

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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LALZARZOVA

## DECLARATION

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

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(LALZARZOVA)

Place: Aizawl, Mizoram

Research Scholar

(PROF. R.THANGVUNGA)

(PROF. R.L. THANMAWIA)

Head,

Supervisor

Department of Mizo

Controller of Examination

Mizoram University

Mizoram University

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## CHAPTER – I

**Introduction to the Mizo Society and Drama**

The Mizos are the people who live in Mizoram. In the olden days there was a saying that the Mizos emerged from a big cave called ‘Chhinlung’. The Mizos could be characterized under the race of the Mongolians. Following the conceptualization, the Mizos then came under the Tibeto-Burman tribes. One of the Mizo historians Rev. Liangkhaia have said that,

(Circa 900 A.D.) The Mizo forefathers believed that human beings came out from Chhinlung, but nonetheless it seemed Chhinlung is a hole on the ground covered by a flat rock. Some gossip about China that people nowadays talk about can come to a close relation with the concept of Chhinlung (Mizo Chanchin 13).

The story of Chhinlung was translated in English which was recorded by J. Shakespear in 1912, he wrote,

The place whence all sprang is called Chhinlung. All the clans came out of that place. Then two Ralte came put together, and began at once chattering, and this made Pathian (God) think there were too many men, and so he shut down the stone (Shakespear 94).

‘Mizo’ chiefly comprises of people who live in Mizoram, who call themselves and claim themselves to be Mizos. During the British times they were called Lushai, Kuki and Chin. But it is certain that they all belong to the same race. British Colonial Administrator, J. Shakespear says,

All the Lushai Kuki clans resemble each other very closely in appearance and the Mongolian type of countenance prevails. There is no doubt that the Kukis, Chins and Lushais are all of the same race (The Lushai Kuki Clans 8).

One historian describes the meaning and what Mizo or Zo is composed of,

Lusei and other related clans who are settled in the Lushai hills (Mizoram) call themselves 'Mizo' from time immemorial; 'Mizo' meaning 'Zo people.' Lusei designates only people who were under the rule of Sailo chiefs, and 'Mizo' now covers all ethnic Zo people (Vumson 2).

The Mizos lived in hilly areas, having one chief to rule over a village. The Mizo society was a chief centered society. The chief was not only the head of the village, all powers including the matters of life and death were in his hands. It can simply be said that complete authority was vested in him. He attained a high and respectable position in the society. The economy of the people was based on agriculture, most of them practiced shifting cultivation. The Mizos habitually invaded one another, mainly due to land issues. Sometimes conflict between chiefs also caused war. One thing to be noted is that the acclaimed north and south war in Mizoram history broke out solely due to the quarrel over a bride between two notable sons of chiefs, this is remarkable.

Life of the Mizos was simple, the villages were set in jungle areas where wild animals were still found in large number. The village was usually built on the crest of a hill with the chief's house having the best location, normally at the center of the village. Every village had a bachelors' dormitory (the Mizos call it Zawlbuk) which was obtrusively locating near the house of the chief. Zawlbuk played a very important role in the life of the people. It was a place where all young men and some elders of the village stayed and slept in the night. Apart from this, Zawlbuk was the training center for boys and a place where the youths were trained and shaped to become responsible members of the society. It was the best institution of the society for building up the lifestyle of the people as a whole, especially for the Mizo youths.

The Mizo society had a beautiful ethical code known as *Tlawmngaihna*. The term being untranslatable, the concept can be somewhat understood as respect for others, hospitability, unselfishness, courage and helpfulness to others in all respect. It demands self-sacrifice for the service of others and is the Mizo principle and philosophy of life. N.E. Parry said, "It is really a very good moral code enforced solely by public opinion....*Tlawmngaihna*, therefore, deserves every encouragement, as it were allowed to fall into desuetude (sic) it would be most detrimental to the whole of the tribe," (qtd.in Kiangte, Mizos of North East India 23). The spirit of *Tlawmngaihna* controlled the tendency to stratify the society. The mechanical solidarity and cohesiveness of the society were maintained by restricting multiplicity and specialization of labor (Thomas 10).

Mizo society was a patriarchal society where male dominance was observed. Most of the villages located in the jungle, where wild animals were still found plenty; and sometimes they invaded each other. The people of the village needed a protector, Pasaltha (warrior) who played an important role for their safety. The Pasaltha of every village took up tasks to maintain security and defense of the villagers. Pasaltha achieved respectable position in the society by means of their talents and abilities in terms of warfare and hunting. Every village had a number of Pasaltha to defend and protect the people and their domesticated animals against invaders, wild beasts like tigers, bears and wild-boars etc. which sometimes attacked people and animals.

The significance of a warrior of a village was very notable; the people could live peacefully under their patriotic safeguards. Almost every village had its famous warrior, and they customarily invaded one other. The people and the safety of the village was in the hands of the warrior. T.H. Lewin described the picture of the raid which was practically followed in the olden times, he wrote,

“On starting for a raid, the old men and women of the village accompany the party an hour’s journey on their way, carrying the provisions, and then leave them with out loud wishes for their success. ‘May you be unhurt, and bring home many heads,’ (The Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein 148).

When Mizo warriors defeated their enemies they would chop off their heads and bring them to their village to prove their victory. They did not invade

each other exclusively for want of heads, they merely did so to show off their victory to the people of their home.

The life and safety of the people was fully dependant on the warrior of the village. In war and anxieties, warrior/warriors were very important. Some famous warriors rendered all their efforts for the safety and defense of the chief and the people. Two of these warriors were Lalnu Ropuiliani and Pasaltha Khuangchera. Traditionally Mizo tribes were arrogant, but they were affectionate on the inside. Sometimes their lives seemed more peaceful than the other tribes.

As mentioned earlier, Mizo society was based on patriarchal system, work was systematically distinguished for both male and female. Difficult tasks like building up of settlements and earning daily bread were placed in the hands of the male. Women did household chores and management of homes were primarily in their hands, although they too went to the jhoom. Selet Thanga described Mizo women as,

Mizo women carried out works like fetching water, husking and cleaning rice, domesticating pigs and poultry, cooking and washing and looking after the children. They were always busy and tired, having inadequate time to sleep (Pipu Len Lai 17).

There were certain important personalities in the Mizo society. The chief was the supreme law and order, having power even over death in his village. The second most important persons were the ministers of the chief. The chief appointed ministers to help him govern the village, they were the village's



governors exclusive of the chief, and therefore they were very important. Coming in the third were the Val Upa (middle aged men) who gathered and disciplined young men of the village besides performing every essential task for the good of the society. They were respected by these young men, and if necessary they took part in the dealings and administration of the court of the chief.

The blacksmiths being forgers of all the tools were also important in the society. Every household supplied them with rice because they had no time for cultivation. The principal man in the field of religion was the Sadâwt (priest), his position could be equal to a Pastor in Christianity. They depended on Bawlpu (priest) concerning ailments and diseases. His position could be similar to a doctor in the present day. There was also a Tlangau (herald) whose duty was to make known the orders of the chief to his subjects. Though his position was not much considered honorable, he played an important role in the society.

The Mizos thought highly of persons who offered their lives for their land. Almost every village had a person who could be called a patriot. The most important and eminent persons in this regard were the young men. Let us take a look at their audacity and how the society expected them to be so. The young men were typically sacrificial to the society, offering themselves to the society whenever needed. They were the consolers and protectors of the village where wild beasts like tigers were still found plenty. Their significance was eminent owing to their custom of battling (Lalthangliana 144-147). Prof. C. Nunthara talked of a Mizo boy as, "Every boy was trained to be courageous ever since he was old enough. Their primary judgment of bravery during those times was not

to flee and to fight boldly in the face of wild beasts and enemies,” (Seminar and Important Papers 43).

One very essential deed in the history of the Mizos was the prize and honour of possessing ‘Nopui’ (cup for drinking wine) which was presented to the most hospitable and brave young men, reputed for their good performances in the society. Mizo young men were expected to act speedily in case of calamities and emergencies. For this reason they slept in Zawlbuk at night. ‘A man and an adult buffalo should always stay alert’ was the opinion of the young men. There were innumerable enemies and wild beasts, as mentioned earlier, their position was important owing to their custom of battling, and they held in high esteem the persons who stood firm in the face of enemies and wild beasts without discerning the matters of life and death. The society respected, admired and exalted these incredibly hospitable and brave persons. The chief presented with them ‘Nopui’ in front of all his subjects. B. Lalthangliana said.

The people admired, exalted and respected the incredibly brave and extraordinarily hospitable persons who were willing to lay down their lives protecting the people. They would prepare Nopui or Huai No (cup for the brave) on Chawngchen (to join or take part in a ‘chawng’ feast and festival) occasions (qtd.in Mizo Pasaltha: Socio-cultural Perspective, C. Nunthara 43).

The brave and the hospitable were priceless as their condition demanded them to be. Moreover, a ‘Tawlhloh puan’ was clothed to the brave who did not flee from the enemies. This apparel at the beginning, as K. Zawla said, belonged

to the rich only, and they began to use it to clothe the brave as time went by (155). At times when they won battles they celebrated in the chief's compound, they planted a piece of wood at the center of the compound, and those who dared confirm they would not retreat from wild beasts and enemies would cut the wood. They called this 'Thingserh sat' and they valued it to a great degree. They admired the persons daring to cut Thingserh, and they often spied on those who would cut it. K. Zawla defined the attitude of the ones who cut Thingserh.

I will never flee from enemies unless there is an utmost necessity. I will never let the enemies who attack my village escape. I will not draw back to protect my village and its women and children. I'd rather die than not prevailing. Therefore, hear ye that I am willing to lay down my life to protect the chief and his subjects (96).

The villages having large number of persons cutting Thingserh secretly took pride in their attainments as well as being comforted. The Mizos scattered in different villages having chiefs, and almost every village had a famous Pasaltha. In the book *Mizo Heroes* published in 2003 by Tribal Research Institute, Government of Mizoram, it is recorded there used to be as much as 24 warrior. Let us look at the names of the most famous warrior as told by B. Lalthangliana: Vanapa, Chawngbawla, Khuangchera, Taitesena, Neuva, Zampuimanga, (Seminar and Important Papers 51).

Let us take a glance at each one of the Mizo warriors.

1. Vanapa: Vanapa's real name as used to say is Thangzachhinga while some people called him Chawngzachhinga. (Seminar and Important Papers, 82) He belonged to a clan of Chawngthu Vanchiau and the exact year of his birth is untraceable. C. Laladinga believes it to be about 1785 (Mizo Pasaltha hmingthang Vanapa 11) He was famous for his bravery and hospitality and was sometimes said to be bad tempered. Some said he later repented his bad temper. During his residence at Kelsih in 1810 Lalsavunga's village was attacked by the Hualngo clan. In this incident the conditions of the attackers were worse than the village they attacked, it is said the villagers led by Vanapa drove them away. This is believed to have been the first time Vanapa appeared in history (C. Laladinga 11). He was hospitable and serviceable to the society, a good craftsman and is said to be very good in weaving bamboo. One popular theme usually mentioned alongside the story of the Mizos is 'Tualte Vanglai'. The period Tualte Vanglai was famous for its warriors. It is said Vanapa is the best among the warriors (34).

His main profession was the art of weaving bamboo and the people were fond of buying his bamboo baskets. According to K. Zawla, the people of Vanapa's village would say about him, "If Thangzachhinga could be a little good-tempered there would not be much to criticize about him." (Mizo Pipute leh an thlahte chanchin 249). His surliness was one of the reasons of his popularity. Later on he learned to be gentle and consequently became a very gentle one, and it is said that even his voice had become soft (250). His hospitality is mentioned often. Once the young men of the village went hunting with Vanapa. After a while

they became extremely hungry. Vanapa saw a ripe fruit of a fig, he beckoned his friends and on reaching there one of them grabbed the fruit and savoured it whole. With this Vanapa commented, “Young man, even I have not eaten a single bite. We your friends do not carry stones,” (253). It is known that apart from being brave, he was very hospitable. His house was at the far end of the street, he was always willing to take the lead in times of war. Vanapa, the one which is always mentioned every time the names of Mizo warriors are told, died in 1871 (C. Lalaudinga 197).

2. Chawngbawla: Chawngbawla belonged to a Chhakchhuak clan and a best warrior of the chief of the south Seipuia (K. Zawla 253). He was a rather slim man with a good behaviour, the kind of person who was often mistakenly undermined. Once during drinking local wine with friends one guest mistaked him for someone else and asked him, “You, my friend, tell me how many animals you have killed.” He replied, “I have not killed that much so as to count them.” On hearing this the guest scornfully challenged him again. Chawngbawla replied, “Once I’ve captured the leg of a wild bear, and I’ve captured the leg of a wild tiger. Those are my only captures. I have not killed as many as the three stones of a trivet.” The guest then regretted for challenging him and walked away silently and timidly (K. Zawla 254). He was a very famous warrior and the men loved to go hunting with him for they felt secure and at peace. His character was that of cool and calm and he was never proud.

Once on their attack of Sialhmur village the villagers had heard beforehand that they were going to be attacked and they all ran away. On their way back home

the village's warrior Nghatebaka, who was on his way home from fishing, chased them along with other warriors. Chawngbawla and his men were fleeing, and one man among them cried out not knowing Chawngbawla was among them, "O how we miss Chawngbawla! If he was here we would not run this tired." Chawngbawla replied, "Chawngbawla cannot haunt on this kind of days, just move forward." But later Chawngbawla lay in ambush for Nghatebaka and shot him dead. It is said that the pursuers went back to their village.

3. Khuangchera: The name of Khuangchera is to be mentioned in the first place if we are to talk about the true account and contribution of any patriot in Mizoram. He is remembered for his die-hard valour against the British imperialism. Like many other Mizo heroes, he lived during the turbulent times when the British were drawn into the Lushai Hills for the protection of their tea estates in the plains. While exact dates of his birth and death are not traceable, he would have lived around the period of 1860 – 1890, as can be inferred from his being a patriot with chief's Lianphunga and Sailianpuia.

