

ZO HISTORY

With an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion
and their status as an ethnic minority in
INDIA, BURMA, and BANGLADESH



Vumson

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by
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DEDICATION

I dedicated this book to my paternal grandparents for teaching me Zo history, customs, and culture by reciting them over and over again. My grandfather killed over sixty four-legged wild animals. including a tiger. He trimmed two doltials. They sold their surplus rice harvest and made some money. When my maternal grandfather demanded an extra-ordinary high bride-price for my mother, my paternal grandfather simply poured silver rupees in a basket and offered as the bride price. My grandfather named me after himself taking his name. Vum and calling me “Son” meaning to narrate, with the hope that I, when I grow up, will tell the world his achievements. I hope this page satisfies his wish. My father did extensive research work on the history of Zo people. His work was published in Khupzathang’s “The Genealogy of Zo Race”. My mother never went to school. Although she bore ten children she found time to experiment with growing tea, the first in East Zoram. She started producing tea in the early 1950’s and today, tea production is the main Occupation of three villages and it is being exported to Burma as the “Dolluang Tea”.

PREFACE

Zo people tend to speculate as to where they came from. Some suggest that they are the descendents of the Chinese of the Chin dynasty because they are called “Chin” by the Burman. Some devoted Christians dreamed of being one of the lost tribes of Israel. The following pages are an attempt to clarify the origins of Zo people and their migration roads to their present settlements. I also sought to trace all Zo people and pinpoint where they are to be found and the political and cultural condition they are facing today. The history of the Zo people is very complex because they have many versions of legends and traditions. Their clothing, houses and diet differ from one area to another because of climatic differences within a short distance. The language, though basically similar, has developed into multi-dialects. Even their name as a people has been pronounced in many different ways. I make attempts to compromise these differences so that, at least outside their own land they are known by the same name. In doing so, I take the name used by most Zo people such as Zoram or Zoland. Zo terms used in this book are mostly of the northern Zo people. I view the contiguous Zo settlements as Zoram, statistic shows the user of Zoram outnumber the user of Zoland, and I use East Zoram and West Zoram to cover Zo settlements in Burma and India respectively. I also search for Zo names to replace foreign abusive names such as Chin, Kuki, Tiddim Chin, Plains Chin etc. and use more acceptable and practical names such as Paite for Tiddim Chin, Pawi for Falam. Haka. and Chhimtuipui people, Lusei for Duhlian dialect speaking peoples. and Asho for “plains Chin”.

As a Sizang I had easy access to the history of the Sizang, and depended on older publications for the rest. The result however is far from complete. Many older publications though may very well be informative, but confused between tribal and village names. Some names seem to have been created out of the blue such as Shendus or Yindus. The most serious short coming of this paper is the history of the southern Zo, because I have no access to their verbal or other records.

I will welcome at any time correspondence concerning errors. suggestions for improvement, or criticism of the text as no perfection exist here.

In writing Zo names I have followed the practice in West Zoram, which will have some opposition in East Zoram, because they have followed the Burmese way, and every word of Zo names has a meaning. But conforming to international practice, as every Zo indeed has a family or clan name, this might be a better way in the long run. As for example my given name is Vumson and my clan name is Suantak. so my name should actually be Vumson Suantak. In front of a few names I add Pu. This is how Zo address a gentleman. Pu stands for Mister whereas Pi stands for Miss or Misses.

Inscription by Ex-Chief Khuplian, Lophei

October 3, 2011 by [thawngno](#) [Leave a Comment](#)

I am the 15th generation down from the house of Thuantak who is the original progenitor of the Siyin Tribe. Being an orphan from childhood I exerted myself all alone in many enterprises by which I became a self-made man with many and various achievements. When the British on 1888 undertook their first expedition against us (the Chins) I attained the age of 20 years and I played an active part in the defence against them. When the British troops marched up the Signalling at No. 5 Stockade the united forces of the Siyins, Suktes and Kamhaus made a good resistance to the British attack which was easily repulsed. On this occasion I personally captured one rifle. When the second expedition took place in 1889 the British, too well armed to be resisted against, carried the day: hence the annexation of Chin Hills. I then rebuilt and settled in Lophei Village which was originally founded by Kiim Lel and was destroyed by the Tashons in my grandfather, Lua Thuam's time. Henceforth my hereditary chieftainship of the Lophei clan was restored to me. Moreover I founded the three villages-Tuisau, Tuival, and Suangdaw all of which have ever since been in my jurisdiction. As I was advanced in age after my service of 40 years as Chief, my eldest son succeeded me to the chieftainship. Being highly pleased with my meritorious and loyal services. His Honour, the Lieutenant- Governor of Burma in 1922 presented me a D.B.B.L. gun as a reward and a good service certificate. And to mention more I was given many good certificates, by the various Administrative officers of Chin Hills. The Burmese text on the inscription may be translated as follows : The Sizang people who dwell in the villages of Lophei, Khuasak, Buanman, Thuklai, and Lamkhai are the descendents of Thuantak. I belong to the fifteenth generation. The history of my lifetime has been recorded in Zo and English. The animals drawn on the memorial stone indicate Khuplian's hunting trophies : a tiger, a bison, a leopard, a wild pig, a barking deer, and a deer.

CHAPTER I
Introduction to Zo People
THE GENERIC NAME “ZO”

The term Zo or Jo was mentioned as the name of a people in a few historical publications of the Indo-Burman peoples. Fan- ch'o" a diplomat of the Tang dynasty of China, mentioned in 862 A.D. a kingdom in the Chindwin valley, whose princes and chiefs were called "Zo". In 1783 Father Sangermo" mentioned "the petty nation called JO.- G. A. Grierson" recorded in 1904 "The name is not used by the tribes themselves, who used titles such as ZO or YO or SHO."

However, because of the Zo people' frequent contacts with many different people at their borders the available literature is often confused about which people should be designated as ZO or other names. When the British took possession of Bengal and had their contact with Zo people, the Bengalis told them that the Zo were Kuki, a Bengali word which means something like savage or wild hill people. But when the British came in close contact with the Lusei, they realized that they did not call themselves Kuki. Initially the British used the term "Loosye". However, the British later adopted "LUSHAI" as the official designation for Zo people living in the western part of the Zo country, as the ruling clans of these people were known to them as "Lushai".

There were a few British officers who tried to understand the people they were dealing with: outstanding among whom was Tom Lewin, who said; "The generic name of the whole nation is "DZO"

When the British annexed Assam and Manipur they came in contact with the Hmars, whom to the British were no doubt related ethnologically to the Lusei, but who were not exactly Lusei. Hmar is a Lusei word for north, and the Hmar people were so named because they lived north of the Lusei. Hmar people had come to Manipur and Tripura sometime during the 1600s and they were called Kuki by their neighbours. By about 1850 the Thado or Khuangsai started to appear in Cachar and Manipur:

and the British adopted Kuki for the Hmars and “New Kuki” for the Thado.

Under the heading “New Kuki” were included all Paite. When in 1825 the British invaded Arakan and the Southern Zo country they gave the Sho the name Khyang. Khyang is the Arakanese name for Zo and is an old Burmese word for Chin. When the British came in contact with people of the hill areas west of Kale valley, Chin was adopted from Burmese. “Plains Chin” was the name given to the Asho, because they were found in the plains of Arakan and Burma. Thus the British knew the Zo people as Lushai, Kuki, New Kuki, Khlang, Chin, and Plains Chin.

Lusei and related clans which settled in the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) called themselves Mizo from time immemorial; Mizo meaning Zo people. Lusei designates only people who were ruled by Sailo chiefs. and Mize, now covers all ethnic Zo people.

Languages change naturally and unavoidably as people separate from one another and come in contact with others. We can never be exactly sure of the original name for “Zo” people. Today the people call themselves Zo, Mizo, Cho, Sho, Khxou, Asho, Chaw, Yaw, and Masho; which are similar sounding and which are all equally uncorrupt in their respective Zo dialects.

Zo people find it very difficult to accept a name other than the one they call themselves. The Lusei and related clans who were absorbed under the Sailo chiefs accepted Mizo as their designation, and the name of the former Lushai Hills District was changed to Mizo District at India’s independence. The Indian government did not like Mizoram, because they feared that ram (land) would mean ownership of the land. Only at the creation of the Union Territory did India accept the name Mizoram.

The term Mizo covers all Zo people, as does Zomi and Laimi, according to their respective users. Zomi is a designation used by the Paite, a people whose men wore a hair knot at the back of their head. Laimi is used by the Lais in Haka areas, in Falam and in parts of Matupi. For the Lais to accept Zo as a name is especially difficult, because they call their southern neighbours Zo; a people they regard as uncultured and uncivilized. Zo students in Rangoon seem to accept Zomi as the common name,

Zo people often call themselves Thlangmi. Khalangmi or Khangmi. meaning I Hillmen. The word Khlang or Khang should not be confused with Khyang.

and they produce the “Zomi Students Magazine” for students who are Asho, Sho, Lai, Paite and Lusei. Mizo is accepted by all in Mizoram and other adjoining districts, including the Lusei in the Kale-Kabaw valleys.

There are some Zo people who believe that Chin could be the designation for all Zo people. For example, the Paite National Council (PNC) of Lamka (Churachanpur) in Manipur has speculated that the name “Chin” originated with the Chin Dynasty of China. In a letter to the Prime Minister of India in 1963, the PNC suggested that Chin people be unified into one territory. The PNC cited the Linguistic Survey of India by G. A. Grierson²⁷ and said; “The word ‘Chin’ is supposed by authorities to be a corruption of the word ‘Jen’ or ‘Man’.” The PNC chose “Chin” because under “Chin, as a genus, come all Kuki tribes; whereas Kuki as a species is a subgroup of Chin, or in other words, Kuki is another grouping system excluding some tribes under Chin. Hence Chin is a wider denotation and Kuki a narrower denotation.” However, T. Gougin²⁴, also from Lamka, insists in his book, “The Discovery of Zoland” that Zomi is the right designation for Zo people. Mi means people, and Zomi is the right sequence of syllables, in contrast to Mizo.

Hrangnawl, a former parliamentarian from Haka, believed the word Chin, Ciin or Tsin was the original name of the Zo people, and he suggested that it originated in China. His suggestion is based on the fact that there are many places in Zo country which have “Ciin”, “Tsin” or “Chin” as names— such as Ciinmuai, Chintlang or Tsinkhua. Hrangnawl has also suggested that “Chin” could have come from Ciinlung, Chhinlung or Tsinlung, the cave or rock from whence according to legend the Zo people emerged into this world as humans.

Many Zo people however cannot accept the name Chin, because they have never called themselves by that name, and, moreover, they know that the name Chin was officially used only after British annexation. As mentioned earlier, the British adopted it from the Burmans.

It appears that the Burmans called the Zo people Chin from their very early contacts in the eleventh or twelfth century A.D. When the Burmans moved down the Irrawaddy River and came to the Chindwin they discovered a basket carrying people occupying the river valley. Hence they called the river “Chindwin”, meaning

“the valley of the baskets” as “chin” means basket in Burmese. The general Burmese population accept “chin” to be a word for basket, and they explain that the Zo people were so called because of their habit of carrying baskets. B. Lalthangliana’ of Mandalay University. Department of Burmese History, agrees with this explanation.

Professors G.H.Luce and F.K. Lehman”. authorities on Zo history and anthropology, speculate from the way “Chin” was spelled on Burmese inscriptions that “Chin” can mean ally or friend. They base their interpretation on the assumption that Zo and Burman peoples were not hostile to one another at the time of the Burmese inscriptions. But the inscriptions also reveal controversial slave trading along the Chindwin River. This could mean that there were, in fact, hostilities between the inhabitants of the Chindwin valley and the Burmans. Thus “Chin”. meaning ally or friend, is the modern political interpretation, and “Chin”, meaning basket, is the Burmese tradition.

Zo people do not accept the interpretation of Chin meaning ally or friend. When the 1950 Burmese encyclopedia defined Chin as “ally”, Tunaung, an MP from Mindat, protested in the Burmese Parliament and accused the Burman of politicizing the name. Haugo, the first Zo in East Zoram to receive an M.A. degree and a lecturer at Mandalay University wrote: “Whatever it meant or means, however it originated and why, the obvious fact is that the appellation ‘Chin’ is altogether foreign to us, it has been externally applied to us. We respond to it out of necessity but we never appropriate it and never accept it and never use it to refer to ourselves. It is not only foreign but also derogatory, for it has become more or less synonymous with being uncivilized, uncultured, backward, even foolish and silly. And when we consider such name calling applied to our people as Chinboke’ Winking Chin) we cannot but interpret it as a direct and flagrant insult, and the fact that we have some rotten fiends is no consolation.”

Zo people have many variants of the same name to choose from. The varieties are :

1. The people in Tedim, Lamka, Falam, Mizoram, South Haka and part of Matupi call themselves “Zo”-for instance Zomi, Yo. Zo, Mizo, Zotung, Laizo, Zokhua.
2. In south Falam and north Haka areas, people call them-

selves Lai They deny that they are any kind of Zo at all, and have reserved the term for southern Haka (division). The Haka regarded these people as relatively uncultured and uncultivated. But the Haka or Lai call their own country “Zo country” in prayers at major feasts of merit. According to Lehman; “This is a typical instance of the somewhat arrogant social posture of the Haka people, for which they got the name Hal Kha (bitter demand) . . . Haka are, regionally considered, Lai (central), and for them the term ‘Zo’ means only Chins as a whole, at one level, or their own subordinates to the south, as another level of reference.” Laimi means “our own people” or “our own Haka people”. In Zo language lai means centre. and the Lai people believe that they are. or were, superior to all other Zo people because of their position at the center of the universe.”

3. In southern Zo country (Mindat. Matupi) people call themselves She or Khxou, depending on whether they live in the drainage of Yaw Chaung, in the vicinity of Mindat, or in the drainage of the Hlet Long stream. To the east of Lemro, Sho call themselves M’kang and at Matupi, Ngala. In the region between Mindat and M’kang country Sho or Khxou stands for the people as a whole, and local people call themselves N’men”
4. In Paletwa people call themselves “Khumi” or “Khaki”. However Khumi or Khami means village people and it is not a clan name.
5. The name “Mru” in Arakanese comes from the word “Macho” which, when written in Arakanese, becomes Mru.
6. Zo people living on the plains of Burma, in Arakan, in the south west Chin State. and in the Chittagong Hills are called “Khyang” in literature, but call themselves “Asho”.
7. In the Yaw area, people call themselves” Zou’. which is written by the Burmese as “Yaw”.²⁹

There are intellectuals who translate Zo as “Highlanders”. They automatically conclude that the people call themselves ‘Zo’ or ‘Highlanders’ because they live in the highlands. This is simply absurd because they called themselves “ZO” when they lived in

the plains of the Chindwin Valley. Zo might mean highland but never highlanders. Another translation of Zo as “uncultured or uncivilized- comes from the Haka’s bawiphun or royalty, who regard their southern Zo neighbours as uncultured and uncivilized. To translate Zo as “uncultured or uncivilized” because of Haka attitudes towards their neighbours is misleading and cannot be taken seriously. A people will never adopt or care for a name used to degrade them.

The actual translation of zo in the Zo common language may be termed as follows : Zo people divide a mountainous region into two climatic zones. The higher part of the region is characterized by cold, wet, and damp climatic conditions, which have geographical natures of ever-green forests, where potatoes, maize, and sulfur hears may be grown. These areas are covered with rain clouds in the monsoon rainy season. The sun is rarely to be seen. Such a place or area is denoted by the term ‘Zo’ in distinction from the ‘shim or chhim’. which is generally lower in elevation and with a warmer and drier climate, where bamboo thrives and hill-side rice may be grown. The generic name “Zo’ has no relation with the geographical-climatic term “zo”.

Zo people have a tradition of naming their clans after the head of each clan. Hualngo are descendents of a man named Hualngo, and the Zahau, Kamhau and other Zo clans each carry the name of their founder. It must have been the same with Zo. Zo or a very similar sounding name must have been the name of the Zos’ originator. The “Genealogy of (Chin) Race- by Khupzathang shares in this interpretation and postulates a man named ‘Zo’ as the founder of the Zo people. (See Table 1)

The author chooses Zo as the designation of all Zo people, because it appears to him that Zo is the most widely used name, whether it be Zo, Yo, Jo, Cho, Sho, Khxou, or Yaw. The author does not insist that “Zo” is the proper or right designation. However, he believes that names such as Kuki and Chin which originated as abuse names should not be adopted as designation of a people. Such names could hinder understanding between the abuser and the abused. It will be in the interest of all Zo people to be known by a common name most possibly Zo.

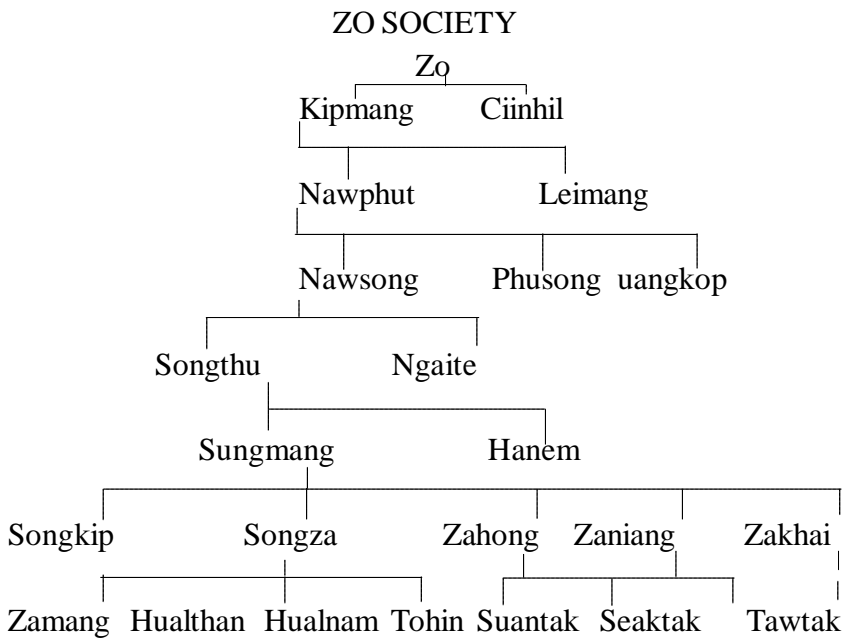


Table 1. Genealogy of Zo people after Khupzathang³⁶

Zo Population

There are currently about two and a half million Zo people. About half of them live in the Indian part of Zo country (Zoram), half a million are in the western part of Zoram (Mizoram), 180,000 in Manipur, 50,000 in Tripura, and some scattered in Nagaland, Cachar and the state of Meghalaya. In Burma 400,000 live in the eastern part of Zo country—East Zoram or the Chin State, 300,000 in the plains of Burma, 50,000 in the Sonya Tracts and the Hkamti or Naga District, about 150,000 in the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha valleys. and about 40,000 in the state of Arakan. In Bangladesh. about 50,000 Zo occupy hilly regions between the Sangut and the Karnaphuli Rivers.

The Zo people occupy a contiguous region of about 60,000 square miles not counting Asho settlements in lower Burma and Masho settlements in Arakan.

Zo Society

Lack of communication, tribal wars, and lack of arable land in the country they adopted as their home caused Zo people to lose their racial harmony. As they grew in size quarrels erupted

between groups, and even relatives were separated and driven to different regions. As a result of these kinds of forces the Zo gradually developed differences in their political, cultural, and religious systems.

The Political System

hundred people, constituted a village. Heterogeneous society was seldom found in early stages of Zo migration to the hills but developed in later stages of history.

A village was an independent unit, claiming land about seven miles or eleven kilometers in radius for its cultivation. Zo people shifted their fields frequently due to rapid erosion of the soil, and settlements were frequently moved from one place to another. The people in central Zo country were less migratory than those in northern and southern regions. The southern people shifted their villages in a circular or repeating pattern, whereas in northern areas people moved farther and farther north and west. Each village had its own government, and a chief or a headman functioned as administrator for the village. Generally the duty and power of the chief or village headman was similar among all Zo. Hereditary chieftainships were common in the northern part of the country, whereas in the southern part a headman or a village leader ruled the village. In some instances chiefs ruled over several villages.

The chief or headman had political and judicial powers, he controlled to varying degrees the daily lives of the people. Land division, disposal, sequestration, and redistribution within the village boundary were his responsibilities. In northern Zo country the village headman collected taxes and dues for the chief. In southern Zo country, where no chief (Maru) arose, the headman or village leader lent his name to the village." The village headman was usually assisted by his councillors, the number of which was determined by the number of village houses.

The chief usually owned the land or, as Stevenson put it, "the chief is the Lord of the Soil." However there were chiefs who did not completely own the land. In the Sizang area the chief and commoners each owned their own fields, which were handed down over generations from father to son. Chieftainship was

hereditary. From clan to clan the custom differed as to whether the youngest or eldest son inherited the office of the father. In most cases however, the youngest son inherited the chieftainship. It was next to impossible for a daughter to inherit the office of the father. The inheritance of property among common people followed the chiefs' examples. If a man had more than one wife the children of the first wife were heirs to the property of the father. The sons of chiefs who would not inherit a chieftainship could fend for themselves and often led or were sent to take their followers to found new villages.

As "The chief was Lord of the Soil", the chief received a certain tax from all products of that soil. He also received a "flesh tax", usually a hind leg of a four-legged wild animal killed by the villagers. A salt tax was also paid in areas where there was salt production. The villages also built the chief's house complete with a defensive wall and, in time of war, it served as a village refuge and fort. Some chiefs conquered neighbouring peoples and typically sent their sons to rule over conquered villages. In some cases chiefs recognized the chieftainships of conquered people, as long as an alliance or tribute fee was paid.

At the time the British conquered the Zo people Falam had developed itself into the most powerful of chieftainships in Zo country. They had done this through development of a political organization comparable to democratic types of government found in the western world. Each Falam chief was aided by a council of elders, although they were not necessarily of aristocratic origins and could even be from among the slaves or conquered people.

In waging war the Falam never fought alone but invited their allies to fight with them. They formed alliances with the Shan Sawbwa of Kale, as a result of which the Falam became the traders of the Zo, supplying salt to even the most remote regions of the country. They also knew how to exploit their subjects. When they subdued the Zanniat rebels, they made the Zanniats carry trade goods from the plains without payment.

The Falam people integrated all people and treated all peoples equally and without prejudice. Thus the Falam were not only Powerful but enjoyed the trust of most of the Zo people from the

Lushai Hills to the Burmese border. They might one day have united all Zo people under their domain, had not the British appeared on the scene. Even today the Falam are not clannish; any newcomer to Falam is accepted as one of them, so that the town of Falam is the most pleasant in the whole Zo area.

There were other common bonds beside those of the chieftainship practice in Zo society. In the central part of the country, where individuals owned land, the people practiced some form of capitalism, but the overall Zo social structure was communal (communism). The communist theoreticians Karl Marx, I. Lenin, and Mao-tse Tung desired human equality and assumed they could move human beings from greed to generosity. In western and other so called civilized countries this has proved a failure. But the Zo people have always practiced a form of socialism within their communities. This form of socialism is called Tlawmn-gaihna in the Lusei dialect, which means “love of less”.

Samuelson explained Tlawmn-gaihna; “Tlawmn-gaihna implies the capacity for hard work, bravery, endurance, generosity, kindness, and selflessness. The forefathers emphasized this value of action to their progeny. In days of both happiness and misfortune, the concept of Tlawmn-gaihna was a stabilizing force.”

“If a person grew sick or died in a village other than his own, the youth of that village would carry the dead body or sick person back to his own village. When the Mizo people traveled in a group, the youngest man’s duty would be to obtain firewood to cook food for the rest of the company. If an older man’s basket became too heavy a younger man would help relieve the load. Later on, the elders would honour the man who had the greatest Tlawmn-gaihna by letting him drink rice beer first in the get together.”

“...this ... code of morals made it obligatory for every Mizo to be courteous, considerate, unselfish, courageous, industrious and willing to help others, even at considerable inconvenience to oneself. When everybody was hungry, a man would eat very little, leaving the bigger portion of food for friends. . walking one whole day over rough terrain in order to give important news ... a man risks his life to save his friends.. These are all Tlawmn-gaihna or ‘to need less’. It might be called “self denial and acceptance of pain”. In a village community, the building of one’s house is the responsibility of all, and only basic material

needs to be collected by the owner. The villagers will build a widow's house from scratch. The field of a sick person is attended by all the villagers. When a hunter brings home a big four-legged animal the whole village shares the meat, and all the villagers are automatically invited when there is a wedding. The whole village goes into mourning for a dead person."

Culture and Custom

Village sites were chosen with an eye to both defensive position and available water. A preferable site was high on a ridge so that it was easily defensible, but these places were difficult for the women who had to carry water from streams below. The Zo who most often migrated—the Lusei, Thado, Hualngo and villagers in southern Zo country—built their villages on tops of ridges. Most villages in the central part of the country were situated on slopes where it was easily defensible and where stream water could also be brought to the village using bamboo or wooden flumes. The same pattern of village sites are found in Zo country today, although villages are no longer threatened by wars.

There is no village planning. Houses are built on plots which are more level than the surroundings. A yard in front of the house is sought, but the village layout is no one's concern. One of the characteristics of a Zo village is a *khan* or *lungdawn*, a memorial stone in memory of a powerful man. Usually situated on higher ground than the village houses, an evergreen *Bayan* tree is planted to give shade to the place. Memorial slabs are decorated with drawings of animals that the man killed in his time, and wooden carvings of men and women are erected there as well. These places serve as a meeting ground, or as a dancing arena during ceremonies, and as a place of offerings to the spirits. The skulls of animals killed during feasts for the dead are hung at (*fie khan*, in belief that these animals will accompany the dead to his new world. Any man can erect such a monument for himself or for any important relative, and a village can have several *khan*.

Traditional Zo houses are generally substantial constructions. Rectangular in shape, Zo houses are usually constructed on a slope, and often earth has to be moved to obtain enough flat ground for a fireplace and working space in front of the house. Animals are kept beneath the house, so that part also has to be

flattened. Half of the house has an earthen floor, and the other half has flooring of planks or split bamboo. This type of house is common among those who are less migratory. For those who move often, one side of the house might be only a few inches above ground, with the opposite side quite high. Migrants seldom move earth. A house is generally divided into a living room (inner room) and a work room. Hunting trophies, the skulls of animals shot by the family, are shown on the dividing wall between the two rooms. In the living room are the fireplace, the master's bed, the children's bed, and anything that has value to the family. The master bed is next to the fireplace and is also used as a bench to sit near the fire for warmth. As the house has no windows the inside is almost always dark. The work room of the house is in the front, where firewood and grain pounding equipment are kept. Most domestic work is done in this part of the house, which is more of a verandah than a room, as it is open at the front. Life revolves around the verandah during warmer days of the year. In front of the house is the deck or platform, the *doltial*. The size of the platform can indicate the wealth of the owners and is usually made of teak wood d planks. The *doltial* usually measures about twelve by four yards. Rich people have two such *doltials* joining each other, and at one end are two planks twelve yards long and a yard wide. The long planks are laid about a foot higher than the main platform and serve as a comfortable sitting platform.

Staple foods for central Zo people are maize, millet, sulphur beans, beans, peas, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, melons and other crops that grow in colder regions. These crops can be grown in the zo area with its cold and high altitude. In *sins* or *chhim* areas (hotter climate) of Zo country, and along deep river and stream valleys, rice is the staple food. Meat is scarce as is sugar and milk. Honey is obtained only in small quantities. Because of these shortages the people often suffer from vitamin deficiency, and they are often simply hungry for meat and *zu* (rice, corn or millet beer).

Zo culture is very much connected with *zu*: although some western writers have suggested that Zo culture is a *mithun* culture. A *mithun*, a grass eating animal, is the most important domestic animal, and the wealth of a man is judged by the numbers of his *mithun*. But if Zo culture should be symbolized by anything it should be *zu*. *Zu* represents one of the main

characteristics of the Zo people, and zu is more than just rice beer, as has been suggested by some Western writers. Zo people hold feasts on occasions of happiness or grief. Successful hunts of small animals, or a visit by a distant relative would be celebrated with a feast. A mithun, a pig or a cow would be slaughtered, and several pots of zu would be consumed. A man is very proud when he kills a tiger, an elephant, or a vulture, and such occasions are times of great celebration. Killing an elephant is to achieve man's maximum masculinity. Among birds the hornbill is the most highly prized, and the killing of it would be celebrated with a sa-ai ceremony which raises a man's social status.

The Zo celebrate many other kinds of feasts as well. Wedding feasts take at least two days (varying among different clans)—one celebration at the bride's home and another the next day at the groom's. A rich harvest of grain (over one hundred baskets) would also be celebrated with a feast. If a person believes he is wealthy, a khuangcawi or tong ceremony is performed. Other traditional ceremonies vary from clan to clan. A rare but important ceremony with great feasting was the rat ai or gal ai. when a man had killed an enemy and decided to celebrate his triumph. This was revived during the Second World War, when Zo soldiers were killed in action. The relatives of the deceased sought revenge by killing enemy soldiers. As it was dangerous to perform the ral ai during the war, heads of the enemy were kept in utmost secrecy, and a rod ai ceremony was performed after the war. Thus, when a man performed the ral ai, he performed it more often in grief than in happiness.

The most frequent celebration is the feast of grief. The death of a person is followed by a great feast in remembrance of the dead person. The rich may slaughter several animals, but the poor become much poorer, because they too want to send their loved ones on the way with at least one animal. The animal meat is eaten at the home of the dead, and the remains are distributed to relatives. (In Sizang area the "wife-giver" receives the neck portion of the animal, a substantial amount.)

For all these feasts mithun, cattle, pigs and other animals, depending on the wealth of the people are slaughtered, and a great amount of zu is consumed. This might seem like a waste, but in reality it is the heart of Zo civilization.

Those who celebrated khuangcawi. tong, sa-ai. or ral-ai, and all others who achieved something in life composed songs telling of their past, their success in war, the capture of slaves, and the loss of their loved ones. These songs recorded personal as well as community history. Songs recorded the poor and rich, the loss of sons, daughters, brothers and sisters, and great hunts. The songs were sung during feasts and were handed down from one generation to the next. For a people who have no writing, the recording of history has been possible only because these songs were sung repeatedly. Still it is amazing that songs of twenty generations ago, such as “The Song of Pu Songthu”, are still remembered.

Songs are sung not only during feasts, but whenever there is a gathering. At the death of a child, the mother, the aunts, or the sisters recite. step by step, the child’s life story. Likewise, kneeling beside the deathbed village women recall in song, composed at the instant, the story of the death as they saw it. When a boy falls in love he sings a song expressing his feelings to the girl, and the girl replies with a song. When chiefs or village elders are to decide a matter of war and peace, they would rather compose a song than explain details to the village council.

Throughout Zo history marriage customs seem to have been uniform, with bride prices and “wife-givers” and “wife-takers” characteristic of the Zo people. Different prices are asked for different brides, with social status and physical perfection determining price. Past relationships between the two clans involved can also play a role in determining price. Sometimes the bride price can be only symbolic, which means the expenses of the wedding ceremony are counted as the bride price. If a poor boy is not in a position to pay, he may be allowed to pay later, or a boy can escape paying the bride price if he elopes with the girl, or if he simply moves into the house of the girl and waits until the girl is ready to marry him. Social customs relating to marriage are important, such as “wife-taker” and “wife-giver” relationships. When a boy is eligible for marriage, and if he does not have a girl friend. his parents or relatives will look for a bride for him. In choosing the bride priority is given to girls from the clan of the boy’s mother. Usually the daughters of the mother’s brother are the first considered. If an eligible girl is available from the mother’s clan the parents or relatives send an ambassador to the girl’s parents

to ask for her hand. The ambassador's job is a very delicate one, and he has to present his mission with traditional manners. He also has to offer a pot of zu or a cock (different for different clans). The return of these gifts, which might be in a week or so, means that the proposal has been rejected. There is no reproach for being rejected. If the gift is not returned, then the ambassador and the girl's parents negotiate the bride price, and arrangements are made for the wedding. The girl's parents can decide the size of the animal to be slaughtered at their house and also the amount of zu to be made available. After all these are agreed upon, the marriage ceremony is performed. Thus, the mother's clan is the "wife-giver" and the clan of the son is the "wife-taker". If a boy marries a girl from a different clan than his mother's, his sons can still marry girls from their mother's and grandmother's clan, thus continuing the "wife-giver" "wife-taker" system. It is regarded as distasteful to marry a paternal aunt's daughter, because a man (extended to his children) has social obligations to his in-laws, and the marrying of a daughter of a paternal aunt makes the social relationship impossible. The social obligations are exercised during ceremonies and in times of grief. A man and his children take care of work related to ceremonies; i.e., slaughtering animals, and the preparation of food and *Du*. It is the man's duty to please his in-laws, or in other words the "wife-taker" has the duty to please his "wife-giver". However, the "wife-giver" is not superior to the "wife-taker". It is merely tradition, and the "wife-giver" can not make demands upon the service of the "wife-taker". The "wife-taker" simply feels an obligation to please, respect, and be thankful to the "wife-giver". A quarrel between in-laws is regarded as most distasteful.

Marriage is uncommon between tribes, and unheard of with other races, foreigners, or slaves. Illegal cohabitation would be such a disgrace to a family that they would be cast out from their community. It is paramount to keep clan or family pure. Once married to a different tribe, descendants can never become pure again. Even today in some parts of Zo country the purity of the girl's parents is considered ahead of all qualities of the girl.

Zawlbuk is the word used to describe the custom of bachelors staying overnight at a designated house, and it is an important social feature of Zo life. The Lusei call the house a *zawlbuk* or bachelor shelter, which usually is built in the center of the village. It is used especially by bachelors as their common sleeping

house. The Paite people do not have *zawlbuk*, but the bachelors sleep in the house of the *thiampui* or high priest. They call it *sawm*. The Pawi (Haka and Falam people) will sleep in the house of a beautiful girl. When a boy is in love, he will ask his friends to sleep with him in the house of his girl friend. The bachelors use these house to spend their leisure time. It is a place for learning the trade of hunting, warfare and the like; even how to court girls.

Religion

Zo believe in a supreme God or *pathiau*. God is good. He gives health, richness, children and other human wishes. God is never cruel and never hurts people. Therefore Zo people never sacrifice or offer anything to appease God.

Zo people fear spirits or devils who are under the rule of the king of spirits. The spirits (*dawi. huai. khuazing*) live on earth, below the earth, in the sky, in springs, trees, caves, mountains, streams, houses, and even in the human body. There are some places which are agreed upon as strongholds of the spirits. They are Rih Li (a lake) in Falam district, Mt. Victoria or Arterawttlang in the Kanpetlet area, Paha, a great limestone cave near Tuingo, Nattaga—the door of the spirits according to the Burman, a stream in Tedim area, and others. Each village has a certain location where people believe spirits reside. Spirits are either like human beings, are small people with only one leg, or are giants that stride across the peaks of the hills. The spirits have immense strength and power, can transform themselves into anything, but most commonly take the form of snakes. The spirits bring sickness and misery unless treated with due respect. Rituals have to be performed and sacrifices made so as to appease the spirits. Moving to a new village, to a new house, or cultivating a field requires the blessing of the spirits. Sickness is a punishment by the spirits who are unhappy with a person or family. Offerings are performed by priests. An animal, such as a red cock, a sucking pig, a dog, or a *mithun*. the type of which depends on the seriousness of the illness, is slaughtered for the offering. The meat offered to the spirit is only a small portion of the animal: i.e., the liver, the head or the legs. and is combined with one or two cups of *zu*. The remainder of the meat and *zu* are consumed by the family and the priest.

In some cases the priest fights against the spirit. Sickness is caused by a spirit who enters the body or by the spirit being caught in the soul of the body. In such cases the *thiampui*, the high priest, recites a verse composed to drive away the spirits. These verses are handed down from one generation to another. The sick person's body is then painted with pungent-smelling spices. The spirit, who is believed to dislike the smell of spice, then leaves the body. In other cases a sick person has to drink fresh dog's blood, over which a sorcerer has chanted, to drive away the spirits. Epidemics and plague are caused by invasions of angry spirits, who roam the country at night searching for victims. People make mud pellets and shoot them with bows at the entrances of houses through the whole night, to bar entry of the spirits.

People also fight spirits with arms. A woman in Buanman village said that she was snatched by a local spirit who lived in a cave near the village. She said the spirit wanted to marry her. She often disappeared from home or work, and she said her spirit lover usually came to her in the form of a snake and, wrapping itself around her legs, flew her off to the cave. Her lover offered her a lotion which would transform her into the same kind of spirit, but she refused repeatedly. The villagers soon became angered and went to the hill opposite the cave, from where they shot missiles from their weapons into the cave. When they entered the cave, they found seven dead snakes. The woman, who was in the cave at the time of the attack, said that her spirit lover was killed as well. After that she was abducted no more.

Zo people believe in life after death, although it is said that a person can be reborn only if death is violent and instantaneous. The dead live forever as ghosts and keep their social status. Zo also believe that a person can be born again as another human being. One such tale is of a boy who was born with a scar. When the boy, named Thangngin, could speak it told a story of being hurt by somebody and talked of things a child could not know. Thangngin, who was later a Christian pastor, was embarrassed because he could not reconcile his position as a pastor and his experiences as a reborn person. He told his story very reluctantly. He did not remember many of his experiences, because his parents objected and they had had the priest recite a sorcery verse to make Thangngin forget his past.

Thangngin was a young man at the time of a Falam attack on Khuasak during the 1840s. When the Falam occupied a part of the Khuasak village, he saw the Falam searching for survivors. To escape being captured he hid himself in the attic of a house, on the shelves used to hang cobs of corn. A Falam warrior with a spear found him. The warrior shouting, "I am the son of my father." pierced Thangngin's breast with his spear. Thangngin said that he felt very warm and fell asleep immediately. When he awoke he saw a headless corpse lying beside him. On inspection of the corpse he found that the body was his. He felt the body and settled down among other people. He could not recall how long he lived with these people. On one hunting day they caught a bear. On their way home, as they carried the bear, he realized that he was with strange people. Some were carrying the bear, and others were on top of the bear eating the meat. To think over the strange behaviour of these people, he went to a nearby hill and watched from a distance. From there he saw that his companions were ants, and that they were carrying a black caterpillar. When he returned to his friends they were, like him, all human.

Realizing that he was an ant, his wish was to be reborn as human. To be reborn he needed to enter the body of a woman. However whenever he approached a woman he was repulsed immediately. How, he did not remember, but one day he became a bee. Being a bee and trying to reach a woman was much more difficult than being an ant, because as soon as he approached a woman, she would drive him away. Then, one day, he became a flea. After becoming a flea, he was successful in getting into the clothes of a woman. He could not recall how he came into the body of the woman, his mother. When Thangngin was born, he had a scar on his breast and he was said to have told his story as soon as he could speak.

Another story is told of a boy with a forehead scar who was born in Khuasak village in the late 1940s. As soon as the boy could recognize people, he was afraid of a certain man, Ngalphuakpa. After the boy could walk he cried and hid himself behind objects whenever Ngalphuakpa came for a visit. He also threw himself flat on the ground whenever a gun was fired. When the child could speak, he related that he had been a Japanese soldier who lived in the forest after Japanese troops left the area. The villagers had hunted down the lone Japanese soldier, and it was

Ngalphuakpa who had shot the soldier, hitting him in the forehead. Also in this case, the parents suppressed the child from telling his stories.

Zo Language

The Zo language is grouped with Tibeto-Burman languages. and Zo people who study English and Burmese in school find Burmese to be the easier language to learn, even though they may already know Roman script. A student in Manipur found the Meitei language easy to learn because it is similar gramatically and in vocabulary to the Zo language. In West Zoram (Mizoram) students find Hindi as difficult as English, because English and Hindi are Aryan languages and they have little affinity to the Zo language. The Zo people are not multi-lingual as characterized in literature, especially in Burma. Zo people have indeed diverse dialects, many of which are not easily intelligible to those using other dialects. The worst example perhaps is between dialects of the southernmost Zo and the northernmost Zo.

Professor Gordon Luce” analyzed 700 words of Zo language common to at least three Zo dialects. From these 700 words 230 words are common in all dialects of the Zo people. From the northernmost Zo, the Thado-Khuangsai in the Naga Hills (Somra Tract). to the southernmost Zo. the Asho in the Sandoway-Thayetmyo area, the use of words common to the 700 word base are as follows :

Thado-Khuangsai	554 words
Tedim	191
Hualngo (Lusei)	631
Khualsim (Falam)	627
Haka	573
Asho	383
Khumi	381

From this table it is possible to divide Zo people into two linguistic groups, the northern group with more than 500 common words and the southern group with less than 500 common words. The dialects of the northern group, though differing in some words. are intelligible between groups if the people are patient.

The southern Zo dialects are similar to the northern dialects, but differences lie in the words that are borrowed from the Burman and the Arakanese, with whom the Asho, Khumi and the Masho had been in contact for centuries. Comparing the Lusei and the Haka, or Falam dialects, one finds many words borrowed from Burman in the Haka and Falam dialects, whereas the Lusei borrowed many words from Indian or English languages. For example: as there was no word for “school” in the Zo language, it has been borrowed from English and Burmese. Thus school is called *sikul* by the Lusei, whereas it is *saang* for the Paite of Tedim. The Paite of Manipur say *sikul*, the Falam say *tlawng*, and the Haka say *siang*, *Saang*, *tlawng* and *siang* originated from the Burmese *kyaung*.

In East Zoram there has been no common language, and Zo political leaders have not touched the subject as it has been a very delicate matter. On one hand no representative has wanted to ;cc other than his own dialect being claimed as the common language. On the other hand. Zo leaders have feared possible repercussions from the Burmese government if they put too much emphasis on a common Zo language. It would be contradictory to the Burmese government’s policy of completely abolishing the teaching of Zo language in schools in the “Chin State”. Just after independence the Zo language was taught in primary school up to the fourth standard. The Revolutionary Government of General Ne Win reduced it to the elementary grades, after which Zo language was allowed to be taught up to *the* second standard only. At present no Zo language is taught in the schools. Thus the question of a Zo common language in East Zoram was ended by the Burmese government.

Of all Zo dialects, the Lusei or Duhlian dialect is the most widely spoken. It is the common language in West Zoram, and it is spoken by almost all Zo people in Manipur and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Hualngo and Lusei dialects are the same. It was said the Saito chief Lallula encouraged use of the Duhlian dialect by all his subjects, and since then it has been used successfully as a common language by the Lusei. Today more than half of the Zo people use the Lusei dialect. Haka or Lai, Falam or Laizo, and Tedim or Pailite dialects are very similar to the Lusei dialect—so much so that in conversing each group uses its own dialect. The best example is seen in Tahan where all Zo tribes

live together as neighbours. Therefore, if there should be a common language for the Zo people, the Lusei dialect is the ultimate choice.

The following Table shows how Zo dialects differ from one another, and for comparison, from Meitei and Burmese.

English	Meitei	Lusei Hualngo	Paite Tedim Thado	Pawi Lai Matu	Asho	Khumi Muan	Sho	Burmese
one	amah	pakhat	khat	pakhat	hnat	ha	tumat	thit
two	anih	pahnih	nih	pannih	hnih	nya	hnihhnit	
three	chum	pathum	thum	Pathum	thum	hum	chum	thung
four	marl	pali	li	Pali	li	Palyh	khli	li
five	manga	panga	nga	panga	ngaw	pang	hma	nga
six	taruk	paruk	guk	paruk	sok	tureu	chuk	cheuk
seven	lareh	pasarih	sagih	pasarih	sih	saryh	chih	khunit
eight	nipan	pariat	giat	pariat	set	taja	choir	sit
nine	maipan	pakua	kua	pakua	kua	takaw	kao	ku
tenthara	thara	sawm	sawm	pahra	ha	ho	hra	lase

Zoram (Zoland)

The land occupied by the majority of the Zo people extends from a latitude of about 25 degrees 30 minutes North in the Somra Tracts facing Mt. Saramati, and in Nagaland across the Namtaleik River and the North Cachar Hills, to about 20 degrees 30 minutes North. The Asho live further south of the Arakan Yomas, Irrawaddy valleys and Pegu Yomas (below Procne and Sandaway). All these areas fall between 92 degrees 10 minutes East and 94 degrees 20 minutes East. The north-south length of the Zo country is roughly 350 miles (500 km) and it is generally about 120 miles (192 km) wide.

The majority of the people occupy the Indo-Burman ranges, a series of parallel mountain chains trending north-south along the India-Burma boundary. The mountain ranges are a continuation of the Naga and Patkoi hills, extending as far south as Arakan Yomas. Fast Zoram lies in the eastern part of these mountains and is higher than the western mountains (West Zoram or Mizoram).

The highest peaks in these ranges are Ngulluvum, Innbuk.

Thuamvum (Kennedy peak), Lentlang, Kharantlang, Rungtlang, and Arterawttlang (Mt. Victoria), which is the highest peak in Zo country at 10,400 feet or 3,412 meters. The other peaks are in average about 8,700 feet or 2,854 meters high. In West Zoram the highest peak is Phawngpui (Blue Mountain), which is 6,598 feet or 2,164 meters high. At the north and south ends of Zo country the land is less rugged and rises from 2,000 to 4,000 feet, or 656 to 1,312 meters.

The capital of West Zoram, Aizawl, lies at 3,700 feet or 1,214 meters above sea level, whereas Haka (Halkha), the capital of East Zoram, is at 7,500 feet or 2,460 meters. The valleys between ranges are mostly v-shaped gorges, and there are very few flat areas to serve as, agricultural land. Because the elevations can vary quite extensively temperatures also vary greatly. In the valleys of the larger rivers, such as the Run or Manipur Rivers, the climate is sub-tropical. Ten miles or 16 kilometers away, however, at an elevation of 6,000 feet (2,0W meters) and at the top of mountain ranges, the climate is rather moderate. The climate is “monsoon” and rain falls from May to October. Average rainfall for the year is between 70 inches (178 cm) and 170 inches (432 cm). Average yearly rain in Aizawl is 82 inches (208 cm), Lunglei 138 inches (350 cm), Haka 90 inches (228 cm), and Kanpetlet 109 inches (276 cm). In one year Haka had 118 rainy days and Kanpetlet 127 days. Summer temperatures range between 64 to 84 degrees F (17 to 29 degrees Centigrade), and winter temperatures are between 37 and 75 degrees F (3 to 24 degrees Centigrade). Some places, like the town of Haka, are chilly in winter and temperatures can drop below the freezing point in the night and frost form on the grass. Snow falls very rarely, and when it does the people call “the mountain has vomited.”

To overcome the cold, Zo people built houses with thatch roofing and often double layered split bamboo walling. The houses were separated into two parts. One part was completely closed except for the main entrance with a door. In this part of Elie room, the people cooked, slept, and spent their evenings sitting around the fire place during the colder periods of the year. To conserve the heat during the night, the glowing charcoal was buried under ashes, to keep that part of the house comfortably warm during the night. Around the fire place was the master bed, usually two wooden planks about five feet wide combined.

The pillow was a rectangular wood place about 4 inches in diameter. The children slept on the other side of the fire place. The guests slept on mats on the third side of the fire place.

This might explain the assertion that Zo people were filthy and never washed themselves. This is, of course, partly true in some areas. Zo people did not wash themselves at regular intervals but randomly whenever they conic across a stream or a pool of water. Their water supply at their own dwellings might not be enough for body washing, as it has to be carried up hill from the water fountain or another source. Although they might have washed themselves clean, the smoke, ashes, and dust made them quickly dirty again. When nights were not cold, the front part of the house, which is open at the front, is used for almost all activities including sleeping purposes.

Because people did not have many warm clothes, the blanket that were used in the night might have been the only cloth to protect the body from the cold during the day. This was very much the practice of every Zo during the earlier days when shirts and pants were unknown to them. To cover the private parts, the women wore very short or mini skirts which barely covered the upper part of the thigh. They usually covered their breasts until they became mother. After becoming a mother, hiding of the breast is not deemed necessary. In some parts of the Zo country, young or old Zo women never hid their breasts. Men usually wore loin cloths: however older men may have worn nothing at all except a blanket when it was cold. To prevent the freezing of their hands in times of warfare, the men slept with hands dipped in cold water during the winter nights.

In higher parts of the mountain ranges, pine and rhododendron flourish. In lower areas teak, bamboo, and similar plants are abundant. Farmers grow potatoes, maize, millets, sweet potatoes, plums, and apples in the higher altitudes. Rice, oranges, and pine apples are grown in the lower valleys. Except for the lower part of Zapan (Kaladan), all rivers flow turbulently through rugged country. They are full of rapids which carry boulders and silt. During the rainy season these rivers are especially formidable. All of Zoland is hilly, except for small stretches of plain. The largest such plain is the plateau in the Champhai-Cikha area. Others are near Thlanthlang Khuabung, Letak, Buangtu, Mung-plang, Khuaphual, and Botsung. In these flat areas wet cultivation

is practised, using animal power. The low lying Paletwa and Kolosib areas offer the best agricultural land.

There are very few lakes in Zoland. The biggest lakes are Rih Li in the Hualngo area in East Zoram and Palk Lake in the south of West Zoram.

Because of the rugged nature of the land, communication and transportation are difficult. At the present time dirt roads connect towns in both East and West Zoram, and the Kaladan river is navigable from Paletwa to the Indian Ocean. In addition, the Tlawng or Dhaleswari streams could in the future be developed for navigation.

Production from Zo country is limited to agriculture. A few products, mostly fruits, are being exported. Blessed with a variety of climate, Zo people can produce almost all types of fruits, tropical or temperate. There is a noticeable improvement in this field. Other products, such as silk and turpentine, are becoming popular. The potential also exists for exportation of furniture and similar products.

In the past, elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, wild dogs, bison, deer, and wild boar inhabited Zoland. With the appearance of firearms these animals have become nearly extinct. Fish in the streams have been ruthlessly killed with dynamite and poison, and most of the rivers and streams in Zoram are empty of larger species of fish.

Zoram is predominantly made of silty shale and sandstone. Limestone and igneous rocks are also found. The silty shale and sandstone are relatively soft formations, easily washed away by rain, which results in landslides. Because of this, roads built on the slopes of the mountains are difficult to maintain. Ngawcinpau named these rocks “Zoflysch” because of their similarity to the Flysch rocks of the Alps in Switzerland. The oldest rocks in Zoram are the schists, that make up Arterawttlang (Mt. Victoria). They were deposited some six hundred million years ago. The “Zoflysch” was deposited some fifty million years ago.

Basic igneous rocks displaced into the “Zoflysch” during the building of the Indo-Burman ranges, some thirty to forty million years ago. Suangdongtlang (Webula), Bukpivum, Ngullumual (Mwetaung), Leisan, Nattaung (Dawimual), and many small peaks along the Zo-Burma border are built of chromite and nickel.

bearing ultrabasic rocks. Garnierite, a nickel silicate mineral, was discovered by Ngawcinpau, the first Zo geologist, on the Ngullumual. The nickel content was 1.19 to 4.59 percent.

Ngullumual has the economic potential for nickel mining. The author discovered chromite in these same ultrabasic rocks. Other important minerals found in these rocks are talc, from which talcum powder ^{is} made. and asbestos, which is used as insulation material in industry. Other commercially interesting rocks are slate and limestone. Slate is used traditionally as roofing material. Limestone can be used for the manufacture of cement. Abundant limestone is found in Lungrangtlang (Haka), and Paha (Tedim).



Festive Lusei dress

CHAPTER 2

ROOTS OF ZO

In the absence of written documents, and because the Zo had limited contact with neighbouring peoples, it is extremely difficult to trace Zo history. However, through historical linguistics, archaeological findings, and ethnic relationships, it is now accepted that Zo belong to the group of people identified as Tibeto-Burmans.

The oral genealogy of Zo claims that a man named Zo was the originator of all Zo people. The genealogy however does not record time or locations, and many names must have been forgotten. The genealogy may also contain only information about those who were powerful, with those less successful being omitted. Estimates based on oral history account for approximately twenty seven generations of Zo people. Assuming a generation to last twenty-five years. Zo people have been in existence for only about seven hundred years. Therefore genealogy as the Zo recall it cannot be wholly depended upon as a source of information. A written genealogy, the "Genealogy of the Zo Race," was compiled by Khupzathang of Buanman. in 1974. The written version however was based on information from only parts of Zoram, and thus neither the written genealogy nor legend reveal the true origins of the Zo people. (See Table 1)

Origins in China

Zo legend asserts that the Zo were originally from a cave called Chinlung, which is given different locations by different clans. The legend cannot be accepted as a fact, because it is contradictory to known facts of how man originated.

The physical features of Zo people, yellowish or brownish skin, brown eye, black hair, slanted eye, prominent cheekbone, wide nose, and flat face suggest their relation to the Indonesian-Malay subrace of the Mongoloid Race. By analysing Zo language and comparing with other languages anthropologists concluded that Zo language is related to the Tibeto-Chinese languages and

therefore their cultural affiliations with them. The Tibeto-Chinese group of people are subdivided into several groups (see Table 2) and Zo people are placed together with Burman, Meitei (Manipuris), Naga, Kachin, Lolo, Tibetans, etc. as the Tibeto-Burmans, who at one time or the other must have shared common cultural or political affiliations or both. This leads one to believe that Zo people originated in China and that they might in some way be related to bones found in the caves of Chou k'outien south of Peking—the bones of “Peking Man”. Peking Man is earliest known man in China and surrounding areas, and anthropologists believe that Peking Man possessed certain characteristics peculiar to the Mongoloid race.

Traces of human existence are attributed to as long ago as a million years, and Peking Man may have flourished in 500,000 B.C. In the Ordos region of China stone implements and a few bones of hunting people have been found, suggesting a time frame about 50,000 B.C.

By about 4,000 B.C. a Mongolian people with a neolithic culture appeared, but instead of being hunters they were animal breeders. Their tools included finely polished rectangular axes with keen cutting edges.

By about 2500 B.C., according to Eberhard², there were eight principal historical cultures in China. The Ch'iang tribes, ancestors of the Tibeto-Burmans, were found in western China in the province of present day Szechwan and in the mountain regions of Kansu and Shensi. Their economy was based on sheep herding and the raising of yaks, ponies and some pigs. Cultivation appears to have resulted from alien influence and mainly involved wheat and buckwheat.

During the Shang dynasty, (1600-1028 B.C.) the Ch'iang tribes were neighbors of the Shang people, with whom they were in a more or less constant state of war. They lived in the southwest region of Shansi and Shensi. During the Chou dynasty (722-481 B.C.), Ch'iang tribes were found in northwest China, between the sources of the Yangtse and Wei. Hall writesthese people had been mountain dwellers, originally living in the northwest of China. The earliest Chinese records coming from the latter half of the second millennium B.C. called them the Ch'iang. Chinese hostility forced them to take refuge in northeast Tibet.”

During the Han dynasty the Ch'iang tribes appeared as the Tanguts—the Tibetan Tribal Federation. The Tanguts attempted to block Chinese access to Turkistan, which the Chinese had conquered in 73 A.D. Heavy fighting ensued and the Chinese got the upper hand, driving the Tanguts to the South. Whether this was the reason for the Tibeto-Burman's migration to the south can only be guessed. Hall-⁶ gives an earlier time, the first millennium B.C., for the Tibeto-Burman southward migration. He writes

“...they were pursued by the Chinese rulers to Tsin (Chin) through the mountains towards the south.”

The Ch'iang tribal structure was always weak, as leadership arose among them only in times of war. Their society had a military rather than a tribal structure, and the continuation of these states depended entirely upon the personal qualities of their leaders. They were fundamentally sheep breeders, not horse breeders, and therefore showed an inclination to incorporate infantry into their armies.'

The absence of writing among most of the Tibeto-Burmans suggests that their separation must have begun at a very early date perhaps before the Chou dynasty, whose rulers were Tibetans. Except Tibetans none of the Tibeto-Burman group had writings. The Chou dynasty came to an end around 200 B.C. During the third century A.D. Buddhism was introduced into Tibet and China but none of the Tibeto-Burman group except the Tibetans were effected. They had been shifting their villages often in connection with their slash and burn method of cultivation. Civilization therefore did not penetrate them.

The southward movement of the Tibeto-Burman people took many years perhaps several centuries. Recent migration of Zo people to the Kale-Kabaw-Valley has taken a century and there is no sign that migration is completed. The same pattern was very likely the case with the Tibeto-Burman group. The Kachin, for example, were still moving towards the south until very recently. As they slowly moved through the hilly regions some settled in one location and some moved on. The result was their separation as different groups. Those who separated last remain closely related, for example, Zo and Meitei.

In moving toward the present Burma. Zo people separated into two groups. One group moving southwards between the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy. The other group moved south to the west of

the Chindwin and reached Zo country and Arakan before 1000 A.D. According to G.H. Luce the Naga were in present Nagaland when the Zo-Meitei group passed through on the move south. One demonstration of this was a village in Nagaland whose inhabitants never married with other tribes, but who retained the original Zo language and culture. The villagers said they had lived in that village for several centuries. These villagers and some other Zo-Meitei groups remained in Nagaland as others moved to the south, and these people such as the Tangul Nagas, are linguistically and culturally closer to the Zo than to other Nagas. In the Somra Tracts the Pongniu, Sawlaw, Kayou and Heni clans, who speak the Kalaw dialect, are closely related to the Laizo of Falam. Zo people, and perhaps also Meitei slowly moved through the Hukawng Valley. When they came to the confluence of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin Rivers they settled there, the two big rivers giving them security and protection from enemies. One reason of their settlement could have also influenced by their inability to cross the two big rivers. Legends told us that Zo people found out building rafts only after they saw a rabbit floating on logs.

The ancient history of the Chindwin Valley was told by a chronicle found in Kale. The "Gazetters- speak of a ruined palace, and the chronicle of the town Yazagyo traces its history back to the time of Buddha, when Indian princes from Magadha ruled local Sak Kantu people. Even today the carved walls of the ancient town of Yazagyo can be appreciated at a place twenty miles north of Kalemmyo, in the Kabaw Valley west of the Chindwin. The chronicle says that about A.D. 639 the palace was destroyed by combined forces of Manipuris and Zo According to the Gazetteer the Kale area was closely linked to ancient Magadha. Yazagyo is a corruption of Rajagriha, the residence of Buddha and capital of Magadha. Webula, a mountain a few miles west of Kalemmyo, was named after Wepulla of the Pali history of modern Buipula.

Of all Tibeto-Burman peoples the Meitei of Manipur were the people linguistically closest to the Zo, and they settled together as one group in the Chindwin Valley. Historical materials of the Meiteis have shown the presence of Zo people in the Chindwin Valley after the beginning of the Christian era. Lehman" puts the Zo's occupation of the area well into the middle of the first millennium A.D., in which period the Meiteis conquered the

Andro-Sengmai group of people, who were inhabitants of present day Manipur.

Hodson” said that the Manipuris (Meitei) were descendents of surrounding hill tribes. Their traditions have remained similar and even today they retain many customs of the hill people. He wrote, in 1900, that the organization, religion, habits and manners of the Meitei of two hundred years before were the same as the hill people (Zo and Naga) of his own era.

There are legends and traditions which tell of early relationship between Meitei, Naga, and Zo. A Tangkul (Naga) tradition says that Naga, Meitei and Zo descended from a common ancestor who had three sons. These were the progenitors of the tribes. This tradition puts the Zo as the eldest and the Meitei the youngest. Hodson wrote, “The Tangkul legend is to the effect that one day a sow, heavy with young, wandered from the village of Hundung and was tracked to the valley by the younger of the two brothers who had migrated from the village of Maikel Tungam, where their parents lived, and had founded the village of Hundung. Oknung, the pig’s stone, where the sow was eventually found, is situated on the banks of the Iril River. The sow littered there and the young man stayed to look after her; and as he found the country to his liking, he decided to settle there. For a time he kept up friendly relations with his brother in the hills, who made a practice of sending him every year gifts of produce of the hills and in turn received presents of the manufacture of the plains. The younger brother became well-to-do and proud, and abandoned the custom of sending presents to his brother in the hills, who promptly came down and took what he had been in the habit of getting.”

Hodson also told a Mao Naga legend, which connects the Naga, Meitei, and Zo. “Once upon a time there was a jumping match between the three sons of the common ancestor. The Kuki leapt from one top of one range of hills to the crest of the next, while the Naga, nearly as good, cleared the intervening valley, but his foot slipped and touched the river. Hence the limit of his ablutions, while the stronger Kuki to this day avoids all use of water. The Manipuri tumbled headlong, which explains his fondness for bathing. Another variant says that the father of them was a Deity named Asu who had three sons, Mamo, Alapa, and Tuto. From Mamo are descended the Kukis and the Nagas,

while the Gurkhalis are sprung from the loin of Alapa and the sons of Tuto are the Manipuris.” This and many similar legends of Zo, Meitei, Naga, and Kachin tell stories of their early relations. Most of the legends attempt to explain how they separated or lost track of each other.

Grierson told a Thado legend which tells of the Khungsai (Thado) and Meitei separation. “Our forefathers have told us that man formerly lived in the bowels of the earth. The Khuangzais and the Meiteis were then friends. One day they quarreled about a cloth, and their mother took a dao and cut intopieces. From then on the Meitei and the Thado went separate ways. The Meitei, who had gone to cut haimang trees, left fresh footprints, so that many people followed them and the Meitei became numerous. The Khuangsais went to cut plantain trees from where they ascended to the earth. When people looked at the footprints of the Khuangsai they looked rather old and therefore few people followed them, which explains why there are only a few Khuangsai.”

Kachin legend says that they were separated from the Zo people, who had gone out in front, and they spent many days Irving to trice the way the Zo people had gone. As they could not find the trial they called the Zo people *khang*, meaning footprints, because they were looking for footprints of the Zo people. (As there are Khang tribes in the Hukawng valley, the identification of the Zo as Khang could be of modern interpretation.)

Khami legend says that the separation was due to the women and children, who could not walk fast and remained behind, where they cultivated the land and followed the others later.

Sizang legend is similar to the Khuangsai legend, but it does not specify from whom their group was separated. They went in front of the others and to mark their trail cut down plantain trees. The plantain trees grew up immediately after being cut, so that the people following them assumed they had lost the trail and went no further. There was another party, however, who marked their trail by cutting off tree bark. The people finding these still fresh cuttings followed them. Thus there were fewer Zo people.

There are also Meitei or Manipur legends that record the relationship between Zo, Naga, and the Meiteis. Tombi Singh, (1972), a Meitei writes. “If we have an element of truth in our

legends and historical records, one thing is established: that the ancient forefathers of the Manipuris had their origin in the hill areas of Manipur. This period of forefathers reigning in hilltops is too remote from our memory and understanding to grasp it in its fullest details. As time passed, a super human being performed almost a miraculous feat to drain the water collected in the valley, boring a hole through a hill rock with a spear-like weapon. Even now the outlet is known as chingnunghut. As the result of the drainage provided for the water of Manipur, the population of Manipur moved down to the valley. . . special mention are seven clans, who established stable kingdoms in the different areas of the state.”

Little is known about Meitei history. In 777 the Shan prince Samlon^g found the Meiteis to be very poor. After a thousand years, during the region of King Pamheiba. Manipur became a strong nation. Conversion to Hinduism during the late eighteenth century and contact with Indians and Chinese widened the gap between the highlanders. Zo and Naga, and plainsmen, the Meiteis. There had been little contact except for warfare, and different cultures. customs, and modes of life were developed.

Table 2. Modern mythology interpretation of Zo relationships to other peoples, and a list of Zo main clans.



Langzo	Limyo	Hmar	Zophei	Khuano
	Yhppy	Chawte	Mi-E	Dim
		Chawngtu	Tawr	Guile
		Khiangte	Laizo	Ngaihte
		Ngente	Khuangh	
		Tlau	Khualsim	Simte
		Vangchhia	Zahau	Bake
		Renthlei	Zanniat	Vaiphei
			Lente	Gangte
			Ngawn	

Zo Kingdom

Zo people believe they settled in the Chindwin Valley in early times. They know the Chindwin River by different names— the Lusei as Run. meaning river, and the Paihte as Tuikang, meaning white water. Pu K. Zawla in his “Mizo Pi Pu to Ieh an Thlahte Chanchin” suggested 996 A.D. as the year in which Zo people arrived in the Chindwin Valley. and he oelieves that they lived there two or three centuries.

The rise of the Tang dynasty (618-906 A.D.) brought contact between early Zo people in the Chindwin and the Tang Chinese. The Tang, as widely traveled traders. recorded the existence of three kingdoms in Burma—the Pyus, the Pegus (Mon). and the Sak. The Sak kingdom may have been the Zo of upper Burma.

The rise of the Nan-chao kingdom during the Tang dynasty influenced the Pyu as well as the Zo kingdom, and the Tang dynasty brought resurgence to the political power of the Nan-chao, who were Tai or Shan living in south-west China. In about 629 A.D. the Nan-chao chief was a subordinate of the Tang emperor. but in time the Nan-Chao chief Pi-ko-lo overpowered other small states and built a large Nan-chao kingdom. In 738 A.D. the Nan-chao conquered the Tu-fan (Tibet) and Shihman (Lolo) tribes. (Lolo tribes are one of the Tibeto-Burman races. They migrated from the north as the last of the Tibeto-Burmans) Because of a misunderstanding between the emperor and the second Nan-chao chief. Ko-lo-feng, a great battle was fought at Hsiakuan and 6,000 of the Tangs’ troops were killed. Thus the Nan-chao established themselves as a stable kingdom. During this period the Shan attempted to push eastward into China as well as southwest. In 750 A.D. Ko-lo-feng opened trade routes to India and to the kingdom of the Pyu in central Burma. He

established permanent garrisons at staging posts, and these garrisons were in later years to dominate northern Burma and conquer the Zo people in the Chindwin Valley. In 700 A.D. the Nan-chao plundered the Pyu capital and carried off thousands of captives to Kunming, which ended the Pyu kingdom.⁵⁰

Tang Chinese travelers learned of an eighth century kingdom and various tribes existing west of the Nan-chao kingdom. The capital of the kingdom, “the wooden stockade”. was situated at the confluence of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin Rivers. At that time the Zo people must have settled north and west of the capital, as most of the locations connected with the Zo people were found in the north of the Chindwin and Irrawaddy confluence. The northern most part of the Zo settlement was at Homalin. Fan-ch’o, a diplomat of the Tang. described the Chindwin River and the people living in the Chindwin Valley. The Chinese called the Chindwin River “Mino”; hence the people living in the Chindwin Valley were called Mino people. Fan-ch’o wrote in “The Manshu: Book of the Southern Barbarians”, “It takes its source in the Hsiao-Po’lo men *Little Brahman Kingdom’ of the northwest. It flows south past the Yu-yeh-chu river valley. Then to the southeast it reaches the wooden stockade which is on a sand bank 100 li from north to south and 60 li from east to west. They call their princes and chiefs Zo. The Mino have long white faces. They are by nature polite and respectful. Whenever they address anyone, they came forward making a bow at each step. The kingdom has no cities with inner or outer walls. In the middle of the hall of the Mino King’s palace there are great pillars cut and carved in patterns and adorned with gold and silver... They are 60 day stages southwest of Yungchang city of Man.- (The Chinese called the Nan-chao “Man”).

“In the ninth year of Taho (835 A.D.) the Man destroyed their (Zo) kingdom and looted their gold and silver. They captured two or three thousand of their clansmen and banished them to wash the gold of the Li shui (Irrawaddy)”

Remains of Zo settlements are still found today in the Chindwin Valley. Two miles from Sibani village, not far from Monywa, is a Zo ritual ground. The memorial stone was, in earlier days, about thirteen feet (4.3 m) high, but is now decayed from exposure. The Burmese called it *Chin paya* or Chin God. The place was called “Ashground” because of the high ash content of the soil.

In 1971 Khantinzamvungh found beads front necklaces, remnants of copper belts, and pieces of water pipes, used for smoking, in the earth. The Burmese told him that in 1968 Major Ko Ko took three Jeep loads of material from the ground and drove away. In Sathung, a village near Mintaipen, there are remnants of Zo memorial stones which have inscribed the date the Zo people were attacked by Mingyi Kyaw Saw. Near Sagaing bridge there is a village called *Chin Ywa* or Chin Village. There are no more Zo in the village. the Meitei descendents are still there. They are Burmanized and speak only Burmese. In the cemetery however, the Meitei keep their traditions, burying their dead with the heads pointing north, whereas the Burmans bury their dead with heads pointing east. In Sagaing town itself is a place called *Chin Suh* or “Chin meeting place.”

When the Burmese descended to the plains of central Burma, during the ninth century, Zo people were already in the Chindwin Valley. According to Luce the Burmans fought against the other occupants of the area. such as the Thet, Mon, and Pyu, but they did not fight the Zo.

The reason seems very simple. Since the Burmese settled in the east of the Irrawaddy, and the Zo were dominantly between the two rivers, there was no conflict of interest concerning their territory between the two tribes. Only after their kingdom was destroyed the Zo crossed the Chindwin and settled in the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha-Yaw-Valleys and Pandaung Hill. Asho tradition says that they lived in the Pandaung Hills and crossed the Irrawaddy and lived on the east bank of the Irrawaddy during the Burmese Pagan dynasty.

