

***DYNAMICS OF INDIGENOUS CULTURE ON CHRISTIANITY
PERTAINING TO KELKANG REVIVAL MOVEMENT
IN 1937***

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DECLARATION

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

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

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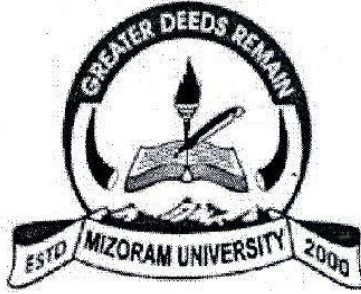
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that “Dynamics of Indigenous Culture on Christianity Pertaining to Kelkang Revival Movement in 1937” written by Catherine Lalruatfeli Ralte has been written under my supervision.

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

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

Advent of Christianity Into Mizoram

Mizoram is bounded on the east and south by the Chin state of Burma, on the west by Tripura and the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, and on the north by Cachar and Manipur. The Tropic of Cancer runs through the heart of Mizoram and lies between 20.20 degree N and 24.7 degree N latitude, 92.20 degree E and 93.29 degree E longitude. It has an area of 21,090 sq. kilometers (Statistic Handbook 16). The Mizos, known as the Lushais by the Britishers and the Welsh missionaries are a tribe of Mongoloid hill-men inhabiting parts of the wild forest-covered mountainous region forming the watershed. Previously, the Mizos were known as Lushai, but since 1950, the term Lushai has been superseded by the term Mizo under the Constitutional framework.

It is the tiniest state in North East India and parallel mountain ranges of two to seven thousand feet above sea level run north and south with narrow and deep river valleys between them. Only a few of the rivers are navigable while most of them cannot be navigated due to numerous rapids and narrow river courses. They can even rise to forty feet high during the monsoon season causing much damage to the land and discouraging travelers. Except for a few patches of flat land bordering the plains of Cachar and Bangladesh the topography of Mizoram is composed of steep hills and deep gorges. The hills are covered with thick forests composed of tropical plants of various kinds and are infested with wild animals and poisonous insects. Bamboo covers about two-thirds of the land area. Periodically, certain species of bamboo flower, bringing forth seeds which are consumed by rats resulting in the sudden increase of the rat population. The excess rat population consumes standing crops leading to famine. The rivers and streams run from north to south, and from south to north as well, pass through deep gorges and are often flooded during the monsoons, carrying away the bridges that span them.

During the early British expeditionary forces, Mizoram was difficult to penetrate from outside, and the people were known and feared for their raiding activities. So the earliest

contacts of the Mizos with the outsiders and of the British was when their war-like activities spilled over into the areas at the foot of the hills which both the Mizos and the British claimed to be theirs.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, Mizoram witnessed an extraordinary socio-political and religious change. This is attributed to the imposition of the British regime in 1889 followed by Christianity in 1894. There was a hectic exchange of raids and expeditions between the Mizos and the British which ended finally as the former were compelled to surrender to the latter's heavily armed offensive. Peace did not settle in spontaneously after the British occupation as random killings and uprisings continued in the land for some years. But the war ended deliberately. The Mizo Chiefs, the backbone of the opposition to the foreign invaders, capitulated and became unwilling agents of the alien rule and the people had no say in the matter.

Both literally and metaphorically, maps and mapping are dominant practices of colonial and post-colonial cultures. Colonization itself is often consequent on a voyage of 'discovery', a bringing into being of 'undiscovered' lands. In an official report dated 6 May 1896, A. Porteous stated that, "There is not in the Lushai Hills any unexplored 'Hinterland'" (qtd. in Kipgen 141). The process of discovery is reinforced by the construction of maps, whose existence is a means of textualizing the spatial reality of the other, naming or, in almost all cases, renaming spaces in a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control. In mapping, the indigenous people have no voice or even presence that can be heard in the new discourse of scientific measurement and written texts that cartography implies. Maps also inscribe their ideology on territory in numerous ways other than names of places. The blank spaces of early maps signify...an open and inviting (virginal) space into which the European imagination can project itself and into which the European (usually male) explorer must penetrate. Such blank spaces invite other cultural superscriptions, such as the elaborately

drawn monsters and sub-human wild-men (savages) of early maps. Maps can also serve as allegorical tools of exploitation. The projection map became a tool of Euro-centrism, defining European latitudes as pivotal reference points for the conception of a World hierarchy, and embodying as geographical fact European attitudes about the nature of the world. It is worth noting that geography and geographers, and the science of cartography, played at least as important a role in underpinning the objects and values of the colonial enterprise.

The East India Company had either annexed or exerted control over all the areas surrounding Mizoram long before the state came into recognition of the British Indian Government. This made it difficult for the Mizos to stand against the British when they came. The Company had annexed the Chittagong Hill Tract in 1760, registered most of the plains territories of Tripura as the *zemindari* (estate) of the *Nawab* of Bengal in 1761, entered into trade relationship with Assam in 1792 on the request of the king. The loss of monopoly of Indian trade in 1813 compelled the East India Company to look for every possible means to extend its commercial enterprise. An opportunity came when the Treaty of Yandabo concluded with Burma in 1826 led to cession of Tenasserim and Arrakan territories. Lower Assam and the Lower Burma were annexed respectively in 1838 and 1852; together with the ceded territories were formed into Assam Province in 1862, to which Upper Burma was added in 1886. Before the way was opened for the development of the tea industry in the Brahmaputra valley by the annexation of Lower Assam, the northern part of Cachar was already acquired in 1832 for tea plantation. This had a strong bearing on the occupation of Mizoram by the British in 1890. However, the Mizos in Dispersion on the extremities of Mizoram, who were called Kukis and Chins, had already been greatly disturbed by the British occupation of the neighbouring countries long before Central Mizoram felt the impact of British influence.

The idea of the border is clearly crucial to post-colonial studies and manifests itself in concerns with the constructed boundaries between peoples, nations and individuals. The idea of the border is implicit in the outreach of European cultures in the colonial period. The region which this aggressive diasporic movement of European settlers reached at any point became defined as the frontier, and the settled area adjacent to this was also known sometimes as the borderlands. The idea of a frontier civilization implies a civilization where rules of law and social graces wither as man reverts to a state of nature. The frontier then becomes a place of savagery on the part of the colonizers under which Mizoram inevitably falls. Such borderland spaces can be spaces of energy, when they question fixities and release the potential for change and revision. This is because these liminal spaces act to problematize and so dismantle the binary systems which bring them into being. It is this idea of the deconstructive potential of the space where two cultures encounter one another which also underlies the idea of the transformative energy of the contact zone. This notion of how Mizoram, being a frontier, became the space of energy problematizing the binary system shall be dealt with in the other chapters largely manifested in the revival movements.

The earliest contacts of the Mizos, then known as Kukis, with the British was through raids launched by the Mizos in areas at the foot of Mizoram hills which both the Mizos and the British claimed to be theirs. The earliest contact on record was made in 1777 when a Chakma chief rebelled against the authority of a cotton farmer employed by the East India Company. He called Kukis men to assist him, and were said to live far in the interior parts of the hills, who have not the use of fire-arms, and whose bodies go unclothed. These Kukis were regarded as allies of the Chakmas who rebelled against a cotton farmer under the East India Company. A detachment of military police under the command of Captain Ellester went into the hills situated in the east of Chittagong but did not enter the then Lushai Hills. No military encounter between the Mizos and the British seems to have occurred till then except

as allies of the Chakma rebels. But from the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Mizos started their raids on the British-claimed territories. Irreconcilable claims of geographical boundaries and encroachment of land by tea-plantation seemed to be the main factors leading up to the British- Mizo wars. To the Mizos, the British extended their activities, particularly tea-plantation on the Sylhet and Cachar borders, into their own reserved forest or hunting grounds while the latter accused the former of launching raids upon people within their British territory. Vanlalchhuanawma laid down five factors that probably caused the reciprocal accusations leading to the raids.

- i) Mizoram was *terra incognita* (unknown land) at that time
- ii) Mizos carried on inter-sub-tribal wars within their own land as they understood it
- iii) The British claimed the Mizo sub-tribes, so-called Kukis, then scattered in the extremities of Mizoram as their subjects after bidding them serve in tea-gardens since an undefined point of time
- iv) In defence of those tea-garden workers they interfered with what the people understood as the Mizo-inter-sub-tribal feuds, and
- v) The British acquired certain parts of its territories on assumption without official conduct of land survey or official agreement with the claimants of those acquired areas (75).

The fifth point explains the British East India Company's reason for its action to promote its interests. The British official interpretation of the Treaty of Yandabo as annexation of the Assam Hills west of the Patkoi range of mountains seems to be based on pure assumptions. Referring to a series of massacres by Kukis, the magistrate of Sylhet said that the massacres

happened in what was alleged to be British territory, indicating that the territory was claimed by assumption and not by official agreement.

The opening of Assam tea for private companies encouraged extension of tea cultivation even to the point of encroachment upon the Kukis' land. Almost certainly, the British tea-planters encroached upon areas claimed and occupied by the then Kuki-section of the Mizos. Introducing the discussion of the Lusei raids, Zairema says, "It all started with tea" (1). The Kukis can be considered to be the vanguard of the Mizos in retaliating against the tea-planters' intrusion long before the Lusei section of the Mizos came in contact with the Company's employees. It also means that the Kukis became the first Mizos to be victims of British subjugation.

The first significant encounter between the Luseis and the Company's employees took place in 1844 when Lalsuthlah made an attack on Kochabari, a Manipur village of Sylhet, and carried off twenty human heads and six live captives. Lalsuthlah was a Palian chief, great-grandson of Sibuta who once ruled a town of twenty-five thousand houses. The main reason for the attack was a woodcutter's failure to pay tribute to the Lusei chief on timber extraction in the Sylhet area, as had happened in 1842. Similar retaliations happened in the Arakan districts. The British request for help from the Rajah of Tipperah to punish the Mizos turned out to be fruitless, so the former obtained the assistance of a Kuki chief, presumably on condition that the traditional sacredness of the Lusei chief's body would be observed. The First British Expedition against the Mizos set out in December 1844 under Captain Blackwood who at once seized and manhandled the chief who came out to meet him.

The Mizos were known and feared for their raids. This was done for numerous reasons. First, there were raids directed against kindred clans whom they drove out of their hills. Second, they were directed against the tea gardeners who were encroaching on their

hunting grounds from the north. These raids provided occasions for taking booty and slaves, which provided the third and fourth reasons for them. It has been said that the fifth reason was headhunting, though this was disputed as the killing and taking of heads were merely incidents in the raids, not the cause of it. Despite such conclusions, the fact remains that there were several factors which suggest that headhunting may have been a major reason for the raids. Great honor for bravery was accorded to the man who took heads. The belief was also prevalent that the spirit of the victims would serve the spirit of the successful head-hunter in the next world. Thus, even if a raid was not undertaken primarily for the purpose of taking heads, it certainly must have provided an important motive.

From 1844 onwards, the number of raids made by Mizos on British territory increased, culminating in what was called 'The Great Kuki Invasion of 1860' in which fifteen villages in Tripura were burnt or plundered, 188 British subjects were killed and hundred people were carried into captivity. The British could not tolerate the challenge to their sovereignty involved in this harassment, killing and capture of their subjects. However, as they saw no opportunity for economic gain in administering Mizoram they first sought to control the raiding through the Tripura and Poang Rajas, who were made responsible for border defence. With the appointment of a superintendent of Hill Tribes in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the area under direct British administration was brought closer to Mizoram. In co-operation with the above mentioned rajas a ring of outposts manned by police were set up along the foothills. The primary reason for appointing the Chittagong Hill Tracts superintendent was for the supervision of the independent tribes and the preservation of the peace of the frontier.

The rajas were ineffective in defending British territories against the raids. The expeditions into Mizo territory achieved limited success insofar as they stopped the raiding for only a few years. The chief value consists in the moral effect which the knowledge of

their existence would naturally have on the minds of the Lushais. Perhaps, the most significant efforts were those made by T. H. Lewin, the third Hill Superintendent, who by his courage, insight into the nature of the tribal world, and love and sympathy for the tribal life and culture, won the respect of the Mizos. He referred to them as “my hill people”, and they in turn called him Thangliana, their own version of Tom Lewin (Kipgen 131). Consequently, he was able to make a treaty of friendship with a powerful southern chief, Rothangpuia, who later helped the British in their efforts to subdue those whom they referred to as the intransigent Lushais.

Rothangpuia, however, was not in a position to stop the raids. His friendship with the foreigners created ill-feeling among the other chiefs. The Mizos began raiding again in 1864, and continued on an even greater scale the following year.

By the end of the decade, reports from local officers on the frontier recommended, with increasing frequency, the adoption of a ‘forward policy’ for dealing with the Mizos in Mizoram. As C. E. Buckland puts it:

The policy unanimously recommended by the local officers was that raids should be met by condign punishment, in the shape of military occupation of the raiders’ villages during as long as a period as possible, the seizure of their crops and stored grain, and the forced submission of their chiefs; after that, by the steady endeavour of the frontier officers to influence them and promote trade; and finally, by a system of frontier posts combined with a line of road running north and south from Cachar frontier to the Chittagong” (461-462).

The government was nevertheless determined to follow its old policy of non-interference and conciliation. In a series of three letters the government laid down its policy of non-interference with the Lushai tribes in matters concerning themselves only; of friendly

communications between the frontier officers and these tribes; and finally, a series of posts along some line from Cachar on the north to the frontier of Aracan in the south.

Perpetual raids carried out by the Mizos eventually compelled the Government to send expeditions to Mizoram. While Edgar, the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, was in the hills pursuing the policy of conciliation with apparent success, a series of raids on the British subjects took place. These were more systematically organized and determined in character than the previous incursions. The first raid on the Chittagong hill Tracts in December 1870 was followed by nine raids on the Cachar plains within a period of thirty days, from 23 January through 23 February 1871. Simultaneously, there were raids in Sylhet, Tripura and Manipur. In the process some villages were burnt and at least one tea garden destroyed. Hundreds of people were killed, both police and civilians. Many were wounded, and about sixty one persons, including several women, were taken into the hills as captives. The attackers retreated from the Cachar front only after sustaining the loss of eighty two of their own men. An incident connected to these raids in Cachar that was to have significant influence upon subsequent British policy was the attack upon the tea garden at Alexandrapore on 23 January in which the planter, Winchester, was killed and his six year old daughter, Mary was carried off as a captive.

These raids, and the public outcry that they caused in Britain, compelled the Government of India to review its policy. After long deliberation, it was decided to send an expedition into Mizoram during the winter season of 1871-1872. Meanwhile, the leaders of the raids were tentatively identified as Vanhnuailiana's sons, Liankhama, Buangtheuva, Pawibawia and Lalburha in the East, and Savunga, Lalpuithanga and Bengkhuaia in the West.

Plans for the expeditions were made and in December 1871, it set off. Realizing the dangers implicit in confronting the tribes, the government gave the following special instructions to the military commanders:

the object of the expedition was not one of pure retaliation, but that the surrender of the British subjects held in captivity should be insisted on, and that every endeavour should be made to convince them that they have nothing to gain and everything to lose by placing themselves in a hostile position towards the British Government (Carey and Tuck 16).

The operations of both columns were successful and most of the Mizo chiefs of Mizoram were reduced to submission. Mary Winchester was surrendered, hostages accompanied the force on its return, and guarantee of free passage in the future to agents of the government was given. In addition, a topographical survey of 6,500 square miles was made.

All this was accomplished within a short span of three months. There were clashes at a few places, but the expeditions' work was relatively easy and the main reason was due to the feuding among the Mizo villages which made it impossible for them to put up a united resistance. At this time, the British had no intention of occupying Mizoram and withdrew, leaving the chiefs to rule as before.

For ten years, there was no further trouble. But this situation did not last as the Mizos did not learn the lesson that internal unity was essential in the face of external threat. Clan feuds never completely ceased, and the outbreak of a bitter conflict between the eastern and western chiefs led to much bloodshed, which was brought to an end by the severe famine of 1880. During that famine the British government provided relief, at the request of the chiefs, in the form of paddy. This relief work was expected to help improve relations between the British government and the Mizos. But in 1882, the period of peaceful relations was broken

through raids. In order to prevent any possible disturbance in Mizoram, the Government of India took measures, sending two survey parties to the area who were ambushed and killed. Almost at the same time two more raids, the latter of which was particularly savage in nature, were made upon British subjects in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It became evident to the government that the existing policy was ineffective in stopping the raiding, and that a demonstration of military power was necessary. Now a policy of pacification through permanent occupation was adopted, and the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-90 was carried out.

The operation began in November 1889 and was successfully concluded five months later in March 1890. Considering the war-like character of the Mizos and the ferocity they had exhibited in their raids in the plains they put up surprisingly little resistance to the expedition. In fact, there was no opposition worth the name. The divided and feud-ridden Mizo community was not in a position to fight the British forces despite the bravery of many individual warriors who were willing to sacrifice their lives for their communities and chiefs. It was the ignorance of the power of the enemy and the necessity for common action in self-defence which enabled the expedition of 1889-90 to achieve its objectives with far fewer casualties than had been anticipated.

When the main body of the expeditionary forces withdrew, they left behind four posts in Mizoram alone which were fortified and garrisoned with troops to maintain order. In his review of the results of the expedition the Adjutant General reported that:

The expedition must be regarded as eminently satisfactory...and the tribes which had previously given annoyance fittingly dealt with, but all the principal tribes inhabiting the country have been brought under subjugation, a large number of captives who had been in the hands of these tribes restored to their own homes, and military posts at

certain places for the preservation of order, and as evidence of British supremacy, established (Reid 17-18).

History holds that Western Europe, England in particular, fought wars in the name of the God of Christianity, and due to their political stronghold, there is no doubt that their belief was spread across the continents. In the fourth century, Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity, with his own conversion, which became a turning point for early Christianity, sometimes referred to as the triumph of the Church. But it was during the reign of Theodosius from the year 379-395 BC that the war between Christianity and Paganism really began. The war for de-paganization of the empire rose in full strength and the Church steadily gained ascendancy, and its influence on its environment grew more and more, spreading gradually all over the continents. And Christianity, not through bloody war but in terms of missionaries who were on their way to Burma, located the Mizo community. A change in the lives of the Mizos occurred when the Missionaries started their work by preaching the religion of Christianity. Around the year 1800, there arose a great Gospel Revival in Wales where the Church felt the need to spread Christianity. And for around forty years, this revival garnered the spread of Missionaries all over the world. This upheaval allowed the arrival of Rev William Williams into the village of Mualvum, the northern part of Mizoram, which consequently led to the spread of Christianity all over the state.