Khuangchera was killed in the battle with the British expedition force near Changsil in September 10, 1890, during the final phases of the British expedition called Vailian (the Mizo term for the occupation of their land by the British). Captain Browne, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills had also been killed in this battle, a few days before the death of Khuangchera and his close friend Ngurbawnga. He was born in one of Lianphunga's villages. We may say that he was a wanderer, for moving from the village he was born in Chhippui first, and then to Parvatui, next to Kanghmun and finally to the influential village of Reiek

(Khangte 106). When he was a boy, Khuangchera once followed a wounded bear into its cave, leading on his apprehensive elders who then killed the bear. Khuangchera's acknowledged skill in wrestling was put to good use when he was ambushed and captured by a raiding party of Pawis.

To prove his valour there is a forbidding cave between villages of Ailawng and Reiek. At the Ailawng end is a narrow cleft in a cliff, with a stream gushing out. One could barely walk in at the entrance and no one dared to move in deep down the cave. But Khuangchera alone explored the long tunnel of the cave and found that the long cave, which takes at least 45 minutes to walk through and at some places crawl through, has openings at both the Ailawng and Reiek ends. After the explorer of this cave, it is known as Khuangchera Puk, which tourists and adventures enjoy to visit these days.

The story of Khuangchera's bravery are many and it may not be possible to tell all of them. He would venture where fainter hearts would hesitate and rescue people at considerable risk to his life.

There is a superstition that a man must not kill any living being or animal during the first week of his wife's delivery of a baby. When the British punitive expedition burned down some villages on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1890, a call from Lianphunga who had fled his village without giving fight, went out for help to fight against the British (108). Khuangchera, whose wife was giving birth to a child, did not volunteer because of this taboo. But as the situation grew worse, he put aside personal considerations and accepted the dangers of violating the taboo, joined other warriors in battle against the British stockade at Changsil and was

shot dead while he was trying to extricate his friend Ngurbawnga, who was lying wounded on exposed ground.

Khuangchera's life reflects the diversity of characters of the famous heroes. Although he was a humble and modest man, sometimes he wanted recognition. However, his valour and chivalry were much stronger than his ego and provided an inspiration to the young and to soldiers.

4. Taitesena: Taitesena Khiangte was born in 1880 in Khawrihnim village. His real name is Ralthatchhunga (K. Zawla 291). During his childhood his face would blush red, and this is supposedly why he had been called Taitesena. His father was Khalhvunga and his mother was Dovi. He was famous throughout Mizoram for his hospitality. Apart from being a warrior, his hospitality is always quoted every time his name is mentioned. In the olden days children and youngsters were used to run errands by the older people of the village, which was an unofficial custom of the society. Due to this they did not have sufficient time to hang out with friends. Taitesena strongly objected this. When he considered the life of children he felt it would be very unpleasant for them and thought of ways to stop it. Whenever children were sent to run errands while he was in Zawlbuk he would go before them saying, "I shall go." It appeared every time they sent children they were sending Taitesena. It is said that the older people eventually stopped their habit of sending children to run errands (291).

Moreover, if anyone talked about his wants or desires in the presence of Taitesena he would try to do it for him. He was hospitable enough to try to satisfy others' needs no matter how hard or easy the road was. Once when they went



hunting in the jungles one of them spoke out how he found a good stone and wanted it for a hone. Taitesena heard this and took home with him a quite heavy stone in his bag and gave it to the speaker after reaching home. As the stone was quite heavy, the speaker received it with a feeling of unease and regretted he ever mentioned it.

Let us take a glance on one of his life stories which is very touching and how intense his hospitality is. One night the chief of their village with an intention of finding out the most hospitable person in his village woke one of his ministers in the middle of the night to go to Zawlbuk and inform the young men sleeping there that there was a need to send an urgent message somewhere and ask if anyone felt like going. On hearing the chief having urgency the young men stayed silent, but Taitesena got dressed and gave himself as the messenger. When he went to the chief's house to ask which village he would be going the chief told him there was no need to go anywhere and that he merely intended to find out who was the most hospitable person in his village. The chief then felt very delighted on Taitesena (293).

Once when the villagers fought a wounded tiger, the tiger bit three warriors of the village. Taitesena hurriedly arrived at the scene and jumped right into where the wounded tiger was. He felt it not right to have stayed unhurt while his friends were injured. It is said he could not be stopped when the others tried to stop him. Then he fought the tiger with a knife. The tiger surely bit him like his other friends, Taitesena was not able to bear the wound and eventually died.

5. Neuva: Neuva belonged to the village of Zawngtah and his father was Darzaliana. He was famous for his ability to endure pain. He was a rather big, strong

and handsome man. He and his elder brother loved to go hunting, and it is said they were crazy for it. Neuva was brave and his mind was undaunted. He often said that if anyone would carve out his eyeballs he would kill that person. He was daring when fighting a wounded bear that his elder brother Thangsavunga had to restrain him. He was a very brave man with an unusual tendency to endure pain. Once he accidentally stepped on a thorn with his foot and the wound became ulcerated. Due to his lack of care the ulcer became septic and spread to his whole foot. Ants and flies would envelop around the wound, but he continued to till his cultivation as if he did not have any wound. He could carry on his daily work as though he paid no attention to it (261). He had an unusually high threshold for pain as if his person did not feel pain at all.

Once while chasing a wounded tiger the tiger suddenly pounced upon him from up a mound in his unready state. The tiger bit Neuva on his hind neck around the nape of the head. The wound was sufficient to kill him. But Neuva held his head with both his hands and his friends walked him home because he did not want to be carried. He asked his brother Thangsavunga to thrust his hand into the wound and found out that a major part of the bones of his neck was broken to pieces! He did not live long after that and consequently died. Even though the bite of the tiger almost broke his neck he never even once groaned out of pain. It is said that when he died his body turned sideways while his head remained locked in its position. There could not be many persons to be said more enduring than he.

5. Zampuimanga: Zampuimanga was from Zampui village, his father belonged to Ralte clan and his mother Hualngo clan. He was an unfortunate son whose father

had died during his childhood. He and his mother migrated to Lalsavunga's village and in this village there was one person named Manga, who had the same name as himself. He is then called 'Zampuimanga'. Strangely one night Zampuimanga had a dream and in his dream he saw an old lady. The old lady told him he would not die of wild animals and enemies. Once there was a wicked tiger who killed as many as ten people and endangered several villages. As the tiger finally came face to face with Zampuimanga's village Zampuimanga fought it and chopped off its tail. The others meanwhile fired at the tiger and were finally able to kill it. Once in another occasion of fighting a tiger the tiger crawled among the thick bushes and stayed there. Zampuimanga could not bear the situation and headed for the bushes. He then chopped the tiger dead all by himself! It is said this made his name famous all around. Every time the society had to face wild beasts they would feel ill at ease without Zampuimanga.

Once when fighting another tiger Zampuimanga charged on the tiger again on his own. The tiger opened its mouth wide and Zampuimanga believed he saw a rainbow inside its mouth. Thinking it was a bad omen for mankind he insisted on heading home. Since nobody paid attention he went home all by himself. But as they fought the tiger after Zampuimanga went home it wounded most of the men. Here it is seen that Zampuimanga's belief proved to be right. Besides being brave it is said he was also famous for being a strong man.

Patriotism in another sense does not only mean protecting the country from human enemies but also protecting it from various kinds of enemies that could harm the well-being of the land and its people. The above warriors we have highlighted

had their unique ways of defending their lands in their own ways. They defended their lands not only from wild beasts, but also from neighbouring rivals. It is seen from their characters so far that in order to protect their villages and fulfil their duties as warriors they were all willing to lay down their lives in the process. We can also see that these warriors were not in a fight with the British like Khuangchera did, however it is to be noted that these are all warriors of the past and they all did not happen to co-exist in the same period of time. The British did not appear in the scene during the times of all of these warriors, and moreover most of the paths of these warriors did not cross with the British.

There is a belief that Mizo warriors performed their tasks solely to please their chiefs and to earn appreciations of the society. But as far as Mizo hospitality and love of the land are concerned, the former is proved to be wrong. We do not see from the above stories where warriors performed their tasks in the society for their own gain. We do not see any kind of mischievous attitude. We on the other hand see some of the warriors giving up their lives in the process of defending their lands. It is also a prove that the Mizos of the past were not so much uncivilised so as to be ignorant on grounds of the knowledge of protecting their villages. Whether a warrior or a regular citizen, they to their utmost ability and available resources guarded and defended their land from any alien infiltration.

They taught their young people since they were children to protect their land and to stand firm in the face of enemies and wild beasts. They even waged minor wars with their neighbouring villages to settle land problems. It was on the

occasions of protecting security of the village that the warriors were of extreme important. As it was their duty and enthusiasm to defend their land from any outside attack, they were ever ready to fight wild beasts and neighbouring rivals, so as protecting it from bigger and mightier opponents like foreign expedition.

From the above description it can be seen the beginning of patriotism in the life of the Mizos and the general situation of the Mizo society on the ground of patriotism. It is evident that the brave willing to lay down their lives for their land were respected and praised. They were hospitable and daring, and they would set out for the society willing to die in times of war and bad times. Mc Call commented, “The Mizos are brave and skilled in battles and functioning in jungles and forests and they are enduring and unflinching,” (Lushai Chrysalis 45).

### **Origin and development of Mizo Drama**

Aristotle believed that tragedy (literature) is about character, and that character is revealed through action, and he tried to identify the required stages in the progress of a plot. Drama is one of the important topic in Literature, it reflects the reality of life, helps us to understand and makes us what we need to be. According to Peter Barry, “Aristotle was the first critic to develop a ‘reader-centred’ approach to literature,” (Beginning Theory 21). In Mizo literature drama also plays an important role, it was first played on the Christmas evening entertainment in 1912. A simple short play was staged, the crowd was delighted, and they extremely enjoyed the play. This is the beginning of Mizo drama in Mizo literature. In literature, drama constitutes the most essential constituent by virtue of originality and interest. In the Mizo context also, drama plays a substantial role

in the development of Mizo literature. The first dramatic action in Mizo was noted in the celebration of Christmas festival in the year 1912.

It flourished during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the first Mizo notable drama '*Sangi Inleng*' was published in 1963. Comparing with world literature, the Mizo drama, its origin and development, may not be so significant in terms of production or merit, but till today, writings of plays is a growing interest among the new generation.

It is said the origin of Greek drama comes from offerings they made to their gods. J.A Cuddon in his book *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* tells about the origin of tragedy as, "In the first place it almost certainly denoted a form of ritual sacrifice accompanied by a choral song in honor of Dionysus, the god of the fields and the vineyards. Out of this ritual developed Greek dramatic tragedy," (926). The Mizos also since history enjoyed doing things together. On big occasions like Khuangchawi and Chawngchen they would celebrate to their hearts' content. They had three big festivals: Chapchar Kut, Pawl Kut and Mim Kut. When they killed a wild beast they would perform 'salulam' (cutting the head of the animal and dancing and feasting), every villager would gather at the chief's compound and celebrate for the whole day. They have practiced performing arts long time before a proper Drama was established, out of which 'salulam' and 'thihthiap ven' (a ceremony performed to protect the body of the man who killed a tiger) were popular. The chief should 'ai' (celebrate) and perform 'salulam' when a warrior killed a tiger, and in the absence and unavailability of the chief, one of his ministers would take the place of the chief.

They gathered at the compound of the chief for the whole day, proclaiming the day as holiday, slaughtering all kinds of domesticated animals and spent the day with wine and meat.

The person who 'ai' and his friends would don female garments, mock and torture the head of the tiger and they would march about the people. He would carry an egg and a white marble in his hands, and when he said "Let us have an egg" he would give the head of the tiger the white marble and he would eat the egg and laugh intensely. Three or more comedians would be there who acted humorously and all the people would laugh at them. According to K. Zawla, the reason why they tortured the head of the tiger is that they believed its friends would observe it from the distance, and they wanted to show them that the humans were not to be challenged (46). It might not be appropriate to claim this as an origin of Mizo drama, but the fact that it is a performing art deserves to be stated as a beginning of Mizo drama when mentioned.

As disclosed earlier the first Mizo drama began with festivals. Christmas as the origin of drama is very suitable for the Mizos who love public gathering. Laltluangliana Khiangte, who earned a doctorate degree in the field of Mizo drama characterizes the development of Mizo drama into three main phases: The Root Period (1912 – 1924), The Budding Period (1925 – 1958) and The Flowering Period (1959 – 2000). He systematically presents the development as late as the year 2000. Apparently the pattern of his characterization is set according to the development and improvement of the Mizos in the field of drama. By adding the remaining chronology and calling it The Millenium Period

(2000 – 2014) the general development of Mizo drama would be understood a lot easier.

1. The Root Period (1912 – 1924): Christian missionaries J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge came to Mizoram in 1894 (Mizo Chanchin 211). These two missionaries created the alphabet for the Mizos. According to Rev. Liangkhaia the time which they made the alphabet looked to be March, 1894 (213). There began Christian converts five years after the coming of Christian missionaries. J.M. Lloyd said that the first Mizo Christians Khuma and Khâra were baptized in 1899 (qtd.in Mizo Narratives: accounts from Mizoram, 198). Rev. J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge, as the Mizos called them Pu Buanga ang Sap Upa respectively, opened a school and educated the Mizos besides preaching the gospel and teaching many other things. According to Mangkhosa Kipgen there were 45 Christian converts by 1901 in Mizoram (qtd.in Mizo Narratives: accounts from Mizoram 198).

The first Christmas in Mizoram was celebrated in 1903. Hualkunga described how it was celebrated, “The missionaries and a few native speakers celebrate Christmas day, by entertaining children and giving them a special feast on December 25, 1903.” (qtd.in Mizo Drama, 33) Celebration of Christmas became more and more popular each year, it was a brand new experience for the Mizos. Christmas of 1912 was a memorable one, it was the year Mizo drama originated. Lianhmingthanga expressed how they celebrated this Christmas:

The Christmas Day, 25 December 1912 will be remembered in the history of Mizo drama, because in the evening of this very day, the first ever dramatic performance was held in the small thatched roofed



theater of Thakthing Veng, Aizawl. With the initiative of the missionaries, the most successful function of variety entertainment was shown to the people for the first time. The well attended function was really enjoyed by the theater goers of that night (qtd.in Mizo Drama 33).

The Mizos celebrated this first Christmas merrily, and the people began to value it more and more. The missionaries organized this occasion with a proper arrangement, and the most common item was singing. They sang Christmas songs together and there were 26 items on entertainment in this event (33). The Mizos during this time were still very simple. The British took 800 Mizos as army coolies due to the rebellion of Abhor tribes in the province of NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh) in 1911. When they came home they brought with them large sums of money. They have become more civilized, but even then they did not want to put on shirts and pants. However they realized the grandeur of other states, but the aged people did not even want to believe it (K. Zawla 401).

