

# **TRIBAL WARFARE OF THE LAI IN PRE-COLONIAL MIZORAM**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

K. LALCHHUANPUIA

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY: AIZAWL

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M.Phil. Registration no: MZU/M.Phil./309 of 22.04.2016

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**CHAPTER ONE**  
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Socio-Cultural History of the Zyhno in Pre-Colonial Mizoram**” submitted by Florida K. Lynapawpi in fulfillment of Master of Philosophy is an original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for other degree. It is recommended that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy.

Supervisor

Dated : 16-12-2016  
Place : Aizawl

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## DECLARATION

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

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

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Place: Aizawl

K. LALCHHUANPUIA

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## 1.1 Introduction

The Lais and conglomerate tribes of north east India, Burma and Bangladesh traced their common origin to a mythological cave located in present South China known as Chhinlung.<sup>1</sup> According to Z. Hengmang a well-known Lai historian who held the view that Lais once settled in China and moved to Tibet. By following the mouth of Brahmaputra and Sallwen River, they move down to the Chindwin valley and settled up to around 750 A.D. and, from here they moved to Hukong valley.

## 1.2 Confusion of the term 'Lai'

Captain TH Lewin stated that 'the Shendus (Lais in Mizoram, then Lushai hills) have a vast land covering a large area, where it took 15 days to cross the boundary'.<sup>2</sup> The Lais occupied numerous region and established many villages such as Sangau, Vawmbuk, Bualpui 'NG' and so on, within the southern portion of Lushai Hills. He further indicates that the Lai tribes wear their hair in a high knot over the forehead which could easily differentiate from the Lushai tribes. Moreover, Kumi, Shendus, and Bunjogeas are called Poi (Pawi). In Lushai Hills, Lakher (Mara) and Poi (Lai) are term as Shendus

There has been a lot of contest whether to accept the terminology Lais or Pawi. Historically Lai has been recognized by a number of names - Chin in Burma, Pawi in Mizoram, Zomi in Manipur, Shendus in Bangladesh. It may also, be noted that their Chiefs were also historically recorded as Lai Chiefs, Shendu Chiefs, Chin Chiefs, and Pawi Chiefs depending upon the geographical in which historical events took place. However, they may be known by various names, the belonging groups whether geographical isolation or language differentiation. Thus, they always maintained the term 'LAI' as the name of the tribe.

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Vanbik, *Proto- Kuki – Chin: A reconstructed Ancestor of the Kuki-Chin Languages*, p.1

<sup>2</sup> T. H. Lewin, *Wild Race of South Eastern India*, p.151.

### 1.3 The term ‘Shendus’

The word ‘Shendus’ was referred to Lais and Maras settled in territories of Lushai Hills and Chittagong hill tracts, East Pakistan then Bangladesh by colonial ethnographers like: T.H. Lewin, N.E. Perry and E.B. Elly. However, the word Chin became popular only after the penetration of colonial rulers of India into Burma, as the Colonial officers for the convenience of their administration simple referred as Chin. Hence, shortly after the annexation of Chin Hills into their subject, the word ‘Chin’ came into use in 1896 as an administrative unit within the British Empire. Whether to blame it or not, it was the Colonial Rulers who coined various term which submit as Lais in accordance with their political institution and boundaries.<sup>3</sup> The terminology ‘Chin’ has been used by the colonial ruler of Burma to put more or less of all the tribes lying within the Chin Hills, under one umbrella.

The emergence of Lai is quite difficult to trace, from which period the Lai used as their tribe name. Many theories might be proposed of the naming of Lai. Rev. Khuakung told that “*the term Lai already existed in times of settlement in China*”<sup>4</sup> which literally proves that the term Lai was used right from the beginning. There might be a little confusion in mentioning the term Lai. However, while they moved down to the Chin Hills and made their settlement, the topography and landscape eg: Hill, Village, Valleys were named according to their Clan or Tribe name such as Laitlang, Laikhua and Lailumte. So, it clearly denotes that the word Lai is not a nomenclature newly constructed.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.4 Derogatory term “Pawi”

The word ‘Pawi’ which was used in olden days, and still exist today is a derogatory term. Since, every village was governed by their own sovereign Chief, to protect his subjects towards their neighboring tribes and to accumulate more wealth. The Chief would usually lay out wars. In the year 1856, there had been a fight between the Southern Sailo Chiefs and Northern Sailor Chiefs, wherein the Lai Chiefs assisted, in which Southern Chiefs were defeated. In the events of the wars, one of the Lai warriors charged the Southern Sailor warrior with their traditional Lai war cry “keima pawte”

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<sup>3</sup> Dounge, *Op.cit.*, p.85

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Khuakung, Halkha, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Halkha (Chin state, Burma).

<sup>5</sup> Lalthanliana, *mizo chanchin*, p. 56.

which means “I am a leopard” or “I am as brave as a leopard”.<sup>6</sup> As the Sailo(Lushai) warriors could not understand the meaning of “pawte”, later they used that very particular word to refer to their attackers and from that time onwards. The Lai’s are identified as Pawi and is commonly used in the Mizo hills till today.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.5 Migration into the Chin Hills of Burma

Prof Gordon Luce, in his *Journal of Burma Research Society* (1954) mentioned that the Lai people reached the Hukong, valley in the three junctions of international boundaries of Tibet, China and Burma in 400 A.D. On their way to the Chin Hills, they spend many years and crossed many places.<sup>8</sup> During a resident in the Chindwin valley, they made their settlement at two places now called Monywa and Shwebo in Myanmar. To commemorate their departure from their brothers who were separated heading for another direction, a feast was organized at the vicinity of the Chindwin River and from then onwards the river was named as *Chinduva*. From Chindwin, they first moved to Oksa and then to Letsa. From Letsa to Phau and they reached the Run river. They approached Tawk from Run and finally reached Simpi. Having settled for several years, they once again moved out and reached the famous ‘Lailun’ cave which was around six miles from Falam town in the Chin Hills.<sup>9</sup> It was here that they met British imperialist who later named them as ‘CHIN’. The reason being, their lifestyle, appearance, looks were similar to the people of a Chinese.<sup>10</sup>

Through few remains of Lai folk songs, it clearly shows that the Lais once settled in China. The Lais claimed that they belong to the descendants of “Cong Cin Mang Ling”, and as a result, they spelled the name of their grandfather in their sacrifices when they reached Lai Tlang or Chin Hills of Burma. Which reads-

*Maw, Cong Cin aw! Maw, Mang Ling aw!*

*Maw, Khuazing aw! Maw, Pathian aw!*

*Oh, adorable one! Oh! Victorious!*

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<sup>6</sup>*The Tribes of Mizoram A Dissertation*, Tribal Research Institute, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup>Interview with Lalchia Zathang, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum,

<sup>8</sup> G.H.Luce, “Old kyaukse and the coming of burman”. *Journal of Burma Research Society*, Vol.XLII, Rangoon university press, Rangoon., p 89.

<sup>9</sup> Rothang, *Tuanbia*, unpublished, p.3.

<sup>10</sup> Z.Hengmang, *Lai Hnam Tobul (Genealogy of the Lais)*, pp.2-3.

*Oh! The mother God! Oh! God!*

It clearly indicates that the Lais once lived in china.<sup>11</sup>

## **1.6 Stages of migration into Lusei hills (Mizoram)**

Accordingly, the migration of the Lai to the present hills (Mizoram) followed in four different phases but the accurate period cannot be known. In fact, such migration was undertaken to satisfy the thirst of Lai Chiefs for territorial expansion and extension of their political domination. The said migration also had changed the course of history and especially it signifies political events. The four stages of migration may be discussed in the following sequence.

### **1.6.1 Hlawncheu clan**

Vanhnuaitlira Hlawncheu was the son of Chhiahtinkhara Hlawncheu, and Chief of Sunthlapui in the Chin Hills of Burma. The first group was Vanhnuaitlir Hlawncheu of Sunthla and his party. Who followed the river *Bawinu*(kodyne), and reached Bangladesh and finally made their settlement at Rengtlang. However, after they had established their hegemony in far flung areas, again they returned back to the present Mizoram.<sup>12</sup>

### **1.6.2 Zathang clan**

Phunhnawma Tlangchhan, Bawilawma Tinthe and Zabiaka Fanchun were the trusted warriors of Zathang Chief of Halkha Chiefdom of the Chin Hills of Burma. Within the zathang clan, there were two clan existed namely *Sangpi* (the elder brother) and *Sangte* (the younger brother) respectively. The origin of the Zathang clan traced their lineage through the line of *Sangpi* and *Sangte*.<sup>13</sup> The second group headed by Phunhnawn Tlangchhan of Congthia village planted a village in the area of *Phongpi tlang* (Blue Mountain).

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<sup>11</sup> K. Hrekung. "Lai folk songs", *A defence of Lai linguistic identity*, p.28.

<sup>12</sup> Dounyel, *Op.cit.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>13</sup> . Interview with Khuakung Zathang, on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Halkha (Chin State, Burma)

### 1.6.3 Chinzah clan

Chinzah and Khenglawt from Lungzarh village of the Chin hill of Burma and Hnialum, Famchun, Mualchin and Zinhlawng from Khuafu village the then Chin hills of Burma. These clans of Khuafu and Lungzarh group were recognized as Khuafu group led by Chinzah clan. They reached Mizoram by crossing river *Tio* near Farkawn in Mizoram. After frequently migrated from one village to another, they reach Lungtian in 1872. Here they firmly established chinzah chiefdom in south Mizoram. They maintained cordial relationship and always assisted one another in time of trouble and dispute with their neighboring villages and other clans.<sup>14</sup> The most powerful Chief within Chinzah clan were powerful brothers namely; Hausata, Vantura and Dokulha. Hausata was responsible for the establishment of Chinzah chiefdom. Though, they ruled different villages by three brothers. However, whenever military adventures beyond their jurisdiction was to be carried out. Along with their brave warrior, they set foot together by backing and co-operating each other. This co-operation proved to be the most powerful.

Khuafu group entered to Lushai hills from northern side, it comprises of 300 Khuafu families, 150 Chhunchung families and 50 Lungzarh families. Altogether they were 500 families which later came to be known as Khuafu group. This group was led by Tialcheu Chinzah who was the son of Nicheu known as Lungzarh Chief. Tiau River which is assumed to be around 1822. As time pass by, Khuafu group was divided into two, where one group of Khuafu (100 families) followed southern part and entered dawn village and make settlement. On the other hand, the remaining group (Tialcheu and his followers) cross Tiau river and make settlement at Zopui which is located near Farkawn. After a while, they again shifted to N.Vanlaiphai and it was here, the Chief Tialcheu pass away. Lai Chiefship, Based on the hereditary system. The throne was hand over to his son name Kamlian and regulates the village administration. Chief Kamlian had three sons namely; Hmekual, Taihmung and Liankung. So, in search of better livelihood, the Lais shifted to Lungkawlh and make settlement. However, they do not stay in *Lungkawlh* for a long period of time; once again, the Lais move out and resides in *Zotlang* village. Within this period, the *Khuafu* first arrange matrimonial alliance with Sailo clan. Nozing

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<sup>14</sup> S.R. Chinzah, *Khuafu Hnam Chhuina*, pp.25-28.

Chinzah sister of Kamliana was married off to Lalngura Sailo son of Ngengpuia Chief of Muallung. Thus, the couples were blessed with two sons; Bualchhuma and Lalsanga.<sup>15</sup>

#### **1.6.4 Hlawnychhing clan**

Hlawnychhing clan from Thantlang Chiefdom, Chin Hills, Burma: Under the leadership of Thawnglian luckily, they manage to cross different rivers and mountain and reach their final destination. They made their settlement at Serkawr.<sup>16</sup>

#### **1.6.5 Fanai clan**

Earliest ancestor of the Fanai clan could trace back to Thatinkuala who was a Chief at Daidim and Kamkhaw villages located in present Myanmar. Later, they migrated towards Rungtlang (halkha) in the Chin Hills.<sup>17</sup> Rorehlova was the third generation of Fanai clan and his settlement believed to be established around 1700 AD. In the olden days, warfare was a continuous practiced among every tribes or village to villages. Hence, Rorehlova father named Chhunruanga was killed during their war with Thlanrawn in the Chin Hills. At the same time, Rorehlova's elder brother named Chhunhleia took revenge against Thlanrawn and in the events of hand to hand combat; he too was killed during the war. As Rorehlova was still a boy to be a Chief of Fanai, he was looked after by his elder sister named Zahluani, As such the throne was contested from his uncle son's. Therefore, Fanai Chieftainship came to an end. Soon after Fanai chieftainship collapsed, Rorehlova and his elder sister took refuge and sought help to Zahau Chief in Rallang village. Unexpectedly, the Chief of Rallang treated them as a slave and treated them inhumanly by letting them to sleep with a goat. Luckily, the two somehow manage to escape from Zahau Chief and took an asylum at Selesih village under the Chief of Sailo named Rohnaa.<sup>18</sup> The Chief of Selesih had a son called Lallula who was also the same age of Rorehlova. Lallula was quiet compassionate on Rorehlova and treated him as if he was his real brother. As time pass, Rorehlova attained adulthood and gradually several villages were also under his domination. Soon he became a very able Chief. Both Rorehlova and Rohnaa maintain relationship and helped each other in times of disputes. Once, wildfire got out uncontrollably within Dungleang area under the principality of Rohnaa Sailo Chief. The Chief promised Rorehlova to give a

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>16</sup> K. Hrekung, "Lai Folk Songs", *A defence of Lai linguistic identity*, Op.cit., p.27.

<sup>17</sup> F. Sapbawia, *Fanai Chanchin*, pp. 26-28.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

*Belrawhmual* (land) if he could stop the wildfire. Hence, Rorehlova along with his friends set out to the forest and easily managed to stop the wild fire. As it was promise Rohnaa gave the land to him. Hereafter, Rorehlova was able to have area under his rule and many of his clans came under his suzerainty and succeed in establishing a Fanai village.<sup>19</sup>

### **1.7 Diverse settlement**

The Lais were scattered in various places, in search of better land for settlement. Beyond Chin Hills of Burma, various Chiefs of Lai succeeded in establishing supreme power within their jurisdiction, such as extreme southern part of Mizoram, Arrakan, Chittagong and Manipur. The Lais in Manipur are now identified as old Kukies, namely, Anal, Maring, Moyon, Monsang, Lamkang, Purum, Khoibu, Chiru, Chothe, Kom and Koireng had established settlement and occupied South Eastern part of Manipur in the present Chandel District, Sadar Hills Division of Senapati District and some areas in Churachanpur District of Manipur.<sup>20</sup>

The Lais were scattered in various places but their main area of concentration lies in the southern most part of Mizo Hills which is now known as Lawngtlai District. Their main habitation is near the Kolodyne River, although they established many villages in the entire valley. However, they do not felt unsecure without having an alliance with other powerful chiefdom. They required traditional military protection and assistant in terms of natural calamities, epidemics, war and other purposes. By and large, the Lai chief in Mizo hills had relation through matrimonial alliance, power politics so and so. Hence, the most of the household preferred to settle in a village which was ruled by a powerful ruling clan, who would able to protect them from any of their adversaries.<sup>21</sup>

### **1.8 Status of Lai Chief in Chin hills (Burma)**

In the pre-colonial period as there were no proper demarcation of boundary. The Chief could claim to any enable land as his own land. The Lais have adequate population and strong administration under a single ruler known as Chief. In the Chin Hills of Burma; Falam, Halkha, Thlantlang, Zokhua and Thetta were the main powerful Chiefdoms. These chiefdoms powerful Chiefdoms had countless tributaries and

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<sup>19</sup>*Monoliths and Landmarks of Southern Mizoram*, District Art and Culture Lunglei, pp. 58-61.

<sup>20</sup> Jangkhongam Doungei, *Lai Chieftainship and its impact in politics*, p.32.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Manghmunga, on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016, Lawngtlai.

accumulate tribute or taxes in these areas. The Lai Chiefs were expressively ruthless in extending their suzerainty even beyond the Chin Hills. To increase their power and wealth, the Chiefs encouraged their followers especially their warriors to carry out tricky journey in order to expand their sway to the unexplored region as to acquire more lands and tribute. Undoubtedly, economic condition plays a vital role in the formation of powerful Chieftdom among the Lais.<sup>22</sup>

Professor Lewis stated that once Chin and Kawl (Burma plain people) cherish with care in every way, it upshot to the emergence of the word so called CHIN. There had been a lot of controversies in regard to the word Chin. The Matu, one of the tribe in the Chin Hills tribes used the word '*Than*' to refer to human being, whereas the Gangaw tribe used '*Chian*' to identify themselves. With the combination of these two words the nomenclature Chin seems to be emerged.

A tribe as we find in India is a collection of families and groups of families bearing a common name which as a rule does not denote any specific occupation; generally claiming a common decent from a mythical or historical ancestor and occasionally from an animal, but in some part of the country held together by the obligations of blood-fued than by the tradition of kinship; usually speaking the same language and occupying, professing, or claiming to occupy a definite tract of country. A tribe is not necessarily endogamous.

From the context of Mizo writers, majority of early settlers in northern side of present Mizoram were believed to be the Lais. This is due to the fact that the greater part of the rivers located in northern area were named in Lai language. '*Va*' in Lai language is known as river. Whereas, most of the rivers situated in northern side ends with the word '*Va*'. Moreover, Thlikva River in Bungzung area, Lungva River in Sialhawk area were believed to be named by the early colonial ethnographers to refer as Lai people.<sup>23</sup>

## **1.9 Conclusion**

The Lais in Mizo hills were ruled by each Chief and established their own independent villages within their sovereign. However, with the intervention of the British into the Mizo hills, the Lai Chiefs were surrendered under the supreme power known as

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<sup>22</sup>Carey, Bertram S. & H.N.Tuck, *The Chin Hills*, p. 152.

<sup>23</sup> V.L. Siama, *Mizo History*, p.5.



Colonial ruler. The power of the traditional Chiefs reduced considerably in order to maintain Law and order in the said land.

Later, Indian became an independence country in 1947, the Constitution Assembly of India set up an Advisory Committee on the right of citizen, minorities and tribal and excluded area for the Administration of Tribal areas. Consequently, the Pawi-Lakher regional Advisory council was formed in 1951. The Pawi-Lakher Regional council was constituted under the sixth schedule on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1953. Later on, Pawi-Lakher Regional council was divided into different District known as Lai and Mara autonomous District council under the state of Mizoram.

#### 1.10 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Lais belongs to Tibeto-Burman family tracing their identity through present China. They are believed to be one of the most powerful tribes among the early Mizo ethnic group. Lai history in war tactics, political institution, economy, and culture received through oral as well as foreign accounts is abundant in comparison to their neighboring Mizo groups such as Thado, Paite, Mara, Ralte, Hmar, Lusei etc. Hence, the Lais once dominated their adjoining tribes by collecting revenue and taxes, which clearly define that the bordering tribes were once under the supremacy of the Lai Chief.

Archival and non-archival sources (including British ethnographical accounts and local sources) elaborately mentioned about the confrontation of the Lais with their neighbouring ethnic groups. They also mentioned about their raids and their skills in guerilla warfare. However, there are two problems- firstly, the colonial ethnographers, including the officials, of which majority of them possessed preconceived notion about this community and they blindly recorded any information they received concerning the Lais. There is certain limitation on the authenticity of the colonial sources as lacked thorough knowledge, and understanding of the Lais. In fact, the earlier literature hardly analyzes the Lais warfare system and hardly reflected their special skill in this regard. Majority of the records are based on Lushai-centric and is also a problem to differentiate the Luseis and the Lais in matter of their culture and social norms.

The proposed study will mainly trace the migration of the Lais to the present settlement and mainly dwell on their warfare and war materials during migration.

Besides, it will also analyze how the colonialists had destroyed the Lais' war skills and warfare materials.

### **1.11 REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

*Lai hnam 'Chin hills atanga lo chhuk hmasate'* written by Upa Manglinga Hlawncheu deals the Lai the then known as Pawi who have migrated from the Chin Hills to Mizoram then Lushai Hills. It gives information of the different Chiefs who had established villages and expanded their hegemony. The author clearly mentioned that the Lai once collected tributes and taxes from their neighbouring tribes. Moreover, conflict between Lallula Sailo and Thlanrawn Chief which later turn out into war against each other is also clearly stated, but proper information of their settlement was not elaborated. Therefore, this has opened new ground for further investigation.

B. Lalthangliana's work *Pi Pu Zunleng 'Chatuan Romei Pi Pu Zunleng A Zam Zodaiah'* (2007) provided us information on the history of Luseis tracing their origins, their ancestors, their culture, land and home. This book tells about the ancestors of the Luseis gave more importance to elders, of establishing of villages and houses, dresses, festivals, cultivation (food gathering), rearing of domestic animals, marriage and divorce, more of all concern in their daily economy, Zawlbuk (Bachelors' dormitory), sacrifices, traditional funeral, folklores etc. Although B. Lalthangliana has given great information regarding the norms of the Lushais, but the relation and traditional conflict between the Lais and Luseis was not highlighted. As the writers' knowledge about the traditional relations of the two groups is too meager, hence further investigation is required to understand more on their relationship.

Zatluanga in his book *Mizo Chanchin*, (2007) presents a very enlightening story about the evolutionary theory based on the bible, He specifically traced the Mizo, their ancestors, customary laws, and settlement in the present hills. The author mentioned tribal warfare between Lai and Lusei Chief. It is clearly stated that Lais and Lusei were different tribes and early writers usually considered Lais as a separate tribes which need authentic further research.

*Mizo Chanchin "B.C.300-1929 A.D." (Mizo History)* written by Col. V. Lunghnema is one of the few books in dealing with the traditional Mizos and its neighboring tribes. He continuously stress the similarities, traditional customs, folksongs

and material culture from side to side which we could identify the nature of ethnicity among the Mizos. Remarkably, he included all the cognate tribes into single tribes known as Mizo. However, tribal warfare in relation with Lai tribes is rarely found which requires deep study.

A.S Reid's work '*Chin-Lushai land*', (2008) provides information of how the British administration laid out countless military expedition in Chin Hills and Lushai Hills. Subduing of powerful Chief among the Chin and Lushai hills, implementing colonial diplomatic skills have been highlighted. Tribal warfare imposed by Chin and Lushai chiefs as well as imposing fines among the ferocious and war-like chiefs by British administration is clearly stated. Moreover, agreement among the chiefs which would further assist in gaining and suppressing the powerful Chin and Lushai Chief in creating British administration within Chin-Lushai land. Various Tribal warfare exercises by both Lushai and Lai Chief is clearly noted.

