

**ORAL LITERATURE:
A STUDY OF MIZO FOLK SONGS**

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CHAPTER- 1

INTRODUCTION

The Mizo:

The term 'Mizo' is a universal term used to identify the different tribes or clans who reside in the entire frame of the present Mizoram. They are one of the ethnic groups living on the North West of Burma and North East of India. They share identical cultures, dialects, traditions, customs and practices and are designate the term 'Mizo'. "The Mizo were known b160y diverse names such as *Kuki*, *Chin* and *Lushai*. The Mizo were first known as *Kuki* because they were the first batch to have arrived in Mizoram during the reign of the Tipperah Raja, Chachag who flourished around 1512 AD" (Grierson 1). When the British came to Mizoram in 1872 they found the land dominated by the *Sailo* Chief, belonging to the *Lusei* clan. Thus they named the ranges under them as *Lushai Hills* and the general population as *Lushai*. The meaning of *Lushai* is also not certain. There are a few explanations; one of them suggests that the term *Lu* means head and *Sei* means elongated. So the name indicates a description of people whose head looks elongated because of their hair knot.

On the other hand, T.H. Lewin writes that "It stands for the word head cutter in English, for the word *Lu* means head and *Shai* means to cut" (370). Most of the names of the Mizo clans are the names of a person. With the passing of

time the name of their ancestor are taken up as the names of that clan. So, Liangkhaia believed that “a person named *Luseia* must have been one of the ancestors, later they began to call themselves *Lusei*” (14).

Because of an inaccurate transliteration the word *Lusei* (or *Lushei*) has been confused with *Lushai*. The term *Lushai* is used in wider sense and implies various sub-tribes while *Lusei* was used only for the sub-tribe of that name. Hence, we find that the Mizo historians used the word *Lushai* to denote the common inhabitants or the hill tracts and *Lusei* or *Lushei* for indication of the *Lusei* sub-tribe alone.

It is rather intricate to give a clear-cut explanation as to when the word ‘Mizo’ began to be used. “Since the remote past the Mizo elders, while talking about their history, always call themselves as Mizo or ‘we the Mizos’” (Vanchhunga 1). When the British came, the people were heard using the word ‘Mizo’ among them.

According to one view, “when the Mizo lived in the *Than* range (Burma), the people settling on the plain named their folks living on the hills as *Zomi* or Mizo, meaning ‘people of the cold region’. The name stuck and the group got identified as Mizo” (Zatluanga 1). But this assumption was contradicted by Lalthangliana, “it seems that there was no one left behind when they escape the *Shan* attack in *Kabaw* by going up the *Chin Hills*. So, he presumes that the word

Mizo took its origin from *Zopui* the name of the village they built around 1765 which is about ten miles to the west of *Tiau River*. Under the Chieftainship of Lallula, the people of *Zopui* took pride in their village as they often success in raiding their foes and called themselves the braves of *Zopui*. Here the word *Pui* means big, therefore, *Zopui* simply implies a big village of the *Zo*” (*History* 71). We see the name of *Zo* mentioned in the song of Lallula:

Zokhaw val hnamchem kan chawi,

Mangngul ar ang kan sahna,

Run kuamah aw e.

{Meaning: We, the *Zo* men killed Mangngul (Chief of *Thlanrawn* village) in the valley of the *River Run*. We slay him like a fowl.}

Kan zokhua hi dem lo u,

Thlanrawn tlunglu kan lakna,

Phanpui zur nguai aw e.

{Meaning: Don't despise our *Zo* Township where we chopped off *Thlanrawn's* head (enemies head). Their heads lie in solo upon the trophy post.}

Meanwhile, K. Zawla writes, “the term ‘Mizo’ is a combination of two words ‘Mi’ and ‘Zo’, while *Mi* means people and *Zo* means hill” (11). He suggested that their settlement in the hill area gave them the name Mizo.

Likewise, some scholars also suggested that *Zo* means highland so the word Mizo is often translated as highlander as they lived in the highlands. But Vumson mention that “this is simply absurd as they have already called themselves *Zo* while they lived in the plains of *Chindwin* valley. So, *Zo* might mean highland but never highlanders” (5).

But the origin and meaning of the word is still uncertain, therefore, it may be concluded that the term ‘Mizo’ is not a name of a tribe or a clan but a generic name to designate racial cultural group by which all the tribes under the Mizo are known in Mizoram which emphasize the people alone.

Origin and Settlement:

The vital way for a primitive man to convey himself was through verbal art. When knowledge and information has been passed down orally for generations it results in deviation from one person to the other. The origin of the Mizo, like those of many other tribes in the North Eastern India is shrouded in mystery. Due to the absence of a written record the early Mizo history cannot be precise and on all accounts the diverse adaptations can be held to be possibilities and not genuine facts. Until late in 1894 when writing was introduced by the British missionaries the Mizos hold on to its oral culture and remain unexposed to the outside world. Some of the Mizo folktales claim that they have a script written in a form of scroll or parchment, which they have lost on their ceaseless

wanderings. Also, “according to one legend, it was consumed by a dog owing to their disregard and carelessness” (Zawla 4). So they have no record of the past history.

The Mizo are generally accepted as part of a great wave of the Mongoloid race migrating from China and later spilling over into the Eastern India, their present habitat. There is an assumption that they sprung up from a cave called *Chhinlung* someplace in the northern hills of Burma. The word *Chhinlung* is literally translated as closed stone. No one has been able to locate the exact place of that rock. Mizo historian Liangkhaia assumes that “the story of the origin of Mizo in *Chhinlung* can be dated around 900 A.D.” (13).

In the mean time, there is belief that “*Chhinlung* was not a rock but the name of Chief of *Aupatuang* in Burma. The name of that Chief was Chhinlung and the forefathers of the Mizo were the subjects of that Chief. Hence the name *Chhinlung* came into existence after the name of that Chief” (Vanchhunga 1-3). Some historians also suggested the same belief that “while the Mizo settle in *Aupataunga* one of the Chief was *Chhinlunga* so his village is regarded as the village of *Chhinlunga* which was later known as *Chhinlung*” (Hrangthiauva & Lal Chungnunga 4), but there is no evidence in support of the proposition. There are some people who believed that the Mizo are the descendants of prince *Chin Lung*, the son of Huang Ti, the King of Ch’in dynasty, Huang Ti was the one who built the Great Wall of China. The prince incurred the discontentment of his father and

left his kingdom and settled in Burma with some supporters. Some historians have confirmed that the Mizo originally lived in the *Mekong* valley and then in the *Hukawng* valley of Burma.

Baveja in his book describe what he asserts as an old legend in which he point out about the construction of a long and thick wall. It has been indirectly suggested by Baveja that the Great Wall of China is connected with the *Chhinlung* rock. “As the construction progressed the Mizos found that their work was very tiring and decided to bolt from the area. Their search for a new and healthy home, where they would live more comfortably, had brought them to the present district of Assam” (Baveja 1-2). This hypothesis must have been just an assumption since no other Mizo tales claims it to be true. The Mizo were unaware of another place beyond the *Chin Hills*; they had the knowledge of the main land China only after the British conquerors had spread education and widen their geographical awareness. Before this time their world was never bigger than their own settlement. Challiana further expresses that “they have no knowledge of the outside beyond *Silchar*. A raiding party was wondering to see good roads to the other side of *Silchar* as they never had the knowledge of the existence of man beyond *Silchar*” (40-41).

The Mizo legend suggested that they emerged from under a large covering rock known as *Chhinlung*. After many of them have come out the *Ralte* clan, who are known for their loquaciousness came out. But they started talking noisily

while coming out of the cave. So, the lid of the rock was closed by the ones having authority thinking that they have become over populated as it has become so noisy. But the story of the Mizo getting out into open from a rock opening is now part of the Mizo fable. There are some folk songs which reflected *Chhinlung* as a place of their earlier settlement:

Thlalai leh dawntuai an tliak zo e,

Chhinlungah mi awm lo, Vangkhua zawng ti ula.

(Meaning: The people of *Chhinlung* are all dead; even the youths are all dead; everyone is searching for a new homeland.)

Pianna han hril ila chhaktiang kawl leh vaiah,

Chhinlungah thang hmasa ka pu e, Lianggaia

(Meaning: I was born in a land far away in the northern side; my grandfather is Lianggaia, one of the first famous people among the *Chhinlung*.)

However, *Chhinung* remains a remainder to all the different clans of the Mizo that they belong to the same origin who came down from *Burma* not very long past. “There are many possible theories as to the origin and location of the *Chinlung*, but the general conclusion is that the Mizo had once settled in central Asia” (Thanmawia *Mizo Poetry* 7). It is rather complicated to trace the exact date as to when the Mizo migrate from the central Asia. They migrate to the West

alongside the boundaries of *Tibet* and moved down south into *Myanmar*. “It is supposed that they arrived at *Myanmar* in the beginning of the year 800 A.D. From there, they continue to move down the banks of *Chindwin* River and settled in the *Kabaw* valley and spread out in the surrounding area. Here they reside from the year 800-1300 A.D.” (Lalthangliana *Culture* 4). During this time they built the oldest town of the Mizo at *Khampat* and the majority of them lived in and around *Khampat*. It is believed that during their settlement in this place they enjoy a good terms with the *Burmese* and they lived in peace and harmony. They led a prosperous life for a while living a secure and happy life for quite a long time.

So, there are different assumptions as to why they migrated from this place. Mizo historian K. Zawla believed that “a dreadful famine *Thingpui tam* over- ran them during this time; in search for a better place to live they were forced to move on” (10). Meanwhile, Lalthangliana writes, “The *Shans* who outnumbered them and were much stronger, entered the *Kabaw* valley. The Mizo were different and unable to stand up against the *Shans*; and so they left the *Kabaw* valley in the year 1300 A.D.” (*Culture* 4). Legends also suggested that they began to develop some controversy among themselves as the Chief of the town exercise excessive authority over the people. “During their settlement in this town it is told that before leaving this place they planted banyan sapling for remembrance and expression of their love and loyalty to the town. They pledged

before their *Burmese* neighbors that when the hanging roots of this banyan tree had turn into a new stem they would return to *Khampat*” (Thanga 3).

So, whatever may be the reason for their migration, it is true that they were looking for better settlements and provisions. The Mizo formed into various groups after leaving *Kabaw* valley and they went up towards *Chin Hills*. There were hardly suitable places to make settlements for the whole group since they are of high ranges, deep narrow valleys. When they had selected a good dwelling spot, only a small group could be accommodated. So, a number of them had to move on to find another suitable place, in this way they began to disperse from one another forming different villages. According to Liangkhaia “the Mizo during this time make their settlements clan- wise. The *Lusei* clan settled in *Seipui* and *Khawkawk*, *Ralte* clan in *Suaipui* and *Saihmun*, *Chawngthu* clan in *Sanzawl* and *Bochung*, *Khiangte* clan in *Pelpawl*, *Belmual* and *Lungchhuan*, different clans of *Hauhmar*, *Chuaungo* and *Chuaung* settled in *Hauhmar Tlang* and the clans of *Ngente*, *Punte* and *Parte* settled in *Chawnghawih* and *Siallam*” (43) .

But during their settlement in this area the land was steep and rough and infertile for cultivation which causes many hardship and difficulties for the people. So, in search of a more productive and fertile place they migrated west ward and finally settled in the range of *Lentlang*. “There settlement in *Lentlang* is marked between 1450- 1700 A.D.”(Lalthangliana *Culture* and 5). In the meantime L.B. Thanga suggested that “from *Khampat* the Mizo immigrated to India into

two groups; one group went north and the other south- west. The first stage made their first halt at *Lentlang*, he quoted that K.Zawla suggested this took place about the year 1466” (4). Life during the settlement in *Lentlang* was much easier than before. They have developed various skill of cultivation and weaving by hand looms.

Their songs and tales are the main source of our knowledge about their settlements in this place. There were constant battles and preparations against enemy attacks for superiority among the different clans during this time. The bravest and most powerful one of every clan happens to be the chief of their own clan. The most courageous of them were the *Lusei* clan, and of this clan the *Sailo* sub-clan was the most dominant and powerful clan. So, most of the Chiefs belonged to the *Sailo* family.

In earlier days the most courageous and dominant one of every clan became the Chief of the respective clan, but with the passing of time chieftainship became hereditary. It became essential for them to shift their settlements to obtain good land for *jhum* cultivation and aggressions of the Chin or the *Pawi* people. They moved west ward crossing the *Tiau River* which now formed the Indo-Burma borderline and settled themselves in the southern most parts of the present Mizoram. This settlement is assumed to have taken place in the early part of the eighteen century. “By 1810 the *Lusei* under the *Sailo* Chief’s had merged their location by occupying the area between *Champhai* and *Demagiri* northward up to

the borders of *Cachar* and *Sylhet*” (Nag 82). It can be assumed that this is how the Mizo came and settled in the present state of Mizoram and the period till then may be regarded as the primitive period of the Mizo. When the British came in contact with the Mizo, the probable period of the Mizo history ceased to exist and their period of recorded history began.

Structure of the Mizo Society:

The early Mizo life in the preliterate time was an invariable struggle for endurance. Life was not easy for them and they had to struggle persistently against the forces of nature. Their social and custom structure was greatly influenced by their daily occupation, agriculture, and hunting expeditions. They earned their livelihood by practising shifting cultivation. So, they had to strive constantly for a selection of an inhabitable place for shelter and fruitful land for food.

When a boy was born, the elders gave their blessings so that he might grow up to be brave and be good hunter. Being brave, strong and hard working was the utmost trait they valued among the men. Men having a mindset similar to the women are condemned and are mocked at by telling them to wear a skirt. Boys are trained to be brave, to be skilled hunters and kill their enemies without fear. Their bravery is measured on the number of animals and foe's heads hanging on their walls.

Other hand, woman's trait is to be beautiful, hard working and good skill in *La deh* (Weaving cloth) so that they can get a hefty sum for their marriage. Women surrender themselves to their husband after marriage and they follow whatever religion their men followed. The girls were trained for collecting fire wood, carrying water from the village water point, cooking etc. from the tender age of 4 (four). They hardly have free time to play around and enjoy their childhood like the boys; hence, they have to endure many complications during their childhood.

The lust for power among the Chiefs of different villages leads to war even within the same clans; there are times the innocent women and children suffer the impact of these wars. Raids were often carried out on enemy villages. At the centre of the village is the Chief's house, he was helped in his administration by the village elders. Near the Chief's house was built *Zawlbuk* (Bachelors' dormitory), where the youth were molded into responsible adult members in the society. *Zawlbuk* served as an institution for different talent and obedience. From this place the elder pass on the history and folklore of their fore fathers. Social etiquette, warfare, wrestling and different sports were also taught in this dormitory. Every young man was expected to sleep in the *Zawlbuk*. The young boys had to collect firewood and water for the *Zawlbuk* until they become a teenager. *Zawlbuk* plays a vital role in the early Mizo society as it served as a village safeguard place.

Strong walls were built and tower guards were kept to keep watch over the villages. When a man killed his enemy, the head should be brought home as trophy to prove his bravery. “In case the place of the killing is too far to bring home the head, he must bring home a large part of the skin from the head” (Zawla 95). Their victory in war was celebrated by displaying the heads of the defeated foes; the young boys were asked to strike at the foes heads to proof their bravery. There were also few occasions where two or three of the best warriors in the village raid their rival villages.

These killings took place not for the sake of head hunting alone, but mainly to protect their village and to assert their bravery. On the other hand, Mc Call stated that “the reason for head hunting is to propitiate evil spirits, to accomplish access to *Pialral* after death, to prove prowess over enemies and to gain the respect of a prospective bride” (38). This assumption cannot be wholly accepted as the killings were done mainly to defend their villages.

Though war and killing was significant among the Mizo, one of their best traits to be noted is that, murder was greatly condemn in their society. Murder, quarrels, and fights among them were not only condemned by the people but actions were taken to discipline the wrong doers. A person commits murder mostly if he is under the influence of alcohol; and it is the attitude of the murdered family to take revenge. And the only way for the person to save himself is to run

to the house of the Chief and hold on to his *Sut*. Once he grabs hold of this *Sut* he can no longer be touched by anyone but in return he and his family are obliged to serve the Chief for their entire life as slaves.

One ethical conventional way inculcated in every Mizo society is *Tlawmngaihna*. Thanmawia quoted that “according to K.C. Lalvunga *Tlawmngaihna* is an ideal of life in which man could not be outdone in doing good to others. When a man is *Tlawmngai*, one cannot defeat him in doing good to others, and that self- sacrifice sometime demands life itself” (*Mizo Values* 15). It is an ethical code primarily arising from a sense of duty and responsibility whereby one’s significance was concealed and regard as less important in the face of the need of others.

From the earliest known history, the Mizo have been known for their unity and graciousness among one another. There may be few instances where their unity and behavior is questioned but over all they shares the good and bad times together as one big family. It is due to this reason that the youth enjoy freedom in life and the relationship between the opposite sexes is quite close in a mannered behavior. An unmarried gentleman has the freedom to visit and accompany any unmarried female whether it is in his village or when he travels to any other villages; the females also have freedom to entertain and converse with their visitors in a well mannered approach to have a happy conversation. There are

occasions when a male looks for his bride in other villages and this is called *Ranngo zawng*.

The Mizo society is a patriarchal society where the head of the family (the father) has full authority in the decision making and functioning of the family. In the event of marriage the practice of monogamy is followed where the bride settles in the bridegroom's resident.

In the early Mizo society, *Zu* (rice beer) played an important role in many phases of their life. They are used almost on all the important occasion of their life, both at times of sorrows and joys. *Zu* was used in times of sacrificial ceremonies, marriages, celebration of the successful hunters and warrior, and at times when they stay up the whole night to condole a bereaved family. They were also used on all the festive occasions. Eventhough, *zu* had been widely used, it is noteworthy to mark that they drank moderately and they were hardly found intoxicated by it.

Nula rim (Courting a lady by visiting their house at night) is an important culture of the Mizo which portrays their life style. They freely converse about day to day life which eventually builds their relationship. These females have an important role to play because they hardly had any free time of their own; they got up early in the morning, gather water, grind rice, prepare meal and after taking care of their family attire they ready themselves for the daily works in the fields.

Even if they were at home, they had the responsibilities to collect fire woods and weave cloths. Weaving cloths was a competition for the females and since it was their responsibilities to provide clothing's and warm fabrics for their families they were always equipped with their weaving equipments even at night.

After dinner, the gentlemen gathered together at *Zawlbuk* and after a short while they used to move out from *Zawlbuk* to visit their admired lady along with their buddies. They would sit and chat near the hearth which was their only source of light at night. When a woman had more than two or three visitors, she is not allowed to speak in favor of or glance at the one she favors but rather treat everyone equally. She had to hide her feelings as long as possible even to her lover if he was present.

The gentlemen would never speak or act to disrespect the parents of the lady and the parents too used their words wisely and carefully while speaking to them. In case the parents react or speak in a way which is unpleasant to the gentlemen, they would be informed to the elders at *Zawlbuk* and depending on the seriousness of the words used by the parents, the judgment of the elders could be either to banned the visit of their house or to dismantle their house without prior warning. It is a big shame for the ladies not to have any visitors and that is why their parents are also very concern and careful in this regard.

Apart from their courting in the house, there was another way where the gentlemen and ladies spent time together called *inlawm* and *thingphurh*. It has significant value in their lives; it is a way to show their love and affection to one another and also the only time they have an alone time together as lovers.

Since, all of them were earning their living from their *jhum*; they had to go for work every day. During this time, those men and women who share a special friendship used to help each other taking turn in each other's *jhum* which is called *Inlawm*. *Inlawm* is defined by JH Lorrain as "To take turn and turn about at helping one another in any kind of work or occupation; to do anything together by turns for mutual advantage or pleasure" (206); it was also a cheerful moment for the lovers since they could have good time together. They would take turn helping each other; the lady would first work in the *jhum* of the gentleman and alternatively work in the later days. *Inlawm* is not specifically meant for lovers; even woman and woman, gentleman and gentleman, woman and gentleman who are not lovers can practise *Inlawm*. There are also occasions where three people participated in *Inlawm*. Generally, families with fewer men tend to favor strong men. In Mizo society, *Inlawm* is very important and taken very seriously. When a gentleman says, "*Ka lawmnu*", it mostly means that he is addressing her as a lover. *Inlawm* provides a valuable opportunity for the lovers to spend time together while working. They would wait for each other on the outskirts of their village where the lady would then carry the food, water and tools of the gentleman on her back. There are also instances where *Inlawm* brings together

two people who at first do not share intimate relationship together. Though they work very hard during these times, they were very happy in their own world. They also played various games such as *Laksang and Zawlzawng* which is meant to foresee their future wife or husband.

Nula rim plays an important role in the society and culture of the Mizo. It is important to note that the ladies are very careful against gentlemen; they even hide their inner feelings even towards their lovers. No matter how hard a gentleman tried to lie down with them, the reality is that, they could touch the tip of the women's clothing only after 3 (three) years of getting to know them. In the society of the Mizo, it is a must for woman to conceal their affections for their lovers or men; incase she shows her affection, it is a shameful thing for herself and her family and the scar of her actions remains indefinitely. And the men took this opportunity to raise their pride and ego among other men since for them to publicize that he a have woman falling for him is a class above other men. Men who can be friend and make love to sisters are even held at higher esteem and even in their death; a fresh feather of a cock is placed on their tomb to commemorate them.

The elders of the Mizo are also very careful when it comes to marriage. Family members with fatal disease, disability, unacceptable character (eg: stealing) etc. is disregarded when choosing a partner. It is hard to get a suitable husband for a woman had love affairs with each and every man. The price of a

woman comes down if they had already conceived a child or if she was a widow and their chance of remarriage to a gentleman was very little. This was the reason why the Mizo women are very careful with their life because it reflects their value and respect in the society and their loyalty and patience are appreciated in the culture of the Mizo.

In the lifestyle and culture of the Mizo, it is the youth who bring peace and happiness to the Chief and his villagers. They are the ones who give their time and lend a hand for others during days of happiness and hardships. To act or speak against them is to bring discomfort in the society. If the young men and women of a village have unity among themselves then their village is a peaceful place for settlement.

Another noteworthy thing in the lives of the Mizo society is the act of *Thangchhuah*, which is an act of merit performed by the rich people or the brave hunters. It plays a significant role in the history of the Mizo society. It was the dream and ambition of every Mizo to perform *Thangchhuah* that would permit him to pass through the gates of paradise where all his mortal labors and worries will come to an end. There are two ways a person could perform *Thangchhuah* i.e *In lama thangchhuah* and *Ram lama thangchhuah*. To attain *Thangchhuah* a series of minor feast have to be performed before the main ceremony *Khuangchawi* is performed.

The first ceremony is called *Sakung*. After marriage when a young man wants to start an independent house, he gives the *Sakung* feast on which occasion *Vawkpa sutnghak* (the biggest male pig) is killed. This ceremony is followed by *Chawng* in which two male pigs and a female pig is killed. The youth of the village are called to join in pounding rice and collecting firewood for the big feast, they are served with drinks at this time which is called *Sumdeng Zu*. The two ceremonies mentioned above may be performed in course of one to three years only. Meanwhile the next ceremony called *Sedawi chhun* is not always easy to perform and many years may elapse before one could accomplish it. In the ceremony of *Sedawi chhun*; a *mithun*, a boar and two small pigs are killed. A great amount of *Zu* is served to the guest. The priest recites and chants their charms after which he pierced the *mithun* and the sacrifice follows. A ceremony known as *Zankhuang* follows where a *mithun*, a boar and a small pig is killed. This ceremony is also again accompanied with a large amount of drinking *Zu*.

The next feast to be performed is *Mithirawp lam*, which is the dance for honoring the spirit of the relatives. Effigies made out of cotton of the dead relatives are erected and taken in procession on the third day. This was accompanied with dances and prayers offered for the deceased souls. Before performing the last and most important ceremony *Sedawi chhun* has to be repeated once more.

Lastly, the most significant ceremony called *Khuangchawi* which every Mizo desire to perform, and yet very few people could accumulate an adequate amount of wealth to achieve it. The ceremony is mostly similar with the previous ceremonies but the only difference lies in the larger number of animals killed, at least three *mithuns*, two boars and two pigs must be killed on *Khuangchawi*. The celebration went on for 4 (four) day where relatives and close ones from different villages were invited. The couple performing *Khuangchawi* would be carried through the village on a bamboo platform and stops at the front of the chief's house. The act of distributing different kinds of valuable gifts which was tossed down by the couple was one of the vital things of this ceremony where the villagers jostled for these gifts. Once this ceremony was over the title of *Thangchhuah Pa* (the man who had performed *Thangchhuah*) is given to.

To be *ram lama thangchhuah* (Performing *thangchhuah* by killing wild animals) is another thing which was designed for brave men and hunters. To attain such title it is required to kill at least a bear, a barking deer, wild boar, a stag, wild *mithun*, a viper and a hawk. There is also an assumption that the soul of the wild animals and enemies a person had killed would accompany him to *Pialral* as his servant. There is a believe that no women, except virgins and the wife of the *Thangchhuah pa* may enter *Pialral*, so, both the men and women would work hard to attain this blessed state.

Beliefs and Practices:

There has been a lot of assumption about the religious belief of the early Mizo. There are historians who believe that the Mizo practice Animism. “Before the British came to their land the *Lushais* were wholly animists” (Mc Call 67). In the mean time Lalruanga quoted that “C.V.L. Auva is of the opinion that the old Mizo religion was kind of polytheism with a tendency towards monotheism” (14). K.C. Vannghaka also writes, “The old Mizo religion as monotheism but also belief in the existence of different minor gods” (11).

The Mizo assume that there is one ‘Supreme Being’ called *Pathian* who is the generous creator of all things. Even though he is a beneficent being he is not much concerned with the fates of human beings. So, sacrifices were not made to him. Besides this there is also a belief in a number of evil and good spirits which could be satisfied only by offering sacrifice. Among the good spirit *Khuavang* is sometimes spoken of as parallel with *Pathian*, but is usually considered mediocre to him who is more concern about human beings.

It is also a common belief that streams, mountains, big trees and forest are inhabited by a spirit which they call *Huai* (Spirit). They have a strong perception that these *Huai* are responsible for the misfortune, illness and all bad things that befell them. Therefore, they had to make sacrifices to them to please those spirits so no harm would come to them. Sometimes there is confusion that the early

Mizo worshipped the devil and evil spirit. But we should make it clear that sacrifices were made to them not as worship but merely done out of expectation to be free from evil. The Mizo have two kinds of priests who perform sacrifices to appease the evil and good spirits; *Bawlpu* for the former and *Sadawt* for the latter. The priests have high esteem and benefit; they are supported by the villagers. The role and details of these priests will be dealt with in more details in the following chapter under invocations.

The Mizo also held a strong conviction regarding life after death; they supposed that the human souls after death wander about the house for around three months. So, during this period they offered food to the departed soul every day. The soul advanced towards the hill *Hringlang Tlang* only after a farewell feast *Thitin* was offered. The souls then proceed to cross the *Rih* Lake; from there it would look back to the world with nostalgia. When it reaches the banks of the river of forgetfulness *Lunglohtui* the soul drink that clear water, and plucked the flower *Hawilopar* which is blooming near the river *Lunglohtui* and wore them on the hair and ears. Since then, the souls forget all about the human world till it reaches the junction *Zingvazawl*. From there the roads to *Pialral* and *Mitthi khua* (Dead men's village) diverge.

They believe that there are two places for the souls in the afterlife; there is *Mitthi khua* for the souls of the ordinary man, a place where they would continue to work and toil. On the other hand *Pialral* is a place where the souls would take

rest from earthly toils and worries. The souls of those who had perform special sacrifice and killed wild animals are permitted to enter *Pialral*. So, it was the ambition of every Mizo to perform stipulated sequence of ceremonies that would lead them to *Pialral*. He who performed all that was required on this side of the grave is known as *Thangchhuah*.

Festivals:

One of the most important practices in the history of the Mizo society is their festivals. It is universal that every tribe has its own annual celebration or ceremonies, both religious and cultural. The Mizo daily routine was round up by a series of hard work as they earn their livelihood by agriculture. There was a need for them to pause from work to have leisure time, to unwind and enjoy. So, they often have a kind of entertainments and gatherings, among these they give great importance to three community festivals, known as *Kut*.

The three important festivals of the Mizo are *Mim Kut*, *Chapchar Kut* and *Pawl Kut*. These are held at specified time and season of the year. *Mim Kut* is celebrated in the month of August-September in the time of harvesting the maize crop. Dedicated to the memory of their deceased relatives, the festival emphasized the spirit of thanksgiving and remembrance of the years. *Chapchar Kut* is celebrated during spring time after the *jhum* cutting is over, the season is ideal and it is perhaps, the merriest of the Mizo festivals. *Pawl Kut* a post-harvesting

festival which is celebrated during December-January. In this festival also an atmosphere of thanksgiving is manifest, because the complicated task of plowing and harvesting is over. Every distinctive tribe generally has their own annual festivals. The ceremonial feast and festivals were very much connected with their religion. These festivals are connected with a number of songs which play a significant role in folk songs study. An in-depth study will be taken in the following chapter under festive songs.

Introduction to Oral Literature:

The famous folklorist, Richard M. Dorson has pointed out that “one of the sectors of folklore and folklife studies is oral literature. Under this rubric fall spoken, sung, and voiced forms of traditional utterance that show repetitive patterns” (2). An Anthropologist and folklorist, William R. Bascom further defines folklore as “verbal art which is obviously related to literature, which is written; but folklore may never be written even in a literate society, and it may exist in societies which have no form of writing. Folklore is an art form like literature related to music, dance, graphic and plastic art, but they differ in the medium of expression which is employed” (398).