They also performed short play besides singing on this occasion, and for the first time in Mizoram drama has begun. Laltluangliana states that,

The most memorable show was the item number nineteen of the variety Entertainment, '*Borsap lem, leh thu chhia nei tu 2 leh arsi lem chang be*' (Superintendent's Court Scene). This particular item may be recorded as the first short play ever staged in Mizoram. It was not simply a combination of dialogue and action, but it has a plot, a short story to portray, hence a play (Mizo Drama 35).

As they enjoyed 1912 Christmas with short play and entertainment, they continued the next year similar to the previous year's celebration. They again took time for entertainment after the Christmas feast, they sang together and spent Christmas of 1913 joyfully. Thanga published how they spent this Christmas in Zoram Thupuan newspaper in 1954. He expressed,

After the public feast, on 25 December 1913, Christmas Entertainment programme was organized. The missionary had delivered a speech on Christmas.....after that, a group of actors performed a meaningful drama. And the choir sang one Christmas song, 'Oh Merry, merry, Christmas chime (35).

People living in small villages heard about the Christmas celebration in Aizawl, therefore spending time like that each year was how the notion of Christmas celebration was introduced to the Mizos. Showing drama in theatre had become insufficient, it is said that two or three years later they often showed drama in the church (35). Likewise the early period of Mizo drama developed inside the confines of the church.

The people valued it in a great deal, and they utilized it for moral teachings and preaching of the gospel. The origin of Mizo drama is pure and remarkable. But the spiritual revival of 1919, being the third revival coming to Mizoram, was a great accomplishment. The first two revivals took place in 1906 and 1913 respectively. Rev. Saiaithanga commented on this particular as 'greatest and most powerful revival'. (qtd.in Mizo Narratives: accounts from Mizoram 222) This

revival spread throughout Mizoram, Mangkhosat Kipgen said that not only Mizoram, this revival enfolded all the Mizos living in Tripura and Manipur (222).

This revival no longer encouraged drama, the people gallantly indulged in singing and 'lenkhawm' (praising God together in singing). This revival had one significance, it brought about drums being used in the church for the first time. B. Lalthangliana gave an account of this experience, "This revival covered every Mizo living in Tripura and Kawlphai. It gave birth to many strange and different encouragements, dance was of different style...The drum which was rejected in the past as Satan's tool was brought inside the church," (Mizo Chanchin 251). R.L. Thanmawia wrote, "The period between the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and World War II saw the greatest changes in fashion, social graces and administration in the society and religion of the Mizos," (Chuailo – I, 111). The people had seemingly become less delighted in drama as they were before. Laltluangliana Khiangte says, "Frankly speaking, the spiritual revival had thrown the dramatic performances out of the Church and was a major set-back in the development of Mizo drama," (Mizo Drama 36).

2. The Budding Period (1925 – 1958): The first Mizo drama originated in the Church, due to its establishment under the nourishment of Christianity it cannot die out or be looked down upon. Although it somewhat shrank back and developed slowly on account of the 1919 revival, there appeared Ch. Pasena in 1925 who was deeply interested in drama and who people admired in his time. He finished Diploma in Education in London and returned to Aizawl this same year.

It can be said that because of his deep interest in drama he renewed its popularity among the people. He wrote six short plays during 1925-1933 and they were played at Sikulpui Hall, Mission Veng (37). He directed the plays besides writing the script, laboring with much effort he again popularized drama. He prepared William Shakespeare's play '*The Merchant of Venice*' to meet the understandability of Mizo intellect and this was showed under his guidance. The plays he wrote are: *Fapa Tlanbo (The Prodigal Son)*, *Khualbuka mi â (A Fool at the Inn)*, *Tinreng daih khawl (Robot or machine with brain)*, *Ransa Khawmpui (Animals' Conference)* and *Rorelna (Court)*. Laltluangliana Khiangte writes about Ch. Pasena as follows:

The first part of the budding period in Mizo drama may appropriately named as Pasena Age or Period. His influence can be seen in the dramatic art of his contemporaries as well as his successors. Being an educationist, he was keen to set an example for other writers and I consider Pasena as 'a pioneer of mizo dramatics,' (38).

Besides Ch. Pasena, Lalkailuia came into the scene. His work *Tualvungi leh Zawlpala* was showed in 1935 at the Assam Rifles Drill Shed. This play can be called the first Mizo love story ever displayed in drama. Lalkailuia also prepared the play *Liandovate Unau*. Apart from being writer of dramas he could act well, and he constantly took part in his plays. In 1934 Chawngzika's time arrived. He can be considered the most popular dramatist during this period. A Christian missionary Rev. Samuel Davies arrived in 1937 who held a Diploma Certificate in the field of drama from the London School of Drama. He and

Chawngzika together organized the first Mizoram Drama Competition in 1940. They named this competition Zosiami Cup after the daughter of Samuel Davies. Three drama parties competed in this competition. Chawngzika translated *The Pilgrim's Progress* in Mizo language and dramatized it in 1938, and it was played at Sikulpui. Rev Samuel Davies considered the very drama as a true drama played in Mizoram for the first time (39).

Lalzuithanga was also a good dramatist during this period. He wrote '*The Black Corner of Aijal in 1999*' which was played by the Kulikawn YLA in Zosiami Cup. They were crowned with second prize. During the thirty years of its development, Mizo drama improved in various techniques. Pasena, Lalkailuia, Chawngzika and Lalzuithanga made names for themselves. They deserved to be named 'four torch bearers' of the Mizo Drama as insisted by Laltluangliana Khiangte (42).

3. The Flowering Period (1959 – 2000): The theatrical and stage performances had been developing for fifty years, since its first period in 1912 and the first printed play appeared in 1963. During this period dramatic art was acquired by a group of actors in almost every village. The first edition of drama '*Sangi Inleng*' was published by Lalthangfala Sailo in 1963. It is a remarkable play in the development of Mizo drama. After 52 years of Mizo drama being displayed in shows, the first book of drama was on the public. He also wrote many plays ever since he started writing drama since 1963. One of his famous plays was *Liandovate Unau*.

Another man who appeared in this period was Lalhmuaka. He produced a number of short plays and also published them. He published his first collection of short plays in October 28, 1965. He considered himself to be the first to publish drama (play) book in Mizo language. Some of his works are; *Lo kir leh mai rawh* (1965), *Ranhleng mak* (1965), *A ni maithei* (1965), *Mautam tam* (1965), *Pathian thu nung-Mizoramah* (1981), *Sumdeng zu* (1981), *Ramthanga te chhung* (1981).

There evolved a number of writers during this fifty years of development of Mizo drama. Let us highlight their names along with their plays. Firstly there is H. Lalsiama, he wrote two short plays, namely *Pa awkhrawl* (1970) and *Ukil Hlawhtling* (1970). Secondly we have James Dokhuma. He was famous more for being a novelist than a dramatist. He wrote the drama *Tumna chu hlawhtlinna hmahruai* (1980). K. Saibela cannot be left out among these. He wrote two dramas, and though his works are few they are considered quite priceless. He wrote *Chhura leh Naa* (1935) and *Thu a tawp e Lumam* (1981). Kawlkungi was the early Mizo female dramatist and her contribution was enormous. Her works include *Zawlpala thlan tlangah* (1981), *Pangpar bawm* (staged in 1977) and *Monu Sual* (1982). The other person who was known more for his novels is C. Laizawna. He wrote *Kan tiam tawh si* in 1982. C. Lalsiamthanga did not contribute much, but his works are quite valuable. He wrote *Diktea Vahvaihna* in 1986.

Laltluangliana Kiangte is one of the most plenteous contributors among the Mizo dramatists. Some of his dramas include *Nu leh pa bum-mahni inbum* (1987), *Faki te chhung* (1987), *Thawmmawia* (1988), *Thawmvunga* (1990), *Lalnu*

*Ropuiliani* (1990) and *Pasaltha Khuangchera* (1997). One that cannot be let out is Liansailova. He was one of Mizo dramatists good in writing tragi-comedy. His works are *Lawm a kim* (1989), *Duaia a duai bik lo* (1989), *Krismas Drama* (1989) and *Tlai ngai lo Pathian* (1989).

*Lalnu Ropuiliani* and *Pasaltha Khuangchera* are written by the same author, Laltluangliana Khiangte. *Lalnu Ropuiliani* was written in the year 1990, and *Pasaltha Khuangchera* was published in 1997. Both these plays were taken from existing legends or real life incidents, which can be termed as historical plays. They will have to be characterized in the section of tragedy. *Khuangchera* was a renowned hero while *Ropuiliani* was a chief, widowed by her chief husband. These plays depict various accounts of the Mizo society as a whole, as well as their battles with the British in those times.

Laltluangliana Khiangte has written about thirty plays, out of which eighteen of them are published. As a writer of *One Act Play*, *Comedy*, *Tragedy* and *Tragi-Comedy*, he holds an eminent status in the field of drama. These particular plays might be considered the best dramas of his works so far. *Pasaltha Khuangchera* was awarded 'Book of the Year' 1997 by the Mizo Academy of Letters. Being the first drama that held this title in the history of Mizo literature, it proves itself to be a remarkable work among the many dramas that have been written. Likewise, the drama *Lalnu Ropuiliani* has also achieved second position in the Mizoram Open Drama Writing Competition in the year 1990 organized by the Department of Art and Culture, Mizoram.

3. The Millenium Period (2000 – 2014): The development of Mizo Drama in the last period is so remarkable. A good number of post-colonial, free and mixed-up contemporary plays have been published in the new Millennium period. At the turn of the twenty-first century, several playwrights and dramatist have seen the relevance of reviving folk-drama in today's theatre movement and development.

With the coming of modern technology along with new instruments and standard devices, certain elements of folk culture and practices could be quite interesting for today's audience. Most of the writers in this new millennium period are much younger than all of the ages that we have experienced in the development of Mizo Drama. Some of these playwrights are: J. Lalnangliana, Lalsangzuala, C. Lalrochhara, Lalfakzuala, R.C. Lalruatchhunga, Lalnunthara Sailo, T.C. Vanlalzauva, Lalhmachhuana Zofa, C. Chhuanvawra, J. Laltanpuia, Jet F. Lalnithanga, Lalhmingmawia Ralte, Lalzua Colney, Lalhmuchhuaka.



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## CHAPTER – II

**Meaning and Definition of Patriotism**

Standard lexical definition reads patriotism as “love of one’s country.” *Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus III* defines patriot as, “person devoted to and ready to defend his or her country,” (544). *New Webster’s Dictionary and Thesaurus* also defines patriotism as, “zealous love of one’s country,” (736). *Chambers 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dictionary* clarifies ‘patriot’ as “Someone who loves and serves their fatherland or country devotedly,” (1012). It also defines Patriotism as “Loyalty and devotion to one’s country,” (1012). The internet book Wikipedia states,

“Patriotism is a cultural attachment to one’s homeland, excluding differences caused by the dependencies of the term’s meaning upon context, geography and philosophy. In a generalised sense applicable to all countries and peoples, patriotism is a devotion to one’s country,” (Wikipedia).

According to Ron Tottingham,

Patriotism, by definition, is love of one’s country. The passion, which aims to serve one’s country, defending it, protecting it, or maintaining it. Patriotism is the character of a good citizen, the noblest passion of citizenship (Are Patriotism and Nationalism Right 26).

Andrew Vincent writes the distinction between the term ‘patriot’ and ‘patriotism’, he asserts,

A distinction is often drawn between the terms patriot and patriotism. The former is seen as an older usage, traceable back to the ancient Roman republic, while the latter is viewed as an eighteenth-century neologism. Patriotism, as in most ideological "isms," is therefore often considered a more recent word. However, the older term patriot still covers many of the conceptual aspects of patriotism (Andrew).

Patriot in Greek origin is *patrís* (πατρίς), which means one’s country (fatherland or hometown). From this comes *patriōtēs* (πατριώτης), meaning ‘the native’ or ‘citizen’ (countryman). The Latins during the 6<sup>th</sup> century called it ‘patriota’ which likewise means ‘citizen’. The English during the Elizabethan Era (1558-1603) eventually used the term ‘patriot’ as time went on. It is said the word Patriotism appeared around the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Wikipedia).

If the definition of patriotism is love of one’s country, it is necessary to define what a country is. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, 1996 defines country as, “tract of land; *one’s* native land,” (T. F. HOAD). *Oxford Dictionary* defines, “A nation with its own government, occupying a particular territory,” (305).

A country is a tract of land inhabited by people of one or more nations. It is a land where people live, establish a society and standard of living. It is a place

where human beings are loyal to one another, abide by the laws regulated by its ruler or king. The vastness of land makes no difference in judging the nature of the country, it may be vast or small, it can never be judged on ground of the size it once was. Every person living in the area have the right to claim the land as his country.

A country is a region identified as a distinct entity in political geography. A country may be an independent sovereign state or one that is occupied by another state, as a non-sovereign or formerly sovereign political division, or a geographic region associated with sets of previously independent or differently associated peoples with distinct political characteristics.

Regardless of physical geography, according to the modern internationally accepted legal definition as defined by the League of Nations in 1937 and reaffirmed by the United Nations in 1945, a resident of a country is subject to the independent exercise of legal jurisdiction (Wikipedia).

As mentioned earlier, standard dictionary definition reads patriotism as “love of one's country.” This captures the core meaning of the term in ordinary use; but it might well be thought too thin and in need of fleshing out. In what is still the sole book-length philosophical study of the subject, Stephen Nathanson defines patriotism as involving:

- (a) Special affection for one's own country
- (b) A sense of personal identification with the country

- (c) Special concern for the well-being of the country
- (d) Willingness to sacrifice to promote the country's good (Primoratz. Ed. 34-35).

According to Ron Tottingham, “A patriot is someone who is devoted to the welfare of one’s country. I am a patriot of the old fashioned country. I am a patriot of what the Red, White and Blue used to stand for,” (Are Nationalism and Patriotism Right 26). He believes that a patriot must be a good citizen, not only in times of war, but also every time when the country needs his duty as a good citizen. In *Anarchism and other Essay*, Emma Goldman states that,

Patriotism assumes that our globe is divided into little spots, each one surrounded by an iron gate. Those who have had the fortune of being born on some particular spot, consider themselves better, nobler, grander, more intelligent than the living beings inhabiting any other spot. It is, therefore, the duty of everyone living on that chosen spot to fight, kill, and die in the attempt to impose his superiority upon all the others (Goldman).

