

**EVOLUTION OF MIZORAM: HISTORY, COLONIALISM AND
CARTOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE**

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LALLAWMKIMI RALTE

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CARTOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE**

BY

Lallawmkimi Ralte

Department of History & Ethnography

Supervisor: Prof. Lalngurliana Sailo

Submitted

In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY & ETHNOGRAPHY
MIZORAM UNIVERSITY
AIZAWL: MIZORAM
Phone: 0389-2330531/0389-2330410**

Mizoram University
A Central University established by an Act of Parliament
Accredited 'A' Grade by NAAC in 2019

Ph: 9772099163
Email: mangurasailo@mzu.edu.in

Prof. Lalngurliana Sailo

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Evolution of Mizoram: History, Colonialism and Cartographic Knowledge” submitted by Ms. Lallawmkimi Ralte (MZU/Ph.D./1162 of 03.10.2018) for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) of the Mizoram University, embodies the record of original investigation carried out by her under my supervision.

She has been duly registered and the thesis presented is worthy of being considered for the award of the Ph.D. degree. This work has not been submitted in the past for any degree in this or any other University or Institute of learning.

Dated :
Place : Aizawl

(Prof. LALNGURLIANA SAILO)
Supervisor

DECLARATION

Mizoram University

September, 2025

I, Lallawmkimi Ralte, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis 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.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History & Ethnography.

(LALLAWMKIMI RALTE)

Candidate

(Prof. KISHOR GAIKWAD)

Head

Department of History & Ethnography
Mizoram University

(Prof. LALNGURLIANA SAILO)

Supervisor

Department of History & Ethnography
Mizoram University

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Place : Aizawl

(LALLAWMKIMI RALTE)

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ABBREVIATIONS

&c	Alternative form of etc.
A.M.	Ante Meridiem, which means “before noon”.
C.B	Companion of the order of the Bath.
C.I.E.	Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire.
C.S.I	Companion of the Order of the Star of India.
D.F.O	District/Divisional Forest Officer.
D.S.O	Distinguished Service Officer.
Esqr.	A title of respect or dignity added after a person’s full name.
I.C.S.	Imperial Civil Service.
I.M.S	Indian Medical Service.
I.S.C	Indian Staff Corps.
Lt. Col.	Lieutenant Colonel.
Lt. Gen.	Lieutenant General.
R.E.	Royal Engineers.
Vict.	Victoria, used to reference laws by Queen who signed them.

GLOSSARY

Arte thlah. The name of sacrifice for illness.

Aungbi . The name of game.

Awk. The name of a fabulous creature which is supposed to swallow the sun or moon at the time of an eclipse.

Bazaar. A market.

Bul thluk. The name of sacrifice for illness.

Punji. Capital.

Chapراسi. An office messenger

Chhawihfa. A meteor, usually seen apparently quite close to a village etc.

Chhawng. Rituals or sacrifices for expressions of reverence and devotion towards spiritual entities.

Chhinlung. The name of a mythical rock or cave in which the progenitors of most of the present human race are said to have emerged following a period of profound *thimzing* darkness.

Chhinlung chhuak. Originating from *Chhinlung*.

Dawino chhui. Ritual or sacrifice for expressions of reverence and devotion towards spiritual entities.

Dawino. The name of a sacrifice.

Dumpawl. The moderate group in MNF is known as the Blue Group.

Durbar. The court of an Indian ruler.

Fano dawi. Sacrifice offered annually to protect the young growing rice crops from disease. This sacrifice is generally offered in the evening, in the village chief's house, and the following day, no one is allowed to leave the village.

Fathang. A tax or tribute usually paid to a chief.

Hawilopar. The name of a mythical flower grown.

Hlamzuih. Infants dying at or soon after birth without sacrificed at the burial.

Hnamchawm. The common people, all save those belonging to ruling clan.

Hringlang tlang. The name of a mythical mountain on the way to *Mitthi Khua*.

Huai. An evil spirit.

Indo. Battle.

Inhawngbi. Name of a game.

Inkawlvawr. The name of a game played with stones about the size of marbles.

Kawlbahra. Sweet potato.

Kawlhnam. A Burmese dao.

Kawlhrei. A Burmese axe.

Kawlkhuang. A Burmese drum.

Kawlthei. Guava.

Kawlsinhlu. Indian gooseberries, *Phyllanthus emblica*/amla.

Kawltu. A Burmese hoe.

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

Keimi. A mythical tiger-man possessing the magic power of changing himself at will into a tiger and back again into a human being.

Khanchhuk. The cross-beams in the roof of a house.

Khawchan. A meteor.

Khawtlang. Community.

Khedda A method employed in India for capturing an entire herd of elephants utilizing a stockade trap.

Khuangchawi. The name of a public feast given by chiefs and other well-to-do persons.

Khuavang. The name of a guardian spirit.

Khuazingnu. A goddess who created the earth.

Khul. A mythical place, cave or rock where humans originated.

Khur. A legendary location, cave or rock, regarded as the birthplace of humanity.

Khurpuitabum. The name of a huge cave or a hole where human beings first emerged.

Leiman. Land tax.

Lasi. The fabled creator of animals who presides over hunting.

Lawm. To assist a person in any work or occupation, especially *jhum* tasks, in exchange for similar assistance received or to be received.

Liang. The tie-beam of a house.

Lunglohtui. The name of a mythical spring on the way to *Mitthi khua*.

Mautam. The term used to describe the cyclical phenomenon, occurring approximately every fifty years, where bamboo plants experience a decline in vitality after flowering and producing fruits. This event is followed by an infestation of rats that consume rice crops, leading to widespread famine.

Mim Kut. The name of a feast or festival held in honour of the dead, at which the first – fruits of certain vegetables etc., are presented to them.

Mithun. The domesticated gayal.

Mitthi khua. Hades - the abode of departed spirits.

Mitthi thlaichhiah. The ceremony of making offerings of food to the spirits of the departed.

Mantris. An official or government minister.

Muntrees. Alternative form of *Mantri*.

Nullahs. An intermittent watercourse, a gully or ravine.

Pasaltha. A person who is brave and manly, a famous or notable warrior or hunter.

Pathian. God, the Giver and Preserver of Life.

Pialral. The Lushai Paradise.

Puanpui. A Lushai blanket.

Puithiam. A priest.

Rajmala. A chronicle of the Kings of Tripura.

Ramhuai bia. Worship of an evil spirit or demon.

Ramhual. The principal men of a village for allotting *jhum* land.

Ramvachal. A person who is fond of wandering and adventurous in exploring the jungle.

Ramri lehkha. Boundary paper.

Sadawt. A private exorcist or priest, especially those employed by ruling chiefs.

Sakhua. An object of worship, a god; religion, religious rites or ceremonies.

Sakung. A ceremonial pillar established for sacrificial intentions.

Sedawi. The name of two of the series of sacrificial public feasts given by aspirants for the distinction of *Thangchhuah*.

Sekhuang. The completion of the rite allows the man to wear a striped turban and open a window in his house. Also known as *Mitthi rawp lam*.

Sinlung. The name of the ancestral home of the Chin/Kuki/Mizo people.

Siruk. The Pleiades.

Siruk la. The last and greatest of the north-west hurricanes or nor-westers of spring, so named because it synchronizes more or less with the heliacal setting of the Pleiades.

Siva. The destroyer, one of the three chief divinities of the later Hindu pantheon. It is also the god presiding over personal destinies.

Sunnud. A deed or document that serves as a legal or official authorization.

Tau. The name of a malignant spirit – sometimes it possesses human beings.

Taumeichherchhi. A kind of “Will-of-the wisp” or “St. Elmo’s fire,” supposed by the Lushais to be a *tau* spirit carrying a torch – hence its name.

Thangchhuah. The title given to a man who has distinguished himself by killing a certain number of different animals in a game hunt or giving several public feasts.

Thian. Holy or pure.

Thianglo. To be unlawful, tabooed.

Thimzing. The name of a fabulous Great Darkness.

Thingbul lungbul bia. Worshipping a tree that has had its whole leafy head broken.

Thingvantawng. A mythical tall tree.

Tungchaw. Lushai bedpost.

Upa. An elder, a chief man.

Vaibel. The name of a man’s pipe with tobacco.

Vailal. The name of a great mythical chieftain, Ruler from/of the plain area.

Vakul. The name of a bird – the *bhimraj* or drongo.

Vanchungnula. A mythical lady from heaven or sky.

Vanhrikpa. A mythical leader who ushered in a significant transformation, leading to plants and animals manifesting distinct personalities influenced by his decisions and actions.

Vau. The name of a flowering tree.

Via. By a route passing through, along, or over; by way of.

Vazar. The name of a bird. They go about flocks and sometimes have a *Vakul* or *bhimraj* as their leader; they are also sometimes associated with koro birds.

Zamindar. A landowner, particularly one who lends out his land to tenant farmers.

Zingvanzawl. The intersection of seven roads leads to *Mitthi khua*.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

At any point in history, the world we live in, even before the time of written records, has held the fascination and interest of human beings. Recent studies have concluded that some cave paintings and other depictions on bones and artefacts are maps of hunting areas, streams, routes, and even maps of the stars, and not merely artistic representations as once believed. It challenges the assumption that prehistoric humans lacked the cognitive abilities to represent abstractly their surroundings. The interpretation of these ancient maps indicated that the drive to understand, depict and make sense of the physical world through mapping is an innate human trait that has existed since deep antiquity, long before the advent of a writing system and recorded history. It demonstrates that our ancestors possessed remarkable spatial awareness and the ability to use symbols to represent their environment. This emerging archaeological interpretation provides a rare glimpse into ancient societies' geographical knowledge and cosmological understanding and how this understanding evolved through time.¹ A map as a graphic representation of the natural world also reflects an abstraction of reality as they are used to show the environment's cultural and physical features. A standard topographic map includes roads, land-use classification, elevation, rivers and other water bodies, political boundaries, and the identification of houses and different types of buildings. Some maps are, however, produced with exact goals in mind.²

The explanations of cartography support the idea that the features of a map are “a mirror, a graphic representation, of some aspect of the real world.” Within the limitations of survey techniques, the ability of the cartographer, “the role of a map is to present a factual statement about geographical reality.” Maps are a unique form of documentation as they guide where things were in the olden days. Based on cartography, we can perceive maps as a “social construction of the world” and a representation of

¹ Caitlin Dempsey, “Mapping Through The Ages: The History of Cartography,” Geography Realm, January 29, 2011, <http://www.gislounge.com/mapping-through-the-ages/>.

²Michael Pidwirny, “Chapter 2: Maps, Remote Sensing and GIS,” Physical Geography.net, Fundamentals of Physical Geography, April 19, 2010, www.physicalgeography.net/fundamentals/2.html.

“the world in terms of relations of power and traditional practices, preferences, and priorities.” The utmost knowledge attainment of a map rests on “locating human actions in space as a form of knowledge.”³ Furthermore, maps cannot simply be viewed as mirrors that inertly show the world. However, at all times, maps provide “a way of seeing” or “a mental image” to make sense of the world.⁴

From the sixteenth century onwards, maps have provided grounds for a new way of looking into the nation-state through its changing and mutual relationship with the expansion and development of cartography.⁵ However, we can also argue at the same time that it is national or religious propaganda which emerged roughly at the same time as “the spread of imperialism and colonialism” that gave birth to most of the maps of the world.⁶ “The act of drawing lines on maps is only one example of how cartography furthered imperialism. Maps were used innumerable ways to extend one nation’s hegemony over foreign and often unknown territory”⁷ as maps turned out to be a source of fixing a region or area for the extension of colonial rule.⁸ The central policy of these imperialists was the exploration of areas “unknown” to them or regions hitherto unfamiliar to them. The explorers returned their physical and ethnographic surveys, resources and settlement maps, usually including analyses of local environments, natural resources, ethnography and the prospects for settlement or exploitation. The use of cartography and survey played essential roles in European colonialism as “exploration had transformed unknown or unexplored territory in to rudimentary, knowable space,

³J.B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 35.

⁴David Vumlallian Zou and M Satish Kumar, “Mapping a Colonial Borderland: Objectifying the Geo-Body of India’s Northeast,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 70, no. 1 (February 2011): 143, doi:10.1017/S0021911810002986.

⁵J.B Harley, “Silences and Secrecy: The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe,” *Imago Mundi: The International Journal for the History of Cartography* 40, no. 1 (1988): 57, doi.org/10.1080/03085698808592639.

⁶Ryan Nock, “Maps in Colonialism,” *About Postcolonial Studies*, October, 2017, scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/2014/06/21/maps-in-colonialism/.

⁷Thomas J. Bassett, “Cartography and Empire building in Nineteenth-Century West Africa,” *Geographical Review* 84, no.3 (July 1994): 316, <https://doi.org/10.2307/215456>.

⁸Lucy P. Chester, “The Mapping of Empire: French and British Cartographies of India in the Late-Eighteenth Century,” *Portuguese Studies* 16, (2000): 256, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41105149>.

these demonstrably modern, ‘rational’ and ‘scientific’ practices—often accompanying military interventions—were employed to transform this abstract, foreign space into the measured and relative territory, bounded and demarcated as a colonial domain.”⁹ Mapping has shown clearly that geography and empires are closely interlinked, as seen from how the Europeans gained possession in different parts of the world. “A passion for territory” could be presumed as the primary concern of mapmaking and empire-building, as Matthew Edney has concisely states, “to govern territories, one must know them.”¹⁰

In the late eighteenth century, the emphasis on geography and cartography as indispensable tools of nation formation and imperial conquest was extreme. European soldiers, merchants, administrators and travellers all practised cartography, indicating its varied applications.¹¹ In India, colonial cartography, which focused on map making and its implications, was one of the critical aspects of understanding the region of North-East India. They treated the map as the perfect example of the deployment of technology of knowledge and power over space. Aside from representing space, maps also locate and define the boundaries of places and people, thereby limiting and symbolising “the social, political, cultural and geographical boundaries of the people inhabiting it.”¹² Without such clear boundaries, building a nation-state could hardly be successful. “On a more concrete level boundaries are a theme in the geographical description and are discussed as a political problem in the historical narrative.”¹³

⁹David Atkinson, “Geographical knowledge and scientific survey in the construction of Italian Libya,” *Modern Italy* 8, no. 1 (May 2003): 10 – 12, DOI: 10.1080/13532940320000745052.

¹⁰Zou and Kumar, “Mapping a Colonial Borderland,” 144.

¹¹Chester, “The Mapping of Empire,” 257.

¹²R.K Bijeta Sana, “Exploration of Region in Colonial North-East India: Construction of ‘Naga Hills’,” *International Research Journal of Social Sciences* 2, no. 2 (February 2013): 34, <http://www.isca.in/IJSS/Archive/v2/i2/6.ISCA-IRJSS-2012-002.pdf>.

¹³Tetz Rooke, “Tracing the Boundaries from Colonial Dream to National Propaganda,” in *State Frontiers Borders and Boundaries in the Middle East*, ed. Inga Brandell (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2006), 130.

As geographical survey and cartography developed into a valuable means of “mapping and governance of territory,”¹⁴ the nineteenth century saw the process of drawing boundaries, defending them, and separating states from territorially bounded units. This separation gave rise to authentic and material consequences connected to and hidden in the abstract notions of space created within colonial border theory. Therefore, it is essential to look at “the process of delimiting a particular territorial claim and also in the attempts at incorporation, exclusion, and negotiation necessary for their creation” to understand the processes.¹⁵ Maps became both the instrument and representation of imperial power as they came to possess the authority to make claiming a territory possible through mapping. Their accuracy and selective content enabled conquests and aided in the creation of empires “by enabling and legitimizing the process of colonisation.”¹⁶

Matthew Edney has rightly pointed out that “systematic surveys were not undertaken to meet the specific cartographic needs of the European governments but rather were begun in accordance with the cultural beliefs and values.” The main distinguishing feature of the colonial task of mapping a territory and its society was to have better facts and knowledge of governing them.¹⁷ Maps became the “scientific vision” through which the colonial administration attempted to chart, restrict and manage the region according to its political-territorial worldview. This mapping project transformed the pre-existing fluid, culturally embedded boundaries and spatial conceptions of local communities into rigid, objectified territorial boundaries on paper. Mapping territories and mapping people coincided with communities forcibly ascribed to specific delineated zones. It enabled the colonial regime to pursue strategies of exclusion and inclusion of particular populations from designated territories based on its

¹⁴ Atkinson, “Geographical knowledge,” 13.

¹⁵ Jason G. Cons, “Claiming Territory: Colonial State, Space and The Making of British India’s North-West Frontier,” PhD Thesis, Cornell University, 2005, 7.

¹⁶ Bassett, “Cartography and Empire Building,” 333.

¹⁷ Oyndrila Sarkar, “The Great Trigonometrical Survey: Histories of Mapping 1790-1850,” *eTraverse Geographical Institute the Indian Journal of Spatial Science* III, no. 1 (2012): 1, academia.edu/8906484/The_Great_Trigonometrical_Survey_Histories_Of_Mapping_1790_1850.

administrative interests. The imposition of these mapped boundaries disrupted and overrode the intricate life worlds, movement patterns and spatial understandings of local Northeast Indian communities that had evolved over centuries. Thus, cartographers used maps to homogenise the region's diverse social-cultural geographies into totalizing colonial "grids of control."¹⁸ The geographical observation and narratives produced by colonial authorities in the early and mid-nineteenth century concerning the territories of the North-east served to reinforce their claims of authoritative knowledge and ability to re-spatialise the region based on their worldview. It allowed them to effectively re-inscribe the region's cultural, political, and geographical maps aligned with the colonial priorities of control, resource extraction, and security.¹⁹

At the same time, the colonial authorities fundamentally tied the act of creating borders and frontiers to constructing and delineating the idea of a bounded "state space." This bounded space provided a specific geographic area as the colonial's political power and control domain.²⁰ As colonial rule transitioned from initial conquest and exploration to a more institutionalised system of territorial governance and resource extraction, having clearly defined internal and external boundaries became an increasingly important imperative for power.²¹ Furthermore, the creation of borders and boundaries by colonial powers led to the emergence of the modern territorial nation or state with clearly defined and exclusive sovereignty over a bounded space. Drawing precise colonial borders demarcated the territorial claims and spheres of control of the region across their global possessions and frontier zones. However, creating boundaries did more than delineate spaces on a map. It profoundly reconfigured power relations and social activities in the borderland regions. Colonial borders imposed new rigid territorial and social boundaries that often disrupted and clashed with pre-existing conceptions of

¹⁸Rafiul Ahmed, "Contesting geo-bodies and rise of sub nationalism in North-East India: A case study of Nagas and Khasis," (PhD Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India, 2009), 115, <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/18139>).

¹⁹Rafiul Ahmed, "Contesting geo-bodies and rise of sub nationalism in North-East India: A case study of Nagas and Khasis," 64.

²⁰Cons, "Claiming Territory," 3.

²¹Chester, "The Mapping of Empire," 263.

space, mobilities and interactions of local populations. This development caused social groups to engage in new confrontations and contestations as they confronted the modern territorialised nation or state idea. It overturned the older spatial condition on the ground. Creating boundaries was not just cartographic; it transformed political geographies, group identities, and power according to a new conception of rigid territoriality.²²

As societies evolved, the concept of an exclusive territorial domain over which a centralised political authority could complete sovereign control took shape. The idea of clearly defined territorial sovereignty became the foundational principle for the modern nation-state. Creating precise boundaries was essential to implement and institutionalise this territorial sovereignty. Constructing boundaries through mapping and legal frameworks became a means to organise and define the spatial limits of their jurisdiction and political authority.²³ By drawing boundaries through maps and preserving them through laws and policies, different governing authorities effectively divided and claimed a nation or state into separate, bounded spaces. This system created clear distinctions between social groups on opposite sides of those territorial lines. However, boundaries do not just divide groups but also play a crucial role in shaping the formation and negotiation of social identities concerning territorialised spaces. They functioned not as static lines but as “creative spaces of social action” where identities emerged, negotiated and contested.²⁴

At some point, maps transcend their assumed nature as a mere “spatial representation” and territory. They take on greater cultural significance as shared national properties that contribute to and shape the collective knowledge and

²² Michiel Baud and Willem Van Schendel, “Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands,” *Journal of World History* 8, no. 2, (Fall 1997): 212 – 220, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20068594>.

²³ Joren Jacobs and Kristof Van Aische, “Understandings Empirical Boundaries: A Systems-Theoretical Avenue in Border Studies,” *Geopolitics* 19, no. 1 (2014): 190, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2013.830106>.

²⁴ Chiara Brambilla, “Borders: Paradoxical Structure Between Essentialization and Creativity,” *World Futures: The Journal of New Paradigm Research* 65, no. 8 (2009): 583 – 584, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02604020903300584>.

understanding of its history, culture and identity.²⁵ Maps contribute to human knowledge about a nation not just by representing geographic locations but by conveying historical consciousness and narratives about the life and evolution of a country. They shape perceptions of national territory and history, influencing how a nation perceives itself and its place in the world.²⁶ However, the study of nationhood must consider the complex and sometimes misleading conception of identity. Identity is always subject to be a fluid and changeable aspect of national and individual experiences as it is always contested and subject to displacement. The ongoing identity crisis is often rooted in the constantly shifting political, social, and cultural landscapes and the continuous redefinition of boundaries.²⁷ As such, a comprehensive analysis of nationhood necessitates an understanding of how maps, as instruments of both representation and interpretation, contribute to the evolving sense of identity within a nation. It involves recognising the relationship between maps and identity, acknowledging that both are constantly subject to revision and reinterpretation based on changing circumstances and perspectives.

Colonial mapping and surveying leveraged technological capabilities as instruments to radically redefine “the land through creating new rules of measurement and categorisation, constructing newer boundaries, creating new administrative units, delineating which areas could be used by whom, writing land laws, creating land titles to legitimate people’s use of the land etc. by its increasing interferences innative land matters” and remake Northeast India landscapes in line with colonial territorial ideologies and governance frameworks.²⁸ In the context of Mizoram, the absence of sufficient historical records has resulted in the assumptions and generalisations in the gap of concrete historical evidence in the early development of the boundaries of Mizoram. A common assumption is that the early boundaries of the region now

²⁵Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of a Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 138.

²⁶Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 156.

²⁷ Winichakul, *Siam*, 173.

²⁸Rafiul Ahmed, “Contesting geo-bodies and rise of sub nationalism in North-East India,” 92.

Mizoram were closely influenced and shaped by the migratory patterns and settlement areas of the various Mizo tribes over the centuries. The boundaries could be assumed to have originated from the spatial spread of the tribes across the region, influenced by their cultural practices, conflicts, and interactions with other groups.²⁹ The arrival of the colonial administration in the region introduced new factors for defining boundaries which may not have coincided with the traditional boundaries recognised by the tribes.

C.A. Soppitt's work, *A Short Account of the Kuki-Lushai Tribes on the North-East Frontier*, observes that land disputes were rare in the pre-colonial period among the Mizo people. The reason could be the abundance of land available in the area, as the population at the time was not enormous. With land not scarce, territorial boundaries or exclusive ownership disputes were relatively rare. However, when disputes did occur, they were often resolved through the assertion of power by the stronger tribes or clans. In these cases, the more dominant would take control of the contested land. This pattern of conflict resolution reflects the social and political activities of the time, which might often determine rights in the context of land ownership.³⁰ Due to their requirement for greater territorial mobility owing to their social and economic factors such as reliance on shifting cultivation, hunting along with inter-tribal conflicts that encouraged territorial expansion, the pre-colonial Mizos extended their domain until they met determined efforts to check their territorial advance. In the absence of significant opposition and physical show of force against them, their expansion went largely unchecked and unrestrained. As a result, the Mizos continued to assert their territorial claims over a significant area. The system continued until the arrival of the British in the region. To restrict the Mizos' territorial mobility, the British recognised the importance of establishing well-defined boundaries to facilitate effective administration and secure their frontiers. The British colonial presence thus ended the Mizos' unchecked territorial

²⁹S.N. Singh, *Mizoram, Historical, Geographical, Social, Economic, Political and Administrative* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1994), 91-92.

³⁰ C.A. Soppitt, *A Short Account of the Kuki-Lushai Tribes on the North-East Frontier*, Reprint (Aizawl, Mizoram: Firma KLM Private Limited, on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, 1976), 22.

expansion, as the colonial authorities moved to delineate precise boundaries and assert control over the region.

In the pre-colonial period, the Mizos practised shifting cultivation, a method of agriculture that involved clearing and cultivating small plots of land for a short period before moving to a new area. This practice necessitated frequent relocations and led the Mizos to disperse across different regions in search of suitable land for cultivation. Due to the absence of clearly defined boundaries, their ways of life must have unintentionally encroached on territories beyond their traditional areas. Mackenzie observes that during this time, “the chiefs claim no property in the land or the forests. Each claims the men of his tribe wherever they wander, or in whatever part of the country they may settle for the time to jhoom. Generally speaking, the jhoomeas of each clan confine themselves within certain rough limits, but there is no real local jurisdiction vesting in any of the chiefs. The forests outside the State Reserves are free to all.”³¹ As a result, the then Mizos could hardly be held entirely accountable for any perceived infringement or encroachment on territories claimed by other entities since boundaries between the Mizos and their neighbouring entities were unclear and undefined. In those days, their geographical concept of the boundary was centred on cultivable areas and hunting grounds, often restricted by natural features such as rivers and hill ranges. This concept of boundary was practical and adaptive to their way of life, focusing on areas suitable for agriculture and hunting rather than fixed lines on a map. Their sense of boundary became meaningful or effective only when other communities made a challenge or opposing claim, as they did not limit the extent of their hunting grounds with any established boundaries.

Accordingly, as they moved to new locations, they claimed all the surrounding unoccupied land within their reach. This pattern of expansion and territorial claims inevitably led to conflicts and disputes over land with neighbouring groups. The difference in political ambitions and territorial claims also challenged the British

³¹Alexander Mackenzie, *The North East Frontier of India* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1999), 332.

Government in India. After the British consolidated their power in the region occupied by the Mizos to resolve conflicts and establish clear jurisdictional boundaries. As seen from N.E. Parry's work *A Monograph on Lushai Custom & Ceremonies*, every chief began to hold *Ramrilehkha* (boundary paper) as evidence of the British-established boundaries. The boundary paper outlined the specific limits of each chief's domain, clearly defining their territorial limits of authority. This process marked a significant shift from the traditional, fluid approach to territorial claims practised by the Mizos to a more formalised system of territorial administration under British colonial rule.³² It further significantly transformed the concept of space for the Mizos from a narrow, undefined unilateral village-level boundary to a national-level idea of boundary. This transition fostered a more extensive, unified identity of Mizohood, replacing the multi-ethnic identity of the various Mizo tribal groups. By defining the territorial limits and issuing boundary papers to the chiefs, the British surveying and mapping played a crucial role in shaping a unified sense of territorial belonging and identity among the Mizos. Thus, the study looked into the different sources that led to the formation of Mizoram by examining how British-created maps identified and affected the spatial and cultural landscape of the region.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation by Thongchai Winichakul is a study of the creation of ideas of nationalism or nationhood among the people of Siam (now Thailand), which promoted the formation of the Siam empire into a nation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by looking into the domination of modern geography and mapping system as the ground work for the setting up of a new nation of Siam. The book examines the transformation of Siam from a traditional, loosely defined geographical area to a modern nation-state with well-defined boundaries through colonial influences and internal political changes. It also examines

³²N.E. Parry, *A Monograph On Lushai Customs And Ceremonies*, 3rd ed. (Aizawl, Mizoram: Firma KLM Private Limited, on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, 2009), 3.

how histories of mapping are not just technical tools but powerful instruments in shaping nations and identities.

David Atkinson's work "Geographical Knowledge and Scientific Survey in the Construction of Italian Libya" provides an insightful analysis of how geographical knowledge and scientific surveys were central to the colonial expansion in Italian Libya. This work highlights how geographical knowledge played a significant role in colonisation. It also shows how colonial authorities employed this knowledge to map and understand the physical landscape, legitimizing their ambitions and control over the territory. It also examines how the colonial project sought to construct a cohesive national identity within the newly established colonial boundaries.

In the case of cartographic knowledge, Thomas J. Bassett's work "Cartography and Empire Building in Nineteenth-Century West Africa" examines how Europeans used maps and cartographic skills to facilitate territorial expansion, which empowered the development of the building of European colonial domains in West Africa. Bassett illustrates how maps were powerful tools in developing European colonial dominance in the region. To create a visual hierarchy legitimising European claims, colour coding, boundary lines and other visual markers on maps to differentiate European-controlled areas and regions considered unexplored or available for colonisation and to give grounds for their ambitions.

Matthew H. Edney, in his book, *Mapping An Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765 – 1843*, meticulously researched and explored the role of maps in the construction and administration of the British Empire in India, how maps were used, not merely as tools for navigation and spatial understanding, but were also instruments of power, control, and colonial governance. He examines the political, cultural, and technological factors that shaped the production and dissemination of maps in colonial India, shedding light on the motivations and strategies of British colonial officials and mapmakers. He explained how British colonial officials used maps strategically to delineate administrative boundaries,

establish political jurisdictions, and assert claims over Indian territories. The book also highlights how the production of maps connected to knowledge production about the Indian landscape, its resources and people, which was essential for effective governance and control.

In “Imperialism, Colonialism and Cartography,” Jeffrey C. Stone explores the compelling and thought-provoking reevaluation of traditional historical narratives surrounding European-African interactions during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It highlights a detailed study of the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 and the subsequent impact of the colonial period. It reconsidered the belief that the Berlin Conference primarily served to partition Africa among European powers. Instead, the author argues persuasively that the conference served broader imperial functions, laying the groundwork for a more profound and enduring relationship between Europe and Africa. By highlighting the differences between imperialism and colonialism, it provides a framework for understanding the complex nature of European domination in Africa. Central to the argument was the role of cartography in shaping European perceptions of Africa and facilitating the implementation of colonial rule, as well as the complexities of mapping Africa and its implications for exercising power on the continent.

In the “New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography,” J.B. Harley comprehensively explores how maps evolved from mere geographical representations to robust social construction and political control tools. It explores how maps are not neutral depictions of geographical reality but are products of social processes, reflecting the values, ideologies and power of the societies producing them. The author explored the historical context in which maps became instrumental in European territorial expansion and served as tools for navigation and exploration and instruments of political domination and territorial conquest. It further highlights Maps were not only used to claim and control territory but also to portray indigenous peoples as primitive or inferior, legitimising European intervention and exploitation.

“The Mapping of Empire: French and British Cartographies of India in the Late-Eighteenth Century” by Lucy P. Chester studied how the role of maps assisted European imperialism in India during the late eighteenth century. Through a comparative analysis of French and British mapping efforts, Chester provides valuable insights into the role of cartography in shaping imperial expansion and territorial control. Chester accurately demonstrates how the mapping of India defined and consolidated existing colonial holdings and laid the groundwork for future expansionist goals.

“Mapping a Colonial Borderland: Objectifying the Geo-Body of India’s Northeast” by David Vumlallian Zou and M. Satish Kumar emphasises the history of mapping with a wide range of visions by observing into the insight of the interaction between cosmography, cartography and colonialism along with the history of borderlands formed by the colonial knowledge of space. It provides a comprehensive examination of how they arrange all accessible means in examining and surveying for mapping and determining the boundaries of Northeast India. It further highlights the complex processes of spatial representation and territorial control by considering geographical features, cultural landscapes, and indigenous perspectives in a region marked by diversity and contestation of issues such as territorial disputes and identity politics.

“Exploration of Region in Colonial North-East India: Construction of ‘Naga Hills’” by R.K Bijeta Sana offers a profound analysis of the role of map-making in the colonial activity in which the centrality of maps are embodiments of power and instruments of imperial dominance. The author put forward that mapping was integral to the colonial project, facilitating the exploration, naming, and, ultimately, the control of territories. The significant contribution of the work is the detailed analysis of specific colonial surveys and maps, as well as their influence on the perception of the Naga Hills. It demonstrates how colonial authorities transformed the unidentified spaces into well-defined territorial entities physically and ideologically to construct a

distinct identity for the Naga Hills and its inhabitants.

Alexander Mackenzie's book *The North-East Frontier* provides a detailed account of the British colonial administration's dealings with the various tribal people of North-East India throughout the nineteenth century. It is an essential historical document that keeps colonial ideas and practices that had far-reaching consequences for the region's social, political, and economic prospects. It emphasises the British observation of the various tribes in North-East India, offering knowledge about their perspective and policy implications. It provides a detailed analysis of how colonial authorities viewed and managed these tribes, considering their strategic importance due to the region's geography and socio-political complexity. It also explains how the British policies aimed to control the frontier and integrate the area under their control by establishing political and geographical boundaries, which disrupted traditional tribal systems, causing long-term socio-political changes in the area.

The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia by James C. Scott explored how the hill peoples of Southeast Asia resisted state control. Scott centres his study on Zomi, a vast and diverse region that includes parts of India, Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and China. These societies preserved their independence through different methods, such as strategic adaptations to avoid state domination. These methods are not indicators of primitiveness but rather deliberate strategies to evade the coercive power of states. It provides a fresh and insightful perspective redefining conventional views of civilisation and statehood. This redefinition offers a new lens through which to view the process of power, control, and resistance in human societies.

Vladimir Propp's *Theory and History of Folklore* made ground breaking contributions to studying folklore narratives, literary theory and criticism. Propp analyses the structure of folktales, not just fairy tales but other folklore stories, such as myths and legends. By using his approach to different types of stories, we can see the components that makeup folk stories but also explore the importance of those

components and how they relate to each other within the overall story. Furthermore, Propp explained that folktales' narrative functions and structure were not random or arbitrary. Instead, he believed they were closely tied to and emerged from the specific social and cultural environments in which the folktales originated. He did not merely see folktales as abstract literary forms but recognised that stories originated from genuine historical, cultural and social contexts.

Being Mizo by Joy L.K. Pachuau is a detailed exploration of the Mizo people's sense of identity and their desire for belonging within the complex socio-political landscape of Northeast India. The book examines the characteristics of social organisation that influence identity formation, highlighting the community's resistance to external influences while at once shaping the community's internal identity. It traces the historical journey of the Mizo people, from their origins as a collection of diverse tribes to their consolidation as a distinct ethnic group. It also looks into how British colonialism, Christianity and the region's political history shaped the boundaries and identity of the Mizos. It provides a thorough and insightful analysis of the Mizo community's fluid and evolving identity, shaped by internal and external influences.

Entangled Lives: Human-Animal-Plant Histories of the Eastern Himalayan Triangle by Joy L.K. Pachuau and Willem van Schendel book focuses on the interconnected responsibilities of humans and non-humans that have influenced both the history and present of the area of the Eastern Himalayan Triangle like India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and China. It explores the region's ancient history, focusing on the evolution of its geography and the migration patterns of humans into the area. By examining the links between the lives of human and non-human actors, the book provides a comprehensive understanding of the region's past and present. It also highlights how these interactions were influenced by local beliefs, traditions, and cosmologies, demonstrating the deeply entangled nature of human and non-human existence in the region, which further offers a fresh perspective on the processes of

identity formation. By integrating the history of various kinds with human history, the book provides a deeper understanding of how the region has developed by its diverse inhabitants.

The Cartographic State: Maps, Territory, and the Origins of Sovereignty by Jordan Branch study the development and use of maps influenced the formation of modern states and the concept of sovereignty. He argues that the introduction of cartography in Europe was crucial in changing the medieval concepts of authority and influence into today's territorial and sovereign state structures. The book's central argument is that maps were more than just symbolic tools but were active instruments in the political transformation of the world. Maps facilitated the emergence of a region as a distinct, bordered entity, which had profound implications for the organisation and exercise of power. This shift led from diffuse, overlapping authorities to centralised territorial governance. The book also explores the impact of cartography on modern statehood and sovereignty, as well as how technological advancements may shape the future.

Political History of Mizoram by Chaltuahkhuma provides the history and society of the Mizo tribes, tracing their origins, social structures, and interactions with external powers, notably the British colonial government. The book begins by tracing the origins of chieftainship and follows their westward migration, highlighting how their cultural practices, like raiding, impacted their relationship with the British. This complex and often hostile interaction led to the incorporation of the Lushai Hills into the British Empire. This book also details how British colonial policies established territorial boundaries, fostering a distinct Mizo identity. The book explores how British absorption of the Hills influenced the Mizo people through Western education, which encouraged political consciousness and led to the emergence of various political parties advocating for Mizo interests and its uprising for greater autonomy. It also looks at the rebellion movement against the Indian Government and the eventual signing of the Mizoram Peace Accord, which paved the way for statehood.

A Monograph on Lushai Customs & Ceremonies by N.E. Parry serves as a detailed record of the customs and ceremonies of the Mizo people following the British occupation of what is now Mizoram. The book documents various cultural practices, providing an invaluable resource for understanding the traditional ways of life among the Mizo. One significant aspect of the book is that it explains the custom of hereditary proprietorship of land by the Mizos, which reflects the deeply rooted social structures and norms that governed land ownership and usage among the tribes. By capturing these customs, the book offers insights into the social organisation and cultural heritage of the Mizos from pre-colonial to the colonial period.

The Lushai 1878-1889, published by Firma KLM Private Ltd. on behalf of the Tribal Research Institute, Government of Mizoram, offers a comprehensive account of British administration in Northeast India during the late 19th century. The book documented the policies and strategies adopted by the British for frontier defence, including establishing outposts to secure their boundaries and additional protective measures the colonial government took. One of this book's significant contributions is the detailed exploration of the interactions between the Mizos and their neighbouring tribes and their evolving relationship with the British authorities. The documentation provides valuable insights into the complexities of these relationships, highlighting the impact of British policies on the social and political affairs of the region.

The Lushai Expedition 1871 – 1872 by R.G. Woodthorpe gives a detailed account of the British Expedition in the then Lushai Hills aimed at demarcating territory in response to frequent raids by the Mizos. The book offers first-hand information on the events that prompted the British Government to take decisive action to protect its subjects. The book outlines the provocations that led to the expedition, detailing how the frequent Mizo raids on British territories created a situation that demanded a strategic response. The book explores the expedition's complexities, highlighting the challenges faced by the British forces as they navigated the rugged terrain and sought to establish clear territorial boundaries and their impact

on the region.

Lushai Chrysalis by Major A.G. McCall offers a comprehensive account of Mizo culture, identity, religion, administration, legal system, and local farming from the perspective of a colonial officer. The author's observations highlight the richness of Mizo traditions and social structure, which offer valuable insights into how it functioned and evolved under colonial influence. The book highlights how introducing a foreign system of governance and authority disrupted the Mizo traditional ways of life and created a sense of confusion and astonishment among the people they had never encountered. The author emphasised that the British presence in the Hills has two distinct aspects: the administration under the government and the missionary. This shift not only altered the political landscape but also left a lasting impression on the cultural and social fabric of the region. The book clearly showed the complexity of colonial rule, where political and religious objectives were interrelated, each reinforcing the other in reshaping the identity and future of the Lushai Hills and its inhabitants.

Important Documents of Mizoram by C. Chawngkunga offers extensive insights into British Government documents relating to present-day Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura. This book is a valuable resource, shedding light on the historical context and interactions between the British colonial administration and the local tribes in these regions. It meticulously documents the history of border confrontations between the Mizos and their neighbouring tribes, which ultimately necessitated British intervention in the nineteenth century. Through these records, the book provides a comprehensive understanding of the geopolitical and cultural dynamics that shaped the region during the colonial period.

The literature review reveals a theoretical framework that critically examine the complex intersections of colonialism, geographical knowledge, and power mechanisms. Postcolonial theory serves as a primary analytical lens, critically exploring how colonial powers strategically utilized mapping and cartographic

techniques as instruments for territorial domination. Spatial theory introduces another sophisticated perspective, examining how geographical spaces are dynamically produced, controlled and interpreted.

Based on the literature review, it is evident how colonial expansion, through their knowledge of space, put up new ground for a new nation, involving various actions in establishing a new nation or boundary of an area. From the review, it became clear that how the colonial power expanded their territory with the help of maps and cartographic knowledge and how it gave them the power to grow their domain even in the far east of northeast India. However, a noteworthy finding from the review of existing literature is that no particular studies have focused on the formation of Mizoram, along with the political boundary map. So, this research is an effort to contribute academic resources to complement this gap.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There should not have been any problem of boundary conflict vis-à-vis the Mizo occupation of land, which then was a vast space unclaimed by any sovereign or tribal occupation but for their occasional spread into areas where people other than they made settlements. Mizos were warlike people, and hunting was not merely a pastime but an essential economic and cultural activity connected with their religious and administrative system. Big games like elephants, wild mithuns, deer, etc., and heads of enemies consisted of the essential trophy for achieving the grand title of *Thangchhuah*. They did not consider it evil or criminal to forage in enemy lands for such a trophy. Moreover, they needed meat for seasonal and festival food, and hunting was the primary resource.

Whatever the causes for the Mizo migration westward from present-day Myanmar, historical evidence shows they had no intention of going further west or north than the present settlement due to substantial and decisive settlements in those directions. They contained their concept of settlement and boundary within the available

land they could roam in and use for cultivation without external opposition. It happened that they assumed land for themselves that bounded other habitations with whom there seemed to have been no definite boundary, politically, geographically, and ethnically. There came a day when they became aware of foreigners encroaching upon the land they had assumed to be theirs for free. Like any warlike people of the earth, they felt it their bounden duty to preserve the land for their tribe and future generations and to discourage any incursion into their land. With such territorial consciousness and jealousy for the resources within, they felt justified in martial efforts.

Events of so-called Mizo encroachments into British territory may be considered a colonial construct in the context of the extent of British occupation of India when no administrative unit seemed to have existed except a few economic ventures in the form of tea gardens. In a military conquest, a clash of might decides whoever is stronger assumes control of the weaker. Mizos then had no means to oppose the British military expedition, which made an excuse for a few tribal conflicts for a more significant political ambition of expanding the British territory.

Therefore, it became significant to focus on how the British government extended their colonial administration in Mizoram by looking into the British knowledge of space and the resources they employed to demarcate their domain. So, the problem this research focuses on is how colonial knowledge of space through cartographic practice reordered space, territory and fixed communities in bounded areas. How did colonial knowledge production through mapping enable the colonial state to govern hitherto unknown lands, and how did colonial categorisations shape Mizo identity?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine pre-colonial Mizo cosmology and conception of space.
2. To study colonial construction of space and frontier (margin).
3. To analyse colonial cartographic knowledge production in Mizoram.

4. To study the impact of colonial spatial arrangement on Mizo cosmology and identity.
5. To examine the contestation of colonial construction of space in post-colonial Mizoram.

METHODOLOGY

This research inquired into primary and secondary sources to investigate the intersections of space, boundary, identity and colonialism from pre-colonial to post-colonial in present-day Mizoram. The study primarily relied on archival research, drawing from colonial and post-colonial official documents maintained in various archives, including the Mizoram State Archives, Aizawl, National Archives of India, New Delhi, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, and Assam State Archives, Guwahati. An extensive review of secondary literature complemented the primary sources. The secondary sources were accessed from multiple libraries both within Mizoram, such as the Mizoram State Central Library and J.M. Lloyd Library & Archive, and across India, including the Library of Asiatic Society in Kolkata, the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library in New Delhi, the Central Secretariat Library, the Indian Council of Historical Research Library in New Delhi and the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Central Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

To critically analyse the obtained data, the research utilised an approach based on theories of space and place, boundary studies and identity formation. It enabled an in-depth examination of how colonial spatial practices influence identity and boundary formation and how these factors evolved in the post-colonial period. To enrich the historical narrative and to provide more context, the study also incorporated oral history methods by conducting unstructured personal interviews with knowledgeable persons regarding issues related to the research topic.

AREA OF THE STUDY

The study area focused mainly on the modern Indian state of Mizoram, which has spanned from the colonial to post-colonial periods.

CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter 1: Social Structure and Cosmological Worldview

This chapter introduces the research topic dealing with the Mizo society before the onset of colonialism in Mizoram. It also examined the pre-colonial Mizo cosmology and their conception of space.

Chapter 2: Colonial Expansion and Shifting Frontier

This chapter studies the colonial expansion and the reordering of the frontier (border), which located the Mizos into a zone identified as frontier or margin. It also investigated how the frontier became a zone of contact, exchange, and contestation of the colonial spatial arrangement.

Chapter 3: Producing Lushai Hills

The chapter examined colonial spatial practice embodied in map-making through surveys such as topographical, trigonometrical, etc. It showed how these exercises enabled the colonial authority to produce a named place called Lushai Hills and spatially fixed and identified communities within it.

Chapter 4: Colonial Spatial Arrangements

British colonisation of erstwhile Mizoram extensively impacted the communities in terms of boundary and space. The indigenous conception of space and boundary, which had been fluid and overlapping at times, were to be readjusted in new arrangements that fixed and sedentarised people within a mapped space or territory. Therefore, the chapter examined how this reordering of space or territory, such as

boundary demarcations, land settlement, etc., impacted the local cosmology and identity.

Chapter 5: Mizoram: Evolution of Homeland

This chapter focuses on the post-colonial evolution of Mizoram as a homeland, intrinsically connected with the emergence of political consciousness. It examined how colonial categories such as Lushai and Lushai Hills have challenged or contested to foster more extensive and inclusive identification.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The last chapter deals with the findings of the research.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND COSMOLOGICAL WORLDVIEW

Mizoram, one of the states in the northeastern part of India, derives its name from the words *Mi* (people), *Zo* (cool highland) and *Ram* (land). Thus, Mizoram implies “land of the hill people.”¹ The international boundary limits Mizoram externally, with Bangladesh to the west, Myanmar (Burma) to the east and south, the interstate boundary, Tripura to the northwest, Manipur to the northeast, and Assam to the north. Before 1954, the British government designated the region of Mizoram as the Lushai Hills District. The region was again renamed the Mizo Hills District and administered by Assam until 1972 when they granted it Union Territory status under the name Mizoram under the governance of the Central Government.² Then, on February 20, 1987, it was granted statehood with Aizawl as its capital, becoming India’s 23rd state.³ As per the 2020 Statistical Yearbook of Mizoram, the area spans 2,10,87 sq. km with 277 North-South and 121 East-West roads. As of the 2011 census, the population was 10,97,206.⁴

The shortage of historical records has obscured the early history of the Mizoram people. Historians and writers assumed that they belonged to the Mongoloid race as they were supposed to have met the physiological requirements for the Mongoloid racial stock⁵ and grouped them as belonging to the Tibeto-Burman

¹ “History of Mizoram,” *Mizoram Larsap Run (Raj Bhavan Mizoram)*, Government of Mizoram, last updated January 17th, 2024, <https://rajbhavan.mizoram.gov.in>.

² Deryck O, Lodrick, “Mizoram, state India, Also known as: Land of the Mizos, Lushai Hills District, Mizo Hills District”, *The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica*, February 5th, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mizoram>.

³ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, National Informatics Centre, Mizoram State Centre, “History: Birth Of The Mizoram State,” Mizoram Portal: State Portal of Mizoram, last updated February 9th, 2024, [Mizoram.nic.in/about/history.htm](https://mizoram.nic.in/about/history.htm).

⁴ Government of Mizoram, *Statistical Handbook, Mizoram 2020* (Aizawl, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Mizoram, 2020), xii-xiii.

⁵ Rev. Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin*, 4th ed. (Aizawl, Mizoram: Mizo Academy of Letters, 1976), 1; Sangkima, “A Study of the Mizos with reference to their Early Home,” in *History and Ethnic Identity formation in North-East India*, ed. Prof. J.V Hluna (Bali Nagar, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., 2013), 32; Lt. Colonel J. Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, 3rd ed. (Aizawl, Mizoram: Tribal Research Institute, Department of Art and Culture, 2008), 1; Vumson, *Zo History- With an introduction to Zo Culture, Economy, Religion and their status as an ethnic minority in INDIA, BURMA, BANGLADESH* (Venghlui, Aizawl, Mizoram: Vumson, c/o N.T. Thawnga, 1986), 26.

group based on the categorisation of Southeast Asian Languages.⁶ Mizos inhabiting the state of Mizoram consist of a group of different tribes bound together by a shared social and cultural existence.⁷ The name “Mizo” is frequently used to refer to “hill people,” which includes Kuki,⁸ Lusei, and Chin⁹ sub-tribes in Burma, Manipur, Tripura, and Bangladesh who share a common genealogy and lineage with the Chhinlung¹⁰ origin narrative.¹¹ Since most Mizos claim Chhinlung as their original home, and all Mizo tribes spread out from here, it is impossible to draw any firm conclusions about their origins. We can trace the history of the Mizos back to the eighth century A.D., but we can only identify detailed pieces of information from around the fourteenth century A.D.¹² Since detailed written records are unavailable for tracing the history of the pre-colonial Mizo society, several historians and writers primarily base the early history on oral tradition through folktales and folksongs, which give crucial information for the study of the early life of the Mizos.

To examine something like an acceptable description of the pre-colonial life and history of the Mizos in the absence of records in the form of intelligible artefacts and other forms of recordings poses an insurmountable problem. Recent discoveries of several stone carvings in monoliths show them to be memorials of heroes or powerful chieftains and their acts of fame. Still, they do not reveal the origin of their subjects. To a certain extent, folktales and folk songs, orally transmitted down

⁶ Rev. Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin*, 1; Sangkima, *Essays on the History of the Mizos* (Guwahati, Assam: Spectrum Publications, 2004), 34 ; B. Lalthangliana, *History of Mizo in Burma*(Aizawl, Mizoram: Zawlbuk Agencies, 1977), 3; Vumson, *Zo History*, 26-27; Major Anthony Gilchrist McCall, O.B.E, Indian Civil Service, Late Royal Field Artillery, *Lushai Chrysalis*, Reprint, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Firma KLM PRIVATE LTD. On Behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Govt. Of Mizoram, 1977), 25-34; V.L. Siama, *Mizo History*, 2nd ed. (Aizawl, Mizoram: Lengchhawn Offset, 2020), 7.

⁷ Sangkima, *Essays on the History of the Mizos*, 15-17.

⁸ In this study, the terms Kukis, Lusei/ Lushai and Mizo are used interchangeably, recognizing their shared ethnic and cultural heritage. These designations refer to the same of people, encompassing various tribes within the broader Mizo community. It is also noteworthy that historical and contemporary sources may present variations in the spelling, which reflects the complex tapestry of tribal identities in the region and acknowledges the fluidity of ethnic categorizations over time.

⁹ According to G.A Grierson the word “Chin” is a Burmese term for the different hill tribes that inhabit the region between Burma and the Provinces of Assam and Bengal.

¹⁰ In *Dictionary of the Lushai Language* by James Herbert Lorrain (Pu Buanga) give the definition of Chhinlung as “The name of the mythical rock from beneath which the progenitors of most of the present human race are said to have issued after the *Thimzing* darkness.”

¹¹ *A Brief Account of Ranglong*(Aizawl, Mizoram: Tribal Research Institute, Directorate of Art & Culture, Govt. Of Mizoram, 1993), 1.

¹² Siama, *Mizo History*, 8; Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History And Cultural Identity (1890-1947)*(Guwahati, Assam: Spectrum Publications, 1995), 11-12.

through the generations, provide viable historical sources through internal evidence to the present generations. Such being the case, a study can examine a few elements from folktales and folksongs to obtain seminal knowledge of pre-colonial culture and history, which will enlighten the cosmology and concept of space relating to the pre-colonial Mizos.

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines cosmology as studying the universe and its origin and development.¹³ The *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* gives the meaning of cosmology as (i) a branch of metaphysics that deals with the universe as an orderly system, (ii) a branch of astronomy that deals with the origin, structure, and space-time relationships of the universe.¹⁴ However, in the context of ethnic, tribal, and cultural studies, cosmology is explained uniquely by using a symbolic approach to the universe that departs from the definition of modern science. Since nature closely intertwines with primitive societies' physical and spiritual worlds, their notion of the universe and its beginning was aligned with nature, thereby making human beings an element of the universe.¹⁵ The term "cosmology" has been in use since the 1730s, but it was not until after World War II that it became associated with science. "Cosmology" can be defined as "an account of the cosmos." The term "logy" is derived from the Greek word *logos*, which characterises as "an account" and thus forms the foundation of cosmology. In anthropology, cosmologies were vital to human culture and society. Archaeologist Timothy Darvill defines cosmology as "the worldview and belief system of a community based upon their understanding of order in the universe." As a result of this varied interpretation, it is possible to infer that various cultural practices also influence human belief systems, further aiding in developing personal identities.¹⁶

¹³ *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 9th Edition* (W.H. Smith, London, Oxford University Press, 2015), 345.

¹⁴ *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, Based on Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (Massachusetts, U.S.A, G.& C. Merriam Company, Publishers Springfield, 1963), 188, s.v. "cosmology".

¹⁵ [egyankosh.ac.in](https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/35535/1/Unit-4.pdf), "Tribal Cosmonogies and Cosmologies," Ignou The People's Universities, 1-13, <https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/35535/1/Unit-4.pdf>.

¹⁶ Nicolas Campion, "The Importance of Cosmology in Culture: Contexts and Consequences," in *Trends in Modern Cosmology*, ed. Abraao Capistrano (CBS Publishers & Distributors Pvt., 2017), 4-5, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/67976>.

Oral traditions are a significant source of information about culture. They reveal deeply-held cultural beliefs, and like other expressive forms of culture like dance and song, they also put these beliefs into action. Oral narratives abstracted from daily life offer a culture's perspective on itself, passed down from generation to generation, and modified under regional narrative customs and experience as ethnography also takes the form of oral storytelling.¹⁷ The assumption that oral tradition has developed into the ideal medium for "transmitting information of cultural value over generations" has generally been embraced, establishing it as the most important means for understanding past societies and cultures. Among the various forms of oral tradition, mythology often conveyed through folktales, stands out as a captivating means of transmitting information constructed to reiterate cultural insights.¹⁸ As already noted, the Mizos just recently began keeping their written records. Since the information from their earlier history is so scant, oral tradition has emerged as the most significant method for gathering information about their past.

1.1 Provenance and Evolution

It is possible to infer from the many accounts of pre-colonial Mizo society that the Mizos were nomadic people who frequently wandered in search of new settlements for various reasons. Every Mizo tribe claimed Chhinlung to be in the southern part of China (See Map No.1.1)¹⁹ as the location of their origin, and most eminent Mizo writers and historians support this claim. Besides, some authors conjecturally traced the Mizos' origins; as such, Rev. Liangkhaia hypothesised that the earliest progenitor of the Mizos could be Japheth,²⁰ one of the three sons of Noah in the book of Genesis. He also advanced the hypothesis that Chhinlung was a hole

¹⁷ Stuart Blackburn, "Oral Stories and Culture Areas: From Northeast India to Southwest China," in *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* XXX, no.3 (October, 2009): 419-420, <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/csas20>.

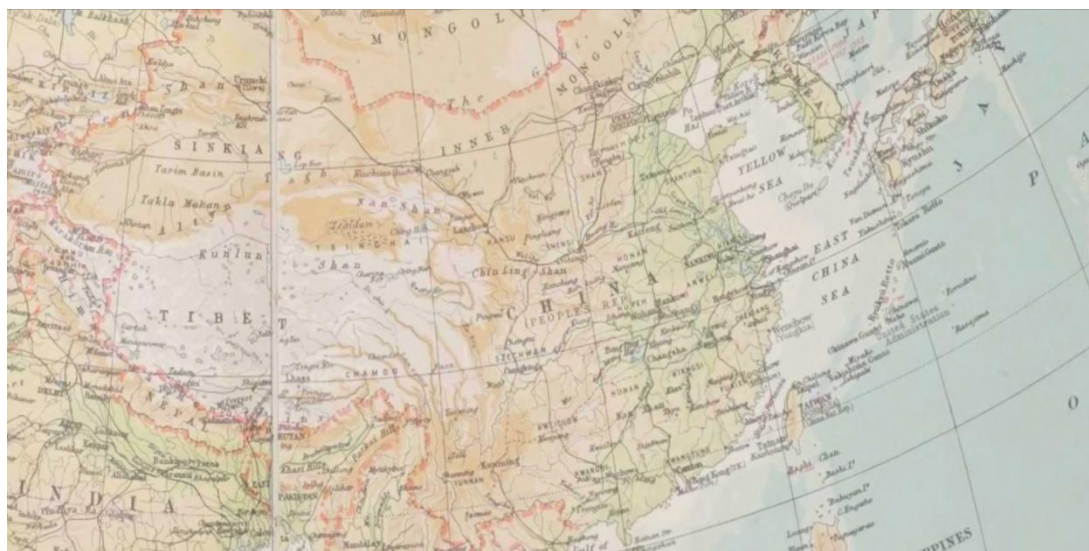
¹⁸ William K. Powers, "Cosmology and the Reinvention of Culture: The Lakota Case", in *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* VII, no.2(1987):175, <https://cjns.brandonu.ca/wp-content/uploads/7-2-powers.pdf>.

¹⁹ Frank Debenham, *The Reader's Digest Great World Atlas*, (London: The Reader's Digest Association Limited), 41.

²⁰ Based on the source of the "Priestly" tradition of the Pentateuch, Japheth is declared as the third son of Noah, whereas the older tradition Yahwist assert him as Noah's second son as seen in Genesis 9: 20-27.

in the earth covered by a flat rock, while he also speculated that Chhinlung was the name of a Chinese prince who left his father and moved to Awk Satlang in Burma

Map No.1.: Location of modern-day Chhinlung



(Source: Frank Debenham, *The Reader's Digest Great World Atlas*, (London: The Reader's Digest Association Limited), 41.)

around 750 A.D. They later assembled in large numbers in Awk Satlang. After Prince Chhinlung died, his people moved to a new location and referred to themselves as *Chhinlunga chhuak* (*Chhinlunga Chhuak* means originating from Chhinlung). We may consider that those were the ancestors of the inhabitants of the present-day Chin Hills, Manipur, Mizoram, Satikang Hills and Cachar Hills.²¹ Vanchhunga, in his book, *Lusei leh a Vela Hnam Dangte Chanchin*, relied on Chinese and Burmese legends and proposed that Chhinlung might be the name of a Chinese king's son who established his kingdom at Aupataung in Burma, possibly identified as Awk Satlang and that after Chhinlung passed away his subjects moved on farther, which might be a reliable indication of the Mizos' ancestry.²² K. Zawla also suggested in his book *Mizo Pi Pute Leh An Thlahte Chanchin* that a Chinese prince named Chhinlung might have had a kingdom named after him.²³ Similar to this, in *Mizo History - Mizo Hnam Hrang Hrangte Chanchin* by Hrangthiauva that a place named Chhinlung could have existed in Awksatlang, also known as Aupataung by Burmese people, in Burma. In addition, he noted that the Mizos' ancestors had lived in Chhinlung, where Chhinlunga had ruled as their monarch. As a result, their village was known as Chhinlunga's village. Here in Chhinlung, a devastating plague hit the village, and many people died. In their grief, they composed a song given below:

*A tlung e, thim khawzin a tlung e,
Khua tinah thim khawzin a tlung e.*

*Khua tinah thim khawzin a tlung e,
Thalai leh dawntuai an tliak zo ve.*

*Thalai leh dawntuai an tliak zo ve,
Chhinlungah mi awm lo, vangkhaw zawng ti ula.*

We can translate the song as follows:

It has come, darkness has come,
Darkness covers every village.

²¹Rev. Liangkhaia, *Mizo*, 1.

²²Vanchhunga, *Lusei Leh A Vela Hnam Dangte Chanchin*, Reprint(Aizawl, Mizoram: Department of Art & Culture, 1994), 3-4.

²³K. Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute Leh An Thlahte Chanchin*, 5th ed. (Mission Veng, Aizawl, Mizoram: Lalnipuii, 2011), 6.

Darkness covers every village,
Youngmen and girls all die.

Youngmen and girls all die,
None remains in *Chhinlung*, not a single one.

This song suggests the ancestors of the Mizo people who formerly lived in a location known as Chhinlung. However, they must have fled Chhinlung due to the disease and continued their hunt for a new home, which prompted their westward movement.²⁴

Likewise, Vumson in *Zo History* stated, “Zo legends assert that the Zo were originally from a cave called Chhinlung,” the Zo he refers to can be considered the forefather of the Mizos. However, he mentions that the locations of Chhinlung vary among the different ethnic groups of the Mizos.²⁵ In the same way, B. Lalthangliana, in his book, *India, Burma Leh Bangladesh-a Mizo Chanchin*, brings up how different ethnic groups of the Mizos claim Chhinlung as the place of their origin but have given various names of Chhinlungas follows:

1. Lusei - Chhinlung
2. Hmar – Sinlung,
3. Tedim (Paite) – Khul,
4. Kuki (or Thado) – Chhinlung,
5. Darlong – Sinlung,
6. Anal – Khol
7. Kom – Khur

He acknowledged that Chhinlung’s exact location is unknown but referred to the hypothesis by Mizo genealogists identifying Chhinlung as the Great Wall of China.²⁶ Like other ethnic groups, the Ranglong consider Chhinlung their ancestral homeland. Older Ranglong people asserted that their ancestors emerged from the Khurpuitabum cave. Khurpuitabum’s meaning in this context is identical to that of Chhinlung.²⁷ The Darlong recognise that their ancestors came from a particular cave named Sinlung

²⁴Hrangthiauva, *Mizo History (Mizo Hnam Hrang Hrang Chanchin)*, 2nd ed.(Tuikhuahtlang, Aizawl, Mizoram: C. Chhuanvawra & Sons, 2015) 1-3.

²⁵Vumson, *Zo*, 26.

²⁶B. Lalthangliana, *India, Burma Leh Bangladesh – A, Mizo Chanchin (History and Culture of Mizo In India, Burma & Bangladesh)*, 2nd ed. (Remkungi, 2014), 45.

²⁷*Account of Ranglong*, 3.

and believe it still exists in South China, like many other tribes of Kuki-Chin descent. Although the well-known Chhinlung tales differ, they all point to the origin of man from a specific location, whether it be a cave or a hole.²⁸

The preceding observations of the many hypotheses on the *Chhinlung* theory likely draw the most plausible hypothesis for the origin of the Mizos. However, the precise location of Chhinlung is unknown, and there are some variations in its content and its meanings. What is evident is that our forefathers had the idea or knowledge of their origin that had been passed down from generation to generation, which further produced their sense of knowledge for self-contemplation, which assisted in the construction of their identity, like Henri Lefebvre viewed the characters of “production” by Hegelianism in *The Production of Space*:

First, the (absolute) idea produces the world; next, nature produces the human being; and the human being in turn, by dint of struggle and labour, produces at once history, knowledge and self-consciousness – and hence that Mind which reproduces the initial and ultimate idea.²⁹

Despite the lack of geographic specificity, the Chhinlung narrative and their origin theories possessed symbolic power in catalysing the Mizos’ self-exploration of their roots, facilitating an ongoing “production” of their unique socio-cultural identity imbued with ancestral knowledge passed down through myths and oral histories. However, the specific details of the Mizos’ origin and the complexities of their identity construction may involve cultural, historical and socio-political factors beyond Lefebvre’s theoretical framework. The myths and theories about the Mizo origin play a significant role in creating a historical narrative that contributes to the ongoing process of shaping and understanding their identity.

Another approach to tackle the pre-colonial history of Mizos is through folktales, as they reflect our history by explaining our existence, conduct, and customs and, in the long run, making it possible to define our identity. Folktales dealing with the concept of opposite worlds of the living and the dead, the earthbound and the para-human, the human and the sub-human, the human and the

²⁸Letthuama Darlong, *The Darlongs of Tripura*, 2nd ed.(Agartala, Tripura: Tribal Research & Cultural Institute, Govt, of Tripura, 2013), 13; Siana, *Mizo*, 7.

²⁹Henri Lefebvre, *The Production Of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith (108 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1JF, UK: Basil Blackwell Ltd., & Massachusetts 02142, USA,3: Cambridge Center, Cambridge, 1991), 68.

superhuman abound, implying spatial limitations and social classification existing even in the earliest times. Such assumptions cannot be ruled out because every plane of existence in these opposite worlds exhibits and shares the language and behaviour of humans. Mizos have a rich store of folktales ranging from mythical and legendary tales to comic and allegorical tales wherein animals and humans play equal roles in the same way as Lefebvre refers: “Nature produces the human being.”

Tales of mythical Nature are about the origin of earth and life forms, the concept of virtue and life after death. Folktales show that the Mizos once believed that a single goddess, Khuazingnu, created the world. There was no soil when Khuazingnu formed the planet, and the area was covered with small rocks, making it impossible for trees and plants to grow. There was a large river called Tuihriam that was extremely cold. Dipping one's hand into its water felt like the river had severed the limb; so intense was the chill. No one would have the guts to swim in it. However, there was a small patch of land on the other side of Tuihriam, which both animals and people coveted intensely. Various animals tried to swim across the river and retrieve the soil, but none were successful. Eventually, a porcupine came forward and tried to swim across the river. By force of will, it thickened its skin and succeeded. He pushed the soil with his snout, and some of it was attached to his lips, which he managed to return to the opposite bank. After that, there was another issue over how to enhance the soil, and none of them could come up with a solution. An earthworm moved forward and suggested he could improve the soil by eating and defecating it. Though they initially objected, they finally accepted his offer, having no other alternative. The earthworm then began to consume a small amount of soil. He quickly multiplied with his excrement, and the soil distributed evenly to cover the ground. After that, Chulteinu³⁰ levelled and smoothed the earth's surface, creating a flat area. Trees and bamboo grass appeared soon after the earth had soil on it. At that time, Vanlaiphai, a settlement, was located at the centre of the sky. There was a very tall tree called *Thingvantawng*, and the villagers wanted to cut it down. They cut down the tall tree when they thought the soil was dry enough. However, the soil was not dry enough, and the fallen tree destroyed the flat soil. The larger branches formed

³⁰In *Mizo Thawnthu Zirzauna* by Dr. Lalruanga, Chulteinu is referred to as Chhura.

the big rivers, and the smaller ones formed the small rivers, leading to streams and mountains.³¹

The myth of *Thimzing*³² was the Mizos' most universal folktale concerning the beginning of humanity. The event was memorable when, on one occasion, a solar eclipse lasted longer than anticipated, and the Sun obstructed from early morning till midnight. Unexpected odd events happened during that time of darkness, and everyone transformed into different species. Some changed into monkeys and chimps, while the chief and his council became Vakul,³³ and those *Thangchhuah*³⁴ men turned into tigers. The young men who amused themselves in wrestling turned into bears. Young men and women who had formed merry *lawm*³⁵ groups in the *jhum* turned into Koro³⁶ and Vazar,³⁷ while those who returned from their *jhums* with fire brands turned into fireflies and *Taumeichherchhi*.³⁸ Different tribes evolved into various forms – Paite and Vuite became squirrels, the Chawngthu tribe became monkeys, the Vangchhe tribe became elephants, and the Ralte tribe became Chepchep.³⁹ Even the domesticated animals changed into wild animals and birds, and some people became stars during this event, known as the *Thimzing*. When that happened, Khuazingnu, their creator, was so upset that she contemplated a solution to reverse the situation before they all evolved into other forms. She started by selecting one human couple from each tribe or clan, placing them in a pit, and covering the hole with a large rock called Chhinlung. The number of humans inside the Chhinlung eventually increased, and Khuazingnu, unsure if they were now a sufficient number, opened the Chhinlung and peered inside. The noise the humans made revealed that they were sufficiently numerous, and Khuazingnu was

³¹ R.L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Hnahthlak Thawnthu Vol I (Thuanthu leh Ramsa Thawnthu)*(M-24, Ramhlun South, Aizawl, Mizoram: Dindin Heaven, 2009), 29-34.

³² The name of a fabulous Great Darkness.

³³ The name of a bird – the bhimraj or drongo.

³⁴ The title given to a man who has distinguished himself by killing a certain number of different animals in the chase or, 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* (cloth). The possession of this title is regarded by Pa as a passport to Pialral (Paradise).

³⁵ To assist a person in any kind of work in exchange for similar assistance received or to be received.

³⁶ The name of two species of birds the white crested laughing-thrush and the brown jay.

³⁷ The name of a bird who go about in flocks.

³⁸ A kind of “Will-of-the-wisp” or “St Elmo’s fire,” supposed by the Lushais to be a *tau* spirit carrying a torch – hence its name.

³⁹ The name of a small cicada.

ecstatically pleased and opened the Chhinlung widely. Different Mizo tribes emerged from Chhinlung's open entrance. However, when the Ralte tribe arrived, they were so enormous in number and made such noise with their chatter that Khuangzingnu decided to seal the Chhinlung. Those who remained within could not exit because no one reopened it. Some suggest that if Khuangzingnu had kept the Chhinlung open longer, the ethnic Mizo tribes would have been considerably larger. As a result, every branch of the Mizo group now refers to themselves as *Chhinlung chhuak*.⁴⁰

A detailed account of the creation of humankind according to the Mizos in *The Lusei Kuki Clans* by Lt. Col. Shakespear runs as follows:

Formerly the Hauhul chief swallowed the moon, having been changed during his dream into an awk⁴¹, and many people were watching and said, 'The awk is swallowing the moon.' Then he awoke and his mouth was bleeding. A year later he died and his ghost was turned into an awk and went up into the sky, and the moon was full and big, and the ghost, which had been changed into an awk, could not swallow the moon, but the next day the moon was smaller and he swallowed it. Thus men knew for the first time that there was an awk.

When an eclipse occurs there is much excitement and beating of drums, &c. This is to frighten the awk, for the Lushais believed that once the awk swallowed the Sun so effectually that general darkness prevailed. This awful time is called "Thimzing" - i.e., the gathering of the darkness - and many awful things happened. Everything except the skulls of animals killed in the chase became alive, dry wood revived, even stones became alive and produced leaves, and so men had nothing to burn. The successful hunters who had accumulated large stocks of the trophies of their kill were able to keep alive using of them as fuel, and some of their descendants still survive among the Thados. As it was pitch dark, neither animals nor men could see at all, and tigers went about biting wildly at trees, stones, and people. A general transformation took place, and humans too all changed into animals. Those who were going merrily to the jhum were changed into "satbhai" (laughing thrushes), as can be known by their white heads, which represent the turbans worn by the men, and their cheery chattering. People wearing striped cloths became tigers, the chiefs of those days being represented by the hornbills of today, whose bills represent the bamboo rods for stirring rice while cooking; but another version is that the chiefs became king-crows, whose long tail-feathers the chiefs value much and wear as plumes. The black hands of the gibbon prove clearly that his ancestors were dyeing thread when the Thimzing occurred. Another version ascribes the same origin to the crows. Similarly, those who were carrying torches finding their way down stream

⁴⁰R. L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Hnahthlak Thawnthu*, 26-29.

⁴¹Awk is the name of a fabulous creature which is supposed to swallow the sun or moon at the time of eclipse.

beds were changed into fireflies. The Chongthu family are sometimes said to have been turned into monkeys, the Vangchhia into elephants; but another version says the elephants were old women who were wearing their “puanpui” - i.e., cotton quilts - with the tufts of cotton outside. Wrestlers were suddenly transformed into bears, who to this day grapple with their foes.

The Paihte or Vuite clan became a species of squirrel, while the Ralte’s ancestor was just saying, “Vaibel kan chep te ang nge?” “Shall we suck our pipes?” and was therefore changed into a sort of insect called “chep chep,” from the sound it is always making.

The domestic animals were changed into wild ones, but a number of large boulders in the Vanlaiphai are said to represent Chhura’s mithans which were grazing there at the Thimzing. After this terrible catastrophe the world was again repopled by men and women issuing from a hole in the earth called the ‘Chhinlung.’⁴²

Furthermore, the Mizos had a theory concerning the eclipse. Similar to the tale mentioned above, the Mizo people once believed that the spirit of the Pawi chief was responsible for the solar eclipse. They thought that a Pawi chief was swallowing the Sun and tried to rescue it; they used to make lots of noise by beating gongs, drums and anything that could make a loud noise. Such a belief occurred like this: once, a solar eclipse happened while a Pawi chief slept. After being awakened by the fear-stricken people, he related his dream. “Oh, how my mouth aches! I swallowed the Sun, and it thrashed about so much I spat it out again, and I become very tired.” And he died soon after. So when a solar eclipse occurred, they took it as an omen presaging the death of a Pawi chief. When an eclipse occurred, a perception prevailed that tigers and snakes were near and very angry, and people never dared to go working. Moreover, when the “Awk” spat the Sun out on top, it was regarded as a good omen. When it spat out below, it was an omen for dysentery breakout; if it came out on the side, people would develop rib pain. People also believed the Pawi chief swallowed the moon, causing a lunar eclipse. To watch the lunar eclipse, they filled a wooden trough with water and watched the reflection on the water thrashing violently. Considering that Hauhul is one of the Pawi subclans, it is possible that the

⁴²Shakespear, *The Lusei Kuki Clans*, 91-92, also quoted in Lallianzuali Chhangte, “Mizo Origin Myths,” in *Mizo Narrative: Accounts from Mizoram*, ed. Malsawmdawngliana and Rohmingmawii (Guwahati, Assam: Scientific Book Centre, 2014), 4-5; *Mizo Thawnthu*, 3rd ed. (Aizawl, Mizoram: Tribal Research Institute, Dept. Of Art & Culture, 2008), 2-4.

Pawi chief and the Hauhul chief, mentioned by Shakespear, are the same.⁴³ The Pre-colonial Mizo used the celestial object to predict both excellent and terrible occurrences for their future, following the observation of the eclipse narrative mentioned above.

Additionally, in *The Lusei Kuki Clans*, reference is made to the Lusei version of the rebirth of the people as follows:

The place whence all people sprang is called Chhinlung. All the clans came out of that place. Then two Ralte came out together, and began at once chattering, and this made Pathian think there were too many men, and so he shut down the stone.⁴⁴

The Lakhers by N.E. Parry mentions the same origin theory that the Mara/Lakhers had passed down by their predecessors:

Long ago before the great darkness called Khazanghra fell upon the world, men all came out of a hole below the earth. As the founder of each Mara group came out of the earth he called out his name. Tlongsai called out, "I am Tlongsai"; Zeuhnang called out, "I am Hawthai"; Sabeu called out, "I am Sabeu"; Heima called out, "I am Heima." Accordingly God thought that a very large number of Mara had come out and stopped the way. When the Lushei came out of the hole, however, only that the first one to come out called out, "I am Lushei," and all the rest came out silently. God, hearing only one man announce his arrival, thought that only one Lushei had come out, and gave them a much longer time, during which Lusheis were pouring out of the hole silently in great numbers. It is for this reason that Lusheis to this day are more numerous than Maras. After all men had come out of the hole in the earth God made their languages different, and they remain so to this day.⁴⁵

In *Theory and History of Folklore*, Vladimir Propp discussed the relation between reality and folklore and stated, "folklore, like any other art, derives from reality. Even the most fantastic images are based on reality."⁴⁶ Likewise, the folklore mentioned above concerning the Mizos' origin could be considered a flight of their imagination. However, the ideas imply that the story's central purpose is to describe the actual incident from the past. They could not document their life events at the

⁴³ C. Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo Nun* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Mizoram Publication Board, 1999), 74.

⁴⁴ Shakespear, *Lusei Kuki Clans*, 93; Lallianzuali, "Mizo Origin Myths," 5-6.

⁴⁵ N.E. Parry, Indian Civil Service, *The Lakhers* (St. Martin's Street, London: Macmillan And Co., Limite, Direction by the Government of Assam, 1932), 74; Lallianzuali, "Mizo Origin Myths," 6.

⁴⁶ Vladimir Propp, *Theory And History Of Folklore*, trans. by Ariadna Y. Martin and Richard P. Martin and several others, 4th ed. (Minneapolis, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 38.

time, and the only method to do so was through memory, which eventually became a component of their folktales, further portraying their former lives. Another thing worthy of note in the folktales of the Mizos was the ties and conformity we have seen between humans and other living things in which every being played a crucial role in every division of work or any occasion, without any sense of dividing line among them which indicate there was social harmony in the community. As Lefebvre goes on to explain:

Social space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder,⁴⁷ as space implies, contains and dissimulates social relationship and this despite the fact that a space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things.⁴⁸

The fluid and inclusive concept of space in the folktales of the Mizos, where there are no rigid dividing lines among different beings, reflects a worldview characterised by interconnectedness and mutual dependence. This perspective likely influenced various aspects of Mizo society, including how they perceived social relationships, organised their communities, and approached environmental interactions. There is a sense of equality and interdependence among different beings in a society where the boundaries between humans, animals, and nature are not defined sharply. Social relationships are not hierarchical but rather cooperative and symbiotic. It might have fostered a strong sense of community and collective responsibility, where individuals recognised their past interconnected roles within the social structure. Thus, it could be assumed that “the freedom of individual was also protected within this concept. The concept of cooperation and reciprocity became the guiding principle in all walks of life.”⁴⁹ The lack of rigid hierarchies between different beings results in social relationships characterised by mutual respect and collaboration. Such a society values the contributions of all its members, whether they are individuals or like groups such as clans, tribes or communities, leading to a strong sense of unity and shared purpose. Moreover, this outlook in life also impacts

⁴⁷Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 73.

⁴⁸Lefebvre, 83.

⁴⁹Jangkhomang Guite, *Against State, against History - Freedom, Resistance, and Statelessness in Upland Northeast India*, 1sted. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019), xxxv.

the Mizo approach to governance and decision-making. So, even when they started to have leaders within the communities, they were expected to consider the needs and perspectives of all beings, ensuring that decisions benefit the collective rather than a select few.

However, as the population of humans and animals increased, the need for a leader became apparent. Vanhrikpa, recognised for his benevolence and caring nature, emerged as the chosen leader. His leadership style and decision-making had a profound impact on the community. The once undifferentiated relationship between humans and animals started to evolve. Under Vanhrikpa's guidance, a noticeable change occurred. Plants and animals, influenced by his decisions and actions, exhibited distinct personalities. This transformation suggested a departure from the previous harmonious coexistence, introducing a new movement where each entity developed unique characters and traits. This shift in their interconnected world marked a significant chapter in their shared history, as the once unified community now experienced a differentiated existence shaped by the leadership and influence of Vanhrikpa.⁵⁰

The fluid and inclusive concept of space fostered a sense of collective responsibility and mutual support, necessitating a leader who could guide the community while respecting these values. Here, the story of Vanhrikpa could be seen as a symbolic representation of Mizo identity formation, capturing the transition from a harmonious, undifferentiated state to a more complex and diverse cultural landscape reflects the various aspects of identity formation influenced by leaders, cultural interaction, and changing socio-historical circumstances. This kind of narrative not only preserves cultural history but also provides a lens through which the community can reflect on its past and understand the processes that have shaped its identity over time:

It is exciting because they got their *histories* in oral narratives, the corpus of which is indeed very great; it just needs to be excavated. Also, anything that the tribes have – the land, the pains, angers, and so on – can form parts of the unfathomable source of information, which makes it even more exciting. We just need to be sensible to them in order to transform them into useful information. The mountains, the ecology, and the rugged landscape, which

⁵⁰Thanmawia, *Mizo Hnahthlak Thawnthu*, 35 – 38.

acted as the limit, can be an exciting site of surveillance into their worldview, attitude, mentality, and even their physical attributes. It not only protects, preserves, and promotes but also hinders and, in hindering, it has shaped their lived world order. Space/place has been perceived, conceived, lived, and experienced through time; human actions take and make place.⁵¹

1.2 Economic-driven Movement of People

In the past, the Mizos were considered a nomadic tribe that relocated to a new location roughly every five to ten years.⁵² The Mizo people consider Chhinlung the original home of their forefathers, which they believed to be in southern China. Following their departure from Chhinlung, the early Mizo ancestors must have lived in the Chindwin valley in the eighth century A.D. They then moved to the Kabaw valley, which the Mizos refer to as Kawlphai, during the same period, i.e., 800-850 A.D.⁵³ Soon after, around 1000 A.D., they moved from the Kabaw Valley to the region of Khampat, where they remained for several centuries and asserted that Khampat in Burma was their oldest town.⁵⁴ During this time, the area suffered a great famine, and due to wars and conflicts, they determined to leave the area.⁵⁵

Moreover, based on some Mizo oral history, in Khampat, the ancestors of the Mizos were under the rule of an atrocious ruler who compelled his people to build a long, broad channel running through his entire realm and who gave them no time for agriculture, thus leading to famine. As a result, the people decided to flee and migrate to the hills to search for better territory for their livelihood.⁵⁶ At that point, before leaving the area of Khampat, the Mizos planted a banyan tree and prophesied that they would return when the branches of the banyan tree touched the ground. The prophecy is as follows:

*Ka phun Bungpui dawi-ai ka sanna,
Mi khawih loh, sa khawih loh tein,
Thangin lian la Khuanuleng hualin;*

⁵¹Jangkhomang Guite, *Against State, against History*, xix-xx.

⁵²Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier Of India*, Reprint(New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2020), 293.

⁵³Lalthangliana, *Mizo In Burma*, 3-4; B. Lalthangliana, *Mizo Chanchin (A Short Account & Easy Reference of MIZO HISTORY)* (Chhinga Veng, Aizawl, Mizoram: R.T.M Press, 2009), 3.

⁵⁴Zawla, *Mizo Pipute*, 8; Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 13-14.

⁵⁵Lal Biak Thanga, *The Mizos: A Study In Racial Personality*(Gauhati, Assam: United Publishers, 1978), 3; Lalrimawia, 13-14.

⁵⁶Vumson, Zo, 38.

*I tang zuar piallei a zam tikah,
Seifaten vangkhuarawn din leh nang e*

The translation is as follows:

I plant this banyan tree in a wishful dream,
May you grow untouched by man and beasts,
By nature's care, grow strong,
When your branch touches the ground,
Sons of Lusei will build their place over again.⁵⁷

Here, the Darlong tribes assert their claim to planting the Banyan tree at Khamphat through a folksong, given as follows:

*"Simah Lersia, Hmarah Zingthlo;
Khawmalaiah Luahpui;
Luahpuiin Lengbung a Phun;
Thlangah Pual Rangin Tlan E!"*

The song mentions Lersia ruling the southern territory while Zingthlo, Pawi's ancestor, rules the northern region. The song also mentioned that Luahpui, who was the ancestor of Darlong and Hmar, was the one who planted a Banyan tree, which Pualrang admired from the west.⁵⁸ The relationship between the Khamphat Bungpui and the Mizos became clear from the prophetic statement and folksong above, highlighting that the Mizos' ancestors originally resided in the Khampat region. Although they were subject to a brutal king in addition to natural disasters, in light of the prophecy, one must inquire why they abandoned the area and desired to return to Khampat. Before the Mizos fled Khampat, there must have been a close companionship between the Burmese and the Mizos. Many of the Mizo children's games, some of their costumes, farming implements, farm products, and musical instruments all share similarities or have words with the prefix "kawl."⁵⁹

Burmese and Mizo children use the games of throwing quoits, gauntlet, wrestling, merry-go-round, and chuck-farthing. In Mizo, the chuck-farthing is known as "inkawlvawr," whereas "kawl" is "Burmese." Therefore, it is apparent that this game is Burmese. Accordingly, the gauntlet is called "inhawngbi," where the

⁵⁷Lalthangliana, *India, Burma, Bangladesh – A Mizo*, 70.

⁵⁸C. Chawngkunga (Former Minister of Mizoram), interview by Lallawmkimi Ralte, Dawrpui Vengthar, Aizawl, October 14, 2022.

⁵⁹In Mizo, the word 'Kawl' refers to Burmese.

victorious group usually shouts “*aungbi*,” which means “we won.” Mizos must have replicated this shout as “*inhawngbi*,” to which the game referred. The instruments most often employed by Mizos include brass gongs of various sizes, all of which are once again Burmese, and a drum known as “*kawlkhuang*,” considered to have emerged from the late tenth to thirteenth centuries while they were in the Kabaw Valley. In the same way, different names for crops, such as “*kawlbahra*” (sweet potatoes), “*kawlsinhlu*”(Indian gooseberries, *phyllanthus emblica*/amla) and “*kawlthei*”(guava) and agricultural tools like “*kawlhrei*”(axe), “*kawltu*”(hoe), and “*kawlhnam*”(dao) have the prefix “*kawl*” word in their names. It also reveals that the Mizos had a knowledge of farming and employed a variety of tools.⁶⁰

Early in the fourteenth century A.D., the ancestors of the Mizo people migrated from Khampat to the Chin Hills, where they started to divide into numerous smaller tribes due to the conditions that prevailed in the hill tracts’ geographical location.⁶¹ Once they found a location suited for a village, they invariably discovered it was too small for everyone to live there. As a result, only a small group could reside there, and the remaining ones had to continue exploring other acceptable locations. Therefore, due to this division, the Mizo villages began to disperse, and communication between them became incredibly challenging. As a result, the Mizos’ unity steadily dwindled.⁶²

During this time, different chiefless clans settled in various places, vying for supremacy and engaging in conflict. In the absence of a centralised authority, the prevailing notion that “*Might is Right*” was crucial in determining supremacy at that time.⁶³ The Chawngthu clans remained in Bochung and Sanzawl, the Ralte clans in Suaipui and Saihmun, while the Lusei clans remained in Seipui and Khawkawk. Numerous other clans, including Khiangte clans in Pelpawl, Belmual and Lungchhuan, Hauhnar, Chuaungo and Chauhang clans at Hauhnar Hills, and other clans like Ngente, Parte, Punte remained in Chawnghawih and Siallam, had their locations and started to elect their clan heads by selecting the man with the most

⁶⁰ Lalthangliana, *Mizo in Burma*, 9-12; Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 13.

⁶¹ Lalrimawia, 14; Sangkima, *History of the Mizos*, 38

⁶² Lalthangliana, *Mizo In Burma* 14.

⁶³ C. Chawngkunga, interview.

bravery among them.⁶⁴ Sir Robert Reid's quotation from Mr John Edgar, the then Chief Secretary of Bengal, provide background information and an understanding of the scenario as a whole:

Almost every village has its own Chief, who generally, however, owes some sort of allegiance to the most powerful Chief of the group of villages to which he belongs, whom I may, for convenience sake, call the head of his clan. From time to time the Chief of some subordinate village gets power and throws off his allegiance to his former head, and founds a new clan for himself, which gets known sometimes by his name, sometimes by the name of the hill on which the Chief's village is situated, and sometimes by a variation of the original clan name. The people of these Chiefs change about from time to time, leaving a declining or feeble chief to settle under some one more able and energetic.⁶⁵

As a result, each village, led by a chief, gradually came up with its narrative of how it came to be and how it lived there, to the point where it practically forgot about other communities. Each region naturally developed its dialect, style of dress, and traditions. Extreme clannish notions consequently took hold, and the Mizos' unity began to vanish.⁶⁶ Ultimately, the Lusei secured dominance by defeating all the other clans owing to their courage and skill in combat. Most prominent Lusei leaders belonged to the Sailo clan, descended from Sailova, Thangura's grandson, and were the most powerful of these Lusei clans. The Lusei chiefs all asserted that they were Zahmuaka's descendants. Six lines of chiefs, Zadeng, Palian, Thangluah, Thangur, Rivung, and Rokhum, descended from him. The glory of the Sailos was made possible by Sailova, grandson of Thangura, Zahmuaka's fourth son.⁶⁷

According to J. Shakespeare, Thangura, who lived in the early eighteenth century at Tlangkhua, north of Falam in the Chin Hills, was the ancestor of all Lusei chiefs.⁶⁸ Regarding the inception of the Mizo chieftainship, Rev. Liangkhaia and K. Zawla proposed that Sihsinga, whose son was named Ralnaa, and Ralnaa's son, Chhuahlawma, were the earliest ancestors of the Mizo chiefs. At Seipui, the Lusei

⁶⁴ Rev. Liangkhaia, *Mizo*, 21-22; Zawla, *Mizo Pipute*, 12; Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – Hisotry*, 14.

⁶⁵ Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam 1883-1941* (Guwahati, Assam: Spectrum Publications, 1997), 3.

⁶⁶ Lalthangliana, *Mizo In Burma* 14; Siama, *Mizo*, 11.

⁶⁷ *Mizoram District Gazetteers* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Director of Art & Culture, Government of Mizoram, Education and Human Resources Department, 1989) 22-23; Siama, 11-12; C. Chawngkunga, interview.

⁶⁸ Shakespeare, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 2.

took Chhuahlawma captive and sold him as an enslaved person. Nevertheless, a Chhakchhuak tribe there in Seipui adopted him as a son and found him a wife who gave birth to a son, Zahmuaka. Then Zahmuaka married Lawileri and gave birth to Zadenga, Paliana, Thangluaha, Thangura, Rivunga, and Rokhuma. At this time, the Hnamte clan at Khawrua and Tlangkhua was without a leader. They asked Zahmuaka to lead them, but he initially turned them down. However, he decided to proceed with it after considering his wife's suggestion, eventually becoming the Mizo's first chief.⁶⁹

Between 1250 and 1400 A.D., they lived in the Thantlang and Run river region. They later set out towards the area between the Lentlang and Tiau rivers, reaching there between 1410 and 1450 A.D. They lived here for over two centuries, and much of their culture changed. In pursuit of new territory, they eventually crossed the Tiau river and entered modern-day Mizoram under their respective chiefs, and soon, the Mizo chieftains also became hereditary.⁷⁰ However, there was a constant threat from more powerful tribes from the east, and to better resist their attack, several tribes joined together to form one large village called Selesih. Legend states that Selesih had more than 7,000 houses and was a substantial settlement. Nevertheless, a village that size could not be self-sufficient for very long. Some of the sub-tribes moved west in quest of fresh territories since there was a shortage of fields for cultivation, firewood, and drinking water.⁷¹ Under economic pressure, the Mizo chief and their followers moved west for better livelihoods and land suitable for farming. They eventually occupied the area now Mizoram and grew to become the dominant force in the region, which historical records did not accurately document the region at the time.⁷²

The Mizo migration from the Chin Hills to Mizoram likely occurred in three stages. The first group of Mizos, also known as Kukis or Old Kukis, crossed the Tiau river and settled in modern-day Mizoram. The New Kukis followed the Old Kukis, and the Lusei tribes moved after them as the third group. The New Kukis (Thado,

⁶⁹ Rev Liangkhaia, *Mizo*, 35-36; Zawla, *Mizo Pipute*, 12-14.

⁷⁰ B. Lalthangliana, *Mizo Chanchin (A Short Account & Easy Reference of MIZO HISTORY)*, 22-31.

⁷¹ Thanga, *The Mizos: A Study In Racial Personality*, 5; C. Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo Nun*, 5; Siana, *Mizo*, 27.

⁷² S.N. Singh, *Mizoram, Historical, Geographical, Social, Economic, Political and Administrative* (New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications, 1994), 28.

Jangshens with their offshoots) expelled the Old Kukis (Hrangkhawl, Darlong, Biate or Hmars with their offshoots) from Mizoram. The Lusei then pushed them away.⁷³ The New Kukis are said to have taken the same path as the Old Kukis, and the two groups may not have travelled far. So, a conjecture supposes that they arrived in the region of present-day Mizoram somewhere between the fourteenth and fifteenth century A.D. Around 1700 A.D., the Lusei, the final group of migrants to arrive in Mizoram, settled permanently.⁷⁴

1.3 Social Fabric and Cultural Strategies of Environmental Changes

The concept that “the desire for space leads ‘naturally’ to the acquisition of territory, by the use of aggressive behaviour if necessary,” which subsequently evolves into “an impulse to defend this territory against others seeking to ‘invade’ it,” provides a framework for understanding the Mizo settlement patterns and subsequent conflicts.⁷⁵ After the Mizos arrived in the region that is now Mizoram, they engaged in battles with nearby tribes, repelled invaders from the north, and engaged in numerous conflicts with one another. By 1890, various Mizo chiefs had built their villages in the region of what is now Mizoram.⁷⁶ Due to the enormous space available for cultivation close to the majority of villages and the sparse population, one community did not need to trespass upon the grounds of another during the pre-colonial period. Later, when disagreements did occur, the more powerful clan had the upper hand.⁷⁷ The chief had complete control and authority over his village in Mizo society. The chief made all decisions about the village’s internal affairs with the help of his council of elders (*Upas*). It is

⁷³ C.A. Soppitt, *A Short Account of the Kuki-Lushai Tribes on the North-East Frontier*, Reprint(Aizawl, Mizoram: Firma KLM Private Limited For Tribal Research Institute, Govt. Of Mizoram, 1976), 7; Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 14-15; G.A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey Of India, Vol. III Tibeto Burman Family Part III, Specimens of The Kuki-Chin and Burma Groups*(Calcutta, India: Office of the Superintendent, Government Printing, 1904), 2, <https://archive.org/details/LSIV0-V11/LSI-V3-3/page/n5/mode/2up>.

⁷⁴ G.A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey Of India, Vol. III*, 2; Sangkima, *History of the Mizos*, 53; Siama, *Mizo*, 17.

⁷⁵ David Storey, *Territories The Claiming Of Space*, 2nd ed. (Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN: Routledge, 2012), 14.

⁷⁶ Lalthangliana, *India, Burma Leh Bangladesh – A, Mizo*, 345; Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo*, 5.

⁷⁷ Soppitt, *A Short Account Of The Kuki-Lushai Tribes*, 22; Lt. Col. Thomas H. Lewin, *A Fly On The Wheel Or How I Helped To Govern India*, Reprint(Aizawl, Mizoram: Tribal Research Institute, Art & Culture Department, Government of Mizoram, 2005,) 232.

accurate to say that the chief was the virtual landowner in the pre-colonial Mizo society. The chief territoriality in pre-colonial Mizo society revolved around the chief's authority over land, governance, and internal affairs of the village.⁷⁸

The people often identified themselves and indicated their place of belonging by referencing the names of their chiefs. They would ask, "*Tu Khua nge I nih?*" meaning, "Of whose village are you?" and respond, "*Chu mi Khua chu ka ni,*" which means, "I belong to the village of such chief." This practice further demonstrated how the chiefs identified the identity and belonging of their people. The chief's name became a significant aspect of individual identity and belonging, emphasising the importance of the strong connection between individuals or communities and specific geographical territories led by the chief in defining the social structure of the Mizos during this period.⁷⁹

Even though each village had its boundary, which was occasionally vague and never precisely defined, the Mizos were free to move to neighboring villages. A chief, however, never visits another chief's village to induce or convince a person to go on his own.⁸⁰ Lewin's reference to a hill proverb clearly illustrates how the pre-colonial Mizo society acknowledged other boundaries:

If you go into a strange river take in your flags;
If you enter a strange village, take the strut out of your walk;
Even better, as his hill servant put it –
In your own village crow and be a cock; but when
You are in another, you must be a hen.⁸¹

The practical considerations influenced by the fear of losing his subjects mitigated the chief's potential for despotic rule. This apprehension stemmed from the people's nomadic instincts and the imperative to govern according to established customs. It fosters governance that emphasises a delicate balance between authority and the preservation of communal loyalty. The Mizos like to build their villages on top of ridges or spurs because it is challenging to find locations elsewhere due to the

⁷⁸ N. E Parry, I.C.S., *A Monograph on Lushai Customs & Ceremonies*, 3rd ed. (Aizawl, Mizoram: Firma KLM Private Limited, on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, 2009), 1-3; R.H. Sneyd Hutchinson, *Eastern Bengal And Assam District Gazetteers, Chittagong Hill Tracts* (Allahabad: Pioneer Press, 1909), 48.

⁷⁹ C. Lalaudinga (Headmaster Pensioner, State and National Awardees' for Teacher and INTACH Life Member), interview by Lallawmkimi Ralte, Ramhlun Venglai, Aizawl, October 4, 2022.

⁸⁰ Parry, *Lushai Customs & Ceremonies*, 16 – 17.

