

**DECLARATION**

**Mizoram University**

**June, 2011.**

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

**This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English.**

**(Candidate)**

**(Head)**

**(Supervisor)**



**MIZORAM UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**CERTIFICATE**

**This is to certify that “Dynamics of Christianity in the Song Tradition of the Mizos” written by Mark V. Vanlalrema has been written under my supervision.**

**He has fulfilled all the required norms laid down within the M.Phil. regulations of Mizoram University. The dissertation is the result of his own investigation. Neither the dissertation as a whole nor any part of it was ever submitted to any other University for any research degree.**

**(Dr. Margaret L. Pachuau)**

**Supervisor/Assistant Professor,**

**Department of English**

**Mizoram University.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**I would like to thank God for endowing me with the opportunity to pursue research and for blessing me with health and for providing me with the best persons I could ask for during the course of the research.**

**I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Margaret L.Pachuau, for her unflinching support and guidance throughout the course of this research.**

**I would also like to convey my deepest gratitude to the Mizoram University and to the Department of English in particular for giving me the opportunity to carry out the research.**

**I also extend my deepest gratitude to the people whom I contacted for resource and relevant information during the research. Without them I could not have proceeded this far. I am particularly grateful to C. Lalrinfeli and Jamie Zodinsangi Hrahsel for their generous help and insightful suggestions.**

**I am indebted as well to my family for giving me the support and for offering their prayers for my sake throughout this research. It has been a long wait for them.**

**(MARK V. VANLALREMA)**

# **CONTENTS**

# **PAGE**

**Declaration**

**Certificate**

**Acknowledgements**

**Chapter I**

**1 - 31**

**Chapter II**

**32 - 53**

**Chapter III**

**54 - 87**

**Chapter IV**

**88 - 110**

**Chapter V**

**111 - 135**

**Bibliography**

**136-141**

**Appendices**

**Bio-data**

## CHAPTER I

### SONG AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Ontologies that are essential to the definitional parameters of the song tradition differ widely across the globe, even as they cut across historical time frames, and across cultural spectrums. Despite this however, the art of song and music making continues to inhabit human faculty, while suiting the need of the artists as well as the absorbers and thereby evolving to integrate ideas and creative input that are inspired from within and without. Of the innumerable mediums that are employed in order to transport auditory waves that are imbued with aesthetic refinement, song has always been one of the primary forces that foreground any musical composition. Together with musical instruments or other accompaniment set to song, the human civilization has evolved into one while constantly giving out strains of music in myriad ways. This dissertation will argue for a significant postcolonial space in terms of the song tradition of the Mizos and Christianity and will denote that there is a distinct amalgamation of religion and culture in locating the same. It will seek to establish that the cultural continuum between song and religion and liberation has been born out of a consensus between the cultural text and the religious context. It shall situate the same within the dimensions of a post colonialist perspective and argue that in as far as the song tradition is concerned, the Mizo tradition has had much to benefit by the advent of the colonizer who was the missionary. While dwelling upon the concept of the song tradition it must be maintained that cultural history and cultural memory have been intrinsically linked together even in terms of communities and in the same vein 'every action carries a trace of the past-an unconscious memory of it even.' Thus the past and the concept of a memory of the song tradition even in terms of the oral perspective remain significant. Within the parameters of the said paradigms this study proposes to locate the significance of Christianity in

the song tradition of the Mizo community. A study of this dimension must necessarily explore the aspects that are related to post colonial intellectual discourse and the place of culture and the significant transition that a culture has undergone within the ambit of the same. The study will take into account the various sets of significant or inherently essential set of theories that combat the residual effects of colonialism on cultures and will denote the centrality of how, the Mizo community as well as its song tradition has moved beyond the nuances of the inherently stringent 'colonial domain'.

In the light of this perspective it is significant to illustrate that song has been central in terms of dealing with the aspect of identity within the colonized Mizo society. Identity itself has been complex and multifaceted within the Mizo community. In as far as locating the origins of the community have been concerned, there has been an inherent sense of ambiguity and Mizo academicians dwell upon narratives that denote that the community itself has had its origins seemingly from an underground cave known as Chhinlung<sup>1</sup> which has been regarded to be located, somewhere in the modern province of Tibet. This tribe, now known as the Mizos were regarded to have finally arrived at their present habitat in the North-Eastern part of India, and were subsequently integrated into Indian demography and polity after the British administration left India in 1947. The Mizo tribe has been an amalgamation of various sub-tribes and are reputed to have 'music making' as one of the hallmarks of their identity. Thus, song has been central in terms of dealing with the aspect of identity within the Mizo society. That the concept of song has been integral to the development of the Mizo culture remains an understatement. Mizos within the pre colonial times as well as in the post colonial era have often been referred to as a people where both singing as well as a significant amount of dancing that has accompanied the song, have been characteristic hallmarks. Mizos have also been

recognized as a 'singing people' <sup>2</sup>by the missionaries themselves and this term has various interpretations. In this regard it remains significant to note that the song tradition has been significantly intrinsic to the Mizo sensibility. While recognizing that there are post colonial thinkers that have exposed and deconstructed the inherently racist, and significantly imperialist nature of the colonial legacy, it is inherently significant to recognize that, etched well into the community there is an inherent recognition of the stand that has been posited by theorists as well as domains that advocate and seek multiple voices within the process of the postcolonial legacy. The Mizo tradition of song has in significant ways advocated for the domain that has recognized the gradual yet inherent development in terms of 'determining the space' for significant multiple voices within the community.<sup>3</sup> In response to this, it must be noted that while a lot of debate has gone in terms of effectively and fairly incorporating the 'subaltern voice', there has also been a huge mass of criticism in terms of studying the 'other'.<sup>4</sup> In this study, the focus upon the influence of the post colonial concept of the 'other', namely the Christian missionary, will be demonstrated in terms of an amalgamation as well as an inherent assimilation of the notions of hybridity. It will reassert that Christianity as a religion, even within the ambit of a postcolonial discourse still has relevance and bearing upon the present Mizo context in arenas that are both secular as well as theological. It seeks to write back or 'puncture' the notion regarding the inherent postcolonial beliefs which denote that Christianity was often a tool to promote 'Western protection and imperialism'.<sup>5</sup> While an inherent number of post colonial writings have stressed upon the 'terrors of the colonial aftermath' it is significant to observe that in a community like that of the Mizo community, the colonial aftermath has actually been otherwise.

Within the perspective of these observations it must be realized that the concept of colonization has been different in different cultures. In the case of the Mizo community, it

must be realized that the role of the missionaries and subsequently that of colonization was not merely to make the 'colonized culture' cope in terms of making them 'rediscover the Biblical texts as an alternative to or to search in their pages for a better world.' While significantly elucidating upon these aspects it must be established that the influence of Christianity especially upon the song tradition of the Mizos has been approached in terms of its inherent thematic distinctiveness and authoritativeness. This concept can be interpreted in sharp contrast to various factors that vouch for the thematic presuppositions of post colonialism where the belief has been, that in many cultures there had been an inherent acceptance of the 'religion posited by the Christian missionaries'.<sup>6</sup> In this regard the interrelationship between song and religion in the context of the Mizo community become significant. There are various issues that are to be addressed in this dimension. For instance, that of the concept of the 'power systems' that have to be located within a particular domain where there are issues which are related to aspects such as; who has the power to interpret the song culture, and in that regard to whom do the songs belong? The study also seeks to address issues that focus upon whether there are any 'realities' that the songs within the Mizo community are attempting to erase or suppress or conform to? In terms of the Mizo cultural parameters there has been a marked focus upon who the 'songs belong to' and in like manner, where the interpretations of the songs are aimed at. While delving upon these aspects there is also an inherent aim to seek a coherent meaning in terms of the ethical effect that the songs would have had upon the community.<sup>7</sup> The Mizo cultural context has always adhered more towards a sense of identification with post colonialist theorists such as Homi K. Bhabha who denote that the colonial world should valorize mixing spaces where truth and authenticity move aside for ambiguity.<sup>8</sup> The Mizo scenario is also very much in sharp contrast to the reaction by Frantz Fanon who argues that there has to be a more 'violent perspective' in



terms of moving away beyond the colonial mindset. Fanon's argument has been against the notion of hybridity wherein he denotes that the previously colonized peoples would remain hybrids 'with a miserably a schizophrenic identity'<sup>9</sup>, unless they revolt against the colonizers or their oppressors. It has not merely been the element of song but it has been the location of culture in terms of the Mizo paradigm that has been central in necessitating the concept of the Mizo song tradition .

It is therefore essential to denote the place of song within the Mizo community. In this regard the most essential factor in terms of the argument of song has been that it is one of the few narratives that has been in existence as a genre even within the pre colonial sensibility. The advent of the Christian missionaries in Mizoram took place in 1894 and prior to that song had been the determining factor in terms of the centrality of identity especially because the community who were then known as the Lushais<sup>10</sup> were an oral community. In the absence of the written word, song became the predominant form of communication and thus, there were songs that were composed for almost every occasion. Thus, for every member of the community song was actually well etched in their ethos. Mizos have been portrayed as inherent lovers of song and in the wake of this aspect, there has been a spate of song compositions which were interlinked to the notions of identity. While there are arguments that specify that songs were central to the Mizo existence there are critics who argue that there was a time especially when the Mizos who occupied the area that lay to the west of Lentlang had no significant song culture to speak of at all. Chronology has become not merely complicated but suspect especially with regards to the origin of song and thus, rather than dwell upon the chronological parameters it has always made better sense amongst the cultural critics to trace the 'song types' as represented

within the Mizo community. Within the song tradition of the Mizos there are inherently three categories of songs that are popularly acknowledged. These are

- i) Pipute hla (song of the pre missionary era)
- ii) Sakhaw thar hla (song of the missionary era)
- iii) Tunlai hlate (song of the contemporary era)

Amongst these classifications Pipute hla is actually the oldest in terms of the genre and at times it is also referred to as ‘hmanlai hla’ or songs of old and they are believed to have had ample bearing upon Mizo oral literature. However their underlying significance still remains very central. These songs were usually of two lines and later on there were songs that contained three lines as well. In terms of what could possibly be termed as ‘coherent chronology’, this song type can perhaps be classified under three distinct divisions:

- i) songs originating from inhabitants who migrated from the East of the Tiau river
- ii) songs originating from inhabitants who migrated after crossing the Tiau river
- iii) songs originating from inhabitants who migrated after the nineteenth century

It has also been regarded that while the Mizos were located within the east of the Tiau river, they composed songs and these were classified under categories such as :Dar hla, Nau awih hla, Bawh hla, Hlado, Pi Hmuaki hla Chawngchen zai and Chai hla to name but a few.<sup>11</sup> There were also consistent changes that were made to these songs from time to time. Song composition continued even after the community migrated from the Tiau river, and thus there were songs that were composed, and based upon various individuals within the community.<sup>12</sup> There were also genres such as Dar hla, Bawh hla and Hlado, that were found

within the Mizo song tradition. There were also a set of songs that were known as Dar hla and these were songs that were rendered to the accompaniment of the 'dar' or traditional Mizo gong. The 'darbu' or set of gongs were used to accompany these songs. This category of songs were actually deemed to be amongst the oldest in terms of Mizo songs and the lyrics were very simple and they were inherently composed in order to be sung in accompaniment of the gongs. A notable few amongst these were songs such as , 'Liando te unau' , 'Kinga lu thle lekah' which were rendered as song but were significantly bereft of the complexities of verse. Apart from these there were also songs that were known as 'hlado' and 'bawh hla'.<sup>13</sup> Hlado especially was used at the time of hunting and it was a chant that was rendered by the warrior .This cry was rendered by the hunters at almost every place they rested in ,and thus it was regarded to be of especial significance. The warrior rendered this cry over the dead body of the slain enemy, and this chanting of the cry was dependent upon the general atmosphere, in that, if the conditions were still very tense the chant could go totally unrendered. If such a circumstance took place then the warriors would render this cry as lustily as possible when they were about to enter their village. It was also chanted in celebration of the heads that had been hunted down in times of war. Bawh hla, however was not as chanted as often as hlado. However, both bawh hla and hlado were verse that celebrated the bravery as well as the successes of Mizo heroes.

Apart from this, there was another instance of song that was classified as 'thiam hla'. Mizo religion was largely animistic and centered around mythical beliefs in the pre colonial era and so this type of song was especially chanted only by the priests. It was regarded to be sacred verse and it thus was inaccessible to the public at large. So sacred was this verse that even the relatives or the children of the priests had no access to them. The verse was also learnt in secret and the song itself was of two types because there were only two categories of priests.<sup>14</sup> There

were various aspects to the sacrifices within the community ,and thus, there were as many songs that were rendered for the same. There were also songs that were sung by the community at gatherings, and this variety of the song tradition had very many compositions. Some of these songs were classified as ‘Chawngchen zai’, ‘Chai hla’ , ‘Salu lam zai’ and ‘Puma zai’. Chawngchen zai has been regarded to be amongst the oldest in terms of Mizo verse. The various compositions that were rendered within this category were named after the places of origin and composition. Some of these were ‘Tlangkhaw zai’, ‘Dawn zai’, ‘Lumtui zai’ .Incidentally some of these songs had their places of origin from the villages that were located within the Chin hills and significant amongst these were ‘Zai lam hlapui’, ‘Tlangkhaw zai,’ ‘Tlangphei zai’ , amongst other variety of song and there were also songs that represented various aspects that were related to the Mizo way of life .

Chai hla falls within the realm of a predominantly older variety of song within the Mizo tradition ( just as Chawngchen zai).In terms of chronology ,its exact date of origin is ambiguous but it is clear that as a genre it is intrinsically interrelated to the spring festival of Chapchar kut as well. Within this genre there were verse such as Thailungi zai,Lalvunga zai,Darthiangi zai, and Zopui zai.Usually the chai had songs that were of two lines only and were of varying song compositions.The predominant mood was that of festivity and merriment and these songs were sung in times of happiness and this accounted for the popularity of the tradition. Puma zai

was another genre within the Mizo tradition that was actually rendered in times of mass gatherings.<sup>15</sup> It was actually song that originated at the time when there was a significant transition between the old and new religious order within the Mizo society. There was therefore, a distinct difference in terms of the composition of the song and Puma zai by itself created significant controversy amidst the Mizo society as well. The advent of the Christian

missionaries and the subsequent impact of Christianity as a religion within the society created a hurdle for the people at large. As a reaction to the massive impact of the Christian mission, the village chiefs and various other Mizos composed verse in reaction to the same. The missionaries had brought about a significant change in terms of the already, coherently established song tradition of the Mizos and songs were translated and rendered into harmony by them from the original Western compositions by the Welsh missionaries. These songs managed to replace the traditional verses of the land and as a result, a significant majority amongst the Mizo community rose up in retaliation against the new song order. The move was supported by the local chiefs, who were determined to keep alive the older song tradition and significantly it was at this time that the Puma zai came into existence. It was regarded to have originated from the Biate community during 1830-50, (but however there are no coherent aspects to the same with regards to accurate chronology). The genre was actually very popular within Mizoram during 1880 onwards and apart from other verses, the song would end with the term 'Puma' at the end of the song. Puma was actually a term of reference for 'god' in the Biate dialect. The songs were regarded to be a beckoning to the old traditions and because it was interlaced with yearning and cultural sentiment, and it managed to gain immense popularity amidst the masses. It had significant appeal amongst the chiefs and the commoners, old as well as young people within the community.

Other categories of song types which were and are still integral to the Mizo tradition are Tlanglam zai, Lengzem zai, Chheih zai and Zawlbuk zai. There were also songs that were composed after certain individuals. These were songs such as Pi Hmuaki zai, Lalvunga zai, Darthiangi zai amongst several others, and they were usually composed as three lined verse. All these songs within the pre missionary period were very simple songs in composition and

there was nothing that was inherently moralistic or significantly complex in them. Each song however was unique and each had its own lyrical connotations. The period saw the rapid composition of songs that were usually of two or three lines only and in fact it was regarded that two lined verse were of a prior origin than the three lined verse. There were songs that incorporated a number of words from other languages as well and these were undoubtedly much more complicated by nature. Most of the songs incorporated themes that were related to contemporary life and as a result of this they were very popular amongst the community. Song in the Mizo community has also been interlinked towards the aspect of Christianity. In this regard Mizo society has significantly continued to perceive post colonialism as an inherently hopeful discourse and it has been a society that has actually moved beyond all that colonialism entails but at the same time interestingly it has also incorporated aspects within the framework of the colonized. Thus, there has been the creation of an inherently unique ‘new self’ especially in terms of the song tradition. Within the ambit of the post colonial framework Mizo song tradition has had a lot to recognize. However there is a significant truth in that the Mizo within the post colonial world order ‘owes a lot to the colonizer’, and this notion has been made especially within the ambit of inherently recognizing that there is a large part of the colonizer that is still inherently alive in the recesses of the Mizo psyche. Thus, the notion of the ‘subaltern speaking’ as Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak has proposed or the notion of the ‘empire writing back’ has myriad dimensions upon the community in as far as Mizo music and song tradition is concerned.

While recognizing the fact that music and song are a significantly universal phenomenon, and inherently a form of human expression to communicate feelings with the self or other beings, the notion of music within the realms of the Mizo has inherently been to

communicate and act as a living narrative in terms of the realms that are mortal and immortal, spirit and flesh, the deities and the demons, living and non-living. Mizo song tradition is inherently a tradition that has been ambiguous in terms of its origin and has continuously evaded a significant time-and-space location.<sup>16</sup> However, its cultural realities have in many ways been located within a sense of a pre colonial Mizo past and this adheres in significant measure to what ethnomusicologists such as Lucy Green have denoted, in an introduction to one of her critical essays, that “A society without music has never been discovered.”<sup>17</sup> This is inherently true also of Mizo song tradition and this statement has also been supplemented by a number of researchers in music, such as Philip V. Bolhman who also confirm that, “Ethnomusicologists generally assert that there is no society in the world without music, thereby attributing universality at a basic epistemological level”<sup>18</sup>. In this regard there has to be a comprehension of the significance of the impact of colonization within the Mizo domains. The political scenario has to be necessarily understood in this regard. In as far as the colonial aspect is concerned, it must be realized that the annexation of the Lushai Hills (present Mizoram) in 1890 was a culmination of the forward policy that was adopted by the British. After the annexations of Assam (1826), Khasi Hills (1833) and Upper Burma (1885) the Lushai Hills was the only terrain that was left unoccupied between India and Burma. The political atmosphere that was prevalent in the region favoured the British to occupy the hills permanently and the then government of Assam felt that each province should undertake the administration of its own tracts because the tract was too big to be administered by one officer alone and this proposal was accepted by the Government of India and approved by the secretary of state for India. Accordingly the tract was divided into two administrative units namely, the North Lushai hills and the South Lushai hills, the former being part of the Chief Commissionership of Assam and the latter was attached to

Bengal. The creation of the tract into two districts was officially proclaimed in 1895 and it was the outcome of the operations of the 1889-1890 expedition. Aijal or the present Aizawl was the capital headquarters of Capt. H.R. Browne who was designated as the Political Officer and Lungleh or the present Lunglei was made the headquarters of Capt. J. Shakespear who was designated as Superintendent. So in this regard, the land became one where there was significant amalgamation of both the whites as well as the native tribals of the land. Within this ambit, there was a marked recognition of a society that laid emphasis upon the significance of music as narrative. Song was a parameter that was recognized inherently as a mode of communication even before the advent of the colonizers. Within this perspective there has to be an inherent emphasis upon the fact that in many ways within the domains of Mizoram, the Welsh missionaries were actually one of the foremost to recognize the centrality of song and music within Mizo society, even as they communicated the message of the Gospel, (that of Christianity) amongst the inhabitants upon their advent in 1889.<sup>19</sup> The advent of the Christian missionaries itself was regarded and is still regarded to be an invaluable asset to the Mizo society. It however must be emphasized that the sole aim of the Welsh Christian mission was not to promote the concept of the song tradition amongst the native inhabitants. F.W. Savidge and W.H. Lorrain had actually sought to venture into a far flung, nondescript area all in order to preach the message of Christianity. This 'act of colonization' was carried out significantly in various parts of the world and it was not merely the Lushai hills that were undergoing exposure to the Christian domains. It was within the ambit of such colonization that the missionaries realized that the Mizos were actually a tribe that was inherently fond of song, and in this regard this chapter argues that song was actually not an inherited legacy from the white man, rather that



song had existed in its own parameters even much before the colonizer actually set foot upon Mizo soil.

Song has been central in terms of dealing with the aspect of identity within pre colonial Mizo society. There must thus be a comprehension of the fact that even within the domains of the Mizo community there were a number of people who were identified as composers of Mizo songs and that this composition of song was pertinent to both men as well as women. For instance, a woman by the name of Pi Hmuaki, who was a resident of the village of Ngente, some 25 miles off Tiau river was regarded to have been the first composer of songs amongst Mizo women<sup>20</sup>. She played a vital role in terms of the song tradition of the Mizos because all the other forms of vocal expressions prior to her songs were without melody, and were actually chanted out, mostly in unison by various groups. Pi Hmuaki has been credited by a majority of the community, with the creation of tune to song. Thus, her extraordinary contribution to the genre of song has been remarkable especially within the song tradition of the Mizos. Some of her compositions were created at a time when the village that she lived in was enveloped in geographical transition, and her entire tribe was actually heading southwards. Being an avid composer of song, she bemoaned the impending loss of her blissful village life, as well as her the fact that the community to which she belonged to was nearing the prospect of migration. Some of the songs that she composed went thus;

*I will not forget the pleasant life in my Ngente village*

*Until the demise of the crescent moon.*

The pre colonial legacy in terms of the song tradition has thus etched itself in myriad dimensions and it has also loaned significant impetus in terms of the creation and the

location of carving not merely a niche for the community at large but it also created the establishment of an identity that was central and inherent and also significantly located in song. For instance, Pi Hmuaki was so prolific and spontaneous that very soon the inhabitants of her village became extremely concerned about the prospects for the later generation. They felt that there would remain little or no opportunity for the youth to compose any new songs. Thus, the village rallied around and decided to bury her alive. Even as she was being dealt with in such a barbaric manner, so ardent was her love for song that she continued to compose and sing till her dying breath;

*My dear ones, my dear young boys,*

*Do shovel me gently*

In like manner, it has been deciphered that within the realms of the pre-colonized or the pre-Christian society there was an ideal amount of solidarity within the community where song occupied a central role. It was a camaraderie and bonding that was actually established as seemingly bereft of class or caste distinctions. The village was grouped together under the rule of the chief. As such there were occasions where festivals were celebrated together. One such occasion was Chai, in which all the people could participate as they gathered together for the rendition of songs. These occasions were meant as a source of entertainment for the hard-working Mizos. The origin of the Chai occasion is hard to trace, but by various accounts, the Mizos had already practiced Chai even before they crossed over to their present habitat. The first identifiable context of the songs for the Chai occasion can perhaps be traced back to the Chief Lalvunga, who set up his domain in Farzawl village. On one of the Chawngchen occasions, all the ladies were sitting opposite a handsome young man by the name

of Lianchia as they were celebrating with songs and music. Lalsavunga barged in immediately and even as he sensed the affinity of the ladies toward Lianchia, he playfully recited in song and thus the occasion would be significantly marked in terms of song. Song was thus, integral and would result in the creation of a sense of frenetic excitement in the air. The ladies responded with yet another Chai song and the music continued. Lalsavunga however was killed later due to a feud that arose between him and Chief Lianpuia over the killing of a gayal. In death there were many under his dominion who were unwilling to stand by him against the invading Lianpuia brothers. He was beheaded and his severed head, could only serve as a mockery to later Chai occasions with the lines. Another important Chai song is the Zopui zai which originated in the Zopui village under Chief Lallula. As already elucidated, songs form one of the most important cultural expressions of any given mass of people. Due largely to the significant absence of 'written records' in terms of the historical evolution of the Mizo tribe, coherent inquiry into the life, especially in terms of the social set up of the early Mizos have relied heavily upon the element of song. Orality was the mode of communication even as the written parameters were yet to be established. Significantly, the forefathers passed on to their next generation, information about the community in the oral tradition and the genre of song featured largely within this domain. This was not surprising because the Mizos dwelt in a primal land, where there existed an intrinsic bonding to nature and alongwith this, there remained an ubiquitous fear of the spirits. All these were central in the Mizo taking refuge in the mode of song and thus song was regarded to be one of the primary ways in which the early Mizos conveyed their state of mind. Mizos composed songs for different purposes and for different occasions and these had been handed down orally to their descendents in the various clans. The nature of the songs in terms of the early Mizo culture was largely dependent upon the socio-cultural parameters. Being

largely located within the domains of a primitive form their lives were turbulent and were marked by inter-village wars and rivalry. Most clans chose to settle down upon lands that were fertile, especially as the communities were agrarian in nature. Thus in the absence of a coherent religion, there arose superstition and taboos and more importantly the perpetual fear of numerous evil spirits. It was in this realm that the song tradition also flowered. Cultural historians have denoted that musical instruments such as the darbu, darkhuang and darmang are actually an intrinsic part of the Mizo heritage. Again it must be noted here that these were instruments that were played bereft of any profound words in terms of the composition, thus denoting that there was an avid sense of simplicity to the composition of song and yet at the same time it also expressed that song was still very central. Simon During has denoted that ‘representations of the past are always arbitrary, often political and cannot be taken as given for critical thought’ and this statement is true in various ways for the Mizo perspective as well.