Another book worth mentioning in the history of tribal warfare is Captain G.C. Rigby, *History of Operation In Northern Arrakan and The Yawdwin Chin Hills 1896-97*, precisely highlighted the role and function of British military expedition as well as the officials' diary where we acquire knowledge relating to tribal warfare. The books give information regarding gazette of villages, possession of guns, nature of the country, transport (method of carrying loads), climate, communication, supplies, fauna and flora, geological sites etc. On the other hand, though it is enlightening, the names of persons, village and rivers are quite confusing which needs further research.

N.E. Parry's work on "*The Lakhers*" (2008) traced the early relation with the Shendus. Parry defined that Lakhers were sub-tribe of Pawis. The term Shendus covered all the Haka (Halkha) Chin tribes. The historical accounts of Mara and Lai Chief are evidently emphasized in this book.

Carey and Tuck's "*Chin hills volume 1*" (2008) traced the beginning of the British administration in the Chin hills and Lushai hills, It specifically deals with the social custom, economic status, armour and administrative set up of the Lais of the Chin Hills. One fascinating print to be noted here is the manufacture of gun powder and bullets which was normally used in hunting and during tribal warfare. The Chief's and its functions in the society were clearly defined as well as expansion of his sway and territory. Tribal warfare carry out by the Chins and the British military expedition against

the offenders is also well recorded in this work. However, particulars names or words such as Hakas (Halkha), Klangklangs (Thantlang), Yokwas etc are misspelled.

*Wild Races of South-Eastern India* (1978) by T.H. Lewin deals with the relation of the Chiefs and the British authority, their system of administration and the people of the Hills. The book also provided us with the disturbing activities of the Lai and Lusei Chiefs who occasionally made surprise attack, plunders and raids in the British protectorate area of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The book provides us detailed information about raids committed by the Hill tribes.

A.G. Mc call in his book *Lushai Chrysalis*, (2015) briefly discussed the social and cultural life of the Luseis their customs and religious belief in pre-colonial period. Chapter 11 has clearly highlighted the various warfare committed by the various tribes of Mizoram then the Lushai Hills, which included Shendus (Lai) or Lakhers and their military expedition. The book is a valuable source for the understanding of the Hill tribes and their war tactics.

*The North-East Frontier of India* (2013) written by Alexander Mackenzie is valuable sources which contained the history of the North-Eastern tribes, their early relation with the British and the British policy towards the tribes. In chapter XX1 the author clearly discussed about various outrages committed by the Lusei or the Kookie tribes. In other chapters the author also highlighted the Shindu and raids committed by the tribes. The so called great Kuki invasion of 1860 is also discussed in the chapter.

*Pawi Chanchin*, (2011) published by Tribal Research Institute Directorate of Art & Culture Government of Mizoram is a great work which deals with the origin of the Pawi, their migration, settlement and administration. It also deals with the traditional belief, marriage system, death rituals, customs and traditional practices of the early Pawis (Lai). The author provided us wealthy information on about the social history and culture of the early Pawi.

## **1.12 AREA OF STUDY**

Area of the study will predominantly be mainly focus on the '*Lairam*' (the land of Lais), which covers the present Lawngtlai district of Mizoram. Though the '*Lairam*' includes the Lai inhabited area of the Chin Hills of Myanmar, the researcher would not

deal with these areas. The researcher will deal with the art of war of the Lai tribe, especially during the pre-colonial period.

### **1.13 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To trace the origins of the Lais and their movement and settlement in the present hills.
2. To discover the details of tribal warfare and its significance.
3. To examine the material culture of the Lais.
4. To study the impact of tribal warfare among the Lais in Mizoram.

### **1.14 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What do 'Chin' and 'Lai' signify in the context of Mizoram?
2. What is the significance of studying the Lai's among the other groups of the Mizos?

### **1.15 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research will rely on both primary and secondary sources. Primary source will consist of archival records and colonial ethnography. Interview would be conducted with the local Lai and Lusei historians and other experts, who acquired knowledge in this field. Secondary sources will include books, journals, and articles, which are both published and unpublished work. Traditional folksongs, myths, legends, proverbs and folktales will be used in this research as well. It will be based on qualitative research.

### **1.16 TENTATIVE CHAPTERIZATION**

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter will mainly focus on the historical background of the Lais and their migration and settlement to the Lushai Hills Mizoram

#### **Chapter 2: Traditional society and economy**

This chapter will deal with the role and function of the Chiefs such as: judiciary, revenue, economy and their political institution. Hence, it will emphasize the marriage

system of the Lais and practiced of shifting cultivation. In addition, the lifestyle of the village, their traditional customs and practices will be explored.

### **Chapter 3: Warfare material and their strategies.**

The chapter will explore the materials and weapons used in their warfare and strategies employed in war. Traditional knowledge on the technological production of weapons will be the main focus. The skills and technique of tribal warfare will be clearly elaborate.

### **Chapter 4: Tribal Warfare**

This chapter will extremely focus on the Organization and Method of the Tribal warfare. Various strikes, attacks, plunder and ambushes by the Lais to their neighbouring tribes will be the main focus of this chapter. The impact of inter-tribal warfare in the political system, economy and religion will be systematically studied.

### **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

The concluding chapter will mainly deal with the findings of the research.

## 2.1. Introduction

Whenever the Lais established a village, they would always have a leader to instruct and gave advice for the common masses.<sup>24</sup> In the pre-colonial period, as men cannot live in isolated places and wandered alone, it is a form of natural existence that a human being needs to survive as a group or community. Likewise, the Lais would maintain a leader to guide and protect within the group system.

## 2.2 Social Stratification

In the pre-colonial period, the Lai society was divided into three different groups with the Chiefly clan on the top, and the well to do household of the village who were also known as the *Phunsang* with the council of elders, whereas the commoners placed the last group within the village.<sup>25</sup>

The Chief clans and his families were usually exempted from any tributes and taxes and compulsory services or public work. There were also other households who were also considered to be well to do family or ruling clan who lived independently from the parent family and who also exempted from any taxes from the household of the village, but did not receive tributes from the latter. There might be several such kindred families of the ruling clan; he only the ruling Chief was privileged to receive tributes and free services from the households of the village.

In administering the village, the Chief had appointed some village officials. Importantly the council of elders, without the advice of these elders the Chief would never try any case. Besides, the council of elders there were some village officials who were worth mentioning, the Blacksmith (*Soser*), the village crier (*Tlangau*) and the Priest (*TlangBawi*). The village blacksmith for his rendered service was given one basket of paddy from every household once in a year with a hind leg of animals shot or trap. However, it varies from village to village, whereas the village crier had a privilege to choose a plot for agriculture land along with the other officials of the village and was regarded as reward for his service. The Priest reward was more or less the same with that of the village crier.

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<sup>24</sup> Stephen Nikoi, *Lai Nunphung (Chin Culture And Traditions)*,p. 372.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Ukmang Zathang, on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016, Lawngtlai.

It is not easy to distinguish between religious, social, cultural and political elements in tribal society. It is even harder to distinguish between the political realm, social structure and economic system. They are inseparably intertwined, and deeply rooted in religious concepts.

### **2.3 Slaves**

According to information received from Ukmang Zathang, there were several types of *Sal* or slaves in the Lais society. The more significant was *Sal* (slaves) belonged to the Chief, whether the slave lived with the Chief or in a separate house. As in the case of *Innlak Sal* (Slaves who lived in their own house but worked for their master) and had no right to do as they wish.<sup>26</sup>

The contribution of the traditional slaves was numerous, among which their service towards the economic was more significant. As slaves were mostly owned by the Chief, and they also did all the arduous works which also greatly help in wielding Chiefs power.

The *InchungkharSal* was different from those slaves who were captured during the war or raids. They were of the Chief's household members and did all the household works in return for food and shelter given to them by the tradition head or Chief. In the traditional Lai society, although the Chief also owned land for cultivation his family did not work in the field. All the hard work such as clearing the forest, 'Lo' cultivation and other related activities were done by his Slaves. There were also the slave women and girls who were mostly looking after the household activities such as cleaning the daily supply of rice, weaving clothes and weeding the 'Lo' or agriculture lands. The female slaves also have to take care of the Chief's children. If the Chief was quite influence, his *Sal* would even use and enjoy the property of the Chief like ornaments, guns and weapons, but they could not inherit such materials unless the Chief them as gift.

Prof. Sangkima subscribed to the institution of slavery and stated that:

*The Sal (slaves) custom in early society was the system evolved through the ages and at the time it was a recognized institution.*

*A man could become Sal (slaves) under various reasons. The*

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.



*children of the Sal (slaves) become slaves by birth but he could buy back his freedom or be voluntarily released by his master. They might also be called the domestic servants or personal attendants of the Chief.*<sup>27</sup>

The chief not only possessed slaves, whereas the common people could keep as many slaves as they could capture. He could also purchase from the other owners.<sup>28</sup> In some instances, the common man would have the right to marry off the women slaves, if she was attracted to him.

Carey and Tuck classified the Lai's slavery into two classes namely, those who have been captured by force and those who have willingly submitted to the yoke or who were born into slavery or who for crimes committed were condemned to slavery.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the slaves who were captured in war did not stay peacefully and would continually work for their masters. In some instances, if they had a chance to escape, they would take the opportunity to run away from their masters and return back to their own village or took asylum in neighbouring villages. It is clear that a man had the same right to kill or sell his slave as his dog, and the Chief of the village used his female slaves as concubines if he wishes to do so. However, the children born from slave could not inherit Chief's property.

In the traditional Lai society, the Chief was the supreme head and wielded numerous powers and exercised political, religious, economic, judicial etc. although the Chief was all in all, and had the controlling power over his subjects, in times of war, he would always be at the front like a commanding in Chief of the modern age. At the same time, he acts as a judge when disputes occurred within the community or strange incidents such as murder, rape etc. prevails in society. The Chiefs in Lai society therefore were usually direct descendants of the founder of a particular clan or settlement, and they maintained and preserved their lineage almost as a holy institution. Power and privilege,

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<sup>27</sup> Sangkima, "Bawi and Sal as an important Economic factor in early Mizo Society with special reference to the Chief" in *A Modern History of Mizoram*, ed., p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>29</sup> Carey and Tuck, *Op.cit.*, p. 203.

status, rank and class; all that they had received as a mandate from the guardian Deity, 'were firmly endorsed in the lineage system'.<sup>30</sup>

The family life of the early Lais was quiet unique in compared to present lifestyle. Blissful moment in family circle was hardly known. In particular, husband and wife would not speak to each other in a polite manner. The wife would communicate her husband with a harsh tone and in return the husband would follow the same high tone. This kind of communication was known as '*nupa I chawnh*' and is regarded as a form of well-being.<sup>31</sup> All land belonged to the Chief and he had the controlling power within his jurisdiction. The Chief also received certain percentage of food grains from the household of the village. Every able bodied individual household member rendered their service in the form of manual labour according to customs as a form of rewarding the Chief in return for maintaining peace and tranquility.

## **2.4 Marriage**

In the traditional Lai society, marriage had always been regarded as the most important occasion in the life of a young man and a young woman. The proposed girl that a man eventually married could make him respectable or she could pull him down to a low and degraded position. Therefore, parents carefully searched for the spouses of their eldest sons.<sup>32</sup> The traditional Lai marriage has been described by Suihial who related that:

*“Especially, the elite or well to do sough girls of the same status for their sons. If a man could marry a higher class woman, it was a great honour for him and his family. But if he married a maiden of a lower class, then the other young man of his class would look down on him. It was for this reason that every parent tried their best to find a woman of high class for the eldest son in order that the honour of the family should not reduce due to marriage. However, a man was entitled to marry any number of women of any class or lesser wives. The formal wife, called nu-tak or nu-hrim was the one who held all the ceremonial activities such as*

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<sup>30</sup>F.K. Lehman, *The Structure of Chin Society: A Tribal People of Burma Adapted to a Non-Western Civilization*, p. 144.

<sup>31</sup>B. Lalthangliana, *Pi Pu Zunlengs*, p. 16.

<sup>32</sup>K. Zawla, "Mizo inneih dan" in *Fungki*, p. 140.

*propitiation or sacrificial feasts to the household Deity. The sacred utensils called khotlaban used in these ceremonies were hung from the ceiling above the couple's bed. The couple would eat ceremonial food together from these sacred utensils. Only the wife who shared all these was entitled to be the formal wife".<sup>33</sup>*

However, the Chiefs always try to maintain the purity of Chief lineage where they would propose another village Chief's daughter for their daughter-in-law so as to preserve the Chief lineage to which clan they belong to. On the other hand, it was therefore essential that the eldest son, who was in line to receive the family's name and inheritance, married a woman at least of his own class. If he failed, his brothers, upon marrying women of their equal or higher class, could take away his birth right.<sup>34</sup>

#### **2.4.1 Role of *Palai* (the go between)**

Marriage proposal and engagement played a very distinct part in the olden days: engagement was arranged by the parents at young age or after the attained marriageable age. This engagement happened with the knowledge of relatives and neighbours as a mark of witness. One of the salient features of Lai marriage was the careful selection of partner. The main consideration in the process of their partner selection was based on kin groups and tribes. Inter-marriage with other tribes had caused quite a problem in earlier community. The higher clan would reject the lower clan. On the other hand, the lower clan would seek to marry a girl or boy from the higher clan which was known as '*sechhun*'.<sup>35</sup> Traditionally, the parents were very careful and fastidious in the selection of partner for their children. The selection was based on good health and physical well-being especially of the bride to be. It was a custom or practice to trace back the lineage of the bride many generations. If they found any rumours stating the ill health or having an affair in the past, the boy parent would usually reject the marriage proposal. Among the Luseis, especially for the Chief's clan even a small scar if found in the body of the girl, henceforth the marriage would be postponed automatically.

When a young man wished to marry a girl from the same village, two of the go between, usually middle-aged or older married men from other families, would be sent to

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with Suitial, on 15<sup>th</sup> may 2016, Halkha (Chin State, Myanmar).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>35</sup> *Pawi Chanchin*, Tribal Research Institute, pp. 122-123.

the girl's house to ask for her hand. The marriage proposal took three processes; the first process was simple, the go between or *Palai* went to the girl's family and the first talk hardly determines the outcome of the proposal. The second process generally determine of the proposal was accepted or rejected. In the third process, there were more than two of the go between who would stand as a witness of the engagement.<sup>36</sup> They also had to take along some *zu* and present a bottle to each of the leaders or Chiefs of every village they crossed on their way or they would not be permitted to enter that village. Weddings were held in high esteem among the Lais and matrimony was considered almost sacred. The ceremonies were performed and observed very seriously. Hence, there was no limit to the number of domestic animals that could be killed on this day, and the more they were killed enhanced the social status of the feast-giver.<sup>37</sup>

#### **2.4.2. Inter-marriage between clans**

Inter-marriages between the Lais and its neighbouring tribes were common both in the Chin Hills and in the Lusei hills, and even more so in some particular villages like Bualpui, Lungtian, Fungkah, Rulkual of the Lais.<sup>38</sup> Marriage communal affairs and all the households of the village were automatically invited when there was a wedding.

#### **2.4.3 Process of wedding ceremony**

Lianmang narrated the various stages in the process of wedding ceremony. "*Inah* was the wedding day and the next day was called '*Sawngtemh*". The bride's family gathered together and proceeds towards the groom's house with meat and alcohol. The groom's family also gathered and they rejoice the wedding with feasting and alcohol. On this very day, they would negotiate on the bride's prices. Some of the prices negotiated were; '*Zutlawng*' and '*Satlawng*' for the chief, '*Nureithu – Pareithu*' for the elders accompanying the bride's parents, '*vaiurhthu*' for the people sitting to the right and left of the family. Apart from this aunt of the bride could demand specific things such as; *TwoArkho* (two chicken), *Thifim* (necklace) and *Bel* (brass pot). Apart from '*inah*'. There was another marriage ceremony called '*inlailen*' and '*puanparkai*".<sup>39</sup> Once they completed satisfactorily of all the preliminaries, the marriage procession known as

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with Hrangmang, on 8<sup>th</sup> may 2016, Thlantlang (Chin State, Burma).

<sup>37</sup> Pawi chanchin, *Op.cit.*, pp.128-129.

<sup>38</sup> Cherrie Lalnunziri Chhangte, "The Pawi/Lai Community: A Brief Introduction", *MZU Journal Literature and Cultural Studies*, An Annual Referred Journal Vol. 1, Issue 1., p. 84-86.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Lianmang, on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Halkha (Chin State, Burma).

'*Lawichiat*' night would take place. The groom's family sent the groom's sister, aunt and other relatives to escort the bride to the groom's house<sup>40</sup> When the bride's party reached the bridegroom's house, the party would stand outside and asked the bridegroom from the presents like necklace, '*Leilawnkaiman*' (a skein of cotton thread for climbing up the ladder to the bridegroom's house). It was also a custom that as soon as the bride entered the house, the bridegroom would place '*Puan*' (mat) and clothes for the bride and her party to sit on. Once they sat down, the bride's family would ask for a large number of dues like chickens, puppies, piglets, knife, shovel, axes and so on. On '*Lawichhiat*' night, the bride and brides mate would spend the night at the groom's house and were to leave left for the house early in the morning. But on certain wedding, the bride and the brides mate did not necessarily spent the first night at the groom's house. On the next day, the bride and the groom's family would spend the rest of the day feasting and drinking in their respective houses. They would kill pig and chicken and exchanged food which was called *Arkhokheng* or *Rawl hniang pek*. This day was called *Lawithat* night, when the bride would finally enter her husband's house with all her belongings and lived with her husband. On the night of *lawithat*, the groom's family would spend the night at their relative houses and would leave the house empty to give privacy to the new couple.<sup>41</sup>

Elopement is a kind of marriage which usually occurred with couples who failed to obtain their parents' consent to their marriages. Therefore, eventually eloped by going away for a few days where their parents would not find them, usually to another village. Normally, after a few days, the girl or boy's parents were informed about the incident.<sup>42</sup>

#### **2.4.4. Divorce**

Divorce was also not common among the Lais. When the wife wished to leave her husband's house and terminate the marriage, she took back with her all the properties she had brought as dowry and she returned articles animals and materials handed to. This kind of divorce is called '*sumchhuah*'.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, if the husband wish to divorce his wife he could simply order her to leave his house and that also she should go empty handed or otherwise depending on their terms of settlement.

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<sup>40</sup> K. Zawla, *Op.cit.*, p. 145.

<sup>41</sup> Pawi Chanchin, *Op.cit.*, pp.128-134.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Vanlian, on 14<sup>th</sup> may 2016, Halkha (Chin state, Burma)

<sup>43</sup> Pawi Chanchin, *Op.cit.*, p.132.

If the wife died and the man remarried another woman, she could share all the ceremonial functions with him, she became his legal wife, called *nu-tlai*. A son by his formal wife was entitled to inherit his father's properties, especially the house and the land. If he had no son with his first wife the son of the second wife could inherit the property of his father.

Unlike most Hindus of the mainland of India among the Lais the remarriage of a widow was not restricted. Tradition says that a widow could remarry any man who was ready to accept her as his rightful wife. It may be noted that the man that she remarried was usually a divorcee or *Pathlawi*. Remarriage of widows was customarily free but dependent on the age, personal attraction and according to skillfulness of the woman. The remarriage usually took place after the erection of the memorial stone of the deceased husband or wife. The memorial stone was placed on the grave of the deceased after three months counting from the date of his or her death. At some point, a widow could remarry husband's brother if both the families agreed so.

## **2.5. Feast**

Two significant social symbols in traditional Lai society were *bawite* and *khuang cawi*. The first was a lesser ceremonial feast, which every noble man attended to show his ability, power and wealth. The latter was the highest or bigger feast, which could only be achieved by a man of considerable wealth. In both cases a young bison or *guyal* was tied loosely with a rope to the ceremonial post, such post was found in almost all the village where such feast was to be celebrated. The ropes which were used for tying the animal were also held by men of status equal to the concerned person who made such feast. Two or three significant points to be noted here is that first, a ceremonial prayer was made by the man who made a feast or priest and after that the man would shoot the animal with bows and arrows. Second if a man married to a lower division of clans or commoner, he was not entitled to hold the rope which was tied to the animal. In anticipating such occasion every parent was aware of their son's future status, Hence they always look for a high status of their sons so that the family's honour would not be deduced. Thirdly a man was entitled to marry many wives of his choice even from the commoners. The legitimate wife, called *Nutak* or *Nu-Hrim* was the one who held all the ceremonial activities such as sacrificial feasts to the household deity. The sacred utensils called *Khothlaban* used in these ceremonies were hung from the ceiling above the

couple's bed. The couple would eat ceremonial food together from these sacred utensils. Only the wife who shared all these with her husband was entitled to be the legitimate wife.

## 2.6. Nature of the people

The Lais, after permanently settling in the southern hills were now mainly depended on shifting cultivation or '*Tlang lo neih*'. After the fertility of the soil was depleted, they shifted to another hills for cultivation. The colonial officials relating to their report on various matters connected with the chin and Lushai hills also point out that the people residing near the Kolodyne have permanent villages.<sup>44</sup> They would move from one place to the other according to their indigenous requirements and due to the fact that when the land or fertility of the soil was eventually reduced and could not yield the sufficient or expected produce. They would shift to a new site which had not been cultivated by any other clans or tribes.<sup>45</sup> As the Lais depended much on the agricultural produce they always looked for a fertile land which would yield sufficient crops to last for one or two years. Their economy was based on sustainable economy. Once the land was used up and the fertility of the soil reduced the household cultivation had to look for another land. A move was also made due to imperative epidemics, natural calamities or war. It was the village elders who would always advice the household of the village to move to a new site.<sup>46</sup>

Although Mizos live peacefully for sometimes, however, hostility and chaos sometimes led to inter village quarrels which ultimately led to village war or clannish wars and continuous feud was experienced in the Mizo Hills. The fact that to maintain proper law and order, protection of boundary, peace and harmony, compelled them to establish the then village chieftainship system: a leader or a respectable figure who could lead them at all times.<sup>47</sup> In order to maintain law and order, preservation or claimed boundary, peace and cordial relationship with their neighbouring tribes or villagers had compelled the Lais to have a respectable figure strong enough to protect them in times of danger and who could lead them under any circumstances. In this way, like the Luseis

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<sup>44</sup> Political department- 54, Carton Box- 5, Mizoram State Archives, p. 18.