The term Oral Literature, is the art and skill of imaginative verbal expressions. It refers to a form of verbal art which is transmitted orally or conveyed by words of mouth. Oral literary tradition includes folk tales, musical

theater, proverbs, riddles, verse, plays, proverbs, epic poems and historical recitations. It refers to any imaginative exercise of the spoken language to produce a work of art similar to those of Literature. “The Ballad, folktale and proverbs of preliterate or non literate cultures that are sung or recited to audiences and are passed with changes from generation to generation through memory rather than by being written down” (Hag 155).

Oral literature is a natural impulsive occurrence of the intimate feelings passed down in a customary manner, which appear from the depths of the unconscious mind of the folk. It sprung from life, hence reflects the deepest recesses of the communal and cultural life of a society, its ethnicity, customs, lifestyle, practices. It is unfathomably rooted in tradition and sealed yet new in memories. Through this verbal transmission, it sustains a set form even though it may stay alive in many deviations.

Francis Lee Utley defines Folk Literature as ‘Orally transmitted literature wherever found, among primitive isolates, civilized marginal cultures, urban or rural societies, dominant or subordinate groups’ (13). Folk literature has the fundamental features of songs, narratives, proverbs, riddles etc. The Mizo folk literature is quite rich in point of diversity and of eminence. It has been recorded that there are more than a hundred folk songs and folk narratives.

Folk songs:

Folk songs may be considered as one of the most popular forms in the Oral Literature. They are the songs that originated among the general folk and have been verbally passed on from one generation to the next. Folk song is something the community has acknowledged, embraced to be its own, and constantly lives with. There are different definitions of folk songs. According to Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms, “Folk song is a song of unknown authorship that has been passed on, preserved, and adapted in an oral tradition before later being written down or recorded. Folk songs usually have an easily remembered melody and a simple poetic form such as the quatrain” (Baldick 99). Meanwhile, the Oxford Pocket Dictionary of Current English defines folk song as, “A song that originates in traditional popular culture or that is written in such a style” (*folk song* <http://www.encyclopedia.com>>).

Standard Dictionary of folklore, Mythology and Legend defines that “Folk song comprises the poetry and music of groups whose literature is not by writing and print, but handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, and still current in the repertory of a folk community” (Maria Leach, Ed.1032).

Folk songs are generally anonymous composition, transmitted orally. The theory that folk songs were originally group compositions has been modified in recent studies. These assume that the germ of a folk melody is produced by an

individual and altered in transmission into a group-fashioned expression. “National and ethnic individuality can be seen in folk music, even in the case of songs transplanted from one country to another” (*folk song* <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-folksong.html>).

The origin of folk songs is rarely known to its community, the uncertainty of the original process was formerly considered a chief principle to identify folk songs. The songs may be an individual or group creation, whose composition is in some way taken up by the folk. These songs however, are apt to have a great influence on the entire community because of its life in oral tradition. They are passed on by words of mouth from parents to children, from generations to generations.

One of the essential traditions of folksongs are transmitted orally, that is, they are learned through hearing rather than the reading of words or singing, typically in informal, small social group of family or friends. Since it goes through the oral process it may have significant differences from time to time as it ordinarily does not exist in a standard form. The songs often undergo changes from the original composition as others learn and sing it, it is re-created constantly. Even the most brilliant singer tends to alter the original composition after passing through innumerable versions. As folk song exist through oral tradition, and as it constantly transpire in some community, and within that, is generally tied to some occasion, it is constantly subject to change.

Folk songs are an unremitting reminder to the earlier period regardless of community nowadays living in a rapid developing modern world that can effortlessly lose track of culture from the past. The folk itself and the ethnicity of the folk are responsible for creating, preserving and changing works of folk songs.

The Mizo are known to be great lovers of songs. Their bliss and sorrows are conveyed spontaneously in the form of songs. The composition may be made by individual or groups. Their emotions and feeling are typically expressed through their songs. Mizo folk songs are lyrical in nature, short length, rhythmic and can be easily understood. It reflects the social heritage, the environment and culture of the Mizo of a particular time. Most of the Mizo folk songs are of complex or troubled times but there are some that rejoice or commemorate times of bliss. There is a certain pace to a folksong, it's not hasty or rushed and concentrates of the story telling aspect. Traditional instruments are generally used such as gong, drum etc. Mizo folk songs are meant for different occasions and for different function, not for mere amusement. The context in which songs are sung is an important consideration. Sad songs are not sung at celebrations; happy songs at mourning; war songs at marriages, love songs while an enemy is being slain and blissful songs at times of sickness and death. The Mizo community is expressed passionately and imaginatively through their folk songs. Their songs are live human documents reflecting authentic historical processes and trend of different epoch.

Statement of Thesis:

The aim of my thesis is to disclose the various aspects of Mizo oral literature in general and the Mizo folk songs in particular with a special emphasis on a systematic classification of Mizo Folk songs. It appears that tradition of folk songs study was initiated by several scholarly- oriented British administrators, foreign Christian missionaries, local early historians as well as local enthusiasts attracted to the collection of folk songs. But, their works mainly result in the collection of folk songs and there was no sign of an attempt in classification and study of folk songs. In recent past, a few researchers and scholars have taken up the studies and classification of folk songs, but among them there are only a few who pursue the modern and analytical classification.

We can say that though collecting of folk songs has been continuing for many years and many books and records containing fragmentary information on Mizo folk songs, and though some scholars and researchers have attempted analytical study of Mizo folk songs, the material collected and published needs to be properly classified, analyzed and interpreted in their proper context. In the present studies a general study of Mizo folk songs are undertaken with a special emphasis given in the field of its classifications.

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CHAPTER 2
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF
MIZO FOLK SONGS

In the absence of written records, the history and growth of the Mizo folk songs remain vague. It is rather very complicated to trace the origin of the Mizo songs. Some historians believe that the origin of Mizo songs can be traced back very far while some believe that it's just somewhere not very far. Since there is no written record of the origin and development we will have to depend on what ever sources we have.

Some historians assumed that the earliest history of the Mizo can be traced back to their settlement between the rivers *Run* and *Tiau*. It is believed that the history of Mizo songs can be traced back during this time. "The most popular place of their settlement was *Seipuikhur, Khawkawk, Suaipui and Sanzawl*. But the Mizo did not have songs in this location" (Malsawma 141).

According to Lalthangfala Sailo, "The Mizo already have songs from the time of *Thlanrawk Pa Khuangchawi*" (4). Thlanrawk Pa's real name was Belebuta. His son was Thlanrawka and so he came to be known as Thlanrawk Pa (meaning father of Thlanrawka). He was a great chief whose lands reached far and wide. He married the fairy daughter of the god of wind and rain, Sabereka. To celebrate his union with his beautiful wife he arranged *Khuangchawi* feast. He

invited all living creatures, they danced and made merry and it has become one of the most important *Khuangchawi* in the Mizo context. But the exact time of this event cannot be determined in history but is often regarded as a very long past.

It can be assumed that the Mizo have songs in the very early period. Also, it is known from these facts that words exist before its transformation to songs. K. Zawla writes that “While residing beyond *Lentlang* the Mizo does not have songs but the *Pawi* tribe already had songs at this time; when seeing the *Pawi* singing and dancing Mizo desired to have songs and dance too” (229). “This period was around 1500 AD” (Malsawma 141). There was a tale which narrates that during this time one man happened to kill *Tumpang Sial* (Wild gayal), the villagers had a desire to celebrate and danced the whole night. They could not do so without a song, so, one man came forward to compose a song and began to sing:

Heta tang hian kha kha a lang a,

Kha ta tang khan hei hi a lang a.

(Meaning: That side is visible from here and this side is visible from there.)

They could not stay up for long that night with just this song so they had to call off for that night. The next morning, the daughter of the man who killed the *Tumpang Sial* began to sing a song while she was playing:

Ka pa'n tumpang sial a kap e,

Kan run a mawi e.

(Meaning: My father had killed a wild gayal and the horn has decorated our home.)

So, after hearing this song they gathered once more and began to celebrate again. Lalthangliana quoted, “V.L. Zaithanmawia in his book *History of Mizo hla* writes, the first Mizo song we can trace is way back during their settlement in the bank of river *Chindwin*. During this time songs are sung by a group of youth, as the leader sings, ‘*Ha law, ha law*’ the rest of the youth would reply, ‘*Aw e, aw e*’. The Mizo have some fine songs during their settlement in Shan state” (*Mizo Literature* 3). One of the songs in the Shan state sings thus:

Shan fa tlang khua pu tling tleng e,

Indo thlunglu bakin chhaih;

Kan mi thah, kan laimi do,

Tual thatin lan eih de ning.

(Meaning: While we settled in the land of Shan, the beheaded foes put up on the victory post were enjoyed by the bats)

They began to compose a song for going downhill, “*Huang huang tak, huang huang tak*” and to go up hill “*Ur ur tak, ur ur tak,*” and to go in a straight road “*Vai vai tak, vai vai tak*”. But still these songs could not give them an

opportunity to dance. So, some of the clever men among them suggested that they would sing and dance declaring the names of their children. If a man has children's named Thanga, Lala and Khumi the father would sing thus:

Thanga pa ka hi e,

Lala pa ka hi e,

Khumi pa ka hi e.

(Meaning: The father proclaims that he is the father of Thanga, Lala and Khumi.)

This suggested that a person who had more children had the chance to dance longer and those who had less would dance only for a short while. Then those who did not have children would not have the chance to dance at all.

Lalthangfala Sailo again stated “when the Mizo ancestors walked in the front direction, they used to either lean back or bow down repeatedly by singing a song;

Khawmhma pal a er an ti,

A duh duhin er rawh se,

A er leh lo an ti e” (1)

{Meaning: It is said that the branch of a *Khawmhma* (a kind of tree which bear a sour fruit) tree is bending. Let it bend as it wishes to be. But then again they said it is not bending. }

As they sing this song, the singers join their hands together and began to bend and bow as much as they could. There are many assumptions and sayings with regard to the origin of the Mizo folk songs and it is rather difficult to make a clear cut decision.

One story narrates that, once there was a *Pawi* (one of the Mizo clan) visitor in the village, the people in the village suggested that the visitor should sing and dance for them hoping that they would also learn some songs from him. He stood up and uttered the words in *Pawi* dialect “*Ziang so ka hril kei*” (which simple means ‘what song should I sing’). The people mistook it for a song and began to repeat the words in tune. He then continue saying in *Pawi* language “*A si ri love*” (It is not a song yet), which was again repeated by the people mistaking it for a song. At this moment the *Pawi* visitor getting annoyed said “*Lam theih a kal si hlah;*” (It is impossible to dance in a situation like this?) and fled from that place. The people thought that he had gone to pass urine but as he did not return they were confused. They suggested that some of them should run after him an offer him to give a reward if he continues to sing for them. So, he returned and began to sing and dance.

Similar to the above narration with a slight variation “During the time when the Mizo and the *Paite* mix settlement, they once requested a *Paite* to teach them a song. He then said, ‘*Khawmhma pal a er an ti*’. Thinking that it was a

song, they replied saying, ‘*Khawmhma pal a er e*’, they began to bend backward, hardly able to speak to each other”. (Lalthlangliana *Hranghluite* 120 & 121).

“As seen from the songs of the *Hmar* tribe, the Mizo also have songs relating to the Mizo departure from *Chhinlung*”, as given below:

Ka siengna sinlung hmingthang,

Ka nu ram ka pa ram ngai,

Chawngzil ang ko kir theu chang sien,

Ka nu ram ka pa ram ngai,

Khaw sinlungah kawt sial ang ka zuang zok a,

Mi lo nel lo tan a e, hriemi hrai a. (Nghakliana 26 & 27).

(Meaning: Oh how I miss the village of *Sinlung* (*Chhinlung*), the village of our ancestors; there were so many of us when we moved from that village.)

Some of the songs reveal many of the Mizo settlement in *Shan* village. The following *Hmar* tribe song also suggested that the Mizo faced many hardships during their settlement in the *Shan* village:

Shan khuaah tampur a tlain,

Mi za ra tlan thier a e,

(Meaning: While settling in Shan village there was a famine which brings hardships to many of the people.)

Shan khaw fiartui tha var siauvin dang,

Nghaknun hnamchem ang a chawi.

(Meaning: While settling in Shan village there use to be huge floods which brings hardships to many of the people.)

In the meantime Lalthangliana argues, “These songs cannot be called the foremost songs of the Mizos because our elders during their settlement in the *Kabaw* valley (Tahan-Khampat) or even before then, it is believed that they do have songs during those days. When they were drove out from *Shan* state and settled in the *Chin Hills*, there was soil erosion which brings hardship in their daily way of life, especially towards food and clothing and it eventually lowered their standard of living. Then *Thingpui Tam* (Famine) followed which brings the death of many elders who were aware of the early history of the Mizos; due to these factors the early songs of the Mizos cannot be known” (*Mizo Literature* 7 & 8).

Mizo folk songs evolved during times of sorrows and mourning when a family member died. They cried over the dead body and during their time of loneliness and grief they chanted what came out from their weeping hearts. And this became *Tah hla* (Mourning Songs). When a mother cuddles her baby to sleep by chanting slowly it again became what is known as *Nau awih hla* (Lullabies).

So, songs evolved or are composed without the intention of it being composed as seen from these facts.

We can conclude by saying that the Mizo composed songs very early and they are very fond of singing and dancing as seen in their culture. Among the tribes of the Mizo, the *Lusei* are the ones who are known to come up with their own songs at a very later period. We can admit that though there are different assumptions and theories of the historians, there exist only slight variation in their findings of how the Mizo started having songs and the first song of the Mizo.

Folk song is not some kind of history of events but rather emotional verdict of certain circumstances and groups of events. The development of the Mizo folk songs, in terms of its coherent chronology can possibly be classified under three distinct divisions:

1. *Tiau chhak lama chhuakte* - Before A.D. 1700. (Songs originating before crossing the *Tiau* River)

2. *Tiau kan hnua chhuakte* - Between A.D. 1700 – 1900. (Songs originating after crossing the *Tiau* River)

3. *Kum zabi 20-naa chhuakte* - After A.D. 1900. (Songs originating during the 20th century)

(Thanmawia *Thuhlaril* 184)

1. *Tiau chhak lama chhuakte* - Before A.D. 1700 (Songs originating before crossing the *Tiau* River):

Before the Mizo crossed the river *Tiau*, they already had many folk songs and these songs can again be divided into two sub eras, namely:

1.1. *Thantlang awmlaia chhuakte* (During the settlement at *Thantlang*): The songs which originated during their settlement in *Thantlang* are generally known as *Thantlang Upa hla*. Thanmawia assumed, “these songs emerged before crossing river *Run*, it is assumed that it was a period between AD1300- 1450” (*History* 25). Songs composed during this period are of two lines verse, the most popular songs are as follows:

1.1.1. *Thuthmun Zai (Khawhar zai)*: It is presumed to be one of the oldest songs of the Mizo. The earlier ancestors of the Mizo were affected by a great famine which eventually led to the spread of a deadly disease and resulted in the death of many. They would visit and console the families of the deceased and keep them company; on such occasions they would comfort each other by chanting and singing a song which led to the origin of *Thuthmun zai*. These songs were sung sitting and so is given the name ‘*Thuthmun zai*’.

A tlung e, thim khaw zin a tlung e,

Khua tinah thim khaw zin a tlung e.

(Meaning: There was complete darkness which covered every village and it happened worldwide.)

1.1.2. *Hlado*: “It is believed that *Hlado* originated during the period between A.D. 1300 to 1450” (Lalthangliana *Mizo Hun* 6). They are chanted when a warrior killed an animal. Depending on the kind of animal killed, there are different types of *Hlado*. *Sahrang* (Wild animals) specifically have different kinds of *Hlado* which are chanted only when the *Sahrang* are killed. The rest of the *Hlado*'s are grouped together as *Hlado Tlanglawn* (General *Hlado*) and they can be chanted anytime when the hunter killed animals, even though they also are of different types.

The different types of *Hlado* are named according to the animals killed, namely, *Sai* (Elephant) *hlado*, *Savawm* (Bear) *hlado*, *Sanghal* (Wild pig) *hlado*, *Sazuk* (Sambar deer) *hlado*, *Sakhi* (Barking deer) *hlado*, *Tumpang* (Gayal) *hlado*, *Sakei* (Tiger) *hlado*, *Sather* (Wild goat) *hlado*, *Muvanlai* (Hawk) *hlado*, *Satel* (Tortoise) *hlado*, *Sanghar* (Wild cat) *hlado*, *Tangkawng* (Wild lizard) *hlado* and *Mirethei hlado* (A poor man's *hlado*).

1.1.3. *Bawh Hla*: *Hlado* and *Bawh hla* are in fact regarded to be almost one and the same thing. They are both chanting form of songs which are rendered only by brave and accomplished warriors. *Bawh hla* however was not chanted as often as *Hlado*. The warrior rendered this chant over the dead body

of the slain foe; it is not chanted in groups but by a single person. It was also chanted on the celebration of the heads that had been brought home by great warrior as war trophy. It can also be called as a 'Pride song' since it is an opportunity for such warriors to chant about their bravery, greatness and how they are feared by their foes. *Bawh hla* is a verse that celebrated the valor as well as the successes of Mizo warrior. A more detailed study of *Bawh hla* and *Hlado* is seen in chapter 4 under the theme hunting and war songs.

1.1.4. *Salulam Zai*: It is believed to be originated during their settlement in the land between the rivers *Run* and *Tiau*. They are one of the oldest songs which are sung while celebrating the kill of an animal. It was originally called *Sa lam zai*. But since it was sung during the occasion of *Salu lam* (celebration of the killed animals that had been hunted down by great brave warrior) it later came to be recognized more and famous with the name *Salu lam zai*. It is usually sung in groups during the ceremony of *Salu lam* and is assumed to be one of the oldest songs of the Mizo. Some historians assume that it originated after the Mizo had possession of guns; however, even before the advent of guns, the Mizo killed animals using spear and laying traps for animals. So, it can be assumed from the above facts that the song would have originated even before the possession of guns.

Based on the wordings used and the places mentioned in the songs it can be again presumed that it existed during their settlement in *Lentlang* and *Thantlang*.

Run luiah Zuksial ka ping,

Pelpawlah Phuaivawm kap ing.

(Meaning: I shot a deer on the bank of *Run River*; I also shot a bear in Pelpaw village.)

Salu lam zai can be categorized into various groups, namely – *Sa lam hlapui*, *Sa lam pheii*, *Sakhal zai*, *Lianlunga zai*, and *Salu lam hla thu*. *Salu lam zai* is not a blend of various aspects such as nature, persons and animals. It is mainly about showing respect to the brave and successful hunters, to ask God to bless their skills in hunting and their remembrance for their deceased family members.

1.1.5. *Dar Hla*: The songs which can be sung along with an instrument called *Darbu* are known as *Dar hla*. Though there are many types of *Dar hla*, the tunes are very similar to each other. The famous ones among the *Dar hla* are as follows – *Liando te unau*, *Chawngyungi man tam e*, *Chhimbu leh peng peng* (The tonic solfa rendering of the song is seen in page 234), *Kinga lu thle lekah*, *Ngunte thi*, *Dar zawrh hla*, *Khuai lam hla*, *Chawngchilhi*, *Kan lal lai*, *Dar lam hla* and *Chhi I teng teng*. A detailed study of *Dar hla* is taken up under *Rimawi hla* in Chapter 3.

1.2. *Lentlang awmlaia chhuak hla te* (During the settlement at *Lentlang*): “It is believed that their settlement in this place was around 1450 AD-1700 AD” (Thanmawia *History* 26). During this time, the Mizo have greatly developed in folk songs composition. The songs composed during their previous settlement continued and new songs were also composed following the old forms and there were also consistent changes that were made to these songs from time to time. But, the songs during this time are mainly three lines composition. Some of the most significant songs are as follows:

1.2.1. *Chai hla*: Thought it is not known when and where the Mizo started the practice of *Chai hla*, it is presumed that it is one of the oldest songs among the Mizo folk songs. “The first incident of *Chai* is seen in *Suipui* and *Saihmun* villages where they were unexpectedly attacked by the *Pawi*” (Lalthangliana *Mizo Literature* 23). This period is assumed to be around 1600 A.D. when they departed from *Thantlang* and *Run* region. So, due to these facts, it can be assumed that the practice of *Chai* originated even before 1600 A.D. most probably during 1550 A.D. *Chai hla* is sung during the festival of *Chapchat Kut*; all the men and women would gather together and danced along with it. There is an argument in the period of its origin; while some believed it originated during their settlement in *Lentlang*; but there are some who assume that it originated after crossing the river *Tiau*. The different types of *Chai hla* during their settlement in *Lentlang* are as follows:

(a). *Thailungi Zai*: This song is basically about Thailungi and her stepmother; and how Thailungi's brother searched for her. In this story Thailungi was traded to a *Pawi* businessman by her stepmother in exchange for an iron ball. As they are out of sight, Thailungi's stepmother regretted that she had let her go without any of her materials and could not forgive herself, so she decided to call her back to give her *Tuibur* (Women's smoking pipe) and *Em* (a kind of basket made out of bamboo) and the dialogue of the songs they sang as they answer each other came to be known as *Thailungi zai* as shown:

Thailungi's stepmother sings:

Thailung, Thailungi, i tiangthirte lo nghak la,

I hlantai te lo nghak rawh.

(Meaning: Thailung, Thailung do not hasten but wait awhile for I am sending your smokingpipe and your basket.)

Thailungi reply thus:

Chhaktiang khi chen ka thlen chuan

Tiangthir a tha bo ngai lo

Hlantai a tha bo ngai lo.

(Meaning: Once I reach the far eastern land, I would no longer need them for a new and better ones will be there.)

When Thailungi's brother came of age, he searched for his sister in the *Pawi's* land. He finally found her and upon reuniting they shed a lot of tears. Thailungi's husband requested Thailungi's brother to settle with them; but Thailungi insisted her brother to go back home and take revenge for her. She gave him a dao and a cloth, and sent him home. Thailungi's brother killed their stepmother, cut off her head and wrapped it with the cloth which Thailungi had given and sent it to Thailungi. *Thailungi Zai* is also known as the first song of the *Chai hla*.

(b). *Lalvunga Zai*: The song narrates the tragic end of the Chief Lalvunga. "It is one of the oldest among the *Chai hla*, it is believed to be originating around 1650 during the Mizo's settlement in *Lentlang*" (Thanmawia *Mizo Hla Hlui* 174). The Chief of *Hualngo*, Lalvunga was known for his bravery and handsomeness. He was captured and killed by the *Zadeng* Chiefs. His head was put up at the *Sahlam* (Victory post where the head of their foes are hung); the story about how they fought against him, defeated and killed him was narrated in the form of a song and it came to be known as *Lalvunga Zai*. They are mostly composed by his foes to mock at him. *Lalvunga Zai* is one of the most renowned songs among the *Chai hla* which is sung till today. A study is undertaken in chapter 3 under the sub-head of Ballad.

(c). *Mangkhaia Zai*: "*Mangkhaia Zai* is assumed to originate around 1950" (Thanmawia *Mizo Hla Hlui* 171). "*Mangkhaia* is the son

of Mangthawnga, the Chief of *Tuichhin* village, Mangthawnga was a *Ralte clan* known as *Khelte*” (Lalthangliana *Mizo Literature* 31). Mangkhaia was captured by foes from their village and was held captive in the house of Darkawlchhunchheka, the Chief of *Tiaural Zawngte* village. Mangkhaia was known for his looks and his talent for singing. Using the cuffs around his wrist as a musical instrument, he used to sing along with it. The songs he composed during his imprisonment became one of the famous songs among the *Chai Hla*. The songs are composed by him about his loneliness during his imprisonment, and there are some songs composed by the ladies who fell for his good looks. Beside these there are songs which are composed by the enemies who had killed him to mock and jeer at him while celebrating their victory.

1.2.2. *Chawngchen Zai*: One of the most important and of greatly valued in the life of the Mizo was *Chawngchen*. It is also known as *Chawng* or *Chawnfang*. To perform *Chawngchen* they had to be rich in terms of food, and those who can performed it were considered to be above the common people and they were treated with great respect. It is not easily performed by common people and it plays a significant role in their religious beliefs.

Whenever there were people to perform *Chawngchen* it is appreciated by the whole community and they happily enjoyed the occasion together as one big family. In the evening they performed *Chhawng Hnawt* with *Buh Changrum* and lots of meat. They also performed merry events in which they fed each other with

boiled eggs. The people who organized *Chawngchen* were called *Chawngnu* for female and *Changpa* for male. At night the youths would gather in *Chawngpa's* house and cheerfully sung *Chawngchen zai*. The females would sit in circles in the middle surrounded by the males at their back and one person would sit in the center playing the drums.

Chawngchen zai is one of the oldest and most famous songs of the Mizo. However, the exact nature of its origin and year is not known. In some of the Mizo history, we see that *Chawngchen* was performed during the time of the legendary person Lalvunga and Lianchhiari. Assuming from these facts, it can be said that *Chawngchen zai* evolved during the 3rd or the 4th century. Some of the first known songs about *Chawngchen zai* were during the Mizo's settlement beyond the river *Tiau*. The place where *Chawngchen zai* started is traceable since the song reflects the name of the place where it was sung. "This also implies the age of *Chawngchen zai*; for example, *Tlangkhaw zai*, *Dawn zai*, *Lumtui (Tuilum) zai*, *Bellung zai* etc. got their names because they evolved during the Mizo settlement in the *Chin* Hills and they can be easily assumed from the fact that they originated before the Mizo crossed the river *Tiau*" (Thanmawia *Thuhlaril* 165).

It is normally believed that it originated during their settlement between *Lentlang* and *Thantlang* region and those periods are assumed to be the year 1450 to 1650 A.D. (Lalthangliana *Mizo Hun* 18).

There are different kinds of Chawngchen zai and it continues to be composed even after crossing the *Tiau* River and they are as follows - *Zailam Hlapui, Tlangkhaw zai, Dawn zai, Niten zai, Darthiangi leh Chertuala zai, Thuthmun zai, Lumtui zai, Thlangkhaw zai, Buangkhaw zai, Bellung zai, Tlangphei zai, Mitthi Chawngchen zai, Hla Lungleng, and Hla Tluang Khawvar.*

(a). *Lumtui Zai*: It is one of the oldest among *Chawngchen zai*. It is believed that it originated during their settlement in *Tuilum* village on the bank of *Tiau* River.

Lumtui tha phei tuahkhuang kan lakna,

Chalvawm chhaina dai a thiang reng e.

(Meaning: Lumtui village, once a famous and beautiful village now has begun to fade and lost its beauty.)

Chawngchen zai is one of the most renowned themes which highlighted the loneliness of the earlier ancestors of the Mizo; they could not perform *Chawng* without it nor could they celebrate their most valued occasion. That is why it is an important occasion in the life of the Mizo.

(b). *Tlangkhaw Zai*: It originated during the reign of Chief Thangura Sailo during their settlement in *Tlang Khaw* village which is located to the northern side of *Tiau* River. *Tlang Khaw* village was a majestic

place filled with riches; the people of the village used to compose song highlighting their greatness and wealth and these songs were used on *Chawngchen*.

Tlangkhaw hrinin sumtin an khawm a,

Sum tin khawm tiandar a vuai ngei e.

(Meaning: Dwellers in the *Tlang khaw* village are very rich; you can't imagine how rich they are.)

While singing this song, only *Thangchhuahpa* and *Chawngpa* are allowed to dance. It is one of the highly regarded forms of song.

(c). *Tlangphei Zai*: It is one of the forms of *Chawngchen zai*, it is believed to originate while the *Hauhnar* clan settled in *Tlangzawl* village. The songs mainly deal with love theme, depicting the various love lives of the young men and women at that time.

(d). *Dawn Zai*: It originated during their settlement in *Dawn* village located on the northern side of *Tiau* River. The story behind it may be illustrated as follows: One day, a bachelor entered the house of a female companion to make love to her; unfortunately he was caught by the female's father and was questioned what he was trying to do. He replied by saying that, he was simply trying to take an axe to chop down the bamboos in their village

entrance. However, his real intention was revealed anyway among the villagers. He later on composed a song about it and based on its tune more songs were composed by others. This song is performed by the *Lusei* tribe during *Chawngchen*; it is sung to the tune of a fast pace beat of a drum.

A khu khua khu Pangzawl khua khu,

Pangzawl khua khu, Ngunkuala lenna.

(Meaning: When I glance far beyond I can see *Pangzawl* village, the village where Ngunkuala resides and whom I miss so much.)

(e). *Darthiangi leh Chertuala Zai*: *Darthiangi* and *Chertuala* were married couple who embraced and cherished their love for each other. Unfortunately, they could not have a baby between them and it eventually led to their divorce. The songs are mainly about *Darthiangi*'s loneliness after their separation.

Chhungah chul i, pawnah chul i,

Fa pa lian chulin ka mawi lo ve.

(Meaning: It is the nature of human beings to slowly lose their beauty and strength in time, but I cannot imagine young man fading away.)

1.2.3. *Thiam Hla*: it is chant by priest during sacrificial offerings and it is not meant for the common people. Since it is chanted by the

expert only, it is named *Thiam hla*. It originated during their settlement in *Lentlang*. There are two types of priests, one connected with the religious aspect and the other with the medicinal aspects and the verse was specifically composed for occasions associated with the kind of sacrifice performed, *Thiam hla* are of different types and it also depends on the preference of the priests. A more detailed study of *Thiam hla* is seen in the next chapter.

1.2.4. *Pawnto Hla* (Game Songs): It is a song for the children and youths which they sung during their playing time at night. It is a reflection of the lifestyle of the children and youths. It originated from *Lentlang* and continues to evolve even after their departure from it.

1.2.5. *Nau awih Hla* (Lullabies/Baby Sitter Songs): This song originated from mothers or baby sitters who used it for soothing their babies to sleep and came to be known as *Nau awih hla*. Though this song is often classified among the children's song they are not sung by children but mainly by the mother who sooth the baby to sleep. It originated during their settlement in *Lentlang*.