⁸¹ Lewin, *A Fly On The Wheel*, 196.

steepness of the hillsides, in part due to climate reasons. Still, a stockade of heavy timber logs surrounded it primarily to gain an excellent defensive position.⁸² The Mizo tales of Thlanrawkpa, connected to the Mizo's early past, are one of the folktales that provide a different justification for why the Mizo built their homes on hillsides. This narrative asserts as follows:

Thlanrawkpa was a powerful chief and the first person to domesticate a *mithun*⁸³. Thlanrawkpa attained such dominance that he even married the daughter of God. Thlanrawkpa gave God a large gun as a gift during the wedding ceremonies, and the thunder we hear today is the report of that gun. Thlanrawkpa asked all the animals present to assist him in constructing a path to God's residence so that he may return with his bride. All were happy to assist, with the exception of the owl and earthworm, who then received a curse from God and consequently became unable to look at the Sun without perishing. However Thlanrawkpa asked God to withhold the Sun for a day during this festival so that the owl and the earthworm might join in the feast. God complied with this request, and there was total darkness for a period of time, known to the Mizos as *Thimzing*⁸⁴. Animals and birds that had no names before to distinguish them from one another were given specific names during Thlanrawkpa's *khuangchawi*⁸⁵. According to the unique achievements they accomplished at the feast, they were given names. After Thlanrawkpa's wedding, the entire community caught fire, and God's daughter urged everyone to go to the sea, where it was cool. After that, there was a significant flood, and so the Mizos began to build their residences on stilts to protect themselves from flooding.⁸⁶

From the notion mentioned above, it is evident why the Mizos locate their settlement on top of a ridge for a variety of reasons, including the inability to find suitable positions elsewhere because of the steepness of the slopes or due to flooding as depicted in the stories of Thlanrawkpa, but the primary motive may have been for security. Furthermore, because of their migratory patterns, the Mizos were less likely to build extensive barriers and instead looked for a challenging spot. It reflects the

⁸²Shakespeare, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 19-43; Capt. T.H. Lewin, *The Hill Tracts Of Chittagong And The Dwellers Therein* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Tribal Research Institute, Department of Art & Culture, Govt. Of Mizoram, 2004), 144; J.H Harrington, "II. Account of the Kookies or luntas: written by John Macrae, Esq. and communicated to the Asiatic Society," in *Philosophical Magazine Series 1* (1798-1826), 17:65 (June, 2016):13-14, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1478644030867636>.

⁸³The domesticated *Gayal*.

⁸⁴As mentioned before the word "*Thimzing*" refers to a fantastical period of immense darkness during which many terrible events are alleged to have taken place, and the Mizo people associate it with the dawn of humanity.

⁸⁵The name of a public feast given by chiefs and other well-to-do in the Mizo society.

⁸⁶Thanga, *The Mizos*, 2.

community's historical background and the need to adapt to their habitat's geographical and environmental conditions.⁸⁷

When the chief passed away in the olden days, his son received the land by an inherited right. There were few chiefs in pre-colonial times, and each one might control substantial land holdings. Upon their marriage, it was customary for the chief to give each of his sons a plot of land and establish them with their village. When the father/chief passed away, the youngest son remained with him and took over the village. Due to this habit, the land had already been sub-divided when the British authority was established in present-day Mizoram and outlawed warfare, leaving few chiefs whose lands could be divided. Therefore, only one of a chief's sons can aspire to inherit a village's territory for practical reasons.⁸⁸ A quotation from J. Shakespeare's note demonstrates our point:

I have submitted proposal for educating the sons of the chiefs. I am strongly opposed to the formation of many petty hamlets. Every chief has his boundaries now and I should not subdivide the land further. Where a chief has sons, he may if he likes give them hamlets within his boundaries, but his responsibility for the collection of house-tax and the carrying out of orders should not thereby be diminished.⁸⁹

Shifting cultivation was the primary production method throughout the pre-colonial era, with hunting as a backup. When selecting land for cultivation, the chief and the elders carefully evaluate the quality of the land after consulting the *Pasaltha* and the *Ramvachal*. Usually, some claim that the period to choose a cultivation plot is late January or early February. However, the old saying goes: "*Ramtuk relho awmtual mei lum aiin Siruk an men tla thak thak thin*," which means that the committee for yearly distribution for Jhum sitting by the bonfire ended after the Pleiades sank. Another saying goes: "*Upa pawntoin Siruk an men thlak thak thak chuan ram tuk rel a hun a ni ngai*," which can be comprehended as when old men went on chatting at night to the setting of the Pleiades it is time for the distribution of the annual *jhum* land. As the Pleiades started to vanish towards the end of February, this proverb simply states that choosing a plot of land may not always be possible in January; as

⁸⁷Shakespeare, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 19; J.H. Harrington Esq., 'II. Account of the kookies or lunctas, 13-14.

⁸⁸Parry, *Lushai Customs & Ceremonies*, 1-4; Shakespeare, 42.

⁸⁹Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam*, 43-44.

a result, land selection also took place in late February.⁹⁰ This *Siruk* (Pleiades constellation) appears in winter, at dusk in November. When it reached the zenith, it was considered the time for older adults chatting outside (by the fire) to retire. Even children playing outside at night used to sing this rhyme:

*“Siruk van laizawl a thlen leh
I tin rual ang, Dar lenmawi,”*

The rhyme may translated as:

As the Pleiades reach the zenith
Let us all go to bed, beautiful friend.⁹¹

Even a lullaby was composed as follows:

*“Ka nau Thangte, sangparah khua va chuan la
Siruk kawlkungah leng e;
Siruk kawl kungah leng e, thangvan zawlah,
Chhawrthlapui lamluai nge,”*

This lullaby may interpreted as:

My dear little Thangte, go up the high platform,
And see if the Pleiades has risen;
The Pleiades have come up to the edge of the sky,
The forerunner of the bright moon.

The story of the origin of *Siruk* (Pleiades) is told in Mizo folklore as follows:

There was once a location with a very excellent quality of clay not far from the edge of a village. The clay was perfect for producing pots and other practical objects. The clay was also incredibly fine so it was simple to pound and shape into slingshot pellets. As a result, the villagers went there often. Six villager men showed up one day and dug for clay in the hole that had been made by frequent clay digging. The hole was deep and wide enough for all six men to enter simultaneously because everyone used to come and dig for clay there. They were cheerfully excavating for clay when the hole abruptly caved in. Six of the companions passed away tragically. According to Mizo elders, the spirits of departed friends soared to heaven and transformed into stars. The six stars would vanish from the sky during the *Vau* (March) season because of a strong storm. It is assumed that they were carried off by the storm. As a result, the storm is known as “*Siruk la*”, or the storm that stole the six stars.⁹²

Historically, according to the Mizos, the *Siruk* (Pleiades) were seven before a strong storm blew one of them away. The worst storm in a year has been called

⁹⁰Lalthangliana, *India, Burma Leh Bangladesh – A, Mizo*, 364.

⁹¹Rev. Liangkhaia, *Arsi Chanchin*(Aizawl, Mizoram: Rev Liangkhaia with the approval of the Mizo Academy of letters, 1975), 1-2.

⁹²Thanmawia, *Mizo Hnahthlak Thawnthu*, 115-116.

“*Siruk la*” (six stars taker/Pleiades taker). They considered that by early May, the Pleiades would be set at dusk and regarded it as the time for sowing paddy seeds. At that time, a strong gale used to come, after which the Pleiades stopped appearing. The mystery was explained by saying that the storm blew it away, for which the storm earned its name, “*Siruk la*”/“Pleiades taker.” After the six stars’ disappeared blown by the storm, they believe no strong wind comes during the year.⁹³

Moreover, there are two stars for which they did not give a name but laid great importance to them. About this star, they used to say that between the rise of a crescent moon and the full moon, a small star is seen either on the right or left side of the moon. If it appears on the right, they said “*Milu a Khai*,” meaning it carries a head, and if it appears on the right, they said “*Chem a Chawi*,” signifying it wields a sword auguring a successful time to engage in hunting and raiding expedition. It was an excellent opportunity to raid their enemy, too. It was customary to leave reluctant braves to guard the village. A famous war chant goes thus:

*Arsi e, thlapa chaw law, ralvawn za lang ka duh in e,
Hawikawm e, thanglung thawn e, ka do rimnampa ka tlun e,*

It may translated as:

May the stars hide their light as we go to fight enemies,
Thus, we, and brave fighters, shall capture our foes easily.⁹⁴

Thus, the “*Siruk*” (Pleiades) star observation mentioned above made it evident that the Mizo people used these six stars to determine the seasons and the passage of time in the past and to indicate whether an event was favourable. Likewise, they employed meteors to denote both favourable and unfavourable events. In the past, people did not know what caused meteors; however, they acknowledged that they could observe them throughout the day and refer to them as “*Khawchan*” and give the nighttime meteor the name “*Chhawihfa*”. They consider “*Khawchan*” and “*Chhawihfa*” warning signs for anything negative.⁹⁵ It is evident from the observation above that the Mizos’ pre-colonial practices reveal a profound symbiotic relationship with the cosmos. Their skilful use of stars for predicting favourable and unfavourable events indicates a life profoundly shaped by natural

⁹³ Rev. Liangkhaia, *Arsi Chanchin*, 2; Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute*, 117.

⁹⁴ Zawla, 120-121; Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo*, 154.

⁹⁵ Rev. Liangkhaia, *Arsi*, 30.

factors. The Mizos' cultural practices and celestial observations intertwine, influencing practical decisions and forcing the core of their cultural values and identity.

The Mizos of pre-colonial times practised *jhumming*, or shifting cultivation, and after the year's harvest, they elected to cultivate another territory. This method of shifting cultivation caused them to become nomadic tribes. The availability of resources for cultivation in the immediate area determines how long a village stays in one location. The village is relocated to a new location once all the land that is conveniently accessible has been used. They had never stayed in one location for more than ten years. When they decided to locate such a new settlement, the chief sent some of his people to investigate whether it was a secure location for settlement. The inspection team took a cock and spent the night at the site where their future village would be located. They believed that establishing settlements in the area would not be wise if the cock they brought did not crow in the morning. However, if the cock crowed in the morning, the inspection team deemed the location suitable as a stable place for settlements.⁹⁶

It demonstrates that the pre-colonial Mizo were aware of the ability of animals to serve as a guide between humans and their destiny. It shows that natural factors influence how they conduct their lives. The Mizos were once considered superstitious and that every unexpected occurrence would foretell unfavourable outcomes. They commonly regard some actions, thoughts, or sights as "*thianglo*"⁹⁷ or taboo; if they experienced any strange sight or sound, they would immediately assume that some tragedy was on the horizon and seek *Puithiam's* (priest) guidance on how to avoid it. J. Shakespear recounts the many superstitious items.⁹⁸

In the olden days, the Mizos' subsistence economy also depended primarily on hunting because they lacked animal husbandry techniques due to their nomadic way of life. They organised many hunting groups, and their preferred prey was the

⁹⁶ Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo*, 95; Shakespear, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 22; McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, 165-166.

⁹⁷ *Thianglo* originally carried with it the idea of misfortune or even death being likely to follow any act, etc, so designated.

⁹⁸ See J. Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, 100-104.

wild elephant, which was plentiful in the foothills.⁹⁹ In quest of elephants and other wild animals, large hunting parties launched protracted trips into the deserted areas of the land.¹⁰⁰ However, as time passed, the Mizo community frequently experienced economic difficulty due to a shortage of arable land and food. Different economic interests often brought on inter-tribal conflicts. The Mizos were consequently pushed to migrate due to their social and economic difficulties, which raised the demand for unoccupied land. Nevertheless, another distinctive feature of the Mizo economy was the raiding system. Raids were known for their speed and decisiveness, and their primary tactics were surprise attacks, launching quickly and intended to capture territory, loot, and slaves. In their pursuit of wealth, the Lusei chiefs invaded their neighbouring areas, which caused them to push into other regions. The requirement to get human heads for the funeral rites of their deceased chiefs was another factor in the frequent occurrence of these raids. Typically, a quest for human heads began soon after a chief died.¹⁰¹

The Mizos had a common idea that placing the heads around the chief's corpse would let the dead people's souls travel with the chief on its arduous final journey. Due to their habit of headhunting, the Mizos frequently invaded surrounding territories without understanding that there was a boundary line, as they considered all the unoccupied land was theirs to take.¹⁰² Some state that there is a subtle but substantial distinction between the raiding and headhunting traditions of the hill tribes. However, they frequently portrayed raiders as bringing away the highly treasured heads of their victims. While the goal of raiding was purportedly to acquire slaves and loot, the goal of headhunting was purportedly to pursue non-materialistic goals such as gaining social status and spiritual rewards in the afterlife. It can be challenging to preserve the distinction, but in some circumstances, it can be

⁹⁹ Lewin, *The Hill Tracts Of Chittagong*, 144-147.

¹⁰⁰ Shakespear, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 34.

¹⁰¹ Suhas Chatterjee, *Mizoram Under The British Rule* (Delhi 110035: Mittal Publications, 1985), 3; Sangkima, *History of the Mizos*, 65.

¹⁰² Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier Of India*, 288.

helpful—and even revelatory—to do so to comprehend the practice of headhunting.¹⁰³

The economic conditions and production system of the Mizos community profoundly influenced raiding and headhunting practices. Raiding, driven by the pursuit of material gain and territorial expansion, reflects how economic factors shaped social relations and spatial arrangements. Economic disparities may prompt raiding to address resource shortages or acquire extra items unavailable within the community. Economic considerations such as resource acquisition, territorial control, wealth accumulation, and community relations play crucial roles in shaping the nature of raiding and its impact on the raiding community and its surrounding environment. Similarly, while more closely tied to sacred or ritual practices, headhunting bears spatial representations of social status within the community, serving as a symbolic form of wealth. It clearly emphasises the idea that “social space is produced and reproduced in connection with the forces of production,”¹⁰⁴ highlighting how economic considerations impact the social relationships and spatial configuration within the traditional societies of the Mizos.

The need for distinct territory exhibits significant variability across different societies, indicating a strong influence of socio-cultural factors in shaping these spatial needs and practices. This variability suggests that “territorial behavior” is not solely determined by innate drives but is heavily modulated by cultural norms, social structures, and historical experiences.¹⁰⁵ This socio-cultural approach to territoriality is particularly relevant when examining the Mizo people, whose settlement patterns and land use practices reflect a complex interplay of cultural, economic and environmental factors. This thought is evident in the social and economic lifestyles of the Mizos, vividly demonstrated by their diverse dispersion across a broad geographical area. Even though a Mizo chief governs a specific village, it is customary to say “*Chumi Lalna Tlang*,” signifying that that particular chief ruled the hill area. This expression indicates the expansive territorial claims made by the chiefs

¹⁰³ David Vumlallian Zou, “Raiding the dreaded past: Representations of headhunting and human sacrifice in north-east India,” *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 39, no. 1 (2005): 80, <https://cis.sagepub.com/content/39/1/75>.

¹⁰⁴ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 77.

¹⁰⁵ Storey, *Claiming of Space*, 16-17.

in the olden days. Such phrases reflect the chief's governance over a village and highlight the chief's extensive reach and influence, suggesting a broader domain that extended into the hill areas and beyond the immediate village boundaries.¹⁰⁶ The Mizos, however, had minimal chances to increase their territory because of the progressive rise of British influence and the monarchs of Manipur, Cachar, and Tripura's recognition of particular regions.¹⁰⁷ Here, the other tribes perceive the Mizos as encroaching on their land, misunderstanding the Mizos' concept of boundaries. The Mizos were unfamiliar with fixed territorial limits and unknowingly crossed into areas other tribes considered their own. Although the chief in Mizo society had total authority over his village, he had no legal rights to the land in the uninhabited area. As Mackenzie states:

The chiefs claim no property in the land or in the forests. Each claims the men of his tribe wherever they wander, or in whatever part of the country they may settle for the time to jhoom. Generally speaking the jhoomeas of each clan confine themselves within certain rough limits, but there is no real local jurisdiction vesting in any of the chiefs.¹⁰⁸

It was impossible then to regard the Mizos as a tribe without understanding a boundary concept. They have several wise proverbs which serve as advice for moral life and safe conduct of living, which shows their awareness of boundaries:

Ri-te nek zawnga ri kham sawn hi chhungkaw paber an thi duh tih a ni,

in which case it would mean: shifting boundary against a neighbour can culminate in the death of the household's head. Another proverb goes like this:

Mai leng an um ngai lo,

It can be interpreted as: if a pumpkin plant strays beyond the boundary, the owner should not pursue it by taking the pumpkin.¹⁰⁹

The Mizos and their understanding of boundaries can be further collated by studying folktales. In one of the Mizo tales, *Chungleng leh Hnuaileng Indo* (War between the flying creatures and land creatures), we witnessed a massive battle between flying and land creatures after a tortoise smashed a serpent's egg. Although

¹⁰⁶C. Chawngkunga, interview.

¹⁰⁷ Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 288.

¹⁰⁸ Mackenzie, 332.

¹⁰⁹ Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo*, 58-59.

the serpent has instructed the tortoise to keep watch over its egg, a deer dared it to hop over them, but the tortoise refused to accept the challenge. However, the deer kept bothering the tortoise, promising to save him from the serpent if he broke the egg. The tortoise eventually accepted the task but could not succeed and smashed the egg. The deer, terrified of the serpent's anger, ordered the tortoise to seek other protection. However, no one dared to do so. The tortoise, who was miserable and worn out, plodded along till he came onto the home of an eagle, willing to take the tortoise under his wing and defend him. As a result, when the serpent arrived at the eagle's perch, the eagle claimed not to have seen the tortoise. However, the serpent noticed the tail of the tortoise, which prompted the serpent to scream out her rage. This occurrence made the eagle and the serpent rivals, which sparked a battle between creatures of the sky and the land. During the Great War, the bat showed cowardice by frequently switching sides in favour of the winning side. After the war ended and peace returned, the bat found himself awkward, unsure of his side. They claim he spends the day hiding in caves out of shame and only emerges at night.¹¹⁰

It is often seen the bat as illustrative of the consequences of cowardice. However, from another angle, it might serve as a good illustration of how vital it is to define one's identity and set clear boundary limits. As the bat switched sides during the conflict, he lost track of whose side he belonged to, which prevented him from being himself and forced him to hide his identity from others. Likewise, the pre-colonial Mizos must have shared this sense of "territorial belonging" and recognised the importance of being bound to a particular jurisdiction for their safety and well-being. In those days, the Mizos were wont to experience raids and attacks from wild animals, so each of them felt the necessity of being unified as they know that unity is strength, which can only be achieved within such a boundary as "boundaries are clear lines of demarcations, where they unify or filter people – sometimes people with multiple identities and legitimacies."¹¹¹

¹¹⁰Thanmawia, *Mizo Hnahthlak Thawnthu*, 86-91; Dr. Lalruanga, *Thawnthu Zirzauna*(Aizawl, Mizoram: Zomi Book Agency, Bara Bazar, 2000) 92 – 95; Lal Dena, *Selected Mizo Folktales Rereading In The Context Of Modernization And Globalization*(Khatla, Aizawl, Mizoram: MCL Publications, 2013),190-193.

¹¹¹ Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, "The State Of Borders And Borderlands Studies 2009: A Historical View and a View from the Journal of Borderlands Studies," *Journal of Borderlands Studies*1, no. 1 (May, 2010): 9, <http://hdl.handle.net/2115/50839>.

Another Mizo folktale, *Kungawrhi*, illustrates how boundary filters identities. In the story, we witness the appearance of *Keimi*.¹¹² In the tale, a man is splitting a bamboo one day when he accidentally cuts his thumb. Eventually, pus formed on the finger, and a lovely baby girl emerged. He raised the baby as his daughter and gave her the name Kungawrhi. She grew up and became a beautiful young woman. A *Keimi* guy fell in love with her. One day, Keimi dried Kungawrhi's footprint on the shelf above the hearth. Since then, Kungawrhi's health deteriorated. Her father offered her marriage without a brideprice to anyone who knew how to cure her and do so. Then *Keimi* heard about this offer, removed the footprint from the shelf, and healed her. He married Kungawrhi and took her to his home. When he reached the outskirts of the village, he turned into a tiger, telling her to hold his tail and run at all speed. One older woman fetching firewood saw them and reported what she saw to Kungawrhi's father. He then offered her as a prize to anyone who could rescue his daughter. Two brave young men, Phawthira and Hrangchala, offered to attempt the rescue. They eventually arrived at the village of the fairies. However, they were forbidden to enter. *Keimi* had turned himself into a fairy. Phawthira threatened them, saying, "If you don't allow us to enter, we will punish your village. Tell us where you keep Kungawrhi and surrender her to us." The fairies replied, "Do your wish if you can." Phawthira then threw his brass hairpin, upon which one part of the village collapsed. Yet the fairies refused to give up Kungawrhi. Phawthira and Hrangchala tried various means of punishment until they surrendered Kungawrhi. They ultimately returned Kungawrhi to her father.¹¹³

In the story, *Keimi* is given a separate identity and described as part of the creatures who could turn himself into a human and a tiger. His distinct identity indicates that he was not a part of or a member of the community where Kungawrhi lived. However, from a realistic standpoint, a human cannot alter his nature as *Keimi* did. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that *Keimi* must have been a member of a neighbouring tribe with an undeterminable identity for the Mizos at the time. The

¹¹² "*Keimi*" was considered as a mythical tiger-man possessing a magic power of changing himself into a tiger and back again into a human.

¹¹³ Pi Nuchhungi and Pi Zirtiri, ed., *Serkawn Graded Readers Mizo Thawnthu* (Serkawn, Lunglei, Mizoram: Published by the Author, Serkawn Centenary Edition, 2003), 15-16; Dr. Lalruanga, *Thawnthu Zirzauna*, 31.

reason why they identified him as *Keimi* might have been due to his appearance or attire. Thus, our forefathers appear to have a clear sense of boundary as the purpose for the formation of borders/boundaries is:

To demarcate who and what belongs by creating the emblematic other, an identity that lies in opposition to what the state warrants itself and its people as.¹¹⁴

One intriguing aspect of *Keimi* is that there is a possibility that *Keimi* may be a native of one of the Mizos' neighbouring tribes, those subgroups of the Chins like Naga, who believed they shared a close ancestry with the tiger. It is because these tribes must have portrayed themselves in specific ways, like how they dress or apply tattoos to their skin, which may give them a tiger-like appearance in the eyes of other tribes, such as our ancestors referred to as *Keimi*.¹¹⁵ In the story, we have also witnessed how two stalwarts, Hrangchala and Phawthira, volunteered to rescue her, and their heroic escape through the surrealistic boundary between the world of the fairies and that of living humans illustrates the sensation of division between them, which further demonstrated the persistent significance of regional notions of territoriality and sovereignty.

The legendary tales of *Sichangneii*, of *Lawnglaili*, of *Lasiri leh Lasari*, of *Sawrlaii-Tlumtea leh Vanchungnula*, and *Kungawrhproject* a secondary world of higher existence attainable temporarily by those of the lower or everyday world. It appears Mizos conceived of the universe as three-tiered or levels – the lowest tier occupied by mortal human beings, the middle tier being the abode of *Vanchungnula* (heavenly maidens), the third and top tier the seat of *Pu Vana* or supreme God. In the stories mentioned above, the occupants of the first and second levels can visit each other for a limited period. Beautiful maidens like *Sichangneii* and *Lawnglaili* of the middle heaven often visit the lower level to bathe in the cool stream at dawn, to be caught by a specific brave human. A brave youth, Tlumtea paid court to the beautiful *Vanchungnula*. Two heavenly sisters, Lasiri and Lasari, played with two human

¹¹⁴Brit Edellen, "Border and Identities," *Brown Political review*, Last updated April 7, 2016, <https://brownpoliticalreview.org/2016/04/borders-and-identities/>.

¹¹⁵Joy L Pachau and Willem Van Schendel, *Entangled lives- Human-Animal-Plant Histories Of The Eastern Himalayan Triangle* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 97.

brothers, Thangsira and Thangzaia, in a hopeless romantic chase.¹¹⁶ Likewise, all the tales mentioned above show that they reside in two distinct locations—the earth and the heavens—highlighting a dividing line between them.

Tales of young lovers tragically denied connubial happiness owing to parental cupidity or internecine tribal feuds, abduction by the nether world's spirits, and successful huntsmen possessed by the charm of *Lasi*¹¹⁷ are of undiminished interest. There even are reports of experiences corroborating the myths of spirits of the dead on their journey to the final resting place in the dim horizon beyond. Mizos' concept of life after death is of particular significance because they conceived the spirit world as a mere continuity of mortal life and society, though in a different dimension and a reduced form. The borderline between life and death, the living and the dead, the noble and the humble, just as today, was always too obvious to ignore.

In the story of *Tlingi leh Ngama*, a loving couple separated by the death of the wife Tlingi, the border between the world of the living and the dead could be traversed only in dream or trance, and through one such event; Ngama woke up in the village of the dead and happily united with Tlingi. Nevertheless, to a living person, everything in the village of the dead was imperfect and merely imitative of the living world, so Ngama found it confusing and disoriented. Tlingi advised him to return to the world of the living and offer fresh food to her so that she could feed on the spirit of the offering. The Mizos regard the story as the origin of *Mim Kut*,¹¹⁸ the festival of crops during which every family sets aside a portion of their meal for the dead for three months or till *Thitin*¹¹⁹ when they bid the spirit farewell on its journey to the *Mitthi khua*¹²⁰ or *Pialral*¹²¹. Unable to bear their separation, Ngama finally took his own life and became united with Tlingi.¹²² In the story, death draws the line between the worlds of the deceased and the living, thus indicating their perception of boundary, whether in the actual or imaginary worlds.

¹¹⁶Pi Nuchhungi and Pi Zirtiri, *Serkawn Graded Readers*, 22; *Mizo Thawnthu*, 40-44.

¹¹⁷*Lasi* – The fabled creator of animals or the spirit which presides over hunting.

¹¹⁸*Mim Kut* – The name of Mizo festival held in honour of the dead.

¹¹⁹*Thitin* – The month of August.

¹²⁰*Mitthi Khua* – The abode of departed spirits.

¹²¹*Pialral* – The Mizos Paradise.

¹²²Dr. Lalruanga, *Thawnthu Zirzauna*, 45-54.

In a different tale, Mauruangi, whom her stepmother mistreats, is convinced to marry their monarch, *Vailal*,¹²³ by the monarch's assistant because of her beauty and the kindness she has shown them. Here, the appearance of *Vailal* makes it evident that the Mizos had friendly ties with the non-Mizos at the period, especially with plainsmen, and that inter-community marriage might be ordinary at the time.¹²⁴ Furthermore, the *Rajmala* also mentions that a Tripura¹²⁵ King named Kumara fell in love with a Kuki lady when he visited the shrine of *Siva*. Nevertheless, when *Siva*'s wife Parvati became aware of it, she grabbed the woman "by the hair, trampled her throat under her foot" in an attempt to break the woman's neck and caused the Kuki lady to have her throat split in half, forcing the belief that Kuki women have always had a low voice.¹²⁶

The connection between the plainsmen and hill people, particularly the Kukis, as highlighted in the Mauruangi tale and the *Rajmala* account, highlights a complex relationship that speaks to the region's broader concepts of territoriality and sovereignty. This bond and connection suggests there could be a shared understanding or negotiation of space and power, which is integral to territoriality and sovereignty and expressed through cultural practices. The creation and sustainment of "spatial enclaves" in Mizo society exemplify how territoriality and sovereignty influence various aspects of social life, "including race, class, gender, and sexuality."¹²⁷

1.4 Traditional Cosmology and Spirituality

In the past, the Mizo did not perceive human beings as the centre of life but as a component of the natural order of things. They held that the living world was

¹²³*Vailal* – Ruler from/of the plain area.

¹²⁴*Mizo Thawnthu*, 79-91; Pi Nuchhungi and Pi Zirtiri, *Serkawn Graded Readers*, 69-80; Dena, *Selected Mizo Folktales Rereading*; 107-117.

¹²⁵ Tripura is a state situated in the northeastern part of India. It was referred to as "Rengram" by the Mizos which could be translated as "Land of Raja". Tripura was previously called Hill Tipperah by the British Government of India until 1920, when the state's present name came into official use. Therefore, for the purpose of this study the term Tripura will be used instead of Hill Tipperah.

¹²⁶Dr. N.C. Nath, "5. The Book on *Taidaksina – Shrine of S'iva at the city of Chambula*," *Sri Rajmala, Vol I to IV*, Reprint (Agartala, Tripura: Tribal Research & Cultural Institute, Government of Tripura, 2013), 38; Rev James Long, *Analysis Of The Rajmala or Chronicles Of Tripura*, 3rd ed. (Agartala, Tripura : Tribal Cultural Research Institute and Museum, Govt. of Tripura, Agartala, 2008), 9; Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 270.

¹²⁷Storey, *Claiming of Space*, 24.

created and preserved by a supreme being called *Pathian*, who had little regard for humans.¹²⁸ In this case, the name *Pathian* is likewise obscure. They might call *Pa Khuazing*, the father of all beings because the Mizos once thought *Khuazing* was the world's creator and might call *Thian* (holy/pure). Consequently, they might refer to *Pathian* as a sacred ultimate entity.¹²⁹ Besides, the countless *Huai* (evil spirits), which they believed to live in every stream, mountain, and forest and were held accountable for all illnesses and bad luck, have a much greater significance to the average man. In addition to *Pathian* and *Huai*, there is a spirit called *Khuavang*¹³⁰ who, while occasionally compared to *Pathian* and said to be identical, is typically regarded as being beneath him and more compatible with humans. Sometimes, *Khuavang* appears to humankind, and whenever he does, those who encounter it invariably become ill. In addition to all these spirits, each clan or tribe has a unique spirit that governs its destiny. This spirit is known as “*Sakhua*,” and all sacrifices and a *Puithiam* (priest) of the clan or tribe must perform all sacrifices made to the spirits. Only family members may be present. As a result, they devoted their entire life appeasing various spirits, and maybe because of these sacrifices, Mizos are known as “*Ramhuai bia*” (who worship an evil spirit) or “*thingbul lungbul bia*” (who worship trees and rocks). However, they do not worship the spirits as *Pathian* (God) or their creator.¹³¹

The Mizos also believed in inferior benign spirits that did not harm them. Concerning humans, they gave a specific name. They are *Khuanu* (Mother of Nature), *Pu Vana* (Heavenly Father), *Lasi* (female spirit and animal protector), and *Van Chung Nula* (maiden in heaven). Each was regarded as kind and faithful to humans as they carried out their appointed tasks, and the *Pathian* had direct control over them.¹³² The recognition that these supreme beings, despite different names and characteristics, are sometimes considered as one reflects an interconnected and broad worldview. The Mizo likely understood the interconnectedness of these spirits,

¹²⁸Shakespeare, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 61; McCall, *Chrysalis*, 68.

¹²⁹V. Lalthawna, *Pi Pute Sakhua Leh An Thlarau Khawvel* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Mizoram Publication Board, 2006), 38.

¹³⁰*Khuavang* – The name of a guardian spirit.

¹³¹Shakespeare, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 61; Lianthanga, *Hmanlai Mizo*, 7.

¹³²Phairothanga, “*The Origin And Significance Of Inthawina In The Traditional Mizo Society*,” (Bachelor of Divinity Thesis, Aizawl Theological College, Mizoram, 1997), 26.

acknowledging the diversity in their roles while recognising their shared divine essence. The spirits may appear to act separately, but they are inseparable and collectively contribute to the overall spiritual fabric of the Mizo belief system. The Mizos' ability to understand and worship spirits under various names demonstrates the versatile nature of their belief system. It allows for varied interpretations and symbolic representations with their social and personal contexts while retaining a core unity in recognising the significant Supreme Being in the community's life.¹³³

The pre-colonial Mizos also believed that everything in nature, both living and non-living, had a spiritual presence. "The natural appears at the same time as supernatural, and the ordinary as extraordinary," which reflects a belief that all aspects of life and nature are intertwined, influencing and affecting one another in significant ways.¹³⁴ Central to this belief was the perception of "*ramhuai*," evil spirits believed to inhabit specific natural features like large trees or tree roots, ponds, caves, etc. These spirits were considered akin to humans in form and nature, acting as the guardians or proprietors of their respective territorial domains or spaces. This way of thinking necessitated respectful and cautious interaction with the natural world, as they believed that any disruption to these spirits might result in misfortune or harm, leading to illnesses, epidemics and general misfortunes befalling the human community.¹³⁵ "Animism represents one of the most precise and developed forms of the primitive religious conception. Its essential feature is that the universe is supposed to be filled with spirits."¹³⁶ Likewise, the Mizo believed spirits were generally similar to men and regarded as guardians or owners of those territorial spaces.

In the past, the Mizo worldview incorporated a strong sense of territoriality, understanding different geographic locales and landscape features belonging to particular spirit entities. By defining territory as "a portion of geographic space

¹³³C. Lalaudinga, interview.

¹³⁴Waldemar Bogorus, "Ideas of Space and Time in the Conception of Primitive Religion," *American Anthropologist* 2, no. 2 (April, 1925): 207, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/661206>.

¹³⁵Lalsangkima Pachuau, " Mizo "*Sakhua*" in Transition Change and Continuity from Primal Religion to Christianity," *Missiology: An International Review* XXXIV, no. 1 (January 2006): 44, [academia.edu/66543886/Mizo_Sakhua_in_Transition_Change_and_Continuity_from_Primal_Religion_to_Christianity](https://www.academia.edu/66543886/Mizo_Sakhua_in_Transition_Change_and_Continuity_from_Primal_Religion_to_Christianity).

¹³⁶Bogorus, "Ideas of Space and Time in the Conception of Primitive Religion," 211.

which is claimed or occupied by a person or group of persons,”¹³⁷ their belief system thus facilitated a conceptualisation of the land divided into different territories under the metaphysical ownership or control of specific spirit forces. Respecting the territoriality of the spirits was essential to maintaining balance and avoiding calamities, just as humans like to demarcate territories as “theirs” and resent others “invading” their space.¹³⁸ This animistic worldview highlighted and extended the pre-colonial Mizo notion of territoriality, usually understood as claimed by human persons/groups, to the unseen realm of spirits believed to stake claim over specific portions of the geographic space. Consequently, pre-colonial Mizos also intimately linked their understanding of territoriality and boundaries to their spiritual beliefs. They perceived space as being imbued with unseen spiritual entities, where the unseen realm shaped and defined the limits of their habitation and interaction with the environment.

Liangkhaia believes that the Mizo religion and sacrificial offerings are of native origin, and sacrificial worship seems to have a late origin. At first, they were at a loss as to what it was to worship and offer sacrifices to when they became ill and did not know what caused it. They eventually came to adopt a specific form of worship and sacrifice. The first form of sacrifice they adopted was *Arte thlah* and *Bul thluk*. As they continued searching for object of worship, they chanted, “*Pi Biakin lo chhang ang che, Pu Biakin lo chhang ang che,*” which means “Whom grandma worshipped answer, whom grandpa worshipped answer,” offering their prayer to the unknown deity worshipped by their forbears whom they believed must respond to their prayer. Such could have been how they developed a form of worship, and as time passed on, they called upon the names of ancestors they could remember farthest, saying, “*Chu mi biakin lo chhang ang che,*” which implies “whom such and such worship answer.”¹³⁹

According to K.Zawla, the origin of *Sakhua* was the names of two gods, *Sa* and *Khua*, which later combined into *Sakhua*. They worshipped *Sa* with a pig and *Khua* with a *Mithun*. The priest of the clan, *Sadawt*, could conduct the worship of

¹³⁷Storey, *Claiming Of Space*, 1.

¹³⁸Storey, 8.

¹³⁹Rev. Liangkhaia, *Mizo*, 23-26.

Sakhua.¹⁴⁰ There was no sacrifice except incantation. It was a family worship asking the blessing of the maker of people.¹⁴¹ *Sa* is the god specific to individuals, family and clan who guards over the family and blesses them. In contrast, they regard *Khua* as a good spirit and identify it as female. Thus *Khua* and *Khuanu* seemed to be identical. On the other hand, *Khua* can refer to both the protectors of the land and the entire community of a particular village because the word *Khua* means “village or nations.” Though worshipped separately, with the share of *sa* and *khua* being specific, the two formed a unity of religious worship that must always go hand in hand. Such appears to be the form of earliest worship among Mizos¹⁴² The various forms of worship were *Sakung*, *Chawng*, *Dawino chhui*, *Sedawi*, *Dawino*, *Sekhuang* and *Khuangchawi*. The chief and his subjects performed collective worship for the community, which included *MuchhipTlang Biakna*, *Kawngpui siam*, and *Fano dawi*.¹⁴³

The Mizos also believed that *Mitthi khua* and *Pialral*, a concept akin to heaven, existed and that there is life after death. They assume that *Mitthi Khua* served as a place of relaxation for ordinary people who could not perform *Thangchhuah*¹⁴⁴ during their lifetime. *Pialral* was a luxurious and comfortable abode primarily intended for the *thangchhuah* people. In the past, this would have been one of the motivations for the Mizo people to try to become *thangchhuah* to make their spirits reach *Pialral* after this life.¹⁴⁵ The specific beliefs held by the Mizos regarding

¹⁴⁰*Sadawt* – The clan’s priest is known by the name *Sadawt*. Each clan in the Mizo community had its own priest, who went by the name *Sadawt*. *Tlahpawi* served as the chief’s *Sadawt*’s assistant priest and assisted him in every way possible. Another category of priests, known as *Bawlpui* in Mizo society, were primarily responsible for providing assistance to anyone who sought him out, particularly in cases of illness.

¹⁴¹Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute*, 87.

¹⁴²Zaliana, *Mizo Sakhua (Kumpinu Rorel Hma)*, 2nd ed. (Aizawl, Mizoram: Tribal Research Institute, Art & Culture Department, 2013), 7-11.

¹⁴³Rev. Liangkhaia, *Mizo*, 24-26; Siana, *Mizo*, 58-59; C. Chhuanvawra, *Aw Pialral (Mitthi khua leh Pialral chhuina)* (Tuikhuahtlang, Aizawl, Mizoram: C. Chhuanvawra, 2015), 44-46; C. Chawngkung, *Sakhua* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Department of Art & Culture, Govt. of Mizoram, 1997), 32-56; C. Lalaudinga, *Mizo History Chin Hills & Mizoram* (Ramhlun Venglai, Aizawl, Mizoram: C. Lalaudinga & Sons, 2019), 61-67.

¹⁴⁴There are two methods to accomplish *Thangchhuah* and obtain its title: (i) *In lamah Thangchhuah* which involves killing all the domestic animals required to give a feast for the entire village. (ii) *Ram lama Thangchhuah* involves killing of certain wild animals and perform sacrificial ceremony over them. *Thangchhuah* is also known as *Zawhzaw Zo* (person who fulfilled all requirements)

¹⁴⁵Shakespeare, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 62; C. Chhuanvawra, *Aw Pialral (Mitthi khua leh Pialral chhuina)*, 44-46.

the afterlife and their motivations indicated their striving for spiritual elevation. The conception of *Mitthi Khua* and *Pialral* as distinct destinations represents their understanding of space. The desire to reach *Pialral* motivated the Mizos to strive for practices necessary during their lifetime for their spiritual elevation after death.

The Mizos believed that after death, the soul left the body and passed through the *tungchaw* (Mizo bedpost), crossed over to the *khanchhuk* (the cross beam in the roof of the house), followed *liang* (a wall plate) and left the house at the end and ascended to *Rihdil*.¹⁴⁶ It came back from *Rihdil* and lingered in the area of the house for three months in the form of a spirit. The “*mitthi thlaichhiah*”¹⁴⁷ was practised during this time. The soul left this world at the end of time and travelled to *Mitthi khua* or *Pialral*.¹⁴⁸ One unusual aspect of Mizo mourning was that from the day of the deceased’s passing until three months later, the mother of the house was not allowed to fetch water, never cleaned or combed their hair and mourned every morning. This period was known as *Lurumlai* or *Samhrampu*, and they abstained from engaging in religious practices since they believed that their *Sakhua* hated them, which led to their unfortunate circumstances. It indicated a profound seriousness in their *Sakhua*, illustrating the deep significance of their spiritual beliefs and practices.¹⁴⁹

The soul had to go through many stages on its journey. After *Rihdil*, it arrived at the picturesque *Hringlangtlang*,¹⁵⁰ a legendary hill from which it could see the living world. The soul felt a profound sadness because it still longed for the human world. However, when he arrived at the location where the *Lunglohtui* stream runs, drank from the spring, plucked the flower known as *Hawilopar*¹⁵² from its vicinity, and wore it, his soul forgot all about the human world and became driven to

¹⁴⁶Rihdil – The name of the lake said to be passed by departed souls on their way to *Mitthi Khua* located in Myanmar and 3 kilometres from Zokhawthar, Mizoram.

¹⁴⁷*Mitthi thlaichhiah*– The ceremony of making offerings to the spirits who has departed this life.

¹⁴⁸Shakespeare, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 62; Chhuanvawra, *Aw Pialral*, 44-47; R. Chaldailova, *Mizo Pi Pute Nunkhua*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: VLC Hriatrenga, 2019), 15-17.

¹⁴⁹C. Lalaudinga, interview.

¹⁵⁰*Hringlang Tlang*– The name of a mythical mountain on the way to *Mitthi Khua* from which the spirits of the departed look back and view with longing the living world which they have left behind

¹⁵¹*Lunglohtui*– The name of the mythical spring on the way to *Mitthi Khua* beyond the *HringlangTlang* of which the spirits of the departed drink and lose all their longings to return to earth.

¹⁵²*Hawilopar*– The name of a mythical flower which grows on the road to *Mitthi Khua* beyond the *Hringlang Tlang*. The spirits of the dead pluck and wear these blossoms in their hair or ears, and after that have no desire to turn and look back upon the earth which they have left behind.

travel to the *Mitthi khua* or *Pialral*. The routes leading to the *Mitthi Khua* met at a site named *Zingvanzawl*. There was a man named Pawla and his wife, Sanui. Pawla shot every spirit that walked by with his pellet bow, except for those who had died of *hlamzuih*,¹⁵³ *thangchhuah*, a virgin girl, and men who had engaged in sexual activity while they were alive. By looking at them, Pawla could quickly recognise such people, and they had even composed a song for men and women, which indicates that both men and women made every effort to avoid being struck by Pawla's pellet bow. A song for men goes like this:

*Di nei lo Pawlan a sai an ti;
Fam mah ila min sai bil tawh hlei lo'ng e,
Ka nemrang puan tial ka di zawnna.*

Translated as:

Pawla shoots him who had no fiancée,
Should I die, he would not shoot me,
My chequered cloth I shared with my fiancée.

Another song goes like this:

*Fam mah la vala suihlung phang suh,
Pawla sai ral i hlauh leh zingvawnzawlah,
I hel lai siali mi chhal ang che.*

Translated as:

Should you die, young men, be not afraid,
Or should you fear being shot by Pawla,
You claim me as your fiancée.

Moreover, this is how a song for women goes:

*Lungphang suh, mi u Chhuihthangvala,
Pawla sai ral dan nan mi tih loh chuanin,
I tawnah tlang rel ka dawn lo ve*

Which can interpreted as:

Don't be dismayed, young man,
To prevent Pawla from shooting at you,
I would not care what if people cared.

According to their belief, anyone who Pawla shot at would sustain a three-year-long wound. Although there was no more hardship on the journey from that point, the spirits continued straight to *Mitthi Khua* or *Pialral*.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³*Hlamzuih* – Infant dying at or soon after birth and were bury without offering the customary *thlaichhiah* sacrifice for the deceased.

¹⁵⁴Zaliana, *Sakhua*, 14 – 17; Chhuanvawra, *Pialral*, 70 – 72.

The pre-colonial Mizo belief system comprised beliefs in the Supreme Being and Spirits, the existence of “benevolent and malevolent spirits” that required practices such as “propitiatory sacrifices,” “the practice of *Sakhua*,” and beliefs about the afterlife and making every effort to reach *Pialral*. While these may seem purely spiritual, they were driven by and inseparable from the communal solid value system of the pre-colonial Mizo society. Community festivals, moral codes of behaviour, taboos, and superstitious beliefs that regulated their social life were all part of the religion, which was essential for controlling and sustaining their social life. The pre-colonial Mizo belief was a set of abstract beliefs and rituals and a comprehensive system governing spiritual and social aspects of life. It reflects the relationship between the spiritual realm and the communal values that define Mizo identity and society.¹⁵⁵

The pre-colonial Mizo worldview believed in a holistic and interconnected universe where every tangible or intangible element played a vital role. They perceived space not as empty or void but filled with spiritual energies and entities. Space was not confined solely to the physical realm but extended into the spiritual and metaphysical domains, as evidenced by their creation myths and belief systems. Regarding the afterlife, Mizo mythology includes various realms or spaces where departed spirits embark on their journey beyond mortality. These realms could be metaphorical, symbolic, or literal places within the cosmos. Such narratives surrounding the afterlife were not merely speculative but held significant moral and spiritual significance, imparting valuable lessons reflective of Mizo cultural values and beliefs. They did not see the afterlife as a distant or abstract concept but as a continuation of existence within the cosmic order.

To sum up, the pre-colonial Mizo society lived in a close relationship with nature and relied on the abundance of nature for livelihood. Their surrounding environment influences the majority of their customs and cultural practices. Their form of government was chieftainship, and the community always sought to become self-sufficient. Families, clans, tribes and villages formed the boundaries of their concept of unity at the time, and it can be assumed that identity consciousness existed.

¹⁵⁵Pachua, “Mizo ‘Sakhua’ in Transition Change and Continuity from Primal Religion to Christianity,” 42-43.

The Mizos believed in the existence of multiple spirits as well as in the existence of a single supreme entity that was the source of all things. The Mizos' traditional belief system made it apparent that they held the concept of Pathian or God and life after death. However, the conventional Mizo religion's acceptance of the Pathian did not significantly influence or shape their ideas and belief in an afterlife.

Their traditions and religious beliefs highlighted the value of sacrifice, with the priest playing a crucial part in the sacrificial rite. Their surrounding environment influences most of their customs and cultural practices; as Braudel suggests, "humans life respond to the command of environment, but also seeks to evade and overcome them, only to be caught in other toils."¹⁵⁶ The pre-colonial Mizo society responds to the commands of their environment by adapting their way of life to its limitations and demands. However, they also seek to overcome these commands by innovating and finding new approaches. Nonetheless, the Mizos, like any other community, may encounter new challenges or unintended consequences in their pursuit of transcending the environment's influence.

¹⁵⁶Paul Stock, "History and the Uses of Space," in *The Uses Of Space in Early Modern History*, ed. Paul Stock(Palgrave Macmillan, New York, United States, 2015), 3.

CHAPTER 2

COLONIAL EXPANSION AND SHIFTING FRONTIER

During the pre-colonial era, the Mizos, led by their respective tribes or clan chiefs, dominated various areas. They dispersed in numerous areas due to their manner of production-shifting cultivation-which required frequent relocations. The Lushai Hills were undisturbed primarily by outside forces until the middle of the nineteenth century. However, the British colonial government was concerned about the Mizos' frequent raids on their plain territories. Once Cachar, Sylhet, and the Bengal plains were under British rule, the Mizos in the neighbouring hill ranges began to interact unfavourably with the new administration.¹⁵⁷ Following their annexation of the area, the British immediately began engaging in commercial activity in tea plantations in Cachar in 1855 AD.¹⁵⁸ The southern portion of Cachar, which borders the hills of modern-day Mizoram, was quickly covered by tea plantations once the British became interested in the growth of the tea plantation area. The Mizos, who considered the expansion of the plantations as an infringement against the limit on their traditional hunting grounds and which, in time, would perhaps lead to the loss of control over their territory, were suspicious and alarmed by this colonial expansion.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, they were concerned that the expansion of the tea garden might strain their *Jhum* cultivation and hunting ground, which could lead to their starvation.¹⁶⁰

2.1 Scenario Before Encounter with the British

Until 1800, the Lushai Hills were uncharted territory, and the effort to explore the near region initially began in Chittagong, a British administrative outpost and fortress under the administration of Bengal. When Major James Rennell finished his Provincial Maps in 1774, he presented smaller-scale General Maps, an explanation of their creation, and an index detailing the territories covered by each surveyor,

¹⁵⁷ Vumson, *Zo History*, 107.

¹⁵⁸ Singh, *Mizoram, Historical*, 89.

¹⁵⁹ Singh, 6.

¹⁶⁰ Chatterjee, *The British Rule*, 192.

mentioning that “the course of the Fenny within the hill is not known.” These suggest that most of the region beyond the Fenny River remained unexplored when they created the maps.¹⁶¹ Rennell’s report from 1774 indicates the circumstances:

That part of the Rangamati to east of Burrampooter...[was] never explored, but the mountains that from the Boundary, and even most of the detached hills, were laid down by Bases. The Eastern part of Tiperah is an entire forest...it is not with any certainty known how far this forest extends Eastwards, and the first Territories we hear of beyond it are those of Ava. I am of opinion that the uninhabited tract extends at least 150 miles from west to east, and about 100 from north to south.

The Chingree river is taken from a sketch drawn by a Dutchman who navigated that river during the time it was swollen by the annual rains. The Eastern Boundary of Tiperah is from the reports of the Rajah’s people, who made an excursion that way some years before Tiperah was subjected to Bengal. During their journey they saw no habitations except those of the Cookies who are a kind of wild men and build their Huts on Trees for the greater security against the wild Beasts.¹⁶²

By 1777, Captain Ellester led a military expedition to explore the Chittagong Hill Tracts up to the border of the Lushai Hills. In 1800, Mr. Rennell, the Chief Engineer of Bengal, made the first entry into the southern Lushai Hills and documented the local inhabitants in detail. During the first Anglo-Burmese war of 1824-25, Burmese and Arakanese soldiers advanced deep into the highlands. Captain Hedgkins and Lieutenant Sandias surveyed several areas in the southern Lushai Hills during this time. Prior to British interaction, Sailo chiefs governed nearly the entire region now known as Mizoram.¹⁶³

In the North, following the British annexation of Cachar in 1832, incursions by the Lushai tribes into the area created difficulties for the British administration. Faced with a scarcity of food and fertile land, the Lushais conducted raids on neighbouring territories in search of plunder and slaves. As they realized that their traditional hunting grounds were gradually being overtaken by colonial boundaries, the Lushais

¹⁶¹Colonel R.H. Phillimore, C.I.E, D.S.O., *Historical Records of the Survey of India, Vol.I 18th Century* (Dehradun (U.P.), India: The Surveyor General Of India, 1945), 33-34.

¹⁶²R.H. Phillimore, 83.

¹⁶³Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 8; Lewin, *The Hill Tracts Of Chittagong*, 153-158.

launched attacks into British territory, feeling that their survival as an independent hill-dwelling population was under threat.¹⁶⁴ In what is now southwestern Mizoram, the British first came into contact with the Mizos following the annexation of Chittagong in 1760. A trade route was created along the Chittagong frontier hills, facilitating regular communication between the plains and the hill tribes.¹⁶⁵

The chief of Chittagong's letter to the Governor-General, Warren Hastings, dated April 10, 1777, contains the earliest British reference to the Mizos, formerly known as the Kukis or Lushais, where he claims that:

a mountaineer, named Ramoo Cawn, who pays the Company a small revenue on their cotton farm has, since my being here, either through ill usage from the revenue farmer, or from a disposition to revolt, for some months past, committed great violence on the Company's landholders, by exacting various taxes and imposing several claims on them with no grounds of authority or legal demand was flattered with hopes of securing the person of this said Ramoo Cawn; He has now assembled men in yet larger bodies of Kookie men, who live far in the interior parts of the hills, who have not the use of fire-arms, and whose bodies go unclothed.¹⁶⁶

Surg. Lt. Col. A.S. Reid, Medical Officer in Charge of the 2nd Battalion 4th Gurkha Rifles, also noted the reference of the tribes in the following manner:

Since the days of Warren Hastings the various tribes whom we now include under this term have, at long and uncertain intervals, reminded us of their presence in a manner not calculated to inspire mutual regard or confidence. The first record of the raids of these savages dates from 1777, when the chief of Chittagong, a district which had been ceded to the British under Robert Clive by Mir Kasim in 1760, applied for a detachment of sepoy to protect the inhabitants against the incursions of the Kukisas they were then called.¹⁶⁷

On visiting Chittagong in 1798, Francis Buchanan writes of coming across the Lushais

¹⁶⁴Lewin, *A Fly On The Wheel*, 206.

¹⁶⁵Pum Khan Pau, "Reconfigured Frontier: British Policy Towards The Chin-Lushai Hills, 1881-1898," in *The Nehu Journal* XVI, no. 1, ed. Prof. D.V. Kumar and G. Umdor (Shillong: North-Eastern Hill University Publications, 2018), 2-3.

¹⁶⁶Lewin, *The Hill Tracts Of Chittagong*, 31.

¹⁶⁷Surg. Lieut. Col. A.S. Reid, M.B., *Chin – Lushai Land Including A Description Of The Various Expeditions Into The Chin-Lushai Hills And The Final Annexation Of The Country* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1893), 7, <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.79810/page/n5/mode/2up>; Lewin, *The Hill Tracts Of Chittagong And The Dwellers Therein*, 31-32.

in the area and mentions how some of the Lushai tribes in the area paid an annual tribute to a Bawm¹⁶⁸ Chief, as indicated in the following passage:

The chief of Bonjoogies, as I am here told, is by the Chakmas called Tai-koup. His Subjects are said to be numerous, and to consist of two tribes, the Bon-zu and Loo-sai. From the head of every family in his dominions, Tai-koup receives an annual tribute of one basket of rice, and one piece of cotton cloth.¹⁶⁹

He further mentions how the inhabitants of the hills, situated between the sea and the river Holda, frequently relocated due to incursions by the Kukis, which they considered a vicious group who lived far away but often attacked the inhabitants of the hills.¹⁷⁰ He went on to state that at this time, they thought the Kukis resided on the creek's far-upstream banks¹⁷¹ and went by the names Koongkies, Loo-sai, Loo-she, Lang-ga, or Linkta and settled in several places. Raiding bands of the Looshe or Loo-sai people frequently traversed the stream of Kassalong.¹⁷² The Chakmas were afraid of them at the time because they would murder them if given the chance. Even though they considered that the Kukis should live close to Khan Tlang (Kundal),¹⁷³ the Chakmas searched for eight days without discovering any of their dwellings.¹⁷⁴ Before this, the *Rajmala* also recounts the Kukis' assistance to the Tripura Kings in the worship of the fourteen deities or gods (*Caturdasa-deva-Puja*). It describes Kuki's role as "men of other tribes, Naga, Kuki etc. duly performed the *bali – dana* (cutting off the victim) in the puja" and frequently encountered the king during religious

¹⁶⁸ In this case, Willem Van Schendel identified the Bonjoogies are the same as the Bawm tribe.

¹⁶⁹ Willem van Schendel, ed., *Francis Buchanan In Southeast Bengal (1798) His Journey to Chittagong Hill, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Noakhali and Comilla* (Dhaka: Mohiuddin Ahmend, The University Press Limited, 1992), 110.

¹⁷⁰ Schendel, 15-16.

¹⁷¹ The following rivers might be identified as the streams described here: Kooburea cherra – A small lake and tributary of the Kornofuli river in the Rangamati region of Chittagong Hill Tracts; Mogban – A seasonal lake (*jhil*) in the Mugbon region, Rangamati district of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

¹⁷² Tributary of Karnaphuli in Barkol Upozila/Thana, Rangamati District of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

¹⁷³ A mountain peak which is 682m, 2,237 ft located on the northernmost border of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Tripura.

¹⁷⁴ Schendel, *Francis Buchanan In Southeast Bengal 1798 His Journey to Chittagong Hill*, 110-119.

events.¹⁷⁵ These indicate the Mizos' extensive dispersion before the arrival of the colonial administration.

The Mizos were known as Kuki, Chin, and Lushai or Lusei throughout the pre-colonial era, which has led to the idea that the term "Mizo" is said to have lately been coined. The word Kuki, which means "wild man" in Bengali, is supposed to have been used to refer to all hill dwellers in the northeastern region of India. Consequently, it could be assumed that the British adopted the term Kuki to refer to all the tribes living in the Lushai Hills region based on this Bengali phrase. Later, the term "Chin" was used to refer to the hill tribes between Burma and Assam, to which the Mizo people in Burma (modern-day Myanmar) are also known. The name Lushai may have originated from a person named Luseia or the name of a location. J. Shakespear claims that the term "Lushai" is a mistranslation by the British of the words "Lushei" or "Lusei." Nevertheless, unlike the word "Lusei" or "Lushei", which refers to a particular group of clans, Mizo refers to a large group of related tribes that dwell in the present-day Mizoram region and share similar socio-cultural life.¹⁷⁶ The term Mizo, which translates to "hill people," may refer to all other sub-tribes of the Chin, Lusei, and Kuki groups in the states of Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Burma, and Bangladesh that have accepted the Chhinlung tale of Mizo origin, giving them a feeling of shared history and common genealogy.¹⁷⁷

The Kukis or Lushais were described by Hutchinson as being of medium height, with wide-set eyes, a high forehead, broad nostrils, a long upper lip, and high cheekbones, which he claims are traits unique to the Mongolian race. He goes on to state that they have fantastic endurance capabilities and outstanding muscular power, and they can march in a day, which is what it would take an average person three or four days to do. They have a strong memory, are excellent imitators, and can quickly

¹⁷⁵Dr. N.C. Nath, "3. The Book on Trilocana (*Trilocana Khanda*) – The worship of the fourteen deities, 9. The Canto on *Danger Fa (Danger Fa khanda)* – Ratna Fa in Gauda, & 10. The Canto on Ratna – Manikya (*Ratna – Manikya – khanda*) – The Bengalees (in Tripura)(*Vanga – upanivesa*),"in *Sri Rajmala, Vol I to IV*, 28-53; Rev James Long, *Analysis Of The Rajmala*, 8.

¹⁷⁶ R.H. Sneyd Hutchinson, *Eastern Bengal And Assam District Gazetteers, Chittagong Hill Tracts* (Allahabad: Pioneer Press, 1909),45; Sangkima, *History Of The Mizos*, 15-17.

¹⁷⁷*Account of Ranglong*, 1.

grasp concepts. In addition, they are kind and hospitable but have several flaws in terms of character. To a certain extent, they are pretty harsh and simple-minded. Their thoughts are always on obscene and animalistic topics, and the rougher and more repulsive these may be, it seems that the more they enjoy them. He also noted that they lack moral integrity and are naturally devious and dishonest. Also, they are incredibly lazy and only exert effort when necessary.¹⁷⁸

Back then, people from the hill frequently volunteered to aid lowland political figures in their quest for control. Several of the valley monarchs or rulers, along with other fugitives, often sought refuge in the highlands during difficult times¹⁷⁹ as “the mountains through which they lead were known to be inhabited by fierce and unconquered tribes, whose aggressions on the inhabitants of the subjacent plains had led in many instances to the payment of a species of blackmail to procure exemption from their attacks.”¹⁸⁰ Specifically, dissident members of the Tripura Maharaja’s¹⁸¹ family would flee to the hill tribes residing in eastern Tripura and encouraged them to commit atrocities. Even though the rajah did not have effective authority over the Kukis then, he did claim their homage and tribute. However, it is questionable if he was powerful enough to compel anybody who did not want to provide these to do so.¹⁸² Accordingly, in the royal chronicles *Rajmala*, “the king sat on an elevated platform there and instructed a Kuki chieftain (Sardar) to count the men present there,” which indicates that the Kukis had long been considered the warriors of Maharaja of Tripura.¹⁸³ Apart from that, the numerous Burmese invasions and subjugation of Manipur led the Manipuri rulers to seek sanctuary in the highlands

¹⁷⁸Hutchinson, *Eastern Bengal And Assam District Gazetteers*, 46-47.

¹⁷⁹Jangkhomang Guite, “Colonialism and Its Unruly?—The Colonial State and Kuki Raids in Nineteenth Century Northeast India,” *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no.5 (September 2014): 1191, http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0026749X12000674.

¹⁸⁰R.B Pemberton, *The Eastern Frontier of India* (New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications, 2018), 2.

¹⁸¹On 1st January, 1877, Queen Victoria conferred a title Maharaja to the Rajah of Tripura, along with other numerous native rulers in India. As a result the Tripura king came to be known as Maharaja. This title will be used to refer to the ruler of Tripura onwards.

¹⁸²Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 279-280.

¹⁸³Nath, “13. The Canto on Dhanya Manikya (1463-1515 Or 1490-1520) (*Dhanya – Manikya Khanda*),” *Sri Rajmala, Vol I to IV*, 66.

frequently. Several regional rulers in another area also fit this description. Besides, when the Burmese army captured Telyne and the surrounding area in 1824, some of the troops never returned to Burma; instead, they stayed among the Kukis in the highlands of south Cachar.¹⁸⁴

When the British first arrived in the Cachar district, numerous tribes of the Kuki people occupied the hills to the south. The Paihte chief controlled the Hachek range up to the river Gutar, while the Thado chiefs ruled east of the river Tlawng (Dhaleswari).¹⁸⁵ Thlangums controlled the Buhban range, while Changsils occupied the region to the south. The Saihreem chiefs inhabited the east of the river Tuivai/Tipai.¹⁸⁶ In addition, there were various other clans like Hratlis and Vaiphei, etc. Despite their differences in name, all of these clans belonged to the same race and spoke dialects of the same language. They also shared similar customs, political systems, and religious beliefs and dressed similarly. Despite this, the clans frequently engaged in conflicts with one another. When one chief gained more power than his rivals, the losing chiefs and their followers would migrate to the area of Cachar, taking with them only those who remained loyal to them, as most people tended to join the village of the stronger chiefs.¹⁸⁷ Also, it is essential to highlight that the acquisition of Arakan (which is now part of present-day Myanmar) by the British after the First Anglo–Burmese War (1824-1826) was a significant factor in the establishment of the British presence in the southern border, which had significant implications for their future interactions with the Mizos and other hill tribes in the region. Early explorations and surveys of the hill tracts of Chittagong in the 1840s, though,

¹⁸⁴ Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 293; Thanga, *The Mizos*, 112; Guite, “Colonialism and Its Unruly?,” 1191-1192.

¹⁸⁵ Tlawng River is also known as Dhaleswari River, here in the study the term Tlawng and Dhaleswari may be used interchangeably but except for the source quoted from the official documents.

¹⁸⁶ The Tipai river, known as Tuivai by the Mizos, joins the Barak river, is one of the major river in Mizoram that flows through the northeastern states of India and the Sylhet Division of Bangladesh. Here in the study the term is also used interchangeably.

¹⁸⁷ State of the – clans and as to the policy to be pursued against them. Enquiry as to whether any new treaty has been made with Sukpilal, June 1871, File No. 209, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon’ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 183-184; Col. E. B. Elly, *Military Report on the Chin-Lushai Country*, Reprint(Aizawl, Mizoram: Firma KLM-(P) Ltd., 257/B, B.B Ganguly Street, Calcutta 700012, on behalf of the Tribal Research Institute, 1978), 1.

“revealed that the real cause of disturbances originated from the far interior, which was predominantly inhabited by the Shendus,¹⁸⁸ who also pushed the Lushais towards the north.”¹⁸⁹ However, it is worth mentioning that during that time, political and territorial boundaries in the region were fluid and prone to change due to various factors such as migration, conflict, and annexation.

In the past, the Kukis, who travelled to the plains for trade and bartering purposes, took annual gifts from the frontier Zamindars to persuade them to sell their forest goods or as blackmail. They undoubtedly received some payment from wood-cutters going into the hills as the cost of security. Bloodshed would inescapably be the outcome if their demands became ignored. According to Alexander Mackenzie, the first known documented hill-tribe raid, as a result of these matters, occurred in September 1826, when groups of Sylhet¹⁹⁰ wood-cutters were slaughtered by a group led by a Chief named Buangtheuva, in the hills above the river Simla (seems to be the Tut river as known today) ten miles west of the river Tlawng. The magistrate dispatched messengers who went to the village of Buangtheuva, three days’ journey into the hills on the river Langkaih,¹⁹¹ and discovered that the Zamindars of Pertabgur were allegedly the ones who had withheld the annual gifts, which was the root cause of the outrage.¹⁹²

Despite frequent conflicts, compromise often resulted from it since the forest tract protected the inhabitants of the hill and served as an impenetrable barrier from which they might quickly come down to inflict retribution for any misconduct. The hillmen, therefore, acted as “sources of support, power and a place for hideouts and even as lords over many plainsmen.”¹⁹³ A letter to the secretary to the Government of the Political Department in 1834 contained a reference to Captain Fisher’s account of

¹⁸⁸Shendu or Shindu is an Arakanese term which seems to have covered all the Haka Chin tribes and the Lakhers.

¹⁸⁹Pau, “Reconfigured Frontier”, 3.

¹⁹⁰One region in modern day Bangladesh.

¹⁹¹Langkaih River is also known as Langai River.

¹⁹² Jayanta Bhusan Bhattacharjee, *Cachar Under British Rule in Northeart India* (New Delhi, India: Radiant Publishers, 1977), 16; Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 279.

¹⁹³ Guite, “Colonialism and Its Unruly?,” 1193.

the Kukis' atrocities against the inhabitants of the Cachar plain in the previous year. Besides that, the recommendation in the letter was to provide Captain Fisher ₹2000 to encourage the establishment of other Manipuri chiefs and their followers along the province's southern border.¹⁹⁴ It might be a plan formulated by the British to create some buffer point between the inhabitants of the plains and those of the hills, which would protect their operations in the plains.

In 1842, there were incursions against the British territory in the districts of Arakan in the south and Sylhet in the north, prompting the British Government to respond. The authorities in Sylhet sent three mediators to conduct an inquiry and settle the matters with the Lushais. However, the Lushais captured two of the mediators. They tortured the remaining ones by being shown the corpses of the slain victims and were later released. They then arranged a ransom and ultimately paid to the Lushais. In the south, Lt. Gen. Sir Arthur P. Phayre, British Commissioner in Burma, was compelled to seek vengeance by leading an expedition into the south Lushai hills from Arakan. However, this expedition showed that any expedition or mission into this region that was not well-equipped and thoroughly prepared was sure to fail.¹⁹⁵ As Machiavelli rightly stated, "you have to understand that when one marches through enemy country, one bears more and greater dangers than in doing battle. Therefore, while marching, the captain must redouble his diligence. The first thing he must do is to have the whole country through which he is marching described and depicted so that he knows that place, the number, the distances, the roads, the rivers, the marshes, and all of their qualities. To get to know this, he must have with him, diversely and in diverse modes, those who know the places, and question with them with diligence, and compare what they say and, according to the comparisons."¹⁹⁶ However, these early interactions set the stage for the British colonial administration's approach to the

¹⁹⁴ Kookies Outrages, 20th February, 1834, File No. 25, Foreign Department, Political, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1-5; Kookies Outrages, 20th February, 1834, File No. 26, Foreign Department, Political, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1-3.

¹⁹⁵ Mccall, *Chrysalis*, 38,

¹⁹⁶ Niccolo Machiavelli, *Art of War*, trans. and ed. Christopher Lynch (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London), 111.

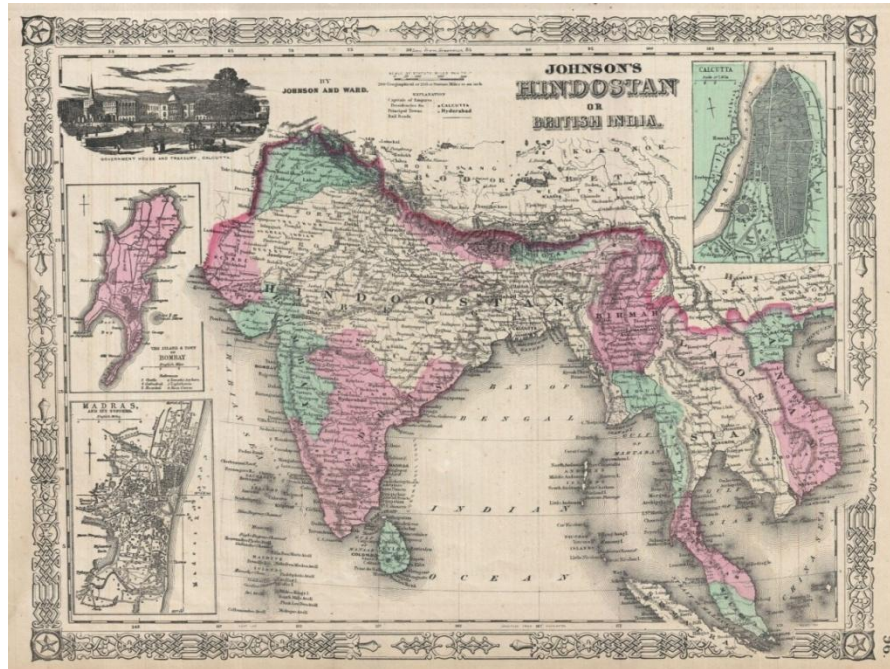
Lushai Hills to have a more strategic approach to effectively control and govern the region.

At that time, there was sporadic trade between the tribes that border the Assam, Bengal, and Burma plains and the inhabitants of these regions. Nevertheless, a considerable number of tribes live in the region, which extends from Tripura to the valley of the Kyendwen or Chindwin River (See Map No.2.1),¹⁹⁷ and have little or no contact with their neighbours from the lowlands. Only a system of internal conflict among them made their presence known, and each year, a different tribe on Manipur's southern borders pushed into the forefront. In some manners, the Kukis have been moving slowly in a northerly direction for years and have seized regions that once belonged to more northern tribes. These northern tribes fled, leaving an empty tract between themselves and these powerful opponents. The several tribes were impossible to cohabit with, regularly engaged in vicious competition, waged the same types of "exterminating warfare," and were utterly incapable of developing either cognitively or artistically. They pursued the same constant line of occupations simultaneously. After the harvest season, they indulged themselves in festivals by feasting and dancing. They alternatively organized an expedition against the settlement of other tribes and conducted raids into the border villages along the frontier line and in Cachar. Shakespear claims that the raids' primary goal was to acquire wealth and enslave people, not to collect human heads. The act of killing and collecting heads was the secondary aspect of the raid and not the main motive behind it. However, the marauder's primary objective was not always stealing property but acquiring heads, vital for adequately performing their chief's funeral ceremonies.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷Alvin Jewett Johnson & Ross C. Browning, Johnson's Hindostan or British India, height:13 in (33cm); width: 17 in (43.1 cm), 16.5 x 12.5 inches, in Barry Lawrence Ruderman, Antique Maps Inc. (New York:1861), raremaps.com/gallery/detail/99513.

¹⁹⁸Pemberton, *Eastern Frontier of India*, 16-18; Shakespear, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 59-60; McCall, *Chrysalis*, 38-39.

Map No. 2.1: Map on the location of Kyendwen/Chindwin river



(Source: Alvin Jewett Johnson & Ross C. Browning, Johnson's Hindostan or British India, height:13 in (33cm); width: 17 in (43.1 cm), 16.5 x 12.5 inches, in Barry Lawrence Ruderman, Antique Maps Inc. (New York:1861), raremaps.com/gallery/detail/99513.)

A report from the superintendent of Cachar in 1853 sheds light on the longstanding fear and insecurity experienced by the local population due to the attack of the hill tribes, especially the Kukis, even before the British obtained control of the region. The report provides insight into the cultural beliefs and practices of the Kukis regarding the importance of having human heads for burial rituals. The report is as follows:

I have the honor to state first with reference to the southern portion of the district, that for many years back, and long before we obtained possession of the province, the inhabitants of the plains to the south were in constant alarm and dread of the tribes of Kookies who resided both within our boundaries and without to the south and south-east in the independent Tipperah Hills and in the Munnipore territories. They used to come down and attack the villages in the plains, massacre the inhabitants, take their heads, loot and burn their houses. These aggressions used principally to be made after the death of one of the Kookie Rajas, when having human heads to bury with him is, in the idea of the Kookies, a matter of great consideration.¹⁹⁹

The earliest evidence in support of this scenario indicates that Larihua, who appeared to have been a respected Paihte chief, passed away around the end of 1843 or the beginning of 1844, placing his son Lalsuktla in a position to take over the charge of leadership among his tribe. As previously noted, in those days, no Kuki Chief could embark on his final, lengthy voyage alone without servants to carry out his demands in the unseen realm. Nonetheless, there was no undue strain on his clan members's fidelity. They were not required to go before their time as long as they could provide Bengali slaves, whose heads stacked around the chief's body and fervently hoped their spirits were keeping company with him. However, as the British Government had opposed this trade, there were few slaves in the hills; thus, on the night of April 16, 1844, Lalsuktla invaded the Manipuri settlement of Kochabari in Pertabgur, seizing twenty heads and taking six living captives.²⁰⁰

After the annexation of Cachar into British territory in 1832 they took measures to strengthen the region's security against external threats, particularly from

¹⁹⁹ British territorial limit in the parts uninhabited by the Loosai, April 1870, File No. 150, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 6.

²⁰⁰ Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 288-289; McCall, *Chrysalis*, 40.

the hill people. As part of this effort, they established a system of fortified villages along the Cachar-Manipur frontier. Two Manipuri Princes – Tribhowanjit and Ram Singh, were also given villages for their residence and protection.²⁰¹ Given this, as Lalrihua refused to assist them, the Manipuri Prince Tribhowanjit and his brother Ram Singh's attack on their village caused significant harm and resulted in his death. It is reasonable to speculate that Lalsuktla may have attacked the villages of Manipuri to seek revenge for the death of his father.²⁰²

Before the colonial era, the Maharaja of Tripura asserted his sovereignty over the entire region adjacent to the kingdom of Burma.²⁰³ Perhaps as a result of this, the British at the time believed that the tribes living in the eastern areas of Tripura were the subjects of the Maharaja of Tripura, which led Mr J. P. Wise, the collector of Sylhet and Agent for Tripura State, to suspect the Maharaja's involvement in the raids of 1844. When they discovered some connection between them, the British eventually decided that if the Maharaja could not compel or negotiate the surrender of the perpetrators by the first day of December 1844, they would pursue a different approach or strategy in dealing with them. Even though the Maharaja had taken action by presenting four Kukis prisoners and twenty-seven witnesses as evidence of the defendant's involvement in the raid, an expedition was still dispatched, resulting in the British's advent in the Lushai Hills.²⁰⁴

2.2 The Onset of Colonization

Before the 1844 expedition, there were scarce interactions or contact between the Mizos and the British. The explorations and survey of the Chin-Lushai hill tracts in the 1840s disclosed that the root of disturbances in both Arakan and Chittagong

²⁰¹ McCall, 37-38; Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 8-9; Dr. Lalthanliana, *Mizo Chanchin (Kum 1900 Hma Lam)* (Model Veng, Aizawl: Vanlalhmuaka and Vanlalhruii (Hruaiteii) te Nupa, Vanbuangi Gas Agency, 2000), 438.

²⁰² Lalhmachhuana Zofa, *Mizo History Indo leh Inrun* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Zofa Publication, 2022), 462; Letthuama, *Darlongs of Tripura*, 37; Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 288; Dr. Lalthanliana, *Mizo Chanchin*, 438.

²⁰³ McCall, *Chrysalis*, 304.

²⁰⁴ Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 289; Thanga, *The Mizos*, 109.

“originated from the far interior, which was predominantly inhabited by the Shindus, who also pushed the Lushais towards the north.” However, the Chittagong authorities had limited knowledge about these tribes, so they relied on the Arakan authority to handle efforts to prevent raids, for which an expedition was dispatched but failed.²⁰⁵ However, the expedition of 1844 brought Captain Blackwood and a party of Sylhet Infantry into the Lushai Hills to punish Lalsuktla. During negotiations, the British offered Lalsuktla a conditional surrender, promising not to take his life if he complied. However, Lalsuktla misunderstood this assurance as a promise of complete absolution and freedom from punishment for his actions. Thus, on December 4, 1844, Lalsuktla surrendered himself. He admitted his involvement in the raid but claimed ignorance that the raid targeted British subjects. Despite Lalsuktla’s claim of not knowing that the raid was on British subjects, he was still found guilty and sentenced to life in prison. As a result, his people, the Mizos, considered his deportation as a breach of the agreement, which turned out to be one of the motives for their relentless atrocities against the British.²⁰⁶ Ngursailova, his son, was said to have sworn revenge on the British due to their deeds.²⁰⁷

In June 1847, the magistrate in the region of Sylhet reported that a group known as Kukis had carried out many violent attacks in an area claimed to be under British control. More than 150 people had been killed in the massacres, most of whom were the Kukis themselves, making the situation very dire. Here, the Maharaja of Tripura stated that the violent incident had occurred within his territory and objected to any intervention by the magistrate. Despite the Maharaja’s demonstrations, Sylhet officials maintained that the attack happened within the district’s limits, as previously delineated by Captain Fisher. As a result, they sent a detachment of soldiers to protect the area. However, the situation worsened, and Colonel Lister led additional troops

²⁰⁵ Pau, “Reconfigured Frontier” 3.

²⁰⁶ R.G. Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition 1871 -1872*(Aizawl, Mizoram: Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, 1978), 12; Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 289-290; Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 35.

²⁰⁷ State of the – clans and as to the policy to be pursued against them, June 1871, File No. 209, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon’ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 182; E.B. Elly, *Military Report*, 2.

and a professional surveyor to the location. Upon investigation, it became clear that the location of Fisher's boundary line was much further north of the site of the massacre. As a result, the British withdrew their troops and made no further mention of the attack on them.²⁰⁸

As the Mizos continued to conduct raids on their neighbouring tribes while being armed with firearms, many believed that no tribe would stand against them. Colonel McCulloch, a Political Agent in Manipur, became aware of the growing strength of the Mizos by 1847. Based on the letter dated August 17, 1847, between William Grey, Esqr., Under Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Fort William and H. Ferguson, Magistrate of Tripura, it appears that some of the Mizos tribes settled within the boundary of Tripura at that time, and Colonel McCulloch suggested that the Maharaja of Tripura should be responsible for keeping the Mizos under control. However, when British officials questioned Maharaja about the Mizos, he stated that he had heard of them but had no knowledge about them as they were not under his rule.²⁰⁹

The Magistrate of Sylhet stated in November 1849 that Kukis had carried out other violent attacks on the Simla River and British territory, killed 29 persons and captured 42 persons. The raids were carried out by Chief Ngura, who was the son of a deceased Sentlang Chief Lallianvunga, against the Thados who "became Company's ryots, and made themselves useful by cutting timber, bamboos, cane, &c," and sold them at the market. They thought that when the Thados sought safety in Cachar owing to their dread of the Lushais, they carried away two sets of gongs claimed by the Lushais, and the attack on their village was due to this disagreement. In response to the attack, the deputy governor of Bengal organized an expedition to punish the raiders. Lt. Col. Lister, Political Agent of Khasi Hills and commandant of the Sylhet light infantry, was appointed expedition commander. The expedition began on January 4, 1850, from Cachar, moved south, and reached Ngura's village on January

²⁰⁸ Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 290-291.

²⁰⁹ Tribe of...found in Tipperah, Correspondence regarding, 4th September, 1847, File No. 8-12, Foreign Department, Political, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India.

14. It launched an attack on it, leading to its destruction.²¹⁰

Colonel Lister considered that a troop of around three thousand would be required to deal with the Mizos' atrocities and the construction of a road through the region from north to south. At the same time, establishing armed outposts with some supportive Kukis along the frontier was suggested as a defensive measure. To enhance British control over the region and protect their interests, Lister planned the formation of a Kuki Levy. The British Government of Bengal approved the recommendations and initiated talks with the Mizos. As a result, the western chiefs, Suakpuilala, and other Chiefs, Vanhnuaailiana, Lalphunga, Lalngura and Vuttaia, sent their representatives to Cachar in October 1855 to meet with the superintendent. Though the Mizo chief's primary aim was to obtain British protection from the Pawi, despite their appeals rejected, the British authorities, on the other hand, pledged to treat the Lushai as allies and not to interfere with them as long as they adhered to the boundary (See Appendix No.1).²¹¹

In this state of affairs, we have seen Warren Hastings' concept of knowledge and power in the establishment of British dominance in India as he stated that "every accumulation of knowledge and especially such as is obtained by social communication with people over whom we exercise dominion founded on the right of conquest, is useful to the state....it attracts and conciliates distant affections; it lessens the weight of the chain by which the natives are held in subjection; and it imprints on the hearts of our countrymen the sense of obligation and benevolence."²¹² Fisher might have been conscious of the importance of accumulating knowledge about Mizo culture, traditions, and beliefs to negotiate effectively and win their cooperation, as

²¹⁰Inroads made into, Sylhet, and Chittagong by Kookies to the independent Looshai tribe, Political dispatch from Court of Directors, 5th November, 1851, File No. 37, Foreign Department, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 17-22; Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 290-291; Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition 1871 -1872*, 12-13; *Mizoram District Gazetteers*, 26; Elly, *Military Report*, 2.

²¹¹Inroads made into, Sylhet, and Chittagong by Kookies to the independent Looshai tribe, Political dispatch from Court of Directors, 5th November, 1851, File No. 37, 23-28; Woodthorpe, 13-16; *Mizoram District Gazetteers*, 27; Mackenzie, 296 -297.

²¹²Bernard S Cohn, *Colonialism And Its Form Of Knowledge The British In India* (41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 45.

evidenced by his suggestion to construct roads to enhance communication with the Mizos further. However, it is crucial to recognize that this approach was based on the assumption of British superiority and the legitimacy of their conquest and may have involved the exploitation and oppression of the indigenous people.

In 1855, the issue of dissolving the Kuki Levy arose. Still, the regional authorities strongly recommended its continuation, stating its efficacy in monitoring and gathering knowledge about the Mizos. The outcome was a temporary calm in the frontiers. Due to a series of violent acts committed by the hill tribes, the lieutenant governor of Bengal, Sir John Peter Grant, in 1859, suggested the removal of the regions situated to the east of the Chittagong plain from the jurisdiction of the general regulations and suggested assigning a superintendent with magisterial authority, ensuring sufficient supervision and management of the various tribes residing in the largely uncharted territory. Consequently, under Act XXII of 1860, the Hill Tracts of Chittagong was formed as a distinct district or “Non-Regulation Province” under the supervision of Superintendent Captain Mc Grath in 1860. The appointment of the superintendent was aimed at facilitating regular communication and interaction with the different tribes chiefs inhabiting the area and hoped to gather valuable information that would aid the government in developing strategies “for the civilization” of the tribes to curb the rampant raid that had inflicted significant harm on the subjects of the British.²¹³ This incident demonstrates how the British created and sustained an unequal power which maintained a power structure that marginalized the hill regions, as they considered the areas were deemed economically unproductive at that time as “political and economic factors led the colonial powers to enlarge their dominions and

²¹³C.E. Buckland, C.I.E of the Indian Civil Service, *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors; Being A Narrative Of The Principal Events And Public Measures During Their Periods Of Office From 1854 to 1898*, Vol I (Calcutta: S.K. Lahiri & Co., 1901), 180-181, https://ignca.gov.in/Asi_data/9349.pdf; B.P. Barua, “Extension Of British Administration To Chittagong Hill Tracts,” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 33, (1972): 516, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44145391>; Rajkumari Chandra Kalindi Roy, *Land Rights Of The Indigenous Peoples Of The Chittagong Hill Tracts*, Bangladesh (Classensgade 11E, DK 2100 – Copenhagen, Denmark: International Work Group For Indigenous Affairs, 2000), 42.

then to strive for definition and codification of the limits of their sovereignty.”²¹⁴

In the meantime, Rothangpuia, a Thangluah chief, perpetrated atrocities by assaulting a community in Tripura’s plains at Chagulneyah, killing around 186 people, which became known as the “Great Kookie Invasion” of 1860. Subsequently, in January 1861, Captain Raban led 1,250 military police to confront Rothangpuia, who surrendered and requested and received British protection. Following the encounter with Rothangpuia, the British surveyed the area they had explored. Meanwhile, a large Kuki group carried out a bold raid on three villages and a prosperous market near Udaipur in Tripura. The attackers then proceeded eastwards and, on their return, they burned numerous Chakma villages belonging to Kalindi Rani and attacked the Kurkurea Police outpost of the government, only to be repelled.²¹⁵ To defend the frontier, in July 1861, Captain Graham, the hill superintendent, was assigned the task of persuading the Maharaja of Tripura to meet with the commissioner at Comillah and assign the latter the task of frontier security in which he (1) established five frontier posts of 20 men each connected by roads; (2) established an enclosure of 150 men on the Fenny connected with the posts by a road; (3) entertained six drill instructors for his men; (4) agreed to a topographical survey, and which resulted in temporary security.²¹⁶ At the same time, the superintendent received instruction to prevent hostile tribes from entering the plains’ market places, which would significantly impact the hill people as these markets were their primary source for selling their goods and products through bartering.²¹⁷

After Rothangpuia’s surrender, the British Government used the opportunities to establish friendly relations with the Sailo and Haulong tribes, all referred to as Lushai by the British at the time. In September 1862, the Mizos conveyed a message stating they did not intend to attack Europeans. Still, they believed that they had the

²¹⁴Robert L. Solomon, “Boundary Concepts and Practices in Southeast Asia,” in *World Politics* 23, no. 1 (October 1970): 5, http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0043887100001404.

²¹⁵Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 342-345; Birendra Chandra Chakravorty, *British Relations With The Hill Tribes Of Assam Since 1858* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1964), 50-51; Buckland, *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors*, 181-182.

²¹⁶Mackenzie, 345.

²¹⁷Buckland, *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors*, 181-182.

authority “to cut up other tribes” and that the British had no right to intervene.²¹⁸ Accordingly, a report from Sylhet showed that there were Kuki outrages in various villages, such as Ramdulal’s Bari, Rammohun’s Bari and Chundraipara under the jurisdiction of Thannah Rajnugger, Sylhet, in January 1862. The report further stated that some of these villages were within British territory. Since these villages were located close to each other and about eight miles from Adumpore, the collective attacks became known as the Adumpore massacre. Here, some stated that the attackers were dependents of Chief Ngursailova, whom they considered a trusted subject of the Maharaja of Tripura. Then, the British authorities instructed the latter to organize a defensive force to prevent further aggression.²¹⁹

On January 20, 1863, Sir Cecil Beadon, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, addressed the issue of frontier policy in this region with the same approach he had used in dealing with other areas. In his claim, he suggested that relying on the good intentions of the indigenous people, often viewed as “savages”, was unsafe. Therefore, he recommends that the government maintain a solid line of semi-military posts on the frontier to maintain peace. Amidst these events, the Shendus carried out raids and massacred defenceless communities and wood-cutters, and the Kukis were accused of holding British subjects captive and refused to release them. Additionally, it came to light that traders traded arms and ammunition to supply the Kukis.²²⁰ Following Sir Cecil Beadon’s policy of conciliation (See Appendix No.2), Captain Graham, the superintendent of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, proceeded to Rothangpuia’s village, where he convinced the chief and nine other prominent Chiefs of the Lenchew range to make a binding agreement to maintain peace (See Appendix No.3).²²¹

In April 1863, four women captured from the Chundraipara raid escaped to Cachar and moved to Sylhet. From their statements, it appeared that Ngursailova did not solely lead the Adumpore raid of 1862 but also involved three other Chiefs,

²¹⁸ Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 345-346.

²¹⁹ Chakravorty, *British Relations With The Hill Tribes*, 52; Mackenzie, 297-298.

²²⁰ Mackenzie, 346-347; Buckland, *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors*, 288.

²²¹ Mackenzie, 347.

Suakpuilala, Rungbhoom, and LalHoolien. The authorities in Sylhet requested an expedition against the chiefs in the cold weather of 1863. Still, the government did not immediately agree to this due to a survey report of Cachar that mentioned Suakpuilala had maintained friendly communication with the Cachar authorities since 1849. Before considering the use of force, the lieutenant governor ordered the deputy commissioner of Cachar to try to convince Suakpuilala to release the captives in his possession and to take responsibility for protecting the frontier by preventing his people from raiding and by not supporting other chiefs in similar actions. In return, they would receive annual presents as a sign of loyalty. The fear was that a hostile expedition could provoke the Mizos and put the expanding tea gardens in danger.²²² However, it is crucial to emphasise that this policy was to defend British economic interests, particularly the expanding tea gardens, rather than the genuine concern for the well-being of indigenous people. These highlight the complex nature of colonial policy and their underlying motives.

Captain Stewart, the deputy commissioner of Cachar, used the scarcity of food in the Hills as an opportunity to establish communication with Suakpuilala and offered him a gift of rice to conciliate him and potentially prevent future raids or conflicts. In October 1864, Suakpuilala sent his representatives to meet with Captain Stewart. They admitted to the facts of the Adumpore raid and stated that Suakpuilala's sister's marriage to Ngursailova prompted the raid. They explained that they conducted the raid to make up the bride's price and were unaware that the villages were within British territory. They agreed to all the terms in the agreement, including returning the captives and pledging friendship, to receive a monthly payment of ₹50. After communicating with Suakpuilala, Captain Stewart also received a delegation from Vanpuilala, the chief of Mullah, and established similar arrangements with him. Vanpuilala's messengers expressed concern about expanding tea gardens along the

²²² Letter from J.W. Edgar, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of Cachar to the Commissioner of Circuit, Dacca Division, (No.C, dated Cachar, the 13th March 1871), June 1871, File No. 209, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 186-187; Mackenzie, 298-299.

river Tuirial (Sonai),²²³ fearing it would negatively impact the hill tribes. Captain Stewart tried to alleviate this by explaining the benefits of having a tea garden nearby.²²⁴

In December 1864, they held an annual meeting in the south, but none of the great chiefs attended it. Representatives from Chief Rothangpuia and Sailo Chiefs did attend. Although they sent presents, they did not make money payments. They attributed the absence of other chiefs to the cold season and their need to focus on cultivation. As a result, the government provided instructions that a fixed and convenient payday should be agreed upon for the payments for police service and frontier security. The money could be given to any delegation of relatives the chiefs might send if they could not come.²²⁵ This incident highlights the necessity of diplomacy and respect for local cultures and customs to find mutually beneficial solutions in establishing and maintaining governing structures in new regions.

In December 1865, the deputy commissioner of Cachar reported that Suakpuilala had failed to deliver the captives and, in response to messengers sent by Captain Stewart, had claimed that three members of his tribe had been killed a year earlier by a Kuki settlement in Cachar. So, they planned an expedition to force Suakpuilala to surrender the captives, but they postponed the operation due to the onset of the rainy season. In the rainy season of 1866, Captain Stewart gathered information about Suakpuilala's whereabouts and discovered that communication from Chittagong was impossible and considered necessary to send at least 400 soldiers from Cachar to deal with the situation. Considering these circumstances, they gave up the idea of a military expedition and resumed negotiations. However, before they sent any messengers from Cachar, a delegation from Suakpuilala arrived bearing annual gifts but no captives. Captain Stewart demanded that they hand over the captives. The delegates explained that many of the captives had already been married to the Lushais

²²³ Tuirial river is also known as Sonai river, and the two terms may be used interchangeably throughout the study.

²²⁴ State of the – clans and as to the policy to be pursued against them, June 1871, File No. 209, 186-187; Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 299-300.

²²⁵ Mackenzie, 348; Buckland, *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors*, 457.

and were unwilling to leave. Chief Ngursailova had stopped Suakpuilala from sending in the captives, but they had already sold several to the Pawi. Thus, the matter remained unresolved, and they expected Suakpuilala to maintain friendly relations.²²⁶

Despite the successful meeting between the Mizo chiefs and the British government to establish a system of governance in the region, reports of a series of raids conducted by the Mizos soon began to be heard. In January 1866, the Shendus attacked a Mrung village on the south frontier, and on July 9, 1866, another raid on Khokheong occurred, which “was supposed to be the work of Lushai Howlongs.” The same band was responsible for two minor incursions in Kwasa Khung and Kaptai Valley. A messenger was sent up to Chief Rothangpuia’s village to investigate the raids, and the information gathered suggested the Howlongs were responsible for the attack. Chief Rothangpuia found himself between his desire to maintain friendly relations with the British and his loyalty to the Howlongs.²²⁷ These show that while the government established peaceful relations with some Mizo chiefs and communities, there may have been ongoing tensions and conflicts between or with other groups. It might be possible that establishing a system of authority may not have been wholly accepted or recognized by all groups in the region. This situation highlighted the inherent complexities of imposing external governance in a diverse and culturally distinct territory. While successful meetings and payments may have helped develop initial trust and cooperation, ongoing efforts were needed to sustain such relations over time.

Again, during 1868 and 1869, various parties carried out multiple attacks. In November 1868, raiders attacked some Naga villages in Manipur. In December 1868, the Magistrate of Sylhet reported that attackers struck a village near Adumpore, followed by reports of the attack on Chief Hrangvunga’s village in Tripura. The deputy commissioner linked this movement to the one occurring on the side of

²²⁶ Deputations of – regarding negotiations with Sukpial, January 1867, File No. 79 – 82 ½, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon’ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India; Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition*, 19-22; Mackenzie, 300.

²²⁷ Mackenzie, 349-351; Buckland, *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors*, 457.

Manipur. Once again, on January 15, 1869, the Lushais burned the tea garden of Loharbund in Cachar and then attacked Monierkhal, after which they marched in force for Manipur. During this time, Kanhai Singh, a refuge prince of Manipur, had assembled near Cachar's east frontier to raid Manipur while the Lushais were threatening the tea gardens in the south. The report shows that Kanhai Singh has significant authority over the Kukis on the Tripura side, and he was also seen with them after they made their way to Manipur.²²⁸

As a result, the British formed an expedition to punish the marauders involved in the raids. They soon suspected that Suakpuilala was responsible for the raids in Tripura and Sylhet, and Lushais attacked the Cachar tea garden under Vanpuilala, who instead blamed the three sons of Vanhnuailiana, an independent chief who resided far to the east of Vanpuilala. While Vanpuilala's statement proved an attempt to make favourable terms with the British on seeing their force about to invade his territory, the British remained concerned about his role in the raids. It is worth noting that Vanpuilala had previously objected to the extension of tea planting in his directions, which raised suspicions about his motivations and objections towards the British presence.²²⁹ These events represent the complex and multifaceted nature of conflicts in the region, with factors such as ethnic tensions, territorial disputes, economic interests and political struggles all playing a role.

Soon after, the punitive expedition of 1869 began and consisted of three columns. Colonel Nuthall led the west Dholeswari Column, and Mr Kimbley and Mr Baker led the Sylhet Column, who were to meet with the west Column in Suakpuilala's village, and the east Cachar Column focused on operations in Vanpuilala's village was headed by J.W. Edgar. However, the 1869 expedition encountered significant challenges and ultimately failed. The rugged terrain and harsh

²²⁸Raid on village in ---by a party of the Looshai tribe, December 1868, File No. 418 – 421, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India; Raids committed by the, February 1869, File No. 307 – 310, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 5-9; Mackenzie, 301.