The role of missions and missionaries in the development of colonization was crucial. In the words of historian Etherington,

The explosive expansion of Christianity in Africa and Asia during the last two centuries constitutes one of the most remarkable cultural transformations in the history of mankind. Because it coincided with the spread of European economic and

cultural hegemony, it tends to be taken for granted as a reflex of imperialism (qtd. in Ashcroft et al 128).

The fear of cultural transformation or of cultural assimilation leading to the annihilation of Mizo nation was prevalent among the Mizos, and it kept the people at bay. Khuma and Thanga in their visit to the south also testified to coming across a similar story: “The British Government now intends to kill us without recourse to the knife. Missionaries are sent to put an end to our religion and to our mode of worship so that we may all die” (qtd. in Vanlalchhuanawma 129). The fear of being killed without recourse to the knife was symbolic of the fear of cultural assimilation.

Christianity came to Mizoram as a gradual extension of work that had been carried on for some decades in the region by the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission (later Welsh Presbyterian Mission) in the Khasi and Jaintia hills of the then Assam, and by the British Baptist Missionary society (BMS) in the Chittagong Division of the then Eastern Bengal though the first missionaries to enter the areas were connected for several years with the Arthington Aborigines Mission. In due course, the Welsh Mission and BMS were to undertake work throughout the region where Lusei or Duhlian was the prominent language, roughly corresponding with the present Mizoram. A small area in the southernmost corner of Mizoram inhabited by the Mara people was assigned to a third mission, the independent Lakher (Mara) Pioneer Mission. Later, other denominations such as the Salvation Army, the Roman Catholics and the Seventh Day Adventists entered the area, drawing their members from the churches established by the above mentioned missions.

Shortly after the initial occupation by the British forces, a young Welsh Presbyterian Missionary working at Shella in the Khasi Hills, became convinced that the time was right to start work among the Mizos of Mizoram. William Williams, the first Christian

missionary came to Mizoram to explore the possibilities and was greatly attracted to the Mizos who in turn developed a liking for him. His request to the home board of his mission in Liverpool to undertake a mission in Mizoram led to the adoption of Mizoram as a mission field by the General Assembly of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church in 1892. It was decided to start work there as soon as possible, and the choice of the missionary was naturally Williams. Unfortunately, his sudden death soon after his return to Shella led to delay in implementing the plan.

Simultaneously, unaware of the plans being made by the Welsh Mission, two young missionaries of the newly founded Arthington Aborigines Mission, J. H. Lorrain and F. W. Savidge, decided to undertake work in the then Lushai Hills. The appearance of Lorrain and Savidge amazed the Mizos in many ways. It was the first time they had seen white men carrying their own baggage and without a gun. Though they were of the same race, they were not as powerful as the officials. Hawla says that Lorrain and Savidge were “the first missionaries called *Zosaps* by the Mizos” (79). Despite the initial suspicion of them it was not difficult for the missionaries to gain the confidence of the people. In the first place, the people were impressed by their rudimentary knowledge of the Mizo language which they had studied earlier before coming to Mizoram. On hearing them speak crowds would gather around them, including the village chief and his wife. They soon established friendly relations. Unlike the British officers who understood only the Bengali language of their government workers, the missionaries were interested in things Mizo. They reduced the language to writing and started producing a literature in the Roman script using a phonetic form of spelling known as the Hunterian system.

The extent to which they had gained acceptance even during the time when the situation was unsettled is evident in a report made by D. E. Jones, the first Welsh Missionary, at the end of his second year in Mizoram according to Welsh Foreign Mission Report:

During the year 1899 Lushai has been politically unsettled. It is practically governed by the sword, and disarmament has been going on for some time. Two chiefs were imprisoned and about a hundred men were arrested on “suspicion amounting to knowledge” that they possessed guns. Notwithstanding all this there is no sign of mutiny, and although the natives are always suspicious of other sahibs, the “Mizo Sap” (Missionary) soon wins their confidence. Some say that they would like all Sepoys and their officers to leave, but that they would wish the missionaries and the shops to remain” (qtd. in Kipgen, 196).

While Lorrain and Savidge were laying the foundations, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission continued preparations to send their own people to work in Mizoram. Their former effort to send missionary in Mizoram had to be delayed due to an untimely death of William Williams. David Evan Jones was sent who received a warm welcome and great help from Lorrain and Savidge. Evangelistic efforts started to become successful both in the north and south, the latter showing greater promise of rapid growth.

When Christianity came to Mizoram, the people had been living undisturbed by outsiders with a traditional culture developed in isolation. This isolation was mainly due to the rugged terrain in which they lived which was covered by heavy forests inhabited by ferocious animals and war-like people. Even their language, unlike that of their plains neighbours contributed to isolation. Consequently, their religious practices were not influenced in any significant way by the great religions of their neighbours- Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. The importance of this context accounts for the rapid and indigenous growth of Christianity in the land.

The socio-cultural and religious background of the Mizos seem to be prepared for Christianity, as well as for the revival movements of today. *Zawlbuk* (bachelor’s dormitory),

Tlawmngaihna (Mizo code of morals) and the general social life served to prepare the people for Christianity and its expansion. Not only that, the Mizo religious beliefs created a basic awareness of the Christian doctrine of God, the root of eschatology, etc. Singing and dancing, deeply rooted in the Mizo culture, became the best means of worship. The traditional Mizo *Khuang* (drum) which was used for indigenous worship and festival became an indispensable instrument for Mizo Christian music and worship. At the same time, the Mizo concept of *Tlawmngaihna* became the central force and the main factor for the spread and rapid growth of revival and Christianity in the land.

Writers of the nineteenth century often described the Mizos, then known as Lushais, as barbarians, cruel savages, head-hunters and other such epithets. Probably that was how the outside world perceived them to be. But at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, socio-cultural changes took place due to the work of the missionaries and the revival movement. Various aspects of Mizo social and cultural life became instrumental for promoting their new religion- Christianity.

Zawlbuk and the Chief's house are the largest buildings in the village. *Zawlbuk* was the place where Mizo bachelors slept together. Every village had its own *Zawlbuk*. Vanlalchhuanawma accounts for its importance:

Zawlbuk acted as a recreational centre, a remand home, a school of culture and learning as well as a durbar hall. Children learnt discipline...The Thingnawifawm (collectors of firewood consisting of younger boys) for *Zawlbuk*, and Tlangvals (the bachelors) alike listened to folklore reflecting topics of basic religion, history, geography, sociology, politics, economics and of adventures, wars, jokes, romance and the like. *Zawlbuk* thus helped preserve the most significant Oral Traditions, keep

the best of social mores and traditional values in perspective and bridge the generation gap to a considerable extent (*Revival Movement*, 55).

When the missionaries came, *Zawlbuk* offered opportunities for their Mission work. The Arthington Missionaries Lorrain and Savidge found their first opportunity to interact with the Mizos in the *Zawlbuk*, as Vanlalchhuanawma quotes Lewis' observation: "In the *Zawlbuk*, where all youths...learnt. In the same spot, later on, the lads were held spell-bound over another story- the most wonderful of all,, of a saviour's life and love, and in turn their ears caught strange accents, but these were charged with the music of Heaven" (*Revival Movement*, 60). Edwin Rowlands also says in his report,

There are also advantages for Mission work; one special advantage is the *Zawlbuk* system in the village. The *Zawlbuk*...Here, in the olden times, it is said, they used to discuss their plans for raids aand wars, now they recite here their folklore and traditions; and here too, they hear the Gospel of the living Christ (qtd. in K. Thanzauva, 7).

The Church was perceived to have taken the place of *Zawlbuk*. They accepted the challenge by giving much positive teachings both in the pulpit and Sunday Schools.

The most significant element of Mizo culture is *Tlawmngaihna*. It is the Mizo code of moral life. J. M. Lloyd observes, "Honesty, courage, self-discipline, mutual help, a readiness to organize and be organized were all highly appreciated and in fact were largely summed up in the untranslatable word *Tlawmngaihna*" (11). Lloyd again quotes Sangliana,

Tlawmngaihna is the Mizo code of morals and good form. One cannot, for example, be regarded as *Tlawmngai* unless one is courteous, considerate, helpful, unselfish, courageous, industrious and ready to help others, and will try to surpass others even at

considerable inconvenience to himself. A *Tlawmngai* man or woman will always try to ensure that he or she does not stand in need of help from others, and will try to surpass others in doing his or her ordinary daily tasks efficiently. We, thus, see that *Tlawmngaihna* embraces various types of activities and manifests itself in various forms which can be summed up as ‘Group over itself’ wherein self-sacrifice for the needs of others is the spontaneous outcome. A man who practices the precepts of ‘*Tlawmngaihna* is highly respected (11).

Whether it is relief and rehabilitation of the poor and the needy, helping a helpless person, facing emergency situations, etc., *Tlawmngaihna* covers every sphere of life. It was beautiful, praiseworthy and magnificent. This ethical code of *Tlawmngaihna* survives even after the disappearance of *Zawlbuk*. In the face of sweeping changes, the *Zawlbuk* way of life was declining along with a perceptible decline in discipline and morality among the youth. However, it has been contended that the ethical code of *Tlawmngaihna* had been “refined, strengthened and given truer and surer ground by Christianity” (Saiithanga 145). To the Mizos, to accept the teaching of Jesus meant to be *tlawmngai* and to serve this God, at whatever cost, was to fulfill the old Mizo ideal of *tlawmngaihna*. Vanlalchhuanawma gives his observations:

The traditional moral code of *tlawmngaihna* was a predatory asset to open the people to the Christian principles of life. It truly conforms to the highest moral requirements laid down in the Bible. Traditional taboos against stealing, murder, adultery, selfish ambition, inhumanity and inhospitality, etc., were all bound up with the positive implications of *tlawmngaihna*. For instance, a man in a life-threatening poverty might be condoned for stealing from a neighbour’s rice-bin. But stealing for selfish motive was condemned. Again, adultery was always associated with a tiger’s bite or similar

other mishaps. In short, the more systematic moral code of the Bible appeared compatible with the traditional code of *tlawmngaihna* (152).

Most of the early writers of Mizo history described the traditional Mizo religion as animism, worshipping big trees, rocks, jungle spirit, etc. In reconstructing the traditional Mizo religion, Rev. Liangkhaia concludes that: “We, therefore, by our *Sakhua* have not been worshippers of *ramhuai* (spirits), but sincere seekers of *Pathian*, God” (26). It seems that the only blockage for the Mizo ancestors was ignorance of the exact identity of God until Christianity revealed His attributes to them. In support of this, McCall states, “Old Lushais believed naturally in the existence of one supreme God, a god of all humanity and goodness; but their spiritual repose was disturbed by spirits of Evil known as *Ramhuais* who had to be propitiated perpetually” (68). Moreover, the Mizos’ belief in the immortality of the soul and existence of the next world occupied a dominant place in the pre-Christian Mizo spirituality which found its concretization in the Christian’s belief.

The Mizos have always attached special significance to visions and dreams. Most of their clan gods and sacrificial systems had their origins in dreams. They were believed to be the means of communication with humans used by supernatural beings, both good and evil. Many writers conceived of Christianity in Mizoram as a fulfilment of a dream. Darphawka had a series of dreams interpreted as the coming of the white missionaries, the first in which *Pathian* (God) spoke to him took place in 1880, and the last in 1890. One of the earliest references to his prophecy was made by M. E. Bowser in 1928:

Between forty and fifty years ago, in a village in a distant Lushai-land, a man had a dream. In the night a voice spoke to him, saying: “A Great Light will come from the West and shine upon Lushai; follow the light, for the people who bring it will be the ruling race (19).

It was believed to have been fulfilled with the coming of the Christian light from across the seas.

In the history, culture, customs and religion of the Mizos, singing and dancing had their roots deeply implanted. The earliest songs seemed to be those sung during dancing. Singing became the outlet for expressing their happiness, sadness, victory and pride. Without singing and dancing, the traditional festivals such as *Khuangchawi*, *Chawngchen*, *Kut and Milu lam*, etc., would have been incomplete.

Mizos have an inborn love for singing and it has been a central feature of Mizo society since the olden days. Among the pre-literate people of the world, the Mizos are likely to be the richest in songs.

Edwin Rowlands gives an account on the Mizos love towards singing in his report, that at Christmas time during an expedition, “the British soldiers were encamped at a certain place and were having Christmas repast accompanied by songs, the Lushais who were shooting in the vicinity of the camp, stopped when the singing began, but fired again when the singing ceased” (317). Since Mizos loved to sing, they frequently had a fellowship of singing and dancing, accompanied by drinking of wine. When they became Christians, singing became more and more meaningful to them. They surrendered to God through singing, praising and glorifying God and serving him through it. Every occasion to the Mizos seemed to be an occasion for singing.

Khuang is a Mizo drum and is one of the most important musical instruments of the Mizos. Without it, social gatherings and religious ceremonies are felt to be incomplete. In Mizo culture and saying, dancing without singing and singing without drumming and drumming without drinking was an impossibility. Drumming demands singing and singing demands dancing and dancing demands drinking.

New studies emphasized that although the story of Euro-American expansion and the story of missions are deeply intertwined, the relations between them are far more complex than has often been suggested. Radical critics of missions who argue that missions are the forerunners of more direct control see missionaries as conscious precursors of imperialism. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin contend that they forget the role missionaries also played in “acting as a buffer between harsh government and policy and indigenous peoples, and especially between settlers and indigenes in settler colonies. Initially, while the Mizos showed hostility on their part against the Imperial government, the pioneering missionaries were able to win the confidence of the colonized by simple kindness and medical services which were cheap yet effective as compared to the exorbitantly expensive traditional animal sacrifices

There has been no more dramatic shift in recent times in post-colonial studies than the growing awareness of the role religion has played in both the practices of colonization and the developments which have occurred since political independence in the post-colonial world. This takes many forms. First, there is a growing awareness of the complex role religion played in the history of imperialism, both directly through the impact of missions and indirectly, as religion acted to shape the responses of both colonizer and colonized. The religious practices of colonized peoples were often denigrated as mere superstition or openly attacked as heathenism. As such, the Arthington Mission, the first Mission to start its evangelistic work in the land, was based on his conviction that “God has called me to care for the souls of the heathen” (qtd. in Vanlalchhuanawma 98). And so, religion is used to justify the so-called ‘civilizing mission’ of the colonizer. This was particularly the case where these practices were not written down in forms (sacred texts) which Europeans could recognize as in the case of the Mizos. However, even where their complexity and intellectual force was

acknowledged as in the case of cultures with written religious texts such as India, they were perceived to be decadent or decayed and in need of reform.

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Chapter 2

Revival and Indigenization

The continuing evangelistic efforts of the missionaries entailed unprecedented tension in the society. This continued even after the emergence of the official Mizo Church. The rapid erosion of socio-cultural identity called for urgent action on the part of the Mizos. But disarmed of all traditional means of doing so, they needed something else. The revival movement offered the much-needed means of maintaining a distinctive Mizo identity (Vanlalchhuanawma 112).

The revival movement in Mizoram happened when two powerful alien systems- the imperial government and the institutional church were introduced into the land. The former aimed at securing peace, law and order while the latter aimed at converting the Mizos from their traditional primal beliefs to those of the Christian religion.

The rapid growth of Christianity in Mizoram during the first half of the twentieth century is closely associated with this phenomenon of revival. There were “four major Revival Movements” in Mizoram when the phenomena peaked into great waves and spread throughout the land, and Kelkang Revival Movement fell under the fourth Revival Movement. Most scholars who have written about the revival movements in Mizoram identify these waves as peaking during 1906, 1913, 1919 and around 1937. However, a closer study of scanty sources reveal that these were the years when revival stirrings affected the Mission *Veng* (locality) Church, while remarkable revivals happened in other places without interruption. It is conceived that this traditional periodisation has been based on scholars who obviously placed importance on the Mission *Veng* Church. Undoubtedly, they were strongly influenced by the missionaries who worshipped there.

One of the most powerful strategies of imperial dominance is that of surveillance, or observation, because it implies a viewer with an elevated vantage point, it suggests the power to process and understand that which is seen, and it objectifies and interpellates the colonized

subject in a way that fixes its identity in relation to the surveyor. The imperial gaze takes the form of the gaze of the missionaries who saw some unchristian and unacceptable traditional cultural elements entailed in the revival movements, thereby intending to put it under control. Katie also terms the stirring at Aizawl as “the most unruly revival I have ever seen” (qtd. in Vanlalchhuanawma, 204). As the missionaries found the movement indecent and excessive, they attempted to control it. This notion was most probably responsible for the traditional periodisation. This imperial gaze defines the identity of the subject, objectifies it within the identifying system of power relations and confirms its subalterneity and powerlessness. For the observer, as in Foucault’s panopticon, sight confers power, for the observed, visibility is powerlessness. In the colonial paradigm, power over the subject, asserts Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, “may be exerted in myriad ways, enforced by the threat of subtle kinds of cultural and moral disapproval and exclusion, which the Missionaries exerted through the efforts to put the ecstatic revival movements under control within their supposed paradigm of normal. It became a significant method by which the colonizers could obtain a position of panoramic observation, itself a representation of knowledge and power over colonial space.

If in the past Wales can be called “the Land of Revivals”, then the “name can be even more aptly applied to the Lushai Hills. In fact, it is a name more aptly given to Mizoram. The Welsh Revival of 1904-5 gave rise to the Lushai revival, the former has long since spent its force, whilst the latter has continued almost uninterruptedly ever since in one part or other of the hills.

The revivals in Mizoram, unlike those in the Wales, did not bear the name of a prominent leader as they did in Wales (Evans 50). The revival movement in Mizoram commenced under the direct influence of the Khasi revival which in turn was a spill-over of the Welsh revival.