1.2.6. *Pi Hmuaki Zai*: Pi Hmuaki is regarded as the first known composer among the Mizo whose composition are personally named after her. She was from *Ngente* village and most of the songs of *Ngente* village are composed by her. "Though the exact period of origin is not known, it is believed

that it originated during the period 1600-1650 A.D.” (Lalthangliana *Mizo Hun* 49). A few illustrations of her songs and the story behind it are as follows:

She composed various songs on a variety of themes, all the other names of her village men were sung in her song except for Thingtluruma and Zawlsiala. These two men decided to visit Pi Hmuaki to see if she composes songs including their names too, and before they left, she composed a song by saying:

Thingtluruma, Zawlsiala chhuah leh

Sobal ka chhum thal tui ang nghak rawh.

{Meaning: Thingtluruma and Zawlsiala why do you make haste, wait a while to share the *bal* (the generic name of edible arum bulbs) that is boiling.} (Lalbiakliana 149)

When she envisioned about her death, though her body might be buried away she wanted her songs to live forever; and so she expressed her feelings through this song:

Ka tak fam se, ka zai fam lo se'ng,

Thlang kawr mi lal chungah chuang rawh se.

(Meaning: Even if my body is laid down to rest forever, let my verse live on. Let it spread far and wide, let it be known in the far western kingdom.)

An unexpected turn of event happened to Pi Hmuaki. There was a foolish assumption that if Pi Hmuaki continued to compose more songs, the new generation will no longer have the chance to compose new songs. They feared that she would compose all the songs by herself; so they agreed to bury her alive. As they were burying her, she sung her last song to those men burying her:

Nauva te u, nau haia te u,

Tha te te khan min chhilh ru.

(Meaning: Beloved bachelors, be tender and careful while you are covering my body.)

“She may be buried alive and her body might rot away in the soil; but her songs are remembered and cherished by the new generations of the Mizo”.
(Lalsangzuali 7)

2. *Tiau kan hnua chhuakte* - Between A.D. 1700 – 1900 (Songs originating after crossing the *Tiau* River):

The Mizo composed many songs after they crossed the river *Tiau*. A lot of them are adaptation of the song composed earlier. For instance, many more songs categorized under *Hlado*, *Bawh hla*, *Thiam hla*, *Chai hla*, *Chawngchen zai* and *Salulam zai* are composed after their departure from *Tiau*. Songs composed or

which evolved after crossing the river *Tiau* are mainly songs bearing personal names, some of the most popular ones are:

2.1. *Darmani Zai*: These songs are composed by different men for Darmani to show their love for her. It has a melodious tune which is very easy to sing along. All songs composed based on this tune is called *Darmani zai*. Darmani is not known for her beauty but she was famous because she had a special ability to socialize and make friends. “Darmani is from *Tlanglau* and she is *Pawi Hrantlang* clan. Most of her songs were composed by Thlanchhinga, a salesman from *Thlantlang*; who sells *Thival* (one of the mizo traditional necklace)” (Lalthangliana *Mizo Hun* 81).

Thlanchhinga was madly in love with Darmani; he was even ready to marry her and settle with her in Darmani’s place. But he was not accepted by Darmani and her family, so he went back to his native place. In frustration just before he left the village, Thlanchhinga angrily chanted about his riches and bravery and these facts are evident from some of his songs.

While doing business in Darmani’s village, Thlanchhinga used to visit Darmani at her place. One day, Thlanchhinga and his friend decided to visit Darmani with a serious intent of winning her love; but due to heavy rain their plan could not be carried out that night. “Unable to visit her love, Thlanchhinga composed a song that night which became the origin of *Darmani zai*”

(Lalbiakliana 197). The tune of the song was so appealing that it touched the hearts of the people immediately; and it does not take very long before the song reach each and every corner of the Mizo land with its infectious tune.

2.2. *Laltheri Zai*: Laltheri was the daughter of Lalsavunga, Chief of *Sailo* clan; her real name was Lalchawngpuii. Her ancestors were known for their stubbornness and bravery; Laltheri also was very brave and she possessed good leadership quality.

“The origin of *Laltheri zai* is believed to be around the period 1820 to 1865” (Lalengliana 49); “studies from her ancestors and her brothers reveal that it reaches its peak during the period 1850 to 1870” (Lalsangzuali 39). They are mainly love songs, laments for her lover and her anger towards her parents.

“When her father, Chief Lalsavunga passed away in *Darlawng Tlang*, they moved to Saitual under the command of Vanhnuailiana (Laltheri’s brother) in the year 1842” (Zawla 341). During their settlement in *Ruallung* village, Laltheri was in love with a commoner Chalthanga who was known for his good looks. But those days, only the son of a Chief could take the hand of the daughter of the Chief for marriage; and if a commoner shows his affection towards the daughter of a Chief he would be killed. Eventually, Chalthanga paid for his life in showing his love towards Laltheri.

Laltheri's love for Chalthanga grew each passing day and their relationship reached a point where the Chief's advisers could no longer tolerate their jealousy; so they spoke to the Chief about it. Chief Vanhnuailiana then gave an order to search for Chalthanga and to kill him. On hearing the Chief's order, Chalthanga escape from the village. But the Chief's men were able to catch up with him at *Lungpawn village*; and they pretended to be Laltheri's messenger, Chalthanga calmly drank *Zu* (Rice beer) with the Chief's men. And while Chalthanga was unaware of the situation, one of the Chief's men killed him from behind with an axe and he died instantly. "According to some legend, Chalthanga was shot dead by Lamhawiha who was one of the servants of the Chief Vanhnuailiana" (Lalthangliana *Mizo Hun* 49).

On hearing the death of her lover, with tears in her eyes she gathered some of her best cloths and went to the place where Chalthanga was killed. She warpped his body with the cloths she carried and kept his body in *Lungpawn* cave; and till today the cave came to be known as *Chalthanga Puk* (Chalthanga's Cave). Laltheri began to lose control of herself (physically and mentally unstable) each passing day after the death of Chalthanga.

Fortunately, Laltheri later found out that she bare the child of Chalthanga; she delivered a baby boy and named him Zakhuma. She could hardly wait for him to grow up and take revenge on the men who killed his father. Fearing this, the men responsible for the death of Chalthanga migrated to another village. But

unfortunately, Zakhuma died when he was only one year old and was deeply mourned by Laltheri.

Laltheri later got married to Dinmanga and they lived together in *Belrawhmual* at *Darlawng tlang*. Their village came under the attack of Chief Hempua and Dinmanga was killed in the fight. On hearing Dinmanga's death, Laltheri came out from her hiding place and into the battle fields; grabbed Chief Hempua hair and spitted on his face three times. This incident highlights the bravery of Laltheri; and Dinmanga's head was not taken as war victory accolade. Chief Hempua described the incident of being spitted at, more painful than being slapped on the face.

On hearing the story of Laltheri, the long standing tradition of the *Sailo* Chiefs i.e. killing of a commoner who falls in love with the Chief's daughter was banished and a lesser punishment of cutting of the offender's ear was introduced. This truly justifies the importance of Laltheri in the history of the Mizo.

2.3. *Lianchhiari Zai*: Lianchhiari composed many songs in which majority of them are towards her lover Chawngfianga. She was the daughter of one of the Chiefs in *Dungtlang* village which comprised of 3000 houses. She was of the *Pachua* clan called *Chua*hang. History about her parents and where she was born is not known and it is believed that she is the only child. Lalthangliana writes, "It is also assumed that she became famous during the year 1750 to 1769"

(*Hranghluite* 140). There are many stories about Lianchhiari and how beautiful she was. She fell in love with a commoner Chawngfianga; she even wanted to marry him. But due to certain complications they could not get married. Due to loneliness she began to compose songs. That is why most of her songs are about love and loneliness.

2.4. *Saikuti Zai*: Lalbiakliana writes that “Saikuti was born in the year 1830 at Thingsai village” (168). She is the youngest of four siblings born between Thangawna Fanai and Ngurchuailovi. Saikuti used the tune of *Chhim zai* in her songs. She even had tune in her name which is called *Saikuti Herawt zai*.

The first known song composed by Saikuti was during her childhood. One day Saikuti and her friends were playing under the *Zawlbuk*; in the meantime Hmarthanga was lying down and singing inside the *Zawlbuk*, which was reflected in the song:

Zawlbuk hnuaiah buhlem kan thap chiam a,

Hmarthanga zai kelbe lo ang e.

{Meaning: We were sieving pretended rice under the *Zawlbuk* (Bachelor’s dormitory), the voice of Hmarthanga sound like a bleating goat. }

“It is assumed that Saikuti was 12 years old when she composed the above mentioned song” (Lalbiakliana 168).

Unlike other famous composers of the Mizo, Saikuti was very innocent when it came to lovers and matters of marriages. Patlaia, son of Chief Khawtindala and Tuvunga were the only two known lovers of Saikuti; and their relationships never interfered in the interest of the public. Being a well behaving girl and a good composer of songs, Saikuti's fame reached every corner of the Mizo land. There are many men courting for her hand, but refused them as she still pleased to stay single. Later on, she got married to Zakunga at *Thingsai* village.

Most of her songs were composed out of her desire except for a few songs which were composed on the request from others. *Saikuti zai* consists of two tunes, namely, *Chhim zai* tune and *Herawt zai* tune; and her songs can be categorized into four types, namely, *Lengzem zai* (Love songs), *Mihrang awih hla* (Patriotic songs), *Mithi ngaih hla* (Laments) and *Sa lu aih hla* (Hunting songs).

Though Saikuti lived to see the turn of the 20th century, her songs followed one of the oldest traits of Mizo songs i.e. two lines verse. We see many of Saikuti's character in her songs; she was very good at motivating and influencing others. Once she had a lover who was younger than her; she thought that her lover would not have the courage to save her if they were suddenly attacked by foes, and she expressed such thoughts through a song. Her lover was not happy about it, so he stopped speaking to her. Saikuti tried her best to win him back, and at the end they happily spent time together again. Saikuti was a lover of

nature and kind hearted towards animals. She was a gentle and sentimental person and a lover of music. She was endowed with a special ability to compose a song instantly as and when requested by others. Some of the songs of Saikuti pointed out the barbaric nature of the Mizo, like beheading of defeated foes to be put up at the *Sahlam* (Victory post) for the crows to feed upon, the cruel nature of angry men in the village etc.

2.5. *Darpawngi Zai*: She was *Ralte Bungsut* clan; her father was Manghauva and her mother was *Khiangte* clan. She bravely sang out what she felt was right through her songs. Darpawngi was fun loving, smart and sang a lot during her childhood. She grew up in her grandfather's house; they used to sing together. Her grandfather's name was Lalchema also known as Lalcheua, Chief of *Laisawral* village.

Darpawngi had a hard life growing up; sometimes death would have been a better option when compared to all the hardships faced by Darpawngi. But she bravely faced them and eventually overcomes her struggles. She got married to the man who once rejected her and died in *Chhingchhip* village. Darpawngi is regarded as one of the best composers of her time and her songs can be divided into three types. During her time, her songs touched the heart of the people and they were sung more frequently than other songs. She even composed a song in the tune of *Saikuti zai*. The three types of Darpawngi Zai are as follows:

- i). *Thlek Zai* (Songs of head turn)
- ii). *Tah Zai* (Lamentations)
- iii). *Thinrim Zai* (Protest Songs)

2.6. *Darlenglehi Zai*: *Darlenglehi* was from *Thiltlang* village. Though she was not very pretty she was fair, having good figure and was the most appreciated lady in the village; she was also a very shy person. “Her real name was *Dartinthangi*” (Lalbiakliana 200); however some writers write that “her real name was *Darzalengi* or *Dartinchhingi*” (Lalsangzuali 127). *Darlenglehi* was a divorcee so she was given the name *Darlenglehi* (who is single again)

Some of *Darlenglehi zai* illustrate the time when the British first set foot on the land of Mizoram. Some of her famous songs in this regards are *Mingo val*, *Manliana*, *Kawhri khawhal*, *Sailulak lal man* etc.

Some of the *Fanai* and *Sailo* clan also composed songs based on the tune of *Darlenglehi zai*. *Darlenglehi zai* is a very important song in studying the history of the Mizo because it deals with various aspects like love between men and women, grief and loneliness, advent of the British in Mizoram, how the British burned down the villages, capturing of the Mizo Chiefs and the call of the brave men to defend the land of Mizoram.

Apart from what we have written above, the other famous personal named songs are: *Darchhama zai*, *Lalchhungi zai*, *Tuchhingpa zai*, *Lera zai* and *Neihlaia zai*. There are some popular songs which were not named after an individual, namely, *Nidul zai*, *Zialung zai*, *Zawlbuk zai* and *Lasi zai* and *Tlangnuam zai*, *Kawrnu zai* and *Darthlalang zai*.

3. *Kum Zabi 20-naa chhuakte* (Songs in the 20th Century):

Songs which evolved after 1900 A.D. are very diverse in nature. The advent of Christianity in 1894 greatly changed the mindset of the Mizo; it is believed to be the main reason for such diversity in songs. The kind of songs which evolved during the turn of the 20th century are as follows:

3.1. *Awithangpa Zai*: Awithangpa's real name was Hmarlutvunga. "He was born in 1887 in *Kanghmun* village. In 1905 he had a son whom they named 'Awithanga', so he eventually gets the name 'Awithangpa', meaning the father of Awithanga. He composed more than 300 songs" (*Lalthangliana Mizo Hun* 147). He has an ability to fairly socialize with others, but he was very much driven by loneliness. He could easily compose any genre of songs instantly. Majority of his songs are composed as and when required and not through deep meditation of the situation or environment. He easily composed songs with beautiful words in accordance with what he saw, what he encountered and what touched his heart.

*Saisen teta nu hnun tui leh chun ka ngaih,
Tunah nang leng ka ngai che lungrun mi u;
A sawi hian Thangngo ka sawi thei lo.*

(Meaning: My mother and her breast milk was the one I needed most when I was a baby. But, as for now, you are the one, and the only one I long for.)

In the above song, he beautifully expressed his love and longings for his lover by comparing it to a baby's need for mother's milk and the warm embrace they crave from their mothers. During the occasion of *Tlanglam*, *Awithangpa* composed a beautiful song as seen below:

*Tlanglamin kawl thlek ka zir dawn e,
Buangkhaw perpui damlai pialral Siali;
Lenchawm nen val rual hi hawi ve la.*

(Meaning: I will dance in the rhythm of *Tlanglam zai*, Maubuang, my abode is like a paradise, ladies, let us dance and enjoy in merriment.)

Awithangpa had a skill of expressing and using the right words in his lyrical songs; having deeper meaning to it and this shows the greatness of *Awithangpa* as a composer. His songs can be divided into four themes; *Lunglen zai* (Love), *Lusun zai* (Laments), *Khawvel thil* (Nature & materials), and *Inphuah elna* (Satire).

3.2. *Puma Zai*: It is believed that its origin dates back to a very early period, however, it became famous among the Mizos only from the early part of the 20th century.

“The word *Puma* is taken from the language of *Hmar-Biate* clan which means *Pathian* (god)” (Thanmawia *Mizo Hla Hlui* 497). In *Puma zai*, the line of each song ends with the word *Puma*, eventually became to be known as *Puma zai*.

The growth of Christianity among the Mizo gave birth to a new form of song. These songs translated into Mizo language by the Christian missionaries was growing rapidly. To counter the new religion and hamper its growth was the main objective of the non Christian Chiefs and elders. They decided to celebrate more extravagantly on the occasions of the Mizo *Kut* (Festivals); they danced and chanted words of mockery against the Mizo Christians. The origin of *Puma zai* among the Mizo started during this time.

The origin and evolution of *Puma zai* has many stories behind it which are different from one another. Let us elaborate some of them:

According to one story, it was first sung one evening by evil spirits on the outskirts of the village of Hrangchhuana who was the descendent of Lalsavunga. They continue to sing for 3 (three) consecutive evenings which was heard by many people of the village. Some men took note of the tune of the song;

composed many more songs based on it and made it famous. Malsawma assumed that “this was how *Puma zai* originated among the Mizo” (164).

In another story, before the Mizo was invaded by other tribes (Vailen), there were a group of people called *Khawchungho* in *Vairengte* village who used to sing this kind of songs. On hearing them sing the beautiful tune, some Mizo men memorised the song and brought it home.

Ngurliana writes, “In 1880, the year of the first *Thingtam* (Famine), some men from *Chengkawlaw* village namely, Saihanga, Chawngruma and some others went to *Tuirial* River to do business in rice trading. On their journey, they stayed overnight in *Hrangkhol* village and they heard this song sung by people. They decided to learn the tune of the song and they composed a similar song as shown below:

Rialtui hmingthang vai tleirawl kan dawrna

Puma eldawng, dawng ruaia.” (145)

(Meaning: We do trade business with the youth of the plain people on the bank of *Tuirial* River.)

But unfortunately it was not popular among their people and the song lost its interest among the people. Then a lady named Darpisiaki (Denga Nu) composed a song based on its tune for soothing a baby. Then some fun loving people enhanced the song by composing further lines to the song which

eventually became famous among the people. More enhanced songs began to be composed based on this tune. Even children at playing time would sing the song, but, by omitting the line “*eldawng, dawng ruaia*”. One of the new composed songs is given below:

Kan tuikhur hi khur tha a lo ni – Puma,

Sirte Ainawnpari bual kan hmu, bual kan hmu.

(Our village water point is such a fine water point. We see a beautiful girl having a bath.)

While singing these songs, they used to wave their hands by holding flowers or leaves. Then its popularity reached across other villages and these villages sent some of their men to learn the tune of the song. The first two men responsible for spreading the tune and fame of *Puma zai* to other villages were Khawzadala of *Bunghmun* village and Lalsakeia of *Sunhluchhip* village. The Chief of *Zawngin* village, Lalzika also sent 4 (four) of his men to learn the tune of *Puma zai* from *Ratu* village. But, before reaching *Ratu* village they were able to learn it from Khawzadala’s village.

“Chief Lalzika became so fond of *Puma zai* that he commemorates it by organizing a feast killing a Mithun. From then on, the fame of *Puma zai* spread across each and every corner of Mizoram” (Ngurliana 134-135).

Liankhuma quoted Zawla's assumption that "When Edgar arrived to rescue Mary Winchester; he brought several servants with him. Among his servants, some men were from *Biate* village. Then this *Biate* song *Puma zai* was memorized by some Mizo men and they too began to sing along with it. It became famous and reached its peak during the year 1900 and later" (32).

L. Keivom was of the opinion that, "*Puma zai* was started by the people of *Biate* during their migration from the northern region while they settled in *Vairengte* village during the year 1830-1850" (Quoted by Thanmawia *Thuhlaril* 192).

The origin of *Puma zai* as described by Mizo historians are of different nature. However, it can be concluded from these stories that *Puma zai* came to be known by the Mizo in the later part of the 19th century and became famous during early part of the 20th century.

Puma zai captured the hearts of the Mizo people; the youths would sing and dance along with it even in the streets. It was enjoyed by all tribes and it brought harmony and unity among the people. It did not take long before it shook the entire Mizoram. It was also an important tool for the Chiefs of the non-Christian Mizo to use it against the Mizo Christians. They would compose songs relating to the disapproval of the gospel. It also hampered the growth of

Christianity as the Christian missionaries find it hard to gather people who would listen to their preaching on the words of God.

This influential nature of *Puma zai* which captivated the hearts of the people was described by Lalthangliana as “a kind of cultural revival which awakens a new dawn and which entails the true nature of the Mizo tribe” (*Mizo Hun* 75). It is true that *Puma zai* can be regarded as one of the forms of Cultural Revival (because most of the old folk songs are of simple tune with soft melody and the songs consist of two or three lines). Christianity brought about a completely different form of songs which slowly captured the heart of the people and eventually extending its value and respect among the people. These songs were of foreign languages which were translated into Mizo language by the Christian missionaries and that are why the tune and melody of the songs were completely different from the Mizo folk songs. The songs were intentionally composed for a specific purpose, these songs gained popularity and respect by virtue of the gospel and the traditional Mizo folk songs began to be neglected.

Many of the Mizo folk songs which were aligned with the nature and culture of the Mizo may be subdued for some time by the advent of Christianity, but they still hold a special place in the hearts of the people. That is why when *Puma zai* originated, it re-ignited the traditional values and captured the heart of the Mizo and brought back the true colors of the Mizo culture which again captured the hearts of the people within a short span of its evolution.

As time passed by, omitting the word *Puma* in *Puma zai* and by slightly changing the tune, many more new songs began to be composed. And the songs are named after the person who composed the tune and eventually different types of songs evolved with a slight rearrangement of tune from the original *Puma zai*.

3.3. *German Run Zai*: “This song originated during the year 1917. During this time 2500 Mizo bachelors were forced to join the British army to fight World War – I and were sent to France” (Thanmawia *Mizo Hla Hlui* 519). The songs are mainly composed by the Mizo soldiers who fought in the World War – I mentioning about the war, their loneliness and love songs as well. There are some songs composed by the lonesome ladies in their village longing for their bachelors who had gone to war.

It is very much similar to *Puma zai*. It originated during World War – I, when the Mizo were under the command of the British. Due to the break out of World War – I, the Mizo men were also deployed to fight under the command of the British against the Germans. *German run zai* illustrates the story of the Mizo soldiers; what they saw and felt during the war and how they expressed what they have encountered during their fight against the Germans for the glory of the British government.

The Mizo are few in terms of population and occupy a small area of the world’s geographical area and were not aware of the happenings across the other

continents. They mingled and fought in and around the small area thinking that there were no other tribes to challenge their existence. However, when they were forced to step foot beyond their territorial dominance and view the bigger picture of the world's scenario; they longed for their homes and loneliness took over their mind. When they reached Germany, they mumbled in despair thinking about their families and loved ones. All they could think about was to see their loved ones alive; how eager they were to go back home and their loneliness was not shared by the other soldiers of different country. Let us look at a song which shows their feelings during the war:

Ka nu tap zelin mi ring lawm ni?

German ral lian kulhpui dai kan tawn ni chuan

A surin ngen mu a sur sung sung.

(Meaning: Mother, do you think that I still cry out here? The day we fought against the German soldiers, bullets were coming upon us like rain.)

3.4. *Hrangchhawni Zai*: “Hrangchhawni was born in 1884 at *Hmawngkawn* village” (Thanmawia *Mizo Hla Hlui* 291) and “she died peacefully at Sialmat Churachanpur, Manipur on 9th May 1976 around 80 years of age” (Ibid 293).

Hrangchhawni was a fair and beautiful lady having a short physique; she was friendly and wise; and during her time she was admired not only by bachelors but also by married men. She was not only a good composer of songs, but also a very good singer and dancer and many would gather just to see her dance. One of her songs portrayed about the *Mautam tampui* (Famine) as seen below:

Kan pian a tlai nge a hma lam zawk?

Vanhnuai mi hrilh mautampui a len laiin

A intawng Chhingpuii u leng zun nen.

(Am I born too early or too late; why is it that bamboo famine occurs during my encounter with my love.)

When King Edward VII died in the year 1910, Hrangchhawni expressed the incident through a song which was believed to be the first song composed by her:

Kan Lal Edward-a a fam ta e,

Ngur zawng zawng leh ralvawng tleitir min sawm e;

Salam kan buk e, Aitlang zo daiah.

(Meaning: When King Edward died, everyone was invited to pay their respect towards him at his funeral. We pay tribute towards him on the hills of Aizawl.)

We can also see from some of Hrangchhawni's songs that she closely socialized with the people and that she also was the people's favorite, famous and her fame travelled far and wide across the land. When Chief Lalzika of *Buhban* heard off Hrangchhawni, he sends his trusted courtiers to invite Hrangchhawni to visit his village. She accepts the invitation and went to *Buhban* village where she was received with great honor.

The people of *Buhban* were not familiar with one of *Hrangchhawni zai* called *Rechheih zai* which was in sync to dance along with the beat of the song. Coupled with her being a good dancer, the people of *Buhban* were very attracted to it such that the audience could not be accommodated in the Chief's house. Hrangchhawni received gospel salvation while staying in *Buhban* village which was not approved by the Chief of the village and she was no longer allowed to stay in the village by Chief Lalzika.

Hrangchhawni was a wise and powerful lady because she had the ability to change the mindset of others who were against her and transformed them to faithfully stand by her side in the end. There was one incident of such nature while she resided in *Vanbawng* village. Business travelers from *Lamzawl* staying in *Vanbawng* village decided to meet Hrangchhawni in her resident. One of the travelers named Dokhuma, who was not amused by a female dancer decided to join his co-travelers. Later on, when Hrangchhawni heard about Dokhuma's attitude, she decided to entertain him after taking a few cup of *Zu* (Rice Beer)

together. She melodiously sung and beautifully danced along with her newly composed song, partly teasing Dokhuma with the slightest touch of her breast against him. Dokhuma was subdued by the moment of ecstasy he felt and he was even willing to stay up all night long to enjoy the dance. The song composed by Hrangchhawni that night is as shown below:

Chhingkhual valmawia ka tawng leh ta,

Ka lam ang e, lenchawm beng rawh Sawiluaipa

Sirva kal siam ang e, her liai-in.

(Meaning: I have once again met a handsome man from another village. Let the drummer beats his drums and I will dance to it, just like a bird turning around before taking off, I will dance so beautifully.)

Hrangchhawni was a wise and honest person who stood by what she considered is right. She had a good moral mindset and she never kept her thoughts to herself, but instead cried it out loud in the form of a song. During her time, *Hrangchhawni zai* was very popular among the people because it was a simple tune. It is interesting to note that, just mentioning her name was also very pleasing among the men in *Zu hmun* (a drink and entertainment place for the men).

3.5. *Chalmar Zai*: It evolved during the early period of the 20th century. It is also known as *Thingpui zai* (Tea Song). They are mainly satirical in nature. It is one of the famous and most important songs among *Puma zai*. It

highlights the true nature and meaning of *Puma zai*. It expresses the non approval of the Christian religion among the Mizo.

When Christianity entered the life of the Mizo, their lasting culture of drinking *Zu* (rice beer) together was change since the newly converted Mizo Christians started taking tea instead of *Zu* and that is why this type of songs are mainly about mockery towards others. One of the *Chalmar zai* is shown below:

Tinzu leh tinzu a dang mang e,

Nangni tinzu luarbawn thingpui hnahthel ro;

Tirhkoh meibulan a dut kuang kuang.

(Meaning: There lies a huge difference between your drinks and our drinks. Your drinks are made of dried tea leaves and they are also drank by the Christian missionaries.)

The song illustrates how the newly converted Mizo Christians started a new life style, following a different path compared to the old traditions of the *Mizo*. This was the time when the new teachings of the gospel brought about division and internal conflicts in the minds of the people. It brought about the clash of belief among the Mizo on whether to uphold their traditions or follow a new path according to the gospel. This argument was strongly pointed out and discussed by Siamkima, “*Rihdil* Lake has a significant place in the hearts of the Mizo; nonetheless, when the river Jordan flows through the hearts of the Mizo, it

eventually became the victor at the end. However, even though *Rihdil* has been defeated by river Jordan, it will not die in the hearts of the Mizo” (19). *Chalmar zai* is mainly about the mockery of the newly converted Christians by those who uphold the tradition of the ancient culture of the Mizo. *Chalmar zai* is very important in the history of the Mizo because it highlights the transition period of the Mizo and it will always be remembered in the Mizo history. It was given the name *Chalmar zai* base on the name of Allen Chalmar who was the manager of a tea garden in the *Cachar* area.

3.6. *Ramthar Zai*: These are songs about Christianity which portray the yearning for heaven. The approach of the song is very different from the other songs; however, it follows the same kind of tune as the old Mizo songs.

The advent of Christianity brought great changes in the structure of the Mizo folksong, the number of lines in the song; the stanzaic pattern and tune undergo great alteration. These changes succeeded the previous songs and in the meantime it brought about wisdom, knowledge and taught them about life and henceforth guided them in their daily way of life. Besides the various religious compositions, love songs between the youths, Patriotic songs began to be composed. The Mizo then eventually have a systematic classification of songs based on its nature, namely: Religious songs, Love songs, Pop songs, Patriotic songs, Propaganda songs and Political songs.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MIZO FOLK SONGS

The Mizo oral literature is fairly rich, even though the oral tradition of the Mizo has been modified by the written literature with the introduction of the Mizo alphabet by the Missionaries in 1894. A considerable amount of Mizo folk songs have survived and have been recorded by scholars and writers.

The various characteristics of Mizo folk songs show the nature and character as well as highlight the richness of the Mizo folk songs. However, it may be wrong to judge it with an in-depth and critical analysis based on today's written literature, since they are simple literature. That is why it is necessary to understand how we can define its various characteristics and how it is brought to light. And it is for this reason that we will study and acknowledge how the various Mizo folk songs can be identified and emphasized based on their various characters, quality and nature.

Closely looking into the earlier Mizo songs, we can clearly see that they have a sort of uniform and regular characteristics. Let us analyze some of the general characteristics of the Mizo folk songs.

Simplicity is the main trait of Mizo folk songs; they are characterized by simplicity of musical and poetical devices, and marked by the absence of embellishment. A prime quality of Mizo folk songs is straightforwardness in

textual form and style, simplicity of melody and rhythm. They are simple and easy to comprehend the implication of the song with freshness and life, briefly yet completely and suitably proportioned.

The early Mizo folks hourly communicate with nature and they are not exposed to the other world apart from their community. So, these songs reflected the daily routine, the cultural heritage of the Mizo people's mental and emotional sphere of their life. They found solace in what they saw, elude them from feeling of loneliness, eventually; their songs are connected with the simple life of the people. Intricate situation and complex composition are hardly seen in their early songs.

Looking into their history we notice that they do not have knowledge about other world other than their own. The trees and forests as well as the various animals and birds in their surroundings greatly influenced their mind set and are most frequently rendered in their songs. However, imagination and fantasy about the outside world beyond their settlement is hardly seen in their songs since they are confined to their settlement. The simplicity in their form and style demonstrates the simplicity of their attitude to life. It reveals the feelings and sentiments of the common people, their melancholy and struggle, anguish and bitterness, torments and anger in simple and straightforward manner.