²²⁹ Raids committed by the, February 1869, File No.322, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India; Buckland, *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors*, 458.

weather conditions substantially impeded the military operation's progress. Moreover, the expedition's ineffectiveness was compounded by the troops' insufficient understanding and familiarity with the local geographical landscape. Beyond these primary obstacles, additional factors contributed to the mission's overall unsuccessful outcome. So, Sir William Grey, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, proposed the dispatch of a fresh expedition in the cold weather of 1869 – 1870. However, the British Government* of India objected as they had reservations and objections to deploying troops for punitive reprisals to frontier outrages. They held the principle of not resorting to such measures. They were reluctant to acknowledge the necessity of pursuing and chastising the offenders by venturing into their strongholds and mountainous regions. Instead, their policy with the hill tribes was “to place them under a carefully and well-qualified officer, in charge of any difficult tract of country which the ordinary authorities were unable to superintend, who should have the entire control of our relations with the tribes, in subordination to the commissioner.”²³⁰

The outcome of the failed expedition harmed the British prestige among the Mizos. Following this expedition, the British implemented a policy of conciliation and concession to reconcile with the Mizos and address any grievances. However, instead of achieving the desired effect, this conciliatory approach seemed to have the opposite effect. It reinforced the belief among the Mizos that the British lacked the power or ability to harm them as they perceived the British as powerless to inflict any significant damage or assert their authority over them. As a result, the policy of conciliation and concession unintentionally strengthened the notion among the Mizos that they were not under significant threat from British control or influence. It likely had implications for the relationship between the Mizos and the British authorities,

* Here Mackenzie stated “In a demi-official correspondence which passed between the Viceroy, Lord Mayo, and Sir W. Grey in October 1869, and which was afterwards brought on official record, Lord Mayo expressed the strongest objection to any more military expeditions against the Lushais, and suggested settling down protected communities of that tribe outside our Cachar border, arming them and utilizing them to repel incursions from beyond. Lord Mayo also advocated placing a Political Agent in Hill Tipperah”

²³⁰ Measures adopted to punish the....., March 1869, File No. 313, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India; Buckland, 458-459.

potentially affecting governance, cooperation, and future interactions.²³¹

2.3 Administrative Discord

It is possible to claim that the raids conducted by the Mizos were a response to changes in their circumstances, such as changes in their access to resources or relationships with neighbouring communities. Alternatively, the raids may have resulted from misunderstanding or inadequately addressing grievances. In such a way, the raid was an act of resistance by an independent group of people who did not consider themselves subjects of the established state. Their motivation for the raid can act as a defence of their autonomy and independence within the hills.²³² From the perspective of the Mizos, they were likely resisting the British attempts to extend their influence and control over the hill regions, where they had traditionally lived and governed themselves. They must have probably seen themselves defending their autonomy and independence from an external power encroaching on their claimed territory and way of life. However, from the British perspective, the raids were seen as aggression and lawlessness that needed suppression to establish or protect their interests and authority over the regions.

James C Scott's idea of extending administration provides a valuable outline for understanding British colonial practices. Scott argues that states typically seek to expand "administrative discipline" to "previously ungoverned" areas, a perspective that aligns closely with British efforts in the Indian subcontinent.²³³ Such is particularly evident in the colonial approach to hill regions, where British authorities sought to establish control and integrate these areas into their broader governance structure. Here, the British also sought to bring the hill regions under their control as they desired to establish their interest and ensure the smooth functioning of their

²³¹ Intelligence Branch Division Of The Chief Of The Staff Army Head Quarters India, *Frontier and Overseas Expedition from India, Vol. IV, North And North-Eastern Frontier Tribes*(Simla Government Monotype Press, 1907), 237, <https://apnaorg.com/books/english/frontier-overseas-expiditions-from-india-4/frontier-overseas-expiditions-from-india-4.pdf>.

²³² Guite, "Colonialism and Its Unruly?," 1190.

²³³ James C Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*(New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009), 2.

administration. Some British officials thought the hill tribes, including the Lushais, should be brought under British authority, aiming to classify them as subjects of the British Government. According to this viewpoint, the British expected the hill tribes to adhere to British laws, regulations, and governance, and they considered their territories to be part of British territory.²³⁴ However, it is essential to note that such viewpoints may not necessarily reflect the perspective or desires of the hill tribes, who may have had their notions of autonomy and self-governance. The differing interpretations and aspirations between the British officials and the hill tribes were a source of ongoing tension and negotiation during this period.²³⁵

Meanwhile, Sir William Grey, the lieutenant governor of Bengal, expressed his uncertainty regarding claiming the hill tribes as subjects of the British Government. He found it difficult to comprehend how the British government could consider the hill tribes as subjects when there had been no historical exercise of authority over them and, in many cases, no previous proper communication with them.²³⁶ Sir William Grey's perception highlights the need to determine the limits of British jurisdiction in these regions. It suggests that there was recognition of the need to carefully examine the relationships between the British Government and the indigenous tribes; acknowledging them and simply claiming them as subjects may not be justifiable or practical.

Returning to the situation, while the British considered measures to implement their policy, messengers from several Lushai chiefs arrived in Cachar to meet J. W. Edgar to gain a better understanding, which became an opportunity for the British to achieve their goals while avoiding the high cost and risk of a military expedition. In response to the arrival of messengers from the Lushai chiefs and to further the negotiations, they decided that J. W. Edgar, accompanied by a small guard, would travel to seek a personal interview with the principal chiefs. Additionally, Major

²³⁴Memorandum By Colonel Raban, 11th February, 1869, File No. 319, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 2-3.

²³⁵Memorandum on the Southern Boundary of the Cachar District..., August 1869, File No. 150, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 4.

²³⁶Memorandum on the Southern Boundary of the Cachar District..., August 1869, File No. 150, 4.

Macdonald, the superintendent of surveys, was assigned to accompany Mr. Edgar in defining the southern boundary of the Cachar District and obtaining topographical knowledge of the regions.²³⁷ Before, as seen from Captain Stewart's report:

the Lushais have always been looked upon as an independent people, but it is not certain that they occupy independent territory. The southern boundary of Cachar is indefinite, and may be pushed as far as it is thought proper. The natural boundary is the water-pent of the hills between this and the sea, and this the Chutta Choor, a peak which is sometimes talked of as the boundary, is supposed to be. If this be the case, all the Lushais, that we have any communications with, are within the district, as they all drink from waters that flow into the Barak.²³⁸

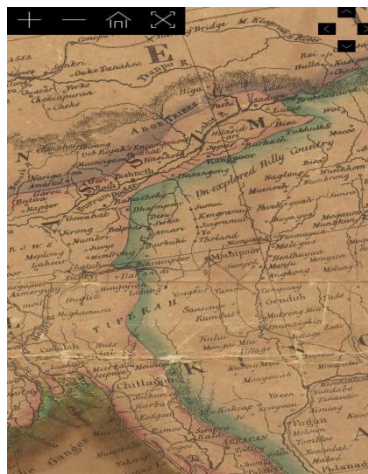
This report indicates that the area occupied by the different Mizo tribes in those days had never received proper recognition from the British Government of India. Moreover, in his memorandum, Colonel Raban stated that before Colonel Lister conducted his expedition against a portion of the Mizo tribes, they did not know much of the Lushais in Cachar, but "it is evident, however, that they must have held the position which they now hold for many years before 1850 since they appear in Tassin's map, published, I believe, in 1830, much in their present ascertained position" (See Map No.2.2) and the area remained unexplored.²³⁹

²³⁷ Looshai tribe's probable movements during the present cold season, January 1870, File No. 61 - 65, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 3 - 4; Buckland, *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors*, 459.

²³⁸ British territory to defined in the parts inhabited by the Looshai tribes....., April 1870, File No. 150, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, Delhi, 6; Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of Bengal*, 299 - 300.

²³⁹ Memorandum by Colonel Raban, 11th February, 1869, File No. 319, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India; Jean-Baptiste Tassin, To His Excellency the Right Honorable Lord William Cavendish Bentick G.C.B. & G.C.H. Governor General and Commander in Chief in India, 40x31.3 inches, in Barry Lawrence Ruderman, (Calcutta: 1834), raremaps.com/gallery/detail/64108/to-his-excellency-the-right-honorable-lord-william-cavendish-tassin.

Map No. 2.2: Tassin's Map



(Source: Jean-Baptiste Tassin, To His Excellency the Right Honorable Lord William Cavendish Bentick G.C.B. & G.C.H. Governor General and Commander in Chief in India, 40x31.3 inches, in Barry Lawrence Ruderman, (Calcutta: 1834), raremaps.com/gallery/detail/64108/to-his-excellency-the-right-honorable-lord-william-cavendish-tassin.)

In the past, colonial officials and writers often described the Mizos as a tough and resilient group of savages who did not owe allegiance to any established authority.

They have a history of conflict with the neighbouring tribes, such as the Manpuris, Tripuris and Burmese, who have made several unsuccessful attempts to subdue them as they were also well-armed with firearms obtained from Chittagong and Cachar, where they manufactured the gunpowder.²⁴⁰ Perhaps as a result of this, after the raid of 1869, the British became increasingly interested in understanding how the Lushais were acquiring their firearms. Despite the strict supervision imposed on the owners and sellers of firearms since 1866, there seemed to be a well-organized plan between the people living in the hills and those in the plains to acquire weapons through the Sunderbans and the vast jungles to the south, which the British administration would have had difficulty in preventing.²⁴¹

On December 20, 1869, J.W. Edgar started his expedition, and the farthest southern portion he reached was Bepari Bazar, where he encountered Suakpuilala and had a satisfactory discussion with him, who agreed to all his proposals.²⁴² For the defence of the frontier, J. W. Edgar also proposed the necessity of a fixed boundary line between them, as the survey department of India never adopted an absolute line or extent of the British territory for the final maps. “The area of the Lushais and the eastern Hill Tipperah portion was often described as “unexplored,” “densely covered with jungle,” showing the unsurveyed streams and topography by dotted line only, and in a different style, whilst the extreme limits of the British territory were marked, in the same conspicuous characters, as “boundary undefined” and “supposed watershed.”²⁴³ After much deliberation, J.W. Edgar persuaded Suakpuilala to agree and sign a *Sunnud* (See Appendix No. 4) on January 16, 1871.²⁴⁴ The Mizo expressed

²⁴⁰Raid on village in ---by a party of the Looshai tribe, December 1868, File No. 418, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India.

²⁴¹Arms in the hands of the Looshai tribe of Kookies...., July 1869, File No. 182 – 184, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 3-13.

²⁴² Edgar’s (Mr.) meeting with Sookpilal who agrees to all his terms...., April 1870, File No. 148, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 2-4; Buckland, *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors*, 459.

²⁴³British territory to defined in the parts inhabited by the Looshai tribes....., April 1870, File No. 149, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India.

²⁴⁴ Edgar’s (Mr.) further report of his proceedings in Looshai country; final report awaited; fresh map of Looshai country to be prepared, May 1870, File No. 103 – 105, Foreign Department, Political A, National

great satisfaction upon receiving the reassurance that they would not face interference as long as they abided by the conditions outlined in the *Sunnud*. While discussing this matter, Suakpuilala mentioned that the fear of external intervention in their internal affairs had been the main factor preventing his people from relocating to the north.²⁴⁵ This statement highlights the Mizos' strong desire for self-governance and autonomy during that time.

Traditionally, the Mizos inhabited a territory organized into self-governing village communities under the leadership of a chief. Each of these villages represented a distinct clan or sub-clan and occupied specific areas characterized by village settlement, *Jhum* lands (shifting cultivation) and hunting grounds with autonomous units with their governance systems and customary laws. Each settlement area significantly shaped the community's social and political structure, providing a sense of territorial identity and belonging. Each of these village territories was not only defined by the physical boundaries of the villages but also encompassed the surrounding *Jhum* lands and hunting grounds, which were essential for their livelihoods and sustenance. However, expanding British territories and establishing tea plantations threatened the Mizos and their traditional way of life. At the same time, the hunting practices of the Mizos could be seen as equivalent to agricultural activities, as hunting served as a crucial component of their subsistence livelihood. Therefore, one can consider their hunting grounds comparable to their agricultural fields. However, the British authorities imposed their understanding of land use and ownership. From their perspectives, the limits of *Jhum* cultivation were often considered the defining line for their territorial boundaries.²⁴⁶ The encroachment on the surrounding *Jhum* lands and hunting grounds resulted in the loss of their lands and created tensions and conflicts between the Mizos and the British authorities. These

Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India; Sunnud given to Sookpilall....., October 1871, File No. 145 – 147, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 4-5.

²⁴⁵ Charges incurred in negotiating with Sukpilal, a – Chief and a reward of Rs 500 granted to Munijelow, July 1871, File No. 269, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India.

²⁴⁶ Guite, "Colonialism and Its Unruly?," 1217.

lands were economic resources and cultural and social significance for the Mizos. The British encroachments disrupted the Mizos's way of life, depriving them of their means of subsistence and threatening their cultural identity.²⁴⁷

Correspondingly, before implementing Mr. Edgar's suggestions, and while he was in Suakpuilala's village discussing matters with him, in January 1871, a series of raids were committed by the Lushais, in coordination with the Howlongs and Sailos on a larger and more determined scale than any previous incursions of the kind. On the morning of January 23, the *Cachari Punji* of Ainerkhal was attacked, resulting in the death of 25 people and 37 individuals were taken captive. Simultaneously, another group of Lushais attacked Alexanderpore, resulting in the death of Mr. Winchester, a planter living there, and the capture of his child, Mary Winchester. Furthermore, Cutlicherra, an adjoining garden, was attacked the same day. The second attack occurred on January 24 at 9 A.M. Despite the warning letter sent by J.W. Edgar, emphasizing the need to strengthen the guards, Monierkhal, Darmiakhal and Nugdigram were still attacked by the Lushais on January 27. On the same day, raiders targeted some wood-cutters on the bank of the Rukni. There was then an intermission of raids on the Cachar district, but on February 23, they attacked Julnacherra.²⁴⁸

In the region of Sylhet, a series of devastating attacks have taken place in some villages near the Chargolla frontier post. On January 23, the village of Cacharipara also experienced a horrific attack where they burnt a significant portion of the village and the destructive act resulted in the loss of more than 20 lives and some young women were forcefully abducted from the village. Continuing the unfortunate sequence of events, on January 24, another village opposite the Sylhet outpost faced

²⁴⁷ C. Chawngkunga, interview.

²⁴⁸ Tea gardens and villages in the south of Sylhet and Cachar. Mr Winchester of the Alexandrapore tea garden killed..., March 1871, File No. 46 – 71, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 38-43; Note by Captain Lewin on the late....., April 1871, File No. 253, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Judicial Department, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 173-182.

attack. On February 27, a village near the Allynuggur outpost faced a similar fate.²⁴⁹ In Tripura, a party of Lushais attacked villages located approximately four hours south of Adampore and on January 21, they fired upon the *Khedda* people who were involved in capturing elephants, and Pooyarbari village was also plundered and destroyed. The following day, the violence persisted as they burnt and attacked the neighbouring villages of Boongbari and Puldhar. According to reports from the *Khedda* people, the assailant group numbered between 200 and 300 individuals, indicating a significant and coordinated operation.²⁵⁰ On March 2, men armed with guns and daos launched an attack in Goomtee, located about 40 miles from Comilla, along with some Reang villages. Another raid occurred in Teotecah Reang's village, which is close to Udaipur. Attacks accompanied this raid on two or three villages near Shonamura. Furthermore, reports emerged of two groups engaged in a spree of looting, burning villages in the vicinity of the river Gumti and Chagalnayah station in Tripura Hills and subsequently moving southward.²⁵¹

In the same year, on February 25, the political agent of Manipur reported that a village in the hills southeast of the valley came under attack on the night of February 15. The attackers destroyed the village, resulting in the loss of 40 lives, all of whom were brutally decapitated and captured 20 persons. While the raid occurred further east than any previous attack by the Lushai tribe, the Manipuris strongly believed that the raiders belonged to that tribe. The political agent also shared a similar view, assuming that the motive behind the raid's motive was the death of Chief Vanhnuailiana. However, they did not provide specific details regarding this

²⁴⁹ Tea gardens and villages in the south of Sylhet and Cachar., March 1871, File No. 79, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 44 – 45; Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of Bengal*, 307.

²⁵⁰ Telegram from Joint Magistrate, Sylhet, to Political Secretary, Bengal Government, Calcutta and Commissioner of Dacca, - (dated the 24th January, 1871), March 1871, File No. 166, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 80-81.

²⁵¹ Judicial Proceedings, March 1871, File No. 181 -183, 222, 373, quoted in Malabika Das Gupta, *Economics Impact of Raids on the Shifting Cultivators of Tripura* (1 Park Street, Kolkata: Professor Ramakanta Chakrabarty, General Secretary The Asiatic Society, 2008), 23; Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 307

connection.²⁵² The intensified raids indicated a clear challenge to the British authority. Multiple groups' involvement suggested a coordinated effort to resist British influence while asserting their autonomy and preserving their culture. At the same time, the increased number of raids created a setback for the ongoing negotiations and peaceful resolutions.

In this context, the raid demonstrates “conflicting notions of space and territoriality” between the British Government and the Mizos. The colonial administration introduced a new understanding of space that emphasized quantification and measurement, viewing it as a resource to be controlled and exploited for economic and strategic purposes. Under colonialism, the concept of space underwent a significant transformation, primarily viewed through the lens of land area, natural resources, and economic productivity. The British sought to control these resources and transform the land to suit their interests, which clashed with the traditional notions of space and territoriality held by the Mizos. The conflicting understanding of space created tensions and disputes, and the raids occurred to resist encroachment on their territories and defend their space and territoriality.²⁵³ Concerning the Mizos, the land and its resources were deeply embedded in their cultural and traditional value, tied to their identity, livelihoods, and sense of belonging, often defined by community boundaries. The conflicts and resistance that emerged were not only about physical or material resources but also about preserving their cultural integrity, maintaining their traditional practices, and safeguarding their ancestral connections to the land. Fernandes rightly stated, “Given their symbiotic relationship with the land, the community views the resultant conflicts as defence of its culture, identity and livelihood.”²⁵⁴

The statement by Yangkahao Vashun captures the profound significance of land for tribal communities. He emphasizes that land reflects the history of

²⁵²Mackenzie, 307.

²⁵³Guite, “Colonialism and Its Unruly?,” 1190.

²⁵⁴Walter Fernandes, “Tribal Customary And Formal Law Interface In NorthEast India: Implications For Land Relations,” Study Lib., <https://studylib.net/doc/7638687/tribal-customary-and-formal-law-interface-in-north-easter>.

“exploitations, alienation, struggle and cry of the tribals for their lands. Without the land, tribals are nothing. The land is everything for the tribals. It is their backbone. Landlessness is equal to rootlessness.”²⁵⁵ Likewise, the Mizos have always regarded land as the fundamental essence of existence since it was the foundation for their cultural practices, social cohesion, and economic livelihoods. For them, losing land or territories signifies a disruption of their traditional way of life, resulting in a sense of displacement, vulnerability and social marginalization, highlighting the need to respect their land-based traditions. As Lewin states, “The real rulers of the Hill Tracts were undoubtedly the chiefs, and they, I found, were highly suspicious and jealous of any infringement on their power and prerogatives.”²⁵⁶

Robert David Sack, a geographer known for his work on territoriality, argues that territoriality is a fundamental component of power. This concept suggests that controlling a specific geographic area is a way to exert power and influence over people and resources within that space. By establishing boundaries, those in power can regulate access and assert authority, reinforcing their control over the territory. This idea is evident in the context of colonial expansion, where colonial powers like the British sought to impose their authority over regions like the Lushai Hills, using territorial control to manage resources and influence local populations.²⁵⁷ The arrival of the British brought about significant changes in the existing land systems and governance structure, leading to tensions and resistance from the Mizos. Resistance movements, uprisings, and acts of defiance often evidenced against the British administration. The British responded to these conflicts in various ways, from negotiation and compromise to military suppression. The struggle over land and geography was not merely about physical resources. However, it reflected a more

²⁵⁵ Yangkhai Vashum, “Theology of Land: A Naga Perspective,” in *The Tribal Worldview and Ecology*, ed. A. Wati Longchar and Yangkhai Vashum (Jorhat: The Tribal Study Centre, 1998), quoted in Rev. Lalchawiliana Varte, *Land In The Traditional Mizo Religion And Its Significance For The Development Of A Mizo Theology Of Land*, https://www.academia.edu/36268438/LAND_IN_THE_TRADITIONAL_MIZO_RELIGION_AND_ITS_SIGNIFICANCE_FOR_THE_DEVELOPMENT_OF_A_MIZO_THEOLOGY_OF_LAND, 4.

²⁵⁶ Lewin, *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong*, 205.

²⁵⁷ Storey, *The Claiming of Space*, 19.

profound clash of worldviews and ontologies regarding the relationship between people, power, and the control of space. Whereas the Mizos viewed the land as intrinsically tied to their cultural identity, livelihoods, and community structures, the British considered it a commodity to be quantified, demarcated, and exploited for economic and strategic ends. This fundamental difference in perspectives underscored the broader conflict between the two groups over power and the control of space.

The British colonial administration implemented a defensive policy to safeguard their frontiers from external threats, including raids and attacks by the Mizos. This strategy focused on protecting and securing territorial boundaries. A letter from J.W. Edgar to the commissioner of Dacca clearly outlines this policy approach towards the Mizos:

The first of these may be called the policy of pure defence. It is to have as few relations as possible with the tribes, and, in the words of Lord Dalhousie, used of another frontier to confine ourselves to the establishment of effective means of defence on the line of our own frontier. A second line of policy is the permanent occupation of the Lushai Hills, and the more or less complete subjugation of their inhabitants. A third course is to refrain from occupying the country, or from exercising any direct control over the people, and to attempt to gain an effectual influence over them by conciliatory measures, by doing all in our power to extend trade, and other humanizing influences, while making the chiefs and their followers clearly understand that we had both the power and the determination to inflict severe punishment for any misbehavior on their part.²⁵⁸

The government responded to reports of raids by Mizos by instructing local officers to gather information on the hill tribes' activities and identify those responsible. Initially, the reports about which tribes were involved in the attacks were inconsistent and contradictory. However, further investigations revealed that the Haulawngs and Sailos were responsible for the raids in south Cachar. In eastern Cachar, the raids were attributed to the sons of Vanhnuaiana, possibly aided by individuals from Vanpuilala and Pawibawi. For the Sylhet raids, witnesses identified two of Suakpuilala's sons

²⁵⁸ Letter from J.W. Edgar, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, on special duty, to the Commissioner of Circuit, Dacca Division, - (No.C, dated Cachar, the 13th March 1871), June 1871, File No. 209, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Judicial Department, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 187-188.

among the attackers, leading authorities to conclude that the raids were orchestrated by the people of Suakpuilala and the followers of his sister, Vanhnuaithangi.²⁵⁹

Despite his initial enthusiasm for reconciling with the Mizos, J.W. Edgar became increasingly troubled by their persistent incursions into British-controlled territories. Faced with this challenge, he submitted a memorandum, expressed his concern, and recommended a more forceful approach to bring the tribes under complete suppression. Edgar believed “a policy of defense not accompanied by punishment for past outrages would, in all probability, fail.” Without such measures, he argued, the Mizos would continue their raids, undermining any defensive efforts or infrastructure, such as outposts and roads.²⁶⁰ To his astonishment, shortly after reaching an agreement with Chief Suakpuilala, the combined forces of the Mizos from the south and north conducted raids in Cachar, Sylhet, Tripura and Manipur. The disregard for the agreed-upon accord demonstrated the British authorities’ limited control and influence over the Mizo tribes. Edgar’s experience serves as a reminder that the colonial administration’s perspectives on security and peace often differed from those of the indigenous populations.²⁶¹ The imposition of boundaries and policies that undermined the traditional practices and territories resulted in further unrest and conflict. It highlights the inherent challenges in maintaining control and stability in a complex colonial setting, as the aspirations and desires of different groups often clashed with the colonial authorities’ aims.²⁶²

Simultaneously, T.H. Lewin, Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong, who had previously visited the Lushai Hill, urged for a full-scale military expedition. Based on his observations and understanding of the situation, he promptly recapitulated his suggested strategy, which is as follows: “1. Ascertain clearly what tribe and what chiefs have committed the late outrages in Cachar. 2. Organize an expedition to punish

²⁵⁹Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 308; Elly, *Military Report*, 7.

²⁶⁰Memorandum by J.W. Edgar, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, (No. 266, dated Cachar, the 22nd March 1871), April 1871, File No. 257, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon’ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, 185-186.

²⁶¹Guite, “Colonialism and Its Unruly?,” 1217.

²⁶²C. Chawngkunga, interview.

these tribes – the expedition will start at the end of November 1871. 3. The permanent establishment of a post of observation in the Lushai country at the close of the punitive expedition.” Having witnessed the challenges and conflicts in the region firsthand, Edgar believed that the local inhabitants, particularly the Lushais, would not pose substantial armed or organized resistance. The British considered the Lushais’ mode of warfare to be primitive and characterized by surprise attacks during the night. This perception made them believe the Mizos lacked the military skill to mount a formidable resistance.

Furthermore, the social and political structure of the Mizos, consisting of numerous small village communities without centralized leadership, made it unlikely for them to engage in coordinated actions or resistance. Based on Edgar’s perceptions, targeting specific chiefs in their punitive measures would further reduce the possibility of unified resistance from the Mizos.²⁶³ Edgar’s ideas about the limited resistance capabilities of the Mizos and the British perception of their warfare methods coincide with the notion of constructing a narrative of “uncivilized” or primitive tribal society, as examined by James C. Scott in the context of Southeast Asia. Scott argues that being labelled as “uncivilized” often coincides with living outside the control or influence of the dominant power, which in this case would be the British. This account serves to justify the British authority and intervention in the region by framing the Mizos as a backward or “uncivilized” society. By designating them as “uncivilized” or primitive, the dominant powers can legitimize their presence and position themselves as agents of progress, modernity, and civilization in contrast to the supposedly primitive or uncivilized societies living beyond their control.²⁶⁴

2.4 Resistance and Pacification

In July 1871, the governor-general in the British Government of India council

²⁶³ Note on the Lushai Question by T.H Lewin Deputy Commr. Of Chittagong Hill Tracts, March 1871, File No. 236, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon’ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 119-120.

²⁶⁴ Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 99-102.

decided to launch a punitive expedition into the Lushai Hills during the cold weather of 1871-72. The objective of this expedition was to punish the tribes involved in the recent raid. The main features of the expedition proposals were that two columns should start on November 1, 1871 – the one from Chittagong, the other from Cachar – each column consisted of Royal Artillery – ½ Mountain Battery, Sappers and Miners – 1 company, Native Infantry - 1,500. The British authorities desired the cooperation of the Maharaja of Tripura and Raja of Manipur. Still, they specified that their troops should focus on protecting their frontiers and establishing communication through their territory. Additionally, the authorities expected them to contribute to the opening of roads in the region. This approach aimed to ensure the neighbouring regions' safety while concentrating the punitive expedition's main force on the Lushai Hills.²⁶⁵

Two columns led the expedition. The left or Cachar column, led by Brigadier General G. Bouchier and accompanied by J.W. Edgar serving as Civil Officer, and the right or Chittagong column, commanded by Brigadier-General C.A. Brownlow with Captain Lewin as Civil Officer. The government granted both columns complete authority over the political and military aspects of the expedition. Their primary objective was not limited to retaliation but focused on securing the release of British subjects held captive. They explicitly instructed the columns to establish enduring friendly relations with the Mizos and persuade them of the disadvantages of adopting a hostile stance towards the British Government.²⁶⁶ The expedition of 1871 -1872, which Colonel Woodthorpe and Sir Alexander Mackenzie have extensively documented, can be summarized by highlighting its results. The Cachar column marched *via* Tipai Mukh, and once the Cachar column reached Champhai, they successfully subdued the tribes of Vanpuilala, Poiboi and Vanhnuaailiana. They imposed terms and conditions upon Vanhnuaailiana's widow, establishing their authority and control over the tribe. Similarly, the Chittagong column compelled powerful Mizo Haulawng chiefs such as Bengkuaia, Savunga, and others to submit

²⁶⁵ Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition*, 37; Elly, *Military Report*, 8.

²⁶⁶ Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 312; Buckland, *Bengal Under The Lieutenant Governors*, 499.

and acknowledge their allegiance to the British. Additionally, several Sailo chiefs representing the Sailo clan also submitted under the same terms as the Haulongs. These terms included allowing free access to British agents to their villages, surrendering the guns that were taken at Monierkhal and Nugdigram, releasing captives (including the daughter of the late Mr. Winchester), and paying a substantial quantity of fines in kind.²⁶⁷

By the end of January 1872, the Mizos surrendered, and by April 3, the last forces involved in the expedition returned to Calcutta. The results of the expedition can be summarized as follows:

1. The complete subjugation of two mighty tribes residing in over sixty villages. Among these villages, twenty that resisted were attacked and destroyed.
2. Fifteen chiefs personally submitted to the British and made solemn commitments to themselves and their tributaries to maintain good behaviour in the future.
3. The successful recovery of Mary Winchester, who had been held captive, and the liberation of more than 100 British subjects captured at various times.
4. The survey officers associated with the expedition were able to conduct triangulation and survey approximately 3000 square miles of the region, resulting in a successful survey of more than half of the region.²⁶⁸

Here, the successful surveying efforts would not only contribute to a better understanding of the geographical area but will also provide essential information and insights for the British authorities in their operations and administration in the area as “geographical learning was a matter of” their “utilitarian concerns associated with

²⁶⁷ Mackenzie, 313-314; Woodthrope, *The Lushai Expedition*, 37-46; Elly, *Military Report*, 9-10; Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 36-37; Lewin, *A Fly On The Wheel*, 255-256; Buckland, *Bengal Under The Lieutenant Governors*, 500-503.

²⁶⁸ Intelligence Branch Division Of The Chief Of The Staff Army Head Quarters India, *Frontier and Overseas Expedition from India, Vol. IV, North And North-Eastern Frontier Tribes*, 246-247.

commerce, state administration and imperial politics.”²⁶⁹ The British concept of empire was rooted in clearly defined territorial boundaries. In contrast, the Mizos determined their polity’s territorial limits more “by a vague sense of clan or chiefly domains.” They could be subject to interpretation or change based on cultural or social factors incompatible with the British understanding of territorial sovereignty. Since the Mizos were not considered “imperial subjects” of the British Empire, punishing those engaged in plundering and illegal activities within the British territories posed difficulties in “legal complexities regarding British sovereignty.”²⁷⁰ The lack of clear territorial boundaries and the different political systems created challenges in enforcing British laws and jurisdiction among the Mizos.

Based on Governor General Lord Mayo’s minutes, it is evident that one of the main objectives of the expedition was to show the advantages of trade to Mizos, as they recognized their interest in trade and sought to capitalize on it to foster economic development.²⁷¹ The British administration believed that introducing trade and commerce would demonstrate to the Lushais the benefits of engaging in legitimate economic activities and discourage them from plundering or raiding. While trade could bring economic opportunities, the colonial administration’s emphasis on the advantages of trade may have overlooked the social, cultural, and historical factors that influenced the Mizos’ economic practices and perspectives, thereby creating a barrier against their encroachments in the British territories, creating a buffer zone and reinforcing their position in the region.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ Anastasia Stouraiti, “Colonial Encounters, Local Knowledge And The Making Of the Cartographic Archive In The Venetian Peloponnese,” *European Review of History – Revue europe’enned’histoire*, 19, no.4(August 2012): 493, doi:org/10.1080/13507486.2012.697874.

²⁷⁰ S Thangboi Zou, “Riverine Bazaars, Trade and Chiefs In the Colonial Lushai Hills,” *Asia Ethnicity*, (November, 2019):568, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2019.1687284>.

²⁷¹ Letter from J.W. Edgar, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, to the Commissioner of the Dacca Division, - (No. 295A, dated Cachar, the 13th April 1870), May 1870, File No. 217, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon’ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, Delhi, 176; Lewin, *A Fly On The Wheel*, 255.

²⁷² Letter from J.W. Edgar, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, on special duty, to the Commissioner of Circuit, Dacca Division, - (No.C, dated Cachar, the 13th March 1871), June 1871, File No. 209, 193.

As a result, the British established three markets or *bazaars*. Tipaimukh *bazaar*, located on the southern frontier of Cachar, was situated at the confluence of the river Barak and Tipai/Tuivai, separating the Lushai and Manipur hills. The market was accessible to the people of the southern Lushai hills under the leadership of the Bengkuaia and Savunga chiefs. The Sonai *bazaar*, patronized by the western chiefs such as Kalkhama, was situated on the river Tuirial and served as a dividing line between the eastern and western territories. The Changsil *bazaar*, patronized primarily by Suakpuilala and located on the river Tlawng, was an important trading centre for the western chiefs and their communities. Bengali traders have conducted trade at these markets since their establishment. They sold various goods such as salt, iron, brass, copper, utensils, tobacco and possibly other items. In exchange, the traders receive commodities such as rubber, ivory and more.²⁷³

By participating in the market economy and exchanging their goods for cash, the Mizos have encountered and become familiar with the use of money as a medium of exchange. Their interaction with the traders and the trade activities in the markets introduced them to the broader economic system and the benefits of engaging in commercial transactions. Additionally, the availability of different consumer goods in the markets exposed them to a broader range of products than they may have previously encountered. This exposure to consumers' goods would have influenced their consumption patterns and potentially led to adopting new goods and practices that have impacted their livelihood and contributed to cultural changes over time.²⁷⁴

The Mizos once led a self-sufficient lifestyle, cultivated their food and produced their clothes, indicating a high degree of independence and minimal reliance on external sources for their basic needs. In such a self-sufficient system, there was no need for money. They relied on barter or non-monetary exchange systems within their

²⁷³ William Wilson Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Assam, Vol II, District Of Goalpara (Including The Eastern Dwaras), The Garo Hills, The Naga Hills, The Khasi And Jaintia Hills, Sylhet And Cachar* (London: Trubner & Co., 1879), 392; Zou, "Riverine Bazaars," 568–569; *The Luhshais 1878 - 1889* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Firma KLM Private Limited on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, 1978), 41-67.

²⁷⁴ C. Chawngkunga, interview.

community or with their neighbouring tribes for goods not produced in the area.²⁷⁵ These highlights show that the Mizos did not have a formalized currency within their community then. Although they did not have a monetary system, the Mizos knew the concept of money and its use. They understood the purpose and value of money and used it to purchase articles in the frontier markets. A quote from Hunter makes it very clear: “In December 1874 the Lushais came down in large numbers to purchase cattle, in exchange for which they offered the cash they had obtained from the sale of rubber.”²⁷⁶ It is worth noting that their reliance on money to purchase goods in the markets indicates a shift from a traditional bartering exchange system to a more monetized economy, shaping their economic practices and expanding their access to goods and resources beyond their local community.

Before establishing the markets, the British anticipated strong opposition from all the chiefs. This resistance was generally because the British would not permit the chiefs to collect tolls from traders if the markets fell under British protection. The chiefs’ ability to levy tolls was a significant source of their power and economic control within their territories. The British believed that the Mizo chiefs would do all in their power to prevent their people from attending the markets and that if the temptation of getting cheap goods proved more decisive than their authority, they would not hesitate to make raids in the British tea gardens and villages to revenge themselves on us for their loss, to compensate themselves for it by take, and to make it dangerous for their people to attend the markets. This strategy highlighted the delicate balance the British needed to maintain between establishing economic control and managing residents.²⁷⁷

Here, Edgar put up an idea and attempted instead to make arrangements with the chiefs, under which they should receive a fixed payment for each boat going up for trade instead of the present indefinite demand. Here, Chief Suakpuilala and all the

²⁷⁵N.E. Parry, *The Lakhers* (London: Macmillan & Co., Limited St. Martin’s Street, 1932), 94.

²⁷⁶Lewin, *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong*, 151; Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Assam*, 392.

²⁷⁷Letter from J.W Edgar, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of Cachar to the Commissioner of the Dacca Division, - (No. 295A, dated Cachar, the 13th April 1870), May 1870, File No. 217, 176.

chiefs on his side consented to this but asked that each trader going up should have a pass from the British and should agree to refer all disputes that might arise between the Cachar people and the Mizos to British arbitration. The British gladly agreed to this and made a tariff of payments by traders and wood-cutters, which seemed to satisfy the Mizos.²⁷⁸

As a result, the market gave the Mizo chiefs a consistent source of income through revenue, but the exactions the Mizo chiefs imposed on the traders hampered the expansions of the markets. The British entrusted the Mizo chiefs with ensuring the safety and protection of the traders within their territories. In return, they receive monthly rent from the traders who established their businesses in their respective areas. The British employed this security arrangement as a part of the broader trade strategy. By outsourcing the security aspect to the Mizo chiefs, the British implicitly recognized the territorial sovereignty of the chiefs within their domains.²⁷⁹ In the trading system, the British use of “market diplomacy” in the rubber trade demonstrates their strategic approach to influencing the behaviour of raiders and fostering a more peaceful and productive economic environment. The prospect of participating in the profitable rubber trade acted as a check against their tendencies towards marauding or raiding. The British believed that the raiders would recognize the benefits and potential gains associated with engaging in trade, and this economic opportunity would act as a check on their inclination towards destructive activities. The British often assumed that for certain wild races, such as American Indians, hunting and war were considered the only suitable occupations for men and may even perceive trade as degrading. However, the Mizos, whom they regarded as being among “wild races” or “savages,” despite occasionally indulging in hunting or war, possess an extraordinary aptitude for trading.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸Letter from J.W Edgar, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of Cachar to the Commissioner of the Dacca Division, 176.

²⁷⁹Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 318; Zou, “Riverine Bazaars,” 8.

²⁸⁰Notes on the Lushais by Mr. Burland, June 1871, File No. 209, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon’ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 197; Zou, “Riverine Bazaars,” 568.

While trade was the primary means of influence, the British recognized the importance of education and sought to provide instruction among the Mizos, particularly in practical skills and mechanics, rather than focusing solely on book knowledge. The British acknowledged that some Mizos already possessed basic skills in working with wood and iron. However, they believed that with proper education, the Mizos could further enhance their abilities in these areas as they showed great intelligence in matters connected with mechanics, which led the British to believe that they had the potential to excel in these areas. Furthermore, some Mizos wanted to have their children taught to read and write Bengali, which the British acknowledged and believed should be encouraged and fulfilled. However, they were cautious not to force education upon the tribes without natural inclination or spontaneous desire to learn.²⁸¹

The British recognized the potential of the Mizos to become a valuable and productive community through trade promotion and constant communication with them as they considered that they possessed positive qualities such as intelligence, persistence, and kind and affectionate dispositions when in their territories and engaged in peaceful activities. The British believed that by engaging with them and providing them with opportunities for trade and pleasant activities, they could transform from being perceived as a nuisance to their neighbours into a valuable and cooperative community. However, during times of conflict, raiding or when engaged in warfare, the Mizos exhibited behaviours that were not inherently different from those observed among “civilized or uncivilized” societies. The British considered the atrocities committed by the Mizos to be no worse than those committed by other civilizations during times of conflict. The British do, though, concede that during times of conflict, the Mizos had not committed atrocities to the same extent as those

²⁸¹ Letter from J.W. Edgar, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, on special duty, to the Commissioner of Circuit, Dacca Division, - (No.C, dated Cachar, the 13th March 1871), June 1871, File No. 209, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon’ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 194.

that other so-called civilized societies had recorded.²⁸²

Establishing markets provided a valuable means of communication and information gathering for the British. The markets served as interaction centres between traders, including the British and the local tribes, such as the Mizos. It further facilitated regular contact and exchange of goods and information between the British and different communities.²⁸³ By utilizing the markets as a platform for engagement, the British gathered necessary details on the life and activities of the hill people, especially the Mizos. The information obtained proved crucial to formulating effective strategies and policies, making informed decisions in their dealings with the Mizos and their neighbouring tribes, and asserting their authority.

To sum up, the frontier zone became a site for various economic activities and extraction of natural resources, and the Mizos also engaged in different activities, adapting to the changing landscape and forming new social and economic networks. However, these transformations also brought challenges, such as exploitative labour practices and economic disparities. Politically, the Mizos responded to the new spatial arrangement and colonial policies through various means. Some Mizos resisted colonial rule, engaging in armed resistance against the British, while others sought to negotiate and collaborate with the colonial administration, recognizing the potential benefits it could bring. These political responses influenced various factors, including local power dynamics, cultural identities, and changing socio-economic conditions. Colonial policies and practices shaped the creation of the frontier zone and the interaction between different groups and communities. The Mizos navigated this new spatial arrangement by adapting their social, economic, and political lives to the changing circumstances that continue to shape the region today. The establishment of new administrative structures, combined with the system of indirect rule, had a profound impact. Under the colonial administration, chiefs served as intermediaries through whom governance became implemented. This approach allowed the British to

²⁸² Notes on the Lushais By Mr. Burland, June 1871, File No.209, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 198.

²⁸³ Elly, *Military Report*, 11-12.

manipulate and exploit divisions within the Mizo society. The divide-and-rule strategy allowed the British to maintain control by favouring certain chiefs over others, leading to the fragmentation of authority and creating divisions among the Mizos.

CHAPTER 3

PRODUCING LUSHAI HILLS

The Mizos' deep connection to their land indeed led them to view conflicts over land as essential to defending their culture, identity, and livelihood. This bond was central to their way of life, and any threats to their land were perceived as threats to their very existence and cultural heritage. The British colonial expansion, particularly through the establishment of tea plantations, disrupted traditional land use, intensifying rivalries and leading to new conflicts. This disruption was not merely an economic issue but a profound cultural and existential challenge for the Mizos. The British colonial expansion into the foothills of the Lushai Hills, particularly through tea plantations, disrupted traditional land use and strained resources, exacerbating existing rivalries among communities and sparking new conflicts. The Mizos' defense of their culture, identity, and livelihood fueled their resistance against these external encroachments in efforts to protect their land. The British administration implemented particular strategies to uphold peace and protect the borders, including the establishment of markets and the organization of annual meetings with local chiefs. These initiatives were designed to create a governance system that would promote stability and reduce conflicts. Consequently, the Mizos remained relatively subdued along the frontier for a period of time. At the same time, the British administration conducted a topographical survey of the Lushai Hills to facilitate the effective operation of their governance. This survey was intended to collect comprehensive geographical and spatial data about the area, covering its physical characteristics, boundaries, and resources.

3.1 Colonial Power and Spatial Control

The British launched the great trigonometrical survey in the early nineteenth century to create highly precise maps of the Indian subcontinent, establishing a powerful instrument for colonial governance and territorial management. From the middle of the nineteenth century, the British administration began control over the Lushai Hills and sought to define its boundaries to clarify their jurisdiction. This process involved

negotiations with the local chiefs and tribes. The British were often motivated by restricting boundaries for administrative purposes, resource management, and addressing conflicts in the frontiers. When cartographers began preparing the Atlas of India in the eighteenth century, they engraved the geographical materials of several on the eastern frontier on the final sheets using a scale of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to the mile. However, they excluded the un-surveyed tract inhabited by the Mizo tribes from the publication and did not issue it in any other way on a similar scale. The exclusion seems to be due to the government's pending decision regarding the frontier line in that unsurveyed area. Not including the un-surveyed tract in the publication or issuing it on a similar scale, the cartographers ensured that there would be no difficulty in adopting any necessary frontier line as deemed appropriate by the government.²⁸⁴

Captain Pemberton, in 1835, states that the southern boundary of Cachar as:

On the south, the limits have never been accurately defined, and we only know that, on this side, the line is formed by the northern foot of lofty mountains inhabited by the Poitoo Kookies and by wild and unexplored tracts of territory subject to Tripurah. This densely-wooded and mountainous region appears to commence at a distance of between 40 and 50 miles from the southern bank of the Soormah.²⁸⁵

It is important to note that Pemberton's description reflects the limited knowledge and understanding of the region at that time. He acknowledged that neither he nor any other Europeans had explored or traversed this area in any direction. Therefore, his attempt to describe the boundary and the unexplored region was based on available information and likely drew upon existing maps created from more recent explorations. As a result, it was recognised that more up-to-date maps from recent explorations were needed to understand the region better, even though the southern boundary of Cachar remained poorly delineated. Consequently, a survey party was sent into the unexplored area to

²⁸⁴Memorandum on the Southern Boundary of the Cachar District, the Northern Limits of Chittagong, and the Eastern Limits of Hill Tipperah as shown in the Preliminary Sketch Map of the Eastern British Frontier bordering on Burmah and Munnipore with reference to Home Department (Letter No. 4611, dated 12th October, 1869, and Bengal Government letter No. 161T., dated 23rd August, 1869), April 1870, File No. 150, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 7.

²⁸⁵Memorandum on the Southern Boundary of the Cachar District, File No. 150, 6.

gather more accurate geographical information. The hope was that this area, inhabited by the Mizo tribes, would be identified on the map with a designation such as “Looshai tribes un-surveyed.” The intention behind this designation was to address the region in a manner that would be politically expedient so that the British Government of India could recognise the unique status of the area and its inhabitants and the need for further attention and consideration.²⁸⁶

It appears that the British colonial authority desired to extend its control over the entire valley of the Sonai/Tuirial and Dhaleswari/Tlawng *Nullahs*, including the area south of their sources on the watershed that separates the Kurnaphuli river from the streams as mentioned earlier. It considered this territory part of to-be British territory and intended to attach it to the Cachar district. However, the existence of hill people in the area complicated matters. Nonetheless, it sought to expand its power over these populations, irrespective of their level of civilisation or willingness to be governed by “civil jurisdiction.”²⁸⁷ This approach was rooted in the imperial mindset of the time, which viewed colonial subjects as lesser in civilisation and in need of governance and control by the colonial powers. This belief led to a wide range of authority claims being made, not only over territories but also over individuals or groups of people, regardless of “their spatial location or distribution.”²⁸⁸

Meanwhile, the British Government of Bengal also opposed recognising the territorial independence of certain tribes inhabiting or traversing the tracts of land on their eastern frontier. It considered these territories to be within the limits of British territory and expressed the view that recognising the territorial independence of these tribes, explicitly mentioning the Lushais (Mizos), would be against its interests as they were an irritant to the British Government and neighbouring communities within British districts. The British Government’s perspective reflects the colonial mindset of the time,

²⁸⁶Memorandum on the Southern Boundary of the Cachar District, File No. 150, 6; British territorial limit in the parts inhabited by the Loosai, April 1870, File No. 150 – 153, 6-8.

²⁸⁷Letter from Colonel H.L. Thuillier, Surveyor-General of India to Hon’ble A. Eden, Secretary to Government of Bengal, (No. 1053, dated 1st August 1867), April 1870, File No. 150, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 3.

²⁸⁸Jordan Branch, *The Cartographic State, Maps, Territory, and the Origins of Sovereignty* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 24.

which aimed to establish control and governance over the territories and populations under their rule. It was deemed essential to demonstrate its authority and educate the tribes on “what constitutes British territory,” suggesting the need to bring these tribes under the British Government’s control and influence.²⁸⁹

At the same time, it is essential to note that the surveys conducted were not merely for territorial control and technical exercises for mapping and data collection. They deeply intertwined with colonial ideology and the British sense of imperial identity. The surveys assert colonial control, establish territorial boundaries, and gather information for effective governance. Additionally, the surveys reinforced the perception of the indigenous population, such as the Mizos, as the “Other” distinct from the British “Imperial Self.” The British positioned themselves as superior, the dominant ruling force, and the indigenous populations as subjects to be governed and controlled.²⁹⁰ The Survey Department of British India did not adopt any absolute line or extent of British territory for the final maps of the eastern frontier till 1869. Instead, the maps reflected the actual surveys of the specified districts. At the same time, the un-surveyed portions, including the Lushai Hills and Eastern Hill Tripura areas, were described as “unexplored” and “densely covered with jungle” in prominent characters. Dotted lines represented the un-surveyed streams and topography and labelled the extreme limits of British territory as “boundary undefined” and “supposed watershed” in conspicuous characters. These indicate that British territory’s precise boundaries and extent in those areas were not definitively established or surveyed. Consequently, the question of defining the boundary and determining the extent of British territory in that area still awaits the government’s action.²⁹¹

Major Macdonald, the superintendent of surveys, accompanied J.W. Edgar, the deputy commissioner of Cachar, to the Lushai Hills in 1869, with the objective of

²⁸⁹Memorandum on the Southern Boundary of the Cachar District, File No. 150, 5.

²⁹⁰Mathew H. Edney, *Mapping An Empire The Geographical Construction Of British India, 1765 – 1843*(Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 316-317.

²⁹¹Letter from Colonel H.L. Thuillier, Surveyor-General of India to E.C Bayley, Esq., Secretary to Government of India, Home Dept., (No. 72, dated 14th January 1870), April 1870, File No. 149, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1.

mapping the region to eliminate any further uncertainty or ignorance regarding routes and geographical features and made a good sketch of the valley of the Sonai and much of the country between that stream and the Dhaleswari. As a result of Major Macdonald's survey in the Lushai Hills, the significance of the collected materials prompted H. Le Poer Wynne, the under-secretary to the Government of India, to request the lieutenant governor to prepare a fresh map of the Lushai Hills as quickly as possible. Wynne specified that cartographers should create this map using the materials collected by Major Macdonald. Additionally, Wynne even requested that two dozen copies of the map, once completed, be provided to the office of the Government of Bengal.²⁹² However, it is possible to assume that the frequent forays conducted by the Mizos into so-called British territories posed difficulties in surveying these areas and potentially caused delays in preparing a proper map for the region. The volatile security situation resulting from these plunders could have impeded the progress of the surveying process.

Before the signing of the *Sunnud* of 1871, there was correspondence regarding the boundary of the Lushai hills to the south of Cachar. By the end of 1870, the lieutenant governor of Bengal visited Cachar and personally discussed the boundary between the district of Cachar and the Lushai tract with J.W. Edgar. After their discussions, the government officials accepted Edgar's suggested boundary line and officially notified it in the *Calcutta Gazette*. The lieutenant governor expressed that changing the accepted boundary line would be undesirable and would move it further north. He believed they had already given sufficient consideration to the Lushais (Mizos) in determining the boundary. He noted that their settlements did not extend near the fixed boundary line. Additionally, all the salt springs of the Lushais (Mizos) were situated south of the boundary. He further emphasised that if the *Sunnud* was significant,

²⁹²Letter From F.B. Simson, Esq., Commissioner of Dacca, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Political Department, - (No. 45, dated Dacca, the 5th April 1870) and Letter from H. Le Poer Wynne, Esq., Under-Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Dept., with G-G to Hon'ble A. Eden, Secretary to Government of Bengal, (No. 765P., dated 12th May 1870), April 1870, File No. 103 – 105, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 9-19; Letter From F.B. Simson, Esq., Commissioner of Dacca, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Political Department, - (No. 45, dated Dacca, the 5th April 1870), April 1870, File No. 66, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 40.

the government needed to prescribe its boundaries rather than allowing the Lushais (Mizos) to have a say through further negotiation. The lieutenant governor believed that the boundaries, as already determined, were fair and equitable with the Lushais. Furthermore, the lieutenant governor generally approved the *Sunnud* drawn up by Edgar.²⁹³

Here, the perspective expressed by the lieutenant governor that the government should prescribe the boundaries specified in the *Sunnud*, rather than allowing further negotiation by the Lushais, highlights the British authority and control over territorial delineations, which further reflects their expansionist tendencies and perception of boundless authority. The idea expressed by Mathew H. Edney reflects the British imperial mindset that “the space of the map was not bounded and limited but was as extensible and as potentially all-encompassing as British power and knowledge could make it.” This suggests a belief in the authority of the British government to determine and impose boundaries unilaterally, ignoring the rights and claims of local indigenous communities like the Lushais (Mizos). Therefore, Edney’s statement provides a broader context for understanding the underlying assumptions and power structures in the boundary or frontier issue, highlighting the British perspective of asserting control and dominance over the mapping and territorial delineation processes.²⁹⁴

Accordingly, the British considered a specific boundary line the most appropriate and proposed this demarcation line in their official correspondence with the local authorities. However, Chief Suakpuilala, with whom W.J. Edgar had discussed the matter, raised objections regarding the crossing point of the river Tlawng. According to Chief Suakpuilala, the line one of his predecessors fixed was Pauchpirka Mokam, a place not marked on the map but situated north of Bairabi *Mukh*. The British preferred Bairabi as the crossing point because they had marked it on the map. However, the Mizos seemed to hold a superstitious reverence for Pauchpirka Mokam, which they

²⁹³Letter from Hon’ble A. Eden, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Judicial Dept to C.U. Aitchison, Esq., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Dept., (No. 4885, dated 7th November 1870), December 1870, File No. 120, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 7.

²⁹⁴Edney, *Mapping An Empire*, 25.

called the place of God. In light of Chief Suakpuilala's objection and the significance attached to Pauchpirka Mokam by the Mizos, officials suggested delaying the adoption of a proper boundary until the next season after further inquiry. The situation necessitated further discussions and investigations to resolve the dispute over the crossing point of the river Tlawng and to consider Chief Suakpuilala's objection.²⁹⁵ But Edgar was able to persuade Chief Suakpuilala and a *Sunnud* which outlined the agreed-upon boundary line and the crossing point of Tlawng or Dhaleswari was signed (See Appendix No.4). From the British standpoint, it seems that the boundary was not only a district boundary, but rather a boundary that delineated the extent of British jurisdiction and control over the tribes they considered under protected territories. It signified the British colonial administration's efforts to balance asserting their authority and accommodating the tribes' autonomy within the defined boundary.²⁹⁶

On seeing Edgar's tour reports from the Lushai Hills, the lieutenant governor, Sir George Campbell, suggested that officials must exercise caution not to restrict themselves too much when determining boundaries. He views the boundaries not as territorial boundaries that limit their authority as the paramount power but as boundaries of the estates of the different Mizo chiefs. Within these boundaries, the British agreed to refrain from interfering with the internal administration as long as the chiefs maintained good conduct. He also approved the proposed annual visit of the deputy commissioner to the hills to meet the chiefs, which would improve their position and relationship with the Mizos in matters of governance and administration. Furthermore, Edgar's proposal to construct two roads to enhance and facilitate the British position was approved. They also considered the extension of bridle roads through the hill once they firmly established their relations with the Mizos.²⁹⁷ Here, surveys played crucial roles in

²⁹⁵Letter from J.W. Edgar, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of Cachar to Commissioner of the Dacca Division, (No. 813, dated 23rd September 1870), December 1870, File No. 121, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 8.

²⁹⁶Letter from Bengal Government on Mr. Edgar's proposed visit to the Looshais, (No. 4885, dated 7th November 1870), December 1870, File No. 120 – 122, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 5.

²⁹⁷Letter from the Hon'ble A. Eden, Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Judicial Department, to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, - (No. 2512, dated Fort William, the

understanding the region, its people, and their needs, essentially serving the British in developing effective administration and decision-making. “The surveys were part and parcel of the British belief that they pursued a liberal, rational empire as much benefit of the local population as for themselves.”²⁹⁸ The lieutenant governor emphasises the need to maintain a delicate balance between asserting British authority and respecting the autonomy of the chiefs while establishing communication channels and infrastructure, demonstrating a strategy of colonial management. It reflects colonial powers’ typical mindset and approach in manipulating and shaping governance structures to serve their interests. While the surveys and infrastructure development may benefit the local populations, their primary purpose was to consolidate British control, exploit resources and maintain imperial authority.

During the 1871–1872 expedition, a significant development occurred regarding the surveying of the Lushai Hills. A survey party accompanied each column of the expeditionary force, which conducted topographical surveys in the newly explored and challenging terrain. Despite the limited time available for their operations, these survey parties managed to delineate approximately 6,500 square miles of the region, bridging the gap between the survey of Chittagong and that of Cachar. The southern party, led by Major Macdonald, embarked on a significant surveying venture, pushing north from Chittagong. Their efforts resulted in completing a triangulation* of 2,300 square miles and topographical mapping* of 1,700 square miles. The eastern frontier series of excellent trigonometrical surveys connected this surveying work. The survey area lies between 22°30' and 23° 45' north latitude and 92° 30' and 93° east longitude. The surveying process determined a substantial portion of the watershed between the Cachar

24th May 1870), May 1870, File No. 282, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon’ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 276; Buckland, *Bengal Under The Lieutenant Governors*, 504.

²⁹⁸Edney, *Mapping An Empire*, 317.

* According to Oxford Dictionary, *Triangulation* is the tracing and measurement of a series or network of triangles in order to determine the distances and relative position of points spread over an area, especially by measuring the length of one side of each triangle and deducing its angles and the length of the other two sides by observation from the baseline forming the basis for creating detailed maps.

* According to Geosciences, Topographical mapping focuses on accurate graphic, representing the physical features, elevation, and terrain of the surveyed areas.

and Chittagong and the Akyab water systems. The surveying work established “forty well defined geographical points.. and the heights of 37 of these obtained with mathematical accuracy.”²⁹⁹

Completing the triangulation and topographical mapping of such a vast area indicates the meticulousness and precision of the surveying work conducted by Major Macdonald’s southern party. These achievements contributed to the scientific understanding, mapping accuracy, and overall knowledge of the region’s geography. The main objective of trigonometric surveys in the British cartography of India was to produce a better sense of “coherency and cohesion” in the mapped spaces compared to older methods. While improved geometrical accuracy was a secondary benefit, triangulation’s uniform and consistent structure to the geographic archive motivated the British to pursue these surveys. Ultimately, these surveys enhanced the understanding and control of the region’s geography, offering a comprehensive and standardised approach to mapping, which would serve as a foundation for future development and control of the area.³⁰⁰

At the same time, Captain Badgley, leading the northern party, embarked on a surveying mission from Cachar. Lieutenant Leach, R.G. Woodthorpe and three other Civil Surveyors accompanied this party, and it was well-equipped with the necessary tools for surveying. They supported themselves by many instrument carriers and had three sets of instruments with them. They completed approximately 600 square miles of triangulation, nearly 200 linear miles of route survey, and topographical mapping of 4,800 square miles. The surveyed region extended to 93° 30' east longitude and almost 23° north latitude, encompassing the entire Tuiri river and its tributaries, which flow into the Barak river at Tipai Mookh.³⁰¹ By mapping these waterways and their surrounding areas, the survey highlights the importance of waterways in the region’s geography and infrastructure, as the rivers served as crucial transportation routes for the British in their

²⁹⁹Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 316-317.

³⁰⁰Edney, *Mapping An Empire*, 336.

³⁰¹Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 317; Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition*, 49-50.

operations within the hills during the colonial period. Major Macdonald's account highlights the necessity of the waterways as he stated:

The experience of an expedition in March 1869 from Cachar in the north down to Bepari Bazar, and in November 1869 from Chittagong up the Kurnafoolee through Demagiri Falls up to the Syloo hills, has shown me that it is quite easy to reach those point by water in five or six days from the date of leaving Gootur Mook in Cachar and Kassalong in the hill districts.³⁰²

However, Major Macdonald's surveying efforts faced limitations and challenges that prevented him from fully mapping certain areas. The upper course of the river Tlawng and Turial, which are western tributaries of the Barak river, remained uncharted due to the inability to push further north. Additionally, the lack of a junction between the surveying parties led to a gap in longitude between the overlapping portions of the survey despite overlapping latitudes. There was also a gap in latitude between the northern limits of the tract surveyed by the Chittagong party and the southern boundary of the surveyed Cachar region. These constraints resulted in insufficient mapping and a lack of thorough coverage in some locations.³⁰³

After conducting the survey, the surveyors discovered several flaws and shortages in the existing improper boundary system. Mr. Tanner, Deputy Superintendent, strongly recommended discarding the previous boundary altogether, as it never truly existed except on paper. Based on their findings, the surveyors put forth recommendations for establishing a new boundary, which were:

- (1) From the Blue Mountain in the latitude 22.31' to Pukling in latitude 23.22'the frontier line passes through a country which is inhabited by the Howlong and Syloo tribes, who until the next year never owed allegiance to the British Government.
- (2) From Pookling to Cachar the boundaries of Chittagong Hill Tracts and of the Hill Tripura traverse a region almost wholly unknown to the English.³⁰⁴

³⁰²Memorandum of the Kookie Hills by Major John MacDonald, Supdt. Of Revenue Survey Office, Calcutta,(3rd February 1871), March 1871, File No. 235, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon'blethe Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 113.

³⁰³Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*,317.

³⁰⁴ Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, August 1872, File No. 1, quoted in Chatterjee, *Mizoram Under The British Rule*, 79.

The accepted eastern boundary of Tripura involves the Langkaih river, which runs between Jampui and Hachek ranges up to its source at Betlingsib (Thaidawr). From there, it extends across to the Dolujuri peak, then by a straight line to the Surdaing peak and follows up to the river Fenny (See Appendix No.5).³⁰⁵ However, Tripura Maharaja's dispute with the British regarding his eastern boundary can be traced back to the government notification issued in 1874, which designated the Langkaih river as the east boundary of Tripura. At that time, the Maharaja contended that the boundary should align with the western boundary of Burma/Myanmar. He claimed that the region up to Tipaimukh, particularly in the east, was undeniably part of Tripura and acknowledged by responsible government officials. Furthermore, a valid arbitration award confirmed that the area up to the Tlawng river belonged to Tripura. The British authorities held a contrasting viewpoint in the dispute. They prioritised the defence of the frontier from the Mizos over the established boundary for Tripura and Lushai Hills. According to their perspective, the responsibility for protecting Tripura and the frontier should lie with the Maharaja, with guidance and advice from the political agent.³⁰⁶ However, since the Maharaja of Tripura could not suppress the raids conducted by the hill people in his claimed territory, the river Langkaih was established as the eastern boundary of Tripura as a form of war indemnity.³⁰⁷ According to the British perspective, prioritising defence preceded establishing specific boundaries. This issue reflects the British powers' manipulation and shaping of territory to serve their interests and maintain control over the territories under their influence.³⁰⁸

Captain Badgley, the leader of the survey party, put forward a proposal for a new boundary between Cachar and the Lushais. However, despite his suggestion, the

³⁰⁵ Letter from Col. J.E Gastrell, for boundary Commissioner Bengal, to J. Crawford, Esq., Offg. Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal, July 1874, File No. 9 – 2, Judicial Department, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India; Notification by – The Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (Dated the 23rd June 1874), June 1906, File No. 3, Political Department, Political-A, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Assam State Archives, Gauhati, India, 5.

³⁰⁶ Maharaj Kumar Sahadev Bikram Kishore Dev Barman, ed., *Tripura State Eastern Boundary Dispute* (Agartala, Tripura: Parul Prakashani, 16 Akhaura Road, 2002), 5-9.

³⁰⁷ C. Chawngkunga, interview.

³⁰⁸ Sailiana Sailo, IAS Rtd., interview by Lallawmkimi Ralte, Zotlang Veng, Aizawl, 25th November, 2022.

Government of India adhered to the boundary established by Edgar and Chief Suakpuilala in 1871.³⁰⁹ In addition to recommending the establishment of a new boundary, Mr. Tanner, Deputy Superintendent of Revenue Survey, also proposed the connection of the Chittagong Hill Tracts with Cachar following the readjustment of the boundary. This proposal suggests a strategic vision for enhancing connectivity and facilitating governance between the two regions. Moreover, the acknowledgement of defects in the existing boundary system reflects the British authorities' commitment to rectifying and improving administrative structures in their colonial territories and a desire to establish a more accurate and effective demarcation supporting the ground's geographical realities.³¹⁰

3.2 The Brunt of Hegemony

Following the military expedition and survey of the Lushai Hills in 1871-1872, the British government recognised the necessity to defend the newly defined territories in the region. To address these defence needs, the government established several security outposts to cover the area from southern Cachar through Tripura, along the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and eventually connected with outposts in the Arakan Hills. These outposts served as strategic locations for guarding the boundaries, ensuring the security of the newly demarcated areas (See Appendix No.6). The presence of frontier outposts and establishing trading markets seemed to have a pacifying effect as there was a period of relative peace and calm in the frontiers.³¹¹

In the late nineteenth century, the expansion of the tea industry significantly affected the land traditionally used by hill tribes, including the Mizos. While the British maintained a policy of non-interference in the Lushai Hills, they focused on developing tea plantations in nearby areas. This led to the transformation of new regions into tea

³⁰⁹ Lalrimawia, *Mizoram-Hisotry*, 65.

³¹⁰ Chatterjee, *The British Rule*, 79.

³¹¹ Letter from F.B. Simson, Esq., Commissioner of the Dacca Division, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Political Department, - (No.83, dated Dacca, the 28th March 1871), April 1871, File No. 292, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Judicial Department, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India, 218; Elly, *Military Report*, 11-12; *The Lushai 1878-1889*, 4-5.

plantations, encroaching upon the territories historically used by these tribes. As a result, the appropriation of land for tea cultivation restricted the land available to the Mizos, disrupting their traditional land-use patterns and practices essential for their livelihoods and sustenance. The tea planters rapidly expanded their estates, quickly acquiring large tracts of land. Table No.1 shows the acreage used for tea plantations.³¹²

Table 1: Area for Tea Plantation

Year	Total Area Taken Up For Tea Plantation	Area Under Actual Tea Plantation
1872	3,31,990 Acres	2800 Acres
1878	5,87,409 Acres	1,47,840 Acres
1885	9,21,891 Acres	1,97,510 Acres
1895	10,65,268 Acres	2,76,014 Acres

The above table discusses the rapid expansion of tea plantations, focusing on the significant disparity between the land acquired and the area used for tea cultivation. This large-scale acquisition highlights the unfairness and injustice faced by the Mizos, as the amount of land acquired greatly exceeded what was necessary for cultivation. Such disproportionate acquisition marginalized the Mizos, illustrating the power and resource imbalance of the period. The table underscores the negative impact of colonial policies on the rights and well-being of the Mizos, who endured land expropriation and economic marginalization.

Scott has rightly stated:

The hegemony, in the past century, of the nation-state as the standard and nearly exclusive unit of sovereignty has proven profoundly inimical to non-state peoples. State power, in this conception, is the state's monopoly of coercive force that must, in principle, be fully projected to the very edge of

³¹²Dhriti Kanta Rajkumar, "Raids Made Out Of The Lushai Tribes In The Tea Gardens Of Cachar During The Colonial Period: A Study On The Historical Perspective," *IOSR Journal Humanities And Social Sciences* 9, no.4(March-April 2013): 47-48, doi:10.9790/0837-0944354.

its territory, where it meets, again in principle, another sovereign power projecting its command to its own adjacent frontier.³¹³

In light of the above statement, it is evident that the dominance of “the nation-state”, the British, as the primary “unit of sovereignty,” was detrimental to “non-state peoples” such as the Mizos. The nation-state exercised power which involved the “monopoly of coercive force” and the projection of authority exerted throughout its territorial boundaries, often coming into contact with other sovereign powers at their adjacent frontiers. This projection of power and authority can clash with the rights and interests of “non-state people” like the Mizos, who found themselves at the receiving end of state actions that prioritised economic development and territorial control over their traditional lands. The expansion of tea plantations contributed to the transformation of the landscape and socio-economic action in the region, often at the expense of the Mizos, who had inhabited and utilised the land for many generations. The transformation of the landscape and socio-economic condition brought about by the expansion of tea plantations shows how the British hegemony disrupted the Mizos’ way of life and their relationship with the land they inhabited and relied upon for generations.

The British colonial administration demonstrated its hegemony in the Hill Tracts of Chittagong during 1875-76 through a resolution issued by the lieutenant governor of Bengal. There was uncertainty about whether Chief Vanhawia and his tribe were within British territory. Nonetheless, the British prioritized communicating to Chief Vanhawia that he and his people were subject to British laws and regulations. This action exemplified the British colonial approach of asserting authority and maintaining control over people within their jurisdiction, emphasizing their laws even before confirming the tribe’s settlement and exact location. Stuart Elden highlights the intrinsic link between territory and sovereignty, asserting that “to be in the territory is to be subject to sovereignty.” The British sought to assert their sovereignty by emphasizing territorial control, underscoring that “territory is the space within which sovereignty is exercised”.

³¹³Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 11

This underscores the critical importance of controlling and governing a specific area to maintain sovereign power.³¹⁴

The significant expansion of British territories and the clash with the cultural practices of the Mizos, such as hunting and raiding, soon began to disrupt peace in the frontiers and the British territories. In 1875, rumours were circulating about potential hostilities between the southern chiefs, but Chittagong's British authorities acted to prevent actual conflicts from erupting.³¹⁵ The policy of the British Government towards the Mizos was characterised by exercising political influence rather than direct control, along with establishing a precise boundary beyond which regular jurisdiction would not extend. Through this approach, the British gradually mapped and gained administrative oversight of significant portions of the Lushai Hills region. At the same time, the remaining areas were explored and mapped by survey parties. Sir George Campbell, the lieutenant governor, supported the idea of maintaining an advanced post to exert political influence on the Sailo, Haulawngs, and other tribes who were more easily accessible from the Chittagong Hill Tracts than from the Cachar side. However, the Shendus in the direction of Arracan remained more challenging for the British at the time.³¹⁶ The British expedition of 1871-1872 likely highlighted the repercussions of the Mizos' actions and displayed the advanced military strength of the British forces. This might have encouraged the Mizos to exercise caution, leading them to limit their raids and conflicts, whether due to ongoing feuds or as a reaction to recent offences in their region. This restraint contributed to maintaining a relatively peaceful frontier for the British.³¹⁷

In 1882, the Lushai Hills were hit by a severe famine, soon followed by outbreaks of plague and disease, compelling many inhabitants to abandon the hills. The famine severely affected the *jhum* cultivation and caused a decline in rubber, an essential

³¹⁴Note on proposed removal of residence of the Syloo Chief, Van Huoya, to the Ruejan Range, May 1877, File Nos. 12 – 14, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1-5; Stuart Elden, *The Birth Of Territory* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 329.

³¹⁵Elly, *Military Report*, 12.

³¹⁶Buckland, *Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors*, 505.

³¹⁷Reid, *Chin-Lushai Land*, 38.

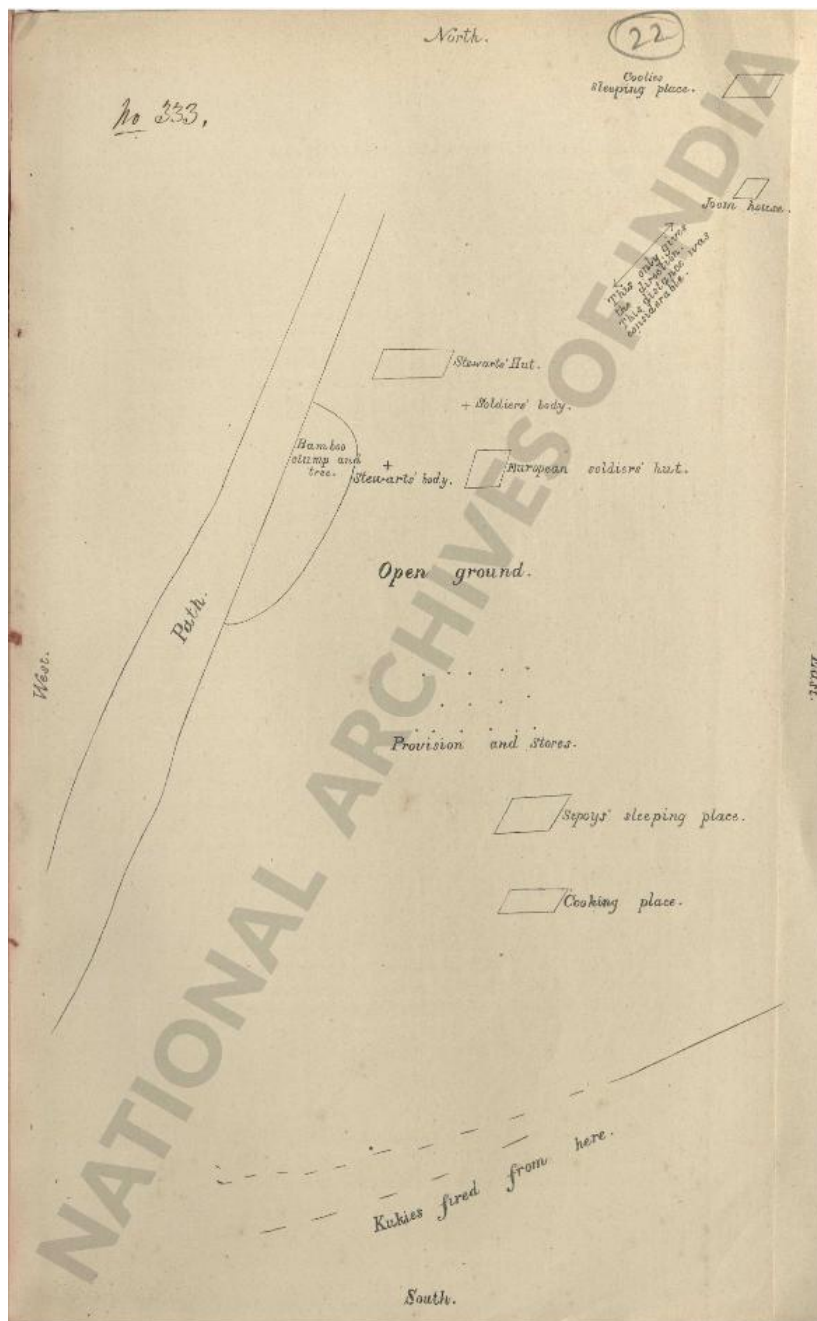
trade commodity, due to over-exploitation. With no resources to buy food, the people faced extreme hardship. In such dire conditions, plundering became the sole method of survival, leading to widespread unrest across the Lushai Hills.³¹⁸ Shortly thereafter, the Mizos started launching raids in the neighbouring areas. In November 1883, police units near Demagiri were ambushed by the Malliam/Molienpui Pawis, who were serving as scouts for a substantial group of eastern Lushais. This assault on the police units demonstrates the scale of the Mizo raids and their organized initiatives, with scouts collecting information for larger groups.³¹⁹ One notable occurrence was an unprovoked attack by a large group of Shendus under Hausata on a small survey party led by Lieutenant J. F. Stewart, who was killed by the attackers on 3rd February 1888 at Saichal range (See Map No.3.1).³²⁰

³¹⁸ Letter from The Secretary to The Chief Commissioner of Assam from The Secretary to the Government of India, (No. 1067, Dated Shillong, the 28th July, 1884), October 1884, File No. 376, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1 – 2; *The Lushais 1878 – 1899*, 84 – 85; Lalrimawia, *Mizoram-History*, 37 – 38.

³¹⁹ *Frontier and Overseas Expedition from India*, 239.

³²⁰ Raid by Kukies in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, March 1888, File No. 333, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 22.

Map No.3.1: Site where Lieutenant Stewart was killed on 3rd February 1888.



(Source: Raid by Kukies in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, March 1888, File No. 333, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 22.)

The British employed the parties to collect military information and enlarge the British existing maps by establishing a new road in the region. Lieutenant Stewart's party started from Rangamati and was working towards Saichal, planning to meet the second party under Lieutenant Baird of the Derbyshire Regiment, who was to work down from Demagiri.³²¹ However, the motive behind the attack did not specifically target the British Government. Hausata was compelled by his obligation to obtain heads of foreigners for his father-in-law, Zahuata. The raiding party accidentally came across Stewart's camp and seized the opportunity to achieve their objective when they found it unguarded. While initial plans were to dispatch a punitive expedition in response to the attack, authorities postponed the expedition multiple times. The first postponement was due to the season, and the second was because of the unsettled state of the Chindwin district, which the British authorities considered impractical to take further action against the Mizos at that time. Instead of the expedition, the British authorities strengthened the frontier outposts to prevent future raids.³²²

Later, on February 15, 1888, an attack was made on a Moorung village of Raja Pran Khye in the Chema valley south of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Observers attributed the attack to Shendus from their dress and how they wore their hair. The raids of that year happened to be the most serious of any occurring since the expedition of 1872, and the British also received reports of at least one raid in the Arraccan Hill Tracts. The British authorities began to question that the expedition of 1872 completely pacified only the northern and western clans/tribes of Mizos but that those to the south and east

³²¹ Letter from J.W. Edgar, Esq., C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal Political Department to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 449-P., dated Calcutta, the 6th February 1888 (Confidential), March 1888, File No. 322, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 11; Colonel L.W. Shakespear, *History Of The Assam Rifles*, Reprint(Aizawl, Mizoram: FIRMA KLM PRIVATE LTD. on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, 1977), 82 - 83; Reid, *Chin-Lushai Land*, 39 - 41; Elly, *Military Report*, 16.

³²² Letter from Colman Macaulay, Esq., C.I.E., Offg. Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to The Secretary to the Government of India, October 1888, File No. 187, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 17-18; Shendoo Raids on the Chittagong Hill Tracts, October 1888, File No. 88, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 4; *Frontier and Overseas Expedition from India*, 239-240.

had come to think themselves sure of continued impunity.³²³ The British authorities recognized that the frontier was at risk of incursions as long as the Shendus remained active. Due to the limited information on the Shendus, launching a military campaign against them was deemed too difficult and dangerous. Instead, the British Government of India prioritized incorporating the intervening tribes into their governance. The Howlongs, especially chiefs Saipuia and Vandula, pledged their assistance and shared intelligence on Shendu movements. In the southern region, the British extended their influence, with Araccan authority covering areas outlined by Captain Hopkinson in 1847 and establishing a frontier post at Talakmai. It was believed that Burmese authorities influenced the southern Shendus. The British administration's strategy centred on managing the Shendus as the primary challenge, with support from the Mizo tribes and cooperation from neighbouring tribes.³²⁴

The local British authorities were adamant about launching an immediate punitive expedition in response to the attacks by the Mizos. They feared that failing to punish these acts would lead to more attacks on British territories. Recognizing that an expedition was unavoidable, they wanted to act swiftly to prevent friendly tribes from becoming alienated and possibly joining the hostile chiefs in self-defence. However, the Government of India opted against an immediate expedition, partly because they had other pressing issues to prioritize. They also believed that a successful operation would require coordinated efforts from both the Burma and Chittagong sides. The instability in Burma made such coordination challenging. The local authorities were particularly concerned that Chief Saipuia, a crucial ally on the frontier, might turn against them due to their inaction. They worried that postponing the expedition for another year could lead Chief Saipuia to oppose the British. Additionally, the Bengal Government warned

³²³ Shendoo Raids on the Chittagong Hill Tracts, October 1888, File No. 88, Foreign Department, External A, 4.

³²⁴ Letter from D.R. Lyall, Esq., Commissioner of the Chittagong Division to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 153HT-VI-2, dated Chittagong, the 2nd March 1888) October 1888, File No. 90 and (No. 161HT-VI-2, dated Chittagong, the 4th March 1888), October 1888, File No. 92, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1.

that if the Shendus found the Chittagong border too well-guarded, they might consider raiding the Cachar region instead.³²⁵

The issues mentioned above serve as a prime example of the “divide and rule” strategy often used by colonial powers in India. By forming alliances with neighbouring tribes and fostering divisions among indigenous groups, the British authorities aimed to exploit existing rivalries. This tactic enabled the British to maintain control and manipulate the region by pitting different groups against each other. In this scenario, by gaining the support of some Mizo tribes while isolating the Shendus, the British aimed to weaken the collective strength of the indigenous populations and assert their dominance. It’s crucial to recognize that the British strategy was primarily driven by their desire to establish dominance, exploit resources, and secure control over the region. As Thomas Holdich states, “the idea of the adoption of this divide was repudiated with scorn by the side which wanted the ranges, and if it was supported with perfervid frenzy by other, it was because of the gain in culturable land which might thereby accrue, and certainly not from any heartfelt desire for assimilation.”³²⁶ Here, the idea of dividing the tribes of Mizos would be rejected by the Mizos, possibly because they understood the potential negative consequences it could have for their power or influence. On the other hand, the British, who supported the divide-and-rule policy, were driven mainly by the potential gain for their administration rather than a genuine desire for unity or companionship.³²⁷

While the British were contemplating how to deal with Shendus, another savage attack occurred on December 13 1888. Pakuma Rani’s village, only 4 miles from Demagiri, was raided, resulting in the death of the Rani and 21 more killed, 13 heads taken and 15 captives. The raiders were said to be Kalkhama, son of Chief Suakpuilala, Nikhama, Kairuma and Lungliana. The fact that the Rani had always been loyal and

³²⁵Telegram from The Chief Commissioner, Assam (To His Excellency), (Dated the 9th December 1888), K.W. – 1, Section III, March 1889, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India,13.

³²⁶Col Sir Thomas H.Holdich, *Political Frontiers And Boundary Making* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited St. Martin’s Street,1916), 27.

³²⁷C. Chawngkunga, interview.

known to be within British territory made swift punishment imperative. However, the British faced a logistical challenge in dealing with Kalkhama and other chiefs as they lived in a far northern region. If authorities launched to punish the raiders, the same column tasked with punishing the Shendus could not simultaneously pursue them. Hence, they needed to consider an expedition from Cachar. This incident demonstrated the urgency for prompt punishment and the complexities involved in planning an effective response to such raids.³²⁸

As a response to the recent raids and escalating tensions, the governor-general in Council considered it necessary to take immediate action. To provide reassurance and initiate a retaliatory action, the British Government of India authorised the assembly of a force at Demagiri, which would advance eastwards into the hill region of the Shendus. The primary objective of this expedition was to prevent further raiding activities. The force explicitly directed Saipuia's village, and the plan, as the Government of Bengal proposed, was to proceed as far eastwards as possible, considering future operations against Hausata's and Zahuata's villages. A road would be constructed from Demagiri as the force advanced to ensure effective communication and logistics. The commanding officer would receive instructions to identify a strategically advantageous central position, if available, capable of accommodating a sufficient force and being held during the upcoming rainy and hot weather. In addition to the road, a telegraph line would be promptly established between Chittagong and Rangamati, extending to Demagiri, facilitating efficient communication between the various locations involved in the expedition. However, the long-term plan for dominating and pacifying the hill region between Chittagong and Burma, Cachar and Arracan would require further consideration. The recommendations put forward by the Bengal Government on this

³²⁸ Letter from J.W Edgar, Esq., C.S.I., to W.J. Cunningham, Esq., (Dated Calcutta, the 15th December 1888), 32; Letter from Foreign Under-Secretary, Calcutta to Chief Commissioner, Assam, (No. 2406 E., dated the 16th December 1888), File No. 18, 48; Letter from J.Ware Edgar, Esq., C.S.I, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to The Secretary to the Government of India, (No. 2734P., Dated the 17th & 18th December), File No. 21, 48 – 50; Letter from Foreign Under, Calcutta to Chief Commissioner of Assam, Silchar, (No. 2432 E., dated the 20th December 1888), File No. 31, 57, March 1889, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India; Shakespear, *The Assam Rifles*, 86.

matter be carefully and thoroughly considered before decisions are made. The experiences gained from the expedition would play a crucial role in shaping future policies. The annexation of Upper Burma significantly impacted the British position in the region, as settled districts under direct British administration now surrounded it. This change further draws attention to the importance of taking appropriate actions and formulating an effective long-term strategy for the British.³²⁹

Upon learning of the British plan for the expedition, the Shendus took immediate defensive measures. They fortified their villages and even established a fortified stockade on the left bank of the river Koladyne, intending to resist the British advancement from that point. In response, the British authorities devised a strategy to create a sense of presence near the Shendus villages before the expedition. They deployed an advance guard to make an impression that the British were nearby and actively monitoring their activities. The intention behind this strategy was to keep the Shendus occupied with fortifying their villages further, thus diverting their attention from raiding into British territory, and to dispel any perception that the British had abandoned the idea of attacking or were afraid to do so. The British were concerned that if they did not make their presence felt near the Shendus villages, the Shendus might interpret it as a sign of weakness or a lack of resolve on the part of the British. Such misinterpretation could encourage them to resume head-hunting or raiding expeditions on their own accord.³³⁰

The continuous raiding forced the government to acknowledge that a policy of appeasement was no longer effective. An expeditionary force, “Lushai Expeditionary Force of 1889,” led by Colonel F.V.W. Tregear of the 9th Bengal Infantry, was dispatched to seek retribution for the atrocities committed. The force departed from

³²⁹Letter from W.J. Cunningham, Esq., Under-Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No.2424E., dated Fort William, the 19th December 1888), File No. 29, 56 – 57 and Letter to The Right Hon’ble Viscount Cross, G.C.B., (No. 4 of 1889, Fort William, the 8th January 1889), File No. 56, 72 – 73, March 1889 Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India; Shakespear, 86.

³³⁰Letter from S.N. Walker, Esq., Assistant District Superintendent of Police to the Deputy Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, (Dated Demagiri, the 30th December 1888), File No. 60, March 1889, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 78-79.

Rangamati in Chittagong on January 6 and arrived at the destination on January 9, followed by Native Infantry and the entire party assembled at the site by January 11, 1889. Under Colonel Tregear's leadership, the expeditionary force includes Mr. Lyall, Commissioner as Civil Political Officer, Messrs. G.A.S. Bedford and C.S. Murray as Assistant Political Officers. Additionally, Captain J. Shakespear served as the intelligence officer. The force consisted of approximately 1,150 men. These included 200 men from the 2nd Madras Pioneers, 250 of the 2nd Bengal Infantry, 400 of the 2/2nd Gurkha Rifles, and 250 of the 9th Bengal Infantry. In addition to the infantry units, the force was equipped with two mountain guns, providing artillery support during the operations. In the meantime, a party of raiders wreaked havoc in the Chengri valley on the Chittagong frontier between January 8 and 10. The raiders attacked twenty-four villages, resulting in the death of 101 persons, with 91 individuals taken captive, intensifying the imperative need for a strong response from the British to end the aggressive activities.³³¹ Later, reports indicated that Lianphunga and his half-brother Zahrawka were responsible for the raid. On February 9, 1890, Lianphunga surrendered himself to the British authorities. When questioned about his involvement in the attack on a village in British territory and the abduction of captives, he explained:

I was not aware that the village was in British territory, but I thought it was in Hill Tipperah. Formerly, many years ago, Savunga had a *punji* there, which was attacked by Tipperah and cut up. Afterwards that part of the country was used as a hunting-ground by the Lushais. When the Chengri valley people settled there, about the year of the great earthquake (1869), we told them not to remain as it was our hunting-ground, and that if they persisted, we would attack them. They did not leave the place. Jarak, my half-brother, whose *punji* were some distance in the direction of the Chengri valley, told me that he had met some Chengri valley men armed with guns in the jungle and they might be going to attack his *punji*. At this time I was ill, and said that Jarak might go and attack the *punji*,

³³¹Letter from D.R. Lyall, Esq., on Special Duty to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 5, dated Chittagong, the 16th January 1889), March 1889, File No. 70, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 84; Reid, *Chin Lushai Land*, 46; Mc Call, *Chrysalis*, 53; Shakespear, *The Assam Rifles*, 86.

taking my men. Bongho joined with his men, but getting ill on the road returned to his *punji*, his men going on.³³²

After careful consideration, Lianphunga and Zahrawka were deposed from their chieftaincy for four years and fined 15 guns by Captain Browne, Political Officer of North Lushai Hills. The British also made it clear that if any of their people were to commit any offence against the Mizos tribes, the Mizos or their chiefs were not to take matters into their own hands. Instead, they received instructions to report the incidents to the political officer, who would investigate the case.³³³ Here, Lianphunga's surrender and explanation shed light on the motivations behind the raid, offering a deeper understanding of the ongoing tensions between the British administration and the Mizos, as well as the complexities of the situation. As Thongchai stated:

The conjunctions of the concept of geo-body with other communal identifications have generated broader and more complex significations for the geo-body. Powerful values are added to it once its signification extends beyond territoriality – encroaching upon the notion of soil, *chat* (common origin), and the royal sphere of power.³³⁴

The tensions were rooted in the situation's complexities beyond territorial disputes. In this circumstance, "the concept of geo-body" extends beyond territoriality and encompasses other communal identifications, such as the Mizos' attachment to their ancestral land and notions of royal authority. The raid and Lianphunga's actions reflect the significance they attributed to their territorial identity, not just as a physical space but as a symbol of their heritage, cultural practices, and aspirations. Also, the tensions between the British administration and the Mizos demonstrate the situation's complexities, where "the geo-body" goes beyond mere physical boundaries and

³³²Statement made by Lengpunga at Camp No.12, outside Lengphunga's *punji* on the 9th February 1890, October 1890, File No. 134, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 26.

³³³Letter from Captain H.R. Browne, Political Officer, Lushai Hills to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, (No. 14, dated Aijal, the 14th June 1890), October 1890, File No. 133, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 24-25.

³³⁴Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*(Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 135.

encompasses broader meanings as it highlights the complexities arising from the clash of different cultural, social and political values associated with the territory.³³⁵

3.3 Power Dynamic of Spatial Configuration

By the 1880s, some British authorities claimed the Mizos were impoverished and driven to desperation. They argued that the Mizos resorted to plundering to survive, leading the British to consider the annexation of the territory inhabited by the Mizos and the assumption of direct government control. At one point, the British had implemented a system of subsidising the tribes through trade, which had certain advantages. It helped maintain communication between the British and the tribes and provided some insight into the tribes' feelings and intentions to some extent. However, as trade declined and the Mizos faced economic hardships due to the depletion of their *jhum* lands, they began raiding neighbouring territories to alleviate their plight. Consequently, the British authorities considered the grant of subsidies less advisable as they believed that continuing to provide subsidies would only be seen as a sign of fear and weakness. They felt it would only encourage a spirit of haughty insolence among the Mizos. They believed force and punishment were necessary to quell the Mizo's tendency towards plundering and raiding.³³⁶

Here, it is essential to note that this perspective reflects the viewpoint of the British authorities at the time and may not fully represent the complexities and nuances of the situation or the experience and perspectives of the Mizos. The British authority's viewpoint was to highlight their power, and they sought to establish and reinforce their authority and intimidate the Mizos by demonstrating their ability to freely access and penetrate areas that the Mizos may have believed were beyond British reach. The British statements:

The fact is, that the time has come when we must form intimate relations with the Lushais. We must be prepared shortly to Nagahillise them. We must assume

³³⁵Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*,135.

³³⁶ Letter from The Secretary to The Chief Commissioner of Assam from The Secretary to the Government of India, (No. 1067, Dated Shillong, the 28th July, 1884), October 1884, File No. 376, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India,8 – 9.

dominion over them of some sort or other; we must open out their country; we must provide for thorough communication between this and the Chittagong Hill tracts; we must be in position to know what is going on beyond our borders; we must throw forward our present stockade, and not leave miles and miles of a valuable reserve (the Inner Line) to become the “happy hunting-grounds” of the Lushais.³³⁷

Moreover, “here we are and we can go where we like, and penetrate into places where you thought we never came”³³⁸ indicates their desire to establish dominance.

The British authorities, such as D.R. Lyall, Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, believed that conducting an expedition through the heart of the raiders’ territory was an essential measure. In a letter to the Chief Secretary of the Government of Bengal, Lyall expressed his opinion that the expedition should be comprehensive and stated:

Every Chief should be made to come in and admit his vassalage, and parties should be detached to compel any Chief not obeying to come in. They should be told that they will not be interfered with of their country annexed so long as they abstain from raiding, but that raiding is absolutely forbidden and will be promptly punished. To secure the power to do this, a good road should be made right through the heart of the Shendoo country from Demagiri to the best point in the Burma frontier, and a small, but fully equipped force should be located on a good site about the middle of this road. I believe 500 men to be ample for this purpose, but the number would depend a good deal on the views of the Burma Government. The above number would be ample to dominate thoroughly the tribes up to the Sangal Klang, on which the post might with advantage be located.³³⁹

Shortly thereafter, the expeditionary forces arrived in the region and began their operations in the hills, specifically in the village of Seipuia, on February 17, 1889, led by

³³⁷Letter from J. Knox Wight, Esq., C.S., Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, (No. 1,303J., dated Silchar, the 28th June 1884), October 1884, File No. 380, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 15-16.

³³⁸Letter from C.A. Elliott, Esq., C.S.I. to C.Grant, Esq., C.S.I., (Dated Shillong, 27th August 1884), October 1884, File No. K.W. No. 2, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 7.

³³⁹Letter from D.R. Lyall, Esq., Commissioner of the Chittagong Division to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 916H.T. – VI, dated Chittagong, the 12th December 1888), March 1889, File No. 22, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 52.

C.S. Murray and commanded by Mr. Walker. The forces were welcomed with apparent friendliness, suggesting an initial openness to establishing amicable relations. Following this, the expedition extended its visit to Vandula's village. There, the Lushais displayed their hospitality by offering rice and beer, which likely contributed to the friendly atmosphere. Notably, Vandula, who had formerly been a powerful figure as one of the leading Howlong chiefs, still held sway among the Mizos. It became clear that Vandula's established friendly relationship and submission to British authority influenced others, prompting them to follow his lead and submit to British rule.³⁴⁰ Before directly engaging with the Mizos, British authorities approached them with scepticism and caution, doubting the Mizos' trustworthiness. They suspected that the Mizos might lie, necessitating verification of their statements. Additionally, there were fears that the Mizos could employ tactics like poisoning the British forces' water supply, reflecting a perceived safety threat. However, it's important to understand that this perception may not accurately represent the Mizos. These beliefs were influenced by the British colonial viewpoint and interactions with certain individuals or groups within the Mizo community. Despite these apprehensions, the British acknowledged the Mizos' strong sense of unity. They noticed that although different Mizo tribes might express hostility towards one another, they would unite against the British. The British recognized the existence of powerful coalitions among the Lushai people and noted that specific factions, especially the western Lushai led by Chief Lianphunga, had formed a formidable alliance. These groups showed a pattern of collective action on important issues, displaying high levels of cohesion and organized effort.³⁴¹

Although there was initial scepticism, the British viewed their success in winning over influential leaders such as Chief Vandula as a favourable advancement. This support enabled the British forces to secure a stronger presence in the region, thereby

³⁴⁰Sir Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, Reprint (Aizawl, Mizoram: Firma KLM Private Limited on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, 1978), 10; Reid, *Chin Lushai Land*, 51-53.

³⁴¹Letter from Captain H.R. Browne, Political Officer, North Lushai Hills to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, (No. 53, dated the 4th August 1890), October 1890, K.W.No. 1, 7 and Extract from Diary of Captain H.R. Browne, Political Officer, Lushai Hills, for the twelve days ending with Sunday, the 4th May, October 1890, File No. 127, 12, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India.

facilitating greater control over the area. According to Machiavelli's assertion, "this mode did not" only "serve to divide the enemies' forces but to double his own. Having made him weak in this way, (they have) assaulted him and won." In the context of British strategy in the Lushai Hills, they sought to diminish the unified strength of the Mizos and establish their authority by securing the backing of key figures and tribes. By forming alliances among the Mizos, the British effectively bolstered their forces in line with Machiavelli's principle, fragmenting the indigenous groups, reinforcing their position, and reducing the perceived threat, thereby asserting their dominance in the region.³⁴²

After departing Vandula's village, Mr. Murray and his team carried out a thorough survey of the area. Their journey took them across Theiriat and the Bawlpui range, then down into the Mat and Koladyne valleys, before crossing another mountain range about 1,500 feet high to reach the river Koladyne. Along the way, they stopped at Darbilli village, where they learned about the death of Hausata and that Stewart's gun had been buried with him. They also uncovered information about a Chin chief named Paona, located far to the east, who had received the severed heads of those slain in the raid. Chief Paona was implicated in the raid on Stewart's party, along with Hausata, his two sons, and Zahuata. Meanwhile, two prominent Lushai chiefs, Zahuata and Zakapa from Malliam Puiis, became aware of the British military movements in the Chin hills and understood their territory was the next target from the west. Consequently, they decided to submit to British rule and pursue peace and reconciliation.³⁴³

The construction of the new road was a slow and arduous task due to the dense bamboo jungle in the lower areas and thick forests in the higher regions. While the road was being built, members of the force undertook several survey missions in the surrounding areas to gather essential information about the terrain, local communities, and potential military threats. During their exploration, the British forces passed through

³⁴² Machiavelli, *Art of War*, 135

³⁴³ Letter from D.R. Lyall, Esq., Commissioner of the Chittagong Division to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 441-H.T. – VI-2, dated Chittagong, the 16th April 1889), June 1889, File No.119, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 11; Reid, *Chin Lushai Land*, 53; Shakespear, *The Assam Rifles*, 87.

an uninhabited area at about 3,300 feet, where they discovered a significant open saddle near the villages of Lalruma and Seipuia. Recognizing its strategic importance, they planned to establish a strong post there. This post, later known as Fort Lungleh, was intended to exert control and influence over the southern hills. It featured a large timber fence measuring 167 yards by 40, with accommodations for three officers and 250 riflemen, ensuring a substantial military presence. Constructing a road through such terrain was challenging, requiring extensive cutting on the hillsides and building temporary bridges over numerous streams along the route. The troops, aided by over 2,500 Chakma and Bengali labourers hired by the civil authorities, worked on constructing a road from Demagiri to Lunglei, covering a distance of forty-one miles. Lunglei, located east of Demagiri, was selected as the site for an advanced post. Road construction began on January 16th and reached Fort Lungleh on March 11, 1889. The result was a robust four to six-foot-wide pathway with gentle slopes, navigable even by loaded elephants.³⁴⁴

As the construction of the post neared completion, authorities organized a flying column to visit and punish two villages, including Hausata's, situated approximately 30 miles southeast across the river Koladyne. This column, composed of detachments from all units, embarked on its mission, navigating the challenging terrain of the Bualpui range, which stood at 5,200 feet. They descended into the low hills between the Mat and Koladyne rivers. Anticipating potential resistance at the Koladyne river crossing, the authorities were surprised when the column crossed without opposition. On March 20, 1889, the column arrived at Hausata's village. A few shots fired from a mountain gun scattered the inhabitants, allowing the column to enter and set the village ablaze. Amidst the burning structures, they unearthed and opened Hausata's grave, discovering a firearm believed to be Stewart's gun, providing evidence of Chief Hausata's involvement in the massacre of Stewart's survey party. With the destruction of the village, including the neighbouring village of Zahuata, and the inhabitants having fled,

³⁴⁴*Frontier and Overseas Expedition from India*, 247; Reid, 50-57; Shakespear, 87-88.

there were no further actions required in the area. Consequently, the force returned to Lungleh, completing their mission.³⁴⁵

On April 3, 1889, a durbar of Chiefs convened at the new Fort, with key chiefs from the southern Howlongs in attendance. They pledged their loyalty to the British, which was a satisfactory outcome given the situation. However, due to the seasonal conditions, the full resolution of issues with the Shendus, aside from burning the deserted villages of Hausata and Zahuata, had to be delayed. By April 16, 1889, they had carried out significant punitive actions; Fort Lungleh was established, and a road was completed. At this point, most of the forces could be withdrawn, leaving behind a garrison of one British Officer, Mr. Murray, as Assistant Political Officer and 212 frontier police personnel in Lungleh to maintain control of the area.³⁴⁶

Due to the incomplete success of the Lushai Expedition of 1889 in fully subduing the Shendus tribes, two groups from these tribes entered British territory while the expedition was still in progress. The British strongly suspected that they intended to continue raiding if conditions were favourable. Given their involvement in previous raids, the necessity to secure the release of captives still held by them, and their general tendency towards raiding, it became crucial for the British to implement measures to exert control over the region. These issues were discussed separately in a relevant context, highlighting the importance of addressing and managing the activities of these tribes. Consequently, on September 11, 1889, the government of India decided that military operations should be conducted.³⁴⁷ The authorities orchestrated a comprehensive expedition with multiple objectives. Their primary aim was to punish

³⁴⁵ Letter from Colonel V.W. Tregear, Commanding Lushai Expeditionary Force to D.R. Lyall, Esq., Commissioner of Chittagong, (No. 235, dated Camp Fort Lungleh, the 3rd April 1889, June 1889, File No. 120, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 6 -7; Reid, 55-56; Shakespear, 88; *Frontier and Overseas Expedition from India*, 248.

