R Giles, Lushai Hills, p. 11, available at www.archive.org.

²⁷ Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1883-1941*, Shillong, 1942, p.3.

²⁸ Dr. J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram*, p. 14.

²⁹ C. Nunthara, *Mizoram: Society and Polity*, New Delhi, 1996, p. 41. The emergence of chief ended the primitive communitarian life.

³⁰ A short and incomplete write up on the Sailo after Zahmuaka can be seen in *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, January 1916*, pp. 20-22.

The Sailo chiefs became the most prominent and well-known because it was during the zenith of their power that interaction with colonial power began.³¹ By the time when the British came to the Lushai Hills, the Sailo had already established themselves as the most prominent ruling clan. They were thus the main target of the imperialist power.

Power and authority that emanated through the chiefs was a convenient tool for the British colonisers. It was through this institution that the British later ran their authority. As it emerge as an arm of colonialism the institution of chieftainship itself had faced vehement resistance in the Lushai Hills.

II. 4. 1 The Chief and the Village System

The Lushai villages were an assemblage of houses with the chief's house at the centre. He was also the most powerful in the area under his jurisdiction. John Shakespear wrote, “. . . among the Lushai, each village is a separate state, ruled over by its own Lal or Chief.”³² It was the case that powerful chiefs had one or more tributary villages. The welfare and security of the village lied in the hands of the chief.

The chief combined the power of legislature, executive and judiciary. No one in the village could challenge the decision of the chief and his authority.³³ He was also the authority who punished the guilty.

The welfare of his subjects was the priority of the chief. The chief was the protector and guardian of his village. He was the defender of his subjects in times of war and against wild beasts. He was their benefactor in times of scarcity of food and

³¹ The rise of the Sailo as the most powerful ruling clan can also be attributed to the numerous social and economic privileges that the chief had enjoyed. The chief was the most powerful and authoritative in his jurisdictional area. The chiefs were not despotic, they were rather benevolent. The efficient administration rendered by them attracted many people.

³² J. Shakespear, *The Lushai-Kuki Clans*, London, Macmillan, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1988.p. 42.

³³ The reward of capital punishment was also vested in his hand. He thus had the power over the life and death of his subjects too.

natural resources.³⁴ The Lushai society was egalitarian. The chief was not an authoritarian head but a benevolent ruler.

However, the power of the chief was very much circumscribed. The power of the chief was limited by the fact that his subjects being free could easily transfer their allegiance to another chief if they were aggrieved.³⁵ The rival chiefs were always opened to listen to the cause in an attempt to gain more subjects. Thus, the chiefs were constrained to govern according to custom and tradition.³⁶

J. Shakespear wrote, “. . . any Chief whose rule was unduly harsh soon found his subjects leaving him and he was therefore constrained to govern according to custom.”³⁷ If the villagers feel oppressed, the chief lost his importance and popularity.

The individual calibre of the chief had great implication. The power of a chief depended on his capacity and intuition. “A strong ruler, who governed mainly according to custom, could do almost anything he liked without losing his followers, but a weak man who tried petty tyrannies soon found himself a king without any subjects.”³⁸

Thomas Herbert Lewin narrated an incident that he had experienced in 1866. Lewin was on a visit to a village of a leading Lushai chief. During his conversation with the chief, a drunkard stumbled along. The drunkard seized the chief by the neck and shoved him off the path as his path was blocked by the chief. Lewin’s narration had illustrated the position of the chiefs in the Lushai Hills to a certain extent.

Such disrespect to a chief made Lewin nervous. It was unacceptable for Lewin or any Europeans. Lewin asked the chief for an explanation of such disrespect being permitted. The chief replied that in a war or in a council that he was a Chief and his words were obeyed. Behaviour like that would be punishable to death.

³⁴ The villagers approached their chief in times of hardship. A hungry villagers freely entered the chief’s house and get what he needed. The chief was bound to feed him.

³⁵ J. Shakespear, *The Lushai-Kuki Clans*, p. 42.

³⁶ J. Shakespear, p. 44.

³⁷ J. Shakespear, p. 39.

³⁸ J. Shakespear, p. 44.

However, in the village the drunkard was his fellow and equal. Even a chief could not block a path to which even a drunkard had to pass by.³⁹

The incident narrated by Lewin maybe exceptional. However, it illustrated the egalitarianism that existed in traditional Lushais society. The chiefs received honourable treatment in the village. The villagers were also duty bound to help the chief in all possible ways. The chief was the receiver of certain gifts and free labour. The chief's house was constructed with free labour provided by the villagers. Some of the chief's properties were regarded as common to all.⁴⁰

Presents and gifts that a chief received were regarded as common property. The villagers often took away what they wanted. This was because it was regarded that the chief being well-known received more gifts. He was expected to distribute whatever he received. The chief at his will could demand anything from his subjects. The Lushai chief, then, would appear to be all-powerful and authoritative. Disobedience to the order of the chief even entailed expulsion from the village.

Although the chief appeared to be absolute, he assumed absolute power in theory only. He tried every case in consultation with his *upa* or council of elders. The chief was assisted by the upas in the daily affairs of the village. Authority emanated from the council through the chief. The chief transacted the business of the village administration with the help of his council. He was guided and supervised by this council.

The upas were appointed by the chief himself and could be dismissed by him.⁴¹ The chief himself made observations among his subjects to select his council's members. The position of upa was not hereditary. There was neither fixed number nor tenure for the upas. They remained in the council as long as they enjoyed the confidence of the chief.

³⁹ T. H. Lewin, *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein*, Calcutta, 1869, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰ T. H. Lewin, *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein*, p. 243.

⁴¹ N. E. Parry, *A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., 1927, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, p. 4.

There were no stringent rules for the composition of the upa. The numbers of upa in a village normally depended on the density of the population. It was proportionate to the requirement of the village.

The upas were the most prominent and respectable individual in the village. Through them the chief administered and extracted loyalty from the villagers. The chiefs were also supposed to spend most of their time in the counsel of their upas. They discussed and decided on all matters affecting the village. They enjoyed their leisure over a cup of rice beer.

A strong chief practically controlled everything while the business of a weak chief was run by his upas. However, the system acts as a system of 'checks and balances.' In normal situation the two acted cordially in the management of village administration. The upas analysed all possibilities and trajectory in every situations. They further consult the people in their capacity. This made the administration of the village function like a modern day democracy.

The Chief's Council was the only the arbiter of justice in a village. All civil and criminal cases were decided by the Council.⁴² The Council was guided by customs and traditions. In cases that involved close relatives of the chief, the chief abstained from deliberations. Any members of the chief's Council would also voluntarily abstain from the deliberations if their near relatives were involved.⁴³

The party or the one guilty were often punished besides bearing the *salâm*. The *salâm* was rather regarded as the court fee or expenditures of the court. The punishment depended on the gravity of the crime. A fine between □ 1 and □ 5 was normally imposed. In case of theft, restitution of the stolen articles was demanded. In grave case, a fine of *sial* (*bros frontalis*) was the norm.

⁴² In crime like murder and rape, the guilty could be punished by chopping off his ear or nose. However, such heinous crime rarely existed.

⁴³L. B. Thanga, *The Mizos*, p. 10.

The chief was to help anyone, who came to seek his help. Even, a murderer could seek refuge in the chief's house. In such cases, the chief had to protect the murderer. No one could lay hand on the murderer if the chief does not permit.⁴⁴

The power of the chief had remained so until the fall of the Lushai Hills under colonialism. The power of the Chief's Council was checked "only by the temper of the people they ruled. Until they overstepped the mark the people had no other course open than to submit."⁴⁵

The position of the chief was hereditary, and "all trace their pedigrees back to one called Thangura."⁴⁶ There was no provision or custom for the removal of a chief. The only way that a subject could avoid an unjust chief was only through migration. Through migration the subjects transfer their loyalty to another chief. This transfer of allegiance was a serious loss to any chief. Thus a chief was often compelled to rule wisely and justly. The more subjects a chief commands portrayed his greatness.

The chief was a leader in war and hunting expeditions. He can declare war and reached an agreement with another chief. The chief was a commander during battle or raid.

The land belongs to the village community. However, the chief is recognised as the guardian of the land. He was the protector and a father figure to his subjects.

Besides the *upas* there were some other officials in the village. They were *ramhual*, *tlangau*, *thirdeng*, *puithiam* and *zalên*. They assisted the chief in dispensed of village administration. They were appointed by the chief and his council.

Jhum or shifting cultivation was the mainstay of the village economy.⁴⁷ *Ramhual* were officials who advised the chief where forest was to be cleared each year. They were an expertise in the art of jhumming. The number of *ramhual* depended on the wish of the chief.

⁴⁴ In such cases the criminal became the *pawikhawih bâwi* of the chief.

⁴⁵ A. G. McCall, *The Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 2003, p. 96.

⁴⁶ Grace R. Lewis, *The Lushai Hills – The Story of the Lushai Pioneer Mission*, London, The Baptist Missionary Society, 1907, p. 22.

⁴⁷ Forest was cleared or cut each year for the purpose.

Certain plot of land or forest was allotted to each family by the chief on the advised of the Ramhual for cultivation. The plot was selected first by the chief followed by the ramhual. The people choose their plot on the basis of a draw of lot.

Due to this pattern of selection, the ramhual paid more tax to the chief than the general public.⁴⁸ This tax was paddy tax known as *fathang* or *buhchhûn*. The ramhual paid ten baskets as *fathang*.⁴⁹ Other village household normally paid six baskets of paddy per family.

The *tlangau* (village crier) disseminated the messages of the chief to the villagers. He was an important village official. He would go around the village to proclaim the chief's order. He acted as a publicity agent for the chief. He was also entrusted with arrangement and division of works when the whole village was engage in *hnatlang* or common public work.

The *tlangau* was given a basket of paddy by each household as remuneration for his service in each harvest. However, the kind of remuneration differed from village to village. It was purely of local arrangement. The *tlangau* also function as a personal peon for the Chief's Council. Generally, a village had only one *tlangau*.

The *thirdeng* was the village blacksmith. He was an important local functionary in any agricultural society.⁵⁰ The tools he made or repaired mainly consisted of agricultural, household and weapons of war. He received two baskets of paddy and twice an amount of rice cooked by the his family (*chaw rel hnih*) from each household as remuneration.⁵¹ He had share in any animal caught or trapped by the villagers. This was called *pûm sa pek*.⁵² However, his share differed according to the animal trapped. There were two categories of *thirdeng* of – *lal thirdeng* (the

⁴⁸ The ramhual usually had the chance to select fertile plot for cultivation. They were thus, well-to-do members of the village. To retain their position, they never hesitated to pay larger *fathang*. They were to support the chief whenever needed.

⁴⁹ A basket was equivalent to a mustard oil tin of modern day.

⁵⁰ He had to make and repair the tools required by the villagers. He had to repair any tools that were required in the daily life of the villagers.

⁵¹ Jem. Thawnglinga, *Chin-Mizo Chanchin*, Aizawl, Prof. Orestes Rosanga, First Edition, 2019, p. 407. The figure 'two' implicates the share of the blacksmith for the rainy and dry seasons.

⁵² Jem. Thawnglinga, *Chin-Mizo Chanchin*, p. 407. This was called *thirdeng sa* by most writers.

chief's or royal blacksmith) and thirdeng (normal blacksmith). The lal thirdeng was expected to possess superior skills than the normal thirdeng.

Any person who possessed the required skills could not be the village's blacksmith. It was rather hereditary. In the absence of hereditary thirdeng, it was selected from the villagers by the chief. It was often given to the one who had the least opportunity in the village.⁵³

In traditional Lushai society, each village had its own priest who was known as *puithiam*.⁵⁴ His duty was to perform sacrifices for the villagers.⁵⁵ Generally, he was rewarded with a basket of paddy by each household in one harvest year. The quantity of remuneration differed in each villages.

There were three types of priesthood – *sadawt*, *tlahpawi* and *bawlpw*.⁵⁶ The *sadawt* was the chief's private priest. He was the royal priest. He was responsible for sacrifices related to the royal family. The *tlahpawi* was an assistant to the *sadawt*. The *sadawt* generally was a close associate of the chief. The chief had control over the *puithiam* in his jurisdiction. He directed them on which sacrifice and ceremony to conduct. However, the chief was not a religious head.

The *puithiam* did not occupy a high status in the social hierarchy. He did not have any remuneration as such. However, he was to the level of the chief in choosing the place for his *jhum*. In face of hardship in maintenance of *jhum*, he could seek help from the Chief's Council. In any ceremonies of *sakhua* or belief system the lower end of the spine of the animal was the share of the priest.⁵⁷

⁵³ No one, but the village blacksmith can have an anvil. If anyone else had it, it was an omen that death will befall on the family. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 401.

⁵⁴ In the Lushais society there was a separation of the secular and religious role of the chief. However, in the *vantlâng sakhua*, the chief perform the ceremony instead of the priest.

⁵⁵ The *puithiam* sacrifices to appease the spirits that causes illness to human beings. By checking the pulse of a sick person, a *puithiam* would prescribe animals that would be sacrifice to *pathian* (Supreme Being). The *puithiam* performs all kinds of sacrifices and ceremonies when the need arose.

⁵⁶ Extreme care was taken in the selection of the priests. The priest was to be innocent, free from any deformity and diseases, well verse in sacred religious and social rites, etc. It was said that, "The rites of a priest with fault is not answer by the 'khua' (supreme being)". The priest was ordained by the chief in a ceremony of *hriakthih*. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, pp. 398-400.

⁵⁷ There was an adage, "Priest with remunerations lives a short life, and their ceremonies were not accepted by the 'khua' (supreme being)." See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 408.

The *bawlpu* would perform sacrifices and ceremonies to ward off malevolent spirits.⁵⁸ They were not ordained by the chief and his council.⁵⁹ They were paid by individuals who took their services. Every village does not have a *bawlpu*. In such cases, their role was played by other priests.

Important ceremonies performed for the entire villagers or *vantlâng sakhua biak* were *kawngpuihawn* or *kawngpuisiam*, *fanodawi*, *pilnam*, *muchhip*, *tuikhur* or *tuitler*, and *khawthen*.⁶⁰

Kawngpuihawn or *kawngpuisiam* was performed to please the spirit of wild animals.⁶¹ *Fanodawi* was performed for healthy agricultural crops and rich harvest from the cultivated lands.⁶² *Pilnam* was close to *Fanodawi*. It was a ceremony for protection during clearing of the *jhum*, health of the crops and the cultivators, and a rich harvest. *Muchhip* yearned for healthy human lives. *Tuikhur* or *tuitler* was a consecration of the village's waterspring. It was a prayer to, 'outpour plenty of fresh water and not diseases'. It was mostly performed with three years gap. *Khawthen*

⁵⁸ The sacrifices or ceremonies to appease or ward off *huai* and *hring* were performed by the *bawlpu*. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 399. The malignant spirits were regarded as the causes for illness and sufferings.

⁵⁹ See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 408.

⁶⁰ Ceremonies for the public or *vantlâng sakhua* were performed not by the priest or *puithiam*, but by the chief. In this case, the chief himself is the *puithiam*. If the chief does not qualify to be a *puithiam*, the ceremony was to be performed by his siblings. If the chief was a minor, the procedure of the ceremony was to be taught to him by the *puithiam*. In times of public worship or *vantlâng sakhua biak*, the chief has to be fresh and clean; and dresses in all grandeur. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, pp. 321-325.

⁶¹ It was performed on the *kawngpui* (mainroad) of the entrance of the village. Two poles, tied or joint with wooden bar at a very high position were placed on both sides of the road. In the bar, a branch of shrub or *chhawl* was placed. Near the *chhawl* was placed different animal heads. The sacrificial animals were pig and red cock. One of the chant was –

*“Lut ang ka khawzawlah lut ang,
Salnu lut ang, Salpa lut ang;
Salian sate lut ang, ki tha, ngho tha lut ang;
Mimza lut ang, fangza lut ang;
Ka khawzawlah hrichhia lenglovin, nunsei hrisel lut ang.”*

See, Jem. Thawnglinga, pp. 322-323.

⁶² In the *jhum*, *thumhmun* was made in the base of a convenient tree. From there, when the paddy were palm tall i.e. in the month of *Nikir* (June), the ceremony was conducted. The sacrificial animals include a pig and a red cock. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 324.

was organised in case of the occurrence of natural disasters. It was a cleansing ceremony to appease the 'angry spirit'.⁶³

The chief also appointed a number of persons known as *zalên*. They were selected by the chief himself among the upper echelon of the village. They were contacted by the chief in hour of need and emergency. The chief also approached them for his need and in time of scarcity.

The *zalên* were exempted from paying tax or the *fathang*.⁶⁴ They were exempted because of their obligation to the chief's household if it "runs short of paddy or falls into any kind of difficulty."⁶⁵ They also had the privileged of selection of *jhum* site along with the *ramhual*. Like *ramhual*, the *zalên* was also entirely a local arrangement of the chief. Their number varied from village to village.

II. 4. 2 Rights and Privileges of the Chiefs

The chief being the guardian of the people devoted most of his time for the welfare of his subjects. The chief being the owner of the cultivated land was given a basket of paddy. The chief was due to receive *fathang* as a tax for cultivation of his *ram* or land from every household except the *zalên*. There were also several kinds of other taxes and payment in labour.

The *salâm* was also another such privilege of the chief. The chief often realised a *salâm* of □ 5 or a female pig form from the side that lost a disputed case. However, this was rather regarded as court fee.

The chief had a share in the wild animals caught or trapped within his territory or land.⁶⁶ It was normally the hind leg. However, in the case of an elephant;

⁶³ One of the chant was – "*Thiang ang, thiang ang;*

Ka khua thiang ang,

Ka hmunpui lei lai thiang ang."

See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 57.

⁶⁴ They were the only category or group who did not pay the traditional tax to the chief.

⁶⁵ N. E. Parry, *A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*, p. 8.

⁶⁶ Hunting was a game, a form of meeting subsistence needs and an important way of climbing the social ladder. A wild catch was a symbol of bravery, valour and manliness. It was undertaken by menfolk.

he took one of the tusks in lieu of the hind leg. This was the *sa chhiah* or flesh tax.⁶⁷ If this share of the chief was not paid, the hunter was liable to be fined.

The chief was also privileged to receive a portion of every honey collected and gathered by the villagers within his territory. This was known as *khuai chhiah* or honey tax.

Salt was an important essential that was rarely found in the Lushai Hills. Whenever a salt spring was found, the chief had share in the salt that was collected by the villagers. This was known as *chikhur chhiah* or salt tax. The villagers had to pay certain amount of salt that was extracted in the chief's territory. The amount to be paid was not prescribed. It depended on the amount collected.

The chief also received tribute in terms of labour. The chief's house was constructed with free labour by the villagers. The chief had sacrificed majority of his time for the village. He did not have sufficient time to construct his own house or gather material needed for construction. It was therefore obligatory for the villagers to provide the needful. This was known as *lal insak* or construction of the chief's house. According to custom, the chief was to provide feast for his villagers after the completion of his house.

As an administrative head of the village, the chief also was entitled to several rights and privileges. Traditionally, the Lushai chiefs had the power to order capital punishment. He had the right to give capital punishment to murderers and rapists. Although, the chief was administratively and judicially powerful, he brought forth every case in his council. As, said before every cases, civil or criminal were decided in accordance with the prevailing customs.

The chief had full power on his subjects. An offender could be punished by fines or by refusing him to cultivate the land. He could expel anyone found guilty of misconduct. The system of punishment acts as a deterrent and had a role in the subjects being responsible villagers. The chief had the authority to seize the property of his subjects who refused to obey his orders.

⁶⁷ The details on the tax were given in Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 215.

An instance which made the Lushais chief autocratic was his right to seize the property of any of his subjects.⁶⁸ In case of migration or transferred allegiance to another village, the chief had the right to seize their property. Transfer of loyalty was regarded as tyranny. And, in an attempt to avoid this, the chiefs were very careful in their dealing with their subjects.

However, as mentioned before, the autocratic nature of the power of the chief was always kept in check. He was bounded by customs and traditions in dealing with the people. A chief who ruled by his personal whims was gradually deserted by his subjects.

Traders traded goods and no currency existed during those days. Goods and other essential commodities were obtained through barter. Traders and businessmen moved from village to village. They also acted as one communication link between villages. The chiefs had the right to tax these traders within their jurisdiction.⁶⁹ And these taxes were the bone of contention during the period of early encounter with colonialism.

The chief always had close interaction with his subjects – directly or indirectly. The villagers were obliged to carry out the chief's order – individually or collectively. For the villager, the chief was their overlord.⁷⁰ The power of the chief was also kept in check by his council.⁷¹ This consultation with the village elders made the village administration democratic.

Neville Edward Parry, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, stood for the exclusion of the Hills from the Reformed Constitution.⁷² His statement reads, “The hills are

⁶⁸ This he could do when he wishes and whenever he thinks was deem fit.

⁶⁹ Suakpuilala right to tax the traders was confirmed by his agreement with the British 1871.

⁷⁰ It must me noted that a Lushais chief was not an autocrat. The chief also have the right to punish any of his subjects who infringe established customs.

⁷¹ In internal and external decision making the chief was assisted by the upas or village elders.

⁷² This was a period when the debate for the classification of areas into categories like ‘Excluded Areas’, ‘Partially Excluded Areas’ was ranging. The Lushai Hills was finally classified as ‘Excluded Areas’. The Lushais thus remained unrepresented in the reformed Assam legislature. They were left with their traditional chiefs to administer the local affairs under the supervision of the British officers. The Government of India Act, 1919 had drastically changed the administration of British India as a whole. This change in the system of administration was called ‘reformed government’.

already far ahead of the plains in self-government. Each village manages its own affairs; cases are tried by the chief and his elders. . . . it is surely better to let the people develop their own lines instead of handing them over to council of foreigners on which they have no voice . . . The existing system is entirely adequate for the need of the present.”⁷³ The exclusion upholds and recognised the power and authority of the chiefs.

II. 4. 3 Law of Succession of the Chiefs

The office of chieftainship was hereditary. However, there was a minimal difference in the pattern of succession among the clans of the Lushai Hills. Among the Lusei, it was the youngest son who inherited the deceased father’s property and status, while among the Paite, it was the eldest son.⁷⁴

In pre-colonial Lushai Hills, it implied inheriting the prestigious office of the chief or the father and all his property and authority.⁷⁵ In case of the demise of the youngest or eldest son, the responsibility fell into the hands of the next-in-line. The Lushai chiefs indeed had the prerogative to branch out. He was privileged to establish a new village and the right to keep *bâwi*.⁷⁶ By tradition, the chief would marry off his mature son of marriageable age.

In the case of chiefs having more than one son who were married, the sons other than the inheritor were often sent forth to a newly established village. Some households would also be transferred to the new village. They became *khawpêr* or tributary chief or village. And, later it was often the case that they became an independent chief. This resulted in the multiplication of chiefs in the Lushai Hills. The success or failure of the new chief depended on his own talent and capabilities.⁷⁷

⁷³ Extract from a Note by N. E. Parry, Superintendent Lushai Hills, dated 3 March 1928. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, p. 99

⁷⁴ H. Kamkhenthang, *The Paite – A Transborder Tribe of India and Burma*, Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1988.

⁷⁵ J. Shakespear, *The Lushai-Kuki Clans*, London, Macmillan, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1988, p. 42.

⁷⁶ *Bâwi* were freer than bonded labourer or slaves. They were more like maid or attendant. In the Lushai Hills, the well-to-do and the chief often have *bâwi*.

⁷⁷ J. Shakespear, p. 42.

In other cases, a strong chief had villages which paid tribute to him (khawpêr). In these cases, the chief appointed a person of his own to rule the tributary village.

Lushai chiefs used to have *hmêi* or concubines besides their legitimate wife. The siblings of the chief and his legitimate wife were called *chhungpuifa*. The children of those with the concubines were regarded as illegitimate. They were called *hmeifa*. In addition, there were children who were born out of clandestine relationship between the opposite sexes. They were called *sawn*. The chief often used to have *sawn*. In case the chief did not have a legal male child, his eldest male *hmeifa* would succeed him to his chieftainship. If the chief neither had a male *chhungpuifa* or *hmeifa*, the eldest male *sawn* would succeed him.

II. 6 The *Zawlbûk* Institution

In traditional Lushai village there was a *zawlbûk*. It was a dormitory for youngmen. It was from where the youngmen learnt social norms, ethics and nuances of lives. The elders guided and taught them. Thus, it was an important institution where boys were trained to be responsible human beings.

The *zawlbûk* was normally built near the chief's house which was located in the middle of the village. All unmarried men and widowers spent the night there. They took responsibilities in maintaining vigilance over the village.

The home and the hearth was an important place where the Lushai boys and girls were taught daily traits. The parents would speak of words of advice and caution to their children.⁷⁸ When the children attained the adolescent stage, the process of learning was continued in the *zawlbûk*. The upas or elders taught the nitty gritty of life to the youngmen in the *zawlbûk*. It acted as an institution of education like the modern-day school.

The adolescence stage of the boys was confirmed in the *zawlbûk* rather than their parents. Deciding who could sleep in the *zawlbûk* among adolescents was the

⁷⁸ C. L. Hminga, p. 28.

authority of its superintendent.⁷⁹ And this was the confirmation of his age and maturity. *Mim Kût* was a festival for the ordination of this maturity. However, this ordination could be done in other festival if it was necessary.⁸⁰

Among the zawlbûk dwellers, the leader was the *val upa* or superintendent. He was the most industrious, courageous, and efficient organiser among them. He was their undisputed leader. He was responsible for organising the group. He was not elected. Age was an important factor.⁸¹

The training to face every walk of life began in the zawlbûk. The beginners in their capacity started with what they could do. They started off by lighting fire, carrying water, running for errands, and so on. The juveniles also provided the much needed firewood for the zawlbûk.⁸² All the boys in the village until they reached puberty were responsible for the supply of firewood for the zawlbûk.

Responsibilities were given to elder residents to train and chide the young boys. They had the authority to punish anyone who failed to perform their task. Any interference or indiscretion from the parents was not entertained. Any meddling parents were up against all the youngmen of the zawlbûk. The chief could only throw a stone on the roof of the zawlbûk, if he thought nuisance came from the zawlbûk.

Orphans and sons of widows considered their own convenience and decided their stay in the zawlbûk.⁸³ The zawlbûk also served as a guest house. Men from other villages used to spend the night along with the youngmen of the village at the zawlbûk. They developed bond of friendship through chatting and other ways of interaction.

⁷⁹ The attainment of adolescent cannot be uniform for every village. In a small village, the stage was attained earlier. This was because there were less people to spend the night at zawlbûk. The situation was vice-versa in a large village.

⁸⁰ Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 356.

⁸¹ Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 354.

⁸² There was a Mizo byword, 'Zawlbûk a thingnawi fawm rual', referring to a pre-adolescent stage of human life cycle.

⁸³ They were not punished if they were not present.

The zawlbûk sustained the security of the village. It acted like a modern-day barrack. The men at the zawlbûk were mostly unmarried who were ready to respond to any surprise call. The call could be from an enemy, wild beast or any disaster.

Married men also used to spend their time in the zawlbûk. They took their cane or basket work along with them. The young men used to learn the art from them. It was also a place where the boys learnt the art of wrestling and other skills. The teenagers were told stories of the bravery and noble deeds of the old folks.⁸⁴ They were trained on the subject of austerity, perseverance and patience.

The chief and his council also used to frequent the zawlbûk.⁸⁵ They acted as councillors and taught its residents ethics, morality, etiquettes, and the like. Traditions did not allow women to enter zawlbûk. However, anyone could enter it in the face of tragedy in the village. The chieftainess and juvenile sons of widower could enter in accordance with the necessity. In case a woman had to convey certain message in the zawlbûk, she could only speak from the *bawhbel*.⁸⁶

Several Lushai young men had field experience of the First World War as part of the Labour Corp in France. They were awestruck by the grandeur of western civilisation. They were filled with the desire to change the indigenous way of living. They cultivated the idea that their way of life with the zawlbûk as the epicentre was not conducive to modern progress. Their idea was to break away from the traditional way of life and adopted the western style. The importance of zawlbûk became gradually undermined. Many Christians too started to see the family and schools as a better means for social learning.

The dwindling of the zawlbûk reduced the power of the chiefs. The chiefs being colonial agents were always supported by the colonial authority. There was attempt to revive the zawlbûk. It gathered more momentum when N. E. Parry became the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills in 1926. He ordered every village to

⁸⁴ C. L. Hminga, p. 29.

⁸⁵ Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 359.

⁸⁶ Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 359. The *bawhbel* was a big log placed horizontally at the entrance of the zawlbûk.

construct and maintain zawlbûk. The Circle Interpreters (C. I.) were entrusted to report any village that did not do so.

The re-emergence of zawlbûk was welcomed with a grand feast on 8 May, 1926 at Rengte (Kolasib).⁸⁷ The existence of accord between different sections of the society, the prevalence of *tlawmngaihna* – Lushai code of ethics, the predominant fraternity and altruism were the reasons cited in support of the revival of zawlbûk. This revival of zawlbûk encountered greater opposition in villages with more Christian population.⁸⁸

With the onslaught of modernity, the zawlbûk could not really be retained. A. G. McCall raised the issue at a public meeting in Thakthing on 1 January, 1938. After this, McCall was convinced to revoke the order of Parry. Thus, the historic institution met its dead end in the Lushai Hills.

II. 7 The Contentious *Bâwi* System

The traditional *bâwi* system was a means that provided for the destitute. It thus had a charitable dimension. However, the presence of *sâl* – one class of *bâwi* made the system appeared as a crude form of charity.⁸⁹ It was such that if a man becomes *bâwi*, he and his descendents remain *bâwis*.⁹⁰ A *bâwi* except *fatlûm bâwi* can be redeemed by a payment of □ 40 or a *sial* (*gayal*) to the master.⁹¹

The custom also provided that the *bâwis* were allowed to change their allegiance to another chief in case of ill-treatment. A *bâwi* could also misuse this provision. The chief had to be vigilant on this. For fear of such desertion many chiefs were compelled to be lenient to their *bâwis*. The prestige and wealth of the chief largely depended on the number of *bâwis* they possessed.

⁸⁷ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, April 192, pp. 85-87.

⁸⁸ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, September 1926, pp. 197-199.

⁸⁹ There was another group of individuals called *sal*. Their only difference with *bâwi* was that they were captives in wars and raids. They can also earn their freedom with a payment of one *sial*. However, the value of man of royal blood was higher than the others.

⁹⁰ The *bâwi* were termed as 'slaves' by those who were ignorant of their real conditions. In the Lushais society slavery does not exist. *Bâwi* was not a system, where humans were sold like cattle. See, J. Shakespear, *The Lushai-Kuki Clans*, p. 45.

⁹¹ A *bâwi* who was not redeemed became a member of the family of his master. This was called *saphun*, a kind of sanskritisation. *Saphun* implies that the *bâwi* shared the same *sakhua* of his master.

A detailed description of the *bâwi* was given by Jemander Thawnglinga.⁹² The colonial administrators also left notes on the system.⁹³ The note of John Shakespear, the former Superintendent of the Lushai Hills was relayed by Vanchhunga.⁹⁴ However, the writing of Jemander Thawnglinga is more genuine than that of the colonial writers or the secondary sources derived from them.

According to the prevailing custom of the period, only a chief could have a *bâwi*.⁹⁵ However, in practice, the case was not so. Two classes of *bâwi* – *chawm bâwi* and *sal* were maintained by some family too. The *bâwis* were divided into four classes:—

i). *Pianpui bâwi*: - This group consists of all those who could not provide for themselves. Many have been driven by hunger and take refuge in the chief's house. Widows, orphans, infirms and others who are unable to support themselves and have no relatives willing to do, form a bulk of this class of *bâwi*.⁹⁶ They were looked upon as part of the chief's household and they perform their task in return for their food and shelter. They adopted those who could look after them as their *pianpui* or 'descendants from the same lineage or family'.⁹⁷ They were quite independent and were less worried to meet their daily needs.

⁹² Jem. Thawnglinga, pp. 404-407.

⁹³ Assam Administration, Political Deptt., February 1914, Annexure A. Also see, J. Shakespear, pp. 45-49. John Shakespear, I. A., served as the Political Officer, North Lushai Hills from 1897-1898, as Superintendent of the Lushai Hills From 1898-1899 and again in 1900-1903; Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, (culled from 'History of the Frontier Areas Bordering Assam), First Edition, 1942, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1978, p. 67

⁹⁴ Vanchhunga, *Lusei leh A Vela Hnam Dangte Chanchin*, Aizawl, Deptt. of Art & Culture, First Edition 1955, Reprinted 1994, p. 179.

⁹⁵ However, there were another class of *bâwi* called *chawm bâwi*. They were children who have no one to look after them. They became the *bâwi* of anyone who took care of them. See, See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 406.

⁹⁶ A stepfather may also ask his predecessor's children being put into the well-to-do household, unless any of their father's relatives will take them.

⁹⁷ In non-Sailo chiefdom, not only the chief can have a *bâwi*. This was especially true with the well-to-do households of the village. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, pp. 405-406. *Pian-* 'birth', *pui-* 'together' or 'along'.

Châwm bâwi referred to orphans or kids who were attended by another family. The pianpui bâwi were referred as, *inpuichhung bâwi* by colonial writers.⁹⁸

ii). *Pawikhawih Bâwi*: - These were criminals who, to escape from the consequences of their ill deeds took refuge in a particular household. Murderers, debtors, thieves and other vagabonds avoided punishment by becoming bâwi.⁹⁹ *Pawikhawih bâwi* were also known as *chemsen bâwi* to the colonial writers.¹⁰⁰

Sûtpui Pawm Bâwi existed only in the case of murderers or when blood was out in the commitment of the crime. When a criminal in despair cling to the *sûtpui* of a house, he directly became the *bâwi* of that household.¹⁰¹

Fatlûm Bâwi was another category of *pawikhawih bâwi*. They were those who failed in their attempt to outmanoeuvre the village leaders or elders of the village.¹⁰²

iii). *Tûkluh Bâwi*: These were person who during war had deserted the losing side and joined the victors by promising that they and their descendants would be bâwi.¹⁰³

The bâwi system bewildered the colonial administrators and they were confused on the way to deal with the system. The custom of having bâwi by the chief or well-to-do was the accepted social norm in the traditional Lushai society. Although the British followed a policy of non-intervention in the beginning, they were later compelled to interfere in this custom. At the outset of their rule, they

⁹⁸ J. Shakespear, *The Lushai-Kuki Clans*, p. 46. *Inpui* – house/big house; *chung* – within.

⁹⁹ Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 405. Their position is similar to that of the *inhrang bâwi*. They lived separately from their masters. Their children are considered bâwi to the same extent as their parents. The master generally takes the marriage price of the daughters of such bâwi. *In* - house, *hrang* - separate.

¹⁰⁰ J. Shakespear, pp. 47-48. *Chem* – dao; *sen* – red.

¹⁰¹ When criminal clinged to the *sûtpui* of a house, it was a taboo to lay hands on him. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 405.

¹⁰² Even if, they migrate to a new village they were still *fatlûm bâwi* of their new chief. This was the case, if the new village was ruled by Sailo chief. Vanchhunga belongs to this class of bâwi. See, Vanchhunga, *Lusei leh A Vela Hnam Dangte Chanchin*, pp. 176-178; Jem. Thawnglinga, pp. 398-400. *Fa* - siblings, *tlûm* - youngest. In the Lusei ancestry, it was the youngest son who inherited the paternal household.

¹⁰³ A *tûkluh* bâwi does not live in the chief's house, and is in most respects the same position as *inhrang* bâwi. *Tûk* – request/ask, *luh* - enter.

abolished the pawikhawih bâwi and tukluh bâwi.¹⁰⁴ However, the colonial authority accepted the prevalence of pianpui bâwi as it provided for the maintenance of the poor, infirm and destitute.¹⁰⁵ In order to accommodate the poor and needy the chief's house was big and roomy.¹⁰⁶

T. H. Lewin in 1870 wrote, "The condition of these so called slaves was very little different indeed from that of free people . . . The slavery in these hills, if, indeed be slavery, was of the mildest description and was deliberately adopted custom of the majority of the people, not a bondage imposed by force."¹⁰⁷

Lorrain and Savidge translated the word as 'a slave', 'a retainer' but later they changed their position and held that the meaning was rather 'pauper'.¹⁰⁸ Shakespear further wrote, ". . . there is a class known as Boi who have been miscalled slaves by those who ignorant of their real condition."¹⁰⁹

Mrs. Howie in her letter to the Under-Secretary of State for India, E. S. Montagu dated 14 July 1913, accepted the existence of slavery among the Lushai.¹¹⁰ But while using the term 'bois' she bracketed, 'the English literal translation of slaves'.¹¹¹ It seems that 'bâwi' was translated as slaves by those who had superficial knowledge of the bâwi system.

The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society letter addressed to the India Office states, "That the 'Boi' system is nothing but slavery can hardly be denied."¹¹² They did not mean slavery in the sense we understand it, they used the

¹⁰⁴ The British Government abolished slavery throughout the British territory by Act V of 1843. It was on the strength of this provisions that this group of bâwi in the Lushai Hills were released.

¹⁰⁵ J. Shakespear, p. 48. This official position was similar to the standpoint of the Government when the debate on the emancipation of slave in the Madras Presidency arose in 1801. These type of slavery were not abolished because of the 'lost that would accrue to the Government from its abolition'.

¹⁰⁶ Grace R. Lewis, *The Lushai Hills – The Story of the Lushai Pioneer Mission*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁷ T. H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South Eastern India*, pp. 50-51.

¹⁰⁸ Foreign and Political Deptt. Pros., External A, March 1914, Nos. 11-17.

¹⁰⁹ J. Shakespear, p. 54.

¹¹⁰ Mrs. Howie was formerly known as Mary Winchester. She was a captive of the Lushais during their raid of a tea garden in plain of Assam in 1871. This will be discuss in the next chapter.

¹¹¹ Foreign and Political Deptt., Pros., External A, March 1914, Nos. 11-17.

¹¹² Foreign and Political Deptt., Pros., External A, March 1914, Nos. 11-17. Encl. No. I.

term so that it will be more knowledgeable to the world.¹¹³ The Society was misquoted by McCall, who said, “. . . it describes as slavery.”¹¹⁴ Articles also appeared in newspapers calling it, ‘Lushai Slavery’.¹¹⁵ McCall himself restricted to using the term ‘bâwi’ and not translating it. Frederick S. Downs did the same while Lloyd uses the term ‘serf’ in writing ‘bâwi’.¹¹⁶ It was in any case not a system that bought and sold human beings.¹¹⁷

Thus it is clear that there exists no exact translation for the word ‘bâwi’, so it is preferable to use the indigenous term. The custom itself is more comprehensible when we use the word ‘bâwi’.

In any case, the number of bâwi was never numerous i.e. the bâwi practice was not that prevalent as it was assumed to be.¹¹⁸ In a letter, F. J. Sandy refers to Fraser’s short visit to Aizawl in early 1915 as follows: — “The people welcome him heartily, but they were not very concerned about the bâwi affair. I have been surprised at how little the Mizos know about it.”¹¹⁹

The debate over the bâwi custom and the process for its abolition took a dramatic turn. It was an agenda on which the two agents of the colonial state – the government and the missionaries- were at loggerheads. For the missionaries, it was ethically wrong while for the government it was politically correct. It was the

¹¹³ This was also the case for Mrs. Howie when she bracketed the word ‘slaves’ for *bâwi* in her explanation of the custom to the outside world.

¹¹⁴ A. G. McCall, *The Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl, p. 123.

¹¹⁵ A. G. McCall, p. 123.

¹¹⁶ F. S. Downs, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. 5, Part 5, The Church History Association of India, 1992; J. M. Lloyd, *Harvest in the Hills*, Aizawl, Synod Publication Board, (Reprinted as *History of the Church in Mizoram*), 1991.

¹¹⁷ J. M. Lloyd, *Harvest in the Hills*, p. 154.

¹¹⁸ The total cost of the measure, according to rough estimate for the remuneration of the bâwis, is estimated at ₹ 45, 960. A bâwi can be release at the payment of ₹ 40 per person. Then, 45,960 divided by 40 makes 1,149. Thus there will be around 1149 bâwis during the year 1914-1915. See., Foreign and Political Deptt. Pros., External A, July 1915, Nos. 3-8.

¹¹⁹ J. M. Lloyd, p. 156. The lesser or non-existence of western education, thereby print culture among the locals can be a reason for this.

medical missionary, Dr. Peter Fraser who took the reign for the abolition of the b̄awi system.¹²⁰

Fraser too equated b̄awi system with slavery. He stand firm in his claimed that it was tantamount to slavery. Sir John Jardine raised the issue in the House of Commons on 12 June, 1913.¹²¹ The proposal for the eventual abolition of the b̄awi was postponed in view of the pressure of work in the Foreign and Political Department.¹²² However, the colonial government advocated measures for effectual suppression of the practice.¹²³

The attempt for the gradual freedom of the b̄awi was issued by J. Hezlett, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills on 18 March, 1914.¹²⁴ Freedom could be bought by the b̄awi by payment of £ 40.¹²⁵ However, this amount should not be regarded as the price for freedom. It was the price for the providence provided by the owners of the b̄awi. B̄awi who could not redeem themselves could ask the help of the British government. If any case arose after this, it should be treated as the case of the common people.¹²⁶

It was not a compulsion for the b̄awi to redeem himself or herself. A b̄awi could also prefer to remain in his master's house. However, he would no longer be a b̄awi. His former master would be his parents. He would stay as *awmpui* (attendant)

¹²⁰ Peter Fraser was a medical doctor born and brought up in Caernarfon, Gwynedd, Wales. He joined Rev. D. E. Jones as medical missionary in the Lushai Hills in 1907. He was one of the few missionaries who dared to raise fingers at the British officials. He was against government officials for condoning certain evil practices in native society.

¹²¹ Foreign and Political Deptt. Pros., External A, March 1914, Nos. 11-17. Sir John Jardine joined the Bombay Civil Service in 1864. After his retirement, he returned to England in 1887. He went into active politics and was elected to the Parliament in 1906. He represented Roxburghire till 1918. He died in 1919.

¹²² This proposal was given by Austen Chamberlain, Secretary of State for India on 23 July, 1915. However, this was the period of the First World War when Britain was busy on all fronts. See., Foreign and Political Deptt. Pros., External, No. 63 of 1915.

¹²³ Foreign and Political Deptt. Pros., External Secrets, December 1915, Nos. 14-16.

¹²⁴ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, April 1914, pp. 57-58.

¹²⁵ A family of b̄awi can also be redeem at the same amount.

¹²⁶ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, June 1914, pp. 93-94.

or relatives who stayed and attended to the need of the family.¹²⁷ The use of the word ‘bâwi’ to address ‘the redeemed’ was also prohibited.¹²⁸

II. 7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a historical background to the understanding of the Lushai Hills. It provides a general background to the understanding of the theses. Apart from a general description of the geography, this chapter mostly focuses on the chiefs. This was because it was around the power of the chiefs that traditional Lushais society and villages functioned. The chiefs were the guardian and benefactor in the villages. The social life depended directly or indirectly on the chiefs. They were embodiment of authority, power and greatness. They emerged as symbol of colonial resistance and later as ‘collaborators’ in the pursuance of colonial agenda. It was through them that colonial administration and consolidation was carried out.

Colonialism interfered in traditional institution like the zawlbûk, bâwi system, etc. The debates on the maintenance or abolishment of these practices came to take an interesting turn as colonial consolidation of authority and government took hold in the Lushai Hills.

¹²⁷ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, October 1914, p. 170; *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, February 1915, pp. 20-21.

¹²⁸ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, November 1914, p. 189; *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, December 1914, pp. 207-209.