The love songs which are among the loveliest, lyrical and most popular in the Mizo folk song repertory, are composed in a simple and direct approach. From an illustration of the following love song the message of love is expressed in a very simple and direct form:

Min la ngai maw, min la hawi ve maw?

Ka lungdi khan min la ngai ve maw?

(Meaning: I wonder if my love misses me and still longed for me.)

A good number of this simplicity characteristic is found in Children's game song, Nursery rhymes, Lullabies etc. These songs often use limited rhythms and a few musical varieties, and they may consist of only one musical line repeated many times.

These songs are one of the earliest songs of the Mizos. They are not composed out of practice or pre-planned, but are composed instantly, spontaneous outpour of the mother to put the baby to sleep.

A khi ah khian lungpui a lo lum dawn e,

Ka nauvi kha a delh ang e suan rawh u.

(Meaning: A big stone will be rolling down, so move my baby aside.)

Akin to its simplicity and its effortless sing-able tune, it has been recorded that there are more than a hundred different kind of tune in Mizo folk songs, but they mainly circle around a few musical notes. Most of the Mizo folksongs mainly circle around three to four musical notes. Thanmawi writes, “One of the musical instrument songs called *Dar hla* consist of only three notes” (*History of* 41). “The earlier tunes are simply constructed in a very straightforward character, having the note of mostly, ‘d’ ‘r’ and ‘m’ ” (Chhuanvawra 121).

Thus, the uncomplicated simplicity and sing-ability of the tunes make the song immensely popular among the folks. The songs are composed to fit their voice; the melodies touch them as something long familiar. This melody must come from the simple, homely, peasant folk and is surely the simplest of songs.

With regard to the range, they are fairly effortless even for an untrained voice as they are between three to eight tones. Mizo folk songs are also sung in a relaxed manner and easy voice. It is also characterized as strophic, wherein one melody is repeated for every stanza.

Different cultures have specific ways of arranging their folk songs; whatever may be the theme or form of the song they are categorized based on their characteristics. “When the early Greek composed on elegiac meter it is categorized as ‘Elegy’ even if it is a song about two persons in love or if it is a song about mourning” (Thanmawia *Lung* 77). Similarly, the Mizo have a regular

form of labeling folk songs which is characterized mainly by its tune and is termed as '*Hla bu*'. Songs having the same tune are kept under one category called '*Hla bu khat*', even though it consists of various nature and themes, based on their tune they mostly come under one category.

During those days not many people are blessed with the talent of making a beautiful tune; so if a person composed such melodious tune, different songs are composed by different persons based on the existing tune and the tune composer becomes the name benefactor of the song. For example, if we look into *Hrangchhawni zai* – We find a lot of songs categorized and grouped together in a single '*Hla bu*' called *Hrangchhawni zai*. But it is evident from these songs that all the songs are not composed by her since there are songs composed for her by other composers. The following song is composed by one of the elders of *Buhban* village named Tuka to greet her on the occasion of her visit to their village, he sings:

I hming kan sawina a rei ta e,

Tunah erawh kan tawng che Ngunpangpari;

Khawvel sawi Hrangchhawni dam reng rawh.

(Meaning: We have been talking about you for a very longtime and now we meet; Hrangchhawni, whose fame reached far and wide, the admiration of many; May you live a long life.)

Likewise, in *Darmani zai*, though the songs bear the name of Darmani, they are not composed by her. The story behind it is portrayed like this: Bachelor businessman once visited the village of Darmani, he and his lodging partner decided to visit the house of Darmani; unfortunately their plans were hampered by heavy wind and rain that night. The bachelor businessman pours out his grief and sadness that night in the form of a song and the so called *Darmani zai* originated. Based on this tune many songs were composed and they are all kept under one category called *Darmani zai*.

Darmani run kan tlawn lai chu tui zanah,

Kan tlawn thiam lo, kawlrrawn chhim thlipui;

Hrang dah ngai, chhim thlipui hrang dah ngai.

(Meaning: Due to heavy winds our plan was failed, it is sad; we could not visit her this night.)

The above song illustrates the heavy winds which stops them from visiting the house of Darmani on that faithful night. It is clear for the songs that it was composed by someone else who long for her company.

Darmani zai vangkhawpui tualah leng,

Neihchawng runah tlai ni tla lenpui maw?

Tlai ni tla lenpui maw, tlai ni tla.

(Meaning: Darmani Zai is so famous that it is even sung in the house of the riches whole day long.)

Long after *Darmani Zai* had become famous, another person emphasized on how he got influenced and inspired by it in the form of a song, but since the tune are the same, it is categorize under *Darmani zai*. These types of situation exist not only in *Darmani zai* but many more are seen in Mizo folk songs. So it is safe to presume that, “Even though there are a number of Folk songs, there exist a mere hundred of them if we categorize it based on its tune” (Thanmawia *Mizo Hla Hlui* 7). If we carefully study the Mizo folk songs, it consists of a handful of tunes in which different types of songs are composed based on these tunes which justify our acceptance that the Mizos do have a lesser folk songs based on its tune.

In the history of the Mizo Folk songs, the tune of the song had more significant value and influence compared to the composer of the song because even if the theme and nature of the song is completely different it is kept under one category since the tune of the songs are the same. The tune is given high importance and they are the main context of the song. Most of the tunes in the Mizo folk songs are soft and tender which can be sung and danced with in the social gatherings as well as tranquil moments. In *Awithangpa zai* we come across a song composed for a beautiful lady:

Tlei dang lungkham reng a awm lo ve,

Chaltuai chhai lai di a ni;

Tlei dang lo chantir suh u.

(Meaning: You are the one, above all, and whom every man seeks to fall in love with; let no one marry you before I do.)

In the mean time we also see a deep mournful song in *Awithangpa zai*:

Zu intawng maw, vankhua zu hmu ang maw e,

Leng za ang maw, chun riangi leh;

Awithang ka hrinhnianga e.

(Meaning: Will my dear son Awithanga and my lonesome mother who had passed away meet each other and unite once again in the land of the dead.)

Awithangpa's first song above portrayed love and relationship between two lovers while the latter points out his emptiness and sympathy for his dead mother and his imagination about his dead child whether they will meet in the dead man's village. Though these two songs contrast in theme and nature, they are both label under a single *Hla bu- Awithangpa zai* since they do have a similar tune. The main focus of interest in Mizo songs is on the musicality or the aesthetics of sound.

There are a few songs categorized under *Hla bu khat* not based on their tune but rather based on the nature and theme of the songs. For example, when a warrior killed an animal he chanted *Hlado*, it did not matter if the chant is long or short; if he chanted it for that occasion then it comes under the category of *Hlado*. Based on the kind of animal killed *Hlado* also are of different types and tune. If a foe is killed then all their chants come under the category of *Bawh hla*. *Hlado*, *Bawh hla*, *Salu lam zai*, *Dawi hla*, and *Thiam hla* are the type of songs in the Mizo folk songs which are categorized under *Hla bu khat* based on its nature and theme. Apart from these folk songs mentioned, all the other Mizo folk songs are labelled based on the tune of the song.

Another noteworthy character to be noted is that they are spontaneous composition. Since they are accustomed to composing different songs with the same tune, these songs are mostly composed instantly depending on what they do and see in their surroundings and are sung out instantaneously. While singing a song in groups the talented composer among them spontaneously compose new lines and recite them, these were sung by the whole group following the same tune they have started. Since it was not a premeditated or intended composition, there are differences in the length of the song and the regularity of meter is also not maintained. However, the singers themselves make adjustment to be in rhyme with the tune.

This type of illustration is clearly reflected in the *Hrangchhawni zai*. When the Chief of *Buhban* village, Lalzika came to know of the fame of Hrangchhawni, he was very keen to meet her; so he sent one of his best men along with gifts (i.e. money for her to buy herself new shirt and cloth) to invite her to his village. Hrangchhawni found it hard to turn down Chief Lalzika's invitation; so she decided to travel towards *Buhban* village along with the messenger and the men of Chief Lalzika. When they reached *Buhban*, Hrangchhawni could hear the people singing together with their drums in Lalzika's house in preparation for the *Chapchar Kut*. She hesitated to enter the house and sits in the Chief's veranda and the Chief was called out to greet her. While greeting the Chief, Hrangchhawni sang:

Filhpui hmingthangah khua kan chuan,

Lal bawrhsap pa lal lai ngur awi lamkhuangpui;

Chung vanrial rum emaw ka lo ti e.

{Meaning: We inhabit the famous hill top of *Chalfilh tlang*; the sound of the drums and dance inside the Chief's (Lalzika) house is so majestic as if it is the heavenly sound of a hailstorm. }

The Chief smiled at her and they entered his house. Hrangchhawni quickly changed into one of the traditional attire *Tawlhloh puan* and started to sing.

Chhingkhualah sakhmel ka uang lo ve,

Kan lo leng e di rial lo chawnpui pari,

Zia-am hlim chhing rawh leng tuaitiri.

(Meaning: I do not make fool of my gorgeousness in this village; however, I do have many who admire me; let me dance with my skirt lifted higher.)

There dance and merriment at that time was so overwhelming. As they sang and danced happily together; they even assumed that the lawn of the Chief was shaking to the rhyme and tune of their song and dance that day.

As illustrated above, we see that Hrangchhawni was able to compose a song instantaneously in rhyme with the previously existing tune which can be followed immediately by everyone. Since they used to sing this kind of instantly composed song the lyrics of the songs are also quite simple, easy to learn, lively in tune with their present situation and so they were very interested in such kind of songs. Mizo folk songs are spontaneous overflow of the composer's feelings, it may also be noted that there can be different composers at a time since the recital may be done by different persons.

One of the important features is that each stanza stands alone and they do not have any connection or meaning related to each other. Every stanza is unitary in nature. "Except for a few songs that are composed in a short narrative form, i.e. ballad, some of the *Chawngchen zai* and some of the songs named after

individual” (Thanmawia *Mizo hla hlui* 7). An example of such is illustrated in the following song from *Sa lam hlapui*:

Khisa tuk chhuak chhumpui zing hnuaiah

A ki riu riau riang lo thlawh nan a tha.

(Meaning: I saw a deer with beautiful horns in the forest; oh how I wish I had it for ploughing the fields.)

Va ko u, va ko u, ka pa Hminglian,

Rih chin tlangah va ko u ka pa Hminglian.

{Meaning: Go and call my father (who had died) from the hill top by the *Rih Dil Lake*.}

In the above illustration, we find that there are no relation between the first and the second stanza. The first stanza speaks about how good the *Ki* (horn) of a deer will be for ploughing the fields and how they want it so badly; the second stanza speaks about how they desperately needed to call back the deceased *Pa Hmingliana* from the dead man’s village. In spite of its contrasting theme, they are from the same song. So, we can see that the context of the song is given less priority than the tune.

One of the natures of the Mizo folk song is its subjective theme, the Subject-matter is concerned with the composer's own reflections and feelings. The manifestation uponed what the composer has seen or heard is echoed in the songs. Whatever the subject may be the poet's mind is centered on his own thoughts and feelings.

We can say that many of the Mizo folk songs are personal, the composer reveal their thoughts and experiences. But it is also safe to say that these composers talk about their past based on their experience and transform it in the form of a song. In this kind of songs, we see a lot of illustration where the composers convey their ego and presumed themselves to be above average compared to the common men and women of their time.

In the case of *Hlado* we come across a situation where the slayer of the animal extols himself and proclaims himself above common men; his chants are normally attribute to himself, as being elevated than other men. As seen in the case of *Savawm Hlado* where the warrior chants about his greatness compared to others:

Vawmphuai e, huk dum dum a,

Vala ka lungphang na hlah maw;

Kei chu e, thangdu chuan thawn,

Ka hming e, rualin hril naw che maw.

(Meaning: I do not tremble even before a roaring wild bear; I will be recognized as a brave warrior by many.)

In the case of *Bawh hla* the person who takes the head of his foe chants about his victory and accomplishment above the dead body of his foe.

Kei che e, ka sentet e,

Sa leh doral ka pianpui e;

Ka do ve, rimnam pa e,

Thangchem e, ai kim mi ti ulaw.

(Meaning: I was born to be a great hunter for animals and a predator towards my foes; so I eventually will kill many more foes.)

Bawh hla can be chanted only by the person who took the head of his foe. He himself cannot chant it whenever he feels like it; if the place of his victory is safe from the rest of his enemy, only then he can chant it with his head held high keeping his foot on the dead foe. He chants it again before entering his village to show that he is victorious in his fight against those foes and only then he can enter the village along with his accomplishments. This is the reason why *Bawh hla* is chanted on the out skirt of their village and their guns are fired to notify their people of their victory. Then the people of their village came to understand their achievement and welcome them with their best attire and gifts. They again make their chants in a place called *Mi lu aihna* (celebration of the enemy's head when a

warrior killed his enemy) where the head of a Mithun or a pig is used in place of the foe's head. This is also the day when they commemorate the great warriors; so these warriors held their head up high keeping themselves above the rest to be adored and respected. Even their *Bawh hla* are of self appraisal, and prestige which influence the common people to hold them at high esteem among others.

Songs like *Chai hla*, *Chawngchen hla*, *Salulam zai*, and personally named songs are songs where the composer of the song are mentioned and it is them who gives respect and acceptance to their songs which highlighted the importance of the composers. *Hlado* and *Bawh hla* are songs which depict the personal ego and greatness of an individual while *Chai hla*, *Chawngchen zai* and personally named songs are songs which depict struggle, compassion, and sympathy. In one of *Awithangpa zai* we see:

Kan lenlai nghil nghiala di kan chhai,

Hai ang tar leh sakhmel chul tur Awithangpa'n;

Ka dawn khawl, lung reng a awi thei lo.

(Meaning: During our youthful days we played with the hearts of someone we like; when I think about the days when Awithangpa will eventually get old and loose his attraction, I can't help but feel sad.)

In the above lines, the composer's self sympathy and misery in his life thinking about the future is reflected. The song is purely subjective in nature, as

the picture of the self and his thoughts are expressed. Sadness, grievance, and melancholy are often a central character in folk songs all over the world. P.B Shelley has quote a famous line, “Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought” (‘To a skylark’, *the Oxford* 451). Likewise, in the Mizo folk songs despondency and grievances of the composer’s feelings are the ones that create the most beautiful verse.

In the study of Mizo folk songs we cannot abandon the partaking of the women folk. It is presumed that in the Mizo history, the status of the women is not at par with the men. The women had no voice in social administration, whether at home or in the community and even if she had, it was never approved by the male folk. Some of the traditional sayings clearly highlight the attitudes of the men towards women; “*Hmeichhe thu, thu ni suh, chakai sa, sa ni suh*” which means “A crab’s meat is not regarded as meat, likewise, the words of women is also not a word to be considered”.The women were under the autocratic dominance of men.As already highlighted in chapter I, women seldom sit idle in the early Mizo society. When they are free from household chores, they bring out their spinning wheels to weave cloth.

However, in the context of songs named after women, it is important to note that the names of the women are far more in number compared to men’s and the majority of them are composed and named after women. They are not only great in number, but it is noteworthy to mention that the most famous folk songs

of the Mizos named after personal names are of women. These songs cover all aspects of life particularly the long cherished dreams of a woman, her aspirations, fears, love and longings in the heart.

Songs named after personal names greatly highlighted the participation of women in the history of the Mizo songs as evident from the fact that Thanmawia “had pointed out 30 names of the women folk under personally named songs, in the mean time, we find only 19 songs named after men, 10 of them belong to the renowned warriors of their time and were classified under *Pasalthate hla* (Songs of great warrior), leaving only 9 of them which are solely based on common men” (*Mizo hla hlui* 11-12). These facts truly point out the significance of women in the history of the Mizo folk songs. A woman's sentiments are nimbly woven into the fine fabric of the folk songs of the Mizo.

In the Mizo society a woman who commits adultery are termed as *Uire* (adulteress) and are looked down upon by the society. In such circumstances the wife has to leave the house of the husband empty handed if he does not forgive her. It is noteworthy to mention that, a good number of songs from *Lianchhiari zai* reveal such action of adultery which she committed with her lover Chawngfianga. She boldly sung her longings for her lover Chawngfianga even after she was married to another person.

The women in Mizo folk songs even brought about social changes. We can see this reflection in the case of Laltheri's story. Her songs contributed extensively to the social protest against the growing class discrimination facilitated by the repressive village chief. She brought about a change in the social status of the Mizo women through her songs. She was the daughter of a powerful Chief, Lalsavunga but broke tradition by falling in love with Chalthanga, a commoner, who was beheaded at the behest of her angry brothers. Laltheri protested against the murder by refusing to wear clothes and abstaining from food.

Her songs clearly declare the depth of her feelings. Her powerful grieving finally touched the hearts of her proud Sailo brothers. And the Chief Vanhnuailiana, her brother, agreed that such cruel incidents would not take place in future. A more detailed study of the protests songs of Laltheri is seen in the following chapter.

Another characteristic of Mizo folk songs that can be highlighted is the use of parallelism. Parallelism is defined as, "The arrangement of similarly constructed clauses, sentences, or verse lines in a pairing or other sequence suggesting some correspondence between them, the effect of parallelism is usually one of the balanced arrangement achieved through repetition of the same syntactic forms" (Baldick 183).

Mizo folk songs are mainly composed in Couplet, triplet and Quatrain, in these line we often see repetition from the previous line a word, phrase or sentences to support the previous line to make a more impressive conclusion. This is commonly seen in *Chawngchen zai*, *Dar hla*, *Sa lu lam zai* and *Chai hla* (Lung 81). Let us illustrate one famous *Chawngchen zai* where we also observe a beautiful reflection of parallelism:

Ka ngai, ka ngai mang e, ka ngai mang e,

Ka lungdi ngunkualbuni ka ngai mang e.

(Meaning: I miss my love, I long for my love, Oh how I long for my love.)

Ka dawn lo, ka dawn lo ve, ka dawn lo ve,

Lungdi ngaiin siktui thiang ka dawn lo ve.

(Meaning: I cannot drink, no; I cannot drink even the pure water because I am missing my love so much.)

Mizo Folk songs are rich and diverse which reveal their entire life. The whole life of the people, the rudiments of their temperament, their feelings; about their concerns, their agony and their pleasure; the nature of the people as a whole and as an individual separately are reflected in their folk songs. It generally reflects the everyday life of the common folks and tells stories of the common folks, their simple lives and how they go about with their everyday life are

reflected in a very simple form. And just like many other folk songs all over the world, the subjects of the Mizo folk songs are very much linked to nature.

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CHAPTER 3

CLASSIFICATION OF MIZO FOLK SONGS

Folk songs characterize customs and characteristics of a certain community through musical expressions. Classification of folk songs is an important step to preserve this heritage as it unfurls the enormous significance of folk songs in the understanding of the structure and function of society. The need for a universal classification of folk songs is becoming more and more important to preserve them for a more systematic and technical study. Dundes writes on the importance of classification in folkloristic studies in *Folklore, Critical Concept in Literary and Cultural Studies*, “One of the great accomplishments of folklorists lies in the area of classification” (3).

Musicologists have taken up interest in the study of folk songs, primarily with the purpose of classifying melodies into collection of tunes that have a similarity in the group of oral transmission. Music classification has been taken up in recent time using a variety of machine learning approaches. Researchers have used a number of features and methods in their attempts to computerize this process of folk song. In some cases, these kinds of ‘Automatic music classification’ have led to almost perfect form of the classifications produced by expert musicologists. Folk songs are a blending of words and music, the ideal classification method for folk songs should merge music and words. To have this ideal system it is the duty of musicologists and folklorists to take up a combined

study in both levels of music and words. Until then, folk songs are usually classified manually by scholars who have knowledge and experience in the area.

Folk songs were classified in various ways by writers and scholars according to their own regional convenience. Let us illustrate some of the classifications done by various writers of different regions:

Chinese ethnomusicologists have made a classification of Hans Chinese Folk Song by their type following a three-fold classification system namely; “*Haozi* (Work songs), *Shange* (Mountain songs) and *Xiaodiao* (Lyric songs). Each type was further divided into sub-types:

I. *Haozi* (Work songs):

- 1). Transporting Songs.
- 2). Construction Songs.
- 3). Farming Songs.
- 4). Sailing and Fishing Songs.
- 5). Miscellaneous Songs.

II. *Shange* (Mountain songs):

- 1). General Songs.
- 2). Herding Songs.
- 3). Field Songs.

III. *Xiaodiao* (Lyric songs):

- 1). Narrative Songs.
- 2). Little Songs.
- 3). Popular Songs. (Huang 113-121)

In *Classification and Structure of Maithili Folksongs* had classified Maithili folk songs into seven groups: “Songs representing the life-cycle events, Songs representing the annual calendar of events, Seasonal songs, Wisdom songs, Devotional songs, Songs of love and beauty, Songs of glory”. (Mishra)

In the mean time, Nityanand Patnaik, in his book *Folklore of Tribal Communities* make classification of *Santali* Songs in 11 (eleven) categories:

1. Social Songs
2. Ritual Songs
3. Cultivation Songs
4. Love Songs
5. Wedding Songs
6. Divorce Songs
7. Santals and Sex Songs
8. Bonga Lover
9. Religious and Semi-religious Songs
10. Marriage Songs
11. Love of Flowers and Birds (49-73)

He further gives the classification of the Hill *Kharias* Songs in 4 (four) categories:

1. Marriage Songs
2. Doli/Doll Songs
3. Changu Songs
4. Jhumer (128 & 129)

M.V.Vishnu Namboodiri in *Folk songs, songs of myth and reality* classify Malayalam folk songs into 4 (four) categories as:

1. *Samudayikapattu* (Communal / racial song),
2. *Anushtanapattu* (Ritualistic song),
3. *Vinodapattu* (Song for games and entertainments)
4. *Panipattu* (Labour song). (36-37)

Archer Taylor in *Lists and Classifications of Folksongs* cited an example of a very instructive classification made by James Ross in *A Classification of Gaelic Folk Song*. Ross classifies folk songs into 4 (four) big categories, namely: Theme, Structure, Folk aetiology and Song function. These four broad classifications are further classified into sub categories as follows:

I. Theme –

1. Songs with an inter-sexual aspect:

- (i). Love songs (General)
- (ii). Matchmaking songs
- (iii). Night visit songs
- (iv). Pregnancy songs
- (v). Rejection songs
- (vi). Complaints.

2. Songs relating to the physical environment –

- (i). Hunting songs
- (ii). Homeland songs
- (iii). Topographical songs.

3. Panegyric –

- (i). Eulogy
- (ii). Elegy
- (iii). Lament.

4. Satire –

- (i). Diatribe (Aoir)
- (ii). Flyting.

5. Songs of miscellaneous themes –

- (i). Religious songs
- (ii). Bacchanalia
- (iii). Jacobite songs
- (iv). Merry songs.

II. Structure –

1. Ballads –

- (i). Heroic ballads
- (ii). Sailors' ballads (Placename songs)
- (iii). Soldiers' ballads.

2. Macaronics

3. Pibroch (Bagpipe) songs

4. Puirt-a-beul (Mouth-music)

III. Folk aetiology –

- (i) Fairy songs

IV. Song function -

- 1. Songs associated with ritual –

- (i). Hogmanay songs
- (ii). Charms and incantations.

2. Occupational songs –

- (i). Cradle songs
- (ii). Milking songs
- (iii). Palming or clapping songs
- (iv). Rowing songs
- (v). Spinning songs (Taylor 11-12).

Every community has various kinds of approach to their folk songs. Different societies put diverse kinds of emphasis or attach different kinds of significance in classifying their songs. It is a rather complicated task to classify the Mizo folk songs into separate categories. Sometimes the same kinds of songs belong to different categories. It is also natural for a song to have conflicting functions; these are the many reasons for the diversity of folk songs. “The Mizo folk songs according to an indigenous system of classification list about one hundred types of folk songs” (Laruanga *A study* 32).

One of the most common classifications of Mizo folk songs is its chronological classifications. This kind of classification cannot be trusted in terms of its accurateness as the compositions of the major part of folk songs were mere hypothesis. Archer Taylor had included a chronological list in his

classification suggesting two ways to make such list “(1) lists arranged according to the dates when the individual songs were composed (such dates are obviously based on conjectures having various degrees of plausibility), and (2) lists arranged according to the dates when the song was published, alluded to, or otherwise indicated to have existed” (20). Chronological study has become not only complex but suspect especially with regards to the origin of song and so, instead of dwelling on the chronological constraint, it makes a better sense to trace the different song types and classify them as characterized within the Mizo folk.

Since the introduction of written literature, the pioneer writers like the British administrators and the Mizo historians have taken step in preserving the folk songs by collecting and putting them in writings. But, it is unfortunate to say that till date, there have been only a few scholars and writers who have taken up a systematic classification apart from listing and compilations. According to Lalruanga, the traditional way of classifying Mizo folk songs are as follows:

1. Songs bearing names of individuals.
2. Songs named after merry and festive occasions.
3. Songs named after tribes.
4. Songs bearing the name of objects.
5. Songs named after villages or outlying countries.
6. Songs bearing musical instruments.
7. Songs named after the modulation of the voice.

8. Songs bearing after expedition, war and hunting.

(Traditional 168-183)

Besides this traditional ways of classification he further classified the Mizo folk songs of various types in the following categories:

1. Songs of love and yearning, songs of a lyrical nature.

2. Songs of mourning and lamentation.

3. Ballad.

4. Songs connected with festivals.

5. Songs connected with hunting.

6. Songs of satirical nature.

7. Songs connected with infants and children

(A study 60)

R.L Thanmawia classified Mizo folk songs in the following manner:

1. *Dar hla*

2. *Naupang hla*

3. *Hla chham chite:*

(i). *Hlado*

(ii). *Bawhhla*

(iii). *Thiam hla*

(iv). *Dawi hla*

4. *Puipunnaa sak chite:*

(i). *Chawngchen zai*

(ii). *Chai hla*

(iii). *Salu lam zai*

(iv). *Puma zai leh a siperte*

5. *Mimal hmingchawi hlate.*

(*History 27-38*)

Keeping in view the ways of classification made by different scholars and writers mentioned above, we will classify the Mizo folk songs considering their structure, function and theme. The thematic classifications will be dealt with in the next chapter; the following are the various types of classification made for intense studies.

1. Structure

1.1. *Thawnthu Hla* (Ballad)

1.2. *Rimawi Hla* (Musical instruments songs)

2. Function

2.1. *Naupang Hla* (Children's song)

2.2. *Thiam Hla* (Invocations)

2.3. *Dawi Hla* (Incantations)

2.4. *Kut Hla* (Festive Songs)

3. Theme

3.1. Major themes:

3.1.1. Love

3.1.2. Hunting & War

3.1.3. Laments

3.1.4. Satire

3.1.5. Nature

3.2. Minor Themes:

3.2.1. Patriotic

3.2.2. Protest

3.2.3. Courting

1. Structure:

1.1. *Thawnthu Hla* (Ballad): The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms defines ballad as, “Folk songs or orally transmitted poem telling in a direct and dramatic manner some popular story usually derived from tragic incident in local history or legend. The story is told simply, impersonally and often with vivid dialogue” (Baldick 24). Twin Hag also gives the definition and mentions the subject of a ballad as, “A narrative folk song. The ballad is traced back to the Middle Ages. Ballads were usually created by common people and passed orally due to the illiteracy of the time. Subjects for ballads include killings, feuds, important historical events, and rebellion” (18). “The origin of Ballad is

from the late Latin and Italian word ‘Ballare’, meaning ‘to dance’. It is a song that tells a story and originally was a musical accompaniment to a dance” (Cuddon 71).

Ballad is a narrative form of poetry which evolved from Folk Literature. It is one of the oldest forms of song in the English Literature. In literal explanation, it is a story communicated in the form of a song or story teller songs. One of the characteristic of a Ballad is that a particular line of the song keeps on repeating in almost every verse of the song. Ballad regularly expressed the character as it is without any misrepresentation or falsification.

As indicated in Mizo history, the people are fond and passionate towards singing, known for singing and composing under different circumstances or situations. The Mizo have a good number of *Thawnthu hla* even in the preliterate period. Among the Mizo most popular ballads, a number of them were from *Chai hla* like – *Lalvunga zai*, *Mangkhaia zai*, *Lallula zai*, *Neihlaia zai*, *Lera zai* and *Thailungi zai*. Apart from these *Chai hla* there are also some popular ballads bearing the names of individual, namely – *Duhmanga & Dardini zai*, *Lianchhiari zai*, *Laltheri zai*, *Chawngvungi zai*, *Darthiangi & Chertuala zai*, *Chhingpuii zai*, *Tuchhingpa zai* etc. These popular ballads were transmitted orally, which disclosed the way of living and culture of the Mizo in earlier days.

From the above popular Ballad let us study some of the most significant ones:

1.1.1. *Lalvunga zai*: This song is a story about the tragic end of Chief Lalvunga. While he was residing in *Farzawl*, Lalvunga known as the attractive Chief had a quarrel with Lianpuia for chieftainship. Lianpuia was exiled from *Farzawl* as he was suspected in the death of Lianchia who was famous for his good looks. Lianpuia made an alias with other Chiefs for the fall of Lalvunga. He invited Lalvunga to *Farkawn* Village for Peace Treaty, where a close kin widow Huallianpari took Lalvunga as her guest. She informed Lalvunga of the plan Lianpuia had for him and told him to run back to his village as Lianpuia planned to murder him. But Lalvunga replied, “I came for a Peace Treaty, let them kill me if it is their wish, I do not run in the face of foes”. Just as he was warned, Lalvunga was killed. *Lalvunga zai* evolved base on this story:

Lalvunga'n ka lian a ti Farzawl a luah,

A luah sual e changsial sawmthum an la e.