The Shans established a state at Hkamti Long, previously held by a Tibetan prince in about 1000 A.D. It started as a military outpost of the Nan-chaos during the three-side hostilities involving Chinese and Tibetans. After establishing themselves the Shan began settling in the Hukawng, Mogaung, Kabaw. Kale, and to a lesser extent in the Yaw valleys. The Shans must have intermixed with the Zo people, as many Zo. in particular the Lusei and the Pawi (Zahau), legends tell us about their times with the Shans.

For example “Shan khaw fiartui the vat in dang,

Ngaknun hnamchem ang an chawi”

Not only do songs describe a river, which speculation holds to be

the Chindwin, but the songs narrate life in a Shan village. The Paite, or other Zo clans, seem to have no such traditions. The Paite call the Shans “the children of Khamang” which perhaps means that the Paite regarded the Shans as Khmer. They call the Chinese “Sen” which must have been derived from Shan. The Paite were less intimate with the Shans during that time because they occupied the areas around Kan a little farther south from the Shan.

During this period the Zo occupied the countries west of the Chindwin and Irrawaddy Rivers—stretching from Khampat/Homalin area in the north to the Yaw country/Pandaung Hills in the south. The Shans concentrated themselves in the northern part of this area—mainly north of Kale. Few Shans were in the Yaw area. Zo were the main occupant of the area south and west of Kale, the Myittha and Yaw valleys. Some Zo were already in the southern Zo—northern Arakan areas.

In 1253 the Mongol king Kublai Khan struck south from Linpan mountains of Kansu, through some 700 miles of no-man’s land, by-passing Tu-fan (Tibet), and attacking Ta-li the Nan-chao capital. The Nan-chao kingdom of Ta-li was destroyed in 1279. After this destruction the surviving Shan rulers migrated to the present north of Burma, Thailand and surrounding areas.

The Mongols then invaded Burma and captured Conca (near Bhamo) on the ninth of December, 1283. The Mongols advanced as far as Myingyan and then retreated. The Shans of Hkamti Long and Mogaung took the opportunity to fill the vacuum thus created and in April, 1301 invaded and overran north Burma, east and west of the Irrawaddy. In 1364 they sacked the twin Burmese capitals of Sagging and Pinya.

After destruction of the Burmese kingdom petty Shan kingdoms were formed in different parts of Burma, including Kale. Like their sister states of Mohnyin and Mogaung, they became independent.

The Mongol invasion and the Shan activities drove the Burmans to migrate to the west of the Irrawaddy starting during the thirteenth century. The Burmans settled down in the Yaw valley. At a certain time the Burman seemed to recognize the Zo people with their own name and called the area the Zo country. Yaw was derived from Zo or a very similar word. The river in the Zo

country was named the Zo stream or Yaw chaung. The Burmans brought their culture, religion and wet cultivation, which they copied from the Pyus. Zo and Burman lived side by side over a century. Both of these tribes had at one time in the past the same ancestor. They shared the Tibeto— Burman language and therefore the Zo plain dwellers of the Yaw valley adopted easily the Burman language and Burmese way of life including the religion. These Burmanized Zo people are still in the Yaw country today. They call themselves the Yaw people and speak Burmese with a distinctive dialect.

Most of the Zo people however did not easily change their way of life. Even in the Chindwin valley they used slash and burn method of shifting cultivation, and practiced their custom of animal sacrifices. They preferred hill areas for their settlement and many of them occupied the Pandaung Hills as documented by Asho history.

Because new immigrants were brought by waves of Burmese invasions of the kingdom of Manipur and Assam, the Burmans quickly spread to the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha valleys. By the fourteenth century the Burmese established themselves tightly in the area that their chronicles mentioned Kale as early as 1370. The Burmese hold on the Shan was so strong that by the fourteenth century the names of the Sawbwas bore Burmese names, including Kyitaungnyo, the Sawbwa of Kale.

Zo People Built Kale Palace

In 1368 Sao Saw Ke (1368— 1401) a Shan Sawbwa or prince became the king of the new dynasty founded at Ava. He took advantage of the quarrel between Kale and Mohnyin and annexed both states and replaced the Sawbwas with his relatives. Kyitaun-gnyo, his very ambitious nephew, became the Sawbwa of Kale, who even attacked Ava in 1425 circling the city for seven months but failed to dethrone the king. In 1374 he built the palace of Kale. It had a double moat, measuring 30 yards (30 m) wide, and massive walls a kilometre square, enclosing an area of 2,34 acres. The remains of the massive walls of Kale city, still stand today two miles south of the present Kale. (The author did not see the remains himself.)

The Asho from the Sandoway district of Burma have ballads that mentioned the bricked-wall city of Kale.

Ania la chap don a kho a, e e e e
 htoan za na baleng a hpuan a, e e e e
 apok a poichi a oat limit it, c e e e
 htoan za na baleng a hpuan a,
 ane ye olo ve dimo e, e e e e
 si sho e lo po e hnaung e, e e e e
 son sho e a toan e sy c. e e e c
 kanau o suam ei o htui yo

Translation

To the upper country
 To the plains and dry grasses
 To the brick city of our forefathers
 To the plains and dry grasses
 Which are so charming
 Let us, hie, come along!
 Let us haste with every speed
 Oh my fairy-like young brother
 (Taken from Vumkhohau)

Zo (the Lusei) verbal history states a cruel king and a great famine which killed thousands of people in the Shan country as the reason for their migration to the hill.” The Sizang records the oppressive Governor of Kale as the cause. He forced the people to construct a moat running all around the Kale palace. There were so many people involved in the construction and the fingers cut accidentally during the construction filled a whole basket. At the same time the people had to defend themselves against the Manipuris who invaded the Zo-Shan country constantly. They therefore could devote little time cultivating their fields and eventually famine struck the area. The Zo then decided to leave the plains and migrated to the hills.

Whenever there was a possibility of assimilation, the Zo moved away, and it was time for them to move away from the Burman because some Zo had assimilated to the Burman. They climbed the hills of the Zo country and following the highest ridges they looked for suitable locations for settlement, and they settled down wherever they came across caves big enough to protect them from rain and weather.

They left behind the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha Valleys, a land they occupied for some centuries. To this rich land they came back again and again to hunt for the vast forest of the valleys was inhabited by bountiful wild animals such as bison, bear, wildboar, huge herds of deer, tiger, elephants herds and even rhinoceros. The streams were full of trout and fishing was done with the nets obtained from the Shan and the Burman. They came back when they need slaves, and human heads for sacrificial purposes. And they came back to trade. They were the friends of the plains people until they quarrel, and they were enemies until they agreed once more to be friends. When peace was established after the British invasion, they came back to settle and today they live peacefully together.

Conclusion : Zo people must have come to the area between the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy rivers before the 8th century, possibly at the beginning of the Christian era. Zo people had built a Kingdom there. with capital at the confluence of the two rivers, which protects them from their enemies. Their Kingdom was destroyed by the Nanchaos during the 9th century. The Masho might have migrated to the Zo country without first living in the Chindwin Valley or their migration might have happened immediately after the Zo Kingdom was destroyed. Most Zo people lived together with the Shans from the 9th century upto the 14th century. The Burmese came to the Zo country in the 13th century. The majority of Zo migrated to the Zo country starting in the 14th century.



Festive Lusei dress

CHAPTER 3

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENTS, 1000-1826

To better understand the relationship between various groups of Zo, the Zo people can be separated into six major groups (1) Asho (2) Laimi (3) Masho (4) Mizo (5) Sho, and (6) Zomi.

As stated earlier any one of these terms will typically be used by individual clans to describe all Zo people, and there are some who would debate the specific categories and sub clans within them. In order to create a general picture that retains basic accuracy however, and to allow for a reasonable discussion of clan and group interrelationships; this type of grouping is necessary.

In order not to totally bury distinctions however, the following should be noted by the reader. According to other tribes, but not by the clans people themselves, the Zomi group are called Paite, the Laimi group Pawi and the Mizo group Lusei. These terms are also used in this document.

Asho covers all Zo living in Arakan and on the Burmese plains, but not those in the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha Valleys. Asho also covers those people recognized as Khyangs in the Chittagong Hills Tract. Masho includes Mru, Khami and Khumi. The Masho dwell in the Paletwa area, the eastern hilly regions of Chittagong and in northern Arakan. The Sho are situated in Mindat-Kanpetlet and South Matupi. Pawi reside in northern Matupi, the Falam and Haka areas and the Lakher Pawi area of Mizoram. The Pankhu and Bawmzo clans of the Chittagong Hill Tract also belong to the Pawi.

The Lusei are found in Mizoram and the south western part of Manipur. The Hualngo of the northwest Chin Hills also belong to the Lusei group. Paite are found in the Tedim area, and from there to the Churachandpur or Lamka district of Manipur, where they are recognized as Kuki. Their settlements are also found in hilly regions of Hkamti and Homalin districts. Zo or Yaw people of Gangaw area are excluded from the main Zo tribes because the degree of their Burmanization is so advanced that they are perhaps more Burman than Zo. (See Table 2 for main clans of Zo people).

Migration to Zoram

Zo must have separated into two distinct groups as they migrated to the west of the Chindwin.

The Khami, Khumi and Masho (Mru)-group, migrating along a big river, have no tales of settling in the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha Valleys. They were probably the earliest migrants to Zo country. The rest of the Zo people, although not having exactly the same legends, have records of being in the Chindwin-Kale-Kabaw-Myittha Valleys. The people who call themselves Mizo, Zomi, Laimi, Asho, Sho and Zo were later migrants to Zo hill country.

Anthropological studies made by Lehman differentiate two forms of Zo social organization: a relatively poor material culture and simple social structure in southern Zo areas, and a more elaborate material culture and more defined social structure with *bawi/chia* distinctions for northern Zo people. He drew the boundary between Matu and Zotung country, which is approximately 21 degrees 45 minutes North. Luce” splits Zo people into two groups, with northern Zo having general linguistic and cultural unity and superiority. Drawing conclusions from these studies, the later migrants must have lived separately in two groups and migrated to Zo country by the nearest roads to the hills. Some time after the tenth century A.D. and before the thirteenth century A.D. the settlement patterns of the early Zo people may have been as follows :

1. Early Migrants :

Khumi/Khami, Masho (Vakeung), Khaungsu, Pawmnau, Anu, Myhn, Reaungtu, Yhp-py; in the southern part of the Zo country (south of Haka Sub-division). This group falls into the southern group as defined by Lehman and Luce.

2. Late Migrants :

(a) Southern Group Yaw (Zo), Asho, Sho, Matu; in the Yaw (Zo) country, Pandaung Hills, Myittha Valley, and Lower Chindwin Valley.

(b) Northern Group Pawi, Lusei, Paite; in the northern Myittha, Kale-Kabaw and Lower Chindwin Valley.

Socioeconomic differences between northern and southern groups might be the result of differing land fertility, with the southern part of Zo country having the advantage. Differences could also have been caused by the timing of migration into the hills.

Early Migrants : Masho

The earliest migrants into Zo country were the Masho group, whose legends do not record settling down in the Kabaw, Kale, or Yaw (Zo) Valleys. Their migration was directly to the hills. The other Zo people, when they moved to the hills, had to fight their way out of the valleys. As will be seen later the Masho were driven south by the Lai.

Khami legends say they were ruled in olden days by a hill king. People moving into the hill king's jurisdiction were called *Mi*. They were also called *khumi*, meaning 'village people', which was later changed to Khami. The Khami people came from area called Tui Ben.

Because of the instability of life in Tui Ben the Khami passed through the big mountain ranges and moved west, leaving women and children to come behind. The advance party cut down plantain trees to mark their trail, but when the slower group arrived they found only growing plantain tress. As a result they assumed thq advance group had already gone far beyond; so they decided to camp and plant rice. Thus the two groups lost each other. The people left behind cultivated the land, using shifting cultivation, and they frequently moved about in search of new farm lands. On their moves they fed themselves on fish, oysters and shrimp caught from streams.

Another version of the group's split involves foods eaten. On coming to a big stream one group caught shrimp of a much larger size than normal. Shrimp normally turned red when cooked, but these did not. In waiting too long for the shrimp to turn red the group was left behind. At a junction of streams the first group went along the right branch (Mi), and the later party followed the left branch (La). They eventually linked up again where the two streams re-joined. Now they called themselves by

different names, *Mi* for the group of the right branch and *kham* for those of the left. *Kham* also means to encounter great hardship, which means that the people following the left branch had many difficulties on their way. In order to cultivate their land in peace the Masho chose a hill king to rule over and protect them. The king received the first yield of every crop, meat and fish, and half of the heart and a leg of every animal killed. The land of the hill king was called “Khu” and his title was “Khukong”. That is why Khami people are also called Khumi. The Khami/Khumi people later traveled farther from the Khu land and reached Rungkhua (village- of rocks) mountain in Haka district. After living there for about thirty years they moved to the Sabwe mountains in the Kanpetlet area, where they lived for about two hundred years. Then they moved to the Khanlung range between Paletwa and Matupi. 104 Today Khami and Matu have **numerous** significant cultural similarities.

A group of Khami who moved farther south are now called “Mru”, which is Arakanese for Masho. Thus Masho is the tribe name and Khami the clan name. Today the Masho speak the Kha-mi dialect, and although Masho and Khami dialects differ about two words per ten, speakers of each language are easily intelligible to the other. The Masho have been mentioned in Arakan chronicles since the eleventh century, and the chronicles record a Masho as king of Arakan during the fourteenth century. According to Loeffler Masho have been in southern Zo country since about the sixteenth century. Paletwa district and areas in the Chittagong Hills Tract also use the Khami dialect.

Late Migrants

During the fourteenth century migrants came to Zo country because of Shan/Manipuri conflicts and the hard labour demanded by the Sawbwa of Kale. The social, economic and linguistic studies of Zo people made by Luce⁴) and Lehman⁴¹ show that there are basic differences between the southern and northern groups of Zo.

The Southern Group (Asho, Sho)

Asho

In literature Asho are mentioned as “Khyeng” or “Plains Chin”.

Khyeng is an old Burmese word for Chin, and Arakanese use it today. According to their tradition the Asho first settled along the Pandaung hills, an area west of the junction of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin Rivers. The area also bordered the Yaw country. Asho tradition says that they moved east across the Irrawaddy river during the time of Pagan and mixed freely with the Burmans. The Asho say that Pyu Saw Hti, a prominent man in Burmese Pagan courts, had been an Asho, and that his Asho name was Kha Sai Hlan. During the reigns of Kings Min Don and Thibaw (Mandalay), Ashos U Bu Lu and U Htwe were prominent in the Burmese court. The Asho believe that the Thets, who, according to Burmese inscriptions, were one of the three original inhabitants of Burma, were Asho or Zo. Eventually the Asho migrated into the hills west of the Pandaung area. They lived side by side with the Khami for about two centuries before separating into two groups, one group moving south along the Arakan Yomas and the other group, the "Khyengs", still dwelling in the Paletwa and Chittagong Hill Tracts. The date of their separation was estimated by Loeffler", from linguistic studies, to lie between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Asho were driven southward from the Haka area by the Khami. who were inturn driven south by the Pawi (Lai).

The largest body of Asho now reside between the crest of the Arakan Yomas and the Irrawaddy River and are concentrated about Padaung, opposite Prome, and in the vicinity of Thayetmyo, Henzada and Kanaung. A small group also resides in Bassein. A second Asho dialect region extends east of the Irrawaddy, where some 8,000 Asho had made their way to the Pegu Yomas. On the western slope of the Arakan range, a movement, perhaps in the wake of the Burmese invasion of Arakan (1785), and certainly antedating the first Burmese-British war (1825), took settlers from Padaung, by way of the Taungup pass, into Sandoway district. Dacoits were rampant along the border between Burma and the British possessions, and their activity accelerated migration in the period just prior to the second Anglo-Burmese War (1852). By 1901 there were some 7,000 Asho in Sandoway".

The Asho had placed themselves under the Burmese and Arakan governments and they paid taxes and were liable to be called upon in case of war. The Asho however dwelled apart from Burmese and Arakan inhabitants, as their observance of ritual

practices proved an obstacle to assimilation. Sacrifices of fowl, pigs, and buffalo were offensive to their Burmese neighbours, and keeping pigs, which roamed freely in the villages, was despised by the Burman.

Today Asho dwell in intimate daily contact with Burmese, and many Asho from southern Burma now hold important positions in Burmese government. Some follow the Burmese religion of Buddhism, but many Asho are Christians, as missionaries converted them just after the British occupation. The American Baptist Mission adapted the Burmese alphabet to write Asho Bible translations. Unlike other Zo people, Asho use the Burmese alphabet for their writing, although there is a movement today to use romanized script, as the Burmese alphabet is inadequate for Asho expressions.

Some Asho are returning to the Chindwin area and have settled together with Lusei, Paite, and Pawi in the Kale Valley. They are seen in Tahan (near Kalembo) and surrounding areas. Nowadays Asho are tracing their roots to the Zo people in Zoram. The Asho celebrate, together with other Zo people of East Zoram, the Chin National Day on the 20th of February. Asho students at the Universities of Rangoon and Mandalay also join the Zomi University Student's Union, which produces the "Zomi Students' Magazine" every year. Asho clan names are Nankaing Zo, Pansai Zo, Seilezo, and Panglango.

Sho or Kx'ou or Zo

The people of Mindat sub-division, formerly Kanpetlet, call all Zo people Sho or Kx'ou or Zo. These clans, Muan, Ng'men, M'Kang, Nga, Dal and Upa, speak different dialects but use the Muan dialect as a common language, which they call the Zo language. Their sub-clans are Ciin-Zo, Laitanau, Ng'lungthu, and Thangpawng. Muan legend tells how man came to earth. At the creation of earth and heaven there was no difference between land and water and it was difficult for man to live. Then God dropped crabs and prawns from the sky, after which there was a difference between land and water. Next God sent down from heaven animals, such as tiger and bear, by an iron ladder (bridge). When

God told Puthu, the originator of Sho, to descend to earth with six men and women, Puthu asked to use the iron ladder. At first God refused the request, but on Puthu's promise that he 'would look after the animals, God give him six spears, six knives and six bows and arrows, and he agreed to Puthu's request. God forbade Puthu and his party not to live with the animals.

However the humans quarreled with the animals and killed almost all of them with their arms. The animals in turn killed all humans except Puthu and a woman. Puthu then asked God what he should do. God was angry at Puthu for not obeying, so God sent him a fowl and ordered him to cut it in half. One half he should cook for himself and the woman, and the raw half he should give to the tiger for its consumption. God then gave him permission to kill the tiger if it should attack him and the woman. Puthu did as he was told and humans and animals thus took different roles in life. Mangthang, the son of Puthu went to a Burmese town, Pu Bakhu. Then Mangthang, guided by a dream, moved north and founded the village of Mangen. Mangthang's son and grandson, Hamyauvui and Kikhawnai, lived in Mangen until their deaths, but Kikhawnai's son moved to Hilang, which lies in the Mindat district.

"Some Ng'nen claim to have originated in the plains and to have come up from the Yawdwin into the eastern most part of northern Mindat Subdivision, displacing some and absorbing other inhabitants. They are a rather warlike group and maintain an attitude of disdain mixed with fear and patronage toward Chin of the farther interior. The Ng'men have a fairly elaborate material culture. Their costume includes multicolored striped blankets, men's sitting cloths in the form of genital sheaths, women's sleeveless shirts and other items not found west of there."

The M'Kang live to the west of Hletlawng drainage but east of the Lemro river around the villages of Thluk and Zophong. Tamang who live to the west are also M'Kang, and they both have the same dialect. M'Kang and Matu are also similar in many respects. M'Kang have heavily tattooed their women's faces, from which they got the name Chinme (black Chin). This custom began because girls were kidnapped to serve as lesser wives to Burmese Kings, or to princes and village headmen. Burmese men fantasied sexual relationships with Zo women because of the Burmese women's habit of sitting with spread out

legs. Zo women excited their sexual fantasies because of the 'Lo women's habit of wearing split mini-skirts and having to sit with their thighs close together to hide their private parts. To discourage the Burmese the M'Kang tattooed their girls' faces, which became a tradition and is still practiced today, although to a lesser extent.

The Burman call the people of northern Mindat, *chinbok* or 'stinking Chin'. Chinbon refers to people of the southern Mindat Subdivision, and both Ng'men and M'Kang claim a relationship with people of northern Zocountry. The Dai people are found to the south and southwest of Ng'men, and some Dai are found immediately south of Matu country. "Yindu" in literature probably refers to Dai.¹⁰⁴

The people of Matupi Subdivision came according to some legends from the Zotung territories, and some connected their past with particular villages in Zotung country. They do not claim a single origin, but there is a fair degree of linguistic unity among them. There are numerous significant cultural similarities between Khami and Matu."

Note: The description of the various tribes or clans of southern Zo is incomplete. The Myhn (Muan), Yhp-py (Upu), Vakeung, Khaungsu, Pawmnau, and Reangtu need more attention and their settlement patterns recorded.

The Northern Group: Laimi, Mizo, Zomi

Because of close affinity among dialects it may be concluded that the Lusei, Pawi and Paite have always lived close together. It is very likely that during settlement in the Chindwin Valley the Zo people led a peaceful life without tribal conflicts. Tribes in themselves are often a product of warfare among people, which among the Zo began after their migration to the hills. The rugged terrain, and each migratory group's suspicion of others led to limited contact with one another, thereby developing different dialects and differing habits.

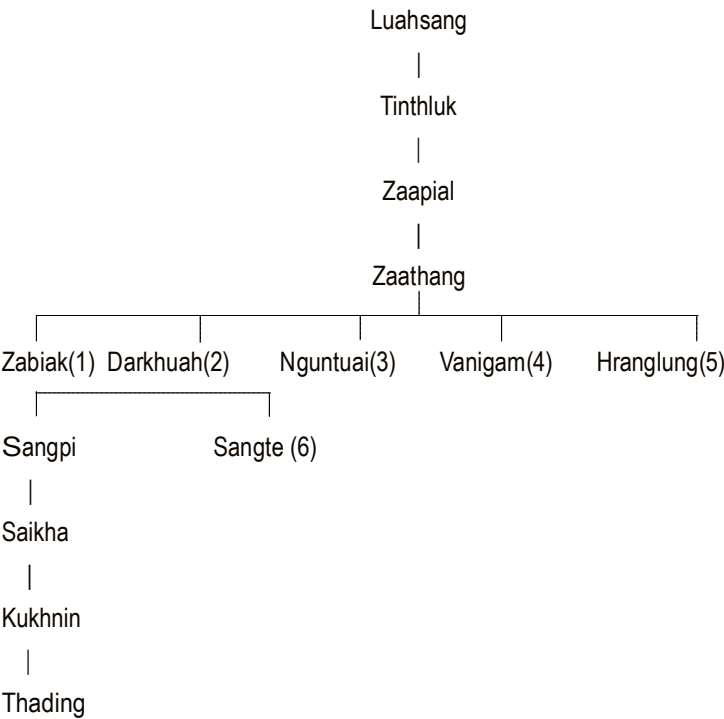
The following are descriptions, taken from legend and historical study, of varied northern groups and their origins.

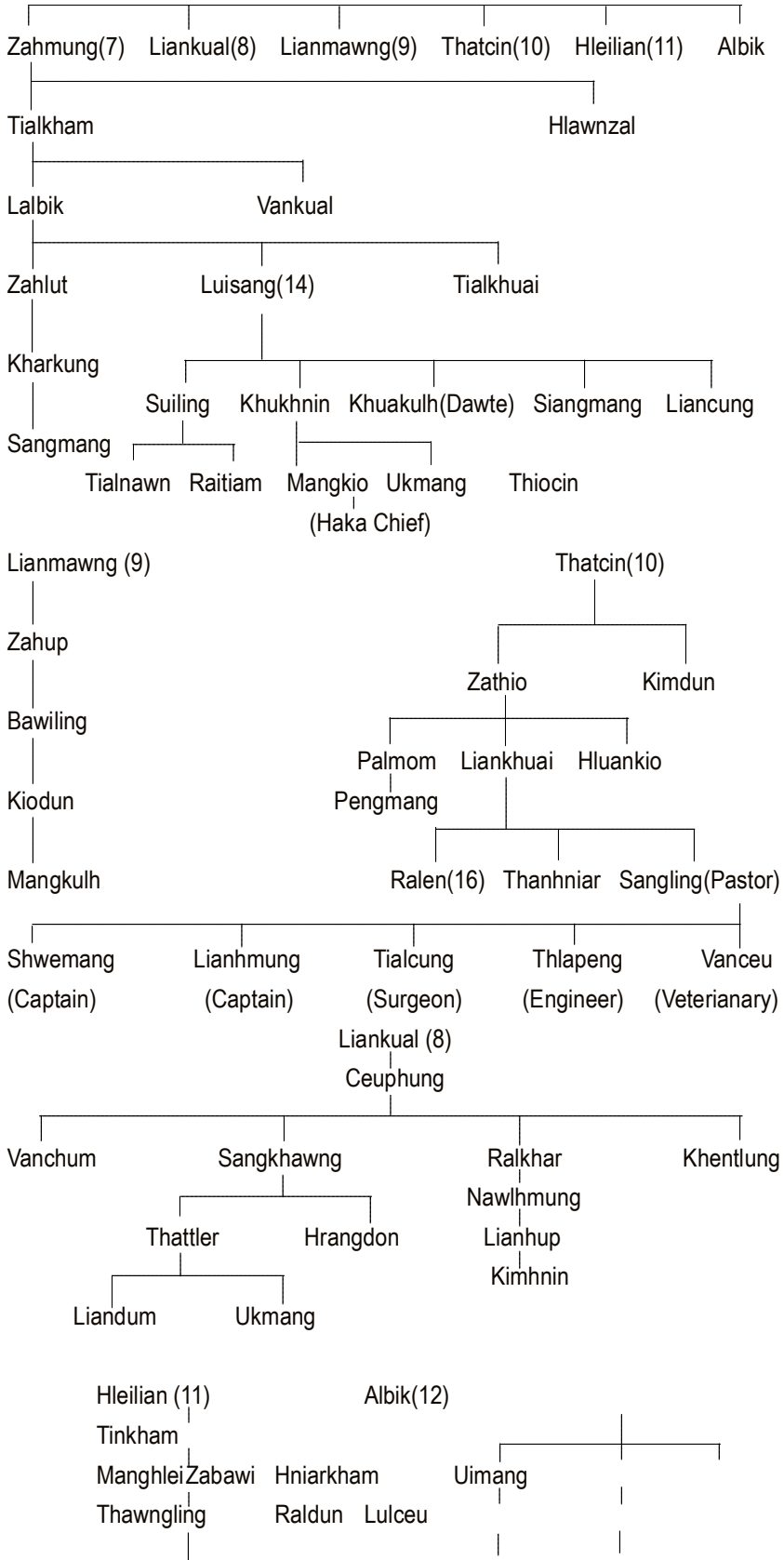
Pawi or Lai

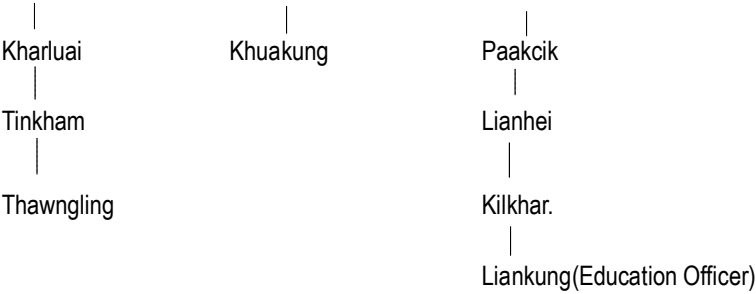
From the plains of the Shan country, the Pawi settled down initially at Hmunli., where they found plum fruit. After eating the plums, they drank the water and found it sweet and decided to stay there. From Hmunli they moved to Lailun, where possibly they first dwelled in a cave. Lailun is near Sunthla, a village between Falam and Haka (Halka), From Sunthla the Pawi group expanded in all directions. Pawi is a name give by the Paite and the Lusei to those^{*} who tie their hair on the top of their foreheads. The Pawi themselves do not call themselves Pawi but Lai, which stands for all Zo people.

The Haka originally settled down near Haka, and their traditions say that their village, Zothlang, was once huge and covered the hill of Khuava. The descendents of Lai chiefs Seohle and Hluasang founded the village Pailan, which lay three miles north of Haka. Seohle, the elder of the two brothers, asserted his rights as chief of the newly formed village and insisted that his younger brother Hluasang give him a pig once a year, in token of his overlordship. To this Hluasang pretended to agree and only asked that he be allowed to kill the animal while Seohle held it. The pig was therefore produced, and as Seohle stooped down to seize it Hluasang stabbed him in the heart with the traditionally prepared bamboo killing spike.”

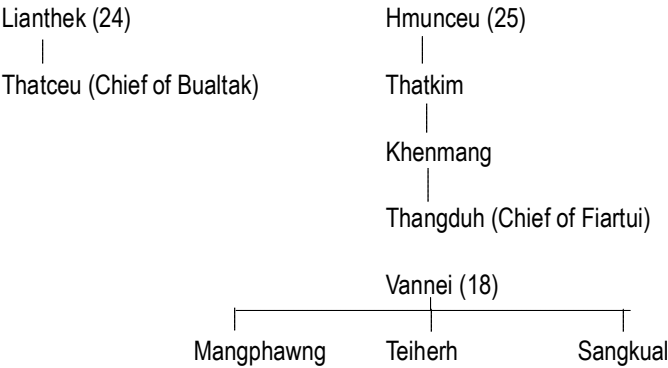
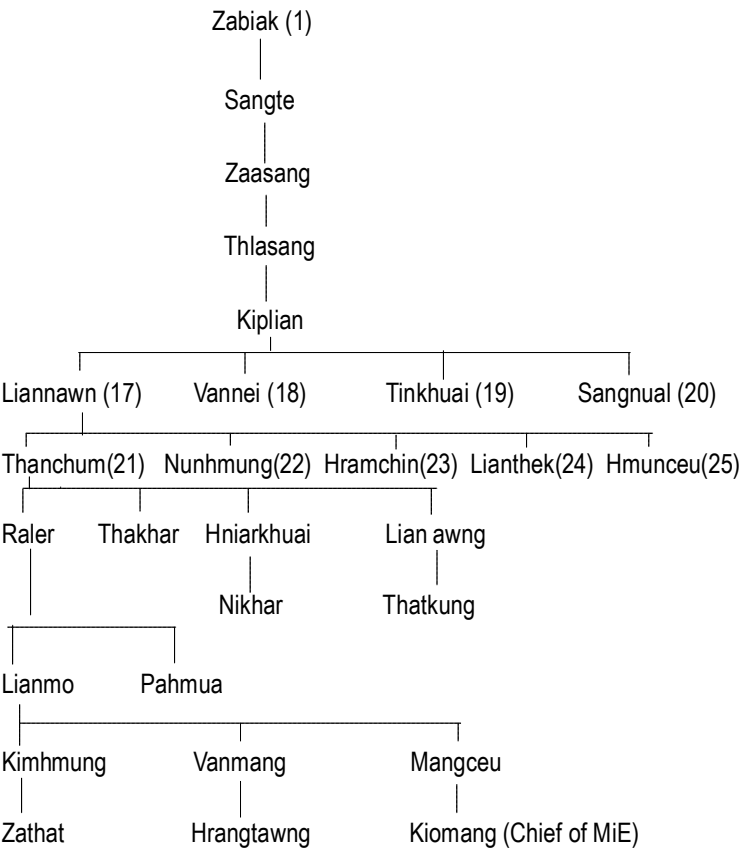
Genealogy of Sangpi Family (Halkha Chiefs)

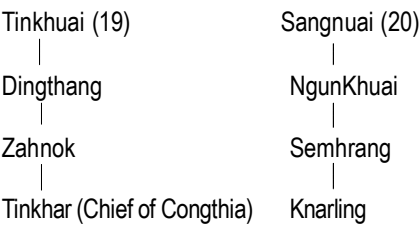






Sangte Family





Darkhuah (2) most important descendents were Zathiluai and his son Nikhuai, who were Chiefs of Khawthar.

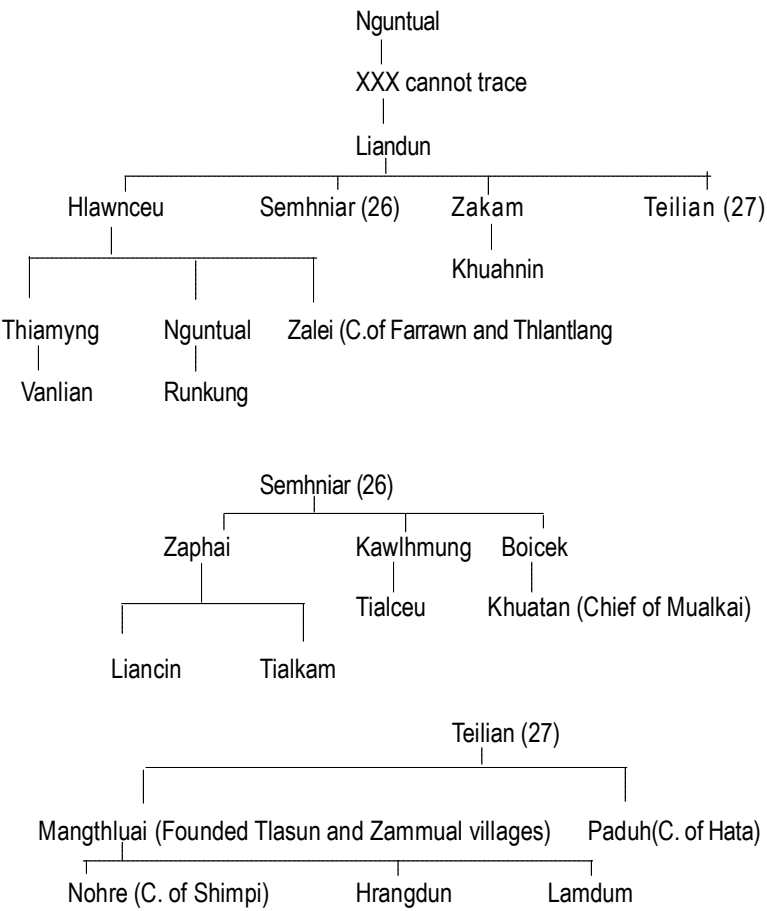


Table 3. Genealogy of Lai Chiefs. (Supplied by Pu Pauzakam in consultation with Pu Mangkio. Pu Lianhmung and Major Kyawrap.)

The professions of the descendents of the chiefs shows that they are still popular with the people because they are still elected as village headmen. Many descendents of chiefs acquired higher education primarily because their fathers were farsighted and encouraged their children to go to school. The compensation given to the chiefs by the government made higher education for their children affordable.

Hluasang was now in the undisputed position of ruling the village, but believing that the place where he had slain his brother would bring ill fortune, he moved to the present village of Haka and allowed his people to build hamlets around the area. Thus began the spread of Lai people in the Thlanthlang, Zokhua, Zotung, Mi-E, and Lakher areas. Several generations later Tanhle, Zathang and Bawmlong, three brothers directly descended from Hluasang, began gathering scattered peoples into villages in order to strengthen their tribal war position. (See Table 3. for the genealogy of Lai chiefs)

Lautu is a linguistic area in Haka district, and the hereditary ruling lineages of Lautu claim to be from the same clan as the descendents of Liancin. Although there are various dialects in the Haka area the Lautu dialect is akin to Lakher. The Zophei dialect of this area is similar to but not the same as the Lai dialect spoken in Haka. The Thlantlang and Mi-E dialects are however easily intelligible to Lai.

Not long after they migrated to the hills, the Sunthlas and Halkhas (Haka) were at war. The Hakas got the upper hand, and the Sunthlas fled and founded Tlasun settlement. The word “Tlasun” came from Sunthla or Suntla. The Tlasun, during the chieftainships of Hniarvum and Tsonbik, built up their power and demanded tributes from Laizo, Sunthla, and surrounding areas. But the Laizo and Sunthla refused to pay tribute, as they were allied to surrounding villages, including the powerful Mang-kheng village. The Tlasun then enticed the Zanniat and Khualsim clans east of the Var (Manipur) River to join with them. Together they outnumbered the Laizo, Mangkheng, and their old villagers, the Sunthlas. After that success the Tlasun made a practice of forming alliances with people they conquered, and by recognizing them as partners in the Tlasun council they became very powerful. The Tlasun Council was ruled by a council of elders, selected for their wisdom and social prestige and to represent either village quarters or patrilineal extended families.

The policy of the Tlasun was to rally their neighbours and establish a strong central position. They not only received tributes from Zahau, Khuangli, Ngawn, Zanniat, Khualsim, and Laizo

but also conquered the Sizangs several times. The Tlasun were also the nominal allies of the Sukte and Sakhiliang (Limkhai), a Sizang clan. They also took part in Zahau's wars against the Lusei and made alliances with Shan/Burmans in the Kale-Kabaw Valley. At the time of the British appearance Tlasun was undisputedly the most powerful chieftainship in all Zo country, as their influence stretched from Manipur to Haka.

Zahau, the youngest of four brothers from Sunthla village founded the village of Tlao during the seventeenth century." His eldest brother founded the village of Kairawn, and his other two brothers went to Thlanrawn and Tosum respectively. The Zahaus soon expanded their territory and founded the village of Khuangli. In about 1850 the Zahau attacked Khuangli, and after making no headway, appealed to the Tlasun for assistance. The Tlasun gave their assistance on condition that the Zahau pay them tribute. The Zahau accepted these terms and ever since have recognized the Tlasun as their overlords.

Khuangli attempted to resist the Tlasun yoke, but the Tlasun council called in all its vassals and enlisted Haka chiefs to assist in bringing the refractory community to terms. The combined Tlasun and Zahau forces defeated the Khuangli, who since have paid tribute to both Tlasun and Zahau. Ngawn, which was founded by the Khuangli on the opposite side of the Var, recognized the Tlasun as their overlord because of the Khuangli submission. The Zahau became a major power during the chieftainship of Kipkual. They again subdued the Khuangli and fought against their neighbours the Haka, Ramtlao, Fanai, and Lusei. The Lusei lost heavily and in due course were driven west across the Tiau River. After a period of time the Zahau separated the Lusei from the Hualngo, whom they allowed to resettle in their old territory east of the Tiau river.

The genealogy of the Zanniats shows that they are of the same clan as the Laizo. See Table 8 according to Carey and Tuck", "They are probably a family which split off and was left behind by one of the numerous tribes which migrated north. The people took on Shimpi in which their forefathers the hill men lived, but years ago Burmans came from the plains, settled down amongst them ... The name Khweshim or Kwe shim probably was given by Burmans to the people who split off from Shimpi and settled elsewhere (Kwe to split, Shim or Shimpi, the name of the original

village).” The Zanniat are divided into two clans, the Sipong and Tapong.

The Lakhers or Maras are best described by N.E. Parry in his book “The Lakhers”⁶¹. He wrote, “The Maras, inhabit the southeastern corner of the Lusei district, south of the Haka subdivision of the Chin and the extreme north of the Arakan Hill tracts. Most of the villages are enclosed in the large bend made by the Kaladan (Bawinu River), which after rising in the hills -near Haka and flowing in a southerly direction, takes a sharp turn, and flows northwards till somewhat north of Muallianpui village, when it again turns south and flows down to the Bay of Bengal at Akyab. There are a few Mara villages situated west of the Kaladan between Maras on the east of the upper Kaladan or Bawinu in Haka subdivision...”

The principal Mara tribal groups are Tlongsai, Hawthai, Zeuknang, Sabawi, Lialai, and Heima. Parry further wrote, “On the west the Maras are bordered by Fanais and Luseis, on the east and north by Hakas and the south by Khumis, Matus, and Ashos. The Maras are a branch of the Lai tribe and speak a language closely related to Lai. They are the same people as the Shendus to whom Colonel Lewin makes constant references in his various works, and are still called Shendus by the Arakanese. Tradition says that the Maras came from the north, and it is certain that they all came to their present homes from different places in the Haka subdivision of the Chin Hills, presumably being pushed forward by the pressure from the east, in the same way as the Lusheis (Lusei) under their Thangur chiefs were pushed forward into the country they now occupy. The progress of their migration to the present territory can be traced fairly accurately. The Saiko and Siaha people are both Tlongsai, and say that they originated at a place called Leisai between Leitak and Zaphai. From Leisai they moved to Saro, and thence to Chakang, both of which places are in Haka. From Chakang they crossed the Kaladap and came into the Lusei Hills, and settled first at Phusa, on a hill between Ainak and Siata; thence they moved to Khupi on the Tisi river, thence to Theiri, and thence to Beukhi. At Beukhi the Siaha and Saiko Tlongsais separated, the former occupying various sites in the neighbourhood of Beukhi, ending up their present site of Siaha, while the latter moved successively to Saikowkhitlang, Khangehetla, Zongbukhi, Chholong and Khihlong, eventually settling at Saiko about fifty or sixty years ago. From Saiko they have formed the

other villages of the Tlongsai group ruled over by Hleuchang chiefs. From the number of village sites they have occupied since coming to the Lushai Hills, it is certain that they must have been settled in the Lushai Hills district between 200 and 300 years.”

“The Hawthai clan, whose main village is Tisi, originated, they say, at a place called Chira in Haka, whence they came Saro, Siata, Paimi, and Nangotla to Tisi, where they have now been for thirty years. They are there for more than thirty years. They are therefore more recent immigrants than the Tlongsai. Nangotla, Chholong, and Longbong, or, as the Luseis call them Ngiawtlang, Chuarlung, and Lungbun, of Hawthai villages, and the two villages of old and new Longchei in Haka. The Zeuhngang, who are the people of Savang, originated at Hnarang in Haka, whence they crossed the Kaladan and settled on a high range called Kahri Tla. They moved in succession to Hlongma near Sehmung and Cheuong on the banks of the Tisi river, and then settled on their present site of Savang, where they have now been established for about 130 years.”

“The Sabeu, who are the people of Chapi, originated at Thlata (Thlanthlang) in Haka. One of their chiefs, Mahli, married a Lakher woman, and from that time the royal house has regarded itself as Lakher. This Mahli moved from Thlata to Ngiaphia, whence his branch of the Sabeus moved in succession to Pazo, Khotlaw, Chorihlo, Chawkhu, Fachaw (near the junction of the Satlong River with the Kaladan), Khiraw, Ravaw, Tichei, Pasei, Pema, Sacho, Loma and thence to their present site called Tichhang, where they have now been settled for twenty years. The reason given for the frequent moves of site is that they were afraid of being raided.”

“The Sabeu, whose villages are in Haka, are of the same group as the Sabeu of that river and Lungbleh, and some powerful villages of the Sabeu tribe of Chapi. Their head chief, Vasai, is a Changza, and a cousin of Rachi, chief of Chapi, and his village, Kihlong, is only about thirteen miles from Chapi along the top of the Kahri range.”

“The inhabitants of Heima and Lialai in the Arakan Hill Tracts belong to the Heima and Lialai groups, which are very closely allied to the Sabeu. The chiefs of both villages are Changzas, and they have been more or less vassals of the Changza chiefs of Kihlong.”

“In addition to the pure Lakher villages, there are certain Haka villages in Haka and also in the Lushai Hills the inhabitants of which are halfway between the Pois (Pawis) and the Lakhers, and it is difficult to say exactly what they are. Such villages are Hnarang or Ngarang in Haka and Aina, and Siata in the Lushai Hills; with Aina must also be classed the Haka village Mangtu, Khabong, and Zeuphia, known in Lushai as Vuangtu, Khawbung, and Zaphai. The customs followed in these villages are partly Lakher and partly Poi. The Aina group are on the whole more Lakher than Poi, both in language and customs, and regard themselves as Lakhers..Hnarang is more Poi than Lakher, and calls itself Poi, but Pois regard the Hnarang people as Lakhers, though their language is Poi. These villages on the border line between Pois and Lakhers gradually formed themselves into a separate tribe after they broke off from Thlanthlang and their other original homes in the Chin Hills.”

MIZO (Lusei)

Linguistically, culturally and genealogically the Lusei and Hualngo belong to one clan. The Lusei or Hualngo tradition records them as having migrated from Shan country into Zoram. As with many other Zo clans the Lusei and Hualngo believe they originated within the earth. Lal Biak Thanga³⁰ writes, “There was a big cave called Chhinlung which, literally translated, means ‘closed stone’. The Mizos say that their forefathers came out of this cave, one by one they came out, and when a couple belonging to a Ralte sub-tribe came out, they talked so much and made such a noise, that the guardian god of the cave fearing the human population had grown too large, closed the cave with a stone preventing any further exit of human beings from the earth.” This is very similar to the Mara Story⁶².

In many publications, mostly by the British colonial administrators, Lusei was corrupted to ‘Lushai’ or ‘Lushei’, and in the British view Lushai covered almost all Zo clans living in today’s Mizoram. Lal Biak Thanga’s opinion on the name “Lushai” is that, “The origin of the word Lushai to which the district owed its former name has also never been satisfactorily explained in the past. While the first part *lu* has always been correctly translated as head, different interpretation has been given to the second part *shai*. According to one interpretation, it is taken to mean ‘to

shoot’ and the word ‘Lushai’ is said to define the characteristics of a Mizo as a headhunter. According to another, it is taken to mean ‘long’. The exact equivalent of long, however, is *sei*, also spelled in the past as *shei* and not *shai*.

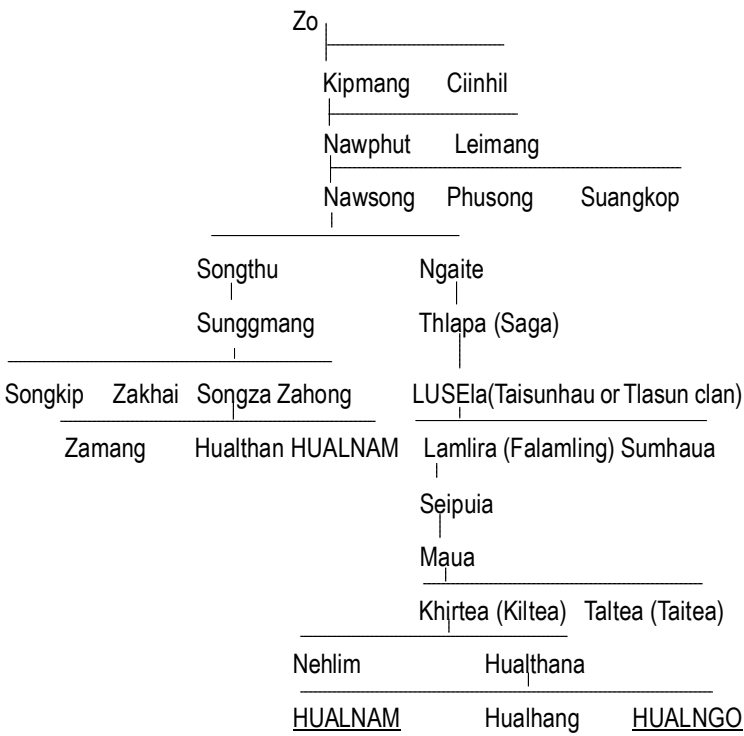


Table 4. The genealogy of the Hualnam clan shows a link between the Lusei/Hualngo clan and the Songthu clan. This is very important because now we can trace the parting of the Lusei and Paite. This is of interest because Hualnam was the brother of Hualngo, the progenitor of the Hualngo clan. However, there are two versions. One version shows that Hualnam, Hualthan, and Zamang were brothers, and they were the direct descendents of Songthu and puts them at eight generations from Zo. Whereas the other shows Hualnam, Hualhang, and Hualngo were bothers and Hualthan their father and puts them as the descendents of Ngaihte, the brother of Songthu, and at thirteen generations after Zo. The later version seems to be more plausible. Because of changing dialects the names differ to a certain extent in almost all cases but they are easily recognized by their resemblance.

This is purely a corruption of ‘Lusei’ which is the name of one of

the sub-tribes constituting the Mizos”. It is the custom of Zo people to name their clans after one of their forefathers, and there is little doubt that the name “Lusei” is taken from one of the clan’s ancestors. In the genealogy of Hualngo and Lusei, as seen in Table 4, Lusei appears as one of the forefathers.

The table not only explains the origin of the name “Lusei” but also the relationship between Lusei and Hualngo. According to Hrangliankhuaia, Hualngo had two sons and lived nine generations ago. Almost all people living in the Lushai Hills district are Lusei, as the Lusei generally absorbed all people who came in contact with them. Lusei clans are Chawte, Ngente, Khawlhiring, Vangchhia, Pautu, Rawite, Renthlei, Tlau, Zawngte, Songthu, and Sailo. Paite also claim that they are descendants of Songthu, and thus the Lusei-Songthu and Paihte-Songthu are closely related. The Sailo clans are descendants of Suantak (Thuantak), as will be seen later.

According to Pu K. Zawla¹⁰⁰, Lusei migration to the hills began in 1463, which is very close to the year 1475, when the Meitheis under Raja Kyamba combined with the Pong (Shan) of Mogaung fought and overthrew the Shan Sawbwa of Khampat. Professor Luce estimates the Zos’ migration during the sixteenth century.

Lal Biak Thanga ³¹ writes about the settlement of Lusei in the Kabaw Valley around Khampat, “That the Mizos belonged to a Mongoloid stock is not disputed. That they came from the East is also not disputed. That their original home was in Mekong Valley and that they once lived in the Hukawng Valley was further corroborated by many including an old Burmese priest at Mandalay to Mizo historians who had visited Mandalay to trace the history of their origin and migration. According to him, the ancestors of the Mizos came from Shanghai, possibly in the tenth century. By which route they came, and how long they took to reach Hukawng Valley in Burma is now lost in obscurity. Legends and folklore in reference to their stay are few. . the story of Liandova and his brother ... are believed to belong to this period. According to K. Zawla “. . they came to the Chindwin belt about” 996 A.D. They lived here barely two hundred years. Then a cruel chief ruled over them; and they wanted to get away from him. At this time, a great famine over ran the country and thousands of ‘people died. This precipitated their decision to leave the land. Before they left, they planted a banyan sapling at Khampat and

took a pledge in front of their Burmese neighbours that they would return to Khampat, their permanent home, when the sapling had grown into a tree and its hanging roots had turned into new stems. They emigrated from here in two groups; one went north and the other southwest, through which they entered into India.”

The myths of the Khampat banyan tree were fostered by Buddhist monks, and Zo people who have emigrated to the Kale-Kabaw Valley have used the legend as justification for their migration to the area.” The banyan tree, like *zu* and *mithun* is very closely associated with Zo culture, and Zo people were very proud to have evergreen banyan trees growing on their ritual grounds or located near a *khan* or memorial stone. Early scholars of Zo however did not record the Khampat banyan tree legend, and Lalthangliana’s⁴⁰ analysis of old Zo songs did not prove that the *bung pui* mentioned really meant the Khampat banyan tree. The songs could very easily have been about one of many banyan trees planted on such grounds.

The first settlements of Lusei and related clans were near Falam not far from Sunthla, and the close affinity of Duhlian and Sizang dialects suggests strongly their existence as a group in the Chindwin Valley. Thus Lusei or “Mizo” alone could not have resided in a special area. Lal Biak Thanga³⁹ told the story of Lusei migration to the hills, “The first stage of halt in this movement was at Lentlang, which according to K. Zawla occurred in about 1466 A.D. In the absence of a chief, each family grouped themselves together and each sub-tribe settled in separate villages. The sub-tribes, who could trace back their lineage to Lentlang period are the Lusei, Ralte, Chawngthu, Khiantge, Hauhnar, Chuaungo, Chuauhang, Ngente, Punte and Parte. The Lusei were at Seipuikhur and Khawkawk; Ralte at Suaipui and Saihmun; Chawngthu at Sanzawl and Bochung; Khiantge at Pelpawl, Belmual, and Lung-chhuan; Hauhnar, Chuauhang at Hauhnar range; and Ngente, Punte, and Parte at Chawnglawi and Siallam. There is a hill range a little to the west of Lentlang, known as Pautu Tlang, which must have been named after a subtribe of the same name who, with Rawite, Chente, Chawhe, and Maipawl, lived here and then moved west as far as Tripura where their descendants are still to be found.”

The Hualngo have recorded that they settled down at first at

Rungpi near Falam. Lalthangliana⁴⁰ wrote, “When I went to these old places I found many stone monuments that look very old; perhaps they were put up at a time when Mizos came to settle at these particular places. Seipui is still a village though Khawkawk had been abandoned for quite a long time ... The distance between these two places is only about two furlongs and on the northwest is the Muchhip mountain, on the north east is Khawkanglu mountain and on the west is the Len range. Being bounded by these hills and ranges, the place has a very good natural protection from enemies. In fact the place is like a pit bounded by hills on all sides. It has springs that would not go dry in summer. It is one of the most suitable places on the Chin Hills for human habitation. It is only twenty five miles from Falam.”

Year	Chiefs of Zahau clan.	Chiefs of Khuangli Sun Thang clan.	Chiefs of Ngawn of Vazang group	Chiefs of Hualingos of Seipi.	Elders of Prominence in Tashon.	Hearsay record of tribal history handed down by spoken word to the present-day elders of the tribes.
1600	Hauhul Zahau		Mwi Thang	Hual Ngo Lal Vur		1600 Hualingo history goes back another 3 generations to a person called MAUA whom they regard as their first ancestor, and who was a Tashon who got lost while hunting and settled in the then existing village of Seipi, some time in 16th century. Founding of Ngawn villages east of the Manipur river. Ngun Kual, son of Kip Kual the Zahau, murdered by his Lushai villagers, and the famous ten heirlooms stolen. Founding of Khuangli villages.
	Khla Tsawng Kip Kual	Nam Thawng Sun Thang	Len thuan Lun Zawm	Tser Put Hrat Tsi		

1700	Tsung Nung	Khla Kual	Nun Tuah	Shiar Thul	1700 Tashon attack on Seipi is beaten off with great loss to the Tashons who are succoured by Kip Kual the Zahau on their retreat to his village. Wars between Zahaus and Ramkhlo, Khlanrawn, Mankheng, Haka and a few skirmishes with Zakhlir, who surrender to Zahau. Kip Kual holds his first Khuangtsawi, and a Mirang (White Mon) is said to have come to see it with many soldiers. War between Zahaus and Hlawnmual, heir to Zahau Chief killed.
	That Hrim		Nun Khar	Dar Khal	1775 Flight of Khawtlang and Hualngo villages over the Thio Va as result of destruction by the Hakas of Kual-hring and Zawngte. This is first recorded use of firearms by Chins. Re-establishment of a Zahau village by Khaw Kim Thang.
	Khaw Kim Thang	Vung Kual	Zang Sum	Tseng Tawng	Attacks by Hakas on Mankheng, Laizo, Khualshim and Tashon villages causes numerous migrations to protection of Zahau village, and rise of the Zahau clan commences.
	Khuang Tseo	Mang Sawm	Nun Thang	Hawi Luan Hniar Vum	Khuangli pay-protection dues to Ramkhlo after abortive attack. Fan-ai villages founded by RO REHLO, a <i>tefa</i> of Khaw Kim Thang, on land given by the Lushais to protect them from Hakas.

1800	Thang Bur	Mang Kual	Za Neng (who lived over 100 years)	Za Huat	1800 War between Zahau and Lushai, and capture of Vuttaia Sallo Lushais with Haka and Khlang aid almost extirpate the Hualingos remigrate to the east of Thio Va of settle in Shimhrin village. Ngawns and Khuanglis destroy Mualbem. War between Zahau and Thangsai, Khuavum destroyed by Zahau. Khianrawn destroyed by the Shimhrin.
	Khla Tseo				1805 Wars between Tashon and Siyins and former destroy Lopei. Immigration of Ngawn to the Khuangli tract as a result of continual attacks of Zahau and Khuangli on the Ngawn village east of the Manipur.
	Van Nawl	No Al		Lian Sum	Re-establishment of Khan Thuawm by Zahau, as Chief of Mualbem. Invasion of Thado country by Kam Hau and his Zahau and Khuangli mercenaries.
	Thang Tin Lian		Tin Tsuai	Ral Ling	Destruction of the Zanniat by Tashon and its Shimhrin allies. War between Zahaus and Fan-al.
					Recommencement of hostilities between Zahau and Haka. Destruction of Khuasak (Siyin) by Tashon and Shimhrin allies. Destruction of Khuangli by Tashon.
					Arrest and subordination of Zahau Chief by Tashon.
					Destruction of Mualnuam, (Siyin) by Tashons and Burmans.
					Successful ambush by Siyins of Burman-rationing party.
					War between Zahau and Khuangli.
					War between Hualingo and Sokte, and killing of Spkte Chief.
					Evacuation of Tsuntsung caused by Zahau picketing.
					ANNEXATION.
					Zahau and Hualingo raid Senam taking 13 heads and 90 slaves.
1900					1900 Rebellious intent of Zahau and Khuangli in 1918.

Table 5 Historical records of Falam area. Taken from Stevenson (87) with modifications

“Bochung is situated on the west of Seipui and crossing over the Len range the distance between the two points is only nine miles ... On its north at a distance of six miles is Saihmun ... On the southeast is Pelpawl ... On the east of Bochung, at about two miles, is the old - abandoned village of Sanzawl ... The site of villages, taken as a whole were well protected by mountain ranges that supplied ample water for both human consumption and crops.”

Lusei and Hmar migration to Manipur must have been in the 1400s and early 1500s, as Manipur chronicles mentioned them as ‘Old Kukies’ for the first time in 1554. Thus Lal Biak Thanga mistook the Shans for Burmans. The Hualngo say they migrated to the hills from the Shan country, but the Burmese came to the Kabaw area only after the 14th century, and the Sawbwas of Khampat were Shans until the time of the British invasion.

As noted, the Lusei did not reject other people who came in contact with them, and many were absorbed and now form the bulk of the West Zoram or Mizoram population. Even the Thangur and Sailo chiefs, who had been the dominant Lusei leaders for some generations, were not direct descendants of the Lusei clan. The forefather of the Sailo chiefs, Boklua, was the grandson of the Sizang Ralna. (See Tables 4 and 5). Lal Biak Thanga explains, “When the Luseis were at Seipuikhua, their neighbouring village invited them to offer a chief. One house after another was approached, but all refused saying, , ‘Invite Zahmuaka, who has many sons.’ The birth of Zahmuaka was as follows. The first Lusei settlers at Seipuikhua were of the Chhakchhuak clan. This clan was at war with the Paihtes, who were then living on the right bank of the’ Chindwin. In the fight one Chhuahlawma, the son of a Paite warrior called Ralna, was captured by the Chhakchhuak people and carried off as a slave. He was adopted by them as their son. When he grew up and got married, his first son was named Zahmuaka by his wife.”

“Zahmuaka had six sons. They were Zadenga, Paliana, Thangluaha, Thangura, Rivunga, and Rokhuma.”

Thangura was the grandfather of Sailoa, whose descendants ruled Lusei and other Zo clans who occupied the Lushai or Mizo Hills.

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENTS 65

		Suantak (Thuantak)			1475-1500
		Ngengu (Nenu)			1500-1525
Boklua(Sizanga)	Lamhtam	Khuakuan	Tungnung	Nantal Phucil	1525-1550
Ralha					1550-1575
Chhuahlawma					1575-1600
Zahmuaka					1600-1625
Zadenga	Paliana	Thangluaha	Thangura	Rivunga Rokhuma	1625-1650
		Chawnglula	Thawngmanga		1650-1675
			SAILOa		1675-1700
Chungnunga		Lianbula		Chenkuala	1700-1725
Rohnaa	Lalchera	Lahluna	Lalruma?	Thangphunga	1725-1750
Lallula					1750-1775
Lalpuiliana		Lallianvunga	Mangpura	Vuttaia	1775-1800
Lalsavunga		Ngura			1800-1825
Vanhnuailiana		Lalphunga	Thawmphunga		1825-1850
Dothioa		Liankhama	Lalbura	Buangtheua Cinhleia	1850-1875
Saihranga		Hrangkima Thangkhuma Hrangchuana	Lalhuta Rokima Lalchungnunga	Lalsailoa Suakphunga Laluaa Suakhama Lalbawnga	1875-1900
Ngura					1800-1825
Vanpuilala					1825-1850
Lalhleia					1850-1875
Thuamluaia	Lunga	Lalhlianga	Laichingkim		1875-1900
ZO HISTORY					
Mangpura		(Mangpawia)			1775-1800

Suakpuilala	Thawmphunga	Rumphunga	1800-1825		
Lalchhunga	Sailianpuia	Khalkhama	Hrangkhupa	Lainphunga	Lalhrima
Liankunga	Lalluaia	Hrangliana	Suakhuma		
	Hrangvunga				

	Suakpuilala				
Lalsavunga	Thanruma	Tulera	Lalsavuta	Dokhuma	Zahrawka
Ngursailoa	Lalthangvunga	Rohrenga	Lallura	Lalbuanga	Saikhuma
	Kawlkaphang			Khawvelthanga	

	Vuta (Vuttaia)	1775-1800			
Lalnguaua	Lalvunga	Lungliana	Kairuma	Lalkhuma	Lalthanglula
Ralthianga	Zataia	Lalngura	Liankangloa	lalbuta	
	Ralthioa	Kaichuma	Laltawna		
	Liandawra	Huliana	Thangcuanga	Saihnuna	
		Kawlhununa	Lalbika		
		Hrangliana	Thangpura		
		Liansailoa	Lalbuanga		
		Laltawna			

Lalchera

Rolura

Lalrivunga	Thutpawia
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Khawsaia	Lalpuithanga	Thangduta	Thuama		
Vantawnga	Sangvunga	Bengkhuaia	Vansanga	Lalhleia	Laltawna
Lallura					
Dopawnga	Dokhuma	Thangliana	Kawlkhama	Cheua	
	Konglova	Lalhrima			
	Liankhara	Kamloa			
	Rochungnunga	Thangbula			

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENTS 67

LalburaHmingthangaRumlina Suakngura Rothianga RocingaRoguaua
HmangphungaLalbuangaRohmingthanga Lalhngingloa RungnawlaRobola
Saipawla

Tlutpawia (Tlutpawrha)

I
Vandula Seia Lalthangvunga LalluauaThantluanga Patuia
Lalhmingliana Vanhnuaichhana
Savuto Hrangphunga Thanhulha Sangliana DotawnaThansanga
LianthioaDohawla DotawnaThanzama ThanzamaLianlula

PukawlhDarpuiliana Darliankuala Savings

Lalngura, Lalzika Lalbuta Chawngghmingliana
I
Lalthangvunga Khamliana Thanthuama
I
Lalruta Lalhlinga Laltawnga
Lahluna

Laltuaka
Lalchungnunga Chawngchhunga Hauchema

Thawmpuia Lalngura Lals anga
Thanglianga

Suakbenga
Vanchhingkhupa Lalrumliana Lianhnuna Darthuama Laingera
Lalruma

ThanglilutalHauchemaDarpuithanga LalhaupaiaChongchhuma
Lalchhungnunga
 Nengpuia Thatlilutal lLalngura ChhanghnunalBual^ohhuma
DokapaBawiliana Lalngena
BuNiana Dailoa Rozika SaluaiaThangchhuma Lalmaka Lalkhama
ThanchumaLalhnunaThenphungaBiakvelaSailoa

Table 6 Genealogy of Sailo clan. Chronology after B. Lalthan-gliana (40) with modifications. The chronology may fit one generation but may not fit another. Boklua was called Sihsinga or Sizanga. Lal Biak Thanga continues, “...Zahmuaka traced his descent from one Sisinga, also called Sisanga and his wife Sesingi.” Thus the most powerful chiefs of Lusei were descendants of Boklua, who was remembered as Sisanga because of his clan Sizang. Boklua was the son of Ngengu, or Nenua, who was the progenitor of the Sizang. (See Tables 4 and 5) Zahmuaka, who was persuaded by the hnamte (common people) to become chief, accepted leadership of the group, and his six sons, Rokhuma, Zadenga, Paliana, Rivunga, Thangluaha, and Thangura prospered. From them sprang six lines of Lusei chiefs. The descendants of Thangura, the Sailor, became the most powerful chiefs in the Lushei Hills. Shakespeare” estimated Thangura to have lived in the early eighteenth century. His first

village was said to have been at Thankhua, north of Falam. During Thangura's time the country to the north of him was occupied by Paite and Hmar, the east by Sunthlas and the south by Haka. In these areas the people established themselves under regular chiefs, while the areas to the west appear to have been inhabited by small communities formed largely of Zo blood relatives, each probably feuding with another. It was into this western area, when good land was needed for cultivation, and when attacked by eastern Zo, that the Lusei had to move.

The Rokhuma clan are found on the Tipperah-Sylhet border. They are the eldest branch of the Zahmuakas and are said to have passed through the hills now occupied by the Luseis. In about 1830 they ruled over some 1,000 houses in four villages along the Tlong, or Dallesari, River near Darlawng peak.

The powerful Zadengs lived around Darlawng peak and had 4,000 houses concentrated in four villages. In alliance with the Palians, the Zadengs attacked and defeated the Hualngo. Following that alliance however, the Zadengs allied themselves with the Sailo chief Haupuituala, who was supported by the Chakmas of the Chittagong Hills. The Zadengs, Chakmas and Sailos then fell upon the Palians. After conquering the Hualngo and Palians, they made peace with Manipur.

Subsequently, the Zadengs quarreled with Mangpura, the son of the great Sailo chief, Lallula. In the fight Mangpura was helped by Vutaia, another Sailo chief. The Manipur king, although swearing alliances with the Zadengs, did not come to help his friends. Thus the Sailos easily defeated the Zadengs, who then fled southward and separated into independent villages, each numbering less than 100 houses. Their last chief died in 1857 at Chengpui near Lungleh. The Palians under chief Purbura were powerful, receiving tribute from Purbura's contemporaries, the Thangur chiefs. Purbura's village on Dungthlang contained some 3,000 houses, but it was destroyed in an attack by the Zandengs and their allies. Purbura rebuilt the village after the attack, but it was destroyed again by Rolura of the Sailo family.

The Thangluah and Rivung settled in the southern part of the hill country, where they were attacked by the Sailo chief, Vutaia. The Thangluah were also attacked by Hausat of Thlanthlang,

who drove them into western Zo country.

Lalthangliana analyzed the habitat of early Zo people in general and the Lusei in particular. According to drawings on memorial stones, found at the old Siallam and Chawnghawih villages, and by dates taken from the genealogy of Sailo clans (See Table 5), Lalthangliana concluded that during the 15th and 16th centuries Lusei lived in areas between the Manipur river and the Than range. There they grew millet, wheat, arum and sweet potato and used horns or wooden spikes as hoes. At that time they did not grow rice. They made their scanty clothes from hemp, and they covered only their private parts.

They moved further west in the 17th century and lived in the Tiau Valley and along the Len range. There they acquired knowledge of weaving with hand looms and the use of iron utensils. With this knowledge they made medium sized blankets, and both men and women had their ears pierced and wore iron pins as ornaments.

Swords made of iron were scarce during the 15th and 16th centuries, so wooden clubs were generally used for fighting. During the 16th and 17th centuries the bow and arrow was the primary weapon, as iron swords were still rare.

A memorial stone of the 17th century showed a man wearing long bird feathers on his head, and proudly carrying a knife or sword. The spear was used for hunting. A picture of an elephant with a spear on top its head possibly means that the elephant had been killed with the spear.

The Bawmzo are a small group of people, belonging to the Zahau clan. Distinct from the Zahaus, they are now found in the Chittagong Hills tract. Their migratory history has been studied by Spielmann. ¹⁰⁶

Zahau	Zahau moved from Sunthla to Tlao. (According to Zahau's genealogy, Lawncheu was not men-tioned as a son of Zahau)
Lawncheu	Lawncheu moved to Sangau and lived for many years.
Satinkhar	Son of Lawncheu; lived at Sangau.
Vanniatlirh	Son of Satinkhar; moved to Arakan but after a short time returned to Sangau.

- 5 sons Tialkhar, Neiung, Liankung, Rokharaw and Tat kham. Tialkhar, the eldest, moved to Arakan and to the west and returned with many followers to their earlier home Sangau. Today his descendents live in Sangau and the Lushai Hills (Mizoram)
- Liankung Son of Tialkhar; moved to Rengthlang (south) on the Sangau River at Vanzangthlangphai, from there to Mariathlang and settled down near Cingbawthlang (Masho Hills). Later he moved again to Rezaphai (Vaitaha Phai) in the plains. Then crossing the Sangau River he went back to the hills and settled down at Nawftaw (Noapatong) and founded the village Liankulpavana. Liankung's rule was from 1830-40. The Bawmzo then were about 1000 men strong. They made friendship with the Kalini Rani Chakma princess.
- Taikhan Brother of Liankung; joined by two sons of his brother Neiung.
- Sannawn Son of Neiung; he waged war against the Mashos and moved to the Sunthla area at Khamthun. From Khamthun he moved again to Sawmruckkhuathlang.
- Manghniar Brother of Sannawn. He ruled only three years and died when he was 16. He killed only one man, a Lusei in about 1866, when the Haulong attacked Bawmzo.
- Sunthluai Sister to Manghniar. Sunthluai ruled many years until her death. The Bawmzo grew to some 5,000 during her rule. Since then there has been no movement.

The Bawmzo occupied the hilly area on the Burma Bangladesh border, between latitudes 21 degrees 40 minutes and 22 degrees and 40 minutes North. They live in 45 villages along with other Zo groups, with the Pankhua and with other races such as the Chakma and Marma. The Bawmzo are found in the hills, whereas Chakma and Marma occupy valleys. Bawmzo villages with populations of over 200 people are Arthah, Fiangpichung, Munnuam, Sunsawng, and Tlangchat.