In as far as the oral tradition was concerned there were various kinds of ‘dar hla’ or songs that were set to the beat of the gong. Amongst these were songs such as, Chhimbu leh peng peng te, Sa zawng lam hla, Liando te unau hla, kal rawh sai kal rawh hla amidst others. Apart from this, within the period of the oral tradition there were songs such as, hlado leh bawh hla. These songs were regarded to be amongst the oldest in terms of the Mizo song tradition. Hlado was chanted at the time when animals were killed and at the same time because there was a lot of warfare that took place, bawh hla was also created in memory of the dead warriors.<sup>21</sup> Apart from this there was also a genre that was known as ‘salu lam zai’ which as regarded to be of the same chronology as ‘hlado’. Whenever an animal was killed the villagers would behead it and they would be making merry with a lot of feasting in the village, it was for these occasions that this song type was denoted. There were songs of various types and amongst

these were ‘hlapui’ and ‘sakhal zai’. There was yet another category of song and this was called ‘Chawngchen zai’, and this was one of the older group of songs, this type of song bore their name from the various villages that it originated from. For instance, Lumtui zai, Dawn zai. Chai hla was another type of song that seem to have originated before the crossing of the Tiau river. A significant example of such type is ‘Lalvunga zai’. There has also been supporting evidence with regards to the concept of song and music and this has been found in the various musical instruments. As compared to various other cultures it must be noted that Mizos had very little in terms of musical instruments. Some of these are Tingtang, lemlawi, phenglawng, tumphit, mautawtawrawt, rawchhem, tui umdar, talhkuang, bengbung, seki khawn, khuang, hnah tum, apart from these there were also the darkhuang, darbu and darmang<sup>22</sup> that were rendered in accompaniment to the various songs types that had been mentioned earlier. Intrinsicly it must be realised that song has been a part of the cultural heritage of the Mizos and at the same time that it had had a very coherent form of development, with the traditional instruments as well. Bruno Nettl, a music and anthropology professor has stated that all musicologists “at some level of conceptualization, they regard all musics as equal. Each music they believe, is equally an expression of culture, and while cultures may differ in quality, they are bound to believe in the fundamental humanity, hence goodness of all peoples.”<sup>23</sup> As already realized, colonialism had affected the people who were colonized economically, socially and politically. In addition to this, there have been significant cultural changes that have manifested themselves in literature, art and music. In terms of the Mizo domains however, there has been the focusing of certain elements that have been brought, coerced or drawn together, they may either repel, mingle or do a bit of both and have in the process blended coherently into the song tradition. This aspect has been intrinsic not merely of the Mizo parameters because there are constant examples of

‘musical hybrids’ that abound in various post colonial domains. In Mizo culture too, this element has persisted over the years and the Mizo tradition of music has had the colonized and the colonists affected and influenced one by the other. This aspect has been examined by Nettl, even as he recognizes that the hybrids contribute towards the fusion of sound ,musical instruments as well as structure. Thus, the arena of hybridity remains an intrinsic arena in terms of the Mizo cultural perspective where, there has been an inherent demonstration of a new world sound ,one that cannot be compartmentalized according to land, language,as well as political borders.

In the light of music and song tradition especially as pertinent to the present study, ethnomusicologists such as Bruno Nettl, have consistently demonstrated that there are three types or groups of motivation of non- Western societies as expressed in their musical behavior. In an essay entitled “Cultural Grey-Out” he denotes that the first of these is, “the desire to leave traditional culture intact, survival without change.”The second arena refers to complete Westernisation “that is, simple incorporation of a society into the Western cultural system.” The third is moderate as compared to the first and it is the motivation of “modernization” a term which Nettl himself defines as, “the adoption and adaptation of Western technology and other products of Western culture as needed, simultaneously with an insistence that the core of cultural values will not change greatly and does not match those of the West.” The third category applies very significantly to the Mizo song tradition where there has been significant ‘adoption’ as well as ‘adaptation.’ This development too has been very much in keeping with the depiction of ethnomusicologists who have denoted that since the 1960’s ,the promulgation of hybridity constitutes a large facet in terms of music.This aspect has been a factor that has been inherent in many cultures for instance, even in terms of the Aboriginal Australian identity there are aboriginal pop music groups that were formed in the 1970s and these were powered by the

business of the music industry and these bands accommodated familiar Western music styles by playing a mixture of country as well as Gospel songs. There were also bands that were concerned with the “restructuring of song texts by incorporating a mixture of ritual symbolism and concern with colonial hegemony.” These elements thus built up further resistance against European musical values. However it must be noted here that in as far as the Mizo culture and music is concerned, there has been an inherent arena of resistance but at the same time, there has been a consistent influence of the Western role models in as far as music has been concerned.<sup>24</sup> The distance between the two ends of the spectrum of hybridity abounds with smart rhythms and fresh sounds that demonstrate the movement of people as they migrate and circulate across the man made boundaries ‘between land and sea’. Post colonial societies thus share in many arenas with regards to the notion of hybridity. For instance in India, Ravi Shanker has been instrumental in fusing classical Indian music with Western sounds since the 1960’s, when he began collaborating with The Beatles and especially George Harrison. Also, there has been a spate of Asian musicians who have created music and who feature instruments that are indigenous to their culture. Robert Young also denotes the classic illustration of Rai and Islamic social space in the context of hybridity.<sup>25</sup> Algerian Rai, has according to him shaped and formulated the concept of a post colonial context in as far as music in Algeria is concerned. He denotes that Rai music emerged in the 1970’s in Algeria after the appalling experiences of the Algerian War of Independence. Rai is often described as “raw, rough, earthy,” and has also been regarded to be “defiant, assertive, passionate” Young denotes that “the emergence of Rai is associated with the migration of people throughout Algeria to the cities and in that sense, “marks a syncretic musical form that epitomizes the economic imperatives of modernity. This involved much more than a process of fusion, synthesis or intermixture”.<sup>26</sup>

This study has also been intrinsically located with issues that are related to the notion of the 'hybridised nature' of the post colonial culture or the post colonial self and how it has been increasingly represented in terms of the Mizo song tradition. Within the parameters of the Mizo domain it shall focus upon the established ideology that, much of post colonial culture or writing, has concerned itself with the hybridized nature of post colonial culture and this has been regarded to be a strength rather than a weakness. The song tradition in this regard has concentrated upon the notion that the transaction of the post colonial world order is not a one way process in which "oppression obliterates the oppressed or the colonizer silences the colonised in absolute terms." In terms of the Mizo domain, it must be reiterated that the song tradition continues to dominate and reassert the ideology to a greater degree. Especially as song tradition in this dissertation has been concentrated within the dynamics of Christianity there has been undoubtedly an interlinking of religion and the song tradition. With the advent of the missionaries in Lushai domains in 1889, there had been and has been a continued process of the amalgamation of song and religion. Thus, there is an enhanced stress upon the 'mutuality of the process' of the colonizer and the colonized. The concept of the song tradition in the realms of Christianity has stressed upon the fact that there is a keen emphasis upon the element of the 'survival' of song within the Mizo tradition. This element of survival of the song tradition of the Mizos has been integral because as denoted earlier, there had been an established tradition of song even prior to the advent of the missionaries and this element had been tapped as it were, by the missionaries because song was and is still, the significant tradition that embraces and creates a sense of solidarity and bonding within the community. Thus the impact of the missionaries as well as that of the element of religion within the Mizo community lays great emphasis upon the fact that there was an inherent aspect of survival in terms of the said tradition. It testifies that even



under the most “potent oppression of the distinctive cultures of the oppressed”, there has been the creation of new formations which have arisen from the clash of cultures and that these have been a significant characteristic of imperialism.

The notion of hybridity and the power that it releases may well be seen as a characteristic feature of the post colonial Mizo. The tradition of song, that has been part of the pre colonial and inherently pre Christian tradition amongst the Mizos have in the process, allowed a “means of evading the replication of the binary categories of the past” and have also succeeded in developing “new anti- monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth.” The concept of hybridity has been seen to occur in most post colonial societies as a result of “conscious moments of cultural suppression”. Critics denote that it could perhaps be because the colonial power has invaded the colonies in order to consolidate political as well as economic control or when settler –invaders dispossess indigenous peoples and in the process force them to assimilate to new social patterns. Ideologically, it has been asserted too that it could occur in later periods when patterns of immigration from the metropolitan societies and from other imperial areas of influence continue to produce complex cultural palimpsests with the post colonized world. In the case of the Mizo song tradition there has been an inherent association of the same with that of worship. As Christianity has significantly been the religion amongst the people of the state even after the colonial missionaries have departed, there has been an inherent assimilation of the Western as well as native song traditions. The study has also located itself within the framework of the notion that such formulations as have been denoted earlier have naturally not found universal assent. This has largely been because such traditions have tended to resist the ideas of “pure culture” of either post or pre colonial arenas. However it also emphasizes that the manner in which these new trends have been established have been different

in the manner as it has emerged from other places.<sup>27</sup> In such a manner, the Mizo tradition of song too has significantly amalgamated such elements, as will be denoted in the later chapters in order to create and recreate the nuances of song within the tradition.

While hybridity has been emphasized upon, it must be realized that especially within the Mizo context, it has been because there has been a significant realization of the fact that much of the artistic and social production of the community has taken place within the constraints of the traces of the colonial and neo colonial moment. Again, there is also the increasing recognition that, within the ambit of the Mizo society there has been either a vigorous resistance to or an inherent dialogic process of recovery and reinscription. There is a strong emphasis upon the notion of the fact that hybridity in terms of the Mizo perspective does not at any point of time, deny the tradition in which it has sprung from. There has been an inherent recognition of the pre colonial tradition and it has continued upto the present time. There is an inherent presence of this aspect even within other post colonial cultures. For instance E.K. Braithwaite,<sup>28</sup> has stressed upon this aspect too in terms of the Jamaican context by stating that, Jamaican 'creolisation' is an arena where, "the creole is not predicated upon the idea of the disappearance of independent cultural traditions but rather upon their continual and mutual development." The study has re-emphasized the fact that no post colonial form has been able entirely to avoid the impact of the shifts that have characterized the post colonial world. Thus, the aspects of hybridity have asserted that there is an inherent positive aspect to the 'politics of assimilation'. Wilson Harris has in the same light denoted that "only a dialogue with the past can produce originality".<sup>29</sup> The notion of hybridity is central to the mind set of the Mizo as well because this aspect of assimilation has worked very well. The Mizo has carried and has continued to carry within himself remnants of deep seated antecedents. Petersen and Rutherford have also

maintained that in many ways “the past plays tricks on us and conditions our present responses.” They have examined this statement in the light of the fact that there are what they have termed as “fossil identities” that are floating all around us and only by entering into a fruitful dialogue with these are we able to revive the fossils that are buried within oneself. The same is in many ways true of the song tradition and Mizos, there are responses in terms of the song culture and its inherent dynamics because within the culture itself there are aspects of the past that play tricks upon the psyche in terms of conditioning responses in various ways. The dilemma has always been in terms of trying to enter into a fruitful dialogue with the past in order that the fossils of the past that have been deeply buried within the self can be revived. There has not been an inherently total rejection of the past and this has been pivotal in terms of creating a positive aspect because the awareness of cultural roots can always have a very positive influence. As Wilson Harris has consistently denoted that in terms of a rediscovery of the self there was “...a sudden eruption of consciousness, and what is fantastic is that it all came out of a constellation of two ordinary objects, two anchors.” Thus, there has also been the location of a density of resources and immense possibilities within the ambit of this discovery. The Mizo experience has been to locate and visualize arenas that are termed as increasingly new possibilities and also in the process to construct new scales that can attempt parameters of progress. This process is what Wilson Harris has depicted as “architectonic”, namely that it presupposes an insight that may enable us to relate to the static in a new way thereby modifying both it and us. This can be equated with the notion of creativity and in many ways this has demonstrated that the concept of identity is but a ceaseless task and an infinite movement, with the recognition that there has to be a dialogue with the past and also the future.

In the same lines, Chinua Achebe has denoted that, in a cultural context like his, he lived in what he termed as “the crossroads of cultures.” He has depicted a culture where Christianity was inherent but at the same time it was a society where there were still people who were wrestling with multiple headed spirits and offered food to idols, blinded by heathenism. This in sharp contrast to the fact that there were still a cross section of the society that sang hymns and read the Bible day and night. This cultural contrast has also been noted sharply in many ways in terms of the Mizo parameters. Alexis in an essay also speaks about the ‘marvellous realism’ of the people of Haiti where he depicts that for them, the aspect of song becomes very central, and that work for them is unthinkable without music or without song in which all the workers take part. Thus there is the concept of the working song, and there is an inherent uniqueness in terms of the culture. The voodoo gods of the Haitians are nothing but an inspiration to the ownership of the land that he works on. Apart from this, Morisseau –Leroy denotes that, “We are again living through a renaissance of the Haitian song. We see flourishing again forms of expression, both rich and original...”. The concept of a ‘marvellous realism’ has been significantly denoted here in terms of the fact that there has been a central appreciation of the beauties of the Haitian motherland as well as its wretchedness. Amongst other things it also aims to find a proper form of expression to its own people. Within the ambit of Mizo society also there has been an inherent sense of development in terms of a cultural action, something that is not inherently alike but in various ways akin to the aspect of creolisation, in a place like Jamaica. Observations regarding that of people in terms of moulding and assimilation have been central here. This was regarding the fact that there was an assimilation of the English people and the West Indies. In many ways as in the case of Jamaica too there has been an inherent production of mimicry and ‘mimic men’ in terms of the Mizo society. In music as well as the song tradition however, there

was the production of an integration of the old as well as the new in differing forms of song. Homi Bhabha himself in an essay has denoted that ,the notion of cultural difference and not cultural diversity matters in terms of the revision of the history of critical theory. He deliberates upon the arena of the boundaries of culture where meanings and values are (mis) read or signs are misappropriated .Cultural difference thus,problematizes the past as well the present. Fanon had spoken of the need for a theory of cultural signification,that posited for the necessity of theory,and also the restrictive notions of cultural identity. According to him,the liberatory people who bear or initiate the productive instability of revolutionary cultural change are themselves the bearers of a hybrid identity. Significantly this has been located in terms of the Mizo cultural identity as well. That it has been very much a part of the psyche of the people to recognize the aspects of change even within the tradition of the song. Robert Young's essays again advocate for the cultural politics of hybridity where he denotes that at its very simplest "hybridity is the making one of two distinct things". There he also discusses the aspect of hybridity making difference into sameness and sameness into difference but in a way that makes the same no longer the same and the different no longer simply different. This is also associated with the concept of the Mizo song and in many ways there are intrinsic arenas where the culture is still locked into "parts of the ideological network of a culture that we think and presume we have surpassed."

Foucault's notion of 'how we have been trapped into our own history' becomes in the Mizo context of song ,as a significant case in point. The element of power has been intrinsically associated with the cultural relations between Britain and her colonies especially in the nineteenth century. The concept of colonization in terms of other countries was very different as compared to the Mizo scenario,for instance in terms of the European thought the aspect of

culture in its colonial operation was regarded to be “hybridised, alienated and potentially threatening.” It created in many colonies a set of people whom Bhabha denoted as a set of ‘white but not quite’ people. The Mizo domains too were not very different even though Mizoram was but the furthest in terms of the geographical locale too and the fact that the colonizers chose to set foot on such soil has been rightly in many ways been interpreted as ‘God’s miracle’. Again, it must also be noted that ,for Mizos the aspect of the old, essentialising categories of identity have been very much essentialised and significantly fixed in many ways. Thus, it has been with song and the cultural perspective, where song has been so inherent and integral towards the development of the said community. There has not been an ‘imagined past’ in terms of the Mizo community with regards to the song tradition, rather the past especially in the pre colonial notions of song has been very much recognized and this has been significant in creating the essential recognition of the dynamics between song tradition and Christianity within the Mizo arena.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Eventually, this tribal group finally arrived at their present habitat in the North-Eastern part of India, and were integrated into Indian demography and polity after the British administration left India in 1947.

<sup>2</sup> There are critics who regard this term to be derogatory and vehemently patronizing and yet there are also others within the community who consider this aspect in an inherently patronizing parameter .

<sup>3</sup> This belief has been significant because it remains contrary to the inherently post colonialist ideological standpoint that colonizers have been mere ‘salvagers’ in terms of their power of persuasion and coercion at various levels.

<sup>4</sup> As Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak denotes “ to refuse to represent a cultural Other is salvaging your own conscience, and allowing you not to do any homework.”

<sup>5</sup> While recognizing this parameter ,as a belief for various communities, especially in Africa and other colonialist domains ,the study will seek to refute such a stance ,especially in terms of the inter relationship between Christianity and the Mizo cultural parameters.

<sup>6</sup>.As it has been influenced by cultural and psychological effects such as hybridity and alienation that were triggered by colonialism.

<sup>7</sup> As Spivak has articulated , there is an inherent recognition of the fact that studies such as these are significantly problematic. It will seek to establish that the cultural continuum between song

---

and religion and liberation has been born out of a consensus between the cultural text and the religious context.

<sup>8</sup> Bhabha's essays reflect this stance at a more critical level.

<sup>9</sup> According to him, this collective action would apparently stimulate collective pride, and free them from inferiority complexes.

<sup>10</sup> Lushais as termed by the British was the anglicized form of the word Lusei.

<sup>11</sup> Songs were named after the composer or after a time or place of origin.

<sup>12</sup> Some of these were Darmani hla, Mangkhaia hla, Lianchhiari zai and Saikuti zai .With the advent of Christianity, literacy also was established to a tremendous extent and it enhanced the composition of song. Various types of song were composed and some of these were Awithangpa zai, Puma zai, Tlanglam zai .

<sup>13</sup> These were in fact regarded to be almost one and the same thing. However there were songs that were used for both the animal as well as human race.

<sup>14</sup> One category comprised the religious sector and these were called dawwi, kawngpui siam, sedawi and dawino chhui .The other category comprised the medicinal aspects and the verse was specifically composed for occasions associated in terms of animal sacrifice or with regards to the spirit world.

<sup>15</sup> Regarded to be a form of rebellion vis a vis the Christian and pre Christian world order.

<sup>16</sup> Greene amongst other ethnomusicologists denote this purview.

<sup>17</sup> Ethnomusicologists focus upon this notion.



---

<sup>18</sup> Missionaries have reflected this notion in their texts.

<sup>19</sup> Cultural critics such as B.Lalthangliana reflect this perspective.

<sup>20</sup> Historians in the Mizo parameter continue to debate over this perspective.

<sup>21</sup> It must be realized that at the very outset there was perhaps very little demarcation between the two genres of songs. However after a time it was apparent that the songs were of two distinct categories altogether and soon there existed a marked difference between the two types. Hlado seems to have preceded bawh hla to a certain extent. There seems to have been a distinct division in terms of the words of the songs but it must be noted that the lyrics were very distinct and profound.

<sup>22</sup> Different types of Mizo wind and string instruments.

<sup>23</sup> Nettl has denoted that ethnomusicology is instrumental in denoting a coherent critique for the study of music.

<sup>24</sup> This is very much akin to what ethnomusicologists have derived in terms of research in as far as bands such as Cibo Matto are concerned. These are bands that are poised on the opposite end of the spectrum and they exemplify the assimilation of the Western culture, by displaying the effects of Westernisation with extreme and indulgent lyrics. This band also makes the most of technology that has been raised by the Western world and the lyrics of their songs for instance reflect a hybrid combination of inter-Western language and motto in English.

<sup>25</sup> Hybridity applies inherently to the Mizo paradigm as well.

---

<sup>26</sup> Young further illustrates that Rai performers usually begin by using distinctive local acoustic instruments, later on he observed that the development of rai was actually precipitated by technological change. And gradually it rose in its modern form as an independent, form and force and breaking established conventions within the musical and social culture of Algeria. According to Young a hybrid genre of this kind “says something about contemporary social problems, social contradictions: its politics are in its articulations...” Interestingly, rai singers have been profiled as bohemian rebels who aspire to express a free individualism of the west and allies them to international pop icons of rebellion such as James Dean to punk, rap and reggae. It must also be observed that hybridity works at different levels at the same time, according to cultural, economic and political demands of specific situations. It involves processes of interaction that create new social spaces to which new meanings are given. These relations enable the articulation of experiences of change in societies splintered by modernity and they facilitate consequent demands for social transformation.

<sup>27</sup> For instance, in the radically dislocated cultures of the West Indies, they have emerged very strongly because there have been no possibility of asserting a pre colonial past. Rather what has been focused and emphasized upon is the aspect that, as writers like Chinua Achebe denote even cultures in countries such as Nigeria have sought “energetically to assert the validity and continuity of their pre colonial past”. In such terms, they have realized that there can be a fruitful metaphor in the idea of ‘cross fertilisation’ between such elements.

<sup>28</sup> Typical of the post colonial reactions and these are perhaps not corresponding to the Mizo model of study.

---

<sup>29</sup> In this sense within the domains of the Mizo psyche there has been an inherent rhythmic capacity ,that has suggested that a curious rapport exists “between art and genesis.”The inter relationship between song and the Mizo has been intrinsic.Even within what the colonial mind has termed as the so called savage mind and the so called civilized mind, there has been the rapport between music and song and identity.

## CHAPTER II

### RELIGION AND MIZO SONG TRADITION

The concept of the sacral has been under much debate especially in terms of the post colonialist perspective. In various societies, and predominantly within the realms of a more concretely established Euro-American thought, it has been regarded that the secular has replaced the sacral and the 'sacral has been dismissed at best as a myth and at worst a superstition'. In many arenas there has also been the belief that people have been divided within communities based upon their religious beliefs. However, despite these aspects there are coherent dialogues that reaffirm that the sacral is emerging 'again' as a part of a broader rethinking of post colonial identity and it is in the fabric of this that this chapter has considered a specific location of religion especially within the domains of the Mizo song tradition . This chapter will seek to dwell upon the significance of the centrality of Christianity in the life of the Mizos ,and shall reflect upon the same from the point of view of the missionary as the colonizer and the Mizo as the colonized sensibility who had accepted the 'white man's religion' in the process of transformation. It shall denote that the song tradition too has been inherently shaped and honed in terms of the parameters of hybridity ,while incorporating both the pre as well as the post colonial aspects. The chapter will also focus upon the religion that was inherent in the pre colonial Mizo, because it is only with this aspect that the colonial domains or the acceptance of Christianity can be merged. It will denote that even during the pre colonial era there were chants and incantations that denoted the existence of the song tradition. Within these domains it remains intrinsic to establish that there has always been an inherent recognition of the fact that Christianity remains central and significant within Mizoram in terms of religion especially in as far as the post colonial domains are concerned. Thus, a study of the song tradition of the Mizo

must necessarily incorporate the impact of Christianity within Mizoram. Within the post colonial traditions the role of the colonizer has been defined and redefined in many aspects. The colonizer has been required to confront himself in myriad roles, especially in terms of the notion of being the representative of a culture, of race and subsequently also of accused crimes. Amongst these have been inherently located the crimes of violence, crimes of suppressions and most significantly, the crimes of conscience. There has also been the dual belief that a sense of relief from colonialism could come either by only working with Christianity and on the other hand there were others who felt that 'Westernisation' was the solution. The Mizo concept of the song tradition was one that advocated for hope amidst the turbulent beliefs and this belief has been very much vested in terms of the Christian principles of hope amidst inherent hopelessness. This can be studied in various ways as corresponding to the African cultural response towards colonization and Christianity in particular. Especially after 1945, the responses towards the 'new religion' was regarded to be varied, especially as they were "inspired by a hope of change, scarcely present before, scarcely never before felt with any intensity or wide appeal..." In like manner, the song tradition of the Mizos has sought to express and examine the conditions or the cultural grounds on which both natives within Mizoram as well as the Europeans missionaries lived and understood each other.