Chapter III

COLONIALISM AND ITS RESISTANCE IN THE LUSHAI HILLS

III. 1 Introduction

By the early nineteenth century the British imperial might had subdued and conquered the areas adjacent to the Lushai Hills. With the conquest of Assam, the British searched for possible expansion of their plantation agriculture led to the clearance of forests nearer the Lushais' hinterland. This clearance led to the encroachment of the areas of the Lushai Hills which was also their *sai ramchhuahna* or hunting ground. Outraged by this action of the 'outsiders', the Lushais often conducted raids in the British occupied territory. The Lushai chiefs conducted these raids as they believed the *vai* or foreigner might tract back and retreat. It was their wish to protect their forest, which was the source of their subsistence.

The Lushais resisted the British and their cohorts with every resource that was at their command. Prior to the British expansionism the Lushais beyond the extreme southern British frontier line in the Cachar District were hardly known.¹ The Lushais were the major opponent of the British among the several hills tribes.

The Lushais were already aware that a horde of army was going to invade their homestead. They had been waiting anxiously to waylay the foreign intruders. The following is one of the ballads that were composed to uphold their spirit of anxiety while waiting for the alien intruders.

“A lian inti a lian si lo ve,

Chengrang chawiin kan nghak tlang tinah,

¹ Col. L. W. Shakespear, *History of the Assam Rifles*, UK, 1929, Gauhati, United Publishers, Reprint, 1980, p. 11.

*Ka thlang Sappui a lian si lo ve...*²

(They say, they are coming in horde, they are not,

We wait with our arms on every high hill,

The alien Whitemen are not coming.)

This chapter rereads the colonial representation of colonialism and its resistance in the Lushai Hills. It uses available colonial records and other secondary sources. It argues that it was the British ruination of the Lushais' sources of subsistence that resulted in an unpleasant encounter between the two.

III. 2 The Advance of Colonialism in the Lushai Hills

The British East India Company conquered Chittagong in 1761 and Assam in 1834.³In 1765, they had invaded Cachar and Sylhet.⁴ With their contact of the land bordering the Lushai Hills, they started to know about the Hills. The Lushai groups who had made westward movement already had interaction with the hill tribes of *Satikang* (Chittagong) and Bengalis around 1700 A.D.⁵

The foothills of the Lushai Hills, Cachar, Sylhet and the plains of Bengal had fallen under the British occupation. With this, the Lushais began to have unpleasant contacts with the British. The early encounter between the Lushais and the British were not cordial. The Lushais were subsequently denied the tribute which they extracted from the woodcutters of Sylhet.⁶

²B. Lalthangliana, *Mizo Hun Hlui Hlate*, Chhinga Veng, Aizawl, RTM Press & Computer, 1998, p. 144; R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Hla Hlui (Mizo Folksongs)*, Din Din Heaven, Ramhlun South, Aizawl, 2012, p. 495.

³Chhawnmanga, *Mizorama Michengte*, Aizawl, Hnamte Press, 1985.

⁴B. S. Carey, & H. N. Tuck, *The Chin Hills*, Vol. I: 1896, New Delhi, Cultural Publishing House, Reprint, 1893, p. 12.

⁵Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, *Zoram Vartian – Chanchintha leh Thuziak Khawvâr Tan Dân*, Aizawl, Fineprints, 2008, p. 15. The different hill tribes of Chittagong were Chakma, Bâwm and Mughs. The 'elephant trappers' or kheddah were the first who had knowledge of the existence of 'wild tribes' deep in the jungle. See, Chhawnmanga, *Mizorama Michengte*, Aizawl, Hnamte Press, 1985, p. 129.

⁶From time immemorial the Sylhet woodcutters had been paying tax to the Lushai chiefs for cutting wood and bamboo. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, *Chin-Mizo Chanchin*, Aizawl, Prof. Orestes Rosanga, First Edition 2019, p. 222; A. G. McCall, *The Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 2003, p. 38. The payment of this was curbed by the new authority.

The British policy of clearing the forests for their expanding tea plantation was concomitant to intrusion into their land for the Lushais. The land was close to their heart as it was their hunting grounds. Thus, complicated relations began to emerge between the Lushais and other settlers in the Lushais borders who were now under the British.⁷

In 1850, the British Superintendent of Police at Chittagong recorded that there were 19 raids in the last twenty years.⁸ This showed that the vociferous Lushais were a threat to the expansion of the British imperial agenda.

The Lushais were so fierce that even the British could not easily establish their supremacy in the Lushai Hills. They not only attacked and raided British subjects in British territory, but also those settlements established by those they drove out of the Lushai Hills.⁹ These raids in the British territory were recorded in most details by Alexander Mackenzie and in the book compiled by the Intelligence Branch Division of the Chief of the Staff, Army Head Quarters, India in 1907.¹⁰

In September, 1824 a group of traders from the plains were waylaid and killed by the Lushai *pasalthas*. The traders entered the Lushai Hills along the Tlawng (Dhaleswari) River to collect bamboos and timbers.¹¹ This was an act of vengeance

⁷Alexander Mackenzie, *History of the Relations of the Government, with the Hill Tribes of the North Eastern Frontier of Bengal*, Calcutta, Home Department Press, Calcutta, 1884, photographically reproduced as *The North East Frontier of India*, New Delhi, Mittal Publication, 2003, pp. 288 – 304; R. G. Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition, 1871-1872*, London, 1873, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1978; A. G. McCall, *The Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 2003.

⁸*Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, March 1904*, printed by B.C Das at the Dina Nath Press, Sylhet, published by Mr. A.R Giles, Lushai Hills, p. 12, available at www.archive.org; B. S. Carey, & H. N. Tuck, *The Chin Hills, Vol. I*, New Delhi, Cultural Publishing House, Reprint 1983, p. 12. This was a reviewed of the history of the Satikang Hill Tracts for the past twenty years. . In these raids, 107 persons had been slain, 15 wounded and 186 captured for slaves.

⁹ They were the main target of the Lushai chiefs. Their settlements were in the areas adjacent to the Lushai Hills. And, some of them already had fall under the British authority.

¹⁰*Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, Vol. IV, North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes*, Simla, Government Monotype Press, 1907 (Compiled in the Intelligence Branch Division of the Chief of the Staff, Army Head Quarters, India)

¹¹In 7 April, 1777, the great Lushais Chief, Sibuta (1712-1782) had fought against the British in establishing his protectorate over the natural resources of the Lushai Hills. The Bengali traders extracted Bamboos from the Lushai Hills, but were afraid of Sibuta. They urged the Governor-General, Warren Hastings for protection to which Hastings agreed. Ralte, Lalhrualtuanga, *Zoram Vartian – Chanchintha leh Thuziak Khawvar Tan Dan*, Aizawl, Fineprints, 2008, p. 17.

as a Lushais chief was angered by an act of a certain Zaminder in Pertubgarh circle of Sylhet District.¹²

On 16 April, 1844, Lalsûtthlaha, of Paite clan and 200 Lushai *pasal̄thas* swarmed the settlement of Kuchabari, a Manipuri colony in Sylhet.¹³ Lalsûtthlaha was unaware that the Manipuris were protectorate of the British or the East India Company.¹⁴

The British Government of India dispatched a team led by Captain George Blackwood towards the end of 1844 to the Lushai Hills.¹⁵ They entered the Lushai Hills via Koilashur River on the Northeast border of Tipperah.¹⁶ The target of Blackwood's was Lalsûtthlaha who was made to surrender on 4 December, 1844. However, the British dared not drift deep into the interior of the Lushai Hills.

Several local writers claimed that Lalsûtthlaha's purpose of the raid was to acquire human heads so that their spirits would accompany his deceased father to *pialral* or the next world.¹⁷

The British Political Agent Wise who was stationed at Agartala investigated the cause of the raid. The Lushais often traded in the market established by the Manipuri in the British territory of Sylhet (Kachubari). The Manipuri traders treated

¹² Till the later nineteenth century, the Lushais were constant threat to British colonial expansion.

¹³ Suhas Chatterjee, *Frontier Officers in Colonial Northeast India*, New Delhi, Akansha Publishing House, 2009, p. 7 & 18.; Alexander Mackenzie, pp. 288-289 ;R. G. Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition, 1871-1872*, London, 1873, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1978, p. 11; A. G. McCall., *The Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 2003, p. 40; According to Jem. Thawnglinga Pratabghar was also raided and Lalsûtthlaha was accompanied by Bawtaia. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, *Chin-Mizo Chanchin*, p. 182. The Manipuri prince was provided land, arms and ammunition by the British in order to safeguard the frontier.

¹⁴ The Lushais killed twenty people and took away six captives. Alexander Mackenzie, pp. 289-290; A. G. McCall., p. 47. Manipur was recognised by the British as a 'Subordinate Native State' after the end of the First Anglo-Burmese War. Since, then the British had a great say in the matters of Manipur. Every succession to the throne required British endorsement.

¹⁵ Four Companies of the SLI was sanctioned by the Officer Commanding, Federick J. Lister. During this period, Sylhet is the present Karimganj in Barak Valley, Assam.

¹⁶ Col. L. W. Shakespear, *History of the Assam Rifles*, UK, 1929, Gauhati, United Publishers, Reprint, 1980, p. 11. The Rajah of Tipperah preferred to ignore the mighty colonial power. He was forced upon to supply them with labour or *kuli* and ration.

¹⁷ Benjamin Ralte, "Early Contact: A Prelude to Colonialism in Lushai Hills", *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Vol. XVI, November 2015, p. 2. This view was also upheld by the Sylhet Magistrate, Sealy and he was more eager to punish the Lushais. Also see, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, *Zoram Vâr̄tian*, p. 19.

the Lushais with disdain and often deceived them.¹⁸ The lack of respect by the Manipuri culminated in a raid with the murder of the Lushai Chief, Lalrihua.¹⁹ Thus the real reason for the raid was contrary to the claims of local writers.

Lalsûtthlaha had surrendered as he was promised by Captain Blackwood that he would be pardoned unconditionally. However, he was tried under Regulation VIII of 1829 and was transported for life.²⁰ He was imprisoned in the house of Sylhet Zamindar, Ali Amzad.²¹

The punishment rendered to Lalsûtthlaha had angered the Lushais who believed that there was no honour in defeat even for a chief. It was seen as a dishonourable breach of custom and courtesy.

Ngurchuailova, son of Lalsûtthlaha vowed to take revenge against the British.²² This was also the basis for Lushais' and the later chief, Pawibawia's distrust of Whitemen.²³ This anger resulted in the occurrences of more raids in the British territory. The Lushai raids on British suzerainty became more frequent during the 1840s.

Between 1845 and 1847, the Lushais (or Kuki, as early British records call them) raided and plundered the British territory of Manipur State and Sylhet.²⁴ They killed more than one hundred and fifty people. Because of the Sylhet raid, the Sylhet

¹⁸ F. Lalremsiama, *Milu Lak leh Vai Run Chanchin*, Aizawl, MCL Publications, 1997, pp. 71-72.

¹⁹The two Manipuri princes vied for the throne after their father's death. Ram Singh seeks the support of Lalrihua, who choose to maintain his neutrality. In fit of anger, Ram Singh assassinated an unaware Lalrihua. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 18.

²⁰F. Lalremsiama, *Milu Lak leh Vai Run Chanchin*, p. 77 & 137; Col. E. B. Elly, 'Military Report on the Chin-Lushai Country', Shimla, 1893, Calcutta, Reprint, 1978, p. 22; Benjamin Ralte, *Historical Journal Mizoram*, p. 2.

²¹ The Lalsûtthlaha clan was suppressed. However, the British territorial border of Sylhet remained defenceless as before. The hills tribes again raided the British territory in the cold season of 1847.

²² F. Lalremsiama, pp. 93-96. To avenge his father's punishment and transportation, Ngurchuailova raided Sylhet (Ramdulbari, Ramhohanbari, Chundraipara, and Adampur) in January, 1862. He raided despite knowing that they were British subjects.

²³ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, February 1907, p. 31.

²⁴ *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, Vol. IV, North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes*, p. 235.

Light Infantry (SLI) was obliged to move upto the Lushais' border.²⁵ As such, the Lushais were driven back to the interior of the Hills.

In November 1849, ten miles south of *Hringchar* (Silchar) was raided by the Lushais. Simultaneous raids were also conducted in Tipperah and Sylhet. These raids were conducted by Lalngura, Chief of Sentlang.²⁶ In this daring raid of Cachar twenty-nine people were killed and forty-two people were taken as captives.²⁷

The colonial government resolved to take punitive measures against those responsible for the raid. It prompted the Rajah of Tipperah for the measures and to rescue the captives.²⁸ The Rajah was informed that if he was unable to comply with the demand, the British would march a force into his territory.²⁹ The colonial power was no more in a position to allow what they called 'bloody and wanton outrages' to go unpunished.³⁰

On 4 January 1850, a punitive expedition commanded by Lieutenant General Frederick J. Lister, Commandant of Sylhet Light Infantry (SLI) was dispatched by the British Government of Bengal.³¹ An important target of Lister's column was the subjugation of Lalngura. They marched from Cachar (Silchar) on 4 January, 1850.³²

²⁵The District Magistrate of Sylhet sent the SLI to the affected areas to restore confidence among the demoralised villagers. By this time, Lord Dalhousie was the Governor General of British India. The five Companies of soldiers were led by Lister himself.

²⁶ John Shakespear, *The Lushai-Kuki Clans*, London, Macmillan, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1988, p. 21. Lalngura was the only son of Lalianvunga. Lalngura's father died around 1849, which was before they moved to Sentlang. Sentlang was one of the largest villages in north Lushai Hills and was located in the eastern side of Tlawng (Dhalleswari). As stated by colonial records Sentlang was three days marched along the Chattachora range.

²⁷Col. L. W. Shakespear, *History of the Assam Rifles*, p. 11. Also see, R. Rualthansanga, *Traditional and Representative Institution in the Lushai Hills*, Guwahati, EBH Publishers, 2015, p. 51. This raid of November, 1849 was also reported by the Magistrate of Sylhet.

²⁸Roopacherra in Tipperah was also raided by Lalngura.

²⁹The British are aware that the delicate problem of the Lushais was closely connected with the affairs of Manipur and Tipperah. They attempted to draw the cooperation of the Rajas of Manipur and Tipperah.

³⁰Bejamin Ralte, *Historical Journal Mizoram*, p. 2.

³¹Priyam Goswami, *The History of Assam – From Yandabo to Partition, 1826 – 1947*, Kolkata, Orient Balckswan Private Limited, Reprint, 2016, p. 139; *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, Vol. IV, North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes*, p. 235. Lister was the Political Agent of the Khasi Hills for twenty years. He brought the Khasi Hills under the control of the British and considerably tamed the wild tribes. The East India Company retained his service as the Officier Commanding of the

On 14 January, 1850 Lister and his force reached Sentlang.³³ Sentlang was located a little north of Neibawi. It consisted of 800 houses and several granaries.³⁴ The British claimed that they rescued more than four hundred captives of the Lushais.³⁵ However, the British could not capture Lalngura as he was positioned, “in a very strategic position and his cantonment on the top of a high mountain.”³⁶

Lister did not dare to march forward with his 300 men as he had seen that the next villages were well fortified. He heard that Vanhnuailiana had more than 5,000 fighting men; among them were several Burmese troops.³⁷

Lister discovered that the Lushais were more powerful than what the British had assumed. Having no choice, they retreated after burning Sentlang on the second day of their stay (16 January, 1850).³⁸ Their return was not easy as the Lushai *pasalthas* disrupted them at every convenient point.³⁹

From Lister’s expedition the British experienced the ineffectiveness of direct military intervention in the Lushai Hills.⁴⁰ They placed detachments at two most vulnerable points in the Hailakandi area.⁴¹ These points were manned by four

Sylhet Light Infantry (SLI). He had the sole authority to decide the number of companies and the quantity of ammunition to be despatched in a particular expedition.

³² Suhas Chatterjee, p. 21; F. Lalremsiama, pp. 101-104. The force consisted of 100 of the SLI and 150 armed Civil Police.

³³ Benjamin Ralte, p. 3.

³⁴ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 11.

³⁵ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, March 1904*, p. 13.

³⁶ Considering the small number of force in his contingent, Lister find it risky to further attacked Lalngura. They retreated after destroying Sentlang. His spies desisted him from further advance. See, Suhas Chatterjee, pp. 20-22.

³⁷ F. Lalremsiama, p. 102.

³⁸ Benjamin Ralte, p. 3. After Sentlang was reduced to ashes, Lalngura established himself again at Sesawng. He later moved further north to Khawruhlian. According, to Liangkhaia, Lalngura breathed his last at Khawruhlian in 1854.

³⁹ Frederick Lister was wounded after a conflict with a large body of Lushais. They reached Cachar on 23 January, 1850. See., Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 11.

⁴⁰ The British were convinced that extensive operations in difficult terrain are bound to fail. It was a strain to financial health and thus was impractical.

⁴¹ According to Goswami, military detachments were placed at three points. See, Priyam Goswami, p. 139.

companies of Sylhet Light Infantry (SLI).⁴² A body of 200 strong local Kukis, which was later increased in 1850, was formed into Kuki Levy at the suggestion of Captain Lister.⁴³ This body assisted the armed Civil Police in controlling and protecting the borders.⁴⁴

On January 1860, there were record of raid by 400-500 Lushais along the Fenny River (lying between Chittagong and Tipperah). On 31 January, 1860 the Chagulneyah valley in Tipperah was raided. In this raid, 15 villages were ransacked. 185 British subjects were killed and more than a hundred were taken as captives.⁴⁵

The investigation of Captain McGrath, Superintendent of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) proved that Rothangpuia was the instigator of the January 1860 raids.⁴⁶ The colonial government could only sent retaliatory troops against the Lushais under Major Raban on January, 1861.⁴⁷ Major Raban and his team were waylaid intemperately.⁴⁸ They could not do anything and returned helplessly. However, Rothangpuia was later defeated and he became friendly to the British.⁴⁹

The colonial power felt the need for more forward headquarters and conciliatory measures.⁵⁰ In July 1860, Captain Thomas Herbert Lewin was appointed

⁴²Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 11; Priyam Goswami, p. 139.

⁴³It was also a source of employment for those Kukis living in the British territory. See, Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 22.

⁴⁴ The presence of large British military forces in the border made several Lushai chiefs nervous. In December 1850, delegates of several Lushai chiefs went to Silchar with an offer of tribute. See, Priyam Goswami, p. 139..

⁴⁵ F. Lalremsiama, pp. 104-107. Rothangpuia was the chief behind these raids.

⁴⁶ Captain McGrath of the Madras Artillery was appointed as the first Superintendent of the Chittagong Hill Tracts on June 1860.

⁴⁷Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 65; F. Lalremsiama, p. 108.

⁴⁸Jem.Thawnglinga, p. 223.

⁴⁹By December, 1873-1874 Rothangpuia of Thangluah clan and decendants of Lianlula of Sailo clan had become a friend of the imperial power. See, V. L. Ngaihawia,*Mizo Lalte leh Pasalthate Chanchin*, Lalnam Literature Board, Nunna Lalnam, 2009, p. 17.

⁵⁰ The Bengal Government appointed T. H. Lewin exclusively to deal with the Lushais. He was to meet the Chiefs and induce them to sign agreement of good conduct. He was to strengthen British outpost in the Anglo-Lushais border. He was also to take necessary measures in order to prevent smuggling of arms in the Hills. See, Priyam Goswami, p. 140.

to take charge of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The police headquarter was subsequently moved up from Chandraguna to Rangamati.⁵¹

In fact, Captain Lewin was the first British high official who had direct contact with the Lushais.⁵² He was a pioneer of in dealing with the ‘wild’ tribes. During the cold season of 1864-1865, he undertook expeditions into the hills in an attempt to establish contact with the hill tribes.⁵³

During the period of colonial advancement in the Lushai Hills, there was no established course of action for the British. It was guided by circumstances and guided by events in the field. The officer in charge of the frontier thought and acted accordingly. Thus, policy in dealing with the Lushai Hills was non-existent, it was created.⁵⁴

On 20 January 1863, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Sir Cecil Beadon announced that peaceful co-existence with the Lushais would be the policy of his government.⁵⁵ ‘Non-interference’ was the catchword of the British, while being friendly to every power. Attempts were to be made to meet the Lushais in their

⁵¹Ragamati was established or founded by the two sons of Chief Laitluanga (1580-1670), Ramthlenga and Sialkaithanga. They were the younger brothers of King Khamlaia (Khawlige, 1620-1708). After the death of their father, Ramthlenga and Sialkaithanga moved to establish a new village in the plains on the bank of Khawthlangtuipui (Karnafuli). They did not give a name to the new village and people call it as “Rama te unau khua” or “Rama te khua” (village of Rama, derived from Ramthlenga). Later, it became popular and was known as ‘Rangamati’. The Chakmas’ records also recorded as ‘Ramatia’. After settling for 15 years the two brothers moved on to established two new villages. The elder brother, Ramthlenga established Ralau village in the confluence of Ral-au (Sabalong) and Khawthlangtuipui Rivers. This was calculated to be at 1687 AD. See, Laldova, *History of Chittagong Hills Tracts (A chhunga Zofate leh Hnam hrang hrang chanchin tawi)*, Christian Fellowship Bangladesh, 2014, p. 179-180.

⁵²Captain Thomas Herbert Lewin, who was dearly called, Thangliana was appointed as Hills Superintendent in 1864 by the colonial administration. It was he moved the Police Headquarter from Changraguna to Rangmati in 1867. Chandraguna is about 50 miles from Chittagong. It can be reached by a steamship. See, Chhawnmanga, *Mizorama Michengte*, Aizawl, Hnamte Press, 1985, pp. 132-133.

⁵³Ralte, Benjamin, p. 2.

⁵⁴Lewin to Commissioner of Chittagong Division. Letter No. 579 Dated 7 July 1873. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, p. 21.

⁵⁵While the British accepted offer of friendship from the Lushai chiefs, they refused to interfere in inter-clan feuds.

homestead or the nearest convenient location in the border. All frontier officers were notified of the British Bengal government's policy.⁵⁶

As instructed, the Superintendent of Cachar, Captain Stewart met four *upas* or councillors of Suakpuilala and Vanhnuailiana at Silchar in 1864. The Lushai chiefs agreed to maintain the peace in the frontier. They offered certain articles as tribute to the British annually. Both the Lushai chiefs were offered an annual grant of ₹ 600 each.⁵⁷ However, this produced peaceful conditions lasted only for two years.⁵⁸

Relations between the two Lushai chiefs and the British again turned sour because of the Lushais complete opposition of the expanding tea gardens.⁵⁹ Therefore, in 1865, the imperial government contemplated on sending military expedition against the two chiefs. On hearing the intention of the British, Suakpuilala sued for peace. However, peace in the British frontier remained for a year or two. The years 1868-1869 had witnessed series of daring raids of the Cachar-Sylhet frontier by the Lushais.⁶⁰

A Naga village in Manipur was attacked and burnt by Vanhnuailiana and Pawibawia in November 1868.⁶¹ Suakpuilala's men undertook a devastating attack in the Hill Tipperah in the same year.⁶² Lalruma attacked and plundered the Nowarbund tea garden on 10 January, 1869. Dothiauva attacked the tea garden of

⁵⁶ F. Lalremsiama, p. 110. This policy was already applied by the British in the case of the Abhor with success.

⁵⁷ Priyam Goswami, p. 139.

⁵⁸ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 22.

⁵⁹ The Lushai chiefs were also instigated by fugitive Manipuri princes in Cachar who had used the Lushai in their attempt to dislodge Chandrakirti from the throne of Manipur. See, Priyam Goswami, p. 139.

⁶⁰ Tipperah was raided by Lianphunga in 1887. And, Sazâi (Chengi) valley was again raided by Lianphunga and Zahrawka (son of Suakpuilala) in January 1888. This raid was more atrocious than any other raids. 101 people were killed and many others were taken as captives. Rothangpuia started to raid British territory again in late 1869.

⁶¹ These two Chiefs, Vanhnuailiana in particular were the target of the Cachar Column or Left Column of the First *Vailen* of 1871-1872.

⁶² Suakpuilala had his own cause to plunder British territories. His first demand was the release of Lalsûthlaha. When he was married to the daughter of Lalsûthlaha, he promised his in-laws to take a revenge on the British. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, pp. 224-225.

Monierkhal on 14 January, 1869. The Kalanagar stockade in Manipur was plundered by a combined force of several chiefs led by Dokhama in early February, 1869. Thus, several raids were carried out on British subjects to resist the expansionist agenda of the British imperial government.⁶³

III. 3 The British Strategy for 'Peaceful' Lushai Frontier

In an attempt to chasten the Lushais and secure 'peaceful' frontier, the British formed a Regulation District in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) with the passage of Act XXII of 1860.⁶⁴ It was under the supervision of a Superintendent.

The British further wanted the possession of Cachar due to its strategic location.⁶⁵ The Governor-General-in-Council asked the Burmese Commander in Assam to refrain from invading Cachar on the ground that it had already been taken under British protectorate.⁶⁶ However, the hill tribes of the surrounding hills repeated their occasional marauding of Cachar with impunity. Reluctant to get involved in Cachar, the British, at the same time, could not avoid the growing need of mercantilism.⁶⁷

The British vowed to secure their protectorate in the Cachar-Sylhet border. They wanted to provide security and peace for what they claimed to be their subjects. To prevent further raids, the British decided to undertake military offensive measures

⁶³It was back in 1864 that the Lushai Chief, Vanpuilala informed the Cachar Deputy Commissioner, Captain Stewart to halt their clearance of the jungle which had already penetrated upto Tuirial (Sonai). He pleaded to them not to penetrate further. However, his plea went unheeded. See, F. Lalremsiama, p. 91.

⁶⁴ F. Lalremsiama, pp. 104-107.

⁶⁵ The British were determined not to let the Burmese to control Cachar. Intensive diplomatic activities occurred in the north eastern frontier of the British occupied areas. Assam and Manipur were already dominated by the Burmese by this time.

⁶⁶ R. M. Lahiri, *The Annexation of Assam (1834-1854)*, Kolkata, Firma KLM Private Limited, 2003, pp. 24-25. The Calcutta Council argued that Cachar commanded a pass through which the Burmese might invade British territory. The motive alleged for taking Cachar under British territory was far from satisfactory with the Directors in England. They characterised it as "another instances of mistaken policy." After the Anglo-Burmese War, the princes who had alliance with the British were reinstated. In this way, Cachar was given to Govinda Chandra in 1813.

⁶⁷The British opined that they were "bound to defend Cachar from foreign aggressions, and not from plunderers and marauders." However, this policy of the imperial government swayed with the decline in foreign threat and the rising need of colonial expansion. See., R. M. Lahiri, *The Annexation of Assam*, p. 151.

into the Lushai Hills. The central thrust of the British policy was to ensure ‘peaceful’ frontiers.

Survey and exploration which was a prelude to an intrusion of colonialism were conducted.⁶⁸ Brigadier-General Nuthall was ordered by the British Government to conduct punitive operations. His target was Suakpuilala.⁶⁹ The first column under Nuthall, commanded by him routed through the Tlawng (Dhalleshwari) river as far as *Tûtchhuah* (Pakwamukh/Gotur mukh) and Chângsil (Bepari Bazar, not far from Suakpuilala’s village). The second column under Major Stevenson routed through the Tuirial (Sonai) river to Suakpuilala’s village.⁷⁰

In addition to the above, Messrs. Baker and Kemble (Civil Police) patrolled the eastern border of Tripura to Koilashur River and through Zâmpui range. They later entered into one or two tributary village of Suakpuilala on the Tût (Pakwa) River.⁷¹

The British encountered tremendous resistance from the Lushais.⁷² Nuthall’s column almost reached Suakpuilala’s village. However, dearth of supplies and great deal of sickness stalled the British march. There was continued incessant rain and the difficult terrain did not favour the British.⁷³ The imperial forces returned to Cachar by the middle of March, 1869. The intrusion was thus a failure.

⁶⁸Chhawnmanga, *Mizorama Michengte*, p. 130; Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 63. A team led by Captain Hodgkinson and Lieutenant Sandes forayed into the extreme south of the Lushai Hills in the winter of 1848-1849. They went up Chhintuipui (Koladyne) river from Akyab. They have an escort of native troops and police. They ascended *Rala Tlâng* (Raletkhang) and reached the vicinity of Serkawr and Tuipang (which later became an important military post).

⁶⁹Jem.Thawnglinga, p. 225. He took a force consisting of the Sylhet Light Infantry (SLI), the 7th Native Infantry, a Eurasian Battery (Artillery) and strong detachments of the Cachar Frontier Police. They were divided into two columns. The two columns departed from Cachar on 20 February, 1869.

⁷⁰Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 59. Suakpuilala had raided Adampur again in November 1869. This was because Captain Stewart had received his messengers disgracefully in 1865. See, Lalhruiailuanga Ralte, pp. 25-26.

⁷¹Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 59. Tût is the left bank tributary of Tlawng (Sonai) River which it joins in a little south of Jalnacherra.

⁷² There were casualties from the British sides.

⁷³Priyam Goswami, p. 140; Jem.Thawnglinga, p. 225.

Failure of the expedition was a disaster for the imperial authority. It immensely diminished the prestige of the British government. In due course, there was a wide debate on the future course of action on dealing with the Lushais. What the British government wanted was prevention of raids and secure 'peace' in their border. The policy of conciliation and concession which was applied by the British after it only served to confirm among the Lushais that the foreigner or *vais* were powerless to injure them.⁷⁴

F.B. Simson, the Commissioner of Dacca Division was of the opinion that peaceful intercourse with the Lushais would result in more successful administration than harsh measures enforced by soldiers.⁷⁵ He proposed for an expedition "without necessarily irritating the Lushais but to show the tribes the ability of British power to occupy their land".⁷⁶ Lord Ulick Browne, Commissioner of Chittagong Division, suggested the establishment of a strong advanced post to check the Lushais.

The view of Browne was supported by Sir William Grey, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal (1867-1871). Grey reiterated the failure of the frontier officers despite their efforts to prevent raids from the Lushais. This conveyed the failure of the British policy of conciliation and its insufficiency to protect the British frontier from the tribes beyond. There was a need for the British to tread more carefully.

The British officials on the field unanimously recommended that any raids should be dealt with severe punishment in the shape of military occupation of the raiders' village as long as possible. This would be associated with the seizure of crops and stored grains.

⁷⁴*Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, Vol. IV, North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes*, p. 237.

⁷⁵ Earlier, Sir William Grey's proposal for another expedition during 1869-1870 was objected owing to the lateness of the season. It was in 1870 that an advanced guard of forty men was sanctioned by the British Bengal Government. This was a fulfillment of the proposal of Sir William Grey, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal (1867-1871). The advanced guards were stationed at Rothangpuia's village (Uiphum range) temporarily.

⁷⁶Foreign Department Political A Proceedings. December 1869. Nos. 216-292. F. B. Simson, Commissioner of Dacca Division to the Secretary Government of Bengal No. 101 Date 31 March 1869. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, p. 22.

The British decided to station an officer in the Lushai Hills, for the purpose of entering into engagement with the chiefs. The incumbent was to act as arbitrator in all disputes between the British and the villages in their frontier. He was to place intercourse with them on a sound basis and a nominal tribute from the Lushais. The British government also agreed to equip the frontier in order to resist sudden unforeseen attack.⁷⁷

The new Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, John Ware Edgar was charged with the implementation of the above policy.⁷⁸ Edgar and his team set out for the Lushai Hills on 20 December, 1869 from Silchar.⁷⁹ He met the representatives of Kalkhama and other chiefs on 1 January, 1870.⁸⁰

Edgar marched towards Chângsil and met Suakpuilala, who the British regarded as the representative of the chiefs of the western Lushai Hills.⁸¹ Despite the bleak situation he reached a milestone by executing *sanad* with Suakpuilala⁸². It was signed on 16 January 1871.⁸³ This agreement had the sanction of the Governor-General. Thus, Suakpuilala became a close aide of the British. He assisted the British authority against those Lushais who resisted them.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ C. E. Buckland, *Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors, Volume I*, Calcutta, Second Edition, 1902, p. 461. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema.p. 23.

⁷⁸ Edgar agreed with the policy of the British government in general. But he objected with the idea of locating an officer in the Lushai Hills. He objected the idea because of the extreme dislike of any foreigner by the inhabitants. The unfriendliness of the climate and heavy expenditure to be incurred upon the maintenance of an officer with a suitable guard were also in the mind of Edgar.

⁷⁹ He was accompanied by Major McDonald, of Revenue Survey and Inspector of Police, Dost Muhamad, three sepoy, twenty one constables, three native officials and a few Lushai guides.

⁸⁰ Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, p. 27.

⁸¹ Priyam Goswami, p. 141; Jem.Thawnglinga, p. 226.

⁸² Suakpuilala was one of the most well-known chief of the time. *Sanad* was a grant of recognition from the imperial authority to the native ruler. It was intended to create a feeling and foster the idea of subordination to the native people. This subordination was in relation to the British Empire.

⁸³ C. U. Aitchinson, *Treaties, Engagement & Sanads, Volume XII*, Calcutta, 1909, Reprint, 1984, pp. 163-164. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema.p. 23. However, the date was 15 February, 1871 according to Pu Thawnglinga. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 226. The British acknowledged Suakpuilala as the most powerful chief among the Lushais. As per the *sanad* Suakpuilala was to have power and authority over all other Lushai chiefs. Suakpuilala agreed not to raid the Cachar Hills and other British territories like Tripura and Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Thus, the British territories adjacent to the Lushai Hills were secure from raids by the Lushai, atleast for a time being.

⁸⁴ Priyam Goswami, p. 141.

Trading relations with British subjects along the Tlawng (Dhaleswari) river grew as a result of the agreement.⁸⁵ Suakpuilala was given the right to extract *sidah* or *sidak* which was paid annually.

The terms of the agreement also laid that the British would not expand their territorial boundary towards the Lushai Hills. It was Suakpuilala's hope that the Lushai Hills would thus remain immune from British expansion.

Raid in the British territory still went on. Edgar again visited Suakpuilala later in 1870 in an attempt to draw the boundary line. During his stay, he got to know that other Lushai chiefs had raided British territory in Cachar in January 1871.⁸⁶

Meanwhile, the British expanded their plantation towards the Lushai Hills. And they gradually started to clear the forest of the Lushai Hills. The hunting grounds of the Lushais were exploited and destroyed massively. Many other Lushai chiefs were aware of the *sanad* between Suakpuilala and the Whitemen.⁸⁷ They were completely against the British expansion into the Lushai Hills. Their mistrust of the Whitemen was further heightened by the British breached of their *sanad* with Suakpuilala.⁸⁸

The breach of the agreement had repercussion on the British policy to secure 'peaceful' Lushai frontiers. Tea-gardens and settlers within the British occupied areas were raided. The provoked Lushai Chief, Rothangpuia, repeatedly raided villages in Tipperah. The resources of the imperial government were seriously threatened by these raids. It was the expectation of the Lushais, that raids would retract the Whitemen from further expansion.

On the morning of 23 January, 1871, the Cachari punji at Ainerkhal in the Hailakandi Sub-Division was burnt. About 25 persons were killed and 37 were taken

⁸⁵Traders were now permitted to cut timber and woods, but to the payment of certain tax. The issue on boundary was also discussed. And, this was the first instance on which boundary was agreed with the colonial government. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 28.

⁸⁶It was these raids that had resulted in the Lushai Expedition of 1871-1872 by the Imperial Government.

⁸⁷ Many other chiefs were not ready to accept Suakpuilala as the most powerful among them. However, they were more against the British rather than a man of their own.

⁸⁸The *Kheddah* – elephant trappers still continued to trap elephants in the Hills.

prisoners.⁸⁹ On the same day George Steller's plantation in Alexandrapur was attacked by Bengkhuaia.⁹⁰ This attack occurred while James Winchester and his daughter Mary Winchester visited the tea estate.⁹¹

James Winchester was unfortunately shot dead during this raid. Mary Winchester, a girl of six years of age, was captured and carried away by the Lushai *pasalthas*.⁹² A British citizen in the hands of a frontier tribe hurt the sentiment of the Whitemen. As later event showed, it was beyond the toleration of the *Kumpinu* (the Queen or Her Majesty Government).⁹³

Katlicherra, the adjoining garden, was attacked on the same day.⁹⁴ It was also on the morning of 23 February, 1871, that the *kulis* line at Julnacherra was attacked by the Lushais. These raids on Julnacherra and Monierkhal were carried out by Lalburha.⁹⁵ In these raids of the British occupied territories, the Lushais took away

⁸⁹Alexander Mackenzie, p. 305; Col. E. B. Elly, *Military Report on the Chin-Lushai Country*, p.6. This raid too, was conducted by Chief Bangkhuaia. See., Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 29.

⁹⁰ Bengkhuaia was a descendant of Rolura. He was the son of Lalpuithanga. See, V. L. Ngaihawia, *Mizo Lalte leh Pasalthate Chanchin*, p. 39. The first deviation from Christian teachings in the Lushai Hills was by Khawlianthlira. It was as early as on 1913. He was an old teacher from Butpawl's Lawihmun, near Ruantlang. Tleithanga, father of Tlira participated in this raid. Tleithanga bought a captive girl of fair complexion named 'Nokri' (Nokiri in Lushai). He took her as his wife, and Tlira was born in 1878 as their fourth child. See, Rev. Lalsawma, *Revivals – the Mizo Way*, Aizawl, Rev. Lalsawma, 1994, p. 61-62.

⁹¹ Col. L. W. Shakespear, pp. 67-69.

⁹²An extract from *The Illustrated London News*, dated May 25th, 1872. Also see., Alexander Mackenzie, p. 47; B. S. Carey & H. N. Tuck, p. 15.; *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 18; J. M. Lloyd, *Harvest in the Hills*, Synod Publication Board, 1991, pp. 6-8.

⁹³*Kumpinu* is the Lushai name for Queen Victoria or Her Majesty Government (literally 'the Company's Mother'). See. J. H. Lorrain and F. W. Savidge, *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Lushai Language (Dulien Dialect)*, Shillong, Assam Secretariat Press, 1898., p. 130. British officers wrote countless appeals to the Government for better protection of their frontier subjects but its outrageous to see that only when a real British citizen is a victim they decided to take action. Also see., B. S. Carey and H. N. Tuck.

⁹⁴This raid too was conducted by Chief Bengkhuaia. See., Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 29.

⁹⁵ Lallula fathered Lalpuiliana. Lasavunga was the son of Lalpuiliana. Lalsavunga moved eastward and met his death in Saitual. His sons – Vanhnuaiana and Lalphunga moved further northeast. The sons of Vanhnuaiana were – Dothiauva, Liankhama, Lalburha, Buangtheuva and Chinhleia. Laburha later settled at Vancheng. Here he was succeeded by his son, Thangchungnunga. See, Vanchhunga, *Lusei leh A Vela Hnam Dangte Chanchin*, Aizawl, Deptt. of Art & Culture, First Edition 1955, Reprinted 1994, pp. 155-165. There was also a mentioned that Lalburha son of Vanhnuaiana settled at Sesawng during the First Vailen. See, Vanchhunga, *Lusei leh A Vela Hnam Dangte Chanchin*, p. 247; V. L. Ngaihawia, p. 39; *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, pp. 18-19.

thirteen guns from the British forces.⁹⁶ Raids also occurred at Sylhet, Tripura, and were also reported by the Political Agent in Manipur.⁹⁷

On 24 January, 1871, a second attack on Katlicherra was carried out by some thirty Lushais. In this attack, fifteen of the Lushai *pasal̄thas* were armed.⁹⁸ On 27 January, 1871, the Lushais made a surprise attack on the sepoy and police at the Monierkhal tea garden and plundered it. An attack on Nungdigram and raid on Durmukhul, was also carried out on the same day.⁹⁹

These attacks were so fierce, persistent and devastating that within a short span the whole of southern Cachar was almost deserted. The British policy of conciliation was a failure. The local officers recommended collateral measures as a means of revenge.

These raids, thus, invited more punitive actions from the British against the marauding Lushais. The British were eager to keep their subjects and their protectorate safe. For this, capable British officers and personnel were dispatched to the Lushais country.

The local British officials were tired of soft or appeasement policy towards the Lushais. They demanded extreme measures against the hill tribes. Even then, they were directed not to interfere and leave the Lushais on their own as far as possible in the management of their affairs. They were to cultivate trade and friendly relations, “. . . endeavour to establish permanent influence over the chiefs and to maintain such vigilance along the line of defence as to deter the tribes from committing raids on cut off parties that may attempt them.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ R. Rualthansanga, *Traditional and Representative Institution in the Lushai Hills*, Guwahati, EBH Publishers, 2015, p.52.

⁹⁷ Mackenzie, Alexander, pp. 305-308; Col. E. B. Elly, pp. 6-7. The raids on Tripura, Sylhet and Manipur were discussed in, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, pp. 30-31; F. Lalremsiama, pp. 136-159.

⁹⁸ This attack too was carried by Bengkhuaia. One section attacked the police guarding the tea garden. Another group attacked the *kuli*. Bengkhuaia group returned after this attack and it was estimated that they had lost 57 men. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 29.

⁹⁹ These three attacks, it is estimated that the Lushai lost 25 men, and killed 17 men besides taking several captives. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 30.

¹⁰⁰ Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), September 1872, No. 269, Note by Aitchinson Dated 4 September, 1872. Cited in, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 24.

III. 4 The First *Vailen* (Colonial Invasion), 1871-1872

As seen above, the British authorities, especially the local officials were much angered by the frequent depredations committed by the Lushais in the British territory. Tremendous pressure was forwarded to the imperial government by Sir George Campbell, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and the local officers.¹⁰¹

On 11 July 1871, the Governor-General in Council decided on executing what was later known as the First *Vailen* against the Lushais.¹⁰² Directions were issued for operations. Purely retaliatory measures were to be avoided. If any unavoidable infliction of punishment was needed, it was to take the form of destruction of villages and crops. The main objective of the operation was to rescue all captives in the hands of the Lushais unconditionally.

The restoration of peace in the British frontier was also an important goal.¹⁰³ Safe recovery of Mary Winchester was another important proposal made by the British government to the Commanders of this Expedition.¹⁰⁴ The military expedition was to be retribution against the Lushai chiefs especially those responsible for the raid on the Alexanderpur tea garden.

The British decided to undertake two pronged attack of the Lushai Hills. The expeditionary forces were dispatched in two columns on 1 November, 1871 from Cachar and Chittagong. Brigadier General Bouchier and Colonel Charles Henry

¹⁰¹It was in May 1871 that Sir George Campbell had suggested “military exploration” rather than a measure of pure retaliation. He also suggested for the identification of strategic post for the British troops “in the centre of the Lushai country” and to establish a means of communication with the Lushai. He argued for a military expedition with a goal of entering into friendly relations with the Lushai. However, if the British forces were resisted, force must be use to compel respect from the Lushai. See., C. E. Buckland, *Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors, Volume 1*, Calcutta, Second Edition, 1902, p. 462. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, p. 25.

¹⁰²Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political A, August 1872, Nos., 61-113; R. G. Woodthrope, *The Lushai Expedition*, p. 37; Priyam Goswami, p. 141.

¹⁰³ This would enable the tea planters on Government grants, and their labourers, to follow their occupation safely.

¹⁰⁴Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political A, August 1872, Nos., 61-113; R. G. Woodthrope, pp. 6-7; Alexander Mackenzie, p. 312.

