

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Definition of Mizo:

The word 'Mizo' is a compound word, 'mi' and 'zo' and is generally translated as hillman. While the translation of the word 'mi' as a person is correct, the translation of 'zo' as a hill is not quite satisfactory because the word 'zo' carries with it the conception of highland and the cool, pleasant air. And very often, the word 'tlang' meaning a hill or a mountain is used jointly with 'zo'. For example, expressions like – "Sihfa village is zo" or "Our zotlang" convey more about the health and pleasantness of the village or a hill rather than the mere fact of the village being located atop of a hill. Thus, Mizoram means the land of Mizos – 'Mizo' denotes the people while 'ram' denotes the land.

The word 'Mizo' is a comprehensive term used to identify a group of the different tribes or clans who live in the present Mizoram and some of the neighbouring state and countries which are to be described later. Thus 'Mizo' consist a number of tribes which may be broadly divided into five major and eleven minor sub-tribes. These tribes and sub-tribes are further divided into a number of clans. The major ones are,

Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Paite, and Pawi.

The minor sub- tribes are as many as eleven, and numerically smaller than those. They had either lost their distinctive dialects or forgotten them as a result of disuse when they mingled with the larger groups. They have not however, lost their separate identities. Some of the most notable characters in the ancient history of the Mizo people belonged to some of these minor sub-tribes. These sub-tribes are,

Chawngthu, Chawhte, Ngente, Khawlhiring, Khiangte, Pautu, Rawite, Renthlei, Tlau, Vangchhia, Zawngte.

These eleven sub-tribes are known as *Awzia*. Some of the historians added some more sub-tribes such as Mirawng, Bawng, Biate, Hrangkhawl, Dawn, Tlanglau and Mualthuam. The differences in dialects between these clans are very little, and they can understand each other.

In the absence of written records, the origin of the Mizos is veiled in obscurity, and no conclusion is certain. The Mizos themselves claim 'Chhinlung' to have been their ancient home. Chhinlung literally means 'covered stone' and it is imagined to be a big cave. The Mizos say that their fore-fathers came out of this cave. One by one they came out, and when the Ralte tribe came out and were so noisy talking that the guardian god of the cave fearing either being discovered or the population had grown too large, closed the cave with a stone preventing any further exit of human beings from the earth. Supporting this view, one of their oldest songs records:

Ka seingna Sinlung ram hmingthang,
Ka nu ka pa ram ngai,
Chawngzil ang ko kir thei chang sein,
Ka nu ram ka pa ram ngai.

(My home land, famous Chhinlung, /Could it be called back like Chawngzil, /Homeland of my old ancestors.) (Thanmawia, *Mizo Hla Hlui*, 7)

More recently, there has been an attempt to interpret the legend rationally. Chhinlung is said to mean not a cave but the name of a Chinese prince in China. The correct form of the word was Chin Lug. He was the son of Huang Ti of the Chin dynasty who built the Great Wall. The prince incurred the displeasure of his father and

left his kingdom and settled in Burma. This interpretation has the merit of greater reliability free of the supernatural.

Another tale having more historical bearing is that Chin Lung is the name of a Chinese prince (whose father's name was not declared). The prince moved towards Burma with large number of people because of some displeasure of his father. He settled in Aupataung (which Mizos called 'Awksatlang') in Burma. Chin Lung was dead in that city on the hill and his people spread in different directions. All these people said that they were '*Chin Lung chhuak*' meaning 'Belong to Chin Lung'. And later on, in course of oral transmission the name Chin Lung becomes Chhinlung (Vanchhunga-2)

According to Hrangthiauva:

At the time our ancestors lived in Aupataung, their forbears, Mirua, Marua and Mizova lived together. New generations issued from them through birth and marriage. The Meiteis and the Raltes are said to have emerged as distinct groups. It is possible there were more others. From Mizova issued Chhinlunga who was a great king, the place of his rule was called 'Chhinlunga khua' where they settled for a long time, each clan speaking its own dialect. Chhinlunga bore Thlahpa, Thlahpa bore Duhlina, Taichenga and Hrumtunga. The descendants of Duhlina came to be called the Duhlian. The Duhlian clan took over the language spoken by Mizova which came to known as Mizo language. Descendants of Mirua and Marua left Chhinlung to find other settlements whereas descendants of Mizova lingered for a long time. After some time a plague broke out and as so many died they decided to leave the place and settled in the confluence of the rivers Run and Chindwin named Kalewa. The

descendants of Mizova who hailed from there henceforth called themselves ‘Chhinlung chhuak’ (5).

All these interpretations and introspections make it likely that the Mizos originally belonged to Central Asia and later came to the present habitat from the east. It is known that they settled in Kabaw Valley, Burma around seventh century A.D. In 1200 A.D., the Mizos were pushed out of this valley by the successive colonists called Shans and then all the tribes moved one by one in different ways. It is known that the largest group, Luseis settled on the bank of Run river in 1250-1400 A.D., crossed the river and settled between Lentlang and Tiau river around 1450-1700 A.D. They moved westwards and crossed the Tiau river before 1700 A.D. and then reached the present Mizoram. Some other groups settled in Manipur, Tripura, Cachar, Bangladesh and Chin hills in Burma. (Lalthangliana. *India*, xxx)

As the different tribes went different ways and inhabited different states and countries, there is a great controversy regarding the constitution of Mizos. And the different tribes and clans have their own names for their specific tribe having their own speech, and there was no tribe of the name ‘Mizo’ at that time. So, at what time did the term ‘Mizo’ become current, and who used it also needs to be considered. T. Gougin, in his *The Discovery of Zoland*, writes, “the real meaning of Zomi (or Mizo) is one who dwells on the hillside having the same bearing in manner and custom etc. for ages together” (Thanmawia. *Mizo Poetry*, 13). Some of the historians believe that the people living on the hills could be named Zomi or Mizo or “People of the cold region” by the brethren of the hot valley (Thanmawia. *Mizo Poetry*, 13). B. Lalthangliana believes that they are called so after the name of the town Zopui, which was built around 1765 A.D.

(Lalthangliana, *History of Mizo in Burma*, 71). Here, Zopui means 'Big town of Zo'.

One poems of this time refers to the big town as follows:-

Zokhaw val hnam chem kan chawi,
Mangngul ar ang kan thahna,
Run kuamah aw e.

(We, men of Zopui, bear the swords,
For we killed Mangnguls as chickens,
By the bank of river Run) (Thanmawia. Mizo Hla hlui, 13)

This interpretation shows that the word 'Mizo' would have come only after the second half of the eighteen century when Zopui town was built. Vumson mentioned the possibility of Mizo clans to being the descendants of the great Zo dynasty who ruled over the northern Burma in the 11th or 12th century A.D. According to him, the term Zo or Jo was mentioned as the name of a people in a few historical publications of the Indo-Burman peoples (Vumson, 2).

In corroboration of the lines quoted by Hrangthiauva another historian from Kalemmyo, named Zachhinga says,

The Kachin, Karen, Shan, Chimphoh, Miru, Maru and Mizo are descendants of Tibet. After their ancestors sojourned in China for a long time the seven tribes entered Burma. Miru, Maru and Mizo came in the vanguard, and when they traversed deeply into Burma, settled in Chinzua. The Kachin, Shan, Karen and Chimphoh followed in their trail, and when they were not waited for they settled in the Burmese plains. The time of settlement in Chinzua is around the 8th century, when the great Burmese king Siangpahranga ruled in Mandalay.

After living at Chinzua for a long time the Miru, Maru and Mizo came to settle in Aupataung around 1000A.D. After living a long time in Aupataung they dispersed: the Mirua went to Satikang; the Marua to Naga Hills, and the descendants of Mizova to the Lushai Hills (2).

Hrangthiauva himself comments on the above:

When I collate their findings and what our forefathers related, it is most likely that Mizo was originally of Mongoloid stock, who came through China and Tibet, where Mizova was born, and his descendants came to Burma with the descendants of Mirua and Marua. . . Therefore, 'Mizo' has a very long long story (3).

From all these interpretations, it appears that Mizo have no collective name before their occupation of the Chin Hills. Even if the word 'Mizo' or 'Zomi' or 'Zo' had been well known to them earlier, the Sailo chiefs, after having subjugated many other Mizo clans, made the use of this collective name 'Mizo' current amongst their subject. As we described earlier, the Mizo sub-tribes were divided by the walls of international and state boundaries for a couple of centuries, the cultures and traditions, mode of living and behaviors and even dialects gradually differed from place to place.

This has, however, been a common phenomenon in all major societies. In a narrow view, Mizo include only those who resided in the present Mizoram and those who can use the written Mizo language, but this view is not acceptable because, in a wider sense, Mizo includes all the clans who had been bound together by the bond of common traditions, customs, history and cultural heritage having linguistic affinity.

As we mentioned earlier, Mizo includes most of the Mizo clans are inhabit in the present Mizoram which occupies the north eastern corner of India. It implies ‘The land of Mizos.’ Mizoram is actually a mountainous region having hills with an average height of 900 meters. It has an area of 21,087sq.kms. It became the 23rd state of the Indian Union in February 1987. It was one of the districts of Assam till 1972 when it became a Union Territory. After being annexed by the British in 1891, for the first few years, Lushai hills in the north remained under Assam while the southern half remained under Bengal. Both these parts were amalgamated in 1898 into one district called Lushai Hills District under the Chief Commissioner of Assam. With the implementation of the North-Eastern Re-organization Act, 1972, Mizoram became a Union Territory and as the sequel to the signing of the historic memorandum of settlement between government of India and the Mizo National Front in 1986, it was granted statehood on 20th February, 1987. The state of Mizoram having common borders with two foreign countries, viz., Myanmar and Bangladesh, occupies an area of great strategic importance on the political map of India. During the 19th century, the Mizos came under the sway of British missionaries and most of them are now Christians. The missionaries introduced Roman script for the Mizo language and formal education, and started teaching English. A major portion of Mizoram population is engaged in agricultural pursuits. The main pattern of cultivation revolves around jhum operations (clearing the jungles for cultivation). Hence festivals in Mizoram are connected with such agricultural activities. The Mizos are justifiably well known as a singing tribe. Their musical tradition, unlike that of other tribes of the country is well developed in several ways.

1.2. Definition of myth:

A myth can be regarded as a traditional story of a remote past, which may describe the origin of the world and of people. It is an attempt to explain mysteries, supernatural events and cultural traditions, sometimes sacred in nature, as myths can involve gods or other creatures. And, a myth represents reality in dramatic ways. According to *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, “Myth is the traditional stories of a people, often orally transmitted. They usually tell of unbelievable things in a deliberate manner, so that a myth can mean both ‘an untrue story’ and ‘a story containing religious truth.’ The subject-matter that the gods and their relations with human or other beings, or complex explanations of physical phenomena” (Chrystal, 62). A myth is a story that may or may not be true. The definition of the word myth is still subject to debate. Myths may be very old or new, like urban myths. There may not be records or other proofs that they happened, but at least some parts of myths may be true.

Mythology is usually applied to a body of stories whose purpose is not limited to entertainment. According to *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, “Mythology (from the Greek ‘mythos’ for story-of-the-people, and ‘logos’ for word or speech, the spoken story of a people) is the study and interpretation of often sacred tales or fables of a culture known as ‘myths’ or the collection of such stories which usually deal with the human condition, good and evil, human origins, life and death, the afterlife, and the gods. Myths express the beliefs and values about these subjects held by a certain culture” (Mark). The stories of mythology are often charged with a special seriousness and importance. Some stories are associated with a living religion still being practiced at the time the myth is told, others are more secular in nature, but still include values and

perspectives that inform the society and culture of the storytellers. We know about them from older people telling them to younger people. Some myths may have started as 'true' stories, but as people told and re-told them, they may have changed some parts, so they are less 'true'. They may have changed them by mistake, or to make them more interesting.

The Encyclopedia of Religion defines, “A myth is an expression of the sacred in words: it reports realities and events from the origin of the world that remains valid for the basis and purpose of all there is. Consequently, a myth functions as a model for human activity, society, wisdom and knowledge” (Bolle, 261). Many people believe that myths are false stories that primitive people used to tell to explain the nature of the universe before a better, more scientific explanation was available. This view is related to the popular use of myth to mean false story. For instance, there may be people say that it is a myth that the sun travels around the earth, or that thunder is really the sound of two clouds colliding. Mythological stories often contain elements that do not accurately reflect the scientific understanding of the societies that tell them, but this literal falseness can also be a reflection of their importance. Because mythological narratives are important to a society, they are often handed down unchanged from generation to generation. As a result, the scientific details embedded in these stories are unchanged even as new scientific discoveries alter the people’s understanding of their world. Even stories about the formation of the cosmos can convey important truths to subsequent generations, although the scientific views in them are outmoded. The false science of a mythological tale may be much more obvious than its unchangingly true values and world view. Mythological stories reveal true things about the culture that originated them, and may include values and perspectives that can be meaningful even for those of us outside that culture.

Many people understand myths as stories of gods and heroes, and so they are. *Encyclopedia Americana* defines, “Mythology is the study of myths, and the myths themselves, which are stories told as symbols of fundamental truths within societies having a strong oral tradition. Usually myths are concerned with extraordinary beings and events” (Long 699). Mythical stories provide us with an understanding of the nature of human life. The ancient Greek story of Heracles can serve as an example. Heracles, a human, is the illegitimate son of Zeus, the head of the Greek gods. Hera, Zeus’ wife, is resentful of her husband’s bastard by another woman and drives Heracles crazy, so he kills his own wife and children. Thus, his story also shows the limits of human freedom: a fundamentally good man deals with the consequences of actions that seem beyond his control. Heracles must perform a series of amazing deeds or labours to atone for his crimes. In addition, upon completing these labours, he achieves immortality. Although the story of Heracles’ labours emphasizes the fact that, as a rule, human beings are subject to death, it also suggests that through great deeds, human beings can challenge and overcome this destiny by becoming immortal.

Some people think of myth as story told to explain its scientific facts, or to describe the origin of natural phenomena. This is called aetiology or aetiological function. For example, a Native American story from the Pacific Northwest explains that the raven is black because he once flew through the smoke hole or chimney of the house while trying to get away from Petrel after stealing fresh water from him. The story goes on to provide further aetiology, explaining that, in his flight, the raven dropped the water here and there as he went along, and that this is the origin of the great rivers of the world. In the story, Petrel is hoarding fresh water until the raven distributes freely. In thwarting Petrel, raven’s impulse is at the same time generous and

mischievous, but his method of distributing his gift is not orderly or systematic. The story demonstrates the bounty available from nature, but suggests that the world is not orderly or predictable, and that survival in it requires cleverness, generosity, and the flexibility involved in changing your colors to suit the situation. It is clear that this story about raven does not agree with modern theories about how rivers are formed or how animals obtain their coloration. It does, however, represent some important truths about the Native American view of the world.

On a more basic level, the story of Raven and Petrel provides its readers with an accurate mental representation of their physical environment. Thus, its incorporation might call the best scientific knowledge of its time. Myth does not contain science but represents an alternative way of viewing the universe. The argument here, however, is that science and myth covers the same domain: the characterization of the natural world for the purpose of understanding and predicting the behavior of nature. In this sense, we can say that myth performs some of the same functions we may call science. For example, from the story of Raven and Petrel, Native Americans could formulate a mental map of their area, so they could plan how to find fresh water, which is abundant in the region, but not distributed according to any discernable pattern like the flight of a bird being pursued.

More than any other aspect of quality, the scientific views of myth incorporates are likely to make it seem outdated, irrelevant, or false. However, if these views are understood in the context of what is known at the time, they may well provide us with insights useful to the science of our times. For example, the myth of Raven and Petrel emphasizes the randomness found in nature. Mathematicians and computer scientists recently discovered that natural phenomena like clouds, trees, and bodies of water are

not regular, and to study them, they have invented fractal geometry, which incorporates a random element in their description.

For some people, the more important question about myth is “Did it really happen?” However, this turns out to be a more complex issue than it first seems. Some myths deal with events in the lives of historical characters. These figures range from Gilgamesh, the ancient king of Uruk in 2000 B.C.E., to Cyrus who was the king of the Medes in the fifth century B.C.E., and to Daniel Boone, the eighteenth century American pioneer. In many instances, historical details may have been modified, or their emphasis changed in mythical stories told about historical figures. In this sense, the myth may not be true. It is, however, difficult to determine the motivations or character of any historical figure, and all the people in the society do not agree on the facts surrounding a figure or on the motivations for her or his actions. At the same time, though, mythical stories flesh out a historical framework otherwise represented only in inscriptions and treaties, telling us how people of a particular era felt and thought. In addition, myth can often alert us to the existence of historical events that might be unknown except for their preservation in a story.

Myths can provide us with a variety of insights into the minds and aspirations of the people who tell them. Greek mythology of a Trojan war provides a good example. The Greek forces destroyed Troy after a long siege. Eratosthenes put the date of the war at 1184 B.C.E. The war arose over the kidnapping of the Greek Helen, wife of Menelaus, by the Trojan Paris, son of Priam, the king of Troy. According to the myth, Paris at least believed that he was entitled to Helen. He received her from Aphrodite as a reward for granting to the goddess of love first prize in a beauty contest he was judging.

The story of the Trojan War provides insight into Greek culture, at least at the time of Homer. From the decision of Achilles to choose a short and glorious life over a long and uneventful one, we can see that the Greeks attached great value to victory in the battle. The story of the Trojan War shows that, in their view, war represented a contest of wits as much as one of military prowess and strength. The war shows us that Greek society was based on the alliances a person made with others: this is why the Greeks so readily mounted an expedition that spent ten years trying to recover one man's wife. It can also be seen how the Greeks saw human freedom and its limitation. It is easy to oversimplify the role of the gods and suggest that the Greeks believed they were enslaved by divine commands, or that they used the gods as an excuse for their actions.

In addition, it has metaphysical implications which emphasize the limitations that mortality places on human beings' attempts to achieve eternal fame. It also provides insight into Greek cosmology by incorporating contemporary scientific explanations of the nature of the universe. This is especially clear in the various accounts we have of the heroes' adventure on the way home from the war. They encountered gods who control natural phenomena, like Aeolus, god of the winds, Proteus, a sea god who can change himself into any natural phenomenon, and Poseidon, the great god of the sea. Early Greek science portrayed the physical universe as made up of conflicting and complementary natural forces- wind, water, air and fire. The myths of the time portrayed these forces as arising from differences of opinion among the gods.

The Aegean Sea is a treacherous body of water even today, when traversed by modern ships. Greek sailors traveled in small vessels that held fifty to a hundred men. Their ships were not self-contained entities that reached their destination after many uninterrupted days on the ocean. Rather, they navigated along the coastline and landed

on shore each night for sleep and provisions. The *Odyssey* makes clear that the open sea, out of sight of land, is a dangerous place; humans lacked control and were buffeted by forces that could easily destroy them. This account was scientifically accurate, representing the nature of the Aegean and the state of Greek science and technology at the time.

Every culture has evolved its own mythology as we described some of the Greeks', defining its character and offering a way to understand the world. Every society recognizes powers that are greater than them, such as light and dark, sun, storm and frost, flood and drought, and the growth of the plants on which their lives depend. Investing such powers with spirits that have a recognizably human nature has allowed people to make greater sense of a random and threatening universe. Propitiating the spirits with offerings and prayers allows their worshippers to feel that they have a degree of control. At the same time, by seeking the protection of deity, devotees are able to relinquish responsibility for their own lives to a higher authority. Myths concerning gods and goddesses help to give shape to the powers that are seen to preserve or endanger humanity. Myths of every culture reveal the power of love, with its accompanying anxiety and jealousy; the conflict between generations, the old and the new, the violence of men, especially on the battlefield or in hand to hand combat; the mischief of the trouble maker, bored by the steady pace of every events; the sadness or illness or injury; the mystery of death; and the possibility of another life after it. Stories about individual heroes chart the effect of enchantment upon the mind and body; the horror of madness with its disruption of human relations; the incidence of good luck and misfortune, and the whole issue of fate; the challenge of the unknown, whether a voyage into uncharted waters or a quest for a sacred object; the personal danger of a contest with a monster, even a beheading game; and the sadness of betrayal and treachery by

family or friends. Myths about the wider world try to explain its mysteries, dealing with the cycle of fertility in human beings, animals, and plants; the relationship between human kind and the gods; the creation of the world and the origins of society; and the nature of the universe.

