CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN COLONIAL MIZORAM

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CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN COLONIAL MIZORAM

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This is to certify that the thesis **entitled "Cultural Resistance In Colonial Mizoram"** submitted by Mr. Hosana Lalenvela Khiangte in fulfillment of Doctor of Philosophy in History is an original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for other degree. It is recommended that this thesis be placed before the examiners for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DECLARATION

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December, 2023

I, Hosana Lalenvela Khiangte, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis entitled, 'Cultural Resistance In Colonial Mizoram' is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/ Institute.

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ABBREVIATION

BCM	: Baptist Church Of Mizoram.
BMS	: Baptist Mission Society.
CB	: Carton Box.
FDEP	: Foreign Department External Proceedings.
G	: General
MHA	: Mizoram History Association
MSA	: Mizoram State Archive
NAI	: National Archive Of India.
NEIHA	: North East India History Association.
P	: Political
Rs	: Rupees
TRI	: Tribal Research Institute

GLOSSARY

Ai : *Ai* means 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 red pumpkins, a popular song, etc.

Anna : A currency formerly used in India and Pakistan, equal to one-sixth of a rupee.

Bawi : Bawi was a servitude or retainer in the Mizo society.

Bawlpu : *Bawlpu* was a priest selected by a specific clan group to cater their particular religious requisites

Chai : Chai was the name of a dance in which young men and young women form a circle round a man who serves out beer and other who play a drum and beat the horn of a Mithun.

Chaprasi : Colonial government servants of subordinate rank.

Coolie : The term "coolie" historically refers to a labourer from Asia, especially India and China, persons who were hired for manual work in various parts of the world, during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The term often carried a derogatory connotation, reflecting the exploitative and harsh conditions these workers endured.

Durbar : A meeting of the Lushai Chiefs, organized by British officials.

Fanai : A sub-tribe of Pawi who established their chieftainship in the eastern and southern parts of Mizoram.

Fano dawi : To offer the annual sacrificed which was made to protect the young growing rice crops on the village jhum from disease.

Fathang : A tribute paid to the chief in terms of basket of paddy by all his villagers once in a year which was three baskets full.

Fangrual : Itinerant group campainers.

Favang khawmpui : A church conference during autumn.

Gayal : A species of bovine peculiar to the Northeast India, Bangladesh and Myanmar and China, it is also known as *Mithun*.

Harhna Sang/ Hlimsang : A high revivalist.

Harhna : Revival.

Haulawng : A similar branch of the Sailo clan who established their chieftainship in the boundary of North and South Lushai Hills.

Jhum : Shifting cultivation practiced in the hills.

Kawngpui siam : To offer an annual sacrifice to ensure prosperity for the whole village especially in the hunting and trapping of wild animals.

Khawchhiar : A village writer.

Khuang : Drum.

Khuangchawi : *Khuangchawi* was a name of a public feast given by the Chiefs and other rich people in the village.

Kuli-awl : *Kuli-awl* was an exemption of forced-labour to the people

.

Pawi : *Pawi* is one of the Mizo tribes who inhabited the track between Tiau and Kolodyne river in the southeast of Mizoram, now known as Lai.

Puithiam : *Puithiam* was the position of a priest, charged with the orchestration of religious and spiritual rituals

Ramhual : *Ramhuals* were given the privileged group in the society

who chose the first choice of fields to cultivate

Sachhiah : The portion of an animal's meat, given as a due by subjects to their chief.

Sadawt : *Sadawt* was the officially designated priest appointed by the chief to oversee the spiritual affairs of the entire village

Sechaih : A sport of chasing a *gayal* from place to place before it is sacrificed.

Seer : A seer is a traditional unit of mass and volume used in India, Afghanistan and Iran. In India, the seer (Government seer) was defined by the Standards of Weights and Measures Act (No. 89 of 1956, amended in 1960 and 1964) as being exactly equal to 1.25 kg (1.792 lb).

Sepoys : Soldiers.

Thingnawifawm : To collect fire sticks or twigs done by a male child

Tlangval : A bachelor.

Val Upa : Val upa was an oldish young man or a middle-aged man.

Vawk kawng tum : Vawk kawngtum was a track of animals, not a proper road for human.

Zalen : Zalen were free citizens within the community, they could also choose a cultivation land before common people.

Zawlbuk : A bachelor's dormitory.

Zu : A Mizo fermented rice beer.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis entitled, "Cultural Resistance in Colonial Mizoram," delves into the historical context of colonial Mizoram, examining the impact of British colonialism on the social, political, and cultural aspects of Mizo society. It analyzes the strategies employed by the Mizos to preserve their cultural identity and resist the imposition of foreign ideologies. The thesis focuses on various forms of cultural resistance utilized by the Mizos, including language preservation, traditional practices, religious beliefs, and artistic expressions. It also explores how these cultural elements served as powerful tools of resistance, fostering a sense of unity and defiance among the Mizos. Through this research, the thesis aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the Mizos' experiences under colonial rule and their agency in resisting domination. It seeks to elevate the voices and narratives of the Mizos, recognizing their resilience and determination in the face of colonial oppression.

1.1 Mizoram.

Mizoram, positioned in the northeastern corner of India, is a state characterised by an array of diverse landscapes, hilly terrains, winding streams, a rich assortment of flora and fauna, and numerous other natural assets. It attained statehood and became the 23rd Indian state on February 20th, 1987. [1] Geographically, it lies within the latitudinal coordinates of 21º 56'N – 24º 31'N and the longitudinal coordinates of 92º 16'E – 93º 26' E. Positioned between Myanmar and Bangladesh, its strategic location holds geographical and political significance, as it shares an international border spanning approximately 585 kilometres with these two nations. [2]

To its north, Mizoram is bordered by the Indian states of Assam and Manipur, while to the east and south, it is neighboured by the Chin Hills and Arakan of Myanmar and the Chittagong Hill tracts of Bangladesh, respectively. The western boundary

[1] "Profile of Mizoram," Mizoram Online. 27 June 2017. http://www.mizoramonline.in/About/profile/index.html.

[2] Rintluanga Pachuau, *Mizoram: A Study in Comprehensive Geography*, (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 2009), 24.

abuts the Indian state of Tripura. Notably, Mizoram shares its boundaries with three Indian states: Assam, Manipur, and Tripura, extending over 123 kilometres, 95 kilometres, and 66 kilometres, respectively. The terrain consists of hills that run in a north-south direction, with an average elevation of 900 meters, culminating at the highest point, Blue Mountain, standing at 2165 meters. [3] Mizoram total geographical area spans 21,081 square kilometres, with maximum dimensions of 285 kilometres north to south and 115 kilometres east to west. [4] The population in 2014 comprised 5,55,339 males and 5,41,867 females, totalling 10,97,206. [5]

The physical topography of Mizoram predominantly comprises mountainous terrain characterised by tertiary rocks. These mountain ranges exhibit a north-south inclination in parallel sequences, interspersed with narrow, deep valleys. Elevations vary, ranging from 21 meters at Tlabung to 21,157 meters at Phawngpui. Only a few small patches of flatlands exist, primarily in the form of intermontane plains.

Mizoram terrain is youthful and in the early stages of development, featuring prominent relief features with steep slopes continually shaped by various exogenetic processes such as isostatic gravity. Given its youthful nature, Mizoram's geomorphic features display limited diversity in landform formation. However, a distinctive characteristic is evident in the western slopes of the mountain ranges, which exhibit steeper gradients. The primary agent contributing to these landforms is the erosive action of running water, a process in operation since the upper tertiary period. [6]

Mizoram boasts a pleasant and temperate climate, setting it apart from other hilly regions in northeastern India. Summers are moderately warm, with winter temperatures remaining relatively mild. Temperature fluctuations range between 9º C and 20º C, with minimal extremes and limited duration.

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[3] "Physiography," Government of Mizoram, 8 June 2017, https://mizoram.nic.in/about/physiography.htm.

[4] Pachuau, *Mizoram*, 24.

[5] *Statistical handbook Mizoram*, (Aizawl: Directorate of Economic and Statistic, Government of Mizoram, 2014), 1.

[6] Pachuau, *Mizoram*, 2

The onset of winter in Mizoram occurs in November and extends through February of the subsequent year. This is succeeded by the arrival of spring, typically concluding in mid-April. During this transitional phase, intermittent storms intermittently announce the impending arrival of summer. The hills and mountains are enveloped in a captivating world of bluish hazes during the summer months. These warmer months are accompanied by sporadic drizzles, which mitigate the heat, rendering it tolerable. The period spanning from June to August is the rainy season, with Mizoram receiving an average annual rainfall of 208 cm. However, it is during the autumn season, which spans from September to October, that the climate is most delightful. During this period, the atmosphere becomes notably more transparent, affording breathtaking views of distant mountain ranges from elevated vantage points.[7]

Mizoram, erstwhile Lushai Hills, was colonised in the last decade of the 19th century, and the onset of colonial governance in this remote corner of India witnessed scores of armed resistances, which, however, was subdued by the British. The colonial rule in Mizoram was indirect in nature, whereby the traditional power structure dominated by the Mizos Chiefs was allowed to continue with modifications and alterations wherever some aspects of it contradicted the colonial conception of power and authority.

The establishment of colonial rule was immediately followed by the arrival of Christian missionaries who had explicitly or implicitly complemented the colonial "civilising mission" by establishing churches and schools to win converts.

After Christianity was practised for over a decade, when people were converted, a series of Christian religious revivals occurred for the Mizo Christians in 1906, 1913, and 1919.[8] The 1919 revival was a watershed in Mizo Christianity as it sought to negotiate Christianity with the elements of Mizo indigenous cultural practices. During these times, indigenous folk songs, which were perceived by both

[7]"Climate," Official Website of Mizoram Tourism. 19 June 2017. https://tourism.mizoram.gov.in/page/climate.html.

[8] Rev. Z.T Sangkhuma, *Mizoram Harhna Thlirletna*, (Aizawl: Z.T. Sangkhuma),13-15.

the Christian missionaries and Mizo Christian converts as having connections with their pre-Christian culture of heathenism and hedonistic aspirations, were prohibited from being sung and listened to. In the initial years of conversion to Christianity, the newly acquired Western singing tune, known as 'solfa zai' or tonic solfa, was prescribed as the only valid form of worship singing in the church. However, due to repeated Christian revivals, a host of new Mizo Christian songs, called *lengkhawm zai*, which had an affinity with the traditional Mizo tunes, soon emerged.[9] These new songs were much more appealing and endearing to the Mizo Christians as these songs are far more effective in evoking the emotional and cultural fabric of the Mizos. Yet, the missionaries and early Mizo Christian converts opposed this development because these songs were no different from the traditional songs, at least in terms of tune and the accompanying instruments such as drums and gongs, which eventually led to the rise of contestation between Western-influenced Mizo Christians and the Mizos who hold fast to their traditional culture.

1.2 Concept of Resistance.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, resistance is 'dislike of or opposition to a plan, an idea, etc.; refusal to obey and the act of using force to oppose something.'[10] "Resistance" is a relatively under-research field of social science. Depending on the meaning of "power", different types of activities will count as resistance. According to James C. Scott, "resistance includes any act(s) by member(s) of a subordinate class that is or are intended either to mitigate or deny claims-(for example, rents, taxes, prestige) made on that class by super-ordinate

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[9] R.L Thanmawia, (ed.), '*Harhna in A Hrin Hla Leh A Phuahtute' on Harhna: Mizoram Revival Centenary Souvenir (1906-2006)*, (Aizawl: Synod Revival Committee, 2006), 579-581 ─ *Lengkhawm zai* is a Mizo traditional manner of singing. Wen the third revival occurred in 1919 the indigenous way, rather than the western tunes of solfa, it awakens the people's sentiment by using drums, dance and soft tunes. When they gathered to worship, they often said, *'a Lengkhawm zaiin'* which means' in a traditional way', later they used *'khuang hnihin'* which means using two drums. When they practiced *Lengkhawm zai*, indigenous writers such as Patea, R.L. Kamlala, C.Z. Huala began to write the songs. This Lengkhawm Zai degraded the western tunes of solfa and promoted the Mizo culture in Christianity and is practiced till date.

[10] Sally Wehmeier, Colin McIntosh, Joanna Turnbull (eds.), s.v. "Resistance" in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 7th edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

classes (for example, landlords, large farmers, the state) or to advance its claims (for example, work, land, charity, respect) vis-a-vis those super-ordinate classes."[11]

Vinthagen also maintains in this connection that "Within resistance studies, there exists a plurality of concepts and definitions of resistance incorporating, e.g., 'disguised resistance', 'critical resistance, 'off-kilter resistance' or 'civil resistance'. Within other somewhat overlapping fields, such as social movement studies, terrorism studies, or subaltern studies, there exist also suggestions of other concepts with different but similar connotations, e.g.' contention', 'protest', 'power struggle', 'revolution', or 'mimicry'."[12] In academic discourse, the term 'resistance' has been applied to various actions and behaviours across multiple dimensions of human social life, spanning individual, collective, and institutional domains. These manifestations of resistance are found in diverse settings, including political systems, forms of entertainment and literature, and workplace environments. Indeed, resistance has been used to describe everything from major political revolutions to the subtlest choices of personal hairstyles. The term' resistance' is defined variably, encompassing notions of acting autonomously, pursuing one's self-interest, or engaging in active efforts to oppose, confront, and reject cooperation with prevailing forces or systems. [13]

In the words of Douglas Haynes and Gyan Prakash, "Resistance should be defined as those behaviours and cultural practices by subordinate groups that contest hegemonic social transformations that threaten to unravel the strategies of domination."[14] Therefore, it can be asserted that all the various definitions of resistance are inherently interconnected. Resistance, in its essence, encompasses anything that stands in opposition to its adversary, whether it takes on active or passive forms, is characterised by military or unarmed tactics, involves physical or mental

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[11] James C Scott, *Weapons of the week: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 290.

[12] Stellan Vinthagen, "Understanding "Resistance": Exploring definitions, perspectives, forms and implications," http://www.resistancestudies.org/files/VinthagenResistance.pdf

[13] Jocelyn A Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner, "Conceptualizing Resistance," *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 19, No. 4. (2004), 533-554. 23 August 2017 http://www.jstor.org/stable/Hollander/4148828.

[14] Haynes Douglas and Gyan Prakash, "Introduction: The Entanglement of Power and Resistance," in *Contesting Power: Resistance and Everyday Social Relations in South Asia*, ed. Douglas Haynes and Gyan Prakash (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3.

dimensions, is overt or covert, and occurs within the dynamics between dominant and oppressed forces.

1.3 Concept of Culture.

According to S.L. Doshi and P.C. Jain, "Culture has originated from the Latin word *colere,* which means "to cultivate". In social anthropology, the word 'culture' means "knowledge", that is, knowledge about those aspects of humanity which are not natural, but which are related to that which is required. In other words, culture refers to "those abilities, notions, and forms of behaviour which are acquired by a person as members of society".[15]

According to Raymond Williams, the word 'culture' began as a noun of process connected to growing crops, that is, cultivation. Subsequently, the idea of cultivation was broadened to encompass the human mind or spirit. This gave rise to the notion of the cultivated or cultured person. The nineteenth-century English writer Matthew Arnold also describes culture as 'the best that has been thought and said in the world'. [16]

In the words of Jeff Lewis, 'Culture is an assemblage of imaginings and meanings that are generated by a given social group. These meanings may be constant, disjunctive, overlapping, contentious, continuous, or discontinuous. The given social group may be formed around a broad gradient of human communities, activities, and purposes. Communication is the central force that binds social groups to culture; in contemporary culture, these communicational processes are dominated by various modes of global networked media.'.[17]

1.4 Concept of Cultural Resistance.

Cultural resistance is using culture 'consciously or unconsciously, effectively or not, to resist and/or change the dominant political economic and/or social

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[15] S.L. Doshi, and P.C. Jain, *Social Anthropology*, (New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2001), 123.

[16] Chris Baker, Emma A. Jane *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, (London: Sage Publication, 2008), 45.

[17] Jeff Lewis, *Cultural Studies: The Basics*, (Los Angeles: Sage Publication, 2008),18.

structure'.[18] According to Eben Barnard, "Cultural resistance has been seen to be a slippery and flexible concept, easily characterised as rebellious deviance or emancipator struggle depending on the observer's ideology. Examples of cultural resistance are ubiquitous yet may go unnoticed because the resistors may not consciously define their actions."[19] Literature, arts, traditional practices, etc., operate as a medium through which cultural resistance is performed in a pacifist way. Cultural resistance enables us to present ourselves as individuals and as a community in the face of an ever-growing oppositional force. Thus, cultural resistance has multiple functionalities and gives us spaces through which we can simultaneously engage in our individuality and community, hence offering room for inclusive personal and communal growth.[20]

Roger Bastide also defined cultural resistance as "an endeavour not to let the vital values inherited from . . . ancestors perish, but to re-establish them through symbolic or military means."[21] Cultural resistance is also the practice of using meanings and symbols, that is, culture, to contest and combat a dominant power, often constructing a different vision of the world in the process.[22] According to K.N. Panikar, 'The rejection or destruction of indigenous culture was not the only mode colonialism adopted in its cultural quest. An attempt to establish identity with the colonised through the appropriation of indigenous cultural practices and the imputation of new meaning to them were equally a part of the colonial cultural

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[18] Stephen Duncombe, "Cultural Resistance Reader," 10 June 2017. http://www.northernhighlands.org/cms/lib5/NJ01000179/Centricity/Domain/159/Cultural%20Resistance%20Reader%20by%20Stephen%20Duncombe.pdf.

[19] Eben Barnard, "Review Essay: 'Cultural resistance': Can such practices ever have a meaningful political impact?" Critical Social Thinking: Policy and Practice, Vol. 3, 2011 3 August 2017. https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/appliedsocialstudies/docs/EbenBarnard.pdf.

[20] *Cultural Resistance*: *The arts of protest*, www.newtactics.org, https://www.newtactics.org/conversation/cultural-resistance- arts-protest.

[21] Paul Stoller, "Horrific Comedy: Cultural Resistance and the Hauka Movement in Niger," Wiley on behalf of the American Anthropological Association. 15 November 2017. https://www.jstor.org/stable/639964.

[22] Stephen Duncombe, *Cultural Resistance*, www.blackwellreference.com/public. http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/tocnode?id=g9781405124331_chunk_g9781405124331 9_ss1 -179.

engagement.'[23] Doudou Diene[24] also mentions that 'the whole process of cultural resistance is a process of reconquering a denied humanity'.[25] Therefore, cultural resistance can be stated as a conflict between the forces of dominance and the indigenous forces in the form of arts and traditional practices.

1.5 Thesis approach.

To arrive at a conceptual framework for this study, the work of Antonio Gramsci provides a stimulus for understanding cultural resistance from 'history from below.'[26] In this connection, the term "subaltern" for subordinates in military hierarchies refers to groups outside the established structure of political representation. According to him, 'non-hegemonic groups or classes are called "subordinate", "subaltern" or sometimes "instrumental."[27] Subaltern classes may include peasants, employees, and other groups denied access to 'hegemonic' power.[28] In the same vein, in *Subaltern Studies I: Writing on South Asian History and Society*, Ranajit Guha mentioned that the historiography of Indian nationalism fails to recognise the contribution made by the people on their own. He also clarifies that throughout the colonial period, another domain of Indian politics arose in which the actors were not

[23] K.N Panikkar, *Colonialism, Culture and Resistance*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 21.

[24] Doudou Diène was a prize-winner in philosophy in Senegal's Concours General. Having joined the UNESCO Secretariat in 1977, in 1980 he was appointed Director of the Liaison Office with the United Nations. Between 1985 and 1987, he held the posts of Deputy Assistant Director-General for External Relations, spokesperson for the Director-General, and acting Director of the Bureau of Public Information. He is also very active with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.

[25] Doudou Diène, The Notion of Cultural Resistance, History News, Vol. 69, No. 1 (WINTER 2014), pp. 11-14, 20 September 2017. Published by: American Association for State and Local History, Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/43503085.

[26] O.V. Ligade, "Subaltern Studies: A New Trend in History Writing," *International Research Journal* ISSN-0975-3486 VOL. I * ISSUE—6 RNI: RAJBIL/2009/30097.

[27] Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (ed,) *Selections from The Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (New York: Published simultaneously by Lawrence & Wishart, London, and International Publishers,1971).

[28] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 3rd Edition (London & New York, Routledge Publication, 2013),200.

the dominant groups of the indigenous society nor the colonial authorities but the subaltern classes.[29] Thus, the Subaltern was a notion of resistance to elite domination.

For reinstating the subaltern voices, Paul Thompson advocated the practice of an alternative reading of history through 'oral tradition and oral history'[30] because of his belief that "Oral history is as old as history itself."[31]

In so far as Mizo's resistance to British colonial expansion and subsequent cultural imposition through Christianity in the Lushai Hills, we may look at two approaches of resistance, which apply to the present study. Scott has made a categorisation built on the two primary forms of resistance,[32] the public and the disguised resistance, which correspond to three forms of domination (material, status, and ideological).

The approach of resistance exists in the public form as public declared resistance or active such as 'open revolts', 'petitions', 'demonstrations', or 'land Invasion'. 'Open revolts'—to be in an 'open revolt' means to break away from or rise against constituted authority, as by open rebellion. It also connotes the refusal to accept or be subjected to some authority, condition, etc. It means to turn away in mental rebellion, disgust, or abhorrence or to feel mental aversion.[33] 'Petition'— *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* defines a petition as a written document signed by many people asking somebody in an authority position to do or change something. It

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[29] Ranajit Guha, "On Some Aspect of the Historiography of Colonial India," in *Subaltern Studies I: Writing on South Asian History and Society*, in ed. Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University Press 1982), 1.

[30] "Oral history is the act of collecting historical data based on narratives and stories that have been quoted orally. This definition precedes the scientific method of 'oral history,' i.e., gathering historical information based on targeted, active, and informed interviews. Whereas, oral tradition is a way of transmitting general cultural issues from one generation to another—i.e., folklores, myths, songs, etc." SID - Scientific Information Database. 21 March 2017. https://www.sid.ir/en/journal/ViewPaper.aspx?ID=204886.

[31] Paul Thompson, Joanna Bornat, The *Voice of The Past: Oral History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 23.

[32] Stellan Vinthagen and Anna Johansson, "Everyday Resistance: Exploration of a Concepts and it's Theories," in *Resistance Magazine*, no 1, 2013. P 5. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303516884.

[33] "Revolt." The Free Dictionary, 3 September 2017. www.thefreedictionary.com/revolt.

can also mean an official document requesting a court to take a particular action. As an action, it means to make a formal request to somebody in authority, especially by sending them a petition.[34]'Demonstration'—According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 'demonstration' refers to an act of showing someone how something is used or done. It can also mean an event in which people gather to show that they support or oppose something or someone. The term is also used to describe an act of showing or proving something.[35] 'Land invasions'— 'Land Invasion' refers to the illegal occupation of land, intending to establish a settlement upon it. An invasion may be by one individual or hundreds of households - but the nature of the problem and the measures required to deal with it are the same. These are against material domination, assertion of worth or decoration of status symbols against status domination, or counter-ideologies against ideological hegemony.

Resistance also exists in the disguised or passive form (low profile, undisclosed, or "infra-politics") as everyday resistance, for example -'poaching', 'squatting', 'desertion', 'evasion', 'foot-dragging'. Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary defines 'poaching' as taking and using somebody or something that belongs to somebody or something else, especially in a secret, dishonest way. In its literal sense, it means to illegally hunt animals, birds, or fish on somebody else's property or without permission.[36] Squatting— to 'squat' means to live in a building or on land that is not yours without the owner's consent.[37] It can also mean settling on unoccupied land without legal claim or occupying a given piece of public land to acquire title to it.[38]'Desertion' means 'to stop buying, using or supporting something'. In a passive tone, it means to go away from a place and leave it empty.[39] It also connotes abandonment without consent or legal justification of a person, post, or relationship and the associated duties and obligations. To a certain extent, it can also

[34] *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary,* p.1130.
[35]Demonstration," Miriam-Webster. 1 July 201 http://www.merriam webster.com/dictionary/demonstration.
[36] 'Poaching*' Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary,* p.1161.
[37] 'Squatting*' Oxford*, p.1485.
[38] "Squatting." The Free Dictionary, 1 July 2017. http://www.thefreedictionary.com/squatting.
[39] 'Desertion' *Oxford,* p.413.

mean a state of being deserted or forsaken.[40] 'Evasion' means the act of avoiding something that you do not want to do or deal with or the act of evading something. It also means a way of avoiding something. It can also mean a statement or action that avoids directly dealing with something (such as a complex problem or question)[41]. 'Foot-dragging' means failing to act with the necessary promptness or vigour. In simpler terms, it means failure to do something quickly because one does not want to do it.[42] In disguised form, resistance also exists as direct resistance by disguised resisters against material domination, hidden transcripts of anger or disguised discourse of dignity against status domination, or dissident subcultures (e.g., millennial religion, myths of social banditry class heroes) against ideological hegemony.[43]

Furthermore, in the work of James C. Scott, *'The Art of Not Being Governed'*, various groups reside in the hills of Zomia—a mountainous region in Southeast Asia and the largest remaining area that is not integrated into the so-called 'nation-state'. These groups of people in *Zomia* remained intact from the influences and reach of the lowland state and thus have existence as a 'region of refuge'. Their view is that their daily life represents a primitive form of society and pre-state society. They also preserved their ethnicity and oral culture, which helped in reinventing their histories and genealogies.[44] The people residing in the hills passively resisted the nation-state by refusing to live with them.

The missionaries educated the early converts, whose writings on Mizo accounts were dictated by colonial discourse. Therefore, studying cultural resistance in Mizo history entails new empirical and theoretical approaches. Thus, from the above approaches, the present study construes the past on how and why the Mizos

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[40] "Desertion." Merriam-Webster. 1 July, 2017. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/desertion.

[41] "Evasion" Meriam-Webster. 1 July, 2017. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/evasion.

[42] "Foot-dragging" Meriam-Webster, 1 July 2017. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/foot- dragging.

[43] Stellan, Vinthagen. "Understanding Resistance."

[44] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (London: Yale University, 2009), 23-24.

actively and passively resisted colonialism by reinterpreting archival sources and retrieving the voices of the marginals/subalterns.

1.6 Lushai-Mizo.

During British colonial rule, governmental officials investigated the Burmese hill regions, observing that distinct ethnic communities inhabited these areas, conversing in diverse dialects and identified by various appellations. Beyond the Chittagong Hill tracts and the northeastern frontier of India, the British administration designated these groups as the "Kuki" and "Chin," situated westward of the core Burmese populace. As British officers ventured into the Burman hills to establish governance over the previously unregulated territories, they embraced the term "Chin," which was already employed by the Burmans. After the annexation of these hill areas, the term "Chin-Hills" emerged in 1896 as an administrative entity under the jurisdiction of the British Empire. [45] Upon the British acquisition of Bengal and heightened interaction with the hill tribe populations, especially those residing in the northern hills, the Bengali terminology "Kuki," signifying untamed or indigenous hill inhabitants, came into usage. It became apparent to the British that most of these individuals initially did not identify as "*Kuki*"; they used the term "*Loosye*." Over time, the British adopted the appellation "*Lushai*" to denote the ethnic group inhabiting the adjacent territory encompassed by the Chittagong Hills, Hill Tipperah, Cachar, and Manipur. Employing the Kolodyne River as a demarcation line, they contrastingly utilised *Chin* to categorise the populace residing westward of Burma, consequently establishing a distinct categorisation of the Lushai Hills and Chin Hills, respectively. Thus, the terms *Kuki* and *Chin* are interchangeable and predominantly refer to several hill tribes collectively.[46]

As Reid's assertion stipulates, "Chins and Lushai are practically one race."[47] This perspective is likewise endorsed by Carey and Tuck, who acknowledge that "the Kukis of Manipur, the Lushai of Bengal and Assam and the Chins...are of one and the

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[45] Sing Khaw Khai, *Zo people and their Culture: A Historical, Cultural Study and Critical Analysis of Zo and its Ethnic Tribes,* (Manipur: Khampu Hatzaw,1995), 1.
[46] Khaw Khai, *Zo people and their Culture*,1.
[47] AS Reid, *Chin-Lushai Land*, (Aizawl: Firma KLM Private LTD,2008), 6.

same stock".[48] Giving the generic name to these, many attempts have been promoted.[49] The colonial officer TH Lewin articulated, "Under the term '*Dzo'* are included all the hill tribes of this region."[50] In the early 19th century, British administrators adopted terms such as *Kuki*, *Chin*, and *Lushai* from Bengal, Burma, and Assam. However, these terms were not indigenous to the local populations and represented entirely unfamiliar languages to the Mizos.

Given that the Mizos constituted the predominant population in the territory bordering Manipur, Cachar, Hill Tipperah, and the Chittagong Hills, the region was identified as the Lushai Hills until the conclusion of August 1954. Subsequently, through a parliamentary enactment, the nomenclature Lushai was substituted by Mizo, considering that the 'Mizo was a more inclusive name for self-identification, comprising several tribes, which subsumed even the Lushais within its fold. Sangkima notes that tracing the initial utilisation of the term "Mizo" in a definitive manner posed challenges, as it represented a gradual process of development. During their residence in Burma, they were already referred to as Mizo, and the predecessors of the Mizos employed the phrase "*Keini Mizo te chuan*," which translates to "we the Mizos."

On September 1st, 1954, the administrative designation 'Lushai Hills District' was renamed the 'Mizo Hills District.' Subsequently, in January 1972, it was elevated to a Union Territory and christened as Mizoram.[51] To contextualise the present study within its historical framework, utilising the term *Lushai* becomes inevitable, considering its prevalent usage during that period. The terms *Lushai* and *Mizo* will be employed interchangeably throughout the study, serving as synonymous expressions in most instances.

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[48] HN Tuck and Bertram S. Carey, *The Chin Hills Vol*.1, (Aizawl: Firma KLM Private LTD,2008), 2.

[49] Soong Chul Ro, "Naming a People: British Frontier Management in Eastern Bengal and The Ethnic Categories of The Kuki-Chin," (PhD Thesis, University of Hull, 2007), 7.

[50] T.H. Lewin, *The Progressive Colloquial Exercise in The Lushai Dialects of the 'Dzo' or Kuki Language*, With Vocabularies and Popular Tales (Calcutta: Calcutta Central Press Company Limited, 1874), i.

[51] *Mizoram District Gazetteers* (Aizawl: Director of Art & Culture, Government of Mizoram,1989), 2

1.7. Origin Myth of the Mizos and Migration.

Many scholars and historians have attempted to trace the origin of the Mizo. According to Liangkhaia, "Mizo are the descendants of Japheth son of Noah in the bible".[52] The Mizo myth tells us that humans originated from an incredible hole within the earth, which they called *Chhinlung* or a 'closed stone', a literal translation of the word. They also believed that their ancestors came out from that hole, and at last, the *Ralte* sub-tribe came out and created an uproar, which the guardian God feared of the growing human population and closed the stone to prevent the exits of human beings on earth[53]. Among the various Mizo tribes, it is called by multiple names, such as *Chhinlung* by Lushai, *Pawih,* and *Hmar* called *Sinlung* and *Tinlung* to *Paihte.*[54] For some writers, the word *Chhin lung* is not precisely what it means, but the name of a Chinese prince, *Chin-Lung,* the son of *Shih Huang Ti* from the *Chin* dynasty who built the Great Wall.[55] According to Sangkima, *Chhinlung* is located in the Szechwan province of China,[56] in the southern part of China. It is believed that there are three reasons why *Chhinlung* was left. First, their enemies were more powerful than them, not have enough power to drive them away, so they had to move in search of new settlements. Secondly, due to the cruelty of the ruler Cheng, known in history as Shih-Hwang-Ti, who imposed severe punishment on them, they were forced to leave their home when they were subjected to rigorous work. Thirdly, they left due to the conflict between their leader, Prince *Chinlung*, and his father, supported by his other sons.[57] When they left *Chhinlung*, they migrated to Myanmar, settled in the Shan State, proceeded to *Kabaw* Valley to *Khampat,* and then moved on to the Chin Hills.[58]

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[52] Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin,* (Aizawl: L.T.L Publication, 2002), 13.

[53] LB Thanga, *The Mizos: A Study in Racial Personality,* (Guwahati: United Publishers, 1978), 1.

[54] Hrangthiauva, *Mizo History*. (Aizawl: C. Chhuanvawra & Sons, 2011), 1.

[55] Thanga, *The Mizos* p.3.

[56] Sangkima, *Essays on The History of The Mizos*, (Guwahati: Spectrum, Publication, 2004), 3.

[57] Sangkima, "Conceptualizing Origin Myths of The Mizo," *Historical Journal Mizoram*, volume – XV, (2014), 2.

[58] "History of Mizoram," Government of Mizoram, 4 April 2018. http://mizoram.nic.in/about/history.htm.

Between A.D. 1,000 and 1500, Mizo resided between the *Run a*nd *Tiau rivers.*[59] The various clans of the Mizo were said to have entered Mizoram at three different points in time. The first group to migrate from the Chin Hills was the so-called 'Old *Kuki* Group', while the second was the 'New *Kuki* Group'. It is believed that they arrived on the land during the 14th-15th Century A.D. The third group, *Lusei,* were said to have entered by the second half of the 17th century.[60] The *Palian* clan was believed to be the first clan to move and inhabit the land. Subsequently, they were followed by *Zadeng, Rokhum, Chenkual, Thangluah, Rivung and Sailo*.[61] Among all the clans, the Sailo clan began to settle in one village, i.e. *Selesih*, the village with seven thousand households, popularly known as *Selesih Sangsarih*. They had seven *Sailo* chiefs: Pukawlha, *Darpuiliana, Darliankuala, Rohnaa, Lalchera, Thangphunga,* and *Lalsailova.* Due to their joined settlement, they emerged as the ruling clan.[62] By the second half of the 18th century AD, *Selesih Sangsarih* began to scatter in different directions as the chiefs craved more power, leading them to feud over marriages, lands, plunders, etc.[63]

1.7.1 Lusei.

As they dispersed in various directions, the southern regions of Lushai Hills came under the governance of the descendants of Rolura, the renowned progenitor of the Southern Sailo chieftains. Rolura's lineage can be traced back to Zahmuaka, the founding figure of the Lusei Chiefdom. Zahmuaka, as the inaugural Lusei chief, fathered six sons: Zadenga, Paliana, Thangluaha, Thangura, Rivunga, and Rokhuma. Thangura, in turn, sired Chawnglula and Thangmanga. Thangmanga gave rise to Sailova, who later became the ancestor of Chungnunga, Lianlula, and Chenkuala. Chungnunga, in his lineage, begot Lalhluma, Rohnaa, Lalchera, and Thangphunga.

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[59] Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin*, 43.

[60] Malsawmliana, "A Study of the Thangur Chiefs: With Special Reference to Lallula," *Historical Journal Mizoram* volume-IX, (2008), 24.

[61] Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin*, 83-89.

[62] V.L. Siama, *Mizo History*, (Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press, 199), 36.

[63] Malsawmliana, A Study of the Thangur Chiefs, 26.

Lalchera, the forefather of Rolura,[64] held a prominent position among the chiefs in Selesih Sangsarih. Upon their dispersion, his son Rolura crossed the Tiau River and migrated towards the Southern hills. Rolura had two sons, namely Lalrivunga and Tlutpawrha. Tlutpawrha's offspring included Vandula, who became the chief of Leite village; Seipuia, who assumed the position of chief in Theiriat; Lalthangvunga, who rose to become the chief of Haulawng; and Lalluauva, who held the title of chief in Bualpui village. Lalrivunga's sons included Khawzaia, chief of Rawpui village, Lalthuama, chief of Khawnglung, and Vansanga, the offspring of Lalthuama. Additionally, Lalpuithanga, chief of Sailam, was the father of Sangvunga and Bengkhuaia. Thangduta, the chief of Kawlhawk, had sons named Chhim Lalburha and Rungnawla, while Dailala had a son named Rohnuna, who later became the chief of Bungtlang village.[65]

Upon Rolura's migration towards the Southern Hills, he founded his initial settlement in *Chamring*. Subsequently, he relocated to Sialsuk, Diarkhai and Tumbawk, between Lungrang and Zote. Finally, he established the village of Chhipphir, where he settled permanently. Following Rolura's passing, his son Tlutpawrha assumed leadership of Chhipphir. After Tlutpawrha's departure, Vansanga, whose father was Lalthuama (the son of Lalrivunga, who was Tlutpawrha's brother), took over as the esteemed chief. Vansanga vehemently resisted British rule during the period spanning from 1890 to 1892. Upon his capture by the British, the village was transferred to Lalluava. When Tlutpawrha relocated from Chhipphir, he continued south and incorporated Lunglei into his dominion. Lalrivunga, the eldest son of Rolura, established a village near Chaltlang, close to Zote village. From Zote, he relocated to Sekhum village, where he eventually passed away. His sons then proceeded northward and annexed Thenzawl, Serchhip, and Sailam.[66]

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[64] C. Chawngkunga, *Genealogical Tree of Mizo*, (Aizawl: Art and Culture Department of Mizoram, 1996), 39.

[65] Lalthanliana, *Zoram Chanchin (Kum 1900 hmalam*), (Aizawl: Vanlalhmuaka and Vanlalhruaii, Vanbuangi Gas Agency, 2000), 411.

[66] Lalthanliana, *Zoram Chanchin*, 411

Another clan that settled in the Southern Hills was the Thangluah clan. Thangluaha, the offspring of Zahmuaka, was the progenitor of this clan. Thangluaha, in turn, had two sons: Lalhrilha and Khawchhiaha. Lalhrilha, in his lineage, had three sons: Lalthlura, Lalthlana, and Zahuapa. Zahuapa, as the next in line, fathered Ropuiliana, who, in turn, was the father of Lalpuihluta. Lalpuihluta, then, had a son named Rothangpuia, who demonstrated unwavering loyalty to the British during the Expedition of 1871-1872.[67]

Upon their migration to Mizoram, the Thangluah clan initially settled in the village of Chawngtui. After four decades had passed, they relocated to Thenzawl and subsequently moved further west, establishing their habitat between the Tut and Mat Rivers, a region known as the Thorang range. It is worth noting that between 1840 and 1850, Lalpuihluta, the father of Rothangpuia, occupied the Thorang range. However, their peaceful habitation in this area was disrupted when Sailova, the son of Lianlula Sailo, sought to gain control over the territory, leading to hostilities. Regrettably, the Thangluah clan suffered defeat in this conflict, compelling them to venture further south and establish their settlement in Tlabung, located amidst the Sirte and Uiphum ranges. It is significant to mention that from 1850 onwards, Rothangpuia assumed the role of the paramount chief within the Thangluah clan.[68]

1.7.2. Mara.

When the Maras or Lakhers encountered the British, they were identified as the Shendus.[69] Their migration originated in Leisai, located within the Chin Hills of Burma (now Myanmar). They subsequently proceeded to Saro and Chakang, both of which are situated near Haka.[70] Following their residence in Chakang, the Maras or Lakhers embarked on a journey that took them across the Kolodyne River, leading them into the Lushai Hills. They settled initially at Phusa, perched atop a lofty hill

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[67] Zothanpuii, "A brief Study of the Thangluah Chief, Rothangpuia" *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Volume- IX, (2008), 95.

[68] Lalthanliana, *Zoram Chanchin*, 364.

[69] N.E. Parry, *The Lakhers*, (Aizawl: Firma KLM Private Limited,1976), 5.

[70] Haka is situated in the central-eastern part of the Chin State in Myanmar.

between Ainak and Siata. Their migratory path led them to Khupi, situated along the Tisi River, and subsequently to Theiri and Beukhi. Significant development occurred when the Siaha and Saiko Tlongsai clans decided to part ways. The former settled in various locations near Beukhi, ultimately establishing their settlement in Siaha. Meanwhile, the latter embarked on a series of migrations, sequentially settling in Saikowkhitlang, Khangchetla, Zongbuki, Chholong, and Khihlong. It's noteworthy that from Saiko, they established the other villages within the Tlongsai group, all governed by Hleuchang chiefs. [71]

1.7.3 Lai.

The Burmese knew Lai as *'Chin'*, and the term '*Chin'* is imprecise and should be pronounced as *'Khyang',* which means ally or comrade. All the kindred tribes believed their origin was in South China, and they moved to Myanmar by following the mouth of the Brahmaputra and Salwin rivers. They were thought to have settled in the Chindwin Valley around 750 AD and finally settled on Chin Hills in Myanmar.[72] The first group migrated to Mizoram under the Leadership of the Hnawncheu Chief Vanhnuaitlirha and was followed by the group headed by Chief Lianchia Hlawnchhing. They were followed by Chinzah chief Taihmunga to have a permanent settlement, and after him, Fanai chief Rorehlova migrated to Mizoram.[73]

[71] Parry, *The Lakhers*, 2.

[72] Jangkhongam Doungel, *Lai Chieftainship and Its Impact in Politics*, (Delhi: Balaji Publications, 2015),1.

[73] Upa Manglinga Hlawncheu, *Lai Hnam, Chin-Hills atanga lo Chhuk Hmasate*, (Lawngtlai: Published by the author, 2004), 1-2.

1.8 Statement Of The Problem.

Even though colonial empires gradually began to collapse after World War II, their studies are still significant and relevant in the decades following it until the 21st century. Colonialism is critically seen not as an aberration but as a purposeful design intended to spread a hegemonic structure whereby one-person ("whites") benefits from the exploitation and subjugation of another person ("non-white"). Colonialism is a form of systematic oppression and domination. If a particular group is politically disenfranchised within their own country, then that group may be an oppressed internal colony. If the group is economically exploited within the society, then the group represents the possibility of domestic colonisation. Minority groups often become culturally manipulated and commodified within their societies through the market and the media, and this leads to domestic colonisation.[74]

Works of the colonial writers and the official documents are the primary available written sources. These writings were dominated by the colonial agenda of promoting the coloniser's superiority while emphasising the perceived shortcomings of the natives. For that reason, complete dependence on colonial sources might result in a biased understanding of the issue, and the literary work available presently will be far from the truth. Thus, a critical study of the colonial documents and writings is imperative.

Even many of the Mizos writers based their works on colonial sources. Colonial domination is so pervasive that even in the 21st century, many works on British colonialism in Mizoram by local authors simply reproduce the same colonial discourse without any critical evaluation. This colonial literature has not provided enough information on Mizo's cultural resistance against British colonialism. Therefore, deeper examination in this area is necessary.

A fresh perspective is imperative to transcend the limitations imposed by the prevailing colonial narratives and offer a more comprehensive understanding of the

[74] David L Brunsma, "Colonialism" in *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol2*, 2nd Edition, ed. William A. Darity (Detroit: Course Technology, 2008), 11.

historical dynamics in Mizoram. The existing discourse, heavily influenced by colonial sources and perspectives, tends to perpetuate an incomplete and biased portrayal of the impact of British colonialism on the region. A new perspective is needed to unveil obscured narratives, particularly those related to Mizo cultural resistance against colonial domination, which have been overshadowed or misrepresented in conventional accounts.

1.9 Review of Literature.

For this research, a curated collection of literature has been examined. The objective is to grasp the underlying concepts and methodological considerations associated with investigating the cultural resistance exhibited by the Mizos against colonial influences. The historical narrative of Mizoram reveals a compelling tale of cultural resilience and resistance against colonial forces. This literature review delves into key works that shed light on the intricate dynamics of Mizos resistance to British colonialism, offering a nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural fabric that shaped their struggle.

Zalen Nana British Do by Dr Lalthanliana, published in 2000 by Mizoram Board Publication, shows how the Mizo chiefs resisted the British. The policy of conciliation on the Lushai hills is noticeable. The author divides the British military expeditions in Mizoram into four — the expedition of 1869, The Lushai Expedition 1871-1872, the expedition of 1888- 1889, and The Chin-Lushai Expedition (1889-90). The later three of these four invasions experienced British penetration from north, west, and south, and the Mizo chiefs resisted. The author mentions that the southern chiefs made weak resistance; it also mentions the works and designation of the British officers during those times. This book highlights a negotiation between the Mizo Chiefs and the British before their invasion. Mizo cultural resistance to British colonialism is not systematically highlighted, and no sufficient information on the southern part is given.

Suhas Chatterjee's *Mizoram under British Rule,* published by Mittal Publications in 1985, mentions that the Mizos, officially recorded as *Kukis* up till the

expedition of 1871-1872 was changed to *Lushai*. The writer mainly based his sources on official British documents, and it seems that no effort was made to inquire from Mizoram. The book contains the first contact of Mizo with the British up to the times of the Christian missionaries, including the British policy of conciliation and forward policy, the British expedition to the Lushai, and the consolidation of British rule and the problems faced by the British. At the same time, there is no case study, and all topics are written briefly. The issues faced by the Mizo against the British are insufficiently provided, and the resistance made by the chiefs was mostly the armed resistance. How exactly did they resist, and what forms of resistance were not written in this book. Thus, it seems that the book is only about a study of the work of the British in Mizoram.

The Lushai Expedition 1871-1872 by R.G. Woothrope is the writer's personal observation during the expedition. The contact between the Mizo Chiefs and the British, including the policy of conciliation and the principal characteristics of three different tribes of the hill Lushai, Paihte or Sokte, and Pawi, along with their dress and physical appearance are contained in the book. It throws light on the Mizo culture during those times and the use of tobacco; *'Men, women, and children, from the age at which they can hold a pipe, smoke almost incessantly'.* The author does not mention any form of resistance; it instead glorifies the supremacy of British power. The work mainly focuses on the northern part of Mizoram, and no kinds of resistance are mentioned.

A Fly on the Wheel or How I Helped to Govern India by Thomas Herbert Lewin mainly deals with the Lushai Expedition of 1871-1872. It gives us detailed information on the expedition from the southern column. The author spoke the native vocabulary and was regarded as the Lushai's friend. During the expedition, the author was deputed as a Political Officer in subordination to the General commanding the southern column. The book contains the friendship between the author and the southern Mizo chief, Rothangpuia. Rothangpuia even assisted Lewin during the expedition. Different armed attacks by the British are mentioned in the book. The treaty between the two parties is mentioned, and how Lewin swore an oath of the treaty

is provided in the book. He established a permanent post at Demagree (present name Tlabung) and taught them how to use ploughs and cattle to have permanent cultivable lands so they could abandon the *jhum* cultivation. Though the Expedition of 1871-1872 did not colonise the Lushai Hill, the expedition made by the British from the southern column and the resistance caused by the southern Mizo chiefs is clearly shown in this book.

Mizo Culture by Mangkhosat Kipgen, published in 1996 by The Mizo Theological Conference, deals with the generic name and the origin of the Zos, tracing their migration from plain Burma to Chin Hills and how they settled in Lushai Hills. The author writes about their settlement in Selesih and the feuds among the intra-clan, including their surrounding religious communities and their influence on the Mizo belief system. In socio-culture, the author includes how they came to have chiefs and their elders. The cultural institution known as *Zawlbuk* and its functions and the economic system of *jhum* cultivation is also mentioned. The writer also mentions customary laws and practices, folk songs, and folk tales. In religion, the beliefs and practices of the Mizo, how they performed their rituals with a sacrificial system, and the function of *Bawlpu* and *Sadawt* are also noticeable. The book contains the advent of the British, how the hill came to be colonised, and how colonialism changed the administration of the Mizo society with the introduction of circle interpreters and the abolition of the *zawlbuk* and *bawi* system. Colonialism brought a new religion, Christianity, which profoundly impacted Mizo culture.

Christianity and Subaltern Culture by Vanlalchhuanawma, published in 2006 by The Rev. Ashish Amos of the Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, deals with the pre-colonial Mizo social culture and the conquest of Mizoram by the British until the arrival of the Christian Missionaries. It also deals with Christianity in Mizoram before the revival movement and how the Mizos reacted to Christianity. The book contains the beginning of the revival movement and how it developed into an instrument of indigenisation. The author mentions the most significant revival, how the cultural elements were initiated in the church, and when the contestations of the Western and indigenous cultures were at a high point, which led to the emergence of new denomination churches. The book describes the decline of the remaining cultural

institution, i.e. *Zawlbuk*, and the appearance of more ecstatic forms of indigenous Christian revival, *viz hlimna sang or high revival*, and more westernised forms of religious awakening. *Pianthar harhna* or new-birth revival. The author mentions the setback in developing indigenous forms of revival, concentrating on why and how the Government interfered in the revival and how the official church issued the Revival Guide or *Harhna hruaina*.

Lushai Chrysalis by Major A.G. McCall mentions that the Lushais belong to the Tibeto-Burman group, and the origin of the Lushai clan is provided. The book contains the contact of the Mizo and British subjects up till the Chin-Lushai Expedition. The author mentions the rituals and practices of the traditional Mizo beliefs until the arrival of the Christian missionaries and the society up to the colonial period. The book mainly deals with the culture of the people.

In the Art of Not Being Governed by James C. Scott, the first chapter introduces and focuses on the various groups residing in the hills of Zomia—a mountainous region in Southeast Asia and the largest remaining area not integrated into the so-called' nation state'. These groups of people in Zomia remained intact from the influences and reach of the lowland state and thus have existence as a 'region of refuge'. The ethnic groups in Zomia were mainly formed by people running away from the states and seeking refuge in this area. Their view is that their daily life represents a primitive form of society and pre-state society. Being dwelling in an isolated area, this characteristic encourages a specialisation of languages and cultural practices. These ethnic groups have also preserved their ethnicity and oral culture, which helps to reinvent their histories and genealogies. Scot's primary concern is, thus, on the refusal and avoidance of a nation-state and the cultural rejection of the lowland patterns by the upland Zomia.

Scott's work in "State Spaces: Zones of Governance and Appropriation" and related writings examines how geography limits state control in Southeast Asia. He explains that upland migration helps people avoid state power, creating distance and friction between upland and lowland areas. Wet rice cultivation and irrigation are

crucial for state-building, requiring a concentrated workforce on flat land. Scott challenges the dominant narrative of the state as peaceful, portraying it as reliant on slavery and war. He describes "escape agriculture" by hill people, who adapt to mountain terrain and maintain resistance through illiteracy, avoiding the state's written culture.

Further, Scott explores the dichotomy between civilized valleys and unruly hills, suggesting that this perception allows hill people self-governance and freedom from oppression. Migration to the mountains offers an escape from state burdens like taxation, slavery, and wars. Hill people practice state-distancing governance and agriculture, and their cultural practices are framed as deliberate distancing from the state. Strategies like shifting cultivation and low-value crops enhance this distance. Scott also discusses how ethnic identity and religious practices serve as resistance to state control, with hill people favouring oral culture over written culture to avoid state influence.

Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance by James C. Scott, published by Yale University Press in 1985, examines the effects of the Green Revolution on the Mudha irrigation project in Kedah, a state in Malaysia. The book focuses on the class conflict between the "bourgeoisie" and the "proletariats". It examines the agriculture and economy, the social organisation, and the value system that engendered tension in the land. The book describes how the green revolution creates class consciousness by shedding the old order of things. The author has exposed that the double-cropping system is a kind of capitalism that allows only the elite to prosper. The system has brought inequality, creating a binary class structure. Before the double cropping system, people experiencing poverty, even though they are poor, were always self-sufficient, but with the new system, they have been marginalised. Though the old structure of things hinders the rich, they are in almost complete control of things. Theoretically, the book deals with the 'why' of things. Why not fight, revolt, and subvert the economic and social structure that keeps them or makes them poor? In doing so, Scott's main idea is not the obvious, that of "false consciousness," which argues that the poor's ignorance prevents them from reacting to the change in paradigm. Instead, Scott argues that the poor of Kedah know precisely

what is happening to them, why it is happening to them, and how it is happening to them. But their procrastination, or rather simply their inaction, is due to their knowledge of the impossible obstacles they would have to overcome if they ever revolted. So, according to Scott, the poor peasants, instead of taking up arms or any sort of reaction, relied on anything they could to support themselves and hang on to the old ways of things that were slowly waning.

Roger Neil Rasnake's *Domination and Cultural Resistance* examines the social life of the *Yura*, a Quechua-speaking Andean ethnic group who live in dispersed residence patterns and farm maise in dry river valleys in southern Bolivia. Rasnake also focuses on how the indigenous authorities, the "*kuraqkuna"* or elders, have played a central role in constructing and perpetuating the Yura group and creating solidity against any possible destructive forces. Combining ethnohistorical research with contemporary fieldwork, Roger Neil Rasnake traces the evolution of leadership roles within the changing composition of the native Andean social groupings, the "ayllus"-- from the consolidation of pre-Hispanic Aymara polities, through the pressures of the Spanish colonial regime and the increasing fragmentation of the republican era, to the present.

Rasnake's interpretation and description of the *Yura* festivals are pretty interesting. The *Kuraqkuna* are the ones who represent the ayllus in festival events, and according to Rasnake, this creates a constitution and reconstitution of the ethnic identity of the people. He explains how the Yura peasants and the rotating system of Kurakuna conceptualise group identities and unities while trying to soothe the Andean spirits and the non-Yura vecinos whose power must be ignored. Finally, the book also examines the "meaning-world" of the Yura authorities and elaborates on how the *Kuraqkuna* relate in ritual to their fellows and how they perceive the supernatural world, for which they act as essential mediators.

It is a widespread understanding that anthropologists always try to keep tribals or indigenous people as museum pieces. However, the book *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar* by Nandini Sundar shows how misplaced this charge is, arguing that forested and hill areas like Bastar have never

been outside the “mainstream” of history and that the flattening out of local politics to create the appearance of isolation and homogeneity is essentially a product of colonialism and post-colonialism. The choice today, as in the past, has never been one between “tradition” and “modern civilisation” or between “development” and “backwardness” but over alternative visions of democracy.

By exploring the expansion of the colonial and post-colonial state in Bastar, Madhya Pradesh, and popular resistance to it, this book has been part of redefining how history and anthropology think of tribal India.

Based on a vibrant combination of field and archival research, deployed in methodologically innovative ways, the book is divided into three parts: the first section portrays the pre-colonial economy and polity. It dispels notions of dominant history that see Bastar and other such places as untouched and isolated before colonialism, showing instead the degree of social and political fluidity in the region in the pre-colonial period. The second section provides accounts of both “major” and “minor” resistance to the colonising process. It throws light on the play of multiple histories, differently constructed and differently understood by the actors involved. The third section focuses on the contradictions faced by tribal society today and the processes of cultural redefinition endangered by these contradictions. The second edition includes an afterword that discusses contemporary issues concerning the formation of Chhattisgarh.