Brownlow were nominated as Commander-in-Chief to command the Cachar or Left Column and the Chittagong or Right Column respectively.¹⁰⁵

The Cachar Column under General Bouchier was accompanied by Mr. Edgar, DC of Cachar as Political Officer.¹⁰⁶ The Chittagong column under Colonel Brownlow was accompanied by Captain T. H. Lewin and his friend Rothangpuia.¹⁰⁷ This column assembled at Samat (Kassalong) in mid-November 1871. It consisted of the same strength as the Left Column.¹⁰⁸

Each column had a Commissariat Department that consisted of 1200 *kulis* and several elephants.¹⁰⁹ A *kuli* crosps consisting of 800 men intended for the carriage of the sepoy's baggage was also enrolled.¹¹⁰ Each kuli received ₹ 8 per month and ₹ 2 Batta while on actual service. They also get rations from the Commissariat while on service.¹¹¹

Both the columns were accompanied by a Medical Corps and a Survey Department. R. G. Woodthrope was attached to the Left Column which he joined in

¹⁰⁵ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political A, January 1872, Nos. 281; *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁶ The detailed number of the personnel of this column is in R. G. Woodthrope, p. 94; Col. E. B. Elly, p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ Lewin befriended Rothangpuia by taking him to Calcutta and presented him a gun (*laiphir*). See., *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, April 1903*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁸ Kassalong River is known to the Mizos as Samat Lui. It is the largest tributary of the Karnafuli. The famous village of Lungadu famous for the skill of its blacksmith was located in this valley. Many from the Lushai Hills went to Lungadu to buy *chem* (dao), etc. Kassalong and Sabalong (Ralau Lui) Rivers enters Kanafuli near Sabalong Bazar. Sabalong Bazar was known to the Mizo as *Ralauchhuah Bazar*. It was from here that the pioneer missionaries, J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge made their failed attempt to enter the Lushai Hills. It was in this confluence that the British had established the Kassalong Police Camp. The Mizo village of Ralau was also situated near this confluence. This village of more than 300 years old was one the oldest settlement of the Mizo in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). See, Laldova, *History of Chittagong Hills Tracts (A chhunga Zofate leh Hnam hrang hrang chanchin tawi)*, Christian Fellowship Bangladesh, 2014, p. 20-27. The detailed number of personnel involved with this column is available in Col. E. B. Elly, p. 9.

¹⁰⁹ According to Pu Chhawnmanga the Left Column consisted of 4 Armed Battalions, 300 Police, 1200 Kulis and 157 Elephants. See., p. 126.

¹¹⁰ R. G. Woodthrope, p. 94.

¹¹¹ Alexander Mackenzie, p. 312.

Cachar.¹¹² He was appointed to the Topographical Survey of India in July 1871. No tents were allowed as each man was being supplied with a waterproof sheet.¹¹³

Co-operation was given by the Raja of Manipur in the form of contingent force of five hundred men. They were commanded by two Manipuri officers. The Bengal Government placed this force under the orders of General Bouchier.¹¹⁴ Major General Nuthall was appointed to accompany the Manipuri force.¹¹⁵ They confined themselves to the protection of the Lushais-Manipuri border in order to prevent the slipping in of the Lushais into Manipur.¹¹⁶ They were to open roads and maintain communication through their own territories. They were directed to be in constant readiness in case the need arose.¹¹⁷

III. 4. 1 Resistance against the Cachar or Left Column in the Lushai Hills¹¹⁸

Tipaimukh, located in the junction of the Tuivai and Tuiruang (Barak) rivers, on the border with Manipur, was fixed as their starting place by the Left Column of the British troops. The place was also selected as advanced base of operations by this column.¹¹⁹ On 15 December, 1871 the greater portion of the force reported at the base. They then marched through the very difficult and torturous country.¹²⁰

¹¹²R. G. Woodthrope, p. 50.

¹¹³Col. E. B. Elly, p. 9.

¹¹⁴ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political A, August 1872, Nos., 61-113; R. G. Woodthrope, p. 46.

¹¹⁵ Nuthall was an officer of great experience on this frontier.

¹¹⁶Chhawnmanga, p. 126.

¹¹⁷ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political A, August 1872, Nos., 61-113. Also see., Col. E. B. Elly, p. 8.

¹¹⁸ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159. The movements of this column are extracted largely from this file in which we find the daily telegrams sent by the Commander to the officials in Shillong, Shimla, Delhi and Calcutta. Also, Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political A, August 1872, Nos. 127-137; Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political A, August 1872, Nos. 61-113; clipping of *the Pioneer* (Allahabad) mentioned in the Bibliography; *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*.

¹¹⁹Tipaimukh at present is located in Manipur, along the Northeast border of Mizoram and Manipur. It is situated in the confluence of Tuiruang (Barak) and Tuivai.

¹²⁰ "The path was sometimes lost in swamps, but again appearing, followed the course of small streams alive with innumerable leeches, which fastened on us without the slightest provocation". See, R. G. Woodthrope, p. 57.

The intrusion of their land by the Whitemen was resisted by an attack on 1 December, 1871 by the Lushais.¹²¹ On 16 December, 1871 General Bouchier pushed on a company Sappers and two hundred of the 44th Assam Light Infantry and finally encamped at an elevation of 4,000 feet. Far away on the south-eastern hills of their camp was perched the more advanced villages of Chief Pawibawi.¹²²

The colonial forces descended towards the confluence of Tuivai and Tuibûm (Towebem, Station Nos. 7).¹²³ They crossed the river Tuivai by a weir. The distant war-cry and threatening demonstration of armed Lushai *pasalthas* were seen. The British General assured the Lushais that his intentions were not necessarily hostile.¹²⁴ However, his attempt to gain confidence of the Lushais failed.

On 19 December, 1871, General Bouchier received report that Pawibawi's and Khawlian's men assembled at Tuibûm.¹²⁵ This stream runs on the base on which the British troops encamped. On 23 December, 1871 the British troops commenced upwards and onward to Khawlian village. About forty armed Lushais threatened their passage across the two rivers. The Lushais ambushade began to fire at the British.¹²⁶ For the British, it was a clear sign that it would get tough.

On 24 December, 1871, the Lushais attacked the British advanced guard on their entry of the village (Khawlian) jhums (swidden agriculture). The Lushais fired from the crest of each hill and retired as the British advanced. The British suffered casualties of three – two of the 44th Assam Light Infantry were killed and one of the 22nd was seriously wounded.¹²⁷

¹²¹ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159.

¹²² This was the Sialkal Range within the present day Mizoram.

¹²³ Tribal Research Institute (TRI), *The Lushais*, 2008, p. 164.

¹²⁴ If the British sepoys were not engaged, the General guaranteed that he would do them no harm.

¹²⁵ One of Pawibawi's *upa* named, Darphawnga was with the British troops. And, another person who was named Raipa (?) was also with the British troops. See, *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 20.

¹²⁶ If the British troops could grab the meaning it would convey, 'go back'.

¹²⁷ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159.

On 24 December, 1871 the British were still encamped in Khawlian village. General Bouchier took out the troops and destroyed another large village and some granaries.¹²⁸ On 25 December, 1871, the British met resistance in which three sepoy got wounded. They burnt Khawlian village and several granaries. One sepoy of the 41st was killed by the Lushais before they left. The British troops returned to the Tuivai camp on 26 December, 1871.

On 27 December, 1871 the British troops, cleared the surroundings of their camp. The Lushais sharp shooters were a constant menace. This resulted in wounding of a sapper, a man of the 22nd Punjab Native Infantry and a labourer. The Lushai *pasalthas* continuously hassled the British communication system.

On 28 December, 1871 the Lushais wounded a sepoy of the 44th Assam Light Infantry and a *kuli*. The British troops were returning with a protected convoy to bring up supplies from the rear. Late in the night the British received information of an attack on the 27th, and on some elephants while out for Chara near Tipaimukh.

In Chara a strong force of 400 British men were posted.¹²⁹ Bouchier took 200 men of the 23rd to assist the Survey Department. Three elephants belonging to the British troops were missing at Tipaimukh. Three British attendants were killed and another wounded.

On the morning of 29 December, 1871, the Lushais fired the British advanced party and wounded one of the 42nd. An emissary from Chief Pawibawi met General Bouchier with the Khawlian people. They admitted having suffered severely both in life and property.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 21. This village could be Vanbawng.

¹²⁹ It was that the British had 33 elephants in this camp. See., *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 23.

¹³⁰ The casualties on the British side till 30 December, 1871 was — three killed and fourteen wounded. The British report of 8 January, 1872 mentioned that two of the wounded among the British troops had died; the others were progressing favourably to Tipaimukh – the base camp of the British troops.

Sappers and Miners Wing of the 4th Native Infantry moved on 4 January, 1872 to Tuitu stream.¹³¹ There were no hostilities since the last report of the British. Bouchier reported, “Lushai came into the camp with fowls and vegetables which they eagerly barter for salt, they are civil and quiet, and cleaner than most hill-men, and not at all the savages we expected to find them”.¹³²

Bouchier’s policy here was to separate the western tribes from the eastern ones to prevent a united force against the British. The British policy of ‘divide and rule’ was at play. As later events showed, the ‘illiterate savage’ could not withstand the diplomatic strategy of the imperial power.

On 8 January, 1872, General Bouchier proceeded to Daido, the most western of Pawibawi’s village.¹³³ On the 11 January, 1872 the British troops reconnoitered as far as Old Khawlian – the village was deserted some months ago and burnt recently by the Lushais.¹³⁴ This was the village and stronghold of one of the prominent Lushai chief, Vanpuilala.¹³⁵

The British troops marched from Tuitu (Station Nos. 8) on 8 January, 1872 and faced no opposition.¹³⁶ They reached Daido and found it deserted and already burnt. On 10 January, 1872 the British forces encamped at Kalawng Tlâng. Here, chiefs’ Pawibawi’s and Kalkhama’s emissaries visited the British troops. On the 14

¹³¹This stream flows in between Khawlian (Mizoram) and Parvachawm (Manipur). The British had constructed bridal path in between Tuibûm and Tuitu till Parvachawm. See, *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, February 1907, p. 23.

¹³² Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159.

¹³³*Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, February 1907, p. 24. The Lushai word *khua* is use for village. Villages were named after the chiefs until as late the forties. They were not named after the localities where they were built. *Khua* represented particular community belonging to a particular chief, who possessed the name. It is now use as the name of the locality. See, Lalsawma, *Revivals – the Mizo Way*, Aizawl, Rev. Lalsawma, 1994, p. 42.

¹³⁴ In some cases, the Lushai after hiding their valuables and grain preferred to burn their village by themselves instead of being left to plunder by the enemy.

¹³⁵Vanpuilala was the son of Lalngura of Sentlang. By the time of his father death at Khawruhlian in 1854, he was a boy of twelve years. After the death of his father, he moved to Phaileng and later to Zawngin. After the first dreadful *mautâm* in the Lushai Hills, Vanpuilala established himself at Khawlian. To act as an advance outpost he also established Daido, about five kilometres northeast of Khawlian.

¹³⁶Major Moore with Hydyut Ali’s labourers were expected to reach Old Khawlian on 13January, 1872.

January, 1872 the British forces reconnoitered at Chiahpui (Station Nos. 10), the first of Pawibawi villages.¹³⁷

The British plan was to reach Lalburha by taking the easier route to the South of the Khawlian range. However, after getting to know of Pawibawia, they changed their plan. They now wanted to reach Pawibawia at Selam, so they moved to the southeastern direction from Khawlian range.¹³⁸

On 17 January, 1872, the British troops marched to Chiahpui. Captain Blackwood mounted his battery on the back of elephants. When the British troops reached the first jhum, crowd of two hundred unarmed Lushais resisted their advance.¹³⁹ They said that their chief, Pawibawia was present and would make his submission. The said chief came out; however, he turned out to be an impersonator.¹⁴⁰ From Chiahpui onwards road was not made by the British during this expedition. They resorted to country paths and few elephants were taken over these.¹⁴¹

The British had only two routes to reach Pawibawia. The first was through Ngopa range and the second through Surtlâng in the Sialkal Range. The Chiahpui villagers did not reveal the easier route to the British. The British spent the night of 22 January, 1872 on the stream of Sairûm, about three miles from Chiahpui.¹⁴²

In anticipation of the British choosing passage through Ngopa range (Station Nos. 11), the Lushais heavily stockaded the hills.¹⁴³ The British guides, Darphawnga and the man from Thangriduma, also failed to convince the British to take the route

¹³⁷ Tribal Research Institute (TRI), *The Lushais*, p. 165.

¹³⁸ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 25.

¹³⁹ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 26.

¹⁴⁰ The Lushai were constantly reminded of the fate of Lalsûtthlaha. This is the reason why chief like Pawibawia refused to surrender. Prominent pre-condition set by Lushai chiefs for their negotiations with the British was the release of Lalsûtthlaha. However, this was denied by the British. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 223.

¹⁴¹ Tribal Research Institute (TRI), *The Lushais*, p. 165.

¹⁴² *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 27; Tribal Research Institute (TRI), *The Lushais*, p. 165.

¹⁴³ At Ngopa range and at Khuangnung (Station Nos. 12) the British mentioned that they faced scarcity of water. See, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), *The Lushais*, p. 165.

thorough Ngopa. This was because the British had prior knowledge of the Lushais plan to waylay them. To avoid an ambush, the British chose to climb the precipitous Sialkal Range.¹⁴⁴ It was on 24 January, 1872 that the British had crossed Tuila stream, on the base of Sialkal range. They were commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Roberts.¹⁴⁵

The Lushais' plan was to resist the British and compelled them to withdraw. The Lushais were prepared to pursue the foreigners even to the plains (of Cachar).¹⁴⁶ However, this unfortunately did not work as the British took the more unexpected and difficult route.

On 26 January, 1872, a detachment of British troops consisting of one hundred infantry and two steel guns attacked and burnt a large village called Teikhang under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Roberts.¹⁴⁷

The road leading to the village was strongly stockaded. However, when the first position of the Lushais was burnt, they appeared to lose heart. They understood that they could not challenge the mighty colonial power. The Lushai *pasalthas* retired to their village which was situated on a naturally strong hill and was also well stockaded.

The intention of the Lushais was to defend their village. Their withdrawal was tactical. It was only due to the British use of artillery that they had dispersed. They had dispersed only to regroup and challenge the British in the village. They had in them not even an idea of fleeing from the Whitemen. Then, the second shell of the British artillery bursted in the middle of the village. The British infantry advanced

¹⁴⁴Standing at 1,967 metres in height Surtlâng of Sialkal Range is the third highest point in Mizoram.

¹⁴⁵*Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 28. Frederick Roberts had been the Deputy-Quartermaster General of the Cachar Column of the Expedition, See, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), *The Lushais*, Aizawl, Second Reprint, 2008, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶*Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁷*Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 29. Teikhang consisted of around two hundred houses. Field Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar, *Forty-one Years in India – From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief, Volume I, & Volume II*, London, Richard Bentley and Son, 1897.

under the cover of the artillery fire and stormed the village.¹⁴⁸ Hesitatingly, the Lushais were compelled to withdraw by the artillery of a superior western power.

In the encounter that had ensued, the death of two of Pawibawia's tributary chiefs was reported. Smooth-bore ammunitions were found on some death bodies. This showed that the Lushais who were involved in this encounter had connections with those involved in the raid of British territory in the previous year.

General Bouchier too was among the injured. He, however, reported that his wound had progressed.¹⁴⁹ The General informed Pawibawia that as consequences of his opposition to the British troops on the 25 and 26, January 1872 he had to pay a fine of *sials*, goats, pigs, fowls and unhusked rice. The British forces occupied Selam on 4 February, 1872.¹⁵⁰ This was the main village and headquarters of Chief Pawibawia.

Selam village was strongly stockaded and consisted of around two hundred well-built houses.¹⁵¹ The villagers were anxious for a settlement for peace. They evidently exhausted their resources while resisting the British troops.¹⁵²

On 14 February, 1872 General Bouchier and his troops passed through two hills, known as 'Lalburha's Gate'. They met no resistance. On 17 February, 1872, they marched to Champhai, Lalburha's main village.¹⁵³ It was unoccupied and was destroyed without opposition — the village contained about 500 houses and there were signs of its having been much larger.

¹⁴⁸ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁹ The General was earlier informed by Pawibawia to retreat. If he does not retreat he would mobilize with Lalburha and defeat the British. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, *Chin-Mizo Chanchin*, p. 227.

¹⁵⁰ On 2 February 1872, in the name of the Column, Bouchier returned sincere thanks to the British Government for the congratulatory message.

¹⁵¹ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 30.

¹⁵² Chhawnmanga, p. 126. Bouchier hoped to leave Selam on 12 February, 1872. They planned to reach Lalburha's village (Champhai) on 17 February, 1872.

¹⁵³ Lalburha died on Friday, 27 January, 1933 at around 4 P. M. at the age of 82. He had established or moved to 16 villages. Every village he established were no less than a house of 150. He performed *khuangchawi* ten times in his lifetime. In January 1932, he moved to Valchêng from Chhawrtui. He breathes his last at Valchêng. Being a chief who survived long, he was much respected by the later colonial officials. See, *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, March 1933*, pp. 37-43.

The head-men from the village belonging to Lalburha's mother had brought in a coat and musket belonging to the 4th Native Infantry. They also brought a pouch of one police killed at Monierkhal. This proved Lalburha was the leader of the attacked on that garden in January 1871.¹⁵⁴

By 20 February, 1872, Vanhnuailiana had surrendered unconditionally.¹⁵⁵ The whole Lushai Hills throughout which the Left Column had passed had been subdued. The General gave them 24 hours to deliver up —

i). The arms taken from the police at Nungdigram and Monierkhal, or if these could not be procured within the time, an equal number of their own muskets.

ii). To send three of their headmen to the camp as hostages for the safe conduct of the column on their return journey to Tipaimukh.

iii). To pay a fine of war gongs, ivory, *sials*, goats, etc.¹⁵⁶

On 11 February, 1872, General Bouchier communicated his full view to General Brownlow that if it was possible the withdrawal of the two columns from the Lushai Hills could be simultaneous.¹⁵⁷

III. 4. 2 Resistance against the Chittagong or Right Column in the Lushai Hills¹⁵⁸

The Chittagong or the Right Column of the British troops was of the same strength as those starting from Cachar.¹⁵⁹ It was mainly composed of Gurkha regiments. Their advanced based camp was at Tlabung (Demagiri). The force

¹⁵⁴This proved claimed by Lalhruaitluanga Ralte that the Monierkhal raid of 1871 was carried out Lalsangyunga and his party was wrong. See., Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, p. 30.

¹⁵⁵It was in Selam that the British heard of Vanhnuailiana's death. Vanhnuailiana was at Ruangtlang, which was near Lalburha's village.

¹⁵⁶*Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁷This Column reached back Tipaimukh on the 6th & 7th of March, 1872. See, *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1907*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁸ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159. The movements of this column are extracted largely from this file in which we find the daily telegrams send by the Commander to the officials in Shillong, Shimla, Delhi and Calcutta. Also, Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political A, June 1872, Nos. 125-136. And the clipping of the Pioneer (Allahabad) mentioned in the Bibliography.

¹⁵⁹They were picked up from five different military battalions and from the Chittagong Frontier Police. See, Chhawnmanga, p. 137.

assembled at this camp towards the end of November 1871. This column had an advantage as they could use the rivers (Chhimtuipui) for navigation.¹⁶⁰

The targets of General Brownlow or the Right Column were the Sailo (Syloos) and the Haulawng (Howlongs – Sailo chiefs of South Lushai Hills). The Haulawng were located the farthest from the British advanced camp located at Tlabung. The British forces were to depose Savunga and Bengkhuaia.¹⁶¹

Mary Winchester, the white girl who had been carried off from Alexandrapur in 1871, was believed to be in the hands of Chief Bengkhuaia.¹⁶²

On 16 December, 1871 a small British advanced party under Colonel Macpherson surprised the village of Vanhnuna, a Sailo chief. The previous warnings given by the British were not heeded by Vanhnuna and his villagers.

On 21 December, 1871, another column led by Colonel Macpherson and Colonel Donald Macintyre destroyed large stores of rice or granaries.¹⁶³ The Lushai *pasalthas* offered vehement resistance in the encounter that ensued. The British had one Gurkha casualty who was killed in an ambush. On 23 December, 1871 Macpherson destroyed the third village. He rejoined General Brownlow on 25 December, 1871.¹⁶⁴

Colonel Macintyre returned to the British camp at Tlabung (Demagiri) on 23 December, 1871. He had destroyed two villages. One of the villages which he had destroyed was heavily stockaded. The granaries that the British destroyed in this village were estimated to be eight thousand mounds.

¹⁶⁰The river *Khawthlangtuipui* (Karnafuli) from the north of Tlabung had many swift rapids. The Column crosses these rapids by placing wooden rafts in the basin of these rapids and used it for transiting men and materials. See, Chhawnmanga, p. 137.

¹⁶¹This Savunga was the only son of Dârliankuala. He was proud and assumed to be the richest Sailo chief. He had two of the most cherished treasure – *Liando Dârbû* and *Ngente Thi*. He was the grandfather of Khamliana, Chief of Lungleng (near Aizawl). He died at the age of 120.

¹⁶²Chhawnmanga, p. 137.

¹⁶³Macintyre was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry to British and Commonwealth forces for this Lushais campaign.

¹⁶⁴Foreign Dept., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159.

The cruelty of the British was very much seen in their actions. Practically superior British armed contingents had destroyed even the granaries of a humble village folks. Macintyre also captured twenty-five *sials*, besides pigs and poultry.¹⁶⁵

Notwithstanding the severity and cruelty that the British had inflicted on them, the Lushai *pasal̄thas* were still not ready to give up. They made no sign of submission and continued to fire on the *vai* (foreigner). They were convinced, and responded to the call to resist the unwanted intrusion at all cost.

On 7 January, 1872, General Brownlow reported that fifteen villages averaging 150 houses had been destroyed together with their granaries.¹⁶⁶ However, the determined Lushais made no show of submission and continued to fire on the British.

Colonel Macpherson met with more than unusual resistance on 9 January, 1872 in the strongly stockaded village of Lalngura. In this heavy encounter one Gurkha was killed. One British officer and nine British sepoy were wounded by bamboo stakes. The Colonel bought back a *seer* weight stamped 'C.H. Crane, Wolverthampton', from the village. This weight must have come from the Cachar tea plantation. It was made to implicate that Lalngura's village was involved in the 1871 raid of Cachar tea garden.¹⁶⁷

Earlier, on 6 January, 1872, Colonel Macpherson and his contingent surprised a team of Lushai *pasal̄thas*. In this ambush by the British, one Lushais was killed and two were wounded.¹⁶⁸

The British troops reached Savunga's village (Kawlhawk range), on 12 January, 1872. It consisted of about 300 houses. However, it was burnt by the Lushais themselves on 7 January, 1872.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159.

¹⁶⁶ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159.

¹⁶⁷ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159.

¹⁶⁸ This is an important instance in which casualties from the Lushai side was made by colonial record.

¹⁶⁹ However, there are also records that the village was burnt by the colonial forces. See, V. L. Ngaihawia, p. 36.

General Brownlow reported, “It will be some days before our supplies will enable us to move against the Howlongs, the most important villages of which people are immediately in front of us. Bengkhuaia who is said to have Mary Winchester, is on the third range from this and east of the Kolodyne”.¹⁷⁰

T. H. Lewin arrived at Belkhai when Rothangpuia was the chief there. He wanted to befriend the Lushais. He persuaded the Lushais by informing them not to be afraid of him or the Whiteman. However, the Lushais could not be easily befriended. Moreover, their response to Lewin was rather boisterous.¹⁷¹

It was on the morning of 12 January, 1872 that Captain T.H. Lewin started with a suitable escort to put Rothangpuia on the Haulawng territory.¹⁷² Captain Lewin and Rothangpuia had undertaken a mission to convince the Haulawng chiefs. They failed and Captain Lewin returned on the 14 January, 1872. However, Rothangpuia proceeded to southerly direction on the 15 January, 1872.¹⁷³ The Lushais had not offered any resistance to the movement of Captain Lewin. They might have been worn out or ran out of resources, which might have hit them badly.¹⁷⁴

On 1 February, 1872, General Brownlow retracted his plan and moved against the Haulawng. This was because Mohammed Azim, a police Subedar, had been sent with Rothangpuia. The Subedar was instructed to go up to a certain point. However, contrary to instructions, Azim followed Rothangpuia deeper into the Lushais' country.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159.

¹⁷¹ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, April 1903, p. 12.

¹⁷² Rothangpuia's village was located in the Uiphum range, four miles to the south of Tlabung. By this time, Rothangpuia was friendly to the British. See, Chhawnmanga, p.131.

¹⁷³ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159.

¹⁷⁴ Even so, on 30 January 1872, the Pyndoo post was attacked by the Shendus (Mara or Lai) and Haulawng. They killed one policeman and wounded three from the British side.

¹⁷⁵ Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159. Subedar Mohammed Azim had been on political errands to the Haulawng before. He wrote to the General that if there was any fighting; both he and Rothangpuia would be in danger. This had put the General in a very difficult position.

If General Brownlow and his team were to meet the other Column it was important that they should come to terms with the Haulawng.¹⁷⁶ Captain Lewin strongly advocated the British troops to remain stationary until they again heard from the Subedar. Signal fires of the detachment party with the Survey group were seen on the night of the 27 February, 1872. This party was hopeful to return on the 3 March, 1872.

General Brownlow telegraphed on 7 February 1872, that he expected to return from his raids on the northern Haulawng by 1 March, 1872. It was on 1 March, 1872 that the General planned to commence his gradual withdrawal from his present line of operations.

Savunga and Bengkhuaia, the most powerful of the Haulawng chiefs, submitted to the British on 17 February, 1872.¹⁷⁷ They had gone through a long negotiation with Captain T. H. Lewin.¹⁷⁸ The two great chiefs agreed to give up their captives. They bound themselves to keep peace and allow the British free excess to their country now and hereafter.

A British survey party with a detachment of the 2nd Gurkhas proceeded to Bengkhuaia's village .i.e., Sailam on the 19 February, 1872. Another group of British survey party advanced to Jatamah's village. The British troops began their withdrawal after the return of the survey parties.¹⁷⁹

On 6 March, 1872, the southern Haulawngs surrendered some captives to the British troops. The chief of Valchêng, Seipuia made his submission later.¹⁸⁰ On 23

¹⁷⁶Brownlow assumption was that Md. Azim, the Subedar who accompanied Rothangpuia may have applied delaying tactic.

¹⁷⁷It was later proven by the British that Chiefs Sangvunga and Bengkhuaia were involved in the Cachar raids of 1871.

¹⁷⁸The negotiation was in one ford of the stream, Lâu Lui located in the present Thenzawl. This ford to this day was known as *Vai biakkai* (Vai – foreigner, biak – negotiate, kai – ford). Though Rothangpuia was also there with General Brownlow at Thenzawl, Captain Lewin was approached secretly by the Lushai to negotiate with them. See, Chhawnmanga, pp. 140-141.

¹⁷⁹The commander of the Column had estimated that the survey parties would take around six days.

¹⁸⁰The villages of Seipuia – the village in which he established himself in different time were, Valchêng, Belpui, Dawn, Baichi, Zobawk, Zopui (Hrangchalkawn), Mualcheng, Saitluk, Thangte, Hmawngtlang (Zotlâng) Kawmzawl, Pukpui, Khawthir, Riatte and Riatpui (Theiriât). Chawngbawla was his famous pasaltha. See, V. L. Ngaihawia, pp. 104-105.

March, 1872, the Northern Haulawngs, accompanied by the usual peace offerings of elephant's tusks, gongs, gayal and goats tendered their submission to the British. They had earlier conveyed their desire and general understanding through Rothangpuia.

Earlier on 25 February, 1872, Captain Lewin had information that all the Sailos chiefs had assembled at Lalzika's village. The British noted of a division in the Sailo Chiefs' Council as to whether they should submit or make a combine attack when the British column retire. Even though the Lushais were aware of the atrocities of the British troops, many among them were still willing to challenge the British.

On 12 March, 1872, General Brownlow marched towards Vandula's village (Râlvâwng).¹⁸¹ The General was met by Vandula's eldest son (Savûta), who tendered submission in the name of his father.¹⁸² Seipuia (Chief of Valchêng), the brother of Vandula and Lalthangvunga (Haulawng), representing the whole of southern Haulawngs had also submitted.¹⁸³ Thus the column under the Command of General Brownlow had completed its task.

III. 4. 3 Aftermath of the First Colonial Invasion

The British military expedition of 1871-72 into the Lushai Hills resulted in greater success than the expectation of the imperialist power. The British aimed to extract maximum benefits from their invasion in the most economical manner.¹⁸⁴

Both the British the military columns completely withdrew from the Lushai Hills by March 1872.¹⁸⁵ The defence of their frontier was reconsidered by the

¹⁸¹These were on their marched back to Tlabung. Although it was planned that the two columns will intersect, the Right Column did not dare to cross the lofty peaks of Hmuifang range. So, besides, a few troops, majority of them marched back to Tlabung. See, Chhawnmanga, p. 142.

¹⁸²When Mr. Edgar was the Superintendent of Cachar, Major Graham was the commander of the British Arakan forces. Graham wanted to visit Edgar. However, his movement was not permitted by Chief Vandula. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 224.

¹⁸³They were the sons of Tlutpawrha. Tlutpawrha was the son of Rolura. The sons of Tlutpawrha were, Vandula, Vanhnaichhana (Khâwngchhetê), Seipuia and Lalthangvunga. See, Vanchhunga, p. 196 & 208.

¹⁸⁴Alexander Mackenzie, pp. 314-316.

¹⁸⁵Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85-159.

British.¹⁸⁶ They established several military posts in their goal to control the Lushais and secure 'peaceful' frontier. Police outposts were maintained throughout Cachar's southern frontier to the Chittagong Hill Tracts through Tripura. The main frontier police post was shifted from Samat (Kassalong) to Tlabung (Demagiri).¹⁸⁷

A number of Lushai chiefs submitted to the British and promised lasting friendship and peace. Mary Winchester and many other captives were released by the Lushais. The Lushais perception of their invincibility enhanced by the impregnability of their villages was shattered.¹⁸⁸ The Lushais had earlier assumed that human enemy dared not to attack them as their country was impenetrable, with its precipitous thick forested hills.¹⁸⁹

The frontier officers endeavoured to keep up frontiers relations by means of bazars and annual meetings with the chiefs.¹⁹⁰ Bazars and trading marts were opened at Samat (Kassalong), Tlabung (Demagiri), Tuirial (Sonai), Chângsil (Bepari Bazar) and Tipaimukh.¹⁹¹ Frontier trade was encouraged but ingress into the Hills was regulated after 1874-1875 by the Inner Line Regulations.

The British record stated that General Brownlow or the Southern Column had lost 47 sepoy. They lost 118 of their labours. Rothangpuia was given a 'certificate of appreciation' by the Viceroy.¹⁹²

Consolidating the gains brought by the First *Vailen* of 1871-72, the long arm of colonialism began to penetrate into the Lushais' heartland. The intrusion brought

¹⁸⁶Col. E. B. Elly, p. 11. In 1874 posts were established on the Cachar, Sylhet, Tipperah and Chittagong, frontier at Jirighat, Mainadhar, Monierkhal, Norabund, Jhalmacherra, Katlicherra, Oliviacherra, Lakhimanla, Fatehkuli, Adampur, Koilashur, Kamalpur, Demagiri, Sirthay (Sirte), Ohipum (Uiphum), Saichul (Saichal) and in the Arakan at Kulukwa and Daletmai.

¹⁸⁷The northern Lushai chiefs also entered into agreement with the British authority. It was under Vanhnuailiana and Pawibawia that chiefs of North Lushai Hills resisted the British troops.

¹⁸⁸As the villages were located in the top of high hills, the Lushai assumed that it was inaccessible to the people of the plains.

¹⁸⁹The Lushais-Tipperah boundary was re-demarcated. This resulted in the creation of boundary and destroyed the natives' imagination of their land. Simultaneously, it also marked colonial supremacy.

¹⁹⁰Foreign Dept., Pros., Political A, June 1872, Nos. 125-136.

¹⁹¹Col. E. B. Elly, p. 12.

¹⁹²Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 229.

peace in the British frontier, and ‘cordial’ relations existed at least for a decade and half i.e. for around sixteen years.¹⁹³

In 1888, a survey party under Lieutenant Stewart was ambushed. It resulted in the death of Stewart, two Europeans and one sepoy.¹⁹⁴ In December the same year, the Lushais conducted ruthless raid on the village of Pakuma Rani only four miles from Tlabung (Demagiri).¹⁹⁵ The frontiers were strengthened pending the organisation of expedition deep into the South Lushai Hills.¹⁹⁶ The distant government was ready to sanction the execution of what was to be known as the Second *Vailen* of 1889-90.

III. 5 Annexation and Resistance – The Second *Vailen*, 1888-1889

The fragile peace of the Lushais frontier of the British after the Expedition of 1871-1872 remained for only more than a decade and half. It was difficult for the British to control the determined Lushais.

The British Cachar frontier remained peaceful, while that of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) experienced raids during the 1880s. In November 1883, a party of the British Frontier Police was attacked between Sazek (Burkul) and Tlabung (Demagiri).¹⁹⁷ In February 1886, Takams (Chakmas) in the British territory was attacked by the Shendus (Mara or Lai).¹⁹⁸ In March, 1888, a Survey Party (scout) led

¹⁹³Raids in the British territory were not completely absent. There were exception for few raids and inter-village wars.

¹⁹⁴*Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, Vol. IV, North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes*, p. 239; Col. E. B. Elly, p. 16.

¹⁹⁵Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, (culled from ‘History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam), First Edition, 1942, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1978, p. 8. This is a village in the border of Chittagong where the British after the first *Vailen* established a marketing centre and an outpost.

¹⁹⁶A. G. McCall., p. 53.

¹⁹⁷In this attack, two sepoys and a British labourer were killed. Among the settlements of the Lushai (Mizo) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Burkul Range was/is the most populated. The Mizo called it Sazek Tlang. A detailed description of the range is in Laldova, *History of Chittagong Hills Tracts*, pp. 5-7.

¹⁹⁸Six Takams were attacked and two of them were killed and their heads taken away.

by Lieutenant John F. Stewart operated in Saichal Range (twelve miles northeast of Rangamati).¹⁹⁹ They were attacked by Hausata Chinzah.²⁰⁰

A British military officer of high official importance was assassinated.²⁰¹ The British Empire wanted to strike back. However, as summer was setting in, it was considered inadvisable to make any reprisal until the next cold winter. This was also postponed by the British Council in Shimla as operations in the Burma side had not progressed as desired.²⁰²

The desire of the British government was to make a combined move for Burma and Bengal. In order to prevent future raids, two hundred and fifty personnel of the 9th Bengal Infantry under Major Woodhouse were sent to assist the Commissioner to guard the frontier.

While the British decided on their action plan to avenge the death of Lieutenant Stewart, another raid occurred in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).²⁰³ The British troops that concentrated at Tlabung (Demagiri) occupied a line of posts nearer to the Lushaisborder. During this moment, a raid occurred on the village of Takam chieftainess, Pakuma Rani.²⁰⁴ The chieftainess along with more than twenty people were killed and fifteen persons were taken captives.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ Another party was led by Lt. Baird with 12 policemen. They were to move upstream along the Khawthlangtupui till Tlabung. From there, they were to move south to the Uiphum range. They were to meet Stewart's team in the Rêng range. The overall commander was Capt. John Shakespear. He accompanied Baird's team till Tlabung. See, Chhawnmanga, p. 144.

²⁰⁰ Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), July 1895; H.J.S. Cotton, Officiating Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to W.J. Cunningham; *Note on the Question of the Jurisdiction of the British Government in the Chittagong and South Lushai Hills Tracts*, dated 13 May 1893, also, H.R. Browne, *The Lushai Hills*, Shillong, 1889. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, p. 31. Also see, Col. L. W. Shakespear, pp. 84-86; F. Lalremsiam, pp. 125-129; Chhawnmanga, pp. 144-146; Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 229; *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, April 1907*, p. 62. Stewart and two Corporals were killed and their heads taken away.

²⁰¹ This was the first time that a British military officer was killed by the Lushais.

²⁰² Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 85.

²⁰³ This was on 13 December, 1888. See, Chhawnmanga, p. 148.

²⁰⁴ This raid occurred on 13 December, 1888.

²⁰⁵ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 86.

The Lushai chiefs – Lalhleia, son of Vuta, Kairuma and Nikhama, grandson of Vuta, were involved.²⁰⁶ Lieutenant Widdicombe of the 9th Bengal Infantry (stationed at Tlabung) and the Frontier Police marched to the scene. But the raiders were rapid and had already retreated. In the meantime, the settlers of the southern tip of the Lushai Hills – Pawi, Lakher and Fanai, raided the CHT with frequent interval.²⁰⁷

One of the most devastating raids was carried out by the Lushais during 8-10 January, 1889.²⁰⁸ A party of about six hundred Lushai *pasalṥhas* descended on the Upper Sazâi (Chengi) river valley.²⁰⁹ They were headed by two chiefs – Lianphunga and Zahrawka, sons of Suakpuilala.²¹⁰ The *pasalṥhas* burnt and destroyed 23 villages, killed 100 people and carried off ninety-one prisoners.²¹¹ This daring act of the Lushais was the foremost cause for the sanction of the Second *Vailen* by the British government.

Lianphunga had kept more than sixty captives but ransomed only seven. He had demanded ₹ 700, while the negotiator only had ₹ 185. Part of the money was paid and the remaining ₹ 515 was to be paid in a month. Even after frequent reminder, the Chittagong Zamindar did not clear his ransom dues and the interest that

²⁰⁶However, according to Thawnglinga, the raid was conducted by the Lakhers. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 229. And, F. Lalremsiama claimed that the raid was conducted by Kalkhama. See., F. Lalremsiama, pp. 158-159.

²⁰⁷ F. Lalremsiama, p. 119.

²⁰⁸This Sazâi (Chengi) valley raid was dated by F. Lalremsiama as 8 January, 1888 and states that it was conducted under Chief Kalkhama. See., F. Lalremsiama, pp. 119-122 & 157-158.

²⁰⁹Chengi river is called Sazâi by the Mizo. It is the second largest tributary of Khawthlangtuipi (Karnafuli), after Samât (Kassalong). It enters Karnafuli near Rangamati. Therefore, Rangamati Bazar is also known as Chengimukh Bazar.

²¹⁰Suakpuilala fathered eight sons. They were Kalkhama, Sailianpuia, Lianphunga, Thanrûma, Hrangkhupa, Lalhrima, Lalsavunga, Zahrawka. Lianphunga was the Chief of Lungṥian or Zawngṥah (by Vanchhunga). See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 230. There was another Lianphunga. This one was the son of Lalsavunga. He was the Chief of Sihfa and the father of Pawibawia and Lalruma. See, Vanchhunga, p. 166. In this raid, Neuva was the leader of the *pasalṥhas*. See, V. L. Ngaihawia, p. 129.

²¹¹Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), October 1889, Nos. 27-66. John Ware Edgar, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to Henry Motimer Duran, Secretary to the Government of India, No. 19-PD dated 3 June, 1889. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, p. 31. Also see, Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 87.

was agreed.²¹² This grievance resulted in the dreadful raid of the Sazâi (Chengi) valley.²¹³

The British authority of Cachar demanded the release of the remaining captives. However, this was flatly refused by Lianphunga and Zahrawka. Lianphunga threatened them with another raid, if the ransom due to him was not paid within two months. The Lushai chiefs never cared that their captives were subjects of the British or not. The ill-treatment of their father, Suakpuilala was still fresh in their mind. They only wanted the Whitemen to refrain from their continued exploitation of their 'sacred grounds'.²¹⁴

The British Government of Bengal became clear that the existing system of frontier defence was inadequate to check raids. They realised that the presence of British armed forces inside their dominion would not deter the Lushais from committing atrocities in the British occupied territory.²¹⁵ To the British imperial government it was no longer tolerable, "that a tract of unexplored barbarism should permanently thrust itself up between the British districts of Cachar and Chittagong and the two protected states of Tipperah and Manipur."²¹⁶

The British Council at Shimla definitely decided to undertake more serious measures. The Lieutenant Governor went from Calcutta and met Colonel F. Vincent W. Tregear and Chittagong Commissioner, David Robert Lyall. This meeting issued an order to the military forces stationed at Tlabung (Demagiri) and Rangamati 'to prepare and be ready'.²¹⁷

²¹²An agreement of 10% per month was agreed by the two parties.

²¹³Anderson, J.D., Deputy Commissioner, Cachar to Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Assam, the 13th July, 1889. Cited in., F. Lalremsiama, pp. 121-122.

²¹⁴ The Lushai chief, Zahrawka regarded the Sazâi Valley as his own and his own 'sai ram chhuahna'(hunting grounds). He treated and the settlers – Kuki and Tuikuk as his subjects. When they are often pestered from the other side, he decided to protect and safeguard his territory.

²¹⁵The settlers of the Lushai Hills were convinced that their land was well protected because of its inaccessibility. The British were determined to crush this invincibility, intrude and rule over them.

²¹⁶Alexander Mackenzie, p. 373.

²¹⁷ F. Lalremsiama, p. 132.

On 19 December, 1888, the British Bengal Government issued orders for a military expedition to enter the Lushai Hills. The column was called the 'Lushai Expeditionary Force' by the colonial power. And, this expedition was known to the Lushais or Mizos as *Vailen Vawi Hnihna* or the 'Second Military Influx of Foreigner'.

The Second *Vailen* was under the command of Brigadier-General F. Vincent W. Tregear of the 9th Bengal Infantry. Messers C.A.S. Bedford and C.S. Murray served as Assistant Political Officers. Captain J. Shakespear was the Intelligent Officer of the Column.²¹⁸ It began rendezvous at Rangamati. This single column of the British troops marched in the Lushai Hills on January, 1889. The column used Tlabung (Demagiri) as its base.²¹⁹

The 1,250 men of all ranks that were engaged included 200 men of 4th Madras Infantry (Pioneers), 250 men of the 2nd Bengal Infantry, 400 men of the 2nd Gurkha Rifles, 250 men of the 9th Bengal Infantry, and ½ Coy., and; sappers and miners together with four Mountain Guns of 2nd Bombay Mountain Battery. It also includes Signalers, Labour Corps and 38 Elephants.²²⁰

The target of the Expeditionary Force was to release all captives captured in the raids of Sazâi Valley and Pakuma Rani's village of Tipperah. They were to punish the perpetrators of raids in the British territory. The British assumption was that it would be a deterrent for their repetition in the future.²²¹ The British officials were expected to open full communication with the Lushais. They were directed to make good roads through to the Chin Hills. They also had to establish military posts

²¹⁸Shakespear was included as he had an experienced of the Lushai Hills before.

²¹⁹This column was known as the Chittagong Column. There was another column known as the Chin Hills Column. This particular column was part to what was known as 'the Chin-Lushai Expedition, 1888-1889'. It was decided that the two columns will converge at Halkha. The target of the expeditionary forces was to crush the tribes of South Lushai Hills and South-West Burma; and to secure a safe route between India and Burma.

²²⁰ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 86; Chhawnmanga, pp. 149-150

²²¹Priyam Goswami, p. 141.

to dominate the Lushais and punish the chiefs involved in the raids, especially Hausata and his cohorts.²²²

The British had abandoned their old policy of punitive expeditions, attacking and burning villages and withdrawing out of the hills. It was abandoned in view of permanent occupancy.

A column of two hundred men and cannon was led by General Tregear, Lt. Col. Nicolay and Maj. Channer.²²³ They destroyed the village of Hausata (Lungtjan), the chief responsible for the attack on Lieutenant Stewart's party.²²⁴ However, Hausata had died a few months earlier.²²⁵ His grave located in the centre of the village was dug. Stewart's gun was found under the Hausata's death body. It proved that Hausata was involved in the attack of the British officer.²²⁶

Beside the village of Hausata, the village of his neighbour, Zahuata was also destroyed.²²⁷ The British forces then returned to Lunglei.²²⁸ A Durbar was held at Fort Lunglei in mid-April 1889 by General Tregear. Prominent Lushai chiefs attended the Durbar.²²⁹

²²² Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), August 1890, Nos, 221-227. Lyall, Commissioner of Chittagong Division, *Note on the future management of the South Lushai Hills*, dated 12 January, 1890. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, p. 32. Commanding points were to be held in the hills which would effectively prevent raids without involving extensive dealings with the tribes. Also see., Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 86.