Many people tend to consider revival simply as a spiritual phenomenon that has revitalized Christians from time to time, characterized by emotional excitement, extreme manners and peculiar activities and kindled mostly by the emotionalism of the people, ordinary and uneducated. A deeper analysis reveals that revivals in Mizoram are indeed a struggle between indigenous Mizo culture and the culture introduced by the British colonizers and the Christian Missionaries, and Kelkang Revival Movement in 1937 was a testament to this notion, generating a unique form of Christianity deeply rooted in indigenous culture. The word “revival” for Lalsawma has two other connotations- “Renewal, Reawakening” (qtd. in Harhna, 3), and in this regard revival at Kelkang village was significantly peculiar since it was not only a spiritual renewal, but also a reawakening of indigenous culture.

The revival frenzy, however, is not confined only to Christianity as is seen even in the case of Hinduism. It takes the form of an emotional outburst on receiving spiritual enlightenment in both cases just as much as Christians would show happiness just like the Hindus would while a player shoots a goal in a football game. Theologians tend to locate the difference in the source of enlightenment, as well as in the consequences it brings about. In Christianity, it tends to channelize itself for evangelization while it is otherwise for their counterpart and does not seem to go beyond the frenzy.

The decade of the christianizing movement prior to the revival movement in Mizoram was marked by cultural clashes, transition and assimilation. The Missions on their part challenged the people with their Good News, ‘Believe that you may be saved’. The people were left to accept, reject or seek some ways of adapting themselves to the new situation and message. Indifference, at best, and opposition at large, characterized the response to the early christianizing movement. The decade saw a conflict between traditional culture and Christianity.

The first decade of the revival movement in Mizoram was a decade of developments for shaping the rapidly growing Mizo church in the midst of creative tension between the revival movement and the church. During the first decade, the movement assumed an imported character and was wholeheartedly welcomed by the church. As it gradually developed, demonstrating more indigenous character, tensions started to arise in the Church. It grew to produce tensions and even persecutions in the periphery of the Church when the Mission addressed itself to the 'rescue' of the revival-affected Christians. Tensions within the Church grew so intense that they resulted in the creation of autonomous Christian movement towards the close of the first decade of the revival. The Tlira movement was the first autonomous Christian movement in Mizoram which drew its inspiration mainly from Tlira's personal vision written in the form of an epistle to one of his disciples. Without any written constitution, the perceived self-revelation of the Spirit in the vision was its guiding principle. The movement had a strong tendency to revitalize various cultural traits, especially traditional song, music, dance, drinking *zu* (beer) and *lenkhawm* i.e. informal socialization. It used traditional types of Christian songs using pure traditional tunes.

The revival movement in Mizoram commenced under the direct influence of the Khasi revival which in turn was a spill-over of the Welsh revival. The first revival stirring in 1906 in Mizoram was largely the outcome of the joint efforts between the foreign Mission and the early Mizo Church, apart from the direct influence of the Khasi revival. It may be proposed that Mizoram was politically and socially prepared for a revival by the beginning of the twentieth century. Politically the Mizos under pressure had shown their acceptance of British rule by erecting memorial stones in all villages to commemorate Queen Victoria's death and by lighting torches on every hill to celebrate the Proclamation of King Edward VII as Emperor of India. At the turn of the century, the Mizos had, thus, been conditioned to accept the European way of life even to appreciate the religious movements in the West. A

striking fact about the first revival stirring in Mizoram was that the Church made preparation for a specific type of revival namely, the Welsh revival. The desire for a revival grew more intense after the news of Khasi revival reached the Mizo Church. “The news of the revival at home and in the Khassia Hills”, reports Lorrain in 1905, “has filled many of the converts with a longing for a similar manifestation in the Lushai Hills (17). The Mizo Church in the North and South encouraged each other to pray for a revival. The Church in the North being a section of the Presbyterian Church Assembly in Meghalaya considered sending Mizo delegates to attend the Annual Assembly meeting in Mairang during March 15-18, 1906, the first to be held after the start of the Khasi revival. Like the revival at the Khasi Assembly, the first revival in Mizoram started during the final hours of the meeting after hope is given up for the Welsh revival kind repeating themselves (Kipgen 219). In spite of their enthusiasm there seemed to be no sign of the anticipated revival. D.E. Jones expresses his great frustration: “few came to the meetings and it seems to be getting harder...we expected something great on Sunday but I felt it unbearably cool and hard as if before a thunderstorm” (1) .

The spark of revival in the Mairang delegates was fanned into flame when the church at Aizawl arranged a series of reception meeting. As was the custom of the Christians a farewell to the southern delegates and one of the northern evangelists was arranged on Monday morning, April 9, in the school-cum-chapel at 8: 00 a.m. It was during the singing of the farewell hymn, “God be with you till we meet again”, that the expected revival finally came. D.E. Jones contends that it suddenly “burst into flame” and the congregation, according to Lloyd, “felt the power of the spirit come upon them in a remarkable manner” (qtd. in Kipgen 219). The strange noises made by those attending the meeting attracted people living in the neighbourhood, who soon joined the group in increasingly large numbers. What began as a brief farewell prayer service ended up continuing for six hours. The revival

manifestations during the first stirring appeared to be similar with those of the Welsh and the Khasi revivals. The most prominent feature was conviction and confession of personal sins. The obvious way the Holy Spirit worked this time was by conviction of sin. Another equally significant feature was expression of joy based on the perceived assurance of divine forgiveness. As the deep conviction of sin was manifested in the form of praying, confessing, weeping, crying, shouting, panting or swooning, the joy of forgiveness was expressed in the form of enthusiastic singing, hand-clapping, thumping the floor, hand-waving, dancing or body swaying. Every aspect of the revival manifestations seemed to be in perfect harmony. No musical instrument was used to accompany the singing.

This first revival did not last long. The intense period lasted only for two weeks, though it continued for some time in outlying villages at a less intense level. Saiaithanga suggests that the reason for its brevity was the small number of Christians at that time. The revival of this ecstatic type was a new phenomenon among the Mizos, so Kipgen suggests that this may be the reason why the movement was not sustained at that stage. He further continues. In form and perception it was still foreign, not yet having taken on the indigenous cultural features that the latter revivals were to assume.

Though Christianity was now establishing itself, difficulties arose in three different stages. The persecution of revivalist Christians was the first and direct reaction to the revival. Secondly, the *Puma Zai* Movement, though indirectly influenced by it, acted as a counter movement and actually prepared the ground for subsequent revivals. The third development was a famine. It too served to prepare the ground for the later revivals.

Amidst the revival stirrings in various villages, a cultural movement centered around an obscure song called *Puma Zai* flared up. The *zai* or song was seen as a setback to Christianity. It was composed of a double-lined refrain of any number of verses with an

ambiguous appellation *Puma* at the end of the first line of every refrain. Hence the name *Puma Zai*. As the movement progressed more songs were composed and minor changes were brought in the structure, tune and ethos of the *Puma Zai*. The lines of a verse increased from two to three or more, the accompanying dance found place both at home and in the open-air, and the name changed to *Tlanglam Zai* (Song of Community Dance) which in course of time yielded a vast number of songs with modified tunes collectively known as Traditional Mizo Songs. Carter and Luaia recall how exactly the song was used to counter the Christian movement- that the mockers would scoff the evangelists at street-preaching by dancing and singing: “Imitating *Vai* (foreigner) by holding a book/ Always telling some news” (531). Such jeering intimidated the listeners from embracing Christianity. However, the nature of the *Puma Zai* movement strongly suggested that it was a cultural response to the Christian revival movement. A few reasons to support this view are given here. First, the movement appeared as an imitation of the revival. Second, Lalzika’s motive in introducing and popularizing the *Puma Zai* when the Government restricted physical persecution of the Christians, can be interpreted as a response to the thriving western-Christian culture through the unchecked revival movement by the traditional movement. Third, the socio-religious concessions given to the participants in the *Puma Zai* were an accommodation to the less expensive requirements of those becoming Christian. Fourth, the omission of ‘*Puma*’ in the *Tlanglam Zai*, the discontinuance of animal sacrifice in its celebration, and the singing and dancing even without *zu* (beer), all are examples of the modification of the traditional practices to match Christian religious practice. Fifth, the commitment of the *Puma Zai* enthusiasts to regular community gathering for singing and dancing even without feasts or *zu* revealed a strong inclination towards the revival movement. It ultimately contributed much to the promotion of revivalism particularly in the areas of singing and dancing. This cultural movement seeped into the Mizo Christians unconsciously. When Mizo Christians display it

in their mode of worship, the greater is the tension between the church and the revival movement.

It can be rendered that 'nativism' is entailed in the minds of the Mizos wherein the desire to return to indigenous practices and cultural forms as they existed in pre-colonial society is expressed instantaneously. The term is most frequently encountered to refer to the rhetoric of decolonization which argues that colonialism needs to be replaced by the recovery and promotion of pre-colonial, indigenous ways as discussed above in the case of the Mizos. The debate as to how far such a return or reconstruction is possible or even desirable has been a vigorous one. Colonial discourse theorists such as Spivak and Bhabha argue strongly that such nativist reconstructions are inevitable subject to the processes of cultural intermixing that colonialism promoted and from which no simple retreat is possible. This aspect is clearly manifested in the case of Mizo Christians who had shown the desire to return to indigenous and cultural practices yet infused with the Western form of Christianity which they had accepted earlier. Spivak has more recently defended the use by post-colonial societies of a 'strategic' essentialism whereby the signifiers of indigenous (native) cultures are privileged in a process of negative discrimination.

The most prominent revival stirring of the first decade, usually known as the second revival stirring, was that of 1913. Lasting for about two years, emphasis is given to it probably because of its tremendous impact on the Church at the Mission Compound. Moreover, the ordination of the first Mizo pastor and certain other significant events made the stirring of the later part of the first decade a transition from foreign-oriented revival during the first popular stirring towards a more indigenous form of revival. It was a much more extensive and powerful movement than the first revival. This revival was experienced with greater intensity during the ensuing Presbytery meeting in the north. The congregation of some five hundred people gathered for the Presbytery meeting was like a boiling cauldron,

meeting without break for three or four days and nights, and they could not be persuaded to leave. When the delegates finally did disperse they spread the revival far and wide-and brought in a large number of converts to the church. The second revival lasted only two years with the following three or four years being quiet with a lack of zeal in the churches.

Ethno-psychology in post-colonial discourse suggests that “there were certain ineradicable mental ‘sets’ that prevented ‘natives’ from exercising the same degree of control or responsibility as the colonial settlers” (Ashcroft et al 83). The revival manifestations of the second revival stirring gradually assumed some cultural traits such as dancing, crying, shouting, jumping, somersaulting, acting symbolically, swooning or falling into trance which was considered unruly and primitive, causing great concern to the church. One such instance was given by Jones: Some sank so deep into a coma that it was impossible to detect either their pulse or their breathing. They seemed as though dead and at first we were greatly perturbed by this. It seemed as though they had crossed into the spirit-world.

The missionaries tried to impart decency and self-control to the Mizo Christians. At times, there has been a danger of some of the people yielding themselves too much to their physical emotions forgetting that one of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control, and the missionaries have striven to faithfully instruct our people and warn them of the danger. Many Mizo revival enthusiasts took offence at such instruction. D.E. Jones’s also advised to make the meetings shorter and to restrain themselves for reason of their health and conscience. This form of pseudo-scientific construction was deeply embedded in the assumptions underlying the notion of race itself- that physical characteristics indicated deeply embedded psychological, intellectual and behavioural differences between racial groups. Anti-colonialist theorists such as Fanon did not accept the essentialist ideas that underlay colonial ethno-psychiatric models and critiqued the idea that the ‘native’ was a natural category.

Tensions started to arise between the revivalists and the Mizo Chiefs which resulted in the spread of the Mission-revival-oriented Christians who became founder-leaders of the Church in different places where they happened to settle. The cultural-revival, the *Puma-Tlanglam*, made inroads into the Christian revival, resulting in numerous converts while at the same time increasing tensions between the Mission-Church establishment and the revival movement. The intervention of the Government in protecting the Christians from the chiefs' harassment and cultural demands did little to prevent the assimilation of cultural traits into the revival. The persisting tension between the revival movement and the church was dealt with by adjustment and expurgation. This means that the Church tolerated certain cultural traits, such as music, dancing and *lengkhawm* in the revival movement, while banning certain others such as drinking *zu* or beer, participation in feasts and festivals, and other practices directly associated with traditional religion. Hence, out of the underlying tensions evolved the unique nature of the Mizo Church.

The third wave of revival broke out while the people were still mourning for the dead and a feeling of depression was widespread. It started on a Sunday night, 26 July 1919, simultaneously in three widely separated places- Nisapui in the north, and Zotlang and Thingsai in the south. This strange and inexplicable coincidence was described by those living at the time as a miracle. It was widely welcomed insofar as it lifted the spirits of the people. This is regarded as the most important of the Mizo revivals. It was during this third wave of revival that the Mizo traditional *Khuang* or drum was introduced in accompaniment to singing- a practice that was to become a prominent feature of Mizo Christianity. Whoever received the revival believed from the start that the Spirit intended to penetrate the whole of Mizoram. That conviction led them to take it to other villages, whether it was during the daytime or at night. Here the Mizos enact their indigenous ethical code of *tlawmngaihna* wherein they contended that "to serve this God, at whatever cost, was to fulfill the old Mizo

ideal of *tlawmngaihna*. An account of how it began at Nisapui village in the north and spread from there will provide a clearer understanding. When the revival broke out, Paranga, the evangelist in that area was present. He quickly left for his village, Lungdai, and was followed by three young men compelled by the ethical code of *tlawmngaihna*. On reaching their destination, they shared their experiences and a revival began. After three days of revival experience, the Christians of Nisapui decided to visit the Christians of Lungdai, which they did, and then together, in a great crowd, everyone went to Thingkuang village. Here began a practice of what was to become a prominent feature of Mizo Christianity- the use of drum in accompaniment to singing. The excited Christians of the three villages in turn decided to visit Durtlang which they did at night. In the dark, it was only the man in the lead of the procession who could see the way, holding aloft a petromax lantern. In their excitement, no one, not even girls and women carrying babies, felt tired. Initially, the people of Durtlang were reserved and gave them only a grudging reception. But by the end of two days they too began to participate in the revival. Only then did the Christians of the two villages returned home. Now it was the turn of the Christians of Durtlang who decided to take the revival to Aizawl. In their excitement they too would not wait till the next day but set out immediately, led by their chief Lalsuaka. A large crowd marched towards Aizawl, singing to the beatings of the drum and went directly to the school-cum-chapel building. There they rang the church gong so vigorously that the townspeople rushed to the spot fearing that there was a fire. But when they arrived, they too got caught up in the ecstatic spirit of the revival. Though it was early August and the monsoon rains were heavy, the meeting continued through that entire night and the next day. Thus the revival came to the Mission Veng church in Aizawl. The movement was similarly developing in the south. At the autumn Presbytery meetings held at Aizawl in the north and Lungrang in the South the revival reached its climax. One of this third revival's main importances was the fact that it led to large-scale conversions to

Christianity in Mizoram. It went on for five years, from 1919 to 1923, and produced the most rapid growth of the Christian community in the history of Mizoram. Downs noted that:

The area in which Christianity grew most rapidly at the beginning of the century was Mizoram...Less than thirty years later the church in north Mizoram alone was already larger than its sister church in the Khasi and Jaintia area, even though the population of Mizoram is less than that of the Khasi and Jaintia districts of Meghalaya (122).

Kipgen further proclaims that Downs understated the case in which his statement is based on the statistics of the two Presbyterian synods for 1929, but the Presbyterian churches in Mizoram had, in fact, surpassed the membership of the Khasi- Jaintia churches four years earlier in 1925.

The revival movement during the second decade of the revival (1916-1925) led to the acculturation of Christianity. This does not mean that the cultural traits entered directly into the sphere of the Church's activity. Rather, Christianity ventured into the realm of traditional culture and custom. In other words, the revival movement in virtual tension with the Church adapted itself to the indigenous culture and experience. Certain aspects of the movement made it appear to be a cultural movement. In its extreme form it appeared to be an autonomy movement and an assertion of Mizo identity. The most important development in the Mizo search for identity was what Vanlalchhuanawma refers to as "the Autonomous Christian Movement" (281). This movement became more prominent in the second decade than in the first, particularly in the Kawlkhuma movement. Despite the denial of Kawlkhuma and his followers of being part of the Tlira movement, the first autonomous Christian movement in Mizoram, the close association between the two leaders was an established fact (282). The Kawlkhuma movement soon turned into a denominational movement in the form of the Salvation Army and has been continuing in that form pertaining to its western structure. It has

been more successful than the Tlira movement in so far as structural continuity is concerned. But it proved to be a failure as an autonomous movement or an indigenizing agent which provided its initial impetus. The Tlira movement, structurally short-lived as it was, had been more successful in maintaining its autonomous and indigenous characteristics and thus made considerable contributions towards indigenization of Mizo Christianity. It is, however, undeniable, that the indigenizing spirit and autonomy-consciousness of the Tlira movement found their continuity in the Kawlkhuma movement. Vanlalchhuanawma observes:

The basic motivation to start new Christian groups was normally a desire to break with the western structure of the Church which sought to purge Christianity of as many distinctively Mizo elements as possible. But the pressure of the official church was too strong to stand against, without outside help. In the end, those indigenous movements were left with an option either to ally themselves with the other foreign denominational structures or to remain as small pockets of unorganized defectors. Hence arose the Salvation Army and the Roman Catholic Church (283).

The stirring of 1919 has been regarded as most outstanding and representative. The stirring is often referred to as the Great Revival or the Third Revival. Liangkhaia calls it the “greatest of the revivals” (142). It is regarded as the most extraordinary revival for it considerably changed the characteristics and concepts of the Christians, and presumably because of its strong indigenizing influence and widespread impact.