Within the geographical locales of Mizoram, the concept of Christianity in itself has best been understood to be the product of the interaction of a continuing movement with the institutional Church.<sup>1</sup> Christianity and the subsequent revival movements in the state of Mizoram have not been regarded to be an isolated phenomena, rather both these may be seen as the direct results of the national as well as international evangelistic movements that gained momentum all over the world from the eighteenth century onwards. Mizoram incidentally was

the last state in Northeast India to be reached by the Christian missions. The most fundamental concepts in terms of tracing the dynamics of the song tradition within the post colonial parameter will be that of Christianity because ,it is this factor that had been and still is integral to the psyche of the Mizo and their song tradition. The first missionary to set foot in Mizoram was William Williams and he has been described by the Welsh missionary monthly *Y Cenhadwr* as “an enthusiastic missionary,a man full of adventurous spirit,born-pioneer ,full of enthusiasm to break new ground.” He had expressed in a letter that he had wanted to spread the Gospel to the Lushais.In a comment upon the Mizos he in fact advocated that “the Gospel is the only power in the world that will bring peace amongst them.”He thus had a strong determination to start a mission in the Lushai hills and on a tour to the land it was noted that he was greatly attracted to the Mizos who in turn also developed a liking for him.However he died suddenly on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1892 but despite this Lloyd one of the foremost missionaries has denoted that it was William Williams who “first brought the name of Christ to the hearing of the Lushai people; it was he also who first brought the needs of Lushai into prominence among our churches in Wales.”The missionaries thus followed the notion of “the cross follows the flag” and they arrived in Mizoram after the British had begun to consolidate their hold.The first Christian mission in Mizoram was referred to as the Arthington Aborigines. Fredrick William Savidge and James Herbert Lorrain were the pioneer missionaries from the Arthington mission to Mizoram.<sup>2</sup> It appeared from the very outset that the pioneer missionaries recognised the Mizo instinct for music and singing.William Williams refers to his first two hour meeting with the Mizos to whom they sang several tunes. He denoted that the latter “listened with open mouths” and although he failed to persuade them to do the same, momentarily ,they tried to sing one of the tunes while his party was leaving by boat. On the other hand Lorrain and Savidge found the Mizos extremely

unmusical before they embraced Christianity. They in fact denoted that “the only time they were known to sing was when they were drunk.” Vanlalchhuanawma narrates that in order to further elucidate this aspect there is a story that is told of an occasion where the first school boys were taught singing and certain Mizos working nearby came running in and asked, “where is the beer pot?”<sup>3</sup> Thus, this narrative denotes that singing and heavy drinking were connected in Mizo sensibility and that both were chiefly confined to the adult world.

The term ‘Mizo’ is the generic name for the whole of the related ethnic groups in Mizoram and the adjoining areas of the Chin Hills, Manipur, Chittagong hill tracks, Arakan and Tripura. In terms of the origin of the Mizos there seems to be a common theory of origin which the Mizo sub tribes invariably share is the ‘chhinlung’ legend.<sup>4</sup> The imposition of the British regime in 1889 followed by the introduction of Christianity in 1894 put the entire Mizo society in an unprecedented socio-political imbalance, Christian missions arrived in Mizoram in the wake of the British occupation as was happening in other Asian and African countries. Christianity brought with it various techniques such as literature, education and medicine and thus there was also a general identification of the Christian mission as an intrinsic part of the administration and as a result of this, it added to the ‘suspicions’ of the people about their intent in terms of evangelism. The initial response of the Mizo society to the ‘Christianising’ movement as a whole was thus either openly hostile or that of silent resistance. The reaction to early Mizo Christians was that of condemnation, contempt and persecution.<sup>5</sup> Those forms of response obviously reflected the social protest against the alien rule and culture maintained in the emerging Mizo Church. However, since the outbreak of the revival movement in 1906, there was an embracing of Christianity in large numbers. In order to further comprehend the nature of Christianity in Mizoram, there must be a comprehensive depiction of the status of Christianity

within Mizoram, then known as the Lushai hills. The first Christian missionary to set foot in the Luahai hills was Reverend William Williams . The first Christian mission in the Lushai Hills was the Arthington Aborigines or India Aborigines Mission. The missionaries ,who came to Mizoram namely, F.W.Savidge and J.H.Lorrain were from the Arthington Mission and they embarked upon the mission to ‘set the light of the Gospel’ in the context of the Lushai hills in January 11<sup>th</sup> 1894. Edwin Rowlands, a Welsh missionary who came after the Arthington mission had left the Lushai Hills, was a keen admirer of the people and their inborn love for singing and he subsequently recorded,

“The Lushais seem to have a great love for singing. It is said that during one of the military expeditions ,when the British soldiers were encamped at a certain place at Christmas time, and were having a Christmas repast ,accompanied by songs, that the Lushais, who were shooting in the camp, stopped when the song began but fired again when the singing had ceased.”<sup>6</sup>

There had been an immense amount of material that had been already gathered in terms of the song tradition of the Mizos as well as an immense amount of growth and development in terms of the Mizo composers and their songs even before the arrival of the Christian mission. To further elucidate that the Mizos in fact had an immense amount of songs and music, K.Zawla has denoted thus, “it must be said that we ,the Mizos, are the people who have the most extensive range of song in the whole wide world even before having the alphabet.”<sup>7</sup> Lorrain and Savidge the two missionaries referred to earlier have however been credited in terms of rendering the first Western hymns to the Mizo people. The both of them had composed a song which was based upon the life of Jesus, and it depicted instances relating to the incarnation up till the ascension and it was set to the tune of J.J.Rousseau’s “Come ye sinners poor and needy”. The



smooth flow of the song made it easy to sing and it first placed in the Mizo hymn book which contained a dozen hymns. Some of those hymns were familiar hymns that had been sung in many places even before the missionaries themselves had set foot in those places. The hymns and songs were very important instruments in removing Mizo apprehension about the ‘alien religion’ and played a unique role in the later revival movement when new Mizo hymns based upon traditional tunes emerged. The Welsh mission immediately developed the ministry of music by adding six more hymns to the already existing twelve hymns that had been contributed by the Arthington mission and subsequently they also printed a new hymnbook in 1899. The surprising aspect was that as soon as the mission inaugurated an evangelistic outreach in the villages, there was no rejection towards the same, rather the villagers began to sing Christian hymns in the *zawlbuk*<sup>8</sup> and this itself was a significant indicator that the hymns as well as the missionaries themselves were well accepted within the local domains. Songs became inherently central for the people even as there was a continued acceptance of Christianity and this has been indicated especially in terms of the revival movement, when the missionaries were making headway in the various villages amidst opposition and indifference. Even as there arose significant pandering towards the Christian hymns, there arose a cultural movement that was centred around an obscure song called “*puma zai*” and this movement flared up during the year 1907. The said songs that stirred the controversy were songs that were composed around a double lined refrain of any number of verses and it had the appellation of ‘*puma*’ at the end of the line.<sup>9</sup>

There remained however an inherent recognition of the fact that there were various aspects that were interconnected with the shifting paradigms that were located within the study of the Mizo song tradition. In this regard the sentiments of ethnomusicologist, Philip V.

Bohlman may be taken into consideration .He has used the term ‘world music’ in order to denote all kinds of music that different cultures of the human race have made and continue to make. In the light of this observation he has also stated that “the historical trajectory of world music is largely characterized by return and revival” . The musical roadmap for the Mizos has assumed a very similar observation since the time of the Christian missionaries whose one principal ministry resource was the power and the influence of the songs that they gave the Mizos. While disseminating the Christian ideology, music became one of the more significant tools of the early missionaries. The old order gave way to the new quickly in terms of attracting a majority of the populace, even as there was still the pre colonial song tradition ,there was the growing awareness of the Western tunes of the English hymns that were rendered in translation and these tunes quickly attracted the local community. Initially, these songs were not too many in number but at the same time the native Mizos were faced with a sense of attraction especially because they were drawn towards the ‘attractiveness’ of the new religion of Christianity as well as its comforting promises of salvation. This led many to be convinced about the religion of Christianity within a short span of time. So overwhelming was the force of the new Christian music that was imported from abroad that until the first spiritual revival broke out in the year 1913, neither the Mizos nor the Western Missionaries had to think of any other music genre to supplant or to complement what had been slowly built up as a model for Christian songs. When a new Christian culture was administered into the life of the Mizos by the missionaries, the resulting impact on the society was immense. Among the social identity markers that defined their self-conceptualization, a shift in musical direction is one of the most noteworthy changes. Prior to the advent of Christianity in the Lushai hills,there had been a semblance of primitive religion in the community. Sangkima denotes that the actual origin of the ‘primitive religion’

was lost in oblivion<sup>10</sup> but at the same time he also depicts that there was a time when men felt that they could control the forces of nature. However he also records that there was the incessant realization that they often failed to govern the spells with their own limited devices. According to him “the moment they realized and accepted their failures and limitations they turned and created supernatural beings whose presence around them they mysteriously felt to do what they could not do.”<sup>11</sup> With regards to the aspect of primitive religion Sangkima continues to denote that there was a time when the Mizos were in a state of ‘confusion’ and presumably this was in the pre colonial period when there was no accepted or formalized religion, but at the same time, there was a distinct need to realize that a divine providence was the order of the day. The idea was mooted that there ought to be a certain religion with a definite pattern of worship. And it is said that they would begin worship by chanting,

*Pi biakin lo chhang ang che*

*Pu biakin lo chhang ang che*

This would mean

*Respond when a woman worships you*

*Respond when a man worships you*

In the same realm, primitive religion had three fundamental characteristics and these were, animism, ancestor worship or the worship of the dead and also the worship of supernatural beings. All of these aspects involved song, and thus song was intrinsically located both within the pre colonial as well as post colonial era especially in terms of worship. Mizo religion in the pre colonial era was regarded to be animistic by nature. Thus there was the inherent belief that the

spirits lived within them and therefore they worshipped rocks and mountains. Like other primitive people Mizos also worshipped their ancestors and they believed in the existence of a living reality whom they regarded to be the creator of the universe and the source of everything.<sup>12</sup> There were also different types of incantations that emerged from clan to clan and village to village. Mizo religion therefore, was not a religion that involved community worship, rather it was religion that could be advocated by individual worship and increasingly, there was the inherent belief that there were good spirits as well as evil spirits. Thus, in this regard there were a number of sacrifices that were performed in order to appease the spirits. Again there was the belief in the existence of life after death and there was the belief in the existence of two places of abode after death and these were known as, 'mithikhua' and 'pialral'. What has been apparent is that the Mizos believed in the existence of a Supreme Being who was regarded to be the God of all humanity and goodness. Mizo religion has been regarded to be a religion where sacrifices were conducted that obliged the symbolic services of the priests. A brief aspect of the roles of the two types of priests has been made mention of, these were 'sadawt' and 'bawlpu' and together they were commonly referred to as 'puithiam' or priest.

In the Mizo context, however the approach of the Western missionaries or the impact of the colonial mission at large was not so much in terms of the resistance factor. This approach by itself is predominantly significant because it remains inherently contrary to many beliefs in terms of colonialism. Gauri Vishwanathan's essay, on conversion, has denoted that there is a cultural significance that is associated with conversion and she states that "conversion's instrumental significance cannot be denied, nor can its dynamic engagement with either or both cultures with which the convert is affiliated."<sup>13</sup> Significantly she has denoted the instance of Narayan Viman Tilak, a Maharashtrian Brahmin convert to Christianity in the late nineteenth

century Western India, and the case that she denotes here is that though he assimilated norms of Christian belief and conduct he also sought to indigenize Christianity and make it compatible to Hinduism.<sup>14</sup> This aspect is however, totally in contrast to the Mizo perspective and the precolonial religion as already denoted earlier has not been instrumental in terms of locating itself within the realms of a post colonial Christianity. While significantly recognizing that the tradition of song has been central even during the pre colonial era ,it must be noted that there was an inherently new tradition of song that emerged within the post colonial perspective. Thus, even within India, there was an altogether significant domain in terms of the reception of the tradition of song and Christianity. On the contrary, there are cultures where there has been a significant arena of hostility towards the coloniser's religion. For instance ,William Baldrige<sup>15</sup> has attempted to locate the element of history from the native American's perspective. The year 1492, becomes central in this mode because he stated that this was the time when Columbus and his spiritual children had 'usurped the role of God and imposed their definitions of reality into this continent.' There is a scathing tone that runs through this article and it denotes in the event that a central agent in terms of the colonization of this hemisphere was the Christian Church. This belief remains once again very different in terms of the Mizo context in as far as ideology is concerned , because it speaks about how the vast majority of the native people in certain Western countries had experienced the missionary system as 'racist and colonial' and that the most prevalent response had been 'passive resistance'. Baldrige had also depicted that there has been a five hundred war against Christian colonialism and that there had been inherent success in these wars. Ultimately he deduces that 'fighting the oppression of the missionary system is a struggle for justice' and that this struggle for justice ultimately becomes a struggle for power and accordingly he denotes that 'power lies at the core of Christian colonialism'.

Such theoretical premises, especially those that are concerned with writing back to the empire are aspects that are significantly different from the Mizo premise because in as far as the Christian premise has been concerned there has been little or no 'fight against the missionary'. Rather it has been and it still remains a culture where the colonial missions and missionaries are still very much recognized as essential hallmarks of a culture that is dynamic and positive especially in terms of keeping a song tradition alive and dynamic. On the other hand there are aspects that are inherently related to 'global conversions' in that, there has been an interactional perspective in terms of the study of conversions.<sup>16</sup> There is always the belief that the colonizers themselves are experiencing the transformation of religion 'at home' and they have brought that endeavour to their 'mission fields', that is in terms of the arenas where they are based. Simultaneously their encounter with the tradition of the people they try to convert also has an impact on their understanding of their own beliefs and practices. Thus, the element of transformation is central to the missionary aspect and in the light of this observation the concept of song has been intrinsic in that there is a broad notion of hybridity that has been regarded to exist within Mizo domains. In terms of the post colonial perspective, there has been a significant rereading and reinterpretation from the dominant postcolonial concerns such as liberation struggles of the past as well as the present. However though much has been said and debated upon in these perspectives, the Mizo response towards colonization and significantly that of Christianity have not been in terms of the aspect of resistance. Rather, there has been much more that has been located in terms of a focus of the establishment of a new genre of song where, the old has in many ways been giving way to the new. The so called 'unexpected amalgamation of peoples, ideas, cultures and religions' in terms of a postcolonial concern have been significantly articulated in this dissertation within the Mizo domains. This by itself is not

surprising because the Mizo society is one that has continued to still recognize and acknowledge the traditional sources of moral authority, and sacred texts such as the Bible are inherent amongst them. This factor is again significant in terms of locating the song tradition because in various colonial experiences, there is the increasing recognition of the fact that such texts are not the only places to look for answers to either abstract or existential problems. In seeming agreement to this perspective, Edward Said has supplemented this argument by denoting that there are “many of us who were brought up during the period when the classical colonial empires were dismantled. We belong to the period both of colonialism and of resistance to it...”<sup>17</sup>. Said had also pointed out that, scholars rarely speak suspiciously or disparagingly about the renaissance and this is because according to him texts by dead people were read, appreciated and appropriated by people who imagined an ideal commonwealth. This has been linked to the assumption that in the modern postcolonial present, thinking about cultural exchange involves thinking about domination and forcible appropriation where someone loses and someone gains. However in as far as the Mizo cultural dynamics are concerned, there has never been a mere appreciation or celebration of the colonizer missionary ‘merely because they have been dead and gone’. Thus, the argument towards the immense wave of anti-colonial and ultimately an anti-imperial activity in many colonized domains into a virtually ‘mutual seige’ as denoted by Antonio Gramsci has been unnecessary.

The Mizo concept of the song tradition was one that advocated for hope amidst the turbulent beliefs. The African cultural response towards Christianity has been regarded to be inherently complexed. Colonisation had brought about not merely political but also a significant cultural and religious change in the African community. The westernized minority that had been influenced by European culture and Christianity had first rejected African traditional culture but

with the rise of African nationalism ,a cultural revival had occurred.<sup>18</sup> This is once again in sharp contrast to the Mizo song tradition where there has not been too much that has occurred in terms of the Mizo song tradition. In the wake of these arguments,Felix Muchimba states that in terms of the African context, “Christians need to be on guard against reverting to ancestral worship in the name of maintaining their culture and spiritual identity.” There is a certain amount of similarity in both the Mizo and African tradition in that there has been an inherent recognition of the aspect of music in terms of the religious beliefs.There are references to the Old Testament where the Hebrews sang to God with joy and danced before Him.There has been a significant recognition of song and music in the Old Testament books of Chronicles,Ezra and Nehemiah to name but a few where there has been a demonstration of the role that song and music has played.Even as this chapter attempts to locate Christianity there has to be a depiction of the significance of song tradition in the religion.The dynamism of social culture ensured that the function of music changed from the times of the Old Testament to the New.There is also the recognition that when missionaries enter a particular domain, they do not enter a cultural vacuum but that they enter ongoing societies and cultures with unique belief systems and social constructs.Thus in many arenas especially in terms of the African contexts there has been the aspect of contextualization.Mizo society on the other hand has not contributed much in terms of a dominant contextualization.There are theologians as well as writers who strongly advocate the practice of Christian spirituality in a more contemporary African as well as Biblically acceptable style. The worship parameters of both African as well as Mizo tradition in the pre colonial period has been similar in many ways.For instance,there would be dancing and singing and clapping and chanting,these aspects being arenas where community identity is reinforced.This act of worship creates a sense of community identity and the style itself is very different from the



Western style of worship which is very individualistic. Christianity has also been perceived in many domains as a foreign religion that has been inherently identified with Western culture and thus Christian converts were expected to adopt Western ways and this 'cultural foreignness' was a great barrier in many societies to the spread of the religion. However this is in many ways a distinct similarity to the study of Africa and colonization and the Mizo context. For instance, in the early nineteenth century there was an increasing rejection of the beliefs and practices of the community by the Protestant missionaries. These were rejected on the ground that they were either pagan or primitive. There was also the distinct belief that there was nothing in the non-Christian culture that the Christian missionary could build on and thus there was the belief that every aspect of the traditional non-Christian culture had to be destroyed before Christianity could be built. Thus in Africa the consequence was that the indigenous people saw this aspect of Christianity as foreign and it was regarded that becoming a Christian meant the acceptance of Christianity and also the cultural ways which was Western. In this regard Christianity was presented to Africans in a western culture package. The African community naturally felt that the Western culture was superior and that colonialism was a triumph of the western civilization. In terms of the western theology and the colonial expansion of Christianity Bosch writes that, "western Christians were unconscious of the fact that their theology was culturally conditioned; they simply assumed that it was supracultural and universally valid. And since western culture was implicitly regarded as Christian, it was equally self-evident that this culture had to be exported together with the Christian faith." There is now thus, an appeal by many academicians as well as theologians to ensure that the issue of practicing Christianity must be done in a more spiritually contemporary African manner.

With regards to the intellectual consequences of non contextualization in many areas where colonization has occurred Christianity has been perceived as a foreign religion and therefore it has been identified with western culture. This cultural foreignness was a great barrier to the spread of the Gospel among many tribal groups and cultures. This was there too in terms of the Mizo community but later there was a mass revival and a general acceptance of Christianity. In terms of the African context for example old beliefs did not die out and actually went underground only because they were not consciously dealt with. Young converts did not dare to tell the missionaries about their old ways because they feared their wrath, in the case of the Mizo society this was not so. Thus there was a hidden culture in terms of Christianity in the African context while this was absent virtually in terms of the Mizo community. Again there was a strong need for a contextualization of the Gospel because in the African context, the inculturation which involved rethinking and reexpressing the original Christian message was required. In this aspect Africa has been an arena with witchcraft as inherently one of its central beliefs. Thus what is required is the presentation of Gospel where Christ is seen as all powerful in terms of liberating people from witchcraft and superstition. In the light of these aspects music has been central in terms of worship. It has been a great and powerful medium of communication. In the Mizo dimension there has been the use of many musical instruments that have been made accessible by electronics in terms of not merely the Western arena but the Mizo world as well. More and more worship groups are utilizing these instruments in the present day arena. There are a number of songs that have been sung or composed in terms of a Western music orientation. Worship has very central linkages with song as stressed earlier. However there is a need to recognize the various aspects of traditional Mizo music in this regard. The concept of music has been a major area of debate and often conflict as well. There have been many in the

Church who have felt that the traditional starts with the early colonial hymns and thus there has been a negation altogether of the contemporary aspects in many respects too. For instance when the organ was first introduced in the music arena many Christians referred to it as the “devil’s instrument”. This condemnation was not merely associated with the organ but with many accepted songs outside the accepted limits of liturgical Church music as well. For instance when noted music composer Ira D. Sankey first wrote his songs for Dwight L. Moody’s mission enterprise traditional Churches considered these songs to be totally unsuitable for public worship, thus the debate regarding music is not new at all.

What could perhaps facilitate the promotion of a more solidarity based appreciation of music could be in terms of the creation of an awareness regarding the appreciation of Christian music. What remains significant in the Mizo society is that while other cultures have aimed at an emancipation from colonialism and subsequently a change in the practice of Christianity, <sup>19</sup> Mizoram has not been as vehement in this regard. For instance, while most African churches sought self rule there has not been the case with the Mizo domain. The post colonial argument especially in terms of a majority of African thinkers has been that it is not Africa that must be Christianised but that Christianity must be Africanised an argument that has however not found sufficient depiction in terms of the Mizo arena. While debating about the aspect of Christianity in Mizoram it must be recognized that the religion itself has been set against the backdrop of Western worship and Western principles. Mizo Christians have till date retained many principles that are intrinsic to the colonial domains. This again is in sharp contrast to other cultures that believe that there has to be a cultural balance in terms of the worship and religion. They believe that there are very obvious elements that are to be retained in their cultures and that there are certain elements that are ‘evil’ and these must be thrown aside. In the Mizo

context there has been a general regard that there are beliefs that are pre colonial and that they must be inherently thrown aside. Song as denoted earlier has its own sense of identity and thus both Western music and the community that it is imbibed into are to be taken into consideration. In the Mizo society there has been a significant sense of amalgamation and a sense of assimilation and the concept of hybridity becomes central. This has in many ways kept alive the tradition in terms of the Christian domain and thus, there is not much need in terms of argument for instance, to advocate that a culture or cultures should ‘appreciate and respect’ the other culture and patterns of worship. The revival has been important in many ways in terms of locating the place of song and Christianity in Mizoram. Associated with this is the element of singing and dancing.<sup>20</sup> This seems to be one of the rare statements recorded with regards to the sentiments of the Mizo perspective upon the missionaries. The missionaries by and large largely represented the opinion of the established Church and it seemed to appear that the missionaries only ‘tolerated’ the revival without sincere appreciation of its basic ethos.<sup>21</sup> Singing as well as dancing were and still are very central to the socio-cultural life of the Mizos. Thus the revivals were marked with traditional Mizo singing and dancing.

In as far as the publication of hymnbooks are concerned the Mizo were enthusiastic overtly in this matter and Strom observes that :

Mizos are a singing people. This is perhaps their most outstanding characteristic. Taught by the musical Welsh, Mizos quickly began to compose songs-so many that they wanted to publish a new hymnbook every year.

The Mizo hymnbook which is known as the Kristian Hlabu is probably one of the hymnbooks that has undergone the greatest number of revisions as well as reprints.<sup>22</sup> Subsequently the second

decade of the twentieth century has often been regarded to be the decade of the Mizo Christian hymns. The concept of the colonizer reacting sharply to the colonized sensibility came about when the missionary began to make statements that stated that the songs that had been sung by the pre Christian Mizo were but 'corrupt ballads', "God's hymns as they call them have become very popular ...they have to some extent supplemented their corrupt ballads and are sung in the zawlbuks." The fact that the non Christian songs were described as 'corrupt ballads' denotes the imperial domain in terms of the attitude of the missionaries. The statement also denotes another significant aspect to the arena of song, which is that, people sang the Christian hymn for the first time not merely to act as a device of worship but rather for it to facilitate the traditional ballads. This denotes that there was a deep love for music by the native people and that they were responsive towards differing genres of music. It also depicted that hybridity was quickly being an acceptable point of view with them. In this regard there must be significant mention of the reaction to the colonial missionary and his hymns. This came in the form of the 'puma zai'. It arose in the light of the various revival movements that occurred in the villages of Mizoram. And this was regarded to be a cultural movement more than anything else and it occurred in the year 1907. This song was composed of a double lined refrain of any number of verses and there was an appellation of 'puma' at the end of the first line of every refrain thereby the term 'puma zai'.<sup>23</sup> Interestingly though there have been a number of theories with regards to the origin of 'puma zai'. The Biate term 'puma' means God and thus in terms of the Mizo connotation it may be rendered as a song of God. At the time when the persecution of the Christian revivalists was being curbed by the government Lalzika the chief of Zawngin went to Ratu with a young man named Liangkhaia who learnt the song and introduced it in his village, in order to celebrate the song the chief held a public feast for the entire village where the young men danced about,

waving their arms. and thus it finally caught the entire community in a huge frenzy. The song and its impact was tremendous so much so that even the non Mizos were caught in the frenzy. There were some changes to the song gradually and the lines of the verse increased from two to three or more. This was in sharp contrast then to the belief of the missionaries. The mission and the Church saw the movement in both north and south of the state as a setback to Christianity.<sup>24</sup> The aspect of 'puma zai' was gradually regarded to be a resurgence to heathenism. However researchers have deduced that there were no anti Christian elements in the song.

## NOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> Vanlalchhuanawma in a study on Christianity and Subaltern Culture.

<sup>2</sup> They landed at Sairang in Mizoram on January 11<sup>th</sup> 1894 which has been celebrated as the day on which the Gospel arrived in Mizoram.

<sup>3</sup> These however were only the initial responses of the junior missionaries after less than a year's experience among the people.

<sup>4</sup> There is a Mizo version that denotes that all peoples and all tribes emerged from a cave called 'chhinlung'.

<sup>5</sup> As elucidated by Vanlalchhuanawma in a seminal study on song and Mizo perspectives.

<sup>6</sup> An observation made by the Europeans and non Europeans alike.

<sup>7</sup> His work Mizo pipute leh an thlahte chanchin is devoted to the growth and development of the Mizo poets and their songs prior to the advent of the Christian missions.

<sup>8</sup> The boys dormitory. thus there was a cultural amalgamation regarding the same.

<sup>9</sup> A form of rebellion, as against the Christian song genre.