Patriotism is one of the big class of words that are linked to the virtues of membership. To participate in relations of, for example, friendship, community, nationhood, citizenship, or marriage implies normative conventions. In other words, there are value expectations built into such membership. One important dimension of any membership relation is an expectation of loyalty. Fidelity or loyalty to a nation or country, community, friend, citizenship, marriage, or state is thus implied in the actual practice.

To participate openly and self-consciously, therefore, in any of these membership practices involves adherence to loyalty-based virtue. In this context, the term patriotism usually denotes a specific loyalty virtue, consequent upon membership of a country or state. However, the term loyalty alone does not quite cover the range of values associated with patriotic membership. Patriotism also signifies a sense of personal identification with, and concern for, the well-being or welfare of that country or state. Further, it entails a readiness to make sacrifices for its defense or welfare. In addition, it provides (for some) the ground for all moral action—in the sense that morality, in itself, is seen to be, quite literally, premised on patriotic membership. Patriotism also indicates a special affection, feeling, or emotive response. This emotive response is commonly designated as a "love of country."

Patriots are citizens joined by love of country and a readiness to sacrifice, perhaps even die, for their country. Such patriotism was emphatically characteristic of the Spartans of classical antiquity. They were citizens in the strict sense of the term: They shared an identity with others to whom they were related by nationality, as well as by blood, and a sense of belonging to a community for which they bore responsibility. In a word, they were public-spirited.

The Spartans' sense of public-spiritedness did not develop by accident. Spartan boys were trained, almost from birth, to be soldiers, and Spartan girls were required to exercise naked (in public), with a view to producing sons capable of being soldiers, as well as daughters capable of giving birth to them. Their readiness to fight (and perhaps give their lives) for their country is best

exemplified by the legendary King Leonidas and the three hundred Spartan soldiers who fought the Persians and died at Thermopylae in 480 BCE. For good reason, then, the word Spartan has come to be associated with patriot ("Patriotism" IESS).

In addition, the qualities of "local familial or community loyalty" and an "impersonal abstract legal loyalty" have remained part of the vocabulary of patriotism to the present day. Local communal identification implies a more visceral loyalty, an attachment and love for the "familiar."

In the medieval period, the patria could be identified with a locality, hamlet, clan, village, township, or city. The patriot was one who submitted to the village or city and was prepared to defend it. Family, locality, city, tradition, land, absolute monarch, total state, and republic have all been objects of patriotic loyalty.

In contemporary discussion there have been a number of renderings of patriotism. These can be distinguished between two forms—strong and moderate patriotisms. The stronger version argues that patriotic loyalty is the sole source of any meaningful moral claims. The content of patriotism is therefore always particular or local.

In this context, the loyalties demanded from the patriot are simply to whatever values are regarded as dominant within a state or community. The key critical opposition to this perspective comes from universalist forms of argument, such as universal human rights claims. However, the larger bulk of recent writings



on patriotism have appeared within the moderate category. The moderate category tries to mediate between universalism and localism.

### **Strong Patriotism**

The strong variant of patriotism does not have as many proponents as the moderate form. One key example of this is strong communitarian patriotism. In his 1984 essay, "Is Patriotism a Virtue?" Alasdair MacIntyre sees patriotism as one of a class of "loyalty-exhibiting virtues." These virtues exhibit "action-generating regard" for particular persons or groups, and they are embedded in highly particular relationships (qtd.in Andrew). Morality is thus rooted within communal relations. For MacIntyre, morality is always learned from within a particular way of life. Goods are always the particular goods of communities.

The morality of patriotism is therefore seen as perfectly natural to us as communal beings. MacIntyre's citizen is basically a very mild-mannered political animal; however, it is important, nonetheless, to realize that the strong particularist arguments he deploys have been utilized by much more worrying forms of politics. Racial exclusivism or political authoritarianism could well be justified within this framework. The dangers implicit within this perspective are those of extreme exclusion and the lurking possibility of communal jingoism. In the twentieth century, strong variants of patriotism have been associated (rightly or wrongly) with the militaristic or bellicose stance of German National Socialism and Italian fascism in the 1930s.

## **Moderate Patriotism**

The more recent moderate account of patriotism contains four subtle variants. First, for neoclassical republicans the distinctive character of patriotism is its focus on political liberty and civic virtue. Love of country is not love of a language or ethnicity, but rather of political liberty. This is not a love of a particular liberty, but a generic nonexclusive liberty as embedded in law. It is seen essentially as a universalizing force. A republic is seen to embody a powerful sense of local solidarity contained within a universal vessel of liberty under law. For its proponents, republican language is thus a viable alternative to current liberal foundationalism, ethnic nationalism, and strong patriotic arguments.

The distinction between strong and moderate patriotism has direct parallels with the distinction, made within communitarian theory, between strong and moderate senses of community. Whereas MacIntyre sees a direct synonymity between nationalism and patriotism and adopts a narrower, stronger, and more exclusive sense of community, Charles Taylor seeks some separation between patriotism and nationalism and adopts a more differentiated view of community (incorporating multicultural diversity).

Further, whereas, for Taylor, moderate patriotism is a matter of self-conscious citizen identification with a polity, strong patriotism swims in murkier waters, usually envisaging patriotism as a prepolitical, nonintentional attachment. Moderate communitarian patriotism, for Taylor, has no "prepolitical" reference. It rather implies more intentional attachment to a country and its laws. Patriotism

is therefore always "politically defined," as in the American and French Revolutions. However, most moderate communitarian patriots admit that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the vocabularies of nationalism and patriotism became confusingly intermeshed (qtd.in Andrew).

### Nationalism and Patriotism

Webster Online Dictionary describe Nationalism as, "a feeling that people have of being loyal to and proud of their country often with the belief that it is better and more important than other," (Webster). Britannica Encyclopedia states that, "nationalism, ideology based on the premise that the individual's loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpass other individual or group interests," (502). There are negative and positive arguments for both separating and fusing nationalism and patriotism. The positive statement for their fusion is contained in stronger views of communal identity. Both concepts embody powerful statements on the moral priority of the community. The positive view therefore involves the direct normative assimilation of nationalism and patriotism to communitarianism. This can be termed the "positive assimilation model" (qtd.in Andrew). Richard Marcus says that,

George Orwell wrote that nationalism was one of the worst enemies of peace. He defined nationalism as the feeling that your way of life, country, or ethnic group were superior to others. These types of feelings lead a group to attempt to impose their morality on any given situation. When those standards were not met, more often than not, war would result. In contrast he stated that patriotism was the feeling

of admiration for a way of life etc. and the willingness to defend it against attack. The obvious difference between the two is that while patriotism is a passive attitude, nationalism is aggressive by nature (Marcus).

The negative reading of the "fusion" views patriotism and nationalism with equal contempt as blemishes on political and moral discourse. This can be termed the "mutually disagreeable model." There are a number of background points to this model. First, patriotism is seen as a verbal "sleight of hand" to avoid the pejorative connotations of nationalism; however, basically they are the same.

The separate use of patriotism therefore has a face-saving character. Second, it might well be the case that patriotism did have an older individual meaning, but since the nineteenth century that older sense has been totally lost. Patriotism is exactly the same appalling entity as nationalism. Patriotism should therefore share all the opprobrium heaped upon nationalism. The "mutually disagreeable model" was well formulated by Leo Tolstoy at the beginning of the twentieth century. Tolstoy found both ideas repellent. Despite great efforts by states to foster patriotism, it is the same doctrine as nationalism. In the final analysis, both entail the renunciation of all human dignity, common sense, and moral conscience. George Orwell states that,

Nationalism is not to be confused with patriotism. Both words are normally used in so vague a way that any definition is liable to be challenged, but one must draw a distinction between them, since two different and even opposing ideas are involved. By

‘patriotism’ it means devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people. Patriotism is of its nature defensive, both militarily and culturally. Nationalism, on the other hand, is inseparable from the desire for power. The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more power and more prestige, not for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality (Orwell).

The opposite thesis to the above is the separation of nationalism from patriotism. This again has positive and negative dimensions. The positive reading of the separation is most forcibly rendered by recent republican writers. Thus, true patriotism must be kept completely distinct from nationalism. For such republicans the language of patriotism invokes a specific love of the political institutions and laws that embody a non-dominatory concept of liberty. It is therefore about sustaining a particular way of life in a republic. Nationalism, on the other hand, is seen as a highly exclusive, prepolitical, culturally oriented attachment that is antagonistic to liberty. It is therefore deeply pernicious to confuse patriotism and nationalism, since patriotism is the theoretical and practical antidote to nationalism.

The negative reading of their separation suggests that patriotism and nationalism should be kept distinct on negative grounds. The concepts are historically different. Each has a distinct historical trajectory. Patriotism, for example, is an older terminology that has a much more intimate connection with

both the state and religious language, whereas nationalism has closer connections to modernity and secularism. However, both terms are to be mistrusted for different reasons. Both are equally objectionable as narrow, exclusive, tribal, and deleterious to human dignity. In this context, the separation between patriotism and nationalism is valid, but this redeems neither doctrine.

Nationalism and patriotism both show the relationship of an individual towards his or her nation. The two are often confused and frequently believed to mean the same thing. However, there is a vast difference between nationalism and patriotism. Nationalism; it is a belief that ones Nation and way of life is superior or exceptional in the world.

Patriotism, however, is the love of one's culture, history and customs, as well as a love of the principle of Sovereignty; the right of a people to make their own decisions for themselves. Patriotism is proud of a country's virtues and eager to correct its deficiencies; it also acknowledges the legitimate patriotism of other countries, with their own specific virtues. The pride of nationalism, however, trumpets its country's virtues and denies its deficiencies, while it is contemptuous toward the virtues of other countries. It wants to be, and proclaims itself to be, "the greatest," but greatness is not required of a country; only goodness is.

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## CHAPTER – III

**Patriotism in Mizo Drama: A Study on Lalnu Ropuiliani**

Chieftain Ropuiliani, daughter of Lalsavunga, is the leader of Denlung village, who is survived by her husband Vandula, the chief of Denlung. It is believed the period of her reign is about four years after the death of her husband. (Lemchan Khawvel I – 17) The drama *Lalnu Ropuiliani* is written by Laltluangliana Khiangte, which was published back in 1997. The drama comprises of five Acts, concluded with the death of the protagonist Ropuiliani. The drama is in the form of tragedy.

The said drama, as the name goes, is based on the story of Ropuiliani. It can be subsumed into the category of Mizo historical drama. At the beginning of the drama Ropuiliani appears as the elder daughter of the chief Lalsavunga. Attaining chieftainship from Act-IV, which she acquires as a result of her husband Vandula being chief of their village. With the demise of her husband in Act-IV, Ropuiliani inherits chieftainship. This chapter basically will scrutinize Ropuiliani's love for her village/country. It will have to investigate her life as being chieftainship running in her veins (daughter of a chief) even before obtaining full responsibility of a chieftain.

It is seen that Ropuiliani used to be a stubborn, high spirited lady who is well aware of her position as daughter of a chief. In the first exposition of the drama in which we see her mother telling her to fetch wine for the ministers in the chief's house, Ropuiliani strongly replies, "I've never heard a Sailo chief's

daughter fetching wine,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 1.1). Women are usually obedient to their parents, it is believed to be applicable so in the case of daughters of the chiefs, however Ropuiliani is different. As mentioned earlier, she is very well aware of her position as daughter of the chief, who dares to contradict her own mother when asked to fetch wine for her father’s ministers. It appears so far she is of firmly resolved character and somewhat imperious in nature. At one time heroes of the village successfully come home from hunting, the villagers thereby gather to meet their heroes at the entrance of the village; when her father tells her to accompany the villagers, she boldly replies, “I shall not go...I deliberately can’t mingle with the commoners. They’re not sons of chiefs and high-born. I cannot hold hands with the commoners, I cannot dance along with them,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 1.1).

A question can arise as to her behaviour to be a typical demeanour of a chief’s daughter. The answer itself can be given from this very drama, where her behaviour is broadly different from her sister Laltheri’s behaviour. Her sister on the other hand requests their father to join the crowd meeting the heroes of the village. Laltheri does not differentiate between the commoners and the high-borns. She eventually falls in love with a common man Chalthanga and even carries his baby. It can be seen that the attitudes and behaviours among these two daughters are very contradictory. It is shown that their father orders them to join the villagers at the entrance to meet their heroes. He says, “Go with you mother and bring the finest wine,” (Lemchan Khawvel – I 1.1). There may not be rules

regulating actions and behaviours for daughters of the chiefs, but there can be a number of notions and attitudes applicable to them.

Moreover, it is known that Lianchhiari, daughter of Dungtlang village chief, is in love with Chawngfianga, another commoner, and here the chief and his wife agree with their bondage. The chief understandingly courts Chawngfianga's messenger and says, "We can accept cutting down of branches of the fig tree in our jhoom as a female gayal and its baby," (K. Zawla 321). The daughters and sons of the chiefs usually get married, but in the case of the conduct of daughter of a chief, strict rules and guidelines are not seen. Therefore it can be said that Ropuiliani is very different from other daughters of chiefs, and her behaviour can be conceived as a rather imperious one.

It appears Ropuiliani does not deem herself to marry a commoner. She even utters these proud words when Vandula and his men come to court her, "Vandula has not a chance to see my face unless he is an offspring of the mighty Sailo clan," (Lemchan Khawvel I - 2.4). From her behaviour it can be clearly seen that she has a straight-forward character, is well aware of her birth-right, who continuously upholds the honour of her family, determined and courageous enough which makes her apparently unaware of her sex.

When she realizes her sister carrying the baby of a commoner Chalthanga, she is outraged and extremely hurt. "It is unbearable to understand that a commoner is in love with my sister," (Lemchan Khawvel I - 3.1). She firmly believes that the daughter of a chief is born only for the son of another chief, and

it is unlawful for a commoner to fall in love with her. It can be noted that this particular daughter of a chief is definitely a remarkable woman.

Disclosing Ropuiliani's inflexible character preceding her chieftainship harmonizes with her future patriotism and unwillingness to surrender. Therefore her unique and seemingly strong-willed character paves a crucial way for her glory even after she faces the British.