²²³ It was said that Darbilhi's men including Vaitlaia accompanied the British troops. See, Chhawnmanga, p. 154.

²²⁴ During this operation Chief Seipua of the Haulawng clan and his aged brother were 'friendly' to the British. They entered and burnt Lungtjan after firing it with several rounds with Cannon.

²²⁵ This was informed to C. S. Murray in Darbilhi's village. Murray was on tour in Theiriat and Sairep range including the river Mat and Tuipui. Chhawnmanga, pp. 150-151.

²²⁶ Chhawnmanga, pp. 152-153; F. Lalremsiama, p. 134.

²²⁷ Present day Lungtjan was the village of both Hausata and Zahuata. Hausata was located the present Kulhrulh waterpoint. And, Zahuata was located in the present Middle School. Both the places have a distance of about 400 meters. Chhawnmanga, p. 153.

²²⁸ Fort Lungleh was already established in the village of Seipua (Zotlang). It housed 250 military personnel and 3 Officer. It had Post Office and Telegraph office. The place was now in the hands of Public Works Department (PWD), Government of Mizoram. Chhawnmanga, pp. 151-152.

²²⁹ It was attended by Seipua and his two brothers. The two sons of Vandula – Sangliana and Lalruma also attended the meeting. Thus, it was attended by five Lushai chiefs. The Fanai chiefs did not participated citing their enmity with the Sailos as the reason.

The intentions of the British Government were explained to them by Lyall, the Political Officer. C. S. Murray was the translator.²³⁰ The reason for the punishment of Hausata was explained to the chiefs by the colonial agents.

Besides Hausata, the British exacted punishment of all other chiefs responsible for raids in British territory. Being satisfied with the result they obtained, the last among the British expeditionary force withdrew from Lunglei on late April, 1889.²³¹ The expeditionary force had constructed a road of forty-one mile from Tlabung to Lunglei.

III. 8 The Chin-Lushai Expedition, 1889-1890

On 11 September 1889, the British Government sanctioned the Chin-Lushai Expedition. It was under the overall command of General William Penn Symonds, the General Officer Commanding of Burma. The scheme of operations framed by the British military authorities was approved by the British Government of India.

The expedition had four objectives as stated by colonial official. Firstly, it aimed to punish certain tribes that had raided and committed depredations in British territory. Secondly, to subjugate neutral tribes and brought within the sphere of British dominion. The third objective was to explore the territory between Burma and Chittagong. Lastly, to establish semi-permanent posts in the regions if the necessity arose.²³² It was clear that the British wanted to extend the long arm of colonialism in the region. The complete pacification and recognition of the British power by the settlers was the goal.²³³

²³⁰Murray was the District Superintendent of Police stationed at Tlabung.

²³¹ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 89. 250 men of the Chittagong Frontier Police arrived during the summer of 1889 and garrisoned the Lunglei Post. Also see., Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), August 1890, Nos, 221-227. Lyall, Commissioner of Chittagong Division, *Note on the future management of the South Lushai Hills*, dated 12 January, 1890. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, p. 33.

²³²Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, (culled from 'History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam), First Edition, 1942, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1978, p. 14.

²³³*Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, Vol. IV, North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes*, p. 240.

Frequent raids by the Chins necessitated large force from Burma being sent into the Chin Hills. Two military columns were dispatched by the British in the winter of 1889-1890 in the Chin-Lushai Hills. The one from Burma was directly under General Penn Symonds and the other under Colonel F. Vincent W. Tregear operated from Chittagong.

General Tregear was given command of a larger force of 53 British officers and 3,924 men. He led his men again into the Lushai Hills in November 1889. His orders also included the dispatch of a column northwards from Lunglei. The target of this column was to punish Lianphunga and other chiefs who were responsible for the Sazâi (Chengi) valley raid.²³⁴

W.W. Daly, Commandant of the Surma Valley Military Police Battalion advanced from Silchar (Cachar). In order to release more men for Daly's advance, the military posts in the border were held by the 40th Bengal Infantry.²³⁵ Colonel Skinner's group was a detachment from Tregear's column.²³⁶

Colonel Skinner's column was dispatched to punish Lianphunga for the Sazâi (Chengi) valley raids and those who were implicated in the massacre at Pakuma Rani's village. The column converged with Daly, eighteen miles south of Aizawl, near Lianphunga's village (Zawngtãh).²³⁷ It was just before this convergence that Daly was to receive the submission of Lianphunga.²³⁸ However, Lianphunga escaped, probably for having another strategy in the appearance of a bigger force.

²³⁴ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 89.

²³⁵ Col. L. W. Shakespear, pp. 89-90. He already had 400 men under his command. Cholera broke out in Rangamati, spreading up river to Tlabung. It greatly delayed the assembly of forces, which did not reach Lunglei till well into January, 1890.

²³⁶ Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), July 1895, Nos. 122-145; H.J.S Cotton, Officiating Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to W.J. Cunningham, *Note on the Question of the Jurisdiction of the British Government in the Chittagong and South Lushai Hills Tracts*, dated 13 May, 1893. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, pp. 33-34. Colonel Skinner commanded 300 men of 22nd Gurkhas, 250 of the 3rd Bengal Infantry, 50 Bombay Pioneers and 100 Chittagong Frontier Police.

²³⁷ It was here that the two different police units – the Chittagong Frontier Police and Surma Valley Military Police, which were later amalgamated, met for the first time.

²³⁸ This was contrary to the instruction that Lianphunga submission would only be received by Colonel Skinner.

The Lushai *pasalthas* began to show their resistance. After an intermittent firing from the surrounding jungle, they attacked the village in which the British forces had encamped. One British sepoy was killed and Captain Brownrigg and others were injured.²³⁹ The colonial forces repelled the attack and destroyed the village and its granaries. The imperial hordes confiscated all the cattle too.

A force of the 22nd Gurkhas and the Chittagong Frontier Police under Major Begbie moved eastwards. Their target was Kairuma and Nikhama for their raid on Pakumi Rani's village.²⁴⁰ They were successful and proceeded to Thanruma's village (around Sakawrtuichhun).

The British troops withdrew to Silchar after a successful expedition.²⁴¹ Before their withdrawal Colonel Skinner selected a site for the location of a permanent post in the north Lushai Hills. A new military post named Fort Aizawl was established to control and dominate the northern Lushai Hills.

Fort Aizawl was garrisoned by two hundred of Daly's men (Surma Valley Military Police Battalion) under the command of Captain Herbert R. Browne and Lieutenant H. W. G. Cole of the 22nd Gurkhas.²⁴² Captain Browne was later vested with political power too. The fort had subsidiary stockade at Chângsil with hundred men to safeguard the line of communication with Cachar.²⁴³

Chângsil and Aizawl were connected by a fair weather road. Communication beyond Chângsil was provided by the river Tlawng. Chângsil was the furthest point to which boats from Silchar could reach with supplies. A telegraph line from

²³⁹ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 91.

²⁴⁰ Jemandar Mallo Rai of the Surma Valley Military Police captured two Lushai at Nikhama's village single-handedly. The Lushai fired at Rai and the moment happened to be while he was without a revolver. He was "mentioned" for gallantry.

²⁴¹ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 91.

²⁴² Fort Aizawl was located on the range on which Lianphunga's village was situated. It later on became the capital of the state of Mizoram of the Union of India.

²⁴³ Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), August 1890, Nos. 221-227; Lyall, Commissioner of Chittagong Division, *Note on the future Management of the South Lushai Hills*, dated 12 January, 1890. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, p. 34.; 50 men as recorded in Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 91.

Chângsil to Jhalancherra in the Cachar border was partially completed during this time.

The Chittagong or Southern (Tregear) Column used Lunglei as their advanced base. They constructed a road from Lunglei to Halkha in Burma. They also constructed a post at Darzo Tlâng (5,700 feet) called Fort Tregear. This was located midway between Lunglei and Halkha.²⁴⁴

Meanwhile, a flying column of sixty personnels of the 22nd Gurkhas led by L. M. Hall and twenty-five of the Chittagong Frontier Police started off for Halkha in early March and linked General Penn Symonds's troop. Captain John Shakespear and Lieutenant Bythell, R.E. were with them.²⁴⁵ They were to assist the Burma Column in order to recover the heads and loots carried off in the raid on Stewart's camp.²⁴⁶

The operation ended on April 1890. Fort Lunglei was garrisoned by two hundred men of the Chittagong Frontier Police.²⁴⁷ They were under Messrs. Pugh and Taylor with a strong detachment of their men at Tlabung (Demagiri). Their target was to control the southern Lushai chiefs.

Fort Tregear was garrisoned with 200 rifles (armed police) of the 22nd Gurkhas under the command of Captain Hutchinson and Lieutenant P. Boileau.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴The road connecting Lunglei and Halkha was completed on April, 1890.

²⁴⁵John Shakespear was now an Assistant Political Officer of the force.

²⁴⁶C. S. Murray while on his in Theiriak and Sairep range was informed at Darbilhi's village that the head of Stewart and others were with Lalbuai in the East. See, Chhawnmanga, p. 151. Stewart's head or what remained of it and other articles of raid were recovered from the Chief of Hmunlipi village, Chin Hills. The head of Stewart and others were given a proper burial at Halkha on 5 March, 1890. See, Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 92; Chhawnmanga, pp. 161-162.

²⁴⁷This unit of the Chittagong Frontier Police was renamed the "South Lushai Hills Military Police Battalion" in April 1891. It was in this year that the south Lushai Hills area was constituted as a District of the Chittagong Division. It was placed under the charge of Captain John Shakespear with the title of "Superintendent".

²⁴⁸Fort Lunglei and Fort Tregear were connected with a mule track and telegraph line with Tlabung.

Captain John Shakespear and Captain Moir, I.M.S. were also at Fort Tregear as Political and Medical officers.²⁴⁹

III. 7 British Supremacy and Colonial Control

The colonial power regarded the expeditions as eminently satisfactory.²⁵⁰ Communication between Bengal and Burma was established. The Lushais who used to raid British territory were brought to subjugation. Military posts were established at certain places to preserve order and maintain control. The supremacy of the British power was now established in the Lushai Hills.²⁵¹

The question over the administration of the newly acquired territory was next in line for the colonial power.²⁵² On 15 May, 1890, James Wallace Quinton, Chief Commissioner of Assam remarked that mere establishment of police posts in certain points would not be enough to bring the fiery Lushais under control. He opined that for the purpose of colonial control, “. . . officer possessing both experience and judgment should be at the same time appointed to feel his way among the people and gradually accustom them to our control.”²⁵³

Political and administrative control of the Lushai Hills was now the goal of the British. The North Lushai Hills District was placed under the administration of Assam on 3 June, 1890.²⁵⁴ Captain Herbert Browne, Personal Assistant to the Chief Commissioner of Assam was designated as the Political Officer and exercised general control over all departments. The district was held by the Surma Valley

²⁴⁹ Col. L. W. Shakespear, pp. 93-94. Fort Tregear was abandoned in 1898, chiefly owing to scarcity of water. Another position was selected some 9 miles further east at what was now known as South Vanlaiphai. And, South Vanlaiphai post was given up by the British troops in 1900.

²⁵⁰ The report was given by a British Adjutant General on 16 July, 1890.

²⁵¹ Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, p.18.

²⁵² The last and final expedition of 1889-1890 led to the formation of two districts – the North Lushai and the South Lushai Hills Districts. Both the districts had their headquarters at Aizawl and Lunglei respectively.

²⁵³ Robert Reid, pp. 19-20.

²⁵⁴ The district covered the areas that were held by the descendants of Chief Lallula Sailo.

Military Police Battalion numbering 500.²⁵⁵ Military posts were established at Chângsil (Bepari Bazar), Rengte Road and Tuirial (Sonai).

On 1 April, 1891, the South Lushai Hills District was made a District of the Chittagong Division, Bengal. It was placed under a Lieutenant Governor. Charles Stewart Murray of the Bengal Police was appointed Superintendent.²⁵⁶

The Chittagong Frontier Police was renamed as the South Lushai Hills Military Police Battalion. Its base was shifted from Rangamati to Lunglei.²⁵⁷ The District was put under the control of the South Lushai Hills Military Police Battalion.²⁵⁸ Fort Lunglei, Lalthuama and Fort Tregear were established for colonial control with military base at Tlabung (Demagiri).²⁵⁹

III. 9 Conclusion

For a better understanding of colonialism and its resistance, the chapter incorporated the interaction of colonial agents with the Lushai Hills from its inception. The treatment of Lalsûthlaha and the breach of the *sanad* with Suakpuilala by the British had serious repercussion on the British policy related to the Lushai Hills. It heightened the Lushais' mistrust of the Whitemen. The Lushais were more compelled than before to resist the alien hordes. The history of the Lushai Hills up to the last decade of the nineteenth century was marked by frequent raids into the British occupied territories and the retaliatory expeditions.

In their early encounter with the Lushais, it can be seen that the British had underestimated the capabilities of the Lushais. And these early encounters acted as a survey to map the Lushais country. It can be seen that Lister did not dare advance

²⁵⁵ The forces or Police was necessary not only for defensive measures but also to enable the Political Officer to do his duty that was needed to keep the fearsome Lushai under control.

²⁵⁶ Priyam Goswami, p. 142. However, according to Chhawnmanga, Captain John Shakespear was appointed as its first Superintendent when it was created on 1 April, 1891. See, Chhawnmanga, p. 166.

²⁵⁷ Chhawnmanga, p. 166.

²⁵⁸ It consisted of 529 native officers, non-commissioned officers, and constables.

²⁵⁹ Demagiri was within the area of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). It was situated outside the area of the South Lushai Hills. Under Sir Charles Elliot's order (Government of Bengal, Letter No. 378-PD of 4 Sept., 1897) it was declared that for administrative purposes it should be considered to be part and parcel of the South Lushai Hills.

against Lalngura as he was stationed in a 'strategic position'. The great Vanhnuailiana was calculated by the British to have five thousand fighting men with him. Thus, the British reconsidered their move and further ingress. As things were not yet settled, the British policy at this stage was impromptu.

Captain Blackwood's expedition (1844) established the Lushais as a distinct tribe in the eyes of the western colonial power. Their difference from other hill tribes was confirmed by the colonial power. It also made the British ascertain that it was the Lushais who occasionally raided the British occupied territory.

In 1847, Captain Lister was sent to punish the Lushai chiefs who raided the British territory. Instead of punishing the Lushais, the British forces were repelled. Captain Lister was severely injured. Angered by this, Lyall, Commissioner of Chittagong Hills proposed the subjugation of the entire Lushai Hills, even by force.

The attempt to subdue the whole of the Lushai Hills began with the First *Vailen*, 1871-1872. This first military intrusion had not resulted in conquest. The British conquest of the Lushai Hills was after their successful conduct of the Second *Vailen*, 1888-1889.

However, the conquest of the Lushai Hills does not imply the absence of colonial resistance. Resistance to colonialism became more vocal in certain pockets. Even after subjugation, the establishment of colonial control was not an easy task for the colonial power.

Chapter IV

COLONIAL CONTROL AND ITS RESISTANCE IN THE LUSHAI HILLS

IV. 1 Introduction

The subjugation of the Lushai Hills heralded the emergence of colonial agency as an instrument of colonial control. However, the imposition or dawn of colonial control in the Lushai Hills was not without resistance. It exploded not long after Captain Herbert Browne assumed the charge as Political Officer of the North Lushai Hills on 18 May, 1890.

The loss of fighting men and grains and total destruction of villages compelled the Lushais to restrain from further resistance. Prominent Lushai chiefs were captured, surrendered or became mere fugitive by now. However, there still was a prevalent call in challenging or resisting colonial control.

Kairuma and his associates, Lalburha and his cohorts, Kaphleia, Zakapa and Zadûna in the southeast continued to harbour their independent spirit. This group dared to stand against the Superintendent's order to supply impressed labour, thereby launching a serious challenge to the British authority.

An analysis of the resistance towards colonial control in the Lushai Hills is hereby clubbed under three headings. It began with a conglomerate of chiefs of the western Lushai Hills, or those living west of the river Tuirial (Sonai).

IV. 2 Resistance in Western Lushai Hills

The western Lushai Hills was occupied by chiefs who were mainly the descendants of Suakpuilala. Kalkhama (Sentlang), Lianphunga (Zawngt̄ah) , Sailianpuia (Reiek), Thanruma (Bawlte), Liankunga (Muthi), Hrangkhupa (Dâpkhan), Lianhrima (Thingsûlthliah), Thanghulha (Hmuizawl), Lalsavunga

(Keprân), Thatliana, Lalluaia (son of Sailianpuia), Hmingthanga, Liankhara, Thâwmpônga (Muallungthu) and Tulera (son of Thâwmpônga) were the most important among them.¹

Captain Herbert Browne, the British Political Officer, was given detailed instructions for the consolidation and future administration of the North Lushai Hills District.² He was instructed to exercise his influence over the chiefs and induce them to submit to the British. He was to stop the chiefs from all kinds of raids on British territory as well as on each other. He was to protect friendly chiefs and open communications with Bengal and Burma. He was also directed to take up the question of Lianphunga's complicity in the Sazâi (Chengi) Valley raids. He was to collect revenue but not to enforce it upon the unwilling chiefs.³ He was also authorised to act as a Deputy Commissioner and was to submit weekly reports to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

A durbar of chiefs was summoned by Browne at Aizawl on 13 June, 1890. It was attended by all the principal chiefs between the Tuirial and Tlawng rivers. Browne reiterated the imperial policy and measures to be taken up against the unruly chiefs. He pointed out that raiding was prohibited. The British government's forces and servants should be allowed to move freely in the hills. He notified that that no chiefs could collect tax of any kind from the traders. The chiefs of each village were recognised. They were entrusted to collect tribute for maintenance of roads and abide by the British's instructions.⁴

¹ Râlduha (Khawchhetê) was the son of Tulera. His period was the period of the arrival of Christianity. He accepted the Christian faith. See, Vanchhunga, *Lusei leh A Vela Hnam Dangte Chanchin*, Aizawl, Deptt. of Art & Culture, First Edition 1955, Reprinted 1994, p. 173-183.

² Priyam Goswami, *The History of Assam – From Yandabo to Partition, 1826 – 1947*, Kolkata, Orient Balckswan Private Limited, Reprint, 2016, p. 141. All seemed pointed towards a state of comparative peace. However, the chiefs around Aizawl were not exactly in a submissive state of mind. They still were avowed to drive the foreigners out of their motherland.

³ Browne levied a house tax. He demanded supply of free labour. He disregarded instruction about the imposition of taxes. These were seen by the Lushais as usurpation of their liberties. Browne was thus a target of the Lushai *pasalthas*. See, Priyam Goswami, *The History of Assam*, p. 142.

⁴ Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), March 1891, No. 158; Sir John Edgar, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Commissioner of Chittagong Division, *Note on the future Management of the Western Portion of the Country between Chittagong and Burma*, . Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram, 1890-1954 (The Bureaucracy and the Chiefs)*, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 2007. p. 40.

Browne's announcement of the imposition of annual house tax and demand for labour was not received well in the durbar. The Lushais were to supply a fixed number of labour whenever demanded by the British.⁵ The issues were seen as undermining their independence and sovereignty. According to Priyam Goswami, the chiefs did not want their men to serve another power as it undermined their authority.⁶ The two issues were discussed but were left unresolved.

On the issue of the Sazâi (Chengi) Valley raid, the British had confirmed the involvement of Lianphunga and Zahrawka. On the basis of their statement, Browne announced his decision in the durbar. Lianphunga and Zahrawka were derecognised from their chieftainship for a term of four years. They were made to pay a fine of fifteen guns each. They were forbidden to build new villages. After the completion of four years, their case would be reconsidered. Browne's imposition was the least expected and it was difficult to accept for the two chiefs.

The position of a chief was sacred and godly. The removal of Lianphunga and Zahrawka, an action never contemplated, caused widespread distress. The chiefs and their *upas* decided upon resisting an alien authority however powerful it might be.

The British demand for revenue was opposed by several chiefs, even from those who took an oath of allegiance to the British. The British decided to collect revenue first from the settlers of the western Lushai Hills⁷. This made them the first to rebel against the new colonial imposition. Kalkhama who took the lead in the resistance explained that, "We would not even be allowed liberty to hunt in the jungle; I lost my head and resolved to fight."⁸

⁵ Rev. William Williams during his visit in March 1891 had mentioned that the Lushais were punished for revolting against the British in last September. Hundred Lushais were forced to work for the British per week. However, during Williams's visit forced labour was not free of wages. The British demenaded any number and they were paid. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, *Zoram Vârțian – Chanchințha leh Thuziak Khawvâr Tan Dân*, Aizawl, Fineprints, 2008, p. 170.

⁶ They loathed its as unnatural. See, Priyam Goswami, p. 141.

⁷ This was revealed to Kalkhama by Lalphunga, one of the Upa of Chief Liankunga.

⁸ Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), January 1891, Nos. 121-134; H.W.G. Cole, Commandant, Surma Valley Military Police to the Inspector General of Police, Assam, *Statement of Kalkhama, Raja*, . Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram*, p. 41.

On 1 September, 1890, representatives of Thanghulha, Thanruma, Lalhrima, Hmingthanga, Hrangkhupa and Liangkunga met at Kalkhama's village (Sentlang) and decided upon the future course of action. The responsibility of different groups was formally assigned. On 9 September, 1890, Captain Browne who was *en route* to Silchar was attacked at Chângsil by men of Thanruma (Chief of Bawlte).

Seventeen British sepoy were killed and Browne managed to reach Chângsil with severe injury. He succumbed to his injury shortly afterwards and was buried there.⁹ Browne's movement was made known to the Lushai chiefs by a *chaprasi* named Changkunga to whom was told the official tour programme.

The Lushai *pasal̄thas* suddenly stormed the British posts at Aizawl and Chângsil. Chângsil was attacked by men of Hrangkhupa, Lalsavuta, Hmingthanga, Kalkhama, Liankunga and Thanghulha.¹⁰ Aizawl was attacked by men of Thanruma, Sailianpuia and Lianphunga. Aizawl and Chângsil were besieged by the Lushais and held from 9 to 28 September 1890.¹¹ Chângsil was attacked by men of Lalhrima and Thatliana.¹²

Saizahawla was one among the many *pasal̄thas* who stormed Chângsil. He bemoaned that the slanting hats of the British troops made them look dreadful. He expressed how eager he was to see the *vais* lay down in confusion when fired upon. Saizahawla lay besides a tree and meticulously observed the melee at Chângsil. When they massacred all the British sepoy, he ran towards the boat and captured two guns.¹³

⁹ Chhawnmanga, *Mizorama Michengte*, p. 164. Col. L. W. Shakespear, *History of the Assam Rifles*, p. 95.

¹⁰ This Thanghulha was the *in hrang* son of Suakpuilala who later established himself at Nisapui. See, V. L. Ngaihawia, *Mizo Lalte leh Pasal̄thate Chanchin*, Lalnam Literature Board, Nunna Lalnam, 2009, pp. 15-16.

¹¹ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, April 1907*, printed by B. C Das at the Dina Nath Press, Sylhet, published by Mr. A. R Giles, Lushai Hills, p. 63, available at www.archive.org.

¹² The possibility of coordinated attacks by the Lushais who often fought internecine wars among themselves proves that these risings were not of a single chief, but covers most part of the Lushai Hills.

¹³ Tribal Research Institute (TRI), *The Mizo Heroes*, Aizawl, 2003, pp. 34-35.

The reinforcement hurriedly sent by the British Government from Silchar was attacked near Chângsil.¹⁴ This resulted in the death of Lieutenant Swinton and several British troops were wounded.¹⁵ Liankunga's *pasalthas* were responsible for the attack and death of Captain Browne and Lieutenant Swinton.¹⁶ Lalhrima who was implicated later surrendered the personal effects of Captain Browne like a rifle, two revolvers, aneroid gold watch, a silver watch and field glasses.

It was hard for any military commander to outdo the Lushai *pasalthas*. The British were in dire need for more capable military commanders in order to subdue the Lushais. Extensive search was done for capable military persons.

The search for an able officer ended with Robert McCabe, Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur District. McCabe's reputation was known as the conqueror of rebellious Ao Nagas. He was immediately sent to the Lushai Hills to restore order by the British Government of India. He was assisted by the 40th Bengal Infantry in his short but vigorous campaign against the Lushai chiefs.¹⁷

The chiefs of the western Lushai Hills who resisted the British were the first target of McCabe. In the cold winter of 1890-1891, McCabe was able to secure the surrender of all chiefs, except Thanruma.¹⁸ He compelled the surrender of as many as fifteen chiefs who had challenged the colonial authority. For this feat, McCabe was nicknamed *lalmantu* or 'arrestor of chiefs' by the Lushais.¹⁹ Kalkhama, Lianphunga

¹⁴ The independent chiefs were not in a position to accept a fortification within their territory. They hold firm to resist the intruders at every instances. It was in one of these resistances that several Mizo heroes including Ngurbawnga and Khuangchera laid down their precious life.

¹⁵ Chhawnmanga, p. 165. This had occurred on 26 September, 1890. See, Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, *Zoram Vârñian*, p. 169.

¹⁶ Chângsil had two forts. Browne and Swinton were buried in the first fort. See, Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, p. 169.

¹⁷ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 96.

¹⁸ Thanruma had taken refuge in the extreme southern side of the North Lushai Hills District. Also see, Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, pp. 169-170.

¹⁹ Chhawnmanga, p. 165. It was estimated that McCabe arrested fifteen chiefs.

and Thanghulha were deported to Hazaribagh jail and the rest were released on payment of fines.²⁰

The arrest and departure of the three chiefs was heartbreaking for the Lushais. It was hard to decipher that their beloved chiefs would ever walk again in their own land. The villagers of Lianphunga expressed the melancholic feeling as –

*“Tlan theih chang se,
Tuahchhâwn vaimût uilovin;
Liandang liamhnu lo kirleh la,
Thlang sappui tual chil lovin.”*²¹

(“If it can be redeemed,
I will give my everything;
Who left for beyond, return
Without trampling Whiteman’s arch.”)

The above lamentation was responded by those who knew of the chiefs’ heavy military embankment.

*“Liandang kirin ka mawi lo e,
Pheisen darfêngin min hmachhuan,
Ṭapin ka liamzel awm e.”*²²

(Return is inconceivable
Ahead lays armour and arms of the palins
With tears, I will go, beyond.”)

²⁰ The three chiefs were implicated as the main conspirator that resulted in the death of Browne and Swinton. The trouble faced by the British had hardly been solved; the Manipur Rebellion broke out in March 1891. This necessitated the service of the Surma Valley Military Police. They were detached along with a column commanded by Colonel Rennick.

²¹ V. L. Ngaihawia, *Mizo Lalte leh Pasalṭhate Chanchin*, p. 18.

²² *ibid.*, p. 18

Kalkhama (Sentlang), Lianphunga (Zawngt̄ah) and Thanghulha (Nisapui) were sentenced and retained for ten years under Bengal State Prisoners Regulation, III of 1818.²³ The three chiefs never wanted to be treated like slaves by a foreign authority. They wanted to preserve their dignity and honour. Having few choices, Kalkhama and Lianphunga hanged themselves on September 1891.²⁴ The superior British military power had now completed the “pacification of the North Lushai villages west of the Sonai River.”²⁵

Thanghulha was released on September 1895 before the completion of his ten years’ sentence. However, his chieftainship was given to another person by the British. He joined his son Lalpuithanga Sailo at Sêrzawl (now known as North Sêrzawl). He died on 11 August, 1906 at the age of 65. He was buried at *Lengchhawni Lungphun Tlâng*, North Sêrzawl.²⁶

IV. 3 Resistance in Eastern Lushai Hills

The eastern Lushai Hills during this period were the villages ruled by the descendants of Lianphunga and Vanhnuailiana or those living east of the river Tuirial (Sonai). They held that they were beyond the touch of the foreigners. They envisaged that the British would never attempt to control them. Besides, they were in internecine wars with the western Lushais. For this reason, they did not join the resistance to the British that had arisen in the western Lushai Hills.

It was from Robert McCabe that the chiefs of the eastern Lushai Hills first heard that tax and labour would also be collected from them. The chiefs termed it as outrageous and decided to fight for the preservation of their dignity. However, the British government was firm on their demand. It was because of their commitment to subdue and rule the Lushai Hills and thereby establish colonial control.

²³ The law empowered the authority to detain any individual indefinitely on the basis of suspicion of criminal intent, and without having to commit the detainee to trial. It was a law for preventive detention enacted in the Presidency of Bengal.

²⁴ Some authors have written that the three chiefs had committed suicide.

²⁵ V. L. Ngaihawia, p. 18; Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, (culled from ‘History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam), First Edition, 1942, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1978, p. 29. However, there was rebellion in Manipur and in the southern part of the Lushai Hills. The rebellion in south Lushai Hills was due to the ungracious manner of C. S. Murray.

²⁶ This was deduction by the researcher from a post in social media.

The chiefs of the eastern Lushai Hills consisted of two groups. The first groups were the villages of Pawibawia, Lalburha, Buangtheuva and Liankhama. The second group consisted of the descendants of Vuta and Kairuma. It consisted of Thanruma, Thanliana, Remkunga, Lalsavuta and Vanthanga. Liankhama and Pawibawia were already dead and Pawibawi's village (Selam) was ruled by a minor. Thus, the only powerful chief left was Lalburha.

The Superintendent, Robert McCabe visited thirteen villages in Eastern Lushai Hills. Prominent among them were Liankhama's village (Vangtê) with 852 houses, Pawibawia's village (ranges of northeast Lushai Hills) with 712 houses, Buangtheuva's village (Hmunpui) with 583 houses, Lalburha's village (Vâncêng) with 457 houses and Kairuma's village (Tlaikuang) with 401 houses.²⁷

On 16 March 1891, McCabe and his team reached back Fort Chângsil. It was during this period that Rev. William Williams, the pioneer missionary was in the Fort.²⁸

Lalburha had objected to the requisitions for labour and flatly refused to supply it. In March 1892, the British forces commanded by Robert McCabe proceeded to the village of Lalburha. Lalburha attacked them and the rebellion started.

Persistent attack was made on the British for several days. In these attacks Jemadar Bhudai Singh, three sepoy and a Havildar of the Surma Valley Military Police were wounded.²⁹ A ration convoy *en route* to McCabe was attacked and two sepoy were killed. Different escort parties of the British were attacked at an interval. The resistance of the colonial control spread. The 18th Bengal Infantry were sent to Aizawl to reinforce the Military Police.³⁰

As a result of the rebellion in eastern Lushai Hills, the commanding officer at Aizawl sent a telegram to Lunglei. He reported that many of the Lushai *pasalṥhas*

²⁷ Tribal Research Institute (TRI), *The Mizo Heroes*, p. 60; Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, p. 168.

²⁸ Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, *ibid.*, p. 169.

²⁹ Chhawnmanga, p. 170.

³⁰ Col. L. W. Shakespear, pp. 100-101.

were from Lunglei.³¹ Shakespear, Lt. Townsey, Lt. Boileau and 150 troops marched from Lunglei to Aizawl to aid McCabe. When they reached Lalluauva's village, the British troops knew that fight was imminent.³²

Lalburha was aided by contingent from the villages of Pawibawia, Liankhama and Buangtheuva.³³ The reinforced British troops captured Pawibawia's village on 18 April, 1892. The British troops moved around the Lushai Hills and destroyed whatever they could. Burning of villages and stockades or granaries were the most common. The loss on the Lushais's side was heavy. The villages of Lalruaia (son of Pawibawia, Lailak) and Lalhleia (son of Vanpuilala, Ratu) were also destroyed. Lalhleia unwillingly surrendered on 20 April, 1892.

While the Eastern Lushais rebelled against the British domination in the Lushai Hills, one of the most daring raids was carried on in the British Territory. It was a raid on the Buruncherra tea estate in the Hailakandi Sub-Division of Cachar District on 4 April, 1892. It was carried out by men from the villages of Maite, Pawibawia and Lalburha.³⁴ Forty-five British subjects were killed and thirteen were taken as captives by the Lushai *pasalthas*. This raid was carried in order to warn-off the British and abandon their advanced post at Lalburha (Vanchêng).³⁵

As the situation became grim for the British, McCabe was obliged to retreat to Aizawl. He started out again with Captain Grenville Henry Loch in greater strength. They marched with 400 military personnel. Their target was Kairuma and

³¹ Chhawnmanga, p. 170-171.

³² Lalluauva was on the side of the foreign power. Lalluauva village was mentioned as Phulmawi and Bualpui by Vanchhunga. See, Vanchhunga, *Lusei leh A Vela Hnam Dangte Chanchin*, p. 166 & 209.

³³ Telegraphed message sent from Fort Aizawl to Fort Lunglei confirms presence of men from the south among the resistance force. See, Chhawnmanga, pp. 170-171. They were all the descendants of Lalsavunga. Vanhnuailiana was the son of Lalsavunga. Liankhama, Lalburha and Buangtheuva were three of the five sons of Vanhnuailiana. Pawibawi was the son of Lalphunga, brother of Vanhnuailiana. Pawibawi had seven sons. See, Vanchhunga, pp. 156-167.

³⁴ Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, p. 31.

³⁵ The British had established a military post at Tlaikuang, after their defeat of Kairuma. See, *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, April 1907*, p. 65.

Pawibawia.³⁶ News of the Lushais rebellion was already telegraphed to Silchar by the British.

By the beginning of April, detachments of the British Regulars held Aizawl and Chângsil. This had released the North Lushai Military Police for the suppression of the revolt which was now widespread.³⁷

There was also trouble on the Burma side and disturbances touched the Lushai borders. The Chins who had resisted the British lived adjacent to the Lushai Hills.³⁸ A column under Captain H. Rose of 3rd Gurkhas was detached from Fort White (Thangmual, Chin Hills).³⁹ Captain Rose's column consisted of a detachment of the 60th Rifles and 39th Garhwalis with two Mountain Guns. The column was accompanied by Sir Bertram Sausmarez Carey.⁴⁰ They were to help and co-operate with those column under G. H. Loch and John Shakespear.

McCabe made further advance to the east of the river Tuirial in an attempt to capture Buangtheuva, Thankhama, Vanphunga and Pawibawia's mother. Captain John Shakespear and Sir Bertram Carey overran the central and southern regions while McCabe and Loch dealt with the northern clans.

The village of Buangtheuva was captured on 7 May, 1892. Maite village was captured by a force of 150 men under Captain Loch on 24 May, 1892. With the

³⁶ Chhawnmanga, p. 173.

³⁷ The Surma Valley Military Police garrisoned at Fort Aizawl was made into a separate unit at the end of 1893 and was rechristened the "North Lushai Military Police Battalion". Its first commander was Captain Grenville Henry Loch of the 3rd Gurkhas. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 318; Chhawnmanga, p. 168.

³⁸ The British attempt to reach an agreement with Chawnbika, Tlaisun Chief of Falam and Sihzang (Paite) Chiefs was a failure. It was reported that the Sihzangs have a total of 4430 volunteers, including 400 from Tiddim and 30 from Mualbem. Chawnbika and the British concluded an agreement only in 1896. See., Jem. Thawnglinga, *Chin-Mizo Chanchin*, Aizawl, Prof. Orestes Rosanga, First Edition 2019, p. 231-232.

³⁹ This fort was named after Field Marshall Sir George White who commanded the British troops during during the First Chin Expedition, 1888-1889; the Chin-Lushai Expedition 1889-1890 and the Siyin-Gungal Rebellion, 1892-1893.

⁴⁰ Col. L. W. Shakespear, pp. 102-103. Carey and H. N. Tuck authored two important books named, *The Chin Hills, Vol. I*, and *The Chin Hills, Vol. II*. Both the books were reprinted by Cultural Publishing House, New Delhi in 1983.

destruction of Maite village, the resistance offered by the Eastern Lushai to British colonialism was nearing its end.⁴¹ Lalburha was now only a fugitive.

The British military commanders had established that the sudden appearance of Captain Rose's column from the east had made the Lushais nervous. The appearance of more troops conveyed to the Lushais the futility of further resistance. It caused the waning of the rigour in their attempt. Although, the leading chief evaded arrest for the time being, the clan submitted and trouble ceased.⁴² Major Pulley, Captain Tillard and Captain Browne led the 3rd Gurkhas to a tour of the southern Lushai Hills during that winter.

The eastern Lushais could not withstand the British imperial forces. They made desperate but futile attempt to secure the help of the western Lushais. Lalburha, though subdued and humiliated, held out for some time. The defeated chiefs were compelled to accept the demand of tax and labour by the foreign power.

Lalburha, the foremost figure in the rising of 1892 was finally defeated by Loch. He surrendered before Alexander Porteous, who later succeeded McCabe as political officer in 1896. He surrendered with 14 guns out of 50 demanded and a valuable elephant's tusk in lieu of a fine of five *sials* or *gayals*.⁴³ Lalburha was a fugitive after the resistance in the eastern Lushai Hills. He was allowed to start a village again on payment of certain fines. The British expedition team returned to Aizawl on 8 June, 1892.

Kairuma was the last of the Lushai chiefs who was subdued by the British. It was on February, 1893, that A. W. Davis, Political Officer of the North Lushai Hills marched to Kairuma's village (Tlaikuang, presently in Khawbung area).⁴⁴ He was escorted by 150 police and military personnel. He was met on the spot by John

⁴¹ The Indian General Service Medal was issued later to the British troops and Military Police who took part in these operations.

⁴² Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 103.

⁴³ Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), June 1896, Nos. 16-18. Cited in, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 46.

⁴⁴ Davis succeeded Robert McCabe in 1892.

Shakespear, Superintendent of the South Lushai Hills. Kairuma did not turn up in his village. However, his villagers agreed to pay tax and supply labour.⁴⁵

Kairuma again refused to provide labour for the construction of Aizawl road and accordingly he was fined 60 guns. However, Kairuma remained adamant and refused to make his submission. The British Governments of Bengal and Burma agreed to send reinforcement columns to assist the main force in order to subdue Kairuma.⁴⁶ Kairuma's village (Tlaikuang) was occupied by the combine force on 25 December, 1895. Tlaikuang was burnt completely and a military outpost was established subsequently.⁴⁷

Kairuma and some of his subjects fled to Hmunte. From Hmunte, Kairuma established Biate.⁴⁸ He then moved to Ralvawng. Later, Kairuma moved back to Biate.⁴⁹ On 6 March 1896, the British ended their expedition against Kairuma. The cost of the expedition was estimated at about ₹ 25,000.

IV. 4 Resistance in South Lushai Hills

Resistance to British colonial control was also tremendous in the south Lushai Hills which was under the British Bengal administration. The chiefs of south Lushai Hills were divided into two groups – the Haulawng and the Vanlaiphais or Muallianpuis.⁵⁰ The *upas* of Seipuia, Lalruma, Sangliana, Lalthangvunga, Lalthuama and Vandula collectively represented the Haulawngs. The Haulawngs were of Sailo clan that ruled over south Lushai Hills. Zakapa, Dokapa, Lalchhuma, Zadûna,

⁴⁵ Dr. J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram*, p. 46.

⁴⁶ In order to suppress the group, a punitive expedition was sent in the winter of 1895 under the orders of the British Chief Commissioner of Assam. Besides the forces from Aizawl and Lunglei, British troops arrived from Falam, Burma.

⁴⁷ B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Volume X*, Allahabad, 1906, pp. 19-20. The British forces from different directions were ordered to reconnoitre at Kairuma (Tlaikuang) on 25 December, 1895. Tlaikuang was burnt as the Chief Kairuma did not fulfil the demand of the British forces. Also see., Rev. Zokima, *Mizo Lal Ber – Kairuma Sailo*, Rev. Zokima, Aizawl, 1993, pp. 120-126.

⁴⁸ Biate was established in 1901 after Kairuma returned from his imprisonment in Aizawl.

⁴⁹ Robert McCabe asked Kairuma who the greatest chief was. He replied that it was he. See, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), p. 60. Kairuma moved to Ralvawng in 1907. Due to unhealthy condition, they moved back to Biate in 1909.

⁵⁰ The Haulawngs were Sailo chiefs who ruled in the South Lushai Hills, west of the river Chhimtuipui. The Vanlaiphais or Muallianpuis were Fanai Pawi chiefs, who rule in the east of Chhimtuipui up to the Chin Hills of Burma.

Kapchhunga, Liankhama and Kaphleia were called the Vanlaiphais or the Muallianpui by the British. They belonged to the Fanai clan.

In early February 1891, the then Assistant Political Officer, South Lushai Hills, Charles Stewart Murray made a requisition for labour to Zakapa, a Fanai chief of Khawhrî. Zakapa evaded the demand by taking shelter at the village of his tributary Chief, Lalchhuma. Murray threatened Zakapa with seizure of his wife, if he could not meet the demand.⁵¹

The Lushais were stung by the insult and were not ready to comply with the demand of the colonial agent. In retaliation, Murray burnt Zakapa's village (Khawhrî) and the granaries. This consequently resulted in the uprising in the south. The British were attacked and Murray narrowly escaped with his life.⁵²

The British reinforcement party led by Captain Hutchinson from Fort Tregear failed to capture Zakapa.⁵³ They apprehended Zakapa's tributaries and smaller chiefs like Lalchhuma, Dokapa, Kapchhunga and Liankhama. They were liberally treated.

As Zakapa was an important figure of colonial resistance in the Lushai Hills, a more extensive discussion of his exploits is provided in the next section.

Captain Hutchinson made extensive forays into the South Lushai Hills. He crushed the Lushai with military might and attempted to conciliate the ill feelings of the tribe. His military movement had tremendous impact on maintaining colonial control in the Hills.

The Haulawngs opposed the advance of the British troops under Captain John Shakespear. On the outskirts of Vansanga's village (Chhiphir) they were attacked by a combined force of Lalhrima (Serchhip) and Kâmlowa (Thenzawl) on 15 March, 1892.⁵⁴ The British were blocked and intercepted. Possession of superior military

⁵¹ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 96. Murray character that was rarely given by colonial writer was written by Lalhruiailuanga Ralte. See, Lalhruiailuanga Ralte, p. 177.

⁵² H. C. Thanchungnunga, *Fanai Lal Huaisen Zakapa Chanchin (Mizo Hmeichhiate Humhimtu)*, Aizawl, Mualchin Publications & Paper Works.

⁵³ Zakapa was later captured in 1 January, 1896. Chhawnmanga, p. 176.

⁵⁴ Administrative Report of the South Lushai Hills, 1891-1892. Cited in., Zorema, Dr. J., p. 45; Vansanga village was mentioned as Serchhip by Vanchhunga. See, Vanchhunga, p. 207.

capabilities had been always the British advantage. After an intense exchange of gun fire, the Lushais retreated. Vansanga's village was captured by the British.⁵⁵ However, the situation remained precarious and tense.

The Lushais fought the British at Zote, Lungrang, and elsewhere. They inflicted casualties here and there. The Lushais often used a systematic scheme of 'lie in wait' strategy. The British forces and labourers faced several attacks in important routes like Lunglei-Tlabung and Lunglei-Darzo. Even Fort Lunglei was fired on several occasions.⁵⁶

On April, 1892, the Pawis of the adjoining Burma rebelled against the British. Troop under the command of Captain Rose was sent out from Tiddim, Burma. Captain Loch and Captain Shakespear were also dispatched from the north and south Lushai Hills. It was the strategy of the colonial power to crush the rebellion from all angles.⁵⁷

The British military column led by Captain Ross and Carey arrived at Dokhama's village on 10 May 1892. Shakespear's troops of two hundred men also arrived on the spot. The convergence of large forces from the east and south was a symptom of withdrawal for the already depleted Lushais. Even after the defeat of certain columns, the arrival of new columns made the Lushais nervous. While Loch and McCabe fought in the north, Shakespear and his troops fought in the centre and south.⁵⁸

With the help of the force from Burma, Shakespear destroyed the Haulawng villages of Lalhrima (Serchhip), Lalkanglova (Hriangtlâng), Dokhama, Rochungnunga (son of Lalsangvunga, Bâwngchâwm) and Tlungbuta (Lâmchhip). However, the villages of Lalthuama (South Bualpui), Dopawnga, Lallura (Sêrtlâng), Kâmlova (Thenzawl), Zadûna, Rohnuna (Bûngtlâng), Kalkhama, Kaphleia, Thangliana (grandson of Bengkhuaia, Sialsûk), Vantawnga (Pangzawl) and

⁵⁵ Chhawnmanga, p. 171.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 172.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 173.