Black Skin, White Masks by Frantz Fanon, published in 1952, examines the psychological and social impacts of colonialism and racism on Black individuals in a white-dominated world. Fanon argues that colonialism causes dehumanization and a sense of inferiority among the oppressed, leading to internalized racism. The book’s title symbolizes the masks worn to conform to societal expectations and the struggle for authentic self-expression. Fanon discusses “double consciousness,” the conflict between one’s cultural identity and the imposed identity of the colonizer, and highlights the role of language in reinforcing colonial power. The book has significantly influenced post-colonial studies, critical race theory, and discussions on

identity and liberation, remaining a classic in philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies.

Decolonising the Mind by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues that European languages and cultural values during the colonial period disconnected Africans from their heritage and led to the loss of indigenous languages. Ngũgĩ contends that using European languages in African literature perpetuates a colonial mindset and reinforces colonial power dynamics. He advocates for adopting African languages to reclaim cultural identity and promote authentic self-expression. The book highlights the political role of language in struggles for independence and cultural autonomy, drawing from Ngũgĩ's experiences with activism and imprisonment. It critiques colonialism's legacy and calls for a cultural renaissance embracing African languages in literature, education, and daily communication. "Decolonising the Mind" significantly impacts post-colonial studies, African literature, and discussions on the relationship between language and power, remaining influential in academic and decolonization efforts worldwide.

The Wretched of the Earth by Frantz Fanon, published in 1961, explores the deep impacts of colonialism on societies and advocates for violent resistance as crucial for decolonization. Based on Fanon's experiences in Martinique, he argues that violence is necessary to break colonial structures and reclaim the oppressed's humanity. The book serves as both a critique and a rebellion manifesto, challenging colonial dehumanization. Fanon criticizes the national bourgeoisie for sustaining colonial influences post-independence, driven by self-interest. His insights have globally influenced liberation movements and remain relevant in understanding the enduring legacies of colonialism.

Colonialism, Culture and Resistance by K.N. Panikkar published in 2007 by Oxford University Press mainly deals with how the Indians tried to deal with the colonial dominance and subjugation and the consequences of such resistances. Building upon serious research of over four decades, the collection broadly discusses in detail, the different forms of resistances – armed rebellion, intellectual dissent and cultural protest – and questions the nature of these resistances. One key contribution

of this book is its view of these resistances as a part of a quest to construct an 'alternative modernity': a cultural and intellectual framework form by the blending of traditional and western ideologies. According to the author, this alternative modernity has its manifestations in different fields of cultural and intellectual concern – cultural practices, social ideas, literary creation, scientific enquiries and so forth.

SUBALTERN STUDIES I: WRITING ON SOUTH ASIAN HISTORY AND SOCIETY edited by Ranjit Guha, published in 1982 published in 1982, is a seminal work that critically examines the prevailing historiographical trends surrounding Indian nationalism. *On Some Aspect of the Historiography of Colonial India* Ranajit Guaha mentioned how the historiography of Indian nationalism wrote by the colonialist and bourgeois-nationalist elitism. The colonialist historiography credited the British colonial rulers, administrators, policies, institutions and culture while the historiography of nationalist and neo-nationalist recognized the elite personalities, institutions, activities and ideas. In fact, Guha condemns the elitist historiography and sees it as a sort of the spiritual biography of the Indian elite. Nevertheless, he also mentioned that the elitist historiography is of course not without its uses, it showed the structure of the colonial state as well as the process of its numerous organs in certain historical circumstances. However, these historiography does not clarify Indian nationalism as it fails to recognize the contribution made by the people on their own, that is, autonomously of the elite to the making and growth of nationalism. He elucidates that throughout the colonial period another domain of Indian politics in which the actors were not the dominant groups of the indigenous society nor the colonial authorities but the Subaltern classes that its root could be traced back to pre-colonial times. This promoted the extensive and spontaneous mobilization of the nationalist period that shared three characteristics: horizontal mobilization, notion of resistance to elite domination and conditions of exploitations. Guha does not claim complete segregation between the politics of the elite and the masses. The elite frequently appropriated the masses to meet their gains. However, in any event, both the movement failed to obtain their desired goal.

Partha Chatterjee's *Agrarian Relations and Communalism in Bengal, 1926-1935* deals with how the peasants of Muslim came into a communal politics that opposed the Hindu landowning class who oppressed them. The writer points out three modes of political power i.e. the communal, the feudal, and the bourgeois. During the mid-eighteen centuries, the colonial rule led to two major consequences in the political life of Bengal; one, the gradual evolution of a formal machinery of state and an institutionalized political process based on bourgeois constitutional principles, and two, an entirely new process of differentiation among the peasantry caused by colonial extraction and the extended operation of a market economy in rural areas. Partha also mentioned the riot of 1926 caused by the dispute over Janmastami procession of Dacca including the Patuakhali Satyagraha of 1926-1927. A riot in Ponabalia and Kulkati where 15 muslims people were killed is also mentioned by the writer. He also indicated the jute traders from north and north-eastern Bengal where the jute traders and money landers held an important role in the lives of the peasantry but because of the unpredictable price fluctuation which continuously appears to work against them and following the jute nosedive of the early 1920s their grudge found open expression. The writer comments that the local literature during this period wrote in verse suitable for singing or recitation that shows much greater anger against traders and money landers than against Zamindars. The main theme of this article is how the economic difficulties of the peasants turn to communal which was expressed through their dominant ideology - Islam.

Small Peasant Commodity Production and Rural Indebtness: The Culture of Sugarcane in Eastern U.P., c. 1880-1920 by Shahid Amin deals with the problems of small peasant commodity productions. The writer highlights the existing literature on commercial agriculture in India such as B.B. Chaudhuri on Bengal, Elizabeth Whitcombe on late nineteenth century and early twentieth century U.P, Neil Charlesworth's study on western India in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, David Washbrook work on dry districts of the Madras presidency, Peter Musgrave, a Cambridge Historian works on the U.P. countryside, Jairus Banaji for late nineteenth century Maharashtra, Colin Fishers unpublished study of indigo in North Bihar. The author mentioned the cultivation of sugarcane and the manufacture of raw sugar in

eastern U.P. and indicated that unless a man has seven sons and twelve grandsons he should not cultivate sugarcane and also point out that peasants without bullock cart works for two days of another cultivator having bullock cart and in exchange got the use of his plough for the next day. It is also noticed that certain practice of cultivations gave us idea of the time about labour and organization involved in producing raw sugar for the market. The article shows us the interconnection of the pressures on peasants from nature, government and othersocial classes.

David Arnold, in *Rebellious Hillmen: The Gudem-Rampa Risings, 1839-1924* talks about religion and regionalism among the hillmen of Andhra. The idea or rather the conception of a well-defined territory was the main catalyst for the cohesion between the elite and the peasant against the British and Telegu invaders. The essay accounts how the movement lost its leaders and momentums, as profits were offered to certain sections of the elite. The peasants were unable to form their own cohesive movement as they were unable to form their own leadership. Arnold quite candidly shows that the Congress were hostile towards the movement and the peasant as they posed a threat to their influence.

In *Peasant Revolt and Indian Nationalism: The Peasant Movement in Awadh, 1919-1922* Panday deals with the nationalism of the masses in Awadh. It accounts, or rather shows how a change in aims and perception took place in the movement as the *sarkar* began to side with the landlords and the Congress turned their back on the peasant as they became bigger and more influential.

In *The Great Indian 'Faction': A Political Theory Examined* David Hardiman highlights the main shortcomings of works done by scholars with regards political movements in the country. He argues that scholars have failed miserably to establish any connection between political groupings in the village and local level found by anthropologist and the political elites that encompassed the all-Indian level. He argues that more attentions should be given to 'class' whenever classes collaborate and should give credit to the lower class to make up their mind on the pros and cons of such collaborations.

The review of the selected literature for this research proposal indicates that knowledge exists regarding cultural resistance in Mizoram. Therefore, this research would seek to amend the existing research gap by providing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the historical narrative surrounding the Mizos' role in cultural resistance against colonialism. The existing literature provides some insights into the resistance efforts of the Mizos, particularly in relation to their adoption of Christianity. However, there is a need for further exploration and analysis of the various forms and strategies of cultural resistance employed by the Mizos during the colonial period.

The proposed research aims to fill this research gap by examining the historical context of Mizoram, its geographical location, population, and physical topography. This will provide a backdrop for understanding the socio-cultural and political dynamics that shaped the Mizos' resistance to colonialism. The research also explores the concept of resistance and culture, as well as the concept of cultural resistance, in order to establish a theoretical framework for the study.

The literature review also highlights the need for a deeper analysis of the historical events and processes that contributed to the Mizos' resistance to colonialism. While some studies have touched upon the role of Christianity in this resistance, there is a need for a more in-depth exploration of the relationship between Christianity and cultural resistance in Mizoram. The research will therefore focus on this aspect, examining how Christianity was used as a means of resistance against colonialism and how it shaped the Mizos' cultural identity.

1.10 Objectives.

The objectives of the thesis are:

- To explore the pre-colonial Mizo culture.
- To investigate the social-cultural changes in colonial Mizoram.
- To examine the process of cultural resistance and Christianity.
- To examine contestation between Western and Mizo traditional cultures within Christianity in Mizoram.

1.11 Area Of Study.

The study covers the history of colonial Mizoram, emphasising the history of resistance to colonial domination in the guise of Christianity. The study also focuses on the Mizo's reaction to the new Western religion, that is, Christianity and its impact on the Mizo society as a whole and the emerging conflict of ideas between western Christianity and the Mizo traditional culture.

1.12 Methodology

The primary sources for this study include oral sources and official records. Oral sources refer to interviews with individuals from the Mizo community who have knowledge of the historical resistance against colonialism. These interviews provide valuable insights and perspectives that may not be found in written records. Official records, on the other hand, can be found in the National Archives of India, Mizoram State Archives, and the Library of Deputy Commissioner's Office in Lunglei. These records may include government documents, correspondence, and reports that shed light on the historical events and actions taken by the Mizos during the colonial period.

Secondary sources for this study include literature and periodical journals. The Mizoram University Library, Mizoram State Library, and Lunglei District Library to access books, articles, and other publications related to Mizoram's history, cultural resistance, and colonialism are consulted of the thesis. These sources provide a broader understanding of the existing scholarship on the subject and offer different perspectives and interpretations.

In addition to written sources, this study also incorporates other forms of cultural expression such as novels, paintings, and folk songs. These forms of artistic expression can provide unique insights into the beliefs, values, and experiences of the Mizos during the colonial period. They can offer a more nuanced understanding of the cultural resistance against colonialism and complement the information obtained from archival and official documents.

Overall, this research employs qualitative method and approaches such as, post-colonial and subaltern approaches to elicit a comprehensive understanding of the colonial history of Mizoram and drawing on a variety of primary and secondary sources, as well as different forms of cultural expression, to gather data and analyse the historical narrative surrounding the Mizos and their role in cultural resistance against colonialism in Mizoram.

1.13 CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter One: Introduction.

This chapter deals with a brief introduction to the area of study, with a particular emphasis on outlining the overall structure of the thesis. Additionally, efforts are made to arrive at an understanding of the issue of cultural resistance.

Chapter Two: Pre-colonial Mizos culture.

The second chapter examines various aspects of pre-colonial Mizo culture. It covers topics such as the origin of chieftainship, the role of the chief and his administration, village officials, taxes, servitude or retainers in pre-colonial Mizo society, belief systems, festivals, economy, and specific cultural institutions and elements like Zawlbuk and Zu or a fermented beer.

Chapter Three: Socio-Cultural Changes in Colonial Mizoram.

This chapter sought to comprehend the socio-cultural transformations that occurred during the colonial rule in Mizoram. The chapter primarily endeavours to understand the changes brought about by British colonial rule, especially concerning key aspects such as administration, the shift in economy, the impact of Christianity, developments in education and healthcare, restrictions on Zu consumption, the decline of Zawlbuk, the abolition of servitude, as well as changes in music, dress, and clothing.

Chapter Four: Cultural Resistance to Colonialism.

This chapter examines the Mizo community's reception of the European Christian missionaries and the subsequent impact of Christianity on the cultural fabric of the Mizos. Special attention was given to the perception of the chiefs of Mizoram regarding this new religion and its social message. The chapter further delved into examining the counter-hegemonic processes among the Mizos. Here, in this chapter, the subalterns are the forces of traditionalism within Mizo Society which strongly oppose the spread of Christianity and there was also every effort made by them to revive the traditional cultural practices and performances.

Chapter Five: Contestation of Western Culture.

In this chapter, attempt is made to understand the nature and outcomes of the contestation between two cultures—Western and Mizo traditional cultures—within the context of Christianity in Mizoram. Furthermore, the chapter identifies another layer of subalternity, specifically the marginalised group within Mizo Christianity. This group comprises individuals who have steadfastly adhered to many traditional elements, despite facing opposition from both missionaries and educated Christians.

Chapter Six: Conclusion.

This chapter summarise the entire thesis and the significant findings of the research.

CHAPTER 2

Pre-Colonial Mizo Culture

The pre-colonial Mizo culture was deeply rooted in traditional beliefs and practices. Their belief system revolved around animism, where spirits were believed to inhabit different aspects of nature. These spirits were highly revered, and rituals were conducted to appease them. Chieftainship was significant in Mizo society, as chiefs were chosen based on lineage and leadership qualities. They held considerable power and were responsible for the welfare and protection of their villages. The village administration was well-organised, with each village having a council of elders who aided the chief in decision-making and resolving disputes. This council was crucial in maintaining law and order and upholding traditional customs and norms. They also managed the distribution of resources and coordinated communal activities. This chapter will explore the Mizo culture before colonial times, specifically focusing on their belief system, chieftainship, and village administration.

2.1 Origin of chieftainship

Tracing the origins of chieftainship within Mizo society presents a complex undertaking. Nevertheless, among historians, there exists a widely accepted viewpoint that situates the inception of Mizo chieftainship within their settlement in Lentlang, an area nestled between the Ṭiau and Run rivers in the present-day Chin Hills of Myanmar. During this formative phase and the preceding periods, the Mizo people encountered recurrent inter-clan conflicts, characterised by frequent raids aimed at acquiring plunder and enslaving captives. These internal rivalries led to the ascendancy of more powerful clans over weaker counterparts, resulting in a lack of tranquillity among the population. In addition to these internal struggles, the Mizos faced a persistent threat from the *Pawi*, another kindred tribe, which further exacerbated the challenges faced by the Mizo people. Since the primary means osubsistence for the Mizo community was shifting cultivation (*jhum* cultivation), safeguarding their agricultural activities became a pressing necessity. Given these

daunting circumstances, the imperative for a steadfast and courageous leader who could ensure communal safety and security during adversity became evident. Consequently, each clan was compelled to appoint its chieftain, thereby laying the cornerstone for the eventual development of chieftainship as a pivotal element within their societal framework.[75]

According to K. Zawla, when Mizo ancestors wandered around the vicinity of *Khampat* and *Seipuikhur* in the Kale-Kabaw valley in Myanmar, an individual named Nova (unrelated to the biblical figure) existed. Nova had a son named Dongula, who, in turn, was a parent to two children: Ninguitea and Bawklua. The union of Bawklua and Lakiri brought forth a son named Sihsinga. Sihsinga, in due course, became the progenitor of Ralnaa, who later became the father of Chhuahlawma.[76] While residing in Seipuikhur, a confrontation arose with the Hualngo tribe, resulting in the unfortunate capture and enslavement of Chhuahlawma.[77] However, he found sanctuary and was adopted by Sepuia Chhakchhuak. In his newfound home, Chhuahlawma entered into marriage and fathered a son named Zahmuaka. Over time, Zahmuaka became a father to seven sons, although the family remained in a state of destitution. The names of Zahmuaka's sons were Zadenga, Paliana, Thangluaha, Thangura, Rivunga, and Rokhuma; regrettably, the seventh son passed away during infancy.

The *Hnamte* clan, originating from *Khawrua* and *Tlangkhua* villages, found themselves without a leader, and the residents of Sepui village declined the role of becoming their chief. Initially hesitant, Zahmuaka turned down the proposition. However, following his wife's advice, he eventually embraced the duty and assumed their leader's position.[78] In the words of V.L. Siama, 'after becoming chief, Zahmuaka, on one occasion, attempted to return to his previous village. However, the *Hnamte* clan extended a basket of paddy to him as a tribute for his service, deterring his

[75] Sangkima, "Origin of chieftainship in early Mizo society," in *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Volume. XI, (2008), 7.
[76] K. Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute Leh an Thlahte Chanchin*, (Aizawl: Lalrinpuii, Mission Veng, 2011), 163.
[77] Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute*, 18.
[78] Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin*, 64-65.

departure.'[79] Zahmuaka's descendants continued to hold authority over the people as time progressed. Scholars such as Sangkima suggest that chieftainship underwent a developmental process, eventually becoming hereditary.[80] Many of the chiefs hailed from the Sailo lineage, specifically the *Thangur* clan of the *Lushei* tribe.[81] Chieftainship also emerged within minor tribes like *Pawi*, *Paihte*, *Hualngo*, and *Fanai*. However, these instances were fewer and existed in a subordinate capacity to the Sailo chiefs.

2.2 Role of the chief and his administration.

In the Lushai Hills, a predominant share of chieftains traced their lineage to the *Sailo* ancestry within the broader Lushai clan. These chieftains exercised dominion primarily over the central zones of the region, with a few notable deviations, such as the *Pawi*, *Mara,* and *Fanai* chieftains, who held sway over the southern hills. Their dominative influence extended over both the populace and the land they inhabited. The villagers effectively assumed the role of their subjects, bearing the expectation of unwavering adherence to the mandates set forth by these chieftains. The Mizo chieftains earned distinction for their philanthropic disposition towards their subjects, a characteristic that garnered profound fealty and reverence from the populace. This steadfast allegiance, in turn, induced a fervent dedication among villagers to champion their chieftains' causes and diligently execute any assignments these leaders delegated.

Furthermore, the chieftains undertook a pivotal role as custodians of the settlement, charged with shielding the inhabitants from external threats posed by adversaries or perilous fauna. Instances of dissent against the chieftains' decrees were infrequent. In the rare event that opposition emerged, exposing the chieftains to resistance from their subjects, dissenting individuals ventured into the prospect of

[79] V.L. Siama, *Mizo History*, (Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press, 1991) .14.
[80] Sangkima, Origin of Chieftainship, 9.
[81] J. Shakespear, *The Lusei-Kuki Clans*, (Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, 2008), 2-5.

expulsion from the community, invariably leading to confiscating their assets as a consequential measure.[82]

Indeed, it holds true that not every Mizo chief displayed benevolence and compassion toward their subjects. A pertinent illustration of this can be found in the case of Chief Chhawnpuia, who confronted the predicament of lacking a biological heir to succeed him in his chieftaincy. Faced with this circumstance, he was determined to adopt a four-year-old boy named Sibuta to make him his rightful heir and successor. Nonetheless, Sibuta's reputation was anything but virtuous, characterised by his propensity for malevolent and malicious conduct. Chief Chhawnpuia's daughter, recognised as Darlalpuii, clung to the hope that the responsibilities intrinsic to assuming the mantle of the chief might effectuate a transformation in his demeanour. Consequently, she resorted to imposing rigorous penalties upon her sibling, fervently aspiring that these measures would incite contrition within him and pave the way for his reformation before his eventual ascension as chief.[83]

At age eight, Sibuta was joined by the birth of a natural son within the family. However, as time unfolded, Sibuta's character ventured down a disquieting path, culminating in a series of abhorrent transgressions. He resorted to the grave act of poisoning his father, Chief Chhawnpuia. Furthermore, in a callous display of fratricide, he perpetrated the slaying of his sibling amidst the forest environs. In an endeavour to veil this act of murder, Sibuta deceitfully propagated the narrative that his brother had met his demise after a fall from a tree, an attempt to retrieve a nest cradling avian progeny. Seizing upon the leverage afforded by his grievous misdeeds, Sibuta strategically manoeuvred himself into the position of the new chief. To solidify his ascendancy, he exhibited a heartless disposition by expelling his sister, Darlalpuii, along with their mother, to the peripheries of the settlement. This calculated expulsion rendered them not only exposed but also devoid of protective safeguards. During the ceremonial observance known as *Khuangchawi*, a feast of merit, Sibuta orchestrated

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[82] Mangkhosat Kipgen, *Christianity and Mizo culture*, (Aizawl: The Mizo theological Conference, 1996), 58-59.

[83] Benjamin Ralte, 'Sibuta', *Historical Journal Mizoram,* Vol-XI, (2010), 16.

a plan to sacrifice ten *Gayal*,[84] a bovine species. However, a calculated stratagem lay concealed within his intentions, as he intentionally presented only nine animals. This subtext insinuated a more sinister design. When the day of the ritual arrived, he issued a directive to his retinue of young men to apprehend his sister, Darlalpuii, for a nefarious purpose.

Nevertheless, the cohorts recoiled from executing this appalling command, refusing to be complicit in such a heinous act. Exhibiting an absence of remorse, Sibuta undertook the responsibility personally, resorting to his agency in ending the life of his sister. This act was enacted with a callousness that equated her existence to that of a mere *Gayal*, slated for sacrifice as part of the *khuangchawi* ceremony.[85]

In the governance of the Mizo village, the chief assumed a collaborative role with a council of esteemed elders referred to as *Upa*. While the chief theoretically retained authoritative power, decisions were not made unilaterally; instead, the chief engaged the *Upas'* counsel prior to settling any affairs. These *Upas*, selected by and subject to dismissal by the chief, occupied a pivotal function in offering guidance to the chief and participating in the village's administrative functions.[86] Among these *Upas*, the paramount influence was vested in the *Upa Min*,[87] who fulfilled the role of the chief's advisor and shared in the chief's elevated status. In synergy with their fellow *Upas*, they collectively constituted the council entrusted with assistance and direction to the chief overseeing village matters. A foundational criterion for the Upas was their profound acquaintance with Mizo traditions and customary jurisprudence, equipping them to dispense sagacious and well-informed input. [88] The extent of authority commanded by the chief was contingent upon personal temperament and aptitude. A chief of robust disposition commanded substantial dominion across all spheres within their purview, whereas a chief of lesser fortitude might be susceptible

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[84] A species of bovine peculiar to the Northeast India, Bangladesh and Myanmar and China, it is also known as *Mithun*

[85] Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute*, 168-169.

[86] N.E. Parry, *A Monograph on Lushai customs and Ceremonies,* (Aizawl: Firma KLM Private Limited on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, 2009), 1.

[87] *Upa Min* is the most inluential person among the Chief's adviser- *Upas.*

[88] Lalhmingliani Ralte, "The Mizo Chief and His Administration Before 1890," in *A Modern History of Mizoram,* ed. Sangkima, (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 2004), 2.

to the sway and impact of the *Upas* perspectives and determinations. In their quotidian administrative undertakings, the chiefs and *Upas* adhered unwaveringly to established Lushai customs and conventions. [89]

The story of Darpawngi from Buanhmun village exemplifies how chiefs of lesser authority could succumb to the influence of their *Upas*. In Buanhmun village, Liankhara Sailo assumed the position of chief, while Darpawngi resided within its precincts. A contentious matter unfurled involving Darpawngi and the *Upa Min* revolves around possessing a kid (young goat), each party asserting rightful ownership.[90] In a bid to adjudicate the dispute, the chief and his council of *Upas* opted for a solution. They positioned the kid at the epicentre of the village grounds and tethered the mother goats of the two claimants proximate to their respective dwellings. The premise was that the kid would instinctively gravitate toward its biological mother, thus definitively identifying its valid owner. The outcome bore witness to the kid instinctively going to Darpawngi's abode and suckling from its veritable maternal breast, eliminating all ambiguity regarding its legitimate proprietorship. Notwithstanding the unequivocal proof bolstering Darpawngi's claim, the chief and the *Upas* inexplicably awarded custody of the kid to the *Upa Min*. This unjust decision angered Darpawngi, compelling her to compose a song expressing her frustration and discontentment with the outcome of the situation –

Khiangvawn Rai kan rah e,	*We are a lonely orphan,*
Ka lengkelin sumtual zawlah	*My kid in the field*
A chun a hai love.	*Recognised her mother*.[91]

[89] Parry, *A Monograph,* 1.
[90] Dr. Doliana, *Mizo Nunhlui leh Hlate*, (Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press, 1998), 145.
[91] Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute*, p. 304

2.2.1 Village Officials.

In addition to the *Upas*, the chief also appointed other village functionaries to assist in the governance of the village. These officials undertook pivotal responsibilities spanning diverse facets of village administration. Among the significant roles were those of - *Tlangau*, *Thirdeng*, *Puithiam*, *Ramhual*, and *Zalen*.

2.2.1.1The Tlangau:

The *Tlangau* occupied a position of considerable significance within the Mizo community, functioning as the village herald or crier. Their paramount responsibility entailed the dissemination of the chief's decrees and commands to the village populace. These proclamations encompassed instructions regarding forthcoming tasks or activities to be undertaken by the villagers, typically relayed during nighttime hours. In recognition of their invaluable service, certain villages expressed gratitude to the *Tlangau* by presenting them with a basket of paddy called *Fathang*.[92] This gesture symbolised a form of remuneration for their pivotal role in communicating the chief's mandates to the community. However, the practice of offering such recompense varied among different villages. While some communities extended this token of appreciation to the *Tlangau*, others did not provide any remuneration. This aspect remained subject to the localised arrangements and customs inherent to each specific village.[93]

2.2.1.2 The Thirdeng:

The role of the *Thirdeng* within the village was of profound importance, as this skilled blacksmith assumed the responsibility of repairing and maintaining the various tools indispensable to the villagers. The act of restoring and upkeeping these tools held a pivotal role, and, in recognition of these services, the blacksmith received compensation in the form of a rice basket from every household in the village following the harvest season. However, the precise compensation arrangement for the

[92] Fathang was a tribute paid to the chief in terms of basket of paddy by all his villagers once in a year which was three baskets full.

[93] Bimal J Dev and Dilip Kumar Lahiri, *Lushai Custom and Ceremonies*, (Delhi: Mittal Publication,1983),6.

services of the *Thirdeng* exhibited variation contingent upon the specific agreement reached during his employment. In some villages, the blacksmith received a rice basket solely from those households for whom he repaired tools. Nevertheless, adhering to customary practices in many villages, the *Thirdeng* was entitled to a rice basket from each household in the village, irrespective of whether he had undertaken tool repairs for them or not. Furthermore, the *Thirdeng* retained an additional claim termed *Thirdeng Sa*, granting him a modest share of any animal hunted or trapped by a villager. This share conventionally constituted the animal's spine and three ribs. If this share was not conferred to the blacksmith, he held the prerogative to demand compensation amounting to Rs 20 instead. Importantly, villagers were not bound to seek out the official village Thirdeng for tool repair exclusively; they retained the liberty to approach a private blacksmith for these services if they preferred.[94]

2.2.1.3 The Puithiam:

Within the Mizo community, the role of *Puithiam* encompassed the position of a priest, charged with orchestrating religious and spiritual rituals. This priestly function was bifurcated into two categories: *Sadawt* and *Bawlpu*. The *Sadawt* was the officially designated priest appointed by the chief to oversee the spiritual affairs of the entire village. Conversely, the *Bawlpu* was a priest, a specific clan group selected to cater to their particular religious requisites. Both types of priests operated as spiritual caretakers of the village, extending their services through spiritual guidance and the pursuit of remedies aligned with their belief systems. In acknowledgement of their sacred duties, priests received compensation in the form of paddy. However, the precise remuneration system was subject to variability among different villages and was contingent upon local arrangements and customs.[95]

2.2.1.4 The Ramhuals:

The *Ramhuals* played a crucial role in the Mizo community as they possessed extensive knowledge of *jhum* cultivation. They served as advisors to determine the

[94] Parry, *A Monograph*, 7.
[95] Dev and Lahiri, *Lushai Custom and Ceremonies*, 7.

appropriate areas for *jhum* cultivation each year, assisting the chief in making informed decisions regarding agricultural practices. As a token of their significance and expertise, other than the chief, the *Ramhuals* were given the privilege of having the first choice of fields to cultivate. This precedence allowed them to select the most fertile and favourable lands for their agricultural endeavours. The *Ramhuals* paid a heavier *fathang* than regular villagers in return for this special privilege. The role of a *Ramhual* was typically bestowed upon skilled and accomplished cultivators, as their expertise was highly valued. However, the number of *Ramhuals* varied among different villages. The system of dividing up *jhum* was as follows -

Initially, the chief exercised his prerogative by choosing the land he intended to cultivate for the year. Subsequently, the *Ramhuals* made their selections sequentially, with each *Ramhuals* choice determined by their position in this order. By this sequence, the *Ramhuals* remunerated the chief with *Fathang*, and the amount paid was directly proportional to the order in which they had made their *jhum* selections. For instance, the first *Ramhual* might offer ten baskets of paddy to the chief, and the second would provide eight, the third six, and the fourth four. While some villages adhered to uniform *Fathang* amounts paid by the *Ramhuals*, in others, these amounts differed. Despite the *Ramhuals'* obligation to provide a more substantial *Fathang* than ordinary villagers, there remained a considerable pool of candidates aspiring to assume this esteemed position, given its favourable standing within the village community.[96]

2.2.1.5 The Zalen:

The Zalen enjoyed a close and amicable relationship with the chief and held the status of free citizens within the community. In recognition of their unique role and expertise, they were exempt from paying *Fathang* to the chief. They were also a privileged group who chose the cultivation land before the ordinary people. Moreover, they stood ready to assist the chief whenever he encountered challenges or required support.

[96] Parry, *A Monograph*, 8.

2.2.2. Taxes.

The chief collected different types of taxes within his jurisdiction. The different types of taxes were *Fathang, Sachhiah, Chichhiah, Khuaichhiah, and Sechhiah.*

2.2.2.1 Fathang.

Fathang represented a tribute tendered to the chief by all villagers within his jurisdiction, including those who cultivated his land. This tribute amounted to three baskets filled with paddy. Villagers lacking adequate paddy for this in-kind payment could substitute it with Rupees 2/- during colonial times. It is important to note that if a villager cultivated the land of another village chief, their chief could not claim the *Fathang* privilege for that particular land, as it was exclusively paid to the chief who owned the land. If a villager cultivated land belonging to two different chiefs, they were obliged to pay *Fathang* to both chiefs. *Fathang* did not apply to vegetables or other crops if cultivated on the same chief's land alongside the main rice crop. However, if a person cultivated crops like maize on another chief's land as subsidiary cultivation, they were required to pay *Fathang* to the chief whose land hosted these subsidiary crops. Furthermore, in cases where two individuals from separate households shared the same parcel of land, they were only obligated to pay *Fathang* for the portion of the land they jointly cultivated.[97]

The quantity of paddy designated as *Fathang* differed from village to village, often measured in baskets. However, during British colonial rule, some regulations established a maximum limit on the amount that could be imposed as *Fathang*. The maximum amount that could be levied was fixed at six-snowflake kerosene oil tins of unwinnowed paddy heaped up full. [98] *Fathang* served a dual purpose. It provided sustenance for the chief and his family and served as a means to assist the chief's subjects who were grappling with sickness, poverty, or other adversities. This system

[97] Parry, *A Monograph*, 12-13.
[98] Parry, *A monograph*, 13.

allowed the chief to maintain economic stability within his village and exert control over the societal dynamics.[99]

2.2.2.2 Sachhiah.

Sachhiah was a levy imposed on villagers who captured or trapped animals, and it consisted of the left foreleg of the animal, commonly referred to as a *Dar*. Established customs governed the allocation of Sachhiah to the chief, and the chief had no discretion in selecting which part of the animal to claim. *Sachhiah* was owed to the village chief, where the hunter had captured or trapped the animal. However, if the animal had perished due to an accident or had been killed by other wild animals, there was no obligation to pay *Sachhiah* to the chief. To ensure compliance with *Sachhiah* payments, a fine of Rupees 40/- was imposed on the individual responsible for the animal's death if they failed to provide the required *Sachhiah* to the chief.[100]

2.2.2.3 Chichhiah.

Certain chiefs possessed salt wells within their jurisdiction, which served as salt sources for consumption and trade. Residents of the village were not allowed to gather salt from these wells without the explicit consent of the chief. When villagers did collect salt, the chief received half a seer [101] of salt from the total quantity collected. Additionally, each individual involved in the salt collection was required to pay half a seer of salt from their share to the chief. If these dues were paid in cash, it amounted to four *annas*. [102]

2.2.2.4 Khuaichhiah.

Khuaichhiah represented another form of tax or due payable to the chief in Mizo society. It was associated with the gathering of honey and wax from giant bees that constructed their hives within rocks, particularly on land belonging to the chief.

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[99] Nancy Lalrinmawii Rokhum, "Social Stratification of The Mizos", in *Mizo Narratives: Accounts from Mizoram*, eds. Malsawmdawngliana and Rohimngmawii (Guwahati, Scientific book Centre, 2013), 32.

[100] Parry, *A monograph*. 13.

[101] *Seer* is a measurement for weight. One *Seer* is equivalent to 1.25 kilograms

[102] Parry, *A monograph*. 13

These hives were regarded as the chief's property when located on the chief's land. Villagers were not permitted to extract honey and wax from these hives without the explicit authorisation of the chief. Villagers could only collect honey and wax with the chief's consent. Once the honey and wax had been gathered and distributed among the villagers, the chief was entitled to an equal share alongside each individual who had participated in the collection. This arrangement ensured that the chief received a fair portion of the collected honey and wax. However, if the honey and wax were obtained without the chief's consent, those involved in the unauthorised collection would be subject to a fine of Rs 40.[103]

2.2.2.5 Sechhiah:

Sechhiah was a particular tax or levy in Mizo society that pertained to the sale of *Gayal*, a type of cattle. When a villager from one village sold their *Gayal* to an individual from another village, they were obligated to offer a young pig as *Sechhiah* to the chief of their village. [104]

Servitude or Retainer in the Mizo Society

Servitude, also known as the *Bawi* system in Mizo society, has an unclear origin but is a significant category within their traditional customs. According to Sangkima, *"The origin of the custom is not known, but it is believed to be as old as the society itself, and only the chief could possess a Bawi."* [105] Lewin asserts that "*Boi*" is the term used in the Mizo dialect, signifying a person who has forfeited the right to individual action, but the term 'slave' would not be entirely appropriate in all other aspects.[106] William Van Schandel stated that, there were two types of servitudes, servitude-by-refuge (*bawi)* and servitude-by- capture (*sal*). [107] There were three main

[103] Parry, *A monograph*, 19.

[104] Rokhum, "Social Stratification of The Mizos", 32.

[105] Sangkima, "Bawi and Sal as an Important Economic Factor in Early Mizo Society with Special Reference to The Chief," in A *Modern History of Mizoram*, ed. Sangkima (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 2004), 14.

[106] T.H. Lewin, *The Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect of the 'Dzo,* 80.

[107] William Van Schandel, "Beyond Labor History's Comfort Zone? Labor Regimes in Northeast India, from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-first Century," in The Lifework of a Labor Historian:

types of servitude-by-refuge known as *Bawi*: Distress servitude, known as *Inpuichhung Bawi*; Sanctuary servitude, known as *Chemsen Bawi*; and Deserter servitude known as Tuklut Bawi.

2.3.1 Distress servitude or *Inpuichhung Bawi*:

These individuals, driven by starvation or dire circumstances, sought refuge in the chief's house. This category primarily consisted of orphans, widows, and others who could not support themselves and lacked relatives to provide for them. *Inpuichhung Bawi*, in particular, comprised a significant portion of this group. In exchange for their food and shelter, *Inpuichhung Bawi* essentially became members of the chief's household. The young men among them were responsible for tasks like cultivating the chief's land and tending to his fish traps. The women and girls took care of duties such as cleaning rice, sewing clothes, fetching wood and water, and looking after the chief's children. In addition to these responsibilities, the *Bawi* often used the chief's firearms and ornaments. It was within the Bawi's rights to leave the chief's house and seek a new master if they were mistreated or harmed by the chief or his wife.

Given that a more significant number of Bawi was believed to enhance the chief's reputation, they were generally well-treated by Chiefs who were willing to receive them. A *Bawi* could earn their freedom by offering one *Gayal* or its equivalent in cash or goods. When a young male Bawi reached the age of marriage, the chief would procure a wife for him, and they would reside in the chief's house with their wife for three years. After this period, they would establish their household and be known as *Inhrang Bawi*, working for themselves. They had to give the chief the hind leg if they killed any animals during this time. Failure to do so necessitated the payment of one *Gayal* or its equivalent. If the chief required rice, he could call upon

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Essays in Honor of Marcel van der Linden, edited by Ulbe Bosma and Karin Hofmeester (The Hague and Boston: Brill, 2018), 174-207, 26 April 2921. https://www.academia.edu/37600727.

the Bawi for assistance, and similarly, if the Bawi needed help, they could seek the chief's aid.[108]

2.3.2 Sanctuary Servitude or *Chemsen Bawi*:

The Sanctuary servitude known as *Chemsen Bawi* were a distinct category of *Bawi* in Mizo society. They included individuals who had committed crimes and sought protection from the chief against retaliation from the aggrieved victim's relatives. This category also encompassed those unable to repay their debts and thieves who had managed to avoid punishment and became the Chief's *Bawi*. The chief would release these individuals from their obligations under the condition that they and their children became his *Bawi*. Unlike *Inhrang Bawi,* the *Chemsen Bawi* did not live in the chief's house and worked directly for him. However, their children were regarded as *Bawi* to the same extent as their parents. Additionally, the chief collected the marriage price for the daughters of the *Chemsen Bawi*.[109]

2.3.3 Deserter servitude or Tuklut Bawi:

The Deserter servitude, known as *Tuklut Bawi,* consisted of individuals who switched sides during the war. They abandoned the losing side and joined the victors, pledging that they and their descendants would become the Chief's Bawi. To secure their freedom, a *Tuklut Bawi* could obtain it by offering a *Gayal*, and one *Gayal* would secure the release of the entire family. Like the *Inhrang Bawi,* the *Tuklut Bawi* did not reside in the chief's house. In most respects, the status and position of the *Tuklut Bawi* were similar to that of the *Inhrang Bawi*.[110]

2.3.4 Sal.

These were the people captured in raids. Though Sal's work was the same as *Bawi,s,* they were never called *Bawi*. Their position was different from *Bawi*. One of the differences between *Sal* and *Bawi* was that *the chief and their captors could own Sal* and be traded for guns. Usually, only marriageable women and children were taken

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[108] Shakespear, *The Lusei – Kuki Clans,* 46,47.
[109] Shakespear, *The Lusei – Kuki Clans,* 48.
[110] Shakespear, *The Lusei – Kuki Clans,* 49.

captive, and the latter were disposed of in marriage, and the captors took the price of the marriage. The captive children were looked after by the captors as their children and well-treated, and they seldom returned to their own houses even when they got the chance.[111]

2.4 Belief system.

In the pre-colonial era, the forebears of the Mizos held the conviction that an ethereal realm inhabited by supernatural beings existed. They espoused the notion that God embodied benevolence and bestowed blessings upon those who exhibited virtuous deeds while also attributing adverse outcomes to individuals of immoral disposition. Consequently, they bestowed upon God the appellations '*Khawzing Pathia"* or '*Khua leh vang*.'[112]

Liangkhaia asserts that the forefathers of the Mizos lacked a formalised belief system, yet, in times of illness, they sought healers and devised a novel ritual performance referred to as '*Arte thlah'* and '*Bul thlah*.' Subsequently, they introduced another form of supplication, believing their entreaties would be answered if their ancestors possessed a deity. These invocations were encapsulated in the phrases '*Pi biakin lo chhang ang che, Pu biakin lo chhang ang che,*' signifying '*May the revered maternal ancestors respond, may the revered paternal ancestors respond*.' As they embarked on migrations, they gradually relinquished their former prayers, instead invoking the names of their ancestral villages and their progenitors. For instance, the *Lusei* clan evoked their Seipuikhur and Muchhip villages, the *Khiangte* clan referenced Belmual and Lungchhuan villages, and the *Chawngthu* clan referenced Sanzawl and Bochung villages. Likewise, various other clans invoked their respective village appellations.[113]

According to C. Lianthanga, the Mizo ancestors' belief systems remained relatively obscure before their settlement along the *Run* River. However, following their crossing of the *Run* River, it is believed that they developed a more structured

[111] Shakespear, *The Lusei – Kuki Clans*, 49.
[112] C. Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo Nun* (Aizawl: Mizoram Publication Board, 1999), 6.
[113] Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin*, 45.

belief system. Around 1500 A.D., a significant event transpired near Sepui village. Hualthana, the son of Chief Seipuia, experienced a visionary encounter with an enigmatic figure who proclaimed, '*I am your ancestral deity, the creator of your existence. Worship me, and I shall bestow blessings upon you*.' Hualthana was convinced that he had encountered the divine creator, and along with his wife Neihrimi, they commenced their worship of this deity.[114] Subsequently, the Chhakchhuak clan and their descendants adopted the veneration of Hualthana's deity, incorporating the names of Hualthana and Neihrimi into their prayers, '*Hualthana biakin hual ang che, Neihrimi biakin hual ang che*' signifying '*May Hualthana's deity watch over you, and may Neihrimi's deity protect you*.'[115]

The descendants of the chief, known as the Sailo clan, adopted and emulated the belief system of the Chhakchhuak clan. During their prayer rituals, they incorporated the names of their ancestors, uttering phrases like 'Zahmuaka's *God protect you; Lawileri God's protect you"* This exemplifies how their belief system evolved, often influenced by other clans who introduced their ancestral names into their spiritual practices, particularly those that could be traced back through their lineage.[116]

According to the perceptions shared by James Dokhuma, the term '*Sakhua'* can be dissected into its constituent parts, *Sa* and *Khua*. In their belief system, *Sa* represented the role of the creator, while *Khua'* embodied the role of protector and bestower of blessings upon them. Esteemed scholars like B. Lalthangliana and L.K. Liana have concurred with this perspective, asserting that the fusion of *Sa* and *Khua* led to the term *Sakhua*. Furthermore, *Sa* was revered symbolically through the pig, while *Khua* found its representation through the *Gayal*, with both animals holding significance in their religious practices.[117]

Within the Mizos belief system, two prominent sacrificial rituals hold significance: the ceremony aimed at soliciting blessings from God and the ritual

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[114] Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo Nun*, 6.
[115] Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo Nun*, 6.
[116] Lianthang, *Hmanlai Mizo Nun*, 6 .
[117] B. Lalthangliana, *Pi Pu Chhuahtlang* (Chanmari: Hrangbana College Publication, 1998), 195.

intended to placate malevolent spirits, which they believe have the potential to inflict harm and illness upon them. Below are succinct descriptions of these two sacrificial performances -

2.4.1 Sakung.

When a married son decided to leave his father's household to establish his residence, a customary practice known as '*Sakung a phun*'[118] was observed. This ritual involved the sacrificial killing of a male pig, referred to as '*Vawkpa sutnghak*.' [119] It was strictly forbidden to sell a male pig that a family had raised for this purpose, and if they happened to rear two male pigs, only the smaller one was eligible for sale.[120] This act symbolised the transition to the son's independent belief system. [121] During the ritual, the pig was positioned beneath the stairs of the new house. The designated leader, known as the '*fatu*,'[122] untied the rope from the pig's leg while a private priest recited a prescribed chant, marking the significance of this momentous occasion.

2.4.2 Chawng/Chawnfang.

This particular sacrifice was conducted either by an individual or a family. It involved the ritual sacrifice of two male pigs and one female pig for an event called '*Chawnfang*.' The female pig, known as '*Sabebuh*,' was reserved for the children's consumption. The ceremony spanned five days and featured the consumption of forty pots of rice beer. A substantial quantity of unhusked rice had to be meticulously cleaned to prepare the rice beer, typically accomplished by pounding it in a mortar. Young men and women were tasked with this laborious task, often carrying it out under the moonlight. As a token of appreciation, those who cleaned the rice received seven pots of rice beer, referred to as '*Sumdeng Zu*,' on two occasions.[123] Young men

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[118] *Sakung* signify a pillar in the veranda.

[119] *Vawkpa sutnghak* is a male pig domesticated by a family, it was not allowed to sell to someone else as it should be killed when the son leaves the house to live by his own, if the family have two male pig the older one should be used for vawkpa sutnghak and the younger can be sold out.

[120] L.K. Liana, *Zofate Thu Hla*, (Aizawl: C. Lalsanglura, 1994),135.

[121] Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo Nun*, 10.

[122] *Fatu* are the people who presides at a feast, they are often relations to the one who gives the feast

[123] C. Chawngkunga, *Sakhua* (Aizawl: Department of Art and Culture, Gov't of Mizoram, 1997), 34.

and women were also responsible for gathering firewood, referred to as '*chawngthing*.' In exchange for this service, they were rewarded with seven pots of rice beer, but only on a single occasion, known as '*Thing ek zu*.' [124]

As the Chawng/ chawngfang spanned for five days, the observance of each day was structured in the following manner -

2.4.2.1 In chhe siam ni:

The first day of the *Chawng* or *Chawngfang* ritual was dedicated to renovating the house. The host extended invitations to the *tufa*[125] and close friends. Since the day was devoted to house refurbishment, the host and his friends constructed a unique structure called '*luhkapui*.' [126] To support this structure, they utilised '*ṭhawmmawl*,' [127] and they also worked on refurbishing the walls and the house floor. The first night of the ritual was known as '*Thingfar zan*.' On this night, young men and women were generously provided with seven vessels of rice beer, referred to as '*sumdeng zu*.' Without sleeping, they stayed awake throughout the night. The finest quality of rice beer was set aside and placed in a *Gayal's* horn cup. The honour of drinking from this horn cup was bestowed upon the most distinguished '*tlawm ngai* '[128] male, signifying the highest recognition in the village. If this distinguished '*tlawm ngai'* individual happened to be in another location, efforts were made to locate him, and no one was permitted to partake from the horn cup until he had done so. [129]

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[124] Liangkhaia, *Mizo awmdan hlui & Mizo mi leh thil hmingthangte leh Mizo Sakhua*, (Aizawl: Mizoram Publication Board, 2008), 14.

[125] *Tufa* are a grandchild, a nephew or niece, a cousin.

[126] *Luhkapui* is a platform in front of the Mizos house or the individual logs which form the floor of the above platform.

[127] *Ṭhawmmawl* is a pile or post under a house supporting the floor.

[128] To put one's own inclinations on one side and do a thing which one would rather not do, with the object either of keeping up one's prestige, etc., or of helping or pleasing another, or of not disappointing another. To do whatever the occasion demands no matter how distasteful or inconvenient it may be to oneself or to one's own inclinations.

[129] Chawngkunga, *Sakhua,* 34.

2.4.2.2 Zupui ni:

The second day marked the most significant celebration. A pig was sacrificed on this day, and an elaborate feast was arranged. The children eagerly requested '*sabebuh*.' [130] Following the hearty meal and the consumption of '*sabebuh'* in the host's house, young women sat amidst the young men, and together they sang the traditional '*chawng chen zai'* song. The host and the '*val upa*' [131] performed a lively dance on the floor, and the night was filled with merriment, all without any sleep. On this festive night, young men and women were gifted seven pots of rice beer to enhance the celebrations further. [132]

2.4.2.3 Zu ṭhing ni:

The third day of the feast marked a slightly more subdued affair compared to the grand celebration of the second day. While there was still an ample supply of rice beer and a feast was enjoyed, it did not reach the same scale as the previous day's festivities. The night of the third day was observed similarly to the second night, and young men and women were once again presented with pots of rice beer to partake in the revelry. [133]

2.4.2.4 Saruhkawl cheuh ni also known as Chawndo ni:

On this particular day, the host family typically ran low on rice beer and meat, with only a limited supply known as '*kawmchar zu*' remaining. The remaining meat and bones were combined with rice to make the most out of the available resources. At this point, the *tufa* uttered the phrase '*chawng kan do*' and brought food items from their homes to share with the host family. [134]

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[130] *Sabebuh* ngen was to ask or demand their share of either the *chawng* or *khuangchawi* feast. The Mizo boys do by shaking the house of the giver of the feast while they chant the following ditty- I want *Sabebuh*, I want it, a bit salty, a bit salty, along with the meat, with the meat.

[131] Val upa was an oldish young man or a middle-aged man.

[132] Liangkhaia, *Mizo awmdan hlui*, 15.

[133] Liangkhaia, *Mizo awmdan hlui*,15.

[134] Liangkhaia, *Mizo awmdan hlui*,15.

2.4.2.5 Tual phiah ni:

The final day of the *Chawng* or *Chawngfang* was the fifth day. On this day, the *tufa* once more contributed their food items to the host family, and they all partook in a communal feast together. Additionally, efforts were made to tidy the host's house and vicinity. It was also customary to return any borrowed vessels to their respective families on this day, thus concluding the ritual with a sense of shared celebration and communal support. [135]

2.4.3. Sedawi/Sedawi chhun.

In the traditional practices of the Mizo culture, the slaughter or sale of male *Gayal* and male pigs was infrequently undertaken without specific cause, primarily because these animals held significant importance in their religious beliefs, being reserved exclusively for sacrificial rites. It was within the prerogative of the *khuangchawi*[136] family to exercise unrestricted authority over these animals, allowing them to determine their fate and usage as they saw fit.

2.4.3.1 Sedawi:

Within the context of *Sedawi* rituals, a specific protocol was adhered to when sacrificing a young, mature *Gayal* with horns and ears of equal size, often accompanied by the slaughter of a male pig. When the decision to sacrifice the *Gayal* was made, a ritualistic post known as '*seluphan'* had to be obtained. This process involved the participation of the priest and five close associates, one of whom had to be a priest's relative. They brought along a rooster and rice for the ceremony. Upon reaching the designated tree to be used for the sacrificial post, the priest, bedabbling the tree three times with rice beer and reciting an incantation, began the proceedings. After reciting the chant, the priest placed a small stone on a wooden stick and shot it three times toward the top of the tree while the others exclaimed, '*It reaches over the tree*. 'Following this, the priest would carefully chop the tree once with an axe, and the five men would cut down the tree. As the tree was being cut down, the priest would

[135] Chawngkunga, *Sakhua*, 38.
[136] *Khuangchawi* was a name of a public feast given by the Chiefs and other rich people in the village.

shout, '*My rooster crows, take it down*,' after which they would proceed to sacrifice the rooster and partake in a meal consisting of the rooster and the rice, then they took home the wood for a sacrificial post. Later in the evening, before erecting the sacrificial post, the priest would create a circular boundary on the ground using porcupine quills. He would then issue a challenge three times, echoed by the others, before setting up the post. On the lower fork of the *seluphan*, the priest would hammer in a small, round pine tree with its face directed outward.[137]

2.4.3.2 Seluphan:

The chestnut tree was predominantly chosen for crafting the *seluphan*, the sacred sacrificial post. This post was typically placed to the east of the street, adjacent to the front of the house. The *Gayal*, destined for sacrifice, was securely tethered to the post, allowing for its ritual slaughter from the platform situated in front of the house. The key participants in this ceremony included the host, who wielded a spear; his wife, equipped with a netted satchel covered in animal skin; and the priest, who carried a large gourd. The trio emerged from the house together, with the priest first bedabbling rice beer from his gourd and then reciting the prescribed chant. Following the priest's invocation, the host skilfully pierced the animal's heart from the opposite side and entered the house without looking back. His wife followed suit, and the priest trailed behind. Having been dispatched by the designated individual referred to as the '*fatu*,' the Gayal was then dissected into smaller portions. The head of the *Gayal* was placed upon the *seluphan*. During the subsequent seven days, the participants refrained from tending to their essential needs as they observed this sacred ritual.[138]

2.4.4. Dawino chhui

Liangkhaia notes that the *Sedawi* ritual was followed by the *Dawino Chhui* ceremony, often accompanied by the expression '*dawino kan chhui*.' When the family's children matured, they could no longer depend on their parents for support.

[137] Chawngkunga, *Sakhua*, 42.
[138] Liangkhaia, *Mizo awmdan hlui*, 17.

Instead, this tradition served as a means to seek blessings from the spirits for their habitation, encompassing the areas beneath, around, and above their dwelling place.[139]

2.4.4.1 Chunglam.

This ritual constituted an act of reverence towards '*Khua'*, [140] wherein a sacrificial offering of either a goat aged one month or more or, in some cases, a piglet was employed. The process involved extracting rice beer from '*sumhmun'*[141] and subsequently transferring it into the '*thlanvawng'* [142] plate. Following this, the priest would recite chants designed to shield the family's spirits from potential unseen threats. To offer the meat's fat, a '*thlanvawng'* plate, approximately the size of two spans when measured using the thumb and middle finger, was employed and bordered along the sides, referred to as '*chunghribawm*.' For the fats of the meat, the skull was placed inside a small basket, and the meat's juices were poured over it without the addition of salt. Subsequently, this small basket was positioned within the '*chunghribawm*.' After the priest recited the appropriate offertory chant, the meat was consumed. Those who finished their meal would cleanse their hands using the rice beer in the '*thlanvawng'* plate. [143]

2.4.4.2 Hnuaipui.

Their belief system encompassed the notion of sentient spirits residing beneath the earth's surface, residing within the eight layers, safeguarding them from potential calamities like landslides and other disasters. A female pig was offered for the

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[139] Zairema, *Pi Pute Biak Hi* (Aizawl: Zorun Community, 2009), 19.

[140] *Khua* is referred to as the maker and protector of the village where the people resides and their community as well as rivers and hills. As the word *khua* is a bit short they mostly used *khuavang* and *khuanu* is used in songs.

[141] *Sumhmun* is the front veranda of a Mizos house where the large wooden mortar for husking rice is generally fixed; a veranda, a front porch.

[142] *Thlanvawng* is the name of a flowering tree, the wood of which is used for making pig-troughs, plates, butts, drums, mortars, gun-stocks, etc.