Many cultures have their own versions of common myths, which contain archetypal images and themes. Myth criticism is used to analyze these threads in literature. Some scholars distinguish myths into two categories: 'Origin myths' which describe the origin of some feature of the natural or social world, and 'Cosmogony myths' which describes the creation of the world. "A creation myth is a symbolic narrative of how the world began and how people first came to inhabit it. Cultures generally regard their creation myths as true" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). In the society in which it is told, a creation myth is usually regarded as conveying profound truths, metaphorically, symbolically and sometimes in a historical or literal sense. They are commonly, although not always, considered cosmogonical myths—that is, they describe the ordering of the cosmos from a state of chaos (the initial gap created by the original separation of heaven and earth) or amorphousness. Creation myths often share a number of features. They often are considered sacred accounts and can be found in nearly all known religious traditions. They are all stories with a plot and characters who are deities, human-like figures, or animals, who often speak and transform easily. It addresses questions deeply meaningful to the society that shares them, revealing their central world view and the framework for the self-identity of the culture and individual in a universal context. Every origin myth is a tale of creation: origin myths describe how some new reality came into existence. In many cases, origin myths also justify the established order by explaining that it was established by sacred forces. The distinction between cosmogonic myths and origin myths is not clear-cut. A myth about the origin

of some part of the world necessarily presupposes the existence of the world—which, for many cultures, presupposes a cosmogonic myth. In this sense, one can think of origin myths as building upon and extending their cultures' cosmogonic myths. In fact, in traditional cultures, the recitation of an origin myth is often prefaced with the recitation of the cosmogonic myth.

According to Mircea Eliade, “All myths participate in some sort in the cosmological type of myth for every account of what came to pass in the holy era of the beginning is but another variant of the archetypal history: how the world came to be... The creation of the world being the pre-eminent instance of creation, the cosmogony becomes the exemplary model for creation of every kind... Origin myths continue and complete the cosmogonic myth” (cernunnos’). Mircea Eliade understood all myths to be cosmogonic myths. The purpose of myth was to return to the *time before time*, before the gods or supernatural beings created the world. This pre-cosmic state is sacred time, and for Eliade, it is the aim of the religious person to go beyond the profane world of space and time (through ritual or storytelling) and enter into the sacred space of eternal time, thereby experiencing the primal power in the form of *hierophany* (Greek: *hieros* “sacred,” and *phainein* “to show”) that gives order to the laws of culture and cosmos. Again, he concludes: “For many traditional cultures, nearly every sacred story qualifies as an origin myth. Traditional humans tend to model their behavior after sacred events, seeing their life as an ‘eternal return’ to the mythical age” (Eliade, 17). Because of this conception, nearly every sacred story describes events that established a new paradigm for human behavior, and thus nearly every sacred story is a story about creation.

Many people once believed in mythological animals and gods. These animals or gods may have control or have power over a part of human or natural life.

For example, the Greek god named Zeus had powers over lightning and storms. Whenever Zeus wanted to, he could make a storm to show his anger. Another example is that of the Egyptian god, *Atum*, who was said to be the creator of everything in the world. In Hindu mythology, the cause of thunderstorms was said to be the wrath of *Indra*, the chief of all gods. His most powerful weapon was the *Vajra*, or thunderbolt. It was said that no one could survive an attack from this weapon. In Mizo mythology, the cause of thunder was said to be the dragging sound of plates by *Pu Vana*, who lives in heaven. And thunder-bolt was said to be the shot of his gun.

As it is said that different tribes and cultures have different myths in accordance with their tradition, culture and social outlook, Mizo myths are not to be compared with others' with a common criteria. It is needed to be analyzed as it is. Myths were passed orally from generation to generation, and with the passing of time, the myths which were told in the east, west, north and south side of Mizoram may differ from place to place. In that case, Mizo myths require to be analyzed from the written records which are in published books in the present day. In Mizo folklore, there are about 30 myths originated in accordance with their social outlook which can be seen in published books. The myths include creation of earth, origin of heaven and living things, origin of stars, origin of natural calamities, animals transformation that how they came into being, and how religion or beliefs and practices began. Those myths were incumbent upon supernatural beings and gods like *Khuazingnu*, *Vanhrikpa*, *Pu Vana*, *Sabereka*, *Thlanrawkpa* etc. The Mizo ancestors were curious about death and the afterlife as much as their limited ability permitted. So, this type of myths which show the origin of beliefs and practices towards afterlife could be seen in the tale

Tlingi leh Ngama, Rihdil, Pialral and Mitthikhua with the role of *Pawla*, non-human. Much of these myths were believed as sacred by the people of the time.

The word myth is rendered ‘*tuan thu*’ in Mizo where ‘*tuan*’ has the same meaning as in the phrases ‘*tuan leh mang*’, ‘*tuana saruh khel*’, and ‘*thu*’ means word or story. The literal meaning is therefore ‘ancient history’. In the first published Dictionary of Mizo – English, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language* by J.H.Lorrain it is given as “probably the old form of the word **thawnthu** or **thanthu**.” Like other myths Mizo myths have existed for eons, and the sources beyond knowledge. Says Lalruanga, “Today’s stories are written and communicated in tablets [sic] or paper, but ancient tribal stories were written in the heart. As such it is pure and truthful as gold from the furnace free of all dross” (4).

1.3 Relation of myth to other narrative forms:

In western culture, there are a number of literary or narrative genres that scholars have related in different ways to myths. Examples are fables, fairy tales, folktales, sagas, epics, legends and etiologic tales. Another form of tale, the parable, differs from myth in its purpose and character. Even in the west, however, there is no agreed definition of any of these genres and some scholars question whether multiplying categories of narrative is helpful at all, as supposed to working with a very general concept such as the traditional tale. Non-western cultures apply classifications that are different both from the Western categories and from one another. Most, however, make a distinction between true and fictitious narratives, with true ones corresponding to what in the West would be called myths.

If it is accepted that the category of traditional tale should be subdivided, one way of doing so is to regard the various subdivisions as comparable to bands of colour

in a spectrum. Within this figurative spectrum, there will be similarities and analogies between myth and folktale or between myth and legend or between fairy tale and folktale. In the section that follows, it is assumed that useful distinction can be drawn between different categories. It should, however, be remembered throughout that these classifications are far from rigid and that, in many cases, a given tale might be plausibly assigned to more than one category.

Fables: The word fable derives from the Latin word *fabula*, which originally meant about the same as the Greek mythos; like mythos, it came to mean a fictitious or untrue story. Myths, in contrast, are not presented as fictitious or untrue. Fables, like some myths, feature personified animals or natural objects as characters. Unlike myths, however, fables almost always end with an explicit moral message, and this highlights the characteristic feature of fables- namely, that they are instructive tales that teach moral about human social behavior. Myths, by contrast, tend to lack this directly didactic aspect, and the sacred narratives that they embody are often hard to translate into direct prescriptions for action in every human terms.

Fairy tale: The term fairy tale, if taken literally, should refer only to stories about fairies, a class of supernatural and sometimes malevolent beings- often believed to be of diminutive size- who were thought by people in medieval and post medieval Europe to inhabit a kingdom of their own. Like myths, fairy tales present extraordinary beings and events. Unlike myths- but like fables- fairy tales tend to be placed in a setting that is geographically and temporally vague and might begin with the words, “Once upon a time there was a handsome prince...” A myth about a prince, by contrast, would be

likely to name him and to specify his lineage, since such details might be of collective importance to the social group among which the myth was told.

Folktales: There is much disagreement among scholars as to how to define the folktale; consequently, there is disagreement about the relation between folktale and myth. One view of the problem is that of the American folklorist Stith Thomson, who regarded myths as one type of folktale; according to this approach, the particular characteristic of myth is that its narratives deal with sacred events that happened ‘in the beginning’. Other scholars either consider folktale a subdivision of myth or regard the two categories as distinct but overlapping. The latter view is taken by the British Classicist Geoffrey S. Kirk, who in *myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures (1970)* uses the term myth to denote stories with an underlying purpose beyond that of simple story-telling and the term folktale to denote stories that reflect simple social situations and play on ordinary fears and desires. These typical folktale themes occur also in stories normally classified as myths, and there must always be a strong element of arbitrariness in assigning a motif to a particular category.

Sagas and Epics: The word saga is often used in a generalized and loose way to refer to any extended narrative recreation of historical events. A distinction is thus sometimes drawn between myths and sagas. While saga in its original sense is a narrative type confined to a particular time and place, epics are found worldwide. The relation between epic and myth is not easy to pin down, but it is in general true that epics characteristically incorporate mythical events and persons. An example is the ancient Mesopotamian epic *Gilgamesh*, which includes, among many mythical episodes, an account of the meeting between the hero *Gilgamesh* and *Utnapishtim*, the

only man to have attained immortality is the sole survivor with his wife of the flood sent by the gods. Myth is thus a prime source of the material on which epic draws.

Legends: In common usage the word legend usually characterizes a traditional tale thought to have a historical basis, as in the legends of King Arthur or of Robin Hood. In this view, a distinction may be drawn between myth which refers to the supernatural and the sacred, and legend which is grounded in historical fact. But the distinction between myth and legend must be used with care. In particular, because of the assumed link between legend and historical fact, there may be a tendency to refer to narratives that correspond to the one's own beliefs as legends, while exactly comparable stories from other traditions may be classified as myths; hence a Christian might refer to stories about the miraculous deeds of a saint as legends, while similar stories about a pagan healer might be called myths. As in other cases, it must be remembered that the boundaries between terms for traditional narratives are fluid, and that different writers employ them in quite different ways.

Parables: The term myth is not normally applied to narratives that have as their explicit purpose the illustration of a doctrine or standard of conduct. Instead, the term parable, or illustrative tale, is used. Familiar examples of such narratives are Sufism (Islamic mysticism), rabbinic (Jewish Biblical interpretive), Hasidism (Jewish pietism) and Zen Buddhism. That parables are essentially non-mythological is clear because the point made by the parable is known or supposed to be known from another source. Parables have a more subservient function than myths. They may clarify something to an individual or a group but do not take on the revelatory character of myth.

Etiological tales: Etiological tales are very close to myth, and some scholars regard them as a particular type of myth rather than as a separate category. In modern usage the term etiology is used to refer to the description or assignment of causes (Greek *antia*). Accordingly, an etiologic tale explains the origin of a custom, state of affairs, or natural feature in the human or divine world. Many tales explain the origin of a particular rock or mountain. Others explain iconographic features, such as the Hindu narrative ascribing the blue neck of the god Shiva to a poison he drank in primordial times. The etiologic theme often seems to be added to a mythical narrative as an afterthought. In other words, the etiology is not the distinctive characteristic of myth.

CHAPTER 2

Characteristics, Classification and Development of Mizo Myths

According to Lalruanga, a renowned folklorist among the Mizo, myth has occupied only a few spaces in the Mizo folk narrative, only about one-tenth of the Mizo folk narratives can be called myth. He said, “In my point of view, we have only a few myths, we keep paces with others in legend, but we are extremely rich in folklore” (144). Although few in numbers, Mizo myths have a wide range and are unique in quality; this is why we can say Mizo myths have a special worth as compared to other myths. While other tribes in North East India shared different myths among themselves, Mizo myths have different characteristics from the myths of the other tribes. It may be because the Mizo ancestors had no interaction with the other tribes in the North East. It is difficult to say the exact number of myths in Mizo literature. According to Thanmawia, we have about 30 myths in Mizo literature, but all these myths are related with one another, some wrote them in one story while others wrote them in two or three stories. So, we can say that it is wiser to focus the study on which myths are bound together in the small package of Mizo myth than to count their number. Among the Mizo folk narratives, there are some stories that have the characteristics of folktale and legend with myth element in them, called etiological narrative, such as – *Tlingi leh Ngama*, *Lasiri leh Lasari and Thangsira leh Thangzaia*, *Hlawndawhthanga*, *Chhura*, *Tumchhingi leh Raldawna*, *Rahtea*, *Sakhi leh Satel*, *Tualvungi leh Zawlpala*, *Chawngmawii leh Hrangchhuana*, *Zauhranga* and the only cumulative tale in Mizo folk narrative, *Chemtatrawta*. According to Santi Tafarrela, Professor of Antelope Valley College in California, “An etiological narrative is a story that purports to explain (in mythic, religious, or literary terms) the origin of something. It is, in other words, an

imaginative story triggered by a question about how (or why) something came to be in the world” (Tafarrela).

Therefore, the myth elements found in these etiological narratives play an important role in the study of Mizo myth, so these etiological narratives will be included in this study of Mizo myth.

In Mizo myth, we have different stories about how the earth came into existence, how the soil began to exist, how men first came to live, how eclipse occurred, why the storm began to strike, why the earthquake began to shook, how the stars got scattered in the sky, how all the trees and plants came to exist, how they got their names and certain natural calamities. How the Mizo people began to practice their religious rites, their beliefs and practices including their belief in life after death can also be seen in these myths. Although these myths are few and very brief, they contain important elements for the study of myth; therefore, it is important to look carefully into these stories. These stories we are about to study were passed on from the ancestors to their children by word of mouth, so there are some differences in how the story were told in the eastern, western, northern and southern parts of Mizoram, and among the different sub-tribes of Mizo. Therefore, we will be using only those in written form and published in books. The books which are mainly used to write this dissertation are- *Mizo Hnahthlak Thawnthu Vol I* by R.L.Thanmawia, *Mizo Thawnthu* published by Tribal Research Institute, *Mizo Thawnthu Zirzauna* by Dr.Lalruanga.

2.1. Characteristics of Mizo Myth:

2.1.1 Correlation with one another:

Almost all the Mizo myths are correlated with one another; this relation is one of the most important characteristics of Mizo myth. Their relation is so good that one-third

of all the Mizo myths can be told as one story. In the first, there was the myth of a supernatural being called *Khuazingnu*, who made all the earth, forests and animals, but her creation was not like what we see in today's environment, it was imperfect. Then, the next story tells how the soil was formed and the next how mountains and rivers came to exist, and how rice was first made. And then the myth of *Vanhrikpa*, which relates how things began to exist in the form they are in the present days. We may say that in these stories we have the sequel of creation theory complementing the works of *Khuazingnu*. *Khuazingnu* made the rudiment of earth, and then the creatures made the soil, mountains and rivers, and rice for their living. And then another non-human being, called *Vanhrikpa* made the different creatures into the form they are today.

Secondly, *Sabereka Khuangkaih*, *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi*, *Savun Lehkha*, *Chhinlung*, *Thimzing* and *ArsiThawnthu* are all related so that if one of the stories is told, one will have to continue with the next story. One of the Mizo myths that have the most myth element is *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi* which led to the making of the story *Sabereka KhuangKaih*, which are usually told in sequence. Also, the story, *Savun Lehkha*, which tells about the 'leather manuscript', also originates from *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi*. In Mizo myth, *Thimzing* occupies an important place; it is the story where all the creations became what they are today. *Thimzing*, often translated as 'eclipse' in English, tells about how different animals –*Vakul*, *Koro*, *Vazar*, *Chepchep*, *Zawng* and *Thehlei*, came into existence (assumed their present states). It also explains how '*Taumeichherchhi*' and how the striped form of the *Sakei* were first came into being. These myth elements found in these stories, along with six of the eight stories about the origin of stars are all related to *Thimzing*. One of the famous events in the Mizo mythical history, '*Chhinlung*' has a strong relation with *Thimzing*. These two stories cannot be separated from each other. It appears that *Thimzing* is the genesis of

‘*Chhinlung*’. We have two stories that tell how an eclipse started to occur. These two stories, though slightly different, have common endings. Once, an eclipse took place for a long time and then ‘*Thimzing*’ occurred. When *Thimzing* changed many human beings to different animals, it was *Khuazingnu*, the one we have mentioned earlier, who closed the door of *Chhinlung*. From the time when many men escaped from *Chhinlung*, all human beings and animals used to live in harmony, even man and natural beings mated with each other, and then ‘*Thlanrawkpa*’ was born.

Among the Mizo myths, there is one story that has a strong link with history; it is the story of ‘*Khampat Bungpui*’. This story, along with the one that tells us about how the Mizo people were divided into different tribes, also originated from the story of ‘*Chhinlung*’, these stories is the continuation of ‘*Chhinlung*’ story. Therefore, more than twenty stories can be classified as serial. Though we have classified these myths into two groups, we can say that they are all related with one another, for a good story teller, they can be told as one story.

Some myths such as – how the storm began to strike and origin of the earthquake has no link with any other story. Also, those stories where we find practice of religious rites and how the Mizo ancestors started to make sacrifices to the demons, the story about their beliefs in the life after death, are also different from the ones we have said in the previous paragraph. These stories are distinct and have no connection with those we have mentioned in the previous paragraph.

2.1.2 Freedom of creatures:

Unlike the myths of other tribes, in Mizo myth, gods and all creatures have freedom and lived in harmony. In the myth of other tribes, gods or creators have high authority over human and other creations; the central figures of their myths often are the

gods. Greek myth is strongly bound by the story of love and hatred among their gods – ‘Zeus’ and his sons Prometheus and Epimetheus, and the other gods. In Hindu myth, we can say that the works of the creators Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, their relationship with the other gods and the hatred among them made the whole Hindu myth. The sky woman and her sons in Iroquois myth, ‘Father of all spirits’ in the Aborigines’ myth, and the ‘Kaang’ in the myth of the Bushmen are all the center of their stories. Unlike these myths, supernatural beings do not occupy high position in the Mizo myths; they do not have the equivalent position compared to the gods in the other myths.

Different supernatural beings such as *Khuazingnu*, *Vanhrikpa*, *Sabereka*, *Chhama* and, the human and non-human breed, *Thlanrawkpa*, although they have some super powers, are not the origin or beginning of all creations, and they are not even referred to as gods. Unlike other myths, these superpowers have no deep connections with each other, the war and hatred among the gods, love and descendants among the supernatural beings, or taking vengeance is not seen among these supernatural beings. Some of the affairs and taking vengeance we see in the myths are usually between creatures and creatures. In the beginning, though the earth and some animals and plants were created by *Khuazingnu*, yet all the follow up works were done by the creatures. The existence of soil, mountains and rivers, rice, *awklem* (eclipse) and storm etc. result from the works of the creatures. Also, we can say that the prime cause for the existence of different kinds of animals, *Thimzing*, is the result of the works of the creature *Awk*. The creators had no responsibility in the transformation of many human into different animals; they did not vent nor expend their anger upon the humans or creatures; instead, *Khuazingnu* helped the humans to escape when *Thimzing* occurred and put them inside *Chhinlung*. And, all the birds and animals and even humans that we see in *Thlanrawkpa*

Khuangchawi, the cause of what they are today and how they got their names depend on how they acted that day.

2.1.3 Simplicity:

Simplicity is one of the main characteristics of Mizo myths; they are characterized by primitiveness setting and characters. Unlike other myths populated by many gods and their descendants, different authorities and the combination of the confusing results of their works, Mizo myths are simple and very short in length; they have no confusing meanings and are easily understood by any reader. According to Lalruanga, “ancient tribal stories were written on page of the heart, which is pure and truthful as gold from the furnace, free of all dross.” Its simplicity does not decrease the value of the story for the Mizo people; they will live as long as the tribe lives. The myths of some tribes are religious taboos and are not told in common places; common people are not allowed to tell and are told only by professional story tellers. Unlike this, Mizo myth can be told by everyone, high and low, old and young. There is no specific place for telling a story, it can be told beside the fire place, as a bedtime story and even at social gatherings. At times when there was *Zawlbuk*, it used to be an important place where stories are told and listened. Although there are some myths that relate the religious rites, the beginning of the mode of religion such as – *Rihdil Chanchin*, *Pialral leh Mitthi khaw chanchin*, *Pawla chanchin* and the beginning of the time when people started to worship demons called *Chhama*, *Ngalsia* and *Lasi thawnthu*, they are not religious taboos. They have strong connection with religion and are the foundation of the beginning of religion, but they can be said and told everywhere and every time. Though these stories are told anywhere by any person, they do not lose their value and reliability, in fact, they add special values to the owning culture.

2.2 Classifications:

2.2.1 Origin Myth:

The origin of things, how they were created and how they happened to exist, comes under this classification. There are only few stories in Mizo myth that can be called origin myth. While most folklorists used creation myth and origin myth to mean one thing, it can carry different meanings in the myths of Mizo. The coming into existence of things from empty space (*ex nihilo*) can be divided into two groups: the creation by supernatural beings and by the works of the creatures. *Khuazingnu* is responsible for the existence of earth, human, animals, trees and plants. The story does not tell if she gave command like the God of Israel in Hebrew myth, or she created them with her own hands, but it is clearly seen that she did the creations.

“In the beginning the world did not exist and neither did us human beings. There was one God name *Khuazingnu*. She made the Earth and she created a variety of green vegetation to protect the earth from searing heat and to give it a pleasant atmosphere. . .

“As time passed, to feed on green vegetation that she had created, she created humans, birds, animals and insects” (*Mizo Studies* II.1, 57).

As we have seen, creation, along with *Sabereka Khuangkaih*, is indeed the works of a god. At the time when *Thlanrawkpa* was preparing himself to perform *Khuangchawi*, he sadly forgot to invite his father-in-law, *Sabereka*. *Sabereka* was very displeased and created *Sabereka Khuangkaih* to hinder the preparation of *Thlanrawkpa* and stop him from performing *Khuangchawi*. The possession of magic on earth also came from the supernatural beings; it was given to *Vanhrikpa* by the daughter of a god to make peace with him.