Anti-colonialism signifies the point at which the various forms of opposition become articulated as a resistance to the operations of colonialism in political, economic and cultural institutions. It emphasizes the need to reject colonial power and restore local control. Paradoxically, anti-colonialist movements often expressed themselves in the appropriation and subversion of forms borrowed from the institutions of the colonizer and turned back on

them. The sometimes arbitrary arrangement of church governance became the space within which a discourse of anti-colonial nationalism was focused, leading to the demand, or rather the precipitation of autonomous Christian Movement highly indigenous in character. Anti-colonialism frequently perceived resistance to be the product of a fixed and definitive relationship in which colonizer and colonized were in absolute and implacable opposition. In settler colony situations, resistance at the level of cultural practice may occur before the political importance of such resistance is articulated or perceived. This is exactly what had taken place during the revival movements where the Mizos showed resistance to the western Christian culture through the gradual assimilation of their indigenous cultural practices.

The third decade of the revival i.e. 1926-1935 was by and large quiet but formative as far as the revival movement is concerned. Since the great revival of 1919, there had always been some revival activity going on somewhere in Mizoram. Even when the great wave had passed, there continued to be manifestations of revivalism here and there. Because of this there is confusion concerning the precise time when the fourth revival wave can be said to have begun. It is complicated by the fact that there was also more than one type of revival going on at the same time. One was a new, less ecstatic type, and the other was of the type that had become traditional. To distinguish between them, the less ecstatic type is referred to as the new revival while the other one as high revival. "Opinions about the precise date of the beginnings of the fourth revival range all the way from 1930, the date given by V.L. Siama to 1937, the date given by Carter (qtd. in Kipgen 244). Others have chosen a wide variety of dates in between. Liangkhaia saw the new-birth movement referred to above as a substitute for the on-going revival movement which had earned disfavor because of the emerging *hlimna sang* features of the ecstatic kind such as quaking, swooning and speaking in tongues in it. He writes thus:

The Baptist brethren disliked this spirit of *hlimna sang* and were intent upon restricting it; and the Northeast pastorate of Aizawl division also disfavoured it and appeared considerably successful in arresting its further development (36).

The revival movement in its third decade saw itself diverted towards Western forms while still struggling to maintain its traditional character. This decade witnessed the increasing popularity of Western choral singing which came to be vigorously developed in the Church. Singing with tonic solfa meant singing in parts after the Western fashion, which helped retain all the English and Welsh tunes in the Mizo Church. Katie Hughes, in her letter to Mr. Hughes Morris revealed the concentration on singing as a paramount help to counteract a rather unhealthy revival which was found here and there among the village churches.

No single outstanding revival stirring may be identified during the given decade”, says Vanlalchhuanawma, yet the revival movement went on unabated with impressive influence. The common features such as prolonged singing, drum-beating, dancing, trembling and shaking were still prominent. Two features particular to this decade were the heavenly smile and dancing accompanying the sermon. Dancing with a smile on the face became an innovation of the decade.

The decade was marked by the open encounter between the revival movement with indigenous characteristics and the *New Awakening* oriented to Western theological concepts. The tension thus aroused considerably retarded the spread of the indigenizing revival movement and tended to inculcate more and more Western thought and structure into Mizo Christianity. It was in this decade that the Church chose to openly counter the revival movement by instituting official restrictions on certain revival features. The indirect

cause”for restricting certain aspects of the revival was most probably the renewed vigour with which certain Western forms were reinforced.

The conflict between the Church and the revival movement came to the fore with the increase of theologically trained Mizo Christians and pastors. By the third decade the number of ordained Mizo pastors was already twenty in the north and nine in the south. Those in the ordained ministry normally adopted the Mission perspective in their attitude towards the indigenous revival movement in which the vast majority of the Christians were involved. The natural tendency of the Church under the leadership of those pastors was to prefer the westernized new revival to the indigenous revival. For this same reason, the indigenous revivalists tended to view higher theological training as retarding higher spiritual experience and even as a way to spiritual dryness. Conflict between the opposing groups became inevitable. This tension was an important aspect of the growth of Mizo Christians in their faith.

As in the case of the beginning, there is disagreement concerning when it ended. Many writers do not even attempt to say when it ended. Among those that do, Lloyd said that it continued strongly till 1937. Hminga seems to think that the revival wave continued up to at least 1938, and identified its sudden decline during 1937 and 1938 as being due to the chaotic situation created by the District Superintendent’s suppression of the extremists of Kelkang in 1937. For Kipgen, the sharp decline of the revival wave already “began in 1936, the year before the Kelkang episode” (247). The tendency to suppress the indigenous trait in the revival movement and of the Church retarded the growth in the number of Christians as evidenced in statistics. The increase in Church membership in both north and south was only “1,886 in 1936 as compared with 5,775” for the previous year (qtd. in Kipgen 247). The sharp decline of converts was seen mainly due to the chaotic years of 1936 and 1937. The chaos was due to the nature of the Biate revival which was highly ecstatic with many strange

features, and the controversy it created in the churches. Those under the influence of the new revival were especially critical of it as being unsound. The rejection of the high revival in the south as well as the missionaries' efforts to discourage excessive practices associated with it would also have contributed to its decline. The drastic drop in new members for Kipgen in 1938 was due to the superintendent's actions which brought, in the words of Edwards, incredible change of the atmosphere. Some other churches like Baktawng and Mawngkawn were also represented by the Government as being in danger of repeating what had happened at Kelkang and when he was sent to investigate, he found that the problem had disappeared. They were probably discouraged by the incident at Kelkang which we shall be dealing with in the next chapter in detail. This dampened the revival spirit, and adversely affected Christian growth.

The 1951 Census of India shows 154,575 Christians in Mizoram representing 80.31% of the total population of 196,202 (qtd. in Kipgen, 249). That the revival movements were the greatest contributor in this phenomenal growth is indisputable. But the importance of these movements lies not simply in the numerical growth of the Christian community to which they contributed. Of greater importance is why they led to such growth. They were responsible for the creation of the distinctively indigenous Mizo Church, and why Christianity was attractive to the people.

The Revival Movement at Kelkang village (also called *Kelkang Hlimpui*) is the only revival which is named after its place of origin. It was also one of the most infamous revival stirrings due to the intervention of the British Administration. In addition, the Christians then in Kelkang village all belong to one denomination, that is, the Presbyterian which called for unity among them, lending enormous contribution for the success and uniqueness of the Revival. The north and south of Mizoram then was divided between the Welsh Mission of

Presbyterian Church and the Baptist Missionary Society respectively in April, 1903 which is effective till today.

To recognise the success or failure of Christianity in a particular place is related to the degree to which it has been meaningfully indigenized. The term “indigenization” here means more than the transference of administrative authorities from missionaries to the native, but it is used rather to indicate the impact of the traditional culture on the nature of Christianity, including the way faith is understood and the way God is worshipped. Christianity in the land is characterized by a wide array of parallel faiths with numerous sects. They vary mostly in creed and in mode of worship, yet they all share a similar faith of entering heaven after death. Kelkang Revival Movement is regarded as critical insofar as more of those participating in the revival movement threatened to leave the established Church and this revival contains numerous spiritual traits and results in the emergence of numerous sects. There have been various assumptions for the rapid growth of Christianity in Mizoram. It is commonly assumed that rapid growth is to be expected among “primitive” people whose primal religious system lacks the tenacity of more “advanced” religions, but the problem here lies in the fact that other people of the North-East are equally primitive and isolated, sharing similar “modern history” yet Christianity took several generations to become established among them. There was the assumption that the reason for the native response to Christianity was because they feel that they were chosen of God. Kipgen denounces this as “theologically questionable” and “historically inadequate” (3). There remains another attribution which is the responses made by the Mizo people. This notion asserts itself as the key to understanding the phenomenal growth of Christianity among the Mizos. The most significant response being the revival movements which generated perpetual tension with the British institutional church which this study will be dealing with in particular, i.e., the Kelkang Revival Movement in the next chapter.

From its inception, the Missionaries perpetually took the role of Ethnographers, giving “direct observation of and reporting on Mizo people’s way of life. There are myriad reports of various kinds, official or in the form of personal letters, from the Missionary Societies, representing Mizos as savages, primitive and uncultured. Right from William Williams, the first Christian missionary ever to set foot in Mizoram, on his first tour to the land was impressed by “the big size of Mizo villages, tonal Lusei language, Mizo crafts...and bamboo work, time-consciousness, belief in the good God named *Khuavang*”, and gives his impression that “although they have not come into contact with the Western style of work, they are far in advanced of the Khasis” (qtd. in Vanlalchhuanawma 96). Historically, ethnography concerned itself principally with recording the life and habits of peoples from societies not the observer’s own-usually distant locales, distant, that is, geographically or culturally from the West, and seen as different from the normative European cultures. And Anthropology is a term for the broad discipline in which ethnography is located. When the discipline began, these alternative cultures were constructed through a notion of the exotic, which differentiated them from the European, or of the primitive, which saw them in a Darwinian way as stages in the ‘development’ of man. And these are ideas clearly useful to colonial discourse in constructing a hierarchy of cultures. For this reason, anthropology and ethnographic discourse have often been critiqued in post-colonial texts as classic examples of the power of Western discourse to construct its primitive others. Criticism of ethnography argues that cultural knowledge is ‘constructed’ rather than discovered by ethnography. Some of the more critical accounts have argued that anthropology itself was not simply a child of colonialism, in that colonization opened up areas of research and ethnographers provided information to colonial administrations, but rather it was ‘colonialism’s twin’. This aspect becomes an affirmation of the crucial role of the Missionaries in colonization.

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Chapter 3

Culture and Religion: Situating Mizo Indigenous Culture in Christian Sensibility

Early before 1937, the Christians in Kelkang village were already acquainted with revival movement. Though there are a number of revivals in Mizoram, the 1937 Kelkang Hlimpui (Revival Movement at Kelkang) is the greatest and best-known in Mizoram and abroad. The name *Hlimpui* itself indicates a superior and an extra-ordinary incident such as long continuation of feasts, unspeakable emotional excitement, abandoning of all Jhum works and schools. It was infamous due to the efforts of the Assembly Standing Committee which tried to suppress the revival frenzy, eventually culminating in the transference of the Pastor and a school-teacher.

Thanghnuai Ralte was mostly held responsible for the outbreak of revival at Kelkang in 1937. He was 36 years of age at that time, and came from Vandawt village situated on the western part of Mizoram. His purpose of visiting Kelkang village on April 1937 was simply to collect the bride-price of his sister. Being a product of the recent revival in the west, he soon revealed his gift of tongues, called *vanzai* (heavenly singing) or *tawnghriatloh* (speaking in tongues), which raised curiosity and desire for knowledge to the people. Gradually, the number of people who used to accompany Thanghnuai increased daily, and Thanzinga and Pasina became his most devoted companions.

As noted earlier, the Christians at the village had experienced revival stirrings in the past. Those stirrings had been characterized by conviction of sin, crying, spirited singing, dancing, quaking, expressions of brotherly love and deep longing for each other's company. Kelkang village was thus prepared for the indigenous type of revival, and *tawnghriatloh* was introduced to them for the first time.

At the end of April, the revival spirit began to work among the people partially. In the beginning of May the powerful revival broke out. Chhawntluanga states: "One evening about 3 p.m. in the beginning of May, 1937 Thanzinga lay on his back near his Master's bed with

his mouth wide open and then said, “Gather all the people, tell all and Sundry to come together people for God’s wonderful blessing is coming” (3,4). The message soon spread throughout the whole village like a wild fire. People came running hurriedly to the house, singing together, and then the great revival began to break out- singing and dancing enthusiastically.

Kelkang Revival Movement had all the features of earlier or contemporary revivals, yet most of the features prevailed at its extreme manners. The overflowing revival excitement could not be hidden away since it led to a tremendous increase in the number of Christians within a short span of time. The news of revival spread throughout Mizoram and abroad, attracting a number of visitors daily. These visitors can be grouped into three categories depending on their intentions. The first group consisted of people who came to share the joys of fellowship. The second consisted of those who were curious to see the ecstasies and considered them as entertainments. The third group consisted of the observers or the spies sent by McCall, the then Superintendent. Following the report of the Chief of the village who was a non- Christian, McCall invaded them as a revolt which was followed by severe persecution and punishments.

The consequences of *Kelkang Hlimpui* were far more noisy and widespread than the revival itself. This made it quite infamous in the general knowledge of the people. The Chief of Kelkang was, in the words of McCall, “an old-world chief of the old type” (221). Being a non-Christian Chief, his blamable point was his behaviour upon the early Christians. He threatened, seized their drums, and not allowed to perform *Mual Inkhawm* (gatherings for worship) at the Chief’s court yard. He was frustrated when many of his non-Christian companies converted to Christians during this revival. Therefore, he ordered Thanghnuai to leave the village thrice without success. Since July 24, 1937, the continual series of feasting began, so the villagers, both Christians and non-Christians, abandoned jhuming with

schooling as well. The feasting appeared to have no end, and the strange prediction that filled the mind of the people completely bewildered the Chief that he eventually reported the matter to the Superintendent at Aizawl.

Even before 1937, Assembly Standing Committee of the Presbyterian Church, representing the entire country of India discussed numerous times concerning the high revival frenzy. The 1937 *Kelkang Hlimpui* appeared to be troublesome and confusing. It had a discussion not less than ten times about it. After careful observation, the first action taken by the Committee was the transference of Pastor P. D. Sena and teacher Dothuama, and appointing a new Pastor and teacher at their places. The Pastor did not admire the revival movement. In his first Pastoral visit to Kelkang after its outbreak in 1937, he failed to make proper discussion with Thanghnuai who was the main person responsible for its outbreak. On his next visit he was not given much chance to preach or to lead the service at all. McCall lamented that he failed to make any impression since a pastor's duty was to supervise his church, yet he was in fact, hounded out of his own pulpit in the Kelkang village chapel.

Here, McCall exerted his typical Western mindset that "subject races did not have it in them to know what was good for them", seeing himself as "providing for, directing, and sometimes even forcing...rise...to...eminence" (Said 35, 37). Dothuama, the teacher, was a mission school teacher. He was a Synod preacher as well as a member of Assembly. He did not preach at the village since the revival in 1937 as the revivalists did not see him as a spiritual person, accusing him of preaching only from his knowledge. Since they did not trust him, he did not tolerate them either, and accused the revivalists as far as he could during McCall's judgement. He was eventually transferred in 1938.

One of the most spectacular incidents in *Kelkang Hlimpui* was the interference of the British administration. Since 1906 revival waves swept over the whole land, but any

intervention of Administration were not known except in Kelkang. L.T. Zama even thought that the political movement of Mizoram began from the military invasion of McCall to Kelkang (14-19). It is the only instance in Mizo history where secular authorities ever laid hands on revivalist group. The external forceful pressure against extremists and excesses by the administration greatly helped in quelling the undesired elements of revival. McCall becomes the embodiment of a colonizer with the assumption that Orient and everything in it was, if not patently inferior to, then in need of corrective study by the West.

McCall who was detested of revival movement was informed that the village had gotten out of control due to the machination of revivalists. Within thirty-six hours he started for Kelkang eagerly on the 4th September, with an escort of twelve Gurkha Riflemen of first Battalion of Assam Rifles, and reached the destination on Sunday, 12th September. The whole village was taken by surprise. Two Riflemen were on duty outside the Chapel which had been made a stronghold by the villagers. Others went to houses reported to be in possession of guns, and the houses thought to contain the ring leaders were surrounded. Within fifteen minutes they gathered all the leaders except the main ring leader. Therefore, men were sent in search of him on the higher grassy knoll behind the village and without difficulty, he was arrested. The report given by the spies which McCall took seriously was the supposed plot against his life. It was reported that in the church before they arrived, i.e. 11th September, on Saturday night Pasina stated, "When I appeared before the Superintendent, I would irritate him by dancing before him and when the Superintendent got angry or said damn! I would give the signal for assaulting the Superintendent by suddenly fisting him in the face when all were to fall on the Superintendent and then if he was murdered no one could be held responsible individually for no one would be able to say exactly who killed him" (6). Mimicry such as in the case of Pasina can be quite threatening, and can perpetuate itself as an

unconscious strategy of resistance. The fact that it is resistance at all is more important than the degree to which it is an actively pursued strategy.

From the next morning, the Superintendent took up an enquiry, sitting daily for five days from ten in the morning till five, or six O' clock in the evening. According to McCall, over seventy witnesses were examined out of which thirty nine were defense witness either directly or by declining to state what they knew. The chief prosecution witnesses were the Chief, his son Vanhnuaithanga, the village teacher, the Pastor, and one or two casual witnesses. The defense witness Pasina claimed that they were following the directions given in the Bible and experienced great joy as a result of constant Bible study and prayer under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He further stated that he had been in a semi-conscious state while uttering a number of prophecies. He also admitted that there was killing of animals but claimed that it was due to their happiness and new found joy.

McCall's observation concerning the accused was that of an Occidental man who considered that "any deviation from what were considered the norms of Oriental behavior was believed to be unnatural" (Said 39). This led him to believe that Thanghnuai was the one who set the idea of the Holy Spirit entering into people, while Pasina and Thanzing took the advantage of this to revert to old day wizardry by croaking about, trembling and influencing the people. He resented the way the revivalists were acting, and even admitted that it was no wonder that the village authorities felt perplexed, for he believed that these men were perpetrating sorcery in the name of Christianity.

Racial stereotyping is one aspect of colonialism that restricts the natives of the rights the Imperialists allowed for themselves. When the British colonial ethnographers explored the terrains of human habitats of various parts of the hills of present North- East India, they perceived them to be wild, savage and disobedient communities that needed to be penalized

and disciplined. This aspect trickled down to *Kelkang Hlimpui*, the Revival Movement at Kelkang. The word *Hlimpui* indicates an extraordinary incident such as long continuation of feasts, unspeakable emotional excitement, abandoning of all Jhum works and schooling, etc. These incidences were enough to stir in the colonizers' mind that the Oriental is "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, different", thus they are "rational, virtuous, mature, normal (Said 40). So they took it upon themselves the responsibility of giving penalties and disciplining them through the interference of the British administration at Kelkang.