<sup>10</sup> Studies in Mizo identity have located these bearings.

<sup>11</sup> A belief in spirits evil and otherwise has been part of Mizo sensibility.

---

<sup>12</sup>However, it must be noted, that primitive religion too was actually undergoing different stages of development and the inclusion of 'lurh' and 'tan' ranges clearly indicate the changes in religion.

<sup>13</sup> However, her study on the dynamics of conversion have little or no similarity to the Mizo context.

<sup>14</sup> In his case he wanted Indian Christians to be more truly Indian and he claimed that the British missionary project had denationalized Christianity and in the process had made the West the exclusive reference point of Indian Christianity.

<sup>15</sup> In his essay entitled "Reclaiming Our Histories", where he denotes the acceptance of the White presence as superior in many cultures.

<sup>16</sup>Conversion to Christianity has implied inherently that the converts are in the process of becoming 'modern'. Similarly this is a dual factor in that the missionaries who bring in Christianity to the rest of the world are being converted themselves.

<sup>17</sup> Said's observations are significant to the post colonial order in general and inherently different from the Mizo domain in particular.

<sup>18</sup> Felix Muchimba's studies on contextualization and the African perspective denote this claim.

<sup>19</sup> African and other Asian contexts reflect aspects that are different from the Mizo perspective.

<sup>20</sup> Liangkhaia asserts that even the foreign missionaries were sympathetic to this revival, and there was a distinct difference in the way of worship. For instance they themselves do not dance but they seemed to sympathise with the 'mihlim' or the overt spirituals.



---

<sup>21</sup> This feeling continues till today where the dominant mode is still with reference to the Western practices.

<sup>22</sup> Published and revised and reprinted nine times between 1899 and 1922 under the supervision of the missionaries and subsequently ten times after that until 1986.

<sup>23</sup> Puma zai was and is still herealded as seminal in terms of resistance in song and cultural dynamics of the Mizos.

<sup>24</sup> Lorrain called it 'satanic opposition'. Liangkhaia who had by then become a Christian saw it as a power of darkness. Saiaithanga saw it as a drawback that handicapped the Good News of Christianity.

## CHAPTER III

### SITUATING HYBRIDITY

This dissertation has stressed upon the notion of the presence of song culture as an inherent Mizo cultural ontology even prior to the establishment of colonial contact. Statements have also been made in terms of the nature of response toward the revolutionizing appearance of Christianity brought by the missionaries in which violence and polemic were not, as opposed to many instances in African situations, part of the negation with the culture of the West and its Christianizing endeavor. Additionally, it has already been clarified that the Christianization of the Mizos cannot be categorically stated as following patterns that took place in many parts of the world where struggle to reclaim the past inheritance and aspirations to Christianity has followed a very different and dramatically morphed traditions. The fact proves that the Mizos were not the subservient adopters of western import.

This chapter will illustrate that, in order to fully realize the above theorization about the nature of the Mizo colonial situation and subsequently the post colonial landscape, locating the presence of cultural hybridity within the song composition becomes significant. During the times of political colonization of by the West, what was used as the touchstone for their knowledge of the peoples of other lands, especially of the East were fixedly and subjectively motivated by the western conception of life, or “orientalism” as Edward Said has expounded.<sup>1</sup> This was an essentialist perspective that not only tried to understand a world outside of Europe more distinctly different than the point of reference, which was Europe, but it also posited the stereotypical signification of the people of the east. The British administrators and the missionaries, having originated from such western background had absorbed such attitude in

their dealing with the Mizos. The Mizos were seen as a different race of people, which needed to be brought into contact with the Western world. While on this task even as the British administration followed a political dimension, the missionaries were engaged in the religious aspects as well as in most of other modernizing institutions. The whole pursuit of Christianity for the missionaries meant the Christianization of the Mizos. A closer scrutiny of the situation in the Mizo history since colonization revealed, however, that the response to such Western endeavor was met with, what Bhabha posits as “hybridity,” that is “ a dialogic model of nationalities, ethnicities, and identities” in which the culture assumes “ something new, emerging from a ‘Third Space’ to interrogate the givens of the past.”<sup>2</sup> As a substitute for the hegemonic ideas of cultural identities such as the notion of racial purity and nationality, hybridity radically shifts the focus of postcolonial preoccupation with the question of the Other/Us relations, and offers a different form of conceptualizing the past. From this angle, it has been possible to construct that the Mizo Christian identity has been an exchange of the western culture and the native culture, resulting in a synthesis that is highly hybrid. It was never totally Western, but at the same time it was located highly in cultural distinctiveness. Hybridity is also closely related to the concept of mimicry which according to post colonial discourse is the adoption of the culture of the foreign and colonial master’s way of life. The deployment of the concept of hybridity and other such terms enabled the revelation of the dynamics that happened in the past. There is a “mutual and mutable” condition of establishment that replaces the hegemonic argument of the west against their colonial subjects.<sup>3</sup> From Bhabha’s point of view it is possible to enter the Third Space from where the cultural interaction of colonized and the colonial can be delineated productively with the result that the supposed two binary entities have in fact required the presence of each for their existence. The third space is a mode of articulation, a way of

describing a productive, and not merely reflective space that engenders new possibility. It is an “interruptive, interrogative space,” and also “enunciative” space of new forms of cultural meaning and production blurring the limitations of existing boundaries and calling into question established categorisations of culture and identity.<sup>4</sup> According to Bhabha, this hybrid third space is an ambivalent site where cultural meaning and representation have no “primordial unity or fixity”.<sup>5</sup> In articulating the denotations and connotations of hybridity, there emerges a set of differentiated sub-categories such as racial hybridity, linguistic hybridity, and religious hybridity, but all of these can fall neatly under the umbrella term of cultural hybridity. It is within the framework of this theoretical postulation that this chapter is going to explore the concept of the Christian song culture.

The emergence of an indigenous Mizo Christianity was so profoundly shaped by the song culture that it is clear that the modern version of Christianity owed hugely to the world of music. When the first missionaries started their work among the Mizos, they immediately recognized the tribes’ affinity toward music. The entry of the Western Christian songs announced the beginning of the song culture of the Mizos. The Mizo song forms of the past were alien to the Westerners who adopted the carefully regulated, written form of song structure. All the Mizo song forms of the past were orally transmitted by their ancestors to the next generations. They were not codified into strict regulated parameters as employed by the West. However this does not mean that there was an absence of musical aesthetics, rather it denoted the presence of a very indigenous, deeply distinctly low sound that cascaded between notes into a sliding pattern, one that was at once deeply indigenous. In terms of musical parameters such as the melody, the rhythm, and the harmony concerns, there existed different standards to gauge the quality of the two forms of songs. The essential variance between the two song forms seemed to present an

incompatible dialogue between the two cultures. Thus, the missionaries were quick to publish the Christian hymn book in order to let the Mizo Christians sing in the norm that was acceptable to their Western standard.<sup>6</sup> Published by Eureka Press in Calcutta in 1899, the song book contained eighteen songs that mostly focused on the subject of Jesus as a savior, as the only means of attaining freedom from the bondage of spiritual darkness. It was in this hymn book that the first Mizo Christian song also made its appearance. It was a song composed by the missionaries Lorrain and Savidge. Setting the tune similar to the hymn “Come, Ye Sinners”, the song went,

*Isua vanah a om a*

*Khuavel ah zuk lo kal a,*

*Mihring angin a lo om,*

*Keima min tidam turin,*

*Baibala ka hmu thei e,*

*A va tha ber em ve le!*<sup>7</sup>

The English rendering would be,

*Jesus who was in heaven*

*Came down to the earth*

*And took the form of man*

*So that I could be saved*

*We know this from the Bible*

*What a good news!*

Set with the tonic sol-fa, the song was sung along with other prototypes of modern Mizo Christian songs. This aspect was instrumental in spreading the message of Christianity among the Mizo people. With more songs that were added to the Christian repertoire, the very idea of Christianity caught on rapidly. The success of the new Western song form also meant that there was a total rejection of any of the hitherto song forms that the Mizos themselves enjoyed in the non Christian sections of the community.

The introduction of Christianity induced an immediate paradigm shift in the song tradition of the Mizos. It has been denoted that whenever Christians gathered for worship and sang their songs, they always attracted a huge number of the village people who were curious of, as well as touched by the novelty in the form of songs. The pre-Christian Mizos heavily mixed singing with their traditional drum called *khuang*, and rice-beer called *zu*. Thus this new song form of the West which was absent from all other Mizo cultural elements, and sung in a different melody line had captivated the minds of the Mizos.<sup>8</sup> The huge success of the new Christian song form that was rendered from the Western song books announced the arrival of mimicry in the Mizo religious practice. The Western world represented both by the British Raj and the missionaries presented itself as an indomitable force, as it progressively dislocated their traditional culture in myriads of ways.<sup>9</sup> The government proved to them that there was a military force far mightier in power and arms than the village chief and his men, while the new religion claimed authority over the superstitions, spirits, and demons that had been troubling them since the beginning. To those that accepted Christianity, adoption of the song style of the newly imported religion was natural, and they firmly believed in those songs however incongruous with

their mode of articulation for them. McCall described an incident with an early Christian convert who apparently had very little to offer in terms of Christian apologetics as he wrote in his memoir, Lushai Chrysalis,

One young Lushai was found carrying a Bible under his arm, and when asked if he did not consider that Christianity, as represented by the complicated theological and doctrinal approach, was too complicated for simple Lushais, his answer was that the reason he carried a Bible was, not that he knew anything about it, but that he had heard that Christ had some disciples, whose duty it was to spread His sayings, but that he did not know much about what these sayings were.<sup>10</sup>

The observance of this fact suggested the presence of the emulative character of the early Christians who saw the missionaries as carrying out the work of the Lord, and as ambassadors who courageously committed themselves to the creed of the “great commission” as found in the last chapter of the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the first generation Christians were tempted to mimic their colonial masters, ‘appear as they appeared’, and do the work that they thought was their own calling. Not surprisingly, as Christianity spread, there emerged many self-proclaimed evangelists who went from village to village with dedicated zeal that was comparable to the determination of the missionaries in bringing the whole of the tribes under Christianity. This was the moral obligation that the early Christians felt toward their non-Christian tribe members. For all the unappealing comments made by McCall, it was individuals like these who brought Christianity to the door step of the Mizos across villages, and who contributed significantly to the increase in the number of Christians. Their messages were often simple, in that, in some

instances, a mere wayward invitation to believe in Jesus Christ was enough to occasion the membership in the Christian community.<sup>12</sup>

As has been denoted earlier, the excitement in the new religion infused great fervor during the first decades of contact with Christian missionaries, and spiritual revivals took place following the increase in number of Christians and the songs that were translated primarily from the Western hymn books, and Khasi hymn books.<sup>13</sup> It is worth noting that this commitment to the Western tune has evolved to become the epitome conservative mindset of the Christian church that has survived even the most tumultuous occasions that happened in the later years through time.<sup>14</sup>

In all of these revivals what was remarkable was the role that songs played to successfully excite the converts into the realm within Christianity and at the same time to attract more people to Christianity. The spiritual revival occasions took the entire Mizoram by storm and within no time the Christian population swelled. As will be denoted later, these revival moments brought out the creative and indigenous side of the Mizos and announced a break from the Western song style. They came about with a vehement force in terms of composing a brand new kind of song form which was a hybrid of Western and the indigenous known as the *Lengkhawm zai*.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, there were others from the inception of Christianity within the Church that vehemently opposed the revival in terms of its manifestation as there were occasions in which the revivalists indulged in physical bouts of some kind and swooning (besides dancing) that were incomprehensible to many people within the Church. These adherents of the Western tradition of singing did not believe in the presence of the Holy Spirit with those on the extreme side of the revival, and these were also known locally by the term the



*hlimsang*.<sup>16</sup> The missionaries could not have anticipated such a series of spiritual episodes, and were at times baffled by the excesses that they felt were not integral to the essence of Christianity. With regard to this, the 1941 -1942 missionary report of the Presbyterian Church of Wales operating in the Northern part of the state denoted,

Difficult problems continue to arise as the result of the Revival. For the past six years it is Revival that has been our greatest burden and anxiety...some place an extraordinary emphasis on strange tongues, faith healing, messages from the unseen, and other indescribable phenomena, creating a situation very difficult to handle.<sup>17</sup>

However, the movement went on, and elements earlier thought pagan became part of the Christian hybrid that was slowly making its mark. This evolution of the Mizo Christian form has echoed the very history of the Christian religion as hugely influenced by the local geo-political influence of the land of the Middle East as expounded by Shirley Jackson Case, who in an essay entitled “The Nature of Primitive Christianity” has explored some of the other religious ideas of the times of Christ and the early Christians that had been filtered down to Christianity and that ultimately enabled it to appear as a brand new religion.<sup>18</sup> Much in the same vein, there did not evolve a Christianity installed by the missionaries within Mizoram that wholly followed the Western model. Instead, since the early times, Christianity took on a course along the path carved by the Mizo minds. This transformation was clearly reflected in the song tradition. The Christian songs composed followed closely the indigenous mode of singing and the songs imported from the West through translations were skillfully localized in that they were sung in the *zaikhawm hla* tune, which seemed to be a fitting hybridization. With the *khuang* on board the Christian establishment, the music of the Church had two modes of options on how to sing

the Christian songs. However, in some cases there were resentment against the other genre by groups pledging loyalty to one form of the Christian songs. This dynamic new song culture continued to mark the Christian worship service for the days to come. Meanwhile, the missionaries were forced to accept such traditional movement that the revivals carried along with them. Thus within Christianity, the tendency to hybridize had set in since a long time back.

At the intersection of the Christian culture and the local Mizo culture, the emergence of the *khuang*, the Mizo drum, played a very prominent role in the hybridizing process of Christianity in the Mizo context. The Mizos made their drums out of a hollow cylindrical wood over which the skin of cattle was stretched. Lawmsanga identified three types of Mizo drums, the smallest of which measures less than 12 inches in diameter, a medium-sized drum measures from 12 to 16 inches, and the large-sized drum measures anything more than the medium-sized drums.<sup>19</sup> Traditionally the Mizos extensively employed the drum on occasions ranging from the festivals and celebrations, to the dance and ritual practices to the house of the chief where the chief and his elders sang their tunes. So much central was the drum in the life of the pre-Christian Mizo life that the saying “*khuang lova chai ang*” was and still is a popular saying, which denoted the emptiness of any festival without the use of drum and which connoted the incompleteness of something due to the conspicuous absence of an important element, namely the drum. The idea of the incompleteness or the emptiness of any musical activity without the drum even penetrated the Christian mindset, and so the drum had to be accepted in the Church even though this was not in the best interest of many Christians of the time along with the missionaries.

The concept of the *lengkhawm zai*, is another point of observation where it is possible to locate hybridization in terms of the Christian song culture. Mention has been made of the earlier song forms of the Mizos. The first generation Mizo Christians denounced all the forms of their singing including their musical instruments. But when the *khuang* made a comeback, the beating style of this Mizo drum also changed considerably. Correspondingly, a bigger drum called *khuangpui*, and a smaller one called *khuangte* were extensively used. With this, the *lengkhawm zai* was set. Stylistically, the *lengkhawm zai* used a musical time signature of 1.2/4 approximately with the *khuangpui* beating the first beat and the *khuangte* beating the first and second beat within a tempo ranging from 125 Beats Per Minute to 145 Beats Per Minute of a metronome reading. Depending on the mood of the song and the connection built up within the song structure, the *khuangpui* was rolled along with the *khuangte*. The notes within the *lengkhawm zai* fell within the diatonic scale of the Western music notation system, and there were also several tunes that were sung solely within the pentatonic scale. This peculiar feature of the *lengkhawm zai* at once demanded and evoked a melancholic feeling on the people who took part in such situations.<sup>20</sup> Another peculiar feature of the *lengkhawm zai* was the role of the recitation of lyrics, called the *hlahril*. Since the pre-Christian days, the singing occasions of the Mizos almost always employed those who spontaneously recited the next lines to be sung in the song.<sup>21</sup> This feature was extensively used by the Mizo Christians, and this has become a trend even when songs of Western origin were sung in the tonic sol-fa form. The stylistic formulation of the *lengkhawm zai* served as a ready tool to deploy for the lyrics of the Mizo Christian composers. The new song form of *lengkhawm zai* was not purely Mizo, nor purely Western, but an amalgamation of the two, thereby creating an important landmark in the song culture of the Mizos.

During the times of the emergence of Christianity as a new set of faith, the teachings of the New Testament were either directly or indirectly influenced by the religious traditions of the surrounding area. Similarly, the form of Christianity that eventually took shape in Mizoram also relied heavily on the traditional ways of the Mizos, and in the process, a mutually inclusive model was worked out in the negotiation. In a line of thought similar to Matthew Arnold's prescriptive notion of culture as all that is noble, worthy of incorporating, the purpose of the Christian mission itself was heavily bent on amalgamating all that was worthy of the best Christian practices. Lorrain noted this attitude of the mission as

We are not here to make them Eastern duplicates of Western Baptist, but to bring them to Christ and to so guide them that they shall develop along their own national lines into strong Lushai Church of God which shall be a living witness of the power of the gospel...We look forward to the time when the Lushai Church shall be a happy blend of all that is best in Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist, with something added perhaps which no Western denomination can supply.<sup>22</sup>

This indeed denoted that Christianity and the song tradition of the Mizos was a dynamic process with plenty of rooms to adjust itself while still evolving and drawing upon different cultural formulas. In the song tradition, it was this "something" that he mentioned that became an important element that defined the Mizo Christian landscape in a very profound way. However, the road to achieving such a model of Christianity was not smooth and easy, and some of them took time to validate themselves as Christian elements. During the third revival experienced by the Mizos, a major watershed moment came to install itself in terms of the Christian song culture. This was in the form of the native song composition, and of the musical instrument

associated with it. Prior to this spiritual revival, all the music forms and practices of the Mizo Christians followed a pattern that was developed in the West. In short it was a mimicry of the model from the West. The Mizos sang the songs that were not only poorly translated but often that belied the Mizo mode of thinking and conceptualization of the immediate and the spiritual world. In connection with this, B.Lalthangliana has denoted that Liangkhaia, one of the first generation Mizo Christians and who also made a significant contribution terms of Mizo literature, and others were sorry and were implicated in the process for the types of lyric prose used by the missionaries and the early Christians.<sup>23</sup> In this connection, Bhabha's notion of mimicry can be applied to the first early Christian songs. There were Mizo composers who blindly followed the missionaries' model of composition as they freely wrote using everyday Mizo expressions, stiff lyrics that were deprived of the grace and elegance that the Mizos had always longed for in their songs, set in an even more difficult music system of the tonic sol-fa. These early composers were categorical in their denial of anything that had to do with the early Mizo song forms and instead produced songs that mimicked those that came from the West in form and style. In their effort to isolate themselves from the 'heathen world' which they strongly denounced, the first generation Mizo Christians rejected all their traditional song styles, even defying the missionaries who tried to persuade them to compose songs in their traditional style. However, they understood the powerful potential of the traditional Mizo song tunes in order to lull back one into 'heathenism', especially within the context of the nascent Christian stage, and so they wanted to continue in the new tradition that was thoroughly Western in nature. Notable among them were Rev. Challiana, Rev. Saiaithanga, Rev. Chuaftera, Laibata, Taitesena, R.Dala, Rev. Chhuahkhama, Hrawva, Sainghinga, and Bawnga. It must be noted, however, that not all the Mizo Christian songs of this age were driven into oblivion due to the cultural upheaval that

occurred within Christianity. Many of the songs of this age continue to form an important enduring worship element for Christians through generations, and act as a reminder of Western Christian song heritage. Notwithstanding the derived characters of these songs and their textual distance from the Mizo tradition, the first two significant spiritual revivals occurred within Mizoram, spurred on by the melodies and theological implications of these songs. In form and in content, the songs of the time mimicked the Western models that were inscribed in their culture. Under the rubric of culture, it is within the domain of Christianity that mimicry was present. According to Lois Tyson, mimicry involves “the attempt of the colonized to be accepted by imitating the dress, behavior, speech, and lifestyle of the colonizer.”<sup>24</sup> When the early Christian missionaries started proselytizing the Mizos, this was exactly the case that was observed in the Mizo situation. This valorizing of the Western mode of living, thinking, and acting was mediated through the medium of Christianity and in their song literature of the time, and there was a determined bent towards the tunes that the missionaries had brought with them. The notion of mimicry also brought to the fore, not only the conscious attempt to adopt the practices and values of the West but also the concept of rejecting one’s own cultural identity as it reflected the shame experienced by the colonized individuals concerning their own culture. Thus the Western discourse completely subsumed the Mizo composers (like the first Indian literatures in English) and the early Mizo composers took the form of the Western songs style. A prolific, Western educated Liangkhaia, one of the first composers of Mizo Christian songs, sometimes wrote songs that were based on liberal usage of tunes from the hymnbooks like the Welsh Tune Book or Sacred Songs and Solos. Since the West was their yardstick, their originality was also limited and their creativity was mapped out by the West. Lifting a tune and structure from song number 287 of Sacred Songs and Solos, Liangkhaia wrote a song,

*Hetah hian nunna tui a luang,*

*Kalvari-a lo chhuak chu;*

*Mi tam tak tihdam nan a luang,*

*Tu pawh a in duh zawng chu;*

*Nang, Eden natna veitu kha,*

*Lo kalin va in thuai la;*

*Tin, Kalvari tui fim tak kha,*

*I thinlungah a luang ang.*<sup>25</sup>

In some instance, however, very successful purely translated songs were produced. Hrawva's translation of the hymn from Sacred Songs and Solos entitled "Enthroned is Jesus now," bore this notion.

*Isuan ro a rel e,*

*Van thutphah chungah khian;*

*A lu-ah lallukhum, a ke*

*Bula mi thianghlim nen.*<sup>26</sup>

The original English rendition of the same reads,

*Enthroned is Jesus now*

*Upon His heavenly seat;*

*The kingly crown is on His brow,*

*The saints are at His feet.*<sup>27</sup>

Although these songs and many others by Mizo Christians avoided the syntactical and poetical inconsistencies that had thoroughly inhabited the earlier Christian song translations, yet these cannot be considered as indigenous especially due to their extensive reliance on the Western format prescribed. In this way, most of the songs of this era reflected their cultural mindset and became the site of mimicry.