Unlike these creations of gods or supernatural beings, the existence of storm, earthquake, mountains and rivers, mushroom and eclipse is the consequence of the works and actions of creations. The creatures did not make these on their own will or might, but are accidental creations resulting from inadvertent mistakes, and the creatures did not expect to make them happen. During the time when all creations, humans and animals lived together in harmony, there was a big tree standing at the center of the earth. They cut down this tree, but the soil was not as dry as they had expected, the fallen tree depressed the soil and created channels, so mountains and rivers were formed. When *Pawngeklir* rolled a huge *ek* out from the soil and disposed it at the end of the earth, she met the keeper of the end of the earth and told him a lie that all men had died. The keeper then tried to destroy the earth and shook it as hard as he could and this is why earthquake happened. According to some sayings, the keeper put fire on the huge tortoise that carried the earth on his back, and so the earth shakes because the tortoise makes sudden movement. Though the endings are different, both relate the existence of earthquake, that it was not the creation of gods but the work of a creature. Likewise, supernatural beings did not take part in the making of the storm, tornado, eclipse and mushroom etc., and there was no specific person or creature responsible for the actions. Some are the consequences of anger while some occurred because of the carelessness of the creatures. Anyhow, they started from the movement, action and feelings of the creations.

2.2.2 Transformation and Apellation myth:

In this, section will trace how creatures started to change into the form they are in today, how the uncompleted creations were made complete. Most of the creations were not made in the form they are today, and they were not given their names. Under

certain situations, they were transformed and became what they are today. Some of them did not change their form but were given higher positions. The beginning of the completion of the earth and other creations can be further classified into two groups: transformation and reformation.

a) Transformation: During the time of *Thimzing* many human beings were transformed into different animals and things.

“While the world was in complete darkness, all of a sudden strange things happened. Everyone became different. Some turned into monkeys. Some turn into chimpanzees. The Chief and his council members turned into *Vakul* birds. The honoured brave *Thangchhuah* men, who were wearing the *Thangchhuahpuan* and respected turban all turned into tigers.

The young men who were having a mock wrestling all turned into bears. Young men and women who had formed *lawm* groups turned into spools of *Koro* and *Vazar* birds.

Those who had gone to the jhum with fire lights turned into glow worms or *Taumeichherchhi*.

The Chawngthu tribes turned into monkeys. The *Vangchhe* tribes turned into elephants. The *Paite* and *Vuite* tribes turned into squirrels, and the *Ralte* tribes into *Chepchep*” (*Mizo Studies*, II.2, 210).

Stars in the Mizo myths are not creations of gods, but something that are changed under certain circumstances. Usually, they are the transformations of humans and animals. Seven of them are metamorphosed during *Thimzing*; they are *Khiangte Zawngzim* (Taurus), *Chhohreivung* (Orion), *Sikeisen* (Mars), *Siruk* (Pleiades), *Dingdi Puantah* (Capella and three other stars in Auriga, which form an isosceles triangle), *Saikawikap* (Aquila and Delphin) and *Zangkhua* (Great Bear). There were persons who became stars after their death like *Chawngmawii* (Jupiter), *Hrangchhuana* (Saturn) and

Hrangkhupa Se Lu. Some also believed that *Siruk* was made by the six sisters whose soul went up to the sky and stayed there as the Pleiades stars.

Apart from these, we have a mythical tiger man in Mizo myth called *Keimi* (a person who has the magical power to change himself or herself into a tiger, and back to human form). We see this kind of transformation in the story *Hlawndawhthanga te unau*, where *Hlawndawhthanga* and his brothers transformed themselves into tigers, this is the prime cause of the belief in the existence of *Keimi* among the Mizo ancestors. There are certain types of transformation: *Fartuah* and *Vaube* are the transformation of the two brothers *Thangsira* and *Thangzaia*. We have *Saisu* from the transformation of *Phungpuinu*, who gobbled up *Tumchhingi*, the wife of *Raldawna*. All the things we have mentioned here are transformed from one form to another, so we can put them under this classification.

b) Appellation: We have learnt from the story of *Vanhrikpa* that many creations were given higher position or better form and how they came to exist in the form they are today. Why a she-goat always smells its kid while breast-feeding, how *Hnahthial* and *Di* swapped their places so they could grow better on the favorable soil till today, why *Mau* and *Pang* became thick and strong so that the wind would not destroy them, are found in the story of *Vanhrikpa*. Also, from the story of *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi*, *Zuhrei*, *Zawhte* and *Thehlei* got their names from their action in the story. *Ar* also came to be called ‘*chiri*’.

‘*Zuhrei* had a good taste for *zu*, he took so long to drink the *zu* at the event of *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi* that they named him *Zurei*. As time passes, it came to be called *Zuhrei*. Later a cat came and walked along a small slender log to everyone’s surprise, so *Thlanrawkpa* said that they should call it *Zawhte*. That is how a cat is came to be known as *Zawhte*. A moment later, a squirrel came and walked along a rope, everyone shouted with astonishment that it had more ability than the cat, and then *Thlanrawkpa* gave it the name *Theihlei*. For a time

it was called *Theihlei*, but with the passing of time, it is now known as *Thehlei*.’ (Thanmawia 66)

In the same story, we find how *Ar* has its knees bent backward, why *Sahuai* does not want to look at the sun, why *bawng* is beaten with a stick while ploughing the fields, why the *Paihte* and *Tuikuk* men have skill in weaving. The story of *Savun Lehkha* tells us why the Mizo people came late in the world of letters than the *Vai* comes under this category.

We find why the bat goes out to look for food only at night in the story of *Chungleng leh Hnuaileng Indo*, why the prawn has fluffy lips in the story of *Chemtatrawta*, why the bamboos of *Reiek Tlang* came to be covered with limb and knot in *Boruak Indona* story and why all the animals came under the control of *Lasi* ; and how men were possessed by these spirits are seen in the story on *Chawngtinleri*. Again, the stories of how rice was first prepared to be planted on the soil and how Chhura made plains in Champhai and Vanlaiphai cities are included in this group. The bamboos in the eastern part of Mizoram are found to have their limbs in reverse position; we can see the reason of this in the story of *Tlingi leh Ngama*. All these stories we have mentioned can be classed in this group.

All these stories we have mentioned above account for the beginning of things, but the myth element in them are not of primary creation, but the metamorphoses of creations due to certain circumstances. A large proportion of Mizo myth may be categorized under this form. The mystery of original creation *ex nihilo* might have eluded the ancestors of the Mizo owing to the higher demand of intellectual and philosophical speculation.

2.2.3 Myths which influence Belief, Practice and History:

Though belief, practice and history are different in meaning, they are the materials that join Mizo myths with the real and actual, and so we will group them together under this classification. Some myths contain actions and events that are so ridiculous that they evoke no more than comic entertainment, while others contain elements that could relate to temporality. Nevertheless, acceptance of myths does not rely on belief in the reality of the story.

a) Beliefs and Practices:

The Mizo people regarded the supernatural with respect and fear because they believed that blessing and curse, good and evil come from the supernatural powers. They believed in the existence of the creator god who was believed to be a good spirit dwelling in the sky above, and they called him '*Pu Vana*'. He is the giver of all blessings. At the same time they believed that powerful but hostile spirits inhabit certain nooks and corners of the forests. Whenever humans encroach upon their haunts they would show displeasure by causing sickness to the transgressing individual and his family. The first primitive impulse was to placate the offended spirit by animal sacrifice. The origin of this spirit worship was thought to have begun with the myth of *Ngalsia*. According to Hrangthiauva, this religious rite was first performed by Hualthana, a common man of Seipui village (35). The story goes like this: the wife of *Ngalsia* was a kind of evil spirit who could read the mind of the people, and she had the ability to make people dumb, but the people could not do any harm to her. And another myth '*Tuihuai lal Chhama*' strengthened their belief in spirits. In the story there was one man called *Chhuihthanga* whose wife planted a *ting* plant beside a *Sih*. The roots of the *ting* plant went too deep under the ground and grew into the nose of *Chhama*, the

king of the evil spirits of water, and encircled his body. The king got angry and killed *Chhuihthanga*. According to Hrangthiaua, the event took place around 1560 AD in the old village of Thasiama (37). From these stories, the Mizo ancestors became more aware of the evil spirits and the harms they did to humans. So they believed that these evil spirits were the ones who made them sick, and they believed that they needed to make more sacrifices to these spirits to win their favors. Thus the ritual practices like *Khal*, *Bulthluk*, *Daibawl* and *Bawlpui* were born.

The Mizo ancestors put high esteem on the brave and heroic men, good at hunting animals. Since their religion was strongly connected with life after death, everyman born wanted to be a good hunter. They believed that they needed to perform *Thangchhuah* during their life time so their soul might go to *Pialral*, a place where they would live a luxurious life. Hunting and killing many animals and then become a *Thangchhuahpa* was the fondest dream and desire of all the men folks. They believed that killing many animals was a blessing of *Lasi*. Some of the brave men and good hunters were believed to be in love with a *Lasi*; the spirit blessed them in hunting and gave them good opportunity to kill many animals. The queen of *Lasi* was *Chawngtinleri*; she was believed to have the power over all animals. When someone shot an animal, he would sing *Hlado* upon the dead body of the animal. One of the songs that ratify that *Chawngtinleri* was the queen of *Lasi* is:

“Siamtu’n e, Siamtinleri’n,
 Tanah nghovar mi hlan ulaw;
 Bualdim e, ki tha le maw,
 Chho sang e, kai lai ka thloh awk e” (Thanmawia, *Mizo HlaHlui*, 96).

(The creator, *Chawngtinleri* gave me a deer from *Tan tlang*, I shot the one with the best and most beautiful antler).

This belief arose from one of the myths, where *Lianchea* gave the hands of his sister *Chawngtinleri* to the king of *TanTlang* spirits, *Lalchungnunga* and won the favors of these spirits in hunting.

In Mizo society, it was not a sin for a bachelor to sleep with a maiden, moreover it was a matter of pride and a matter to be boastful about. This opinion started from the story of ‘*Pawla* and *Sanui*’ which was all linked with their beliefs. *Pawla* and *Sanui* guarded the doors of the city of the dead. They were non-human and twice as huge as normal human. All those who were dead and were to enter the city of the dead were struck by a huge catapult by *Pawla* and it was so painful that it sores for three years. But *Pawla* did not dare to strike a man who has slept with a maiden, *Thangchhuahpa* and a dead infant. Because of this belief, the bachelors were extremely frightened to die before sleeping with a maiden. In one of the songs it says;

Di nei lo Pawla'n a sai an ti

Fam mah ila min sai bil tawh hlei lawng e

Ka nenrang puan tial ka di zawнна (SAIP 145)

(Him who has not loved is shot by *Pawla*, so they say;

I'd never be shot by him though no I die

My chequered *Puan* had I shared with my love)

So the ancestors' belief, their religion and practices correspond to with these kinds of myths. The traditional practices of the Mizo ancestors, *Thlai Chhiah*, portion of food they spared for the soul of their dead family member, and *MimKut* (one of the festivals of Mizo) have interesting connection with the story *Tlingi leh Ngama*.

b) History: Some myths told as stories have strong link with history but have no proof of reality. We have a few myth of this kind and they had been told and retold without a hint of disbelief that they might have actually occurred in the

remote past. As we have mentioned in the earlier part, when many humans turned to different animals during *Thimzing*, the creator, *Khuazingnu* picked a couple of each from different sub-tribes and closed them inside *Chhinlung*. This is one of the most familiar stories among the Mizo myth. We also find the story of *Chhinlung* whence Mizo ancestors were believed to have come out whenever the history of Mizo is spoken of. When the Mizo ancestors were leaving Burma, they planted a Bunyan tree at *Khampat* village which later came to be fondly called *Khampat Bungpui*. In addition to this, there is one story that tells us why different tribes of Mizo got scattered in different parts of North East India. In the story, when the people were migrating towards the west, they were divided into groups; the leading group left traces so the others could follow them. But one tree upon which they left their mark happened to be a *Muk* tree whose bark turns black immediately after cutting. The second group came upon the tree, and finding the mark quite old, gave up hope of ever catching up with them, and decided to settle without going further west. This story explains how different sub-tribes of Mizo were scattered in different parts of North East India. These myths we have mentioned are the reason and origin of the religion of the Mizo people, their belief and practices, so it is best to put them inside this category.

2.2.4 Myths of the flood:

A limitless ocean featured in many creation myths as the primeval state of the world. A flood of global proportion was also a common theme, in which an inundation was sent to wipe out sinful humankind and thus restore the world to its pristine original state, so that it could be repopulated by a nobler race. The Egyptians believed that their creator god, *Ra*, would one day tire of humanity and return the world to the watery abyss of *Nun* before beginning a new cycle of creation. Stories of overwhelming floods

reflected the ambiguous nature of humanity's relationship with water, which was vital to life but also carried the threat of violence and devastation. The Tigris and Euphrates, the two rivers on which the civilization of Mesopotamia depended, flooded unpredictably, and their fearsome nature is expressed in several versions of the flood myth, which was to find its way into the Hebrew tradition as the familiar story of Noah's ark (Cotterell, 276).

Like the classification of the myth of another clan, there is one myth in Mizo cosmogony that can be put under this category, a story that tells about a violent flood that occurred, *Ngaitei Thawnthu*. Though there are two different sayings of the story *Ngaitei Thawnthu*, both portray the violent flood that was caused by *Tuihuai*. In the story, there was a beautiful girl named Ngaitei. She was admired and adored by the god of water so he wanted to make her his wife, when Ngaitei refused his proposal; he sent his flood to bring her to him. This myth is slightly different from the Egyptian myth of flood, though the floods are caused by gods in both the myths, the flood in the Mizo myth was meant for only one person and did not threaten the whole population.

2.3 Mizo myth in written form:

If we are to trace Mizo myth in its written form, we need first to study the growth of some Mizo folk narratives. Mizo myth is very much limited to a few cycles, and a separate book of it does not even exist. Even the Mizo folk narrative books were also not much found. The Mizo tribe is a very young one, and the Mizo script also very young and the Mizo script was born only in 1894. But even before the Mizo alphabet appeared, Mizo language was put to writing. The first word in Mizo language was written in Chittagong hill tracts by the Deputy Commissioner Capt.T.H. Lewin in his

book, *Wild Races of South Eastern India* in the year 1870. In this book, in pages 125-152, some words of Mizo language were written in Roman script which matches the tone of Mizo language. Words such as *Lhoosai*, *Koa-vang*, *Patyen*, *Tlandrok-pah* and many more were written conveying the sounds as he heard them. Even though folk narrative were not included, the words mentioned earlier were the words from Mizo folk narrative and therefore deserve to be mentioned in the study of the written form of Mizo folk narrative.

In the year 1874 T.H. Lewin wrote another book which constituted one of the foundations of the study of Mizo language called *Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect of the Dzo of Kuki language with Vocabularies and Popular Tales*. It is an important book in the study of Mizo language where in many words and also three famous Mizo folk narratives, namely, *Chemtatrawta*, *Lalruanga* and *Kungawrhi* were written in the Roman script expressing the sound of Mizo speech as best an Englishman's ears could have received. Here, the story of *Chemtatrawta* was titled *The Consequences*. Here is a sample passage of the tale rendered:

"Tchemtadrokai-kuang pan a-kut a-tscet. A-htin a-ura, ropuikimaashatlagh; thing varungakha-um varungtuka den-suk; varungchu-un-in ling-kin buhahtaihteh; aling-kin chu-un tsa-nghulmitatscetsuk; atsa-nghulchu-un in bag omnahna-tchung a-hpur-suk bag, saibeng-aalut; asaichu-un-in tartey in atlaw-tsciek-suk; tarteytuikur a-vatlagh..." (Lewin 71)

The tale of *Lalruanga* was also titled *Story of Lal Ruanga*, and let us sample another passage:

"Rulpuingun-tcherangun-chunula-in an-hlaw, chu-ti-chu-un nulapakat-in ahlaw-du-loh: Chuti-chu-un rulpui thing hnaingunaatcher, chu-ti-chu-un rulpui-in

atcha, Tui-Ruang / Tleng-chu-un tiow-vin nawt-drok, ta-tukani-angey..." (Lewin, 72)

It is obvious that he had written it from hearing the spoken words. Even though it is very different from Mizo language as written nowadays, it is readable and therefore it is very precious. The two stories in this book, *Chemtatrawta* and *Lalruanga* were considered as Mizo myths and therefore this is the first book on Mizo myth ever written. The next person to render Mizo language in writing was J.Shakespear, Superintendent of Lushai Hills. Four years after the Mizo alphabet was born, in 1898, he had written a book '*Mizo leh Vai Thonthu*'. This book is the first book of Mizo folk narrative written in Mizo language. There are 10 stories in this book:

1. Thangpasaisira leh Nuhlupi thu
2. Tlumtea-teUnao thu
3. Zaia khualzin thu
4. Zaia mihring sa eitu khuazin thu
5. Sichangneii thu
6. Chhura thu - 1
7. Chhura thu- 2
8. Liandova-te u-nao thu
9. Khena leh Rama-te-unao thu
10. Pa fa hruaibo thu

Among the ten stories mentioned above, a story having the characteristics of a myth is not found. In November 1902, J.Shakespear published the first monthly news paper, '*Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Lehkhabu*'. In the first issue of this newspaper one Mizo folk

narrative, '*Hmasang Chanchin*' written by Lalhrima, chief of Sesawng was included. And in the year 1909, '*Folktales of the Lushais and their Neighbour*' which was also written by J.Shakespear was published. Frederick J. Sandy, one British missionary also produced book titled '*Legends of Old Lushai*' in the year 1919. There are twenty- two Mizo stories in this book. And in the year 1949, Major A.G Mc Call published another book, '*The Lushai Chrysalis*'. In this book there are thirteen Mizo stories written in English (Thanmawia. Mizo Hnahthlak, 9).

In the year 1938, forty-four years after the Mizos have the alphabet, there were many Mizos who could read and write. One of the former intellectual women among the Mizos, Nuchhungi wrote a school textbook. In this textbook titled '*Serkawn Graded Reader*' there are three volumes containing thirty Mizo stories. This book is significant because it is written by a Mizo and therefore to considered a landmark in the literary history of the Mizo. It is different from the stilted attempts made by foreigners in its smooth story-telling in correct Mizo language. The year 1938 was considered an important milestone in the development of Mizo folk narrative.

Fresh editions of Mizo myths and stories are coming in succession. P.S. Dahrawka published *Mizo Thawnthu* in 1950 wherein there are twenty- one stories. In this book besides these twenty- one different tales, there are also 22 different tales of *Chhurbura*. Among these different tales and the tales of *Chhurbura* there are some tales which contained some characteristics of Mizo myth.

In the year 1992, Tribal research Institute, Department of Art and Culture, Mizoram published a good book *Mizo Thawnthu*. This book contains 26 folktale and popular Mizo myths.

In 1994, C. Vanlalawma published a small collection of Mizo stories under the title, '*Hmanlai hian mawm*' containing 13 stories, six of which have myth element.

By the turn of the 21st century, fresh awareness of the value and significance of culture and folk narrative became vogue among scholars and the laity. Academic began to give attention to the study and analysis of folk literature. In 2000 Dr. Lalruanga published *Mizo Thawnthu Zirzauna*, which is a pioneering work on the analysis of Mizo folk narrative. This book was divided into two parts. The first part contains the study of Folklore. The second part contains 21 Mizo stories eight of which are Mizo myths.

By the year 2009, two books by R.L. Thanmawia, *Mizo Hnahthlak Thawnthu*, Volume 1 and volume 2 were published. These books contain Mizo stories classified according to the nature and characteristics of the stories. Volume 1 was titled *Tuan Thu leh Ramsa Thawnthu* containing Mizo myths and Animal Tales. The first part of volume 1 contains all Mizo myths in 27 stories. The second part contains Animal tales and there are 23 stories. Volume 2 is titled *Hmangaihna Thawnthu*, and there are 21 love stories. Among these 21 stories, two of them possess folklore and myth elements. As mentioned earlier, these two books are the repository of Mizo folk narratives.

Another contribution to Mizo folk narrative was by Lalhmachhuana Zofa. He had published four books of Mizo folk narratives. Apart from this, Mizo folk narrative which occupies a phenomenal place is the story of *Chhurbura* which was published as an individual book in the year 2004.

In the year 2013 Lal Rinawma published a collection of 34 stories under *Thawnthu Un* . These stories are not commonly known and had some distinct features.

2.4 Translations of Mizo myths:

There are two English translations of Mizo folk narratives by Frederick J. Sandy and A.G. Mc Call, *Legends of Old Lushai* and *The Lushai Chrysalis* respectively. They were written before the existence of the Mizo printed versions, and they possess remarkable quality in that they were translations from word of mouth. Yet another book of English translations by J.Shakespear of eleven stories are included in *The Lushei Kuki Clans* written in the year 1912 and published the same year. Though it was published after the existence of print version in Mizo language, the stories which were translated in this book could not be found in the earlier Mizo folk narrative books. This book is also an important milestone for Mizo folk literature. J.Shakespear had written several creation myths of Mizo. The stories translated in this book are:

1. Awklem lo awm tan dan
2. Thimzing
3. Chhinlung
4. Thlanrawkpa khuangchawi
5. Ngaitei thawnthu
6. Origin of Tuichong river
7. Zawngte pi pu uai
8. Savawm tui khuap
9. Rimenhawihhi
10. Chhura
11. Mualzavata

These stories were not only popular but they were the treasures of the Mizo tribe and contain some of the phenomenon myths. Therefore this book is considered very important in the study of Mizo myths.