<sup>45</sup> O. Rosanga, "Inter Sub-tribal Relations Among the Early Mizo", in *A Modern History of Mizoram* ed. by Sangkima, p.46.

<sup>46</sup> James Dokhuma, *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung*, p. 4-6.

<sup>47</sup> Khuakung, Zathang, on 10<sup>th</sup> may 2016, Halkha (Chin State, Myanmar).

the Lais also began to have Chieftainship system and in return each households of the village was required to pay certain tributes to their Chief.

## **2.7. Selection of village location**

As the Lais were a nomadic tribe migrating from one place to another, exploration of land for settlement was their first priority and they were quiet careful in the selection of land. They usually look for good lands which could provide them fertile soil and water hole to aid them in the maintenance o sustainable economy. Landscape played an important role as most of the traditional villages were well fenced with wood especially for those who settled in present Chin Hills of Burma.<sup>48</sup> Even if the village was established on top of the hills, they usually selected where a stream could run peremially within the village or nearby village. The location of the village would always provide with climatic condition and not easily accessible from external aggressors.

## **2.8. Administration of traditional head**

The constant and prolonged war with the adjacent tribes or cognate relations compelled the tribes to establish a stable leader, and to uphold authority for day to day administration. However, in the initial stage, nobody wanted to be the head man as there was no material rewards attached to the position, no ritual power bestowed upon the incumbent and it was also a big burden to be representative of the whole household of the village and yet one had to devote his full time for such administration.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, Chief ship was not considered to be a particular attractive position, and no clan would like to keep Chief ship to themselves.

In former years the Lais did not maintain any kind of leader or head man for the welfare of the people. Every household of the village usually gathered their basic needs for subsistence economy. Nevertheless, despite enjoying a certain level of peace within the family and community, confusion and misunderstanding gradually rose within family circle itself which led to chaos and other complications. Such problems were usually solved by the head of the family or solved indigenously. However, in the presence of

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<sup>48</sup> Carey and Tuck, *Op.cit.*, p.176.

<sup>49</sup> Sangkima, "Origin of Chieftainship in early Mizo Society", *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Volume – XI. 2008, pp.7-8.



threats or raids from the adjacent community or villages which were resulted into the aspirations for their political supremacy and better economic condition as well.<sup>50</sup>

### 2.8.1. Power of the Chief

R.L Gupta stated the tribal ways of Chieftainship in Mizoram

*“The tribes were governed by Chiefs, often assisted by advisory councils. The scope of their political authority was narrow because most of the affairs of life were governed by long-established customs. In some, the authority of the Chief was despotic; in others his power was strictly limited by hereditary or by some accepted rules of succession; in others, the Chief was chosen freely by members of the tribes. Sometimes the tribal organization was permanent; in other cases a number of tribes united to form an alliance or a loose confederation”.*<sup>51</sup>

R.L. Gupta made a conclusive remark and noted that every tribal society in the past had a form of Chieftainship but the pattern of Chieftainships adopted in different tribal societies were not uniform.<sup>52</sup>

The colonial ethnographer J.Shakespeare described the power and tribute received by tribal chief in Mizoram and stated:

*“The Chief was the supreme ruler within his domain, therefore, he not only owned lands but also the forest, the woods, the rivers and all living beings within his territory. Thus, whenever a villager shot wild animals and catching river products, the Chief was given a share in the form of a flesh levy called sa-thaw. A Chief was entitled to certain dues in kind: ‘Fathang’ a basket of grain due to be paid by the villagers. The Chief was highly regarded as the protector of the territory; he therefore had the right to receive a portion consisting of a hind leg or in some case*

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<sup>50</sup> Interview with Lalhulha fanchun, on 18-19<sup>th</sup> February, Sangau.

<sup>51</sup> R.L. Gupta, *Political Theory*, p. 57.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*

*both of those animals' parts. Moreover, whenever a domestic animal is sacrificed for private purpose, specific portion is reserved for the Chief. Nonetheless, the villagers handed one hind leg or one four leg as a form of practice in connection with religious sacrifice from many generations, and if he ruled more than a single village he collected taxes called (Khua-Man) from all the tributary villages.”*<sup>53</sup>

As ‘the lord of the soil’, the Chief was not only the owner of the land but the head of the village, the protector of his people. The Chief had full powers over his subjects, disputes between any inhabitants were tried by the council of elders and the Chief was the final authority. Fees were usually received from the loosing parties, called *Salam* in Luseis and in Lai, meaning fee paid to the Chief and elders.<sup>54</sup> If a villager refuses to obey the Chief’s order, ‘Chief can refuse to allow the offender to cultivate his land any longer, and can turn him out of the village’.<sup>55</sup>

### **2.8.2. Role of the Chief**

In choosing of village location, it is imperative for the village elders to examine closely if the new village would be adequate or sufficient for settlement. They have to inspect carefully the adjoining area, whether the location for the new village was suitable to be occupied by the whole household for settlement. The village would be inspected carefully along with the Chief and the elders. Initially, a priest would be consulted if the chosen site would be suitable for new settlement or village. Once the required procedure was completed, the final custom was spending the night by few elders at the chosen site taking with them a cock. If the cock did not crow like a good lusty cock one hour before dawn, it would be taken as a bad omen.<sup>56</sup> But if the cock crows normally, it was considered to be a good omen, and the selection of the site was made final.

In establishing a village, the Chief had the right to choose the best spot for constructing his house. The Chief’s house was usually situated at the heart of the village.

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<sup>53</sup> J. Shakespear, *The Lusei-Kuki clan*, p. 83.

<sup>54</sup> O. Rosanga, *The Socio- Economic History of the Mizos in the Second-Half of the Nineteenth Century*, Unpublished M.Phil., Dissertation., p. 31.

<sup>55</sup> N.E. Perry, *The Lakhers*, p.250.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-62.

The elders who went to look for the new site were given priority to select the site for constructing a new house, followed by the other village elders and the warriors or *Pasaltha* and the last would be the commoners. In the construction of a house to a particular place, the Lais followed hierarchical form (according to status) of selecting the house site. Traditionally, the Chief's house would be surrounded by his elders, warriors, priest and his subjects as a form of security and protection from external aggressors. The commoners have the right to construct their houses within the vicinity of the village. The residence of the Chief could be easily identified from other houses. The house of the Chief would, as expected, be obviously bigger in size and grander in all aspects compared to other houses in the entire village. This is so, as a Chief house was a meeting place for the households of the village where important issues would be discussed according to circumstances.<sup>57</sup>

The Lai houses were raised from the ground, and were strongly built, as indeed they need to be in the face of crashing cyclones. The framework was of rough-hewn timber uprights, supporting sides of split bamboo, and roofs of the same material or thatch with palm leaf. There are usually no partitions, the parents, and the children's bed-platforms being either side of a central hearth. We should keep in mind that the houses are built on hill slopes, usually raised three feet from the ground on the uphill sides perhaps fifteen and twenty feet off the ground and lifted by long posts on the downhill side. Generally, the house was 20 feet high by 50 to 200 feet long and some 30 feet broad. The size and quality of the house differ according to the wealth or property of the owner. The Lai houses were built off the ground and underneath space would be kept for big cattle and other domesticated animals.<sup>58</sup> The Chief house consist of one great hall or common room, with the Chiefs' sleeping place, raised bed fashion, in a warm corner near the fire. The hearths, of which there were two, one at either end of the big hall, were made of earth trodden down into a square frame of rough logs. The walls were of bamboo matting set double, with a space of four inches between the inner and outer wall, giving coolness in summer and warmth in winter. The Chiefs house contained large veranda where trophies of animals' horns and skulls hung on the outer wall of the house.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Dounge, *Op.cit.*, p.57.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Hrangmang, on 8<sup>th</sup> may 2016, Thlantlang (Chin Hills, Burma).

<sup>59</sup> T.H. Lewin, *A Fly on the Wheel or How I help to Governed India*, p. 160.

The village has a stable social system under the village Chief. Colonialism did not introduce any land legislation which acted as the destabilising force of the social system while the Chiefs retained their power over land and customary rights. There was a happy life. T.H. Lewin subscribed that:

“What struck me most among them was the contentment and well-being of their lives, as compared with the feverish anxieties of civilized life”.<sup>60</sup>

### **2.8.3. Distribution of land and division of labour**

The Chief was the supreme power over and had the right to distribute lands according to custom to the household of the village.

There were three types of land for distribution:

- (1) Rights to distribute of unoccupied plots (*Lo lawng*) or free land.
- (2) Right to divide occupied lands into smaller units due to increase of population.
- (3) Rights to partition rotational field (*Lo bung*) into plot (*Lopit*) or to divide the plot into smaller plot.
- (4) Right to grant permission to cultivate specially rescued *Tuklaw* or *Khawhmawng* land or uncultivated thick forest land.<sup>61</sup>

In early Lai society, the entire population may be categorized as agriculturist except the Blacksmith. Periodic visit were paid to the nearest markets in neighbouring Cachar and Chittagong to purchase essential commodities, such as salt, brass cooking pots, and iron for implements, which were bartered for cotton, ivory etc.<sup>62</sup> After the selection of the village and a house site, it was a busy times for the household to work in their selected *Lo* or plots for cultivation. As agriculture was the main occupation of the Lais, each household had to pursue shifting cultivation which was the only method known in pre-Colonial period. Therefore the men and woman exempting children had to work in their *Lo* to sustain their daily economic life. The division of labour was based on human resource- between male and female. The men built the house and clear the land for rice cultivation; they helped in the weeding and harvesting, and procured fresh meat

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<sup>60</sup> T.H. Lewin, *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers therein*, p.7.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Vanhmingthanga, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

<sup>62</sup> Lalngurliana Sailo, “Modes of exchange in pre-literate Mizo Society”, *NEIHA Proceedings*, 2002, p.115.

with their natural skill in setting snares and hunting. The women would be engaged in fetching wood for fuel and water for cooking and completing other various household duties. The women contributed the greatest part during weeding and harvesting. Apart from that they would also make all the clothing for the whole household from cotton grown in the fields, which they themselves gathered, clean, spin, and weaved into strong cloth.<sup>63</sup>

## **2.9. The Process of *tlang lo neih* or shifting cultivation**

The form of cultivation is known as *Tlang lo neih* or *Lo neih* usually done on a shifting basis, and comprised of various stages. The process of shifting cultivation is cutting down of bamboos or trees of jungle, burning of died cut vegetations, sowing of seeds, weeding, and eventual followed by harvesting. The clearing of the thickly forested jungle by primitive weapons was quite a heavy task and exhaustive. As compared to the modern technology, the traditional system of cutting or clearing the forest by the households of the village seemed to be quite primitive, and the result of shifting cultivation too was sometimes not sufficient to people who based their living on subsistence economy.<sup>64</sup> The cutting was usually done by men in the month of January and February.

By the end of March and early April, if rains do not fall, the process of burning was usually initiated. The appointed day for burning was a matter of accuracy. If a day was chosen before vegetation and cut trees got thoroughly dried burning would not result in a well-burned field. If rain intervened before a day could be fixed, the whole firing was seriously held up for about three weeks to even up to a month. If it was not burned at the appointed day or week in the real year the households would be in serious trouble as there would be shortage of crop in the village where even famines might ensue.<sup>65</sup> If conditions are favorable, the early summer heat will parch the stricken forest and result in a slashing and vigorous fire.<sup>66</sup> All the male villagers turn out with sticks and knives to guard the fire-lines so that uncut forest may escape mutilation. In this respect they deserve commendation for their good sense in genuinely seeking to avoid unnecessary damage to what is their very life-blood.

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<sup>63</sup> J. Shakespear, *The Lushai-Kuki Clans*, *Op.cit.*, p.16.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>65</sup> Dokhum, *Op.cit.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>66</sup> Shakespear, *Op.cit.*, pp.166-170.

In the month of May when rain falls was unexpected the households of the village both men and woman started to sow rice seeds usually mixed with other vegetable seeds. The process of sowing was quite simple small were scooped out with sticks or hoe and different varieties of seeds were put before moving to dig another hole so on. Sometimes, a group of young people of different families might form a bigger agriculture work partnership by giving a helping hand and work in each field alternately.<sup>67</sup> Agriculture work partnership was highly cherished in the Lai society. It was one of the most appealing work for the young men and young woman as they could have chance to mingle with friends and could express their inner most thought. Apart from the economic gains, work partnership had different value to the household of the village as they could always share their sentiments and joy or deepest feelings with their neighbours or other clan or families.

As there was no reaping or threshing machines, every phase of cultivation had to be tackled by hand. Reaping was carried out by one, two, or more, of the family working together in slow rhythm through the field, snipping off the ears with a small 'Faah' (hand-knife or Sickle) and deftly tossing the rice over their shoulders, when it falls into a *Sei* (bamboo basket) on their backs. But harvest time was a happy time.<sup>68</sup> If the family produced sufficient rice, they would not feel hesitate or laborious ways, moreover, they eagerly wanted to harvest as soon as possible. If harvest was successful and the family produced in large quantity, the households of the village acknowledge them as a great successful family. The moment of joy and the future prosper of the households depended on their produce that usually falls during the month of November and December.

The result of shifting cultivation was precarious and the system was a wasteful one, for the *Lo* could not be cultivated two years in succession and the soil usually takes at least four or five years to recover its fertility. If this had been the case it may also implies that Mizos and its neighbours especially the Lais could make a move imperative as the land within reach would be easily used up.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> C. Nunthara, *Mizoram Society and Polity*, p. 107.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Lalchi Zathang, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

<sup>69</sup> O. Rosanga, *The Socio- Economic History of the Mizos in the Second-Half of the Nineteenth Century*, *Op.cit.*, p.20.

## 2.10. Activities of woman

During the whole year round, whether in the summer or winter times the woman's general lifestyle would hardly change as they spent most of their time mainly in household activities and during the cultivation of the agriculture land.<sup>70</sup> A woman had to wake up early in the morning, filled her bamboo basket with empty bamboo tubes, and proceeded towards the village water hole or springs, which were generally some way down the hill, during the dry seasons, the supply of water was usually scarce and scanty. Sometimes the village water hole dried up and even if there was any, the woman had to wait for her turn to fill up her bamboo tubes. This would take several hours. Chhawnmanga provided an account of Lai women relating to their daily works in responsibilities and according to him:

*“After carrying back her basket with bamboo tubes filled with water, she had to prepare meal for the whole household and in the meantime, rice grains or dried paddy had to be dry out in the sun or shelf over the hearth. The unhusked rice was pounded with a mortar which was usually placed in the front verandah of the house. The process was quite exhaustive as the woman in order to separate or winnows the husks had to use oval shaped tray made of plaited bamboo till it would be clean enough for cooking. And by the time her husband would wake up for meal”.*<sup>71</sup>

Despite the burden of work entrusted to them, the women never complaint to their relatives and took the task happily. The process of preparing meal was the same in every Lai society.

On return from the war path the young women (*nu ngak*) would accompany the welcoming party and meet the warriors carrying for them *zu*, fruits, and tobacco, and would escort them back to the village amid ecstatic jubilation. To commemorate the victory, the young women would perform *Sar Laam* along with men in the village ground.

## 2.11. Hunting

Hunting was another area where all the Lai youths were trained to be responsible persons in the society. They took pleasure in hunting as the sport and for getting meat,

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<sup>70</sup>*The Lushais*, Tribal Research Institute, p.40.

<sup>71</sup>Interview with Chhawnmanga, on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Saiha

and the weapon used were guns and spears.<sup>72</sup> Hunting for the chase of an elephant was the most favorite games of the Lais. They moved for many miles camping for days and months during the whole period of hunting for an elephant. The leaders of the group and elders secretly observed each individual and made assessment the personality of each to his elders. Knowing this assessment all young men tried their best to be successful during the chase.

Sangkima suggests that

*“Hunting was yet another center for learning and through which the youth were disciplined and shaped as a young man”.*<sup>73</sup>

T.H Lewin has described the habit of tobacco smoking among the Lais (shendus) and also the materials used for smoking. He stated:

*“It was customary for the men to smoke a pipe made of a bamboo lined (with a small bamboo pipe) and later with copper. The women use a tiny sort of hookah, also of copper, with a clay bowl, the tobacco water which collects at the bottom of the hookahs is held in high esteem amongst them as a preservative of the teeth and gums. Every man carries a small gourd full of it, and it is an act of common courtesy among them to present it to an acquaintance or visitor, in order that he may take a sip. Their tobacco is fermented, pressed, and cut up”.*<sup>74</sup>

## **2.12. Rituals and sacrifices**

The traditional Lais have observed different types of sacrifices. Among them was *Khawhrum chhiat* this was a sacrifice perform in order to appease the spirits of the *Phawngpi tlang* (Blue Mountain). The sacrifice was usually performed every year. Before the sacrifice the priest would fixed the date for the sacrifice and an animals to be sacrifice was announced. It was usually held in *thal*. The *pawngpi tlang* spirits have known by the Lais in different names since time immemorial, as such Tialchhumpa, Darkualpa, Thlabei, Phirthang etc. The animal was sacrifice to these spirits for blessing

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<sup>72</sup> Parry, *Op.cit.*, p.136.

<sup>73</sup> Sangkima, “History and Evolution of Education in Mizoram”, 22 *Session NEIHA*,.p.323.

<sup>74</sup> Lewin, *Op.cit.*,p. 160.



them with a great fortune, with beautiful girls and boys, self-subsistence economy in food etc. great warrior etc.

Before, the sacrifice a flat stone known as *phawnglung* was taken from the *Phawngpi tlang* by two young men, these young men should be free from any crime or ceremonially pure. The flat stone would carry down by the men and was placed near the tree locally known as *Bungkung* at the outskirts of the village. The animal for this sacrifice was usually used guyal or pig.<sup>75</sup>

Epidemics caused by unhygienic treatment of the water supply, animal and human refuse, or treatment of the dead, one or all, might give rise to a loss of public confidence in the site. Also land within easy and safe range of cultivation might wear out, and this would surely necessitate a move.<sup>76</sup> So, whenever they performed sacrifice, it was dedicated to the evil spirit as was regarded who could harm to the human beings. The Lais never worshiped and do not want to indulge as well. However, to maintain peaceful life and fear of the evil spirit to overcome in the community, sacrifices were carried out.<sup>77</sup>

As the Chin and the Lais are synonymous, there was hardly any gap in their respective social functions. Taking in view of this the detailed study of the Chin of Myanmar, Carry and Tuck were also quite relevant to the Lais of Mizoram. They stated:

*“When a man falls sick he sets it down to one of the evil spirits and he sacrifices a young fowl or a small dog; if he gets well, it means that the spirit was satisfied and has withdrawn the sickness; if he does not recover, then he had made a mistake ; perhaps it was a dog, not a fowl, that he should have sacrificed; but after sacrificing the dog, if he still remains ill, he tries a small pig, and then a large pig, then a small Sial (Gayal), and so on, until if the illness is prolonged, he sacrifices his all. As a general rule the smallest fowl and pig are sacrificed first in the hope of appeasing the spirit as cheaply as possible. It is not uncommon thing for a man to sacrifice bison after bison during*

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<sup>75</sup> Pawi Chanchin, Tribal Research Institute, p. 104-106.

<sup>76</sup> A.G. McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, p.166.

<sup>77</sup> Dokhuma, *Op.cit.*, p.54.

*an illness, and sometimes a Chief will sacrifice as many as ten during one illness”.*<sup>78</sup>

Moreover, in almost all the Lai villages, there existed a wise man or woman, who claimed to be wise than other household members. So, this man would lay out certain requirements when any person fell ill which the spirit would love to compromise for sacrifice. Any family was infected with certain diseases or illness usually consulted the so called ‘wise man’ to propitiate the spirit which caused such illness. The wise man, after interaction and questioning for a minute with the unfortunate one concerning his recent ailment, the former would pronounce that the spirit of a stream has been insulted and should be pacified with *Ar pa sen* (a red cook), which should also be sacrificed on the bank of a stream, the wise man would also inform the patient that the spirit in the wall was aggrieved and desired a pig. The animal was slain, usually by the wise man, and *Zu* (rice beer) was poured over the death animal and the wise man mutter to the spirit inaudible to others.<sup>79</sup> One interesting point to be noted here is that, the wise man always existed on eating the sacrificial meat, and for the animal would always choose pig. In course of time, the households of the village suspended the wise man preferences. They sometimes argued that why he would always ask for a pig. It may be suggested that as the meal of pig (pork) has been the most palatable meal of the Lais, the temptation to such meal could not be simple ignored by the wise man. Whether the patient was healed or not, it was not important to him but the meal he usually enjoyed with his family was more important as it was supplement to their daily economy.

### **2.13. Treatment of death**

If any of the household members within a village suffered from certain sickness or ailments, which later turned out to be very serious, they would place him in a sitting position held by his relatives until he drew his last breath. Among the Lais it was considered better that a man should die in the arms of his nearby relatives than dying flat on the floor. If a man died and if there was a gun in the house it was fired off. If the deceased was a famous hunter many round would be fired as a sign of respect to the dead man. It was believed that the evil spirit that may cause any harm to the family of the

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<sup>78</sup> . Carey and Tuck, *Op.cit.*, p.197.

<sup>79</sup> Khuakung Zathang, on 10<sup>th</sup> may 2016, Halkha, (Chin State, Burma).

deceased would be frightened off, and it was also to announce the death of such person to the households of the village.<sup>80</sup>

After the body was washed with warm water by some close relation, hairs were greased and combed and body was neatly dressed. Two bamboos are placed sloping wise against the wall at the back of the house, and a mat was placed across these bamboos, and the body was laid on the mat in a reclining position, with its feet on the floor. They provide with spears and guns in hand and surrounded by all his worldly goods. The relatives and friends all visit him, bringing gifts of tobacco, food, and liquor which were placed in front of the death body.<sup>81</sup> In some villages a small platform was erected above the head of the dead, and rice with some food items are kept on it for the spirit to eat. Special care is taken to see that flies do not settle on the dead body, as it was very disgraceful. Outside the house, a large number older men gathered round beer pots enjoying drinking, talking, chanting various folksongs, etc.<sup>82</sup>

When a household member died, the whole of the villagers would come together to show their last respect to the death or mourn the decease. It was a custom for the households not to go to their *Lo* until the deceased was buried, and this would take for many days.<sup>83</sup> However, if a person died due to unnatural death, young men would dig the grave and buried the corps as soon as possible. This custom was practiced since time immemorial and was a tradition handed down from many generations. One significant point to be noted here is that the Lais like the Lusei had a strong believe that if the unnatural death body was kept for days, it would naturally had negative repercussions- a curse to the society. The Lais also believed that if the deceased body was immediately buried the family would be freed from any unforeseen danger or disease. In this situation, unlike natural death there were no social activities like drinking, singing, dancing and dancing or killing domesticated animals to free their relatives.