(Meaning: Chief Lalvunga, you think that you are powerful and occupied *Farzawl* village; but you are wrong, they have taken thirty of your Mithun, what a sad outcome.)

Tlan rawh, tlan rawh Lalvung tlan rawh ral an ti,

Tualkhel ralah Lalvung ka tlan ngai lo ve.

(Meaning: Chief Lalvunga was warned many a times to withdraw as his foes were planning to kill him; instead, he chooses to face his foes saying, “He do not withdraw before a common foe”, but it eventually met to his death.)

Lalvunga nu tap tap lo la I chau vang,

I fa Lalvung sahlamah uai zo ta e.

(Meaning: Lalvunga’s mother, there is no point in lamenting now; your son is dead and you have lost him; his head is already hung in *Sahlam*.)

The above mentioned songs narrates the tragic story of the brave Chief Lalvunga, they are satirical in nature and deals with the subject of killings, feuds and sufferings.

1.1.2. *Mangkhaia Zai*: “Mangkhaia was the son of Mangthawnga the Chief of *Champhai* village” (Thanmawia *Mizo hla hlui* 171). There was lots of war and killings during the reign of Chief Mangkhaia. He was captured during his youth by the enemy; he became very lonely viewing his village from where he was held captive. He even though that his father had forgotten about him since he did not immediately negotiated for his release. His frustration towards his father is reflected in some of his songs. He also seems to be an attractive man since most women are infatuated towards him and what seem to be the words of love from these women were highlighted in some of his songs.

Ka lungdi ka zawl ka ti lem love,

Lanu suihlung a leng tam na e.

(Meaning: I am not saying that I made love affair with all my previous lovers but there are many who longed for me.)

Min hruai ve la i pa khawzawlah

Hmun in lai tha min luahtir ve rawh

(Meaning: Oh how I wish that you would take me to your father's beautiful village and give me a piece of land to settle on my own.)

Mangkhaia's father Mangthawnga decided to pay for his son's ransom but could not come to an agreement since they demanded some more. Mangkhaia became lonelier since he was held captive for a long time and continued to compose more songs. Finally, Dara and Mangthawnga come to an agreement on the ransom of Mangkhaia and Mangthawnga prepared himself to pay for his son's ransom.

Mangthawnga informed every village along the way that he and his son will be travelling the same path on their return, but unfortunately forgot to mention it in *Bualte* village and Mangkhaia was killed as a foe on their return. There are 2 (two) stories told behind the dead of Mangkhaia. In one of the story, there was a widow who tells Mangkhaia that she was ready to take him home if he

was willing to take her as his wife. Mangkhaia on his eagerness to go home agree with her. Then together they travelled towards Mangkhaia's village. On the third day of their travel, Mangkhaia began to regret his decision and felt ashamed to take a widow home as his wife because he was the son of a Chief and known for his good looks. Out of anger, the widow convinced the people of *Bualte* village and Mangkhaia was killed by them.

Bualte sahlama uai ta hnu kha,

Mangkhaia kirin ka ring lo ve,

(Meaning: His head is put up in the *Sahlam* (Victory post) of *Bualte* village, Mangkhaia will no longer return.)

Mangkhaia kirin ka ring lo ve,

Tui leh luang kirin ka ring zawk e.

(Meaning: It is more likely that the rivers would flow in reversed direction than Mangkhaia coming back to life.)

1.1.3. *Neihlaia zai*: Neihlaia was mostly popular because of his possession of *Zawlaidi* (the name of a philter). Even though the songs were named after him, most of the songs were composed by others. Not much is known about his parents and ancestors except that he had a sister who played an important role in Neihlaia zai. In the story he is depicted as owning a *Zawlaidi* which he had paste in an endless band and tied it in the path of the village water

point. But unfortunately his sister Zawlmangi was the one to touch this band and was under the spell of the *Zawlaidi*. She then composed many love songs expressing her longing for her brother and became famous for it. These songs came to be known as *Neihlaia zai*.

Neihlaia'n tuanghrui a zam,

Umtui phurin Siali'n lam vat awn chhin

(Meaning: Neihlaia had tied a rope of *Zawlaidi*, which was accidentally touched by me, while visiting the village water point.)

Zawlmangi became more and more infatuated to her brother and was unable to control her feelings towards him; she eventually got pregnant but Neihlaia decided not to spoke about it because of its unacceptable nature.

Ka u Neihlai chun rawh,

Pha pha lo la "Ka zawl tak e" lo ti la.

(Meaning: Dear Brother, do not deny it any longer, just admit and tell that we made love.)

One of the song revealed that his sister wished to spent the night on the outskirts of their village on his wedding night.

Neihlaia thai sel zarah,

Khawte daiah zan sial ang riah nuam ing e.

(Meaning: I cannot imagine how frustrated I will be on the night of Neihlaia's marriage; I'd rather sleep on the outskirts of the village just like a Mithun.)

The following song reflects Zawlmangi's admiration and attraction towards his brother and drew a beautiful metaphor from a flower *Zamzo* to emphasize his fairness.

Buk tualah zamzo ka phun,

A par a tha Neihlaia hmel te lo ang.

(Meaning: I planted a *Zamzo* flower next to my *jhum* hut; it beautifully blooms just like the face of Neihlaia.)

1.1.4. *Duhmanga leh Dardini Zai*: This song is about the famous story *Duhmanga leh Dardini*. Duhmanga was the son of a Chief while Dardini was the daughter of a widow. Even though Duhmanga was desperately in love with Dardini, his parents could not accept their love and instead forced him to marry Saikii, the daughter of the Chief's Adviser.

Later Duhmanga eventually married Dardini because of his abiding love for her. While he was away hunting for a number of days, his parents withdrew

his marriage to Dardini. That did not stop Duhmanga from loving Dardini, instead made him realize how much he loved her. But Dardini's mother, afraid of being a nuisance for the Chief built a barrier around their house so that no one can enter their house. But that does not stop Duhmanga and Dardini from loving each other, and they expressed their love towards one another through songs. In the end, Duhmanga's heart could not take it anymore and he climbed over the barrier to spent time with his beloved Dardini. But then again, Dardini's mother thinking of their own safety decided to leave their village with her daughter while Duhmanga was away hunting.

Pa ro pakhat I sang chem. Hrin,

Naan laiah lung thawr thla maw,

Kim lian runah kan tlawng fawm chu.

Nang chu e lungthli tumkheng ai chi,

Kei be tu vaihlia nganbawm bang,

Tah hriam zei tik dai lai in maw.

(Meaning: You and I are not of the same status, and I am privilege to have met you, but the loneliness is hard to bare; I don't even know how this loneliness will eventually pass me by.)

Duhmanga and Dardini's song are primarily their love for each other which were expressed and composed by various composers and were mostly

composed in the *Lai* (*Pawi* – one of the clan of Mizo) language, which suggest that they appeared before the Mizo crossed the river *Tiau*.

From the different ballad cited above we can see that the Mizo ballad does not follow the type of stanzas as seen in the English ballad and does not follow all the regular form of the English ballad. But, there exist certain similarity in most Ballads with rich narrative form. The theme mainly point toward the story of love and war. They narrate the tragic incident in local history or legend but are short length and incomplete.

1.2. *Rimawi Hla* (Musical instruments songs): Mizo have various types of musical instruments, “they are roughly divided into beating or striking instruments, wind instruments and string instruments” (Thanmawia 38). The Mizo percussion instruments were *Khuang*, *Dar*, *Seki*, *Talhkuang* and *Bengbung*. The wind instruments include *Phenglawng*, *Rawchhem*, *Tumphit*, *Mautawtawrawt* and *Buhchangkuang*. The stringed instruments are *Tingtang*, *Lemlawi* and *Tuium dar*. Among them, *Khuang* (Drum) is the musical instrument which is used most frequently and *Dar* (Gong) was the most valued and most precious of them. *Dar* was usually used in public gathering. *Darkhuang*, *Darmang*, *Darbu*, and *Darbenthek* (*Darsumsil*) were the most common and were regularly used by them.

As the name suggested, these songs were performed with a musical instrument called *Dar*. The year and time of its origin is not known. It is belief

that the Mizo came across *Dar* (Bronze metal plate) during their settlement with or when they came in close relationship with the *Kawl* people (Burmese). In *Dar hla*, it is not about the wordings or meaning of the songs but the melody and tune of the song which was important to the composers. In a musical instrument called *Dar bu*, there are three sets of *Dar*, while *Darkhuang* is a single instrument which is played to give extra harmony to other instruments, though playing it alone also does give a majestic sound. *Dar bu* is a set of three different instruments which gives out three different tunes: ‘do-re-mi’; the perfect sound and perfect tune of *Dar bu* together with a clear loud sound is valued even more. It is important to note that *Dar* was also one of the most valued items among the Mizo valuable possessions.

As mentioned earlier, the sound is the main concern in *Dar hla* and the wordings are also composed based on the tune. Songs like *Chhimbu leh peng peng in tu tu*, does not have much significant meaning, so it can be assumed that it is one of the earliest to be composed. Songs composed after crossing *Tiau* (Border of Burma) began to have more meaning in its lyrics. Some of the well known *Dar hla* were *Ngunte thi*, *Chawngvungi man tam e*, *Kal rawh, kal rawh*, *Chhi I teng teng*, *Kan Lal lai*, *Kinga lu thle lekah*, *Mithi rawp chawi* etc.

Dar hla is usually sung during days of important festivals, times of religious ceremonies, rituals and sacrifices. Besides this *Dar* were also used to determine the price of a woman at times of marriages.

Among the various types of *Dar*, let us study some which have specific names after it, such as *Darkhuang*, *Darmang*, and *Darbu*. Some have interesting stories behind them, like how it causes war and how friendship between two Chiefs last forever because of them. Though we cannot portray each and every one of them, let us study some of the most significant and popular among them by learning the various uses and occasions when they were played.

1.2.1. *Darkhuang*: The size of *Darkhuang* may vary: the bigger the size of the *Darkhuang*, the louder the sound and it indicates a greater magnificence. It was played occasionally to be in tune with the sound of drum and singing. It was mainly played the whole day when celebrating the death of foe, during *Khuallam* dance, on the death of a person, on the day of *Sakei aih* and *Sapui thlah*. It was also played on the court yard of *Thangchhuah pa* and also played occasionally to be in tune with *Darbu* during social gatherings and festivals.

1.2.2. *Darmang*: The size of *Darmang* ranged from a very small size to a bigger size in systematic proportions. It could be owned by ordinary people, so there can be four to five or even more in a single village. It was played in a single beat or played in rhythmic tune to the beat of two or three of them played simultaneously. It was played to be in tune with the rhythmic beat of *Khuallam*, and also when *Sapui* (wild beast) was killed. It was played on the

outskirt of the village while chasing a Tiger. The people used to play two to three of them together along with *Khuang* (Drum) and other musical instruments.

1.2.3. *Darbu*: *Darbu* are of three types which differs in regard to the sound it make, namely, *Aw-pui* (Big voice), *Aw-lai* (Medium voice) and *Aw-te* (Small voice). They were played in such a way that all three were in tuned with one another. It was played with either a song or just a tune. In *Darbu hla*, there were some which have a significant connotation to it while there were also songs which did not have much meaning but the melody of the tune was very pleasing to the ear. *Darbu* were presumed to be the most precious among the *Dar*. They were played during the occasion of *Sechhun Khuangchawi*, the occasion of *Ral aih* and *Sakei aih*, and while celebrating the death of a foe. It is played continuously during day and night on the occasion of *the death the villagers* and also played during the time of *Cheraw* (Mizo traditional dance) dance.

There are various kinds of *Darbu*, among them the most significant and most popular ones are *Siallam dar* and *Liando dar*. Now, let us look into the *Dar hla* which have interesting stories behind it.

The origin of *Liando dar* is not known. It is notable to mention that *Chawngthu* Chief Lersia possessed it during his settlement at *Vanlaizawl* village.

Lersia requested his younger brother Singaia to sell *dar* and others along with necklaces. But unfortunately, Singaia was swallowed by a python in *Tiau*.

One of the Mizo legend narrates an interesting story about Liandova possessing the gong in the following manner. Liandova and his brother Tuaisiala were left an orphan when their father passed away as their mother remarriage to another man. Being an orphan, they live a miserable life. They were ridiculed by their fellow villagers as they were so poor. On one such occasion their whole community went hunting where they came across a big python. They all walked over it without noticing it. Liandova's brother noticed the eye of the python and told his brother which was at first not accepted by him. But later he proved that it was a python and disclosed it to the other villagers.

The villagers did not believe him at first, but later realized that it was true. They killed the python and distribute the meet among themselves. Liandova and his brother did not get a good meat for their share; instead they were given the stinking stomach. They go further down the stream with there share with tears in Liandova's eyes. Tuaisiala began to cut open the stomach and to their surprise it was filled with great treasures. There was a set of gong and some necklaces, so the suddenly become one of the riches person in their village. This is the legend of how one of the most precious gongs came to be known as *Liando dar*.

One of the *Darbu* was called *Liando dar*. And the other *Darbu* was named after the price of Liandova's wife Tuaichawngi and was called *Tuaichawngi dar*. The necklaces were also named after his brother Tuaisiala, *Tuasial thi*.

Liando Dar consists of two *Dar* which were of *Aw-pui* (Big voice) and the other which resembled both *Aw-lai* (Medium voice) and *Aw-te* (Small voice). When Liandova and his brother Tuaisiala took possession of *Liando Dar*, they were settling in the village of *Lungbel* which was under the reign of Hautuala, the Chief of *Chuauhang* clan. They must be very overwhelmed that they have the *Liando dar* since they played it occasionally fearing that others might hear of it. But eventually, others became curious of the sound and began to enquire about it, asking what kind of gong they were playing, *Dar enge in tum?* (Meaning - What kind of gong do you play). They replied by saying, "We are not playing any gong but we are just making sound with some poor gourd". Their cautious reply was made into a song and it was later used as *Dar tum hla*, as shown below:

Liandote unau unau,

Dar enge in tum in tum?

Dar engmah kan tum love,

Liando bur chhe te kan tum kan tum.

(Meaning: Liandova and his brother, what a gong is that you played? We played no gong, it is not a real gong, it is just Liando's poor gourd which

we sound like a gong.) – The rendering of the song in tonic solfa is seen in page 232.

These *Dar* were under the possession of Liandova and his brother for a time. While they settled in the village of *Vangchhe*, Liandova's wife was murdered by the people of *Vangchhe* and so to take revenge among the people of *Vangchhe*, Liandova seek the help of Kawlha, the Chief of *Selesih* and gave him these *Dar* in exchange. And so later on it was under the possession of Kawlha, and Seipuia, the Chief of *Khantlang* composed a song towards it:

Duh leh kan Mangai darpui chu kal raw se,

A aia tha Liando darpui tha hmingthang,

Kan lallai runah rum vung vung.

(Meaning: We may have lost our famous gong, but now we got an even better gong called *Liando dar* which we play loudly in our Chiefs house.)

After this, the famous war between the Northerners and the Southerners broke out between the descendents of Rolura and Lalula. And one of the reasons the war broke out was presumed that it was because of the obsession of Vuta to possess the *Liando dar*. According to one of the *Khawnglung* song composed by the Chief of *Khawnglung*, who later was captured by the *Pawih*. It can be noted that *Liando Dar* was kept in high esteem as seen in the song below:

*Kan pu la Vut nunrawnga vangin,
 Liando dar vangin,
 Thlangtiang chinlai doral min chan e,
 Len mual kan liam e;
 Fanai ral in ti maw?*

(Meaning: Because of our cruel Chief Vuttai and because of *Liando dar*, war broke out; we have descent across *Lentlang*, why do you call us *Fanai* foe?)

Liandova's song was among the oldest *Dar hla* which was composed while the Mizo settled beyond *Tiau* (Burma). But according to some assumption, during the time of *Thlanrawkpa khuangchawi*, Sirtea also known as Vasir was requested to dance and the song he danced to was the oldest *Dar hla* known to the Mizos:

*Sirte va lam ta rawh,
 Sirchalte va lam ta rawh.*

(Meaning: Go and dance *sirte* (bird); go and dance again *sirte*.)

Another *Dar hla* which has an interesting story is *Chawngvungi Dar hla*. Chawngvungi was a beautiful maiden; there are many gentlemen who courted her. Sawngkhara was one of the many suitors, who later win over the heart of Chawngvungi. Their love grew and so after sometime Sawngkhara desire to marry her. He sends an emissary to ask for her hand in marriage. When

Chawngvungi's father learn about this, knowing that Sawngkhara's father possess the famous *Liando dar* he decided to demand it for the price of his daughter. Sawngkhara's father was reluctant at first, and he was not willing to part with the gong. But, it so happened that Sawngkhara could not stop loving Chawngvungi,so, Sawngkhara's father eventually had to surrender the gong for the price of Chawngvungi.

But, unfortunately, not before long Chawngvungi passed away, and her mother wept bitterly upon her corpse, these laments came to be known as *Chawngvungi dar hla*. Here is a specimen of such song:

Chawngvungi man tam e,

Thi ka pek a duh lo va

Dar ka pek a duh lo va,

Ka dar huai kher man ngen che,

Chawngvungi man tam e.

(Meaning: So high is the price of Chawngvungi, They refused the necklace I offered them, Again they refused the gong I gave, My precious sacred gong they demanded, Oh Chawngvungi, your price unsurpassed all.) – The tonic solfa rendering of the song is seen in page 233.

2. Function:

2.1. *Naupang Hla* (Children's Song): In the study of Mizo folk songs we see different types of folk songs suited for various occasions and places. Among such folk songs, one of the most prestige folk songs was songs for the children. These children folk songs justify that the Mizo ancestors were also good at parenting rather than what we presume them to be as mere fools. The Mizo have great composers of children's songs and among the first known were *Liando-a te unau*. But their songs were most famous as *Dar hla* in spite of it being a children's song.

It is safe to assume that there was a chance that folk songs for the children were the first song to be composed. When a baby cries, mother utters or hums in melodious tune to soothe them. Though we do not exactly know how mothers soothed their babies in the olden days, it is a known fact that they would have used a single letter 'A' or 'E' or melodic hm...hmm...hmmm to put their babies to sleep. The wordings may not make much sense or it might be made-up of meaningless lyrics, nevertheless, it also might be the first song sang with a tune.

Let us try to elaborate children's folk songs in the following three branches:

2.1.1. *Nau awih Hla* (Lullabies): Though these songs were for children, they were not composed nor sang by them, but rather it was the mother or caretaker who composed and sang these songs. It is important to

ascertain that this is not children's folklore. It is not a component of children's own culture. But instead, they are tradition for adults, used by parents, grandparents and caretaker of small children in their play with children. The songs have the function of making the child sleep, play, and learn. The lullabies were often performed simultaneously with a soothing, rocking movement following the rhythm of the song. This traditional type of song was very much alive, till today. To rock a baby in the arms while sitting or walking up and down the floor is probably the most usual technique.

Even babies and children understand the actions of heartfelt love when they are carried for soothing and with each gentle repeated tap on their back; they slowly fall asleep knowing they are in loving arms. Since the main function is to calm a baby to sleep the text itself is not important, it's the rhythm that becomes most important element in the lullaby. The rhythms were smooth and there were no large tonal leaps. As the child was about to fall asleep and the singer was not sure whether the child was actually sleeping, the voice was lowered.

Ka nauvi hi mu hle hle se bei hle hle,

A mut loh chuan kei man ka beng mu ange.

(Meaning: Dear baby, sleep, sleep peacefully if not I myself shall put you off to sleep.)

There was a song which reflected their earlier settlement; it seems to be written during the time they settled on the banks of river *Run*.

Ruahpui sur bum bum e, vanrial a chim e.

Ka nauvi kal nan e run tui lian e.

(Meaning: Due to heavy rain, the path for my baby, the river *Run* had become over flooded.)

The following song depicted the protective mother or caretaker rendering a comforting lullaby, to protect the child against certain danger:

A khiah khian lungpui a lo lum dawn e,

Ka nauvi kha a delh a nge suan rawh u.

(Meaning: Up from yonder high above, will roll a big stone, so move my dear child before it hit her.)

The song may be adapted to such conditions in different ways. The condition that the song must be uninterrupted and perpetual can be met by singing the same stanza several times. Sometimes the melodies were either sung on lull words, or the lyrics were made up for the occasion as it was often sung with a simple repeated request about falling asleep and need no improvisation. As long

as the rhythm was fixed and the voice conveys a secure presence, the meaning of the lyrics could be anything.

2.1.2. *Pawnto Hla* (Game songs): The term ‘Pawnto’ is defined as “to be out of doors in the evening or at night” (Lorrain 355). Even though these songs seem to be just a game song for fun among the children, it reflected many culture of the early society. A detailed study of it serves as an important function in reflecting the life of the early Mizo and reveals their aspirations, values and goals. Most of the games are played after the evening meals especially under the moonlight along their neighbors within a block of the town or village.

There are various game songs but this particular *Pawnto hla* have a particular time of playing i.e. the evening or night, that it why it is studied under different head. These are songs which they sang with freedom while living a carefree innocent life, they might not understand its meaning but it is a great song with dignity and value which they sang together. “A game then may be defined as a form of play in which two or more participants vie, either as individuals or as groups of teams, under the limitations of rules either tacitly or explicitly understood by the contestants, for the purpose of determining which is the better or the best at particular form of play, a game is a dramatic play contest” (Maria Leach 433).

The Mizo *Pawnto hla* played significant role in exercising the mind and body of the children. These songs were mainly legion; a group of children joined together, they joined hands or form a queue or a circle. There are times the games were played sitting or running around. Let us illustrate one of the *Pawnto hla*:

Ngheng tawlah ngheng tawlah, sai awnah sai awnah,

Aruh no no chhuakah,

A che che sih hlawkah,

Thleng pui khup hnu thal leh thei lo;

Kei ka tiam dai diak.

(Meaning: Lets lean on to one another and let the weak be force out; everyone should standstill else pinch the faulted; a plate upside down cannot go back to its right position, and I am ready.)

It is not a song to be disregard even though it is a children song because every line has a deeper meaning to it and it portrays different nature of human beings. These kinds of songs were mostly accompanied with action. In the song mentioned above, the children would hold each other and moved left to right leaning against each other.

2.1.3. *Pipu Uai Hla* (Swing songs): Playing in a swing was one of the most popular games played by the Mizo children. They made a swing on the branches of a tree near their home or on the outskirts of their village. The

swinging was often accompanied with simple ditties which are called *Pipu uai hla*. The Mizo does not have many of these types of songs. The ones they have also had little significant value to it. Let us highlight one such song which illustrates that playing with the swing is one of the Mizo children's natures:

Pipu kan suih ram tinah kan suih,

A sat chattu mi u duai ngai lo.

(Meaning: We made a swing in various places; no one should cut it down.)

From the study of these three branches of children folksongs it is evident that the Mizo children were not in awe of children of other tribes since most of these songs are action songs which help them in learning and understanding about life and improve their characters. Since there were no schools or formal educations, their playtime with their fellow friends and caretaker serves as a suitable place in engaging themselves in various disciplines.

2.2. *Thiam Hla* (Invocations): The Mizo have various sacrifices; the invocations chanted on such occasion are called *Thiam hla*. They were memorized by the priest and were greatly treasured by them. Various ceremonies have different incantations. There are two types of priest; *Sadawt* and *Bawlpu*, they do not have much in common. In today's scenario, their difference would have been between that of a 'Pastor' and a 'Doctor'. However, they cannot be described separately in order to have an in-depth study.

According to Mizo historians Hrangthiauva and Lalchungnunga, “*Sakung* is the beginning of the Mizo religious practices; they assume that this practice was discovered by the son of the chief of *Seipui* village, Hualthana and his wife Neihhrimi” (19). But this assumption was often regarded by others as mere presumption. Meanwhile, according to some historian the Mizo did not know what or whom to worship during their settlement in *Lentlang* i.e. in between the river *Run* and *Tiau*. But they did believe that something or somebody was responsible during their time of sickness. “They continue to search for something to worship; they used to chant, ‘*Pi biakin lo chhang ang che, Pu Biakin lo chhang ang che*’ (Meaning: Let the ones whom our ancestor’s worship response to our worship), hoping that if ever their ancestors worshipped god, that god would have answered them too; and it became the first known invocation of the Mizos” (Liangkhaia 45) Later on, different writers used this assumption as the platform to write something about such stories.

In the beginning there was no division between religion and the sacrificial offerings for the sick people; *Bawlpu* performed the first part of the ritual and the second part was performed by *Sadawt* because they came up with sacrificial offerings due to their sickness and afterwards continued with the practice of religion even if they were in good health. To them, it was a way of showing love and respect to whomever they worship or maybe they also recognized that prevention is better than cure. In time, they also began to use animals as sacrificial

offering to their god since animals were their prize assets compared to any other possessions during that period. The fowl and the young pig were the most frequently used in various sacrifices.

Invocation was highly treasured by the Mizo. It is passed on from generation to generation and was not meant to be learned and performed by any layman. They took every precaution even to the length of performing ‘Augury’ to determine the next successor. He should be a person who is extraordinarily talented among his siblings and also be a respectful person above others. We hardly see songs about invocation because its status was placed in high esteemed song which is highly valued and treasured. Since it was not often publicized, only a few of them were passed on. We came across a few invocation songs due to the fact that in some point of time, there was someone who memorized it and passed it on to someone else. Let us analyze some of the sacrifices made by the priest:

2.2.1. *Sadawt* Invocation: It evolves along the religious song because it was composed based on their needs. While they were using *Sakung* (This is the first sacrificial offering in the long process to become ‘*In lama thangchhuah*’), it is obvious that in the beginning they would not have invocation song for *Khuangchawi*. Therefore, it is presumed that it continue to grow this way: For the sacrificial offering of *Sa biakna* it is assumed that resources like *Sakung*, *Chawng* and *Dawino chhui* were discovered first because invocation rituals like *Sedawi*, *Sekhuang*, *Khuangchawi* and *Zaudawh* which is

used for the ritual of *Khua biakna* follows its path. Even after the conversion to Christianity, different societies have different ways of reverence and in the same way different tribes have different ways of performing the rituals even though what they worship were the same.

Let us highlight one of the first invocations which are used for the ritual of *Sa biakna*:

Hual ing, hual ing, Duma thla hual ing,

Khumpui lumin hual ing, tappui lumin hual ing,

Fanu chawiin hual ing, fapa chawiin hual ing,

Mi that sa kapin hual ing, buh bal thlovin hual ing,

Tum viau a hai tar a dam hual ing,

Seipui khura mi'n chhang ing,

Zinghmun a mi'n chhang ing. (Malsawma 155)

(Meaning: For the healthy recovery of Mr. Duma, we pray in the name of the main Bed and the main Fire place, let him be blessed with more sons and daughters; to kill foes, to hunt animals, to have fruitful daily bread and to have a long life we pray; let the god who dwells in the pit of *Seipui* and the morning hill please answer our prayers.)

According to J. Malsawma, “this song and *Bulthluk* are the only two songs which we have when we migrated from *Lentlang*”. If that is the case, this might be the invocation for *Arte thlah* since the wordings can also be about *Thla hualna*.

Kawngpui siam and *Fano dawi* were also rituals which can be performed only by *Sadawt*.

The *Sadawt* invocation often mentioned their earlier dwelling place in their chants, the wording of their songs became longer and longer in time. If only we could be acquainted with the ins and outs of these invocation songs, we would be able to recognize and distinguish which one was first and which one was last among them. It would have also been an important factor in the study of the Mizo history.

Liangkhaia mentioned invocation in which *Sakung* was used in the following manner:

Sain aw ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Sakunga thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Thlanchhaka thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Thlanthlanga thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Khawlaia thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Khawpuia thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Leiruta thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Lailawia thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Thawhmunna thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Bualchhuma thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Chumchiha thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Zinglaia thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Chhuahphova thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Chhuatcheha thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Mualliana thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Lenpuia thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Tuala sa lu tar ho chuan thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Muchhipa thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Mutena thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che.

Fuanthara thovin ka sa hrial lo chhang ang che. (46)

(Meaning:

Oh, bless me, oh, bless me,

Arise from the Sakung (a post at the backside of the house)

Then accept my hog,

Arise from the upper side of the graveyard, and accept my hog,

Arise from the lower side of the graveyard, and accept my hog,

Arise from Thantlang (Mountain), and accept my hog,

Arise from the village open space, and accept my hog,

Arise from the bigger town, and accept my hog,

Arise from the Leirut (digget fencing), and accept my hog,

Arise from the Lailawi (name of place), and accept my hog,

Arise from the Thawhhmun (name of place), and accept my hog,

Arise from Bualchhum (name of place), and accept my hog,

Arise from Chumchih (name of place), and accept my hog,

Arise from the Zinglai (name of place), and accept my hog,

Arise from the Chhuatpho (stretched bamboo), and accept my hog,
 Arise from Chhuatcheh (tighten bamboo floor), and accept my hog,
 Arise from Muallian (big big ranges), and accept my hog,
 Arise from Lenpui (Len range), and accept my hog,
 Arise from Muchhip (historical village), and accept my hog,
 Arise from Mulen (name of place), and accept my hog,
 Arise from Fuanthar (name of place), and accept my hog.)

This invocation originated after the Mizos migrated from the land of *Seipui*, this could be assumed due to fact that *Muchhip* was mentioned in the chant.

2.2.2. *Bawlpu Invocation*: The main work of *Bawlpu* is to perform sacrificial offerings. But he did not perform it to the good spirit but rather to the evil spirits alone. The invocation of *Bawlpu* is also the beginning and the end of all rituals.

We come across a lot of invocations of *Bawlpu* and know more about it compared to the invocation of *Sadawt* but since it does not portray their dwelling places in their chants it is hard to capture its true evolvement in history. However, we could find out a glimpse of its origin in the northern part of *Tiau* (Burma) and its origin within Mizoram.