The Hmar occupy parts of West Zoram, Manipur, the North Cachar Hills, Cachar District, and the Somra Tracts. Hmar simply means north, and they have been, referred to as northern people because they live north of other Zo people. The Lusei call them Khawtlangs or Westerners.

(This section on Hmar people, is taken from "The Education of the Hmar People" by Rochunga Pudaihte⁶⁴.)

The Hmar settled down among the Mishmi and lived together with them for over a generation. During that time, the Hmar prince Sura was in love with a Mishmi girl named Thaironchong, which was disapproved by Sura's parents. However, Sura's friends Devanngul and Devanhang arranged a wedding, which was successful, and the Hmars prospered.

After a generation the Hmar moved eastward and came to a large river. As they could not cross the river, they survived on crabs. They called the river Airawdung. One day a large rabbit was sailing down the river on a tree trunk. After seeing that, they learned how to make rafts and boats. They then lashed together bamboo poles and floated across the river. At the opposite bank of the river they encountered a powerful tribe against whom they fought a fierce battle, and they eventually forced their way to a new territory. The people they met were known to them as Shans. The following song narrates a part of their life among the Shan.

Kapa lamtlak a tha'n dang
 Sinlung lamtak aw a tha'n dang
 Shan khua ah thapo in vang
 Tuoichaung in hranlu, a thunna,
 Thlomu sieka kemin hril,
 Zainghawngah hranlu bah kan sal

My father's steps were remarkably good
 Sinlung's steps were, indeed, remarkably good
 Few are the good men in Shan State
 Where Tuoichaung brought the enemy's head
 You talked of tips with eagles paws
 And we hang the heads with high ropes.

One Hmar chief was very rich and was said to eat only on gold plates. His song;

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Shan khua thlangfa putling
I do thlunglu bakin galh
Sasawmfa thlaw ka lai mi tha
Thalkhat in lai ei de ning

Sons of western Shan look lovable
But you sounded out only war
With our abundant harvest and men of war
We will make you a spring time festival

The prosperity of the Shan state was interrupted by a famine so severe that a highly prized gong was exchanged for a handful of rice, instead of the usual one hundred bushels. The Hmars therefore moved north and northwest in search of food. They named their villages according to the names of their chiefs.

The Hmar people started head hunting in the Shan country as follows. Hrangkhup and Thawnglai were out hunting and in the forest and saw a bamboo shoot growing through a hollow tree. A mole had bored through several nodes inside the bamboo and came to a node above where an owl had a nest. While mother owl was away the mole bored through the last node and ate all the owlets except one. Mother owl was very angry, and, waited secretly at the nest for the mole to come out-. As soon as it did, she killed it. The owl cut off the mole's head, and gave the flesh to the owlet. The owl set the head of the mole on a branch and danced around in a festive mood.

Hrangkhup and Thawnglai carefully watched the dance and thoroughly enjoyed it. They conferred and agreed to adopt the practice. When they got home they composed a Hrang Lam Zai, a song of war, and they made an effigy and sang and danced around it.; Months later the two men quarrelled bitterly. One day later Hrangkhup saw Thawnglai's mother in the field: He chopped her head off and returned home and celebrated with the trophy. Thawnglai joined in the festival, but the "next morning he chopped off the head of Hrangkhup's wife with his sword, saying a dog tripped him. Saying, "Take the body", he then ran off with the head. From these two incidents the practice of head hunting and the ceremony afterward were developed.

The first Hmar was Manmasi, who had three sons: Miachal, Niachal, and Nelachal. Miachal was a great warrior and commander. Niachal was a great farmer and Nelachal a great hunter.

From the three brothers descended several Hmar clans.
They
are :

Khawbung	Pakhuong
Leiri	Thiek
Sakum	Ngente
Ngurte	Hrangchal
Faihriem	Biete
Vangsei	Chawrai
Hrangkhawl	Darngawn
Changsan	Khelte
Sakechek	Lungtam
Khawlhiring	Hmar-Lusei

The list of Hmar sub-groups suggests that Hmar and Lusei are closely knitted together and that some sub-groups belong to both clans. In some literature Ralte is mentioned as the originator of the Hmar.

ZOM1 (Paite)

Paihte or Paite is a name given by the Lusei and Pawi to people living in Tedim, in the southern and eastern parts of Manipur district and in the Somra Tract.

Thaute or 'fat people' is also a name given to them by the Lusei. Among Paite themselves thaute refers only to the Sizang. In literature the term Kuki also covers part of the Paite. The clans of the Paihte are Guite, Ngaihte, Teizang, Thado (Khuangsai), Sukte, Sizang, Khuano, Saizang, Vaiphei, Baite, Gangte, and Yo.

Most Paite clans claim to be descendants of Songthu, who is listed as one of the earliest Zo men. In the absence of written records however less important men have been forgotten, and only those with power have been remembered. Songthu, or Cawngtu, must have been a powerful man, as Songthu songs are still sung in ceremonies among the Lusei and Paite.

The Paite tell of early settlement in the Tuikang or Chindwin valley, where they lived with the Khamang people, who may have been the Shans. According to Vum Ko hau⁹⁷, the migration of these people to the hills was due to the oppressiveness of the Shan Sawbwa of Kale. Lai Biak Thanga³⁹ also mentioned a cruel king as the reason for the Lusei's migration to the hills. Vum Ko Hau dated the time of the Sizang's migration to the hills as 1374, the time when the Kale Sawbwa was building the Kale palace.

The Paite claim they first settled down at Ciimnuai when they migrated from the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha valley. Ciimnuai offered them good cultivable land, but sometime during the sixteenth century Ciimnuai grew so overcrowded that people moved away. Some of the Paite moved south, or 'down the hill side'; thus they were called "Sukte", a people going south. They founded their home in Mualbem. Sizang, Thado, Vaiphei and Yo said they lived together for many years, until the Sizang and Thado quarreled. The reason for their quarrel was "the tails of a deer and a flying squirrel."

The Thado killed a deer, and as was traditional, distributed the meat of the deer to every village household. The Sizang then killed a flying squirrel. They did not distribute the squirrel meat, as it was too small, but hanging up the squirrel skin to dry in the sun. The Thado were angry at the Sizang for not sharing the meat with them, as they thought the squirrel tail, being much longer than that of a deer, must be from a very big animal.' After the quarrel the Sizang moved to a place near a salt spring, and thus they received the name Sizang, meaning "near a salt spring". The Vaiphei moved to Tuitawng, on the border of the plains and hills. The Thado and Yo moved north of Ciimnuai, where the Thado founded the village of Phaileng and the Yo the village of Gamngai.

Before the quarrel the Paite seemed to have lived peacefully at Ciimnuai for as long as two hundred years. After the Paite separated the Sukte emerged as the most powerful clan and conquered almost all other Paite clans, except for the Sizang. The Sizang were involved in wars against their neighbours from the south, the Falams and the Shan-Burmans.

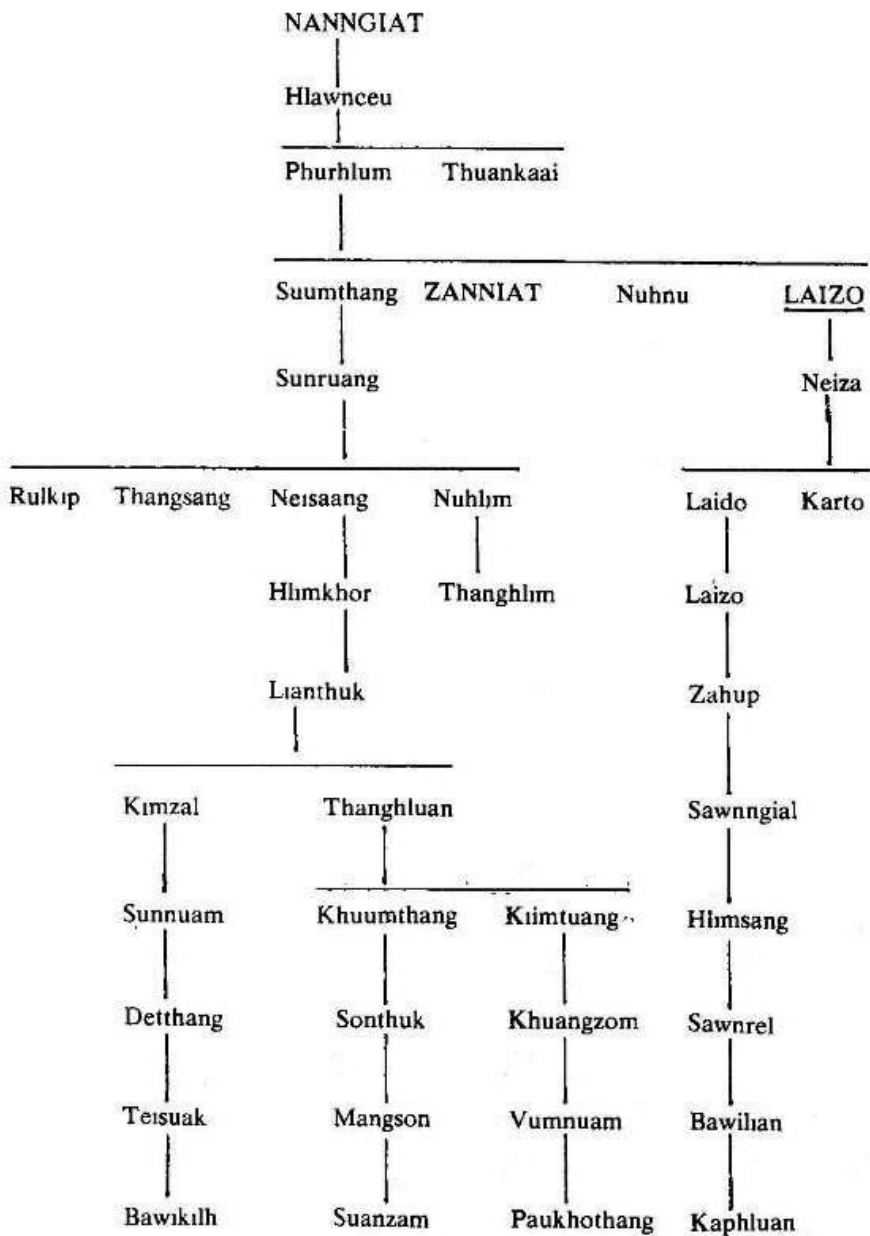


Table 8 . Zanniat and Laizo genealogical relationship according to Sonngin³⁶

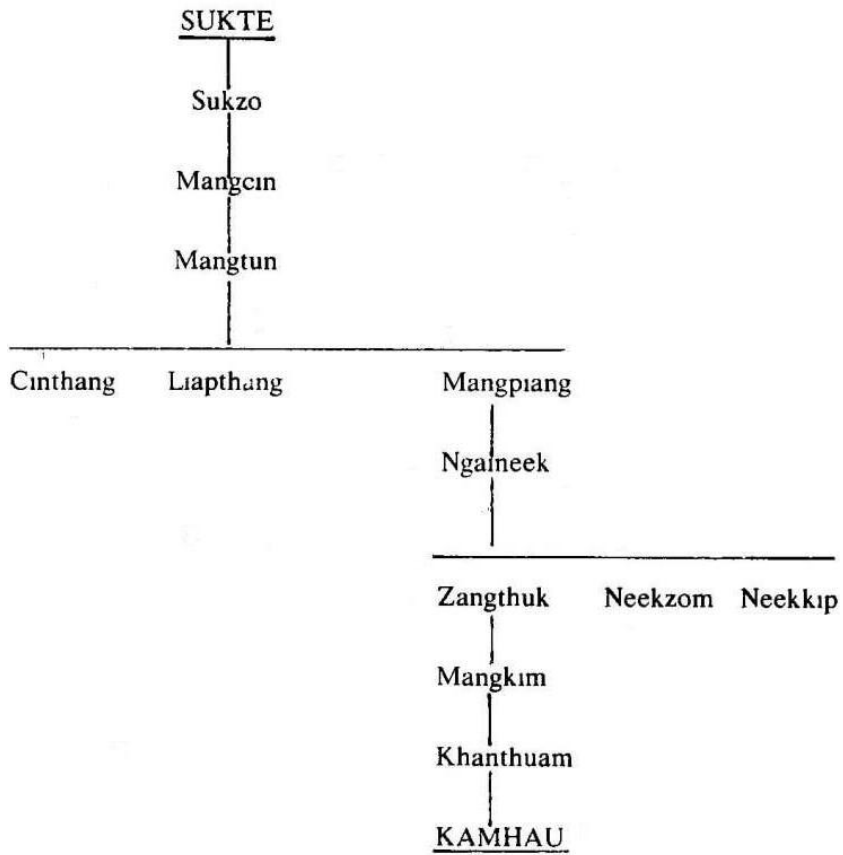


Table 9. Genealogy of Sukte. The Sukzo genealogy shows that Sukzo had three sons: Bawmkhai, Suksak, and Pualte and Mangcin is not included as Sukzo's son.

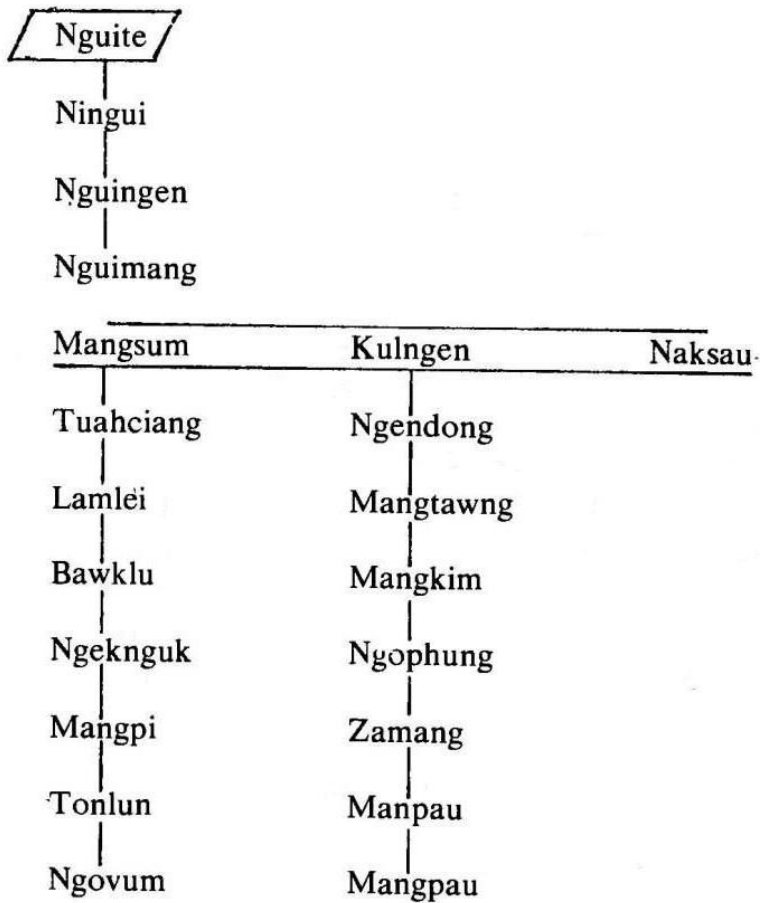
The Sukte could not trace their progenitor and had no clan name. They therefore appealed to the Sukzos to let them use Sukzo as their clan name. The Sukzo agreed and for their sincerity they received a barking deer from the Sukte. For eight generations the Sukte lived peacefully at Mualbem, which became a large and flourishing village. Then Khanthuum, son of Mangkim, quarreled with his father and fled to the Zahaus. From there he arranged to be recognized by the Zahau and Falam as chief of the Sukte. He promised the Falam that he "would pay them tribute when he returned to Mualbem as chief. At the death of his father, in about 1820, Khanthuum returned to Mualbem accompanied by the Pawis (Zahau and Falam) and became head of the Sukte clan.

In a short time Khanthum conquered most other Paite clans. Carey and Tuck³ wrote, "He carried his arms right up to the plain of Manipur, and all the tribes he met with on the way either paid him tribute without fighting, or paid him tribute after having been defeated." The clans defeated by Khanthum were the Thado, Yo, Vaiphei, Guite, Ngaihte and Khuano. Among them the Thado resisted most strongly, with the result that most Thado villages were burned to the ground. Khanthum died of old age sometime in 1840, and Zapau, his youngest son, succeeded him. The eldest son of Khanthum, Kamhau, had already founded a village called Tedim. He ruled Tedim so absolutely that the Sukte territory was divided into two separate communities; the Sukte under Zapau and the Kamhau under Kamhau.

The Sukte ruled over the villages of Saizang, Ciimnuai, Khawlai, Dimpi and Phaileng. The Kamhau had a bigger territory however, extending from north of Saizang to the Manipur border. In times of war, often resulting from Kamhau's expansionism, the two communities helped each other. Kamhau died at Tedim in 1868. According to tradition, Khawcin, the youngest of his eight sons, succeeded him. Kamhau's descendents spread their influence to the west side of the Manipur River, called Gungal or 'the other side of the river'.

The Sukte chief Zapau died in 1882 and was succeeded by his youngest son, Dothawng. Khawcin, the Kamhau chief, died in September, - 1891. As Khawcin had no issue his chieftainship fell to Haucinkhup, an eighteen year old son of Haupum, a brother of Khawcin. During Khawcin's rule the power of the chief grew weak, because his brothers lived together with their immediate subjects and worked for their own interests. They collected both their own and Khawcin's tribute from the people, and this practice left the people with small quantities of food for their own survival. This was the major reason for the Guite migration to Manipur.

The Guite trace their genealogy to Lamlei, who was according to the Thados an illegitimate son of Dongel, the elder brother of Thado.⁷² According to Lt. Nginsuanh in *Genealogy of the Zo (Chin) Race of Burma*³⁶ Guite or Nguite genealogy is as follows

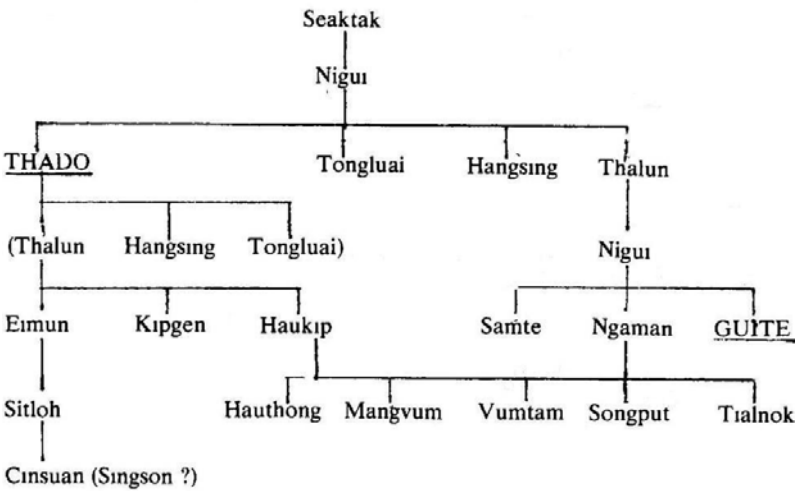


This is very confusing because of the inclusion of Bawklu and Ngengu, who according to the Sais, their progenitors.

The Guite's early village of Vangte was destroyed by Sukte and Falam, and some survivors then moved north from Vangte and settled around Tedim. The rise of Kamhau however forced them to move further north. Some Guite settled down during the 1870s in the Lushai Hills under Lusei chief Pawibawia, but Pawibawia ill treated them and in 1877 they moved once again, to the hills between Manipur and Kamhau. The Maharaja of Manipur allotted them land, which nominally belonged to Kamhau. Pemberton, the British representative, had given the land to Manipur in 1834 as part of the Yandabo treaty with the Burmese King.'

The Thado have several names. They were called by other Paite, Lusuang or Khuangsai. They were called "New Kuki" by the British. Today the Meitei call them "Kuki". Thado are the most numerous of all Zo people as a single clan. At Phaileng

near Tedim the Thado found themselves competing for power with the Guite. So they moved north and northwest settling to the north and west of the Tonzang area until the rise of Khanthuam. Khanthuam and his powerful son, Kamhau, conquered the Guite who were ruling the country around Tedim, the Yo, who occupied the areas between Tedim and Tonzang, and the Thado. As a result of the Sukte conquest the Thado moved west and north . with some reaching the Cachar hills and others going as far as the Patkoi hills. The Mangvum clan settled the Manipur villages of Lawmpi, Tualbung, Leivumkhau, Sialsawm, Baumbal and Lukotam. The Vumlu and Kumtam clans settled the Tedim area villages of Khiangzawl, Khuangkham (Savumkhua), Hiangzang, Balbil, Haisi, Hangken, and Hangkum.



One other version is that Seaktak had two sons : Dogel and Thado, and Guite was the illegitimate son of Dogel.

The genealogy as remembered by each clan differ from one another, thus, Thalun was the brother as well as the son 'of Thado. Guite was the son of Dogel, the brother of Thado, while others remembered Guite as the grandson of Thalun, the brother of Thado.

Table 10. The genealogy of Thado and Guite clan

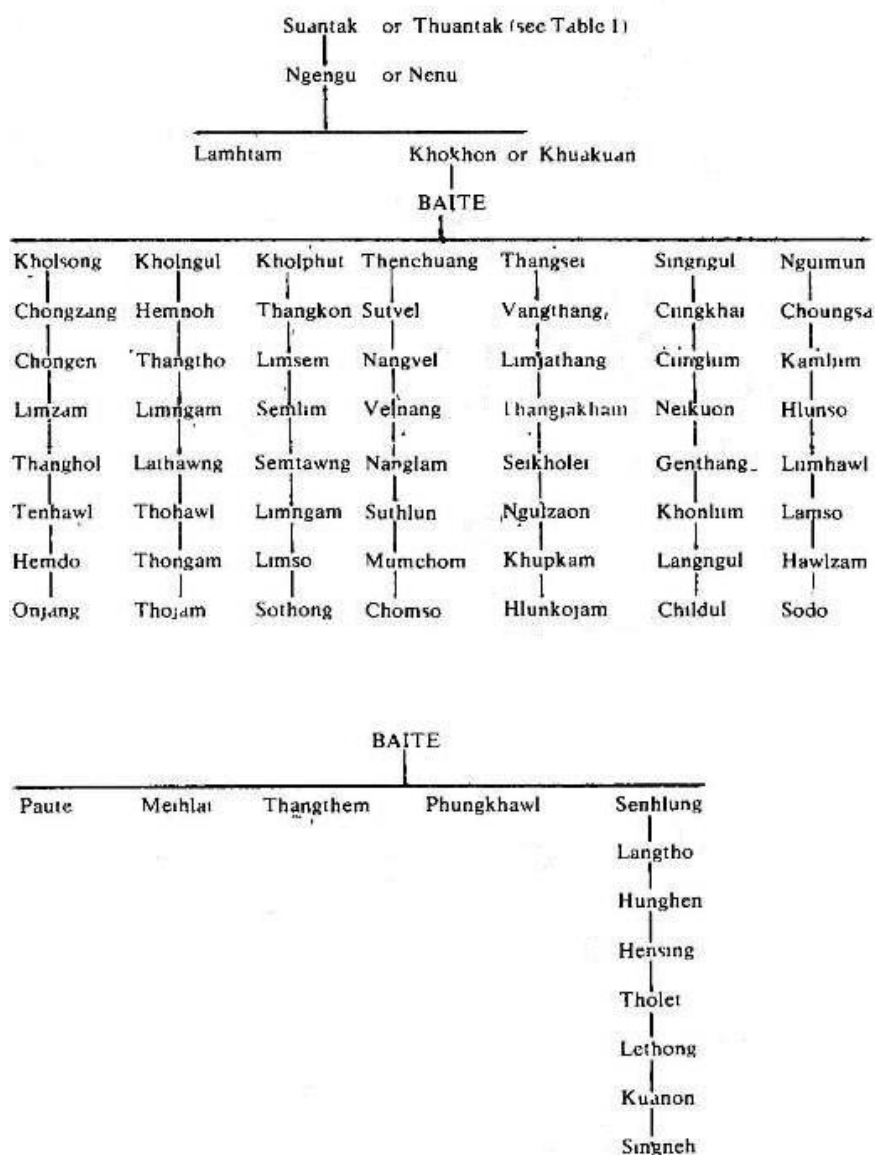


Table 11. The genealogy of BAITE according to Hlunkothang in (36). (The last five generations are not printed because of space.)

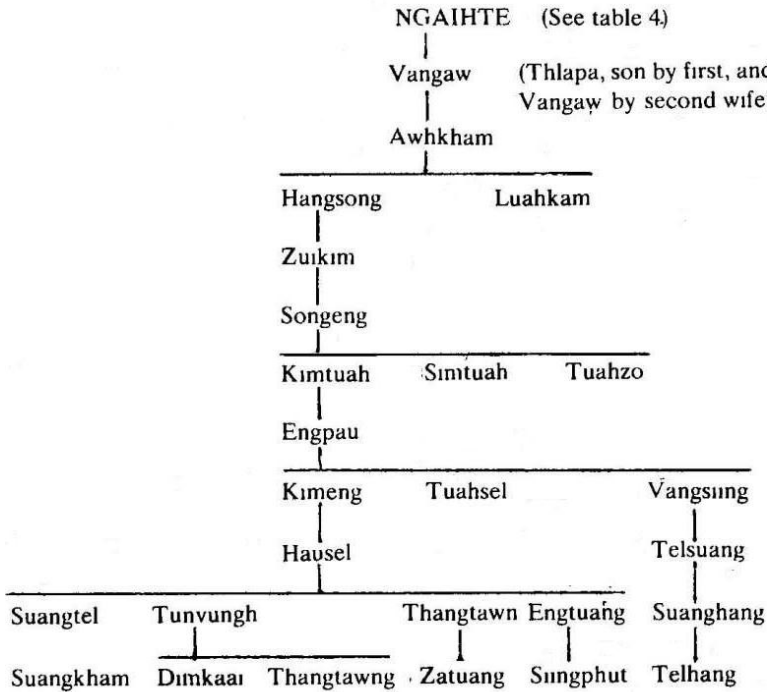


Table 12 Genealogy of Ngaihte, according to Theuzakap in (36)

The Vaiphei, who settled at Tuitawng valley, were in conflict with the Shans of Nansaungpu, and those who lived in Tungzang were under the yoke of the Sukte. They migrated to the west, settling in the hilly regions of Manipur.

Yo people were also called Tailian. Yo people settled in the north western part of Tedim district and south of Manipur. Over time Sukte settled with the Yo, although the Sukte believed to be superior by birth because they conquered the Yo and ruled them for several decades. Intermarriage was rare.

The Sizang were said to have lived in the Myittha valley somewhere near Kan, where they were called Thaute or fat folks. We can not be sure whether they lived there alone or with the other Paite group. It is most likely that the term Thaute applied to all Paite and that they lived there together. From the Myittha Valley and Sizang went to Ciimnuai, and from there they climbed Kennedy peak or Thuamvum and chose .Sizang Valley for their new home.

The two sons of Suantak, Ngengu (Nenu) and Daitong, founded the Khuasak Village (North Village) which is located a few miles

from the present Khuasak village. Ngengu's son Lamtam founded the village of Lophei. Vanglok's son Hangsawak founded Tavaak village, and Thuklai founded Vumzang village which is near the present Thuklai village. The Sizang have been in these area for about seventeen generations. As they belong to one family and because they were weak" until the beginning of the nineteenth century, they stood together and lived peacefully. The soil in their area was bad and most of their time was spent in pursuit of food.

Tribal Wars

From the time the Zo people migrated to the hills they waged war on each other, mostly to gain land. It must have been during the 1500 and 1600's that tribal wars broke out on a large scale. During this period the Zo moved away from their original hill settlement of Rungpi, Hmunli, and Ciimnuai, and each clan founded new settlements. A few of the tribal wars; which must have been relatively recently, are described here:-Most of them are stories gathered from the northern part of Zo country. Tribal war records from the southern part of Zo country were not available at the writing of this manuscript, although southern Zo seem to have fought more tribal wars than those in the north.⁴³

The War Between Sunthla and Haka

The Sunthlas, trying to gain tributaries, demanded heavy tribute from the-Haka. Carey and Tuck¹³ described the resulting fight between the Haka and Sun'thla."Bom Long and his people gave in without a struggle, but Ya Taung and Tan Hie (the tree brothers) collected 700 men, and taking up a position, which they hastily fortified, along the stream which now runs through the centre of Haka village, awaited the attack. The Shunkla army was assembled at Minkin (Mangkheng) and is described as numerous as the seeds in one basket of Indian corn. The force, led by Hlunseo, the great-grandfather, of Kwa Err, one of the present chiefs of Minkin, advanced, along the range where the present road runs."

"The battle began at midday, both sides fighting with spears, das (knives), and shields. It is stated that bows and arrows were not used, and that it was sunset before "the Hakas were driven from

their positions by the enormously superior force of the enemy. Both sides lost heavily, and among the Haka slain were nine expecting women; the murder of these still rankles in the minds of the Hakas. The victorious Shunklas spread over the valley, destroyed everything, and for ten days the remnant of the Hakas lived in the dense jungle on the summit of Rongklang, subsisting on roots and the flesh of the dogs which had followed them. When the Shunklas, had returned, Bomlong gave them shelter, and his village is said afterwards to have contained 800 households".

"The Hakas now sued for peace and a heavy indemnity was paid to the Shunklas, who, as an assurance of their good faith, sent a man and his wife to live in Haka. Not long after, however, the woman was badly treated by a Haka boy during childbirth and she fled with her husband back to Minkin. Petty war again broke out with varying success until Tat Sin, Probably nearly 200 years ago, collected a considerable force of Hakas and attacked the Shunkla villages in the valley where Reshein and Shunklapi now stand. He gained a signal success, inflicting a heavy loss in men, and driving into Haka all their cattle." (Today Sunthla is used instad of Shunkla.)

The Haka—Lusei War

The Haka, having beaten the Sunthla, were in a strong position. They turned their attention to the Lusei (Khawlhing and Zawngte), who occupied the area a short distance west of Haka. The Lusei were concentrated in huge villages, Khawlhing and Vizang, on the western slopes of the Rungthlang range, and they had frequently threatened to invade Haka.

The Hakas were now determined to fight the Lusei. To ensure success, Liandun, the head of the Nunthua Suan family, was sent to acquire a force of Burmans armed with guns. (Alaungpaya, the Burmese, king from Shwebo had been campaigning against Manipur and- Assam, recruiting his soldiers along the way from Burma to Manipur. The Burmans devastated Manipur in 1758, and Burmans from the Myittha-Kale-Kabaw Valleys took part in the attack. Zo warriors had also taken part in the campaign. Some guns thus were left in the hands of the Burmans and Zo.) After several years of persuasion Liandun succeeded in including Myat Sari! the chief of Tilin, to join the Hakas. Myat San and 200 men armed with guns and two brass cannons marched to join the

Hakas' fight against the Lusei. The Haka and the Burman surprised the Lusei in a dawn encounter, and the Lusei having no firearms deserted their villages and fled in disorder. For several months parties of Haka ravaged the country, eventually driving every Lusei across the Tiau. Having beaten the Lusei, the Haka were respected by their neighbours, and the Zahau and Thlanthlang villages made peace with them. The Haka enlarged their territory by founding new villages, but war soon broke out between Haka and Sakta.

The Sakta—Haka War

"It was in Lyen Hnon's time that the Hakas first came into collision with the Burmans. The story is that the Thettas (Sakta), seeing how successful the combined Haka and Burman forces had been against the Lushais (Lusei), hired a force of Burmans to help them to destroy Haka. The latter, hearing of the approach of the army, deserted their village, which was at once occupied by the enemy, who spent a lot of time digging up the compounds in the hope of hidden property. The Hakas, meanwhile having carefully hidden their women and children, marched on Sakta by a jungle path along the summit of Rungthlang range, surprised the village which had been left entirely undefended, put all the women and children to the sword and flung their corpses into the Ri Var, the stream below Sakta, which is said to have been choked with bodies for the entire waning of the moon. The Saktas, hearing of the disaster, hurried back on the tracks of the Hakas, but failed to meet them."¹³

The Burmese - Haka War

After the war with the Sakta the Haka became unfriendly (with the Burmans. The Burmans, during the chieftainship of Lonseo, advanced to the hills with a thousand soldiers and destroyed several villages, including Haka and Zokhua. The villagers hid their grain however, leaving the Burmans without provisions. On their way back to the plains the Burmans were ambushed between Haka and Farrawn, and only a few escaped. After that the Haka organized various raids on the plains, taking captives, cattle and grain.

The War Between the Zanniat/Khualsim Against the Tlasun

Zanniat and Khualsim became "tributary to Tlasun by entering and settling down in their territory, but they were so oppressed by their rulers (the Tlasuns)" that they decided to fight for their freedom. In about 1860, after taking council together, they decided not to cross the Var or Manipur River and not to attack Tlasun itself, but rather to kill every Tlasun man who should cross to the left bank. The hanging rope bridge was guarded, and no one was allowed to cross over from the left bank. Consequently Tlasun received no information of the plot, and small parties of -Tlasuns who crossed the river to trade, hunt, etc., were taken to Losawn village and killed. This method of operation was successful, and 80 men from Tlasun were killed before the plot was discovered. Two Tlasun men however escaped to Minledaung. There they were protected and hidden by the people and then smuggled across the Var. The news of the rebellion thus reached Tlasun. The Tlasuns proceeded with deliberation as usual. They rallied their allies, the Zahau, Hualngo and the Sunthla, and crossing the Var, overran and utterly laid waste the Zanniat Khualsim tract. Only those who fled to Burma evaded the death penalty.

The result of the rebellion proved dissirous to the Zanniats and their allies. They became for all purposes the slaves of the Tlasun and were forced to carry salt and rice from Burma. These goods were -required by Tlasun not only for consumption, but also for sale to the Zahau and surrounding villages. The principal rebels, the Lumbangs, Parte, Khualai, Lati, and Lunhan were punished with heavy taxation and fines, and they had to cultivate the Tlasun fields from which each household had to pay an annual basket of millet.

The Lusei Wars

The various branches of the Sailo family were frequently at war. Their last war, caused by a land dispute, ,was sometime in 1856 and lasted about three years. The war, which'was'called "The war of the North and the South," ended with the Northern Sailo capturing the south's young chief.

There were also wars between the Luseis and Thlanthlangs, and

wars between the northern chiefs themselves. These quarrels were stopped when the British conquered the Zo.⁵²

The Lusei—Zahau War

The Lusei had been pushed to the west of the Tiau river by the Zahau, Haka, Thlanthlang, and Tlasun., Even in the west the Lusei were never left alone. They were constantly pursued by powerful eastern tribes who demanded and received tribute whenever the Lusei attempted to settle in one location. In order to withstand the eastern tribes a number of other subtribes combined into one village, Selesih, in about 1740. Even then the eastern tribes came yearly to collect what they required from the Lusei, who consequently gave up their treasures of Burmese gongs, brasses and bells, mithun and ornaments.

When Lallula became chief of Selesih he began to scheme an end to the miserable plight and insecure life of his people. At that time there was an orphan named Rohrehlova, adopted as a child by Sailo chief Rohnaa, the father of Lallula. When Rohrehlova was of age he was made a tafa or 'dependent' by Khawkimthang the chief of Zahau. Khawkimthang sent Rohrehlova with 70 households to form the village of Bawlte, near Champhai, to enlarge his territory. The Lusei had also given Rohrehlova the land because they wanted a buffer state between them and the eastern tribes of Zahau, Haka, Thlanthlang, and Tlasun.

Rohrehlova entered into peaceful co-existence with the Lusei chiefs, among them chief Lallula, whom he had known during childhood. Having gained the friendship of Rohrehlova and the support of neighbouring Lusei chiefs, Lallula proceeded to carry out his plan to fight the eastern tribes. He then invited the Zahau to collect their annual tributes.

"Though this as contrary to the normal practice of the eastern chiefs who used to come on their own initiative and at their own convenience, they never saw nor suspected any foul play, being confident that the Lusei would not dare raise their fingers against them. Not only the chiefs and their warriors, but their village elders and young boys also came to collect their prize. In the meantime, Lallula had asked all the neighbouring allied chiefs to come with their warriors. He instructed his villagers to prepare an adequate quantity of rice, zu and meat to feed the eastern

guests who were led by their chief Thanchhuma. The leading elders accompanying him were Phunthanga and Cherkuanga. Their champion fighter, called Thanghlianga, was also in the party. The number of warriors accompanying Thanchhuma was said to be about three hundred. They were feasted continuously for three days by Lallula. On the third night when the entire village was asleep, Lallula and his warriors fell on them and a massacre followed. However, Thanglianga and two others escaped home to report the disaster. Thanchhuma and Cherkuanga were captured alive but the other counselor, Phunthanga, was killed. This massacre came to be known as the "thlanrawn rawt", meaning the massacre of the Thlanrawn. This was about 1753-54 A.D. In the course of years, Thanchhuma and Cherkuanga were allowed to purchase their freedom and, their ransoms being paid, were released. It was about this time that one of the Chaihla called Zopui Zai, sometimes called Lallula Zai (the poems of Lallula), was popularized."³⁹

After the massacre the Lusei felt threatened, and many of them migrated west. Lallula's western migration, was estimated to be in about 1757, and he wandered westward until 1786. His dwelling places were Zopui, Vanlaiphai, Bawktlang, Zbbawk, Lungchuan, Bawngchun, Zobawk, Zawngtah, Chamring, Diarkhai, and Parvatui, where he died about 1803. Lallula was the most powerful Sailo or Lusei chief, and since his rule the Lusei have used the Duhlian dialect or Lusei ttawng as a common language. This dialect is spoken today by every Zo in the Indian part of Zo territory.

Kamhau's Wars

Kamhau's rule began in about 1848. Due to location between Manipur and Burma Kamhau acquired guns from both countries. By the 1850's his clan was equipped with enough guns to wage war against their neighbours.

The Kamhau—Shan War

In about 1850 the Shans of Kale and Yazagyo, under the Kale Sawbwa, burned down Tedini and Lamzang. Kamhau submitted to the Sawbwa of Kale and acknowledged his rule. A few months after Kamhau's submission the wife of the Kale Sawbwa died at Yazagyo, and Kamhau sent his suzerain the gift of a slave. The

deputation taking the slave was received and the slave accepted. But while the deputation was returning to the hills it was surrounded by Shans and the whole party beheaded.¹¹ Thus Kamhau declared war against the Shan of the Kale-Kabaw Valleys, and the war lasted until the British subdued the Kamhau in about 1900.

Kamhau—Manipur War (Meitei Gal)
(Meitei is the Zo name for people of Manipur.)

In the treaty of Yandabo, between the King of Burma and the British representative Captain Pemberton, an imaginary line was drawn through Zo country, and the hilly regions of present eastern and southern Manipur were given to Manipur. This area had been the home of the Thado, Hmar and Yo. During Kamhau's reign Zo people moved to the north because of his territorial expansion. The Thado settled in the hilly regions south of Logtak Lake in Manipur, which belonged to Manipur according to the Yandabo treaty. The Kamhau regard this as their region and the Thado as their subjects. The Thado were also in conflict with the Guite, who settled to the south of them. The Guite lived in the villages of Lawmpi and Mualpi; and they were also subjects of Kamhau.

The Kamhau-Manipur war began because of beliefs in witchcraft. To accuse someone of being a witch is a serious matter among the Zo. Some deaths and sickness are believed to be caused by witches, and in cases of death, the witch is believed to have caught the person and consumed their soul. In cases of sickness it is believed the witch has attempted to overpower the soul. A witch inherits his or her power from their parents, although witches are usually women. To cure a witch of her power is possible only on the wedding night, as on that night her power is lost if the husband can stay awake. If the witch can stand astride her husband while he sleeps she is free to fly from roof to roof in search of victims. During her absence from bed her body is separated from her head, and if somebody* turns her head or body her soul cannot re-enter, and she dies.

The following is an example of how a witch was caught in the act. A child died suddenly, and the village women went to the house of the dead to mourn. The witch who was responsible, before leaving her house, asked her maid to change the place of

a skirt with another one, and after that to prepare a fish in an earthen jar for dinner. The maid forgot about the skirt and opened the earthen jar. There, in the earthen jar was the child of the neighbour alive' She picked up the child and ran to it's house, and as soon as she appeared the corpse turned into a tree stem. The witch immediately, left the village with her husband to return to her village. As the couple walked along the side of a hill the witch looked back and the villagers saw a huge red mouth. The maid died that same night.

Thus when the Thado accused the Guite of having witch power the Guite had to protect their dignity, and chief Ngokhothang attacked the Thado villages. The Manipur Maharajah Chandrakirti Singh had been disturbed by these outraged as well as other Kamhau activities in the area, and he resolved to punish the Kamhau. An expedition of 1,500 men left for Tedim in January, 1857, and the Maharajah placed such importance on the "success of the operation that he, carried in a palanquin, led the expedition himself.'

The Meitei had sent the Kamhau a message saying that their witch craft had dampened the Kamhau's gun powder and that their own guns were loaded with thread and needle to stitch together the Kamhau's eyes. They were coming' to take all the Kamhau elephant tusks, and they also planned to carry away the women of Tedim.

Chief Kamhau allowed the Meiteis to advance, but in the meantime he invited the Sukte. and Sizang to come and fight the common enemy. The Sukte chief Zapau and the chiefs of Sizang arrived with their warriors. To mislead the Meitei they felled pine trees on the top of Lailun hill. At night the Kamhau burned the logs to make it appear that a large army was camping on the hill.

Kamhau led the combined forces to meet the Meitei a few miles north of the camp fires, where they surprised them by firing into their midst. Kamhau's forces were somewhat surprised themselves, as their gun powder was.,not affected by the Meitei witchcraft. The Meitei in confusion gave up the fight and ran, leaving their baggage and the Maharajah's palanquin in the hands of the Zo forces. The Maharajah was also left behind. He retreated on foot and arrived in the valley of Manipur some days later with only a handful of followers.

The majority of the Meitei retreated along the Manipur River, instead of following their line of advance, and about two thirds of them were drowned. The combined Zo forces captured forty guns, and the Sizang were rewarded with three Meitei heads for their assistance.

After the 1857 war both the Kamhau and Sukte promised the king of Manipur they would no longer molest his subjects. But quarrels between the Thado, under Manipur jurisdiction, and the Guite, under Kamhau, caused a continuous warlike situation between the independent Kamhau and the British ruled Meitei. The British took more and more Manipuri affairs into their hands, and they accused the Kamhau and Sukte of destruction actually caused by the Guite.

Between 1857 and 1870 the Sukte and Kamhau were at peace with the Meitei, but the Guite under Suankam were quarreling with the Haukip clans of Thado. In an attack in 1859 the Guite burned a Thado village and left 15 headless trunks of men. Forty five men, women and children were carried away into captivity, along with their flocks and herds. These attacks were made by the Guite with no help from allies.

In 1871, the Sukte ran short of rice, and a party went to chief Lalbura's village to buy rice. Lalbura not only refused to sell rice but also killed a member of the party. Thus Khawcin, the Sukte chief, attacked a Lusei village. The attack occurred during the absence of the Lusei men, who were on a fighting expedition to Cachar. The unprotected Lusei village was easily overran by the Sukte, and they killed a large number of women and children.

The Sukte sent four heads of the people they killed to Manipur to manifest their friendship. In that same year the Maharajah of Manipur sent a large brass pot to Chief Khawcin, with the request that he help him in his war against the Lusei chief Vannuailiana. Khawcin assented because he required about 100 heads to perform funeral rituals for his father, Kamhau. Khawcin collected an army numbering several hundred men and, accompanied by his brothers, marched to Champhai in two days. The Lusei under Lalbura, son of Vannuailiana, had been collecting a large force and they were prepared to counter Khawcin's attack. Champhai was heavily stockaded. The Sukte at night however quietly occupied a large stockade near the village. The Sukte then opened fire, killing three instantly. The Lusei defended

themselves stubbornly and fought all day and killed three attackers.

On the next day, February, 17, 1872, the Meitei under the command of two majors arrived at Champhai. They were joined there by a British troop of 130 officers and 2,000 muskets under the command of General Nuthall. The troop was the northern column of the British Lushai Expedition, and the Meitei were to support the British forces from the northern flank. This was the first full scale British invasion of Zo territory.

The advance of British and Manipur troops panicked the Lusei. Realizing the situation, the Sukte seized the initiative and made a fierce onslaught against the Lusei, taking hundreds of captives. The Sukte then returned to their villages.

The Meitei on their return from Champhai fell in with a party of Guite who had taken part in the fight against the Lusei. The Guite were under the command of their chief Ngokhothang, and they had with them 957 Lusei captives from two Lusei villages. The Guite welcomed the Meitei in their camps, believing that the Meitei were their partners in the war against the Lusei. But the Meitei majors, Sai Kaichamba Balarma Sing and Tangal, arrested Ngokhothang and his party. (Tangal later became general of the Meitei Army and was executed by the British for his role in opposing British rule.)

The Lusei were taken to Manipur and were resettled in the valley. Ngokhothang and his sons were taken to Imphal, the Manipur capital, and put in prison. In April, 1872, the Sukte sent an embassy to Manipur to negotiate the release of Ngokhothang. The British political agent however told Khaivum, the chief Sukte delegate, that Ngokhothang would not be freed unless all Meitei captives in Sukte hands were freed. Ngokhothang died shortly thereafter in a Manipur jail. Some exchange of captives was made; with the Suktes returning forty-four Meitei. In 1873 peace was sworn between Manipur and the sons of Ngokhothang, after the Meitei returned the skull of their father.

The peace did not last long. A group of Guite, living in the Lawmpi area, attacked the two Thado villages of Kumsol and Mukoong in Meitei-territory. The British-Manipur groups blamed the Sukte for not keeping the peace agreement. The Maharajah, with approval of the British, organized an expedition 2,400 men strong. They started on February 19, 1875, to attack Mualpi and

Lawmpi. On March 20 the party was attacked by the brother and son of Zatural, the chief of Sukte. In the engagement two Sukte were killed. The next day the Sukte decided to seek peace and sent a deputation to settle the dispute. It was agreed that the Sukte had to return their captives to Meitei territory. Accordingly the chief of Kumsol, his wife and child and six other captives were returned to the Meitei majors. Real peace was never attained between the Sukte and Manipur. Due to a population increase in the Kamhau area more and more Guite migrated to Manipur from villages around Tedim. The last group, about 2,000, reached Manipur in 1877.

Sukte—Lusei Wars

As we have seen the Sukte and Kamhau quarreled with Lusei chiefs Lalbura and Vannuailiana, and the Sukte and Kamhau destroyed Champhai, Lenkam, and Thatthlangkhua (Khuanglian) on different occasions. They overran the whole country around Champhai, capturing men, women, and children and took as many as two hundred captives. The Sizangs helped the Sukte and Kamhau in their operations. The Lusei chiefs did not quietly submit to the depredations, as Lalbura twice marched into the Sukte area with a large force. On the first occasion his objective was Saizang, but his party was discovered while still on the other side of the river. The Sukte having been duly warned succeeded in ambushing the Lusei and driving them back. The bodies of seven Lusei fell into the hands of the Sukte.

Lalbura's second attempt was aimed at Mualbem, and this time he succeeded in crossing the Manipur River unobserved. Mualbem is, however, perched on the summit of the high cliffs of the Manipur River, and as Mualbem was strongly defended, the Lusei had no chance. They were driven back to the river, and in recrossing two of them were drowned.¹³

The Kamhau—Zahau War

Chief Kamhau made attempts to enlarge his sphere of influence into the Zahau, Khuangli and Botung areas. But the Zahau attacked Zapau, Kamhau's brother, with a large force. Although the Sukte repulsed the attack, the Zahau were successful in stealing cattle. Thus chief Kamhau bought peace with the Zahaus

by paying one mithun triennially as tribute to Khuangli.

The Hualngo and Zahau Against the Sukte

In 1876 a combined force of Hualngo and Zahau, some 300 strong, suddenly attacked Tungzang and killed 29 people. The Sukte quickly organized and, taking a short cut to Inbuktlang, ambushed the Zahau-Hualngo group. The ambush was a failure, allowing the Hualngo and Zahau to escape with their captives. Haupum, the brother of Khawcin, was killed during the attack.

The Destruction of Lophei

From the time of their migration from the plains the Sizang were as peaceful as they were weak. By about 1800 however, the village of Lophei had grown to 80 houses. Lophei had at that time the best warriors of the Sizang, including Enmang, who was well known in the surrounding Pawi and Sukte areas for his leadership in times of war. The chief of Lophei, Luathuam, was not only proud of his warriors but also arrogant in his dealings with his fellow Sizangs. He ruled his village with absolute power and without listening to the villagers.

Traditionally Zo people made an offering to the Dawi (spirit) every year. During the early 1800s the Lophei made their annual offering to the Dawi by killing a cow that belonged to the warrior Luaon. It was agreed that every household in the village was to contribute a basket of beans to Luaon to pay for the cow, and the beans were collected at the residence of the chief. But chief Luathuam and his wife ate them instead of delivering them, and Luaon patiently waited for three years for payment! After the three years he once again reminded the villagers of their debt, but they assured him that they had given the beans to Luathuam. (Luathuam claimed that the beans were rotten and no longer fit for human consumption.) Then the villagers manufactured bamboo mats and sold them to Kale. Again the materials obtained in exchange for the mats were collected at the chief's residence. But chief Luathuam behaved as before. He ignored the existence of the materials obtained for the mats.

Luaon had at the time a slave which he wished to trade. At the village of Saizang he met with Lalmang, a Tlasun chief, who was selling a gun for two slaves. Luaon traded the slave and the beans

owed him by the village of Lophei for the gun. When he returned to Lophei, Luaon went to the highest ground in the village and after firing his gun announced, "Brothers and sisters, please listen to me. In exchange for a gun I gave Lalmang of Pawi my slave. I promised to give him the beans you owe me by the next harvest. If, by the first full moon after the harvest, payment is not yet made, I asked him to reduce Lophei to dust and ashes."

The Lophei villagers immediately held a meeting, and since they had already paid twice agreed that the chief should make the payment of Lalmang. Once again, Luathuam did not comply with the villagers' decision.

Lalmang waited till the dark of the moon after the harvest, and since payment had not yet been made he prepared to attack Lophei. Lalmang invited the Sunthlas, Zahau, Ngawn, and Sakhiliang (Limkhai, a Sizang clan like Lophei). Lalmang and his Tlasun chiefs also approached Zapau, the chief of the Sukte, to help them. Zapau was asked to invite Enmang of Lophei for a visit, because, Enmang was a great warrior and the Pawi were afraid to attack Lophei was Enmang in the village. Only when Zapau agreed to lure Enmang away from the village did the Pawi dare to attack.

Oh the day of the attack the Lophei were building a thatch house for the Tulpi (high priest). The work was finished in the early afternoon, and, as usual on such days, the people were fed with zu in gratitude for their work. That afternoon the Pawi invaded from Khuangmual ridge above the village. The villagers were already drunk, and, on seeing the Pawi, shouted; "If you are here to attack us, you are too few, and if you come here for a visit, you are too many."

Because they were too drunk the villagers could not easily agree on how to defend themselves. The village had constructed a stockade around Luathuam's house, and they decided to attack the Pawi from the stockade. But few could walk that far. The Pawi started burning the houses one by one, beginning with, those nearest the ridge. Only Luaon's son attacked the Pawi. He killed six men before the Pawi shot and wounded him. They dragged him off and threw him into a burning house. Defending the village of Lophei was left to the women. They hit the attackers with mithun horns, their drinking cups, while the nien simply invited the Pawi to drink with them. The Pawi ruthlessly

killed all the people they could lay their hands on.

The Pawi wanted to capture Luathuam, the chief and the actual culprit. To mislead the Pawi the Lophei dressed up a slave in a white headdress with peacock feathers, to look like Luathuam. Then they let him run down the ridge of the village shouting, "I Luathuam. am escaping." The Pawi followed and killed him immediately. Only then- did the Pawi end their massacre. '

On the day of the attack the smoke from Lophei, could be seen from Mualbem, where Enmang had been invited by chief Zapau, who knew the reason for the smoke, told Enmang of his suspicions. Enmang, realizing the invitation by Zapau had been "part of a plot, immediately decided to return to Lophei!! On his arrival at Lophei, he challenged the attackers, crying out, "who are you, who turn my village into ashes and dust? I am Enmang, the son of my father." Then he fired his gun.

Knowing Enmang had returned to the village, the Pawi at once retreated to the ridge above the village,' where they built a temporary prison of wooden planks. From there a young captive, Samkam, escaped, helped by a Pawi who pushed him over the top of the plank enclosure. He was allowed to run down the hill to the village,, a rare humanity on that day.. There he saw that only 7 out of 85 couples had escaped with both husband and wife remaining alive. Among the hundreds who were taken captive was the pregnant wife of Luathuam. She was the only one to be ransomed. The others were enslaved in the Pawi area.

The neighbouring Sizang clans had merely looked, on, since they wished to punish the arrogant Luathuam themselves. The Pawi no longer respected the Sizang after the destruction of Lophei, and they demanded a tribute of a mithun every soya bean year. (Zo believe that soya bean can be grown every three years. Thus a soya bean year means the year when the soya bean can be grown.)

The Destruction of Khuasak

When the Pawi of Tlasun and Sakhiliang were forming an alliance to attack Lophei, Lalmang and Hoilian of Tlasun wanted to use a path in Ngomang's garden. Ngomang' of Thuklai gave permission, but the Pawi burnt" down his house as they retreated from Lophei. In the house a set of gongs which belonged to Mottuang

were destroyed. The gongs were of immense value to the people in those days.

To avenge the attack on Lophei and to punish the Pawi of Tlasun for burning the gongs, as well as to catch two slaves of Dopa"u who had run away and hidden themselves at Khaikin, Buanman and Khuasak attacked the Ngawn village of Khaikin. This village was near Kale in Burma and subject to the Tlasun. The Sizang (the combined force of Thuklai, Buanman, and Khuasak) took four captives from Khaikin. Lalmang, the chief of Tlasun, sent Zomeng, the headman of Dakbung, to demand the return of the prisoners. He reasoned that four of his slaves on a visit to Khaikin were slain during the attack, and the return of the captives would restore peace between the Tlasun and the Sizang.

The elders of Khuasak held a meeting to discuss how to react to Lalmang's demand. They were about to submit until Pi Niangcing, wife of Khuasak chief Kimkam, composed a song and sang it to the leaders. The song contained a refusal to return the prisoners, even at the price of being destroyed. The song was sent to chief Lalmang.

Lalmang then assembled his allies, the Khuangli, the Zahau, and the Shan-Burman at Kale. These Pawi clans then marched to Khuasak. Khuasak was expecting the attack and for defense had built a stockade with a trench and bamboo spikes all around. A constant lookout was kept from the village. The Pawi camped at the outskirts of Khuasak, waiting for the right moment to strike, but the people of Khuasak detected every Pawi approach to the village. One day Kimsuak was serving as lookout. He saw that the Pawi were having lunch at the Khuasak main gate called Ngallu (the place where the heads of enemies were hung). He shot and wounded one Pawi. On hearing the shot, the villagers rushed to the scene. The Pawi ran for their lives, and in their haste two fell from a cliff and were killed. On another day Thanghau, who had lookout duty, spotted the Pawi, and once again the Khuasaks drove the Pawi away. On that day the Khuasaks found out that their enemies were not the Pawi alone, but that they had been joined by the Sukte clan.

On a later date the attackers stormed the entrance of the satellite village of Khuakhuan, where the Pawi were repelled but did

succeed in burning seven houses.

Another time the Pawi attacked and scored an easy victory. It was at night when the Khuasak were mourning the death of the villager Hangkhai. As was the tradition on such occasions the Khuasak people had been singing and drinking the whole night through and were preparing to leave the house with the corpse. They were singing the song "Thang Ho" when the Pawi began their attack and reached the house of mourning. Thukthang, the drummer for the funeral dance, first saw the enemy approach. He threw his drum at them and ran to get a weapon. The attackers then entered the house. They dragged the drunkards to the door and, using the threshold as; a butcher's block, beheaded them. The women in mourning had veiled their faces with black clbths, so they were unable to see that they were being attacked. When they were dragged to the threshold to be killed they thought they were being invited to drink zu. Only after most of the women had been killed did the rest realize what was going on. After this tragedy the Sizang women never again veiled their faces in mourning.

The Khuasaks had at that time two stockades, one located at Ngomang's residence and another at chief Kimkam's. The Khuasak warriors first, ran to Ngomang's stockade to defend themselves but lost 38 men. Then they retreated to Kimkam's stockade. In the meantime the Pawi were roaming the village burning houses and killing everybody on sight.

One incident concerned Ciinvung, a thirteen year old girl who had been left alone at home by her parents. When the Pawi came to her house she shot three of them with three guns left by her father. Before she could load the guns again the attackers captured her, beat and raped her and finally killed her. The Khuasaks later came to believe that a fig tree began to grow on the spot where she was killed. That tree is still to be seen today.

The gun shots were heard in Thuklai. Enmang, who lived there, decided to help the Khusaks. He announced his decision by shouting, "On the day the village of Lophei was attacked, you Sizangs just looked at us being destroyed. Now Khuasak is being attacked because the Sizang did not stand together. If Khuasak is destroyed, the Pawi will attack Thuklai and Buanman. If we are Sizangs, we have to help one another. There are forty guns in the Sizang area. Let us have them". These words of Enmang

were heard by Zawnkai of Vangte village, who was on his way to join the attack of Khuasak. Zawnkai informed Lalmang of Enmang's intention. Lalmang, afraid that the Sizangs would help each other, immediately ordered his men to retreat to a hill north of Khuasak. There they built a large fire and threw in captured children. Then the Pawis negotiated the ransom to be paid for captives, and they returned to their respective villages with captives who had not been ransomed.

The results of the war were devastating to Khuasak. Too many people had been killed for the remaining Khuasaks to mourn in their traditional manner. Usually an animal was sacrificed in memory of a person's death, but this time the dead could be remembered only with an egg and a rice roll per person.

The village of Khuasak had had fourteen guns before the attack. Seven were lost in defense of Ngomang's stockade. One gun had no flint; so every shot had to be fired by using a heated charcoal stick to ignite the gun powder. The Pawis took the guns belonging to two villagers whom they had killed. The three guns that were used by Ciinvung also fell into the hands of the Pawi. Two other guns changed hands in favour of the Pawis at Kimkam's stockade.

Khuasak lost heavily during the war because some warriors were angry at the wife of chief Kimkam, whose arrogance had caused the Pawi to attack them. Ngomang, who was the best warrior of Khuasak at that time, refused to go to the house of Kimkam. The Khuasak were divided into two factions; one loyal to Kimkam and another which avoided him. Thus the Pawis had an easy victory at Ngomang's stockade, who were only a part of the villagers assembled to defend themselves.

The Shan-Burmans under Maung Yit, the Sawbwa of Kale, also marched on Khuasak. According to records at Kale this happened in 1228 Burmese time, or "1867 A.D. The Shan-Burman were 1,000 men strong but were late in reaching Khuasak. The battle had already been fought and the terms of peace already drawn. The Khuasaks, although losing heavily, did not surrender to the Pawi but agreed to pay a mithun and some grain in reparations. The Shan-Burman were easily defeated, and they left their rice at Khuasak and retreated to Burma by way of Tlasun.

Sizang's Migration to Mualnuam and Its Destruction

The Sizang people were angry with chiefs Luathuam and Kimkam,

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because it was their faults that the Pawi had attacked. Some villagers from Khuasak, Thuklai, and Buanman therefore decided to build a new village. Ngomang, a Sizang leader and well known warrior from Khuasak, went to Bunglung (Zayagyo) to obtain permission from the Bunglung Sawbwa to build a village at Mualnuam. Mualnuam was some eight miles away from Nansaungpu, a Shan village. The Sizang called the Shan people the children of Khaman. (The word Khaman possibly comes from the word 'Khmer'. The Khaman were originally Shan, but in due time became Burmanized. Therefore they will be recognized as Burmese or Burmans in this paper.) To get permission from the Bunglung Sawbwa, Ngomang presented the Sawbwa with an elephant tusk and a necklace made of beads.

The Sawbwa permitted the building of the village, and a peace treaty was agreed upon. The treaty was made in the form of a prayer to the spirits. The wording of the prayer ran somewhat as follows, "The children of Khaman and the children of Suantak will be friends starting from today. Until all the birds disappear from the sky and until the stream of Tuingo reverses the direction in which it flows today, the children of Khaman and the children of Suantak will never quarrel and will remain friends." (Tuingo is called Nattaga by the Burman, meaning the gate of the spirits because of a limestone cave on the bank of the stream.) "

Following the Sizang tradition a dog was decapitated and Ngomang and the Bunglung Sawbwa legs' were painted with the dog's blood. Permission to settle at Mualnuam having been granted some 40 households from Thuklai, Buanman, and Khuasak founded the village of Mualnuam. (Mualnuam is situated at the hill and plain border. Mualnuam means pleasant hill.)

At first the Burman and Zo lived together peacefully. But despite Ngomang's warning the Sizang started stealing the cattle of Nansaungpu and grain from the Burmese fields. To hide their activity the Sizang killed the animals in the forest and dumped the bones in the Tuitawng River. (Tuitawng is Balatachang in Burmese) They dried the meat and carried it home. When the Sizang realized the Burmans were suspicious of them, they blamed the Mualbem for stealing the cattle and suggested the Burman look for the bones in the Tuitawng River.

The Burmans found the bones in the stream and fished them out

with their fishing nets, but they were not to be fooled by the Mualnuam story. In due course the Burmans invited the chief of Tlasun to join in an attack on Mualnuam. The Tlasun chief, who regarded himself as an enemy of the Sizang, readily agreed. He made one condition; the Burman should kill all the Mualnuam men. Only then he would attack the village.

The Sizang received word of the impending attack and relatives in the Sizang area tried to persuade the-people of Mualnuam to return to the Sizang area for safety. But only Ngomang and his family returned to Khuasak. The others were influenced by Kimkam to remain. He said that his name was not Ngomang but Kimkam, which meant that he was not a coward like Ngomang and he would remain at Mualnuam.

In the meantime, the Burman at Nansaungpu built a house in the midst of their rice fields. They made the walls of the house with three layers of split bamboo, rather than the normal One layer, so that it was not easy to see through the spaces between the bamboo. The floor of the house was covered with fresh sand. The Burman then invited the men of Mualnuam to come to the house to discuss their friendship and to distribute headdresses. The headdresses were of cloth and were worn for special occasions, such as when celebrating the killing of a wild elephant.

Thirty-seven men from Mualnuam went to the house at Nansaungpu. One by one they were called in to receive a headdress. But when each man bent down to allow the Burman to measure his head for a headdress, his head was chopped off from behind. His body was then removed to a room built for the occasion, and the blood immediately hidden under the sand. Kimkam was to go in last because he was the chief of Mualnuam, but he became suspicious when none of his villagers reappeared. He peeped through a hole in the bamboo and saw a fellow villager's head being chopped off. Immediately he began running towards his village shouting, "The children of Khaman! I am not surrendering. I am Kimkam, the son of Sawmhang." But the Burmans had posted look outs who killed him before he reached his village.

The Burman then informed the chief of Tlasun that they had slain all the Mualnuam men. The Tlasun then attacked the village of Mualnuam, killing 145 people and taking 7 children captive. (Two of the great aunts of the author were also captured

and died in slavery in Burma.) Only Hangkip returned to the Sizang area, after spending half of his life as a slave. He acted as an interpreter when the British occupied the Zo country.

Peace Negotiations between the Sizang and the Pawi

After the Mualnuam massacre the Sizang and the Pawi agreed to negotiate a peace. Khanthum, chief of the Sukte, acted as the negotiator. He proposed that the Sizang pay a tribute of a mithun to the Tlasun every soya bean year, and that the country east of the Manipur River become the territory of Dopau, the chief of Buanman and the eldest of all the Sizang chiefs. The Pawi and the Sizang people accepted Khanthum's peace arrangement.

The Sizang's first payment of a mithun died on the way to Tlasun, and only the head was delivered. Lianbawi, the chief of Tlasun insisted on another mithun. The Sizang argued that since Lianbawi had received the head of the mithun, they would not make another payment. Lianbawi then threatened that unless he was given another mithun he would attack and destroy the Sizang.

The Sizang decided to fight the Tlasun and avenge themselves for what they had lost in earlier wars, and they sent Thangsuan and a few warriors to destroy the hanging bridge over the Manipur River. Thangsuan was successful. His party cut down the bridge and brought a piece of the rope to show Hankam, the chief of Sakhiliang.

Thangsuan was a native of Khuangli and was a very good warrior. He had captured the gun of the Tlasun chief during a battle between Khuangli and Tlasun. Thus when Tlasun defeated Khuangli the Tlasun chief sought out Thangsuan in order to kill him. He, however, had fled to Sakhiliang and was living as a refugee under the protection of Hankam, the chief of Sakhiliang. When the Pawi went to attack the Sizang, the Sizang ambushed his party at Lainam and killed Lianbawi the chief of Tlasun. They tied Lianbawi's legs together with a rope and dragged his body to Thuklai, which was three miles or four and a half kilometers away from Lainam. The Sizang claimed that Lianbawi was so fat that no dust stuck to his body when they dragged it along the road. In Thuklai, every one, including the children, walked over Lianbawi's body. This was the only time the Sizang

ever won a war against the Pawi, although they were involved in some six major wars.

Quarrel Among the Sizang People

The villagers from Khuasak under chief Khamthuk and the villagers from Buanman under chief Tongon attacked the village of Saizang Hongkam, the chief of Saizang, was captured by Tongon. Hongkam's son, Mangvum, and two of Hongkam's slaves called Onnang and Hongawi, were captured by Khamthuk. Hongkam's brothers ransomed him at a price which included the two slaves captured by Khamthuk. But Tongon considered the two slaves as his own property and demanded that Khamthuk give them to him. When Khamthuk refused he and Tongon could only agree to fight each other. Thus the villages of Khuasak' and Buanman went to war.

It was impossible for either side to start hostilities because Kangtuang, a Khuasak whose wife was from Buanman, reported every move made by Khuasak to the Buanman. As it was impossible to attack the Buanman some of the Khuasak people decided to live in peace and moved their houses to Ngalkhua, where they did not post look outs. In the meantime the chief of Buanman approached the chiefs of Mualbem and Gungal villages and asked them to help him attack Khuasak. They agreed, and one morning Buanman and its allies ambushed the Khuasak on their way to their fields. Seventy-two people were slain.

The Khuasak decided to avenge the massacre but agreed not to kill any one from the Buanman village. The Khuasak took their revenge by bribing a Mualbem lookout in the village of Dakbung. For two copper bracelets they were allowed to kill two Mualbem people visiting in Dakbung. Then it was again Mualbem's turn to avenge the two killed by the Khuasak. The Mualbem warriors stealthily approached the Khuasak village and killed the pregnant mother of Honghang as she was working in the fields. She had thought peace restored between the Buanman and the Khuasak and had ventured alone into an unguarded field.

When the chief of Buanman, Tongon, informed the Khuasak people that he was going to attack Ngalkhua, an unguarded part of Khuasak, Khuasak chief Khamthuk replied that he would :

then declare a full scale war against the Buanman. Khamthum, the chief of the Sukte, who realized the consequences of continued war, succeeded in convincing Buanman and Khuasak to make peace. Khamthuk then offered to give up the two slaves who were the cause of the war. Tongon however told Khamthuk to keep the slaves, as he said it was not worth killing each other because of two slaves. Peace was therefore restored among the Sizang.



Festive Lusei dress

CHAPTER 4

BRITISH INFLUENCE 1826-1947

During the eighteenth century the British, French, Spanish and the Portuguese ventured out into Africa and Asia for the purpose of dominating Asian and African nations. Europeans had had their technical revolution and with the manufacture of steam engines it was easy for them to venture into far distant lands for trade and colonialism. It was the Portuguese who came first to Arakan and Bengal, and the British long arm of colonialism appeared as a trading company called “The East India Company”. It established a base in the Bay of Bengal to trade with the Bengalis, and in 1760, Meer Kasim, the King of Bengal, ceded Chittagong to Lord Clive of the East India Company. The British then invaded the Assam and Surma valleys, driving out the Burmese who occupied the area. In 1765 in the name of the East India Company the British invaded the districts of Cachar and Sylhet, where their first contacts with the Zo people were the Hmars.

The profit of the East India Company was enormous. Lord Clive received two million pounds sterling within five years as gifts from Indians alone, while a British soldier made 40 pounds a year. The East India Company was not happy with Lord Clive for spending so much money colonization, and for making too little money for the Company. He was sued by his employers on that account, and he ended his life by suicide.

The British expanded their trade into Burma and annexed lower Burma in 1824 in what was called the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826). The British also drove the Burmese out of Manipur and at the same time invaded Arakan. The Burmese general Mahabandoola stood firmly against the British at Akyab, but he was recalled to fight the British in Lower Burma. The British took Arakan and advanced to the southern part of the Zo country.

The Khami stood against the British in various villages such as Miwa, Tansi, Kuwa, Singtaung, Salingmen, and at Maungnama hill. The Zo people’s spears and bows and arrows were no match

against the British rifles however, and the British took over the southern part of the Paletwa area. They opened an outpost there in 1826.

T h e Division of the Zo Country

Prior to the British appearance the Kingdom of Manipur covered only the plains of Manipur, and the hilly regions surrounding the valley were occupied by the Zo and Naga people. Some low lying hills were inhabited by the Luas, who were outcasts from Meitei society.