Translated Mizo myths in other languages had not been published separately, and so we can have to rely on the published Mizo folk narrative translations for sources of myths translations. T.H. Lewin, who pioneered the written form of Mizo language, again took

the lead in this work. The three stories in the book *Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect of the Dzo or Kuki Language* were written in Mizo language and then translated into English. As mentioned earlier, the spelling of Mizo words which were irregularly written and were hardly readable were translated into English which render the true meaning of the stories.

Folktales of Mizoram published in 1997 by Dr. Laltluangliana Khiantge contains 68 stories in English. Among them seven have the characteristics of myth. Another book of Dr. Laltluangliana Khiantge published in 2002 titled *Mizo Songs and Folktales* contains stories in Mizo and English. Among these stories 7 have the characteristics of myths. A book containing 60 stories in English translation, *Culture and Folklore of Mizoram* was published in 2005 by B.Lalthangliana. The stories were all folktales and had no characteristics of a myth. Tribal Research Institute of Art and Culture Department published *The Mizo Folktale* in 2006 which contains 32 stories translated in English. Among these three have myth characteristics. Dr. Rualzakhumi contributed English versions of 13 Mizo myths in three issues of *Mizo Studies* (II.1, II.2 & II.4) published by Mizo Department, Mizoram University.

1. Creation Myth
2. How the Land Acquired Soil
3. How the Mountains and Rivers Were Created
4. Vanhrikpa
5. How Rice began to be a Staple Food
6. How Earthquake Began
7. How Storm Began
8. Thimzing

9. Chhinlung
10. Chinlung (Thado Version)
11. How Chhinlung was named (As orally narrated by Hmar elders)
12. The Path Ethnic Chhinlung People Followed
13. How Magic was Acquired

Margaret L. Pachuau published *Handpicked Tales of Mizoram*, in the year 2008. In this book, there are 14 tales; among these two stories have characteristics of myth.

Chapter 3

Creatures and Supernatural beings

3.1 Supernatural beings.

Super heroes and supernatural beings more powerful than ordinary human beings have appeared in the myths of all races. These superhuman and supernatural beings are usually the main characters, if not the creators, of such tales. The differences between myths are based upon the complexity of the people's imagination and the civilization they belong to. The formation, powers and functions of the super beings differ among various myths.

Greek myth is rich in gods and supernatural beings and some not exactly categorized as gods. Mother Earth, *Gaea* and her son *Uranus* produced many off-springs called the *Titans*, and *Zeus* was born out of *Cronus* and *Rhea*. The botherance and confusion between the immortal gods, jealousy and betrayal gave birth to disastrous wars. *Zeus* was a Casanova has the ability of pleasing a woman leading to a production of many off-springs, all from different mothers. The hatred, chaos and fights among them occupy a vast place in the Greek myth (Cotterell, 22). Likewise in the Egyptian myth, we find many gods copulating and producing many offspring. Their greatest god known as *Ra* or *Atum* (Sun God) gave birth to *Shu* (Sky God) *Tefnut* (God of Water) *Shu* and *Tefnut* got married and they gave birth to two children, namely, god of the earth, *Geb* and goddess of the sky, *Nut*. The great god *Rafell* in love with his daughter *Nut*, the sky goddess and so he married her. Meanwhile, *Nut* deeply loved her brother *Geb* even while being the wife of *Ra*. *Nut* also fell in love with *Thoth* (god of wisdom) who was conceived by *Ra* alone using his super powers. Such emotions like love and

jealousy between the gods sprouted many new things. Thoth extended the number of days so as to enable *Nut* to give birth to five children (Ngente, 298).

We see from above that supernatural beings exercised superhuman power and authority in the ancient myths. Love and its attendant relationships were born between their descendants, between siblings, father and a child and with their grand generations/descendants. With such love and affection comes jealousy and anger accompanied by revenge in the end.

In the Mizo myths, we do not find many such deities. Love relationships amongst them and their off springs do not appear in Mizo myth. God-like entities that we see in Mizo myths are self existent without forebears or descendants. The absence of homogenous character in the divinities of Mizo myths such as love, hatred, jealousy and ill-will so common in other myths necessitates certain difference in the format of this study. The supernatural world is also completely different. The supernatural in a Mizo myth can be broadly divided into two; the first one being the good supernatural beings and secondly the evil supernatural beings. Such a division is based upon the functions and actions of supernatural beings on the earth and creatures. The Mizos refer to the good supernatural being as '*Khua-nu*' and '*PuVana*', the evil supernatural beings as '*Huai*', '*Chawm*', '*Phung*', all demoniac in nature. The supernatural beings that populate the Mizo myths and their characteristics are given below:

1. **Khuazingnu**: The primary form of deity we can see in Mizo myth is '*Khuazingnu*', the goddess of creation. The word '*khua-zing*' means a situation of disorder, worry, a state of riots and discord. It is similar to the word '*chaos*'. In view of the name '*Khuazingnu*', '*Nu*' refers to mother. Hence, when we literally translate the word *Khuazingnu* as 'Mother of *Chaos*'. This goddess is

considered to be the first deity. Though she, unlike the Greek goddess *Gaea*, did not conceive a child, she created the earth, human beings and different varieties of flora and fauna from nothing. Because of this we can address her as the 'Mother Earth'. And then, instead of leaving her creations she tended and took care of her creations. The goddess opened the windows of the sky and poured water to dampen and moisten the dry surface of the earth that she created (Thanmawia. Mizo Hnahthlak, 29).

Later, when humans and animals increased in numbers, and darkness was yet prevailing, the goddess, to prevent all the humans turning into animals, took a couple from each race put them inside a deep pit and shut them inside using a boulder (Thanmawia. Mizo Hnahthlak, 52). Tracing the time of her creation up to the prevailing darkness, it is believed that there must have been a wide a gap between them as the population of creatures had increased so many. Even after this, as she continued to guard and protect them, we can address her as the 'Guardian goddess' besides being the 'Mother goddess'. The Mizo tribes never addressed her as 'goddess' but she always call her '*Khuanu*'.

2. **Vanhrikpa:** When the creator completed her work, the creations increased in population because of which they needed proper guidance. She appointed 'Vanhrikpa' to be their governor, and he became the supernatural in power next to the creator, and he was also the ruler. All the creations that lived on the earth were under his rule. He carefully listened to their discontentment and thus made judgment for the goddess of all. (Thanmawia, Mizo Hnahthlak, 35). Similar to many other myths, the already created beings needed to be shuffled and guided in order to be in the way as it is now, and so, they needed a ruler and a

counselor, who Vanhrikpa is. He possessed a human character along with superior powers and abilities yet the people did not deify him.

3. **Sabereka:** The deity that Mizo ancestors accepted and worshipped as their primary god was '*Sabereka*', popularly known as '*PuVana*'. Unlike the above deities, he assumed the true traditional characteristics of a god such as anger, contentment, even jealousy and envy. Just like the Greek Olympian god, dwelling on a hill, he too had a particular dwelling place on a hill, the exact location of which is not known now. It is also learnt that his son '*Sahmula*' was the spirit of *Mawmrang* hill. He was the creator as well as the destroyer and was associated with envy and jealousy. Because of his anger, many things sprouted and changed. A gun and a huge saucer were presented to him by '*Thlanrawkpa*' as a bride price when he married his daughter. These gifts later came to be the formation of thunder and lightning. To vent his anger upon his son in law, he created '*Sabereka Khuangkaih*' which destroyed all the soils that *Khuazingnu* created. This explains the fact that he is the 'god of destruction'. Secondly, the different created beings each in its own eyes toiled hard because of which they became arrogant. Due to their arrogance and ego, he was unable to subject and control them, so he classified and separated their speeches. The story has an interesting similarity to the Biblical account of Babel wherein God separated and divided the speeches of people for their pride (Genesis 11). The story clarifies his greatness, his power, his superiority and authority.
4. **Thlanrawkpa:** The sub-clan of the Mizo race called '*Paite*' called Thlanrawkpa, '*Dahpa*' (TRI, 5). He was not addressed as god because he was born and brought up like a human and had human characteristic. But still then, being conceived between a human and a super natural, he was superior to and

more powerful than ordinary humans. Living like a human he could still have Sabereka's daughter as his wife. People respected him and it seems that all the creations of his time obeyed him. He not only occupied the state of a creator but was a ruler and a counselor. However, he is significantly known for the mass metamorphosis that took place during his '*Khuangchawi*'. Since he was associated with both human and godly natures, he sometimes put on his godly nature and sometimes behaved like mere human. Keeping in mind his many judgments and appointments on how things needed to be, we can see his godly nature. At the same time, when his human character burst out we see a vast difference in actions and judgments from the people who praised him and the people who spoke against him.

5. **Phung/Chawm**: These are regarded more as demons than as benevolent beings. Their attributes are limited to appear in frightful and horrifying forms. They are supposed to occupy inferior status to humans and are therefore jealous of humans, especially women, for their beauty and love and often resorted to tricks and cannibalism. They are believed to have the power of reading the minds of people.
6. **Chhama**: Chhama is also an evil spirit who dwells under the sea. He is a demon leader and not a god. He never moves about and always sleeps under the sea. He utilizes his powers using his thoughts. He is not governor of humans but has great authority on them. He is a revenge taking demon. He wanted to have an agreement and settlement with the humans, but since he is in a spiritual form, their worlds differ and hence such a compromise is not possible. This spirit is an understanding spirit, and if necessary, can refrain from anger based on negotiations.

7. **Lasi:** Lasi are popular in Mizo folklore. Most known Lasi are women. One male Lasi mentioned in Mizo folktale is the Lasi king, Lalchungnunga. Lasi are universally known to be the guardians of the animals of the forest, especially game animals. More than other superhuman beings they relate closer to human beings, blessing them whom they found worthy with animal prey. A Lasi may bless a hunter whom it desires to have romantic relation with. They stand firm by the promises and vows they make.
8. **Pawla:** Pawla was the guardian of the entrance to the gateway of the abode of the spirits of the dead. He and his wife named Sanui giants. The dead on their journey towards the abode of the dead were shot at by him with a big pellet bow. The shot with the huge pellet, which was the size of an egg, was so painful that the sore lasted three years. But even though they were extremely frightened by him, they did not offer sacrifices to him, but they had certain practices to avoid his shot. He would not dare to strike those who were *Thangchhuah*, the spirit of infants and bachelors who had slept with maiden. Because of this, bachelors were determined to sleep with a maiden before they die even if they cannot be *Thangchhuah*.

3.2 Creatures of the myth age.

The ancient world seems to be closely connected to creations and deities. We can trace it back through Greek culture, one of the most civilized cultures of that period. One of the most important aspects of the Greek worldview is that it was the first to put man at the center of the universe. Unlike the animal deities of the Egyptians and Mesopotamians, the gods of the Greeks were homologous. Not only do they possess human characteristics, but they embody the emotional flaws of humans as well. Unlike

the gods of other ancient civilizations Greek gods were not infinitely omniscient and omnipotent, but they manifested typical human foibles such as philandering, feasting, drinking and obsessive jealousy. To the Greeks, the life of the gods so closely resembled human life that the gods felt real and tangible, rather than incomprehensible and remote.

There was not much distinction in Mizo myths between humans and other creatures concerning their livelihood. The humans and the animals played essential roles in the formation of the world. *Phivawk*, *Sahram*, *Sakuh* and *Changpat* played important roles in the Mizo creation myth, and *Chhura* and *Chulteinu* were involved in making the plain. Animals and humans shared similar fates in the stories such as *Thimzing* when thick darkness covered the whole world for three days. Those who could stay without sleep for the three days remained human, and those who slept turned into animals. Correspondingly, the 'Cherokee' of the American Indians have a myth in which the *Great Spirit* ordered the animals and vegetations to stay awake for seven days and seven nights. Majority of them could not keep the command and failed. Among them, only the pine tree, cedar tree and few others could perform the task and they were awarded with the ability to be green throughout the year and never to be barren whereas the others shed their leaves every winter.

Since the beginning of human history, people had lived in close contact with animals-usually as hunters and farmers - and had developed myths and legends about them. This relation is shown in many myths including Mizo and Hindu. In Hindu mythology, it is called *Satejuk* (TRI 2). All kinds of creatures, from fierce leopards to tiny spiders, play important roles in mythology. A myth can give special meaning or extraordinary qualities to common animals such as frogs and bears. In the Mizo myths,

Sahram and Phivawk play the foremost roles in the formation of soil. A worm is also considered to increase the soil and rats are the only animal that could take out rice seeds from the crack of a stone. However, other creatures found in myths like many headed monsters, dragons and unicorns were never known to have existed in the real world.

Animals may serve as stand-ins for human or human characteristics, as in the African and Native American trickster tales or the fables of the Greek storyteller Aesop. In some legends, animals perform heroic deeds or acts such as mediators between heaven and earth. They may also be source of the wisdom and power of a shaman. Animals often have a dualistic quality in mythology. They can be helpful to humans or harmful-sometimes both. They provide people with food; but at the same time they can be dangerous. As sources and symbols, animals represent the mystery and power of the natural world, which can create or destroy.

In myths different creatures are closely linked and a strong binding relationship can be seen in the Mizo myth as in the myths of other races. But the important point that needs to be noted is the fact that, just like in the Greek myths where humans hold the center position, the humans are always superior and more important than other creations even when they all live in harmony with each other. In one of the Mizo myths, a *Pawngeklir* kept on rolling a ball of dung/excrement and finally it rolled up to the utmost part of the earth. *Pawngeklir* requested permission from the Guardian of the Horizon to release the ball of dung at the end of the earth. The guard asked *Pawngeklir* where such a large quantity of dung came from. *Pawngeklir* replied, ‘All the humans have died and I gathered their remaining excrements and produced a lump.’ This was all a lie. On hearing this, the Guard shook the earth trying to topple it, as he thought that all the humans have passed away. The people shouted, ‘We are not dead, we are still

alive!’ The guard stopped shaking the earth on hearing that the humans were still alive. This is how the Mizos stated the origin of earthquake. When we carefully examine this myth, we can see the superiority of humans. Along with the humans, Khuangzingnu created many animals and they all lived in peace and they got on well together. That the horizon guard shook the earth thinking that all humans have died even when other creations and living beings were still alive is indicative of the premise that other living beings were of less significance. It also clarifies that humans were the center of attention. It also exposes the notion of the Mizo ancestors, regarding humans as the superior beings.

In another myth, under the governance of Vanhrikpa, all the people and animals were treated equally. But in the meanwhile we can see that ‘Tuihriampa’ often set animal traps and ensnared them. Their origin and guidance still being the same, humans possess a cleverness to destroy and manipulate his co-dwellers. This shows the superiority and ability of humans over animals in the process of survival. We can clearly understand the views of Mizo ancestors concerning humans and other beings.

3.3 Relationship between man and supernaturals:

The relationship that occasionally happened between humans and supernatural beings cannot be overlooked though it is difficult to explain rationally. Reading Greek plays provides valuable insight into the relationships between gods and humans. While both gods and humans have fairly similar personalities, Greek gods have such power that, given motivation from an arrogant mortal, they are all too willing to manipulate for their own pleasure without regard to the consequences for others. The Greek gods act capriciously, frivolously, and even immorally, that they are not particularly heroic, and that they lacked the religious seriousness we might expect from a god. The Greeks did

not always think of their gods in the same way many native Americans think of God. In the typical Judeo-Christian way of thinking, God is all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful, and is the source of moral goodness. Like this, if we look into the myths of different nations – Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Americans, Indians and Mizos, our beliefs and expectations regarding God may differ, but certain relationships between men and gods like the power and control of gods over humans, their anger and curse and their blessings on human, the love between god and human seem to have much affinity.

As already mentioned in the previous chapters, Mizo myth is simple and typical, and there is limited manifestation of supernatural beings. Therefore, the effects of supernatural beings on humans immanent in the myths of other races are not as conspicuous in the myths of Mizo. But, there are some relations, good and bad, between gods and humans. These supernatural powers like – *Khuazingnu*, *Vanhrikpa*, *Sabereka*, *Thlanrawkpa*, *Phung/Chawm*, *Chhama* and *Lasi* have significant effects upon the human world. The different relationship between man and supernatural beings are as follows:

1. Man living under the rule of deities:

The ancient people worshipped many gods, each with a distinct personality and domain. The Egyptians had more than 2,000 deities; the Hindus have 333 million. Deities have governed virtually every possible activity, object and emotion. In addition to the broad categories (e.g., war or the sea), we have had deities for individual items; for example, the Irish honored both the goddess of rivers (*Boann*) and the goddess of the *Lagan* River (*Logia*). There have been deities for individual cities (*Athena* for *Athens*), mountains (*Gauri-Sankar* for Mount Everest), lakes, tribes, plant species, temples, constellations, parts of the body, etc. In some cultures, each home possessed its own deity, to supplement the culture's “goddess of the home” (who was named *Hestia* in the Greek religion). Deities governed not only major phenomena such as agriculture or love or the sun, but also such common matters as leisure, reptiles, the kitchen stove, guitars,

jeering, the nose, politics, prostitution, singing, burlesque, doors, virginity, willpower, firecrackers, gambling, face cream, drunkenness, and the toilet.

In Mizo myth, we see the responsibility of supernatural beings and their rule over humans from the story of *Thlanrawkpa*, half human and half god, the one who has much ability and a noble king who served a big feast to all creatures. He is comparable with *Gilgamesh*, the famous Mesopotamian hero, who was believed to be based on a real person, most probably a Sumerian king and was two-third god, one-third man. The humans we see during the time of *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi* were of different tribes – *Paihte*, *Tuikuk*, *Vai* and *Mizo*. *Thlanrawkpa* had made arrangements for the living of all these different tribes. Let us look into that part of the story of *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi*;

‘.....Later came a *Paihte* man and a *Tuikuk* man, *Thlanrawkpa* asked them, “Do you have had sufficient food at *ThlanrawkpaKhuangchawi*?” The two replied, “Yes, we are full, long live *Thlanrawkpa*!” Then *Thlanrawkpa* said to them, “You have honoured the name of *Thlanrawkpa*, take these to earn your living,” and he gave them knives for splitting cane. This is why *Paihte* and *Tuikuk* are good at weaving till today. Next came a *Mizo* man and a *Vai* man. *Thlanrawkpa* asked them the same question, and the two also replied that they were fully satisfied and honoured the name of *Thlanrawkpa*. Then, as a reward, *Thlanrawkpa* gifted the *Mizo* man with *Savun Lehkha* (a leather parchment) and the *Vai* man with *Laisuih* (common paper) so that they would be knowledgeable in all fields of learning to the next generation. The *Mizo* man had no good place to put it safe, so he used it to cover a wooden mortar. A dog came and ate it all. But the *Vai* man preserved it carefully and taught it to his children and their children. This is why the *Vai* people are higher than the *Mizo* people at studies. (Thanmawia. Mizo Hnahthlak, 73&74)

In the same story, many creatures were given their names and their living was also planned for them by *Thlanrawkpa*. This story reveals how *Thlanrawkpa* had control over the humans, his plans for them are clearly seen, and till today, *Vaipa* has a better brain than *Mizopa*, and *Tuikuk* and *Paihte* are still good in weaving.

Also, in the works of the creator god, Khuazingnu, the power and control of the god upon humans is clearly seen. When *Thimzing* occurred, and many humans started to transform into different animals, Khuazingnu could not bear to see her creations changing into lower forms. So she picked a man and a woman each from different clans and put them inside a cave and closed the opening with a huge stone. This story is similar with the Mesopotamian myth of flood which in the Hebrew tradition, a couple each of all creations were saved inside Noah's Ark. In Indian mythology, the great god *Vishnu* was seen as the protector of the world, having measured out the universe in three giant strides and established it as the home of both gods and humanity. In token of his willing involvement with the human race, he descended to earth and became incarnate at times when the world of mortals was threatened by evil. Likewise, Khuazingnu in Mizo myth also cared for her creations; she nurtured them and saved them from a catastrophe. She prepared a safe place for the humans to save them from *Thimzing*. She treated all the different tribes equally and chose one couple each from the tribes and put them inside a safe place, Chhinlung, so that all tribes survived. Later, she checked on them to see if they had multiplied; she opened the door of Chhinlung for them and let them live in the open again. She released the exact number that would accommodate in the land she had created. From this we can see the gods made good plans for the living of the humans and the humans lived safely under the authority, protection, love and care of the gods.

2. Anger and mercy of the gods upon humans:

Gods are jealously inclined towards humans and often vented their anger. The Egyptians believed that their creator god, *Ra*, would one day tire of humanity and return the world to the watery abyss of *Nun* before beginning a new cycle of creation which was said to be the beginning of flood. The Mizo people believed that the reason for *Sabereka Khuangkaih* was because of the anger of one of the gods, *Sabereka*. His son-in-law, Thlanrawkpa forgot to invite him to his *Khuangchawi* celebration. So, Sabereka created a violent flood to wash away all the lands. Until they got the soil from *Tuihriamral*, Thlanrawkpa could not proceed with the preparation of his celebration. Though this can be spoken of as anger between two gods, *Thlanrawkpa* was a half-human; therefore we can say that it was the anger of god with human.