The actual Ropuiliani, or chieftain Ropuiliani appears from Act – IV of the drama. Her husband, the chief Vandula dies shortly after a snakebite from hunting. As a result, the sole authority of chieftainship falls in Ropuiliani's hands. Her husband's trust in her to succeed him rather than appointing his own son confirms that she is a remarkable woman. On his death bed her husband conveys,

My sons have ruled in different hills. The youngest Lalthuama shall remain with you. If he wishes to manage independently you shall give him a piece of land. And you shall abide here and go nowhere else, for there has to be built a gravestone on the hill of the chief of Denlung (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.1).

Her husband's entrustment of complete authority of chieftainship to Ropuiliani on account of his death is conspicuous and furthermore elucidates her splendour. Not only that she is the wife of a chief, she now becomes the chieftain, the ruler of their village. The moment full authority falls in her hands meets the period when British expedition metamorphoses into great annoyance. She dares not welcome the Rahsi (circle officer) sent by the British. When Dara (Rahsi)

announces that a British personnel has come to see her, it provokes a massive antagonism to the chieftain of Denlung. She proudly shows her resentment and unwillingness to go, “Even if they are seventy times British, I will not submit myself even once under them. We are the true inhabitants. A guest does not command his host. A good guest performs accordingly as his host,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.2).

Her words remind us of the Dwamish Chief Seathl’s words to the President Pierce which was spoken in 1855, ten years before British expedition in Mizoram. We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He leaves his father’s graves and his children’s birth-right is forgotten. The sight of your cities pains the eyes of the red man. But perhaps it is because the red man is a savage and does not understand (seattle).

Being the owner of the land and holder of responsibilities, Ropuiliani knows she has the right and privilege, and it can be said that with her conscience she tries her best to uphold it. In 1856 there arises a battle between the white men and the previous native dwellers of Washington. The white men put to use cannonballs and even shells. The owners of the land are defeated in this battle, only two among the invaders are dead, while eighteen Indians die and approximately 80 of them are injured (Battle of Seattle(1856)).

The original owners of the land are not able to gather themselves to fight after this battle which lead to a tragic situation of not being able to protect their land. Ropuiliani is not troubled by the question of victory or defeat over the British, she merely fights back to protect her land.

Ropuiliani is dauntless in her words which she proudly shows to protect her land, but she is captured without a fight. The question if she is a patriot can be asked in this drama. Aristotle described tragic hero as, “should be some one of high fame and flourishing prosperity.” (qtd.in *The theory of drama*, A. Nicoll, 104). Chaucer also described as follows:

Tragedie is to seyn a certyn storie,

As olde bokes maken us memorie,

Of him that stood in great prosperitee,

And is y-fallen out of heigh degree

Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly. (qtd.in *The Theory of Drama*, A. Nicoll 105)

Ropuiliani is a chief who is above all her subjects, maintains total jurisdiction in her village. The road to her downfall can construct ideologies regarding the concept of tragedy. Her apprehension without the slightest resistance against the British makes her bold words evaporate and lack vitality. It can be asked whether she is brave enough or not. It is desirous if there was not

only her strong words but more action. She would say daring words as these: “There is no one above me save a hawk. They would be in a serious trouble once I raise my hand upon them,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.4). “A land cannot be conserved unless the head is moved and the feet shifted. We should bear a head which is willing to die in preserving our land if needs be,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.4). Her words imply how fearless she is, and it appears she does not dread that much.

Apart from assassinating Satinkhara however she does not do much. Satinkhara is an interpreter who is also an ambassador between the British and the chiefs and in return demands domesticated dogs and poultry from them. He goes to Ropuiliani’s village thrice for negotiations. He is sent in the place of the Rahsi Dara who has become hesitant seeing her. It brings to his death as a result. Assassinating Satinkhara is hard to accept as an action of resistance. It is disagreeable to accept it as an action to assassinate the interpreter and ambassador where there is absence of fighting their primary enemy and rival. This incident can be taken as a minor incident.

Act – IV Scene – 2 of the drama says a British army J.F. Stewart is killed by a Lakher chief Hausata. This episode has taken place before Ropuiliani has come to the throne. She comments, “If only the other chiefs followed Hausata’s footsteps, who on earth would bring guns together?” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.2). But she herself does not follow his footsteps even after she rules, assassinating the non-Britisher while on the other hand loathing the British so much. Satinkhara is not even a Mizo, he is of a Tuikuk tribe (Lalsangzuali Sailo 108). Ropuiliani’s

husband Vandula dies in Denlung during the summer of 1889 (18). Lalsangzuali Sailo writes the date which Ropuiliani is captured as the 8<sup>th</sup> August 1893 by Shakespear and his men (135). This means she rules for four years and it appears she is rather tardy in her movements.

Meanwhile other chiefs fight with the British. Liangkhaia in his *Mizo Chanchin* wrote Captain Browne and his men are shot at by Manga's descendants in September 1890. Liankunga's village opened fire on Lt. Tytler and his men on September 25 and 26. He also wrote that Lalsavunga's descendants opened fire on R.B. Mc Cabe and his men on February 29, 1892 (*Mizo Chanchin* 143 – 144). Moreover in the south, Rolura's descendants opened fire on the British at Lungrang and Zote on March 16, 1892. Lalvansanga also opened fire on Shakespear and his men at Chhipphir on March 16, 1892 (Lalsangzuali Sailo 113).

It is certain from what we have highlighted that there are a number of chiefs who fight back the British conceding the fact that a number of chiefs are defeated. It is almost implausible to perceive Ropuiliani stays mute long enough while other chiefs are being active and struggling. It can occur that only her words are brave and no action is to be seen. If we say the reason lies in the fact that she is a woman, the assumption itself is contrast to the fact that she has the thought of a man when looking at her behaviour.

Her seemingly utilization of four whole years in plotting to fight back can imply she is a weak chieftain rather than a strong one. Her bravery and patriotic



feeling can also be questioned seeing her unwillingness to fall under the hands of the British. She neither surrenders to the British nor fights back, she just sits idle and observes for four years. Her conduct can be assumed as an invalid act of a heroic character of a Drama.

On the contrary Ropuiliani is not totally sitting idle. She goes against the British expedition as best as she can. This mere protest is spiteful enough for the British. She protests against a yearly tax of two rupees, not only that she refuses to participate when chiefs of different hills are called together at Lunglei, she refuses to even send a representative. She also refuses to give a Coolie when asked. She strongly defends her village, "I shall not send my subjects as carriers. No one hesitates to suffer their strengths for me...they assist their chief in every possible way and in all respects. My subjects shall not exhaust their energy as coolies to the British," (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.4).

Some Mizo chiefs readily surrender to the British during this time, it is a prominent act for Ropuiliani, the only woman chief not wanting to surrender. She faithfully stands for her subjects, sustains her chieftainship and does not have the tendency to surrender in preserving her land. The British show no mercy to the Mizos the minute they set foot on Lushai Hills. They burn Mizo houses on their expedition in 1844. Woodthorpe says,

"When the British troops arrived at the hills, they started burning houses and destroying grains, and ultimately, Chief Lalchhokhla, head of the raiding party was sentenced and transported for life imprisonment," (Woodthorpe 12).

The Mizos antecedently set out to raid the British during this time. “It appears that between 1854 -1862, the Mizos raided the plains 19 times in which 107 persons were killed and about 186 persons taken as captives including Mary Winchester, minor white girl,” (Hluna 34). Aiming at stopping these actions at first the British later decide to govern Mizoram, which results in a massive tumult.

The hostile attitude of the Mizos is indeed the main contentions of the British Government, so much so that the Governor General of India, though seem reluctant, is compelled to order an armed invasion by sending forces into the Hills (Lewin 256). They therefore set out with an army to capture Mizoram. Many Mizo chiefs yield to the British while Ropuiliani does not set her heart on submission. These defeated chiefs as it appears in the drama are: Chief Seipuia, Chief Vanhnuaiichhana, Chief Lalthangvunga, Chief Lalluauva, Chief Sangliana and Chief Lalruma (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.5). Six powerful chiefs readily surrender to the British, while the only female chief Ropuiliani sticks to her standard and does not give in to protect her land. She can be said a very patriotic one.

A number of Ropuiliani’s resentment of the British can be seen. But why does she not send her heroes to fight with them, does she spend the whole four years wasting time in plotting how to fight back or does she arduously remain silent to protect her land? It shows in the drama that the British at first try to win Ropuiliani without a fight and be in peace with her. “The British heads who arrive with a great army want to have a decent relationship with you,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.2) says the Rahsi Dara to Ropuiliani.

Let us see her reply in this regard, “Let them stop creating riots if they want peace...tell them I demand them to not create further commotion,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.2). Ropuiliani’s concept in demanding them not to create disturbance here can indicate exemption from taxes in her village, to stop trying to govern them and respect the dwellers of the land. She cannot comprehend being called to participate at the assembly at Lunglei.

She believes that being the chief, anyone wishes to see her should come to her village. “He who wants to see me shall come to my village,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.2). Captain J. Shakespear’s words, “I want all of you to accept the Queen’s orders in order to avoid battles,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.3) confirms the British’s wish to negotiate in the absence of battles and win them over by diplomacy.

J. Shakespear does not have any known intention of attacking Ropuiliani on hearing she does not appear at the Lunglei assembly. When the Rahsi Dara complains her absence and hostility to the Queen, J. Shakespear replies, “Notify her the proceedings of the meeting and she has to abide by them. She will pay taxes and supply coolies,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.3). Even when Dara reluctantly replies and says, “Master, I cannot repress her. Send Satinkhara, for he is wise and has more expertise to negotiate. It will be best if you go there yourself,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.3). He simply replies, “I shall not get under way to see an old chieftain. I shall capture her if she does not abide by them,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.3).

It is shown that he does not want to go to Ropuiliani's village to speak to her. Instead he attempts to repress her using a Rahsi in lieu of himself and has no intention of attacking Denlung village except when there emerges unavoidable circumstances. Therefore it can be assumed that Ropuiliani is not in a haste to send her heroes to battle if she is not attacked. She merely says, "If they tread on my land we will shoot them instantaneously," (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.3). It can be seen here she does not intend to be the first one to attack.

One thing to be noted is that Ropuiliani's village Denlung is composed of small inhabitants. It is said that the total household in her village is 200, making it a total of 785 households after adding up the villages of Vandula's descendants (Lalsangzuali Sailo 97). It is also said that Ropuiliani and her youngest son Lalthuama are more unanimous as compared with her other sons. She gives him a settlement at Mualthum. Ropuiliani's own village does not have much dwellers, it comprises of only 200 households. Let us take a look at the condition of her rivals. J. Shakespear's record as retold by Liangkhaia says: the entire army coming from the north comprises of 3,380 soldiers led by Brigadier General Tregear and 1,180 soldiers led by Col. Skinners, adding up to 4,560 soldiers! Moreover there are 3,327 soldiers in the south (Mizo Chanchin 140). It should not be an easy task for a barely 200 household village to fight even the army of the north with 4,560 soldiers.

It can be assumed Ropuiliani is aware of the circumstance and is disinclined for the matter. This can be seen in the drama. She says to Rahsi Satinkhara, "If your British Seksiara (Shakespear) resolves to stand in his words I will summon

my brothers of the north, Dothiauva, Liankhama, Lalburha, Buangtheuva, Vanphunga, Dorawta, Lalzika and Hrangkung and I will drive them out of our land,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.4). It appears she does not intend to fight on her own, but plans to strike as many men as possible in joint forces if needs be. It also appears she does not estimate to succeed by herself, thereby having no prior intention of opening fire on the British soldiers. This is the reason why inspite of extremely detesting the British, she braces herself in her throne for four years. Their vast difference in numbers, can be assumed prevents her from attacking unless the situation becomes indispensable.

Ropuiliani cannot tolerate Rahsi Satinkhara as time goes by, “I am getting sick of seeing their Rahsi. I totally loathe him. Is not there anyone who would put his face as far away as possible,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.5). Knowing this Hnawncheuva kills Satinkhara. This assassination takes place with the full knowledge of Ropuiliani. This incident intensifies the rivalry between Denlung village and British heads to a great extent. The agitation succeeding Satinkhara’s assassination is not seen much in the drama, however her son Lalthuama along with Hnawncheuva are seized as a consequence, bringing about greater trouble (Lalsangzuali Sailo 64). During the four years of her reign she assembles her accomplices only once which is the night before she is captured. Trusting the British would attack on account of Satinkhara’s assassination, “Let them come. We shall battle. As for us we shall have to keep watch. Let me gather my relatives who are chiefs and near chiefs and brace ourselves to drive these foreigners out

of our land. Assemble tonight, for time has become inadequate, we need to be cautious in scheming battle,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.5).

It looks like the situation has become unavoidable. Presuming the British would surely attack on account of Satinkhara’s assassination, she hastily assembles her accomplices. The chiefs she assembles here are Chief Dokhama, Chief Dokulha and his son Lalthuama. Chief Dokhama answers, “I will talk to the chiefs of the north and we shall show up once we are ready. We shall drive the British out of our land when we are thoroughly organized to fight,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 4.5). It can doubtlessly be said that Ropuiliani makes her move a little late to gather other chiefs when she has consumed four whole years literally doing nothing.

If we look closely we can see that she finally makes her move not because her patriotic feeling is insufficient or the like, but because of her consideration of their conditions. However in Drama it is a significant experience for a tragic hero suffering at his own cost by reason of not doing what he has to do. Aristotle called it hamartia and described tragic hero as, “The ideal tragic hero must be an intermediate kind of person, a man not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice or depravity but by some error judgement,” (qtd.in Aristotle’s Poetics, Tilak 92). Ropuiliani’s patriotism results with a problem because she does not act fast enough for herself, and she pays the price of her own unhurriedness.

There is no mention of intention and later abortion of attacking the British in the drama, however, her slowness in attacking and long-time preparation can be called an error of judgement and results in paying her own price in a jail. One reasonable reason of her catastrophe is her patriotic feeling that makes her unwilling to surrender. Besides, as mentioned earlier, she does not want to be the first one to attack. She has been waiting so long for them to wage war on her village that there is no significant time left to make her move. This can be another reason. Ropuiliani could be blamed for this state of affairs, but considering closely we can see that she cannot be completely blamed. For she is the chief of her village, she is fully aware of her condition and strength and has to consider the safety and administration of her village. Humphrey House says, "It may be accompanied by normal imperfection, but it is not itself a moral imperfection, and in the purest tragic situations the suffering hero is not morally to blame," (qtd. in Aristotle's Poetics, Tilak 93). Pondering over their condition Ropuiliani cannot take all the blame.