[143] Liana, *Zofate Thu Hla*, 138.

sacrificial ceremony, and the '*serh'* [144] was carefully buried. The cooked meat from this offering was consumed within the confines of the household, with the condition that it should be fully consumed within three days. Occasionally, individuals from their village were invited to partake in the communal meal.[145]

2.4.4.3 Hnuaite.

This ritual represented a form of reverence directed towards the guardian spirit of the dwelling and its surrounding environment. A piglet was chosen as the sacrificial offering and was ritually slaughtered beneath the house. The '*serh*,' was hung on the upper roof of the postern. The meat was then placed on a '*thuk*,' [146] and chants were recited. Following the recitation, the family consumed the meat as part of the ritual.[147]

2.4.5 Kawngpui siam.

Within the Mizo belief system, a significant and communal practice known as '*Kawngpui siam*' held great importance. Typically, the practice of their belief system was orchestrated by a single family, with assistance from their relatives and clan members, and it was a source of enjoyment and cohesion for the entire village community. However, '*Kawngpui siam*' took on a distinct character as it was observed collectively by the entire village populace at a specified time. Before the commencement of '*Kawngpui siam*,' the village chief and elders would communicate this upcoming event to the residents, usually with at least a two-week notice through a communication channel known as '*Tlang au*.' [148] It was imperative for all villagers to be present in the village on the designated day, as no one was to be excluded from this communal practice. If a villager happened to be visiting another distant village or was away on a journey when '*Kawngpui siam*' was observed, it was interpreted as a sign that the village community no longer required their presence. Consequently, these

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[144] *Serh* is the part of a sacrificed animal or fowl dedicated to the God or Spirit to whom it was offered.

[145] Zairema, *Pi Pute Biak Hi,* 20.

[146] *Thuk* was the part of Mizos hearth enclosed by the three stones which support the pot over the fire; a fireplace, a grate, a stove.

[147] Zairema, *Pi Pute Biak Hi,* 20.

[148] *Tlang au* was village herald whose duty is to make known the orders of the chief, a town crier or a herald.

individuals often chose to relocate to another village. The community was adamant about not observing the day without the participation of absent villagers and waited for a time when all could partake in the event together.

The purpose of '*Kawngpui siam*' was to conduct a ritual sacrifice aimed at securing prosperity for the entire village, particularly in the realms of hunting and trapping wild animals, as well as ensuring protection against potential adversaries and defeating their enemies. This ritual was conducted yearly; alternatively, a pig and a hen were employed as sacrificial offerings. Notably, only Chief *Sadawt* held the authority to perform this sacred sacrificial ceremony. [149]

The ritual sacrifice occurred in the evening, taking place on the main pathway just outside the village's southern entrance. A circular area was designated for this purpose, created using a climbing plant. In the centre of this spot, ashes were sprinkled and left undisturbed overnight. The expectation was that footprints of animals or humans would appear on the ash-covered spot by the following day. The priest, accompanied by a group of men in odd numbers with names associated with blessings, would gather at the spot. They would partake in the meat of the sacrificial animal. Afterwards, the priest would take a stone and a wooden chip with him. Before entering the chief's house, the priest would utter, '*Open the door for us, we are rawite, and we bring home religious blessings; we are punte, and we bring home abundance*.' Upon entering, the priest would throw the stones and chips of wood on the floor, proclaiming, '*This is a human skull, this is an animal skull*,' treating these objects as though they were genuine human and animal skulls, generating a sense of joy among those present. The following day, the ash on the selected spot was examined. If an animal footprint was observed, it was believed that hunting would be successful. Conversely, if a human footprint was found, it was seen as an omen of someone in the village meeting an unnatural and unfortunate fate.[150]

[149] *Sadawt* was a private exorcist or priest, especially such as are employed by ruling chiefs.
[150] Chawngkunga, *Sakhua,* 56.

2.4.6 Fano Dawi.

The villagers conducted another communal sacrificial ritual known as '*Fano dawi*' to seek blessings for their rice crops. During this event, strict prohibitions were in place, including refraining from all work forms and even pounding unhusked rice. Only a black hen was deemed suitable for sacrifice for this particular sacrificial performance. The hen was ceremoniously slaughtered by '*Sadawt*', typically near the chief's barn, and the gathered participants consumed the meat. The chief played a pivotal role in this ritual by cooking the rice and providing rice beer for everyone to drink. '*Fano dawi*' was predominantly observed during June.[151]

2.5 Festivals.

In the pre-colonial Mizo society, three primary festivals held significant cultural and social importance. These festivals were *Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut,* and *Pawl Kut*.

2.5.1 Chapchar Kut:

The most significant festival in Mizo society was '*Chapchar Kut'*, usually celebrated after the forest had been cleared for cultivation, often in March. Following the communal observance of *Kawngpui siam*, *Chapchar Kut* would be celebrated within a few days. [152] The festival's duration varied depending on the availability of *zu*, a traditional rice beer, and lasted for about a week. [153] Leading up to the festival, young men would engage in hunting activities, which they referred to as '*Kut sa zawn ni*.' On the designated day, the Lushai people would ritually sacrifice pigs, known as '*Lusei vawk talh ni*'. The subsequent day, referred to as '*Hrilh*,' was marked by restrictions among the Lushais, including the prohibition of making lard, consuming sour fruits, or conversing with strangers from other villages. On this same day, non-Lushai individuals would perform their pig sacrifices, termed '*Lutawi vawk talh ni*.' The day following these rituals was named '*Zupui ni*,' during which *zu* consumption

[151] Zairema, *Pi Pute Biak Hi*, 38.
[152] Dokuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung*, 79.
[153] Parry, *A monograph*, 90.

was the focus, and in the evening, a practice called '*Chawnghnawt*' took place, where boys and girls exchanged rice, meat, and eggs by placing them into each other's mouths. This was followed by '*Chai*,' a celebratory dance and song performance in which young men and women alternately formed a circle. The subsequent day, known as '*Zuthing chawini*,' was dedicated to continuing the consumption of *zu* until the supply was depleted. [154] *Chapchar Kut* was the most important festival in Mizo society, celebrated with great enthusiasm and cultural significance. [155]

2.5.2 Mim Kut:

This particular festival held a relatively minor status within Mizo society. The consumption of zu and bread marked it without the customary sacrifice of pigs. The primary purpose of this festival was to pay homage to individuals who had passed away in previous years. [156] Each household would prepare bread, crafting small portions individually wrapped in leaves. These bread items were arranged in even numbers and placed upon the memorials of the deceased. In contrast, for the living members of the household, bread was consumed in odd numbers. [157] The consumption of *zu* occurred in a house where someone had experienced a death within the past year. This festival typically lasted a maximum of two days and was generally observed during September. [158]

2.5.3 Pawl kut:

This festival, occurring immediately after the harvest, served as an expression of gratitude and thanksgiving, typically extending for approximately one week. [159] During this period, women in the households collected eggs while the men embarked on hunting expeditions. In instances where hunting proved unfruitful, it was customary to substitute with the sacrifice of a hen for the festival. A noteworthy cultural tradition of this festival dictated that no family should engage in quarrels during this time, as it

[154] Siama, *Mizo History*, 87.
[155] Parry, *A monograph*, 91.
[156] Parry, *A monograph*, 91.
[157] Siama, *Mizo History*, 85.
[158] Parry, *A Monograph*, 91.
[159] Parry, *A Monograph*, 91.

was intended to be a joyous celebration. The Lushai community would carry out pig sacrifices on the first day, with non-Lushai residents performing their pig sacrifices on the subsequent day. A designated memorial platform at the village entrance was the focal point for the festivities, where children and adults congregated to participate in the celebration. Children engaged in sharing, placing eggs and meats into each other's mouths, while young men and women collectively enjoyed the consumption of *zu*. [160]

2.6 Economy.

Agriculture was the main occupation of the Mizo.[161] The whole population can be classified as cultivators except for a few people who live on contributions of rice given to them by the community in exchange for their service.[162] Like other tribes in the Northeast, Mizos depended on the method of agricultural practice known as shifting cultivation.[163] It was known as 'young-ya' in Burma and 'dhai-ya' in Central Province (present-day Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Maharashtra)[164] , and particularly in the North-East it is known as '*jhum*', and in Mizoram, it is known as 'Lo'.[165] The villagers needed to move from one place to another as the practice of shifting cultivation needed fertile land. The Mizo usually occupied one village for four to five years and then moved to another new village; the change of place was known as '*khawthar kai*', which became a part of their economic and social life.[166] Though the Mizo economy was sustained by shifting cultivation, it also had auxiliary activities like hunting and fishing.

Conflicts and raids among villages were common in the pre-colonial Mizo society. James Dokhuma said the Mizos typically organised their cultivated fields for accessible communication and collaborative defence against potential raiders. Rather

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[160] Siama, *Mizo History*, 86.

[161] Lalngurliana Sailo, "Economic Changes and Social Evolution: Mizoram (1870-1960)," (PhD thesis, North Eastern Hill University, 2004), 65.

[162] Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, 16.

[163] Sangkima, "Economy and Society of pre-colonial Mizoram," in *Society and Economy in North East India vol -2*, (New Delhi: Fozail Ahmad Qadri Ed, Regency Publication, 2006), 201.

[164] TH Lewin, *Wild Races Of South Eastern India* (London: WH Allen & Co, 1870), 31.

[165] Sangkima, "*Economy* and Society of pre-colonial Mizoram", 201.

[166] Zawla. *Mizo Pi Pute*, 128.

than dispersing their fields, they concentrated them in a manner that facilitated contact with one another, enabling them to unite in defence against the raiders when needed.[167] When allocating land for cultivation, a structured hierarchy was observed. The chief had the first choice of cultivable land, with his *Bawi* or retainers generally responsible for cultivating the chief's chosen fields. Following the chief's selection, the chief members of the council or *Upas* were granted the second choice of cultivable land, and then the *Ramhuals*. In some villages, the *Upas* and *Ramhuals* made their land selections jointly. The Zalen came after them in the hierarchy, and finally, the villagers were allowed to choose the land they would cultivate. [168]

The cutting down of the forest for cultivation was a heavy task, and it involved various stages, including cutting down jungle trees and bamboo, burning, sowing seeds, weeding, and harvesting. The cutting was done mainly by men between January and February; during the year's cold season, as soon as the forest was cut down, a feast known as *Chapchar Kut* was held.[169] This feast was the most important in the Lushai year and was held to celebrate the arrival of the Lushai New Year. The festival mostly took the form of a week-long feasting and drinking. Before this, a ceremony known as *Kawngpui Siam* was performed to ensure that the New Year may bring luck in hunting and that the crops may be good [170]

If rain occurred by the end of March or April, it was common to intentionally set fire to the cleared hillside, mainly if the fallen timber or bamboo was still damp. The selection of the right day for this controlled burn was a skilful task. All the men in the Mizo community would participate in this endeavour, equipped with knives and sticks, with the primary goal of safeguarding the fire lines to prevent any inadvertent harm to the untouched forest. McCall emphasised that the Mizos deserved commendation for their wisdom in earnestly endeavouring to minimise any avoidable damage to what constituted their essential life source. [171]

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[167] Dokuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung*, 8
[168] Dokuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung*, 8-9.
[169] AG McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, (Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, 2015),167.
[170] Parry, *A monograph*, p. 90.
[171] McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, 168.

Given that rice served as the main staple in the Mizo diet, paddy rice was the principal crop cultivated. Villagers engaged in sowing rice seeds along the hill slopes during May, selecting a time when rain was imminent or already falling. The sowing process was relatively rudimentary in nature. It involved creating shallow holes using *daos* (traditional cutting tools) and depositing a few seeds into each hole. [172] There was no specific arrangement, and approximately eighteen inches or so of these tiny holes were scooped out using a Lushai hoe. Seven or more grains of rice were dibbled in each hole before moving on to sow another. Notably, the holes were left unfilled. Germination typically commenced five to six days after sowing the seeds, providing sufficient rainfall. In addition to the main rice crop, various vegetable seeds were cultivated in the paddy fields. These included yams, pepper, herbs, various beans, cotton, and tobacco.[173]

The rice fields underwent meticulous weeding between June and October, typically three to four times, to prevent invasive weeds from suffocating the emerging shoots. In June, a traditional ceremony called *Fano Dawi* was performed to ensure bountiful crops and minimise mosquito infestations. [174] Weeding was strenuous and back-aching work.[175] The initial weeding, referred to as *Hnuhpui*, was followed by *Hnuhhram* as the second round, *Athual* as the third weeding, and concluded with *Athial* as the final weeding. [176] These weeding activities were usually carried out through a cooperative labour arrangement known as *Inlawm*. [177] This reciprocal labour system primarily involved young unmarried men and women, often with romantic interests in each other. [178]

The harvest season unfolded towards the year's end, spanning the months of November and December, the reaping after months of nature's vagaries. As described by A.G. McCall, various adversities such as droughts impeding the rice ear's growth,

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[172] Sailo, "Economic Changes," 66.
[173] McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, 168.
[174] Parry, *A monograph*, 91.
[175] McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, 169.
[176] Dokuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung*, 17.
[177] Sailo, "Economic Changes," 67.
[178] Dokuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung*, 17.

hidden insects gnawing at the shoot roots, and untimely winds capable of rendering once-promising rice fields unproductive, an easy prey to covetous rats, were ever-present threats. [179] Subsequent to the successful harvest gathering for a celebration, a feast known as *Pawl Kut* ensued, serving as a form of harvest thanksgiving. This festive occasion is usually extended for about one week. [180]

Hunting played a significant role and served as a supplementary economic activity. As noted by J. Shakespear, "*The hill men had a strong penchant for fresh meat and possessed adept skills in trapping game*." [181] Dexterous hunters held a respected position in Mizo society, especially those who achieved the esteemed status of *Thangchhuah*.[182] Before embarking on hunting expeditions, a ritual offering called *Lasikhal* was made to a spirit named *Lasi*, whom the Lushai people believed to be the guardian of all wild animals. [183] Upon their return from a hunting trip, the most accomplished young hunter was honoured with a cup of rice beer, and this recognition extended to certain public ceremonies thereafter.[184] The Mizos displayed remarkable craftsmanship in crafting snares and traps for capturing various animals. One such trap involved bending a sturdy sapling or bamboo as a spring mechanism, propelling the ensnared animal into the air, and suspending it by one foot. Another trap, designed for tigers and other wild creatures, consisted of a rudimentary cage constructed from logs open at both ends. The top of this cage was composed of multiple large tree trunks configured to collapse and crush any animals passing through it. Additionally, the Mizos exhibited proficiency in creating small rat traps and snares to capture birds.[185]

Fishing constituted a vital component of the Mizo economy, primarily employing a bamboo and timber structure known as *Ngawi dawh* in the Mizo

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[179] McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, 169.

[180] Parry, *A monograph*, 91.

[181] Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, 33.

[182] *Thangchhuah* was 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, and they and their children are allowed to wear the *thangchhuah puan* or cloth. The possession of this title is regarded by the Luhsais as a passport to *Pialral* or Paradise. J.J. Lorrain, dictionary of the Lushai Language, p, 447

[183] Parry, *A monograph*, 14.

[184] Sailo, "Economic Changes," 69.

[185] R.G. Woodthrope, *The Lushai Expedition* (Aizawl: Tribal research Institute, 1978), 88.

language. These structures, reinforced with stones, spanned across rivers from one bank to the other, serving as weirs. Fishing was also done using conventional casting nets, spears, and doas. [186] In addition to these methods, various indigenous fishing techniques were employed, including *Sangha tlang vuak* (Community herbal fishing), *Bawngdawh* (The use of barricades), *Lungtuk* (Employing hammers), *Lui thliar* (Water diversion), *Suar dan* (Temporary water blockage), *Chawnzial* (Cave fencing), *Tui theh kang* (Water bailing). [187] Water was sometimes poisoned to capture fishes by immersing decoctions made from the barks, roots, and seeds of plants such as *ankasa*, *khangding*, *khangtak*, *khawkherh*, *khiangzo*, *ruthei*, *rucheh*, *rulei*, and *ngaihhih*.[188] It was customary for both the village Chief and widows who did not participate in these activities to receive their share of the catch, and also when the entire community engaged in fishing endeavours. [189]

2.7 Zawlbuk.

The *Zawlbuk*, often referred to as a bachelors' dormitory, held a pivotal role in Mizo society, serving as a vital social institution where unmarried young men spent their nights together. This establishment played a crucial role in their training and development into responsible adults. A *Zawlbuk* was established in each village, generally situated at the village centre near the chief's residence. The *Zawlbuk* provided a place for bachelors to sleep, served as a location for their education, and moulded them into responsible members of the community. Travellers passing through the village could find accommodation in the Zawlbuk for the night, and even the village chief utilised it as a venue to issue orders and host meetings.

Given that the young men stayed together at night, they were readily available in case of unexpected emergencies. When urgent situations arose, such as the need to transport a sick individual or dig a grave or when a tiger or leopard intruded into the

[186] Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, 35.

[187] H. Vanlalhruaia, "Mizo Economy and Ancillary Branches in Pre-Colonial Period," in in *Mizo Narratives: accounts from Mizoram*, eds. Malsawmdawngliana and Rohimngmawii (Guwahati, Scientific book Centre, 2013), 75-76.

[188] B. Lalthangliana, *Hmasang Zonun*, (Aizawl: MC Lalrinthanga, Khatla, 1992), 64.

[189] Lalthangliana, *Hmasang Zonun*, 68.

village and threatened livestock, the young men would promptly respond to the call for assistance. [190] These young men aspired to be self-sacrificing individuals. In instances where a tiger was trapped, they often vied to be the first to reach the scene; occasionally, they feigned slumber. Some would create fine shavings using split bamboo for a kindling fire and keep them nearby during their sleep. When the time came, they would rush out of the *Zawlbuk* without waiting for their comrades, but they were expected to obey the instructions of their elders, known as *Upas*, who advised against venturing alone.[191] The *Zawlbuk* also served as a hub for learning various activities, including wrestling and other games. Wrestling was a compulsory activity for all bachelors, with younger boys initially wrestling amongst themselves, and any attempts at evasion were not tolerated. The *Val Upa,* or elder youth, served as the leaders of the *Zawlbuk*, overseeing its activities and guiding the younger members (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Zawlbuk or A bachelors' dormitory.
Source: www.gutenberg.org

[190] Parry, *A monograph*, 8-9.
[191] Challiana, *Hmasang Mizo Awmdan* (Lunglei: South Lushai Mission Press, 1956), 20

The residents of the *Zawlbuk* were divided into upper and lower stages, with the lower stage known as *thingnawifawm*. [192] Parents would send their boys, typically around eleven years old, to the *Zawlbuk*, where they would be admitted into the *thingnawifawm* stage. Monitors were appointed from the younger group, known as *thingnawifawm hotu* or junior boys, to maintain discipline and oversee the boys of the *thingnawifawm* stage. Generally, there were around four monitors, but the number varied depending on the village's size. Usually, one monitor was designated for each street within the village to ensure effective control over all the boys residing in different parts of the village. The primary responsibility of the monitors was to ensure that the *thingnawifawm* boys collected sufficient firewood for the *Zawlbuk*. Gathering firewood was the primary task of the *thingnawifawm* boys to fuel the communal fire. In cases where any boys failed to fulfil this duty, they were punished. This penalty required the defaulters to collect double the firewood the next day. If they neglected their assigned task, the punishment escalated to triple or quadruple the usual workload.[193] Another method employed to discipline mischievous or misbehaving boys was to have them stand in a circle, placing the wrongdoer in the centre and having the others push them back and forth. This form of punishment was known as *Awlrawt*.[194] During their time in the *thingnawifawm* stage, the boys learned essential values such as obedience to their elders, self-discipline, and respect for social norms and values.

If a *thingnawifawm* boy grumbled to his parents that he had been mistreated by the monitor, and if the enraged parents responded by verbally abusing or physically assaulting the monitor, the young men from the *Zawlbuk* would collectively take action against the boy's father. They would visit the offender's home, sit on the floor, grasp onto the wooden posts, and sway their bodies back and forth until the entire house trembled dangerously. They would only depart after thoroughly frightening the household. This form of punishment was referred to as *Sawi*, and its purpose was to

[192] *Thingnawifawm* was to collect fire stick or twig, done by male child.
[193] Parry, *A monograph,* 10.
[194] Siama, *Mizo History*, 34.

demonstrate their lack of respect for the individual being disciplined, regardless of whether he chose to relocate to another village or not. [195]

There was a specific system for young boys to progress to the status of *tlangval* and attain freedom from their obligations in the *Zawlbuk*, a transitional phase from *thingnawifawm*. When a boy appeared to be maturing and reaching puberty, he underwent an examination conducted by the *tlangvals* or the young men. During this examination, one of his pubic hairs was plucked, and the length of the hair was crucial in determining his status. If the pubic hair was long enough to encircle the *vaibel*, the stem of a bamboo pipe, the individual was recognised as a *tlangval* or young man. However, if the pubic hair was too short to wrap around the bamboo pipe stem, the boy was required to continue his duties as a *thingnawifawm*. In cases where a boy had the physical size and appearance of a *thingnawifawm* but failed the examination twice or on three occasions, he was typically granted a grace pass. Another method to attain the status of *tlangval* was for a *thingnawifawm* boy to hunt and kill wild animals or cut a tiger's tail. Engaging in such activities automatically qualified him as a *tlangval*. Killing wild animals and, particularly, cutting a tiger's tail was seen as a warrior's work, signifying bravery.

Furthermore, if a *thingnawifawm* boy were involved in fornication, he would be accepted into the *tlangval* stage, as having intercourse with an unmarried woman before marriage was considered a significant achievement. In situations where the *thingnawifawm* boy was hesitant to discuss his sexual encounters, he would confide in a trusted friend, who would then speak on his behalf. To ensure fairness and prevent false accusations that could harm a girl or woman's reputation, there needed to be a witness to confirm the involvement in such activities. [196]

Upon completing the *thingnawifawm* stage, the young individuals were granted admission to the upper stage known as *Tlangval*. [197] In this stage, they were recognised as grown-up adults and gained the privilege of sleeping in the Zawlbuk

[195] Parry, *A monograph,* p 11.
[196] Dokuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung,* 189.
[197] Tlangval is a bachelor.

alongside other bachelors. [198] Zawlbuk served as a traditional school or institution, and the teaching method employed was predominantly oral. The instructors were the older members of the community, and there were no specific appointed teachers. Knowledge and wisdom were passed down through verbal communication and the sharing of traditional wisdom and practices.

After the evening meal, a gathering occurred in the Zawlbuk consisting of all the village bachelors and a young married man who had three or four children and resided in his father's house. Older men from the community further joined this assembly. Bachelors interested in wooing women left the Zawlbuk to socialise, while those who chose to stay behind engaged in listening to the conversations of the older community members. During these gatherings, the older individuals shared stories and discussions about various aspects of life. These topics included reminiscences of their youth, tales of warriors and self-sacrificing individuals, hunting techniques, agricultural practices, religious rituals and ceremonies, craftsmanship and toolmaking, warfare tactics, narratives about beautiful women, and insights into the Mizo way of life. By participating and listening attentively, the bachelors absorbed knowledge and were encouraged to ask questions to satisfy their curiosity and gain a deeper understanding of their culture and traditions. [199]

The *Zawlbuk* also served as a platform for discussions and conflict resolution. In the context of relationships, Mizo society followed a courting tradition where a male suitor visited the home of a female. If the woman's parents behaved in a manner that the bachelor found disagreeable or denied the young man entry into their house, the bachelor would inform his friends in the *Zawlbuk*. Together, they would approach the family in question and take action, which involved dismantling the family's platform, tearing down walls, and removing their chicken coop. In response to this act, the woman's parents would offer a gesture of reconciliation by presenting a large and small pot of rice beer to the bachelors to apologise for their actions. In a sense, the bachelors held significant authority in the village, mainly when contentious issues

[198] C Lalremruata, "Zawlbuk- A Traditional School Of The Mizo" *Historical Journal Mizoram, Volume – XV*, (2014), 243.
[199] Dokuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung*, 186.

arose between unmarried women and bachelors. The village Chief and elders generally refrained from intervening in such matters. However, apart from these specific issues, the bachelors were generally obedient and respectful towards their chief and elders in the village. [200]

In the *Zawlbuk*, which was exclusively designated for bachelors, women were prohibited from entering. If, by any chance, a bachelor dreamt of a woman entering the *Zawlbuk*, it was perceived as an ominous sign, and they believed that the woman seen in the dream would face an unfortunate fate, according to their cultural beliefs regarding the *Zawlbuk*. In the rare event that a woman did enter the *Zawlbuk* against these norms, the bachelors would refer to her as '*zang zawng hmeichhia*,' which translates to a woman seeking a male partner or, in more colloquial terms, a woman seeking a male penis for sexual intercourse. This terminology was used to signify the transgression of the established cultural boundaries related to the Zawlbuk and to emphasise the impropriety of such actions within their societal framework.[201]

2.8 Zu

The term *zu* referred to beer-fermented liquor or the fermented rice grains prepared for beer production by adding water. [202] In the early Mizo society, *zu* held significant cultural and social importance. It was integral to various aspects of their lives and was used on all important occasions. Festivals and religious ceremonies, in particular, would not be complete without including *zu* as an essential element in their rituals and celebrations. [203]

In the pre-colonial Mizo society, there were three primary types of *zu*, namely *Zupui*, *Zufang*, and *Rakzu*. Among these, *Zupui* was the most commonly consumed and was typically served as a communal drink, often shared among community members during social gatherings and events. It was a popular and widely enjoyed beverage among the people. On the other hand, *Zufang* and *Rakzu* were not commonly

[200] Challiana, *Hmasang Mizo Awmdan*, 20-21.
[201] Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung*, 187.
[202] J.H. Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language* (Kolkata: The Asiatic Society, 2008), 570.
[203]Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo Nun*,103

consumed in public settings. *Zufang* was usually consumed by family members after returning home from their workplace, somewhat akin to how people today might have a cup of tea upon returning home. It had a more domestic and private use within family settings. *Rakzu*, on the other hand, was relatively rare and reserved for special occasions. It was occasionally consumed by the chief and his elders, signifying its elevated status and restricted use in specific ceremonies within the society. [204]

2.8.1 Zupui:

Zupui was a type of beer that differed from the spirits like *rakzu* and *zufang*. [205] It was commonly made from husked rice and brewed with the chaff without separating the chaff from the rice. [206] This distinctive brewing method, where husked rice and chaff were mixed together, led to its alternative name, *Hranden zu*. *Zupui* had a special role in communal events such as festivals and religious ceremonies. During these occasions, young men and women collaborated in husking the rice, a process referred to as *Chawng buh den*. The *zu* served to the youth engaged in husking the rice was known as *Sumdeng zu,* signifying the communal and collaborative nature of the drink, which brought the community together during important social and religious gatherings. [207]

2.8.2 Zufang:

Zufang was a type of fermented beverage made from *kawng lawng* or fazu, a variety of glutinous rice. It was brewed in smaller pots than those used to make other beverage types. The fermented rice from *Zufang* was commonly consumed within the family setting. It served as a refreshment for family members and a beverage to share with friends during social gatherings.[208]

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[204] *Zu in Mizo Society; Past and Present*, (Aizawl: Tribal research Institute, Mizoram, 1983), p. 3.
[205] Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, 576.
[206] Siama, *Mizo History*, 70.
[207] *Zu in Mizo Society*, 4.
[208] Siama, *Mizo History*, 70 also on *Zu in Mizo Society*, 7.

2.8.3 Rakzu:

Rakzu was a type of spirit distilled from grains that had already been fermented. The general population did not commonly consume this spirit, and was not typically served as a communal drink during social events. *Rakzu* was known for its potency and the ease with which it could lead to inebriation. *Rakzu* was primarily consumed by the chiefs, their elders, and older individuals within the community. It was a drink enjoyed in smaller, select gatherings for companionship rather than being a widely shared beverage among ordinary people.

Among the male youth in Mizo society, consuming *zu,* the fermented beverage, was not a regular occurrence. Instead, they typically partook in it during specific occasions, including festivals and religious ceremonies. Additionally, they might indulge in *zu* when they return home after extended hunting trips or spending several nights in the forests. As for the female youth, their consumption of *zu* was even more restricted. They generally drank only in moderation and typically reserved it for important events and special occasions.[209]

In Mizo culture, there were two methods of drinking zu, the fermented beer: *zukhawn* and *zusiak*. *Zukhawn*: This method involved placing a small bamboo or straw tube directly onto the beer pot and then sucking the beer out from the pot through this tube. *Zukhawn* was essentially the act of drinking beer directly from the container using a tube. *Zusiak*: In contrast, *zusiak* involved using a siphon or similar apparatus to transfer the beer from the pot to a separate receptacle or container. The beer would flow through the siphon and then be distributed to the drinkers in cups or other vessels. While the methods of transferring the beer differed between *zukhawn* and *zusiak*, the actual act of drinking the beer from cups or other containers was the same in both cases.[210]

In the tradition of drinking *zu,* cups played a significant role, and there were three distinct types of cups, *namely Lalno, nopui, hailawn no,* or *noleng*: *Lalno* cups

[209] Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo Nun,* 103.
[210] *Zu in Mizo Society*, 27.

were reserved for the chief of the village. It was a cup of honour explicitly meant for the chief. Some chiefs had their own *Lalno* cups, but there was no separate *Lalno in many villages*, as the chief was universally respected and honoured by all villagers. Whenever the chief attended a gathering where *zu* was being consumed, he was automatically treated as the chief guest and served first. *Nopui*: *Nopui* cups were designated for the house owner where the *zu* was being served. It was the cup in which the drinking took place in that household.

Additionally, *Nopui* cups could be used for a favoured person who had done significant good deeds for the village. *Hailawn No* or *Noleng*: These cups were meant for ordinary people and were more commonly used among the general populace. They were the cups used by individuals who were not the chief or the owner of the house where the gathering occurred. In the absence of the chief, the first share of *zu* was usually served to one of the respected elders who had gained fame during their youth.[211]

2.9 Conclusion

The history of the Mizo people, like many indigenous communities globally, is a rich tapestry woven with elements of culture, tradition, resilience, and adaptation. Although the colonial era disrupted and transformed their way of life, fragments of pre-colonial Mizo society can be gleaned from various sources, such as colonial ethnographies, early 20th-century accounts from educated Mizos, and the enduring oral traditions of the community.

The emergence of chieftainship within Mizo society was a complex process influenced by historical and socio-economic factors. Recurrent conflicts and raids between clans led to the need for leadership in resolving disputes and ensuring the safety of the community. The presence of neighbouring groups like the Pawi further heightened the need for strong leadership in protecting the Mizo people from external threats.

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[211] *Zu in Mizo Society*, 28.

Village officials played vital roles in administration and governance, receiving compensation in the form of rice for their services. These officials collected taxes, demonstrating the chief's economic control and authority over various aspects of the villagers' lives. The servitude system, an integral part of Mizo society, had three main categories and provided essential support to the chief's household and the broader community.

The Mizo belief system revolved around a divine moral order, with rituals performed to seek blessings and prosperity. Festivals like Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut, and Pawl Kut held cultural and social significance. Agriculture, hunting, and fishing were essential for the Mizo economy, with shifting cultivation being the primary agricultural practice.

The Zawlbuk served as a social institution for young men, offering training, communal living, and conflict resolution. Zu, a fermented beverage, held cultural importance and was consumed on specific occasions. The impact of British colonialism in the 19th century had lasting consequences on the Mizo people, as it did for many other indigenous communities in the region.

CHAPTER III

SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES IN COLONIAL MIZORAM

The interaction between the British government and the Mizos, characterized by British military expeditions, arose directly from the incursions conducted by Mizo chiefs into adjacent territories, including regions under British control. These expeditions ultimately paved the way for the colonization of the Mizo Hills. The inability of Mizo chiefs to effectively oppose British colonization through armed resistance resulted in the establishment of British paramountcy over the entire Lushai Hills. The methods of British domination in the Lushai Hills encompassed the imposition of tributary payments, such as taxes, and the utilization of forced labour, among other measures. This chapter examines the elements of colonial rule while seeking to understand the colonial rule in Mizoram and the socio-cultural changes it entails.

3.1 Colonial Administration.

Upon the British colonization of the Lushai Hills, with the northern region falling under Assam's jurisdiction and the southern region coming under Bengal's authority, a pivotal event known as the Chin-Lushai Conference convened in Calcutta on the 25th of December 1892. The agenda of this conference was to deliberate upon matters pertaining to civil and military administration associated with the governance of the Chin and Lushai hills. During the conference, a series of resolutions were adopted to address these issues.

The conference participants agree that it is essential to have one administrative head for the entire Chin-Lushai Hills region under the authority of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. However, they acknowledge that this cannot be done immediately due to communication, supplies, and transport challenges. They propose improving communication lines between important areas and providing necessary staff for transport and supplies. The boundaries of the new administrative area should generally align with the territory occupied by the newly controlled indigenous people.

Still, the specific details need to be discussed with local officers. The conference also agrees to place North and South Lushai, along with a portion of the Arracan Hill Tracts, under the administration of Assam, on the condition that transport and commissariat equipment are provided for supplies and that funds are granted for food and telegraph services.[212]

In 1896, a subsequent Chin-Lushai Conference took place, this time being convened at Lungleh. The attendees at this conference comprised officers who put forth several noteworthy recommendations. Some of the key points among these recommendations were as follows: -

1. Withdrawal of the outpost at Fort Treager, but no other change in the position of existing permanent posts;
2. Constitution of a single battalion of Military Police, of 10 companies of 110 men each, to replace the existing battalion in the North and South Lushai Hills and the Civil Police force at Demagiri.
3. Construction of roads between Aijal and Lungleh and between Aijal and Falam. Upon completion of these roads, it will probably be safe to effect considerable reductions in the garrisons of the Chin and Lushai Hills.
4. Amalgamation of the North and South Lushai Hills at some date not later than the 1st of April 1898.[213]

Following the convening of this conference, a significant outcome emerged with the realization of the proposal to merge the North and South Lushai Hills, which officially came into effect on 1st April 1898. This merger was enacted under the provisions of the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation of 1880, and subsequent notifications were issued in accordance with this Act and the Scheduled District Act of 1874. [214] The initial overseer of this administrative change was Colonel J.

[212] Foreign Department Report on Chin Lushai Hills, September 1892, National Archive of India, New Delhi.

[213] Letter, "Letter to the Chief Commissioner of Assam" from the Secretary to the Government of India, Fort William, the 27th January 1898. No. 147-E. B", CB 19, Pol 188. Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

[214] McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, 1.

Shakespear. Further organizational enhancements were implemented, involving the division of the entire Lushai Hills district into two sub-divisions: Aizawl sub-division and Lunglei sub-division. Aizawl was designated as the headquarters for the whole district, while Lunglei served as the headquarters for the Lunglei sub-division.

During this period, Shakespear devised the 'Land Settlement Policy' and established the territorial boundaries of different regional chieftains. In 1901, an innovative system known as 'Circle Administration' was introduced, wherein the district was subdivided into eighteen circles, with eleven falling under the Aizawl sub-division and seven under the Lunglei sub-division. Each circle was assigned a Circle Interpreter who acted as an intermediary between the Sub-Divisional Officers and the local chieftains. [215] Circle Interpreters were aided by one circle *Chaprasi;* the effectiveness of Circle Interpreters hinged on insight, competence, and meticulous management of records and reports. They maintained a register for the current year, recording all relevant current orders and notes. They were later handed over to a Lushai clerk for storage over three years before being discarded. Before submitting their current registers, Circle Interpreters extracted orders and notes with ongoing significance, which were then transcribed into the new register for the subsequent years. Among their specific responsibilities, Circle Interpreters were tasked with preparing House Tax Assessments and compiling statistical data.

The position of Lushai clerk was filled from the ranks of Circle Interpreters and entailed a substantial level of responsibility. The efficient operation of certain challenging aspects of the administration, such as impressments and supplies, heavily relied on the performance of this officer. In Lunglei, the Lushai clerk served as the President of Rahsi Veng Panchayat and oversaw Rahsi Veng. This included managing the assessment and collection of the Personal Residence Surcharge within the Lunglei Station. Interestingly, the people of Lunglei, who were non-government civilians, paid him *Sachhiah*[216] regardless of where they hunted animals. Chiefs from other villages

[215]*Mizoram District Gazetteers 1989*, 47.

[216] *Sachhiah* was a portion of an animal's meat, given as a due by subjects to their chief.

were not entitled to claim any dues if residents of Rahsi Veng hunted animals in their respective areas.

Moreover, the Lushai clerk played a crucial role in requesting and organizing supplies as needed by Government Officers. He was responsible for ensuring that all impressments and demands were promptly communicated and efficiently managed. He also assumed the general oversight of the Circle Register and compiled monthly statistics received from the Circle Interpreter. Additionally, he performed preliminary tasks for the statistical clerk, who was responsible for verifying the accuracy of the final figures. [217]

The chiefs were stripped of certain privileges but were permitted to retain their positions as chiefs in their villages under the condition that they would comply with government directives and contribute to maintaining law and order within their respective jurisdictions. The rights of the chiefs that were abolished included: -

1. Right to order capital punishment
2. Right to seize food stores and property of villagers who wished to transfer their allegiance.
3. Proprietary rights over lands, now arbitrarily reserved by the government, in the interest of the public living in neighbouring areas in British India.
4. Right to tax traders doing business within the chief's jurisdiction.
5. Right to freedom of action in relation to making their sons chiefs under their own jurisdiction.
6. Right to help *Bawis* who were, by custom, not open to redemption.
7. Right to freedom of action in relation to other kinds of *Bawi* who used to constitute the means whereby the chiefs could cultivate and acquire the ability to sustain their villages in peace and in war.
8. Right to attach the property of their villagers when they wish or deem fit, with or without fault on the part of the villagers.[218]

[217] McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis,* 1.
[218] *Mizoram District Gazetteers 1989,* 48.

In each village, a village record keeper, *Khawchhiar,*[219] was appointed by each chief. His responsibilities included maintaining a record book where he documented the village house list and details regarding revenue exemptions, particularly *Kuli-awl*.[220] Additionally, he kept a record of all individuals who possessed firearms, including their license numbers. He diligently recorded all orders received related to the supply of impressed labour and preserved village boundary documents, as well as any orders of a permanent nature that impacted the village or its residents. Another crucial duty of the *Khawchhiar* was the maintenance of a birth register, where he recorded the names of all newborn children, whether male or female, along with the name of the child's father. This information had to be entered as soon as a name was assigned to the child. The *Khawchhiar* was also responsible for documenting deaths, specifying the cause and the age of the deceased. He was required to submit a detailed report and a monthly list of names to the Circle Interpreter without fail, with the deadline being the seventh day of each month following the one for which the statistics had been compiled. Upon receiving these returns, the Circle Interpreter would incorporate them into his monthly report and submit them as early as possible to the Superintendent or Sub-Divisional Officer, ensuring that these officers received the reports no later than the 15th day of any given month. The *Khawchhiar* could be subject to a fine of Re1/- if there were any irregularities or delays in performing these tasks. Furthermore, his registers were subject to examination by various authorities, including the Vaccinating Inspection Staff, Circle Staff, and Officers during their tours as opportunities allowed. [221]

3.2 Shift in Economy.

The Mizos traditionally practised *jhum* cultivation, a method in which forests were cleared and burned to enrich the soil. Once the soil fertility declined, they would shift to another suitable piece of land. However, following the Expedition of 1871-1872, TH Lewin introduced a new approach to land cultivation; he mentioned that-"Chiefest among these measures, was the permission to advance small sums

[219] *Khawchhiar* was a village record keeper.
[220] *Kuli-awl* was an exemption from forced-labour.
[221] McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis,* 1.

(aggregating, however, £4,000) to the hill people, as loans with which to purchase ploughs and cattle, and so enable them once and forever, as I hoped, to abandon their old nomadic system of "jum" culture and settle down to own, and hold land, as a permanent cultivator."[222] Additionally, Lewin established a bazaar or market in Demagiri in 1873. The government allocated Rs 3000 for this purpose, and eleven shops were set up under Lewin's supervision. Rubber played a central role in this market, and barter systems were prevalent for trade during this period. Mizos engaged in exchanges, trading items such as rubber, ivory, and cotton in return for commodities like salt, iron, dao (a type of knife), and tobacco, among others.[223]

During the 1870s, money was not prevalent among the Mizos. However, with the British colonization of the hills in 1890, the concept of currency became known to the local population. A notable instance illustrating the introduction of money was when Colonel Shakespear announced rewards for individuals like Zakapa, Pazika, and their councillors after the defeat of Murray. These rewards were denominated in rupees (Rs), with Zakapa receiving Rs 500, Pazika Rs 200, and councillors Rs 100 each.[224] Another significant development occurred during a durbar of chiefs convened by Shakespear from 1st to 4th January 1892, near Lunglei. Representatives from various tribes attended this gathering. During this event, Shakespear made several important announcements. He declared that British occupation was permanent and emphasized that internal conflicts and feuds among the tribes would not be tolerated, with stringent punishments to be enforced.

Regarding revenue collection, the British authorities began accepting tribute payments in the form of rice, and labour was to be compensated at a rate of 4 annas a day. [225] These measures indicated the introduction of a monetary economy. Hence,

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[222] TH Lewin, *A Fly on the Wheel or How I Helped to Govern India*, (Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute,2005), 294.

[223] Lalngurliana Sailo, "Frontier Markets and The Mizos" *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Volume-XV, (2014), 101.

[224] C Lalthlengliana, *The Lushai Hills; Annexation, Resistance and Pacification (1886-1898)*, (New Delhi: M.P Misra for Akansha Publishing House, 2007), 92.

[225] Report, "Administration report of the South Lushai Hills for the year 1891-92". By J Shakespear CB-1, G-9, Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

one of the discernible impacts of colonialism in the Lushai Hills was the introduction and integration of a money-based economy.

In 1895, when the British authorities demanded coolies from the chiefs, the chiefs complied without any objections. They not only supplied the required coolies but also paid tribute as requested. However, in most cases, the chiefs insisted on making these payments in rice instead of money. [226] During the Chin-Lushai Conference of 1896 held in Lunglei, Mr. Porteous, the Political Officer from the North Lushai Hills, proposed a wage of 4 annas per day for impressed labour, which was considerably lower than the prevailing market rate of 8 annas. Additionally, the house tax rate, previously set at Re. 1 per house, was increased to Rs. 2, aligning it with the rates in other hill tracts of the Province of Assam. [227] Following consultations with the Assam administration, rules governing tribute rates and impressed labour were officially implemented in April 1899.

Regarding tribute, it was mandated that it be paid in rice at the rate of 20 seers[228] of cleaned rice or one mound[229] of unhusked rice per house. The decision of whether to accept husked or unhusked grain was left to the discretion of the Superintendent. A commutation rate of Rs 2/- per house was applied when rice was not provided. For impressed labour, each household was required to provide one coolie for ten days, excluding the time spent travelling to and from the work site, and the rate of payment was set at eight annas a day. [230] Although money had been introduced initially, it was not extensively used. The insistence on tribute payments in the form of rice was due to the British dependency on the local food supply, which had

[226] Letter, "Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department regarding report" from Captain Shakespear on the administration of the South Lushai Hills for the year 1894-95." from H.J.S. Cotton, Esqr, CB 4, G-44, Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

[227] Letter, "Letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal" from R.H. Snyed Hutchinson Superintendent South Lushai Hills, Summary of opinions of Officers attending the chin-Lushai Conference held at Lungleh, December 1896, on subjects submitted for discussion." CB 3, Pol-36, Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

[228] One seer is equivalent to 1.25 kilogram.

[229] One mound is equivalent to 37.324 kilograms.

[230] Letter, "Letter to the Commissioner of Chittagong from C.E.A. W. Oldham Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal." CB 13, Pol-136, Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

significant implications for the Mizo economy. Additionally, the people were still required to pay *Fathang* to their chiefs, and the practice of paying tribute in the form of goods and items had a notable impact on their economic well-being.

3.3 Christianity.

Wherever the colonial powers were established and, in their presence, the arrival of Christian missions was almost inevitable. Historically, there was a prevalent assumption that colonial expansion into non-Christian regions was seen as God's providence, presenting an opportunity to spread the Gospel to what was often referred to as the "heathen" world. [231] Before the Christian missionaries arrived among the Mizos, their religious belief system was rooted in "animism." According to this belief, human existence was intertwined with a mystical assembly of powerful entities, most of which were perceived as having unfriendly characteristics. These entities were formless spirits for which no tangible images or clear concepts could be formed. Some of these spiritual beings held specific responsibilities or spheres of influence; for instance, one was associated with cholera, another with smallpox, and yet another with diseases affecting cattle. Some were believed to inhabit rocks, others in trees, and others were connected to natural features like rivers, whirlpools, waterfalls, or secluded pools hidden in the hills. The Mizos felt compelled to diligently appease all of these entities, as they were believed to be the sources of various afflictions. [232] Resources were typically allocated to appease these spirits, and priests conducted sacrificial rituals.

When contrasting the pre-colonial Mizo religion with Christianity, it becomes evident that these belief systems have significant differences. In the Mizo animistic religion, the belief was rooted in numerous powerful spirits and entities, each with its sphere of influence and often perceived as unfriendly forces. Rituals and sacrifices were performed to appease these spirits to ward off afflictions and misfortune. On the other hand, Christianity introduces a fundamentally different worldview. In

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[231] Yangkahoa Vashum, "The Doctrine of Devine Healing in the Old Testament," *Journal of Contemporary Thought and Practices* 7, no.3(2011) January 2019. http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/jcta/07-03_yangkahoa vashum.pdf.

[232] McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, 67.

Christianity, there is the belief in one God, the creator of Heaven and Earth. The central tenet is the crucifixion of Jesus, God's son, who is seen as the pathway to salvation. According to Christian doctrine, Jesus sacrificed himself to atone for the sins of humanity. Through repentance and turning to God, individuals can find forgiveness for their sins. Christianity also emphasizes a message of love, peace, and harmony. It teaches people to love one another, live together in peace, assist those in need, and practice forgiveness during times of dispute. These principles are central to Christian teachings and guide followers' behaviour and moral values. The transition from pre-colonial Mizo animism to Christianity represents a shift from a belief system based on appeasing multiple spirits to a monotheistic faith centred around the worship of one God, with an emphasis on love, peace, and forgiveness as core principles.

The introduction of Christianity to the Lushai Hills was facilitated by J.H. Lorrain and his companion, F.W. Savidge, who received official permission from A.W. Davis, the North Lushai Hills Political Officer, on December 25, 1893. Their mission was sponsored by a wealthy merchant named Arthington from Leeds, near London, and consequently became known as the Arthington Aborigine Mission.[233] On 26th December 1893, Lorrain and Savidge departed from Silchar and embarked on a boat journey along the *Tlawng* River. This river journey spanned 16 days, eventually arriving at Sairang on 11th January 1894. Interestingly, although their arrival occurred on the 11th of January, Lorrain officially recorded their arrival date in his Log Book on January 13, 1894.

> 13 Jan 94 Arrival at Sairang (on 11 Jan 1894)
>
> Arrival in Sairang, 50 coolies at work for fort. Told if asked Capt. Loch he would ___? Them to us. Write and sent letter up by 2 boatmen, answered that he could give us no assistance.[234]

Before receiving official permission from A.W. Davis to enter the Lushai Hills, J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge had a crucial meeting with Assam Chief Commissioner Sir W. Ward during his visit to Silchar in December. Following a formal and

[233] H Thangtungnung , *Anglo-Lushai Relations 1890-1947*, (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2014), 121.

[234] J.H. Lorrain, "Log Book," (Serkawn: BCM Archive), 27.

meaningful discussion, Lorrain saw a glimmer of hope regarding their entry into the Lushai Hills. It is important to note that Lorrain and Savidge were the first white individuals who were not government employees to contemplate living in such a challenging and often dangerous area, which understandably made government officials apprehensive. They were concerned about the potential complications Lorrain and Savidge might pose for the government and were also worried that the Mizos who had converted to Christianity might resist government authority. Under stringent conditions, an agreement was eventually reached, granting permission for their ingress into the Lushai Hills. However, upon their arrival at Sairang, when they requested the assistance of coolies from Captain Loch, he declined their request, citing orders received that prohibited providing any aid to missionaries.[235]

Despite the official government's refusal to assist them, J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge were determined to reach the Lushai Hills and carry out their mission. Whether they were influenced by "cultural hegemony" is not explicitly known, but their primary objective was clear: to spread the Gospel. Despite encountering numerous challenging circumstances and obstacles, they remained committed to completing their mission. Their unwavering dedication to their religious mission showed their determination to persevere despite difficulties.

As they were not given any assistance, they were delayed in Sairang for five days. Lorrain wrote his first impression of the Lushai people:

> 16.1.94 Delayed in Sairang 5 days trying to get goods conveyed up to Aijal
>
> First Impression. I am sure if you were to walk through a Lushai village and were to see the pigs, fowls and youngsters all rotting and scrambling about in the dirt and could peep inside the squalid hovels in which these people live; you would think that it was high time that they were taught to be a little less like beast. And yet with all this dirt the Lushais seem to be a fine race and capable of great improvement. We can see the differences between those who have come in contact with their conquerors and those who have not. The former class wash their faces and some even make themselves look very nice.[236]

[235] PL Lianzuala, *Zofate Chanchin Tha Rawn Hlantute*, (Lunglei: Joseph Lalhlimpuia, 2012), 95.
[236] Lorrain, "Log Book," 28.

Lorrain's initial impressions of the Mizo society of that era appeared to be influenced by the prevailing norms and perspectives of his time. His observations reflected the state of the Mizo society as he encountered it. He noted that the Mizos had not received formal education and were living in what he described as a "primitive society." This observation likely referred to their lack of access to formal schooling and modern amenities, standard features of Western societies at the time. As far as health was concerned, Lorrain also raised about the hygiene practices of the Mizos, particularly the interactions of youngsters with pigs and fowls. This observation suggested that, in his view, the society did not meet the hygienic standards of the Western society he was familiar with. Lorrain's comparison of Mizos' living conditions to that of a beast can be seen as a reflection of the prevailing mentality of white superiority that was prevalent during the colonial era. Such comparisons were often used to justify colonialism and the mission to "civilize" indigenous populations. Despite these observations, Lorrain seemed to have a positive outlook on the Mizos. He believed they were a fine race with the potential for significant improvement. This optimism likely fuelled his missionary work, as he saw the possibility for the Mizos to adopt what he considered more "civilized" ways of life, including Christianity.

Lorrain's primary goal was to introduce the Christian God to the Mizos, who held their traditional belief system rooted in a space for various supernatural entities. This endeavour involved language challenges, particularly in finding the equivalent terms for God in the Mizo language. Lorrain's confusion regarding the terminology likely arose because he primarily relied on Lewin's *Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect* as a source of knowledge. In Lewin's book, '*Patien'* was equated with 'evil spirit,'[237] while '*Kuavang*' was described as 'God, the good spirit.'[238] However, during his time among the people of the northern Lushai Hills, Lorrain discovered that the local usage differed from Lewin's descriptions. The people in North Lushai Hills referred to the benevolent spirit as *Pathian*.

[237] Lewin, *The Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect of the 'Dzo*, xii.
[238] Lewin, *The Progressive Colloquial*, ix.

29.1.94 Pathian = God or Devil

> The word we used in the south (according to Lewin) for Devil seems to be used here for God and the word we have always used for God is not known here at all.[239]

The validation of *Pathian* as the equivalent of God in the Mizo language appears to have occurred during the time of the Welsh Missionaries D.E. Jones (1897-1926) and Edwin Rowlands (1898-1923). They likely played a significant role in refining and clarifying the terminology used to convey religious concepts to the Mizos, including the term for God. It was not until much later, in 1940, when Lorrain published his "Dictionary of the Lushai Language," he officially designated *Pathian* as 'God, the Giver and Preserver of Life.'[240] This demonstrates the evolving understanding and consensus within the missionary community regarding the terminology for religious concepts in the Mizo language. Additionally, Lorrain's differentiation of *Khuavang* as a 'guardian spirit' likely aimed to provide greater clarity and accuracy in conveying religious and spiritual concepts to the Mizos.

The transition from the Arthington Aborigine Mission to the Welsh Mission marked a significant change in the leadership and management of the missionary efforts in the Lushai Hills. D.E. Jones, a Welsh missionary, arrived on August 31, 1897, while the two missionaries from the Arthington Aborigine Mission departed from the Lushai Hills on 31st December 1897 due to the termination of the mission.[241] This transition meant that the Welsh Mission took over the responsibility for the mission activities in the region. In 1899, D.E. Jones visited the South Lushai Hills and began preaching the Gospel. He noticed that in the village of Pukpui, a considerable crowd gathered to listen to his preaching, unlike in other villages where only a few adults and children showed interest. Upon inquiry, Jones learned that the larger turnout in Pukpui was attributed to a prophecy made by Darphawka,[242] who had foretold,

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[239] Lorrain, "Log Book," 28.

[240] J.H. Lorrain, *Dictionary of The Lushai Language* (Kolkata: The Asiatic Society, 2008), p.267.

[241] B Lalthangliana, *India, Burma, Bangladesh-a MIZO KOHHRANTE*, (Aizawl: Remkungi, 2007), 20.

[242] Lalhmuaka, *Zoram Thim Ata Engah*, (Aizawl: Synod Publication Board, 1980),107.

'*Tuipui ral atangin mingo an lo kal anga, an thu lo awih rawh u*,'[243] In the same year, Sub-Overseer Sohan Roy also preached the Gospel. Thankunga[244] inquired whether his message aligned with that of the British Missionary. Upon learning that the message was indeed the same, Thankunga converted to Christianity on December 18, 1899. This conversion led to eight other families embracing Christianity. [245] In 1900, E.W. Rowland visited Lunglei and organized a Christian convention, which was attended by forty Christians. [246] However, tensions arose between the Christians and Chief Darmaka of Pukpui village, leading to the ostracisation of Christians from his village. Consequently, the government established a Christian village at Sethlun in 1902, with eleven houses from Pukpui and six from another village joining the Christian community.[247]

Under the Baptist Missionary Society, Lorrain and Savidge returned to South Lushai Hills and arrived at Lunglei on 13th March 1903.[248] At that time, Lunglei already had a growing Christian community, with 125 converts, including children, and 30 households. Additionally, 13 individuals had been baptized by the Welsh Missionary working in the Northern Lushai Hills. [249] Upon their return, Lorrain and Savidge initially focused their efforts on education and healthcare.[250]

3.4 Education and Healthcare.

In 1893, government schools were established at Demagiri (now Tlabung), Lunglei, and Aizawl to primarily educate the children of British sepoys and other government employees. However, these schools faced several challenges, including frequent changes in teachers and low student attendance. Recognizing the need for

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[243] The literal translation of these words are as as follows: 'Messengers would arrive with a message from across the sea and you should obey them.'