In Lai traditional custom, each and every ceremony used to be conducted in a sincere manner and believed to be effective once it was laid out. If a member of the family met a natural or untimely death, it was deemed that the house ought to be purified or sanctified to prevent further misfortunes. Such practice used to be more commonly

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<sup>80</sup> Reginal Arthur Lorrain, *Five Years in Unknown Jungle*, p. 155.

<sup>81</sup> Carey and Tuck, *Op.cit.*, p. 197.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid

<sup>83</sup> Interview with K. Hrangvela, on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

performed in cases of unnatural deaths. This form of ceremony was known as *Inchung Thenh Thianghlim Naak* (household ritual ceremony). In this case, purification of the house was always carried out after the deceased body was buried. According to this process, the deceased person could be either from a different clan or family. However, if a stranger died the owner of the house would normally claim a pig or fowl from the deceased relatives for the ritual ceremony for the purification of the house, which was believed to be defiled by the death. Moreover, earthen would be claimed by the householder. NE parry also marked the belief system among the Lais and Maras he cited that:

*“If a house was polluted due to occurrence of death, it was imperative to conduct ceremony to purify the house and for the benefit of the householders”*.<sup>84</sup>

#### **2.14. Burial system**

The Lais practiced a unique burial system for the Chiefs and persons the well-to-do families or elders which could still be observed or seen in the southern most part of Mizoram popularly described through the ages as ‘*Pura*’. On some occasions, when the powerful Chief passed away, the whole village would mourn and pay tribute to the deceased Chief. Along with the death body of the Chief, a trusted dweller or slave from the village would be buried along with the Chief. They would provide *Darkhuang* (gong) for the person buried alive with the Chief inside the grave signifying that the Chief was once a wealthy, generous and powerful amongst the neighbouring villages and nearby territories. Such practices, though considered barbaric in the post modern era, was considered a good sign or omen among the people and used to be strictly adhered to only after agreement between the volunteer and the Chief’s family as the welfare of the relatives of the person who was buried alive with the Chief had to be under the care of Chief’s family in all matters. Typically, drumming of gongs and other forms of recognition or regards would be done for nine days for the person buried alive with the Chief.

According to Hrangvela khenglawt:

*“In the beginning the Lais did not use coffins or rough planks made of wood as part of materials for burying the death. They*

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<sup>84</sup> Parry, *Op.cit.*,p. 402.

*commonly used a piece of cloth to wrap the body of the death, and buried in the dug grave or vault made to put the death body, after they buried and filled the grave with the earth, and the foundation made, they placed several stones arranged in a circular manner to commemorate the deceased”.*<sup>85</sup>

The men would arrange the gathered stone ranging from 6 to 8 feet long neatly arranged in the form of a pyramid. The diameter of it's would be 8 feet in a circle manner. The Chief's relatives would place *Bel* (pot or utensil) on top of the '*pura*'. On the other hand, the burial system for the well-to-do was called *Thlanpi* (stone-house). A grave about six feet deep, eight feet long and six feet wide would be dug have floor at the base, there would be roof lined with flat stones and a small space left with a large flat stone used for closing the doors. Such family's grave would be usually opened only when another family member, who was entitled to be buried in the same grave, died.

In traditional Lai culture, the location of the body was usually marked with a memorial table made of thick plank wood known as '*philh loh naak*'. On the plank of memorial, various figures like men, women, children, animals of all sorts, gongs, beads, guns etc was carved.<sup>86</sup> This serves two purposes: firstly, the grave would not accidentally be exhumed and secondly, often contained information of tributes to or about life of the deceased. This used to be considered as a form of remembering their loved ones. It can also be viewed as a form of immortality. In most of the villages, graves could be grouped, and in some cases, graves would be located close to the relative residence or even within the same premises or place.<sup>87</sup>

## **2.15. Economy**

The entire population depended on agriculture and every household had to earn their livelihood. The main staple foods were rice, maize, sweet potato, arum, millet and other vegetables.<sup>88</sup> The Chiefs was judged by the households of the hills according to his assets and possession in terms of land or wealth. The more wealth they possessed, the more powerful they become and respected in the society. If the Chief wisdom was deep, the economic resources were utilized and regulated wisely. As the Chief gradually

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<sup>85</sup> Interview with Hrangvela, on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

<sup>86</sup> Parry, *Op.cit.*, p.193.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Buanlala, on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

<sup>88</sup> Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin*, p.48.

accumulated more wealth in a society, further respect and power could be eventually exercised among neighboring villages as well. In traditional Lai society, livelihood and alliance comes through economic reasons.<sup>89</sup> Hence, if villagers within a community suffered from natural calamities or disaster, they would reach out for help to neighboring villages. In those events, neighboring villages would support in kinds such as grains other agricultural products, service etc. Ultimately, this would bring about a good connection between those villages. In early society, the economic life of the people was so simple that the Chief relied upon, and was also measured in terms of the number of *Sial* (bison) he possessed.<sup>90</sup> As *Sial* played and occupied a significant place in the economic life of the Chief as well as the common man, the value or worth of a person would be judged in term of the number of *Sial* he possessed.

In traditional Lai culture, rice was the staple food and maize too was commonly used. The only form of cooking widely used was boiling, ingredients of a meal rarely being cooked in separate pot. They had three principal meals a day one in the morning, one at mid-day, and the last one in the evening. They used to eat in a corporate body; sitting in a circle around a large disk of food, all the members of the family, including guest if any, used to eat as much as they desired, took the eatables from the common disk with bare hand.<sup>91</sup> Variety in taste and the mineral needs are secured chiefly by the addition of salt, chilies, occasionally ginger, and turmeric, and green vegetable and egg yolk. It is the exception for fats or oils to be used in cooking though, by the introduction of what is called *Saum*, some fats and tastiness are provided. Ash water drained through wood ash was a regular ingredient in most meals. Meat never played a large part in traditional diet.

Domestic animals were not kept for the table, but as currency, wealth and ceremony, animals were commonly killed on special high days, feast days and sacrifices. Hunting provides and changed the intake capacity of the people. In fact, everything from field rats to elephants are ever in demand, caught by trap or shot by guns, in the case of those lucky enough to possess these treasures, the desire of all good hill-men. Pumpkins, cabbage, onions, brinjal, yams, cucumbers, creeper beans, ginger, arum, bamboo shoots, and many jungle herbs and leaves, provide the main aids to a staple diet of rice or maize.

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<sup>89</sup> Interview with Tialchi, on 15<sup>th</sup> may 2016, Halkha (Chin Hills, Burma).

<sup>90</sup> Shakespeare, *Op.cit.*,p. 46.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Thangbika, on 2<sup>nd</sup> may 2016, Tluangram (Chin Hills, Burma).

Besides the cooked food, the Lais were in a habit of taking delicious fruits: banana, papaya, guava, mango and the various wild plums, mulberries, figs, and the nutty fruits of the jungles.<sup>92</sup>

## **2.16. Conclusion**

Before the advent of the colonialist, the Lai were governed under their own erstwhile chief known as *Bawi* who was an omnipotent in every activities of the village. Therefore, he was the leader in times of war and providers in times of famine and natural calamities. The Chief enjoyed an overall sovereign and his subjects were loyal to him.

The traditional Lai society have varieties of practices belief and customary laws, there were several festivals observed by them, which were performed according to their beliefs in a meaningful way.

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<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, 186.

### 3.1 Introduction

In Pre-Colonial Mizoram, inter-village feuds and wars was a common practice and also quite significant among the Lais. It was more or less a struggle for existence based on the survival of the fittest, to gain supremacy over the others and takeover their sphere of influence.<sup>93</sup>

### 3.2. Causes of warfare

There were many causes that led to tribal warfare. First, the traditional blood feud between and among the different villages was the main cause of the inter-tribal war. Second, there was frequent conflict and hostile relationship between and among the villages due to several grounds such as dispute over ownership of land; desire of capturing the properties of wealthy villages, etc.<sup>94</sup>

Prof. O. Rosanga stated:

*“Some Chiefs, through their brave warriors usually had the tendency of expanding their sway. Soon the more powerful Chiefs exercise their suzerainty over their conquered villages and territory. The weaker village or those that were defeated in order to protect their subject or to such anticipated raids sought overture to more powerful Chiefs. Seeing such opportunity other powerful chiefs of other clans would immediately come to the aid of the weaker Chiefs to confront the irritating Chiefs. When such alliance was successful, almost all of the Chiefs and their subjects came under the suzerainty of more powerful Chiefs. In this way opportunity would always be for territorial expansion and increase of population. Showing prowess to their neighbours or Chiefs ultimately led to clan feuds or incessant wars in the Mizo hills”.*<sup>95</sup>

One who killed at the time of the war would carry the head home as a trophy and as a proof of his achievement. In order to honour his success the warrior who killed enemy at the time of war were given high esteem in the society and celebrated with a

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<sup>93</sup> Interview with RT Hnialum, on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2016, Lawngtlai.

<sup>94</sup> K. Zohra, *The Maras: Indigenous Tradition and Folk Culture*, p.148.

<sup>95</sup> O. Rosanga, theorizing the concept of Mizo Hero: Indigenous Perspective, Presented on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, Aizawl, p. 2.



great triumphant function.<sup>96</sup> Usually the presence of a warrior was felt in the village, and the household of the village especially old men, woman and children would feel safe and secure from either aggressors or intruders. In the mean time, it was quiet difficult to sleep in peaceful mind when the village do not have a good warrior or hunter.<sup>97</sup> As for the village warriors, specific tactics and defensive measures have to be carefully employed to prevent themselves against each other's offensive measure. Once war was declared, the young warriors would search for a chance of showing their bravery or daring enterprise with prowess and competent valour.

### 3.3. War Strategy

One of the important characteristics in the nature of military organization in Mizo early period was the absence of a paid soldier or militia, whose duty was to look out for the safety of the people as well as the village.<sup>98</sup> This military system was comparatively applicable to the traditional Lai military system.

J. Shakespeare in his report stated that

*“The pois are, I am sure, a more savage race than the Lushais, and, living in an open country, have been more accustomed to fighting in the open than the Lushais, and this has made them braver and more venturesome, and in this respect they are certainly less willing to confess themselves beaten and quietly escape from rule. On the other hand, these very qualities are grounds for hoping that the Lais will better repay the trouble being spent on them”.*<sup>99</sup>

From the account of various colonial ethnographers the Lais were once became troublesome for the newly British administration and they often raided villages across the frontiers which were under the British administration. In return, the colonial authority took enormous steps to subjugate the raiders.

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<sup>96</sup> C. Lalthlengliana, “Mizo Warfare and its development upto Colonial period”, *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Volume – VIII. 2007, pp. 50-51.

<sup>97</sup> K.L. Khama, *Zofate Nunphung Lamdang Zel leh An Nun Tawnte*, p. 79.

<sup>98</sup> Lalchhuanawma, *The early Military encounter with the British: Warfare techniques, adaptation and strategies*, Unpublished. Ph.D., Thesis, Hyderabad, p.109.

<sup>99</sup> Political Department, Carton Box-5, Mizoram State Archive, p. 3.

Tribal warfare was one of the common practices among the hills tribes, and was also the most striking feature of the tribal's, and this practice was inherent in several tribal groups of the north east of India even before the British penetration into the hills.<sup>100</sup> It is believed that not only to a particular tribe, warfare is found sporadically to every civilization of all over the world. In Mizoram, the Lais also had clear reason and purpose of making wars or raiding their neighbours or rival tribes or clans. In the early stages and primitive culture, they were recognized as head hunter or *Lu laak hnam*. However, the most admired person in the community was slayer of both men and animals or *mithat sathat*. The form of taking heads had three main purposes. In the first place, they needed heads for use at the ceremonies performed at the funeral of their Chiefs. Secondly, the desired heads to supply themselves with servitors in another world which was associated with the socio-religious sanctions which benefited the soul of the slayer once he killed enemy and become slaves for the slayer.<sup>101</sup> Lastly, to killed a man and carried his head to prove that he was a warrior and a slayer of man.<sup>102</sup>

In 1854, the adjacent territories were under the British subject where the Lais carried out various raids, according to the report indicated by Mackenzie cited that:

*“During the last seventeen years raids in which 107 had been slain, fifteen wounded, and 186 carried captive. The whole of these forays were believed to be the work of shendus or tribes from the south”.*<sup>103</sup>

This literally proved that the Lais carried out several raids upon the neighbouring tribes. It was a troublesome for the British administration as the southern hills was still independent and ruled by their Chief respectively.

Various raids carried out by the Lai warriors usually happened during dry season that was usually after harvest and when all the household of the villagers were mostly free from the burden of work. The Chief, the village elders and warriors usually held a meeting to fix certain days of their raids or wars. The council of tribal warfare headed by the village Chief was firmly vested with the power to declare war, and also decided the

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<sup>100</sup> Sangkima, *Essays On The History Of Mizos*, p. 65.

<sup>101</sup> William Shaw, *Notes On The Thadou Kukis*, p.79.

<sup>102</sup> Sangkima, *Op.cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>103</sup> Alexander Makenzie, *The North East Frontier of India*, p. 338.

direction of war and selection of the hostile and warlike villages.<sup>104</sup> As soon as it was dark, the young men made big fire in the village street, and they performed dance called 'Saar laam' making their movement around the fire. According to Lalhulha:

*'This was a first round exercise of the proposed war'*.<sup>105</sup>

Every parent wanted their children to become a good warrior who would protect the village and honour within the community. Once, a male child was born, they would say 'ral khua duah ah' and would prepare a bundle of fire and made the boy to hold it as a mark of future warrior to burn the enemy's village.<sup>106</sup> At the same time, other parents would also make their boy child to hold 'Nam' which means a sword or Dao respectively, as a sign who would destroy the enemy's village and bring back their heads.

As stated in the previous chapter, the Lais were nomadic tribes and they had to face frequent inter-village wars or made raids due to political and economic reasons, warfare is said to be part of the Lai culture and like any other Mizos their main purpose was to gain heads and economic revenues. The method and strategy was quite primitive and barbaric compared to the more civilized people. As a militaristic race, they fought numerous wars amongst themselves and with other tribes, threatening each other, capturing and killing their enemy, and returned with the booty plundered.<sup>107</sup> It is to be noted that in Pre-Colonial period there were no proper road and communication between villages too was not simple. The only available roads were bridle path or footpath known as 'Tum', these were commonly used by the Lais and there were no other links roads to have an easy access to their neighbouring villages, and they were not aware of developing such roads. It would also make it difficult to approach their village by their adjacent tribe or enemy. They treated any stranger as an enemy and usually end up into conflict. This was one of the reasons which had created tension and which ultimately led to incessant wars. Since this was the case, the Lais often selected the new land for their newly establish village and always in a strategic location, so that the approach to their village would be difficult to others.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Interview with Lalhulha Fanchun, on 18-19<sup>th</sup> February 2016, Sangau.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Liangkhai, *Mizo Awmdan Hlui & Mizo Mi leh Thil Hmingthangte leh Mizo Sakhua*, p.49.

<sup>107</sup> Lalthlengliana, *Op.cit.*, p.50.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with vanhmingthanga, on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

### 3.4 Strategic Location of village

As the Lais had to defend themselves, the village was usually located perched up in the hills where they could easily notice the approach of the penetrators. As shifting of villages was a common practice, selection of village location was very crucial. The foremost was to identify the source of the water points; the first priority was the safety of the village from the enemy, good atmosphere and environment as well.<sup>109</sup>

### 3.5. Construction of stockade

The art of making stockade of a village initially was more or less a continuous process which they learned it from while they were in the Chin Hills (Lai tlang) of Burma. The skills and technique was maintained and used in the Mizo hills. In the middle of the village, usually a thick wooden wall stronghold was constructed meant for the hiding place especially for women, children, and old aged to seek refuge when there was a danger of being attacked. This fort was known as '*kulhbing*'.<sup>110</sup> It consisted of a strong stockade of tree trunks and saplings about ten feet in height. These saplings were planted in two or three rows and the stockade was looped to enable the defender to fire. All round the stockade a trench was dug and sown bamboo stakes, and was crossed by a draw bridge, which was raised and lowered by cane ropes.<sup>111</sup> This *kulhbing* proved to be very useful for the inmates of the village as the types of warfare were usually a surprise attack. If and when the enemy attacked suddenly, the household of the village in order to escape the annihilation of the intruders would rush towards *kulhbing* for their safety.

In the early period, not only to secure of the attack of the intruders but also from wild animals and so forth, the Lai would usually constructed stockades circling round the village.<sup>112</sup> It was a sort of fort as a means of preventive measures and to make the villagers to live peacefully within the community. The village stockades were made of wooden walls, and were high enough so that the enemy would not easily climb through. This sort of fortress was known as *khuakulh*.<sup>113</sup> In the absence of sufficient wood for construction, they commonly used pointed bamboo spikes so that the village would not be easily accessible.

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<sup>109</sup> Interview with Thanhanga, on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

<sup>110</sup> Thanga, *Hmanlai mizo awm dan*, pp.117-118.

<sup>111</sup> Perry, *Op.cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>112</sup> T.H. Lewin, *A Fly on the Wheel or How I help to Govern India*, p. 162.

<sup>113</sup> Lalthanliana, *Mizo Chanchin (Kum 1900 Hmalam)*, p.201.

### 3.6. Pre-War Sacrifice

Liankhohau has given a brief account of tribal ways of future prediction before they went for raids or attack and stated that:

*“Before setting out for an attack, Deity was consulted first to ascertain whether the omens was propitious or not. The priest would hold up a fowl while another would chop off of its head. Based on the position on which the head of the chopped head of the chicken fell would depend on the success or failure of the expedition. If the beak faced the village to be attacked, the omen was taken as a good one; if it pointed to the priest, it forecast total annihilation of the attacking force. When the omen was favorable, the attacking party would set out. The attack usually took place at night and generally ceased when the sun was fairly up”.*<sup>114</sup>

Another strategy of tribal warfare was their espionage system. When the Lai tribe determines to make a war, they send out spies to discover position, strength and to find out accessible area of the enemy village. Once they could have the full knowledge about the location and approach, they would start towards the enemy village, which was usually arranged at nightfall, Lewin stated:

*“They then lay ambush at night, and at two or three in the morning they all entered to the village. Their weapons are the sword and lance, the bow and arrow, if an enemy abandons his village, they slay all the women and children who may fall into their hands, and carry off all they can lay hands on; but if the enemy having learnt their design, has the courage to wait and meet the onslaught, they quietly and quickly return to their homes”.*<sup>115</sup>

Shakespeare also described how the Mizo warriors that were prepared them before going to war and stated:

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<sup>114</sup> T. Liankhohau, *Social Cultural, Economic and Religious Life of the Transformed Community*, p. 36.

<sup>115</sup> T.H. Lewin, *Wild Races of Southeastern India*, *Op.cit.*, p. 145.

*“When they were about to go for war, each man would provide himself with cooked rice or grinded corn which could last for several days. Their food was rammed down very tightly into pieces of bamboo, so that for several days, food could be conveniently carried without fear of any being lost on the road. Sections of bamboos were also employed as water bottles, the bamboo being cut above one joint and below the next and a small hole made just below the joint on one side, which could be easily plugged with a roll of leave; for sake of lightness the bamboo would be whittled down so much as could be safely done. Thus, these war parties travelled immense distance”.*<sup>116</sup>

Likewise, The Lais of the southern hills laid out typical strategy to declare wars against their neighbours even of far the flung area. They would also declare war when confusion and conflict stuck with the same clan. A well laid out plan would be made when a war would be declared or raids be made against the same clans, before confrontation they sometimes would first sent emissaries or intermediaries to avoid serious annihilation from both the parties, which were considered dangerous and as far as possible they wanted to avoid such attack. But such annihilations could not always be avoided. As a whole, plundering, slaves, lootings and bringing home the spoils of the war was a common in the Mizo hills.

### **3.7 Types of warfare**

The first method of warfare among the mizos was the heroic warfare. Leaders of opposing clans and tribes fighting each other characterized heroic warfare. It can also be said that the individual Chiefs between the leaders of opposing camps constituted the Chief feature of this sort of warfare.<sup>117</sup> This form of practices was more or less the same with Lai ancestors in the initial stage of warfare.

#### **3.7.1 Ralpi or Combat war**

The *Ralpi* was one of the offensive methods of tribal warfare, whenever a dispute takes place between the same clan and different locality and a war was to be declared,

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<sup>116</sup> J. Shakespear, *The Lusei-Kuki Clans*, *Op.cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>117</sup> Lalchhuanawma, *The early Military encounter with the British: Warfare techniques, adaptation and strategies*, Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, *Op.cit.*, p.125

the parties to be at war usually made a limitation that no secret ambush should be carried out between them. This type of war was known as *Ralpi*.<sup>118</sup> In this type warfare, they intended to show their potential upon the other, they tried to capture as many of their rivals as possible and whoever captured the captive shall have him or her as his slave. But there was no reason for the captives to be permanent slaves, so long as the relatives of the captives paid up the ransom to the captors. Accordingly, captives were not given ill treatment, hence many of the captives married from the captor villages. However, all matrimonial benefits should go the captors as well as the ransom money whenever the relatives of the captives liberated them.<sup>119</sup> The captors were also at a disposition to fix the ransom according to their conveniences. As such, neither the Chief nor the nobles would be consulted nor involved. The Chief and his family were not susceptible to being captured or taken prisoners but through mutual understanding, they would seldom be killed nor subjected to slavery through mutual understanding among the Chiefs of the same or different clans.

### **3.7.2 Rawlral or Guerilla warfare**

The second type of the warfare was known as '*Rawlral*', which was more dangerous type of warfare. It was a surprise attack made by a group of persons similar to the guerilla warfare. Wherever or whenever the situation arises to attack their enemy for instance, the enemies were less aware of the anticipated danger. Few warriors with fully arms would go to the enemy controlled villages and ambuscades the unprepared households who pass their way. Also at nightfall they used to attack the villagers and would come to the *Lo*. They made sudden attack and immediately moved to other places.<sup>120</sup>

Sometimes, they laid Ambush in thick jungle of the approaching enemy and instantly fired and disappeared.<sup>121</sup> They usually attacked the enemy when they were in the most difficult situation such as while crossing the river or when they were about to cross an area affected by natural calamity. The offensive weapons were Stone booty traps, firearms, spear, bamboo spike, pellet bow, bows and arrows and Dao, among which booty traps were the most damaging weapons of annihilating the approaching

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<sup>118</sup> Parry, *Op.cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with Vanlian, on 14<sup>th</sup> may 2016, Halkha (Chin Hills, Burma).

