

Abstract

A STUDY OF THE GROWTH OF MIZO FOLK THEATRE

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(MZU/M.Phil./268 of 19.04.2016)

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A STUDY OF THE GROWTH OF MIZO FOLK THEATRE

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fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of
Philosophy in Mizo of Mizoram University.**

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DECLARATION

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

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Mizo.

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled '*A Study of the Growth of Mizo Folk Theatre*' submitted by Lalthantluanga Chawngthu for the award of Master of Philosophy in Mizo embodies the results of his investigations carried out under my supervision and that, to the best of my knowledge, the same has not been submitted for award of any degree in this or any other University or Institute of Higher learning.

The candidate has been duly registered and has completed all formalities required of his as an M.Phil. candidate.

I consider the work worthy of being submitted for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Mizo Language and Literature.

Dated the 28th July 2017

Aizawl, Mizoram

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is rather difficult to know exactly when the Mizo people started practicing folk theatre movement. It is also hard to accurately tell the origin of theatre among the civilized society as far as the whole world is concerned. It could be said that theatre probably arose among the Mizo people as a performance of ritual activities. According to Laltluangliana Kiangte:

“It may not be surprising to say that no one really knows when the first performance of drama actually took place in the long history of mankind. However, the natural development of drama, in its simplest form, seems to be first the deed, then the story and lastly the actual play. The origins of drama have always been deeply rooted in the religious instincts of humankind. All of us may agree to say that fear, sympathy and curiosity appear to have prompted the beginnings of drama in its religious origins”
(Laltluangliana, *A Brief History of Mizo Drama & Theatre* 9).

Intently looking at the Mizo folk theatre, it is normally done with the intention of invoking blessings for the community and the individual. Before the year 1894 AD, when the Mizo did not yet have their own alphabet; their social life, culture and everything they used to do were inherited by speech and action. After having alphabets and their own writing material; these words and tunes, culture and social life, their way of living are kept in written records. Before they

had alphabets, they had no way of keeping records of anything. The theatre was the only way of passing on to the next generation. Therefore, we can probably surmise how much material, potential and achievements have been lost down the years.

Folk theatre, which has been practice by the Mizo related with the society. Their songs, dances, religion, superstitious belief to offer a sacrifice and their different chant of rituals, the time when they obtain victory over their enemies and when they killed wild animals and others; all the different Mizo clans had practiced the same. Each own clans have their own chief and settle at their own village but the folk theatre, which they practiced, is almost all the same. However, the largest Mizo clan, the Lushei way of practicing, which is not much more difference from other sub-clan of the Mizo, this chapter further study the details of this clan.

In Mizo folk theatre is not act on stage as in today, But is usually act out wherever is convenient, such as in the streets. In these plays, they usually act out how they hunt their war skills and things, which are connected, to their religion, as all these played a crucial role in their community life. According to Sheelita Das, the term Folk theatre was:

It is the portrait of the different lifestyles in the olden days. It is a composite art form with a fusion of elements from music, dance, pantomime, versification, epic and ballad recitation, graphic and plastic arts, religion and festival peasantry. The Folk theatre having roots in

native culture is embedded in local identity and social values. (Sheelita Das, *Folk Theatre – Its relevance in development communication in India 1*)

Many Mizo writers said that Mizo are originated and descendant from Mongolian (Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin 1*; V.L.Siama, *Mizo History 7*). Liangkhaia said from their face cut, face bone, forehead, snub nosed it is clear the Mizo belonged to Mongolian. The farthest Mizo histories that they know are the time they lived near the *Rûn* river (43).

The Mizo comprises of various clans of the hills people, which have similar dialects and cultures, those clans are collectively known as Mizo. Even though, these various sub-clans such as Hmar, Lai, Mara and others have different dialects, but these dialects were similar in various forms. Lushei dialect was the most common and used by all the clans of Mizo. The Mizo were not only lived in Mizoram, but also in Myanmar, Bangladesh, some states of India.

According to B.Lalthangliana, the Mizo began to settle in this Mizoram as follows:

The various sub-tribes who are the descendants of the Mizo entered Mizoram in different stages, different times and periods. The mainstream of the Mizo led by the Sailo chiefs entered the present state of Mizoram in the year 1700 A.D. The majority of them were Luseis... Hmar, Ralte, Lai(Pawi), Paite, Mara(Laher) and other clans were included among them. Before they cross the

Tiau river they already had chiefs to rule them. The weaker chiefs and their subjects were the first to across the Tiau river, and later on the strong chiefs followed in their wake. They established villages on the tops of various hills, and gradually they spread out all over the present Mizoram (*Lalthangliana, A Brief History And Culture of Mizo 35*).

Mizoram is lies between Myanmar on the right and Bangladesh on the left with its southern tip touching the Citation Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. Manipur, Tripura and Assam also lie along the border of Mizoram. It has a 630 km. long International Boundaries with Myanmar and Bangladesh. It covers an area of 21,087 sq. km (*Lalrinawma, Mizo Ethos 2*).

The Mizo have various types of folk theatre. In olden days, they used to live in small villages ruled by one chief. These villages constantly wage war against one another. When there is war between villages, the victor or the winning village would celebrate their triumph in the village field. The head of their captives were usually taken home and would be hanged high; the villager would dance around and mercilessly shoot them. These acts of the villagers can be termed under the Folk theatre (*Laldinmawia, Literature Lamtluang 386*).

This chapter shall trace the common practices of Mizo ancestors, which intertwined with the community life shown through certain social activities, which they observed. Though various scholars have opinions that differ from one

another, the outcome of the message that they seek is the same. This serves in making it interesting and valuable at the same time. Therefore, it shall try to leave no stone unturned. This study involves the practices and festivities of the Mizo ancestors, some which have been modified and changed bit by bit and still observed to this day.

After the advent of Christianity in 1894 AD through British Missionaries Pu Buanga (Rev.J.H.Lorrain) and Sap Upa (Rev.F.W.Savidge) under the Arthington Mission, several practices could not be continued that were connected with the indigenous belief of the Mizo (Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin 189-190*). Christianity shone a light on many ignorant aspects of Mizo social and communal life. Many of the practices within the community were no longer possible or fit to be continued under this new era. It shook the very social foundations of the Mizo people. The old ways were no longer possible and had to be kept aside to make way for new ways and ideas.

It may not be able to point out all the beliefs and customs from folk theatre of the Mizo ancestors; however, this chapter will try to ponder upon the beliefs and customs, that which are not exchanged by words but mainly with actions, practices, and that which is precious to the Mizo.

Discussed below are some varieties of theatrical practices, integral to the Mizo society, displayed in accordance with established ways and their religious beliefs by the well-to-do and the powerful influential families in the society.

Practices like *Kawngpui siam*, *Mitthi rawp lam*, *Fano daw*, *Buh za aih*, and *Mi zawn inchuh*.

1.1 KAWNGPUI SIAM

There was a practice to offer sacrifices known as *Kawngpui Siam* annually by the villagers in the month of April. The aim to offer this sacrifice was to ensure prosperity to all the villagers. This sacrifice performed in the afternoon before *Chapchar Kut*¹ festival by offering a piglet at the south entrance point of the village. The whole village ought to be present on this occasion. Absentees were liable to be fined with *Salam*². At this time, the *Sadawt*³ will name all the animals except tiger, before the sacrifice was offered. After performing the ceremony by the *Sadawt*, a small feast was arranged. The objective of the ceremony was for obtaining blessings for the village (Lalrinawma, *Mizo Ethos* 140).

In the olden days, there was no other job for the Mizo society, jhuming cultivation was their main occupation. They cleared the field every year and they take new actions. As they did this every year, before celebrating *Chapchar kut*, they did first *Kawngpui Siam*. If they did not first *Kawngpui Siam*, it is unlawful to celebrate *Chapchar Kut* (Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung* 38).

The main aim of *Kawngpui Siam* is to ask for blessings in hunting and war. As it is their way of worshipping their God. On this day, no one is supposed to go further than his or her village boundary. If they did *Kawngpui Siam* while they are on neighbourhood village, then they become angry and some of them would

migrate; they regarded it as a bad man (*Zairema, Pi Pute Biak Hi 35*). Every year, the elders of village sacrificed the pigs and the hens turn by turn. Three, five, or seven people used to go in this sacrificial practice. For this, they chose the ones whose names had a blessing; they would select the south of the village for this sacrificial practice (*Lianhmingthanga & Lalthangliana, Mizo Nun Hlui 126*).

1.1.1 KAWNGPUI SIAM (THEATRE)

The chief, the traditional *Sadawt* and come of the community elders carried pig and a hen in a basket with a fire, a bamboo tube and a knife. They reach the southern part of the fringe of the village during the afternoon. Then, before the *Sadawt* kills the pig, he offered a chant to relieve the people of the village:

Lentlanga sa aw lo lawi rawh,
Tumpanga sa sai liana sa,
Tuksiala sa khisaa sa, nghalhriama pa;
Lo lawi rawh, kawngpui tluang takin.
Tha siam i lawina tur.
Sakawl lunglian ka sawm tel love,
Buannela sa, Rih lia sa,
Champhaia sa, Ngaizawla sa,
Aw, lo lawi rawh.

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Lentlanga ramsa te lo kal ula,

*Tumpang leh sai te kha,
Sazuk, sakhi leh sanghal te pawh,
Kan kawngpuiah hian lo kal rawh u.
Ramsa tha te in lo kalna tur a ni e.
Nang sakei, kan sawm ve lo che;
Buannel leh Riha sa zawng zawng te,
Champhai leh Ngaizawla sa zawng zawng te,
Kan khuua lo kal ta che u.*

(English)

The animals of Lentlang, come to our village,
The wild gayal, elephant,
Samber, Deer and wild boar,
Come to our village without a hindrance.
Only good wild animal's place,
Tiger, we did not invite you
Buannel's animal, Rih's animals
Champhai's animal, Ngaizawl's animal
O! Come to our village.

After the traditional *Sadawt* chanted, they killed the animal they had brought. Then, chanted again so that they might kill many enemies and wild animals. They ate the animals they had killed and even if there were remain (left over); they are not supported to take them home. (Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung 41*) After that, they planted green chestnut trees along both side of the

road, floured the road with the ashes of the fire so that the track of animals can be seen. They went home towards the chief's house after all the grazing domestic animals of the village went home (*Zatluanga, Mizo Chanchin 19*).

When the route maker reaches the village, they knocked their door. Then the route maker told them, "Open the door for us". The people inside the house answered, "We won't open, are you bad guests or good guests?" The route-maker said, "We are good guests, we had delivered enemies head, wild animals head, we are '*khawlhiring*', we delivered '*hrinna*', we are '*parte*', we delivered '*parna*', we are '*punte*', we delivered '*punte*'". Therefore, after they repeated for three times, they open the door. Merrily, they welcomed them so that there might be many animal head delivered in their village (*19-20*).

In the book of *Mizo Ethos: Changes and Challenges*, point out the way of doing and important of *Kawngpui Siam* as:

According to the traditions, those who did not take interest in a war were considered effeminate and were given a low status in the society. It was associated with the bloodshed where the duty of vengeance remains unseated until they were satisfied. The heads taken home were not meant for exhibition in their village but to treat them with contempt by the victors. The young brave people used to produce the gruesome heads of their victims in combat and after placing them on high poles in the village square, particularly near the Chief's house, the whole community would join in dancing and singing, and

*Zu*⁴ was served during that ceremony. Human heads was brought home to certify that he killed his enemy (Lalrinawma, *Mizo Ethos 141*).

The next morning, they went for the ashes they had floured and if there were deer and wild boar's footprints, they were very happy. But, if they find the footprint of a tiger, they felt easy and even make the route over again. On the day on the route making, the whole village had a holiday around seven days of the *Kawngpui Siam*; they hunted for the festival of *Chapchar kut* (Zatluanga, *Mizo Chanchin 20*).

1.2 MITTHI RÂWP LAM

The Mizo ancestors had religion that they practiced in accordance with well-established ways and principles. They settled in smaller ethnic groups in different places. They are slightly different religious practices among the different clans of the Mizo. However, the discussion below will focus on the practices and religious beliefs of the Lusei clans, the single largest clans among the Mizo.

According to their religious belief, one who is capable of *Khuangchawi* will rest in *Pialral*⁵ with live happily with receiving their needs. Therefore, in order to perform *Khuangchawi*, there are several steps like *Sakung*, *Dawi no chhui*, *Sedawi*, and *Mitthi râwp lam* have to be first performs or fulfilled respectively. Though the last among these *Mitthi râwp lam* is not yet considered the real *Khuangchawi*, it is an entitlement to *Thangchhuahpa*⁶ status. Such a

person can put on a striped *diar* (“turban”), that is called *Thangchhuah diar*, be draped in *Thangchhuah puan*⁷ and can wear stick the long tail-feathers of the *bhimray*. Apart from this, he can also open the window, only that he is not yet entitled to make a dais like a fully-fledged ‘*Thangchhuah*’ (Chaldailova, *Mizo Pi Pute Khawvel* 164).

On the occasion of *Mitthi rawp lam*, representations or images of all dead members of their family, the young and the old, are made as lifelike as they possible can using cotton seeds that they had previously collected, especially the cloth for rousing the head of the images would have already been specially woven beforehand. They name each of the images the name of the family member it represents. The image of the original ancestor of their clan which can remember is made larger than the rest of other images, and is given the name *Thlahpa*⁸, which is especially made to stand in the middle of the stretcher (Lianhmingthanga & Lalthangliana, *Mizo Nun Hlui* 164). These images are adorned with *Puanchei*⁹, *Kawrzeh*¹⁰, necklace and bracelet, and are made to appear as lifelike as possible.

1.2.1 MITTHI RAWP LAM (THEATRE)

The makeshift statues of dead members of the family, which were placed on the *Khumâi* (“Secondary bed”), are taken to look out the window and then taken back inside. The best meat, from the *gayal* they have killed for the ritual, are placed on bamboo sewers and pierced through the chest of the statues. The whole household would be busy doing their parts for the ritual and decorating the statues while the mothers cry for the children they have grieved. They would talk to the

statues and make believe that the statues talk back to them too. Though these are mere statues, a melancholic aura would fill the entire household and everyone grieved as though they had just lost their loved ones.

The next step is to make a palanquin to carry the statues. This palanquin should look like a platform with four stilt legs and railings. The length should be about a fathom and a half, approximately four feet, and the breadth should be about a fathom, approximately four feet. Along bamboo shaft for carrying is fitted to the centre of the platform along the main beam. The statues are then placed against the railings facing each other. Two or three barrels of local *Zu* are to be placed on the front yard before the statues are carried out from the threshold (Chaldailova, *Mizo Pi Pute Khawvel* 164).

All the *Thangchhuahpa* attends the ritual; they are respectable in the village that is above the common peasants. The musicians mostly those who play the different drums of Mizo like *Darbu*¹¹, *Darkhuang*¹², *Seki*¹³ etc and the appointed carrier of the palanquin (usually chosen from among the sons-in-law of the family or brave men of the village) along with 20-30 people to cry for the dead, gather at the house of the *Chawngpa*¹⁴.

The *Sadawt*, the host and his wife march slowly from the house in a mourning procession. The *Thangchhuahpa*, dressed in their full attire, followed them. Behind them are the carriers of the palanquin and the musicians come last. The procession also includes the people who appointed to cry for the dead. They

play an important part in the ritual and would cry all through the procession until they reach the village main grounds where the barrels of *Zu* were placed.

As soon as they reach the village grounds, they would sit around and the elders of the village shortly join them. They sing grief song along to the music played by the musicians. Whoever would cry mourning the dead. The *Zu* is distributed. It should be noted that young people do not drink a drop of *Zu* in such rituals. Young and old people would come out to watch them. After a certain time the palanquin is lifted again and carried around the grounds, sometimes raising it high to show their grief for the departed loved ones.

The criers keep crying throughout this ritual and express their grief for the dead. They would place down the palanquin once they reach the *Zu* barrels, drink again, and repeat the steps describe above. The *Sadawt* will decide the number of times they would repeat these steps. Men taking part in the procession would fire guns during the last time they carry the palanquin around the grounds, the sound of music from the various drums, the loud crying, and surging of the palanquin add to the ambience of the ritual.

After the last round, they drink some more *Zu* and then march towards the house of the *Chawngpa* in the same order as they had come. The palanquin is then taken apart as the last rite for this ritual (166).

1.3 FANO DAWI

Fa means rice (Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung* 42). It is a scarification offered by the villages to yield a healthy and plenty rice. *Ar hâng*¹⁵, the main offering is subscribing one after another is every year by the village elders. The sacrificing day is proclaimed as rest day and no villagers set out for work.

1.3.1 FANO DAWI (THEATRE)

After breakfast of the sacrificing day, they gathered at the chief's elders enters the chief's house carrying *Ar hang* under his arm, and he is followed by the *Sadawt*. The chief called on the *Sadawt*, thus order him to start the sacrificing ceremony. The *Sadawt* took *Ar hang*, headed towards the rice bin, one of the elder sit with him holding *Zu* in a ground bowl (use of sacrifice) and *haite*¹⁶.

The *Sadawt* scoop out the beer in the gourd bowl with *haite*, retain in his mouth, and squirt out of his mouth on the *Ar hâng*, incant a spell softly, which seem to be impossible to hear:

Vanrang kara lengin ka pui hang lo chhang ang che,

Tukram lova lengin ka pui hang lo chhang ang che,

Dum hluam hluam rawh, dum hluam hluam rawh,

Mima chi aw, fanga chi aw,

Ka pui hangin dum hluam hluam rawh.

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Vansang taka awmin ka thil hlan hi lo pawm la,

Ramhnuai chhah taka awmin ka thil hlan hi lo pawm rawh.

Dum chhunzawm zel la, dum chhunzawm zel rawh.

Vaimin leh buh malsawmna dawng la,

Ka thil hlan vangin malsawmna dawn gang che.

(English)

Let who dwells in heaven; accept my offering of fowl,

Let who dwells in forest, answer my offering of fowl,

Black continuously, black continuously,

Seeds of barley, seeds of rice,

For my sacrificial, black continuously (31).

He again on the fowl, cut at the neck of a fowl, pull out the wings and tail, tuck in the wall of the rice bin, and in this way, *Fano daw*i ceremony is over. The rest of the day is spending to sing the song they like.

1.4. BUH ZA AIH

Buh za aih is the most unpopular practice of the ancestors of Mizo. It is said their practiced while they occupied at *Lentlang*. At that time, maize was commonly used for this ceremony. No exact date or period was fixed for *Buh za aih*. They usually celebrate this during the dry season. The Hmar clan, one of the

Mizo clan, believed that if people practice *Buh za aih* three times during their lifetime, their soul would go to *Pialral* where they would live without having to work for their living. They considered this as similar to *Khuangchawi*. It seems that the Lushei stopped *Buh za aih* after they crossed *Tiau* river.

1.4.1 WAYS OF PRACTICING BUH ZA AIH (THEATRE)

The chief's *Sadawt* and the man who conduct *Buh za aih* come out formally bringing isolated *Zu*. The *Sadawt* leads the way followed by the man, walking slowly heading toward the place where *Buh za aih* is to occur. On reaching the place, they were joined by some of the people. The *Sadawt* used a *haite* to scoop out the isolated *Zu*. Then squirt the rice and chanted a song of ritual:

Fang a hawng e,
Chunga Pathianin mal tin rawn sawm e,
Vanrang kara lengin mal tin rawn sawm e,
Ka sathauin lawmna ka rawn thlen leh e,
Buh za aitu hi siamtuin lo chhang ang che,
Pi Biakin lo chhang ang che,
Pu Biakan lo chhang ang che.