Even though her consideration of her villagers and their vast difference in numbers result in her unhurriedness, they are the reasons why she falls. There is also one big mistake she makes, which is her failure and ignorance to suspect the Rahsi Dara as a spy when he arrives on the night of scheming the battle. They believe the British would be very disappointed on hearing the assassination of Satinkhara by Hnawncheuva, and this is why they call an emergency meeting. Her big mistake in the midst of that threatening atmosphere is her failure to suspect Rahsi Dara arriving with a chicken as peace offering after they have cold-

bloodedly killed the other Rahsi. It is very doubtful for the side having a better and supreme army to carry a peace offering chicken. The Mizos have abundant maxims, one of which is, “A woman’s wisdom does not extend beyond the public water point,” (Khangte 84).

Although Ropuiliani is a chief, she is a woman, and here her sexual status can be said manifested in this occasion. Rahsi Satinkhara is killed with her approval in her own village, it becomes impossible for another Rahsi to set foot on Denlung village. The arrival of Rahsi Dara in the midst of all these should have to be considered as something of utmost importance or some spy intervention, and looking at the affairs of both sides there is an air of extreme hatred. It can be said their ignorance in suspecting him as a spy, seizing him and cross-questioning him certifies her femininity.

She is not cautious enough, and in the case of Rahsi Dara, he has hesitated to go to Denlung in the past and therefore requests to send Satinkhara to represent him. Their failure to suspect Dara arriving in her village fearlessly succeeding the hesitation of his friend to enter Denlung village and his later assassination in the core of their critical atmosphere corresponds with the maxim a woman’s wisdom does not extend beyond the public water point. This is her big mistake. When a tiger falls in their noose-trap and every bachelor and father of the village set out to trap the beast, it is an ordinary act. But it is a prominent error of judgement for the chieftain to take an annoying guest who is also on the side of their rival for granted. Rahsi Dara’s speech while going out is a good soliloquy while on the other hand a destruction for Ropuiliani, “It would be wise to set upon when they



are already being hard-pressed... There might be no other time as opportune as this. It looks like I am successful in spying,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 5.1). Consequently two days later Shakespear and his army raid her village and capture her in their unprepared state.

Ropuiliani's mind stays undefeated though captured. She does not surrender, but is taken by force, and there can be no higher price paid for the love of one's land as this. The British tempt her many times to surrender, but she does not once give in. “Plotting a detestable conspiracy and winning by force is against the law. He who acts against the law is a criminal,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 5.2) she dares to challenge them, and stands firm when she thinks she is right even before the British.

Shakespear talks about her, “She is the only person to dare go against the Queen's orders,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 5.2). Her capture almost feels like a redemption for the British. Shakespear again comments, “Now we have captured the Denlung chief, who is the most mind trigger of all, who suspends the growth of our rule and the root of all rebellion... There is no more problem to face once Ropuiliani's mouth is shut,” (Lemchan Khawvel I - 5.3). They know Ropuiliani is the major obstruction for controlling Mizoram, and this very knowledge is the evidence proving her patriotism.

She is locked up at Lunglei, but later they deem this is not right. They tempt her for subjugation but it is in vain. They believe if she remains in Lunglei she would continually speak to the minds of the people and new problems would

arise. Her captor Shakespear's speech confirms how Ropuiliani has a unique ability to touch the hearts of the people and how powerful is her essence. "Although she is behind bars the people will rejoice knowing she is still alive. They will hate her captors and another rebellion will soon take place," (Lemchan Khawvel I - 5.3).

They believe it is best to lock her up outside Mizoram, and so they try to persuade her one last time. Her ministers and especially her son cannot bear to understand her being sent away. Her ministers advise her to surrender, Lalthuama tries to convince her, "If we are not there our subjects will be controlled by the British, will it be wise to leave them behind without a chief?" (Lemchan Khawvel I - 5.3). Ropuiliani on the other hand never thinks about surrendering. She is now an elderly of 70 years but still daringly replies, "I want to show them that although they defeat us with force, they do not defeat our spirit. I counter them with words and action, I cannot turn my words into lies," (Lemchan Khawvel I - 5.3).

Ropuiliani does not want to take her food anymore, and as she has grown old she becomes very weak after eight days. (Lemchan Khawvel-I 5.4) She makes a will to her son to bury her beside her husband's grave. She says these words before she dies, "I am in this state because of keeping your father's will," (Lemchan Khawvel-I 5.4). These words are said to have been interpreted over and over.

Let us investigate the reason why she does not surrender under the British is whether it is her love of her land or keeping her husband's will. Her husband's

will goes like this, “This land is our land, it is forbidden to give it to others. Do not give our land to anyone,” (Lemchan Khawvel-I 4.1). She dies soon after she speaks these words. In his will he also asks her to be chief of Denlung village and remain his successor, and that victory is in the heart and encourages her not to lose heart because of her femininity. Ropuiliani mentions her keeping of her husband’s will only once and that is to her son Lalthuama.

Whenever she has dealings with the British she never mentions the idea whether they are to stand firm and fight back or surrender because of her husband’s will. To not surrender by keeping her husband’s will is also not mentioned in her meetings with her ministers and other chiefs about the British. Although there is no mention of her being a good wife to her husband, her deeds clearly prove it. But it looks like her resistance is not only because of her husband’s will. She is a person who dares to lay down her life for her subjects, it can be true to say that she goes to jail as a substitute of her subjects.

She is tempted many times to surrender, and when Lalthuama begs her to surrender she has not a slight intention of doing so, “If we are not there our subjects will be controlled by the British. Will it be wise to leave them without a chief?” (Lemchan Khawvel-I 5.3). Even when her own son tells her that to just surrender would be a good thing for everyone, she stands firm. She replies, not mentioning her husband’s name this time, “If we fully surrender without any leftover the new generations might blame us. I want to show that even if they defeat us in physical force they do not defeat our minds,” (Lemchan Khawvel-I 5.3). She does not feel it wise to surrender as the whole clan, does not want the

coming generations to blame her, so she wants to keep up her principle and forget about surrendering.

When one of the jail guards asks her to promise to stop fighting the British and tempts her that if she does so, she would be brought back to her village, she replies with a determination of not surrendering, “I was born to resist the British! Tempt me no more to betray my land. I am looking out for freedom of my land than riches and prosperity,” (Lemchan Khawvel - I 5.4). It is clear here that she does not surrender by reason of not wanting to betray her land. Her keeping of her husband’s will cannot be argued as she herself admits it to her son, but it can be seen that her resistance towards the British is not only because of her husband’s will. She shows her concern over her husband’s will as a wife, but she does not surrender for the love of her land. She feels it not right to surrender when thinking about the future and therefore continues to resist the British until her death.

The cause of her death does not look like sheer old age. Her fasting is mentioned in the drama, the Jail Superintendent R.W. Murray reports as, “The state prisoner Ropui Lieni Lushei chieftainess died on the situation of old age,” (Sailo 166). She might still be alive if she was not in jail.

Though she is a woman she can be regarded as the blocking rock sitting on the invasion of Mizoram for the British. Superintendent J. Shakespear during this time is very well aware of this situation. He comments,

Her influence is distinctly hostile to us as it only natural when it is considered that that she is the daughter of one great chief Vanolel who always opposed us...it is

clear to me that all Lalthuama's obstinacy and troublesomeness has been due to the influence of his Mother....she has great influence over the rulers of her other son's villages (qtd.in Tlawm ve lo Lalnu Ropuiliani 101).

It is clear from the above statement that Ropuiliani is their biggest problem. The reason why they want to send her out of Mizoram is that she still speaks in the minds of the people, it looks like they fear rebellion should occur if the people knew she has not surrendered. The intensity of how much the British are driven crazy by an old woman confirms Ropuiliani's identity and power, her value and love of her land. They feel it best to put her at Chittagong jail, for they cannot be at peace if she is not sent away. The Chittagong Commissioner W.B. Oldham during this time writes in his letter to the to the Chief Secretary,

The presence of these two persons in the hills is mischievous even in confinement; and for some time, to come they can be enlarged. Ropui Lieni should in my opinion be kept in the Chittagong Jail where her loyal kinsmen, some of whom have often expressed a wish to come to Chittagong, can visit her (qtd.in Tlawm ve lo Lalnu Ropuiliani 151).

Accordingly the Denlung chief is locked away in Chittagong jail. She is treated there as a state prisoner and the British receive her respectfully. The fact that she is not treated as a regular prisoner but as a state prisoner shows that the British do not think lowly of her. The date on which they arrive at the Chittagong Jail is said to be the 18 April, 1894 (Sailo 157). Her imprisonment is not on grounds of murder or theft and the British take it seriously because of the true

reason which is patriotism. They even authorize four Jail Warders to guard Ropuiliani and her son Lalthuama.

She has to leave her Denlung village where she would walk about powerfully, where her subjects respect her and are willing to do anything she needs. Clearly there is no other reason, for the British many times have tempted her to surrender, if she would surrender she would still be with her subjects and still occupy her position under the British, but she feels this proposition is not right. She loves her land, and the concept of freedom to her is to spend her time and days savouring freely the beauty of nature with her people. Rabindranath Tagore in one poem has dreamed of this kind of place,

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up

Into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way

Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee

Into ever-widening thought and action-

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,

Let my country awake (Gitanjali 35).

The liberated life she used to live and dream of, Ropuiliani has to leave them behind for jail for the sake of loving her land, the sacrifice she makes is deep enough. As we see in the drama she no longer wants to eat the food she is provided in the prison and goes fasting. This is because the jail warden tempts her again to surrender. It is shown again how strong-minded she is,

There is no way I will give in to the British, I will never eat their food anymore. It is fine if my body suffers. This body preserves its mother land, and know that it is fine even if it cannot save it (Lemchan Khawvel 15.4).

Ernest Hemingway has said, "A man is not made for defeat," (The Oldman and the Sea 98). It appears to him that to be born only to be defeated is not worth at all. This short phrase has been a psalm to people who never surrender. It is clear that Ropuiliani also has no intention of surrendering. She has no intention to surrender only because of their vast differences in the quality of arms and the quantity of soldiers. Although she fails physically she tries to make sure she does not yield. These words are truly reflected in her life, "A man can be destroyed, but not defeated," (98). She is not able to protect her land and her village falls consequently under the British, but the British do not defeat her. They

can never defeat her feelings. If the victor in a battle was measured with the mind which does not yield, it can be said that Ropuiliani is the conqueror.

It is very difficult to accept that she dies of '*sheer old age*' as alleged by the administration. It is more logical that her health succumbs to overwhelming pressures imposed upon her by the British and that she has to deal with wearisome invaders with their ceaseless demands and forcing her people to servitude. The trauma she suffers incessantly takes a mighty toll on her mentally and physically leading to her demise while fighting for her honour, land and people till her last stand.

What seems to be evident is the fact that with her death, the general movement against the British rule also collapses. It now becomes easier for the British to subdue other Mizo chiefs. Now that their leader is no more, the people in general also discard the idea of resistance. Messages are sent to the villages informing people to surrender their guns, and from Ropuiliani's village alone 100 guns are extorted and the entire collection amount to as many as 500 guns (Sangkima 122).

From all these accounts it becomes apparent that Ropuiliani is the architect of Mizo resistance to colonial rule. Her character exhibits the greatness of mind for she can wield strong influences upon other Mizo chiefs, more so because the period coincides when Mizo chiefs fight their alien enemies alone as inter-clan feud in the form of war is very common which results in impracticability to stage joint confrontation against the British. It is also a time when the chiefs are not



accustomed to the idea of making common and formidable alliance with their neighbouring chiefs. Therefore, in this background, Ropuiliani's role becomes even more significant and forms a part and parcel of the freedom movement and hence belongs to the galaxy of freedom fighters.

As an iron lady, she prefers at her old age to remain in prison till her death than to serve alien master. She subscribes to an example of the highest standard of patriotism. That the colonial administrators do not spare her, all show that she joins hands with other freedom fighters in upsetting the Imperial designs in varied forms.

The remarkability of Chieftainess Ropuiliani is her unshakeable ambitions, her dignity and principles, unassailable and charismatic authority which makes even her contemporary Mizo chiefs consider her a symbol and leader in the resistance movement against the foreign rule. Though deeply grief-stricken and yearning for her homeland and her people, she refuses to surrender to the British till the end. Her character indeed shows a rare kind of exceptional qualities and hence proves to be truly a 'Queen'. It may have been perhaps for these reasons that even her captors look upon her with great regard and respect that instead of putting her with other inmates like a scandalous criminal, she is accommodated in the European ward of Chittagong Jail so much so that even the status of a 'State Prisoner' is accorded to her. For her alone the post of four personal guards is temporarily created and all these clearly are manifestations of respect, admiration and esteem held by her captors.

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## CHAPTER - IV

**Patriotism in Mizo Drama: A Study on Pasaltha Khuangchera**

The drama *Pasaltha Khuangchera* is divided into five Acts; with five scenes in Act- I, three scenes in Act –II, five scenes in Act –III, four scenes in Act –IV and four scenes in Act –V. When we read William Shakespeare’s tragedy *Hamlet* we see that the central figure from the opening to the end of the play is *Hamlet*. Similarly in this drama, the whole story is centred around the life and conducts of Khuangchera. It appears the very plot of the story is driven by Khuangchera’s character, he is the most popular person in the drama. The drama is the manifestation of several things happening in Khuangchera’s life and how he faces difficulties. It is tragically concluded with the death of the protagonist, hence the drama is tragedy.

Let us take a look at the general theme (plot) of the drama. There is one certain Pasaltha (warrior) who is the son of a widow, his name is Khuangchera. He is from Parvatui village. He is of good natured and brave, a very beneficial and serviceable one to the society. And there is Neihthanga, the son of a minister of the village court who emulates and plots against him. For this reason, although his greatness and good deeds reach the ear of the chief, he never earns any praise. He marries Thanchhumi, one of the fairest ladies of the village, and when he sends messengers to court her, Neihthanga also sends his own messengers to her. Thanchhumi’s mother favours Neihthanga for he is the son of a minister, but her

father and grandfather make the decision and Khuangchera becomes Thanchhumi's husband.