<sup>120</sup> F. Lalremsiama, *Milu Lak leh Vai Run Chanchin*, p. 47.

<sup>121</sup> T.H. Lewin, *The Hills Tracts Of Chittagong*, *Op.cit.*, p.164.

enemy. The offensive weapons are practically confined to power and shot, the powder home-made, reported slow in ignition but none the less powerful, the shot usually angular or rectangular pieces of metal- hammered lead or filled iron, forced from a flintlock or percussion-cap musket.<sup>122</sup>

During such times, the attackers or warriors would even kill children and brought home the heads of the enemy. The raids were usually made where the target would be accessible. However, inter-village war or tribal war was usually avoided during the rainy season.

### **3.7.3 Rammu**

This was another tactics or method by which a man or a group of men set out to kill and cut the heads of the enemies from a particular village. An adventurous warrior may also take this advantage and lie in ambush and whoever came within their hideout would be attacked. They usually spend from one to even a week according to availability of their foe. The main aim of this type of tactics was to get the enemy's head so that they would be acknowledged and noticed in the Society. Basically it was for individual fame and valour. However among the Lais no war was waged without a good reason and no person were annihilated without war declaring unless they were at the war with the larger community.

The village that was attacked usually suffered severe annihilation. The attackers would usually burn the whole village and its inhabitants would run for safety in the nearby jungles. The warriors before setting fire they would first look each house for any valuable or household items especially that were made from brass or iron. Apart from these valuables they also look for cotton made cloths especially quill or *Pawnpui*. Items like hair pin or beads or bangles or any items that were usually looking for by the young warriors to carry home so that they would proudly presented to their girlfriends.

### **3.8. Operation of warfare**

The Chiefs and his warriors were always in the lead followed by the households of the village carrying gongs and drums, with which they made a loud and prolong. On

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<sup>122</sup> Willaim Shaw, *Notes on the Thado-Kukis, Op.cit.*, p. 80.



this occasion, however, the unarmed villages returned after seeing off the warriors, and the warriors were ready in pursuit to attack enemies' village.<sup>123</sup>

After travelling to a far distances and when the enemy village was approaching usually few warriors were sent to get prior information about the one of the village.<sup>124</sup> It was to have the full knowledge about the area in which they would make their attack. The second batch of the warriors was also sent to investigate the actual position of the stockades or the village fences. Once those were done, they set for the accurate time and place to strike or make an assault against their adversary. They carefully compare opponent in term of weapons and men force so as to defeat them. They managed to obtain where strength is super abundant and where it is deficient.<sup>125</sup> In making tactical disposition, the most preferable method was to strike at night when the enemies were in a state of relieved or after the ceremonial function in which all the village men were drunk. But let the methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances. So in warfare, the best way was to avoid what was strong and to strike at what was weak.

The party would march quietly towards the village through the *guyal* or *sial* path. Thus, the warriors destroyed the village fence and enter in the village, and the commander instructed each man to take position and surrounded each house. Once they set into position, and then, they made a sudden attack by releasing fire shots against the houses.<sup>126</sup> Then the whole village was heard with the cry of woman and children and with the sound of fire-arms. Once it was over, the village was filled with a pool of bloods, death body everywhere, and many wounded men lying on the ground. Survivors if any would run for their safety, and there who could not escape was captured and taken as captives. The party then started their return journey homewards before sunrise, taking heads with them and captives and other spoil of the war of portable articles. In some cases, if the slain head were large in number, they would peel out the skin of their head which was regarded as equivalent to head. On their way home, if the village was still too far to reach within a day, they would halt and rest the night at any suitable place.

The successful party usually entered the village in the early morning. During day time or after sunset as it was a taboo for the war party to enter the village. Before

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<sup>123</sup> Perry, *Op.cit.*, p. 209.

<sup>124</sup> T.H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South Eastern India*, *Op.cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Lalchi Zathang, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

reaching the village, the party fired off several rounds of volleys to announce their arrival. Once the households of the village heard the sound of fire-arms all came to meet the war party beating drums and gongs with plenty of rice beer. The warrior who brought the highest number of heads of the enemy was highly honoured by giving a special cup of rice-beer. After consuming the rice-beer, they entered the village with triumphant cheer and shout. The heads of the enemy were taken into the village, and were placed on the ground, and were immediately followed by grand ceremony.<sup>127</sup>

### **3.8.1. Venerate of the chief's deceased body**

One of the characteristic features of tribal war was the funeral method in connection of the death especially of the Chief. Head of the enemy was required for the decease. When a death occurred in the Chief's family, the whole village went into mourning. Neither drums nor gongs were beaten, and every one had to remain quiet in his house till the chief ceased his mourning.<sup>128</sup> To restore happiness within chief's family, the warriors executed a war to neighbouring tribes and brought home the heads of the slain person which were placed on memorial post of the deceased Chief.<sup>129</sup> Typically, they laid out strikes against the other village so as to grace the obsequies of some departed chief in the forms of obtaining enemy's' head.<sup>130</sup> When the duty was completed the mourning ceased and the village resumed into normal life.

### **3.9. Trade of war materials**

Almost all the Mizos depended mostly on the produce of the forest, agriculture, hunting and spoils of the war. On the contrary, Prof O. Rosanga maintained that the Mizos in the pre-colonial period had trade relations with their neighbours and they went as far as the present Bangladesh. Trade relation with neighbouring was carried out as far as Rangamati and Kessalong, in the east with the adjoining tribes of the Burma border, and in the extreme south trade with the Arakanese.<sup>131</sup> Hence, as the Lais did not have the resources and scientific knowledge especially to produce iron materials, they procured it through trade. Exchange in kinds was a barter system existed; the use of coins was

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<sup>127</sup> Zohra, *Op.cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>128</sup> Laiu Fachhai, *The Maras from Warriors to Missionaries*, p. 8.

<sup>129</sup> Sangkima, *Essay on the History of Mizos, Op.cit.*, p.65.

<sup>130</sup> O. Rosanga, "Bater, Tradition and Transformation of Exchange Values Resulting from Colonial Intervention in the Mizo Hills" in S. Haukhanlian Mate, Vanrammawii, (ed.), *Custom and tradition of the hill people of North East India*, p. 115.

<sup>131</sup> O. Rosanga, "British Trade Relation with Mizoram till 1930, and its Impact", *Proceedings of North East India History Association Seventeenth Session*, 1997, p.340.

unknown to them. With the advantage of getting iron product in the adjoining areas, the Lais used such iron for making different kinds of weapons. The Lais also could get firearms from the defeated foe, and also from villages who were willing to sell their guns.<sup>132</sup> The warriors were fond of taking captives as slaves to bring back the enemy head and spoil of the war. Moreover, every man would look for iron material as it was the basis of war material.

The Lais were ruled by hereditary Chiefs, each having a number of villages under his control. Darchungnunga assumed that from the year 1680 attack and counter attack was frequently exercised which lasted for almost 200 years. The tribe solves disputes and quarrel by means of warfare.<sup>133</sup> He further stated that:

*“Instead of going hunting wild animals, they prefer to launch war against neighbouring tribes”*

However, this was misconstrued as the Lais not only cultivated forest land; they also had to live on their crop.

### **3.10 The main war weapons of the Lais**

The ancestors of the Lais implemented war materials for different purposes like hunting, cultivation, wars and raids etc. in the absence of these materials, the Lais would not survived and maintained their political hegemony upon the bordering areas. Therefore, these tools played a crucial role in the pre-colonial period.

#### **3.10.1 SAHBUAK (Stone chutes)**

The *sahbuak* were used as defensive purposes and the topography of the Mizo hills was favourable to such use.<sup>134</sup> Once, they received information noting that the enemies were about to attack the Lai villages, they would choose favourable spot and they gathered big stone to be used at such crises. At a time, the *sahbuak* would be released once the enemies passed where they sat the trap. It was said to be effective and many of their foes usually lost their life. One may suggest that it was the most vital method commonly used in the Mizo hills.

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<sup>132</sup> Interview with Lalchia Zathang, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

<sup>133</sup> Darchungnunga, *Mizoram Chhiarkawp*, p. 10.

<sup>134</sup> C. Lalthlengliana, *The Lushai Hills, Annexation, Resistance and Pacification 1886-1898*, p.11.

### **3.10.2 NAM (Dao)**

The Nam was a sort of Dao and was one of the most useful materials they acquired so far. The *Nam* could be used in many such as hunting, fishing, cutting of the forest, construction of houses, etc and commonly used during the war. With the help of the *Nam* the Lais managed to reach their economy and countered any confrontation especially from their counterpart. Almost every household of the village owned Nam as it helped them in making their domestic needs.

### **3.10.3 LULAK NAM**

The *Lulaak Nam* was a special Dao for cutting the enemy heads. The word *Lu* means head and '*Laak*' means to take off or chopped. As it was specially designed, not only the warriors but also the whole households of the village valued and honoured the '*Nam*'. It was also a weapon which would alleviate the status of the Chief and his village.

### **3.10.4 KINGKAWT**

The *Kingkawt* was a curve Dao and a man had killed his enemy's always had his *kingkawt* decorated. So, it was also used during war and raids as the Dao proved to be the best weapon to cut off the enemy head. It was a Dao usually well-polished and more comfortable in use compared to other Dao.

### **3.10.5 KAWL NAM**

The *kawl nam* was a short Dao or knife. The word *Kawl* means Burmese Plains and *Nam* means Dao or knife. It was a small curved knives sharpened on one side only, and the shape and size varied from one village to another village or from one tribe to another.

### **3.10.6 MUH PUAH(Matchlock gun)**

*Muh puah* was believed to be the first firearms used in the Mizo hills. These types of guns are known to be match lock guns. Loading is done from the mouth with the help of muzzle-loading rod. Firing is done by burning the gun powder at the small hole at

the bottom of the barrel with a living ember or other mechanism which produces sparks. They always selected a dry splinter of banyan wood for making a living ember.<sup>135</sup>

### 3.10.7 OLAN

*Olan* was more or less the same with *muh puah*, and was popularly used during the time of Shah Jahan i.e., about 1720 A.D. This firearm was mostly made from Holland the Lais after taking the name, they called 'Olan'. The gun has a trigger and when it is pressed, the head of the trigger and when it is pressed, the head of the trigger strikes against the flintlock that produces sparks which burn the gun powder.<sup>136</sup>

### 3.10.8 TUKULI

*Tukuli* was a muzzle loading Gun, made in Turkey and the Lais called it *Tukuli* taking after the name of Turkey. Once they were able to acquire firearms from the plains of Myanmar. They also improved their warfare skills and technique. It was easy to shoot their enemies from a long distance rather than risking their lives based on combat war. Besides, the Lais also used Guns for hunting, preventing the village from ferocious wild animals, and for the conservation of their *Lo* from birds and wild animals. One may suggest that the Lais commonly had used fire-arms, and it was one of the reasons that they hardly felt defeat from their counterparts.<sup>137</sup>

Among the Lais firearms was highly regarded and was the best assets of the households for both economic and social standing in the society. It was regarded as the highest economic value next to agriculture. It was moreover regarded as a great honour to own guns and was the highest for brides' price. Firearms were commonly used to protect the village from external dangers or aggressors to protect themselves from the attack of enemies and to protect the 'Lo' or agricultural lands from wild animals.<sup>138</sup>

### 3.10.9 FUNGKI

The *Fungki* is a sort of flask of a horn of a *bison* or *sial* commonly used for carrying gun powder. It was usually tied with small plaited cane. The open end of the flask was usually covered with bamboo knot and an opening was made on the taper end

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<sup>135</sup> Lianhmingthanga, *Material Culture of the Mizo*, p. 44.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>137</sup> Interview with Biakmang, on 7<sup>th</sup> may 2016, Thlantlang (Chin Hills, Burma).

<sup>138</sup> O. Rosanga, "The Consolidation of Mizoram with Special Reference to the Disarmament of the Hills", *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Volume VIII, 2007, p. 98.

which was closed by the lid. The stocks are painted red, black, and yellow, and are highly varnished. Lewin stated:

*“Their power flasks are made of bison horns, polished and beautifully inlaid with silver and ivory”*.<sup>139</sup>

### **3.10.10 FEI (Spear)**

There are three types of *Fei* (spear). 1. *Muzuk fei*. 2. *Feikibar* (barbed spear). 3. *Sechhun fei*. Although the Lais did not manufacture iron, they could easily acquire from the western part of the Mizo hills crossing the distance land to the border markets. *Muzuk Fei* and *Feikibar* were the main weapons during war time and especially when no fire arms were available. The *Sechhun fei* was used to kill wild animals and to spear animals that were to be sacrificed to the spirit.

### **3.10.11 PHAW (Shield)**

The *phaw* was a shield made from the thickest part of the skin of bison's or buffalo skin. The outer side of the shield was decorated with brass plate. Two handles were made in the middle of the inner side. A shield made out from the rhinoceros was highly regarded, and was very rare and was not an easy task to kill such animal having thick skin. The Lais commonly used two types of Phaw:

(a) One was round shape about two feet long and one breath to two feet wide. The animal killed was first skinned and then dried up in the sun if not on the shelf over the hearth. The longer they kept the better and the drier the harder for they would be the shield. The outer side of the shield was decorated with copper or brass plate which was firmly fixed and at the inner side there was a handle which was also firmly fitted. This *Phaw* was the most popular kind and was also decorated with feathers called '*chhawn*'.

(b) The other kind of *phaw* is like the former one, made of the same animal's skin but it is decorated. It is rectangular in shape and it is a bit longer than the former one. This *phaw* is used to guard the shoulder and back of the user. Both the *phaw*'s are used for self-defense in the time of war by the Lais warriors.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> T.H. Lewin, *Wild Races of Southeastern India*, *Op.cit.*, p. 149.

<sup>140</sup> Lianhmingthanga, *Material Culture of the Mizo*, p. 47.

### **3.10.12 SAHMIN**

The *Sahmin* was a kind of bag made of plaited cotton string. It has an outer cover made of animal skin, which could not be torn with Dao or spear. It was carried on the war path. The warriors used for keeping small object and precious items which they obtained from either from raids or wars.

### **3.10.13 TEKLUNG LE BAWM (a match in a tinder box)**

The *Teklung Le Bawm* was a small box where *Teklung* (a flint fire stone), and *meitalhchingkim* (a steel with a handle made by Lai black smiths) and *meibu* (tinder, obtained from a kind of palm tree called *meihle*) were kept. It was the only source of fire available in the early life of Lai. It was a sort of lighter ignited with such items kept inside, such box was needed as the three items were to be kept well- dry as it was necessary to produce fire. Its string was usually tied on the string of the big satchel. As the war party usually spent several days in enemy territory or unknown land or crossing their border land, this sort of box was quite handy to make fire for cooking rice etc. This match box was carried by only a few, as it was difficult to acquire it and also quite helpful during the chase. But the exact date of when and where the Lais procure such materials was unknown.

### **3.10.14 FIREARMS *Meithal* (mostly old muskets)**

The firearms were commonly imported from Burma and Chittagong (Bangladesh) during the first half of the nineteenth century. They were fond of shooting and large hunting parties frequently made expeditions into the uninhabited parts in search of elephants, wild bison or bison, bear, tiger etc.<sup>141</sup> Hunting played an important place in the economy of the Lai, as meat which was additional to their subsistence economy. The Lais eats anything from rhinoceros to monkey and from big to small animals and including all sorts of birds.

### **3.10.15 ZEN (Gun powder)**

The Lais manufactured gun powder by themselves out of the local materials. Where, when, and how they learnt is a matter worthy of a very deep thought; perhaps it

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<sup>141</sup> Lalrinmawia, *Mizoram-History and Cultural Identity (1890 – 1947)*, P.3

came from the Chinese through the Burmese plains.<sup>142</sup> The method of manufacturing gun powder was simple. They collected the saturated soil out of animals' urine and dung which were mixed with soil in a large baskets poured with water.<sup>143</sup> The water of a red colour was boiled for two or three hours and then left to cool. The nitrate crystals dried in the sun was mixed with charcoal. The mixture was pounded in a mortar and a little water and spirit were added. When it had been sufficiently pounded and dried in the sun it became ready for use as gun powder. The powder made by this process was said to be quiet powerful, but produce a good deal of smoke.

### **3.10.16 CHHAI AND THAL (Bows and Arrows)**

In Lai society, it is one of the most common effective weapons used in daily life. The size of the bows used was usually two to four feet long and was made of bamboos. The Lai people were also said to have use poison arrows.<sup>144</sup> These *chhai* and *thal* would be carried with them where ever they moved or during the chase. It was commonly used for self defense, hunting, while wandering to unknown territory, and to attack their enemies as well. Every man who attained adulthood was quiet expert in the use of *chhai* and *thal*.

### **3.10.17 SAHLAM (a tree from which a human head is suspended)**

The *Sahlam* was a tree located and preserved at outskirts of the village and also played a crucial role in the Lai society. A strict rule was maintained to all households of the village not to cut off any branches of the sacred tree. The special tree was used on certain occasion relating to successful raids or wars. Heads that were brought home were hanged on such tree followed by the ceremony in the village.

### **3.10.18 SOSER (Blacksmith)**

Among the household members the *Socer* or blacksmith occupied an important place in the village. Without the blacksmith the activities and practices among the people would have been a failure. In the early period, the whole households were fully devoted to shifting cultivation, it was imperative an each household to own an iron product like Dao, sickle, axe etc, as it was not possible to achieve harvest produce in the absence of

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<sup>142</sup> Bertram S Carey & H.N.Tuck, *Op.cit.*, p.225.

<sup>143</sup> O. Rosanga, *The Socio- Economic History of the Mizos in the Second-Half of the Nineteenth Century*, *Op.cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>144</sup> Doungel, *Op.cit.*, p. 59.



such material.<sup>145</sup> In this case, blacksmith was highly respected and honoured in the society. In some villages, each house would give a share out of their agriculture produce. The *Socer* would be skilled and trained profession based on hereditary which pass down through many generations. *Socer* would be consulted by the villagers in regard to the iron materials to work on their tools or implements.

The role of the *Socer* was also quite significant as the Chief and his followers always needed extra quality in their warfare materials. When the chief would likely declared war against their adversary, the warriors were conscious of their materials to be used at raids time. It was the duty of the *Socer* to polish their war materials which sometimes work from seven days to thirty days. One may suggest that the confidence of the warriors should be relied heavily on the materials they possessed, and hence the *socer* role in the Lai society was quite significant and crucial too as his labour depended on the future of the Chief and his subjects.

### **3.10.19 Spoil of the war**

Among the spoils of the war *Sal* or slaves captured during the raids were most important assets next to fire arms. *Sal* were prisoners who would work for their master, and indulged in any kinds of work and activities from household to forest. They could be sold off at any time like cattle from master to master. Shakespeare superintendent of south Lushai hills in his report stated that:

*“I have long been aware that a good deal of kidnapping and taking possession of others people’s goods by violence went on among the southern village”.*<sup>146</sup>

This clearly indicates that the Lais carried our wars or raids in order to obtain slaves to far extend that would develop their economic condition and work force. Further, Lewin had also given the origin of this custom as a whole among Mizos and the adjacent tribes and stated:

*The origin of this custom, if not indeed the origin of the chronic state of warfare in which all hill people seem to live, was the want of women. Among all hill people the women is the hardest*

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<sup>145</sup> Interview with Vanhmingthanga, on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

<sup>146</sup> Political department-38, Carton Box- 4. Mizoram State Archives, p. 37.

*worker, the main toiler. Those who had few women went with arms in their hands, and took what they want from a weaker community. This is the cause or pretext of almost every strike that was committed. It is the enforcement of demands, either of claims made by a strong village on a weak one for black-mail or the price of the head of some deceased member of the stronger community. It is the practice among them, on the death of any member of the village, to saddle it upon some village which he may lately have visited and to demand a certain price for his life.*<sup>147</sup>

### **3.11 Conclusion**

In the early society, under the Chiefs a primitive form of skills and weaponry complete in itself was practiced. The way by which they put a booty-trap with a bamboo poisonous bamboo spikes and a *sahbuak* to overwhelm the enemies shows that the people had already acquired a highly developed form of war-tactics.

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<sup>147</sup> T.H. Lewin, *Wild races of southeastern India*, *Op.cit.*, p.53.

## 4.1 Introduction

What made the birth of warfare possible was the emergence of societies with fully articulate social structure that provided constancy and legitimacy to new social roles and behaviours. It was no accident that the two earliest examples of these societies, Egypt and Sumer, were states where large-scale agricultural production was first achieved. The revolution in social structures that rested upon the new economic base was the most important factor for the emergence of warfare.<sup>148</sup>

According to Scott:

*“Political and military supremacy requires superior access to concentrated man power, in return, is feasible only in a setting of compact, sedentary agriculture”.*<sup>149</sup>

Economy played a very crucial role in establishing supremacy against their rivals, at the same time it elevated the population as adjacent households seeking refuge within the village for better livelihood. Tribal warfare solely concentrated in the development of economic condition.

## 4.2 War and Raids

Warfare among the Lais in pre-colonial Mizoram was one of the important events in building up and maintaining the society. The Lais like their neighbouring tribes practiced warfare for numerous reasons.<sup>150</sup> It was not solely based on head hunting and spoils of the war but to maintain peace, harmony, security and defense against foreign aggressors and to counter their foes or protection of their land. Protection of the land, well-being of the inhabitants, training the youths in a beneficial ways, comes under the traditional custom of warfare. This literally exhibits the aim and vision of warfare in the Lai culture that were to reside in the then geographical area of the most southern part of Mizoram.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Lalchhuanawma, *The early Military encounter with the British: Warfare techniques, adaptation and strategies*, Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, p. 137.

<sup>149</sup> James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, p. 64.

<sup>150</sup> Sangkima, *Essays On The History Of Mizos*, p.65.

<sup>151</sup> Interview with RT Hnialum, on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2016, Lawngtlai.