[244] Darphawka brother-in-law was Thankunga, due to the prophecy made by Darphawka he was curious about the new religion. Later he became one of the first pastor among the Mizo.

[245] V. Lalzawnga, *Zoram Baptist Kohhran Chanchin Pawimawh Lawrkhawm, Part I,* (Lunglei: BCM Literature Committee, 1990), 26.

[246] Lalzawnga, *Zoram Baptist Kohhran*, 26.

[247] Lalzawnga, *Zoram Baptist Kohhran*, 26.

[248] Lianzuala, *Zofate Chanchin*, 303.

[249] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram* 1901-1938, (Serkawn: Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee), 7.

[250] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram* 1901-1938, p.8.

improvement in the education system, John Shakespear proposed implementing a grand-in-aid system for schools in the South Lushai Hills.[251] In 1894, the two missionaries, J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge, arrived in the region. They constructed their residence and moved in on February 9, 1894. In addition to their living quarters, they built a school officially opened on 2nd April 1894.

> 14 Feb. 94 Moved into our House on Friday 9 Feb. 1894. The First Mission House in Lushailand.[252]
>
> 11 April 94. First school in Lushai land Opened on April 2nd 1894 with 2 pupils Tongphunga and Suaka. From 9 to 11 Every Morning Mastered Alphabet and word of one syllable in one week. Before one month passed could read almost anything we wrote. Had job to get many to start 'we are like monkeys and can learn nothing.[253]

Lorrain and Savidge made significant efforts to create a written form of the Lushai language. They developed the Lushai alphabet during their stay at Silchar,[254] likely drawing on available linguistic resources and their study of the language. Their work in understanding the Lushai vocabulary and language structure included references to TH Lewin's writings and Brojo Nath Saha's *Grammar of the Lushai Language (1884*). Lorrain made the statement as follows-

> When we first came into contact with the Lushais at Kassalong in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1892 and settled amongst them at Fort Aijal in January 1894, the tribe had no written language. Years before – in 1874 – Lt Col. (then Capt) Thomas Herbert Lewin, Deputy Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, had published his 'Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect', and in 1884 Assistant Surgeon Brojo Nath Shaha, Civil Medical Officer of the same district, had published his 'Grammar of the Lushai Language,' both of which we found extremely useful in our earliest effort to learn words and phrases. Neither of these works, however, pretended to suggest a mode of literation which could be taught to the Lushais. It therefore fell to our lot to reduce the language to writing in such a way that our system could be readily adopted by the people themselves. For this purpose, we chose the simple Roman script, with a few slight emendations

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[251] J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram 1890-1954(The Bureaucracy and the Chiefs),* (New Delhi: Mittal Publication, 2007), 67.

[252] Lorrain, "Log Book," 29.

[253] Lorrain, "Log Book," 32.

[254] Lianzuala, *Zofate Chanchin*, 152.

> adopted since is still used throughout the tribe with eminently satisfactory results.[255]

The alphabet they constructed while they were stationed at Silchar was:

Ȧ A B D E F G H I J K L M N O P R S T U V Z CH [256]

They realigned the alphabet in 1897 as follows:

A AW B CH D E F G H I J K L M N O P R S T Ṭ U V Z [257]

In the early years of their missionary work, Lorrain and Savidge dedicated considerable effort to teaching the newly constructed Lushai alphabet to individuals such as Liana Hauhnar, Khuma, and others while stationed in Silchar. However, despite repeated attempts to impart this knowledge, their initial students did not make significant progress in learning the alphabet. Due to the challenges faced in teaching their first group of students, they shifted their attention to other individuals who might be more receptive to their teachings. They then focused their attention on Suaka and Thangphunga, who joined their efforts later, likely influenced by the encouragement or persuasion of Captain Loch.[258]

Upon their arrival in the South Lushai Hills in 1903, Lorrain and Savidge initiated educational efforts by establishing a school at Serkawn, accompanied by a hostel that initially had seven seats. Savidge selected seven government school students to fill the hostel and brought them to Serkawn. [259] Over time, the number of students increased, with twenty-four eventually registered.[260] In February 1905, the responsibility for education in the Lunglei Sub-division was transferred to the Baptist Mission, with Savidge serving as the Honorary Inspector. This authority transfer marked the Baptist Mission's growing involvement in educational activities in the

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[255] Lorrain, *Dictionary*, v.
[256] Lianzuala, *Zofate Chanchin*, 154.
[257] Lianzuala, *Zofate Chanchin*, 154
[258] Lianzuala, *Zofate Chanchin*, 116.
[259] Lianzuala, *Zofate Chanchin*, 322.
[260] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901*-1938, 8.

region. Subsequently, in 1906, schools were opened in several villages, including Sethlun, Bualpui, and Darhulha's village. [261]

The missionaries established a healthcare facility known as the Mission Dispensary in Serkawn to gain the favour and support of the local population. This dispensary received many patients over the years, hailing from various villages who sought medical assistance.[262] The following table presents data illustrating the quantity of individuals who availed themselves of medical treatment at the dispensary during different years: -

Year	Number of People
1904	1500
1905	1560
1906	2760
1907	4188
1909	4000
1910	5000
1911	4695
1912	5427
1913	4146
1914	5486
1915	7314
1916	7434
1917	6845
1918	5331
1919	9176

Source: BCM Mission Compendium [263]

[261] Zorema, *Indirect Rule*, 68.

[262] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram* 1901-1938, 7.

[262] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram* 1901-1938, 7-8.

[263] K Lalrinthanga and J Lalduhawma, eds, 'BCM Mission Compendium: 1939-2014,' (Serkawn: BCM Publication Board,2014), 689.

In addition to their efforts, the Baptist Missionary Society (B.M.S.) provided further support by dispatching two additional missionaries: Miss O. E. Dicks, a trained nurse and midwife from Cheltenham, and Miss E. M. Chapman, a trained teacher from Catford. [264] Their arrival bolstered the mission's capabilities. In 1922, a qualified nurse, Miss E.M. Oliver, joined the Serkawn team to assist in the dispensary's operations. Her expertise and skills were valuable in providing healthcare services to the local population. Furthermore, in February 1923, the wife of the Superintendent of Lushai Hills, Mrs. Scott, inaugurated a new hospital in the region. This hospital was named *Serkawn Damdawi In*, now recognized as the Christian Hospital Serkawn.[265]

3.5 Restriction on Zu consumption.

When the British established their rule in the Lushai Hills, significant changes were introduced to the traditional administrative and social systems. These changes led to the emergence of new social groups and dynamics within the society. One notable change was the introduction of the position of Circle Interpreter, which held significant authority within the new administrative structure. However, over time, some individuals in this role began to misuse their power and manipulate the organizational system to their advantage. This misconduct resulted in public protests in the southern region of the Lushai Hills in 1906 and 1907. In December 1907, in response to the unrest, Major Cole and a contingent of 100 Military Police, led by Lt. Col. Lock, were dispatched to the troubled area. Instead of addressing the root causes of the protests, the British administration imposed fines of Rs. 500/- or confiscated 20 guns from the villagers involved.[266] This punitive approach highlighted a perceived injustice within the British administration in the Lushai Hills. The fines were levied on the protesters rather than the Circle Interpreters, who were seen as the primary instigators of the protests.

The introduction and spread of Christianity in the Lushai Hills had a transformative impact on the traditional social and political structures. Over time, it

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[264] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram* 1901-1938, 153.

[265] KMS Dawngliana, *BCM Handbook (Mizoram Baptist Kohhran thu chitin Chuanna)*, (Serkawn: BCM Publication Board, 2009), 68.

[266] *Mizoram District Gazetteers 1989*, 44.

eroded the authority of the traditional chiefs, and the church emerged as an alternative centre of power and influence within the community. The advent of education played a crucial role in this transformation. As formal education was introduced, a new educated class started to emerge in society. These educated individuals acquired knowledge and skills that empowered them to assert their positions and status within the evolving socio-political landscape. This process led to the gradual decline of influence held by the traditional chiefs. The traditional hierarchical structures and systems of authority began to give way to a more stratified and complex socio-political establishment in which the church, education, and the emerging educated class played increasingly significant roles. As Christianity and education spread, they brought about profound changes in the Lushai Hills, reshaping the power dynamics and social hierarchies that had prevailed for generations.[267]

One significant impact of colonial rule on Mizo society was the abolition of the customary practice of freely drinking *zu*. In the pre-colonial Mizo society, consuming *zu*, a traditional alcoholic beverage, was a common practice, particularly during festivals and specific occasions. Before colonial rule, there were no restrictions on the consumption of *zu*. [268]

In 1906, the Superintendent of Lushai Hills issued a prohibitory order on selling zu. Within certain areas, without obtaining written permission from the Superintendent and the Sub-divisional Officer of Lunglei, the sale of *zu* was prohibited in both Aizawl and Lunglei, as well as within a five-mile radius from the post offices of these two locations. This prohibition was set to take effect from 1st July 1906. The order also stipulated that those individuals who failed to comply with this prohibition were subject to prosecution under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code (I.P.C.), which pertains to disobedience to an order lawfully promulgated by a public servant. [269]

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[267] O Rosanga, "Mizo Resistance against Colonial Rule in Mizoram," *NEIHA Proceedings,* (2011), 336.

[268] Zu is a fermented rice beer.

[269] Order, "Prohibition of Manufacturing Rakzu", by superintendent of the Lushai Hills, G-156, CB 12, 68, Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

In the Lunglei area in 1907, conditional orders were issued allowing individuals to distil liquor for personal consumption. However, these orders explicitly prohibited the sale of such liquor. Unfortunately, some individuals in the region did not adhere to the prohibition on selling liquor. In response to this non-compliance, the Sub-divisional Officer of Lunglei, Mr. C. Shadwell, imposed a ban on the production or making of *zu* altogether.[270] This action was taken to curb the illicit sale of liquor and maintain control over the production and distribution of alcoholic beverages in the area. This was reiterated by A.G. McCall, who served as the Superintendent of Lushai Hills and issued another order in 1936.[271]

On January 21, 1938, on behalf of the Thakthing Panchayat, two clerks named Neihrima and Thanga wrote a letter to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills. In the letter, they submitted a list of proposed penalties that could be imposed on individuals deemed deserving of disciplinary action. These penalties were intended to help improve the behaviour or conduct of such individuals. Additionally, in the same letter, Neihrima and Thanga expressed their concern about the sale of *zu* in certain areas under the jurisdiction of the chiefs of Aijal and Tlangnuam. They believed that unless the sale of *zu* was strictly prohibited in these areas, similar to the measures taken under the Lushai clerk's jurisdiction, it was unlikely that the undesirable practices associated with the consumption of *zu* would diminish. [272]

In December 1942, the license for selling *zu* in the areas of Thakthing and Kulikawn was put up for auction. Several bidders participated in the auction, including Lalupa, who was absent but offered Rs 25/- for Thakthing and Rs 65/- for Kulikawn.[273] In a statement provided by the Officer in Charge of Aizawl Police Station on May 10, 1944, it was revealed that there were numerous instances of *zu* sales in the town of

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[270] Order, "Prohibition of Manufacturing Liquor", by Sub-Divisional Officer, Lungleh, G-156, CB 12, p. 66. Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

[271] Order, "Order for proclamation of drum by Circle Interpreters concerned" by AG McCall, G-1463, CB – 121, Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

[272] Letter, "To the Superintendent of Lushai Hills", from Neihrima and Thanga, G-1463, CB – 121. Mizoram state Archive, Aizawl.

[273] Letter, "The Superintendent of Lushai Hills", from Thanga, G-849, CB-69. P, 25. Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

Aizawl by individuals who were not officially authorized sellers.[274] The Officer in Charge of Aizawl Police Station requested a list of persons holding licenses to sell *zu* in Aizawl from the Superintendent of Lushai Hills. This information was needed to act against those selling *Zu* without the required licenses.[275] The official sellers of zu in 1944 were identified as Pu Hrangchhinga for Chinga Veng, Pu Thangtawia for Chaltlang, Pi Thangluaii for Kulikawn, and Pu Lalupa for Thakthing. [276] However, these authorized sellers encountered business difficulties due to the rice shortage. They sent a letter to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills on May 31, 1944, explaining that they had to turn away their customers on many occasions because they lacked sufficient rice to brew *zu*. They requested the Superintendent's assistance in arranging a monthly supply of an adequate quantity of rice, which they were willing to pay for, to ensure they could continue their business. [277] The Superintendent acknowledged their situation and scheduled a meeting for them to discuss the matter further at his office on June 14, 1944.[278]

On June 14, 1946, Chawnglera and Thangkhuma, Lusei clerks, submitted a letter to the Superintendent. In this letter, they requested the cancellation of licenses for four individuals who had permission to sell *zu* to the military. They argued that since there were no longer military personnel to sell *zu* to and due to the rice shortage in Aizawl, it was necessary to revoke these licenses. Additionally, Chawnglera and Thangkhuma pointed out that enforcing the ban on all unlicensed *zu* sellers following Lushai Hills District-Cover page 20, clause (9) was essential. They believed that by doing so, more rice would become available in Aizawl. The *zu* sellers were purchasing at high prices, making it challenging for ordinary people to obtain an adequate rice supply. As a solution, they proposed the implementation of a total prohibition on *zu*

[274] Statement, "Regarding Sales of Zu, by Officer in charge," by Aizawl Police Station, G-849, CB-69. page 10. Mizoram Sate Archive, Aizawl.

[275] Response, "List of Zu sellers in Aizawl," by Assistant Superintendent of Lushai hills, G-849, CB-69. page 11. Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

[276] Response, "List of Zu sellers in Aizawl,"11.

[277] Letter, "Letter to the Superintendent of Lushai hills", from Thangluaii, Hrangchhinga, Thangtawia, Lalupa. G-849, CB-69, 12. Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

[278] Letter, "Letter to Pu Hrangchhinga, Thawngtawia, Thagluaia, Lalupa to come to the Superintendent Office" from the Superintendent of Lushai Hills, G-849, CB-69, 9. Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

sales, similar to what had been practised in earlier years.[279] In response to their proposal, the Superintendent issued an order on 28th June 1946 banning the manufacture and sale of zu. The reason for this restriction is the expected poor harvest in the district in 1946, and it was crucial to conserve the rice stock. The order further specified that police would be responsible for enforcing this order specifically in the Aijal area, and individuals in positions of authority in Aijal are warned that any unreported sale of zu within their jurisdiction will be held against them. The order also cautioned that if individuals are habitual sellers or buyers of zu, they may be expelled from the Aijal area, and their houses will be given to other applicants.[280]

While the colonial government exercised control over the consumption of *zu* and issued licenses for its sale to the military, the Baptist and Presbyterian churches implemented strict prohibitions on their members regarding the consumption of *zu*. In the minutes of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church presbytery meeting on April 22, 1910, one of the agenda items was to discuss and implement measures to prohibit the consumption of *zu* among church members.[281] Likewise, Lorrain's report to the Baptist Missionary Society (B.M.S.) in 1913 strongly indicates his disapproval of alcohol consumption within the Lushai community, particularly concerning living a devout Christian life. He explains that during drinking events, people's worst behaviours are displayed, including the use of vulgar songs and jokes. He further argues that followers of Jesus cannot participate in such gatherings and still maintain their moral integrity. He informs the B.M.S. authority that a rule was established with the agreement of early converts, stating that all Lushais who wish to join the Christian community must abstain from alcohol.[282]

Despite the significant role that *zu* had held in the daily life of the local population, the missionaries, with the consent of early converts, actively discouraged

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[279] Letter, "Letter to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills," from Chawnglera and Thangkhuma, G-849, CB-69, 16. Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

[280] Order, "Order N. 2389 – 400G of 28.6.1946", by the Superintendent of Lushai Hills, G-849, CB-69,14. Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

[281] Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Presbytery Minute, 1910-1920, Aizawl Theological College Archive.

[282] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938*, 98.

its consumption among new converts. This missionary influence led to a transformation in the cultural practices surrounding *zu*. As a result, beer vases used for storing and serving *zu* were deliberately broken and discarded, falling into disuse in many villages. Instead of *zu*, tea emerged as a replacement beverage of choice. This shift in preferences and practices gradually rendered the everyday use of *zu* gradually insignificant in the community.

3.6 Demise of Zawlbuk.

Another significant impact of colonial rule was the demise of the *zawlbuk*,[283] an integral social institution within Mizo society. The *zawlbuk* was a bachelor dormitory where unmarried young men would spend their nights sleeping together. It was also where these young men were trained and prepared for adulthood, instilling them with essential life skills and responsibilities. Much of their time, mainly their evenings, was dedicated to activities within the *zawlbuk*. The putrescence of the *zawlbuk* had profound consequences on indigenous cultural practices. It led to the decline of this traditional institution, which played a vital role in shaping the youth into responsible adults. Additionally, the *zawlbuk* served as a repository of oral tradition, where young men would learn about their history and culture through storytelling and conversations with their elders.

When N.E. Parry assumed the office of Superintendent of Lushai Hills in 1926, he recognized the significance of the *zawlbuk* in Mizo society, even though it had largely fallen into disuse in the society. Inspired by its historically important role, he took steps to revive this traditional institution. Parry issued an order intending to restore the *Zawlbuk* that says: -

> STANDING ORDER NO. 69 D 26-1-1926.
>
> "*I have notice that in a few villages, the Zawlbuk is no longer maintained. All Chiefs are hereby informed that every Lushai Village must keep up a Zawlbuk. Circle interpreters will report to me any villages that have no Zawlbuk*".

[283] Thangtunung, *Anglo-Lushai*,.142.

Dated Aijal, Sd N.E. Parry,
26th January 1926 Superintendent
Lushai Hills. [284]

He identified villages that had abandoned the *zawlbuk* and issued orders to reinstate it within their respective communities:

> "*Please order all circle Interpreter to report villages which have no Zawlbuks. The following villages, I know, have no Zawlbuk and should be ordered to build one before the 31st March 1926:*
>
> 1. *Paliana.*
> 2. *Hrangchhuana.*
> 3. *Lalzidinga*".[285]

Christian missionaries, such as Rev F.J. Rapper of the Baptist Mission in Serkawn, actively participated in efforts to rejuvenate the *zawlbuk* institution. Rev. Rapper, who also held the position of District Commissioner for Boys Scouts in the Mizo hills, played a pivotal role in this restoration. He successfully mobilized the youth in various social welfare activities, collaborating with the then-government and local chiefs to achieve this goal. To attract young men to the *zawlbuk*, Rev. Rapper provided amenities like petromax lighting and indoor games such as carrom.[286]

The decline of the *zawlbuk* institution in Mizo society can be attributed to several factors. One significant factor was the introduction of British colonial administration. Under colonial rule, the authority of traditional chiefs was diminished, and they had to exercise their power following British instructions. This change in the role of chiefs affected the administration and significance of the *zawlbuk*. Furthermore, as colonial influence grew, the people began to downplay the importance of the *zawlbuk* in their society. Parents found it challenging to comply with the

[284] "STANDING ORDER," *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*, February 1926.
[285] Sangkima, *Essay*, 135.
[286] Mrs N. Chatterjee, *Zawlbuk as a Social Institution in the Mizo Society* (Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, 1992), 32.

demands of the *zawlbuk*, especially when their children were sick or needed at home. Additionally, the disciplinary actions taken by the *zawlbuk* inmates may have been perceived as too harsh, leading to a decline in its popularity and acceptance within the community.[287]

Another significant factor contributing to the decline of the *zawlbuk* institution could be attributed to the experiences of Mizo youth who participated in the First World War. When these young Mizos were recruited into the war service, they were exposed to the material prosperity and the outward expressions of Christian life in countries like France and Germany. This exposure to Western civilization and Christian practices profoundly impacted their outlook. Upon their return, these Mizo veterans began to believe that they needed to depart from their traditional ways and emulate Westerners regarding religion and lifestyle to improve their quality of life. They adopted Western lifestyles and influenced others in the community to do the same, giving the impression that their traditional way of life, including the discipline enforced in the *zawlbuk*, was inadequate for their material progress.[288]

The influence of early converts was also an essential factor. When the missionaries arrived in 1894 and introduced schools and gave formal education, they indirectly replaced the *Zawlbuk* system, and as such, the *Zawlbuk* gradually lost its importance. Christianity taught new morality in the service of Christ, and as a result, the traditional practices in all forms were dislocated, which led to the degradation of the *Zawlbuk* practice.[289] A.G. McCall mentioned that the principal instigators behind the decision to discontinue the Zawlbuk system were the personnel affiliated with the Lushai Mission.[290]

The infusion of modern education and Christian ethical values into society led to a significant disregard and discrediting of traditional values and practices among the younger generations. While the *zawlbuk* had its advantages, some church leaders

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[287] Sangkima, *Essay*, 134.
[288] N. Chatterji, *The Earlier Mizo Society*, (Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, 1975), 89.
[289] Thangtunung, *Anglo-Lushai*,143.
[290] McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, 211.

also saw disadvantages. According to Mangkhosat Kipgen, "There were others of lesser calibre who visited the Zawlbuk only to create confusion by spreading rumours and indulging in unhealthy gossip – especially centring around clandestine love affairs from their own younger days and other scandals in the village."[291] The victims of this gossip, usually women, had no means of addressing their grievances. When the inmates of the *zawlbuk* stood united, the chief and his elders found it challenging to take disciplinary action.[292] Neihrima, the Lushai clerk, in a letter to the Superintendent on November 22, 1937, mentioned that "Zawlbuk is considered to be a place where anyone thinks himself free to talk and say and do as he likes as it will be cleared in the Lushai old saying '*Zawlbuk thu mai*' which shows that Zawlbuk is not a place where important matters are spoken about thought over. Some people are always apt to speak any bad words and do bad things which tend to spoil the character and morals of the young people."[293] Challiana, one of the early pastors, remarked that it became easy to engage in wrongdoing whenever young men gathered together. From the church's perspective, the *zawlbuk* was seen as a place of faults, overbearing behaviour, and cruelty.[294]

Another issue that concerned church leaders was the practice of young married men continuing to sleep in the *zawlbuk* even after marriage. These young married men would visit their wives at night and return to the *zawlbuk*. Sometimes, other men would impersonate the husband and sleep with the wife without her realizing that it was not her husband returning from the *zawlbuk*. The impersonator would carefully select his victim, often choosing women whose husbands were irregular in visiting them. This practice, known as *Thlim*, led to incidents that resulted in divorce, fines, and quarrels within the community. [295]

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[291] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 177.

[292] Samuel V.L. Thlanga, "Zawlbuk", in *Mizo Narratives: Accounts from Mizoram*, eds. Malsawmdawngliana and Rohimngmawii (Guwahati, Scientific book Centre, 2013), 65.

[293] Letter, "Letter to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills" from Neihrima, G-1463, CB-121. Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

[294] Challiana, *Hmasang Mizo Awmdan*, 22.

[295] J.D. Baveja, *The Land Where the Bamboo Flowers*, (Assam: Publication Board Assam, 1970), 21.

The introduction of formal education also played a significant role in the decline of Zawlbuk in Mizo society. In a letter to the Superintendent, Neihrima stated, "Regarding disciplining children and young people, there are schools where they are better disciplined than in Zawkbuk."[296] Buchhawna, in another letter to the Superintendent, mentioned that "Schools have also made the children's life in Zawlbuk practically difficult. Schools appear to be a far better place for discipline, wisdom, etc." [297] Parents found it more advantageous for their children to study in the comfort of their own homes, and they believed it was easier to maintain control over their children when they were kept under their care rather than allowing them to spend their nights in *Zawlbuk*. [298]

In the Thakthing locality, *Zawlbuk* had fallen into disuse and required repair. However, due to the villagers' busy schedules with their *jhum* cultivation, they could not undertake the necessary repairs. Instead, they replaced the rotten portion of the wall with bamboo saplings to prevent cattle from entering the structure. Both Thakthing and Kulikawn had graveyards located outside their localities, and during the process of digging graves, especially on rainy days, they encountered difficulties. Therefore, on September 28, 1937, Neihrima wrote to the Superintendent requesting that the *Zawlbuk* be dismantled, and a graveyard house be constructed using the materials from the *Zawlbuk*. [299]

Buchhawna's letter to the Superintendent also emphasized the need to abolish *Zawlbuk,* wherein he criticizes the cultural practice of the Mizos when staying at home is frowned upon and considered effeminate. This tradition has resulted in women being burdened with all the household chores while the men socialize in the Zawlbuk. He contends that this habit does not promote love for one's home and family. Instead, he suggests that schools are better equipped to teach discipline and wisdom to the younger

[296] Letter, "Letter to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills" from Neihrima.
[297] Letter, "Letter to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills," from Buchhawna. G-1463, CB-121. Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.
[298] McCall, *Lushai chrysalis*, 211.
[299] Letter, "Letter to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills" from Neihrima.

generation. He does not consider Zawlbuk necessary in prevailing circumstances and encourages children and young men to sleep in their homes.[300]

On January 1st, 1938, the Superintendent of Lushai Hills, A.G. McCall, convened a public meeting in front of the *Zawlbuk* in the Thakthing locality. He acknowledged the historical role of Zawlbuk in maintaining discipline and preventing trouble in the Mizo community, including the outbreak of fires. He expressed concerns that the disappearance of *Zawlbuk's* discipline would be a matter of alarm for the tribe. During the meeting, Pu Telala addressed the gathering, stating that the current circumstances no longer necessitated the presence of Zawlbuk. He mentioned that there were no longer sufficient twigs for firewood in the village outskirts, children were attending school and had no time to collect firewood, and young men needed to focus on their studies.

Additionally, traditional feasts of merit such as *sechhun* and *khuangchawi*, were no longer feasible due to the influence of the new religion. Indeed, the presence of young men in *Zawlbuk* sometimes led to trouble for the young ladies in the community. He argued that Zawlbuk was no longer needed in their society. *Upa* Thanga also shared his perspective, noting that while Zawlbuk had served as a valuable institution for discipline and protection in the past, the presence of schools and the Young Men's Association (Y.M.A.) had replaced its role effectively. He suggested that the community should not feel ashamed to do away with Zawlbuk. The Circle Interpreter, Pu Luna, intervened, emphasizing that the topic under discussion was essential to the people and had been addressed in Government standing orders. He acknowledged the honour associated with *Zawlbuk's* discipline but agreed with previous speakers that the presence of Y.M.A. and schools had made *Zawlbuk* unnecessary. In response to these discussions, Superintendent A.G. McCall concluded and acknowledged the lack of young men to occupy *Zawlbuk* and the belief that the discipline provided by the Y.M.A. and schools would suffice. Therefore, he announced that the standing order established by Mr. N.E. Parry would be

[300] Letter, "Letter to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills," from Buchhawna.

reconsidered within ten days. This decision marked the end of *Zawlbuk's* existence in Mizo society.[301]

3.7 Abolition of Servitude.

The most significant impact of colonial rule in the Mizo society was the abolition of the servitude system, known as the *Bawi* system. The British Government had already prohibited slavery within its dominion with the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, and by 1838, all enslaved people were freed throughout the British Empire. When the British colonized the Lushai Hills in 1890, they discovered that the *bawi* custom was illegal, and any individuals classified as *bawi* were granted freedom if they appealed for it by paying the customary ransom, which amounted to Rs. 40 or its equivalent in the form of a *Gayal* or other assets. Many *bawi*, especially those belonging to groups like the sanctuary servant, *Chemsen Bawi*, and deserter servitude known as *Tuklut Bawi*, were thus redeemed and liberated. However, the primary concern for the British administration in the Lushai hills centred around the status of the distress servitude known as *Inpuichhung Bawi*, a specific category of individuals subject to the Bawi system.[302]

The controversy surrounding the Bawi system in Mizo society began with the arrival of Welsh Missionary Dr. Peter Fraser. In the words of B.C. Allen, 'In December 1908, Dr Fraser, an M.D. of Edinburgh with his wife and one Mr Roberts, who is his personal employ, came to Aijal to work as members of the Welsh Mission. This gentleman had no previous experience of the East, and within a very short time of his arrival, he assumed an attitude of active hostility towards many of the customs of the Lushais, more particularly to… the *bawi* custom under which retainer is supported by the chief and in return work for him.'[303] In the year 1909, a youthful chieftain by the

[301] Zatlluanga, *Mizo Chanchin*, (Mizoram: Directorate of Art & Culture, 1996), 115.
[302] Sangkima, *Essay*, 83.
[303] Letter, "Letter to The Secretary of the Government of India in the Foreign Department" from B.C. Allen, Esq., Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Political Department. February 1911, FEAP September Nos 5-21, page 7, National Archive of India, New Delhi.

name of Khawvelthanga, hailing from Maubuang, embraced Christianity and released all of his *bawis* with the following declaration:

> From this time, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the name of our King Edward, I free you from slavery. From this time, no one will be able to make you a slave.[304]

Nevertheless, Major H.W.G. Cole, Superintendent of the Lushai Hill, firmly opposed this sweeping reform. He argued that such a move would undoubtedly incur the displeasure of the ruling chiefs. [305] This disagreement ignited a fierce dispute between Peter Fraser and Major H.W.G. Cole. Khawvelthanga, in response to the Superintendent's stance, requested an official confirmation of the emancipation of his *bawis*. He sought assurance that these individuals would not revert to a state of *bawi* servitude under his successor chief or any other chief in whose territory they might find themselves. As Khawvelthanga's letters did not contain specific information about the individuals released from the *bawi*, the Superintendent clarified the situation by stating that while Khawvelthanga had authority over his *bawis*, he did not have the power to liberate *bawis* from other chiefs who might come to or reside in his village. [306] Major Cole expressed that Fraser's advocacy had generated significant discontent. He cautioned that persisting in his course of action might result in either Fraser's assassination or a widespread uprising in the hills. He also contended that many objectionable aspects of the *bawi* system had already been amended through the directives of previous Superintendents. He advised against further changes, which could pose a severe risk of inciting disturbances. [307] However, Fraser firmly believed that the presence of *bawis* within a chief's household was a clear indication of the existence of slavery within the British Empire.

Consequently, he argued that the very existence of '*bawis*' ran counter to the Constitution and should be eradicated entirely.[308] R.J. William, the Secretary of the

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[304] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 153.
[305] Zorema, *Indirect Rule*, 73.
[306] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 153.
[307] Letter, "Letter to The Secretary to the government of India in the foreign Department" from B.C. Allen, 18.
[308] Zorema, *Indirect Rule*, 74.

Welsh Calvinistic Methodists' Foreign Mission, noted in his correspondence that both Lushai Christians and *bawis* seeking assistance to secure their freedom testified to their situation. He found it perplexing that a British subject should be required to pay what he interpreted as a ransom for their liberty. [309] Initially, in compliance with the Superintendent's instructions, Fraser paid the Rs 40 fee demanded by the court to secure the release of *bawis*. However, he soon encountered many *bawis* seeking his assistance to gain their freedom. Fraser printed numerous postcards and distributed them to raise awareness of his actions and gather funds for this cause. Consequently, Fraser and Major Cole were entrenched in a conflict, compelled by their respective circumstances and viewpoints.[310]

To calm the anticipated problems, Major Cole issued an order in the November issue of *Chanchinbu*,[311] wherein it was explained that in the Lushai hills, the concept of "bawi" or slavery was not the typical form of bound slavery. Instead, individuals can buy their freedom by paying a ransom. They have the freedom to go wherever they please, suggesting they are not enslaved. Therefore, it is more accurate to call it "Membership of the Household" rather than "slave price" (Bawi man). It suggested that it should be referred to as "Payment for board of household members" (chhungte chawmman). Anyone who wishes to buy their freedom can do so by giving the chief either forty rupees or a Gayal, and one family will be allowed to ransom themselves.[312]

Dr. Fraser was garnering support from other missionaries operating in the district, and he received backing from all of them, as they were all seasoned and held senior positions compared to him.[313] The Superintendent told D.E. Jones that if they could not co-operate with the government, he would invite another mission to take the work up in their stead. D.E. Jones and other missionaries tried to persuade Dr Fraser

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[309] Letter "Letter to B.C. Allen, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam" from R.J. Williams, Esq., Secretary, Welsh Calvinistic Methodists' Foreign Mission, March 1911, FEAP September Nos 5-21, page 5. National Archive of India. New Delhi.

[310] Zorema, *Indirect Rule*, 74.

[311] *Chanchinbu* or *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* was a monthly magazine published by the government of the Lushai Hills.

[312] Kipgen, *Christianity*. 156.

[313] Zorema, *Indirect Rule*,74

to adopt a conciliatory approach while expressing their support for his effort to abolish the *bawi* system and advised him to be careful as they believed that wrong steps on their path might work against the interest of both the *bawis* and the mission. While attempts were made to resolve the matter by other missionaries, Dr Fraser submitted a memorandum to King George, sent letters to Members of Parliament, and released a statement to the press. His action made the controversy very serious and made the Superintendent extremely angry. D.E. Jones expressed his discontent over this action strongly to Dr Fraser and Major Cole, and the Directors of Welsh Calvinistic Mission too strongly disapproved.[314]

With the instruction of the Mission Directors, on November 1910 at *Mawphlang* in Khasi Hills, the district committee took up the matter at the meeting.[315] In the words of Dr Fraser, "Major Cole was invited into the final meeting. At first, he appeared to be satisfied with the agreement, but towards the close of the conference, he asked me whether I would accept the '*bawi'* system as it now is. Otherwise, I would not be allowed to return to Lushai. To this question, I replied, 'I cannot accept the '*bawi'* system as it now is.'" Frazer further stated, 'for me "to accept the '*bawi'* system as it now is" would be to accept a system which has been acknowledged to be a system of slavery by other missionaries besides myself, and as illegal by Government officials. Besides, this question has already been referred to higher authority.[316] The meeting did not have any good results on the *bawi* issue, but it somewhat put more pressure on both sides.

The Superintendent, Major Cole, informed the district committee members that he had imposed restrictions on Dr Fraser's movement, preventing him from visiting certain villages in Mizoram until the issue was resolved. Additionally, he exerted more pressure on Dr Fraser, urging him to either leave Mizoram or sign an agreement stipulating that he could return to Lushai Hills as a missionary under certain

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[314] Kipgen, *Christianity,* 160,161.

[315] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 161.

[316] Letter, "Letter to Reverend T. W. Reese, Secretary of the D.C. Welsh C.M. Mission, Shillong" from P. Fraser, December 1910, FEAP September Nos 5-21, page National Archive of India. New Delhi.

conditions,[317] which stipulated that he was required to focus solely on his role as a Medical Missionary, which includes providing religious instruction and medical treatment. He must not involve himself in any way in Lushai complaints, disputes, or matters that the appropriate authorities should address. Regardless of his opinions on Lushai customs, he must refrain from expressing them to any Lushai individuals. If anyone approaches him with secular matters, he must direct them to the Superintendent or his assistant if it matters to the courts or to Reverend D.E. Jones. He must also ensure that his employees or anyone under his authority do not interfere in any disputes among the Lushais, except those within his compound. Before undertaking extended tours, he must consult with the Superintendent and abide by their decision, especially in areas that may be politically sensitive. If he fails to comply with these conditions, he must leave the Lushai Hills within one month.[318]

Dr Fraser refused to sign the agreement and thought he did not feel justified. He also believed that signing the agreement would forfeit his right and duty to speak out in the name of the Lord and Master.[319] When Major Cole heard Dr Fraser's refusal to sign the agreement, he sent a letter to him and mentioned that 'Your refusal is being reported to Government with a recommendation that you can only return to Aijal to set your private affairs, and a further communication will be made to you in due course.'[320] Dr Fraser wrote him back and said that he did not think any missionaries would be willing to sign this agreement or to expect any preacher of the Gospel to sign away his liberty of speech and conscience in such a way, and since Major Cole recommended the government to banish him from Lushai Hills, he informed him that

[317] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 162

[318] Copy of a draft submitted by Major Cole and expected by him to be signed by P. Fraser as a condition that he should return as a missionary to Lushai, FDEP, page 13. National archive of India. New Delhi

[319] Letter, "Letter to Reverend J. Ceredig Evans, Chairman, D.C. Welsh C.M. Mission," from Dr Peter Fraser, December 16th 1910. FEAP September Nos 5-21, page13. National Archive of India. New Delhi

[320] Letter, "Letter to Dr Peter Fraser" from H.W.G. Cole, 19th December, 1910, FEAP September Nos 5-21, page14. National Archive of India, New Delhi.

he was appealing and asking for a trial.[321] Dr Fraser submitted his appeal letter and asked for a trial to the Viceroy of India on December 22nd 1910.[322]

The Directors beseeched the government to permit Fraser to continue his work in the Lushai Hills before making their final decision, as the need for Fraser's service in Mizoram was very crucial since no other medical missionaries were serving in the Lushai Hills then. Moreover, due to his advancing age, which is forty-seven years, he will face difficulty in learning new languages like Bengali sufficiently well to conduct religious services effectively in any of the stations in the plains, and the Directors fear that he and his wife would not be able to work for any length of time in the extreme heat of the plains.[323]

The Directors also expressed their irritation concerning the independent action of Dr Fraser in sending petitions to the King, letters to Members of the Parliament, and releasing a statement to the press. At the same time, they still hoped that Dr Fraser would co-operate and permission could be given to him to remain in Mizoram. [324] Therefore, the directors requested Dr Fraser to give an undertaking in order for him to continue his work among the Lushais, whereby he was not to take any action regarding the bawi system, as the Superintendent would make recommendations to the Commissioner for reform. He was also instructed to consult with his colleague on all matters to be brought before the government, and decisions made by the District Committee are to be followed and sent to the government by the committee's secretary. If he disagrees with the committee's majority decision, he can appeal to the Directors. Additionally, any correspondence regarding the Mission's work or negotiations with the government is not to be sent to the press or any person without

[321] Letter, "Letter to H.W.G. Cole" from Dr Peter Fraser, 21st December, 1910, FEAP September Nos 5-21, page,14. National Archive of India, New Delhi.

[322] Letter, "Letter to His Excellency the Viceroy of India, Calcutta," from Dr Peter Fraser, December 22nd 1910. FEAP September Nos 5-21, page 11, National Archive of India. New Delhi

[323] Letter "Letter to B.C. Allen, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam", 6.

[324] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 164.

the approval of the Directors, except for the Secretary of the District Committee and the General Secretary of the Mission.[325]

By the instruction of the Directors, the district Committee was held in Shillong from 28-29 June 1911 to make a further effort to persuade Dr Fraser. The members of the District Committee were engaged in a heated argument with Fraser concerning his procedures. Efforts to convince him to accept the three conditions were unsuccessful.[326] At this point, the government felt compelled to order the removal of Dr Fraser from the Lushai Hills. Dr Fraser left on 26th October 1912, and Major Cole was transferred to Manipur.[327]

Before Dr Fraser left Mizoram, by order of their directors, members of the Welsh Calvinistic Mission in Assam met in a conference at Aizawl in October 1911 to consider a solution to the *bawi* issue.[328] In attendance were three individuals: the Reverend Mr Evans, a seasoned missionary with thirty years of service in the Khasi Hills; the Reverend Mr D.E. Jones, who has dedicated sixteen years to his Missionary work in Aizawl; and the Reverend Mr J.H. Lorrain, a pioneering missionary associated with the Baptist Mission Society, whose involvement with the Lushai Hills spans over two decades. The conference considered the issue enunciated by the Superintendent about certain principles with the object of putting into clear light the modification in the *bawi* system, which successive superintendents had introduced to effect improvement. After careful consideration, the missionaries agreed that if it were generally known that all cases arising out of the bawi system would be decided on these lines, there would remain no system feature to which objection could be raised. The principles were agreed by this conference are as follows:

(1) That the use of the word "*bawi"* should as far as possible be discontinued.

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[325] Letter "Letter To B.C. Allen, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam," 6.
[326] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 165.
[327] Zorema, Indirect Rule, 75.
[328] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 166.

(2) That claims for "*bawiman*" should be treated exactly like the claims which any Lushai, not a chief, might advance against any persons to whom he had given board and lodging.

(3) That claims against "*bawis*" other than those which would fall under suggestions should not be entertained unless for express consideration received, and should in that case be limited to the amount of such consideration.

(4) That the liabilities of "*bawis*" should not be increased by the adaption of suggestions (2) and (3), and that the claim against any one family of "*bawi*" should not exceed Rs. 40, the present maximum liability that is enforced.

(5) That it should be widely made known that it was not open to a Chief to take back forcibly any "*bawi*" who had left his service, the only admissible course being for him to apply to the courts, and ask to have his claim for compensation decreed. That it should, similarly, be made known that any "*bawi*" discontented with his lot was free, either to leave the service of his chief and allow the latter to apply to the courts for compensation, or himself to appeal to the courts to record an order that was no longer a "*bawi*".

(6) That any other questions arising in connection with the "*bawi*" system should be decided according to universal Lushai custom as binding on all Lushais, no distinction being made between Chiefs and ordinary people.[329]

Following the settlement, the government of Assam proposed a change in the future status of *Bawi* in Mizoram.[330] The following measures proposed in the Assam administration's letter No. 5028-P., dated the 23rd June 1915, were as follows:

[329] Letter. "Letter to The Secretary To The Government Of India, foreign And Political Department" by The Hon'ble Mr. W. J. Reid, I.C.S., chief secretary To The Chief Commissioner Of Assam, February 1914, FEAP March 1914 Nos 11-17, page 13. National Archive of India, New Delhi.

[330] Sangkima, *Essay*, 83.

(1) A date should be fixed after which the "*bawi*" contract could not be entered into.
(2) It should be notified that the government would pay to the chief the customary ransom (Rs 40) in the event of any "*bawi*" coming forward and asking to be declared free.
(3) Government should recover from persons in whose behalf ransoms were paid such portion of the money paid as it could reasonably recover.
(4) Persons so released would be at liberty to leave the chief's house or to remain in it as they wished, provided that if the chiefs did not desire to maintain them in their houses they would have to leave, and government would have to make arrangement for their relief.
(5) It should be explained to the chiefs that they would have the same rights as other Lushais to bring suits in the ordinary way for the recovery of the maintenance charges of any persons whom they might support in their houses.[331]

In 1923, Mr W.L. Scott, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, completed a census of *bawis* in the district. The number of in-dwelling *bawis* families was 316, comprising 476 *bawis*, of whom 119 were males between the ages of 16 and 60, and 357 were women and children. The number of out-dwelling *bawis* was 1110 houses, and the number of heads of family or youngest sons was 1,123, of whom 1,061 were between the ages of 16 and 60. The total number of families or houses was thus 1,426, but the peculiar customs concerning the *bawis* prevalent amongst the Chins and the Lakhers in one area of the Lungleh sub-division will make it necessary to pay the redemption price in respect of individuals and not in respect of families. Consequently, the total number of cases for which the redemption price to be paid was 1626. The initial expenditure in redeeming all the *bawis* in the district would be about Rs 65,000.[332]

[331] Letter "Letter to The Government of Assam" from the Chief Secretary, February 1923, FEAP 1923 File No 522, page 6. National Archive of India, New Delhi.
[332] Letter "Letter to The Government of Assam" from the Chief Secretary, 7.

In 1927, the Government of Assam changed the word *bawi* to a newly coined term *chhungte* or *awmpuite,* which means 'inmates of the house'. Then, the term *bawi* was no longer permitted to be used in Mizoram. However, the issue of *bawi* reached the King of Great Britain, and he referred the petition of Dr Fraser to the parliament for discussion, and accordingly, the parliament discussed the issue. Mary Winchester, once a captive in the Lushai Hills in the early 1870s and who was then restored to her relatives in London in 1872, was instrumental in bringing about this effect. The British parliament finally passed a resolution to abolish the customary practice of *bawi*.[333]

3.9 Music

Christian missionaries played a significant role in shaping the music and dance forms in the Mizo society. With their arrival, they introduced Western musical instruments, such as the piano, guitar, and violin, which gradually replaced the traditional Mizo instruments like the *khuang*, a traditional drum, a bamboo mouth organ, and the *darbu*, a set of gongs played in rhythm with the khuang.

The missionaries also introduced Western music notation, which allowed the Mizo people to write down their music and preserve it for future generations. This was a major departure from the traditional oral transmission of music and dance, where knowledge was passed down through generations by word of mouth. Christian hymns and songs became popular among the Mizo people, and choirs were formed in churches. The Western influence could be seen in the harmonies, melodies, and rhythms of these songs, which were in contrast to the traditional Mizo music characterized by pentatonic scales and repetitive patterns.

The emergence of *Lengkhawm zai* was a significant development in Mizo music, as it allowed the Mizos to express their Christian faith while also retaining elements of their traditional culture. These songs incorporated Western musical instruments, such as the guitar and piano, along with traditional Mizo instruments like the bamboo flute and drum. The lyrics of Lengkhawm zai songs often drew inspiration from biblical stories and teachings, but they also reflected the Mizos' experiences and

[333] Sangkima, *Essay*, 83.

struggles as a community. This genre of music became popular not only among Mizo Christians but also among the wider Mizo population, as it resonated with their cultural identity and provided a means of spiritual expression. Despite the initial efforts of the missionaries to suppress traditional music, the Mizos' innate talent and passion for music allowed them to create a new musical form that was uniquely their own.

Along with the changes in music, the dance forms in the Mizo society also underwent transformation. The traditional Mizo dances, which were performed during festivals and other cultural events, started incorporating elements from Western dances such as polka and waltz. Movements became more structured and choreographed, and Western dance steps were introduced.

The influence of Christian missionaries not only brought about changes in the music and dance forms of the Mizo society but also had a broader impact on their cultural identity. The adoption of Western styles led to a shift away from traditional practices and a growing acceptance of Western culture. Today, while elements of traditional Mizo music and dance still exist, the influence of Western styles remains prominent in the Mizo society.

3.10 Dress and Clothing

The Mizo society witnessed significant changes during the colonial period and one area where these changes were physically more prominent is in the form of dress and clothing. This shift in dress can be attributed to the arrival of Christian missionaries in the Mizo region during the colonial era. With the spread of Christianity, Mizo society experienced a significant change in its cultural and social practices, including clothing. The missionaries encouraged Mizo people to adopt Western attire as a sign of modernity and conformity to Christian norms.

Prior to the influence of Christianity and colonialism, traditional Mizo attire consisted of garments made from handwoven fabrics, such as puan and lungi, which were worn by both men and women. These traditional clothes were reflective of the Mizo culture and their connection to nature. However, as Christianity took root, the missionaries saw traditional attire as being too closely linked to pre-Christian beliefs

and practices. They viewed Western clothing as a marker of progress and a way to distance Mizo society from its traditional roots.

The Mizo people gradually began to adopt Western clothing, such as shirts, trousers, dresses, and skirts, as their everyday attire. This shift was not without resistance, as some individuals and older generations clung to their traditional clothing. However, over time, Western styles became more accepted and prevalent in Mizo society.

The adoption of Western clothing also had practical implications. As colonialism brought changes to the Mizo economy and livelihoods, Western clothing was seen as more suitable for engaging with the colonial administration and participating in the emerging market economy. Additionally, Western attire was associated with education and social mobility, as the colonial education system required students to wear Western clothing in schools.

Although the influence of Christianity and colonialism played a significant role in the change of dress code, it is important to note that the adoption of Western styles was not solely imposed from external forces. Mizo individuals actively embraced these changes as a means of integration into a globalized world and to distance themselves from their traditional past. Today, Western clothing has become the norm in Mizo society, with traditional attire reserved for ceremonial and cultural occasions.

3.11 Conclusion.

This chapter discusses various aspects of British colonial rule in the Lushai Hills and its impact on the indigenous Mizos. The British imposed control over the region, introducing administrative changes and stripping the Mizo chiefs of their authority. They also introduced new economic practices and exerted control over the local food supply. Christian missionaries played a role in spreading Christianity and establishing schools in the region. The missionaries also contributed to the decline of traditional Mizo practices, such as the consumption of the traditional alcoholic beverage called *zu* and the traditional social institution known as the *zawlbuk*. The abolition of the *bawi* system, a form of servitude, was also a significant development

under British colonial rule. The missionaries and colonial rule also influenced the transformation of music and dance, as well as the transition from traditional Mizo clothing to Western-style attire. These changes reflected the cultural impact of colonialism and the influence of Christianity on Mizo society.

CHAPTER IV

CULTURAL RESISTANCE TO COLONIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY

This chapter examines how colonialism was resisted, how the Mizo received the Christian missionaries, and the impact of the new faith on the Mizos' cultural fabric. It will also focus on the perception of the chiefs of Mizoram about this new religion and its social message. It will further examine the counter-hegemonic process among the Mizos.

4.1 Introduction.

The British Government made repeated incursions into Mizoram in response to the assertive actions of Mizo chiefs. The initial such event occurred in 1844 when Chief Lalsuthlaha carried out a raid on Kochabari, prompting the deployment of Captain Blackwood with a military contingent to assert colonial dominance over this chief. [334] The second instance of Mizo resistance unfolded in 1850 when Ngura Sailo, a figure often relegated to the periphery of historical discourse, launched an attack on a *Thado* village near Silchar and faced retaliatory measures led by Colonel Lister. Another episode of Mizo defiance emerged when Rothangpuia, a Thangluah chief, ventured into British territory and pillaged several villages. In retaliation, a British expeditionary force under the command of Major Raban set Rothangpuia's village ablaze in 1861.[335] During the winter of 1868-69, Vanhnuailiana and his brothers raided Mirawng village under Manipur Raj. Simultaneously, Suakpuilala and Vanpuilala undertook incursions into Cachar, penetrating Adampore in December and raiding two tea gardens, Loharbond and Monierkhal, in January 1869. To quell these acts of subaltern resistance, the British deployed over 1000 soldiers with artillery under General Nuthall to the Lushai Hills region. However, their mission foundered due to adverse weather conditions and their limited familiarity with the local terrain, exposing the vulnerabilities of colonial forces in unfamiliar territories. [336]

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[334] AG McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Tribal Research Institute, Reprinted, 1977,), 40.
[335] Lewin, *A Fly on the Wheel*, 190.
[336] Lalthanliana, *Zalen Nana British Do*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Mizoram Publication Board, 2000), 8-20.

The failure of the British expedition in 1869 likely emboldened the Mizo chiefs, leading to a coordinated attack on settlements within British territory, including Cachar, Tripura, and Manipur, by January 1871. [337] Among the Southern Chiefs who participated in these raids were the offspring of Rolura and certain villages from Lianlula. From the Northern hills, the chiefs included the descendants of Lalsavunga, and in the Eastern region, key figures were Pawihbawiha, Lalphunga, and Lalhleia, alongside the descendants of Lallianvunga who were also actively involved. Two possible motivations can be attributed to the Mizos' raids on British territory during this period. Firstly, Chief Ngursailova's desire for retribution against the British for his capture and subsequent life imprisonment played a pivotal role.[338] He managed to rally other Sailo chiefs to join forces for this purpose. Secondly, the Mizo chiefs perceived the British establishment of tea plantations as an encroachment upon their ancestral lands, which served as an additional impetus for their actions. [339]

Between the 23rd and 24th of January in 1871, united Mizo chiefs launched a series of severe and widespread raids. These raids marked a significant turning point in Mizo history, as they included the killing of Mr. Winchester, a tea planter, and the capture of his daughter, Mary Winchester. In response to these raids, the British Government initiated an expedition known as 'The Lushai Expedition 1871-1872.' This expedition achieved success, resulting in a period of relative peace. However, subsequent raids by the Mizos compelled the British to mount another expedition. The coordination of operations in the Chin Hills and the Lushai Hills led to the decision to launch the combined 'Chin-Lushai Expedition' in 1889-90, officially decided on the 11th of September 1889. [340] With a long-term colonial agenda in mind, the British Government eventually moved toward colonising the Lushai Hills. They appointed Political Officers in both Aizawl and Lunglei, with Captain H.R. Browne serving as the Political Officer in the North and Mr. Murray assuming the role of the first

[337] Lalthanliana, *Zalen Nana British Do*, 8-20.
[338] Lalhruaitluanga Ralte, *Thangliana*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Mizoram Publication Board, 2013), 123.
[339] Ralte, *Thangliana*, 25.
[340] Robert Reid, *History of The Assam Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1882-1941*, (Guwahati, Assam: Spectrum Publication, Reprint, 1997), 10.

Superintendent of the South Lushai Hills on April 1st, 1891.[341] Passive resistance against colonial administration was pivotal in opposing British colonisation efforts. In response, the British Government amalgamated the North and South Lushai Hills in 1898 and introduced the Circle Administration to facilitate more convenient and centralised rule.

4.2 Evasion and Denial of Service.

Despite their inability to resist British colonial rule through armed resistance, certain Mizo chiefs refused to acknowledge British supremacy over the entire Lushai Hills region. These chiefs and their subjects displayed a hostile disposition toward the British authorities and employed tactics such as evading colonial officials and rejecting demands for tribute payments, including labour and house taxes. One notable figure in the South Lushai Hills who adamantly resisted cooperation with British colonial authority was Chieftainess Ropuiliani, the widow of Chief Vandula, one of the most influential chiefs in the South Lushai Hills. Ropuiliani, while nominally projecting her youngest son, Lalthuama, as the head of villages previously under her late husband's control, effectively maintained complete authority over him. Although Lalthuama did not engage in armed resistance against the British, he posed a significant challenge to colonial authority in the South Lushai Hills. A scholar studying British colonialism in the Lushai Hills notes that Lalthuama 'was under the complete control of his mother, Ropuiliani.[342] Vandula had control over six villages, and following his demise, Ropuiliani, a determined and strong-willed woman, assumed dominance over all these villages.[343] All the villages under her influence adopted a passive hostility toward the British, making it consistently challenging for colonial officials like Shakespear to secure tribute and labour from them. Shakespear had written about her as follows:

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[341] Lalrimawia, *Mizoram; History and Cultural Identity (1890-1947)*, (Assam: Spectrum Publications, 1995), 39.

[342] Suhas Chatterjee, *Mizoram Under the British Rule*, (Delhi: Mittal Publication, 1985), 113.

[343] Report, "Report Concerning Ropui Lieni, widow of Vandula, and her son, Lalthuama, at present prisoners in Lungleh," by J. Shakespear, FDEP, January 1894; Nos 445P, National Archive of India,
New Delhi.