The greatest prize of the time '*Nopui*' is presented to Neihthanga and the name of Khuangchera is called upon only in times of confrontation of wild beasts and natural enemies, as he never retreats even from tigers. Thus he leaves Parvatui and migrates to Reiek village. The British expedition comes into force during this time, the British and the Mizos open fire on one another at Changsil. Khuangchera correspondingly takes part in this gunfight and he endures boldly till it ceases. His friend Ngurbawnga follows him and consequently meets his death.

### **Khuangchera character and Patriotism**

Khuangchera is a humble, daring, patient and honest person. Many times it can be seen his bravery and uniqueness as though the purpose of the drama is to disclose his bravery and sacrifice for the land. Looking closely at his character he is a calm, steadfast, humble and honest person who bears the heart of courage. Thangtawna comments on Khuangchera's character as, "Khuangchera cannot be competed by anyone. He is both brave and strong, has both the abilities to be hospitable and diligent, and furthermore patient and kind," (Khiangte 21).

At one time a tiger falls in their noose-trap and by the time the others hear about it Khuangchera and Thangtawna have already gone trailing. Though in the face of wild beasts, he is always the first to set out for the safety and security of his village. His character is purely a hospitable one. Once there arises a problem in one of the families of his village. Ngalngêta accuses the village priest of

stealing a fowl and tries to kill him. He kills the mother of Thangchhinga who is a small boy. He persists at his home, the villagers go wild and nobody dares confront him.

The villagers seek the chief's defence. Their only hope here is Khuangchera. He confronts Ngalngêta and their problems are easily taken care of. As it is clear the society needs him, even the chief calls him, "You, my warrior champion," (76). The other warrior of the village Hempua also comments on his superiority, "Khuangchera is loved by all, prominent as the morning star and is likely to ascend above the clouds," (35). The praise of a fellow warrior by another warrior proves who Khuangchera really is. It will however be good to note that he is a fatherless orphan.

Khuangchera is a person who sacrifices his life for the society. This drama is tragedy as mentioned, which is tragically concluded with the death of the protagonist. It is said that in a world of Christianity a person has to die in order to live, with hopes for life after death. As for Khuangchera, he has to be willing to die in living in order to be Khuangchera. There is no such vision of life after death, he is ever ready to die to become one man for his land. One of the ministers briefly tells of his interesting life story, "He is a person who constantly offers his life for his people," (39). His wife Chhumi's grandfather's words certifies who Khuangchera really is, "To refuse a person like Khuangchera is to bring displeasure to Mother Nature," (51).

### **Khuangchera and his land**

From the story of this drama it can be understood that the Mizos live in villages under the leaderships of their particular chiefs. Khuangchera used to be an inhabitant of Parvatui, but he does not reside there forever. He migrates to Reiek village. It can be said that Khuangchera has two villages during his lifetime. Parvatui is chief Lianphunga's village, regardless of whether it is a charming village or not, it can be assumed there are some unfavourable circumstances since its best warrior leaves it for good. Khuangchera is a warrior who fights till death protecting his land, as this is the conclusion of the drama. Let us see if Khuangchera ever loves his previous village where he emigrates from.

This drama has five Acts, the greater part of the drama, from Act –I to Act –II are concentrated on the village of Parvatui. The latter two Acts are episodes taking place following his arrival at Reiek village. He is energetic and impossible to outrun in protecting the society for which Neihthanga has to say, “How obstructive is our Khuangnema,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera 2.2). It is evident that even though he does not earn a Nopui, judging on his acts of constantly going ahead of a Nopui bearer Neihthanga, the more glorious one with the help of whom the society benefits is Khuangchera. A particular upa (minister) comments on Khuangchera's continual sacrifice for the society, “Khuangchera is indeed a man of sacrifice for his land,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera 2.2).

K. Thanzauva describes a Mizo warrior as, “He is unafraid, unflinching, unfeared, unbeaten, who never flees from enemies and wild beasts and rather dares to lay down his life,” (SAIP 37). It can be seen in the drama that Khuangchera always leads the group surrounding wild beasts for killing purpose when in hunting. He is the one who rescues Neihthanga, who craves for popularity from a tiger and kills it. He fights an overgrown tiger with his life for his society, dangers never make him retreat. His rival Neihthanga confirms his dedication and bravery as, “If not for Khuang-mi-huaia I would have been eaten whole inside the enclosure,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera, 2.3). A person to be praised by a rival who consistently tries to belittle him and never thinks about showing kindness is Khuangchera. He is also the person who brings in Ngaihsii’s dead body which is being killed by a wild beast.

It can be assumed that during this period a number of man-eating beasts prevail. Consequently it can be seen that the warriors are valuable in the society and women and children are comforted by their presence. B. Lalthangliana quotes, “The warriors are the defenders of the village who comfort the chief, the ministers and the natives,” (SAIP 52). While in Parvatui he is ever ready to serve his society even in the absence of war, utilizing his strength in comforting the frightening women and children. It is clear that he loves Parvatui village, wants its betterment and does everything in his power to comfort its people and can be assumed he is thought to take the lead in times of battles. Therefore it can be said Lianphunga is making a mistake of not offering him a Nopui. There is no one else in the drama who sacrifices enough for Parvatui village. The drama depicts



Khuangchera's character of serving his village whenever necessary, and this shows he is patriotic.

Let us see how things are at his other home village Reiek. Being a citizen of Parvatui he spends all of his might for his village, but his deeds as a warrior are not appreciated. Moreover he has a rival who plots against his every move. All these urge him to leave for Reiek village. This doesn't mean he does not love Parvatui village, for he faces with lots of problems in this village, and his road to marrying Thanchhumi is a difficult one. After sending messengers for courting Thanchhumi, the son of a khawnbawl upa (minister) Neihthanga treacherously sends his own messengers. Knowing Thanchhumi's parents have not come to their decision, he proudly says as the son of a khawnbawl upa, "That means they are waiting for me, we ought to send our own messengers. We will send the ones they will humbly entertain," (Pasaltha Khuangchera 3.1).

They surely send their messengers, but Thanchhumi rejects him. Being the son of a khawnbawl upa therefore has no effect. He consequently creates a chaos on the night of the marriage and acts disgracefully. Apart from almost losing his wife who sincerely loves him, the habit of constantly going ahead of the son of a khawnbawl upa while he himself merely being the son of a widow makes the eyes of some people ache. Parvatui has never been a homely village for him. It appears his human nature takes over and feels it wise to leave the village where he never earns a favour.

At the immediate beginning of the drama one of the village women Ngaihsii is bitten by a tiger. The village warriors fight the tiger here and according to eye witnesses Khuangchera is the bravest of the warriors and takes the lead in the fight. During the informal meeting of the chief and his upate (ministers) about this incident one upa says Khuangchera is the one who kills the tiger, “Our val-upa (leader among the young men) insists on Khuangchera’s interference,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera, 1.3). But Neihthanga’s father being the most trusted minister of the chief, the position of killing the tiger falls on the hands of Hempua. When Hempua is called upon and informed of this position, he argues and confirms Khuangchera is the rightful killer, “It is not I, Khuangchera is there. I am a mere follower of him with Changa. It is not in my position to kill it,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera 1.3).

Frankly and directly he adds how none of them are as good as Khuangchera, “Whether it is the issue of bearing a Nopui or killing a wild beast, we are in no position to overtake Khuangchera. He is far better than us,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera, 1.3). Even though one of the warriors and a val upa (leader among the young men) Hempua truthfully confirm Khuangchera’s killing, there is still no place for him, all because of Neihthanga’s father! Bearing a Nopui is a privileged honour in the Mizo society, but the most appropriate candidate Khuangchera is not offered to bear it. It is seen that Neihthanga, who is never the first to arrive is made to bear the Nopui. As Thawngtawna and friends describe him in the manner of a joke, “Neihthanga hurriedly arrives in the last,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera, 1.4). Neihthanga mutters on the night of the eve of Khuangchera’s

marriage to Thanchhumi, “Am I not Neihthanga, bearer of Nopui offered by the chief,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera, 3.5). For these reasons the reason why Khuangchera migrates is that he does not feel at home in Parvatui and it is not that he does not love it.

He himself talks about this migration in the drama, “In times of trouble and distress, both in the village and out in the fields I am Khuangchera, but in times of favour I am not Khuangchera. I can be kept no longer,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera 4.1). Let us furthermore take a glance outside the drama. K. Zawla explains why Khuangchera migrates as this.

Chief Lianphunga calls upon Khuangchera’s name, a man of high importance whenever he is faced with danger, but in times of favour and goodwill his name is never called. The chief and his men eat his male goat while he is away to another village and while he already feels offended (K. Zawla 267).

It could be painful for a warrior who is their main comforter in dangers to be treated disrespectfully by killing his male goat. If one is to be blamed, the chief should be accused for disrespecting and not honouring his prized warrior, even though he has complete authority in his village. Though Khuangchera does not give his answer when asked why he migrates, it can be assumed to be a very painful situation for a matured man such as himself, who readily gives up his life for his village. It is evident from what we have said that it is not that he does not love his village, the main reason why he migrates lies in the fact that there is a person in the society who is plotting against him besides feeling uncomfortable

in many ways. Villager Mangapa's words confirms Khuangchera is a good man, "You young men have a lot to learn from his life," (Pasaltha Khuangchera 4.1).

Although he migrates from Parvatui village to Reiek village he is a warrior, he is not in absence of someone to turn to. For warriors, wherever they go, society rely on them. It is clear Reiek village warmly welcomes him. He has been having a rival and receives not enough favour, but as a warrior he has to move on. For a warrior there is a place to be brave everywhere he goes. He has a relative there at Reiek, and also his friend is there, it can be assumed their chief would also welcome him.

When the chief hears the British are coming, Khuangchera is called at the chief's court along with the permanent ministers. Being taken as granted at his previous home village, his name has been called finally at the court of the chief of Reiek. When chief Sailianpuia learns Khuangchera has not arrived for the meeting at the court he orders the herald, "We will not be able to start without him. Summon him at the earliest," (Pasaltha Khuangchera 5.1). His life can be comparable to an African poet Phillis Wheatley who recounts his journey to America.

'Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land,

Taught my benighted soul to understand

That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:

Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.

Some view our sable race with scornful eye,

“Their colour is a diabolic die.”

Remember, Christians, Negros, black as Cain,

May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train (Wheatley).

Though Khuangchera has had a rival and his previous chief does not favour him, there are other chiefs, and although people would try to undermine him for being a widow's son he knows there are other people who appreciate him and knowing this he continues to move forward.

Does Khuangchera commit a mistake by migrating to Reiek village from Parvatui village? Even before he sets out to battle by which action being stimulated by his uncontrolled ego just because of a chief's words against him, it looks like there has been an error of judgment in the drama. He is constantly having a rival in Parvatui, and for this uneasiness he migrates to Reiek. After he settles himself in Reiek there is a need to battle, here as a warrior he has to fight the enemy which eventually leads to his death. There can be a question here whether or not Khuangchera might live longer if he has not migrated.

He has a good chance not to migrate if only he changes his mind about migrating. Back at Reiek their chief's wife is against his migration in a good sense, she even begs him not to go. Being begged by the wife of their chief, and not by regular people like the daughter of their neighbour or his close friends is a noble situation, but he resolves to migrate. Looking at his circumstances and

problems his migration is not exactly inappropriate, but it is the beginning of his catastrophe.

It is apparent that even if Neihthanga is there to constantly plot against him he still speaks into the minds of the people in the society. His position as a warrior is not gone. When Neihthanga creates chaos on the night of Khuangchera's marriage a Val Upa comments, "Nobody should begin any kind of mischief on the night of a warrior's marriage," (Pasaltha Khuangchera 3.5). He does not lose his position, for it is seen that even though the chief does not honour him with Nopui, the society as a whole respects him as a warrior. It is not seen whether he has any disagreement with his chief, his main enemies are Neihthanga and his father, the most trusted minister of the chief. They plot against him for their own gain, and this very conspiracy blinds the eye of the chief. He cannot control himself by reason of their chief's words after he migrates to Reiek and sets out all alone to battle. He might avoid this kind of words if he was still in Parvatui village. He makes the wrong decision twice, for once bears twice, and his life eventually suffers.

He spends his time and life for the society of Reiek, the short period of his staying at home due to his wife's giving birth which is demanded by their tradition is enough to make the chief anxious, and he is sent as soon as the period is over to open fire on the British. He even utters these words, "The people would find it long enough before Khuangchera appears on the scene of battles. Why can't they understand this short period of observance?" (Pasaltha Khuangchera 5.5). But he does not forget he has to do everything he can to preserve his land, he swears how

he loves his land and lives to preserve it, "I should do everything in my power as I live not for myself," (Pasaltha Khuangchera 5.5). During his stay in Parvatui and Reiek villages he spends most of his time not for himself, but for the chief and the society. He even works as a coolie.

Theodore Roosevelt says, "Patriotism means to stand by the country. It does not mean to stand by the president," (Grayling). Looking at the whole life of Khuangchera there is no known intention of leadership or authority. It looks like he does all he can to meet the needs of the society. It is mentioned earlier that Khuangchera is always the first to arrive at the scenes of danger while Neihthanga hurries after his friends. The British appear, destroying the natives' hunting spots in order to make way for their control over the Mizo chiefs. The British take steps with the interpreters to take control over the chiefs, making them pay taxes and eventually alienating them from their own home. It is not like a mere fight between neighbours, or just another dispute between neighbouring rivals. They are the genuine foes who come to colonize the land, it is indeed a real battle.

It is a situation where a patriot cannot simply stand and watch. Khuangchera, being a man who knows when and where to respect his chief and even serve as a coolie when necessary, feels unlawful to pay taxes in his own land. Knowing he needs to preserve his land he swears, "Men should indulge in man to man combat in order to preserve their land," (Pasaltha Khuangchera 5.3). As willing as he is to fight to preserve his land, Khuangchera is not a man who loves to fight looking at his character. All of his actions are being conducted for

the society. His objective is to do all he can for his land, “We now have to strike strategically for our subjects,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera 5.3).

It looks like he has no intention of retreating or surrendering on his flight to protect his land. When men firing at the British return, one of the men advises Khuangchera to go back home, “It is dangerous Khuangcher, it will be best for you to go back home. Even all of our bullets are not enough to kill them all,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera 5.5.). But he pursues his mission. As a person of sacrificing his entire strength to protect his land, he has no intention of going back even though he is told they will not succeed on account of their opponents’ vast number. His friend Ngurbawnga does not feel it wise to let him go alone and follows behind him.