⁵⁸ It was estimated that they had destroyed around 20 villages. Other destruction in the form of lives, granaries, domesticated animals, etc. could not be estimated. See, Chhawnmanga, p. 173.

Liankhara (son of Lalsangvunga, Vânehêng) remained untouched by the colonial power.⁵⁹

Nikuala, Chief of Chawngtlai, a revered symbol of resistance to foreign intrusion also was captured by the Burma Column. He was captured on 22nd April, 1892 and was taken to Fort White. He was later handed to Captain John Shakespear.⁶⁰

The military superiority of the British however could not completely silence the Lushais. A formidable resistance emerged in the person of Ropuiliani during the summer of 1893.⁶¹ She was the widow of the great Vandula and the daughter of Vanhnuailiana. Like her father and her husband, she vowed to resist any forms of colonial control and domination. She was the mother of Lalthuama.

Lalthuama's village was located between the Mat and the Chhimtuipui (Koladyne) rivers. It was the centre of resistance to British forces. He intrigued with other chiefs of northern Lushai Hills for a fresh revolt against British colonial control.⁶²

Lalthuama was the recognised head of the descendant of Vandula. His chieftainship was concomitant with the control and influence of his mother, Ropuiliani. She instructed her son to never abide by the decrees and orders of the British imperialists.⁶³ They killed some British labourers and interpreter. They attempted to contact Kairuma and other chiefs who still evaded the clutches of the British.

⁵⁹ Vanchhunga, pp. 201-210. However, due to constant movements the village of the chief change frequently. There was also similar name for different chiefs, which make the reconstruction of their village name rather difficult.

⁶⁰ Nikuala was imprisoned at Calcutta. He however, killed a prison attendant at the end of his imprisonment. He was further imprisoned in a lunatic asylum which he served till his death.

⁶¹ Lalneihzovi, *Role of Ropuiliani in the Freedom Struggle*, Aizawl, Gilzom Offset, 2005.

⁶² There was a planned to resist the British under aegis of Fanai Chief, Dokhama. See., Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 104; Chhawnmanga, p. 174.

⁶³ By this time, Captain John Shakespear had become the Superintendent of the South Lushai Hills. He succeeded C.S. Murray on 15 April, 1891.

Lalthuama was directed by his mother not to pay tribute and supply labour to the British. He gave shelter to Pâvunga who assassinated Satinkhara, a British interpreter. Hlawncheuva, one of the Lushai *pasalthas* who was implicated in the assassination of Lieutenant Stewart was also given asylum by Lalthuama. Because of this, the British had imposed a heavy fine on him. Lalthuama refused to pay the fine and also did not comply to the British Superintendent's demand of labour. He was charged with an attempt to rise against the imperial power.

Captain John Shakespear with Messrs. Pugh and Hutchinson along with 80 Rifles (military police and sepoy) left Fort Lunglei for Ropuiliani's village (Denlung). Lalthuama and his old mother were captured. Their weapons were confiscated and the villagers were disarmed.

The British strategy here was a sudden show of strength. They calculated that nothing impressed the village folk than a surprise show of force from the British military. Messages were sent to all neighbouring villages by the British troops to surrender with all their guns. Having seen the superiority British forces, nobody wanted to face the further wrath of the *Kumpinu* (the Company).⁶⁴ Besides, most of the Lushai chiefs were already depleted.

The British troops discovered that the northern Fanai chief, Dokhama had been at Lalthuama's village.⁶⁵ He had only left the village the day before Shakespear's arrival. They had arranged for another revolt against imperial intrusion and attempt at colonial control. It was fortunate for the British that they had nipped what undoubtedly would have developed into another serious effort to force the British out of the Lushai Hills.⁶⁶

Ropuiliani and her son Lalthuama were subsequently deported to Rangamati, headquarter of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) on 26 October, 1893. Their villages duly paid the fines levied on them. Ropuiliani did not survive the prison and died within a year of her detention.

⁶⁴ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 104; Chhawnmanga, p. 175.

⁶⁵ This showed that Dokhama had really planned for greater resistance force against the British.

⁶⁶ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 104.

The Haulawngs were also finally subdued by the winter of 1893. This was achieved by A. W. Davis, successor of Robert McCabe as Political Officer, North Lushai Hills. The village of Laburha of the South was subdued and a fine of 20 guns and certain number of labour was imposed upon him. Any other Lushai chiefs left were a fugitive to be captured later by the British.

An advanced British post was established at Lalhrima's village (Serchhip, son of Bengkhuaia), located midway between Aizawl and Lunglei.⁶⁷ The Haulawng chiefs around Serchhip made their submission by January 1893.⁶⁸ The villages of Lalhrima, Rochungnunga, Liankhara, Tlûngbuta (son of Bengkhuaia, Chief of Lâmhchhip), Lalkanglova and Kamlova (son of Bengkhuaia, Chief of Thenzawl) were fined 200 guns for their involvement in the rising against the British in April-May 1892. The Lushais had no other option now, but to supply labour to the British.

At the same time, because of the conviction that the Lushais had, the British were never secured. The situation was very much porous. An assessment of the situation by A. W. Davis in his Administrative Report of the year 1892-93 noted – “Judging from our experience in the Naga Hills, it will probably be many years before the Lushais realised that our stay in their country likely to be permanent, and until they do realize this fact thoroughly, it will certainly be necessary to keep up a very considerable armed force at Aizawl with outposts at different points from which the various sections of the tribe can be effectually controlled.”⁶⁹ Being fearful of a renewed Lushais rising, the British government decided to station their military men at different outposts to control the Lushais.

IV. 4. 1 Zakapa

The revolt against the British subjugation rendered by Zakapa was a part of what had been clubbed as Lushais resistance in South Lushai Hills.

⁶⁷ This Lalhrima, son of Bengkhuaia was the Chief of Serchhip. His village was burnt by the imperialist. See, Vanchhunga, pp. 202-203.

⁶⁸ *ibid*, p. 314. Serchhip was completely burnt by the colonial forces.

⁶⁹ *Administrative Report of the North Lushai Hills for 1892-1893*. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, p. 45.

In an attempt to reduce the consequences of the *Thingtam* of 1880, the Fanai conjoined at Lêng. After the breakdown of the Lêng confederacy, Zakapa and his younger brother, Pazika moved to Khawhrî. This was calculated to be in 1882. When they moved to Khawhrî, Zakapa ruled over around four hundred households⁷⁰.

Zakapa, Chief of Khawhrî, was the organiser of the Revolt of 1891 against the British colonial control in south Lushai Hills. He was perhaps the only Lushais chief who turned his arms against the British power, even after being subjugated by superior military might.

The greatness of a Lushais chief was often measured in the number of *khawpêr* or tributary chiefs or villages he had under his rule. And the historic greatness of Zakapa was shown by the tributary chiefs he had. These feudatory chiefs highly respected Zakapa and were with him in every difficult situation.

The four tributary chiefs or villages that were under Zakapa were:–

(i) Lalthuama, Chief of Aithur/Chawngdini. Lalthuama was the son of Sailo chief, Vandula;

(ii) Lalchhuma, Chief of Lungsum. He was the son of Patlaia, Chief of Thingsai;

(iii) Dokapa, Chief of Keltan;

(iv) and, the Chief of Bemtâr.

Khawhrî and its tributary villages enjoyed peace and security under the capable chieftainship of Zakapa. Even the venturesome Pawi or Lai and Sailo did not dare to attack them. The fraternity showed by Zakapa and his brothers filled other chiefs with fright. It was during this period that the power of the Fanai reached its zenith.

IV. 4. 2 Zakapa and British Imperialism

After the establishment of the British military supremacy in the Lushai Hills, revolt broke out in the southern Lushai Hills. This revolt was centred in Khawhrî. It

⁷⁰ Thanchungnunga, H.C., *Fanai Lal Huaisen Zakapa Chanchin*, p. 19.

was because “of injudicious action on the part of Mr. Murray (British Civil Police) who was on tour with an escort of Frontier Police” as Colonel L. W. Shakespear put it in his *History of the Assam Rifles*.⁷¹

Being subjugated by the superior British military might, Zakapa already took an oath of loyalty. He politely agreed to supply the labourers demanded by the imperialist. However, later instances showed that the lack of foresight of some imperialist officer aggravated the situation. The conviction on his conscience compelled Zakapa to challenge the British again.

The British entered Khawhri on 8 February, 1891. The Superintendent of Police, C. S. Murray, was accompanied by 50 frontier police, signallers and others under the command of Mr. Taylor. They reached Khawhrî from their Chhimtupui base. They were in a convoy that carried rations, arms and ammunition; and a large amount of Government money (₹ 2000/-).

Kulis supplied by Zakapa carried the loads of the convoy and Murray had the idea of further transport with the help of Zakapa’s labourers. Zakapa promised to supply labourers in the morning. However, on the same night, he left his village for Lalchhuma’s village which was half-mile away. On 9 February 1891, Murray sent for Zakapa and Lalchhuma. However, both refused to show up before the British official.

Being furious, Murray accompanied by Taylor and the interpreter went to Lalchhuma’s village the next day. They found the two while they were in a conference inside the *zawlbûk*. Murray in an unseemly manner ordered the chiefs to leave the *zawlbûk*. He warned Zakapa of burning down his granary if he did not obey the order. Zakapa uneasily swallowed the humiliation and ordered his men to leave the *zawlbûk*. He and Murray had heated conversation inside the *zawlbûk*.

When Zakapa and Murray left the *zawlbûk*, Zakapa’s *pasalthas* shouted and jeered Murray. Zakapa was willing to supply labours to the imperialist but not women to satisfy the carnal desires of Murray and Taylor. A furious Murray returned

⁷¹ Col. L. W. Shakespear, p. 96.

to Khawhrî. The gulf between the two had widened. Both now realised that some sort of means to settle their enmity was looming.

Proceedings of the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Alexander Mackenzie confirmed the statement of L. W. Shakespear stated above. It stated that Murray's disgraceful conduct through his interpreter was his demand for two girls for himself and Mr. Taylor was the principal cause of the outbreak of the revolt. Murray headed the force that had entered Khawhrî. He was so emphatic in his immoral and unjust demand that he even threatened the chief.⁷² In case of non-compliance of his order, he would forcibly snatch away the wife of Zakapa and the wives of other chiefs.

Zakapa could sense the insecurity of his own wife who was on a four month pregnancy for her second child. Therefore, it was necessary for the Lushais of the southern Lushai Hills to stand united in order to save the honour of their *Lalnu* or chieftainess.

According to oral tradition, when the immoral demand of Murray was disclosed to the villagers, all the girls in the village hurriedly fled to the nearby jungle hiding themselves with a view to save their chastity⁷³. The village elders, finding themselves in a helpless situation, approached Aisuaka requesting him if he could offer his mentally retarded daughter to the Whiteman. Aisuaka took his daughter and his wife by the same night and departed for Rawpui, about 30 km away from Khawhrî. This reflected how every Lushais was ready to protect the honour of their women folks.⁷⁴

IV. 4. 3 Preparation and Events of the Revolt

Zakapa was an outstanding military leader and a strategist. He was well prepared to face the British. He meticulously planned for the movement of his *pasalṥhas*. One group fully equipped with guns was entrusted under the command of

⁷² Tribal Research Institute (TRI), *The Mizo Heroes*, Aizawl, 2003, p. 81.

⁷³ Rothangliana, *Zakapa, a Warrior Chief and Organiser of the Revolt of 1891*, Hnahthial College Silver Jubilee (1979-2004) Souvenir, Hnahthial College Silver Jubilee Committee: 2004, p. 19.

⁷⁴ In another version, there was a fair girl of Paite clan in Khawhrî. This girl was demanded by C. S. Murray. When the girl's family knew of this, they fled. Murray then threatened the Chief of Khawhrî. See, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), p. 81.

Pâzika, younger brother of Zakapa. This group was tasked to ambush the British if they were to burn the village granary. The second group armed with guns, spears, *chempui*, and others was commanded by Zakapa himself. They were tasked to attack the rest of the British forces encamped in the village. Their other target was to burn the village *zawlbûk* which was occupied by the *vais* (foreigners).

After his return from Lalchhuma's village Murray left Havildar Major Sangram Singh with 20 men in charge of the baggages, supplies and the British money. He ordered to keep the men from wandering about in the village. He gave no further orders to the Havildar Major⁷⁵. Having done so, he along with Taylor and 30 policemen advanced to destroy the granary of Zakapa at a place now known as *Buhkang Mual* (hillock where rice was on fire) which is about two miles away⁷⁶.

The imperialist forces reached the hillock where they found thirteen *chhek in* or storage or granaries filled with rice and allied agricultural products. The drastic incident of burning of Zakapa's granaries occurred on 10 February 1891. This clearly portrayed the level of cruelty of the imperialist forces. They were not men of honour but decadent policemen who were even willing to destroy the hard-earned provisions of the whole village. They had even slaughtered women and children by cutting off their necks.

On their way back, Murray and his team were waylaid by Zakapa's *pasalṭhas*. The British advanced guards lost their lives from the casualty of heavy gunshot that they received from every corner. Murray had a near-death experience and Taylor was severely injured. Zakapa's forces were in large number. They had enough guns and weapons and were positioned in all strategic locations.

The British forces retreated and dared not try to and advance further. They fortunately found an escape route through the precipitous terrain of the stream, Pa-awh. In the confluence of Pa-awh and Tuipui, the British troops reconnoitred. They found that they had lost six men, including two signallers. This was one of the most severe setback that was inflicted upon Murray in his whole career. The British

⁷⁵ Murray had lost his judgmental sense in regard to this. He later explained that he did this as there was no expectation of any hostile movement from Zakapa.

⁷⁶ Rothangliana, *Zakapa*, p. 22.

managed to reach Chhimtuipui (Kolodyne) river at dusk. They reached the British Chhimtuipui base at 4 P.M. on 11 February, 1891.

The fate of the Havildar Major and the twenty Policemen with him was no better than that of Murray and his party. On seeing the smoke and flames of their granary, Zakapa and his 50 *pasalṭhas* were in fury against the intruders. The enraged *pasalṭhas* burnt the village zawlbûk occupied by the imperialist troops. Four policemen were killed and many were wounded. One policeman lost one of his arms in the fight and the Lushais nicknamed him Banbula (man with no arm). After his retirement from the service of the imperial authority, Banbula settled in Khatla, Aizawl.⁷⁷

The Havildar Major and others also managed to escape from Zakapa's village and fled to Aithur, Dotawna's village. From there they proceeded towards Chhimtuipui and reached the British base on 12 February, 1891. The rest of the policemen who sustained injury arrived at the British base on the next day.

IV. 4. 4 Zakapa's *Pasalṭhas*

Darpawnga, popularly known as Pawngvîna, was one of the most well-known *pasalṭhas* of Zakapa.⁷⁸ He was also infamous for his ill-tempered nature. He was popular as Pawngvîna because of his bad temperament.

Pawngvîna belonged to the Renthlei clan. He had no time to fold his long hair due to his temper and undue haste. He grew up from a poor family. His family migrated from Khuanglêng to Satawn and then to Dungtlâng. From Dungtlâng, they moved to Khawhrî. Pawngvîna was already well known for his altruism and courageous character from Satawn.⁷⁹

When Zakapa and Murray had a heated conversation inside the zawlbûk, the British policemen sensed danger. They attempted to send SoS signal to Fort Tregear and Fort Lunglei with a mirror using sunlight. Pawngvîna blocked the sunrays with

⁷⁷ Rothangliana, p. 22.

⁷⁸ Some said his real name was Pawngliana. See, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), p. 79

⁷⁹ Tribal Research Institute (TRI), p. 79.

his *puan* .i.e. cloth. The signaller shouted, “Het sala! chikni teriama, bhenchod!!”⁸⁰ Disgusted by their temperament, Pawngvîna thundered, “I will make you my *bawi*. I will cut you to pieces, I will cut you to pieces!”

Pawngvîna was remembered for his valour, courage and bravery. He accompanied Zakapa in the storming of the zawlbûk and killed one signaller with his spear. He earlier told his family that he could not tolerate co-existence with the enemy.⁸¹

From Khawhrî, Pawngvîna moved to Chhipphir and then to Thorang hill. He later moved to Berhbial. From Berhbial, he migrated to N. Sabual where he breathed his last.⁸²

Another outstanding *pasal̥tha* of the revolt of 1891 was Aichhunga. When the village zawlbûk was attacked by the *pasal̥thas*, Aichhunga slept in the middle of the only path to the zawlbûk. This path was also the only escape route for those policemen who were stucked inside the zawlbûk. Aichhunga challenged the British policemen, “Whoever dares cross me, I will cut off his head.” He later rightfully named his grandson as Râlkhama (one who blocks the movement of the enemy)⁸³.

Another *pasal̥tha* of Khawhrî during Zakapa’s chieftainship was Chhingbula Renthlei. He was around 20 years of age during the revolt and was one of the youngest warriors. He once saw a tiger devouring a deer. He approached the scene and whispered to himself, “Move away and let me have my share”. The tiger retreated unwillingly with a mild roar. He slowly uttered, “Do not roar so often, I will leave when I get enough”. After he collected enough meat, he left the scene and the tiger continued to devour whatever was left.

Chhingbula never left Khawhrî. He died on 1 September, 1944 and was buried in Khawhrî itself⁸⁴.

⁸⁰ Thanchungnunga, H.C., p. 116.

⁸¹ Tribal Research Institute (TRI), p. 81.

⁸² Tribal Research Institute (TRI), p. 79.

⁸³ Thanchungnunga, H.C., p. 118.

⁸⁴ Thanchungnunga, H.C., p. 123.

Besides, there were many *pasalthas* who had made the supreme sacrifice for their motherland. They had given their utmost to save their country from the clutches of the colonial control. It is a sad part of history that their lives were not recorded. Their suffering and sacrifice in challenging and opposing the most powerful and imperialistic nation of the day will always be remembered as ever.

IV. 4. 5 Consequences of the Revolt

Murray was immediately transferred and demoted for his outrageous and unpardonable acts by the imperial authority. Lalchhuma, a subordinate chief of Zakapa, surrendered himself to the British on 23 February, 1891. His village was burned on 1 March, 1891. Dokapa, Kapchhunga and Liankhama who were also accomplices in the uprising were arrested. However, they were liberally treated for their later good conduct.

Zakapa fled for his life and became a homeless wanderer. For a long period he had escaped being captured by the British. The British forces under Hutchinson, who marched from Fort Tregear, burnt his village on 2 March, 1891.

Captain J. Shakespear who was stationed in Fort Lunglei (Lungleh) was entrusted by the British authority to capture Zakapa. Zakapa was finally arrested at Khuangthing in 1896⁸⁵. Khuangthing was the village of his elder brother - Zadûna. It was with tremendous hardship that J. Shakespear captured his target.

Zakapa was brought to the court of the Viceroy in Calcutta in the presence of the Chief Commissioner. In the Calcutta Court, Zakapa and Murray presented their case. J. Shakespear played the role of an interpreter for Zakapa.

Zakapa's life was spared for his spectacular bravery and upright nature. He was imprisoned for two years. Murray lost the case and was stripped of his rank. He was court-martialled and disposed never to step again in the Lushai Hills.

⁸⁵ Chhawnmanga, p. 176.

Zadûna sought refuge in the forest of Lunglêr, which was beyond the Tiau River.⁸⁶ His fugitive ended when he was arrested in the early dawn of 5 January 1896 by Superintendent John Shakespear.⁸⁷

Zadûna and Zakapa were proclaimed to be under arrest for five years. However, they were released before the end of the sanctioned period. Having no other option, both became good British subjects after their release. Zakapa moved to Sailuluk where he became chief until his death on 28 December 1914.

Zakapa's village, Khawhrî was given to Lalchhuma, son of Patlaia. After the death of Lalchhuma in 1945, his son Liannawla succeeded him. Liannawla transferred his village from Lungsum to Zakapa's village proper. He ruled there as chief till the abolition of chieftainship in the Lushai Hills i.e. 1954.

Zakapa was an able ruler who displayed a real concern for the welfare of his subjects. The areas under his control were economically self-sufficient. He is best known for his bravery, courage and military skill. He possessed the real character of an independent chief, unwilling to bend to the whims of an alien power.

IV. 5 Weaknesses of the Lushai Chiefs

The Lushai chiefs could not withstand the onslaught of the imperial forces.⁸⁸ As such, the Lushais were defeated. Survey parties and intelligence officers along with the British forces were a prelude to the movement of the colonial military forces. Flying columns accompanied by survey parties were also dispatched to the interior villages.

The survey party mapped the country. Later, the mapping of the Lushai Hills emerged as an important tool for colonial control. More information on the Lushai Hills was gained by the British. It was in this information collection that Lushais were undone by the colonial power. The helio system, the telegraph, the elephant, canon, and others added to the advantages of the British.

⁸⁶ Tiau is the river which presently is the boundary line for India and Myanmar (Burma).

⁸⁷ Chhawnmanga, p. 176.

⁸⁸ Suakpuilala who had his own vested interests and others were on the side of the British. He died in 1881. See., Priyam Goswami, p. 141. General Brownlow column could reach agreement with sixty chiefs, while they were resisted by only 20 Chiefs. See, Jem. Thawnglinga, p. 229.

Besides their bravery and valour, one reason why the Lushais could not be easily subdued was because they were well-armed. The Lushais had been in possession of firearms for the ‘last sixty or seventy years’.⁸⁹ It can be presumed that the Lushais began the use of guns from or after the First Anglo-Burmese War, 1824-1826.⁹⁰ They possessed the technology to manufacture gunpowder.⁹¹ They also had a number of flint-muskets which came mostly from Burma. Their powder flasks of Sial’s (Mithun) horn were beautifully polished and inlaid with silver or ivory.

According to T. H. Lewin, the Lushais learnt the use of firearms only ‘within the last ten or twenty years’ which they obtained from Burma and Chittagong.⁹² This writing of Lewin was first published in 1869. Other common weapons were spear and *chempui* (dao). The Lushais were expert in the use of these weapons.

By early 1889, the British had connected important centres in the Lushai Hills by telegraph. The telegraph lines were frequently attacked by the Lushais. It was the aim of the Lushai *pasalthas* to undo the British communication system. In an event of confrontation, the British helio system was also a target. They knew the importance of communication system in a battle.

The Lushais also had another use of the telegraph wires. The wires were cut into pieces with a length of around one *khâp*.⁹³ These cut pieces were often used as ammunition and loaded in the barrel of a gun. This was known as *khemu*. When fired upon, the application of blister and intense energy hit the target. The skin of the target was cut and burnt in the place where it was hit. One British personnel was hit

⁸⁹ J. Shakespear, *The Lushai – Kuki Clans*, London, Macmillan, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1988, p.14. Shakespear was the Assistant Political officer of the Chittagong Column of the First *Vailen*, 1871-1872.

⁹⁰ R. Rualthansanga, *Traditional and Representative Institution in the Lushai Hills*, Guwahati, EBH Publishers, 2015, p. 53.

⁹¹ There were very few sulphur springs in the hills. It was also obtained by soaking and boiling the ‘aunglauk’ bean, which contains much sulphur. Saltpetre and nitre were obtained from heaps of manure collected in baskets and strongly impregnated with urine. The liquid that drained into receptacles was boiled and evaporated. And then, crystals of saltpetre and nitre were produced.

⁹² T. H. Lewin, *Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein; With Comparative Vocabularies of the Hill Dialects*, 1869, p. 139.

⁹³ *Khâp* is a unit for measurement of length. One *khâp* is equal to the length between fully stretch tip of the middle finger and the thumb.

by *khemu* on his face, his face was ripped horizontally.⁹⁴ It would be a frightful scene.

The greatest weakness of the Lushais' chiefs was their inability to present a united front in the face of a common enemy. Their sovereign character and ego made them hesitate to seek friendship with their brethren chiefs. This was because it entailed a degree of sacrifice for dignity and honour. This high degree of self-worth was also a reason that made them cultivate less regard for Whitemen. Fraternal unity among the chiefs was nearly nonexistent. The imperial British diplomats were an expert in exploiting this weakness.

The Lushai chiefs used to raid and fought each other for supremacy. The desire to outdo neighbouring chiefs was supreme in their mind. This made them capricious even in the face of a greater enemy. Loyalty to a particular chief or village too, deterred the Lushais in providing a united force against imperialist intrusion. This was further hampered by the absence of swift relay of information.

On the other hand, colonial forces were also in constant search for ally. They crushed resistance against their project with the assistance of these allies. For some indigenous chiefs, collaborating with the colonial power was safer than being engaged with the mighty power.

The chiefs generally pursued clan or village interest rather than the broader Hills- wide unity. The concept of power under a single unit was not yet imagined by them. In the precarious internecine wars, working with rather than fighting the coloniser offered the best way to survive. The Lushai chiefs competed for their own advantage and tried maintaining their independence. However, they did not realise that whatever independence they had envisaged connoted dependence on the colonial power.

The colonial power was masterful in exploiting even the slightest division that existed among the indigenous chiefs. The construction of local colonial infrastructure was a possibility because of the participation of several collaborators. Their knowledge was critical for colonial subjugation of the locals. As we saw in the

⁹⁴ Chhawnmanga, *Mizorama Michengte*, Aizawl, Hnamte Press, 1985, p. 172.

preceding chapters, these agents of the colonial state participated to undermine the authority of the other chiefs, dismantled the social structures and disrupted the Lushais' economy.

Keeping aside the British military superiority, another reason that the Lushai Hills could not challenge imperial intrusion was the absence of central authority. There was no local authority that held the whole society as a single unit. Lineage loyalty and allegiance to a particular chief largely hindered the challenge to colonial subjugation. Frequent internecine wars and absence of intra-village unity worsened the Lushais' power. An example of how a particular Lushai chief was derided by others is hereby given.

One target of the British troops of the Chittagong Column was Savunga's village (Bawlte, Kawlhawk range). The colonial forces reached Bawlte on the 12 January, 1872. Savunga could not retain his chiefdom in the Kawlhawk range after his subjugation by the colonial power. He became a homeless wanderer, wandering along the Pûkzîng range. He was derided by other chiefs –

'Lal ka hmu, lal vâkvâi ka hmu,

Pûkzîng tlângah lal vâkvâi ka hmu,

(I saw a Chief, I saw a homeless Chief,

I saw a wanderer, a Chief in Pûkzîng range,)

*Aia i e, u aw aia e.'*⁹⁵

Even after he honourably succumbed to the mighty British, Savunga never surrendered. However, it was after this tragic incident that Suakpuilala planned to raid Bawlte from Hreichuk. However, this raid was avoided as Savunga bestowed Suakpuilala with precious gifts like *chunbuang thi*, etc.⁹⁶

Savunga was constantly robbed by the descendants of Manga and Rolûra. 'Vainut Gong' and 'Laizo Gong' were taken from him by the descendants of Manga.

⁹⁵ See, V. L. Ngaihawia, p. 36.

⁹⁶ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, October 1903, p. 14.

While he was in Nâlzawl, near Kânghmun he took the flight on the verge of being raided.

Savunga never surrendered to the British. He later got shelter in the hands of Buangtheuva, son of Vanhnuailiana.⁹⁷ The colonial master allotted Lunglêng, near Aizawl to Khamliana, grandson of Savunga. Khamliana brought his grandfather to stay with him. Savunga had lived long enough to interact with the pioneer Christian missionaries.

J. H. Lorrain and F. W. Savidge heard the news of the living grand old chief. They proceeded to Lunglêng. On the verge of their interaction, Savunga asked them, “Are you Whiteman?” They replied him, “Yes, we are”. The reaction from the grand old chief was rather outrageous for the two missionaries. Saying, “I never wanted to talk to you”, he approached the inner room of the house.⁹⁸ Savunga died at Lunglêng at the age of one hundred and twenty.

Such was the intensity of dislike for Whiteman by Savunga and his generation of Lushais. It was rather not surprising to see the fierce resistance that they rendered against imperial expansionism for they possessed high level of hatred for foreigners. What was surprising was that the Lushais could not forge a united front to face the British military forces. It was of greater astonishment that this was not a possibility when majority of the Lushai chiefs were of the same clan.

It is sad that derision rather than solidarity or fraternity even in the face of extreme circumstances was the prevalent practice. This can be conveniently said from the experience of the pitiable Chief Savunga.

The disunity that existed among the ruling clan does not occurred only in the Lushai Hills. K. N. Panikkar stated that the resistance that was rendered to colonisation by the Indian rulers was “sporadic, weak, and disunited.”⁹⁹ The Indian

⁹⁷ V. L. Ngaihkawia, p. 37.

⁹⁸ V. L. Ngaihkawia, p. 37.

⁹⁹ K. N. Panikkar, *Colonialism, Culture, and Resistance*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 1.

rulers failed to grasp the larger agenda of colonial advanced as they were trapped in their minor ambition and were “not able to look beyond their immediate interest.”¹⁰⁰

IV. 6 Conclusion

Even after the subjugation of the Lushai Hills, there was tremendous resistance from the western, eastern and southern Lushais. However, it must be known that most of the chiefs were already depleted. It was from certain pockets that resistance had arisen. It was their dislike of foreign oppression and expectation to uphold their independence that resulted in the emergence of these resistances.

Looking at Zakapa’s case – the foremost figure of this resistance; we find that he represented how the Lushais tried to correct what was considered as demeaning and forced themselves to the attention of the colonial power. His character and conviction was admired even by the colonial power. He rebelled consciously and only when he confirmed that his plea went unheeded. He became an epitome of the study of colonial resistance in the Lushai Hills. His action was deliberate but a desperate way out for the intolerable condition of existence created by agents of colonialism.

The surrender of Kairuma and his associates marked the waning of Lushais armed resistance to British colonial control. The Lushais had no choice but to accept their fate that they could not mount a challenge to the British power. Unwillingly, they succumbed to colonial rule.

The chiefs of the eastern Lushai Hills grudgingly accepted the conditions and demands of the colonial power. The payment of yearly tribute and supply of labour was an obligations and a symbol of submission. “There is no longer any reason to anticipate serious trouble” for the British.¹⁰¹ The subjugation of the Lushais of the eastern Lushai Hills, thereby the establishment of colonial control by the British, was completed with the surrender of Kairuma (1895).

¹⁰⁰ K. N. Panikkar, *Colonialism, Culture, and Resistance*, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), September 1896, Nos. 11-13, *Administrative Report of North Lushai Hills for 1895-96*. Cited in, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 47.

The Lushai Hills was acquired by the British through diplomatic manoeuvres and military superiority. The Lushai Hills – both North and South, was annexed by a proclamation of the Governor's General of India-in-Council on 6 September, 1895.¹⁰²

By 1894, British troops were already stationed in Darzo, Lalthuama's village, Lunglei, Lungsen and Tlabung in South Lushai Hills. In North Lushai Hills, they were stationed at Aizawl, Serchhip, Chângsil and Rengte (Kolasib).¹⁰³ Besides, there were several military posts along important routes.¹⁰⁴ The hold of colonialism and colonial control was maintained through such several strategic outposts. The colonial subjugation of the Lushai Hills was now completed. The people had no other choice but to concur with colonial agents in steps towards colonial consolidation.

¹⁰² The status of the Lushai Hills till 1895 was "Foreign Territory under British supervision". The need to annex was later felt by the British officials, H. J. S. Cotton, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal. He remarked that the Hills had not been assigned to any province of British India. It was, therefore administered under the direct orders of the Governor's General-in-Council. See, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 47. The British were reluctant to assume direct control of the outlying areas. They thought the best course was to govern them by means of Scheduled District Act until it was deemed fit for the application of regular law.

¹⁰³ The Serchhip Post was moved to Thenzawl on the Aizawl-Lunglei Road in 1898.

¹⁰⁴ Chhawnmanga, p. 176.

Chapter V

COLONIAL CONSOLIDATION AND ITS RESISTANCE IN THE LUSHAI HILLS

V. 1 Introduction

The British government established their rule in the Lushai Hills after the Second *Vailen*. The period between 1891 and early 1893 was utilised for the maintenance of colonial control by the British. From the third quarter of 1893, the period of British colonial consolidation began in the Lushai Hills. For the strengthening of British imperialism, capable officers were sent out to different areas of the Lushai Hills. These officers were harbinger of British colonial consolidation in the Lushai Hills.

The British had encountered enormous difficulties in maintaining control in the Lushai Hills. It was unmanageable because it was hitherto an unadministered area of constant raids and warfare. Moreover, the settlers were recalcitrant to any alien subjection.

The British determination at colonial consolidation was gradually a success. In 1896, John Shakespear observed that there was no chance of any resistance to the British rule in the future.¹ British ascendancy had finally been established by this time. The British official favoured the suspension of strong coercive measures and was supportive of the application of gentle rule.

This chapter looks at the way in which all British machineries targeted colonial consolidation. It argues that the dynamic of secular and non-secular actors were employed towards the achievement of this. The local British officers

¹ J. Shakespear, *The Lushai-Kuki Clans*, London, Macmillan, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 1988, p. 47.

concentrated their energies to prevent the rise of any capable individual who could challenge them. Western educations, religion, disarmament, segmentation of land among others were important tools used by the colonial authority.

The appropriation of the indigenous “cultural practices was a part of the technology of British colonial control in India.”² Being identified “with indigenous tradition was part of a larger political project of an alien rule seeking legitimacy.”³ In the case of the Lushai Hills, much of the traditional mores were incorporated in giving a new faith to the settlers. And, the incorporation of these practices was a site of contest and resistance.

V. 2 Colonial Consolidation, Disarmament and Financial Parsimony

What was interwoven with the process of colonial consolidation was the disarmament of the Lushais by the British Government of India. The possession of fire-arms by the Lushais was a headache to the colonial power. The first guns or firearms that fell into the hands of the Lushais were those made in France and Holland. The Lushais called those made in France as *pranki* and those made in Holland as *awlan*.⁴ Thus, firearms were named after the place they were manufactured.

In their attempt for colonial consolidation, disarmament of the Lushais was an important step that was undertaken. The Lushais were first introduced to firearms around 1775 A. D. Jemander Thawnglinga reproduced Harvey’s writings that the

² K. N. Panikkar, *Colonialism, Culture, and Resistance*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 105.

³ K. N. Panikkar, *Colonialism, Culture, and Resistance*, p. 114

⁴ Jem. Thawnglinga, *Chin-Mizo Chanchin*, Aizawl, Prof. Orestes Rosanga, First Edition 2019, p. 57. The way they called largely depends on the way they pronounced the manufacturing country.

Burmese had used firearms in the Burmese-Manipuri War of 1775.⁵ The Lushais bought arms from traders from Burma and other places.⁶

The pioneer missionary, Rev. William Williams had noted a British officer who grievously told him that they had received back their (British) coins in the form of projectiles from the barrel of firearms.⁷ During this period there was no value for money among the Lushais. They bartered their goods mainly with salt and tobacco. They preferred half a penny of aluminium than two penny of silver. This was because aluminium coins could be modified as projectiles for firearms.⁸

To safeguard their interest, the British authority formulated a systematic policy of disarmament.⁹ Regular flow of arms had emboldened the younger section of the Lushais to resist the colonial superpower. With the consolidation of their rule, the British first chose to issue licenses for guns with caution and moderation. The Arms Act of 1878 was enforced by which unlicensed guns must be surrendered or license secured for them.¹⁰ All unlicensed guns were confiscated and the owners of such guns were heavily penalised.¹¹ Any informer for the British authority was liberally rewarded.

⁵ Jem. Thawnglinga, *Chin-Mizo Chanchin*, p. 57. In the earlier period, the Lushais and its cognate tribes had *thal* (bow) only. When guns were introduced, it was known as *meithal*. It was because of the spark that it produced when it was fired. The Lushais word *mei* stands for 'fire'.

⁶ Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, *Zoram Vârțian – Chanchințha leh Thuziak Khawvâr Tan Dân*, Aizawl, Fineprints, 2008, p. 172.

⁷ Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, *Zoram Vârțian*, pp. 167-168. Rev. William Williams set out for the Lushai Hills from Jhalnacherra on 5 March, 1891 through the river Tlawng.⁷ He arrived at *Tûtchhuah* (Guturmukh) on 11 March, 1891. His first interaction was with the kids of Mualvûm on 15 March, 1891. The Chief of Mualvûm was Liankunga. It was located 5 miles away to the left coast of Tlawng. It was habited by a house of 500.

⁸ Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, p. 168.

⁹ From the very outset, the British were aware of the presence of large number of arms in the Lushai Hills. As a part of disarming them, surrender of arms was an important demand made by the British to every chief. Chief Lalhrima was made to pay 500 guns and 265 guns were demanded from Kairuma. See., Rev. Zokima, *Mizo Lal Ber – Kairuma Sailo*, Rev. Zokima, Aizawl, 1993, pp. 119-124. (However, this seems to be an exaggeration).

¹⁰ This Act passed by Lord Lytton regulate the manufacturing, possession, sale and carrying of arms. It prohibited the Indians from possession of firearms without proper permit.

¹¹ Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, p. 172

John Shakespear had moderated the confiscation policy when he assumed the charge of Superintendent. He had no doubt that until the “unadministered” tract was explored and disarmed the British authority would be “living in a volcano which may erupt at any moment”.¹² However, Shakespear was against sending punitive expedition to villages suspected of possessing unlicensed firearms. Punitive expedition had inflicted tremendous amount of miseries. It did not spare even the innocent further creating a sense of insecurity and discontentment. The anger that evolved was calculated as far more dangerous than the possession of some unlicensed guns.¹³ Shakespear’s policy of disarmament was carried out by means of establishing permanent police posts. His policy was continued when both North and South Lushai Hills Districts were amalgamated into one administrative unit.¹⁴

Shakespear confiscated every guns and weapons. He marked each and every gun; and issued one gun for a house of ten.¹⁵ He constantly mingled with the people in an attempt to create cordial relations and sense of confidence. The British gradually began to gain the confidence of the Lushais. The Lushais started to cooperate with the British, rather than resisting them.

The British succeeded in their gun control policy. The Lushais gradually began to get accustomed to the practice of licensed guns. Within a year, disarmament policy followed by the British yielded positive result for them.¹⁶ The withdrawal of

¹² Ranju Bezbaruah, *The Pursuit of Colonial Interests in India’s North-East*, Guwahati, EBH Publishers, 2010, p. 111.

¹³ Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), October 1899. Nos. 35-41, *Administrative Report for 1898-1899*,. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram, 1890-1954 (The Bureaucracy and the Chiefs)*, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 2007. p. 48.

¹⁴ The whole of Lushai Hills was united and came under the administration of Assam on 1 April, 1898. The South Lushai Hills was under Chittagong before the amalgamation.

¹⁵ Chhawnmanga, *Mizorama Michengte*, Aizawl, Hnamte Press, 1985, p. 188.

¹⁶ In 1889-1899, there were a total of 844 licensed guns in the Lushai Hills. The number of guns that could be sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner of Assam for the whole district was 1,040. Aizawl division possessed 571 licensed guns. Among these, 32 were in the hands of the sepoys and other foreigners, and the rest 539 were held by the local populace. In the Lunglei Division there were 273 licensed guns. This portrayed the success of the disarmament policy of the British.

unlicensed arms enabled the British their possession of these arms thereby, limiting the arms in the hand of the Lushais.¹⁷

The next step that the British took for colonial consolidation was the reduction of the expenditure on the administration of the Chin-Lushai Hills. This was a means targeted to save the imperial exchequer. During the year 1893-94 to 1896-97 an amount of ₹ 1,040,300 was spent for both the Lushai Hills Districts.¹⁸ An amount of ₹ 2,56,500 was spent for the Chin Hills by the British administration during the same year. The average expenditure spent on the Hills was quite burdensome.

A conference of local officers with an agenda to reduce British expenditure on the Chin-Lushai administration was called at Lunglei. This conference known as the 'Second Chin-Lushai Conference' was held during 14-18 December, 1896.¹⁹ The Conference also discussed the reduction of forces and establishment of the minimum necessary for maintenance of control and consolidation as required. The establishment of good communications, enforcement of tribal responsibilities, and the amalgamation of the North and South Lushai Hills were also discussed at length.²⁰ As a result, the Military Police Battalion was concentrated only in central-strategic position. Isolated and expensive outposts were withdrawn.

¹⁷ Grace R. Lewis, *The Lushai Hills – The Story of the Lushai Pioneer Mission*, London, The Baptist Missionary Society, 1907., p. 21.

¹⁸ A break-up of the expenditure was ₹5,46,300 and ₹4,94,000 for the North Lushai Hills and South Lushai Hills respectively.

¹⁹ It was attended by – Alexander Porteous, Political Officer, North Lushai Hills; R. Sneyd Hutchinson, Superintendent, South Lushai Hills; H. N. Tuck, Political Officer, Chin Hills; and Captain G. H. Loch, Commandant, North Lushai Hills Military Police. Earlier, the final sitting of the First Chin-Lushai Conference was held at Calcutta on 19 January, 1892. It was an attempt to amalgamate the three administrative units of the North Lushai Hills, the South Lushai Hills and the Chin Hills. On the basis of the resolution the North and South Lushai Hills were amalgamated on 1 April, 1898. However, its amalgamation with the Chin Hills was not implemented even though there was no substantive argument against its implementation.

²⁰ Dr. J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram*, p. 49. Sir William Ward, the Chief Commissioner of Assam agreed to take-over the administration of the South Lushai Hills. However, he requested for a certain period as it would give him time for the settlement of financial questions that should be disposed off. He had no doubt that the amalgamation of the Lushai Hills would improve and reduce the expenditure on administration. Ward's request was agreed by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.

The British Government Proclamation No. 978-P of 1 April, 1898 published the Rules of the Administration of the Lushai Hills. The rule was to maintain the principle of internal control of villages by their own leaders i.e., the chiefs.²¹ It was from this that the chiefs emerged as collaborators in the governance and functioning of the colonial empire. This had also greatly reduced the financial strain of the British.

The British decided to continue with the indigenous system of village administration through the chiefs. This was because the aim was effective administration with lesser spending. Minimum presence and interference, respect for traditional laws and customs, and allowing the chiefs to exercise their authority on all local matters were the basic principles of colonial consolidation.

V. 3 Colonial Administration and the Status of the Chiefs

During the period of their long encounter with the Lushais, the British realised the importance of the Lushai chiefs. The British knew the authority that the chiefs had commanded. It reinforced the idea that for the successful colonisation of the Lushai Hills, they would have to win over the chief and ‘collaborate’ with them. Thus, the British were cognizant of the role that could be played by the chiefs for the consolidation of their rule.

John Shakespear had played a prominent role in the conquest and consolidation of the Lushai Hills. In his official capacity, he suggested entrusting local and village responsibilities to the chiefs. In his Administrative Report for 1895-96 he said, “I am convinced that it is better to uphold the government of the chief and to govern through them. With this view, I have submitted proposals for educating the sons of the chiefs.”²²

²¹ Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), July 1898. Nos. 40-62, Proclamation on the Transfer of the South Lushai Hills under the Administration of Assam., Cited in, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 50. Earlier, the whole of Lushai Hills came under the administration of Assam with effect from 1 April, 1898.²¹

²² Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), October 1896. Nos. 28-35, Cited in, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 58.