Manipur was originally annexed by the Burmese King Bodawpaya, and the Burmese had ruled there since 1810. In 1826 when the British annexed lower Burma they also drove the Burmese from Manipur. The British recognized the Maharaja Gumbheer Singh whom the Burmese had installed, and Man'pur became semi-independent.

The Kabaw valley had belonged to the Shans, but after the rise of Burmese King Alaungpaya Burma and Manipur were, at different times, in possession of the valley. Under the British the dual claims of Manipur and Burma to the Kabaw valley brought about conflicts that involved the Zo clans of Guite, Thado and Kamhau.

In 1834 at Yandabo, Pemberton, the British negotiator, drew an imaginary line from the source of the Namsailung (or the Tuisa or Tinzin) river as the boundary between Manipur and the Kabaw valley. This boundary divided Zo people between two British administrative units, one to Burma and the other in India. The dividing line meant nothing to the Zo people however, and more and more people moved north during the 1840s and settled down in the hilly areas which Pemberton had allotted to Manipur. The primary cause of the population shift was the conquest of the Thado, Yo and Guite by the Kamhau.

Early Relations with the British

After the British occupation of Cachar, Sylhet and the plains of Bengal, the Lusei, who inhabited the bordering mountain ranges, began to have unpleasant contacts with the new administrators. The Lusei had driven away the Hmars, the Tiperra and Saks, and

by 1810 had consolidated themselves in the hilly regions between Cachar in the north and the Arakan hills in the South. The Lusei had also found that the Bengalis were an easy prey. The Bengalis however had become British subjects, and the British regarded the Lusei as intruding into their territory when the Lusei resumed their raids against the Bengalis. Matters were made worse when the Raja of Tipperah claimed that all the outlying hills bordering Tiperra belonged to him. The Thado, Lusei and other Zo clans had regarded the hills as their own since about 1790. Their claim was reinforced by the fact that they received yearly payments from Tipperah's frontier police for bringing their forest products down to the plains, and Tipperah woodcutters had to pay a fee for protection from the Zo. Failure to observe this procedure easily led to bloodshed.

In September, 1826 a party of Sylhet woodcutters were killed by the Lusei under chief Vutaia, because the annual payment of the protection fee was withheld by the Zamindars (British Police) at Pertabgur. The; magistrate under the British sent three men to investigate the cause of the killings, and Vutaia detained two of them and sent the third to the plains after showing him the heads of the woodcutters. As a result the British authorized payment of the yearly protection fee to the Lusei but ordered the closure of the Sylhet market to all Zo people living in the hills.

Between 1830 and 1850 there were heavy movements of Thado, Lusei and Naga tribes in the Cachar area, corresponding to the rise of the power of Kamhau. The Naga, who occupied the southern part of Cachar during the 1830s, were attacked and driven north by the Thado, who were in turn driven north by the Lusei about 1849.

Lalhrina, who died sometime during 1843, was a powerful Lusei chief. His son Lalsuktla, to honor his father and in preparation for his funeral, took 200 men and attacked the Bengali village of Kochabari in Pertabgur on April 16, 1844. He returned with 6 captives and 22 heads, needed to accompany the dead chief to his new world.

As Bengal was in the hands of the British, the British dispatched Captain Blackwood with a party of the Sylhet Infantry into the hills. Chief Lalsuktla's village was surrounded and his supply road cut off. Blackwood then summoned Lalsuktla to negotiate

the terms of peace, but instead of negotiating Blackwood arrested and tried him. The British found Lalsuktla guilty of raiding the Bengali village and deported him for life. To fulfill the purpose of their presence, the British soon started to exploit the land by growing tea in Saduja and Cachar and cotton in the plains of Cachar. Timber was extracted from the hilly regions claimed by the Luseis.

As residents on the plantations the British soon witnessed the horror of tribal war, which resulted in the killing of about 150 people between 1826 and 1849. The tribal wars at that time were between the Thado, Naga, Hallam, Lusei and Meitei. As the Raja of Tipperah, who claimed to rule the hills, had no authority over the Lusei, it fell to the British to maintain peace and to defend against or colonialize the Lusei and other hill people. In assuming this protection role, the British found that the raids on their subjects had been made by chiefs Sukpilal and Lallianbawm of the Lusei. Thus in January 1850 Colonel Lister of the Sylhet infantry was sent to punish Sukpilal. After marching ten days from Sylhet he captured the village of Senthlang, which had some 1,000 houses. The chief of the village was Ngura, son of Lallianvunga, chief of Hmuifang. There were 249 Thado captives in the village who took advantage of the British arrival to escape from captivity. Colonel Lister left the village after avowing friendship with the Lusei chief.

However, as soon as the British left, the Lusei butchered 20 Thado men living with them, as revenge for the escape of the Thado captives. The Lusei chief was very powerful, as he employed about 300 Burmese warriors. Colonel Lister realized now that the Lusei had not acknowledged any alliance to the Tipperah Raja, and based on his findings he recommended the Thado be armed to protect themselves from the Lusei.

A levy of 200 Thados were raised and armed, and the area became peaceful for twelve years, during which the Lusei sent embassies and present to the British. In 1855 Sukpilal sent an elephant tusk, and in 1861 Vanpilal, the chief of Mullah village, requested British protection from the Lusei in the south. He also requested the release of his uncle Vannuailiana, who was in prison in Manipur. To impress the British with his good intentions chief Vanpilal released a Thado, who was a chief's son, and whom he had taken captive in 1849.

During the 1860s the Lusei again became restless. They regarded themselves a free people, their boundaries unlimited. With an increasing population and a shortage of cultivable land they wanted to expand their territory. Thus on January 22, 1862 villages in Adampore Sylhet were attacked and burned by a party of four Lusei chiefs-Ngurchuailova, Suakpuilala, Runvunga and Lalhuliana. The attack was to commemorate the wedding of Ngurchuailova with the sister of Suakpuilala. In 1863 another attack was carried out on Chundraipura, although the Lusei did 'not realize that Chundraipura belonged to the British. When the

British asked for the return of the captives from Chundraipura, the Lusei could not release them, some having married with the Lusei and some having been sold to the Pawis. Somehow friendly relations continued between the British and the Lusei until 1867. In January of that year an exiled Manipuri prince, Kanhaising, encouraged the Lusei to attack the British. The Luseis attacked Monierkhal and burned the tea garden of Loharbund in Cachar.

In retaliation for these attacks the British sent General Nuthall on an expedition to punish Suakpuilala, Vanpilal and Ranphunga. The military mission failed in its objective as heavy rain forced them to return before they reached their destination. Mr. Edgar, a stubborn deputy commissioner of Cachar, set off in January, 1871 to contact the chiefs in their villages, in particular Suakpuilala. Suakpuilala agreed to recognize Cachar as British occupied territory, and a peace treaty was executed, the one and only treaty the Lusai people ever signed with the British.

The Lusei however reasoned that it was the British who now encircled them in their hills and restricted their expansion, and they saw signs that the British were going to stay permanently. They concluded that unless the British were driven away at this time there would be no future chance. They therefore attempted to destroy the tea plantations and outposts.

While Suakpuilala was negotiating the boundary between the Lusei and the British, two Lusei parties descended to the plains of Sylhet and Cachar. The eastern party was under Vannuailiana's sons, Liankhama, Buantheuva, Pawibawia and Labura, and the other party from west of the Lusei Hills was under Savunga, Lalphunga and Bengkhuaia. On January 23, 1871 the Cacharee Punjee of Ainerkhal was burned, 25. persons killed and 37 taken alive. Bengkhuaia also burned the Alexandrapore tea garden. A

planter, Mr. Winchester, was shot down, and Mary, his five year old daughter, was captured. On January 24, 1871 Cutlicherra was attacked, and on January 27, Monierkhal. The Sepoys (Indians recruited by the British as their army) fought the Lusei for the whole day. On the same day another tea garden at Nudigram was attacked. Eleven persons were killed and three captives were taken.

On the west, at the border to Sylhet, the British frontier post was attacked on January 23 and next day another outpost was overrun. The outpost at Allynuggur village was attacked on February 27. On January 21st some villages in the hills of Tipperah were burned and on the 22nd, the village of Boonbari.

Rothangpuia was a powerful chief in the south western part of the Lusei Hills. The British knew of him because of his killing and capturing raids on the plains of Bengal. To punish Rothangpuia the British sent an expedition with 200 rifles and 450 carriers. When the British reached the village Rothangpuia and his people were nowhere to be seen, and the expedition could only burn the village.

There was no peace in this area until Captin Thomas Lewin, an honest and determined man, was appointed administrative officer of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1864. Captain Lewin had been in other parts of India as administrator and had known other hills people in India. He liked the hill people because of their simplicity and honesty, and he was able to win the friendship of Rothangpuia because he knew how to communicate with him. Lewin learned to speak the Lusei tongue, and, discarding the English way of living, he adopted the Zo peoples' way of life. He walked barefoot, drank zu and wore Lusei clothes. He was so loved by the Lusei that they called him Thangliana instead of Thomas Lewin.

British Invasion of 1871 (West Zoram)

The British sent out a military expedition, consisting of two columns; one column to destroy the villages of Lalbura, Vannuailian, Lenkam and Pawibawia in the north and northeastern Lushai Hills, and the other column to enter Zoram from Chittagong. One of their objectives was to recover Mary Winchester, who was a captive of chiefs Benkhuaia and Sangbunga.

The Cachar column under General Bouchier was assembled at

Silchar with over 2,400 men. The party advanced up the Barah river in mid-November 1871, going from Silchar to Tipaihmukh, reaching Siallam village. Vannuailiana, the chief, had died and the successor, his son Lalbura, left the village and escaped arrest by the British.

The southern column under General Brownlow was accompanied by Captain Lewin and his friend Rothangpuia. The party was the same strength as the northern column, and they assembled at Kassalong in mid November 1871. The party advanced by boat to Demagiri and from there, using mules and elephants as carriers, by foot to the Lusei Hills. They were met with strong opposition. The Lusei built stockades, laid ambushes and prepared avalanches of rocks which swept down on the paths leading to the Lusei villages. The skirmishes however were decided in favour of the British because their weapons were superior to the Lusei's spears and bows and arrows. The Lusei left their villages, in many cases burning the villages behind them. They took their essentials with them in baskets, but the animals and granaries which were left behind were plundered by the British.

The chiefs Lengura, Vanlula, Vanhnuaia, Vankenga and Vanhnuna gave in to the British, but Savunga, the most powerful chief of the area, stood against the invaders. The people however began to panic when the invaders fired a large gun from a ridge and hit the village. At the village of Lalngura, son of Savunga, the Lusei wounded nine soldiers and killed a Gurkha. Savunga, Lalngura, Lalzika and Bengkhuaia gave themselves up at the persuasion of Captain Lewin and Rothangpuia.

Six year old Mary Winchester was freed by Bengkhuaia, who had kept her for a year. Bengkhuaia's wife had treated Mary well. Mary did not want to part with her when the British came.

The northern column was supported by the Maharajah of Manipur, who sent his two majors with some 2,000 men. They were to watch the southwestern border of Manipur, in the neighborhood of Chibu, to prevent the Lusei from escaping to the east. Manipur troops were also sent to hold the Rengti and Moonvai ranges on the Delaswari River. The Maharaja also invited the Suktes to assist him in fighting their common enemy Vannuailiana. The invasion did not result in the submission of all Lusei chiefs, and thus it was not as complete a success as the British had

intended. But it did show the Lusei that the enemy could advance to their homeland, and there was peace for the following sixteen years.

The Lusei however, because of a dispute over land cultivation, continued to quarrel among themselves; the eastern Lusei under Lengkham, Chungliana and Pawibawia against Thangula of far west Zoram. As a result of the dispute many Lusei sought more peaceful territory and moved to the British Cachar district. Because of the tribal wars between other groups more and more Zo moved to the west and north.

Lusei, Haka, Sukte, Thado and Pawi continued to attack people under British protection. From 1834 to 1854 alone the British recorded nineteen raids. In 1860 the Lakher made such a fierce raid on the Chakmas that the British recorded the event as the “Great Kuki Invasion”, and between 1863 and 1869 the hill people made thirty raids on the Arakan valley. In 1842 Captain Phayre made an expedition to punish Haka and Lakher, whom he called the Shendus; but he was not successful. In 1848 Captain Hodgkinson and Lieutenant Sandes went up the Kaladan and reached the vicinity of Sherkhua and Tuipang but had to return to Paletwa because the “Shendus” attacked them. The British attempts to protect their subjects were not successful until 1890.

British Campaigns in East Zoram

In 1886 the British annexed upper Burma and captured Thibaw, the King of Burma. He was transported for life to the Andamans, and his possessions were transferred to the British. The British then advanced to the Burmese western borders to occupy the Kale and Yaw valleys. (Kabaw fell into British hands in 1826). In 1887, after a short period in the Kale area, British administrative officer Captain Raikes sent out messengers to the chiefs of Sukte, Kamhau, Sizang, Falam and Haka, asking them to come down to the plains and meet him.

The Sizang chiefs refused to go down by themselves but sent four warriors Tunsuang, Hausuang, Doson and Tensang; A meeting was held on March 26, 1887 at the Kale Phongyikyung (monastery school).

The topics of the meeting were:

1. The British government recognized Maung Pa Gyi as Governor (Sawbwa) of Kale State. The Sizang should in the future make no more raids within the Sawbwa's territory and no more slaves should be taken. The sizang could keep slaves already taken from the Kale area.
2. The British intended to open a trade route to Chittagong from Kale. Would the Sizang oppose it? Moreover, transport coolies (carriers) and guides would be needed, which the Sizang should supply.
3. The British intended to visit the Letha range (Thangmual). Would the Sizang oppose them?

Tunsuang, as the speaker of the delegation, replied that they were willing to have friendly relations with the Sawbwa and had not attacked him since he was installed as Sawbwa. The route to Chittagong would have to pass through the Pawi country, and this had to be discussed with the Pawi. Tunsuang said that he opposed strongly any exploration by the British in the Sizang area. Should the British visit Thangmual, they should inform the Sizang prior to the visit; otherwise, as the people had never seen a white man before, the British visit could have a disastrous effect. Their women and children would panic at the sight of a strange white man.

Captain Raikes then presented the delegation 5 gongs, which, measured 8 tongs (from finger tip to elbow) in circumference, five blankets, five pots (earthen ware) and 120 hangkes or Burmese longyis. The presents were taken to the hills and divided among the Sizang chiefs. Chief Sonpek came down to Sihaung but refused to go to Indin, the residence of Captain Raikes, so Captain Raikes went to Sihaung to interview Sonpek. The main topics were:

1. Recognition of the Kale Sawbwa by the British government. Sonpek replied that he had no reason to disagree with the British, as Burma now belonged to the British and they could do whatever they liked in Burma.
2. Raids committed by the Sizang in Kale territory: To this Sonpek told Captain Raikes that Tlasun had conqu-

ered the Sizang in their last war, but this did not mean that they were in control of the Sizang. The Sizang were still independent and he had no authority over them. He could not order the Sizang to stop their war activities, nor could he restrain them.

However, should the Sizang recommence their attacks on the Kale area he would willingly give his assistant to the Kale Sawbwa as he had done before.

3. Captain Raikes was anxious to know all the particulars of the existing trade routes between Bengal and the Tlasun or Pawi area. He said that he wanted to travel on the existing route by himself. "Sonpek said that he was not prepared to answer any questions about the route; that such a route existed he had no doubt, but he knew nothing personally about it, and he considered it inadvisable that any advance should be made through the Tlasun Hills at present. He wished for a time to consider the matter and he wished to consult the other Tlasun chiefs who were not at the durbar. He did not intend actually to object to the British Government sending a party through his country but it was impossible for him to guarantee the safety of that party; his territory was extensive, the people wild, and he had no means of ensuring safety to life and property. If he gave any promise to the effect that a party sent by the British Government through his country would not be molested, he would be accused of treachery if afterwards the party met with any opposition. He therefore declined to say anything except that* so far as he was personally concerned, he had no objection to a party passing through his country, provided that he was relieved from responsibility in case the party met with opposition. He protested, however, against any advance being made immediately, or until he had time to consult with the other chiefs and thoroughly to prepare his people for the visit".

"Sonpek also said that he was not in a position to give any particulars as to country to the west of the Tlasun tract. He did not know whether the Tlasun tract adjoined Chittagong, or whether there were other tracts and; tribes between Tlasun and Chittagong, and he begged

that no more questions should be asked as he was not accustomed to long interviews.”¹³

In both cases the meetings were ended with the British soldiers demonstrating their fire power by firing a gun at a distant object.

Zokhua and Haka chiefs not only refused to meet Captain Raikes but also killed two messengers sent by him. The third messenger Shwehlaing, who was the son of the Zokhua chief and his lesser Burmese wife, returned alone.

Sizang's Reaction

On the return of the delegation the Sizang chiefs held a conference in which the delegation reported their impressions. “These enemies (British) are different from other people we have ever seen. They are as white as goats. They- cloth themselves from head to foot. They cover their feet with leather and we believe that they will not be able to climb the slopes of the Zo hills.” When the Sizang chief council discussed the terms of the British, they concluded that the British intention was to rule and dominate the Zo people, and that they were going to make the Zo people their slaves. Therefore the chiefs decided to oppose the British and to attack them wherever they were.

A few days later information was received that the British were building roads from Kale towards the Sizang country. The Sizang then sent a delegation to the British to demand their immediate withdrawal and to stop the road construction. When the British ignored their demand and proceeded with their road construction, the Sizang attacked them with all available arms, including knives, spears, bows and arrows and guns. All males of the Sizang valley marched down towards Kale for the fight.

Haumang (Khuasak), Sonawn (Buanman), Kimlam and Sonlam (Thangnuai) were killed in the skirmish at Tulsuk, but the British were driven back to Kale. Seventeen Burmese employed by the British were captured and taken prisoner. Because of the Gurkha soldiers who stood bravely at their fighting positions the body of Sonlam could not be recovered. (In Sizang Gurkhas are called lubeam. Lubeam means rounded head.) The Sizang then returned carrying their dead.

The British returned to road construction and reached Thuangthi

(a plain-hill boundary now called mile 9). The Sizang attacked and captured four guns and four mares and lost one man. The British then retreated for the second time to Kale (Kambale). The Sizang, thinking that they had won the war for good, returned home and celebrated their victory with a great feast.

Groups of Sizang then went down to the plains and attacked the Shan-Burmese inhabitants during the rainy season of 1887. One of these raids led by Khaikam, son of Khuppau, then the chief of Khuasak, killed one person, took four captives and burned Kale to the ground.

Thlasun Chief

Sonpek's Reaction

Sonpek became suspicious of British intentions after meeting Captain Raikes, and he was encouraged to fight against them by Shwe Gyo Byu, a pseudo prince to whom Sonpek had given asylum. Shwe Gyo had organized a rebellion against the British in 1887 in the districts of Mingyan, Chindwin and Pagan. The British, after putting down the rebellion, had made Shwe Gyo Byu's nephew the Sawbwa and had banished Shwe Gyo Byu to Mandalay. However, accompanied by the deposed Sawbwa of Kale, he had fled first to Yaw country with a few of his followers and then to the Zo country. On the 4th and 5th of May 1887 the Thlasuns carried off the Sawbwa of Kale and freed him only when he promised to join his uncle in rebelling against the British.

Zokhua and Kamhau Reactions

Zokhua raided the Yaw country and killed eight persons and carried away twenty-eight. The Kamhau went down to Khampat and burnt it to the ground.

British Invasion of East Zoram

The British now planned to attack the Sizang. Carey and Tuck, who were political officers, wrote; "It was determined to deal first of all only with the Siyins and to inflict on them such a crushing blow as not only to cripple them for the future, but also to terrify the Tashons into giving up the rebel Shwe Gyo Byu, his followers and the Shan captives."¹³

The Sizang, who had gone home for normal life, were once again informed that the white men, mikaangte, had advanced with a larger force and that they were building a stockade at Phatzang, about ten miles from the plains. On hearing the news of the British advance the Sizang council sent Khaikam of Khuasak to Tedim to meet Khawcin, the chief of Kamha'u. Khawcin immediately rounded up 400 warriors and marched to Khuasak to stop the British from further advance into the Zo country.

At Khuasak the warriors were feted by slaughtering a mithun. The next day a force consisting of 1,200 Sizang, 400 Kamhau and 30 Sukte from Mualbem marched to Phatzang. At Phatzang the British held their positions for some hours but were beaten and retreated towards the plains. Khuplian, the young chief of Lophei, wrestled a rifle from a British soldier in a hand to hand fight. This was the first semi-automatic gun to reach the hands of the Zo people. General White, commanding officer of all British forces in Burma, was directing the British troops at Phatzang. Comparing the fight with the Boer wars and Indian up-rising in which he fought, he described the Phatzang or "Leisan encounter as "the most difficult enemy to see or hit I ever fought." (Fort White was named after him.)

After driving out the enemy the Kamhau had to return home, as they had rations to last only three days. But the British came back with a larger force and attacked the Leisan stockade of the Zo forces. Since the Kamhau had already left for home, as had some of the Sizang, the Leisan stockade was guarded by a few remaining Sizang and the Mualbem group. During their encounter three Mualbem were killed. A Gurkha soldier in the fight shot at the Mualbem. Thinking that the soldier would have to refill his gun with another bullet, the Zo rushed to capture him. But the Gurkha shot a few more times, killing a man for every shot. The Mualbem then decided to return home as they had to carry their dead to their village.

From Leisan the Zo forces withdrew to Hanthang and built a stockade. The Lubeam (Gurkhas) once again drove them out of their stockade, and after suffering one Sizang casualty the Zo forces retreated to Thingten (near Nilum peak). At Thingten some Thuklai left for home after shooting a barking deer, as such an occasion was a traditional reason to celebrate.

Another attempt was made to stop the white man at Hanthanglu

Or Fort White. The Sizang made an avalanche of rocks to trap the British forces, and although they managed to slow down the advance they could not stop it. The attempt failed because of the depleted forces of the Sizang

The British reached Hanthanglu, and Carey and Tuck summed up their advances to Khuasak; "No. 4 stockade was established on 31st January (1888) and No. 5 three days later. Accompanied by Sir George White and Major Raikes, General Faunce advanced on Koset (Siyin) on 4th February with a strong force. Descending from the high range on to the village, he gave the Chins but small chance of resistance, and they did no more than fire a **few** . and then busied themselves with carrying off their household goods. The enemy then set fire to their own village, which, with the exception of six houses, was reduced to ashes before the arrival of troops."

The people of Khuasak abandoned their village and took refuge in the forest. At the same time over 2,000 warriors of the Sizang, Kamhau, Sukte and Khuano were assembling at Buanman. The mikaangte, who then occupied Khuasak, saw the assembly and they aimed and fired their gun at Buanman. The volley exploded inside Buanman, and the Sukte and Kamhau were so impressed by the fire power of the British that they decided to return home, saying; "This enemy is more powerful than any other enemies we have encountered." The British then took Buanman and Thuklai easily.

"After the halt of a few days to bring up food and bedding, the troops attacked and captured without difficulty the two large villages of Bwaman and Toklaing."¹³ On March 6, 1888, all Sizang villages fell to the British. But the Sizang people did not surrender themselves nor their slaves as the British demanded. Instead they took to the jungle, and the fight went on.

The British built their post in Thuklai, from where they advanced to Vangte and Saizang. Saizang was defended strongly by the villagers, but the arms of Gurkhas and Punjabis were too much for the Zo, and Saizang was burned. Then the British proceeded to Tedim, where four sepoys (Indian soldiers) were wounded by the Kamhau. "They fought well in defence of their capital."¹³ Twenty five Kamhau were killed and many were wounded.

While the British were attacking Saizang and Tedim the Buanman

Rebuild their village in Taitan (Siallum), with the intention of defending it. For their defense the Buanman built a stockade. On seeing the newly built village the British sent a column consisting of 125 rifles to destroy it. The Buanman positioned themselves in the stockade and on May 4, 1888 the battle of Taitan was fought. Carey and Tuck described; "The upper stockade consisted of a log hut, the sides and roof of which were bullet proof. It was connected with a ravine to the east by a trench about 3 feet wide, 5 feet deep, and 20 yards long. The trench was covered with logs and planks flush with the ground. The hut itself was surrounded at distance of 5 or 6 yards with rows of sharp-pointed stakes -about 3 feet high. The second stockade was in the bed of the ravine. It consisted of a hole about 6 or 9 feet square, from which a trench ran down the ravine. Both trench hole were covered with logs and planks and were bullet proof. In both stockades there were a few spaces between the logs through which the Chins fired, and the only way in which they could be carried was by pulling away some of the timber."

"At the lower stockade, early in the action, Second-Lieutenant Michel fell mortally wounded. The troop at first endeavoured to turn out the defenders of the upper stockade by firing through the openings between the logs. Before long the covered trench was noticed and pulled open and the Chins in it were shot. After accomplishing this under fire from the Chins in the lower stockade and in the neighboring jungle, the column retired burning the village as it went." The British lost three killed and eight wounded, and Surgeon LeQuesne was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery during the battle.

During the preparations of defense at Taitan, the Buanman requested the help of other Sizang clans. The Limkhai refused their assistance saying; "We are no match for the fighting power of the enemy." The people of Khuasak and Thuklai were in their hiding places, so contact with them was not possible.

During the encounter, the noise of the gun shots could be heard at Limkhai. Three brothers from Limkhai—Khatkam, Kamsuak and Sonthuam—could not endure the plight of their Buanman brothers, and they marched to the rear of the British and attacked. The British retired immediately, believing that large Sizang forces were attacking. Although the Buanman lost 24 men they did not surrender, and they continued their fight afterwards.

While the Sizang, Kamhau and Sukte were engaged in attacking the British at Kale area, the Pawi "in great force on the 10th December 1887 made a simultaneous attack on the camp at the village of Sihaung and also on the villages of Kyawyaw and Kundu close by." The British however repulsed the attack of the Pawi. This was the first time the Burmese had seen the Zo people lose a battle, and they cheered the British.

Zokhua and Haka showed their disapproval of the British presence by raiding the Yaw country. The Sho people likewise attacked villages under British occupation.

British Final Invasion of Zoram (Chin—Lushai Expedition)

After 16 years of relatively peaceful conditions in western Zoram, the British, contrary to their promise of not interfering in internal affairs, sent out survey parties to map the country. In addition, the presence of the British in the areas around the Zo country presented a barrier that restricted Zo in search of better cultivable land. The old Vannuailianna, Suakpuilala, Rothangpuia and Vansangsa, who had earlier submitted to the British, had died or were no longer powerful. The younger generation of chiefs were angry at the British for restricting them, and they dreamed of the old prosperous days. The only way to get rid of these feelings was to overthrow the British.

Although the villages of Sizang, Kamhau, Sukte and Khuano had been burned, no one in eastern Zoram had submitted to the British. Khaikam of Khuasak moved his headquarters to Suangpi, from where he organized his resistance movement against the British. The Sizang, Tedim and Khuano people ambushed the British whenever possible. They stole cattle from British camps, destroyed vegetable gardens and cut telegraph cables. The cables, when cut into pieces of about a quarter of an inch made ideal buckshot for flintlock guns.

The Sizang lived for two years in the jungles, changing their hiding places whenever the British forces detected their whereabouts. The Kamhau moved their administrative center from Tedim to Tonzang, a day's march farther away from the British outpost at Thuklai.

In February 1888 Lt. Stewart and a party of ten were on their

way to survey an area of Thlanthlang. Hausat, Vantuai and Dokhuai, three brothers of the Thlanthlang clan, ambushed Lt. Stewart and his party, killing eight and taking their heads. A large party of North Lusei led by chiefs Nikhama, Khairuma and Lunglana attacked a village near Demagiri (under British administration), carrying off 15 persons and killing the chieftainess Pakumi Rani (Chakma) along with 20 of her people. In early 1889 chief Lianphunga of Sailo attacked 23 villages, killing 100 people and carrying away 91 as captives.

The British thus realized that the Zo people were not afraid of them, and it was necessary for them to send a strong force to subdue some or all of the more powerful Zo tribes. Their headquarter at Simla decided upon two parties, the Lushai Field Forces and the Chin Field Forces. The Lushai Field Forces was divided into two columns, the Southern and the Northern Lushai columns. Likewise, the Chin Field forces consisted of the Northern and the Southern Chin Columns.

The two forces were to start from Chittagong and Kan (Yaw valley) and were supposed to meet at Haka after subduing all the clans on their way. The expedition was called the Chin-Lushei Expedition (1888—1889). One of their objectives was to capture Hausat, Lianphunga, Nikhama, Kairuma and Lunglana. They also wanted to capture the pseudo prince Shwe Gyo Byu.

The Southern Chin Column

The Southern Chin Column was under Brigadier General W.P. Symons and consisted of 1,869 rifles (men). They were assembled at Pakokku in Burma and marched to Kan in the Myittha valley. From Kan they advanced to Taungtek and Rawvan (Chinme) and then to Zokhua. Lai villages such as Zokhua, Khuapi, Sakta, Shurkhua and others ambushed the party and caused some casualties.

In February 1889 Lianson, the 70 year old chief of Zokhua, submitted to the British. Peace was sworn between the parties and slaves produced. But the slaves who had been captured from Burma had married or had regular boyfriends and did not wish to return to Burma.

On February 11, 1889 the Zokhua chief and the British general

took an oath of friendship. A. S. Reid (1893) wrote; "The Chins brought a half grown pig and a fine cock. The former was securely tied and laid on its side. The principal headman then stood with a cup of liquor (zu), which he slowly poured over the pig, and swore an oath that they would all be good friends with the English, that they would not injure the road or telegraph wire and etc.; should they fail in any way, they might die as this pig and cock were going to die. After this one of the Chin interpreters, acting on behalf of the General and Mr. Ross, stood over the pig and going through the same form said if the Chins kept their oath, they would not be killed or imprisoned and would be treated in a friendly way. The pig and cock were then killed, the former by being stabbed in the heart with a dagger and the latter by having its head cut off."

A similar ceremony was held the same month in Haka after the Haka submitted without a fight. The British then marched to Thlantlang, and Zahuat, the chief of Thlantlang, submitted to General Symons. The Lushai Column (Captain Shakespeare and Captain Rundell) also reached Haka, thus for the first time joining East and West Zoram under one administration. From Haka the Chin Southern Column marched toward Tlasun. At the village of Kharon head chiefs Manglon and i Sonpek met the General and tried to persuade him not to advance to Tlasun. The British general did not obey.

On reaching Tlasun the British demanded a fine of Rs. 10,000 and an annual subsidy of two elephant tusk and ten silk sheets or their equivalent, namely Rs. 500. (Rs. = Rupees, an Indian money introduced by the British. A days hard labor was worth one eighth of a Rupee during the British occupation). The Tlasun flatly refused to pay the fine, saying that they had no money or elephant tusks.

The British decided to wait for the arrival of the Chin Northern Column rather than to immediately attack the Tlasun. This was because some three thousand Kamhau, Sukte, Sizang, Zahau, Hualngo, and other clan warriors had assembled near by and were awaiting the word of the Tlasun on whether to fight or to give in. The Chin Northern Column, which consisted of 1,622 men, started from Fort White. Colonel Skene commanded this column and their objective* was to subdue Zo people between Fort White and Tlasun. For the time being they abandoned their

attempt to subdue the Sizang, who resisted under the leadership of chief Khaikam.

The British had burned Suangpi, but instead of surrendering himself Khaikam simply moved his headquarters from Suangpi to Pimpi. But on January 17, 1890 Manglun, the chief of Sakhaling, surrendered to the British and informed them that, if the Tlasun surrendered, the Sizang would follow suit. Therefore it was very important for the British to subdue Tlasun. Thus the Northern Column marched to Parte and waited for the southern Column.

Before making any further movements General Symons contacted the Northern Column. In the meantime the Zo warriors were busy preparing to attack the British. They built stockades around Tlasun and were waiting for the word from the chiefs to strike. The Northern Column then marched from Parte to Tlasun, and the British renewed their demand for the payment of fines. Tlasun chiefs Sonpek, Manglon, Khalian, Bawimung and Vungceo decided to submit to the British. They produced 16 goats, 70 mithun, Rs. 200 and an elephant tusk. These were much lower in value than the British had demanded, but they flatly refused to pay more, saying that they had no more. They also refused to give up the Shwe Gyo Byu prince as they had sworn an oath of friendship with him. Shwe Gyo Byu gave himself up two years later and was hanged.

The Lushai Field Forces

This force under General W. Tregear consisted of 3,380 men. The Northern or Cachar Column was under Colonel Skinner and consisted of 700 fighting men. Its objective was to punish Lianphunga and the sons of Vutaia and to establish a permanent post in the vicinity of Lianphunga's village.

The object of the Southern Column was :

1. Construction of a mule road to Haka, thus connecting Burma to India,
2. Establishment of posts along the route so as to secure complete pacification and recognition of British power, and;
3. Subjugation of Zo clans which were still neutral to British rule.

The Southern Column advanced by water to Demagiri and thence by land to Lungleh, where the British had established a post. The coolies alone consisted of 2,511 Punjabis, 782 Lusei, 2,196 mules and 71 elephants. The column marched from one village to another, building roads on the way. On December 26, 1889 Dokhuaia and Vantuia, the brothers of Hausat, surrendered to the British.

The British then selected villages which were said to have taken part in the killing of Lt. Stewart and his party. Lalthuama, who in his 21 years had given so much trouble to the British, surrendered when his village was surrounded. Chiefs Vantura, Paona, Lalwe and Zahuat submitted to the British after initial defensive measures.

Lushai Northern Column

The Northern Column started on December 28, 1889 from Lungleh. Lianphunga submitted to Mr. Daly, the political officer, when the column reached his village. Lianphunga however evaded surrender and escaped when he was sent to Colonel Skinner for his submission. Colonel Skinner then sent Captain Brown and seven sepoys to Shillong for consultation about Lianphunga.

In the meantime Lianphunga attacked the British outpost of Changsil, to which the British then sent reinforcements. As the Lusei were losing the fight Lianphunga, Khalkhama and Thanglula gave in. Lianphunga was deported to the Andaman islands for life.

The Chin-Lushai Expedition ended with the establishment of a road connecting Chittagong and Kale. Aizawl was selected as the North Lushai outpost, and the other outposts established were at Vanlaiphai (Fort Tregear), Paletwa, Fort White, Haka, Falam, Zokhua and Lungleh.

At the end of the Chin-Lushai Expedition most of the chiefs in the Falam, Haka and Lusei areas had submitted to the British. Sizang, Sukte and Kamhau were still opposing the British by force, and Surkhua and Sakta refused to give up their slaves, thereby refusing to submit to British rule. The Matu, the Sho, the Lakher and part of the Khami area were left untouched by the British.

The Sizang, witnessing the surrender of the Tlasun, decided to

lay down their arms and give up their slaves. On the first of September 1890 Khuppau and Khaikam of Khuasak surrendered their slaves. On that day, in a ceremony held in Thuklai, Sizang chiefs Manglun (Limkhai), Kamlam (Thuklai), Khuppau (Khuasak), Dolian (Buanman) and Khuplian (Lophei) made an oath of friendship with political officer R. S. Carey. A mithun was slaughtered for the ceremony, and its tail was dipped in the blood. Pu Kamlam took the tail of the mithun and stroked the legs of Mr. Carey, and said; "Let us forget our wars in the past; should you break our peace agreement, may you fall like the hairs of mithun and pigs, and should the Sizang break this peace agreement, may the Sizang fall like the hairs of mithun and pigs." After the ceremony, Mr. Carey announce British recognition of the existing Sizang chiefs.

The submission of the Sizang was followed by that of the Sukte. The villages of Dimlo, Dimpi, Mualbem, Phaileng, Phunom, Khawlai and others took the oath of allegiance at the beginning of the year 1891.

The Kamhau at Tonzang however refused to submit to the British. Khawcin, the chief, died at the end of the 1890 and was succeeded by Haucinkhup, who was only 18 years old. Haucinkhup refused to surrender his slaves even though the British sent Captain Rundell and 650 men to attack him. During the encounter 12 men of the Kamhau side were killed. The chiefs Haucinkhup, Thangkhuapau and Ginzatuang surrendered themselves after fighting for the whole night. They then produced their slaves.

Surkhua and Sakta refused to produce their slaves or to submit to the British, although the demand was made repeatedly. Instead of bowing to the demand, they ambushed the troops, killing one British officer. Then the British annexed Sakta, which fell in February 1891.

In March 1891 the Thlanthlang chief Lalwe, 21 years old, and chief Khuaicuai attacked the troops that were sent to collect fines and slaves at Lawvar stream.

Carey and Tuck¹³ gave the details; "On the 19th March Lieutenant Macnabb, with a column of 100 men, 39th Garhwal Rifles, with two guns, under the command of Lieutenant Mocatta, started for Tyao. The object of the expedition was entirely peaceful, firstly to meet and confer with the Thlantlang Chiefs and explain to

them that the Government insisted on their abstaining from all raiding, and secondly, to meet messengers bearing information and letters from the Superintendent, South Lushai Hills. On arrival at Thlantlang, however, the Chiefs of the tribe were so drunk that it was impossible to interview them, and leaving some Hakas to watch the village the column pushed towards Tyao, where information was received that the Thlantlang chiefs were out of hand, that they had attempted to raise a force to oppose our advance from Haka, and that a party of armed Chins had been seen near Lawvar stream. Some of the Haka Chiefs with Lieutenant MacNabb elected to stay at Tyao, promising to join the column next day, and on the 2nd the return to Haka was begun".

In the meantime the Thlantlangs organized to attack the Lushai column, but the British received the news of the impending attack. Thlantlang was lost in March 1891. Another group of Thlantlangs, led by chiefs Lallwe and Khuaicuai, attacked Lieutenant Mocatta's column as they halted for breakfast at Lawvar stream. Lieutenant MacNabb wrote; "I had not been there two minutes and we were just discussing what the total desertion of Hyrankan might portend, when the question was settled by the Chins who opened fire on us from all sides. The Military officers ran to their posts, whilst I, thinking the attack was a mere surprise which would speedily be repulsed, took cover to finish my breakfast, until I was undeceived by seeing wounded sepoys staggering to the water, and finding the enemy's fire maintained. I then went forward to see if I could be of any assistance and joined the advance guard, where I found Lieutenant Forbes and Jemadar Amara Singh Negi had both been wounded. One mountain gun under command of Sergeant Moore came up to reinforce the advance guard, and the men being rallied, the enemy were driven back for about half a mile by good, steady skirmishing, two Chins being killed to my own knowledge. Taking up a strong position on a commanding knoll, the advance guard was halted to enable the main body and rear-guard to close up I then went back to the main body I found that two men were dead and Lieutenant Forbes and some 13 other wounded men had to be carried. Lieutenant Mocatta collecting his dead and wounded men, pushed on, keeping his column well together Pushing on under continued fire we came to the Bupi stream, which is commanded on both sides by precipitous hills descending into

the nullah in walls of rocks, the stream flowing in the gully thus formed. This position was stubbornly held by the enemy, hidden behind trees, rocks, and a hastily run up stockade on the left, others firing from behind huge trunks of fallen fir trees still smouldering from a recent fire. In vain our sepoys attempted to skirmish up these heights. They were so precipitous to be scaled, so, while the mountain guns opened fire on the position on the left, the men crossing the stream, and running through the gully under heavy fire, carried the hill to the right, where, being speedily joined by Sergeant Moore and his section, the latter quickly got his gun into action and silenced the fire from the opposite hill. We here halted until every one was up and took stock of our position. We were ten miles odd from Haka; we expect opposition for at least 30 miles; he had 13 wounded men (some mortally) to carry, and two dead; we had exhausted over one third of our ammunition; we had only two days' ration left."

The Lais followed the British and shot at them from the rear, and they built road blocks everywhere possible. The British troop were followed to Lawvar and then to Thlantlang, and five sepoys were killed and 15 wounded, including two officers¹³.

Up to March 1891 the Shurkhua had not submitted to the British demands to turn in their slaves. More carriers were also demanded of the villages, but Munkhong, the chief of Shurkhua, remained stubborn and refused to supply the British. Therefore 80 British rifles marched to Shurkhua on March 29, 1891. Mr. Tuck, who headed the march, wrote; "No opposition was offered to our entering the village, but on arrival at Munkon's house I found that he had fled on our approach. I sent for him but he refused to come. On his refusal, I had his house occupied by the troops. Shortly after, we were surrounded by a shouting and rapidly increasing mob of probably 150 Chins armed with sticks and spears. I did not take very much notice of this, but asked Lieutenant Passingham to get his men ready in case of emergency. The men were ordered to fix swords and were extended round the house, most of them outside the compound, forcing back the crowd. The Chins resisted a little and tried to hit some of the sepoys with sticks but nothing serious occurred and the crowd quieted down. I again sent messengers to Munkon, but he refused to come and refused to supply coolies as ordered. When this message was brought, the greater portion of the crowd, which

had increased considerably, ran to the houses and got guns, taking up positions all around us, some under cover, and some on the open ground in front of the house."

"The women and children left the houses near us. I at once told the mob that the men with the guns must retire or I would have them fired on; they did not obey, but more Chins ran and got their guns. The position of the troop was rapidly becoming critical as the number of the Chins with guns increased ,"

The British and the Shurkhua then exchanged fire, but the sepoys using rifles got the upper hand. The British then burned a quarter of the village. In the skirmish 35 Shurkhua men were killed and some 20 wounded before they retreated to the jungles. Munkhong some days later surrendered to the British, after which he was deported to Pakokku—from where his villages ransomed him with 55 guns.

After Shurkhua surrendered their villages supplied coolies, and twenty-five Burmese captives were released and returned to Burma. Some slaves however refused to return and remained in Surkhua.

Thus one by one the Zo groups fell to British pressure, although it took six years before the northern part of eastern Zoram came under British rule. The British left the southern part very much on its own.

Zo people, though inferior in arms and,man power, could not accept that they were beaten and that the British were there to stay. They made a final attempt to drive the British out by killing the township officer.

Myook Suam (Assassination of the Township Officer)

At the beginning of the year 1892 the impact of the British presence was felt everywhere. Coolies were demanded of the villages, and roads for British use had to be built. The British imposed increasingly heavy fines for any sign of opposition. What made the Zo people most determined to oppose the British was their demand for the freeing of slaves and the collection of guns as fines.

In the Hualngo—Lusei area, Nikhuai, a Zahau chief who ruled

over a mixture of Lusei, Zahau and Paihte clans, rebelled against the British. Also Labura Sailo, a Lusei chief, refused to supply coolies for officers who were then in Zo country to make maps and collect fines or slaves, and the Lusei chiefs Vansanga, Dokhuma, and Kairuma opposed admission of the British political officer Shakespear into their territories.

In the Gungal area, Kaptel village under chief Thuamthawng attacked the British outpost at Botung. Taking advantage of the attack, the British demanded the surrender of Thuamthawng, all slaves in the area, and a number of guns.

To make matters worse, Mesan, a Burmese slave of Thuariithawng, left his master and fled to Fort White and found sanctuary with the Township Officer Myook Tun Win, an Arakanese. But Mesan was not happy with Tun Win and returned to Kaptel, where on arrival Thuamthawng shot and killed him. The incident gave the British additional grounds to demand heavier fines from the Kaptel chief.

The Sizang, who had ceremonially taken the oath of friendship with the British were not happy with the treatment they received.

Their grievances had been :

1. Pu Kamsuak, who shot and killed Major H. F. Stevens before the oath of friendship was taken, arrested and put into jail.
2. Pu Onvum, who was looking after a British garden at Fort White, was accused of stealing the vegetables and killed.
3. Pu Vumson, who was plucking mango fruits in his field at Kalzang, was used by soldiers as a target for shooting competition, thereby injuring him so severely that he lost one leg.
4. Pu Onson, who was harvesting sweet potatoes in his field at Ciintam, was shot and killed without any reason.
5. The British demanded all guns and when delivered broke them and buried them with salt.
6. The British demanded that all slaves be given to them.
7. The British started collecting taxes.

Preparation for the Myook Suam

To avenge their grievances Ensuang, Kamngo and Sontuang

killed a Gurkha sepoy at Sapan. Another sepoy was killed at Aicik by Thanghau, and Takthuan killed five mules belonging to sepoys at Aicik.

Thuamthawng did not bow to British demands, but instead instigated other Zo people, especially the Sizang, to stand against the British. The Sizang chiefs welcomed Thuamthawng and Paudal with open arms when they visited and explained their intention to oppose the British. Vumlian, Kamngo, Mangphut and Hangkhup discussed the matter at Kamlam's house at Pumva, Kamlun contributing a pot of zu for the important occasion. The Sizang chiefs, except Manglun of Limkhai, held a conference at Vanleal's hut in Voklaik. They agreed unanimously to turn agabist the British and to drive them out of Zo country.

Khaikam of Khuasak was sent to Thuamthawng to discuss further details of the planned attack on the enemy, and Khaikam, Thuamthawng, Paudal (son of Thuamthawng) and Khanhau (chief of Heilei) decided to send messengers to Lusei, Haka, Tlasun and Zahau chiefs. The messengers brought back news of the willingness of these people to cooperate with them, and it was decided to ambush and kill the political officer, Mr. Carey, who was to be invited to Pumva. It was further planned that direct confrontation with the enemy's forces was to be avoided, but that wherever possible the enemy should be ambushed, their telegraph lines cut, and their mules killed—which it was hoped would force the enemy to leave Zo country.

The Execution of the Plan

Thuamngo, a Sizang, served as a policeman at Fort White. The Sizang sent him to the political officer with a message from Thuamthawng, which said that he was ready to surrender himself and that he brought with him an elephant tusk, a rhinoceras horn and 150 guns to be presented to the political officer.

But Mr. Carey was called to southern Zoram, and Myook Tun Win was designated to go to Pumva to receive Thuamthawng and the presents. When the news was received at Pumva the Zo leaders decided to go on with their plan. Tun Win was not an enemy as he was not white, but he served the British, and the Zo people were not ready to serve anyone—whether white, Burmese, Arakanese or from any foreign power.

The problem remaining to be solved was who should kill Aungzan the interpreter, who was the son of a Burmese slave and a Phunom woman. Because of the tradition of "an eye for an eye" the Phunom relatives of Aungzan would avenge his death. But the problem was easily solved as the Phunom themselves came forward and agreed to shoot Angzan.

On October 9, 1892 Tun Win marched from Fort White to Thuklai. He was accompanied by two interpreters, Aungzan and Aunggyi (who spent 15 years in the Sizang valley as a slave) and 30 rifles as a body guard. The Sizang welcome the party at Muitung, and to avoid arousing suspicion they were very friendly to all members of the party. Then, saying that they were going to make preparations for the ceremony at Pumva, they hurried to Suangbum and waited for the arrival of the Tun Win party.

Hangtuang fired the first shot, which was returned by the guards. Although the shooting was nearly point blank five soldiers escaped, and after the skirmish one man from Thangnuai was found killed. On receiving news of the attack from the escapees the British sent a large force to the Sizang area and, with the exception of Limkhai, burned all the Sizang villages. The British then demanded the return of all slaves and guns—but the people instead took to the jungle. At a conference held at Kaptel the Zo leaders pledged to disturb the British movements more than ever.

In retaliation the British sent Brigadier General Palmer with a force of 2,500 rifles. More Villages were burned, livestock taken away and fields destroyed. Due to the resulting lack of food it was difficult to keep women and children in the jungle, and they were back to the villages after half a year of hiding. The British finally took family members of resistance fighters as hostages. Thus it was no longer possible to rebel against the British, and in July 1893 Kamlian and Thuamngo (Thuklai), Dolian and Kamcin (Buanman), Khamhau (Heilei) and Lalnang (Muizawl) surrendered themselves. They were arrested and deported to Burma. Thuamthawng and Paudal gave themselves up during late 1893, after which they were also deported to Burma. Dothang (Sukte chief) and Manglun were accused of helping the rebels and arrested, and their guns and slaves were confiscated. In Haka and Falam the British demanded all guns be turned over to them.

By the end of 1893 the British managed to position small army

detachments in all key villages. Their main object was to capture or eliminate Khaikam and Khuppau and their some 127 followers. All paths and all villages were closed to them, and they had to switch their headquarters to the jungles near Yazagyo. In May 1894, after their family members were taken hostage and threatened with death unless the "rebels" surrendered, Khuppau, Khaikam, Vumlian and Suangson gave themselves up. This was the last group resisting British rule. Khaikam was deported for life to the Andaman Islands, and all the others were banished to Burma.

Disarmament

The British then completely disarmed the Zo people. 4,302 guns were collected in the Chin Hills alone. The following table illustrates how many guns were collected from each tribe.

Tribe	Guns
Tlasun	255
Zahau	40
Hualngo	76
Haka	605
Thlantlang	490
Surkhua	140
South Haka	940
Sizang	433
Sukte	340
Gungal	553
Kamhau	307
Thado	123

In total the British collected over ten thousand guns from Zo country.

Thus the British consolidated their rule over most of the Zo. The British did -not however attempt to change the life style or the living standards of the people, and the country remained peaceful for over a decade until the Thauo-Haka rebellion.

Thado-Haka Resistance Movement 1917-1919

World War I (the Great War) broke out in 1914 with Germany, Austria, Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria fighting against England, France, Russia, America and other nations. Britain mobilized all her human resources to add strength to her fighting troops, and she recruited soldiers and noncombatants from all her colonies.

In 1916 about a million soldiers and half a million noncombatants from British India and Burma were sent to Mesopotamia, Iran, France and Turkey.

About four thousand Zo young men went to Europe. Their journey from Chittagong, Akyab and Rangoon took them to France, where they evacuated the wounded and loaded and unloaded military supplies going to the front. Each of them, except for those who died on the ship or in Europe, brought enough money home to pay for any bride they chose to marry.

The experiences of those who went to Europe were not easily forgotten and in some cases changed beliefs. They were impressed by the war machinery of the Europeans, as the planes, ships and guns were immense developments for the boys from Zo country. They also had endless tales of their adventures and experiences with the French women of the night. Before the Zo young men left for Europe they had been certain that the sun rose out of mountain ranges, but when they returned they were convinced the sun rose from the ocean.

The British demanded a fixed number of young able-bodied men from every clan and village for the French labour camps, and various Naga, Lusei and others joined the force in 1916 2,100 young men from Lushai Hills District went to France voluntarily. But in 1917 more men were demanded, one thousand men from each of the administrative subdivisions of Falam, Haka and Tedim. The Zo people, who had never left their country, feared that their youths would never come back, as was the case with some who had gone earlier. Moreover, the people still resented the collection of arms and slaves by the British.

The resulting uprising was started sometime in September 1917 by Vankio, the chief of Zokhua, who declined to send men as demanded, and who was met with threats by the administration. The rebellion was joined by the Sante chiefs of Haka and chief Lallwe of Thlantlang and quickly spread to surrounding areas. In early December 1917 Haka was besieged for a fortnight, Falam was threatened, and the road between Falam and Haka was blocked. From the main areas of uprising in Zokhua, Khuapi, Aitung, Shurkhua, Hnaring and Sakta the rebellion spread in the

latter part of 1918 to Zonghing in Mindat and to the southern Lushai Hills, covering the upper Bawmu to Wantu, Laitet and Ngaphai.

As Pemberton had ceded part of Zo country to Mampur the land occupied by the Thado fell within the semi-independent Mampur administrative area. The Mampuns, taking advantage of the simple good natured Highlanders, exploited the Thado not only in collecting taxes but also in trade. The Thado had recognized this exploitation and they had been suspicious of the Mampuns' moves. When in 1917 Mampur authorities demanded that a large "number of young men go to Europe, the Thado chiefs Ngulkhup of Mombi and Ngulbul of Longza decided to stand up against the Mampuns and the British. They refused to send any men

According to a Mampun, Tombi Singh⁷⁷, the Kuki (Thado) rebellion was instigated by other parties. He writes, "They clearly made it known that if the government used force to compel them to do what they had no intention of doing, they would also use force." It was also believed, though not actually proven, that Bengal seditionists in Sylhet and Cachar, quick to define where discontent could be fanned, sent emissaries amongst the southern Thado urging them to rebel and thus cause more trouble for the British Raj.

When the Thado chiefs flatly refused to supply what was demanded the British sent an army of 100 rifles to subdue Mombi and Longza. The Thado defended themselves, but they were beaten and their villages burned by the British, causing the villagers to go underground.

The uprising was supported by Thados in all areas. The Thado of Hinglep and Ukah attacked a police station near Shuganu and other British outposts. In no time the entire hill country surrounding Mampur valley, covering an area of 7,000 square miles, was in the resistance movement.

Prior to the uprising the British had been collecting guns from the people, and as a result the Thado had only a few guns and had to use spears and bows and arrows against rifles. Shakespear⁷⁴, wrote about the Thados' war instruments; "They also used a curious sort of leather cannon made from a buffalo's hide rolled into a compact tube and tightly bound with strips of leather. A vent is bored into the proper place, their own rough powder

poured in, and a quantity of slugs or stones is then inserted. The weapon is fastened to a tree so as to command into a turn in the tract up which the enemy is approaching, and is either fired by hand at the head of the party as it appears in sight, or is arranged to be fired by a strip of cord which our flankers may touch, and which drops a stone on to a percussion cap on the vent which fires the charge to hit our men coming up the path "

The Zo did not stand in any one position for a long period, due to their inferiority in arms. They fired into army detachments on the march and into army camps at night. They rushed into the plains, burned the villages, killed the villagers and drove the cattle back with them to the hills. It was not possible for the British to catch these raiders.

During the uprising Naga earners working for the British refused to cooperate, which caused delay in the advance of troops and in shortened supplies.

An encounter between Thado and the sepoy was described by Shakespear⁷⁴ "As it was known the direct road to Mombi up the Tuyang valley was strongly stockaded at three points, Coote decided to run these by moving straight up into the hills east of the Tuyang, and proceeding via Nampho Kuno, rebel village. The column began its climb in single file, the only way to advance, up a steep spur covered with small trees and scrub jungle, when after going for about an hour several shots rang out in front, to which the advance guard replied. Not a single Kuki was seen, but they had wounded three riflemen and had vanished. Later on, crossing the top of the ridge, the same thing occurred again but without effect, as it was dusk the Column camped in a small but friendly hamlet and was subjected to sniping during the night, in which one man was mortally wounded, dying next morning. The next march was along a ridge covered with the long grass of disused cultivation, at the far end of which Nampho Kuno was in sight, glasses showing the presence of many armed Kukis in it. At this point firing was suddenly opened on the column from both flanks accounting for 3 more wounded, viz 1 rifleman and 2 carriers. No enemy was seen in the long grass, which was thoroughly searched, while the mountain gun opened on the village at 900 yards. The first round plumped into the place, dispersing all in it, and it was then destroyed." Led by Thado chiefs Ngulbul, Pachei, Tinthawng and Enzakhup

the resistance movement lasted two years, from December 1917 to May 1919. At the beginning of 1918 the British with 2,400 men (rifles) attacked and punished Thado villages. Villages such as Surkhua, where the rebellion started, were burned down to the last house. The British supplied their operations from supply bases in key villages. The rebellious area was also subdivided into (1) Zampi area (2) Hinglep—Mangkung area, Southwest of Lungtak lake (3) Mombi area (4) Burma road area, and (5) North Somra and Tuzu river area.

The British operation was under the command of Brigadier General Macquoid, who was based in Mawlaik with General Sir H. Keary, the commander in chief of 3,000 men. 970 guns were submitted to the British at the Thados' submission, after the British burned 86 of 198 Thado villages.

To crush the uprising the British sent troops to Haka as well as to the Thado region, and in the Haka area 18 villages were burned, and 600 guns were delivered to the British as submission.

British Administration

Originally the British had no intention of colonizing Zo country. They needed teak, elephant tusks and most importantly taxes from their colonies. Zoland is barren and mountainous and the climate severe"; in any case commercially uninspiring for the British. Zoland "was not the land of flowing milk and honey, no glittering outcrops to raise thoughts of mineral wealth, no telling indications of reservoirs of endless oil" as McCall⁵², one of the administrators, put it. But the British annexed Zo country With the excuse of having to provide security for their enterprises in the plains and on the claim that the Zo people were savage, barbarous, backward and primitive. They had come to free the Zo country of slavery, but they instead oppressed the Indian subcontinent and created modern slavery

The British applied form of administration was simple and direct. Zo chieftainships were recognized, and the British did not interfere with the chiefs' powers and functions. Village organization and local authorities were left as they were. But because of the administration's support of the chiefs many misused their power and oppressed the people.

Zo country was divided into various districts by the administration.

South western Zoram (South Lushai Hills) was administered under Bengal from Chittagong; north western Zoram (North Lushai Hills) was under Assam with its capital at Shillong; and eastern Zoram was divided into 3 parts—(1) Paletwa was in the North Arakan Hills district, (2) Matupi, Mindat, and Kanpetlet were in the Pakokku district, and (3) Tedim, Falam and Haka were in the Chin Hills District. The Zo people at the border of the Naga Hills and Manipur were under the Naga and Manipur administrations respectively.

The Lushai Hills district was administered from Aizawl by a superintendent, and Lungleh was the headquarters of the Southern Lushai Hills District. The Superintendent reported to the Governor of Assam, whose headquarters were in Shillong. Only Falam, Tedim and Haka districts were recognized as the Chin-Hills district. Falam was the headquarters for this district. The Chin Hills District was under either a superintendent or a deputy commissioner at different times. The Commissioner resided in Sagamg, as the Chin Hills was a part of the Sagaing Division.

British rule had created peace among the Zo people, and therefore the people concentrated their energy on land cultivation, trade, and, in the later part of the rule, on Western education. The introduction of police, administration, army, schools and medical treatment brought new horizons to the life of the people.

The introduction of education by the Christian missionaries allowed a few men to become clerks, policemen and army officers, and these men were to be regarded as a newly created middle class. The Zo people very soon realized that life with education could be much better than Zo traditional life, and young people were encouraged to attend schools.

Many British administrators did not however wish to educate the people, resulting in the closure of schools in East Zoram or in allowing only selected students such as the children of chiefs to go to school. This did not happen in West Zoram where individual administrators had more understanding of development. Captain Browne (1887—1890) made himself recognized as the chief of all chiefs. G.H. Loch (1893) constructed mule roads and the Aizawl jail. J. Shakespear (1897-1898) united the North and South Lushai Hills Districts into one district. Cole (1899—1900) hung three Lusei men because they robbed Pawi travelers, and he

established boundaries for a chiefs territory. He also introduced potatoes and rubber and opened the first school at Aizawl in 1899. W. N. Kennedy (1911-1912) borrowed Rs. 800,000.00 from the British India government and helped the mautam famine victims. W. L. Scott (1919—1921) opened the Assam Rifles to the Zo people. He also defended the District from the attempt of the Maharajah of Tripura to seize a part of it. N.E. Parry (1924—1928) was very popular because he encouraged the preservation of Zo culture and customs. He protected the common men from the chiefs by limiting taxes paid by the commoners—such as having to construct chiefs' houses and having to provide chickens and eggs to feed visiting administrative officers. Bride price, which had no rules previously, was limited to a uniform basic price. Parry also freed the older people from forced labor as coolies, and he created the gun tax.

A. G. McCall (1931-1943) opened the first high school in Aizawl. He requested that the chiefs support the British in their fight against Japan, and a total of 3,550 young men joined the India-Burma-British Army. He also gave permission to form the Mizo Young Men's Christian Association, which was the foundation for Mizo politics in later years.

During Superintendent A. R. H. MacDonald's period, (1943—1947), many changes occurred in the world. The Second World War and India's Independence, which affected and determined the future of the Zo people, will be described in more detail in following chapters.

In West Zoram the Christian missionaries were very active in educating the people, and as a result a Lusei obtained a B.A. degree in 1924, whereas in East Zoram the first Zo was graduated in 1947. This belated development was the result of British administrators like Superintendent Naylor, who closed down the Middle School in Tedim and reduced the High School in Falam to a Middle School.

The Deputy Commissioner, political officer, or superintendent, as head of the administration had certain duties, the collection of revenue, maintenance of peace and order, and administration of justice. He was associated by Subdivisional Officers and Township officers. The Deputy Commissioner or the Subdivisional Officer settled civil and criminal disputes with the help of interpreters, who also gave information about Zo customs.

The British preserved most of the customary laws. Judicial and political as well as economic matters of the village were exercised by the village headman or chief. Village feuds, lawlessness and anarchism rarely existed. Important disputes about land, tribal quarrels, murder cases; etc., had to be settled by the deputy commissioner of the district. He sought in these cases the advice of the chiefs and village counselors. In matters of criminal and civil defense, the Indian Penal Code and the codes of Criminal and civil procedure were not applied to Zoram, contrary to the practice in Assam and Burma.

Before the British appeared communications were almost nonexistent in the Zo country. The people used trails, streams and mountain ridges as footpaths, but during the occupation the people were forced to build roads connecting their villages. The administrators toured the districts periodically, and the villagers treated them with obsequious respect. Because they were white they were called *mirang bawipa* or *mikang topa* or *mirang lalpa*, meaning White Master or Lord. Animals were slaughtered, pots of *zu* were presented and feasts were held to please the visiting white master. Eggs, chickens and other edible things were presented as gifts.

Whenever such a visit was planned a messenger was sent to inform the villages. Villagers then repaired or cleaned the roads so that the officers riding on mules were not disturbed by tree branches or too narrow roads.

The British kept bungalows at a good day's walking distance between their administrative centers. These bungalows were under constant care by a local man who looked after the gardens and kept the house clean. Administrators on tours used the facilities.

Some administrative officers took a personal interest in the life and customs of the people and acclimatized to the living conditions of the "wild tribes". These were administrators who had intimate knowledge of the Zo language, interests, customs, traditions, viewpoints and psychology.

As early as 1900 the British recruited Zo people into the military police, the Assam Rifles, the Burma Rifles and the Chin Hills Battalion. These people were used for the suppression of the Haka and Thado, malabar, and Saya San rebellions, and they

were the backbone of the British defense against the advance of the Japanese.

Technical advancement accompanied colonialism. Telegraph communication, postal services, the use of nails for building houses, the use of bricks, and most importantly, the use of Western medicine were introduced. The introduction of money altered the value of wealth from the forms of paddy, slave, mithun and teak planks. The introduction of Christianity and education affected the life of the Zo people in the highest degree.

Nationalist Movement During Colonialism

Traditionally politics was in the hands of the chiefs. Commoners, except for the Tlasun, did not discuss politics. During the British rule political organizations were not tolerated, and as the Schedule Act and the Chin Hills Regulation Act were applied there was no legal political activity.

The first politically conscious man among Zo people was Than Pet Mang, a Sho from Kanpetlet district. As a youth he attended a Buddhist monastery in the Yaw country and learned the Burmese language. When he grew up he joined the Burma Riiles. He rose rapidly in rank and in 1924 he was a subedar (an officer). As he hailed from Zo country he was trusted by his British officers, and being intelligent he was asked to spy on the movements of Burmese politicians who were instigating against British rule.

In 1924 he attended a meeting held by Burmese politicians, where he heard a speech given by a Buddhist monk named Utama. The speech was on British colonialism and it reflected his national feeling. Thereafter, instead of reporting to his British superiors, he made contact with Burmese politicians and eventually resigned from the army. He went back to his native village of Vuamthu and, calling himself Vuamthumaung, the son of Vuamthu, he helped found the "Chin National Union". In 1933 the Chin National Union prepared a memorandum demanding self rule for Zoram and sent it to the British government in Rangoon. They also demanded independence as soon as Burma should get independence. No reply was received from the British government.

In 1939 the executive members of the party were arrested. They were Vuamthumaung, Wazelaw, Kipiling, Onning, Aungling,

Ontam, Vumthugai, Kimang and Linggi. They were thrown first in Gangaw jail and then in Falam and Tedim jails. In Falam and Tedim the prisoners received such widespread sympathy, contrary to the British wish, that they were once again transferred to Katha in Kachinland, where they were kept in prison until the Japanese invasion.

Christian Missionaries

Soon after the British invasion Christian missionaries came to Zo country. The missionaries had worked in India and Burma, where they had had little success in converting the Indians and Burman who were Hindu, Muslim or Buddhist. They had more success with the hill people because they were ignorant of the teachings of major religions. In 1834 the American Baptist Mission recorded their first convert of an Asho in lower Burma. They soon went to the hilly regions bordering Burma, India and China, and they arrived in Zo country in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The first missionary was Rev. W. Williams of the Welsh Calvinistic Church. He came to south west Zoram in the latter part of the 1880s. In 1893 R. Arthington of the Arthington Aborigines Mission financed two missionaries to Aizawl, F. W. Savidge and J. H. Lorraine. In 1894 they went to south west Zoram. They did not see success in their first years, but they learned the Zo language and within two years they introduced the writing of the Zo language using Roman script. They also translated some portions of the Bible and prepared the first and only Lusei-English dictionary. Even today the sizable book is the only available dictionary of the Zo language. Lorraine and Savidge taught the people how to read and write, and afterward they opened mission schools. The Zo people were then able to read the Bible, and Christianity spread easily in later years. Only in their fourth year however did the two missionaries start to see signs of success.

In 1898 they were recalled to England because Arthington believed that the missionaries' job was to teach a few people to read, so that those individuals might teach and evangelize other individuals or tribes. In 1898 a Welsh Presbyterian Missionary, Rev. D. E. Jones, arrived in the northern part of West Zoram. He had easier work than Lorraine and Savidge, as by 1899 he had visited almost all important villages and had twenty converts.

The British administration completely ignored education for their subjects, so that educating the people was wholly in the hands of the missionaries. They used this to their advantage by teaching the Duhhan dialect in the schools, although the official language was Bengali. The schools included courses in evangelism, so that in a short time the missionaries had Christians trained as teachers, evangelists and pastors.

To yield even more success the missionaries introduced medicine and hygiene. These new methods could cure more sick people than the Zo traditional methods of sacrifice; and many families converted to Christianity to cure their sick ones. Christianity spread with increasing speed and in the 1940s there were villages in which all the people were Christians. There were even some villages founded where only Christians were allowed to dwell.

In the 1951 census of India 91% or 178,000 of 196,000 Mizo were Christians. 56,000 Mizo, or 29%, could read and write. One of the reasons for the success of the missionaries in the Lushai Hills was the church organization. The Baptist missionaries in the south Lushai Hills combined with the Welsh Mission in north Lushai Hills, and the church was organized in the same manner. Pastors were trained and selected in the same manner in the south and north Lushai Hills, and they were posted to lead a certain area. The pastors periodically visited all the villages in their jurisdiction and reported the conditions of the church organization. They also held a meeting of all the church leaders every year to discuss the problems of church organization.

Rev. Arthur Carson was in 1899 the first missionary to come to East Zoram as a member of the American Baptist Mission. Carson faced difficulties in converting the people. He had to use his economic and medical knowledge to win a few people, and he registered his first convert in 1904, after working for five years. A child (girl) was sick and instead of making offerings to the spirits Carson treated the sick child with medicine. When the child recovered from her sickness the parents became Christians. As the missionaries had in West Zoram Carson also taught the people how to write the Zo language in the Roman alphabet, and the New Testament was translated into different Zo dialects. Another missionary, Rev. Cope, came to East Zoram in 1908. The missionaries covered all of the then Chin Hills, but they were not as successful as their counterparts in West Zoram. In

1925, after twenty years in East Zoram, only 450 men and 376 women were registered as Christians. According to Stevenson⁷, "The cause of the difficulties of the missionaries were the prohibition of 'beer' drinking and feast-giving. The people simply ignored the Mission and only 3% became converts to Christianity over the course of several decades." In 1962, according to Reverend Robert Johnson³⁴, there were 38,000 Baptist Christians.

Another reason for the slow development of Christianity was the appearance of Paucinhauism, which offered a change from the old tradition but allowed drinking zu and feasting, which the people love so much. In the Tedim area where Paucinhauism first appeared most of the villages converted en masse. Stevenson⁸⁷ said that 27% of the Falam followed Paucmhau and in the Zanniat area the whole tribe converted.

Similarly Catholics, who came to East Zoram only after Burma's independence, gained rapidly in Tedim and Zanniat areas. The reason might be found in the Catholics' allowing followers to drink zu. The followers of the Catholics and the Baptists were about equal in size in the Saizang area during the 1970s. Today in West Zoram nearly the whole population is Christian. In East Zoram Christians are gaming ground, supported by the general economic hardship of the people. According to the Siyin Baptist Bulletin 62.5% of the people in East Zoram are Christians, 83 years after the introduction of Christianity. The teachings of the Missions awakened the Zo people to defects in their social life. They realized that religious rituals and sacrifices to the spirits were very much a waste. The appearance of Paucinhauism, which changed many of the traditions but which suited local conditions, was the result of the teachings of the Missions. A new form of Christianity, or rather a new method of worship which had little to do with the worship method of the missionaries appeared in a cult called Hlimsang. As the Christians discarded the old traditional songs and dances, these Hlmsangs simply sang Christian hymns but danced in the churches. Hlmsang gained popularity recently in all parts of the country.

Rev. Zairema explained the spread of revivalism as the work of the Holy Spirit. He wrote, "Men of that village decided to fish the following day. Public fishing was usually done with poisonous roots which have to be well beaten to be effective. As they were

at this laborious task something strange happened to one man. They thought he was sick and a few other boys were detailed to take him home. The few Christians there decided to have a prayer for him. Something happened to them during the prayer. They started crying, dancing, and singing and completely forgot about their fishing. On such public fishing all the catch are equally shared by all those who take part. But their non-Christian friends refused to give them their share of the small catch. When they come to their senses, their friends had left, and they also started looking for the left-over. The poison had been delayed and they caught more than they could carry and had to call back their friends for their share. This happened on 8.4.1906."