Prof O. Rosanga cited that

*“In the olden days almost all the villages of Mizoram consisted of many divisions-clans, family, or sub-division of Mizo sub-tribes in matter of dialect and language, and cohesiveness varied considerably. Each village was inhabited almost exclusively by people of the same clan or family. Each village was quite independent of each other and generally more or less at feud”*.<sup>152</sup>

The Chief exercised their power according to village wise; they could not interfere in the affairs of the other villages. Each village has its own set of management and institution. The Lais were known for their bravery, courage, warfare and diplomatic skills. Among the Chiefs who settled near the Blue Mountain (*Phawngpi*) surround villages. The prominent Chiefs' clans were Hlawmcheu, Zathang and Chinzah. They were known for plundering as well as military adventures.<sup>153</sup> In inter-village warfare, the Lais adopted a raiding of villages instead of attacking or striking one particular enemy's village. This indeed was a part of their strategy of annihilating their counterpart.<sup>154</sup>

#### **4.3 Pasaltha (warrior)**

In the Lai traditional society, the warrior or *Pasaltha* held an important place depending upon their performance and contribution in the society. The term *Pasaltha* could be examined in many ways. Firstly, to attain the position of *pasaltha*, a man need or required to kill several wild animals in the chase. Secondly, to keep the household of the village saved from aggressive and to prevent them from ferocious wild animals. Thirdly, in the presence of *pasaltha*, the villagers usually feel safer and secured.

The role of *pasaltha* was numerous and their status was not easily achieved by the household of the village. For instance, political expansion or territory created disputes between two villages or Chiefs, and if the emissary was unable to settle such disputes, it normally ended up in inter-village warfare. In the events of the affairs a brave and courageous young man was always sought to protect and prevent the village and its

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<sup>152</sup> O. Rosanga, “inter Sub-Tribal Relations Among An Early Mizo”, in *Historical Journal Mizoram Volume Viii*, 1998., p.6.

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Manghmunga Chinzah, on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016, Lawngtlai.

<sup>154</sup> C. Lalthlengliana, *The Lushai hills: Annexation, Resistance and Pacification*, Op.cit., p.19.

inhabitants from the attack of their enemies. In this way the *Pasaltha* could be easily known and acknowledged by the household of the chief's village.<sup>155</sup> In this way the status of the *Pasaltha* was also earned based on their wisdom, bravery, talent and courage to counter any annihilation from their adversaries. For such services, no reward or privileges were ever expected or nothing was hoped in return for their deeds.<sup>156</sup> If there were several *Pasaltha* within the chiefs' domain, it also implied that Chief's power increased and his adversaries or other Chiefs were not in a position to confront such village.

The highest prestige and position of the *Pasaltha* came in the form of distinction. This was to prove their bravery and powers in the society and that would be brought home as many heads as possible. The achievement accomplished was followed by feast and celebration. There was no sign of appeasing any deities and literally to show the courage and bravery of *pasaltha*.<sup>157</sup> The traditional Lai society followed a system of reward to those who contributed in the community. Unlike the modern society, the Lais highly honoured and respected a self-sacrificed man who would immediately attend when his neighbours or colleague were in need of help and he would always be ready to sacrifice for the village even in times of danger and losing his own life. One of the most notable rewards was known as *nopui* to honour *Pasaltha*. Every youth wanted to achieve and pursue so as to hold the well-known *nopui*. This *nopui* containing rice beer was given to a person who would be described as brave and generous in the society.

#### **4.4 Tribal war dance (Saar laam)**

The peculiarity of this *Saar laam* was the implementation of skills in each step of the dance process.

In the beginning of the dance style, it highlighted their advanced ability to handle bow and arrows and able to defeat them by using only bow and arrows. They would raise their one hand above their heads and point towards the sky.

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<sup>155</sup> C. Lalthlengliana, "Mizo warfare and its development up to colonial period", in *Historical Journal Mizoram Volume Viii*, Op.cit., p. 51.

<sup>156</sup> F. Lalremsiama, *Milu Lak Leh Vai Run Chanchin*, Op.cit., p. 14.

<sup>157</sup> V.L. Siana, *Mizo History*, Op.cit., pp.54-55.

In the next course of the dance, it depicted that the warriors managed to defeat his opponent with the use of only the fist (*kut tum*) and put him to death. Therefore, they would raise their fist above their head and dance.

In the next process of the dance, it shows that the warriors not only used his bare hand but also his legs to support, while the warrior has been in the fight. Hence, they would also lift their legs as a sign of putting it into practice.

In the final course of the dance, it focuses on the fearless eagle flying above the sky. Likewise, they dreamed of flying above the sky and beat up the enemies so as to exhibit the dominant role of the warrior.<sup>158</sup>

During celebration of the success of warriors, the whole household of the village would gather in front of the Chief house or any convenient grounds suitable for the successful war. The warriors along with the young girls in between and each man stood together in one line and performed a dance to commemorate their victory. This dance is known as *Saar laam* and the other Mizos of the north hills called it as *Solakia* or *Sarlamkai*. But, the process and objective was more or less similar. *Saar laam* literally described dominant warrior who had defeated or destroyed the enemies. The dance portrayed the warriors' skills and technique of tribal warfare.

#### **4.5 Ral aih**

Ral aih means a ceremony performed by the Lais when they brought back the enemy's head in order to get the spirit of an enemy killed in a war into one's power after death, and also to protect from evil consequences during their life time.<sup>159</sup>

In the early Lai society, every man would dream of having slaves to accompany him while entering the *Pialral*. Not only to the human world, the practice of having slaves was believed to be highly regarded and respected even in the afterlife. Those warriors who could produce several numbers of human heads during his life time would be given a warm welcome in the next life and whatever required and wants would be

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<sup>158</sup> Stephen Nikio, *Lai Nunphung (Chin Culture and Tradition)*, *Op.cit.*, p.179.

<sup>159</sup> James Herbert Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai language*, p.374.

placed before the warrior. As this was their believe, the warrior would try to produce as many human heads as possible having a vision of what he would obtain after he died and in this way he would position himself into a respectable man even during his lifetime.

In *Ral aih* ceremony the process of celebration of the warrior and the commoners was more or less the same. The commoners would kill a pig to perform such ceremony while the wealthy man would slay a Bison to feed the whole villagers.<sup>160</sup> The man who organized *ral aih* had to produce *Zu* (rice beer) in order to offer to his guests who were gathering for the ceremony. The preparation of *Zu* for the ceremony was usually made by his relatives and neighbouring households.

#### 4.5.1 The day of *Ral aih*

On the day of the event, the youths from the village would gather and a long bamboo post was erected in front of courtyard of the warrior. In this events no real human heads were used, instead they would hang a *bur* (a gourd) and *hreng* (plank wood cross sharpened at both side and a hole in the middle) attached at the edge of the bamboo. *Hreng* has to be painted with the blood of animal slayed.<sup>161</sup>

All the villagers would gather in front of the warrior house and celebrated by drinking various kinds of rice beer as such; *zupui*, *zufang* etc. Interestingly, no person would be totally drunk and no quarrel or confrontation took place during the celebration. The use and practice of *Zu* among the *Lais* was highly respected and none dare to get drunk as it was considered to be a part of their social norms.

#### 4.6. Belief system

The belief system beyond the world was instrumental in molding the cultural norms and values. According to Prof. C. Nunthara there were two types of *Mithi Khua*. One was ordinary *Mithi Khua* and the other was *Pialral* (paradise and heaven). *Pialral* was meant only for those who distinguished themselves during their lifetime in economic wealth by giving a number of prescribed ceremonies and feasts of honour in bravery or in hunting skills prescribed number of wild beasts. The impressive position of the individual which has been obtained in the Mizo social world were thus, intrinsically and

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<sup>160</sup> T.K. Chinzah, *Pipu Ziarang*, p. 40.

<sup>161</sup> *ibid*

intimately inseparable and connected with the belief system of life after death.<sup>162</sup> It was this belief system, which prescribed the traditional social value on bravery and wealth among the Lais. Among the traditional Lais, to attain *pialral*, a man has to perform both *In lei Thangchhuah*<sup>163</sup> and *Ram lei thangchhuah*<sup>164</sup> in order to have an access to *pialral*.<sup>165</sup>

#### 4.7 Matrimonial alliance

Lusei Chief Sailo and Khuafu Chinzah Chief were living together peacefully. A history of Mizo's written by C.G.Verghes stated that,

*“After 1795 Lusei Chief and Thlantlang Chinzah had a strong bond between each other through the use of matrimonial alliance. After all, the Lais were in contact with Sailo Chief, Lai Chief Hausata also went as far as the blue mountain located in the southernmost tip of the Lushai Hills who also had brave warriors and defeated Lt.Steward”.*<sup>166</sup>

In this regard the author refers to the northern Sailo clan that maintained a strong relationship within the Mizo hills.

Lalpuiliana son of Lallula Sailo got hitched Khuangtial daughter of Nicheu the then Lungzarh Chief which took place at the time when they were in Zopui. Some elders also asserted that ‘in order to defend themselves from the intruders, Lalpuiliana Sailo married a Chinzah woman named Khuangtial who happened to be the daughter of Lungzarh Chief. This wedding ceremony took place in around 1795. The couple had two children namely Vanhnuaithangi and Lalsavunga respectively. Unfortunately, Khuangtial a mother of two children died at a very young age.<sup>167</sup> Lalsavunga, as a Sailo Chief soon became famous and his main village was located in the present Aizawl. This was about in 1824 AD and later Lalsavunga shifted his village to Darlawn (to the east of Aizawl).

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<sup>162</sup> C. Nunthara, *Mizoram Society and Polity*, Op.cit., p.97.

<sup>163</sup> In lei thangchhuah: it was a form to organise a feast and celebration for the whole community with the village. More or less, promotion of social prestige and status. In addition, this practises would leads to attainment of *pialral* in the belief system among the Lais.

<sup>164</sup> Ram lei Thangchhuah: the hunters have to obtain a number of wild animals as much as possible, in the form of firing a shot, trap etc. to achieved the rank of thangchhuah.

<sup>165</sup> Interview with R.T. Hnialum, on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2016, Lawngtlai.

<sup>166</sup> C.G. Verghes, *History of Mizo*, p.116.

<sup>167</sup> Interview with Lalmaka, on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Saiha.



Remarkably, Lalsavunga also married a Chinzah named Tuantial daughter of Tialcheu Khuafu (Chin Hills) Chief.<sup>168</sup> In this way the great ruler of the hills in order to strengthen their position relied much on the matrimonial alliance.

#### 4.8 Grouping of Sailo ruled villages

Around 1747 AD the descendants of Sailova decided to group themselves together so as to counter ‘*Lai ral*’ (the Lais who frequently attacked the Lusei villages) at a place called Selesih which was at a distance of one mile to the present Khawbung south in Champhai district. It was believed that the town at its peak sheltered 7000 inhabitants, and it was regarded as the first town ever mentioned in Mizo history. It is said that three Chiefs from Sailova’s lineage and four Chiefs including Rohnaa, father of Lallula grouped together, distributing among themselves local areas in town.<sup>169</sup>

#### 4.9 Chhim (South) and Hmar (North) war

Sailo Chief Lallula died and was succeeded by his youngest son Vuttaia also known as Vuta was known for his strong rule. His father and Fanai Chief Rorehlova had made a brotherly pact and helped each other all through the wars. Vuta also ruled during the lifetime of Rorehlova for a brief period. Vuta tried to cross Buanhmun but Southern Chief Lalpuithanga succeeded him.<sup>170</sup> Vuta was very angry and plan to immediately attack him. Lalpuithanga fled to Chengte, afraid of the strong and fierce Chief Vuta.<sup>171</sup> Vuta, upon hearing his opponent’s action, he composed a very insulting song.

*Lalpuithanga’n Buanhmun a luah e*  
*Lalpuithang had occupied Buanhmun,*  
*Chengte ah a raak kir*  
*But he returned to Chengte*  
*A kawm tuk e*  
*What a miser*

Lalpuithanga was furious about the song, and was eagerly waiting for an opportunity to humiliate Vuta. It There was a man called Thawmvunga the then adviser and *pasaltha* of Chief vuta who went to Lalpuithanga’s village to bring some of his

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<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>169</sup> K. Laldinpuii, , “Lallula”, *Historical Journal Mizoram Volume – XI*, 2008, p.49.

<sup>170</sup> Vanlalringa Bawitlung, “Processes of state formations in Mizo society” *Historical Journal Mizoram volume VIII*, 2007, *Op.cit.*, p.34.

<sup>171</sup> Lalthanliana, *Mizo Chanchin*, *Op.cit.*,p. 514.

subject who were willing to shift to Vuta's village. As per the customary practice Lalpuithanga confiscated the fire-arm (gun) from one of the household who was supposed to move to Vuta's village. Immediately thawmvunga then sought the aid of Vuta to return the gun.

It was well known that the Sailo Chief were wise and they also made alliances or pact with other mizos or Mizo groups, commenting that the Sailo clans were 'forbidden to be killed' and during war if they took shelter in the *Pum* or blacksmith work place. So Thawmvunga and Vuta proceeded towards Lalpuithanga's village to annihilate his counterpart and the latter was waiting to make use of his chance. He instructed his subject that if Vuta showed any anger they should beat him up with firewood.<sup>172</sup>

Chief Lalpuiliana as usual welcomed his quests and they all started drinking *Zu*. Lalpuithanga's *pasaltha* and others as per instruction, each men in firewood ready to be used when called for. After they got drunk Chief Lalpuithanga confronted Vuta accusing him of camparing an insulting songs directly linking against him. Lalpuithanga confronted Vuta about the song, and Vuta nervously answered that the former misunderstood the meaning of the song. Thawmvunga disagreed with his Chief and said aloud "Master Vuta, let me dance with my sword". He waved his sword and said "it was not any misunderstanding as we definitely insulted Lalpuithanga with the song". When vuta's *pasaltha* weaved his sword in a dancing manner, Lalpuithanga's men lay low their heads in order to escape and cutting their heads and he immediately retrieved his gun. However, Lalpuithanga men pulled from the other end of the gun in trying to get back the gun and they hold him down. The tug of war' continued for sometimes and Chief Vuta helped his *pasaltha* by beating Lalpuithanga's men with a bamboo stick. Thawmvunga no longer could control his temper and trimmed or swipe his sword to those hands which held the other end of the gun. Chief Vuta and his Chief adviser escaped unhurt. A gun was fired which indicated the declaration of war. It was the immediate cause that led to war between the southern and northern Sailo clan.

**4.10 Thlanrawn rawt** (Thlanrawn was a village located in Chin hills between Halkha and Falam inhabited by the Lais and *rawt* meanscompletely destroyed or total annihilation)

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<sup>172</sup> Chhawnmanga, *Mizoram Michengte*, p.112.

In order to understand and to have a thorough knowledge about the Lai warfare special mention has been made on some significant tribal wars of the Mizo hills. Attempt also made to draw attention to the most famous raid or annihilation during the time of Lallula a Sailo Chief. He was regarded as the most powerful among the Mizo Chiefs and having about 5000 subjects. Although the famous Lallula one of the toughest Chief of all the Mizos and his subjects were under a tributary of the Lai Chief. It appears that the Sailo were always were always feared of their neighboring Lai clans who frequently attacked their villages, captivating whatever they wanted of their possession. So, the Sailo villages have no other option rather than giving tributes or taxes to the Lai clans.<sup>173</sup> Many times, the Lais would enter into the Sailo villages and collected tributes by force. On the other hand, it was irritating for the Sailos to admit their defeat from their formidable enemy. Memory about the collection of tribute by the Lais and taking way their properties of the Sailos by force such as bison, beads, necklaces, dyer, yam, fowls and other domesticated animals has seen frequently reflected in the Lai folktales and stories.<sup>174</sup>

Since this was the case, Lallula could no longer bear the cruel act imposed by his neighbour. His mind would not rest until he could stop this menace. He was awarded that until and unless his subjects were self-sufficient, he could not take any action against the Lais. He, therefore, laid out a well plan or strategy to defeat his adversary. He instructed all his subjects to work harder than before and to be self-reliant and self-sufficient so that they would survive in times of war against the Lais.

#### **4.10.1 Political relation**

The Sailo Chiefs knew that the Lais were quiet powerful in war activities; they also knew that, they were far ahead in war strategy. In order to defeat the Lais, the sailo had to make a well lay out plan to be implemented at the night moment. The scheme was to be carefully planned and without failure it had to be materialized by all means against the Lais who inhabited the Thlanrawn village. According to such plan as far as possible means of confrontation was to be avoided. In the event of the affairs Chief Lallula called his adopted brother Named Rorehlova of Fanai clan and some of his trusted advisers to conspire and form a confederacy against the Thlanrawn Lais. Once this was finalized

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<sup>173</sup> Vanlalringa Bawitlung, "Processes Of State Formation In Mizo Society", *Historical journal VOL VIII*, 2007, p.35.

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Chhawnmanga, on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Saiha.

they also made overture to other Lusei Chiefs and their subjects to help them in their future plan of actions or warfare strategy. All the Chiefs accepted it as this could be their chance to escape themselves from paying tributes to the non Sailo clan.<sup>175</sup>

Conspiracy against Thlanrawn village was agreed by the other Sailo Chief. Lallula Therefore enticed the most powerful Chief of Thlanrawn named Thanchhum. Lallula requested Chief to inform him on his visit in advance so that Chief Lallula could prepare a grand welcome to the Lai Chief. In fact almost all the Sailo Chiefs were seriously conscious about paying tribute to the Lai Chief, they regarded it as against traditional norms or insult as they had never paid any tributes to any Chief of other clan. Lalula invited the latter to come to Zopui and joined in the grand celebration of harvesting and successful hunting expeditions of his village. As requested Chief Thanchhuma made his to Lallula's village and he was presented large amount of tributes collected including ivory and other valuables.

#### **4.10.2 Strategy of Conspiracy**

Chief Lallula and his elders of Zopui village instructed all the all the household<sup>176</sup> instructing that their respective guests should be treated with the best hospitality and they should provide them with meat and *zu*, so that no doubts feeling should evolve from their guests, clear instruction was also given to the households of the neighbouring villages that they should bring from the forest '*Changel laimu*' and the peeled branches of '*Beltur*' tree, and the women should bring home large barks of trees pretending to be ivory and gongs respectively.<sup>177</sup>

The Chief of Thlanrawn had accepted the invitation and was ready to visit Zopui village to join in the pretension of the grand celebration. But the Thlanrawn Chief had not suspected the whole intension of such invitation and had no idea of what in store for him. In the meantime Lallula and his elders had planned strategic policy of hosting the counterpart. It was prepared in such a way that every household at the instance they heard the beating sound of *Darkhuang* coming from the Chief house. They should kill their respective Thlanrawn guests. Chief Thanchhuma looking forward to his future prospects with his warriors went to Zopui village much earlier than as the expectation of

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<sup>175</sup> K. Zawl, *Mizo pipute leh an thlahte chanchin*. *Op.cit.*, pp. 179-180.

<sup>176</sup> K. Laldinpuii, "*Lallula*", *Op.cit.*, p.49.

<sup>177</sup> Zatluanga, *Mizo chanchin*, pp.148-115.

Chief Lallula. The latter secretly sent messages to other Sailo Lusei Chiefs urging them to come with large number of warriors, otherwise their plan would fail and the survival of their future would become black if not united. The suggestion and plea was accepted by other Chiefs and they came in large number. As planned, the neighbouring households brought what looked like ivory and gongs. They reached Zopui at dusk or after sun set.<sup>178</sup> Accordingly the receptionists carefully accommodated the men from two to three in a house where the Lai guests were accommodated. This was done in order to fulfill their action plan against their counterpart. They were also instructed to pour water in their guns barrels so that their fire arms would not function. Women and children also instructed to hide in the nearby jungle.

The day came for the grand celebration, and it was held in Chief Lallula's compound. It was performed with great dancing and singing, with abundant *Zu* and several animals were killed for the feast. The Luseis carefully pretended to be drunk and they poured their *Zu* secretly while the Lai guests enjoyed their drinks as much as possible. By nightfall the celebration was over and they dispersed drunkenly moving towards their respective shelters.<sup>179</sup> Around midnight Lallula all at once shouted to his two guests-the Thlanrawn Chief Thanchhuma and his elder named Phunthanga accusing them of being cruel to the Luseis and instantly the men from Vanlung village who were available for such emergency caught Thanchhuma and killed Phunthanga. The rest was not a difficult task, almost all were killed out of three hundred men of Thlanrawn were killed except the three who escaped the genocide. The well laid planned was materialized and now the hated Lai Chief was a prisoner of a Lusei Chief. The great ordeal called 'Thlanrawn Rawt' or total annihilation of men of Thlanrawn village took place in the year 1760 A.D. this significant and memorable killing has been told by Mizo folks and may be regarded as the most merciless annihilation ever known in Mizo history.

#### **4.10.3 Fame of Lallula**

The significant fact to be noted here is that *Thlanrawn rawt* made Lallula famous for his advanced technique and skill in warfare, and his reputation increased and he was also respected by the other petty Chiefs. But most of his neighbours started moving towards the western hills due to fear of the repercussion that may fall upon them. As

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<sup>178</sup> Lalthanliana, *Mizo Chanchin*, *Op.cit.*, pp.404-406.

<sup>179</sup> F. Lalremsiama, *Mi Lu Lak Leh Vai Run Chanchin*, *Op.cit.*, pp. 22-23.

most of the petty Chief and their subjects moved to other region, hence Chief Lallula and Rorehlova were left alone likely to be confronted by the Lai clans. But the anticipation of the Lai revenge was never heard or told by the Mizo elders, now Lallula firmly established his kingdom and his fame spread far and wide beyond the Mizo hills.

However, after three to four years of the mass killing Lallula was now not unaware of his position as his territories lies in a strategic position. The Chief decided to shift his village but without his wealth excepting his singing cock which he took along with all of his possession.<sup>180</sup>

The significant point to be noted here is that it shows traditional Mizos were quite vengeful against their counterpart. It also marked the beginning of Sailo hegemony in the Mizo hills.