As denoted earlier, however, the advent of the third revival in 1919 was the most significant phase for the development of the indigenous Mizo Christian songs. It was in this revival movement that there was located the manifestation of the indigenous. Alongside of the hitherto Christian song practice, there emerged songs that were written purely from a different angle. Scores of indigenous composers came on the scene and wrote songs that were fundamentally different from the existing stock. As denoted before, the Mizo situation with the establishment of the British empire was a very different one, and it was not marked by aggression, hatred, or violence. This was largely due to the successful communication of the missionaries with the natives, as the British administration took a step back in many of the affairs of the natives while leaving many aspects into the hands of the missionaries. For instance, in the matters of education, the missionaries were entrusted by the government to look after the institutions and the education offices, a task which they diligently did.<sup>28</sup> To get a perspective on this change it is worthwhile to focus attention on the groundbreaking composers of this time. During the time of the spiritual revival of 1919, the spiritual psyche of the Mizos underwent a sea change. It was a turbulent time in which the Mizos began to deal with the Christian God in



their own way by deploying their own terms of reference and not using the dictates of Western Christianity. A closer scrutiny of this new genre suggested the dynamics of postcolonial concepts that were operating in the Christian arena of the time. A composer named Patea was hailed as leading the arena of Mizo Christian song composition about the year 1920s. In total he composed fifty-five songs. His most popular song was entitled “Ka Ropuina Tur leh Ka Himna Hmun.” The song originated out of a special encounter that he received, according to Patea’s contemporary, Laiawrha, who was a longtime resident of Samthang village, and who claimed to have heard Patea’s own testimony.<sup>29</sup> Born in 1894 at a village called Tualte, misfortune struck Patea’s family early. He was a frail, little boy during his childhood, and hence the name Patea, a Mizo term for “Little Fellow”. His father died when he was young, and they lived with his mother’s elder sister. But Patea’s uncle also passed away within a few years, leaving them no choice but to seek refuge with the Chief of Khawbung village, and thereby entering into a Mizo customary law called “Vanlung Ur.”<sup>30</sup> This arrangement ensured shelter, social safety and protection which was given to them by the chief, but in return they became slaves of the chief for generations. The experience of Patea evoked the presence of marginalization, or the unhomeliness in one’s own land. The system of the *bawih* under the chief, and the society at large under the British Raj presented him with psychological disconnectedness with the immediate physical world. This feeling of self-pity was heightened by his various losses in life. Under this position of liminal existence, his only focus was the Christian concept of heaven, which was an object of desire that he could only imagine. With this frame of mind, he positioned his songs to focus on the heavenly realm, a thematic consideration that the Christian Mizos immediately associated themselves with. The approach to the terms of reference was not anymore Western, even though his songs followed the formal structure of the Western style. His

songs centered on the hope of the heavens, despite the daily struggle of earthly life. One day when Patea thought about all that had happened to him in his life, and of the unfortunate lot that he had had, he was filled with sadness, and even wished that he had died in his mother's womb. Just then, a voice spoke in his heart, consoling him that the voice represented his mother and father, and that from that moment on, he would serve the same. At the urge of the voice, Patea prayed and came to realize that it was the voice of God and he was filled with ecstasy. Subsequently, Patea wrote the song with tears falling down his cheeks, as he understood the love of God through the trails of the lonely road that he had been travelling. The first stanza of the song reads,

*Ka ropuina tur leh ka himna hmun*

*Ral hlauhawm leh titna awm lo chu;*

*Thaler atang hianin ka hmu rinin,*

*Chu hmun hlun chuan min tuam vel vangin.<sup>31</sup>*

In English the text could be thus rendered,

*A place of my glory and shelter,*

*Where there is no enemy and fear;*

*I can see it through faith from this desert land,*

*For that enduring place engulfs this sphere.*

The idea of pilgrimage is clearly depicted in this song. The song envisioned the splendor, the joy, the reunification, and the beauty of life after death when one eventually enters heaven. This is in correspondence with the Christian message of the first missionaries. Patea was grateful that his wandering soul was saved through the grace of Christ, and he felt that although cynics may not believe in the gospel, he believed firmly that all nations would at the end of the world believe in Christ. In his analysis of Patea's songs, Rev. Lalsawma suggested three fundamental characteristics that underlined his songs. These are motifs that evolved out of Patea's preoccupation with a state of mind called, *Khawtlang Lunglen*. In Mizo social psychology, one encountered *Khawtlang Lunglen* when one was in a zone, in which one was overcome with a sense of nostalgia that was mixed with a pleasurable sense. This happened when one thought of the social life, with the images of flora and fauna creating an important catalyst. James Dokhuma explained the feeling of *Khawtlang Lunglen* as a tender feeling that overcame one upon contemplation of the change in seasonal pattern accompanied by nature's exhibition of that change.<sup>32</sup> It can be attributed that the concept of *Khawtlang Lunglen* was the main driving force behind almost every song by Patea. Another influential Christian song composer of the time who announced a break from the Western song tradition was R. L. Kamlala, whose legacy among Mizo Christian worship has been profound. Being educated, R. L. Kamlala worked at schools in Kolasib and Kawnpui village. He was caught by the zeal of a widespread spiritual revival in 1920. Experiencing spiritual salvation in the light of his understanding of the crucifixion of Christ as well as the fascination for heaven, and the power of the resurrection of Christ, he became intoxicated in his religious dedication. Due to this imbalanced psychological disorder, he was even put behind bars. During his lifetime he was a prolific composer, (with 61 Mizo Christian songs, 23 songs in the Ralte dialect and several others). R.L. Kamlala's thematic

preoccupation was viewed from two divergent views by two scholars. The first observer, Siamkima opined that for R.L. Kamlala the world is full of sadness and that even if happiness came his way it lasted only for a few moments.<sup>33</sup> This renders the impression that Kamlala's outlook is bizzarly pessimistic. On the other hand, R.L Thanmawia, citing the references of elements of gladness in his songs believed that Kamlala merely wrote of the miseries of the world in order to set the stage for the conceptual understanding of the happiness that is to come in life after death. R.L Thanmawia argued this by pointing out that even in a certain song by Kamlala, the term "lawm," (happiness in English) was used more than six times.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to Patea and Kamlala, another pioneering composer was a man named C.Z. Huala, a native of the village of Biate, who wrote most of his songs during 1921 to 1930. His songs were scripted with simple lines for singers to follow and with only a few metaphors and similes. He was credited to have composed only seven songs. R. Lalzirliana, a scholar studying his songs concluded that the main concern of all the seven songs of C.Z. Huala was the longing for heaven. So, it was evident that C.Z. Huala's preoccupation was not so much of this world as it was of heaven because he consistently depicted the misery of life here on earth and of the glory that was to come in heaven. In one of his most popular songs "Lei Lal Puan Ropui Chu a Tlawm Ang" he wrote,

*Tunah tapin rum rih mah ila,*

*Thihnain ka mit a chin hunin;*

*Ka hlau lo vang, thlan thim ata min tho vang a,*

*Ka mittuite chu hru fai turin.*<sup>35</sup>

The English rendering would be,

*Although now I may be mourning,*

*When death closes my eyes*

*I will not be afraid, as He'll raise me up from the dark grave*

*To wipe away my tears*

This same sentiment is also depicted in his another song “ Damlai Tuipui Fawn Piah Lamah Chuanin” in which he spoke of his desire to be with his deceased relatives who were now in heaven under the auspices of the Savior. In the last verse he pleaded to his Savior thus,

*Min lo kai ang che, aw ka Chhandamtu,*

*Ka rumna thlaler atang hianin;*

*Ka pan zel ang Beramno Lal lenna,*

*Aw, then lohna ram, chatuan pialral.<sup>36</sup>*

The English rendering would be,

*Hold my hands, o my Savior*

*In this desert land where I cry in agony;*

*I'll go on toward the place where the Lamb lives*

*O, a place where there is no separation, Pialral that lasts forever.*

Here the concept of the term “Pialral” is depicted. The term has been defined in J.H.Lorrain’s Dictionary of The Lushai Language as “ The Lushai Paradise” or “ the further side of the Pial River.”<sup>37</sup> It is an interesting observation how the pre-Christian precept came to be conceptualized in terms of the new perspective offered by Christianity. One of the single most advantages for the alien religion of Christianity was the availability of its parallelism in the traditional concept of the Mizo religious sensibility, which C.Z. Huala boldly ventured to use in the song. Like the concept of the after-life state of existence in Christianity, the early Mizos believed in a place called “*Pialral*,” which is the abode of the dead. It denoted that a soul must first pass through some nostalgic passes through its journey along the enchanting hill called *Hringlang tlang* to encounter the *Lungloh tui* stream and the *Hawilo par* flower. It was believed that after drinking the *Lungloh tui* from its clear stream, and plucking the *Hawilo par*, the wandering soul of the deceased completely forgot his longing for the world of the living and he was then prepared to enter the land of the dead. However, not everyone was entitled to go there, for only those who secured *Thangchhuah* had the access to the *Pialral* because of the nobility of their lives here on earth. *Thangchhuah* was a religious ceremony that was performed by successful warriors and noblemen and it consisted of a series of rites involving slaughtering of various wild and domestic animals as a sacrifice. It also involved the organizing of feast for the whole village people. *Thangchhuah* not only enabled them to live a respectable live on earth but also entitled them *Pialra* which was a world of complete luxury and bereft of economic want. The commoners were believed to have gone into the *Mitthi Khua* (the city of the dead) and lived their lives there, maintaining their social rank, and working out their everyday living as before.

Although both the Christian vision and the pre-Christian Mizo projection of the realm of the spiritual seemed to appear co-incidentally close, yet the idea of the Christian heaven as

understood in the Bible was different. Heaven as the dwelling place of God that the Biblical character Jacob when he had woken up from his sleep in a place called Bethel and marveled at was a very distant spiritual concept. Jacob proclaimed “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven” (Gen. 28.17). Also, heaven was a place where the angels lived with God but “No-one knows about the day or hour not even the angels in heaven...” (Matt. 24:36); and heaven was also the final home of the redeemed as the apostle Paul wrote of the “Father from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name” (Eph. 3:15).<sup>38</sup> The *Pialral* with all its association with the best of Mizo society was the area of ultimate bliss which the pre-Christian Mizos conceived. Yet Christianity thrived on this analogy and finally merged the two realms of the final destination of the soul. This may be the case of an unusual blending. Yet, the imagery seems to be working well for the Christian Mizos, many of whom would never have the chance to be great citizens here on earth, and who could only think of the glory of heaven in terms of their pre-Christian conceptual framework. In dealing with the issue of hybridization, the concept of the thematic preoccupation of the early Christian Mizo songs come to the forefront and therefore deserves closer scrutiny. The centrality of the theme of the afterlife has perhaps been one of the most important topics when new songs were produced. There was also a myriad production of indigenous songs that concentrated upon the sufferings of Christ, and this was considered to be very fundamental to the Christian belief. Apart from these there were several considerations that built up the Christian repertoire. As already established, the notion of mimicry was set in early on in the Mizo Christian domain and that too within song culture. It was predominantly the driving force of the early composers and lyricists of Christian songs. With the rise of new song composers during the third revival, the new song genres carried a hybridized melody. Sung with the rhythm kept by the drums and dances to accompany the

mass singing, this new genre announced the production of the *Lengkhawm zai*. The *Lengkhawm zai* however did not completely consume the already established norm of Christian song tradition, which was the production of translated songs or compositions that were based on tunes borrowed from Western hymns. The two song genre continued to exist side by side in the Christian setting. The appearance of the *Lengkhawm zai* was a remarkable cultural event in that, it not only helped spread Christianity but it also effectively destabilized the invented secular song forms like the *Puma Zai*, *Hrangchhawni Zai* and other song forms that had threatened to ‘assault’ Christianity and had already done serious damage to the Church in the past. The interaction between the Western Christian culture and the native culture was viewed as competition for dominance between opposing cultures by Siamkima. He argued this by invoking the Mizo myth that denoted the significance of the symbolic *Rih dil*, or the lake *Rih*, which was the place souls were believed to have passed through on their way to their final destination. In his famous essay “Rih Dil leh Mizoram,” Siamkima illustrated how the vision of life after death, and life beyond *Rih dil*, had now been increasingly taken over by the contemplation of life beyond river Jordan of the Bible, a symbolic river for the Israelites of old.<sup>39</sup> His main idea, argued in a nostalgic tone, was that, the moment *Rih dil* lost its bearing in the Mizo minds, and was replaced by river Jordan, was in effect, the moment when the Mizos lost an important cultural heritage. However, to the minds of the native composers, this very term of “Rih” continued to hold an important place and that it surfaced in the Christian songs during the third revival moment. Not only in the form and melody of the Christian songs did hybridization take place, but it also appeared in a number of ways in which the Mizo pre-Christian elements and poetical terminologies of the past began to build up their themes built around the ‘new’ religion of Christianity.



While the forms of expression of the new faith in Christianity may be valorized as assuming the native tradition, it is also possible to denote how the spiritual faculty of the Mizos conceived of the Western modes of thinking, and radically altered the idea of many of their values. The idea of individual freedom as construed in the Western Christian circle had not be applicable for the Mizos. A case in point here was the concept of slavery, or the *bawih* system in Mizo context. Lorrain defined the term as “a slave, a bondsman, a vassal, a serf.”<sup>40</sup> Since early on, the practice among the different tribes of the Mizo chiefs was to keep slaves who were taken as prisoners from the defeated enemies to work for them. The Mizos also had a system of the *Lal saphun*, under which circumstance, a person who committed murder may run into the house of the chief to embrace the middle post of the house ( if he feared revenge from the relatives of the one he murdered ). Likewise, under the arrangement of *Vanlung Ur* , a person or families too poor to look after themselves may also run to the chief, as a symbol of their dependence on the chief for their life. All such persons living with the chief were afforded protection and economic survival by the chief, but the custom also entailed a strict condition that legitimated them and their descendents as slaves of the chief forever. There was virtually no way out once people became the slaves of a chief. When the Christian missionaries had already proselytized many Mizos, the *bawih* system had still been left untouched, and many were still under its grip. Thus, in a society that celebrated communal equality and agrarian livelihood, the *bawih* system acted as a strong barrier that segregated the society, but the *bawih*s were positioned at the lowest rung of the society. When Christianity was introduced, the initial teachings were bent heavily on the concept of freedom and liberation from the evil spirits and demons brought about by Christ. This theology appealed to the sensibility of the Mizos and it worked for the Mizos especially because

they were coiling under fear of the evil spirits and demons. There could be nothing better than the idea of freedom that Christianity indoctrinated in them.

It was the Western missionary, Dr Frazer, who championed the cause of the *bawih*s, and who ultimately helped secure the release of the *bawih*s from their lot. After a complicated and vehement case battle against the British administration, Dr Frazer finally won. The defense of the *bawih* system put forth by the Superintendent of the time also was not without creditable argument since the practice of the *bawih* system and the treatment to which the *bawih*s were subjected was totally different from any other, in that the Mizo chiefs largely treated them with dignity and the *bawih*s were accepted in the society. Nevertheless, they were under the whims of the chiefs they served. Thus, the Western system of freedom interacted and changed the outlook of the Mizos who began to embrace this shift in their cultural value due to its closeness to Christianity's metaphor of freedom as symbolized by the work of Christ.

The jubilation of the Mizo population upon the abolition of the *bawih* system was described by Lalhmuaka in his book Zoram Thim Ata Engah, in which a large mass of people greeted Dr. Frazer in the town of Aizawl on his visit from Britain after he had left the mission.<sup>41</sup> Thus, another concept of Western justice was adopted by the Mizos. This event immediately served as a metaphor for the Mizos while demonstrating the concept of freedom that the Christians received from God. This was immediately echoed in the Christian song domain and an enduring Mizo Christian song was instantly composed by Thanga thus,

*Aw Lalpa, Chungnung ber, kan fak hle a che!*

*Pathian Nung leh Engkimtithi i ni e;*

*Hnehchhiahte, bawih, riangvaite, mi sualte thian,*

*Fahrahte, retheite Lal, Pa leh Pathian.*<sup>42</sup>

As the song directly praised the Lord as a supreme deity who was on the side of the oppressed, the *bawih*s, the orphans, the sinners, the song had a mass appeal among the Christians.

With reference to the abolition of the Mizo slave system, it has to be taken into account that there was anxiety within the colonial enterprise. In an effort to inscribe the Western mode of justice system the colonial establishment was shaken from inside its sphere in the form of the missionary appeal to end slavery. Thus, Christian values as interpreted by the West was significant in deconstructing its own system of administration that was supposed to uphold principles that was based on the Christian ethical code of conduct. Once the abolition of slavery was enforced by law, many Mizos *bawih*s indeed began to feel the liberating power of hybridization. While noting the incorporation of Western Christian values into the Mizo social system, it is also imperative to analyze the hybrid state of Christianity due to the indigenous social system of *Tlawmngaihna*, which was a social ethical code of conduct that was highly honored among the Mizos. To the Mizos, *Tlawmngaina* was the ultimate virtue of kindness, selflessness, and altruism, that was marked by heroism, tenacity, sacrifice for others and endurance. The Mizos took pride in the number of young men and women who exhibited *Tlawmngaihna* in their daily life in their community. The revered and famed hunters of the Mizos were mostly venerated not so much for their number of kills but by their nature of conduct during their hunting expedition and social interaction with the village people. *Tlawmngaihna* was a moral code that had been taught in the bachelors' dormitory, *Zawlbuk*, of every village. The success of Christianity can be attributed largely due to the existing operation and inculcation

of *Tlawmngaihna* among the Mizos. For the Christian Mizos, it was easy to picture Jesus as the symbol of *Tlawmngaihna* even though the context of a Hebrew culture was difficult to comprehend. The teachings of Christianity and the implications of *Tlawmngaihna* were compatible to a remarkable degree. In this regard Mangkhawsat Kigpgen wrote “ The tenets of Christianity, namely love and service, thus assumed a form with which the Zo Christians were most familiar. *Tlawmngaihna* naturally became an integral component.”<sup>43</sup> In its original form of practicing *Tlawmngaihna* such as in the case of hunting enemies was not possible once Christianity took root, but in a modified form the spirit of *Tlawmngaihna* was shaped to give Christianity an indigenous character. Several early Christians took on themselves the task of evangelists and wandered about the land preaching the Gospel. Caring for the sick and the homeless, and other humanitarian tasks were also extensively practiced by the Christian communities, and so eventually *Tlawmngaihna* became synonymous with Christianity itself. In referring to the group of early Christians known as the *Fangrual* and *Zinrual*, who were a band of determined evangelists during the 1920s, Vanlalchhuanawma denoted that evangelism was the new expression of *Tlawmngaihna* as these men voluntarily worked across the land in their pursuit.<sup>44</sup> The successful deployment of the concept of *Tlawmngaihna* and of its special place in the Christianity of the Mizos was a unique hybridization from which a productive result was seen.

In the postcolonial situation, a hybrid state is a healthy state of existence, for it denounces the superiority of a given culture and rejects the binary opposition that has informed conceptualization of other cultures based on binary opposition. The Mizo song tradition has evolved from the framework of hybridization. There was a time when mimicry was the adopted formula for the expression of Christian spiritual experience. Many songs that were set in the

Western tradition formed an important part of the corpus of Christian songs. However, the true voice of the natives came to be felt during the series of revivals, with its manifestations heavily mixed with the Mizo native ways. From this time, the parameter of Christianity as inspired by the West was contested by the songs of composers such as Patea, Kamlala and C. Z.Huala whose tunes were a hybrid of the indigenous and the Western, while the song lyrics drew on the Mizo traditional religion as well as imageries of the Bible and the traditional musical element in the form of the *Khuang* was reintroduced. Christianity was also a location of cultural hybridity in terms of the value system of the Mizos. Culture, and the Christian community, can thus be seen in the case of the Mizo situation as a place of translation and negotiation. It must, therefore, be recognized that the third space that forms hybrid culture has been a historical reality of the Mizos that has continued to influence the Christian situation in general and the song tradition in particular.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The concept of Orientalism was introduced in the book of the same title by Edward Said who argued that in the vast body of literature on the East, the West's perception of the East was in the past informed by highly essentialist agenda of the West.

<sup>2</sup> Guerin, Wilfred L. et al. A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature. Indian ed. New York : OUP, 2007.305. Print.

<sup>3</sup> Graves, Benjamin. "Homi K. Bhabha: The Liminal Negotiation of Cultural Difference," Postcolonial. 6 May 2010 < [http:// www.postcolonialweb.org/ poldiscourse/bhabha/bhabha2.html](http://www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/bhabha/bhabha2.html)>.

<sup>4</sup> Kohli, Wendy. "Teaching In/For The Enunciative Present," Philosophy of Education Society, 11 Dec. 2010 < [http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/eps/PES-Yearbook/96\\_docs/kohli.html](http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/eps/PES-Yearbook/96_docs/kohli.html)>.

<sup>5</sup> Bhabha, Homi K. The Location of Culture. Special Indian ed. London : Routledge, 2010. 55. Print.

<sup>6</sup> Thu Leh Hla. Aug. 1983 : 1-14. Print.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> The primary reasons of the denouncement of traditional Mizo song forms was the association of the Mizo rice beer, the *zu*, with most of the musical exhibitions of the pre-Christian Mizos considered self-indulgent and demonic by the early Christians.

<sup>9</sup> It has been said that the effect of the new Christian songs were so powerful to the extent that in many *zawlbuks*, and other non-Christian gatherings, the non-Christians sometimes emulated the Christian songs.

<sup>10</sup> McCall, A.G. Lushai Chrysalis.1949. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, 2003. 215. Print.

<sup>11</sup> The gospel of Matthew, the first book of the New Testament of the Bible, denotes aspects about the life and teachings of Jesus. Chapter 28, the last chapter has been invoked consistently by evangelical Christians to support their mission endeavor, in which Jesus commanded his disciples to go to the people of all nations to make them his disciples (that is, to make them Christians). This precept is termed the Great Commission.

<sup>12</sup> It is said that the mere invitation “please, believe in Jesus” often had a strong effect on the non-Christian communities even without much further discussion about the spiritual implications of being a Christian. However, a case can also be made as to whether many of the converts became Christians on the ground of economic and social consideration.

<sup>13</sup> Within ecclesiastical parlance, the term ‘revival’ suggests the attainment of a renewed spiritual self-realization accompanied by more committed engagement in the religious demands of the church.

<sup>14</sup> The revival movements not only brought about spiritual fervor, but a cultural self-realization in that it brought in elements hitherto considered unchristian such as the new *lengkahwm zai* style, and the Mizo drum, *khuang*.

<sup>15</sup> *Lengkhawm zai* has evolved to be one of the most potent genre of Christian songs till the present time. Within its fold, themes bearing on death and the afterlife are called *Khawhar hla*, which form the primary songs that are sung by communities while consoling bereaved families.

<sup>16</sup> *Hlimsang*, or High Revival, according to Mangkhawsat Kipgen , was a term that initially applied to *khurh harhna*, or Quaking Revival, that created problems for the church in the mid 1920s before taking on this terminology.

<sup>17</sup> Thanzauva, K., comp. Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894 – 1957. Aizawl: Synod Literature and Publication Board, 1997.163. Print.

<sup>18</sup> Case, Shirley Jackson. “The Nature of Primitive Christianity,” The American Journal of Theology. 17.1 (1913): 63-79. JSTOR. 13 April 2011 <www.jstor.org.search>.

<sup>19</sup> Lawmsanga. “A Critical Study on Christian Mission With Special Reference to Presbyterian Church of Mizoram,” Diss. U of Birmingham, 2010. 100.

<sup>20</sup> Lalhaerliana, Andrew. E-mail to the author. 20 March. 2010.

<sup>21</sup> According to Andrew Lalhaerliana, music instructor of William Booth School of Music, Aizawl, the mood of the *lengkhawm zai* is essentially plaintive, and that just as the symbol of modern jazz music is the presence of its “swing” quality , the true *lengkhawm zai* is melancholic in nature.

<sup>22</sup> The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901 -1938. Lunglei : Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, BCM, 1993. 99. Print.

<sup>23</sup> Liangkhaia was said to have expressed a feeling of remorse for the uncomplaining acceptance of the unscrupulous use of everyday words in the songs by the missionaries that could have been refined to suit the feelings of the Mizos.



<sup>24</sup> Tyson, Lois. Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York : Routledge, 2006. 421. Print.

<sup>25</sup> Kristian Hla Bu. 18<sup>th</sup> Rev. ed. Aizawl : Synod Literature and Publication Board, 2005. 479. Print.

<sup>26</sup> Kristian Hla Bu. 18<sup>th</sup> Rev. ed. Aizawl : Synod Literature and Publication Board, 2005. 265. Print.

<sup>27</sup> Sacred Songs and Solos. 1<sup>st</sup> Indian ed. London : British Publishers, 2000. Hymn no. 136. Print.

<sup>28</sup> The government was well pleased with the missionaries for their running of educational institutions.

<sup>29</sup> Lalthangliana, B. Patea leh Damhauhva Hnuhma. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Aizawl : RTM Press, 2005.13. Print.

<sup>30</sup> *Vanlung*, according to James Dokhuma, was the separate hearth for the slave family to cook in the chief's house. Individuals and families who were too poor to feed themselves often turned themselves in to their chief who ensured their survival in return for their bonded slavery.

<sup>31</sup> Kristian Zaikhawm Hlabu. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Lunglei: BCM Publication Board, 2003. 305. Print.

<sup>32</sup> Dokhuma, James. Tawng Un Hrilhfiahna. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Aizawl: Gilzom Offset, 2007.168. Print.

<sup>33</sup> Lalthangliana, B. History of Mizo Literature: Mizo Thu Leh Hla. Aizawl: RTM Press, 1993.191. Print.

- <sup>34</sup> Lalthangliana, B. et al., eds. Mizo Hla Leh A Phuahtute. Aizawl : Hrangbana College, 1999. 164. Print.
- <sup>35</sup> Kristian Hla Bu. 18<sup>th</sup> Rev. ed. Aizawl : Synod Literature and Publication Board, 2005. 502. Print.
- <sup>36</sup> Kristian Hla Bu. 18<sup>th</sup> Rev. ed. Aizawl : Synod Literature and Publication Board, 2005. 533. Print.
- <sup>37</sup> Lorrain, J.H. Dictionary of the Lushai Language. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1940.365. Print.
- <sup>38</sup> The Holy Bible: New International Version. Colorado Springs : International Bible Society, 1984. Print.
- <sup>39</sup> Siamkima. “Rih Dil leh Mizoram,” Chhawkhle (Mizo Ro Bawm): An Anthology of Mizo Prose and Poetry. comp. and ed. Mizo Literature Publication Society. Aizawl: North Eastern Hills Publication, 1988. 9. Print.
- <sup>40</sup> Lorrain, J. H. Dictionary of the Lushai Language. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1940.31. Print.
- <sup>41</sup> Lalhmuaka. Zoram Thim Ata Engah. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board, 1988. 229. Print.
- <sup>42</sup> Kristian Hla Bu. 18<sup>th</sup> Rev. ed. Aizawl : Synod Literature and Publication Board, 2005. 470. Print.

<sup>43</sup> Kipgen, Mangkhawsat. Christianity and Mizo Culture: The Encounter Between Christianity and Zo Culture in Mizoram. Jorhat : The Mizo Theological Conference, Mizoram,1996. 287. Print.

<sup>44</sup> Vanlalchhuanawma. Christianity and Subaltern Culture: Revival Movement as a Cultural Response to Westernization in Mizoram. Delhi: ISPCK, 2007.311. Print.

## CHAPTER IV

### SONG AND WORSHIP

This chapter will explore the inter-relationship between song and worship in the context of the Christian Mizos. It will argue that the two are inextricably woven into the fabric of the Christian Mizo society. It will also denote the centrality of the both concepts for the Mizos since the pre-Christian days, while garnering their link in the Christian society of the Mizos. Worship formed an integral part of the pre-Christian Mizo community. Their world view was thoroughly marked by their conception of the supernatural beings, and the power that resided in these deities rendered them to acknowledge the limited human capacity and the unlimited powers of the supernatural beings under whose arbitration humans existed. Studies of diverse cultures of the world from the past reveals, whether they are dependent upon oral communication or on written formula that they have all shared a common characteristic in that the worship of mythical gods and deities, offering sacrifices and rites, have struck at the very root of their cultural uniqueness. The Mizos of the pre-colonial times could be viewed as highly religious in their effort to connect with the deities. They responded to the various natural objects and abstract beings which they believed had possessed supremacy over them in order to be at peace with them.