³⁴⁶ Letter from D.R. Lyall, Esq., Commissioner of the Chittagong Division to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 441-H.T. – VI-2, dated Chittagong, the 16th April 1889), June 1889, File No. 119, 6; Reid, *Lushai Hills*, 10-11.

³⁴⁷ Letter from the Commissioner of Chittagong, forwarding the Report on the Administration of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier for the year 1889-90, (No. 855H.T/VI – 12, dated the 15th July 1890), 1890 – 1900, File No. CB – 1, G – 7, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 56; Reid, *Lushai Hills*, 11-14.

tribes that had raided and caused damage to British territory. Furthermore, the mission sought to extend British control over previously neutral tribes now affected by the circumstances under British control and to explore and open up the partially known region between Burma and Chittagong. If necessary, the expedition aimed to establish semi-permanent posts in the areas visited to ensure complete pacification and the recognition of British authority. Since the operations targeted raiders in the Lushai Hills and involved movements from east to west and vice versa, they decided to treat the entire campaign as a combined operation known as the “Chin-Lushai Expedition,” distinguishing it from previous operations.³⁴⁸

In the winter of 1889, British forces launched extensive military operations in the area. The Chittagong column, led by Colonel F.V.W. Tregear and consisting of approximately 3,000 troops, advanced to Lungleh. Their main objectives included constructing a crucial road to Haka, linking India and Burma, setting up posts to maintain control and security along the route, and subduing tribes under British influence. Captain J. Shakespear once again served as the Field Intelligence Officer for this mission. Meanwhile, the northern column, led by Colonel G.J. Skinner of the 3rd Bengal Infantry and accompanied by C.S. Murray as the political officer, consisted of about 800 soldiers. This group was primarily deployed to the northwest to retaliate against the raiders in the Chengri valley and Pakuma Rani’s village. Simultaneously, a separate force of 400 men from the Surma Valley Battalion of Military Police, under the command of Mr. W.W. Daly, was dispatched from Cachar. Their mission was to rescue captives taken during the raids, punish Vuttaia’s sons for their role in raiding Pakhuma Rani’s villages, and establish a permanent post near Lianphunga’s village.³⁴⁹ The British Government of India sought to fully dominate the Lushai Hills. Until they achieved this goal, the mission of the Chin-Lushai force was deemed incomplete. The troops could only be withdrawn once the local chiefs were entirely compliant and adhered to all directives without hesitation. Given the characteristics of the local population, the

³⁴⁸*Frontier and Overseas Expedition from India*, 240.

³⁴⁹Reid, *Lushai Hills*, 14-15; Reid, *Chin-Lushai Land*, 184-186, Note on the Lushai Hills, its inhabitants, and its administration since 1888, 1895 – 1896, File No. CB – 1, Pol – 3, 4.

British suggested initially using strict and severe measures, with the option to ease these actions later if it proved suitable.³⁵⁰

On January 28, 1890, a column set out northward to punish the Lushai tribes responsible for raids on the Chengri valley and Pakuma Rani's village, who had evaded retribution the previous season. They used coolie transport and rafts along the river Tlawng to reach Lianphunga's village, where they joined Mr. Daly's contingent from Cachar. Together, they punished the villages involved in the Chittagong raids and exited the hills through the Cachar districts. Meanwhile, the central column, having allocated most of its coolie transport to the northern group, steadily progressed in building a road to Haka, finishing by mid-April. They dispatched a party to meet Burma troops at Tiau on February 26, 1890. The expedition successfully rescued several captives destroyed the main village responsible for the offences, and imposed a fine. Besides rescuing captives from the Chengri valley, their primary focus was establishing posts and organizing road communications. They chose a site on the Darzo range for a permanent post and completed Fort Tregear on May 4, 1890. The British stationed 200 riflemen from the 2/2nd Gurkhas under Captain Hutchinson at Fort Tregear. The Cachar column set up posts at Aijal, with 200 military police rifles under Captain Cole, while Captain Browne acted as a political officer. They established Fort Aijol on the range where Chief Lianphunga's village was located and another fort at Changsil. The remaining forces began withdrawing from the region, reaching Chittagong by mid-May 1890. Road construction commenced from Fort Tregear to Fort Lungleh and from Lungleh to Tiau gap. They also improved the native track from Tiau gap to Haka for mule transport.³⁵¹

In terms of administration, these efforts led to the creation of two districts named the North Lushai Hills and South Lushai Hills, with administrative centres in Aizawl and Lunglei, respectively. On July 3, 1890, the British Government of India approved the

³⁵⁰Letter from D.R. Lyall, Esq., C.S. Commissioner of the Chittagong Division to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 33 – VI-2-H.T., dated Chittagong, the 12th January 1890), August 1890, File No. 239, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 4-6.

³⁵¹*Frontier and Overseas Expedition from India*, 249; Shakespeare, *The Assam Rifles*, 93; Reid, *Lushai Hills*, 15-17; Reid, *Chin-Lushai Land*, 184-224.

Chief Commissioner's proposals to place the North Lushai Hills under the Assam Government's jurisdiction, appointing Captain H.R. Browne as the political officer. Subsequently, on April 1, 1891, the British Government of India established a new South Lushai Hills district and integrated it with Bengal, appointing Mr. C. S. Murray as the first superintendent. These administrative divisions were established to streamline governance and implement British colonial policies in the Lushai Hills. The creation of two separate districts with distinct headquarters exemplifies the British colonial strategy of dividing territories for more effective administrative control and management.³⁵²

3.4 Forming New Spatial Legacies

During the Chin-Lushai expedition of 1889-90, a small survey team accompanied two columns of the expeditionary force conducted survey operations. One of the key goals was to survey the region and establish communication routes. The column under Brigadier-General Symons, C.B., included a survey team led by Lt. T.F.B. Renny-Tailyour, R.E., which gathered at Kan in the Myittha Valley before moving into the Chin Hills. Meanwhile, another team led by Lieut. W.B. Bythell entered the Lushai Hills from Chittagong. These survey teams were crucial for mapping and documenting the geography and terrain of the areas explored. They seized every opportunity to enhance their topographical knowledge of the difficult regions they traversed. On March 26, 1890, Lt. Bythell and his survey teams left the upper Koladyne camp to join Lt. Renny-Tailyour from the Burma force at Tao village. Their combined mission was to complete the survey of the area between the Lushai Hills and Haka, covering approximately 9,000 square miles, with about 5,000 of those being newly explored and mapped.³⁵³

Following the withdrawal of troops after the expedition, the British needed to decide on the future governance of the Lushai Hills. One key issue was determining

³⁵²Reid, *Lushai Hills*, 18-52.

³⁵³The Royal Geographical Society, "The Indian Surveys, 1889 – 90," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 13,no.7, (July 1891): 402, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1801487>; Reid, *Chin Lushai Land*, 195-206.

whether Northern Lushai land would fall under Assam's jurisdiction and how this decision would affect the political boundary between Bengal and Burma. General Symons suggested using the river Kolodyne and its continuation, the Tui Pui, as the boundary between Burma and Bengal. The commander-in-chief supported establishing this boundary and notifying the relevant authorities, assuming there were no objections. The chief commissioner recommended that Northern Lushai land be provisionally governed by Assam, with boundaries defined by the Manipur river to the east, Tripura to the west, Cachar to the north, and including the southern villages held by the descendants of Lallula (See Appendix No.7), without a specific topographical boundary. British officials Sir S. Bayley and Sir C. Crosthwaite agreed that it would be premature to place all the hill tracts under a single officer. Instead, they suggested that each province administer the tracts along their borders and gradually bring the tribes under control. They believed Northern Lushai land would eventually fall under Assam's jurisdiction and planned to strengthen their presence and influence among the tribes following the troops' withdrawal. Despite having limited knowledge about the area and its people, the British were optimistic due to the friendly attitude shown by most tribes towards Daly's column and anticipated that establishing control over the region would not pose significant challenges.³⁵⁴

Regarding the recommendation of establishing the line of Kolodyne and Tui Pui as the political boundary between Bengal and Burma, the British authorities in Bengal considered it the best choice based on geographical factors, as well as considering the tribal distribution in the region.³⁵⁵ According to J.W. Edgar, it was impossible to accurately describe the geographical line that demarcated the boundary between Bengal and Assam and between Bengal and Burma in the Lushai Hills. Regarding the overall policy for dealing with the tribes, the lieutenant governor agreed with the principle of

³⁵⁴Letter From J.W. Quinton, Esq., to W.J. Cunningham, Esq., [Demi-Official](Dated Gauhati, the 17th March 1890), August 1890, File No. K.W. No. 5, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 33.

³⁵⁵Letter from Foreign Department, Calcutta to Chief Commissioner, Rangoon, (Telegram, No, 596-E., dated the 17th March 1890), August 1890, File No. 221, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 36.

not imposing strict instructions on the political officer, allowing flexibility in their approach.³⁵⁶ Back in 1871, Edgar held the view that “the fact was that the state of the law and the ease with which these people move from one jurisdiction to another make it almost impossible for the British to deal with them effectually and that the jurisdiction over them should be made to depend on their race, not on their geographical position, at any given time.”³⁵⁷ This observation suggests that the British aimed to establish a system that would extend their jurisdiction and control over the Mizos, irrespective of any political boundaries or territorial divisions. This approach embodies the colonial mindset of categorizing and classifying people based on racial characteristics. It ignored the complex socio-cultural dynamics of the Mizos and reduced their identity to merely their racial background. The British overlooked the diverse cultural, linguistic, and historical factors that shaped the Mizos’ identity, simplifying it to a single dimension. This reflects the colonial practice of creating hierarchies and divisions among various racial and ethnic groups, often to justify and maintain their rule by disrupting existing social structures, causing demographic shifts, relocation, and assimilation as they expanded their control. Scott had suitably stated, “one state above all the others was the propulsive force setting multitudes of people in motion and absorbing them.”³⁵⁸

The British authorities admitted that their understanding of the Lushai Hills and its tribes was limited, complicating the task of recommending a precise boundary. Nevertheless, the chief commissioner had pondered the issue and sought advice from Colonel Woodthorpe, who had previously surveyed part of the Lushai Hills and aimed to make the best decision possible with the available information. Regarding the eastern boundary, there was insufficient knowledge about the region south of Manipur, specifically between the easternmost Lushai near the river Tuirial and the Kanhows, which added to the complexity of determining the boundary. The Lushai people who had

³⁵⁶Letter from Sir John Edgarm K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Political Department to The Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, (No. 1619.P., dated Calcutta, the 19th April 1890), August 1890, File No. 238, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 42-43.

³⁵⁷J. Ware Edgar, “Mr. Edgar’s Notes On The Lushai And Other Kookies,” Part II, (20th March 1871), quoted in Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, 428.

³⁵⁸Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 129.

once lived in the Kungnung and Tualcheng areas had migrated westward, and the British were unaware of who had replaced them. They tentatively proposed the Nankathe or Manipur river as the eastern boundary, as it seemed like a relatively straight line from north to south on British maps. However, further exploration and input from the tribes or the Burmese administration could lead to adjustments. Similar challenges were faced concerning the southern boundary, as there was uncertainty about the extent of Vuttaia's son's lands and the feasibility of imposing an arbitrary line to limit shifting cultivation. They suggested drawing the line based primarily on tribal considerations, recognizing the Lushais to the north and the Haulawngs and Sailos to the south.³⁵⁹

Such a situation existed before the North Lushai Hills district received final approval. However, after the district's ultimate approval, various efforts were taken to maintain political authority over the Northern Lushai Hills (See Appendix No.8).³⁶⁰ Captain Browne, serving as a Political Officer, received clear instructions (See Appendix No.9) to utilise his diplomatic skills to persuade the chiefs to accept the authority of the administration and to discourage them from engaging in open raiding activities. Additionally, he needed to collect revenue from the chiefs who were willing to pay, whether in monetary form or through other means and supply labour. However, the instructions emphasised that no immediate attempt should be made to demand revenue from tribes unwilling or unable to pay.³⁶¹ Upon reaching Fort Aijal, Captain Browne commenced negotiations with the chiefs to persuade them to come to Aizawl, along with Lengphunga, to resolve his case. He deemed this crucial to maintain peace and stability. However, gathering the chiefs in Aizawl posed a delicate challenge due to their

³⁵⁹Letter from F.C. Daukes, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 1159 P., dated Shillong, the 28th March 1890), August 1890, File No.233, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 38.

³⁶⁰Letter from The Secretary of State for India to The Government of India, (No. 64 (Political), dated India Office, London, the 18th September 1890), October 1890, File No. 356, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 5.

³⁶¹Letter from F.C. Daukes, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to Captain H.R. Browne, B.S.C., Political Officer, Lushai Hills, (No. 1468-P., dated Shillong, the 22nd April 1890), August 1890, File No. 255, Foreign Department. External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 66-67; Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 39.

suspensions, timidity, and the onset of the rainy season, which made communication extremely difficult. Despite these obstacles, the political officer convinced the leading chiefs to come to Fort Aijal, and a meeting took place on June 13, 1890. The withdrawal of troops from Lushai land posed significant challenges in administering the region. Maintaining a positive relationship with the chiefs and securing their cooperation was crucial, as they played a vital role in the administration of the area. The British knew alienating the chiefs or forcing them into opposition would have significantly complicated governing the region. Captain Browne received instructions to ensure that no one evaded punishment and to firmly suppress any attempts at such evasion. The chief commissioner also expressed his hope that the governor-general in the council will understand the situation and grant approval for the actions taken in this regard.³⁶²

Despite the British efforts to maintain cooperation, the western Lushai chiefs expressed their discontent and refused to comply with the British demands of paying revenue and providing labour. The announcement of Lianphunga's deposition for four years, made by Captain Browne during the *darbar* of Chiefs held on June 14, 1890, was also met with objections from the chiefs. Furthermore, there were concerns among the Mizo chiefs that even hunting in their own village's hunting ground would be prohibited, adding to their grievances and frustrations. These factors created a challenging situation for the British authorities in their attempts to establish control and maintain order in the region. On September 9, 1890, the dissatisfaction of the western Lushai chiefs escalated into a violent ambush targeting Captain Browne. While travelling from Aizawl to Changsil, Captain Browne and his small party of four police sepoy were attacked just 2 miles from Changsil (See Appendix No. 10). There appear to be no extra security measures in place to prevent the attack. The ambush killed three of Captain Browne's men, and he succumbed to severe arm wounds.³⁶³

³⁶²Letter from Offg. Secretary to The Chief Commissioner of Assam to The Secretary to The Government of India, (No. 2981P., dated Shillong, the 28th July 1890), October 1890, File No. 126, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 11.

³⁶³Diary of Captain H.R. Browne, Political Officer, Lushai Hills, for the week ending with Sunday, (No.3, the 25th May 1890), October 1890, File No. 129, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 13-15; Letter from E.A. Gait, Esq., Census Superintendent,

Meanwhile, on the same day, another party consisting of sepoys and coolies were attacked between Aizawl and Sairang, resulting in the death of 11 individuals. The Lushais immediately laid siege to both Aizawl and Changsil following the attacks. Following the unexpected outbreak of violence by the Mizos, the British local officer swiftly initiated operations to subdue them. Surgeon H.B. Melville, I.M.S., took charge of subduing Aizawl, while Lt. H.W.G Cole, the commandant of the Surma Valley Military Police Battalion, assumed responsibility for operations in Changsil. To reinforce their efforts, a Relief Force consisting of 200 men from the Surma valley Military Police, commanded by Lt. A.C. Tytler, was sent from Silchar. Lieutenant R.R. Swinton of the 44th Bengal Infantry, Mr. A. W. Shuttleworth, Assistant Superintendent of Police and Dr. Whitchurch, I.M.S., accompanied the relief force. Tragically, Lieutenant Swinton lost his life on September 26 during a fight that occurred as the relief force made their way up the river Tlawng towards Changsil (See Appendix No.11). However, on September 28, Changsil was successfully relieved. On October 2, Lt. H.W.G. Cole and Lt. Tyler began their journey to relieve Aizawl, accompanied by a force under the command of Lt Watson of the 40th Bengal Infantry. They reached Aizawl on October 4, effectively ending Dr. Melville's challenging duties of defending the area.³⁶⁴

After Captain Browne's unfortunate incident, Mr. R.B. McCabe, I.C.S., replaced him as the new political officer. Actions were required to make the tribes aware of the futility of resistance, show them the power of British rule, and discourage any additional resistance. These actions involved camping in their villages, confiscating concealed

for the Personal Assistant to the Chief Commissioner of Assam (on tour), to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, [No. 7T., dated Silchar, the 11th September 1890 (Confidential)], October 1890, File No. 142, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 57-58; Letter from R.B McCabe, Esq., C.S., Political Officer, North Lushai Hills to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Section I, General and Political conditions prior to the rising in September 1890, (No. 89, dated Aijal, the 11th June 1891), January 1892, File No. 56, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 217-218; Reid, *Lushai Hills*, 23-24; Mc Call, *Chrysalis*, 58-59.

³⁶⁴ Diary of Captain H.R. Browne, October 1890, File No. 129, 13 – 15; Letter from E.A. Gait, Esq., Census Superintendent, October 1890, File No. 142, 57-58; Letter from R.B McCabe, Esq., C.S., Political Officer, January 1892, File No. 56, 217-218; Reid, 23-24; Mc Call, 58-59.

property from the surrounding jungle, destroying their crops, and conducting small-scale operations to hunt them down. The aim was to make the Mizos realize that time was not on their side and that complete submission was their only viable option. Upon assuming the role of a political officer in the North Lushai Hills in Aizawl, Mr. McCabe implemented large-scale punitive measures. Several Chiefs, including Khalkhama, Lianphunga and Thanglunga, were deported and sent to Tezpur Jail as part of these measures, where the two former chiefs hanged themselves. These actions likely assert British control and defer further resistance from the chiefs and the tribes.³⁶⁵

H.W.G Cole was confident that all the Lushais west of the Sonai river opposed the British forces. However, uncertainty remained about the involvement of Lushais living east of the river Tuirial in the uprising. Cole expressed his belief that they likely did not participate.³⁶⁶ While some young warriors may have joined the siege of Aizawl and Changsil, the eastern Lushais offered no organized assistance. The eastern Lushais (See Appendix No.12) had a history of ongoing feuds with their western neighbours and likely viewed the destruction of their rivals with indifference. They also did not anticipate that the British Government would assert control over their actions or attempt to collect tribute from them. Between 1872 and 1892, the eastern Lushais did not pose any significant trouble for the British. However, during this period, they were engaged in conflicts with the western Lushais and some of the descendants of Vuta, and they made unsuccessful attempts to regain control over the Sonai and Tipaimukh *bazaars*, which had been a source of revenue for them in the past. Meanwhile, in addition to dealing with the western Lushai Hills insurrection, the British also took steps to establish

³⁶⁵ Letter from F.C. Daukes, Offg., Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to The Secretary to the Government of India, (No. 4114P, Dated Shillong, the 2nd October 1890), December 1890, File No. 63, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 15-16; Letter from R.B McCabe, Esq., C.S., Political Officer, North Lushai Hills to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Section II, Campaign Against The Western Lushais, 1890-91, (No. 89, dated Aijal, the 11th June 1891), January 1892, File No. 56, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 220-225; Reid, *Lushai Hills*, 25-29; A.G. Mc Call, *Chrysalis*, 59.

³⁶⁶ Letter from Lieutenant H.W.G. Cole, Commandant, Surma Valley Military Police Battalion Cachar to The Inspector-General of Police, Assam, Camp Silchar, (No.IC.II, dated Changsil, the 12th September 1890), December 1890, File No. 64, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 17-19.

their authority over the villages east of the river Turial. A military expedition lasted from January 24 to March 5 1891 through the eastern Lushai territory. The force consisted of 400 men from the 43rd Gurkha Light Infantry and 30 Military Police, which was strong enough to discourage active opposition from the Lushais. The expedition accomplished its objective during this tour. These objectives included locating and visiting the eastern Lushai villages by increasing the British topographical knowledge of the hills, establishing contact with the chiefs, asserting British control, and obtaining their consent to pay house tax and provide labour. The chiefs gave their consent willingly, agreeing to consider themselves subjects owing allegiance to the British Government.³⁶⁷

The Chief Commissioner believed that the Lushais residing east of the river Turial had been thoroughly subdued, similar to the western Lushais whom the expedition of 1890-91 had decisively defeated. The British expected these eastern Lushais would not pose significant trouble if proper outposts were established and maintained in the region, and they would help prevent any potential uprising or unrest in the area.³⁶⁸ Captain Browne noted that the British had never established any communication with certain eastern Lushai chiefs, such as Vuta's sons, as they had not experienced the British power during the expedition of 1871-72. Until then, there had been no contact between the British and the eastern Lushais, which made the recent expedition more valuable in gaining knowledge about these tribes.³⁶⁹ During the rainy season of 1891, there was limited interaction between the British and the eastern Lushais. However, the British officials repeatedly notified the eastern Lushais about

³⁶⁷Letter from R.B. McCabe, Esq., I.C.S., Political Officer, North Lushai Hills to The Secretary to The Chief Commissioner of Assam, Section I, Our relations with the Eastern Lushais prior to the rising on 1st March 1892, (Shillong, the 23rd July 1892), December 1892, File No. 43, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 9-10.

³⁶⁸Letter from F.C. Daukes, Esq., C.I.E., Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 4873-P., dated Shillong, the 24th October 1892), December 1892, File No. 42, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 5.

³⁶⁹Letter from R.B McCabe, Esq., C.S., Political Officer, North Lushai Hills to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Section III, Eastern Sonai Promenade, (No. 89, dated Aijal, the 11th June 1891), January 1892, File No. 56, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 231.

their plan to collect a tax of one rupee per house during the upcoming cold season. In October, the *mantris* of Lalbura, one of the principal chiefs, and Bungteya warned that if British forces marched through their territory, the villagers would abandon their villages and retreat to the jungles. The British also heard rumours indicating that the eastern Lushais had resolved to make a bold attempt for independence.³⁷⁰

By February 29 1892, it was necessary for the British to visit the village of Lalbura and enforce compliance as Lalbura failed to provide the requested coolies. While in Lalbura's village, it became apparent that trouble was brewing as British forces noticed a significant number of Pawis and Bungteya's men in the vicinity. As anticipated, the Lushais launched an attack on the British camp, and the presence of Poiboi's, Bungteya's, and Lenkham's men indicated that the attack was not merely a spontaneous uprising by Lalbura but a coordinated uprising of the eastern Lushais. In light of the situation, the British could assess the strength of the combined opposition against them. Recognizing that they could not rely on the loyalty of the western Lushais, British officials decided it was necessary to request the government to send 300 military personnel to hold Aizawl and Changsil while releasing the garrison of 400 Military Police for punitive operations in the east of the river Tlawng. Plans were formulated in consultation with Captain Loch and Lieutenant Tytler and were promptly put into action (See Appendix No. 13). Meanwhile, the eastern chiefs urged some of the leading western chiefs, like Sailenpuia, to join the uprising and threatened to attack them if they assisted the British. However, the western Lushais preferred to remain neutral and observe the outcome of the rebellion. The British considered it essential to make it clear to both sides that they would only recognize open foes or loyal allies who demonstrated their obedience and provided substantial assistance. However, on April 4, a party of men from Lalbura, Poiboi and Maitei raided the Boruncherra tea estate. The raid aimed to obtain heads, pressuring the British to withdraw their regional presence. Consequently, British authorities deliberated on outposts and frontier protection alongside punitive

³⁷⁰Letter from R.B. McCabe, Esq., I.C.S., Political Officer, North Lushai Hills to The Secretary to The Chief Commissioner of Assam, Section I, Our relations with the Eastern Lushais prior to the rising on 1st March 1892, (Shillong, the 23rd July 1892), December 1892, File No. 43,10.

expeditions. On April 10, 1892, the punitive force under Captain Loch departed from Aizawl and successfully subdued the eastern Lushai chiefs by the end of May 1892.³⁷¹

During the British administration's efforts to address the uprising in the north and eastern parts of the Lushai Hills, another issue arose in the southern hills. The British authorities had levied tribute and labour demands on the chiefs in the region, which caused unrest among the people. On February 9, 1891, Mr. Murray, who was on tour and visiting Zakapa's village, threatened the chief and his people if they failed to meet the British demands and demanded two women, including Zakapa's wife. This action further aggravated the situation and increased tensions and potential conflict in the southern hills. Consequently, on February 10, hostile forces attacked Mr. Murray and his contingent. In response, a punitive expedition under Captain Hutchinson and Captain Shakespear was sent from Fort Tregear to punish Zakapa and bring his village under British control. However, Zakapa managed to escape upon hearing about the expedition. Despite this, the British force destroyed the village of Zakapa and captured several other chiefs during the operation.³⁷² After the incident, Mr. Murray was considered unsuitable to continue as the superintendent of the South Lushai District. As a result, they reassigned him to his previous duties in the Bengal Civil Police. In his place, Captain J Shakespear, who had served as an Assistant Political Officer in the Hill Tracts, was appointed to the position and assumed his responsibilities as the superintendent of the South Lushai District on April 16 1891. Shakespear had distinguished himself and

³⁷¹Letter from R.B. McCabe, Esq., I.C.S., Political Officer, North Lushai Hills to The Secretary to The Chief Commissioner of Assam, Section II, History of The Eastern Lushai Rising 1892, & Operations East of The Sonai From 10th April to June 8th (Shillong, the 23rd July 1892), December 1892, File No. 43, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 15-20.

³⁷²Shakespear, *The Assam Rifles*, 96; Attacks on Mr. Murray's party at Jacopa's village and measures for his relief. Return of the promenade party from the Eastern Lushai Country, March 1891, File No. 251 – 255, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1-13; Attack by the Lushais on Mr. Muray's party at Jacopa's Village, Proceedings- October 1891, File No. 65, Home Department, Public, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1-15; Memo by W.Oldham, Esq., Offg. Commr. of the Chittagong Division. Copy Submitted to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, *Diary of Captain J. Shakespear, 1st Battalion, Leinster Regiment, Superintendent, South Lushai Hills, from 7th to 16th May 1891*, (No. 659H.T/XIII-II, dated Chittagong, the 24th May 1891), August 1891, File No. 88-97, Foreign Department, External B, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 12-13.

demonstrated qualities that instilled confidence in his abilities, and the British authorities believed he would perform well in the new role.³⁷³

The superintendent, Captain J Shakespear, faced challenges in dealing with the resistance of Lushai chiefs who opposed British rule. In addition to the ongoing unrest in the eastern Lushai region, the Haulawng chiefs also took up arms against the British, which hindered the task of Captain J Shakespear. However, with the help of reinforcements from Burma, Captain J Shakespear was able to launch a punitive campaign. He partially destroyed the villages of Lalhrima, Lalkanglova, Thangluta, Rochungnunga and Dokhuma, which lie within the jurisdiction of the North Lushai Hills.³⁷⁴ Under the leadership of Captain J Shakespear, the British made significant progress in dealing with the Lushai resistance against British rule. In August 1893, he successfully executed the arrest of Ropuiliani, a prominent Lushai chieftainess, and her son Lalthuama. Both individuals, known for their hostility towards the British, were detained in Chittagong Jail. The Government of India issued the warrants for their arrest under Regulation III of 1818, which provided legal authority for apprehending and detaining individuals deemed a threat to British rule.³⁷⁵

He also confronted Fanai chiefs, including Zaduna and his son Kaphleia, who were part of a confederacy led by Kairuma aimed at opposing the colonial authority. Through his efforts, he managed to subdue and neutralize their resistance. Furthermore,

³⁷³ Appointment of Captain J. Shakespear as Superintendent, South Lushai Hills District, Pros. June 1891, File No. 62 – 68, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1-10; Retention of Captain Shakespear's service as Superintendent, South Lushai Hills District, for a further period of two years, Pros, December 1891, File No. 41 – 61, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1-11; Letter from H.J.S Cotton, Esq., C.S.I., to The Commissioner of The Chittagong Division, (No. 1356P., Dated Calcutta, the 13th April 1896), Pros. July 1896, File No. 113, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 38.

³⁷⁴ Annual Report Of The North Lushai Hills For The Year 1892-93, 1893, File No. CB-2, G-25, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 19.

³⁷⁵ Letter from H.J.S Cotton, Esq., C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to The Secretary to The Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 2128P., Dated Calcutta, the 10th August 1894), October 1894, File No. 219, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India; Letter from H.J.S. Cotton, Esq., C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, To The Commissioner of The Chittagong Division, (No. 3172P., Dated Calcutta, the 27th November, 1893), 1891 – 93, File No. CB – 2, Pol – 12, Political Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 75 .

Captain J Shakespear successfully dealt with Lushai chiefs like Lalchheuva and Vansanga, who continued to foster a spirit of hostility among the Lushais. His campaigns against these prominent chiefs significantly diminished the idea of resistance against colonialism in the South Lushai Hills.³⁷⁶ In the meantime, Mr. A. Porteous, the political officer in the North Lushai District, successfully subdued Kairuma, the powerful chief who openly rebelled against the British. Kairuma, whose village and its dependent villages were situated southeast of Arbam peak, refused to comply with the orders issued by the political officer regarding the supply of coolies, which led to the British taking punitive action to bring him under control.³⁷⁷ The British campaigns against the prominent chiefs in the Lushai Hills were instrumental in quelling resistance and pacifying the region. The successful subjugation and capture of hostile chiefs showed that the British would forcefully suppress any resistance against them. By demonstrating their military strength and resolve, the British authorities diminished the idea of resistance among the different tribes in the Lushai Hills. The challenging terrain of the Lushai Hills, with its intricate pathways and rugged landscapes, posed significant obstacles for the British forces. However, recognising the importance of understanding the region, combined with the energy and perseverance of the British officers, allowed them to navigate through these challenges and accomplish their objectives. These highlight the strategic and logistical considerations crucial for achieving success in the pacification and campaign efforts in the Lushai Hills.

By that time, the South Lushai Hills district had an estimated area of 2,400 square miles and fell under the jurisdiction of the lieutenant governor of Bengal starting

³⁷⁶Diary of A. Porteous, Esq., I.C.S., Offg. Political Officer, North Lushai Hills, for January 1896, Pros. June 1896, File No. 17, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 6-10; Letter from C. W. Bolton, Esq., C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to The Secretary to The Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 445P. – D, Dated Darjeeling, the 20th September 1897), Pros. November 1897, File No. 1, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 6-7.

³⁷⁷ Operation in the Chin hills and against Kairuma during the season 1895 – 96, Pros. December 1895, File No. 128 - 129, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, Delhi, 27-33; Operations against the Lushai Chief Kairuma and the villages of his group, Pros. June 1896, File No. 16 – 22, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1-11.

from April 1, 1891. The district's western boundary shared its length with the Chittagong Hill Tracts. To the east, the rivers Tui Pui, Tyao and Koladynem bounded the region, serving as natural dividers between the North and South Chin Hills. The northern and southern boundaries of the South Lushai Hills district remained undefined at that time. The north boundary roughly followed the latitude of 23°-2" N. A series of villages ruled by the sons of Savunga and Bengkhuaia formed a dividing line between the South and North Lushai Hills. The southern boundary, approximately 22° 20" of N. latitude, ran along the south edge of the Lakher settlement Serkawr, separating the district from the North Arakan Hills. The British authorities presumably constituted the district under Act XXII of 1860 but had not assigned a specific eastern limit or formally annexed it. The arrangement for the administration of the district was finalized personally by the lieutenant governor in February 1891, and the details of these arrangements were outlined in a letter No. 133HT, written by Commissioner Mr. D.R.Lyall, C.S.I, on February 28, 1891 (See Appendix No. 14).³⁷⁸

To discuss the military situation in Assam and the Chin-Lushai area, a Conference later known as "the Chin-Lushai Conference" was held in Calcutta on January 29, 1892. During the conference, Sir Charles Elliot supported consolidating the Chin-Lushai territory under a single administration. He recommended that even if it was not feasible to include the Chin region, the two Lushai districts should be amalgamated under one administrative head. One of the key outcomes of the conference was the consensus among the majority of participants that they highly desired to bring the entire area known as the Chin-Lushai Hills under one administrative authority, which was highly desirable and needed to happen as soon as possible. This recommendation highlighted the significance of unifying the region's administration for better governance and coordination by the British. However, implementing these recommendations would require careful consideration and planning, as well as considering various political, social, and geographical factors. The Chin-Lushai

³⁷⁸Letter from W.B. Oldham, Esq., Commissioner of the Chittagong Division to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 1310L., dated Chittagong, the 14th July 1892), January 1893, File No. 42, Foreign Department. External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 9.

Conference concluded that the new administration of the Chin-Lushai Hills should be subordinate to the chief commissioner of Assam. The Conference participants recommended placing the entirety of the Lushai Hills, encompassing its northern and southern regions, and select areas of the Arakan Hill Tracts under the administration of Assam. The governor general in the council considered the Conference's proposal and concluded that "the whole of the Lushai country should be under the Chief Commissioner of Assam, and the transfer of the Southern Lushais from Bengal to Assam should be made as early as possible." However, on March 19, 1893, the British officials decided to postpone the transfer until the Chittagong Division could also be transferred due to financial considerations, as it would impact the financial savings in the transfer procedure.³⁷⁹ By May 13, 1893, the chief commissioner received instructions to task Mr. Davis and Captain Shakespear with collaboratively developing a final scheme for the administration as a single entity. By November 15, 1893, the joint efforts of Mr. Davis and Captain Shakespear resulted in the completion of the final proposals for the administration of the Lushai Hills.³⁸⁰

While developing the administrative system for the Lushai Hills, the governments of Bengal and Assam had since issued memos outlining the current legal situation in the Lushai Hills. The consensus was to officially recognize these areas as part of British India. According to Mr. Wigley's note dated January 9, 1893:

The proper courses would seem to be to get 33Vic. Cap., 3 Section 1, applied to the Lushai country by Resolution in Council, and then to pass a Resolution for the government of the country, as suggested in Bengal letter of 19th July 1892, paragraph 4.³⁸¹

³⁷⁹ Letter from H.J.S. Cotton, Esq., C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, May 1894, File No. 327, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 89-90; Reid, *Lushai Hills*, 52-55.

³⁸⁰ Letter from F.C. Daukes, Esq., Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 100-Fro.- 778.P., dated Shillong the 6th February 1894), May 1894, File No. 301, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 11.

³⁸¹ Demi-Official from The Hon'ble H.J.S. Cotton, C.S.I., Chief Secretary to The Government of Bengal (To Secretary), Dated the 19th October 1893, 16-18; and Letter from W.J. Cunningham, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department to The Chief Commissioner of Burma, (No. 1116-E., dated Simla, the 17th May 1893), Pros. July 1895, File No. 133, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 43.

On June 25, 1895, the British government approved the incorporation of the Lushai Hills into British territory. Before this, the Assam province administered the North Lushai Hills District, while the provinces of Bengal administered the South Lushai Hills District. However, no formal administration had officially governed these areas. The governor general in council, exercising the powers conferred upon him by the relevant statutes, proclaimed to rectify the situation (See Appendix No. 15). The proclamation declared that the North Lushai Hills would be placed under the administration of the chief commissioner of Assam and included within the Province of Assam. Similarly, the proclamation declared that the South Lushai Hills would be subject to the lieutenant governor of Bengal and included within the lower provinces of Bengal. At a meeting of the council of India on September 25, 1895, the members resolved that to ensure the legal framework for governing these territories, the provisions of Section 1 of the Statute 33 Victoria Chapter 3 being “An Act to make better provision for making Laws and Regulations for certain parts of India and for certain other purposes relating thereto,” were made applicable to the North Lushai Hills under the administration of the chief commissioner of Assam, and the South Lushai hills under the administration of the lieutenant governor of Bengal, from September 6, 1895.³⁸²

The North Lushai Hills political officer recommended deploying a survey party to conduct a detailed topographical survey in his jurisdiction. Before making any decision, Sir William Ward, the then Assam chief commissioner, also sought information on the previous survey efforts and plans regarding topographical surveys in the South Lushai Hills. Therefore, the British authorities in the Hills requested the Revenue Department’s permission to provide the required information to address the

³⁸²British Jurisdiction in the Chin-Lushai Hills, Pros. August 1896, File Nos. 85 – 99, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1-10; Letter to The Right Hon’ble H.H. Fowler, *Her Majesty’s Secretary of State for India*, (No. 120 of 1895, Simla, the 25th June 1895), Signed by Elgin, G.S. White, A.E. Miller, H. Brackenbury, J. Westland, A. Mackenzie, A.C. Trevor, Pros. July 1895, File No. 144 and 144 B, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 61 – 64; List of general Acts of the Governor General in Council declared to extend to the whole of British India, 1896, File No. CB – 4, Pol – 40, Political Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 105.

matter accordingly.³⁸³ The assistant surveyor general in charge of the drawing office stated that as of September 1896, no proper survey of the Lushai Hills had taken place. However, expedition/reconnaissance maps were available for almost the entire area, created on scales of 1, ½, and ¼ inches. The annexed map indicates the areas that have been reconnoitered / explored and the respective dates of the surveys. The British government of India received no formal proposal regarding a topographical survey of the Lushai Hills. Moreover, it was uncertain whether a topographical party would be available for such a survey in the coming years unless there was a compelling need for accurate maps. Furthermore, conducting a detailed 1-inch survey of the North and South Lushai Hills, covering an area of over 6,500 square miles and mainly in the jungle, would require an entire topographical party at least three years to complete.³⁸⁴

The Second Chin-Lushai Conference reports, held from December 14 to 18, 1896 at Lunglei, presented various viewpoints on the amalgamation of the Lushai Hills. Messrs, Porteous, and Hutchinson believed that the Lushai Hills amalgamation should not occur until the connectivity infrastructure between Aizawl and Lunglei is improved. They believed that premature amalgamation could be problematic. However, they recommended completing the amalgamation by April 1, 1898 and emphasized the importance of expediting the construction of a better connecting road between the two areas. On the other hand, all other officers attending the conference agreed that transferring the South Lushai Hills to Assam was highly politically and financially desirable. The recommendations and discussions of the conference, including the call for a topographical survey of the Chin-Lushai Hills, likely played a significant role in shaping the future administration and territorial arrangements in the Lushai Hills. The conference report served as an essential document for decision-makers and authorities in

³⁸³Letter from The Officiating Secretary to the chief Commissioner of Assam to The Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, (No. 530 For 3399-P., dated 11th August 1896), April 1897, File No. 40, Department Of Revenue And Agriculture, Land Surveys, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 7.

³⁸⁴Letter from The Assistant Surveyor General in charge Drawing Office to The Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 3069.S., dated 9th November 1896), April 1897, File No. 40, Department Of Revenue And Agriculture, Land Surveys, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 8.

shaping the coming administration and territorial jurisdiction of the Lushai Hills.³⁸⁵ The administration of Assam raised the question of undertaking a proper survey of the Lushai Hills. In response to an enquiry, the assistant surveyor general stated that no proposal existed for a topographical survey of the Lushai Hills, and it was uncertain if a topographical party would be available for the survey in the coming years unless the need for accurate maps were urgent. However, the lieutenant governor believed conducting a comprehensive survey of the entire Lushai Hills as soon as possible was necessary.³⁸⁶

Additionally, the conference discussed the issue of subsidizing chiefs and headmen in the region, and the officers unanimously agreed that subsidizing them would not bring any advantage. They considered it more practical to enforce village responsibility through the existing tribal or village authority. However, there were divergent opinions regarding the specific authority to be vested with the responsibility. Mr. H.N. Tuck, the political officer in Chin Hills, believed in maintaining the current administration system through tribal chiefs in the Chin Hills for as long as possible. Mr. R. Sneyd Hutchinson, Bengal police and the superintendent of South Lushai Hills, on the other hand, supported the idea of grouping villages under selected leading chiefs within specific tribes. Meanwhile, Mr. A. Porteous, I.C.S., Political Officer, Northern Lushai Hills, thought that within the Lushai Hills, he believed in recognizing the authority of village chiefs exclusively within the Lushai Hills. These different

³⁸⁵ H.J.S. Cotton, Note by the Chief Commissioner of Assam on the Proposed Transfer of the South Lushai Hills from Bengal to Assam, (Dated 25th January, 1897), July 1898, File No. 60, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 32-33; Letter from C.G. Bayne, Esq., Revenue Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Burma to The Secretary to the Government of India, (No. 5 – 4 S.-17, dated Rangoon, the 1st March 1897, April 1897, File No. 41, Department Of Revenue And Agriculture, Land Surveys, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 9; Letter from F.H. Skrine, Esq., Offg. Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, To The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 7L, dated Chittagong, the 1st January 1897), 1891 – 1897, File No. CB – 1, G – 2, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 33.

³⁸⁶ Letter from C.W. Bolton, Esq., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to The Secretary to The Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 391P. dated Calcutta, the 8th February, 1897), 1891 – 1897, File No. CB – 1, G – 2, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 3.

perspectives highlighted the complexities and considerations involved in determining the most appropriate system of administration and authority within the Lushai Hills.³⁸⁷

The Government of Bengal and Assam, in consultation with the political officer of North Lushai Hills, recognized the need for an accurate survey of the Lushai Hills due to the perceived inaccuracies in the existing maps, highlighting the importance of conducting a comprehensive survey to ensure reliable geographical information. The British officials suggested employing survey party No. 14 for this survey work and forwarding any representations or proposals to the British Government of India for their consideration. Furthermore, there was a proposal to re-evaluate the strength of survey party No.14 and explore the possibility of assigning the survey of the Lushai Hills to survey No.6 once they completed their work in Assam. This proposal indicated that the existing strength of the Survey Department might be more than what was necessary for the administration's requirements, implying the potential need for reorganization or downsizing of the department to optimize its resources.³⁸⁸ Overall, the urge for an early and accurate survey of the Lushai Hills and the consideration of reorganizing the Survey Department reflected the administration's commitment to improving the mapping and surveying capabilities in the region for better governance and understanding of the terrain. Even more, they organized training for the officers in actual surveying. The training program should last at least one month and include teaching in the following fields. They also used to organize training for the officers in practical surveying. The training program should last at least one month and include teaching in the following fields of work: (a) Traverse survey (b) Cadastral survey (c) Pertalling (d) Extraction of

³⁸⁷ Letter from R.H. Sneyd-Hutchinson, Esq., Superintendent, South Lushai Hills, To The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 968G., dated Lungleh, the 21st December 1896), 1896 / 1906, File No. CB-3, Pol – 36, Political Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 145; Letter from H.N Tuck, Esq., Political Officer, Chin Hills to The Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Burma, (No. 1, dated Falam, the 3rd January 1897), April 1897, File No.41, Department Of Revenue And Agriculture, Land Surveys, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 10.

³⁸⁸ Letter from F.G. SLY, Esq., *Under* Secretary to the Government of India to The Surveyor General of India, (No. 394/146-8, dated the 24th February 1897), April 1897, File No. 39, Department Of Revenue And Agriculture, Land Surveys, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 4.

areas and preparation of settlement paper (See Appendix No. 16).³⁸⁹ And the tools used for survey in the surveying operations were drawing material, Perambulators, Planetables, Sextants, Chronometers, Telescopes, Theodolites, Prismatic Compass.³⁹⁰ The report shows that the British forces established a comprehensive heliographic communication system between Silchar and all the outposts in the North Lushai Hills during the expedition in Lushai Hill. Additionally, they extended this communication network to Burma. This heliographic communication system allowed for efficient and effective communication between locations in the Lushai Hills.³⁹¹

However, the No.6 Survey party, engaged in cadastral work, did not have the necessary training or expertise to conduct surveys in hilly terrains like the Lushai Hills. On the other hand, the No.14 party specializes in topographical surveys, making them more suitable for mapping and understanding the complex features of such regions. The British officials recognised the necessity of maintaining a skilled workforce for future surveying requirements, but some British authorities did not accept the proposal to abolish the No.14 party. They recognized the value of keeping the experienced individuals from the No.14 party, as they would be required to survey the Lushai Hills. The situation highlights a significant challenge in the availability of trained topographers. In the past, the British focus was primarily on cadastral surveys, which resulted in a shortage of topographical surveyors. The rigorous pursuit of cadastral surveys led to successful outcomes, but it also surpassed the settlement operations in Bengal and Burma, causing a surplus of survey parties in those regions. Consequently, there was a need to reduce topographical and cadastral surveys. However, the constant demands for reduction create difficulties in administering the department with a proper economy. Officials expressed uncertainty regarding the number of personnel that needed

³⁸⁹ Rules for the training of Officers in Practical Surveying, April – December 1900, File No. CB-7, G-80, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 8.

³⁹⁰ Colonel R.H. Phillimore, C.I.E., D.S.O., *Historical Records of The Survey Of India, Volume II, 1800 – 1815*, (Dehradun (U.P.) India: The Surveyor General of India, 1950), 225-236.

³⁹¹ Letter from The Offg. Secretary to The Chief Commissioner of Assam, To The Secretary to The Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 321For/2356P., Shillong, the 15th June 1896), 1896, File No. CB-4, Pol-42, Political Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1.

to be maintained. They recognized that circumstances might force them to dismiss trained individuals with little advance notice. At the same time, it takes approximately two years to train a native surveyor to a level where their skills are worth paying for in topographical surveying.³⁹² This issue highlights the importance of balancing surveying operations, considering the requirements needed. It also highlights the need for long-term planning to ensure the availability of trained topographers and maintain stability in the department's workforce.

Given that authorities planned to transfer the South Lushai Hills to the administration of Assam and the possibility of questions regarding communication between the North and South Lushai Hills, they recommended that the survey conveniently begin from the direction of Assam. Before confirming the starting point, the Foreign and Military Department reviewed the matter to ensure they had no specific reasons or preferences for beginning the survey at one end rather than the other. If no such reasons exist, the decision can be left to the surveyor general and the respective local governments to settle. The Government of India had entrusted the responsibility of deciding the survey details to the authorities in communication with the Government of Bengal, Assam, and Burma. It is worth noting that they agreed to conduct a topographical survey of the Lushai Hills as soon as possible. Based on the surveyor general's letter, a topographical survey of the Lushai Hills should be carried out by the No.14 Survey party, which specialises in topographical surveys currently located in the central provinces. Here, the surveyor general strongly recommended the No.14 Topographical Party transfer to Lushai Hills instead of abolishing it. According to the instructions, the entire region should be surveyed as a single project since they formed a continuous tract.³⁹³

³⁹²Letter from Major General C. Strahan, R.E., Surveyor General of India to The Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department, (No. 765.S., dated Calcutta, the 5th March 1897), April 1897, File No. 40, Department Of Revenue And Agriculture, Land Surveys, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 5.

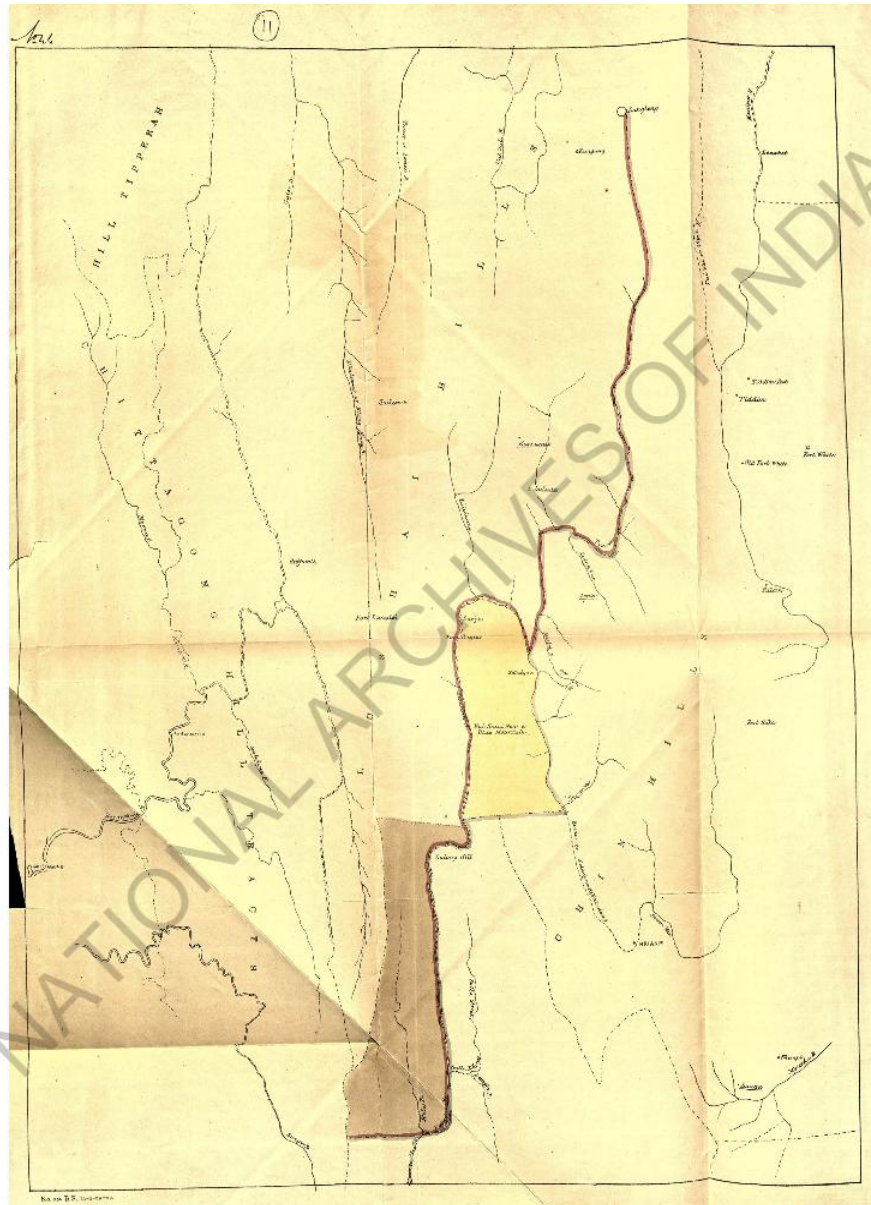
³⁹³Letter from F.G. SLY., Esq., Under Secretary to the Government of India to The Surveyor General of India, (No.826, dated Simla, the 22nd April 1897), April 1897, File No.42, 15; Letter from the Surveyor General of India, No. 765-8, dated 5th March 1897, Diary No. 436 and Letter from the Chief Commissioner of Burma, No. 449, dated 1st March 1897, Diary No. 449, Department of Revenue and

On April 1, 1898, a proclamation in a Gazette Extraordinary (See Appendix No. 17), effecting the transfer of the territories formerly known as the North and South Lushai Hills, was approved on March 15, 1898 by the secretary of state for India. Following the authority granted by section 46 of the Police Act, 1861 (V of 1861), the governor-general in the council was pleased to extend the provisions of the said Act to the territories formerly known as the North and South Lushai Hills and the tract known as Rutton Puiya's villages, including Demagiri. It is referred to as "the Lushai Hills" (See Map No.3.2).³⁹⁴ To ensure clarity and convenience, the British authorities saw the need for a clear definition of the boundaries of the Lushai Hills. The chief commissioner agreed with the views expressed by Major Shakespear. However, the practical challenges of the Lushai people's nomadic and *jhumming* lifestyle made demarcation difficult. Given their nomadic nature, it was not easy to establish permanent boundaries that the Lushai population would consistently recognise and respect. Drawing arbitrary lines on the map or using geographical features like hills was insufficient to ensure practical boundary recognition. Rivers provided a more sensible option for demarcation but were not always available in every area. Despite the challenges, the authorities believed having a clear definition of the boundaries was desirable for general purposes.

Agriculture U.O.I No. 515, dated 10th March 1897, April 1897, File No. 146 of 1896, Serial No.9, 31 – 32; Department of Revenue and Agriculture U.O.I. No. 614, dated 18th March 1897, J.S., - 19-3-97, H.Daly, - 19-3-97, April 1897, 33 -34; Finance Department U.O.R. No. 1698, dated 10th March 1897, Signed by R.A. Gamble, 12-3-97, J.F. Finlay, 13-3-97, J.W[Estland], 15-3-97, 32; Military Department U.O.I. No. 982-B., dated 6th April 1897, G.H. More Molyneux, - 13 – 4-97, Military Department unofficially, 35; Department Of Revenue And Agriculture, Land Surveys, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, Delhi ; Diary No. 1418 – Programme of operation of the Survey of India Department for 1899 – 1900 in particular No.14 Party, Lushai Hills, 1912, File No. CB – 6, G – 68, Survey Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 9 – 12.

³⁹⁴Letter from J.Lang, Esq., Officiating Under-Secretary to the Government of India, to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 503-E.B., dated Fort William, the 15th March 1898), Pros. July 1898, File No. 47 Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1; Notification made by W.J. Cunningham, Secretary to the Government of India, (Simla, the 1st April, 1898), Pros. July 1898, File No. 54, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 19, Transfer of the South Lushai Hill from Bengal to Assam. Boundaries of the Lushai Hill. Amendment of the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation of 1880; Pros. July 1898, File No. 44, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 15.

MAP No. 3.2: Map showing the region of the South Lushai Hill transfer from Bengal to Assam



(Source: Transfer of the South Lushai Hill from Bengal to Assam. Boundaries of the Lushai Hill. Amendment of the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation of 1880; Pros. July 1898, File No. 44, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 15.)

Despite the challenges, the authorities believed having a clear definition of the boundaries was desirable for general purposes. However, if they could not achieve satisfactory boundaries, the British authorities decided to leave the question of boundaries in “abeyance” for the time being.³⁹⁵

To conclude, the limited knowledge and understanding of the region of the Lushai Hills led to uncertainties and conflict between the inhabitants and the British colonial administration, especially regarding its boundaries. The lack of exploration and the region’s description based on limited available information led to recognising the need for more accurate geographical information. Hence, the British authorities sent a survey party into the unexplored area. At the same time, the British administration aimed to address the region politically, recognizing the unique status and culture of the inhabitants and emphasizing the need for further attention and consideration from the British Government of India. At the same time, the raids during this period exemplified the tensions between the British administration and the Mizos, which the British saw as a challenge to their authority and control over the region. However, these raiding activities were deeply rooted in the Mizos’ cultural practices and social structures, reflecting the clash of the territory’s cultural, social, and political values. The British sought to impose their system of governance and control, while the Mizos resisted these efforts, wanting to maintain their traditional practices and autonomy. These tensions highlighted the challenges in defining and establishing authority, boundaries, and governance in a region with diverse cultural and social practices. By conducting a survey and producing updated maps, the British authorities sought to better understand the Lushai Hills and its inhabitants, laying the groundwork for future regional administrative decisions and policies.

³⁹⁵Letter from The Officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, (No, 314-For. – 2252-P., dated Shillong, the 7th June 1898), Pros. July 1898, File No. 60, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 21-22.

CHAPTER 4

COLONIAL SPATIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The British administration's objective of creating a new political map for the Lushai Hills and establishing a fixed political boundary had far-reaching consequences for the traditional practices of the Mizos. The reordering of space and territory through boundary demarcations and land settlements disrupted the indigenous concept of fluid and overlapping boundaries, leading to resistance from the local communities. The clash between the British administration's efforts to assert governance and control and the deeply rooted cultural practices and social structures of the Mizos further exacerbated the tensions. The process of surveying and mapping territories and imposing a fixed boundary challenged the flexible and interconnected nature of their cultural practices and social structures. As the Mizos grappled with these changes, their traditional cosmology and identity were profoundly affected, causing a re-evaluation and adaptation in their way of life. Introducing new administrative systems and establishing fixed boundaries brought about fundamental changes in the region, impacting the lives of indigenous communities and their understanding of space, governance, and cultural identity. The challenges the local inhabitants and colonial administrations faced in navigating the changing landscapes of power, territory, and cultural heritage during the British colonial administration resulted in significant transformations in the Lushai Hills.

4.1 Developing a Sedentary Society

Following the British Government of India's decision to place the Lushai Hills under the jurisdiction of the chief commissioner of Assam and designated it as the Lushai Hills District, they appointed Major J. Shakespear, C.I.E., D.S.O. as the first superintendent, with W.C.M Dundas serving as Assistant Superintendent of the district. Aizawl became the headquarters of the newly formed district, with Lunglei serving as

the sub-divisional headquarters under the administration of Mr. F.C.T. Halliday of the Bengal police.³⁹⁶

One of the primary objectives of the British Government in this administrative reorganisation was to extend their authority and control over the Lushai Hills. They aimed to establish clear boundaries for the district and take up greater responsibilities to govern the area effectively soon. This move would allow them to consolidate their presence and implement policies to manage the region more effectively. Before establishing the Lushai Hills as a proper district, as mentioned in the previous chapters, there were frontier conflicts between the hill tribes and the British administration. These conflicts often arose due to competition over the traffic in rubber brought down by the hill tribes and the expansion of tea gardens beyond the foothills, which sometimes led to disputes with the hill tribes. To address these conflicts and regulate governance in the eastern frontier of Bengal, the British administration enacted the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, commonly called the Inner Line Regulation. The main objective of this regulation was to establish a system of control and regulation over the movement of people, especially those from outside the region, into the specified areas. The Inner Line Regulation of 1873 empowered local authorities to prohibit British subjects in general or specific classes from crossing a particular line designated for this purpose. A pass or license issued by the Deputy Commissioner, containing necessary conditions, was required for individuals to go beyond this line. It is important to note that the “line” referred to in the Inner Line Regulation did not necessarily indicate the territorial frontier of British possessions but marked the limits of the administered area. This distinction was necessary due to the practical challenges of precisely defining the actual boundary of British possessions in the region and regulating the movement of people there. The Inner Line Regulation of 1873 was the first law promulgated in Assam under the authority conferred by Statute 33 Vict., Chapter 3. This statute granted the executive government of India the power of summary legislation for backward tracts. Officials

³⁹⁶ Administration Report Of The South Lushai Hills For The Year, District Administration, 1891 – 92, File No. CB – 1, G – 9, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 17; Reid, *Lushai Hills*, 60.

referred to such laws as regulations to differentiate them from acts or rules passed after legislative discussion.³⁹⁷

Over time, the British authorities progressively established the Inner Line along the northern, eastern, and south-eastern borders of the Brahmaputra valley. It served as a demarcation line beyond which the government placed specific limitations on land acquisition by planters. They were not allowed to acquire land beyond this line, either from the government, local chiefs, or tribes. This measure controlled and regulated the expansion of plantations and settlements in the region. However, the Inner Line on the Lushai limit, which was in place before the British occupation of the Lushai Hills, fell into disuse. When officials proposed the Cachar Inner Line in 1875, the Deputy Commissioner noted that it must be somewhat artificial due to the region's nature. The mountain ranges from north to south, and the Inner Line from west to east made it necessary to modify the line to create a more distinctive boundary "which no one can cross without knowing it." The Cachar "Inner Line" was formally laid down through a Notification in the *Gazette of India*, No. 2299P, dated August 20, 1875, under the provision of the "Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act v, of 1873." This notification marked the boundary between South Cachar and the Lushai Hills with a red line to signify the demarcation. The Chief Commissioner of Assam noted that in the demarcation process, they slightly differed from the initially determined line at a few points. However, the records do not provide specific reasons for these alterations.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁷Sir Edward Gait, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., Of the Indian Civil Service (Retired), *A History Of Assam*, 2nd ed. Revised (Calcutta and Simla: Thacker, Spink & Co, 1926), 334 – 335; Chakravorty, *British Relations with the Hill Tribes*, 89 – 90; Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 55-56.

³⁹⁸Gait, *History Of Assam*, 335; Letter from The Chief Commissioner, Assam, (No. 828, dated 30th April 1878), Office Note- The "Inner – Line" on the south frontier of the Cachar District, Pros. July 1878, File No. K.W. Political A., July 1878, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 2; Letter from S.O.B. Ridsdale, Esq., C.S., Secy. to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Dept., (No. 828, dated Shillong, 30th April 1878), Progs. July 1878, File No. 30, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India,7; W.w. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Assam Vol-2*, Reprint(Vivekanand Nagar, Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporations, 461,1975), 362.

The “Inner Line” which separated Cachar and Lushai Hills had been describes a geographical boundary line starting from an outpost established during the Lushai Expedition of 1871-72, north of Chatter Choor Peak, and extending to various landmarks and grants. The line runs along a police track connecting the Chatter Choor and Jhalnacherra outposts, proceeds south along the river Tlawng/Dhaleswari to the Jhalnacherra grant’s southwestern corner, and follows its southern boundary as revised in 1872. It continues along a range of hills to Barooncherra, tracing the southern and eastern boundaries of the Barooncherra grant to its northeastern corner. From there, it follows a ridge to a pucca pillar, then moves east to the Rengti Pahar range, marked by three pucca pillars. The line travels north along the Rengti Pahar ridge to a bifurcation point, following the western branch to the Jalinga river source. It follows the Jalinga river to the Sonacherra grant’s southeast corner, then along the eastern boundaries of Sonacherra and Nowarbund grants to a police road junction. The line then follows the police road to the Rukini river, proceeds southeast to the Monerkhal grant’s boundary, follows its west and south boundaries to the Turial/Sonai river, and finally follows the Mainadahar grant’s boundaries to the river Barak.³⁹⁹

These details provide further insights into establishing and adjusting the Inner Line in different regions, including the Lushai Hills and Cachar, as part of the British administration’s efforts to regulate movement and land acquisition in the area, to manage and control the territory and its resources. The establishment of the Inner Line had the primary motive of bringing under more stringent control the commercial relations between the British subjects and the hill tribes, which further facilitated the power exercise in the authority, management of economic activities, and protection of

³⁹⁹Under the provisions of Section 2 of Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation I of 1873 (a Regulation for the peace and government of certain districts on the eastern frontier of Bengal) the Governor-General in Council is pleased, in supersession of Notification No. 2299P., dated 20th August 1875, to notify that the line described below shall be the “Inner Line” on the south frontier of the district of Cachar, Progs. July 1878, File No. 31, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 7.

the interests of both the British subjects and the local communities by the British administration.⁴⁰⁰

Under the same provisions, the Inner Line of the Chittagong Hill Tracts was also notified in June 1879 as follows:

This line of boundary commences at the hill station marked S. South of Betling Sib 2234, on the Jampoi range.. along the whole course of the “Tulenpui” or “Sujjuk” River to its junction with the Karnafuli River... to.. Ophiham No.5; .. joins the Thega Khall...follows the water-shed of the Weybong....meets Keokradong...mets...portion of the Arakan Hill Tracts...⁴⁰¹

However, it is interesting to note that the Inner Line, which was strictly enforced until 1895, was eventually disused due to a proposal by the political officer North Lushai Hills, which suggested relaxing the strict enforcement of the Inner Line because it hindered the free movement of people between the districts of Cachar and Sylhet and the Lushai Hills. Recognising this potential restriction on the movement of people and trade, neither the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet nor Cachar raised any objection to the proposal. As a result, travellers did not require a “pass” or written permission to enter the Lushai Hills district. Although authorities did not strictly enforce the Inner Line in the Lushai Hills district, some individuals or groups still sought “passes” from the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar for entry into the Lushai Hills district. The Deputy Commissioner would issue a “pass” upon request in such cases. While the requirement for a “pass” was no longer mandatory, it appears that specific individuals or groups still felt the need to obtain official documentation for various reasons. It could have been due to personal preference, security concerns, or practical considerations related to travel and interaction with the local population. This practice likely continued to address persistent problems or assure those who preferred official travel permission.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰⁰ Mackenzie, *North-East Frontier*, 55.

⁴⁰¹ Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 76.

⁴⁰² Lalrimawia, 76; Letter from the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, to the Under Secretary to the Government of Assam, Appointment and Political Department, (Letter No. 2990 G, dated Aijal the 16th March 1929,), 1929, File No. XLVIII/39/29, Political Department, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 28.

Since the description of the boundary between the Lushai Hills and Cachar districts in the notification of June 24, 1875, was somewhat vague, the question of rectifying the boundary between Lushai Hills and Cachar districts came up in 1903. Over the years, the people of the Lushai Hills had been moving northwards towards the plains of Cachar, while the people of Cachar, no longer afraid of the Lushais, had been moving southwards. It resulted in frequent boundary-related issues, particularly regarding timber felling along the rivers that crossed the boundary. To address these problems, the chief commissioner proposed a revision and more accurate definition of the boundary and suggested that a tract of hilly country between the river Tlawng and Barak, which geographically belonged to the Lushai Hills, be transferred from the Cachar district to the Lushai Hills. This tract contained Lushai villages and served as a refuge for discontented Lushais seeking to escape the control of the superintendent of the Lushai Hills. Additionally, this tract included part of the Inner Line reserve, a reserved forest area. The proposed boundary adjustment would facilitate administration and improve the maintenance of the Silchar to Aizawl road, which was challenging under the current arrangement but comparatively more straightforward under the Lushai system of administration.⁴⁰³

During that period, the issue of foreigners entering the Lushai Hills district from Sylhet did not arise. Regardless of whether they had a pass, foreigners were allowed to proceed as far as the first police outpost in the district. If they travelled by the river, the outpost was Sairang on the river Tlawng, 13 miles from Aizawl. If they travelled by road, the outpost was Kolasib on the Aizawl-Silchar road, 52 miles from Aizawl. At these outposts, officials detained them until they obtained permission from the superintendent or assistant superintendent to proceed to Aizawl, unless they had obtained prior permission in many cases. Upon arrival in Aizawl, they would report to the superintendent or assistant superintendent, and a pass would be issued to them for

⁴⁰³Letter from F.J. Monahan, Esq., I.C.S, Secretary to The Chief Commissioner of Assam, To The Secretary to The Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 589For./1620P., Shillong, the 14th April 1903), Proceedings, March 1904, File No. 44, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 8-9.

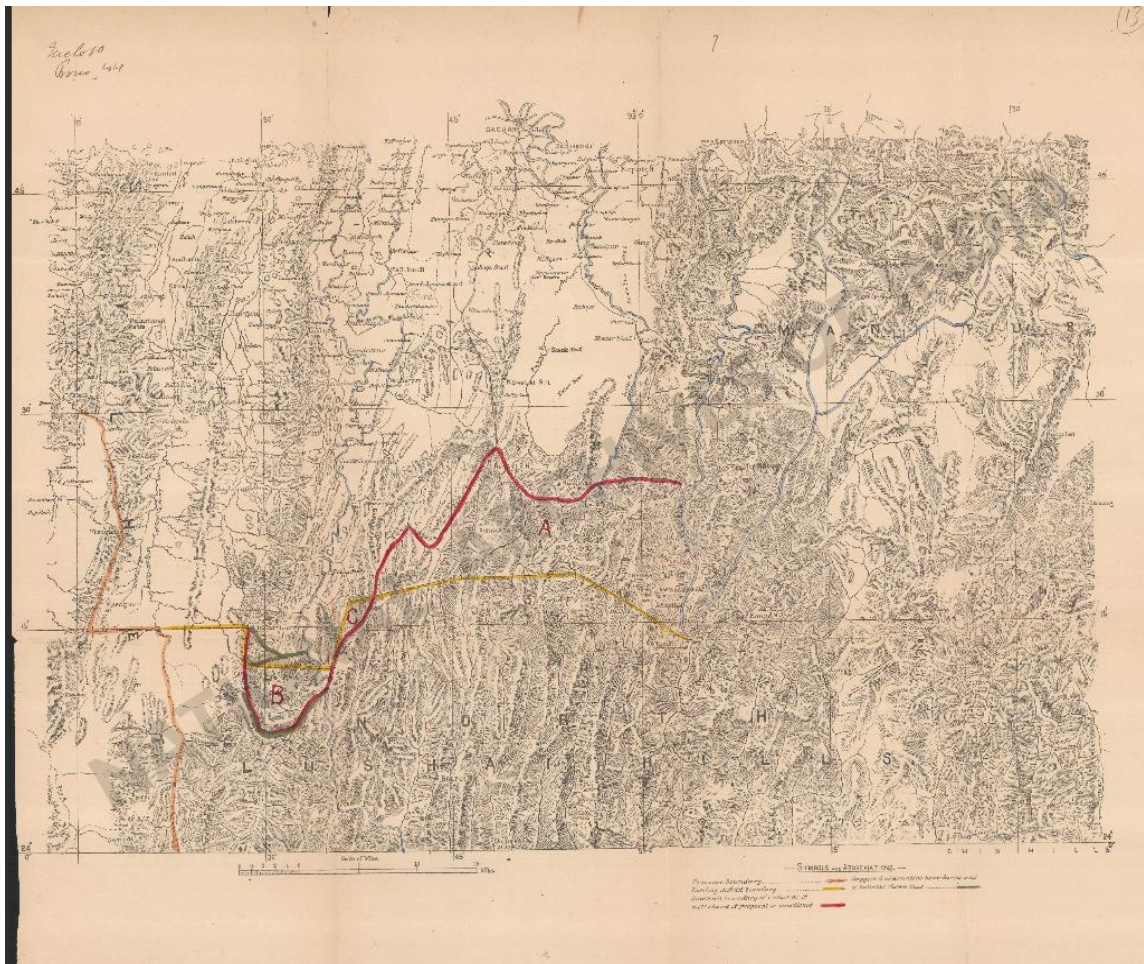
temporary or semi-permanent residence in the Lushai Hills, depending on their specific circumstances. Passes for temporary residence were rarely or never refused, except in cases where the applicant had a known lousy character or questionable purpose for the visit. Authorities freely granted passes for semi-permanent residence to traders, shopkeepers, and similar individuals for themselves and necessary agents and servants. In the Lunglei subdivision, the procedure was identical, but passes remained essential for entry into the district. Upon arrival from Demagiri, individuals would report to the sub-divisional officer in Lunglei, who would then issue a pass. The outpost was located at Demagiri on the Karnaphuli river, approximately 40 miles from Lunglei. Alongside these measures, a registration system was necessary to facilitate the implementation of Notification No. 784P, dated October 9, 1911. This notification dealt with the expulsion of foreigners from the district, and the office of the Lushai Hills superintendent maintained a pass register.⁴⁰⁴

In 1912, the Government of India addressed the issues regarding the proposed rectification of the boundary between Lushai Hills and Cachar. In 1903, officials recognised that providing a more accurate description of the boundary had been challenging due to the lack of names for many of the small streams mentioned. However, the No.12 party, Eastern Circle of the Survey of India, had been working in the area. Major Mears, the officer in charge, represented that it was impossible to define the boundary as previously proposed by the Assam administration. Considering the importance of clearly defining the southern boundary of the Cachar district, the lieutenant governor considered it necessary to submit a revised definition for approval by the Government of India. In this revised definition, officials replaced the vague

⁴⁰⁴Letter from the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, to the Under Secretary to the Government of Assam, Appointment and Political Department, (Letter No. 2990 G, dated Aijal the 16th March 1929), 1929, File No. XLVIII/39/29, Political Department, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 28-29.

descriptions previously used with named and known streams and provided a map showing the newly laid down boundary for reference (See Map No.4.1).⁴⁰⁵

MAP No. 4.1: Revised definition of the boundary between the Cachar and the Lushai Hills districts.



(Source: Revised definition of the boundary between the Cachar and the Lushai Hills districts, Proceedings, February 1912, File No. 1 – 3, Government of India, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Delhi)

⁴⁰⁵ Revised definition of the boundary between the Cachar and the Lushai Hills districts, Proceedings, February 1912, File No. 1 – 3, Government of India, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Delhi.

By February 14, 1912, the revised boundary definition between Lushai Hills and Cachar districts was approved.⁴⁰⁶ The boundary line defined in this demarcation begins at the junction of the Ruanding stream with the river Barak and follows upstream to the source of the Lungkhul. It crosses a range in a westerly direction, following a feeder into the Teirangnek stream, continuing to its junction with the river Sonai. The boundary proceeds southward up the Sonai river to the Suanglawn Lui, then follows upstream to intersect with the Bagh Khal or Tuishen Lui. From there, it runs to a large feeder near the deserted village of Saipumu, ascends to the summit of the Bonkong range, and descends via the Teidu Lui to the Rukni river. A straight line extends northwest to the Dholai bridge on the Aijal-Dwarband road and then upstream to the source of the Dholai stream. Crossing the watershed, it follows the Chimluang stream to the river Buranchara and the Hmarluang Lui tributary. The boundary ascends this tributary, crosses the Bhairabi range, and descends the Bhairabi stream to the Pakwa River. It goes upstream to the second large left-bank tributary and follows it to its source. Finally, it proceeds in a straight line to the Chatarchurra peak.⁴⁰⁷

In government letter No. Pol. 1248-3719-A.P., dated 14-5-29, officials deliberated on abolishing the Cachar Inner Line concerning the Lushai Hills. Consultations involved the Lushai Hills Superintendent and the Cachar Deputy Commissioner. While the Superintendent suggested defining the Inner Line by the district boundary, allowing unrestricted travel within the Lushai Hills up to Sairang, Kolasib, or Demagiri without requiring a “pass,” the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar

⁴⁰⁶Letter from The Hon’ble Mr. J.F. Gruning, Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, revenue and General Department, To The Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, (No. 283-R., dated Shillong, the 3rd (received 5th) February 1912), and Letter from The Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, To The Hon’ble Mr. J.F. Gruning, Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, (No. 371-E.B, dated Calcutta, the 14th February 1912), Proceedings, February 1912, File No. 1 – 2, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1-7.

⁴⁰⁷Letter from The Hon’ble Mr. J.F. Gruning, Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, revenue and General Department, To The Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, (No. 283-R., dated Shillong, the 3rd (received 5th) February 1912), Proceedings, February 1912, File No. 1 – 2, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 6-7

recommended excluding the Lushai forest blocks, leased by the divisional forest officer, from the Inner Line. Additionally, the Deputy Commissioner favoured issuing “passes” through the Lushai Hills Superintendent rather than the Cachar Deputy Commissioner. This indicates a preference for local governance and access management by the Lushai Hills authorities.⁴⁰⁸

The Deputy Commissioner observed the complex administrative considerations and challenges faced in the Lushai Hills district. It appears that the Deputy Commissioner recognised the need to have some control over the entry of outsiders into the Lushai Hills to maintain peace and ensure good governance for the people.⁴⁰⁹ During this period, trade-in Aizawl was minimal, primarily involving government contracts for rations. The existing bazaars were small and insufficient for growth. Overcrowding in Aizawl strained essential services like water, sanitation, and fuel. To manage resources and ensure sustainable growth, the superintendent of the Lushai Hills advocated restricting immigration, particularly among shopkeepers and Gurkhalis, who often exceeded business limits and brought in relatives. The district’s limited settlement areas could not support large-scale immigration. The Lushai Hills, with a population of about 15,000 households, featured a mobile settlement pattern, relocating every few years. The tribal system was less developed than in neighbouring regions like the Chin Hills. The Deputy Commissioner recommended establishing an Inner Line to regulate entry into the Lushai Hills but suggested not aligning it strictly with district boundaries. He saw no need to restrict Lushais from visiting the plains but acknowledged that the pass system,

⁴⁰⁸Pass System in the Lushai Hills, Letter from Deputy Commissioner of Cachar,(No. 2548 RQ 25.7.29); Letter from A.J. Laine, Esq., I.C.S., Offg. Commissioner, Surma Valley & Hill Division, To The Chief Secretary to The Government of Assam, (No. 639-T.P., Dated Camp Shillong, the 29th August, 1929); Letter from A.J. Laine, Esqr., I.C.S., Offg. Commissioner, Surma Valley & Hill Division, To The Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, (No. 627P., Dated Silchar, the 12th August 1929); Letter from C.G.G. Helme, Esq., I.C.S., Superintendent, Lushai Hills, To The Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division, Silchar, (No. 1375=G/I.II, Dated Aijal, The 22nd August, 1929), 1929, File No. XLVIII/39/29, Political Department, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 2-18.

⁴⁰⁹Letter from G.D. Walker, Esqr., I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner, Cachar, to The Commissioner, Surma Valley & Hill Division, (No. 2548R, Dated 26/7/29), 1929, File No. XLVIII/39/29, Political Department, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 19.

familiar to the Lushais, could continue as a protective measure. Regulation V of 1893 needed to be extended to the Lushai Hills under the Scheduled District Act (XIV of 1874) to implement the Inner Line, as it had not yet been applied there.⁴¹⁰

The under-secretary to the Government of Assam was instructed to reference the correspondence, particularly the Surma Valley & Hill Division commissioner's letter No.639T.P., dated September 2, 1929, concerning establishing an Inner Line for the Lushai Hills District. The directive sought to determine whether granting exemptions from the prohibition against crossing the proposed Inner Line would be appropriate for two groups: (1) officers visiting the Lushai Hills on government duty and (2) foreigners permitted to reside in the district. These exemptions were intended to accommodate the unique needs of government officials conducting official business in the Lushai Hills District, as well as foreigners authorised to live there.⁴¹¹

The situation regarding the Inner Line in the Lushai Hills district required legal authority, as the existing system executed by the superintendent lacked it. The governor in council proposed establishing a specific Inner Line for the Lushai Hills district to grant the superintendent legal control over entry regulation. An inquiry was suggested to determine an appropriate Inner Line for the district, which could lead to abolishing the Inner Line in the Cachar district. Previous correspondence, such as the Assam Administration's letter from July 22, 1895, indicated a shift in perspective. Initially, restricting Lushais from entering the plains was deemed sufficient, while entry into the Lushai Hills was unrestricted. However, this view had evolved, and now the superintendent wished to regulate entry into the hills, allowing free movement from the

⁴¹⁰Letter from C.G.G. Helme, Esq., I.C.S., Superintendent, Lushai Hills, To The Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division, Silchar, (No. 666G/I-11, Dated Aijal, The 6th June 1929), 1929, File No. 488, Col – XLVIII/39/29, Political Department, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 20; H.N. Tuck, Political Officer, Chin Hills, Supplementary Report on the subjects submitted for discussion at the Conference held at Lungleh in December 1896, Pros. May 1897, File No. 32 – 36, Foreign Department, External B, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 17.

⁴¹¹Letter from I. Majid, Esq., I.C.S., Under Secretary to the Government of Assam, To The Commissioner, Surma Valley & Hill Division, (Letter No. Pol.2416-6763 A.P. Appt & Political Department, Political Branch), 6th October 1929, File No. XLVIII/39/29, Political Department, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 8.

hills to the plains. This change aimed to provide a structured approach to entry control in the Lushai Hills district, adapting to the new administrative preferences and requirements.⁴¹²

This shift in administrative strategies in the Lushai Hills district was driven by changing circumstances and the need for legal backing. This shift includes the proposal to establish the Inner Line, which represents part of a more extensive process involving territorial settlement and the displacement of “indigenous political spaces” without their consent. This process highlights the confrontations between various human powers, such as the British administration, and the clash between different realms of “geographical knowledge.” It contrasts the traditional indigenous understanding of the region with the colonial perspective. As noted by Thongchai, “...in the settlement of the ambiguous territories, in a sense, all of them were working alongside one another to displace the indigenous political space. Confrontations thus occurred not only among these human powers but also between different realms of geographical knowledge.”⁴¹³

The governor in council, utilising the authority granted by the Scheduled Districts Act of 1874, extended the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, as amended in 1925, to the Lushai Hills district. Subsequently, under the authority of section 2 of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, the Governor in Council, with prior approval from the Governor-General in Council, established the “Inner Line” for the Lushai Hills district. This Inner Line was determined in alignment with specific Survey of India publications: (a) maps 83H and 83D from 1922 and 1921, respectively, and (b) maps 83D/15, D/14, D/11, and D/7 from 1911–12. The northern boundary of the Lushai Hills district was set to coincide with this Inner Line.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹² Letter from The G.E. Soames, Esq., C.I.E., I.C.S., Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, to The Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division, (Letter No. Pol-1248 – 3719 A.P., Shillong, the 14th May 1929), 1929, File No. XLVIII/39/29, Political Department, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 25-26.

⁴¹³ Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 107.

⁴¹⁴ Notification made by W.A. Cosgrave, Off. Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, on Inner Line of the Lushai Hills District, (No. 9102A.P., The 28th August 1930), 1930, File No. CB – 33, G – 412, 2; (1) Extension of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (V of 1873) to the Lushai Hills district. (2) Prescription of the northern boundary of the Lushai Hills district as the

The governor-in-council, utilising authority from section 2 of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873, decided to abolish the Inner Line in the Cachar district with approval from the Governor-General in Council. This Inner Line was initially established by India's Foreign Department Notification No. 2299P on August 20, 1875 and later revised by Assam's administration in Notification No. 103 on July 3, 1878, with the Governor-in-Council's approval.⁴¹⁵ Simultaneously, the governor-in-council used the same regulatory power to prohibit individuals, except government officers on duty, from crossing the "Inner Line" into the Lushai Hills District. Nevertheless, exceptions were made for two groups: "foreigners permitted to reside in the Lushai Hills District and indigenous inhabitants of the Lushai Hills District."⁴¹⁶

The establishment of the "Inner Line" by the colonial administration created a controlled space aimed at maintaining isolation between the Mizos and the neighbouring population. This restriction on outsider entry into the Lushai Hills influenced the sedentarisation of the Mizos by fostering a sense of territoriality and attachment to specific lands, thereby encouraging a settled lifestyle. The limited interaction with outsiders also helped preserve the Mizos' distinct cultural practices and traditions, strengthening their cultural identity. The Inner Line significantly impacted the socio-political landscape, enhancing territorial consciousness among the Mizos and altering the organisation and definition of space. It redefined relationships between communities and authorities, fundamentally changing how the colonial administration and the indigenous inhabitants perceived, controlled, and utilised space. The policy thus played a crucial role in shaping the socio-political and cultural dynamics of the region.

inner line of that district. (3) Abolition of the inner line of the Cachar district.,1930, File No. 209 – X, Foreign and Political Department, External, National Archives of India, , Government of India, New Delhi, India, 1-14.

⁴¹⁵ Notification made by W.A. Cosgrave, Off. Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, on Inner Line of the Lushai Hills District, (No. 9103A.P., The 28th August 1930), 1930, File No. CB – 33, G – 412, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1.

⁴¹⁶ Notification made by W.A. Cosgrave, Off. Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, on Inner Line of the Lushai Hills District, (No. 9104A.P., The 28th August 1930), 1930, File No. CB – 33, G – 412, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1.

4.2 Transformation of Spatial Dynamics and Impact on Space and Boundary

Integrating the North and South Lushai Hills under Assam's administration through Regulation II of 1880 posed issues in accurately defining the combined area's boundaries. The North Lushai Hills' boundaries could be described relatively accurately, but the South Lushai Hills' were challenging to specify clearly. Mr H.J.S Cotton, the Chief Commissioner of Assam at the time, noted the impracticality of providing a precise boundary enumeration due to the lack of an authorised boundary specification for the South Lushai Hills. Cotton proposed a more practical approach: broadly referencing the previously known territories of North and South Lushai Hills without engaging in detailed boundary descriptions. This approach would sufficiently comply with the regulation's intent without unnecessary complications.⁴¹⁷ The British Government of India decided against expanding administrative responsibilities in a particular direction at that time. The decision was contingent on the Lieutenant Governor of Burma providing proposals establishing the need or benefit of disarming the area or exerting more effective control. Without such proposals, the authorities preferred to maintain the existing arrangements. Consequently, they opted to postpone the delineation of the southern boundary of the Lushai Hills.⁴¹⁸

By April 19, 1898, the Government of India recommended marking the eastern and southern limits of the Lushai Hills, but administrative challenges delayed the demarcation. Mr. Drake Brockman, assigned to this task, prioritised resolving disputes between border villages and setting up a new outpost. Despite the delay, the lack of defined boundaries did not pose immediate administrative issues, allowing authorities to defer final demarcation until the cold weather season of 1899-1900. Major J. Shakespear suggested extending political influence over six villages south of Sherkor near the upper

⁴¹⁷Letter from E.A. Gait, Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 149P. Shillong, the 17th July 1897), October 1897, File No. CB – 5, G – 57, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 45-46.

⁴¹⁸Letter from J.B. Wood, Under-Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, To The Honourable Mr. H.J.S. Cotton, C.S.I, Chief Commissioner of Assam, (No. 1982-E.B., Simla, the 8th October 1900), 1900, File No. CB – 7, G – 79, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 46.

Koladyne (Boinu river), which were not under British control and had conflicts with British-administered villages. Shakespear advised Mr. Drake-Brockman to establish influence over these villages to preserve peace. However, the chief commissioner opposed expanding the hill district boundaries to include areas not under British control. Mr. Cotton, conversely, believed that if the information about the six villages was accurate, annexing them to the Lushai Hills could provide a convenient and well-defined southern boundary.⁴¹⁹

Border conflicts in the Lushai Hills were persistent due to poorly defined boundaries. The Chin-Lushai Conference highlighted the need to demarcate these boundaries, prompting the government of India to form the Boundary Commission. The commission aimed to resolve border disputes and establish clear territorial divisions for the Lushai Hills. Lieutenant-Colonel H. St. P. Maxwell, Political Agent to Manipur and Capatin H.W.G. Cole, I.S.C., Officiating Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, were appointed to determine and demarcate the boundary between Lushai Hills and Manipur. Sub-surveyor Sitaram Naidu from the Survey Department of India assisted them. A comprehensive survey of the area between Tipaimukh and Lungleng Hill was conducted from January 22 to February 9, 1900. Tipaimukh was a crucial point as it served as the trijunction where the river Tuivai/Tipai meets the river Barak, marking the boundaries between Manipur, Cachar, and Lushai Hills. The objective was to thoroughly assess the region to address territorial demarcation and boundary-related issues, ensuring no future disputes and providing clarity for the local inhabitants.⁴²⁰ The commission responsible

⁴¹⁹ Letter from The Secretary To The Chief Commissioner Of Assam To The Secretary To The Government Of India, Foreign Department, (No. 180For/1300 P. Shillong, the 11th April 1899), Pros., May 1899, File No. 39, Assam Secretariat, Foreign A, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 4-5; Letter from L.J. Kershaw, Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, to The Secretary to The Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 363For./3508P. Shillong, the 16th August, 1900), 1900, File No. CB – 7, G – 79, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 52.

⁴²⁰ Letter from Captain H.W.G. Cole, I.S.C., Offg. Superintendent, Lushai Hills, to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, (No. 838G., dated Aijal, the 21st February 1900) & Letter from Lieutenant-Colonel H.St.P. Maxwell, C.S.I., I.S.C., Political Agent in Manipur, to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, (No. 1 dated Manipur, the 22nd April 1900),

for defining the boundary between the Lushai Hills and Manipur submitted a report (detailed in Appendix No.18). This report was accepted by the chief commissioner, who found the demarcated boundary to be clear and well-established. The Chief Commissioner expressed confidence that the government of India would review and approve the boundary as outlined in the report.⁴²¹

The boundary delineation begins at the junction of the river Tuivai and Barak at Tipaimukh, marked by a revenue survey pillar approximately 50 yards southwest of the junction. This pillar denotes the trijunction of the Manipur State and the Cachar and Lushai Hills districts. Following the river Tuivai, the boundary proceeds around Senvong Hill and under Pabarchang Hill until it meets the Tui-Toi stream. The path continues upstream to a source at Bongkot saddle, where a boundary pillar marked M.L. (I) has been erected. From this saddle, the boundary crosses eastward, descending via a stream that is a source of the Vang-Vum-Lui and follows this stream back to the Tuivai river. It then continues up the Tuivai river, which flows north of Chepui Hill, until it meets the Tuikui stream northwest of Lungleng Hill. The boundary then follows the Tuikui stream to its source near pillar No. 8 of the Manipur-Chin boundary, about 4 miles east of Lungleng Hill. The left bank of the Tuivai river serves as the boundary for the Lushai Hills, while the right bank is the boundary for Manipur.⁴²² Eventually, on May 18, 1900, the British Government of India approved the boundary between the Lushai Hills and Manipur, as demarcated by this commission (See Map No.4.2).⁴²³

Proceedings May 1900, File No. 150, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 7-10; Chatterjee, *The British Rule*, 135-136.

⁴²¹L.J. Kershaw, Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, to The Secretary to The Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 244For./1754P., Shillong, the 3rd May 1900, Proceedings May 1900, File No. 150, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 6.

⁴²²Letter from Captain H.W.G. Cole, I.S.C., Offg. Superintendent, Lushai Hills, to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, (No. 838G., dated Aijal, the 21st February 1900), Proceedings May 1900, File No. 150, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 8-9.

⁴²³Letter from J.B. Wood, Esq., Under-Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, to The Chief Commissioner of Assam, (No. 1047-E.B., dated Simla, the 18th May 1900), Proceedings May 1900, File No. 151, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 11 – 12; Demarcation of the boundary between

During the demarcation of the Manipur-Lushai Hills boundary, issues arose regarding the undefined border between the Lushai and Chin Hills. In June 1900, the Superintendent of Lushai Hills recommended a meeting between officers from both regions to address this issue. Concurrently, the Chief Commissioner of Assam suggested including an officer from the Chin Hills or one of his assistants in the process. Consequently, Mr. A.C. Bateman, Assistant Superintendent of Chin Hills, represented Burma, and the Chief Commissioner of Assam appointed Mr. Dundas for the demarcation task. This collaboration aimed to resolve the boundary ambiguities between the two regions effectively.⁴²⁴

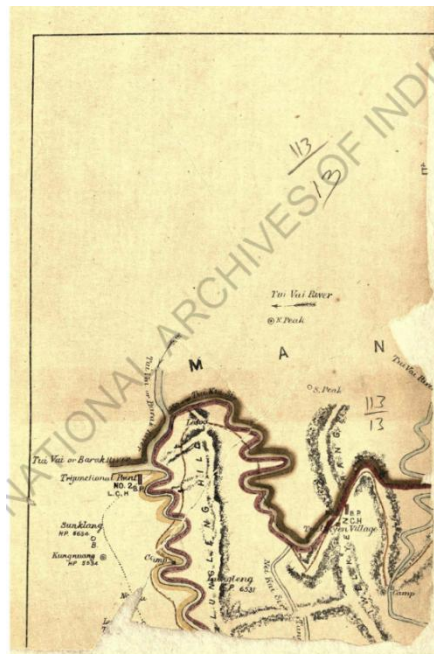
Between January 16 and 23, 1901, Bateman and Dundas thoroughly examined the area between Lungleng Hill and the source of the river Tyao to determine the best alignment for the undefined boundary between the Lushai Hills and the Chin Hills. A boundary line was established between the Lushai Hills and the Chin Hills after thorough examination and consultation with neighbouring tribes to prevent future misunderstandings. A joint report detailing the boundary was submitted on February 14, 1901, (as outlined in Appendix No. 19). The chief commissioner of Assam and the lieutenant governor found the proposed boundary acceptable and without objections. The defined boundary in the report starts at the confluence of the Twivai (Tuivai) and Twisai (Tuisa) streams, marked by a cairn and pillar No. 2 on the left bank of the Twisai (Tuisa), 50 yards from the confluence. This point serves as the tri-junction of Manipur, Lushai, and Chin Hills. From there, the boundary follows the Twisai (Tuisa) stream north to where it meets the Twimang (Tuimang). It then continues along the Twimang (Tuimang) to the confluence with its tributary, the Bapui-lui, and follows the Bapui-lui to its source below a pillar marked L/C.H/3 on Vai-kho-hmun. This location is also

⁴²⁴Letter from The Officiating Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, Political Department, to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 269 – I – B. – 3, dated Rangoon, the 9th May 1901), Proceedings, June 1901, File No. 1, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 6.

where the Tyao, the recognised boundary between the Chin Hill and Lushai Hill districts, originates.⁴²⁵

On May 22, 1901, the Government of India sanctioned the demarcation of a specific section of the boundary between the Chin and Lushai Hills. This delineation, determined by Bateman and Dundas, spans the area between the Manipur-Lushai Boundary and the Tyao River (See Map No.4.3).⁴²⁶

MAP No. 4.3: Boundary between the Chin and Lushai Hills



⁴²⁵Letter from A.C. Bateman, Esq., Assistant Superintendent, Tiddim, North Chin Hills, to The Superintendent, Chin Hills, Falam, (No. 31, dated the 14th February 1901), Proceedings June 1901, File No. 1, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 6-8.

⁴²⁶Letter from J.B. Wood, Esq., Under-Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, (No. 822-E.B., dated Simla, the 22nd May 1901), Proceedings June 1901, File No. 2, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 11; Demarcation of the portion of the boundary between the Chin and Lushai Hills which lies between the Manipur-Lushai boundary and the Tayao river, Proceedings June 1901, File No. 1 – 2, Government of India, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India.