" the revival wave soon covered the whole country. The Mizos were by nature fond of singing and dancing. With the revival new songs were composed and sung to the tunes easy to learn. Singing and dancing were the most popular expression generally accompanied by ecstatic phenomena. There were only a few people who could read the gospel portions that had already been translated. Services were simple; someone might recite a portion of the gospel he had heard or read somewhere, and prayers were offered and the meeting given over to the singing of hymns. As they were filled with happiness services could even last a whole night. In one of the Christian gatherings at Khawbung village, the evening meeting started after sunset. The congregation enjoyed singing the first hymns so much that when they stopped to continue the evening's programme the sun had risen."⁴⁹

Lalthangliana (1975) analyzed the merits and demerits of embracing the Christian faith by the "Mizos" in Burma. On one hand, Christianity brought disunity because of the existence of differing sects. Christians stole each others membership by offering favours, and fist fights and court disputes resulted when members of one church defected to other sects but insisted on occupying the church building which they had built. "Mizos are found to be too much of a Christian. They read the Bible exclusively. Much of their time is spent either in Biblical discussions or attending Church, neglecting their family affairs. Accusations of immorality or corruption led to a religious riot in 1962 at Tahan near Kalembo.

One of the merits of Christianity is the peace that it has brought to people who were sworn tribal or family enemies. Now these

people sit side by side in the churches.

Thanks also to the missionaries there is much improvement in literacy. In West Zoram nearly 100% are Christians and the literacy rate is nearly 60%, which is the highest in all India. The Christian Church also provided scholarships to half of the "Mizo" university students in Burma, and almost every educated Zo professes Christianity as his religion. There is also more advancement in the areas of health and hygiene among the Christians than among traditionalists.

Being a Christian however means the ruination of all knowledge of authentic Zo folklore, folk songs and even Zo ways of eating and drinking. It is similar to cutting oneself off from Zo culture, as if such an action were excusable in a Zo. It is ridiculous for a Zo not to know anything about Zo culture, but this is exactly what is happening. The Church organization in Zo country has become too perfect

Zo Christians are no longer to take part in any Zo cultural or social functions, nor are they expected to perform traditional ceremonies or sing love or even ancestral and historical songs. The only celebrations sympathized with by the church are Christmas, New Year and Easter. Thus Zo grow up in an environment of a foreign culture, where knowledge of their own culture is regarded as non-Christian. A Zo is deprived of his natural heritage through his puritan Christian upbringing.

The missionaries' insistence on their followers not drinking zu had been one of the reasons some people were reluctant to convert to Christianity. Zu played a very important function in the Zo culture, as the importance of celebrations had been measured by the number of pots of zu consumed. The birth of a child, a wedding or mourning are occasions when people celebrated or mourned by drinking zu. Babies were also fed with zu so that they would grow to be strong and sturdy. Zu had been one of the most nutritious elements of the Zo peoples' diet. There is a scarcity of rich nutritious food products in Zo country, and the prohibition against drinking zu was an act of arrogance by the missionaries. They had come from countries where there is an abundance of milk, butter and other nutritious food products. In their own countries abstinence from alcohol is not even mentioned as one of the demands for becoming a Christian.

Zu has now been replaced by tea and coffee, which very often causes bowel disorders. Milk, sugar and tea have to be imported, which has resulted in economic difficulties for the people. There is evidence that since converting to Christianity the Zo youth are much smaller in stature than the Zo people of a century before.

In their own countries the missionaries allowed their cultures to grow and their folklore to be preserved. Social dancing and the singing of folk songs are as natural as living and dining. The prohibition of cultural development is one of several devastating actions the missionaries introduced to the Zo people.

The high percentage of literacy may be overwhelming at first glance, but there is much to be desired in the quality of that literacy. The missionaries were concerned purely with the spread of their mission, and in accomplishing their goals they completely ignored the well being of the people. Their students have advanced knowledge in evangelism but lack in knowledge of how to survive in the changing world. Although there are more Christians now, the economics of the people are the same as some decades before the advent of the missionaries.

Religion is one of the main factors that control peoples differing social structures and allow them to exist together harmoniously. It was the British and their administrations who grouped the Zo with Indians and the Burmans. By converting a minority of the people to Christianity, while the majority of the people are Hindu or Buddhist, the British were only preparing for future political conflicts among these people. We have witnessed some of these conflicts in the sixties and seventies.

The Religion of PAUCINHAU

Paucinhau of the Sukte clan founded a new religion at the beginning of the twentieth century. The beliefs of this new religion were very similar to those of the traditional religion, and the main difference between the old and new lies in methods of worship and sacrifice. One of the most important changes was the disappearance of elaborate funeral rituals, which had caused immense hardships on the families of the dead. Another very important aspect of the new religion was Paucmhau's creation of writing. It was the first time ever that Zo people had their own writing. Thus in later years the religion of Paucmhau was called

laipian or the birth of writing. The religion was also called lawki.

Paucinhau was born at Tedim in 1859, and his biography was written by S Nginhsuan⁵⁶ "Paucinhau was brought up as an ordinary normal child according to the traditional patterns of life. He attended his father's mithun and goats in the grazing of Tedim He freely associated with his boyhood friends When he was old enough, he was sent to Mualbem by his parents, according to the practice of those days, to learn the tactics of war and to be able to speak the language of Teizang, in those days the enemies did not dare to kill a captive who spoke the royal language of Teizang. When he returned from Mualbem, he helped his father in the common and normal occupation of all people, cultivation."

"While he was living as normal and healthy life, he was involved in a prophecy concerning the destruction of Tedim, which was at the zenith of its power. Pasian (God) commanded him to speak out, but nobody believed him, and he composed the following song.

Thang van a zal Sian za mang aw,
Tong dam khaak heem in za'ng e.
Pupa'pat loh khua van nuai-ah,
Sian tong dam sin thu hi e.

Thou God of Gods, reigning on high,
I heard a hint—Thy word.
Unheard, unknown in days of yore,
God's word prevails through all the land"

"Some time later, the British began their campaign to annex the Chin Hills The Chins made a brave stand against the invader, but had to give in to superior force They advanced into the Chin Hills and captured and burned Tedim. Its population scattered in all directions. Khanlian (Paucinhau's father) and his families fled to Lailui about six miles north of Tedim At Lailui, Paucinhau continued to receive revelations from Pasian, but as nobody believed him, he became ill and remained an invalid for fifteen years During his long illness he had communications from Pasian in the form of visions and dreams."

"Paucinhau had many visions and dreams, of which the following are a selected sampling."

"Vision of Heaven"

"On a plain were gathered a multitude of people, rich and poor, great and small. I went to the place where these people gathered, and I saw a rope hanging down from heaven above the multitude. Many people competed to climb up the hanging rope but no one was able to do so. When many people had failed, I prayed Pasion and climbed up the rope, and I was able to climb it. As I climbed up the rope, I found that there were thirty layers of heaven, and I saw the abode of Pasion. Then I climbed down again to my starting place. Again I saw the rope hanging to the underworld. I climbed down the rope and that there were forty layers of the underworld. I then climbed up the rope to my starting place. Then I wound up the rope and coiled it beside me, and the coil was twice my height."

"Concerning this vision Paucinhau composed this song •
 Zan ciang zal mang thang van tuang va tung tang e,
 Za lu'n sum tual lum sang e.
 Banzai hm sun, sei no gual aw,
 Meelmuh pian in dang sang e.

To heaven I went in vision clear,
 And saw God's home, how glorious!
 With hand I shade my eyes from dazzling light;
 The sight, oh friends, how wonderful!

"Pasion said to me; 'Paucinhau, behold my house of silver and house of gold to show you how man's life we change.' Saying this he showed in front of me one by one houses of dazzling grandeur, and they disappeared one after another. Besides these, some people conspired to kill me and came in ones twos and threes, but when I said 'Fall' these people fell as I said Then I saw coming towards me a countless number of horses of stone. These came up to me and ran back as far as eye could see, and there they fell down in cloud of dust and disappeared. Then all Chin people fell in a single group and were obliterated. Similarly, next all white people were obliterated as they fell in a series of five groups one after another Then I did not want to see these any more and hid my face with my hand. Still Pasion forced me to see them through something like a mirror. After many people had thus fallen, I counted the remnant, and there were only eleven of us left. These revelations took one whole day and then I regained normal consciousness."

"Vision of Pasion's Command"

"On a wide plain there gathered a huge multitude of people. Then Pasion appeared from above in a dazzling rainbow-haloed light. He was riding about wherever He pleased on something shining and sparkling like the sun. Then I cried to the multitude, 'Behold Pasion, Let us follow his commands'. However no one dared to look up at Him but looked down at the ground with downcast eyes. Then Pasion called to me, 'Paucinhau, the life of you human beings, is not even comparable to that of the worm. But if you follow My holy commands, heaven and earth will convulse into two or three lumps. Those who disobey me, I will punish'. After these words He ordered, 'Worship me' 'How would we worship thee?' I asked, and He replied : 'Worship me saying this.

Pasion, the Creator of heaven and earth, sun and moon,
 Pasion, the creator of men and animals,
 Pasion, the healer of the sick.'
 Paucinhau then composed these songs .

"Tung thangvan ah, a sang sawn ah,
 Sian zua pa meel in mu'ng e
 Sim lei thangvan kal ah e,
 A bawl lo mi om lo e.

I saw in heav'n, in highest heav'n
 The face of father Pasion.
 Between heaven and earth below,
 There is none he had no made."
 Paucinhau's vision of Pasion's command to abolish dawi sacrifices :

"Once in a vision Pasion appeared to me and commanded, 'Paucinhau, starting from now until eight years are completed, abstain from taking the life of living things from the smallest ants and flies, rats and birds, to the biggest beasts.' As Pasion commanded I scrupulously abstained from taking the lives of any living thing for eight years. When the eight years were completed, Pasion agam commanded me: 'Paucinhau, we have now completely fulfilled our promise with the dawis, and we have overcome them; for during these eight years we have successfully abstained from taking life, whereas they have been persecuting and killing human beings. Therefore from this day on which I command

you, you must cease to sacrifice meat and drinks to the dawis " From that day, sacrifices of meat and drinks to the dawis, from the most feared Pusa dawī (ancestral spirit) to the lesser dawis, were abolished.

Sian mang in tong dam hong khak e,
Zin tawh na khen in ci e.
Pupa khan a lung a gimna,
Sian in leen puan bang paai e.

Almighty Pasion, He sent me word,
Be set apart from dawī.
The bane of man from ancient times,
Pasion now casts off like rag"

Ginsuanh continued and wrote about Paucinhau's invention of writing; "During my fifteen years illness at Lailui, I once had a vision of Pasion coming down from heaven and he commanded me: 'Paucmhau learn Lai—(i e., reading and writing)' and Pasion held a book in his hand. Pasion then took some pebbles, and He put them together and separated them again in turn, in a certain fashion. Pasion then asked me, 'Can you do like this?' and I answered 'I can' Then I did as He had done, and I was able to do so. When I could do as he had done, He gave me a book."

"After this vision there arose in my mind a great desire to learn how to write. This desire occupied my mind day and night, and I was contemplating about it continually. Finally a system of sounds spontaneously flowed, as it were, out of my mind, and I formed a symbol to represent each sound as I thought fit. And thus my writing came into being."

There are about 1,050 basic characters, each representing a sound. To each basic character may be added two to five additional marks to represent long and short, ascending and descending sounds. These additional marks are called dawng tawī na. In this way, he symbolized all the sounds and words of the language, and people learned them easily and well.

All these sounds were arranged into mnemonic poetic lines. These lines were in turn grouped into six divisions called books or grades. A student could write any thing and everything in the language when he had learned all the lines in the six grades, namely;

- (1) Ibu
- (2) Min bu
- (3) Dong len bu
- (4) Lun sia bu
- (5) Tha tuk bu
- (6) Thuamzong bu

"Many people like these invention and they quickly and easily learned it. Paucmhau himself used it to record his visions, dreams and teachings. He used it widely for exorcism. Whereas people before used to record their achievements on monuments in base relief, now they used Paucmhau's writing on the monuments."

"In the villages where his teaching was accepted, Paucinhau instructed his followers to build a "Sang" or Temple, where teaching and worship could be conducted in peace and quiet. In each village he appointed 'Laisang' or pastor, 'Lai-at' or clerk, and 'Upa' or exorcist. These officers administered the group of followers collectively called, 'Pawlpi'. The Pawlpi met every week in the Sang (school). If there was any sickness in a home, on the invitation of the family, the Pawlpi met in that home for a special prayer service. In those days, when a person died, the corps was dried and kept in the home for a very long period, even two or three years, and then a very expensive funeral was held. Paucinhau, however, advised his followers to hold not so expensive funeral and to bury the dead on the third day after death. He also abolished other extravagant feasts."

In contradiction to the above story Paucinhau was said to have been to West Zoram during the early 1900s, where he had seen the Christian activities and the mission schools. When he came back from the west he started his teachings. It appeared that he might really have learned about Christianity before he started his teachings. The mention of Jesus in the prayers by his followers suggest the possible truth.

Whatever background he might have had Paucinhau brilliantly executed his role as a prophet. He also chose the exact time when the Zo people had begun to realize that their traditional sacrifices and funeral ceremonies had made them poor and miserable. The teaching of the missionaries farther awakened the people to the defects of their social system.

Paucinhauism.'which was called lawki, spread like wildfire in the Tedim and surrounding areas. At one time the whole Tedim subdivision professed lawki. According to Stevenson (1943) almost the entire Zanniat tribe and about 27% of the Falam division had beeri converted to lawki by 1936. The religion also spread to West Zoram, Haka and Manipur.

Paucinhau died on the 28th of December 1948. In 1970 he had about 150,000 followers.⁵⁶ This number might be a little too high as only 9% of the population in the north eastern Zoram profess lawki, because many Paucinhau followers converted themselves to Christianity.



Festive Lusei dress

CHAPTER 5

JAPAN RAL- (THE JAPANESE WAR), 1942-1944

Unsatisfied with the treaty of Versailles at the end of the First World War in 1918, and stimulated by the quest for more room for the German people (a place in the sun), Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler started to expand its territory by overrunning Austria and Czechoslovakia, and on September 1, 1939, Poland. This led Britain and France to declare war against Germany.

Japan, under its dictator General Tojo, formed the Axis powers with Italy under Mussolini and Germany under Hitler. Then on December 7, 1941 Japan declared war on the United States of America and attacked Pearl Harbor. By 1942 Japan had overrun China, French Indochina, British Singapore and Malaya, Thailand and U.S. possessions such as the Philippines, Guam, etc. The Japanese crossed the Burma border in early 1942, took Pegu and Rangoon, and marched north toward Zo country.

The British defense in Burma was too weak to halt the Japanese advance, and they, along with thousands of Indians, evacuated Burma. The condition of the Indian refugees was horrible and pathetic. They had no proper transport, as the railroad was hopelessly overcrowded, and they had no food or clothing. The women and children were desperately exhausted from walking, hunger and sickness. Malaria, parasites, dysentery and cholera befell them in the heat of Burmese open country, and thousands died by day and night.

By early 1942, having successfully driven the British into India, the Japanese occupied Burma east of the Chindwin River. In May 1942 the Governor of Burma fled to Simla and established a Burmese Government, and Zo politicians—U Nu and members of the Chin Independence Party—were freed from Rangoon jail by the fleeing British. As soon as the Zo politicians were back in Zo country, after crossing the Dry Zone of Burma on foot, they organized the Zo freedom movement. When Japan granted nominal independence to Burma in 1943 the Zo politicians around U Nu declared Zo independence and formed a government with U Nu as its first president.

Japan wanted to win the favour of Asian people and to do so propagated the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In an attempt to win the trust of the Zo people the Japanese freed Zo soldiers of the Burma Army who had been taken captive by the Japanese. These Burma Army regulars and the Chin Hills Battalion later became the backbone of the Levies formed to defend Zo country from the advancing Japanese.

Zo Levies

The recruitment and training of the Levies was under the administrators Stevenson and Naylor, with the objective of building resistance to protect Zo villages. Accordingly, two cadres of Levies, "A" and "B", were established. The "B" Levy "was not normally a professional soldier, though military pensioners were frequently to be found in their ranks. His role was to defend his village effectively. This required firstly that he be armed, and secondly, that he be reliably on call at rotational intervals to ensure that each village possessed a pool of runners from which inter-village messengers or porters could immediately be demanded at any hour of day or night. It followed from the implied divorcement from regular agricultural pursuits that the 'B' Levy, while on duty, had to be rationed and paid. The 'B' Levies numbered many hundreds and, in most areas, could be counted on for as much as or more than they were paid for.

Arming the Levies and supplying ammunition was solved by using flintlock guns. "These arms, for most part, were flintlock rifles, and to the Chins they were the most priceless of all possible gifts Passed down from father to son, and preserved in immaculate condition by both, they now aggregated a powerful arsenal in the hands of men skilled in their use. Gunpowder they had learnt to make for themselves, and a couple of hundred yards of telegraph wire pillaged from the Valley could be cut and fashioned into bullets for a more than sufficient supply of ammunition".

"In the Chin Hills, a fusillade from behind a protective screen of panjis (bamboo spikes) was followed by a fade-away to the next ambush position, where reloading could be done at leisure. In the forties of the twentieth century Japs died in the Chin Hills of wounds inflicted by weapons made before the battle of Waterloo1 Rifles we provided as and when we could to those trained in their

use; we even distributed shotguns sent to us from India."

"The 'A' Levies were a full-time force, and to a large extent they were still embodied soldiers officially. Many of them were survivors of actions in Burma that had ended in the extinction of their units. Weaponless, and with their equipment lost or jettisoned, they had found their way back to the Hills, with or without detentions in enemy hands en route. Silently, and frequently shamefacedly before their pensioner elders, they had returned to their villages and reverted to agricultural pursuits from which they had been weaned by the recruiting officer years previously. Thus they had remained, in many cases until a Burma Army pay party visited the hills and, with no questions asked, called them to various points along the route and paid them their arrears in full."

The material above is taken from H. Braun⁷ who in 1942 was the commander of a Levy Battalion at the Burma—Zo border. When he was stationed in the Fort White area he led his Levies to attack the Japanese outpost at Tahan, which was the first retaliation against the Japanese in Burma. He was then transferred to the Haka area, and when the Japanese drove the Levies from Haka he retreated to West Zoram. From West Zoram he organized the Levy force which drove the Japanese from Zo country, often working behind the Japanese lines.

Burchett¹¹, who accompanied General Wingate in his adventure behind the Japanese lines in the Monywa area, wrote; "Within a few weeks of the withdrawal (from Burma) some of these irregulars were already operating in the Chin Hills along the southern Burma-India border. The Chin villagers themselves asked and received permission to defend their hills even before the Levies were formed. Organizers were sent in to contact headmen. Brass gongs and skin drums passed on the news from village to village. Swift, silent Chin runners sped along the narrow hill trails bearing messages, giving assembly points and times."

"Soon these squat, slant-eyed, honey-skinned tribesmen began to gather, bringing with them their beautifully carved flint-locks, which are handed down from generation to generation. They are the most picturesque of all the Burma-hillmen. Their hair is worn long, and coiled up into a top-knot. As often as not the elaborate top-knot is held in place by the quill of the long curving tail

feathers of the "drongo" bird. Every man carries a tiger skin pouch in which he carries the nails and stones he uses for ammunition, and the gun powder that he manufactured himself. Their short, brightly-checked skirts are usually tucked up tightly between their legs, because a man that hunts tigers and leopards can't afford to be caught in a trailing loin cloth. They assembled in the meeting places and their headmen read the message that meant war to the Japs. Small villages should supply platoons, larger ones companies, all under their own chieftains."

Duty for most of the chiefs was to lead their respective clans as company or platoon commanders, as the people preferred to serve under their own chiefs rather than the trained officers of the Burma Army or the Chin Hills Battalion.

Yo and Thado built their home guards around chief Pumzamang, and the Sakte Levies were led by Thawngzakhup of Saizang. Thuamcm, Thianpum, Suanghauthang, Paukam and Lamkhawmang also served as company commanders in the Sizang area. Zanniat and Khualsim Levies were led by the chief of Lumbang and Taikual. Haka Levies were led by Thangthio, Hawlshuh and others, and the outstanding Levy leader Zahu commanded the Levies in the Gangaw area. Young intellectuals such as Thawngcinthang, Vunghsuan, Shiahhlwe, Summang, Khaimunmang, Gmzatuang and Pauzakam took part as clerks and guides.

According to Vumkohau, "Most of the able bodied Siyms were already enlisted in the Chin Hills Battalion or that of the Burma Rifles. Some served in the civil services of the local administration, hence those who led the Siyin* levies were the chiefs of the tribal areas concerned, military pensioners, schoolmasters, civilian clerks, police constables etc. While the men folk fought the Japanese, the Siyin women folk supplied the labour for sending ammunition and supply to the front."

In August 1942 the Levies took their positions along the Zo- Burma border. The Chin Hills Battalion was positioned in the north from Suanglulum to the foothills of Webula, and the Levies defending line ran from Natchaung and Pamunchaung to the Gangaw area in the south.

During the fall of 1942 the Levies collected abandoned rice

*Siyin is a Burmese word for Sizang.

stored in the Kale Valley and transported it to their bases in the hills. By that time the Japanese occupied the area as far as Kalewa, and they were doing exactly the same as the Levies—but their rice was being transported to the south. By the beginning of winter 1942 the Japanese occupied Kalembo. The activities of the Levies at that time were described by Burchett; "They set about preparing for the Japs, these stout-legged, stout hearted mountaineers. They sent out patrols right into Jap-occupied villages. They ambushed and trapped Jap patrols sent out after them. They established information services, and a Jap could hardly take his boots off or write a postcard to his favorite geisha without the Chins knowing. The Japs were worried They sent out patrols that never came back, or came back carrying dead or wounded with strange wounds from bamboo spikes, or jagged stones and nails fired into them from short range."

"They (the Japanese) bribed other villagers to carry notices and warnings to these recalcitrant top-knotted tribes-people. They huffed and they puffed, but they couldn't bluff the Chins. For supposedly good propagandists, their efforts were amateurish to say the least Here are two of their leaflets,

Our Brethren. All Chin Soldiers.

How you are troublesome with the works under the suppressive and selfishness of English government. Our Japanese troops have determined to attack the British troops those camping in your Chin Hills at present. You are the same race as Burmese and why are you in doubt yourselves about whether to co-operate with us or not? Are you willing to get freedom as Burmese race did before? Do not be too late! Being the same race which are include in Asia, we earnestly advise you to co-operate with us and surrender as early as possible. Delay means Dangerous' We the Japanese troops are willing to help your Chin race as Burmen.

The above notice is a warning to you all before we attack Chin Hills.

(Signed) YAMATA,
Commander of the Burma Frontier
Japanese Army for Attacking Chin Hills"
To all Chin Races, Chin Hills :
Our brethren, you all Chin races.

Awaking and rise up now' Its time for your Chin races to cooperate with the present Burmese Government.

Our Japanese have determined to attack the British troops those are now camping at your Chin Hills Therefore we deeply advise you better to co-operate with us now.

Do you know that the British and American Governments have lost heavily their forces during the battles such as Hong Kong, Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, etc.

You all Chin races, being included in Asia, must carry your duties with high spiritedly, to co-operate with us quickly.

(Signed) YAMATA
Commander of the Burma Frontier
Japanese Army Attacking Chin Hills."

The Zo levies were not worried by these warnings, and they sent out patrols and established secret hide-outs under the very nose of the Japanese. They worked and patrolled and fought on 45 pounds of rice, 15 pounds of beans, and half a pound of salt a month, with perhaps an odd tiger or monkey thrown in for meat rations They held the Japanese during the waiting months, while the British and American army reformed and retrained in India and China. Due to the activities of the Zo, Kachm and to a lesser extent the Naga Levies, the advance of the Japanese was stopped for more than half a year of precious time.

How thoroughly the Levies knew the movements of the Japanese was to be seen in a diary reproduced by Harald Braun. These diary entries reflect movement of the Japanese in the Kalemmyo area.

- 6-8-42 Bn patrol to Sanmyo seized five rifles and the documents indicative of recent Jap contact
- 7-8-42 Now that villages are able to live on own produce consider it advisable close all main roads to private traders with the plains Believe Japs to have hazy idea our real strength jand consider fog should be maintained (N.B. This was done.)
- 11-8-42 Japs reported intend returning Kalemmyo near future and to have ordered fifty coolies to be ready on their arrival. Also reported to have ordered all rations in

- Kalemmyo areas to be sent to Kalewa and have threatened deal with anybody supplying Hills. Kalewa bombed Kalemmyo machine gunned during afternoon attacked bursts over Kalemmyo visible from No Three
- 19-8-42 Same source reports arrival Kalewa of one hundred Jap women since transferred Mawlaik. (N B. Falam to 4 Corps-'presumably these are HORS DE COMBAT')
- 23-8-42 Unidentified single engine low wing monoplane recede this area from Eastward fifteen forty hours today
- 26-8-42 Mine of 23rd pilot reported to have waved red and white flag over No. 2.
- 26-8-42 Two village Levies on recce Kalemmyo Tuesday did not return. Reported caught by Japs Kalemmyo and sent Kalewa under escort.
- 27-8-42 Both captured Levies escaped from Indainggyi where reported questioned by two Jap officers with ten Jap and Burman troops Fate of one still unknown. Report or other follows
- 4-9-42 Reported killed all points except Kalewa Japs 8 others 10 injured Japs 5. Three LUNDWINS reported sunk including two loaded rations in mouth Ubok chaung Road bridge damaged by same bomb Damage to buildings various but no military significance (N B The above in response to a request from Corps for information on the result of recent air attacks)
- 8-9-42 Repeat opinion leaflet raids giving reliable news will have good effect.
- 17-9-42 R.A.T. after recce planes. Urgent must speed up all reports one or more planes. Special section fighters standing by waiting your reports. (N B The above from Levy H.Q. Falam.)
- 19-9-42 J. W. Munro reports from Yazagyo his escape from enemy territory parties sent bring him in.
- 21-9-42 Jap plane shot down by three British planes near Yuwa.
- 29-9-42 150 large dogs breed unknown brought Kalewa and 500 Thaungdut. Reported to be for use in unspecified antiguenlla role.
- 30-9-42 Single engine Jap monoplane with wireless mast unretracted.

streamlined undercarriage and wings tapered on trailing edge over No. 3

- 1-10-42 3,000 Japs and rebel Chinese Kalewa of whom 1,000 have left for Tamu via Sittaung and possible further 1,000 for Khamti N. of Tamanthi. These troops have with them fierce breed of dog in large numbers. Their role includes a bomb attached to collar All boats going down Myittha being commandeered at Kalewa for transport of troops Large number Japs Kalewa down with malaria.
- 4-10-42 Japs collecting B.B.T.C. elephants Palusawa. Villagers ordered rations to be sent Kalewa at 20 baskets per village. Approx. 22nd 70 motor boats arrived Kalewa with Japs.
- 7-10-42 No. 2/Fort White area reced by Jap plane for about three hours in all.

The traditional Zo method of waging war is by ambush, with ambush positions protected by a liberal plantation of sharp firehardened bamboo spikes tipped with rotting pig's liver. The spikes are normally made in two sizes, shorter ones to impale the foot and longer ones to rip the belly. The spikes, which can cause blood poisoning, are hidden under branches and scrubs and are difficult for a man rushing a defended position to see.

In November 1942 the Haka Levies were attacked about fifty miles from Haka by a Japanese force which advanced from Kan behind a screen of press-ganged villagers. The Levies then retreated to Shimpi which was 40 miles from Haka. At Shimpi the Japanese were repulsed and suffered some 50 casualties at the hands of the Levies. Another Japanese party attacked a Levy position near Dawngva, and the Haka Levies under Joshua Po Nyo, a Karen, retreated toward Haka, blowing the Dawngva suspension bridge on their retreat. The Japanese retreated also as they too had suffered casualties.

On the 23rd of December 1942 the Japanese were relaxing peacefully at an abandoned house in Tahan near Kalemio when Zo Levies from No. 2 stockade (Theizang) attacked. Approaching the Japanese position in daylight, but under the cover of grass and undergrowth, the Levies surprised the Japanese so thoroughly that they panicked. The sentry, who was positioned in a tree, was

shot down, and many others were picked off by gunfire as they ran for cover. In a matter of a few minutes twelve Japanese were killed. The Levies returned to their stockade unharmed. The attack was the first the Japanese had been attacked by the allies since the British retreat from Burma, and the British Broadcasting Corporation announced news of the attack on the 26th of December. Some days later Levies stationed at Suangluvum made another attack on the Japanese camp and were successful.

In February 1943 the Japanese launched an attack on the Ngazang ridge. Braund¹⁷ wrote; "They came up the Hill shouting in Urdu that they were friends and that the Levies should not shoot." But the Levies ambushed them, causing Japanese casualties. The Levies were then pushed to the top of the ridge by artillery fire, which was being used by the Japanese for the first time in the Chin Hills. The Levies also suffered casualties in the battle.

In early May 1943 the Japanese assaulted No. 3 stockade with a battalion supported by artillery fire, and three platoons of Levies and two regular Gurkha companies were driven back. The Japanese then advanced to Fort White. After five days of fierce fighting the Levies and Gurkhas, who had been digging in at Khuikul (between Fort White and Kennedy Peak), lost Khuikul to the Japanese. The Japanese took Kennedy Peak by September of that year.

At the same time another Japanese force advancing along the Kuai stream took Pimpi and Dolluang and advanced to Kennedy Peak. In the fall of 1943 however Tedim, Haka and Falam were still in the hands of the Levies and Gurkhas. The Haka Levies were stationed then at Lungngo, Haka and Hata. At the end of September 1943, 300 Japanese and 100 Burmese soldiers marched toward Tinthe, and the Haka Levies from Hata ambushed the party when it camped at Netpian Var. The Japanese, who did not expect to be attacked, had no sentries and the Levies were able to throw hand grenades into the Japanese camp. The Japanese reported 132 killed and wounded in the skirmish.

The Japanese force advancing from Pao Var, Runpi and Haiphai area could not be halted by the Chin Hills Battalion and Falam Levies, so Falam was lost on November 7, 1943. On November 11th the Japanese attacked Hranhrmg (Haka) and Hmarlawn with machine guns and mortars, and on November 12 the Japanese entered Haka itself. The town of Haka saw some more fighting

when the Gurkhas attacked the Japanese in the shopping centre with rifles and machine guns and later with their kukris and bare hands.

The Japanese however drove the Levies and Gurkhas to Timit Var. The Japanese did not advance farther than Thlanthlang as their plan was to get to Imphal via Tedim and Tamu. After the successful Japanese attacks the Indian National Army (INA) of Subhas Chandra Bose occupied Haka. The Haka people hated the Indians much more than they hated the Japanese because the INA treated the population very badly. The Levy outpost at Lungngo was never taken by the Japanese, and a patrol sent out to attack it lost nine out of ten men in an ambush by the Levies.

According to Colonel Stevenson, who was the commanding officer of the Zo Levies, the Levies killed 214 Japanese in the first eight nights of ambush. The Levies captured maps, war diaries and considerable equipment. Stevenson gave his tribute to the Levies and Vumkohau in a letter written to Vumkohau in November 1945, when he was serving as additional secretary at the Governor's office for Frontier areas. He wrote, "The loyalty of the Chins to me and my small handful of brother officers passes belief. At a time when the whole might of the Commonwealth was collapsing about their heads they stood firm by our side facing the mortars and machine guns of Japan with shotguns and ancient flintlocks. There was the occasion when Saw Ci and one companion cut up a whole platoon of Japanese in a desperate face-to-face fight on a mountain path. There was a time when the girls of Dolluang carried the packs of our commandos to within 50 yards of the point of battle so that the men could be fresh and fit to fight. There was the time when I took nearly a thousand men and women on a dawn "raid" into the Japanese occupied plains to carry away rice sold to us in secret by friendly Burmese villagers. Chins of all ages, both men and women, accepted danger without hesitation."

"All these things could happen only because the Chins found in their hour of danger leaders among their own people who were capable of facing whatever odds might come, and who were willing to die for their country. There were many fine men among them—the Lumbang Chief Hlurr Hmung, Hon. Lieut. Tai Kual and his sons, Subedar Suak Zam of Dolluang, to name but a

few—but among them all Mr. Vum Ko Hau stood out as the man of the moment. He alone had the knowledge and courage to play dangerous game of bluff which enabled his people to organize under the very eyes of the Japanese commanders the resistance movement which struck them down. I am proud to have served with this brave man and his gallant companions. Their resistance to the Japanese in the critical years after 1942 may well have decided the fate of India, for the infiltration tactics which led to the downfall of Burma were frustrated by their skill as jungle fighters."⁹⁷

Zo Soldiers in General Wingate's Guerrilla Army The Chindits

When the British administration collapsed in May 1942 British and Chinese troops retreated to Kachinland, Zoram and Manipur. The Japanese stopped their advances East of the Chindwin because of their heavy losses and because of resistance by the Kachm and Zo levies. Then Wingate was assigned to Burma. He was a Brigadier in the British Army and a soldier with unusual ideas and tactics. In 1938 he had crushed an Arab revolt in Palestine, and in 1941 he put Haile Selassie back on the Ethiopian throne and captured fourteen thousand Italian soldiers with only three thousand men under him. In June 1942 Wingate's idea of deep penetration into enemy held territory was being considered. Wingate thought, "the Japanese are good in the jungle. No doubt about it. But if they can infiltrate, so can we. We must teach our men jungle fighting and how to infiltrate." Thus Wingate was given some British troops, some Gurkhas, an RAF section of officers, a section of signallers, a mule transport company and a unit of Burma Rifles comprised of Karens, Kachm and Zo soldiers (2/20th Burma Rifles). They were trained in jungle warfare in Assam for six months and marched in February 1943 from Imphal to the Chindwin, crossing into Japanese held territories east of the Chindwin.

For part of his troop General Wingate rounded up Zo soldiers who had withdrawn from Burma to India. Those who had a knowledge of English were used for the ranks. Among those serving in the Chindit were, to name a few, Naik Sonkholian, Havildar Sonkhopau, Havildar Hrangthio, Thiankhokhai, Putpa,

Khamcinpau, Suangpiang, Ngopum, Khaikhomang, Liankhohau, Taikchoon, Ciatwe and Lamungthang. These men were dropped behind Japanese lines in different parts of Burma. Sonkholian, Suangpiang and Liankhohau were dropped at Shwebo, and Khaikhomang and Ngopum were among those sent by submarine to Ramree and Cheduba. Thiankhokhai, Taikchoon and Ciatwe were air dropped east of the Irrawaddy. Suangpiang and Liankhohau operated from Mawchi area in the Kayah chieftainship till the end of the war. Another soldier, Stevens Dokhothawng, served with American troops under Colonel Musgrave in Kokang, Shan country. Many Zo soldiers with the Chindits never returned home, and the first batch which was dropped in October 1942 was nearly wiped out by the Japanese.

Burchett" praised these soldiers, "The Burma Riflemen, because they did not operate as a unit, but were split up amongst the columns, have little mention in this book. Wingate said they were the finest body of men he had ever had under his command, and other officers pay equally glowing tributes. These stouthearted Burma Riflemen are officered by former civilians from Burma : men from rice and teak firms; from the mines and trading houses. Without exception, the officers spoke the language of the country and liked the people. Relations between them and the men were excellent, because there was mutual respect, and the officers understood their likes and dislikes. Every British soldier in the Wingate force pays the highest tribute to the Burma Riflemen and acknowledges that without him the expedition would have been a dismal failure."

"It was the Burma Riflemen who always went ahead to collect information, to spy out the land, to make contact with the villagers for food and boats. When groups were near to starving or dying of thirst, it was the Burma Riflemen who time and again saved them by producing water from the hollow stem of the giant bamboo, food from the leaves of the tamarind tree, the young shoots of gourd or pumpkin vines, the leaves of yams. They collected fungi and showed how locusts, rats, and monkeys can be turned into palatable stews and grills." In fighting too the Burma Riflemen were 'eager, courageous and intelligent, and it was often their knowledge of the jungle that made successful ambushes possible.

"To most of the men who took part it seemed they had done

little else but march, march, march, without getting anywhere in particular, then turn round and march, march, march, again back to India. Sure, they blew a few bridges, cut the railway line, fought a few battles, but everything seemed rather pointless." "From a strictly operational point of view, the results were not spectacular. They put the main railway out of commission for several weeks by cutting the line and blowing the great Bonchaung Gorge. They killed a number of Japs directly and many more through information given to the R. A.F. And that was about all."

"But they did tie down a force between four or five times as great as their own, and forced Jap headquarters to call off operations which had already started. The Japs pulled back troops from Tengyueh, and thus the Chinese defeated them when they attempted to take the Mamien Pass west of the Salween. They called off operations against the Northern Kachin Levies. After one futile crack against the Chinese guarding the Ledo road project, the Japs gave up and rushed the troops which they had boasted were going to march along the Ledo road to India down to protect the Mandalay-Myitkyina Railway. The patrols which were gathered in the Homalin area for infiltration across the Chindwin were pulled back, and divided into smaller patrols to roam the forests between the Mu and Chindwin rivers, and prevent the Wingate men returning. A move planned against the Chin Levies was postponed until June, by which time the Levies, greatly strengthened by British regular forces, threw them back with heavy losses."

Japanese Advance to Tedim

At the end of 1943 the 33rd Imperial Japanese Army under Lt. General Yanagida continued advancing toward Khuikul and Kennedy Peak against the Gurkhas and the Levies. At Tedim in March 1944 the British 17th Indian Division under General Cowan was recapturing some lost ground and operating with increasing success. But the condition of this local war changed abruptly. A 2,000 strong detachment of the 33rd Japanese Division crossed Vangte and Mualbem. On March 6, 1944 they suddenly and violently attacked the British detachment at the bridge on the Manipur River near Tonzarig, twenty miles north of Tedim. Another Japanese detachment attacked the British engineering camp near Cikha, the camp containing practically no fighting

troops but a large number of noncombatants, including five thousand Indian laborers.

Within 24 hours of the report of the attack the 17th Division was ordered to retreat from Tedim to Imphal. They had to fight their way back home however, through Tonzang and Singgial. The heaviest fighting was at Singgial, where the opposing troops fought to obtain the only existing water spring.

Some of the Zo Levies followed the retreating British army, but others returned to their homes, to rise against the Japanese some months later. Field Marshal Sir William Slim⁷⁹ described the retreat of the 17th Division; "It was a long column that began to wind through the hills on the afternoon of the 14th. The whole division went on foot, although it took with it great numbers of vehicles and animals, transport was reserved for stores, ammunition, supplies, and wounded. The first day it covered twenty miles while the Japanese cautiously followed; with sound tactical sense they were concentrating on cutting in ahead and blocking the road. This, by the 14th they had done in two places, just north of Tonzang and at an unhappy Milestone 109 Camp, where the tiny garrison, hampered by a mass of noncombatants, was quickly in difficulties. The Gurkhas of the 17th Division, on the 16th, dealt swiftly and effectively with the first block, sweeping the enemy from their position with bayonet and kukri. The road was now opened but only to Milestone 109."

"Nor was the Tedim road the only sector from which danger threatened. On the night of March 15-16, the Japanese 15th and 31st Divisions, poised along the east bank of the Chindwin, moved in earnest. The 15th Division crossed the river in three columns about Thaungdut with orders 'to advance through the hills like a ball of fire', to isolate Imphal from the north, and then capture the town. Moving swiftly, by March 18 one column was pressing our 20th Division's flank, near Myothit, and others, already only 50 miles from Imphal, were approaching Ukhrul. At the same time the 31st Japanese Division, in eight columns, crossed the Chindwin on a forty mile front from Homalin to the North, and pushed west like the probing fingers of an extended hand."

The Japanese cut off the 17th Division and thus pushed forward to Imphal. The British then sent two Divisions from Imphal to open a route for the 17th Division, but the British could not hold

Ukhrul, and it fell to the Japanese on the 25th of March. The 23rd Indian Division fought its way toward Tedim and opened the road to Tedim. Slim wrote, "The leading units of Robert's 37 Brigade (of the 23rd Division) with a few light tanks moving rapidly, drove off a Japanese force which was besieging a small detachment of ours at milestone 100 on the Tedim road. Before our troops could push on to the relief of the camp at Milestone 109 the enemy, infiltrating through the jungle, had established a series of road blocks behind them. They were thus forced to turn and clear the road toward Imphal while the second brigade of the 23rd Division fought south toward them. The situation on Tedim road was now for a time as it had been once been in the Arakan coast - a Neapolitan ice of layers of our troops alternating with Japanese—but in both training and morale our men were much better fitted to deal with such a confused and harassing business than they had been in 1943."

"With relief thus delayed, the situation at Milestone 109 grew critical. On the night of March 16-17, the noncombatants were skillfully led through the enemy by jungle paths to join the 23rd Division; the handful of fighting troops hung on for two days more and then followed them. The Japanese, swarming in to seize abandoned supplies and vehicles, at once set to work to build powerful defences to deny passage to the 17th Division."

"Cowan, advancing north with his main force on the road, wisely sent infantry high on the ridges to each side. While these columns cleared the crests, the 48th Brigade, with R.A.F. fighter bomber support, broke through a desperately defended position astride the road and, after another hard fight on March 25, re-took the camp itself, recovering intact most of the lost stores and vehicles. As the head of the 17th Division thus effectively dealt with the Japanese 215 Regiment, the rear guard was nightly beating off fierce attacks from a reinforced 214 Regiment. A final all out assault on March 24, when several enemy tanks were knocked out, was repulsed. Two days later the rear guard, blowing up the bridge across the Manipur River, withdrew, and the whole division moved on again. The back of the Japanese obstruction had been broken and, after some minor engagements, the 17th and the 23rd Division met at Milestone 102. Leaving two brigades of the 23rd Division to cover this approach, the 17th Division reached Imphal complete on April 5."

"Even with the Japanese driven from its banks, the crossing of the Manipur was no easy operation. The river, one hundred yards wide, was in full spate, flooding through its gorge at a speed of ten to twelve knots, hurling itself against boulders in fountains of spray, and bringing down tree trunks in full career. Its roar, audible for miles, was like that of a great football crowd. Not without difficulty the engineers got a rope across, and a flying bridge—a ferry attached to a cable—was built. The first boat to attempt the crossing was capsized by the fury of the stream. All its occupants were lost. But the cable held and next day the ferry was working, though a crossing was still a hazardous and nerve-testing experience. Ferrying in these conditions was a slow business, but by the nineteenth a road block had been placed behind the Japanese rear guard whose shelling, particularly that of some 155 mm. guns, has been thoroughly unpleasant. Next day the rear guard was attacked. An attempt by the enemy to break through the road block failed, and they took to the jungle, abandoning ninety dead and the objectionable 155-mm. guns." Thus the 17th Division reached Imphal while the Japanese continued their drive toward Imphal and Kohima.

The Japanese 15th Army under Lt. General Renya Mutaguchi launched the Japanese "march on Delhi." In this movement the entire 31st Division, 20,000 men under Major General Kotuku Sato, marched across the rugged Zo-Naga Hills to attack Kohima on April¹, 1944. Kohima was defended by one thousand men including convalescents, rear-echelon troops, state police forces and the Zo and Naga soldiers of the 1st Assam Regiment. After a week of severe fighting, with assistance from the 2nd Indian Division, Kohima was held, and the Japanese advance to the railway junction at Dimapur was stopped.

General Tsumoru Yamamoto attacked Imphal from all sides over a period of four months but could not break through. The Japanese Commanding General Mutugachi ordered his men to "continue in the task till all of your ammunition is expended. If your hands are broken, fight with your feet. If your hands and feet are broken, use your teeth. If there is no more breath left in your body, fight with your spirit. Lack of weapon is no excuse for defeat."

But the Japanese lacked not only arms. They were also madly driven by hunger and thirst. General Sato, the commander of the

31st Division lost 3,000 men and had 4,000 wounded, and he refused to continue fighting and retreated from Kohima. On June 22nd the British forces at Kohima and Imphal linked together again, winning the Kohima-Imphal battle. The battle lasted seventy four days, with over 53,000 Japanese casualties and 17,000 men lost by the 14th British Army.

Kogun Hayasgi³⁷ analyzed the Japanese defeat, "The failure of the Imphal Operation was not due to unsatisfactory action on the part of the front-line soldiers but was attributable to the fact that the Fifteenth Army made light of the enemy and ignored logistics in its complacent operational planning. The essentials of the army's logistical thinking embodied the following features.

Officers and men should carry maximum amounts of provisions. Elephants and oxen should be hauling stores.

The oxen should be devoured when provisions run out/Personnel should be prepared to eat grass. (As a matter of fact, they had already trained themselves to do so.)

The Advance along the road to Imphal from Kohima should be effected within two weeks, at the latest, after commencement of operations.

The road should be repaired after its capture, in order to convey supplies at once by motor vehicle."

Japanese Retreat

By the third week of July 1944 the Japanese were driven out of the Imphal plain and were retreating toward the Chindwin and eastern Zoram (Tedim). A "Lushai Brigade" was created to pursue the Japanese along the Imphal-Tedim road. Commanded by Brigadier Marindin its objective was a long range harassing role. It was formed in a hurry from war-raised Indian Battalions and local Zo levies that had retreated to Manipur and the Chin Hills.

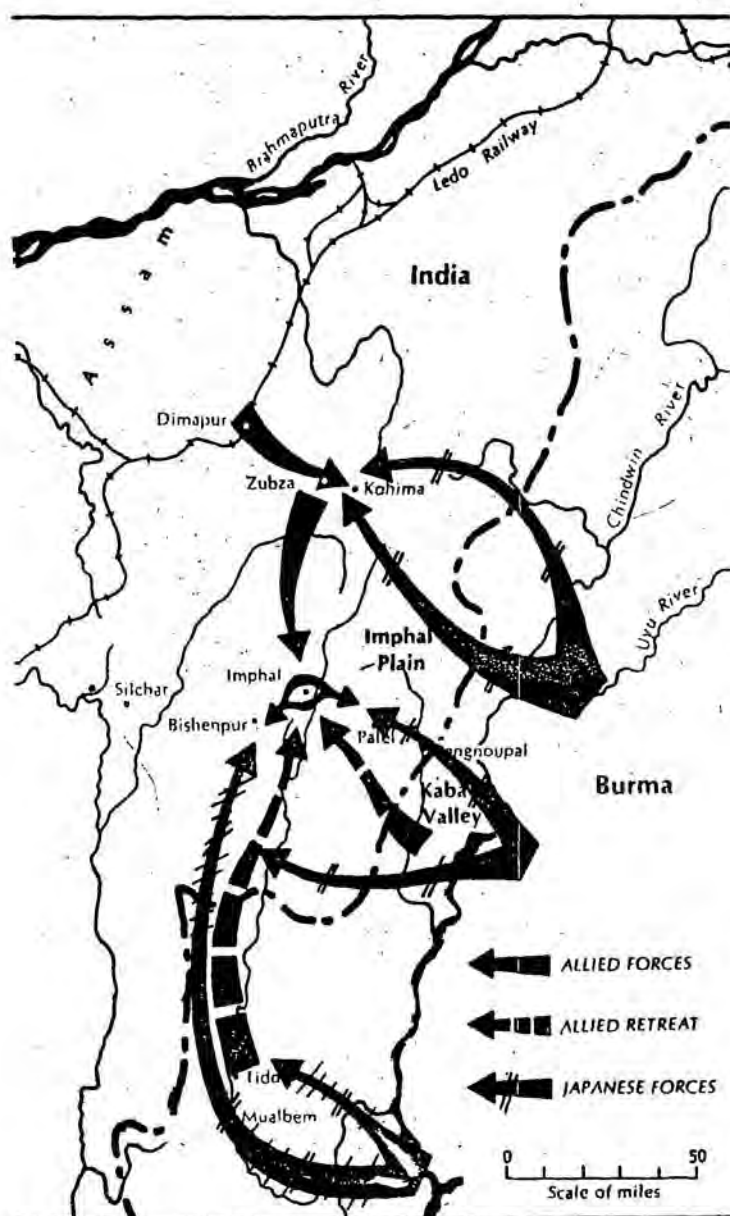
The Brigade had little equipment, no artillery or engineers and only improvised signals. There was a story that it had only one map. General Slim ordered the Brigade to pursue the Japanese down the Tedim road, and he gave it a task to "completely dislocate the Japanese traffic on the road Tedim-Imphal northbound and render it useless to the enemy as a line of communication"

Slim⁷⁹ wrote, ".. after difficult marches of from eight to one hundred and twenty miles across flooded streams and mountains, his two northerly battalions were, by the end of July, harrying the road by stealthy ambushes and sudden bursts of fire. More than two hundred enemy were killed, many wounded, and numerous vehicles destroyed, while several hundred Japanese -were tied down to piquet the road. All at small cost to us. The third battalion, however, made the biggest bag. It concentrated on an eight mile stretch where the road, on the east bank of Manipur, ran through a precipitous gorge. Our men on the west bank, protected by the raging torrent, kept the road under constant fire at close range. All wheeled traffic in this sector ceased."

"With his fourth battalion—my old friends the Bihar Regiment, who were so proud of their women—Marindin improved on my orders, and launched them into the Chin Hills to capture the local capitals of Falam and Haka. The Chin Levies had with them their families, and, looking like the children of Israel trekking out of Egypt, they joyfully assisted in liberating their country, dumping women and children in their own villages as they captured them."

"Helped by these actions, the main advance of the 5th Division from the north on the Tedim road continued. On September 14, the leading troops reached the west bank of the Manipur River, a hundred and twenty-six miles from Imphal. The river, now in flood, was a most formidable obstacle, but one brigade, having turned back through Imphal and Shuganu, marched down the east bank, and as our troops arrived on the west bank, seized the high ground opposite them. The Japanese, in danger of being cut off, abandoned further defence of the river line."

"Without pause, the division pushed on for Tedim with the troops already across, while tremendous efforts were made to get the remainder of the division over the river as the road behind it collapsed in mud and landslides. The leading brigade, in spite of the difficulty of the country, advanced on a wide front, so as to overlap the frequent but small Japanese rear guards. By October 1st our troops were in the hills some miles due east of Tedim, in contact with the enemy who still fought well and put in frequent counter attacks. The outflanking tactics of our troops paid off, and even the formidable 'Chocolate Staircase' position was turned



Japanese forces advanced to the Zo country and took Tedim, Falam, and Haka. Then they pushed into Meitei, and Naga country. They failed to take Imphal and Kohima, where from the British drove them quickly back to Burma, across the Zo country ending a two year Japanese occupation of the Zo country.

in this way and abandoned by the enemy after little resistance. Chocolate Staircase was the name given to the Tedim road where in seven miles it climbed three thousand feet with thirty eight hairpin bends and an average gradient of one in twelve. The road surface was earth, and marching men, animals, and vehicles soon churned it into ankle-deep mud. The hillside and with it the road itself often disappeared in thunderous landslides; then every available man had to work with pick and shovel to shape a track again. No soldier who marched up the Chocolate Staircase is ever likely to forget the name or the place. The enemy made several more desperate attempts to block the road to Tedim but the constant threat to his line of retreat, his fear of losing guns and vehicles, the accuracy of 221 Group's air strikes even in this country, and the unquenched elan of our troops in direct attack had their effect. Tedim was occupied on October 17."

"After Tedim, as the 8,800 foot Kennedy Peak was approached, the Japanese resistance hardened again. While his main force pushed steadily on, Warren staged two wide turning movements, one of which established a road block behind the enemy. In several days' fighting among mist-covered mountains the Japanese were forced to withdraw, and after frantic and costly attempts to break through on the road, they abandoned everything except their small arms and took to the jungle. On November 8 our troops reached Fort White and on the 13th, as already related, the 5th Indian and the 11th East African Divisions jointly entered Kalembo."

In the course of its advance down the Tedim road the Division had killed 1,316 Japanese—fresh corpses counted on the ground. It had wounded another 533 and had taken 53 prisoners. The British losses were 88 killed and 293 wounded.

"The Lushai Brigade, operating on the right flank of the 5th Division, had infiltrated a hundred mile front and had pushed on to the Myittha Valley. It had occupied Falam and Haka on October 19, amid great rejoicings and reunions of the loyalist tribesmen, not enlivened by the free distribution of captured rice

and stores. By mid December, when greater events were impending, the Lushai Brigade had patrols on the east bank of the Chindwin, had cleared the whole country west of the Myittha River, and was closing in on the last Japanese foothold in the Myittha Valley at Gangaw."

"There is no doubt that the enterprise and dash of this improvised and lighthearted brigade were a real contribution to the pursuit to the Chindwin. It had operated for sue months on pack transport, supplemented by an unavoidably meagre air supply, across two hundred miles of jungle mountains, against the enemy flank and rear. Considering the paucity of its equipment and resources, it gave one of the most effective and economical examples of longrange penetration."

"The Imphal-Kohima battle which now ended was the lasband greatest of the series that had been fought continuously during the past ten months on all the Burma fronts. They have achieved substantial results; the Japanese Army had suffered the greatest defeat in its history. Five Japanese Divisions (15th, 18th, 31st,33rd, and 55th) had, at any rate temporarily,pbeen destroyed as fighting formations, while two other divisions, an independent brigade, and many line-of-communication units had been badly mauled. Fifty thousand Japanese had been killed or died, and their bodies counted on the Arakan and Assam sectors."

Japanese Occupation

The behaviour of the Japanese troops was described by Vumkohau. "In the early days of occupation the behavior of the Japanese troops appeared very correct. A lot of propaganda was issued by all the British civilian offices to the effect that the Japanese soldiers would molest the women folk. Not a single instance was heard of up to the occupation of Tedim."

"Soldiers hid away in the jungles during the day. Many women and children shifted their belongings from the villages to the field huts. On the way they met many Japanese soldiers. They said that women were never looked at. This kind of news spread quickly and some remarked that their behaviour appeared to be more orderly than some of those among the allied troops. Some of the criticism about the Japanese troops were that they would take baths naked outside the buildings and would also answer the

call of nature by the side of the road without taking cover."

The Japanese good behavior toward Zo women was said to have been influenced by the Burman. When they were about to enter Zo country they had asked the Burmans, "What annoyed the Zo people the most?" To this the Burmans had answered, "Do not ever touch their women! If you do so, they will turn against you." Thus there was not a single case where the Japanese molested a Zo woman.

When the Japanese first reached the Zo villages they behaved politely, and they took nothing by force. They came to sit around the fire places and share food the villagers cooked. But as they were still advancing they asked for guides, and the villagers had to supply them. They taught these guides how to survive in the jungle with little food, and their supplies were evenly distributed.

Later their attitudes changed as their supplies grew thin, and herds of cattle belonging to the villagers were slaughtered. Food grains were collected against payment with Burmese currency, which became useless after the war. Food was becoming scarce as it was not possible for the people to cultivate because of the war, and in the later part of the war the Japanese took by force any food they could find.

As soon as the Japanese occupied East Zoram they formed a local army known as the Chin Defence Army (CDA). Those who were used as guides and interpreters were made officers. Ngawcinpau and Thangzahau became lieutenants. Some Zo men were sent to Leilum for officers' training. They were Kimngin (Khuasak), Vungsuan (Tedim), Ngozam (Thuklai), Pumzakam (Khuasak), Khupsavung (Tedim), Teldolian (Tedim), Cijthang (Tedim), Luahcin (Tedim) and N. Bil (Hualngo). The CDA's main objective was to drive away the remnants of the British troops in Zoram; The CDA accordingly had some skirmishes with British troops west of the Manipur River, where Ngawcinpau, Thangzahau, Luacin, Cinthang and N. Bil were captured by the British. They were tried and found guilty of helping the Japanese and were put in various jails in India.

After some months in Zoram the Japanese showed their methods of ruling an occupied country. Contrary to their propaganda the Japanese applied very cruel methods in ruling the Zo country.

Vumkohau wrote⁹⁷, "Every educated person who served with distinction with the British against the Japanese before their occupation of the Chin Hills was 'invited' from time to time to report to Tedim. Most of the invitees expressed unwillingness to serve in the new administration. When they got to Tedim, the divisional headquarters of the Japanese army for north Burma and East India, they found that things were not moving as they expected. Some of the Chiefs who took active command of their clan Levies found themselves in chains; many persons were slapped as they reported. Other Chiefs were required to reside near the Japanese camps; guns were requisitioned lest they were used for revolt. Some suspected as spies for the British were, slapped, boxed, and beaten to death in drawing rooms within sight of their families. All were required to bow low in front of the Japanese officers. One had to announce one's name every time one reported to the Japanese commissioner. Many a fat and haughty person during the British days became slim and cautious overnight. As soon as the Japanese reached the heart of the Chin Hills, they started killing people on the slightest suspicion. I believe this was to frighten the people and to show who the real masters were for the fact that they would not win the love or respect of the place they occupied in the ordinary way. When a village was suspected of being pro-British, they would send for the headman with one or two elders. If there was firing of the Taungya, they would accuse the headman of siding with the British enemy and kill him on the spot, sending out some circulars the next day that the headman of such and such town had been killed for having cooperated with the British. Fear was in everybody's mind. Nobody would dare speak evil against the occupying forces who were called 'To Thak', new masters." With the new master there appeared terms such as 'cut throat' in everyday language.

In order to look after the interests of the undefended local Zo population an organization called the "Chin Leaders Freedom League" was secretly formed. The founding members were Vumkohau, Pauzakam, Khaimunmang, Vulzathang, Ginzatuang, Lunpum, Summang, Awnngin, Zuktsio and Pi Donkoting. But the Japanese had something else in mind. They drafted the members of the Chin Leaders Freedom League to serve as civilian officers in the Japanese military administration at the Japanese Military Academy at Tedim. Earlier appointees Tualkam

and Zabiak were then promoted to captains in the Japanese Army, and they acted as administrative officers. Vumkohau became the educational officer and headquarter assistant to Inada, the Japanese cooperation commissioner. Songpau and Ginzatuang were made chui (assistants). The Japanese then moved their administrative center from Tedim to Tuikhiang, and the CDA officers served as guides. Suanghau, Ngolian, Lianhawng, Mangkonang, Ginzatuang and Vulzathang were transferred to Tuikhiang. Vumkohau and Pauzakam were left as administrators at the General Headquarter at Tedim.

At the end of 1943 the Japanese ordered that British troop formations must be reported to Japanese officers, and persons hiding such knowledge were threatened with decapitation. There were false reports by some young irresponsible people that resulted in the torture and decapitation of others. Among them was Hauzahen, who was the high priest in the Sizang-Tedim area. Other sufferings of the people were the shortage of food and the requisition of forced labor. The people were robbed of their food grains, and their cattle were slaughtered. Protesting these activities to the Japanese resulted in death sentences being passed and carried out. Labourers to carry Japanese war materials and to build roads and camps were in constant demand and were forced from the villages. Villages where there were Japanese were also bombed by the R.A.F. Unhappy with the harsh Japanese treatment the people formed the Sakte Independence Army (SIA) at Mualbem. Chief Hauzalian (Suangzang), Thawngcinthang (Saizang) and the headmen of Gungal villages were the founders of this SIA. The SIA was joined by Singlian and Suanglian of Sizang and became the Sakte and Sizang Independence Army (S.I.A.)

The resistance movement quickly spread to Ngawn, Falam, Zahau and Haka areas, and in September 1944 open rebellion against the Japanese was launched. After being suppressed for so long the Zo people were exploding for freedom, and an organization called "Free Chin" was born. The Free Chins attacked the Japanese at Mualbem, Sualim, Suangaktuam and Sakhiang, and Phutthang and his men drove the Japanese from Suangpi and Phunom areas. The Ngawn also cleared the Vazang area of Japanese. The success of the Free Chin, or as it was then known the Chin Independence Army (CIA), was enormous. But this could only happen because the Japanese strength had been

concentrated for the drive to India. Had the Japanese had a stronger force there would have been catastrophic results for the Zo people. The success was also due to the fact that the Japanese were deprived of their main source of supply, transportation and labour.

Major C.L. Burne paid his tribute to the CIA in a letter to Vumkohau, "I cannot speak too highly of the fighting spirit shown by these men, who stood up, in many cases, to daily shelling by artillery and determined counter attacks by the enemy armed with modern weapons. And not only the men. On occasions of alarm, women also armed themselves with axes and dahs, and, in addition, brought food to their menfolk while under fire."

"In these reports it would be invidious to mention names of the rank and file, among whom there were many cases of individual heroism and example. One hundred percent cooperation was given by all and every villager, if not actually fighting, did magnificent, if less spectacular work by carrying loads and supplying food gratis from their depleted stocks. It must be remembered that the Free Chins were not rationed nor were they paid."

In the southern Zo country, in the valley of Kaladan, the Japanese were very friendly at the beginning of their occupation. They had been sending Indian and Burmese agents to India from Arakan, but the intelligence they received was unsatisfactory. The Japanese Commander in Arakan, Lieutenant General Tanaya, was not content with the intelligence network which simply ran agents into India. Therefore he gave orders to recruit Zo agents along with Arakanese, Indian and Burman. The Japanese intelligence network under Captain Tanaka Seirokuro was very successful when Zo agents were employed.

At first the Masho and Khami agents collected news on the movements of the West African Division as it moved south down the Kaladan Valley. As Zo settlements stretched without political demarcations from the Valley of Kaladan to Bandurban and Chiringa, Masho and Khami agents could easily infiltrate into Chittagong and head west in Bengal. Zo agents were very happy with the small payments they received from the Japanese, so much so that they even offered Tanaka the highest priced local bride. The bride price was set at 200 yen.

The Japanese defeat at the beginning of 1945 changed conditions

however. The Japanese intelligence network depended on getting their food supply from the local people, and in many instances the Japanese used unfriendly methods to obtain food." Thus Zo people attacked the base of the intelligence unit, slaughtering the Japanese almost to a man.

CHAPTER 6

ZO PEOPLE IN BURMA

The political boundaries of the Union of Burma are largely the result of British colonial efforts. When the Kingdom of Burma fell to the British in 1885, Thibaw, the King of Burma, controlled the Irrawaddy Valley as far north as Bhamo.

Zo tribesmen however had never been ruled by the Burmans. Just before the British conquest, in a period of expansion, King Bodawpaya raided and claimed areas of Manipur and Assam bordering Zo, but no attempt was made to claim Zo. Neither, at the signing of the Treaty of Yandabo in 1834, were the Burmans interested in the hilly regions surrounding the Kabaw valley. The British however, drew a imaginary line across Zo country and allotted a part to Manipur. When Britain separated India and Burma in 1937 the line became the Burma-India boundary. Thus a part of Zo country was incorporated into Burma and another part into India. (Zo people in India will be discussed in the next chapter.)

Although the majority of Zo people left the Chindwin, Kale, Kabaw and Myittha Valleys during the fourteenth century, there were Zo who never left the area or who returned after leaving. One group which never left was the Yaw clan.

Until the reign of Sao Saw Ke, the Shan king of Ava, the Zo home area west of the Chindwin was ruled by the Shan Sawbwas. Burmese Kings Alaungpaya, Bodawpaya and Mindonmin conquered the Shan Sawbwas from time to time on their way to attack Manipur or Assam. The Kabaw Valley was crossed so often by invading armies of Burmans and Manipuris that both the Burmese King and the Manipur Raja claimed it as their dominion in 1826. In reality the Shan Sawbwas, perhaps since the ninth century A.D., were independent, and the Burmese kings or the Manipuris recognized them as rulers of the valleys—up to the coming of the British. The few Zo people there never asserted political influence, and they lived in marginal areas of the plains from which they could easily join their folks if attacked by the Shans. There were always Zo settlements some miles

north of Kalemmyo and in Sihaung areas, mostly protected by the chiefs of Falam.

The Asho were similar and in times of conflict may have moved to a hostile Arakan country and lower Burma, instead of returning to the hills. As soon as peace was attained in the Kale, Kabaw and Myittha Valleys Zo people started to settle down in the area. For example, there were only a few Sizang in the Tahan area before the British appearance, but their number increased in no time.

Many new Zo villages sprang up along the hill-valley borders after the early 1900s. According to Lalthangliana⁴⁰ the Lusei (Mizo), who are a large proportion of the Zo people in the Kale-Kabaw Valleys, came to the Tahan area in 1925. The majority of "Mizos" however came after Burmese independence, in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The substantial increase of Zo population in the valley was due to the introduction of Western medicine, which could cure malaria, the disease that had kept Zo people away from the valley plains for so long. Another reason was the adaptation to a tropical climate by those who served in the army, police and other professions in Burma. After adopting Burmese eating habits it was difficult to return to Zo eating" habits. Zo people in Burma now live in the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha Valleys, lower Burma, in Arakan, the Somra Tracts and the Hkamti District, in addition to the 400,000 Zo in the "Chin State" or East - Zoram.

,In the Kale-Kabaw area Zo make up about 40 percent of the population; e.g., there were 60,000 Zo in the Kale valley in 1971. In Arakan the Zo people are represented by Khami and Masho, totalling about 100,000 people. In lower Burma, the Asho total about 300,000 people.

In Somra Tract, the Pongniu, Sawhaw, Kayau and Hemi clans speak the Kalaw dialect, which is very similar to Laizo. Thado or Khuangsai clans occupy the Nkamti district. There are about 50,000 Zo in these two areas.

The people in the Somra Tracts and Hkamti district have had their own political course. During British rule these areas were administered by a District Superintendent. On March 16, 1946, as independence was eminent, Mr. McNath, the District Superintendent,

invited the chiefs for a conference and asked them whether they would like to join India or Burma. The chiefs decided overwhelmingly to join India, but Mr. McNath then told them that they would have to join Burma. The chiefs immediately agreed to join the Chin Hills in Burma. Mr. Kerogg, who replaced Mr. McNath, did not want the Zo people to join the Chin Hills District, as he preferred the district to be part of Burma proper. He strongly campaigned for his cause by confiscating guns from chiefs who opposed his ideas and by presenting guns to chiefs who supported him.

In 1947, at the Panglong conference, the Zo delegation—led by Zavum and with Tuvél, Zawzati, Ginzam and Zathuam as members—expressed a wish to join the Chin Hills. Two members of the delegation however wanted to join Burma proper. None of the delegates could speak the Burmese or English languages, so they could not properly communicate with the Burmese delegation nor the later established Commission for Frontier Areas Inquiry. When delegates from Somra Tract and the Hkamti district could not unanimously agree on whether to join the Chin Hills or Burma proper the Burmans took the advantage by promising the chairman of the Inquiry Commission that they would settle the matter by popular vote. Up to the present day there has been no such mandate in either the Somra Tracts or Hkamti District.

In 1948 Zathuam was selected to represent the area in the Burma parliament. He was given full political power to carry forward the Zo people's wish, which was to join the Chin Hills or the then Chin Special Division. In Rangoon, U Nu, the Prime Minister of Burma, refused to see Zathuam. In the district Mr. Kerogg was still trying to protect the people of the valley and was campaigning heavily against the district joining the Chin Special Division. Thus in 1949 Zathuam resigned from parliament in frustration. Today the Somra Tract and Hkamti District are incorporated into the Mandalay Division.

Early Relations with Burman

Early relations between Zo and the Burman of the border areas were best recorded in his diary by Dr. E. H. East M.D., a Baptist missionary.

"January 19, 1905; I am now two days hard marching South of Haka,

and close to the border of Burma and there is no village in the Chin Hill district south of Rua Van.

The old chief took me out of the village and up into a high mountain and then out on the brow of it and as we stood there he stretched out his right hand and pointed to the country below. 'Here,' he said, 'we sat and planned our raids upon the Khol Me Kwa (Kawl Mi Khua or Burmese villages) before the white men came and took our lands away. Here I sat with my father and his father in the council of war as we sharpened our swords and our spears and when all were ready we cautiously wended our way down and we separated into several parties and sent spies to a certain village and then we camped far enough away so the dogs could not hear us. Early in the morning while the Burmans were still sleepy we surrounded the village and gave our war cry and killed all men, made prisoners of the women and children and brought them with us home. All cattle we took with us and all the grain. The women and children became our slaves. After these wars we had many feasts. Now the white men have made us slaves and we have to work hard to make our food by tilling the fields. Tell me, how long will the white men 'sit' up here?"

"Many times I have been asked, 'How long will the Engle Mi (English) sit in our country?"

"Suppose they leave you, what will you do then?"

"I and my people will make war upon our old enemies as we did before the white men came."

There was minimal contact between Zo and Burmans before forming the Union of Burma. In fact, Zo contacts with Burmans were only with Shan-Burmans in the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha valleys. Thus both Zo and Burmans, due to their lack of direct communication, suffered under preconceived culturally stereotypic notions of one another.⁴³ Zo did not venture to Burma because of widespread tropical diseases in the plains and because of their lack of knowledge about how to behave in the hot climate. The Zo knew the soil in Burma to be fertile and productive, and that the Burman had a better material culture than his. He was also aware of the civilization of the Burman but was not inclined to imitate it, because he viewed Burmese social behaviour with contempt. He differed with the Burman in niceties of value. A Burman valued elegant food, beautiful clothing, and cleanliness.