Even though they do not chant much about their previous dwelling places, they chant a lot about the names of mountains as seen in one of the invocation called *Zunthiang*. In time, it continues to grow and develop in a proper way. Compared to *Sadawt*, *Bawlpu* was not inclined to a specific tribe; that is why the experts in chanting the invocation have more sacrifices to make and were usually occupied.

It did not have a set of determined rules in its sacrificial ritual. “The sacrificial ritual of *Arte thlah* and *Butthluk* were followed by the sacrificial ritual of *Khawsikpui* and *Khawhring ramhuai*. *Khawsikpui* ritual was started by the *Hmar* tribe of the Mizo and their invocations are portrayed below:

Phut-Hai, chibai,

Saisawm tlangah zuang tho che a ti khai,

Velvulnu a ti, velvulpa a ti khai,

Lawipui sulah zuang tho che a ti khai,

Velvulnu, velvulpa a ti khai,

Duma thlunglu ah buk tang a ti khai,

Buk thei mak se a ti khai,

Chawnbanah vuan tang a ti khai,

Vuan thei mak se a ti khai,

Pheiphungah vuan se a ti khai,

Vuan thei mak se a ti khai,

Suak leh sal tlan ang a ti khai,
Nanga suak in nu zing sumau thei maw a ti khai,
Var tui chawi thei mo a ti khai,
Keia suak nu zing sumsu thei tang a ti,
Var tui chawi thei tang a ti khai,
Manmasi pan thu tin hril ngei a, hla tin hril ngei a,
Cherei nu kha khua na buk se khua na fiam ngei se,
Chhumpui zing muai muai kha zui ta rawh,
Romei kai chuai chuai kha zui ta rawh,
Khua kha tin raw – chibai e, Pathian.” (Malsawma 156)

(Meaning: This type of invocation cannot be given literal meaning and explanation line by line. All the chants cannot be explained. What the priest is trying to do is to have a successful sacrifice by bowing to God, declaring his supremacy and chanting historical places. He chanted about their weaknesses and asks for power and wisdom to overcome these weaknesses. He prayed for family well being within the house and in their fields; to give them strength and courage to work effortlessly during time of hardships. As he starts by bowing to God and mentioning his name, he also ends his chant by pronouncing the name of God.)

We also see that the ritual of *Khawhring* is started by the *Lusei* people and is portrayed below:

Kharpui bulah zuang tum che, Taunu,
Tappui bulah zunag tum che, Taunu,
Mi lai lungah zuang tum che, Taunu,
Khurte pawn la, vung thar chhuah la,
I chun i nun a tah che, I zua i pan a tah che,
Nang aw e, i lenna khaw khur chungah,
Kei aw e, ka lenna khaw zampuah,
I nun ka nu ngam maw ni,
I pan ka pa ngam maw ni,
Nangin kei mi ngam maw ni,
Dur – Taunu, tin rawh ka leh che.

(Meaning: Evil spirit (*Taunu*) may you fall in a pit, may you fall in the fireplace, go to the places of the foes and die there; then your mother and father will grieve over you, you rest below the soil of the earth while I live above it; your mother didn't challenge my mother nor your father challenged my father, so do you dare challenge me; run away evil spirit.)

What comes after the ritual of *Khawhring* invocation is not known and it is also not possible to elaborate since there exists so many rituals in this regard. This sacrificial offering started in *Seipui* and was assumed that it ends with the ritual of *Khawhring* because even before the emergence of the *Zosap*, the *Bawrhsap* of the land (British ruler) had banned the proclamation of person as having *Khawhring* during their rule.

According to JH Lorrain, *Khawhring* is:

The name of a malignant spirit which also closely approximates to what in English is known as the 'evil-eye' that it may be well called by that name. Certain people – especially women – are said to 'have or 'posses' a *khawhring*. Such a person is quite ignorant of herself and only comes to know of it when she finds herself accused of being the 'possessor' or 'owner' of a *khawhring* which has been 'eating' somebody else, or causing intense colic-like pains in the abdomen of its victims. Thenceforward cases of colic and such like in the neighborhood are constantly being attributed to her *khawhring*, and she finds herself an object of fear to her friends and neighbours. If she is unmarried her bad reputation will probably rob her of husband, and make life very unhappy. The *khawhring* spirits are also believed to bewitch food, beer, etc and spoil them. When a Lushai is about to eat his food he throws a pinch of all the different kinds on one side for the *khawhring* spirits, with the words *chhuak a* ('clear out', 'Begone') for he believes they are always watching and will do him harm unless thus appeased. Verb: to be bewitched or spoiled by a *khawhring* spirit.

(253-254)

2.3. *Dawi Hla* (Incantations): Incantation was defined by the Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms as "The chanting or reciting of any form of words deemed to have magical powers, usually in a brief rhyming spell with an insistent rhythm and other devices of repetition; or the form of words thus

recited. Incantation is characteristic of magical charms, curses, prophecies, and the conjuring of spirits” (Baldick 124). Akin to invocation, incantations were also chanting songs, but they were less in number than the former as the Mizo have only few wizard. The songs were mostly in *Hmar* language so it was assumed that it originates from the *Hmar* clan.

The incantations of the wizards were greatly treasured by them and they scarcely demonstrate to others. They even demand a massive price to disclose their incantation to others. As already highlighted the Mizo did not have many wizards, the most popular ones among the few wizards were Hrangsaipuia, Lalruanga, Keichala and Zangkaki. Among them Zangkaki was the only female to possessed this supernatural element.

Let us look into the few specimen of the song in which Hrangsaipuia uses *Dawi hla* against Lalruanga:

Simah kawl hrei hrut tang e,

Hmarah kawl hrei hrut tang e.

(Meaning: I will go to the south as well as to the north and explore it the best way I can.)

Sum sen-in malen ka tih,

Leng ka tih, leng diai ka tih.

(Meaning: I will explore every land I can and roam about freely.)

Sum vawmin maleng ka tih,

Nanga tum hranga te kha.

(Meaning: I will explore every land I can and I ask you all how you are going to do it.)

Suar ang zuang tum rek ka tih ka mawlaw

Kei chu nem nang ka ni lo.

(Meaning: I had no difficulty crossing big rivers since I can hop upon it; it does not create a problem for me.)

These songs were mainly about threatening Lalruanga. Lalruanga replied with his own *Dawi hla* as given below:

Kawl a kungah kan thawk in e,

Virthli ang e khan,

(Meaning: I can freely roam about each and every place just like a wind.)

Hung hrang rek ka tih,

Phai khaw sumpui angte khan,

(Meaning: I can go to any place I wish; I am just like a cloud.)

Hunginchawi ngiek rek ka tih,

Vanrang sumpui ang te khan hungin zam rek ka tih,

(Meaning: I am strong and powerful; I am like the clouds in the sky.)

In tumhranga te khan suar ang zuang chin rek ka tih,

Ka malaw, nem nang ka ni lo.

(Meaning: Does your strong men faces difficulty along/in crossing the rivers? I am not a person troubled by difficult situations and problems.)

The Mizo legend shows that, Lalruanga and Hrangsaipuia both have songs (*Dawi hla*) in the *Lusei* language, and are given below:

Hrangsaipuia chant:

Hreu bem bum tlang atangin i lo kal a,

Kan tapchhakah i rawn thu hreu bem bum mai a ni maw....?

(Meaning: You came from a rugged mountain and now you sit ruggedly next to my fire place.)

Lalruanga chant:

Pial thin then tlang atangin ka lo kal a,

In tapchhakah ka rawn thu pial thin then a nih hi.....

(Meaning: I came from a high mountain having pleasant breeze and now I sit pleasantly next to your fire place.)

These incantation highlighted had indicated the origin of *Dawi hla* in the Mizo history. The Mizo legend suggested that the daughter of Pathian (Supreme God) taught Vanhrika (the god of science) the art of witchcraft which he reveal to Keichala, Lalruanga, and Hrangsaipuia. It is assumed that Zangkaki was a friend of Pathiana's daughter, and she learnt this witchcraft from her. They have mystifying powers; they could create clouds and burn it, they even made inanimate objects to an animation form. They had Dawibur which was used as an important element while performing the spell or incantations. Another significant element of this art was Dawisut(breaking of the spell), which were performed to prevent or remove any danger or cure sickness. Their incantations were mainly a revelation of the powers, they boast of their greatness ad powerfulness over other creatures.

2.4. *Kut Hla* (Songs Associated with Festivals): There were various ceremonies and festivals performed by individual to reveal their status in their society. An important event in the life of the Mizo was the community festivals. The community festivals were term as *Kut* which were held at a specific season of a year. The three important *Kut* of the Mizo are *Chapchar Kut*, *Mim Kut* and *Pawl Kut*.

2.4.1. *Chapchar Kut*: *Chapchar Kut* was the most prestigious among the festivals of the Mizo. It is celebrated in the month of march i.e. a period of leisure for the people working in the jhum and hence the best time

of the year and it is that one occasion in a year where the elders and adults reached the height of ecstasy and enjoy the best way they possibly could. During those days, days of free and enjoyment time were rare since they were engaged with daily work for their survival.

In the legends of the Mizo, the origin of *Chapchar Kut* is dated way back to the time when their ancestors migrated from Burma and settled between the valley of *Run* and *Tiau*. Some brave men decided to go hunting after they finished their work in the paddy fields. But to their surprise, the hunting party returned empty handed. The Chief felt sorry for them and decided to comfort and patronized them by putting up the heads of various animals (Buffalo, Pig, Dog and fowl) and invited the youths to join them by taking a day off from all other activities. It so happened that their celebration was even more gratifying than other celebration. Then the elders decided to join them by contributing a jar of *Zu* (Rice Beer) in their celebration. They soon became over crowded in the Chief's house, so they shifted to the front lawn of the Chiefs house to accommodate everyone. Being under the influence of *Zu* and becoming a bit restless, they sang, joined hands in circles and danced together to the rhythmic tune of the song. Even the children gathered around to witness their celebration.

Eventually, the children too gathered *Zu* and pour them in a cup for their dancing elders. In due course, the children became the distributors of *Zu* on such celebration and their celebration dance also came to be known as the origin of the

majestic dance of the Mizo *Chai*. They decided to have such kind of celebration each year during the same time and that was how the festival of *Chapchar Kut* originated. The condolence gesture to lift the spirit of the low morale hunters of a single village then became the origin of the most prestigious festival of the Mizo called *Chapchar Kut*.

In time, the style of celebration of *Chapchar Kut* also differed and different types of *Chai hla* are also composed. But these songs did not have any relation to the celebration, neither do they depict the time of celebration or how it is celebrated and were never written in the theme of the festival. Let us illustrate one *Chai hla*:

Kutpui kan ur khuangruah chiah nghian e,

Chappui rawh lovin a tul ngai lo.

Chappui rawh lovin a tul ngai lo,

Ka chung chhawrthla a vanglai lo maw.

(Meaning: There is continuous rain during our festival; however, it will not stop us from burning our fields, even the moon is on its prime.)

This song portrays that *Chapchar Kut* was celebrated during their free time when the weather was fair and when they could enjoy the moonlight. Apart from this song, we do not see any line in other songs where *Chapchar Kut* festival was mentioned. Some of the most famous *Chai hla* sung in *Chapchar Kut*

festivals were *Lalvunga zai*, *Mangkhaia zai*, *Thailungi zai*, *Lallula zai*, *Neihlaia zai* etc.

Even though these songs have no thematic relevance with the *Chapchar Kut* festival, they used to sing and dance along with it merrily. The tune of *Chai hla* are very appealing and easy to dance along with; it can also be assumed that the tune of the song were given more importance than the substance of the song. One of the *Chai hla* reflects their merriment and reluctance to end dancing during this festival:

Chaiin khuarei luat a awm lo e,

Neihkungpuia sumtual a zau laiah

Siali vawnlai thlah a har ngei e.

(Meaning: We cannot get tired of the Chai dance; we cannot get enough of the merry making dance on the lawn of the riches.)

2.4.2. *Pawl Kut*: It is the second largest festival after *Chapchar Kut*. It is celebrated after the harvesting season and that is why it is also called *Pawl Kut* (*Pawl* is the time between the harvesting and cold weather). The origin of *Pawl Kut* was described by the Mizo elders as follows:

During the earliest days, the time when the Mizo settled in the plains of *Khampat*, there was a huge famine called *Thingpui Tam*. The famine was so

devastating that even a single grain of rice was worth a gun; even the most beautiful woman of that time was worth only a kilogram of rice. A hungry pig could not stand on its own so it was leaning against the wall. They were so weak to even cry for food; just a tear drops from their eyes was witness to their hunger.

The following year after the devastating famine, they were blessed enormously harvesting various foods. The youth came up with the idea of celebrating their good year by placing various traps to capture animals and birds. So eventually they organized a feast for the entire village with whatever they had caught. Then the whole villagers happily had a grand feast together.

On the occasion of their celebration, the King gave a humbling speech, “For three years we suffered and fought together the hardship and survived with unity; let this day be remembered as the day that everyone of us, from the poorest to the richest, shower our love, appreciation and blessing to one another by sharing the finest food and drink we have to each and every one of us”. And this gesture of kindness shown to one another is called *Chhawngnawh*. From this day on, *Pawl Kut* was celebrated every year during the same time.

The first day of celebration was called *Lusei vawk talh ni* (Meaning - The day for the *Lusei* to kill their pigs), the second day was called *Ralte vawk talh ni* (Meaning - The day for the *Ralte* to kill their pigs) and the third day was the feast day called *Chhawngnawh ni*. On the day of *Chhawngnawh*, everyone including

men, women and children were dressed in their best attire. The entire villagers participated on the occasion of *Chhawngnawh* where they feed one other with their finest food and drink. On the night of *Chhawngnawh*, it was presumed as mandatory that every family should have their meals with meat as one of their food item. As years pass by, mostly the youths and the children participate in *Chhawngnawh*, though few elders also participate.

For the celebration of *Pawl Kut*, the youth and children used to collect rice as donation for making *Zu* (Rice Beer), which they later brew in the house of the woman whom they were most accustomed with. Some drank the *Zu* while others sold it for buying other things. While collecting this donation, they used to sing from *Sumhmun* (Lobby):

Mim neiin mim min pe u,

Fang neiin fang min pe u,

Chhawhchhi pawng e.

(Meaning: Those who have *Mim* (a kind of millet pop corn) give us; and those who have grain, give us grain.)

When they were given what they asked for, they give thanks to the donators by singing:

Dam ang che, dam ang che,

Tar kun khup bihin dam ang che,

Kum tin buh za thlo ang che.

(Meaning: Wish you long life, live till old age and have sufficient harvest every year.)

In the meantime, they cursed the non donators by singing:

Thi ang che, thi ang che,

Ngal ngetin thi ang che.

(Meaning: May you die, you die now; may you die with ulcer of the shin.)

It is a festival of joy and happiness celebrated by giving up their daily task. As it was celebrated year after year, it was later recognized as an indicator for the ending of a year and the beginning of a new year.

2.4.3. *Mim Kut*: *Mim Kut* was a festival for the dead ones. Since the months of festivity were different, there are of two types namely, *Savunga Mim Kut* and *Rolura Mim Kut*. *Rolura Mim Kut* is called *Young Mim Kut* given the fact that it was observed in the month of August while *Mim* (Corn) was still young. *Savunga Mim Kut* was called the *Old Mim Kut* given the fact that it was observed in the month of September when *Mim* (Corn) had grown larger.

In one of the Mizo story *Tlingi* and *Ngama*, *Zawltlingi* and *Ngambawma* were best friends from their childhood; their friendship continued to grow in their

youth and in the end their love for each other resulted in marriage. Sadly, Tlingi died soon after their marriage and Ngama felt more and more lonely each passing day. One day he went to the *jhum* where he and Tlingi used to work together; the vegetables were ready to be collected so he collects them. On reaching home with immense feeling of loneliness, before he could properly place his bundle of vegetables, he fell down and scattered all his vegetables. He cried while he slowly lost his consciousness. In his unconscious dream, he visited the land of the dead, where he saw Tlingi who had become very thin. He asked the reason why she had become very so thin, and Tlingi answered, “I had no alternative than to be thin because we are not given appropriate food; I used to dream about eating the vegetables in our *jhum*”, later Ngama regained his consciousness.

He began to pick up the vegetables and place some of them on the grave of Tlingi and said, “Tlingi, eat the vegetables we have harvested”. The next time he went back to the *jhum* he experienced the same kind of feeling. On reaching home, he again fell on the floor losing his consciousness. He went to the land of the dead, but this time he sees that Tlingi had regained her weight and had become fat. He asked her why she had become fat, and Tlingi answered, “I had no alternative than to be fat because I have eaten the vegetables which you had given me”. From this story, our ancestors decided to offer their newly harvested vegetables to their loved ones who had passed away, and then *Mim Kut* was practiced.

This festival is not for celebrations and is meant for remembrance of their loved ones who had departed this life. Though it is observed by all the people, there are some who observe it even more because their family member dies in-between their observation of the 1st (first) and 2nd (second) *Mim Kut*. For a more significant study of the songs connected with *Mim kut* let us look into how the festival was observed.

They ground rice for making *Chhang* (Mizo traditional rice-flour covered in a leaf and boiled), *Chhangpai* (a small shoulder pouch for keeping the *Chhang*) was also made, and the cooked *Chhang* along with their newly harvest vegetables were placed on the tomb of their loved ones. They brew *Zu* (Rice beer) in advance and drank it from the day of the festival; they sang mourning songs and laments; they get together and make conversation with a deep feeling of loneliness in them. The children collect donations in every house (*Mim-pawng*) which was used for making *Zu* for them. All the children used to carry *Chhangpai* which makes them very happy during the festival.

It was days of mourning and loneliness for the elders. It was observed for 3 (three) days during which they were not allowed to eat the offering made to the dead souls, but from the fourth day all the activities done on behalf of the deceased loved ones come to an end. It was believed by their ancestors that during these 3 (three) days, the souls of the departed loved ones would mingle among

them; but once the festival was over, it was time for the dead souls to move on to their own path whether they like it or not.

The *Santals* have a similar assumption that the spirit of the death lingers around until the family members and the villagers perform death rituals. “But they hasten for these rituals within 5-20 days as they believe that the spirit may cause harm to the family and villagers” (Patniak 24). The month of *Mim Kut* i.e. August is called *Thi Tin Thla*, which means ‘The departed month of the dead souls’. The songs sang during this festivals are songs of mourning and lamentation. Their grief over the death of loved ones, their attempt to console each other and their desire to visit the dwellings of the dead are the main theme reflected in these songs. These songs are studied in detail in chapter 4 under laments theme.

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CHAPTER IV

THEME OF MIZO FOLK SONGS

As pointed out and seen in the previous chapters, one of the richest features of Mizo folklore are the folk songs of various types with their traits of high lyricism, striking opus, unfathomable feeling in various characteristic and wonderful phrase of human feelings. The Mizo folk songs bestow wonderful variety in terms of bliss and contentment, pain as well as anguish, valor in hunting, bravery and spirit in war and expedition as well. The Mizo folk songs are simple and delightful in nature, full of heartfelt sentiments and profound attitude. Many are allied with the theme of love, expedition; hunting, bereavement and dirge, and some are have satirical nature, festival themes etc.

The Mizo folk songs with their varied theme were highly vibrant and varied, and the study is essential as it manifested the principles of the Mizo way of living and thinking in the past. We have seen the classifications in term of its structure, and function of the Mizo folk songs in the previous chapter. In this chapter we will take up an intense study on the classification in terms of the themes of the Mizo folk songs. Most of these songs were mainly sung in groups at various festivals and ceremonies. There are also some songs which were sung in an unceremonious occasions like *Zu hmun* (a place where men gather to drink rice beer) and *Zawlbuk* (Bachelor's dormitory). Meanwhile, there are some songs which can be sung only by a particular individual at a specific time. The various

themes of the Mizo folk songs had been classified keeping in view the characteristics and feature of the songs and also the suitability of a proper study of their background. The magnificence of Mizo folk songs with its variety of themes is most remarkable both in eminence and diversity. The major themes and minor themes can be studied as:

1. Major themes:

1.1. Love: Love has always been one of the most universal themes in literature. Whether it's poignant or blissful, romantic or tedious, people always seem to be interested in someone else's love life because they are pleased to know that there are people who have loved, lived and suffered just like them or like they wished they had. Love had been treated in various ways in literature. Love is distinctive in that it is a consistent: while it goes on through different decades and different centuries, the elements stay the same.

Likewise, the most fascinating and popular Mizo folk songs are the songs of love with lyrical nature; love was the principal motive of a very large part of Mizo folk songs. And most of the songs of love were found to have high lyrical quality. These songs are pure expressions of one's own feeling; melancholy, happiness and sadness. Love constituted the principal theme of Mizo folk songs like the rest of the world.

The Mizo song with the theme of love can be traced back to *Chawngchen zai* which was regarded among the earliest song of the Mizo. It is believed that *Chawngchen zai* originates during their settlement between *Lentlang* and *Thantlang*. The songs in many ways depicted deep feelings and emotion of the lovers. They reflect the deep longing for the beloved and sadness cause due to love failure.

Lungruni leh keini indi ve chu,

Khuanu tuahloh kan va riang erawh

(Meaning: The love affair between my love and I is really pitiful since it looks as if we are not meant to be together.)

Ka ngai, ka ngai, ka lung ka mawl ta e,

phu loh kan ngai lung kan mawl ta e.

(Meaning: I am missing my love, I am missing someone above my stature and it is driving me mad.)

Lianchhiari zai cannot be overlooked. She was the daughter of Vanhnuaithanga one of the Chief in *Dungtlang*. She fell in love with a commoner Chawngfianga and the relationship tends to grow deeper each day. So, Lianchhiari request Chawngfianga to send an emissary to ask her hand for marriage. Being a commoner at first he felt reluctant to ask the hand of the Chief's daughter, but then later sent an emissary named Thura. Lianchhiari's

father was quite keen with the emissary and even agreed that he will not ask a large amount for her daughter's price so that it will not be a burden for Chawngfianga. But, out of jealousy their emissary told them that it would be best for them to leave the village that very night since the Chief was against their will. So, they moved to *Chhingzawl* village.

Lianchhiari's songs were mainly reflection of her longing for her beloved Chawngfianga whom she separates because of rival. She long for her beloved so much that many of her songs are lamentations of her lost love. One of her song revealed that she longs for her lover so much that even though days have gone by she could not stop saying his name:

I hming sawi ni reh lo

I ngaih dai hlen love

I rauthla tuangtuah par

Nitin khal lai ka rel

(Meaning: I cannot stop loving you, so I cannot stop saying your name; I am holding a flower and staring at it each day, pretending it is you.)

Being a beautiful woman there were many suitor. But she further expressed her sincere love for him though many have courted her:

Mi fa dawntuai zawng zawng lo leng rawh se,

Chawnga ang reng lungdi ka tawng tawh lawng e.

(Meaning: Even if all the best men in the world try to win my heart; I will never meet anyone who touched my heart like Chawnga does.)

We also find deep feelings of a lover in the song *Darthiangi leh Chertuala*

Zai as follows:

Tho rawh ,tho rawh, ka u Darthiangi,

Zu ruin maw chham ang I zal le?

{Meaning: Get up; get up, my sister Darthiangi; are you sleeping because you are under the influence of *zu* (rice beer)}.

Zu ruin maw chham ang ka zal lo ve,

Chera ngaih chham ang ka zalpui e.

(Meaning: I'm not sleeping because I am drunk; I slumber because my heart misses and longed for my love Chertuala.)

One of the songs of Saikuti expressed a touching pangs of separation on the loss of her lover Tuvunga who was killed in the enemy's hand:

Min sel lo u, hawihkawm ka lenrualin,

Di then chungah ka suihlunglen tuar har ka ti.

(Meaning: Do not despise me dear friends and families; for I find it very hard to endure the pain of losing my love.)

From the few love themes cited above we can see that the Mizo employ their songs as a medium of expressing their relationship. Their love songs were mainly the expression of affectionate love between the lovers and their longings for a lost love. These love songs are not just beautiful love poems; they give a glimpse of Mizo psychology through their imagery. They expose deep feelings in love and unveil social and domestic relations and social values. The languages were seen to be richer and dignified than in everyday verbal communication.

Several striking lyrical love songs appear during the First World War, as a number of Mizo volunteers left their native soil for Europe as Labor Corps under British Force. "They depart from the capital, Aizawl, on the 27th April 1915" (Zatluanga 154). Their departure was a momentous event for the Mizo people. The separation of lovers, families and friends at this time brought about remarkable songs known as *German Run Zai* (Song of War against German). These songs are touching and are full of affection; they truly revealed the passionate hearts of the young Mizo men and women. The themes were mainly on farewell with a melancholic tone and were mostly in dialogue form.

1.2. Hunting and War:

1.2.1. *Hlado*: The unique nature of the Mizo was their nature of self sacrifice for others and their stance for the welfare of others. But since they were humans, they do demonstrate a bit of personal ego and fame when it comes to achievements and glory; disclosing their accomplishments through *Hlado* and *Bawh hla* when they had taken the head of a foe or an animal. The main motive of performing this practice was to gain dominance and leadership over their killings in the afterlife. Though these two songs are put in one category they are used in different occasion, they are not meant to be sung in groups unlike other songs, but instead, be rhythmically chanted with a specific tune.

A victorious hunter was identified as *Pasaltha* and was regarded very highly in the society. When a successful hunter slays a wild animal he rendered a song which is called *Hlado* (Songs of the successful hunter).

These songs were lyrical in nature and the contexts of the songs were egocentric, which expose the pride and strength of the hunter himself.

Miah hrang chi awm e,

Saah hrang chi awm e,

Tiau dung e, ka zui changing;

Kawlkei e, a nun te ka iang e.

(There are some men who are brave than anyone and some beast are wild too; while hunting along the river *Tiau*, I am as wild as the tiger.)

These songs were regarded among the earlier songs of the Mizos as most of them are in the *Hmar* and *Pawi* dialect. H.K.R. Lalbiakliana suggested that the earliest *Hlado* was composed in the *Chindwin* valley and the song goes like this:

Vi li liu, vi li liu

Haw haw haw, ku ku kui (85)

(Being the first of its kind, the words have no clear meaning but indicated the new achievement with particular high sounding words to reflex the success and joy in hunting.)

“The languages of *Hlado* are not difficult to understand, J Malsawma concluded that the composers are accustomed to the use of *Pawi* dialect for *Hlado*” (Mizo poetry 34). Many people are of the opinion that the *Pawi* tribes were the pioneer in composing *Hlado* as most of them were composed in their dialect and only few of them are in *Lusei* dialect. But it must be noted that the composition in *Pawi* dialect does not mean that they are the sole composer (Hrangthiauva 350-351).

As pointed out in Chapter 1, the Mizos in early times hunt wild animals as it has a deep religious purpose in their beliefs. They believed that a man who had

killed a barking deer, a bear, a wild gayal, a deer and a boar could be regarded as *Ram lama thangchhuah* and were eligible to enter their ideal place *Pialral* in the second life. Hence, it was the aspiration of every brave man to hunt for such wild animals. Hunting has a significant role as it paved the way for the poor people to win over fame and fortune by killing wild animals. It may be noted that successful hunters killing particular wild animals require for entry to *Pialral* used to climb the nearby hill top and chanted the said *Hlado* with the top of his voice for his success in hunting. Here is an example of such kind of song by a poor hunter:

Lianchhung e, an than ni'n e

Tualah hnumkhuang a ri ngai e;

Rairah e, kan than ni'n e,

Tlanga'n e, kan lo au lai rih e.

(Meaning: The rich men make noises in the street with their drums and gongs; and their greatness was glorified. And for us the poor, our greatness were glorified from the forests when we chant our success in hunting from a hill tops in the form of *Hlado*.)

The songs are purely subjective and unlike most of the Mizo folk songs they are not meant to be chanted in groups but a single performance. In many of the *Hlado* we see the reflection of man's superiority over the animals and the inferiors were jeered at by the superior.

*Rengpan e, awi mu che maw,
Hreuvah nau bang I tah chu e,
Zan mang e, salah khan e, meithal e,
Buan ang rak pawm che maw.*

(Meaning: Bear, while you sleep peacefully like a snake in coil inside your nest from the sound of *Thereng*; and in your dreams, may you meet the bullet of my gun.)

Like wise, there are songs which highlighted a scornful pity to those men who goes to work in the *jhum* and could not go hunting wild animal since it's a rather intricate job.

*Chunnu 'n e, a tir che maw,
Uai hnianga ram va tuan che e;
Kei chu e, chengrang te nen'
Tlangan e, thliten ka her ngai e.*

(Meaning: So indolently you had to go to do hard work for jhumming as your mother directed you to. For me, I have my own way and went for brave hunting and roaming above the high hills with my choice and with my gun.)

From the song mentioned above, we can see that these songs are full of ambitions and pride. *Hlado* may vary according to the skill of the composer, a

person with more egos and less ego and others who can perform it based on the benefits they incurred on others achievement. Then, there were also others who copy the lines of others; among the *Hlado* what we have known is authentic and only a handful of them.

There are some songs which highlights the Mizo believes in the supernatural being. They believed that when some hunters killed animals in the forest they were helped by a super natural being who rule over animals. In the following *Hlado* a hunter call upon *Khuanu* (Mother nature) to grant levelheaded share of hunting to one and all instead of showing support to a few only:

Khuanu e, mangmawl aw chi,

Thang ngai than tui tuk hlah law;

Kipten e, i phawt ulaw,

Valin e, pahrang kan duh chian e.

(Meaning: Oh mother nature; don't be too foolish when dispensing your favor and blessings; and bestow your favor and blessings equally to all, as we all young men desire and crave after outstanding fame.)