After five days of enquiry and hearing, it was documented that the Superintendent gave out a four full page and hand-written 'Statement of declaration' on the 18th September, 1937. On the next day, the Superintendent issued punishment as follows:

1. The Three Accused- Pasina Pawi, Thanghnuaiia Ralte and Thanzinga Pawi were sentenced to three- year's rigorous imprisonment in Sylhet.
2. All guns became the property of Government.
3. All pay house tax at double rate for two years.
4. All to do six days unpaid punishment labour at Aijal.
5. All women in the party- enjoying remission of revenue to pay from now on and their arrears.
6. No imprisonment within this year, but all will be among the first to provide any unavoidable demands as from April 1st 1938 from which date they will be at usual rates to assist them in meeting their extra house tax.
7. Any member of the community giving trouble or further expense the ring leader will be severally and jointly responsible for meeting all charges.
8. Those who disobeyed orders when given in the village to do double punishment labour of others.

9. The Chief is the responsible leader of the Village and is fined Rs. 60/- or two Mithuns and his son would normally succeed him; but in this year, the circumstances were exceedingly difficult for the Chief and his honour is entirely untarnished.
10. The C.I. is reduced.
11. The C.C. (Chaprassi) is noted as not being suitable for promotion until he shows himself to be much widest awake (qtd. in Lalsangmuana, 53).

Apart from the punishments issued in writing, there still existed other important punishments and actions taken by the Superintendent. The most severe punishment was punitive Earth Work labour at Aizawl. It required all the men between fifteen and fifty years of age to render unpaid labor for six days. Ninety six men formed themselves into three groups and worked in order one after another. Each group spent about a month. The work was to level the ground for construction of the Assam Rifles' barracks in the immediate south of the A.R. Parade. The work was done under the strict military guard with poor accommodation and limited supply of food. The first group departed from Kelkang on September 26, 1937 while the last group arrived at the village on October 24, 1937. Seizure of guns was considered to be the greatest loss in Kelkang history. Since it was one of the most valuable treasures in a Mizo house, many bursted into tears. All guns even owned by non- Christians were confiscated to be the property of the Government.

The issues surrounding historic-cultural legacies in this Revival Movement included denial of the practice of indigenous culture in modes of worshipping, for instance, seizure of *Khuang* (traditional drum) which is an "indispensable instrument for Mizo society through the ages. The Superintendent seemed to believe that *Khuang* were the prime factor of high revival frenzy. This eventually led him to issue an order to seize all the drums used in the Church and gatherings in the name of Christ. After a year, it was delivered back to them

again. This action was carried out with the hope that revival excitement would cease if it was not used, but the stirring continued on with the same intensity.

Another remarkable punishment given by McCall was the expulsion of two revivalists- Kapdaii and Chalruala . Their expulsion was triggered by the question, “Will you be happy or excited again” in the wake of the revival was to be answered negatively. Yet a positive reply was provided by these two revivalists. However, Kapdaii was called back before she could leave the village on the account that she was a widow, and Chalruala returned to the village after a two- months stay at another village called Tualte. These two revivalists along with Thanghnuaiia were the embodiment of what Naipaul termed as “mimic man” who are “appropriate objects of a colonial chain of command, they are also ‘inappropriate’ colonial subjects because what is being set in motion in their behaviour is something that may ultimately be beyond the control of colonial authority. These three revivalists could not be subdued in their behaviour in spite of the punishments inflicted upon them. This mimicry can be quite threatening and can perpetuate itself as an unconscious strategy of resistance, asserting identity in the process through its element of mockery by appearing to parody whatever it mimics. This assertion of identity takes on a subtle and unconscious form. They adopted the colonizers’ cultural habits, assumptions and values particularly of the Welsh revival in 1904 where the main features of the revival are “singing, praying and preaching” (Lalsangmuana 16). Yet it was not quite the same due to the ecstatic phenomena and revival frenzy accompanying it, appearing as a parody of what it mimics- of the Welsh Revival, and this mimicry is not far from mockery. This further revealed the limitation in the authority of colonial discourse almost as though colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction. The play between equivalence and excess made the colonized both reassuringly similar and terrifying since mimicry is at one resemblance and menace. And this creation mimic men made the British themselves anxious, for instead of being secondary, the

imitations are actually superior to the original and authentic. This may impart justification to the intervention of the British Government during the Kelkang Revival Movement.

It is difficult to understand the true nature of revival in Mizoram from its outward appearance. The pre-conceived ideas of Mizoram easily led to false understanding of the revival. Emotional excitement, extreme manners and peculiar activities that accompanied the revival are easily misunderstood. But the people with the right perspective can identify the dynamism in it. The revival is then perceived to be developing and shaping the church. So, revival in general, and *Kelkang Hlimpui* in particular, consequently helped the church grow and attain more stability. From this time onward, the victory of the revival spirit in the life of the Mizo Christians was indisputably revealed. It is deemed to be “God sent” to effectively strengthen the Church in Mizoram. The Superintendent’s judgement and punishments against the revivalists were unnecessarily severe and excessive. At the same time, the revivalists are seen to be in need of proper moderation and guidance. McCall’s intervention could be seen as a refinement of the emotional and revival excitement which might have resulted in the undesired element in the future. Therefore, Kelkang Revival Movement might be taken as a speed-breaker for extreme revival manifestations and expression for Mizoram as a whole.

The colonizers imposed upon the natives the identity of a “subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves (Said 35). This is evident through the punishments carried out by McCall on the revivalists at Kelkang village. This phenomenon of stereotyping is robbing and denying the natives their own sense of identity as it fixes individuals or groups in one place, presuming to understand them on the basis of prior knowledge that is at best defective. Identities were then constructed by the colonizers as ‘subjects’ of ethnographic disciplines and later brought under their rule as a set of disobedient subjects. These identities treated as ‘tribes’ further became the subject of nationalist discourses and, as citizens they were determined by the capacities

and constraints of 'state' discourse. As decolonized subjects, they now share the vision of India as 'Europe's Other', and Europe as 'India's Other', while they position themselves as the 'Other of both' with respect to their otherness from both Europe and India. For Bhabha, there is no simple pre-given notion of 'subject', and what is done constructs the subject as much as the subject acts upon the situation. "Choices made by other people construct our identities", asserts Huddart, which in this case is the construction of Mizos as British colonial subjects by the colonizers, "and our own choices in turn transform and construct our identities" (21). Since this process of construction is continued by our day-to-day activities, the frenzy of revivalism at Kelkang brought about the production of conflictual, fantastic, discriminatory identity effects where the subjective identity of the native never takes on the fixedness and solidity of objects.

The advent of the British as the conquering and administering power in the state had shaken the Mizo culture to its roots. It was inevitable that the very presence of the British led to changes in the life of the people. The shock of exposure to the two powerful influences of British imperialism and Christianity would have been highly detrimental to the culture and identity of the Mizos, had not certain measures been taken to preserve it. Since the Mizos were nomadics, they were accustomed to change and were hence more ready to accept the new situation than others might be.

The power of the Gospel is to transform the individual along with the social and spiritual life of the community which receives the Good News. He further states that it should transform the total life of the community. This transformation had an impact upon all their cultural practices, be it social, economic, political and religion.

The fact remains that the British judged traditional practices by their own value system- condemning aspects of the culture which they thought to be detrimental to the

interests of the people. One of the earliest efforts of the government was to do away with what was considered 'savage' and 'barbaric' practices. These included the prohibition of headhunting, the smothering and or burying alive of infants together with their dead mothers, the spearing to death of an eavesdropper, the slitting of the nose and or ears by a grieved husband of the paramour of his unfaithful wife, the killing of those believed to be magic workers, and the gang rape of a reputedly loose woman by the young men. These acts were declared illegal and were made punishable with imprisonment for the more serious case, and fine for others. Other customary practices like eavesdropping by the young friends of a newly married couple on the first night, while not made illegal, were nevertheless discouraged by Christian missionaries and teachers. The people now enjoyed a peaceful life under the British regime, yet at the same time they were either prohibited or discouraged from participating in activities that had previously been a source of entertainment and sport. Similarly, the confiscation of guns and the prohibition against killing of certain animals such as elephants made it difficult for them to attain the coveted status of *Thangchhuah*.

Other measures taken by the government was to curb the nomadic behaviour of the Mizos. Hence Shakespeare introduced the 'Land Settlement' in 1898-1899 to stabilize the situation. The land settlement vested all land in the government, which then apportioned village areas to the chiefs and established their boundaries. Within those boundaries the chief and his people could move about for jhum cultivation as they wished. Unrestricted movement to other parts of the hills was thus curbed. The permanent settlement of the village communities made possible their development. The establishment of permanent buildings for schools and churches was also made practicable. Generally it contributed to the social and economic development of the people.

An era of social change in which Christians took lead was the abolition of the slavery system or the *Bawi* system. It has a close relationship to the institution of chieftainship due to

which the government was reluctant to deal with it. The *Bawi* system in Mizoram has been variously described ranging from a form of social security to slavery. In the absence of any other means of caring for the destitute, it had a charitable dimension. While acknowledging that it did play a useful role as a crude form of charity, one also needs to recognize that once a person became a *bawi* (slave), he and his descendants for generations were in bondage to the chief. They included people who had been driven by starvation to take refuge in the chief's house (Kipgen 74). They were called *Inpuichhung Bawi* and were looked upon as part of the Chief's household and worked for the chief in return for their food and shelter. Once a person entered the Chief's household for security reason, she or he could purchase their freedom only by paying one *mithun* or its equivalent in cash or kind. There were also criminals who, to escape from the consequences of their ill deeds, took refuge in the chief's house known as *Chemsen Bawi*. Murderers who were closely pursued by those seeking blood vengeance rushed into the chief's presence seeking protection in return for their and their children's freedom. Debtors unable to pay their creditors were also in this category. They did not live in the chief's house or work for him, but their children were considered *bawi* to the same extent as their parents. There were also *Tuklut Bawi* who, during war, have deserted the losing side and joined the victors by promising that they and their descendents will be slaves. Then there was the last kind of *Bawi* called *Sal* who were people captured in raids. Unlike the other kind of *Bawis*, they could be owned both by the chief and the captor. Slavery, though not the only reason, was certainly the principal factor behind the Mizo practice of raiding. The *Sal* constituted a permanent labour force for the chief and ensured him not only economic prosperity but perpetual service even in the afterlife, or *Pialral* (the Mizo paradise). While the status of the chiefs was lowered, the *bawis* were raised to the status of all commoners.

Attention should be given to the Mizo concept of *Saphun* in order to understand socio-cultural transformation. In the olden days the Mizos had a practice known as *Saphun* connoting to converts. It was when one left one's own kinsfolk and became part of the other clan who were considered superior. It has been conjectured that the Mizos who were Christians had developed such mindset, rejecting their old culture and mimicked western lifestyle. They were indeed frightened of not being anglicized.

It is to be noted that the Western theology itself perpetuated by the Missionaries was based on binarism. It was the missionaries who advocated dichotomization of Christianity and heathenism. Such polarization, therefore, affected the new converts to suppress everything that pertained to their old life including old songs, old tunes, drinks, festivals, social dances and entertainments. Anything that is unchristian was immediately recognized as harmful to the individual and to the whole community. Culture that was not western was seen as un-Christian. The missionaries inculcated in the mind of the Mizos that the natives are "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, different; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, normal" (Said 40).

Due to the prevalent notion that the old culture was heathen culture, traditional festivals or *Kut* were suppressed by the early Christians, though it was kept alive by those who refused to embrace Christianity. Festivals occupied a prominent place in the life of the Mizos. Different festivals were celebrated for different occasions having different origins. An indispensable element in these festivals and celebrations was rice beer or *zu*, a traditional drink used often on sacrificial days, on successful hunting and on holidays. Later on it was prohibited for the Christians which resulted in the gradual disappearance of *zu* in the Christian community. It had always been a generalization than rice beer was banned by the missionaries. Yet Kipgen asserted that it was actually the pioneer Mizo Christians who advocated for the banning of drinking rice beer for the Christians on ground that the

maintenance of self- control had always been a problem whenever rice beer was involved. The colonizers intended to interfere with social customs as much as possible which is evident in their guiding philosophy: “They must be allowed to develop on their own lines and be protected against exploitation and the subversion of their rules and customs by a different civilization which would be unsuited to them” (qtd. in Kipgen, 144). Yet, social institutions which were incompatible with Christian doctrines have been abandoned by the Mizo Christians. The intention of the Missionaries upon their arrival in Mizoram had been to spread Christianity and eliminate unbiblical practices and beliefs from the Mizo culture, and their achievement is phenomenal. From 1930 onwards festivals like *Chapchar Kut* were revived and celebrated by the Mizos who worked in government offices while the Church continued to develop a negative attitude.

Christianity is like a fierce storm blowing from the West which every Mizo had felt, heard and experienced. Christianity is mainly concerned with the spiritual welfare of the people. With this end in view the missionaries engaged themselves in all sorts of evangelical activities such as preaching the life, works and teachings of Christ as well as educational and medical work. Dr. Fraser opened a dispensary in 1908. In 1912 the dispensary was moved to the land donated by Christian Chief of Durtlang M. Suaka. It was soon converted into a hospital in 1928 by Dr. J. Williams and his wife. Medical works as well as that of education became instrumental for the eradication of superstitions such as sacrificing to spirits, and supplanted the office of the local priests.

The politics of Chieftainship and village administration existed in the truest sense in the Mizo society until the British invaded Mizoram. Then the British administration came and changed all existing orders of administration. The British policy was not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Mizo which was left absolutely to the Chief concerned. But the Superintendent, on behalf of the government was empowered to interfere in the

administration of the chief only when they went beyond their respective jurisdictions. In fact, the Superintendent was the real administrator of Mizoram on behalf of the Government of Assam, the Viceroy of India and the King in England during the British regime. Previously the Chiefs were the absolute owners of the land under their jurisdictions. But later, the Government reserved the right to take away any or whole of the land under his possession whenever required for Governmental purpose.

At the first Conference of the Circle Representatives of Commoners and the Chiefs on 14th January 1946, the people were adamant on abolishing the powers of chiefs initiated from the personal gesture of McDonald, the then Superintendent of the Lushai Hills. The era of the Chief among the Mizos was waning, and on 9th April, the Mizo Common People's Union was founded whose aim is to free the people from the tyrant rules of the traditional chiefs. The year 1952 ushered in the new era in the administration of the Mizo District. For the first time, the rulers were to be elected. On November 12th, 1951 the Assam Government had dissolved the advisory Council and fixed the 4th of April 1952 as the date for the election of the Mizo District Council (Vischer 33- 35). To replace the chiefs and the elders (*Upa*), the District Council enacted the constitution of the village council elections on 24th July 1954, and the Mizo Union Party won all the elections. Thus, chieftainship was abolished. Among the Village Council, proper records about the information of the Chiefs' elders ceased to exist, yet with the abolition of the Chiefs, they too perished with the passage of time.

Vanlalchhuanawma asserts that a remarkable facet of revival movement in Mizoram is its liberative dimension. It not merely encountered with the alien administrative structure, but also with similar oppressive structures. The introduction of female education became the prime factor towards the upliftment and liberation of women who were holding considerably low status within the patriarchal society. One of the most remarkable changes from pre-

Christian custom was constituted in the status of women. Women had been possessions to be acquired, beaten or disposed of at male's will. Christianity empowered women who were enunciated into the Churches equally as men; however, ordination is still pending. Women started to gain entry in multifarious fields such as medicine, business and even in political administration. Thus Christianity not only eliminated the precarious belief and obsessions they have in superstitions, but also elevate the status of women.

One of the most important impacts of Christianity was the abolition of *Zawlbuk* (bachelor's dormitory and venue for drinking and war training). It was a place for social gathering of men exclusively, playing an important role in the Mizo life. The arrival of Christianity acted as a real hindrance to its proliferation. Lalthangliana asserts that due to the changes of life and time, school and Christianity, it came to a halt in the year around 1925. It found its replacement in the church building, simultaneously acting as a social center. The church became the venue for frequent meetings as people attended the church for fellowship and renewing themselves through listening to biblical messages. Another prominent factor contributing to the disappearance of *Zawlbuk* was the introduction of formal education pioneered by the missionaries. With the establishment of schools and learning centers, it began to disappear. N. E. Perry's attempt to revive *Zawlbuk* at around 1926 was unsuccessful. A number of villages pursued to re-build it, yet they slowly dwindled away.

The Mizo ethical code of *tlawmngaihna* is the pride of the Mizos. The pre-Christian Mizos were sacrificial and endearing or *tlawmngai* in every aspect of their life. It surpasses all their good deeds and behaviour since without it, the performance of such valor actions is impossible. It does not clash or contradict with Christian teachings, but rather moved along with each other. The spirit of *tlawmngaihna* is what Christianity desires for human beings. Being there for the needy is what Christianity teaches which was already practiced in the traditional Mizo life prior to the arrival of the Missionaries. Parry's contention was that it

(*tlawmngaihna*) had been refined, strengthened and given truer and surer ground by Christianity.

Honesty invokes glamour and truthfulness, which the Mizos always wear as attire since pre-Christian era. Honesty was an important emblem of the Mizo spirituality. Christianity does not deny this ethical principle, and rather embraces it as part of the Christian life. Honesty which is a component of *tlawmngaihna* declined surprisingly after Christianity's arrival. It becomes controversial for him whether Christianity had erased the practice of honesty (or rather *tlawmngaihna*), or "alter it to a new dimension in different ways and means" (69). However, it is worth noting that honesty is one of the core ethics that the Christians live by, practiced by the Mizos vehemently since the pre-Christian era.

One cannot deny but acknowledge the positive ramifications that occurred in the Mizo socio-cultural interaction with the western. Education and medical works incubated a transition from primitive to a modern stage. The accolade of the western cultures by the Mizos, however, resulted in negation of traditional cultures. The cultural expansion of the West did not find complete assimilation in the Mizo culture due to the defense mechanism or cultural resistance initiated by indigenous revival movement, and Kelkang Revival Movement in particular. Christianity with its hermeneutical approach became a useful tool for the Missionaries to re-interpret the histories of the world to the natives. Such hermeneutical approaches became an all-encompassing affair for the early mission to develop an acceptable interpretation of indigenous religions and institutionalize it under the Church. And since colonial discourse "encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' the colonizer...the result is a...blurred copy of the colonizer" (Ashcroft et al 125). Therefore, apart from stereotypical identities enforced on the natives, colonialism imparted the identity of Christianity to the natives, validating itself as a symbol of tribal identity and status.