He feels contrite having his friend follow him and says the words that touch the hearts of warriors, “Why would you follow me! I am setting out with a will to lay down my life protecting my land. I have no intention of retreating,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera 5.5). A common talk about how the brave Spartans encourage themselves goes as defeat has no place in the hearts of the Spartans. It is evident that Khuangchera has already laid down his life for his land even before he dies. Defeat has no place in him. His combat with a knife when his gun runs out of bullets proves his bravery and unwillingness to surrender. He does not want to give in and rather fights till his last breath for his land.

The world remembers the death of the Spartan king Leonidas and his three hundred men at Thermopylae in 480 B.C. There they battle with thousands of



Persian soldiers. The Persians are many and when they fire their arrows it is impossible to see the sun. On hearing this, one of the Spartan soldiers utter these bold words, “Won’t it be nice, then, if we shall have shade in which to fight them?” (Battle of Thermopylae). They surely fight in the battle, but due to their vast difference in number they all die. Likewise, in the case of Khuangchera and the British, the Mizos are outnumbered and there is a huge difference in the quality of weaponry.

But for a patriotic warrior it is forbidden to submit, “My blood has made a commitment to preserve this land that needs to be protected. Let the blood that is dripping off my veins drive the British away from our land,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera 5.5). He struggles with his knife, slashing anyone who comes near him. They shoot him dead in the end, yet he fights till the last drop of his blood for his land.

Horatio recites a very beautiful tribute for *Hamlet* and wishes the angels to welcome his soul, “Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,” (Hamlet 5.2). In another Shakespeare’s drama *Julius Caesar*, Brutus utters these words before he dies, “Caesar now be still: I kill’d not thee with half so good a will,” (Julius Caesar 5.3). Though he kills Caesar his love of his country never leaves him. He pursues on killing their king for he thinks it is the wise thing to do, but in the end it leads to his death.

Let us see Lucilius’s account of Brutus, “When you do find him, or alive or dead, He will be found like Brutus, like himself,” (Julius Caesar 5.3). Likewise,

a leader of the enemy soldiers pays homage to Khuangchera, who will always live for his land with these words over his dead body, “I have never seen anyone as daring and tough and patriotic as him... This brave soldier deserves to be praised,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera 5.5).

It can be seen from the drama Pasaltha Khuangchera that the life of the main hero, Khuangchera's life is very unique. The side of his misfortune is not mentioned much, and the life of Khuangchera is viewed in detail as though the writer is trying to tell us of his bravery and perfect quality as a warrior from the beginning of the drama to the end. It could be because the drama is a historical drama, and although the writer has a certain amount of freedom, it appears the writer mostly writes about Khuangchera's life in history as a whole. In addition, the villain of the drama Neihthanga cannot completely destroy Khuangchera. They both belong to Parvatui village, court the same girl Thanchhumi, and they both send messengers each to marry her as wife. But we see it is Khuangchera who marries her. Neihthanga on the other hand bears Nopui, the highest award of their time. We can know this from Lukawnga's words, “To think it through, you already have the honour of bearing Nopui. As for him (Khuangchera) he has not been offered by the chief (Pasaltha Khuangchera 2.2). It is apparent that apart from having the honour of Nopui, Neihthanga is no match for Khuangchera on every walks of life. Once while fighting a wild tiger Khuangchera has saved Neihthanga from the tiger, he tells how Khuangchera has saved him, “If not for the brave Khuangchera it would surely eat me whole,” (Pasaltha Khuangchera 2.3).

The remarkableness of Khuangchera is that even though he earns no praise he never stops doing the good things he claims as his duty, and his character is well suited to be an example one should follow. The reason why he is not honoured a Nopui is because of Neihthanga who is the son of the chief's Upa Min (minister). At the beginning, honouring Khuangchera is mentioned at the chief's court, but this Upa Min strongly opposes it. Khuangchera therefore could not earn the same.

To perform good deeds and giving oneself only to earn praises does not qualify to be a true sacrifice. But as for Khuangchera, it seems he does not regard all these as of any account, for he never flees for his society in times of need. On occasions like fighting wild tigers or handling mischievous persons of the society and fighting with the British he puts all his efforts in performing his tasks. He is humble, always putting his land before him which makes him great and qualify to be a patriot. He himself talks of how difficult it is to be a good warrior for the society and at the same time a good father and a husband in the form of soliloquy, "How complex it is to be both a good husband and a warrior! (Pasaltha Khuangchera 5.5). His wife recently delivers a baby, there is a need to battle and he has to set out for his land, he is in no condition at all to comfort his own family. It is clear for a normal human being how complicated his situation is. A normal man should marry a wife, look after his children and as head of the family the father has to earn bread for his family and while going to battles it is a life and death state of affairs.

Taking into account all these circumstances it can be noted that Khuangchera is a remarkably unique man, his love of his country apart from being a warrior urges him to move forward and he truly qualifies to be the hero of the drama.

During his settlements in Parvatui village his deeds as a warrior are worthy to be honoured, but he does not receive any because of his rival Neihthanga. The villain Neihthanga tries everything in his power to prevail over him, on reading the drama we can see that Neihthanga is busy plotting commotions on the night of his marriage. Whether their chief is a cruel one or not is not mentioned anywhere in the drama, but it is seen that the eyes of his intuition are made blind by his Upa Min Neihthanga's father. He loses his best warrior solely because of his most trusted minister who wants his son to be more popular and praised than Khuangchera.

We have said earlier that Khuangchera migrates from Parvatui village to Reiek village. It can be said the main reason he migrates is the villain of the drama Neihthanga. He outstrips Khuangchera of the honour of Nopui, sends his own messengers for the hand of Thanchhumi after Khuangchera, and if not for Thanchhumi's grandfather Khuangchera might not marry her. Khuangchera is willing to do everything for the society, but he also has to think about his family and his own life. As a father he has to preserve the honour of his family. Being the son of a widow he apparently is not able to attain his suitable destiny. Taking into account such conditions it seems the right thing for him to migrate.

If he didn't migrate he might have faced with more problems. It seems wise to migrate for his rivals are more powerful than he. To flee from problems out of fear of facing them can be a very unpleasant matter for the character of a dramatic hero, however it appears his migration accounts for fear of Neihthanga. He has a relative in his proposed village, we see the village's blacksmith is a close relative of Khuangchera. He says to his friend Ngurbawnga, "Your village's blacksmith is a close relative of mine," (Pasaltha Khuangchera 3.4). Moreover his friend Ngurbawnga invites him to migrate to his village. He feels Khuangchera would feel at home there, "Every young men and women of our village might have heard the name (Khuangchera). Come settle there, you would find comfort in it," (Pasaltha Khuangchera 3.4). The village being the home of his best friend and a relative, it is a tempting invitation for Khuangchera to settle there at last.

Besides, it can be assumed that every society wants and welcomes a warrior to settle in their village. Therefore it looks like he is not fleeing after all, and his migration is mainly due to his concern for the family's future. His new village warmly welcomes him and he promisingly becomes the village's best warrior: this exactly is 'patriot'. He is brave everywhere, whether Parvatui or Reiek. He is not troubled by earning slaves, the most important thing in his life is that he never retreats nor runs away, no matter where he is.

As said earlier patriotism is sacrificing oneself for his country. Judging from this point of view, if we take a close look at this drama, Khuangchera is a brave warrior who spends all his life for his land, sacrificing all that he is for the love of his land. He is truly a brave man, and lives honourably till the end as a

protagonist of a drama should be. He does what he has to do boldly and never flees from anything. Though he has no one to favour him he never stops doing good things for the society, he does his duty righteously and respectfully regardless of time and place. This brave soldier indeed deserves to be honoured.

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## CHAPTER – V

## CONCLUSION

Patriotism does not end in the definition love of one's country. A true patriot should think for the betterment of his land and do everything for the good of his land, not only in times of war but also in peaceful times. He should fight with a readiness to lay down his life in times of war. He should have the quality of a good citizen even in peaceful times. One thing is certain from the two dramas *Lalnu Ropuiliani* and *Pasaltha Khuangchera*. In the case of Khuangchera he already has a position of a warrior, he is a gentle person looking at his character, he cannot understand being falsely judged, lives patiently to be a good citizen, and although he emigrates from Parvatui village the fact that Reiek young men look to him as their role model justifies he is quite a good citizen.

He is worthy of being a patriot, but he faces many problems in his personal life. This makes it look like he cannot become a man he is supposed to be. Ropuiliani's drama is a good example of feminine strength and power. She is brave, strong-willed, and all her acts in protecting the land she loves can be considered too much for an old lady. But the very point is the confirmation of patriotism.

Although it is easy to assume she is imprisoned and defeated by the British because of her deliberateness, looking at their situation she is not much in a position to do anything on the other hand. They would not succeed if they fight instantly, for she knows their difference in number. Therefore as it constitutes a



tragic flaw of a drama, her deliberateness is for the good. Defending her subjects while being a chief and her constantly looking out for them even after her imprisonment will deny she is not a patriot.

In tragedy, the protagonist sometimes must always end with tragic death, it is the important aim of tragedy in the classical theatre of Athens. A tragic hero must be a high class member of the society as claimed by the early critics and also the plays. The two plays we study fortunately follow the Greek pattern of drama. The two protagonists somehow have high places in the society of the Mizos. Ropuiliani is a chief, who has complete authority to govern the village. Khuangchera is also a warrior who is not just an ordinary warrior, he is a respected one. He is respected by the whole village except that someone constantly tries to get ahead of him. Both of them give their life to defend their country. Ropuiliani fights with honour till her last breath, physically and mentally. She does not want to surrender to the British at all.

Khuangchera gives his all patriotic mind-set to defend his country. He never surrenders to the invaders and fights till his last breath. The writer Laltluangliana Khiantge also tries to reflect all the deeds that are performed by these two protagonists. If the definition of patriotism 'love of one's country' ever stands literal and never fails, these two protagonists must be considered heroes who make the Mizos proud.

Khuangchera's death is the consequence of a battle with the British. At first he cannot take part in the battle because of a standing taboo that demands the

husbands to remain at home for two or more days at the time of his child's birth. When the chief hears of his situation he feels somewhat pained and thus speaks out his thought that Khuangchera is not at all what they expect him to be. (Pasaltha Khuangchera, 5.4). On hearing this Khuangchera is deeply hurt. He sets out all by himself to open fire on the British when everyone else is coming home. A patriot should be willing to die when necessary to protect his land is a simple definition of patriotism. Khuangchera's character here is very patriotic because his purpose in fighting with the British is to protect his land.

On the other hand a question arise as to his action whether or not being driven by his anger. It is understandable that he is angry, for the reason why he leaves Parvatui village and migrates to Reiek village is because he does not receive honour and title from the chief as he has hoped for. On the other hand it can be said that the reason lies in the chief not exalting him. It is again a situation between himself and the chief at the close of his death. Khuangchera is said to be a gentle person, but he seems to be a person who secretly suffers without pouring out. He is gentle and patient, but due to the stubbornness of the chief and his ministers to change their minds even after he secretly suffers urges him to leave Parvatui village and migrate to Reiek village.

While in Reiek he sets out by himself to open fire on the British only because of one speech of their chief and eventually meets his death. His death is indeed due to protecting his land, but it mainly is due to his lack of control when he is in a position not to die at all. He loves his land, and although he is disappointed by the chief's words he tells Ngurbawnga who follows after him that

he is willing to die as he pursues his journey to protect his land. He dies because he loves his land, and he dies before his time because of his lack of control over one little speech of their chief.

These two dramas have a certain similarity. The supposedly villain in a drama, here the British, are their common enemies. The protagonists both fight the British, and it seems they both are defeated, but they do not surrender. Ropuiliani is captured and held in a prison until her death. She would have been released if she would just surrender. Many times she is asked and tempted to surrender, but she remains unyielding and keeps the love of her land till the day she dies. Khuangchera on the other hand is not captured, as he manages himself to be impossible to be captured. He dies fighting the British in a battle. Whosoever may be their opponents, they both do not give in and fight till the end, and the sacrifices they make for their land is patriotic.

Patriotism is love of one's land, living at one's best for the land whether in times of war or peace and a willingness to lay down one's life if necessary. The protagonists in these dramas live this kind of life in reality. Ropuiliani is a chief and her position in the society is above the people. In Greek tragedy the protagonist is thought to be a person who is above the commoners, and viewing Ropuiliani's drama in accordance with this ideology it turns out to be an interesting story and is more or less acquainted with Greek tragedy.

Ropuiliani is captured because of an error of judgement and pays the price of her mistake. Her delay in fighting the British and waiting for the right time is

the decision she mistakenly makes. She is attacked before she is prepared, consequently ending up in a prison. In the end she dies inside a prison where her subjects are unable to see her. Her glory lies in her unwillingness to surrender due to her love of her land, but considering her femininity, she is not the kind of a woman who submits to the ways of men and not a vulnerable one unlike other women. It is true when she tells her son that she goes to prison because of her husband's will, but the better truth is her patriotic feeling. Whosoever her husband may be, looking at her character and behaviour it appears she is an unlikely person to surrender under the British, even if her husband did not make the will.

Similarly in the context of Pasaltha Khuangchera's drama, the hero dies fighting the British because of his love of his land. The nature of his death however seems to be an error of judgement. Here he resolutely sets out to open fire on the British on his own will although their Val Upa tries to stop him, for he cannot control himself because of the chief's little accusation on his act of staying at home for his wife's parturition while all the young men of the village go to battle. His stubborn decision of going is a mistaking decision he makes that eventually leads to his death. Whatever is the cause of his pursuit, the reason why he fights the British is his love of his land. Though his death is the result of his mistaken decision, it would be impractical to not call him a patriot preserving his land from the enemy as he surely does fight the British in order to protect his land.

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**Appendix**

Name of the Candidate : LALZARZOVA

Degree : M.PHIL.

Department : MIZO

Title of Dissertation : PATRIOTISM IN MIZO DRAMA: A  
STUDY OF LALNU ROPUILIANI  
AND PASALTHA KHUANGCHERA  
BY LALTLUANGLIANA  
KHIANGTE

Date of payment of Admission Fee : 27.07.2012

Date of Approval of Research Proposal:

1. Board of Studies : 30.04.2013

2. School Board : 07.05.2013

Registration No. & Date : MZU/M.Phil./108 of 07/05/2013.

Date of Submission : 25.07.2014.