> Her influence is directly hostile to us, as is only natural when it is considered that she is the daughter of one great chief who always opposed us and the widow of another. Since her husband's death, she has seen his brothers becoming more and more friendly with us, and increasing their prestige by virtue of this alliance. So much so that I overlooked her entirely and attributed Lalthuama's frequent faults to his own youthful folly. All the villages belonging to this group have been more or less troublesome, not actively hostile but passively obstructive. It has always been difficult to get tribute or labour from them.[344]

Due to Lalthuama's actions, which were perceived as a threat to British authority, he was arrested on multiple occasions. His mother, Ropuiliani, who operated from behind the scenes, was the primary instigator behind his resistance to British rule. Lalthuama's first arrest came about when General Treager dispatched messengers to contact the Muallianpui chiefs, and their route took them through Lalthuama's village. He halted their progress. Secondly, it was discovered that Paawna, Chief of Thlengang, who held the head of Lt. Steward, was residing with Lalthuama.

Furthermore, Lalthuama was found to be in league with Vantura and Dokola, along with other chiefs implicated in the murder of Lt. Steward. In May 1889, a bugler was killed in Lunglei, and Lalthuama sent his men to guide the killers to Tiau and Lunglerh, thus facilitating their escape from capture. As a consequence of these actions, he was incarcerated,[345] and his release was contingent upon the payment of a fine, which consisted of 30 guns, 1 *Gayal*, 10 pigs, 20 chickens, and 100 mounds of rice.[346] On January 21st, 1890, his associates conveyed the demand to the British authorities. They agreed to the terms but insisted that the 100 mounds of rice be delivered after Lalthuama returned home, at which point he would make the payment

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[344] Report, "Report Concerning Ropui Lieni, widow of Vandula, and her son, Lalthuama, at present prisoners in Lungleh," by J. Shakespear, FDEP, January 1894; Nos 445P, National Archive of India, New Delhi.

[345] Report, "Report Concerning Ropui Lieni."

[346] Lalsangzuali Sailo, *Tlawmve lo LalnuRopuliani*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Published by the author, 1998), 59-65.

to the army camp near the Mat River. He was released that day and the 100 mounds of rice were delivered to the colonial authorities on January 28th.[347]

In 1888, Thonglien, who was chief of Serkawr, conducted a raid on a village near Ruma in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and took two individuals as captives. Lalthuama, although not directly involved in the raid itself, provided shelter for the two captives within his village. As a result, a penalty of Rs 50 was levied against Lalthuama for concealing the two captives.[348]

In August 1891, when Hutchinson visited Lalthuama's village, he was met with a less-than-friendly reception. Additionally, Hutchinson received a report from a Lushai bugler indicating that approximately 10 men from Lalthuama's group had attempted to attack him. Responding to this report, Hutchinson arrested Lathuama. However, Lalthuama was released once it was determined that the person who made the report had been intoxicated and that the information provided was incorrect. This marked the second occasion on which Lalthuama had been arrested.[349]

When Satinkhara, a local interpreter working for the colonial government in the South Lushai Hills, was murdered in Hnahthial village, which was under the rule of Chief Dokhara, suspicions naturally fell on Lalthuama's involvement, given his history of resistance. Although Dokhara did not belong to any established chiefly clan, his marriage to Vandula's daughter had granted him control over a village. Because of this marital tie, Dokhara was subordinate to Lalthuama's authority.[350] Satinkhara's role involved collecting taxes and conveying necessary government orders to the chiefs. He often used abusive language when dealing with villagers, which caused frustration among the locals due to his domineering demeanour. Ropuiliani, seeking to address this situation, incited a courageous warrior named Hnawncheuva by saying, 'Hnawncheu, you consider yourself brave and fearless, but you lack the courage to eliminate Satinkhara.' [351] Some days later, Satinkhara was indeed murdered.

[347] Report, "Report Concerning Ropui Lieni."
[348] Report, "Report Concerning Ropui Lieni."
[349] Report, "Report Concerning Ropui Lieni."
[350] Report, "Report Concerning Ropui Lieni."
[351] Lalhluna RK, interview by Hosana Lalenvela Khiangte, Lunglawn, Lunglei, September 24, 2019.

Hnawncheuva, the perpetrator of the murder, was not immediately apprehended due to the outbreak of armed resistance in South Lushai Hills, which the British referred to as 'the rising in March 1892.' However, it was announced that anyone offering shelter to Hnawncheuva would face punishment. Shakespear received information suggesting that Hnawncheuva was under Lalthuama's protection. In response, Shakespear promptly arrested Lalthuama and held him in the residence of Darmaka, an interpreter working under Shakespear. He instructed Lalthuama to produce Hnawncheuva or pay a fine of 100 guns. However, Lalthuama only paid 13 guns out of the 100 imposed as a fine. Subsequently, he escaped from the interpreter's house and refused to return.

In July, Shakespear received intelligence indicating that Ropuiliani, collaborating with Dokhuma and other chiefs, was plotting an attack against the British authorities.[352] On the 7th of August, Shakespear, accompanied by Hutchinson and Mr. Pugh, led a contingent of 80 soldiers, including the interpreter Darmaka, on a mission to apprehend the chieftainess. They set their sights on Denlung village for this operation. On the 8th of August, the expedition reached Denlung village and successfully arrested both Lalthuama and his mother, Ropuiliani.[353] Shakespear was well aware that Lalthuama's obstinacy and aggressive behaviour were primarily influenced by his mother.[354] Ropuiliani was the mastermind behind concealing Hnawncheuva, the individual responsible for the murder of the interpreter Satinkhara. In his report, Shakespear mentions:

> RopuiLieni could have arrested all the murderers, as is clearly shown by the fact that the moment she was captured, she sent out orders to have Lancheyva (Hnawncheuva) caught, and he was brought in at once.[355]

This report makes it clear that Ropuiliani and her son, Lalthuama, steadfastly resisted complying with the demands of colonial officials. They did so by harbouring

[352] Report, "Report Concerning Ropui Lieni."
[353] Sailo, *Tlawmve lo*, 135.
[354]Report, "Report Concerning Ropui Lieni."
[355] Report, "Report Concerning Ropui Lieni."

the individual responsible for the murder of a colonial official, Satinkhara, within their jurisdiction and allowing the killer to remain at large.

The resistance put forth by the Southern chiefs against the British effectively ended with the capture of Ropuiliani and her son.[356] They were subsequently deported to Chittagong Jail with the approval of the Government of India under Regulation III. Ropuiliani, the chieftainess, passed away in January 1895, likely due to old age.[357]

While most chiefs in the South Lushai Hills had their authority subdued, particularly following Ropuiliani's and her son's incarceration, a formidable and influential chief who resisted cooperation with the colonial administration remained. This chief, known as Kairuma, occupied a unique position, officially falling within the jurisdiction of the Political Officer of North Lushai Hills. He resided at a geographical point where the jurisdictions of Lungleh, Aijal, and Fort White converged. Kairuma was the third offspring of Vuta, a highly esteemed Sailo chief and the grandson of Lallula.[358] Within the group of chiefs governed by descendants of Chief Vuta were figures such as Kairuma, Lungliana, Neihpuithangi, Lalbuta, Zataia, and Ralthianga, all of whom fell under Kairuma's influence. Furthermore, Chief Zaduna and Chief Kaphleia from the South Lushai Hills were also under his sphere of authority and sway.[359]

Despite Kairuma's implication in the raid on Pakuma Rani village within the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1889, no immediate punitive action was taken against him. Instead, his associates, Lungliana and Nikhama, faced consequences for their involvement in 1890 when they encountered the Chittagong Northern Lushai Expeditionary Force, led by Colonel G.I. Skinner, following their rendezvous with Mr. W.W. Daly's contingent at Lianphunga's village.[360] In 1891, R.B. McCabe, the Political Officer of North Lushai Hills, conducted official visits to the villages

[356] Lalthlengliana, *The Lushai Hills,* 107.
[357] Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills,* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Tribal Research Institute, Reprinted, 1978,), 49.
[358] K. Laldinpuii, "Kairuma Chief of Biate," *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Volume-XII, (2011),39.
[359] Letter, "Letter to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam," by A. Porteous, Political Officer of North Lushai Hills, CB-4, G-37, Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.
[360] Letter, "Letter to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam."

governed by Kairuma, Lungliana, and Neihpuithangi (Kairuma's mother). During these visits, an official notification was issued, requiring the payment of house tax at the rate of Rs. 1 per house to the Political Officer based in Aijal. [361]

In February 1892, Captain Shakespear and Mr. McCabe convened at Lailen, responding to Captain Shakespear's request to resolve a dispute between Kairuma and Dokhuma, a chief within the jurisdiction of the South Lushai Hills administration. During this meeting, they confirmed Kairuma's rightful possession of the contested land. Moving forward to January 1893, Mr. Davis, the North Lushai Hills Political Officer, and Captain Shakespear convened once more at Lailen, Kairuma's village. However, their reception was notably unfriendly. Once again, in January 1894, these two officers met at Kairuma's village. The response they received mirrored the previous years' experience: the chiefs refused to meet them but provided coolies for their transportation to the next village. In the words of Mr. Porteous:

> A halt of a fortnight was made in Jataiya's village, and supplies for a force of 100 men were taken from the villagers during that time without payment, but not a single gun was surrendered out of the fine imposed, and beyond carrying in their allotted share of rice to ration to Serchhip outpost, none of the coolies ordered from either of these villages were supplied. A guard of 25 men was posted at Kairuma's Village for some week in April to enforce the order for furnishing coolies, but without effect.[362]

Kairuma persistently resisted submitting to British authority. In response, Mr. Davis ordered an additional 50 guards to be stationed in the villages of Kairuma and Zataia. During subsequent visits by Mr. Porteous and Captain Shakespear, these chiefs declined to engage with them. Additionally, Kairuma was instructed to provide 100 coolies for labour in Aijal, but he disregarded this directive. Consequently, in the early days of April, Mr Porteous imposed a fine of 60 guns on Kairuma, stipulating that if the fine remained unpaid by the end of the rainy season, he would face the

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[361] Laldinpuii, "Kairuma Chief of Biate," 40.

[362] Letter, "Letter to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam," by A. Porteous, Political Officer of North Lushai Hills, CB-4, G-37, Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

consequences. Kairuma rejected the fines imposed upon him, leading to the initiation of an expedition against him. [363]

In November, key officials, including Mr Porteous (the Political Officer of the North Lushai Hills), Captain Loch (the Commandant of the North Lushai Hills military police), and Captain John Shakespear (the Superintendent of the South Lushai Hills) convened to finalise crucial details regarding the expedition against Kairuma. They collectively determined that the three-column meeting would occur on the 25th of December 1895. Additionally, Mr. Tuck, the Political Officer of the Chin Hills, was duly informed of these arrangements. [364] The Aijal, Lungleh, and Falam columns converged at Kairuma's village in the Tlaikhuang Hills. However, Kairuma remained steadfast in his refusal to submit to British authority, resulting in the burning of his village. A contingent of Military Police was stationed alongside the stockade as a guard. During the operation, Captain Shakespear succeeded in capturing Zakapa and Zaduna. The capture of these two chiefs led Kairuma to realise that he could not withstand the British forces. According to Captain Shakespear, "His (Kairuma) very wise Upa, Chungnunga, came in and made a submission and on payment of a fine in guns and supplying some coolies he was forgiven and since then been one of the very best chiefs."[365] With Kairuma's submission, the entire Lushai Hills region was annexed.

4.3 Dissimulation.

In an alternative form of everyday resistance termed 'dissimulation', individuals conceal their true feelings or intentions and feign different ones. The regulation of anger and aggression constitutes a significant aspect of the socialisation process for individuals raised in subordinate groups for apparent reasons. Throughout history, much of the commonplace politics within subordinate groups has been characterised by a politics of dissimulation, where both the symbols and practices of

[363] Letter, "Letter to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam," by A. Porteous.
[364] Laldinpuii, "Kairuma Chief of Biate," 42.
[365] Note, "Note on the Lushai Hills, its inhabitants, and its administration since 1888," by J Shakespear, CB-7, G-79, Mizoram State Archive, Aizawl.

resistance are deliberately obscured.[366] Instead of resorting to overt insults, individuals employ nicknames. Colonial officers, in particular, were assigned names that reflected the animosity they harboured toward superiors who had curtailed many of their traditional liberties and rights. John Shakespear, the first Superintendent of the amalgamated Lushai Hills, candidly acknowledged his awareness of this phenomenon in a personal letter to a missionary stationed in the North Lushai Hills.

> "Yes, I know my Lushai nickname very well. I am lucky, for some of us got worse ones. One captain was always called "Sahib Rawnga"; later, he brought out a Lushai vocabulary in which Rawnga was said to mean "Of a pleasing kindly disposition." Another was called "Sakei Sahib", he said, because he wore a striped blazer, but I doubt it. Dear old Porteous, the most well-meaning and conscientious of Superintendents but prone to gusts of fierce wrath with wrongdoers, was always known as "Taoura". Then there was "Biang-Shera," Plowden, and "Then-tiaova," Colonel Loch, who was always smiling, many others. Oh, Dundar was "Sahib Shaaga," and a Bengali overseer, who insisted on being called Sahib, not Babu, was named "Sahib Hanga." I do not think he liked it." [367]

In the Mizo vernacular, 'Sahib Rawnga' translates to 'Cruel Sahib,' while 'Taoura*'* signifies 'Mr. Sulky' and 'Then-tiaova' conveys 'Mr. Grin.' Captain H.R. Brown, the first Political Officer of North Lushai Hills, acquired the moniker 'Hmaireka,' meaning 'Mr. Curved face.' Other colonial officers were similarly bestowed with descriptive names, such as Mr A.W. Davis referred to as 'Hmuihmulduma,' signifying 'Mr. Black Moustache,' L.O. Clarke as 'Thangte-eka,' which connotes 'Mr. Little famous bowel,' Major W.N. Kennedy, as 'Hnarkula,' meaning 'Mr. Curved nose,' Mr F.C. Hanniker and Col A. Playfair being designated as 'Pawngvina,' or 'Mr. Choleric.' Mr. J.H. Hezlett was also named 'Hmuihmulzara,' translating to 'Mr. Big moustache.'[368] It is evident from Shakespear's letter to Mr. Mendus that assigning such names was a form of dissimulation. Major GH Loch was initially labelled as 'Thenthiauva' or 'Mr. Grin,' but upon his comprehension of the meaning and subsequent protest, he was renamed 'Manding Putara,' signifying 'Old

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[366] James C. Scott, "Everyday Forms of Resistance," *Cultural Critique* 36 (1997): 31, 28 October 2018.

[367] J Shakespear, "Letter to Mr Mendus" Private Letter, 20th April 1939.

[368] Lalhmachhuana Zofa, *Mizoram Political Records*, (Aizawl: Published by the Author, 2013), 280-282.

man commandant.'[369] These instances revealed that the Mizos altered the names they assigned to colonial officers once these individuals became acquainted with the Mizo language. These names, often hilarious and disparaging, were used to convey a veiled message of the Mizos' disapproval of these individuals and their position in the colonial establishment. While they may not have explicitly expressed these nicknames in the presence of these officials, they made jokes about these nicknames among friends on drinking occasions. In a sense, this practice is employed as a form of stereotyping their cultural and political superiors, providing the Mizos with a sense of empowerment and psychological resilience while expressing these names from their position of subjugation and dominance. As they could not openly insult the British officers, this practice represented a disguised resistance against their subordination under colonial rule. Nevertheless, a very interesting reverse is apparent when Mizos collectively named the missionaries 'Zo-sap.' Semantically, 'Zo' denotes a larger ethnonym comprising Mizo as well as many other kindred tribes, while 'sap,' though initially derived from 'sahib,' was appropriated to identify European colonial officials and to denote all Europeans eventually. Thus, terms like 'Bawrhsap', 'Sapte', 'Manding sap' and even 'Zo-sap' were indigenously produced to identify their colonial masters and the missionaries. Yet, 'Zosap' stood out among all other 'sap' wherein Mizos have shown their acceptance to the missionaries despite being Europeans by willingly prefixing 'sap' with 'Zo.'

4.4 Resistance to Christianity through Cultural Practices.

Wherever colonialism exerted its influence, it was inevitably succeeded by a purported civilising mission with the aim of 'enlightening' and rescuing the indigenous populations from the perceived dominance of natural forces over their lives. One of the primary instruments employed by the colonisers to advance their civilising agenda among the local inhabitants was Christianity, which was reinforced by the provision of education. Following the annexation of the North and South Lushai Hills, Western Christian missionaries arrived at Aizawl in 1894. These missionaries swiftly acquired proficiency in the local language and developed written forms to

[369] Shakespear, "Letter to Mr Mendus."

facilitate their evangelical endeavours through educational initiatives. They concurrently conducted evangelistic preaching and established schools, resulting in the conversion of some Mizos to the Christian faith. The introduction of Christianity gradually eroded the traditional sources of authority, with the church emerging as an alternative centre of power. The novel religious beliefs, accompanied by Western culture and knowledge, conflicted with the Mizos' traditional ethos and belief system. Consequently, the Mizos began challenging the civilising mission imposed by the colonial administration and the missionaries.

Here, in this chapter, the subalterns are the forces of traditionalism within Mizo Society which strongly oppose the spread of Christianity and there was also every effort made by them to revive the traditional cultural practices and performances in the form of puma zai.

In the early 20th century, during the initial stages of Christianity's introduction to the Lushai Hills, a significant cultural resurgence occurred across the region through the medium of a communal song called *Puma Zai/Tlanglam Zai*. According to K. Zawla, the origins of *Puma Zai* can be traced to the *Biate* tribe, an ethnically related group to the Mizos, predominantly located in the present-day Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya and the North Cachar Hills. [370] Incorporating Puma Zai into the Mizo cultural milieu has historical roots dating back to Mr Edgar's arrival in the Lushai Hills in 1871. Mr. Edgar, the Deputy commissioner of Cachar, tasked with recovering 13 guns looted by Lalburha, brought along some *Biates* as coolie labourers, from whom the Mizos initially learned the songs of *Puma Zai*. However, these songs faded from memory rather swiftly. It was not until the *Thingtam* famine of 1880 that the Mizos recollected these songs, encountering them among Kuki rice sellers along the Tuirial River.[371] The popularisation of the song can be attributed to a resident of Ratu village who sang it as a lullaby. Subsequently, some young men acquired the song

[370] Hosana Lalenvela Khiangte, *Resistance in Southern Mizoram During the Colonial Period*, (MPhil Thesis, Mizoram University, 2016), 87.
[371] Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute*, 385.

from him and began to sing it. [372] In March 1908, [373] Chief Lalzika of Zawngin village dispatched four individuals to learn the song, introduced it in his village, and marked its arrival by sacrificing *Gayal.*[374] Initially regarded as a folly by chiefs from other villages, this enthusiasm soon led them to follow suit. The fervour grew to such an extent that young men would incorporate dance into their meals, holding food in one hand while gesturing with the other.[375] As time progressed, performing this song transformed into a communal endeavour, transitioning from individual hearths to village courtyards. This practice eventually came to be known as *Tlanglam Zai* and was embraced by every member of the village.[376]

The songs rapidly disseminated throughout the Hills, and Saiaithanga likened its propagation to a sweeping wildfire. [377] This widespread embrace of the songs posed a significant obstacle for Christian evangelists in their mission to preach the Gospel. There were few receptive audiences left for their message, as the fervour for the songs had taken hold across the region. This presented a predicament for those who chose to convert to Christianity: they could not partake in singing these songs, and the populace was unwilling to relinquish this profoundly cherished tradition of communal singing.[378]

As per Lalhmuaka's account, quoting Rev H.S. Luaia, it was observed that many of the young Christian males and females who had converted to Christianity tended to revert to their previous beliefs and practices. This suggested a lack of steadfast commitment to evangelism. [379] During this period, evangelists encountered a peculiar situation in which, while delivering their sermons, non-Christians would

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[372] Saiaithanga, *Mizo Kohhran Chanchin*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: The Mizo Theological Literature Committee, Aizawl, Reprinted, 1993),

[373] Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute*, 385.

[374] According to Lorrain in his Dictionary of The Lushai Language page number 4, *ai* means to kill a domestic animal and perform a ceremony of rejoicing over such things as good rice harvest, a pumper crop of hundred red pumpkins, a popular song, etc.

[375] Mangkhosat Kigpen, *Christianity and Mizo Culture*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: The Mizo theological conference, Mizoram, 1996), 228.

[376] Saiaithanga, *Mizo Kohhran Chanchin*, 29.

[377] Khiangte, *Resistance*, 88.

[378] Khiangte, *Resistance*, 88.

[379] Lalhmuaka, *Zoram Thim ata Engah*, 139.

engage in singing *Puma Zai* and dancing around them, effectively overshadowing their preaching. One of the commonly sung songs from the *Puma Zai/Tlanglam* Zai collection was: -

> *Lehkha bu keng vai lem chang (Carrying book, imitating foreigners) Chanchintha hril reng mai, Puma (Always proclaiming something, Puma).*[380]

The presence of this song and the associated social activities, such as dancing and drinking, posed a significant challenge to the progress of Christianity in the region. These practices directly contradicted the principles of the new religion, representing a substantial impediment to its progress. J.H. Lorrain, the pioneering missionary in the Lushai Hills who returned to the South Lushai Hills in 1904, referred to this phenomenon as 'Satanic Opposition' in his report. He specifically addressed the song in the following manner:

> A strange song called "Puma Zai," which is said to owe its origin to a man possessed by demons, made its appearance in the north some months ago and spread like wildfire over the country. Many rumours were current as to what this "Puma Zai" would accomplish, and it was stated that all who acclaimed its advent would be exempted from offering sacrifices to demons and that the dread spirits would in future be appeased if such votaries merely offered, when ill, a few hairs or feathers instead of the usual sacrifices of animals and birds. In village after village, the song was welcomed by the heathen as a revolution from the Evil One, and sacrifices were offered, accompanied by much beer drinking and dancing to inaugurate its use, which it was confidently affirmed would silence forever the Christian hymns and stamp out the new religion. No words can tell what a severe test these orgies were, and still are, to the scattered converts in the distant villages, but we praise God that in the majority of cases, they stood firm and refused to join in the unholy revels.[381]

The *Puma Zai* came to an end during the bamboo famine of 1912. Bamboo flowering triggered this famine, which commenced in 1911 and resulted in a severe food shortage in 1912.[382] With the scarcity of rice, the production of rice beer, a

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[380] CL Hminga, *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, (Lunglei: Literature Committee BCM, 1987), 85.

[381] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938*.47.

[382] Kigpen, *Chrsitianity and Mizo culture*, 233.

significant cultural element, also declined. This shortage of rice beer, coupled with the overall hardships caused by the famine, profoundly impacted the people, leading to a decline in their enthusiasm. Consequently, Puma Zai gradually faded away during this time. [383]

In the early 20th century, a new song known as *Chalmar Zai* emerged among the non-Christian community, alternatively referred to as *Thingpui Zai* or the 'tea song.' Chalmara was one of the heads of the Cachar tea garden. During this period, tea consumption gained popularity among the Mizo population. As Christians shifted away from the traditional beverage, called *zu*, in favour of tea, they encountered disdain from non-Christian individuals. In response to this cultural transition, non-Christians composed a satirical song called *Chalmar Zai*,[384] which humorously mocked the Christian adoption of tea and reflected the social tensions arising from this change. The songs were: -

1. *Chalmar leh Chalmar a dang mang e,*	*Both Chalmar are pretty unrelated,*
Keni Chalmar dardawnkawnah a hawng e;	*We drank our chalmar with a cup of rice beer;*
Tumse no lenga'n a fang del del.	*We poured it into the cup and drank one by one*
2. *Zu dawn leh zu dawn a dang mang e,*	*The same drinking rice beer are dissimilar*
Chimtlang lalrrengpuia zu dawn ve reng chu;	*The Southern Chiefs Rice beer;*
Chhuan lai ngantui ang a sen riai e.	*It's red like a boiling rice beer.*
3. *Dar ri leh dar ri a dang mang e,*	*A different sound from the same bell,*
Keini dar ri chawltui zu dawnna rengan;	*Our bell is for drinking;*
Nangni dar ri, di auhna, di auhna.	*Your bell is for calling a paramour.*
4.*Tinzu leh Tinzu a dang mang e,*	*Same rice beer is different*
Nangni tinzu luarbawn thingpui hnahthel ro;	*Your rice beer is made from dry leaves;*

[383] Saiaithanga, *Mizo Kohhran Chanchin*, 30.

[384] RL Thanmawia, *Mizo Hla Hlui (Mizo Folk Songs),* (Aizawl: Published by Din Din Heaven, 2020), 586.

Tirkoh meibulan a dut kuang kuang. *A bob-tailed evangelist drink it, drink it.*

5. *Zu I lawm huam huam ang u, valrual hian,* *Let all the young men drink rice beer,*
Damchhung tawite thih hnu sei tur dawnin; *Considering how life is short and death is long;*
A ngur lal, I run ti thing lo la. *O! Our Chief, don't give up drinking.* [385]

The new religion, Christianity, forbade most of the traditional cultural practices of the Mizo people, which created a strong feeling among them to counter Christianity. According to the Presbyterian Church Presbytery Minutes of April 1910, the Church prohibits the practice of *Fanodawi* [386] and *Kawngpui siam*[387] as the Christians worship another God.[388] In 1915, there was controversy in a village in the South Lushai Hills on the grounds of *Fanodawi* and *Kawngpui siam.* These were traditional sacrificial acts performed by the public to get blessings for their agricultural activities. The Christians in this village not only refused to participate in these sacrifices but also left the village, and a fine was imposed on them by the chief.[389] The Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church held in June 1919 also mentioned that in the village of Ngentiang, the Christians did not observe *Fanodawi* and a fine was imposed on them by the non-Christians.[390]

During a Baptist Church Presbytery meeting convened on October 18, 1918, in Serkawn, there was deliberation on men courting women. It was noted that in Mizo society, it was customary for men to visit women's homes at night before bedtime. However, despite the church's decision on this matter, some Christian men chose to disregard it. The Church convention minutes are as follows:

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[385] Thanmawia, *Mizo Hla Hlui,* 586.

[386] To offer the annual sacrificed which was made to protect the young growing rice crops on the village jhum from disease.

[387] To offer an annual sacrifice to ensure prosperity for the whole village especially in the hunting and trapping of wild animals.

[388] Rev H. Remthanga, *Synod Thurel LakKhawm, Volume 1(1910 - 1950),* (Aizawl, Mizoram: The Synod Literature & Publication Board, 1996), 203.

[389] Presbytery Minute Book 1915-1931, BCM Archive, 1.

[390] Remthanga, *Synod Thurel Lakkhawm,* 203.

> Sins are often committed among the youth community Christians; the main reason for this is wooing women. From now on, every local church should announce the prohibition of wooing women and terms of the prohibition should be made by the Presbytery; it was proposed by some brothers. We had a big debate on this topic, some brothers are afraid that even if terms and conditions are made by the presbytery, those who are not willing to follow will not obey at all. It will be a big problem for the Presbytery if it cannot be implemented. Therefore, we decided that every deacon from a different village should zealously instruct the young men not to go to the women's house. Some churches already banned this, so we decided to send letters to take their examples to the church and those who do not. It was proposed by Pu Buanga and second by Pastor Chuautera.[391]

In the Chapchar Presbytery Minutes of March 11, 1921, held at Serkawn, there was a church convention with an agenda concerning chiefs who had converted to Christianity. During the meeting, a resolution was passed stipulating that if a chief embraced Christianity but did not assume the role of a deacon, they would be regarded as regular church members and would not have any involvement in church matters. [392] This decision clearly illustrated that the decision of the Church diminished the Chiefs' authority in matters concerning its members' welfare. The Church influenced various social issues, including decisions related to Christian couples seeking divorce. In such cases, despite being residents of the villages, the chiefs held no authority over the church's decision-making process.

The traditional Mizo sport/entertainment known as *Se Chaih*, which involved dragging a *Gayal* with a rope tied to its horn from one place to another and teasing it with bamboo spikes before it was sacrificed, was prohibited by the church for its members. The church deemed this practice an act of cruelty on animals contrary to Christian values and associated with heathen rituals. In April 1910, the minutes of the presbytery meeting of the Presbyterian Church indicated that efforts were made to eliminate *Se Chaih* and Saphluia, Dala, and Saptlangvala were appointed to engage with the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills for this purpose. Furthermore, the presbytery minutes of April 1913 showed that children were encouraged not to participate in *Se Chaih*. [393] An incident in Ralvawng Village exemplified this

[391] Presbytery Minute Book 1915-1931, BCM Archive, 55.
[392] Presbytery Minute Book 1915-1931, BCM Archive, 16.
[393] Remthanga, *Synod Thurel Lakkhawm*, 204.

prohibition. When the village chief ordered the performance of *Se Chaih*, the Christian members refused to participate, resulting in their being physically assaulted by the chief. The meeting minutes of *Chapchar* Presbytery on 16th March 1922 are as follows:

> In some villages, Se Chaih is still organised. A few days back in the village of Ralvawng, it was performed. When the Christian refused, the chief had bitten four persons. So, we agree that it is necessary to report it to the government. It is better to report on writing, and the writing manner will be in the hands of the writer; the writer should be Pu Buanga. It was proposed by Mankima and second by Pu Buanga.[394]

To suppress the spread of the new religion, the chief of Ralvawng issued orders to conduct the *Se Chaih* ceremony on Palm Sunday. However, the Christian community adhered to their religious practices, which included observing Sunday and abstaining from participating in traditional sacrifices. Consequently, they rejected the chief's directive. On Palm Sunday, the Christians organised a procession through the village. The chief, in response, instructed them not to pass through his house and marked a boundary with bamboo to delineate the area they should avoid. Two individuals, Kalkhangliana and Tilhanga, disregarded the chief's instructions and crossed the bamboo boundary.

As a consequence, the chief resorted to physical violence, beating them with a bludgeon. According to RK Lalhluna, the chief's resistance to Christianity stemmed from several concerns. Firstly, he observed that as people converted to Christianity, they abandoned traditional Mizo culture. Fearing a loss of his followers, he opposed the new religion and actively sought to eradicate it from his village. Secondly, the Christians' practice of observing Sunday and refraining from work that day raised concerns for the chief, as he worried about potential food shortages for his villagers. Simultaneously, he observed Christians leaving his village to settle in Sethlun, the first Christian village. This further fuelled his apprehensions, as he feared losing a significant portion of his population and, consequently, opposed and attempted to eliminate the new faith.[395]

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[394] Presbytery Minute Book 1915-1931, BCM Archive, 52.

[395] Lalhluna, interview.

4.5 Persecution of Christians.

In Mizoram, the era of colonialism was succeeded by a civilising mission driven by the intent to 'enlighten' and liberate the natives from their indigenous belief systems, which were deemed as having an insurmountable influence over them. The colonisers employed various tools to advance their civilising agenda among the indigenous population, with Christianity being a central component, complemented by initiatives in education, healthcare, and more. Following the annexation of the North and South Lushai Hills, Western Christian missionaries arrived in Aizawl in 1894. These missionaries familiarised themselves with the local language and transcribed it into written form, facilitating their evangelical efforts through education. They concurrently engaged in proselytising through preaching and the establishment of educational institutions, leading to the conversion of some Mizos to Christianity. Nonetheless, the introduction of this new religion, accompanied by Western culture and knowledge, clashed with the traditional culture and belief systems of the Mizos. This incongruity prompted the Mizos to resist and challenge the civilising mission imposed by colonial rule.

According to Ranajit Guha, *'Subaltern mobilisation relatively more violent…more spontaneous,'* [396] Various incidents of violent opposition to Christianity and its adherents were registered in both the North and South Lushai Hills in the early years of colonial rule. In South Lushai Hills, religious persecution of varying degrees was evident when Christianity began to win converts. In 1899, DE Jones, the Welsh Missionary from the North Lushai Hills, preached the Gospel in the *Pukpui* village of the South Lushai Hills. Thankunga, the brother-in-law of Darphawka (a man who prophesied the coming of Christian missionaries from across the sea), converted to Christianity; along with him, eight families were converted too.[397] Figure 4.1 shows the image of Thankunga. These newly converted Christians observed Sunday and failed to respect the order of their chief, Darmaka. Figure 4.2 shows the image of Darmaka, the chief of Pukpui. For the construction of the road between Lunglei and

[396] Ranajit Guha, "On Some Aspect of the Historiography" 4.

[397] V Lalzawnga, *Zoram Baptist Kohhran Chanchin Pawimawh Lawrkhawm*, (Lunglei: BCM Literature Committee, 1990), 26.

Aizawl, the demand for labour and coolies was high. The chief of Pukpui ordered his people to do road construction work on Sunday, which, however, could not be complied with by the Christians as Sunday was observed as a day of worshipping God. The Mizo Christians faced allegations from non-Christian villagers for refraining from consuming Zu, a traditional drink, as directed by the missionaries. They were criticised for supposedly distancing themselves from their cultural and traditional practices. This issue became a significant reason for the Christians as well as the non-Christians, which sometimes culminated in many unpleasant situations.

Figure 4.1: Image of Thankunga
Source: BCM Archive, Serkawn, Lungl

Figure 4.2: Image of Darmaka, chief of Pukpui.
Source: AG McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, 2015.

The Christian population in Pukpui Village faced significant challenges due to their religious practices. Their observance of Sunday and refusal to engage in tributary labour on multiple occasions led to denunciation by their fellow villagers, including their own family members. It is reported that some of their relatives even confiscated their belongings. [398] The village chief resorted to drastic measures to exert authority and discipline over the Christian community. This included killing their livestock as a punishment for their disobedience and prohibiting them from cultivating their *jhum*s.

These Christians faced challenges as they did not show the expected respect to their village chief; instead, they considered Thankunga, their leader. Chief Darmaka reported this insubordination issue to the Sub Divisional Officer (S.D.O) of South Lushai Hills, accusing Thankunga of attempting to usurp his chieftainship and undermine his authority. The district authority took the side of Chief Darmaka and found Thankunga guilty of the allegations. Consequently, Thankunga was sentenced to a 10-day imprisonment and compelled to work on road construction. Upon learning

[398] Lalzawnga, *Zoram Baptist Kohhran* 27.

of this situation, DE Jones from the North Lushai Hills travelled to Lunglei and met with the Sub Divisional Officer. Following negotiations, the district authority permitted the Christians to establish a separate village. The S.D.O then forwarded their request to Aizawl, and the permission was granted on April 15, 1902. Subsequently, the seven Christian families were informed, and all family heads convened a meeting on the same night. On the following day, April 16, 1902, every working-age male for *jhum* cultivation journeyed to Sethlun to seek suitable land for cultivation.[399] Seven households from Pukpui and six from other villages joined them at Sethlun, establishing the first Christian village in Mizoram. The table presents the names of the seven men and their children who relocated to Sethlun, while Figure 4.3 illustrates some of the individuals from the table list.

Sl No	Name	Children	Grand children
1	Rochawnghluta	1. Zothanga 2. Thangchhingpuii 3. Thangsavungi	Chawnglali
2	Khawtinthanga	Thankunga	Buchhawna
3	Thangngaia	Hmingdailova	Sainghinga
4	Hrangpawla	Thangchhinga	
5	Hluneka	1. Lawngvara 2. Lianchama 3. Khumtira	
6	Zotawna	Lianhawla	
7	Sanhleia	Talhhulha	

Source: Upa Lalrinchhunga, *Pukpui Khawtlang Leh Kohhran Chanchin*, (Lunglei: Baptist church of Mizoram Pukpui, 1996.

[399] Upa Lalrinchhunga, *Pukpui Khawtlang Leh Kohhran chanchin*, (Lunglei: Baptist church of Mizoram Pukpui, 1996.),

Figure. 4.3: Early Christians from South Lushai Hills forced to migrate to Sethlun due to the persecution of Chief Darmaka of Pukpui.
Source: BCM Archive, Serkawn, Lunglei.

In South Lushai Hills, another case of Christian persecution took place in the village of Lunglawn, located on the outskirts of Lunglei. While this incident has been passed down orally, every effort has been made to depict the events as they occurred accurately. The central figures in this incident were Chief Lalchhunga of Lunglawn and the family of Saizema, the son of Chawngbawla, one of the prominent Mizo warriors in the Lushai Hills.[400] Saizema, a resident of Lunglawn village and a father of six children, converted to Christianity with his wife, Thangtei, and their children. Tragically, Saizema passed away shortly after his conversion. Due to their conversion to Christianity, Chief Lalchhunga persecuted Saizema's family. Lalchhunga subjected the Christians in his village to mistreatment due to their abandonment of the traditional practice of drinking *zu* and their refusal to work as labourers. The Christians rejected the traditional belief system, turned away from traditional sacrifices, and failed to conform to the societal norms and traditions of Mizo society during that period. Upon

[400] Saizema was the son of a famous Mizo warrior, Chawngbawla.

Saizema's death, the chief of Lunglawn refused to allow the young men of his village to dig his grave, claiming that they were Christians and that their God would do it.

Furthermore, he did not offer condolences or comfort to the grieving family, rebuking them by saying that they were Christians and that their God would be there for them. It was customary for young men to spend nights with bereaved families, but the chief did not permit them to do so, again citing their Christian faith and the presence of their God. He also prohibited any form of gifts or offerings to the family, asserting that God would provide for them. Anyone who dared to give a present to Saizema's family would face severe punishment.[401]

After Saizema's death, his body was kept inside his house as there was no one in the village willing to dig his grave due to the Christian beliefs of his family. During the night, a stranger from the *Pawi* community sought shelter in Saizema's house without being aware of the householder's passing. When Saizema's wife, Thangtei, explained their situation to the stranger and gave him the choice to stay or leave, he opened the curtain and discovered the lifeless body of Saizema. Without uttering a word, the stranger silently left the house. The following day, upon hearing the news, people from Sethlun, another village, came to Lunglawn and dug a grave for Saizema. The grave was three feet deep, and this act allowed for Saizema to be properly buried. Despite this, the chief of Lunglawn persisted in his anti-Christian stance. He increased and doubled the *Fathang* and imposed on Thangtei, the widow of Saizema, and continued to insult her with the phrase, "God will provide for them," echoing his disdain for their Christian beliefs. [402]

As the Christians refrained from partaking in alcoholic beverages, Chief Lalchhunga harboured a desire to consume rice beer that the Christians brewed, aiming to ridicule their practices and beliefs. He approached Thangtei, compelling her to ferment rice for his consumption. When she initially resisted, he resorted to threats, leaving her fearful and coerced into fermenting the rice for his enjoyment. Upon its readiness, the chief indulged in the drink and expressed his contentment. Encouraged

[401] LT Muana, interview by Hosana Lalenvela Khiangte, Serkawn, Lunglei, September 22, 2019.
[402] Muana LT, interview.

by the pleasurable experience, he proposed that Thangtei become his concubine, enabling him access to the rice beer prepared by the Christians. Thangtei, however, rejected his proposition, citing the predicament it would create for her children. She also pointed out that the missionaries would not accept such an arrangement. Frustrated by her refusal, the chief ordered his young men to destroy her house.

Contrary to his expectations, these young men sympathised with Thangtei and refused to follow his command. The chief's frustration persisted, leading him to expel Thangtei and her children from the village during a heavy rainstorm before dawn. Seeking refuge, they journeyed to Zotlang and took shelter in her son-in-law's house. Thangtei informed the missionaries of her situation and inquired about attending church services there. The missionaries suggested that she go to Sethlun, where there was a church. To reach Sethlun, they had to traverse through Lunglawn village. Upon learning of Thangtei's intentions, Chief Lalchhunga attempted to capture her en route by dispatching some young men. [403] Fearful of being apprehended by the chief, Thangtei and her family opted to take an animal trail known as *vawk kawng tum* to reach Sethlun, bypassing the main road. [404]

Three female retainers, Pawngi, Hlunziki, and Challianbuki, were residing in the Chief of Zote village household when they converted to Christianity. Following their conversion, they faced mistreatment and even endured torture at the hands of the Chieftainess. Parima, one of the initial Christian messengers from South Lushai Hills, who lodged in the house of the chief of Bualpui village near Zote, frequently visited these women. The Chieftainess became infuriated by his visits and would often beat him until he bled. Subsequently, EW Rowland, the missionary from the Northern Lushai Hills, secured the release of the three Christian servants by providing a sum of forty rupees. [405]

On another occasion, Thankunga and Zathanga, the initial Christian messengers from the South Lushai Hills, visited the village of Dophunga in the eastern

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[403] Muana LT, interview.

[404] Vawk kawng tum is a track of animals, not a proper road for human.

[405] W.W. Carter and H.S. Luaia, *Mizoram Baptist Kohhran Chanchin*, (Lunglei:The Literature Programme Committee, Baptist Chruch of Mizoram, 1981), 46.

region. They sought shelter at the residence of a man named Saiburha for the night. Upon arrival, Saiburha's wife returned from the forest with firewood and engaged in a friendly conversation with the visitors, inquiring about their place of origin and purpose. However, upon learning that they hailed from Sethlun village and their mission was to spread the Gospel, she abruptly ceased conversing with them, displaying apparent displeasure and refusing to prepare dinner. In this situation, her husband took charge of meal preparation, with assistance from Thankunga and Zathanga. [406]

The preceding discussion underscores that during the early phase of British colonial rule in the Lushai Hills, Christianity emerged as a force that challenged the established norms of traditional Mizo society, including its social structure and power dynamics. While Christianity advocated for equality among its followers, it concurrently established a new locus of authority through the church leadership. Mizo chiefs perceived this development as a direct challenge to their power, authority, and traditional way of life. Consequently, certain chiefs responded by imposing severe oppression and subjecting the newly converted Christians to various forms of abuse and maltreatment.

In the village of Lungmawi, Tlawmi and her sisters converted to Christianity and were tortured by her brothers, though the chiefs and the society did not physically harm them but were despised by them. In Lungchem village, Thawma and his brothers changed their beliefs. The chief and his villagers also scorned them, but no corporal punishment was shown to them as the brothers had good physiques and were good warriors. Two female *bawis* who resided in the chief's house of Aithur village were also converted and were loathed by their brother. Once, the chief tried to strike them with a spear, and as they ran off from him, the chief chased them. He fell through the floor near the door, and the spear almost hit his own throat. When a preacher taught a hymn in this village, some of the young males disturbed them by beating the drum. The converted man known as Lengkaia of Keltan village also faced severe persecution.

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[406] Lalhmuaka, *Zoram Kristian Hmasa Tihduhdahna*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Synod Publication Board, 1985), 107.

A widow who was the sister of Hemphunga Bualpui chief Panuaia lived in the village of Muallianpui with her four children and was also a laughing stock. In a traditional Mizo society, a stranger from another village should not be denied as a guest in their home. When preachers travelled and preached in different villages, they were hardly welcome as guests by anyone in the village, and they had no place to accommodate themselves. When Zathanga and Parima preached the Gospel in the village of Sedai near Lungchem village, before seeking a lodge in the village, they preached first, and after they finished their preaching, they were denied to be hosted by every household in the village.

The most famous persecution in Mizoram occurred in the Village of Khandaih in 1906. According to Liangkhaia, Khandaih was the biggest village in Mizoram[407] , and Lalsawma mentioned that the village consisted of 4000 families.[408] When Mizoram was colonised, the government started collecting taxes and demanded *kuli,* and in 1892, when the government called for paying the tax and *kuli*, the Chief of Khandaih village Vanphunga Sailo replied them and said, 'I am the chief and no one is above me. Without my authorisation, no one should kuli nor pay taxes.' As he did not obey the government, the armed conflict happened with the British, and by the end of 1893, Vanphunga Sailo was apprehended and imprisoned in Aizawl for four months. When Superintendent A.W. Davis visited him in jail and asked, 'Vanphung, are you willing to give kuli and tax,' he replied, '*Kan ngam lo deuh che u a nih hi*,' (we are a bit unmatched with you).' Hence, he was made to give a thump impression on a bond paper and was freed by the Superintendent.[409] The relationship between the British and Vanphunga was not in good condition even before the coming of Christianity in his village.

In January 1903, a primary school was established by Edwin Rowland through a young man, Hrangsaipuia called Zirtirtu Hranga (Hranga the teacher).[410] The number of students enrolled was 116, and young men were much more numerous than the

[407] Liangkhaia, *Mizorama Harhna Thu*, (Aizawl, Mizoram, L.T.L. Publication, 2006), 22.
[408] Lalsawma, *Revivals: The Mizo Way*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Published by the Author, 1994), 38.
[409] JV Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Published by Dr John V. Hluna, 2006), 2-3.
[410] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 38.

children. The teacher taught the students, preached to them, and taught them a Gospel song; even in the evening, he alternately preached in the two *Zawlbuk*. Even when The chief and his elders suggested he stop his preaching and concentrate only on his work, he ignored their suggestion and constantly preached, and the chief and his elders very much disliked his disregard.[411]

The Christian community did not have a dedicated church building, so they used the school for their religious services. Their primary teachings emphasised avoiding practices such as drinking *zu* and participating in traditional religious ceremonies like *Kawngpui siam*, *Fano dawi*, and others, which they believed did not lead to progress and, therefore, should not be engaged in by those who followed God. These teachings caused resentment among the non-Christians in the community. Additionally, during this period, the Christians adopted the practice of shaking hands, likely influenced by foreigners. The non-Christians responded to this practice and contemptuously composed a sarcastic song: '*Pathian thuawi invuan chet – invuan chet*' (Obeyers of God, shaking hands, shaking hands), mocking the Christians for their new custom.[412]

Initially, Vanphunga did not pay much attention to the growing number of Christians, believing that a group of impoverished people could not challenge his authority. However, his wife, Lalkaichhungi, was deeply concerned and wanted to eliminate the Christians, fearing that their association with foreigners could pose a threat to her husband's position. She continuously urged Vanphunga and the chief to relocate the school to the outskirts of the village to avoid the disturbance it was causing. According to teacher Hranga's diary, the school attendance dropped from 116 to 21 by May 1904. Eventually, Zosaphluia sent a hymn book to Vanphunga, which he received on August 30th, 1904. This led to the permission to rebuild the school on the same site, with reconstruction beginning on September 13th, 1904, and reoccupation on September 17th, 1904.[413]

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[411] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*, 4, 6.
[412] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*,7.
[413] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*, 16,17.

Two Christian women, Harkungi and Machepi, wore traditional cloth known as *Thangchhuah puantial*, typically worn exclusively by *Thangchhuah* individuals. Some young and older adults, upon seeing them wearing this cloth while intoxicated, viewed it as an insult to their tradition and pelted them with stones.[414]

When a revival took place in Khandaih, it led to a significant expansion of the congregation. Due to the dual use of the school building as a church, the influx of attendees caused overcrowding. The Christians arranged an open-air worship service to accommodate the growing number of worshipers. During this outdoor gathering, they danced joyfully and were moved to tears of happiness.[415] The chief thought that it disturbed the village and with his elders, they said –

> If we spare them, they will all turn away to become "Obeyers of God!" Consequently, we'll lose the privilege of drinking zu and of performing feasts since the Christians teach against making and drinking zu. What will be the advantage of being chiefs? This (sic) sort of people are bad subjects, and must be checked.[416]

When the non-Christian residents noticed that Christians refrained from agricultural work on Sundays due to their religious convictions, they perceived this practice as unproductive. They feared it might lead to inadequate harvests, viewing Sunday observance as a potential cause of famine. Furthermore, the non-Christian community regarded this behaviour as disruptive to the village's overall functioning, even as a challenge to the authority of the village chief. Consequently, they developed a strong desire to expel the Christians from their community. This prompted Chief Vanphunga to initiate a campaign of persecution against the Christians, commencing in May 1906. [417]

The initial stage of persecution began when the leader sought out the elders who had children following the Christian faith. The elders were assembled, and those

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[414] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*, 8.

[415] Liangkhaia, *Mizoram Harhna Thu*, 23.

[416] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity ans subaltern Culture: Revival Movement as a Cultural Response to Westernization in Mizoram*, (Delhi: Rev. Ashish Amos of the Indian Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, 2006), 174.

[417] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*,17.

with Christian children were subjected to a notable offence: they were denied access to a traditional drink known as *zu*. The leader conveyed a clear message: if their offspring identified as Christians, they were prohibited from consuming the chief's zu. Additionally, he warned that if these children persisted in their Christian beliefs, they would forfeit their positions as elders. This posed a significant dilemma for the elders who had children practising Christianity. Faced with this predicament, the elders encouraged their children to renounce their newly adopted faith. However, the Christian children declined to do so, resulting in clashes with their parents and ensuing turmoil within Christian families. Chief Vanphunga's foremost elder, Darkhuma, who resided in a separate area, was also confronted with this situation as his son, Saithuama, had embraced Christianity and had even married the chief's daughter. Despite Darkhuma's attempts to persuade his son to abandon Christianity, including resorting to physical punishment, Saithuama remained steadfast in his faith. This led to Saithuama being expelled from his own home by his father. Even after his expulsion, he continued to adhere to his Christian beliefs. His father, Darthuama, and the chief orchestrated the separation of Saithuama from his wife.[418]

All the Christians in the village experienced persecution, being forcibly dispersed through the use of canes while they were gathered together. Learning about this distressing event, the indigenous preachers Thanga and Phawka visited Khandaih to assess the situation and provide solace to the affected Christians by saying –

> "God's Word is living. The Roman Government, the most powerful of the past, had tried to destroy it and its adherent but utterly failed. It is not simply persisting but thriving till today. The Mizo Lals, subjected to Christian Government and too insignificant to be acknowledged as Masters, should not even think of destroying it, for they will never do at all."[419]

This posed a significant challenge to the non-Christians, one that could not be easily dismissed. The issue was the shift in allegiance from the Mizo chiefs to the Christian leaders, and this change was hard to overlook. To compound the situation, the Christians even translated hymns, which added to the complexity of matters -

[418] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*,18.

[419] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and subaltern Culture*, 175.

Ho my comrades! see the signal
Waving in the sky!
Reinforcements now appearing, Victory is nigh!
"Hold the fort, for I am coming!"
Jesus signals still;
Wave the answer back to heaven,
"By thy grace we will!

and also, a song,

On God's might relying
Till the vict'ry's won.
Satan's host defying,
Guard our armour on!
For the cause that's holy,
For the right that's grand
For God's warfare solely,
Join we heart and hand. [420]

The term Jesus as *Lal* and Satan's host to the chief's army was thought of as an open challenge to the chieftainship. In the words of Saiaithanga, "We shall surely win" hurt the sentiments of most non-Christians.[421]

In the village of Khandaih, a Christian resident named Chhuna Khawlhring suffered a severe beating at the hands of non-Christian villagers, rendering him unconscious. Believing him to be deceased, they discarded his body on the outskirts of the village. Another Christian, a young man named Chalbuanga, ventured to the location, intending to provide a proper burial. Chhuna Khawlhring was still alive and requested a drink of water. Chalbuanga not only tended to him but also transported him back to his home. When news of Chalbuanga's compassionate act reached the village chief and elders, they subjected him to a brutal beating with a hoe, resulting in

[420] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and subaltern Culture*, 175.
[421] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and subaltern Culture*, 175.

severe injuries and bleeding. Tragically, Chalbuanga succumbed to his wounds a few days later, becoming the first martyr among the Mizo Christians.[422] Figure. 4.4 indicates the Tombstone of Chalbuanga.

Figure. 4.4: Image of Chalbuanga Tombstone.

Source: phullenkohhran.wordpress.com

In December 1906, Vanphunga shifted his village to Kawnpui and, did not permit the Christians to inhabit the new village, and left them at Khandaih. However, the Christians joined them in the new village after three months. After the Christians settled themselves in the new village, the persecution was much more severe than before. The Christians's properties, such as pigs, *Gayal*, etc., were confiscated, their houses were demolished, and they were also expelled from the village in the nighttime under mosquitoes, sandflies, and land leeches. The Chiefs of nearby villages were all

[422] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*, 22.

the brothers of Vanphunga, and the expelled Christians were not willing to settle in those villages. Mostly, they lived on an old disused *jhum*, and a pregnant woman named Kapkungi, who was banished from the village, had delivered a baby daughter in a hut and named her '*Vakveli'* '(wonderer).'[423]

In the words of Lalsawma, the chief and his elders forced the Christians to do impressed labour on any day, especially on Sunday. Levy fines were imposed on the Christians; chicken, eggs, and pigs were extorted whenever a guest or officials from another village came to the village. If the family could not satisfy the chief's demand, he would take an equal amount from the paddy field. To recant from their belief, men with Christian wives and children were encouraged to batter them. Stripping young girls of their dress, putting them out in the open for men to laugh at, tying them up to post, and pouring cold water upon them was also their way of persecution.[424]

Vanphunga relocated his village to Changzawl, and once again, he prohibited Christians from joining him in his new settlement. [425] During this period, D. E. Jones visited Vanphunga's village, accompanied by Lalsailova, a Christian chief from Kelsih village who happened to be a cousin of Vanphunga's wife, Thanga, and Vanchhunga. [426] Simultaneously, to exacerbate the oppression, Vanphunga enlisted the support of his brothers, namely, Thangkama, the chief of Sihfa; Dorawta, the chief of Saitual; Lalzika, the chief of Buhban (later Zawngin); Lalruaia, the chief of Lailak; Thawngliana, the Chief of Lenchim; and Khawzadala, the chief of Khawruhlian. [427] Upon the arrival of D. E. Jones, his companion, Saithuama approached them, explaining that his wife had been forcefully taken away and was in poor health. Thangkama, the chief of Sihfa, visited the dwelling where D.E. Jones was staying and firmly declined to entertain any of D.E. Jones's pleas on behalf of Saithuama. Thangkama asserted that a chief had complete authority in his village to act as he saw

[423] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*, 18.
[424] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 41.
[425] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*, 22.
[426] JM Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, (Aizawl: Synod Publication Board, 1991), 99.
[427] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*, 24.

fit, and, in any case, the events that had transpired were intended for the betterment of the women. [428]

In the afternoon, D.E. Jones and his friends went to the chief's house, hoping to see the woman. The chief and his brothers, with the elders, were all very drunk. When they arrived, they saw that she was put on the bamboo floor at the foot of the main bed and could not reach her due to traditional courtesy. D.E. Jones seems to have removed his shoes, and the drunken elders try the shoes to see if they can walk around in them. The most verbose was Thangkama, and he argued with them again and told them that the chief could do anything he wished in his jurisdiction. D.E. Jones told him that the village was under the dominion of the greater chief, Edward VII. [429] Thangkama took a *dao* under the seat in front of the hearth, grasped the nape of the neck of D.E. Jones, and tried to chop him off. Vanphunga quickly interfered and said, Mercy! Mercy! [430]

In the evening, they again went to the chief, but the house was full of drunks; they were ridiculed and insulted. When Vanchhunga tried to meet the woman, he was beaten and insulted. Impossible to discuss the matter, D.E. Jones tried to offer a gift in a gesture of reconciliation, but the chief, fearing of being contaminated by Christianity from him, refused anything from his hand.[431]

The following Saturday, D.E. Jones went to an old village some distance away. There were two *Zawlbuk*, one of which they held a service in preparation for the baptism of about thirty young men. This service was performed in a whisper for fear of being disturbed. However, when it was over, one of the chiefs suddenly discovered that a service was going on in *Zawlbuk*. He rushed in just before midnight and threw embers at the Christians from the central fire. He scattered them in all directions,

[428] Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 100.
[429] Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 100.
[430] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*, 24.
[431] Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 100.

hitting everything within reach with his stick and chasing them angrily. However, baptism and holy communion took place on Sunday without much disturbance.**4**[32]

Persecution spread to the villages of Vanphunga's brothers as well. On Monday, they moved to Thangkama's village Lungpher. Thangkama was prepared for them and ordered a fine of one pig to any villagers who listened to the preaching. D.E. Jones threatened the chief to report his action, and the chief allowed the villagers to listen if they wished.**433** In his autobiography, D.E. Jones stated that –

> I was blamed for the trouble and was personally at risk. It was believed that the conversions (of the young men) were due to magic. I learnt later that the chief planned to kill me when I went there to baptise thirty converts. In that way it was thought they would be rid of this new faith. But by God's mercy I was spared.[434]

Vanphunga escalated his persecution of Christians within his village. The situation worsened during Edwin Rowland's visit, who was treated with extreme disrespect**;** even *bawhhla*[435] was pronounced upon him**.**[436] Vanphunga took further action by sending his son, Labuaia, along with elders Vawma and Ralkaikima to meet with Superintendent H.W. C. Cole. During this meeting, Cole sternly warned Vanphunga that he must cease his persecution of Christians within one week, or else he would face removal from his chieftainship. [437] Upon learning of this persecution, Reverend F.W. Savidge in Serkawn was outraged. He questioned how such events could occur within the British Empire and contemplated travelling to address the situation. He began preparing his luggage for the journey, but on the eve of his departure, he received news that Superintendent Cole had taken measures to prohibit the persecution of Christians. Consequently, Savidge cancelled his intended journey. [438]

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[432] Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 100,101.
[433] Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 101.
[434] LLOyd, *History of The Church In Mizoram*, 102.
[435] Bawhhla was a chant or cry raised by warriors when returning from a successful raid.
[436] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and subaltern*,176.
[437] Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*, 26.
[438] Lalhmuaka, *Zoram Kristian Hmasa Tihduhdahna*, 20.