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Chapter 4

Religion and Power

The Mizoram Presbyterian Church has its origin in the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church also known as the Presbyterian Church of Wales. The Church's administrative system predominantly followed the Presbyterian form of Church government which is patterned after John Calvin's ecclesiastical polity. The church administration is important for the Presbyterian Church as Presbyterianism is mainly about Church governance. What is seen here is the triumph of the colonizers in the form of missionaries to weave the white man's anxiety in the natives' mind that the colonized are 'childlike', in need of guidance and reform perpetuated through the administrative system of the Occidental Church.

Said defines "imperialism" as "the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory" (9). He argues that although the age of empire largely ended after World War II, when most colonies gained independence, imperialism continues to exert considerable cultural influence in the present. It is necessary, according to Said, to look at how colonialists and imperialists employed 'culture' to control distant land and peoples. On the connection between culture and empire, Said observes that imperialism had always tried to inculcate in the colonized the authenticity of them being the ruler, and superior to be exact. He states thus: "For the enterprise of empire depends upon the idea of having an empire...and all kinds of preparations are made for it within a culture; then in turn imperialism acquires a kind of coherence, a set of experiences, and a presence of ruler and ruled alike within the culture" (11). In the light of this statement, the 'kinds of preparations' of the imperialists to rule a distant territory in the context of Mizoram is through the administrative system projected largely in the Presbyterian Church.

The rise of Methodism in England can be traced back to 1729 when young collegians received the appellation 'Methodist' as a result of their great commitment and orderly ways of life for the cause of Christianity. Doctrinal differences led to the division of the Methodists in England into two distinct sects- Mr. Whitfield the Calvinist, and Messrs, John and Charles

Wesley the Armenian. Independent of the Oxford Movement, the Welsh reformation began on 30th March, 1735, pioneered by Howel Harris of Trevecca. The ‘noble trio’ responsible for the formation of the Presbyterian trend were Howel Harris, a layman, Daniel Rolands, a clergyman in South Wales, and George Whitfield. They adhere faithfully to the teachings of John Calvin . At its inception they belonged to the Establishment and had neither the intention nor the wish to separate themselves from it. The meeting of the first Association of the Calvinistic Methodists in 1743 resulted in the rise of numerous new societies at the residence of Mr. Jeffrey Davis of Rhiwiau. But it was not until 1801 that the ‘Order and Form of Church Government’ and ‘Rules of Discipline’ were published. Twenty two years later saw the publication of the Confession of Faith of the Connexion. The form of Church Government adopted by this connexion was considered Presbyterian.

The expansion of British colonial rule paved the way for the establishment and growth of Christianity or the Church. This is particularly valid in North-East India. The interest for evangelism in Mizoram, as denoted by Ryngnga was initiated by Rev. William Williams, a young Presbyterian missionary working at Shella in the Khasi and Jaintia hills. In late 1890 Mizoram was still in a very turbulent state and non-military visitors were not allowed entry. William Williams wanted to help them change their way of life in order that peace may prevail. He and his companions left Sylhet on 23rd February, 1891.

In pursuance of Rev. William’s appeal to adopt Mizoram as one of its Mission fields, the Welsh Mission formally adopted Mizoram as part of its new field in the month of June 1892. But due to the demise of Williams and the entry of Indian Aborigines Mission, the idea of sending Welsh Presbyterian Mission was abandoned. The Arthington Mission was unwilling to establish a permanent Mission station in any particular place and rather instructed its missionaries to move to new places after every three years. There were exchange of communications between the pioneer missionaries and the Welsh Mission

regarding the adoption of the Lushai Hills. It can be anticipated that all these transactions took place probably in the year 1897. This conjecture can be supplemented by the appointment of Zosap to work in Mizoram in a letter dated 29th April 1897 to the Secretary of the General Assembly in Wales. It is assumed that the Arthington Mission had acquired the idea of abandoning Mizoram in the beginning of 1897 since Zosaphluia was appointed only after the adoption of the land as its mission field in pursuance of the pioneers' plea. Along this line of thought, it is justifiable to regard 31st August, 1897, the day Zosaphluia set his foot on the soil of Mizoram as the beginning of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church.

Pertaining to the spread of Christianity, focus will be primarily on the Mizoram Presbyterian Church since it is the first Mission Church to be established in the land, and by far the largest compared to the other denominations. Moreover, it follows the rules of administration laid down by the Occidental Presbyterian.

The previous chapter has highlighted the effects of Christianity imposed upon the Mizos by the colonizers through the missionaries. Unsurprisingly, they took upon themselves the white man's burden emblematic of the well-intentioned aspects of Western colonialism and euro centrism. This implies that the Empire existed not for the benefit- economic or strategic or otherwise- but of Britain itself, but in order that primitive peoples, incapable of self-government, could, with British guidance, eventually become civilized and Christianized. Colonialism became the moral burden of the 'white' race who considers themselves "rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion", which is divinely destined to civilize the brutish and barbarous parts of the world that are recognized as "none of these things" that the colonizers are (Said 49).

Boehmer holds the opinion that post colonial must be distinguished from the conventional hyphenated term (i.e. post- colonial), as post colonial literature is not simply the

writing which ‘came after’ empire but which critically or subversively scrutinizes the colonial relationship (3). Post- colonial societies are still subjects in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo- colonial domination, development of new elites within independent societies, frequently buttressed by indigenous peoples. Therefore, one should consider the full implications of restricting the meaning of the term to ‘after- Colonialism’ or after- independence.

When James Herbert Lorrain and Frederick W. Savidge of the Arthington Aborigines Mission entered Mizoram in 1894, the modern missionary movement had entered its prime period. The emergence of the “indigenous principle” of mission in the nineteenth century was an important turning point in the history of the Protestant missionary movement, especially in the English speaking world. This principle as propounded by Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson, promoted the establishment of a strong “self- supporting, self governing and self- propagating” indigenous church as the aim of the Christian mission. This principle was sanctioned even by other non- English speaking European missiologists of the period. Karl Graul (of Leipzig Mission) and Gustav Warneck maintained the aim of mission to be “the creation of independent indigenous churches” (qtd. in Pachuau, 96).

The pioneer missionaries in Mizoram Lorrain and Savidge displayed their awareness and approval of the ‘indigenous principle’, and the missionaries endeavoured to make the native Christian Church in this land self- propagating and self- supporting. Curiously, here and in another article published the next year, Lorrain omitted ‘self-governing’ from the list of the three selves. Ten years later, in reporting the plan to inaugurate the South Mizo Presbytery of the Baptist Church, he could state that “The Lushai Church today is self- supporting and self-propagating and is well in the way to being self-governing” (qtd. in Hminga 101). This is a projection of the anxiety of a white man who was unwilling to trust the native wholeheartedly. The anxiety expressed in generalized suspicion and distrust” by

which the Orientals are labeled is vehemently expressed by the colonizer himself. The missionaries distrusted the Mizo Christians. This is evident in the production of Handbooks and Guidelines which the Churches are to employ and have been employing even after the British regime. This enables them to control and rule over distant land and people even after they were gone.

For Foucault, religion is “always a subsidiary sub-category, a cultural deposit” (33) and argues that it is a struggle for power and domination. He asserts that the church is a “superb instrument of power for itself” and considers it as a “political force” (107). Faith which seems to be the crux of religion recedes to the background in his perception of religion. This argument holds true in the manifestation of power by the Church under ‘colonial protective umbrella’ by taking upon itself the bounden responsibility of taking control and giving guidance to the revival-affected people within its fold. This led to the eventual publication of *Harhna Hruaina* (Guidelines for Revivalism) by the North Lushai Assembly Standing Committee to discern the acceptable and unacceptable features of the revival. Foucault further recognizes Christianity as power structure which obligates its followers to accept its dogma, its sacred text and its authority as truth. People willingly submit to this perhaps, on the account of religion as opium for the masses.

The *Harhna Hruaina* was the most explicit and comprehensive response of the Church to the revival movement. It is a document published in 1949 by the North Lushai Assembly Standing Committee. It was meant as its name suggests, to provide the Christian public with some guidance, to discern the acceptable and unacceptable features of the revival. As regards the date of issue of *Harhna Hruaina*, no specific record seems to have been left either by the Church or the Mission except that it was issued sometime in 1949. From Samuel Davies’ letter dated January 13, 1949, it can be assumed that it was published near the beginning of the year: “We have spent hours in the Standing Committee discussing the

revival and we believe that at last we have succeeded to come to an unanimous decision on the matter. We have decided to write a directive for the Churches how far they should allow things” (qtd. in Vanlalchhuanawma, 449).

The claim of unanimity of the Standing Committee in deciding the matter requires a careful analysis. The *Harhna Hruaina* asserts unanimity of decision which suggests that “the Spirit of God obviously guided the Committee members” (qtd. in Valalchhuanawma, 449). At the same time it acknowledges differences of opinion among the people involved in making the decision. This question of unanimity about the *Harhna Hruaina* will be dealt with in more detail below. It seems appropriate here to have a short review of the manual.

Only a few major factors leading to the publication of the *Harhna Hruaina* will be enumerated here. To begin with, the treatise reveals the apparent contrasting natures of the revival which had been perplexing Church leaders for several years. On the one hand, the revival entailed cultural and emotional elements which in the institutional church’s view were of primitive character. On the other hand, it consistently contributed to the growth of the Church even though the credit went to the church and the Mission. This confusing situation was clearly expressed by David Edwards’s letter to Thomas not long after the superintendent’s interference with the Kelkang stirring, in the following words:

At its best the revival has deepened to a phenomenal degree the personal knowledge of Jesus as Saviour and Lord, which has given it significance and permanence far greater than any previous one. At its worse it has been a revolt against authority in any shape of form and an attempt to live under anarchy of the spirit (qtd. in Vanlalchhuanawma, 450).

Five months later Miss Gwen Rees Roberts reaffirmed in her letter that many boys and young men who were drifting away from the Church have been deeply affected, and even

though they spent all their free time drinking the previous year, they now spend it in reading the Bible and in prayer. She, however, prefixed this statement by saying that the excesses of the revival were “difficult for us colder and less emotional Westerners to understand” (qtd. in Vanlalchhuanawma, 450). It was this same perplexity that challenged some in the Mizo leadership of the Church to support the *Harhna Hruaina*.

Certain other factors responsible for drawing up the *Harhna Hruaina* are given in the treatise itself. Firstly, since the Mizo Church from its inception had not been acquainted with revival, it was felt that they would not understand the various characteristics of revival. Secondly, the Standing Committee of the Assembly desired that the revival would be a real blessing to all. Thirdly, not all the revival features were edifying to the Church. Fourthly, it stated that all revivalists in different parts of the world were not the same, hinting, perhaps, that the Welsh or English revivalists were not comparable to the Mizo ones. Moreover, the Church felt that it therefore, had a responsibility of giving guidance to the people affected by the revival.

Constrained by the above situations and factors, the Church eventually issued the *Harhna Hruaina* to provide its people with specific guidance about the revival movement. It also strongly urged the people to accept the Manual, however difficult that might be for some, as it was meant for the good of the whole Church.

The *Harhna Hruaina* lists seventeen major features together with some minor manifestations that characterized the revival movement from its inception. It seeks to analyze and explain those features from the established Church’s perspective and to suggest some ways to deal with each of them. The following is the Guideline’s contents in summary:

- 1) Dance: Dance is a feature of the Church in the Old Testament whereas no mention of dance is made in the New Testament Church. Mature people would express

their joy not in dancing, but in their life and manner since dance is a primitive trait, as the Standing Committee had stated.

- 2) Dispensation of the Spirit: The Spirit is God and works like wind according to His own will; He is not something that human beings can disperse. A person is advised to control himself/herself although one may feel the urge to disperse the Spirit.
- 3) Symbolic Action or Dramatizing: Acting like a baby to show spiritual immaturity, hopping or somersaulting to demonstrate disunity in the Church must be done away with. It does no good whatsoever.
- 4) Ministration: The “hlimsang” (high-spirited) often needs to be taken care of physically and mentally. They must be given Biblical teaching according to their own understanding. Certain modes of ministration are wrong: i) Preparation: the tendency to stroke people in order to wake them from a state of swoon or to urge them to dance should be averted since it usually stimulated attraction between opposite sexes. ii) Spiritual Sickness: in this case there was a sensation of pain on a particular spot of the spiritualistic, while another felt the pain on that similar spot in his or her body. The spiritual ministration again led two persons to be attracted to each other. But the strangeness of the feature or the experience of healing does not make it the work of God’s Spirit since satan also has the power to do so as is evidenced in the Bible. iii) Baby-sitting: Although there are obviously spiritual babes who need nurturing by milk, it is unbiblical for grown-up persons to act like babies with someone else baby-sitting him or her. Those people involved in the symbolic baby-sitting are often married people. In the revival atmosphere it becomes difficult for the partners to relate to each other.

- 5) Perception of “Voice”: When one has a deep spiritual experience one may feel that one hears a voice. It is said that the true voice of God first convinces the will and conscience and leads to action whereas the evil spirit’s voice comes, often audibly, from outside and compels the person irresistibly with threat of some evil to come if it is not obeyed.
- 6) Tawnghriatloh (speaking in tongues): The Bible no doubt mentions “tawnghriatloh” but does not regard it as edifying, so that it is better not to use it much. Some knowledgeable people say that satan can work exactly the same way. It happened in Germany and France that certain persons who got defeated by satan spoke in all the European languages including Latin and Arabic. It is a feature distinctive to the Pentecostal Church.
- 7) Vision: A vision may be right or wrong. The vision truly given by God may be identified as follows: i) it has a distinct purpose ii) it positively bears fruit iii) it is perceived with a clear conscience and a clear state of mind. The vision satan gives is identified by the following features: i) it demands one just to receive it without doing anything ii) human imagination interspersed the vision iii) it is incongruent with the general truth iv) it has no fruit to utilize and does not hold faith in God in anyway. Even when satan tempted Jesus he showed Him visions.
- 8) God’s companionship: i) a true sense of God’s companionship or presence is felt in the mind. The mental aspects such as conscience and will all agree with each other. God’s will and man’s will in complete agreement produce joy and peace of mind. ii) the evil spirit’s revelation of God’s companionship is perceived in the body- by heating up , or blowing like the wind or a numbing human sensation- and produces uncontrolled body movements. But there is no joy or peace of mind.

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- 9) Prediction: There are people in the revival who claimed to be full of the spirit, even to understand the minds and actions of others. The criterion for authenticity in such cases should be its contribution to the edification of Christian community.
- 10) Spirit's freedom: There is freedom where the Spirit of God is. It removes fears and superstitious restrictions due to ignorance. But those under revival influence want to do without sacred religious ceremonies since they regard themselves to be beyond the realm of the Church's rules and regulations. The Church leaders may tell them what is right or wrong.
- 11) Revival born Idiocy: There are two types: i) Idiocy maybe a natural occurrence. It usually reflects the pre-dominant social-cultural. ii) Evil spirits can make a person an idiot with an intention to mislead. It first strongly attracts the recipient, gradually blinds his conscience and misleads him to accept every aspect of its guidance.
- 12) Khurbing (high- revivalists acting as lovers): Properly and modestly managed it entails edification. But it often turns out to be a tempter's snare to trap the adherents. So the Standing Committee can no longer accept it and has required everybody not to be involved in it. Violation of the order will call for the Church's action
- 13) Thlarau dung bawh leh vang bawh: It is shameful even to name it. Were there some among the revivalists known to perform the act the Church would not be agreeable to them. Intentional violation of the Church's warning to them shall be duly taken into the Church's consideration.
- 14) Threats: Pronouncing warnings of threat is not the work of God's spirit. People who claim to possess the spirit and threaten people with possible death or suffering are bad people. The Bible contains number of threats and warning

against those who would not heed to God's will and propose. The role of the prophets was largely pronouncing the coming evils provided that the people of God fail to obey Him. Some of the revivalists claimed to carry on the biblical prophetic role in their own context.

15) Knowledge of the Verses in the Word of God: God's spirit reveals the word of God. i) In a clear conscience and in agreement with a general teaching of the whole. ii) In the mind with a definite purpose. Satan's way of revealing the word of God is to show in an instant a vast expand of land as happened in Jesus' Temptation. He takes a single verse to confirm the asserted vision and does not consider the compatibility of the interpretation with the general ethos of the whole biblical teaching.

16) Quaking, Swooning and Freezing: The body follows the tendency of the mind. Out of extreme fear, joy or exhaustion, some people may quake, swoon or freeze. But quaking, swooning, uncontrolled shaking or shouting and exhaustion in the absence of such extreme feelings should not be considered healthy. The spirit of worship can be badly disturbed. People involved in such emotional phenomena need help and must be either held in hand or taken to an isolated place.

17) Disregard for the Church and its leaders: People who receive a sudden awakening during revival may disregard normal Church proceedings and the leaders, of whom some in turn fearing they may really be unspiritual, decide to follow their people instead of giving them guidance. Our Church is "the Church of God bought by Him with blood", and the leaders thereof are generally those "made by the Holy Spirit to the leaders over the Church". They are led to the longest way by the Spirit and are equipped with the best spiritual understanding, spiritually, mature enough to guide the Church through trying times of difficulties and depression.

They know far better the way of the Gospel than the newly awakened people who like the enthusiastic youth need guidance and maybe led to misunderstand the Church and its leaders.

18) True and False works of the Spirit during Revival: The manifestations are too much to enumerate in their entirety. To summarize: i) the true work of the Spirit convince the mind and the body of the Gospel and put them in enmity with the carnal mind. It helps one to grow in the likeness of God, to appreciate the Church, produces more of the fruits of the Spirit...to aim at unity and not separation in the Church, to be modest in the sight of both God and man. It also helps to desire to know God's word and to appreciate Sunday School, and creates firm and lasting Christian minds. ii) The false work, on the other hand, creates a superiority complex, confidence to be able to do anything, passion to be powerful and peculiarly different, pride and even fantasy to kill others or one's self. To associate with the Spirit beyond what is credible means to defile the Spirit, demanding a payment for prayer and using awful device to test spiritually, are not the works of the Spirit. A belief that nothing can defile one is a terrible apostasy (qtd. in Vanlalchhuanawma, 451-453).