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Buh a lo hawng e,
Van Pathianin mal min sawm a,

Vana awmin mal min sawm e.
Kan ran talh hmangin lawmthu kan rawn sawi e,
Buh za aitu hi siamtu in lo pawm la,
Pi Biakin lo pawm la,
Pu Biakan lo pawm ang che.

(English)

The rice is coming,
 God in heaven blesses me,
 That who dwells in heaven blesses me,
 I am giving to thanks you with my offering of domestic animal,
 Accept the man, who performed *aih* ceremony of *Buh za*,
 Whom we worshipped of Grandmother accept we offering,
 Whom we worshipped of Grandfather accept we offering.

The *Sadawt* then again scoop the isolated *Zu*, he squirt the heaped rice.
 After this, the musician comes out, and then the people joined them by dancing
 and singing.

During that time, the wife of the man conducting *Buh za aih* dressed herself
 with one of the best clothes, then they carry her esteeming and let her sit in the
 first place, then they head to the place where they stock their strain of rice. At one
 corner, an adult man having a sense of humour were there to lighten things up,
 generally these men were dancing ridiculously. At the same time, the musician
 went on continuously. They dance using *Cheraw*¹⁷, singing *Buh za aih* song. All

the people attending this special occasion except the musician join hands walking around the strain of rice.

Among the dancer, the owners of the rice took out his sword and sprung it up in the air and stood on top of the rice, and wave his sword and proudly said, “I am the man known by all, under the sky, only our chief, the sun, the moon, and the stars rule over me. You poor people come and clean the mess I made. Give it to the dogs, pigs and hens”. He raises his sword above waving and the sword glitters.

While they were, dancing around the wife of rice owner distributed *Zu* to the dancers, And after she joined the dancing crowd and they jumped in other people’s sack of rice, making a mess and began to shout proudly. They poured in more rice. After doing this for a while, with drums and bells went into the house of the owner of the rice. In addition, as they carried the wife of the rice owner around, and danced again as *Cheraw* and danced surrounding the rice, some of them distributed *Zu* to the people.

1.5 MI ZAWN INCHUH

Whence did the Mizo practices of *Mi zawn inchuh* come into being, it is hard to adduce in detail. B.Lalthangliana opined that after the British settled in Mizoram in the year of 1890 AD, conflict between territorial villages, towns became sparse, and transient guests from neighbouring villages gradually augmented. Hence, from this period, it was believed that *Mi zawn inchuh* was first

practiced. They surmised that *Mi zawn inchuh* was enhanced between 1890-1940 AD (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture* 92).

The origin of *Mi zawn inchuh* is *tlawmngaihna*¹⁸ (Lalthangliana, *Pi Pu Zunleng* 139). If a traveler suddenly fell ill and cannot return by its own. It fell upon the shoulder of the youths to lead the patient to his/her village. Then, a messenger was sending to disclose appropriate mortuary-mortal counsel to the convalescent's home village. As soon as they heard the mortuary, they sent for the village crier to disclose the news. They even sent for a messenger to disclose the mortuary to the nearest village, which was en route to their destination. As such, they call for the entire person's village. Similarly, if a traveler dies during his sojourn in other village, all the methods of messaging is par with the ill patient.

There are two types of stretcher in which the convalescent was carried. Severe patient was carried in a stretcher and the minor ones incapable of walking are carried in *tawlai*¹⁹. The deceased person is called *Mi ruang zawn*, in this case, the stretcher is not used for hoisting the body, but rather the cadaver is covered with cloth and then lugged and strapped onto an improvised contraption of bamboos or a broad wood piece, after which, the wholesome apparatus is then foiled in and wrapped full cover with knelled bamboo fibres. Since it can be carried without any care and can be easily decomposed, they carried the body hastily. Even in common parlance "*A uih zawn ang mai*" is used to indicate a hasty trotting (139).

When they carried such a body from one village to another. Courier emissaries of a subsequent village to whom the body shall be passed-on, expecting the body's arrival further than their duly village territories may then choose instead to suspense beyond their own grounds. And this very act of friendly bickering over that should hold responsibility of the deceased is what is known as *Mi zawn inchuh*. Tradition holds that the lads, during the course of this comradely sparring, ought not to injure themselves in ways which could do serious harm; and so sportive action that might involve damaging the eyes or ears, or that which might inflict dislocations of joints, biting, squaring punches, exchange of fisticuffs or bruising another lad's genitalia are thereby consciously suppressed. Only toppling take-downs are permitted and this determines the victor in a given spar. The chief and his nobles, if they happen to take participation in the lump activity are to be left unscathed (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture* 93). As they really enjoyed such occasion, they are really eager for such a situation to happen.

In a certain times, it is often, the case that the latter couriers awaiting the bodies arrival, would conceal themselves in the ambient, anticipating the ingress moment of first carriers. The second lads would then ambush and encircle first envoy at the onset, coming in from and back and all sides. This usually serves difficult for the carriers themselves to move about. During such occasions, the *Val Upa* ("an oldish young man") would impasse and simmer down the full band wrangle, "It's enough, call it quits" and then both camps of carriers would find themselves perturbing the spar even more escalated. Only when beaten by a supple stick would these lads come to resolute halt (94).

R.Chaldailova, wrote the ways of practicing *Mi zawn inchuh* in the forms of drama; from this, it is easy to know that the one of the most Mizo folk theatre:

MI ZAWN INCHUH

(The chief, his wife and two or three visitors were there in the chief's house, they were talking about a jhum. Three young men strangers came into the chief's house.)

Messenger : We are going to carry one ill man of *Sumsuih* from *Sailam*, villagers of *Sailam* were also asked to assemble gather together when sunrise. (They told the chief. Then the Chief told them to eat food at his elder Rotuaka's house and one of his visitors gets them out immediately.)

Chief : (To one of the visitor) Go and call young man for me (the Chief sent him).

Village crier : What is it you're Majesty?

Chief : Call the *Khawchhiar* ("those who took census") immediately (The village crier immediately went out)

Khawchhiar : We got information from *Sailam*, they said that they are going to carry a man from *Sumsuih*, and

told us that *Sialsuk* have to meet them. What about the present condition our villager? Is it necessary to gather completely?

Khawchhiar : Wait a minute Saingura's father; I do not actually know whether there is claw condition, I think we *Sialsuk* and *Sailam* have to be in ready every time. We are just like what they say Chief's concubine.

Chief : Ok. Then it will be best to let the village crier proclaim to gather completely.

Village crier : My chief, is there someone to carry?

Chief : Yes, there is, they are going to carry villager of *Sumsuih* from *Sailam*, go and proclaim like 'Young men of age between 15-60 must go out completely to meet *Sailam*, and they to wait for each other at the entrance to a village' he said.
(The Village crier went out immediately)

Village crier : (To every street) Hark...! Listen what I said everybody. They are going to carry one man of *Sumsuih* from *Sailam*, all young men of age above 15 and below 60 years have went out to meet to

Sailam completely without fail, the entrance to a village will be waiting place.

(Those who are going to carry went quickly towards the entrance to a village, the elder arbitrate when they were gather completely)

Elder : The elected strong men will take the lead, and the rest will follow behind them, we should be tied as thickly as possible. None should go away from others. We should not let go whoever we see, and must defeat our entire opponent. Even after the king said 'It's enough' we should attack continuously without releasing our strength (He said).

(The crowd cheered up excitedly, and all go over, after they went far, they heard the noise of *Sailam* people who carry the corpse. When they heard the weird sound from a dark gloomy forest at a distance, the strong one bind together and take the lead. The crowd also binds thickly together behind them. They gave a loud cheer opposite to *Sailam*, and there was noise from side to side.)

They finally meet at *Kawnzam*. *Sialsuk* village work out completely. *Sailam* village as well work out completely, they were challenging each other as well, and strong ones fight each

other and those behind them upon them craving to fight too. They are wrestling with might and main, many had fallen.

They rise up quick, and attack another. They go towards the bier, no one really do not try to hurt each other.

Sialsuk Elder : You have carried long ways, you will be tired.

Sailam Elder : Ahhh...we are not tired yet, we'll carry again for a moment. (said the elder, holding on to the bier, but villagers from *Sialsuk* tried to take by force. They attack everyone who tries to hold on to the bier, after they attack for a while...)

Chiefs of Sialsuk and Sailam : It's enough, it's enough!

(whipping loudly with a stick, So then they stop immediately. After the king interfere they never continue attacking)

Young men of Sialsuk: Do you challenge to wrestle?

(Screaming loudly)

Young men of Sailam : Yes, of course

(They sit opposite to each other on a suitable place, they used to start wrestling from the third strong one. they show of their muscled body by girding their cloth at their waist in the sight

of the crowd, and they were fighting altogether. If *Sailam* are in the side of being raised, *Sialsuk* screamed up and screamed excitedly.)

(Likewise, if *Sialsuk* are in the side of being raised *Sailam* cheered up clapping their hands. Thus, after they wrestle three each they stop their wrestling and said goodbyes, they separate each other with good words. *Sialsuk* villagers energetically carry the bier, and finally walk on [Chaldailova, *Mizo Pi Pute Lenlai* 93-98]).

Mi zawn inchuh, the beautiful Mizo practice of ‘fighting’ over a sick/deceased person as it passed from one village boundary to the next, is a healthy contact sport and a welcome forum for showcasing Mizo *tlawmngaihna* in its full bloom through rendering of invaluable service to help the helpless, while at the same time forging unity amongst village-folks and also friendship with neighbouring villagers. Sadly, however, this practice is dying out today owing to the fact that things were taken too far sometimes. The friendly pushing and shoving became harder and harder with time, resulting in unnecessary cuts and bruises here and there. Moreover, strength in numbers began playing a hand in the outcome, and small villages could not compete with big ones. The practice was brought to an end by those in power (*Lalthangliana, Mizo Culture* 96-97), swiftly putting a stop to the beautiful sport wherein young men pushed and shoved as a friendly gesture to show their *tlawmngaihna*.

However, there are many places where poor transportation facilities require the continuation of this practice, especially places lacking in motor-able roads. But unlike in the olden days there is no pushing and shoving or ‘fighting’ over the sick/deceased person. They simply meet in the middle and the person is handed over from one group to another solemnly. In this way, though differently, the beautiful practice of *Mi zawn* is continued to this day.

GLOSSARY

1. **Chapchar kut:** Chapchar kut is the most important and biggest of the three festivals in Mizo community. It was celebrated annually after they had cut their jhums, and were free from toil and hard labour. Every year it was celebrated or held at the end of March of the beginning of April. Among the three festivals, it was the most popular and lasted the longest (*Lalthangliana, A Brief History and Culture of Mizo 125*).

2. **Salam :** A penalty/fine payable to chief and his elders in early Mizo society.

3. **Sadawt:** The named *Sadawt* is the traditional priest of Mizo society. Every village has their own *Sadawt*. The *Sadawt* had to prepare and perform all the required rituals for the worship. He had to chant the recite of an incantation and, had to kill the sacrificial animals too.

4. **Zu:** A traditional fragmented liquor of Mizo.

5. **Pialral:** *Pialral* is according to Mizo traditional belief, a place where the soul of who can perform *Khuangchawi* would live without working any more on a ready food.

6. **Thangchhuahpa:** 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. The wife of such a man also shares his title as *Thangchhuahnu*. The possession of this title is regarded by the Mizo as a passport to *Pialrial*.

7. **Thangchhuah puan:** The name of a cloth worn as a mark of distinction by one who has the coveted title of *Thangchhuah*, the wife and children of such a man are also entitled to wear this cloth.

8. **Thlahpa:** The central figure in a *Mitthi rawp lam* group of ancestral effigies, representing the original ancestor of the clan. Whereas the other effigies are decorated carefully, this one, because he lived so long ago, has no such honour done him.

9. **Puanchei:** A white cloth decorated with coloured stripes, worn by either men or women.

10. **Kawrzeh:** One of the Mizo women cloths, decorated with coloured stripes.

11. **Darbu:** A set of three different size brass-gongs having different notes of sound.

12. **Darkhuang:** The name of the biggest type of brass-gong.

13. **Seki :** A domesticated gayal's horn.

14. **Chawngpa:** The performer of *Chawng* feast.

15. **Ar hâng:** A domestic fowl, when it is used in the sacrificial ceremony, they called it name as *Ar hang*.

16. **Haite:** A vessel made of small gourd.

17. **Cheraw:** A bamboo dance, a traditional dance for Mizo.

18. **Tlawmngaihna:** It literally means, “Unwillingness to be defeated or be beaten”. To the Mizo mind, the word ‘Tlawmngaihna’ brings forth the essence of beauty. C.Vanlallawma defined it as follows: “Tlawmngaihna was pushed out into the streets by society, where it established itself in the daily life of the community and was hitched to and drawn forward by the big cup of honour” (Lalthangliana, *A Brief History and Culture of Mizo* 163).

19. **Tawlai:** A kind of stretcher or seat of cloth on a pole, used for carrying a sick person between two or more bearers.

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CHAPTER 2

SAKEI LU LAM

The Mizo believed that animals, domesticated and wild, all have souls. They believed that if a ceremony were performed on killing a wild animal by sacrificing a domestic animal, the soul of the killed would be forever enslaved (Chaldailova, *Mizo Pi Pute Khawvel* 96). Beside this, they believed that all souls of animals killed for a great feast of fame called *Khuangchawi*, wild animal slain, as well as the ones sacrificed for ceremonies would accompany the grand journey of the person who performed the ceremony to the land of the dead. Believing that *Pawla*²⁰ (who catapults lesser men) would not dare shoot such performers with his big catapult/pellet-bow at the entrance of the land of the dead; they tried their best to perform such ceremonies to escape being shot at. Of all the ceremonies performed on killing wild animals, they revered that which was performed on killing a tiger that necessarily called for a holiday, and none would go working on fields. The brave were to guard women who collected water and he who worked on the field that day was deemed to be surely bitten by a tiger.

R. Chaldailova mentioned that when they celebrated on killing of a tiger, he mentioned about the guarding of *Thihthiap* like this:

They believe that the leader of all animals who was the family of tiger named *Thihthiap*, and that when performing a ceremony on the killing of a tiger; *Thihthiap* and other tigers watched the activities from afar. Women sacrifices led the activity, and on seeing them the tigers

despicably said, “Oh, to have been subdued by those women.” On the departure of the women, the brave would come with their spears and guns, play-hunt the dead tiger shooting at it repeatedly, which so terrified the tigers that they run in fright saying, “Well, they truly are terrifying...” (96)

The Mizo of olden day believed that tigers knew everything-sin committed in secret, even adultery committed. They believe that tigers never bit the good, and that he who was bitten must have been evil one way or the other. An adulterous mother must confess to her baby or be bitten; such adulterous mother feel at ease only when they whisper in the ears of their babies, “*Ka uire*” (“I have committed an adultery”). Therefore, the Mizo braves seldom shoot at tiger. Tigers are killing only when they disturbed hunters in their game or when they killed and ran away with the domesticated animals (Lalthangliana, *Mizo culture* 31). When a tiger is killed hunters would say, “It accidentally came across horizontal thunderbolt,” and the kinder ones would cover it with *puandum* (“a traditional cloth striped with different colours”). They seldom called it by its name and, term it *Sapui* (31).

Revering the tiger as they did, it was mostly the wealthy or the chief who performed the ceremonies on killing a tiger; the hunter-killer himself would perform the ceremony if he had the means to do so. It was for this reason that ordinary people seldom performed ceremonies on the killing of tiger, for the need to sacrifice a gayal or a pig was burdensome.

On the day of *Sakei lu lam*, the *Sadawt* killed the domestic fowl. Before killing the domestic fowl, he chanted first the ritual:

Kei kawng chung a ka kal leh

Nang kawng hnuaiah,

Chhimhlei ang ka hnuaichhiah che,

Thangvan ang ka chungnung e;

Khuavangin mi hual ang a,

Chhuah lamah leh tlak lama

Ka kal leh min hual zel ang. (Zatluanga, Mizo Chanchin 24).

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Kawng chung a ka kal a nih chuan,

Kawng hnuaiah i kal zel ang.

Lei ang hian ka hmusitin ka hnuaiah ka dah che a,

Van ang khian ka sang a,

Pathianin min venghim zel ang a,

Khawi hmunah pawh kalin awm ila,

Min vengin min awmpui zel ang.

(English)

While I set my foot on upper road,

You will set your foot lower road,

I despise you as the earth,

I am superior like as heaven,

God will always abide by me,
 Wherever I walk on the south or north,
 God will lead me always.

Laltluangliana Khiangte clearly depicts the difficulty of *Sakei lu lam* and the timing details of *aih*²¹ as such:

When a tiger has killed a domestic animal, the hunter/killer of the tiger does not perform the rituals of *ai* on his own. Those who wish may join him. In order to perform *ai*, a domestic animal has to be butchered. This animal should be a gayal or at least a hog. Since at least 20 *ngan*²² of *Zu* is needed, most commoners cannot meet this requirement. Therefore, the chief or one of his nobles hosts the *ai* usually. When the person who performs *aih* has pass away, he has to be guarded from the *Thihthiap*. After that either a gayal or a hog has to be butchered for *thlaichhiahna* (“gift to the dead”). This can be a burden for common folk.

There are few who have the means to perform *ai* on the very day that the tiger was killed. If the *ai* is to be performed at the later date, the tiger is skinned and stuffed with rice-husk and sewn back together and left to dry in the sun. It barely shows difference from a live tiger.

Then, after they had brewed the *Zu* into sweetness, they set the date and timing of the *Sakei lu lam*. On this

auspicious they no one from the village is to attend to their jhum.

Even the women-folk are not to venture out for any domestic purposes like fetching water. A *Pasaltha*²³ can do fetching water under the utmost necessity under special circumstances with an armed escort (Laltluangliana, *Chantual Ennawm 2*, 38-39).

2.1 SAKEI LU LAM (THEATRE)

The people carried the tiger that they had killed from the forest and usually placed it the chief's house and all the people of the village came to see it. The chief then ordered the community elder and village herald to play off the skin of the tiger. The chief later asked for his chief men and decided upon the rejoice over the tiger by having a feast. This feast does not have to necessarily him on the first day, as they need *Zu* and therefore, they have the feast after 5 or 6 days. The village crier proclaimed that all the families should be ready with their *Zu* (Chaldailova, *Mizo Pi Pute Khawvel 97*).

On the day of the feast, they piled up all the *Zu* in the chief's house. While the elderly sat all around. They sang and danced. They played *darbu*, *darkhuang*, drums, and *seki* in the corner of the house; they were all in a great hustle. The one who played the *darbu* played and sang:

Chhimbu leh peng peng intu intu,

A lu lam kawng lu lam kawng e.

*Arin khup tui a dawt a dawt a,
Sai rualin a phei a khawng a khawng.*

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

*Chhimbuk leh kiltheihrawk chu an inchhawn an inchhawn a,
A lu lam chu kawlh vek rawh se;
Arin sai khup a chuk a chuk a,
Saiin a ke a per a per e.*

(English)

An owl and a hawk-cuckoo answer and reply each other,
May his head gets bald,
A fowl pecks an elephant's knee repeatedly,
A herd of elephants stumped their feet repeatedly.

While they sang, the ones who played *darkhuang* would sometimes respond. They also danced merrily and sang along without ceasing.