Understanding the context of pre-Christian religious belief and practices is imperative to the comprehension of the transition from the pre-Christian primal belief system to Western Christianity. The religious dimension of the early Mizos was multi-faceted and indeed overarching upon every person. The realm of the supernatural had a direct bearing on the everyday lives of the pre-Christian Mizos. Broadly classified, the spiritual world consisted of two sets of deities: the malignant and the benevolent. It was with malignant spirits that the Mizo had more interaction, for almost every physical infirmity and ill-luck was attributed to the works

of one of these spirits. They regarded natural objects like forests, gorges, stones, rivers, unusual trees, and many other non-living objects they encountered everyday in their hunting grounds and farms as possessing spirits called *huai*. Therefore, they were careful not to annoy the *huai*, that inhabited them, and would immediately summon their priests to offer sacrifices to the *huai*, if some misfortune struck upon them or their family. This observation would often result in the conclusion that the early Mizos were animists. Due to this lingering precautious apprehension, it has often been suggested that the Mizos before the advent of Christianity were often described to be living in perpetual fear of the demons and spirits. However, this practice was done only to appease the malignant supernatural beings, and they did not worship these harmful deities. Apart from this, there was a galore of superstition that dictated their lives, from menial tasks to serious endeavors. The Mizo equivalent of the term “religion” has been an amalgam of the pre-Christian belief system. The pre-Christian faith was not an ordered set of belief like Christianity’s monotheistic understanding of God. Before the term *Sakhua* was formulated as a signifier to encapsulate the idea of one’s religion, the Mizo had used the term in two separate ways. *Sa* denoted a god who was the maker of everything, including people, while *Khua* was understood as the protector and preserver of the creation<sup>1</sup>. It was because of the powers associated with them that the Mizos worshipped these two deities and all the other spirits were offered sacrifices, not in order to worship them but to pacify their wrath over humans. In speaking of the relationship with each of the two god characters, Zairema denoted that the Mizos paid homage to the *Sa* in order that they did not suffer pain, while the *Khua* was worshipped so that they received the dispensation of its blessings<sup>2</sup>. The Mizos also believed in a deity known as *Khuavang*, which is “the guardian spirit in whose hands lay the destiny of every human being from cradle to grave.”<sup>3</sup>

Despite all these deities, however, the Mizos also seemed to acknowledge the presence of at least one omnipotent god. Their ideas of these deities were remote and they were considered to inhabit their abode far into the heavens. One of them was the supreme being called *Pathian*, the deity who would eventually come to be identified as the supreme being in the Christian belief or the God that Christianity worships. This term as well as the power associated with it offered the most suitable terminology among a host of other benevolent deities for the integration of Christianity into the spiritual lives of the Mizos. In the pre-Christian times, although *Pathian* was recognized, there were no practices to demonstrate their worship of the being. Amidst numerous sacrifices that were offered to the harmful spirits, public worship also happened on a moderate frequency and mainly took the form of the *Fanodawi* and *Kawngpui Siam*. Besides, each clan had their own religion with a few differences in their worship pattern and sacrificial practices. Mobility within the religious system was also possible due to the availability of proselytizing to the religion of other clans. Thus, if a person wanted to adopt the religion of other sub-tribe, he followed a ritual practice called *Saphun* that necessitated not only his adoption of the religion of another clan but also his change of clan.<sup>4</sup> In their pre-Christian theology, the Mizos expressed their concern for not only their welfare during their lifetime, but their mind was focused even more so on life beyond death. Thus, a life of comfort and luxury in the afterlife was their main concern. The *Mitthi Khua*, or the village of the dead, was thought to be a place where the commoners continued to live much like their earthly way of life, while those who performed *Thangchhuah* during their lifetime were reserved a luxurious life in the *Pialral*, a village beyond the river *Pial* that separated it from *Mitthi Khua*. So ingrained was the idea of the *Pial* river and the journey of the soul into the *Mitthi Khua* or the *Pialral* in the minds of the Mizos that even after Christianity was embraced, there was a consistent echo in the songs of the Mizo Christians

as related to these pre-Christian elements. The silence of the Christian Bible on the detailed journey of the souls was thus filled up conveniently by the native spiritual element. Death, for the pre-Christian Mizos was always an emotionally painful event, but it was the work of circumstance which they could not avoid. On the occasion of death, depending on the cause of death, the community and the family observed certain codes of conduct and going out hunting or gathering food or wood collecting were strictly forbidden. The community members would gather together in the house of the bereaved singing songs to comfort them while drinking rice beer. This practice is known as *Khawhar lenpui*. As Christianity began to take its root, this practice of gathering in the bereaved family's house was Christianized as Christian songs were sung without rice beer, and interspersed with impromptu speeches from among the comforters. In the Christian culture of today's Mizoram, this practice has been regarded as one of the traditionally important symbols of Mizo solidarity, and it has helped perpetuate the sense of communal unity that has underlined Mizo society from the pre-Christian times. When Christianity came to the Mizos, it powerfully shifted their focus from the evil spirits that they had dreaded to the almighty God who could dispel all these superstitious apprehensions and practices. In term of convicting them of their sinful ways which were based on the Christian perspective, the new religion was quite successful. However, in terms of the Christian victorious life over death, it seemed to have done comparatively less, for death still continued to be one universal constant which they could not get over the tragic feeling of easily. The practice of getting together in the house of the bereaved family has continued during the Christian era, but significantly the tools of consoling the bereaved has changed, and Vanlalchhuanawma called this change "Christianization" of the tradition. On those occasions, the new Christian songs at once became the fodder for the sympathizers, as these songs conveniently spoke of life after death, the

beauty of heaven, the trails of life, and the prospect of reunion with the dear and loved ones in heaven. Contrary to this, in the pre-Christian world, mournful tunes were sung by the elderly and it formed the majority that was sung by the consoling group with the slow beat of the drum, amidst the smoking pipes and rice beer that were passed round amidst the cry of the old women and the occasion dance of the old men. The practice of giving condolence called *Ralna*, had also been either in the form of traditional rice beer, *zu*, or agricultural produce, in the past, but when Christians sustained and modified the *khawhar lenpui* practice, they did away with the *zu*, and the condolence gift took on objects that were of economical importance for the families. The purpose of the practice was often seen as serving two-pronged concepts. It still retained the original sense of giving comfort, offering a shoulder to cry on, to the family that lost their loved ones as in the past, and it was often elevated as an occasion to praise and worship God, as all the songs in these settings are Christian songs that were occasionally broken by the delivery of impromptu sermons and messages.

In all of their pre-Christian religious practices and rituals, there was no existence of religious communal songs that reinforced their adoration of the beings they invoked. Yet, this does not mean that there was no music involved. The priests, who were referred to as either the *Puithiam* or the *Sadawt* performed the rites with incantations that were handed down to them from their predecessors. In an important sacrifice on behalf of the community called *Fano dawi*, the priests chanted,

*Dum hluam hluam dum hluam*

*Mima chi, Fanghma chi dum hluam hluam,*



*Leng rual ram tuan pheikhai zang,*

*Kan rual ram tuan pheikhai zang,*

*Kan thlawhhma tuang rawh se*<sup>5</sup>

This chant without directed to any particular deity asserted the wish that their vegetables seeds such as maize (mima) cucumber (fanghma) and agricultural fields be bountiful in the seasons ahead. It also denoted that young men and women who were working in the fields be blessed with strength and agility. A more direct appeal to their deity, *Pathian*, is seen in the practice of the *Lushei* clan as the *Sadawt* killed a piglet:

*Pathianin aw ka satluang lo chhang ang che,*

*Van sanga leng pathianin ka satluang lo chhang ang che,*

*Ni kara cheng pathianin ka satluang lo chhang ang che,*

*Thla kara cheng pathianin ka satluang lo chhang ang che,*

*Thian Khawthangan ka satluang lo chhang ang che,*

*Pathian Khawtawngpa'n ka satluang lo chhang ang che,*

*Mal tin siamtu pathianin ka satluang lo chhang ang che,*

*Sa tin siamtu pathianin ka satluang lo chhang ang che,*

*Thing bul lung bul siamtu pathianin ka satluang lo chhang ang che,*<sup>6</sup>

The English rendering of the same would be,

*Pathian, you accept my sacrificial gift,*

*Pathian, you who dwell in the heaven, accept my sacrificial gift,*

*Pathian, you who dwell in the sun, accept my sacrificial gift,*

*Pathian, you who dwell in the moon, accept my sacrificial gift,*

*Pathian whose popularity reaches far and wide, accept my sacrificial gift,*

*Pathian, you who provide every blessing, accept my sacrificial gift,*

*Pathian, you who create all the animals, accept my sacrificial gift,*

*Pathian, you who create all the plants and the rocks, accept my sacrificial gift.*

The lines quoted asked *Pathian* who dwelt in the sky, the sun, the moon, and who created all the life forms to respond to the sacrifice. It is clearly evident from the above lines regarding the reverence they accorded to *Pathian*, as he was acknowledged to be a supernatural being living among the heavens and also as the creator of life and lifeless forms. Zairema recorded that the pre-Christian Mizo conception of their *Pathian* was much deeper than the Western Christian God because it carried with it the notion that *Pathian* was the everlasting father. This particular attribute on the part of the *Pathian* indeed was the reason why God has been translated into Mizo as *Pathian*. Although there were other high gods in the pre-Christian Mizo spiritual realm like the *Khuavang*, which was also a powerful deity who marked each humans with moles and lines on the hands and toes and gave intelligent knowledge to whom he favored, ultimately the term *Pathian* was adopted to refer to the Christian God.

In the post colonial world order of contemporary times there has been an increasing propensity to consciously remodel Christianity that has been brought on the soil and filtered through the Western value system so that in its place a new form of Christianity should take root according to the native world view. This pattern of development also has been witnessed within the Native American post colonial situation. The introduction of Christianity among the indigenous people of the United States was also facilitated by the British Empire that dominated the land. The missionaries set out on the task of evangelizing the natives, with an air of disdain for everything that was culturally inherent to the natives whom they called Indians. For the early native Christians, proselytization meant forgoing everything that they cherished in the past. The missionary activities were so determined in their efforts to Christianize them that a Christian native had no means of perpetuating the heritage of their culture as the Western education system, culture and practices categorically denounced their early ways. However, within time, the native intellectuals began to critique the Western society which was predominantly a Christian society that installed itself on their land and began to feel the inconsistencies that were contained in the articulation of the Christian ideals and their manifestation. While identifying a lot of Christian values as perfectly compatible with many of their pre-Christian values, and understanding the benefit of Christianity over their native religions, there was also a move to redefine Christianity in their own terms. This project even considered a move radical enough to completely ignore the Hebrew Old Testament and valorize the tribe history to give way to a more meaningful interpretation of Christianity among their people. To many of the Native Americans, Christianity (coming from the West) was simply not applicable and that in its place Christianity that was borne out of the indigenous was the better option. Referring to the inaptness of the Western model of Christianity, George Tinker stated "If Christianity is to survive among the

native people...it must not only be rooted in Native culture but also in the hands of the Natives.”<sup>7</sup> Considering the religiosity and the piety of the pre-Christian Mizos, it is not difficult to see how the Christian Mizos earnestly adopted the new religion of Christianity with great dedication and fervor due to the alternative offered by Christianity. The Christian tradition as well as the song tradition marched ahead in ways that were different from many colonized countries. Although sharing many similar cultural disturbances with the Native American Christian situation with reference to colonial cultural both historically and in matters of practice, the response of the post-Colonial Mizo Christianity was never overt in its theoretical trajectory of decolonization. There were several cultural moments that defined its native autonomy in terms of articulating Christianity, but not seeking a full divorce from the framework which the missionaries had established in the churches of Mizoram. Because of this, even in an extreme case of isolation from mainstream Christianity, there was never a move to reclaim the religious practices and worship patterns of the pre-Christian times. Any indigenous movement that was radically distanced from the mainstream Christianity did so within the ambit of Christianity, thereby forming cult movements while drawing from the Christian Bible which was also their reference point. With regard to this, there have been a substantial number of home-grown religious sects across the population spectrum, but most of them are conceptualized from the Christian belief. Thus, no animal sacrifice, or invoking the deities, or acknowledging the power of the spirits as in the pre-Christian past has resurfaced within the religious sphere.

The concept of worship in the Christian parlance carried with it the idea of adoration and contemplation of God. The term also anticipated a reverence to and a submission of one's will to God. Following the Protestant Reformation movement in Europe, the form of Christian worship was increasingly altered; in that hymns began to occupy an important place in the worship

services of the Christians. In an effort to set the record straight about the growing misconception in the Christian world, pastor Rick Warren in his book, The Purpose Driven Life argued “ For many people, worship is just a synonym from music” before saying “Worship has nothing to do with the style or volume or speed of a song.”<sup>8</sup> However, there is no doubt that the interrelationship between worship and music occurred at a very deep level. When the missionaries introduced Christianity to the Mizos, one of the main tools of evangelism were the songs that the Christians sang. To the first generation Christians, whose knowledge of the Biblical stories and theological grasp of the Christian message was limited, songs provided one of the most rewarding of spiritual experiences. Songs opened up their imaginative horizons and enabled them to understand various concepts within the framework of Christianity.

However, the attitudes of the missionaries during the initial years of contact reflected the colonialist mentality, even as songs were written by the first generation Christians in the style of the Western form of music. The statement of musicologist Philip V. Bolhman “To music, then , accrues the potential to articulate colonial power, and that potential was never lost on those eager to colonize and missionize the worlds of others they encountered”<sup>9</sup> fit the situation of the beginning of Christianity among the Mizos. This colonialist project also permeated the mission board in their discussions. The 1915 missionary report written by Lorrain explicitly reflected this attitude when he cited the validity for the existing Christian song tradition among the Mizos. This was regarding the printed reports of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference that read “not infrequently the first native contributions to a Christian literature take the form of hymns, and then even when they show little of literary art, impress themselves upon the memories of the worshippers and come readily to their lips.”<sup>10</sup> At the same time, Lorrain rendered praise for the degree in which tonic sol-fa system had been adopted by the Christian in a “remarkable degree.”

The music composition of the native Christians erupted with immense success during the revival that occurred about 1929. The power of the songs modeled on the Western forms had no doubt helped to consolidate the Christian movement as it had enhanced their worship experience tremendously. It was the Christian songs that flowed out of the hearts of the native converts that had mapped the course of the nature of Christian worship. In a tone which was almost anticipating the erasure of the Western Christian in future, the 1930 missionary report stated “To-day the Lushai Church is producing quite a new type of hymn, which is becoming even more popular and popular than those spoken of above. They are the outpouring of Lushai hearts inspired by the Holy Spirit. In construction they conform largely to the old Lushai songs, but the tunes, Lushai through and through are yet something quite different from those used in the old heathen days. The Christians love these new hymns and sing them with ecstatic fervour.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, this category of Christian songs continued to form an important element in the worship services for the next generation.

In the heat of the spiritual revival, worship experience also took a very different path. While the espousal of traditional practices and rituals was strictly forbidden by the first generation converts, there was also a synthesis between the Western and the local tradition. The powerful effect of the Christian songs had also resulted in innovative Christian native practice. The Mizos began to kill animals and they organized feasts for the Christian communities in order to praise God, while undermining the traditional purpose of animals slaughter as a part and parcel of sacrifices to the evil spirits. In the past a wealthy man would organize the *Thangchhuah* feast, which meant inviting all the villagers to partake of the abundant supply of food and meat, in an effort to secure a place in the *Pialral*. When the Christian population grew and as revivals broke out, *Thangchhuah* became adapted in the Christian manner, in which the focus of the feast

changed from the concern of luxurious *Pialral* existence to one that glorified God, which was regarded to be a powerful symbol of worshipping God. The number of animals killed “to the glory of God” in a certain village of the south in 1928 was recorded as ten pigs and two goats.<sup>12</sup> On occasions like these, Christians would gather together to sing and to praise God. This became one of the hallmarks of their worship practices. Singing hymns with the traditional drum, *Khuang*, quickly became synonymous with worshipping God. It was the Mizo’s love of music that funneled the Christian movement, especially more so after the revival that occurred in the 1930s. Christian reports of the time would abound in the activities of the native Christian church members holding *Lengkhawm zai* or *Zaikhawm* sessions. Etymologically, *Lengkhawm* or *Zaikhawm* referred to merely singing together, and as Christians gathered together to praise God on such occasions, the *Lengkhawm zai* gradually established itself as an important kind of worship service. However, the songs of the *Lengkhawm zai* sessions comprised not only the original compositions of the native Christians, because songs that were received from the West were also sung in the tune of the *Lengkhawm* style. Many songs of Western origin were sung with equal dedication and fervor. It was gatherings of this kind that gave impetus to the growing number of Christians across the state.

While the upheaval in musical and spiritual dimension took place within Christian worship it is crucial to elaborate upon the physical manifestations of the spirit of worship exhibited by the Mizos. The missionaries working both in the North and the South of the land conformed rigidly to the Western code of Christianity and did very little to embrace dancing while songs were sung. At many levels they tried to exercise a reserved mentality when it came to dealing with the natives. Yet, the Mizos were not only a tribe that showed enormous love for singing but also for dancing. In the past on festivals and other occasions for merry-making they

performed several dances; some were choreographed for uniform performance, and some were performed according to the whim of individuals. Eventually when the drum ( the *khuang* ) was introduced into the Christian community and the increasing number of native songs informed and nurtured their spiritual well being, the Mizos responded their affection toward God through dancing. The powerful sound of the *khuang* inspired the Mizos to dance, although not in a fashion completely similar to their pre-Christian days, but in terms of lifting their arms and dancing about in groups on the ground in worship services. The series of revival movements that occurred among the Mizos were of considerable importance to the development of modern day Christianity and of the various religious groups that were formed out of the direct result of the revival moments. Among the first of the indigenous sects that were formed the *Tlira Pawl*, led by Tlira who was once a devout Christian but whose preoccupation with the belief that the Second Coming of Jesus (as found in the Bible) had already occurred, and that Church rituals were meaningless, made him to follow a road different from the mainline church. Following his vision, Tlira denounced the Church along with his followers. By 1914, the Presbyterian Church issued a statement about its grave concern regarding the false prophets that alarmed the Christians unnecessarily, while clearly alluding to the activities of Tlira who had by this time attracted huge adherents. Tlira reportedly saw many visions of extraordinary manifestations, and some of them even constituting prophecy. With his death in 1951, his followers soon began to dwindle.

Tlira was not the only one to upset the tide of nascent Christianity. There emerged a cult know as *thiangzau* by about the 1930s, that were borne out of the impact of the revival movement. The *thiangzau* did not draw out their doctrine, but it was a libertine philosophy claiming that every act and thought was pure and holy. The term itself has been sometimes



defined as “extensive law” or “libertinism or “all free”.<sup>13</sup> It was a very accommodative teaching that undermined the structure of the Christian Church and its practices. They even permitted sexual union between consenting adults, and their rationale was that everything was lawful unto God. Their rites, which were often highly contextualized, were performed by their priests. Closely related with the *Thiangzau* movement was the *Khuangtuaha Pawl*, headed by the charismatic Khuangtuaha and his brother Chana who were excluded from the Church in 1939. The main objective of this group was *Ram Thar*, or a new land which was promised in the Bible. It was a sense of longing for the existence in a land free of all the hardships, pain, strife, poverty, and skirmishes that characterized earthly living. Over time, the cult grew into a huge proportion and eventually they set up their habitation on the outskirts of the village of Baktawng. Although they used the Bible with its 66 books, they interpreted it according to their own tenets that even allowed keeping multiple spouses. Their divorce from the mainline Christianity was also marked by the different songs forms that they used in their worship services. Most of their songs were based on the *Tlanglam Zai*, with the three line stanza structure, that was composed by Chana who was prolific enough to add new songs almost every week into their hymnals during his active years.<sup>14</sup> The cult is still operating in their establishment near Baktawng village and to a certain degree are still cut off from the rest of Mizo society. There were several other religious groups that were formed after the revival incidents across the state with various Biblical interpretations and codes of conduct that were different from the Church practices that was first installed by the missionaries. The penetration of the land by other Church denominations also happened gradually and within a few years, among the Mizos, various Church denominations operated their ministries.

In spite of the presence of the various Christian groups in the state, however, the Christian song tradition remains central. The Kristian Hla Bu that has undergone several editions has never lost its appeal in the Church worship services. It has a sizeable amount of hymns for worship purposes. These were songs that were translated from the Western hymns during the time of the missionaries to the native production. Also, contemporary songs found loyal support among the youth and children. Worship has been seen as a solemn practice among the Christians and singing became the spiritual mainstay that conditioned the atmosphere of such service. In contemporary times, the state of Mizoram has often been described as a Christian state. Church buildings in the form of chapels often tower above all the other buildings in almost all the villages and towns of Mizoram which is symbolic of the manner in which Christianity has percolated the society. A typical Church would conduct daily morning prayer, night services, Sunday services, and Sunday schools, besides the activities of various departments within the Church. This denotes the extent to which worship has been prioritized by the Mizo Christians. It may be proper to highlight the objective of the missionaries who were regarded as “hoping to build a self-propagating Church”. Many analysts have regarded the powerful monolithic structure which is assumed by the Church as a direct outcome of the heavy engagement of the Church in missionary activities. The dominant Churches of the Mizos send out missionaries not only within the state of Mizoram among other minority groups, or across India, but also send them to work in far off foreign countries. In certain parts of their mission fields, these missionaries have taught the natives the translated version of Mizo Christian songs, as tools for worshipping God. Evangelism has been indeed one feature of Christianity that has been rendered so dearly in the hearts and minds of the Mizo Christians since their first contact with Christianity. Local evangelists would set out in order to win over the hearts and minds of their

friends, relatives, and villagers from other areas. Evangelism itself has been defined as the “zealous preaching and dissemination of the gospel, as through missionary work.”<sup>15</sup> Closely connected, and sometimes interchangeable in the Christian parlance, with this is the concept of “mission”, which is the organized effort for the propagation of the Christian faith, and this aspect constitutes the professed assignment of every Christian believer to reach out to other peoples in an effort to denote precepts that are related to Christian beliefs. The chronicle of the history of Christianity illustrates that Christians had not been consistent in their evangelical zeal over the centuries. Historically in the West in the 19th and early 20th centuries there developed a great upsurge in the Protestant mission activity. Many of these were voluntary and unofficial, but most denominations also established official organizations for their missions. The chief mission agencies that operated in Mizoram were also the products of this upheaval in the realization of this Christian responsibility. When the missionaries started work among the Mizos, this ethical demand was indoctrinated into the minds of the Mizos without confronting doubts as to its legitimacy. The newly-turned Christians then began to take this mandate with assiduity, while touring among their own people with the intention of bringing to their knowledge, the appeal of the new faith. All along, the Christian songs fanned the flame of enthusiasm to those who were out on mission trips and the Church communities. This strongly felt desire to propagate Christianity, which is one that characterized the call of the Christian mission among the Mizos, is found in a popular hymn composed by Zahlira and harmonized by V.L. Sanga . The first verse explicitly presents the burden the songwriter has for his mission calling. It reads:

*Lalpa, ram lak tumin khawvelah hian,*

*Kei ka kal zel ang, ka phurrit nen;*

*Ka phatsan lo vang che, ka Lal Isu,*

*Hmelma doral lian mah se* <sup>16</sup>

This may be depicted as;

*Lord, in order to claim the land,*

*I will press on with my burden;*

*Jesus, I will not forsake you,*

*Despite the strong enemy.*

In addition to this, hymns translated from Sankey's Sacred Songs and Solos, have always been proved to be the spiritual oasis for the Christian Mizos since the beginning of Christianity. One such hymn, highly motivational in its mission theme, translated by Rev. Lianhmingthanga has been entitled "Behold, the Master now is calling", the chorus of which reads:

*Go forth, with patience, love and kindness;*

*And, in the Master's names,*

*The blessed news of salvation*

*To all the world proclaim!* <sup>17</sup>

It was songs, and still is, songs like these that touch the sentiments of the Christian Mizos. These were songs that propel them to act swiftly as a church group or as individual evangelists. The emphasis on the need to evangelize others has thus been an imperative, and the ignorance of which is tantamount to the failure of duty. Thus, an important characteristic of the worship of

the Mizo Christians looked to anticipate the spreading of the gospel, even as the missionaries that came from the West to introduce them to Christianity were regarded with high honor. At the onset of Christianity, the “strong enemy” consisted of the village people pledging allegiance to their traditional Mizo religion, and the chiefs and their elders who insisted upon enjoying the higher social echelon in the society. Indeed, the early Christians received a certain amount of prejudice and social ostracism. Lalhmuaka has mentioned an account of two native Christians; Thankunga and Zathanga, who were greeted with warmth in the tradition of hosting guest by a household in the village of Pukpui, but were immediately shunned by the mother of the house upon realization of their faith, and she also refrained from cooking food for them. Violent resistance to Christianity could not hold fast as most British army officers representing the government authority were either directly or indirectly in favor Westernizing the hill tribe, and Christianity was on the forefront of bringing a path of change which mere wielding of power could not have brought about. Therefore, oppositions to Christianity (when they got on a violent turn) were crushed by the agents of authorial British law. In this manner the ‘new religion’ was given a conducive environment and it gained a fast momentum.