Faith which is the basic tool for religion is unfounded and pointless when it comes to controlling and changing a culture. What is more important is the dominant power which the church is gradually reaching for. "Historically, what exists is the Church. Faith, what is that? Religion is a political force" (Foucault, Power 107).

The conflict between the Church and the revival movement came to the fore with the increase of theologically trained Mizo Christians and Pastors. Those in the ordained ministry normally adopted the Mission perspective in their attitude towards the indigenous revival movement in which the vast majority of the Christians were involved. The Pastors in the

ordained ministry assumed the role of being one of the most important agencies whereby imperialists retain control over its overseas territories. The natural tendency of the Church under the leadership of those pastors was to prefer the westernized new awakening to the indigenous revival. For this same reason the indigenous revivalists tended to view higher theological training as retarding higher spiritual experience and even as a way to spiritual 'dryness'. Conflict and tension between these opposing groups was an important aspect of the growth of Mizo Christianity.

Michel Foucault believed in the freedom of people. He also realized that individuals react to situations in different ways. In a translated collection of his interviews and other works, he wrote that power "reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives (Power/Knowledge 30). Therefore, even though the missionaries attempted to suppress the indigenous traits expressed in the revival movements, their attempt was in vain as power also comes from the people who are supposedly repressed. The revival movement was to the foreign missionaries a reflection of the primitive culture of the Mizos. They believed that the primitive mind is very easily attracted to the miraculous and the bizarre, and a mere surface acquaintance with the Christian scriptures often results in perfectly sincere, yet dangerously foolish interpretations of scriptural facts and teaching. The missionaries' attempt to repress primitive culture was in vain since one of the most important impacts of the revival movement was the indigenization of Mizo Christianity. From then on Christianity in Mizoram developed characteristics indigenous to the people by adopting the cultural elements of the revival movement. Then some western elements under pressure had to give way to certain elements which the missionaries considered primitive and Oriental. The result was a conflict between traditional Mizo culture and traditional Western Christian culture. As a consequence some foreign elements in the Church underwent a process of modification,

elimination or change. Through this process, an indigenous Mizo Church with a distinctive Mizo identity emerged. Christianity then ceased to be a western set of religious doctrines and practices but became a religion indigenous to the Mizos. The importance of power, for Foucault always lay in the effect that power has on entire network, practices, the world around us, and how our behaviour can be affected, not power itself.

Paul Enns emphasizes the importance of administration within a Church. He states, “The Church as the Body of Christ is a living organism, analogous to the human body with the head giving it direction, even as Christ is the Head of the Church, giving it direction. Nevertheless, there is also organization that governs the functioning of the Church” (357). Since the church is grounded on firm administrative system, its function as an institution cannot be ignored. Edmund Hill further testifies that the church is a living “observable social reality, institutionally structured” (190).

The Mizoram Presbyterian Church (MPC) is one of the oldest constituent bodies of the Presbyterian Church of India which had originated with the mission of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists’ Foreign Missionary Society at the Khasi Hills in 1841. From that day the MPC faithfully remain within the fold adopting and accepting the rules provided by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church of India.

Along with other social theorists, Foucault believed that knowledge is always a form of power, but he took it a step further and states that knowledge can be gained from power; producing it, not preventing it. Through observation, new knowledge is produced. The Church leaders attain the significance of being the guardian of Knowledge- regulating, observing and disciplining the church and its members. His theory states that knowledge is power:

Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of ‘the truth’ but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, ‘becomes true’. Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, ‘there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations (27).

One of the regulatory modes of power/knowledge that Foucault cited was the Panopticon, an architectural design put forth by Jeremy Bentham in the mid –nineteenth Century for prisons, insane asylums, schools, hospitals and factories. Instead of using violent methods such as torture and restraining them in captivity, the Panopticon offered a powerful and sophisticated internalized coercion which was achieved through the constant observation of prisoners. This constant observation is achieved in the Church through the notion of morality internalized in the Church members, regulated and observed by the Church leaders. Disobedience of which can lead to disciplinary actions and even excommunication from the Church. Numerous instances can be drawn from the realm of marriage within the Church. The Presbyterian Handbook states that anyone marrying against the will of the Church shall be liable to be disciplined such as abstaining from various important ceremonies of the Church (122). In the case of divorce, the persons will be disciplined, and be given Remarriage License and Revocation Certificate after a certain period of time, whose lengths vary according to the reasons of divorce (138). The time period ranges from immediate issuance of the Certificate and License immediately after divorce such as in the case of a person whose wife/husband refuses to engage in intercourse with the person, to issuance of it after three years to the one who refuses to copulate with his/her partner. The one who refuses it is disciplined for a

longer period of time for he does not co-operate to submit to the will of God and of the Church in raising a Christian family which is one of the causes of marriage in the Church.

The Panopticon is a metaphor that allowed Foucault to explore the relationship between systems of social control and people in a disciplinary situation, and of the power-knowledge concept. In his view power and knowledge comes from observing others. It marked the transition to a disciplinary power, with every movements supervised and all events recorded. In the paradigm of the Church the constant gaze is directed through the Church leaders. For the supervision of movements of the Church and of its members, there exists different Church Courts in the Mizoram Presbyterian Church. The first is the 'Local Church' which is the lowest of all the courts but the most hectic comprising of Ministers, Probationary Pastors and Elders as well as an extra few members if the Pastorate Meeting grants them. The exercise of Church disciplines in accordance with the Constitution becomes its most profound function. The second is the Pastorate responsible for the general supervision of the Churches within a given area. The third is the Presbytery endowed with the authority to dismiss, transfer and discipline Elders within its jurisdiction. Lastly, the Synod has the highest authority among the different Church Courts and is involved in the organization and maintenance of order throughout its territory. All internal and external matters are regulated by the Synod. Mizoram Presbyterian Church maintains a Secretary in each and every courts and committees and has the responsibility of recording each and every event such as Presbyteries held or Conferences and committees, and every actions and agendas the committee or the gathering has to offer.

The result of surveillance for Foucault is acceptance of regulations and docility, normalization, stemming from the threat of discipline. Suitable behaviour is achieved not through total surveillance, but by panoptic discipline and inducing a population to conform by the internalization of this reality. Likewise, what we see within a Church is that the

Church leaders are incapable of observation of its members the whole time. Therefore, character is formed in the community through the internalization of constant observation. This is achieved through the teachings of moral life which is at the heart of Christianity.

What can be derived from Foucauldian notion of power is that the more one observes, the more powerful one becomes. The power comes from the knowledge the observer has accumulated from his observations of actions, with knowledge and power re-inforcing each other. He states that, “by being combined and generalized, they attained a level at which the formation of knowledge and the increase in power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process” (Discipline 232). In the context of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, the vast knowledge of the observer (the Presbyterian Church in Wales) is endowed to the Mizo Church leaders through the various Handbooks and administrative system in writing handed down to them by the missionaries. Along with this knowledge comes power, that the Church has been interfering even in the political realm right from its inception in the state. At the dawn of Indian Independence, political parties began to emerge and there immediately developed a serious tension between parties. At this juncture, the Church told the Pastors not to be involved in active party politics. However, lay workers were allowed to participate till 1966 when the church prohibited affiliation to any political party. However, if any of the Church leaders wanted to contest in elections, it would be considered on individual ground. When violence broke out following the MNF insurgence, the Church felt that they had a role to play to prevent any further deterioration of the situation in Mizoram. It also felt that it needs to restore goodwill and mutual understanding between the MNF and the general public, and also between the security forces and the Mizo people in general, and the MNF in particular. It continued to take a step further resulting in the issuance of a pamphlet of Declaration and Appeal, through which it expressed boldly that the Church condemned the violent activities in Mizoram which was against the teachings of the Gospel as well as the

laws of human rights. In addition, the period between 1987-1993 had a particular significance in Mizo history. During this short period, there were three general elections. Mizo National Front party formed the government in 1987, but hardly functioned for two years. The Congress formed the ministry after the 1989 elections, and won again in 1993, in alliance with the Mizoram Janata Dal party. During this period, one of the most important issues was regarding liquor permits. These liquor permits had been introduced in 1984. The Presbyterian Church strongly opposed the selling of liquor. It appealed to the government not to issue any new permits nor renew the permits. Upon the request of the Church, the government did not issue any new liquor permits nor renew them. Knowing the inadequacies of the Mizo people's understanding of politics, the Church undertook the responsibility of providing them political education through seminars, lectures and symposia. These activities were carried out through the Synod Front Committee, a body appointed by the Mizo Presbyterian Church.

For Foucault, power exists everywhere and comes from everywhere; it acts as a type of relation between people, a complex form of strategy, with the ability to secretly shape another's behaviour. He did not view the effects of power negatively. For him, power did not exclude, repress, censor, mask and conceal. He saw it as a producer of reality, producing "domains of objects and rituals of truth" (Discipline 194). Even when the Mizos were under the dominion of British rulers, and under direct guidance by the missionaries, Foucauldian power is exerted through the indigenization of the Church. Therefore, while the rules and regulations of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church are binding on the one hand, it also lays down General Directives as, "The articles in this Constitution do not spell out in detail the administrative functioning of the Church Courts. The Synod and other Church Courts may therefore adopt resolutions and take decisions not repugnant to this Constitution" (qtd. in Lalngaihthanga, 41). Thus the Mizoram Presbyterian Church in its organizational and

administrative system follows both the Constitution and procedures derived to suit the distinctive characteristics of the Mizo.

The power of the Church pervades the entire realms of the Mizo society. In *Power/Knowledge* (1980), we see Foucault's perception of the nature of power in society, and not the conventional treatment of power that concentrates on powerful individuals and repressive institutions, but the mechanisms by which power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives. His statement of power as "that concrete power which every individual holds, and whose partial or total cession enables political power or sovereignty to be established" is seen as the same power that pervades the church of Mizoram till today. Christianity has been so closely interwoven with the Mizo cultural identity that it has become an important foundation of the Mizo's self-understanding. The Mizo social norms and the cultural values are now determined in a large measure by Christianity, or the ethics of the Church. The Church replaces the *Zawlbuk* (bachelor's dormitory) which had been one of the most important institution in Mizo life. It always occupied the largest open space in the centre of the village where the Church usually stands now in a given locality. It had been an institution serving the needs of the Mizo society, shaping its personality and lifestyle through the inculcation of a disciplined mode of conduct which is now unquestionable taken up by the Church as its responsibility met through a variety of social works and the teachings of the Gospel to lead a good life set by Jesus Christ. Though it had been "hardly possible to understand the development and nature of Mizo Culture without giving a central place to the *Zawlbuk*" (Kipgen 64). Now it is becoming impossible to understand Mizo culture without a Church which is already deeply embedded in the Mizos' life.

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

The term ‘indigenous’ has a firmly established place within the lexicon of political discourse. While not commonly viewed as controversial or ambiguous, there is no consensus on its precise definition. A popular answer is that indigenous people are those “people who are the original inhabitants of the land” (Fowler 38). Within this concept, however, there are “two concepts of indigeneity” for John Fowler, the first one being “whose ancestors were the original inhabitants of the land”, and the second one being those “people who either themselves, or their ancestors, inhabited the land at the time of...European conquest” (38).

Christianity is an integral part of the history of the Mizos. Religious and social formations in North-Eastern part of India are marked by pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial transformations. There had been rising concerns about the traumatic cultural changes that had come upon the Mizos as a result of the impact of colonial rule. The advent of the British power staggered and bewildered and paralyzed the people, and the Christianizing task of the missions were admitted to be the most active, dynamic and sustained instruments of change. This study takes on Kelkang Revival Movement of 1937 as a point of departure and focus upon the interaction between the Christian Gospel brought about by the Western Missionaries and culture of the Mizos which paved the way for Christianity itself. The revival movement in Mizoram has had a “continuous existence since its inception in 1906”, only thirteen years after Christianity was introduced in the land, and it happened when two powerful alien systems, namely the imperial government and the institutional church had been installed in the land. “Against these varying contacts”, observes McCall, “the Lushais had no equipment on which to fall back for strength, except the traditions and the stories of their grandfathers” (197). He would have had little idea of the relevance of his statement to the revival movement which came as the means available to them with which to respond to the religious changes in particular and social changes in general.

The rapid growth of Christianity in Mizoram during the first half of the twentieth century is closely associated with the phenomenon of revival. There were “four major Revival Movements” in Mizoram when the phenomena peaked into great waves and spread throughout the land, and Kelkang Revival Movement fell under the fourth Revival Movement. Many people tend to consider revival simply as a spiritual phenomenon that has revitalized Christians from time to time, characterized by “emotional excitement, extreme manners and peculiar activities” and “kindled mostly by the emotionalism of the people”, ordinary and uneducated. A deeper analysis reveals that revivals in Mizoram are indeed a struggle between indigenous Mizo culture and the culture introduced by the British colonizers and the Christian Missionaries, and Kelkang Revival Movement in 1937 was a testament to this notion, generating a unique form of Christianity deeply rooted in indigenous culture. The revival frenzy, however, is not confined only to Christianity as is seen even in the case of Hinduism. It takes the form of an emotional outburst on receiving spiritual enlightenment in both cases just as much as Christians would show happiness just like the Hindus would while a player shoots a goal in a football game. Theologians tend to locate the difference in the source of enlightenment, as well as in the consequences it brings about. In Christianity, it tends to channelize itself for evangelization while it is otherwise for their counterpart and does not seem to go beyond the frenzy.

It is important to study how the socio-cultural and religious background of the Mizos seems to be structured and preordained for Christianity. *Zawlbuk* (bachelor’s dormitory), *Tlawmngaihna* and the general social life served to prepare the people for Christianity and its expansion. In addition, the Mizo religious beliefs created a basic awareness of the Christian doctrine of God. Singing and dancing, deeply rooted in the Mizo culture, became the best means of worship. The traditional Mizo *Khuang* (drum) which had been used for indigenous worship and festival was re-introduced into Mizo Christian music and worship “during the

third revival” between 1919-23. At the same time, the Mizo concept of *Tlawmngaihna* became the central force and the main factor for the spread and rapid growth of revival and Christianity in the land. The grounding of Christianity was accommodated within the indigenous tribal culture as was evident in Kelkang Revival Movement which was deeply rooted in the indigenous culture. This mode of cultural transmission contradicts the general view of the public that Christianity necessarily destroys indigenous culture.

To recognise the success or failure of Christianity in a particular place is related to the degree to which it has been meaningfully indigenized. The term “indigenization” here means more than the transference of administrative authorities from missionaries to the native, but it is used rather to indicate the impact of the traditional culture on the nature of Christianity, including the way faith is understood and the way God is worshipped. Christianity in the land is characterized by a wide array of parallel faiths with numerous sects. They vary mostly in creed and in mode of worship, yet they all share a similar faith of entering heaven after death. Kelkang Revival Movement is regarded as critical insofar as more of those participating in the revival movement threatened to leave the established Church, testified by Kaphlira by stating that “this revival contains numerous spiritual traits and results in the emergence of numerous sects” (35). There have been various assumptions for the rapid growth of Christianity in Mizoram. It is commonly assumed that rapid growth is to be expected among ‘primitive’ people whose primal religious system lacks the tenacity of more ‘advanced’ religions, but the problem here lies in the fact that other people of the North-East are equally primitive and isolated, sharing similar history yet Christianity took several generations to become established among them. E. M. Chapman and M. Clark otherwise developed the assumption that the reason for the native response to Christianity was because they “feel” that they were “chosen of God” (93). Kipgen denounces this as “theologically questionable” and “historically inadequate” (3). There remains another attribution by Hluna which is “the

responses made by the Mizo people” (14). This notion asserts itself as the key to understanding the phenomenal growth of Christianity among the Mizos. The most significant response being the revival movements which generated perpetual tension with the British institutional church which this study is dealing with in particular, i.e., the Kelkang Revival Movement.

Homi Bhabha’s hybridity erupts from the clash between cultures. The possibility of a cultural hybridity is opened up by the interstitial passage between fixed identifications. This liminality (interstitial passage) is presented as a paradigm of colonial anxiety. The principal proposition is the hybridity of colonial identity which entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. Bhabha argues that hybridity results from various forms of colonization which leads to cultural collisions and interchanges. In the attempt to assert colonial power in order to create anglicised subjects, “The trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different—a mutation, a hybrid” (111). This hybrid trace contradicts both the attempt to fix and control indigenous cultures as is evident in the eruption of revival movements which led to the acculturation of Christianity. This led to the emergence of an “indigenous Mizo Church with a distinctive identity” which disrupts the general pre-conceived belief that Christianity wanes indigenous culture and customs. This does not mean that the cultural traits entered directly into the sphere of the Church’s activity. Rather, Christianity ventured into the realm of traditional culture and custom. The revival movement in virtual tension with the Church stimulated the Mizo Christianity to adapt itself to the indigenous culture and experience rendering it to be a cultural movement. This encounter between Christianity and the indigenous culture produced a unique Mizo form of Christianity. Wilson Harris formulates that hybridity at present “is constantly struggling to free itself from a past which stressed ancestry, and which value the ‘pure’ over its threatening opposite, the ‘composite’” (Ashcroft et al 34). And since colonial discourse “encourages the

colonized subject to ‘mimic’ the colonizer...the result is a...blurred copy of the colonizer” (125). This mimicry can be “quite threatening” (126), and can perpetuate itself as an “unconscious strategy” of “resistance” (Huddart 62-66), asserting identity in the process through its element of “mockery” by appearing “to parody whatever it mimics” (Ashcroft et al 127). This assertion of identity takes on a “subtle” and “unconscious form”, but Huddart claims that for Bhabha, the fact that it is resistance at all is “more important than the degree to which it is an actively pursued strategy” (62). Moreover, cultures are, for Bhabha the consequence of hybridizing processes (Huddart 129). Therefore, Kelkang Revival Movement which is a product of the interaction between Western Revival Movement and Mizo indigenous culture propels itself in the realm of culture in the light of this statement. This study stresses on the notion that the Mizos in mimicking the revival aspect of Western Church, however, instead of struggling to free itself from a past which stressed ancestry, rather asserted indigeneity, thereby asserting the revival movement as a cultural response

Orientalism, in Edward Said’s terms, was the fabrication of the West which was considered as static and underdeveloped. Therefore, Orientalism is a Western fabrication lacking coherency with external realities. The fabrication of history was further crucial for the British to legitimize their civilizing mission. Similarly, colonial ethnographers and historiographers exaggerated the ‘raiding’ and described the Mizos as raiders, headhunters, savages and so on. However it was the colonizers who encroached into the hunting ground of the Mizos and set up tea plantations. The Mizo Chiefs resisted the encroachers by attacking the British tea plantations in the spirit of patriotism. The colonial expansion of tea plantation threatened the Mizo’s means of existence. Therefore, such onslaught was done in order to defend their land which, for the Mizos, supplemented their economy by hunting, fishing, catching elephants and rubber tapping.