4.6 Conclusion.

Within this chapter, the subalterns are representative of the traditionalist forces within Mizo Society. These subaltern groups vehemently oppose the proliferation of Christianity and actively attempted to rejuvenate traditional cultural practices and performances.

The chapter discusses the forms of domination and resistance during the early period of British colonial rule in the Lushai Hills, focusing on the actions of Chieftainess Ropuiliani and Chief Kairuma. Their defiance of British authority is explored through various means, including evasion, denial of service, and refusal to acknowledge British supremacy. Chieftainess Ropuiliani and Chief Kairuma are presented as key figures in the resistance against British colonial authority. Despite their limited resources and power, they demonstrated a strong determination to challenge British dominance. Their actions serve as examples of the resilience and perseverance displayed by the Mizos in the face of colonial oppression. The use of dissimulation, such as assigning nicknames to colonial officers, is also examined as a form of subtle resistance.

The clash between Christianity and traditional Mizo culture is a central theme in the chapter. Resistance to Christianity is manifested through religious persecution, social ostracism, economic coercion, and political opposition. The complex interplay between religion, culture, and power in the region is examined, highlighting the challenges faced by the Mizos in preserving their traditional way of life.

The chapter also explores the cultural resurgence of the Mizos through communal songs and their resistance to the spread of Christianity. This sheds light on the complexities of cultural identity and the interplay between religion and power in the region.

Overall, the chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the forms of domination and resistance experienced by the Mizos in the Lushai Hills under British colonial rule. It highlights the various strategies employed by the Mizos to challenge British authority and preserve their cultural traditions.

CHAPTER V

CONTESTATION OF WESTERN CULTURE

5.1 Introduction.

This chapter examines the conflict between Western and Mizo traditional cultures within Mizo Christianity. The arrival of Christianity resulted in a clash of cultures, as many Mizo cultural practices, such as singing and performing traditional songs, were forbidden for Mizo Christians, leading to a dominance of Western practices within society creating a form of cultural hegemony. The 1919 revival brought about significant changes within the Christian community. The established Church became the focal point of the traditional revival, intensifying the contestation between Western and traditional forces within Mizo Christianity.

5.2 Revivals.

The examination of the revival movement gains significance as it represents the beginning of the clash between Western and Mizo traditional cultures within Christianity. Therefore, to focus on this study, it is essential first to explore the revival movements in Mizoram. Before 1947, there were four instances of revivals in the Lushai hills. The initial revival occurred in 1906, followed by another in 1913. However, the third revival in 1919 marked a significant turning point in the history of Christianity in Mizoram. Moreover, another revival took place in 1930. Each revival led to a substantial increase in the number of Christians in the region.

5.2.1 The First Wave.

Upon learning about the Christian revival in Wales, which had also reached the Khasi Hills, the Mizo church, under the guidance of missionaries, was eagerly prepared to embrace the revival. In March 1906, the annual Presbyterian Church Assembly meeting was scheduled at Mairang, a village in the Khasi Hills. However, the missionaries could not attend the meeting due to prior commitments. In their absence, D. E. Jones and Lorrain, stationed in the North and South Lushai Hills,

decided to collaborate and jointly send delegates to the Assembly.[439] The primary objective behind sending Mizo delegates to the Assembly was to experience the revival first-hand. As articulated by Lalsawma, it was an act of faith, believing that the revival's fire would touch the delegation and bring it back to Mizoram.[440]

A group of eleven members, seven from the North and four from the South was carefully chosen to represent the Mizo church at the Assembly. The Northern delegation included Chawnga, Thanga, Khuma, Vanchhunga, Pawngi, Thankungi, and the leader, Siniboni, a Khasi woman. The Southern representatives consisted of Thankunga, Parima, Zathanga, and Lenga. However, Lenga had to withdraw from the journey in Aizawl due to a leg injury. [441] Upon reaching Aizawl, the Southern delegates learned that the Northern delegates had already left for Sairang on a country boat the previous morning. The following morning, the Southern delegates embarked on their journey, with ten members now travelling together. [442]

During their overnight stay in Cherrapunji, the Mizo delegates first encountered the revival movement. Reflecting on this experience, Thanga expressed his thoughts as follows:

> "That evening before nightfall, we were singing hymns, and about as we did so, our hostess began waving her hands about and her children began to wave them too. We couldn't make it out. Were they trying to irritate us? We didn't like it in the least." [443]

When the Mizo delegates finally arrived at their destination, the Assembly meeting proved to be a profoundly transformative experience, as they were enveloped in the fervour of revival.[444] During one of the meetings, an incredibly moving scene unfolded when Khuma was overcome with emotion and found himself weeping while the hymn "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" resonated repeatedly for approximately

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[439] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram: A Study on Revival Movement (1906-1937)," (PhD Thesis, Mizoram University, 2013), 107,108.
[440] Lalsawma, *Revivals: The Mizo Way*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Published by the author, 1994), 32.
[441] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 33.
[442] LLOyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 90.
[443] LLOyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 91.
[444] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 108.

an hour during the morning service on the 16th of March.[445] The spiritual intensity further escalated during an informal singing session around a bonfire on Friday evening when a Khasi friend led a prayer;[446] it was then that an extraordinary occurrence took place. Vanchhunga was suddenly stricken and struggled to breathe, clenching his fists and becoming rigid. Later, he conveyed his experience, stating, *"I felt my inside to be more blazing hot than fiery embers. It was almost beyond endurance*."[447] The spiritual encounters continued the following day, with Saturday bringing yet another remarkable moment. Thanga experienced a profound shift within himself as the universal prayer was underway. Suddenly, his entire body felt insensible, and he felt that all his strength had been stripped away, leaving him in a helpless state of reclining. However, it was during this very moment of vulnerability that Thanga felt as though an unseen hand had touched him, and from that point onward, he rejoiced in a newfound spiritual awakening. [448]

The most significant and unforgettable moment for the Mizo delegates occurred during an open-air meeting on Sunday afternoon. The local missionary, Mr. Robert Evans, called upon the Mizo representatives to gather in front of an elevated platform. With a congregation of over 8,000 people, he requested the entire Assembly to pray for the delegates and their land. As Thanga recollected, an awe-inspiring and powerful unity enveloped the crowd, and they collectively raised their voices in a resounding chorus of prayer. The impact of this moment was profound, as Thanga described how they stood there, moved to tears and trembling with emotion, and not a single soul among them remained untouched by the overwhelming spiritual experience. [449] J.H. Lorrain also mentioned that despite the language barrier that prevented the Mizo delegates from understanding the spoken words, they returned deeply impressed by the fervent outpouring of prayer and divine presence they had witnessed. [450]

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[445] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture,* 174
[446] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture,*169.
[447] Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 92.
[448] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture,*169.
[449] Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*,92.
[450] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938,* 35.

As they journeyed back, the Mizo delegates revisited Cherrapunji, having already visited Shillong, and were joyfully reunited with fellow Christians returning from Mairang like them. Together, they participated in the evening service, where the vibrant and impassioned singing ignited a spiritual fervour that swept through the entire congregation, prompting them to sway their bodies and dance in ecstasy. 451 Even the elder Parima was caught up in the fervent atmosphere, whirling ecstatically with spiritual joy. [452]

Upon reaching Silchar, an inexplicable disagreement arose among the delegates, causing an unsettling rift that led them to avoid communication with each other. [453] However, when they reached Bilkhawthlir, their spiritual revival joy was reignited, and on Sunday, they gathered for a meeting where some of them expressed their jubilation through dancing. [454] As they continued their journey, their camaraderie was further strengthened by the shared singing moments while walking, particularly after crossing Sakawrhmuituai. Finally arriving in Aizawl on the 4th of April, they paused at Chaltlang, which lay two miles from Aizawl, to engage in a customary prayer, a practice they consistently observed before entering any village. [455] In a touching display of unity and devotion, each member prayed one by one, Zathanga remarked:

> While the first of us was praying, I was aware of a streak of flame, very high above us. And, as each one prayed in turn, the flame descended lower and lower, and as the last one prayed, it disappeared. I am sure it went inside us.[456]

Once again, the delegates were deeply moved by this unanticipated display of spiritual fervour. In the wake of this powerful encounter, Thanga found himself inspired by the moment's profound impact, and his heart overflowed with newfound spiritual insight. Driven by this fresh wave of inspiration, Thanga composed a brand-new hymn.

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[451] Lalsawma, *Revivals*,33.
[452] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,169.
[453] Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 93.
[454] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,169.
[455] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 34.
[456] Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 94.

Sinner, sinner, sinner I am Lord

But you have forgiven me,

I'll praise and praise you ever.[457]

The delegates, deeply moved by the hymn Thanga had composed, sang it repeatedly along with other hymns throughout their journey until they finally reached Mission Veng in Aizawl. [458]

The Mairang Delegates received a warm welcome, and a meeting was thoughtfully organised on their behalf in the school-cum-chapel building, where prayers had been fervently offered every evening in anticipation of their arrival. Despite the delegates' hopeful anticipation, to their dismay, there was no evident sign of revival during the gathering, leaving them deeply disappointed. [459] Amidst the lack of visible revival, Pawngi and Thangkungi, undeterred, expressed their devotion and zeal through dancing during the service. Despite their enthusiasm and heartfelt prayers, the anticipated revival seemed elusive.[460] D.E. Jones, while recounting the event, described the meeting and its subdued atmosphere, acknowledging the delegates' longing for a spiritual revival that had not yet materialised: "They returned here full of the spirit of the revival, and some of them manifested the groaning and the rejoicing of revival times the first night but others were quiet."[461]

Thanga, one of the delegates, stated, "Those who had not been there were very suspicious and thought we were merely imitating what the Khasi people were doing. They sneered at us."[462] Another delegate also mentioned that they feared the revivalists because they thought they would "bewitch" them.[463]

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[457] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,170.
[458] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,170
[459] Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 94.
[460] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,170.
[461] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,170
[462] Lloyd, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, 94
[463] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 112.

Over the following four days, the delegates continued their time together in Mission Veng, Aizawl, engaging in fervent prayers and gatherings. During this period, they shared reports and testimonies about their experiences with the revival movement. [464] A meeting was thoughtfully organised each night, allowing the delegates to express their thoughts and insights. Additionally, the delegates actively reached out to the children, addressing them during school sessions and even accompanying the missionaries on preaching visits to various villages, eager to spread the message of revival. [465]

Despite their dedicated efforts and heartfelt prayers, there was still no visible manifestation of revival during the Sunday service. This lack of tangible evidence of revival left D.E. Jones feeling disheartened and uttered his frustration:

> … a few came to the meeting and it seems to be getting harder…we expected something great on Sunday but I felt it unbearably cool and hard as if before a thunderstorm. On Sunday night we asked whether there was anyone willing to follow Jesus and no one answered and we thought that we were doomed to disappointment.[466]

As the days passed without any evident revival, the hope for a transformative spiritual awakening began to dwindle. The situation reached a point where, on the evening of Sunday, the 8th of April, 1906, during the service, D.E. Jones announced that a farewell meeting would be held the following morning for the three southern delegates. The news of their departure seemed to resonate with a sense of disappointment, and as a result, many people did not attend the farewell meeting. D.E. Jones delivered a heartfelt speech during the farewell gathering and offered prayers. The attendees sang a parting hymn, "God be with you till we meet again," with an extraordinary warmth that defied their initial sense of departure. The song was sung repeatedly, and remarkably, no one felt persuaded to leave the meeting. [467] Even the school pupils, who had come for their usual classes, stood puzzled and hesitant at first,

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[464] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 34.
[465] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 112.
[466] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 113.
[467] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 34.

but they, too, joined in the singing, drawn in by the poignant atmosphere. D. E. Jones made a farewell speech and pronounced a benediction; he wrote:

> After pronouncing benediction someone began to speak. Then another and another and young woman came of her own accord to confess her sins and asked for prayer on her behalf and then a torrent came. The singing was powerful there were one or two loud screams and strong crying and tears.
>
> Prayer became universal and we could hardly understand more than "forgive", "Oh Lord!", "Mercy!", "Save" and such heart-rending exclamations. The hymns seemed new to our ears. Then there was a break and about two dozen came forward to confess their sins.[468]

Hlunziki, the wife of the first baptised Mizo, stood up during the meeting and courageously confessed her sins, expressing remorse for dishonouring Christ's name by leaving her husband. Her heartfelt confession profoundly impacted the congregation, stirring a deep conviction within each member as they reflected on their shortcomings and sins. In response to the decisive moment, someone from the congregation suggested singing a hymn, "Ring aloud the heaven's bell, we shall rejoice for a sinner is repenting." As the hymn echoed through the air, a sense of excitement permeated the gathering, and their bodies began to move with fervour. The congregation, filled with spiritual energy, danced passionately, swinging their arms and legs, beating on tables, and thumping the floor. [469] The exuberance and passion of the gathering attracted attention from neighbouring villages like Thakthing, Hriangmual, and others as people came running to witness the revival in the Church. Amid the fervent atmosphere, if someone prayed for an extended duration, another would start a hymn, continuing the spiritual momentum.[470] Zathanga mentioned, "We thought the time was not long, but we spent six hours together when we stopped; it was time to have lunch. The situation compelled us not to go home, and we halted for another day. The Holy Spirit was with us".[471] The revival soon spread to villages like

[468] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,171.
[469] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,171.
[470] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,172.
[471] Lalhmuaka, *Zoram Thim Ata Engah*, 136.

Khandaih, Muthi, Ngopa, Sakawrtuichhun, Saihum, Bunghmun, Pawlrang, and Zokhawsang. [472]

The delegates from the South returned home after staying for about a week in Aizawl. They shared their experiences at Mairang and Aizawl in every village where they spent the night. Lorrain and other Christian community members warmly received the delegates at the outskirts of Pukpui village. Later that night, a gathering was organised at Serkawn to hear about the delegates' remarkable journey.[473] At that meeting, Thankunga continued to dance during the singing and could not constrain himself.[474] Lorrain was suspicious that it might be an imitation of what they had seen over there and reported:

> These methods were gently but firmly repressed by us, for we greatly feared spurious revival which would have worked nothing but evil amongst us. For the same reason, we resisted the temptation to invite any of the northern Lushais across to hold revival services. We felt that if the revival was to come to south Lushai, it must be our duty to wait upon God until He saw fit to send it Himself.[475]

At the same time, J.H. Lorrain humbly acknowledged that during this period, the Holy Spirit worked among them once or twice as never before. The expected manifestation of the revival did not materialise, leading some individuals to feel disheartened and discouraged, causing them to cease their prayers for revival. However, amidst this discouragement, a few steadfast believers remained dedicated to their prayer for revival. [476] Nevertheless, Rev. Carter and Sawiluaia believed that the Christians in the South had indeed heeded the call of the revival, and the communities at Serkawn and Sethlun experienced a profound spiritual awakening. Notably, at Serkawn, even students were deeply touched by the revival, to the extent that they continued to sing with fervour long after their designated bedtime. [477]

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[472] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 115.
[473] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,179.
[474] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 115.
[475] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938,* 38.
[476]*The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938,* 32.
[477] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,180.

In April 1907, during the "Great Gathering," an extraordinary and divine moment occurred when the Holy Spirit descended upon the attendees with remarkable power. As the "Great Gathering" reached its final service, the spiritual stirring within the congregation reached a climactic pinnacle, leading to an extension of the service for several additional hours. Upon their return home, the people from Sethlun and other members of the Church were deeply impacted by the revival they had experienced at the Gathering. They organised a prolonged meeting in their chapel, filled with revival enthusiasm and a desire to express their newfound spiritual awakening.[478]

5.2.2 The Second Wave.

The second wave of revival commenced in February 1913, and it originated in the village of Hmunhmeltha, situated near Champhai. The village's founding can be traced to Mr Sanga, who accompanied the final British Expedition to the Lushai Hills in 1890. As a result of this collaboration with the British, he became the Headman of the village, which was initially established for wet rice cultivation. Mr Sanga extended a warm invitation to Christians who were facing persecution and displacement, hailing from Khandaih village and various other neighbouring villages. These persecuted Christians found refuge in Hmunhmeltha, which became their safe haven. Subsequently, a Church was established in1906 in the village to provide spiritual solace and a sense of community for these displaced Christians. [479]

In the village of Hmunhmeltha, there lived a man named Mr. Dara, who was a passionate supporter of the revival movement. He and his wife, Thangrochhingi, faced the unfortunate circumstance of not having children and struggling financially. Their house was in a state of disrepair, with a thatched roof and walls made of other dry leaves. The makeshift nature of their dwelling left peepholes on all sides of the walls; they also reared a pig in a corner near the entrance, and whenever the couple prayed

[478] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture*,180.
[479] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 59.

and sang, the pig would join them.[480] However, despite the less-than-ideal conditions, Mr. Dara held a different perspective. He often expressed to his wife that their house was very great. In response, his wife would question the greatness, pointing out the thatched roof and leaf walls without any partitions inside. Undeterred, Mr. Dara would consistently reaffirm his stance, repeating, "Nevertheless, it is great." [481]

In the early months of 1913, Dara and his wife visited their relatives in Tuisen village. On a Sunday night in February 1913, as they made their way to attend the Church service, Dara took a detour just before reaching the Church. He felt compelled to pray before entering the service and did not join the congregation. No one knew his whereabouts during the service, which left them wondering about his actions. After the service concluded, concern for Dara's well-being grew among the attendees, prompting them to search for him. They eventually discovered his lifeless body lying on a prostrate tree near the Church, wearing a serene and happy expression on his face. Before his passing, Dara had mentioned experiencing neck pain while on the way to the Church. Due to the joyous expression on his death face, his father-in-law was convinced and converted to Christianity. They brought his cadaver back to his village on the same night and buried him on the following day, which was the 3rd of February 1913. As it was the custom to console the bereaved family, the villagers went to their house to sing and pray every night.[482] One night, the gathering was moved into excited singing, and the village teacher, Liansata, kept a good record of what happened when revival suddenly arrived:

> The 9th of February was Sunday. At night, in the company of Mr Thangkhuma, an evangelist then (ordained in 1914), we gathered at Dara's house singing joyfully till late night. As we were about to recite the Lord's prayer in closing, we were all suddenly seized with a contagious laughter so that we could not say the Prayed at all. Some even fell down and rolled about on the floor laughing. So, we said, "God does not want us to disprse yet. Come, let us sing again." So, saying we sat down and starts the hymn, Aw thlarau thianghlim lo

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[480] Rev H. Zalawma, "Mizoram Harhna Tum Hnihna," in *Harhna: Mizoram Revival Centenary Souvenier (1906-2006),* ed. RL Thanmawia, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Synod Revival Committee, 2006), 267.

[481] Zalawma, "Mizoram Harhna Tum Hnihna," 267.

[482] Zalawma, "Mizoram Harhna Tum Hnihna," 267.

> kal la (Come, Holy Ghost, inspire our souls) which could not end till the next morning." [483]

Liansata continues to write about the event of the 11th of February:

> We sang and danced throughout the day. No one came to School. And for 5 days it was impossible to go to School for we sang non-stop only that one hymn. Men danced joyfully and wept bitterly on being shown the suffering of Jesus. Most Christians of the village were weeping, barring me![484]

The revival took a break because certain groups accused Thangrochhingi, the wife of Dara, of being possessed by an evil spirit.[485] To propose an agenda for a Presbytery meeting, an informal conference of a Church around Champhai was held on the 8th of March 1913 at Butpawla's village, and they again felt like a sudden outburst of rain. During the Presbytery meeting in the North, this revival was experienced more powerfully, and D. E. Jones mentioned in his letter that some five hundred congregations of people at the Presbytery meeting were "like a boiling cauldron, meeting without a break for three or four days and night," and they could not be persuaded to leave.[486]

The revival affected Durtlang on April 1913 and apart from Durtlang and Mission Veng, the revival reached other villages like Arro, Darchhun, Dulte, Hualtu, Hrangkima Khua, Haklawn, Hmuifang, Khawthlir, Khawdungsei, Khuangthing, Khuangleng, Khuafoh, Khawbung, Kawlkulh, Leisen, Maubuang, Phulpui and Sialsuk. It also covered the Southern parts of the Lushai Hills on the 22nd of March at Lunglei and in May at Serkawn and Theriat and Tawipui in June 1913. Carter and Sawiluaia stated that the revival spread widely in the southern area without mentioning any particular villages. In his report, J.H. Lorrain mentioned that many of the boys in Mr Savidge's boarding school have been converted and several of them were baptised. In the village of Dawn, nearly all the boys and girls have given themselves to Jesus.[487]

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[483] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 57.
[484] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 57.
[485] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 118.
[486] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 118.
[487] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938*, 101.

Due to difficulty in communication, little influence of Christianity and the thinness of the population over large areas, the western part of Mizoram was least affected.[488]

The second wave of the revival movement had a central and overarching theme focused on the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.[489] This theme dominated the revivalist discourse and teachings, serving as a focal point of spiritual contemplation and devotion. Additionally, several other significant themes were interwoven into the fabric of the revival, including the Cross of Christ, Christian Love, the Holy Spirit, and the End time.[490] Some revivalists expressed a deep sense of urgency, believing they might not have sufficient time to see the full fruition of their spiritual endeavours. This conviction led some to give away their clothes selflessly. The emphasis of the central theme of the revival, about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, could be due to the influence of the missionaries. Figures like Peter Fraser were believed to have a profound and unshakable conviction regarding the nearness of Jesus' return. A prominent missionary, J.H. Lorrain, also dedicated much of his preaching to this theme, especially in the region of Lunglei. In 1913, the contributions of Kristian Tlangau played a significant role in further highlighting the theme of the second coming, skilfully referenced worldwide events, drawing connections to the end-time, thus intensifying the spiritual awakening and focus on Christ's imminent return. [491]

The physical expression in this revival was similar to the first wave but more intense and forceful.[492] The manifestation of the revival stirring was mainly shouting and shaking their bodies, crying and laughing and moving their bodies while singing, waving their hands, and dancing in the space between the altar and the public place. Some of them made a cross and a crucifixion with cardboard, carried it inside the Church and waved it to offend Satan. When the missionaries told them to restrain themselves, the revivalists accused them of not receiving the Holy Spirit and assaulted them.[493] At the same time, in the southern part, J.H. Lorrain, in his report, mentioned

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[488] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture,*180.
[489] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 57.
[490] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 121.
[491] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture,*202.
[492] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 68.
[493] Zalawma, "Mizoram Harhna Tum Hnihna," 273.

that when they told the revivalists that one of the fruits of the spirit is 'self-control' and warned them of their danger, many of them saw the need for greater watchfulness and cried to God for the wisdom to know how to rightly used His most wonderful gift to men.[494]

The Second wave of revival gradually subsided by the end of 1914, but its impact left a lasting impression on the hearts and minds of the Mizo community. Rather than fading away entirely, the movement transformed itself into a deeper current of prayer and dedication to a devout life in the subsequent years. This ongoing spiritual fervour became an adequate preparation for the Third wave of revival that was yet to come. [495] By 1916, the Church recognised the need for spiritual revitalisation and, under the leadership of Liangkhaia, established a group called '*Kristian Beihram Pawl*.' The primary objective of this group was to revive and reinvigorate the Church. In addition to regular services, they organised special prayer services and dedicated preaching services aimed at nurturing the spiritual growth and devotion of the congregation. In October 1918, during the Presbytery held at Hmunhmeltha, an important decision was made to introduce a new practice known as '*Beihrual*,' an evangelistic campaign. This campaign was to be organised in September every year. [496]

5.2.3 The Third Wave.

The third wave of revival in 1919 marked a significant turning point in the history of the Mizo community. It was a transformative period that had a profound and lasting impact on the spiritual landscape of the region. Mangkhosat Kipgen, a notable figure in Mizo history, referred to the description of F. J. Sandy to this revival as 'the greatest and most powerful' in Mizoram.[497] The movement was so profound that its influence extended beyond the borders of Mizoram, spreading to Manipur and Tripura,

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[494] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938,* 100.
[495] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 68.
[496] Liangkhaia, *Mizoram Harhna Thu*, 34, 35.
[497] Kipgen, *Christainity*, 236.

affecting not only the Mizos but also the Naga Baptist churches, particularly among the Tangkul Nagas of Manipur. [498]

At the beginning of 1919, tragedy struck the land in the form of a devastating influenza epidemic that swept through every village. The impact was devastating, as forty to fifty people lost their lives in each village, and in the plain areas, the death toll reached around one hundred lives. The village of Chief Letzakaia, known as Hriangtuinek, was particularly hard-hit, as the influenza outbreak coincided with a smallpox outbreak, resulting in the loss of three hundred eighty lives. This epidemic marked the deadliest period in the history of Mizoram, leaving the people heartbroken and grief-stricken. As the community mourned the loss of their loved ones, a remarkable event unfolded on the night of the 26th of July, 1919. Despite the sorrow and despair that had befallen the region, the revival movement broke out simultaneously in three villages: Zotlang and Thingsai in the South and Nisapui in the North. [499]

On the night of the 26th of July 1919, at Nisapui village, three girls, namely, Kaivungi, Buti, and Ziki, were singing and praying. In her letter to the Nisapui Church on the 65th anniversary of the revival, Kaivungi mentioned that "the three of us were singing and praying in our house on that night, and all at once we were made to see the reality of Christ's suffering for us that we could not contain ourselves but wept bitterly for joy and sorrow. We continued singing and praying the whole night.'[500] The next day was Sunday, and after the noon church service, some girls were again singing in the same house fervently, and people heard them as the singing of many voices, and when they went to inquire, they found only a few girls singing. The people who went to see the singing were also caught up in singing, and the house could not contain them anymore, so they moved outside in the open air to sing and dance. The singing and dancing continued throughout the night for three days and night, and the revivalists even forgot the need to sleep and eat.[501]

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[498] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 238.
[499] Liangkhaia, *Mizorama Harhna Th*u, 35, 36.
[500] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 87.
[501] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 88.

After three days of revival in Nisapui village, Paranga, an evangelist, prophesized that the Holy Spirit wanted to cover the entire Land, took a bamboo torch, and went out at night to visit the neighbouring village Lungdai. Three young men accompanied him, and when they reached the village, they were also caught by the revival. Their target was the next village, known as Thingkhuang, and when they reached that village, an evangelist, Selkhuma was also present. The head of the village, known as Euva, had a new drum that was in good condition, and they used it for singing in the service. From Thingkhuang village, they moved to Durtlang village at night; the one in the front used a bamboo torch to light their way, and the other on the back, who walked in the dark, held the back of the one in the front.[502] Among the group were girls and mothers with babies, and they were very enthusiastic to bring revival to the next village.[503]

When the group arrived in Durtlang, their reception was initially lukewarm. The villagers seemed hesitant and reserved about the revival movement they were bringing. However, undeterred by the initial response, Paranga and his companions stayed in Durtlang for two days, fervently praying and sharing the message of the revival. The revival also touched Durtlang villagers; the revivalist group from Nisapui, Lungdai, and Thingkhuang eventually returned to their villages. [504]

Under the leadership of their Chief Suaka, the villagers of Durtlang set out to visit Aizawl Mission Veng Church. On their way, they carried a drum, and along with the drumbeats, they sang and danced excitedly on the streets of Aizawl. When they reached Mission Veng Church, they rang the Church bell vigorously, and some people thought a fire spread out and ran towards the Church, but they saw revivalists singing and dancing and started joining them. The first ordained Pastor, Rev. Chhuahkhama, was in tears of joy. It was the month of August, and the rain pouring out did not stop the revival. The revivalists from Durtlang spent the whole night and the next day in

[502] Rev C. Vanlalhruaia, "Mizoram Harhna Tum Thumna," in *Harhna: Mizoram Revival Centenary Souvenier (1906-2006),* ed. RL Thanmawia, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Synod Revival Committee, 2006), 290.

[503] Liangkhaia, *Mizorama Harhna Thu*,37.

[504] Vanlalhruaia, "Mizoram Harhna Tum Thumna," 291.

the Church and moved back to their place after the Mission Veng church received the revival.[505]

The church members of Zotlang, located near Lunglei, had been praying for a revival, but their expectations were not immediately met, leaving some of them feeling disheartened after six months of waiting. However, on the 26th of July, during an evening service, a transformative encounter with the Holy Spirit took place. As the congregation sang the hymn, "*I am not ashamed to own my Lord*," the powerful words were met with an enthusiastic response from one man who shouted out the chorus, "*At the Cross! At the Cross!*" At that very moment, an incredible power descended upon the entire gathering, overwhelming them with a divine presence. Some were moved to tears, while others felt compelled to jump and dance in the sheer exuberance of the revival. The singing and dancing continued unabated until the dawn of the next day. For more than seven days and nights, the church members were immersed in songs of praise and expressions of joy as the revival took root and flourished. [506] The revival extended beyond Zotlang, reaching neighbouring villages such as Pukpui, Lunglawn, and Theiriat.

The revival at Thingsai village also broke out on the same night. It was said that the characteristics of the revival were quite similar to Nisapui and Zotlang. The theme of the revival was about the 'cross,' and people could not stop singing and dancing. A famous faith healer known as Thanbawnga during the revival was also the product of this village. [507]

Since the central focus of the revival was centred around the cross, those who were deeply affected by it became enthusiastic to share their experiences. Consequently, they commenced preaching within the church premises and took their message to the streets and individual households. A group of revivalists was

[505] Liangkhaia, *Mizorama Harhna Thu*,39.
[506] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 96.
[507] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 127.

established, and they embarked on journeys to various villages to disseminate the teachings of God, earning themselves the name '*Fangrual*.' [508]

During this revival, a traditional drum called *Khuang* played a significant role. In the Lungrang Presbytery gathering of 1919, a powerful revival movement took place, attracting delegates from the South, the North, and the East. While Lalsawma believed that the use of drums inside the Church had been introduced in previous revivals,[509] H.W. Carter, H.S. Luaia, and other writers argued that it was during this third revival that the practice of using drums inside the Church was first introduced. [510]

The manifestation of the revival was in the form of physical acts, such as dancing and singing. Lalsawma mentioned, 'When the singing warmed up, a person began to quake involuntarily, maybe, and then quaking increased with the tempo of the singing till the person had to jump out in ecstasy. Refusal to give physical expressions may result in pain, in part or whole, of the body or even in paralysis of the whole body. So began a familiar phrase, "Spirit illness" (Thlarau nat), which became very common till recently.'[511] The manifestation of the revival became a disturbing aspect to the people, resulting in division of opinion and confusion in the Church. [512]

As the years passed, the revival continued to flourish, and in 1921, the Presbytery convened in Zotlang, attracting a remarkable number of attendees, making it one of the best-attended gatherings. Notably, H.W. Carter and H.S. Luaia pointed out that it was during this particular Presbytery that a quacking dance known as *Khurh lam* was introduced in the southern region by delegates from the northern areas. [513]

Another form of the manifestation of the 1919 revival was a physical expression of ecstasy, which symbolised the cross. It was not a proper dance but symbolising through action as they were crucified as Jesus Christ and acted as they

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[508] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 128.
[509] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 87.
[510] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 128.
[511] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 85.
[512] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 129.
[513] Carter and Luaia, *Mizoram Baptist Kohhran Chanchin,* 79.

felt the agony. Lalsawma narrates the outward expression of this particular revival, namely, that when individuals intensely concentrate on the image of Jesus on the cross, their imagination can transform into a vivid experience of being crucified. They may adopt the pose of outstretched arms, resembling the shape of a cross, by standing against a wall or lying on the floor for extended periods. In some cases, this can lead to a state of coma with a rigid body, making it challenging to detect their pulse and breathing.[514]

5.2.4 The Fourth Wave.

Since the 1919 revival, various revival activities persisted and did not fade away even after the third revival. Although the intensity of the initial wave diminished, the manifestation of the revival continued hither and thither.[515] This led to different opinions among historians regarding the precise onset of the fourth revival. Carter and Luaia mentioned that the revival of quaking started in 1926,[516] V.L. Siama believed in 1930, J.M. Llyod in 1933, and Saiaithanga in 1935.[517] However, based on the available evidence, 1930 is generally considered to mark the beginning of the fourth wave of the revival. [518] The revival broke out at Champhai Presbytery in 1930, and the characteristic features of an indigenous Mizo revival marked the Presbytery. Several delegates of the Presbytery halted in Biate village when the Presbytery was over, and great excitement happened there[519] . It was considered the beginning of the fourth wave of the revival. It spread to many villages, shifting from the Northeast to the Southeast.[520]

During the fourth wave of revival in Mizoram, many key features were similar to those of previous revivals. These features included singing, preaching, prayer, and dancing, all accompanied by a strong sense of excitement and fervour. [521] While some

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[514] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 86.
[515] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 244.
[516] Carter and Luaia, *Mizoram Baptist Kohhran Chanchin*, 79.
[517] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 151.
[518] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 131
[519] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and subaltern Culture,*329.
[520] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 131.
[521] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 153.

scholars believed that the central theme of the revival was the Holy Spirit, [522] others, like missionary doctor John Williams, noted the central theme to be the cross. [523] According to Vanlalchhuanawma, all the themes of the revival movement mentioned previously were present in this period, though with necessary modifications based on specific circumstances. [524]

In 1934, a revival occurred in Hlimen village near Aizawl, during which the revivalists acted as if they were intoxicated with *zu* to the point of being unable to walk correctly. [525] Due to their behaviour resembling that of drunken individuals, they were called '*hlim sang*' (high revivalists) or '*thlarau rui*' (spirit-intoxicated). In the North, they were known as *Hlimna Sang*; in the South, they were referred to as *Harhna Sang*, both terms literally translated as "High Joy" or "High Revival".[526] The fourth phase of the revival was marked by what some considered "excesses," leading to divisions within the Church. This phase was characterised by a strong emphasis on charismatic and spiritual gifts, such as prayer-based healing, imparting the spirit through touch, speaking in unknown languages (glossolalia), prophetic utterances, and entering trance-like states. [527] The enthusiastic use of speaking in unknown tongues in prayers and songs created controversy, as it often resulted in group singing in an unknown tempo of the hymn, sometimes to the point where the familiar notes were utterly lost.[528] It is said that the revivalists claimed to be able to communicate directly with God verbally at any time. "Father God says" became their general slogan, and they also claimed that they did almost everything according to God's direct instructions, so they were often called '*Pa Pawl*' or "The Father's clique."[529]

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[522] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 133.

[523] John Williams, "The Report of The North Lushai Hills. 1931-32," in *Reports of The Foreign Mission of The Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894-1957*, compiled by K Thanzauva, (Aizawl: The Synod Literature and Publication Board, 1997), 108.

[524] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and subaltern Culture,*340.

[525] Liangkhaia, *Mizorama Harhna Thu*,54.

[526] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture,* 340.

[527] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 133.

[528] Lalsawma, *Revivals*, 158,159.

[529] Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture,*341.

Due to the unusual occurrences and phenomena accompanying the revival, the government decided to intervene. On the 17th of July, 1935, Superintendent L.L. Peters issued Standing Order No. 29, acknowledging that some individuals were asserting to have received healing through prayer while others believed they possessed miraculous abilities. The order called for an end to these activities, and those who defied the order were subject to a fine of Rs. 50, payable to their chief, who also had the authority to expel them from their villages. Persistent disobedience could result in imprisonment by the government. Additionally, the chief would face reprimand if they supported these individuals. Subsequently, on the 27th of July, 1935, Superintendent L.L. Peters issued Standing Order No. 32 of 1935-1936, clarifying that the earlier order applied to those who claimed to possess supernatural and miraculous powers, known in Lushai as *Zawlnei*. The government's intervention aimed to regulate and address the unusual practices associated with the revival movement. [530]

One of the most well-known sparks of the Mizoram revival movement was the revival incident at Kelkang. Almost all ecstatic experiences were on show there. The movement was so strong that it interfered with the village's daily operations. In the stirring at Kelkang, prophecy played a significant role. Some revivalists declared that God would provide his people with husked rice and that it would rain from heaven. The British Empire will collapse, according to the revivalists' predictions. People refused to prepare for *jhum* land the following year, emphasising the end of the world, and the teacher stated that many kids dropped out of School as a result. The villagers' domesticated animals were sacrificed due to the ongoing feasts. Paid missionaries like the pastor and teacher were refused to give sermons in the Church. Subsequently, the chief reported the situation to the government, and the superintendent McCall came out fully armed, and by heavy force, he was able to stop the movement after handing out punishments to all those found to be engaged, including jail to the ringleaders.

One of the most notable incidents that ignited the Mizoram revival movement was the event at Kelkang. A display of various ecstatic experiences characterised it, and the movement's fervour became so intense that it seemed to disrupt the village's

[530] "STANDING ORDER", *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*, 1935.

normal daily activities. Prophecies held a significant role during this stirring at Kelkang. Some revivalists declared that God would miraculously provide husked rice, which would rain down from heaven. Additionally, they predicted the collapse of the British Empire. The impact of these prophecies was profound. People refused to prepare *jhum* land for the following year, believing in the world's imminent end. As a result, many children dropped out of School due to the perceived urgency of the situation. Furthermore, ongoing feasts led to the sacrifice of the villagers' domesticated animals.

During this time, missionaries, pastors and teachers were denied the opportunity to give sermons in the Church. The situation escalated, prompting the chief to report the matter to the government. Superintendent McCall intervened with full force, arriving heavily armed, and effectively halted the movement. Punishments were handed out to all involved, and the ringleaders were imprisoned. This intervention aimed to end the disruptive activities associated with the revival movement at Kelkang.

5.3 Khuang Or Drum.

According to Edward Said, "After the period of 'primary resistance,' literally fighting against outside intrusion, there comes the period of secondary, that is, ideological resistance, when efforts are made to reconstitute a "shattered community, to save or restore the sense and fact of community against all the pressures of the colonial system."[531] Likewise, the introduction of Christianity in Mizoram led to subsequent cultural changes. The arrival of Western Christianity brought forth a different cultural influence, and alongside the new belief system, certain traditional cultural practices were prohibited for native Christians. The Mizo Christians were taught to adopt the practices of Western Christianity, even including the prohibition of singing traditional songs. As a result, a form of "cultural hegemony" emerged within society. However, the 1919 revival marked a pivotal moment that brought about changes within the Christian community. The established church became the target of the traditional revival, leading to a contestation between Western-influenced Mizo

[531] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 209.

Christians and the Mizos who holds fast to their traditional culture. Here, in this chapter, the subaltern are identified as those within the fault of Mizo Christianity who wanted to incorporate elements of their traditional cultural practices and rituals within Christianity which however is not welcome by the missionaries and the church establishment at that point of time.

Many Mizo traditional folktales, such as '*Sabereka Khuangkaih*', '*Maurawkela khuang*', '*Zawngrengtea khuang*', and '*Thlanrawkpa khuangchawi*', mention drums, and thus it can be inferred that *khuang* or drum played a crucial role in Mizo society.[532] During the time of festivals, a drum was extensively used. It was also used in the place of drinking *zu*, during '*chai'*[533] ; therefore, the drum plays a pivotal role in the performance of Mizo folk dances and songs.[534] In this vein, Vanlalchhuanga postulates that the use of drums by the progenitors in times of joy and sorrow and their religious rituals was a significant aspect of their culture. The drum served as their main musical instrument, playing a vital role in their singing and dancing traditions. An old Mizo saying, "*Khuang lova chai ang*," which translates to "*dancing without drum*," emerged in the society to emphasise the importance of the drum in their cultural expressions.[535]

Nevertheless, early Mizo Christians refrained from utilising drums due to their association with the pre-Christian Mizo culture and entertainment, and the missionaries did not promote their usage. In traditional Mizo society, it was believed that dancing without singing, singing without drumming, and drumming without drinking were impossible. Drumming required singing, singing required dancing, and dancing required drinking. As a result, drum beating should not have been included in early Mizo Christian worship.[536]

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[532] Vanlalzuata, "Harhna leh Khuang," in *Harhna: Mizoram Revival Centenary Souvenier (1906-2006)*, ed. RL Thanmawia, (Aizawl: Synod Revival Committee, 2006), 568.

[533] Chai was the name of a dance in which young men and young women form a circle round a man who serves out beer and other who play a drum and beat the horn of a *mithun*.

[534] Vanlalchhuanga, *Mizo leh Khuang*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Gosen Press, 1996), 5.

[535] Vanlalchhuanga, *Mizo leh Khuang*, 9.

[536] Lalsawma, *Revival*, 79.

The Church prohibited the use of drums in worship and inside the Church. Despite the association of drums with traditional practices, resisting the wishes of the Church, the revivalists started incorporating drums into their revival meetings and eventually into Church services, even without official approval from the Church or the missionaries. Using drums alongside singing became a permanent tradition throughout Mizoram, mainly starting from the third wave of the revival. The only exceptions were the two Mission station churches in Serkawn and Mission Veng, where the use of drums remained prohibited for an extended period.[537] According to Lalsawma, the first use of a drum in a Church service was:

> "there was a man named Hmara affected by a revival at Hmunulh village near Thingkhuang, a little way down from Sentlang. Hmara used to beat his small drum in keeping time for his singing. Men liked to listen to his singing and drum beating at the Church there, perceiving the convenience of using the drum in singing soon took Hmara's example and used the drum in their meetings. At that time, I lived in a nearby Lungdai village ruled by a Christian lady Khumi the divorced wife of Hnanliana of Nisapui. When a team of touring revivalists visited the surrounding villages of Zanlawn, Nisapui, and other villages, I joined them as a boy, big enough to help carry the drum. The year would be 1913 or early part of 1914."[538]

Before the revival of the third wave in 1919, the practice of incorporating drums into religious ceremonies was present in Hmunulh and its neighbouring village but not throughout all of the Lushai hills. Despite their desire to utilise drums during worship services, they refrained from doing so because the Church did not permit their usage.[539] According to Liangkhaia, the introduction of the drum to accompany Christian singing took place in Thingkhuang village, which was the third village to receive the revival movement after its initial outbreak in Nisapui village—on the third day of the revival in Thingkhuang, Euva, the leader of the Christian community in the village, utilised the drum in conjunction with their singing.[540] Subsequently, the drum became an integral part of the revival movement and accompanied it wherever it spread. Its influence extended to the southern regions, specifically during the

[537] Rohmingmawii, "Society and Religion in Mizoram," 137.
[538] Lalsawma, *Revival*, 79.
[539] Vanlalzuata, "Harhna leh Khuang," 571.
[540] Liangkhaia, *Mizorama Harhna Thu*, 36. Kipgen, *Christianity and Mizo Culture*, 273.

Lungrang "Great Gathering" held in the autumn of 1919.[541] From that time onward, drums were permanently used inside the Church.

Due to the Church's disapproval of using drums, the reintroduction of the instrument faced opposition from within the Church itself. Some individuals could not accept or embrace incorporating drums into the worship services. Khumhnawla, a devoted follower of the Christian faith, was reportedly deeply upset by the use of the drum to the point that he wept bitterly. As a "soldier of the Cross," he strongly disagreed with and was deeply troubled by the introduction of the drum into religious practices.[542]

Despite the opposition from the Church, the revivalists remained steadfast and continued to use the drum inside the Church. In one Church, a member asked about using drums, stating, "Why do we use the drum inside the church when it was used in a place associated with drinking?" In response, other members replied, "Your shin was also in a place associated with drinking."[543]

5.4 Zai Or Song.

Zai or songs played a significant role within Mizo society, and various types of songs existed during the pre-colonial period. The exact origins of Mizo folk songs remain unknown. According to K. Zawla, in the ancestral conversations, songs were absent when they resided in Lentlang, and even when they desired to dance, they could not do so due to the absence of songs. Eventually, they developed a new song to communicate across distances, *Heta tang hian kha kha a lang thei, Khata tang khan hei hi a lang thei*, which roughly translates to '*From here we can see there, from there you can see here*.' Subsequently, a renowned composer named Pi Hmuaki was born.[544] From this time onwards, the Mizos began to composed their own songs.

[541] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 273.
[542] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 273.
[543] Vanlalzuata, *Harhna leh Khuang*, 573.
[544] Zawla. *Mizo Pi Pute*, 265.

5.4.1 Lengkhawm Zai Or Assembly Songs.

Before the third wave of revival in 1919, during the early stages of Christianity in Mizo society, early converts were prohibited from singing any traditional Mizo songs due to their perceived association with the old religious practices. This restriction was evident during the Presbytery held in April 1910 when the Presbyterian Church banned the traditional singing style called Zo Zai.[545] While songs were introduced to the early Christians, they predominantly consisted of translated songs sung to Western melodies. Tonic solfa was introduced to Mizo Christians, and the first song written by the missionaries was –

Isua vanah a awm a,	*Jesus in Heaven*
Khawvel ah zuk lo kal a!	*Came down to earth!*
Mihring angin a lo aw,	*Living like a human*
Keimah min chhandam turin;	*To give me salvation*
Baibulah ka hmu thei e,	*I can see from the Bible*
A vat ha kher em ve le!	*How great it is!* [546]

The Church's prohibition of traditional songs and tunes led to the suppression of Mizo culture. However, in resistance to this dominant power, during the 1919 revival, early Mizo Christians began composing new songs called *Lengkhawm Zai*. These songs blended elements of traditional tunes with the Western style of tonic solfa. This creative fusion allowed the Mizo Christians to reclaim and express their cultural heritage while incorporating influences from the new religion. C.Z. Huala mentioned that, based on his observation, the new Christian songs were composed around 1922. Patea wrote a song titled '*Ka ropuina tur leh ka himna hmun*' (My Place of Glory and Safety), which became popular among the people. Additionally, Patea composed the

[545] Remthanga, *Synod Thurel Lakkhawm*, 203.
[546] C. Chhuanvawra, *Hmanlai leh Tunali Mizo Hlate*, (Aizawl, Published by the author, 2011), 189

song, '*Lei lal puan ropui chu a tlawm ang*' (The Glory of Royalty will Fade), and Kamlala wrote '*Rinin thlir thiam ila*' (To Look by Faith). However, in a more profound examination, B. Lalthangliana interviewed Kaphnunui, Patea's wife, who informed him that when Patea composed his first song, she was with their first child. It is believed that this occurred around 1919 or the beginning of 1920.[547]

However, the process of indigenising these songs was not without its challenges. Despite being highly admired, some individuals considered these new songs "profane," notably when Mizo composers incorporated the poetic traditions of Mizo folksongs. This hesitancy stemmed from the belief among early Mizo Christians that such poetic traditions were closely associated with "pagan poetry." Thus, incorporating indigenous elements into the new songs faced resistance and debates within the community.[548]

Nevertheless, as the revival spread in the Lushai Hills, the newly composed songs gained popularity. One contributing factor to their admiration was the use of Khuang by the Christians.[549] According to Mangkhosat Kipgen, this has allowed the Zo Christians to express their belief system, emotions, and experiences that resonated with their indigenous culture. The songs were a spontaneous outpouring of the composers' inner spiritual experiences, enabling them to communicate their convictions, joys, and sorrows authentically. [550]

The blending of traditional tunes with Western elements in the creation of the song *Lengkhawm Zai* can indeed be seen as an example of 'hybridity' (Hybridity pertains to the emergence of novel transcultural expressions within the contact zone formed as a consequence of colonisation.).[551] Through these *Lengkhawm Zai*, the Mizos, as a subaltern group, found a way to express themselves and assert their

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[547] R. L. Thanmawia, "Mizo Lengkhawm Zai Zirchianna/ A Critical Study of Mizo Lengkhawm Zai," in *Lenchawm: A Study of Mizo Lengkhawm Zai*, ed. Laltluangliana Khiangte (Aizawl: Department of Mizo, Gov't Hrangbana College, 2017). 180.

[548] Z. D. Lalhmangaihzauva & Lalmalsawmi Ralte, "Lengkhawm Zai: An Articulation of Indigenous Cultural Memory of the Mizos," *Journal of MIELS* Vol. 1. (June 2014): 74-84.

[549] Thanmawia, "Mizo Lengkhawm Zai Zirchianna," 186.

[550] Kipgen, *Christianity*, 270, 279-280.

[551] Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Postcolonial Studies*, 135.

cultural identity, thus breaking through the constraints imposed by colonialism. By incorporating traditional Mizo elements with Western influences, *Lengkhawm Zai* represents a form of cultural resistance, allowing the Mizo people to reclaim their cultural heritage and assert their 'agency'.

5.4.2 Kaihlek Hla Or Parody Songs.

'Parody', according to Richard A. Posner, "is best understood in terms of one of its synonyms: it is a "take off" a take-off on another work or on a genre of works. It takes characters, incidents, dialogue, or other aspects of the parodied work(s) and moves on from there to create a new work." [552] It can be interpreted in the context of the Mizo culture that parody songs are used as a form of resistance against the oppression of Western Christianity. In the case of the Mizo people, when the dominant Western Christian power banned their traditional songs, they responded by creating a new form of song known as *Kaihlek hla* or parody songs. According to B. Lalthangliana, these parody songs emerged around 1917, [553] while RL Thanmawia suggested that the song developed around 1919 as the parody song was famous while Lengkhawm zai was prevalent in society between 1920 and 1940. [554] However, both viewpoints can be valid as there were songs developed by non-Christians to insult the Christians and songs that the Christians themselves also parodied.

In this context, *Kaihlek hla,* or parody songs, served as a means of cultural resistance and expression for the subaltern Mizo people. These songs were used to mock and criticise the Christians who were oppressing their traditional culture. According to RL Thanmawia, J.H. Lorrain characterised the song as an act of defilement and a subject of mockery towards Christianity. One of the famous parody songs that insulted the Christians and hurt the religious leaders was –

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[552] Richard A. Posner, "When Is Parody Fair Use?" *The Journal of Legal Studies*, Vol. 21, No 1, (1992): 70, https://www.jstor.org/stable/724401.

[553] B. Lalthangliana, *Mizo Hun Hlui Hlate*, (Aizawl: RTM Press & Computer, 1998), 238.

[554] R.L Thanmawia, "Hla: Mizo Hla Chanchin (A Tobul leh A Than Dan)" in *History of Mizo Literature (Bu Thar)* ed, Laltuangliana Khiangte (Aizawl: Department of Mizo, Mizoram University, 2013), 61.

(Original Song)	(Parody Song)
Kulhpui bulah ka awm reng a,	*Belpui bulah ka awm reng a,*
(Under the darkest fort I am),	*(Lounging with ample brew vessel),*
Ni eng lo chhuah nghakin.	*Haileng no khat nghakin.*
(And waiting for the sun).	*(Longing for cup to drink*). [555]

However, the non-Christian Mizos were not the only ones to engage in parody songs. The Christians also created parodies of existing songs, demonstrating the resistance of the subaltern Mizo against the dominant culture. The Church imposed a ban on courtship between men and women, which was a prevalent practice in Mizo society. This matter was even discussed during the Baptist Church's Presbytery meeting on the 18th of October, 1918. Although no official prohibition was decided upon, the local Church was encouraged to follow the example of other Churches that forbade men from wooing women. [556] Despite the Church's attempts to suppress romantic connections, the flame of love persisted and could not be extinguished. In response, the youth cleverly transformed Christian songs into relationship songs to deceive their leaders. B. Lalthangliana mentions that the Church and its leaders were particularly stringent regarding singing these new songs, and those caught singing them were threatened to be expelled from the Church. As a result, the youth would only sing these songs while on their way to fetch water from the well or while working on their cultivated land. [557] Though there were numerous *Kaihlek hla* or parodied songs existed, some of them are as follows –

[555] Thanmawia, "Hla: Mizo Hla Chanchin", 61.
[556] "Presbytery Minute Book 1915-1931," (Serkawn: BCM Archive), 55.
[557] Lalthangliana, *Mizo Hun Hlui Hlate*, 238,239.