After all the missionaries had left Mizoram due to the insurgency that broke out in 1966, the institution of the Church was already firmly rooted among the Mizos. Meanwhile the Christian song tradition continued to enrich itself because new song composers appeared on the scene. Many of the song composing styles of the native Christians changed overtime due to the increasing exposure to musical forms from the West and through popular media. Advancement in studies and higher education also has also touched the music scenario in general especially as radios became available. From 1960 onwards, secular music through popular media came to be integrated into the Mizo society. It was a new chapter for the musical journey of the Mizos.

Following this, local radio artists began to write songs that were based upon popular Western tunes. The Church meanwhile had also raised choirs in several villages. With the increasing development in the field of education, politics, economics, and other social parameters, song composition also took on various forms. While many of the Christian songs of contemporary times were individual reflections and were meant to be sung individually, there were a sizeable amount of indigenous Christian songs that were used for worship. The repertoire of Mizo Christian songs has been immense and modern composers are actually writing more songs. At the same time, the songs comprising the *Lengkhawm Zai* has continued to secure reverence even in the minds of many Christian Mizos, particularly the elderly. However, there has been little addition to this genre other than what has already been composed and recognized because new composers have been writing tunes that are modeled on Western precepts. Rev Samuel has believed that the decline or the non-continuance of the *Lengkhawm zai* composition was due to the enhanced influence of Western music among the Mizos. He opined that the modern generation has laid higher premium on music of the West, and that the traditional *Lengkhawm zai* style has been increasingly viewed as outmoded, at least from the perspective of the composer.<sup>18</sup>

The influence of popular culture has also been tremendous. With an increasing atmosphere of globalization where the media in the form of television, newspaper, mobile phones, the internet and other modes of information technology feed the Mizo society, it has indeed been possible to be influenced one way or another. However, the increasing exposure to the outside world also meant that the Mizos have begun to reflect upon their culture with critical perspectives and have begun to realize their rich heritage in terms of the song culture. This resulted in propelling attempts to rewrite Christian songs by using the form of traditional pre-Christian structures. However, apart from the tunes, these new compositions have not really echoed the sentiments of

the songs of olden times with its pre-Christian elements. These are, however, isolated events and the time taken to successfully resurrect many of the pre-Christian songs forms (to be included in the Christian worship) are yet a matter of speculation.

Already the worship services of many Churches have been making allowances for the youth who have increasingly followed the Western models. These worship services do not include traditional Christian hymns, and the *Lengkhawm zai* as well. The singing experience has been enhanced due to the amalgamation of musical components like the amplified electric guitars, drums, and modern electronic musical instruments. This form of singing is increasingly catching on among the Christian circles worldwide. Despite the contemporary Church setting in Mizoram, witnessing an immense influence in the field of music and its performances from the West, the Church has adhered to the tradition of the *Lengkhawm zai* and the hymns based on the tonic sol-fa as well as new songs composed from the pens of native Christian composers. Debates also arise and these are related to the spiritual purity of the contemporary Western style singing experience with its highly-charged atmosphere, with loud electronic musical instruments, and many conservatives see such acts as a form of imitation, and not applicable within the Mizo cultural context.

Although the Mizo Christian post colonial stance may not be as violent in its endorsement of its own brand of Christianity, even to the extent of harboring ambitions to redefine Christian principles that Western culture had indoctrinated, the Christian culture of the post colonial Mizoram has been in many ways reflective of a cultural hybridity. The centrality of songs in the life of the Mizos is paramount. Christian worship has thrived on the songs that were spontaneously embraced by the early Mizo Christian, and the songs have helped them to thrive. At the same time, the musical expression through songs as fed by the drums during the revival

movements also engendered formation of cults with different ideologies and practices. The Western missionaries are long gone, and the Church is in the hands of the Mizos themselves, yet the Church has evolved as an organic body, with much of the traditional and the Western music intermingling within its composite and rendering it whole.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Dokhuma, James. Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung. Aizawl: J.D. Press Publication, 1992.24. Print.

<sup>2</sup>Zairema. Pi Pute Biak Hi. ed. Chuauthuama .Aizawl : Zorun Community, 2009. 124. Print.



<sup>3</sup>Kipgen, Mangkhawsat. Christianity And Mizo Culture: The Encounter Between Christianity and Zo Culture in Mizoram. Jorhat: The Mizo Theological Conference, Mizoram, 1996.115. Print.

<sup>4</sup>Dokhuma, James. Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung. Aizawl: J.D. Press Publication, 1992.25. Print.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. 38

<sup>6</sup>Zairema. Pi Pute Biak Hi. ed. Chuauthuama. Aizawl : Zorun Community, 2009. 70-71. Print.

<sup>7</sup>Vernon, Irene S. “The Claiming of Christ: Native American Postcolonial Discourses” The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS). 24. 2 (1999): 75-88. JSTOR. Web. 8 Feb. 2011. <www.jstor.org.search>.

<sup>8</sup>Warren, Rick. The Purpose Driven Life : What On Earth Am I Here For?. South Asia ed. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 2002. Print.

<sup>9</sup>Bohlman, Philip V. “Music And Culture: Histiriographies of Disjuncture,” The Cultural Study of Music : A Critical Introduction, eds., Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton, New York: Routledge, 2003. 47. Print.

<sup>10</sup>The Annual Reports of BMS on Mizoram 1901 -1938. Lunglei : Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1993.129. Print.

<sup>11</sup>The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901 -1938. Lunglei : Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1993.266. Print.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. 240.

<sup>13</sup> Vanlalchhuanawma. Christianity and Subaltern Culture : Revival Movement as a Cultural Response to Westernization in Mizoram. Delhi : ISPCK, 2007. 433. Print.

<sup>14</sup> Dokhuma, James. Zoram Kohhran Tualto Chanchinte. Aizawl : Tlangnuam Press, 1975. 36. Print.

<sup>15</sup> "Evangelism," The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed., Boston : Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000. The Free Dictionary. web. 3 March 2010 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/evangelism>>.

<sup>16</sup> Kristian Hla Bu. 18<sup>th</sup> Revised ed. Aizawl : Synod Literature and Publication Board, 2005. 338. Print.

<sup>17</sup> Sacred Songs and Solos. 1<sup>st</sup> Indian ed. London : British Publishers, 2000. 756. Print.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel. Personal Interview. 3 Jan. 2011.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the dissertation and highlights the ongoing discourse of the Mizo Christian song experience. It will attempt to connect the various strands of arguments that have been discussed in the preceding chapters with a view to giving a reasoned ethic on the development of the Mizo Christian song perspective. Committed to its theoretical stance in terms of the postcolonial criticism, the chapter will reinforce the unique colonial and postcolonial situations of the Mizo who have now predominantly been Christians. It will also endeavor to denote the non-violent, yet highly- charged cultural amalgamation of the West and the indigenous that essentially characterizes the Christian Mizos in the earlier decades. Curiously from within the Church establishment, from within the ecclesiastical setting, the reclamation of the indigenous self has taken place and a consciousness that spoke right into the hearts of the people using traditional idioms has also set in. This rupture is a significant milestone for the postcolonial appreciation of the Mizo history. A point of focus will also be the extent to which these native tendencies went about their way, with the result that some radicalized version of indigenous Christianity left the mainstream altogether. This native project was mediated at the risk of hybridizing the imported Christianity from the West with elements deeply entrenched in the animistic Mizo society, necessitating suspension of syncretism that occurred at many levels and ultimately treated the two as compatible. The words of Aime Cesaire also exemplified the dreams and aspirations of these Christian Mizos who from within asserted their traditional moorings while embracing Christianity to the core. He stated, "It is not a dead society that we want to revive. We leave that to those who go in for exoticism. Nor is it the present colonial society that we wish to prolong, the most putrid carrion that ever rotted under the sun. It is a new

society that we must create, with the help of all our brother slaves, a society rich with all the productive power of modern times, warm with all the fraternity of olden days” in his Discourse on Colonialism, even as he clarified that the final prescriptive object of the blacks in Africa who were suffering under white supremacy and who were also introduced to Christianity to replace their existing tribal faith with all its rituals and practices.<sup>1</sup> The hermeneutical aggressiveness of Aime Cesaire and other postcolonial writers could not have been envisaged by the Mizo hymn composers. However, they richly deployed the vernacular that was profoundly abounded in the pre-Christian notions of myths and beliefs in their effort to Christianize the land. It was a subtle but determined effort to view life and beyond through their own spiritual eyes and a manifestation of what mattered to them within the Christian doctrine (and not so much of the perspective from the Western Christians who originally introduced them). To this type of native composition, the response was overwhelmingly positive.

The concept of Tribal Theology which was a novel theological enterprise also provided a glimmer of hope in terms of understanding the religious development that has been the hallmark of Christianity. It impacted peoples whose direct closeness to nature has been dislocated, but whose spirits intrinsically have been wrapped up in the lore of the past. Therefore, if syncretism makes a mockery of their Christian form, and if the Western concept of Christianity set out to accuse its many mythical facets, Tribal theology has helped to reconcile the difference while awarding them an identity genuinely indigenous and at the same time made them devoutly committed to Christianity. The primacy of songs is an undeniable literary presence in the history of the Mizos, and if the pursuit of the exposition of Mizo culture as a whole is to be carried out, the song culture of its people has to be one of the most rewarding sources of information. Songs,

both in the missionary era and in contemporary times, has been one of the single cultural identity markers that comprehensively shaped their ethos, body politic and aspirations.

The Mizo song experience has come a long way since the early times when Christianity was not known to the people of the hilly area. The impact of Christianity has been so exhaustive in the psyche of the people that a paradigm shift in the mindset of the people had occurred within just a few years of the introduction of the new religion. From the tribe who were given to belligerent enterprises, consisting of war, raids and stealthy hunting activities, and who continuously instilled fear in the minds of the neighboring British colonies, the adoption of the Hebrew concept of god occurred in a very short time. In all of these, songs played a very important role in bringing the people under the control of the government, and into the embracing arms of Christianity. Christianity offered them a better alternative in terms of understanding the concept of god. However, from their own cultural landscape, proselytizing themselves, and landing into the world of Christianity has been a unique experience. It opened up the possibilities for pushing the boundaries of Christianity while developing their own brand of the religion, and opening the door for certain religious groups that began to interpret Christianity in their own ways. Thus, the white man's religion has evolved in the hands of the natives who cherished its ideals and principles managed in their own ways. Although Christianity was imported by the early Christian missionaries, over the years the model of Christianity that finally inhabited the parishes was not a replica of what had been the long established tradition in the West. Heavily infused with the native worldview, there emerged an evangelical Christianity, that was deeply intent on spreading the Christian belief, that was encapsulated by the new Christian songs that seeped right into their moral fabric. At the intersection of the two cultures, the Western and the native, the Christian songs lay as a

fundamental link that fused the differing conception of life and the afterlife. Initially when the Christian texts from the West had been imported, translated and mediated in the form of songs, the response was overwhelmingly positive for the project of championing Western thoughts and ideals with Christianity as the primary tool.

According to John McLeod, “one of the strengths of postcolonialism is that it has made available a variety of concepts and reading practices that can be productively applied to contexts that go beyond the older, selective areas of concern which preoccupied critics of Commonwealth literature.”<sup>2</sup> In view of this, it is tempting to extrapolate that one of the earliest postcolonial writings of the Mizos were the early Christian songs that were natively composed, for in them was vested the application of concepts that the common masses deeply identified themselves with. The traditional setting of the bucolic Mizo society was greatly disturbed by the British regime, who were perceived as joining forces with the equally-alien mission agencies on so many level of social governance. Thus the road for the expression of their nostalgic traditional culture had been seriously hampered. Although the missionaries worked for and with them, yet maintaining a sense of psychological connection, based on an egalitarian spiritual journey in the same realm was not an advantage for the Mizos who had traditionally been a society marked by equality. This imbalance has been mentioned in a book Christianity And Subaltern Culture : Revival movement as a Cultural Response to Westernization in Mizoram by Vanlalchhuanawma, who wrote,

The estrangement of the general public from the British Raj even led to the alienation between the traditional Chiefs and their erstwhile subjects. The people conceiving the tie between the British Raj and the Mission as stemming from ideological confluence were

further removed from embracing the alien culture, particularly Christianity in its pure western form.”<sup>3</sup>

He went on to denote “The revival Movement with its culture-oriented features and yet with Christian ideals, initially turned out to be the Mizo Christian community’s response to the persecution of the Chiefs who detested Christianity and lamented the passing away of traditional culture, as well as to the pressure of the imposing alien culture.”<sup>4</sup> Certainly among the many “culture-oriented features”, the composition of indigenous song forms was of primary importance. These songs dissolved the tension between the invading Christian concepts and the indigenous tendency to remain rooted in the culture which was heavily informed by past practices. The power of these songs not only bridged the gap between the Western and the native by employing myths and folklores in their newly adopted Christian hermeneutics and discourse. Additionally, the writing of these songs was enabled by the arrival of the spiritual revival moments that repeatedly occurred in Mizoram before 1950. The window of opportunity opened once revival fervor took roots in the land and the contextualization of Christianity became possible not so much from the evangelists and missionary trained indigenous church workers, but from the pens of Mizos of lowly birth, and who had undergone hard times in life. Noting the significance of these revival outbreaks, James Dokhuma, in his introduction to Zoram Kohhran Tualto Chanchinte, which recorded a brief glimpse on homegrown sects flowing out of the revival movements, commented that the revival movements not only worked by way of converting the Mizos to Christianity, but the spirit of God tremendously enabled them to enrich their literature.<sup>5</sup> Significantly, he also wrote that scores of song composers were thrown into the limelight, and indigenous men wrote not on account of their skill but because of the divine inspiration. They wrote songs that touched the hearts of the Mizos and that immediately set them

into emotional fervor. It was a state of attainment where there could be no equal for the bereaved mothers and fathers.<sup>6</sup>

In lieu of the other aspects of Christianity, the Mizo Christians put higher premium on the melancholy, and on the songs that evoked tears as when one thought of the heavenly paradise as the abode of their dear and loved ones. This was also facilitated by the spiritual revelation that convinced them of their sins, and a feeling of tenderness elicited in them when Christ crucified on the cross imagined through their mind's eye. Within the domain of their new faith the Christian Mizos were pained by the grim reality of death when one succumbed to it, and communities gathered at the mourning houses to console the bereaved. This practice was in the pre-Christian past, marked by melancholic communal songs and rice-beer drinking rounds, and it was replaced by the communal singing of the newly composed Christian songs in the house for a certain length of time. This immediately became the trend for any occasion of death. The occasion of marking the dead ceremonials thus became Christianized. But no amount of Christian Western songs could touch the hearts of the bereaved families, who had been weeping due to human loss in the family. The continued insistence on the part of the Mizos to dwell on the theme of death clearly illustrates the presence of the pre-Christian lineage, and the choice of songs sung during such times reflected the leanings of the Mizos. Sawiluaia reminisced from his own childhood when death gripped the village as he wrote in his Hman lai Mizo Khawsak Dan leh Mizoram Buai Lai Thu that whenever there was death in the village, people were terrified to attend any work and that children never ventured out at night for fear of the spirits of the dead.<sup>7</sup> These types of songs came to be known as *Khawhar hla*. Stating the significance of these Mizo Christian song types, R. Lalrawna wrote that songs under this category were universal to all



Mizos, yet were uniquely theirs, despite geographical borders. He also felt that through time they would be immortalized, and he accorded them the title *Mizo Rohlu*, or Mizo Treasure.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps the most significant benchmark in term of indigenous self-consciousness was the time of the spiritual revival of 1937. Vanlalchhuanawma wrote extensively about the beginning and consequences of this spiritual upheaval in his book Christianity And Subaltern Culture: Revival Movement as a Cultural Response to Westernization in Mizoram. Invested with such an enormous power to influence, and disrupt the steady progress of Christianity in the region, this revival is worth putting focus upon. About the time of spiritual revival, there also came about a very different song form that struck the Christian establishment. Deeply nostalgic of the forms of pre-Christian song tunes, there began to pour forth couplets that closely resembled community songs of the heathen past, yet Christian in content. The arrival of this song form announced a time of great disturbance. Already, the Church was grappling with the problematic issue of those revivalists whose codes of conduct, ministerial practices and dance maneuvers crossed the limits of not only doctrinal sanctity but the British administration of the time. The revivalists were often locally referred to as *hlimsang*, the more derogatory *thiangzau*, the former denoting those in higher state of happiness while the latter were libertine. When the official position of the Church was so stringent, even to the extent of publishing the Church Directives or manual, in an effort to crack down on the revivalists tendencies, a majority of those affected by the fervor of revivalism continued to stay on, boldly going forward with their practices and spiritual exercises. This was indeed a significant moment in the history of modern Mizo religion as the by products of this movement who founded other religious groups considered sects by the mainline Church adherents.

Some groups of *thiangzau*, however, chose to walk out, denouncing the rigid containment pursuit of the church administered by the missionaries, yet professing their loyal adherence to their newly found religion through many of their poignant lyrics set in the traditional *Puma zai* or *Tlanglam zai* or other native tunes. In one of their satirical songs directed at the church, they sang,

*Bookroom zai mai chuan ka tlei zolo*

*Tlanglam zaiin Kanan thar kan awi dawn e*

*Kanhu lo sual rawh se chhingkhualah.*<sup>9</sup>

The English equivalent of the piece would be:

*I am not satisfied with songs from bookroom*

*We are going to sing in Tlanglam tune for the new Canan*

*Let them criticize our modus operandi.*

The “bookroom” here, suggested the presence of an alien element that failed to win over their hearts, even though many new songs had been translated into Mizo and distributed at the bookroom in the form of songbooks. The bookroom served as the main centre of dissemination of knowledge in written form. This Western import was precisely attacked by the orally rooted culture in this song as the lyrics derided such Western import. This, however, does not mean the denunciation of their Christian belief nor a return to their non-Christian roots; rather it expressed their desire to enjoy Canan, the Biblical land flowing with “milk and honey”, after years of pilgrimage. The defiant spirit of the *thiangzau* is depicted in this song which was set in the

traditional couplet form and sung in the *tlanglam zai* tune. For them the stricture of the Church was an impediment in the progress of their spiritual experience, as the above lines suggested, and they assaulted the mission with as much force as they could within their literary and Biblical wit.

At the same time, the theological assimilation of the *thiangzau* enclave is presented in another song.

*Zion thuthlungpui a hnun kan vuan*

*Biahthu kan thlung ramhlun bawngte palai nen*

*Edenthar luah tur chu keimahni.*<sup>10</sup>

The English rendering would read:

*We have grasped the stalk of Zion covenant,*

*Made a covenant with the ambassador bawngte of the enduring land*

*We are the ones to occupy the new Eden.*

This song is not only rich in its metaphorical content but in its amalgamation of the native and the foreign. Zion covenant referred to the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ to redeem the human souls, according to the Christian belief. It was a theme that often constituted the favorite theological ruminations of the *thiangzau*. It is interesting to note that the song used *bawngte*, a kind of bird invested with the power to foretell good and bad omens in the pre-Christian Mizo culture, to resemble the Holy Spirit, instead of a dove that the Bible used to signify the same. In the past, hunting expeditions would be cancelled or proceeded depending on the direction a *bawngte* bird flew across the sky, and the *thiangzau* conveniently employed such cultural

elements of the past with smooth syntactical finesse. Although, the lyrics were thoroughly indigenous and the tune was immediately penetrating to the natives, the mission and Church elders felt that welcoming songs of this genre was a game that was too dangerous to play because of its closeness to heathen life style. It was a habit that was inevitable and easily occasioned relapse. Therefore, great precaution was taken not to bring in such elements into the Church or any Christian setting. Lalzawnga suggested that, despite the skilful presentation of the lyrics of many of these *thiangzau* songs, it was primarily due to the tune of the song and the song structure which perfectly fitted the pre-Christian models that the Church vehemently opposed such songs.<sup>11</sup>

At this point it is fair to carefully analyze the position of the contemporary Church on issues such as this. Although still considered highly unfit for congregation consumption in the Church and Christian gathering, the Church seemed to be aware of the uncomfortable situation that often arose when sending music choirs outside of the state of Mizoram. On such occasions, other Christians naturally were curious to listen to the Mizos praising God in their own way. The Mizoram Church representatives were often required to be prepared to perform such cultural exhibitions either only on very special occasions in their state for the entertainment of special guests, or in other lands away from their people. So, in this arena with reference to particular song forms, reclamation of the native identity has not taken place, due to the willful alienation of the song genre.

It is clear that the Western Christian missionaries lacked precise knowledge on how to influence the natives with reference to their song types, and they stressed upon songs of Eurocentric origin and hymns. Commenting on the biased nature of Western thought of the twentieth century that necessarily informed the preference of music of Western origin, Ruth

Finnegan in her essay “Music, Experience, and the Anthropology of Emotions”, wrote “Western classical music- the assumed norm- has often been implicitly assigned to the ‘rational’ side of the equation, connected with written formulations, and the intellectual elements of cultivated human society.”<sup>12</sup> This “assumed norm”, highly critical of indigenous modes of musical expressions and experiences served the purpose of Major A.G. McCall, the British administrator during the time of the missionaries. His description of a typical scene of the revival at once suggested perplexity and anger mixed with blame for missionaries:

“Songs or prayer may accompany the early stages as the individual answering the call stands up in the chapel, among the congregation. Space is made, and the performer commences to move the feet and perhaps to give forth words. The tempo of the dance increases, the accompanying drum beats accelerate, the dancer, perhaps a woman or young girl, ever more energetic in her movements, stomach wobbling, breasts swollen in ecstasy, eyes dilating, all towards the final paroxysm of surrender, abandon, and dementia, which ultimately causes exhilarated supporters to catch the performer as she falls in some helpless swooning of hysteria.”<sup>13</sup>

Pointing fingers at the mission for what became an incomprehensible phenomenon of revivalism due to the latter’s inability to contain effectively these bouts of physical antics, McCall even felt the need to be involved in the affairs of the Church to discipline those displaying such behavior. His extreme measures and encroachment into the affairs of the Church even ensued unfavorable relationships with the Church.

Although the dance forms exhibited during the times of revival were not the direct replica of the traditional way of dancing, these physical movements were an extension of the past. Given

to emotional outburst, the Mizos were spontaneous dancers. In the pre-Christian setting, the common masses would dance on certain religious ceremonies and festivals such as the *Chapchar Kut*. On the occasion of dancing, rice-beer and the traditional drum, the *Khuang*, and one or the other types of gongs were the ubiquitous elements. In a typical *Chai* setting, the songs sung by the rice-beer drinking participants were set to the beat of the drum, and this highly charged atmosphere indulged the dancers to move about while swinging their arms as birds, with their bodies rhythmically stooping closely to the ground.

The position of the Church was adamant in its outlawing of these cultural dances as they sensed the danger of drunken revelry lurking invariably every time such occasions took place. Once a person became Christian, he was not allowed even to watch such indigenous merry-making practices. For a long time such injunction seemed to be working well for the Church, but it left a vacuum in the psyche of the Mizos who knew too well the stimulating effects of indulging in such practices. But by now the idea of the every song form from the West was regarded as the “rational”, and attributive of a “cultivated human society” (as expressed by Ruth Finnegan earlier). This aspect was deeply entrenched in the minds of the Mizos, and any attempt to recall the past social festivities amounted to commission of taboo. Once revival broke out, however, this constraint was felt to be lifted up. With the introduction of the Mizo traditional *drum* in the Christian arena, and indigenously composed hymns proliferating, the stage was set for the unfettered show of emotional and spiritual warfare. To many who were caught in the revival, there was nothing more liberating and spiritually intense than participating in the song and dance. Surveying the various musical instruments used by numerous people groups and tribes of the world, Kevin Dawe wrote

“Musical instruments are formed, structured, and carved out of personal and social experience as much as they are built from a great variety of natural and synthetic materials. They exist at an intersection of material, social, and cultural worlds where they are as much constructed and fashioned by the force of minds, cultures, societies, and histories as axes, saws, drills, chisels, machines, and the ecology of wood.”<sup>14</sup>

The *khuang*, once reclaimed, gave the Mizos a sense of hope, and exhilaration. Its chief end still remained the same, that is, to accompany and enrich their song experience. Instantly, they immediately found out the religious power of the *khuang*. However, all the other musical instruments used in the past were not that fortunate, and they ended up as pre-Christian identity markers.