In May 1906, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills reported incidents of outrages carried out by a group of men from the un-administered village of Zongling in the British-administered villages. Efforts to secure reparation through messages to the chief of Zongling was unsuccessful, prompting the recommendation that the Superintendent visit the area and demand the restoration of captives. Officials observed that the region south of the Lushai Hills district lacked a clear territorial boundary with British and independent villages scattered throughout the region.⁴²⁷ The administrations initiated efforts to define the boundary, with Mr. Whalley conducting a tour in the cold weather of 1902-1903 and submitting a report in which he states:

Certain villages acknowledged our supremacy and paid house-tax, others did not, and owing to the tendency of the villagers to migrate and the practice by which the sovereign power followed a village in all its migrations, British and independent villages lie interspersed throughout a considerable area, especially down the long tongue of land to the south of Sherkor. While such a state of affairs continues, it is inevitable that there should be friction, and there will always be a danger, that complications requiring armed intervention may arise.⁴²⁸

The report failed to provide sufficient details to delineate the frontier, prompting Mr. L.O. Clarke, the superintendent of the Lushai Hills, to visit villages near Zongling. He proposed bringing Zongling and other villages south of Sherkor under control, potentially from the Arakan side. The Government of Burma also received relevant proposals. The lieutenant governor stressed the necessity for a clear and practical boundary south of Sherkor and advocated for abandoning the current system. Despite the pressing need, the exact delimitation of the southern frontier of the Lushai Hills

⁴²⁷Letter from the Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, (No. 12048-J, Dated the 8th (Received 17th November, 1906), Proceedings, March 1907, File No. 135, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India,4; Letter from The Assistant Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department of Eastern Bengal & Assam, Judicial Department,(Letter No. 672 E-C, dated Fort William, the 22nd February, 1907), 1929 – 1930, File No. CB – 32, G – 404, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 8-9.

⁴²⁸Letter from J.E. Webster, Esq., I.C.S., Secretary to The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Judicial Department, to The Secretary to The Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 1204SJ, Shillong the 8th November, 1906), Proceedings, March 1907, File No. 135, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India,10.

remained unresolved, as the Assam administration deferred action after taking control. Until 1900, the chief commissioner of Assam and the Government of India considered it a low priority. The lieutenant governor suggested that the superintendent establish the boundary during his Zongling visit with a surveyor's assistance. Although the government of India agreed on the necessity of a boundary, they doubted its practicality as an administrative frontier due to the nomadic nature of the inhabitants of the Lushai Hills. It was crucial to consider tribal connections and physical features to ensure a homogeneous population within the boundary. Additionally, there was concern about potential overlap with the nominal northern boundary of Arakan Hill.⁴²⁹

In the past, the un-administered tract near the region of Sherkor (See Map No.4.4),⁴³⁰ primarily inhabited by Shendus tribes, remained under nominal control of Burma, and the administrative frontier was not to be expanded. British India was informed by officials that the Burma government would not be responsible for the actions of the Shendus. The chief commissioner of Burma had no objection to considering the tract as part of the province geographically. At that time, the Lushai Hills were administered by the Government of Bengal, which sought cooperation from Burma's chief commissioner to maintain influence over the unadministered tract. As part of this effort, they proposed annual meetings between officers from Arakan and South Lushai Hills within the tract to preserve their influence. However, the chief

⁴²⁹Letter from R.E. Holland, Assistant Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, to The J.E. Webster, Esq., Secretary to The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Judicial Department, (No. 762 E.-C., Fort William, the 22nd February 1907), File No. 138, 9-11; and Letter from J.E. Webster, Esq., I.C.S., Secretary to The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Judicial Department, to The Secretary to The Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 1204SJ, Shillong the 8th November, 1906), File No. 135, 26 – 27, Proceedings March 1907 Government of India, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India; Letter from The Assistant Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department of Eastern Bengal & Assam, Judicial Department, (Letter No. 672 E-C, dated Fort William, the 22nd February, 1907), 1929 – 1930, File No. CB – 32, G – 404, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 10.

⁴³⁰Sanction to the proposals of the extension of loose political control over the un-administered area on the Assam-Burma border between the Hill District of Arakan, the Chin Hills and Lushai Hills, Proceedings, September 1921, File No. 1 – 17, Foreign and Political Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 36.

commissioner of Burma preferred to have no interaction with the tribes between Kalawa and Sherkor, as they had not caused any trouble in Burma, and there was no intention to interfere with them. The situation highlights differing administrative priorities and strategies between the British Indian government and the Burma government regarding the unadministered region and its tribal populations.⁴³¹

MAP No. 4.4: Proposals for extending loose political control over the un-administered area on the Assam-Burma border between the Hill District of Arakan, the Chin Hills and Lushai Hills.



(Source: Sanction to the proposals of the extension of loose political control over the un-administered area on the Assam-Burma border between the Hill District of Arakan, the Chin Hills and Lushai Hills, Proceedings, September 1921, File No. 1 – 17, Foreign and Political Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 36)

⁴³¹Letter from The Hon'ble F.C. gates, I.C.S., Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, (No. 321 A. – 2C.I., dated Rangoon, the 18th October 1905), July – December 1906, File No. CB – 10, G – 12, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 2.

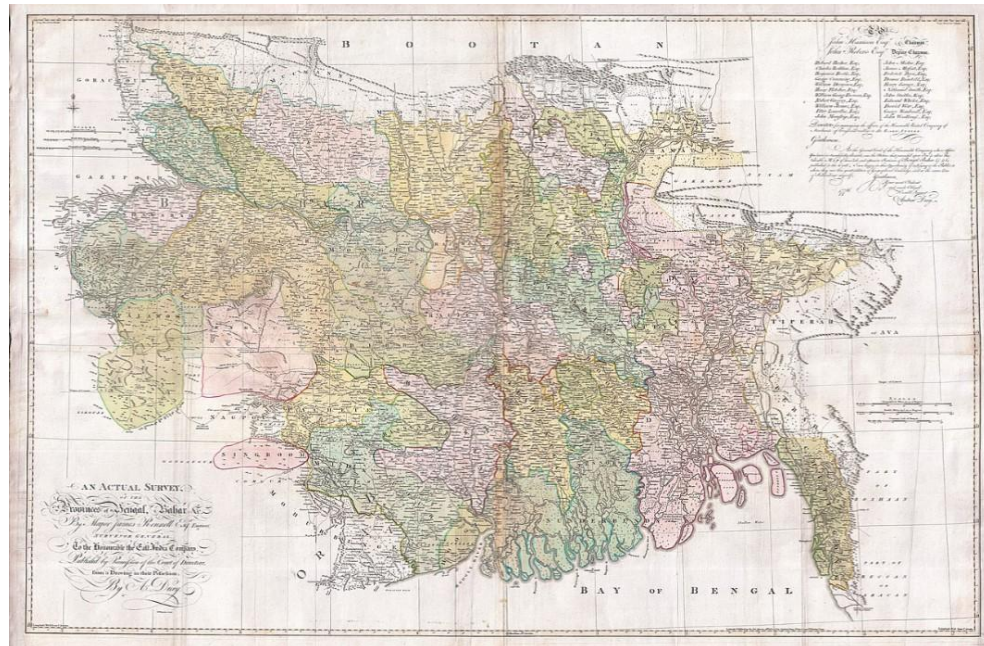
After the incident at Zongling, the government of Eastern Bengal and Assam declared that it would not consider any proposals for annexation or political control beyond its established administrative border. It emphasised that due to the Lushai Hills district not aligning with Burma's administrative boundary between the upper and lower Koladyne rivers, involving Arakan officials in the boundary determination was unnecessary. The lieutenant governor expressed optimism that the surveyor general would assign a skilled surveyor to assist the superintendent during the boundary settlement process. The matter was under consideration by the British Government of India.⁴³²

Meanwhile, the western boundary of the Lushai Hills was under dispute regarding establishing the Langkaih (Langai) river as the boundary line. This proposal was initially put forward on June 23, 1874, and reiterated by the Government of Bengal in 1884. However, the Maharaja of Tripura rejected this proposal, arguing that the boundary decision was made without his knowledge. The government, on the other hand, claimed the boundary was fixed with full awareness. Historical context from Major Rennell's 1781 map of Bengal, commissioned by the Hon'ble Court of Directors, indicates that the eastern boundary of the states extended to the "Dominion of Ava." The contention highlights a historical disagreement over territorial limits between the government and the local ruler, reflecting differing perspectives on the boundary-setting process (See Map No. 4.5).⁴³³

⁴³²Letter from J.E. Webster, Esq., I.C.S., to The Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Districts, (No. 12288, Shillong, the 17th November 1906), July – December 1906, File No. CB – 10, G – 12, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1.

⁴³³Maharaj Barman, *Eastern Boundary Dispute*, 5-7; Letter from Colonel J.E. Gastrell, for Boundary Commissioner, Bengal, To J. Crawford, Esq., Offg. Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 90, dated Calcutta, the 20th June 1874), July 1874, File No. 9 – 1, 9 – 2, Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Judicial Department, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata, India; Letter from W. Maude, Esq., I.C.S., Offg. Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Political Department, (No. 264T., dated Chittagong, the 3rd August 1905), June 1906, File No. 1, Political Department, Political-A, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India; Notification by – The Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (Dated the

MAP No. 4.5: Maps illustrating the eastern boundary asserted by the Maharaja of Tripura



(Source: File: 1776 Rennell – Dury Wall Map of Bihar and Bengal, India – Geographicus – BaharBengal-dury-1776.jpg from *The Bengal Atlas??*, Rennell, James, (1779 first edition), Retrieved from – commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1776_Rennell_-_Dury_Wall_Map_of_Bihar_and_Bengal,_India_-_Geographicus_-_BaharBengal-dury-1776.jpg)

23rd June 1874), June 1906, File No. 3, Political Department, Political-A, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 5.

In 1835, Pemberton's report suggested that the entire Lushai Hills region was part of Tripura. By 1890, Tripura authorities sought the return of territories separated from the Maharaja of Tripura's dominion by the Notifications of 1874. Commissioner Oldham, however, refused to consider this request until a credible individual personally explored the Klong or, Tlawng (Dhaleswari) valley to assess the western side's condition and the sentiments of its inhabitants. Despite this, neither Captain Lillington nor Mr Oldham disputed Tripura's claim to the land east of the river Langkaih as belonging to Tripura. The core issue involved verifying territorial claims and the need for a thorough exploration to establish the rightful ownership of the contested areas.⁴³⁴

In 1891, the Maharaja of Tripura sought to extend the state's eastern boundary. The political agent referred the issue to Commissioner Mr Oldham, who deemed the region unworthy of further consideration, causing the matter to stall. Subsequent representations from Tripura on October 11, 1891 (See Appendix No. 20), and December 1, 1897, went unanswered (See Appendix No.21). Eventually, the Government of Assam addressed the case but declined to reopen the issue without discussing its merits. It was not until 1898 that the proposal to define the boundaries between the Lushai Hills and Tripura reached the Government of India, resulting in a notification on the subject in 1900.⁴³⁵ On May 26 and July 21, 1905, Rai Uma Kanta Das Bahadur, Minister of Tripura, made new appeals to the Government of Bengal regarding a boundary issue. The government maintained that the boundary established in 1874 was clear and had been chosen for specific reasons.

Additionally, they noted that the administration of Assam had reconsidered the matter in 1893, and a decision had been made not to reopen it. In response, Rai Bahadur suggested a compromise, recognising the complexity of restoring the entire disputed

⁴³⁴Letter from L.J. Kershaw to the Under Secretary, Government of Eastern Bengal & Assam, June 1906, File No. 1, Political Department, Political-A, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 2-3.

⁴³⁵Maharaj Barman, *Eastern Boundary Dispute, II Exhibit B*, 19.

tract. He proposed that the Pakwa river, a tributary of the river Tlawng, be used as the boundary, starting from its confluence with the river Tlawng.⁴³⁶

On April 11, 1906, the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam confirmed the boundary between the Lushai Hills and Tripura as officially established, with top-level government approval and authoritative support (refer to Appendix No.22). The boundary was defined to include the area up to the Tlawng and Pakwa rivers, making any changes to the boundary line impractical. Consequently, the lieutenant governor decided not to revisit the issue, as it had been conclusively settled years prior. Historical correspondence supports this decision: Maharaja Bir Chandra Manikya Bahadur's letter dated February 9, 1874, acknowledged the Langkaih (Langai) river as Tripura's eastern boundary. Further, in his letter dated January 15, 1882 (refer to Appendix No.23), the Maharaja indicated that he did not view the Langkaih river as a temporary boundary and proposed it as a natural division between Tripura and Sylhet. This historical documentation reinforced the established boundary, making it clear that any reconsideration of the boundary was unnecessary and unsupported by past agreements.⁴³⁷

On February 15, 1913, Tripura's authorities submitted new petitions about the state's eastern boundaries to the governor council of the new Presidency of Bengal. Unfortunately, these efforts did not result in favourable decisions, as the council was unwilling to revisit the issue (See Appendix No. 24). Despite repeated appeals from the Durbar of Tripura, their concerns about the eastern boundary had not yet been

⁴³⁶Letter from W. Maude, Esq., I.C.S., Offg. Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Political Department, (No. 264T., dated Chittagong, the 3rd August 1905);and Letter from Rai Umakanta Das Bahadur, Minister, Tippera State, To The Political Agent, Tippera, (No. 58-XI-1, dated Agartala, the 26th May 1905); and Letter from Rai Umakanta Das Bahadur, Minister, Tippera State, To The Political Agent, Tippera, (No. 119-XI-1, dated Agartala, the 21st July 1905, June 1906, File No. 1- 2 and 5, Political Department, Political-A, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 1-8; Maharaj Barman, *Eastern Boundary Dispute, II Exhibit B*, 19 – 20.

⁴³⁷Letter from The Offg. Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Judicial and General Department, to The Commissioner of Chittagong, (No. 3940J., dated Shillong, the 11th April 1906), June 1906. File No. 15, Political Department, Political-A, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Gauhati, India, 13-14.

sympathetically addressed. Nevertheless, the Durbar remained optimistic; believing their plea to the Government of India might eventually succeed. They specifically requested the restoration of the territory up to the Tlawng river and the Sorphuel peak, even if returning the entire area separated by the Langkaih (Langai) line was not immediately feasible.⁴³⁸

On 31st December, 1919 Maharaja B.K. Manikya of Tripura wrote to the Viceroy and Governor General of India to appeal against the Government of Bengal's decision, which marked the river Langkaih as Tripura's eastern boundary. The Maharaja detailed the historical context and requested a reassessment of the boundary line.⁴³⁹ Subsequently, on September 21, 1922, Tripura's minister sent another appeal to the political agent, seeking arbitration and requesting the letter be forwarded to the Government of Bengal. On October 8, 1922, the Tripura authorities reiterated their boundary concerns to the Government of India. Despite holding discussions with the governor of Assam, the Durbar of Tripura's request was rejected. After reviewing the situation, the Government of India decided to uphold its initial decision and dismissed the call for arbitration, maintaining the boundary as previously defined. The appeals from Tripura were unsuccessful, as the Government of India found no grounds to alter their prior orders or pursue arbitration.⁴⁴⁰

In the early twentieth century, the Mizos, under the leadership of a Sailo chief, migrated to Tripura and settled in the Jampui Hills with the Maharaja of Tripura's permission. Hrangvunga Sailo, among the Sailo chiefs, lived in Phuldungsei, where a dispute emerged regarding the village's location. On May 7, 1922, the British Government, through A.C. Majumdar, Sadar Collector of Tripura, suggested a new boundary demarcation between the Lushai Hills and Tripura to be conducted during the upcoming cold season. The government requested that the Superintendent of the Lushai

⁴³⁸Maharaj Barman, *Eastern Boundary Dispute, II Exhibit B*, 26-27.

⁴³⁹Maharaj Barman, *Exhibit A*, 1-11.

⁴⁴⁰Maharaj Barman, *Exhibit C*, 1-15.

Hills nominate a representative from the Lushai Hills to join the survey party.⁴⁴¹ On February 14, 1928, N.E. Parry, then Superintendent of Lushai Hills, inquired about the boundary between Lushai Hills and Tripura, seeking clarification and details regarding the specific demarcation line between the two regions. This period marked significant administrative interactions between the British Government and regional leaders, focusing on territorial boundaries and local governance. Parry specifically mentioned how officials' documents defined the western boundary of Lushai Hill:

Starting from the point where Sylhet Boundary cuts the LANGAI river up the LANGAI river to its source on the hill station BETLINGSIB (3083) along the range Southwards to BETLING (2234), thence Southeastwards to the source of a tributary of TUILIANPUI river, down this tributary to the TUILIANPUI, down the TUILIANPUI to the point opposite to the source of HARINA river, from this point Westwards in a straight line to the source of HARINA. Down the HARINA river to the KARNAPHULI river, up the KARNAPHULI river to the mouth of THEGA KHAL river, up the THEGA KHAL river to its source on the WAIBUNGTAUNG, along the watersheds of WAIBUNGTAUNG Southwards to the starting point at KEUKRABONG.⁴⁴²

Mr. Parry's proposal addresses a boundary dispute between the points of Betlingsib (3038) and Betling (2234). He suggests that when the government initially delineated the boundary, it was meant to follow the Langkaih (Langai) river to its source, continue along the range to Betlingsib, then to Betling, and southeast to the Tuilianpui river source. This would include the Phuldungsei village, with its 63 houses, within the Lushai district. Mr Parry proposes amending the boundary's verbal definition to start from the Sylhet boundary's intersection with the Langkaih river, follow it to its source, and continue along the range to Betlingsib and Betling. This amendment aims to align the boundary with the original intention and prevent disputes. He recommends

⁴⁴¹Letter from A.C. Majumdar, Esqr., M.A., B.L., Sadar Collector, Tripura State, to The Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, Fort Izal, Lushai Hills, (No.452/XXXIX-2, Dated Agartala, the 7th May 1922), 1922 – 1923, File No. CB – 24, G – 306, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1.

⁴⁴²Letter from N.E. Parry, Esq., I.C.S., Superintendent, Lushai Hills, To The Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division, Silchar, (No.3055 G/I-II of 15/2/28, Dated Aijal, the 14th February, 1928), 1928 – 1929, File No. CB – 17, Pol – 165, Political Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 47.

erecting a stone marker at the boundary with representatives from both Lushai Hills and Tripura present. Additionally, he suggests relocating the 63 houses of Phuldungsei village to either Tripura or the Lushai Hills and advises the Tripura Durbar to prevent village establishment along the boundary to avoid further disputes.⁴⁴³

Mr J. Hezlett argued that Phuldungsei village should not be considered part of the Lushai Hills, as the latest topographical map showed it within Tripura's territory. He admitted to a mistake in describing the boundary as extending to the source of the Langkaih (Langai) river at Betling Sib, noting that the actual source was three miles north of Betling Sib along the hills. Hezlett proposed that officers from the Lushai Hills and Tripura conduct a joint investigation and demarcate the boundary according to the existing notification. The government accepted this suggestion.⁴⁴⁴

Until July 9, 1910, there was a misinterpretation or incorrect definition of the boundary between the Lushai Hills and Chittagong. This issue arose because officials noticed that the two districts, which were supposed to share a boundary, did not have a direct border with each other.⁴⁴⁵ This situation and the above observation highlight the complex and intricate nature of the boundary situation during that period, indicating that the precise demarcation and understanding of the boundary of Lushai Hills were subject to challenges and possibly required further clarification or adjustment. As a result, the government decided to conduct a fresh boundary survey of the Lushai Hills within the next six years to identify and correct any mapping errors or inaccuracies in the existing

⁴⁴³ Letter from N.E. Parry, Esq., I.C.S., Superintendent, Lushai Hills, To The Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division, Silchar, (No.3055 G/I-II of 15/2/28, Dated Aijal, the 14th February, 1928), 48-49.

⁴⁴⁴ Letter from J. Hezlett, Esqr., C.I.E., I.C.S., Offg: Commissioner Surma Valley and Hill Division, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, (No, 587 R, dated Silchar, the 28th February 1928); and Letter from H.M, Prichard, Esq., I.C.S., Secretary to the Government of Assam, To The Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division, (No. 1880 R., Shillong the 29th May 1928); and Letter from H. Weightman, Esq., I.C.S., Under Secretary to the Government of Assam, To The Commissioner, Surma Valley & Hill Division, (No. Pol.641/2011 A.P., Shillong the 14th March, 1929), 1928 – 1929, File No. CB – 17, Pol – 165, Political Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 53-56.

⁴⁴⁵ Boundary between the Lushai Hills, the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the adjoining districts of Burma, January 1911, File No. 39 – 42, Political Department, Political – A, Assam State Archives, Government of Eastern Bengal & Assam, Gauhati, India, 1.

boundaries to ensure an accurate and well-defined demarcation of the boundaries of the Lushai Hills district.⁴⁴⁶

4.3 Formation of Appropriate Territorial Boundaries

The superintendent of Lushai Hills approved a revised description of the northern boundary, published as the Inner Line in Gazette Notification No. 9102 A.P. on August 28, 1930. This revision expanded upon the earlier description from Notification No. 1093P of 1904 and was believed to reflect the northern boundary of Lushai Hills accurately. Following the publication of Gazette Notification No. 9102 A.P. on August 28, 1930, the Survey of India conducted a detailed survey of the boundary and suggested modifications related to Cachar and Sylhet. The superintendent found no objections to these modifications as they pertained to the district. This revised boundary and subsequent modifications were intended to ensure clarity and accuracy in defining the territory of Lushai Hills.⁴⁴⁷ The following is the northern boundary of the Lushai Hills district:

From the junction of the Ruanding with the Barak river, the Inner Line shall run up the midstream of the former to where it receives the Lungkulh Lui; thence up the midstream of that stream to its source, and crossing the range in a westerly direction down the right bank of a small feeder flowing into the Teirangnek stream; thence down the midstream of the latter to its junction with the Sonai river. From this point the Inner Line shall run south-westwards up the midstream of the Sonai river as far as its junction with the Suanglawn Lui; thence up the midstream of this *lui* to its junction with the Bagh Khal; thence up the midstream of the Bagh Khal or Tuishen Lui to its junction with a large feeder that takes its rise near the deserted village of Saipum; thence up the midstream of this feeder to the summit of Bongkong range, and crossing that range down the midstream of the Teidu Lui to its junction with the Rukai river. Then a straight line running in a north-westerly direction from this junction to the Dhalai bridge one furlong north of the 80th mile stone on the Aijal-Dwarband road, this point is also the trijunction of the Hailakandi/Silchar subdivisions (district Cachar) with the

⁴⁴⁶Letter from H.M, Prichard, Esq., I.C.S., Secretary to the Government of Assam, To The Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division, (No. 1880 R., Shillong the 29th May 1928), File No. CB – 17, Pol – 165, Political Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 54.

⁴⁴⁷Boundary of Lushai Hills District, 1900, File No. CB – 7, G – 79, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 20-21.

Lushai Hills district; thence up the midstream of the Dhalai river to its source, where, crossing the watershed it strikes the headwaters of the Chhimluang Lui and down the midstream of this *lui* to its junction with the Barun Chara; thence down the midstream of the Barun Chara to its junction with the Hmarluang Lui (Te); thence up the midstream of this *lui* to its source in the Bhairabi range; thence crossing the Bhairabi range westwards to the source of the Bhairabi stream; thence down the midstream of the Bhairabi stream to its junction with the Dhaleswari of Tlong river; thence up the midstream of the Dhaleswari river to its junction with the Pakwa river; thence up the midstream of the Pakwa river to the second large tributary met with on its left bank; thence up the midstream of this tributary to its source; thence in a northerly direction along a range to Chatarchurra peak (2071); thence due west in a straight line to the trijunction point of districts Sylhet, Lushai Hills (Assam) and Tripura State (Bengal) situated on the Langai river about $\frac{3}{4}$ th of a mile southwest of the confluence of the Medi Cherra with that river.⁴⁴⁸

The Government of Assam recognised the river Langkaih (Langai) as the definitive boundary for the western Lushai Hills, as clarified by Mr. C.K. Rhodes, Secretary to the Assam Revenue Department, in a letter dated May 22, 1930. For practical reasons and due to its proximity to Tripura State, it was considered appropriate to follow the Bengal Notification 1946 P.D. dated July 14, 1916. However, this notification was to be used with amendments suggested by the Director of Survey.⁴⁴⁹ The boundary between the Lushai Hills and Tripura and its western border with the Chittagong Hill Tracts was officially outlined in a notification published in the Assam Gazette on September 17, 1898. This notification, numbered 2095-P and dated August 25, 1898, provided the most recent description of these boundaries at the time. Despite this formal delineation, authorities contemplated altering the boundary lines. The western limit of the Lushai Hills, defined by the following boundaries with Tripura and Chittagong, is as follows:

⁴⁴⁸Boundary of Lushai Hills District, 1900, File No. CB – 7, G – 79, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 11-12, and 20-21; Northern & Southern Boundary of the Lushai Hills District, 1928 – 31, File No. CB – 32, G – 401, General Department, , Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1-2.

⁴⁴⁹Boundary of Lushai Hills District, 1900, File No. CB – 7, G – 79, 21– 22; Northern & Southern Boundary of the Lushai Hills District, 1928 – 31, File No. CB – 32, G – 401, 2-3.

Starting from the point where the Sylhet boundary cuts the Langai river up the Langai river to its source at a point on the range 3 miles North of Betling Sib, thence along the range Southwards to BETLING SIB (3083) thence continuing along the range Southwards to BETLING (2234), thence Southeastwards to the source of a tributary of TUILIANPUI river, down this tributary to the TUILIANPUI river, down this tributary to the TUILIANPUI, down the TUILIANPUI to the point opposite to the source of HARINA river, from this point Westwards in a straight line to the source of HARINA. Down the HARINA river to the KARNAFULI river, up the KARNAFULI river to the mouth of THEGA KHAL river, up the THEGA KHAL river to its source on the WAIBUNGTAUNG, along the watersheds of WAIBUNGTAUNG Southwards to the starting point at KEUKRADONG.⁴⁵⁰

The southern boundary of the Zongling region, extending eastward from the western boundary, aligns with part of the southern boundary of the Lushai Hills District. Although this boundary has not been formally announced, it has been proposed as the southern boundary for the Lushai Hills. The S.D.O. Lunglei and Mr. Fisher, Deputy Commissioner of Arakan Hill Tracts, verified the proposed boundary on December 30, 1928. Documentation related to this boundary, identified as Paper No. 16/A of File I-12 of 1928-29, was forwarded to the Commissioner S.D.O. for publication, as indicated by Superintendent Letter No. 2643 G dated February 10, 1929, and recorded as Paper No. 19/A File I-12 of 28-29. Furthermore, the Zongling area's and Haka's boundaries were officially notified in Notification No. 5232AP on August 26, 1931. The following is the southern boundary:

Starting from KEUKRADONG the boundary runs eastwards to MEPHRUTONG or RENGTLANG, thence to the source of a small stream called the VARANG lui or MRAIK CHAUNG whose source lied due east of the peak, down the VARANG lui or MRAIK CHAUNG to its junction with the SEKUL (KOLA) KALET stream (where a boundary stone has been placed), thence up the SEKUL (KOLA) or KALET stream to the mouth of the KHAWTLANG or ZYUCHA stream (where a boundary stone has been placed), up the KHAWTLANG or ZYUCHA to its source on the SAMANG or KWIMAN range; thence southwards along the SAMANG or KWIMAN range to the source of the SAMAK or KWIMAN stream (where a boundary stone has been placed down the SAMAK or KWIMAN stream to its junction with the KOLODYNE river to the mouth of the KHANZA or KWIMAN stream (where a boundary stone has been

⁴⁵⁰Boundary of Lushai Hills District, 1900, File No. CB – 7, G – 79, 16.

placed)(the mouths of these two streams are opposite one another); thence up the KHANGZA or KWIMAN stream to its source in the KAISI TLANG (where a boundary stone has been placed); thence southwards to the source of the RALE or SHWELAIK stream; down the RALE or SHWELAIK stream to its junction with the SULLA river; thence northwards along the SULLA river to its junction with the KAIKHEU or KHINKON stream (where a boundary stone has been placed) thence up the KAIKHEU or KHINKON stream to its source on the PATHIAN or PAHTAY TLANG; thence northwards along the PATHIAN or PAHTAY TLANG to the source of the PARA stream; thence down the PARA stream to the TUISI stream or MICHAUNG; then up the TUISI river to the mouth of the KHEIMU river; thence up the KHEIMU river to its source on the KAHRIA TLANG, thence along the summit of theKAHRIA TLANG on a southerly direction to the source of the RAPHU river, thence down the RAPHU river to the BOINU (or KOLODYNE).⁴⁵¹

Officials from the Lushai Hills and Chin Hills were required to survey to define the boundary between the Lushai Hills and the Haka-Tiddim regions of Chin Hills. Although arrangements were finalised with Arakan, the process for the Chin Hills boundary was stalled. According to a letter from the Government of Assam Political Department dated November 14, 1928 (No. 7004 A.P.), the joint inquiry that began in 1928 was halted, and no further progress has been made since that time.⁴⁵² The ultimate eastern boundary established is as follows:

Starting from the point at the junction of the RAPHU river with the BOINU, down the BOINU to its junction with the TYAO; thence up to the course of the TYAO to its source on the VIKO TLANG, then eastwards to the source of a tributary of the TUIMANG river down the TUIMANG to its junction with the TUISA, down the TUISA to its junction with the TUIVAI river, down the TUIVAI river to its junction with the VANGVUM LUI, up the VANGVUM LUI to its source at a saddle known as BONGKOT where a boundary pillar marked ML(1) has been erected, thence crossing to the west side of this saddle to the source of the TUITOI streams; down the TUITOI stream to its junction with the TUIVAI river, down the TUIVAI river to its junction with the BARRAK river, thence down the BARRAK river to its junction with the RUANDING LUI.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹Boundary of Lushai Hills District, 1900, File No. CB – 7, G – 79, 13 – 14 and 26 – 28; Northern & Southern Boundary of the Lushai Hills District, 1928 – 31, File No. CB – 32, G – 401, 10-11.

⁴⁵²Boundary of Lushai Hills District, 1900, File No. CB – 7, G – 79, 22-28.

⁴⁵³Boundary of Lushai Hills District, 1900, File No. CB – 7, G – 79, 15.

The limits of the Lushai Hills district were finally legally determined and proclaimed in this manner by the government. The boundary line encompassed the unadministered tracts, such as the Zongling regions in the Lushai Hills district. On August 28, 1930, the government officially delineated the boundaries of the Lushai Hills district, including unadministered areas like the Zongling regions, through Notification No. 9102 A.P. This notification defined the district's limits in the north, west, south, and east. However, on March 9, 1935, a subsequent Notification No. 2106 A.R. replaced the earlier one, designating these boundaries as the "Inner Line" of the Lushai Hills district. This designation was made under the authority of section 2 of the Bengal Frontier Regulation, 1873 (V of 1873). The Inner Line is detailed in the Survey of India publications, mapping the boundaries as follows: 1"=4 miles and 1"=1 mile publications, northern boundary on 83H, 83D 83D/15, D/14, D/11, and D/7; western boundary on 83D/7, 83D, 84B, and 84C; and southern and eastern boundaries on 83B, 84-C, 84E, 84F, 83-D, and 83-H. These boundaries collectively constitute the Inner Line of the Lushai Hills district, legally establishing the district's extent.⁴⁵⁴

The Simon Commission, charged with assessing India's political system, faced significant political activity in Northeast India. Both tribal communities and colonial officials emphasised the distinctiveness of the hill tribes from the rest of India in terms of race, language, culture, and politics. These officials, acting as tribal representatives, argued against integrating tribal regions into a unified Indian polity, fearing it would harm tribal interests. N.E. Parry, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills District, advocated for excluding the Lushai Hills from proposed reforms, proposing a separate Northeastern Province instead. In March 1928, Parry submitted this proposal, envisioning an independent administrative entity for the hill tribes. As a result, the Government of India Act of 1935 classified the Lushai Hills as an "Excluded" area, placing it outside provincial legislative control. Administration was under the Viceroy, with the Governor of Assam acting as the Agent to the Crown Representative. This

⁴⁵⁴ Chakravorty, *British Relations with the Hill Tribes*, 188; Lushai Hills Boundaries, The Assam Gazette, March 15, 1933. (Part II), Orders by the Governor in Council, the 9th March 1933, 1-3, DC Record Room, Aizawl, Mizoram.

classification meant the region had a unique status within British India's political framework, with its administration separate from provincial oversight. Revenue for the Lushai Hills was not subject to provincial legislature votes, reflecting its distinct administrative arrangement.⁴⁵⁵

Creating "Excluded" areas in northeast India, such as the Lushai Hills, served two primary purposes during the British colonial period. Firstly, it aimed to isolate the tribes from the Indian National Movement for independence, as the British viewed these tribes as potentially disruptive to their rule. Secondly, it sought to protect the tribes from exploitation and cultural assimilation by the plains people. Recognising the distinct cultural identities and traditional practices of the tribes, the British administration endeavoured to preserve these identities and shield them from external influences. Establishing "Excluded" areas was driven by strategic concerns, cultural preservation, and the desire to maintain regional stability. From 1937 to 1947, the governor of Assam administered the "Excluded" territories, including the Lushai Hills, as separate units, operating independently of the Government of Assam. This arrangement featured a distinct administrative setup with a separate Secretariat, where the secretary to the governor played a crucial role in governance. Such a setup ensured focused attention and specialised administration for these regions, allowing the tribal communities to govern themselves according to their customs and traditions during that period.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁵Sajal Nag, "Production of North Eastern Region: Colonial Construction and Nationalism Affirmation," *Summerhill* 24, no.1 (June 2018): 28-29, <http://localhost:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/5156>; Sir Robert N. Reid, "A Note on the Future of the Present Excluded, Partially Excluded and Tribal Areas of Assam," in *On the Edge of Empire Four British Plans for North East India 1941-1947*, ed. David R. Syiemlieh (New Delhi: Vivek Mehra for SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd, 2014), 47-55; Constituent Assembly of India North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Vol 1 (Report), (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1947), 4; McCall, *Chrysalis*, 238; Mizoram District Gazetteers, 50-51.

⁴⁵⁶Jangkhongam DOUNGEL, "Colonial Administration in Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas of Undivided Assam with Special Reference to Lushai Hills," in *Tribe-British Relations in India: Revisiting Text, Perspective and Approach*, ed. Maguni Charan Behera (Gateway East, Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore Pte. Ltd., 2021): 314-316, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-3424-6>.

The British authorities recognised the distinct identity of the inhabitants in the “Excluded” areas, particularly the Lushais, who were apprehensive about being politically dominated by Indians. The Lushais, a more aware and intellectually advanced hill tribe, aspired for a better future beyond being labelled as “Excluded” or “Backward.” They expressed a preference for self-governance or autonomy, resisting integration into British India without their consent. This sentiment highlighted their desire for alternative arrangements that respected their unique cultural and historical identities. Addressing these aspirations posed a challenge for the British, who sought to create a system acknowledging the distinctiveness of these communities while providing opportunities for development and progress. The aim was to enable these areas to evolve towards more advanced institutions within the framework of colonial rule. The British intended to maintain control and administrative oversight while fostering social, economic, and political growth. However, colonial policies and priorities influenced the realisation and implementation of these aspirations, with ultimate authority and decision-making power residing with the British Government in India. The framework’s effectiveness was contingent on the colonial context, impacting the degree to which the aspirations of the Lushais and other communities were fulfilled.⁴⁵⁷

4.4 Impact on Indigenous Cosmology and Identity

The imposition of fixed boundaries in the Lushai Hills had significant repercussions, primarily because these boundaries were established based on geographical suitability without considering local societal dynamics. Over time, these rigid boundaries posed challenges for the British administration by limiting flexibility and adaptability as the region evolved. The delineation of these boundaries fostered a sense of territoriality and identity among the local people, creating a stronger connection between them and their land. This development led to, a “macro identification” within the community, distinguishing the people of the Lushai Hills from others and reinforcing their unique identity. Thus, establishing fixed boundaries had both practical and

⁴⁵⁷Reid, “Tribal Areas of Assam,” 68-69; McCall, *Chrysalis*, 240.

symbolic impacts, shaping perceptions of land ownership, identity, and a sense of belonging in the region.⁴⁵⁸

The British gained control of the Lushai Hills region through military conquest, and “the complete pacification of the Lushais is largely due to the constant touring of European officers.”⁴⁵⁹ The constant relocation of villages in the Lushai Hills required frequent map updates, hindering administrative stability until a system with clearly defined village land areas was established. J. Shakespear’s spatial arrangement, implemented between 1891 and 1899, addressed this issue by allocating specific territories to each chief, allowing mobility within these areas. This arrangement benefited the local population and enhanced British administrative effectiveness in the region. It provided a framework for land management that contributed to the development and stability of the Lushai Hills. Between 1900 and 1903, authorities finalised the boundaries for all chiefs in the district. Although the process was largely successful, there were instances where villages acted independently to seek compensation for perceived injustices; however, these actions did not significantly harm individuals or property. While Shakespear’s territorial arrangement offered stability, it also restricted the traditional mobility and freedom of the Lushai Hills’ inhabitants, marking a significant shift in land and territorial management under British rule.⁴⁶⁰

Before implementing a proper territorial arrangement system in the Lushai Hills, the chiefs primarily held land ownership. Introducing this system established clear boundaries for each chief by issuing *Ramri lehkha*, or boundary papers, facilitating more

⁴⁵⁸Joy L.K. Pachuau, *Being Mizo Identity And Belonging In Northeast India* (New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2014), 98-99.

⁴⁵⁹Notes on the Lushai Hills: Its Inhabitants and Its Administration since 1888, File No: CB – 1, Pol – 3, 10 – 11.

⁴⁶⁰Letter from R.B. McCabe, Esq., C.S., Political Officer, North Lushai Hills, to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Section III Eastern Sonai Promenade, (No. 89, dated Aijal, the 11th June 1891), 1890-91, Pros. January 1892, File No. 56, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, , Government of India, New Delhi, India, 30; Chakravorty, *British Relations with the Hill Tribes*, 80; Extract from the proceedings of the Chief Commissioner of Assam in the General Department, regarding instructions for the preparation and submission of an Annual General Administration report in Hill Districts, other exam the Lushai Hills, 1900 – 1903, File No. CB – 7, G – 88, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 41.

precise land ownership. In 1898, the superintendent of Lushai Hills issued twenty-six boundary papers to different Lushai chiefs, significantly defining territorial and administrative boundaries. Land held by chiefs became hereditary, with succession to the chief's eldest son upon the father's death, subject to confirmation by the Superintendent. Previously, chiefs often granted a village to their eldest son before their death, but the new system negated this practice by automatically considering the eldest son as heir and successor. If the eldest son was deemed unfit, the next eligible son assumed the role of chief. Despite the new boundaries, some chiefs still sought to establish their sons in separate villages, but the limited land available often made this impossible, as larger settlements had already claimed most of the terrain. The system marked a shift from discretionary inheritance to a more structured and constrained land succession process.⁴⁶¹

Following the creation of the Lushai Hills district, Sir Alexander Mackenzie recommended minimal legislative enactments for the region, believing that existing administrative Acts and the officer's executive actions would suffice. The lieutenant governor supported this view and consulted the chief commissioner, Mr. Cotton, who agreed with Mackenzie's perspective. Consequently, it was proposed to seek approval from the Government of India to restrict the application of substantive and procedural laws in the Lushai Hills, except for the Indian Penal Code, under Regulation II of 1880. This proposal aimed to limit law applicability to only those deemed necessary for the region. Additionally, Major J Shakespear communicated with Mr. Cotton regarding remarks by Mr. Davis during the 1894 handover of the North Lushai Hills concerning the administrative rules for the area:

⁴⁶¹Parry, *Lushai Customs & Ceremonies*, 3-4; Shakespear, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 42; Major A.G. McCall O.B.E. Indian Civil Service, *The Lushai Hills District Cover*, Reprinted (Aizawl, Mizoram: The Tribal Research Institute, Deptt. Of Art & Culture, 2008), 17; Ramri Lehkha, 1898, File No: CB – 6, Pol – 55, Political Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram; Chief Succession, 1936 – 1937, File No: CB – 41, G – 525, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 16-24.

I always held the chiefs of villages responsible for the behaviour of their people, and upheld their authority to the best of my ability. I have repeatedly told them that this policy will be consistently followed, and that, as long as they behave themselves as they should, their orders will not be interfered with, even though the orders may appear to us at times a little high-handed, and not quite in accord with abstract ideas of justice. In this connection, it is well to remember that no chief can very greatly misuse his power or oppress his people. Were he to do so, his village, and with it his own importance would quickly diminish, as the people would migrate to other villages. In upholding the authority of chiefs, I have, as a rule, declined to take up appeals against their orders in petty cases, as it only diminishes a man's authority to be brought into Aijal to answer some petty charge preferred against him by a discontented villager. Besides, any course of action which tends to discourage litigation amongst a people like the Lushais is worth persisting in, or they would soon become like the Kukis, in the Naga Hills, who, having been, by neglect on our part, practically emancipated from the control of their hereditary chiefs, are the most litigious tribe in that district.⁴⁶²

The British authorities recognised the significance of chiefs in the governance of the Lushai Hills, acknowledging their lineage-based authority and the high regard in which the local community held them. This understanding led the British to preserve the chiefs' authority, which was crucial for maintaining order and effective administration. Traditionally, power was held by strong, wise individuals, but under colonial rule, chieftainships became hereditary, requiring compliance with British standards of behaviour and capability. This transformation placed a responsibility on the British to train chiefs to govern effectively under their rule. The administration of the Lushai Hills was thus managed by the chiefs, with a superintendent overseeing justice and general supervision. J. Shakespear notes, "I am convinced that it is better to uphold the government of the chiefs and to govern through them, rather than to try to govern without them." The British approach reflected respect for existing local dynamics and

⁴⁶²Letter from E.A. Gait, Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, to The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, (No. 149P. Shillong, the 17th July 1897), October 1897, File No. CB – 5, G – 57, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 46-47.

aimed to integrate traditional authority structures within their colonial governance framework.⁴⁶³

During the early twentieth century, a “Circle Administration” system was introduced in the Lushai Hills to balance local authority structures with British governance standards. This system, implemented from 1901-1903 under J. Shakespear, grouped villages into administrative units called “Circles,” with 13 in Aizawl and 7 in Lunglei. By 1901, a land survey identified 239 villages with a population of 82,434 under British jurisdiction. Each Circle had an interpreter and *Chapراسى* to facilitate communication between sub-divisional officers, chiefs, and the populace. While the system aimed to enhance intelligence gathering and political administration, challenges arose due to interpreters prioritising personal popularity over government interests. This lack of commitment limited the system’s effectiveness. To fully harness the system’s potential, it was necessary to appoint better-educated and more responsible individuals. Such appointments were expected to progressively enhance unity among the chiefs and their communities, fostering a higher standard of governance in the region.⁴⁶⁴

The Chin-Lushai Conference in Lunglei emphasised a policy of non-interference in tribal affairs, valuing the autonomy and self-governance of tribal communities. Discussions addressed the contentious issue of forced labour in the Lushai Hills, concluding that it should be limited to urgent situations and compensated reasonably to prevent discontent and potential uprisings. The conference also introduced a house tax of ₹2 per house annually, marking a shift in the economic landscape by altering perceptions

⁴⁶³Letter from R.B. McCabe, Esq., C.S., Political Officer, North Lushai Hills, to The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, (No. 89, dated Aijal, the 11th June 1891) Section II Campaign Against The Western Lushais, 1890 – 91, Pros. January 1892, File No. 56, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 21; McCall, *Chyrsalis*, 244; *Frontier And Overseas Expeditions From India*, 243; Notes on the Lushai Hills: Its Inhabitants and Its Administration since 1888, File No: CB – 1, Pol – 3, 10-11.

⁴⁶⁴Extract from the proceedings of the Chief Commissioner of Assam in the General Department, regarding instructions for the preparation and submission of an Annual General Administration report in Hill Districts, other than the Lushai Hills, 1900 – 1903, File No. CB – 7, G – 88, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 41; “KUM 1901, KHAW CHHIAR,” *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* 7 (May 1903): 5 – 7; Reid, *Lushai Hills*, 61; McCall, *Lushai Hills District Cover*, 37 – 38; *Mizoram District Gazetteers*, 47; Chakravorty, *British Relations With The Hill Tribes Of Assam*, 187.

of ownership and financial ties and extending economic authority beyond tribal chiefs to the colonial administration. Additionally, the conference proposed the disarmament of the populace, advocating for a ratio of one gun per 15 houses, with excess firearms being subject to confiscation—this measure aimed to regulate firearm possession, maintaining public safety and order. Overall, the conference sought to create policies fostering stability and cooperation among tribal communities by recognising the potential consequences of injudicious actions and emphasising a balanced approach to governance, economic changes, and public safety.⁴⁶⁵

The Chin-Lushai Conference aimed to balance colonial administrative goals with the cultural and social values of the Lushai Hills community by promoting stability, cooperation, and autonomy among tribal communities while ensuring efficient governance. This dual focus sought to harmonise the relationship between colonial authorities and indigenous populations. Despite awareness of regional factors, British boundary-making in the Lushai Hills highlighted significant differences in territorial perceptions. The indigenous people likely viewed boundaries more fluidly, based on historical and cultural land ties, contrasting with the British emphasis on fixed demarcations. British authorities perceived tribal raids as encroachments, characterised as “savage and unprovoked” disruptions, while the tribes viewed these actions as necessary for survival and resource competition. The British focus on clear boundaries reflected their territorial sovereignty concept and control needs. This imposition of fixed boundaries aligned with imperialist objectives represents a form of “geographical violence” to control and chart the world. The colonial approach significantly impacted the Lushai Hills people, challenging their historical and cultural land connections and imposing a new territorial framework. This redefinition of spaces was central to British colonial domination and control, affecting the indigenous perception of identity and land relationships.

⁴⁶⁵Letter from F.H. Skrine, Esq., Offg. Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, To The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, (No. 7L, dated Chittagong, the 1st January 1897), 1891 – 1897, File No. CB – 1, G – 2, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 32.

During the British colonial period, the various tribes inhabiting the Lushai Hills were collectively referred to as Lushais by the British, despite each tribe having distinct social customs and dialects. The term Lushai itself does not have a definitive origin but was interpreted by some British authorities as meaning “head-cutters” or “long-heads,” possibly due to a custom of wearing long hair. The names given by neighbouring tribes might have influenced this interpretation. However, it is crucial to recognise that colonial perspectives shaped such interpretations and do not necessarily provide an accurate representation of the Lushai people’s cultural practices or identity. According to Mr. McCabe’s report, the Lushais identified their community as *Mizo* or *Mizau*, which included various castes, clans, or tribes. This suggests that “Lushai” was a broader label imposed by the British, overlooking the diversity and self-identification within these communities. The name “Lushai” reflects the colonial tendency to simplify and categorise complex indigenous societies under a single term, which often masked the rich cultural diversity in the Lushai Hills.⁴⁶⁶

In the Lushai Hills, different fluid boundaries contributed significantly to the relationships among various tribes over time. These tangible and intangible boundaries created complex divisions, fostering a mentality of self-preservation and rivalry among tribes and clans. The harsh environment led each tribal chief to perceive neighbouring chiefs as threats, resulting in competition for resources and power, while internal divisions within clans further complicated social dynamics. Colonial officials viewed the Indigenous communities as having short-sighted ambitions, primarily driven by immediate self-interest rather than long-term cooperation. Despite living in a hazardous environment, the tribes’ self-perception contrasted with external views. They considered themselves cultured rather than “savages” due to their supernatural beliefs, highlighting

⁴⁶⁶Letter from R.B. McCabe, Esq., I.C.S., Political Officer, North Lushai Hills, To The Secretary To The Chief Commissioner of Assam, Section I, Pros. December 1892, File No. 43, 5-6; Shakespear, *Lushei Kuki Clans*, 42; Vumson, *Zo*, 56-57.

their complex identity. The ongoing struggle for survival and resources reinforced both physical and social divisions among the tribes.⁴⁶⁷

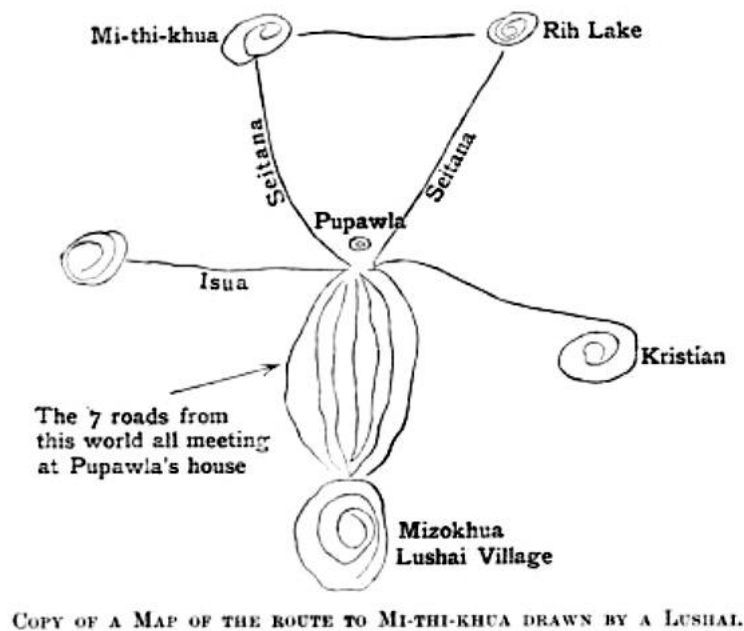
Despite their internal divisions, the people of the Lushai Hills shared a collective consciousness and memories that fostered a strong sense of kinship and distinct identity. They recognised their differences from surrounding communities, which further unified them. A pivotal aspect of their shared identity was the belief in a common origin myth, which connected the diverse tribes and provided a shared sense of heritage and ancestry. This myth reinforced their collective identity despite tribal diversity. Memories often invoked places beyond current political boundaries, highlighting a shared notion of origin and destiny. Such memories imbued geographical spaces with significant meaning, transforming them from mere physical locations to territories with deep territorial identity. This transformation marked the Lushai Hills people as a distinct group, contrasting them with external perceptions. The shared memories and territorial significance were crucial in forming and solidifying their identity. These elements helped distinguish the people of the Lushai Hills, highlighting a collective “us” and reinforcing their unique cultural and historical identity.⁴⁶⁸

The establishment of British rule in the Lushai Hills facilitated the spread of Christianity, significantly transforming the region’s religious landscape. Previously, the Mizo people adhered to traditional beliefs, where achieving the esteemed *Thangchhuah* status was essential for a soul to reach *Pialral*, the Mizo paradise. This status was attained through hunting and killing various wild animals or hosting elaborate feasts, activities often beyond the means of most locals. Consequently, reaching *Pialral* was an unattainable aspiration for the majority. The introduction of Christianity provided an alternative spiritual path, offering hope to a broader population segment. Christianity

⁴⁶⁷Lewin, *A Fly On The Wheel*, 252; *Mizo District Gazetteers*, 40-41; Pastor Challiana, *Hmasang Mizo Awmdan*, 3rd ed. (Aizawl, Mizoram: South Lushai Printing Press, 1950), 3; McCall, *Chrysalis*, 68.

⁴⁶⁸Lal Dingluaia, “Maps, Mission, Memory and Mizo Identity,” *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 35, no. 4 (December, 2018): 241, DOI:10.1177/0265378818810271; Vumson, *Zo*, 26-27; Vanchhunga, *Hnam Dangte Chanchin*, 3-4; Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute*, 6; Hrangthiauva, *Mizo History*, 1-3.

introduced beliefs and practices that did not require participation in hunting rituals or demonstrations of wealth, making spiritual fulfilment accessible to more people. This shift marked a significant transformation in the religious and cultural identity of the Lushai Hills' inhabitants. A hybrid map outlining the route to *Mitthi Khua*, drawn by a Lushai informant, highlighted an intriguing fusion of beliefs:



(Source: Lt. Colonel J. Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, (St. Martin's Street, London: Macmillan And Co., Limited 1912), 63, archive.org/details/lusheikukiclans00shak/lusheikukiclans00shak/page/n7/mode/2up?view=theater.)

The map showcases a unique blend of Christian and indigenous beliefs, incorporating elements such as a Christian village, heaven, and Jesus alongside the Lushai's *Mitthi Khua*, overseen by Seitana (Satan). This fusion of religious concepts highlights the community's spirit of tolerance and openness to integrating new beliefs into their cultural framework. It reflects an ability to adapt and coexist with diverse ideas, demonstrating cultural and religious inclusivity. The map's portrayal suggests that

the author sees no contradiction in depicting separate realms in the afterlife, paralleling the distinct territories familiar to them for each respective race.⁴⁶⁹

The introduction of Christianity significantly altered the religious and cultural landscape of the Mizo people. As individuals embraced Christian beliefs, their identities became closely linked with their new religious affiliations, forming Christian communities. This shift contributed to a new Christian-influenced social fabric and resulted in changes to traditional cultural practices, with some customs being replaced by Christian rituals and celebrations.⁴⁷⁰ Christianity fostered a sense of unity among the Mizo people, shaping their collective consciousness and strengthening communal bonds. However, the British colonial policy of “divide and rule” introduced internal divisions among the Mizo tribes, weakening their collective strength and facilitating British governance. Despite these challenges, the Mizo community, known for its resilience, actively resisted these divisions to maintain cultural, social, and territorial cohesion. The influence of Christianity may have also affected the Mizo people’s attitudes toward the British, potentially altering their aggressive stance towards the colonial administration. This complex interplay of religious transformation and colonial influence played a significant role in shaping the Mizo community’s identity and resistance efforts.⁴⁷¹

Mizo people considered their land sacred territory, specifically as a hunting ground for elephants, known as “*Kan Sai Ram Chhuahna*,” which translates to “our hunting grounds.” This territory held religious, economic, and cultural significance, and its loss deeply affected the Mizo community. The British colonial administration’s reconfiguration of space disrupted the indigenous cosmology, challenging traditional

⁴⁶⁹Shakespeare, *Lusei Kuki Clans*, 62- 64; David Vumlallian Zou, “Picturing A Region A Geographical History Of British Assam,” in *Landscape, Culture, and Belonging, Writing the History of Northeast India*, ed.Neeladri Bhattacharya and Joy L.K. Pachuau (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 97-99; Joy L.K. Pachuau and Willem van Schendel, *The Camera As Witness A Social History of Mizoram, Northeast India* (Cambridge House, 4381/4 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi, India: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 75-77; Chhuanvawra, *Pialral*, 71; Sangkima, *History Of The Mizos*, 71, Zaliana, *Sakhua*, 93-99.

⁴⁷⁰C. Lalaudinga, interview.

⁴⁷¹Romawia (MSS, Gen. Secy.), interview by Lallawmkimi Ralte, College Veng, Aizawl, March 23, 2023.

understandings of space and the interconnectedness of spiritual and natural realms. This imposition of new territorial identities altered the Mizo worldview. The introduction of maps by colonial powers played a crucial role in shaping a fractured Mizo identity by visually depicting boundaries and borders. These maps were external constructs that influenced the Mizo's perception of their land and identity. While the maps visually represented the Mizo homeland, they often disregarded the pre-existing societal complexities due to unequal power dynamics. Thus, colonial maps depicted and negated the Mizo territory, offering a sense of territoriality while undermining traditional activities and cultural practices.⁴⁷² Thongchai highlights that modern geography transformed how space is conceived “with its own classificatory systems, concepts, and mediating signs.” This shift from traditional spatial conceptions of “sacred entities” to a new set of rules and signs altered the people of the Lushai Hills’ understanding of space and territory, ultimately transforming their relationship with their environment and identity.⁴⁷³

The Inner Line Regulation of 1873 was a crucial measure by the British to manage frontier conflicts and regulate movement in the Eastern Frontier of Bengal, including the Lushai Hills district. The cultural and social practices of the Lushai Hills people often led to encroachments into neighbouring territories, resulting in conflicts with the British administration. These ongoing conflicts and military interventions helped establish the region's political boundaries. The creation of these boundaries altered the social and customary structures of the Lushai Hills people, imposing a new governance framework. Previously accustomed to fluid territorial boundaries, the people had to adjust to a more rigid administrative system, influencing their governance, social dynamics, and customs. The imposition of external authority disrupted the interconnectedness of the spiritual, natural, and human realms, fundamental to their cosmological beliefs. This reordering of space-challenged their understanding of the land's sacredness and environmental relationships.

⁴⁷²Lal Dingluaia, “Maps, Mission, Memory and Mizo Identity,” 242-243.

⁴⁷³Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*, 35-36.

Furthermore, the sedentarisation of the population within mapped territories imposed a fixed and defined identity upon the indigenous communities. Their identity, previously rooted in fluid territorial affiliations and kinship networks, became tied to the boundaries and territories assigned by the colonial authorities. This shift from a fluid and overlapping identity to a more static and territorially defined identity had profound social and cultural implications for the indigenous communities. It disrupted the traditional understanding of space, challenged the interconnectedness of the spiritual and natural realms, and imposed new territorial identities upon the indigenous communities. These changes continue to shape the region's contemporary identity and cultural landscape.

CHAPTER 5

MIZORAM EVOLUTION OF A HOMELAND

The sedentarisation of the population within the mapped territories further solidified the imposition of a fixed and defined identity upon the people of the Lushai Hills. Their identity, previously rooted in fluid territorial and kinship relationships, became tied to the boundaries and territories assigned by the colonial authorities. The shift had profound impacts as it disrupted the traditional social structures and governance systems, redefining their identities. The legacy of the colonial imposition of boundaries and the associated reordering of space continue to leave a considerable impact on the social, cultural, and political dynamics of the indigenous communities in the Lushai Hills. The contestation of these boundaries and the ongoing efforts to reclaim and redefine the indigenous identities and territorial affiliations reflect the enduring impact of the colonial construction of space on the region's communities.

5.1 Challenging Colonial Legacy

The consolidation of British power in the Lushai Hills led to significant changes in the social dynamics and inter-village relationships. This transformation facilitated more harmonious village interactions, promoting regional peace and cooperation. Establishing a unified administrative unit further fostered a sense of unity among the people. A pivotal development was the Chiefs' Conference, held from 1935 to 1936, which gathered regional chiefs to discuss shared interests. These conferences served as a platform for communication and cooperation, allowing chiefs and their tribes to express common concerns. The Chief Commissioner of Assam, overseeing the Lushai Hills' administration, acknowledged the unity displayed by various tribal representatives at these conferences. This recognition of unity among the tribes contributed to a stronger collective identity and cooperation. These developments significantly influenced the

evolving social and political landscape in the Lushai Hills under British administration.⁴⁷⁴

During colonial rule, British authorities required Mizo chiefs to visually delineate their chiefly domains, creating sketches attached to boundary documents known as *ramri lehkhha*. In 1898, the Superintendent of Lushai Hills issued twenty-six such boundary papers, each specifying the territorial limits of different Lushai chiefs. The administrative reorganisation of the Lushai Hills into territorial circles in 1901 resulted in more *ramri lehkhhas* and additional boundary maps.⁴⁷⁵ During this period, Major J. Shakespear opposed the establishment of numerous small hamlets and villages in the Lushai Hills. He argued that each Chief already had well-defined boundaries, making further land subdivisions unnecessary. Chiefs could allocate hamlets or villages to their sons within these established limits, but this did not reduce their responsibilities for collecting house taxes and enforcing orders within their territories. As part of the British efforts to modernize village administration, they provided education to the sons of the chiefs. This education aimed to prepare them for future roles as chiefs and heirs, ensuring they could effectively manage their responsibilities.⁴⁷⁶

Before the consolidation of British rule, the territorial boundaries of villages in the Lushai Hills were relatively loose and indefinite. Villages did not have clearly defined boundaries demarcated by formal boundary lines from neighbouring villages. This lack of precise boundaries sometimes led to disputes between chiefs, resulting in conflicts and ongoing wars, such as the North-South War.* However, under British rule, chiefdoms were reorganised, and each village's territory became distinctly demarcated by natural dividing lines. Within their villages' territories, the villagers enjoyed the

⁴⁷⁴C. Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society And Polity* (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1996), 119-120; Administrative report for 1935 – 6, As; Pol B, December 1936, File No. 389-94, quoted in Lalrimawia, *Mizoram, History & Cultural Identity 1890-1947*, 85.

⁴⁷⁵Zou, "A Geographical History Of British Assam," 97-98.

⁴⁷⁶"Notes on the Lushai Hills: Its Inhabitants and Its Administration since 1888," File No: CB – 1, Pol – 3, 10-11.

* In the north-south war, the conflict was primarily led by two prominent chiefs. The northern chiefs, who held pivotal roles, were descendants of Lalsavunga Sailo, while the southern chiefs were descendants of Lalmanga Sailo. The fundamental cause of this war revolved around a territorial dispute related to land ownership.

freedom to move, hunt wild animals, and cultivate the land, subject to conditions set by the chief.⁴⁷⁷ Establishing clear boundaries allowed for enhanced authority and control over territories, facilitating a more efficient system of administration and discipline. The British preserved many traditional laws and customs within these defined areas. This administrative structure was evident from the village level, where the chief and elders provided guidance. Within this framework, young and old individuals had their respective leaders for different aspects of life, maintaining traditional social hierarchies.⁴⁷⁸

The British occupation of the Lushai Hills introduced an unexpected and transformative power to the region, significantly impacting the local populace. The residents soon became aware of two dominant influences within their territories. The first was the Government, represented initially by the political officer and subsequently by the superintendent of Lushai Hills. The second influence was the missionaries, who arrived shortly after the British conquest. Both entities played substantial roles in reshaping the social and cultural fabric of the Lushai Hills, marking the beginning of a new era for its people.⁴⁷⁹ After establishing their administrative system, the British significantly diminished the powers of the chiefs. While the chiefs continued to handle internal administration, they effectively became instruments under the authority of the British, who restricted their powers under the guidance of the superintendent of Lushai Hills.⁴⁸⁰ McCall noted that several chiefs' privileges and prerogatives had been abolished, drastically diminishing their status. Removing these rights and prerogatives reduced the authority and influence of the chiefs in various aspects of governance and administration. These rights included:

1. The right to give capital punishment.

⁴⁷⁷Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society And Polity*, 67-68; Lalmachhuana Zofa, *Mizo History Indo Leh Inrun*, (Aizawl, Mizoram: Zofa Publication, 2022), 373-417.

⁴⁷⁸C. Chawngkunga, interview.

⁴⁷⁹McCall, *Chrysalis*, 196-197;

⁴⁸⁰R.N. Prasad, *Government and Politics in Mizoram 1947 – 1986* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1987), 65.

2. The right to seize food stores and property of villagers who wished to transfer their allegiance elsewhere.
3. The right to proprietary over lands, arbitrarily reserved by the Government, in the interests of the public living in neighbouring areas in British India.
4. The right to tax traders conducting business within the chief's jurisdiction.
5. The right to appoint their sons as chiefs within their jurisdiction.
6. The right to assist those *Bawis* (Slaves) who, by custom, were not open to redemption.
7. The right to engage in actions related to other kinds of *Bawis*, who were essential for the chiefs' ability to cultivate and sustain their village in times of peace and war.
8. The right to attach the property of villagers as and when they wished, regardless of whether or not the villagers were at fault.⁴⁸¹

The executive staff of the Missions in the region often complicated the roles of the chiefs. While a detailed examination of the methods used by these mission executives is needed to fully understand their influence on people's beliefs, under the British administration, chiefs retained hereditary control over their territories as long as they exhibited exemplary behaviour and efficiency. The administration allowed chiefs to collect customary tribute and assigned specific governance responsibilities within their territories. Importantly, chiefs did not own the land but had hereditary rights to cultivate it and use forest resources for the community's sustenance. This system underscored the chiefs' governance role and responsibilities, balanced by the benefits and rewards they received.⁴⁸²

During British rule in the Lushai Hills, the government-controlled land distribution among chiefs, using existing possession as a key factor for allocation. This approach was necessary to avoid complex treaty settlements involving numerous scattered individuals across an 8,000-square-mile area. Consequently, the chiefs lost

⁴⁸¹ McCall, *Chrysalis*, 202; Rev. V.S. Lalrinawma, *Mizo Ethos: Changes And Challenges* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Mizoram Publication Board, 2005), 177-178; *Mizoram District Gazetteers*, 48-49.

⁴⁸² McCall, *Lushai Hills District Cover*, 17-18.

their independence and authority. The British exacerbated this issue by granting chieftainship to individuals without legitimate claims, increasing the number of chiefs from 60 to 400 by the 1940s. This proliferation diluted the traditional chiefs' status and authority, altering their relationships with the people. Under colonial rule, traditional roles such as hunting and warfare were forbidden, reducing chiefs' responsibilities to administration and tax collection. This shift turned chiefs into mere government agents, straining their relationships with the people and causing them to be viewed as local autocrats. The changes imposed by British rule led to a significant decline in the traditional power and respect once held by the chiefs in Lushai society.⁴⁸³

The chiefs had been successfully incorporated into the region's workforce by the colonial authorities by the middle of the 1910s, and in a confidential report in 1938, the superintendent noted:

The fundamental fact that this district is run very greatly by the chiefs and Headmen exercising specific powers conferred by Government should never be lost sight of. The work actually done by the Chiefs is real and valuable and the existing system should not be weakened without very good cause, for the economy and success in running the district is due, very greatly, to the position the Chiefs hold.⁴⁸⁴

Until the end of World War II, the Lushai Hills' communities were politically disengaged, governed by chiefs under district administration guidance. Post-war, Lushai youth developed political awareness and opposed the British policy that granted full authority to the chiefs, viewing it as a means for British control. The British government's emphasis on retaining traditional regional chiefs led to the perception that these chiefs were more aligned with colonial administration than community leadership.⁴⁸⁵ Consequently, many in the Lushai Hills regarded chiefs as colonial agents

⁴⁸³McCall, *Chrysalis*, 201-202; Roluahpuia, *Nationalism In The Vernacular State, Tribes, and the Politics of Peace in Northeast India* (Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 52-53; 'Proposals For Lushai Hills Durbar' in Chief Conference & Durbar, 1940 – 1941, File No. CB – 43, G – 548, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 25.

⁴⁸⁴Pachau and Schendel, *Camera As Witness*, 128; McCall, *Lushai Hills District Cover*, 3.

⁴⁸⁵*The Tribes of Mizoram A Dissertation* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Tribal Research Institute, Directorate of Art & Culture, 1994), 11.

rather than community advocates. The growing discontent with this new order was directed at the chiefs, who acted as “intermediaries” between their communities and the British, implementing policies such as forced labour and taxation. This shift in perception marked a significant change in the relationship between the chiefs and their communities, indicating an emerging political consciousness and desire for self-governance among the Lushai youth.⁴⁸⁶

Following the British occupation of the Lushai Hills, the region’s involvement in the two World Wars significantly impacted its society. Thousands of men from the Lushai Hills enlisted as volunteer labourers in the Indian Corps, reflecting a shift in the warrior culture prevalent among the hill tribes. Traditionally, being a warrior was a core cultural element, symbolizing manhood. However, the prohibition of headhunting and criminalization of inter-tribal warfare necessitated a transformation of this warrior tradition into alternative rituals and practices. Participation in colonial military expeditions became a new rite of passage, allowing these men to maintain their warrior identity amidst changing circumstances. The wars exposed them to modern civilization, broadening their horizons and offering insights into different societies. This experience elevated their self-esteem, fostered unity, and inspired aspirations for independence from the plains. Furthermore, the involvement in global conflicts led to infrastructure improvements and introduced new cultural elements and opportunities to the Lushai Hills. Consequently, a gradual emergence of political consciousness began to take root among the people, marking the beginning of a transformative period in their history. Overall, participation in the World Wars played a crucial role in reshaping the cultural and political landscape of the Lushai Hills.⁴⁸⁷

During the period in question, Christian Missions in the Lushai Hills prioritized education to further Christianize society, making notable efforts to educate the local

⁴⁸⁶ Pachau and Schendel, *Camera as Witness*, 126.

⁴⁸⁷ Michael Noble, “NORTH EAST and the FIRST WORLD WAR,” *The Centre For Hidden Histories: Communities, Commemoration And The First World War*, (February, 2016), <http://hiddenhistorieswwi.ac.uk/uncategorized/2016/02/north-east-india-and-the-first-world-war/>; Jangkhomang Guite, “Rite of passage in the Great War: The long march of Northeast Indian labourers to France, 1917 – 1918,” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 57, no. 3 (June 2020): 5-6, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0019464620930895>; Pachau and Schendel, 196-209.

population. By 1914, 49 students were taking exams at the Aizawl School, with village students often outperforming those from Aizawl, indicating successful educational outreach in villages. Concurrently, the government's educational strategy aimed to provide basic education in the hill areas but deliberately limited it to prevent locals from seeking employment opportunities elsewhere or aligning with the growing anti-colonial movement in British India. This was intended to prevent the development of a politically aware or agitated population. Despite these government intentions, some individuals, aided by missionary networks, left the Lushai Hills to pursue higher education, which was unavailable locally (See Photo No. 5.1). This resulted in an educated segment within the Lushai Hills that became more politically conscious, sometimes causing colonial authorities concern. This unforeseen development contradicted the government's original aim of limiting political awareness among the hill communities. Thus, while the missions advanced education to spread Christianity, the unintended consequence was the rise of a politically aware population segment, which was not aligned with the colonial government's objectives.⁴⁸⁸

Figure No. 5.1: First Mizo Student in Shillong, 1906.



(Source: Joy L.K. Pachuau and Willem van Schendel, *The Camera Witness A Social History of Mizoram, Northeast India*, 97)

⁴⁸⁸Pachuau and Schendel, 87-103; Roshema, "Aijal Skul," *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu* 1 (January 1914): 8-12.

The integration of Christianity with education was pivotal in modernizing the Lushai Hills during the colonial era. This integration facilitated the establishment of an administrative system and a “bureaucratic culture” that were crucial to sustaining changes in the region. Despite differences and conflicts, there was general agreement that the British government positively influenced the Lushai Hills’ inhabitants. The government contributed by setting up hospitals and educational institutions, introducing new laws, and promoting updated social norms and behaviours. The British administration was often perceived as a source of knowledge, benevolence, and respectability.

Consequently, the residents of the Lushai Hills were introduced to numerous new concepts, some of which they considered improvements, while others were seen as detrimental. While these changes created opportunities for curious and adaptable people, they also signalled the onset of challenging times and hardships for others.⁴⁸⁹ British rule negatively affected the colonies, notably forced labour and taxation. The colonial administrations implemented these policies, employing local chiefs as intermediaries to enforce compliance. This system co-opted traditional authority structures, compelling chiefs to act on behalf of the colonial government. The imposition of forced labour disrupted local economies and traditional lifestyles, as individuals were compelled to work in colonial projects.

Similarly, introducing taxes placed financial burdens on the local populations, many already living in subsistence conditions. These measures aimed to extract resources and labour for the benefit of the British Empire, often to the detriment of the indigenous communities. In his report, J. Shakespear justified the government’s tax and labour obligations as follows:

You forced us to occupy your hills, we had no wish to come up here but you would raid our villages, so we had to come, and so now you have got [to] to bear as much of the occupation as possible, you cannot expect us [to] spend the

⁴⁸⁹Joy L.K. Pachau, “Why Do People Convert? Understanding Conversions to Christianity in Mizoram,” in *Landscape, Culture, and Belonging Writing the History of Northeast India*, ed. Neeladri Bhattacharya & Joy L.K. Pachau (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 301-302; Makthanga, “Tui Leh Ram,” *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu* 1 (January 1926): 17-24.

money of the people of the plains on importing coolies to do the work that you are too lazy to do except under compulsion.⁴⁹⁰

In the Lushai Hills, the colonial administrative framework integrated local chiefs into the colonial governance system while maintaining their traditional roles. Although socio-cultural reforms were introduced, the institution of the chief remained largely unaltered. The colonial authorities intentionally minimized interference in internal administration to preserve the chiefs' status. However, this integration transformed chieftainship into a tool of colonial governance, altering its traditional role and aligning it with colonial interests. This shift fueled resentment among the community toward the chiefs, as they were increasingly seen as extensions of colonial rule. Ultimately, this discontent contributed to the decline of the chiefs' authority. The transformation of chieftainship under colonial influence became a significant factor in the erosion of their traditional power.⁴⁹¹

5.2 Political Awakening and Resentment

By 1920, educated elites began organizing against traditional chiefs and values, advocating for democratic principles. This shift was driven by education and modernization, leading to a critical view of the existing political structure. In the Lushai Hills, political awareness emerged even before the British government's Simon Commission was established in 1928. In Aizawl, merchants took the initiative to voice community aspirations in politics by seeking integration into the Assam Provincial Administration, by passing the Lushai Hills Superintendent, N.E. Parry. Leaders like Pu V.Z. Biaka, Pu Telela, and Pu Laldala, who served as secretaries, sought inclusion in the Assam Provincial Government. However, on October 22, 1926, N.E. Parry apprehended and incarcerated these leaders. This event marked the beginning of political awareness in

⁴⁹⁰Pachua and Schendel, *Camera as Witness*, 121-122.

⁴⁹¹Roluahpuia, *Nationalism in the Vernacular*, 52; Robert Reid, *History of Frontier Areas Bordering On Assam* (Delhi, India: Eastern Publishing House, 1983), 43; Parry, *Lakhers*, 13.

the region, highlighting the tension between traditional authority and emerging democratic ideals.⁴⁹²

The emergence of educated elites had a limited impact on the political landscape until 1935, when the Young Lushai Association (YLA) was formed under Superintendent McCall. The YLA, inspired by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and supported by Welsh Presbyterian Missionaries, aimed to introduce democratic ideas in the Lushai Hills. In 1945, members of the YLA expressed their desire for democracy to Superintendent Mr. ARH Macdonald. Recognizing that the name "Young Lushai" excluded other tribes, the association was renamed the "Young Mizo Association" (YMA). This change paved the way for forming the first Mizo political party, the Mizo Union Party, in 1946. The YMA ceased to exist after the Mizo Union Party was established. Until then, the YMA was not considered a political entity and had little influence on the British colonial administration.⁴⁹³

In the Lushai Hills district, the British integrated the chiefs into the colonial governance structure and performed governance through them. A representative group of twenty-two chiefs was elected to form the Chief's Council in 1940, which the administrators considered representative of the people. After the Lushai Hills were declared an Excluded Area in 1935, informal political activities began, including *Hnamchawm* (Commoners) in the council at the request of the district's Superintendent. This inclusion highlighted the complex relationship between the chiefs and ordinary people. In January 1946, the "Lushai Hills District Conference," akin to a parliament, was convened with twenty representatives from both groups. During this assembly, the Superintendent posed the question of land ownership, receiving varied responses, while some members attributed ownership to "The Superintendent," while others claimed it belonged to "The Chiefs." He clarified that "the land belongs to the people," a statement

⁴⁹²Padmalaya Mahapatra and Lalngaihrawia Zote, "Political Development in Mizoram: Focus On The Post-Accord Scenario," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 69, no.3 (July – September 2008), 644-645, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41856452>; C. Chawngkunga, *Important Documents of Mizoram* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Art & Culture Department, 1998), 298; Prof. J. Zorema, *Kumpinu Leh Mizoram* (Lunglei, Mizoram: Research & Publication Committee, Govt. J. Buana College, 2018), 68.

⁴⁹³Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 121-122; Dr. Lalramchuani Sena Samuelson, *Mizo Independence Movement* (Published by the author, 2023), 33.

aimed at promoting democratic ideals and ensuring the populace's well-being. The Superintendent's actions were driven by a desire to maintain the Lushai Hills under the Crown Colony, aware of the broader political developments in British India. His objective was to establish a reformed governance structure to avoid the region falling under the autocratic chief rule, emphasizing democratic principles and the future welfare of the people.⁴⁹⁴

Consequently, in line with the decisions made by the new legislative body of the District Conference, the superintendent issued the following orders:

1. The Chief should not, at his discretion, expel any of his inhabitants from his village. A body of elected *Muntrees* or *Upas* should be formed to select who should be expelled from the village.
2. Whoever is in the village of a Chief, regardless of whether they engage in agriculture or not, were required to pay a *Fathang* to the Chief. Even those who did not cultivate the land were obligated to pay Rs. 2/-. However, government employees, teachers, pastors and Salvation Army officers were granted exemptions from this requirement.

After the superintendent's speech at the District Conference and the examination of his subsequent orders, the *Hnamchawm* (Commoners) expressed approval due to the establishment of a democratic or parliamentary legislature. This new system curtailed the autocratic power of the chiefs. Consequently, political groups, notably the Mizo Union Party, which had not yet been officially organized, started autonomous initiatives to gain influence and control in the Lushai Hills. These developments progressively diminished some chiefs' authority under the District Conference framework.⁴⁹⁵

Following a District Conference, several individuals, including R. Vanlawma, Hrangaiia, Lalbuaia, and V. Rosiama, convened to discuss the formation of a political party. Encouraged by the possibility of gaining approval from Superintendent

⁴⁹⁴B.K. Roy Burman, "Emergence of Mizo Nationality," in *History And Ethnic Identity Formation In North-East India*, ed. J.V. Hluna (Bali Nagar, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., 2013), 261; Keihawla Sailo, M.C.S. (Rtd.), *Golden History of Lushai Hills (Zoram-Chin-Lushai-Kuki Country)* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Published by the Author, 2016), 201-202; Chaltuahkhuma (L), *Political History Of Mizoram*, 2nd ed. (Electric Veng, Aizawl, Mizoram: Vanthangi, w/o Chaltuahkhuma (L), 2001), 48-50; Zorema, *Kumpinu Leh Mizoram*, 102-103; Proposals For Lushai Hills Durbar' in Chief Conference & Durbar, 1940 – 1941, File No. CB – 43, G – 548, 24-27.

⁴⁹⁵ Chaltuahkhuma, 50-52; Sailo, *Golden History*, 205; R. Vanlawma, *Ka Ram Leh Kei (My Country and I)* (Khatla South, Aizawl, Mizoram: MCL Publications, 2022), 143.

MacDonald, they decided to have R. Vanlawma formally request permission. On April 9, 1946, Vanlawma approached the superintendent, who approved the request. As a result, a new political party named the “Lushai Commoners’ Union” was established at Aijal Boys’ M.E. School on April 25, 1946. The party was later renamed the “Mizo Union.” This event marked the formal establishment of a political organization that aimed to represent the interests of the familiar people in the region. The party’s political ideals and strategies significantly shaped the trajectory of future independence aspirations. Their dual objectives were pivotal: first, the abolition of chieftainship, and second, the creation of a distinct state by unifying all Mizo-inhabited regions. These goals underscored the party’s direction for its political endeavours, emphasizing a break from traditional structures and the pursuit of a unified Mizo identity.⁴⁹⁶

The Mizo Union adopted the term “Mizo” to promote inclusivity among tribes in the Lushai Hills and neighbouring regions such as Tripura, Cachar, Manipur, and Bangladesh. This choice symbolized a desire to unite diverse ethnic communities under a single political entity. The aim was to represent the collective interests of the people, transcending individual tribal identities. By focusing on Mizo unity through political representation, the Mizo Union sought to strengthen its connection with the tribes’ strong ethnic and cultural ties.⁴⁹⁷

On July 20, 1946, the District Conference’s second session occurred at the superintendent’s office, with Southern representatives absent. The superintendent issued a notification reflecting the conference’s resolutions, leaving many agenda items unchanged. That afternoon, the Chiefs’ Council convened at the Boys’ M.E. School for their second *durbar*, the first in 1940 at Thenzawl. This meeting led to the establishment of the “Lushai Chiefs’ Council,” which notably advocated for “Self-determination” for

⁴⁹⁶ Vanlawma, 143-145; Chaltuahkhuma, 53-54; Sailo, 205-06; Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 128; Roluahpuia, “Unsettled Autonomy: Ethnicity, tribes and sub-national politics in Mizoram, North-east India,” *Nations and Nationalism* 27, no. 2 (April 2021): 415, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12681>; Sajal Nag, *Pied Pipers In North-East India: Bamboo-flowers, Rat-famine and the Politics of Philanthropy (1881-2007)* (Daryaganj, New Delhi: Ajay Kumar Jain for Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2008), 227.

⁴⁹⁷ Vanlawma, 119; Dr. Lalramchuani Sena Samuelson, *Mizo Independence Movement* (Published by the Author, 2023), 36-37.

the Lushai Hills as India neared independence. Concurrently, the Mizo Union gained widespread support, except from traditional elites and “intellectual groups,” predominantly college-educated. During the Mizo Union’s first General Assembly from September 24-26, 1946, tensions arose as “intellectual groups,” led by Ch. Saprawnga, criticized the leadership as “ignorant and uneducated.” This discord prompted the original leaders and their supporters to break away, forming the Mizo Union Council, which emphasized a policy of separation from India. The period marked significant political activity, highlighting regional aspirations for autonomy and the internal conflicts within emerging political movements.⁴⁹⁸

The political landscape in the Lushai Hills was marked by tension between the Mizo Union and the Mizo Union Council. The Mizo Union, supported by the Church and southern Aizawl, favoured democratic systems over traditional chiefdoms, leading to an anti-chief movement and subsequent violence against chiefs and their supporters. This conflict underscored the political strain in the region. In response to internal conflicts, the United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO) was formed on July 5, 1947. Following the dissolution of the original party, the Mizo Union Council merged with the UMFO, receiving backing from council members, chiefs, and their followers. The Mizo Union, advocating for the abolition of chieftainship and integration with India, was primarily supported by the Church and commoners. This resulted in two distinct factions: one promoting the abolition of chieftainship and integration with India, and the other favoring the retention of chieftainship and opting out of India. The division between these factions highlighted the broader political and social tensions within the Lushai Hills, reflecting differing visions for the region’s future political status.⁴⁹⁹

Between 1943 and 1946, deliberations took place regarding the administrative integration of Burma and Assam’s tribal regions, with a focus on adjusting the frontier

⁴⁹⁸Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History*, 54-55; Sailo, *Golden History*, 207-208; Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 128-129; Proposals For Lushai Hills Durbar’ in Chief Conference & Durbar, 1940 – 1941, File No: CB – 43, G – 548, 24-27.

⁴⁹⁹Nunthara, 128-131; Dr. Malsawmliana, “Political Consciousness And Separatist Movement In Mizoram,” in *Mizo Narratives Accounts From Mizoram*, ed. Malsawmdawngliana and Rohmingmawii, (Gauhati, Assam: Scientific Book Centre, 2014), 246-247; Nag, *Pied Pipers in North-East India*, 227.

between Burma and India. A primary concern was ensuring that distinct tribes were not divided between two administrations. The Burma administration representatives argued against splitting tribes and merging hill and plain areas, advocating for boundaries that would place entire tribal areas under a single governance structure. After India's independence in 1947, the British administration endorsed Prof. Coupland's proposal for a Crown Colony of Eastern Agency. This proposal suggested creating a colony independent of both India and Burma, directly governed by the British, encompassing Assam's hill districts and adjacent Burmese regions. However, within the Lushai Hills, there were differing opinions due to varying political ideologies. The United Mizo Freedom Organization favoured merging with Burma, whereas the Mizo Union, influenced by Indian national leaders, preferred staying with India but with some degree of autonomy. Additionally, Mizo Union leaders aimed to reintegrate Mizo areas in Manipur and Burma into the Lushai district. These discussions underscored the intricate interplay of tribal identity, governance, and political aspirations in the region.⁵⁰⁰

Back in 1946, the Cabinet Mission Statement of May 16 highlighted the need for an initial session of the Constituent Assembly to ascertain the fundamental rights of both citizens and minorities. After adopting the Objectives Resolution on January 22, 1947, the Assembly's primary task was forming the Advisory Committee, tasked with examining and reporting on the administration of specific regions, including the Northeastern tribal Areas. On January 24, 1947, a resolution mandated the Advisory Committee to establish a Sub-committee for planning the administration of North-Eastern Tribal Areas,⁵⁰¹ which was formed on February 27, 1947, ensuring a systematic and efficient approach for the areas, commonly known as "Bordoloi Committee," named

⁵⁰⁰ David R. Syiemlieh, "The Crown Colony Plants: The British And The Hill Areas Of North – East India, 1945 – 1946," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 59, (1998): 694-695, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44147039>; Sajal Nag, "Production Of North Eastern Region: Colonial Construction and Nationalist Affirmation," 30; B.K. Roy Burman, "Emergence of Mizo Nationality," 262; James P. Mills, "A Note On The Future Of The Hill Tribes Of Assam And The Adjoining Hills In A Self-Governing India," in *On The Edge Of Empire Four British Plans For North East India 1941 – 1947*, ed. David R. Syiemlieh (Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd, 2014), 100.

⁵⁰¹ "Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas on February 27, 1947," *Constitution of India*, 2023, constitutionofindia.net/committees/sub-committee-on-fundamental-rights/.

after its chairman, Gopinath Bordoloi, and headed by Rev. J.J.M. Nicholas Roy. The Sub-Committee also included two non-Constituent Assembly members from the Northeast: Rup Nath Brahma and Mayang Nokcha.⁵⁰² The Bordoloi Committee conducted visits from April 18 to July 14, 1947 to various hill areas, including the Lushai Hills, conducted interviews, and gathered evidence from diverse sources. Co-opting two members from each hill area, the Bordoloi Committee selected Khawtinkhuma and Ch. Saprawnga, both from the Mizo Union party

In 1946, the Cabinet Mission Statement emphasized the need for the Constituent Assembly to address the fundamental rights of citizens and minorities. Following the adoption of the Objectives Resolution on January 22, 1947, the Constituent Assembly focused on forming an Advisory Committee. This committee's role was to examine and report on the administration of specific regions, including the Northeastern Tribal Areas. On January 24, 1947, a resolution required the Advisory Committee to create a Sub-committee to manage the administration of these areas. Formed on February 27, 1947, this Sub-committee became known as the "Bordoloi Committee," named after its chairman, Gopinath Bordoloi, and headed by Rev. J.J.M. Nicholas Roy. The Sub-committee included two non-Constituent Assembly members from the Northeast, Rup Nath Brahma and Mayang Nokcha. The Bordoloi Committee undertook visits from April 18 to July 14, 1947, to various hill areas, such as the Lushai Hills, conducting interviews and gathering evidence. To ensure comprehensive representation, the committee co-opted two members from each hill area, selecting Khawtinkhuma and Ch. Saprawnga from the Mizo Union party. The systematic efforts of the Bordoloi Committee aimed to ensure efficient administration and representation for the Northeastern Tribal Areas.⁵⁰³ The committee concluded that the Mizo Union party had a better representation of the people's interests compared to the District Conference. They

⁵⁰²“Sub-Committee on the North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas on February 27 –July 28, 1947,” *Constitution of India*, 2023, constitutionofindia.net/committees/sub-committee-on-the-north-east-frontier-assam-tribal-and-excluded-areas/.

⁵⁰³“Sub-Committee on Minorities on April 17 and July 21, 1947,” *Constitution of India*, 2023, constitutionofindia.net/committees/sub-committee-on-minorities/; J. Zahluna, “Constituent Assembly And The Sixth Schedule: With Special Reference To Mizoram,” *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 71, no. 4 (October – December, 2010): 1235-1236, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42748950>.

observed that the District Conference was dominated by certain officials and Chiefs, limiting its representativeness. This assessment was detailed in the committee's report:

In connection with the co-option of members we would like to mention the "District Conference" convened by the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills as an elected body purporting to be representative of the whole of the Lushai Hills. The election to this body which consisted of twenty chiefs and twenty commoners with the Superintendent himself as President was boycotted by the Mizo Union which was the only representative body of the Lushai at that time and clearly could not be regarded by us as representing more than a section of opinion, largely that of certain officials and chiefs controlled by them. Consequently the criticism that we co-opted members without consulting the Superintendent or his conference carries, in our opinion, no weight.⁵⁰⁴

Superintendent MacDonald conveyed the District Conference's surprise at the Bordoloi Committee's view that the Mizo Union was the only significant organization in the Lushai Hills. He highlighted that the committee should have recognized other political entities, especially the organized power of the chiefs within the Lushai Hills District. MacDonald emphasized the necessity of consulting the District Conference, as it represents the district's interests, before making important decisions in such matters.⁵⁰⁵

The District Conference representatives informed the Bordoloi Committee that the Lushai Hills were previously designated as an Excluded area, which restricted political activities under colonial rule. With the arrival of the new Superintendent, these restrictions were somewhat relaxed, permitting meetings with three days prior notice to the chiefs, who could also attend. Prior to the 1946 Conference, chiefs had the authority to expel individuals, a power that was revoked by the conference. The District Conference was established primarily to advise the superintendent on matters concerning customary laws. Additionally, the Mizo Union was formed to improve the

⁵⁰⁴ "Letter from The Chairman, North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal & Excluded Areas Sub-Committee to The Chairman, Advisory Committee On Fundamental Rights, Minorities, Tribal Areas, etc. Constituent Assembly of India, Council House, New Delhi," in *Constituent Assembly Debates Book 2 Volume VII – 4th November 1948 to 8th January 1949, Official Report*, 6th Reprint (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 2014), 102-103, eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/760458/1/CA_Debate_Eng_Vol_02.pdf.

⁵⁰⁵ Gopinath Bordoloi, "Minute on the Committee met the full "District Conference" held at 3 O'Clock in the Superintendent's office on 18th April, 1947," in *Constituent Assembly Of India, North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal And Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Volume II (Evidence) Part I, Lushai, North-Cachar, Garo, Mikir And Naga Hills* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1947), 56-57, <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/handle/10973/39820>.

Mizo people's position and foster better relations between Chiefs and Commoners. Although the Mizo Union functions as a private organization and does not have the authority to advise the superintendent, the Conference does hold this authority, highlighting its significance. The removal of the chiefs' power to expel and the advisory role of the District Conference underscore its critical role in the political restructuring of the Lushai Hills.⁵⁰⁶

The Bordoloi Committee investigated the District Conference's awareness of the British Government's intention to transfer India's administration to its people, including excluded and partially excluded areas. The Committee confirmed that the District Conference was aware of this announcement. During discussions about the implications of the British Government's departure, Conference representatives felt constrained by the Committee's assumption that they wished to join the Indian Union. The Committee clarified that they were free to choose any path, emphasizing the importance of achieving governance through peaceful cooperation or internal disagreements. The Committee's report highlighted a major divergence in objectives regarding the status of the Lushai Hills between the superintendent and the District Conference versus the Mizo Union. The superintendent sought to establish the Lushai Hills as a separate region, whereas the Mizo Union aimed for its integration into India. This disagreement underscores a significant conflict over the political and territorial future of the Lushai Hills during that period. The Committee's findings illustrate the complexities involved in the transition of power and the differing aspirations of local entities during the decolonization process.⁵⁰⁷

In the meeting with the Bordoloi Committee, Church representatives in Lushai Hill emphasized their commitment to avoiding political involvement and unifying the people. They were optimistic about the adult franchise, believing it would be as effective

⁵⁰⁶ Gopinath Bordoloi, "Minute on the Committee Interviewed with the representatives of the District Conference on 18th April, 1947," in *Constituent Assembly Of India, North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal And Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Volume II (Evidence) Part I, Lushai, North-Cachar, Garo, Mikir And Naga Hills* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1947), 1-2, <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/handle/10973/39820>.

⁵⁰⁷ Bordoloi, 5-6; Zorema, *Kumpinu Leh Mizoram*, 123-124.

there as in other parts of Assam.⁵⁰⁸ In contrast, the Ex-servicemen Association, focused on the welfare of ex-servicemen and the Lushai Hills district, expressed uncertainty about the country's future amidst the current situation. They anticipated India's independence post-British rule but doubted the feasibility of a united India due to ongoing communal differences. For them, independence meant local self-governance and protection of their lands, religion, and community within a united India. They criticized the co-opted members for representing only one party in the Lushai Hills, not the entire populace, and emphasized the importance of elections for their advancement. Concerns were raised about proportional representation, given the small population of one and a half lakhs, questioning whether they would have a fair opportunity to express their opinions. The ex-servicemen advocated for maintaining their current position while pursuing advancement through electoral means, highlighting the need for fair representation in the political process.⁵⁰⁹

During the Bordoloi Committee's visit to the Lushai Hills, approximately 360 chiefs participated in discussions regarding the region's status within Assam. Mr. Kailuia, a delegate and Assistant Superintendent in Lungleh, expressed that there was no reason for the Lushai Hills not to remain part of Assam in the future. His statement reflected the prevailing sentiment in the Lushai Hills at the time, which was generally accepting of their inclusion in Assam, with no immediate desire for administrative change. Mr. Kailuia's aspiration to become a chief underscored his connection to the region's traditional leadership structure. His dual role as both a government official and a potential traditional leader highlighted the interconnectedness of administrative and conventional elements within the region. These interactions and aspirations illustrate the

⁵⁰⁸ Gopinath Bordoloi, "Minute on the Committee meeting with the Church Representatives of the Lushai Hills in 18th April, 1947 at 2:30 P.M.," in *Constituent Assembly Of India, North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal And Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Volume II (Evidence) Part I, Lushai, North-Cachar, Garo, Mikir And Naga Hills* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1947), 15 <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/handle/10973/39820>.

⁵⁰⁹ Gopinath Bordoloi, "Report on the meeting with Ex-servicemen Association in the Lushai Hills," in *Constituent Assembly Of India, North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal And Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Volume II (Evidence) Part I, Lushai, North-Cachar, Garo, Mikir And Naga Hills* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1947), 17-21, <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/handle/10973/39820>.

complex structure and diverse perspectives present in the Lushai Hills during this period.⁵¹⁰

The Mizo Union, during discussions with the Bordoloi Committee, emphasized the importance of the District Conference as the authoritative body in decision-making. They proposed a District Council with 20 General seats and 5 Chiefs' representatives, advocating for an adult franchise in elections. The Union intended to draft a constitution for the Lushai District, urging its acceptance by the Conference, as they believed it was the only body with the authority to finalize such matters. However, they criticized the equal representation of Commoners and Chiefs, highlighting the disparity where 300 chiefs had the same seat allocation as over 1,50,000 people.⁵¹¹ The Mizo Union's primary goal was establishing local autonomy in the Lushai Hills, focusing on territorial unity under the name Mizo and Mizoram, full self-determination within Assam, and special financial provisions from the Centre. They proposed a National Council with supreme legislative and executive authority, with any legislation affecting the district requiring its consent. The Union also stressed the introduction of a pure democratic system.⁵¹² Their vision aimed to prioritize identity, autonomy, and self-determination, advocating for a governance structure that respects local culture, empowers decision-making, and addresses economic challenges, reflecting the aspirations of the Lushai Hills people.

The church representative expressed hope that when drafting proposals for the Mizo people to present to the Constituent Assembly, certain considerations would be remembered. Specifically, any government established for the Mizos should not obstruct but rather facilitate what is perceived as God's work among them. The statement

⁵¹⁰ Gopinath Bordoloi, "Minute on the meeting with the Representatives Of The Chiefs," in *Constituent Assembly Of India, North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal And Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Volume II (Evidence) Part I, Lushai, North-Cachar, Garo, Mikir And Naga Hills* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1947), 21-25, <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/handle/10973/39820>.

⁵¹¹ Gopinath Bordoloi, "Minute from the Interviewed with the Representatives of the Mizo Union on 18th April, 1947, at 4:30 P.M.," in *Constituent Assembly Of India, North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal And Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Volume II (Evidence) Part I, Lushai, North-Cachar, Garo, Mikir And Naga Hills* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1947), 26, <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/handle/10973/39820>.

⁵¹² Bordoloi, 27.

emphasizes the importance of a government structure that supports the religious and cultural aspirations of the Mizo community, fostering their spiritual and communal development.⁵¹³

The resolutions of the District Conference on April 19, 1947, highlighted the belief that organizing a special election in the Lushai Hills for fair Mizo representation in future governance was feasible. This suggestion arose from dissatisfaction with the current representation, which was seen as worse than having no representation at all. The Conference criticized the appointment of “representatives” to the Sub-committee without consulting the Lushai Hills’ people, considering it a deliberate act against their interests.⁵¹⁴ Internal tensions due to diverse aspirations and conflicting ideologies among the Lushai Hills’ people led to the fragmentation of the Mizo Union. This division resulted in the formation of new political entities, such as the Mizo Union Council and the United Mizo Freedom Organization.