Zo similarly liked delicious food but viewed Burmese epicurean mannerisms in daily life as a bad habit. One must note that this was primarily because the foods produced in Zo country were not as bountiful as those produced in the plains, and ultimately a Zo must eat what he can produce. It was very difficult for Burman slaves to survive in the hills on Zo food. Slaves were generally treated well, but the food was a torture for the Burmans. Zo knowledge of Burmans was mostly through slaves and he saw it as a Burman weakness when they had difficulty in surviving on Zo food.

Zo had names for persons who were addicted to fine food. They called them *ui co* or holder of dog's character and also *ui san* or red dog; consequently Zo came to identify the Burman by these names. There is a Zo parable of two rich men—one Zo, the other Burman—who disagreed as to who was wealthiest. After much debate a contest was arranged. On the first day one man would eat while the other watched, and on the following day their roles would be reversed. Nonpartisan judges would observe the watcher, and if he salivated or swallowed he would lose the contest. The Burman wagered his cattle herd, while the Zo bet his herd of mithun. It was decided that the Burman would eat the first day. He subsequently had his servants prepare a lavish feast of delicacies. The Zo watched while the Burman feasted and yet did not swallow. The following day the Zo came to the table, but there was nothing prepared. Instead he produced one small green mango from his pouch. The Burman could not help but salivate as the Zo ate the sour fruit. The judges ruled that the Burman swallowed thrice and therefore announced the Zo as the winner of the contest. The cattle were then driven to the hills where the Zo resided.

When a Zo father looked for his prospective daughter-in-law, he preferred one who did not have a reputation as a lover of fine food. Zo put value on good *zu*, impressive housing, hunting trophies and ceremonies. A Zo was aware of the relative poverty and the difficulties of his existence in the hills, but he preferred his own hilly region because of its cool climate, its relative freedom from tropical diseases and its beauty.

Zo refer to Burman as *Kawl* and to the country they inhabit as *Kawlram*, in a somewhat derogatory sense. *Kawl* means "under" or "below", therefore *Kawl* must have originally referred to the

plain dellers. Zo profess low regard for Burmans and Burman social behavior, but they envy the cleverness of the Burmans and their ability to take advantage of them in various ways. The best examples of these were the massacre of Shurkhuas at Kan and the behooding of all the males from the village of Mualnuam at Nansaungpu. Burma's constitution was a recent example. Zo people feel that they are in constant danger of exploitation by the Burmans, and therefore the term Kawl for the Burmans is associated with ill-bred, unstable, tricky, and treacherous character.

Some Zo legends tell tales of Zo-Burman relationships. One version which is common in areas bordering Burma is about how the Zo peoples' writing was usurped. "In the Kanpetlet story there were two children, the offspring of the first man and woman. When they came of age, a piece of leather was dropped from the sky for the first boy, but being uneducated he did not know it was to be used for writing. He cooked and ate it.... Later a piece of leather was dropped for the second boy. The boy wrote on it and became the ancestor of the Burman people."

"The Hnaring legend, which may be taken as a representative of the Haka-Falam area. . . . It is a tale of three brothers who had been given two forms of writing: writing with charcoal on stones and writing on leather. Two of the brothers went off to Burma, and it is thought they were ancestral to the Burmans. The third brother, who was the ancestor of the Chin, lost the writing on stone in some undisclosed way. He also lost writing on leather because a dog ran off with the leather and ate it." Lehman. In the Sizang-Tedim area the legend is similar. The tale simply explains why the Zo lost their writing. Zo wrote on leather, which was eaten by a dog. The Burmese wrote on tree leaves and at one time the leaves were burnt, but the Burmans could easily read from the still intact ash.

These legends seem to be common to people living close to the Burmese-Zo border, as people living farther away from Burman influences have no similar legends. Zahau, Hualngo and Lusei claimed that they originated from the Shan. Matu in the southern interior had no stories relating to the Burman, and Thado, who lived close to the Meitei, had tales of associations with the Meitei.

Sizang also had a legend of their contact with a Burmese king who wanted to dominate Zo. From the plains of Kale the king sent two immortal soldiers, who were tattooed over the whole body, to Thangmual (Fort White). The Sizang ambushed the two and shot them. That was the Burmese king's only attempt to annex Zo country.

There were times in the recent past when certain Zo chieftainships helped a Burman king or the state of Burma in wars against Manipur. Some Zo warriors were even said to have fought for the Burman king Alaungpaya, against the Mon in lower Burma (Syiam). Zo warriors however acted as they pleased and left the wars as soon as their personal aggrandizement was fulfilled.

Steps to Zo - Burman Union

After the Second World War the British resumed their rule over the Zo people, but things began to change quickly. In India and Burma nationalist politicians such as Mahatma Gandhi Jawarlal Nehru, U Saw and General Aung San were demanding political independence from the British government. In 1945, Sir Winston Churchill and his conservative party lost their power. The Labour Party, with Clement Attlee as its leader, was favourable to the idea of giving the colonies their independence.

Under British rule East and West Zoram were excluded from the legislatures of Burma and India, because Zo people were not Burmans or Indians in speech and because they differed in aspects of culture, customs and religion. Beginning in 1937 both Burma and India had been administering responsible provincial governments, but by the end of the war independence was an accomplished fact for India only, because she had not been torn by the war.

There was no political stability in Burma before or during the war, as from 1937 to 1942 there had been four Prime Ministers. And the availability of arms and the hatred of British colonialism led several Burman organizations, such as Aung San's antifascist organization, to fight the British during the war. Aung San was later recognized by the British as the Burmese people's representative, despite his wartime association with the Japanese.

Aung San soon threatened the British by saying that his Anti-Fascist Freedom-League (AFPEL) would rise in rebellion unless

immediate independence was granted. On December 20, 1946, Mr. Attlee, the British Prime Minister, announced in the House of Parliament a new policy for Burma's future. The British government then invited a Burmese delegation, lead by Aung San, to London, and the treaty known as the Attlee-Aung San agreement was signed on January 27, 1947.

Included in the conclusions reached during conversations between his Majesty's government and the delegation from the Executive Council of the Governor of Burma were the following articles :

"8. Frontier areas:

It is the agreed objective of both His Majesty's government and the Burmese Delegates to achieve early unification of the Frontier Areas and Ministerial Burma with the free consent of the inhabitants of those areas. At the time it is agreed that the people of the Frontier Areas should, in respect of common interest, be closely associated with the government of Burma in a manner acceptable to both parties. For this purpose it has been agreed :

- (a) There shall be free intercourse between the peoples of the Frontier Areas and the people of Ministerial Burma without hindrance.
- (b) The leaders and the representatives of the peoples of the Frontier Areas shall be asked, either at the Panglong conference to be held at the beginning of next month, or at a special conference to be convened for the purpose of expressing their views upon the form of association with the government of Burma which they consider acceptable during the transition period, whether :
 - (1) by the appointment of a small group of frontier area representatives to advise the Governor on frontier affairs and to have close liaison with the executive council or
 - (2) by the appointment of one frontier area representative as executive councilor in charge of Frontier Affairs, or
 - (3) by some other method.

- (c) After the Panglong meeting, or the special conference, His Majesty's government and the government of Burma will agree upon the best method of advancing their common aims in accordance with the expressed views of the peoples of the Frontier Areas.
- (d) A committee of Inquiry shall be set forthwith as to the best method of associating the frontier peoples with the working out of the new constitution of Burma. Such Committees will consist of equal numbers of persons from Ministerial Burma, nominated by the executive council, and of persons from the Frontier Areas, nominated by the Governor after consultation with the leaders of those areas, with a neutral chairman from outside Burma selected by agreement. Such committee shall be asked to report to the government of Burma and His Majesty's government before the summoning of the Constituent Assembly."

The Frontier areas of Burma, which are the Karen Hills, the Kaya Chieftainship, the Shan territory (several Chieftainships), the Kachin Hills and East Zoram (Chin Hills), form an area nearly the size of Burma proper. Today the frontier areas comprise 47% of the total area of Burma. Aung San was therefore determined to add these areas to Burma.

Thus it was General Aung San who gained independence for Burma. He incorporated small pre-British independent Kingdoms Shan, Karenni, Kachin, and Zo (only the eastern part) bordering Burma into independent Burma.

Aung San was born in 1915 at Natmauk in Magwe district in an upper class family. He did well in school and joined the University of Rangoon. There he agitated against the colonial university administration. Eventually, because of his hard work, devotion to duty, and impressive patriotism, he became the president of the Students Union and the Editor of Oway, the Student Union's Magazine. He was 21 in 1936, when he led the country wide student strike which forced the university authorities to make amendments in their administration rules.

In 1938 Aung San joined the Dohbama-Asiayone (Thakins)

becoming the General Secretary. He also joined the All Burma Peasant's League. Both organizations' objectivity was to free Burma from colonialism. He was soon forced to go underground because such activities were not tolerated by the colonial administration. Aung San slipped to China and then to Japan, where, with other patriotic Burmans - the Thirty Comrades—he received military training. He was back in Burma in 1942 as the Commanding Officer of the Burma Independence Army (BIA). When Japan occupied Burma and gave nominal independence, he was made a major-general by the Japanese Emperor and became the Defense Minister in Dr. Ba Maw's Burmese Government. However, Japan did not respect the sovereignty of Burma and moreover, Japan was losing the war. Aung San turned his back against his former allies and formed the Anti Facist Freedom League and joined the British.

After the war Aung San, as the undisputed leader of the AFPFL, strove for Burma's independence. Aung San, perhaps as the only politician, envisioned Burma as a union with indigenous races surrounding Burma. In a statement entitled, Defence of Burma, January 30, 1945, he formulated minority rights in the future independent Burma. He said, "They must be given proper place in the State. They must have their political, economic, and social rights defined and accorded. They must have employment. They must have their own rights of representation. They must have equal opportunity in all spheres of the state. There must be no racial or religious discrimination. Any books, songs, signs, symbols, names, etc., which foster such ideas must be officially banned. And we must carry out special uplift work amongst them so that they could be brought to our level and finally to the world level together with us."

Aung San recognized cultural, economical, linguistic and other differences between the minorities and the Burman. He wanted these differences retained and he allowed each group to keep "its basic elements of its historic identity and interests.

He stood for local autonomy for ethnic minorities. He formulated a non integrated Burma Army, where Shan, Karen, or Zo formed their own battalions. He stated: ". . . should be organized as class battalions, i.e., a Burman will be posted to a battalion consisting only of Burmans, and a Karen will be posted to a battalion consisting only of Karens." He continued and said that each

unit should be placed in charge of officers belonging to the respective ethnic community. He further said : "In the case of the Shans, the Kachins and the Chins also, they will be permitted to form class battalions in the Burma Army. We desire that such battalions of the Burma Army as are composed of the indigenous races of Burma should, except in the exigencies of active military operations, be organized into brigades and other higher military formations consisting only of such races.

For Aung San National Unity was of prime importance for the future of Burma. He said, ". . . unity of the entire people, irrespective of race, religion, sex and sectarian and party interests, in action and not in words for national tasks and objectives." And further, "On national questions they should and must come together and work together without sectarianism in their affairs." At the Panglong conference Aung San said, ". . . the Hill people would be allowed to administer their own areas in any way they please and the Burmese would not interfere in their internal administration."¹¹⁴ Aung San, therefore, clearly understood the wishes of the Hill people and without much difficulty he won the hearts (livers) of the leaders of the non Burmese frontier people to join Burma at the Panglong conference.

Panglong Conference

Invitations to take part in the conference to be held in February, 1947, at Panglong, Shan territory were sent out to important Zo chiefs such as Thangtinlian, Pumzamang, and Hlurhmung. Most of the chiefs refused to take part because to join Burma would mean loss of their power. Chiefs such as Thangtinlian, Pumzamang, and Vanhmung did not want to join Burma. They wanted the British to stay, or if they were to go, the chiefs wanted Zoram to be independent.

During the British administration the southern part of Zo country was not included in the Chin Hills District; therefore only representatives from Haka, Falam, and the Tedim area were invited. The Zo delegation was comprised of Hlurhmung, Chief of Lumbang; Thawngzakhup, Chief of Saizang; and Kiomang, Chief of Haka. Vumkohau of Thuklai was included in the conference because he had played an active role as civil administrator during the Japanese occupation, and he had later led the

Siyin Independence Army against the Japanese. He was sent to the conference as the representative of Sizang. Moreover, because he was educated at Sagaing High School, he spoke fluent Burmese and English. There were very few Zo who had such a knowledge of languages, and he was used by the delegation as their interpreter. He was therefore regarded by other areas' representatives as spokesman of the Zo delegation. Singlian (Limkhai), who was fluent in the Burmese language, also took part in the delegation.

The Shan were represented by their Sawbwas, including Sao Shwe Taike, the Sawbwa of Yawngnhwe. The Kachin were represented by their Duwas or chiefs, among them the Duwa Sinwa Nawng. Kaya and Karen did not send representative. The Burmans were represented by General Aung San and his advisors, headed by U Tin Htut.

The Zo delegation had no political experience. Neither, with, the exception of Vumkhohau and Singlian, could they understand Burmese or English well. And in addition they were not aware of the political implications involved in joining or not joining Burma.

The members of the Burmese delegation made it appear that everyone of them had a blood mixture with the Shan or Arakanese to suppress the idea of racial differences. Aung San claimed that he had 50 percent Zo blood in his veins. Zo people had been skeptical about Burmese ability to run a government and questioned the trustworthiness of the Burman. When Captain Tinzam, Commanding Officer of the Chin Hills Battalion, met Aung San in Meiktila, he expresses his doubt of the ability of a Burmese government to pay pensions to retired soldiers. He said to Aung San, "The British promised us pension when we retire from the army. Will you do the same? Will you be able to pay us?" Aung San explained carefully by saying that it would be the proceeds of the farmers that would pay the pensions.

The Burmese delegation went to Panglong knowing that Zo people did not trust the Burmese ability to govern. Contrary to their expectation of an arrogant and treacherous Burman, the Zo delegation met Aung San, who was understanding, honest and direct. In wooing the delegations of the non-Burmans, Aung San did not only gave lectures on the future of the country to be federated as Burma, he also used small talks to convince the delegations to join Burma. Vumkohau valued an evening when

Aung San went to the camp of the Zo delegation and drank tea. In these small talks, Zo delegation asked what they wanted; schools, hospitals, and roads. Aung San promised everything, even more privileges to the Zo people than the delegation had ever dreamed of obtaining from a Burmese government. He told the delegates that the Presidency and the Prime Ministership of the government of Burma were open to all citizens and that without discriminations, Zo, Burman, Kachin, and Shan students would be sent abroad for studies. Therefore, the Zo delegation was easily impressed by the Burmese delegation, especially Aung San. There was neither contempt for condescension in his attitude towards the Zo. "The Chin mandate sought guarantee from Bogyoke to opening of schools in the hills, provision of finance for the development of the Chin Hills, development of communication and retention of the Chin Rifles battalions in the Burma Army. Bogyoke Aung San was touched by the simplicity and modesty of the terms in the Chin mandate and readily gave his assent to all the demands.

The Shan had ruled Burma after the collapse of the Pagan dynasty. Since then they always had a powerful and stable monarchy or Sawbwa system in the Shan plateau. When the last king of Burma, Thibaw, was deposed and exiled by the British the power of a Shan Sawbwa was demonstrated by the Sawbwa of Yawngghwe, when he sent a force to rescue him. The Shan did not feel historically inferior to the Burman. They had rich natural resources and a developed agricultural system. Like the Burman the Shan were Buddhists, which brought similar civilizations to both of them. Because of their experiences with the Burman, the leaders of the Shans at Panglong hesitated to join Burma.

The Kachin had successfully defended their independence against the Shan, Chinese, Burman, and Japanese. It had taken many years until 1930 for the British to subdue them. They were unwilling to join Burma because they strongly wanted to be independent. The Shan and Kachin delegations talked about The Karens boycotted the Panglong conference and applied unsuccessfully for a separate state of their own. They were the most advanced people in Burma in terms of education and rank in the British-Burma armed forces, and they had cooperated closely with the British. They expected the British to return the favor and honor their loyalty. Additionally, they had had

racial clashes with Burmans in 1941 in the Irrawaddy Delta.

The straightforwardness, sincerity, and determination of Aung San however won the hearts of the Zo delegation. They announced their decision to join Burma earlier than the Shans and Kachins. It was this announcement that made the Shans and Kachins also decide to join Burma. According to Vumkohau⁹⁷; "On account of his proved sincerity we never believe that he would die so soon nor that there would ever be any racial or religious discrimination in the future history of the union." The Zo delegation did not ask for statehood. They thought they would be better off if they were fully integrated into Burma, because Zoram had no natural resources.

Aung San made a pact with the Kachin leader Duwa Sinwa Nawng. In return for adherence of the Kachins to Burma, the Kachin should receive a separate state comprising the Bhairio and Myitkyina districts. The Shan Sawbwas received assurances regarding their status and their constitution of a separate Shan state Tinker.

Aung San and his advisor U Tin Htut decided to give eastern Zoram special administrative status because the Zo people wanted to maintain their old customary law. Thus eastern Zoram was made an administrative division of Burma, with special status, hence to be called the "Special Division of the Chins".

The Zo delegation discussed amongst themselves whether western Zoram (Lushai Hills) should be incorporated with eastern Zoram (Chin Hills). They did not however raise this question at the conference as the matter was too big for them to handle. According to Singlian they did not understand the definition of an autonomous state, and the only question was whether to join or not to join. They were grateful that the Burmans were ready to include eastern Zoram in Burma. After three days of discussion the Panglong agreement was signed on February 12, 1947.

Frontier Areas Committee of Inquiry

The Frontier Areas Committee of Inquiry was formed, with D. R. Rees Williams as chairman, after the signing of the Panglong agreement. From its headquarters at Maymyo the committee conducted a whirlwind inquiry during March and April, 1947. There the committee heard evidence from representatives of many tribal groups. The evidence was generally in favour of association with Burma and for autonomy in internal administration, coupled with the right to secede from Burma if the association should prove burdensome.

When interviewed by the Frontier Areas Committee of Inquiry, the Zo delegation agreed to join the Union of Burma with the condition that customary laws would be retained and respected.

A part of the discussion follows :

Chief Thangtinlian; "As we have said in our memorandum, we should like to go into Burma proper. However, as far as the preservation of Zo customs is concerned, we should like to deal with that matter ourselves."

Chief Pumzang; "If we could preserve our ancient culture, we should like to join Burma proper."

Singlian; "We want to control our internal affairs ourselves and for the rest we should like to join Burma proper."

Chairman; "What internal affairs do you mean?"

Singlian; "Ancient customs."

Kanpetlet representative; "We suggest that the customary law be applied to all legal matters including criminal offences."

Chairman to Lunpu (Masho); "What do your people want?"

Lunpu; "We want to join with Burma, but we want our people to be ruled according to our customs."

Chairman; "What sort of guarantee do you want from the government of Burma about the retention of your customs?"

Lunpu; "We want to decide all the cases by ourselves."

When Savut (Hualngo) requested the inclusion of the Naga Somra District and the Hkamti Tract in Zoram, the Burmese members of the Committee replied that they would solve the

problem to the satisfaction of all concerned. The Naga district of Burma remained in the Mandalay Division under direct Burmese rule, and the Committee recommended autonomous states for the Shan and the Kachin.

In Zoram a mass meeting was held in Falam on the 20th of February, 1947. The meeting was attended by Zo representatives from Tedim, Falam, Haka, Matupi, Mindat, and Paletwa districts. At the meeting it was decided to unite these six districts as the Chin Special Division, and the date February 20th was adopted as Zo National Day. Six representatives were nominated in the meeting to represent the Zo people in the British Burma parliament.

Members nominated were : Vumkhohau, Waumthumaung, Mangtungnung, Htathlaing, Ngunto, and Tialdum.

At the same meeting an election was held to select a Zo representative to act as Executive Counselor in the Executive Council of the Governor of Burma. There were three candidates and the votes tallied were : Vumkhohau 84, Tialdum 7, and Waumthumaung 1.

Thus Vumkhohau became Zo Counselor in Burma's Provincial Government in March, 1947. During the second half of 1947 the main occupation of the government of Prime Minister Aung San was the drafting of the Burma Constitution, which took four months.

Aung San was the only Burman trusted by the frontier people, and he might have been the only Burman capable of uniting the frontier people and the Burmans. It is doubtful though whether he would have been able to unite the Burmans. He was responsible for the expulsion of the Communists led by his brother-in-law Thakin Than Tun, who went underground and started a civil war that destroyed any hope of economic development in Burma.

To the grief of most people in the newly formed Union of Burma, Aung San and most of his cabinet members were assassinated by gunmen hired by U Saw, a former Prime Minister of Burma and a political rival of Aung San. The only Burman, who had harvested the trust and friendship of the frontier people, and the only Burman who might have the capability to bring Burma forward was discarded before he had the chance to lead the nation. To the writing of this page, Burma has not produced a leader capable of tracing the foot steps of Aung San. U Tin Htut,

who was the architect of Burma's road to the union with the frontier people befell a similar brutal fate. The pattern of Burma's political leadership was thus shaped : application of force to gain power.

Vumkhohau, the Zo Executive Counselor, went to London with Thakin Nu, who took over the AFPFL leadership, and signed the Nu-Atlee-Agreement, which granted Burma its independence on January 4, 1948.

The Constitution of Burma and Its Effects on Zo People

The "Constitution was adopted by the newly formed Burmese government. Section V of the constitution directly concerns the Zo people.

"Part V.—Special Division of the Chins

196. There shall be a Special Division of the Chins comprising such areas in the Chin Hills District and the Arakan Hill Tracts as may be determined by the President.

197. (1) A Chin Affairs Council shall be constituted consisting of all the members of Parliament representing the Chins:

(2) A member of the Union Government to be known as 'the Minister for Chin Affairs' shall be appointed by the President on the nomination of the Prime Minister acting in consultation with the Chin Affairs Council, from amongst the members of the Parliament representing the Chins.

(3) Subject to the powers of the Union Government are:

(i) the general administration of the Special Division and, in particular all matters relating to recruitment to the civil services in the Special Division, to posting and transfers, and to disciplinary matters relating to these services and - .

(ii) all matters relating to schools and cultural institutions in the Special Division shall be under the superintendence, direction and control of the Minister for Chin Affairs.

(4) The Chin Affairs Council shall aid and advise the Minister in the discharge of his duties.

(5) Any member of the Council who shall have ceased to be a member of Parliament shall

be deemed to have vacated his seat in the Council but he may continue to carry on his duties until his successor shall have been elected.

198. Subject to the provisions of this constitution, all matters relating to the powers and duties of the Minister and of the Council and their relations to each other and to the Union Government shall be determined by law."

Among the non-Burmese nationals there were no legal experts, and the drafting of the constitution was absolutely in the hands of the Burmans. The writers of the Constitution recognized the linguistic, cultural and customary law distinctions of the Zo people. However, economic aspects, industrial and natural resource exploitation and their potential were written for the benefit of the Burmese. In theory the constitution respected the distinctive identity of the Zo people, but the economic well-being of the Zo (among other frontier peoples) was in complete control of the Burmans. This fact was admitted by U Chan Htun, the constitutional advisor, ". . .our constitution though in theory federal, is in practice unitary." Tinker¹⁰⁷

Dr. Kyaw Thet, Professor of Burmese History at Rangoon University, explained how it had been possible for the Burman to write the constitution in their favour. "When independence came it was therefore easy to write into the constitution clauses ensuring central control over education, finance, revenue, police, defence, and foreign policy. The few individuals who might have protested in the name of the minorities were disarmed by being asked to become part of the central control as ministers, generals, permanent secretaries, or ambassadors. Today eight years after independence, a glance of the ministers and officials will show that this method of political integration is still being used and successfully."38

The method seemed to work during the first decade of independence. The frontier people could not be fooled very long. Their dissatisfaction exploded into armed uprisings in the sixties and are still rampant today.

The Council of Zo Affairs

Starting 1951, parliamentary elections were held every four years

in which one member of the Chamber of Deputies and two members of Chamber of Nationalities were elected from each of the six districts of East Zoram. This made eighteen members of parliament. The office of the Minister for the Chin Special Division, the Chairman of the "Chin Council", and the Parliamentary Secretary were in Rangoon. The minister received, like all Burmese cabinet ministers, one thousand seven hundred kyats a month, and the government provided him with a house and an automobile. The Chairman and the Parliamentary Secretary also received salaries compatible to high ranking civil servants and each was also provided with a house and an automobile of less luxurious quality. The other members of Parliament were provided with certain traveling concessions. Except for two parliamentary debate sessions, one in September for the introduction of the budget and the other in March, they remained in Zoram.

At attaining independence the members of parliament were Vumkhohau (Thuklai), Thawngcinthang (Tedim), Captain Mangtungnung (Muizawl), Wuamthumaung (Kanpetlet), Savuta (Falam), Tialdum (Falam), Ngunto (Haka), Htathlaing (Paletwa), and Zavum (Naga-Hkamhti), though also representing Zo people was not included. There were plots and intrigues among the few representatives at gaining independence. Vumkhohau, the former Deputy Counselor was accused of favoring his native village because he converted the National High School of Thuklai to a state school as the first in East Zoram. Thuklai was not an administrative center like Falam or Kanpetlet. Vumkhohau found himself out maneuvered. All Zo council members except Htathlaing voted for Wuamthumaung, making him the first Minister of Zo Affairs. Thawngcinthang, formerly the secretary, who had voted for Wuamthumaung faced the same fate a short time later. Captain Mangtungnung became the Parliamentary Secretary. So the young intellectuals were replaced by the more seasoned politicians.

Although Vumkhohau lost his political office he was appointed as Deputy Secretary in the foreign office. He resided in Rangoon on the Prome Road. His residence was the meeting place of all Zo people in Rangoon, and: his wife Mangkhottiin, the ever pleasant hostess offering tea, coffee, and food to everyone who called. In 1953 Vumkhohau was sent to the United Nations as Burmese representative. In 1955 he was appointed Burmese Minister to France and the Netherlands, and later served as Burmese Ambassador to Indonesia, Laos, and Czechoslovakia.

Wuamthumaung was Minister of Zo Affairs from 1948 to 1951. During this time Burma was in a state of deterioration because of an uprising by the Karen National Defence Organization and because of underground movements by the Communists and Muhajids. Zo soldiers were sent everywhere to suppress rebellion, and they were largely responsible for keeping Rangoon from falling into the hands of the Karens and other insurgent groups. Captain Mangtungnung, Parliamentary Secretary of the Zo Affairs Council, went to India to receive aid from Indian Prime Minister Nehru for fighting the insurgents. Major Kapzathang traveled to rebel-threatened areas as a representative of U Nu, to encourage the civil population and government agencies, such as the military and the people, to continue fighting.

Politics in Zoram during this period had no definite direction or ideology, except from the leaders of the Chin National Union and the Chin National Organization (CNO). The only election promises were to get more schools, hospitals, roads, etc. One consideration however was pay, which was three hundred Kyats a month. Another objective was to be in a position to help relatives and friends get jobs in government service.

Election results depended mostly on the personal popularity of a politician and how large his clan and community basically were—which was very conservative politics. When the AFPFL split into socialist and conservative factions, the Zo members of Parliament were faced with difficult decisions, as they did not have any political ideology. Zo people are a very conservative folk, even the Zo students at university. They have always supported conservative parties, and as a result those who joined the socialist faction (stable) did not do so because of political ideologies.

The political parties contesting the first elections to the Zo Council were the Chin National Union and the Chin People's Freedom League, which was founded by Captain Mangtungnung in 1947. Young politicians like Zahrelian and L unpum contested as members of the Chin Congress Party.

After the 1951 election the Zo Affairs Council overwhelmingly endorsed Zahrelian as their leader. He was the son of the Zahau Chief Thangtinlian and his nu sun (second wife), Menzing. Zahrelian's studies at Mandalay University had been interrupted by the war, and he enlisted in the British army and served as an officer in India. After the war he joined the civil service and

became Deputy Commissioner of southern Zoram (East). Wuamthumaung, then Minister of Zo Affairs, was not happy with the method of administration applied by Zahrelian. Zahrelian employed his own methods to punish offenders of criminal justice, usually by giving lashes. He was forced to resign by Wuamthumaung and thus entered electoral politics.

In 1951 the Burmese Prime Minister U Nu was against the Council's endorsement of Zahrelian as Minister of Zo Affairs, and instead of Zahrelian he chose Singhtang. Many Zo people were upset by U Nu's action, and he was accused of using dictatorial methods. U Nu gave Zahrelian's age as the reason for refusing to make him a member of the cabinet, as Zahrelian was then twenty seven years old.

The real reason came to light in later years. After Zahrelian resigned as Deputy Commissioner he went back to Falam to prepare for his political career. At one time Wuamthumaung, the Minister for Zo Affairs, visited Falam. He attended a public meeting with the Burman U Thein Maung, Commissioner of eastern Zoram, where they were to give speeches to the gathering. In the agenda of the meeting Zahrelian was scheduled to give a speech, but U Thein Maung denied Zahrelian the right to speak. Zahrelian, who was popular with the people of Falam, said simply, "If I am not allowed to speak, the meeting is dissolved." The people dispersed and went home. U Thein Maung was very disturbed by the action of Zahrelian and reported the matter to U Kyaw Nyein, leader of the socialist faction of the AFPFL and Deputy Prime Minister of the Burmese Government. He noted that Zahrelian was intelligent and popular in Zoram and was to be watched carefully.

U Kyaw Nyein therefore wanted to have Zahrelian under his influence. U Kyaw Nyein was also very suspicious of U Nu, who had gained in popularity and attracted many supporters. When the Zo Council elected Zahrelian to be their minister, U Kyaw Nyein advised U Nu not to appoint Zahrelian as Minister of Zo Affairs, with the belief that by pushing a wedge between U Nu and Zahrelian, Zahrelian might, come to him for support. (U Kyaw Nyein was wrong, as U Nu and Zahrelian became friends.) Zahrelian served as Parliamentary Secretary until 1952, at which time U Nu agreed to appoint him Minister for the Zo Affairs Council.

In 1953 Singhtang, from the district of Kanpetlet, became Minister for Rehabilitation. He had joined the Burma Rifles as a rifleman, and after resigning from the army he joined the Forest Department and worked as a forest ranger before turning to politics. While Singhtang was minister road construction projects were drawn and surveying was started. He served until 1956.

Among the Zo MPs was Lunpum, who was elected as the Chairman of the Zo Council. He was one of the first Zo graduates from eastern Zoram, with a B.A. degree, and he had been the headmaster of Thuklai State High School when Sizang leaders asked him to turn to politics.

Most of the Zo members of parliament joined the Burmese AFPFL, who dominated the election of 1956.

Elected to Parliament were:

Zahrelia	Falam	Minister for Zo Affairs
Lunpum	Tedim	Chairman of the Zo Affairs Council
Htunaung	Kanpetlet	Parliamentary Secretary
Mangtling	Matupi	
Yohtung	Haka	
Singhtang	Kanpetlet	
Mangcinkhup	Tedim north	
Hauzalian	Tedim south	
Thanglian	Falam	
Ralhmung	Haka	
Sawhla	Paletwa	
J.Sannem	Matupi	
Hrangnawl	Haka	

The AFPFL split into two factions in 1958, and the Zo parliamentarians joined different factions. There were three political parties in eastern Zoram after 1958, the Chin National Organization (CNO), the Stable AFPFL, and the Clean AFPFL. The CNO was formed by merging the Chin People's Freedom League and the Chin National Union on February 20, 1957, the tenth anniversary of Zo National Day. As more Zo parliamentary members joined the stable faction Zahrelia had to step down as minister, and Ralhmung became Zo Affairs Minister.

U Nu resigned as Prime Minister of Burma to organize, the election, and a caretaker government was formed by General Ne Win. During the caretaker government Thanglian became Minister for Zo Affairs. He resigned however with the dissolution of the caretaker government in February 1960.

The 1960 general election was contested by the Clean AFPFL, led by Zahrelan; the Stable AFPFL, led by Ralhmung and the Chin National Organization, led by Captain Mangtungnung. The Clean AFPFL and the Stable AFPFL won nearly equal numbers of seats. The Chin National Organization did very well in Tedim area, taking all three seats; one for the Chamber of Deputies and two for the Chamber of Nationalities. One seat from Haka also went to the CNO. Thus the Chin National Organization was gaining in popularity. In Tedim Captain Mangtungnung beat two university graduates—Dr. Vungsuan and Lunpum. Although the CNO fought and beat Clean AFPFL candidates during the election they supported the Clean AFPFL in the election for ministership of Chin Affairs, and Zahrelan once again became minister. He held his post until March 1962, at which time General Ne Win took over the government by a coup d'etat.

Under Burmese Administration (1948—1962)

As we have seen, the Burmese central government was in control of education, finance, revenue, police, defense, foreign policy, economy and trade. There was little that the frontier people could do by themselves. As seen on the Union Flag, the frontier states and the Chin Special Division functioned as satellites and behaved according to the policies of the central government. Tinker¹⁰⁷ recognized this fact; "The relation of the state government with the union government appears to be that of dutiful adolescent to a severe parent. As long as the children behave in a way which the father approves, they are permitted a reasonable degree of freedom. But immediately they assert an independence which is contrary to the parental wishes, they are reminded sharply of their dependence." Most of the grievances of the frontier people were caused by the government's obvious division of the satellite states from the rest of Burma and by the dominance of Burmans in all walks of life.

The Minister of the Zo Affairs Council had no control over development projects in Zoram, and he had so little power that he could not even create the post of a clerk unless approved by the Finance Ministry in Rangoon. He was in charge of general administration as laid down by the constitution, but the administrative powers of the Chin Special Division were under the commissioner, over whom the minister did not have entirely precise control.

Neither did the Zo Affairs Council have legislative powers. The members of parliament had no influence in the administration of Zoram, although they were sometimes called to meetings when the location of a new school or health center was disputed. The only responsibilities of the Zo parliament members were to represent Zo interests during parliamentary debates and to distribute to the subdivisions of eastern Zoram new schools and other projects contributed to the Chin Special Division by the Burmese government.

Development projects for eastern Zoram were drawn up by the Burma National Planning Commission in Rangoon, whose members were not familiar with conditions in Zoram. Every year a certain sum of money was allotted to a certain project in Zoram. The money was not given to the Zo Ministry but went through government departments. The departments were under Burmese officers, and due to bureaucratic organization and Burmese lack of enthusiasm for work the money allotted rarely reached Zoram before the end of the year. The Finance Ministry terminated projects if not completed by the end of fiscal year, and the money had to be returned to the Burmese government. The Minister of the Chin Special Division had no power to reallocate the money to other badly needed projects.

Thus development projects were delayed and progress slow. Progress in all Burma was also slow because of Burmese internal quarrels, communist insurgency, and the uprising of the Karen National Defense Organization.

Burmans believed racial consciousness among the frontier people resulted from British policy. Htin Aung¹⁰⁸ stated; "Thus in Burma, the Chins, the Kachins, the Karens, and the Shans were prompted by the colonial government to give emphasis to their racial differences from the Burmese, and to ignore their racial affinities."

He continued, "The factors uniting the various Tibeto-Burmese tribes were first, Buddhism tinged with the native and pre-Buddhist worship of spirits, and second, the Burmese language which was the common heritage of all the Burmese peoples. Both these factors the British government attempted to destroy and substitute in their places racial consciousness and racial suspicion."

As a result of this point of view the policies of the Burmese government emphasized the unity of Burma through an extension of Buddhism, Burmese language, Burmese dress, and other cultural models. Burmese was made the official language, and pupils in eastern Zoram were taught Burmese from the first standard. They were taught Zo language only in fourth standard, and the colleges and universities neglected or prohibited the teaching of frontier peoples' languages. In addition, the Burmans suppressed the existence of different histories, cultures, and customs by neglecting to put these subjects in school and university curriculums. The government ignored racial or cultural differences by stereotyping the Burmese people.

The frontier people had agreed to join Burma with the belief there would be racial harmony and equal racial treatment. Instead the frontier people experienced complete domination by the Burmans. The Burmese government ignored the existence of the history, culture and customs of the frontier peoples and concentrated on influencing the Zo and other frontier peoples to adopt Burman lifestyles. In other words they advocated the racial supremacy of Burmans. The exhibition of dances and dresses during Union Day festivals was not meant for spreading understanding between two or more differing cultural factions, but rather to display the presence of primitive culture in Burma. The Union Day celebrations of the AFPFL Governments were held only in Rangoon, which meant that the shows were for Rangoonians.

The Burmans further antagonized frontier people by developing resources for Burma proper and subsequently neglecting frontier peoples' needs. For instance, Burma proper received first priority for economic development, construction and industry in every case. Steel mills, textile factories, pharmaceutical and paper industries, etc., were concentrated in Burma proper. Electricity generated from Kayah state supplied Burma proper, and yet Kayah Villages around the power plant were refused electricity.

The government broadcasting service reserved only one-half hour each day for each of the frontier states and the Chin Special Division broadcasts, using all subsequent air time for Burmese and English broadcasts.

All important cabinet posts and high civil service positions were held by Burmese, except for the positions of minister for frontier states and the Chin Special Division.

Due to the British practice of recruiting minorities however, the frontier people did hold positions of importance in the armed forces at the time of independence. The Burmese however quickly changed this condition. The composition of Burma Army officer positions above the rank of battalion commander changed from nearly no Burmese personnel during the British reign to almost all Burmans by the second year after independence. General Smith-Dun (Karen), the Commanding Officer of the Army, was replaced by Ne Win (Burmese). (In spite of this Smith-Dun remained loyal to the Burmese government during the KNDO uprising.) Kachin top officer Brigadier Ya Lum Tang was forced to resign from the army, and Colonel Dalzakam, the highest ranking Zo officer was dismissed. The Air Force Chief of Staff, a Karen, was also replaced. .

Buddhism was first introduced in Zo country by the Burmese king Alaungsithu, by building a Pagoda at Hilon village in Mindat township. Later the Burmese government attempted to spread Buddhism by sending venerable Sayadaws to eastern Zoram. The Buddhist monks, unlike Christian missionaries, did not however easily win followers. For example, the worship of Buddha figures reminded the Zo people of their offerings to spirits, and the Burmese did not translate the teachings of Buddha into the Zo language. Instead they expected Zo people to learn Burmese to read the Buddhist scriptures.

In all administrative capitals monasteries endowed with state money attempted to become permanent centers of enlightenment. A man-made cave costing six million dollars was constructed in Rangoon to commemorate the sixth Buddhist Synod. It was insouciant to waste so much money on a temple when the state badly needed economic development. Lunpum, chairman of the Zo Council, was quoted as saying about Kaba Aye cave; "This was one of U Nu's madness." The subsistence level of the Zo

people also worked against the Burmese attempt to spread Buddhism, as the Zo could not support the burden of feeding Buddhist monks, thus causing feelings of animosity.

In 1960, U Nu introduced religion into party politics, when he promised to make Buddhism the state religion if the clean AFPFL won the election. In the Chin Special Division the religious issue agitated a large segment of politicians. Approximately 40 percent of the Zo people were Christians, and most of the rest animist, with only a few Buddhist residing on the Arakan side of the Kaladan River. The Zo people concluded that the Burmans were showing political superiority. The Burmese opinion was; "We form the majority. We will do what we like irrespective of what others like or dislike."

The state religion issue also resulted in creation of a University of Rangoon union of students from the frontier areas. The union's objective was to stop the introduction of Buddhism as the state religion, by publishing the views of the frontier students in pamphlets. The union also held meetings to which the press was invited. The press reported the meetings but because of the students' anti-government stand did not print the points made. The frontier students' organization did not gain publicity, but the leaders of the organization later became leaders of nationalist uprisings. Damkhohau, chairman of the student organization, became a leader of the Zo uprising in 1966, and Zauseng, general secretary of the students' union, became the general secretary of the Kachin Independence Army.

Despite Panglong agreement and constitutional safeguards providing for freedom of religion U Nu made Buddhism the state religion. This revived age-old racial suspicions, and in 1960, ten years after passage of the Panglong agreement, the youth of the Shan state demanded secession according to the provisions of that agreement, and when it was refused, the Shans started their armed rebellion, which is still active today.

For the frontier people a reform of the union parliament was most essential. At that time the Chamber of Deputies had 250 members of which 190 were Burman, and the Chamber of Nationalities had 125 members of which 62 were Burman. Of the 375 members of the national parliament only 123 members were from the frontier states and Chin Special Division, giving Burmans total control of the government and enabling an override in the

event of a frontier states block vote.

The making of Buddhism as the state religion had been a declaration of Burmese superiority over the frontier people, and the recognition of the preeminent status of Buddhism as the religion of the majority meant the continuation of the financial and organizational support already given to Buddhist missionary activity by the union government. The state religion issue was not the deciding factor in the dissatisfaction of the frontier people, but it enhanced national movements which are still active today.

When despite protests Buddhism was made the State Religion leaders of the frontier people organized the National Minorities Alliances. Meeting in Taungyi, Shan State, on February 25, 1961, they adopted a blue book containing proposals for amendments to the union constitution. The focal point of the constitution was to make Burma a unique federation, in which Burma proper would have the same status as Shan, Karen, Kachin, or Zo states. The Chamber of the Nationalities would have the same number of parliament members from each state, and the states would have the same status, power and privileges. At the meeting in Taungyi the Zo people were represented by one veteran member of parliament and a group of young politicians.

The subsequent assumption of power by the Burmese military appeared to result from the activities of the consortium of frontier people. At the time of the Burmese military coup d'etat. the consortium was holding its Federalist Seminars in Rangoon. Captain Mangtungnung, president of the CNO, and Cinsinthang, a young politician from Tedim, were on the steering committee of the consortium.

Zo Soldiers Save Burma

The outbreak of insurgency in Burma brought opportunities for many Zo young men to enlist in the Burma Army and military police, and there had been Zo soldiers in the Burma Rifles and the first and second Chin Rifles at the time of independence. The army not only provided a rare opportunity for a young man to venture into the world outside Zo country, but it also provided an opportunity to earn money—which was not possible in the hills. Supplied with their rations and uniforms army personnel could save all their pay and after some years return to Zo

country to build a house with a corrugated iron roof. The army was seen as a source of education, discipline and money. Army personnel were respected, and they could choose any of the girls in the village for marriage. As a result most Zo young men were ready to join the army.

On attainment of independence "multi-colored" insurgency broke out in all parts of Burma. Burmese politicians thought they deserved a lion's share in independent Burma; and when they did not get it they attempted to wrest their shares by force. By midyear 1948, only a few months after independence, the Burma Regiment, which was recruited from private political armies, had grown to a considerable size. As events accelerated these soldiers, singly or in whole battalions, deserted the new government's regular army. The First Burma Rifles, all Burmese, defected to the Communists and occupied Prome. Only the Karens, Kachins, Zo and the Burma Gurkhas stood at their duty posts under the new government. In July 1948 these loyal soldiers actually saved Rangoon from falling into the hands of the Communists and deserters who closed in on the city.⁸⁰ Prime Minister U Nu himself had to have Chin Rifles for his protection, as Burmans could not be trusted because of their various political loyalties. The troops of the hill tribes (Karen, Kachin, Gurkha and Zo) were rushed from one location to another to quell the rebellion, and although they were very loyal, one group, the Chin Rifles, were faced with a difficult decision at the end of 1948.

Karens and Burmese, though together in the Delta and Pegu areas for some decades, had not become integrated. This was true even for those with the same religion. During the British occupation Karens converted to Christianity and served the British loyally. When the Second World War broke out Burmans formed the Burma Independence Army (BIA) to fight against the British. Following withdrawal of the British from Burma the Karens fought the Japanese underground and clashed with the BIA, and racial war broke out between Karens and Burmans at Papun and Myaungmya.

After Burma's independence there were still Burmese and Karen troubles, as Burmese Communist insurgents attacked Karen villages. The Karens therefore formed the Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) to protect their villages. One of the Karens' demand's was for an independent state covering almost all of

lower Burma. As the Burmese government refused to listen to the Karens' demands, and because of incidents that appeared to instigate racial hatred, the KNDO raised in arms against the Burmans.

The officers of the Chin Rifles felt that the quarrel was between Burmans and Karens, and that it should be decided between the two parties. Although they wanted to be loyal to the government they were friends of the Karens, and they did not want to take sides. They had fought side by side with the Karens against the Japanese, had served in the Wingate expedition together, and they had been partners in quelling the "multi-colored" Burmese insurgents. As they saw it as a purely racial conflict and the Zo officers, led by Colonel Dalzakam and Lieutenant Colonel Liancinzam, decided to help neither the Burman nor the Karen.

At the same time there was another incident that helped the officers decide not to take part in the conflict. Two Zo soldiers at Pegu were knocked down by a jeep driven by a Burmese army officer. Zo officers reported the matter to the Burmese commanding officer and requested that he punish the driver of the jeep. But the Burmese reacted scornfully as usual and took no action against the officer who drove the jeep. This insult contributed to the Zo officers determination not to take the side of the Burmese in the conflict.

The Karen soldiers had split up and the larger group joined the KNDO. With this kind of opposition the Burmese needed the Chin Rifles desperately, as most of the Burma Army's heavy guns were in their hands. If the Chin Rifles stayed neutral or sided with the Karens there was no chance that the Burmans could defend themselves. When the Prime Minister heard news of the Chin Rifles refusal to fight he and Brigadier Kyaw Zaw rushed to speak to their commander, Colonel Liancinzam, at their Pegu headquarters.

U Nu⁵⁸ wrote, "The next day Brigadier Kyaw Zaw came to report that every gun, every soldier he could find had been sent to Pegu with others to fight to the death. But, he continued, there was a company of Chins giving trouble. Their commanding officer had bluntly refused to fight, saying they had enough and were returning to the Chin Hills."

"As Bo Kyaw Zaw explained, the recent history of this Chin

company was as follows : They were bivouacked in the Kayah, State when their positions were overrun by the KNDO insurgents. The prime minister had sent Brigadier Kya Doe, a loyalist, to prevail upon the KNDO to release the Chins. The KNDO had agreed to set the Chins free but had confiscated their rifles. This then was the company that had been hastily refitted in Rangoon and thrown into breach in Pegu."

"Thakin Nu did not hesitate. Together with a Chin parliamentary secretary, Captain Mang Tung Nung, and Brigadier Kyaw Zaw, he boarded a military aircraft and landed at an airstrip fifteen miles from Pegu. The airstrip, although unused since World War II, was preferable to the road, which was infested with PVO and Communist insurgents throughout its length. The dispirited Chin officer was at the forward position and all those at battle stations could see him. The prime minister made an earnest appeal to his patriotism and loyalty. Captain Mang Tung Nung reinforced his appeal in the Chin language. Thakin Nu, pointed out that Chins had established a well-deserved reputation for gallantry. He did not believe that the present company could return home and tarnish the record of great campaigns and great victories. The Union expected the officer to do his duty in its hour of need. To this the Chin officer said, 'We won't let you down. We will stay and fight.' " "The prime minister became so emotional at this that he did something he was to regret later. He sanctioned a bounty of five thousand kyats to the Chins on the spot. . :"

Since that time there have been prohibitions against forming pure Zo battalions, and although he served the Burma Army loyally Colonel Liancinzam was never given a promotion. The Zo soldiers did fight against the Karen nationalist insurgents, and it was the first Chin Rifles who defended Rangoon and kept it from falling into the hands of the KNDO, who had occupied Insein, a satellite town of Rangoon. At Insein, after 112 days of siege, the Karens were driven back in retreat across the Hlaing River. For the Zo soldiers Insein was one of their fiercest battles, and their casualties were high. Captain Taikchoon of Matupi was awarded the medal of Aung San Thuriya, the highest decoration of the Burma Army. He was the only one to be so honored while still alive.

Zo soldiers also encountered heavy casualties fighting the KNDO at places other than Insein. Lt. Col. Hrangthio, commander of

the First Chin Rifles, was killed in action against the KNDO in August 1949. Born in 1919 in Laizo he enlisted in the army in 1939. Hrangthio was a brilliant soldier. He fought throughout the Second World War, for which he was awarded the Burma Gallantry Medal, and he received the King's Commission in 1944. Promoted to Major in 1945, he went to Britain for military training at Sandhurst and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in December 1947. His military success was so important to the Burmese Government that Prime Minister U Nu was said to have offered his daughter in marriage. As Hrangthio was already married he declined the offer.

At the beginning of 1949 the Burmese Government controlled only Rangoon, as most of the Burmese towns were in the hands of the rebels. The Burma army was short of arms and ammunition, and the condition of the government was so hopeless that many government officials had decided to hand their power to the Communists. Prime Minister U Nu however insisted on fighting the rebels, and he was supported by the leaders of the frontier people. He asked them to organize emergency units of the "Frontier Armed Forces" which if necessary would fight with sticks and knives. Upon receiving their assurances that they would, he "was so overcome with gratitude and. . so intensely moved that tears welled up in my eyes." ⁵⁹

Thus Major Kapzathung was sent to recruit two battalions from Zoram, and the third and fourth Chin Battalions were formed. In addition two Union Military Police battalions were recruited from Zoram. Many of the recruits were ethnic Zo from Manipur and the Mizo Hills who had returned to the Kale-Kabaw valley during the 1900s. According to Lalthangliana⁴⁰ there were over 3,000 Mizo soldiers in the Burma Army in 1960. They risked their lives in defending Burma from degeneration, for which they and their families were recognized as Burmese citizens by the Burmese government. Most of them settled down in the Kale-Kabaw Valley. Thus the decisive factor in holding Burma together was the allegiance of various frontier peoples, especially the militarily significant Kachins and Zo people.

Money allotted in Kyats	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Kalemyo – Falam	connected	1240000	521000	1290400	1376500
Gangaw – Haka	startd	27 miles	.....	.....	.....
Falam – fort White	.....	.....	.....	.....	opened
Kyauktu – Mindat	started	.....	.....	.....	opened
Falam – Haka	.....	started	4 miles	jeepable	opened
Saw – Kanpetlet	.....	.....	.....	started	.....
Kalemyo – Tedim	.....	surveyed	.....	10 miles	.....
Mindat – Matupi	.....	7 miles	8 miles	14 miles	.....
Paletwa – Matupi	.....	16 miles	.....	2 miles	7 miles
Matupi – Haka	.....	4 miles	.....	.....	.....

Table 13. Progress of road construction in East Zoram.

(Zoram profited from the price increased of rice due to Korean War – see 1954).

Table

Table 14. The table gives how much it cost to run the welfare of East Zoram (Kyat in thousand).

fiscal year :	1961	1964	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
	-62	-65	-67	-68	-69	-70	-71	-72
Zo Council :	77	392	601	642	665	682	676	557
General Admin.	865	875	788	741	775	797	765	861
Information	44	14	25	35	30	48	62	71
Judicial	32	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Education	2454	3132	3355	3488	4209	4317	4416	4878
Health			510	586	679	732	813	880
982 1033								
Culture			....	16	38	36	39	35
39 53								
Relief			161					
Agricult. & Forest	348							
Industry			39	39				
Civil works	951	1262	1187	1251	1224	1241	1243	1295
Finance & Revenue	...	...	...	...	...	34	34	38
Pensions & Monetary Awards	...	...	...	...	...	...	....	260
Total			5590	6316	6673	6925	775 6	8033
8217 9127								
Capital Expenditure	....	145	728	394	583	585	292	325
Gen. Administration	997	155	378	161	150	103	87	113
Information	....	...	63	65	5	10	38	17
Education	.....	60.8	2.24	1.09	2.04	2.05	3.81	4.84
Health	.....	1081	446	174	436	469	222	290
Culture	....	....	3	....	...	.....	....	.....
Agriculture	13							
Civil works	2834	1048	3630	2450	1937	2178	1835	1505
Total	3844	3037	5493	3357	3316	3554	2857	2735

Socialism Under Military Government

Displeased by the unrest of the frontier people, the Burma Army carried out a coup on March 2, 1962, "to rescue Burma from degeneration." It brought an end to U Nu's government. U Nu had been popular with the people, but he lacked an ability to govern. His government was replaced by the "Revolutionary Council of the Republic of the Union of Burma", with General Ne Win acting as Chairman of the Revolutionary Council. The members of the Revolutionary Council were brigadiers and colonels

of the Burma Army, and neither Zo nor other frontier nationals were included. At the time of their take over the military arrested all members of the U Nu government. Zahrelan however was freed after a few hours. The military dissolved parliament and ruled without a constitution. The ministry of the Zo Affairs Council was abolished, and administration of the Chin Special Division fell under the Chairman of the Zo Council. The Revolutionary Government appointed Major Sonkholian (Thuklai), a professional soldier, as Chairman of the Zo Council. The members were Ex-Lt. Col. Putpa (Tedim), Ex-Captain Tinzam (Lumbang) and Wuamthusing (Mindat).

The Chairman of the Zo Council, Sonkholian, was not a member of the government. His office was first established at Kalembo, but the Burmans in Kale Valley protested its presence. The Burmans put up posters, some of which read; "Historically Kale and Kabaw Valleys are not Zo country. Chin blood is Chin blood; Burmese blood is Burmese blood; Do not touch the Burmans. Do not touch a property that do not belong to you. If you touch it, it will be replied by fire. Burmese politicians of the Kale-Kabaw Valley; are you sleeping?" The posters were signed by "Burmese Youth". Shortly thereafter the office of the chairman of Zo Affairs was moved to Haka.

In July 1982 the government announced the principles of the "Burmese Way to Socialism". There was no mention of policies for the frontier people, and strong emphasis was placed on a socialist state which would not allow private holdings. The government planned and later executed the nationalization of agriculture, industrial production, distribution, transportation, communication, external trade, etc. All means of production were to be owned by the state, cooperative societies, or collective unions (state ownership and control being the main basis(of socialist economy). Ne Win stated at a party seminar on February 15, 1963, "Since socialist economic system is bound on social ownership, private ownership would not conform with our objective we will nationalize all of them." Banks were nationalized within a month, as were all shops in Zoram. A few companies belonging to Zo traders were also nationalized.

To improve agriculture the government introduced tenancy law and the "Protection of Peasant's Rights Law" in March 1963, with the motto "only those who till the land shall have to own the

land." For the first time a Burmese law applied to Zoram. (Working People's Daily, March 2, 1965). The government introduced terrace agriculture to East Zoram, and the growing of orchards was encouraged. Under the new law Zo land owners were afraid they might lose their land, so they grew fruit crops in their fields.

New health centers were also opened, and the construction of dirt roads was wholeheartedly supported by the government. And in 1970 for the first time in Zo history a paved road was started between Burma proper and Zoram.

Although the government propagandized economic development there was still a shortage of basic necessities such as salt, sugar, milk, cooking oil and for the first time, rice. In 1967 Zo people had to smuggle rice from Burma into their country because the government did not allow private transportation of rice to Zoram. In contrast Zo villagers for the first time tasted Burmese foods such as noodles and Ngapi (pickled fish). This came about because of the government policy of equal distribution of products.

The government's unrestrained printing of money in 1971-72 created inflation of an astronomically high level—1000%—so that everyone, especially hill peasants who had no cash income, faced a formidable problem in just existing. People could no longer afford the traditional slaughtering of animals, during marriage ceremonies or while mourning for the dead. The people managed to survive the shortages of clothing and other necessities by bringing expensive smuggled goods from India and Thailand.

Year	Primary	Middle	High
1948	86	1	
1953	214	14	7
1954	217	14	7
1955	223	14	7
1956	233	17	7
1957	251	17	7
1962	280	22	7
1972	450	52	8
1974	500	54	9

Table 15. Numbers of schools in East Zoram.

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Oranges, coffee, tomatoes and other farm products had been Zo exports to Burma. Starting from the late 1960s apples were added to the list. Due to the government's policy against free trade however fruit growers were in conflict with the law when they transported their products in large quantities to Burma. Also, because of a lack of facilities for preservation, fruits had to be transported to Rangoon or Mandalay on charter planes. The farmers therefore made little profit on their products and faced extreme poverty.

The government's drive toward socialism and the nationalization of all commercial enterprises in Burma moved the power and wealth of the country from the hands of the business people, who were in the majority Indians and Chinese, into the hands of the military. The officers and men of the army are not trained in trade and commerce but they are ordered to run the country's economy. It is not the expertise that runs the country's economy and welfare, but rather, it is the association with the military that puts a person in-charge of organizations and projects. This causes confusion, mismanagement, and corruption. The result was the total collapse of the country's production and distribution system- Where the military failed, smugglers and blackmarketeers took over and they controlled a substantial amount of the economy. The black market employed a large portion of the urban population. Many government employees were involved in the black market business because their salary did not meet the basic necessities for staying alive. A dried-fish vendor made as much as an engineer who had been educated in Russia or USA.

Burma's Second Constitution

After six years of ruling the country without a constitution General Ne Win in 1968 invited 33 leading Burmese politicians to "consider whether this constitution should be the old one, an entirely new one or an old one with certain modifications." However the answers given by the politicians were not satisfactory to Ne Win. For example former Prime Minister U Nu wanted to be reinstalled. Most of the politicians wanted the old system of government. Their opinions did not suit Ne Win and members of his government.

To answer the; question of a constitution, "The Union of Burma

Internal Unity Advisory Body" was formed from among former politicians. Two Zo politicians included in the body were Lunpum, a former MP and former Minister for Land Nationalization, and Thakin Aungmin, a former MP. In the summer of 1971, at the first congress of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), the Chairman, General Ne Win, announced 96 names of politicians who would draft the constitution. Sonkholian, Chairman of the Zo Council, and the members of the Council, Putpa, Tinzam, Wuamthuhasing and Thakin Aungmin were included as representatives of the Zo. The public was also invited to make suggestions as individuals or groups.

Zo living in Rangoon formed a committee and put forward a draft constitution. It suggested forming a genuine federal state, with eastern Zoram as a state with the same status as other states such as Shan, Burman, Karen, Kachin, Kayah and others. The name proposed for the state was "Zo State".

In Mandalay, when a Zo group approached authorities with their draft of the new constitution, Colonel Sein Lwin, commander of the Burma Army's North West command, told the Zo group that Zo people were backward, weak and unimportant. He said they should not bother with such matters as the constitution. (Col. Sein Lwin killed Karen leader Saw Ba U Gyi.) The new constitution eliminated autonomous states by dividing Burma into states and divisions. The new "States" were only states in name and had the same administrative and political status as the divisions. The "Chin State" no longer belonged to ethnic Zo but to all citizens residing there.

The constitution states; "The national races shall enjoy the freedom to profess their religion, use and develop their language, literature and culture, follow their cherished traditions, and customs, provided that the enjoyment of such freedom does not offend the law or public interest."

It is difficult for national races to develop their language, literature and culture when every department is tightly in the hands of the state. In Zo country pupils are taught Zo language up to the second standard only, or none at all.

The constitution states further; "Burmese is the common language.", and "The Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma is a state

wherein various national races make their homes together."

The new parliament has 451 members of which 154 are non-Burmese nationals. Therefore, as under the old constitution, the frontier cannot block an issue even if they stand together. There are 154 votes against 297.

The Council of State, whose members were elected from among members of parliament, was the driving force in determining decisions made about states within Burma. In the State Council Burmans outnumbered frontier people even though two new states were created, and the Burmans had a clear majority of 11:17, not including the Prime Minister who need not be a council member. The result was that there was no possibility for the frontier people to influence political decisions.

In 1972 the government arrested some forty Zo high-ranking civil service employees and politicians. The reason for the arrests was not clear, although speculation was that the government doubted that these Zo intelligentsia would accept the new constitution. They were kept in prison in Burma proper for four years without trial and then were freed to resume their occupations in Zo country.

The new constitution was adopted by holding a national referendum on December 15, 1973, after a highly propagandized campaign. The constitution changed the Chin Special Division to the "Chin State". The request for a change of name to "Zo State" was rejected by the Revolutionary Government because it is too similar to Mizo.

In the nine townships of East Zoram 153,331 of 156,105 eligible voters voted, and 98 percent of them approved the constitution. Of course less than 0.1 percent of the Zo population understood why they had voted. They came because it was the wish of the government, and the Zo people believe that they must be loyal.

The constitution paved the way for the military and its BSPP party to stay in power. From the first drafting to adoption of the constitution every step was tightly in the hands of military representatives, and the final document contains the goals and interests of the military. Art. 11 specifies that the party should lead the nation. It is also stipulated that the country will have only one political party.

Adoption of the constitution was followed by election of the peoples parliament. As no opposition was allowed the Burma Socialist Programme Party won all the seats.

The elected members were :

1. Captain Pawlu (Falam), 2. Ngunlwe (Falam), 3. Colonel Vankulh(Haka), 4. Aungtin (Kanpetlet), 5. Captain Taikchoon (Matupi), 6. Varhsar (Matupi), 7. Thakin Aungmin (Mindat), 8. Nyuntpe (Thlantlang,Burman), 9.Captain Singkhokhai (Tedim), 10. Colonel Khenzamung (Tedim), 11. Lianchi (Tonzang), and 12. Aungtin (Paletwa)

In the first peoples' parliament Colonel Khenzamung was elected to the State Council and Colonel Vankulh was appointed Minister for Social Welfare. Zo people were therefore well represented in the first government of the "Union of the Socialist Republic of Burma", but the Shans, with a population of 3.2 million, were not represented either in the State Council or in the Council of Ministers. Vankulh's name disappeared from the list of ministers in 1976, but he reappeared as a member of the State Council. Khenzamung's name disappeared also, and he was given another function of lower importance.

Major Sonkholian was not elected to parliament, and he stepped down as Chairman of the Zo council in 1974. Lt. Col. Kapcungnung, who hailed from Ngawn area in Falam district, was appointed the next Chairman. He had joined the army as a private, and while stationed with the Fourth Chin Rifles he became an officer. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel during the 1970s and commanded a battalion of the Burma Army.

As chairman of the Zo Council Kapcungnung worked hard to improve economic conditions. He also wanted all departments to work as hard as he, but civil servants, could not follow his pace or performance. Kapcungnung went back to his military unit in 1976.

Lt. Col. Kimngin, who was born at Khuasak in Tedim district, became Chairman of the Zo Council in 1976. Like Sonkholian and Kapcungnung, Kimngin had joined the army as a private as soon as he left high school, and he was commanding a battalion of the Burma Army when he was called to take his post. During the twenty years of the Revolutionary Government there

were some economic developments. Road construction was speeded up, and all district administrative towns were connected by jeepable roads. Growing fruit crops was encouraged by the government, and farm products started to reach Burma. The introduction of terrace agriculture opened the eyes of the Zo people to ways they could improve their productivity.

The fourth party Congress of the Burma Socialist Programme Party was held on August 3, 1981. San Yu, General Secretary of the BSPP, presented the political report of the central committee. On the nationality problem he said, "Burma is a country where different national groups live together and where a socialist society is being established in accordance with the Constitution based upon socialist principles. Hence, national unity based upon peasants and workers is essential." At the election of the Central Committee of the BSPP the following Zo members were included : .

Kamliabwea, Ex-Captain Singkhokhai, Ex-Colonel Khenzamung, Brigadier-General Tuangzakhai, Ex-Lt. Col. Paukhanthang, Paudonang, Ex-Colonel Vankulh, Lt. Col. E.K. Kimngin, Ex-Lt. Col. H. Ngozam, and Lianchi.

Zo people were not represented in the central Executive Committee of the Party, which is the highest level of the political hierarchy and determines the future of the Zo and other peoples of Burma. The 1974 constitution replaced federalism with central control and emphasized centralization and the primacy of state over the interests of individuals and subgroups. The new constitution is therefore the reversal of the Panglong-agreement, where Zo and other frontier people opted to join Burma with the condition that they handle their own affairs without Burmese interference.

After the introduction of the constitution most of the frontier people Karen, Kachin, Shan, Mon, Karenni, Arakanese, and, to a lesser extent, Zo continue their revolt against the Burmese government. They seek separate and distinct identity and aim for political separation from proper Burma. The new constitution does not solve the country's no. 1 problem : the sense of national unity. To compensate for centralization, the government pronounced better cultural understanding.

Burmese Attempt for Understanding

Burma is not and never has been a nation in the sense that all or nearly all of its people share a common set of values, beliefs and goals. Neither do they acknowledge a primary loyalty to a polity that transcends loyalty to race, religion, language or place of origin. Silverstein⁷⁶. Thus Zo and other frontier people do not feel comfortable among Burmans.

Burmans are generally polite, friendly and easy going, but as soon as a Burman notices weakness in his partner he immediately shows his attitude of superiority. Zo people, handicapped by limited knowledge of Burmese language, culture and religion are regarded as mentally inferior, and their habit of easily/trusting a Burman has been used to exploit them. As a result Zo retain their old suspicions of the Burman people.

Zo have had difficulty learning the Burmese language because there has not been extended contact with the Burmese, and there has been a shortage of Burmese teachers in the hills. Burman's institutions did not try to understand Zo people. Rather they expect frontier people to understand them. A Mandalay University professor of Burmese language, U Tint Lwin, speaks English, Japanese, Nepalese, Hindi, Chinese and German, but he never bothered to learn any frontier peoples' languages. This shows how much the Burman wants to understand his partners. The Burman can easily communicate with the outside world, but he lacks basic knowledge of his j)wn countrymen.

For most Burmans Zo live far away, speak a different language and have been seen only a few times. They know them from tales as a wild and primitive folk, dirty, and eat dog's meat, and they regard and treat them as foreigners. The Burmese opinion of a foreigner may⁷⁷ be noted from these quotations from Burmese folklore.

The master of the house said to his servant, "Look out the window. I hear the footsteps of some people." The servant looked and replied, "Sire, there are no people in the street, only, three foreigners."

The quiet of a village was broken by shouts of "A man has fallen into the well!" The villagers came out in alarm, but the first to reach the well looked into in and cried out, "Be calm, my

friends, it is not a man, but a Chinese!" The Chinese from the bottom of the well shouted back in anger, "If I am not a man, am I a bird? Am I a bird?"¹⁰⁸

Today, more than thirty years after the forming of the Union of Burma, the government is still treating Zoram as a foreign country. It maintains a gatepost at the Burma-Zo State boundary to check immigration from the Zoram to Burma and to control the smuggling of goods from Burma to Zoram. When Colonel Khenzamung became a member of the State Council, use of the gates was discontinued; but as soon as he was ousted from the State Council the boundary gates were reopened.

Burman inability to accept Zo as countrymen is easily exposed in communicating with them. Because the names of Burman and Zo are different Burmans do not know whether to call a Zo partner "Ko", a polite form of being on a first-name basis, or to use other terms of address. The Burman sometimes uses "Mr.", which is really out of place as the Zo does not feel at all European.

On the other hand the Zo habit of taking Christian names make they seem very foreign in the eyes of the Burman. Burmans see Buddhism as a national religion and Christianity as a foreign religious influence. Thus Burmans have viewed the Zo as being under foreign influence, and in addition, because of their limited knowledge of their countrymen, they believe that Zo national dances and songs are a product of western influence.

Another basic difference between Zo and Burman came to light when Zo soldiers served with Burmans. Previously, in Zo battalions, Zo soldiers saved almost all their pay to build homes, get married, support their parents or to support a relative in gaining higher education. Ever since Zo soldiers have served with Burmans however they have saved less and like the Burmans spent more of their pay for amusements like gambling. There even have been cases where parents have had to send money to a soldier to support his Burmese wife.

Zo soldiers have also copied the Burman way of eating; so that at the end of their military service they can no longer tolerate Zo food. One reason for so much Zo immigration to the Kale-Kabaw Valley in recent times is the Burmanization of the army personnel. Burmese politicians in the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha area do not however welcome the migration of Zo, and in this regard

the present military organization has been disadvantageous for Zo and Burman.

Although Zo soldiers have been the most loyal to the Burmese government—even today General Ne Win's bodyguards are said to be purely Zo soldiers—there are too few high-ranking Zo officers in the Burma Army. Zo politicians, unhappy with the Burmanization of individual soldiers, and with the unjustified distribution of ranks in the Army, have applied in vain for racially separate army units. From 1949 to 1960 not a single Zo was higher in rank than lieutenant colonel, although during that time there were already close to twenty thousand Zo soldiers.

There were however two Zo full colonels in the Burma Army after formation of the Revolutionary Government. These two were married to Burmese women. In 1980 Tuangzakhai from Khuasak, a Zo, was promoted to Brigadier-General. This was the first time a Zo had reached a rank of that level.

In the 1960s the revolutionary government under General Ne Win sought increased understanding of frontier people by delegating research groups to frontier areas and by publishing books on the history and culture of various frontier peoples—including the Zo. The government also widely propagandized development of the cultures and economies of frontier areas. Also, the military government in an attempt to win the support of the Zo people launched the "Ma Ma Operation" on April 2, 1963.

In October 1964 the government established an Academy for the Development of National Groups at Sagaing. "The Academy accepts for enrollment young nationalities especially from less developed areas of the country. Strong youngsters of 15 to 18 years of age who have passed the 7th standard and possess a keen sense of Union spirit with a promising mettle of leadership are meticulously screened and selected for admission. After completing a 4 year course, the graduates will have successfully completed (i) Basic Education High School (ii) Primary Teachership and (iii) Development Leadership Training."

The objectives of the Academy are :

"(a) The students in the Academy while studying amicably befitting the true brothers and sisters in the Union will consolidate their Union spirit;

- (b) The Academy will bring out youth cadres imbued with political conviction and consciousness;
- (c) The Academy will cultivate qualities of leadership among the trainee nationalities to further preservation of one's own culture and wholesome customs, enhance understanding among all nationalities, develop standard of living in the respective region and promote education, health and general knowledge of its people;
- (d) The Academy will teach subjects relating to local development to all those students, who come from remote areas or border areas and who are willing to go back there and work where education cannot make much headway due to difficulty in acquiring able teachers." ⁸⁵

The Academy, which had over 600 students in 1980, offers subjects in agriculture, political science and basic military science. Though the main objective of the Academy seems to be political indoctrination of frontier youths, it also offers them the chance to visit a school in Burma proper, and most important for students, a job after graduation.