In consideration of the reduction of expenditure in administration of the Lushai Hills, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal remarked that the Hills must be left to govern themselves according to their own customs. However, this should be subjected to the Political Officer's advice and supervision. Sir Henry Cotton, the Chief Commissioner of Assam supported the idea and considered that any deviation would lead to disastrous results.²³ Cotton further emphasised that the working style should not be independent from the chiefs. It had to be with the recognition of the authority of the chiefs in their own villages and over their own villagers.²⁴ The maintenance of the supremacy of British was consistent with the policy of working through the chiefs. The British were able to run smooth administration with lesser expenditure.

The main object of the British was consolidation of British paramountcy in the Lushai Hills. All administrative machineries were directed towards achieving this end. The maintenance of law and order, administration of justice and the assessment and collection of revenue were indirectly controlled by the British.²⁵ They placed British officers in strategic position with troops to command and control the Lushais.²⁶

The British followed the policy of non-intervention in their governance of the Lushai Hills. R. Rualthansanga gave the reason as, "the intuitive realization of the efficient management and direction in the difficult terrain."²⁷ The chiefs were given freedom in their governance of their own village. This was an efficient tool in the hands of the British in maintaining colonial consolidation. However, the power of the

²³ This substantiated the British contention that severe punishment if render to the chiefs would be counter-productive.

²⁴ Dr. J. Zorema, p. 58

²⁵ Rev. Lalsawma, *Revivals – the Mizo Way*, Aizawl, Rev. Lalsawma, 1994, p. 39.

²⁶ Foreign Department External A Proceedings (FEAP), August 1890, Nos. 221-227, *Note on the Future Managemant of the South Lushai Hills*, dated 12 January, 1890,. Cited in, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 57.

²⁷ R. Rualthansanga, *Traditional and Representative Institution in the Lushai Hills*, Guwahati, EBH Publishers (India), 2015, pp. 54-55

chief was at the mercy of the Superintendent who was a colonial agent. Non-interference in the existing customs paid rich dividends.

Neville Edward Parry wrote about the new position of the chief and its development as – “Unless the authority of the chiefs is maintained, it will be practically impossible to run the district except at a very great expense and with a very much larger staff than at present. Rule by the chiefs is the indigenous form of government and has grown up with the people and suits their need and the chiefs are looked up to and respected. It is desirable, therefore, that in the management of his village a chief shall be given as free hand as possible”.²⁸

The village Chief was held responsible for the behaviour of his villagers. The British never interfered in the orders of the chiefs as long as they performed their duty as colonial agent. They did not interfere even if it went against the abstract idea of justice. The British refused to listen to any appeal against the chief in petty cases as it only diminished the authority of the chief.²⁹ In this way, the British upheld the authority of the chief.

The period of armed intrusion and resistance was over. The colonial goal was consolidation of the empire. Reconciliation with the Lushai chiefs was attempted by the British. To win over the ruling chiefs, the British restored their authority.

The restoration of the power of the chief was not without change. The power of the chief was not absolute as before. They became representatives of the British Crown, in their own land. They are now a puppet in British hand. However, the autonomy enjoyed by the Lushai chiefs was quite high. In this way, the consolidation of colonialism began to ascent.

Lalburha, one of the most powerful chiefs, accepted the territory demarcated by the British in 1898. The British thus maintained, “hegemonic tendency, reinforced

²⁸ N. E. Parry, *A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., 1927, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, p. 3.

²⁹ This can be concluded from the words told by A.W. Davis, Political Officer of the North Lushai Hills to his successor, Alexander Porteous in 1894.

the colonial rule and on the meantime created subjects for the British Empire itself”.³⁰

John Shakespear introduced a system of Circle Administration in 1901-1902.³¹ The Lushai Hills Districts was divided into eighteen circles – eleven in the Aizawl Division and seven in the Lunglei Division. This means all chieftainships were grouped into eighteen circles.³² A Circle Interpreter (C. I.) was appointed for each circle. He was assisted by a Circle Chaprasi (C. C.)³³ They acted as a link between the colonial administrators and the chiefs. The main duty of the C. I. was to see that the decrees and orders issued from the colonial administrative headquarters were promptly attended to.³⁴

The cardinal principle of British colonial administration – governance through local collaborators (the chiefs) – remained intact. The circle staff only formed an intelligent link between the colonial authority and the chiefs. The office of the British superintendent constantly guided and directed the work of the chiefs to ensure the consolidation of the British rule.

The status of the chief dwindled with colonial consolidation. The colonial power allotted land to each chief and that allotted land became the juridical area of

³⁰ R. Lalrinkima, “Subjugation and Hegemony: Understanding British Power in Colonial Mizoram,” *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Vol. XVI, November 2019, p. 25. The chiefs were responsible to construct and maintain inter-village pathways. They were charged with the collection taxes in their own village. Civil and criminal cases were dealt by the Chief’s Council. Only, murder and rape cases were referred to the British Superintendent.

³¹ The new system was a way of wrenching administrative power from the chiefs by the colonial power. The Circle Interpreter (C. I.) as a colonial agent becomes more powerful than the traditional chiefs. They were more respected as the colonial administration was supportive of them. The introduction of *Ramri Lehkha* was a prelude to the introduction of the Circle Administration.

³² However, according to Ruaia, when the Circle Interpreter (C. I.) were appointed on 1 April, 1902 there were only twelve. They were Pasina, Romana, Darsata, Thangchhingpuia, Khuanga, Suaka II, Thangnghinga, Chawngkunga, Siamliana, Taikhuma, Buala Tlau and Taikhuma Paite. See, C. Vanlal Ruaia, *Pipute Rammutna (A Socio-Political Innovation of the Mizo)*, Guwahati, EBH Publishers (India), 2017, pp. 131-132.

³³ C. Vanlal Ruaia, *Pipute Rammutna*, p. 131.

³⁴ The circle staff members had no executive power in relation to the manner in which the chiefs rule their village. They had no executive duty to perform in accordance with orders specifically issued by the Superintendent, the Sub-Divisional Officer, or the Assistant Superintendent acting in his behalf.

the concerned chief. The colonial authority marked off the chief's land and accordingly, each chief was given *ramri lehkha* or boundary document (1901-1902).³⁵ This document leased the land to the chiefs. It demarcated the boundary of different chiefs and the area was made permanent.³⁶ The demarcated areas were placed under the jurisdiction of a Circle Interpreter (C. I.).³⁷ Thus, the British and not the chiefs became the real owner of the land.

The intention of the colonial was to curb the power of large chiefs.³⁸ It was the British design to curb the re-emergence of powerful chiefs that could challenge their authority. The process of colonial consolidation was subtly undertaken by colonial agents. Gradually, the colonial administrator began to gain confidence. Several rights of the Lushai chiefs were later abolished.³⁹ This paved the way for greater consolidation of the British in the Lushai Hills. This in fact turned the Lushai chiefs into a mere stamp-head.

When the British took over the administration of the Lushai Hills, there were about sixty chiefs. The colonial authority appointed a number of new chiefs.⁴⁰ The number of chiefs rose to more than four hundred. These newly appointed chiefs were from the chief's clan or from the commoners. Their succession was not hereditary. When a chief died or was unable to rule, the British selected or appointed who they

³⁵ *Ramri lehkha* is a boundary document which marked the area and boundary of particular chief. The concept of 'boundary' was introduced in the Lushai Hills for the first time by John Shakespear. The chiefs enjoyed their rights within their boundary, but subject to sanctioned by the British Superintendent. For fear of encroaching another chief's jurisdiction, the transfer of villages from one place to another, which was frequent in the past, was greatly diminished.

³⁶ This was a milestone each chief now had an allocated village as their boundary was fixed.

³⁷ C. Vanlal Ruaia, 131.

³⁸ Traditional Lushai chiefs reigned over the area to which they claim was theirs. Great chiefs claimed over a vast territory.³⁸ The sons of the chiefs set up new village after being married. They became tributary chiefs.

³⁹ Right to order capital punishment, right to seize food property of villagers, who wish to transfer allegiance to other chief, proprietary rights over lands, right to tax traders, right to freedom of action in relation to making their sons chiefs under their own jurisdiction, etc. were abolished.

⁴⁰ The introduction of the *ramri lehkha* also resulted in the emergence of nepotism. The British had issued boundary document to chiefs whom they favoured. This had significant impact in the history of the Lushai Hills.

deemed fit would serve their purpose. These new chiefs were called *hnamchawm lal*.⁴¹ Thus, there was multiplication of chieftainship. This ruined the prestige of the institution. It resulted in the emergence of incapable and parasitic chiefs. However, the multiplication of chiefs provided the colonial authority more number of faithful collaborators.

In the execution of their orders, the chiefs were the sole authority. If even a convict made an appeal to the Superintendent, the chief's order was still enforced. Thus, favoritism and nepotism was the rule of the day. The convict even though trailed unfairly had to pay fines in paddy or in cash.⁴² Several chiefs became more parasitic and demanded two or more baskets of paddy, which further increased the burden of the common man. Some chiefs drove out those who could not meet their fines or taxes from their villages. Colonialism degraded the traditional ideals of the Lushai chiefs and encouraged despotic rule.

The British officials often undertook tours of the country. They demanded labour or *kuli* to carry their belongings, provisions and other goods. The labourers also helped them in other necessary works. The demand of labour by the British was made through the chiefs. Thus, it was the chief who demanded labour supply to his subjects for the much disliked foreigners. The people hesitated to work for the Whiteman and thus labours were often forced. And, it was often the case that, this kind of labourers did not get wages. The villagers were forced by the chiefs to perform what was rather regarded as humiliating.

There were also instances in which the chief himself demanded forced labour for his personal gain. The chief demanded labour to build his house, jhum work, and others. When it became too often, it became forced. The common man had less time to devote for the welfare of his family and their livelihood. It only increased the hatred for the chief. The people were unable to vent their anger as the parasitic chiefs

⁴¹ R. Rualthansanga, *Traditional and Representative Institution in the Lushai Hills*, p. 63.

⁴² Chawngsailova, "Colonialism in Mizoram: Early Mizo Society, Colonial Rule and Its Effect," *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Vol. XVI, November 2015, p. 41.

were supported and protected by the superior colonial power. Thus hatred for the chief was concomitant to hatred for the colonial power.

V. 4 *Puma Zai* and Songs of Resistance

The emergence of *puma zai* was the first cultural onslaught that the nascent Christianity had encountered in the Lushai Hills. It ingrained the nostalgia for traditional culture. This nostalgia was enhanced as the Lushais could not comprehend the faith of the Whiteman. It also emerged as a symbol of resistance and highlighted that Lushais tradition had no place in the new system of belief propagated under colonialism.

There were different waves of Christian revivals in the Lushai Hills at different intervals.⁴³ Revivals were an opportune time and a period when Christian preachings were more receptive. It inseminated among the masses an intensified detachment from the temporal world. As a result, the church was on a stronger foundation. However, it started to proscribe Lushais tunes, songs and chants, and everything that was related with the native *sakhua*.⁴⁴

The Christian missionaries discreetly criticised Lushais way of merry-making and leisure as ‘worldly’.⁴⁵ The Christian preaching from its very inception was an attack on *sakhua* or the indigenous faith. However, each revival waves reverberated the multiplication of Christians in the Lushai Hills.

The conflagrated activities of the Christians were a challenge to the authority of the chiefs. The Christians refused to offer sacrifices, stopped drinking with others

⁴³ Each wave was centred on different songs and theme of preaching. The revival of 1906 emphasized on the theological concept of the ‘conviction of sin’. This was moulded to favour the agenda of the missionaries. The surged experienced ‘conviction of sin’ and thereby ‘Divine forgiveness’ ensued with victory over all ‘fallacy’ of the land. The missionaries had banned participation in ‘worldly’ feasts. See., Rev. Lalsawma, *Revivals*, p. 37.

⁴⁴ Rev. Lalsawma, p. 38.

⁴⁵ The Lushais were “for several months of the year they are quite idle” for nature had abundantly supplied their needs. See, *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901 – 1938*, Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Serkawn, 1993, p. 10.

and refused to participate in festivals.⁴⁶ However, there were also many among the ‘new’ Christians who had nostalgia for their traditions. Many could not really discard what had been close to their heart.

One popular Christian song during the revival of 1906 was “Hold the Fort, For I Am Coming.” The chorus in Lushais rendition runs like –

Hold your ground, for I am coming!
*Says the **chief** over there;*
Flash your answer back to heaven,
*Yes we’ll hold our ground!*⁴⁷

This hymn sounded a direct challenge to the chiefs who were much harried by it. Christian congregations were interrupted if they sang this song.

‘Puma’ was a god; *puma zai* means ‘songs of puma’.⁴⁸ It was archetypal of the sacrificial songs offered to Puma by the Biate. The Biate were early settlers of the northern part of the Lushai Hills.⁴⁹ There were also arguments that *puma zai* was brought by the Biate *kuli* who accompanied the two *Vailens*.⁵⁰ There was another version on the origin of *puma zai*.

Puma was a young simpleton who lived in Ratu during the late 18th Century. He used to sing lullaby of his own impromptu composition and tune. They were catchy, humourous and comfortable. His songs were playfully imitated. The

⁴⁶ They thus infringed the power of the chief. The chief could also lose several followers and traditions crumbled in the face of multiplication of Christians. However, every villager was obliged to the chief as they were his citizen.

⁴⁷ The original was a hymn from the American Civil War era. It was composed by Philip P. Bliss (1838-1876) in 1870. The Lushais translation for ‘king’ and ‘chief’ are same i.e., ‘*lal*’. See, Rev. Lalsawma, p. 40.

⁴⁸ Lorrain and Savidge claimed that *puma zai* owed its origin to a man possessed by demons was totally delusive. See, *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901 – 1938*, p. 48.

⁴⁹ Rev. Lalsawma, p. 45; David Lalrina, *Ramhuai be hnam kan ni em?*, Vanlalzapi Ngente, Aizawl, 2016, pp. 80-81.

⁵⁰ David Lalrina, *Ramhuai be hnam kan ni em?*, p. 82.

compositions were altered and the tunes were incorporated in merrymaking and entertainments.⁵¹

Puma zai was complete in two lines. The first line ended with Puma making it seemed like being addressed to Puma. The last syllables of the second lines were repeated. The couplets have the tune of recurrent rhythm. Its easy composition and simple tunes made it receptive to the public. Its spread was thus rapid in the Lushai Hills. The song covered every affairs of life.

The dissemination of puma zai and the excitement it stimulated was beyond comprehension. Rev. Saiaithanga equated it with the ‘flaring quickness of cotton wool flakes.’⁵² The enthusiasm that it created had never been seen before. The songs were sung by ‘every living heads’ in the Lushai Hills.⁵³

The Lushai Hills was subjugated and all forms of resistance dwindled in the 1890s. The hills were filled with eternal gloom when even the granaries were burnt by the superior colonial military might. The jocund Lushais were consequently denied of their freedom and independence. In the midst of the prevailing gloom, puma zai emerged as an effective agent for expressing inborn instinct of leisure and amusement.⁵⁴

The revival of dormant cultural entertainment was hazardous to the nascent Christianity. Puma zai was insidious to the growth Christianity in the Lushai Hills. The Christian missionary, J. M. Loyd called it an anti-Christian song.⁵⁵

The younger sections of the Lushais were especially attracted towards puma zai. Many songs that despised the Christians were composed. The Christians became

⁵¹ Rev. Lalsawma, p. 45.

⁵² Saiaithanga, *Mizo Kohhran Chanchin*, p. 25. Cited in, Rev. Lalsawma, *Revivals – the Mizo Way*, Aizawl, Rev. Lalsawma, 1994, p. 48.

⁵³ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, May 1911*, printed by B. C Das at the Dina Nath Press, Sylhet, published by Mr. A. R Giles, Lushai Hills, p. 95, available at www.archive.org.

⁵⁴ Rev. Lalsawma, p. 48.

⁵⁵ David Lalrina, p. 85.

the centre of contempt and were ridiculed. Thereafter, many new converts were lured back to the indigenous ways of social amusement and feasts.⁵⁶

Puma zai underwent transformation and modification through the poet, Hmarrawna (Awithangpa).⁵⁷ The two-line song was transformed into a three-line song. The name ‘puma’ was dropped and the very name was also changed to *tlanglâm zai*.

In Lushai festivals, dances and singing, the dancer was a single person in the middle of a circle of singers. With puma zai, the songs were sung by all the dancers and singers. Anyone can alternate his/her part as singer or dancer. Two famous songsters of *tlanglâm zai* were Thanghniangi from the village of Letzakaia and Rangthuami from the village of Vanphunga of the South.⁵⁸

Puma zai also influenced the Lushai Labour Corps who went ashore to fight the Great War in France. They had composed many songs of puma zai (*tlanglâm zai*). Some of them are –⁵⁹

i. “*German râl tawn chu keimahni,*

Chhim a nghing e, hmar tlang kawl rawn a deng e,

Fam turin a ngen e, vâl zawng zawng.”

(“We are the one who face the Germans,

The south trembles, bang the northern horizon,

They pray to sacrifice, the life of every comrade.”)

⁵⁶ *Pum Zai* was given a death blow by the *mautam* (bamboo blight) that had occurred in 1911-1912. The multiplication of rats had resulted in the failure of paddy in the jhums. Entertainments or feasts could no longer occur in the face of low agricultural productivity. This in turn made the people to seek refuge in God, i.e. Christianity. The second Christian revival came about in the Lushai Hills in the wake of this *mautam*.

⁵⁷ Rev. Lalsawma, p. 47. Several modern writers including Rev. Lalsawma recorded the real name of Awithangpa as Hmarlutvunga. However, *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu* mentioned his real name as Hmarrawna. This is taken to be the most authentic. See, *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, June 1911*, p. 124. *Tlang* – public, *lam* – dance, *zai* – song/singing.

⁵⁸ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, June 1911*, p. 124.

⁵⁹ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, August 1917*, pp. 116-177.

ii. *“Hnam tin nau ang tah na thleng ta e,
Sap pui dar fêng an famna German dai a,
Awi! ka di lung rûn ka phal love.”*
(“Arrive the wail of every nation,
Death at German barrier for those dress British,
Awi ! my beloved, I reckon not.”)

V. 5 Christian Missions, Revivalism and Resistance

As mentioned earlier, the Lushais responded fiercely against the intrusion of foreign invaders. After conquest, the British colonialists concentrated on consolidating their rule in the Hills. The ‘colonial might’ was not always applicable. They had to chalk out measures for long-term consolidation and domination.

One tool used by the British efficiently for maintaining this dominance was the ‘cultural technology of rule’. They would raise the indigenes up from their ‘low’ state and give them their religion. They would educate the Lushais by teaching them the English ways. The British washed the prevalent thoughts of the indigenous society and modified or replaced them with their own. To achieve this, they had conveniently employed missionaries and education. These tools arrived in the Hills on the heels of the British military forces. However, the education imparted was not of high standard. The Lushais received education up to the level that made them submissive to the imperial agents.

On their part, the Lushais regarded the British forces and the missionaries as foreigner and intruders as well. They treated both with disdain. The British imperialist policy included the missionaries as agent. The first missionary, Rev. William Williams was given security and shelter by the Superintendent of Lushai Hills.⁶⁰ However, due to the prevailing scorn for the Whiteman and the resistance

⁶⁰ On his way from Chângsil to Aizawl, Rev. Williams was escorted by Captain Williamson and Robert McCabe, the Superintendent. Rev. William Williams was the fourth Wales missionary stationed in Shella, Khasi Hills. He was 28 years old when he first reached Shella in 1887. In 1890 he

rendered, Williams could not convince anyone.⁶¹ Having lost all hope, he returned to the Khasi Hills where he previously worked.⁶²

The two other pioneers Christian missionaries of the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) – James Herbert Lorrain (Pu Buanga) and Federick William Savidge (Sâp Upa) met in an evangelistic crusade held at New Zealand Baptist Mission in Brahmanbaria (Chittagong).⁶³ During their stay in Chittagong, they got to interact with the Lushais.⁶⁴ Their requests to enter the Lushai Hills were rejected several times. They were given permission to stay in the British military post near the foot of the Hills which was 80 miles upriver .i.e. Samat (Kassalong).⁶⁵ Anxiety was prevalent among the British citizens as Grace R. Lewis wrote that the “country had not quieted down after the Expedition of 1888-90”.⁶⁶

visited Rev. Pengwern Jones who was stationed in Sylhet. The two friends visited Sylhet jail where they interacted with Lushais chiefs. Williams and his friends reached Aizawl on 20 March, 1891. They left Aizawl on 17 April, 1891. He was filled with the desire to preach the Gospel among the Lushais. However, he unfortunately died on 21 April, 1892. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, pp. 160-173.

⁶¹ The Lushais were not yet willing to accept the faith of the White intruders. J. M Lloyd reproduced an incident experienced by Williams where British forces were ambushed by the Lushai *pasalthas*. See., J. M. Lloyd, *Harvest in the Hills*, Aizawl, Synod Publication Board, (Reprinted as *History of the Church in Mizoram*), 1991, p.19; Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 169. This particular incident occurred at Rokaiaabâwk, now known as Ropaiabâwk. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 169.

⁶² This exploration of Rev. William Williams was regarded by Rev. C.L. Hminga as ‘the prelude to the coming of the Gospel’. See, C. L. Hminga, *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, Serkawn, Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1987, p. 47. The condition in the Mizo country was so unsettled in pre-1893 that it was not possible to enter without adequate military escorts. Williams has the honour to be the first Christian missionary to set foot on the soil of Mizoram.

⁶³ J. H. Lorrain was Scottish, while F. W. Savidge was English. .H. Lorrain was a young telegraphist in the London Post Office before he left his job in December 1890. F.W. Savidge was a graduate and a school teacher before he joined the Arthington Aborigine Mission. However, the catalysts for the emergence of Christian missionaries in the Lushai Hills were the Welsh revivals of the nineteenth century. See, Rev. Lalsawma, pp. 8-18. Brahmanbaria was not far from Agartala. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 175.

⁶⁴ Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 184.

⁶⁵ There was Bawrkawlh nearer to the Hills, which could be reached by steamer. However this was not a military post. Lorrain and Savidge were warned that they will be detained even if, they cross one mile from the military post. Samat was an important trading mart too. The military post was set-up by T. H. Lewin when he was a Deputy Commissioner. Lorrain and Savidge were estimated to have reached Samat on February, 1892. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, pp. 179-181.

⁶⁶ Grace R. Lewis, *The Lushai Hills*, p. 9.

The Lushais' detest for the alien intruders was so strong that perturbation occurred frequently.⁶⁷ Fresh troubles broke out and the British had to send an escort to bring Lorrain and Savidge back to safety.⁶⁸ They were moved to Rangamati. Thus, it would seem that the route to Lushai Hills was forever closed for Lorrain and Savidge. After a year, a license to enter the Lushai Hills was finally issued to them.⁶⁹ Lorrain and Savidge set out from Silchar on 26 December, 1893 to start their mission in the Lushai Hills. They reached Aizawl on 11 January, 1894. On their arrival, they paid a courtesy visit to the commanding British officer who received them graciously.⁷⁰

The colonial authority stood forth with their imperialist policy.⁷¹ They were not involved beyond the bare necessity of 'the maintenance of law and order'. Education was regarded as a field of government's investment – an important aid for colonial consolidation. However, steps taken by the colonial government was very meagre. This does not connote that the secular and religious agents of British imperialism were always at loggerhead. It rather was the missionaries who had come on the heels of the British military conquerors and wholeheartedly impart education to the Lushais.⁷²

Beside the practice of healing through western medicine, the missionaries used education as an instrument for attracting the 'heathen natives'. Thus, much effort was made to establish schools and after a few months of their arrival, Lorrain

⁶⁷ Because of the repercussion of the Second *Vailen*, the Lushais ceased to visit the British trading marts. Even if a few of them goes, they ignored to see any Whiteman. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 182.

⁶⁸ This was because of the report that the British military post at Samat will be attacked by the Lushai *pasalthas*. See, Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, p. 183.

⁶⁹ Lorrain and Savidge made a promised not to embarrass the British government in any way. They were made to understand that no official help should be sought or offered.

⁷⁰ The officer reminded them that he was ordered not to help them. And, he cannot do anything for them but that they can go anywhere they choose.

⁷¹ The essence of the British Government policy, in the Lushai Hills was not to deeply involved in the local affairs.

⁷² The colonial authority opined that due the durable peace that prevailed in the Hills, it was more a necessity for them to support the missionaries in their venture.

and Savidge started the first school at McDonald Hill, Aizawl on 2 April, 1894. Schools were established as a part of the proselytisation process, and thereby a tool for colonial control.

Mission schools taught Christian doctrines with reading and writing. A degree in formal educational institutions became a path for entry into government jobs. Christian teachings gradually percolated to the masses. And thus, they became more inclined to the Whiteman's faith i.e., Christianity. The forces of colonial resistance began to crumble in the face of a larger imperial agenda.

The British themselves accepted the importance of education for colonial mastery. The Superintendent, Anthony Gilchrist McCall (1931-1943) wrote, "...the belief that education and Christianity were a passport to salaried jobs, relief from the wearisome toil of cultivating a hard land. Education has constituted a means to dead end, the salaried job".⁷³ However, entry or acceptance of government job implied being servile to the foreign authority. Submission or slavish nature of the indigenous people was what the imperial agenda calculated to achieve. It was held that a traditional society would not withstand an imperial agenda for long.

In 1904, Sir Joseph Bamfylde Fuller, the Chief Commissioner instructed the Superintendent to hand over the education in the Lushai Hills to the missionaries.⁷⁴ Rev. Edwin Rowlands (Zosaphara) of Welsh Presbyterian Mission was appointed as Honorary Inspector of Schools of Aizawl Division in April 1904. In February 1905, education in Lunglei Sub-Division was transferred to the hands of the Baptist Mission with F. W. Savidge as the Honorary Inspector. Annual grants of ₹ 2,030 and ₹ 1,440 were given to mission schools at Aizawl and Lunglei respectively.⁷⁵

⁷³ A. G. McCall, *The Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Reprint, 2003, p. 205.

⁷⁴ Dr. J. Zorema, p. 68. Fuller visited the mission schools in Aizawl and Lunglei and was impressed by the management and progress made by the schools. Three Government Schools were opened at Aizawl, Lunglei and Tlabung by the colonial government in 1893 to educate the children of British sepoy and other employees.

⁷⁵ The establishment of schools by the missionaries was supported by the colonial authority.

Despite intense efforts, progress in the field of education was slow. The Lushais' detest for the *vai* was still strong. The slightest excuse was enough to keep the children away from school. No amount of persuasion was enough to enroll the children. However, the alteration of opinion regarding colonial education was a gradual process.

The missionaries had the support of the colonial bureaucracy. Infrastructures and facilities were provided to them for education.⁷⁶ In order to increase enrollment, the Superintendent made grants to the reluctant parents. Parents were exempted from 'labour work' during the time of their children at school. Two attendants (and their family) of the school and its building were also exempted.

The Superintendent tempted those who passed Class IV (Upper Primary School Examinations) for a special class by exempting them from impressed labour. At the request of J. H. Lorrain, Christians were also exempted from forced labour. Hence, in order to escape forced labour, many joined school and embraced Christianity. In this way, education had been used as a means to attract the Lushais to Christianity. It was not doctrine but escapism from forced labour that made Christianity appealing.

However, the colonial authority put a barrier on higher education. They wanted the Lushais only to attain a protected educational growth of up to primary level only. The British colonial government was reluctant to open a high school. Establishment of educational school above primary level was never encouraged but forbidden.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Granville Henry Loch was the Commander at Fort Aizawl for 23 years, i.e. from 1891 to 1914. He was much helpful to the pioneer missionaries. Again, when D. E. Jones reached Aizawl on 30 August 1897, he settled with Loch. He helped him built the Mission Bungalow at Mission Veng, Aizawl. He later gave a free supply of water to the Bungalow. In 1902, he aided Jones in building a new Mission's school with ₹1,000. In 1914, he contributed ₹1,300 for buying treadle operated printing machine. He erected memorial stone of three pioneer missionaries at McDonal Hill (Thingui Huan), Aizawl in 1915. See, Lalhruitluanga Ralte, pp. 317-330. However, there were instances that the missionaries and the colonial authority clashes on certain issues. An example stated can be on the issue of Bâwi and the Kelkang Revival of the 1930s.

⁷⁷ Rev. Zairema, *God's Miracle in Mizoram*, Aizawl, Synod Press and Bookroom, 1978, p. 23

Given that converting the Lushais was their main mission, the missionaries seem satisfied as long as their students could read the Bible and other gospels. Perhaps preventing the Lushais to be ‘too educated’ was another reason for forbidding the opening of higher education. While providing salaried job was used as a means of attracting the Lushais to western education, the ‘native people’ were merely trained to be capable of holding lower levels of administration. However, it cannot be denied that the introduction of school education had given birth to what A. G. McCall called, ‘articulate Lushai’.⁷⁸

One of the consequences of the education was the weakening of traditional practices. The missionaries euphemistically interfered in the traditional belief system of the people. The Lushais began to undermine their own traditional values and cultures.⁷⁹ The introduction of western medicine discouraged sacrifices to both ‘good’ and ‘evil’ spirits. The traditional *puithiam* (priest/diviner) now had less work to do. The growth of western education incrementally supported Christianity. With the acceptance of Christian doctrine, the Lushais began to give up their old obligations, customary laws and traditional beliefs.

The propagation of the new faith in the Lushai Hills was not without any resistance. Any Whiteman was not perceived well in the Lushai Hills. The Welsh Presbyterian missionaries Rev. David Evan Jones (Zosaphluia) and Rev. Edwin Rowlands (Zosaphthara) were often called or addressed as ‘white fools’ or ‘white vagabonds’.⁸⁰ The White missionaries only attracted children rather than adults.⁸¹ Their preachings were interrupted with antics and inhibited questions.⁸² Jones was

⁷⁸ A. G. McCall, *The Lushai Chrysalis*, p. 197.

⁷⁹ This was an important instrument in the maintenance of colonial consolidation.

⁸⁰ They landed in the Lushai Hills on 31 December, 1898. From 1900, Rowlands took charge of education while Jones took charge of Church administration.

⁸¹ C. L. Hminga, *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, p. 58.

⁸² Some of the questions were, “How much did you pay for your watch?” Or, “Where did you get your shirt?” and so on. See, Rev. Lalsawma, p. 22.

nicknamed *angpûka* or gibberish for his long monologue.⁸³ The Lushais were not well responsive to the Whiteman's faith.⁸⁴

The opposition to the Christian Gospel was vibrant in the Lushai Hills.⁸⁵ There were numerous cases of persecution of those who were 'bewitched' by the Christian missionaries. The inhumane treatments faced by the Christians of Khandaih (Phullen) and Pukpui were well recorded.⁸⁶ Vanphunga's (Chief of Khandaih) pattern of persecution was emulated by other chiefs.⁸⁷ It was the trend in the whole Lushai Hills.

Vanphunga did not want to draw blood as he wanted to avoid the watchful eye of the colonial master. Christian meetings and services were obstructed and they were beaten to disperse. The impressed labour demanded by the colonial authority befell on the Christians, especially if it was on Sunday.⁸⁸ On a convenient pretext, Christians were levied fines by the chief. They were to supply chicken, eggs, pork, and others when the village had guests. If they could not supply, rice amounting to their value was collected from their granaries. Young girls were stripped, men beaten, tied to the post and cold water poured on them.⁸⁹ Many Christians were

⁸³ Rev. Lalsawma, p. 22.

⁸⁴ In the first census of India that was conducted in 1901 there were 45 Christians altogether in the Lushai Hills.

⁸⁵ *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901 – 1938*, p. 9.

⁸⁶ Vanphunga was the eldest son of Pawibawia. They were seven brothers. Khandaih with Vanphunga as its chief consisting of 400 families was one of the largest village. C. L. Hminga, pp. 59-62 ; Rev. Lalsawma, pp. 38-42. However, according to Vanchhunga, Vanphunga was the Chief of Zâwngin. See, Vanchhunga, p. 167.

⁸⁷ Rev. Lalsawma, pp. 38-42.

⁸⁸ Sunday is regarded as sacred by the Christian. It is observe as a non-working day with reverence, prayer and mass.

⁸⁹ A youngman, Chalbuanga was severely beaten at Khandaih that he could not survive his wound. He was the first Christian martyr in Mizoram. Out of option, his widowed mother and sisters migrated to Hmunhmeltha in the East. A Church at Hmunhmeltha was started in 1906 by these migrants 'new' Christians. They were the source of the second revival that had started in 1912.

expelled without warning even in the middle of the night.⁹⁰ They were not given a place for *jhum* (swidden agriculture).⁹¹

The Christians submitted several complaints to the Christian Mission Centre at Aizawl. Rev. Jones with some friends went to Khandaih, making plea to the chief and his brothers.⁹² However, their entire request went unheeded.

In Pawlrang, green cowdung were forcefully pressed into the mouths of the Christians.⁹³ Chief Thangkama of Sihfa found pleasure in torturing the Christians. He used to lay hands on any Christians, Lushais and foreigners alike. In Dorâwta's Saitual, they used to throw big stones on the roof where Christian congregations were held.⁹⁴ The Chief of Lailak, Lalruaia refused to feed Christian preacher. He went before the *tlângau* (village crier) and announced that anyone who fed a mission worker was liable to be fined.⁹⁵ Sairûma, son of Lalhrima (Serchhip) was also a tormentor of the Christians. He devised his ways of tormenting the Christians while supportive of the colonial administrators.⁹⁶

The early Christians at Pukpui village were punished as they did not perform their duty allocated by the chief on Sundays. Their leader Thankunga was jailed.⁹⁷

⁹⁰ Rev. Lalsawma, pp. 40-42.

⁹¹ Vanchhunga, p. 167.

⁹² Vanphunga was a great Chief with many tributary villages surrounding his village. His brothers rule in one of his tributary villages.

⁹³ Rev. Lalsawma, p. 43. The first wave of revivals that had occurred in 1906 had reached Pawlrang in 1908. Continuous singing, loud thumping of floor at the beat, babel of voices which arose in prayers, etc. were tenets of the revivals. These were found noisy by the Chief, Chinhleia. By the time of the First Revival, the native drum – *khuang* was not yet in used in Christian congregation.

⁹⁴ They were fortunate that no one was injured. Later, the chief himself embraced Christianity. See, Vanchhunga, p. 168.

⁹⁵ Vanchhunga, pp. 167-168.

⁹⁶ Vanchhunga, p. 204.

⁹⁷ In 1906, Rev. D. E. Jones in Aizawl and Rev. J. H. Lorrain in Lunglei decided to send a delegation of 11 persons to the assembly meeting of the Presbyterian Church in Mairang, Khasi Hills. Thangkunga was one member from the South. Others member of the delegation from the South were Parima, Zathanga and Lenga. The seven members from the North were Chawnga, Thanga, Khuma and Vanchhunga. Three female delegates were also there, Siniboni (a Khasi and the leader), Pawngi and Thangkungi. They ventured with high hope of receiving the Holy Spirit through Revival. They left Mairang on 9 April, 1906. On their, returned they stopped for Sunday at Sylhet. In Sylhet, they were

The new Christian converts were expelled from the village. However, they were given a new settlement site at Sethlun in 1902 by the colonial government.⁹⁸

Several parents threatened and punished their children for attending schools. Villagers persuaded the boys not to attend schools and mingle with the missionaries. Several of the older boys were sent as labourers to wean them away from the influence of the missionaries. False reports on the mission workers were often dispatched to the colonial authority.⁹⁹

Most chiefs were hostile to the doctrines of the missionaries because they were disruptive elements for the prevailing social fabric, even though the military might of the Whiteman subdued them and were not willing to give in to their faith. They were ready to resist the doctrine that challenged their already limited existence.

On the other hand, the rate at which the Christian faith was accepted in the Lushai Hills was incredible.¹⁰⁰ The foremost reason for the fast spread of Christianity in the Hills could be the simple way in which the Christian doctrine was intertwined with local beliefs.¹⁰¹

encouraged by Rev. Pengwern Jones who preached tearfully with great force. Notwithstanding this, Rev. Jones was named 'Dangawka' (Stammerer) by the Lushais. See, Lalsawma, p. 34. The early Khasi Christians were of great help to the spread of Christianity in the Lushai Hills. Most of them served the colonial government and some accompanied the pioneer missionaries. See, Upa Dr. Lalthanliana, 'Zoram Chanchin Tha Puangtu Hmasa Khasi Christain-te', *Kristian Tlangau*, Bu 1096-na, February 2004, pp. 19-21; *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, June 1912* p. 104.

⁹⁸ This is remarkable as it was the only case where the colonial authority had given refuge for the persecuted early Christians. See, C. L. Hminga, p. 62. However, Lorrain and Savidge stated that the village was founded by the villagers themselves. See, *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901 – 1938*, p. 7. Anyhow, Sethlun was known as *Pathian Veng* (God's village) and the earliest Church in the Lushai Hills was built. See, Rev. Lalsawma, p. 51.

⁹⁹ C. L. Hminga, pp. 59-62.

¹⁰⁰ The first census in the Lushai Hills was conducted in 1901. The total population of Lushai Hills was 82,434. The Christians contribution to this was a mere 45, which include 5 White colonial officials. As recorded by Vanchhunga, out of the remaining 40, 13 were Khasi Christians. The two other non-Lushai Christians were the missionaries, D. E. Jones and Edwin Rowlands. See, Upa Dr. Lalthanliana, *Kristian Tlangau*, pp. 19-21; Among the Lushai Christians, the only married men were Phaisâma, Vanchhunga, Lianphunga, Thankunga of Sethlun and Hausâtlova of Puansen. See, Vanchhunga, p. 286. By the end of 1905, there were only 90 Christians including the non-Lushais in the North Lushai Hills. See, Rev. Lalsawma, p. 38.

¹⁰¹ Others could be the successive waves of Christian revivalism which had occurred in 1906, 1913, 1918 and 1929-1930.

The indigenous *sakhua* or religious concept was equated with those of Christianity. The *pathian* in Lushais *sakhua* was equated with the Christian *Pathian* (God), *pialral* was equated with ‘paradise’ which was called *vanram*. The complicated Christian teleologies were thus reduced to the language of the people.

Rev. Zathanga, who had become a Christian in 1902, recollected the message delivered by Rev. Jones, “Believe in ‘*Pathian*’ Jehovah and worship Him, then you don’t need to sacrifices to the demons any more. Even when you die you shall go to *pialral*.”¹⁰² Many Lushais became Christian because they were afraid of *hremhmun*, which was literally a ‘place of punishment’ (hell). Many people converted because they no more needed to perform sacrifices to cure their sickness.¹⁰³

The content of Christian teaching was salvation through belief in *Pathian* who had power all over evil spirits. This implicated freedom from sacrifices which at times was costly for the common man. A passage to *pialral* in an afterlife was the highest desire of every Lushais. This could be achieved only after the coveted *thangchhuah*, which in turn could only be attained by the wealthy and the *pasaltha*. These were well beyond the grasp of the common man. This made many people enrolled as *Pathian thuawi*, which was a term used for the Christians.¹⁰⁴

The over simplification of the teleologies also made the Lushais Christianity entrenched in frail foundation of Christian doctrine. It was rather intertwined and moulded within the framework of traditional belief system. So, whenever Christianity was reinforced by revivalism, there was a yearning for traditional cultural norms.¹⁰⁵ Thus, these revivalisms often had strong stance of indigenous affinity which implicated fervor of resistance to colonial domination. The traditional fabric of the Lushais society was not yet completely crushed.

¹⁰² C. L. Hminga, p. 62.

¹⁰³ Becoming Christian does not imply that they were well entrenched in the Christian doctrine. Western medicine was also a tool used by the missionaries to convert the Lushais.¹⁰³ The miracle performed by medicine drew many Lushais closer to the missionaries. See., *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901 – 1938*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁰⁴ It literally means, ‘those who obey the word of *Pathian*’.

¹⁰⁵ There were waves of Christian revivals in the Lushai Hills in 1906, 1913, 1919 and 1929-1930.

The Kelkang Revival of 1937-1938 was one which was well recorded by colonial officials and Church elders.¹⁰⁶ In this revival there was absolute frenzy among the *mihlim* or *hlimsang* or revivalists to overthrow the colonial government.¹⁰⁷ Prophetic announcements were common. They claimed that days were numbered for those who opposed the 'spirit' including Chief Liannawla and colonial officials including the Superintendent.¹⁰⁸

It was firmly established by the Superintendent Major McCall that the revivalist believed that "Italy and England would go to war and the result would be that Great Britain would be subdued."¹⁰⁹ They claimed that a great war – Armageddon- would occur on 1 P.M., 13.01.1938. In this war, *Kumpinu Sorkar* or Great Britain would be subdued and all the people would perish.¹¹⁰ The people of Kelkang, however, would be full of 'spirit'.¹¹¹ This 'spirit' spoke through leaders like Thanghnuai, Pasina and others.

¹⁰⁶ This was because of the harsh interference of the colonial authority. See, Rev. Lalsawma, p. 198. The proceedings of the Court in regards to the Kelkang Revival of 1937-1938 were well collected and documented by Upa C. Lalchawimawia. He had collected every minute detail of several proceedings and published it. See, Upa C. Lalchawimawia, *Kelkang Hlimpui leh Khaw Danga Harhna (1937-1938)*, Aizawl, Upa C. Lalchawimawia, 2012.

¹⁰⁷ The Lushais word *rui* or 'bemuse' could be aptly apply to the mental state of the *mihlim/hlimsang*. The frenzy was such that one full month starting from 12 August to the day preceding the arrival of the Superintendent on 12 September was spent in feasting and dancing excitements. See, Rev. Lalsawma, p. 199.

¹⁰⁸ Rev. Lalsawma, p. 200. Liannawla, Chief of Kelkang was the younger son of Nikuala, who was a hero of colonial resistance in the Lushai Hills

¹⁰⁹ Judgement in case No. 35 of 1937, Quoted in., Upa C. Lalchawimawia, *Kelkang Hlimpui leh Khaw Danga Harhna*, pp. 32-45. A. G. McCall was the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills for 11 years, i.e. from 1932 to 1943. His view was that the Missions should be subservient to the administration even in religious matters. He had blamed the Missions for the Kelkang upheaval.

¹¹⁰ As the people – the Christians assumed that the perish of mankind was coming forth, they abandoned their jhums and other works. They feasted by killing animals, sing and dance all-day long. They said that the messages were conveyed to them by *Pathian*. They held that by December rice would fall from heaven for the people. It was in September, 1939 that the Second War World had occurred. It may have resulted in the fall and defeat of Great Britain, if it was otherwise. However, in one way Great Britain stands defeated as it had lost all of its colonies after the War.

¹¹¹ The revivalists claimed that some policemen would reach Kelkang and there would be seven place of refuge. Those who could not reach there would be caught, sent to war and would die. There was nothing to be worried, except failure to live up to the 'will of the spirit'.