Haldo was performed by the skilled hunters as a way to show their marksmanship by calling out others to come and share their killings. It is also a sign of informing the villagers who the hunter is and what kind of animal he had killed. The significant factor of this *Hlado* is that, it conveys the feeling of

togetherness among the people to share even a small achievement; thus, restraining the room for pride and jealousy among the people. There are different types of *Hlado*, namely, *Hlado tluang* (which is chanted without specifically mentioning the kill), *Sai hlado*, *Sakhi hlado*, *Sazuk hlado*, *Savawm hlado*, *Tumpang hlado*, *Sanghal hlado* and *Satel hlado* were the famous ones. Apart from these, there might also be some other type of *Hlado* which were chanted based on their killings.

1.2.2. *Bawh hla*: The early Mizo frequently fought war against neighboring villages and when a brave warrior killed his enemy he put his foot on the dead body and proclaim his name and chanted a song which was called *Bawh hla* (Songs of the brave warrior). When a warrior chants *Bawh hla* on the outskirts of their village to be noticed by the villagers, it signifies that he had killed an enemy. Either the warrior or his selected warrior can recite *Bawh hla* and was not meant for everybody.

It is difficult to know the exact meaning of its name, for the Chiefs of *Lai (Pawi)*, it is called *Vaw hla* and in literal translation the meaning of *Bawh* in *Lai* dialect is 'Strong'. *Bawh hla* was also known as *Chan hla* or *Mi Chan hla*. If this was the scenario, we can assume that the origin of these songs dated back to when the Mizo were engaged in battles and wars for their survival. One known fact was that, these songs were one of the most historical songs and it even might be the oldest songs according to some of the Mizo historians. Also, they were mainly in

the *Pawi* language or rather a mix of *Pawi* and *Duhlian* language which even more implies that these songs originated from the *Pawi*.

In regard to its characteristics *Bawh hla* were very much similar to *Hlado*, they only differ in their purpose (i.e. *Bawhhla* was chanted by great warrior when they slay an enemy, whereas *Hlado* is chanted by brave hunter when wild animals were killed). The warrior who had killed an enemy was also called as *Pasaltha*. He had accomplished the honor of the villagers and was highly appreciated by the society.

In the following *Bawh hla* the warrior celebrated himself and his strength:

Keichu e, kan sentel e,

Sa leh doral ka pianpui e;

Ka do ve, rimnam pa e,

Thangchem e, aikim i ti ulaw.

(Meaning: From nativity, I was born to be brave, to kill wild beasts, and foes; and so it happens that I am attaining outstanding achievements killing and conquering wild beasts and foes.)

In *Hlado and Bawh hla* we came across many beautiful and exceptional depths in Mizo lyrical words which are often used till these days; and it contributed to the richness of the Mizo lyrical wordings. They were fairly rich in

terms of rhyme, internal rhyme, meter, alliteration, pathos etc. *Hlado* and *Bawh hla* are one of the most noteworthy songs when it comes to in-depth study and critical analysis compared to the other types of Mizo folk songs. It is also fascinating to note that, before the Mizo learned how to read and write they have used the letters ‘a’ and ‘e’ in correct punctuation forms. Here is an illustration of such song:

Valpa e, kan kalah khan,

Zingah e, khuanu a tap ai e;

Tlangan e zahrang au e, lian khua e

Nghaknu an sai siau e.

(Meaning: When brave young men approached for hunting, mother god of animals set tears. So and so, I kill wild beast and my village household shouting for joy.)

1.3. Laments: Songs were composed based on the event or circumstances which impel the composer to express his feelings in the form a song. Death was one of the most important factors which touch a person to unveil his true emotions which is communicated through songs. It is hard to explain a person’s feelings in words when faced with sorrow, loneliness and dead; his mind was flooded with an ocean of pain. Filled with spontaneous overflow of emotions which was unexplainable in words; a person conveys these feelings in words. Songs are a great way to express something which is in the heart and which was

hardly said out loud for others to hear; and that might also be the reason why some of the most cherished songs were songs about sorrows, loneliness, longings etc. The mourning songs of the Mizo are sung with a specific tune. And most of these songs greatly reveal their religious beliefs and practices.

In the olden days while the Mizo settle in the *Than* range they were affected by famine. A number of people starve to death, diseases spread widely and families have to part with tears. Families, friends and close ones sits together to mourn and console each other. At this time, they began to utter began with mourning which takes the form of songs later on. As the mourners sits while reciting these mourning songs, it continues to bear the name *Thuthmun zai* (which means songs sung while sitting). They were the songs of lamentation of the dead ones. The origin and composers are not known but are regarded as one of the earliest folk songs

A tlung e, thim khawzin a tlung e,

Khua tinah thim khawzin a tlung e.

Khua tinah thim khawzin a tlung e,

Thalai leh dawntual an tliak zove.

(Meaning: At the time immemorial there was *Thimzin* (great darkness) all over the world which affected every villages; it was so bad many young men and beautiful girls passed away.)

As time went by, more songs about death and loneliness were composed and later on personal names were given to the songs. Many bereavement and lamentation songs largely scattered in the society so they have become a part of tradition.

In the laments of a legendary hero *Tuchhingpa*, we see the picture of their imaginary journey to life after death. As already mention in the earlier chapter they belief that the gate of *Pialral* is guarded by Paula which is reflected in the following song:

Tuchhingpa zing vanzawl I thlen chuan,

Pawla kawtah chengrang kau ang che;

Hnam len la sat dai rawh.

(Meaning: Tuchhingpa (Legendary Hero) when you reach the gates of the dead people kill the gate keeper (Pawla) with your knife and gun; and make him surrender.)

When the songs about mourning theme evolved, they already have what can be presumed as religion such as practices. The Mizo ancestors belief in *Pialral* and *Mithi khua* and they assume, after their death, they go to either one of the two places. However, if we closely study the folksongs of the olden days, *Pialral* was seldom mentioned in those songs. It was only after the influence of Christianity that the word *Pialral* is inscribe in some of the Mizo songs. Their

lamentation songs lean towards songs about condolence, comfort, loneliness and remembrance of the dead.

The folk songs about mourning and loneliness were remarkable because it evolved from true feelings of deep sympathy. Though these were couplet song, it is a complete song which communicates all the essential elements of being a song about grief and sorrows:

Ka nu tap tuk hla law, zan khua hrui ang sei,

Keini riak kan fam lo, milai an fam zove. (Sailo D, Pi pute hla)

(Meaning: My dear mother, weep no more, our sorrowful night is yet not gone, it is not only ourselves (our family) who died. There were many (families) who die and suffer in their prime of life)

In the following *Khawhar zai* the poet mourns the death of his loved one in the beautiful imagery of a simile drawn from a broken banyan tree:

Bungpui a zar a tliak,

A zik a thim reng e,

Mi lai bungdawn a tliak,

Laikhum a thim reng e.

(Meaning: The strong branch of banyan trees was broken and their buds and leaves wither. Our dearest branch is broken and now our bed is empty all the time.)

Lurhpui a sang khi e,

Vanhnuaiin an hril e,

A chhipah chuang ila,

Fam ka ngaih khua lang maw?

(Meaning: There is a very high hill known as *Lurh* hill, its height was told by everybody under heaven. If I climb and stand upon its top, would I see the dead man's village?)

Many mourning songs were found in *Awithanga Zai*. His son, Lalawithanga passed away when he was only a year old, which was deeply mourned by his father. Many lamentations occurs, which were an expressions of the earnest thoughts and emotion of the father in the most innate and dramatic descriptions. We see his mourning songs towards his son, his mother and many others. Let us examine the mourning song for his son Awithanga:

Ka sa maw nuar ka chuninu, a i emaw kan sual e,

Ka tuai duh lai banah an kai,

Awmlai a nunrawng mang e.

(Meaning: Mother, did we angry our God? What did we do wrong that the life of my beloved son had been taken away, Oh, death is so cruel.)

The Mizo assumed that the spirit goes to the Lake *Rihdil* in the east on its way to the *Pialral*. It looks as if his loneliness grew even more each passing day instead of subsiding. In one of his mourning song, he requested his friend Dochhungi-pa to go with him to *Rihdil* to see Lalawithanga:

A khi lentupui khan thuam hnuaiah,

Dochhung pa i kal dun ang,

Awithang thlafam tui Rih li-ah,

Kan va tawng dah law maw e.

(Meaning: Awithangpa was in grieved and missed his dead son; He said to his friend Dochhungpa, “If we go to the path of the dead souls in Rih Lake, we might be able to catch up with the soul of my son Awithanga”.)

We also see a number of lamentations in Darpawngi zai. Darpawngi and Chawngbawnga had three children, they were Bawihbanga, Bawihchhungi and chhimtlangthangi. Bawihbanga died at a very young age, before he was even ten years old. Darpawngi deeply mourned the death of her son. She sings and chant a heart touching and deep longings over his dead body. These songs became popularly known as *Darpawngi Khawhar zai* (Darpawngi laments). Here are some of the mournful laments of a mother over her lost child:

Awmlai lianin tlangtin dung rawn zul,

Vanduai runah ser ang cham na e,

Ka tuai chawnban a kal e.

(Meaning: An epidemic spread across each land. We are the victim as it killed my precious child; it was such a devastating event.)

Ka puak lai leh ka awih lai ve kha

Lungrawn an liam zo ve,

Zingphualah ka chun ka ngai ti ve maw?

(Meaning: My beloved child has passed away; will he miss his mother and call out her name while he walks along the path of the dead soul.)

Sial khaw bawar emaw pau thei lo

Thangril laiah ka hraibung dawntuai

Fam diarial maw a chan le?

(Meaning: On that night my beloved child passed away; even the roosters, whose sound lingers across the village each night couldn't stand to make a single noise.)

A beautiful and touching metaphor is drawn from a bamboo shoot in one of the lamentation as seen below:

Thlangah maurua a dawn thar leh e

Pialleiah vai ang a tham ta e

Ka tuai a dawn thar thei lo.

(Meaning: Bamboo shoots grow and regenerate themselves again but my dead son remains silent as he can no longer bloom.)

Phungrual a tam hlei ka ngai mang e

Hmuh ka nuam e in rem sa lung bang khar chhung,

Ka tuai chham ang a zalna

(Meaning: Oh how I miss my dead son; and how I longed to see him in his resting place in the graveyard where you buried him.)

1.4. Satire: In the early period of the Mizo, we witness a number of satirical natures in their folk songs and these kinds of songs are called *Intukna hla*. The term ‘Satire’ applied to any work of literature or art whose objective is to ridicule. It is more easily recognized than defined. “From ancient times satirists have shared a common aim: to expose foolishness in all its guises—vanity, hypocrisy, pedantry, idolatry, bigotry, sentimentality—and to effect reform through such exposure” (“satire.” The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed. 2014 Encyclopedia.com. 28 Nov. 2014<<http://www.encyclopedia.com>>.)

The distinct feature of the Satirical theme of the Mizo folk songs were not about its melody or tune of the song but rather about its bold nature in

communicating its true intent with aggressive words which are sang without fear. They did not give much importance to poetical words and the words of their songs were sometimes very ruthless.

However, there are also some songs which reveal the cheerful side, humorous side and which lifts the spirit to enlighten the atmosphere. Nonetheless, the songs are true to its subject and direct in expressing the right intent of the song. It is interesting to note that we can see a number of Mizo satirical songs from the British period and the advent of Christianity in Mizoram. In the Mizo folk songs, we can see nomadic pieces having satirical nature, some of the important ones are seen below:

Personal criticism and mockery of individuals is seen in many of the Mizo songs. The most well known among them was between Awithangpa and Diriallova, they were both great composers, and they are both *Lelhchhun* clan of the *Ralte's*. It is seen in the early composition that Awithangpa never composed songs to mock others. It can be assumed that, he later started composing satires after being provoked by Diriallova. They confront each other through a number of songs. Let us look at some of them:

In the house where Awithangpa visited a lady friend; Diriallova went to show that he is better than Awithangpa and speaks as if he is the lover of the lady and says:

*Lalawithangpa hneha Diriallo,
Ka lo leng e Diriallo chawnpui par iang
Zia-am hlim chhing rawh leng tleitiri.*

(Meaning: I Dirailloa, who is greater than Awithangpa and having good looks like that of Chawnpui flower have come to court you, give your attention to me.)

Awithangpa knew very well that Diriallova was not what he speaks of himself. He could not contain himself either; he gave a mocking laugh at him and says:

*A kim tlang rengin a zir si lo,
Sakhmel vul lo chawnpui par intih reng chu
A thang leng hnenah a mawi lo 'ng e.*

(Meaning: Comparing yourself to Chawnpui flower looking at your physique and face is embarrassing for the people to know.)

Then Diriallova with lack of respect and his ego telling him he is superior to Awithangpa, replied saying;

*Thim poh zing se Awithangpa chu
Zawng mei bulah a chang awm e,
Diriallova val erawh kulva thlehniarah,
Ropui rel renga ni lenin.*

{Meaning: If complete darkness occurs, Awithanga will turn into a tailless monkey while I Dirialloa will turn into *Vakul* (King of birds) and will spend my days giving commands.}

Awithanga replied back saying;

Kulva thlehniar ah I chang rua lo

I sakhmelin kawrngau hmelchhia a iang e,

Nu chhun tingbel anga dum zel zul.

{Meaning: You will not turn into *Vakul* (King of birds) since you had an ugly face like Gibson (Wild animal). You also have a black skin just like the black color of a dyeing pan.}

There exist many satirical songs where these two attacks at each other, but in the end Diriallova decided not to answer back.

Lalvunga, the brave Chief of *Hualngo* exile Lianpuia, the Chief of *Palian* from *Farkawn* and took his land. Lianpuia and his brothers unite to kill Lalvunga and composed a song towards his death; and this song later became *Chai hla*.

Lalvunga'n ka lian a ti farzawl a luah

A luah sual e changsial sawmthum an la e.

{Meaning: Chief Lalvunga settled in *Farzawl* village thinking he was untouchable. How wrong he was boasting his greatness, they have taken 30 (thirty) Mithun from him.}

Savunga, son of Darliankuala, known for his pride and riches among the *Sailo* Chiefs was very rude towards Rolura and his descendents. Savunga makes fun of them saying their hands have become rough from grabbing and eating abnormal foods while his hand are so smooth that it got cut playing Liando's musical instrument, and composed a song to mock them:

Nangni in chawi beram bar tur

Keini kan chawi Lalneihzovin,

Ni tin Liando dar a chheu el el dawn e.

{Meaning: While you play with your ordinary Dar (gong), we on the other hand will be playing with the prestigious *Liando* dar.}

Rolura and his descendents were very furious at Savunga. When the British rescued Mary Winchester from her captors, Savunga was involved in the shooting of Mary Winchester, and for his actions, his land was burned down and he became a wanderer. Rolura and his descendents took this opportunity to mock back at Savunga with a song:

Lal ka hmu, lal vakvai ka hmu,

Pukzing tlangah lal vakvai ka hmu;

Aia i e, u aw aia i e.

(Meaning: I saw a Chief, a wandering Chief. On the land of *Pukzing* village I saw a wandering Chief.)

As noted earlier, we see that different Chiefs of the Mizo took chieftainship and reign before the British step foot on this land. During that period, a number of war breakout between these Chiefs and their clans which are conveyed in the satirical nature of the Mizo folk songs. Not only this, the origin of the famous wars during this period, namely, *Chhim leh Hmar Indo* (Northern and Southern War) and *Chhak leh Thlang Indo* (Eastern and Western War) is believed to be because of the Mizo satirical songs. It is an important aspect to be noted as to how the words of a song plays an important role and highlight its influence in bringing conflicts between the *Sailo* Chiefs which ultimately resulted in massive wars between them. These outcome truly underline the uniqueness, powerfulness and admiration towards the Mizo Satirical Songs.

Since the Mizo Satirical Songs were one of the reason behind the outburst of the two famous wars in Mizo history, it is obligatory that we study the songs responsible for the origin of these wars and understand its effectiveness in creating conflicts.

1.4.1. *Chhim leh Hmar Indo* (Northern and Southern War):

On the eve of the British annexation of *Mizoram* into the British Empire, *Mizoram* was ruled by two large groups of *Sailo* Chiefs in the Northern and Southern part of the land. Chief Vuta and Chief Vanhnuailiana in the Northern region and Chief Rolura and his ascendances headed the Southern region. During this time, Chief Vuta of the Northern region was trying to extend his line of control for new settlement in a place called *Buanhmun*. Having already started the ground work for settlement and occupying the land, the land was overtaken by the Chief of the Southern region named Lalpuithanga. The Chiefs of the Northern region were very angry at his actions. After learning of their anger and in fear of their retaliation, Chief Lalpuithanga decided to relocate to a nearby village called *Vancheng* and settled over there.

Once the Northern Chiefs gain knowledge of the actions of Chief Lalpuithanga, they emphasize his action as a sign of weakness and mocked at him; they compose a satirical song about him:

Buanhmun pai ang pawm tawh hnu,

Chengteah lam ang let e,

Lalpuithang lema,

A lema lema.

(Meaning: Chief Lalpuithanga, you gladly occupy *Buanhmun* village for your new settlement. But you could not settle for long because of your fear

and weakness and relocated to *Vancheng* village. You are a Chief who is weak, who is untrustworthy and one who could not stand by his words till the end.)

For Chief Lalpuithanga and the other Southern Chiefs, this satirical song inflicts much humiliation and pain in their hearts that they are reluctant to forgive the Northern Chiefs.

The Satirical song mentioned above caused more stray pieces of another satirical song between the Northern and the Southern Chiefs which resulted in some incidents between the two. And such situation and circumstances caused the famous Northern and Southern war in Mizoram. According to K. Zawla, the Mizo historian, “the actual war began in the year 1856 and ended in the year 1859” (106).

1.4.2. *Chhak leh Thlang Indo* (Eastern and Western War):

In this war, the main group of the Western region was headed by *Zadeng* Chief and the Eastern group was headed by Chief Mangpawrha, descendant of Lalluta, *Sailo* Chief. It is important and interesting to highlight that, in one of the most famous war of the Mizo history, the rivalry and hatred between the Chiefs of the Easterner and the Westerner which ultimately led to war was again ignited by satirical songs. These famous wars among the Mizo is unique in such a way that it is not just a war between one or two Chiefs but rather a geographical unification

of various Chiefs into one group which have significant impacts on the entire land.

In the earlier part of the 19th century A.D. *Aizawl* (the capital of Mizoram) and the western part of *Mizoram* were ruled by the *Sailo* and the *Zadeng* Chiefs. During this time, one of the *Sailo* Chiefs *Vuttaia*, was arrested by the *Pawih* (one of the clan of Mizo) and was taken prisoner to *Falam*, Burma. The *Pawih* demand a huge ransom in exchange for their prisoner. Since the ransom could not be paid by them alone the *Sailo* Chiefs begged their fellow Chief for assistance. At last the prisoner was ransomed. Every Chief contributed except for one *Zadeng* Chief *Lalchungnunga*, and his disagreement with the *Sailo* Chiefs began to break their acquaintance. As a result of this revulsion Chief *Mangpawrha* who ruled at *Reiek* Village near *Aizawl* mocks at *Lalchungnunga* the Chief of a neighboring Village *Truahzawl* by the following lines:

Zadeng an thlungluah

Kulva chang chuang lovin

Lianak chuang rawh se

Keini kan thlungluah

Kulva chang leh lianak

Chuang rawh rawh se.

{Meaning: Let the tails of black crow put on the head of *Zadeng* tribe for decoration, however, the highland racket-tailed drongo's tail and *Ngenchi* (decoration item for victory) adorn our heads for victory.}

The song cited above is an implication to the traditional practice of the Mizo. It was the convention of the Mizo that conquering warrior who have killed their enemies would put the tail of a racket-tailed drongo and *Ngenchi* as a decoration on their head to show their heroism and to celebrate their triumph. Meanwhile, when they killed their enemy the head would be hung up on a post called *Sahlam* and the crows would feed on them.

Later, Lalchungnunga had the chance to scoff at his enemy when he heard the news of the death of Mangpawrha who met with an accident. He then replies with a dominant mockery through song:

*Khawhkring tuchhuan lalmanga a fam ta e,
Lalchungnunga'n tu nge ka do tak ang le?*

(Meaning: The pride of the Khawhkring Chief Mangpawrha have passed away, so, whom should I, Lalchungnunga subdue in the future.)

The above satirical song seriously attacked the inner feeling of the Eastern Chiefs. They took up arms and the said Eastern and Western war started. "It can

be assumed that it began in the year 1877 and lasted for about 3 (three) years” (K. Zawla 118).

It is an interesting thing that both the parties attacked each other party by coining a number of satirical songs and employed it as weapons in the battle so as to subdue and frightened their counter parts. One of the most interesting even of such incident was the killing of Chhingpuii, one of the most beautiful lady at that time. Chhingpuii was from *Ruanzawl* village (the Eastern group). During this time they were often attacked by the *Tachhip* (the Western group). One day, on their way to their *jhum* along with one elderly man from the village, they were attacked by the *Tachhip* warriors and both of them were killed. They took home the head of Chhingpuii as a war trophy and hung it in *Sahlam* (Victory post). A number of satires were composed by them to mock at the *Ruanzawl* people.

Chhak ralin ka hrang in ti,

In lawm lai Chhinghermawii,

Pualchang hmul ang in thlau ve doralah.

(Meaning: The Eastern warriors you boast of your bravery; like a bird loosing its feathers you lost your most adorable beauty Chhingpuii who now lies in the hands of foes.)

Chhingpuii thlang khuandim chu,

Chhip khawpui mualah lum e,

Chawltui ningzu rui e Lenghermawiin.

(Meaning: Chhingpuii travelled to her groom and lies in the court yard of the great Tachhip. The fair maiden lies drunk and unattended.)

Now we know the incidents taking place in *Mizoram*; what we learn and understand from these wars and battles is that, one of the famous reasons and the sole responder for the origin of these wars is the satirical songs. So we can say, satirical songs had its importance and played its part in these famous wars and from these Mizo Satirical songs we realize the influence, effectiveness, dangerousness and its importance.

1.5. Nature Theme: Folk songs on nature are one of the most common types of tribal folk songs. The rural folk are dependent on nature for their life and livelihood and spend all their life in close connection with Mother Nature. The folk-mind fostered through calm contact with nature and the incidents experiences nurture by it. Thus they are very much emotionally involved to all the aspect of Nature, such as the trees, the seasons, birds, flowers, animals and the entire gamut. This love and attachment to nature is found reflected in all their folk songs.

In the Mizo folk songs, similes and metaphors are largely drawn from nature, which reveal their natural intimacy to the objects of nature. Since nature play a vital role in the life of the people it also provides emotive inspiration in love-songs, the lovers often used the objects of nature to compare themselves. Many folk songs around the world considered the birds as epitome of fidelity, and are common images in folk songs. They are often engaged as envoy of love, and are sometimes personified.

In the following song of *Miri* tribe we see that bird motif is one of the most common songs:

“I would be a bird and a wing to your lake,
 I would be a pigeon and flutter on your roof,
 I would be perspiration and well up in your body,
 I would be a fly and fall on your cheek”. (Jadav 88&89)

In the Mizo folk song, the most common images of love are the eagle, the hornbill and the dove. These birds denote the closeness of the poet with nature and employed it as a means to convey their feelings. Especially at times when the lovers come across separations, he calls for these objects of nature to console, enlighten and even act as a messenger. The following song of Awithangpa expresses the poet’s anguish and he invites the bird to resolve his problems:

Huiva lo leng Awithangpan ka zawt ang che,

Kungpui thadang i chhawn ngai em le?

Liantlang darngo chawi; Thangnuihiauvi.

(Meaning: Oh sweet dove, tell me, I pray, have you ever meet my sweetheart of well born, sweet tongued pale beauty who is nursed by her queenly mother.)

Another worth mentioning is Saikuti, her songs truly signify that God's creation such as rivers and mountains, leaves and flowers, animals and birds occupies a huge portion of her heart. When Saikuti and her family relocated from *Hlingvawm* village to *Thingsai* village, they live on top of a small hill. She was able to pleasantly view the wide mountain ranges and while she gazed through the trees and bamboos with the mist of clouds arising between the mountains, it touches her heart so emotionally that she composed this beautiful song:

Khua tin lang tlang ka pa run a zau e,

Kawlah van rang chum angin leng rih nang ka ti.

(Meaning: The landscape view on my father's house is very good; I can see many villages from here. I want to stay here forever.)

Saikuti was a lover of nature's beauty especially flowers. When she heard about the beauty of *Phunchawng* (A beautiful flower) blooming in the plains on the banks of river *Tiau*, she was so eager to see it. Some Bachelors brought it

home for her; after seeing it, she was so fascinated by its beauty and composed a song about it as shown below:

A hei hi maw phunchawng a par valin a sel chu,

Ka lawm anga senlai nau angin.

(Meaning: So this is the famous *Phunchawng* flower cherished by many bachelors. Oh, how beautiful it is, let me embraced it like a baby.)

One day while Saikuti and her male companion were working in the fields, the man caught a fledgling and put it inside his bag. The mother of the bird was chirping endlessly on top of *Vau* tree hoping that her baby would hear her call. Saikuti felt sympathy for the mother bird since her friend has no intention to release the baby bird. In her desperation, Saikuti composed a song about it and sings out loud:

Sang thing lerah chun an nempui,

Tapin riang thingtin lo dil na e.

(Meaning: My deepest sympathy to the mother bird who calls for her baby from the tree top.)

On hearing Saikuti's emotional song, he realized his arrogance and quietly releases the baby bird from his bag. The baby bird flew towards her mother and they happily embraced each other; the mother bird feeds her baby while playing

along with her. On witnessing their love and happiness, Saikuti again composed a song:

Ka chung sirva hraite puan ang chan hnu,

A tawng leh e, lungduh tinkim chhun rawl a hlan e.

(Meaning: The mother bird finally found her lost baby bird; she happily embraced and feeds her once again.)

Her versatility with any theme and the use of simple language made her songs immensely popular with the people. We can see her closeness to nature from her use of imagery and metaphors drawn freely from it. We see such use of images of the beautiful nature to express her loneliness because of separations in the following way:

Muvanlaiin van zawlah di a au,

Keipawh ka di mual a liam e ralah ka au ve.

(Meaning: The lonely eagle up on high calls for its mate, likewise, I too call for my love that has gone afar.)

There are times a person identifies himself with the nature in their songs. In the song *Nilen zai* we find the lover crying over a lost love and identify himself with the dove:

*Ka vauva huivate, I hram lai bang tawh la,
Keipawh thadang ngaiin, Ka tahlai ni tam e.*

(Meaning: The lover asks the dove near his *jhum* to cease crying as he himself also has been spending many days crying for his love.)

*Ka lungdi nuam che maw, Thangvan sang kai dun e,
Siarah to ila, Khua zain sel rawh se.*

(Meaning: In this song the lover asks his sweetheart whether she is ready to convert with him into the star high above and be talk of the people.)

2. Minor theme:

Besides the major theme mention above, there are varieties of minor themes reflected in the Mizo folk songs.

2.1. Patriotic: The Mizo society as a whole is largely influenced by the great warriors. Due to this influence we learn that the main aim of every man is to do brave deeds for their villages. One such song of Saikuti reflected that the desire of the mother for her baby boy is that he will grow to be a brave man:

*A lo piang e, ka nu ngunhnam a ti,
Hrang hmunpuiah dokim sah lai a ni a tiam e.*

(Mother, a baby boy is born and he plead a Sword, promising that he would fight bravely in future)

Most of the *Bawh hla* render their patriotic feelings. Their love of their villages are expressed in the different songs named after villages such as; *Zopui zai, Darlung zai, Tlangkhaw zai Aialung zai, Lumtui zai, Chhim zai, Chhimthlang zai* etc.

The theme of their songs also greatly reflects their patriotic endeavor. They expressed their love and admiration for their villages, it is noteworthy to see that apart from fighting for their villages physically the patriotic feelings are expressed in the form of a songs. The following *Zialung zai* depicted one such pride and loyalty towards their village *Zialung*:

Kan lal hlei, kan lal hlei ngai e,

Zialung kan lal hlei ngai e,

Kan tai nem lo a awm lo.

(Meaning: We are powerful, yes, we are really powerful. We, the *Zialung* village warrior are more powerful than others. There are none who could survive our attack, but rather subdue.)

It is a remarkable thing that not only the man folk sings of their bravery and greatness attached to their village. Saikuti revealed her patriotic endeavor for her village in the following lines:

Saikhaw tlangah lal lai a zing dawn e,

Chhimtlang naufa banah kai I, ka runpui mawiin.

(Meaning: Brave warriors move towards the north and bring home some slaves to adorn our houses, so the fame and glory of our *Thingsai* village will be known.)

One of the foremost known composer Pi Hmuaki's song revealed her passionate adoration of her village. Long ago, the soldiers of *Hualngo* and *Hualhang* made the people of *Chawnghawih* to evacuate their home by force; the *Ngente* clan then settled together in *Bapui Tlang*. On staring back at their village from a far away distance, Pi Hmuaki rendered the following lines:

Kan Ngente khua khaw nun nuama kha

Thla ka fam hman ki nghilh rua lo ve.

(Meaning: I will never forget thee till my last breath, my pleasant place of abode, my *Ngente* village.)

2.2. Protest: Taking a closure look into the Mizo folk songs, we find that there are some circumstances where a person raised a voice in revolt

against what had happened. There are times where lovers complain against their parents who were against their relationship. We also find that there are times where a person protests against the unfair judgments made by the rulers. It is a noteworthy thing that we find more feminine gender protesting against their situations. We will discuss some of the folk songs with the theme of protest highlighting the story behind the songs.

Laltheri zai was another song which revealed passionate and true feelings of the heart. “Laltheri’s real name was Lalchawngpuii she was the daughter of a famous *Sailo* Chief Lalsavunga and the sister of a well known Chief Vanhnuailiana” (Lalthangliana *Mizo hun* 80). In spite of having the royal blood she fell in love with a commoner named Chalthanga.