The resistance indirectly fostered a sense of nationalism and subaltern consciousness and solidarity among the Mizo clans in the Lushai Hills. In resisting the foreign invaders, the Mizos who had been fond of inter-village or clan feuding became united somehow. This resulted in the unprecedented solidarity during the resistance against the colonizers in the area for the first time. The solidarity was further re-inforced by the colonizers' prohibition of the inter-village or inter-clan feuding.

R-reading the emergence of Christianity in the land is possible with the dawn of new religious identities. With the emergence of the missionaries, Christianity gradually began to supplant the tribal religion. The philanthropic works like schools and medical works tremendously transited the traditional into a modern society. However, the Missionaries affiliation to the western Church ushered in Christianity profoundly based on western denominationalism, thereby, introducing different Christian identities among the Mizos on the basis of doctrines and Church tradition. The Mizos, therefore, began to carry their new religious badges which identify them as Presbyterian in the North, Baptist and Lakher Church in the South. Such segregation on denominational basis did have an adverse impact in the course of time.

After encroaching into the hunting ground of the Mizos, the colonizers crushed the native resistance by employing military might and devised various means to enfeeble the Mizos. Divide and Rule policy was adopted to maintain their stronghold over the Mizos and enacted boundary lines. The occupation of Mizoram by the British colonizer further opened up an avenue for the western missionaries to enter the region. Colonialism and Mission are often seen as two sides of the same coin. In the *Encyclopedia of Mizoram*, Teisi Thou writes, "As part of colonization, the strategy the British followed in the region was to allow the missionaries to build their religious and educational institution and use them as agencies of integrating the tribal folk with the west" (qtd. in Zorinthara, 42). Moreover, it has been

assumed that both the Colonial powers and Missions held the civilizing responsibility which is also known as the 'white man's burden' as their shared goal. Due to such mutual binding in this area, missionaries were, sometimes suspected to be the agent of the colonizers who promoted British Imperialism.

Meanwhile, due to anti-colonial resistance put up by the Mizos, strict restriction for entering the Lushai hills was enforced. When two missionaries reached Aizawl on 13th January, 1894, the British officer in command was ordered not to help them. This was due to the unsettled situation that no official help should be sought or offered. Some years later when Mr. George Hughes arrived at Fort Lunglei, he was received with scorn. The sub-divisional officer said to him, "I suppose you are the missionary? Then I have to tell you that you are not welcomed here" (Glover 7). This kind of expression of disfavor might presumably reflect the condescending English attitude to the Welsh missionary. Yet the attitude of colonial government gradually changed. When the Lakher Mission was about to enter Mizoram, British Officials were appreciating the coming of the Lakher Mission since the Lakhers (a clan residing in the Southern part of Mizoram) have not received the same amount of attention as the Lushai inhabitants of the district.

Christian Missions entered at the heels of the British conquest. Cordial relationship was developed in the area of education, however, with different ulterior motives. It was true that the Cross follows the Flag, but it does not mean full collaboration. In fact, the colonial power was ready to curb any tension that may cause political turmoil and threaten their stronghold such as in *bawi* (slaves) controversy. Hence, except in some area of collaboration which was based on temporary process of conditional reciprocity, the Christian missions among the tribal in NEI (North-East India) were primarily concerned with the propagation of the Gospel and not with promoting British interests. In fact, the presence of Colonial power indirectly promoted Christianity.

The key concept for Gramsci in power dynamics is hegemony, referring to the complex means by which those who are ruled over come to accept and feel they have a stake in the powers that are exploiting and controlling them. How hegemony works, therefore, is that particular forms of culture are imposed by the ruling elite as the ‘preferred’ or dominant form. Within this struggle, however, those who are ruled over or the ‘subaltern’ can resist and challenge the hegemonic culture of the ruling group, asserting their own culture. What also happens, however, is that the subaltern group (outside of the ruling elite) seeks to engage with the hegemonic culture and make it their own, to the extent that it may become their culture (54). The Mizos were led to believe that their culture held no challenge against the superior culture of the white men even in the realm of Christianity on account of profound knowledge on the part of the colonizers imbuing them with power. But by taking on the cultural trappings of the powerful, they attempt to get some of that power for themselves. This notion expresses itself in the unique Mizo form of Christianity through mimicking the Western Christian culture of revival movements, thereby there is an attempt on their part to get some of that power materializing in the church. The church therefore, starting during the British regime, tried to assert power foregrounding itself as Foucault’s assertion of religion as a mere political tool, perpetuating itself as a tool of colonialism from within till today in the context of Revival Movement initiating from “Kelkang” village at the present.

The pioneer missionaries saw the need to indigenize the church from the beginning, but as time went by, the extent of their commitment was severely tested. When the nascent church faced specific questions regarding its relations with traditional customs and festivals, voices of objection sounded the loudest. The central authorities of the mission churches, especially the Welsh missionaries in the north and the Baptist missionaries in the south, unhesitantly showed their aversion to the uses of traditional symbols in the church. While most of the church used the traditional drum for worship as long as the missionaries were in

Mizoram. The tendency of the mission churches has been importing Christian symbols while the revivalists reverted to Mizo traditional symbols. Thus, the demarcation line between *mihlim* (or revivalists) and the mainline church symbolically followed the cutting edge between what is considered traditional and what is considered modern. In many of the *mihlim* groups and particularly among the indigenous sects, anti-modernism has been prevalent, and intellectualism is viewed with suspicion.

The interest in the revival of cultural practices and old festivals began in small measure as early as the 1930s and gained momentum in the 1970s. The movement came as a result of secular liberal education and encouragement from the government. Hrangiaia, a significant figure in the movement that renewed and reformed traditional festivals, gives the following account. Since the 1930s, he says, the few educated Mizo employees of the colonial government began requesting a holiday for the *Chapchar Kut* (the spring festival) from the Superintendent. Taking advantage of the Superintendent's favor of the holiday, a few-presumably non-Christian-people in Aizawl celebrated the festival with feasts and rice beer. When the Mizo District Council was formed in 1952, it immediately resolved to declare government holidays for the three major Mizo festivals, *Mim Kut*, *Chapchar Kut*, and *Pawl Kut*. Under the initiative of Hrangiaia, one of the council member at the time, the district government began the annual celebration of *Chapchar Kut* in 1960 in Aizawl. It was not an attempt to revive the old festivals per se, but to commemorate them by exhibiting how the festival was celebrated in the past. Most participants being Christians avoided the practice such as drinking rice beer which was not allowed by the Church. Since, 1962, the commemorative celebrations of the festival were symbolically Christianized by commencing each celebration with a ceremonial Christian prayer.

The churches did not endorse the functions nor make any apparent attempts to stop the celebrations. In its annual Synod meeting in 1963, the Presbyterian Church did not voice

its disapproval. Christians are not to do anything to revive the old culture and lifestyle which they have renounced. The church did not denounce the celebration nor publicized its disapproval until 1964 when it was reported that some participants took in bottles of rice beer to the *Chapchar Kut* celebration. The Presbyterian Church severely criticized the celebrations and even dissuaded its members from participating in the next celebration. The criticism prompted the district government authority to terminate the festival celebration in 1965. The Council's Executive Chief at the time, Ch.Saprawnga, invited the church leaders and missionaries to an open discussion. According to Hrangiaia, the missionaries and most of the leaders appeared to have understood the government's intent in celebrating the old festival. It was, however, resolutely objected by one of the most prominent Presbyterian leaders of the time, Liangkhaia, who declared his disliking of any occasion under the name of *kut*. He pleaded with the council never to do anything under the name of *kut* during his lifetime.

Another significant event took place in 1973. In that year, the two leading Mizo student organizations, the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo student organization) and the All Mizo Student Federation proposed to renew the commemorative public celebration of the Chapchar Kut. The students could not find a church leader to offer an opening prayer for the function. Later the same morning, Lalsawma, the then Principal of Aizawl Theological College, called back to report that he was ready to offer the prayer at the function if they had not found another church leader. The students' invitation, he said, troubled him the whole night and felt he should not let them down. He offered a fitting and meaningful prayer for the occasion. Since that time, under the initiative of the Mizoram state government, the public celebration of the *Chapchar Kut* has been continued.

The fact that some ministers have acknowledged the grave consequences of discarding Mizo tradition indicates that the church has come a long way. More and more, minister-theologians, Church Elders and researchers reflecting on the problem find it

essential to situate theological analysis in the social and cultural context of the church. The direction of the trend has shifted from that of disregarding traditional culture to affirming its vital role for the healthy development of the church. The overall goal of this new trend is not so much to revitalize tradition for its own sake, but to see it as part of the overall socio-cultural context of the people and the church.

As indicated earlier, a major contribution of the revivals was its influence on the interweaving of Christianity and the Mizo cultural ethos. To elucidate the point, three elements of typical Mizo Christian worship show how Mizo cultural identity integrated with Christianity. The elements are: the traditional drum, native Christian hymns sung to indigenous tunes, and the revival dance. Any visitor to a church worship in Mizoram today will always find a pair of traditional drums which have, to some extent, the hallmark of Mizo Christianity. During the worship, the visitor may also notice the unique hymns set on what has become the traditional Mizo Christian tune. The more familiar western hymns translated into the native language are sung interchangeably with the Mizo tunes. In many cases, the visitor may also find some ‘inspired’ individual dancing in front of the alter-pulpit. Thus, these three elements of worship have emerged as the major distinctive marks of Mizo Christianity.

The wealth of poetical words and the beauty of traditional festivities were shunned by early Mizo Christians. This heritage was rejected as part of the old paganistic tradition. Translated hymns with no poetical appeals were considered normative for Christian usage until the uncontrollable motion of the revival spirit helped to include these old elements into the new Christian singing.

In the early days of the third revival, native hymn writer began to appear with new hymns later to be collected under the rubric *Hla Thar* (new songs). It was a softer tune that

could easily be sung, and it was a powerful means of releasing emotion. As an easeful means of expressing spiritual joy or ecstasy, the songs were repeated over and over again.

By calling the tune indigenous, it is not meant that it followed an established traditional musical form, but rather that the tune emerged from the community's heart and express its deepest feelings (133).

The new hymns' close affinity with the *Puma Zai* tune-type cannot be ignored. The resemblance has not been recognize because of the church's vehement objection to what it believed to be old 'pagan' practices. As K. Zawla has strongly asserted, the *Puma Zai* movement marked a new chapter in the development of Mizo songs. From this song-type developed various new songs, secular and sacred, which are unusually in harmony with the Mizo temperament and sentiments (332). Hence, the movement opened the creative spirit of the people from which various forms of new songs, including the new native hymns, emerged.

In an old Mizo saying, the predicament of missing an essential part is likened to the absence of a drum in a festival dance. The adage '*Khuang lova chai*' (Literally, 'to perform a festive dance without a drum') denotes that it is unseemly to perform a festive dance (or *chai*) without a drum. What this saying attests is that, for the Mizos, singing and dancing demand a drum. A typical Mizo drum is made of hollow cylinder-shaped wood with animal skin stretch on both sides. There are typical sizes, namely, small (measured about twelve or less inches diameter), medium (approximately twelve to sixteen inches diameter), and large (any larger than the medium size). So important is the drum in the traditional Mizo society that the most celebrated public feast *Khuangchawi* (or drum feast) derived its name from the *Khuang* (drum). Yet, the early Mizo Christian community did not use the drum during the first two

decades of its history. Because of its association with the traditional festivals and drinking bouts, the missionaries and the early Mizo Christians precluded the drum from the church.

The negative attitude towards the drum appears to have been enhanced by the *Puma Zai* movement in which the drum played an indispensable role. Lalsawma even suggested that the drum was ‘banned’ from the church-presumably during the church’s encounter with the movement until it was re-introduced during the revivals. For those who believe *Puma Zai* to be the devil’s work, the Mizo drum could have been the devil’s instrument. When the church encountered *Puma Zai* movement, it intensified its antagonism against any practice associated with the old ways of life. The traditional drum, to all outward appearances, was one indisputable representation of the old ways of life. Together with the emerging new native hymns, the drum, however, remarkably gained acceptance in the church during the third revival. Inconceivably, it overcome all the hostilities and eventually become a distinguishing mark of Mizo Christianity. The drum first made its way to the revival meetings outside the church and gradually occupied its present place, albeit objections.

Of the three symbols we have chosen, the role of the revival dance in the church’s life is “most inconspicuous”, at least in outward. Because it is relatively temporal and depends on the other two symbols for its fruition, the extent of the revival dance’s impact on the church’s life is relatively slight. Its spiritual and cultural significance, however is remarkable. Mizos in the past celebrated most of their feasts and festivals with dances. Public singing was always accompanied by dancing which became livelier after a cup or two of rice beer. When the church banned Mizo converts from participation in the public feast and festivals, they were also cut off from the traditional dances. The loss was somewhat compensated when Mizo Christians found a new reason and a new way to dance in the revivals. As stated earlier, Christians in the first revival danced by stamping their feet on the floor. This form of dance was similar to those witnessed in the Khasi hills from where the Mizos imported revival. It is

therefore conceivable that the Mizos imitated the Khasi revival dance. The form of dance began to change with the second revival (1913-1915) where waving of hands and swaying of bodies were the main characters of the dance. Some people stepped out of their seats and danced in groups. There were always extreme forms of dancing. The fourth movement saw the appearance of excessive forms in greater number. Though such excessive forms did appear, they were accompaniments, not the representative of the major trend of the revival movements. The major trend remained to be the general form of revival dance. Since the third revival, it has become a common practice for the people to come out to the front of the pew and dance to express their spiritual joy. As they dance, they clap and wave their hands, sway their bodies and move in circles to the beat of the drum.

Because of the intense encounter between the Christians and the non-Christians, the possible connections between the *Tlanglam* dance and the revival dance were not given serious considerations in the past. In recent years, some contemporary thinkers have seriously reflected on the connection. Lalsawma concludes that the revival dance is a continuation of the old *Tlanglam* dance. Like the connection between the *Puma Zai* and native hymns delineated above, the position is reasonable. There are two factors namely, internal and external factors. Firstly, though at slight variance in their manner of expressions, the two dance share a common trait in structure and appearance. All the major characteristics of the revival dance we have noted-the waving and clapping of hands, the swaying of bodies and the circular movement have their counterparts in the popular *Tlanglam*. Secondly, it should be noted that hundreds of converts in the 1920s and 1930s belonged to the generation that had wholeheartedly participated in the *Tlanglam*. It is reasonable to expect them to continue their manner of expressing emotional joy and put it to Christian use.

The revival movement in Mizoram owe their origin to the Welsh revival of 1904-5. The revival as well as the manner of expression of spiritual joy were imitational in the

beginning. But in the succeeding movements, indigenous expressions supplanted the imported ones by inter-weaving the Mizo sense of identity and Christianity. All three symbols of integration we discussed emerged during the third revival, expressed with greater force in the Kelkang Revival Movement shortly after it. When the so called excessive signs of revival enthusiasm went beyond what the church considered the bounds of Christianity in the fourth revival, the mainline denominations and the revivalist began to part. The revivalists disaffected in large numbers and subsequently formed the United Pentecostal Church of Mizoram and other related denominations and sectarian groups. A large number still remained, however within the folds of the mission churches. But neither the revival nor the revivalists have again played a significant role in the mission churches. While the revivalist and the revivals have been pushed to the periphery of the church and the society, the significant role of the revivals is most recognizable in the nature, characters, and shape of the Mizo church.

One ought again to remember that all cultures impose corrections upon raw reality, changing it from free-floating objects into units of knowledge. The problem is not that conversion takes place. It is perfectly natural for the human mind to resist the assault on it of untreated strangeness; therefore cultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformations on other cultures, receiving these other cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be... Yet the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from something into something else; he does this for himself, for the sake of his culture, in some cases for what he believes is the sake of the Oriental (Said 67).

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APPENDICES

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TITLE OF DISSERTATION : Dynamics of Indigenous Culture
On Christianity Pertaining to
Kelkang Revival Movement in
1937

DATE OF ADMISSION : 30.07.2015

(Commencement of First Semester)

**COMMENCEMENT OF SECOND
SEMESTER/ DISSERTATION** : 1.1.2016

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2. SCHOOL BOARD : 19. 4. 2016
3. REGISTRATION NO. & DATE : MZU/M.Phil./302 of 19.04.2016
4. DUE DATE OF SUBMISSION : 31.07.2017
5. EXTENTION IF ANY : Sought and utilized

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XII	MBSE	2010	I	74.4 %
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M.A	NEHU	2015	II	58 %
M.Phil.	Mizoram University	Course work completed in 2015	I 'A' Grade awarded. 10 pt. scale grading system, 'A' corresponds to 6-6.99 pts.	Corresponds to 68.3% in terms of percentage conversion.

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- ii) Attended and participated in an international seminar entitled, “Indigeneity: Expression and Experience,” organised by the Department of English, Mizoram University under UGC-DRS-SAP I, on 25th and 26th February, 2016.
- iii) Attended and participated in a national seminar entitled, “Emergent Identities: Its Literary Representations”, organised by the Department of English, Mizoram University under UGC-DRS-SAP I, on 4th – 6th March, 2016.
- iv) Awarded the UGC-MZU Fellowship for the tenure of eighteen months from the date of admission on 3rd August 2015.