In the noontime, people gathered near the chief's house to celebrate the feast. The skin of the tiger, which they had played off, was placed on the forked bamboo. Four people walk slowly towards the village square carried the bamboo. Four men, dressing like women, followed them smoking their *tuibur* ("woman's pipe"), carrying their in and using their hand spindle *hmuithlur*²⁴. Behind them, the banterers followed them, making depreciated jokes to amuse the people.

The players of *darbu*, *darkhuang* and *seki* followed the men dressing like women. They sat in the village square, kept singing the *darbu* songs. They kept the tiger in the middle of the square and four women moved around the tiger with the beat of *darbu* and drum. They carry their hand-spindle and would knock them against the tiger, after they moved around for three or four times. They began to wander off.

Laltluangliana Khiangte put *Sakei lu lam* to be able to perform in live in his book '*Chantual Ennawm 2*', in scene IV and V, it can seem that how the Mizo perform the *Sakei lu lam*.

LAN-IV

(A great multitude now occupied the ground. The *Darpu*
[those who beats the *Darbu*] keep on beating their *Darbu*)

Darpute : Let's beat the song of '*Chhimbu leh*
pengpeng intu, intu / A lu lam kawng, lu
lam kawng'

Herald : Keep on beating. Today we are about to
mourn '*Sapui*'. We have also had a large
quantity of *Zu* in which we can swim!
Everybody, who wants to drink of *Zu*, you
can drink it now.

Darpute : Of course, there would be no better way to mourn 'Sapui', keep on beating *Darbu*, excessively.

People : Herald, Go and call them now.
Why are they talking a long time? We are eager to see them. You should not flock our view when they showed up.

Herald : The chief and his village elders were still dressing up. Now they will appear...
Wait for a minute. (He looks back immediately) Look... Look... Look...
They are coming! Our chief and his village elders with warriors were coming.

(They took out the stretcher of tiger they made, the chief and the man, who performed *ai* lead the group. Four men come along with the mighty tiger, followed by the four warriors dressed in woman's attire. Layman followed them with a grim on their faces, they tread towards the ground. A great multitude gathered in the chief's ground, on the flanks and nearby corridors. Even the young and the old gaped at the event with amazement and keep on laughing.)

Children : Oh! Look, a woman! Why did a woman join them? Oh! I can't believe it!

Old Man : They are brave warriors; they used to dress in woman's attire. See, they are wearing skirts and puffing on their pipe, carrying *empai*²⁵ with the bowl or head of woman's pipe. They are carrying/lugging/fearing a pile of sand in their nicotine bag. They smeared their nicotine and smoked their pipe. Besides, they also bring *hmuithlur*. Look still them; you will know what they do.

Children : Really! I doubt! What will they do to the tiger?

Old Man : Wait and watch. They will dance around to their tiger's head. Don't be afraid. Look! They are patronizing the tiger. They are all chief and warriors.

Children : Oh! Oh! Look, look at that. They are really dressing like a woman. See, they are wearing skirts and elephant's tusk in their ear. What's that thing the forerunner is carrying? It's really long and strange!

Wow! It is queer. Come along; let us have a touch on it.

Old Man : See, Did you see the first man? That is our chief. The man behind him is carrying *hmuithlur*, he recurring knocked it against the tiger's head. Do you see that? Look...

Children : Alas! It is really. Look... looks... look...

(The crowd people were rumbled, the brass gong and other instrument rumbled too. The chief and the performer of aih were stayed solemnly. The following group who dressed in woman's attire was making fun, which made the people laughed. But the chief and warriors were forbidden by law to smirk even a hint of laughter. If they did it, they will violate the tradition.)

Children : I find those two women behind them very funny. Look! They are making ugly faces. I don't like it! She even urinates like an old woman...

Old Woman : Oh my God! How detestable! They even make ugly faces against us... See, how

they are swinging, how wicked they are,
they are emulating us.

Children : Sir, why do they have to dress like a
woman?

Old Man : While the performance of *Sakei lu lam*,
the other tiger watched there from a
distance. Moreover, they used to think
that, “And so death arrive to the tiger by
deceit of women, how ludicrous, its
demise is met,” as the saying goes. That is
how they tricked the tiger.

Children : Look, our chief and those men besides
him would not make a grim while others
are laughing. Why they are not laughing
but making a solemn face?

Old Man : While they are acting like a women, they
are forbidden from making a smile,
otherwise, a ghost will beat him. Any
misfortune might not happen to him, they
are trying to abstain from laughing.

Children : But, look, the jester hugging them. Oh!
He smiles a bit... See, he’s smiling, I saw
it.

Old Man : He smiled at a porcupine quill to carry under his arm. Look, can't you all see it. He carries a porcupine quill under his arm. The performer of *ai* also restrained from laughing. But, he has to make an excuse, he holding a porcupine quill. (They are walking in circle while they placed the stretcher in the middle of them, they can abandon the tiger. They went home to the performer of *aih*, and they change their clothes.

Children : Wow...! They went them into house. Look, those lag behind, how ugly they are. Oh! They all went in.

LAN-V

(They all them went away, it was tranquil. But the people still lingers.)

Herald : None should leave us of yet, we were not complete the *Sakei lu lam*; The dancers will return again to double the fun (They beat on *Darkhuang*, *darbu*, and *khuang*, the people were ecstatic.

(The warriors put off their women's attire and come back indubitably as a brave warrior; they started to dance and the patronization of the tiger begins.)

Children : Wow! Wow! They have all changed now. Look, all the others too,. The wags are following them again.

Old Man : Oh! How I miss my golden days! I was one of them during those days.

Children : Sir, Who are the people who keeps on dancing?

Old Man : They are the warriors of our village. Those two wags are also warrior; Vunga and Liana they are.

Children : Oh! Oh! Look, it's really uncle Vunga and his colleagues. It looks like they are having a great time... I wish I could join them.

Old Man : How wonderful it used to be to dance with those swords and spears. He who can dance in such an event is mostly the champion of our village.

- Old Woman : Why is that one man dressed in such heavy clothing?
- Old Man : He is the main performer of *ai*. Look and see, he wear a *thangchhuah puan* as a *kawrtawng hak*²⁶. He brings a *fungki*²⁷ with put on a *kawlhnam*²⁸. And he wear a turban on his head, he also put on a long tail-feathers of *bhimray*. He carries a gun on his shoulder, his bag that called *Sahmim ipte*²⁹. He probably has a white marble stone in his bag.
- Children : Look, there's an egg on his hand, It's amazing! He brings an egg!
- Old Man : Sure, he does hold an egg. He's helping himself to his boiled egg aside the tiger and he will strut along blustering his white marble stones... Wait and watch.
- Children : Huh! He was talking. What had he said? Keep on listening
- Performer : (He walking around sternly with head held high, and he trample upon tiger's

head. So, he said loudly the tiger's
chant...)

Valpa e, hran-ni khan e,

Kei chu e, zuam tuk aw hlah law,

Mual-ling e, leng hnuaiah e,

Kei chu e, Keiñial sa ka chan e.

(He point his fingers at the tiger) Listen, I'm superior than you. You will be always my slave. You sharp as the southern mountain, I tall as the northern mountain. I will walk on the upper road; you will walk on the lower road. If I walk on the side of east, you will walk on the side of west. Do you know?

Oh! Is this the *thihthiap* that you were so boastful of? He is nothing compared to us, even the smallest of us would also beat him. There is no way you will ever beat us now.

([He tortured, pushed him with a stick, gave him a stern look and walked around him] Laltluangliana, *Chantual ennawm 2, 50-56*]).

2.2 THIHTHIAP

Thihthiap was the family of tiger but born in the form of human. It was around the size of a dog, its back was dark brown while its belly was light brown.

It was among the family of the tiger, who are the master of all animals, and *Thihthiap* is the head of the tiger's family. The Mizo believed that all flies, ants and even grasshopper are under its control and can ask them to do whatever he like them to do. It was a rare species; its ear folded seven times (40). When a person who had performed the *Sakei aih*, *Thihthiap* would tried to take revenge on the corpse. So, they carefully guarded the dead body.

2.3 THIHTHIAP VEN (THEATRE)

Some people washed the body of the decease, while some prepared a place for the body to lie. If a person had conducted the *Khuangchawi* ceremony, they crown him a turban with a long tail feather of bhimray and a turf of goat's hair. If he had having sex with two sisters, they showed respect by crowning him with a fresh tail feather of a hen; and if he had having sex with the daughter of chief, they showed respect by crowning him with the tail feathers of a fowl (Lalthantluanga, *Folk Theatre leh Khawtlang Nun Zirchianna* 92).

When they are about to bury or when they are about to lower the coffin, they guarded the body of a person from *thihthiap*. Boys and young mens will guard the body. The herald shouted to the others, "It is time to guard the *thihthiap*". The wives of the village elders and female relatives' sat besides the decease body, they held the cloths on every corner, pulling it tight, as there are some who carried brooms as well as bunch of leaves (Chaldailova, *Mizo Pi Pute Lenlai* 157).

A cat that they considered a family of the tiger hanged in a basket near the decease. One of the village elders stood near the door, the people with the brass gongs sit on the beds or wherever available and beats the gongs. Somewhere on the corner of the streets, people were preparing pork for the people who guarding the *thihthiap*.

Therefore, the elder standing besides the door, when he feels that there were enough people, he began to shout, “Hear hear, it is time to get ready”. The youths and the children, with their stick and brass gongs along with their clappers began to surround the house. The elder where the door then shouted, “We are prepared, we are prepared” fowl (Lalthantluanga, *Folk Theatre leh Khawtlang Nun Zirchianna 92*).

At that moment, the people surrounding the house with branches in hand, started to bang the walls, pillars and support beams of the house. The people in charge of making the cat wailed started to beat it continuously, those sitting besides the deceased body with their cloths at hands, started to fan it rapidly. And those carrying the bunch of leaves and brooms started to fan the body rapidly.

When the time for their preparation was over, the one at the door again shouted, “We’re not ready, we’re not ready”. The youths and the children outside began to walk around the house, those who fan the decease body inside the house also stop the rest; those who beat the feline also stop the rest. After sometime, the one at the door again shouted, “We’re ready, we’re ready”. At the same time, the youths outside and the people inside continued to do what they were doing before.

After repeating the process three to four time, “Hear hear, we have conquered *thihthiap*, let us now rest; for we have won over *Thihthiap*”, cried the elder standing at the door, and with this the guarding of the *Thihthiap* was finished (93).

Children and young men, who guarded ‘*thihthiap*’, gathered and distributed *thihthiap* meat. They handed out the meat with a big ladle and the people received it with their palms. The ignorant kids were made to receive the meat with the clothes worn (as a kind of joke) and people would laugh at them.

Thihthiap meat should not be season with salt in order to show, “We have vanquished *thihthiap*, we have overpower it without any disturbance or hindrance”. After that, the dead body prepared to bury or placed it in a coffin to burn (constantly until the flesh has all decayed and only the bones remained), guns was fired repeatedly, and the villagers mourned the death of crying and weeping until they reach the graveyard (94). If a prominent person died, they would carry the death body along the street and tossed it thee time. Gongs- *darbu* and *darkhuang* played as a means of their final parting to the deceased.

Why do the Mizo hold *Sakei lu lam* in such high regard? It is strange and mysterious that the guarding of the *thihthiap* in necessary when a person who has performed *Sakei lu lam* has died. The tiger is more important than any other animals and held in high regard, such that they do not kill it unless it is necessary. So, the tiger was thought to be all-knowing, therefore, *Sakei lu lam* had to be performed whenever they killed it. Since the tiger was believed to have human-

like intelligence and was even able to read human minds, *Sakei lu lam* was a necessity that had to be performed after its killing.

Sakei lu lam showed a great deals of the life of the Mizo, their fear of the tiger and how they hold it in high regard over other wild animals. It also showed the manner in which they held an conducted their beliefs. *Sakei lu lam* is performed so that community life would be peaceful and so that they and their domestic animals would be safe. When their dressed as a woman when they believed the tiger was watching from afar, it could also show how much they wanted to be safe from the tiger.

A closer look at the cross-dressing that takes place at *Sakei lu lam* shows that other tigers watching from afar would think that the dead tiger could not even stand up to women and has been killed. They would think of him a coward. Elders have said that when the ceremony of *Sakei lu lam*, the performers were dressed up like woman due to this reason: In an olden times, seven siblings have only one sister whom they cherish with care. Even when she went to the forest her seven brothers have made her walk along with them to keep save from enemies and wild animals, even when she was going with another young men. All the way to the forest, she was walking with *hmuithlur*. The tiger fetch her when she was under her brothers' protection, instead of eating her up the tiger keep her in the large boulder and made her lean against the boulder. They said that, the woman knocked against with her *hmuithlur* while the tiger teased her. Her brothers fight against with spear and dao to tiger, they killed the before the tiger ate her. From that day,

when the ceremony of *Sakei lu lam*, the performers were acted like as a woman (Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung*122-123).

Sakei lu lam occupied a high place in Mizo folk theater. The performed ritual is much greater than they did on other wild animals. They really cherished those who can perform *ai* ceremony in a Mizo society, and they occupied a very important position. It is hard to kill a tiger for the coward; it almost needed to sacrifice one's life to kill a tiger, so they called him a great hunter, a brave man. In Mizo society, the hunter occupied a very important place, as they are the guardian of the community

It is believe that the one who performed *ai* ceremony for the tiger's head would have no obstacles on his way to Hades. Even *Pawla* would not dare to shoot him with a catapult; the soul of his tiger would follow him and would his servant. He would enter Hades with a warm welcome that is why the position of the performer of *ai* ceremony cannot be looked down.

GLOSSARY

20. **Pawla:** The name of a mythical gate-keeper to *Pialral*.
21. **Ai/aih:** i) To sacrifice a domestic animal and perform a ceremony over or for (a wild creature killed in hunting or a foe killed in fighting). This is done with a view to getting the spirit of the slain into the power of the slayer after death, and also to protecting him from evil consequences during this life. ii) To kill a domestic animal and perform a ceremony of rejoicing over (such things as a good rice harvest, a bumper crop of a hundred pumpkins, a popular song, etc).
22. **Ngân:** This is the pot for the preparation of *Zu*. The name given to rice for making beer with from the time it is damped and ceases to be *Zukhawl* until (after steaming) it begins to undergo the fermenting process, when it is known as *Zubilh*.
23. **Pasaltha:** A person who is brave and manly; a notable warrior or hunter, a brave, heroic, valiant.
24. **Hmuithlur:** A hand cotton spindle for twisting two or more threads together. Such double threads are generally used for the warp in weaving a skirt.
25. **Empai:** The name of a closely-woven basket for carrying rice, etc.
26. **Kawrtawnghak:** To wear a cloth in such a manner as to make it do duty for a coat.

27. **Fungki:** The name of a flask of powdered gayal's horn used by warriors and hunters.

28. **Kawlhnam:** A long knife or a short sword.

29. **Sahmim ipte:** A netted satchel used with a skin cover.

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CHAPTER 3

KHUANGCHAWI

Khuangchawi is the greatest and the final stage in the dispensation of the indigenous Mizo religion. It was always observed during autumn - in the month of October, the most pleasant time of the year (Lianhmingthanga & Lalthangliana, *Mizo Nun Hlui* 165). October, in the traditional Mizo calendar, is named '*Khuangchawi thla*' – here '*thla*' literally means 'month'. So, October was literally regarded by Mizo ancestors as the month that was most apt for the observance of *Khuangchawi*. They had worked hard throughout the year both in their jhums and at home, and October marked a brief period of lull, the time of the year when all their labours had finished but hadn't yet borne results, thus, affording them some leisurely time. As such, the month was always referred to as "*Favang awllen*". It was the most pleasant time of the year in terms of season and in terms of their daily life.

According to Zairema, the last known observance of *Khuangchawi* was in 1942 by the Chief of Farkawn village. Meat and *Zu* was always found in abundance in a *Khuangchawi*. About a hundred *Ngan* pot of *Zu* was served, and the host's sisters always readily kept the several more pots in case the hundred pots did not suffice. The meat too was always abundant in such an occasion, and, as such, sometimes a special dish for the well-to-do families was usually prepared. It was often a tedious task to get people to attend the feast, as such; the meats were also often distributed in each house. Similar instance of such is founded in the

story of Liandova and his brother who were given only the bones on such occasion (*Zairema, Pi Pute Biak Hi 56*).

It is hard to know that when the Mizo practiced the ceremony of *Khuangchawi*. In Mizo folktale, the man who performed first the *Khuangchawi* was *Thlanrawkpa*. On this ceremony, he invited all the living beings on earth. When the time came for the guests to leave and *Thlanrawkpa* put on a disguise and awaited his guests on their way to find out if his guests would show any appreciation. Finally, there came a Mizo and *Vai* (“Non-Mizo Indians”) was pleased to hear them and gifted the Mizo with a leather parchment while the *Vai* he gave an ordinary paper. From this Mizo folktale, it appeared the Mizo and *Vai*. That is why the practiced time of *Khuangchawi* could not be at early. Liangkhaia also did not believe *Khuangchawi* is practices at very early; he opined that the religious belief and sacrifices of Mizo were not arising at early (Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin 45*). So, the *Khuangchawi* ceremony was may be practiced since or after 1700 AD.

Khuangchawi was part of the Mizo indigenous religion. The popular notion that the ancestors of Mizo were animistic in their belief system is a false notion. The Mizo, in the past, were divided into different clans and settled in different independent and autonomous villages with their own slight variations in their religious practice. However, it concentrates only on the Lushei clan in this paper.

3.1 IN LAMA THANGCHHUAH (KHUANGCHAWI AT HOME)

Khuangchawi is such an arduous feat that only few chiefs and few well to do families can pull it off. It required about a hundred *ngân* pot of *Zu*, a hundred pot of rice, two old male gayal and a female one and two pigs at the very least. And these requirements served symbolic purposes. One of the pigs was regarded as a *Pathian*³⁰ and the other signified their reverence to *sa*³¹. The two gayals were usually regarded for *khua*³², whereas the female gayal was referred to as *tlangphal*³³ and was usually for the children (Lianhmingthanga & Lalthangliana, *Mizo Nun Hlui 166*).

The ceremonial function of *Khuangchawi* could not be conducted on a whim. Certain needs, such as the following, had to be first fulfilled:

3.1.1 SAKUNG

It was the custom that in a Mizo family, the youngest son inherits the property of his father. Hence, other male members after having children were supposed to live in a separate house by leaving their parent's house. When they began to live in a separate house this sacrifice was offered. This sacrificial animal was a pig that has been dedicated and set apart for the same (Lalrinawma, *Mizo Ethos 103*). For the sacrificial practice of *Sakung*, on the evening, the male pig was kept near the entrance of the house, *Tufa* ("his male relatives") unloose the wear of male pig. Then, *Sadawt* would chant the songs of ritual (Lianhmingthanga & Lalthangliana, *Mizo Nun Hlui 150*). This is the songs of ritual for *Sakung*:

Sain aw ka sahrial lo chhang ang che,
Sakunga chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Dara sa-in ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Thlan chhaka chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Thlan thlanga chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che,
Kawtlaia chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Kawtpuia chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Leiruta chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Thawhmunna chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Bualchhuma chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Lailawia chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Chumchilha chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Zinglaia chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Chhuatphov chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Chhuatcheha chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Mualliana chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Lenpuia chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Muchhipa chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Mulena chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che.
Fuanthara chengin ka sahrial lo chhang ang che. (Liangkhaia, Mizo
Awmdan Hlui 12-13).