The anger of god with human sometimes did not stop; it lived on and the gods usually took revenge for it. In Greek mythology, Oedipus was the unlucky son of king Laius and queen Jocasta of Thebes. Because, as a guest at the court of Pelops, Laius had taken sexual advantage of Pelops' young son Chrysippus, a curse was laid on the ruling of Thebes. Indeed an oracle warned Laius that any son Jocasta bore him would kill him and marry his wife, Jocasta. Oedipus could not escape the curse of god upon him and he suffered till the end. In Mizo myth also, the wife of Chhuihthanga made a mistake by planting a tree beside the small spring in their field. As the tree grew, the roots of it grew into the abode of Chhama, encircled Chhama who was sleeping peacefully. Chhama got so angry that he killed the wife of Chhuihthanga. Human brought trouble for him so he vented his anger and using his power he took revenge against the human. When Chhuihthanga cleared the tangled roots by pulling out all the roots of the *Ting* plant, Chhama was so pleased with him, so he gave him the hand of his daughter in marriage. Chhuihthanga told his wife, the daughter of Chhama, everything, and they lived happily. When Chhuihthanga pulled out the roots of the *ting* plant, he lifted the curse of god upon him. The gift of his daughter's hand to Chhuihthanga by Chhama, and the understanding and acceptance of his daughter shows that gods had compassion and mercy for humans.

The ill will and enmity that often arose between gods and humans are not always the fault of humans alone, but the gods themselves were sometimes responsible. In one Mizo myth known as Ngalsia's myth, *Phung* or *Chawmnu* was responsible. Once, when Ngalsia went out hunting with his friends, he was kidnapped by *Chawmnu* who wanted him for a husband. When his friends found him, they tried to take him with his children. This made her really furious, and being a mind reader she cast a spell and made

Ngalsia's friends unable to speak. She was content only after finding out that his friends wanted to take only Ngalsia and not their children. In this story, Ngalsia reported that he did not have to work but always stayed inside the den and he was given food by his wife (*Chawmnu*) regularly. From this, we know that Ngalsia did not approach the fiend on his own, but was controlled and subjected by her superior power; he had no other choice but to accept her as his wife. Hence, in this story, the supernatural was responsible for the trouble and not the human. Supernatural beings are very envious of humans and they were often filled with anger, but the fact that they loved to be mollified and flattered can be seen in the above story where *Chawmnu* was gratified and her anger disappeared when she found that Ngalsia's friends were taking only him and not her children. The water demon- god Chhama was pacified and his anger flew away when Chhuihthanga uprooted the roots of the *ting* plant. The anger, contentment and hatred of the supernatural beings are the actions of humans are also clearly shown.

3. Blessings of gods for humans:

Religion has always been an avenue that people used to bargain for God's blessing. If we do our part, we think that God will do his part and grant us our desires. The world can sometimes seem random and frightening. People turn to God and religion in hope of finding some measure of security, protection and favour. In Greek mythology the gods were seen as simple guardians of the vernal sweetness and beauty of nature, and only later as the friends and protectors of everything graceful and beautiful. A very important aspect of Mizo culture is '*Sa kah*' (hunting). It is linked with the life after death. In order to kill desired animals, it was believed that *Lasi* could bless them. A man named Lianchea gave his sister Chawngtinleri for the wife of the *Lasi* king, Lalchungnunga who lived on *Tan* hill. Keeping his promise, the *Lasi* blessed Lianchea with the heads of

as many animals as he wanted. Chawngtinleri became a *Lasi* goddess and exercised authority over the animal kingdom. Following this, when a man is very successful in hunting, he is believed to be enamoured of *Lasi*. The prayer and petition of hunters to be blessed is seen in their '*thiamhla*' or '*dawihla*'. One such religious rite performed to ask for success in hunting called '*Dawino chhui*' has this chanting prayer to a *Lasi* for blessing;

Lasiin ka zetluang lo chhang ang che,
 Si- khawthanga'n ka zetluang lo chhang ang che,
 Si-khawvara'n ka zetluang lo chhang ang che,
 Hmawngfianga thovin ka zetluang lo chhang ang che,
 Khiangkaha thovin ka zetluang lo chhang ang che,
 Ni zungrawn zui che,
 Thla zungrawn zui che,
 Ka liang khana'n lo tum ang che,
 Nun tluang tumpui ang che,
 Pang dam tumpui ang che.

4. Off-springs between humans and gods:

We cannot deny the fact that gods and supernatural beings are superior and endowed with supreme powers, but they are not aloof from the desire to partake of the physical pleasures of mortals. [cannot nurse themselves without humans] It seems that physical relationship with humans perfect and complete them. As gods and supernatural beings need and long for humans in such a way, love and affection often come between them. These bonds often produce off-springs. In Greek myth, we see this kind of love and affection between Zues, the supreme deity and father of gods and goddesses, and Leda, a human, the daughter of king Thestius of Aetolia and wife of king Tyndaroes of Sparta.

Leda was loved by Zeus and often came to her disguised as a swan. As a result of their union Leda produced egg and bore Helen, the most beautiful woman in the Greek world and the cause of the Trojan war. The off-springs born of gods and humans possessed both human and godly nature and became super heroes half immortal like Achilles.

In Mizo myth, we see a few such relationships between a human and a supernatural being. A girl with such good countenance was Ngaitei,

.....humans, demons, Gods, evil spirits, when they copulate, they often bore a child, their children (boy or girl) are gigantic in comparison to children of ordinary human, they are wiser and more intelligent and more singular in appearance. Among these, there was a girl who was very big and very good looking. Her mother was an ordinary human while her father was a guardian spirit. Everybody who sees her fell in love with her beauty. So she was named Ngaitei (Ngai-too long for / to desire for), her birth name being Thangliani (TRI 17).

In the story of Ngaiteii we find that Ngaiteii was renowned and is still recognized even today as the cause of 'Tui Sang Lian' (great flood). The flood that came due to Ngaitei is interpreted in two ways. First, a young water spirit fell in love with Ngaitei and wanted to take her with him, causing a flood. Secondly, another interpretation explains that flood arrived because Ngaitei's father wanted his daughter to stay with him under water where his spirit dwells. Whichever be the correct explanation, the cause of the great flood in both was Ngaitei, an off- spring between a human and a guardian spirit. A child that was born out of Zeus and Leda in the Greek myth was so beautiful that it led to the Trojan War; likewise, the child of guardian spirit and a human –Ngaitei, brought the flood because of her beauty and charm. The flood

bewildered many, it was a disaster. The earth became so unlevelled by the massive water that the legendary Chhura had to beat the earth to level it and as a result some places like Champhai became a plain.

Again as we see in the Mizo myth, Thlanrawkpa was born between a god and a human, and as he possessed both human and godly nature, he was superior - special in appearance and countenance, wealthier and wiser than an ordinary human (TRI 5). He was renowned and respected for being in a human form yet having super powers and special intelligence. During that time, while all the creations lived in unity and contentment, Thlanrawkpa was never referred to as a god, but his authority over his fellow creations is clearly shown. The story of his grand feast, *Khuangchawi* is still remembered even today. He was wealthy enough to host a feast for all the people and other living beings. One every important point that we need to note is that on the day of his *Khuangchawi*, he gave distinct names to the animals and he planned how they would live for eternity. We can also see that he administrated the humans too.

There are similarities between the two stories of Ngaitei and Thlanrawkpa in that they fell in love with supernatural beings because of their superior appearance and intelligence. Thlanrawkpa wedded the daughter of a god Sabereka, and even gave a gun and a huge saucer as bride price. Mizos interpreted thunder as the sound of the huge saucer being dragged by '*Pu Vana*' and lightning as the sound of his gun-shot. It is alike in the case of Ngaitei too, where a young water-spirit fell in love with her and was so obsessed with her that he tried to win her by causing a great flood.

Unlike the stories above, all the off-springs of humans and supernatural beings are not special in appearance. It is evident in the story of Chawngtinleri wherein the king of *Lasi*, Lalchungnuga fell in love with Chawngtinleri and wanted to make her his

wife. So, with her brother Lianchea's permission, he took her for his wife. The child that was born out of the two was terrifying in looks, was not human looking and it had the looks of goat. Its nose too was placed upside down.

Another love relation that we see is between Ngalsia from Seipui village and Chawmnu married and they had two children. Looking more closely, we find no trace of love relation and communication between them. The Chawmnu kidnapped Ngalsia when he was out hunting. We can say that Chawmnu married Ngalsia only for her own pleasure because if he had loved her, then he would not agree to leave her and go home with his friends. Chawmnu collected all their needs and food-stuffs, not allowing her husband to leave the cave even after being together for a long time. It seemed like Chawmnu ensnared Ngalsia in her trap. Even though description of their children are not given, yet from the fact that Ngalsia's friends tried to take them home too defines that they are in human form and are supposed to be able to live in a human community.

From what we have seen, it is conclusive that the bonding of humans and supernatural beings is the desire more of the supernatural beings than of the human counterparts. And the myths of Chawmnu and Ngalsia, Chawngtinleri and Lalchungnunga, Ngaitei and Tuihuai, are clear indications that supernatural beings could inter-relate with mortal humans of their choice so copiously as to conceive offsprings in mortal coil.

Chapter 4

Reflection of Mizo society and Portrayal of Humanity

4.1 Reflection of Mizo society.

Mizo myth at a glance evinces an underlying moral. *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1994 ed.) defines myth as “a story that originated in ancient times, especially one dealing with ideas and beliefs about the early history of a race, or giving explanations of natural events, such as the seasons.” Myths are associated with culture and thoughts of the myth owner, as in the case of Mizo myth. Their myths are closely linked with their culture and thoughts and it is an important reflection of both the negative and positive aspects of society. The Mizo race is still very young and formal study of their origin often come to a dead end for lack of historical evidence. Our study of Mizo myths and the characters in them portray Mizo culture, traditions, beliefs and practices connected with the important activities of society. This chapter focuses on this aspect of myth.

4.1.1 Mizo myth as a positive reflection of Mizo society: The positive aspects of Mizo society as portrayed in the myths are observed in the following elements:

- 1. Sovereignty/Chieftainship:** A look at the history of the Mizo tribe shows that the Mizo tribes lived in different villages under their own chiefs. The chiefs were the supreme head and they were all in all for the people of their village. They showed favour and considerations towards their citizens and hence made judgments wisely for the good of all. If somebody had any judicial suit, then he/she quickly approached the chief with his/her worry, then the chief wisely made judgement for the good of all. The judgement of the chief in council was

never questioned or rejected by the people. Prof. Laltluangliana Kiangte stated, “The Mizo society has no class distinction and no discrimination on the ground of sex. The village exists like a big family and chief as a father and ruler” (Kiangte, *Mizos of North East India*, 22). The chief respected and loved his subjects, and because of his concern, the people were safe under his rule and they could live in peace. Such governance and rule appear in the myths. For instance, the tales of *Khuazingnu* displays such concern and consideration. When *Khuazingnu* created the earth and all other creatures and living beings to live in unity and contentment. But as time passed and their population increased and certain differences developed they could no longer live in unity and contentment. Fighting and riots started to occur time to time. In order to avail peace and unity among themselves, they appointed *Vanhrikpa* as their chief. *Vanhrikpa* governed and ruled over all the humans and other creatures without partiality to anyone, and made judgements keeping in mind the good of all. Amongst them there was a man named *Tuihriampa* who often set animal traps. This worried and bothered the animals so they came forth to *Vanhrikpa* with their worry. This is consonant with the judicial practice of the Mizo society. Whosoever faced a problem approached the chief in the hope of receiving justice. In like manner, the she-goat was worried because her kid could not recover; the *Mau* and *Pang* were worried because they were brittle; and *Hnahthial* and *Di* were also worried about their health. They all approached *Vanhrikpa* with their worries. Such civic order again indicates the good relationship between the chief and his subjects in the Mizo society. And the judgments meted out by *Vanhrikpa* on the individual cases of these needy subjects have no better parallel in modern justice in terms of commonweal. The

Mizo society never refrains from helping the poor and the needy. Under the chief's rule, if someone is ill and could not tend to their main occupation (i.e. agriculture), then the community would tend to their needs. If some families were unable to complete the cutting and weeding of jhum, the community would help them out which is called '*Khai chhuak*' literally lifting them out. A widow could not build a house of her own; then the community would work together for the same. The people honoured and respected their chief, and nobody dared protest or take offence at a statement of the chief, even unintentional. In the myth referred above, the *Kelpui, Mau, Di, Hnahthial* and *Pang* obediently accepted Vanhrikpa's judgments for their good and no one raised any objection.

2. **Benevolence and generosity:** One Mizo phrase states, "*Sem sem dam dam, ei bil thi thi,*" which means 'he who shares lives, but he who keeps for himself dies'. This we can say is the foundation of Mizo society. The prosperous and well to do help the poor and needy, the rich shade the poor and they never abandoned one another. In regard to their means of livelihood, whosoever had early vegetables shared and distributed amongst their neighbours who had not yet obtained the new crops; this they called '*Thar tem*'. Their staple food was rice, and when a person or family lacked it, then, those who had more would give a share from their rice bins. Thus, the lives of the Mizo ancestors circled around love and unity, favoring one another. As the poor and needy lived under the shades of the rich and prosperous, they often spent a very important event called *Khuangchawi* bound with their culture, tradition, beliefs and practices. This event is also the time when the rich man distributed and shared his wealth with the poor and needy. In Mizo culture, only the wealthy and prosperous who

were blessed with food and fodder and who would be able to feed and satisfy all the people could organize *Khuangchawi*. On the day of *Khuangchawi*, the host tossed and spilled out a huge amount of grain from his rice bin and the poor gathered them gratefully. The people were provided liquor and meat to their satisfaction, and the host also distributed necklaces and clothes. In the Mizo myth, we find an event of *Khuangchawi* in *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi* which is inseparably attached to their culture and bound with their religion. On the day of *Thlanrawkpa's Khuangchawi*, all the people, animals, insects and even non-living dung were present, and they danced joyfully, followed by a grand feast in the evening. It is quite clear that Thlanrawkpa's wealth shaded them, even though it is impossible to trace how and when *Khuangchawi* originated, we cannot deny its existence in the unknown past as recorded in the myths. We can only believe that it had been practiced for ages.

3. **Altruism and valour:** Whenever we speak about the Mizo social life, an exemplary and outstanding ethics of the Mizos is the spirit of altruism called *Tlawm-ngaih-na* in Mizo. It is regarded as the most beautiful ethical code of the society. According to Laltluangliana Kiangte, 'The word *Tlawmngaihna* is an untranslatable term, meaning to be hospitable, kind, unselfish, courageous, industrious and helpful to others in respect. So *Tlawmngaihna* to a Mizo stands for that compelling moral force which finds expression in self-sacrifice for the service of others. It is the core of their philosophy of life. In war or peace, in dealing with individuals or in day-to-day public life, it was this spirit of *Tlawmngaihna* which guided their thoughts and actions' (Mizos, 21). N.E. Parry said, "It is really a very good moral code enforced solely by public opinion... *Tlawmngaihna* therefore, deserves every encouragement, as it were allowed to

fall into desuetude; it would be most detrimental to the whole of the tribe.” (Khangte. Mizos, 22). These morals are firmly attached to the life of Mizos. *Tlawmngaihna* is associated with self-denial, helpfulness and sacrificing oneself for the goodness and advantages of others and also serving others with labour and giving away one’s own victuals. Even though, this word is not present in the myths yet the philosophy of *Tlawmngaihna* is clearly reflected by the roles played by the characters in the myths. When Khuangzingnu created the humans and animals, there was no soil on the earth except for rocks and boulders. For all the animals to survive variety of crops and vegetables needed to exist, and for their food they needed plants for which soil was necessary. Soil was available only on the other side of *Tuihriam* river, an extremely vast and freezing cold river. For the survival of all, somebody had to go and bring it. At this a *Sakuh* sacrificed himself and swam across the river bringing the soil. The action of the *Sakuh* clearly reflected the spirit of *Tlawmngaihna*. Nobody dared to swim *Tuihriam* river because the water was extremely cold, and it felt like it would rip off your hand if you dip it in the water. It was believed that nobody could outlive swimming such a dangerous river and bring back the soil. But, the *Sakuh* gathered all his courage and sacrificed himself for others. He had no knowledge what the outcome would be, but on behalf of everyone he surrendered himself. Disregarding and not considering one’s own hardship, unpleasantness and suffering, shading others and toiling for the advantages and goodness of others and even daring to die if needed to help others- such morals and ethics are exactly what we call *Tlawmngaihna* in the life of a Mizo. Just like the above example; when they were going to start having rice grains, the seeds were again available only on the other side of *Tuihriam*. So, a *Phivawk* and a

Sazu sacrificed themselves and swam across the river and brought rice seeds. They too, had a narrow escape. Yet another case of *Tlawmngaihna* we find in Mizo myth is how the *Kelpui* behaved. On her way to meet Vanhrikpa with her worries, she met *Di*, *Pang*, *Mau* and *Hnahthial*, and all of them asked to forward their problems and worries. Even though it was difficult to handle even her own problems, the others she met on the way forwarded their problems from the places of living. If she had had no *Tlawmngaihna* she would not have spoken for them in front of Vanhrikpa. But she understood the fact that her friends could not move and walk around, and that they were permanently attached to the ground; so she couldn't think only about her well-being and with her selflessness she helped others and did everything what others needed to do. The maxim, "*Midangte hi lo chawl se la, keiman thawk ila,*" (let the others rest while I work) is clearly highlighted and this *Tlawmngaihna* always remain the central ethical code of Mizo people.

Tlawmngaihna is associated with *Huaisenna* (valour), and in the Mizo society, if one wanted to have *Tlawmngaihna*, then he needs *Huaisenna*. In ancient Mizo society, there were frequent attacks from wild beast and the enemy, and to protect the people, *Tlawmngaihna* was indispensable. When such time arrived, one had to have *Tlawmngaihna* to face danger and be courageous enough even to sacrifice one's life if needed for the good of others. This courage is reflected in the Mizo myth. For an instance, when they had to increase the little soil from the opposite bank of *Tuihriam* River, nobody had any idea how they would do it, and nobody believed when the *Changpat* suggested that he eat the soil and multiply it with his dung. But the earthworm stood on his proposal and he said that if his proposal turned out untrue or

incorrect he was willing to be killed. At this, they allowed him to eat the soil and so the soil was multiplied. In this regard, if the Earthworm had not shown courage then the soil would have remained as it was and that little amount of soil was not enough for cultivation and survival of all. Just as the gallant heroes amongst the Mizo ancestors protect the people by surrendering their lives, the earthworm too sacrificed his life to save all the creations. If the *Sakuh*, *Phivawk* and *Sazu* had not shown their courage, their *Tlawmngaihna* would not have had the desired end, and their honorable deeds would have been in vain.

4. Unity in labour: In Mizo society, some practical principles of community work and cooperation for the fulfilment of social obligation and responsibilities had been accepted since time immemorial. Construction and repair of village path or inter-village route, of footpath to their jhum cultivation of constructing *Zawlbuk* (bachelor's dormitory) and *Lal in* (Chief's house), of repairing water-points and building of private houses were done through voluntary team work called *Hnatlang*. Apart from what we have mentioned regarding their means of livelihood too, the youths instead of working in isolation worked in groups. They took turns working in each other's jhum. This practice is known as *Inlawm*. As they worked in groups they could finish even the tiresome and heavy task easily. If a person faced a problem, the community took it as a community problem and so the whole community would make an effort together to solve the problem. Such practice was frequently observed in the Mizo myth in which the unity and bond of the characters often achieved the objectives. As we have seen above, when the *Sakuh*, *Phivawk* and *Sazu* set out to bring the soil and rice seeds respectively, they were not working alone, everyone was busy in their assigned

role. The rest of them were important advisers and became the cheering audiences. Everybody contributed their utmost - the earthworm multiplied the soil, *Chulteinu* stroked and rubbed it, and *Chhura* smote it level. Also, when they were going to chop down *Thingvantawng*, nobody shied away from the community work and cut down the tree together. In the tale of *Chungleng leh Hnuaileng Indo* we can see a firm unity of labour. During the war, all the creatures big or small participated. The eagle and the serpent fought against each other, the owl and the mouse, and even the little birds fought against their matching foes - the earthworms, pecking them mercilessly.

A cumulative tale of *Chemtatrawta* which can be counted as a myth also highlights such unity of labour. In this tale, an old woman excreted at the head of the water point which all the villagers depended on. The entire village participated in the criminal trial, considering the problem as the problem of the whole community. Finally, because of the villagers' unity and hard work, the trail ended with a Prawn who received just punishment.

- 5. Mizo society on the ground of sexual relationship:** From olden times till today, the youths of both sexes in Mizo society were not segregated in society except in matters of domestic responsibility and matrimonial ethics. The young men could court any girl they liked without restrictions. The men prided in making conquest of women and the women on the other hand tried to preserve their purity till marriage. This is firmly associated with the Mizo culture being practiced from the olden times. For a bachelor, having sex with a maiden was not a matter of embarrassment but enables them to be showy and to be able to have sex with a large number of maidens was a matter of pride and privilege.