1. (Original Song)	(Parody Song)
Lei lalpuan ropui chu a tlawm ang,	*Lenna Khua hmun loh chu Lungrunpui,*
(The glory of royalty robe will fade)	*(Distance set us apart, my hearty,)*
Lei pangpar mawite pawh a chuai thei;	*Chan ka nuam sirvate nun iangin;*
(Earthly blooming flowers will vanish);	*(Yearning to be a feathered birdie);*
Kan dam lai ni pawh hi a lo la tla ngei ang,	*I zun ngai reng reng a aw tlaini len hi zawng,*
(Our existence shall fade away and be no more),	*(Passing the day for your captivating charm).*
Mahse, Lal duhawm Isua ka nei,	*Fam ka hlau I zun ngaiin lungrun*
(But, I have adorable Jesus).	*(I wish not to depart, longing for you hearty).*

2. (Original Song)	(Parody Song)
Aw khawiah nge Chhandamtu chuan,	*Aw khawiah nge Thadangi chuan,*
(Oh, where does my saviour)	*(Oh, where does my sweetheart)*
Lungngaih hreawm a tuar;	*Lunglen hreawm a tuar;*
(Enduring profound sorrow);	*(Enduring profound sorrow);*

A hmel duhawm tak hmuh ka chak,	*A hmel duhawm tak hmuh ka chak,*
(I yearn to behold his charming countenance,)	*(I yearn to behold her charming countenance),*
Hmangaih thisen luanna.	*Hmangaih dar tui Luanna.*
(Where love blood flows.)	*(Where love glister flows.)*[558]

While parody can be seen as a take-off on another work or on a genre of works to create new work, in the case of the Mizo people, they served as a powerful tool to resist and challenge the dominant power that sought to suppress their cultural expressions. Parody songs allowed the subaltern Mizo community to reclaim their voice and assert their identity in the face of religious and cultural oppression.

5.4.3 Ramthar Zai.

Ramthar Zai was a song that reflected the contestation between Western and Mizo traditional cultures within the context of Christianity. The song expressed the longing for heaven (referred to as the "new land") and expressed the subaltern Mizos' resistance to and satire of Western Christianity. It was initially introduced by Tlira's sect and later popularised by the Khuangtuaha's sect. Rather than merely copying Western ways and tunes to worship God, the song showcases the Mizo's ability to worship God in their own traditional style.[559] It also blended the aspects of Christianity with their expressions of longing for romantic partners of the opposite sex. Though several songs were composed, two songs were selected for this study. As the Church banned singing traditional songs and tunes, song number one shows their resistance to Western Christianity, and the second song expresses the combination of Christianity and romanticism –

[558] Lalthangliana, *Mizo Hun Hlui Hlate,*239, 241
[559] Thanmawia, *Mizo Hla Hlui*, 588.

1.	*(Original Song)*	*(English Translation)*
	A thlukah ringtu i buai em ni?	*Believer, are you troubled by the tune?*
	Engati nge Pathian ram thil thlawnpek hi;	*Why do you consider Thy Kingdom's gift;*
	Sual rim nam hiala i lo sawi le.	*As connected with a devil's essence.*

2.	*(Original Song)*	*(English Translation)*
	Tawnmangah Parte ka lo hmu che,	*Precious, you were in my dream,*
	Zion pangpar I sakhmelah chandandamtu'n;	*Zion's flower upon your countenance by the saviour;*
	A vul tir em ni Ṭhanongeii?	*Does he let it bloom, Pulchritudinous?*[560]

Apart from *Ramthar Zai*, there were also *Thiangzau hla*. The *Thiangzau* were known as 'Liberal people' within the Church. When the women's department in the Church collected rice for fundraising, the *Thiangzau* created a new song to insult them, and the song was –

[560] Thanmawia, *Mizo Hla Hlui*, 588-589.

(Normal Song)	*(English Translation)*
Imannuela a ṭam em ni?	*Is Immanuel suffering a famine?*
Chawlhni tuk a in buhfai khawn zo zai te hi;	*All the rice that you gathered on Sunday morning*
Kei zawng ei sengin ka ring lo.	*I doubt he can consume all of it.*[561]

Through *Ramthar Zai* and *Thiangzau hla*, the subaltern Mizo community highlights the cultural dynamism within their tradition, demonstrating how they reinterpret religious practices to align with their traditional values and beliefs. In doing so, they assert their perspective and emphasise their agency in shaping their religious and cultural identity. Thus, these songs stood as a testament to their ability to navigate the complexities of cultural encounters and retain autonomy over their heritage.

5.5 Resistance In Education.

In Macaulay's minute on Education, the 2nd of February, 135, he mentioned that "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, -a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." In other words, he suggests the need for a new education system to produce individuals who, while appearing Indian, would adopt British thoughts and beliefs, aiming to create a class capable of supporting the colonial administration in running administrative tasks. He further stated, "I would at once stop the printing of Arabic and Sanscrit books. I would abolish the Mudrassa and the Sanscrit College at Calcutta."[562]

[561] Rohmingi, Hosana Lalenvela Khiangte, Venghlun, Lunglei, Dec 8, 2019.

[562] T. B. Macaulay, "Minute by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay, Macaulay's Minute on Education, February 2, 1835," Macaulay-Minutes.pdf (iitk.ac.in), 5th February 2023.

In the context of Mizo society, only half an education was provided to the populace, and Joy L.K. Pachuau mentioned that the colonial education system faced evident tensions as missionaries, in control, directed schools toward creating devout Christians. While the government funded these schools and sought helpful individuals for local administration, it also feared providing too much education.[563] Shibani Kinkar Chaube outline the Government of Assam, Director of Public Instruction, Report on Public Instruction in Assam for 1912-1913, Shillong.

> While elementary education cannot be freely encouraged in the hills, the greatest care is required in the matter of secondary and collegiate education. It is most important that hill boys should not be betrayed into a course which will educate them out of satisfaction with each such prospects as life in the hills affords or can be made to produce. We must have pioneers, but should not be eager for pioneers of discontent. Scholarships should be granted in ample number to allow of the training of the boys of the hills tribes to fill the Government offices and serve the state in all departments in the hills.[564]

According to Joy LK Pachuau, the missionaries in colonial times were aware of the instructions given by colonial authorities, understanding the need to be cautious in downplaying the societal impact of Christian fellowship. They believed that educational institutions should avoid promoting radical social ideas and instead use the Christian faith to endorse and reinforce the legitimacy of colonial authorities. As a result, students were cultivated to identify closely with the colonial order, and dissent or rebellion was rare among them. The educational focus was not on critical thinking, disciplinary skills, fundamental knowledge, or religious expression.[565] As a result, SK Chaube additionally mentioned:

> The hills people got only half-an-education. The subsidised mission schools, throughout the British period, were almost entirely of Middle English standard. The primary objective of the mission was to collect good preachers. Their teaching was biased towards religion and literature. The general standard of knowledge remained quite low. The hill students, even today, are generally weak in mathematics, natural science and abstract philosophy.[566]

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[563] Joy LK Pachuau and Willem van Schendel, *The Camera As Witness: A Social History of Mizoram, Northeast India* (Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 102.
[564] S.K. Chaube, Hill Politics in Northeast India, (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1999), 47.
[565] Pachuau and Schendel, *The Camera as Witness*, 103.
[566] Chaube, *Hill Politics in Northeast India*, 48.

In light of this educational provision tailored for the Mizo populace, resistance to academic pursuits manifested in the Lushai Hills. In his correspondence, H.S. Luaia recounted that Rev H.W. Carter instituted a school where instruction encompassed the craftsmanship of carriages and chairs, an initiative met with resistance from the community's senior members. Under the auspices of F.W. Savidge, the routine labour activities encountered resistance from the progeny of the chiefs, prompting the students' voluntary departure from the residential facility.[567]

Figure 5.1: Rev F.W Savidge and Rev Challiana are sitting with the student boys inside the hostel.
Source: BCM Archive, Serkawn, Lunglei.

5.6 Conclusion.

The chapter examines the impact of Western Christianity on Mizo Christians and the power dynamics between Western and Mizo cultures. Traditional practices, including singing traditional songs, were prohibited, reflecting the dominance of Western Christian culture seeking to replace native Mizo culture. However, the 1919 revival marked a turning point, with Mizo Christians resisting cultural domination. The revival empowered the subaltern population through spiritual experiences, giving them agency to assert their religious identity. Resistance against Western Christian practices also emerged among some Mizo Christians, highlighting their unwillingness

[567] Rev HS Luaia, Personal Notes. January 10, 2017.

to unquestioningly embrace changes. Despite Western influence, Mizo Christians found ways to adapt and create a unique expression of their spirituality through the composition of new hymns blending Mizo and Western musical elements. Parody songs were also used as a form of resistance.

Overall, the study emphasizes the subaltern perspective and the Mizo people's ability to assert their identity and autonomy while navigating cultural encounters. The subsequent revival movements further illustrate the transformative power of spirituality and the subaltern community's proactive efforts to revitalize their faith. Women played a significant role in the revival movements, and the use of drums in worship was reintroduced despite initial opposition. The revival movements had a lasting impact on the Mizo community, shaping their religious and social landscape. The fourth wave of revival faced challenges and government intervention due to its disruptive nature. Despite these challenges, the Mizo people responded with creativity and resilience, creating a subaltern Christian identity that reconciled their faith with their indigenous heritage. The use of the drum, the creation of *Lengkhawm Zai*, and the emergence of parody songs all reflect the subaltern's creative response and resistance to Western Christian influence. The Mizo people navigated cultural encounters while retaining autonomy over their heritage, exemplified by their reinterpretation of religious practices and the creation of *Ramthar Zai*. The *Thiangzau*'s song serves as an example of subaltern agency in reshaping religious practices and asserting their own identity. The chapter explores the limitations of colonial education in empowering the Mizo community. The subaltern perspective on colonial education reveals its limitations in empowering the Mizo community, highlighting their struggles with an imposed educational framework that serves colonial interests.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

The historical narrative of the Mizo people, akin to the experiences of numerous indigenous groups globally, is a complex fabric interwoven with elements of culture, tradition, tenacity, and adjustment. The period of colonial rule introduced significant disruptions and alterations to their societal norms. However, fragments of the pre-colonial Mizo society can be discerned from diverse resources, encompassing colonial ethnographic records, the testimonies of educated Mizo individuals from the early 20th century, and the enduring oral heritage of the Mizo community.

The genesis of chieftainship within the Mizo society represented a complex phenomenon that evolved in response to various historical and socio-economic forces. The annals of Mizo history were marred by recurrent intra-clan conflicts and raids aimed at looting and enslavement. These conflicts arose from power struggles between different clans, underscoring that the institution of chieftainship initially developed as a response to the imperative for leadership to mediate internal disputes and ensure the safety of the community. This underlines the necessity of an authoritative figure capable of safeguarding the interests of the common populace during tumultuous times. Moreover, powerful neighbouring kindred groups such as the *Pawi* confronted the Mizo people's existence. This external threat further accentuated the requirement for robust leadership to shield the community from external aggression. It is plausible that the Mizo populace valued the role of chieftains in defending their way of life against external threats. Preserving their agricultural endeavours became an urgent priority, and chieftains played a pivotal role in guaranteeing the security of these livelihoods. It is also noteworthy that chieftainship also emerged within smaller tribes like the *Pawi*, *Paihte*, *Hualngo*, and *Fanai*, albeit in a subordinate capacity to the *Sailo* chiefs.

Local authorities within the villages, including individuals like *Tlangau*, *Thirdeng*, *Puithiam*, *Ramhual*, and Zalen, assumed pivotal roles in administration and governance. The study expounds upon how these officials were remunerated for their

services, often receiving compensation in the form of rice, albeit with distinctive practices and variations across different villages.

A diverse array of tributes were rendered, serving not only to sustain the chief but also to establish the chief's economic dominion over the populace. The scope of these tributes underscored the chief's authority across various facets of the villagers' livelihoods. Tributes on rice (known as *Fathang*), animals (referred to as *Sachhiah and Sechhiah*), salt (*Chichhiah*), and honey/wax (*Khuaichhiah*) manifest the extent of the chief's authority and control on access to various resources within his realm. The payment and enforcement of these tributes adhered to established customs and regulations within the community, pointing to a structured and well-defined system of governance. The tribute system incorporated penalties and fines for non-compliance. Notably, tributes, like *Fathang*, served a dual purpose. While it provided sustenance for the chief and his family, it also aided villagers in times of sickness, impoverishment, or adversity. This implies a system characterised by resource redistribution within the community, potentially benefiting individuals facing hardship.

Moreover, tributes related to resources such as salt, honey/wax, and *Gayal* underscored the control over access to resources by the chief. Villagers required explicit permission from the chief to access and collect these resources. The study also highlights variations in the quantity and nature of tributes from one village to another. This localised variation likely influenced villagers' experiences, necessitating their adaptation to the specific tribute practices of their respective villages.

Servitude is deeply ingrained in the historical fabric of Mizo society, with exclusive authority vested in the chief to possess individuals such as *Bawi*. This system encompasses three primary categories of servitude: Distress servitude (*Inpuichhung Bawi*), Sanctuary servitude (*Chemsen Bawi*), and Deserter servitude (*Tuklut Bawi*). Each category delineates distinct circumstances leading to an individual's status as *Bawi*. *Bawi*, in turn, held specific roles and responsibilities within the chief's household, encompassing tasks related to agriculture, domestic chores, and even the utilisation of the chief's firearms and ornaments. The *Bawi's* pivotal role extended to

supporting the chief's household and the broader community. Notably, *Bawi* possessed certain rights, including the prerogative to depart from the chief's residence and seek a new master in cases of mistreatment. This signifies an element of 'agency' among Bawi, enabling them to safeguard themselves against abuse or harm. Furthermore, *Bawi* could secure their liberation by presenting one *Gayal* or its equivalent in cash or goods, underscoring the potential for upward mobility within the servitude system, where *Bawi* could eventually attain personal freedom.

During the pre-colonial era, the Mizos held firm beliefs in a metaphysical realm inhabited by supernatural entities. They attributed both favourable and unfavourable outcomes to the moral conduct of individuals, underscoring a belief in a divine moral order. The Mizos referred to God as '*Khawzing Pathian*' or '*Khua leh vang*,' accentuating God's role as a benevolent deity who bestowed blessings upon virtuous individuals. The *Sailo* clan, while adopting and emulating the belief system of the *Chhakchhuak* clan, incorporated the names of their ancestors into their sacrificial chants and prayers. This exemplifies how belief systems evolved and were influenced by interactions with other clans.

Numerous sacrificial rituals were pivotal in Mizo spirituality, including *Sakung, Chawng/Chawnfang, Sedawi, Dawino Chhui, Kawngpui siam,* and *Fano Dawi*. These rituals were conducted to seek blessings, protection, and prosperity for the community. Notably, the *Kawngpui siam* and *Fano Dawi* rituals involved the active participation of the entire village community, underscoring the communal nature and cohesion they emphasised. The omission of these rituals signified a detachment from the community. During certain ceremonies, strict prohibitions were observed, such as refraining from work during *Fano Dawi*. These restrictions illustrated the reverence and solemnity with which these rituals were approached. Some rituals incorporated divination practices, such as examining footprints on ash in *Kawngpui siam,* to predict outcomes such as hunting success or potential misfortune. In essence, the Mizo belief system and the practice of sacrificial rituals underscored their profound spiritual connection with the divine, their ancestors, and the natural world. These traditions emphasised the significance of community and heritage in their cultural expressions.

Chapchar Kut, *Mim Kut*, and *Pawl Kut* were three prominent festivals with immense cultural and social importance within Mizo society. *Chapchar Kut*, observed following the clearing of forests for agricultural purposes, spanned an entire week and featured a rich tapestry of rituals, feasting, and exuberant dancing. It symbolised the commencement of the agricultural cycle and the promise of a fruitful harvest. *Mim Kut* served as a reverent homage to the departed souls and involved the communal partaking of *zu* and bread. This festival was a heartfelt remembrance of the deceased, fostering a sense of community and shared mourning.

On the other hand, *Pawl Kut* was a festival dedicated to expressing gratitude for the bountiful harvest. It celebrated the culmination of the agricultural season, underscoring the vital connection between the Mizo people and their land. These festivals celebrated the cyclical rhythms of agriculture and highlighted the strong cultural bonds within Mizo communities and their profound connection to the land they relied upon for sustenance and livelihoods.

A profoundly intricate relationship with the land and agriculture lay at the core of pre-colonial Mizo society. The predominant agricultural practice was shifting cultivation, locally known as '*jhum'* or '*Lo*.' The Mizo people, primarily engaged in cultivation, adhered to a nomadic lifestyle where they transitioned from one village to another, clearing forests and cultivating land for several years before relocating. This nomadic practice, known as '*khawthar kai*,' transcended being solely an economic strategy, encompassing a way of life profoundly interwoven with cultural and social dynamics.

The cultivation process involved a series of stages, including forest clearing, burning, sowing, weeding, and harvesting, all managed collectively by the community. Weeding, in particular, stood out as a labour-intensive and communal activity, often providing a backdrop for developing romantic relationships among young unmarried individuals. Pre-colonial Mizo society adhered to a structured social hierarchy, with chieftainship playing a central role in governance. Chiefs held considerable authority and enjoyed the privilege of choosing the best cultivable land. This hierarchical system was also reflected in the land allocation for cultivation, with

chiefs, council members, and elders receiving priority. The community's collective involvement in agriculture was paramount, fostering unity and collaboration. Hunting played a pivotal role in supplementing the economy, and skilled hunters, known as '*Thangchhuah*,' held a respected status within society. Ritual offerings, such as '*Lasikhal*,' were made to seek success in hunts. Fishing constituted another essential economic activity, employing various techniques, including communal herbal fishing and weirs.

Zawlbuk, often described as a bachelors' dormitory, held a central and multifaceted role within Mizo society. Located at the heart of each village, it served a purpose beyond being a communal sleeping area for unmarried young men. Instead, it functioned as a dynamic social institution that significantly contributed to their training, development, and integration into responsible adulthood. The *Zawlbuk* acted as a hub of communal life, providing accommodation for travellers, hosting village meetings, and enabling rapid responses to emergencies.

Within the Zawlbuk, young men aspired to embody self-sacrifice and bravery, readily answering calls for assistance, even in the face of danger. Mandatory activities such as wrestling fostered discipline and camaraderie among its residents. A hierarchical structure was in place, with monitors overseeing the lower stage known as '*thingnawifawm*', ensuring order and discipline. In this stage, young boys learn essential values like obedience, self-discipline, and respect for societal norms. Progression to the upper stage, referred to as *Tlangval*, marked the transition to adulthood.

The *Zawlbuk* also functioned as a traditional school where elderly community members orally transmitted knowledge. Evening gatherings provided a platform for exchanging stories, wisdom, and insights, enriching the bachelors' understanding of their culture and heritage. Furthermore, the *Zawlbuk* played a vital role in conflict resolution, particularly in Mizo courting traditions. Bachelor authority was evident in mediating disputes between unmarried women and bachelors, underscoring their unique position in the village's social hierarchy.

Strict gender boundaries were observed within the Zawlbuk, with women strictly prohibited from entering. Deviations from this norm were viewed as ominous and were accompanied by specific cultural terminology highlighting impropriety. The Zawlbuk was not merely a place of residence but a vital institution that shaped the social, cultural, and moral fabric of Mizo society. Here, young men imbibed essential values, cultivated their identities as responsible adults, and contributed to the cohesion of their communities.

In pre-colonial Mizo society, *Zu*, a fermented beverage, held a distinct and revered place in Mizo culture. It was integral to festivals, religious ceremonies, and various social gatherings. Three primary categories of *zu—Zupui*, *Zufang*, and *Rakzu*—fulfilled distinct roles. *Zupui*, made from husked rice and chaff, was a communal drink shared among the community. *Zufang*, on the other hand, was intended for domestic consumption within households, while *Rakzu*, a potent spirit, was reserved for special and exceptional occasions. The consumption of *zu* was governed by cultural norms and restrictions that differed across gender and age groups. In Mizo society, it was not customary for young males to regularly consume *zu*. Instead, they typically partook in it during specific events such as festivals, religious ceremonies, or upon returning from hunting expeditions. Female youth had even more constrained consumption patterns, mostly drinking in moderation and reserving it for significant events and special occasions. The Mizo culture surrounding *zu* was characterised by using three distinct types of cups. The 'Lalno' cup was reserved for the village chief and was employed as a symbol of honour. Like the chief's guest, the chief received the first serving whenever *zu* was consumed. The 'Nopui' cup was designated for the house owner where *zu* was served, and it was the vessel through which the drinking took place within that particular household. Lastly, the '*Hailawn No*' or 'Noleng' cup was meant for ordinary individuals and was commonly used among the general populace, excluding the chief or house owner. In the chief's absence, the first portion of zu was typically offered to a respected elder. These cultural practices associated with *zu* underscore this fermented beverage's communal and social significance within pre-colonial Mizo society.

The third chapter examines how British colonisation in the Lushai Hills was instigated by British expeditions in reaction to incursions led by Mizo chiefs. The British undertook these actions as a means to assert their dominance over the region in response to perceived threats, ultimately resulting in the subjugation of the indigenous Mizos. Importantly, it is essential to acknowledge that the incapacity of Mizo chiefs to mount an effective armed resistance against British colonisation holds great significance. From a subaltern perspective, this can be viewed as an expression of the Mizos' struggle against the formidable might of the British colonial forces.

The British implemented significant regional administrative reforms, including amalgamating the North and South Lushai Hills. This can be interpreted as a top-down approach to governance, where the British imposed their administrative structures upon the Mizos. Furthermore, the British authorities curtailed various privileges and rights previously held by Mizo chiefs, altering their traditional roles and diminishing their authority. This underscores how these changes disempowered local leaders and disrupted traditional power dynamics. The introduction of Circle Interpreters and Lushai clerks into the administrative system can be seen as a strategy employed by the British to manage and control the local population through intermediaries. These positions required compliance with British directives and involved the collection of various forms of data, which could be perceived as tools of colonial control.

The Mizos traditionally adhered to a shifting cultivation method. However, the British colonial influence brought about several transformative changes, including the introduction of ploughs and cattle and the establishment of a market in Demagiri. These changes marked a shift towards settled agriculture, which can be seen as a transformation imposed by colonial authorities upon the traditional farming practices of the Mizos. The British also introduced the concept of currency to the Mizos, replacing the traditional barter system. This transition from barter to currency can be attributed to colonial influence and marked a significant departure in the medium of exchange. With the British colonisation in 1890, a noticeable transition towards a money-based economy was driven by the British authorities' need to collect taxes and remunerate for services and labour. The British accepted tribute payments in the form

of rice, a staple in the Mizos' diet, impacting the local economy by directly affecting food supply and distribution. This requirement to pay tribute in rice can be seen as a form of economic control exerted by the colonial authorities.

Furthermore, the British authorities imposed low wage rates for impressed labour, significantly lower than prevailing market rates. The increase in the house tax rate from Re. 1 to Rs. 2, aligning with rates in other hill tracts, can be viewed as an additional economic burden on the Mizos' resources. The British reliance on tribute payments in the form of rice underscored the economic dependency created on the local food supply, serving as a form of economic control to ensure a steady food supply for the British authorities. The practice of paying tribute in goods and items had a notable impact on the economic well-being of the Mizos, affecting their economic resources and ability to sustain their traditional way of life. These changes in the Mizos' economy brought about by British colonialism represent a complex interplay of transformation, economic exploitation, and dependency. The introduction of new economic practices and the imposition of colonial policies had profound consequences for the Mizos' traditional way of life and economic welfare, highlighting the power dynamics and control exerted by colonial authorities over the indigenous population.

The advent of Christian missions in non-Christian territories during colonial expansion was perceived as an opportunity to disseminate the Christian faith. Prior to the arrival of Christian missionaries, the Mizos adhered to a belief system rooted in animism, wherein they sought to appease various spirits and entities to ward off afflictions and misfortune. This belief system profoundly swayed their culture and way of life. The introduction of Christianity marked a substantial departure from Mizo animism. Christianity brought forth the concept of a singular deity, a central doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ, and emphasised virtues such as love, peace, and forgiveness. This shift in religious beliefs can be considered a momentous cultural and religious transformation. The British colonial administration played a pivotal role in granting or withholding permission for missionaries to enter the Lushai Hills, which gave rise to inquiries regarding the colonial government's influence on religious conversions and its potential ramifications for the indigenous populace.

In the year 1893, government-sponsored schools were instituted with the principal objective of providing education to the offspring of British sepoys and government personnel. Nonetheless, these educational institutions encountered formidable challenges, including high teacher turnover rates and low student attendance. It was in 1894 that JH Lorrain and FW Savidge emerged as pivotal figures in the region by establishing a mission house and a school. Their unwavering commitment to education and linguistic development played a seminal role in formulating a written version of the Lushai language, complete with a standardised Lushai alphabet. This development significantly facilitated the learning process for the local population. The endeavours of these missionaries in crafting a written form of the Lushai language proved instrumental in the advancement of education. They devised a Lushai alphabet grounded in the Roman script and undertook successive revisions to enhance its practicality. Initially, they encountered difficulties instructing the Lushai alphabet as their initial cohort of students struggled to make headway.

Nevertheless, they persisted and eventually found more receptive learners. In 1903, upon their arrival in the South Lushai Hills, JH Lorrain and FW Savidge expanded their educational initiatives by founding a school in Serkawn. Over time, numerous schools were established in various villages, thus broadening access to education for the local populace. The pivotal moment came in 1905 when authority over education in the Lunglei Sub-division was transferred to the Baptist Mission, marking an escalating mission involvement in educational undertakings within the region. This transition substantially bolstered the educational infrastructure.

In the Lushai Hills, the British exercised various forms of dominance, including the imposition of tributary payments in the form of taxes and forced labour, as well as the introduction of a new religion and associated Western culture and education. This transformative influence led to a quasi-westernisation of Mizo culture. The local population resisted British colonisation through tactics of evasion and denial of service. One prominent figure in this resistance was Chieftainess Ropuiliani, a formidable and resolute woman who refused to acknowledge British authority. Despite nominally designating her son, Lalthuama, as the head of the villages, she retained complete control and implemented strategies to evade colonial officials and

reject tribute payments. Her influence extended across the villages under her jurisdiction, where a passive but persistent hostility toward the British persisted. Ropuiliani's defiance posed a significant challenge to colonial authority, making it difficult for officials to secure tribute and labour. Under the guidance of his mother, Ropuiliani, Lalthuama also posed a significant challenge to British rule, leading to his multiple arrests. Ropuiliani often instigated his acts of resistance. Despite facing arrests and fines, Lalthuama continued to defy British rule, underscoring the determination of subaltern individuals in the region. The murder of an interpreter named Satinkhara underscored the Mizos' aversion to native collaborators who worked with the colonial establishment. Lalthuama's resistance is characterised by passive measures such as obstructing General Treager's messengers from passing through his village, sheltering Chief Paawna (who held Lt. Steward's head), aiding the escape of the bugler's killers, and concealing captives in his village, exemplified his commitment to challenging British authority. While not openly hostile, his actions demonstrated a steadfast resistance that went beyond mere rhetoric.

Kairuma's eventual surrender occurred following the British forces' destruction of his village and the capture of other tribal chiefs. At this point, he recognised the British's overwhelming military strength, leading to the cessation of his resistance. The resistance efforts of both Chieftainess Ropuiliani and Chief Kairuma were poignant examples of their unwavering commitment to challenging British colonial authority despite their limited resources and influence. Their acts of defiance, strategic evasions, and unwavering opposition offer a rich illustration of the intricate and multifaceted nature of subaltern resistance against colonial rule. These examples vividly demonstrate the 'agency' and resilience of marginalised communities within the historical context of the Lushai Hills.

The subalterns are representative of the traditional forces within Mizo Society. These subaltern groups vehemently opposed the proliferation of Christianity and actively attempted to rejuvenate traditional cultural practices and performances. As observed in the context of Mizoram, the practice of dissimulation constitutes a captivating manifestation of everyday resistance wherein individuals conceal their authentic feelings and intentions, assuming different guises. This nuanced strategy

often entails veiling acts of resistance through subtle, indirect means, affording marginalised groups the means to convey their dissent without confronting dominant power structures. An integral facet of dissimulation in Mizoram involved the utilisation of nicknames as a symbolic means of resisting British colonial officers. Instead of overtly articulating their discontent, the Mizos assigned monikers that subtly conveyed their sentiments and perspectives. These nicknames frequently bore humorous or ironic connotations. For instance, '*Sahib Rawnga*,' signifying 'Cruel Sahib,' and 'Tauuara,' translating to 'Mr. Sulky serves as an illustrative example of this practice. Such nicknames enabled the Mizos to express their disapproval without directly challenging the authority of colonial figures. By ascribing these monikers, the Mizos discovered a means to critique colonial officers discreetly. They harnessed humour and linguistic play to articulate their discontent, imparting a sense of empowerment and psychological resilience. While these nicknames may not have been employed openly in the presence of colonial officials, they nonetheless represented a form of concealed resistance against their subjugation under colonial rule. The Mizos' practice of renaming colonial officers, as exemplified in the case of Major GH Loch, underscored their adaptability and willingness to adjust their tactics in response to evolving circumstances. Renaming an officer who protested the initial nickname highlighted the Mizos' capacity to navigate power dynamics and adapt to changing situations. Dissimulation through nicknames serves as a testament to the Mizos' inventive subversion of colonial authority. It allowed them to retain a degree of agency and express dissent while manoeuvring within the intricate power dynamics that constrained overt resistance. This practice is a prime example of how subaltern communities employ subtle strategies to articulate their discontent and resist oppression within the confines of their circumstances.

. The early 20th century in the Lushai Hills region witnessed a profound cultural resurgence among the Mizos catalysed by the communal song *Puma Zai* or *Tlanglam Zai*. This cultural phenomenon, originating from the *Biate* tribe, played a pivotal role in shaping the socio-religious landscape of the area. The adoption and widespread popularity of Puma Zai among the Mizos posed a formidable challenge to Christian evangelism, as the fervour for these songs became deeply ingrained in the communal

fabric of society. This resistance against Christianization was further manifested by creating satirical songs like *Chalmar Zai*, which humorously ridiculed Christian practices. The clash between Christianity and traditional Mizo customs extended to various facets of life, encompassing the prohibition of practices such as *Fano dawi* and *Kawngpui siam* and the regulation of courting rituals. The Church's influence over social matters, including divorce decisions, and its prohibition of traditional sports like *Se Chaih* exacerbated the tension between the two belief systems. Notably, the Church's efforts to suppress these traditional practices frequently led to physical confrontations and social upheaval. Ultimately, the decline of Puma Zai in the wake of the bamboo famine of 1912 marked the conclusion of this cultural phenomenon. Nevertheless, the resistance against Christianization endured, driven by concerns regarding the erosion of Mizo culture and the impact of Christianity on traditional practices. This historical account offers insights into the intricate interplay between religion, culture, and social change in the Lushai Hills during the early 20th century.

The introduction of Christianity, accompanied by Western culture and knowledge, clashed with the traditional culture and belief systems of the Mizos. This incongruity prompted many Mizos to resist and challenge the civilising mission imposed by colonial rule. Christianity encountered resistance within the traditional Mizo society, reflecting broader questions of cultural identity. Mizos perceived the encroachment of Western religion and culture as a threat to their traditional way of life. Christian converts' adoption of new customs and practices raised concerns about preserving Mizo heritage. The conflicts surrounding the spread of Christianity also held political dimensions, as traditional chiefs saw the new religion as a challenge to their authority. This underscores the intricate interplay between religion and power in the region

Various forms of resistance against the spread of Christianity were employed by non-Christians in the Mizoram region. These forms of resistance can be categorised as follows:

Religious Persecution: Non-Christians frequently engaged in religious persecution as a means of resistance. This involved efforts to obstruct Christian

practices and rituals, such as disrupting Christian worship services, forbidding the observance of Sunday as a day of rest and worship, and discouraging traditional community members from converting. In some cases, non-Christians resorted to violence and physical harm against Christian converts, ranging from verbal abuse and beatings to more severe forms of physical violence. These acts aimed to intimidate and punish converts and deter others from embracing Christianity.

Social Ostracism: Social ostracism was a powerful tool used to dissuade conversions to Christianity. Non-Christians would isolate and exclude Christian converts from various social and community activities. This could involve refusing to share meals or engaging in customary practices with Christians, significantly impacting the social lives of converts.

Economic Coercion: Economic coercion was another tactic employed against Christian converts. Non-Christians could impose economic penalties on those who converted, such as confiscating property, imposing fines, or denying access to communal resources—this economic pressure aimed to discourage individuals and families from embracing Christianity.

Political Opposition: Beyond religious differences, the conflict between Christianity and traditional Mizo society extended to a battle for authority. Traditional village chiefs perceived the new religion as a direct challenge to their power structures. Christian converts began to look up to church leaders and missionaries as their new leaders, eroding the authority of traditional chiefs. This shift in power dynamics added a political dimension to the conflict.

Refusal to Adopt New Customs: Non-Christians resisted the adoption of new customs and practices associated with Christianity, viewing practices like handshaking or wearing Western-style clothing as foreign and contrary to traditional Mizo customs. This refusal to adopt new customs was a way of expressing resistance to the changes brought by Christianity.

Expulsions of Christian Converts: Chiefs and non-Christians sometimes resorted to expelling Christian converts from the village as a form of persecution. This

expulsion could occur under various pretexts, including rainy nights, and aimed to isolate and punish converts.

The clash between Christianity and traditional beliefs in Mizoram was a complex and multifaceted phenomenon shaped by the interplay of cultural, social, religious, and political factors. These methods of persecution and resistance illustrate the depth of the tensions and conflicts that emerged during this period.

The thesis also seek to understand the advent of Christianity and its consequent impact on Mizo Christians. The ascendancy of Christianity in the Lushai Hills was accompanied by the proscription of customary cultural rituals, encompassing the singing of indigenous songs. This phenomenon serves as an indicator of a power asymmetry, wherein the predominant Western Christian culture aimed at supplanting and stifling the indigenous Mizo cultural heritage. This paved the way for the emergence of a 'cultural hegemony' within Mizo society, characterised by the imposition of Western Christian practices upon the indigenous populace, thereby underscoring the pre-eminence of Western Christian ideology. However, a pivotal juncture materialised in 1919, with the advent of a revival that triggered a significant transformation. This marked the inception of a contestation between Western and Mizo cultural values and practices within Christianity. This contestation may be interpreted as a manifestation of resistance by the subaltern population against the cultural dominion exercised by Western values and practices in Christianity.

The subaltern here are identified as those within the fold of Mizo Christianity who wanted to incorporate elements of their traditional cultural practices and rituals within Christianity which however is not welcome by the missionaries and the church establishment at that point of time.

The initial revival also underscores the pivotal role of revival movements as arenas of contention between Western and Mizo traditional cultures within Christianity. The journey undertaken by Mizo delegates to personally partake in the revival signifies their inclination to embrace and potentially incorporate elements of this Western religious movement. Simultaneously, it exposes their marginalised position within the broader Christian community. The narratives recounting the

experiences of Mizo delegates during the revival gatherings accentuate the profound impact of spiritual encounters. The sudden emotional outbursts, glossolalia utterances, and physical manifestations of spirituality manifest ‘agency’ and empowerment for the subaltern population. This enables them to assert their religious identity and spiritual beliefs on their own terms. The research portrays the emergence of suspicion and resistance among certain Mizo Christians who had not directly encountered the revival. This apprehension can be interpreted as a manifestation of resistance against the perceived imposition of Western Christian customs and beliefs, suggesting that not all members of the subaltern community were inclined to embrace these changes unquestionably. Despite the prevalence of Western Christianity, the investigation highlights instances in which Mizo Christians ingeniously adapted and personalised their faith. The creation of a novel hymn by Thanga exemplifies their capacity to amalgamate facets of their traditional culture with the Christian faith, thereby crafting a distinct expression of their spirituality. The initial revival provides insights into the intricate dynamics of cultural and religious intersections between Western and Mizo cultural values and practices within Christianity in Mizoram. It delineates the experiences of the subaltern population in terms of transformation, resistance, and adaptation as they navigated the influences of Western culture and religion. Ultimately, this process contributed to the evolution of their unique Christian identity within the broader milieu of Christianity.

The second resurgence of revival in Mizoram further elucidates the dynamics of spiritual and cultural metamorphosis. The genesis of this revival in Hmunhmeltha, a village established by Mr Sanga, illustrates how Christianity provided a sanctuary for persecuted Christians from neighbouring villages. This underscores Christianity’s role in fostering and fortifying community bonds among the subaltern populace, affording them refuge and a sense of belonging. The narrative of Mr. Dara, who passed away on his way to the church, accentuates the personal sacrifices made by individuals within the subaltern community. Despite their arduous living conditions, their unwavering devotion and spiritual encounters, which encompassed moments of infectious laughter and profound weeping, underscore the profound influence of the revival on their lives.

The revival movement is depicted as spontaneous and emotionally charged, with participants engaging in singing, dancing, laughter, and weeping as they felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. These emotional manifestations can be construed as a means of empowerment and a channel through which the subaltern population could articulate their distinct spirituality. Within this revival, the central theme revolved around the anticipated second coming of Jesus Christ. This thematic focal point and others such as the Cross of Christ, Christian Love, the Holy Spirit, and the End Time served as pivotal subjects of spiritual contemplation and devotion. These themes mirror the theological and eschatological dimensions of the revival and their influence on the subalterns' comprehension of their faith.

The interaction between the revivalists and the missionaries is portrayed as occasionally contentious, with revivalists at times accusing missionaries of lacking reception of the Holy Spirit when cautioned about their conduct. This suggests a measure of 'agency' and autonomy among the subaltern population in interpreting and practising their faith, even in the face of missionary guidance. While the second wave of revival eventually waned, it left an enduring mark on the Mizo community. Instead of dissipating completely, it evolved into a sustained current of prayer and unwavering commitment to devout living. This persistent spiritual fervour can be regarded as a form of resistance against external pressures and a mechanism for preserving their distinct spiritual identity. The establishment of the *Kristian Beihram Pawl* and the introduction of the *Beihrual* evangelistic campaign underscore the proactive endeavours of the subaltern community to rejuvenate their faith and the Church. These initiatives reflect their 'agency' in shaping religious practices within their community. The second resurgence of revival in Mizoram encapsulates an intricate interplay of spirituality, cultural identity, and agency within the subaltern population. It highlights Christianity's role as a unifying force and a source of empowerment for the community while also showcasing their unique expressions of faith and their capacity to adapt and reform religious practices to meet their spiritual needs.

The account of the third resurgence of revival in Mizoram in 1919 provides invaluable insights into the profound spiritual and social metamorphoses that transpired during this era. Described as the most substantial and influential, this third

wave of revival extended its reach far beyond the boundaries of Mizoram, impacting regions such as Manipur and Tripura and even influencing Naga Baptist churches. This underscores the regional reach and significance of the revival. Mizoram was beset by a devastating influenza epidemic, claiming numerous lives. Amid grief and despair, the revival spontaneously commenced on the night of July 26, 1919. This occurrence suggests a sense of divine intervention and hope emerging in the face of tragedy. Remarkably, the revival spotlighted the pivotal involvement of three young girls from Nisapui village, who played a central role in instigating the revival through their singing and prayers. The noteworthy participation of women in the revival movement underscores their 'agency' in matters of religion.

Revivalists such as Paranga and his companions actively propagated the revival message to neighbouring villages, catalysing its spread as individuals from diverse communities joined in worship and celebration. The central theme of the revival focused on the cross of Christ, serving as a unifying and transformative element. People were deeply moved by the profound significance of Christ's suffering and sacrifice. Physical manifestations, including singing, dancing, weeping, and a distinctive form of ecstasy symbolising the crucifixion of Jesus, characterised the revival. These physical expressions were employed to convey the intensity of their spiritual encounters. However, the physical manifestations, particularly the ecstatic behaviours, prompted divisions and perplexity within the Church. The phenomenon of 'Spirit illnesses' and differing perspectives among church members posed challenges. Notably, the use of drums inside the Church was introduced during this revival, signifying changes in spiritual practices and the conduct of worship.

The revival continued to thrive following its inception, with gatherings like the 1921 Presbytery attracting substantial audiences. Fresh forms of expressive dances and symbolic actions were introduced, further enhancing the spiritual experiences of participants. The revival of 1919 was characterised by profound spiritual intensity and a sense of communal worship that extended for days and nights. It represented a period of heightened religious fervour and devotion. The third wave of revival in Mizoram in 1919 constituted a transformative and spiritually intense epoch that engendered significant alterations in the religious and social landscape of the region. Physical

manifestations, a focus on the cross of Christ, the active participation of women, and the diffusion of revival across diverse villages and communities marked it. Despite encountering challenges and generating divisions within the Church, it left a lasting imprint on the faith and culture of the Mizos.

The fourth resurgence of the revival in Mizoram offers insight into its distinctive characteristics and the challenges encountered during this period. Like its predecessors, the fourth wave exhibited familiar features, including singing, preaching, prayer, and dancing, all accompanied by a palpable enthusiasm and fervour. However, the central theme of the revival became a point of contention, with some emphasising the role of the Holy Spirit while others focused on the significance of the cross. A noteworthy development during this phase was the emergence of what was termed '*Hlim Sang*' or '*Harhna Sang*,' characterised by intense spiritual experiences and behaviours that bore a semblance to states of intoxication. This phase strongly emphasised spiritual gifts, encompassing prayer-based healing, glossolalia (speaking in tongues), prophetic utterances, and trance-like states. Some revivalists even claimed direct communication with God and were known as '*Pa Pawl*' or 'The Father's Clique.'

The unusual occurrences and phenomena associated with the revival prompted government intervention. In 1935, Superintendent L.L. Peters issued Standing Order No. 29 to curb activities related to miraculous powers and supernatural claims. Disobedience to this order could result in fines, expulsion from villages, or even imprisonment. Subsequently, Standing Order No. 32 of 1935-1936 clarified the scope and purpose of these measures. The revival incident at Kelkang stands out as one of the most notable events during this wave. It featured various ecstatic experiences, prophecies, and predictions, including the belief that God would miraculously provide husked rice and the anticipation of the British Empire's collapse. These predictions disrupted normal village activities, leading to many children dropping out of school due to the perceived urgency of the situation. In response, under Superintendent McCall's leadership, the government employed force to quell the movement and punish its leaders. Intense spiritual experiences, charismatic practices, and fervent beliefs characterised the fourth wave of the Mizoram revival. However, it also faced

substantial challenges due to its disruptive nature, leading to government intervention to restore regional order and stability.

Amid this cultural tumult, a distinctive subaltern Christian identity began to coalesce. Rather than capitulating entirely to Western religious influences, the Mizo community exhibited notable ingenuity and fortitude. They acknowledged the imperative of harmonising their Christian faith with their indigenous identity, and this endeavour assumed a pivotal role in their trajectory.

The role of the drum, known as '*Khuang*,' in the cultural and religious history of the Mizo people in Mizoram constitutes a pivotal facet of their identity and religious customs. Traditionally, the drum, or *Khuang*, occupied a central position within Mizo society. It found application during festivals, social gatherings, and traditional Mizo dances, often accompanied by the consumption of *zu*, a traditional alcoholic beverage. Essentially, drumming, singing, dancing, and consuming *zu* were interrelated components of Mizo cultural expressions. However, with the introduction of Christianity to Mizoram, early Mizo Christians refrained from employing drums in their worship. The drum was perceived as emblematic of traditional culture and entertainment, and the missionaries did not advocate its use. It was believed that drumming necessitated singing, which, in turn, entailed dancing—all of which were associated with the consumption of *zu*.

Consequently, the Church initially prohibited the inclusion of drums in worship and within church premises. This prohibition stemmed from the desire to disentangle Christianity from its traditional associations and create a distinct Christian identity. Despite the Church's disapproval, the revivalists, especially during the third wave of revival in 1919, began incorporating drums into their revival meetings. Over time, this practice extended to church services, even without official endorsement from the Church or missionaries. Drums became an enduring tradition, particularly during the third wave of revival. Specific individuals and incidents played a role in the reintroduction of the drum. For instance, a man named Hmara in Hmunulh village employed a small drum to accompany his singing, setting a precedent for others. In Thingkhuang village, the leader Euva introduced the drum on the third day of the

revival, solidifying its integral role in the movement. This practice was disseminated to other regions, with the permanent use of drums inside the Church becoming commonplace.

Nevertheless, the reintroduction of the drum faced opposition from within the Church itself. Some church members were deeply disconcerted by the utilisation of the drum in religious practices, deeming it incongruent with their Christian faith. Khumhnawla, a devout Christian, vehemently disagreed with and was troubled by this practice. Despite internal opposition, the revivalists remained resolute in incorporating the drum into church worship. They argued that the drum's prior associations with non-Christian activities should not obstruct its use in worship, thus sparking a debate within the Church regarding the appropriateness of the drum in Christian worship. Integrating the drum into Christian worship in Mizoram represented a significant cultural and religious development. It encountered resistance due to its traditional connotations but eventually became an indispensable element of Mizoram's Christian worship practices, particularly during revival movements. This adaptation mirrors the intricate dynamics of cultural evolution and religious transformation within the region.

One of the most noteworthy manifestations of this burgeoning identity is the inception of '*Lengkhawm Zai*.' These songs, crafted by the Mizo community, skilfully intertwine traditional melodies with Western musical elements. This innovative fusion facilitated the expression of their Christian faith while concurrently reaffirming their cultural legacy. *Lengkhawm Zai* embodies cultural resilience and agency—a medium through which the subaltern populace could assert their distinct identity while adapting to external influences. The subaltern perspective accentuates how these songs evolved into a potent tool for the Mizo people to rekindle their sense of identity. It served as a conduit through which the Mizo community reclaimed their voice and accentuated their unique identity. Despite the prohibition on traditional songs, they engineered a novel musical tradition that bridged the chasm between their cultural heritage and their Christian presence.

The emergence of parody songs, referred to as '*Kaihlek hla*,' is another illustrative instance of the subaltern community's creative response. These songs

represent a form of resistance against the oppressive elements of Western Christianity, offering a means through which the Mizo community can satirise and critique the prevailing culture and religion. *Kaihlek hla* underscores the profound interconnection between cultural identity and song. In a society where traditional songs were prohibited, these parody songs functioned as a tool for subverting the dominant authority that aimed to stifle their cultural expression. From a subaltern perspective, it becomes evident that songs were not merely a source of entertainment but also a vehicle for resistance—an avenue through which the Mizo community could assert their viewpoint and underscore their agency in shaping their religious and cultural identity.

The research further delves into the intricate process through which the Mizo people effectively negotiated the complexities inherent in cultural encounters while preserving their autonomy over their cultural heritage. '*Ramthar Zai*,' was a song that offers a compelling illustration of the Mizo community's adeptness in navigating such cultural intersections. In this context, the subaltern perspective accentuates how *Ramthar Zai* reflects the ever-evolving nature of cultural identity. These songs stand as a testament to the Mizo people's capacity to reinterpret religious practices while upholding their cultural identity and retaining control over their heritage. *Ramthar Zai* underscores the idea that cultural encounters need not culminate in obliterating one's culture; instead, they can reinvigorate cultural expressions.

The song crafted by the *Thiangzau* community is a poignant exemplar of their subaltern perspective within the larger Mizo community. By composing this song to critique the women's department of the Church for collecting rice as part of fundraising efforts, they actively engage in cultural resistance and reclamation. Through this action, the *Thiangzau* community demonstrates their 'agency' in reshaping religious practices and aligning them with traditional values and beliefs.

This cultural dynamism exhibited by the *Thiangzau* community is emblematic of a broader phenomenon wherein subaltern groups reinterpret and adapt religious and cultural traditions to assert their unique identity. In doing so, they challenge dominant narratives and assert their viewpoint, accentuating their resilience in navigating the

intricacies of cultural encounters. The *Thiangzau's* song is a testament to their capacity to maintain autonomy over their heritage, even within the confines of a religious institution. It underscores the crucial significance of recognising and valuing subaltern voices and perspectives within any cultural or religious context.

The subaltern perspective on colonial education in the Mizo context unveils a structure crafted not to empower and enlighten the local populace but to reinforce colonial dominance. Intentional limitations on the breadth of education, combined with resistance from the subaltern, depict a marginalised community contending with an imposed educational framework that prioritises the interests of the colonisers over facilitating the comprehensive development of the Mizo people.

APPENDIX – A

1. Modern Map Of Mizoram.

Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Mizoram

2. Images.

Figure 2.1: Zawlbuk or A bachelors' dormitory.

Source: www.gutenberg.org

Figure 4.1: Image of Thankunga

Source: BCM Archive, Serkawn, Lunglei.

Figure 4.2: Image of Darmaka, chief of Pukpui.

Source: AG McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute, 2015.

Figure. 4.3: Early Christians from South Lushai Hills forced to migrat to Sethlun due to the persecution of Chief Darmaka of Pukpui.

Source: BCM Archive, Serkawn, Lunglei.

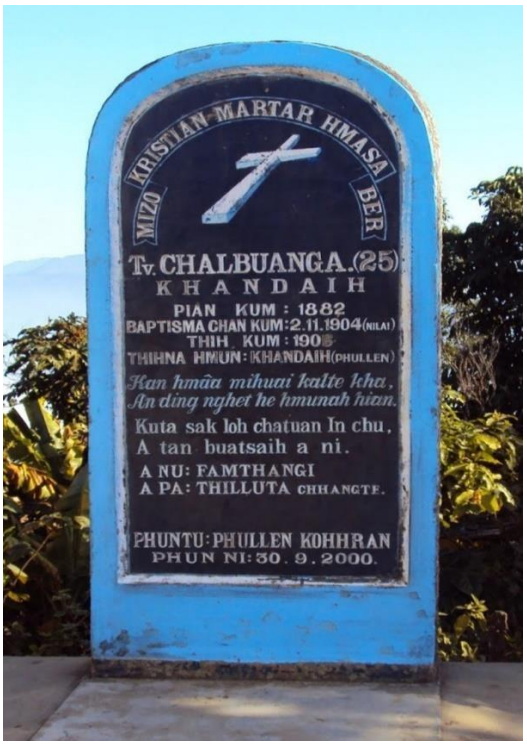

Figure. 4.4: Image of Chalbuanga Tombstone.

Source: phullenkohhran.wordpress.com

Figure 5.1: Rev F.W Savidge and Rev Challiana are sitting with the student boys inside the hostel.

Source: BCM Archive, Serkawn, Lunglei.

APPENDIX – B

The following table presents data illustrating the quantity of individuals who availed themselves of medical treatment at the dispensary during different years: -

Year	Number of People
1904	1500
1905	1560
1906	2760
1907	4188
1909	4000
1910	5000
1911	4695
1912	5427
1913	4146
1914	5486
1915	7314
1916	7434
1917	6845
1918	5331
1919	9176

Source: K Lalrinthanga and J Lalduhawma, eds, 'BCM Mission Compendium: 1939-2014,' Serkawn: BCM Publication Board,2014.

APPENDIX- C

The table presents the names of the seven men and their children who relocated to Sethlun.

Sl No	Name	Children	Grand children
1	Rochawnghluta	1. Zothanga 2. Thangchhingpuii 3. Thangsavungi	Chawnglali
2	Khawtinthanga	Thankunga	Buchhawna
3	Thangngaia	Hmingdailova	Sainghinga
4	Hrangpawla	Thangchhinga	
5	Hluneka	4. Lawngvara 5. Lianchama 6. Khumtira	
6	Zotawna	Lianhawla	
7	Sanhleia	Talhhulha	

Source: Upa Lalrinchhunga, *Pukpui Khawtlang Leh Kohhran Chanchin*, Lunglei: Baptist church of Mizoram Pukpui, 199

APPENDIX- D

No. 11 of 1936-1937

Office of the Superintendent, Lushai Hills,

Order for proclamation of drum by Circle Interpreters concerned.

(a) Within 5 miles radius of Aijal anyone found in possession of distilled zu on his person or in his house or of any apparatus used for distilling will be prosecuted and severely dealt with.

(b) The practice of conveying ordinary Zu from one village to another anywhere within the 5 miles radius of Aijal for any purpose whatsoever is prohibited and contravention of this punishable – except in the case of one bottle for personal consumption only.

(c) The owner of the house in which any breach of the peace arises as a result of drunken brawls will be held personally liable and chiefs who have permitted such a state of affairs without taking steps to holds the party concerned responsible will themselves be held to be liable.

This area is an artificially populated one with a concentrated population and the above orders are passed for the purpose of preserving the general peace of the community and to emphasize the need for temperance and moderation. The Lushai would dislike being called uncivilized. In all civilized countries drunkenness causing a breach of the peace and nuisance, not drinking of alcohol, is an offence punishable with jail.

D/17th Sebtember/1936

sd. A.G. McCall,
Superintendent, Lushai hills.

APPENDIX – E

Letter To The Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, Through the Assistant Superintendent I & II

Dated Aijal, the 22-11-1937

From – Neihhrima, Lushai Cerk
To – The Superintendent Of The Lushai Hills,

With reference to your remarks on the report of the Lushai Clerk. Zawlbuk at Thakthing. The Thakthing Panchayat beg to express their opinions on the matter as follows: -

(1) The Zawlbuk is not required at Aijal for the following reasons

(a) Zawlbuk is meant as a sleeping place for young – men or bachelors. There was no guardian whatever because in former time un-married young men would not sleep in their own houses but would sleep in other people's houses – in which there was a very possibility of causing moubles with the owners of the houses. The Zawlbuk system has been introduced for housing bachelors together at night. Zawlbuk is considered to be a place where anyone thinks himself free to talk and say and do as he like as it will be cleared in the Lushai old saying "zawlbu thu mai", which shows that Zawlbuk is not a place where important matters are spoken about thought over. Some people are always apt to speak any bad words and do bad things which have a tendency to spoil the character and morals of the young people.

(b) In Aijal there has not been a Zawlbuk for a long past – the young men have been accustomed and preferred to sleep in their own houses which their parents also like better rather than their sleeping in other men's houses for they can looked over them better and the youngmen themselves are more useful to them in the moing etc. so there is no need of having Zawlbuk here.

(c) As regards disciplines children and young people, there are schools where they are better disciplined than in Zawlbuk as result of this it is clearly found that the young men of Aijal may be said to have more " Tlawm-ngaih-na" than any village youngmen in the District who are having Zawlbuk in the village.