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Kan biak Sain ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

Sakunga awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thlan chhaka awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thlan thlanga awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Kawtlaia awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Kawpuia awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Leiruta awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thawhmunna awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Bualchhuma awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Lailawia awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Chumchilha awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Zinglaia awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Chhualphova awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Chhuatcheha awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Mualliana awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Lenpuia awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Muchhipa awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Mulena awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Fuanthara awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

(English)

Whom *Sa* worshipped, accept my sacrifice of pig.
 Arise from *sakung* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Yet whom *Dara* worshipped, accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *thlan chhak* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *kawtlai* and accept my sacrifice of pig,

Arise from *thlan chhak* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *thlan thlang* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *kawtlai* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *kawtpui* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *leirut* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *thawh hmun* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *Bualchhum* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *lailawi* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *chumchilh chhak* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *zinglai* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *chhuatpho* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *chhuatcheh* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *muallian* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *lenpui* and accept my sacrifice of pig.
 Arise from *muchhip* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *mulen* and accept my sacrifice of pig,
 Arise from *fuanthar* and accept my sacrifice of pig,

After the completion of chanted by *Sadawt*, he then pierce the upper right chest of the pig with a pointed bamboo to finish the killing of the pig. After grilling the pig, the pork is served for other villagers.

Sacrificing of *Sakung* occupied three days. Within these days, they did not allowed to having and talking of guests, visiting the blacksmith, doing any kind of work and eating sour fruits. In addition, mourning of dead is not allowed as it is

against the traditional laws (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture* 128). After three days, *Sadawt* would clear off the sacrificial practice with chanting the rituals. So, the man who does *Sakung* would regain in normal life.

3.1.2 CHAWNG

In Mizo olden society, one of the most important ceremonies was *Chawng*. All the people in their villages celebrate with happily this ceremony. *Chawng* is also called *Chawngchen* or *Chawngfang*. It occupied six days, but the main functions occupied four days (129). It is the first of the public sacrificial feasts of *Thangchhuah* process. A man who went to perform *Chawng* had to arrange for a large quantity of *Zu*. He had to invite all the young men and women of the village. On this occasion, he killed a pig to give them a feast. They in return carry up the rice required for making *Zu*, husked it, and prepared *Zu*. As soon as they have finished husking the rice, they were served *Zu* as a reward. When *Zu* was ready, the day for holding the *Chawng* sacrifice was fixed (Lalrinawma, *Mizo Ethos* 109).

The first day of *Chawngchen* is term *In chhe siam ni* (“day of repairing house”). In this day, close friends and nearby relatives gather round, making a step to the house and repairing them, which needs to be repaired. They repaired it as best as possible so that even when the village people gather, it would not fall apart (Liangkhaia, *Mizo Awmdan Hlui* 14). On the same day, young men and women collected a bunch of wood happily, for cooking *Chawng* meat and rice. The night of this collection of wood and *In chhe siam ni* (“a day for repairing house”) is

called *Thingfar zan*, and they never slept. They sing and dance all night and they were having a great time.

On this night, young men and women were sitting on the floor of *Chawngpa's* house gaing each other. The young women were arranged by *Val Upa*, to sit in front of the young men cuddling them and then started singing. *Chawngpa* started dancing and singing:

*Kan chhung inah pal ang in tlar a,
In lungduh buan ang in pawm emaw? (15)*

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

*Kan in chhungah pal ang maiin in thu kual a,
In duh zawng theuhte kha in pawm thei hlawm ang chu maw?*

(English)

You're all sit closely in a row like a fence in my house,
Can you all by chance hold your loved ones?

Val Upa then again came out and dances, answering *Chawngpa* using songs:

*In chawng kan chen e, in par kan tlan e,
In siangah ar ang kan ngam ta e.(15)*

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

In hausakna zar zovin in chawngah hian kan hlim e,

In in chhungah ar ang main ngampa takin kan khawsa e.

(English)

We're happily enjoy your big feast and wealth,

Yet, we're free like fowls at your home.

The young woman, cuddled by young man is term as *ngâi*. The men were not allowed to touch the young women mischievously. It's shameful for the young man, if he did such thing and when the women say it out; it is not pleasant for him to stay around other people (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture 130*).

At the time of sitting circlely on the floor, one person dance in the middle, saying the lyrics of the song and the other sing. After a period of time, *Val Upa* says, "*Har a so ve, in nula ngaih kha inthlak tawh rawh u,*" ("The time is passed, release the maiden whom you carries") and the woman then changes their seat sitting next to the other person. Since they change their seat continuously, there came a time when they have to cuddle or sit in front of their secret loves one. They sing and dance all night and it is very easy for them not to sleep but they were always having a great time.

There is three important points, which should be remembered in the time of *Chawngchen* that B.Lalthangliana has highlighted:

Firstly, when we say young man and woman *lâm* (“dance”) in the time of *Chawngchen*, it is not the same as those of today that one standing and waving hand. It is just that they were sitting in *Chawngpa*’s house, young woman were cuddled by man and they were all singing and that is what we called *lâm*.

Secondly, when we say *ngâi* (“sex”) it has some spiritual meaning. It does not mean sex, which we think of today’s world. To act or touch mischievously to a woman is also banned. The woman sitting in front, and cuddled by man is what we called *ngâi*.

Thirdly, when we say *châwi* (“lift up”), it is not merely sitting on other thigh. The woman sitting in front and cuddle by man is called *châwi*. *Chawngchen* and their life style was smart a pure. (131).

The second day of *Chawng* is called *Zupui ni*. They killed animals and have a feast and the children asked for a meat, which was cooked with rice. In a manner of highlighting their wants, they would shake the house which sometimes is very danger (*Liangkhaia, Mizo Awmdan Hlui 14*). After eating what they asked for, man and woman of the village again celebrated *Chawngchen* all night long.

The third day id called *Zu thing ni*. There still were lots of *Zu* and they drink as much as they want but there is no one who really needs to look after. They again have a feast and at night they continue to celebrate *Chawngchen*. But during this time, they were not the same as the night before (15).

The fourth day is called *Sarukawl cheuh ni*, but sometimes, also known as *Chawndo ni*. The couple who offered sacrifices had exhausted their stock of *Zu* and they drink them. Some of the meat left was cook with rice and the nearby relatives bring various kinds of vegetables and meat they have, to *Chawngpa*'s house and they again have a feast.

As the day of *Sarukawl cheuh ni* is like feasting with various kind of curries; the term *Chawndo sa ang nuk mai a ni*, which means “like the meat of *Chawndo ni*”. It is used for saying something which is mixed with various things of the olden days (15).

After passing through all this, *Chawngnu* and *Chawngpa* are in a higher position than others. They can make a shelf on the wall of the back of their bed. They held their head high among various people and they often says, “*Chawngnu nge nge, Chawngpa nge nge*”. Then, they would do one of the Mizo spiritual traditions of Dawino chhui.

3.1.3 SEDAWI

This is a continuous of Mizo religious function. They worshipped *khua* with a gayal. The Mizo called *Khua* as *Khuanu* because they treated her as feminine figure. They also regarded *Khua* as a village protector. They believed that the *Khua* guarded all animals (16).

The first animal they sacrificed on this occasion was a gayal, so they called *Sedawi chhun*. The young gayal, which had a horn equal to the length of palm of hand, was fitted for sacrifice (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture* 136). *Seluphan* was made from a chesnut tree with a forked pole on the top. It was erected in front of the house where the sacrificial animal- gayal was tied up. The sacrificer came out carrying a spear and his wife accompanied him carrying a *sahmim ipte*. The *Sadawt* also took a large family gourd used for holding *Zu* called *Zupeng* (Vanngbaka, *The Old Mizo Religion* 174). The *Sadawt* would take a small quantity of *Zu* in his mouth and blow it out on the gayal and chanted songs of ritual:

Mu chhepa fuk nan ka ti lo,

Sa chhepa fuk nan ka ti lo,

Chalvawma lu chuan nan ka ti a ni e (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture* (137).

Free translation:

We are not mean for perching a damned hawk,

Neither it is for the head of a regular wild animal,

Indeed, we keep and preserve it for the distinct head of wild gayal.

Haw, khua-in aw,

Ka chalvawm lo chhang ang che.

Pi Biak a khua-in aw,

Ka chalvawm lo chhang ang che.

Pu Biak a khua-in aw,

Ka chalvawm lo chhang ang che.

Dara biak a khua-in aw,

Ka chالصawm lo chhang ang che.

(Liangkhaia, *Mizo Awmdan Hlui 17*)

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

E khai! Kan biak Pathianin,

Ka vawk hlan che hi lo pawm la,

Kan biak Pu berin

Ka vawk hlan che hi lo pawm la,

Kan biak Pi berin

Ka vawk hlan che hi lo pawm la,

Kan biak Dara khan,

Ka vawk hlan hi min pawmsak ang che.

(English)

O! Whom we worship,

Answer and accept my offering,

Whom our grandmother worships,

Answer and accept my offering,

Whom our grandfather worships,

Answer and accept my offering,

Whom *Dara* worshipped,

Answer and accept my offering.

Then, the sacrificer shook his spear and said:

Ka chhun tirhna ni se,
Ka lam tirhna ni rawh se,
A ni, a thla dang lovin a kum kipin,
Ka chhun ang.

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Ka vawi khat thahna ni sela,
Ka vawi khat lamna ni rawh se,
A thla leh kum ngai zelah,
Hetiang hian ka that zel ang.

Let it be my first kill,
And my first dancing.
Yes, I will kill again every year
On the same date and month.

He then slightly stabbed the gayal with his spear and instantly went back into the house without looking back and his wife and the Sadawt followed him. As soon as the gayal was speared, it was killed by the nearby relatives and cut up for cooking. The head of gayal was hung up at the *Seluphan*³⁴ and it should be observed seven days, abstaining from any kind of work (Vannghaka, *The Old Mizo Religion 174-175*).

Lalrinawma depicts a clear nature and process of how the Mizo perform the *Sedawi chhun* as follows:

On this occasion, one gayal, one boar and three small pigs were required. *Zu* was also prepared for those who took part in order to keep them from going to sleep. The first day was the *In chhe siam ni*. They strengthen the house and erect the *Seluphan* the forked pole on which the Gayal's skull was placed. Five people were appointed to prepare erect it. A cock was killed. As soon as it was cooked, it was taken rice and *Zu* to the place where the *Seluphan* was being cut and the workers were fed. Then they came to the village and erected the *Seluphan*. The *seluphan* was a forked pole and on the lower point of the fork an egg was fixed by means of a pinewood pin, which was run through it on the *Seluphan*. This was done to guard against the evil eye.

The second day was *Zupui ni*. In the morning, the *Sadawt* and the sacrifice went outside the village. They took with them some white cock's feathers, millet, a spear and a fairly large gourd used for holding *Zu* called *Zupeng*. They then built a model stone house, line it with plaintain leaves and place a chant that was known as the *Sethlako* or *Sethlakung*, the calling of the spirit of the gayal. After this they returned to the village and tie the gayal to the *Sethlakhung*, the calling of the spirit of the gayal. The *Sadawt* and the *Tlahpawi*, after returning to the village, had to prepare the gayal for the sacrifice. The

Sadawt then sings a chant and when he has finished, (*Sadawt* and *Tlahpawi*) drank *Zu*, *Sadawt* blew some of it out of their mouths on to the *gayal*, and *Sadawt* threw three handful of the millet at *gayal*. The *Sadawt* and *Tlahpawi* then went into the house where the sacrifice was waiting for them with his spear and gourd of *Zu*. They told the sacrifice that all is ready and he goes out, approached the *gayal*, blew *Zu* from his mouth on to three times, and sprinkles it with *Zu* under the shoulder. The sacrifice then stabbed the *gayal* with his spear and immediately returned into the house and places his spears and gourd against the wall. As soon as the *gayal* had been speared, its attendants kill it and cut it up.

After the *gayal* had been killed, a small pig was killed on the space at the head of the bed. This was a sacrifice to the evil spirits that lived below the house. No one except full relations of the sacrifice might eat of that pig, which was cooked on a small hearth built on the place it was killed at.

The third day was for *Ruai ni*. They had a feast of meat they had dried over the hearth made for cooking. Seven day after the end of the feast a white cock was killed on the outside platform of the house, that is called *Ar khaw thiang dawh*. The period between the days on which the white cock was killed is known as *Hrilh* and sacrifice may not meet any strangers and they were not entering his house. If they entered they had to pay two

gayal. The gayal's head was hung up for three lunar months, during that time strangers were not to enter the sacrificer's house and he and his wife might not cross any big rivers. Then at the end of the three months they kill a male pig. This is called *Selulawhna* or the bringing down of the gayal's head. The *Selulawhna* could be combined with an ordinary sacrifice to the household Let which saved killing an extra pig. Some close relation or a son-in-law of the sacrifice climbs up and released the rope binding the head to the *Seluphan* and the head fell down and was picked up by the sacrificer's wife and placed in a basket. The flesh of the pig killed at *Selulawhna* was divided in the same way as before except that the *Thianbul* got none (Lalrinawma, *Mizo Ethos 110-111*).

3.1.4 DAWINO CHHUI

Dawino Chhui is still part of the series of sacrifices. They also used to say, "Sedawiin dawino a kai tet" ("The Sedawi brought a continuous series of feast"). *Dawino chhui* was normally a ritual to get blessing from *Pathian* ("God").

Hnuaite- This sacrifice was offered to a good spirit who dwells in and around the house. The sacrificial animal was a pig. Before the *Sadawt* kills a pig, he chanted the songs of ritual like as under:

Hnuaitein ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,

Thuaidura chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,

Banrel bula chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Ṭhawmawl bula chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Kaldung hnuaia chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Kalvanga chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Thuah hnih thuah thuma chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Chhimhmuna chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Kawmdawl(kawmchar) hnuaia chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che
 (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture* 133).

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Hnuaitein ka ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Inhnuaia awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Banrel kianga awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Ṭhawmawl kianga awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Kaldung hnuaia awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Kalvanga awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thuah hnih thuah thuma awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
In chhim lama awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Kawmchara awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

(English)

Let who dwells under world; accept my offering of pig,
 Let who dwells under house; accept my offering of pig,
 Let who dwells near the *Banrel*; accept my offering of pig,

Let who dwells near the supporter of the house; accept my offering of pig,
 Let who dwells under of *kaldung*; accept my offering of pig,
 Let who dwells near the *kalvang*; accept my offering of pig,
 Let arise from the first layer to last layer of the earth; accept my offering of pig,
 Let who dwells in the south of house; accept my offering of pig,
 Let who dwells in the entrance of house, accepts my offering of pig.

The *Sadawt* killed the pig by using bamboo-stick at underneath the house, that side of the door near the road. After they cooked and, anyone could eat the pork. So, a sacrificial piggy set apart for the spirit was kept in the roof rafter of the house.

Lasi- This was a ritual to get blessings from *Lasi*³⁵ for hunting. The sacrificial practice is same with *Hnuait*e but songs of ritual.

Lasiin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Sikhawthangan ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Sikhawvaran ka zel tluang lo chhang ang che,
Hmawngfianga chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Khiang kaha chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Ni Zung rawn Zui che,
Thla Zung rawn Zui che,
Ka liang khanan tum ta che,
Nuntluang tum pui ang che,
Pangdam tum pui ang che (133-134)

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Lasiin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

Sihkhawthangan ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

Sihkhawvaran ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

Hmawng kunga awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

Khiang kunga awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

Ni zung rawn zui la,

Thla zung rawn zui la,

Kan in liangah hian rawn tum la,

Nun thuanna rawn thlen la,

Taksa hriselna rawn thlen ang che.

(English)

Let *Lasi* accept this offering of pig,

Let *Sihkhawthang* accept this offering of pig,

Let *Sihkhawvar* accept this offering of pig,

Let who dwells amidst the banyan tree accept this offering of pig,

Let who dwells amidst the chilauni tree accept this offering of pig,

Follow the rays of the sun,

Follow the light of the moon,

Land on the wall plate of our house,

Bring the prosperous and successful life,

And render us a healthy life.

Chung- This sacrificial practice intending the satisfying of whom, giving the light from the sun and those who control the raining for crops. They used a young pig for sacrifices. The *Sadawt* chanted the songs of ritual like as:

Chungin aw ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Van sanga lengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Chumchi kara lengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Romei kara chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Ni kara chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Thla kara chengin ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Ni Zungrawn Zui che, ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Thla Zungrawn Zui che, ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Ka tlung khanan lo tum che, ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Ka liang khanan lo tum che, ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che,
Ka di hrehan lo tum che, hreh hnih hreh thuman lo tum che,
ka zeltluang lo chhang ang che (134).

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Chungin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Van sanga awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Chumchi kara awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Romei zam kara awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Ni kara chengin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thla kara chengin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Ni zungrawn zui tuin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

Thla eng zung rawn zui tuin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Kan in ban vela awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Kan in lianga awmin ka vawk hlan hi lo pawm ang che.

(English)

Let *Chung*(above) accept this offering of pig,

Let he who dwells in above accept this offering of pig,

Let he who dwells amidst the *Chumchi* accept this offering of pig,

Let he who dwells amidst the haze accept this offering of pig,

Let he who dwells amidst the sun accept this offering of pig,

Let he who dwells amidst the moon accept this offering of pig,

Let he who follows the rays of the sun accept this offering of pig,

Let he who follows the light of the moon accept this offering of pig,

Let he who dwells between the pillar of our abode accept this offering of pig,

Let he who dwells across the beams of our abode accept this offering of pig.

The *Sadawt* stabbed the pig to death, cooked the meat and then the host's family fed on it. The meat, whether cooked or raw, was not to be taken inside the host's house. The remains were to remain where it was cooked and to be eaten again the next day.

A sacrificial animal set apart for the spirit was stored in the *Sa serh bawm*³⁶ and then placed on the wood-rick. When a *chung* was used a visit to the blacksmith's workshop, having or conversing with guests was restricted for three days, after which the *Sadawt* then cleansed and purified it with his rites and rituals

Vansen- This was a ritual to get blessing from the one who dwells between red and black cloud. They sacrifices by using a red-cock (Liangkhaia, *Mizo Awmdan Hlui 18*). Before killing a red-cock, the *Sadawt* chanted the songs of ritual:

Van senin ka hluikhuang lo chhang ang che,
Van sanga lengin ka hluikhuang lo chhang ang che,
Ni kara cheng vansenin ka hluikhuang lo chhang ang che,
Thla kara chenga vansenin ka hluikhuang lo chhang ang che,
Ni Zung rawn Zui che, thla Zung rawn Zui che,
Ka tlung khanan lo tum che,
Ka liang khanan lo tum che,
Ka hluikhuang lo chhang ang che (Lalthangliana, Mizo Culture 135).

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Van senin ka arpa hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Van sanga chengin ka arpa hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Ni kara chengin ka arpa hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thla kara chengin ka arpa hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Ni zung rawn zui la, thla eng rawn zui la,
Kan in chhunga kan tlungah lo tum la,
Kan in liangah lo tum la,
Ka arpa hlan hi lo pawm ang che.

(English)

Let *Vansen* accept my offering of cock,

Let who dwells in heaven accept my offering of cock,

Let who dwells amidst the sun accept my offering of cock,

Let who dwells amidst the moon accept my offering of cock,

Follow the rays of the sun; follow the light of the moon,

Land on the wall plate of our house,

Accept my offering of cock.