This is because the achievement had a very important significance in their life after death. According to the belief of the Mizos, if a bachelor dies without having sex with a maiden, he would be the target of Pawla's bow when he approach the gates of the Mitthi Khua and Pialral, and the wound was so painful that the sore lasted three years. To avoid such terrible fate every bachelor tried to have sexual escapade with every opportunity. In one of the folksongs, a maiden pleads to a bachelor for true love and not just to have sex with her,

Pawla sai ral dan min tih loh chuanin

I tawnah tlangrel ka dawn love (SAIP, 146)

(If you love me truly and not for just to avoid Pawla,
Then I would not care people criticizing me because of you)

While it was pride for the bachelors to spoil as many maidens as they could, it was a matter of great disgrace for a maiden to give in to pre-marital sex; and the parents too advised their daughters against such disgrace. Ironically, bachelors would never take as his wife a maiden who had failed to preserve her maidenhood, and neither their parents desired such maidens to be their daughter-in-laws. The Mizos had a practice and belief at variance with one another. In one song a maiden advised her lover who failed to sleep with her not to feel humiliated. She advised him saying,

Fam mah la, Vala, suihlung phang suh,

Pawla sai ral I hlauh leh zing vanzawlah

I hellai Siali mi chhal ang che. (SAIP, 146)

(Do not be frightened even if you die,
If you are afraid that Pawla would strike you in the spirit world,
Then tell him that I'm your lover).

We observe here how strongly myths operated in the lives of the Mizo even to the extent of the traditional love relationship between a bachelor and a maiden, revealing the strange opposing ideals of sexual behavior among the men and women. During *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi*, *Utawk* and *Laiking* fell in love with each other and were hugging in the dark where nobody could see them. The *Laiking* fingered the *Utawk*'s breast and later playfully told the others that *Tawki*'s breast was soft and supple, and the *Utawk* had to undergo a great deal of embarrassment. This may be understood as a comic censure of the shallowness of the life of humans. For the bachelors it was considered a feather in the cap to boast of having had sex with a maiden. The *Utawk* feeling much embarrassed when the *Laiking* boasted of his success with the toad clearly speaks for the more fragile status of women in the society. We see a similar incident of *Arpui* and *Sanghar* in the tale of *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi*. The *Sanghar* being fully determined to sleep with *Arpui* courted her and ultimately succeeded in his intention; but later he boasted about it to others. After such humiliation, they filed a case against each other at *Thlanrawkpa*'s court. The *Sanghar* boastfully described how he courted her and succeeded on sleeping with the *Arpui* while the *Arpui* could not object and dispute him, so she started crying pathetically. Finally, the *Sanghar* was cleared of guilt and won the law suit, giving rise to the popular Mizo idiom, '*Arpuia lungchhia Sanghara lung lawm*' (*Arpui*'s sorrow, *Sanghar*'s joy) was born. In the former life of the Mizos, though the men tried their best to sleep with the maidens, raping them was condemned to severe punishment and was a lifetime disgrace for such men. Therefore, even when a maiden was raped, she could present her grievance at a

judicial court before the chief and debate on the accusation. Such judicial suit was known as '*Dawvan kai*'. During such a judicial suit, nobody was prohibited to listen to their arguments and while they shouted out their case. A huge crowd gathered, especially on such sexual judicial case. When the *Sanghar* revealed without keeping back anything that it was with the *Arpui*'s will that they made love, and with the crowd's mocking, she was helpless and could not defend her case, so she started crying out in embarrassment. This Chaucerian episode clearly focuses the scene of a judgment's court in Mizo society. When the purity and chastity of a maiden was renowned, and if she was raped, she could prove her innocence at the chief's court, and the bachelor declared guilty was severely punished. Because of this, they tried their best to prove their opponent's willing participation in the guilt. Maidens who were easy to deal with in sexual matter was mocked and laughed at by the people. This shows that in the Mizo society, the purity and chastity of the maiden was highly renowned.

4.1.2 Mizo myth as a reflection of Mizo society in a negative way: The tales and the characters in a Mizo myth highlight some aspects of the life-styles of Mizo society both in a negative and positive way. Let us study how the myths reflected the society in a negative way:

- 1. Imprudence, Heedlessness and Recklessness:** The Mizos are, in general, imprudent and reckless by nature. They often make conclusions heedlessly without deliberating on the outcome of their actions. Their myths reveal that they were vindictive; they lacked firmness of will and judgement; were easily influenced by rumour and strange things. The Mizos easily incline themselves towards some showy people and the things they do and say without scrutinizing

them. If ever we take a closer look at the tales of Mizo myths, they are usually imbecile and silly with facile introduction and conclusion. Unlike myths of other races which describes in detail the origin- as to how and the sources of how their gods created the earth and heavenly bodies, the Mizo myths did not display any details as to how Khuangzingnu created the Heaven and Earth except for the fact that she created them. Likewise in other tales too, things crop up easily and conclusions are made hastily without making an explanation even if bores and riots occur in the tales. This clearly highlights the mind-set of the Mizo people, wanting to settle and place things quickly. When they were going to chop down *Thingvantawng*, they send *Lailen* to check whether the soil has dried or not but since the bird was small and light, it could not form a marking on the soil so thinking that the soil had dried up, they cut down the tree, but since the soil was still moist, the attempt to chop down the tree led to the formation of rivers and mountains as we see in the tale. The people who send the bird to examine should have studied the weight of the bird and the bird too, should have known its weight and since it was willing to experiment the soil, it only swayed up and down finally causing such incidents to happen. Likewise, in the tale of *Chungleng leh Hnuaileng indo* the source of hatred between them was the imprudence of the *Satel*. The *Satel* clearly realized that his physique was unfit to set up the challenge of jumping over the *Rulpui* eggs and landing it safely and he also knew how furious would the *Rulpui* be when he would fall upon the eggs and break them, because of his heedlessness he also did not try to understand the fact that the *Sakhi* who promised to rescue him was not bold to fight against the *Rulpui*. Also the *Satel* thought only about his own pleasure, so he recklessly made the conclusion giving birth to fights, quarrels and ultimately

a war. Every race produces tales and stories exactly in accordance to the mindset of the people and so tales are born according to our thoughts and considerations. Therefore, these are the mindset of the people and it clearly highlighted that the Mizo people do not have distant thinking. In other tales as well, we find many incidents of imprudence and recklessness and it is not possible to mention all of them but let us peep again the more evident and popular: Firstly, Thlanrawkpa because of recklessness forgot to invite his father-in-law who was supposed to be the most important guest in his *Khuangchawi* and secondly, *Kawlkil Vengtupa* (guard of the horizon) because of his heedlessness tried to collapse the earth by shaking it. And thirdly, Lianchea also lost his sister, Chawngtinleri because of his imprudence. Moreover, the Mizos are late in literature just because they were too thoughtless to keep the animal hides safely and instead of using it as a writer tool they kept it negligently which was reachable for the dogs. Their imprudence let the dogs eat up such a precious material. How the Mizo people create tales, the way they build the characters and how they make the conclusions as mentioned above in the myths points out their carelessness, imprudence, heedlessness, thoughtlessness, recklessness and how they do not mind concluding things disorderly and how hateful and hurried minded they are.

2. **Dreams of Leisure:** We humans create our world according to our cravings and preferences and discard things disgusting and hateful. The Mizo tribes are known to be industrious and self-dependent, but it is surprising that their resourcefulness and diligence are not seen in any of their desires in the myths. We can clearly see it from the gift presented to *Kaikuangral* by Thlanrawkpa in the tale of *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi* because *Kaikuangral* pleased him the

most. Thlanrawkpa definitely gave the best reward he could give to *Kaikuangral* who glorified him but the gift was for none of resourcefulness, diligence or righteousness, but only the ability to eat without working for it in leisure. This highlights the mindset of the ancestors, how they long to eat without working hard for it and how fond they were of leisure. Otherwise, *Kaikuangral* must have been presented with a useful working tool. In all honesty the reason for which they longed to be in *Pialral* in the after world was rest from labour. This desire was at the bottom of their culture and practices. Also, the reason why they toiled hard day and night to obtain plenty of harvest was not because of their industriousness but because they wanted to live leisurely in *Pialral* for which organizing a *Khuangchawi* was a necessity. In the same way, each Mizo man wanted to shoot down as many wild animals as he could, not because of sheer bravery and diligence, but because he wanted to be a *Thangchhuah*, and to ensure admittance to *Pialral*. The reason they longed for *Pialral* so much was not so much for freedom from the hard and laborious life and to be together with their loved ones in the spirit, but to live leisurely the life of endless supply - *faisa ringa awm der der na* (utterly relying upon cleaned rice). If we look at the core of *Dawi* (wizardry) in the tales of Mizo myth it was again leisure. Another instance can be taken from an incident in the tale of *Vanhrika*, when *Vanhrika* discovered the culprit who made turbid his well. He was very furious and wanted to kill her who was daughter of a god; but he instantly changed his mind when she promised to give him magic. The magic was the power to have things easily without working hard for it. R.L.Stevenson's ideal of life, 'To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour' (Eldorado, ed. Khiantge, *The Golden*

Lines 150) is quite different from the dream world of the Mizo people. The rewards characters achieved and the construction of the plots of the Mizo tales highlighted their dreams and show cases their desires which was nothing else but the ability to eat and have things without working for it.

3. **Negligence of elders in the society:** The Mizos were said to be respectful towards elders, never grumbling when dispatched by an elder. And at meals until and unless the eldest started a mouthful, the younger never proceeded with the meal. Such were the main talks regarding their respect towards elders. But the practical status of elders highlighted in the myths contradicts the above mentioned statement. It contradicts the statement of Mizos being respectful towards their elders and showcases them as a race that neglects the elders. In the tale of *Chemtatrawta*, we see that an old woman excreted at the head of the village waterpoint which was the main source of water as a protest against an elephant destroying her home. This incident deserves to be examined thoroughly. The old woman could not punish the culprit on her own nor could she find out the reason behind the destruction of her house. Nobody was aware of her worries and since nobody had the intention of helping her, she did what she thought was best to catch the attention of the people. The old woman attained the desired attention only after excreting at the headwater, and her brave protest brought the guilty prawn to justice. The myth originated the phrase '*a kaikuang*' as reference to the main culprit. It could be said that the old woman had no opportunity to seek help and seek justice until she excreted at the head of the water point even after the destruction of her house by the elephant. In another Mizo myth, we see one incident which says,

The narrow rim of the sky and the earth touching each other is called the horizon, and in it the sky and the earth does not meet properly with each other because of which there was an aperture. In this horizon, there was a *Sunhlu* tree and the old woman kept on poking it. Even though it fell close by the tree, it rolled away before she could pick it up (Thanmawia, *Mizo Hnahthlak* 40).

This tale is very strange and astonishing, baffling thoughts. During that time, if an old woman existed then it is obvious that children must have also existed. The question arises as to why the old woman tried to pluck *Sunhlu* located at the horizon, when younger ones keep off from plucking it. Could it be that the old woman who could no longer work did not get a square meal? A closer look at this old woman and the old woman in *Chemtatrawta's* tale by their singular actions highlight the solitary and neglected life of the elderly who no longer deserved the attention of family and society. When we look at conventional pictures of Mizos as being respectful towards elders as in the way they do not refuse their elders when sent for an errand, and the younger not eating until the eldest starts the meal. The renowned and respected are usually the bachelors, especially *Valupa* and *Khawnbawl* (chief's minister) who were useful to the family and community as a whole and not the elderly who were weak because of age. In Mizo language words such as '*Tarchhia*' (the ruined age)' are frequently used; and some insolent men, when they are about to sneeze but reverted, '*Ka hahchhiau let chu veng hmawra tar thi aiin ka ui zawk,*' which means that one misses a sneeze more than an aged person dying somewhere on the outskirts of the locality. Such crude behavior, though much objected to by elders, appeared to be common feature in the public culture of the Mizos.

4.2 Myth as a portrayal of humanity:

A critical study of Mizo myths observes similarities with actual life so that they become portrayal of human society, as all literature does. All living beings did not live satisfactorily at the beginning in the myth world. They did not live perfectly when Khuazingnu created them; they needed food and shelter for survival and for cultivation of crops they needed soil. The creator did not give them the soil they needed, and to obtain it they had swim across *Tuihriam* and bring the soil from the other side. The water of the lake was freezing cold so it was not easy to swim across it. They tried several times to bring the soil and at last with great difficulty they succeeded. After having the soil, their manner of living was still difficult. Vanhrikpa gave them rice as their food but even that seed was available on the other side of *Tuihriam*, and this again they obtained with great difficulty. *Tuihriam* in the Mizo myth can be compared with the difficulties and obstacles of life.

Hardships and difficulties come in human life; all men big or small, rich or poor, face difficulties. When a baby is born, the baby could neither speak nor walk and does not have knowledge of a mature person. He has to face many difficulties to be matured and the more it faces such situations, when he grows up, he will attain true maturity and understanding. We are often cheated of our cravings and desires. We often have to pay the price for what we get by hardship and overcoming difficulties. Therefore, in human life, when we work towards achieving our desires and our needs, hardships always arrive between us and when the hardship is huge and difficult to overcome, people often abandon their dreams, and if by luck the difficulty is small, then it is easy to overcome; this is how human life goes on. The creatures in the myth needed soil and rice for survival, but the gods did not give

them on open hands. It was obvious that the gods kept it for them when they could earn it. The *Phivawk* and *Sakuh* came back almost dying when they swam across *Tuihriam* river to obtain the things they needed. Likewise, we humans too in our journey to achieve the things we want have to face many hardships and some people fail who cannot overcome such hardships. Everybody pleads to God to attain his desires but God does not place the blessings on our hands without deserving endeavour. In order to receive blessings we have to try our best like the *Phivawk* and *Sakuh* to receive such blessing. We have to overcome hardships and obstacles. Those who are unable to fight the difficulties and hardships in their lives, they lead a sorrowful and discouraging life, but those who adhere perseveringly are showered with blessings.

When the entire subject under Vanhrikpa's rule lived contently, there was a thing that could harm them and that was Tuihriampa's trap. It is very surprising to know that Tuihriampa had a trap to hurt his friends while all the creatures lived in peace and unity. The animals went to Vanhrikpa seeking for help because they were worried as Tuihriampa sets a trap and often ensnare the animals. So, Vanhrikpa gave them *Thumpi* to bite and destroy the trap. Meanwhile, when Tuihriampa found out that his trap was damaged now and then, he went to Vanhrikpa with his worry. On hearing this, Vanhrikpa told him to use *Thangtung* for the string of his traps. When Tuihriampa use *Thangtung* to make the traps, it was not possible for the termites to destroy it, subsequently the animals advised each others to be afraid of *hruizam* with a stick that bend, and to go round it.

The above clearly exposes the wickedness that ruled human life. Every religion imparts a good mode of living and no religion condones evil. The animals thought of a way to destroy Tuihriampa's traps because it brought them death, so they kept

Thumpi on duty to bite off and destroy the traps. This was effective for a while, but later Tuihriampa started trapping with better and stronger material. Similarly, in life, we fight against the evil enemies of life; sometimes we may push it away, but it always comes back with better and cunning. It attacks us according to our very nature and disposition. The animals stopped going to Tuihriampa, but took the responsibility of defending themselves resourcefully. The wisdom of the animals teaches us a lesson in how best to defend ourselves from evil attacks. In life temptations to evil will not cease, but we may free ourselves from its snares by prudence. It is difficult to overcome evil by direct assault because its attack is directed from within our own nature; but we may just cheat it by not getting caught in its traps if we are aware of its presence in ourselves and never give in to its temptations.

Every religion imparts a good mode of living, to love one another and to work for the betterment of all. Such is usually the core of the teaching of every religion. But few are willing to abide by the good teachings because of ignorance or selfish desires. But when we trespass against religious and moral standards no one is willing to accept and endure the consequences of our evil actions, but always try to put the blame on others. This is human nature and even if we keep quiet, we still seek to blame others in our minds so as to free ourselves of the burden of sin. Similar disposition operates in the society and the country at large. The governance of the country is not up to the mark, and when we criticize prevailing corruption, indolence, mismanagement in administration - how there is no place for righteousness, we never admit ourselves to be part of the evil game. The people blame the authority and the authority on the other hand blames one thing or the other. This is human nature, pronouncing justice oneself and putting the blame on

others. In the tale of *Chemtatrawta* the old woman does not deem her action as fault when she excreted at the headwater but put the blame on the elephant who destroyed her house. They then asked the elephant the reason for his action, and he said that it was because the bat entered into his nose, and so the blame skipped on till finally, the *Kaikuang* had no one to pass the blame on. He too would not take the blame but sought to change the subject while escaping arrest by hiding. The story exposes true human nature concerning morality. We take advantage of the phrase, '*Tualthat pawhin thiamthu sawi tur an nei alawm*' (Every murderer has an alibi).

Chapter 5

Conclusion

It may be assumed from the previous chapter that myth occupies an important place in the formation of Mizo literature. This dissertation has made a critical analysis of Mizo myths as far as available sources make provision and in the limited scope of the scholar's views. In this chapter 5, we will summarize the major finding in this dissertation as a conclusion.

In chapter I, we have seen that the word 'Mizo' is a comprehensive term used to identify a group of the different tribes or clans who lived in the present Mizoram and the adjacent regions of India and neighbouring countries. The origin of the Mizos is veiled in obscurity, but it has been assumed that they belong to the Mongoloid stock that came through China and Tibet. The Mizo sub tribes were divided by walls of international and state boundaries for a couple of centuries; the cultures and traditions, mode of living and behavior and even dialects as well as folk narratives gradually differed through change of place and passage of time. Thus the term *Mizo* is taken to include all the clans who at one time in history were bound together by the bond of common traditions, customs, history and cultural heritage having linguistic affinity. The narrations of tales have changed considerably owing to isolation from one another as the Mizo race scattered over a wide national and international area. To make a comprehensive study of Mizo myths and bring them within a single focus as in this dissertation one had to rely on no other reliable source but the few extant works in print so that controversy over which version is nearer the original may be precluded.

In the canon of Mizo folklore myth occupies only about one-tenth of the entire folk narratives. But these myths are indispensable forerunners of the legends and folk tales which are placed in another category under the Mizo folk narrative. In fact, many interesting folktales which occupy maximum place in the Mizo folk narrative issued from the practices and beliefs featured in the myths. And some tales within the Mizo folk narratives possessing the character of a legend and folktales with myth element such as *Tlingi leh Ngama*, *Lasiri leh Lasari* and *Thangsira leh Thangzaia*, *Chhura*, *Hlawndawhthanga*, *Tumchhingi leh Raldawna*, *Chawngmawii leh Hrangchhuana*, *Zauhranga* and the only cumulative tale under the narrative of Mizo folklore *Chemtatrawta* are not exactly counted as ‘myths’. But even though they do not have myth as their main characteristic, they still possess certain unmistakable myth element. Therefore, it will be safest to call them ‘etiological tales’ even if we do not exactly call them myths.

But as explained in Chapter 2.1.1, Mizo myths, though not exactly cumulative, have linkage with one another so that when one tells one story there comes another the telling of which is almost impertinent as a sequel; and because of this the stage in which a particular story comes to a conclusion cannot have universality of acceptance. The tales of Mizo myths are simple in nature, easy to understand and easy to remember even by listening only once; solutions are easily available whenever problems crop up; and the origins of things are narrated in a precise and pithy manner without diminishing their value and status as myth.

Mizo myths can be broadly classified into four categories namely, *Origin myth*, *transformation and appellation myth*, *myths of flood* and *myths of practice and beliefs*. The origin myths and transformation myth occupy almost two-thirds of the known Mizo

myths while the belief and practice myth occupy only a little proportion. We can see many super naturals in these myths, but it is surprising to find that exclusive tales about gods are very rare. The brief tale of Pawla and Sanui and the tale of Khuazingnu are perhaps the only tales having a god as a character. But this tale too can be categorized under the myth of practice. Creation myths are very scanty in Mizo myths because the origin of most things were not attributed to creation by gods but are born out of other elements. Thus it is more appropriate to call it origin myths instead of creation myths. Most of the things originated accidentally, and not because they were born out of the will or intention of an agency. Likewise, in transformation and appellation myth, instead of the interference of gods, things arrived and changed because of the creatures' activity. *Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi*, *Thimzing* tales, and some other etiological tales are of this category.

The Mizo myths contain varieties of tales indicative of the level of religiousness of the tribes who owns the myths. But if we summarize the varieties of mythical tales as a whole, we find that they all have at the centre the similar theme of humanity. Human beings may not take part in all the myths but the creatures possess human characteristics and attributes. The gods does not entirely rule over the myths and their participation is not always obvious; and if we take a look at the entire Mizo myths, instead of the interferences of gods, the actions and movements of creatures gave birth to new changes and new arrivals. What one can infer from this is that humans are exclusive creatures apart from other creations whose origin is veiled in a mystery far too complex for the primitive mind to even have an idea of, while the material world they share with other creations is subject to change and mutation the process of which relies on the essential nature of the entire environment. When Khuazingnu created heaven and earth humans

were included amongst many other creations, but the creator seemed to have endowed more intelligence and power to human. Tuihriampa had more wisdom than the other creatures; Vanhrikpa, too was of human mould possessed of supernatural power. Besides the gods, there were superhuman characters with special powers who were born between supernatural being and human such as the sons of Sichangneii. We do not find gods having off-springs by animals, though some animals are there having supernatural potentials like the flying horse of *Chhawnabawraza*. Perhaps the only non-human entity in close encounter with humans in Mizo folk narrative are *Phingnu leh Phingpa*.