On August 14, 1947, M.L.L. Peters, the last British District Officer of the Lushai Hills, convened a meeting with fifty Lushai leaders (See Appendix No.25) to address concerns about the region’s future amidst the rapid transfer of power from the British Government. Due to the lack of information regarding the future constitution and administrative structure for the Lushai Hills, the meeting resolved to seek written clarification from the Governor of Assam. The leaders sought to know if the Lushais could potentially join another dominion, such as Pakistan or Burma. The superintendent of Lushai Hills was responsible for relaying this request to the adviser of the governor of Assam. If the Lushais were to join the Indian Union, they had specific demands: (i) the retention of existing safeguards for their Customary Laws and land tenure, (ii) the preservation of the Chin Hills Regulation, 1896, and the Bengal Eastern Frontier

⁵¹³ “Letter to The Members of the Advisory Sub-Committee touring the Excluded Areas of Assam from The Joint Representatives of the Presbyterian Church in the North Lushai Hills and of the Baptist Church in the South,” in *Constituent Assembly Of India, North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal And Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Volume II (Evidence) Part I, Lushai, North-Cachar, Garo, Mikir And Naga Hills* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1947), 60-61, <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/handle/10973/39820>.

⁵¹⁴ A. MacDonald, “Resolution of the District Conference on 19th April, 1947,” in *Constituent Assembly Of India, North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal And Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Volume II (Evidence) Part I, Lushai, North-Cachar, Garo, Mikir And Naga Hills* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1947), 65-66, <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/handle/10973/39820>.

Regulation, 1873, until the Lushais themselves decide otherwise, and (iii) the right to opt out of the Indian Union after a minimum period of ten years.⁵¹⁵ These demands were crucial to ensure the protection of their cultural and legal autonomy within the Indian Union.

The Bordoloi Committee, after evaluating the needs and concerns of tribal populations in North-East India, recommended a new constitutional and administrative structure for tribal territories. Recognizing the importance of preserving the tribal lifestyle and their participation in national politics, the committee proposed the establishment of a District Council for the Lushai Hills and Regional Councils for the Pawi, Lakher, and Chakma tribes to address regional underdevelopment.⁵¹⁶ Despite these recommendations, the Mizo Union expressed impatience with the process and held a meeting on October 1, 1947. During this meeting, District Superintendent M.L.L. Peters emphasized that the future of the Lushai Hills was aligned with India, particularly after Burma severed ties with the British Empire, making it impossible for British officials in the Hills Districts to support any discussions of merging with Burma. Notably, Peters highlighted the critical need for unity among the people of the Lushai Hills, attributing the lack of consensus to differing opinions on governance. Experienced and sensible leaders within the community sought to adopt a policy that would avoid conflict with the chiefs, recognizing their integral role in the district's administrative framework. However, this approach was not supported by more radical and irresponsible elements who aimed to dismantle the existing administrative structure. These elements advocated for replacing the current system, which involved the chiefs, with a new form of government they described as democratic, where power would be entirely in the

⁵¹⁵Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 111; “Proceedings of a meeting of the Accredited Leaders of Lushai Hills held at Aijal on 14th August, 1947, File No: No. 69237-76 G of 21-8-47,” *A Memorandum to the Secretary General of the United Nations by ZORO*, 1995, <https://www.Zogam.org/proceedings-meetings-Lushai-hills;ShibanikinarChaube,HillsPoliticsInNorth-EastIndia> (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1968), 162-163.

⁵¹⁶Zahluna, “Constituent Assembly And The Sixth Schedule,” 1238; Prabhat Kumar Datta and Panchali Sen, “Governance in the Sixth Schedule Areas in India’s North-East: Context, Content and Challenges,” *Indian Journal Of Public Administration* 66, no. 2 (April 2020): 3, doi:10.1177/0019556120916885.

hands of the people. The tension between maintaining traditional governance and adopting a new democratic system was a significant point of contention.⁵¹⁷

The Advisory Committee deliberated on the Bordoloi Committee's recommendations on February 7 and 24, 1948, incorporating them into Article 244 and the Sixth Schedule of the Draft Constitution. The report was submitted to the President of the Constituent Assembly on March 4, 1948, for further review.⁵¹⁸ Despite efforts, the establishment of the desired District Council for the Lushai Hills was initially unachievable, leading to the creation of a provisional Advisory Council. As the Sixth Schedule neared adoption in Assam's Hills Districts, proposals for Tribal Advisory Council elections were made, including in the Lushai Hills. The Lushai Hills held elections on April 15, 1948, where the United Mizo Freedom Organization won only one of 24 seats, while the Mizo Union secured 23 seats (See Photo No. 5.2). This result indicated a diminishing interest in the movement to secede from India and join Burma. The United Mizo Freedom Organization's struggle against the Mizo Union was unsuccessful, highlighting the lack of clear direction. These developments laid the groundwork for a democratic political structure in the Lushai Hills, aiming to balance local autonomy with broader democratic engagement in independent India.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁷Chaube, *Hills Politics*, 163.

⁵¹⁸Zahluna, "Constituent Assembly And The Sixth Schedule," 1238.

⁵¹⁹"Draft Constitution of the Fifth Schedule, Part IV, Amendment Of The Schedule, Monday, 5th September," in *Constituent Assembly Debates, Book – 4, Volume IX, 30th July to 18th September 1949, Official Report*, 6th Reprint (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 2014), 968 – 969, https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/760460/1/CA_Debate_Eng_Vol_04.pdf; Chaube, *Hills Politics*, 164; Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 131; Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History*, 109 – 113; Jangkhongam Dounghel, "The Uniqueness Of The Erstwhile Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (P.L.R.C.)," *Journal of North-East India Council for Social Science Research*, (October 2005): 2, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4120545>; Zorema, *Kumpinu Leh Mizoram*, 132.

Figure No. 5.2: Advisory Council Member, 1948



(Source: Chaltuahkhuma, (L), *Political History of Mizoram*, 111)

On September 6, 1949, discussions in the Constituent Assembly addressed the autonomy and cultural preservation of the Hills district tribes. Mr. Bordoloi highlighted the necessity for autonomous districts, supported by Rev. J.J.M. Nicholas Roy, who emphasized the strong democratic culture and social organization of the hill tribes centred around village, clan, and tribe. Roy argued for the preservation of their unique culture, suggesting it was superior to that of the plains. This led the Sub-Committee on the tribes of Assam to conclude that allowing these communities to develop according to their culture would best facilitate their integration into India.⁵²⁰ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar also clarified in his speech that creating District and Regional Councils for tribals in Assam, as outlined in the Sixth Schedule, did not lead to a “segregated population,” contrary to

⁵²⁰ “Draft Constitution of the Fifth Schedule, Part IV, Amendment Of The Schedule, Monday, 6th September,” in *Constituent Assembly Debates, Book – 4, Volume IX, 30th July to 18th September 1949, Official Report*, 6th Reprint (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 2014), 1012 and 1022-1025, https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/760460/1/CA_Debate_Eng_Vol_04.pdf.

some of the Assembly members' concerns. He expressed disappointment that these concerns arose due to a lack of proper understanding of the Schedule's provisions, emphasising that for these tribal communities, "their roots are still in their own civilisation and their own culture."⁵²¹ The deliberations of the Constituent Assembly regarding the Hill tribes of Assam were characterized by meticulous and thoughtful planning. The primary focus was to create a constitution that would both preserve the unique cultural identities of these tribes and facilitate their integration into the broader Indian nation. This balance aimed to respect and protect the distinctiveness of the Hill tribes while promoting their inclusion in the national framework.

5.3 Abolition of Chieftainships and Solidarity Movement

The Advisory Councils in the Lushai Hills, lacking a legal foundation, served as consultative bodies offering advice to the District Superintendent or Deputy Commissioners on administrative and developmental matters. Official communication clarified that correspondence concerning the administration of Tribal Areas, as per the Sixth Schedule, paragraph 20 of the Indian Constitution, (See Appendix No. 26), should be directed to the Secretary to the Government of Assam for Tribal Areas, bypassing the Adviser to the Governor of Assam. Consequently, the Assam Government dissolved the Advisory Council on November 12, 1951. Despite their dissolution, these Councils provided a practical learning experience in self-governance for the Lushai Hills populace. Following the enactment of the Indian Constitution, the Government of Assam instituted the District Council in 1952 and the Regional Council in 1953 within the Lushai Hills Districts. The establishment of these Councils was directed by the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and governed by the Autonomous District (Constitution of District Councils) Rules 1951 and the Pawi-Lakher (Constitution of Regional Councils) Rules 1952. These new structures aimed to provide a more

⁵²¹ "Draft Constitution of the Fifth Schedule, Part IV, Amendment Of The Schedule, Monday, 6th September," in *Constituent Assembly Debates, Official Report*, 1022-1027.

formalized and legal framework for governance in the region.⁵²² Shri B.N. Datar, Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs, emphasized during a meeting of the Advisory Council for Autonomous Districts that the Constituent Assembly acknowledged the unique needs, manners, and customs of the residents in the Hills districts. Due to these exceptional circumstances and historical reasons, the establishment of various District Councils was deemed necessary. These councils aim to provide the people in these regions with ample opportunities for growth and development, catering to their best interests.⁵²³

On January 4, 1952, the first public election for the District Council was held, marking a significant political event. The Mizo Union emerged as the dominant party, surpassing the United Mizo Freedom Union. The Council consisted of 24 seats, with 18 members elected directly from single-member constituencies, and six appointed by the governor of Assam based on the Chief Executive Member's recommendation. The Mizo Union secured 15 seats, while the Tribal Union won 2, and the United Mizo Freedom Organization gained 1 seat. The Lushai Hills District Council was formally inaugurated on April 25, 1952, in Aizawl, with Assam's Chief Minister Bishnuram Medhi presiding over the ceremony (See Photo No. 5.3). The Mizo Union's commitment to democracy was instrumental in conducting this first public election. Following their electoral victory, the Mizo Union upheld its promise to abolish chieftainship, reinforcing its democratic principles.⁵²⁴

⁵²² Letter from Sri Samat Kumar Datta, B.Sc., Special Officer to the Government of Assam for Tribal Areas to The Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills & Superintendent, Lushai Hills, Letter No: AD/Misc/139/49/21, 1950, File No. CB – 66, G – 808, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 38; R.N. Prasad, "Sixth Schedule and Working of the District Councils in North-Eastern States," *Dialogue (A quarterly journal of Astha Bharati)* 6, no.2 (October – December 2004): 140, asthabharati.org/Dia_Oct04/R.N.Pras.htm; Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History*, 140.

⁵²³ "Tribal Welfare Is Our Goal," A Speech delivered by Shri B.N. Datar, Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs on November 15, 1958 at the meeting of the Advisory Council for Autonomous Districts), 1959, File No. CB – 101, G – 1227, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 4-8.

⁵²⁴ Zahluna, "Constituent Assembly And The Sixth Schedule," 1241; Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 131; K. Lawmzuala, *Mizo District Council Kha 1952 -1962* (Khatla, Aizawl, Mizoram: Lalramchhuana, Din Din Art Centre, 2002), 20 – 22; Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History*, 143-144.

Figure No. 5.3: First Mizo District Council Members



(Source Chaltuahkhuma, (L), *Political History of Mizoram*, 49)

In 1948, the Mizo Union championed the abolition of chieftainship in the Lushai Hills, facing opposition from Superintendent M.L.L. Peter, who supported the chiefs. The Union demanded Peter's removal by the Government of Assam and threatened a strike on December 28, 1948. In response, the superintendent arrested several Union leaders, inciting violence against him and the chiefs. The Union's dedication was evident as members pursued legal action against chiefs across various villages. A significant case involved Pu Taikhuma, Chief of Pukpui, who was accused of maladministration. Despite 44 charges against him, authorities failed to prove the complaints, leading to the case's dismissal. This incident highlighted a growing boldness among ordinary people and a departure from the traditional reluctance to challenge the

authority of the chiefs in the Lushai Hills. It underscored a significant shift in governance and power dynamics within the region during this transformative period.⁵²⁵

During that time, not all chiefs in the Lushai Hills were viewed unfavourably. However, some chiefs experienced resentment from their communities due to their unfavourable actions. The Mizo Union, dedicated to ending the institution of chieftainship, drew support from individuals opposing certain chiefs, leading many to join their cause. In various areas, Mizo Union supporters rallied with the slogan “Mizo Union, kan ram tan,” meaning “Mizo Union, For Our Land.” Nonetheless, dismantling the chieftainship required legal procedures beyond the Mizo Union’s authority.⁵²⁶ Thus, after establishing the District Council with the Mizo Union as the leading party, efforts began to work towards this abolition. Despite being in power, the Mizo Union faced constraints in implementing substantial changes, as the District Council’s authority, specified in paragraph 1(g) of the Sixth Schedule, was limited to regulating the appointment and succession of chiefs, not abolishing the institution itself because:

The rights and privileges of the Chiefs over land can only be acquired by legislative enactment to be passed by the State Legislature. Such legislation will also have to reserved for consideration of the President under Act 31(3) of the Constitution.⁵²⁷

In 1952, the Mizo Union presented a bill to abolish chieftainship in the District Council, which was publicized in the Mizo Arsi magazine. This move faced strong opposition from the Lushai Chiefs’ Council. The Council argued that the Sixth Schedule’s paragraph I(g) did not empower the District Council to eliminate chieftainship, as it recognized the system of chiefship and tribal customs. The Chiefs’ Council demanded compensation if their rights, privileges, and lands were forcibly acquired, as stated in their memorandum to the Home Minister of India on December 6,

⁵²⁵ Sailo, *Golden History*, 252-253; “Order Issued by M.Wiscott, Sub-Divisional Officer, Lungleh, 23-8-48, Memo No. 1229 D/C/,” in Application for depose of Chief by Mizo Union, 1949, File No. CB – 63, G – 777, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1-7.

⁵²⁶ Lawmzuala, *Mizo District Council*, 51.

⁵²⁷ Letter from Shri Ram K.D.N.Singh, I.A.S., Under Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Tribal Areas & Development Department to The Chief Executive Member, Lushai Hills District Council, Aijal, Letter No. TAD/12/103/52, Dated 4th January, 1953, in Chiefship and Village Council, 1953, File No. CB – 84, G – 1027, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1.

1952. They contended that neither the District Council nor the State Assembly possessed the authority to dismantle the chieftainship institution. Furthermore, they claimed that reducing the payment of six tins of paddy was unconstitutional. The core issue was a conflict between the District Council's proposed abolition of the chiefship and the Lushai Chiefs' Council's insistence on constitutional recognition and traditional tribal administration. The resistance from the Council highlights concerns regarding constitutional rights, customary practices, and fair compensation.⁵²⁸

Under pressure from the Mizo Union and guided by the Assam Government's Legal Adviser, the District Council passed the "Lushai Hills District (Reduction of Fathang) Act" on April 15, 1953, which reduced the paddy tax from six to three tins. This Act received the Governor's approval on May 18, 1953. Additionally, the "Lushai Hills District (Social Custom) Act, 1953" was approved on May 5, 1953, abolishing traditional taxes like *Sachhiah*, *Thirdengsa*, *Khuaichhiah*, and *Chikhurchhiah*, thus reducing the chiefs' power. Although there was resistance to the complete abolition of chieftainship, the movement towards self-governance continued.⁵²⁹

During the drafting of the Indian Constitution, Rev. J.J.M. Nicholas Roy supported village courts for tribes like those in the Lushai Hills. Concurrently, the Assam Government aimed to introduce Village Panchayats, empowering hill people to self-govern. Consequently, on June 20, 1953, the District Council passed "The Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Act," which the Governor implemented on November 19, 1953, and published in the Assam Gazette on December 9, 1953. This Act aimed to establish Village Councils for village administration. However, the formation of Village Councils required the approval of the proposed Village Council Bill, while chieftainship persisted until its eventual legislative termination.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁸Letter from The Secretary, The Lushai Chiefs' Council, Lushai Hills, Aijal to Sir Sjt. B.R. Medhi, Chief Minister of Assam Shillong, Letter No: L.C.C. 15-23/53 A.P.P. 3.2.53, Dated Aijal, the 3rd February, 1953, in Chiefship and Village Council, 1953, File No. CB – 84, G – 1027, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 19-20; Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History*, 149.

⁵²⁹Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 134-135; Chaltuahkhuma, 155.

⁵³⁰"Draft Constitution of the Fifth Schedule, Part IV, Amendment Of The Schedule, Monday, 5th September," in *Constituent Assembly Debates, Official Report*, 1025; Zorema, *Kumpinu Leh Mizoram*, 150 -151; Chaltuahkhuma, 155; "The Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Acts, 1953," *Directorate of*

The abolition of chieftainship in the Assam Lushai Hills was formalized through the Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Act in 1954, amended in 1955. This Act legally ended the traditional rights of approximately 250 Lusei Chiefs and 50 Pawi and Lakher Chiefs, though alternative sources suggest about 320 chiefs were affected. These included 165 Sailo chiefs, 25 Thangur chiefs, 15 Hmar chiefs, 4 Paihte chiefs, 1 Ralte chief, 2 Thado chiefs, 30 Pawi chiefs, 7 Hualngo chiefs, 17 Fannai chiefs, 20 Lakher chiefs, and 28 government-appointed chiefs. The administration of chiefs was transferred to the Mizo District Council on April 1, 1954, and the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council on April 15, 1954, with the Act receiving the President of India's assent on June 26, 1954. This legislative change marked the beginning of land reforms aimed at improving land administration and governance in the Lushai Hills. The District Council took over the administration of land and land revenue, establishing numerous regulations and rules that continue to underlie the Revenue Administration today. This move was seen as a crucial step toward modernizing governance structures in the region.⁵³¹

The list of abolished chiefs in the Lushai Hills demonstrates the diversity of tribal communities in the region by highlighting the various ethnic tribes and their chieftaincies. The Mizo Union sought to rename the Lushai Hills as Mizo Hills to acknowledge the presence of these multiple tribes. In November 1952, R Thanhlira, a Member of Parliament, announced his plan to present a specific resolution, Serial No.3, in the Council of States to address this matter:

Local Administration Department, Government of Mizoram, last updated September 2nd 2021,1, <https://lad.mizoram.gov.in/page/the-luhsai-hills-district-village-councils-acts-1953>; Letter from Shri R.V. Subrahmanian, I.A.S., Secretary to the Government of Assam, Tribal Areas Department, to The Chief Executive Member, Lushai hills District Council, Letter No: TAD/GA/112/52, Shillong, the 30th September, 1953, in Chiefship and Village Council, 1953, File No. CB – 84, G – 1027, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 24; The Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Act, 1953, in Lushai Hills District 1953, December 1953, File No. CB – 79, G – 965, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 33-35.

⁵³¹The Assam Lushai Hill District (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Bill, 1953. Approved. The Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Bill, 1954 – Assented on 26.6.54, 1953, File No. 17/85/53-J-I, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Judicial Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 95-146; Thanga, *The Mizos*, 171; Zorema, *Kumpinu leh Mizoram*, 151-153.

This Council is of opinion that the name of the tribal area “Lushai Hills District” specified in Part A of the Table appended to paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution be changed to “Mizo Ram” and a Bill for the purpose be introduced in Parliament by the Government.⁵³²

The decision to rename the “Lushai Hills” to “Mizo Hills” was driven by the recognition that the term “Lushai” referred specifically to one tribe among many in the region. The initiative aimed to be inclusive, acknowledging the various ethnic and tribal groups present and fostering unity under a broader identity. However, the Assam Government did not act on the renaming because altering the name of a district listed in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution was beyond their authority. They suggested that such a change required consultation with the Ministry of Law through a Bill in the Central Parliament or a Regulation of the President. The Ministry agreed that the principle of the renaming might be acceptable but stressed the importance of considering the potential “repercussions on other Hills Districts.” The renaming initiative was thus stalled by bureaucratic requirements and the need for broader governmental consultation and approval.⁵³³

After evaluating local opinion, the Cabinet decided to thoroughly consider a proposal to change the name of the “Lushai Hills” district. Although the resolution was not presented in the November 1952 Parliament session, the Government of Assam confirmed public support for the change, and the District Council had already passed a resolution in favour. The State Government had no objections and recommended accepting the resolution. The Council of States discussed it on April 24, 1953, and, with the Home Minister’s assurance, R. Thanhira withdrew the resolution. By July 16, 1953, legislation was enacted to change the name to “Mizoram.”⁵³⁴ However, the Prime

⁵³²Letter from H.V.R. Iengar, Secretary, to The Ministry Of Home Affairs, 9th November, 1952, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 5-6.

⁵³³Letter from H.V.R. Iengar, Secretary, to The Ministry Of Home Affairs, 19.11.52, and Letter from S.P. Sen-Varma, Deputy Draftsman, 16th December, 1953, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 5 and 45-46; Roluahpuia, *Nationalism In The Vernacular*, 70-71;

⁵³⁴Letter on Note for Cabinet from A.V. Pai, Secretary to the Government of India, New Delhi-2, 1953, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 22-26.

Minister approved the name change but questioned the suitability of “Mizoram” and suggested “Mizo District” as a better option. He advised consulting the governor and Chief Minister of Assam before presenting the proposal to the Cabinet. The Prime Minister stressed that, regardless of the District name change, the hills should continue to be referred to geographically as the Lushai Hills. While he did not object to “Mizoram” for the District, he emphasized the importance of confirming the name choice before finalizing the decision.⁵³⁵

By September 30, 1953, officials, after consulting the Governor and Chief Minister of Assam, agreed with the Prime Minister’s proposal to name the district as the “Mizo District,” while the geographical area would continue to be referred to as “Lushai Hills.”⁵³⁶ The proposal to change the name of the Lushai Hills District was under consideration, with officials initially suggesting “Mizo District.” However, the District Council of Lushai Hills recommended the name “Mizoram District,” combining “Mizo” and “Ram” to form a proper noun. This was deemed more appropriate than “Mizo Ram,” which would merely mean Mizo District. The Council argued that “Mizoram” conveyed a sense of inclusiveness and historical significance, serving as an ancestral name. Comparisons were made with neighbouring regions, such as Manipur and Cachar districts, to illustrate potential misconceptions if the district were named “Mizo Ram” or “Mizo District,” which might suggest exclusivity for the Mizos. It was highlighted that naming conventions should avoid awkwardness, as seen if Manipur were called “Manipuri State,” which would imply the area exclusively belongs to the Manipuri tribe. Therefore, “Mizoram District” was considered the most suitable name to identify the region as the “Lushai Hills where the Mizo people live.” This naming strategy aims to ensure clarity and avoid awkward phrases like “going to Mizo,” which would incorrectly refer to a people rather than a place. The proposal was designed to respect cultural

⁵³⁵Letter from Y.N. Sukthankar to Shri A.V.Pai, I.C.S., Home Secretary, New Delhi, Letter No: D.O.No.194-PS/53, 18th July 1953, File No: 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 27.

⁵³⁶Letter fro A.V. Pai to Shri Y.N. Sukthankar, I.C.S., Cabinet Secretary, New Delhi, Letter No: D.O.No 15/200/52-Public, Government of India, Ministry of Home affairs, New Delhi, the 30th Sept. 1953, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 33.

identity while ensuring geographical clarity.⁵³⁷ The proposal to reconsider the name was deemed unnecessary because “Mizoram” already signifies “Mizo country,” making the addition of the word “district” redundant. Therefore, the suggested names considered were either “Mizoram” or “Mizo District,” both of which had already received approval.⁵³⁸

The name change of the Lushai Hills to “Mizoram” was met with opposition from certain groups, notably the Lushai Federation, a newly-formed political party, and the Lushai Chief’s Council.⁵³⁹ These groups, particularly members of the “Lushei” clan—a sub-tribe within the district—opposed the change. However, this clan made up less than one-third of the district’s population, and a significant portion of them supported the name change. H.K. Bawichhuaka, representing the District Council and the general populace, expressed support for the name change, highlighting a broader consensus among the people in favour of “Mizoram”:

...it is therefore highly essential that the popular wish of the people of the Lushai Hills “where the Mizo people live” should now be changed into Mizoram so as to bring about the desired psychological effect of oneness of spirit and heart in the several Sub-Tribes inhabiting the land with a view to preserving the integrity of the people against any indoctrination of dissipation.⁵⁴⁰

The debate on April 24, 1953, in the Council of States focused on changing the name of the Lushai Hills District to “Mizo Ram” to promote unity and a collective identity among its inhabitants. R. Thanhlira argued that retaining the name “Lushai Hills” negatively impacted the district’s society by excluding non-Lushai tribes, thus

⁵³⁷Letter from H.K. Bawichhuaka, Esqr., Secretary to the District Council, Lushai Hills, Aijal, Assam, to The Minister for Home Affairs & States, The Government of India, New Delhi, Letter No: DCL.19/53/8-9, Dated Aijal, 19th November, 1953, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 126-127.

⁵³⁸Letter from D. Natarajan, Under Secretary, Dated 7.1. 1954, and The Lushai Hills District (Change of Name) Bill 1953, File No: 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 43-46 and 60-61.

⁵³⁹Resolution in the Council of States by Shri R.Thanhlira, regarding the proposal to change the name of Lushai Hills District to Mizo Ram, 1952, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 69-70.

⁵⁴⁰Letter from H.K. Bawichhuaka, Secretary to the District Council, Lushai Hills, Aijal, to The Minister for Home Affairs and States, Government of India, New Delhi, Letter No: DCL.19/53/3-5, Dated Aijal, 13th May, 1953, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 117-118.

fostering clan-centric sentiments and social disharmony. The district, which was home to multiple tribes living harmoniously, was experiencing a rise in political consciousness, and the name “Lushai Hills” was seen as divisive. Consequently, officials pushed for a name change to encourage inclusivity and well-being.⁵⁴¹ The deputy chairman noted that community organizations, such as the students’ association and a social welfare group, had already adopted the term “Mizo,” replacing “Lushai” with “Mizo Students Association” and “Young Mizo Association,” respectively. This shift indicated widespread acceptance of “Mizo” among the district’s residents. Although some objections from Lusei communities were anticipated, many recognized that “Mizo Ram” was an inclusive term that encompassed all inhabitants, including the Lusei. The proposed name change aimed to strengthen unity and prevent internal strife by acknowledging and embracing the diverse tribal composition of the district.⁵⁴²

During the period in question, the Mizo Union aimed to change the name of Lushai Hills to reflect a broader identity inclusive of Mizo-Kuki tribes across regions like Tripura, Cachar, and Manipur.⁵⁴³ By November 3, 1953, they had prepared a bill for this purpose, (See Appendix No.27),⁵⁴⁴ which was discussed in the Rajya Sabha on February 22, 1954. The discussion revealed that “Lushai Hills” was a colonial designation and that the term “Mizo” had become the common identifier for the people of the region. It was thus agreed to rename the district as “Mizo District,” omitting the term “Ram” from “Mizoram,” as “Ram” means “territory” and was deemed

⁵⁴¹ Extracts from the Council of States Debates dated the 24.4.53, 1953, File No, 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 89.

⁵⁴² Extracts from the Council of States Debates, 91-92.

⁵⁴³ Extracts from an article by H.K. Bawichhuaka, Editor and General Secretary, Mizo Union; published in Mizo Arsi Vol.20 of May 29, 1952, & Extract from Editorial of Mizo Arsi, Vol. 9 of 22 February 1952, edited by H.K. Bawichhuaka, 1952, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 110.

⁵⁴⁴ Letter from D. Natrajan, Under Secretary to the Govt. of India, to The Ministry of Law (Shri G.R. Rajagopalan, Drafting Branch), Office Memorandum, Letter No: No. 15/200/53-Pub., New Delhi – 2, 3rd November, 1953, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 125.

unnecessary.⁵⁴⁵ Consequently, the Bill received the President's assent on April 28, 1954, published in the Gazette of India as Act No. 38 of 1954 Extraordinary Part II Section I, dated April 30, 1954.⁵⁴⁶ Following the sub-section (2) of section 1 of the Lushai Hills District (Change of Name) Act, 1954 (18 of 1954), the President decided that the said Act shall come into force with immediate effect.⁵⁴⁷ The Lushai Hills District (Change of Name) Act, 1954, was enacted on September 1, 1954, officially changing the district's name to Mizo District (See Appendix No. 28).⁵⁴⁸

The introduction of the term "Mizo" marked a significant shift in identity for the diverse tribal communities in the region, similar to changes observed with the term "Ram" in the Lushai Hills' name. "Mizo" emerged as a unifying identity largely due to the efforts of the Mizo Union, which played a crucial role in defining this identity both politically and culturally. The demand to rename the Lushai Hills to reflect "Mizo" was a manifestation of this evolving identity, driven by a desire for recognition and legitimacy. The Mizo Union's political and cultural initiatives garnered widespread support for the renaming, reflecting the people's changing consciousness and quest for formal recognition. The initiative to rename the Lushai Hills was not merely about changing geographical labels; it was a strategic move to affirm the people's identity within the political landscape.⁵⁴⁹ The memorandum presented by the Mizo Union underscored its commitment to the Mizo population's broader cause, articulating a

⁵⁴⁵ "The Lushai Hills District (Change Of Name) Bill, 1954," *Rajya Sabha Council of States*, February 22nd 2022, 683 – 691, sansad.in/rs/debates/officials.

⁵⁴⁶ Letter from K.G. Avadhani, Under Secretary to the Govt. of India, to The Ministry of Home Affairs, Letter No: F. 7 (2)/54 – L, 30th April, 1954, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 140.

⁵⁴⁷ Notification to The Manager, Govt. of India Press, New Delhi, No: 15/200/52 – Public, 1st September, 1954, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 152.

⁵⁴⁸ Letter from Fateg Singh, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, to The Shri R. Thanhkira, M.P., Aijal, Assam, Letter No: 15/200/52-Public., 18th September, 1954, File No. 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi, India, 153.

⁵⁴⁹ Roluahpuia, *Nationalism In The Vernacular*, 73-75.

vision for territorial unity and integrity. This effort was a testament to the Mizo community's quest for unity, identity, and self-determination.⁵⁵⁰

The ascension of the Sailos to chieftainship played a crucial role in defining the Mizo identity. Under Sailo's leadership, the territories became synonymous with the term "Mizo," highlighting a connection that transcended geographical limits. This relationship had spatial and political dimensions, as the governance by Sailo chiefs was instrumental in the development of a unified Mizo identity. Their leadership exemplified the interplay between political authority and the establishment of a collective identity among the Mizo people.⁵⁵¹

The process of defining "Mizo" identity involved exploring the "boundaries of identity" to articulate the criteria qualifying individuals or groups as Mizo. This delineation addressed cultural, linguistic, historical, and geographical aspects, contributing to the Mizo identity. Beyond naming or categorizing, it aimed to create a shared understanding of community membership, impacting who is considered part of the Mizo community. The effort was a socio-cultural and political act, shaping the community's collective consciousness and involving negotiations around inclusion and exclusion. This process acknowledged internal diversity while establishing a cohesive identity aligned with the aspirations of the Mizo Union and the broader community.⁵⁵²

During the colonial era in the Lushai Hills, a Superintendent notification formally recognized specific clans and tribes, including the Pawi, Paihte, Hmar, Lakher, Chakma, Rieng, Tuikuk, Matu, Chawrai, Hrangkhawl, and Langrawng, as part of the Mizo identity for taxation purposes, known as *Leiman*. This administrative recognition provides insights into the colonial practices of categorizing diverse ethnic groups under the broader Mizo identity for governance purposes. The inclusion of these clans and tribes highlights the complex nature of identity and its implications in governance. Such recognition suggests that colonial authorities formally acknowledged these groups

⁵⁵⁰C. Lalchawimawia, *Ramri Leh Zofate Insuihkhawmna* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Published by the author, 2021), 114.

⁵⁵¹Pachau, *Being Mizo*, 115.

⁵⁵²Roluahpuia, *Nationalism In The Vernacular*, 77.

within the Mizo category, influencing fiscal relationships and socio-political dynamics in the region. This historical acknowledgement illustrates the interplay between identity, governance, and administrative policies in shaping community boundaries during colonial rule. The recognition was not merely about ethnic or cultural identity but also practical administrative considerations, underscoring the multifaceted nature of identity formation under colonial governance.⁵⁵³

The Mizo Union Memorandum of 1947 was pivotal in defining the Mizo identity by listing numerous tribes that collectively form the Mizo community. This comprehensive list included tribes such as “Lusei, Hmar, Ralte, Paite, Zo, Darlawng, Kawm, Pawi, Thado, Chiru, Aimoul, Khawl, Tarau, Anal, Purm, Tikhup, Vaiphei, Laher, Langrawng, Chawrai, Bawng, Biate, Mualthuam, Kaihpen, Pangkhua, Tlanglau, Hrangkhawl, Bawmzo, Miria, Dawn, Khumi, Khianu, Khiantge, Pangte, Khawlhing, Chawngthu, Vanchiau, Chawhte, Ngente, Renthlei, Hnamte, Tlau, Pautu, Pawite, Vangchhia, Zawngte, Fanai, and others,” extending beyond the geographical limits of the then Lushai Hills. The inclusion of diverse clans and tribes was a deliberate effort to foster an inclusive Mizo identity, aiming to unite these groups under a common banner. The memorandum highlighted the significance of “shared cultural affinities” as the foundational basis for this unity, acknowledging the cultural elements that connected the various clans and tribes.⁵⁵⁴ This emphasis on cultural commonality was crucial in establishing a collective identity that transcended individual tribal distinctions, thereby strengthening the sense of community among the Mizo people.

Critics assert that the Mizo Union’s initiatives fell short in establishing a comprehensive identity boundary, particularly by not exerting enough effort to include the Mizo communities from Manipur, Tripura, Cachar, and Chittagong. This lack of initiative is seen as a missed opportunity, as incorporating these areas could have led to a

⁵⁵³Order Issued by A. Macdonald, Superintendent, Lushai Hills, Order No: 784-47 G of 29.4.46, quoted in Keihawla Sailo, *Golden History Of Lushai Hills (Zoram-Chin-Lushai-Kuki Country)* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Published by the Author, 2016), 206.

⁵⁵⁴Roluahpuia, *Nationalism in the Vernacular*, 77.

geographically larger present-day Mizoram.⁵⁵⁵ The Chittagong Hill Tracts serve as a clear example of the impact of political boundaries on cultural and social ties. Historically, the Sajek range, occupied by Chief Chawngbiala and his descendants, maintained strong connections with nearby villages such as Phuldungsei, which are now within Mizoram's borders. In the past, these communities frequently engaged in social interactions, including attending weddings and cultural events, highlighting their shared cultural identity. However, the creation of political boundaries divided these communities into separate states and nations, severing their long-standing cultural and social connections.⁵⁵⁶

H.K. Bawichhuaka's reflections highlight the complex nature of Mizo identity, rooted in the historical self-governance of the Lushai Hills before British colonization. This autonomy forms a core element of their identity, with colonial divisions causing a significant grievance that affects their sense of self-determination. Bawichhuaka emphasizes the indivisibility of Lushai and Mizo interests, advocating for the Mizo people's right to choose between joining Burma or India. He asserts that the day marks a pivotal moment for declaring independence for the Lushai Hills, emphasizing the necessity for the broadest possible self-determination. Historically, the Lushai Hills maintained practical independence until British intervention in 1871, which led to territorial fragmentation, leaving only a small area as the Lushai Hills. The British further divided Mizo lands, allocating portions to regions like Manipur and Burma. Bawichhuaka argues for the amalgamation of these divided parts, advocating for reclaiming their land to restore self-governance and territorial integrity for the Mizo people. This perspective underscores the enduring impact of colonial legacies on Mizo territorial and identity concerns, emphasizing a quest for autonomy and territorial unity.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁵C. Lalchawimawia, interview by Lallawmkimi Ralte, Ramrikawn Veng, Aizawl, October 7, 2022.

⁵⁵⁶Laldova (Ex Councillor, Local Govt Council, Rangamati Hill Tracts, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Convener, Tender Department), interview by Lallawmkimi Ralte, October 19, 2022.

⁵⁵⁷Gopinath Bordoloi, "Statement made by Mr. H.K. Bawichhuaka, Lakhimpur, Cachar," in *Constituent Assembly Of India, North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal And Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Volume II*

Mr. Lal Biak Thanga's vision for Mizo unification, as presented to the Bordoloi Committee, emphasizes the importance of collective unity among the Mizo people. The vision includes the establishment of administrative structures, advocacy for autonomy, protection of rights, and ensuring representation within the Mizo population. Despite recognizing the diversity within the then Lushai Hills community, it underscores the need for a unified approach to achieving shared goals and aspirations, highlighting the interconnected nature of the Mizo people.⁵⁵⁸ It is important not to place exclusive blame on the Mizo Union for historical territorial issues. Historical records suggest that communities in border areas did not consistently strive to protect their territories, unlike proactive groups such as the Sailo, Lusei, Pawi, and Laker. This varied level of territorial defence among different communities might have influenced the delineation of present-day geographical borders. The vision calls for recognizing these historical contexts while striving for a unified Mizo identity.⁵⁵⁹

The removal of chieftainship in the Mizo community sparked hopes for unity and a shift toward a more egalitarian and modern political system. This transition aimed to promote equality and reshape the political landscape in the Mizo Hills District. However, the abolition of traditional leadership did not relieve the community of financial burdens; the District Council continued to impose an annual fee of ₹2 for four tins of unhusked rice per household. This persistence of economic impositions complicated the anticipated political transformation. Additionally, changes in land distribution practices further complicate the situation. The Village Council adopted a randomized draw of lots to allocate *jhum* land, eliminating the privilege of selecting *jhum* land. In 1955, an attempt by the Mizo Union headquarters to allow Village Council members to choose *jhum* land as compensation faced strong opposition from the

(Evidence) Part I, *Lushai, North-Cachar, Garo, Mikir And Naga Hills*, (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1947), 49-50, <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/handle/10973/39820>.

⁵⁵⁸ Gopinath Bordoloi, "Report on the Committee interviewed Mr. Lal Biak Thanga, M.A., Mission Compound, Aijal, on 19-4-1947," in *Constituent Assembly of India, North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal And Excluded Areas Sub-Committee, Volume II (Evidence) Part I, Lushai, North-Cachar, Garo, Mikir And Naga Hills*, (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1947), 51, <https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/handle/10973/39820>.

⁵⁵⁹ C. Lalchawimawia, interview.

community. This proposal was met with fierce criticism and resistance, especially from interior villages, prompting central officials to withdraw the resolution.⁵⁶⁰

During this transitional period, the community faced political, social, and economic challenges as it adapted to new governance structures, internal conflicts, and financial constraints. These struggles highlighted the complexities of societal transformation. Within this context, the Mizo Union faced internal disputes that likely weakened its cohesion and effectiveness. In response, some dissatisfied members formed the Mizo Union Right Wing, adding a new dimension to the political landscape. This shift allowed alternative political entities, such as the United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO), to gain momentum and challenge the status quo. The UMFO emerged as a formidable opposition party by the second District Council election on January 25, 1957, securing eight seats. Meanwhile, the Mizo Union maintained its dominance by obtaining 12 seats, establishing itself as the predominant party in the District Council.⁵⁶¹

5.4 Political Mobilization and State Formation

Mizoram faced the second occurrence of *Mautam*⁵⁶² in 1959. As per their cultural traditions, the inhabitants of the Mizo District had anticipated the famine, marking it as the first in post-independent India. In response to the imminent threat, the Mizo Hills District Council proactively addressed the situation, enacting a resolution on October 29 1958:

With the flowering of the bamboos in the Mizo district, the rat population has phenomenally increased and it is feared that in the next year the whole district would be affected. As a precautionary measure against the imminence of famine, following the flowering of bamboos, the district council feels that the

⁵⁶⁰C. Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 136; House Tax & Fathang, 1948, File No. CB – 58, G – 719, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 2-4; Ramhuals & Loen, 1984 – 1949, File No. CB – 57, G – 715, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 3-52.

⁵⁶¹P. Lalnithanga IAS (Retd), *Mizoram Politics Inlumleh Chhoh Dan* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Published by the author, 2008), 137-138; Lawmzuala, *Mizo District Council*, 114-115.

⁵⁶²*Mautam* is the cyclical phenomenon, occurring approximately every fifty years, where bamboo plants experience a decline in vitality after flowering and producing fruits. This event is followed by an infestation of rats that consume rice crops, leading to widespread famine.

government be moved to sanction to the Mizo District Council a sum of Rs 15 lakhs, to be expended on a test relief measure for the whole of Mizo district including the Pawi-Lakher region....⁵⁶³

The Assam government, under Chief Minister Bimola Prasad Chaliha, dismissed the Mizo Hills District Council's warning about an impending famine as unscientific, specifically ridiculing the tribal belief that linked bamboo flowering to increased rodent populations and subsequent famine. This dismissal highlighted a disconnect and lack of empathy towards the District's societal and environmental intricacies. However, the Assam government was caught off guard by the rapid and severe impact of the 1959 *Mautam* famine, which led to widespread starvation and numerous deaths. Relief efforts were hindered by significant transportation challenges due to inadequate road infrastructure, with only a single highway accessible, and even then only for jeeps, complicating the delivery of food to the affected tribal populations. Meanwhile, accusations were made against Ch. Saprawnga, the Chief Executive Member of the District Council, and L.S. Ingti, the Deputy Commissioner, for failing to alert the Assam government about the famine to secure necessary relief. In response to the government's rejection, the Mizo Cultural Society organized processions and public meetings, leading to the establishment of the Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) in 1960 to independently manage famine relief efforts.⁵⁶⁴

The statement by Laldenga, "New Delhi never took note of the suffering of our people,"⁵⁶⁵ expressed a sentiment of negligence by the Central Government towards the Mizo people during a famine. In response, figures like Lalthangliana Sailo, R. Vanlawma, Laldenga, R. Dengthuama, and C. Rokhuma emerged as key leaders by organizing events for the Famine Front. This movement highlighted the rise of local leadership in the face of governmental neglect. The affected Mizo public, suffering from the famine, turned to the Famine Front for aid. The large-scale processions and

⁵⁶³Sajal Nag, "Tribals, Rats, Famine, State and the Nation," *Economic and Political Weekly* 36, no.12, (March 2001): 1029, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4410428>.

⁵⁶⁴Nag, 1029-1030; Sailo, *Golden History*, 261.

⁵⁶⁵Rone Tempest, "Famine Sparked Revolt: Rebel Anger Blooms Into Indian State," *Los Angeles Times*, February 25th, 1987, latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1987-02-25-mn-5674-story.html.

gatherings catalyzed the Assam government and the Union government to initiate relief efforts, highlighting a collective awakening. The public's trust in the Famine Front leaders suggested a recognition of their ability to represent and guide them effectively through adversity. This period also demonstrated the public's political awareness and understanding of their situation, as the Mizo Union leaders navigated these complexities. The events indicated a notable level of political awareness among the Mizo people and an understanding of the broader political landscape.⁵⁶⁶

During the severe famine in the Mizo Hills District in 1959-60, there was widespread dissatisfaction with the Assam Government's response, intensifying existing separatist sentiments. The newly floated pan-tribal political party of Assam, Eastern India Tribal Union or EITU proposed that all MLAs, including ministers, resign in protest of the government's negligence. Key figures included Lalmawia, the EITU chief of the Mizo Hills District unit, who was Parliamentary Secretary, Capt. Sangma, a Garo leader and Minister in Charge of Tribal Affairs, and Rev. Pugh from the Khasi Hills, also a Minister. All three leaders, however, disagreed with the resignation proposal, leading to a rift within the EITU. This division resulted in the Mizo Hills District EITU and a majority of Khasi Hills EITU members breaking away, ultimately causing the dissolution of the party in 1960. Despite this, Capt. Sangma and his supporters established a new political entity, the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC), in the same year. The famine crisis highlighted the Assam Government's inadequate response and contributed to political fragmentation, which led to the formation of a new political organization advocating for hill region interests.⁵⁶⁷

During the *Mautam* famine, officials from various Hill States in Northeast India intensified efforts to establish a separate Hill State. This movement gained traction, particularly following the government's decision to designate Assamese as the sole official language. In response, various political parties joined the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) to advocate for a separate state within India. The first meeting of

⁵⁶⁶Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History*, 205-208; Sailo, *Golden History*, 261.

⁵⁶⁷Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 138-139.

the APHLC was held on July 6 and 7, 1960, at Capt—Sangma’s Goodwood Bungalow in Shillong, where Mr. A. Thanglura was appointed as the first Chairman. Additionally, the Mizo Union distanced itself from the Assam Parliamentary Congress due to disagreements over the language policy and the government’s indifference to the famine in the Mizo Hills District. The Mizo Union subsequently aligned with the APHLC and actively engaged in its initiatives.⁵⁶⁸ Residents of the Mizo Hills District expressed significant discontent with the imposition of the Assamese language, leading to a protest rally. A notable slogan from the rally, “*Phung Hawrawp Kan Duh Lo*,” translated to “We do not want monster handwriting,” indicates their resistance. This opposition to adopting Assamese highlights a strong desire to maintain the distinct cultural identity of the Mizo people. Language, being a fundamental aspect of culture, plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage. By rejecting the external imposition of the Assamese language, the Mizo community demonstrated its commitment to safeguarding its unique cultural legacy.⁵⁶⁹

In 1961, during the APHLC meeting in Shillong on April 4, Ch. Chhunga, a leader of the Mizo Union, opposed the formation of a separate Hill State. Some Mizo Union leaders feared that supporting this movement might lead the Mizo Hills District people to see them as followers of EITU, risking unity and trust. Consequently, they advocated for establishing the Mizo State as a party policy. This position dissatisfied A. Thanglura, who subsequently left the APHLC and formed the Congress party on April 11, 1961, gained followers and received support and funding from the headquarters.⁵⁷⁰ The decision to establish the Congress party was influenced not only by individual disagreements but also by a divergence in political ideology and objectives. The populace understood the importance of aligning with a political entity that resonated with their collective aspirations and goals. However, the adoption of Nehru’s “Pattern of Administration” by the Congress party led to significant resistance, as many in the

⁵⁶⁸A Thanglura, *Zoram Politic Lumlet Dan (Bel Keh Phuar Khawm Tui Pai Thei Lo)*, 3rd ed. (Khatla South, Aizawl: Mizoram: MCL Publications, 2018), 146-147, Nunthara, 138.

⁵⁶⁹C. Zama, (President Ex-Mizo Nation Army (MNA)), interview by Lallawmkimi Ralte, January 9, 2023.

⁵⁷⁰Chaltuakhuma, *Political History*, 209; Thanglura, *Zoram Politic Lumlet Dan*, 152; Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 138.

region were not interested in this approach. This scenario underscores the complex political decisions faced by the people during this period, as they sought to balance pursuing communal objectives with concerns about specific administrative strategies. The situation illustrates the challenges in aligning political affiliations with both ideological beliefs and practical governance preferences.⁵⁷¹

The APHLC conference was held in Tura on June 29 – 30, 1961, and subsequently in Aizawl on September 16, 1961, culminating in a significant resolution, declaring October 24, 1961, as Demand Day, emphasizing the establishment of a Hill State and urging Assam MLAs to resign. Additionally, they resolved to contest the 1962 election under the banner of EITU, mandating the immediate resignation of all elected members. Concurrently, after the Famine Front Conference, Laldenga envisioned forming a new political party. Consequently, on October 22, 1961, the Mizo National Front (MNF) was founded, aiming for the independence of the Mizo Hills. The creation of the MNF incited renewed discussions about independence, intensifying the divisive opinions within the Mizo Hills District.⁵⁷²

In the District Council election on February 5, 1962, the Mizo Union, EITU, and Congress participated, with the Mizo Union winning, while the newly formed MNF did not participate.⁵⁷³ In the Assam Assembly election on October 24, 1962, the APHLC won 11 out of 12 seats for the hill areas and planned for all 11 tribal MLAs to resign to demand a hill state. However, only seven MLAs resigned due to the Chinese aggression, delaying the Demand Day.⁵⁷⁴ The Pataskar Commission was established to resolve political issues in Assam's hill areas but could not proceed due to the Indo-Chinese war, further delaying Direct Action planned by the APHLC. While Garo and Khasi leaders supported the postponement citing “national interests,” Mizo leaders saw it as an obstacle to political resolution. A telegram from New Delhi confirmed the

⁵⁷¹Thanglura, *Zoram Politic Lumlet Dan*, 174-175.

⁵⁷² Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History*, 210; Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 139; Roluahpuia, *Nationalism in the Vernacular*, 81; Zoramthanga, *Mizo Hnam Movement History A History of Mizo Nationalism Movement* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Published by the Author, 2017), 20.

⁵⁷³Chaltuahkhuma, 210-215.

⁵⁷⁴Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 139.

Commission's inability to visit due to an urgent situation, causing Mizo leaders to lose confidence in the APHLC and withdraw from it. This withdrawal indicated the Mizo people's increasing inclination towards a more separatist stance, showing a desire for greater autonomy or independence, as the delay did not align with their political aspirations.⁵⁷⁵

From the outset, the MNF adopted Independence as its primary policy and it organized units and recruited volunteers, gaining significant public backing. Notably, individuals from the EITU and Congress party joined MNF, contributing to its rapid growth. Consequently, MNF quickly became the largest party, coinciding with a decrease in popularity for the Mizo Union.⁵⁷⁶ During this period, the Mizo National Front (MNF), under the leadership of Laldenga, gained significant traction by resonating with the youth through its message of independence and distinct identity. The sentiment of "We are not Indian" was prevalent among the youth, reflecting their desire for political autonomy.⁵⁷⁷ The political landscape shifted notably during the by-elections on April 23, 1963, when the MNF triumphed over the APHLC candidates. Following this, on 10th July 1963, the Mizo Union distanced itself from the APHLC, advocating for a separate state, marking a divergence from the hill-state movement primarily led by the Khasi and Garo groups within the APHLC. As the Mizo Union pushed for a separate Mizo state and the MNF intensified its independence agenda, the region experienced a significant move towards self-rule, highlighting the evolving political aspirations for autonomy and identity distinct from the Indian state.⁵⁷⁸

During this period, minorities in the Mizo District, such as the Paihtes, Maras (Lakhers), and Pawis, sought regional separation due to psychological challenges. These challenges arose from being divided into small groups across different administrations and countries, such as India, Burma, and Manipur. Specifically, Paihtes were split

⁵⁷⁵ Nunthara, 139-140; Paihte National Council, 1964 – 1965, File No. CB – 114, G – 1379, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 63-65.

⁵⁷⁶ Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History*, 216, Thanglura, *Politic Lumlet Dan*, 181-183.

⁵⁷⁷ R. Lalthansanga (Ex. Capt. Company Commander of MNA), interview by Lallawmkimi Ralte, May 24, 2022.

⁵⁷⁸ Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 140; Thanglura, *Politic Lumlet Dan*, 181-182; Roluahpuia, *Nationalism in the Vernacular*, 87; Zoramthanga, *Mizo Nationalism Movement*, 21-22.

among India, Burma, and Manipur, while Maras and Pawis were divided between India and Burma. This fragmentation was partly a result of deliberate British efforts to divide aggressive tribes into multiple groups. These minority communities were scattered across the District due to ongoing migrations that were halted by British intervention. As a result, these groups became isolated from the mainstream development of the Mizo Hills, leading to underdevelopment and fostering a sense of isolation and neglect. The desire for regional separation was driven by these factors, exacerbating their sense of being marginalized from the dominant Lushai tribe.⁵⁷⁹

Political unrest intensified in the Mizo Hills District as aspirations for a separate Hill State emerged. Initially, the Mizo Union supported an Autonomous District Council but shifted its stance to advocate for statehood, aligning with the MNF party's objectives. Conversely, the Congress party proposed a "Scottish Pattern," reflecting the widespread dissatisfaction with the existing administrative structures.⁵⁸⁰ Concurrently, the Mizo District's residents observed a growing influence of non-Mizo elements, particularly from the plains, facilitated by cinema. This influence sparked fears of cultural assimilation, which many perceived as a threat to the Mizo community's unique traditions, customs, and practices. The desire to preserve a distinct cultural identity amid increasing external influences fueled these concerns, underscoring the community's commitment to safeguarding their heritage against perceived assimilation pressures.⁵⁸¹

In early December 1963, the Mizo National Front (MNF) intensified its demands for the "sovereign independence of Greater Mizoram" by deploying leaders Laldenga and Sainghaka to East Pakistan. There, they collaborated with Pakistani agents and Naga hostiles, receiving assurances for training volunteers to oppose the Indian government and planning an insurrection. Upon returning to India, they were apprehended but secured their release in February 1964 by assuring the Chief Minister of Assam that their

⁵⁷⁹The Problem of Minorities in Mizo District' & Memorandum Submitted to Shri B.P. Chaliha, Chief Minister, Government of Assam, by the Paite National Council for constitution of 'Paite Regional Council, 1964 – 1965, File No. CB – 114, G – 1379, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1-62.

⁵⁸⁰Sailo, *Golden History*, 270-271; Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 139-140; Thanglura, *Politic Lumlet Dan*, 175

⁵⁸¹C. Zama, interview.

activities would remain within Indian constitutional limits. Despite these assurances, the MNF escalated its activities, coercively collecting contributions, training hundreds of military-style volunteers, and amassing firearms. They openly ignored government laws and attempted to establish their own “Mizoram Government.”⁵⁸²

In January 1965, the Mizo Union initiated a campaign for the establishment of Mizoram State, enlisting unarmed volunteers and promoting non-violent direct action. However, tensions arose among Mizo and non-Mizo groups from Assam, Manipur, and Tripura, especially evident at Churachandpur, Manipur, leading the Mizo Union to postpone its movement. In response, the Churachandpur Charter of the Mizo Political Parties reaffirmed the Mizo District’s desire for an expanded Mizoram State, encompassing all Mizo-inhabited regions to foster a more inclusive identity.⁵⁸³ On February 12, 1965, a crucial meeting occurred in the Mizo Hills District, involving leaders from the Mizo Union, Mizo National Front, and EITU. The meeting aimed to collaboratively establish a standard policy to promote unity and understanding among the political parties.⁵⁸⁴ These efforts highlighted a commitment to encouraging unity and devising inclusive solutions, considering the diverse perspectives within the community.

The evolution of political thinking in the Mizo Hills was significantly influenced by the development of regional political parties in the Pawi-Lakher region. Key parties included the Chin National Front, the Mara Freedom Party, the Mizo National Front, and the Kalai National Council. These parties represented the diverse political aspirations of the local communities, contributing to the regional political dynamics. The Chin National Front and the Mara Freedom Party were especially prominent. The Mizo

⁵⁸² Fortnightly Confidential Report of Mizo District for the second half of January 1965 by K. Saijal, Deputy Commissioner, Mizo District, Dated Aizawl, 2nd February, 1965, File No. CB – 115, G – 1390, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 3-4; Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 134-135; Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History*, 222; Zoramthanga, *Mizo Nationalist Movement*, 27-29.

⁵⁸³ Lalrimawia, 135; Fortnightly Confidential Report of Mizo District for the second half of January 1965 by K. Saijal, Deputy Commissioner, Mizo District, Dated Aizawl, the 16th January, 1965, File No. CB – 115, G – 1390, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1.

⁵⁸⁴ Fortnightly Confidential Report of Mizo District for the second half of February 1965 by K. Saijal, Deputy Commissioner, Mizo District, Dated Aizawl, the 17th February, 1965, File No. CB – 115, G – 1390, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 5-7.

National Front aimed to align with the Chin National Front, who saw themselves as allies due to cultural affinity with the Mizos. The Mara Freedom Party emerged from the Lakhers' dissatisfaction with the Regional Council, feeling dominated by the Pawis and lacking opportunities to develop their language. This discontent stemmed from perceived discrimination within the Council's composition and conduct. Another critical factor was the use of lofty rhetoric by various groups, which the government associated with the Mizo National Front. This rhetoric included threats of raising battalions, causing widespread fear and political tension. As a result, the region was characterized by heightened political awareness and apprehension, driven by ongoing political issues.⁵⁸⁵

In October 1965, the Mizo Union urged the Central government to establish a Mizoram State, a request evaluated by the Pataskar Commission for the Hill Areas. Despite this, dissatisfaction with the Commission's approach led the Mizo Union to abstain from its proceedings. However, the Mizo National Front (MNF) participated, presenting a memorandum to the government of India on October 30, 1965, which was the first formal representation of their ambitions. The memorandum demanded independence and emphasized regional unification as essential, reflecting broader public aspirations (See Appendix No. 29).⁵⁸⁶ The MNF's mobilization efforts extended beyond national boundaries, involving educated Mizos both within and outside the Mizo Hills. Their cause advocated not only for political autonomy but also for the inherent rights of individuals in governance decisions, aligning with democratic ideals. According to the MNF, the unification of Mizo-inhabited areas was both a political and a human rights issue. The stance was that governance should occur with the consent of those governed, emphasizing that no individual or group should rule another without such consent. This

⁵⁸⁵Letter from Shri R. V. Pillai, I.A.S., Sub – Divisional Officer, Lungleh to Shri K. Saigal, I.A.S., Deputy Commissioner, Mizo District, Aijal on Political situation in the P-L Region, Dated Lungleh, the 25th January, 1965, File No. CB – 114, G – 1389, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 5-8.

⁵⁸⁶ Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History*, 135; Roluahpuia, *Nationalism in the Vernacular*, 88; Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History*, 225-229.

pursuit was not just about political goals but also about upholding democratic and human rights principles.⁵⁸⁷

The mobilization efforts of the Mizo National Front (MNF) were not solely spearheaded by the elite; rather, a widespread effort emerged through the formation of the Mizo National Volunteer (MNV) group. This group conducted extensive campaigns across villages in the Mizo Hills, with the policy of *Zalenna* becoming a central theme that resonated broadly, particularly among the youth. The MNF extended its influence by deploying volunteers to Mizo-inhabited areas such as Manipur and Tripura.⁵⁸⁸ Individuals who joined the MNF and participated in the armed rebellion against the Indian Government were deeply committed to the cause of independence, with some making symbolic promises, like not cutting their hair until achieving the goal of an independent Mizoram. These gestures highlighted the determination and sacrifices of those involved in the movement for self-determination (See Photo No. 5.4).⁵⁸⁹

Figure No. 5.4: Mizo National Army

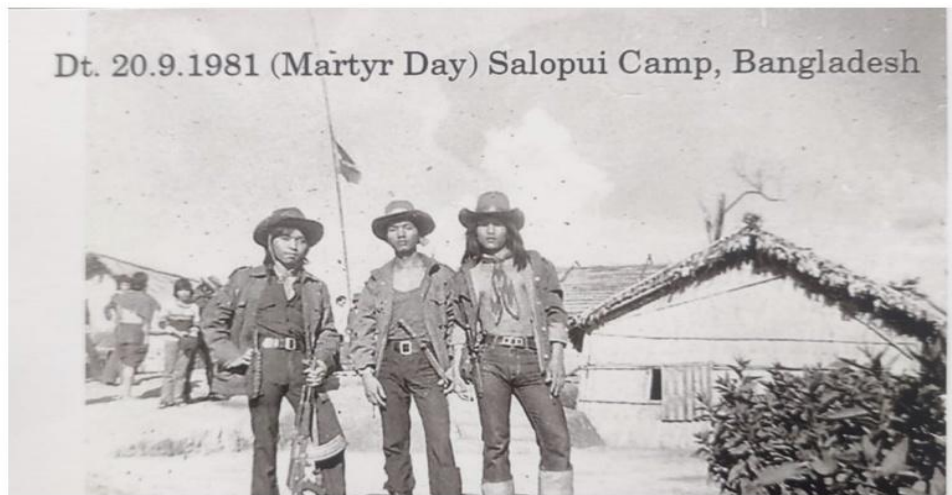


(Source: MNF INPUI, mnfparty.org/mnf-articles)

⁵⁸⁷Roluahpuia, 88.

⁵⁸⁸Roluahpuia, 90; Zoramthanga, *Mizo Nationalist Movement*, 25-26.

⁵⁸⁹C.Zama, interview; MNF INPUI, mnfparty.org/mnf-articles.



(Source: MNF INPUI, mnfparty.org/mnf-articles)

In early 1966, the Indian and Assam Governments decided to deploy additional security forces to the Mizo Hills, despite the existing presence of the Border Security Force (BSF) and Assam Rifles. This decision led to the dispatch of the 5 Battalion of the BSF and the 18 Assam Rifles Battalion. Laldenga, the President of the Mizo National Front (MNF), requested the government reconsider the deployment, proposing dialogue instead. However, the government rejected the appeal for the withdrawal of forces. Amidst growing public sentiment, the MNF saw an opportunity to advance its political goals. As a result, on the night of February 28, 1966, the MNF launched an armed revolution, marking the beginning of their Independence movement on March 1, 1966.⁵⁹⁰

On March 6, 1966, the Government of India declared the Mizo National Front (MNF) an unlawful organization through an Extra-Ordinary Gazette Notification. This decision was based on the belief that the MNF was involved in activities harmful to the security of the Mizo District in Assam and nearby areas of Indian territory. The Central

⁵⁹⁰ Notification on 'Mizo National Front Armed Gangs Must Be Liquidated', Issued by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Government of Assam, Shillong, 1966, File No. CB – 115, G – 1399, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1; C. Zama, *Zalenna Chakin Zoram A Rum (1961-1986)* (Chawnpui, Aizawl: Published by the Author, 2023), 99-106; Zoramthanga, *Mizo Nationalist Movement*, 31-32; Sailo, *Golden History*, 272.

Government, convinced of this assessment, amended the rules to apply Rule 32 of the Defence of India Rules 1962 (See Appendix No. 30), specifically to the MNF. This legal action aimed to address and mitigate the perceived security threats posed by the MNF's activities.⁵⁹¹

The MNF struggle was driven by a profound desire for political autonomy, with its primary aim being the right to “self-determination.” Zoramthanga, one of the movement's leaders, defined this as the pursuit of an independent nation-state. However, he argued that “self-determination” extended beyond mere political independence, warning that independent nations could still oppress their citizens and deny fundamental rights. He stressed the importance of “self-realization” as a key component of freedom, suggesting that the people must actively engage in understanding their identity and aspirations. This perspective underscores that the MNF movement aimed to empower individuals not only politically but also in terms of personal freedom and identity awareness.⁵⁹² The MNF opposed the Mizo Union, which controlled the District Council, criticizing it for failing to contribute to the district's development. The MNF accused the Mizo Union of being directly responsible for the district's backwardness and alleged that the Union misused government funds to maintain its power. Furthermore, the MNF claimed that the Mizo Union betrayed the Mizos by not advocating for independence from India and instead assisting the Indian Government. This political discord stemmed from differing views on the district's progress and its relationship with India.⁵⁹³

In a context where District Council officials were unable to access interior villages due to security issues, the MNF exploited the situation by nominating its members to Village Councils. This allowed the MNF to impose and collect forced taxes. The Mizo Union, however, did not respond effectively to this challenge to its authority. The Mizo Union appeared to lose public sympathy and control over political trends in

⁵⁹¹Mizo National Front Declared Unlawful, 1966, File No. CB – 115, G – 1399, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 105.

⁵⁹²Roluahpuia, *Nationalism in the Vernacular*, 100.

⁵⁹³“Comments on the note containing an assessment of the situation created by the hostile activities of the rebel Mizos in Assam” by Deputy Commissioner of Mizo District, 1966, File No. CB – 115, G – 1399, General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 426.

the district, exhibiting hesitance and fear of MNF reprisals. This reluctance may have been due to reliance on its past reputation and awareness of its limited strength. Instead of confronting the situation assertively, the Mizo Union chose to remain silent and attributed its inaction to external factors. This suggests a cautious strategy, likely a result of its weakened political position.⁵⁹⁴

The Government of India was wary about granting statehood to the Mizo Hills District and other Mizo-inhabited areas after the disbandment of Assam, considering it fraught with difficulties and potential dangers. There was skepticism about whether statehood would effectively neutralize the threat posed by the Mizo National Front (MNF). While statehood might offer short-term advantages, such as allowing the MNF to claim it as a victory towards independence, it could also strengthen the MNF's position, portraying it as a patriotic symbol. The government feared that statehood might embolden the MNF and worsen the situation instead of resolving it. Despite the administrative control established in 1898, the government aimed for deeper social and cultural integration to achieve genuine emotional and national unity. This integration strategy involved countering separatist ideas with the advantages of integration, fostering tolerance, and enabling communities to thrive based on their strengths. Through social interactions and contact with neighbouring communities, the government sought to dismantle mental isolation and build connections to overcome fear and suspicion. In making political decisions regarding the Mizo Hills, it was crucial to consider India's historical context, characterized by slow but consistent integration through centuries of cultural contact.⁵⁹⁵

Between 1966 and 1969, a significant conflict occurred in the Mizo Hills between the Indian government and the Mizo National Front (MNF), an independence movement. The Indian government implemented a strategy of clustering villages to sever the MNF's ties with civilians, given the region's challenging terrain and dense

⁵⁹⁴ "Comments on the note containing an assessment of the situation created by the hostile activities of the rebel Mizos in Assam" by Deputy Commissioner of Mizo District, 1966, File No. CB – 115, G – 1399, 427-428.

⁵⁹⁵ "Comments on the note containing an assessment of the situation created by the hostile activities of the rebel Mizos in Assam" by Deputy Commissioner of Mizo District, 431-433.

forests. This strategy was effective in forcing the MNF to relocate to neighbouring areas such as Arakan and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. From there, the MNF established camps and coordinated attacks while maintaining the Mizo Hills as the core of their movement. The MNF extended its armed operations beyond the Mizo Hills, targeting Mizo-inhabited areas in Manipur, Tripura, and Burma. These regions were integral to the MNF's broader goal of establishing a "sovereign" Mizo state through the ethnic and territorial unification of all Mizo-inhabited territories. Despite the Indian government's efforts to promote social and cultural integration, the conflict underscored the MNF's determination to achieve independence and sovereignty for the Mizo people.⁵⁹⁶ The Mizo National Front (MNF) developed a territorial map that included all regions inhabited by the Mizo people, reflecting their aspiration for a separate territory. To assert their claim, they engaged in symbolic acts like inscribing "Mizoram" on stones and placing these marked stones strategically to serve as boundary markers. These markers were intended to delineate the proposed borders of the envisioned Mizoram territories.⁵⁹⁷

By 1970, the Mizo National Front (MNF) was experiencing internal divisions between its moderate and extremist factions, which threatened the movement's effectiveness. The anticipated independence of East Pakistan endangered the MNF's security and its support from the Pakistan government. Concurrently, India's support for the Bangladesh liberation movement presented an opportunity to weaken the MNF. Within the MNF, the moderate faction known as the *Dumpawl* (Blue Group) favoured diplomatic approaches, whereas the hardliners endorsed the MNF president's decision to persist with armed conflict.⁵⁹⁸ In 1971, the political landscape of the Mizo Hills District saw the emergence of new parties, including the Socialist Party. Within the Mizo Union, a faction opposed to the Union Territory's creation formed the Mizo Labour Party in December 1971. Additionally, members returning early from the MNF movement established the Mizo Inzawmkhawm Pawl. During this time, the Mizo Union actively

⁵⁹⁶Roluahpuia, *Nationalism in the Vernacular*, 104.

⁵⁹⁷C. Zama, interview.

⁵⁹⁸Roluahpuia, *Nationalism in the Vernacular*, 105; Zama, *Zalenna Chakin Zoram A Rum*, 239-240; Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 212-215.

sought the establishment of a Mizo State, communicating this desire to the Indian Government. In July 1971, the Indian Government proposed granting Union Territory status to the Mizo Hills District. By year's end, a reorganization plan for the northeastern region was finalized, resulting in the Mizo Hills District becoming a Union Territory. On January 21, 1972, the Prime Minister of India inaugurated the Union Territory of Mizoram, marking a pivotal shift in the region's political status.⁵⁹⁹

The political landscape witnessed further development with the division of the PLRC into three separate autonomous councils – the Mara Autonomous District Council, the Lai Autonomous District Council and the Chakma Autonomous District Council.⁶⁰⁰ After the Union Territory government election in April 1972, the Mizo Union secured an overwhelming majority. By May 1972, the first Legislative Assembly was established in Mizoram, with Mr. Ch. Chhunga assuming the role of the first Chief Minister. Concurrently, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sought to bolster the Congress Party and imposed different policies and Parties deviating from her policies faced suppression. During this phase, she invited the Mizo Union's leader, encouraging them to align with the Congress Party. After extensive discussions, by January 12, 1974, the Mizo Union merged with the Congress Party, with Mr. Lal Thanhawla assuming the role of the President.⁶⁰¹

On April 28, 1975, retired Brigadier Thenphunga Sailo established the People's Conference Party as an alternative political option for those opposed to merging with the Congress Party. This development occurred amid efforts by the Congress Party to mediate between the MNF party and the Indian government. The People's Conference Party sought to address the political unrest in Mizoram through non-violent means, focusing on unifying the Mizo-inhabited regions within India under a single administration. Brigadier Sailo's platform emphasized the importance of unity among

⁵⁹⁹ Chaltuahkhuma, *Political History*, 240-242; P. Lalnithanga, IAS (Retd), *Emergence Of Mizoram* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Mizoram Publication Board, 2005), 33-35.

⁶⁰⁰ Roluahpuia, *Nationalism in the Vernacular*, 106; Chaltuahkhuma, 243.

⁶⁰¹ Lalnithanga, *Emergence Of Mizoram*, 37; Chaltuahkhuma, 251-254.

the Mizo people to resolve political tensions peacefully.⁶⁰² Brig. Thenphunga Sailo stressed the importance of unity among the Mizos to address the region's developmental lag compared to neighbouring tribal areas like Nagaland, Khasi Hills, and Garo Hills. He urged all Mizos to collaborate and participate in the People's Conference to bridge this gap. The message highlighted that similar to other Indian states, Mizos should be aware of the threat of assimilation and strive to maintain their unique ethnic, cultural, and social identity within the Indian Union. The call to action included embracing the slogan "Sons of the Soil," emphasizing the need to preserve their distinctiveness while participating actively in the national framework.⁶⁰³

The People's Conference (PC) played a crucial role as an opponent to the Congress's political ambitions in Mizoram by effectively garnering support from the "pro-MNF camp" through an emphasis on "tribal identity." This strategy led to the PC's victories in the 1978 and 1979 Assembly elections, with Brig. Thenphunga Sailo became the Chief Minister of Mizoram. However, in the election held on April 25, 1984, the Congress defeated the People's Conference. This change was primarily due to the People's Conference leaders distancing themselves from the MNF, which weakened their support base. Seizing this opportunity, the Congress, under the leadership of Lal Thanhawla, who became the Chief Minister, leveraged its position to facilitate a peaceful settlement between the underground MNF and the Central Government. The Congress's strategic move helped it gain political dominance in Mizoram, marking a shift in the state's political landscape.⁶⁰⁴

The journey toward a peaceful settlement in Mizoram began with an official announcement in New Delhi on July 1, 1976. However, the process was disrupted when the Janata Government took power in March 1977, causing a pause in peace talks with the Mizo National Front (MNF). Despite this interruption, the Congress party's steadfast commitment to restoring peace in Mizoram emphasized in their 1984 election slogans,

⁶⁰²M.C. Lalrinthanga, *Zoram Politik (1976 – 1986)* (Khatla South, Aizawl, Mizoram: MCL Publications, 2021), 23-32; Chaltuahkhuma, 254.

⁶⁰³Lalrinthanga, 35-36.

⁶⁰⁴Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 148-149; Roluahpuia, *Nationalism in the Vernacular*, 146-148; Lalrinthanga, 165; Thanglura, *Politik Lumlet Dan*, 299.

eventually yielded significant results. This commitment led to the promised resumption of peace talks, successfully initiating negotiations between the MNF and the Indian government. These efforts culminated in the signing of the historic Peace Accord on 30th June 1986 (See Photo No. 5.5).⁶⁰⁵

Figure No. 5.5: The signing of the Mizo Peace Accord, 1986



(Source: EastMojo, eastmojo.com/Mizoram/2022/06/29/the-1986-mizo-peace-accord-why-mizoram-celebrates-remna-ni/.)

The successful outcome of the peace talks was influenced by multiple factors. As the extended conflicts began to harm society, Mizo political leaders felt a responsibility to address the situation, viewing the independence movement as a distinctly Mizo Movement. The community's perception of failure to achieve the movement's goals could have been seen as a setback and a source of humiliation. Additionally, a realistic assessment of the ground realities played a crucial role. This included recognizing the strength of the Indian state and the detrimental impact of the conflict on the Mizo community. Such assessments likely persuaded leaders to engage in peace talks. Overall, the combination of societal responsibility, perceived setbacks, and a practical evaluation of the situation contributed to the decision to pursue peace negotiations.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁵Lalnithanga, *Emergence Of Mizoram*, 122; Lalrinthanga, 170-191; Nunthara, 149; EastMojo, eastmojo.com/Mizoram/2022/06/29/the-1986-mizo-peace-accord-why-mizoram-celebrates-remna-ni/.

⁶⁰⁶Lal Thanhawla (Former Chief Minister of Mizoram), interview by Lallawmkimi Ralte, December 8, 2023.

Following the Peace Accord, Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla resigned, and Laldenga became the Chief Minister, with Lal Thanhawla serving as Deputy Chief Minister. During this transition, the Prime Minister recognized the sacrifices of Lal Thanhawla and other Congress leaders in Mizoram, praising their statesmanship and patriotism that went beyond political interests. He highlighted their faith in the people of Mizoram and emphasized the necessity for a similar vision and service for the nation. The Peace Accord directly resulted in Mizoram's elevation to a full-fledged state with a 40-member Legislative Assembly. On February 20, 1987, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi officially inaugurated the new state in Aizawl. This event marked a significant transformation for Mizoram, demonstrating a commitment to the well-being of all its people (See Photo No. 5.6).⁶⁰⁷

Figure No. 5.6: Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at the inaugural function of Mizoram as statehood at Lammual, 1987



(Source: The Telegraph online, telegraphindia.com/north-east/Mizoram-celebrates-32nd-statehood-day/cid/1442593.)

⁶⁰⁷Lalnithanga, *Emergence Of Mizoram*, 149; Nunthara, *Mizoram, Society and Polity*, 151, The Telegraph online, telegraphindia.com/north-east/Mizoram-celebrates-32nd-statehood-day/cid/1442593.

The Peace Accord significantly contributed to political stability and the strengthening of Mizo identity by emphasizing cultural, ethnic, and tribal recognition, as well as promoting inclusive growth and political empowerment. These efforts fostered a stronger sense of identity among the Mizo people.⁶⁰⁸ However, some critics contend that the accord's signatories could have taken a more comprehensive approach to address Mizoram's territorial boundaries, arguing that it may have neglected certain Mizo-inhabited areas. The primary issue was that specific territorial claims might have been overlooked, potentially excluding some Mizo-populated regions. Despite these concerns, the pressing need for peace took precedence, and negotiators chose not to extensively address the reorganization of territorial boundaries.⁶⁰⁹

The involvement of Mizo-inhabited regions outside Mizoram in the MNF independence movement highlights a widespread desire for a unified Mizo identity and the aspiration for their areas to be part of a larger Mizo state. The unfulfilled outcome of these aspirations can be attributed to leadership decisions and external factors.⁶¹⁰ The exclusion of certain Mizo regions from Mizoram's boundaries may affect Mizo identity, potentially impacting how comprehensively and inclusively the Mizo people perceive their territorial and social identity. This sense of incompleteness might undermine the unity and cohesion of the Mizo community, affecting their collective identity and relationship with the newly established state.⁶¹¹ The division of territories based on external decisions, rather than the internal development of the community, reflects the lasting impact of the British "divide and rule" policy on the Mizo people's territorial, social, and political identity. This policy's influence on territorial boundaries has potentially fragmented the Mizo community, leading to challenges in achieving a cohesive and united Mizo identity.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁸C. Chawngkunga, interview

⁶⁰⁹Lal Thanhawla, interview.

⁶¹⁰Laldova, interview

⁶¹¹Romawia, interview.

⁶¹²Dr. Lalramchuani Sena Samuelson (Retired Professor), interview by Lallawmkimi Ralte, December 22, 2023.

The evolving perception of Mizo identity is exemplified by changes in the nomenclature of their habitat. The transformation from Lushai Hills District to Mizo Hills District, and ultimately to Mizoram, marks a shift from tribal identification to a broader territorial identity. The term “Mizo,” meaning “people of the hills,” encompasses both the people and the geographical landscape. The adoption of the name Mizoram in 1972 represents a significant change in Mizo self-identification, emphasizing a connection to a specific macro-geographical area rather than previous identifications focused on individual villages or chiefs. This change highlights the Mizo people’s growing perception of their identity within a wider territorial context, indicating a move towards a more inclusive understanding of Mizo identity that incorporates both tribal relationships and shared geographical space.⁶¹³

The post-colonial development of Mizoram showcases a significant evolution linked with the rise of political consciousness. British consolidation in the Lushai Hills marked a transformative era, drastically altering the social structure and fabric of the local population. This period saw the cessation of head-hunting practices, the reduction of inter-village rivalries, and the creation of a unified administrative unit, which fostered peace and cooperation. Under British rule, clear territorial boundaries were established, granting chiefs and their people greater control over their territories. However, this administrative reorganization reduced the chiefs’ power, as they were transformed into instruments under British authority. The Chief’s Conference became a vital platform for communication and collaboration among tribes, enhancing unity. The political awakening among the people led to opposition against British policies and a perception of chiefs as colonial agents. Despite integrating into the administrative system, the chiefs experienced a decline in authority, reflecting the complex dynamics of Mizoram’s post-colonial trajectory.

The emergence of political consciousness in Mizoram indeed played a crucial role in shaping its path toward self-determination and statehood. As the people of Mizoram began to assert their identity, moving away from the external influences of

⁶¹³Pachauau, *Being Mizo*, 127.

colonial rule and traditional chieftainship, they fostered a more inclusive and unified identity. Following the Peace Accords, which marked a significant turning point, Mizoram's recognition as a full-fledged state in 1987 symbolized not only political stability but also the consolidation of the Mizo identity within the broader context of India. This transition to statehood was a culmination of the struggles for democratic governance, the abolition of traditional chieftainship, and the efforts to forge a collective identity among diverse tribal communities, ultimately contributing to Mizoram's recognition and representation at the national level.

The transformation of the name from Lushai Hills District to Mizo Hills District, and finally to Mizoram, indeed reflects a significant evolution in the perception of Mizo identity. This nomenclature change marks a shift from a primarily tribal and localized identification towards a broader, more unified territorial identity. The term "Mizo," translating to "people of the hills," signifies an integration of both the people and their geographical environment, underscoring a collective identity that transcends individual villages or traditional chieftainships.

The adoption of "Mizoram" in 1972 symbolizes a pivotal moment in Mizo's self-identification. It indicates a move towards recognizing and embracing a macro-geographical identity that encompasses diverse tribal communities under a unified banner. This shift highlights the Mizo people's growing understanding of their identity within a larger territorial context, suggesting a more inclusive and cohesive sense of belonging that integrates tribal affiliations with a shared geographical space. The change in nomenclature is emblematic of the broader socio-political transformations in the region, as it reflects the Mizo community's efforts to forge a collective identity that aligns with their aspirations for self-determination and democratic governance.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Historical exploration of pre-colonial Mizo society provides essential insights into their indigenous lifestyle before British colonial rule and its impact. Oral traditions were pivotal, serving as a rich repository of cosmological beliefs, historical narratives, and spatial awareness. Like many indigenous communities, the Mizos utilised oral traditions extensively to transmit knowledge, cultural practices, and worldviews across generations.

The Mizo oral traditions serve as dynamic connections between generations, preserving information and shaping cultural identity. They convey origin stories, heroic deeds, and significant historical events through myths, legends, and folktales. These narratives often include spatial elements detailing landscapes, territories, and sacred sites of cultural importance. Oral transmission has been crucial for maintaining the Mizos' collective memory, encompassing migrations, territorial expansions, and interactions with neighbouring communities. This method of communication fosters a shared understanding of their history, with concepts of space and territorial boundaries defining their geographical and cultural domain. The oral traditions of the Mizo are vital in both preserving their past and guiding their future, highlighting their role as evolving threads that connect generations.

The territorial factors became involved in the structure of pre-colonial Mizo society, alongside their nomadic lifestyle due to *jhumming* practices. Oral traditions were crucial in preserving and transmitting knowledge about migrations, the chiefs' authority in selecting settlement sites, and the superstitions tied to celestial or environmental signs. Here, proverbs and folktales served as guidelines, emphasising the importance of respecting boundaries and acknowledging the natural world's influence on their lives.

In pre-colonial Mizo society, territorial factors played a significant role alongside their nomadic lifestyle, primarily influenced by *jhumming* practices. The Mizos relied heavily on oral traditions to preserve and transmit essential knowledge about their migrations, the authority of chiefs in selecting settlement sites, and the superstitions related to celestial or environmental signs. Proverbs and folktales were integral to these traditions as guidelines emphasising respecting boundaries and

acknowledging the natural world's influence on their lives. These oral traditions not only helped maintain the societal structure and cultural practices but also reinforced their deep connection with the land and environment, which was central to their identity and way of life.

Pre-colonial Mizo society was intricately linked to its natural environment, showcasing a deep understanding of its existence. The cultural practices of the Mizos were closely tied to celestial observations and natural events, underscoring their symbiotic relationship with their surroundings. This connection not only enhances our understanding of Mizo history but also offers valuable insights into sustainable living and the significant influence of the environment on cultural development. The Mizos, being intimately connected with their environment, shared knowledge about sustainable practices, seasonal cycles, and the use of natural resources. This spatial awareness was essential for their survival and prosperity, directing their agricultural practices and nomadic lifestyle.

Mizo society, structured around chieftainship, displayed a deep sense of unity across families, clans, and villages. Their nomadic way of life, influenced by shifting cultivation, reflected a harmonious adaptation to the environmental constraints and requirements. The emphasis on territorial boundaries, both physically and symbolically, highlighted their recognition of the importance of delineations for their protection and welfare. This careful attention to territorial boundaries demonstrated a clear understanding of the necessity for distinctions for resource management, cultural identity, and security.

The Mizo's oral traditions were instrumental in transmitting knowledge about these boundaries, encompassing physical landscapes and symbolic realms. This dual emphasis on territorial delineations underscores their understanding of the importance of clear distinctions for practical survival and cultural heritage preservation. These practices and beliefs contributed to a strong sense of unity and identity within families, clans, and villages, highlighting the intricate relationship between the Mizos and their environment.

The economic strategies of the Mizos, which included hunting and raiding neighbouring areas, provide valuable insights into their pre-colonial ways of life. The differentiation between raiding and head-hunting, along with their underlying

motivations, highlights unique cultural aspects and historical contexts of their economic activities and inter-community conflicts. Additionally, the broad territorial claims made by Mizo chiefs and their views on boundaries emphasised the authority of chiefs over particular villages and the constraints imposed by external forces like British colonialism and neighbouring monarchs. Examining the Mizos' economic and territorial practices offers a deeper understanding of their societal structure, inter-community relationships, and the challenges they faced in maintaining autonomy amidst increasing external pressures.

Natural influences, particularly celestial observations and environmental phenomena, profoundly shaped pre-colonial Mizo society. Their cosmological understanding, exemplified by narratives surrounding the Pleiades and interpretations of meteor sightings, revealed a deep connection of celestial events with daily life. This intimate connection to the cosmos informed the Mizos' perception of seasons, passage of time, and interpretation of propitious or ominous occurrences, demonstrating a sophisticated relationship between their cultural practices and the natural world. Using animals in rituals to decide on an appropriate settlement site highlights the profound connection between their cultural traditions and the natural environment. This ritualistic practice reflects a belief system that acknowledges the interconnectedness of human existence with the broader ecosystem and an intimate understanding of the environment's influence on their lives. This harmony was practical and spiritual, as evidenced by the belief in the symbolic significance of certain events.

The pre-colonial Mizo belief system also adhered to animistic beliefs, recognising various spirits and a supreme being, *Pathian*. Their rituals, guided by priests, involved sacrificial offerings, emphasising the interconnectedness between their lives' spiritual and material aspects. The Mizo's perception of the afterlife, with *Mitthi Khua*, the lower realm and *Pialral*, the upper realm, reflected their aspirations for spiritual elevation and a continuation of existence beyond the physical realm. The detailed narratives of the soul's journey after death, passing through specific landmarks and encountering challenges bring Mizo's spatial consciousness to light. Place names, routes to *Mitthi Khua*, and encounters with entities like Pawla defined a structured perception of space linked to their ideas about the afterlife. However, the

colonial period marked a transformative period in Mizo history. External influences, including Christianity, introduced changes in belief systems, cultural practices, governance, and economic structures. The colonial era reshaped the Mizo society, impacting its traditional cosmology and way of life. It marked a pivotal moment in Mizo history and contributed to the ongoing discourse on the impact of external forces on local societies.

Before the arrival of the British, the Lushai Hills was home to an ethnically diverse population, including various tribes and communities like the Kukis, Chins, and Lushais, each contributing to a complex socio-political landscape. Pre-colonial Mizo society had experienced a high degree of autonomy, with governance systems centred around their chiefs and community-based decision-making. Their practice of shifting cultivation, known as *jhumming*, required them to relocate frequently, which was integral to their lifestyle and closely tied to their environment and cosmological beliefs. This nomadic lifestyle facilitated a deep understanding of their natural surroundings and was maintained through oral traditions that preserved collective memory and historical narratives.

The region's largely uncharted status in the 18th century is highlighted by Major James Rennell's Provincial Maps of 1774, which were among the first attempts to map the area systematically. These maps aimed to fill in knowledge gaps about the region's geography, particularly its rivers and topography, and were motivated by the military and strategic interests of the British Empire. The mapping efforts were part of broader colonial strategies to exert control over the region and integrate it into the colonial framework, eventually disrupting the traditional Mizo way of life.

The British expansion into north-eastern India, driven by commercial interests such as tea plantations, inevitably led to conflicts with the politically autonomous hill tribes, including the Mizos. These tribes had long maintained a self-sufficient lifestyle, were deeply connected to their environment, and were reliant on *jhumming* (slash-and-burn agriculture) and other traditional practices. Concerns over raids on the plains and the perceived alliances between local rulers and hill tribes initially fueled the Mizos' interactions with the British. Despite these tensions, the Mizos engaged in trade and barter with neighbouring tribes, facilitating economic

exchanges that created a system of mutual dependence between the hills and plains. The trade primarily involved forest products and agricultural goods, vital for the sustenance of the hill tribes and the plains dwellers.

Conflicts and raids, however, were not uncommon, often triggered by territorial disputes and resource competition. In their pursuit of sustenance and territorial security, the Mizos occasionally conducted raids on neighbouring lands, seeking loot and slaves. These actions were partly driven by the need to protect their traditional hunting grounds and the fear of starvation, exacerbated by the expanding British commercial activities in the region. As the British encroached upon their territories, the Mizos faced unprecedented challenges. The disruption of their traditional way of life and economic practices posed a significant threat to their self-sufficiency and harmony with nature. The British imposition of new administrative boundaries, the introduction of a cash economy, and the manipulation of local governance further compounded these challenges, leading to a period of significant upheaval and transformation in Mizo society.

A complex interplay of economic, cultural and religious motives characterised pre-colonial Mizo raids into their surrounding plain areas. While economic gain was a primary driver, these raids' cultural and spiritual significance added complexity to their execution. The profound cultural importance of acquiring human heads was critical in this complex nature. These trophies transcended mere material value, holding sacred and symbolic significance within the Mizo belief system. This fusion of material and spiritual elements in their raiding practices offers deep insights into a worldview where the tangible and intangible aspects of existence are inextricably linked.

A complex mix of economic, cultural, and religious motivations drove pre-colonial Mizo raids into nearby plains. Although economic gain was a primary factor, the cultural and spiritual significance of these raids added layers of complexity. Central to this complexity was the cultural importance of acquiring human heads, which held sacred and symbolic value far beyond their material worth within the Mizo belief system. This practice highlights a worldview where material and spiritual elements were profoundly interconnected, offering insights into how

the Mizo people perceived the link between tangible and intangible aspects of existence.

Before 1844, interactions between the Mizos and the British were limited. As colonial explorations and surveys increased, the British faced challenges due to the region's fluid boundaries. Their initial attempts to establish control were unsuccessful, highlighted by an early expedition that met with strong resistance from local tribes. These struggles emphasised the colonial administration's limited understanding of the region's complex demographic setting and the challenges of engaging effectively with its inhabitants. The British difficulties in implementing comprehensive measures underscore the complicated socio-political fabric of the Lushai Hills and the resilience of its populace.

The geographical features of the Lushai Hills, characterised by rugged terrain, dense forests, and elevated landscapes, served as a natural fortress, offering strategic refuge against external threats. This challenging topography, with its difficult accessibility, provided ideal defensive positions, attracting not only monarchs and rulers evading capture or persecution but also fugitives and rebels from the lowlands. The convergence of diverse groups in the hills often fostered unexpected alliances and collaborations among tribes. The Maharaja of Tripura's purported sovereignty over adjacent regions, including parts of the Lushai Hills, shaped British perceptions, leading to suspicions of his involvement in tribal raids. Consequently, the British, under the assumption that these hill tribes were subjects of the Maharaja, initiated punitive actions against them, further complicating the region's political scene.

British territorial expansion and shifting frontiers intensified their complex interactions with the Mizos. Efforts to consolidate control included establishing fortified villages and surveying the region. Driven by frontier insecurity, the British launched expeditions, culminating in a significant failure in 1869 that damaged their prestige and prompted a shift towards conciliation. This conciliatory approach, however, inadvertently reinforced Mizo's perceptions of British weakness, potentially influencing future engagements. This period marked a clash of divergent governance, territory, and authority perspectives as the British, motivated by economic interests, sought external administrative control into traditional Mizo lands. The resulting conflict of interests laid the groundwork for a complex and often

turbulent relationship between the colonial power and the indigenous communities, characterised by the British desire for effective administration and the Mizos' resistance to external control.

The clash between British colonial ambitions and Mizo independent thought was rooted in fundamentally different worldviews and socio-economic structures. While the British sought to extend their administrative control for economic gain, the Mizos, organised into self-governing village communities led by chiefs, held a deep, identity-forming connection to their land. The expansion of British territories, particularly tea plantations, encroached upon Mizo hunting grounds, triggering tensions and conflicts. Mizo raids, perceived by the British as acts of aggression requiring suppression, were often defensive responses to protect their autonomy and traditional way of life. This conflict reflected competing territorial and economic interests and clashing cultural perspectives on governance and authority. The British imposition of boundaries and policies that undermined traditional Mizo practices exacerbated unrest, leading to a cycle of resistance and punitive expeditions. Such complicated interaction resulted from each side operating from vastly different conceptions of land, sovereignty, and social order.

Mizo raids persisted despite British negotiations and agreements, challenging colonial efforts. The British struggled to gather accurate intelligence on Mizo activities and movements, often failing to identify the specific tribes responsible for attacks. These coordinated raids, involving multiple groups, demonstrated a collective resistance to British influence and a firm assertion of Mizo's territorial independence. British responses ranged from military expeditions to diplomatic efforts, such as the 1871 *Sunnud* agreement, to establish peace. However, these measures often proved ineffective, revealing the British underestimation of Mizo resistance capabilities, which they dismissively labelled as "primitive." Even after reaching agreements, continued Mizo raids highlighted the inherent instability in a region with conflicting aspirations. The British justified their intervention by labelling the Mizos "uncivilised," positioning the British administration as a civilising force.

Mizo raids extended beyond Cachar to include Sylhet, Tripura, and Manipur, complicating the geopolitical landscape and hindering peaceful resolutions. In

response, the British launched punitive expeditions, notably in 1871-1872, with the objectives of punishing the raiding tribes, freeing British captives, and fostering friendly relations. Confident in the effectiveness of these punitive measures, the British aimed to demonstrate their military dominance while collecting essential information about the region, including triangulation and surveying efforts, and providing the British with crucial geographical data for military and administrative purposes. This information facilitated effective control, resource utilisation, and strategic planning in the region, contributing to the broader colonial goal of exerting influence and establishing order in this complex frontier zone. Ultimately, these expeditions represented a comprehensive strategy for colonial expansion, blending military force, intelligence gathering, and cartographic expertise to solidify British control over Mizo-inhabited territories.

British strategies for managing the Mizo territories evolved from initial defensive postures to more comprehensive control measures. Early policies focused on frontier defence and limited tribal interaction, shifting towards permanent occupation and subjugation of the Lushai Hills. Concurrently, the British adopted conciliatory approaches that balanced trade expansion with punitive capabilities. They established markets in the Lushai Hills, serving multiple purposes: facilitating communication, exerting economic influence, and gathering information. These markets and the introduction of a cash economy fundamentally altered Mizo's economic practices, transitioning from traditional barter to a monetised system. Education initiatives, emphasising practical skills, were deployed to enhance Mizo's capabilities and integration. Crucially, the British employed a "divide and rule" strategy, leveraging certain chiefs as intermediaries to manipulate societal authority. This many-sided approach – combining economic transformation, educational initiatives, and political manipulation – allowed the British to gradually assert control over the region while exploiting internal divisions among the communities.

British colonial control in the Lushai Hills depended on a comprehensive geographical exploration and territorial manipulation strategy. Triangulation and surveying efforts, far from being mere technical exercises, were deeply embedded in colonial ideology and imperial identity. These cartographic endeavours served dual purposes – mapping the region and asserting control through establishing territorial

boundaries. The British approach to spatial governance became a crucial instrument to their expansionist agenda, with boundary delineation becoming a critical tool for exerting authority. Survey processes to create coherent boundaries often prioritised British interests over local perspectives. Negotiations with Mizo chiefs were conducted from a position of presumed imperial superiority, reflecting the British mindset that viewed territorial control as paramount. This complex interplay of geographical knowledge, boundary manipulation, and ideological dominance formed the cornerstone of British spatial control in the Lushai Hills, exemplifying the complex relationship between cartography, colonialism, and power structure in shaping the region's political landscape.

Comprehensive surveying efforts on boundary delineation fundamentally shaped British colonial spatial control in the Lushai Hills. These endeavours, however, were complicated by the Mizos' distinct political and cultural concepts of territory. Colonial boundary disputes and adjustments often prioritised British interests over geographical or cultural considerations, demonstrating a pragmatic approach to territorial manipulation. The colonial government's flexibility in altering boundaries to favour defensive positions highlights their commitment to administrative efficiency over rigid demarcations. River mapping emerged as a crucial aspect of these surveys, highlighting the waterways' pivotal role in regional geography and transportation. Recognising the importance of infrastructure in effective governance, the British proposed an extensive network of roads and bridle paths to enhance connectivity across the challenging terrain. This multidimensional approach to spatial management – combining cartographic knowledge, flexible boundary policies, and infrastructure development – exemplified the British strategy for consolidating control over the Lushai Hills region.

The British colonial administration viewed the Mizos as subjects requiring governance and control. They asserted authority over territories and inhabitants, making unilateral decisions with little regard for local perspectives or customs. Colonial surveys reflect a sense of British superiority, positioning locals as subjects requiring administration. By manipulating boundaries, the British created community divisions and exploited internal rivalries. They empowered favoured chiefs and gave special treatment to certain areas, fostering divisions that facilitated

colonial control. Boundary adjustments accommodated indigenous political systems only insofar as they served British administrative needs. The primary goal was establishing control rather than respecting local political and cultural identities.

At the same time, the surveys revealed flaws in the existing boundary system, prompting strong recommendations on establishing accurate and practical boundaries, which demonstrated the British commitment to improving administrative structures for better spatial control. The rapid expansion of tea plantations in the late 19th century and the territory claimed by the neighbouring monarch, like the Maharaja of Tripura, encroached and affected the Mizos' customary land use. These led to the economic marginalisation and disruption of their claimed land, which was subjected to economic exploitation as the British policies favoured economic development and territorial control at the expense of the rights and well-being of the Mizos. The Mizos sought to defend their ancestral lands and resist external encroachments. They viewed the British as intruders disrupting their traditional way of life and threatening their aspirations for autonomy and self-determination.