A red-cock was then killed and prepared near the bamboo water storages, and cooked in a fire place made for that sole purpose, and immediately consumed. The sacredly revered parts meats were wrapped in shoots of banana trees and then placed in the thatched roof using a bamboo stick, directly over where it had been killed.

Hnuaipui- This was the last item for *Dawino chhui*. It must be worshipped with a sow. They killed a sow near the west-side of the back corner of the house and the meat was also cooked there. They offered the sacred meat at the same place. This ritual is to get blessing from the spirit of under-world (Liangkhaia, *Mizo Awmdan Hlui 19*).

The *Sadawt* chanted this ritual:

Hnuaipuiin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

Inrel hnuaia chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

Kalvang hnuaia chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

Banrel bula chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Ṭhawmawl bula chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Palfara chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Lei thuah khata chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thuah hnih thuah thuma chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thuah li thuah ngaa chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thuah sarh thuah riata chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Kawmdawl hnuaia chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Pi Biakin lo chhang ang che,
Pu Biakan lo chhang ang che,
Chhang ngaiin lo chhang ang che (Lalthangliana, Mizo Culture 135-136).

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Hnuaipuiin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Inrel hnuaia chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Kalvang hnuaia chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Banrel bula chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Ṭhawmawl bula chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Palfara chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Lei thuah khata chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thuah hnih thuah thuma chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thuah li thuah ngaa chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Thuah sarh thuah riata chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,
Kawmdawl hnuaia chengin ka vawkpui hlan hi lo pawm ang che,

Kan biak Pi berin lo pawm ang che,

Kan biak Pu berin lo pawm ang che,

Ka hlan zawng zawngte hi min pawmsak ang che.

(English)

Let the spirit of *Hnuaipui* accept my offering of sow,

Let arise from under the house accept my offering of sow,

Let arise from *kalvang* accept my offering of sow,

Let arise near the post of house accept my offering of sow,

Let arise near the *thawmawl* of house accept my offering of sow,

Let arise from *Palfar* accept my offering of sow,

Let arise from the first layer of the earth accept my offering of sow,

Let arise from second layer, third layer accept my offering of sow,

Let arise from fourth layer, fifth layer of the earth accept my offering of
sow,

Let arise from seventh layer, eighth layer of the earth accept my offering of
sow,

Let arise from under the *kawmdawl* accept my offering of sow,

Whom we grandmother worshipped, accept my offering of sow,

Whom we grandfather worshipped, accept my offering of sow,

Let answer and accept all my offering.

Having or conversing with strangers, consumption of sour fruits, knitting,
and giving condolences to deceased family were all prohibited for three days, after

three day the sadawt performed his rituals. *Hnuaipui* is the last stage in *Dawino Chhui* as such observed in much seriousness (136).

3.1.5 SEKHUANG

One full-grown gayal and two boars were killed. Two boars were worship of *Sa* and gayal for *Khua* (Liangkhaia, *Mizo Awmdan Hlui 19*). On this occasion, the Mizo clans called Lushei followed the feast of *Mitthi Rawp lam* but others clans did not worship *Pathian* (“God”) through this *Sekhuang* (Vannghaka, *The Old Mizo Region 176*). The *Mitthi Rawp lam*, in which effigies were supposed to represent their deceased relatives and progenitors of the clan and were strapped to stand in a circle and carried-out on a stretcher at the ground and the families danced with them. The occasion was called *Mitthi rawp lam* (176).

Though it was a great day for them, it was also a day of bursting into tears, longing for their departed loved ones. When a person built the image supposed to represent his child, he attired it by using the old garment of the deceased child and adorned it with the best, that image brought a real picture to visualize the happy face of their child (176-177).

They heard in imagination the sound of the laughter of their beloved and renew their longing, thus compelling them to weep again. Those who perform the *Sekhuang* could now wear a striped turban but not yet a striped cloth. He could make a window on his side-wall, but not *Bahzar* (“an enclosed verandah”). He was not yet regarded as *Thangchhuah* (177).

3.1.6 SEDAWI

Sekhuang must be accompanied by *Sedawi*. Before he performed the sacrifice of *Khuangchawi*, he should perform the sacrifice of *Sedawi*. As normal practice, *Sedawi* was accompanied by a smaller series of feast- *Dawino* and *Dawino chhui*. However, due to the burden expensive of such feasts, they prepared for the *Khuangchawi* after the *Sedawi* without performing again the *Dawino*. The preparation for *Khuangchawi*, like the *Chawng buhden*, *Chawng thingphurh*, *Sumdeng zu*, and *Thing-ek zu* etc. was exactly the same other feasts. But before one can perform this ceremony, he had to give a number of other minor feasts like *Inchhe siam ni*, *Zupui ni*, *Zu thing ni*, *Saruh cheuh ni* etc. and there must be a *Chawngchen* night for the young men and maidens (177).

3.1.7 KHUANGCHAWI

Khuangchawi was the attainment of *Thangchhuah* status. It brought respectability and higher status among the Mizo. On this ceremony, three gayals and two boars need to be killing (Liangkhaia, *Mizo Awmdan Hlui 21*). It cost a great deal of money. Only chief and a few, who could afford, as ordinary people could not afford it, performed it. Its object was to help the performer on to the road to *Pialral*. People who had performed *Khuangchawi* were distinguished from others by being entitled to wear striped clothes and turbans and to wear long tail-feathers of *bhimray* in their. They were also allowed to have windows in their houses. They were generally regarded as people of respectability and position and

were treated with more consideration than other people headdress (Lalrinawma, *Mizo Ethos 113*).

The ceremonial function of *Khuangchawi* could not be conducted on a whim. Certain needs, such as the following, had to be first fulfilled:

Chawng buhden- The preparation of the local brew was called *Chawng buhden* and was prepared from rice. A day would be fixed for *Chawng buhden* and a large amount of rice grain had to be hulled by all the young men and women of the village and this work would be done manually with a *sum* (“a mortar for husking the rice grain”) and *suk* (“the pestle made of wood specially meant for hulling rice”) that was owned by every family. In such manner, the husked rice would be fermented and measured in terms of *ngân* (about 4 litres). The *Chawngpa* was expected to have at least a hundred *ngân* of brewed drink for the ceremony (Lallianzuala, *Khuangchawi 11*).

Sathing zar- Three months before they fixed a date for the feast, all young men and maidens of the village started cutting firewood. A cane was stretched two trees on both sides of the main approach road of the village about 500 metres, and against this, on the alternate side rested the billets so that, they might be thoroughly dry by the time they were needed. As a reward for the young people, they killed a he-goat or billy-goat with long hair which was eaten with much merry-making. This collection of wood was called *Sathing zar* for cooking the meat of animals to be killed. The *Sathing zar* was most enjoyable for the young men and maidens (Vannghaka, *The Old Mizo Region 178*).

Thingthiah- This is a religious ritual of sticking five or seven or nine (odd number) pieces of ginger onto the wall of the house belonging to either the maternal grandfather or maternal uncle. In order to perform *thingthiah*, the man who was to perform the *Khuangchawi* public feast had to prepare the stick for the pieces of ginger. He could entrust only his close friend or son—in-law or any *Thangchhuahpa* with the errand of sticking the *thingthiah*. And this messenger, accompanied by a large procession, was not allowed to speak to anyone until the task was completed. After fixing the *thingthiah*, drinks would follow. Sometimes dinner prepared with pork was also served. In this *thingthiah* ritual, a dance called *thingdim* also known as *Khuallam* (“dance in welcoming the guests”) would be held (Lallianzuala, *Khuangchawi 11*).

The duration of this ceremony was four days. The first day is *In chhe siam ni*, the second day is *Zupui ni*, the third day is *Zu thing ni* and the last day is *Saruhkawl cheuh ni/ Chawndo ni* (Liangkhaia, *Mizo Awmdan Hlui 21*). The platform for the sacrifice called *Khuanghlang* was made with a large clump bamboo / *phulrua*. They brought *phurua* about 15-20 feet, tied it cross wise and made a handrail. The *Khuangchawi* family with their grandchildren was boarded on that platform and the nearby relatives carried it out to the street of their village with dance and the function was what they called *Khuangchawi* (Vannghaka, *The Old Mizo Region 178-179*). Those who sitted on the *Khuanghlang* threw coins, brass-pot, gayal, goat and gun to the people who competed to get hold of such materials, but in tokens; like rope for animal, firewood for gun. This was their grandeur and what they enjoyed most (179).

This feast did not account for much importance in the religious ceremonies performed with a view to attaining *Pialral*. It was more or less, a show of greatness and wealth of a man. A man who had performed *Khuangchawi* ceremonies three times in his life was called *Zaudawh*. These *Khuangchawi* ceremonies had the following aims:

- a) To achieve the eternal bliss of *Pialral*.
- b) To avoid the pellets of *Pawla*, and
- c) To earn respect in this life and life to come.

3.1.8 RAM LAMA THANGCHHUAH (THANGCHHUAH IN THE WILD)

It is not easy to perform *thangchhuah* in the wild if it is not as a *Pasaltha*. For to perform *thangchhuah*, they are required to kill several animals. If a man could kill the animals needed to perform *thangchhuah*, they celebrated and performed the *thangchhuah*. The required animals were deer, bear, samber, wild-boar and gayal. Other animals besides these are the king cobra and the skylark. The gayal is considered same as the wild gayal. Besides, the skylark and viper may not be killed by himself, but, if he can *aih* these two animals, they considered as the killer. Some said that killing elephant is needed for *thangchhuah* (Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung* 46-47). Unless one had killed all such animals one was not able to achieve the *thangchhuah*.

Killing these animals was a difficult task, and when the men went on hunting expeditions, it was often the case that someone else shot and killed the animal required by one to achieve the *thangchhuah*, in such case, the person who needed the kill would asked the person who actual had the kill to give him that particular kill, and that person would gladly gave it to him, hence the term *Upa Sa Kah* (Zairema, *Pi Pute Biak Hi 60-61*). It was believed that those who gave their kill to others who needed it always made another similar kill.

Apart from these required kill, some animals had to be *aih*. These included a deer, a bear, a viper, a flying-lemur and a skylark. However, the flying-lemur was sometimes excluded from the list. The ritual for the deer was always the most serious on. The branches of a blossoming chesnut tree would be planted in front of the house of the one who performed the ritual. They would then drink wine inside the house, sing together and chant rituals, and shoot guns in the air.

A deer is considered the most valuable of all the animals that required *aih*. The *Zu* distributed in the rituals where a deer was *aih* always sweeter than other *Zu*. A person who had not killed a deer was prohibited from drinking that *Zu*, and if there was a person who had *aih* a deer her would always be handed the first drink. A pig was usually used to *aih* the deer (Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung 47*). In some village all, the animals that were required to be killed were also required to be *aih*.

Deer- His first kill is a deer; they considered that the *aih* was prosperous. If a man who aim to do *Thangchhuah* need to *aih* of a deer. For this *aih*, they served

many *Zu* especially, and it was believed that *Zu* was the source of blessing. It was prohibited drinking *Zu* for not killing a deer. But, those who do *aih* of a deer to be first drink of *Zu*. For this *aih* ceremony of a deer, they used a pig (48).

Bear- The reason why Mizo grandparents thought it was especially necessary to hold a virtual ceremony on hunting the bears was that when *thangchhuahpa* after being dead was on his way to paradise, he couldn't bring the bear's soul in the right way properly. That is why, to bring disgrace to it, they celebrate. If someone shoots a sloth (small kind of bear) and not a real bear, he counts it as a real bear and celebrates it, just like he shot the real bear (48).

Added to this, what they said needed to be shot; flying-lemur, king cobra and skylark were celebrated dumbly. On the other hand, they took flying-lemur very sacredly and used a pig and twenty vessels of *Zu* to celebrate. King cobra and skylark were used for *thangchhuah*. They put much importance to it since they bring perfect completeness to the magnificence (48).

Wild gayal- Whenever they shoot a wild gayal or rodent, it is necessary to celebrate using domestic fowl. If they shoot other animals, and that animal is a bit deformed, a domestic fowl is again necessary (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture* 149).

When a wild gayal or flying-lemur is shot, a domestic fowl is used on them as follows: They covered the hen and the animal they shot with a dish placed it opposite to the head of the master's bed and they call that '*thlengpui khup hnu thal thei lo*'. On top of the dish placed upside down sits the hunter who was given *Zu*,

then he gets up after drinking it and the hen was slaughtered by the *Sadawt*. That is their sacred meat, and they gave much importance to it to be able to *thangchhuah* (149).

3.1.9 CELEBRATION OF TIGER'S HEAD

To complete *Thangchhuah* they also say that it is necessary to celebrate the tiger's head. But this celebration is done with declarance of a holiday, though it doesn't hold a very important place in terms of their religious belief (Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung* 49).

When the night of celebration of hunting of tigers is to be held, the *Sadawt* killed a domestic fowl at the house of the person who celebrates it, covers it with a tub, and made it pin it down to death, and chants a spell as:

Kei kawng chung a ka kal leh
Nang kawng hnuaiah i kal ang a,
Thangvan ang ka chungnung a,
Chhimhlei ang ka hnuaichhiah che,
Khuavangin min hual ang a,
Ka kalna piangah mi hual zel ang (121).

Free translation:

I will take the high road
 And you take the low road,
 I am as high as the sky,

I look down on you like the earth below,,
Khuavang will be my guide wherever I am,
 And she will always abide by me.

They would drink the *Zu* together throughout the night. The next day is for the whole village and no one should go to their lands. The other tigers gathered together where they were viewed from the hillock and the mound and whoever went near them were bitten straight away. The women dared not take water from the wells but if was obligatory were guarded by men.

For a fake tiger, *tahrang*³⁷ is weaved, which is then covered by the tiger's hide with its dry skull as its head. It is then carried to the streets in a stretcher by four people. The hunter and his fellow warriors followed, all dressed as women. The hunter wore a women skirt, an elephant teeth necklace with woman's cloak and a *Lenbuang thuum* shawl. He smoke a woman's pipe and carries a pouch filled with sand instead of tobacco, and carries a yarn in *Hmurthlur*. The warriors will make some jokes and laugh loudly. The hunter, imitating woman would smoke the pipe and bang the sand from his pouch as if they are the smokes coming out from his pipe. *Darkhuang* and *Darbu* were played in rhythm with drums. It was a grand spectacle for the villagers. The hunter and his fellow warriors would reenact their hunt and would play chase with the fake tiger carried in the stretcher. Finally, the hunter will hit the tiger's head with *Hmuithlur*. The other tigers watching them from their surrounding forest would surely say that to not even daring a woman, he is shameful, deserves death. During this, laughing is prohibited. They would carry a percupine's guill under their arms so that in case

they laugh, the porcupine would take the fault. If it is considered a laugh, the whole festival would have to be repeated, or another belief is that misfortune would follow (*Zairema, Pi Pute Biak Hi 63-64*).

Later, the dancers went inside the house and change back into male garments. The hunter wore a *Thangchhuah* turban on his head with a cloth over his body like a coat. With a bag in which two boiled eggs, white marble and a *fungki* are kept. He carries a sword, and placed a long tail feather of bhimray in his hair and a gun at his shoulder. Like before, the hunter and his fellow warrior danced and at the end he strip off the egg, held the white marble and asked the tiger, “Let us share an egg?” on saying these words, he stuffed the marble into the tigers mouth while he ate the egg. When he finished eating he said in an ironical tone, “Can’t you eat? You are no match for me. I’m superior to you. I will take the high road, And you take the low road, If you are warrior of the South, then, I, the warrior of the North”. Upon saying these words, he draw his sword out and chop the tiger’s head took his gun and fired it followed by gunshots of his friends. It is said that the onlooking tigers from the forest were terrified and ran away with their tails straightened, and roars “We are no match for them” (64).

So, when *Thangchhuahpa* dies, all the animals he had ever killed follows his spirit and went to the road leading towards the Hades. He node a stag in which a king cobra bind itself on the horns, a skylark flying in circles above them, with a flying lemur right above them, providing shade to the hunter. It is also said that the hunter ride with an elephant and walks at the back. When they reach the entrance

of Hades, it is said that the flying lemurs flew closer to hide the hunter's face from *Pawla's* view (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture* 150).

When *Pawla* saw them, he was scared of the warrior because of his glorious parade, so instead of shooting him with his pellet bow, he jumped inside his house and peep through the holes of his house. Then, the hunter, with all his animals will go to the *Pialral* (150).

It is believed that Hades has seven routes which all leads to *Pawla's* yard. Hence, the people who do not *Thangchhuah* are very reluctant to pass the road. Since, there is no other way, they would surely have to go and if they went, they would be shot at by *Pawla's* huge pellet bow. So, they dread to pass his house and would stay at the road. But the *Sanu* would grab them and take them forcefully towards *Pawla's* house where he would shoot at them as they had feared (*Zawla, Mizo Pi Pute Leh An Thlahte Chanchin* 43).

Sanu is a woman, also known as *Pawla's* wife. If *Pawla* does not have any spirit to sacrifice, he would go to a world of living and kill someone who is not suffering from any disease. She is very partial to *Pawla* and when *Pawla* does not have any scarification, she would stop her weaving just to kill someone. Since she is engaged in helping *Pawla*, there is no progress in weaving her cloth and till today it is also said that she has weaved only a strand of cloth. It is their notion that if somebody is dying due to cholera or other ailment, it is *Sanu* who takes those (43).

There is nothing compared to a Mizo *thangchhuah*, whether it is *Thangchhuah* at home or *Thangchhuah* in the wild. If it is *Thangchhuah* in the wild, then they are honourable and highly thought of in the community. It is the highest honour as if given by the queen of England and the name ‘Saint’ given by the Roman Catholic community for virtuous people. (Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung* 50, 51)

If a person has performed *Khuangchawi* three times, then he can build a *zau*. *Zau* is a tiny house with a rope around it to hang things, located just in front of the holder and in a crowded place. Though the passage is small, they still admire it; and they are not afraid to pass through it. It is used by their daughters and friends to weave cloth and also by their sons to keep company.

When *Lersia*'s three siblings *Sisinga* and his sister stick to the chief for their needs, the chief's wife could not recover, “Let a human being offer me a sacrifice and I shall be alright” she said. They killed *Lersia*'s sister for sacrificial offering while they were hunting, but still she did not recover. *Lersia*'s siblings were afraid and took all their things and ran away. His younger brother *Sisinga* carried their treasures and necklaces, and goes on a different path. *Lersia* too goes on a different path from his brother. Unfortunately a python swallows him, and not knowing there are treasures inside the python, *Liandova* and his brother obtained it. *Lersia* was a very good man. Though the treasures carried by his brother are still on his mind, he does not know how to track it. Later he finally comes to hear some rumours. *Liandova*'s village killed a python; *Liandova* got the treasures inside it. He then goes out to clarify the news. In order to be invited by *Liandova*,

he disguises himself as a beggar, and finally *Liandova* asks him to join him as his guest. They were very poor and had only one blanket and nothing to eat. *Lersia* shares his food, they all ate together. It is said that he somehow managed to successfully inquire. (*Zairema, Pi Pute Biak Hi 57*)

Liandova is afraid that people would take their treasures from him because he is unwilling to stay poor, it is also unsure that he would let *Lersia* take it from him. *Lersia* feels pity for him due to this, and knows that they are kind-hearted young boys. He does not want to take away their treasure infact, he promises to give them a *gayal*, and tells them to inform him if anybody tries to steal from them. Then *Liandova* and his brother took the *gayal* which bore many *gayals* and finally, at last they were able to perform *Khuangchawi*.