The Mizos believed that there is a creator, more powerful than them and who is the origin of everything. They also believed that there are some things more powerful than them who can harm and hurt them. The supernatural of the Mizo myths can be classified as good and evil spirits. In Mizo utterance, the good spirit is called *Khuanu* or *Pu Vana*, and the evil spirit is identified variously as *Huai*, *Chawm*, *Phung*. The tales of *Ngalsia* and *Chhama* are the only tales in which we see sacrifices to the demons and evil spirits. Regarding the life after death, tales of *Rihdil*, *Mitthi Khua* and *Pialral* are linked with their beliefs. Besides this, nothing is found that is linked with their religion. But even as these myths are few in numbers, their influence on Mizo culture and its practices, beliefs, traditions and the society is encompassing till the coming of Christianity. We humans develop the cosmos in accordance with our imaginations and beliefs. Mizo culture and society was guided by their religious beliefs which had strong links with the myths they inherited from untraced lineage. Using myths as foundation Mizos developed their culture and beliefs, inculcating moral order in family and society under the superstitious influence of their belief.

With the advent of enlightenment through foreign influence the mythical heritage passes into literature. With the sharp natural intelligence and sensibility endowed by nature, today's Mizos, instead of casting away their old traditional beliefs as inimical with the new religion, have taken the intelligent choice of preserving these frail and fragile irreplaceable treasures of time for the future generations, not as mere artifacts, but as living matter that can have serious potential in the moulding of a people's self-consciousness and identity.

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX I

Glossary of Mizo Terminology

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>Arpui</i> | Hen |
| <i>Ar</i> | Domestic fowl |
| <i>Awk</i> | The umbral shadow of the earth |
| <i>Bawng</i> | Cow or ox |
| <i>Changpat</i> | Earthworm |
| <i>Chepchep</i> | Fly catcher |
| <i>Chulteinu</i> | A big kind of earthworm |
| <i>Dawi, Dawithiam</i> | The practice or art of wizardry, witchcraft or magic. One skilled in Dawi is 'Dawithiam'. |
| <i>Dawihla</i> | Invocation |
| <i>Ek</i> | excreta |
| <i>Fartuah</i> | The name of a tree bearing bright scarlet blossoms in spring. |
| <i>Hlado</i> | A song which is sings upon the dead body of the animal by a hunter |
| <i>Hnahthial and Di</i> | Thatching plant |
| <i>Hruizam</i> | Creepers |
| <i>Kaikuang</i> | Prawn |
| <i>Kaikuangral</i> | Kingfisher |
| <i>Kelpui</i> | She-Goat |
| <i>Khuangchawi</i> | The name of a public meritorious service of providing community feasts and ceremonies by chiefs and other well-to-do village members. |
| <i>Koro</i> | Laughing thrush |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>Laiking</i> | Lizard |
| <i>Lawm</i> | <i>Lawm</i> groups are those who help each other mutually in their works especially in jhum cultivation. |
| <i>Mau</i> | Bamboo |
| <i>Mitthi khua</i> | The resting place of ordinary and common people after death. |
| <i>Muk</i> | Name of a tree yielding high quality timber. The thick bark turns black as soon as it is cut, making it appear to be cut much earlier. |
| <i>Paihte and Tuikuk</i> | Name of sub tribes of Mizo |
| <i>Pang</i> | Cotton tree |
| <i>Pawngeklir</i> | Dung beetle |
| <i>Phivawk</i> | Warthog |
| <i>Pialral</i> | A pleasant place for the spirit where no work is done and food is available in plenty. The spirits of <i>Thangchhuah</i> family entitle the place. |
| <i>Rulpui</i> | Serpent |
| <i>Sabereka Khuangkaih</i> | Flash flood or landslip caused by inundation. <i>Sabereka Khuangkaih</i> is a frequent occurrence during the rainy seasons. |
| <i>Saisu</i> | Name of plant resembling banana or wild plaintain. |
| <i>Sahram</i> | Otter |
| <i>Sahuai</i> | A slow pace lemur |
| <i>Sakei</i> | Tiger |
| <i>Sakhi</i> | Barking deer |
| <i>Sakuh</i> | Porcupine |
| <i>Sanghar</i> | Lynx |
| <i>Satel</i> | Turtle |
| <i>Savun lehkha</i> | Leather parchment |
| <i>Sazu</i> | Rat |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Sih</i> | A salt spring regarded as haunted by evil spirit |
| <i>Sunhlu</i> | Gooseberry |
| <i>Taumeichherchhi</i> | It is believed to be a spirit appearing as fire lights. |
| <i>Thangchhuah</i> | <i>Thangchhuah</i> as defined by J.H.Lorrain in his <i>Dictionary of the Lushai Language</i> is “the title given to a man who has distinguished himself by killing a certain number of different animals in the chase, or by giving a certain number of public feasts.” The man who had earned the title ‘Thangchhuah’ is called ‘Thangchhuah- pa’, and he is the proud claimant to a place in <i>Pialral</i> . |
| <i>Thangtung</i> | Malay Sago or Palm fibre |
| <i>Thehlei</i> | Squirrel |
| <i>Thiamhla</i> | Incantation |
| <i>Thimzing</i> | “The name of a fabulous Great Darkness lasting seven days and seven nights during which many dreadful things are said to have occurred.” (Lorrain) |
| <i>Thingvantawng</i> | Literally ‘a tree which reached the sky’ |
| <i>Tlumpi</i> | Termite |
| <i>Tuihriamral</i> | Other side of <i>Tuihriam</i> |
| <i>Tuihuai</i> | Water demon |
| <i>Utawk</i> | Toad |
| <i>Vai</i> | The word used by Mizos to say other Indian |
| <i>Vakul</i> | Dromanugo bird |
| <i>Vaube</i> | <i>Bauhinia variegates</i> . A flowering tree that blossoms in spring. |
| <i>Vazar</i> | Necklace thrush |
| <i>Zawhte</i> | Cat |
| <i>Zawng</i> | Monkey |
| <i>Zu</i> | Alcohol or beer |
| <i>Zuhrei</i> | A large jungle rat |

APPENDIX – II

Mythical Tales in English

1. Creation Myth:

In the beginning the world did not exist and neither did us human beings. There was one god named *Khuazingnu*. She made the earth and she created a variety of green vegetation to protect the earth from searing heat and to give it a pleasant atmosphere.

The earth was very dry and trees and plants could not survive too well. So she opened the window of heaven and poured down water to wet the dry earth and all the green vegetation. So whenever it rains our ancestors used to say that the damsel of heaven is fetching water.

As time passed, to fetch on the green vegetation that she had created, she created humans, birds, animals and insects. At the time of creation all the created living beings having tongues could speak, and Man and Animal could communicate with each other.

As time passed human being multiplied in numbers, and so did the animals and birds. As all multiplied in numbers, differences and misunderstandings began to emerge making them to become further and further apart. In the end they even came to view each other as enemies. Even amongst the human beings different type of characters and temperaments began to emerge and differences even amongst the humans began to evolve. Due to this reason the need for a leader emerged and thus they elected a leader amongst themselves who became chief.

2. How the land acquired soil

When *Khuazingnu* created the land there was no soil. The land was filled with flat rocks. Trees and weeds could not grow, and it was a desolated situation. There was a big river which was named *Tuihriam*. The river water was extremely cold that if you dip your hand in the water it would feel as if the water is so sharp that it had cut off the hand from the body.

On the other side of the river *Tuihriam*, there was a small bit of soil which was greatly coveted by man and animal. Different animals tried their luck to fetch the soil. They tried to swim the water but it was so bitterly cold that those who attempted to

swim across it died, even before they swam half the breath of the river. They all longed to fetch the soil, but since no one could swim across the water, they were very desperate.

Finally, the Porcupine came forward. With his firm determination he thickened his skin and tried his luck across the water and he succeeded. He nudged the soil with his nose and a tiny bit remained on his nose which he carried back across the river. His friends were so scared that he would die in the process that they all frantically cheered and encourage him from the land. The Porcupine was successful in his attempt for he could thicken his skin and he swam safely back though he too nearly died in the process.

The next problem was how to multiply the tiny bit of soil that the Porcupine had brought back. No one could think of any way that it could be done so, and all anxiously thought about what could be done. Just at that moment, the Earthworm came forward saying, "Okay! If you will listen to my words, I know how to multiply the soil." They all turned toward the Earthworm and said, "If you know how to solve the problem, speak out." The Earthworm replied, "I will eat this bit of soil and multiply it with my excreta, and I will keep doing so till the soil is plentiful." The animals were filled with misgivings and did not believe the Earthworm. "You are a liar. It is just that you are tempted to eat the soil," they said. The Earthworm answered by saying, "It is not because I am tempted to eat the soil. If I am found to be false, you can cut my body into three pieces!" The Earthworm's words were so brave and defiant that they began to believe him and finally accepted his offer.

Thus the Earthworm began to eat the precious tiny bit of soil. He ate and ate and true to his words, the soil began to keep multiplying with his excreta. It was exactly as he said it would be. At last, there was a huge pile of soil and they were jubilant. With great enthusiasm they ran about everywhere to distribute the soil evenly. The distributed soil was levelled and patted by *Chultei nu*. As she patted the soil, it was well levelled and there were no mountains and rivers and the land was a flat space.

3.How the mountains and the Rivers were created

After there was soil on the land, tress and bamboo grass began to grow on the land. Beneath the very center of the sky there was a village named Vanlaiphai. In the village of Vanlaiphai thre grew a very tall tree called *Thingvantawng*. They wanted to cut down the tree, but were afraid that as it fall down it would detroy *Chulteinu*'s hard labour. So they waited till the soil was dry and settled enough.

One day when they felt that the soil was dry enough, they sent the small *Lailen* bird to look around. The small bird flew over the land and landed on the land at various places and hopped about. Since she was so light she made no dent on the soil. So, she came back and said, "Yes, the soil is dry enough, the *Thingvantawng* can be cut down."

So, they began to cut down the tall tree down with their axes. Since it was so huge it took for long time to cut it down. The men took down with their axes and finally the tree was cut down. However, the soil was still not dry enough and *Chulteinu*'s hard labour was destroyed by the fallen tree. Some of the area was deeply dented. It is said that the big rivers are created by the dents of the bigger branches, while the small rivers are created by the dents of the smaller branches. Thus streams and mountains began to exist.

4.Vanhrikpa

Once upon a time, humans and animals all lived together cordially. No one created tensions or problems to their co-existence. As time passed, they all multiplied in numbers and thus they all agreed that they needed to have a leader. To rile over them all, they elected Vanhrikpa. He was a very good person, and did everything for the good of everyone.

At that time, amongst the humans there was one man with different attitude. His name was Tuihriampa. He began to set traps to catch animals and caught a lot of animals in his traps. Animals became very desperate and called a council amongst them. They came to Vanhrikpa saying, "Look Tuihriampa is setting a traps for us animals and he is going to trap all of us. We are very desperate." Vanhrikpa give them *Tlimpi* to eat and destroy all the traps that Vanhrikpa set. When he could not trap any more, Tuihriampa too went to Vanhrikpa and said, "The *Tlimpi* has destroyed all my traps and

I cannot trap any more animals. Please help me.” Vanhrikpa said to him, “For your trap, use the *Thangtung* palm so that the *Thumpi* cannot eat and destroy your traps.” So with Vanhrikpa’s advice, Tuihriampa used the *Thangtung* and caught many animals again. After this the animals advised each other to be wary of cane vines and bending branches.

There was once a She-Goat who could never nurse any of her babies to maturity. In her desperation, she decided to go to Vanhrikpa to seek his advice. On her way she came across the hill with a pleasant atmosphere, fresh air and warm sunshine where a *Hnahthial* plant was growing. “Goat woman, where are you going?” asked the *Hnahthial*. The She-Goat replied, “There is not going to a day when any of my off springs are going to live. I am going to Vanhrikpa for his good advice.” The *Hnahthial* said, “Oh, listen, friend, it is me who is in great need of Vanhrikpa’s advice. I am perpetually ugly and thin, look at my leaves. They are so unhealthy and ruffled. Please asked Vanhrikpa’s advice on my behalf.” The She-Goat replied, “Alright! I shall speak to him on your behalf.” After a while, she crossed a valley where a *Di* was growing. The *Di* like the *Hnahthial* asked to her where she was going. The She-Goat replied to the question. The *Di* also said to her, “Oh I too have something to tell Vanhrikpa. Look! I cannot grow bigger or lustily even though I live in a fertile valley. I am perpetually thin. Please convey my desperation to Vanhrikpa.” The She-Got replied, “Very well, I shall tell Vanhrikpa.”

After a while the She-Goat reached a place where a *Mau* and a *Pang* tree were exchanging their woes to each other. He She-Goat asked them, “You two friends, what are you talking about?” They replied, “Well, nothing else but what we share the same problem in common. Whenever the storm blows both of our branches and stems keep breaking and both off us are very desperate about it.” When the She-Goat tell them that she was on her way to meet Vanhrikpa, they begged her to tell him of their woes. So the She-Goat without loitering went on towards her destination.

At last, she reached Vanhrikpa’s abode. She told Vanhrikpa about her trouble. Vanhrikpa replied, “It is not anything else but your milk is too thick. Whenever you nurse your baby, smell it behind. If it starts to smell of milk, stop nursing it and keep

away from it.” After that a she-goat will always smell her kids’ behind while nursing them.

The She-Goat also told Vanhrikpa about the woes of the *Hnahthial* and the *Di* and Vanhrikpa replied, “Let the *Hnahthial* and the *Di* exchange their place of growth. Let the *Hnahthial* live in the valley where it is shade, and the *Di* on the hill and take for her husband the Fire and all will be well.” Thus, according to the advice of Vanhrikpa, the *Hnahthial* and the *Di* exchange their places and the *Di* married the Fire. This is why till today, whenever she is burnt by fire, fresh shoots grow in abundance.

The She-Goat also told Vanhrikpa about the problems of the *Mau* and the *Pang*. Vanhrikpa said, “Let the *Mau* strings all over her stem. The places where she will knot her stem will be her limbs, and where the knot is tied, it would be her eyes. Then she will become harder and tougher. As for the *Pang*, she is growing too tall that she cannot be hard and tough. So push her on the tip of her tree and her branches will grow wider. She will then grow to be hard and tough, and she will have enough strength to protect herself against the wind.” The *Mau* and the *Pang* took Vanhrikpa’s advice and they became tough enough to protect themselves against the wind and storm.

5.How Earthquake Began

The living beings called the place where the doomed sky and earth meet as *kawlkil*. At the *kawlkil* where the sky and the earth joined, it was not joined properly. At the *kawlkil* there was a *Sinhlu* (*Emblic*) tree which bore a twin fruit. An old woman tried to pick the twin fruit with a sick. It fell down on the ground just near the tree. She could not pick up the fruit for whenever she tried to; it rolled away out of her reach.

There was a very strong man who was guardian of *kawlkil* and he was constantly watching over it. Once a *Perhpawng* also called a *Pawngeklir* reached the *kawlkil*.

To the guardian he said, “Allow me to roll my ball of excreta across the *kawlkil*.”

The guardian asked the bug, “How can you acquire such a huge ball of excreta?”

The bug replied, “Oh! All the humans have died, and so I collected all their excreta and urine and I made a huge ball out of the.”

The guardian of the *kawlkil* did not know that the bug with the ball of excreta was telling a lie.

He said, “If all the humans are dead then let me shake the Earth very hard and destroy it all.”

He shook the Earth so hard that there was a terrible earthquake.

“Oh no! Oh no!” the humans exclaimed. “We are still alive! We are still alive!”

When the guardian of the *kawlkil* realized that the humans were still alive, he stopped shaking the Earth.

In another version of the story of the Earthquake, the guardian of the *kawlkil* placed the Earth on the top of a huge Tortoise and told the Tortoise not to move at all; for if he did the whole Earth will be destroyed and all humans will perish.

When the *Pawngeklir* told him the lie, the guardian of the *kawlkil* said, “If all the humans under my protection have perished, what is the need to protect the Earth.” He placed a huge burning charcoal on the top of the tortoise. The Tortoise could not tolerate the severe heat and began to move. As he started moving, the Earth began to shake vigorously.

“Oh! Have mercy! Have mercy!” the humans cried, “We are still alive. We are still alive.”

When the guardian of the *kawlkil* realized that the humans were still alive, he immediately told the tortoise to stop walking.

Thus whenever there is an Earthquake, Mizos like our ancestors cry out, “Mercy! Mercy! We are still alive. We are not yet dead.”

6.How Rice began to Staple food

Once upon a time, humans did not use rice as a staple food. They fed on corn, millet and fruits.

One day, Vanhrikpa told his people, “If you proceed to eat corn and millet, you can never complete with Mangmuia the destroyer. You should start eating rice to make

you stronger and tougher. Which kind of rice do you prefer to eat? The Buhkirirum or the Buhchangrum?” he asked them.

The humans were at a loss as to which one to choose.

Vanhrikpa himself replied, “Kirirum rice is very tasty and need no other culinary. Buhchangrum is hard but it accomplishes other culinary. Choose which one you want.”

They tasted the Kirirum rice and it was so tasty that while eating the rice they swallowed their tongues. So they said, “Goodness! This rice is so tasty that we are all going to lose tongues. Let us choose the Buhchangrum.”

The problem however was the seed over the Buhchangrum was on the other side of the Tuihriam River. It was going to be very difficult to get the seed. For a long time they held discussions as to how the seed would be made available for their use. At last they decided that the Phivawk could do the task, for he could thicken his skin while swimming the cold water. The Phivawk indeed swam across the river without much difficulty. However the seed lying inside the cracked rock and the hole was so narrow that he could not think of any way to pick it up. So he returned desolately back empty handed.

Again they consulted each other and decided to send the Sazu with the Phivawk.

“Zu-a, with your pointed lips you are the one who can get the seed between the cracked rocks. Crouch on Phi-a’s back and he will take you across the water” they said.

So the Sazu crouched on the back of the Phivawk who again swam across the river. This time the attempt of fetching the rice seed was successful, for the Sazu could easily get the seed with his pointed nose and mouth.

The human beings were very happy that the rice seed was in their hands.

Then the Sazu said, “Since I am the one to fetch it, I wish to have a bite on it.”

“O no!” replied the human beings. “It is only one single grain. We shall sowed it when it is multiplied, you can have you share of celebrating your fulfilled task by eating and excreting in the granary.”

7.Thimzing

Once an eclipse happened, which happened to be longer than usual. The Sun was swallowed away from early morning till night. Nobody could see each other and whoever made any movement seem to collide with someone. Nobody even attempted to do any work.

While the world was incomplete darkness, all of a sudden strange things happened. Everyone became different. Some turns into monkeys. Some turn into chimpanzees. The chief and his council members turned into *Vakul* birds. The honored brave *Thangchhuah* men, who were wearing the *Thangchhuah puan* and respected turban all turned into tigers.

The young men who were having a mock wrestling all turned into bears. Young men and women who had formed *lawm* groups turned into spoils of *Koro* and *Vazar* birds.

The *Chawngthu* tribes turned into monkeys. The *Vanchhe* tribes turned into elephants. The *Paite* and *Vuite* tribes turned into squirrels, and the *Ralte* turned into *Chepchep*.

The domesticate animals were not spared either. They all turned into some wild beasts, especially bears. This is called *Thimzing*, which means ‘amid the darkness.’

8.Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi

Long ago, when the Mizo ancestors were freed from Chhinlung, the land was fertile and the air was healthy, so their population was increasing at high rate. Even the humans and demons mated with each other and had beautiful daughters and sons, among them was Thlanrawkpa, who was tall and handsome, wise and rich. The Paite tribe called him ‘Dahpa’. The people selected Thlanrawkpa to be their king. When Thlanrawkpa became the king, he went to one of the gods of the sky, Sabereka (usually referred to as Pu Vana) to ask for his daughter’s hand in marriage. Sabereka easily agreed to the proposal, so he demanded only a gun and a ‘Thlanvawng thlengpui’ for the price of his daughter. And then Thlanrawkpa and Sabereka’s daughter got married. From this, the Mizo ancestors believed that the sound of thunder was ‘Pu Vana silai ri’

(the sound of Pu Vana's gunshot) and a distant rolling thunder was called 'Pu Vana thlengpui hnuh ri' (the sound of plate pulled by Pu Vana)

Thlanrawkpa was very rich that he could throw a public feast every day. Later, he decided to perform 'Khuangchawi'(see Glossary). He invited all the creations, humans and animals to join in his 'Khuangchawi'. But sadly, he forgot to invite his father in law, Sabereka. Sabereka was so furious he caused a tremendous downpour of rain which washed away all the soil of the land. There was no place to erect 'Seluphan', so Thlanrawkpa could not carry on with his preparation for 'Khuangchawi'.