The government has also addressed the problem of citizenship for Zo, which was launched as the "Ma Ma Operation" Lusei who moved to East Zoram and the Kale-Kabaw valley after the second World War had no status as Burmese citizens, although many of them had served loyally in the Burma Army and other services. The problem with the Lusei was that they did not consider themselves "Chin", which is correct since they are not "Chins". Unless they recognized themselves as "Chins" however the Minister of "Chin Affairs" was not responsible for them.

At Tahan in 1962 the Lusei formed an organization called the "Lushai Welfare Organization" and requested that the military Government recognize them as Burmese citizens. In a very emotional undertaking some 35,000 Lusei were groomed as citizens of Burma, and in 1964 all Lusei living in and near the Chin Special Division were registered as Burmese citizens of Haka, Tedim,,Kalemyo,and Tamu. They had suffered reprisals as noncitizens so the provision of citizenship was long overdue.

The military in its attempt to woo back frontier peoples also celebrated Union Day in different state capitals. At Mandalay University a Zo student from Paletwa was assigned to write a

thesis on the history of "Mizos in Burma". Popular Burmese writers such as U Thein Pe Myint, Mandalay U Hla and Daw Amar were invited to the Chin Special Division by the government. They wrote positively about the life of the Zo people, although it was difficult for even them to discard the Burmese feeling of superiority towards Zo people. For example, U Thein Pe Myint concluded that Burman and Zo were brothers, and that Burman were descendents of the "older brother" and Zo the "younger brother". This view, according to Burmese tradition, implies that a younger brother has to give or show respect for his elder brother.

Now, thirty years after formation of the union, Burman influence is seen everywhere in the life of the Zo. Today almost all young people can speak Burmese as it is relatively easy for children to learn.

Because of the availability of cheap foreign products in the first ten years of independence many Zo women discarded traditional weaving tools and began to wear imported clothes. Now Zo women wear Burmese dresses and use coconut oil instead of pig fat in their hair. The Zo man, though comfortable with the Burmese longyi (skirt) in the plains, prefers to wear pants in the hills because of its practicality for work and warmth. To the Burman eye the wearing of pants means pro-western culture.

In the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha areas, where Zo and Burman live side by side, Zo live in Burman style houses, practice Burman wet agriculture and wear mostly Burman dress. Zo have bigger houses and more material possessions than many local Burmans because most of them served in the army and are receiving military pensions. In Tuingo village, for instance, the village administration was shared by a Zo as headman, and a Burman as second headman. The inhabitants of most of the villages in the Kale valley however are either wholly Burman or wholly Zo. Even though they live side by side understanding between them is minimal, and intermarriages are rare.

In the Burma Army, where Zo and Burman serve together, intermarriages between Zo soldiers and Burmese women occur occasionally, but at universities and schools in Burma there is no significant contact between groups except in the classroom. Zo students have typically stayed together with other frontier area

students, although today's young people are feeling much more comfortable in Burmese schools.

The introduction of numerous requirements for entrance to colleges and universities, although meant for improvement of the general standard of learning, was disadvantageous for Zo students. Zo high school students had no access to private schools and could not compete with students from cities like Rangoon or Mandalay. Private schools were ordered to be closed down by the government but somehow still existed in large numbers. These private schools had the best teachers, and they thoroughly prepared their students for the matriculation examination. Thus Zo students were shut off from more prestigious professions such as medicine and engineering. The effect of the entrance requirements on the Zo students and the Zo country was catastrophic. In the future, very few Zo people become doctors and engineers if this is allowed to continue.

Awakening of Nationalism

Protected by the rugged Indo-Burman ranges, the Zo were unable to believe that a foreign power could penetrate and occupy their territory. This partially resulted in their strongest ever national feeling during the fight against the British. However, when rebellion and non-cooperation did not drive away the British the Zo treated them with respect and served them loyally. The only organization protesting British occupation had been the CHIN NATIONAL UNION, which demanded independence but did not rise in arms. (See Chapter 4). Wuamthumaung, the founder of the Chin National Union, continued his nationalist politics after independence and eventually became Minister of Zo Affairs in the Burmese Government.

After Burma's independence, Captain Mangtungnung was one of the most colorful of Zo politicians, following a brilliant career in the Burma Rifles where he was given the King's commission. In 1947 he founded the Chin People's Freedom League, and he was Parliamentary Secretary of the Zo Affairs Council until 1951. In 1951 he was elected to parliament and served as Parliamentary Secretary for U Nu for many years. In 1957 the Chin People's Freedom League and Chin National Union were merged to form the Chin National Organization (CNO). Mangtungnung was its

president. No matter what his political organization of the time Mangtungnung always stood for Zo freedom and nationalism. For example, he was the only member of parliament who never dressed in Burmese costume, even in parliamentary debates. He was also very farsighted about future economic developments in Zoram, and he foresaw oil shortages and Burma's limited capacity for import. As a result he preferred to build mule rather than motor roads for the Zo country. In the 1960s and 70s the economic condition of the country proved Mangtungnung's view. Motor roads built by village volunteers were idled when it became too expensive to transport materials by gasoline powered vehicles.

Although the Zo parties he founded were very nationalistic in nature Mangtungnung was also very loyal to the union and Burma. During an interview by the Frontier Areas Committee of inquiry Mangtungnung, together with Wuamthumaung, told the Commission that there was no need for Zoram to have a minister for Zo Affairs. Similarly he always supported but never joined the AFPFL.

The 1964 Emergence of Zo Separatism in East Zoram

The 1964 movement began without any organization or planning and resulted from a variety of government actions and policies. One factor was that Zo members of parliament were angry with the military government of General Ne Win for dissolving parliament. This meant that their hard won seats provided no more work or income, and they were forced to be idle.

The actions of the government, especially the nationalization of banks and shops, were also being watched with suspicion by Zo politicians. The military government's introduction of the "Burmese Way to Socialism" was seen as an attempt to turn Burma into a Communist country. When the government ordered termination of the circulation of one hundred and fifty kyat notes, the politicians of eastern Zo country could no longer accept the government's activities. They believed that Communism meant nationalization of land and houses, and even of pigs and chickens. It was also understood that under Communism the government would introduce forced labor.

Individuals then started to begin their own resistance movements without consultation with others who might also have an interest

in overthrowing the military government. Among those who started alone were Ex-Lieutenant Colonel Sonkhopau, Damkhohau and Mangkhanpau. Their actions preceded a larger nationalistic movement. Soon the leaders of the Chin National Organization, which was banned by the government, followed suit, and former members of the Stable AFPFL also became involved in antigovernmental activities.

Sonkhopau, one of the first initiators of action against the government, joined the British Burma Army in his early youth. He was selected to be a member of General Wingate's Penetration force and was dropped behind Japanese lines in Burma. After the second World War Sonkhopau rose rapidly in rank to become commanding officer of the Second Chin Rifles, a Lieutenant Colonel at the age of twenty six.

His career in the Burma Army was very short lived however. He was very straightforward and honest, and he did not understand politics. His problem started when he served under the command of Brigadier Kyaw Zaw. Kyaw Zaw along with many Burmese high ranking officers, including Generals Aung San and Ne Win, were political appointees rather than professional soldiers.

Lt. Colonel Sonkhopau was assigned to capture Thakin Than Tun, the most wanted man in Burma and leader of the Communist underground movement. Than Tun went underground after having political differences with his brother-in-law General Aung San, and his organization was so strong that the Rangoon government was at one time ready to hand over, its power to it.

When the Burma Army received news that Thakin Than Tun and other Communist leaders were in Prome they ordered the Second Chin Rifles to attack and capture the Communist leaders. Sonkhopau was immediately ready to proceed to Prome, but Brigadier Kyaw Zaw, his superior, ordered him to wait several days until reinforcements could come. When the Zo soldiers were finally ordered to attack Prome the Communists had disappeared. This incident was not the first time that Brigadier Kyaw Zaw had prevented Sonkhopau from capturing the Communist leaders.

As a result Lt. Col. Sonkhopau suspected that Kyaw Zaw was helping the Communists. In a letter to the war office in Rangoon he accused Brigadier Kyaw Zaw of helping and giving assistance

to the Communists and also mentioned the incident at Prome. The army immediately dismissed Sonkhopau from duty without any pensions or benefits. There were two reasons : (1) Army law prohibits a soldier from denouncing his superior. (2) The commanding officers of the Burma Army wanted to expand the army, and to obtain necessary financial backing from the government the army could not allow themselves to be without enemies.

The higher ranking officers' promotions depended on the strength of the insurgency, and thus Sonkhopau could not be allowed to .wipesout Than Tun and his communist allies. Lt. Col. Sonkhopau was therefore bitter against the army, especially when some years later the army refused to reinstall him to his old rank after they had discharged Brigadier Kyaw Zaw because of the Prome incident.

Thus when the Burma Army took power Sonkhopau decided to oppose and overthrow the military government and build a free independent Zo state. To start he and a few followers proceeded to Nagaland to meet leaders of the Naga National Council. He expected to gain support from the Naga leaders as they recognized him as a reliable friend and one who had given assistance to the Naga leader Angami Phizo when he was hunted by Burma Police in the early 1950s.

Damkhohau was another leader of the Zo 1964 uprising. He was the son of Ngullang, who had been a prominent communal politician in Tedim. Ngullang had been responsible for the opening of Tedim High School after the war, and he lead the Church and other organizations. Politics was no new ground for Damkhohau as his political activities had begun when U Nu brought the state religion issue into Burmese politics. At that time Damkhohau had been in his final year at Rangoon University and had participated when non-Burmese students formed an organization to fight against the introduction of Buddhism as the state religion. Damkhohau was elected Chairman of the organization, and Zau Seng from Kachinland was General Secretary.

In 1964 Damkhohau was working as a teacher in Zo country and forming an organization with the idea of liberating Burma from the military. Damkhohau, unlike Sonkhopau, wanted a democratic Burma and he had no intention of separating the states.

Mangkhanpau, a former circle chairman from the Yo area in

north Tedim, began his movement against the military dictatorship by conferring with Burmese political leaders such as U Kyaw Nyein and Ex-Brigadier Aung Gyi—who were known to disagree with the policies of General Ne Win. Mangkhanpau also went to the British and American Embassies asking for aid, and he went to India to see officials of the Indian Government. Then he met with Yo tribesmen from Manipur and agreed with them to oppose both the Burman and Indian governments.

In the mid-60s some former East Zoram members of the Burma parliament openly voiced their resentment against the government. They were Ralhmung, a former minister of Zo affairs in Burma; Rothang, a former member of Parliament and Hmunhre, a member of the stable AFPFL.

The best organized anti-government movement was the Chin National Organization under the leadership of Hrangnawl and Soncinlian, both former members of parliament.

Soncinlian was born in Tedim and lost his father very early in life. As a teenager he continued his father's contracting business and carried it out so successfully that he was a respectable businessman in Tedim in his early twenties. When the Chin National Organization was formed in 1957 he was one of the founding fathers. He contested the 1960 general election for a seat in the Chamber of Nationalities, and he beat all the pro- Burmese Party, Clean AFPFL and Stable AFPFL candidates. In Rangoon he was elected Chairman of the Zo Affairs Council and served in that position until the military dissolved parliament in 1962.

Hrangnawl was born at Thlantlang in 1934. He was interested in politics at an very early age, and in 1956, at age twenty-one, he was elected to parliament. He contested the seat as an independent candidate on a political platform that demanded an autonomous state within Burma. He later admitted that, similar to all other Zo politicians, he did not know what to do with Zo country other than that. Hrangnawl was disqualified by the court in the 1960 general election but got himself elected in a bye election.

The returns of the 1960 general election resulted in a stalemate. The CNO had three members; the Clean AFPFL had five members,

and the Stable AFPFL had five members, so none could build a Zo government. The GNO attempted a coalition with the Stable AFPFL because they did not want to have Zahrelian as a partner, but U Nu, the Prime Minister was not favourable to a non- AFPFL (clean) minister in his cabinet. Thus Hrangnawl acted as a go-between between the two seasoned politicians Zahrelian and Captain Mangtungnung.

The job was not easy however, as Zahrelian and Captain Mangtungnung did not like each other. Hrangnawl first went in secrecy to Zahrelian and told him that if he fulfilled Hrangnawl's conditions Hrangnawl would make him minister for Zo affairs. Hrangnawl's conditions were : (1) All positions in the Zo ministry were to be filled by CNO members, except the post of minister. (2) Zahrelian was to contact Captain Mangtungnung with cautious respect. (Their earlier relationship had been one of arrogance and contempt.)

Zahrelian was willing to fulfill the conditions, and when he called Mangtungnung and talked for a few minutes Mangtungnung agreed to work with him. The role played by Hrangnawl was never revealed to Mangtungnung.

During his tenure as a member of parliament there was little that Hrangnawl could do to improve living conditions of Zo people, as every project was tightly held in the hands of the Burmans. Hrangnawl was involved only in changing some Zo laws.

In early 1964 Hrangnawl organized a secret mission to Rangoon and approached the Embassies of the U.S., Great Britain and India. Although the embassies were very sympathetic to the ideas of Burma returning to civilian rule and better treatment of Zo by the Burmese government they did not promise any assistance. Hrangnawl reasoned with the British Embassy that it was the British who brought all the difficulties, and most importantly of all, that the British had torn the Zo people apart. The British showed their sympathy and that was all. At the American Embassy the CIA representative promised Hrangnawl that he would look into buying arms from international arms smugglers and ask them to accept Burmese currency.

When Hrangnawl returned to Haka his movements were traced by the police because his activities had been leaked to the civil administration. The Sub-divisional Officer Runroth'anga told

Hrangnawl that he knew that he was in the process of organizing an anti-government movement, and that from that day on he should regard himself arrested. Runrothanga could not put him in jail immediately because of the absence of the police commissioner, but he was put under house arrest and was not allowed outside the town of Haka. During this period Hrangnawl walked 42 miles one night to Falam to see Zahrelian. When Hrangnawl explained his activities, which had been coordinated with Soncinlian from Tedim, Zahrelian was very interested; He declined to go underground however as His primary concern was raising his children. He did promise his assistance should the freedom movement need his help and said they should contact him through Nozam, a former aid and MP.

In the meantime Soncinlian and Thualzen, a former army sergeant, had organized the nationalist movement in Tedim. There they were overwhelmingly supported by the youth who envisioned a sovereign Zo state.

The organization spread quickly to areas outside the town itself and also reached Zo areas in Manipur. Soncinlian received news that the Manipur Rifles were to change their uniforms and fight alongside the freedom fighters, and that a high ranking officer of the Manipur Rifles was preparing tactics to be used. Events moved fast. A military government order to arrest all suspicious persons in the Chin Special Division was leaked to the resistance movements, and the politicians, had no alternative but to go into hiding. Ralhmung, Hmunhre and Rothang went to Shillong from where they contacted the Indian and Assam governments. Hrangnawl and his followers went to Tuisan camp which had been organized by the Soncinlian-Thualzen group. Situated in a valley the camp was not satisfactory as a guerilla base, but the movement, which was called the Anti-Communist Freedom League, used it as headquarters. They had one Sten gun and ten rifles. Damkhohau was also at the camp.

From Tuisan camp, which was at the Burma-India border, the movement learned the true facts about aid from the Manipur Rifles. The Paite National Council was indeed ready to help the movement, but it did not have control over the Manipur Rifles. The stories heard earlier meant only that Zo soldiers in the Manipur Rifles might change their uniforms to fight for a free Zo movement.

From Tuisan camp Hrangnawl went to India to see Indian officials. In New Delhi the Indian officials, assured him that all politicians would be given sanctuary. They were however to refrain from political activities, and they were to stay in the 25 mile border zone so as not to embarrass India's relationship with Burma. As long as all the conditions were fulfilled the Indian government would give them financial assistance.

Hrangnawl then went to Shillong to meet with officials-of the Assam state government. The Assam officials, however, saw only Ralhmung, Hmunhre and Rothang. They were asked to go to Aizawl where they received living allowances equal to the pay of Indian MPs.

Rothang, who contested the general election as an AFPFL member, went to Champai with Hrangnawl and met other leaders of the nationalist movement. Soncinlian also decided to go to New Delhi and meet Indian authorities. When Soncinlian met with the Indian officials they wanted the leaders of the movement to name one man with whom they could deal. Soncinlian went back to Champhai and suggested that the nationalists elect a leader. Soncinlian himself was over whelmingly endorsed, but he refused because he did not speak English fluently and he had no experience in guerilla warfare. Instead he proposed Hrangnawl as the leader because Hrangnawl had studied guerilla warfare and spoke English and many Zo dialects fluently. As a result Hrangnawl was selected as leader of the group.

The selection was not made without trouble however. Damkhohau refused to recognize the leadership of Hrangnawl, as he thought a Burmese should lead the movement., He named a former MP from Kalemyo and suggested that they send a delegation to Kale to ask the Burman MP to lead the movement. Many of the Zo nationalists were very agitated by this proposal because overthrow of the military government was not their only objective, and because they thought that a Zo movement should never be lead by a Burman. Participation of Burmans in the movement was not desirable from their point of view.

Lt. Col. Sonkhopau arrived in Champhai camp from the Naga National Council headquarters in the latter part of 1964. He was in a filthy condition with his clothes torn from walking through the jungles. There in Champhai he met Tunkhopum, leader of the underground Pake National Council.

Tunkhopum belonged to the Baite clan of the Yo tribe. He had wanted to be a contestant in the Manipur elections but his candidacy was rejected by the returning officer, as Baite was not listed as a Scheduled tribe. Since he was unable to be a contestant he went underground and traveled to Pakistan to request aid. The Pakistanis recognized him as the leader of the Zo nationalist movement and promised him they would train Zo guerilla fighters.

Although meeting for the first time Lt. Col Sonkhopau and Tunkhopum became very good friends. With the approval of Hrangawl and other leaders they decided to go to Pakistan to train some thirty guerilla fighters.. Twenty men were sent with Sonkhopau and Tunkhopum, and they were to recruit more men on their way to Pakistan. Sonkhopau, as a former guerilla fighter during the Second World War, had no difficulty in recruiting Zo youths.

At that time the resistance fighters happily learned that international arms smugglers were ready to accept Burmese currency in exchange for arms.

On their way to Pakistan Sonkhopau and Tunkhopum formed a United Chin Government. Tunkhopum was made Prime Minister and Sonkhopau minister for defense. Hrangawl was given the portfolio for foreign affairs, but he did not know this as he was not consulted.

After three months of training in Pakistan thirty Zo nationalist were ready for action. The Pakistanis informed the leaders of the movement at Champhai that the trained guerillas were about to depart from East Pakistan, and that the party would have to pass through a part of Arakan and the Chin Hills, where they would have to pass Burma Army outposts.

The leaders of the movement at Champhai had to make a move to avoid the party from Pakistan walking into a Burma Army ambush. It was decided that the Champhai group would attack Falam, Haka and Tedim to : (1) Obtain money from the treasuries for buying arms and ammunition, and (2) Distract the police and army from the border areas where the party from Pakistan would have to pass.

The leaders then split up in two parties to attack Falam, Haka and Tedim simultaneously. Hrangawl led the party attacking Haka. Although the party was only twenty men strong, they

easily took the border town of Rih which was held by a platoon of the Burma Army. They did not take Haka however because word of the impending attack was leaked to authorities two hours ahead of their arrival. When they reached Haka the police were in defensive positions and the nationalists were driven back. In the cross fire a treasury clerk was killed.

The party to attack Tedim was 700 men strong and was led by General Thualzen, commander-in-chief of the movement. This group was equipped with only a few light arms, but even so it would have been easy to take Tedim. Instead of attacking Tedim however Thualzen and his lieutenants met Colonel Vankulh, Commander of the Burma Army Northwest command, and Thawngcinthang, the commissioner of the Chin Special Division. Vankulh and Thawngcinthang, themselves Zo, reasoned with the nationalists that the uprising would only cause hardship for Zo people. Indeed the cruelty of the Burma Army was known to every Zo soldier who had served in it. Army pensioners had told of the Burmese Army burning alive a Karen church congregation, and of Burma soldiers eating fried liver taken from killed Karens! In Kachinland innocent women and children were killed, which was simply a revival of Burmese cruelty against the Thais or Assamese in earlier wars. Vankulh and Thawngcinthang also promised amnesty to the nationalist group if they would lay down their arms.

Thualzen and his assistants therefore agreed to return to their villages. Contrary to the promise given them however the Burmese government ordered the arrest of all persons taking part in the anti-government movement. Thus Thualzen and his lieutenants went underground. The Burma Army then rounded up the majority of nationalists like a flock of chickens and put them in jail in Monywa. There they spent some eight years in confinement.

The Burma Army also attacked the camp at Tuisan and took all the cooks to prison.

Had Thualzen fought he would have received assistance from the villagers. The messengers he sent had been well received, and the villagers had decided to support the nationalists since in 1964 army pensioners were not happy with the military government, as their daily life was made extremely difficult by the nationalization of shops.

Once again the leaders of the movement met together in Champai. Sonkhopau and Tunkhopum with thirty trained people were there, having returned from Pakistan without any difficulties. In Champai Lt: CoL Sonkhopau was accused of sabotaging the movement by forming the "Chin Government". Hrangnawl made him understand that he and his followers were being disarmed because of that.

Sonkhopau was then sent with two armed men to see the leaders of the Naga National Council; but he was arrested by the Assam Rifles on his way to Nagaland. Sonkhopau did not reveal his true identity and gave his name as Thuantak. He was put in prison in Imphal, (and Damkhohau later revealed his true identity to the Indian authorities.

Tunkhopum had his own adventure after the unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the Burmese Government. The Mizo National Front needed Tunkhopum because Pakistani officials recognized him as leader of the Zo freedom movement, and they wanted Tunkhopum's approval before they gave assistance to the MNF. Tunkhopum however differed with the MNF leaders.- He and about thirty of his followers were disarmed by the MNF and were kept at MNA headquarters. After a year with the MNF he was killed in a shooting accident.

After the attack on Haka and the negotiations in Tedim the Indian government stopped their financial assistance to the selfexiled Zo politicians. Ralhmung, Rothang, Soncinlian, Pacungnung and Thualzen then hid themselves at Thingat and Lamka in Manipur.

Lai Bahadur Shastri, the Indian Prime Minister, visited Burma in 1965 and in talks with General Ne Win discussed rebel movements along the India-Burma borders. They agreed to cooperate with each other to prevent any sinister attempt at secession or disintegration. This was to be done by fostering a sense of common nationhood among all peoples within the territories of India and Burma. Accordingly Sonkhopau and other Zo nationalist leaders arrested in India were handed over to the Burmese government. They were put in prison without trial for more than eight years.

Sonkhopau spent ten years in prison, and Hrangnawl and Damkhohau spent over eight years, although at the end of their prison life

the Burman told them their sentences had been for six years; Peace returned, but the uprising caused the Burmese government to station army units in Zo country. One of the Burma Army contingents sent to crush the uprising and maintain law and order was involved in an incident interesting to record.

An Army unit was stationed in Tonzang at a time when there was a celebration in the village, and army personnel were invited to take part. It is traditional for Zo people to drink zu and dance on such occasions so zu was served and traditional songs were sung, and everyone was invited to dance. Although in Burma it is not usual for a man to touch a woman unless they are engaged or married, Zo dance is performed by men and women-dancing side by side, one's arm around the other's shoulder or waist. Placing their arms around women's waists and shoulders was something new for the young Burmese soldiers, and they went a step farther by touching the women's breasts.

According to Zo tradition it is fine to touch another's shoulder, hands or waist, but touching of a woman's breast is regarded as an act of sexual intimacy, and it is most ugly to do so in public. The village elders therefore pleaded with the soldiers not to surpass Zo traditions and explained their customs to the soldiers. On hearing the pleadings of the village elders the military officers and men declared that the people of Tonzang were hostile to them. The army unit then surrounded the village and threatened to shoot anybody trying to escape. They also threatened to burn the village should there be any resistance. After two days of negotiation the soldiers agreed to return to their barracks. The incident demonstrated how cultural differences between peoples can result in conflicts. It also documented the unnecessary use of power and force by the Burma Army, which had created so much hatred among other ethnic minorities in other parts of Burma.

Alarmed by movements of the Mizo National Front, the Zomi Liberation Front and the Naga National Council, Ne Win visited India in March 1968. There he agreed with Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Indian Prime Minister, to joint security measures against resistance groups on both sides of the boundary. They agreed to exchange information, and to coordinate their patrols in the Naga-Mizo border areas.

After the Zo armed struggle of 1965 was put to an end there was no serious movement that threatened the peaceful life of the general public. (The author has no information regarding Zo national movements in the southern part of the Zoram and the plains.) However, a number of Zo people, especially the younger generation, seriously believed in retaining the independence and sovereignty of Zo people. These young people had formed the Ghinland Independence Organization (CIO) in 1962. The CIO coordinated with the Zo uprising of 1965 but did not actively take part in the armed struggle. Due to different tactics of organization the CIO preferred a slow and thorough process for uniting all Zo nationalist movements. In 1966 the CIO was changed to the Zomi National Front (ZNF) and was in close contact with almost all revolutionary movements in Burma which were against the Rangoon government. The ZNF has however been conducting its activities under utmost secrecy since 1968 so that information on the extent of its activity is not available.

The organization's activity was mainly to find out whether Zo nationalities in Zoram east, Zoram west, and Manipur were interested in forming a combined force aimed at attaining an independent Zo state.

The leaders of the Zomi National Front were Thangkhansuan, Thartgzapau, Haukhankhup, Salai Aunghte, Salai Myoaye and Lianmang. These people are intelligent young people who had an early acquaintance with the Burman. They know the Burman way of thinking and know exactly what Burman think of Zo people. The ZNF cooperated with the Karenni National Progressive Party, the Shan State Progress Party and the Kachin Independence Organization and was a member of the alliance of all forces opposing the Ne Win government. This alliance conferred regularly during the 1970s.

Another organization called the Chin Democracy Party (CDP) was formed in 1971. Pu Mangtling, Former Zo Parliamentary Member and Parliamentary Secretary at the foreign office of Burma, was the leader. Other members were William Salianzam, Gincinpau, Daniel Thangzapau, Lianthang, Mangkham, David Cinkhanthang and Bamyint.

The Chin Democratic Party worked with the Pyithaungsu Party of former Burmese Prime Minister U Nu and fought the Burma Army of General Ne Win from the Burma-Thai border.

The CDP however was unhappy with the Pyithaungsu Party for insisting on controlling the frontier areas under their rule. The CDP then split from the Pyithaungsu Party and formed the Chin Liberation Army (CLA) in the early 1970s. The CLA was one hundred men strong and was in contact with Zo nationalist groups in Southern Zoram. In June-1976 a group of the CLA under William Saliangam marched from Kachinland toward Zoram. They intended to establish a base at the Zo-Bangladesh border and organize a movement in Zoram. They were unsuccessful however as a force of the Burma Army found them on the Kalemryo-Tedim road. Saliangam decided to surrender, believing they would receive trial. The Burma Army instead took them to Zo country. There every last man was mowed down with a machine gun. Only one man temporarily escaped the massacre. He was hit in the eye and left for dead, after which he managed to crawl away. On learning that there was an escapee the army hunted him down and shot him in the back.

Hindernis to Zo's Progress

Burma is rich in natural resources. Metals such as gold, silver, antimony, lead, and zinc are being mined in the Shan States. Nickel and chromium are in abundance in the Zo country while copper is found in the volcanoes of the central plains. Tin and tungsten ores are mined in the Kayah State and Tenasserim. Ruby and sapphire have been the source of fortune for the people in Mogok. For many centuries, imperial green jade of the Kachin Hills had been a favorite jewelry of many rich and royal Chinese. Burma was one of the oldest producer of oil. Important industrial raw materials such as limestone, barite, asbestos, mica, iron ore and kaolin are waiting to be exploited. Burma is also the largest producer of teak in the world. Once the number one exporter of rice in the world; Burma still has abundant, unused farmland.

Today however, Burma is among the 15 poorest nations of the world. The primary reason being the enormous waste caused by internal conflicts. With the aim of forcing communism on Burma the communists revolted against the free elected government. Although the present government applied socialist and communist ideologies, the communists continued their war against the government. The Karens never wanted to be a part of Burma

because of past hostilities with the Burman. Shan, Mon, Kayah, Kachin, Muslims, of Arakan, and even Zo people rose in arms with the goal of freeing themselves from the domination of the Burman against the central government. These uprising brought destruction of property and wasted human lives. The cost of keeping Burma from deteriorating drained the states treasury by as much as fifty percent of the national budget. The communists and other organizations waste the country's resources to finance their movements. Jade buys guns for Kachin. Ruby, sapphire, and other precious stones support the armies of the Shan, while tin, tungsten, and antimony are the back bone of the Kaya and Karen independence movements. Taxes imposed on smuggled trading along the Burma-Thailand border is a source income for the Karen organization. Kachin, Shan, and the communists movements are heavily involved in drug trafficking. In addition Burma's products including arts, treasures, antiques, and even animals are traded across the border illegally. Twenty percent Of Burma's teak production is smuggled to Thailand. The illegal trade robs the state's revenue heavily.

The government is not successful in controlling these activities of the underground because : 1. inadequate funding for mobilization of forces big enough to fight the various movements; 2. corruption among officials in enforcing rules hinder effective implementation; 3. military personnel did not always apply diplomatic and human measures in conducting warfare. For example, the burning of whole villages and crops in areas of resistance and the killing of villagers suspected of helping resistance movements brought hatred to the minds of those from whom the military sought friendship and brotherhood.

At the Panglong conference, Burmese leaders promised frontier people equality in all walks of life. However, the frontier people were never involved in important state policy decisions. None of them had been in a position to influence the matters of the state. Some frontier representatives had been appointed as cabinet ministers for lesser important departments such as forestry, land nationalization, and culture.

In nearly forty years only once a frontier man held an important cabinet post, that of the foreign affairs. At Panglong General Aung San, in reference to the frontier people, said they could be brought to our level and finally to the world level

together with us""6. The living condition in the Zo country had remained very much the same as in pre-British days. Zo's main transportation is still On the back. Slash and burn cultivation is practiced much the same as in very early days. Although East Zoram is the only state without a college, the government opened a number of health centers and schools. Dirt roads connect the six sub-divisional headquarters while the four hundred thousand Zo people living in the "Chin State" enjoy about six miles of paved road. We can never be sure whether the Zo are left behind or the world has unfairly advanced to a computer and space age.

The uprising of the sixties in East Zoram were caused by feelings of unjust treatment of the Zo people and by the introduction of unfamiliar political ideology by the Burmese elites. Burmese leaders believed socialism and communism would work like magic" in uplifting the primitive economy and industry of the nation. It was as if they were saying "Let us halt production and make revolution." In their eagerness to make the right ideological choice, they have undermined their understanding with the frontier people. –

Another aspect of the cause of Burma's slow progress may be found in the difference of priorities between the Burmese elite who rule the country and the mass. The overwhelming majority of Burman and frontier people was made up of peasants with little knowledge Of industrial and teachnological possibilities. The Burmese elite were reared in towns under different conditions where automobiles and other luxuries such as refrigerators and stereo equipments were taken for granted although simply out of touch or unaffordable for the mass. The mass needed basic necessities they could afford such as stitching needles and pots and pans to improve their century-old routines of daily life. However, the country's backward industry was not capable of manufacturing even these basic necessities. Therefore, the discussion of industrialization by the military elite was not comprehensible in the language of the mass.

The mass envied the life style of the elite for whom state housing, transportation and other luxuries were easily available; however, the people were strong believers in religion and man's limited ability to alter his condition, which caused them to relinquish any ambtions for a better life, while alive. The elite were not

fully committed to work for the people; instead, they used power, and position to improve their personal wealth and status. Corruption among high ranking officers in the government came to light at the trial of former General Tin Oo and former Colonel Bo Ni, once cabinet ministers. State money, had been freely spent for private purposes and custom duty concessions on luxury goods bought in foreign countries were received by them. When the poor died because the right medicine was not available in the country, the officials enjoyed exclusive military hospitals with unlimited Western medical supplies. For some high ranking officers medical treatment received in the privileged hospitals was not good enough so they sought medical treatment in Western countries at the cost of the state. Extravagant wedding ceremonies of the children of high ranking officers were financed through the state bank. When automobiles cost as much as 100 years salary, of a clerk or a policeman, chauffeured limousines were easily available to high ranking officers, sometimes five to eight for a cabinet minister.

Yet Zo did not despair. The uprising of Zo people in East and West Zoram during the sixties clearly demonstrated their wish to be united. While Zo from the west fought for total independence for all Zo people, the leaders from East Zoram were divided concerning their goals. The majority of the Eastern Zo movement was for complete independence except some leaders such as Hrangnawl and Damkhohau, who fought for a united Zo people to be a part of Burma. The difference of opinion had been the result of treatment received from the Burmese and Indian administration. Zo people in the west felt completely neglected of their affairs by the Indian government and could find no hope of progress in further association. Whereas some eastern Zo leaders believed that under democratic government they might be able to share, even if tiny, responsibilities in shaping the future of Burma and with that, that of the Zo people.



Festive Lusei dress

CHAPTER 7

ZO PEOPLE IN INDIA

Distribution of Zo People in India

Zo people are concentrated in five areas of India; the majority, approximately 450,000, dwell in the Union Territory of Mizoram. Another group of approximately 183,000 occupy the highlands of Manipur. Some Zo are also settled in the State of Meghalaya.

Small groups from the Hmar and Thado clans live in the Cachar District of Assam and Nagaland, and about 50,000 Zo people also occupy Jampui tlang in Tripura.

West Zoram (Mizoram)

West Zoram (Mizoram), which has an area of 23,980 square kilometers, is bordered by Bangladesh and Tripura on the west, and by East Zoram (Chin State) to the south and east. On the north it is bordered by Manipur and Cachar.

According to the 1978 edition of the Statistical Handbook of Mizoram, there were 438,052 people living in West Zoram as of January 1, 1978. This indicates a high rate of population growth when compared to the 1961 census figure of 266,063. The growth occurred despite disturbances in 1966, during which many people were relocated and some left their homeland to settle in Manipur and the North Cachar Hills.

The majority of the population in West Zoram belong to the Lusei, Fanai, Pawi and Mara clans. Non-ethnic Zo, among others, are the Riangs and the Chakmas.

The Duhlian or Lusei dialect is the common language, and it is also used by Zo people living in neighbouring Indian states. The Pawi and Lakher speak Lai in addition to Lusei. West Zoram, with a 50.9% literacy rate, has the highest literacy in India; although according to the 1971 census, hill peasants were about 87% of the population.

Political History

The hills were brought under British rule after the Lushai expeditions of 1871-72 and 1889." In 1891 the British created the South and North Lushai Hills Districts, each district under a superintendent or political officer. The south was administered from Bengal and the north from Assam. In 1898 the two districts were merged and the Lushai Hills District was made a part of Assam.

In 1954 the name of the Lushai Hills District was changed to the Mizo Hills District. Finally, in 1972, the Mizo Hills District was made a union territory of India and named Mizoram.

The main purpose of the British in controlling West Zoram was to protect the plains from attack by the Zo people, and as a result there was minimum interference in Zo internal affairs. Each village managed its own affairs; disputes and cases were settled by the village chiefs and elders under Zo customary law. However, because the British recognized and authorized the powers of the hereditary chieftainships, some chiefs exercised autocratic powers, e.g., allotment of cultivable land was made according to individual chiefs whims and fancies.

Among the privileges, benefits and powers the chiefs received were :

1. Free housing built by villagers,
2. Payment of a paddy tax or fathdng,
3. A flesh tax on four footed wild animals hunted by the people, or sachhiah,
4. A certain quantity of honey from a particular bees' nest, ox khuaichhiah; and,
5. Compulsory submission of disputes to the village chiefs for trial.

These impositions on the villagers created increasing resentment against the chiefs.

In 1935, on the advice of the Simon Commission, the Lushai Hills, the Naga Hills, and the North Cachar Hills were declared backward areas, and hence the Zo were defined as backward people.

On April 1, 1937, these districts were given Excluded Area status within Assam, and as a result, were Administered by the governor of Assam.

The British used much energy in maintaining peace and showed enthusiasm for the study of the Liisei peoples' culture. Little thought was given to development however, and the Zo people were isolated and treated as if in a human museum. The Zo people in the Lushai Hills district became educated much faster than the plains people however because of British missionaries. By 1937 the Zo no longer tolerated being labeled as "backward people", and some Lusei commoners even demanded representation in the provincial legislative assembly.

In 1940, the Zo people protested again, as they continued to be defined as "backward". Sir Robert Reid, the High Commissioner of Assam, visited the Lushai Hills, and the Zo suggested to him that they would be better off if they were attached to their kinsmen in Burma. This resulted in a 1941 proposal by Reid for unification of the Hill Tracts of Arakan, Pakkoku and Chittagong; Chin, Naga, Lushai, North Cachar and Mikir areas; parts of the Chindwin district; the west bank of the Chindwin; the hill areas of Manipur; the hill areas of Sadiya, and the hills of Tripura. Reid's plan was approved by Sir Winston Churchill but vetoed by the labour government.

The Mizo Union

At the end of World War Two, when the attainment of Indian independence was imminent, the Zo were unprepared. There was no political organization in the district, as political participation was forbidden by the administration.

Although there were no political organizations, as will be discussed later, an organization which partially filled the need was started. In 1935, with the help of the Welsh Presbyterian Missionaries Rev. D. Edwards and Miss K. Hughes, the Young Lushai Association (YLA) had been formed after the model of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in England.

The main objectives of the YLA were to :

1. Utilize leisure constructively,
2. Aim at the improvement of Zoram, and;

3. Advocate the Christian way of living.

Thus, the YLA concerned itself primarily with social services.

The members of the YLA soon realized however that the term "Lushai" included only one Zo tribe; to include all other Zo tribes, the name was changed to the Young Mizo Association (YMA).

R. Vanlawma was the general-secretary of both the YLA and YMA.

By 1946 the political climate had changed so dramatically that the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills district, A.R.H. MacDonald, encouraged the formation of a political party by the Zo people. He believed that Zo people, who had stood stubbornly at the side of the British during the Second World War, deserved a better future.

MacDonald, who came to West Zoram in 1943, had been good to the Zo people. He had protected them from the British Indian Army during the Second World War by denying the army use of Zo porters or coolies. He had also protected the common men from maltreatment by their chiefs, and he saw to it that there was no corruption in the administration.

Vanlawma tried to use the YLA to influence Zo chiefs to follow democratic principles. He attempted this by encouraging the election of counsellors (upas) to advise the chiefs. When the YLA recommendations were brought to the notice of the District Superintendent, he called for an election of village upas. In 1946, two upas were elected in every village to counsel the chief in matters relating to eviction from land. These elections were the first ever held in West Zoram; possibly in the whole Zo area.

Thus was the first step taken to protest the villagers from the eviction powers of the chiefs.

In 1942, Mohandas Gandhi's Quit India movement forced Sir Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, to declare his intent to quit India after the Second World War.

Knowledge of this intent made Vanlawma worry about the future of the Zo people in general and the chiefs in particular. After consultation with Dahrawka and other Zo leaders in Aizawl, he drafted a constitution for a political party—to meet the needs which

were not included in the objectives of the non-political YLA. (Dahrawka was not allowed to take part in political organizations, as he was a government servant in charge of the Veterinary department—but consultation appeared permissible.)

On April 9, 1946 Vanlawma approached the Superintendent and received his blessing to start a political party. On the same day Vanlawma formed, the Mizo Commoners' Union, acting as the founder, chairman and general secretary. The other officers of the Union were Lalbuaia and Hrangia.

The primary objectives of the party were to protect and develop the interests of West Zoram. Subsequently, Saprawnga was elected as its president, R. Dengthuama as vice-president, and Vanlawma as the general secretary. Later the party was called the Mizo Union (MU).

On September 24, 1946, at Kulikawn, Aizawl, the MU held its first General Assembly. These resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly :

1. The Lushai Hills District was to be included in Assam province after independence, ,
2. The District was not to be treated as an Excluded Area;
3. Adequate representation was to be provided for in the Assam Legislative Assembly,
4. The District should manage its own legislature concerning internal affairs,
5. All areas inhabited by Zo were to be included in the District, e.g., Lushai Hills, Chin Hills, and some areas of Manipur and North Cachar.

At a meeting in October. 1946, at Thakthing Veng, Aizawl, Mizo Union Party councilors or village representatives were elected : Pachhunga (as president); K.T. Dawla; Rev. Zairema from Dawrpui Veng, Aizawl; Rev. Chhuahkhama from Mission Veng, Aizawl; Thanglian kam from Kulikawn Veng, Aizawl; Ranga from Saitual village; Vanlabuka from Shiphir Village, and Vankeuva from Sialsuk village.

Independence within sight, superintendent MacDonald of the Lushai Hills District felt that something should be done concerning future administration. He therefore called for a conference of

village chiefs to establish a constitution or Vantlang Rorel Khawl. With this constitution MacDonald intended to protect West Zoram from falling under India after British departure.

The conference called by MacDonald drafted and approved a constitution, and the District Conference was thus born. The District Conference consisted of 40 representatives, divided equally between chiefs and commoners. Three Hundred-Fifty (350) chiefs formed an electoral college, which elected 20 representatives from among themselves. Additionally, each group of ten neighbouring houses within the district joined together to elect one representative. As there were 25,100 households in the Lushai Hills in 1946, a total of 2,510 representatives elected 20 representatives to participate in the District Conference.

The District Conference however was boycotted by the MU because they saw that the chiefs were over-represented.

When the Bardoloi Committee of the North East Frontier Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee, with Gopinath Bardoli as chairman, visited the District Conference in Aizawl, MacDonald presented the conference's demands. The demands included (1) representation of at least three seats in the Assam Legislative Assembly, (2) administration of land tenure, agriculture, social customs, primary education, immigration, civil and criminal justice by the District Conference of Lushai Hills District, and (3) self government by the Zo people in accordance with the constitution approved by the Indian government. The government would also be required to pay a certain amount as grant in aid.

Discussion of Zo Political Future

At Lakhimpur, on 21 November 1946, the Mizo Union held a meeting which was attended by Zo representatives from Cachar, West Zoram and Manipur. Bawichhuaka, a Hmar from Lakhimpur, Cachar District, was elected president/The conference resolved unanimously that all Zo areas in Cachar District, Manipur, the Chittagong Hills Tract and the adjacent East Zoram should be amalgamated with West Zoram into one unit and designated as Zoram District. The justification for this resolution was the common culture, language, religion and geographical continuity shared by all the areas and most importantly, because the people of all the districts shared the same ethnic origin.

In the 1943 Churchill declaration concerning "quitting India", he had emphasized the problem of the Maharaja States and the tribal question. It was his contention that before the British could leave India, these problems, which he thought could take ten years or so to settle, had to be resolved.

The West Zoram politician Vanlawma believed however that there was ample time to prepare for independence. He went to Shillong several times to meet the Advisor of the Governor of Assam, and in these meetings he learned that the British Government had confidentially contemplated creation of a tribal belt between Burma and India. The British proposed the tribal area because they wanted to protect these people from molestation by the more advanced Indians and Burmans. Unfortunately for the tribals, however, the British election of July 1945 was unexpectedly won by the Labour Party, which was in favour of leaving India immediately.

Conflict between Hindus and Muslims of the Indian subcontinent reached a saturation point during the early 1940s, and by 1946-47 it was understood that the subcontinent would be divided into Hindu and Muslim nations. Assam, the population of which consisted of Hindu, Muslim and Tribal groups—who were mostly Christians—fell to the Muslim region because the Hindus were fewer than the Muslims.

Bardoloi, the Chief Minister of Assam, and Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister, were desperate to have the tribal people join India., Khasi politicians were divided into many factions and could not agree to one position, and the Garos did not have a political organization. The Naga leaders under Angami Phizo had already been fighting for their independence, and they would not in anyway help India. Thus the leaders of the Mizo Union were the only people that could come to the aid of Assam and opt for India.

As a result, Bardoloi telegraphed Vanlawma to come to Shillong and asked him to opt for India. According to Vanlawma, "It was very difficult to make a decision by myself without consulting my colleagues, as we had not made any decisions beforehand. Most of us wanted to become independent, but some chiefs refused to follow any decision taken by the Mizo Union. So it was next to impossible to take steps for independence, but we were not in a

position to opt for India. But decisions had to be made. If we refused to help India and failed to fight for independence, India or Pakistan might impose a status which we might not be able to object to. So, I was of the opinion that it would be better to bargain for the best status that India could offer."

So he said the following; "Look here Mr. Bardoloi and see the town of Shillong, which is the capital of the Khasi. You would not find a Khasi merchant in the business area, except one or two small shops outside the business area. Do you think that I will make Aizawl like Shillong? I am not going to make Aizawl the second Shillong. We are most afraid of economic exploitation by the business experts from the plains. The papers in Shillong and Calcutta are demanding the 'Black Regulation must Go' in their headlines. They wanted to abolish the Chin Hills Regulation and the Inner Line Regulation which are protecting us from the exploitation of the plains people. If you want our aid, my condition is to keep these regulations. What is your opinion?"

Bardoloi answered, "That would be no problem at all."

Vanlawma continued, "We are a Mongoloid stock of people, and coming from the east, we are ethnologically and culturally different from you, who came from the west. We are now Christians, but even before, we converted to Christianity our own religion differed quite substantially from Hinduism. Our customs are also distinctly different from yours, and it will not be possible to live with Indians under the same laws and regulations. You are requesting me to opt for India, and as a matter of fact we have the right to opt for Pakistan as well as for independence. At the same time we are financially weak and lag behind in civilization. We are a small nation, and we need a great nation to depend upon. If we are going to help you, will you, as an Indian leader, come forward to help us in obtaining our own Legislature and administration? Will you leave us alone to manage our own affairs so that we can survive among other nations?"

Mr. Bardoloi answered, "Your future will be safe by having representation in the Assam Legislature and the Indian Parliament."

Vanlawma disagreed with Bardoloi because representation in the Assam Legislature was not enough of a safeguard for the Zo of West Zoram. In the Assam Legislature Assembly there were 105 seats, and the Lushai district might be allotted only three of these.

Vanlawma said, "I know in the Legislature that matters are decide?! by the majority. How can a microscopic minority be heard? In the Indian Parliament we would not have representation unless special arrangements were made for us. Thus there, is no safeguard for us in either the legislature or parliament. The only safeguard for us is a separate administration, or autonomy. If you insist on having the same law and regulations for the Lushai Hills District, our discussion should end here. If you want us to help you keep this area from becoming a part of ,the proposed Pakistan, it will be your turn to safeguard our existence."

Bardoloi promised Vanlawma it would be possible to give the Zo people in WestZoram autonomy. If Nehru introduced such an autonomy bill it would likely be passed; because Lord Mountbatten was a friend of Nehru's and would support the proposal. Bardoloi also assured Vanlawma that no law which might jeopardize the survival of the Zo people would be forced upon the Lushai Hills District. The Indians, as the big brother, would come to the aid of the little brother and help to develop the economy of the Lushai Hills.

Bardoloi also asked Vanlawma to accept membership in the Committee on Tribal Status, which was to be formed by the Constituent Assembly. Bardoloi also wanted to know whether Vanlawma would demand a special reservation in the All Indiahigher services.

Vanlawma was willing to work in the Committee on Tribal Status, but he did not want a special reservation in the All India higher services, since Zo people might then enlist to serve in their own land.

The two men also agreed that matters of finance, defense and communication should be under the control of the central government of India, in consultation with the Zo government.

Vanlawma and Bardoloi concluded their talks with a gentleman's agreement, whereby Vanlawma as representative of the Mizo Union would opt to join India, and Bardoloi, as the Chief Minister of Assam, would obtain autonomous status for the Lushai Hills District. When the meeting closed, Bardoloi thanked Vanlawma and conveyed his thanks to the Zo people on .behalf of Assam and India, after which he left for Delhi to meet, Nehru.

Vanlawma was then visited by Mr. Sakharie, the General Secretary of the Naga National Union, who asked that the Zo people demand independence after the British departure. Vanlawma decided to stick to his promises to Bardoloi. However, he told Sakharie that should the Indians not keep their agreement he would surely come to the Nagas' side to fight for self-determination - without regard for the strength of their opponent.

After some time Vanlawma received a letter which advised him that a Sub-Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly of the Indian Union had been formed under the chairmanship of Bardoloi.

The committee was to deal with the affairs of the tribal people of Assam. Omeo.Kumar Das, who wrote the letter for Bardoloi, also offered Vanlawma co-opted membership on the committee, which he was asked to accept as soon as possible.

This action implied that Bardoloi, as Nehru's representative, had not honoured his commitment to Vanlawma. Vanlawma responded by letter to Bardoloi to ask whether he still intended to give the District autonomy; if so, Vanlawma said he would be glad to accept membership on the committee.

In the meantime there had been criticism of the MU leaders—for example, some critics pointed out that MU president Pachhunga had no college education and thus was unfit for the post of the- MU presidency.

In November, MacDonald called the office bearers of the MU to Thakthing Zawlbuk to discuss his proposed constitution. At the meeting a party member named Saprawnga unexpectedly put up a no-confidence motion against the office bearers of the MU, toppling Pachhunga, the President, and R. Vanlawma, the General Secretary., Khawtinkhuma was elected as the new President, Lalbiakthanga as Vice-President, and Vanthuama as General Secretary.

The Mizo Union thus gained college educated office bearers. It was difficult to make all Zo people happy, however, because the uneducated majority eyed educated people with suspicion.

The no-confidence motion had been made in contradiction to the Mizo Union-constitution, and therefore the ousted office bearers refused to step down."This resulted in two Assemblies

and two sets of office bearers. Negotiations, to unite the two assemblies and to elect completely new office bearers failed because of differences over whether or not to join India.

MacDonald intervened in the controversy at this point by confiscating files and over fifteen thousand rupees belonging to the MU. The quarrel came to an end some time later, after the United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO) was formed as a result of the MU split. It was only then that the confiscated assets were divided between the MU and the UMFO.

With the MU split on the " question of the political future, the Bardoloi Sub-Advisory Committee had Naga, Khasi, and Jaihta members, but no Zo. As a result, Khawtinkhuma and Saprawnga were offered co-opted membership on the Sub-Advisory committee. Bardoloi had obviously dropped Vanlawma after he was toppled as president Of the MU.

Saprawnga and Khawtinkhuma's acceptance of co-opted membership on the committee was viewed by some leaders as .unnationalistic, because it seemed to be yielding to the wishes of the Indians.

MacDonald also understood very well the situation thus created, and he attempted to block the membership of Khawtinkhuma. When MacDonald did not succeed, he was worried about the future of the Zo people, whom he considered very susceptible to tricks. He; then drafted a constitution for Mizoram under the Indian Union, which he submitted to the constituent Assembly of India with the intention of creating a better position for the Zo people.

Saprawnga and Khawtinkhuma returned to Aizawl after being confirmed as co-opted members in the Sub^Advisory Committee for East India Tribals.

A public meeting was held in early 1947-to review the Zo people's situation, and many speakers voiced their opinions. Xanlawma. who addressed the meeting first, explained his discussions with Bardoloi and how Bardoloi had not honoured their gentleman's agreement.

Vanlawma said, "in the .ancient past Mizoram was not under anybody's governance. Now that the British, who controlled us, are about to leave the Asian Sub-continent, we should, resume

the same status we held before the arrival of the British. We should demand total independence."

For those who were fearful of independence, he said, "When we formed the Mizo Union Party the British situation was not clear as to when and how they were going to leave India. Under them our country was taken care of nicely, and if we had mentioned independence when we started the Mizo Union Party, the British government would not have let us start it at all. But now that India is going to obtain independence, we feel that they will be ruling our country and not considering our own interests. However, the attitude of the Indian people is clearer. They failed to carry out their promise to us—that we would have full membership on the planning board—and have asked us to be a coopted member only, and they might intend to give us still less than self-determination in the future. Now that we know they are not going to carry out their promises, our future looks very uncertain. Therefore, we must govern ourselves. At the moment we have enough supplies, and if we lack supplies, we will find some other country to help us. And if we look at our natural resources, and increase our farming system, we will be able to produce a sufficiency of things. Now is the time to fight for independence."

Vanthuama, who was against independence, said, "It is impossible to fight for independence now. If we look around us we see the 'Darwin Theory', the more powerful swallowing up the less powerful. If and when we are more powerful, we will swallow the Indians, and if they are more powerful than us, they will swallow us. Besides, if we are independent, where will we get salt, and iron ore to make our farming equipment, and how are we going to make money?"

Once again Vanlawma replied, "Pu Vanthuama's statement on Darwin's Theory seems to me to be an attempt to escape reality. We all know for sure that we, the Zo's, are much smaller and less powerful than the Indians. For that very reason, we created this Mizo Union Party."

Continuing, he said, "Concerning salt and iron ore, our ancestors, though less advanced than we, were self-sufficient, and even made their own guns. If our ancestors knew how to trade with their neighbors, we certainly ought to be able to take care of our own affairs. Concerning money, we can use it as the rest of

the world does. If we have enough food; there is no need, in fact, to be unduly alarmed about our future."

Kawtinkhuma and Saprawnga seemed to have lost ground, as most of those at the meeting spoke in favour of independence. These two leaders then countered by publishing a list of new Mizo Union councillors in the Mizo Daily. The Mizo Union councillors who were not listed in the Mizo Daily held a meeting in retaliation, and they removed Khawtinkhuma and his colleagues from the Mizo Union.

Khawtinkhuma and his party reacted quickly by calling together village leaders in the vicinity of Aizawl, and in the name of the MU they passed a resolution to join India. They received the support of the villagers by telling them that joining India meant abolishing chieftainships, and that independence meant retaining the chiefs—which was not true. This was recorded in a classical Mizo song;

"India zawm duh chu lal banna,
Independence duh chu lal lalna"

The chiefs overwhelmingly supported independence, with the result that the independence movement was weakened—because the people were tired of the chiefs.

Several meetings were held to discuss the political future. Over 200 people attended on such discussion in which Pachhunga, Dahrawka, and Hmartawnphunga told the meeting, "We Zo people have nothing in common with the Vai (Indians). If we commit ourselves under the Indian government, we will be swallowed by the Indians because they are many more in number than the Mizo. Until the British came, the Zos had nothing to do with the Vai, and now that the British are leaving we should get out of the British government to be as we were before, namely, free. The Zos are neither slaves nor possessions; therefore, we should not allow ourselves to be treated as such, having to change owners. The Zo should stand firm together and defend Zoram for the Zo people. For better or worse, Zoram is for Zo people."

Thus the Mizo Union was clearly split into several schools of thought; one was led by Vanthuama who wanted to join India, and the other was led by Pachhunga who wanted independence.

Not only did they disagree over joining India, but also, if Zoram were to join India, they disagreed on whether they should be in the state of Assam or under the government of India directly. Only one point, voiced by Rev. Zairema and R. Thanhkira, the editors of the Mizo Daily, seemed to be agreeable to everyone—to have as much autonomy as possible.

There was yet another school of thought expressed by Pachhunga and his faction. They wanted the British to remain in Zoram until the Zo people were ready to rule themselves, and they urged the British not to leave the Christianized Zo people to the Hindu administration.

Other politically conscious Zo of that time, including D. Ronghaka and K. Zawla, published their views in support of Zo independence. The translation of these two men's papers can be read in L. S. Samuelson, "The Mizo Independence Movement", 1976; M.A. Thesis; Humboldt State University.

H. K. Bawichhuaka demanded (1) adequate representation in the Assam Legislative Assembly, (2) the widest possible selfdetermination, and (3) that all areas inhabited by the Zo people should be amalgamated. ,

On January 3, 1947, the MU wrote to the president of the Constituent Assembly of India to request that MU representatives be included on the advisory committee for the tribal areas of Assam. The letter also asked that the Lushai Hills District be excluded from the constituent Assembly. Rather than become a part of the Assembly, the MU wanted to frame a constitution and decide for themselves whether to stay under British protection, to form an independent state, or to join Burmese East Zoram and form a separate province within Burma.

The Bardoloi Committee interviewed MU members on April 17, 1947. Members of the Bardoloi Committee were G. N. Bardoloi, N. V. Thakkar, B. N. Rao, Ramadhyani, Rev. Nichols-Roy (Khasi), and Tenjemaliba Ao (Naga). The Zo co-opted members, Khawtinkhuma and Saprawnga, were also present during the interview.

Two memoranda were submitted for the committee's review. The MU led by Pachhunga requested that the British leave the Zo people as they had been before the British, i.e., independent. The MU faction led by Khawtinkhuma stated that Zoram should be in India for a period of ten years, after which the Zo would

decide what they would do with themselves. During the ten year period they would govern themselves through a district council.

The committee's primary response was that the roads in Zoram would be improved immediately if Zoram joined India.

In July 1947, the committee convened again in Shillong, and Khawtinkhuma and Saprawnga signed an agreement to be under India.

The Naga representative, T. Ao, refused to sign the agreement and left the committee. Naga leaders had been demanding independence from the British government and had actively sought the partnership of the Zo people in their campaign. Angami Z. Phizo, the president of the Naga National Council, visited Aizawl to pursue this end, but it brought no results; the Zo representatives had already signed the agreement to join India.

The Mizo Union faction led by Vanlawma and Pachhunga disregarded the signing and continued their campaign for independence. Four groups of volunteers led by Vankhama, Lalrinliana, Vanlalliana, Challeta, Ngura, Thangridema, and Thantuma were sent to different parts of West Zoram to inform the people of the benefits and advantages of independence. To their dismay the volunteers found that the general population did not care about the political future. The people were tired of the chiefs, who still demanded privileges; and getting rid of the chiefs was their only concern.

Throughout this period, Lalbiakthanga, the only Zo from the Lushai Hills with a Master's Degree, was leading the development of yet another faction of the Mizo Union. According to Lalbiakthanga, the Zo people were so busy fighting against the chiefs that they did not realize the full consequences of their actions on the future. Following Saprawnga's November 1946 no-confidence motion against Pachhunga and Vanlawma, for incompetence in negotiating the future of the Mizos, Lalbiakthanga had been elected Vice-President. Khawtinkhuma—a migrant from the princely state of Tripura, and also a Master's Degree holder was elected President.

Lalbiakthanga however disagreed with MU policy and would not accept the office of Vice-President. He felt that the MU leaders

were too preoccupied and parochial in fighting against the chiefs. He believed that they were putting too great an emphasis on one of the most popular slogans of the Indian National Congress, the abolition of zamindars in India. Lalbiakthanga felt that the MU had failed the Mizos miserably in the transitional period, and that there was no alternative but to form a new party to fill the vacuum left by the MU. Moreover, he saw that the campaign for independence by Pachhunga and Vanlawma's volunteers did not interest the Mizos.

While the factions were fighting to gain control, the time for making decisions was growing shorter. The Atlee Government in Britain had already announced 15 August 1947 as the date for transfer of power from Britain to India.

At this time Lalmawia entered Zo politics. Lalmawia was serving as an army officer in Burma, where he had cultivated friendship with many people of East Zoram, including the family of the late Zahau chief, Thangtinlian. (Thangtinlian's son, Zahrelian, became the Minister of the Zo in the Burmese Government some years later.) As a result of this connection, Lalmawia's cherished dream was the union of the people of East and West Zoram in an independent Zo state. He contacted Lalbiakthanga to discuss his idea, and Lalbiakthanga apparently encouraged him.

Until July 5, 1947, Lalbiakthanga continued to hob-nob with the Pachhunga group. He then obtained agreement from D. A. Penn, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills District, to form another political party. This began the United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO), with Lalbiakthanga as President and Hmingliana and L.. H. Liana as Vice-President and General Secretary respectively. Lalmawia soon left the Burmese Army and returned to Aizawl to join the UMFO.. He was made Vice-President and continued in that position until November, 1947, when he replaced Lalbiakthanga as President.

Lalbiakthanga believed that after, the 15th of August 1947 any talk of an independent Zoram would be treason. On the other hand, the international boundaries of the newly created sovereign states of India, Pakistan and Burma were yet to be clearly defined. (As a matter of fact, the disputed Kabaw Valley was only formally ceded to Burma in 1952.) The UMFO therefore adopted as its policy the unification of all the Zo people of East

and West Zoram, as envisioned by Lalmawia, with complete sovereignty as the ultimate objective. Had the choice been given, the UMFO would have preferred to join Burma instead of India. All members of the Pachhunga group of the MU, with the exception of Vanlawma, joined the UMFO.

Khawtinkhuma had planned a big procession in Aizawl on August 15, 1947, but Vanlawma and his faction would not tolerate a procession in Aizawl's Dawrpui veng area. They were even armed and ready to fight if their restriction was not complied with. Volunteers patrolled the northern part of Aizawl, including the residence of the Superintendent, to make sure that there was no procession and no flying of Indian flags. Despite talk of an independent Zoram, the day of independence for India, August 15, 1947, was observed with calmness.

A farewell party for British officials and officers was held; at which many Zo people wept because of their uncertain future under the Vai.

Zo People Under Indian Administration

One of the first Indian government actions after independence went directly against the desires of the Assam hills people.

The Bardoloi Committee's final report, submitted on July 1947, had stated that the Chittagong Hills Tract of the Chakma, Bohmong, and Mong circles, which were inhabited by Masho, Chakma and Magh people, were strongly adverse to inclusion in Bengal. It further stated that the peoples of these areas wished to live in an autonomous district. The Chittagong Hills Tract and the southern part of Tipperah Hills were seceded to Bengal however, thereby splitting the geographic areas inhabited by the Zo people. This action once again intensified the kind of "irredentist" feeling among the Zo people that had been growing since the separation of India and Burma in 1937.

A wide variety of other changes occurred which were not as negative.

One set of changes had to do with names. After independence the hill district of Assam came under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, and the region was called a Tribal Area J and no longer described as "Excluded". These kinds of changes

continued for some time after independence, as the 1950 Indian Constitution renamed all excluded and partially excluded areas as scheduled areas. These areas were distinguished by having District Councils, which were formed as a result of the Bardoloi committee recommendations.

On the insistence of the Lushai Hills District Council, the name of the district was changed to the Mizo Hills District by an act of Indian Parliament in 1954.

As would be expected, administrative personnel also changed. The last British superintendent of the Lushai Hills District was L.L. Peters, who was replaced by the Indian administrator S. K. Barkataki in early 1949. Barkataki was well liked by the Zo people, particularly because of his support for the building of roads. The people responded by working without pay, and within a very short time Aizawl and Lunglei were connected by a 120 mile dirt road traversable by jeep.

Another change was the extent to which the new constitution gave emphasis to protection and development. Before independence the Governor of Assam administered the excluded areas at his own discretion. Under the new constitution, however, the governor was required to act on the advice of his secretary. The Governor of Assam's Secretary for Excluded Areas also became the Secretary to the Department of Tribal Affairs.

Additionally, under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, district councils had the "authority to protect the peoples' land, and to place in their hands the management of all forests (except forest reserves), the use of canals and water-courses for the purpose of agriculture, the regulation of shifting cultivation, the establishment of village councils, the appointment of succession of chiefs or headmen, the inheritance of property, marriage laws and social customs."

Other sections of law or regulation also provided for protection of the hill districts. For example, Article 275 of the Indian constitution provided that funds be made available to promote the welfare of scheduled tribes, and part XVI of that article provided the reservation of seats in the Lok Sabha (the lower house of the Indian Parliament). The Inner Lines Regulation of 1873 continued to apply to West Zoram in the 1950s, in that it restricted the entry of people other than Zo; its main purposes

being to provide for the preservation of the culture and customs of the Zo people, and to allow them free choice as to their development.

During the initial stages of Indian administration, other changes also occurred in the ways in which District Councils worked, and in the scope of their authority. They were authorized to establish, construct or manage primary schools, fisheries, roads, waterways, dispensaries, markets, cattle ponds and ferries, and were able to prescribe the language and manner in which education was to be imparted in primary schools. They also had the power to regulate money-lending and trading by non-tribals within the district. Thus the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which provided for these District Council powers, provided a basis for elementary education and self-government, and a measure of protection for the tribal people.

A new judiciary system was also created. In each district three judicial officers were appointed by the district council, with the approval of the Governor of Assam. At the first level were village courts, which dealt with village cases that involved a fine of less than fifty rupees. The next higher level, called Subordinate Courts, dealt with cases involving people from different villages, and the most difficult cases went to the District Court situated in Aizawl, the capital of the district.

There were other forces operating during this time that also resulted in change; actions in regard to traditional chieftainships, realignment of political groups, and preparation for the first elections. These three areas of change had perhaps the most overall impact. The issue which had perhaps the widest level of interest among all the people was the question of chieftainships, and their role under the new administration. One of the reasons the MU had originally been formed was to fight the illegal practices of the chiefs. As a result, when Bardoloi had promised his support for the abolition of chieftainships, the MU associated itself with the India Congress Party. (The MU had already decided for the abolition of the chiefs on August 3rd, 1946.) The MU also launched a movement to boycott the chiefs. The people were told not to pay the customary taxes to the chiefs and not to obey their orders. But the chiefs held their positions, taxing villagers in goods and services, and using villagers as coolies. During this time there was much confusion in the villages, as

many villagers refused to obey the chiefs; they felt they could do so because of MU support. Thus when the Indian government supported the chiefs, the MU used the issue as the primary element of their 1952 election platform.

In an additional effort to eliminate the office of the chiefs, village Councils were created, through the "Mizoram Village Council Constitution and Mizoram Administration of Justice Rules, 1953.

(One interesting aspect of the rules was that the village council could exempt from work the elderly who had passed the age of sixty and the young under fifteen.)

The 1953 rules required that every village with at least sixty houses have a village Council composed of five members. Representation in larger villages was made up of the following number of Council members :

Population of Village	Number of Council Members
61-100	6
101-140	7
141-180	8
181-220	9
221-260	10
261+	11

The councilmen were elected by popular vote for a three year term, and the village council had a president, a vice-president, and a secretary. Establishment of village councils did much to replace the power of the chiefs, as the council became responsible for distributing the land for cultivation and for the general administration of the village.

Immediately after instituting the village Council system, a bill was proposed to abolish chieftainships. But the bill did not succeed, as there was opposition from some of the MU leaders. The Assam State Legislature however passed a bill abolishing chieftainships on August 16, 1954. The chiefs were compensated with sixteen lakh rupees, which brought to an end one of the oldest Zo institutions. .

Elections were of course of great interest to all those who had developed political roles within West Zoram, and the first general elections for the Indian Parliament, the Assam Legislative Assembly,

and the District Council were held in June, 1952.

In 1952 no Zo contested a seat in the Indian Parliament, although the Silchar and Lushai Hills districts together elected a Silchar Vai who belonged to the Congress Party of India.

There was much greater participation in politics at lower levels however. Three Assam Legislative Assembly seats had been allotted for the Lushai Hills District constituencies of Aizawl East, Aizawl West, and the southern region of the district. And at the District Council level eighteen seats were to be contested and six seats nominated. The 1952 election was contested by the MU, and the UMFO.

Results of the 1952 elections :

Assam Legislative Assembly :

Dengthuama (MU)	Southern District	Resigned
R. Thanhliira (MU)	Aizawl West	Resigned
Saprawnga (MU)	Aizawl East	

District Council:

15 seats (MU)

1 seat (UMFO)

2 seats (Pawi-Lakher Region)

Nominated : Dr. Rosiama, Lalziki, Medhia Chakma, Taikhuma, Lalthawvenga, and Sainghinga and Lalchungnunga

Chairman : Dr. Rosiama (MU) from Lakhimpur

Deputy Chairman : Tuikhurliana (MU) from south Zoram

Chief Executive member of CEM: Lalsawia (MU)

Executive Members : Sangkunga (MU), and Hrangia (MU).

Lalsawia resigned after serving as CEM for two years and was replaced by Saprawnga, who was a parliamentary secretary in the Assam State Government. Saprawnga dropped Hrangia and Sangkunga as members of the Executive Committee and appointed Lalsawia and Lalbuia.

Another political party, came into being as an aftermath of the 1952 elections. Following the election, the tribal leaders of the State of Assam became unhappy with the governor, who had nominated non-tribals to the District Councils. Although this

was, within his power, as the Sixth Schedule authorized the governor to nominate certain members to the District Council, the nomination of non-tribals was contradictory to the intent of the District Council—the protection of tribal interests.

In an effort to combat the governor's appointment tendencies, representatives of all the major tribes of east India (except the Naga) held a May 30 to June 1, 1957 meeting and formed a party called the Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU). (The Naga did not participate as they did not regard themselves as part of India.) The aim of EITU was the formation of a North-East-Tribal-State, which would include Manipur, Nagaland, and other tribal areas of Assam and Tripura.

All these and other actions resulted in some shifts in direction, which were noticeable in the participation in and results of the general election of 1957. The MU, led by Khawtinkhuma, was committed to the Indian Congress Party, and for the first time the EITU and Indian Congress party appeared in the Mizoram ballot boxes. The UMFO gained more seats in the 1957 District Council election.