This moment of self-expression was a rejection of what has been indoctrinated by the colonial masters. In The Location of Culture, Homi K. Bhaba commented that the colonial master’s chief tool which the Bible was taken as a “Sign taken for Wonder”.<sup>15</sup> Essentially he meant that the English book was a fetishized sign that glorifies the epistemological centrality and permanence of European dominance. It was also paradoxically an emblem of ‘colonial ambivalence’ that suggests the weakness of colonial discourse and its susceptibility to ‘mimetic’ subversion. He argues that the English book (instead of describing the fixity or irreducibility of European rule) in fact betrays these “foundations of authority and moreover empowers the colonized subject with a mode of resistance against imperial oppression.”<sup>16</sup> The book, here referred to the Bible, the sacred book of the Christian missionaries. With reference to the same, in 1937, revival broke out at Kelkang Village, and it was perhaps the most noticeable because of government intervention, and created an unprecedented episodes of turmoil for the church

throughout the land. It was at first accompanied by practices favorable for the Church, including prophesy, mass gathering, glorification of God, and personal mode of addressing God in prayer. These were practices that spread across the region, and it increased the number of Christians. Things immediately took a sharp turn when these revivalists were seen to be stepping too far ahead. The pastor looking after the village and its surrounding area at the time recounted:

“I found Thanghnuiaia put a piece of something in the Bible and where he said it was written about the history of others. What Thanghnuiaia was claiming was that whenever he put the mark in on that page was the direction which he was to give from the spirit on that day. I told him it was not correct to do that. He told me this was a direction from the Spirit. My point was that the Bible was not for use as a fortune telling book, but that we should use it as a guide for our daily life.”<sup>17</sup>

This was followed by the Superintendent of the hill district McCall, the representative of the British Raj, taking an active part in trying to contain the movement. He even imprisoned the spear headers of the movement. Many of the revivalists in the village were given to prophesy and other religious practices conceived by them, thereby confusing and even creating rifts between the two sets of European colonizers – the Mission and the Administration.

Expressing the nonplussed attitude of the missionaries at this indigenous upheaval, a missionary wrote:

“There seemed to be primitive instincts and force at work in these people, and I felt that I had no standard or knowledge by which to judge them. I was in an unknown world.”<sup>18</sup>



At another instance, the writing of McCall's statement clearly pointed out the seriousness and the haplessness of the situation. He wrote that the revival showed "the need of holding the Missions responsible for the outcome of their teachings and their actions."<sup>19</sup> It was a force that could not be easily quelled. The Church and its people moved on from these turbulent years of revivalism, stirring some pockets of Mizoram into a frenzy, and sporadically exciting villages, and bringing forth many self-proclaimed evangelists and prophets. In all of this however, the mainstream Church did not lose its grip. In more contemporary times the tradition of Christian songwriting has evolved considerably. One of the most fecund contributors is T.Romama, a resident of Serchhip, a town located in the centre of Mizoram. Born in 1950 of a religious Baptist family, T.Romama was raised under his father who used to be a music conductor in the local church choir. T.Romama was self taught in tonic sol-fa skill, and did not show much signs of musical inclinations until 1992 when he was already married. His songs, known for their appeal to the young people, were marked by simple idioms, and were invested with easy and catchy tunes. The impact of his songs was not limited to the youth, but also to the general Christian populace of Mizoram and Mizos outside of the state.<sup>20</sup> He wrote well over hundred songs, including four secular songs, and his two songs have already been translated into English.

The song entitled "Hawilopar Krista" by T. Romama was a radical conceptualization, yet it had a very native manner of treating its subject matter, namely that of following Jesus. The writer stated that once he plucked the *Hawilopar*, (a metaphor that symbolizes Jesus) he would never long for the pleasures of the world. In the Mizo pagan tradition, *Hawilopar* was the flower on the *Hringlang tlang*, a hill through which the soul of every dead person would pass through as they left the world. The soul of the dead was believed to have lingered about the village, existing in the liminal space for about three months. The nostalgic and homesick soul of the dead would

wearily trudge its way up on the hill slowly and unwillingly, their mind longing for the loved ones that they left behind. Once on the summit they would view the land of the living for one last time with regret and yearning. Then the weary, thirsty soul would drink *Lungloh tui*, flowing nearby which instantly gave him strength and took away all his heartbrokenness. The *Lungloh tui* had a counterpart in Greek mythology known as the Lethe. In Orphism, a Greek mystical religious movement, it was believed that the newly dead who drank from the River Lethe would lose all memory of their past existence.<sup>21</sup> Near that *lungloh river*, was a field of beautiful flowers called the *hawilopar*. The dead would pluck the *hawilopar* and don it on his head and all the feelings of loneliness and longing for the world of the living would cease. It was ready to march ahead into the *mitthi khua* or *pialral*, the abode of the dead, without any care for the world which was left behind. The significance of *hawilopar* for the Mizos of old was thus religious, and at the same time it was an object they viewed with antagonism due to its power on the souls who the living still dearly loved and longed for. The use of the term *hawilopar* in songs had not been so popular, due to its association with traditional, non-Christian religious belief, but even when it was used, it was used in the sense of building up the theme of death and life after death as perceived by the Mizos since traditional times. Death was a painful reality for the Mizos, and it was something that even the gospel message of the missionaries could not dispel. Pastor Chhawna wrote in his song:

*“Hringhniang an liamna thlafam khua chu e*

*Ka thlir ngamlo hawilopar thliak a*

*Lunglohtui an dawn tur ka ngai ngam lo ve.”<sup>22</sup>*

In translation this could be rendered as:

*I cannot bear to watch the village of the dead*

*The place where they pluck the hawilopar*

*I cannot imagine how they would drink the Lunglohtui.*

This view was presented to the traditional treatment of the journey of the souls on their way to their final destiny. The writer's line of thought reflected the poignant feeling of loss as seen from the native perspective. The writer has denoted that it was too painful to even contemplate upon the souls of the dearly beloved as they attempted to forget all the loved ones in the world. After they drank the potion, *lunglohtui*, and plucked the *hawilopar*, (which they donned on their heads) the souls were refreshed and would move. So, the chief function of the *hawilopar* was to let the souls forget about the world of the living with not a trace of longing left in their present state.

T.Romama on the other hand denoted a new twist to this understanding of the *hawilopar* as an important element in the spiritual realm. He seized the symbolical value of the *hawilopar* as a new transformative agent that changed the soul's capacity to turn back. He equated Jesus and the *hawilopar* as functioning the same way in that both had the power to change the mind. He wrote:

*Hawilo par mawi Krista ka thliak ta*

*Hmangaih takin min chelh reng a*

*Ka lungawi e, ka zai zel ang*

*Ka hawi kirsan phal thawh lawng.*<sup>23</sup>

The translation can be depicted as:

*I have plucked the beautiful hawilopar Jesus*

*He always lovingly holds me firm*

*I am satisfied, I will keep on singing*

*I will not turn back from Him.*

What is of key concern is the fact that when a believer chose Jesus as his Lord and Savior, the true believer lost his desire for the earlier lifestyle due to the change of his lifestyle. Just as the *hawilopar* of the traditional Mizo religion took away the yearning for the world of the living. This radical usage of imagery of the *hawilopar*, would have been a source of controversy had the songwriter denoted them in the past years when Christianity was still in its nascent form, however, in the contemporary situation, it has been well accepted.

The immediate success of this song suggested an important reduction, (rather an interrogation) as to how far the Mizos have been fully Christianized. If Christianity meant the renunciation of traditional religious beliefs, and all its associated myths, in favor of the teachings of Christ, and the stories of the Bible, the return to such pagan concepts presented a serious theological complication. The difficulty in drawing a clear demarcation on how far traditional, non-Christian elements in terms of myth, folklore, superstitions, and other such symbols could make their entry into the world of Christian literature and imaginative or creative productions have been, as seen from instances aforementioned, a thorny issue. While traditional ideas from

the abstract world were accorded with vast permissible limit, usage of certain ideas was withheld.

The concept of tribal theology which is contextualizing Christian experience from the perspective of the native has radically shifted and valorized the tribal worldview in terms of Christianity. It is a theology which is sympathetic to the experience and nature of the natives. It strives to propagate Christianity from within, and not without. A missionary report of 1913 delineated:

“ Our first message, as soon as w could speak the language, was of a Saviour from sin. But the people had no sense of sin and felt no need for such a Saviour. Then we found our point of contact. We proclaimed Jesus as the vanquisher of the Devil – as the One who had bound the ‘strong man’ and taken away from him ‘all his armour where in he trusted’ and so had made it possible for his slaves to be free. This to the Lushais was ‘Good News’ indeed and exactly met their great need.”<sup>24</sup>

The models of tribal theology, according to Thanzauva, should permit a rejection of cultural elements that are antithetical to the Christian belief, and referring to the long saga of Christianity through the Judaea, Greek, Western, and ultimately tribal culture.<sup>25</sup> Practices such as blood sacrifices, sexism, and others that were traditional, had to be rejected. Secondly, the building block of tribal theology is the concept of adoption of traditional values that are working thought to be edifying for the society. These refer to the Mizo code of conduct, *tlawmngaihna*, and sense of community, and communitarianism. The third building block would be the ability to modify the culture. The term “Transformation” is used to refer to this idea of change.<sup>26</sup> It is not a rejection policy nor is it a faithful importation of the foreign; it is a change in the mode of

expression. When Christianity transforms a group of natives, change in their lifestyle and practices is inevitable. On this third tenet, Zirsangliana refers to the transformation that Mizos underwent in terms of the song culture of the Mizos such as the conception of the *lengkhawm zai*, the religious dance practice, the idea of the spirit among others.<sup>27</sup> The practice of *lengkhawm zai* is the transformation wrought on the Mizo style of singing due to contact with the Western style of singing. As noted before, the first generation Mizo Christians unequivocally resisted the idea of singing in the tune of their ancestors. Being enamored by the Western lifestyle of power and possession, they rejected all that was culturally Mizo. A breakthrough occurred in the revivals that changed not only the tempo of both their songs and their Christian belief. The *lengkhawm zai* retained certain features of the old, such as the gathering of people to facilitate the atmosphere, as in the past when people gathered for singing with their rice-beer. Like the traditional precentor who spontaneously recited the next lines to be sung in the non-Christian gatherings, the Christian communal singing in the *lengkhawm* and also for any other tunes heavily depended on these line recitals. Closely associative of the *lengkhawm zai* is also dance, for since early times the Mizos had taken deep delight in their dances. The *Chheih lam*, and other well-organized dance forms of the early Mizos have paved the way for what has become the Christian Mizo dance style.

In conclusion, the study has established that song and Christianity go together, hand in hand, for the Mizos. Songs touched their deepest emotional feelings and spiritual faculty since time immemorial. Marion M. Gough writes “ When music ‘speaks’ our emotions ‘listen’ ”<sup>28</sup>, and the Mizos certainly let their music “speak” and their hearts “listen” solemnly and emotionally while responding with it in ways that are most heartfelt to them. The traditionally inspired *lengkhawmzai* opened this channel. The rhythm of the *khuang* set them up for their

spiritual experience. Speculating the indigenous drums as the source of music itself, again Marion M. Gough suggested “ Rhythm has such a powerful and direct effect upon us that its primal origins are felt.”<sup>29</sup> From this perspective it is highly possible to surmise that the Mizos are deeply rooted in their ancient culture and never wanting to let go of their most cherished drum, the *khuang*. Zothanmawia, a music teacher and Church choir conductor opines that despite the increasing usage of modern musical instruments of Western origin in the Church, the place of the Mizo *khuang* is firmly etched in the Church and that the Mizo Church rhythm will not be easily dislocated. This connotes the perpetuation of the Mizo Christian identity.<sup>30</sup> Modern Mizo society owes immensely to Christianity. Christianity has given them a feeling of ethnicity and an identity which they claim to be deeply Christian. The Christian songs fanned the flame of Christianity along its journey of more than hundred years. Strong in its commitment to the cause of Christianity by way of being actively evangelical, the Church has moved on under its denominational building scenario. The gospel songs and hymns have been consistently moving ahead of the secular songs, while occupying a very prominent pride of place in the hearts of the Mizos. Even a formal gathering of government functions and political parties, not to mention the state’s many Non Governmental Organizations public gatherings and meetings have songs as predominant. This has made them cherish dearly their uniquely fashioned form of Christianity, which was initially the result of Western encounter in their own land. The West with all its trappings and paraphernalia has not been successful in the many years of interaction, for resistance came about as self-deterministic agenda that captivated both the Christian and the pre-Christian elements and it was eventually modeled to suit the Mizo interest. The dynamics of this formulation have not stopped. New voices have been heard, new songs sung, with performers

integrating the Mizo culture into the world music scenario. The Mizos are breaking the boundaries of their confinement even as they participate in the area of globalization.

#### **NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Cesaire, Aime. Discourse On Colonialism. Trans. Joan Pinkham. Delhi: Aakar Books, 2010. 52.

Print.



<sup>2</sup> McLeod, John. Beginning Postcolonialism. South Asian ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007. 136. Print.

<sup>3</sup> Vanlalchhuanawma. Christianity and Subaltern Culture: Revival Movement as a Cultural Response to Westernization in Mizoram. Delhi: ISPCK, 2007. 457. Print.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.457. Print.

<sup>5</sup> Dokhuma, James, intr. Zoram Kohhran Tualto Chanchinte. Aizawl: Tlangnuam Press, 1975. v. Print.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.v. Print.

<sup>7</sup> Sawiluaia. Hmanlai Mizo Khawsak Dan Leh Mizoram Buai Lai Thu. Aizawl : Lengchhawn Press, 2004. 18-19. Print.

<sup>8</sup> Lalrawna, R., comp. Mizo Rohlu. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Aizawl: Gilzom Offset, 2009. vii. Print.

<sup>9</sup> Hnam Zai Hla Bu. Aizawl: n.p., [1989?]. Print.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Lalzawnga. Personal Interview. 5 Feb. 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Clayton, Martin, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton, eds. The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction. New York: Routledge, 2003. 181. Print.

<sup>13</sup> MacCall, A.G. Lushai Chrysalis. 1949. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, 2003.220. Print.

<sup>14</sup> Clayton, Martin, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton, eds. The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction. New York: Routledge, 2003. 275. Print.

<sup>15</sup> Bhabha, Homi K. The Location of Culture. Special Indian ed. London : Routledge, 2010. 145-174. Print

<sup>16</sup> Graves, Benjamin. "Signs Taken For Wonders: Hybridity and Resistance" Online posting. Web. 25 Feb. 2011 < <http://www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/bhabha/bhabha4.html>>.

<sup>17</sup> Vanlalchhuanawma. Christianity and Subaltern Culture: Revival Movement as a Cultural Response to Westernization in Mizoram. Delhi: ISPCK, 2007. 392. Print.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 407. Print.

<sup>19</sup> MacCall, A.G. Lushai Chrysalis. 1949. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, 2003. 219. Print.

<sup>20</sup> Laldusanga. "T.Romama Leh A Hlaphuahte." Online posting. 16 Oct. 2009. Serchhip.wordpress. 25 March 2011 < <http://serchhip.wordpress.com/2009/10/16/t-romama-leh-a-hlaphuahte/>>.

<sup>21</sup> "Lethe." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2011. Web. 12 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/337388/Lethe>>.

<sup>22</sup> Lenkhawm Hla Bu. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Tahan: Literature and Publication Dept., Evangelical Free Church of Myanmar, 1976. 116. Print.

<sup>23</sup> Hmingduhawmi, T., comp. Hlamawi Lawrkhawm. Aizawl: Omniprint Offset, 1997. 84. Print.

<sup>24</sup> The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901 -1938. Lunglei: Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, BCM, 1993. 93-94. Print.

<sup>25</sup> Zirsangliana, B. Theology Kalphung Hrang Hrangte. Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press, 2011. 206. Print.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Gough, Marion M. "The Healing Power of Music." FBMR.org. 2006. Foundation for Mind Being Research. 12 April 2011 <[http://www.fmbr.org/papers/music\\_power1.php](http://www.fmbr.org/papers/music_power1.php)>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Zothanmawia. Personal Interview. 4 Jan 2011.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES:

Kristian Hla Bu. 18<sup>th</sup> Rev. ed. Aizawl: Synod Literature and Publication Board, 2005. Print.

Kristian Zaikhawm Hla Bu. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Lunglei: BCM Publication Board, 2003. Print.

Lenkhawm Hla Bu. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Tahan: Evangelical Free Church of Myanmar, 1976. Print.

Sacred Songs and Solos. 1<sup>st</sup> Indian ed. London: British Publishers, 1988. Print.

### SECONDARY SOURCES:

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. The Post-colonial Studies Reader.  
London: Routledge, 1995. Print.

---. Post Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Bass and Young eds. Beyond Borders: A Cultural Reader. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company,  
2003. Print.

Bhabha, Homi K. The Location of Culture. Special Indian ed. London: Routledge, 2010. Print.

Cesaire, Aime. Discourse on Colonialism. Trans. Joan Pinkham. Delhi: Aakar Books, 2010.  
Print.

Chambers, Captain O.A. Handbook of the Lushai Country. Kolkata: Firma KLM Private  
Limited, 2005. Print.

Chatterjee, N. The Earlier Mizo Society. Kolkata: KLM Private Limited, 2008. Print.

Clayton, Martin, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton, eds. The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Dokhuma, James. Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung. Aizawl: J.D. Press, 1992. Print.

---. Tawng Un Hrilhfhahna. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Aizawl: Gilzawm Offset, 2007. Print.

---. Zoram Kohhran Tualto Chanchinte. Aizawl: Tlangnuam Press, 1975. Print.

Guerin, Wilfred L., et al., eds. A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New Delhi: OUP, 2006. Print.

Hmingduhawmi, T., comp. Hlamawi Lawrkhawm. Aizawl: Omniprint Offset, 1997. Print.

Hnam Zai Hla Bu. Aizawl: n.p., [1989?]. Print.

Kipgen, Mangkhawsat. Christianity And Mizo Culture: The Encounter Between Christianity and Zo Culture in Mizoram. Jorhat: Mizo Theological Conference, Mizoram, 1996. Print.

Lalhmuaaka. Zoram Thim Ata Engah. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board, 1988. Print.

Lalrawna, R., comp. Mizo Rohlu. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Aizawl: Gilzawm Offset, 2009. Print.

Lalthangliana, B. India, Burma & Bangladesh-a Mizo Chanchin . Aizawl: RTM Press, 2000. Print.

---. History of Mizo Literature: Mizo Thu Leh Hla. Aizawl: RTM Press, 1993. Print.

---. Patea leh Damhauhva Hnuhma. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Aizawl: RTM Press, 2005. Print.

Lalthangliana, B. et al., eds. Mizo Hla Leh A Phuahtute. Aizawl: Hrangbana College, 1999. Print.

Lalthangliana, B., and F.Lianhmingthanga. Mizo Nun Hlui Part II. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board, 1992. Print.

Lorrain, J. H. Dictionary of the Lushai Language. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1940. Print.

Luaia, H. S. Hman Lai Mizo Khawsak Dan leh Mizoram Buai Lai Thu. Lunglei: Lengchhawn Press, 2004. Print.

McCall, A.G. Lushai Chrysalis. 1949. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, 2003. Print.

McLeod, John. Beginning Postcolonialism. South Asian ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007. Print.

Mizo Academy of Letters. Zo Kalsiam. Aizawl: RTM Press, 1997. Print.

Nettl, Bruno. The Study of Ethnomusicology. Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1983. Print.

Response to Westernization in Mizoram. Delhi: Indian Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 2006. Print

Rokhuma, K.L. Mizoram Zirnaa Mission Leh Kohhran Rawngbawlna. Lunglei: Communications Dept., Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1988. Print.

Said, Edward. Orientalism. London: Penguin Books, 1978. Print.

Said, Edward W. Culture and Imperialism. London: Vintage Books, 1993. Print.

Sangkima. Essays on the History of the Mizos. Guwahati :Spectrum Publications,2004. Print.

Sawiluaia. Hmanlai Mizo Khawsak Dan Leh Mizoram Buai Lai Thu. Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press, 2004. Print.

Thanmawia, R. L. Chuailo. Aizawl: Gilzom Offset Press, 1997. Print.

---. Mizo Poetry. Aizawl: Franco Press, 1998. Print.

Thanzauva, K., comp. Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894-1957. Aizawl: Synod Literature and Publication Board, 1997. Print.

The Annual Reports of BMS on Mizoram 1901- 1938. Lunglei: Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, BCM, 1993. Print.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. Colorado Springs : International Bible Society, 1984. Print.

Thu Leh Hla. Aug. 1983 : 1-14. Print.

Tribal Research Institute. Mizo Lam Thenkhatte. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, 1994. Print.

Tyson, Lois. Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Vanlalchhuanawma,. Christianity and Subaltern Culture. ISPCCK: Delhi,2007. Print.

Wade, Bonnie C. Thinking Musically. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.

Warren, Rick. The Purpose Driven Life : What On Earth Am I Here For?. South Asia ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. Print.

Williams, Raymond. Culture and Society 1780-1950. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983. Print.

Young, Robert J. C. Postcolonialism :A Very Short Introduction. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Print.

Zawla, K. Mizo Pi Pute leh an Thlahte Chanchin. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Aizawl: Gosen Press, 1989. Print.

Zairema. Pi Pute Biak Hi. Ed. Chuauthuama. Aizawl: Zorun Community, 2009. Print.

Zirsangliana, B. Theology Kalphung Hrang Hrangte. Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press, 2011. Print.

#### **ELECTRONIC AND OTHER SOURCES:**

Case, Shirley Jackson Case. "The Nature of Primitive Christianity." The American Journal of Theology, 17.1 (1913): 63-79. JSTOR. web.13 April 2011 <[www.jstor.org/search](http://www.jstor.org/search)>.

Gough, Marion. M. "The Healing Power of Music." FBMR.org. 2006. Foundation for Mind Being Research. web.12 April 2011 <[http://www.fmbr.org/papers/music\\_power1.php](http://www.fmbr.org/papers/music_power1.php)>.

Graves, Benjamin. "Signs Taken For Wonders: Hybridity and Resistance" Online posting. web.25Feb. 2011 <http://www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/bhabha/bhabha4.html>>.



Kohli, Wendy. "Teaching In/For the Enunciative Present." Philosophy of Education Society. web. 11 Dec. 2010 <[http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/eps/PES-Yearbook/96\\_docs/kohli.html](http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/eps/PES-Yearbook/96_docs/kohli.html)>.

Lalduhsanga. "T.Romama Leh a Hlaphuahte." Online posting. 16 Oct. 2009.

Serchhip.wordpress.25 March 2011 <<http://serchhip.wordpress.com/2009/10/16/t-romama-leh-a-hlaphuahte/>>.

Lalherliana. Andrew. E-mail to the author. 20 Mar. 2010.

Lalzawnga. Personal Interview. 5 Feb. 2011.

Lawmsanga. "A Critical Study on Christian Mission With Special Reference to Presbyterian Church of Mizoram." Diss. U of Birmingham, 2010.

"Lethe." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2011. web.12 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/337388/Lethe>>.

Samuel. Personal Interview. 3 Jan. 2011.

The Free Dictionary. 2011. Farlex, Inc. 3 March 2010 <[http:// www.thefreedictionary.com/evangelism](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/evangelism)>.

Thu Leh Hla. Aug. 1983. Aizawl: Nazareth Press, 1983.

Vernon, Irene S. "The Claiming of Christ: Native American Postcolonial Discourses" The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS). 24. 2 (1999): 75-88. JSTOR. Web. 8 Feb. 2011. <[www.jstor.org.search](http://www.jstor.org/search)>.

Zothanmawia. Personal Interview. 4 Jan. 2011.

## **APPENDICES**

<b>NAME OF CANDIDATE</b>	<b>: Mark V. Vanlalrema</b>
<b>DEGREE</b>	<b>: M.Phil.</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>: English</b>
<b>TITLE OF DISSERTATION</b>	<b>: Dynamics of Christianity in the Song Tradition of the Mizos</b>
<b>DATE OF PAYMENT OF ADMISSION</b>	<b>: No. 3391, Dt. 28/7/2009</b>
<b>(Commencement of First Semester)</b>	
<b>COMMENCEMENT OF SECOND SEM/ DISSERTATION</b>	<b>: Dt. 1.1.2010</b>
<b>Approval of Research Proposal</b>	
1. <b>BOARD OF STUDIES</b>	<b>: Dt. 18.5.2010</b>
2. <b>SCHOOL BOARD</b>	<b>: Dt. 4.6.2010</b>
<b>REGISTRATION NO. &amp; DATE</b>	<b>: MZU/M.Phil/29 of 4.6.2010</b>
<b>DUE DATE OF SUBMISSION</b>	<b>: Dt. 21.6.2011</b>
<b>EXTENSION</b>	<b>: June 2011</b>

**Head**

**Department of English**

## BIO-DATA

**Name:** Mark V. Vanlalrema  
**Father's Name:** V. Lalzawnga  
**Address:** K-82, Venghlui, Aizawl, Mizoram.  
**Phone No:** (0389) 2322730 / 9862327204

### **Educational Qualification:**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Board/University</b>	<b>Year of Passing</b>	<b>Division/ Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>MBSE</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>55.5%</b>
<b>XII</b>	<b>MBSE</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>44.4%</b>
<b>B.A.</b>	<b>Mizoram University</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>56.00%</b>
<b>M.A.</b>	<b>--do--</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>56.94%</b>
<b>M.Phil.</b>	<b>--do--</b>	<b>Course work Completed in December 2009</b>	<b>'A' Grade awarded. 10 pt. scale grading system.</b>	<b>Corresponds to 66% in terms of percentage conversion</b>