It was the anxiousness to be liberated from the alien colonial control that made the people dream of or prophesied the fall of Great Britain. They did not allow any missionary, pastor or anyone else to preach in the Church unless they were appointed by the ‘spirit’.¹¹²

The Kelkang *mihlim* claimed that they spoke in the language of the ‘spirit’. This was regarded by the colonial government as an open defiance of the C. I. and the colonial authority.¹¹³ The colonial authority accused the Kelkang revivalist of blasphemy against Her Majesty – the British Queen. The revivalists were filled with the ‘spirit’ that they feared none – the Chief, the Superintendent, the Parliament or the Mission, who were symbols of colonial subjugation. The Kelkang *mihlim* envisioned that, “ten kingdoms in the beginning of next year will unite against the British and will subdue Britain.”¹¹⁴

There was even an attempt on the life of the Superintendent – the main agent of colonialism. Knowing the report on the march of the Superintendent, Pasina advocated and planned their future course in the Church.¹¹⁵ This was hatched on the very night before the Superintendent arrived at Kelkang. He said that when he was to appear before the Superintendent, he would irritate him – dance and tremble. And when the Superintendent became angry he would knock him down and this would be a signal to assault the Superintendent. If the Superintendent was killed, no one would be responsible as the killing would have been done by the public. It would not matter how much they hit the Whiteman. It further would not matter what they would do after the incident.¹¹⁶ They were not afraid as the ‘spirit’ was with them. The *mihlim*

¹¹² Kelkang came under the Chawnchhim Pastorate or District. The late Rev. P. D. Sena was incharge of the whole pastorate. He did not get out of his way in welcoming the revival excitement. See, Rev. Lalsawma, p. 200.

¹¹³ Mr. Kapchhingvunga was the C. I. during this period. See, Rev. Lalsawma, p. 201.

¹¹⁴ High Court Criminal No. (M) 83 (old No. 61), See, Upa C. Lalchawimawia, pp. 117-120.

¹¹⁵ Pasina was later arrested by surprise.

¹¹⁶ From the Recording Disposition of the Examination of Liannawla Zahao, Chief of Kelkang, available in Upa C. Lalchawimawia, pp. 87-95.

or *hlimsang* were not afraid of gun and had no fear. They believed that misfortune would befall anyone that contested the 'spirit'.

The Superintendent heard the report on the uncontrollable situation at Kelkang on 2 September, 1937.¹¹⁷ It was reported to the colonial authority by Lianhranga, the main *upa* of Kelkang village.¹¹⁸ The Superintendent left for Kelkang from Fort Aizawl on 4 September, 1937 with twelve personnel of First Battalion Assam Rifles.¹¹⁹ The march of the Superintendent was kept in secret. However, Kelkang got to hear of the Superintendent's approach on Friday night i.e. 10 September, 1937. The spies that were dispatched by the colonial government warned the Superintendent of the situation and the danger on his life. The Superintendent received the warning in the afternoon of Saturday, 11 September, 1937. A secret order was given that the Superintendent would march after midnight to arrive in Kelkang at dawn. The change in course was taken in order to reach Kelkang by surprise. The colonial forces reached the village at 6 A.M. The Superintendent immediately seized all the guns and the three main accused were taken into custody.¹²⁰ When the accused had been taken into custody by the police, the villagers started to gather and pressed forward in a surly and insolent manner. The colonial forces tried to break the crowd but they were disinclined to disperse. McCall himself wrote that this was, "very unusual behavior for a Lushai village".¹²¹

In the Kelkang revival, non-Christians of the village were less affected. As mentioned before, this revival resulted in the increase of Christian population in the

¹¹⁷ McCall called on Rev. E. L. Mendus at the Mission Bungalow in Aizawl. He apprised Mendus of the situation in Kelkang. Mendus pleaded that he, and not him, go to Kelkang to settle the matter. McCall was furious and even declined the chair offered to him. He enunciated that the Mission had failed in their policy. The situation had worsened that only the civil administration could handle it. See, Lalsawma, p. 206.

¹¹⁸ However, according to Rev. Lalsawma the matter was reported by the chief by despatching special messenger to the Superintendent at Aizawl. See, Rev. Lalsawma, p. 202.

¹¹⁹ Judgement in case No. 35 of 1937, cited in., Upa C. Lalchawimawia, pp. 32-45.

¹²⁰ Judgement in case No. 35 of 1937, cited in., Upa C. Lalchawimawia, pp. 32-45.

¹²¹ McCall was not yet familiar with the significance of nature of the villagers as he had not yet started his enquiry. Later he had examined seventy witnesses of which thirty-nine were defence witnesses either directly or by their declining to state what they knew. Upa C. Lalchawimawia, p. 35.

village. About one-third of the villagers were already Christians and due to this revival their number increased to two-third.¹²²

Thereafter, the whole village was punished by the colonial government.¹²³ All guns were seized and house tax was paid at double rates for the year. The villagers had to do six days free or unpaid punishment of labour work at Aizawl. Women revivalists who had enjoyed remission of revenue were made to pay along with arrears. Liannawla, the Chief of Kelkang, was accused of incompatibility of not fulfilling his duty as responsible leader of the village.¹²⁴ He was fined ₹60 or two *sial* (gayal or mithun).¹²⁵

The ring leaders Thanghnuai Ralte, Pasina Pawi and Thanzinga Pawi were arrested for default of security under Section 110 Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).¹²⁶ They were sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment in Aizawl Jail.¹²⁷ They were later transferred to Sylhet.¹²⁸ However, their punishment was remitted on their “express condition that they refrain from any public exhibition of worship or preaching any form of religion whatsoever.”¹²⁹ Any breach of their term made them liable to be re-arrested and re-transferred to Sylhet.¹³⁰ They reached back

¹²² From the Recording Disposition of the Examination of Liannawla Zahau, Chief of Kelkang, available in Upa C. Lalchawimawia, pp. 87-95.

¹²³ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, October 1937*, pp. 151-152.

¹²⁴ Liannawla was the younger son of Nikuala, who was a hero of colonial resistance in the Lushai Hills.

¹²⁵ In the words of McCall Chief Liannawla was ‘an old-world Chief of the old type.’ See, Rev., p. 202.

¹²⁶ The main heading of this section of the code is, “Security for good behaviour from habitual offenders”.

¹²⁷ *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, October 1937*, p. 150.

¹²⁸ Rev. Lalsawma, p. 198; Upa C. Lalchawimawia, pp. 46-48.

¹²⁹ Their sentenced to 10 years imprisonment was reduced to 10 months in Sylhet. This was done at the intervention of His Excellency, the Governor, Robert Reid. Fifteen years banishment of two persons from Kelkang was waived. The native drums returned to the Church. The Governor advised McCall not to interfere too much in the matters of the Church again. See., Rev. Lalsawma, pp. 206-207.

¹³⁰ The prisoners were forthwith released from the Sylhet Jail, where they were in custody. See., Orders of the Governor of Assam, Dated the 28th July 1938, in Upa C. Lalchawimawia, pp. 59-61.

Kelkang on 27 August, 1938. The manner in which the revival was quelled showed that it was treated as an upheaval.¹³¹ It portrayed that the colonial government was stern in dealing with any form of resistance to its authority.

The first propagator of Kelkang revivalism Thanghnuai Ralte, a man of thirty-six years old, stayed away from his home since September 1936. This was because of his desire to serve more people. He was accused by the Magistrate McCall for abandoning his family for so long that his wife had to ask the Superintendent to search all over the Lushai Hills. He was asked, “Did Christ abandon a wife and children he was pledged to support?” He answered, “Christ said unless one hates his own life and his family he is not worthy to be my disciple”.¹³²

Pasina was brought before Magistrate of the First Class McCall on 17 September, 1937.¹³³ He was asked, “Does that include abandoning your wife and family whom you have undertaken to support?” His replied was, “It will depend on the spirit. St. Peter also left his home and parents. I do not know if he had a wife. Christ had no wife”. Another question asked to him was, “Does possessing the Holy Spirit require a person to tremble and shake and jump about like a monkey in the bamboos?” He answered, “In the Lushai Hills those who claim to have the Holy Spirit used to tremble and dance but in civilized countries they do not tremble and dance but they have joy in their hearts, so the Holy Spirit works according to the country”.¹³⁴ He adumbrated that dancing together of five hundred people occurred twenty years ago.

¹³¹ All Church members above the age of 15 were interrogated. The ring leaders were put in chains at the P. W. D Inspection Bungalow (I. B.) a mile down south of the village. Curfew was imposed for the judgement days which lasted for six days. See., Rev. Lalsawma, p. 203.

¹³² Form of Recording Examination of Accused, Thanghnuai Ralte, in Upa C. Lalchawimawia, pp. 74-79.

¹³³ Pasina, a man of forty years old, and leader of the revivalist affirmed that a person filled with the spirit must look to improve his family and village life. He must do all good things and whatever the ‘spirit’ directs. One good thing for him was not to be afraid of anyone and to resist the colonial authority.

¹³⁴ Form of Recording Examination of Accused, Pasina Chhonglut Pawi, in Upa C. Lalchawimawia, pp. 80-86.

The Lushai Christians were not well indoctrinated in the Christian doctrines. As mentioned before, it was with much ease that they enrolled as Christians. The peculiar way that they were influenced by Christianity showed it was a trend to be Christianised. Many had become Christians just to escape unpaid *kuli* or received favour from the colonial masters. Thus, the Lushais Christianity was very much imbued with aspects of traditional *sakhua* or native religious ethics. This ethic was enmeshed in the opposition to the alien government. This was very much evident among the first generation Lushai Christians. The propagators of Kelkang Revival of 1937 were Christians but not for more than one or two weeks yet.¹³⁵

However, from a close examination of the two accused quoted above, it was clear that they were not 'simple' folks. They possessed intelligent views and knowledge on the Christian Gospels and the world. If Christianity was propagated in a more arduous way, endurance of Christian doctrines would have been more complete. The haste in which Christianity was preached and accepted snowballed into resistance against alien domination.

V. 6 Modern Awakening and Colonial Resistance

Political consciousness and modern ideas had entered the Lushai Hills through education. Western education widened the horizon of the people. It attracted them towards rational thinking and drew them away from traditionalism. The schools provided emergence of 'articulate Lushais' and developed skills necessary to function in a modern world, away from the traditional set-up. The Christian missionaries focused on the development of indigenous leadership for the purpose of creating an autonomous church. This had its impact on the emergence of local leaders in the socio-political arena too. Among the traditional chiefs, there were profound fears that the Christian missionaries would secure substantial number of followers and this would in turn undermine the existing social structure. This

¹³⁵ Upa C. Lachawimawia, p. 41.

eventually resulted in the persecution and even expulsions of Christian subjects from the villages.¹³⁶

The privileges granted by the government to the chiefs became the tool for oppression of the common people. As stated earlier, the power of the chief had been frequently misused with the supportive colonial administration behind. By this time, the common people had become conscious of their rights. They were ready to stand against oppression and exploitation. Consciousness emerged among the masses to fight the autocratic rule of the chief. Hatred towards the chief lingered. The rational thinking of the new intelligentsia could not be curbed for long.

The Lushai interaction with the outside world was also enhanced by the Second World War. In this war, many Lushais were enrolled as British Sepoys. They served as British Labour Corps in Europe. Their socio-political outlook became broader. They became acquainted with democratic principles of the western world. After the end of the war, they returned to the Lushai Hills with more enlightened outlook. The Labour Corps returnees could not withstand injustice towards the common people rendered by the colonial authority via the chief. They were completely against the autocratic nature of the chief. The welfare of the villagers and strive for justice became their foremost concern.

Western education had become more widespread and more people had access to it. This class coupled with those who served in the British Labour Corps formed a new class of intelligentsia. As the demand for justice rose, they came into conflict with the authority of the chiefs. Education brought rational thinking individual and thus desire for change in the existing system of administration.

The chiefs had become more oppressive and extracted beyond what was demanded by tradition.¹³⁷ In several cases, the chiefs took bribe from the *ramhual* –

¹³⁶ Western education had shattered the fabric of the traditional Lushais family and social interdependency, which were the mainstay of the Lushais society. The idea of individualism stimulated by Lushai converts or western education sought independence from customary communal discipline. This new idea was severely opposed by the ruling chiefs. The anger of the chiefs was shown in their attitude towards the village school teachers and church elders, whom they regarded to be the leaders of the new order.

village officials who first chose the land to be allotted. The commoners wanted to abolish the office of the *ramhual*.¹³⁸ Whatever maybe the anger of the common man, the colonial authority always stood by their collaborator .i.e. the chiefs.

In traditional Lushais society, the villagers constructed the chief's house and the village's *zawlbúk* (bachelors' dormitory) with *hnatlang* (free public work). However, *hnatlang* used to be more frequent with the consolidation of colonialism. The common people had lesser to devote for their daily sustenance. The villagers were compelled to carry provisions and personal belongings of the Sepoys and officials without pay or for free. When it became more frequent, it became forced. This generated a wide chasm between the masses and the chiefs – who indirectly were colonial official.

The anger of the commoners was aggravated by the creation of District Chiefs' Durbar in 1941.¹³⁹ This was the initiative of the Superintendent Alexander Ronald Hume McDonald. In this Durbar, chiefs in each administrative circle sent representative on the basis of election. The Durbar acted as an office for hearing the grievance of the people.

However, in the Chiefs' Durbar, representation was from the chiefs only, as it was a body of the chiefs.¹⁴⁰ The people had no representation. And it was assumed that the Durbar only represented the interest of the chiefs. Thus, it was not accepted as a pure form of representative government. By this time, hatred towards the chief was also at its peak.

As the demand for changes grew, the Superintendent ordered fresh election to the Durbar in 1946. The commoners and the chiefs elected their representatives

¹³⁷ V. V. Roa, *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India, 1874-1974*, New Delhi, S. Chand & Co. Ltd., 1976, p. 111.

¹³⁸ This was one reason for the prevalent of misunderstanding between the chiefs and the commoners.

¹³⁹ There were sixty chiefs at the initial stage of the British occupation of the Lushai Hills. The number reached four hundred in 1940 as the colonial authority had appointed new chiefs on their own. It was created as a means for easier consultation of the chief by the British government.

¹⁴⁰ The objective was to have a collective body that would silence agitation against the government.

separately. However, the Durbar could not function properly as the representatives of the commoners and the chiefs were always at loggerheads. The modern intelligentsia was convinced to fight for the uplift of the position of the people.

The greed of the new generation of chiefs knew no bound. The appointment of new chiefs by the colonial authority was the foremost reason for the multiplication of parasitic chiefs. The concerned commoners now wanted the abolition of the paddy tax, the flesh tax, and others. The chiefs abused their power and expelled anyone from the village with the slightest reason. The privileges of the chiefs and abuse of the same was another source of conflict between the villagers and the chiefs. The British colonial rule had put an end to the migratory nature of the Lushais.¹⁴¹ As the area of land was stagnant, there was a dearth of it with the increase in the number of chiefs.

In settled habitations, the Lushai chiefs continued as the sole authority in the village. The multiplication of chiefs implicated the increase in the representatives of an alien government. Under colonial tutelage, the chiefs became more and more autocratic and the welfare of the public became secondary. Hatred for them and their maladministration grew with the increasing consciousness.

V. 7 New Political Consciousness and Colonial Resistance

Being in the British frontier region, political consciousness was experienced in the Lushai Hills only on the eve of India's independence. The area was classified as "Excluded Areas" to insulate it from larger Indian politics.¹⁴² The people were forbidden of participation in any political activities. However, the growth of new political consciousness among the masses by this time was so great that the colonial authority could not remain ignorant for long. There was tremendous pressure on the colonial authority to make certain changes in the existing rule of administration. The

¹⁴¹ The issue of *remri lehkha* by the colonial authority demarcated the boundary of each chief and made it permanent.

¹⁴² Being under colonial domination the people of the Lushai Hills were prohibited to express their political will. The Government of India Act, 1935 classified the area as an "excluded areas" excluding it from the purview of the Constitution of the time.

Superintendent was furious at the demand that the people could participate in political activities.¹⁴³ Many conscious individual were willing to stand and fight for their rights.¹⁴⁴

The World Wars were an important catalyst in the emergence of the new Lushais awakening. Being an occupied area of Britain, the Lushai chiefs pledged their loyalty to the *Kumpinu* (the Queen). They offered help and many Lushais served Her Majesty in the Labour Corps. The wars became an opportunity for ordinary Lushais for overseas service and travels. It opened an arena for interaction with the western world.

It was on April 1917 that the Lushais gathered in thousands in Aizawl. 2,100 Lushais youth enrolled in the 27th Indian Labour Corp.¹⁴⁵ They were led by Colonel Alan Playfair and Reverend D. E. Jones of the Welsh Mission, who was given the rank of Captain.¹⁴⁶ They left India from Bombay and landed at Marseilles in France. 2,029 Lushais came back home in July 1918. The love for ‘their country’ made their experience traumatic.¹⁴⁷ Their homesickness was so pressing that they declined an offer of sightseeing visit to London.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³B. B. Goswami, *Mizo Unrest*, Jaipur, 1979, p. 128.

¹⁴⁴ The newly emerging consciousness among the Lushais however, could not be silenced any more.

¹⁴⁵ David R. Syiemlieh (ed.), *On the Edge of Empire – Four British Plans for North East India, 1941-1947*, New Delhi, SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2014, p. 5.

¹⁴⁶ Rev. J. H. Lorrain who worked for the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) in South Lushai Hills was also loaned to the YMCA for four months for hut work in France. He worked with the Lushai members of the Indian Labour Corps in France. See, *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901 – 1938*, pp. 141-145. Mr. Lorrain remarked that those involved in the imperial services learned many useful lessons during their stay in France. See., *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901 – 1938*, p. 145; C. L. Hminga, p. 40.

¹⁴⁷ The Lushais served only as Labour Corps and not in the war zone. See., *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, February 1918*, pp. 21-23. Mention was made of their work in Monchy au-Bois in which they demolished old trenches and dugouts. For this work, they were divided into four groups. Group led by Dohleia and Thangkima worked together, while group led by Thanghlianga and Thanzama worked together. See., *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, August 1918*, pp. 114-118.

¹⁴⁸ The nostalgia and longing for ‘home’ did not compel the Lushais to prolong their stay in foreign shores.

Some of them were already Christian when they left and some converted to Christianity while staying aboard.¹⁴⁹ They brought home new style of fashion and wore western dresses.¹⁵⁰ Many of them brought more money into the Lushai Hills and some of them invested in the war loan. With money in their hand, they could afford more amenities and live more luxurious lives. The increased inflow of money accelerated financial market and a modern economy.¹⁵¹

The work of the Labour Corps was also acknowledged and several of them received medal for the imperial service they rendered.¹⁵² They were able to send their children for higher education outside the Lushai Hills.¹⁵³ Their newly accumulated wealth and the knowledge they acquired in the West made them an influential section in the Lushais society.

The Lushais enlisted in the Labour Corps during the Second World War were promised exemption from labour for the remainder of their lives. However, when they returned they found that they were exempted only from *kuli pui* (big labour) and not from *kuli te* (small labour).¹⁵⁴ Their grievance against the colonial authority was heightened by the fact that the able-bodied members of their family were liable to be impressed. They form critical members of the society that resisted any unfair treatment by the colonial authority.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Six hundred of them were Christians. See, *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901 – 1938*, p. 142.

¹⁵⁰ The Lushais men used to have long hair. Those who served in the First World War cut their hair after being exposed in the western world.

¹⁵¹ More than trade and traders, the War marked the real beginning of cash economy in the Lushai Hills.

¹⁵² *Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Bu, January 1924*, p. 8.

¹⁵³ In the Lushai Hills there was educational school of up to Primary standard only.

¹⁵⁴ *Kuli pui* was a kind of impressed labour for which wages were paid. It involves work such as building construction, carrying loads of colonial government servants, sepoy, etc. *Kuli te* was a free labour involving carrying the loads of the chiefs, C.I. and were normally not more than one-day journey. *Kuli* is a transliteration of *Coolie* which is a Hindi term for 'labourer'. The *kuli te* can best be known as 'porters'. See, Orestes Rosanga, "Forced-Labour as a Tool of Colonialism and Hegemony: Mizoram," *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Vol. XVI, November 2015, p. 49.

¹⁵⁵ One most serious case in the history opposition to British rule in India was the Kuki Rebellion (1917-1919). It cost the British government ₹28 lakhs to quell the rebellion and many precious lives

The Labour Corp returnees had submitted a petition to the Chief Commissioner of Assam. They claimed exemption from *kuli te* or impressed labour for the members of their family. They were to be exempted from both and the exemption was purely personal exemption for serving in France.

The response they got from the colonial authority was that no distinction should be made between *kuli pui* and *kuli te*. Exemption was given to any member of their family above forty five years. The colonial authority claimed that the exemption rule on their family members was made in a reasonable and generous manner.¹⁵⁶

The Lushais no longer had the physical capabilities to resist the colonial power. The explosion of modern education had now percolated down to the masses. This gave them another dimension for challenging the excess of the colonial power. There were campaigns made to households explaining the destructive reality of contributing to forced labour. The educated section expressed their discontentment to such oppressive policies through newspaper. Writings on this topic were found in the newspaper, *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu*, which was first published in 1903.¹⁵⁷

There were songs of resistance that were composed against the severe implementation of forced labour or *kuli*. Some of them attended children of the *thlangkawrvai* or foreigners in the plains. Most of the young men were forced to stay away from their villages for months. They carried bags, luggages and provisions of the colonial officials and the Assam Rifles. They were forced to construct new roads, build government bungalows, and schools. One such song of tragedy runs like this –

“*Cham a rei dawn mang e phai kuamah,*

were lost in the process. The question of recruitment for Labour Corps for employment in France was the foremost reason, which turned discontent into open rebellion. This rebellion resulted in drastic changes in the administration of the hills areas of Manipur. See, Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam – From 1883-1941*, Guawahati, Spectrum Publications, Reprint, 1997.

¹⁵⁶ Chief Commissioner of Assam, Order No. 15 of 3 June 1920. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, p. 93.

¹⁵⁷ Orestes Rosanga, *Historical Journal Mizoram*, p. 52. A particular lady named, Darthuami expressed the severity of forced labour at Zopui village in the South Lushai Hills. She also wrote on the mal-administration of the chief and the village elders. She also stretched on the absent of corrective measures from the colonial government to these maladministration.

Sappui chhawn thiam, a ngur laldang hawn dil la,

*Khawtlang kan ngai e val rual hian.”*¹⁵⁸

(“The stay will be long in the forsaken plains,)

Wish there is some to request the Saheb for return,

Much we long for our home.”)

The explosion of new ideas echoed into a demand for expansion of school education. The Labour Corps returnees were an exponent of demand for high school in Aizawl.¹⁵⁹ Successive colonial authorities saw no reason for the expansion of school education.¹⁶⁰ This was despite the Wales Mission’s willingness to undertake it. The issue was again raised by the Mission in 1929. However, it was rejected again by the colonial government. Joint representation was submitted by the Lushai chiefs on the subject in 1931 to the Commissioner Surma Valley. Hezlett, the Commissioner opposed setting up of a high school in Aizawl. He argued that it would undoubtedly produce more educated Lushais than the number of jobs available in the District. Thus, the Lushais were still deprived of education at a higher level than the existing ones.

Enthusiastic Lushais, who really cared for the Lushai Hills had no other option, but to pursue higher studies outside, which could only be provided by conscious and rich parents. And these enthusiasts could only be those who served the *Kumpinu* (Her Majesty) in France.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Zikpuii Pa (K. C. Lalvunga), *Tun Kum Za Chhunga Mizo Fate, 1572-1972*, L. B. Publication, Aizawl 1972, p. 2. Cited in, Orestes Rosanga, *Historical Journal Mizoram*, p. 53.

¹⁵⁹ The first returnees reached the Lushai Hills on 1 July, 1918. See, *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901 – 1938*, p. 145. The two Middle Schools at Aizawl and Lunglei failed to satisfy the desire for higher education.

¹⁶⁰ The educational policy of the colonial government in the Lushai Hills was to provide enough qualifications for interpreters, clerks, school teachers and other small-time jobs. It was entirely framed for colonial governance but not to trickle real enlightenment among the people.

¹⁶¹ *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901 – 1938*, pp. 141-145; It was in December 1940, Robert N. Reid Governor of Assam 1937-1942 remarked during his visit to Aizawl, that the Lushais as, “the most alert and quick witted of the hill tribes and a race that takes keen interest in the outside world.” See, David R. Syiemlieh (ed.), *On the Edge of Empire*, p. 5.

The Lushai boys who pursued higher studies started to appreciate how people organised themselves for their own welfare. They became aware of the necessity to have an organised body as an agent to convince the colonial government.¹⁶² The necessity for organised movement resulted in the formation of the Lushai Students' Association (LSA) in October 1924 at Shillong.¹⁶³

The Lushai Hills remained secluded from any political activities or the Indian National Movement prior to the passing of the Government of India Act, 1919 or in its immediate aftermath.¹⁶⁴ The Inner Line Regulation which was impracticable after the annexation of the hills was re-notified in August 1930.¹⁶⁵

The progress of Indian freedom struggle from the third decade of the twentieth century led to a shift of British interest from the plains to a paternal concern in the Hills. The classification of the Lushai Hills as "Backward Tracts" was a design to keep it secluded from mainstream Indian resistance movement.¹⁶⁶ It was also a design to upkeep their rule in the Lushai Hills through the chiefs. However, nothing could deter the consciousness of the new generation of Lushais. They were not totally unaware of the Indian national movement and constitutional development in British India.

The spread of education and exposure to the wider world were an important harbinger of this. Modern ideas emerged, which opposed the British rule through the authoritarian chiefs. This challenge of the rule of the chiefs consequently triggered

¹⁶² Here, resistance started to take the stance of negotiation and not negation.

¹⁶³ The new association had its branches in Calcutta and Gauhati. In the October 1924 Conference of the LSA in Shillong, Buchhawna was elected to hold the combined posts of General Secretary and Treasurer temporarily. The LSA invited all Lushai students stationed in places such as Silchar, Aizawl and Lunglei to join them.

¹⁶⁴ The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1874, the Scheduled District Act, 1875 and the Chin Hills Regulation, 1896 implemented by the British imperial government had kept the Lushai Hills aloof from the great Indian national movement.

¹⁶⁵ Assam State Archive, Political A Progs., December 1930, Nos. 30-66, Notification No. 9102-AP, dated 28th August 1930. Cited in, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 94.

¹⁶⁶ The classification was notified under the Government of India Act, 1919 Section 52-A.

wider resistance to colonialism. There was an increased knowledge and desire to have representative institutions.

The sustained neryv feelings against the chiefs first came open in 1926. The villagers of Chhingchhip complained to Neville Edward Parry, the Superintendent, against the oppression of their chief, Hmingliana and the *khawchhiar* (village writer), Hrangchhuana. They demanded their dismissal. The colonial government, instead of listening to their demand, penalised them. Every household in the village was fined □3. The chief was made to pay a fine of one *sial* or *gayal*. Around the same time, the villagers of Reiek and Tuahzawl lodged a complaint against their chiefs. This was in relations to the village conscriptions and the sum that was involved. The villagers assumed that their chiefs pocketed all the money.

The reign of leadership of resistance against excessive demand of the chiefs and colonial officials was taken up by Darchhingpuia (Telela). He was from Kulikawn, a suburb of Aizawl. He was a pharmacist by profession. He and his shopkeeper friends – Thuama, Saikunga, Thanzuala, Chawngnhuaia and two tailors C. Z. Biaka and Chawngdailova submitted a representation to N. E. Parry. They protested against compulsory or forced labour in the construction of the chief's house, *zawlbûk*, village school and schoolmaster's house. They also complained against carrying of the loads of C. I. and other colonial officials on tour.

Parry did not grant them any concession. He became furious and threatened them with imprisonment if they did not refrain from such activities. However, the determination of the group could be crushed. The group submitted a copy of the memorandum to the Governor. They further added a prayer for the inclusion of the Lushai Hills District in the reformed provincial Council.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ The Lushai Hills was categorised as the 'backward tracts' and was thus unrepresented in the reformed Assam legislature. They were left with their traditional chiefs to administer their local affairs under the supervision of the British officers. These reforms were necessitated by the passage of the Government of India Act, 1919 (Montague-Chelmsford Reforms). The 'Backward Tracts' were excluded from the jurisdiction of the 'Reformed Councils.' No legislation could be enacted and no resolution could be moved in the legislative councils affecting the backward areas and legislation for them should be affected entirely by means of regulations made by the Governor-General-in-Council under Section 71 of the Act.

Darchhingpuia (Telela) led a group of individuals to Shillong and met Rev. James Joy Mohon Nichols Roy.¹⁶⁸ Rev. Nichols Roy was briefed on the apathy of the chiefs and the hardship faced by the common people. They informed Rev. Nichols Roy of the administrative and political difficulties in the Lushai Hills. On their return, Darchhingpuia and his group organised political gatherings at *Sikul Sen* (Aizawl).¹⁶⁹ The Governor had done nothing and referred their memorandum back to the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills. They were arrested on 22 October, 1926. They were released with stern warnings that any such activity would land them in jail. Thus, the first intellectual/political colonial resistance in the Hills was crushed with an iron hand.

In spite of all the constitutional development prevailing in the rest of India, the colonial government stood firm to preserve the position of the Lushai chiefs. Parry initiated a series of measures calculated to prevent situations that could undermine the authority of the chiefs.¹⁷⁰ The first step taken by the Superintendent was the revival of *zawlbûk* which was already in decline.¹⁷¹ This decline indicated diminution of the power and position of the chiefs. Its revival implicated the prestige of the chiefs, and thereby, his effective hold over the people. Parry ordered every village having more than 25 houses to maintain *zawlbûk*.

¹⁶⁸ Rev. J. J. M. Nichols was one of the earliest figures of modern politics from the natives of Northeast India. He was a member of the Governor's Council in the erstwhile Assam in the 1920s. He was a Cabinet Minister in the Muslim League led ministry in 1938.

¹⁶⁹ It was one of the earliest schools established by the missionary at Aizawl. It was known to the locals as *skul sen*. It literally means the 'red school'.

¹⁷⁰ It had to be recollected that the Lushai Hills and other Hill areas were declared an "Excluded Area" by the colonial government. Any kind of political activity was not permitted in the excluded area. In the Lushai Hills, the people became more conscious of the protection rendered by the British government to the chief. The relations between colonial administrators' vis-à-vis the chiefs and the public had become more troublesome than before.

¹⁷¹ For the new emerging social class, one's own home provided better education than the *zawlbûk*. The *zawlbûk* was an obstacle to their material growth. It was a symbol of traditionalism on which the autocratic rule of the village chief rested. This attempted revival connotes the attempt to hand more power to the chief as it was somehow snatched by the intellectual group. In the face of such circumstances the colonial government decided to strengthen the power and position of the chiefs.

The Superintendent also stopped the further division of the chief's *ram* (area or jurisdiction) and thereby the creation of new villages.¹⁷² By checking the multiplication of chiefs, Parry preserved the power of the existing ones. The colonial authority had tried their best to preserve and strengthen an important tool of colonial domination .i.e. the chiefs.

There was widespread belief that *hnatlâng* (compulsory public and free labour) had become burdensome. It was also against individual rights and freedom. This issue was previously raised by Darchhingpuia and his friends. The Superintendent was of the view that the abolition of *hnatlâng* would increase the burden of administrative finances. It would also reduce the authority of the chief. However, the tide was strong for the abolition of compulsory free or forced labour. To the dismay of the general public, the Superintendent issued an order on 16 November, 1926. The order called for the continuation of *hnatlâng*.¹⁷³ However, it would be an option in regard to the chief's private works. Another order of the same date goes, "According to immemorial custom the villagers had to build and repair the house of the chief free of cost. When a chief goes on a journey it is also customary for some of his *upas* and *ramhuals* to accompany him. Both these customs must be followed and no complaints about either will be entertained."¹⁷⁴ Thus, most of the steps undertaken by the colonial officials were against the general welfare of the public, but were for the preservation of their rule.

The colonial administration stood firm in protecting the judicial authority of the chiefs. Several *kohhran upa* or church elders and school teachers had tried petty cases without the knowledge of the chiefs.¹⁷⁵ Parry subsequently intimated that "the

¹⁷² This had ruined the power of the chief by the division of his authority. If this was continued, it would reduce the chiefs to petty individuals.

¹⁷³ According to custom *hnatlâng* was done by the villagers in building and repair of the chief's house, *zawlbûk*, *pûm* or village blacksmith, schools and schoolmaster's house, maintenance of village waterpoints, clearing of inter-village roads, and other public works.

¹⁷⁴ D.C. (L). Superintendent's Standing Order, No. 94 of 16.11.1926. Cited in, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 97.

¹⁷⁵ In the dawn of the new awakening, the church elders and school teachers had acquired status of importance. They were much respected by the common man. This reduced the status and privileges of

only authority for trying cases in the districts is the chiefs and the courts in Aijal and Lungleh.”¹⁷⁶

The Lushai Hills was outside the purview of the ‘reformed government’ that was announced by the Government of India Act, 1919 (Montague-Chelmsford Reforms).¹⁷⁷ It remained unrepresented in the reformed Assam Legislature. It was categorised as one of ‘backward tracts’ and was subjected to special laws.¹⁷⁸ The Governor was the sole authority to enact and revise rules, both civil and criminal for the Lushai Hills. The people had no voice in the administration, and therefore, it was autocratic and dictatorial. The central or provincial legislatures had no right over the administration of the Lushai Hills. Since 1920, the hill areas of erstwhile Assam were represented by a single nominated member.¹⁷⁹

The Simon Commission that was appointed to review the Government of India Act, 1919 published its report on May, 1930.¹⁸⁰ It upheld the previous order of excluding the backward areas and the continuation of its administration through the Governor. It suggested for the classification of these tracts into – ‘Excluded Areas’ and ‘Partially Excluded Areas’. The first category should be totally excluded from the provincial legislature while the latter were to be represented in it.

the chiefs. The colonial administrators thought that it posed serious problem to the district administration.

¹⁷⁶ D.C. (L). Superintendent’s Standing Order, No. 184 of 10.3.1928. Cited in, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 97. The order prohibited the church elders from trying cases and from interference in any way of the governance of the village which was vested solely in the chiefs and his *upas* (village elders). It goes with stern warning that any breach of the order would be severely punish. It does not debarred people from amicably settlement of dispute among themselves out of court.

¹⁷⁷ The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms or the Mont-Ford Reforms was a reform that aimed to gradually introduce self-governing institutions in India. It introduced Diarchy and the rights of the Central and the Provinces were divided in clear-cut terms.

¹⁷⁸ Legislation should be affected entirely by means of regulations made by the Governor-General-in-Council under Section 71 of the Act.

¹⁷⁹ Dr. J. Zorema, p. 91.

¹⁸⁰ It had also inquired into the working of the growth of education in India which resulted in the formation of a Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Hartog. The Commission also felt that while considering the constitutional problem of British India it was necessary to take account of its relations with Indian states. Therefore, it appointed another committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Harcourt Butler which reported on the relations of British India with natives states.

Following the recommendation of the Simon Commission, the Assam Gazette notified the details of the “Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas”. The Lushai Hills formed a part of the “Excluded Areas” and was thus denied of representation. This was bound to have repercussion in the Lushai Hills.

Lushais ‘intelligentsia’ resisted the order of the colonial government and pressurised for its inclusion in the reformed council.¹⁸¹ The petition also mentioned that they did not want seclusion i.e. as ‘excluded areas’ from the people of other districts of Assam.¹⁸² Like any other colonial authorities, the Superintendent McCall’s policy was to uphold the power of the chiefs.¹⁸³ He was completely against Lushais representative in the Assam Council as it would reduce the power of the chiefs.¹⁸⁴ He was alarmed by the rising political consciousness. Mr. Lloyd Rees, I. P. was entrusted by him to keep a watch on the state of affairs.

A certain Aizawl association submitted a petition on Council entry on April 1934, directly to the governor. Later, each signatory was publicly forced to withdraw his name from the petition.¹⁸⁵ McCall later informed Sir Michael Keane that the public had whole-heartedly condemned the petition and that the signatories had lost ground in front of the public.

The colonial authority rudely suppressed the resistance against their authoritarian rule. The Lushai Hills was again an Excluded Area under the

¹⁸¹ Petition was submitted by the ‘people of the Lushai Hills’ to Sir Michael Keane, the Governor on 4 December, 1933. The petition prayed for two representatives from the Lushai Hills District in the Assam Legislative Council.

¹⁸² Assam State Archives, Political B. Progs. December 1936, Nos. 1138-1189, *Note by Sir Michael Keane*, Cited in, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 102. The petitioners wrote, “the people understand very well the principles of democracy”.

¹⁸³ The Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, Major A. G. McCall asserted that the interest of the Lushai Hills might be affected in the struggle for majority. He however, forwarded the petition, “. . . with humble deference I recommend no action at this stage”. Cited in, Dr. J. Zorema, p. 103. McCall opined that the Lushais were inspired by J. J. M. Nichols Roy.

¹⁸⁴ On 18 December, 1933 the Superintendent was handed another petition signed by Thuama and others. On 11 February, 1934, a petition containing fifty-three additional sheets of paper containing 3,882 names was received by the Superintendent to be forwarded to the Governor.

¹⁸⁵ McCall immediately held a public meeting on 26 April, 1934. He wanted to the Lushais public to hear “what programme the Aijal Association had to offer.”

Government of India Act, 1935.¹⁸⁶ The public again demanded representation in the provincial assembly of 1937. The demand was forcibly turned down. The chiefs abused their power more than ever. Battle was pitted against the common man and the tyrannical chiefs. Towards the end of the Second World War the educated Lushais did not want the British to stay. This was because they did not want political power to be handed over to the chiefs. It was generally felt that the management of the villages should be shared by the common people.¹⁸⁷

There was a public outcry for change in the administrative system – from autocracy to democracy. Meanwhile, the Cabinet Mission arrived in India on March 1946 and its Report on May referred to the end of paramountcy and formation of a federation.¹⁸⁸ The colonial Government of India wanted to devise a means so that the tribals of undivided Assam could be welded into the body on Indian politics.¹⁸⁹

In view of the prevailing circumstances and pressure from within, the Superintendent, McDonald lifted a ban on political activities.¹⁹⁰ A political association that aimed to bring the welfare of the public was founded with the permission of the Superintendent. The association founded under the initiative of R. Vanlawma on 9 April, 1946 was named the Mizo Common People's Union.¹⁹¹ The name of the association was changed later into Mizo Union Party and was commonly known as the Mizo Union.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁶ The Lushais were still devoid of representative politics in modern world. It was an example of successive high-handedness of British officials.

¹⁸⁷ An important area of resistance was the *upas* of the Chief's Council. They had remained nominated for so long and this worsen the misused of power by the chiefs. The demand was that they should be elected by the people. The public was hungry for an outlet to express their opinion.

¹⁸⁸ The federal government at the central would control only three subjects – Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications.

¹⁸⁹ The foreseeable expansionist policy of China was lurking in the midst.

¹⁹⁰ A. R. H McDonald was the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills from 1943 to 1945.

¹⁹¹ The prohibition on the involvement of the people in any political activities was lifted by the Superintendent, McDonald with the establishment of the District Conference.

¹⁹² David R. Syiemlieh (ed), p. 5.

The Mizo Union came into conflict with the District Conference.¹⁹³ The District Conference claimed to be the true representative of the people. MacDonald placed the Constitution in the Conference for unanimous views of its member. However, the question of representation was taken by the commoners. They demanded more representatives and no concrete discussion could be taken up. The Mizo Union boycotted the District Conference. And, they did not participate in the election of the Second District Conference.

The main goal of the Mizo Union was “demanding voting rights for the common people equal to those exercised by the chiefs in the election to the District Conference”. It was an association established with the purpose of checking the autocratic rule of the chiefs. It launched campaign and set up units even in remote villages of the Lushai Hills. There were also violent attacks on the chiefs by the Unionists.¹⁹⁴ The Mizo Union became popular because of mass disenchantment with the institution of chieftainship. The irresponsible chiefs were supported by the colonial government. The movement against the chiefs developed into hatred for colonialism. It was on 3 August, 1946 that the Mizo Union passed resolution for the abolition of chieftainship at its general assembly in Lunglei.¹⁹⁵ This was a prelude to the eventual abolition of an important traditional institution.

In consequence of the various demands of the Mizo Union, there was a conflict with the colonial authority.¹⁹⁶ For the colonial authority, the Mizo Union was not functioning constitutionally. McDonald issued an order prohibiting the Mizo

¹⁹³ The success of the Chiefs' Conference held in 1935-1936 paved the way for the District Conference. The first meeting of the District Conference was held at Aizawl on 18 January, 1946. The Superintendent, A. R. H. McDonald was the President. This consisted of twenty representatives from the chief and twenty other elected from an electoral college. Antagonism prevailed from its very existence as the Mizo Union called it a 'chief dominated body'. No co-operative action can be taken by the two groups.

¹⁹⁴ R. Rualthansanga, p. 83

¹⁹⁵ At the outset, the Mizo Union did not advocated for the abolition of chieftainship. It stands for the curtailment of some of the power, rights and privileges of the chiefs. It stands for the upliftment of the political and economic condition of the general public. It advocated for the prevalence of better relations between the chiefs and the people.

¹⁹⁶ The Mizo Union further demanded that the Lushai Hills should be enlarged and encompassed the Mizo inhabited contiguous areas of Burma, Cachar, Manipur, Tripura and the Chittagong Hills Tract.

Union from collecting any fund on 1 November, 1946. He further blamed the Mizo Union for sowing the seeds of resentment against the chief. The colonial government was still a protector of the chiefs despised their several highhandedness. Relations between the chiefs and the Mizo Union reached its boiling point. The Union launched a boycott movement of the chiefs. The commoners were requested not to obey the chiefs and their orders. They were also asked not to pay the customary taxes. Violent incident occurred in several places.¹⁹⁷ In these struggles, the colonial government as always was supportive of the chiefs.

Leonard Lamb Peters then assumed the charge of superintendent, the Lushai Hills.¹⁹⁸ He wanted to suppress any movement that was in opposition to the traditional chiefs. He issued notice to all villages persuading the people and the Mizo Union to call off their movement. He urged the people not to ruin themselves by accepting the ideal of the Mizo Union against the existing traditional administration. Peters also threatened the supporters of the Unionists with the confiscation of guns. Fines ranging from ₹ 10 to ₹ 100 per household, forced collection of *fathang* or *buhchhun* and other punitive actions were undertaken. However, the people were adamant and went on with the movement. Processions were held in protest against the chiefs and the British rule in Aizawl and Lunglei. The Mizo Union blocked Peters from attending office. Assam Rifles and Civil Police were used to disperse the mob. Peters was urged to quit the Lushai Hills by 27 December, 1948. If the Superintendent did not quit, the Unionist decided to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement against the colonial government.

The Civil Disobedience Movement was launched. It was a peaceful non-violent movement. The villagers disobeyed the laws of the colonial authority via the chiefs and refused to pay the customary taxes. The Unionists convinced the general public that the Superintendent was “the greatest obstacle towards the attainment of

¹⁹⁷ R. Rualthansanga, pp. 83-84

¹⁹⁸ He was the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills during 1947-1949.

their ‘*swaraj*’¹⁹⁹ Mr. Lalrina Sailo, Assistant Superintendent and Roy B. Leetan were sent to tour and punish the leaders of the Civil Disobedience Movement.²⁰⁰ The Civil Disobedience Movement ended on 27 January, 1949 as an agreement was reached. The agreement was signed between the Superintendent, who represented the local government and leaders of the Mizo Union.

Though the civil disobedience ended, the movement for the abolition of chieftainship could not be crushed easily. The resistance to colonialism vis-à-vis the resistance against the chiefs continued. This was seen from the repressive policy that the British had undertaken. Many supporters of the Mizo Union were beaten and sent to jail. Hostility towards the chiefs was regarded as challenge to the colonial government. In 1949, Mr. Bartaki, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, was advised to review the growing discord between the commoners and the chiefs.²⁰¹ N. K. Rustomji, adviser to the Governor of Assam was in favour of abolishing or limiting the power of the chiefs. He adumbrated that it would be impossible for the chiefs, “to maintain their authority indefinitely without the sanction of the people themselves”.²⁰² He suggested that the chiefs must give up any custom or levies that were regarded by the people as humiliating or derogatory. He urged the authority to find way so that the general public should be content and happy with the administration. And, finally the movement for the abolition of chieftainship ultimately became successful in 1954.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Lalrina Sailo, Assistant Superintendent, *Notes on the Mizo Union Civil Disobedience Movement in the Lushai Hills*, A report submitted to the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, 2nd February, 1947. Cited in, R. Rualthansanga, p. 85.