Whenever such occasions carrying the sick and the dead and digging graves arise the Aijal Tlangval gather together much quicker than the village Tlangval round about.

As all young boys who are generally liable to supply fire woods for Zawlbuk are attending schools and cannot make time collecting fire woods for Zawlbuk at the same time fire woods are very scarce and it is almost impossible for boys to gather fire woods.

(d) Having Zawlbuk is found to be very unsanitary because young-men who are sleeping in it as a rule carelessly passes water in the hearth of it and near it by night and in the morning also domestic animals are sleeping under its floor and thereby fouling the ground and place.

APPENDIX – F

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM, No. 45 – C.G.T., DATED THE 17TH (RECEIVED 22ND) AUGUST 1911.

Forwarding for consideration and approval of the Government of India to draft notification in connection with the removal of Dr. Fraser, a medical missionary from the Lushai Hills.

(1) From the further report now received from the Government of Eastern Bengal it will be seen that Dr. Fraser has refused to sign the undertaking suggested by the Directors of the Mission and has merely given an oral promise "that in all matters affecting the mission or the Government he would to the utmost of his ability act in conjunction with the District Committee." The Lieutenant–Governor, however, states that he cannot consider such a promise to be sufficient as Dr Fraser, to judge from his previous actions, would probably find that his conscience precluded him from conforming to the wishes of the Committee when his views differed from theirs.

(2) The Superintendent of the Lushai Hills reports that Dr. Fraser's action is causing unrest and excitement and that, though he has not himself been prominent lately, his teachings are gathering force and the people are now divided. In the Lieutenant – Governor's opinion is avery real danger that a rising may take place, if Dr. Fraser mischievous activities are not restrained, and the gravity of the position is indicated by the fact that the local officers are unwilling to spare more that than 1000 men from the military police battalion for the Abor expedition. The Lieutenant-Governor does not desire to take immediate action if it can be avoided, but will wait, unless unforeseen complications occur, for the Directors final decision.

(3) In the absence of any specific provisions of the law the Local Government consider that the only possible course would be to instruct the

Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, as District Magistrate, if he finds it essential for the preservation of the public peace, to remove Dr. Fraser and his family from the Lushai hills, but Sir Lancelot Hare is advised that Dr Fraser might then prosecute the Superintendent under section 341 of the Indian Penal Code. As the Criminal Procedure Code is not force, action cannot also be taken under section 144, and it is doubtful if a prosecution under section 188 of the Indian Penal Code would stand.

The Lieutenant – Governor therefore considers that such power as exists in some other frontier tracts to remove such person should be obtained and legalised, and he has accordingly submitted for consideration, two draft notifications extending section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code and certain sections of the Chin Hills Regulation to those areas.

(4) In the Peculiar circumstances of the case it seems desirable that special power should be obtained, but Legislative Department may be asked, in the first instance, kindly to advise us on the case.

T.W., - 31-8-1911.

We may ask the Legislative Deparment kindly to examine the notifications, and say if in their opinion they are adequate to meet the difficulties of the present case.

The Lieutenant- Governor asks for early sanction.

E.H.S. CLARKE, - 31-8-1911.

A.H. McMahon, - 31-8-1911.

APPENDIX – G

Serial No. 9. **--LETTER FROM THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM, NO. 980-A. P.—POL-313, DATED SHILLONG, THE 27TH FEBRUARY 1923.**

SUBJECT: --*Proposed gradual abolition of the "bawi" custom in the Lushai Hills.*

I am directed to refer to the correspondence ending with my letter No. Pol,-2056—3640-A. P., - dated the 22nd December 1922.

2. It will be remembered that the following measures were proposed in the assam administration's letter No. 5028-P., - dated the 23rd June 1915 :--

(i) A date should be fixed after which the "bawi" contract could not be entered into.

(ii) It should be notified that Government would ay to the chief the customary ransom (Rs. 40) in the event of any "bawi" coming forward and asking to be declared free.

(iii) Government should recover from persons in whose behalf ransoms were paid such portion of the money paid as it could reasonably recover.

(iv) Persons so released would be at liberty to leave the chief's house or to remained in it as they wished, provided that if the chief did not desire to maintain them in their houses they would have to leave, and government would have to make arrangements for their relief.

(v) It should be explained to the chiefs that they would have the same rights as other Lushais to bring suits in the ordinary way for the recovery of the maintenance charges of any persons whom they might support in their houses.

3. In paragraph 12 of the same letter it was reported that the Chief Commissioner was ordering an informal census of "bawis" to be undertaken. This operation was later postponed until after the war since there was some apprehension

that it might conceivably give rise to trouble amongst the Lushais. The census has now been completed by Mr. W. L. Scott, I.O.S., Superintendent of the Lushai Hills. The number of families of in-dwelling "bawis" recorded is 316, comprising 476 "bawis", of whom 119 are males, between the ages of 16 and 60, and 357 are women and children. As regards out-dwelling "bawis" the number of houses is 1,110 and the number of head of families or youngest sons is 1,123, of whom 1,061 are between the ages of 16 and 60. The total number of families or houses is thus 1,426, but the peculiar custom with regard to "bawis" prevalent amongs the Chins and Lakhers in one area of the Lungleh Sub-division will make it necessary in that area to pay the redemption price in respect of individuals and not, as in the remainder of the district, in respect of families. Consequently the total number of cases in which the redemption price will be necessary is 1,626. The figures are only approximate, but are sufficiently accurate to justify an estimate that the initial expenditure in redeeming all the "bawis" in the district will be about Rs. 65,000. It is impossible to estimate the recurring expenditure which might have to be incurred on account of the maintenance of such paupers as the chief may decline longer to support until it is known how the proposed measures will be received by the chiefs and people.

4. In regard to the question of taking further action the Government of India are aware the Government of Assam have been compelled to submit a deficit budget to their Legislative Council in spite of retrenchment and of the omission of provision of many schemes which are much more urgently than this reform in the Lushai Hills. In the circumstances the Government of Assam do not feel justified in asking the Council to make provision for this scheme, and if its immediate execution is desired they are compelled to ask the Government of India to finance it.

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ABSTRACT

CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN COLONIAL MIZORAM

AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

HOSANA LALENVELA KHIANGTE

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CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN COLONIAL MIZORAM

BY

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Submitted

In partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of

Philosophy in History of Mizoram University, Aizawl

I INTRODUCTION

During the colonial era, Mizoram experienced a complex history characterized by resistance, adaptation, and cultural negotiation. These narrative challenges dominant historical discourses by highlighting the 'agency' of the Mizos, who faced the dual challenges of British colonialism and the introduction of Christianity. Within this context, the Mizos exhibited various forms of resistance and adaptation.

There were two tiers of subalterns in Mizoram: those who vehemently opposed British colonialism and Christianity, resorting to both violent and discreet forms of resistance, and those within the Christian community who resisted the dominance of Western norms while integrating their own cultural traditions. Everyday resistance was expressed through subtle strategies such as nicknames, allowing the Mizos to express discontent without overtly challenging authority.

The clash between traditional Mizo customs and Christianity led to religious persecution, social ostracism, economic coercion, and political opposition. However, the Mizos also found innovative ways to assert their spiritual identity, such as reintroducing traditional drums and creating culturally nuanced hymns. This narrative explores the subtleties of cultural negotiation and resilience, highlighting the Mizos' ability to navigate colonial encounters and religious transformations while maintaining their heritage.

The clash between traditional Mizo customs and Christianity highlights multifaceted resistance forms, including religious persecution, social ostracism, economic coercion, and political opposition. The religious landscape took centre stage with the emergence of revival movements, marking significant turning points where Mizos asserted their spiritual identity amidst challenges and government interventions.

Innovative responses include reintroducing traditional drums into Christian worship and creating culturally nuanced hymns like '*Lengkhawm Zai*.' These adaptations exemplify powerful forms of resistance, showcasing Mizos' ability to negotiate identity amidst cultural and religious transformations.

Beyond overt struggles, the narrative delves into subtleties of cultural negotiation, resilience, and 'agency'. From the ban on traditional songs to the emergence of parody songs, the Mizos demonstrate a dynamic subaltern perspective that shapes their cultural and religious landscape.

The narrative is a testament to Mizos' cultural resilience, showcasing how they navigated colonial encounters and religious transformations while retaining autonomy over their heritage. The voices of the subaltern resound, inviting a re-examination of Mizoram's history and appreciation for the intricate dance of resistance and adaptation that defined this pivotal period.

II RESISTANCE

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, resistance is 'dislike of or opposition to a plan, an idea, etc; refusal to obey and the act of using force to oppose something.' "Resistance" is a relatively under-research field of social science. Depending on the definition of "power", different types of activities will count as resistance. According to Vinthagen, "Within resistance studies, there exists a plurality of concepts and definitions of resistance incorporating, e.g. 'disguised resistance', 'critical resistance, 'off-kilter resistance' or 'civil resistance'. Within other somewhat overlapping fields, such as social movement studies, terrorism studies or subaltern studies, suggestions of other concepts with different but similar connotations, e.g.' contention', 'protest', 'power struggle', 'revolution', or 'mimicry', exist. Scholars have used the term resistance to describe various actions and behaviours at all levels of human social life, such as individual, collective, and institutional, and in several different settings, including political systems, entertainment and literature, and the workplace. Indeed, everything from revolutions to hairstyles has been described as resistance. Resistance is defined variously as acting autonomously, in one's own interest, or in an active effort to oppose, fight, and refuse to cooperate.

According to James C. Scott, "resistance includes any act(s) by member(s) of a subordinate class that is or are intended either to mitigate or deny claims-(for example, rents, taxes, prestige) made on that class by super-ordinate classes (for example, landlords, large farmers, the state) or to advance its own claims (for example,

work, land, charity, respect) *vis-a-vis* those super-ordinate classes." Thus, all the definitions of resistance are intrinsically intertwined; it can be said that resistance is anything opposed to its adversary, whether active or passive, military or unarmed, physical or mental, overt or covert and between dominant and oppressed.

According to S.L. Doshi and P.C. Jain, "Culture has originated from the Latin word *colere*, which means "to cultivate". In social anthropology, the word 'culture' means "knowledge," that is, knowledge about those aspects of humanity which are not natural, but which are related to that which is required. In other words, culture refers to "those abilities, notions, and forms of behaviour which a person acquires as members of society."

III CULTURAL RESISTANCE

Cultural resistance is using culture 'consciously or unconsciously, effectively or not, to resist and/or change the dominant political economic and/or social structure.' According to Eben Barnard, "Cultural resistance has been seen to be a slippery and flexible concept, easily characterised as rebellious deviance or emancipator struggle depending on the observer's ideology. Examples of cultural resistance are ubiquitous yet may go unnoticed because the resistors may not consciously define their actions." Literature, arts, traditional practices, etc, operate as a medium through which cultural resistance is performed in a pacifist way. Cultural resistance enables us to present ourselves as individuals and as a community in the face of an ever-growing oppositional force. Thus, cultural resistance has multiple functionalities and gives us spaces through which we can simultaneously engage in our individuality and community, hence offering room for inclusive personal and communal growth.

Cultural resistance is using meanings and symbols, that is, culture, to contest and combat a dominant power, often constructing a different world vision. According to K.N. Panikar, 'The rejection or destruction of indigenous culture was not the only mode colonialism adopted in its cultural quest. An attempt to establish identity with the colonised through the appropriation of indigenous cultural practices and the imputation of new meaning to them were equally a part of the colonial cultural engagement.' Therefore, cultural resistance can be stated as a conflict between the

forces of dominance and the indigenous forces in the form of arts and traditional practices.

Mizoram, erstwhile Lushai Hills, was colonised in the last decade of the 19th century, and the onset of colonial governance in this remote corner of India witnessed scores of armed resistances, which, however, was subdued by the British. The colonial rule in Mizoram was indirect, whereby the traditional power structure dominated by the Mizos Chiefs was allowed to continue with modifications and alternations wherever some aspects of it contradicted the colonial conception of power and authority.

The establishment of colonial rule was immediately followed by the arrival of Christian missionaries who had explicitly or implicitly complemented the colonial "civilising mission" by establishing churches and schools to win converts.

After Christianity was practised for over a decade, when people were converted, a series of Christian religious revivals occurred for the Mizo Christians in 1906, 1913, and 1919. The 1919 revival was a watershed in Mizo Christianity as it sought to negotiate Christianity with the elements of Mizo indigenous cultural practices. During these times, indigenous folk songs, which were perceived by both the Christian missionaries and Mizo Christian converts as having connections with their pre-Christian culture of heathenism and hedonistic aspirations, were prohibited from being sung and listened to. In the initial years of conversion to Christianity, the newly acquired Western singing tune, known as 'solfa zai' or tonic solfa, was prescribed as the only valid form of worship singing in the Church. However, due to repeated Christian revivals, a host of new Mizo Christian songs, called *lengkhawm zai*, which had an affinity with the traditional Mizo tunes, soon emerged.[1] These new songs

[1] R.L Thanmawia, (ed.), '*Harhna in A Hrin Hla Leh A Phuahtute' on Harhna: Mizoram Revival Centenary Souvenir (1906-2006)*, (Aizawl: Synod Revival Committee, 2006), 579-581 ─ *Lengkhawm zai* is a Mizo traditional manner of singing. Wen the third revival occurred in 1919 the indigenous way, rather than the western tunes of solfa, it awakens the people's sentiment by using drums, dance and soft tunes. When they gathered to worship, they often said, *'a Lengkhawm zaiin'* which means' in a traditional way', later they used *'khuang hnihin'* which means using two drums. When they practiced *Lengkhawm zai*, indigenous writers such as Patea, R.L.Kamlala, C.Z. Huala

were much more appealing and endearing to the Mizo Christians as these songs are far more effective in evoking the emotional and cultural fabric of the Mizos. Yet, the missionaries and early Mizo Christian converts opposed this development because these songs were no different from the traditional songs, at least in terms of tune and the accompanying instruments such as drums and gongs, which eventually led to the rise of contestation between Western-influenced Mizo Christians and the Mizos who hold fast to their traditional culture.

IV REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

For this research, a curated collection of literature has been examined. The objective is to grasp the underlying concepts and methodological considerations associated with investigating the cultural resistance exhibited by the Mizos against colonial influences. The historical narrative of Mizoram reveals a compelling tale of cultural resilience and resistance against colonial forces. This literature review delves into key works illuminating the intricate dynamics of Mizos' resistance to British colonialism. It offers a nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural fabric that shaped their struggle.

Zalen Nana British Do by Dr Lalthanliana, published in 2000 by Mizoram Board Publication, shows how the Mizo chiefs resisted the British. The policy of conciliation on the Lushai hills is noticeable. The author divides the British military expeditions in Mizoram into four — the expedition of 1869, The Lushai Expedition 1871-1872, the expedition of 1888- 1889 and The Chin-Lushai Expedition (1889-90). The later three of these four invasions experienced British penetration from north, west and south, and the Mizo chiefs resisted. The author mentions that the southern chiefs made weak resistance. Besides, it also says the works and designations of the British officers during those times are written. This book highlights a negotiation between the Mizo Chiefs and the British before their invasion. Mizo cultural resistance to British

began to write the songs. This Lengkhawm Zai degraded the western tunes of solfa and promoted the Mizo culture in Christianity and is practiced till date.

colonialism is not systematically highlighted, and insufficient information on the southern part is given.

Suhas Chatterjee's *Mizoram under The British Rule,* published by Mittal Publications in 1985, mentions that the Mizo people were officially recorded as *Kuki* until the expedition of 1871-1872, which was changed to *Lushai*. The writer mainly based his sources on official British documents, and no inquiry was made in Mizoram. The book contains the first contact of Mizo with the British up to the times of the Christian missionaries, including the British policy of conciliation and forward policy, the British expedition to the Lushai and the consolidation of the British rule and the problems faced by the British. At the same time, there is no case study and all topics are written briefly. The issues faced by the Mizos against the British are insufficiently provided, and the resistance made by the chiefs was mostly the armed resistance. How exactly did they resist, and what forms of resistance were not written in this book? Thus, it seems that the book is only about a study of the work of the British in Mizoram.

The Lushai Expedition 1871-1872 by R.G. Woothrope is the writer's personal observation during the expedition. The contact between the Mizo Chiefs and the British, including the policy of conciliation, and the principal characteristics of the three different tribes of the hill Lushai, Paihte or Sokte and Pawi, along with their dress and physical appearance, are contained in the book. It throws light on the Mizo culture during those times and the use of tobacco; *'Men, women and children, from the age at which they can hold a pipe, smoke almost incessantly'*. The author does not mention any form of resistance; it instead glorifies the supremacy of British power. The work mainly focuses on the northern part of Mizoram, and no kinds of resistance are mentioned.

A Fly on the Wheel or How I Helped to Govern India by Thomas Herbert Lewin mainly deals with the Lushai Expedition of 1871-1872. It gives us detailed information on the expedition from the southern column. The author spoke the native vocabulary and was regarded as the Lushai's friend. During the expedition, the author was deputed as a Political Officer in subordination to the General commanding the

southern column. The book contains the friendship between the author and the southern Mizo chief, Rothangpuia. Rothangpuia even assisted Lewin during the expedition. Different armed attacks by the British are mentioned in the book. The treaty made between the two parties is mentioned, and how Lewin swore an oath of the treaty is provided in the book. He established a permanent post at Demagree (present name Tlabung) and taught them how to use ploughs and cattle and to have permanent cultivating lands so that they could abandon the *jhum* cultivation. Though the Expedition of 1871-1872 did not colonise the Lushai Hill, the expedition made by the British from the southern column and the resistance made by the southern Mizo chiefs is clearly shown in this book.

Mizo Culture by Mangkhosat Kipgen, published in 1996 by The Mizo Theological Conference, deals with the generic name and the origin of the Zos, tracing their migration from plain Burma to Chin Hills and how they settled in Lushai Hills. The author writes about their settlement in Selesih and the feuds among the intra-clan, including their surrounding religious communities and their influence on the Mizo belief system. In socio-culture, the author includes how they came to have chiefs and their elders. The cultural institution known as *Zawlbuk* and its functions and the economic system of jhum cultivation are also mentioned. The writer also describes the customary laws and practices, folk songs and folk tales. In religion, the beliefs and practices of the Mizo, how they performed their rituals with a sacrificial system, and the function of *Bawlpu* and *Sadawt* are also noticeable. The book contains the advent of the British, how the hill came to be colonised, and how colonialism changed the administration of the Mizo society with the introduction of circle interpreters and the abolition of the *zawlbuk* and *bawi* system. Colonialism brought a new religion, Christianity, which changed Mizo culture.

Christianity and Subaltern Culture by Vanlalchhuanawma, published in 2006 by The Rev. Ashish Amos of the Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, deals with the pre-colonial Mizo social culture and the conquest of Mizoram by the British until the arrival of the Christian Missionaries. It also deals with Christianity in Mizoram before the revival movement and how the Mizos reacted to Christianity. The book contains the beginning of the revival movement and how it developed into an

instrument of indigenisation. The author mentions the most remarkable revival, how the cultural elements were initiated in the Church, and when the contestations of the Western and indigenous cultures were at a high point, which led to the emergence of new denomination churches. The book describes the decline of the remaining cultural institution, i.e. *Zawlbuk*, and the appearance of more ecstatic forms of indigenous Christian revival, *viz hlimna sang or high revival* and more westernised forms of religious awakening. *Pianthar harhna or new-birth revival*. The author mentions the setback in developing indigenous forms of revival, concentrating on why and how the government interfered in the revival and how the official Church issued the Revival Guide or *Harhna hruaina*.

Lushai Chrysalis by Major A.G. McCall mentions that the Lushais belong to the Tibeto-Burman group, and the origin of the Lushai clan is provided. The book contains the contact of the Mizo and British subjects up till the Chin-Lushai Expedition. The author mentions the rituals and practices of the traditional Mizo beliefs until the arrival of the Christian missionaries and the society up to the colonial period. The book mainly deals with the culture of the people.

Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance by James C. Scott, published by Yale University Press in 1985, examines the effects of the Green Revolution on the Mudha irrigation project in Kedah, a state in Malaysia. The book focuses on the class conflict between the "bourgeoisie" and the "proletariats". It examines the agriculture and economy, the social organisation and the value system that engendered tension in the land. The book describes how the green revolution creates class consciousness by shedding the old order of things. The author has exposed that the double-cropping system is a kind of capitalism that allows only the elite to prosper. The system has brought inequality, creating a binary class structure. Before the double cropping system, the poor, even though they are poor, were always self-sufficient, but with the new system, they have been marginalised. Though the old structure of things hinders the rich, they are in almost complete control of things. Theoretically, the book deals with the 'why' of things. Why not fight, revolt, and subvert the economic and social structure that keeps or makes them poor? In doing so, Scott's main idea is not the obvious, that of "false consciousness," which argues that

the poor's ignorance prevents them from reacting to the change in paradigm. Instead, Scott argues that the poor of Kedah know precisely what is happening to them, why it is happening to them and how it is happening to them. But their procrastination, or rather simply their inaction, is due to their knowledge of the impossible obstacles they would have to overcome if they ever revolted. So, according to Scott, the poor peasants, instead of taking up arms or any sort of reaction, relied on anything they could to support themselves and hang on to the old ways of things that were slowly waning.

Roger Neil Rasnake's *Domination and Cultural Resistance* examines the social life of the *Yura,* a Quechua-speaking Andean ethnic group who live in dispersed residence patterns and farm maise in dry river valleys in southern Bolivia. Rasnake also focuses on how the indigenous authorities, the "*kuraqkuna"* or elders, have played a central role in constructing and perpetuating the Yura group and creating solidity against any possible destructive forces. Combining ethnohistorical research with contemporary fieldwork, Roger Neil Rasnake traces the evolution of leadership roles within the changing composition of the native Andean social groupings, the "ayllus"-- from the consolidation of pre-Hispanic Aymara polities, through the pressures of the Spanish colonial regime and the increasing fragmentation of the republican era, to the present.

Rasnake's interpretation and description of the *Yura* festivals are pretty interesting. The *Kuraqkuna* are the ones who represent the ayllus in festival events, and according to Rasnake, this creates a constitution and reconstitution of the ethnic identity of the people. He gives insight into how the Yura peasants and the rotating system of Kurakuna conceptualise group identities and unities while trying to soothe the Andean spirits and the non-Yura vecinos whose power must be ignored. Finally, the book also examines the "meaning-world" of the Yura authorities and elaborates on how the *Kuraqkuna* relate in ritual to their fellows and how they perceive the supernatural world, for which they act as essential mediators.

It is a widespread understanding that anthropologists always try to keep tribals or indigenous people as museum pieces. However, the book *Subalterns and*

Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar by Nandini Sundar shows how misplaced this charge is, arguing that forested and hill areas like Bastar have never been outside the "mainstream" of history and that the flattening out of local politics to create the appearance of isolation and homogeneity is essentially a product of colonialism and post-colonialism. The choice today, as in the past, has never been one between "tradition" and "modern civilisation" or between "development" and "backwardness" but over alternative visions of democracy.

By exploring the expansion of the colonial and post-colonial state in Bastar, Madhya Pradesh, and popular resistance to it, this book has been part of redefining how history and anthropology think of tribal India.

Black Skin, White Masks by Frantz Fanon published in 1952, explores the psychological and social implications of colonialism and racism. In the book, Fanon delves into the experiences of Black individuals living in a white-dominated world, examining the impact of colonialism on the psyche and identity of the colonized. He argues that the colonial system perpetuates a dehumanizing effect on the oppressed, leading to a sense of inferiority and internalized racism. The title itself, "Black Skin, White Masks," symbolizes the masks that individuals wear to conform to societal expectations and the struggle for authentic self-expression. Fanon's work is highly critical of the psychological effects of racism and colonialism, drawing on his experiences as a Black man from Martinique. He explores the dynamics of racial identity, the desire for recognition, and the internal conflicts faced by those caught in the crossfire of cultural oppression. One of the key concepts in the book is Fanon's idea of "double consciousness," where individuals of colonized backgrounds are forced to navigate both their own cultural identity and the imposed identity of the colonizer. He also discusses the role of language in reinforcing colonial power structures and the need for a revolutionary transformation of society. *Black Skin, White Masks* has had a profound influence on post-colonial studies, critical race theory, and discussions surrounding identity and liberation. Fanon's powerful and insightful analysis continues to resonate with scholars, activists, and readers interested in understanding the complexities of race, colonialism, and the quest for self-

determination. The book is considered a classic in the fields of philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies.

Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o published in 1986, is a collection of essays that critically examines the impact of colonialism on African literature and advocates for the decolonization of the mind through a linguistic revolution. Ngũgĩ begins by tracing the history of his own intellectual development, highlighting the profound influence of colonial education on his thinking and language choices. He explores how the imposition of European languages and cultural values during the colonial period led to a disconnection from African heritage and a loss of indigenous languages. The central argument of the book revolves around the idea that language is a crucial tool for shaping thought and worldview. Ngũgĩ contends that the continued use of European languages in African literature perpetuates a colonial mindset and reinforces the power dynamics established during the colonial era. He advocates for the adoption and promotion of African languages as a means of reclaiming cultural identity and fostering authentic self-expression. "Decolonising the Mind" also addresses the political dimensions of language, discussing how language plays a role in the broader struggles for independence and cultural autonomy. Ngũgĩ shares his experiences with political activism, imprisonment, and the consequences of challenging the linguistic status quo. The book is a powerful critique of the legacy of colonialism and a call to action for Africans to reclaim their linguistic and cultural heritage. Ngũgĩ argues that true decolonization requires a radical shift in language use and education, advocating for a cultural renaissance that embraces African languages in literature, education, and everyday communication. "Decolonising the Mind" has had a profound impact on post-colonial studies, African literature, and discussions about the relationship between language and power. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's work continues to be influential in academic circles and among those interested in the ongoing process of decolonization in various parts of the world.

The Wretched of the Earth by Frantz Fanon published in 1961, serves as an incisive and impassioned exploration of the impact of colonialism on societies, offering a profound psychoanalysis of decolonization movements globally. This

remarkable book, rooted in Fanon's own experiences of racism and colonial oppression in Martinique, emerges as a fervent call to arms, advocating for a violent, transformative response to dismantle the deeply ingrained structures of colonialism. At the core of Fanon's argument is a stark assertion that violence is not only an inevitable byproduct but a necessary means to combat a colonial system that was birthed and thrives through force. He contends that the very humanity of the colonized can be safeguarded and reclaimed only through forceful resistance. The book is, therefore, more than a mere critique; it is a manifesto for rebellion, challenging the dehumanizing narrative imposed by colonial powers. Fanon meticulously dissects the motives of the national bourgeoisie, exposing their self-interested pursuits and the perpetuation of colonial vestiges under the guise of post-colonial independence. His skepticism towards the elites within newly liberated societies becomes a recurring theme, as he argues that their aspirations for freedom may be tainted by the lingering influences of colonialism. Despite being penned during the height of colonialism, Fanon's insights reverberate through time, influencing liberation movements across continents. The review underscores the enduring relevance of his work by examining how economic, institutional, and psychological legacies of colonialism persist in the contemporary world.

Based on a vibrant combination of field and archival research, deployed in methodologically innovative ways, the book is divided into three parts: the first section portrays the pre-colonial economy and polity. It dispels notions of dominant history that see Bastar and other such places as untouched and isolated before colonialism, showing instead the degree of social and political fluidity in the region in the pre-colonial period. The second section provides accounts of both "major" and "minor" resistance to the colonising process. It throws light on the play of multiple histories, differently constructed and differently understood by the actors involved. The third section focuses on the contradictions faced by tribal society today and the processes of cultural redefinition engendered by these contradictions. The second edition includes an afterword that discusses contemporary issues concerning the formation of the state of Chhattisgarh.

The review of the selected literature for this research indicates that knowledge exists regarding cultural resistance in Mizoram. Therefore, the research amends the existing research gap.

V STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Even though colonial empires gradually began to collapse after World War II, their studies are still significant and relevant in the decades following it until the 21st century. Colonialism is critically seen not as an aberration but as a purposeful design intended to spread a hegemonic structure whereby one person ("whites") benefits from the exploitation and subjugation of another person ("non-white"). Colonialism is a form of systematic oppression and domination. If a particular group is politically disenfranchised within their own country, then that group may be an oppressed internal colony. If the group is economically exploited within the society, then the group represents the possibility of domestic colonisation. Minority groups often become culturally manipulated and commodified within their cultures through the market and the media, and this leads to domestic colonisation.[2]

Works of the colonial writers and the official documents are the primary available written sources. These writings were dominated by the colonial agenda of promoting the coloniser's superiority while emphasising the perceived shortcomings of the natives. For that reason, complete dependence on colonial sources might result in a biased understanding of the issue, and the literary work available presently will be far from the truth. Thus, a critical study of the colonial documents and writings is imperative.

Even many of the Mizos writers based their works on colonial sources. Colonial domination is so pervasive that even in the 21st century, many works on British colonialism in Mizoram by local authors simply reproduce the same colonial discourse without any critical evaluation. This colonial literature has not provided

[2] David L Brunsma, "Colonialism" in *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol2*, 2nd Edition, ed. William A. Darity (Detroit: Course Technology, 2008), 11.

enough information on Mizo's cultural resistance against British colonialism. Therefore, deeper examination in this area is necessary.

A fresh perspective is imperative to transcend the limitations imposed by the prevailing colonial narratives and offer a more comprehensive understanding of the historical dynamics in Mizoram. The existing discourse, heavily influenced by colonial sources and perspectives, tends to perpetuate an incomplete and biased portrayal of the impact of British colonialism on the region. A new perspective is needed to unveil obscured narratives, particularly those related to Mizo cultural resistance against colonial domination, which have been overshadowed or misrepresented in conventional accounts.

VI AREA OF STUDY

The study covers the history of colonial Mizoram, emphasising the history of resistance to colonial domination in the guise of Christianity. The study also focuses on the Mizo's reaction to the new Western religion, that is, Christianity, and its impact on the Mizo society as a whole and the emerging conflict of ideas between Western Christianity and the Mizos' traditional culture.

VII OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the thesis are:

- To explore the pre-colonial Mizo culture.
- To investigate the social-cultural changes in colonial Mizoram.
- To examine the process of cultural resistance and Christianity.
- To examine contestation between Western and Mizo traditional cultures within Christianity in Mizoram.

VIII METHODOLOGY

The primary sources for this study include oral sources and official records. Oral sources refer to interviews with individuals from the Mizo community who have in-dept knowledge of the historical resistance against colonialism. These interviews provide valuable insights and perspectives that are not found in written records. On the other hand, official records in the National Archives of India, Mizoram State Archives, and the Library of Deputy Commissioner's Office in Lunglei are profoundly important to present an accurate understanding of the colonial history of Mizoram. These records include government documents, correspondence, and reports that shed light on the historical events and actions taken by the Mizos during the colonial period.

Secondary sources for this study include literature and periodical journals. The researcher consults the Mizoram University Library, Mizoram State Library, and Lunglei District Library to access books, articles, and other publications related to Mizoram's history, cultural resistance, and colonialism. These sources provide a broader understanding of the existing scholarship and offer different perspectives and interpretations.

In addition to written sources, this study also incorporates other forms of cultural expression, such as novels, paintings, and folk songs. These forms of artistic expressions provide unique insights into the beliefs, values, and experiences of the Mizos during the colonial period. They also offer a more nuanced understanding of the cultural resistance against colonialism and complement the information obtained from archival and official documents.

Overall, this research employs qualitative method and approaches such as, post-colonial and subaltern approaches to elicit a comprehensive understanding of the colonial history of Mizoram and drawing on a variety of primary and secondary sources, as well as different forms of cultural expression, to gather data and analyse the historical narrative surrounding the Mizos and their role in cultural resistance against colonialism in Mizoram.

XI CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter One: Introduction.

This chapter deals with a brief introduction to the area of study, with a particular emphasis on outlining the overall structure of the thesis. Additionally, efforts are made to arrive at an understanding of the issue of cultural resistance.

Chapter Two: Pre-colonial Mizos culture.

The second chapter examines various aspects of pre-colonial Mizo culture. It covers topics such as the origin of chieftainship, the role of the chief and his administration, village officials, taxes, servitude or retainers in pre-colonial Mizo society, belief systems, festivals, economy, and specific cultural institutions and elements like Zawlbuk and Zu or a fermented beer.

Chapter Three: Socio-Cultural Changes in Colonial Mizoram.

This chapter sought to comprehend the socio-cultural transformations that occurred during the colonial rule in Mizoram. The chapter primarily endeavours to understand the changes brought about by British colonial rule, especially concerning key aspects such as administration, the shift in economy, the impact of Christianity, developments in education and healthcare, restrictions on Zu consumption, the decline of Zawlbuk, the abolition of servitude, as well as changes in music, dress, and clothing.

Chapter Four: Cultural Resistance to Colonialism.

This chapter examines the Mizo community's reception of the European Christian missionaries and the subsequent impact of Christianity on the cultural fabric of the Mizos. Special attention was given to the perception of the chiefs of Mizoram regarding this new religion and its social message. The chapter further delved into examining the counter-hegemonic processes among the Mizos. Here, in this chapter, the subalterns are the forces of traditionalism within Mizo Society which strongly oppose the spread of Christianity and there was also every effort made by them to revive the traditional cultural practices and performances.

Chapter Five: Contestation of Western Culture.

In this chapter, attempt is made to understand the nature and outcomes of the contestation between two cultures—Western and Mizo traditional cultures—within the context of Christianity in Mizoram. Furthermore, the chapter identifies another layer of subalternity, specifically the marginalised group within Mizo Christianity. This group comprises individuals who have steadfastly adhered to many traditional elements, despite facing opposition from both missionaries and educated Christians.

Chapter Six: Conclusion.

This chapter summarise the entire thesis and the significant findings of the research.

X Findings of the research work.

In colonial Mizoram, two tiers of subaltern groups are discernible. The first tier encompassed subaltern individuals who resolutely resisted both the British colonial government and Christianity. The second tier involves subalterns situated within the sphere of Mizo Christianity, seeking to integrate elements of their traditional cultural practices into Christianity. However, such endeavours were met with disapproval from missionaries and the church establishment at that point of time.

The exploration of Mizoram history reveals a unique way people resisted colonial rule. Discover how Mizos cleverly expressed their dissent through subtle strategies, like using nicknames, to navigate the complexities of power dynamics. As observed in the context of Mizoram, the practice of dissimulation constitutes a captivating manifestation of everyday resistance wherein individuals conceal their authentic feelings and intentions, assuming different guises. This nuanced strategy often entails veiling acts of resistance through subtle, indirect means, affording marginalised groups the means to convey their dissent without confronting dominant power structures. An integral facet of dissimulation in Mizoram involved the utilisation of nicknames as a symbolic means of resisting British colonial officers. Instead of overtly articulating their discontent, the Mizos assigned monikers that subtly conveyed their sentiments and perspectives. These nicknames frequently bore humorous or ironic connotations. For instance, '*Sahib Rawnga*,' signifying 'Cruel Sahib,' and 'Tauuara,' translating to 'Mr. Sulky serves as an illustrative example of this practice. Such nicknames enabled the Mizos to express their disapproval without directly challenging the authority of colonial figures. By ascribing these monikers, the Mizos discovered a means to critique colonial officers discreetly. They harnessed humour and linguistic play to articulate their discontent, imparting a sense of empowerment and psychological resilience. While these nicknames may not have been employed openly in the presence of colonial officials, they nonetheless represented a form of concealed resistance against their subjugation under colonial rule. The Mizos' practice of renaming colonial officers, as exemplified in the case of Major GH Loch, underscored their adaptability and willingness to adjust their tactics in response to evolving circumstances. Renaming an officer who protested the initial

nickname highlighted the Mizos' capacity to navigate power dynamics and adapt to changing situations. Dissimulation through nicknames serves as a testament to the Mizos' inventive subversion of colonial authority. It allowed them to retain a degree of 'agency' and express dissent while manoeuvring within the intricate power dynamics that constrained overt resistance. This practice is a prime example of how subaltern communities employ subtle strategies to articulate their discontent and resist oppression within the confines of their circumstances.

The early 20th century in the Lushai Hills region witnessed a profound cultural resurgence among the Mizos catalysed by the communal song *Puma Zai* or *Tlanglam Zai*. This cultural phenomenon, originating from the *Biate* tribe, played a pivotal role in shaping the socio-religious landscape of the area. The adoption and widespread popularity of Puma Zai among the Mizos posed a formidable challenge to Christian evangelism, as the fervour for these songs became deeply ingrained in the communal fabric of society. This resistance against Christianization was further manifested by creating satirical songs like *Chalmar Zai*, which humorously ridiculed Christian practices. The clash between Christianity and traditional Mizo customs extended to various facets of life, encompassing the prohibition of practices such as *Fano dawi* and *Kawngpui siam* and the regulation of courting rituals. The Church's influence over social matters, including divorce decisions, and its prohibition of traditional sports like *Se Chaih* exacerbated the tension between the two belief systems. Notably, the Church's efforts to suppress these traditional practices frequently led to physical confrontations and social upheaval. Ultimately, the decline of Puma Zai in the wake of the bamboo famine of 1912 marked the conclusion of this cultural phenomenon. Nevertheless, the resistance against Christianization endured, driven by concerns regarding the erosion of Mizo culture and the impact of Christianity on traditional practices. This historical account offers insights into the intricate interplay between religion, culture, and social change in the Lushai Hills during the early 20th century.

The introduction of Christianity, accompanied by Western culture and knowledge, clashed with the traditional culture and belief systems of the Mizos. This incongruity prompted many Mizos to resist and challenge the civilising mission imposed by colonial rule. Christianity encountered resistance within the traditional

Mizo society, reflecting broader questions of cultural identity. Mizos perceived the encroachment of Western religion and culture as a threat to their traditional way of life. Christian converts' adoption of new customs and practices raised concerns about preserving Mizo heritage. The conflicts surrounding the spread of Christianity also held political dimensions, as traditional chiefs saw the new religion as a challenge to their authority. This underscores the intricate interplay between religion and power in the region

Various forms of resistance against the spread of Christianity were employed by non-Christians in the Mizoram region. These forms of resistance can be categorised as follows:

Religious Persecution: Non-Christians frequently engaged in religious persecution as a means of resistance. This involved efforts to obstruct Christian practices and rituals, such as disrupting Christian worship services, forbidding the observance of Sunday as a day of rest and worship, and discouraging traditional community members from converting. In some cases, non-Christians resorted to violence and physical harm against Christian converts, ranging from verbal abuse and beatings to more severe forms of physical violence. These acts aimed to intimidate and punish converts and deter others from embracing Christianity.

Social Ostracism: Social ostracism was a powerful tool used to dissuade conversions to Christianity. Non-Christians would isolate and exclude Christian converts from various social and community activities. This could involve refusing to share meals or engaging in customary practices with Christians, significantly impacting the social lives of converts.

Economic Coercion: Economic coercion was another tactic employed against Christian converts. Non-Christians could impose economic penalties on those who converted, such as confiscating property, imposing fines, or denying access to communal resources—this economic pressure aimed to discourage individuals and families from embracing Christianity.

Political Opposition: Beyond religious differences, the conflict between Christianity and traditional Mizo society extended to a battle for authority. Traditional village chiefs perceived the new religion as a direct challenge to their power structures. Christian converts began to look up to church leaders and missionaries as their new leaders, eroding the authority of traditional chiefs. This shift in power dynamics added a political dimension to the conflict.

Refusal to Adopt New Customs: Non-Christians resisted the adoption of new customs and practices associated with Christianity, viewing practices like handshaking or wearing Western-style clothing as foreign and contrary to traditional Mizo customs. This refusal to adopt new customs was a way of expressing resistance to the changes brought by Christianity.

Expulsions of Christian Converts: Chiefs and non-Christians sometimes resorted to expelling Christian converts from the village as a form of persecution. This expulsion could occur under various pretexts, including rainy nights, and aimed to isolate and punish converts.

The clash between Christianity and traditional beliefs in Mizoram was a complex and multifaceted phenomenon shaped by the interplay of cultural, social, religious, and political factors. These methods of persecution and resistance illustrate the depth of the tensions and conflicts that emerged during this period.

The thesis also seek to understand the advent of Christianity and its consequent impact on Mizo Christians. The ascendancy of Christianity in the Lushai Hills was accompanied by the proscription of customary cultural rituals, encompassing the singing of indigenous songs. This phenomenon serves as an indicator of a power asymmetry, wherein the predominant Western Christian culture aimed at supplanting and stifling the indigenous Mizo cultural heritage. This paved the way for the emergence of a ‘cultural hegemony’ within Mizo society, characterised by the imposition of Western Christian practices upon the indigenous populace, thereby underscoring the pre-eminence of Western Christian ideology. However, a pivotal juncture materialised in 1919, with the advent of a revival that triggered a significant transformation. This marked the inception of a contestation between Western and

Mizo cultural values and practices within Christianity. This contestation may be interpreted as a manifestation of resistance by the subaltern population against the cultural dominion exercised by Western values and practices in Christianity.

The initial revival also underscores the pivotal role of revival movements as arenas of contention between Western and Mizo traditional cultures within Christianity. The journey undertaken by Mizo delegates to personally partake in the revival signifies their inclination to embrace and potentially incorporate elements of this Western religious movement. Simultaneously, it exposes their marginalised position within the broader Christian community. The narratives recounting the experiences of Mizo delegates during the revival gatherings accentuate the profound impact of spiritual encounters. The sudden emotional outbursts, glossolalia utterances, and physical manifestations of spirituality manifest 'agency' and empowerment for the subaltern population. This enables them to assert their religious identity and spiritual beliefs on their own terms. The research portrays the emergence of suspicion and resistance among certain Mizo Christians who had not directly encountered the revival. This apprehension can be interpreted as a manifestation of resistance against the perceived imposition of Western Christian customs and beliefs, suggesting that not all members of the subaltern community were inclined to embrace these changes unquestionably. Despite the prevalence of Western Christianity, the investigation highlights instances in which Mizo Christians ingeniously adapted and personalised their faith. The creation of a novel hymn by Thanga exemplifies their capacity to amalgamate facets of their traditional culture with the Christian faith, thereby crafting a distinct expression of their spirituality. The initial revival provides insights into the intricate dynamics of cultural and religious intersections between Western and Mizo cultural values and practices within Christianity in Mizoram. It delineates the experiences of the subaltern population in terms of transformation, resistance, and adaptation as they navigated the influences of Western culture and religion. Ultimately, this process contributed to the evolution of their unique Christian identity within the broader milieu of Christianity.

The second resurgence of revival in Mizoram further elucidates the dynamics of spiritual and cultural metamorphosis. The genesis of this revival in Hmunhmeltha,

a village established by Mr Sanga, illustrates how Christianity provided a sanctuary for persecuted Christians from neighbouring villages. This underscores Christianity's role in fostering and fortifying community bonds among the subaltern populace, affording them refuge and a sense of belonging. The narrative of Mr. Dara, who passed away on his way to the Church, accentuates the personal sacrifices made by individuals within the subaltern community. Despite their arduous living conditions, their unwavering devotion and spiritual encounters, which encompassed moments of infectious laughter and profound weeping, underscore the profound influence of the revival on their lives.

The revival movement is depicted as spontaneous and emotionally charged, with participants engaging in singing, dancing, laughter, and weeping as they felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. These emotional manifestations can be construed as a means of empowerment and a channel through which the subaltern population could articulate their distinct spirituality. Within this revival, the central theme revolved around the anticipated second coming of Jesus Christ. This thematic focal point and others such as the Cross of Christ, Christian Love, the Holy Spirit, and the End Time served as pivotal subjects of spiritual contemplation and devotion. These themes mirror the theological and eschatological dimensions of the revival and their influence on the subalterns' comprehension of their faith.

The interaction between the revivalists and the missionaries is portrayed as occasionally contentious, with revivalists at times accusing missionaries of lacking reception of the Holy Spirit when cautioned about their conduct. This suggests a measure of 'agency' and autonomy among the subaltern population in interpreting and practising their faith, even in the face of missionary guidance. While the second wave of revival eventually waned, it left an enduring mark on the Mizo community. Instead of dissipating completely, it evolved into a sustained current of prayer and unwavering commitment to devout living. This persistent spiritual fervour can be regarded as a form of resistance against external pressures and a mechanism for preserving their distinct spiritual identity. The establishment of the *Kristian Beihram Pawl* and the introduction of the *Beihrual* evangelistic campaign underscore the proactive endeavours of the subaltern community to rejuvenate their faith and the Church. These

initiatives reflect their ‘agency’ in shaping religious practices within their community. The second resurgence of revival in Mizoram encapsulates an intricate interplay of spirituality, cultural identity, and ‘agency’ within the subaltern population. It highlights Christianity’s role as a unifying force and a source of empowerment for the community while also showcasing their unique expressions of faith and their capacity to adapt and reform religious practices to meet their spiritual needs.

The account of the third resurgence of revival in Mizoram in 1919 provides invaluable insights into the profound spiritual and social metamorphoses that transpired during this era. Described as the most substantial and influential, this third wave of revival extended its reach far beyond the boundaries of Mizoram, impacting regions such as Manipur and Tripura and even influencing Naga Baptist churches. This underscores the regional reach and significance of the revival. Mizoram was beset by a devastating influenza epidemic, claiming numerous lives. Amid grief and despair, the revival spontaneously commenced on the night of July 26, 1919. This occurrence suggests a sense of divine intervention and hope emerging in the face of tragedy. Remarkably, the revival spotlighted the pivotal involvement of three young girls from Nisapui village, who played a central role in instigating the revival through their singing and prayers. The noteworthy participation of women in the revival movement underscores their ‘agency’ in matters of religion.

Revivalists such as Paranga and his companions actively propagated the revival message to neighbouring villages, catalysing its spread as individuals from diverse communities joined in worship and celebration. The central theme of the revival focused on the cross of Christ, serving as a unifying and transformative element. People were deeply moved by the profound significance of Christ’s suffering and sacrifice. Physical manifestations, including singing, dancing, weeping, and a distinctive form of ecstasy symbolising the crucifixion of Jesus, characterised the revival. These physical expressions were employed to convey the intensity of their spiritual encounters. However, the physical manifestations, particularly the ecstatic behaviours, prompted divisions and perplexity within the Church. The phenomenon of ‘Spirit illnesses’ and differing perspectives among church members posed

challenges. Notably, the use of drums inside the Church was introduced during this revival, signifying changes in spiritual practices and the conduct of worship.

The revival continued to thrive following its inception, with gatherings like the 1921 Presbytery attracting substantial audiences. Fresh forms of expressive dances and symbolic actions were introduced, further enhancing the spiritual experiences of participants. The revival of 1919 was characterised by profound spiritual intensity and a sense of communal worship that extended for days and nights. It represented a period of heightened religious fervour and devotion. The third wave of revival in Mizoram in 1919 constituted a transformative and spiritually intense epoch that engendered significant alterations in the religious and social landscape of the region. Physical manifestations, a focus on the cross of Christ, the active participation of women, and the diffusion of revival across diverse villages and communities marked it. Despite encountering challenges and generating divisions within the Church, it left a lasting imprint on the faith and culture of the Mizos.

The fourth resurgence of the revival in Mizoram offers insight into its distinctive characteristics and the challenges encountered during this period. Like its predecessors, the fourth wave exhibited familiar features, including singing, preaching, prayer, and dancing, all accompanied by a palpable enthusiasm and fervour. However, the central theme of the revival became a point of contention, with some emphasising the role of the Holy Spirit while others focused on the significance of the cross. A noteworthy development during this phase was the emergence of what was termed '*Hlim Sang*' or '*Harhna Sang*,' characterised by intense spiritual experiences and behaviours that bore a semblance to states of intoxication. This phase strongly emphasised spiritual gifts, encompassing prayer-based healing, glossolalia (speaking in tongues), prophetic utterances, and trance-like states. Some revivalists even claimed direct communication with God and were known as '*Pa Pawl*' or 'The Father's Clique.'

The unusual occurrences and phenomena associated with the revival prompted government intervention. In 1935, Superintendent L.L. Peters issued Standing Order No. 29 to curb activities related to miraculous powers and supernatural claims.

Disobedience to this order could result in fines, expulsion from villages, or even imprisonment. Subsequently, Standing Order No. 32 of 1935-1936 clarified the scope and purpose of these measures. The revival incident at Kelkang stands out as one of the most notable events during this wave. It featured various ecstatic experiences, prophecies, and predictions, including the belief that God would miraculously provide husked rice and the anticipation of the British Empire's collapse. These predictions disrupted normal village activities, leading to many children dropping out of school due to the perceived urgency of the situation. In response, under Superintendent McCall's leadership, the government employed force to quell the movement and punish its leaders. Intense spiritual experiences, charismatic practices, and fervent beliefs characterised the fourth wave of the Mizoram revival. However, it also faced substantial challenges due to its disruptive nature, leading to government intervention to restore regional order and stability.

Amid this cultural tumult, a distinctive subaltern Christian identity began to coalesce. Rather than capitulating entirely to Western religious influences, the Mizo community exhibited notable ingenuity and fortitude. They acknowledged the imperative of harmonising their Christian faith with their indigenous identity, and this endeavour assumed a pivotal role in their trajectory.

The role of the drum, known as '*Khuang*,' in the cultural and religious history of the Mizo people in Mizoram constitutes a pivotal facet of their identity and religious customs. Traditionally, the drum, or *Khuang*, occupied a central position within Mizo society. It found application during festivals, social gatherings, and traditional Mizo dances, often accompanied by the consumption of *zu*, a traditional alcoholic beverage. Essentially, drumming, singing, dancing, and consuming *zu* were interrelated components of Mizo cultural expressions. However, with the introduction of Christianity to Mizoram, early Mizo Christians refrained from employing drums in their worship. The drum was perceived as emblematic of traditional culture and entertainment, and the missionaries did not advocate its use. It was believed that drumming necessitated singing, which, in turn, entailed dancing—all of which were associated with the consumption of *zu*.

Consequently, the Church initially prohibited the inclusion of drums in worship and within church premises. This prohibition stemmed from the desire to disentangle Christianity from its traditional associations and create a distinct Christian identity. Despite the Church's disapproval, the revivalists, especially during the third wave of revival in 1919, began incorporating drums into their revival meetings. Over time, this practice extended to church services, even without official endorsement from the Church or missionaries. Drums became an enduring tradition, particularly during the third wave of revival. Specific individuals and incidents played a role in the reintroduction of the drum. For instance, a man named Hmara in Hmunulh village employed a small drum to accompany his singing, setting a precedent for others. In Thingkhuang village, the leader Euva introduced the drum on the third day of the revival, solidifying its integral role in the movement. This practice was disseminated to other regions, with the permanent use of drums inside the Church becoming commonplace.

Nevertheless, the reintroduction of the drum faced opposition from within the Church itself. Some church members were deeply disconcerted by the utilisation of the drum in religious practices, deeming it incongruent with their Christian faith. Khumhnawla, a devout Christian, vehemently disagreed with and was troubled by this practice. Despite internal opposition, the revivalists remained resolute in incorporating the drum into church worship. They argued that the drum's prior associations with non-Christian activities should not obstruct its use in worship, thus sparking a debate within the Church regarding the appropriateness of the drum in Christian worship. Integrating the drum into Christian worship in Mizoram represented a significant cultural and religious development. It encountered resistance due to its traditional connotations but eventually became an indispensable element of Mizoram's Christian worship practices, particularly during revival movements. This adaptation mirrors the intricate dynamics of cultural evolution and religious transformation within the region.

One of the most noteworthy manifestations of this burgeoning identity is the inception of '*Lengkhawm Zai*.' These songs, crafted by the Mizo community, skilfully intertwine traditional melodies with Western musical elements. This innovative fusion facilitated the expression of their Christian faith while concurrently reaffirming their

cultural legacy. *Lengkhawm Zai* embodies cultural resilience and 'agency'—a medium through which the subaltern populace could assert their distinct identity while adapting to external influences. The subaltern perspective accentuates how these songs evolved into a potent tool for the Mizo people to rekindle their sense of identity. It served as a conduit through which the Mizo community reclaimed their voice and accentuated their unique identity. Despite the prohibition on traditional songs, they engineered a novel musical tradition that bridged the chasm between their cultural heritage and their Christian presence.

The emergence of parody songs, referred to as '*Kaihlek hla*,' is another illustrative instance of the subaltern community's creative response. These songs represent a form of resistance against the oppressive elements of Western Christianity, offering a means through which the Mizo community can satirise and critique the prevailing culture and religion. *Kaihlek hla* underscores the profound interconnection between cultural identity and song. In a society where traditional songs were prohibited, these parody songs functioned as a tool for subverting the dominant authority that aimed to stifle their cultural expression. From a subaltern perspective, it becomes evident that songs were not merely a source of entertainment but also a vehicle for resistance—an avenue through which the Mizo community could assert their viewpoint and underscore their 'agency' in shaping their religious and cultural identity.

The research further delves into the intricate process through which the Mizo people effectively negotiated the complexities inherent in cultural encounters while preserving their autonomy over their cultural heritage. '*Ramthar Zai*,' was a song that offers a compelling illustration of the Mizo community's adeptness in navigating such cultural intersections. In this context, the subaltern perspective accentuates how *Ramthar Zai* reflects the ever-evolving nature of cultural identity. These songs stand as a testament to the Mizo people's capacity to reinterpret religious practices while upholding their cultural identity and retaining control over their heritage. *Ramthar Zai* underscores the idea that cultural encounters need not culminate in obliterating one's culture; instead, they can reinvigorate cultural expressions.

The song crafted by the *Thiangzau* community is a poignant exemplar of their subaltern perspective within the larger Mizo community. By composing this song to critique the women's department of the Church for collecting rice as part of fundraising efforts, they actively engage in cultural resistance and reclamation. Through this action, the *Thiangzau* community demonstrates their 'agency' in reshaping religious practices and aligning them with traditional values and beliefs.

This cultural dynamism exhibited by the *Thiangzau* community is emblematic of a broader phenomenon wherein subaltern groups reinterpret and adapt religious and cultural traditions to assert their unique identity. In doing so, they challenge dominant narratives and assert their viewpoint, accentuating their resilience in navigating the intricacies of cultural encounters. The *Thiangzau* song is a testament to their capacity to maintain autonomy over their heritage, even within the confines of a religious institution. It underscores the crucial significance of recognising and valuing subaltern voices and perspectives within any cultural or religious context.

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