Later, they collected the soil from 'Tuihriam ral.' Chhura beat the soil and leveled the ground and Thlanrawkpa was then able to perform his Khuangchawi. Different creatures came to his village to enjoy his feast.

Thlanrawkpa gave a name to every creature that came to join in the feast. A nervous chicken came, it was covered with mud, so he called it 'Chirhi'(Miss Muddy). So chickens are called to roost by 'Chiri, Chiri'.

A jungle-rat took so long to finish his share of beer, so he named it 'Zurei'(sucking too long at beer bottle). For the time it was known as Zurei, but with the passing of time, it is now known as Zuhrei.

Later, a cat came and walked along a narrow log. Everyone was surprised to see the cat walking on a thin log, then Thlanrawkpa named it 'Zawhte' (walk on thin log).

Next came a squirrel who walked along a rope. Astonished, everyone exclaimed it had more ability than the cat, and Thlanrawkpa gave it a name 'Theihlei'(much more able). Now it is known as 'Thehlei'.

Thlanrawkpa requested every guest to enjoy in the event, and not to make any trouble, though Sakhi (barking deer) and sakuh (porcupine) were never friends before. They followed the request of Thlanrawkpa, and decided to make friends with each other and danced together and sang 'Khi Kuh, Khi Kuh, kuh khi kuh'.

When a 'Tangkawng'(a species of monitor lizard) saw the two dancing happily, he asked them if could join them, they agreed and added his name in their song "khi

kuh, khi kuh, kuh tang kuh, khi kuh tang kuh, kuh tang kuh,” and the three danced happily.

When a ‘Varihaw’(a peacock pheasant) saw them, he asked them if he could join them, and they agreed and their song became ‘ Khi kuh, khi kuh, kuh tang kuh, khi kuh tang kuh, kuh tang kuh, haw- haw-haw’.

The next day was the day of the big event ‘Khuangchawi’. Among his invitees were Sadai (a kind of earthworm) and vawk-ek (pig’s dung). The two told Thlanrawkpa that they would not be able to dance in the sun, because the heat of the sun would kill them. And then Thlanrawkpa asked Khuazingnu to hide the sun while the two were dancing,

To perform ‘Thingdim’(a dance performed at Khuangchawi) the guests came dancing towards the wide open space in front of Thlanrawkpa’s house. It was a perfect day with no sun, no rain and all the guests were dancing happily under a perfect weather.

Even Vawk ek put on a cock’s tail, and the jungle rat wore chhawkhleii flower in his ears. They were dancing nicely on the ground. The rat looked cute and everyone admired his looks, so they made a song for him;

Zuhreiin pangpar beh e,
Mawina nei e, thatna nei e.

Buipui (the red checked bamboo rat) was jealous of the Zuhrei, and thought that he would look better with the flowers than Zuhrei. So he put flowers in his ears and came out dancing on the ground. But unfortunately, no one praised him as he had expected. They asked him, “Where do you get those flowers from?” He replied, “From my pillow.” He did not look good as Zuhrei, so everyone called him Buipui and made a song for him:

Buipuiin pangpar beh e,
Mawina nei lo,
Thatna nei lo,
Su bui bui.

Buipui was very displeased, he took the drum and run away to his burrow. The others could not sing and dance without the drum and therefore, the phrase ‘Khuang lova chai ang’ was born.

Everyone was dismayed at Buipui’s reaction, so they asked a chicken to go to him and ask him for the drum. With all his skill the chicken tried to persuade him, but Buipui would not give him the drum. So they decided to flood his burrow with water. By hearing the sound of that, Buipui had no choice and threw the drum out of his hole, striking the chicken on her knees. Thereafter the chicken’s knees bent backwards.

When they had their drum back, Sahuai became their drummer. Everyone, even changpat, ar ek and vawk ek were dancing with all their might. Their sound became louder as the time passed, and the sun was so eager to see the chanfpat and ar ek dancing, and began rising from the horizon. The drummer, Sahuai could not allow the sun to rise as it would dry the dancing earthworms and dungs, so he pushed on the tip of the sun as hard as he could.

Later, the sun could not resist seeing them dancing, and rose up at last. And soon vawk ek and ar ek dried up, the heat tired earthworm and could not dance anymore. Sahuai became very angry at the sun; he promised himself not to look at the sun anymore. Even now Sahuai keep bending his head against the sun, and closed its eyes even if it is faced towards the sun.

Evening came, a time for ‘Sa vei chawi’ (a feast served out to each guest in a separate plate). Everyone was in a hurry to get meat with the left hand and beer with the right hand. Laiking (lizard) was so cuuning he got two servings from two counters. He turned his neck red at the back of the house and when he finished eating, he went to the other counter turning his neck black. Someone who saw him doing that, and so the phrase, ‘leh lama awr dum leh lama awr sen’ came to be used to describe cunning fellows.

Chhimbuk (owl) was not satisfied with the sun coming out while they were dancing, so he sat on a branch of a tree with a sullen face while everyone was feasting. Zuhrei came and teased him; the angry Chhimbuk chased Zuhrei to his hole, and waited outside. It was not possible for Zuhrei to go outside, so he made a secret exit at the other

side and fooled the owl. This is how the word ‘Chhimbu dawi’ and the phrase ‘Chhimbuk sa kham’ were born. Till today, an owl and a rat hate each other.

At the end of the feast, Thlanrawkpa wanted to know how his guests thought of him. He dressed himself as a common man and ran to the outskirts of the village before anyone left. He waited there to ask his guests what they felt about his Khuangchawi.

The ox came first with a sulky face. Not knowing that the man standing in front of him was Thlanrawkpa, he told him that he had nothing with a feast. Thlanrawkpa was very angry with the ox and cursed him, this is why the ox is beaten with a stick while ploughing the field.

Next came Kaikuangral (kingfisher), Thlanrawkpa asked him, “Are you satisfied with Thlanrawkpa’s Khuangchawi?”. The bird replied that he was fully satisfied, so Thlanrawkpa blessed him to have his own excreta as food. First, Kaikuangral did not understand what he meant. Then Thlanrawkpa took him to a river and told him to excrete on the water from the branch of a tree standing beside the river. Soon, many fishes came swimming to eat his dung and then Kaikuangral caught the fishes and ate them. Then, Thlanrawkpa said, “That will be your food forever.”

Later, Paihte man and Tuikuk man came and Thlanrawkpa asked them the same question. The two said, “We are satisfied, long live Thlanrawkpa.” Thlanrawkpa was very pleased to hear this, so he gave them knives for weaving cane and bamboos. This is why Paite and Tuikuk are good in weaving till today.

At the last, came a Vai man and a Mizo man, Thlanrawkpa asked them the same question. The two replied that they were fully satisfied and praised the name of Thlanrawkpa with a song. And then he said to them, “You have honoured the name of Thlanrawkpa, as a reward, I will give you these,” and gave a piece of paper each to the men.

9.Savun Lehkha

The Mizo ancestors believed that the Mizo people once had a script of their own for reading and writing. At Thlanrawkpa’s Khuangchawi, a Mizo man and a Vai man honoured the name of Thanrawkpa. As a reward Thlanrawkpa gave them papers in which the ways of riches and all kinds of wisdom was written. Thlanrawkpa favoured

the Mizo man and gave him the better one, 'Savun lehkha' (paper made of leather) and 'Laisuih' (common paper) to the Vai man. The Vai man preserved the paper and taught what was written in it to his children and their descendants. On the other hand, the Mizo man had no place to put the paper, so he used it to cover a wooden pestle. A dog came and ate it all up. This is why Vai were wiser and more educated and had their own script of writing while the Mizo were illiterate and had no script for writing.

10. The war Between the Creatures of the Air and the Creatures of the Land

Once upon a time there lived a tortoise who was keeping guard over the egg of a serpent. After a time a barking deer passed by and invited the tortoise to a high jump competition over the egg of the serpent. The tortoise replied, "Oh no... it is an impossible task for me. I am too slow and I will not be able to jump high over the egg. Besides, I might even land upon the egg and it will break and that is too much of a risk to take." However the barking deer persisted, "even if you crush the egg to pieces, I shall protect you. There is no need to fear." And because of barking deer implored so staunchly, the tortoise eventually relented and said, "Alright then... if you insist."

The high jump competition began and the barking deer jumped over the egg with ease. The tortoise too made an attempt to jump over the egg but alas! He was not as agile as the barking deer and he landed atop the egg and as a result he broke the egg and it shattered into several pieces. In doing so, the tortoise had succeeded in offending in the sentiments of his master, the serpent. The barking deer then became very frightened and he was in a quandary as to what to do and so he advised the tortoise, "You must scramble away to safety for I shall be unable to protect you". And saying this barking deer darted away to safety.

The tortoise who could barely move, began tumbling down the hill as fast as he could. In great consternation he crashed into the houses of several animals including, a wild goat, the elk and wild pig. And to each of them he pleaded, "I have smashed the egg of a serpent, please grant me refuse." But none of them dare to do so. After a time he crashed into the home of a bear and the bear asked, "Who is it that crashes across my house?"

The tortoise stammered, "It is I the tortoise." The bear asked, "What is it that you fear that you tumble down to insanity?" And the tortoise replied, "The barking deer

and I were having a high jump competition over the egg of a serpent. I could not scramble across it in time and so I crashed on top of it and smashed it to pieces. I am trying to escape from the wrath of the serpent and so I am seeking safe heaven. Please do protect me.”

The bear replied, “Alas, I am not strong enough to protect you. You must make your way elsewhere.” And so the tortoise had to scramble away again. He then crashed into the house of a tiger. The tiger snarled, “Who is that who comes crushing into my house?”

The tortoise answered, “It is I, the tortoise. The barking deer and I were having a high jump competition across the egg of the serpent. I was too slow and so I crushed atop the egg and smashed it to pieces. I am now trying to escape from the wrath of the serpent.” But the tiger said, “Alas... I will not be able to protect you from her wrath, you must continue to flee.”

So the tortoise had no choice but to seek refuge elsewhere. At length he crashed into the house of the eagle. The eagle queried, “Who is that who comes crushing into my house?”

The tortoise said, “It is I, the tortoise. The barking deer and I were having a high jump competition over the egg of the large serpent and I was too slow I crushed atop the egg and smashed it to pieces. I am running away in fear, in order to save my life. At this the eagle said, “Do not worry, I shall protect you.” And saying so, he spread his mighty wings and encircled the tortoise amidst its folds.

The serpent had come back home by then and very soon she began to trace the tracks of the tortoise. She asked every animal that she met about the whereabouts the tortoise. And by the time she reached the house of the eagle, she could be heard slithering along in a great rage. The eagle was oblivious to the serpent’s wrath and so he merely asked, “What is that noise?” The tortoise said, “That is what I fear most. It is the sound of the serpent slinking along on its way.” After a time the serpent arrived upon the scene. She asked the eagle, “Have you seen the tortoise?” The eagle replied, “No, of course not.” But the serpent was very suspicious.

“Then why do his tracks stop here at your house? You must have seen him and you must have hidden him somewhere. Why don’t you spread your wings?”The eagle then spread out only his left wings and the serpent ordered, “Spread out the other wing as well.”However the eagle replied, “The other wing is wounded.”Yet the serpent insisted, “You must spread out at least a little bit of it.”

Finally the eagle spread out his other wing. Unfortunately, the serpent could see the end of the tortoise’s tail prodding out from under the eagle’s wing. And at that, the serpent flew into a rage and declared war between the creatures of the air and the creatures of the land. Then all the creatures of the land came together and they began their preparations for war. The creatures of the air also rallied together as they gathered in the banyan tree and they all began to confabulate upon how to wage the war. After careful deliberation of their strategy, the war began. The serpent then rose to a majestic force and it shattered to the ground. As a result all the birds who were sitting atop the tree were lashed aside. The creatures of the land were elated and they raised loud cries of approval. After a short while, the serpent rose once more to its majestic height and whipped aside the other bough of the banyan tree. The creatures of the land were overjoyed and they raised loud cries in enthusiasm. Needless to say, the creatures of the air were terribly dejected.

There was a bat amidst the ranks of the creatures of the air and he had joined them only because he could fly. However, when he noted the course of events he felt that the creatures of the land were gaining stronger foothold and so he decided to join their ranks. “Hey...take a look at me...and look at my head and teeth. You can be sure that I am a creature of the land.”And so he remained within their ranks.

Very soon the battle took a turn for the worse. Al, the creature of the air and the creatures of the land were up in arms against one another in full force. The snails tried to fight against the pit bird and tried to break its legs, while the Vate bird also lashed out against the earthworm. Thus, the war went on in earnest, with the small creatures fighting against the creatures combating against the creatures of their own size. And in that manner the war waged on.

At length the eagle began to attack the serpent and the latter began to waver in strength. Upon seeing this, the creatures of the air were thrilled and they began to raise

loud cries in order to cheer the eagle. As soon as the bat noticed this, he became terribly insecure and decided to join the ranks of the creatures of the air once more. So, he flew up to where the creatures of the air were positioned and pleaded, “Do take a look at me. I do not belong to the ranks of the creatures of the land for I even have wings.”

The war ensued for a very long time. Both the creatures of the air as well as the creatures of the land continued to battle vehemently with one another. At length the serpent raised itself to a majestic height once more and he made an attempt to hack away the tree that the eagle was perched upon. However, he was greatly exhausted by then and he was no longer as strong as he was before. Instead of lashing away at the tree he got caught in the main fork of the tree. The eagle noticed this and jumped at the opportunity to attack the serpent. He mustered all his strength and pecked away furiously at the serpent’s backbone and broke it into a great many pieces. That was the end of the serpent and this signalled victory for the creatures of the air.

After sometime the creatures of the air and the creatures of the land gathered together and signed a pact. Very soon both parties became friends once again. However, as the bat had displayed very cowardly behaviour during the war, he could not find an ally either amongst the creatures of the air or amongst the creatures of the land. In great embarrassment, he fled and hid, and he did not even dare to go out in the light of day. And because of this, the bat wanders out only in the darkness of the night of this day.

11.Lasi Thawnthu

Long ago, there was a king of Lasi (the spirit which presides over animals and hunting) whose name was Lalchungnunga. Lurh and Tan hills were his abode. He had the power and control over all animals. He was in love with a beautiful woman from Lamsial village, Chawngtinleri, the sister of Lianchea.

Lalchungnunga sent his Lasi in the dream of Lianchea to ask for his sister’s hand in marriage. They promised him a valley of wild animals, bullets full of a ‘hrai’ basket (the name of a basket used as a standard village measure), bull-head enough to fill the front wall of his house with the heads and his biggest wild pig. Though Lianchea was reluctant to accept the offer, he was carried away with the thought of killing so many animals, so he accepted to marry his sister to the king of Lasi.

One day, while Lianchea was in his joom house, the Lasi came and took away his beautiful sister. He hurried home and told everything to the villagers. And then, he and the villagers set out to 'Tan tlang' to search for 'Chawngtinleri' but in vain. That night, the Lasi came again in his dream and told him that they were ready to give him what they had promised him. They told him not to show his teeth when he saw a big wild pig at the outskirts of his village. The next day Lianchea went out for hunting, and as promised, he saw a huge wild pig. But before he could shoot it, he was so happy and could not help smiling. As soon as his teeth showed, the wild pig ran away. So he had to go home failing to kill the biggest pig of Lasi.

At night, the Lasi came again in his dream and told him why the pig ran away. They told him to go to the outskirts the next day and they would give him a huge bull, and he should not smile this time. The next day came, but again Lianchea was overwhelmed to see a big bull-gayal so he smiled again. As soon as he smiled, the bull too ran away. From this on, the Mizo huntsmen never talked nor smiled while hunting wild-pig and wild-bull.

Though Lianchea had failed in two of his good opportunities, he killed many animals, as he was promised by the lasi in his dream. The king of lasi, Lalchungnunga was so happy with his wife that he gave her the power of control over all the animals. The Mizo ancestors believed that it was not possible to kill an animal without the consent of Chawngtinleri. They believed that it was the gift of Chawngtinleri when they shoot an animal.

Like all other women, Chawngtinleri also wove clothes at the Lurh and Tan hills. She sat at 'Zopui tlang' and used 'Murpui' as the warp of her cotton. Till today, the place where she sat up the warp is called 'Chawngtinleri puan thin tlang'.

12. Ngalsia

Once upon a time a group of men set out for hunting. Deep in the forest, while they were walking, one of them, Ngalsia, just disappeared. His friends searched the whole area for him but they could not find him, so they went home in despair.

Years passed. Three men went hunting at the place where Ngalsia was lost. With surprise, they saw Ngalsia alive; and they tried to bring him home. But Ngalsia told them that he had a wife and two children, so he refused to go home with them.

His friends asked, “Where are your wife and children?” Ngalsia replied that they could not see them, and told them to leave him. His friends thought that he was mentally disturbed, so they tried to take him home with them by force.

Just then, his wife appeared in front of them. Ngalsia’s wife was a demon who could make herself visible and invisible whenever she wanted. She was very angry and made the three men unable to talk. One of them had in his mind, “It is all because of this she-demon, I am going to shoot her.” But the demon could even read the minds of human and scolded him angrily.

After a while, her anger subsided and allowed them to take home Ngalsia with them, and soon the three men could speak again.

The men were filled with astonishment by seeing what the she-demon could do - making them dumb and read their minds; and they called her ‘Phung rilru hria’ (Mind reading demon). Word about this demon soon spread to the neighbouring villages, and then people began to believe that dumbness was the curse of demon. Convulsions in children were called ‘Phung sual’ and if someone fainted, they called it ‘phung zawl’.

They believed that they should make sacrifices to the demon to win her favour, and from that time they sacrificed animals to the demon.

13. Tui huai lal Chhama

There was a king of spring demons called Chhama. He never worked and slept all the time while his servants cooked for him. He never rose from his bed. Thus the poetical phrase, ‘Chham ang zal’ became current in Mizo poetry, and the yellowish deposit beside a spring is called ‘Chham ek’.

One day, the wife of Chhuihthanga planted a ‘ting’ tree beside the spring at the border of their jhum. As the tree grew, the root grew inside the nose of Chhama. Chhama was furious and sent his demons to kill the wife of Chhuihthanga.

Days passed, and when Chhuihthanga went to his jhum and pulled out the Ting plant, Chhama was pleased and wanted to give his daughter to Chhuihthanga to be his wife, and the two got married.

Chhama used the marriage price to give a big feast. He invited his daughter and her husband Chhuihthanga. While drinking and feasting, they used bottomless cups to serve the drink. Chhuihthanga could not drink the beer and went home in a rage.

Chhama was displeased with Chhuihthanga so he did not allow his daughter to go home with Chhuihthanga. Then Chhuihthanga told everything to the villagers and they began to have fear of the demons. Therefore, in order to please these demons, they used to make sacrifices so their sickness would be healed by the demons.

14.Zofate Zinkawng

Long ago, the Mizo tribe lived in one place in harmony, using the same language. There were no chief among them, though the different sub-tribes had leaders. There were enemies in every corner, so they decided to migrate westward.

Since they were many in number, they were divided into two groups and planned that one group will lead the way and the other will follow. The group that led left trails on the way so the other group would find them easily. Later, they reached an area of wild plantains. They cut the plantains for marking their trail and moved on. The next mark they made was on 'Muk thing' the bark of which turned black as soon as it was cut.

The second group followed the trails left by the first group. There were old women and children among them; some got sick on the way, so they were delayed much on their way. When they reached the place of wild plantains, the plants had already grown to some height after the first group cut them, so they thought the first group was far ahead of them, and they stopped following the trails and settled there. As time passed, they spread east, west, north and south. Therefore, different Mizo sub-tribes spread and lived in different parts of Northeast India.

15.Khampat Bungpui

Long ago, the Mizo tribes lived together in one place, though different sub tribes lived in colony. They had lived in 'Khampat' village for a long time. During that time, the king of Burma was building a castle. The king wanted the best timbers for his castle and needed lots of it. He let his people work for him by force; he put too much pressure on them that the people had no time to look after their own home.

The Mizo elders decided that they should leave the plain and moved to the mountains. Some regretted leaving their homes where they had been living for so long, so they planted a 'Bung tree' (banyan tree) at the center of the village and promised to return home when the branches of the tree touch the ground.

When they moved to the mountains they still lived in colony. But in the mountains it was not possible for the whole tribe to live in one place, so they spread and scattered to different parts. Till today the banyan tree still stands there and every sub-tribe of Mizo claimed that it was planted by their ancestors.

APPENDIX III

BIO-DATA

NAME OF CANDIDATE : GOSPEL LALRAMZAUHVI
DEGREE : M.PHIL
DEPARTMENT : MIZO
TITLE OF DISSERTATION : A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MIZO
MYTHS
DATE OF PAYMENT OF ADMISSION : 01/08/2013
APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL :
1. BOARD OF STUDIES : 22/04/2014
2. SCHOOL BOARD : 09/05/2014
REGISTRATION NUMBER & DATE : MZU/M.Phil./175 of 09.05.2014
DATE OF SUBMISSION : 31/07/2015