During this time the Chiefs were so powerful that their discussions were the final order for the villagers. There was a vast gap between the Kingly family and the commoner; it was like an unwritten law that the commoner should not fall in love with the Chiefs children. The affair was not approved by her family that the lover Chalthanga was murdered by them. Laltheri could not get over her longings for her lover and began to grieve in songs which became to be known as the song of Laltheri. In the whole context of her song she laments on the death of her beloved and in the meantime protests against her family who executed her lover. She finds that life without her beloved was the most complicated thing in

life, some of Laltheri's song blames and complaints her family for killing her beloved:

Ka chun leh zua suihlung in mawl lua e,

Kan sum tualah Thangdang thlunglu hawihte'n in tar le.

(Meaning: Oh my parents, Kingly *Sailo* Chief, how thoughtless are you; decorating our court yard with the head of Chalthanga.)

Eventhough the status of the Chief's daughter were highly respected. Her rebellious mind made her act like mere fools, she walks around the street naked and protest against the cruel act of the ones who took part in killing her lover. In spite of her pleading to clothe herself, she replies thus:

Ka nemte puan ka chawi lo vang ka nu,

Ka di thangdanga zalna mah, chhimhlei tual daiah.

Chhunrawl lovin thla ka fam lo vang ka nu,

Suihlunglengin Sailo ngurpui fam lo awl na e.

(Meaning: I will not clothe myself, my dear mother. Even my dear lover lies dead beneath the earth. I will not die of hunger, my dear mother. It will be much easier to die of loneliness for *Sailo* princess.)

Laltheri's nakedness highlights the cavity of *Sailo* readymade patriarchal system. Stripping off all her clothes symbolizes stripping off her *Sailo* identity as a princess and show how she longed to be free, to be able to live like a normal

human being without boundaries. She represented all the Mizo women who suffered at the hands of tyrannical male patriarchy. (Mizo Studies 189)

A union in marriages with a Chief's daughter for a commoner was out of the question. If the daughter of the Chief conceives the child of a commoner, he should be killed. But it is noteworthy that Laltheri protest against the rule of the Chief's marriages. In Mizo studies, Ruth writes, "She broke the barrier of the *Sailo* marriage institution by conceiving a commoner's baby." (191)

Bawmzo ral mah dar ang chhai ngam loin,

Belzu kungah ka di Chalthanga chawng sai ang sat e.

{Meaning: Afraid to fight against the real enemies, but instead you decided to brutally kill my love (Chalthanga) while he was peacefully entertained.}

Like most society the Mizo young lovers too face many difficulties in their relationships. Even though they were free from cultural repression and lawful intrusion, there were times where the lovers are rejected by the parents. In the song *Nilen zai* we see such kind of situation where a young woman protest against her parents who have become hostile to her because of their rejection of her lover:

*Ka nu maw ral I chan, Ka pa maw ral I chan,
Kawlngo lenthiamtea, Ka run a kai love.*

(Meaning: Dear mother and father, you have become a foe since you could not show him your acceptance, he had stop courting me.)

In *Saikuti zai* we also see the lover complaint of her mother deviation of her lover:

*Ka chuninu sakhmel kawl ang hnim mahse nang tawnah,
Kan run sang kai chu bang lo la Chaltuaia.*

(Meaning: Jealous mother frowns upon seeming lovers, cease not your courting, my love.)

In the two songs mentioned we can see the strong feelings of the lovers. In spite of the disagreement of their parent, the poets tend to continue the relationship with her lover.

Darpawngi was another noteworthy figure in Mizo folk songs. She was a *Ralte Bungsut* tribe and her father was Manghauva *Ralte Bungsut* but her mother was a *Khiangte* tribe. “She was born in 1845 and died in 1920. She died when she was 85 years of age” (Lalsangzuali Sailo 73). Her childhood was spent living in the house of *Laisawral* Chief, Lalchema (Some people called him Lalcheua) (Lalthangliana *Mizo literature* 56).

Her songs can be well assembled according to their tunes and themes into three groups: *Thlek zai* (Songs of head turn), *Lusun zai* (Songs of mourning) and *Thinrim zai* (Protest Songs). Most of her songs are lamentation for the dead of her son and rebellion against the repressive *Zadeng Chief* in *Thantlang*. Her songs were three line verse form except for *Thinrim zai*. *Thinrim zai* has four lines in each verse and the second line is an echo of the first line. She courageously protests against the lopsided judgments of the authority through her song. On one such occasion she and one of the Chief's elder dispute over a kid (a baby goat). Even though it was proved that she was right, she loss the case since she was a commoner who compete with the Chief's elder. She bravely sings:

Khiangvawn rai ka rah e,

Khiangvawn rai ka rah e,

Ka lengkelin sumtual zawlah

A chun a hai lo ve.

{Meaning- I am a deprived helpless *Khiangte* (name of a Mizo clan) being, my little goat recognizes its mother well when trialed in the court yard.}

She drew a touching metaphor from her goat and herself who were wandering about in search for their child.

Ai ka lengkel, ka lengkel,

Ai ka lengkel, ka lengkel,

Keimah iangin hrai a ngai e;

Dailung a vel ruai e.

(Meaning- Oh my goat, oh my goat, just as myself, it wandered about the village in search of its young ones.)

Darpawngi bravely confess her wrath against the Chief Dengpui in a very offensive way:

Dengpui, ka var I ti,

Dengpui, ka var I ti,

I vangkhua chung siar zatin

Pawlin ka ring lo ve.

{Meaning - *Dengpui* (name of the Chief of their village), you think you are wise, but I do not think the number of your villagers will grow as many as the stars. }

In the songs mentioned above we see that in spite of her limitation with the power of the Chief, she boldly protests the flawed judgments made by the Chief. She was courageous, bold and strong. It presents a solemn picture of constrain humility, the bitterness and the hopelessness of failed rebellions.

2.3. Courting: *Nula rim* (Courting a lady by visiting their house at night) is an important culture of the Mizo which portrays their life style. There are a number of songs reflecting their night visit traditions. As already mentioned in chapter 1, it was a common practice for a man to visit the house of a lady, whether it is a young lady or a divorcee, it may be just a friend or a lover. Most of the courting songs reflects their desire to stay courting for some times but time does not permit them. The following song from *Lianlunga zai* reflects such emotion:

Zan a rei e, bawarin leng a hnawl,

I tiam leh ang zan dang siali I runsang kai nan.

(Meaning: The moon has gone down and it's time to head for home, let us promise dearest that we will have another night together)

The following *Nilen zai* reveals a more passionate desire to continue courting and even wishes to stay up the whole night:

Nilen ka tum love, Tlaivar ka tum love,

Thadang anka ka bia, Nilen ka tum leh e,

Tlaivar ka tum leh e.

(Meaning: I had no intention of staying up the whole night, but since I am having conversation with my lover, I changed my mind and decided to stay up the whole night.)

One such Lengzem zai also revealed the lady begging her lover who was about to call off for the night to stay with her for a while:

Zan a rei nem maw, la leng rih la,

Siruk hlang lam ang a her lo vanzawlan;

Tawite tal buan ang mi pawm ve la.

(Meaning: The night is young stay for a while, even the stars are still twinkling in the sky, hold me for just another while.)

During this night visit, they would sit and chat near the hearth which was their only source of light at night. When a lady has more than two or three visitors, she is not allowed to speak in favor of or glance at the one she favors but rather treat everyone equally. She has to hide her feelings as long as possible even to her lover if he is present; sometimes they too cannot hide their feelings for long and we see what seems to be their heartfelt expression in the form of a song as shown below:

Thingte tuah khawm ngaih loh val danna,

Chhingmit len riai e a di val tawnah.

(Meaning: The loom I keep between myself and the man I do not love, while my eyes stray towards the one I love.)

Even though the unwritten tradition does not permit them to choose their visitors who are courting them, the following song also reveals the feeling of the lady not with hold her desire:

A mi lo leng kharlaia ka dan,

Ka di lo leng, a hawia ka hawi.

(Meaning: I blocked the door for an ordinary visitor, but when my lover comes, I warmly welcome.)

From the courting songs, we see that the Mizo youths enjoy a great freedom during the night time. Their daily routine was full of hard work, but at night they enjoy full freedom with their love ones.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this present study, utmost efforts have been given to convey reasonable light on different aspects of the Oral Literature, particularly the Mizo Folk songs. Sincere efforts have been given to describe and analyse the available materials of Mizo Folk songs. It is also interesting to note that a good number of the available materials possess deep significance and value for research and indicate the rich cultural heritage of the Mizo in general and in the Mizo Oral Literature in particular. Further, it can be said that the present study extended the boundaries of studying the culture, religion and social life of the Mizo. The main findings of the present study may conveniently be summed up as below.

The primary sources, secondary sources as well as the analysis of the data clearly reveal the Mizo oral literature especially in Folk songs. This can be claimed as one of the most valuable and outstanding cultural heritage of the Mizo. Indeed, songs accompanied all activities of the Mizo community and were a counterpart of the mental and emotional spheres of their life. Justifications of the above remarks can be seen from the following discussion and from the various points noted below.

From our investigation of the history and development of Mizo folk songs, we can have a more sensible idea about songs in terms of what could probably be

termed as coherent chronology. The older songs were usually of two lines, and later on there were songs that have three lines and four lines as well. Though the findings, facts and figures of the Mizo historians may slightly differ, there exist only minor differences in their findings of how the Mizo started having songs and the first song of the Mizo.

The advent of Christianity had great impact on the structure of the Mizo folk song, thus eventually changing the outlook of the songs. Changes were seen in the number of lines in the song, the separation of stanzas, on how they use lyrical words and tune of the songs. These changes bring to an end the soft tune nature of the old Mizo folk songs. But, on a positive note, it is important to highlight that, songs composed after the advent of Christianity brings wisdom, knowledge and teaches them about life, and henceforth guide them in their daily way of life. Eventually, songs about spiritual healings evolved along with songs which portrays about life after death. Once Christianity had taken over the Mizo ethos, the Mizo folk songs undergo a tremendous change, succeeded by different types of musical tunes. In the later period, there exist more love songs among the youths of the Mizo; then Patriotic songs followed.

The different characteristics of the Mizo folk songs reveal that they follow regular and standardized features. The tunes were often given greater importance than the content of the songs. A good number of the Mizo folk songs follow similar tune; however, the meaning of the songs differs from one another. Closely

looking into our earlier songs, we realize one popular characteristic, i.e. each composer has a tune of his/her own, and when someone else composes in that tune it bears the name of the original tune composer.

Our investigation reveals that spontaneity and simplicity are important feature of the Mizo folk songs. So, it may not be appropriate to anticipate a high degree of polish or finesse in their composition or in melody. They are characterized by fairly few literary forms, but beneath the simplicity lay the deepest possible emotions and spontaneous faith of the people in life. The composer of folk songs lived in contact with nature; the subjects of his/her songs are combined with nature, work, surroundings, and society. Intricacy and complexity are hardly found, on the contrary, numerous examples of the Mizo folk songs exist with poignant richness expressed in a simple melody. The main aesthetic reason for this is that they give an entire expression of its own society, fulfilling the theory of aesthetic completeness both from the point of view of form and of ideological content.

Our study shows that in the Mizo folk songs the prime focus of interest in categorizing them is by the tune and the aesthetics of sound. The semantic content is given a trivial significance in terms of its way of categorizing them. We learn that the Mizo have such a unique way of categorizing different type of songs called '*Hla bu*'. *Hla bu khat* consist of all the similar tunes though it may vary in nature and themes, except for *Hlado*, *Bawh hla*, *Salu lam zai*, *Dawi hla*, and

Thiam hla . In most of the songs, each line of the stanza stand independent, in which the meaning and goal of the lines are entirely different from the next line. Songs about mockery and indecent gestures are very common among the Mizo folk songs.

Our study on characteristics and the different types of Mizo Folk songs reveal the issue of known authorship in the Mizo Oral Literature. The present investigation reveals that there are good numbers of known authorship in folk songs which deserve due consideration and attention in their own right. This peculiarity may be taken as interesting and noteworthy. In the traditional classification of particular types of Mizo Folk songs we see that a number of songs were named or known after the name of particular legendary poets and poetesses. It can also be said that some men and women became legendary persons because songs and verses have immortalized them. A good number of Mizo folk songs have been connected with such legendary persons, legendary places and so on.

Under the circumstances stated above and considering the Mizo way of life in the early period, the same peculiarity and specialty may be claimed as one of the distinctive features of the Mizo folk songs which is usually absent or not known in the characteristics of folk songs of other groups. In the mean time, one main characteristic of the elements of folk song is continuous transformation and changes. So, even though songs are named and labelled after the early composer,

we should keep in mind that their songs have gone through many generations with continual change, and corrections. We should keep in mind that the individual signs of creative activity are not as evident in folk literature as they are in the field of written literature. Folk song often changes according to the character and composition of the community in which it is performed.

Our present research indicates that important aspects of folk songs are the social and historical information they contain. In most cases of the early Mizo society, the men held higher position and stature compared to women in the society. As highlighted in chapter 1, even at an early age, better training and opportunities are given to boys compared to girls. We also learn that men having a mindset similar to women are condemned and are mocked at by telling them to wear a skirt.

Further, in merry making and public festivals, men are again given much more importance and better treatment than women. Furthermore, in the case of religion also, the stature of the men was shown when the wives dully adopt to the religion of her husband. Similarly, men's dominance is again portrayed in society practices, agricultural activities, professional works etc.

However, the interesting point seen from our study of Mizo folk songs is that, women enjoy better recognition compared to men. The Mizo have a traditional way of classification of folk songs which has an important value in its

classification; this unique and famous way of classification is based on naming the folk songs after the names of the individual poets or poetesses. As seen in the earlier chapters, such kinds of folk songs reveals that songs named after women are greater in number than the songs named after men. Furthermore, it is learnt that the songs bearing names of women folk are more popular among the Mizo community than the songs named after men. This fact truly uplifts the condition of women and helped in recognizing the importance of women in the society of the Mizo.

Though collections of Mizo folk songs have been taken up by many writers, scholars and researchers, we have highlighted that only a few analytical classifications have been done. This view in mind, in this present study we attempt to classify, analyse and study the Mizo folk songs according to the international approach and gave proper analytical studies in their proper context. Different ways of classification made by researchers of various communities are studied and highlighted in chapter-3 and from these studies an analytical classification was made according to their structure, function, and theme.

Under the classification made by its structure, we have included *Thawnthu hla* (ballad) and *Rimawi hla* (Musical instruments songs), and under its function we have; *Naupang Hla* (Children's song), *Thiam hla* (Invocation), *Dawi hla* (Incantation), and *Kut hla* (Songs associated with festivals). The thematic classification is again sub-divided into major and minor themes. The major

themes include; Love, hunting and war, laments, satire, and nature. The minor them are; Patriotic, protest, and courting.

From the study of *Thawnthu hla* (Ballad) we observe that in the Mizo Ballad, real life incidents which reflect positive influence are depicted instead of imaginary nature. Incidents involving love, war, and history transformed into stories are the main nature of Mizo Ballads. They are usually short narrative and do not follow the form of a literary ballad stanza, except for the few accidental ending rhyme it does not following a regular rhythm.

Even though singing accounts for a preponderance of music making, formal and informal, in the Mizo folk songs tradition, musical instruments are important, and instrumental music is of significant interest. The study of *Rimawi hla* (musical instruments songs) reveals that the Mizo musical instruments are percussion, wind instruments and string instruments. In the early Mizo traditions, *Khuang* (Drum) was the most frequently used instrument in times of social gatherings. In the meantime *Dar* (Gong) was the most valued and most precious of them, *Dar khuang* instruments were popularly used in various occasions of the early days.

From our analysis of the Mizo *Thiam hla*, we see that they fairly portray the true nature of the early Mizo community; their faithfulness and loyalty to their god was also seen through their sacrificial offerings and rituals. From the above

studies we can see that the invocations are quite lengthy because they usually chant about their desired dreams which they treasured during their period and this reveals what they wanted and what was valuable to them. Invocations illustrate the Mizo folk life more than other folk songs; its studies enlighten more of the Mizo history but unfortunately there exists only a few specimens of them for a more in-depth study and analysis.

The thematic studies undertaken in chapter 4 shows that love is the most popular theme in Mizo folk songs. The love songs generally render the faithful and true, but often despondent, beseeching of a lover who cares nothing but sacrifice on behalf of his beloved. They are mostly sincere, simple words, in most of these songs the ideal of true love is adhered to with great fidelity, - the ideal of constant truthfulness to one lover. There are a few exceptions to this attitude, which stand out because of their direct opposition to this view. Even though true love was so often saddened because of unfortunate fate, yet the ideal was unchanged. Their lamentation songs highlighted mainly lean towards songs about condolence, comfort, loneliness and remembrance of the dead.

Our study of hunting and war theme in chapter 4 clearly reveals the Mizo attitude towards brave warrior. When a boy was born, the elders gave their blessings so that he might grow up to be a brave and good hunter. Being brave, strong and hard working was the utmost trait they valued among the men. Boys are trained to be brave, to be skilled hunters and kill their enemies without fear.

There was an assumption that the soul of the wild animals and enemies they killed would accompany them to *Pialral* as a servant. *Hlado* and *Bawh hla* reveal the attitude of the brave Mizo warrior, they are purely subjective and unlike most Mizo folk songs not meant to be chanted in groups but an individual performance. One of the characteristics was its restriction to occasions, it was proper to sing or recite certain types of lyrics only on certain occasions and only by certain persons.

From this investigation, we also realize that the Mizo songs scarcely render their occupation about jhuming in their folk songs, though it was very much part of their daily life. It can be presume that it was because they do not give high regard to their cultivation works, as they give great admiration to the brave hunters and worrier. Likewise, there are songs which highlighted a scornful pity for those who go to work in the jhum and could not go hunting wild animal.

Chunnu'n e, a tir che maw,

Uai hnianga ram va tuan che e;

Kei chu e, chengrang te nen'

Tlangan e, thliten ka her ngai e.

(Meaning: So indolently you go to work in your jhum as your mother directed you to. As for me, I have my own way and go hunting bravely roaming above the high hills with my gun in my hands.)

From the study of folk songs from different community we acknowledge that theme on marriage and songs sung on marriages function are quite a popular feature of various folk songs, it is worth mentioning to point out that the Mizo hardly have such kinds of songs in their folk songs. In the meantime, there are some songs which reveal their courting for marriages and the arrangements for fulfilling them. The courting songs studied in the previous chapter clearly reveal the freedom enjoy by the Mizo youths. A day's hard works were replaced by the pleasing fellowship with their love ones, but it is noteworthy to mention that they were very careful in maintaining their dignity. Their freedom at night was enjoyed without dishonor.

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GLOSSARY

Chapter - 1

Chawng – the name of a sacrifice and 3 (three) days feast and dancing given by a single individual or a family – the first of a series of sacrifices and feasts to ensure entrance to the Pialral.

Hawilo par – the name of a mythical flower which grows on the road to *Mitthi khua* beyond *Hringlang tlang*. The spirits of the dead pluck and wear these blossoms in their hair and ears, and after that have no desire to turn and look back upon the earth which they have left behind.

Hringlang tlang – the name of a mythical mountain on the way to *Mitthi khua* (dead man's village) from which the spirits of the departed look back and view with longing the world of man which they have left behind.

Inchhawlthuai – a sign of love play by the youth on their way to the jhum.

In Lama Thangchhuah – A kind of sacrifice or a title given to a man who has distinguished himself by giving a certain number of public feasts as a means to attain *Pialral* (the Mizo paradise).

Inlawm – to take turn and turn about at helping one another in any kind of work or occupation; to do anything together by turns for mutual advantage or pleasure.

Khuangchawi – the name of a public feast given by the rich people for the completion of *In lama Thangchhuah*

Laksang – the name of a spider; the spider is used by the youths in a play to determine the characters of their partners to be.

Lungloh tui – the name of a mythical spring on the way to *Mitthi khua* beyond *Hringlang tlang* of which the spirits of the departed drink and lose all their longings to return to earth.

Mitthi khua – Dead man's village.

Mitthi rawp lam – a kind of special program during *In lama Thangchhuah* dedicated to the dead spirit of their family.

Pialral – the Lushai paradise, the further side of the *Pial* River.

Ram lama thangchhuah – title given to a man who has distinguished himself by killing wild creature such as, elephant, bear, sambhur, barking deer, wild boar, and wild mithun in order to attain Pialral.

Ranngo zawng – To travel looking for a wife in other village.

Sakung – The first step for sacrificial ceremony performed for Mizo traditional purpose.

Sedawi chhun – the name of two of the series of sacrificial public feasts given by aspirants for the distinction of thangchhuah.

Sumdeng zu – beer supplied to the young men and maidens who husk rice for a *chawng* feast.

Sut – main post in a Mizo typical house.

Thangchhuah – the title given to a man who has distinguished himself by killing a certain number of different animals in the chase, or by giving a certain number of public feasts.

Thingphur – collecting firewood from the jungle.

Thitin – a farewell given to the dead to rest their soul in the village of the dead.

Tuthlawh – a small hoe (used for weeding, digging holes, etc.)

Zawlzawng – the name of a cricket with very long hind legs.

Zingvawnzawl – Dead men’s village.

Zu – beer or any fermented liquor.

Chapter – 2

Chawngchen – to join or take part in a *Chawng* feast and festival.

Em – the generic name for several kinds of baskets.

Sahlam – a tree from which a human head is suspended.

Sahrang – a term applied to the larger and more dangerous wild animals, especially to those which are hunted, such as bear, elephant, wild pig etc.

Tuibur – a woman’s pipe or the nicotine water from a woman’s pipe.

Chapter – 3

Dawino chhui – a sacrifice in course of thangchhuah.

Dawibur – magic gourd.

Dawisut – breaking a spell.

Fano dawi – a sacrificial festival performed by the whole village every year good harvest.

Kawl – fetters, manacles, handcuffs, stocks.

Kawngpui siam – a sacrificial festival performed by the whole village every year for success in hunting.

Khawhring – the name of a malignant spirit which so closely approximates to what in English is known as the ‘evil-eye’ that is may well be called by that name.

Khawsikpui – a name applied indiscriminately to severe malarial fever, influenza, and typhoid fever.

Khuallam – the name of a dance connected with a public feast; those who take part in the above dance.

Ral aih – to perform the *ai* ceremony in order to get the spirit of an enemy killed in a raid into one’s power after death, and also to protect from evil consequences during his life.

Sakei aih – a special program for celebrating a tiger killed by the hunters.

Sapui thlah – to frighten a tiger away from the neighborhood of a village, as the Lushais do by going out into the jungle in a big band, beating gongs and drums and firing off guns. It is same as Sa thlah.

Thangchhuah pa – the title given to a man who has distinguished himself by killing a certain number of different animals in the chase, or by giving a certain number of public feasts.

Thlahual – a sacrifice to bind the spirit of a person in order to prevent it from roaming away.

Thlanrawkpa khuangchawi – the great legendary *khuangchawi* feast given by Thlanrawkpa.

Zawlaidi – the name of a philter.

Chapter – 4

Khuanu – Mother Nature.

Ngenchi - a decoration on the head of the brave warrior to show their heroism and to celebrate their triumph.

Pasaltha – brave warrior and hunter.

Rihdil – the name of a lake to the east of Mizoram, said to be passed by departed spirits on their way to *Mitthi khua*.

Thereng – the generic name for many kinds of cicadae.

Zawlbuk – A bachelor's barrack or dormitory.

Zu hmun – A place where men gather to drink *Zu* (rice beer).

A TONIC SOLFA RENDERING OF SOME SPECIMENS OF DAR HLA

1. Liando te unau:

$$\left\{ \left| \begin{array}{l} d :r \quad | \quad m :r \quad | \quad d :r \quad | \quad d :- \\ \text{Liando} \quad \text{te} \quad \text{u-} \quad \text{nau} \quad \text{unau,} \end{array} \right| \begin{array}{l} m :r \quad | \quad m :r \quad | \quad d :r \quad | \quad d :- \\ \text{Dar} \quad \text{e} \quad \text{nge} \quad \text{in} \quad \text{tum in} \quad \text{tum;} \end{array} \right\}$$

$$\left\{ \left| \begin{array}{l} m :r \quad | \quad d :r \quad | \quad m :r \quad | \quad m :- \\ \text{Dar} \quad \text{eng} \quad \text{mah} \quad \text{kan} \quad \text{tum} \quad \text{lo} \quad \text{ve,} \end{array} \right| \begin{array}{l} d :r \quad | \quad m :r \\ \text{Liando} \quad \text{bur} \quad \text{chhe} \end{array} \right\}$$

$$\left\{ \left| \begin{array}{l} m :r \quad | \quad d :r \quad | \quad d :- \quad :- \\ \text{te} \quad \text{kan} \quad \text{tum} \quad \text{kan} \quad \text{tum.} \end{array} \right| \right\}$$

(Meaning: Liando and brother,

What was that gong you played?

It is not a gong that we play,

But Liando's poor gourd that we play.)

2. Chawngvungi man tam e:

$$\left\{ \left| \begin{array}{l} m :r | m :- \\ \text{Chawngvungi} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{l} d :r | d :- \\ \text{man tam e,} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{l} m :m | m :m \\ \text{Thi ka pek a} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{l} d :r \\ \text{duh lo} \end{array} \right| \right\}$$

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} m :- | m :m | m :m | d :r | m :- | d :r | m \\ \text{va, Dar ka pek a | duh lo va, | Kan dar huai} \end{array} \right\}$$

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} :m | d :r | m :- | m :r | d :r | m :r \\ \text{kher | man ngen che, | Chawngvung man tam | sum hluan} \end{array} \right\}$$

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} m - | m :r | m :- | d :r | d :- \\ \text{i, Chawng vungi | man tam e.} \end{array} \right\}$$

(Meaning: So high is the price of Chawngvungi,
 They refused the necklace I offered them,
 Again they refused the gong I gave,
 My precious sacred gong they demanded,
 Oh Chawngvungi, your price unsurpassed all.)

3. Chhimbu leh peng peng:

$$\left\{ \left| \begin{array}{l} m :m \quad |r \quad m \\ \text{Chhimbu} \quad \text{leh} \quad \text{peng} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{l} m :r \quad |d :d \\ \text{peng} \quad \text{in} \quad \text{tu} \quad \text{tu}, \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{l} r :m \quad |r :m \\ \text{A} \quad \text{lu} \quad \text{lam} \quad \text{kawng} \end{array} \right| \right\}$$

$$\left\{ \left| \begin{array}{l} r :d \quad |m :- \\ \text{lu} \quad \text{lam} \quad \text{kawng} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{l} m :r \quad :m \quad |r :m \quad .r \\ \text{Chhim} \quad \text{pa} \quad \text{bu} \quad \text{leh} \quad \text{chhim} \quad \text{pa} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{l} m :r \\ \text{bu} \quad \text{leh} \end{array} \right| \right\}$$

$$\left\{ \left| \begin{array}{l} |d :r :d \\ \text{Chhim} \quad \text{pa} \quad \text{bu} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{l} r :m \quad |r :m \\ \text{Leh} \quad \text{lu} \quad \text{lam} \quad \text{kawng} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{l} r :d \quad |m :- \\ \text{lu} \quad \text{lam} \quad \text{kawng}. \end{array} \right| \right\}$$

(Meaning: The song does not have a significant meaning; it is about the rhythmic beats of the responding sound made by the birds)

A TONIC SOLFA RENDERING OF SAIKUTI ZAI

Doh is A

: :	s :s :d	d :- :- - :- :-
	Ka hming Sai	kut

m :r :d	<u>m .d</u> :d :-	- :- :-	l :l :s
Khua vel mah	thang		se la

: :	s :d :d	d :- :- - :- :-
	Ka ngai lo	vang

m :r :d	<u>m .d</u> :	s : :	s :t :t
Chhing khual a	mi		uan hmang val

<u>l :s</u> :-	- :- :-	s :- :- : :
rual		chu.

{Meaning: My name Saikuti may spread near and far,
I do not care about the visitors (bachelors)
who boast with pride and make fun.}

Darbu



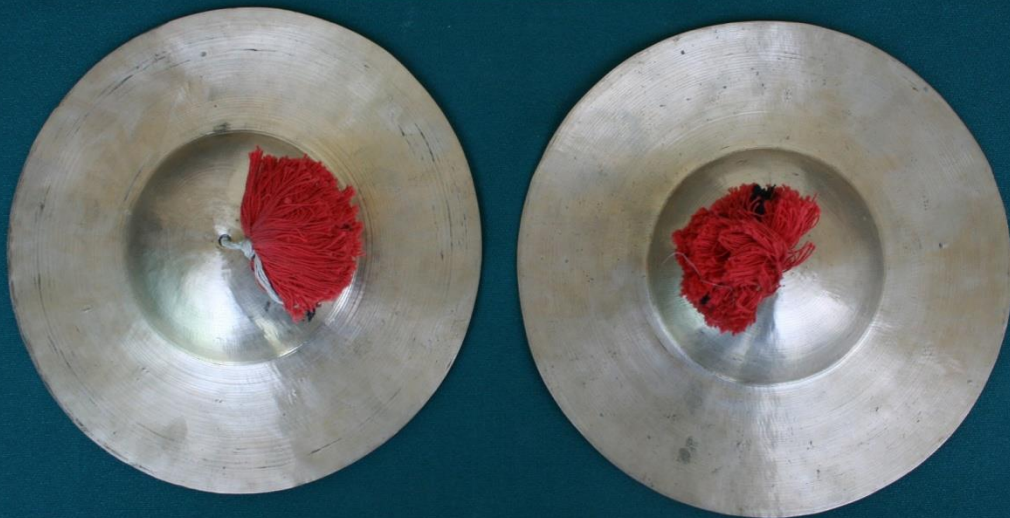
Darkhuang



Darmang



Darbenthek



A picture of some Mizo musical instruments

(Refer to Rimawi hla – Musical Instruments Songs from page 120 – 128)





Rihdil – the lake to the east of Mizoram, said to be passed by departed spirits on their way to *Mitthi khua* (See page 178)

Sahlam – a tree in which a human head brought home by warriors as war trophies are hang.