On the other hand, the British aimed to consolidate territorial control, promote economic interests, and maintain regional dominance. The British response to Mizo raids, notably the punitive expedition of 1889, showcased the dominant authority at the scene. The British, deploying their force to seek retribution, asserted their military superiority over the Mizos. The deposing of Mizo chiefs and the imposition of fines illustrated the nature of the colonial power, where the British authority punished the indigenous leaders for alleged violations. The Mizos, like other "non-state peoples," experienced socio-economic upheaval and cultural landscape alterations due to these hegemonic practices as British authorities held varying views on Mizo's economic conditions and actions, leading to debates about potential annexation and direct governance. Some officials claimed that the Mizos used to raid due to poverty, which influenced discussions on territorial control. Initially, the British subsidised the Mizos through trade to maintain communication and gather information. However, as trade declined and *jhum* lands depleted, Mizos restored to raiding neighbouring territories in response to economic challenges, prompting British reconsideration of their regional governance approach.

Declining trade and Mizo economic struggles prompted a shift in British strategy. Officials feared continued assistance would be seen as a weakness, potentially encouraging the Mizos. They advocated for force. Instead, the British urged the use of force and punishment to put off the Mizos' inclination towards plundering and raiding. The British recognised Mizo unity as a potential threat, noting their ability to unite against familiar foes despite inter-tribal conflicts. When the 1889 expedition failed to control raiding fully, the British launched the Chin-Lushai Expedition (1889 – 1890). This operation aimed to punish raiders, rescue captives, establish posts, and construct roads, successfully consolidating control over the Lushai Hills. The military operations had significant administrative consequences, establishing two separate districts – the North Lushai Hills and South Lushai Hills, to enhance governance and facilitate British colonial administration.

The historical events in the Lushai Hills during the late nineteenth century provide a lens through which one can see the British colonial strategies employed in governing their expanding empire. The British sought to create divisions among various ethnic groups to justify and maintain power, altering existing social systems and causing demographic shifts. These disruptions aimed to weaken indigenous structures and foster dependency on colonial authorities. Simultaneously, the British administration continued to acknowledge the need for accurate geographical information about the poorly explored Lushai Hills, prompting discussions about deploying survey parties to produce updated maps. As these survey discussions unfolded, the British administration raised concerns about the Lushai Hills' amalgamation, in which political and financial considerations played a crucial role in these deliberations. Both the First and Second Chin-Lushai conferences also recognised the imperative of obtaining accurate geographical information. They recommended a topographical survey for future administration and territorial arrangements in the Lushai Hills.

The decision to initiate a topographical survey in the Lushai Hills reflects the colonial administration's strategic planning and logistical considerations during the late 19th century. With the impending transfer of the South Lushai Hills to Assam and the potential implications for communication between the North and South Lushai Hills, the suggestion to commence the survey indicates a thoughtful approach

to addressing future administrative challenges. The process involves multiple parties, including the Surveyor General, local governments, and relevant Bengal, Assam and Burma departments. The Surveyor General recommended that the topographical survey of the entire Lushai Hills be considered a single project, given that the region is a continuous tract. The Surveyor General recommended No.14 Survey Party, which specialised in topographical surveys, for the task, acknowledging the need for skilled personnel to navigate the challenging Lushai Hills terrain and produce accurate results.

In March 1898, the North and South Lushai Hills were consolidated into a single administrative unit, the Lushai Hills, to improve governance and regional management. British authorities, acknowledging the significance of clearly delineated boundaries, launched surveys to establish the limits of the newly consolidated administrative units. However, this process faced challenges due to the Lushai people's nomadic lifestyle and shifting cultivation practices (*jhumming*), which complicated the establishment of permanent boundaries. The British struggled to find a practical demarcation method that the mobile population would respect. They considered rivers as potential demarcation lines, offering a more sensible option, but this approach was not universally applicable due to geographical limitations. These challenges in defining clear boundaries highlighted the complexities of administering regions with diverse cultural practices and geographical features, prompting British authorities to consider specific approaches to boundary demarcation.

British colonial administration transformed the physical and cultural landscapes of the Mizos, altering their traditional worldview and identity. Before Lushai Hill's formal establishment, frontier conflicts arose due to competition over resources, such as rubber and tea gardens' expansion. The British responded by enacting the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, known as the Inner Line Regulation. The imposition of the Inner Line Regulation had significant consequences for the Mizos, as it restricted their mobility and access to resources. This regulation was part of the British colonial strategy to manage and control the movement of people within certain areas, ostensibly to protect indigenous communities from external influences but also to assert colonial authority.

For the Mizos, who had traditionally led a nomadic lifestyle heavily influenced by *jhumming* (shifting cultivation), these restrictions represented a major shift. The regulation limited their ability to migrate freely, which had been a key aspect of their cultural and economic life, as it allowed them to move in response to agricultural needs and environmental changes. By constraining this mobility, the British effectively forced the Mizos into more sedentary settlements, altering their relationship with the land and environment and impacting their traditional agricultural practices.

Moreover, the restriction on movement and access to land and resources also meant that the Mizos had to adapt to a new socio-economic structure imposed by the colonial administration. This included changes in governance and the introduction of a cash economy, which further entrenched sedentary living as communities became more fixed in place. Over time, these changes contributed to a transformation in Mizo society as they navigated the challenges of maintaining their cultural identity and autonomy within the confines of imposed colonial boundaries.

The Inner Line was a strategy to create a controlled, isolated space, separating Mizos from neighbouring tribes. This distinction influenced Mizos' perceptions of land ownership and control, affecting their society's social, economic, and political aspects. By restricting outsider entry, the Inner Line also served to preserve Mizo cultural customs and traditions, reducing external influences and fostering a more robust sense of Mizo identity.

The historical transformation of spatial dynamics in the Lushai Hills region during the late 19th and early 20th centuries reveals complex administrative challenges, border disputes, and changing standpoints on territorial demarcation. Establishing a Boundary Commission demonstrated a proactive approach to resolving boundary issues, with the subsequent approval of demarcated boundaries demonstrating a commitment to clear territorial divisions. However, persistent challenges emerged in undefined regions. Proposals for joint demarcation efforts highlighted the recognised need to involve local tribes and communities in the settlement process. Differing opinions on including or excluding regions within the Lushai Hills prompted proposals for amendments and joint inquiries, reflecting a commitment to practical solutions and avoiding possible conflicts arising from

unclear or vague territorial demarcations. The decision to conduct a fresh survey highlights the nuanced nature of boundary delineation, acknowledging past mistakes and adopting an updated approach for precise demarcation.

The Lushai Hills' geographical transformations reflect terrain complexities and administrative challenges in shaping boundaries amidst diverse tribal communities—appropriate territorial boundaries involve detailed surveying, administrative decisions, and social considerations. The creation of the “Excluded” area, including the Lushai Hills, emerged as a colonial policy with dual objectives: isolating tribal communities from the Indian National Movement while protecting them from exploitation and assimilation. However, the Lushai people's aspirations for a better future and autonomy added complexity to colonial administration. This desire for self-determination indicated a distinct political consciousness among the Lushai, suggesting they were not mere colonial subjects but communities seeking to shape their political destiny. The colonial administration attempted to create a framework balancing these aspirations with the need for British control, reflecting the complex interplay between local aspirations and colonial governance in the region.

The spatial arrangement system implemented by J. Shakespear in the Lushai Hills significantly altered traditional land use practices. Before this, land ownership was fluid, based on customary practices, with chiefs influencing large territories rather than distinct ownership. The new system introduced defined land ownership with specific boundaries allocated to each Chief, transitioning from a communal, flexible system to individualised ownership. This change restricted the traditional mobility of Lushai Hills inhabitants, expecting communities to settle within allocated territories. The shift from flexible land use to a settled system transformed the people's relationship with the land, reshaped social structures, and presented new challenges and opportunities. The transition from customary practices to a defined boundary system affected the landscape and the communities' relationship with their land.

The British administration integrated traditional chiefs into local governance to enhance control, granting them authority to maintain order and resolve disputes within their territories. Though chiefs retained substantial autonomy, they were supervised by the Superintendent to ensure compliance with British governance

standards. The Circle Administration system was introduced, grouping villages into administrative units, with chiefs overseeing these Circles and collaborating with colonial authorities. Interpreters and Chaprasis acted as intermediaries to facilitate communication between British officials, chiefs, and locals. This system aimed to balance traditional leadership with colonial administration. However, the British imposition of boundaries and administrative structures challenged indigenous autonomy, leading to a loss of control over their territories. The introduction of external constructs, such as maps and administrative divisions, affected their cultural independence and altered their perception of identity.

The colonial restructuring of the Lushai Hills led to substantial changes in traditional customs and belief systems. Christian missionaries, accompanying British rule, aimed to replace indigenous beliefs with Christian doctrines, significantly altering the cosmology of Lushai communities. This shift replaced animistic and nature-centric beliefs with Christian teachings, impacting traditional spiritual practices, sacred locations, and ceremonial rites. However, the transition was not entirely absolute, as communities often blended indigenous practices with the new Christian structures, creating a reconciliation of traditional and colonial elements. Christianity provided an alternative spiritual path that was more accessible and inclusive, eliminating the need for traditional practices like attaining *Thangchhuah* status. This religious transformation profoundly affected cultural identity, redefining the spiritual landscapes and practices in the Lushai Hills.

The consolidation of British rule in the Lushai Hills initiated substantial socio-cultural and political transformations, fostering unity and a collective identity among the locals. The cessation of head-hunting practices significantly reduced inter-village conflicts, thereby enhancing community relations. Although the colonial authorities maintained the institution of chieftainship, they introduced reforms to align traditional structures with colonial objectives. This strategy gradually integrated the chiefs into the colonial governance framework. Chieftainship, once a symbol of traditional leadership and cultural identity, was redefined as chiefs assumed administrative duties that supported colonial agendas. This transformation led to local resentment, progressively undermining chiefly authority and contributing to their eventual decline. The resistance to these changes highlights the enduring

challenges posed by the colonial legacy in shaping the socio-political landscape of the region. The erosion of traditional leadership structures under colonial influence underscores the complexities of navigating post-colonial identity and governance issues in the Lushai Hills.

The people of the Lushai Hills showcased remarkable resilience and adaptability amidst colonial challenges. Under British rule, they experienced a complex legacy characterised by the tension between tradition and colonial influences. While the British introduced hospitals, education, and new social norms, creating opportunities for advancement, they also imposed negative aspects like forced labour and taxation. This multifaceted past left a lasting impact on the region. The community's pursuit of education outside the hills fostered a growing political consciousness and resistance to perceived collaboration with colonial powers. This shift in education, modernisation, and political aspirations facilitated the transition from traditional chiefdoms to a more democratic and politically aware society. External factors, including British colonial policies and the broader political context of British India, significantly contributed to this transformation.

Political awareness in the Lushai Hills began to take shape in the 1920s, driven by an educated elite who challenged traditional values and existing political structures under British rule. The British governance model, which relied on Chiefs, encountered increasing opposition as political consciousness grew among the people. Establishing bodies like the Chief's Council and groups like the Young Lushai Association (later the Young Mizo Association) signalled a shift towards organised political representation. These developments set the stage for the formation of the Mizo Union Party, a pivotal moment in the region's political history.

In 1946, the Lushai Hills District Conference introduced democratic principles on land ownership rights. However, the British aimed to retain imperial control, as seen in efforts to keep the region under the Crown Colony. The political landscape became more complex with the emergence of factions like the Mizo Union Council and the United Mizo Freedom Organisation, reflecting ideological divides. External influences, including talks on merging Burma and Assam Tribal areas and creating a Crown Colony of Eastern Agency, further shaped the discourse. The Constituent Assembly's incorporation of the Sixth Schedule in the Draft Constitution, guided by

the Bordoloi Committee and Dr B.R. Ambedkar, aimed to integrate the hill tribes into India while preserving their cultural uniqueness.

Following the formation of India's Constitution, the Sixth Schedule facilitated the creation of autonomous districts to support tribal areas based on recommendations from the Bordoloi Committee. This initiative aimed to address the socio-political conditions of these regions. Consequently, the Lushai Hills District Council was established in 1952, followed by the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in 1953. Alongside these councils, Village Councils were formed to assist with local administration. Political parties, notably the Mizo Union, were strong proponents of regional autonomy, aligning with broader democratic ideals. This push for autonomy was driven by the desire to empower local populations in self-governance, ensuring that decision-making resonated with Mizo's interests and values. Establishing these councils and advocating for autonomy were significant steps towards integrating democratic principles with local cultural and social contexts. This effort aimed to enhance self-governance among tribal communities, reflecting a broader movement towards empowering local populations and aligning governance with indigenous values and interests.

The Mizo Union actively participated in the democratic process by contesting elections and securing seats in the District Council to represent the Mizo community's interests. Their involvement challenged traditional authorities and highlighted the need for a more egalitarian and modern political framework. This period saw significant legal changes, including the Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Act of 1954, amended in 1955, which legally ended Mizo chieftainship. Power was transferred from the chiefs to the Mizo District Council and the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, marking a major shift in power structures. Concurrently, efforts were made to redefine the region's identity. The District Council proposed renaming Lushai Hills "Mizoram District" to reflect the region's tribal diversity better. Despite complexities and discussions regarding the most suitable name, the region was eventually renamed from Lushai Hills to Mizo District, signifying a symbolic and practical acknowledgement of the area's diverse cultural identity.

Renaming Lushai Hills to Mizo District was an inclusive strategy to unify diverse communities under a comprehensive Mizo identity. This effort reflected the complexities of identity formation and sought to represent a broader cultural and ethnic spectrum. The Mizo Union played a significant role in this transformation, advocating for the renaming and fostering of support that mirrored a shift in consciousness and a quest for recognition. Their memorandum highlighted the contributions of various tribes to the Mizo community, emphasising shared cultural ties. Colonial administrative actions, particularly taxation-related, formalised certain clans and tribes as part of the Mizo identity. This quest for recognition involved navigating cultural, linguistic, historical, and geographical boundaries. However, there were criticisms regarding the exclusion of Mizo communities from Manipur, Tripura, Cachar, and Bangladesh, underscoring the challenges of defining Mizo identity across geographical limits. These challenges were exacerbated by colonial administrative decisions that divided Mizo-inhabited regions among different territories, shaping the geographical boundaries of the Mizo community. This division has contributed to ongoing debates about inclusion and exclusion within the Mizo identity, illustrating the lasting impact of colonial territorial control.

The historical territorial losses from colonial interventions fragmented Mizo-inhabited areas, leading to a strong desire for reclamation and unification. Post-chieftainship, the region experienced a complex transition marked by adaptation to new governance structures, internal conflicts, and economic challenges. The Mizo Union, the primary political entity, faced internal divisions while other political groups emerged. The imposition of Assamese as the official language further complicated the political landscape. During the late 1950s, significant political realignments occurred, with discussions about establishing a Hill State. The emergence of the Mizo State movement, seeking separation from the Assam Government, reflected the evolving political aspirations of the Mizo people. A broader movement for autonomy characterised this transformative period, forming a distinct identity and establishing democratic governance structures. These changes marked a significant shift in the socio-political nature of the region, highlighting the Mizo people's pursuit of greater autonomy and self-determination. The early 1960s

was a pivotal period for the Mizo people, marked by heightened political unrest and a strong push for autonomy.

The *Mautam* famine of 1959-60 played a crucial role in this movement, as it exposed the vulnerabilities of the Mizo community and the perceived neglect by the Indian government. The famine, caused by the cyclical flowering of bamboo and the subsequent rat boom, led to widespread food shortages and economic hardship. The government's inadequate response to this crisis amplified the dissatisfaction among the Mizo people, who felt marginalised within the state of Assam. This discontent fueled a growing desire for a distinct territorial and administrative identity separate from Assam. Various political parties and movements emerged, advocating for Mizo rights and the establishment of a separate Hill State. The demand for autonomy was not just about political self-determination but also a response to the broader socio-economic challenges faced by the community.

As a result, political leaders and parties rallied around the cause of independence, seeing it as a necessary step to address the region's issues and ensure the well-being of the Mizo people. This period of political mobilisation laid the groundwork for future movements and ultimately contributed to establishing Mizoram as a separate state, culminating in the Peace Accord of 1986. The complex interplay between the famine's impact and the broader political aspirations of the Mizo people significantly shaped the region's history and its quest for self-governance.

The transition from distinct tribal identities to a broader territorial identity indicated a more inclusive perspective of Mizo identity, as reflected by changing terminology. This shift coincided with a growing political awareness among the Mizo people, who increasingly opposed perceived injustices and colonial legacies. Cultural, ethnic, and tribal factors became essential in mobilising communities, with elements like ethnicity, culture, and language as vital unifying forces for political causes. However, excluding certain Mizo-inhabited regions from within Mizoram's boundaries affected perceptions of completeness and inclusiveness, potentially impacting the unity and cohesion of the broader Mizo community.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX No.1

Colonel Lister's accounts of Suakpuilala's declaration and negotiations with him

He states that the Lushye territory extends seven days' march to the south of his village, and that there are in all ten rajas, of whom he is the acknowledged chief. If this be true, the chieftainship must be an hereditary dignity, and not depending simply on the power of the individual exercising it, as he acknowledges that both Boottai (the chief of the most southern village) and Barmooeelin can bring more fighting men into the field than himself,

All the rivers running into the Barak from the south take their rise far in the Lushai country, and are, with exceptions, navigable for small boats to a considerable distance. The Dullasuree, for instance, to within one march of Sookpilal's village. Strange to say, they know nothing of any rivers running towards the south.

Their fighting population is almost entirely composed of men when they call Chillings, belonging to the country to the south end of their position, distant about seven day's march from their most southern village, and extending, as they report, to the frontier of Burmah. The people of this country, which they call Poee, are described as a powerful tribe, to whom they pay a yearly tribute and acknowledge a sort of allegiance. Two of these Chillings accompanied the raja; they were stout, well-made men, strongly resembling the Burmese and very unlike the Kookies. They were armed with good serviceable flint muskets, apparently of American manufacture, with the name of G. Alton on the locks. The Bengallee interpreter, Gobind Ram, states that there was one of these muskets in each house in the raja's village. They procure them from the Poee people giving them in exchange slaves, at the rate (as the Lushais themselves stated) of two muskets for a slave 41/2 feet high. All their dealings in trade appear to be carried on with this people, with whom, however, they are not always on friendly terms.

Paragraph 7 of your letter no, 244 of the 21st of February lat was fully explained to the rajas, and he promised on the part of himself and the other rajas that no overt acts of any description against the Company's subjects should for the future be attempted; but said that previous to our attack of last year they were in ignorance that any Kookies under the protection of our Government. The raja, in token of submission, presented an elephant's tusk, in return for which some course woollen cloths were given him. He states that the other rajas were afraid to come in being apprehensive of meeting the fate of Lal Chokla, who, having given himself up in 1844, was subsequently transported.

The raja promises that on his return to his village he will cause search to be made for any of our subjects who may still be in captivity in his country, and that if any such are found, they shall be sent back into the British territory.

The raja took his departure on the morning of the 18th, apparently well satisfied with the reception he had met with, and earnest in his promise of future good behaviour, in which he is, no doubt for the present at least, sincere.

[Source: Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier Of India*, (New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications, Reprint, 2020), 296]

APPENDIX No.2

Sir C. Beadon's Policy

This correspondence has convinced His Honor that our relations with the hill tribes on the Chittagong frontier are carried on upon a wrong principle, and that, so long as our policy rests upon the assumption that the Kookies of certain tribes cannot be trusted until they have been made to feel our power, we shall be in danger of embroiling ourselves with them in another unsatisfactory and profitless contest.

Every endeavour should be made to induce the Chiefs of the unfriendly tribes not to come in, as it is called, that is, to present themselves before the Superintendent, either at Chittagong or at any other place at a distance from the frontier, but to consent that he should meet them at some spot equally convenient to both parties, and then to enter into written engagements for the future maintenance of peace on the border.

If a meeting of this kind could be arranged in such a manner as not to wound the natural savage pride of these Chieftains and their followers, and if they could once be made to feel confidence in our pacific intentions, the Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt that they would willingly enter into any reasonable engagements we might dictate, that all hostile incursions and the apprehension of these would cease, and that the tribes instead of being a source of terror to those who live under our immediate protection would become the reverse,

One of the best means of conciliating the good will of tribes, like the Kookies, is to arrange an annual gathering of Chiefs at some convenient place in the hills, on which occasion the Superintendent, representing the British Government, should receive trifling offerings from each Chief, and bestow on him a present in return, and take the opportunity of hearing and redressing all complaints and grievances, and of encouraging free and friendly communication between the different tribes, and between them and the people of the plains. To attend at such meetings, and to receive a token of friendly disposition from the Superintendent, would soon come to be regarded as a privilege, and the general good feeling of the tribes would be enlisted against any one of them who held aloof.

A small police allowance, either in money or in kind, might be given to each Chief to enable him to keep the peace within his own limits, and to prevent his people from attacking their neighbours, and this would also serve as a security for his own fidelity and allegiance.

To enable you to see what may be effected by a policy of this kind, I am desired to forward to you the accompanying copy of Report from Major Bivar, Deputy Commissioner of Luckimpore, in Assam, detailing his negotiations with the Abors, a wild tribe who had for a long time given us much trouble on that frontier, and of the engagement he has concluded with them. The Lieutenant-Governor desires that the policy which has apparently been so successful in Assam, may be followed out in respect to the tribes on the frontier of your Division. If this be done, it will most probably remove all ground of complaint as to the insufficiency of the means at your disposal for coercing these people; and the utmost cost of subsidizing them, and making them serve as their own police, will be far more than covered by the reduction which will thus become practicable in our own Military and Police Establishment.

[Source: Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier Of India*, (New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications, Reprint, 2020), 346 – 347.]

APPENDIX No.3

Agreement signed by Chief Rothangpuia and other Chiefs with the British

“The Kookies hereby acknowledge all persons of the following descriptions living in the hills and plains to be British subjects, namely Mughls, Bengalees, Tipperahs, Chukmas, and such other classes as the Superintendent may from time to time point out.

“The Kookies engage to take measures for preventing any parties from amongst their clansmen from molesting residents in the British Territory, or trading, cultivating or travelling in the hills.

“All traders shall have access to the Kookies villages, and shall be carefully protected from all injury.

“The Kookies shall have access to the markets of Kassalong and Rangamattee at present, and to such other places as the Government may hereafter approve, and their trading parties shall only carry daos.

“Any Kookies settling in British Territory shall pay the same revenue to Government as the other hill tribes residing there.

“In event of the Kookies having any grievance, or in case of any dispute arising between them and the British subjects, the Kookies will refrain from taking the law into their own hands, but they will in all cases appeal to the Superintendent and abide by his decision.

“That annually, about the time of the full moon of the month of January a meeting of the Chiefs and the Superintendent shall be held at Kassalong, at which the Chiefs shall receive such presents in money or kind as may be determined on by the Government in return for which the Kookies agree to prevent all marauding in the hills and plains, and to use every effort to capture offenders and maintain the peace.

“In event of the Kookies failing to act up to the provisions of this engagement it will be null and void.

“The original of this engagement, which is drawn up in English, will remain with the Superintendent, and a counterpart or copy will be furnished to the representative of the Kookie communities aforesaid.

“That the Kookies of the tribe be allowed to purchase annually powder, flints, lead and muskets in presence of the Superintendent, or such persons as he may appoint, and in return for this the Kookies will abstain from purchasing ammunition or arms from unauthorized persons, and will give any information which may come to their knowledge concerning such illicit trade.

“In ratification of the above engagement, contained in ten paragraphs, the Superintendent puts his hand and seal and the representatives of th Kookie communities affix their marks or signature this day of 18.

[Source: Judicial Proceedings, July 1863, Nos. 152 – 53, cited in Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier Of India*, (New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications, Reprint, 2020), 347 – 348]

(4)

APPENDIX No.4

No. 145.

No. 4351, dated Fort William, 12th September 1871.

From—H. L. HARRISON, Esq., Offg. Junior Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal,

To—C. U. AITCHISON, Esq., C.S.I., Secy. to Govt. of India, Foreign Dept., with G.-G.

WITH reference to the letter from your Office, No. 1544P., of the 22nd July last, I am directed to forward herewith a copy of the Sunnud given to Sookpilall, together with an English translation of the same.

No. 146.

No. 235, dated Dacca, 30th August 1871.

From—F. B. SIMSON, Esq., Commissioner of Dacca Division,

To—S. C. BAYLEY, Esq., Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal, Political Dept.

WITH reference to your Office No. 3635, dated 2nd instant, I have the honor to submit herewith a copy of the Sunnud given to Sookpilall, together with an English translation of the same.

No. 147.

Translation of the Sunnud given to Sookpilall.

THE order of the illustrious Government

Be it known to the Looshai Lall (Sookpilall) and to all other Lalls, Muntrees, and people of Looshai villages between the Tapai and Tipperah Hills.

The illustrious Government has laid down the following line of division :—

From Chattachoorra to the mouth of Bhyrubbee Cherra, from the mouth of Bhyrubbee Cherra to Bhyrubbee Tillah, from Bhyrubbee Tillah to Kolosep Tillah, from Kolosep Tillah to Noongvai Hills, from Noongvai Hills to Koobecherra Mookh, which falls to Sunai Nuddee, and it has ordered that the country to the north of the said line shall be called Cachar and the Marthinlong or Northern Looshai lands; on the other side of that line of division shall be called the Looshai Hills. The name Marthinlong or Northern Looshai includes those people who drink the water of the Toaivai, Tipai Tuirel or Soonai Tinpar or Rukni, Sinlong, or Dullessur, and Kloong Doong or Gutur.

The illustrious Government has further ordered that (Sookpilall) and all other Looshai Lalls, Muntrees, and people shall not in any way injure or annoy any of the people of Sylhet or Cachar.

If any Looshai suffers any injury or annoyance at the hands of Cachar or Sylhet people, and wishes to have his wrongs redressed, he must make a request to that effect to the Burra Sahib (Deputy Commissioner) of Cachar, who has been ordered by Government to do justice in such cases.

The Lalls and Muntrees of the Looshais shall be answerable for the safety of all merchants and wood-cutters who go to the Looshai Hills to trade or cut timber.

There are, as is known, various hill tribes known as Simthinlong drinking the water of the river flowing to the south. If they, or the people dwelling in the east of the Tipai, are about to attack or annoy any people of Cachar or Sylhet, and if Sookpilall, &c., know of it and cannot prevent them from passing through their villages, then Sookpilall, &c., must at once give information to the Burra Sahib (Deputy Commissioner) of Cachar.

If a dispute arise between Sookpilall, &c., and the people of the Rajas of Munnipoor or Tipperah, he or they may inform the Burra Sahib (Deputy Commissioner) of Cachar, who will endeavour to get the matter enquired into.

P.—145-147—Oct.

Exd.—T. Y.

कोपी राईट करीब अगिलेवाग
भारत सरकार के कार्यालय
दिल्ली

(2)

When the Burra Sahib of Cachar, or any Government officer who may be deputed by him goes to visit the Looshai Hills, Sookpilall should meet him in person or by deputy at some place to be appointed from time to time within the hills.

If in any year no European Government officer goes to the hills, then Sookpilall, &c., shall send to the Burra Sahib (Deputy Commissioner) at Doodpate (Silchar) some respectable Looshais.

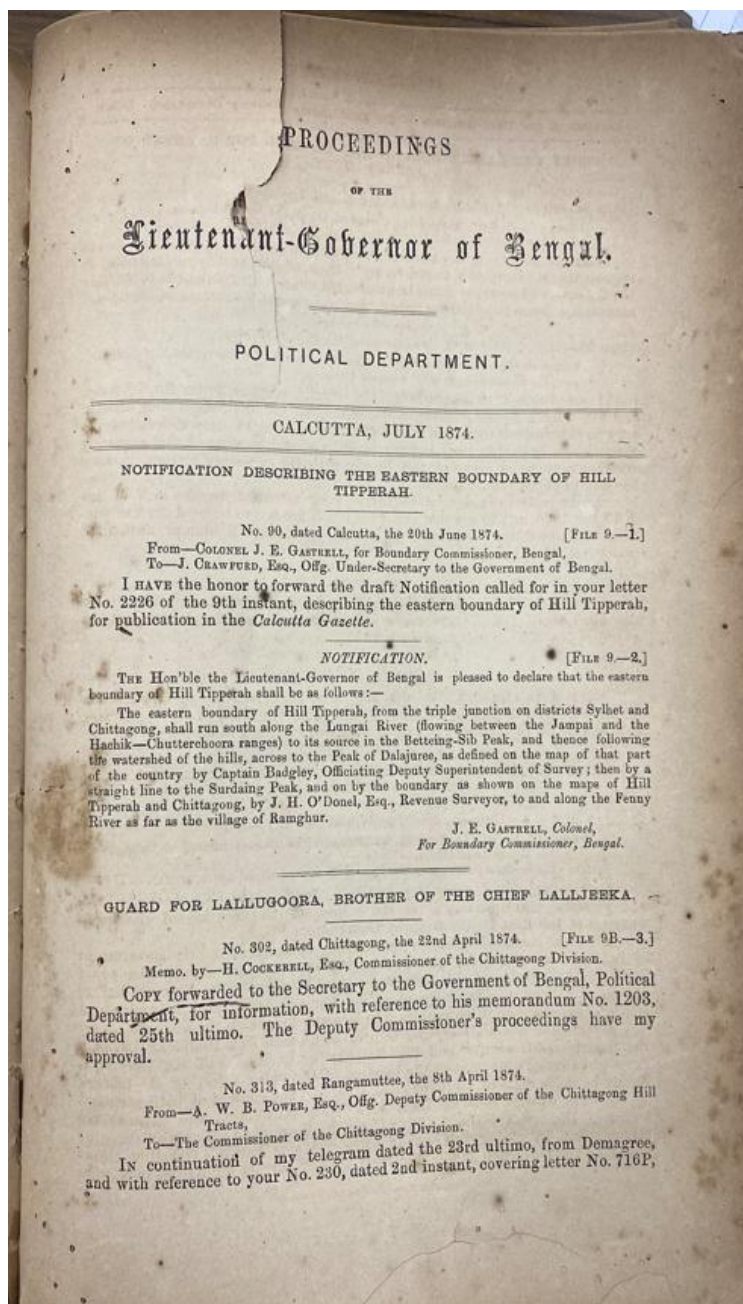
If at any time all the above orders of Government be not carried out, the said Government may revoke this Sunnud and pass such orders as it thinks proper. But as long as Sookpilall, &c., shall obey all these orders, and any similar ones which the Government may issue from time to time for the preservation of peace on both sides of the above-mentioned line, the Government will not interfere with the affairs of their villages, and will leave them in the undisturbed possession of their village land.

Dated 16th January 1871.

बॉम्बे स्टेट आर्काइव्स ऑफ़िसेर
भारत सरकार के आर्काइव्स
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[Source: Sunnud given to Sookpilall....., October 1871, File No. 145 – 147, Foreign Department, Political A, National Archives of India, Delhi, 4 – 5]

APPENDIX No.5



[Source:Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, July 1874, Judicial Department, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.]

APPENDIX No.6

Position and Strength of British Outposts in 1874 –

Outposts	Subadars	Jamadars	Havildars	Sepoys	Total
Jhirighat			2	12	14
Mynadhar			2	20	22
Monierkal			2	20	22
Noarbund		1	2	20	23
Jhálnacherra		1	3	29	33
Chattachura	1		2	20	23
Oliviacherra			2	20	22
Lakhimamla			2	20	22
Fatehkuli		1	2	19	22
Adampur			2	20	22
Total	1	3	21	200	225

*Aside from these tables, in Silchar there were around 230 people of all ranks assigned as reserve.

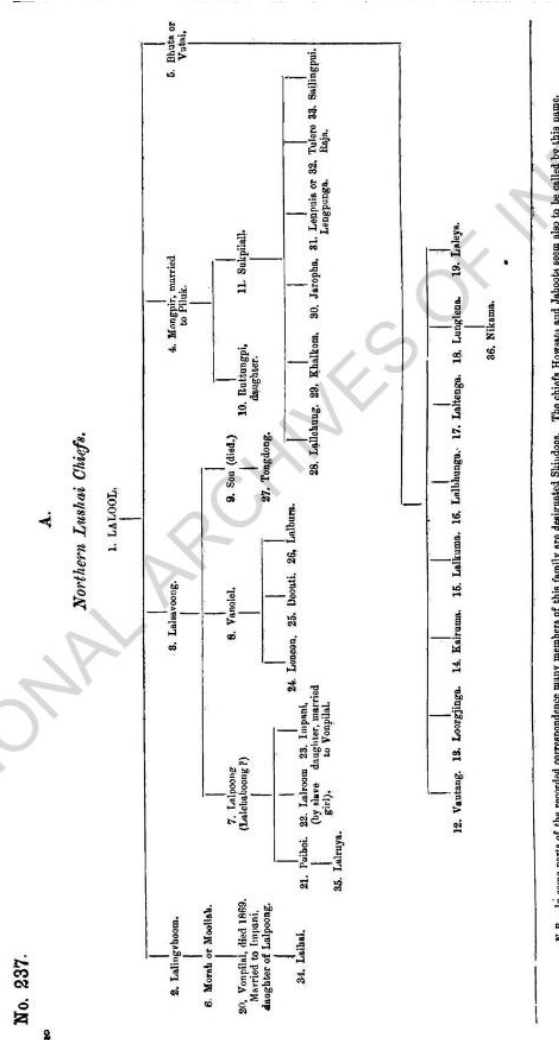
The Strength of the Reserve on the 1st January of the year 1886 – 1889

		Subadars	Jamadars	Havildars	Sepoys	Buglers	Total
1 st January	1886	1	5	24	201	6	237
Ditto	1887	2	6	17	162	5	192
Ditto	1888	1	5	17	212	4	239
Ditto	1889	1	4	19	229	4	257

[Source: *The Lushais 1878 -1889*, Firma KLM Private Limited, On behalf Of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram, Reprint – 1978, 4 – 5]

APPENDIX No.7

Geneological Table of Northern Lushai Chiefs :-



[Source: Arrangements for political & military control of Chin-Lushai country, 1890, File No. 237, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Delhi, 6.]

APPENDIX No. 8

Arrangements for future control of Northern Lushai country. E 355-357

No. 355.

No. 4858, dated Simla, the 10th October 1890.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India, Finance and Commerce Department.
Read—

Despatch from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 64 (Political), dated the 18th September 1890.

Ordered, that copy be forwarded to the Foreign Department, in continuation of endorsement No. 3703, dated the 5th August 1890.

Copy, with copy of the despatch to which the above is a reply, forwarded to the Comptroller, Assam, in continuation of endorsement No. 3264, dated the 7th July 1890.

No. 356.

No. 64 (Political), dated India Office, London, the 18th September 1890.

From—The Secretary of State for India,

To—The Government of India.

I have considered in Council Your Excellency's letter No. 235 (Financial) of the 5th August last, regarding the arrangements made for the political control of the Northern Lushai country.

2. The measures recommended by the Chief Commissioner involved—

- (1) The employment of three hundred men of the Frontier Police to hold the newly acquired tract.
- (2) The appointment of a political officer to conduct our relations with the tribes, on a salary of Rs 1,000 a month.
- (3) The appointment of a young military officer to be an Assistant Commandant of the Surma Valley Police Battalion, receiving a staff allowance of Rs 200 per month, in addition to the staff pay of his rank.
- (4) The appointment of an European Medical officer with the pay attached to a 1st class civil station.
- (5) The organization of a coolie corps of one hundred men on Rs 10 a month, with free rations, and the maintenance of a small reserve of boat carriage between Jhalna Cherra and Changsil.

3. These recommendations you have sanctioned, except that you have thought it sufficient to give the medical officer the pay attached to a 2nd class civil station.

4. Your proceedings have my approval.

No. 357.

No. 2204-E, dated Simla, the 15th October 1890.

From—H. S. BARNES, Esq., Officiating Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department,

To—The Chief Commissioner of Assam.

In continuation of the letter from this office No. 1391-E, dated the 3rd July 1890, I am directed to inform you that Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India has confirmed the arrangements which were sanctioned subject to His Lordship's approval by the Government of India for the future control of the Northern Lushai country.

Nos. 2205-2206-E, dated Simla, the 15th October 1890.

Endorsed by Foreign Department.

Copy forwarded to the Home and Military Departments, for information,

in continuation of the endorsements from this office Nos. 1392—1393-E, dated the 3rd July 1890.

Ed.—P. K. B.

[Source: Approval of the Secretary of State to the arrangements for the future control of the Northern Lushai Country, October 1890, File No. 355 – 357, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, 5]

APPENDIX No.9

No. 255.

No. 1468-P., Jistol Shillong, the 22nd April 1890.

From—F. C. DAUBES, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

To—CAPTAIN H. R. BROWN, B.S.C., Political Officer, Lushai Hills.

I am directed by the Chief Commissioner to communicate, for your information and guidance, the following instructions in connection with your deputation to the Lushai Hills as Political officer. These instructions should, of course, be understood as provisional only, and are subject to such orders as may finally be passed by the Government of India.

1. Your head-quarters will be at Fort Aijal, but you should keep moving about among the Chiefs with the object of establishing political influence and control over them, and inducing them to submit themselves gradually to our rule. As far as your means will allow, you should further endeavour to put down open raidings, to protect our friends, and to punish those who injure them. You will otherwise not be strict to mark what is amiss or attempt to introduce a criminal administration, which, under existing circumstances, you are not in a position to enforce. You will leave the inhabitants, as far as possible, to settle their own affairs among themselves. For the present, you should consider as coming within the scope of your influence the tribes inhabiting the tract lying between the Cachar frontier on the north, Hill Tipperah on the west, the Manipur river on the east, and on the south an imaginary line drawn east and west through the Darlung Peak. It is desirable that you should, if possible, open communications with the officers who will represent the Bengal and Burma Governments at Fort Lungleh, Fort Tregear, Haka, and Fort White. You should also take every opportunity of procuring information regarding the numerical strength of the several tribes with whom you may come into contact from time to time, and regarding such matters as their tribal customs and organization, particulars of which may be of considerable use hereafter.

27

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

X 255-256 Arrangements for political & military control of Chin-Lushai country.

2. After your arrival at Fort Aijal, you will take up and enquire fully into the question of the complicity of Lengpunga in the Chengri Valley raid, and submit a full report on the subject to the Chief Commissioner, containing any recommendations you consider fitting as to Lengpunga's punishment.

3. If, as the Chief Commissioner understands from Mr. Daly to be the case, some of the Chiefs are willing or anxious to pay revenue or tribute, you will receive it in money or kind as tendered, subject to the orders of the Chief Commissioner, and you will endeavour to induce others to follow their example; but no attempt should be made at present to exact revenue or tribute from tribes unwilling to pay it. You should report fully in due course what you find the position to be in regard to the willingness or otherwise of the tribes to pay revenue or tribute; and, pending the final orders of the Chief Commissioner, you should be careful not to accept, in return for the payment of revenue or tribute, any obligations of a nature which might render their future fulfilment a matter of difficulty.

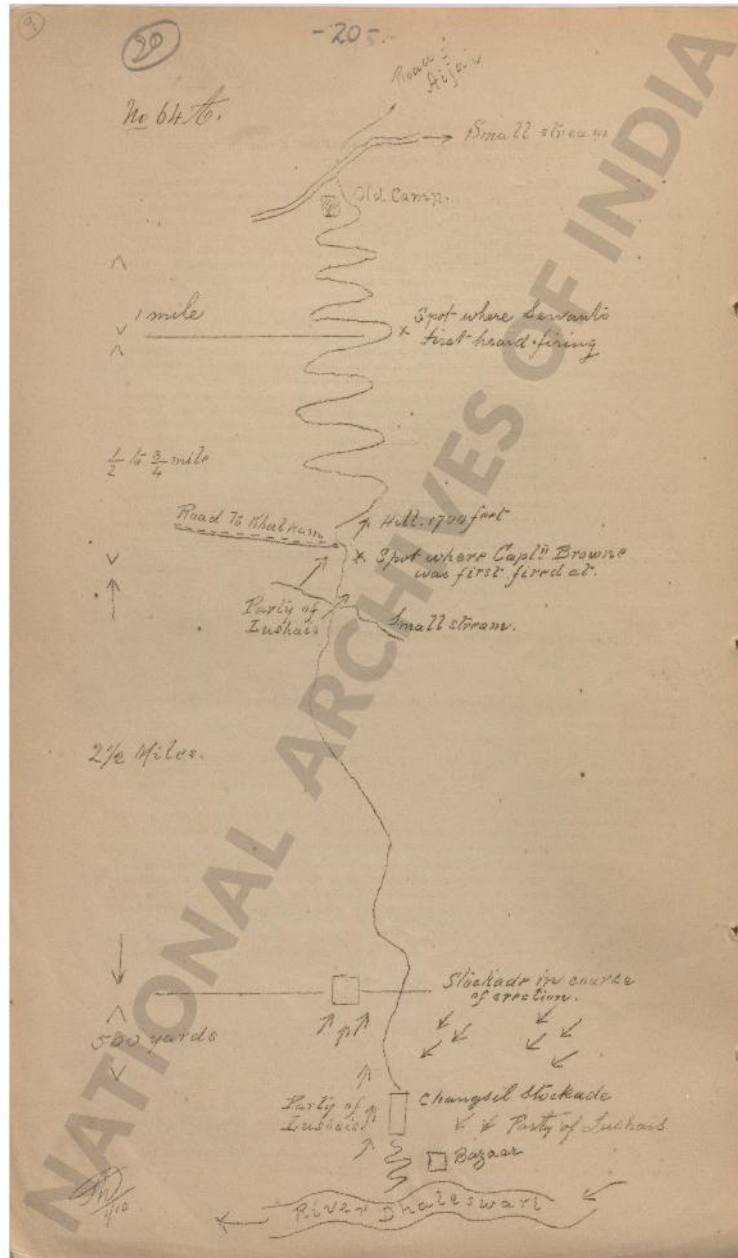
4. You should re-open the bazar at Changsil, if, as the Chief Commissioner understands to be the case, the Lushais are anxious for its re-establishment, and, so far as is practicable during the rainy season, you should examine the country between Changsil and our frontier, with a view to advise upon the alignment of the road which must ultimately be made to connect Cachar with Lushai land.

5. You will exercise the powers of a Deputy Commissioner over the police quartered within the tract described in paragraph 1 as coming within the scope of your influence.

6. You will correspond directly with the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, to whom you will submit weekly diaries. Any important matters, or any matters which may appear to you to require orders, should be reported separately for the consideration of the Chief Commissioner.

[Source: Arrangements for the future political and military control of the Chin-Lushai country. Political boundaries between Bengal, Assam and Burma, August 1890, File No. 255, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Delhi, 66.]

APPENDIX No. 10



[Source: Letter from Lieutenant H.W.G. Cole, Commandant Surma Valley Military police Battallion, Cachar to The Inspector-General of Police, Assam, Camp Silchar, December 1890, File No. 64 A, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Delhi, 20]

APPENDIX No.11

- 25 -

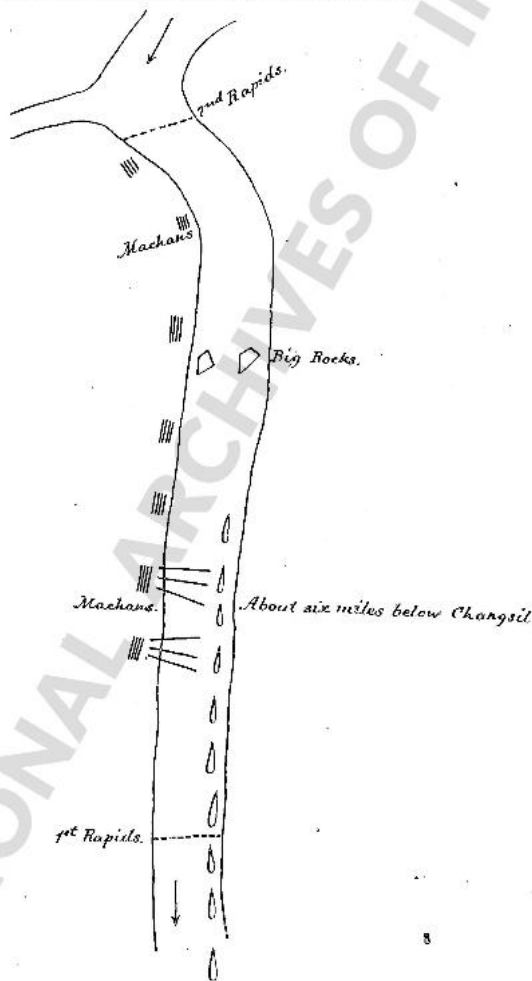
DECEMBER 1890.

Affairs in the Chin-Lushai country.

E 70A

Fig. 70B.

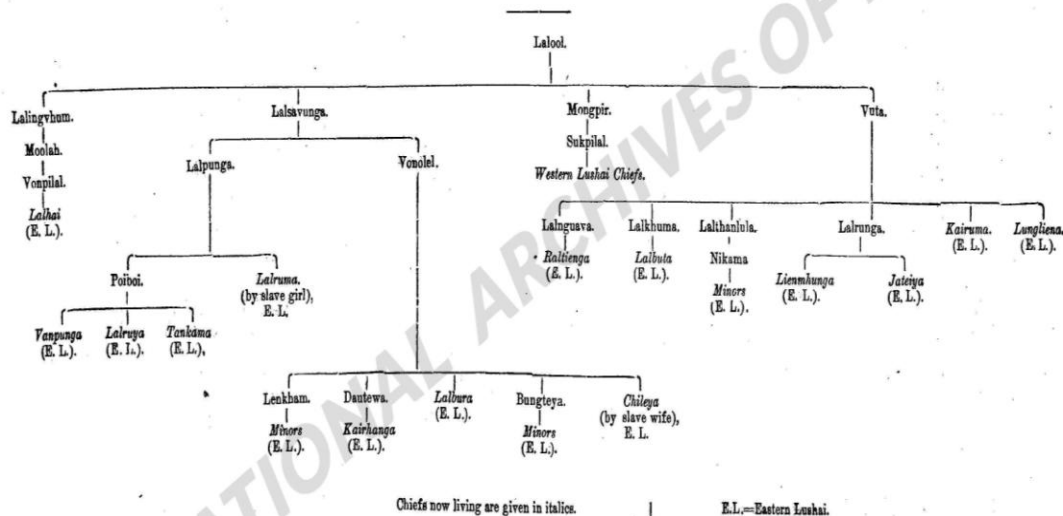
A sketch of the river where Lieutenant Swinton and force were fired at by Lushais.



[Source: Letter from Lieutenant H.S. Tyller, Assistant Commandant, Surma Valley Military Police Battalion to The Inspector-General of Police Assam, (Dated Changsil, the September 1890), December 1890, File No. 70 A, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Delhi, 25]

APPENDIX No. 12

Pedigree of the Lushai Chiefs on Cachar Frontier.



[Source: Letter from R.B. McCabe, Esq., I.C.S., Political Officer, North Lushai Hills to The Secretary to The Chief Commissioner of Assam, Section I, Our relations with the Eastern Lushais prior to the rising on 1st March 1892, (Shillong, the 23rd July 1892), December 1892, File No. 43, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Delhi, 8.]

APPENDIX No. 13

9

attempted to anticipate these arrangements and seize the north crest, but a volley caused them to seek cover in the jungle. Meanwhile the enemy had crept up close to us on all sides, and, taking advantage of the cover afforded by the houses and drains, maintained a steady fire on our camp. The signallers under fire helio'd to Captain Loch for reinforcements and ammunition, and the message was barely completed before the Lushais set fire to the houses all round us. The Military Police sepoy's stuck manfully to their posts, and the coolies, though somewhat scared, were soon collected, and employed in removing our baggage and ammunition from the houses and stacking it in the open square in front of the Raja's house. The ammunition was rendered comparatively safe by covering the boxes with wet blankets, but the intense heat caused considerable damage to the baggage. After the flames had somewhat subsided, the coolies picked up the loads, and we joined Surgeon-Captain Melville on the north crest, a position which we felt capable of holding against any number of Lushais as long as our ammunition lasted.

In this first attack we had one Jemadar and one coolie wounded, while the enemy lost several killed and wounded and five guns. The firing of the village compelled the Lushais to confine their attacks to the north and north-west sides of our position, and we were enabled to procure water and make a temporary rampart of baskets of paddy. At 2 p.m. we reconnoitred in force towards the south end of the village, and brought in our six coolies and fifteen sepoy's who had gone to the Sonai that morning. Disappointed in their first treacherous rush, the Lushais drew off for a time, but at 4 p.m., having been reinforced by 400 men from Poiboi, commenced a most persistent attack, which was maintained till dark. The enemy again suffered severely while we had only one sepoy severely wounded. Desultory firing was kept up during the night, and at 2.45 a.m. on the 2nd March Subadar Jangbir, with 100 rifles Military Police, twelve boxes of ammunition, and seventeen loads of salt, ghee and attah, joined us from Aijal. I have noted in my diary the expedition used by Captain Loch in sending these reinforcements and the plucky manner in which Jangbir and his party fought their way through.

4. At dawn the enemy opened fire from two stockades which they had erected during the night, but they were soon dislodged, losing one killed, one wounded, and a gun. The presence of

Poiboi's, Hungteya's, and Lenkham's men pointed to the fact that this attack was not a mere enroute on the part of Lalbura, but was undoubtedly a concerted rising of the Eastern Lushais. We were thus enabled to gauge the strength of the combination against us; and as no reliance could be placed in the faith of the Western Lushais, it was deemed advisable to request Government to send 300 Military to hold Aijal and Changsil, and set free our garrison of 400 Military Police for operations to the east of the Sonai.

5. Our great difficulty was that of transport. The season of the year was well advanced, the rains close at hand, and the Lushai paths totally impracticable for bullock carriage.

There was no alternative but to construct a bridle path from Aijal to the Sonai, fortify our post at Lalbura, and use it as a depot of stores for the proposed operations against the insurgent villages. As all our coolies, those belonging to the Transport as well as the road coolies of the Department of Public Works, were required to carry the baggage and ammunition of the punitive force, we had, as far as supplies were concerned, to cut ourselves off completely from Aijal pending the close of the operations.

After consultation with Captain Loch and Lieutenant Tytler, the following plans were made:

First.—To fortify the position at Lalbura, so that it might be held by a small garrison.

Second.—To collect and store at Lalbura three months' supply of paddy for our sepoy's and coolies, and so minimise our carriage of rice from Aijal.

Third.—To make a good bridle path from Aijal to the Sonai and establish a post there.

Fourth.—To try and induce Poiboi's men to sever their alliance with Lalbura, and thus minimise the chance of raids on the plains.

Fifth.—To send out parties daily to hunt the enemy down from one hiding place to another, and bring home to each individual Lushai a knowledge of the hardships that such a rising entails.

Sixth.—Captain Loch called in the headmen of the Western Lushai villages, informed them that none of their men were to cross the Sonai, or allow Eastern Lushais to seek refuge in their villages, and that they were to report all information they might obtain regarding the whereabouts of the enemy.

[Source: Letter from R.B. McCabe, Esq., I.C.S., Political Officer, North Lushai Hills to The Secretary to The Chief Commissioner of Assam, Section II, History of The Eastern Lushai Rising 1892, (Shillong, the 23rd July 1892), December 1892, File No. 43, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Delhi, 13]

APPENDIX No. 14

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No. 133H.T., dated Chittagong, the 28th February 1891.

From—D. R. LYALL, Esq., C.S.I., C.S., Commissioner of the Chittagong Division,
To—The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

IN continuation of this office No. 231H.T. of 22nd instant, reporting on the work of the past season in the Lushai country, I have the honour to submit a further report on the points which still require orders of Government, and on the future administration of the new country and its cost.

I have had the advantage of taking the orders of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor on the first draft of this report, and the present report is drawn up to the best of my ability in conformity with the orders issued by His Honour.

BOUNDARY.

2. This is now fully settled in the east and west, the western boundary being the Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the eastern the Eastern Kolodyne, marked Boina, Tipi, or Kolodyne R. (Kaladan) on Lieutenant Bythell's map of August 1890, and the Tyaoor Tipi of the same map. This last river, however, is not correctly marked, and the reconnaissance made by Captain Shakespear and Mr. Pughe showed that, a short distance north of its junction with the Kolodyne, it takes a large curve eastwards. The boundary is therefore east of what is shown in the map, but this does not make any difference, and the present orders require no alteration. The southern boundary has not been laid down and cannot be finally settled until Captain Shakespear returns from his present reconnaissance. It will probably be found most convenient to choose a stream or hill south of Sheekor, the Arakan Hill Tracts jurisdiction being pushed up north to meet this boundary. It is not yet certain whether the villages marked Yongling, Vanchum, and Vandula in Captain Shakespear's map of 8th September, copy of which was sent to you by this office No. 1572H.T.—XIII-46, dated 5th December 1890, should be under Burmah or Bengal, but probably the latter, as it does not appear they can be easily got at from Kalakwa.

The northern boundary has been decided to be the tribal division between the descendants of Lalul and their southern neighbours, and this is generally a good and sufficient basis for the Bengal and Assam officers to go on. It will, however, be necessary for our officers to fix geographical limits based on the family division, and to make the people understand that families jooming or building villages south or north of this line come under Bengal and Assam as the case may be.

One case (that of Kairuma) has already cropped up, in which a chief has come far away from his family grounds, and it would be most inconvenient to have isolated villages under a different Government. I have directed Mr. Murray to discuss this point fully with Mr. MacCabe and to report on it.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SOUTH LUSHAI HILLS.

3. I consider it imperative that there should be one local head of the country exercising control over all departments. This is even more necessary in an unsettled than in a settled country; and the mistakes which occurred during the past season were due almost entirely to the want of a local head. I annex copy of rules marked A, which I have issued subject to the sanction of Government. I hold that for the present the Public Works also should be under the Superintendent. He will in time become the actual Commandant of the Police, and this is another reason why he should exercise control from the first.

The Frontier Police Regulation will require alteration. This will be dealt, with more fully in discussing the police arrangements.

POSITION OF HEAD-QUARTERS, NAME OF COUNTRY, AND DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICERS.

4. The country should, I think, be officially known as the South Lushai Hills, the northern being those under Assam. The head-quarters of the Superintendent must for the present at least be Fort Tregear, but Lungleh is more convenient as the police head-quarters, and for the next year the arrangement will be as follows, subject to the sanction of Government:—The Superintendent and two assistant police officers will be posted at Tregear, and the

Commandant and one assistant at Lungleh. The position of the assistant at Demagri will be discussed in dealing with that place. I think there is no doubt that Lungleh is the best site for the permanent police head-quarters, and that more permanent buildings should gradually be erected there.

It is the opinion of Captain Shakespear and Mr. Pughe that the Vonlaiphai Valley would be a better site for the eastern post than Fort Tregear, and this point should be decided before any additions are made to Tregear. I fear, however, it is too far north. It was intended that Mr. Murray should go fully into this question during his tour which has been cut short by the repulse at Jacopa's village, and I fear the question must now lie over entirely till next year.

The main argument in favour of the Vonlaiphai Valley appears to be that it could be cultivated and thus save transport.

The medical officer and the road engineer should also have their head-quarters at Lungleh.

POLICE.

5. (a) *Distribution*.—The whole of the Frontier Police are being gradually transferred to the Lushai country, as enlistments for the Civil Police, sanctioned in your No. 4610P., dated 27th December 1890, are being made. I have issued the orders annexed, and marked B, regarding their disposition, and I ask approval of these orders under the explanations given below—

The present garrison of Fort Tregear is 200 men, of whom 20 are stationed at the Kolodyne post. I consulted Captains Shakespear, D.S.O., and Hutchinson, 2-2nd Goorkhas, and they both agreed that 170 men were sufficient for Tregear. I believe this number may be reduced to 150 in 1892-93, thus reducing transport. During the past year a post on the Kolodyne has been held by the 2-2nd Goorkhas, and one on the Mat by police, both numbering 20 men. The Medical authorities of both forts state that nearly all the sickness of the past year was contracted at these posts. I consulted the local officers and all agreed that a central post on the ridge between these rivers would suffice for purposes of security, patrols being sent to the two rivers every other day, *i.e.*, one day to the Kolodyne and the next to the Mat.

The site for the post was fixed by Lieutenant Skey, R.E., in consultation with Mr. Pughe and myself, and I annex copy of his report, marked C. I have ordered this post to be constructed in anticipation of sanction. It will cost no more than the repairs of the Mat and Kolodyne posts, and Lieutenant Skey had provided for this work.

Last year Fort Lungleh had a garrison of 150 men, of whom 20 were detailed for the Mat post, leaving 130. I have raised the strength by the 10 men reduced from Fort Tregear, and the strength will now be 140.

Last year it was intended to bring up some of the men's families, but it was found impossible to put up barracks in time.

These are now being constructed, and 40 families will be sent up in April. This will add to the expense, but the men have now been practically three years away from their families, and this is a source of considerable discontent. I consider that the gain is worth the additional cost.

Lungsin has been selected as the place where the mules will be kept during the next rains. I have ordered this change after consulting all the officers concerned who were capable of giving an opinion.

The mules themselves did very well in Demagri; but as they are useless without drivers, it was necessary to locate these last, who are up-country men, in a more healthy place. The change represents no additional charge; mule lines had to be put up somewhere and will cost no more (in fact rather less as bamboos are more plentiful) in Lungsin than in Demagri, while the carriage of their grain can be done after the forts are stocked by one large convoy of all the bullocks and mules.

In Demagri no additional barracks will be necessary.

The necessary godowns will be dealt with under the head of Buildings.

(b) *Pay*.—My proposals regarding future pay of the police are now before Government, and orders will be passed when the Assam rules have been compared. With reference to these rules, I beg, however, to point out that Assam rates of pay were fixed to cover cost of living in a civilised country: even at the outposts in the south-eastern country, where they were stationed

previous to last cold weather, there were bazars, and men could buy food, &c. The Frontier Police are stationed in jungles where everything has to be imported, and where they cannot get any comforts or addition to their food except at enormous rates. After full consideration, I consider that the addition of Rs. 2 per mensem to the pay of the rank and file, thus raising the pay of the lowest grade from Rs. 10 to Rs. 12, is by no means excessive.

A fowl costs a rupee, a small goat Rs. 12, and larger ones Rs. 20, and these are only to be obtained occasionally. I think it will be difficult to keep up the strength of the police unless some inducement over and above the present rates of pay be offered, and the increase proposed is, I think, the lowest possible looking at the Burmah rates, which I urge must be considered as well as the rates in Assam.

The increase is provided for in the police budget for next year under the head of Batta: in future it should appear as pay.

(c) *Leave*.—The late Lieutenant-Governor was in favour of assimilating the leave rules to those of Burmah. Possibly this has already gone up to India. If it has not, I beg that it may now be sent up. The subject was reported on in this office No. 92H.P.—XIII-6, dated 27th March 1890.

(d) *Frontier Police Regulation No. III of 1881*.—This regulation requires amendment. In the letter above quoted, I have recommended that the Frontier Police should in future be enlisted for a term of years, and not, as at present, under Act V of 1861, which is unsuited to a semi-military organisation. If the Government of Bengal agree with me on this point, the necessary change might, with advantage, be made in amending the regulation. The preamble will have to be altered, and a clause inserted providing for enlistment for a term of years.

As already suggested in my letter, I would make such enlistment a condition of the higher rate of pay.

In addition to this change, the name of the force will have to be changed in clause 1 from Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police to Bengal Military Police, and in clauses 2, 6, and 7 the Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong Hill Tracts, will have to be altered to Superintendent, South Lushai Hills, and the District Superintendent to Commandant, Bengal Military Police. I recommend this change of name on various grounds. In the first place, it will be very popular with the men, and this is by no means an unimportant point. It will also enable them to be used anywhere they may be required without a further change of regulation should the Lushai hills no longer require so large a force, and it will also be more easy to amalgamate them hereafter with the Assam Military Police.

BUILDINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS.

6. (a) *Buildings*.—These two subjects must be treated together as the work is done by the same officer and the same establishment. The permanent buildings at Demagri and the road to that place, including the tram at Burkal, should remain, as at present, under the District Engineer of the Hill Tracts, Demagri being in that district, and it being much easier for him to arrange for the skilled labour required for these buildings and for the tram than for an officer whose work lies almost entirely above Demagri, and who has no skilled labour under him. The buildings to be so kept up are the Assistant Superintendent's house, the barracks, hospital, officers and married quarters, magazine, godown, telegraphs and post-offices.

For the current year work is being done by the District Engineer, and his estimate for a new godown was sent up with this office No. 109H.T.—XIII-91, dated 29th January 1891.

The present godown is a substantial building with corrugated iron roof. It was conveniently situated when it was required only as an issue godown for the force stationed in Demagri, but its present site is quite unsuited for a base godown for transport, and is now not used, as it would cost a large sum to take the provisions up to it and again down to where animals can be loaded. The work is now done in temporary godowns, but a permanent and water-tight godown is required for the rains. A convenient site has been selected by Major Bond and myself. In the letter above referred to, I have also proposed that the present godown be given to the Post and Telegraph Departments as office and dwelling-houses. It is well suited for this and also well situated. The other permanent buildings should all continue to be used as at present.

Any temporary buildings required for the coolies or transport animals required for the new country should, as at present, be put up by the Engineer in charge of the Demagri-Tregear road as required.

He will also be responsible for the two forts at Lungleh and Tregear, the guard buildings at Lal Thuama and Longsin (this last need not, in the opinion of frontier officers in which I concur, be any longer treated as a fort), and such other rest-houses on the way as it may be found necessary to keep up, their number and position being decided by the Superintendent in consultation with the Engineer. These will probably be Tuichang, Phyrang or Sailangret, and ridge camp up to Fort Lungleh, and 15-mile camp beyond, but this is a point that may well be left to the Superintendent's decision.

I discussed the question of how repairs should be carried on with Lieutenant Skey and Mr. Murray.

For the present they agree that the barracks and quarters should be repaired by Kooki labour, but that the godown at Lungleh and also the hospital should have corrugated iron roofs, and be rendered less liable to loss by fire than at present. In this I agree: corrugated iron sheets could be taken up by elephants and mules, and timbers can be sawn on the spot. I ask that orders for the submission of an estimate to make these two buildings more permanent should be called for, so that the work may be done next cold weather. No change should be made in Fort Tregear for the present in view of its possible abandonment.

It will also probably be found necessary to make the mule lines at Longsin more permanent.

The cost of the whole will be found in the estimate annexed, and which is explained more fully under the heading "Financial." No provision is made for the buildings at the camps, as they will be put up and kept in order by the road coolies.

(b) *Communications*.—The road to Fort Tregear is, on the whole, an admirable piece of work, and it has stood the rains with very little material damage.

The number of slips was large, but few were of much importance, and communication was never stopped for more than a day or two: still we may not always have the same luck, and it would be unwise to risk another year without a larger staff. Last year Lieutenant Skey did almost the whole work himself, but few officers have his endurance, or would stand so much exposure. He considers that the scale I sent up in this office No. 963H.T—VI-2, dated 28th July 1890, is excessive; and as he has practical experience, and, when he made the proposals, was likely to be the officer entrusted with their execution, I think his views may be accepted.

He considers 200 coolies sufficient, and four subordinates, of whom one should be an European, *i.e.*, a subordinate to about every 20 miles, and he would post them as follows:—

- (1). Lal Thuama; in charge of road from Mat to Fort Tregear, including the Mat bridge.
- (1). Lungleh; in charge of the road from Lungleh to the Mat on the one side and to Lower Lungleh on the other.
- (1). Longsin (European); in charge of the road from Lower Lungleh to Mills Basha.
- (1). Demagri; in charge of the rest of the road.

His coolies he would post as follows:—

Fort Tregear	20
Lal Thuama	20
Lungleh	90
Longsin	30
Demagri	40
Total	200

In the number at Lungleh and Demagri allowance is made for 50 sick.

He considers that no more subordinates are required for the cold weather, and holds it more important to have the full number in the rains. With this staff he considers the road can be kept in order and jungle cleared three times in the year.

This could not be done last year owing to want of labour, but if done steadily for two or three years, the jungle dies down and fewer men will be required.

In the cold weather he would, if necessary, give each overseer 25 more men or 100 in all; but provision for this number has not been made in the budget sent herewith, as it seems probable that the 200 permanent men will be able to keep the road in order. Lieutenant Skey holds that it is more important to have an efficient staff on the road during the rains, and that if the work there is properly done little will be left for the cold weather, except improvements. It is therefore possible that the extra men will not be required, and, if necessary, application for the increased number can be sent up in September. The main difficulties in communications are the rivers Tuichang Phyrang, Mat, and Kolodyne.

Lieutenant Skey has sent up proposals to place bridges fit for mule traffic on the two first, and the whole of the transport proposals for next rains are founded on the supposition that these will be sanctioned. If they are not, additional boatmen and more transport will be required. I am pressing this point very strongly on the Military authorities now in charge of the road. The cost is only about Rs. 7,000 for wire suspension bridges with a wooden roadway.

The Mat has again been bridged, and Lieutenant Skey is sanguine that the bridge now put up will stand. He proposes to put a rope across the river above the bridge, and when freshets occur a strong fatigue party will be ordered to go down from Lal Thuatna to clear the drift wood. There seems to be no doubt that the bridge, as now constructed, will stand the force of any freshet if the drift wood can be dealt with.

The Kolodyne must, as at present, be crossed by a ferry. The present Teesta boatmen wish to go. They have done admirably, and have kept their health. I am arranging for Chukmas in their place.

Lieutenant Skey lays great stress on the arrival of the road coolies before the rains, and I am in communication with the Deputy Commissioner of the Sonthal Pergunnahs and the Collector of Ganjam regarding the importation of men for this work. The Collector of Ganjam says he can get 200 hillmen suited for the work, and these can be got by steamer from Gopalporc.

Lieutenant Skey also considers that waterproof capes should be given these men, and that they should get jerseys.

In this I agree. It is a bad policy to risk sickness, as a sick man costs more than a hale man and does no work, and our great object should be to preserve the health of the men sent up. It will be seen that, except Demagri, all the places where coolies are to be located are 2,000 feet or upwards in height, and with proper precautions it is to be hoped they will keep their health.

It is absolutely necessary to import labour for the next year at least, and probably for two or three years. When the country is thoroughly in hand, this road may be kept in repair to a large extent by local labour, but I do not think it will ever be possible to depend entirely on this, as the hillmen all scatter to their jooms in the rains and there must be some staff on the road to deal with slips as they occur.

(c) *Staff and control.*—Lieutenant Skey agrees with me that as now the district is to be under civil government, the road should also be under the civil authorities.

I had intended to ask that Lieutenant Skey's services should be lent, but he has been offered a post at Poona, which he prefers, and I therefore ask that a young and active Assistant Engineer should be placed in charge, and that he be given four graded Assistants of the rank and on the pay provided for in the estimate.

I think the officer in charge should draw a local allowance like the other officers in the country, and all should draw the usual travelling allowance. This has been provided for in the budget.

(d) *Improvement of road.*—I do not think the road from Demagri to Lungsin or from Lower Lungch to Fort Tregear could be better aligned. It is capable of improvement in small sections, but such improvements are being made gradually year by year, and this will continue to be done by the regular staff.

The middle section of the road is different. It was constructed under pressure when the main object was to push on; the gradients are bad, and the wear and tear to transport on this section of the road is very great. The drop from Lungsun to the Sayaril is very abrupt, and the next three miles of road along the banks of the Sayaril up to the bank of the Phyrang require some 19 or 20 bridges which need constant renewal. Crossing the Phyrang the road to Sailangret traverses a succession of low hills with severe gradients, and after leaving Sailangret and Lower Lungleh no less than three larger and several smaller ridges have to be crossed.

Under sanction of the Chief Engineer, Babu Boikunta Nath Khan has been placed under Lieutenant Skey to prospect a better line, and should he discover one, I strongly recommend that the work should be carried out next cold weather. The cost would be saved in a very few years in the decreased wear and tear of transport. I have not made provision for this work, and an additional estimate is submitted if it is found practicable.

(e) *Village roads*.—So far I have dealt only with the road required for transport purposes.

The Superintendent should also work out a system of village roads to be kept open by the villages benefited by them, and should insist on these being kept fit for loaded coolies.

Among these roads a line leading north from Fort Lungleh to Fort Aijal is imperative; and as there are many villages on this line, it will be easy to keep it up. A line south from Fort Tregear to Sherkor, passing through the villages of Dokula, Vantura, Shamuna, and Dopura, is also necessary. It was hoped by Captain Shakespear that the Kolodyne would be found sufficiently easy to take the place of this line, but such has not been found to be the case, and a road is necessary. On this line too there are villages, and there should be no difficulty in keeping it up.

The road northwards from Tregear has been fully described in the diary of Captain Shakespear's tour. Should the Vonlaiphai Valley be selected as a post, the road to it will go from a point a little east of the new Lal Thuama fort, and, running northwards along the top of the ridge in a very direct line past Vandullah's village, will cross the Tuichang (there quite a small stream), and rise by a fairly easy ascent to the valley. This will be about six miles further than Fort Tregear, and the additional distance for transport is prohibitive, unless it is proved that in the valley can be grown sufficient or nearly sufficient food to feed the garrison.

The road east from Tregear towards Haka made by General Tregear should also be kept open.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH UPPER BURMAH.

7. This subject has not been touched this year, though it is, in my opinion the most important point in connection with the new country. Mandalay is only some 250 miles as the crow flies from Chittagong, and Chittagong will be within 20 to 22 hours' journey from Calcutta when the railway is made. If, then, a feasible line for a cart road or a railway can be discovered from Chittagong to Mandalay, the land route to Upper Burmah will enable the surplus population of Bengal, who refuse to cross the sea, to spread into Upper Burmah, benefiting both provinces. The trade of Upper Burmah will also gain much by the possibility of easy communication between Calcutta and Mandalay. I have already given my views regarding the route on this side the Kolodyne in this office No. 1508H.T.—VI-2, dated 30th October 1890, and I would again press on the Government of India the necessity of pushing on the work of survey. This is not in any way a provincial work, and should be undertaken by the Government of India.

The difficulties are great, but not, I think, insurmountable, while the gain would be enormous.

TRANSPORT.

8. (a) *Permanent transport*.—A certain amount of transport must be kept up all through the rains. Last year this was fixed at 200 coolies, half of whom were nominally stationed at Lungleh and half at Tregear and 100 mules at Demagri, *vide* Government of India No. 292C.L., dated 10th March 1890, from

the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, to the Quarter-master-General.

These are required to work up the perishable provisions, such as atta and onions, which cannot be stored for the whole year, and also to be ready in case any village should break out during the rains to enable the police to reach such village. I use the word permanent to describe this transport entertained for the whole year in contradistinction to that required for the cold weather only.

Last year Bhootia and Goorkha coolies were imported, the former of whom were a failure. Mr. Pughe, who worked the Goorkhas, wished a further trial of this class, but orders have been received in your No. 517J., dated 3rd February 1891, not to enlist more coolies in Darjeeling. I have therefore placed myself in communication with the Deputy Commissioner of Lahore with a view to get Punjabi coolies. These cost a little more to import, but they are men of more pluck and stand slight attacks of fever better than Bhootias.

Captains Shakespear and Hutchinson consider 75 coolies will suffice for Fort Tregear and I have therefore reduced the number for that post from 100 to 75. The same number, 100, will be required for Lungleh as in the past year.

The full number of 100 mules is also required, but they will be posted at Lungsin as above noted. These are provided for in the financial statement herewith submitted, and are necessary.

(b) *Temporary transport.*—General Badcock informed me it would not pay to take back the bullocks, and that they would be left or sold. I ask that they be left. So far as I can see, there will be nearly 800 left when the present work is over. I propose to bring them down to the Subalong Valley where there is excellent pasture, and to put on a herd to every 20 bullocks, giving them bathans as partial shelter during the rains, and I have provided for this in the financial statements appended.

The losses during the rains should be very small, as the weak bullocks will all be weeded out by the hard work they are now doing. If many die, the losses will have to be made up in November next, but I am sanguine that the losses will not be heavy.

Should we succeed in getting in rice from the hill tribes, or should taxation be imposed on rice, I consider that these bullocks will suffice for next year's transport; but should rice not be got in, either the number of bullocks must be increased or coolies must be imported. This subject must be taken up before the next Pooja holidays, by which time Mr. Murray will be in a position to say whether rice will have to be imported in large quantities or not. I have not made provision for the increased number of bullocks or coolies in the financial statements, but the question will have to be taken up and dealt with in September next.

I may here note that, roughly speaking, rice forms nearly 75 percent. of the whole food for the forts, excluding mules' grain, and that the relief to transport by obtaining local supplies is very great. The main difficulty is the unreliable nature of such local supplies; jooming is more precarious than plough cultivation, and famines are frequent in these hills.

It would therefore be unwise to rely entirely on supplies from the Lushais, though doubtless some rice would be forthcoming even in years of scarcity.

(c) *Supervision of Transport and Commissariat arrangements.*—The experience of the past year has convinced me that unless officers accustomed to transport, capable of arranging details, and able to give constant supervision are placed in charge of bullocks, the transport arrangements will almost certainly break down. Bullocks are capable of doing such short stages and are so delicate that far more supervision is required than in the case of mules, and I consider that a Commissariat Officer should be put in charge of the bullocks, as well as of the Government transport, from 1st December, and that he should have two transport officers and two non-commissioned officers under him.

Should coolies be required, a transport officer and a non-commissioned officer should accompany each body of 500.

The police officers in the hills could not undertake their duties in addition to their own, and it is almost certain that if the attempt should be made, there would be a breakdown.

I have not included the pay of these officers in the estimate, as they should be lent from the army, and draw their army pay and allowances.

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The services of three Commissariat sergeants are also required for the cold weather to assist in the extra work connected with the stocking of the forts. I have provided for the pay of three such for four months. Judging by what I have seen this year, it would be unwise economy to trust the supervision of details of provisioning the forts to Assistant Superintendents at least for some years until the thing has got into full working order.

The Commandant of the Police should gradually train up some of his men to undertake this duty.

The regular godown establishment for issue provided for in the police budget is apart altogether from the establishment required for stocking.

MEDICAL.

9. Separate proposals regarding the medical staff have been sent up in my No. 1 (Special duty), dated 2nd January 1891.

The cost cannot be given more than approximately until the grades of the officers to be sent to the hill are known.

CONTROL AT DEMAGRI.

10. This place is within the Hill Tracts, and its revenue and police work must for the present at least continue to be managed from Rangamatti. Inter-course with the hillmen and all political matters must remain under the Superintendent of the new country. The Assistant Superintendent stationed there should be solely under him, and should have nothing to do with the Deputy Commissioner, as it is impossible for him to serve two masters.

I annex in Appendix D the rules I would propose to introduce from 1st April.

It may be found necessary to constitute Demagri a sort of cantonment, separate entirely from the Hill Tracts; but for the present, I think, it should be tried whether such a change is necessary or not.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT FOR RATIONING FOR THE FUTURE.

11. The Superintendent will enter into a contract for the supply of stores at Demagri, and will indent on the contractor as stores may be required. The conditions of the present contract seem fair to both parties and may be adhered to, and the present contractor has proved his ability to do the work. The rate for delivering at Demagri will have to be raised, as with the increased amount of provisions a special establishment is required at Burkal, and this Government is providing this year. I am now negotiating with the contractor regarding rates.

The duty of indenting in time for stores must devolve on the Commandant, Frontier Police, and two months is the lowest margin he should allow. His indents will go through the Superintendent. Rules for transport in the rains compiled by Mr. Ryland from the Commissariat rules, and revised by Major Bond, are annexed as Appendix E, and will be in force from 1st April, if approved.

TAXATION.

12. I annex a note, marked F, from Mr. R. B. MacCabe, Political Officer, North Lushai Hills, on this subject.

This note was asked for by me at the instance of the Lieutenant-Governor.

It is clear that we must work on the same lines as Assam; and Mr. MacCabe's experience of the taxation wild tribes can and will pay is large. His rates differ from those proposed by Mr. Murray and Captain Shakespear and are higher. He proposes Re. 1 as house-tax, and a liability to deliver 10 seers of rice per house at the rate of Rs. 2 per maund, together with free labour for six days in the year.

I would accept these terms, leaving it to the Superintendent to take the tax in kind when it could not be realised in cash, and to accept dhan in place of rice at the rate of 20 seers instead of 10. All labour above the six days to be paid for at the rate of five annas a day. The Superintendent should be very careful not to call on the villages near the forts for an excessive amount of labour, and he should encourage settlers near the forts.

FINANCIAL.

13. I attempted to put the proposals into regular proposition statements, but the form is not adapted for a case like the present, when the expenditure is practically incurred for the first time. The whole of the expenditure proposed, except that on salaries of police and other fixed departments, will probably have to be revised before another year, and is to a large extent tentative.

I have in all cases put the cost of rationing under each head of the estimate as the only way of showing how much each department will really cost—

Statement 1.—Administration.—In this I have included the whole pay and allowances of the Superintendent who will be seconded in the police, and whose pay and allowance should not therefore be debited to that department.

He has at present as Assistant Political Officer one clerk, but he will require another with the increase of work. I have not provided for a treasury as requested in your No. 231P., dated 16th January, as the Lieutenant-Governor decided to work for the first year anyhow without a treasury.

The postal runners are put under this heading as the most suitable. For the past few months they have been paid from the Political grant, but this cannot continue.

Statement 2.—Police.—I tried to work this with the police budget, but failed to work in the details in a satisfactory manner. I have therefore had two statements drawn up. The first (a) shows the distribution of police between the old and the new districts, and the second (b) the actual present and estimated cost of the new district.

The figures for the most part speak for themselves, but explanations seem to be necessary on the points noted below—

(a) *Salaries.*—I have totally failed to follow the police budget figures. I give under present scale what was apparently intended to be the scale, and under proposed scale the actual amount now being drawn, the officers in the tracts being all in the junior grades except Mr. Tayler. I have omitted acting allowances as they constantly vary.

(b) *Establishment.*—These figures require considerable modification, as no provision is made for the establishment necessary for the new district, and this will necessarily be heavy, as the police will be distributed over three centres, and no help can be got from the force which is wholly illiterate. I have gone over the question of the police establishment with the Deputy Commissioner and the Assistant District Superintendent, and I do not think the clerks in the District Superintendent's office can be reduced. The present sum of Rs. 1,920 is therefore required for the pay of the clerks at Rangamatti, and new clerks are required for the Lushai Hills. The police being illiterate, no help can be got from them, and the office staff must therefore be large. The police are also scattered, and there must be an office man at each post.

The godown establishment is also put under this heading, and the clerks will be available for general work. These are already entertained this year as stated in the rules sent up with this office No. 1431H.T.—XIII-32, dated 22nd November 1890, and approved of by your No. 4553P., dated 22nd December 1890. It would be quite impossible to work the provisioning of the men without this establishment.

(c) *Sweepers.*—The services of the additional men are absolutely necessary to keep the forts and camps clean. For the whole year 12 are required, viz., 3 for Demagri, 4 for Lungleh, 3 for Tregear, 1 for Lungsin, and 1 for Lal Thuama. The other 8 are for the camps used in the cold weather. There are 14 such camps; but as the men in the forts are decreased in the cold weather, it is calculated 20 sweepers will suffice. They will have to be imported, and the cost of importation has to be added: these men are now employed.

43 (46)

(46)

The total expenditure in the police in the new districts will therefore be as follows:—

	Rs.
Salaries of officers ...	25,800
Travelling allowance of officers.	9,600
Pay of police	76,695
Establishment	11,400
Sweepers ...	1,990
Good-conduct allowance	540
Increased pay ...	12,000
Travelling allowance of ministerial officers	2,000
Purchase of elephant	4,000
Cost and carriage of provisions	84,520
Ordnance stores ...	4,000
Allowance to contractor for carriage of men	6,800
Contract contingencies	20,428
Total	2,58,973

Against this there is a saving of Rs. 1,65,665 as shown in Statement 2(a) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Statement 3.—Medical.—The statement has already gone up with this office No. 238H.T., dated 28th instant. To make this report complete I annex a copy, and I have filled in approximately the total cost. I think local allowances should be given. As the hospitals will be located at four different places on a line of 86 miles of road, I consider no field hospital will be required next year, thus causing a large reduction on the present cost.

Statement 4.—Roads and buildings.—The estimate is drawn up by Lieutenant Skey and revised by Mr. Murray and myself. I have thought it best to include cost of rationing under each department, estimating a lump sum of Rs. 10 per man per mensem. Including wastage and losses, the cost is not less than this.

The estimate looks formidable, but it is considerably less than the sum originally estimated, and the preservation of the road in good order is imperative.

It may be possible in future years to get local labour for this purpose at least in the cold weather, and even next year it may be possible to get some Lushais to serve; but I have estimated for imported men for the present year.

The 100 men for the cold weather are not included, as they may not be required. Local men can be got for three months. The cost of the current year is shown only approximately; more men have been employed in the cold weather owing to the short number employed in the rains.

The repairs to the forts are estimated to be done by Lushai labour as in the current year, lump sums for each house being given to the men who come in and do the work. They like this way of payment, and it is also economical.

Transport.—I have divided this into two heads, permanent and temporary. The whole transport proposals are based on the supposition that the rivers Tui-chang and Phyrang have bridges fit for mule traffic thrown over them as proposed by Lieutenant Skey. If this is not done, I doubt if the scale proposed is sufficient.

Statement 5.—Permanent transport.—(a) *Mules and elephants.*—The estimate for mules is in accordance with present scale, and there is no increase except a reserve of ten drivers which experience has shown to be necessary.

The estimate for medicines seems to me high, but it is founded on last year's experience.

I have included keep of five elephants: seven are at present sanctioned for the Hill Tracts. I have discussed this point with the Deputy Commissioner, and we are agreed that two should remain and that five should be transferred to the Lushai Hills. The mule-drivers should be recruited from the Punjab, and I have provided cost of importation.

The actual cost of the railway journey from Lahore to Howrah is Rs. 16-4-3, and the steamer fare here Rs. 6, in all Rs. 22-4-3, and food and incidental expenses,

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(47)

including cost of recruiter, will bring the cost of each man up to Rs. 25. The is heavy, but the best men come from about Lahore, and the Deputy Commissioner is willing to assist in recruiting. The Military authorities have brought men from there, and Major Bond recommends that we should continue to do so.

These men should get the full summer scale of Commissariat clothing and the winter scale in part, i.e., except the warm pyjamas and warm coat, and I have included cost of this scale. The men now sent up get the full scale.

The Commissariat Department should supply the clothing on indent and it should be served out in Calcutta.

It is bad economy to stint suitable clothing, and I very strongly urge that all estimates be sanctioned. I have omitted the warm coats and pyjamas, as these men will never be higher than Fort Lungleh, and their permanent quarters are only 2,000 feet high.

Statement 6.—(b) Coolies.—The estimate for coolies is framed on the same basis as that for mule-drivers, except that for the 81 men for Fort Tregear (including sirdars), for whom I estimate the full amount of warm clothing.

It will not be necessary to import the full number of men each year, but for next year the full number will be necessary.

Statement 7.—Temporary and semi-temporary Transport.—In this I have included the keep of 800 bullocks for the working and non-working season, which I calculate at 11 months, beginning from May. Up to that date they will be under Major Bond. This number will be necessary so long as the rice tax is not realised. I hope the tax will be realised next season, but it would not be safe to depend on this, and as the bullocks are in the country, and can be kept at a very small cost during the rains, while it would cost much to replace them, I advise their being kept; even if rice be got locally, part of the whole number will be required for transport and the rest may be sold.

If no rice or little rice is obtained, coolies will also have to be imported, or else more bullocks or donkeys.

I have estimated the cost of bringing the bullock-drivers from Allahabad only, and, as before stated, they should be enlisted by the Commissariat Department. Orders for the enrolment of these men should issue about the beginning of September. I have only provided for the issue of a blanket and a waterproof sheet for these men, but the Commissariat Department will probably consider a fuller kit necessary. I have not included cost of increased strength of bullocks or of importing coolies, as it is hoped this will not be necessary. Additional estimate will have to be sent up in September if they are required.

Statement 8.—Commissariat.—It will be necessary to have a Commissariat Officer fully up to transport work, though not necessarily so high an officer as Major Bond, for at least another season, and the Government of India in the Military Department should be asked to depute such an officer by the end of October.

The officers shown as required for the bullocks should follow in November. I have not shown the salaries of these officers as they will get military pay, but they should either get pay as on active service, or should get a deputation allowance.

I have not provided for this, but it should be added if field pay is not given.

I have also not provided for the office of the Commissariat Officer which should be sent by his own department, and the cost of which is unknown to me.

The sergeants lent should get Rs. 200 a month consolidated pay.

POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENTS.

14. No provision is made for these departments beyond the provision for postal runners as these departments provide their own officers.

15. These statements are fairly accurate as regards future expenditure. They do not include all present expenditure, e.g., there are two field hospitals now in the Lushai country, the cost of which I have not included.

I have also not included the pay of Military Officers.

48 45
(15)

The comparison stands as follows:—

		Present.	Proposed.	Increase.	Decrease.
		Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Statement I	...	25,308 0 0	27,408 0 0	1,900 0 0	
" II	...	2,04,683 0 0	2,58,973 0 0	54,390 0 0	
" III	...	7,020 0 0	16,200 0 0	9,180 0 0	
" IV	...	1,21,309 0 0	1,04,946 0 0		16,363 0 0
" V	...	35,496 6 0	41,672 10 0	6,174 4 0	
" VI	...	66,835 0 0	59,894 11 0		7,000 6 0
" VII	...	2,22,388 0 0	93,850 4 0		1,28,432 12 0
" VIII	...	5,882 0 0	5,882 0 0		
Total		6,88,766 6 0	6,08,716 9 0		

The difference is a little over Rs. 80,000 in favour of the new proposals, but really if all costs were included it is over two lakhs.

16. Of the sum of a little over 6 lakhs, which it is proposed to spend in the new country, about 4½ lakhs, or rather less, will be new expenditure, and a little over 1½ lakhs will be met by a reduction in the expenditure of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

17. After this year all coolies who are engaged should pay Rs. 3-8 a month for ration, as the police will do in the current year, and the realisation from the police may be taken at Rs. 22,638, and from officers, servants, and clerks, and others who now pay, the total will be brought up to about Rs. 26,000.

18. The price of provision for Europeans has been entirely omitted, as I have no means of calculating this, but the total will not be large.

19. The cause of the difference between the sums calculated for cost of rations in the eight statements now sent (under 2 lakhs) and the sum expended this year as reported in my telegram of 24th instant (Rs. 2,81,259) is that in the current year food for 1,000 bullocks and drivers in proportion has been sent up, and also for 1,000 transport coolies, while the estimate is for 800 bullocks and no transport coolies.

20. This report may be taken as a reply to the call made in your No. 231P., dated 16th January, for an estimate of charges. It may be amended next September in view of the experience we meanwhile gain.

21. I beg that printed copies of this report, and its annexures, may be sent for transmission to the officers of the Hill Tracts.

APPENDIX NO. 15

63

No. 144 B.

DRAFT PROCLAMATION.

Whereas the territories known as the North Lushai Hills and the Chin Hills are parts of the dominions of Her Majesty the Queen, Empress of India, and whereas the said territories, although hitherto administered as appertaining to the Provinces of Assam and Burma respectively, have not been formally placed under any defined administration, and whereas it is expedient that the said territories should be formally placed under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Assam and the Chief Commissioner of Burma respectively. Know all men, and it is hereby proclaimed that the Governor-General in Council, in exercise of the powers conferred upon him by the Statute 17 and 18 Vict., Ch. 77, Sec. 3, and with the sanction and approbation of the Secretary of State for India in Council, has been pleased to take the said territories under his immediate authority and management and to place the North Lushai Hills under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Assam and the Chin Hills under that of the Chief Commissioner of Burma, and further to direct that henceforth the former shall be included within the Province of Assam and the latter within the Province of Burma.

WITNESSED BY ME
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR INDIA IN COUNCIL
IN WITNESS WHEREOF
I HAVE HEREUNTO
SIGNED MY HAND AND
THE SEAL OF THE
OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR INDIA IN COUNCIL
AT LONDON
THIS 14TH DAY OF
JANUARY 1884

No. 145.

DRAFT PROCLAMATION.

Whereas the territories known as the South Lushai Hills are part of the dominions of Her Majesty the Queen, Empress of India, and whereas the said territories, although hitherto administered as appertaining to the Lower Provinces of Bengal, have not been formally declared and appointed to be subject to any Presidency or Lieutenant-Governorship, and whereas it is expedient that such formal declaration and appointment should be made in respect of the said territories. Know all men, and it is hereby proclaimed that the Governor-General in Council, in exercise of the powers conferred upon him by the Statute 28 and 29 Vict., Ch. 17, Sec. 4, and with the sanction and approbation of the Secretary of State for India in Council, is hereby pleased to declare and appoint the said territories to be subject to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and further to direct that henceforth they shall be included within the Lower Provinces of Bengal.

[Source: Letter to The Right Hon'ble H.H. Fowler, *Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India*, (No. 120 of 1895, Simla, the 25th June 1895), Signed by Elgin, G.S. White, A.E. Miller, H. Brackenbury, J. Westland, A. Mackenzie, A.C. Trevor, Pros. July 1895, File No. 144 & 144 B, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Govt. of India, Delhi, 61 – 64.]

APPENDIX No. 16

Rules for the training of Officers in Practical Surveying.

1. The course of training should occupy at least one month, and will consist of instruction in the following branches of work:

- (a) Traverse survey.
- (b) Cadastral survey.
- (c) *Pertalling*.
- (d) Extraction of areas and preparation of settlement papers.

2. During his deputation to the survey camp, each officer under training will be supplied with two chainmen. The expenditure incurred on this account will be met from the budget of the Deputy Commissioner of the district in which the survey camp may be held.

(a) *Traverse Survey.*

3. When the officers deputed for training join the survey camp, the officer in charge will explain to them the system of traverse survey, the mechanism and adjustments of a 5' theodolite, the method of reading a vernier scale, and how ordinary village and main circuit angles are observed and recorded.

4. After receiving this preliminary instruction, each officer will survey independently with a 5' theodolite a small circuit comprising 10 angles, and for this purpose the officer in charge of the camp will lay down near the camp an imaginary village with the bonds of the boundary marked by earthen mounds. He will mark with pegs at suitable points, never more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ chain from the demarcated boundary, 10 stations.

5. When the circuit of the village has been completed, the 10 angles and chain measurements will be entered in the village set up form, and the officer in charge will explain how the angular work and chaining can be proved mathematically.

6. The results will then be plotted on an ordinary cadastral sheet (1" ruled squares) by means of the co-ordinates already calculated (Rule 5).

7. Not more than five days should be allotted to instruction in traverse survey.

(b) *Cadastral Survey.*

8. Officers having learnt how fixed traverse stations are obtained from which the external village boundaries are mapped, the officer in charge will then give instruction in field to field surveying and the method of taking off measurements from the 16" diagonal scale, and will explain how a village is surveyed cadastrally by first surveying the boundary, then cutting up the village into quadrilaterals, and finally plotting the field boundaries.

9. Each officer will then carry out independently the detailed survey of a small block of about 30 acres of cultivated land near the camp. The block selected should contain a fair proportion of *basti* land. Not more than ten days should be devoted to this work. In the case of Sub-Deputy Collectors the area to be surveyed should not be less than 75 acres.

(c) *Pertalling.*

10. When the cadastral survey of the block has been completed, the officer will be shown how to run an independent *pertal* with chain and optical square (recording the measurements in a field-book), and how to compare the trace with the original map.

11. He will then run both in his own and in the blocks of other officers numerous check lines aggregating at least three linear miles so as to make him thoroughly familiar with this important branch of survey work. At least six days should be devoted to this work.

(d) *Extraction of areas and preparation of settlement papers.*

12. The officer in charge of the camp will next explain the method of area extraction and the method of filling up the different columns of the *dagchitha* and *jamabandi*, after which each officer will calculate the area of the fields surveyed by him twice, and independently compare the result of the total means with the universal theorem area and prepare for the area cadastrally surveyed by him a complete *dagchitha* and *jamabandi*.

APPENDIX NO.17

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

No. 591-E B.

Simla, the 1st April, 1898.

By the Governor General in Council.

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas the territories known as the South Lushai Hills were by a Proclamation No. 1697-E., dated the 6th September 1895, issued under the Government of India Act, 1865 (28 and 29 Vict., Cap. 17), Section 4, included within the Lower Provinces of Bengal, and whereas the tract known as Rutton Puiya's villages, including Demagri, in the Hill Tracts of Chittagong, is also included within the said Lower Provinces, and whereas it is expedient that the said territories and tract should now be placed under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Assam: Know all men and it is hereby proclaimed that the Governor-General in Council has been pleased, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 3 of the Government of India Act, 1854 (17 and 18 Vict., Cap. 77), and with the sanction and approbation of the Secretary of State for India, to take the said territories and tract under his immediate authority and management, and to place them under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, and further to direct that henceforth they shall be included within the Province of Assam.

By Command,

W. J. CUNINGHAM,

Secretary to the Government of India.

[Source: Transfer of the South Lushai Hills from Bengal to Assam. Boundaries of the Lushai Hills. Amendment of the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation of 1880, Pros. July 1898, File No.52, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, Govt. Of India, Delhi, 18.]

APPENDIX NO.18

No. 838G., dated Aijal, the 21st February 1900.

From—Captain H. W. G. Cole, I.S.C., Offg. Superintendent, Lushai Hills,
To—The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

With reference to the correspondence ending with your memorandum No. 533For.—4331P., dated the 18th October 1899, I have the honour to report that accompanied by Captain Powell and 50 men of the Lushai Hills Military Police Battalion, I met Colonel Maxwell at Tipaimukh on the 19th January. Colonel Maxwell had in camp 75 men of the Silchar Military Police Battalion, who had come up by boat to Tipaimukh, and 25 men of the Manipur State Police. I took a sub-surveyor, whose services were kindly placed at our disposal by the officer in charge of No. 14 Survey Party, and on arrival at Tipaimukh, we at once commenced operations.

2. By the 9th instant, after carefully examining all the country which has been accurately mapped by the surveyor, we completed our operations and were able to decide in complete accord on a well-defined boundary line marked throughout by the courses of rivers and streams, and one, about which, we are of opinion, there can be no mistake whatever in the future, and which will be readily understood by the people themselves. This boundary is fully set forth in the accompanying joint report.

3. It will be observed that the general line followed is that agreed on by Mr. Porteous and Major Shakespear. When demarcating the Chin-Manipur boundary, Mr. Carey and Mr. Porteous erected their last pillar, No. 8, on a saddle about 4 miles east of Lungleng Hill and purposely refrained from erecting any pillar on Lungleng Hill, in view of the contemplated demarcation of the boundary on the Lushai side, which has now been completed. This pillar is close to the source of the Tuikui stream which is a clearly-defined stream running round the north of Lungleng Hill into the Tuivai. We have adopted this stream as the boundary in preference to following small nullahs up to the summit of Lungleng, which, being too inconsiderable to merit even local names, would be apt to give rise to possible misconception in the future. The whole of Lungleng Hill then falls outside Manipur territory and will be included either in the Chin or the Lushai Hills according to the settlement of the boundaries of these districts, about which a separate communication is being made.

Report of the Commissioners appointed to demarcate the boundary between the Manipur State and the Lushai Hills district.

The Commissioners were Lieutenant-Colonel H. St. P. Maxwell, C.S.I., I.S.C., Political Agent in Manipur and Superintendent of the State, and Captain H. W. G. Cole, I.S.C., Officiating Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, and acted under the authority conveyed in letter No. 25For.—210-211P., dated the 19th January 1899, from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner.

2. Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell arrived at Tipaimukh on the 17th January 1900 and was met by an escort of 75 rank and file of the Silchar Military Police Battalion who had come up by river from Silchar, and 25 rank and file of the Manipur State Police who marched from Manipur. Captain Cole was accompanied by Captain Powell, I.S.C., Assistant Commandant of the Lushai Hills Military Police Battalion, and 50 rank and file of the Lushai Hills Military Police Battalion, and arrived at Tipaimukh on the 19th idem. Sub-surveyor Sita Ram Naidu, No. 14 Survey Party, also accompanied the party. That so large an escort was brought was due to the fact that it was intended to take advantage of the opportunity to disarm the villages in the vicinity of the proposed boundary.