When *Chawn* is to be performed, it is called *Lersia* 'Chawng-Mata'. Some people believe that it means 'the first'. Some also believe that it means not wanting to be the first to perform *chawng*. It is said that there was someone before *Lersia* who performed the *chawng*. *Lersia* is a wise and kind-hearted man. *Chawngchen*, *sechhun* and *Khuangchawi* are maybe designed by him. They make an opportunity for poor villagers so that rich villagers may share with them. People are stingy, which is why *Lersia* made *chawngchen* and *Khuangchawi* so that it is necessary for the rich people to look after the poor people. In order to *Chawng*, people have to be wealthy, and often find them not wealthy. But their relatives often force them. They maybe hesitant to do *Sechhun Khuangchawi* since it is quite expensive. The chief's elders and leaders also often force them to do it.

Sechhun Khuangchawi is expensive because it needs a lot of drinks; they spend more than the cost of their rice fields for the village (57-58).

If a person cannot afford *chawngfang* due to inconveniences, he has to kill a pig. He has to *Tlahpawi*, and scratch the rice. They call it *In tumphit* and they sing along while playing the *Tumphit*. There is no *chawngchen* at night and no good *sumdawng Zu*. After this he will do *dawino chhui*, and kill a hog (58-59).

Sekhuang and *Khuangchawi* is very difficult, some men are not able to do it. They want to be *Thangchhuah*, and make a shortcut for them, and call it *zankhuang*. Like the *Se daw* they kill a gayal, put one person to sit with it, carry it in front of the chief's ground, sing a *zankhuang* song, and throw a chicken. They don't keep *talhkhuang* near *Seluphan*. They repeat over again with a gayal, so, they thought it to be *Thangchhuah*, and can have a window and a rope to hang things, but cannot have *Vanlung tap*. It is only the chief who can have a slave, they make a room for him; they make a hearth and call it *vanlung*. *Thangchhuah* can also have that, but their servants are freer than the chief's slave (59).

The Mizo ancestors believed that when a person died, his or her soul would cleave open the top of the head and depart from its body. And the soul of the departed went to Rih Lake on their way to the land of the dead. From Rih Lake the soul of the departed continued on their journey till they reached *Thlanpial* ("a rock cave) and continued their journey till they reached *Hringlang tlang* ("a mythical mountain). They continued their journey till they reached 'Zing-van-zawl' near the exit and entrance to Hades and *Pialral*. It was also the front yard of the Mizo

mythical giant *Pawla*. It is said that Pawla had a big long pellet-bow; and he shot any and every soul of the departed who passed in front of his house on their way to Hades. But the man who could perform *Khuangchawi* and his family allowed passing by without being shot with a pellet-bow (Lalthangliana, *A Brief History and Culture of Mizo 190-194*).

Those who were common people lived in Hades which was situated on this side of the river Pial. Across the river Pial the land was known as *Pialral*. Then, the *Thangchhuah* families who had been successful in hunting and the families who had given a number of public feasts or pierced a gayals and others, and earned the title of *Thangchhuah* which was coveted by the Mizo, crossed the river Pial and were privileged to live in that 'never, never land' called as *Pialral*. There they enjoyed pleasures to the hilt. They neither toiled nor worked, and literally ate of the cornucopia of plenty. This was the land that all the Mizo forebears craved and desired to dwell in (194-195).

GLOSSARY

30. **Pathian:** God of above, the giver and preserver of life.
31. **Sa:** *Sa* was commonly described as the object of worship of particular clan, who presided over the clan and its members (Mizo Chanchin 26) According to the most common understanding, *Sa* was a clan deity, a supernatural being who gave each clan its unique identity. It is true that the *Mizos* conceived *Pathian* as *Sa*, who is transcendent, unmixed, immaterial, Creator-God. This *Pathian* dwells somewhere in the space away from human reach (Lalrinawma, *Mizo Ethos* 75).
32. **Khua:** *Khua* represents *Khuavang* or *Khuanu*, regarded as the watcher or keeper-God of *Khua* (village) or, veng. *Mizos* understood *Pathian* as *Sa* the root and original of man and of various clans and tribes, signifying God as Creator. On the top of that they perceived Gos as *Khua*, representing Him as the Sustainers, Protector, Benevolent and Designer of Man's destiny. *Khua* was worshipped with the offering of the sacrificial Gayal. *Khua* is described as collective deity, having power and might to protect the members of a village community along with their domestic animals (76).
33. **Tlangphal:** To make free to all, anything made free to all or common property.
34. **Seluphan:** A sacrificial post upon which the skull of a domesticated gayal is exposed.

35. **Lasi** : *Lasi* were a good spirits or goddesses of animals. These spirits seemed to be concerned with wild animals. They were the female spirits of the hunt. They are reputed to have lived in the high hills.

36. **Sa serh bawm**: It is a box or basket where the Mizo kept the parts of a sacrificed animal or fowl set apart for the spirits.

37. **Tahrang**: A latticework made with split bamboos plaited together and crossing one another at right-angles.

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CHAPTER 4

RAL LU LAM

In olden times, it seem that the life of the Mizo people was full of conflict, raids between different villages, women and children were tortured, and even houses were burnt. When going to a jhum in the morning, people who go first often see chopped head, and some who went farming in the jhum were often killed with their heads taken. Because of that the villages near the east and north of Mizoram were not able to go to the jhum without men who bringing a gun (*Zawla, Mizo Pi Pute leh An Thlahte Chanchin 90*).

Ral lu lam is, simply put, the celebration of enemy heads taken from conflicts and raids. In Mizo history, raiding parties would bring back to their village. The celebration *Ral lu lam* depicts their ability to defeat and kill their enemies. It is also to show their superiority over their enemies and a way of teaching to never fear those that would wish them ill or harm.

The Mizo act like this to those of their enemy's villages. Therefore, brave men who can kill their enemies were highly honoured. Men, who can dance with their enemy's head in the village's ground, referred to as *Pasaltha*. So, a raiding party sent out to attack stealthily. At that time, they were very cautious and strict. They thought that there is a good time for raiding and those who get that good chance were thought to be successful.

At that time, when the star appears at the right side of the waxed moon, they called, “*Chem a chawi*”. But when it appears at the left, they called “*Milu a khai*”, and they thought that it was the best time to raid for their enemies. But it was also the best time to raid them too. So, they don’t allow all their young men to be a part of the raiding party. They asked their families at home to be very careful during their raid (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture 118*).

While they were out for wars or raiding from their villages to attack stealthily, if a *Bawngpui*³⁸ (a bird) was flying across their village towards the forest chirping loudly, they believed that they are going to be successful and used to be very happy. But, if a *Bawngpui* flew against the forest towards their villages in that time, they believed that it was a sign of bad luck and all went back to their place. It can be opined that the Mizo have such conceptions, as it is clearly visible in the song of *Bawhhla*³⁹:

*Ka chung e, Bawngvapi leh Nemziar hmarin chhawn chi maw,
Ram tha e, chhawn ta ngai e,
Tialnghian thanhawl ka vah liau e (118).*

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

*Kan chung a bawngpui leh nemziar hram lauh lauh chuan,
Kan hlawhtling ngei dawn tih an rawn sawi a,
Mi hmingthang ni turin kan rammu dawn e.*

(English)

Above soaring high of *Bawngpui* and *Nemziar* chirps loudly,
 Acknowledging our future of success,
 We go in pursuit of glory.

This is a triumphant song because a bird flying from the villages towards to the forest (*Zawla, Mizo Pi Pute leh An Thlahte Chanchin 91*).

To dance with the enemy's head, they have to reach their enemy's head to their house first. But if their house is far, they have to take home the scalp including the hair. Then, they also used to say their names three times and narrate *Bawhhla* at their killing place standing on or near the corpse. That was because; the one that he killed will be his slave at the Hades. And when the killer died it was a sign to let their slaves know them while they are waiting in their house. They believed that the one who kills many enemies would have many slaves to wait for him.

A group of raiding party, who can carry home their enemy's head prohibited to enter the village during daylight. So, they sat on a suitable place at the outskirts of the village to be late. They started making noise after dinner; they shoot their guns and narrate *Bawhhla*:

Arsi e, thlapa chawl law, ralvawn arkhuan an e,
Zan thim e, zing hman se law,
Kei chu e, ka do rinnampa ka tlun e;

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

*Arsi leh thlate u, lo chawl tawh rawh u, ar pawh a khuang dawn e,
Khua pawh a var dawn ta e. Zan thim hi ral tawh sela, zing lo ni tawh se,
Kei chuan ka hmelmaka ka that a ni.*

(English)

Rest now, O! Moon and stars, the rooster is about to crow,
Dawn approaches, let the dark of night fade, let morning come,
I have vanquished my foe.

So, they shoot their gun again more and more with narrating the other songs of *Bawhhla* (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture 118*).

Without getting any information from others, all the villagers can know that the raiding party were back successfully. They were in a fever of excitement, young men wooing maiden quickly went home. They showed their gun skills the whole night through at *Zawlbuk*⁴⁰. The old men were also sitting on the street to warm oneself by the fire throughout the night. Young women were also busy preparing *Arkeziak*⁴¹ to favour one in preference to another all night. The raiding party who were narrating *Bawhhla* and shooting guns with so much excitement were not allowed to reach by the villagers (119).

At dawn, the raiding party shoot their guns some more. The villagers know that the raiding party would enter the village. All were going to meet the raiding

party; the maidens also would go to meet the raiding party with *Arkeziak*. Their entry into the village barred by the dark of night, the light of dawn their entry. It is indeed a long-awaited return. Their victory and return signifies a great deal of glory and triumph. To see all this realized is beyond the description of words (119).

Maiden quickly approached the raiding party and hold out to their heads, arms, shins, necks with *Arkeziak*, which they brought. Their queen and noble women hold out to them with amber necklace, a single piece of bead, a necklace with small beads of various colours instead of *Arkeziak* (*Zawla, Mizo Pi Pute leh An Thlahte Chanchin 91*). In addition, it was difficult for all the members of the raiding party to kill an enemy. They just chopped through the dead body of an enemy that their friends killed, and they accept that they also killed enemy. Usually, the one who receive valuable and other precious gifts besides *Arkeziak* were considered warriors who kill enemies (*Lalthangliana, Mizo Culture 118*).

Their families and nearby relatives helping the returning raiding party by relieving their booty taken in a war. They mostly carry home of gun, brass gongs, spear and dao. Those booty took in a war are prohibited to beg, it must be redeem particularly. There is no fixed (much or less) on the redemption money. It usually depends on their favour and wealthiest of their family or relatives who helped them. A gayal, a pig, a cloth, a bowl and eggs redeemed them.

The warriors after narrating *Bawhhla* and shoot guns, they all went to each of their house. They kept their booties to the Blacksmith's workshop. After

breakfast, they went to their chief ground in their complete equipments with their enemy's head in their hands. They kept the enemy's head on a shelf, which they made to keep in the Chief ground; they also kept few stale foods on *lampei*⁴² near the shelf. Then, they will dance over the enemy's head on the ground (119-120).

Warriors who are going to dance dressed like this:

Their wear their best cloth in such a manner as to make it do duty for a coat (*kawrtawnghak*). They carry *Funki* and small bag for putting *Paitung*⁴³, *Tawngkawla*⁴⁴ and *Pailung*⁴⁵ together, their wore *Chhawndawl* on their hair, they again put on *Arkeziak* which they had already received; they wore *Tuirual*⁴⁶ on their head. Those who having *Zawngchal*⁴⁷ and put on their hair, and those who already *ai* of enemy's head by using a gayal, they also put a long tail-feathers of bhimray on their hair (Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung 125-126*).

They selected young women to honour warriors who are going to dance at the ground. They wore *Tuirual*, and put *Arkeziak* in their head, they wore *pawndum*⁴⁸ as *archempai*, and they all prepared to dance with the warriors too. They bring one *Tuirual* each to move about when they start dancing, that is what in a guitar song:

Tuirual e, mihrang sulah

Lengi ka thle e.

Di loh Sialin lam chhawn ka hlan,

Tuirual chawiin lengi ka thle (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture 120*).

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Pasalṭha, mi huaisente kiangah,

Nula te kan lam e.

Kan ngaihzawng ni lote pawh kan lampui a,

Tuirual nen kan thle nghial ngial e.

(English)

In the midst surrounded by brave hunters,

Us, a damsel, showing the sequences of rhythmic steps,

Dancing with even the guys that we don't crush on.

For them it was a beautiful sight to see warriors in their complete full armoured and well dressed young women standing altogether in the chief's ground, they even said they look like mixed blossom of erythrina and bauhinia. There are nothing more beautiful and greater during that time.

Those who are going to play *Darbu*, *drums*, *darkhuang* and *tumphit*⁴⁹ also get all ready. After they all get ready, the warriors go round the enemy's head which they kept on the ground, the one who takes the lead eat half of the boiled egg which he kept in his bag, and crush another half with his left hand, he sprinkled the leftover food particularly with his left hand which they kept at *lampei* near they kept together their enemy's head, while he sprinkled he said:

Hei mal chaw ka vei lamin ka pe a che,

Lamthlang i rap ang a,

*Lamchhak ka rap zel ang,
I meithal chawi kha zawp sela,
Kei meithal chawi i thin leh lungah tla rawh se (121).*

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

*Hei ka kut vei lamin malsawmna chaw ka pe che a,
Kawng thlangah hlir i kal ang a,
Kawng chhakah ka kal zel thung ang.
I ralthuam neihte kha chhe vek sela,
Ka ralthuam erawh nangmah thahna ni rawh se.*

(English)

Here, I am giving you food that would bring big fortune, in my left hand.
You set your foot on downtown while I put mine on uptown,
May your weapons be rotten,
Be my scimitar sharp enough to let you down.

That is what they called *Mal chaw pe* (“giving a blessed food”). They have narrated *Bawhhla*, and shoot guns three times. They played “*Ral hawl na in dal e, Ral sial hawl na in dal e*” with *Darbu* and *Tumphit*. The warriors again go round energetically but feebly and said, “*Lei do ral thluam ang an do, Thlangpui thlunglu kan lam e*”. And they played *Darbu*:

*Ralin sial hawl na maw e,
Hawl na maw e,*

Ral chalin sial hawl na maw e,

Hawl na maw e,

Hawl na maw e (122)

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Hmelmain sial a hlawh chhuak e,

A hlawh chhuak e,

Hmelma hlauhawm tak takin sial an hlawh chhuak e.

An hlawh chhuak e,

An hlawh chhuak e.

(English)

A foe earns a gayal,

Yes, he earns.

Fierce enemies earn gayals,

Yes, they earn,

Yes, they earn.

And they mixed nicely with musical instrument of *Tumphit*. Instantly, the warriors threw about their right leg energetically but feebly on their left side, and make up a great parade. As it was longer and longer, they emphasised more and more, and make so much noise. The whole village feel glorious and watched with great excitement focusing their eyes only on them all day long.

They treated roughly on the enemy's head, which they kept in the middle, they shoot their guns with no bullets, they also shoot in the inside of the mouth, and his tongue was shrinking because of the sprinkled gunpowder. They kept sweet *Zu* in the middle of the ground. The one who already *ai* ceremony of an enemy's head with a gayal drink first, then the warriors drinks from one to another, then the one who already performed *ai* ceremony of an enemy's head with a gayal narrate:

Lu chung e,
Thlang vapual e,
Her law luai samah e (122).

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Kan lu chungah,
Vapual pawh
Kalna tur hre lovin a thlawk kual e.

(English)

They soar high up in the skies,
 The hornbill above our heads not knowing
 Which route to take.

He shoots the enemy's head and they treated roughly. The warriors dance around far from where they kept the enemy's head, a group of young women follow behind them, and softly move about *Tuirual*, which they handle. *Mual lam*

(“dance with an enemy’s head”) is considered as the most precious dance in Mizo society. So, they can play the *Darbu*, that the most *Darbu* songs their plays are:

Chhimbu leh peng peng intu intu,

A lu lam kawng lu lam kawng;

Arin khup tui a dawt a dawt a,

Sai rualin a phei a khawng a khawng (Lalthangliana, *Pi Pu Zunleng* 220).

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Chhimbuk leh kiltheihrawk chu an inhhawn an inhhawn a,

A lu lam chu kawlh vek rawh se;

Arin sai khup a chuk a chuk a,

Saiin a ke a per a per e.

(English)

An owl and a hawk-cuckoo answer and reply each other,

May his head gets bald,

A fowl pecks an elephant’s knee repeatedly,

A herd of elephants stumped their feet repeatedly.

Also, they set up *Thingserh* (“small tree) at the middle of the chief ground; they kept a very sweet *Zu* at vessel near it. They kept a dao beside *Thingserh*. The one who have self-confidence go forth towards *Thingserh*, and knock gently with a dao, the one who sit near him gave the sweet *Zu* in *Nopui*⁵⁰, and went back after finished drinking (221).

The meaning of chopping *Thing serh* is the one who will not run away from the enemies, and dare to sacrifice his own life to save the citizen. If people chop the *Thingserh*, it means he sacrifices his life to the people of his village, the people esteemed them, and they peep on people who are bold enough to chop the *Thingserh*. If there are no one near to give him *Zu*, he had to dip up by himself and drink, they even thought that it was prohibits not to drink. They used to feel very safe when two or three people chopped Thingserh, and they favoured those people in every way (Zairema, *Pi Pute Biak Hi 132-133*).

On the evening, they buried the enemy's corpse in the west side of village. They put up the enemy's head to a tree as big as an arm, and set up in a row at *Lungdawh*⁵¹. One chief named Mangpawrha composed song for *Zadeng* chief:

Zadeng an thlunglu

Kulva chang chuang lovin,

Lianak chuang rawh se (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture 122*).

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Zadeng ho chuan an lu-ah

Vakul chang tawn lovin,

Choâk tawn zawk rawh se.

(English)

Let not the descendants of *Zadeng*

Wear a long tail-feather of bhimray on their head,

A crow's feathers would suit them best.

The tree where they hang the enemy's head called as *Sahlam* (122), they mostly want *zihnghal* (“*stereospermum chelonoides*”) and *phân* (“*ulmus lanceifolia*”)

When they finished dancing with the enemy's head in the ground, the warriors were not allowed to wear *Chhawndawl*⁵², so they kept it. But they can wear *Lenchhawn*⁵³ for seven days. They wear *Lenchhawn* when wooing a maiden; people thought very great and there is no one who challenges to disturb them. To those bad someone who does not want to behave properly, “Move away, My *Chhawn* will hit you,” they immediately silent (*Lalthangliana, Pi Pu Zunleng 221*).

The warriors would perform *ai* their enemies that they killed as fast as possible. The way they *ai* ceremony are not all the same. Those who did *ai* ceremony with a gayal, and some with a pig. They used to *ai* ceremony depending on the animals they had.

If the killer do not *ai* the one that he killed, his soul will not be cheap and will challenge him and will even be unafraid to attack, and they believed he will be feeble-minded mentally deficient. He will not be able to have as his slave in the Hades that is why the killer of the enemy must surely *ai* ceremony.

The one who *ai* with a gayal set up two high pole of *Hranghrual*⁵⁴ and *phulraw kuai* in front of his house, they hang *hranghrual* at the pole; it hit itself loudly as the wind blows, and people thought it very great (*Zawla, Mizo Pi Pute leh An Thlahte Chanchin 95*).