#### **4.11 Sialhmur Run**

One of the sons of Vuttaia called Lalvanga ruled over Sialhmur (the location of their village not yet known). As a result of the Southern and Northern war, Southern warrior named Chawngbawla raided Sialhmuar village. Different village formed a confederacy. Sialhmur village had a brave warrior named Nghatebaka; he went fishing on that particular day when his village was raided. On his return, he was very angry and shouted “you dare attacked my wife and children while I went fishing”, and he chased the men who raided his village.<sup>181</sup> The southern groups fled the village. While fleeing, one man said to Chawngbawla “my friend, I wish Chawngbawla is here fighting with us”.<sup>182</sup> Chawngbawla frowned and said “my brother, just run as fast as you can, even Chawngbawla can’t do a thing”. Chawngbawla plan a new device, he took a turn and hid behind a bush. He shoots down Nghatebaka from his hidden place. From thereon, Vuta looks for every opportunity to annihilate his adversary.<sup>183</sup>

#### **4.12 Zuangva Bawk Run**

The war between the north and south also had its effects to other region of the mizo hills during this time. Hnochhuma, son of Kualsawia, Chief of Fanai occupied Zuangva village with 30 families. Vandula chief of Ralvawng (Southern chief) distress

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<sup>180</sup> Interview with Khuakung Zathang, on 10<sup>th</sup> may 2016, Halkha (Chin Hills, Burma)

<sup>181</sup> Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin*, p.108.

<sup>182</sup> V.L. Siama, *Mizo Chanchin, Op.cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>183</sup> Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin, Op.cit.*,p. 108.

with this move, travelled all the way to *Serkawr* to the extreme south of Mizo hills to inform them of his disappointment, “he expressed his discontentment by telling them that the Fanai clans were gradually extending their way towards the south and he also showed his concern that one day they would dominate the Mara clans.”<sup>184</sup>

Believing that the Fanai clans would dominate them, Thawngliana the Chief of Serkawr and Sangau households of the extreme south hills grouped together and attacked Zuangva village without Vandula who failed to attend the gathering. Both side fought bravely losing seven warriors each.<sup>185</sup> But the Maras retaliated and gathered at Darkhuang *tlang* and they released that their two brave warriors were missing. In order to take revenge, they were now trying to kill their prisoner Darbili. But the prisoner told them if she was killed than her brothers from Thlantlang village would avenge her death and they would not easily defeat her brothers. With that warning tone the Maras hesitated to kill the pregnant women, and at that instance their two warriors named Thangliana and Laikaia arrived in their midst. In the meantime Darbili’s husband named Hnochhuma escaped at the bidding of his wife Darbili.

After a few years, the Sangau releasing the fatality of their position wanted to come to term with the Fanai clans. Taiinga and a few men decided to mediate the peace agreement. They were told “Not to talk directly to Hnochhuma he was a dangerous man, instead they should talk to his brother named Pahnuna”.<sup>186</sup> Taiinga carried a knife that was snatch or taken from Hrangkulha (warrior) of the Fanai clan. When they arrived at Hnochhuma’s house the knife immediately attracted the inmate of the house. Hnochhuma immediately caught Taiinga and dragged outside his house and instantly killed him.

When the Lais of the Sangau village people heard the news, they immediately called the Lungtian village to help them in their fight against the Fanais. However, Lungtian villagers hesitate to fight against the Fanai but proposed that the battle be without using firearms. The battle was about to take place at Lahmun at Vanlaiphai and both side avoided firing any bullets at one another. But in the event of the affairs, one of

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<sup>184</sup> Chhawnmanga, *Mizoram a mi chengte*, Op.cit.,p.120.

<sup>185</sup> Interview with V.Lalchhawna, on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Saiha.

<sup>186</sup> Interview with Lalhulha Fanchun, on 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> February 2016, Sangau.

the Lai warriors named Hnawncheuva fired at a Fanai named Kalkhama which immediately spark the battle.<sup>187</sup>

As no agreement came from both parties, the Fanai fought back by attacking the Sangau village. While crossing a river they killed five of the Sangau warriors and the place where five men were killed came to be known as “*Ralzawh va*”.<sup>188</sup> The Fanai continued to retreat and moved from Thingsai to Muallianpui. During that time Lungzarh and Khuafu households were already made their settlement in Lungtian which was ruled by a Chinzah Chief.<sup>189</sup>

#### **4.13 Bungkhaw run**

The Sailo clans were discontented on Ralvawng Chief Vandula because he hesitated to give back the land called Ralcha and Dar maihum (brass bowl) from Vaki village that belonged to Thlantlang Chief. They decided to attack Bung village instead of attacking Thlantlang and formed an army of almost 700 men. The Fanai warned Bung village about the possible attack, and the Bung villagers immediately sought help from their neighbouring villages and they were ready to confront their counterpart. Both side made every efforts to defeat the other, and after many rounds of bullets were fired from both side the Sailo were defeated.

The significant facts to be noted as a result of this war- one the Sailo who were the predominant ruling clan in the Mizo hills gradually began to decline and their efforts to continue to make overtures to either Mizos too was now meaningless; second, the common use of firearms in the Mizo hills was now seen in their war as a mean of warfare materials. Third, in the events of the affairs the Fanai Chiefs became the deciding factor of the war between the Luseis and the Lais. Lastly, the enmity between the Sailo, Fanai and the Lais continued till the coming of the British and their rule in the Mizo hills.

#### **4.14 Hautheng Run (1896)**

Hautheng village was attacked by the Fanai but Ainak had already warned them. They were all ready and some hide at a safe place. At that time Vuangtu Chief Ralduna

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<sup>187</sup> Chhawnmanga, *Mizoram a mi chengte*, *Op.cit.*,p.121-122.

<sup>188</sup> Interview with RT. Hnialum, on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2016, Lawngtlai.

<sup>189</sup> *ibid*



was in the village as a guest. Fanai readily shoots at them, but Hautheng villagers fought back. They shoot one of the Fanai warriors when he passes them. Fanai warriors were unable to collect his body as the villagers surrounded the body. The Fanais considered themselves failure without retrieving their warriors' body.<sup>190</sup>

To retrieve the body back, the Fanai made heavy smoke and Dopawrha jumped in to collect his friend's body. He caught his leg and dragged him away. They took their Knight home, crossing Kolodyne River. Therefore, Fanai lost terribly at Hautheng battle.

#### **4.15. Ainak Run**

There were about 500 members in Darzo village and the Fanai decided to attack Ainak village. The Fanai had always attacked Mara land, this time it was proposed by Lianbuka. Fanai warrior Pualkhawia and his group left for the battle. They spent a night at Lungtian. Lungtian villagers told them "Go home, war is not good". Pualkhawia replied "we are already halfway, we cannot go back home". "Of course you can, we have spoken to your friends and they all want to go home, you are the only one who wants to fight, we will mark you", they said. He said "mark me all you want, we will also mark you" and they left to fight.<sup>191</sup> They killed Ainak Chief Hmeinu, they burnt down his house and they took his son Ramliana as slave. Much later, they fled the village.<sup>192</sup>

**4.16. Khawnglung Run** (*Khawnglung* was a village located between the present Pangzawl and Bungtlang village in the eastern side, and *Run* Means raid)

Aithangvunga son of rorehlova of the Fanai Chief and his wife shifted to Khawlung village due to famine in about 1861. This famine visited almost all the villages of the mizo hills. All the village inhabitants therefore scattered to different places in search of better livelihood. Aithangvunga and his wife also moved to Khawnglung village and settle in the said village and later became the Chief. Unfortunately, not long after he became the Chief, he died and all the burden of the village administration rest upon his wife named Tawlthlai. TAWLTHLIAI was named

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<sup>190</sup> Interview with V. Lalchhawna, on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Saiha.

<sup>191</sup> Chhawnmanga, *Mizoram Michengte*, *Op.cit.*, p.125-126.

<sup>192</sup> Interview with Lalchia, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

as a ‘widow chief’ as she was the first woman and the only widow to rule a village within Mizoram.<sup>193</sup>

The southern Sailo Chiefs named Thuama and Lalpuithanga respectively took advantage and wanted to make settlement with the Khawnglung village as it was newly administered by a widow. However, her husband Chief Aithangvunga before he died had made a strict will not to make any settlement or agreement with the southern Sailos, as both had never made overture to one another. Therefore, they were not to be allowed within the sovereignty of the Fanais. Nevertheless both Thuama and Lalpuithanga settled and ignoring the authority of the Chieftains within the Khawnglung.<sup>194</sup> Apart from this, they also humiliated verbally of the chieftainees by expressing that they should take Tawlhthlai and their *saluphan* or sacrificial post to the Fanai Chief<sup>195</sup>, both were unbearable and they could not accept such status held by the non-Fanais.<sup>196</sup>

Due to the insulting words coming from their counterpart both the Fanai Chiefs made a well laid plan to attack Khawnglung village. Northern Sailo Chiefs were invited stating that their great uncle Zaduna was going to organize a feast with an elephant (*In Pu Zaduna’n sai a ai dawn*). In the event of the affairs, Tawlhthlai the Chieftainees of Khawnglung village was cleverly taken out from the village and hide in a safe place<sup>197</sup> both Thuama and Lalpuithanga realizing that their village was really going to be attacked by their counterpart, they look several precautions to prevent the village.

Khawnglung village was situated at the edge of the hills fully surrounded by cliff on each side where there was only one accessible path leading to the Khawnglung village. Almost all the southern Sailo Chiefs made a confederacy to attack Khawnglung village but they were ill clad to really confront their foe.<sup>198</sup> In the meantime, the news about the danger of Tawlhthlai reach Kimhmunga son of Nicheuva, the Chief Lungzarh and brother of the Chieftainees. They, with their followers immediately moved to the

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<sup>193</sup> Chhawnmanga, *Mizoram michengte, Op.cit.*, pp.114-116.

<sup>194</sup> Vanlalchhawna Khiantge, *Khawnglung Run*, P. 66.

<sup>195</sup> Saluphan: sacrificial post

<sup>196</sup> S.R. Chinzah, *kan pi leh pute chanchin*, unpublished, p. 25.

<sup>197</sup> Interview with K.Hrangvela, on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

<sup>198</sup> K. Laldinpuii, “Lalpuithanga: A Great Southern Sailo Chief”, *Historical Journal Mizoram VOL X*, 2009, p.35.

south hills of Mizo hills. On their way other Chinzah warriors of neighbouring villages were also invited in their efforts to form a confederacy.<sup>199</sup>

On seeing the combined warriors and weapons, Dokhama and his war party were pleased to witness the confederacy of the Chin Hills of Burma to lend a hand to Dokhama and his party, Lungzarh households composed a song for the success of the warriors:

*“Khawnglung tlangah ri chhuaimaiin,(sounds of war covered the edge of khawnglung)*

*Vawr ta law na min;(let your name become fame)*

*Na pu tinreng lalling ngai a si;(realizing your great grandparents)*

*Thal aw rinnam hnu Kan zul e, (we trace the smell of released spears).<sup>200</sup>*

*Rawngti law hrumlian” (hrumlian come home).<sup>201</sup>*

#### **4.16.1. Condition of the people during celebration**

Thuama and Lalpuithanga Sailo prepared to resist any kind of attack from any aggressive powers. As no attack came as expected, the Khawnglung village unaware of their future tragedy celebrated the *Chapchar kut* with plenty of *zu* and merry making. Such occasion was an opportunity for the Fanai and Sailo Chiefs including Chief of Lungzarh of the Chin hills of Burma to annihilate their counterpart. The Khawnglung households and their warriors were taken by surprise, as the *Zawlbuk* was the top priority of the attackers, rains of bullets were pounded on the *Zawlbuk* inmates, and total annihilation was effected. However, as Chief Lalhleia and his mother already had entered *pum* or blacksmith work place, they could not forced themselves to capture the two. Lalhleia’s mother said aloud ‘I am Lalhleia’s mother’,<sup>202</sup> with due respect to the old treaty towards the Chief, both the said person were not captured by the raiders. Later, they were captured by the Lai warrior and this ended the war<sup>203</sup>

When Lungzarh soldiers arrived they demanded to capture the village Chief, saying “We’ve come all this way to capture them”. So they dragged them out of the safe

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<sup>199</sup> Interview with khuakung Zathang, on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Halkha (Chin State, Burma).

<sup>200</sup> Interview with Lalchia Zathang, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, Lungzarhtum.

<sup>201</sup> Interview with Khuakung Zathang, on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Halkha (Chin State, Burma).

<sup>202</sup> Chhawnmanga, *Mizoram Michengte, Op.cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>203</sup> Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin, Op.cit.*, p. 110.

house. On seeing how village Chiefs was treated, Vuta intervened and suggested “Let me take them home with me”. But they disagreed, “do you intend to have authority over us?” Vuta said “Alright then, you may take them”.

Here it lies that respect that they had for the agreement that they verbally agreed, as orally made agreement was always binding and final, and were usually known by both the parties.

#### **4.16.2. Result of the war**

The significant fact to be noted here is that the war closed the future feud between the north and south.

Thuama the Sailo Chief of the northern clan was also literally defeated and both Fanais and southern sailos made an agreement, which lasted until the penetration of the British. The core reason remark of the Khawnglung raid was the discrimination and humiliation made by Thuama and Lalpuithanga against Tawlthliai a widow Chief. The significant fact to be made here is that the war closed the future between the north and south.

#### **4.17. Fanai Chiefs as deciding factor**

The intention of the Sailo Chief was usually to make cordial relationship with the small rulers or petty Chiefs of the Fanai clans who settled and having separate sovereign power in areas between them and the Lai Chiefs. In this case, the Lais regarded Fanai as their kinsmen and belonged to same tribe. Therefore, they never laid a strike or encroach upon their land. Being feared by the Luseis, Fanai Chiefs were used as to protect against the Lai assault.<sup>204</sup> It may be noted that the first Fanai Chief named Rorehlova was asked to establish his hegemony between them and the Lai Chiefs. Such thing may be debated as colonial ethnographer like J. shakespeare remarked that it was not Rorehlova who was sent by the Sailo Chief but it was on the behalf of Zahau Chief that the Fanai Chief was asked to establish the village.<sup>205</sup> Evidence also shows that there were instances where the northern Chiefs sought help to the Lais Chief through the Fanai Chief during the war between the northern and the southern Sailo Chiefs.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> J. Shakespeare, *The Lushai-Kuki Clans*, *Op.cit.* p.132.

<sup>205</sup> Liangkhaia, *Op.cit.*, p.69.

<sup>206</sup> *ibid*

On the other hand, it is also interesting to note that whenever and opportunities arouse the Fanai made their moved against the Lais. But when the other two parties- Sailo and Lai chiefs made overtures to them, they made no such annihilation on their neighbours.

#### **4.18. Dominant groups of the Lais and Language usage**

Among the ruling clan of the Lais, Khuafu group played a dominant role who are mainly identify as Chinzah clan who made their move to present southernmost part of Mizoram.<sup>207</sup> Though it is commonly known as ‘Lungzarh Khuafu’ groups, they consisted of three class affiliated villages namely, Lungzarh, Chhunchung and Khuafu who migrated to the present Mizoram in search of better economic opportunity.<sup>208</sup> Out of these groups the Lungzarh Khuafu group be reflected more for better understanding of their past as the Chiefs of these villages belonged to the Chinzah clan. One of the most striking features about Khuafu groups was the usage of language where male and female were addressed differently. This literally shows the uniqueness in comparison to other tribes. The Khuafu women used Lai dialect but different in tone which has some resemblance to *Duhlian* accent and Khuafu man employed a mixture of Lai, Duhlian and Khuafu (women language) language.

##### **4.18.1. Famine in Mizoram 1861**

In 1861, famine broke out which affected the whole region of the Mizo hills. All food grains, a crops, vegetables and jungle products were ruined by uncontrollable famine. Fortunately, Cherhlun and nearby three villages were save from famine as they were under the control of the Chinzah Chief. Many households from the region went to these villages especially to Cherhlun for food and seeds of grains. The Chief advice the villagers not to ignore whenever strangers asked for help. In return, the villagers received guns and varieties of gongs in exchange for food which boosted Lai economic status. This proved Teihmunga and his village to be the starting point of their wealth and treasury.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Lalthanliana, *Mizo Chanchin*, *Op.cit.*,p.390.

<sup>208</sup> S.R. Chinzah, *Khuafu chanchin chhuina*, *Op.cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>209</sup> S.R. Chinzah, *Op.cit.*, p. 29.

#### 4.19. Dokulha Legacy in Mizoram

The extension of the Chinzah chiefdom in southern Mizoram was achieved by Dokulha. He established Fungkah (extreme south of Mizoram) village in the year 1887 with the advice of his maternal uncle named Taithaia Fanchun. His eldest brother named Hausata passed away in November 1888 and Vantura became the Chief. But Vantura was shot death by the Maras while collecting tributes in the Mara villages in 1891. Lungtian and Fungkah villages were now under Dokulha Chieftainship.<sup>210</sup>

Dokulha was physically strong and militarily a fearless Chief, on the other hand, he was a kind hearted person who always care for the welfare of his subjects and the households of the village also respected him and always abeyed his order or advice. Dokulha was a courageous, brave and wise, he hardly decline hardship imposed on him. Dokulha was a vengeful man. During his time the southern Mizo hills were already under the British, Dokulha therefore sought the permission of the British sub-divisional officer of the Lunglei named C.B. Drake-Brockman to allow him to take revenge against the murder of his brother named Vantura Chinzah.<sup>211</sup> But his response was not materialized as the British no longer had the intension letting any more clan feuds under their newly administered hills. But Dokulha ignoring the order of the colonial ruler went to the Mara territory and shot death two Mara men.<sup>212</sup>

##### 4.19.1. Visit of Lungtian village

Major J. Shakespeare then superintendent of the south Mizo hills without delay organized an expedition under Mr. Bolla, A.E., and Mr. R.S. Hutchinson, assistant commandant along with sub inspector of police and soldiers to punish Dokulha village of Fungkah on 20<sup>th</sup> Febuary 1892. As they enter Fungkah village, the villagers resisted the British troops but as they were more superior in weapons they were finally captured. Their counterpart Dokulha Chinzah also later surrendered. He confessed the reason for killing the Maras to Shakespeare “if I did not kill some Mara men, my brother’s spirit would have no slaves in the dead men’s village (mitthi khua). Therefore, I went to shoot men of Thawngliana village”.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> K. Hrekung, “Lai Lal Hmingthang Dokulha” in *Mifirte Sulhnu*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>211</sup> S.R. Chinzah, *Khuafo Hnam Chhuina*, p. 36.

<sup>212</sup> K. Hrekung, “Lai Lal Hmingthang Dokulha”, Op.cit., p.116.

<sup>213</sup> Interview with Manghmunga, on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016, Lawngtlai.

Due to his action Dokulha Chinzah was sentenced to Hazaribagh jail in Bihar.<sup>214</sup> Later, in response to the hospitality and convincing attitude of Dokulha households towards the British authority, Dokulha was shifted from Hazaribagh jail to Lunglei in south of the Mizo hills.<sup>215</sup>

#### **4.19.2. Release of Dokulha Chinzah**

Dokulha Chinzah was released from prison and reached Fungkah village safely with fifty of his men on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1896. One important fact that can be noted as to the ultimate capture of Dokulha and his imprisonment was due to the disappearance of a Muslim priest. If so happened that the Muslim priest or ulema named C.C. Raghi visited Dokulha village. The Ulema was on his way to go to China. However, as the households of the village could not communicate with him excepting their chief, they told him to go back to his country. But the Ulema insisted that he would go to China at any cost. Perhaps Dokulha was becoming impatient and after staying for two days in his house, he took C.C. Raghi outside his village.<sup>216</sup> From that day onward the Ulema was never heard and was completely disappeared. However, the disappearance of the Ulema could not be hope of a secret forever.

Zaliana Khawlhing the son in law of Dokulha who was greatly discontented on his father in law due to the demand made by the latter to kill a bison during the khuangchawi festival had informed the British gov't of the murder of the Muslim Ulema.<sup>217</sup> Without delay the gov't captured Dokulha Chinzah and once again he was sentenced to lifetime imprisonment in Andaman and Nicobar Island.<sup>218</sup>

After the imprisonment of Dokulha, there was hardly any inter-clan feud or warlike noticeable in the Mizo south hills. This was so as the British gov't had now made strict surveillance by giving strict order, if any Chief was found having any aggressive attitude towards his neighbours could be dealt by the so called 'paramount power'. Hence, till the British left the Mizo hills there was no war or conflict among the southern Mizos.

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<sup>214</sup> Robert Reid, *The Lushai Hills*, Op.cit., pp. 45-47.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid

<sup>216</sup> Vanlalringa Bawitlung, "Dokulha: the Freedom Fighter" *Historical Journal Mizoram*, VOL XI, 2008, p. 69.

<sup>217</sup> Interview with Manghmunga, on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016, Lawngtlai.

<sup>218</sup> ibid

Therefore, on 21 November 1888, under the supervision of Lt. Bailey who served as assistance commander along with 100 rifles went to the southernmost part of Mizo hills for the purpose of disarming the Lais and the Maras where they seized many guns in order to wipe out the disturbances created by the said tribes and implemented complete control under their newly administered area.<sup>219</sup>

In the course of their expansion the British government became aware of the continuing disturbances created by the *Luseis*, *Pawis* (Lai) and *Lakhers* (Mara) within and beyond their claimed empire, and eventually decided to dispatch punitive expeditions from Bengal and Burma in 1888. In the meantime, the British government of Bengal dispatched two army contingents from Calcutta, in January, 1888. To survey the Mizo country and search for inland routes through which they could enter the hills.

As the foreigners approached the Mizo hills, and the Lais believed that their country was in danger. After the great expedition of 1871-72, report was made in which it was clearly stated that:

*“Not more than 20 miles from Rangamati, was surprised in the early morning by a party of Pois (Lai) headed by Haosata (Hausata), Dokola (Dokulha) and Vantura and was killed with the two corporals and two of the frontier police sepoy. The raiders came from villages just south of the site of Fort Tregear”.*<sup>220</sup>

As a result of their attack Lt. Steward and three others of the survey party were killed and beheaded on the spot.<sup>221</sup>

The news of the attack was immediately responded by the colonial ruler of Bengal. But as there was no strong confrontation the matter was settled without any commitment and the survey party returned and after twenty three days later the body of Lt. Steward was recovered.<sup>222</sup>

The attack of the foreigners by Hausata is still debatable; it may be because of his hatred towards foreign incursion into the Mizo hills. But the customary and practice of the

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<sup>219</sup> General Department- 76, Carton Box- 7, Mizoram State Archives, p. 31.

<sup>220</sup> General Department- 38, Carton Box- 7, Mizoram State Archives, p. 58.