3. Between the 22nd January and the 9th February the whole of the intervening country between Tipaimukh, which is the junction of the Tuivai or Tipai river with the Barak river and forms the trijunction point of the boundaries of the Manipur State and the Cachar and Lushai Hills districts, and Lungleng Hill was carefully examined. It was decided on leaving Tipaimukh to follow the course of the Tuivai river up stream until that river is joined by a stream called the Tui-Toi which flows below Fabarchang Hill. From this point the Tuivai makes a wide detour to the south round the Khulel Hill, which shortly previous to the expedition of 1871-72 was the site of the village of Vompilal, one of the then powerful Lushai chiefs. This hill

has always been in Lushai territory, although recently a Manipuri Lushai, named Ladzakala, emboldened by the security resulting on the occupation of the Lushai Hills, and finding the hill temporarily unoccupied, has crossed over and made a village on its northern slopes. It was therefore decided to abandon the line of the Tuivai river at its junction with the Tui-Toi stream and to proceed up that stream to one of its sources just below a well-defined saddle, known locally as Bongkot, where a site was selected for the erection of the one and only boundary pillar which the proposed line entails. Crossing the saddle, the boundary then follows a stream which is one of the sources of the Vang-Vum-Lui stream which empties itself into the Tuivai river a short distance below. The course of the Tuivai is again adhered to until it flows to the north-west of Lungleng Hill, where it receives the Tuikui stream. This stream is then followed up its course to its source which is immediately below boundary pillar No. 8, which is the last pillar erected by the Chin-Manipur Boundary Commission on a saddle about 4 miles to the east of Lungleng Hill.

4. It was at first our intention to make for the summit of Lungleng Hill which had been provisionally selected by the Chin-Manipur Commissioners as the closing point of their boundary, but the peak selected by them and marked as 6531 in the survey map is not the highest point of the Lungleng Range, nor is it a clearly-defined peak easily recognizable as a land-mark. Had we made for this point, it would have been necessary, in order to complete the boundary, to select a couple of diminutive water-courses on both sides of Lungleng Hill without local names, and in regard to which misapprehension might well arise in future. But by following the course of the Tuikui all chance of any misunderstanding is done away with, and the whole of Lungleng Hill will be outside Manipur territory. At present there is a considerable village of 386 houses (the chief of which is Pumlala, who has always been under Manipur) on a spur of the Lungleng Range, known as Bangmol, but it is practically certain that when he next moves his site, which he will do in a very few years' time, he will move back into Manipur territory, his former sites having been hitherto far further north. Having regard to the nomadic habits of these people, it was decided to adhere, when possible, to clearly-defined well-known streams for boundaries in preference to giving weight to the ethnographical conditions of the moment, but at the same time full consideration was paid to claims on the grounds of old established occupancy. Details of the boundary are clearly summarised in the schedule attached, and the boundary line has been marked with a red line on the accompanying map.

5. A cairn of stones has been erected at the site selected for the boundary pillar at Bongkot, and at this point a masonry pillar will be erected under the orders of the Superintendent of the Manipur State, half the cost being debited to the Lushai Hills. The cost of the demarcation, with the exception of the pay of the sub-surveyor and his party, has been *nil*, all charges in connection with escorts, etc., being debited to disarmament.

H. ST. P. MAXWELL, *Lieut.-Colonel, C.S.I., I.S.C.*,

*Political Agent in Manipur and
Superintendent of the State.*

H. W. G. COLE, *Captain, I.S.C.*,

Offg. Superintendent of the Lushai Hills.

*Camp Pumlala's village,
The 9th February 1900.*

Lushai-Manipur-Boundary.

No. 1, dated Manipur, the 2nd April 1900.

From—Lieutenant-Colonel H. St. P. MAXWELL, C.S.I., I.S.C., Political Agent in Manipur
and Superintendent of the State,

To—The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

With reference to your telegram No. 4330P., dated the 16th October 1899, and in continuation of this office letter No. 370, dated the 29th September 1899, in connection with the demarcation of the boundary between the Manipur State and the Lushai Hills, I have the honour to report that on 19th January 1900 I met Captain Cole, Officiating Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, at Tipaimukh, and we at once commenced examining the country with the assistance of sub-surveyor Sitaram Naidu, of No. 14 Survey Party, Survey of India Department.

2. We were able to decide in complete accord on a well-defined boundary line marked throughout by the courses of rivers and streams, and about which, we were of opinion, no mistake in the future can arise, and which will be readily understood by the roaming inhabitants of that part of the country. This boundary is fully set forth in the accompanying joint report.*

3. In the demarcation of the Manipur State and Chin Hills boundary, the Commissioners, Messrs. Carey and Porteous, erected their last and most westerly pillar No. 8 on a saddle about 4 miles east of Lungleng Hill, and refrained from erecting any pillar on Lungleng in view of the contemplated demarcation of the boundary on the Lushai Hills side. This pillar is close to the source of the Tuikui stream, which is a clearly-defined stream flowing round the north of Lungleng Hill into the Tuivai. We have adopted this stream as the boundary in preference to following small nullahs up to the summit of Lungleng, which, being too inconsiderable to merit even local names, would be apt to give rise to possible misconception in the future. The whole of Lungleng Hill then falls outside Manipur territory, and will be included either in the Chin or Lushai Hills, whichever a future settlement may decide.

4. Should the demarcation now undertaken meet with the approval of the Local Government and the Government of India, a pillar No. 1 marked L. M. (Lushai-Manipur) will have to be erected on the Bongkot saddle. I can easily arrange for the execution of this work in Cachar and for the conveyance of the stone prism by boat to Tipaimukh and thence by coolies to its site.

5. No Lushai Hills villages were found on the Manipur side of the new demarcation line, and only two villages paying revenue to Manipur will fall in the Lushai Hills. These two villages had only lately moved farther south, and they will possibly trek northwards so as to fall within Manipur territory on their next change of *dhums*. I may here note that all the villages in the neighbourhood of the boundary line are inhabited by Kukis of various clans, who are a roving race, never keeping their villages five years on one site, and whose mode of cultivation is clearing the tree jungle off the side of a hill and sowing the ground for two years with *धान*, job's-tears, cotton, etc. The destruction to the forests is very great, but this is the only system of cultivation these people understand, and they fortunately live a good distance from any timber market; so, perhaps, after all little harm is done.

6. As Superintendent of the Manipur State, I am of opinion that the proposed boundary is a fair one, and that Manipur has had her fair share of territory, and this also was the view of the demarcation taken by several Manipuris who accompanied me.

7. In conclusion, I would state that the detachment of 75 men under two native officers of the Cachar Military Police Battalion, who were deputed to escort me through the hills, carried out their duties satisfactorily.

* Same as enclosed with letter No. 838G., dated the 21st February 1900, from the Superintendent, Lushai Hills.

APPENDIX No.19

No. 207-41, dated Falam, the — February 1901.

From—E. O. FOWLER, Esq., Officiating Superintendent, Chin Hills,

To—The Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma.

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9
Encl.
Pro. No. 1

I have the honour to submit, for the orders of Government, the joint report of Mr. Bateman, Assistant Superintendent, Chin Hills, and Mr. Dundas, Assistant Superintendent, Lushai Hills, the officers appointed to demarcate the boundary between the Lushai Hills and the Chin Hills at the north-west corner of the latter district. Instructions to carry out the demarcation were

Letter No. 31, dated 14th February, from the Assistant Superintendent, Tiddim.

conveyed in your telegram No. 859, dated the 15th November 1900. A copy of the forwarding letter marginally noted is also forwarded.

Letters, No. 1, dated the 2nd April 1900, and No. 838-G, dated the 21st February 1900, from Colonel Maxwell, Political Agent, Manipur, and Captain Cole, Officiating Superintendent, Lushai Hills, respectively, to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, explain the reasons which let them to adopt the Tuikui stream to its source below boundary pillar No. 8 of the Chin-Manipur boundary, demarcated by Messrs. Carey and Porteous in 1894, as a portion of the Lushai-Manipur boundary in preference to following a line to the summit of Lungleng Hill.

As regards the boundary which the report now submitted deals with, it was decided (*vide* telegram No. 859, dated the 15th November, from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma) that the confluence of the Twisai and Twivai rivers should form the tri-junctional point between Manipur, the Chin

E-1-2-June.

2

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOREIGN DEPARTMENT, JUNE 1901.

Pro. No. 1 Demarcation of a portion of boundary between the Chin and Lushai Hills.

Hills and the Lushai Hills, in preference to boundary pillar No. 8, and that the Twisai river should form the basis of demarcation.

The idea was to follow the Twisai from its confluence with the Twivai to its source, and then to carry the boundary in a direct line over the hill to the source of the Tyao, the recognized boundary between the Chin Hills and the Lushai Hills.

Messrs. Bateman and Dundas, while carrying out the general idea, found it necessary, for reasons stated in their report, to depart somewhat from this alignment. The line adopted by them is a straighter and shorter one and is in every way a very satisfactory one.

A map drawn by Mr. Bateman illustrating the boundary, as also one traced in Falam showing the boundary clearly, are attached.

In conclusion I would beg to state that the work of demarcation appears to have been carried out most satisfactorily by Messrs. Bateman and Dundas.

Sub-enclo. 1,
enclo.,
Pro. No. 1.

No. 31, dated the 14th February 1901.

From—A. C. BATEMAN, Esq., Assistant Superintendent, Tiddim, North Chin Hills,
To—The Superintendent, Chin Hills, Falam.

I have the honour to submit herewith the Chin-Lushai Boundary Report as drawn up by Mr. Dundas and myself, together with a map of the country I went over.

2. Mr. Dundas and I found it necessary to depart from the original plan of having the Twisai to its source as a boundary for reasons stated in the report.

3. By the new alignment we get Lungleng Hill with Losao village. This is the only village we take over from Lushai Hills. In taking over this village I explained to the headman that he was now under Howchinkup and the Chin Hills authorities, and was in future to pay tribute to the Chin Hills. Tribute for 1900-1901 was collected by the Lushai authorities before handing over. There are no unlicensed guns in this village, they having given up some 250 guns to the Lushai authorities, most of which they bought from the Manipur Chins. There is one licensed gun in the village, so I allowed the owner to keep it, substituting the Lushai stamp for the Chin Hills one. The villagers appear a very quiet and tame lot, no doubt the result of their Chief and several of their headmen having done a year's imprisonment at Aijal quite recently.

The people of this village are rice-eaters. They have lots of good land, and their crops as a rule are very good. The Lushai authorities have been in the habit of demanding a big yearly tribute in rice from Losao to feed the sepoy of Champhai post.

4. Mr. Dundas and I started on the boundary work on the 16th and completed it by the 23rd of January 1901.

5. In conclusion I may add that every one concerned in the demarcation of the new boundary appears pleased, and this I take it was one of the main points to be achieved. Its achievement speaks for the success of our mission.

enclo. 2,
enclo.,
No. 1.

Report of the Commissioners appointed to demarcate the remaining undefined boundary between the Chin Hills and Lushai Hills district.

The Commissioners were Mr. W. C. M. Dundas, Assistant Superintendent, Lushai Hills, acting under the authority of Assam letter No. 585-For.—4185-P., dated the 22nd September 1900, and Mr. A. C. Bateman, Assistant Superintendent, North Chin Hills, acting under the authority of the Superintendent, Chin Hills.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
FOREIGN DEPARTMENT, JUNE 1901.

Demarcation of a portion of boundary between the Chin and Lushai Hills. Pro. No. 1

2. Mr. Dundas arrived at Losao village on the 15th January 1901, and Mr. Bateman on the 16th idem, accompanied by 30 rifles of the Chin Hills Battalion Military Police.

3. Between the 16th and 23rd January 1901 the whole of the country between Lungleng Hill and the source of the Tyao river, which forms the undefined boundary between the two districts, was gone over and examined with a view to ascertaining the shortest and best-defined alignment.

4. The Manipur-Lushai Boundary Commissioners last year provisionally fixed the tri-junctional point at boundary pillar No. 8 of the Chin-Manipur boundary with the intention that, when subsequently the undefined boundary between the Chin and Lushai Hills was demarcated, the Changhnar stream from its source on the south of No. 8 boundary pillar to its confluence with the Twisai would be a possible line. The Superintendents of the Lushai and Chin Hills have, however, agreed that the confluence of the Twivai and Twisai shall form the tri-junctional point between the three districts. We have accordingly fixed No. 2 boundary pillar at the confluence of the Twivai and Twisai. This stone is on a cairn about 4 feet high, marked as follows:
L. C. H. M.
11 11 11, and this is the tri-junctional point.

Further it was decided that the basis of demarcation should be the course of the Twisai stream to its source, and then over the hill in a direct line to the source of the Tyao. We have, however, found it necessary to depart from this alignment for the reason that it would have necessitated a succession of cairns being placed along the Hna-lan Khuang-phah ridge from the source of the Twisai, 10 miles south of the best-defined source of the Tyao. The line adopted by us is shorter and straighter, the source of the Bapui-lui and Tyao being only 50 yards on either side of a neck connecting the Khuang-phah range and locally known as Vai-kho-hmun.

5. The line adopted by us is a direct one. After the confluence of the Twisai and Twimang, it follows the latter stream till the Bapui-lui flows into it, and thence up this stream to the saddle forming the watershed of it and the Tyao. The distance along this boundary would be between 30 and 40 miles. At Vai-kho-hmun we have placed No. 3 boundary pillar marked $\frac{L. C. H.}{3}$.

6. By the above alignment Lungleng Hill with Punlala's village of 386 houses falls within the Chin Hills district, and a spur springing north from the Dettlang Khuang-phah range, Vai-khot-laing, which has hitherto been a bone of contention between the Kanhow and Lushai, and regarded as a buffer between their respective cultivations, is included in the Lushai Hills district.

7. The boundary has been explained thoroughly to the neighbouring tribes and is one about which, we venture to think, there can be no misconception in the future.

CAMP KHUANG-PHAK; }
The 23rd January 1901. }

A. C. BATEMAN, 11
Asst. Superintendent, North Chin Hills.

CAMP KHUANG-PHAK; } 113
The 23rd January 1901. } 11

W. C. M. DUNDAS,
Asst. Superintendent, Lushai Hills.

[Source: Demarcation of the portion of the boundary between the Chin and Lushai Hills which lies between the Manipur-Lushai boundary and the Tyao river, Proceedings June 1901, File No. 1 - 2, Government of India, Foreign Department, External A, National Archives of India, 5 - 8.]

APPENDIX No.20

Demi-Official dated Agartala, the 11th October 1891.

From – Babu UMA KANTA DAS, Rai Bahadur, Minister, Tipperah State,

To – The Political Agent of Hill Tipperah.

Sir,

Referring to your demi-official letter of the 31st ultimo regarding the question of the eastern boundary of this territory, I beg to state that when peace is established in the country to the east of the Dhaleswari river, this Administration can reasonably hope to extend cultivation up to the left bank of that river without difficulty.

2. There is already a proposal for establishing a toll station on the Langai river for collectin collecting dues on forest produce cut in this State and floated down that river. The proposal would ere this have been carried out, had it not been for the fact that the authorities of Sylhet object to give our men passage along that portion of the Langai which flows through tha Langai Reserved Forests of that district. A representation on this subject was made to ypur office in the Durbar letter No. 286, dated 15th September 1886, to which a reply was received with your endorsement No. 3065 – 16-3, dated 2nd December of that year. I beg that the matter may be reconsidered.

3. The Langai valley is separated from the Juri valley of this State by the Jampui range of hills, which is the highest range in this territory and is almost impassable, hence is the request of this Administration for passage along the portion of the Langai stream in question.

4. Plough cultivation has already been extended in the Juri valley up to a few miles of the western edge of the Jampui range, and it will not be difficult to bring the arable lands in the Langai valley under cultivation, in due course, if passage to the valley can be found as requested.

5. Between the Langai valley and the Dhaleswari valley, lie the Haichhak and the Ainkung ranges of hills, which also like the Jampui are high ranges. Until the country is opened out our men should have to go to the Dhaleswari valley through the district of Cachar – a circumstance which cannot be easily avoided, and which, it is believed, will not be objected to by the authorities of Cachar. Indeed, our men, who will have to work in the Langai and Dhaleswari valleys, will, for sometime, have to depend upon Sylhet and Cachar for supplies etc.

6. The country up to the Dhaleswari was from time immemorial, prior to 1874, a part and parcel of this State. The cultivation mentioned in the opening paragraph of this letter will be arranged to be carried on both by means of plough and by juming. For the former will be engaged Bengalis, Cacharis, and Manipuris, and for the latter Tipperahs, Hallems,

and Kukies.

7. The tribes enumerated in the concluding sentence of the preceding paragraph are subjects of His Highness, for whose house they have innate regard and love. In the event of the representation regarding the eastern boundary being viewed favourably, these tribes will be induced to gradually move towards the east and to cultivate jhums in suitable lands in the country watered by Langai and Dhaleswari. For, in consequence of the gradual extension of plough cultivation from the west to the east, and of forest produce, timber, bamboos, etc., on the low hills on the western side of His Highness' territory being largely cut and explored year after year, jhum lands on the side are becoming scarce. This is an additional reason why it has become necessary for the Durbar to ask to be allowed to exercise jurisdiction up to the Dhaleswari river in the east as before.

I beg to remain,

Yours most obediently,

(Sd.) U. K. DAS

Minister, Tipperah State

[Source: Maharaj Kumar & Sahadev Bikram Kishore Dev Barman, *Tripura State Eastern Boundary Dispute, Appendices to Exhibit B*, 11 – 12.]

APPENDIX No.21

No. 140 – III-88, dated Agartala, the 1st December 1897.

From – Babu BANGA CHANDRA BHATTACHARJEE, B. A., Officer in charge, Political
Department, Agartala,
To – The Political Agent of Hill Tipperah.

Sir,

In continuation of this office No. 126 – III-88, dated 3rd ultimo, I have the honour to state that the last dispute relates to the boundary to the east of the Langai. It is needless to state here that in olden times His Highness' dominions in that part of the country extended to the very confines of Burmah. In later years His Highness exercised jurisdiction up to the river Dhaleswari, and this was found to be so by Lieutenant Fisher in 1821-22, and by the arbitrators, Messrs, Yule and Campbell in 1850-51, *vide* paragraphs 39 and 48 of the report of the arbitrators, quoted in the Assistant Political Agent's letter No. 1066, dated 7th January 1887, copy enclosed. Subsequently, however, in 1874, during the Lushai complications, the Government of Bengal thought it expedient to notify in the Official Gazette that the river Langai was to be regarded as the boundary of His Highness' territory in that part of the country, *vide* notification dated 23rd June 1874, copy enclosed. This notification necessarily led to much misconception, which, however, was removed by the assurance given by Mr. Power and Captain E. G. Lillingston, the Political Agents, who explained to His Highness that the territory beyond the Langai was not meant to be permanently served from his dominions, but the above declaration was made only to avoid Lushai complications. Some time after, when the disturbances in the Lushai country subsided, and peace was, to a great extent, restored, a representation was made on behalf of the Durbar, requesting Government to declare the river Dhaleswari to be the boundary as before, *vide* this office No. 646, dated 15th March 1887. This request was repeated in Minister's letter No. 406, dated 6th April 1891, also copy enclosed. In reply the Commissioner informed the Durbar that the troubles still continued, *vide* his letter No. 1046-H. T. – IX-14, dated 3rd August 1891, copy forwarded by your office No. 236 – XVI-25, dated 17th idem. Subsequently the Political Agent, Mr. Greer, in a demi-official letter dated 31st September 1891, communicated to the Minister the Commissioner's enquiry as to whether the Durbar could peacefully extend cultivation up to the Dhaleswari. The Minister's reply was in the affirmative and was contained in his demi-official dated 11th October 1891. Nothing has been heard on the subject since then. But as peace has now been completely restored, and the apprehensions which necessitated the order of 1874 are no longer in existence, the Durbar earnestly hopes that you will move the Government to order a restoration of the part of the country cut off from this State by the notification quoted above, and obtain sanction for a demarcation of the arbitrators boundary up to the river Dhaleswari.

Copies of connected papers, as per list, are enclosed for convenience of your reference.

I have, etc.,
(Sd.) B. C. BHATTACHARJEE,
*Officer in charge, Political
Department.*

[Source: Maharaj Kumar & Sahadev Bikram Kishore Dev Barman, *Tripura State Eastern Boundary Dispute, Appendices to Exhibit B*, 13.]

APPENDIX No.22

No. 15.

No. 3940J., dated Shillong, the 11th April 1906.

From—The Offg. Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Judicial and General Department,

To—The Commissioner of Chittagong.

I am directed to communicate the following observations upon Mr. Maude's letter No. 264T., dated the 3rd August 1905, forwarding a communication received from the Hill Tippera Darbar, in which it is urged that certain alterations should be made in the boundary between the State of Hill Tippera and the Lushai Hills district.

2. It is represented that this boundary line should be thrown eastward, so as to add a strip of country to the State of Hill Tippera. The northern extremity of the line would be moved from the Langai river to the Dhaleswari, a distance of about 13 miles in a straight line: the southern extremity of the line would be moved from the southern of the two peaks known as Betleing to a peak on the Hachik range, a distance of about 7 miles. The effect of this change would be to make the Dhaleswari river, and its affluent the Pakwa, the eastern boundary of the State instead of the Langai river as at present. It would include in the State the whole of the valley of the Langai, the Hachik range of hills, and part of the valley of the Dhaleswari. This area is now included in the Lushai Hills district.

3. The present boundary line was authoritatively laid down, with the sanction of the Supreme Government, by a Notification issued by the Bengal Government on the 23rd June 1874. It has since been confirmed by Notification No. 121P. of 1st May 1900, of the Bengal Government, issued under the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, 1900, which made the southern Betleing peak the north-east corner of the Chittagong Hills district, and was adopted by the Government of India in their proposals for the definition of the boundaries of the Lushai Hills in 1898. It will thus be seen that the existing boundary is supported by very high authority.

4. It is urged that anciently the State of Hill Tippera claimed an indefinite jurisdiction over a great part, if not indeed the whole, of the Lushai country. But it exercised no practical authority over this country, and was unable to prevent raiding on the part of the Lushai tribes that entailed the undertaking by the British Government of difficult and costly military operations which ended in the annexation of the Lushai country and its formation into a British district.

5. In these circumstances, the Lieutenant-Governor regrets to be unable to consent to re-open a question which was definitely settled so many years ago. It is urged that about the time of the issue of the Notification of 1874 the local officers, Mr. Power and Captain Lillingston, made statements which amounted to an admission that the line of 1874 was adopted temporarily only. But the Lieutenant-Governor does not think that their statements can be taken in this sense. These officers were concerned to show that the Hill Tippera Darbar was responsible for guarding the Lushai frontier. They stated that the Hachik range had not been annexed by the British Government and was still independent territory. This was the case. It was

14 GOVERNMENT OF EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM, JUNE 1906.

P. 15-17.

Eastern Boundary of the State of Hill Tippera.

not formally annexed until many years later. But this circumstance cannot be taken to show that the exclusion of the Hachik range from the jurisdiction of Hill Tippera was other than final. Nor could opinions which were expressed by local officers have the effect of modifying a decision of Government.

6. I am to add that, in his letter No. 21 of the 9th February 1874, the late Maharaja Bir Chandra Manikya, Bahadur, acquiesced in the determination of the Langai river as the eastern boundary of the State. That the Maharaja did not consider the Langai to be merely a provisional boundary is further apparent from paragraph 8 of His Highness's letter No. 224, dated the 15th January 1882, to the Political Agent, in which he pointed out that the Langai river had been declared to be the eastern boundary of his State, and suggested the adoption of the same river as a natural boundary between Hill Tippera and Sylhet.

The later correspondence of 1891 with Mr. Oldham, the Commissioner of Chittagong, was not laid before Government, and, should it be possible to place any such construction on his words as that the boundary of 1874 was only provisional, this construction would in no way commit the Government to a revision.

No. 16

[Source: Letter from The Offg. Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Judicial and General Department, to The Commissioner of Chittagong, (No. 3940J., dated Shillong, the 11th April 1906), June 1906. File No. 15, Government of Eastern Bengal And Assam, Political Department, Political-A, Assam State Archives, Gauhati, 13 - 14]

APPENDIX No.23

A LETTER REGARDING THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY, REFERRED TO BY MR. WEBSTER.

No. 224, dated Palace Agartala, the 15th January 1882.

From – His Highness BIR CHANDRA DEB BARMAN MANIKYA BAHADUR, Maharajah of Independent Tipperah,

To – The Political Agent, Agartala,

MY FRIEND,

With reference to the correspondence on the subject of the boundary between this State and the district of Sylhet, from Thal post to Chattuchura, I beg to observe that the proposed boundary, if adopted, would deprive this State of a large area of land which, according to the award of the arbitration, 1851, lies within it, and which, in fact, has from time immemorial, formed part and parcel of my dominions.

2. The decision of the arbitration above alluded to, it is needless to say, is the most valid authority on the subject, and it would appear that, in regard to the portion of the disputed boundary, the arbitrators adopted the line of Lieutenant Fisher (*vide* paragraphs 39 and 48 of Mr. Yule's report, dated 14th January 1851).

3. A glance at the map of the country would clearly show that Kurtigaung, proposed to be the boundary from the spot where the Thal post, it appears, is wrongly placed to the point called Telingta, is far to the west of the line marked by Lieutenant Fisher i.e., the boundary fixed by the arbitrators.

4. It would appear from paragraphs 39 and 48 of Mr. Yule's report mentioned above, that the boundary as fixed by Lieutenant Fisher, and subsequently acknowledged by the arbitrators, runs from the Chattuchura hills through the Patharia range to the source of the Thal Nadi which rises in the Patharia or Adam range of hills to the east of the spot where the present Thal post is situated. Kurtigaung cannot therefore be traced as the source of the Thal and regarded as the boundary from Thal post to Telingta.

5. The officers deputed to demarcate the boundary in accordance with the award of the arbitrators, had, it appears, evidently committed a mistake in regard to the Thal post, for the spot where the said post stands does not appear to be the true source of the Thal Nadi as mentioned in Mr. Yule's report above referred to. This mistake, however, I presume, cannot be held as a bar to claiming the true line of boundary fixed by the arbitrators.

6. Under the above circumstances, I regret I am unable to agree to the proposal of the Assam Government mentioned in the correspondence under reference, and trust that the Government of Bengal will give such consideration to the matter as its importance and my just rights and interest may deserve.

7. If Kurtigaung as already remarked were to be the boundary from the spot where the Thal post is situated to the point called Telingta, a large area of land belonging to my State would be transferred to the District of Sylhet. Besides, that stream would not answer the purpose of a natural boundary. It dries up in parts in certain season of the year and cattle belonging to the ryots inhabiting the western bank of the stream could easily cross over to the opposite bank. Moreover, the ryots on the western banks have to depend greatly on the other bank in regard to land for juming and for firewood etc. If the eastern bank of the stream were to be added to the Sylhet district and formed into a reserved forest tract, as it is proposed, I understand, the inconvenience and hardship of mu subjects inhabiting the western bank of the stream would be very great, and complications, I fear, would occasionally arise.

8. On the other hand, if the Langai river, which, by a notification of the Government of Bengal, has been declared to be the eastern boundary of this State commencing from a point in a south-east direction from the disputed boundary to that river's source in the Betling Sib peak, were likewise fixed as the eastern boundary of the State in regard to the disputed tract, the object of having a natural boundary could, I believe, be attained. It would appear that the river Langai is not far from the boundary proposed by the Government of Assam.

9. I am glad to learn that the Chief Commissioner of Assam and Mr. Toynbee will visit the disputed boundary shortly and trust that the enquiries these officers may be pleased to make on the spot will bring to light the impropriety of adopting the boundary suggested by the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet.

I remain,
Friend,
Your sincere friend,
(Sd.) B.C. DEB,
Maharajah.

[Source: Maharaj Kumar & Sahadev Bikram Kishore Dev Barman, *Tripura State Eastern Boundary Dispute, Appendices to Exhibit B*, 15 – 16.]

APPENDIX No.24

No. 1391-P. D., dated Darjeeling, the 31st May 1913.

From – The Hon’ble Mr. J. G. CUMMING, C.I.E., I.C.S., Officiating Chief
Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Political Department.
To – The Commissioner of the Chittagong Division.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to your Memo. No. 2489 G. M-7 – XXI-15, dated the 21st April 1913, submitting a letter from the Minister of Hill Tipperah, in which the Durbar asks for a reconsideration of the orders passed regarding the eastern boundary of the State.

2. In reply, I am to say that the question was finally considered in 1906 by the late Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam and after a perusal of all the papers and of the arguments in the Minister’s letter, the Governor in Council sees no reason to re-open it. I am to request that the Hill Tipperah Durbar may be informed accordingly through the Political Agent.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Sd.) J.G. CUMMING,
*Officiating Chief Secretary to the
Government of Bengal.*

[Source: Maharaj Kumar Sahadev Bikram Kishore Dev Barman, *Tripura State Eastern Boundary Dispute, Appendices to Exhibit B*, pp. 16, 17.]

APPENDIX No. 25

List of Lushai Leaders present at the Meeting of the Accredited Leaders

1. Khawtinkhuma R.	2. Thanhkira, B.A.	3. Vanthuama
4. Pastor Chhuahkhama	5. Brig. Khawlkhuma, (SA)	6. Khuam
7. Lalbuaia	8. Hrangia	9. Muka
10. Rosiama	11. Vanchuanga	12. Chawnghnuaia
13. Philipa	14. Capt. Ngurliana (SA)	15. Pachhunga
16. Vanlawma	17. Vankhuma	18. Laihuna
19. Chhunuma	20. Pastor Zairema, B.Sc., B.D	21. Rina
22. Zawla	23. Sena	24. Rosema
25. Lalupa	26. Lalhema	27. Saiaithanga
28. Pastor Liangkhaia	29. Lalbiakthanga	30. Lalropuia
31. Suaka	32. Hminglana	33. Lalana
34. Lianhuna	35. Pasena	36. Liansailova,
Chief		
37. Lalbuanga, Chief	38. Lianzuala, Chief	39. Lamhlira,
Chief		
40. Kamlova	41. CH. Ngura, Chief	
42. Zami (Mrs. Khawtinkhuma)		
43. Kapthluai	44. Biakveli (Mrs. Buchhawna)	
45. Lalrongenga (Ex-Sub)	46. Thanseia (Ex-Sub)	
47. R. Zuala (Ex-Jemadar)	48. Dahrawka, V.A.S	
49. Kapthianga	50. Saihlira, B.A.	

[Source: Proceedings of a meeting of the Accredited Leaders of Lushai Hills held at Aijal on 14th August, 1947, File No: No. 69237-76 G of 21-8-47, Extract from “*A Memorandum to the Secretary General of the United Nations*” by ZORO, 1995, <https://www.Zogam.org/proceedings-meetings-lushai-hills.>]

APPENDIX No. 26

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THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

(Sixth Schedule)

(2) Any direction given by the Governor under clause (a) of sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph may be given so as to have retrospective effect.

(3) All regulations made under clause (b) of sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the President and, until assented to by him, shall have no effect.

¹[20. **Tribal areas.**—(1) The areas specified in Parts I, II ²[, IIA] and III of the table below shall respectively be the tribal areas within the State of Assam, the State of Meghalaya ³[, the State of Tripura] and the ³[State] of Mizoram.

(2) ⁴[Any reference in Part I, Part II or Part III of the table below] to any district shall be construed as a reference to the territories comprised within the autonomous district of that name existing immediately before the day appointed under clause (b) of section 2 of the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971:

Provided that for the purposes of clauses (e) and (f) of sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 3, paragraph 4, paragraph 5, paragraph 6, sub-paragraph (2), clauses (a), (b) and (d) of sub-paragraph (3) and sub-paragraph (4) of paragraph 8 and clause (d) of sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 10 of this Schedule, no part of the area comprised within the municipality of Shillong shall be deemed to be within the ⁵[Khasi Hills District].

²[(3) The reference in Part IIA in the table below to the “Tripura Tribal Areas District” shall be construed as a reference to the territory comprising the tribal areas specified in the First Schedule to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council Act, 1979.]

TABLE

PART I

1. The North Cachar Hills District.
2. ⁶[The Karbi Anglong District.]
3. ⁷[The Bodoland Territorial Areas District.]

PART II

- ⁵[1. Khasi Hills District.
2. Jaintia Hills District.]
3. The Garo Hills District.

¹Subs. by the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 (81 of 1971), s. 71 (i) and Eighth Sch., for paragraphs 20 and 20A (w.e.f. 21-1-1972).

²Ins. by the Constitution (Forty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 4 (w.e.f. 1-4-1985).

³Subs. by the State of Mizoram Act, 1986 (34 of 1986), s. 39, for “Union territory” (w.e.f. 20-2-1987).

⁴Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 4, for “Any reference in the Table below” (w.e.f. 1-4-1985).

⁵Subs. by the Government of Meghalaya Notification No. DCA 31/72/11 dated the 14th June, 1973, Gazette of Meghalaya, Pt. VA, dated 23-6-1973, p. 200.

⁶Subs. by the Government of Assam Notification No. TAD/R/115/74/47, dated 14-10-1976 for “The Mikir Hills District”.

⁷Ins. by the State of Assam by the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2003 (44 of 2003), s. 2.

*(Sixth Schedule)*¹[PART IIA

Tripura Tribal Areas District.]

PART III

2***

³[1. The Chakma District.⁴[2. The Mara District.

3. The Lai District.]]

⁵[20A. **Dissolution of the Mizo District Council.**—(1) Notwithstanding anything in this Schedule, the District Council of the Mizo District existing immediately before the prescribed date (hereinafter referred to as the Mizo District Council) shall stand dissolved and cease to exist.

(2) The Administrator of the Union territory of Mizoram may, by one or more orders, provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—

(a) the transfer, in whole or in part, of the assets, rights and liabilities of the Mizo District Council (including the rights and liabilities under any contract made by it) to the Union or to any other authority;

(b) the substitution of the Union or any other authority for the Mizo District Council, or the addition of the Union or any other authority, as a party to any legal proceedings to which the Mizo District Council is a party;

(c) the transfer or re-employment of any employees of the Mizo District Council to or by the Union or any other authority, the terms and conditions of service applicable to such employees after such transfer or re-employment;

(d) the continuance of any laws, made by the Mizo District Council and in force immediately before its dissolution, subject to such adaptations and modifications, whether by way of repeal or amendment, as the Administrator may make in this behalf, until such laws are altered, repealed or amended by a competent Legislature or other competent authority;

¹Ins. by the Constitution (Forty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1984, s. 4 (w.e.f. 1-4-1985).

²The words "The Mizo District." omitted by the Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Act, 1971 (83 of 1971), s. 13 (w.e.f. 29-4-1972).

³Ins. by the Mizoram District Councils (Miscellaneous Provisions) Order, 1972, published in the Mizoram Gazette, 1972, dated the 5th May, 1972, Vol. I, Pt. II, p. 17 (w.e.f. 29-4-1972).

⁴Subs. by the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1988 (67 of 1988), s. 2, for serial numbers 2 and 3 and the entries relating thereto.

⁵Subs. by the Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Act, 1971 (83 of 1971), s. 13, for paragraph 20A (w.e.f. 29-4-1972).

(Sixth Schedule)

(e) such incidental, consequential and supplementary matters as the Administrator considers necessary.

Explanation.—In this paragraph and in paragraph 20B of this Schedule, the expression “prescribed date” means the date on which the Legislative Assembly of the Union territory of Mizoram is duly constituted under and in accordance with the provisions of the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963.

¹20B. Autonomous regions in the Union territory of Mizoram to be autonomous districts and transitory provisions consequent thereto.—(1) Notwithstanding anything in this Schedule,—

(a) every autonomous region existing immediately before the prescribed date in the Union territory of Mizoram shall, on and from that date, be an autonomous district in that Union territory (hereafter referred to as the corresponding new district) and the Administrator thereof may, by one or more orders, direct that such consequential amendments as are necessary to give effect to the provisions of this clause shall be made in paragraph 20 of this Schedule (including Part III of the table appended to that paragraph) and thereupon the said paragraph and the said Part III shall be deemed to have been amended accordingly;

(b) every Regional Council of an autonomous region in the Union territory of Mizoram existing immediately before the prescribed date (hereafter referred to as the existing Regional Council) shall, on and from that date and until a District Council is duly constituted for the corresponding new district, be deemed to be the District Council of that district (hereafter referred to as the corresponding new District Council).

¹After paragraph 20B, the following paragraph has been inserted in its application to the State of Assam by the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1995 (42 of 1995), s. 2, namely:—

“20BA. Exercise of discretionary powers by the Governor in the discharge of his functions.—The Governor in the discharge of his functions under sub-paragraphs (2) and (3) of paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs (1), (6), sub-paragraph (6A) excluding the first proviso and sub-paragraph (7) of paragraph 2, sub-paragraph (3) of paragraph 3, sub-paragraph (4) of paragraph 4, paragraph 5, sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 6, sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 7, sub-paragraph (4) of paragraph 8, sub-paragraph (3) of paragraph 9, sub-paragraph (3) of paragraph 10, sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 14, sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 15 and sub-paragraphs (1) and (2) of paragraph 16 of this Schedule, shall, after consulting the Council of Ministers and the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council or the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, as the case may be, take such action as he considers necessary in his discretion.”

After paragraph 20B, the following paragraph has been inserted in its application to the States of Tripura and Mizoram, by the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1988 (67 of 1988), s. 2, namely:—

“20BB. Exercise of discretionary powers by the Governor in the discharge of his functions.—The Governor, in the discharge of his functions under sub-paragraphs (2) and (3) of paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs (1) and (7) of paragraph 2, sub-paragraph (3) of paragraph 3, sub-paragraph (4) of paragraph 4, paragraph 5, sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 6, sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 7, sub-paragraph (3) of paragraph 9, sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 14, sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 15 and sub-paragraphs (1) and (2) of paragraph 16 of this Schedule, shall, after consulting the Council of Ministers, and if he thinks it necessary, the District Council or the Regional Council concerned, take such action as he considers necessary in his discretion.”

(Sixth Schedule)

(2) Every member whether elected or nominated of an existing Regional Council shall be deemed to have been elected or, as the case may be, nominated to the corresponding new District Council and shall hold office until a District Council is duly constituted for the corresponding new district under this Schedule.

(3) Until rules are made under sub-paragraph (7) of paragraph 2 and sub-paragraph (4) of paragraph 4 of this Schedule by the corresponding new District Council, the rules made under the said provisions by the existing Regional Council and in force immediately before the prescribed date shall have effect in relation to the corresponding new District Council subject to such adaptations and modifications as may be made therein by the Administrator of the Union territory of Mizoram.

(4) The Administrator of the Union territory of Mizoram may, by one or more orders, provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—

(a) the transfer in whole or in part of the assets, rights and liabilities of the existing Regional Council (including the rights and liabilities under any contract made by it) to the corresponding new District Council;

(b) the substitution of the corresponding new District Council for the existing Regional Council as a party to the legal proceedings to which the existing Regional Council is a party;

(c) the transfer or re-employment of any employees of the existing Regional Council to or by the corresponding new District Council, the terms and conditions of service applicable to such employees after such transfer or re-employment;

(d) the continuance of any laws made by the existing Regional Council and in force immediately before the prescribed date, subject to such adaptations and modifications, whether by way of repeal or amendment, as the Administrator may make in this behalf until such laws are altered, repealed or amended by a competent Legislature or other competent authority;

(e) such incidental, consequential and supplementary matters as the Administrator considers necessary.

20C. Interpretation.—Subject to any provision made in this behalf, the provisions of this Schedule shall, in their application to the Union territory of Mizoram, have effect—

(1) as if references to the Governor and Government of the State were references to the Administrator of the Union territory appointed under article 239, references to State (except in the expression “Government of

(Sixth Schedule)

the State”) were references to the Union territory of Mizoram and references to the State Legislature were references to the Legislative Assembly of the Union territory of Mizoram;

(2) as if—

(a) in sub-paragraph (5) of paragraph 4, the provision for consultation with the Government of the State concerned had been omitted;

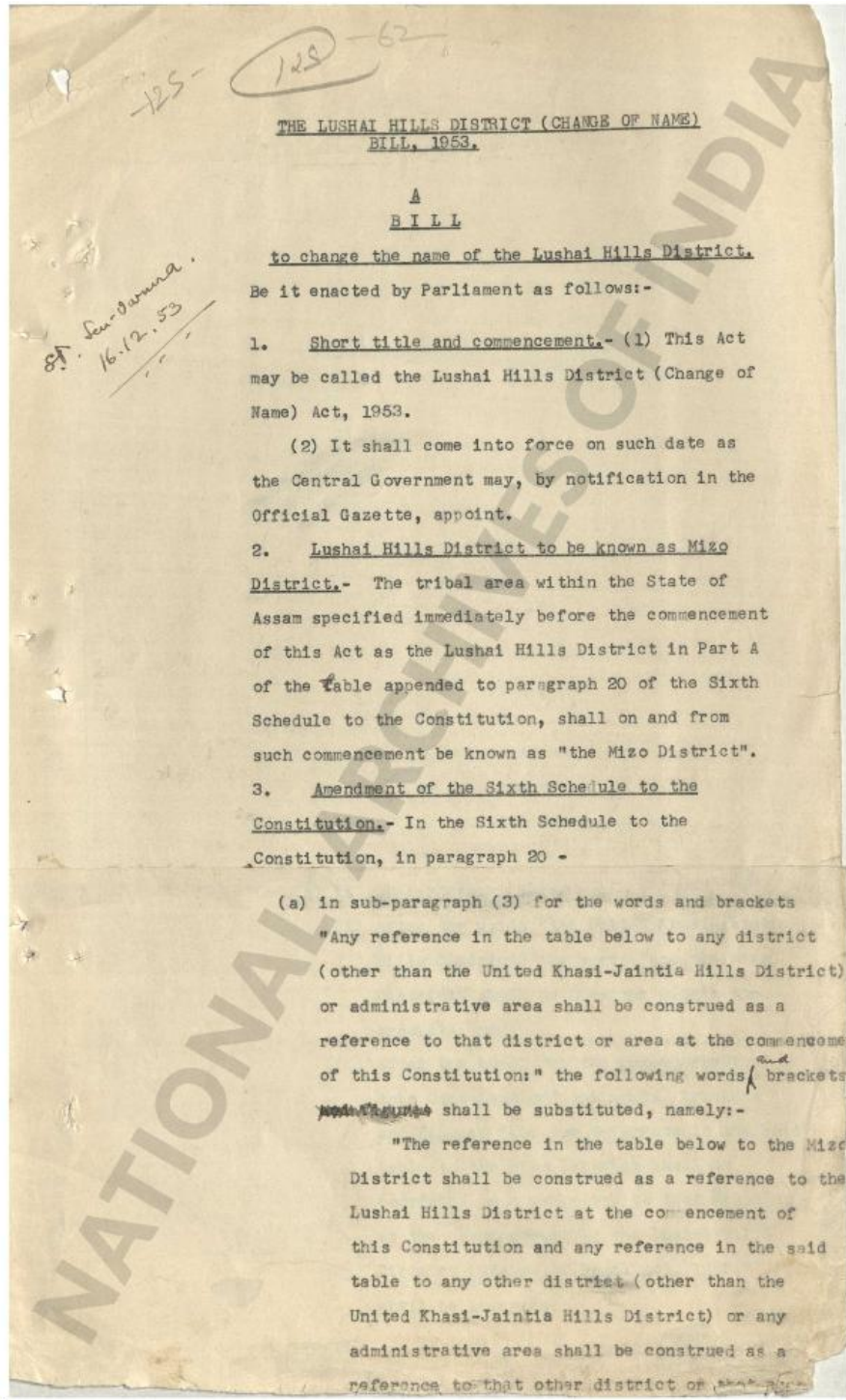
(b) in sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 6, for the words “to which the executive power of the State extends”, the words “with respect to which the Legislative Assembly of the Union territory of Mizoram has power to make laws” had been substituted;

(c) in paragraph 13, the words and figures “under article 202” had been omitted.]]

21. Amendment of the Schedule.—(1) Parliament may from time to time by law amend by way of addition, variation or repeal any of the provisions of this Schedule and, when the Schedule is so amended, any reference to this Schedule in this Constitution shall be construed as a reference to such Schedule as so amended.

(2) No such law as is mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph shall be deemed to be an amendment of this Constitution for the purposes of article 368.

APPENDIX No. 27



8-126 122
(b) in Part A of the Table, for the words "The Lushai Hills District" the words "The Mizo District" shall be substituted.

4. Reference to Lushai Hills District to be construed as reference to Mizo District.- Any reference to the Lushai Hills District in any law, instrument or other document shall, unless the context otherwise requires, be construed as a reference to the Mizo District.

[Source: Resolution in the Council of States by Shri R.Thanhkira, regarding the proposal to change the name of Lushai Hills District to Mizo Ram, 1952, File No: 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Delhi, 129 – 130]

APPENDIX No. 28

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IMMEDIATE.
PARLIAMENT OF INDIA
COUNCIL OF STATES SECRETARIAT
No. CS. 7(1)/54-L. (22)
PARLIAMENT HOUSE,
NEW DELHI.
The 15th February, 1954.
OFFICE MEMORANDUM.
SUBJECT:- The Lushai Hills District
(Change of Name) Bill, 1954.
.....
The undersigned is directed to forward
herewith a copy of the Lushai Hills District
(Change of Name) Bill, 1954, which has been
introduced in the Council of States on the
15th February, 1954.
By 2254/54 Bal.
On 12-2-54.
(Kewal Krishan)
for UNDER SECRETARY.
To
The Ministry of Home Affairs,
NEW DELHI.
'Tuli'

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BILL No. 1 of 1954
THE LUSHAI HILLS DISTRICT (CHANGE OF NAME)
BILL, 1954

(AS INTRODUCED IN THE COUNCIL OF STATES)

A
BILL

to change the name of the Lushai Hills District.

Be it enacted by Parliament as follows:—

1. Short title and commencement.—(1) This Act may be called the Lushai Hills District (Change of Name) Act, 1954.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Lushai Hills District to be known as Mizo District.—The tribal area in Assam now known as the Lushai Hills District shall, as from the commencement of this Act, be known as the Mizo District.

3. Amendment of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution.—In the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, in paragraph 20—

(a) after sub-paragraph (2), the following sub-paragraph shall be inserted, namely:—

“(2A) The Mizo District shall comprise the area which at the commencement of this Constitution was known as the Lushai Hills District.”;

(b) in sub-paragraph (3), after the words “United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District” the words “and the Mizo District” shall be inserted; and

(c) in Part A of the table, for the words “The Lushai Hills District” the words “The Mizo District” shall be substituted.

4. Reference to Lushai Hills District to be construed as reference to Mizo District.—Any reference to the Lushai Hills District in any law, instrument or other document shall, unless the context otherwise requires, be construed as a reference to the Mizo District.

130- 132A 67-
2
STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The Lushai Hills District is one of the six autonomous districts in the tribal areas of Assam specified in Part A of the table appended to paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution. The district is largely inhabited by tribes who are collectively known as "Mizos"—"Lusei" being one of these tribes. There has, therefore, been a demand that the district should be renamed "Mizo District"; the 'Hills' will continue to be called 'Lushai Hills'. The present Bill is intended to achieve this purpose.

K. N. KATJU.

New Delhi:
The 16th January, 1954.

[Source: Resolution in the Council of States by Shri R.Thanhlira, regarding the proposal to change the name of Lushai Hills District to Mizo Ram, 1952, File No: 15/200/52-PUBLIC, Ministry of Home Affairs Department, Public Branch, National Archives of India, Delhi, 133 - 134]

APPENDIX No. 29

Memorandum of Settlement (Mizoram Accord)

New Delhi, 30 June 1986

Preamble

Government of India have all along been making earnest effort to bring about an end to the disturbed condition in Mizoram and to restore peace and harmony.

Toward this end, initiative was taken by the late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi on the acceptance by Shri Laldenga on behalf of the Mizo National Front (MNF) of the two conditions, namely, cessation of violence by MNF and to hold talks within the framework of the Constitution. A series of discussions were held with Shri Laldenga. Settlement on various issues reached during the course of talks is incorporated in the following paragraphs.

Restorations of Normalcy

With a view to restoring peace and normalcy in Mizoram, the MNF Party, in their part undertake within the agreed time-frame, to bring out all underground personnel of the MNF with their arms, ammunitions, and equipments, to ensure their return to civil life, to abjure violence and generally to help in the process of restoration of normalcy. The modalities of bringing out all underground personnel and the deposit of arms, ammunitions and equipments will be as worked out. The implementation of the foregoing will be under the supervision of the Central Government.

The MNF party will take immediate steps to amend its articles of Association so as to make them conform to the provision of Law.

The Central Government will take steps for the settlement and rehabilitation of underground after considering the scheme proposed in this regard by the Government of Mizoram.

The MNF will not undertake to extend any support to the Tripura National Volunteer (TNV), Peoples' Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) and any other such group by way of training, supply of arms or providing protection or in any other matters.

Legal Administrative and Other Steps

With a view to satisfying the desires and aspirations of all sections of the people of Mizoram, the Government will initiate measures to confer Statehood on the Union Territory of Mizoram subject to the other stipulation contained in this Memorandum of Settlement.

To give effect to the above, the necessary legislative and administrative measures will be undertaken, including those for the enactment of Bills for the amendment of the Constitution and other laws for the conferment of Statehood as aforesaid, to come into effect on a date to be notified by the Central Government.

The amendment aforesaid shall provide, among other things, for the following:

- I. The territory of Mizoram shall consist of the territory specified in Section 6 of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971.
- II. Notwithstanding anything contained in the Constitution, no act of Parliament in respect of (a) Religion or Social practices of the Mizos, (b) Mizo customary Law or procedure, (c) Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary Law, (d) Ownership and transfer of land, shall apply to the State of Mizoram unless the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram by a resolution so decides.

Provided that nothing in this Clause shall apply to any Central Act in force in Mizoram immediately before the appointed day.

- III. Article 170 Clause (1) shall, in relation to Legislative Assembly of Mizoram, have effect as if for the word *sixty* the word *forty* has been substituted.

Soon after the Bill of Conferment of Statehood becomes law, and when the President is satisfied that normalcy has returned and that conditions are conducive to the holding of free and fair elections, elections to the Legislative Assembly will be initiated.

The centre will transfer resource to the new Government keeping in view the change in Status from a Union Territory to a State and will include resources to cover the revenue gap for the year.

Central assistance for Plan will be fixed taking note of any residuary gap in resources so as to sustain the approved plan outlay and the pattern of assistance will be as in the case of Special category State.

Border trade in local produced or grown agriculture commodities could be allowed under a scheme to be formulated by the Central Government, subject to international arrangement with neighboring Countries.

The Inner line Regulation, as now in force in Mizoram, will not be amended or repealed without consulting the State Government.

Other Matters

The rights and privileges of the minorities in Mizoram as envisaged in the constitution shall continue to be preserved and protected and their social and economic advancement shall be ensured.

Steps will be taken by the Government of Mizoram at the earliest to review and codify the existing customs, practices, law or other usages relating to the matters specified in Clauses (a) to (b) of para 4.3 (II) of the memorandum, keeping in view that an individual Mizo may prefer to be governed by Acts of Parliament dealing with such matters and which are of general application.

The question of Unification of Mizo inhabited areas of other States to form one administrative unit was raised by the MNF delegation. It was pointed out to them, on behalf of the Government of India, that Article 3 of the Constitution of India describes the

procedure in this regard but that the Government cannot make any commitment in this respect.

It was also pointed out on behalf of the Government that as soon as Mizoram becomes a State:

- i. The Provisions of Part XVII of the Provision of the Constitution will apply and the State will be liberty to adopt any one or more language to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the State.
- ii. It is open to the State to move the establishment of the separate University in the State in accordance with the prescribed procedure.
- iii. In the light of the Prime Minister's Statement at the Joint Conference of the Chief Justices, Chief Minister and Law Ministers held at New Delhi on 31st August, 1985 Mizoram will be entitled to have a High Court of its own if it so wishes.

It was noted that there is already a scheme in force for payment of exgratia amount to heirs/dependents of persons who were killed during disturbances in 1966 and thereafter in the Union Territory of Mizoram. Arrangement will be made to expeditiously disburse payment to those eligible persons who have already applied but who had not been made such payment so far.

It was noted that consequence on verification done by a joint team of officers, the Government of India had already made arrangement for payment of compensation in respect of damage to crop: building destroyed/damaged during the action in Mizoram, and rented charges of building and land occupied by security force. There may, however, be some claim which were referred and verified by the above team but is not yet settled expeditiously. Arrangement will also be made for payment of pending claim of rented charges or land/building occupied by the security forces.

Sd/-

LALDENG
On behalf of
Mizo National Front.

Sd/-

R.D. PRADHAN
Home Secretary
Government of India.

Sd/-

LALKHAMA
Chief Secretary
Government of Mizoram

Source: The South Asia Terrorism Portal (Website)

[Source: Retrieved from
peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IN_860630_Mizoram%20Accord.pdf.]

APPENDIX No. 30

Rule 32 of the Defence of India Rules, 1962, as amended provides that no person shall:-

- (a) Manage or assist in managing any organization to which this rule applies;
- (b) Promote or assist in promoting a meeting of any members of such an organization or attend any such meeting in any capacity;
- (c) Publish any notice or advertisement relating to any such meeting;
- (d) Invite persons to support such as organization or otherwise assist the operations of such an organisation.

Violation Entails Punishment ; If any person contravenes any of the provisions of this rule, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 7 years or with fine or with both.

[Source: 'Mizo National Front Declared Unlawful', 1966, File No. CB – 115, G – 1399; General Department, Mizoram State Archives, Aizawl, Mizoram, 105.]

APPENDIX No. 31

Memorandum of Settlement

Preamble

1. Government of India have all along been making earnest effort to bring about an end to the disturbed condition in Mizoram and to restore peace and harmony.

Toward this end, initiative was taken by the late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi on the acceptance by Shri Lalendra Prasad Singh on behalf of the Mizo National Front (MNF) of the two conditions, namely, cessation of violence by MNF and to hold talks within the framework of the Constitution. A series of discussions were held with Shri Lalendra. Settlement on various issues reached during the course of talks is incorporated in the following paragraphs.

Restoration of Normalcy

1. With a view to restoring peace and normalcy in Mizoram, the MNF Party, in their part undertake within the agreed timeframe, to bring out all underground personnel of the MNF with their arms, ammunitions, and equipments, to ensure their return to civil life, to abjure violence and generally to help in the process of restoration of normalcy. The modalities of bringing out all underground personnel and the deposit of arms, ammunitions and equipments will be as worked out. The implementation of the foregoing will be under the supervision of the Central Government.
2. The MNF party will take immediate steps to amend its articles of Association so as to make them conform to the provision of Law.
3. The Central Government will take steps for the settlement and rehabilitation of underground after considering the scheme proposed in this regard by the Government of Mizoram.
4. The MNF will not undertake to extend any support to the Tripura National Volunteer (TNV), Peoples' Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) and any other such group by way of training, supply of arms of providing protection or in any other matters.

Legal Administrative and Other Steps

2. With a view to satisfying the desires and aspirations of all sections of the people of Mizoram, the Government will initiate measures to confer Statehood on the Union Territory of Mizoram subject to the other stipulation contained in this Memorandum of Settlement.
3. To give effect to the above, the necessary legislative and administrative measures will be undertaken, including those for the enactment of Bills for the amendment of the Constitution and other laws for the conferment of Statehood as aforesaid, to come into effect on a date to be notified by the Central Government.
4. The amendment aforesaid shall provide, among other things, for the following:
 - I. The territory of Mizoram shall consist of the territory specified in Section 6 of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971.
 - II. Notwithstanding anything contained in the Constitution, no act of Parliament in respect of (a) Religion or Social practices of the Mizos, (b) Mizo customary law or procedure, (c) Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law, (d) Ownership and transfer of land, shall apply to the State of Mizoram unless the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram by a resolution so decides.

Provided that nothing in this Clause shall apply to any Central Act in force in Mizoram immediately before the appointed day.
 - III. Article 170 Clause (1) shall, in relation to Legislative Assembly of Mizoram, have effect as if for the word *sixty* the word *forty* has been substituted.
5. Soon after the Bill of Conferment of Statehood becomes law, and when the President is satisfied that normalcy has returned and that conditions are conducive to the holding of free and fair elections, elections to the Legislative Assembly will be initiated.

2. (a) The centre will transfer resource to the new Government keeping in view the change in Status from a Union Territory to a State and will include resources to cover the revenue gap for the year.
- (b) Central assistance for Plan will be fixed taking note of any residuary gap in resources so as to sustain the approved plan outlay and the pattern of assistance will be as in the case of Special category State.
3. Border trade in local produced or grown agriculture commodities could be allowed under a scheme to be formulated by the Central Government, subject to international arrangement with neighbouring Countries.
4. The Innerline Regulation, as now in force in Mizoram, will not be amended or repealed without consulting the State Government.

Other Matters

- The rights and privileges of the minorities in Mizoram as envisaged in the constitution, shall continue to be preserved and protected and their social and economic advancement shall be ensured.
- Steps will be taken by the Government of Mizoram at the earliest to review and codify the existing customs, practices, law or other usages relating to the matters specified in Clauses (a) to (b) of para 4.3 (1) of the memorandum, keeping in view that an individual Mizo may prefer to be governed by Acts of Parliament dealing with such matters and which are of general application.
- The question of Unification of Mizo inhabited areas of other States to form one administrative unit was raised by the MNF delegation. It was pointed out to them, on behalf of the Government of India, that Article 3 of the Constitution of India describes the procedure in this regard but that the Government cannot make any commitment in this respect.
- It was also pointed out on behalf of the Government that as soon as Mizoram becomes a State:
 - i. The Provisions of Part XVII of the Provision of the Constitution will apply and the State will be liberty to adopt any one or more language to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the State.
 - ii. It is open to the State to move the establishment of the separate University in the State in accordance with the prescribed procedure.
 - iii. In the light of the Prime Minister's Statement at the Joint Conference of the Chief Justices, Chief Minister and Law Ministers held at New Delhi on 31st August, 1985 Mizoram will be entitled to have a High Court of its own if it so wishes.
- (a) It was noted that there is already a scheme in force for payment of gratuity amount to heirs/dependants of persons who were killed during disturbances in 1966 and thereafter in the Union Territory of Mizoram. Arrangement will be made to expeditiously disburse payment to those eligible persons who have already applied but who had not been made such payment so far.
- a. It was noted that consequence on verification done by a joint team of officers, the Government of India had already made arrangement for payment of compensation in respect of damage to crop; building destroyed/damaged during the action in Mizoram, and rented charges of building and land occupied by security force. There may, however, be some claim which were referred and verified by the above team but is not yet settled expeditiously. Arrangement will also be made for payment of pending claim of rented charges or land/building occupied by the security forces.

Sd/-	Sd/-
LALDEGA	R.D. PRADHAN
On behalf of	Home Secretary
Mizo National Front	Government of India
	Sd/-
Dated: 30th June, 1986.	LALOHAMA
Place: New Delhi	Chief Secretary
	Government of Mizoram

BIO-DATA

LALLAWMKIMI RALTE

Email: mimiralte23@gmail.com

Mobile No.: 8974418950

Personal Details

Name : Lallawmkimi Ralte
Father's Name : Prof. R. Thangvunga
Mother's Name : Tlangthankungi
Date of Birth : 23.08.1988
Gender : Female
Nationality : Indian
Address : UK B 43, Kanan, Aizawl, Mizoram

Educational Qualifications

- 2016 Awarded Master of Philosophy at the Department of History & Ethnography, Mizoram University under the supervision of Prof. Lalngurliana Sailo, with the topic entitled "Mizoram-Tripura Boundary Since Pre-Colonial Period".
- 2013 Awarded Master of Arts degree from Department of History & Ethnography, Mizoram University, Mizoram
- 2011 Awarded Bachelor of Arts from University of Delhi, Delhi.
- 2007 Finished Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate (HSSLC) from Mizoram Board of School Education, Mizoram.
- 2004 Finished High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) from Mizoram Board of School Education, Mizoram.

Paper Presentations

1. Presented a research paper entitled "Mizos and Territoriality: A Case for the Western Boundary of Mizoram" at the 40th Annual Conference of North East India History Association (NEIHA) during 24th – 26th October, 2019, hosted by Karmashree Hiteshwar Saikia College, Guwahati-22, Assam.

2. Presented a research paper entitled “Pre-Colonial Notion of Boundary in Mizo Oral Tradition” in the XLII Annual Conference cum Seminar of Mizo History Association (MHA) on ‘History Writings in Mizoram’ during 8th – 9th December, 2022 at Govt. Hrangbana College, Aizawl, Mizoram.
3. Presented a research paper entitled “Evolution of Mizo Chieftainship and Territoriality from Pre-Colonial to Colonial Period,” in the XLIII Annual Conference cum Seminar of Mizo History Association (MHA) on ‘History Writings in Mizoram’ during 7th – 8th December, 2023 at Govt. J. Thankima College, Aizawl, Mizoram.
4. Presented a research paper entitled “From Fluid to Fixed: Transformation of Mizo Chieftainship and Changing Concepts of Space and Territoriality” at the 43rd Session of Annual Conference of North East India History Association (NEIHA) during 5th to 7th November, 2024, hosted by Thomas Jones Synod College, Jowai, Meghalaya.

Publications

1. Lallawmkimi Ralte, “Mizos and Territoriality: A Case for the Western Boundary of Mizoram,” *Proceedings of North East India History Association*, 40th Session, 2019, 434 – 443. ISSN No. 2349-753X.
2. Lallawmkimi Ralte and Prof. Lalngurliana Sailo, “Pre-Colonial Notion of Boundary in Mizo Oral Tradition,” *Historical Journal Mizoram (A Peer-Reviewed Journal)*, Vol. XXIV, December 2023, 13 – 28. ISSN No.0976 0202.

PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATE

Name of the Candidate : Lallawmkimi Ralte

Degree : Ph.D.

Department : Department of History & Ethnography

Title of Thesis : Evolution of Mizoram: History, Colonialism and
Cartographic Knowledge

Date of Admission : 16.03.2018

Approval of Research Proposal

1. DRC : 20.09.2018
2. BOS : 25.09.2018
3. School Board : 03.10.2018

MZU Registration No. : 247 of 2012

Ph.D. Registration No. & Date: MZU/Ph.D./1162 of 03.10.2018

Extension (If any) : Extension Period: 2 years (16.03.2024 – 15.03.2026)
consequent upon Resolution No. AC:45:4(3) &
AC:45:3(3), vide No. 16-2/MZU(Acad)/21/PF-2 dated
31.01.2024

(Prof. KISHOR GAIKWAD)
Head
Department of History & Ethnography

ABSTRACT

**EVOLUTION OF MIZORAM: HISTORY,
COLONIALISM AND CARTOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE**

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

**LALLAWMKIMI RALTE
MZU REG. NO.: 247/2012
PH.D REG. NO.: MZU/PH.D/1162 OF 03.10.2018**



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY & ETHNOGRAPHY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
DECEMBER 2024**

I.INTRODUCTION

Even before written history, humans have been curious about their natural environment and the physical world they inhabit. Humanity's inherent spatial intelligence existed long before formalized mapping systems. Our ancestors developed sophisticated ways of understanding and representing their environment through symbols and spatial awareness, demonstrating that the human need to comprehend and document space is deeply rooted in our evolutionary history. This primal connection to geography and territory was not just about physical survival – it was ultimately linked to identity formation and cultural development. This early spatial awareness naturally evolved into more sophisticated forms of cartography. The transition from primitive spatial understanding to formal mapmaking represents a continuation of humanity's deep-seated need to understand and represent space.

Modern cartography, while more technically advanced, still serves the same fundamental human desires that drove our ancestors, as our ancestors' basic spatial awareness laid the groundwork for modern cartography's role in shaping political, cultural, and social realities. Contemporary maps continue to fulfil the basic human need to understand, represent, and make sense of our place in the world, a need that has been with us since our earliest days as a society. However, while maps have indeed served as vital tools for human spatial understanding, they have also functioned as powerful instruments of colonial control and cultural domination, leaving lasting impacts on global power relations that persist to this day. Maps became not just representations of space, but instruments of power that legitimized territorial claims and facilitated colonial administration. By transforming “unknown” territories into “knowable” spaces through scientific surveying and mapping, colonial powers effectively rewrote the spatial descriptions of conquered regions.

The connection between geographical knowledge and imperial control shows how cartography served as a fundamental tool of empire. Edney's observation that territorial governance requires deep geographical understanding highlights how maps became instruments of both knowledge and power. This “passion for territory” drove European powers to systematically map their colonies, transforming unknown spaces into manageable administrative units. This process of mapping was not merely

technical but deeply political, as it allowed colonizers to reshape territories according to their imperial vision, often disregarding existing indigenous spatial understandings and boundaries. Thus, mapmaking became inseparable from the project of empire-building, serving as a prerequisite for an instrument of colonial control.

In India colonial cartography served as both a technology of knowledge and an instrument of power. In the case of North-East India British colonizers did more than simply document geography; they actively constructed and imposed new social and political realities. The process of drawing boundaries was not merely a geographical exercise but a profound act of social and cultural demarcation that fundamentally reshaped how communities were defined and governed. The colonial mapping project thus transformed fluid, culturally defined spaces into rigid administrative units, creating lasting impacts on regional identity and governance. This transformation shows how maps served not just as passive representations of space but as active agents in reshaping social and political landscapes according to colonial objectives.

The emergence of clearly defined boundaries became fundamental to the modern nation-state's identity and authority, marking a departure from earlier, more fluid concepts of political space. The historical development of Mizoram's boundaries presents a complex interaction between traditional tribal territories and colonial interventions. Due to limited historical documentation, understanding early boundary formation largely relies on analyzing the migration patterns and settlements of Mizo tribes, whose spatial distribution was naturally shaped by their cultural practices and inter-tribal relationships. Pre-colonial Mizo society was characterized by relatively few land disputes, primarily due to abundant land availability and low population density. When conflicts arose, the stronger party would assert control and authority over the disputed territory. The Mizos' territorial expansion was largely unconstrained, driven by their need for mobility to support their social and economic practices. This pattern of fluid territorial control continued until British colonial intervention.

However, the arrival of colonial administration marked a significant shift, as it imposed new boundary demarcations that often disregarded traditional tribal territorial understanding. With no fixed boundaries, the Mizos often extended into

neighbouring areas without clear territorial limits as boundaries were loosely defined by natural features like rivers and hills, focusing more on practical needs for farming and hunting than on marked boundaries. As the Mizos expanded to new areas, they claimed surrounding unoccupied land leading to conflicts with neighbouring tribes and challenges for the British in India. To resolve these disputes, the colonial administration, recognizing the need for effective governance, introduced fixed boundaries that fundamentally altered the traditional system of territorial mobility. This colonial reconfiguration of space, a shift from flexible, power-based territorial control to rigid, administratively defined boundaries marked a significant transformation in how the Mizos related to and controlled their land, establishing a new spatial order that would shape the region's future development.

The Mizos' traditional fluid territorial claims were changed to a formal system of land administration through *Ramrilehkha* (boundary papers). This transformation redefined the concept of space for the Mizos, moving from village-level boundaries to a national identity, where British mapping played a key role in shaping both the territorial and cultural landscape, contributing to the eventual formation of Mizoram. This study explored how British-created maps and administration transformed the territorial and cultural landscape of the Mizos. It also delves into how the shift from traditional, fluid boundaries to formalized territorial limits contributed to the formation of Mizo identity.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies on cartography's role in nation-building and colonial expansion provide crucial context for understanding territorial formation. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* by Thongchai Winichakul examines how modern geography transformed Siam from a loosely defined area into a nation-state with clear boundaries. It also examines how histories of mapping are not just technical tools but powerful instruments in shaping nations and identities. In the "New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography," J.B. Harley demonstrates that maps are not neutral depictions but tools of social construction reflecting societal power and ideologies. It further highlights Maps were not only

used to claim and control territory but also to portray indigenous peoples as primitive or inferior, legitimizing European intervention and exploitation. *The Cartographic State: Maps, Territory, and the Origins of Sovereignty* by Jordan Branch study how cartography was crucial in transforming medieval concepts of authority into modern territorial sovereignty. The book also explores the impact of cartography on modern statehood and sovereignty, as well as how technological advancements may shape the future.

Colonial powers' use of geographical knowledge for territorial expansion is extensively documented. David Atkinson's work "Geographical Knowledge and Scientific Survey in the Construction of Italian Libya" provides an insightful analysis of how geographical knowledge and scientific surveys were central to colonial expansion. Thomas J. Bassett's work "Cartography and Empire Building in Nineteenth-Century West Africa" examines how Europeans used maps and cartographic skills to facilitate territorial expansion, which empowered the development of the building of European colonial domains in West Africa. Matthew H. Edney, in his book, *Mapping An Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765 – 1843*, meticulously explores how British officials used maps for governance in India. He explained how British colonial officials used maps strategically to delineate administrative boundaries, establish political jurisdictions, and assert claims over Indian territories.

In "Imperialism, Colonialism and Cartography," Jeffrey C. Stone explores the compelling and thought-provoking reevaluation of traditional historical narratives surrounding European-African interactions during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It highlights a detailed study of the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 and the subsequent impact of the colonial period. "The Mapping of Empire: French and British Cartographies of India in the Late-Eighteenth Century" by Lucy P. Chester studied how the role of maps assisted European imperialism in India during the late eighteenth century. Through a comparative analysis of French and British mapping efforts, Chester provides valuable insights into the role of cartography in shaping imperial expansion and territorial control.

In the context of Northeast India, several scholars have examined colonial mapping's impact. "Mapping a Colonial Borderland: Objectifying the Geo-Body of

India's Northeast" by David Vumlallian Zou and M. Satish Kumar emphasises the history of mapping with a wide range of visions by observing into the insight of the interaction between cosmography, cartography and colonialism along with the history of borderlands formed by the colonial knowledge of space. It provides a comprehensive examination of how they arrange all accessible means in examining and surveying for mapping and determining the boundaries of Northeast India, a region marked by diversity and contestation of issues such as territorial disputes and identity politics. "Exploration of Region in Colonial North-East India: Construction of 'Naga Hills'" by R.K Bijeta Sana offers a profound analysis of the role of map-making in the colonial activity. It demonstrates how colonial authorities transformed the unidentified spaces into well-defined territorial entities physically and ideologically to construct a distinct identity for the Naga Hills and its inhabitants.

Alexander Mackenzie's book *The North-East Frontier* provides a detailed account of the British colonial administration's dealings with the various tribal people of North-East India throughout the nineteenth century. It is an essential historical document that keeps colonial ideas and practices that had far-reaching consequences for the region's social, political, and economic prospects. *The Art Of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* by James C. Scott explored how the hill peoples of Southeast Asia resisted state control. Scott centres his study on Zomia, a vast and diverse region that includes parts of India, Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and China. It provides a fresh and insightful perspective redefining conventional views of civilisation and statehood. This redefinition offers a new lens through which to view the process of power, control, and resistance in human societies.

Vladimir Propp's *Theory and History of Folklore* made groundbreaking contributions to studying folklore narratives, literary theory and criticism. By using his approach to different types of stories, we can see the components that makeup folk stories but also explore the importance of those components and how they relate to each other within the overall story. Furthermore, Propp explained that folktales' narrative functions and structure were not random or arbitrary.

Instead, he believed they were closely tied to and emerged from the specific social and cultural environments in which the folktales originated. Henri Lefebvre's work *The Production of Space* transforms our understanding of how space functions in social existence. Rather than considering space as vacant, he claims that it develops from social processes, is deeply rooted in political systems, and plays an important role in our understanding of societal interactions.

Specific to the region of Mizoram, *Being Mizo* by Joy L.K. Pachuau is a detailed exploration of the Mizo people's sense of identity and their desire for belonging within the complex socio-political landscape of Northeast India. The book examines the characteristics of social organisation that influence identity formation, highlighting the community's resistance to external influences while at once shaping the community's internal identity. *Entangled Lives: Human-Animal-Plant Histories of the Eastern Himalayan Triangle* by Joy L.K. Pachuau and Willem van Schendel's book focuses on the interconnected responsibilities of humans and non-humans. By examining the links between the lives of human and non-human actors, the book provides a comprehensive understanding of the region's past and present. *Political History of Mizoram* by Chaltuahkhuma provides the history and society of the Mizo tribes, tracing their origins, social structures, and interactions with external powers, notably the British colonial government. This book also details how British colonial policies established territorial boundaries, fostering a distinct Mizo identity. The book explores how British absorption of the Hills influenced the Mizo people through Western education, which encouraged political consciousness and led to the emergence of various political parties advocating for Mizo interests and its uprising for greater autonomy.

Colonial-era documentation provides crucial primary sources. *A Monograph on Lushai Customs & Ceremonies* by N.E. Parry serves as a detailed record of the customs and ceremonies of the Mizo people following the British occupation of what is now Mizoram. By capturing these customs, the book offers insights into the social organisation and cultural heritage of the Mizos from pre-colonial to the colonial period. *The Lushai 1878-1889*, published by Firma KLM Private Ltd. on behalf of the Tribal Research Institute, Government of Mizoram, offers a

comprehensive account of British administration in Northeast India during the late 19th century. *The Lushai Expedition 1871 – 1872* by R.G. Woodthorpe gives a detailed account of the British Expedition in the then Lushai Hills aimed at demarcating territory in response to frequent raids by the Mizos. *Lushai Chrysalis* by Major A.G. McCall offers a comprehensive account of Mizo culture, identity, religion, administration, legal system, and local farming from the perspective of a colonial officer. The book clearly showed the complexity of colonial rule, where political and religious objectives were interrelated, each reinforcing the other in reshaping the identity and future of the Lushai Hills and its inhabitants. *Important Documents of Mizoram* by C. Chawngkunga offers extensive insights into British Government documents, shedding light on the historical context and interactions between the British colonial administration and the local tribes in these regions of present-day Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura.

The literature review clearly shows how colonial expansion, assisted by spatial knowledge, laid the foundation for establishing new nations and boundaries. It highlights how colonial powers used maps and cartographic expertise to extend their territories, even reaching the far eastern regions of Northeast India. However, a significant observation from the existing literature is the lack of specific studies on the formation of Mizoram and its political boundary map. This research aims to address that gap by providing valuable resources and insights into the subject.

III.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There should not have been any problem of boundary conflict vis-à-vis the Mizo occupation of land, which then was a vast space unclaimed by any sovereign or tribal occupation but for their occasional spread into areas where people other than they made settlements. Mizos were warlike people, and hunting was not merely a pastime but an essential economic and cultural activity connected with their religious and administrative system. Big games like elephants, wild mithuns, deer, etc., and heads of enemies consisted of the essential trophy for achieving the grand title of *Thangchhuah*. They did not consider it evil or criminal to forage in enemy lands for such a trophy. Moreover, they needed meat for seasonal and festival food, and

hunting was the primary resource.

Whatever the causes for the Mizo migration westward from present-day Myanmar, historical evidence shows they had no intention of going further west or north than the present settlement due to substantial and decisive settlements in those directions. They contained their concept of settlement and boundary within the available land they could roam in and use for cultivation without external opposition.

It happened that they assumed land for themselves that bounded other habitations with whom there seemed to have been no definite boundary, politically, geographically, and ethnically. There came a day when they became aware of foreigners encroaching upon the land they had assumed to be theirs for free. Like any warlike people of the earth, they felt it their bounden duty to preserve the land for their tribe and future generations and to discourage any incursion into their land. With such territorial consciousness and jealousy for the resources within, they felt justified in martial efforts.

Events of so-called Mizo encroachments into British territory may be considered a colonial construct in the context of the extent of British occupation of India when no administrative unit seemed to have existed except a few economic ventures in the form of tea gardens. In a military conquest, a clash of might decides whoever is stronger assumes control of the weaker. Mizos then had no means to oppose the British military expedition, which made an excuse for a few tribal conflicts for a more significant political ambition of expanding the British territory.

Therefore, it became significant to focus on how the British government extended their colonial administration in Mizoram by looking into the British knowledge of space and the resources they employed to demarcate their domain. So, the problem this research focuses on is how colonial knowledge of space through cartographic practice reordered space, territory and fixed communities in bounded areas. How did colonial knowledge production through mapping enable the colonial state to govern hitherto unknown lands, and how did colonial categorizations shape Mizo's identity?

IV.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine pre-colonial Mizo cosmology and conception of space.
2. To study colonial construction of space and frontier (margin).
3. To analyse colonial cartographic knowledge production in Mizoram.
4. To study the impact of colonial spatial arrangement on Mizo cosmology and identity.
5. To examine the contestation of colonial construction of space in post-colonial Mizoram.

V.METHODOLOGY

The research employs a comprehensive approach to investigate the impact of colonialism on space, boundaries, and identity formation in Mizoram, spanning the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. At the core of this study is archival research, utilizing primary sources such as colonial and post-colonial documents accessed from Mizoram State Archives, the National Archives of India, and state archives in Kolkata and Guwahati. These materials offer insight into the production of knowledge, spatial practices, and boundary formations during and after the colonial period.

Complementing this, secondary sources – scholarly works and historical accounts – are drawn from libraries like the Mizoram State Central Library, J.M. Lloyd Library & Archive in Mizoram, the Asiatic Society Library in Kolkata, the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, the Central Secretariat Library, the Indian Council of Historical Research Library, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Central Library at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. These sources provide critical context and enrich the interpretation of the primary data.

The research is based on a theoretical framework focusing on the concept of space, boundary studies, and identity formation. These frameworks are used to analyze the influence of colonial spatial practices on Mizo cosmology and identity, exploring how these practices reshaped territorial boundaries and cultural constructs. Anthropology views and Henri Lefebvre's concept of space production are applied to

understand the evolution of Mizo social structure and cultural factors. The study also employed Robert L. Solomon's theory, which focuses on how space was politicized and contested, highlighting the tensions between indigenous territorial claims and colonial ambitions and how economic interests were central to British colonial expansion. James C. Scott's notions of administrative expansion are employed to understand British strategies for asserting control over previously ungoverned spaces. Stuart Elden's theory of sovereignty and territory is employed to see how the British colonial power perceived territorial control as essential to asserting their sovereignty.

The study includes a cartographic analysis of colonial maps, examining their role in territorial control and identity construction. Mather H. Edney's theory of cartography and power employed how maps shape and reinforce power structures as mapping was not just a technical exercise but a political act to assert control, define boundaries, and facilitate governance. Thongchai Winichakul's concept of the geo-body is used in the study to explore the tension between British colonial ambitions and Mizo territorial identity, showing how the British sought to reshape the Lushai Hills into a geo-body aligned with their imperial objectives to displace indigenous spaces.

Oral traditions such as folktales serve as key tools to compensate for the lack of historical records. By applying Vladimir Propp's folktale theories as a structural framework to examine Mizo folktales as historical documents that capture the community's worldview and social norms. To capture local perspectives often missing from written records, the research employs oral history methods, specifically unstructured interviews with knowledgeable individuals. The study employs qualitative methods to explore patterns and continuities in spatial arrangements, identity transformation, and boundary politics, with a focus on post-colonial contestations of colonial spatial legacies. It examined how these factors continue to shape Mizoram's socio-cultural, political and identity.

VI. AREA OF THE STUDY

The study area focused mainly on the modern Indian state of Mizoram, which has spanned from the colonial to post-colonial periods.

VII.CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter 1: Social Structure And Cosmological Worldview

This chapter introduces the research topic dealing with the Mizo society before the onset of colonialism in Mizoram. It also examined the pre-colonial Mizo cosmology and their conception of space. The study reveals how the origin theory of the Mizos is rooted in oral traditions and folklore, which offer multiple perspectives on their beginnings. Analysis of pre-colonial Mizo society reveals a sophisticated social system that balanced environmental adaptations with cultural innovation. The community's sustainable relationship with nature extended to mere survival, influencing their governance through chieftainship, spiritual beliefs centred on *Pathian* and complex ritual practices including sacrificial ceremonies. It also reveals their religious worldview acknowledged both animistic spirits and a supreme deity; it maintained a distinctive character that resisted the complete integration of afterlife concepts into their belief system. The chapter emphasized their social organization, structured through families, clans or tribes, and village units, demonstrating an in-depth knowledge of collective identity and territorial consciousness. The chapter highlights, that though territorial consciousness exists, their territorial limits were flexible and negotiable, especially when resources became scarce.

Chapter 2: Colonial Expansion and Shifting Frontier

This chapter studies the colonial expansion and the reordering of the frontier (border), which located the Mizos into a zone identified as frontier or margin. It also investigated how the frontier became a zone of contact, exchange, and contestation of the colonial spatial arrangement. The chapter highlights the transformation of the frontier under colonial rule and presents a compelling case study of indigenous adaptation and political restructuring. The frontier zone's emergence as a site of resource extraction and economic activity prompted the Mizos to develop new survival strategies and social networks while confronting new challenges. The chapter further explored how the Mizos actively resisted British control through

armed opposition, others strategically engaged with colonial authorities, sometimes leading to a fragmenting of traditional unity. The study reveals how colonial spatial vision and administrative policies transformed the physical frontier but also began to reconfigure Mizo's political identity and social relationships.

Chapter 3: Producing Lushai Hills

The chapter examined colonial spatial practice embodied in map-making through surveys such as topographical, trigonometrical, etc. It showed how these exercises enabled the colonial authority to produce a named place called Lushai Hills and spatially fixed and identified communities within it. The chapter traced how the British colonial administration's engagement in the Lushai Hills reveals the complex interaction between geographical ignorance, cultural misunderstanding, and political control. Initial British uncertainties about the region's geography and inhabitants necessitated surveys and exploration, highlighting the challenges of administering an unfamiliar territory. It also emphasized the persistent raids highlighting the conflict was not just political but a fundamental cultural clash where British attempts to impose administrative control confronted deeply rooted Mizo social practices and traditional autonomy. The resulting tension between British administrative objectives and Mizo cultural practice ultimately shaped the course of colonial policy in the region, demonstrating how local resistance and cultural practice could influence and modify colonial governance approaches.

Chapter 4: Colonial Spatial Arrangements

British colonisation of erstwhile Mizoram extensively impacted the communities in terms of boundary and space. The indigenous conception of space and boundary, which had been fluid and overlapping at times, was readjusted in new arrangements that fixed and sedentarised people within a mapped space or territory. Therefore, the chapter examined how this reordering of space or territory, such as boundary demarcations, land settlement, etc., impacted the local cosmology and identity. This transformation extended beyond mere geographical demarcation, profoundly impacting the Lushai people's cosmological beliefs,

which had previously integrated spiritual, natural, and human realms in a seamless relationship with their environment. The chapter emphasized that sedentarisation and territorial fixity challenged the traditional identity formation, which was historically built on flexible kinship networks and fluid territorial affiliations. As a result, the resulting of sedentarization of previously mobile communities represents a profound reordering of indigenous space and society whose effects continue to influence modern territorial politics and cultural identity in the region.

Chapter 5: Mizoram: Evolution of Homeland

This chapter focuses on the post-colonial evolution of Mizoram as a homeland, intrinsically connected with the emergence of political consciousness. It examined how colonial categories such as Lushai and Lushai Hills have challenged or contested to foster more extensive and inclusive identification. The chapter highlighted the transformation of the region of Mizoram from a colonial frontier to a distinct political entity marking a significant transition from traditional chieftainship to modern political system. The chapter shows how fixed territorial boundaries under British rule provided clearer jurisdiction but transformed chiefs into colonial intermediaries. The chapter emphasized how the introduction of education led to the growth of political awareness which even led to the decline of chiefly authority. The chapter shows how these transformations shaped modern Mizoram's political and territorial identity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter concludes the research and produces the findings of the research.

VI. Finding of the research work

The study highlights that pre-colonial Mizo society had a deep connection to their natural surroundings, where cosmological beliefs were linked with environmental observations. The Mizo origin theory, particularly the Chhinlung

narrative, reflects a profound connection between identity and spatial conception. According to traditional belief, Chhinlung was not merely a physical cave or covered space, but rather a primordial point of emergence that fundamentally shaped the Mizo understanding of their place in the world. The emergence from Chhinlung is often described in oral traditions as a movement from darkness to light, from confinement to openness, symbolically marking the beginning of Mizo spatial awareness and territorial consciousness. This narrative of emergence has deep implications for how the Mizos traditionally understood space not as abstract or empty, but as inherently connected to their identity and history.

The study reveals the Mizo migratory history, marked by constant movement in search of better land, shaped their understanding of space as fluid and adaptable. Their spatial consciousness was shaped by shifting cultivation and nomadic practices, with boundaries defined by natural landmarks like rivers and hills rather than fixed lines. The pre-colonial Mizo society did not have fixed territorial boundaries but rather saw space as linked to resource availability and community needs. Their worldview was influenced by celestial events, environmental rituals, and the spiritual concept of the afterlife, demonstrating a fluid and adaptive understanding of space. Their spatial consciousness was reflected in their myths, legends, and folktales, which served as repositories of knowledge about territories. Their belief system reveals a complex understanding of both physical and spiritual spaces, including concepts of the afterlife with specific markers and routes showing their notion of space extended beyond the physical to include spiritual realms.

Before British interaction, the Mizo territory was fluid, governed by their respective chiefs with loosely defined boundaries and the Mizo moved freely across vast areas. However, frequent Mizo raids on British-controlled areas created tensions, especially after British annexations in Cachar, Sylhet, and Bengal, where the expansion of tea plantations encroached on what the Mizo claimed as their hunting ground. British colonial expansion into the Lushai Hills began in response to these territorial conflicts. The British sought to control Mizo raids and assert their influence through punitive expeditions and boundary demarcations. This

marked a shift in the perception of space where the British introduced fixed boundaries and administrative control. Early explorations and cartographic surveys, such as those by Major James Rennell, laid the foundation for understanding and mapping the region of Lushai Hills, previously considered unexplored and undisturbed.

British efforts to extend control over Mizo territories encountered resistance, as the Mizos viewed their land through the lens of tribe/clan authority and autonomy. The British sought to impose structured governance and frontier defence, leading to discord in administration. As the colonial administration expanded, Mizo raids were seen as acts of defiance against British encroachment on their traditional lands and threats to their autonomy. This conflict over land and resources was not just a matter of physical control but also a clash of territorial ideologies between Mizo fluidity and British fixed boundaries. The British responded with military expeditions and boundary enforcement, slowly incorporating Mizo territories into the colonial framework. By introducing formal boundaries and using cartography to map the region, the British gradually transformed the frontier, turning the previously undefined Mizo land into a controlled colonial margin. This construction of space by the British reshaped Mizo territorial consciousness, leading to long-term changes in their societal and political structure.

The study also locates how the British initiated large-scale surveys, such as the trigonometrical survey, to produce precise maps of the Indian subcontinent, including the Lushai Hills. This mapping effort was not just a technical exercise but a tool for asserting territorial control. Early maps deliberately excluded areas like the Lushai Hills due to unresolved frontier boundaries, giving the British flexibility in establishing lines of control. The mapping process became instrumental in defining the limits of British administration, transforming fluid indigenous territories into well-demarcated colonial spaces. The expansion of British control over the Lushai Hills coincided with the growth of tea plantations, which encroached on Mizo lands. Cartography helped the British formalize land claims, often at the expense of the Mizos, whose traditional land use practices

were disregarded. Maps were used to delineate boundaries that suited British economic interests, such as the expansion of tea estates, marginalizing the Mizo in the process.

The British military expeditions and the maps they produced helped consolidate British control by delineating frontiers, identifying potential routes for trade and military movements, and establishing strategic posts. These maps and surveys played a crucial role in subduing resistance, as they provided the British with a comprehensive understanding of the region's geography, which was essential for planning military operations and controlling indigenous populations. The surveys and maps produced during British expeditions laid the groundwork for future colonial administration in the region of Lushai Hills. They introduced new territorial legacies, formalizing boundaries that would persist even after the end of colonial rule. These maps and the geographical knowledge they produced redefined the Mizo concept of space, leading to long-term changes in governance and identity. The creation of the North and South Lushai Hills districts, based on these cartographic efforts, established a new spatial framework that shaped Mizoram's colonial and post-colonial history.

The British colonial administration, through regulations like the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873 and the establishment of the Inner Line, introduced a system of control over the movement of people in the Lushai Hills. This severely restricted the traditional nomadic practices of the Mizo people, forcing them into a sedentary lifestyle. The spatial arrangement imposed by the British led to the sedentarization of the Mizos, confining their movement to designated territories. This shift in lifestyle altered the Mizo relationship with the land, from one of fluid movement and flexible territorial claims to fixed boundaries and limited access, thereby reshaping their spatial structure. The colonial reorganization of space challenged the traditional Mizo conception of space. The establishment of fixed territorial boundaries under British rule replaced the Mizo's communal and flexible land usage with rigidly defined territories controlled by chiefs. The colonial government formalized these boundaries by issuing boundary papers (*Ramri Lehkha*) to the chiefs. This imposed an artificial

structure on the political and spatial organization, transforming the land from a shared communal resource to a defined hereditary possession.

This shift resulted in greater territorial consciousness among the Mizos and fostered a new sense of territoriality, as land became linked to political and administrative control rather than communal and spiritual usage. The colonial spatial order not only affected the material world but also reshaped Mizo cosmology, where space and land had once been central to their spiritual and social identity. The impact of colonial spatial arrangements on Mizo cosmology and identity was profound and far-reaching. Traditional fluid boundaries were replaced with fixed territorial demarcations, altering the Mizos' relationship with their land. The introduction of Christianity through missionaries significantly transformed their spiritual landscape, replacing many traditional beliefs and practices. The British efforts to settle boundaries, especially through initiatives like the "Circle Administration," formalized the governance of Mizo territories through chiefs, thereby creating an entirely new spatial consciousness. Traditional Mizo mobility was curbed, and with the chiefs gaining authority over fixed areas, boundaries became tied to colonial administration. In the context of territorial possession and colonial governance Mizo identity, which had previously been fluid and rooted in collective land usage was redefined. Moreover, the study also examines the consolidation of British power in the Lushai Hills imposed significant spatial reorganization, which had profound effects on the local identity and political landscape.

The colonial construction of space forced the Mizo people into fixed territories, a shift from their previously fluid social and territorial relationships. Although British efforts created a more unified administrative structure, it also diminished the powers of traditional chiefs by introducing demarcated boundaries and reducing their authority to that of colonial instruments. Despite these constraints, the British imposed unity contributed to the emergence of collective identity across the region. However, with the advent of education and the growth of political consciousness, the Mizo people began to question colonial spatial impositions. Educated elites and politically aware youth resented the power and

influence granted to the chiefs by the British. They viewed the chiefs as intermediaries acting on behalf of colonial authorities rather than as legitimate community leaders. This resentment culminated in a political movement advocating for democracy and self-rule, exemplified by the formation of the Mizo Union in 1946. The Mizo Union was instrumental in fostering opposition to both the colonial structure and the chieftainship system, which it viewed as tools for maintaining British control over the region. This marked the beginning of efforts to dismantle the colonial legacy of spatial and political control.

Furthermore, the British had reorganized the chiefs' roles, stripping them of much of their traditional authority while making them tax collectors and local administrators. This reconfiguration of leadership under colonial rule led to widespread dissatisfaction among the commoners, who began to see the chiefs as collaborators rather than protectors of their rights. The movement to abolish chieftainship was part of a broader drive to democratize Mizo society and restructure governance. The District Council took significant steps to dismantle the colonial construction of authority. However, it was not until 1954 that the institution of chieftainship was formally abolished, reflecting a successful contestation of colonial spatial and political arrangements. The colonial construction of space also fostered a growing desire for territorial unity and autonomy.

The long-term implications of spatial construction continue to influence contemporary Mizoram. The division of Mizo-inhabited regions across different territories remains a source of ongoing debate about identity and inclusion. The transition from traditional to modern governance systems, while preserving some aspects of cultural identity, has sometimes created complex challenges in balancing traditional practices with contemporary administrative needs. The evolution of Mizo identity, shaped by both resistance to and adaptation of colonial spatial constructs, demonstrates the enduring impact of colonial cartographic and administrative interventions on the region's social, political, and cultural landscape. By the time of political awakening and the formation of different parties, they advocated for the use of the term "Mizo" to represent a collective

identity that encompassed all the tribes in the region. At the same time the desire to change the region's name from "Lushai Hills" to a more inclusive "Mizoram" arose from a need to foster unity among the different ethnic groups, acknowledging their shared cultural heritage, language, and traditions. It could be assumed that this was part of a broader strategy to unify the Mizo people, including those living in areas outside the Lushai Hills and could serve as the foundation for future statehood.

The establishment of formal boundaries during British colonial rule brought a significant shift in how the Mizo people understood and expressed their sense of belonging. Traditionally, Mizo identity was closely linked to the system of chieftainship, where people identified themselves and their community based on the name of their chief. However, with the British introduction of fixed territorial boundaries, a more rigid spatial organization emerged. As a result, people began to associate their identity with the territory or village they inhabited which encouraged a collective identity based on location. While the British administration attempted to impose a structured governance system in the Lushai Hills, they also struggled to clearly define who was included within the broader category of "Mizo." In practice, the British often classified those who paid taxes to the authorities as "Mizo." This highlights how the British ignored the internal diversity of the region as the Hills were home to various tribes and sub-groups. The British colonial administration's reliance on taxation as a marker of inclusion in the Mizo category reflected their prioritization of administrative convenience over a deeper understanding of the region's complex social fabric. It could be assumed that the colonial administration also formalized the concept of "Mizo" as an umbrella identity to categorize the population for easier administration.

This categorization by the British resulted in identity contestation, as it fostered both inclusion for some tribes and exclusion for others based on geographical, political, or administrative criteria. In the post-colonial period, the concept of identity was redefined through the political movements aimed at dismantling the colonial system of governance. The push for territorial unification was another form of identity inclusion for all ethnically related people into one

political entity. However, the political and geographical boundaries established by the colonial administration created a sense of exclusion. Communities that had historically been connected through cultural and kinship ties found themselves divided by the boundary lines. The emergence of Mizo political consciousness, driven by aspiration for self-determination, aimed to unite ethnically related peoples under a single administrative framework. However, this process of identity formation proved to be geographically limited. While it may successfully forge a unified Mizo identity within Mizoram, it fell short of incorporating Mizo-related communities in adjacent regions. This partial success in identity consolidation reveals the complex interplay between political boundaries and ethnic identity formation.

The transformation of Mizo's political consciousness and territorial identity unfolded through a complex interaction of colonial administration, religious conversion, and political mobilization. The colonial period created a paradoxical situation where administrative boundaries both fragmented traditional connections and fostered new forms of unity. While colonial geographical divisions separated ethnically related communities, Christianity emerged as a unifying force that transcended these artificial boundaries, providing a new basis for collective identity and social organization. At the same time, the formation of different political parties marked a crucial phase in this evolution, as these organizations began to actively alert people about the concept of self-determination. This political awakening was dramatically accelerated by the *Mautam* famine of 1959 – 60, a critical turning point. The Assam Government's inadequate response to this crisis, which caused widespread suffering and death, became a powerful symbol of governmental neglect and indifference. This failure of administration during a time of severe crisis deeply affected the Mizo collective consciousness, transforming what had been general dissatisfaction into a concrete demand for political autonomy. The growing political consciousness manifested in increasingly organized demands for self-rule. This political evolution culminated in two significant achievements – the establishment of the Union Territory of Mizoram in 1972 and its elevation to full statehood in 1987. These developments represented

not just administrative changes but the realization of long-held aspirations for self-determination and territorial cohesion. The study reveals the path to the evolution of Mizoram as statehood reflects a complex historical process where colonial boundaries, religious transformation, political mobilization, and crisis response all contributed to shaping modern Mizo identity and territorial consciousness.