Also, the one who *ai* with a pig have to do exactly the same thing as the person who *ai* with a gayal did, but it was prohibited to set up the pole of *Hranghrual*, but can hang the *kawkvahai*⁵⁵. Among the things that can be *ai*, the Mizo people admired and kept great the most at the *ai* ceremony of the enemy's head. The whole people of village respect very much, they can have a piece of mind because of them. They hardly sang another song at the *ai* ceremony of the enemy's head, but they narrate *Bawhhla* very frequently, and always shoot guns too. The *Bawhhla* that they narrate the most are:

Arsi e, thlahpa chaw law, ralvawn zal ang ka duhin e,

Hawikawm em thanglung thawn e, ka do rinnampa ka tlun e.

Zanin e, thainu khan em zei mang nan mang si hlah maw e,

Thingsir e, par hnuaiah khan, thanglung nau bang ka tahtir e.

Phaia e, sumpi thawk e, a duh tlangtin a chaih awk e,

Kei pawh e, thawk ve ing khaw, mi hrai hringhniang ka tlaih awk e.

Nan khua e, ngui sel sel law, hming tha laldanga than nan e,

Ar bang e, kho khuh ning law, mu bang leng law nan chungah e.

Ka nu e, phang nawn nai law, kei than rial bang a daih chu e,

Mai bang e, zam chang se law, tluang khual val rawi zachhingin e.

Kei chu e, mi that ing khaw mualah thle hlang ka duhin e,

Lu chung e, thlang vapual e, luai sam ka lu ah e.

Kei chu e, ka sentet e, chhawn fual ka laihru ah nak e,

Tlang rawn e, sial khaw tun e, thangchem ka pun mi roh ngai e.

Thanghlei e, hmarpa lian e, rawngluai mai law rual kan khum e,

Kan mual e, rei vung vung e, hawng law mang zun a duhin e. (97-98)

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Arsi leh thla te u, lo chawl tawh rawh ula, khua lo var tawh rawh se,

Ka hmelmapa ka hneh thu hi ka then leh rual te ka hriattir thuai theih nan.

Zaninah a nu khan a mumangah eng nge a hmuh ang le?

*Mi lu ka lak avangin an chhungte chu thingsiri par hnuaiyah lusunin an tap
ang.*

Ruamah chhum a lo zing a, a duh duh tlang a khuh a,

*Kei pawh khatiang chiah khan ka thawk chhuak ve a, mi fa duhlai ka man
e.*

In khua kha lungngai takin awm rawh u, kei pasaltha hi ka hmingthat nan.

*Nangni ar te pawh u bengchheng suh u, in chung a muvanlaiin a la mai ang
che u.*

Ka nu, lo lungngai suh, kei mi huaisen hi hmelma te lakah ka thi lo ang,

Kan hmelma te chu an zam tan e.

*Kei chu mi ka that a, mualah lawm ngei ka duh a ni,
Ka lu chung a vapual chang ka tawn te thle ngial ngialin mi lu lawm ka duh
a ni.*

*Kei chu ka pian tirhah chhawlin ka lai hrui an tawn a,
Mi huaisen tura hual ka ni, sial phaw te pawh an tung a, ka pu mi lu lak
chem pawh ka hmang a ni.*

*Hmarpa an lo lian a, kan khuaah hian lo kal ula,
Zu leh sa kan neih hi lo chhim ve teh u, zu pawh duhtawk a in tur kan nei e.*

(English)

Rest now, O! Moon and stars, the rooster is about to crow,
Dawn approaches, let the dark of night fade, let morning come,
I want to tell to my relatives of taking vanquished my foe.

What would his mother see tonight in her dreams?

His family would weep in tears under the blossom of tree because
I cut off their loved one's head.

There's a mist in a depression, it covers every hill on its way,
I, a lad, put efforts in the same way, swooned at any lasses on my way.

Let your people live in worry, for I, a hunter may have a good fame,
You, domestic fowls, do not make noise, or the vulture may catch you.

Mom, don't cry, I will not die in the hands of enemy,
 Enemies are starting to tremble with fear, I want to kill the enemies so that
 I could make a victory celebration.

The long tail of hornbill at my head swinging back,
 And forth in the celebration of victory.

They tied my navel's cord with leaf at my birth,
 I was destined to be brave, they erected a gayal's shield, and I handled the
 knife, which my grandfather used for head hunting.

The northern-men were arising! Do come to our village,
 Drink our *Zu*, there's more to drink we kept.

The Mizo people admired very much who can do *ai* ceremony of enemy's head, whenever they are the people around them feel safe. They got admiration whenever they went for farming; even in a place of drinking *Zu* together, they are the one who will handle *Nopui* the first. Among the Mizo women who have great skills of composing songs also show the preciousness of the man who can do *ai* ceremony like as:

Laimi man la, tanchhawn ka hlan ang che,

Tualah leng la, lenrual su herin.

Nangmah hi maw lian khawpui chhan mihrang an hrilh chu

Khawnlai dan u, tiau ralah hnam len val zawng chu.

(Zawla, Mizo Pi Pute leh An Thlahte Chanchin 98).

Free translation:

(Mizo/Duhlian)

Hmelmate chu that la, chawimawina ka hlan ang che,

Kan khuaah mi tam tak ngaihsan i ni ang.

Nangmah hi maw kan khaw chhantu mi huaisen an lo tih chu,

Chawimawi rawh u, Tiau rala hmelma beia kal te chu.

(English)

Slay the enemy, So, I will boast thy name,

And you'll be held in high esteem by our people.

Thou art the stronghold of our community who sacrifice for our folks,

Praise the brave warriors, who wiped away the enemy.

From these two songs, it can be seen that the Mizo people admire the warriors who fight in a war, and who can bring home an enemy's head.

The warriors who can bring home an enemy's head have an idioms when they are angry, that is, "*Ka lu chhawntual, ka ban ralsamkuai*". It means, "Like they set up the pole of *Hranghrual, Seluphan* and others in front of the house, I was set up the stick of *Chhawn* on my head, that is why, *Chhawn* used my head for street. I hang up an enemy's head with my hand as *Ralsamkuai*⁵⁶ hook the things near it, and grab on the hair with his finger, my arms is *Ralsamkuai* because of this (Lalthangliana, *Pi Pu Zunleng* 223).

In the olden times, when the Mizos celebrate the kind of dancing with enemy's head, it believed to have good reasons. Therefore, we can write those as follows:

a) They used to compete with one another because they were different tribes gathered together and live in different places; wealthiest is what they can be proud of and what they need, they have to work very hard to have it because of that. In their way of taking steps, they used to invade other villages. They used to show how fearful they are, and are not suppose to be opposed by killing people in their invasion and bringing home the corpse.

b) They live their life having enemies, because of that to make them great and to let them know how strong and brave they are; they used to chop their enemy's head and celebrated.

c) They used to tell children to chop the enemy's head that they have taken. This shows that they are teaching since childhood not to be afraid of their enemies and to be brave enough to attack them. They know very well that it is not saving if they are afraid to attack their enemies who can kill and ruin them. They used to teach very hard to be brave.

d) Protecting the village is their imposing duties, which stick to their life. If it is the safety and freedom for the villagers, they are not afraid to lose their life. Therefore, they fight for the safety of the village, they fight against their enemies and bravely took their enemy's head.

e) They don't kill or took heads if they are not their enemies. This shows that the Mizos were very brave tribe in fighting against enemies. But beating towards innocent is what they don't want the most at the same time, they don't want to spent their life being afraid of their enemies, instead of they want their enemies to be afraid of them, that's why we can say that they used to do *Ral lu lam* which is very miserable to see now-a-days.

GLOSSARY

38. **Bawngpui:** A large cuckoo shrike (*campephagidae* fly).
39. **Bawhla:** The warriors' chant or cry; the chant or cry raised by warriors when returning from a successful raid.
40. **Zawbuk:** The bachelor's dormitory. It is a large humped roof situated at the centre of a village or near the chief's house where all the young bachelors gather at dusk and sleep at night. It is the cradle wherein a Mizo lad is drilled to become a responsible member of the society.
41. **Arkeziak:** A tassel of black, white and blue yarn made and used by the maidens to honour the successful warrior; also used by them to decorate the corpse of a dead man.
42. **Lampe:** A potsherd, a piece of broken pot or crockery.
43. **Paitung:** The name of powder-horn.
44. **Tawngkawla:** The name of a tool- a kind of screw driver used for taking to pieces and putting together again the lock of a gun.
45. **Pailung:** Meitalh a cord made of a dyed goat's hair worn round the head in the form of a turban.

46. **Tuirual:** A female headdress made from raw cotton.
47. **Zawngchal:** The name of a cord resembling chenille made of dyed goat's hair, worn round the head in the form of a turban.
48. **Puandum:** A dark blue cloth worn by Mizo.
49. **Tumphit:** A kind of wind instrument made of three bamboo tubes; Pandean pipes.
50. **Nopui:** A cup; a typical Mizo Nopui is made of domesticated gayal's horn; a *Zu* of Nopui is used for honouring the most villiant.
51. **Lungdawh:** A memorial platform erected in a memory of the dead especially on the entrance of a village.
52. **Chhawndawl:** a turf of goat's hair worn by a warrior.
53. **Lenchhawn:** The name of a plume of goat's hair dyed red which is worn as a head-dress by those who have taken a human head in a raid.
54. **Hranghrual:** A contrivance made of small pieces of hollow bamboo suspended by strings in a bunch from the top of a long bamboo pole, which produce a rattling sound as they strike one against another in the breeze. It is

erected when a warrior is performing the *ral lu lam* ceremony in order to get the spirits of those slain by him into his power after death.

55. **Kawkvahai:** The name of an image of a bird made of wood.

56. **Ralsamkuai:** The name of a creeper with curled up hook-shaped thorns, square stem and flowers in spherical clusters.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Apart from all the aforementioned activities that the Mizo ancestors partook in, in the form of theatre, there are many more practices, which can be highlighted. The festivals they celebrated, the game they played, the medicine they used. The construction of their houses, their attire, and the many forms of dance they performed; it would be a struggle to attempt to list them all down. But, from the various practices mentioned above, it can be seen just how big a place theatre holds in the Mizo culture.

Most of the theatre practiced by the Mizo could no longer be observed after Christianity had dug its roots in their midst. Christianity had clearly overthrown their former beliefs. *Kawngpui siam*, a practice frequently observed before the advent of Christianity could no longer endure. *Kawngpui siam*, usually performed around the month of July in order to bring them a good hunt could no longer be practiced as Christians.

Even *Fano dawi*, which was practiced to bring them a good harvest, was also stopped. Even though Jhum cultivation was still the main source of sustenance after Christianity, it was no longer observed within the Mizo society as it conflicted with each other.

Practices such as *Mitthi rawp lam* conflicted greatly with Christian beliefs. In some areas, it was somewhat a relief since it was an arduous and costly task.

Stopping this practice somehow even close the gap between the rich and the poor, the former along-with royalty being the only capable performers of *Mitthi rawp lam* because of their resources.

The tiger was no longer believed to be intelligent like that of humans. It was now, just another wild animal. Human populations grew and occupied more landed. It was easier to hunt and kill tiger with better tools and weapons. People no longer lost their livestock to tigers and Christianity prevailed over the foolish belief of the tigers' superior intelligence. The practice of theatre such as *Sakei lu lam* was no longer necessary nor was the practice of *Thihthiap ven* which normally ensued with the death of the person who had performed the *Sakei lu lam*.

Performing *Khuangchawi* to attain honour in life and to ensure their place in *Pialral* after death was no longer necessary. Christianity changed their views on life after death. Since worldly possessions were irrelevant for the entry to *Pialral*, former beliefs had no place amongst the Mizo.

Mizoram was occupied by the British in 1890 AD (*Zawla, Mizo Pi Pute Leh An Thlahte Chanchin 398*). As a result, raids among the villages were outlawed along-with other violent acts that were associated with it. Practices like *Ral lu lam* was no longer observed since raids and ambushes were finally outlawed by the British. Life in society became more peaceful and people enjoyed more freedom. Different Mizo clans were more at peace with each other with the abolishing of *Ral lu lam*.

The different aspects of Mizo folk theatre mentioned are quite formidable. It does not fall short in comparison to the folk theatre of various communities. Judging from their theatre, an idea can be formed on their religious beliefs and on how they governed their community.

The practice of different aspects of their folk theatre shows great deals of unity in their communal and social life. None were exempted from social gathering. All were welcome. In the event of *Khuangchawi*, the poor were graced by the rich in the form of food and drink which shows the pure and innocent social life they led. Their lives portrayed bravery, gallantry and chivalry, which meant that they were willing to die, if necessary, in order to preserve peace and their way of life.

Zu was a very large part of their lives before Christianity was introduced to the Mizo community, it was included in everything they did, not to mention the place it held in their theatre. But, they did not treat the consumption of *Zu* as a sin. It was safe to say that *Zu* played a very huge role in their society. According to B.Lalthangliana, on social occasions of sorrow or joy; or when chiefs met together; or when entertaining prominent and important guest; *Zu* was used constantly more than any other thing. Drinking *Zu* was a must and was customary. After they became Christians all this was rejected and changed completely (Lalthangliana, *A Brief History and Culture of Mizo* 102).

Theatre was a very important part of their religion. It can be safe to say that the songs and performances they used in their religious sacrifices were displayed

by the theatre. Even after they were introduced to Christianity, they altered their ways of praising to fit into the Christian religion. Their religious beliefs still plays a vital role in their literature today. The poems and prose they compose can be a proof of that.

Even though they no longer use their theatre performances to ask for blessings like in their previous religious belief, they still use them now and then in their adopted Christian religion; they now use prayer as a form of asking for blessings. Christianity granted them sanctuary from the fear of the unknown that they were once succumbed to. Many practices performed out of fear and superstition are now merely stuff of stories; but considering everything they had to go through then, they are not to blame.

It can clearly see that the Mizo people and their society have a love for theatre. It was still adopted by the forefathers even after they were introduced to Christianity in 1894 AD. And with the help of the missionaries, a new form of theatre blossomed in their society. Drama found a new place in their society and in 1912, the first live show form of theatre arose for everyone to witness. In 1963, Lalthangfala Sailo released a play called '*Sangi Inleng*', which he even made into a book (Laltluangliana, *Thuhlaril* 236).

Alongside with the theatre practiced by the Mizo after converted into Christianity, continued the theatre in the forms of Drama. The root of the Mizo drama began to grow with the celebration of the grandest Christian festival in the land, Christmas. The Missionaries and a few native speakers celebrate Christmas

day by entertaining children and giving them a special feast on December 25 in the year 1903. It turned out to be a yearly activity and in 1904, the Baptist Missionaries of the Southern *Mizoram*, Rev. J.H.Lorrain and Rev. F.W.Savidge joined the Christmas feast in Aizawl, organised by Rev. Edwin Rowlands. The celebration of Christmas day increased each year as the Christians of the hills were increasing enormously.

In 1912, Christmas day was celebrated in most of the villages with community grand feast. The Christmas day, 25th December, 1912 will be remembered in the history of *Mizo* drama and theatre, because in the evening of this very day, the first ever dramatic performance was done in a small thatched roofed theatre of Thakthing, Aizawl. With the initiative of the Missionaries, the most successful function of variety entertainment was shown to the people for the first time. The well-attended function was really enjoyed by the theatregoers of that night (*Laltluangliana, A Brief History of Mizo Drama & Theatre 12*).

Some memorable shows were acted on this celebration. The dramatic characteristic of such performance should not be overlooked. The first show was a grand success. It was repeating in the following year. It became therefore, the practices of the day to organise a variety show every Christmas day; not only in Aizawl, but also in different villages, the evening of the Christmas day was observed as show time. After two or three years, the dramatic performance was shown in the church occasionally. Even the Missionary used the method of reciting moral and religious lessons in the Church. For these reasons, it may be concluded that the foundation of *Mizo* Drama was obviously connected with the

ritual of the Church. The Missionaries were benevolent enough to make some shows and entertainment programmes in the Church, which were quite helpful for origin and development of Mizo drama.

The popular stage performance and other forms of entertainment programmes were abandoned even during the Christmas season, and dedicated themselves to singing and dancing with profound joy. Marking the prevailing fact, the spiritual revival had thrown the dramatic performances out of the Church and was a setback in the development of Mizo drama. But that was not a surprising development only because of the fact that even the Greek and English drama had experienced the same kind of provocation in their respective stages. (15-16)

Laltluangliana Khiantge, who not only greatly contributed for the improvement and development of but in fact laid the foundation stone for dramas in Mizo community had written it like this:

The first part of the budding period in Mizo drama may appropriately be named as Pasena Age or Period. His influence can be seen in the dramatic art of his contemporaries as well as his successors... Pasena as 'a pioneer of Mizo dramatics'... The next important dramatist was Lalkailuia... two of his most important works were based on Mizo folktales. He dramatised one of the popular love stories ever told from the time of the forefathers... The second and better half of the budding period may rightly be named as Chawngzika Age, which officially started from 1934. In 1934, Krista Palai (Ambassador for

Christ, translated into Mizo by CHALLIANA) dramatised by Chawngzika. It seems that this play was the first written play with a typed copy in Mizo language... Rev. Samuel Davies took active part in dramatic society. His coming was a blessing for the theatrical performers of the land. He introduced various techniques like, disguise, lighting system background music, scenery and encouraged decorations and systematic presentations.

In order to improve Mizo drama and theatrical performance, Samuel Davies organised drama competition called Zosiami in 1940... Besides these, Mr. Chawngzika and Samuel Davies jointly dramatized and acted some four to six plays. All these plays were meant to portray certain moral meanings above its amusing the Mizo dramatists of the time. The next important dramatist was Mr. Lalzuithanga. His first play, *The Black corner of Aijal in 1999* achieved success, which won the second prize in the first drama competition of *Zosiami Cup*, held in 1940. It was a prophetic play. It forecasts what would happen in Aizawl by the year 1999, just like English novelist George Orwell wrote a novel called '1984'.

During thirty years of its development, the Mizo drama improved in various techniques. Interesting dramatists like Pasena, Lalkailuia, Chawngzika and Lalzuithanga made names for themselves. Meanwhile, their contributions to the development of Mizo drama and their roles as actors were highly appreciated. I have,

therefore, considered them as the ‘four torch-bearers’ of the Mizo drama. Samuel Davies’s inspiration for the improvement of their geniuses and skilful adaptation of capabilities helped the Mizo dramatists greatly. He is still today considered as a ‘leader of Mizo dramatics.’

(Laltluangliana. *A Brief History of Mizo Drama and Theatre 19-23*)

Judging from the dramatic performances of theatre after the advent of Christianity, it can very well be deduced that the level of Mizo theatre was not found wanting. They performed theatre as was dictated by the necessity of their times. In today’s world, they progress in theatre with globally shared information and style. Many theatre-roles performed in 1912 stand as a landmark in Mizo theatre, without which its status today would be highly debatable. It created a milestone that presents evidence of the importance of theatre in Mizo society.

A light for Mizo society in plays, Laltluangliana Khiangte, has taken measure to re-ignite the flame of Mizo plays recently. In this time, notable literary figures such as K.Saibela, Liansailova, Khawlkungi, to name a few graced the realm of theatre. The fire of the ancestral theatre was given a place to light up once again.

Theatre may be one of the most valued customs that the Mizo people have acquired from their ancestors. The Mizo society alters their ancestral methods to

fit into the changing world. This can be run as something that will bring more value to their society own time.

It seem that the Mizo society are hearty few that are close, share a mutual hate for evil, who praise the kind and chivalrous, help those who are in need from the way they portray it in their culture. It can also see how they try to uphold a happy and mutually safe society. Their humanity and how they do everything thinking of how it will affect their lives, even after death; in the way they maintain their culture and ancestral theatre.