<sup>221</sup> Col. E.B. Elly, *Military on the Chin Lushai country*, p.169.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid



Mizos need to be conceived also. From times immemorial, heads of the enemy was one of the important components in the belief system of the Lais. During those times Zahuata father of Hausata's father-in-law demanded two head to be brought and that also to be the heads of the white man.<sup>223</sup> The reason stated was that Hausata and his wife named Ngundawng were separated and in order to reprimand the mistake that was done to his daughter made such demand to his ex-son-in-law if the latter wished to marry his daughter. This incident became one of the reasons for the colonial ruler of India to take serious notes of the Mizo hills and within a few years some of the region was put under their administration.

#### **4.20. Conclusion**

The Lais were involved in many wars and raids which were occurred in the Mizo hills and the bordering areas, the implementation of raids resulted in procurement of goods and materials, alleviate their economy. Remarkably, in order to conduct wars against their rivals grouping of villages was a common feature. This literally reflects the importance of large population.

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<sup>223</sup> Interview with Manghmunga Chinzah, on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016, Lawngtlai.

## CONCLUSION

The Lais in pre-colonial period were spread across Myanmar and India forming minority group. At present permanently settled in the state of Mizoram where almost the majority of them still scattered in the hill of Myanmar. In Mizoram under the sixth schedule of the constitution of India they were given a separate Autonomous District Council.

The research reveals the process of migration of the Lais where each Chiefly clan along with their followers entered the Mizo Hills from different direction of Myanmar. Once they established villages, the Chief had advised his trusted and reliable elders to reside and maintain the village administration. The study also learned that out for another site for suitable settlement and cultivation. After permanently settling in Mizoram they predominantly practiced moving out from one place to another place in search of free land, suitable atmosphere, abundant of water and fertile land. Like any other Mizo groups, the Lais also established numerous villages and spread to different region to the present Mizoram.

In the initial stages of settlement, most of the hilly tribes depended themselves on subsistence economy- gathering forest, river and hunting product for their daily food. The Lais were fully concentrated in *Tlang Lo neih* or practiced shifting cultivation, where they extract most of their staple foods. Similar to their neighbouring tribes they would search for a new land for cultivation as the fertility of the soil was depleted. Shifting of settlement or migration was made imperative due to the unfavorable climate or due to the unhealthy living condition making the death toll increased in the village. However, the research suggests that as the Lais were scattered politically they wanted to establish a bigger and formidable tribe and village. But such motive usually made them to come into contact with rivals' party in political expansion and the intended domination of other tribes in less populated villages led to incessant wars with their counterpart. On the other hand, the Lais needed bigger land for hunting to procure meat to feed the increasing population. It may be noted that once the village became resourceful and the population increased, ultimately led the Lais to have a tendency of expansion. In this aspect it was noticed that the Lais had adopted certain skills to renovate their warfare materials. The study also reveals that the much needed war materials especially iron was acquired from the frontier market.

This tribal warfare proved to be inherent in the socio-cultural activities of the Lais. As the Lais developed their culture they became more developed and the spoils of the war became a supplementary to their economic resources. They made several successful raids and wars they were accessed of having wider perspective of learning the art of war. It was also learned that they had composed numerous songs in connection with a successful war. The study also highlighted the various rituals and sacrifices made to predict the future of the war.

The study finds that warfare literally reflected to gain supremacy against opponent, but not to be regarded as 'head-hunter' as colonial ethnographer had remark. Another purpose was to protect the village and the households. The study also argued the assertion made by the colonial ethnographer problems of misinterpretation of the Lais warfare. In fact the Lais warfare was basically connected with numerous factors like political hegemony, expansion of territory, defense of villages, wealth and treasure, to alleviate of the warriors, religious sanctity, etc. Literally, this denotes that the Lais were not head hunters, savage tribes as coined by various colonial ethnographers.

The finding shows that Lais language had no written scripts and the extent of communication was based on oral tradition and was inevitably limited too. At the same time they exhibited a remarkable feature of Lai language; having two phonological tones, masculine and feminine tone. The Khuafu females till today do not use the language commonly used by men for communication. Though the words are the same, the utterances of words and pitches are longer and softer than the men. When men addressed "*zeidah na ti lai?*" or "where are you going?" the woman usually used soft tone with a mixture of low and high pitched sounds. The research finds that, some of the Lai villages adopted two languages, women those who spoke the present Lai language and those men who spoke Khuafu. There existed different expression of language between the men and women but both understand and could communicate with one other.

The study further reveals that the Lai society in the pre-colonial was no doubt primitive and every households of the village felt save in the presence of brave warriors. The status of the warrior in the society was highly regarded and respected and if the warrior happened to be bachelor, many young girls would look for a chance to express their admiration. The households of the village had accepted such warriors as the guiding force of the village and were respected by all. Even when the wife a warriors went to

fetch water in the village water hole, women who were already in queued let them to fill her bamboo tubes. In the absence of good warriors the elders, women and children did not feel safe and secure. The study also shows that Chief who had dependable warriors had the pride of regulating the village administration, and normally had the ability to defend his territory and spheres of influence. Usually a strong Chief attracted other households from near and far and many households shifted to Chief's land. This also had increased the prestige and power of the Chief.

The finding of the research highlights that through such warfare, the skill of the village blacksmith developed tremendously by repairing and renovating war kits and iron materials of the warriors of the villagers. In return, the role of black smith was well-venerated. The role of the blacksmith was regarded as a specialization of 'warfare' and the technique was not easily learned and the household's requirements to sustain their daily life could not be maintain in the absence of blacksmith. It may be noted that as the household face constant attack from intruder or war from their adversary. It was the duty of every household to see Chief order was fulfilled. Constant wars led to building up the youth to become great and brave warriors. To achieve such position apart from the elders, parents were their main mentor. Hence the study indicates that Hence, tribal warfare does not merely focus on the nature of irrational activities. But was a form of maintaining integrity and development, it was also a sort of lifestyle based on occupation, economic background, defense, offensive measure, inherent in the tribal society to with the time and space of their existence.

The study shows that in the process of the Lai tribal warfare, if the head of the slain was in large number, they skinned their heads and off their tongue as a mark of evidence that they had killed their enemies. Bringing heads or enemy's head proved to be the most glorious act or deeds for the Lai tribal, and does not proved that they were head hunters as alleged by the colonial ethnographers. The Lai warriors consisted of two to three men who would laid out a sudden attack which was called '*rawlral*' usually happened when the enemies were not alert and aware of the approaching enemies, the method was basically way-laying or hiding in waiting in their adversary to appear or attacking them when they were the lease expectation or when they peacefully work in their *Lo*. In such attack the warriors killed their enemies mercilessly and taking home the spoil of the war. In today's perspective it was not the act of bravery, however in the

content of the tribal society of the past as the method of warfare was almost the same everywhere. Therefore the Lai tactics of war and nature was justifiable.

The study further reveals that the ancestors of the Lais were quite weak in their economy. The main occupation was shifting cultivation. Modern trade based on monetary system was unknown to them. Barter was the only method known and due to absence of large scale production. The Lais were compelled to go for the only method known to them, acquiring wealth and materials in a facile ways. Thus, plunder strikes and confiscated of households properties were common features of the Lais warfare. From such raids they obtained goods and property such as guns, slaves, local blankets, and other valuable household items etc, occasional wars and raids made them more powerful and their hegemony increased.

The study suggest that Lai popular dances and folksongs which characterized the beauty of the Lais had never been deteriorated as some might have presumed and was promoted through war culture. It was the symbol of Lais and had the greater impact on the adjacent tribes or non-Lai clans. Such influence shows that the suzerainty of the Lais must have been widely expanded. The most spectacular dances that were adopted by others tribes were originally termed as *Ruakhatlak* (bamboo dance) and *Sarlamkai* (war dance). These dances proved to be of cultural value and were widely performed in the past. Today *Ruakhatlak* is very popular in many educational institutions. *Ruakhatlak* to the Lusei is *Cherawkan*. However, most of the dances has used its originality and were from time to time modified.

The research also reflected the controversial issue as to the origins of the Lais. Various theories were applied to tract their origin of their culture. Most writers without having deep knowledge of the Lai history and without consulting the elders who knows about the past interpreted in their own way. They were only initiated about in understanding the Lai history, and had totally changed the concept of the Lai history, especially of their most valued culture. For instance their cultural practices especially their dances were more or less assimilated which were being produced by local writers. However to fill the gap the scholar commonly applied oral tradition to prove the authenticity of the research findings.

The study also reveals the distinct identity which emerged through collective participation of the young men in the in the society. The system of war group united the

clans or the household of the village. Although the efforts made to protect the Chiefs and the households belonged to various clans created a sense of unity and integration and most of all survival and expansion of sphere of influence. Further investigation also shows the uniqueness of tribal uses of weaponry. The same techniques and strategies were employed among the various groups of the Lai to annihilate their opponent. Weapons of war increased their value and identity. Adopting similar war materials or borrowed technology cultivated acculturation of the Lai social life.

In the initial stage, the Lais in Mizoram were at all times assisted by the Chiefs of the Chin Hills of Burma. The continuity of such relations literally proved they were of the same groups although geographically divided. Diplomatic relations conveyed the message of oneness and unity of those tribes inhabiting diverse region. Their warfare had several negative impact on the vanquish, however for the Lais it brought positive aspect as it more or less clubbed together all the Lais under one umbrella.

The study discovers that the Lai Chiefs in Mizoram had matrimonial alliance with the powerful Chiefs of the Chin Hills of Burma, as a result of which the neighbouring tribes hesitated to wage war against them, and also waved any future plan of action against their counterpart. The extension of their dominion across the boundary and collection of taxes from their tributaries to Cox bazaar also proved that the Lais were dominant tribes of this region. On the other hand, matrimonial alliance was a great advantage for the Lai chiefs in consolidating their hegemony relatively on the other smaller tribes or clans of the Mizo hills. Their formidable powers also proved to be not only the extension of sovereignty and jurisdiction but also established cordial relationship with other powers. Through alliance system, the Lais kept their entity intact, and none of them dare to disturb their claimed territory.

The study also admitted that once the Chief obtained relationship with other powers especially with the Chiefs of the Chin Hills of Burma had enhanced the level of their bravery and courage and prompted them to acquire more new lands for settlement. Even the most formidable tribe of the Maras and the Lusei Chiefs would not dare to oppose the aggressive power of the Lais and both the groups also ended up with in filling the Lai treasury with taxes and tributes.

The finding suggest the Lais in course of time developed their warfare materials and they gradually developed the art of using firearms especially filling up their gun

barrel with some object or cloths in order to block the bullet rolling or coming out from the barrel. This technology upgraded the warriors and hunters confidence in handling the firearms.

The Lais acquired many materials and valuable items from different tribes living at their border. Through the newly acquired values, it gives them the knowledge and creative skill in war technology and they also began to manufacture or make war implements of their own like shields, axe, spears, bow and arrows etc.

The study learned that the Lais exercised counter tactics in anticipation to bear the attack from their adversary. It was the duty of the Chief to request the households to work laborious in order to have more produce from their *Lo*. In this way, if a village was attacked by any intruders or enemies the village had dependable crops for the remaining years. The Chiefs usually had sufficient crops to resist such aggressors. But some Lais Chief shows their weakness for them hardly though about the future. As a result of economic depression and annihilation, many households moved to other powerful Chief's land seeking protection and economic resistance. The less resourceful Chief surely was left with less population, whereas the more resourceful Chief's would be thickly populated.

## Glossary

<i>Ainak Run</i>	: Raids of Ainak village
<i>Arkho</i>	: Plates with Chicken.
<i>Bawi</i>	: Chief
<i>Bawinu</i>	: Kolodyne River.
<i>Bawite le KhuangCawi</i>	: The name of public feast given by chiefs and other well-to-do in the community.
<i>Bel</i>	: Clay pot
<i>Belrawhmual</i>	: A place where earthen pots are fired or baked- generally a slight eminence outside the village.
<i>Bungkhaw Run</i>	: Raids of Bungkhaw village
<i>Bur</i>	: A gourd
<i>Chai le Thal</i>	: Bow and Arrow.
<i>Changel laimu</i>	: The Edible soft portion of banana tree or pseudo/stem.
<i>Chhinlung</i>	: Believed to be the first settlement of Lai tribes located in present china.
<i>Darkhuang</i>	: Gong.
<i>Duhlian</i>	: spoken by the Lusei and presently known as Mizo common language.
<i>FaAh</i>	: Hand-knife or sickle.
<i>Fanai</i>	: The name of a tribe speaking the Duhlian language, the men of which wear the hair in a knot on the front of the head.
<i>Fathang</i>	: A basket of grain due to be paid by the villagers to the Chief.
<i>Fei</i>	: Spear.
<i>Fungki</i>	: A powder horn.
<i>Halkha</i>	: Lai dominated area and present capital of Chin state in Burma.
<i>Hautheng Run</i>	: Raids of Hautheng village.



- Hreng* : plank wood cross sharpened at both side and a hole in the middle attached at the edge of the bamboo
- In Lei Thangchuah* : The title given to a man who has distinguished himself by giving a certain number of public feast.
- Inchung Thenh Thianghlim Naak* : Household ritual ceremony once the deceased body was buried as a form of cleansing the house.
- Inchungkhar Sal* : the slaves who were captured during the war or raids.
- Innlak Sal* : Slaves who lived in their own house but worked for their master.
- Kawl Nam* : Dao imported from Burmese plains.
- Kawl* : people belonging to Burmese plains.
- Khawnglung Run* : Khawnglung was a village located between present Pangzawl and Bungtlang village in the eastern side, and 'run' means to strike or attack.
- Khothlaban* : Sacred utensils
- Khuakulh* : Fortress
- Khua-Man* : Taxes collected from all the tributary villages.
- Kingkawt* : A curve Dao.
- Bawinu* : Kolodyne river
- Kulhbing* : The place where women, children, and old aged to seek refuge when there is danger of being attacked.
- Lai Khua* : Lai village.
- Lai Ral* : The Lais who frequently attacked or raids the adjacent clan or tribes.
- Lai Tlang* : Lai inhabited hilly area.
- Lawichiat* : First night of the wedding, the bride and brides mate would spend the night at the groom's house and were to leave for the house early in the morning.

<i>Leilawn Kai Man</i>	:	A skein of cotton thread for climbing up the ladder to the bridegroom's house.
<i>Lo Lawng</i>	:	Free land for shifting cultivation.
<i>Lo</i>	:	Agriculture land.
<i>Lopit</i>	:	Division of plot into smaller plot of the cultivable land.
<i>Lu Laak Hnam</i>	:	Tribe of head hunter.
<i>Lu laak Nam</i>	:	Dao which was used for cutting heads of enemy.
<i>Mara</i>	:	Tribes living adjacent to Lai tribes.
<i>Matu</i>	:	One of the tribe in the Chin Hills tribes
<i>Meithal</i>	:	Firearm.
<i>Mithat Sathat</i>	:	Slayer of both Men and Animals.
<i>Mithi Khua</i>	:	Abode of the soul of common folks or people
<i>Nam</i>	:	Dao
<i>Nu Ngaak</i>	:	A young women.
<i>Nu Rei Thu – Pa Rei Thu</i>	:	Bride prize for the elders accompanying the bride's parents.
<i>Nupa I Chawnh</i>	:	Communication between husband and wife.
<i>Nu-Tak Or Nu-Hrim</i>	:	Formal wife
<i>Nu-Tlai</i>	:	Second wife a man married one's the first wife expired.
<i>Pasaltha</i>	:	Warrior or Hero
<i>Pathlawi</i>	:	Divorcee.
<i>Pawnpi</i>	:	A kind of blanket made of cotton product.
<i>Pawte</i>	:	leopard
<i>Phaw</i>	:	Shield
<i>Philhloh Naak Tial Naak</i>	:	Memorial table made of thick plank wood.
<i>Phongpi Tlang</i>	:	Blue Mountain.
<i>Phunsang</i>	:	Elites and Council of Elders.
<i>Pialral</i>	:	Paradise
<i>Puan</i>	:	Mat
<i>Puanparkai</i>	:	A mat placed in front of the groom's courtyard for the bride.
<i>Pum</i>	:	Blacksmith work place.

- Pura* : The men would arrange the gathered stone up to 6 to 8 feet conveniently in the form of a pyramid. The base diameter would be 8 feet in circle. The Chief's relatives would place bel (pot or utensil) on top of the 'Pura'.
- Ral Aih* : To perform the ai ceremony in order to get the spirit of an enemy killed in a raid into one's power after death, and also to protect from evil consequences during his life.
- Ral Khua Duah Ah* : To burnt down enemy's village
- Ralpi* : Method of offensive in warfare. Between the same tribes, the parties to be at war usually made a limitation that no secret ambush should be carried out between them.
- Ramlei Thangchuah* : the hunters have to obtain a number of wild animals as much as possible, in the form of firing a shot, trap etc. to achieve the rank of *Thangchuah*.
- Ram Lei Thangchuah* : The title given to a man who has distinguished himself by killing a certain number of different numbers in a chase.
- Rammu* : To be engaged in hunting or a raiding expedition (generally involving camping in the forest).
- Rawlral* : To carry on warfare by secretly ambushing and killing people in the jungle, jhums, etc, instead of openly attacking the village.
- Rengtlang* : A village once ruled by Lai chief located in present Bangladesh.
- Rorehlova* : The first Fanai chief in the Mizo hills.
- Rungtlang* : First established village by the Fanai clan located just above the present Halkha in Chin Hills of Burma.
- Sahbuak* : Stone chutes
- Sahlam* : A tree from which a human head is suspended

<i>Sahmim</i>	: A netted satchel used with a skin cover.
<i>Sailo</i>	: Chief's clan of the Mizos.
<i>Sal</i>	: Slaves
<i>Sangpi</i>	: The elder brother of Zathang clan.
<i>Sangte</i>	: The younger brother of Zathang clan.
<i>SarLaam</i>	: Lai traditional war dance.
<i>Sa-Thaw</i>	: A Share given to the Chief in The form of levy Flesh.
<i>Saum</i>	: To preserve fat pork, generally containing a small proportion of lean, by well boiling and putting it into gourds to mature.
<i>Sechun</i>	: Sacrificial post
<i>Sei</i>	: Bamboo basket
<i>Selesih</i>	: The largest village ruled by Sailo clan located in present Zawlsei area
<i>Shendus</i>	: The term "Lai" employed by colonial ethnographers.
<i>Sial</i>	: Gayal
<i>SialhmurRun</i>	: Raids of Sialhmur village.
<i>Simpi</i>	: First established village by Lai tribes Located in Chin hills Burma
<i>Socer</i>	: Blacksmith
<i>Sumchuah</i>	: To pay back one's marriage price
<i>Teklung le Bawm</i>	: A lucifer match in a tinder box
<i>Thifim</i>	: Necklace
<i>Thlan Pi</i>	: A grave about six feet deep, eight feet long and six feet wide would be dug with floor, sides and roof lined with flat stones and a small space left with a large flat stone used for closing the doors.
<i>Thlanrawn rawt</i>	: Thlanrawn was a village located in the Chin Hills of Burma between present Halkha and Falam inhabited by the Lais and Rawtmeanscompletely destroyed or total annihilation.
<i>Tio</i>	: River separating India and Burma border.

<i>Tlang Bawi</i>	:	Village priest.
<i>Tlang Lo Neih</i>	:	Shifting cultivation practiced in hilly areas.
<i>Tlangau</i>	:	Village crier
<i>Tuklaw or Khawhmawng</i>	:	unexplored land or uncultivated thick forest land.
<i>Tukuli</i>	:	Muzzle loading Gun, made by the Turkey and the Lais called it <i>tukuli</i> after Turkey.
<i>Tum</i>	:	Footpath used of linking villages in the early period.
<i>Va</i>	:	River
<i>Vaiurh Thu</i>	:	Relatives accompanying the bribes family sitting right and left side of the family.
<i>Zen</i>	:	Gun powder.
<i>Zu</i>	:	Ricebear
<i>Zuangva Bawk</i>	:	Raids of Zuangva village.
<i>Zufang</i>	:	Rice beer prepared mostly for the consumption of women and children
<i>Zupui</i>	:	Rice beer

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#### **II. Interviews**

Interview, Dated, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016 with Chhanchunga of Sangau, District Lawngtlai, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 18-19<sup>th</sup> February 2016 with Lahulha Fanchun founder of YLA (young Lai Association) and had extensive knowledge on Lai History, of Sangau, District Lawngtlai, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016 with Thanhranga, of Vawmbuk, District Lawngtlai, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2016 with Biakmang, 72 years, of Thlantlang, Chin State, Burma.

Interview, Dated, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2016 with Hrangmang of Thlantlang, Chin State, Burma.

Interview, Dated, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016 with Khuakung Zathang who maintained and developed the Lai traditional cultures and son of last Zathang Chief of Halkha, Chin State, Burma.

Interview, Dated, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016 with Lianmang, who had a deep interest and promoted Lai History, of Halkha, Chin State, Burma.

Interview, Dated, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016 with Thangbika, of Tluangram, Chin State, Burma.

Interview, Dated, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2016 with Tialchi, 76 years and who had knowledge on Traditional Lai culture and practices, of Halkha, Chin State, Burma.

Interview, Dated, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2016 with Vanliana Halkha of Halkha, Chin State, Burma.

Interview, Dated, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016 with K.Hrangvela who had a deep interest in Lai history, of Lungzarhtum, District Lawngtlai, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 with Lalchia Zathang, 87 years who had a deep knowledge especially Mizoram Lai history, of Lungzarhtum, District Lawngtlai, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016 with Thanhranga Hnialum, 70 years and Primary head Master retired of Lungzarhtum, District Lawngtlai, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016 with Vanhmingthanga, of Lungzarhtum, District Lawngtlai, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016 with Chhawnmanga prominent Lai historian of New Saiha, District Saiha, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2016 with Lalmaka, of Council Veng, District Saiha, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016 with V.Chhawna, who had a deep knowledge of both Mara and Lai migration into the Mizo hills and also author of various book, of Bazar saiha, District Saiha, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016 with Ukmang Zathang, Ex- C E M of LADC (Lai Autonomous District Council) and who had a deep knowledge in Lai history, of Council veng Lawngtlai, District Lawngtlai, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016 with Manghmunga Ex-CEM of LADC (Lai autonomous District Council) and Grandson of Dokulha Chizah Chief of Lungtian, of Council Veng Lawngtlai, District Lawngtlai, Mizoram.

Interview, Dated, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2016 with RT. Hnialum, a prominent Lai historian of Chanmary Lawngtlai, District Lawngtlai, Mizoram

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**MAP OF MIZORAM**