²⁰⁰ The movement was more drastic in the interior villages. Stoning and pulling down of the houses of the chiefs and his *upas*, and other non-unionists’ houses were common. Arson, singing of Union’s song, social boycott, composing and singing of satirical songs, demonstration against the chiefs and their supporters, campaign to join the Mizo Union, etc. the order of the day. See., Lalrina Sailo, Assistant Superintendent, *Notes on the Mizo Union Civil Disobedience Movement in the Lushai Hills*, A report submitted to the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, 7. 3. 1949. Cited in, R. Rualthansanga, p. 85.

²⁰¹ Bartaki was the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills for two terms – 1949-1951 and 1951-1952.

²⁰² N.K. Rustomji, Advisor to the Governor of Assam to S. Barkataki, Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, Memo No. Letter No. 939/C Dated 14th June, 1949, Shillong. Cited in, R. Rualthansanga, p. 86.

²⁰³ It ended with the enactment of the Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chief’s Rights) Act, 1954. It became effective from 1 April 1955. The rights and powers of the chiefs in the Mizo District

V. 9 Conclusion

Colonial consolidation and dominance manifested in two ways – the British capability to rule over the colonial state, and the power exercised by the indigenous elite which itself was the creation of colonialism. The colonial power accommodated all the institutional and ideological resources of the indigene in order to consolidate and maintain its dominance.²⁰⁴ The incorporation of indigenous tradition helps in the continuity and legitimisation of colonial rule. The presence or lack of hegemony however was another question. This case as we see above was also applicable to the Lushai Hills.

Resistance as said earlier is not an event. It rather is a process that is encompassed in every period of time. Colonial resistance in the Lushai Hills did not end with colonial subjugation and the establishment of colonial control. The very measures of colonial control encountered resistances. The position of the figure of resistances (the chiefs) was moulded to suit the need of colonial machinery. The cultural resistance that had emerged was crucial to the understanding of colonial resistance in the Lushai Hills. This is the main focus of this chapter.

The British policy in the Lushai Hills in the closing decade of the nineteenth century was dominated by strategic considerations. From the early twentieth century, it was influenced by economic considerations. The colonial administration was much aided by the activities of the Christian missionaries. Together, they helped in the emergence of the Lushais as British subjects.

The movement for modern representative government in the Assam Provincial Legislature was the work of shopkeepers, pensioners, school teachers, pastors, and church elders. Since the middle of the twentieth century there was increased awareness about representative institution. This was in correspondence

Council (formerly Lushai Hills) were acquired by the Government of Assam. It was handed over to the Mizo District Council on 1 April, 1958. The number of chiefs abolished was three hundred and twenty. See, Dr. J. Zorema, pp. 169-170.

²⁰⁴ Ranajit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony – History and Power in Colonial India*, Cambridge & London, Harvard University Press, 1997, p. 100.

with the increased hatred for the autocratic rule of the chiefs and the colonial government. The nascent agitation and petition throw idea for collective action.

It has to be recalled that some four thousand Lushais youth were enrolled in the British Indian Army, Royal Navy and Royal Airforce during the Second World War. A number of young women too served in the Women's Auxiliary Corps and the Auxiliary Nursing Service. Towards the end of the war, the Lushai Hills was full of British soldiers. They were assigned to counter the Japanese advance. Besides the war time contacts, a number of young Lushais had started to pursue higher studies in and outside of the Lushai Hills. The Lushais started to have larger contacts with 'more civilised' people in and outside the Lushai Hills.²⁰⁵ These were important catalysts that spurned dominating colonial administration in the Lushai Hills.

²⁰⁵ C. L. Hminga, pp. 40-41.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

The study critically assesses the resistance to subjugation and colonial control under British imperialism and colonialism in the Lushai Hills. It looks at the various aspects of colonial resistance. It is known that the independent nature of the tribe and dynamic leadership offered by some chiefs and leaders are hurdles in British colonial domination.

An attempt has been made towards understanding the pre-colonial Lushais socio-political structure. A discussion on the meaning and terms such as 'colonialism' and 'resistance' that are the subjects of widespread and unending debates is also undertaken.

An account of the ethnological and etymological origin of 'Lushais' was also given. This is necessary as the term occupied a central thrust to the theme of the thesis. The region of the study was called Lushai Hills as it was settled by the Lushai. However, the term 'Lushais' was a mistransliteration of colonial agents. It is pertinent to ask ourselves how has this place become what it had become.

The position and the status of the chiefs were also elucidated. They were the pivot of power and authority in the erstwhile Lushai Hills. The institution of *zawlbûk* was where the Lushais learned ethical values from generation to generations. Its importance to the traditional society could not be neglected. It was the debate on the *bâwi* tradition between the colonial officials and Christian missionaries that made it contentious. An analytical study of these has thus been an essential component of the thesis.

In the pre-colonial society, individuals in the Lushai Hills situated themselves based on clans and villages. Power was located on the collectivity of the clans. The

food- gathering society of the Lushais utilised the thick forests as means for meeting their subsistence. They sought to preserve the landscape for hunting, timber, and bamboo. On the other hand, the British wanted to remake this into a world of tea gardens with demarcated borders. Thus, skirmish was bound to occur between the native and the alien power. The Lushai resisted with the goal to protect their territories, landscapes, traditions, beliefs and livelihoods.

The Lushais raided the plains because of their yearning for arms, precious metals and captives. Several other raids also occurred due to the non-payment of dues and not honouring of the terms of certain agreement. Raids were logical given that it was an established way of claiming dues that had not been paid in the pre-colonial era. Raids were not geared towards securing subsistence but it was a way to sustain dignity, power and sovereignty.

The Lushai chiefs also used to raid and fight one another for supremacy. By the time of the intrusion of colonialism, the Sailo clan had established their suzerainty in the Lushai Hills. However, all the chiefs were not of Sailo clan. It was from the Sailo that the British had seized the reign of administrative and political power, and thereby colonial control.

The literal meaning of the name of the legendary chief, Vanhnuailiana is, the 'greatest of all under the skies'. The very sound of his name shuddered Her Majesty Government. He was the mastermind behind the many persistent raids and recurring atrocities conducted in the British territories.¹ The main target of the Cachar Column of the First *Vailen* (1871-1872) was to crush his power. He was the son of the invincible Chief Lalsavunga and brother of Thawmvunga, the great warrior. It was a great relief for the British troops to see a fresh tomb of Vanhnuailiana on 17 February 1872.²

The strategy of warfare among the Lushais was surprise attack, a jungle warfare technique. Stone chutes or *lung sahbuak* were used during the *Vailens*. When

¹ A. G. McCall, *The Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl, Reprint, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), 2003, p. 48.

² Foreign Deptt., Pros., Political B, August 1872, Nos. 85- 159. Also see., R. G. Woodthrope, *The Lushai Expedition, 1871 – 1872*, First Edition, London: 1873; Reprinted, TRI: Aizawl., p. 267.

a raid or an attack on the enemy camp was conducted, the head of the enemy was a prized asset. It was regarded as proof that they had slain the enemy. For this, the *pasalthas* used to bring the head of the enemy home. And for this, they were fallaciously recorded by colonial writers as ‘head-hunters’.³ The British had invariably mentioned and tried to emerge as rescuer of ‘captives’ and securer of frontier ‘peace’ in their military advance of the Lushai Hills. This larger imperial agenda of the colonial power, however, could not be masked for long.

In their search for expansion of plantation farming, the British had encroached upon the land of the Lushais. This was one of the first interactions between the Lushais and the Europeans. The Lushais had every right to defend their *sai ramchhuahna* or ‘hunting grounds’. It was their sacred ground. Imperialist ilk was subsidiary to subsistence requirements. The occasional raids in the British territory were a means to stop and restrain the British from encroachment.

The British encroachment of the Lushai land was a consequence of their annexation of Assam. The exploration of the Lushai Hills by the British was from the Bengal side, through the Chittagong Hills Tract (CHT). A survey of the Lushai Hills was first undertaken under the command of Captain Hedgekins and Lt. Sandis during 1824-1825. During the First Anglo-Burmese War, 1824-1825, a section of the Burmese and Arakan forces advanced into the Lushai Hills.

The traditional Lushai chiefs were not much conscious of the policy of the colonial power. Euphemistic term like ‘non-interference policy’ adopted by the British was of no concern to them. Prestige, honour and dignity were their embodiment. Some Lushai chiefs did draw an annual grant of some amount from the British. However, they did not prefer to be puppets for long. They wanted to earn rather than receive the grant. Although they made an agreement in early 1869, Rothangpuia started to raid British territory again in late 1869. The Lushai chiefs chose not to betray their other Lushais brethren.

³ Lushais traditional values had high respect for human lives. This respect was rather a surprise for its prevalence in a traditional society. They even respected their own enemy. Although colonial writers mentioned them as ‘head-hunters’, it does not imply that they were hungry for heads.

Lianphunga, a Lushai chief was questioned on why he repeatedly raided the neighbouring villages. He answered that it was because the ‘neighbouring people’ had destroyed their forest and were not willing to stop. The Lushais used to hunt elephants, *sial* (gayal), bears, tigers and other wild animals in these forests. For the Lushais, hunting was neither a sport nor a game. It was a means of meeting subsistence requirements.

The British success in the Third Anglo-Burmese War (1885-1886) had emboldened them to follow a forward policy in relation to the hill tribes of Indo-Burma border. British military forces had entered the Chin Hills of Burma to bring it under control and domination. The need was felt to bring the Lushai Hills under similar control. The existence of the Lushai Hills as an independent and source of resistance in the midst of British territory was a hassle. The change in the military approach resulted in abandoning the earlier system of sending punitive expedition and returning after achieving it. The British military troops were now to remain in the Lushai Hills and thus heralded its colonisation.

The imperialist policy was to lay down a fixed limit for its regular jurisdiction. It dealt with tribes beyond their frontier by friendly visit of British government officials. It maintained advanced posts to repel aggression and rendered raids to be ineffective.⁴ The hill tribes were ever convinced to repel imperialist expansion.

The Lushais mistrust of the Whitemen was enhanced by the punishment they had given to Lalsûtthlaha. Instead of being pardoned on which he was promised, the Lushai chief was exiled to Sylhet. The mistrust of the British increased with the breach of their *sanad* with Suakpuilala. The two incidents were etched in the heart of the Lushai *pasalthas*. There was no honour even in defeat and the Whitemen were men not to be trusted.

⁴ B. C. Chakravarty, *British Relations with the Hill Tribe of Assam*, Calcutta, 1962, p. 58. Cited in., Dr. J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram, 1890-1954 (The Bureaucracy and the Chiefs)*, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 2007, p. 23.

Since negotiations and agreement with the Lushai chiefs failed to bring forth lasting peace, the British government decided to send expeditionary forces in the Lushai Hills. Accordingly, a number of British troops were sent into the Lushai Hills. The First *Vailen*, 1871-1872 was the first penetration and interaction of the Lushai with the colonial machinery. However, the Lushai were convinced to resist the British might with whatever was in their power.

After their successful launch of military campaigns, the British Government felt that police force should be kept in the Lushai Hills. This was calculated as an agency for colonial control. However, it was not enough to tame the fiery Lushais. It later suggested the posting of officer capable of bringing the hill tribes into the fold of colonial control. Capable British officers were then sent out as Political Officer to achieve this goal.⁵

Captain H. R. Browne, the Political Officer of the North Lushai Hills, was asked to establish political influence and control over the Lushai so that they could submit to the British rule. The Political Officer was also to make an attempt at the administration of law and order, especially the punishment of foes of the British Empire. However, the incumbent was not to interfere in the internal administration of the Lushai chiefs.

After the Second *Vailen* of 1889-1890, the South Lushai Hills formed a District under the Bengal Province in 1891. It was placed under a Superintendent. The Superintendent was to settle all disputes that arose among the Lushai chiefs. He was also in charge of preventing raids into British territories and public breaches of peace. He was also prescribed not to interfere in the internal affairs and administration of the Lushai chiefs.

However, nothing could subdue the conviction of the Lushais. On January, 1892 during the height of resistance against the British, even Fort Tregear was

⁵ Captain H. R. Browne was appointed as Political Officer in the North Lushai Hills by the British Government of India.

burnt.⁶ Military cantonments inside the Fort were all reduced to ashes. Dr. Antonio succumbed to his burnt injuries. Only the cash safe and ammunitions were taken to safety.⁷

As peace returned the British began to think beyond the Lushai Hills. The real imperial agenda was into application. The British course of domination coincided with the completion of railway connecting Calcutta and Chittagong. The next step of the British was to open railway between Calcutta and Mandalay through the Lushai Hills.⁸

Charles James Lyall, the Chief Commissioner of Assam (1894-1896) had earlier observed, “A feasible line for a cart or a railway can be discovered from Chittagong to Mandalay, the land route to Upper Burma will enable the surplus population of Bengal, who refuse to cross the sea, to spread into Upper Burma, benefitting both provinces. The trade of Upper Burma will also gain much by the possibility of easy communication between Calcutta and Mandalay.”⁹ This was another reason for the British colonisation of the Lushai Hills.

The colonial authority might act inappropriately in several areas which they had colonised. Several *pasalthas* including Zakapa showed them that this did not work in the case of the Lushai. It is known in the pages of history that no alien authority had made such outrageous demand to the Lushai again. Zakapa personified Lushais’ passion to safeguard one’s dignity and honour. The British themselves had learned from the repercussion of Murray’s action. It was not with despotic show of power but with ‘benevolent acts’ that the British had struggled to win back the heart of the Lushais. These benevolent acts were perpetuated more or less through the White missionaries.

⁶ Fort Tregear was abandoned in 1898. And the colonial records mentioned that it was largely due to the scarcity of water.

⁷ Chhawnmanga, *Mizorama Michengte*, Aizawl, Hnamte Press, 1985, p. 168.

⁸ Priyam Goswami, *The History of Assam – From Yandabo to Partition, 1826 – 1947*, Kolkata, Orient Balckswan Private Limited, Reprint, 2016, p. 141.

⁹ Cited in Priyam Goswami, *The History of Assam – From Yandabo to Partition, 1826 – 1947*, Kolkata, Orient Balckswan Private Limited, Reprint, 2016, p. 142.

The ideology that moved imperialism in the late nineteenth century was strengthened by dogmatism and self-assuredness. For the British and Europeans an idea of empire implicates the predominance of the White or Aryan race. The strife for this predominance reverberated into the mandate to rule over the 'other'. This mandate was given a moral and humanitarian camouflage. The Christian missionaries were utilised to save the 'heathen souls' from the certainty of everlasting punishment. Ethical imperialism was wrongly justified on the ground that tutelage of the civilised over the uncivilised was the mandate of heaven.

The essence of British colonial expansion and dominance was to exploit native states for nourishing the mother country. The caesarian state with its might used its power, even foul means, and obtained colonial expansion and subjugation of the natives. The imperialist military superiority reduced the natives and on its backdoor, the entry of the missions was often opened.

The establishment of the British rule was consequently followed by the entry of Christian missionaries in the Lushai Hills. This was accompanied by the introduction of western education based on 'modern' ideas. The traditional society further underwent tremendous changes because of this. The Lushai could not withstand the onslaught of western education and the society began to crumble. Thus they were susceptible to colonial control and domination.

The church gradually emerged as the most important institution in the village. It became the fulcrum of social life in the Lushai Hills. The village chiefs began to oppose the work of the missionaries, as they lost their significance. New laws were incorporated by the colonial state for an amicable solution between the two. The colonial government maintained law and order while the Christian missionaries sustained their 'civilising mission'. Once the Lushai' despise for Whitemen was overcome, it gave way to acceptance of the Whiteman's faith in large numbers.¹⁰

For the missionaries, the paternal colonial government was always behind them. They concurred in socially transforming or reforming the indigenous society.

¹⁰ Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, *Zoram Vārġian – Chanchinġha leh Thuziak Khawvâr Ķan Dān*, Aizawl, Fineprints, 2008, pp. 181-182

However, they diverged later as the state being interested in transforming the colonised only up to a superficial level¹¹. This was in complete divergence with the missionaries' goal, as there were some missionaries who tried to reform the native society so that they would be able to compete with the 'civilised'.¹²

The bâwi controversy and the setting up of a high school were testament to this. The state and missions were together at the beginning, but diverted in the later stage. Christian missionaries like Dr. Peter Fraser (in the case of bâwi) really attempted and worked for the upliftment of the Lushais even beyond the limits demarcated by the colonial state.

It was a general intuition among the Lushais to resist anyone that tried to exercise control over them. In their resistance of the imperial alien power, the Lushai chiefs suffered heavily. Several of them were killed, maimed, deported or lived as fugitive. Several villages along with their granaries and stockades were burnt and destroyed. Their livestock were confiscated and the people lived under constant fear. Economic decline had tremendous effect on the capability of the chiefs.

It was very difficult for the chiefs to meet the demands of the colonial government, even if reinstated. However, it was the agenda of the imperial government to reinstall the chiefs and govern through them. The reinstatement of the chiefs was more financially viable to the British rather than designing whole new administrative machinery.

With the consolidation of the British rule, several changes took place in the Lushai society. The chiefs had to obediently carry out the order of the colonial authority as they derived power from them. The people started to dislike the chiefs as

¹¹ Here we are reminded of Macaulay's infamous 'Minute' on Indian education in 1835, in which Macaulay argued that the British need, "a class of interpreters between us and the millions we govern — a class of person Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect".

¹² A missionary educationist wrote in 1819 that the goal of the education system framed by the colonial government was, "to form a corps of translators and be employed in different departments of Labour". Mr. Thomason's communication to the Church Missionary Society, 5 September, 1819, *The Missionary Register*, 1821, pp. 54-55. Cited in, Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', *Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 28, October 1984, p. 128.

they were part of the colonial oppressor. The British had intrinsically ruined the cordial relations between the chiefs and their subjects.

The chiefs became mere settlement holders with the introduction of *ramri lehkha* in a land they were previously the absolute owners. By submission, the Lushai chiefs subordinated themselves to the colonial power. They were in fact at the mercy of the British authority. The foreign government owned the land and it had only apportioned it out to the chiefs. The power of land distribution was with the chiefs but the legal ownership was with the colonial government. In later years, the chiefs became exploitative and abuse of power became more frequent.

The creation of 'boundary' limited the movement of the people. This had put the chiefs under tremendous pressure as they had to channel the urge of the people to the British 'sahib'. The chiefs now become highhanded in their dealing with the people. This produced frustration among the people.¹³ The changing power structure in the institution of chieftainship had vehement impact in the Lushai Hills.

The establishment and consolidation of the British rule immediately had an effect on the Lushais. Professor C. Nunthara wrote three ways in which these effects were felt.¹⁴ As a result of the restriction on the territorial mobility of the chiefs the hitherto nomadic nature of the Lushais came to an end. The external affairs and relations of the Lushais became more regularised through the British imposition of peaceful co-existence. This was achieved as they were the subjects of the same British authority. The appearance of money as a medium of exchange ended the barter system. It heralded the monetary economy and emergence of the privileged class to the hitherto classless, simple society.

The institution of chieftainship which was the most important institution of traditional Lushai society lost its significance under colonial control. The chiefs could not really oppose the British authority as they had become lazy and parasitic. They rather emerged as an important institution for colonial domination. It was a

¹³ The mass often seek refuge in the hands of the Circle Interpreter (C.I.). The C. I. had emerged as a more important centre of power than what the chiefs had been before.

¹⁴ C. Nunthara, *Mizoram: Society and Polity*, New Delhi, 1996, p. 47.

ready institution which the colonial power used to their convenience with little modification.

In any judicial matter, there was the right to appeal within two months to the British superintendent. In actual practice, the Superintendent did not interfere even if there was an appeal. In reality, the chiefs' decision was final. The colonial authority did not want to anger their local collaborators.

The "Excluded Areas" were governed by the colonial authority in accordance with the already existing customs and rules. There was no scope for participation of the people in this system of administration. However, the Chiefs' Durbar was a landmark in the political history of the Lushai Hills. The first durbar was held at Thenzawl on 14 October, 1941. Generally, members of the durbar were elected by the chiefs of each circle from among them by means of secret ballot. It was attended by twenty-six chiefs. It was the first time that the Lushai Hills had experienced a type of representative government.

The chiefs wanted the continuum of status quo while the commoners demanded maximum freedom from the chiefs. The situation got worsened in 1946 when the Superintendent deposed some hereditary chiefs and appointed government officials in their position.

On 14 December, 1971, the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Bill was introduced by the Honourable Home Minister, K. C. Pant. On the next day, the Honourable M.P. Shri Dinesh Chandra Goswami (Gauhati) spoke of the need for an integrated Northeast India. This region was the last to be conquered by the British. The British found 'tremendous resistance' while they were trying to maintain their hold. In the rest of the country, they follow a policy of division between the Hindus and Muslims. And, in the Northeast, they followed a policy of divide and rule between one tribe and another.

Goswami interestingly noted the observation of Alexander Mackenzie in his book, *History of the Relations of the Government, with the Hill tribes*, where he wrote ". . . when the tribes would not submit to our arms the only alternatives was to

break up and disintegrate their communities".¹⁵ What we can deduce from Goswami's speech is that there was an existence of tremendous resistance in northeast India, including the Lushai Hills. The suppressive policy of the British can also be gleaned from this.

New market forces had swept Europe in the form of mercantilism. The reverberations were felt even in the Lushai Hills. It inaugurated innovation and disruption, and drove the colonial projects. These projects undermined tribal independence and altered the indigenous social structure through economic and social programmes.

As the societal fabric around them changed, the colonised subject confronted unfamiliar pressures. They attempted to grab advantage of new opportunities and tried to balance between innovation and tradition. However, the colonised society was often depicted in static terms. It was not that the colonised society had not existed without change even before it encountered the colonial power. One tends to get an impression that the colonists arrived with full possession of the same values that their ancestors had possessed centuries before. It is a fact that some societies experienced changes early and more rapid than the others.

In the Lushai Hills too there was a crucial conflict of cultures. One was based on kinship and operated within a redistributive economy in which generosity and reciprocity were the requisites. The other was based on aggressive pursuit of interest and profit. In this struggle, the independent tribes followed their own course. Their portrayal in apathy was often due to their opposition of the colonial power. However, tradition is much more ingrained than new market forces.

Migration or the search for fertile land was the core of Lushais' historical experience. However, bitter dimension than this was being uprooted from one's village or expulsion from the native soil or village. This was a common practice undertaken by the colonial power as a system of punishment. Exile to distant lands was a prominent theme in the history of the Lushai Hills as is the attachment to

¹⁵ *Lok Sabha Debates*, Fifth Series, Vol. 10, Nos. 21-26, NMML, New Delhi.

homeland. However, the severity of being exiled had taken severe psychological tolls on the victim. *Pasaltha* like Dokulha (brother of Hausata) was exiled to Hazaribagh and Andaman because of his resistance to the colonial power. *Rani* Ropuiliani was exiled to Rangamati for the same reason. It was the longing for their homestead that ruins and took a toll on their lives.

The Lushai Hills appeared as being 'more' receptive to the rules of the colonial master. This is because the colonial power had horribly dealt with the people of the Lushai Hills. As their strategy of securing 'peaceful' frontier failed, the colonial super power struck the Lushai Hills dreadfully. Besides the villages, they burnt granaries and stockades, and these were their everything for the semi-nomadic hunter-gatherer society. The colonial military might did not give the Lushai any option but to cringe to the imperial agenda. As everything was reduced to ashes, it was impossible for the Lushais to withstand the British. It rather was amazing that some chiefs dared to challenge the British even after their subjugation.

With the percolation of British ways and mores, the native threats receded. With the indigenes silent, the colonist had the freedom to construct the image of the settlers on his choice. They distorted histories to fit their purpose and goal. Imperial power constructed myth about the Lushais. Their histories were absorbed or ignored and it was up to the dominant society to include or exclude them.

There never was complete assimilation as such. Edward Said and Homi Bhabha (among others) argued that colonialism required partial assimilation of the colonised society. Complete assimilation would imply that the colonised were equal to the coloniser. Colonialism created and perpetuated images of the colonised as separate and inferior. However, the images were never silent and had their own power. They were shaped and used by the coloniser for the pursuance of their own goal. It was these images that were at the forefront in the struggle against colonialism. It was their efforts, which finally resulted in the abolition of the authoritarian chieftainship. Chieftainship as studied was a significant tool of colonial control and domination.

The 'Lushai Hills' itself was thus the creation of the colonial state. The administrative system vis-à-vis the *ramri lehkha* was a tool for colonial supremacy. The document was a primary technology of colonial domination. It produced fixed and rigid areas where the Lushai chiefs could not exert their influence to the area beyond. It fixed the people to an area, in an enclosed space. Colonial cartography and the superiority of the colonial power acted on each other and displaced the Lushais' land. It defined the area of a particular chief while on the other hand it issued the same to those they favoured. This disrupted the indigenous space and produced a new notion of Lushai Hills. It is the intrigue of history that the creators of this boundary were facilitated with possession and domination.

As stated earlier, the British entry in the Lushai Hills was preceded or accompanied by survey parties or intelligence officers. Information gathering was an important technique for colonial mastery. Captain Hodgkinson, Lieutenant Sandes, Col. Lister, R. G. Woodthorpe, Lieutenant Stewart and others were part of the topographical survey team at first. Captain John Shakespear was the intelligence officer during the Second *Vailen*.

The survey party studied and mapped the country. Mapping was centrifugal to the British mastery in different regions of South Asia. It was also crucial to their domination appropriating them to 'civilise' the native mind. The role of the British military in knowledge production was an important feature of the transformative power of the colonial state.

Thus, colonialism was itself a cultural projection of control. Knowledge enabled colonial conquest and colonialism itself produced knowledge too. Cultural forms categorised as 'traditional' were the creation and the reconstruction of this knowledge. With their vast knowledge, the British reduced complex codes into simple language and prolifically used it as a tool for colonial domination. The British ruled the Lushai Hills through the systematic creation of grammar for vernacular language, adoption of new religious belief, and so on .i.e. the cultural technology of rule.

The Lushais' ideas of resistance to colonial consolidation were premised in the reclamations of social equality. Human emancipation is achieved when people treat themselves and those around them as equals. For this, authoritative interference of the colonial state has to be curbed. The power of the chiefs as agent of colonialism had to be reduced. Non compliance with popular demand conveys the nepotism that the dominating section had practiced.

The resistance against everyday tyranny of the colonial state went on since the very inception of the colonial state. There existed an unbroken culture of resistance in the Lushai Hills. With the entrenchment of the colonial state, the state was no longer an external entity to the indigenous society. The Lushais depended on the exigencies of the state through the chiefs. They had also acquired the nuances of the everyday lives through the agencies of the colonial state like the education system, new faith, the political system, etc. It was what they gained from the colonial state that enabled them to resist the colonial state itself.

The Lushais resistance till 1889 was an outright rejection of the intrusion of the colonial state in their midst. After the colonial state became dominant, resistance tended to proceed through contentious negotiations.

Zakapa resisted the British because of the contentious demand of colonial agents. The Mizo Union was against the colonial state because of their continued support to the tyrannical chiefs. They claimed certain rights that could be exercised by them within the framework of the colonial state. Thus, resistance was not an outright rejection of the colonial state but negotiations in terms of integration in the polity. The resistances were rather footprints of assertion. The Lushais showed an ability to engage competently and assertively with the colonial state.

It was arduous to resist a dominant power as it was firm and institutionalised. However, resistance on the other hand, was essentially pitted in opposition to this grand power. 'Resistance' as a critical social science concept acknowledges the challenge posed by its ambiguities in the face of dominant institution. It literally means 'endure' or 'remain firm'. Its Latin roots *resistere* must re-orient the earlier emphasis on confrontation and negation towards a logic of negotiation.

Any level of subjugation implicates the existence of resistance. Subjugation and domination cannot be conceivable without the prevalence of some form or level of resistance. To resist is arguably to apprehend the condition of one's subordination. It is to withstand and endure those conditions of everyday life. It is collective strategies with proper intention and roadmap to negotiate power relations from below in an attempt to reframe them in a more favourable or emancipatory direction. In certain case, resistance may fail to rearrange the existing arrangements. Thus, what is more important is the differentiation of the 'failure of resistance' from the 'failure to resist'.

It is hoped that this thesis will give a new dimension to our existing knowledge of the Lushai Hills or Mizoram. It seeks to rethink resistance as a continuum; it attempts to reorient and reinvigorate the study of resistance as negotiation rather than pitting an entity against the other.

Resistance as we comprehend now is rooted in the logic of negotiation rather than negation. Resistance negotiates with the structures that subordinate them in manner that is least costly to them. It recognises the power structure and domination that immerse them. It exploits the gulf in the social arrangements to push forward their claim. In the case of the Lushai Hills, we saw how resistance meaningfully restructured this social arrangement.

The thesis emphasise that resistance is comprehended as negation and negotiation rather than direct opposition to a superior power. This negotiation places the dominant state at the heart of resistance. Resistance is thus intrinsic and not extrinsic to power relations within the state. The thesis explores new way to rethink 'resistance' as a critical social science concept. It is hoped that it will provide novel direction for further critical and scholarly discourse. It must be invoked into a meaningful interpretation and practiced in the context of contemporary attributions of marginalisation. A study of resistance opens up the possibility of further investigations to review the nature of power relations. It is crucial to divulge how resistance interposes with colonial rule or modern state, compelling colonialism or

the state to alter, reconsider, and sometimes completely reform its practices and institutions.

The vehement resistance posed by the Lushais is at an incipient stage of study in academic research. The myth that the frontier tribes of northeast India ardently welcomed colonial occupation is being shattered. The magnitude of the resistance or the parameters on which we measure resistance may not be the same. But it was the efforts of the time which emerged out of the misdoings of the *vais* or the colonial power that is most significant.

APPENDIX – I

ASSAM ACT XXI OF 1954

THE ASSAM LUSHAI HILLS DISTRICT (ACQUISITION OF CHIEFS' RIGHTS)
ACT, 1954

(Passed by the Assembly)

(Received the assent of the President on the 26th June 1954)

[Published in the Assam Gazette, dated 30th June 1954]

An

Act

to provide for the acquisition by the State of certain rights and interests of Chiefs in and over land in the Lushai Hills District.

Preamble – Whereas it is expedient to provide for the acquisition by the State of certain rights and interest of chiefs in and over land in the Lushai Hills Districts in the State of Assam.

It is hereby enacted as follows: -

1. Short title, extent and commencement – (1) This Act may be called the Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Act, 1954;

(2). It shall come into force on such date as the State Government may, by notification, appoint in this behalf.

2. Definitions – In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context, -

(a) “autonomous region” means the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region constituted as such under sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 1 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India;

(b) “agriculture” includes horticulture;

(c) “agriculture year” means the Assamese year commencing on the first day of *Baisak*;

(d) “chief” means a chief of the Lushai Hills District recognised as such by the State Government before the commencement of this Act;

(e) “Compensation Officer” means a Compensation Officer appointed by the State Government under sub-section (2) of Section 7 of this Act.

(f) “Court” except in the case of any reference to the High Court means the Lushai Hills District Council Court established under sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 4 of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, or till such Court is established the Court of the Deputy Commissioner;

(g) “date of vesting” means the first day of the agricultural year next following the date of publication of the notification under section 3 of this Act;

(h) “Deputy Commissioner” means the Deputy Commissioner of the Lushai Hills District and includes the Subdivisional Officer, Lungleh or any Extra Assistant Commissioner or any other officer empowered by the State Government to discharge the function of the Deputy Commissioner under any of the provision of this Act;

(i) “District Council” means the District Council of the Lushai Hills Autonomous District constituted under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in accordance with the Assam Autonomous Districts (Constitution of District Councils) Rules, 1951;

(j) “Executive Committee” means the Executive Committee of the Lushai Hills District Council;

(k) “Fathang” means a due payable to a chief by a cultivator in kind or in cash;

(l) “Homestead” means a dwelling home (whether used by the owner or let out on rent) and the land on which it stands together with any court-yard, compound, attached garden, orchard and out buildings, and includes any out-buildings used for purposes connected with agriculture or horticulture and any tank or well and place of worship appertaining to such dwelling house;

(m) “Law” includes a tribal custom or usage having the force of law in the Lushai Hills District.

(n) “Member-in-charge of the land affairs of the District Council” means a member of the Executive Committee of the Lushai Hills District Council entrusted with the land affairs of the Council under sub-rule (1) of rule 31 of the Assam Autonomous Districts (Constitution of District Council) Rules, 1951;

(o) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

(p) “*Ram*” means a tract or tracts of land held by a chief under a *Ramrilehkha* or boundary paper issued by the competent authority;

(q) “Regional Council” means the Regional Council of the Pawi-Lakher autonomous region constituted under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India and in accordance with the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Region (Constitution of Regional Council) Rules, 1952;

(r) “Rent” means whatever is lawfully payable in money or kind by a tenant on account of the use and occupation of land held by him;

(s) “Tenant” means a person who holds land under another person and in or, but for a special contract, would be liable to pay rent for the land to that other person, but does not include a person who holds immediately under Government;

(t) “Tin” means one four gallon kerosene oil tin.

3. Notification declaring the vesting of “*Ram*” in the State – (1) The State Government may, from time to time, by notification declare that the rights and interests of a chief in his *Ram* specified in the notification shall stand transferred to and vest in the State free from all encumbrances.

(2) A copy of the aforesaid notification shall be served in the manner prescribed on the chief whose interest is affected by such notification.

(3) The notification referred to in sub-section (1) shall also be circulated within the *Ram* concerned by the Deputy Commissioner in such manner as he deems fit.

(4) The publication of such notification in the manner provided in subsections (2) and (3) shall be conclusive evidence of the notice of declaration to the chiefs whose interests are affected by such notification.

4. Consequences of such notification – Notwithstanding anything contained in any law for the time being in force or in any agreement or contract expressed or implied, on the publication of the notification referred to in section 3, all rights and interests of the Chief in the *Ram* shall, save as otherwise expressly provided in this Act, cease and shall vest absolutely in the State free from all encumbrances in accordance with the provisions of this Act with effect from the agricultural year next following the date of publication of such notification.

5. Compensation how to be paid – No compensation to any chief whose rights and interests in his *Ram* vest in the State under the provisions of this Act shall be payable except as provided for in this Act.

6. Settlement of Rams – (1) The District Council or the Regional Council, as the case may be shall take over charge of any *Ram*, the rights and interests of the chief in which vest in the State.

(2) All the *Rams* shall be administered by the District Council or the Regional Council, as the case may be, in accordance with the law for the time being in force in the Lushai Hills District.

7. Compensation Statements – (1) Every Chief whose rights and interests in a *Ram* have vested in the State in consequence of a notification issued under section 3, shall be paid compensation according to the provisions of this Act.

(2) The State Government shall, as soon as possible after the publication of notification under section 3, appoint one or more officers, to be hereinafter called Compensation Officer, to prepare a compensation statement in the manner and form prescribed in the rules and to perform such other duties as are provided by any provision of this Act or by any rule made thereunder.

(3) The compensation statement shall inter alia contain (i) the total number of households within a *Ram* of the Chief, (ii) the amount of compensation to be paid under the provisions of this Act to such Chief and other persons whose interests are

affected, (iii) whether payment to be made in cash or in kind, (iv) whether payment to be made in instalments or in a lump and (v) any other particulars as may be prescribed.

8. Compensation payable to a Chief – (1) The Compensation Officer shall for the purpose of preparing the compensation statement, determine the amount of compensation payable in respect of each *Ram* in the manner and in accordance with the principles hereinafter set out, that is to say: -

(a) The compensation payable to a chief shall be as follows for a period of ten years with effect from the date of vesting –

(i) three tins of paddy per year per household upto a limit of one hundred households in his *Ram*; and

(ii) two tins of paddy per year per household for every additional household in the *Ram* beyond the limit of one hundred mentioned in (i) above.

(b) For the purpose of clause (a) –

(i) where a chief has more than one *Ram* in his jurisdiction, all the *Rams* shall be treated as one *Ram* and the total number of households shall be computed accordingly;

(ii) the actual number of households within the *Ram* of a chief shall be regarded as those paying *Fathang* to the Chief immediately preceding the commencement of this Act, and shall not include those exempted from the payment thereof by virtue of profession, trade, calling, employment or of the recognition of other services.

(c) The amount of compensation shall, as and when paid in cash, be calculated according to the market price of paddy prevailing at the time in the locality where the *Ram* concerned is situated.

(2) The compensation shall, in the first instance, be determined for the *Ram* as a whole and not separately for each of the co-sharers or interest therein.

(3) The Compensation Officer shall then apportion the share of compensation payable to a co-sharer or any persons having interests in the *Ram* and if, in doing so any question involving matters of civil nature arises, he shall dispose of the matter in the prescribed manner.

9. Preliminary publication of compensation statement – (1) The Compensation Officer, after the determination of the compensation payable to a chief under the provisions of section 8 shall prepare the compensation statement as provided for in sub-section (3) of section 7.

(2) The Compensation Officer shall cause a draft of the compensation statement to be published in the manner prescribed calling for objections from any persons interested in it, to be submitted within a period prescribed.

(3) A copy of such draft compensation statement shall be sent in the manner prescribed to the persons whose names appear in the compensation statement.

(4) On receipt of any objections preferred within the prescribed period, the Compensation Officer shall consider and dispose of them according to the rules prescribed by the State Government.

10. Appeal – (1) An appeal, if presented within sixty days of the date of order shall lie against any order of the Compensation Officer passed under sub-section (4) of section 9 to the Deputy Commissioner, Lushai Hills District.

(2) A further appeal shall lie to the High Court from any decision of the Deputy Commissioner, Lushai Hills District if preferred within ninety days of such decision.

11. Final publication of compensation statement – (1) After disposal of all objection and appeals under sections 9 and 10, the Compensation Officer shall correct the compensation statement in such as way as to give effect to the order passed on objections and appeals referred to in section 9 and 10 and cause the compensation statement so corrected to be finally published in the manner prescribed, and on such publication every entry in the compensation statement, except as provided elsewhere in the Act, shall be final.

(2) After the compensation statement has been published under sub-section (1), the Compensation Officer shall, within the period fixed by the State Government, by any general or special order, furnish a certificate to the Deputy Commissioner in the manner and form prescribed, stating the fact of such publication, and such certificate shall be conclusive proof of such publication.

12. Correction of bonafide mistakes, etc. – (1) No correction of the compensation statement after it has been finally published under section 11 shall be made, except as provided in this section.

(2) Correction of *bonafide* mistakes or corrections necessitated by succession or inheritance of any interest in the Ram can be made by the Compensation Officer at any time before the payment of compensation, either of his own motion or on the application of the persons interested, but no such correction shall be made while an appeal affecting such entry is pending.

(3) If a chief dies within the period of ten years from the date of vesting and the compensation payable to him is paid in instalments, the Compensation Officer shall correct the compensation statement after ascertaining heirs or representative of the deceased chief.

(4) Every time, in making such corrections as are referred to in sub-sections (2) and (3) the Compensation Officer shall cause a draft of the corrections to be published in the same manner as the draft compensation statement is required to be published under section 9 and after considering and disposing of any objections that may be made in the manner provided in the sub-section (4) of section 9 shall cause the corrections to be finally published.

13. Mode of payment of compensation – (1) The compensation shall be paid in cash or in kind.

(2) The amount of compensation payable to a chief shall consist of an equal annual recurring payment for a period of ten years if paid in kind or its equivalent if paid in cash.

Provided that the total amount of compensation may be paid, at the option of the State Government, to a chief in a lump either in kind or in cash calculated on the

basis of the prevailing market price of paddy in the locality where the Ram is situated.

(3) The State Government shall communicate its decision under the proviso to sub-section (2) above, to the Compensation Officer in the prescribed manner within a prescribed period.

(4) The Compensation Officer shall, as provided for in sub-sections (1), (2) and (3) make payment of the Compensation Officer in the prescribed manner within a prescribed period.

(5) If any dispute arises as to the title of any such person to receive the amount, the Compensation Officer may, if he thinks fit, keep the amount in deposit in the manner prescribed until the dispute is determined by Court to whom the parties shall be referred and on such determination the Compensation Officer shall pay the amounts to the person or persons entitled to receive the same.

14. Bar to jurisdiction of Civil Courts in certain matters – Save as otherwise expressly provided in any provisions under this Act, no suit or other proceedings shall lie in any Civil Court in respect of any entry in or omission from a compensation statement published under this Act or in any respect of any order passed or any act done or purporting to be done under this Act or the rules made thereunder.

15. Protection of action taken under the Act – No suit, prosecution or other proceedings shall lie against any officer of the State or of the District Council or the Regional Council for anything in good faith done or purporting to be done under this Act or any rules made thereunder.

16. Enquiries or proceedings conducted by the Compensation Officer to be deemed as “Judicial proceedings” – The Compensation Officer, for the purposes of any enquiries or proceedings taken under this Act shall have the same powers as are exercised by an Assistant to the Deputy Commissioner under the rules for the Regulation of the Procedure of Officers appointed to administer justice in the Lushai Hills published under Notification No. 2530(a)-A.P., dated 25th March 1937, as subsequently adapted and modified by the Assam Autonomous Districts

(Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1952, in respect of (a) enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him and (b) compelling the production of documents, and such enquiries or proceedings conducted by the Compensation Officer shall be deemed to be judicial proceedings under the aforesaid rules.

17. Power to order production of documents, registers, etc. – Subject to any condition that may be prescribed, the Deputy Commissioner, the District Council, the Regional Council or the Compensation Officer may, for the purposes of this Act, require any person to produce any document, paper or register which is in his possession or under his control or to furnish any information which he may think necessary for the proper discharge of any duties under any provision of this Act.

18. Delegation of powers – The State Government may, by notification, delegate to any officer or authority subordinate to it, any of the powers conferred on it by this Act to be exercised subject to any restriction and condition as may be specified in the said notification.

19. Penalties – Whoever –

(i) Wilfully fails or neglects to comply with any requirement made of him under this Act, or

(ii) contravenes any lawful order passed under this Act, or

(iii) obstructs or resists the taking by the District Council or the Regional Council or any officer authorised by it in writing of charge of any *Ram* the rights and interests of a Chief in which have vested in the State under this Act, or

(iv) furnishes information which he knows or believes to be false or does not believe to be true, shall on conviction before a Magistrate, and in addition to any other action that may be taken against him, be punishable with fine may extend to one thousand rupees.

20. Power to remove difficulty – If any difficulty arises in giving effect to any provision of this Act, the State Government may, as occasion requires, take any action not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act which may appear to it necessary for the purpose of removing the difficulty.

21. Power to make rules – The State Government may, subject to previous publication, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

APPENDIX – II

ASSAM ACT XVII OF 1855

THE ASSAM MIZO DISTRICT (ACQUISITION OF CHIEFS' RIGHTS)
(AMENDMENT) ACT, 1955

(Passed by the Assembly)

(Received the assent of the Governor of Assam on the 23rd July 1955)

[Published in the *Assam Gazette*, dated the 27th July 1955]

An

Act

to amend the Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Act, 1954.

Preamble – WHEREAS it is expedient to amend the Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Act, 1954 (Assam Act XXI of 1954) hereinafter referred to as the Principal Act in the manner hereinafter appearing;

It is hereby enacted in the Sixth Year of the Republic of India as follows: -

1. Short title, extent and commencement – (1) This Act may be called the Assam Mizo District (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) (Amendment) Act, 1955.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

(3) It shall have the like extent as the Principal Act.

2. Amendment of section 3 – For the heading of section 3 of the Principal Act the following shall be substituted, *viz:* -

“Notification declaring the vesting in the State of a Chief's rights and interest in his Ram”.

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