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APPENDIX

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Degree : MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (MIZO)

Department : MIZO

Title of Dissertation : A STUDY OF THE GROWTH OF MIZO
FOLK THEATRE

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A STUDY OF THE GROWTH OF MIZO FOLK THEATRE

It is rather difficult to know exactly when the Mizo people started practicing a kind of folk theatre movement. It is also hard to accurately tell the origin of theatre even among the civilized society as far as the whole world is concerned. It could be said that theatre probably arose among the Mizo people as a performance of ritual activities.

In Mizo Folk theatre is not act on stage as in today, But is usually act out wherever is convenient, such as in the streets. In these plays, they usually act out how they hunt their war skills and things, which are connected, to their religion, as all these played a crucial role in their community life. According to Sheelita Das, the term folk theatre was:

It is the portrait of the different lifestyles in the olden days. It is a composite art form with a fusion of elements from music, dance, pantomime, versification, epic and ballad recitation, graphic and plastic arts, religion and festival peasantry. The Folk theatre having roots in native culture is embedded in local identity and social values. (Sheelita Das. *Folk Theatre – Its relevance in development communication in India 1*)

The first chapter deals with a brief history of the Mizo folk theatre and operational definition for the folk theatre of the Mizo. In Mizo folk theatre, performances are not on stage as in today, but is usually acted out wherever is convenient, such as in public. In these plays, they usually act out how they hunt their war skills and things, which are connected to their religion, as all these played a crucial role in their community life.

This chapter shall trace the common practices of Mizo ancestors, which intertwined with the community life shown through certain social activities, which they observed. Though various scholars have opinions that differ from one another, the outcome of the message that they seek is the same. This serves in making it interesting and valuable at the same time. Therefore, it shall try to leave no stone unturned. This study involves the practices and festivities of the Mizo ancestors, some which have been modified and changed bit by bit and still observed to this day.

Discussed are some varieties of theatrical practices, integral to the Mizo society, displayed in accordance with established ways and their religious beliefs by the well-to-do and the powerful influential families in the society. Practices like *Kawngpui siam*, *Mitthi rawp lam*, *Fano dawi*, *Buh za aih*, and *Mi zawn inchuh*.

1.1 KAWNGPUI SIAM

There was a practice to offer sacrifices known as *Kawngpui Siam* annually by the villagers in the month of April. The aim to offer this sacrifice was to ensure prosperity to all the villagers. This sacrifice performed in the afternoon before *Chapchar Kut* (“the spring festival of the Mizo celebrated after the completion of jhum cutting”) by offering a piglet at the south entrance point of the village (*Lalrinawma, Mizo Ethos 140*). In the olden days, there was no other job for the Mizo society, jhum cultivation was their main occupation. They cleared the field every year and they take new actions. As they did this every year, before celebrating *Chapchar kut*, they did first *Kawngpui Siam*. If they did not first *Kawngpui Siam*, it is unlawful to celebrate *Chapchar Kut* (*Dokhuma, Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung 38*).

The main aim of *Kawngpui Siam* is to ask for blessings in hunting and war. As it is their way of worshipping their God. On this day, no one is supposed to go further than his or her village boundary (*Zairema, Pi Pute Biak Hi 35*). Every year, the elders of village sacrificed the pigs and the hens turn by turn. Three, five, or seven people used to go in this sacrificial practice. For this, they chose the ones whose names had a blessing; they would select the south of the village for this sacrificial practice (*Lianhmingthanga & Lalthangliana, Mizo Nun Hlui 126*).

1.2 MITTHI RÂWP LAM

The Mizo ancestors had religion that they practiced in accordance with well-established ways and principles. They settled in smaller ethnic groups in different places. They are slightly different religious practices among the different sub-tribes of the Mizo. However, the discussion below will focus on the practices and religious beliefs of the Lushei clans, the single largest clans among the Mizo.

According to their religious belief, one who is capable of *Khuangchawi* will rest in *Pialral* (“Paradise”) with live happily with receiving their needs. Therefore, in order to perform *Khuangchawi*, there are several steps like *Sakung*, *Chawng*, *Sedawi*, *Dawi no chhui*, and *Sekhuang/Mitthi rawp lam* have to be first performs or fulfilled respectively. Though the last among this *Mitthi râwp lam* is not yet considered the real *Khuangchawi*, it is an entitlement to *Thangchhuah* status. Such a person can put on a striped turban, that is called *Thangchhuah* turban, be draped in *Thangchhuah* cloth and can wear stick the long tail-feathers of the *bhimray*. Apart from this, he can also open the window, only that he is not yet entitled to make a dais like a fully-fledged *Thangchhuah* (*Chaldailova, Mizo Pi Pute Khawvel 164*).

On the occasion of *Mitthi râwp lam*, representations or images of all dead members of their family, the young and the old, are made as lifelike as they possible can using cotton seeds that they had previously collected, especially the cloth for rousing the head of the images would have already been specially woven beforehand. They name each of the images the name of the family member it represents. The image of the original ancestral of their clan which can remember is made larger than the rest of other images, and is given the name *Thlahpa*, which is especially made to stand in the middle of the stretcher (Lianhmingthanga & Lalthangliana, *Mizo Nun Hlui 164*). These images are adorned with *Puanchei* (“a white cloth decorated with coloured stripes”), *kawrzeh* (“a Mizo women cloths, decorated with coloured stripes”), necklace and bracelet, and are made to appear as lifelike as possible.

1.3 FANO DAWI

Fa means rice (Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung 42*). It is a scarification offered by the villages to yield a healthy and plenty rice. *Ar hang* (“a domestic fowl”), the main offering is subscribing one after another is every year by the village elders. The sacrificing day is proclaimed as rest day and no villagers set out for work.

After breakfast of the sacrificing day, they gathered at the chief’s elder entered the chief’s house carrying *Ar hâng* under his arm, and he is followed by the *Sadawt* (“a traditional priest”). The chief called on the *Sadawt*, thus order him to start the sacrificing ceremony. The *Sadawt* took *Ar hâng*, headed towards the rice bin, one of the elder sit with him holding *Zu* in a ground bowl (use of sacrifice) and *haite* (“a vessel made of small gourd”).

The *Sadawt* scoop out the beer in the gourd bowl with *haite*, retain in his mouth, and squirt out of his mouth on the *Ar hâng*, incant a spell softly, which seem to be impossible to hear. He again on the hen, cut at the neck of the hen, pull out the wings and tail, tuck in the wall of the rice bin, and in this way, *Fano daw*i ceremony is over. The rest of the day is spending to sing the song they like.

1.4. BUH ZA AIH

Buh za aih is the most unpopular practice of the ancestors of Mizo. It is said to be practiced while they occupied *Lentlang*. At that time, maize was commonly used for this ceremony. No exact date or period was fixed for *Buh za aih*. They usually celebrate this during the dry season. The *Hmar* clans, one of the Mizo clans, believed that if people organize *Buh za aih* three times during their lifetime, their soul would go to *Pialral* where they would live without having to work for their living. And they considered this as similar to *Khuangchawi*. It seems that the Lushei stopped *Buh za aih* after they crossed *Tiau* river.

1.5 MI ZAWN INCHUH

If a traveler suddenly fell ill and cannot return by its own. It fell upon the shoulder of the youths to lead the patient to his/her village. Then, a messenger is sent to disclose appropriate mortuary-mortal counsel to the convalescent's home village. As soon as they heard the mortuary, they sent for the village crier to disclose the news. They even sent for a messenger to disclose the mortuary to the nearest village, which was en-route to their destination. As such, they call for the entire person's village. Similarly, if a traveler dies during his sojourn in other village, all the methods of messaging is par with the ill patient (*Lalthangliana, Pi Pu Zunleng 139*)..

When they carried such a body from one village to another. Courier emissaries of a subsequent village to whom the body shall be passed-on, expecting the body's arrival further than their duly village territories may then choose instead to suspense beyond their own grounds. And this very act of friendly bickering over that should hold responsibility of the deceased is what is known as *Mi zawn inchuh*. Tradition holds that the lads, during the course of this comradely sparring, ought not to injure themselves in ways which could do serious harm; and so sportive action that might involve damaging the eyes or ears, or that which might inflict dislocations of joints, biting, squaring punches, exchange of fisticuffs or bruising another lad's genitalia are thereby consciously suppressed. Only toppling take-downs are permitted and this determines the victor in a given spar. The chief and his nobles, if they happen to take participation in the lump activity are to be left unscathed (Lalthangliana, *Mizo Culture* 93). As they really enjoyed such occasion, they are really eager for such a situation to happen.

In a certain times, it is often, the case that the latter couriers awaiting the bodies arrival, would conceal themselves in the ambient, anticipating the ingress moment of first carriers. The second lads would then ambush and encircle first envoy at the onset, coming in from and back and all sides. This usually serves difficult for the carriers themselves to move about. During such occasions, the *Val Upa* ("a community elder") would impasse and simmer down the full band wrangle, "It's enough, call it quits" and then both camps of carriers would find themselves perturbing the spar even more escalated. Only when beaten by a supple stick would these lads come to resolute halt (94).

The second chapter deals with the learning of how and why the Mizo practiced and performed *Sakei lu lam*. The Mizo believed that animals, domesticated and wild, all have souls. They believed that if a ceremony were performed on killing a wild animal by

sacrificing a domestic animal, the soul of the killed would be forever enslaved (Chaldailova, *Mizo Pi Pute Khawvel* 96). Beside this, they believed that all souls of animals killed for a great feast of fame called *Khuangchawi*, wild animal slain, as well as the ones sacrificed for ceremonies would accompany the grand journey of the person who performed the ceremony to the land of the dead. Believing that *Pawla* (who catapults lesser men) would not dare shoot such performers with his big catapult/pellet-bow at the entrance of the land of the dead; they tried their best to perform such ceremonies to escape being shot at. Of all the ceremonies performed on killing wild animals, they revered that which was performed on killing a tiger that necessarily called for a holiday, and none would go working on fields. The brave were to guard women who collected water and he who worked on the field that day was deigned to be surely bitten by a tiger.

The Mizo of olden day believed that tigers knew everything-sin committed in secret, even adultery committed. They believe that tigers never bit the good, and that he who was bitten must have been evil one way or the other. An adulterous mother must confess to her baby or be bitten; such adulterous mother feel at ease only when they whisper in the ears of their babies, "*Ka uire*" ("I have committed an adultery"). Therefore, the Mizo braves seldom shoot at tiger. Tigers are killing only when they disturbed hunters in their game or when they killed and ran away with the domesticated animals (Lalthangliana, *Mizo culture* 31). When a tiger is killed, hunters would say, "It accidentally came across horizontal thunderbolt," and the kinder ones would cover it with *puandum* ("a traditional cloth striped with different colours"). They seldom called it by its name and, term it *Sapui* (31).

Sakei lu lam occupied a high place in Mizo folk theater. The performed ritual is much greater than they did on other wild animals. They really cherished those who can

perform *ai* ceremony in a Mizo society, and they occupied a very important position. It is hard to kill a tiger for the coward; it almost needed to sacrifice one's life to kill a tiger, so they called him a great hunter, a brave man. In Mizo society, the hunter occupied a very important place, as they are the guardian of the community.

It is believed that the one who performed *ai* ceremony for the tiger's head would have no obstacles on his way to Hades. Even *Pawla* would not dare to shoot him with a catapult; the soul of his tiger would follow him and would be his servant. He would enter Hades with a warm welcome that is why the position of the performer of *ai* ceremony cannot be looked down.

The third chapter deals with the attempt to highlight how the Mizo performed this *Khuangchawi* and how they conducted theatre on this ceremony. *Khuangchawi* was the most prominent public ceremony performed by the Mizo. It was the most important feast that a Mizo man could give. It was very expensive and could only be performed by the chiefs and a few well to do people. The feast consisted of seven or eight phases and could take several years for a man to complete. These could be given according to the convenience of the giver. The ultimate objective was to attain *Pialral* after death. Person who qualified for this were known as *Thangchhuahpa*.

Khuangchawi is the greatest and the final stage in the dispensation of the indigenous Mizo religion. It was always observed during autumn - in the month of October, the most pleasant time of the year (Lianhmingthanga & Lalthangliana, *Mizo Nun Hlui* 165). October, in the traditional Mizo calendar, is named *Khuangchawi thla* – here *thla* literally means 'month'. So, October was literally regarded by Mizo ancestors as the month that was most apt for the observance of *Khuangchawi*.

According to Zairema, the last known observance of *Khuangchawi* was in 1942 by the Chief of Farkawn village Meant and Zu was always found in abundance in a *Khuangchawi* (Zairema, *Pi Pute Biak Hi* 56). The duration of this ceremony was four days. The first day is *In chhe siam ni*, the second day is *Zupui ni*, the third day is *Zu thing ni* and the last day is *Saruhkawl cheuh ni/ Chawndo ni* (Liangkhaia, *Mizo Awmdan Hlui* 21). The platform for the sacrifice called *Khuanghlang* was made with a large clump bamboo/*phulrua*. They brought a large clump bamboo about 15-20 feet, tied it cross wise and made a handrail. The *Khuangchawi* family with their grandchildren was boarded on that platform and the nearby relatives carried it out to the street of their village with dance and the function was what they called *Khuangchawi* (Vannghaka, *The Old Mizo Region* 178-179). Those who sit on the *Khuanghlang* threw coins, brass-pot, gayal, goat and gun to the people who competed to get hold of such materials, but in tokens; like rope for animal, firewood for gun. This was their grandeur and what they enjoyed most (179).

This feast did not account for much importance in the religious ceremonies performed with a view to attaining *Pialral*. It was more or less, a show of greatness and wealth of a man. A man who had performed *Khuangchawi* ceremonies three times in his life was called *Zaudawh*. These *Khuangchawi* ceremonies had the following aims:

- a) To achieve the eternal bliss of *Pialral*.
- b) To avoid the pellets of *Pawla*, and
- c) To earn respect in this life and life to come.

The fourth chapter shows one of the most important theatre performances in Mizo society, that is, *Ral lu lam*. This *Ral lu lam* was also known as *Sarlamkai* by one of the Mizo clans, the Lai people. Mara people call it *Solakia*, while the Lushei call it *Ral lu lam*

(Lalthangliana, *Chhinlung* 57). In olden times, it seem that the life of the Mizo people was full of conflict, raids between different villages, women and children were tortured, and even houses were burnt. When going to a jhum in the morning, people who go first often see chopped head, and some who went farming in the jhum were often killed with their heads taken. Because of that the villages near the east and north of Mizoram were not able to go to the jhum without men who bringing a gun (*Zawla, Mizo Pi Pute leh An Thlahte Chanchin* 90).

Ral lu lam is, simply put, the celebration of enemy's head taken from conflicts and raids. In Mizo history, raiding parties would bring back to their village. The celebration *Ral lu lam* depicts their ability to defeat and kill their enemies. It is also to show their superiority over their enemies and a way of teaching to never fear those that would wish them ill or harm.

The Mizo also act like this to those of their enemy's villages. Therefore, brave men and people who can kill their enemies were highly honoured. Men, who can dance with their enemy's head in the village's ground, referred to as *Pasaltha*. So, a raiding party sent out to attack stealthily. At that time, they were very cautious and strict. They thought that there is a good time for raiding and those who get that good chance were thought to be successful. When the Mizo celebrate the kind of dancing with enemy's head, it believed to have good reasons:

a) They used to compete with one another because they were different tribes gathered together and live in different places; wealthiest is what they can be proud of and what they need, they have to work very hard to have it because of that. In their way of taking steps, they used to invade other villages. They used to show how fearful they are,

and are not suppose to be opposed by killing people in their invasion and bringing home the corpse.

b) They live their life having enemies, because of that to make them great and to let them know how strong and brave they are; they used to chop their enemy's head and celebrated.

c) They used to tell children to chop the enemy's head that they have taken. This shows that they are teaching since childhood not to be afraid of their enemies and to be brave enough to attack them. They know very well that it is not saving if they are afraid to attack their enemies who can kill and ruin them. They used to teach very hard to be brave.

d) Protecting the village is their imposing duties, which stick to their life. If it is the safety and freedom for the villagers, they are not afraid to lose their life. Therefore, they fight for the safety of the village, they fight against their enemies and bravely took their enemy's head.

e) They don't kill or took heads if they are not their enemies. This shows that the Mizo were very brave tribe in fighting against enemies. But beating towards innocent is what they don't want the most at the same time, they don't want to spent their life being afraid of their enemies, instead of they want their enemies to be afraid of them, that's why we can say that they used to do *Ral lu lam* which is very miserable to see now-a-days.

The fifth chapter portrays the discoveries and findings from different aspects of Mizo theatre. It also casts a light on the impact of Christianity on Mizo culture through

theatre. Apart from all the aforementioned activities that the Mizo ancestors partook in, in the form of theatre, there are many more practices, which can be highlighted. The festivals they celebrated, the game they played, the medicine they used. The construction of their houses, their attire, and the many forms of dance they performed; it would be a struggle to attempt to list them all down. But, from the various practices mentioned above, it can be seen just how big a place theatre holds in the Mizo culture.

The different aspects of Mizo folk theatre mentioned are quite formidable. It does not fall short in comparison to the folk theatre of various communities. Judging from their theatre, an idea can be formed on their religious beliefs and on how they governed their community.

The practice of different aspects of their folk theatre shows great deals of unity in their communal and social life. None were exempted from social gathering. All were welcome. In the event of *Khuangchawi*, the poor were graced by the rich in the form of food and drink which shows the pure and innocent social life they led. Their lives portrayed bravery, gallantry and chivalry, which meant that they were willing to die, if necessary, in order to preserve peace and their way of life.

Theatre was a very important part of their religion. It can be safe to say that the songs and performances they used in their religious sacrifices were displayed by the theatre. Even after they were introduced to Christianity, they altered their ways of praising to fit into the Christian religion. Their religious beliefs still plays a vital role in their literature today. The poems and prose they compose can be a proof of that.

It can clearly see that the Mizo people and their society have a love for theatre. It

was still adopted by the forefathers even after they were introduced to Christianity in 1894 AD. And with the help of the missionaries, a new form of theatre blossomed in their society. Drama found a new place in their society and in 1912, the first live show form of theatre arose for everyone to witness. In 1963, Lalthangfala Sailo released a play called '*Sangi Inleng*', which he even made into a book (Laltluangliana, *Thuhlaril* 236).

A light for Mizo society in plays, Laltluangliana Khiangte has taken measure to re-ignite the flame of Mizo plays recently. His actions have given birth to many phases that we are now accustomed to. K.Saibela, Liansailova, Khawlkungi, to name a few. The fire of the ancestral theatre was given a place to light up once again.

A light for Mizo society in plays, Laltluangliana Khiangte, has taken measure to re-ignite the flame of Mizo plays recently. In this time, notable literary figures such as K.Saibela, Liansailova, Khawlkungi, to name a few graced the realm of theatre. The fire of the ancestral theatre was given a place to light up once again.

Theatre may be one of the most valued customs that the Mizo people have acquired from their ancestors. The Mizo society alters their ancestral methods to fit into the changing world. This can be run as something that will bring more value to their society own time.

It seem that the Mizo society are hearty few that are close, share a mutual hate for evil, who praise the kind and chivalrous, help those who are in need from the way they portray it in their culture. It can also see how they try to uphold a happy and mutually safe society. Their humanity and how they do everything thinking of how it will affect their lives, even after death; in the way they maintain their culture and ancestral theatre.

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