The result of the 1957 elections :

Assam Legislative Assembly :

Lunglei :	C. Thuamluaia (UMFO)
Aizawl East:	Lalmawia (UMFO)
Aizawl West :	A. Thanglura (MU)

District Council:

Mizo Union	13 seats
EITU	2
Congress	1
UMFO	8

Nominated Members: Dr. Rosiama and Pi Hmingliani

Chairman : V. L. Tluanga (MU)

Deputy Chairman : C. Pahlina

CEM Saprawnga (MU)

Executive Members Tuikhurliana (MU) and
Dr. Rosiama (MU)

The Executive Member Dr. Rosiama served in the Assembly

until his death in 1959, when he was replaced by Hrangia(MU).

The EITU was later joined by the UMFO and some of the MU members. The EITU however did not become very popular among the Zo due to (1) jealousy existing among the different tribal leaders, and (2) the belief that there would be serious fighting among the different tribes, especially during election time, if a North-East-Tribal-State were to be formed.⁷⁰

The formation of the EITU and its program did however force the Assam State Government to create a new Minister of the Tribal Area Department. Capt. Sangma, of the Garo tribe, became the first such Minister, Lalmawia became Parliamentary Secretary, and A. Thanglura became Chief Parliamentary Secretary.

Mautam and the Birth of the Mizo National Front

During the 1950s, the talk of Zo independence seemed to come to an end. All the political parties engaged in fighting for control of the Mizo Hills District Council, and none were speaking for independence.

During the time Vanlawma and those who preferred independence founded the non-political Mizo Cultural Society. The members were mostly young people from the civil service. R. B. Chawnga, presiding officer of the sub-court of the District Council, was made the President, and Zuala was the Secretary.

The Mizo Cultural Society was transformed into a nationalistic front when Mautam, a famine; struck the Mizo Hills District in 1950. Unhappy with the Assam Government, which did nothing to help the victims of the famine, the Mizo Cultural Society v organized the largest protest procession ever held in Aizawl when the Assam Minister of Tribal Affairs visited Aizawl. The Deputy Commissioner, L.S. Ingty, thereafter forbid government servants to join the society. Thus Chawnga and R. Zuala were replaced by R. Dengthuama and Laldenga respectively. The District Council had suspended Laldertga from his position as a civil service account clerk, and he was free to join any political party. This was the beginning of Laldenga's political career.

Lalbiakthanga³⁹ describes the Mautam as :

"Reverting to the chronological sequences, the next event of importance was the Mautam in 1959 and the consequential

famine in the following year. The Mizos have for ages dreaded the flowering of bamboos. They have noted that the flowering of bamboos was invariably followed by an unprecedented increase in the rat population in the countryside which, in turn, created havoc on the standing crops leading ultimately to famine. The Mizos named these unusual occurrences after some bamboo species. One is called Mautam and the other is called Thingtam. Mau is the common generic name for bamboos, but it is also usually understood to mean the species botanically named *me/ocarina bambu soidef*. This is specially good for house construction, walls, and fencing. Thing is another kind of bamboo botanically called *Bambusa tulda* which is mainly for rough use or for use as a container for carrying water. Tarn in Lushai means to wither or to die. Mautam and Thingtam are known to recur periodically at intervals of every fifty years; and the Mizo elders have recorded them as having taken place in the following order :

Mautam	1862
Thingtam	1881
Mautam	1911
Thingtam	1929
Mautam	1959
Thingtam	1977
Mautam	2007 (Due)"

In October 1958, the Mizo District Council predicted the imminence of famine following the flowering of bamboos and passed a resolution to take precautionary measures. It asked the Governor of Assam to sanction Rs. 150,000 relief money to be expended for the Mizo district, including the Pawi-Lakher region.⁶⁵

The Assam government rejected the request, possibly assuming that the prediction of famine was a primitive people's tradition. But tradition proved right: Bamboos flowered in 1959, and the next year rats multiplied in millions and ate up grains, fruits and everything else edible. The catastrophe occurred so suddenly and so completely that the governor of Assam was taken by surprise, and relief measures were inadequate and slow in coming. The Riangs and Chakmas had to eat wild *armi*, a kind of grass, and some people died trying to find relief.

The people and the members of the District Council were very angry with the Assam government. One Pu Vanalbika, a member

of the District Council, was quoted as saying, "If we continue to be neglected.. the people's feeling will be for secession from Assam."

When relief was slow in coming, the District Council charged that the government was incapable of quick relief measures. On the other hand, the Assam government charged the District Council, which was dominated by the Mizo Union, with noncooperation.

To help supplement the government's weak relief measures, the Mizo Cultural Society formed a new group called the Mizo National Famine Front to render volunteer services to the people most affected by the famine. They helped the villagers by making sure they received their share of government aid. In doing so they became so popular that the villagers recognized them as their leaders.

On October 28, 1961, after the famine was over, the Mizo National Famine Front converted itself into a political party called the Mizo National Front (MNF). Laldenga became the president and Vanlawma the secretary. The aim of the party, as the name implies, was to demand a union of all Zo nationals living in Burma, India, and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh);

The MNF contested the election Of June, 1962, along with the Mizo Union, which had merged with the UMFO. Lalmawia, the UMFO leader, joined the Eastern India Tribal Union, as he believed that a hill state could still be accomplished.

Results of the 1962 elections :

Assam Legislative Assembly :

Lungleh : . Saprawnga (MU) "	Resigned on party request
Aizawl East: R. Thanhkira (MU)	
Aizawl West: Ch. Chhunga (MU)	Resigned on party request
Lungleh : L.H. Lalmawia (MNF)	by-election
Aizawl West: J.F. Manliana (MNF)	by-election

District Council:	67 candidates
MU	16 seats,
EITU	2 seats, and
Pawi Lakher Region	2 seats

Nominated : Zalawra and Lalsanga

The Miio National Front did badly in the 1962 elections but gained tremendous popularity among college students and young people. This support allowed the party to do much better in the by-elections. Laldenga, president of the MNF was elected in a by-election.

The government of the Mizo Hills District was structured as follows:

Chairman:	Bawichhuaka
Deputy Chairman:	V. Rosiama
CEM	Saprawnga (third term)
Executive Members:	Hrangaia
	Lalbuaia

Saprawnga was the chief executive member for three years following the election, and he had held that position for more than ten years until his resignation in April, 1965. He had been "a moderator, mediator and conciliator with humility in behavior and realistic outlook."⁶⁵ The people however had become dissatisfied with his administration, because, although he was an ardent advocate for a hill state, he did not want separate statehood for the Zo people.

Saprawnga was replaced by H. K. Bawichhuaka, who selected C. Pahlira and Hrangaia as members of the executive committee.

Formation of the Indian Congress Party in Zoram

Thanglura, a former Mizo Union member and chief parliamentary secretary, formed the Congress Party of the Mizo Hills District in 1960. The party grew slowly even though some members of the Mizo Union joined.

Formation of a Hill State

Political consciousness was increasing among the hill people of

Assam during the fifties and early sixties. In 1950, the Naga National Council collected thumb prints in all Naga villages and then sent the prints to the president of India as a plebiscite for independence. The Indian Government however refused to recognize the plebiscite.

In 1952, the Naga boycotted the general election and in 1955 started their fight for independence. This struggle finally resulted in the formation of the State of Nagaland in 1963.

Other hill people however found their government dominated by the Assamese plains people who lived in the Brahmaputra River valley. In a state made up of combined plains and hill people, the attitude of the plainsmen was not conducive to unity. As an example, a resolution of the Asom Jatiya Mahasobha, an organization of plains people, said that those opposed to Assamese as the state language should be severed from Assam.

W. Sangma, who started the EITU in 1954, and who was chief executive member of the Garo Hills District Council, felt that there were many loopholes in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. He did not believe that the interests of the hill people were adequately safeguarded.

Dissent over a combined hill-plain state resulted in two Assam Hills Tribals Leaders Conferences—one at Tura in October, 1954; and another at Aizawl in October, 1955. At the October meeting, the 46 conference delegates expressed a unanimous desire for establishment of a state separate from Assam, and a memorandum to this effect was sent to the state's reorganizing commission. The memorandum listed the following reasons justifying a separate state for the hill people.

1. The attitude of the plains people was one of superiority toward the hill people, and frequent use of the words "tribe" and "tribal" to describe the hill people contributed to that sense of superiority.
2. The Assamese Brahman and Kalita castes, descendents of north Indian Hindu aristocracy, were making every effort to dominate the hill people by imposition of language and culture.
3. Assamese made up 50% of the State of Assam population, but they controlled 75% of the seats in the legislature and

monopolized 90% of the seats in the cabinet. 70% of the civil services personnel were Assamese.

4. Practically all major developments and all major technical and non-technical institutions were in the Brahmaputra valley. Roads essential for development of the hills got little attention from the Assam government.
5. Hill people who assumed government service positions were compelled to learn the Assamese language.
6. The hill people were fundamentally different from the plains people in religion, social customs, morality, language, dress and even food. They did not hesitate to eat any kind of flesh, but in the plains the Muslims did not eat pork, Hindus did not eat beef, and the high caste Hindu Brahmins did not eat chicken.
7. The caste system of the plains regarded the non-Hindu hill people as the equivalent of the lowest caste or untouchables.
8. The Assamese language was used in the legislature, and hill people could not understand the debates.
9. Assamese were acquiring land in the hill areas, and the original hill people were being pushed out of their ancestral lands.
10. Hydro-electric plants were constructed in the hills, which flooded agricultural land of the hill peoples, while the power from the dams was used to benefit the plains people.
11. Funds for economic development of the hills were ignored.
12. Money allotted for development of hill areas was used to benefit the relatively advanced plains tribes.
13. Hill people had no share in decisions made about four and five year plans.
14. The constitution provided the governor with powers to define boundaries of autonomous districts, and he could unite two or more autonomous districts into one.

Political arrangements were such that the demand for a Hill State was put on ice. Although the movement for a separate hill state was supported by many hill politicians, they refused to merge their political parties with the EITU. Nevertheless," Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister, persuaded the leaders of the EITU to participate in the government of Assam, with Chaliha as

the Chief Minister. The EITU contested the election in 1957 in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills district, winning three seats.

A. Sangma, leader of the hills block in the Assembly, then became Minister of the Tribal Areas Department, and each autonomous district was represented in the government by a deputy minister or a parliamentary secretary.

The movement for separation gained momentum again in 1960, when the Assam provincial congress committee passed a resolution demanding the immediate introduction of Assamese as the official state language. It was this issue that united the hill people in a common cause.

In July 1960 another conference of the hill parties was called, and the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) was formed. The newly formed APHLC did not demand a hill state but demanded the suspension of the language bill.

The reasons were :

1. The acceptance of the Assamese language would assimilate hill people within Assam but not India as a whole.
2. The hill people would have to learn many languages—Hindi, written in Devanagri; Assamese, written in Prakrit; English, written in Roman script, and their own mother tongue.
3. It would affect the opportunities and prospects of the hill people in government and other services.
4. The move had already created violent discord and disruption instead of unity, e.g., clashes between Bengali and Assamese.
5. The official language should be English until Hindi could be adopted as the official language of India.

The state government, however, was determined to see the language bill through the Assam State Legislature. Therefore, in an August 22nd, 1960 meeting, the APHLC authorized an ultimatum . to the Assam Chief Minister, to the effect that a separation of hill and plain states would ultimately be necessary.

The Assam Legislative Assembly adopted the Assamese language bill on the 24th of October, 1960, and on the 16th of November, 1960, the APHLC resolved at Haflong, North Cachar, that the creation of a separate hill state was the only possible solution to their problem.

The Mizo Union and the UMFO joined the APHLC in support of its resolution, and in the Assam Legislative Assembly election of 1962, one UMFO and two MU candidates were elected along with the APHLC ticket. To be more effective in demanding a hill state the APHLC decided to withdraw from the Assam Legislative Assembly, and the party leaders asked members to resign their seats. One member refused to resign and instead joined the Congress Party. The two vacant seats went to MNF candidates in the ensuing by-elections. ;

Two members of the Mizo Union, Pahlira and Ch. Chhunga preferred a Zo state to a broader based hill state. The Mizo Union met in Aizawl on the 11th of July, 1963, to discuss whether to demand a Zo state or a state for all the hill areas. The meeting was attended by 400 delegates from all parts of West Zoram. Bawichhuaka and Saprawnga supported the hill state idea while Ch. Chhunga stood strongly for a separate Zo state. Chhunga succeeded in winning most of the delegates to his side, and as a result, the MU broke away from the APHLC.

The Mizo Union demanded autonomous statehood on the 8th of August, 1963, and on 31 August, 1963 the MU submitted a memorandum to the Indian Prime Minister demanding the creation of a state for the Zo people.

The autonomous state of Meghalaya. (Khasi and Garo Hills), which did not include the Mizo district, was eventually created in 1969.

The Mizo National Front and its Nationalist Movement

Two completely different racial groups, one of Aryan origin and the other of the Mongolian race, were bound together by a piece of paper called the constitution. A constitution can be sincere and just, but it cannot merge age-old traditions nor can it cure old suspicions and beliefs. For Hindu Indians, the non-Hindu Zo people are regarded as equivalent to the lowest caste and in other words, as McCaF put it, "conveniently and typically. . untouchable." On the other, hand, Zo people call the Indians Vai. Vai means alien, but Vai also denotes-a hostile alien; thus Zo people are calling the Indians "barbarians". To make matters worse, the British brought Christianity to the

Zo people, which made Zo people feel more at home with the Christians in far distant Europe or America than with their neighboring Indians. The Indians, who are better merchants than the hill people, have controlled the economy of the Khasi. Zo people, who identify both themselves and the Khasi as hill people, viewed the Indians with suspicion and deep distrust. The Hindu Indians on the other hand treated the hill people with contempt, as according to Hindu beliefs Zo people are lower caste. There were virtually no direct dealings between the Vai and the general Zo population until 1959—60, when Indian soldiers were dispatched to Zoram to distribute government aid. Any incident no matter how small can spark big troubles. One example, discussed by Vanlawma⁷⁰, tells of such an incident on the evening of March 21, 1960. There was a minor collision involving an army vehicle carrying Sikh army drivers and a vehicle carrying some Zo youths. The two groups accused each other of causing the accident and went to court. In the meantime a soldier was beaten up and sent to the hospital. The Indian soldiers and Zo youths confronted each other in front of the hospital, but there was no big fight, and the crowd that had gathered near the hospital was dispersed. The next day Deputy Commissioner Jamchhong called the city elders together and instructed them to control the youths, as the army was there because of the famine to help the Zo people. He also raised the question of giving arms to the soldiers for protection from the youths. Vanlawma, a poet, writer, teacher, politician and a Zo nationalist, told the Deputy Commissioner that the Zo people should be left alone.

The administration eventually decided to replace the army drivers with Zo drivers, and they sent the Indian army staff away. The incident was small, but the outcome outlined racial tension which could easily explode.

Vanlawma also told of another incident.⁷⁰ The Border Road Task Force (BRTF) was widening the road between Aizawl and Lunglei. The BRTF had "an unsavory reputation concerning their treatment of civilian women." But worse was to come. On their payday, January 7, 1964, the BRTF was camped at the village of Zembawk, about five miles from Aizawl. A BRTF soldier reported to Major DyebOle that his pay had been stolen by a village youth. The major, without further inquiry, sent his troops to the closest house. They tied up Hrangzika, the owner

of the house, and took him to their camp. They also took members of the Village Defense Party with them. As word got around about what had happened other villagers gathered, and youths from Aizawl were informed. The villagers pleaded with the Major to release his captives, but the major would not talk to them. In response, some youths wrestled guns from the soldiers, and there was a fight which ended at about midnight. In the morning the dead body of Sawma, a villager, was found at the roadside. The major was also killed.

The body of Sawma was taken to Aizawl, because he had died a martyr's death in what was considered a fight for Zo freedom. The mourners wore the traditional puandum, a black cloth that symbolized the importance of the occasion.

Later it was found that the soldier had lied about his money being stolen, but the incident shows how much racial tension existed in the region.

With incidents such as these occurring, talk of independence became increasingly popular with many people, and the Mizo National Front gained popularity for their open advocacy of independence. The party gained its first seats in the Assam Legislative Assembly in 1963, when J. Manliana was elected in the by-election. He defeated Bawichhuaka, the president of the Mizo Union, in a landslide victory—8,737 to 1,736 votes. Lalmawia of the MNF also beat Saprawnga, the veteran pro-India politician.

In an article "Communication Between the Hills and the Plains", C. Lalrema outlined how the different races had integrated after independence. He said, "The Mizos recognized goodness when they saw it. The missionaries or the British were the first friends the Mizo had. The love and care in schools, the doctors' healing hands that goes with missionary zeal perpetuated admiration and love for the missionaries. The missionaries lived and ate with the Mizo people, and a mutual respect for each other grew."

"On the other hand, since India got independence many nontribals have lived with the 'tribals' in different capacities; e.g., government servants, teachers; social workers, businessmen, etc. Although such people live physically very close to the people and sometimes even adopt some of their customs, there is little or no identification on the level of a social or religious or cultural plane. These people never have guests in their homes- and are

almost never invited to the home of the 'tribals'. They are completely unaware of the social structure of the villages in which some of them have lived for several years. They do not understand the network of communication that reflects this structure. They never take time to study the Mizo value system. They may live like the Mizos, but they cannot think, like them, and until they do there will never be harmony between Indians and the Mizos." ⁷⁰

"The Government of Assam, by taking advantage of Article 275 of the Constitution and the special development grant, has proceeded to open new and important departments with the object of furthering their own (Assamese) influence and solving their own (non-tribal) unemployment problem."

"During these 14 years of hard work through the district council we have been trying our level best to minimize the problems that are confronting us in the field of education, development, etc. But we are sorry to say that our earnest efforts and endeavours have not been rewarded."

"The step-motherly treatment meted out to the-Mizos is solely responsible for the unfortunate feeling of discontent. So far we feel that we are being treated as second rate citizens. It would be impossible to remove these feeling unless the political aspirations of the Mizo people are fulfilled through the early creation of a Mizo State. While there is no longer any desire to remain as part of Assam, there is still that sincere desire in the hearts of the majority of the Mizo people to feel themselves as Indians, but which they cannot feel in the present circumstances." ⁹⁰

The leaders of the MU, who were pro-Assam and pro-India, were in control of the district administration after independence. They realized in 1963 however that they had failed to bring the district forward and had lost their popularity. To regain their status and to counter the MNFs campaign for independence, they took a more nationalistic, approach. The MNF split in 1962, because Laldenga, the president, and Vanlawma, the secretary general, differed over the tactics that should be used for achieving independence.

Vanlawma then formed the Mizo National Council (MNC). While the MNF and the MNC both advocated independence, they differed in their approach to achievement of the goal. The

MNC advocated nonviolence, while the MNF did not eschew violence if necessary to achieve independence.

Nearly twenty years had elapsed since Indian Independence. Ten years was the longest that Zo leaders had wanted to be in India, and many Zo felt it was time to fight for their own independence. In 1964 and 1965 independence was a burning political issue among Zo intellectuals and college students.

Laldenga, the MNF president, accompanied by Lalnunmawia and Sainghaka, went to East Pakistan in the first week of December 1963 for talks with Pakistani agents. They were well received, and the Pakistanis promised them a base, guns and some money. A code for exchanging letters and a timetable for training of MNF soldiers was also worked out.

On their return to West Zoram, Laldenga and Lalnunmawia were arrested by the Assam police. The Assam police intelligence had been tailing Laldenga, and he was charged with crossing the border to visit an unfriendly nation. Laldenga was released by the Assam government after a month in jail, and after he explained that he had gone to visit ethnic Zo people in Pakistan.

After Laldenga's release, the MNF formed a secret "Underground Mizo Government". This was to make the demand for independence more effective, as with the under-ground government it was easier to organize violence. The members of the government were :

President:	Laldenga
Vice-President	Lalnunmawia
Finance Secretary :	Lalkhawliana
Defence Secretary :	R. Zamawia
Home Secretary :	Sainghaka
Chief Justice :	J. F. Manliana

The Mizo National Front declared independence on March 1, 1966.

The Declaration of Independence said :

"In the course of history it becomes invariably necessary for mankind to assume their social, economic, and political status to which the laws of nature's God entitle them. We hold this truth

to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and that they are endowed with inalienable fundamental human rights and dignity of human persons and to secure these rights, Government are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed and whenever any form of Government becomes destructive to this, it is the right of the people to alter, change, modify and abolish it and then institute a new Government laying its foundation on such principles and organize its powers in such forms as to them shall seem most likely to effect their rights and dignity. The Mizos created and moulded into a nation and nurtured as such by Nature's God have been intolerably dominated by the people of India in contravention to the laws of nature."⁶⁵

Rao,⁶⁵ describes the MNF government:

"The M.N.F. set up its own Government. It had a President and a Council of Ministers in charge of Home, Defence, Foreign, Finance and Public Information. There was also a Parliament with Speaker and members who were all selected by an Executive Committee. The whole of Mizoram was divided into four administrative divisions, each under a Chief Commissioner. Each division was divided into four sub-divisions and each sub-division was under a Deputy Commissioner.,There was a national judiciary headed by the Chief Justice. In each administrative area there were judges for the administration of justice. There was also a Mizo National Army under a Chief of Staff who was assisted by others. The pay of all officers was Rs. 15 per month—equal pay for unequal work."

The underground government sent twenty youth to Pakistan to work out the arms deal, and Zamawia and Sainghaka prepared an arms base. At the beginning of 1965 a shipment of arms arrived from Pakistan and was hidden near Bungtlang. It was the first outfit for the Mizo National Volunteers (MNV), who were called the Vanapa or V battalion. The MNV also created a special force containing fifty tough men to function as the bodyguard of MNF chief Laldenga.

The top men of the MNV were :

Charlie Lalkhawlana, who gave up his training course in cooperative society, Lalhmingthanga, who was a product of St. Anthony's College in Shillong, Thangzuala and Sawela, both of whom had

military experience in the Assam Regiment and Assam Rifles respectively, Biakchhunga¹⁴, who was a veteran of the Burma Army Chin Rifles; and who retired in 1961, Bualhranga, who was a high school teacher, Vanlalngaia³⁰, who was a veteran of the Burma Air Force and was trained in aircraft maintenance by the British Royal Air Force in 1957, and, Ngurchhina, who was Laldenga's brother and had a bachelors degree in agriculture.

Meanwhile the MU, which had done badly in the 1963 byelections, tried to capture the hearts of the people by advocating for a Zo state. To this effect in January, 1965, under the auspice of the MU, an all party meeting was held at Lamka (Churachandpur) in Manipur. The conference was attended by different Zo groups and parties from Assam, Manipur and Tripura, and an attempt was made to merge the MU and the MNF.

After three days of discussion, "the meeting adopted a plan for direct action with the aim of securing a 'Mizoram State', comprising all the areas inhabited by members of the Zo tribe. The status of this State, whether it would be totally independent of India and neighbouring countries, was not spelled out. It was decided that a convention for this purpose would meet in April".

"The threat of direct action was held out by the moderate elements, which constituted the majority of the delegates, with a view to neutralize the growing influence of the Mizo National Front and the Mizo National Council whose representatives were temporarily out maneuvered by the moderates who urged that if the demand for an independent Mizo State comprising all the tribes living in India, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and Burma was accepted, the three Governments would combine to crush them." (LINK, 13th March, 1966)

The Naga National Council also took part in the meeting, and promised to give arms if a revolt should be started. The Mizo National Front submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India on the 30th of October, 1965. The memorandum said, "The Mizos, from time immemorial, lived in complete independence without foreign interference. . Their administration was like that of the Greek City state of the past. . . Their territory or any part there of had never been conquered or subjugated by their neighbouring states... The Mizo are a distinct nation, created and moulded and nurtured by God and nature. The Mizo had never been under the government of India. . ." "Therefore, the

Mizos demanded the nation of Mizoram, a free sovereign state to govern itself, to work her own destiny and formulate her own foreign policy. . ."

"Though known as head hunters and martial race, the Mizos commit themselves to a policy of non-violence in their struggle and have no intention of employing any other means to achieve their political demand. If, on the other hand, the government of India brings exploitative and suppressive measures into operation employing military might against the Mizo people as is done in the case of Nagas, which, God forbid; it would be equally erroneous and futile for both parties, for a soul cannot be destroyed by weapons." ⁶⁵

The memorandum was signed by Laldenga as president and S. Lianzuala as general secretary of the MNF. Because of the general dissatisfaction of the people in the Mizo district, the MNF gained immense popularity. Laldenga became a hero of the people, and the party attracted the younger generation to its fold. The MNF was openly preaching independence. To counteract the MNF's demand for independence, the Mizo Union demanded separate statehood for the Zo people, but the government of Assam ignored the demands.

The movement of the MNF was carefully watched by the Assam government information services, and it was determined that the MNF was collecting arms and ammunition.

The Special Force (SF) of the MNF also realized that their activities had been exposed from within the organization. Thus the SF closely watched all the top men in the organization, and their attention was caught by Lalmana, a Colonel and one of the commanders at Lunglei. He was wearing exceptionally beautiful shirts, normally unaffordable by a volunteer, so he was put under surveillance. Eventually a letter he wrote to Ka U tan (for my elder brother) was seized. The letter contained a description of the exact locations of the hidden arms.

Lalmana, knowing that his life was in danger, immediately took shelter in the Assam Rifles camp. He remained hidden in the camp for several days, but on Christmas day the SF, which had been on a constant look out for him, spotted him going to a tea stall in the Aizawl bazaar.

Five SF men with pistols and a machine gun followed Lalmana,

who was carrying a hammer and a dagger, as he went towards Aizawl jail. To the surprise of the pursuers, Lalmana ran back to the bazaar, virtually knocking the guns out of the SF agents' hands. One agent's attempt to shoot failed when his trigger jammed, and Lalmana escaped unharmed.

Six days later- Lalmana was seen with his elder brother's nephew, whom he used to shield himself. The boy broke free and Lalmana jumped off the road. He dodged only the first pistol shots however. A machine gun sprayed five rounds, and two bullets hit and killed Lalmana. It was the beginning of the violence which was meant to drive foreigners from Zo country and to free it from foreign domination.

In early 1966 the MNF was in frantic but secret preparation for taking over the military and civil administration of West Zoram. Messages were sent in Morse code with battery torches. Guns and ammunition had code names : a bamboo tube was a three inch mortar bomb, peaches were two inch mortar bombs, pineapple was a hand grenade, uifawn or a kind of insect was a light machine gun, and a hornbill was a tommy gun.

The Mizo National Voluntary Force was commanded by General Sawmvela, and the Special Force, under Major Lalliana, was doubled and organized meticulously. The army was 20,000 men strong, and it was divided into four commands, the Eastern, Western, Southern and Northern.

All the towns of West Zoram were encircled by the Mizo National Volunteers, to strike at the zero hour—one o'clock March 1, 1966. The MNF concentrated its military operation in Lunglei and Champhai, so as to: secure arms from the Assam Rifles soldiers who were stationed in these towns. In Lunglei, the volunteers approached the Assam Rifles with an old Bedford truck and two jeeps at exactly 1a.m. March 1st, 1966. The steel helmeted volunteers entered the Assam Rifles compound, and shooting immediately commenced. The MNF arrested the subdivisional officer of Lunglei, and the government treasury was stormed and eighteen lakh rupees taken.

In Champhai- the post of the Assam Rifles was easily taken, and the entire armoury became the property of the MNF. It included six light machine guns, 70 rifles, 18 sten guns, two two-inch mortars, six grenade launchers, two .38- pistols and the entire

magazine 'of ammunition. The town was in the hands of the MNF.

In Aizawl a hand grenade in the belt of Captain Rochina exploded. He was killed instantly, and the explosion warned the Assam Rifles of the impending attack. The MNV started its campaign by holding up the treasury, and the guards, seeing the muzzles of tommy guns, opened the gates. They could provide no access to the main vault because the key was with the treasury officer. The MNV satisfied itself with Rs. 20,000 and twenty rifles.

There was fighting between the Assam Rifles and the MNV all of March 1, 1966 as the MNA tried to drive the Indians from their camp, and the engagement continued to March 2. At 1 : 30 A.M. on March 3, MNV grenade launchers hit targets in Aizawl, and the MNV encircled the Assam Rifles. In the evening the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner was in the hands of the MNV, and 300 prisoners were freed from Aizawl jail.

On March 2, Mizoram became the centre of world attention as major news bulletins flashed news of the uprising. The Indian government declared Mizoram a disturbed area and ordered its army to enter the area.

On the same day, Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda, the Minister of Home Affairs of India, presented the Mizo case to the Parliament:

"Sir, we have been in touch with the Government of Assam in regard to certain serious incidents that have occurred in the night of February. 28th to 1st March in the Mizo Hills District. The position as ascertained from the State Government, is that between 10 : 30 p.m.. on the 28th February and 3 a.m. on the 1st March, some tribals resorted to lawlessness and violence at Lunglei, Aijal, Eayrangte (Vairengte), Chawngte and the Chinluang (Chhimluang) their attempt to disrupt communication and overawe public servants. The total number who took part in all these places is about eight hundred to one thousand three hundred. There are reasonable grounds to believe that these tribals are led by extremist elements in the Mizo National Front. The first attack was at about 10 : 30 p.m. on the 2nd February on the Sub Treasury at Lungleh. A gang of five hundred to one thousand strong attacked a camp of Security forces and an Assam Rifles post. This attack was beaten back and. some of the attackers were stated to have been killed. On our side, two men of the

Assam Rifles were killed and three wounded. The whereabouts of the Sub-divisional officer of Lungleh who was surrounded are still not known. The latest reports to reach Lungleh indicate that some firing is going on at Lungleh. At about 2 a.m. on the first March, a number of persons attacked the telephone exchange at Aijal and an hour later the District Treasury was also attacked by one hundred to one hundred fifty persons who took away ten rifles, two bayonets, some rounds of 303 ammunition and cash from the single lock of the Treasury. They tried to open the double lock but they did not succeed. At about 1 : 30 a.m. on the 1st March, a gang of one hundred, to one hundred fifty people armed with lathis (clubs) surrounded the sub-divisional officer, Public Works Department, at Eayrangte (Vairengte) and asked to get out of the district. The mob took the key from the chowkidar (caretaker) and took over the Departmental stores and the jeep. There were similar encounters at Chinluang (Chhimluang) and Chawngte at which a number of persons belonging to the Mizo National Front were killed. No fresh incidents have been reported from the morning of the 1st March but delayed reports of the rebels seizing two police stations on the 1st morning have been received. While full detail of all these incidents are yet to be gathered, I learned from the Chief Minister that the situation at Aijal is now fully under control. The Commissioner of Silchar Division, the Inspector General of Assam Rifles and a senior army officer have visited Aijal and made an on the spot assessment of the situation."

"As a result of this, the Army had been asked to deal with the situation in the Mizo Hills District. Transport of troops to Aijal by helicopter has been going on this morning and troops are also moving by road to Aijal and are expected to reach there by noon today. The armed police forces have been placed under the operational control of the Army for dealing with the disturbances. The Army will be in charge of the operation for as long-as necessary in support of the civil administration. Curfew has been imposed and intensive patrolling has been started. The State Government has issued a notification declaring Mizo Hills District area under the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Disturbed Area Act and the Assam Disturbed Areas Act. This confers special power to the Armed Forces and the State police. The report that a pirate radio is functioning inciting the Mizo tribals to declare independence and resort to lawlessness is being checked

up. The Director General, All India Radio is arranging to monitor the transmission if any of the pirate radio and steps are being taken to find out the location of the transmitter if in fact it exists. There is enough evidence to come to the conclusion that these acts are part of a campaign by misguided extremists elements in the Mizo National Front to back their demand for independence. Government is determined to put down the disturbances with the utmost firmness and speed, and to restore peace and order. They are confident this will be achieved within a short period." (Indian Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 55., No. 10-12 p. 2126-2127; cited from Samuelson.

On March 4, the MNV stormed the quarter guard with a suicide squad, in which thirteen volunteers were killed. On March 5, the fighting between the MNV and the Assam Rifles was still in progress and no head way was made. The Indian Air Force dropped bombs on Zo towns, especially Aizawl, and strafed homes with fighter planes. Houses were burning, and innocent women and children died. Since the road connecting Aizawl and Silchar was blocked by the MNV, the Indian Army began bringing soldiers by helicopters.

On March 7, a foot brigade, or three battalions, of the Indian Army arrived at Aizawl from Silchar. On their way the army brigade had burned down 120 villages- As soon as they reached Aizawl they ransacked and destroyed still existing shops and homes were also burned. The civil population packed their most needed belongings in fear and sought shelter in gorges and ravines around Aizawl. The Indian Army rigorously enforced curfew, and a pass was required for anybody to go beyond the town limit. Civilians could not contact the outside world for about three months.

On March 8, Aizawl was again under total Indian control. Every one was suspected as a member of the volunteers. Dawla, a nian who came to welcome the Indian Army at Kolosib, was shot on the spot and his body thrown into one of the army vehicles and never recovered.

During this period the headquarters of the MNF was at South Hlimen, some thirty miles from Aizawl. On March 18, 1966, it was shifted to Reiek, east of Aizawl. The Indian army took one town after another, including the border town . of Tlabung (Demagiri), and Laldenga was forced to move his headquarters

The Mizo National Army (MNA) was operating a hide and seek game as more and more Indian soldiers were brought into the Zo country, and as most towns became permanently occupied. The Indian soldiers were often brutal and extremely offensive to villagers. G.G. Swell, a member of Indian Parliament, and Nichols- Roy, a member of the Assam Legislative Assembly, collected information about the uprising and submitted their report to the Indian government.

A part of their report is reproduced, to give insight into the treatment given by the army

"In Kolosib, 50 miles north of Aizawl. . . the army rounded up all the menfolk of the village, about 500 of them. They were collected, made to lie down on the ground on their stomachs and then were kicked, beaten, trampled upon and confined for the night. At night groups of soldiers moved about the village. They broke into houses, helped themselves with everything of value—clocks, sewing machines, clothes, etc. —and raped the women . . ."

"There was the case of the women in an advanced stage of pregnancy—Lalthuami, wife of cultivator Lalthangliana. Five soldiers appeared in the house one night, took the husband out of the house at gun point, and then while two soldiers held the woman down, the third committed rape.⁷⁰

The Indian Army under General Manekshaw relocated villages to cut off MNF movement and to refuse the MNF food and shelter. People were issued identity cards and told to move to new villages, which were not yet built. Relocation sites, called "Progressive Protected Villages", were chosen along the main roads. In many instances villagers were forced to move out of their old dwellings at gun point, because they were reluctant to leave what had been their homes since childhood. In most cases the villagers had to move on a day's notice. There was no time to pack all their belongings, and it was not possible to carry everything at one time. Animals had to be killed, and food grains had to be hidden in the forest. If there was no time to hide food grains, they were burned with the houses. As soon as the people left their homes, the army personnel ransacked the houses, kept for themselves anything valuable, and then burned them down. Hidden food grains in the forest, when discovered, were taken

away by the troops and hoarded, or villagers were ordered to burn them.

Zo villagers were resettled in six sectors : Seling-Champhai road, Seling-Rata road, Lungleh-Demagiri road, Lungleh-Lawngtlai road, and along the western border.

The military could now check every household at every hour, The number of persons living in the house being written, on a plate at the entrance of the house.

The army controlled these grouping centres for two months, after which civilian officers took Over. 150,000 persons or 23,000 families from 600 villages were relocated.

Agricultural production was minimal because of the curfew and the resulting reduction" of available farming hours. Men were also rounded up to construct strategic roads in faraway regions such as Kashmir.

The people were reduced to dependence on government rations, which became the instrument of collective punishment. The policy was one of economic suppression, as well as divide and rule. There was much psychological suffering and physical torture when the villagers were asked to shift from places where they had lived all their lives.

There was a great deal of discontent due to the relocation of villages.

1. There was a shortage of drinking water and food, the ration of one kilogram of grain per adult per week being inadequate.
2. The dispensaries of the relocation centers had no doctors, no pharmacists, no nurses, and no medicine.
3. No attention was given to sanitation.
4. Suitable land for shifting cultivation was not available near the relocation centres, and the fields were 10 to 15 miles away.
5. The curfew hours of 7 p.m. to 4 a.m. caused resentment, inconvenience and hardship, because the Zo people could not practice cultivation for survival.
6. Many people were eager to return to their old villages.

Rao,⁶⁵ estimated that the rebellion had cost the government

several crore rupees. The Mizo District Council gave the extent of the cost at Rs. 4,09,23,629. The uprising had cost the lives of 350 Zo and 160 Indian soldiers.

Units of the Indian Army continued to roam the country. A second relocation was made in 1969, imposing elaborate and strict rules. Curfew was still applied many years after the villagers were relocated. As a result, many people left, their homeland arid settled down in other parts of India where there were Zo ethnic groups. Even after such moves however, Zo ethnic people were carefully watched. In Manipur Zo people who relocated were arrested by the authorities on the slightest doubt.

In 1967 the MNA headquarter was in the Ralvawng Range near Biate, but it had to be moved to Vancheng, near the East Zoram border. At the beginning of 1968 the intelligence chief of the MNF, Vanlalngaia, went to Kachinland (through Burma) to contact the leaders of the Kachin independence movement. Thirty three MNA volunteers were sent to Arakan to meet the president and general Secretary of the Arakan National Liberation Front. In April 1968 Bualhranga was selected to go to China via Burma. He was to take with him 800 volunteers, who would be given military training. They reached China during the cultural revolution which depressed the Zo delegation.

MNF's Attempt to Unite the Zo People

The MNF goal was independence for Zo in India, Burma and Bangladesh. To this end they planned to capture four Zo towns in East Zoram (Chin Hills). In the operation, only government and Burma Army installations were to be attacked; civilians were to be left alone under all circumstances. In May 1966 the plan was ready. Lianhnuana, with the rank of Lt. Colonel, led a column of 800 volunteers. One branch went in the direction of Falam, one toward Tedim and another toward Tamu. They were to strike these towns simultaneously on June 1, 1966.

Lianhnuna secretly circled Falam at night and launched his attack at 2 : 30 a.m., but the police resisted the attackers so stubbornly that the town fell to the MNA only at noon. The MNA captured three light machine guns, 16 sten guns, 122 rifles three. U.S. carbines, and nineteen .38 pistols. The treasury held 23,000 Kyats.

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On the same night Lt. Colonel Zachuala and his Taitesena or T Battalion captured Tuibual (Tibual), a village in the Hualngo area. The Burma Army platoon there ran after exchanging a few shots, and the MNA took six rifles, several sten guns and a wireless set. Tedim was easily taken and the booty there was some 200 rifles and ammunition.

The Burmese government was in a panic; and the 23rd Burma Rifles under the command of Lt. Colonel Ngozam was rushed to Zo country. Once there, the Burma Army contingent laid an ambush on the outskirts of Singai, near the Tyau River. The volunteers walked tamely into the ambush. According to Nibedon; "It would have been a grisly massacre. The Burmese were using ambush positions complete with trenches and were firing low from above the road. If death was seconds away for many in the trap, it was also to be averted swiftly. A couple of the boys were already filled with lead. The action lasted about two minutes. The seven MNA boys wounded in the Burmese ambush were the objects of surprise for -those who returned a few minutes later from the counter attack. All the seven were wounded in the legs. Most of those killed were taking lying positions. The Burmese bullets had been humming unceasingly approximately six inches above the ground."

"As a guerilla, 'They deserved respect, these Special Forces. Many of them were tribals like us. Many Chins are in. ... They are experts in CQC or close quarter combat. They always use G3 and G4 fully automatic weapons.'" ⁵⁴

The commander of the 23rd Burma Regiment, Lt. Colonel Ngozam, was also a Zo and a native of Thuklai village. If he had wanted to kill, he could have done it easily. But Ngozam had no interest in killing his own brothers. He only wanted the MNA to return to their families. The MNA eventually returned to West Zoram.

In East Zoram the MNV were treated as guests in the areas they occupied. The Burmese government tracked down some people who were suspected of assisting the MNA, and they were put in jail for as long as six years.

In the winter of 1968—69 Burma and India conducted joint operations, and the MNA had to withdraw from Zo country and open a new base in East Pakistan.

A MNA group which left for China returned, as they could not cross the swelling Chindwin river', and the Burma Army was on their tails.

1969 was a bad year for the MNF. India and Burma were very active in their drive to eliminate resistance movements in the border areas, and at times the Indian Army even entered Pakistani territory in pursuit of the Zo volunteers. Laldenga also lost one of his most important lieutenants. Rev. Zairema had been approaching both the Indian government -and the MNF for a peaceful solution of the conflict. As a result, there had been secret negotiations between the MNF and church leaders. Vanlalngaia, whom Laldenga sent to negotiate with Rev. Zairema, was arrested shortly after one of their secret meetings. This kind of arrest had occurred before. Anyone who exposed himself for negotiations with the civilian authorities was arrested afterward, but the arrest of Vanlalngaia eroded all hopes of peaceful settlement.

In the meantime the Zo Nationalist leaders disagreed with one another on how they would carry on. Laldenga led the "hardcore faction" which wanted to fight until independence was secured. The "softcore faction" wished to accept a compromise offered by the Indian government. Members of the softcore faction included Lalhmingthanga, Foreign Secretary; Lalkhawliana, Finance Secretary; and Thangkima, Education Secretary.

In 1969, the "softcore faction", or the Dumpawl group, made arrangements to wrestle power from Laldenga. In response Laldenga removed Lalnunmawia from the vice-presidency of the MNF, in March 1970. Major General Sawmvela was replaced by Zamawia as chief of the army, and Lianzuala became vice president of the Front.

In September 1970, Laldenga, accompanied by Lalhmingthanga, went to Peking and met Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-Lai.

On August 20, 1971 the Assam state government announced amnesty for the freedom fighters. They were to be pardoned and each to receive Rs. 100. The government of India would also give rewards for arms and ammunition surrendered to the government, ranging from Rs. 2 per hand grenade to Rs. 4,000 for a light machine gun. The authorities also released those who were in jail, including Sainghaka and Major General Vanlalhruaia. Bual hruanga

went silently to Aizawl and gave himself up, and about 2,500 other nationalist soldiers gave themselves up to the Indian authorities. The three leaders of the Dumpawl group, Lalhmingthanga, Lalkhawliana, and Thangkima, along with a few followers, reached Zo territory.

In the later part of 1971, revolution broke out in East Pakistan, and the future of the MNF looked bleak. India helped the East Pakistanis by driving the West Pakistanis away, and the former beneficiaries of Pakistan, the MNF, had to leave their base in Dacca. Laldenga and some 3,000 MNF people, including women and children, piled into trucks and jeeps and proceeded to Rangamati. Organized by Captain Sangliana, the party reached Rangamati safely, from where they had to move on to Arakan. Piled in seven tug boats, they proceeded down the Karnaphuli. They were soon spotted by a helicopter, and later in the evening the Mukti Bahini were waiting for them at Faruah.

The Mukti Bahini were Bengali nationalists who fought against the domination of the Pakistanis from the west. At the start of the Bengali or East Pakistani revolution, the Mizo National Army had joined forces against the Mukti Bahini and had even engaged in a fight where they captured some arms. Thus the Mukti Bahini was against the MNA. The MNA, under Sangliana and Lalhleia, managed to counter attack and chase the Bengalis through a paddy field, after which they quickly gave up.

The next day an Indian Army platoon attacked them, and again the MNA was superior. They were not bothered after that, as they were by then at the tri-country border between Burma, India and Pakistan. The leaders of the MNF received sanctuary in Arakan by posing as members of the Bawmzo clan, who were fleeing East Pakistan due to the Indian invasion. The MNA, which had its headquarters at Sajek Range, had to open new headquarters in Arakan. They were assisted by the Arakan National Liberation Front and the Communist Party of Burma.

The MNF movement did bear fruit, as West Zoram became a Union Territory on January 21, 1972. The MNF could not accept Union Territory status however, as it was too little. They had struggled for a sovereign Zo state, and until they attained it, they would not give up their fighting.

Laldenga was visited in Arakan by the Pakistani consul from

Rangoon, who arranged travel documents under assumed names for Laldenga and his closest aids. This group flew to Karachi via Rangoon, but most of the MNA was left behind in Arakan, from where it operated against the Burmese and Indian Armies.

When Laldenga arrived in Karachi he was given VIP treatment and accommodated in a plush bungalow. However, when he mentioned his intent to stay permanently, the Pakistani authorities moved him to a less nice house, and VIP treatment was withdrawn.

Laldenga was still in Pakistan in 1973. By that time the Dumpawl leaders were living peacefully in Zo country, but Laldenga's people had not forgotten them, as they were regarded as traitors. Accordingly, Lalnunmawia, a one time vice president of the MNF, was struck with a hammer in his hospital bed and died. The killing was executed so "perfectly that his wife in the next bed did not notice it. Similar killings were registered in other parts of the country. Lalhleia, the MNF "hitman", was on the war path. There were some twenty killings with a hammer or of a similar nature in 1973. During 1973 there were also nineteen encounters between Indian government forces and the MNA.

At the beginning of 1974 an unsuccessful attempt was made to kill the Lieutenant Governor. He was riding in the back of his chauffeured limousine with R. L. Thanzawma, Director of Public Relations, when a sniper bullet hit him in the leg. Thanzawma immediately shielded the wounded Lt. Governor with his body, and the Volunteers stopped shooting so as not to kill Thanzawma.

In 1974, Thenphunga Sailo, a brigadier in the Indian Army, retired from the military. When he came back to his homeland, he found that the Indian Army in West Zoram was abusing the power given to them. They arrested people on suspicion and detained them for a long time. Brigadier Sailo also found that in general the people were utterly disgusted with Indian soldiers. The people knew India through the security forces, and as a result they had been antagonized and alienated from India. To a villager an Indian soldier was India..

As a result, Brigadier Sailo set up a human rights committee and meticulously collected detailed evidence on thirty six cases of misconduct in West Zoram—ranging from rape and torture to collective execution. The names and ranks of the Indian officers responsible for the misconduct were listed, together with the

names of officers who present but who did not take part. Sailo's findings created a furor in the Indian parliament.

In 1974 there were more hammer killings, and a daily curfew was in effect. On December 6, the MNF ordered, through a poster, all non-Zos to leave West Zoram before December 31. Many Indians left quietly, including the wives of senior Indian officials. Nothing happened at the end of December however, and only on 13 January 1975 was the threat made to bear fruit.

On that date, the inspector General of Police, G. H. Arya; Deputy Inspector General of Police, Sewa; and Superintendent of Police, Panchapagesan, were waiting for tea in the Aizawl police head-quarters. The tea should have been brought much earlier, but their petite Zo secretary had given many excuses and had purposely delayed serving the tea. The officers were in the office earlier than expected, and the Special Force group intending to attack them was not yet there. Finally, five MNA Special Force members in police uniform boarded a jeep and entered the police headquarters. They had no difficulty in entering the police station or the office where the high police officers were conferring. Captain Lalhleia, who could write his name with bullets, stood face to face with the hated officers. There was an exchange of words, and then the sub-machine gun "sprayed its contents into the men from the Vai country. Captain Lalhleia and his men escaped in the waiting jeep.

What followed was the biggest manhunt ever carried out in Zoram, and Captain Lalhleia was killed in a shoot out on March 6. Others were also killed by the Indian Army during the man hunt. Captain Lalhleia's companions Major Kapchhunga, Zakima, and Zari, the petite secretary, were arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment.

In the meantime Laldenga was trying to talk to the Indian Government about a peaceful settlement. The Pakistanis had given him \$ 15,000 to leave Pakistan for good, and he received a passport with the name of Peter Lee. His lieutenants in Arakan- Tlangchhuaka, the Vice-president of the MNF; Chawngzuala, MNF party chief; and Army chief Brigadier General Biakchhunga traveled to New Delhi. From Delhi they received VIP treatment on an Air India plane flying to Rome. Finally, they all met with Indian representatives in Cologne, Germany.

In early 1976 the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, introduced emergency rule. This allowed her to use dictatorial powers to throw many politicians in jail, including Zo leaders such as R. Vanlawma.

Laldenga and his lieutenants returned to New Delhi on January 24, 1976, where he was given a posh bungalow. There for five days they had secret talks with the Home Secretary, S. L. Churana, the West Zoram Lt. Governor, Chibber, and other officials. In the talks the MNF acknowledged that West Zoram was an integral part of India. The Indian government then agreed to provide meeting facilities in Calcutta, so that the MNF could discuss among themselves matters of settlement with the government. The MNF agreed to stop all activities, and a plan was worked out to assemble MNA groups in certain locations or camps where they would lay down their arms. A cease fire was therefore in force.

For the Calcutta meeting, the MNF named 26 men who were to be brought in from Arakan, West Zoram and from custody. From Arakan came Biakchhunga, Sangliana and Tawnluia. They came secretly to Aizawl and from there to Calcutta. Colonel Biakvela, who had been on a training mission with 80 men in China, was returning from China through Burma. As he had to fight his way past the Burmese Army, he was asked to join in the talks as soon as he was in Lamka.

The convention was held between March 24 and April 1, 1976. In the meeting it came out that the guerillas in Arakan were doubtful of Laldenga's leadership. Laldenga, who realized his power was at stake, maneuvered cleverly. He let himself be reelected as President and made Tlangchhuaka the Vice-President, Zoramthanga the General Secretary, and Lalthawmvunga the Finance Secretary.

There were differences between India and the MNF over how the volunteers should surrender. As the peace settlement was slow in coming, Laldenga was accused of dragging his feet. Then Indira Gandhi was ousted from government, and the Janata Government outlined a scheme for a peaceful settlement. The scheme contained a plan for peace camps where MNF volunteers could be regrouped and their arms deposited. But the scheme fell because of other demands put forward by Laldenga. One of

the demands that could not be fulfilled was for Laldenga to go to Arakan for talks with his lieutenants. Another was his demand for an interim Zo, government with him as leader. As -settlement grew further away, the Indian government arrested Zoramthanga, whom Laldenga had sent to Arakan for consultations. India was suspicious of the MNF leaders, and they were checking to find out what Zoramthanga had with him. He was released after ten days of detention in Calcutta. Indian authorities arrested Laldenga, after which hostilities were resumed.

In May 1978, Brigadier F. Sailo and his People's Conference Party won election to the Mizoram Assembly. Indian leaders believed that with the people's Conference Party as the Mizoram Government, the Zo people's demand for secession had been put to an end.

The MNF was split into two factions. One faction was loyal to Laldenga and was led by "Colonel" Kawlvella, who took command of the Mizo National Army. The other faction, with Biakchhunga at the top, was supported by six commanders of the Mizo National Army. Therefore Laldenga ousted the most active of the army men Biakchhunga, Zamana, Vanthanga and Sangliana.

The new Chief Minister Brigadier T. Sailo won over "Brigadier General" Biakchhunga, and got him to take the presidency of the MNF. So Biakchhunga, instead of giving up his position, took over the MNF in Arakan. At a convention in June 1978, the leaders in Arakan stripped Laldenga of all his powers and elected Biakchhunga in his place. But Laldenga was not easily ousted and remained in power. He was helped by a fanatic religious group, who arrested Biakchhunga. He was then officially reelected on January 24, 1979. Rualchhina became the Vice-President and Zoramthanga the Defence Secretary, and the MNA was put under Tawnluia.

The MNF remained active in their attempt to drive non-Zos from Zo country, or to "quit Mizoram for non-Mizos". A Hriat Tirna, or a warning, ordered all non-Zos to leave Zoram before July 1, 1979. On June 13, the non-Zo PWD sub-division officer at Saitual was executed. The man was from Silchar, and the Indian authorities had taken his body with great fanfare to his home.

"The relatives of the victim exploded in anger and the communal frenzy let loose by some politicians in that town led to the killings

to three Mizos and injuring eight other tribesmen as violent mobs went on the rampage burning the houses of Mizo settlers and Mizoram government establishments." Actually five Zo bodies were brought back to Aizawl, and the actual number killed was not revealed.

"Mizo youth started piling into trucks and moved down the highway for revenge, and pulling out the Mizos in Silchar who had been hustled into safety by the Assam police. The Army was placed on the alert in this confusion as the trucks carrying excited Mizos zoomed down the highway picking up many more on the way. Had the army not moved swiftly and sealed the inner line gate at Vairengte, the reprisal would have been horrible indeed. Mizo officers and other responsible leaders implored the angry Mizos numbering some three thousand to desist from violence and vindictiveness and gave them their word that their brethren in Silchar were safe. The boys did return to the curfewbound town of Aizawl on the night of June 17 setting ablaze shops belonging to non-Mizos. A shoot-at-sight order was given in the town the next day. The entire length of the Aizawl-Silchar highway was curfew bound."⁵⁴

Because of the killing of non-Zos in Mizoram, the Indian government transferred Laldenga to Tihar jail, and Indian Army and Central Police Reserve Forces hunted down Zo Freedom fighters. Curfew was imposed at every disturbance.

The former front leader Biakchhunga and his friends laid down their arms. Indira Gandhi, back in power in 1980, released Laldenga from jail, and she promised serious negotiations.

In spite of all disturbances and the inconveniences, the MNF was still popular with the people. Former MNF leaders, became respected politicians and civil servants, and the Mizoram government was operating in the shadow of the MNF.

At the end of 1981, Laldenga was in New Delhi for negotiations with Indira Gandhi. The Indian government agreed to grant the Zo statehood, and Laldenga accepted it. The negotiations came, to a deadlock however because of four demands put forward by Laldenga.

They were :

1. Extermination of the power of the Governor in Mizoram. The real administrator of the Union Territory of Mizoram was the Lieutenant Governor.

Brigadier Sailo, the Chief Minister of Mizoram, was only implementing what the Lt. Governor ordered him to do. When Mizoram became a state within India, Laldenga did not want the status quo. He wanted as much self determination as possible.

2. Resources of the state should belong to the state and the state should have all the rights to exploit and market them.
3. Separate election laws should be created for West Zoram.
4. The Forest Department, which at that time was situated in Silchar, was controlling the state forest in West Zoram. Laldenga wanted the forest department to be under the Zo government.

Laldenga also demanded a separate flag for West Zoram, but the Indian government rejected the demand as unnegotiable.

Indira Gandhi let Laldenga wait in New Delhi, explaining that she had no time to talk with him. During this time the MNA moved freely in West Zoram, and at border towns the MNA was collecting tax from traders coming from East Zoram.

There were still incidents of killing. The last one in 1981 happened on December 12. The MNA was at that time asking police officers for guns. When an MNA officer went to the house of police officer Lalbuanga and asked for a gun, Lalbuanga told him that he had none. He promised a gun the next night however. The following night the policeman waited with other police officers, and as soon as the MNA volunteers appeared at the door they were shot. The first shot killed Zoliana and wounded another MNF man. When the MNA returned the fire, Lalbuanga was hit by two bullets.

Curfew was imposed from December 13 to Christmas eve, and cars and other vehicles coming to Aizawl were searched. Police roamed the streets arresting people without a curfew pass.

Racial disturbances were still very much in existence, as West Zoram was totally under Indian military control. There were some twenty thousand Indian forces operating in West Zoram: The last racial conflict in 1981 occurred on December 25, 1981. A group of Zo returning from the plains stopped a jeep driven by a Cachari and requested a ride. When the driver of the jeep

refused to give them a lift, R. Chhuana, who was drunk, hit the driver with his fist. The driver then shouted for help. The villagers of Bhanga, which lies about three miles from the Zoram- Cachar border, rushed to the jeep and attacked R. Chhuana, who died at the spot of a broken skull. The Cacharis chased the other Zo, but they managed to take refuge in village houses. The owners of these houses protected the lives of the Zo by not opening their doors to the pursuers.

For one day travellers from Zoram were not allowed to go to Cachar because of possible repercussions. The Zo people of Vairengte, the village of R. Chhuana, did not take revenge because it was Chhuana who had started the fight.

In New Delhi, Prime Minister Gandhi refused to deal directly with the Mizo National Front leaders. Her representative Parthasarathy promised the Zo leaders that Mizoram (West Zoram) would be given the status of an Indian State in early 1982. Laldenga had consented, having completely shifted from his original goal of independence.

Trouble continued in Aizawl, as Indian Security (S.I.) personnel stopped any person they considered suspicious. When MNF commanders were stopped by the S.I. at Thakthirtg Bazar, the commanders refused to be questioned and ran. The S.I. immediately opened fire. Although nobody was hurt the tension thus created prevailed, and on January 19, Lalchungnunga, an S.I. police officer was shot. On January 20th, the Indian Government announced the end of the cease-fire between the MNF and the Indian Government. The MNF officers and men who were at ease because of the cease fire arrangement were rounded up by the Indian Army and thrown into jail. Laldenga was exiled to the United Kingdom on April 21, 1982.

There had been several talks between the Indian Government and the Mizo National Front leaders. However, both sides did not give easily concessions to their demands. Thus negotiations for peace settlement dragged on and on. At going to the press in early March 1986 The New Statesman carry almost every day the news of the impending negotiations between Laldenga and Rajiv Gandhi. The main obstacle was Art. 371/A of India Govt. Act, which gives the Nagaland Government the power to control land and its natural resources but which refuses the control of law and

order. Laldenga demands the power over land and its natural resources and also the control of law and order, to be under the jurisdiction of the Mizoram Chief Minister, similar to all other Indian, states. Another hindernis was Laldenga's demand of immediately assuming the responsibilities of the Chief Minister of Mizoram, which is unconstitutional as he had not been elected, although Lal Thawnhawla, the present Chief Minister announced that he would step down and leave his post vacant in the search for peace.

Mizoram (West Zoram) : A Union Territory!

After the Zo nationalist uprising, the political climate altered in favour of the moderates. The MNF was criticized for their violence, and they remained popular only in remote areas where they managed to be active. The Congress party, taking advantage of the criticism of the MNF, acquired MNF supporters, including the chiefs and their families. The Congress Party wanted West Zoram to be affiliated with Assam, while the MNF stuck to their objective of self-determination.

The District Council election had been due in 1967, but as a result of the outbreak of violence, the election was postponed until 1970. The result of the election was therefore in favour of the Congress Party for the first time in Zo history, and the party formed the government of the Mizo Hills District.

Chairman : Nghina

CEM : Zalawma

Members : R. Lalhuzauva, Z. V. Lalmawia

In November, 1970, the executive committee was increased to six, and Thanghuama, Mylai Hlycho, and Sapnela became executive members.

Oh 12 January 1971, MU member P.C. Saprema moved for a non-confidence motion against the Zalawma government, charging corruption and mismanagement. Because of a split in the Congress party, Zalawma was defeated, and on 16 January 1971, F. Nghina was elected Chief Executive Member. The Executive Members were Saprema and Thanchungnunga. Nghina had to resign however, because of political differences with the MU who had supported him. The MU and the Congress party then compromised

and elected Ch. Chhunga as the CEM in March, 1971. They formed the United Mizo Parliamentary Party (UMPP), which was dissolved again by a non-confidence motion when the Congress party government was removed. In March, 1971, Zajawma was re-elected as the CEM.

Although there had been accusations, charges, and non-confidence motions within the Mizo District Council, all political parties were for statehood. The Mizo Union continued to press for full statehood, and its President, Chhunga, along with Saprawnga and Bawichhuaka, requested that Indira Gandhi grant a separate Zo state. She promised she would take West ZoranTout of Assam.

On 14 April 1970, the Mizo District Council had passed a resolution demanding a state which would unite all Zo inhabited areas within India. In July, 1971, the government of India accepted a proposal for a Union Territory, which had been made by the Pataskar Commission at the outbreak of the MNF violence.

Many Zo students were, however, unhappy with Union Territory status, and they protested by picketing in Aizawl and Shillong. The Mizo Student Convention demanded an alternate solution that would adequately serve the interest of all the Zo people—within both the district and contiguous areas.¹⁵

"The Mizo Student Convention President Pu Thangkanglova advocated that Mizoram's maximum demand of India should be total independence, and the minimum demand should be nothing less than full statehood, which would give Mizoram greater and more autonomy."⁷⁰

In 1971, the Indian Parliament had passed the Twenty-Seventh Amendment Act, and on January 21, 1972, Indira Gandhi went to Aizawl and inaugurated the Union Territory of Mizoram. The Mizo Hills District became the Mizoram Union Territory, and Zo leaders now had direct access to the Indian government without going through Assam.

Instead of a District Council, a Union Territory has a Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers. The Legislative Assembly of a Union Territory has the authority to "make laws in respect of the matters given in State.list and Concurrent List. However, the Assembly of the Union Territory of Delhi was not given -control over Public Order, Police, Municipal Committee, ImproZO

vement Trust, etc. The minister were to be responsible to the legislature, and the Chief Commissioner was to preside over their meetings. The President of India was given the authority to set up a Council of Advisors." (Indian constitution, Samuelson)⁷⁰

After West Zoram became a Union Territory, the first Mizoram Legislative Assembly election was held in March, 1972.

West Zoram was divided into 3 divisions : Aizawl, Lunglei and Saiha. There were 30 constituencies altogether, with 21 in Aizawl, 5 in Lunglei, and 4 in Saiha division. 156 candidates contested the 30 seats. The results of the election were as follows :

No. of Candidates	Elected	No. of Votes
25 Mizo Union	21	41645
21 Mizo Labour Party	0	24549
18 Socialist Party	0	1704
63 Independence	3 (Pawi-Lakher)	24649
29 Congress	6	34331

The MU, which obtained the majority of seats, formed the government of West Zoram. Ch. Chhunga was elected unanimously as Chief Minister, and he picked Khawtinkhuma as the Speaker. Vaivenga, T. Thangliana, and P. B. Nikhuma became ministers, and H. Thangseia became the Speaker of the House. Hiphei was the Deputy Speaker.

The Indian government appointed Shanti Priya Mukherjee as Lieutenant Governor.

The Ministry was charged with corruption, favouritism, and nepotism, however, and the Congress Party and Mizo Union built a coalition ministry in 1974. Indian Congress Party member, J. Lalsangzuala was appointed as Cabinet Minister, and Zalawma as Deputy Minister. In 1975 Vaivenga resigned as Education Minister and changed positions with H. Thanseia (speaker). Saprawnga replaced Lalsangzuala as Cabinet Minister.⁶⁵

In the 1978 election the people's Conference Party won the Mizoram Assembly election. The West Zoram government as of October 1978 was composed of :

N.P. Mathur (Vai), Lieutenant Governor

Brigadier Thenphunga Sailo, Chief Minister with portfolios for : Political Department, Home Department, General'Administration Department, Secretariat Adniinistration Department, Appointment Department, Law, Judicial and District Council Affairs, Health and Family Welfare Department, and Information'and Public Relations.

Lalhmingthanga, Minister for Finance, Revenue, Excise and Taxation, Public Works, and power and Electricity.

Zairemthanga, Minister for Supply and Transport, Local Administration, Town Planning and Housing, Labour and Employment, and Parliamentary Affairs

P. B. Rosanga, Minister for Agriculture and Soil Conservation, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Forest, Planning, and Community Development.

Malsawma, Minister for Education and Social Welfare, Industry, and Co-Operation Department.

Thangridema was Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and C. Thangridema was Deputy Speaker.

There were thirty members of the second Mizoram Legislative Assembly.

The member fo the Lok Sabha from Zoram was Dr. Rothuama, and the member of the Rajya Sabha from Zoram was Lalsawia.

The people's Conference Party lost the 1984 April general election and the Congress(I) was the victor. Lalthanhawla became the Chief Minister and H. Thansahga the speaker. Sainghaka, Vaivenga, Rokamloa, C. L. Ruala, and R. Thanliana became cabinet ministers. Liansuama and Hippi were given State Minister portfolios'. Lalduhawma was elected to the Lok Sabha and Dr. Silvera to the Rajya Sabha.

Pawi —Lakher Region

The Pawi, Mara (Lakher) and Rieng occupy the southern part of the western Zo hills and see themselves as minorities in an area dominated by the Lusei and related clans. Therefore the southern part of West Zoram was called the Pawi—Lakher Region, and it had an autonomous administration in the Pawi—Lakher Regional

Council. Ethnologically there should be no distinction between Pawi and Lakher. Both are descendents of the Lai, whom the Lusei designated as Pawi.

In 1972, after West Zoram became a Union Territory, the Pawi— Lakher Regional council was reconstituted into three district councils with four representatives for each district. Two members were nominated to each council. In the 1972 election, the Lakher district council went to the Mara Freedom Party, and the other two districts went to the Indian National Congress Party, which was later to merge with the Chin National Front. .

Progress in West Zoram

With the arrival of Messrs. Savidge and Lorraine in 1984, and the adoption of the Roman script for the Duhlian dialect, education spread rapidly in the Lushai Hills District. Thanks to the superintendent of the district, J. Shakespear, the work of Christian missionaries was supported by the administration. Education was encouraged, and the use of a common language was realized.

The first Zo to pass the High School Leaving Examination was R.D. Leta, in 1910, and in 1924 a Zo got a university degree. The first Zo to obtain a Master's Degree (M.A.) was Lalbiakthanga, in 1945. Although primary and middle schools were opened in early 1900, higher education was not encouraged by the British administration. The missionaries concentrated on primary education and left higher education to individual students.

The first high school in West Zoram was opened in 1944, forty years after the first batch of students passed their primary examination.

After independence, school administration was taken over by the District Council. In 1947, there were 22 middle schools and 2 high schools in West Zoram. This was increased to 38 high schools and 143 middle schools in 1972. Primary school students rose from 16,000 in 1947, to 53,000 in~ 1972. The medium of instruction in the primary and middle schools is the Zo language, and in high schools the medium is English. Zo is taught as a language at the University at Aizawl.

The Mizo District Council was also functioning as the major executing agency for most rural water supply, rural communication,

and other development work. Municipal courts were developed at the village and district levels in 1954 and had taken over the administration of civil and criminal justice within their respective jurisdiction.³⁹

Chieftainships were abolished in 1954, and the administration of land was handed over to the District and Regional Councils. 'Fathang was paid as land revenue till 1972 to the District Council, instead of to the chiefs. Thirdengsa, khuachhiah, and chichhiah were abolished. The law of inheritance was substantially changed to give inheritance rights to Zo women, who were denied that right under Zo customary law.

Under the first three five-year plans after independence, 685.27 lakh rupees were allotted for development of West Zoram. Because of the rise in population, fields on hillsides could not wait ten years between use, as was practiced in earlier times, and villagers have had to return to the same field locations within four years. The shorter cultivation cycle has resulted in lower harvests, and terrace cultivation is now being encouraged. Cash crops, such as coffee, cocoa, rubber, cardamom and cashew nuts are also being tried by many Zo. Mulberry gardens are thriving.

In 1972, Zoram was connected with the plains by a 430 km road that passed through Silchar, Aizawl, Lunglei, Champhai and Demagiri. More construction work has been going on to connect Aizawl and Thenzawl, and Kanghmun and Demagiri. Another road connects Tipaimukh, Tupuibari and Aizawl. There are hospitals in Aizawl, Lunglei, Demagiri, Champhai and Saiha. Telecommunication centers are established in Aizawl and Lunglei, and Aizawl has an All India radio station which broadcasts in the Zo language.

Zo People in Manipur

Manipur proper, or old Manipur, is a valley covering about 730 square miles around Logtak Lake. The hilly regions around the valley belong to the state of Manipur, the result of British colonial decisions and the Yandabo Treaty of 1834. Manipur is bordered by Zoram (Mizoram and the Chin State) in the south, Burma in the east, Nagaland in the north, and Assam in the west. The people of Manipur call themselves Meitei. The earliest

settlers of Manipur were perhaps the Andro-Sekmai group of people, who like the Meitei, Naga, and Zo people were a Tibeto- Burman group. The Meitei conquered the Andro-Sekmai in the early Christian era. Studies of tradition, archeology and language give evidence of a close relationship between the Meitei, Zo and Naga; the three groups may originally have come to Manipur together and founded the Meitei kingdom. According to J. Singh¹⁰⁹, the first Manipur king, in 33 A.D., was Pakhangba, or as he was also known, Yabistha. Tongkhohjang Lunkim¹¹⁰ studied the names of the Manipur kings listed by J. Singh and concluded that they sounded very much like the names of Zo and Naga. He said; "The first and second kings bear Meitei names, whereas the third king bears a Kuki name; so also the seventh king bears a Naga name." Tracing the traditions of the Meitei, T.C. Hodson ³¹ concluded that the Naga, Zo and Meitei descended from a common ancestor, and that the Meitei were originally from the same group as the Naga and Zo.

Lunkim wrote; "Another variant of the tradition also said that the father of them all was a deity named 'Asu' who had three sons, Mamo, Alapa, and Tuto. This had been and is still a living tradition and fits the people: namely Kukis, Nagas and Meiteis from time immemorial".¹¹⁰ (It will be interesting to know if Asu has anything to do with Asho and Zo.)

The Zo people who occupied the Manipur hilly regions, however, migrated to their settlements much later than the Meitei. The Hmars came to Manipur during the sixteenth century, the Lusei followed next, and then came the Thado and the Guite.

The Manipur Royal government and the British encouraged Zo settlements in the hilly regions surrounding the valley, primarily to act as barriers against raids by the Nagas, the Burmans, and the more aggressive southern Zo tribes such as the Kamhau. Thus emigrants poured into Manipur during the early and mid 1800s.

According to the 1972 Government Census of India, the population of Manipur consisted of 632,597 Meiteis; 182,581 Zo; 162,780 Naga; 70,969 Muslims, and 26,495 Nepalese. The Meitei are sub divided into seven regional groups (1) Liberal Meiteis, (2) Andros, (3) Moirangs, (4) Sekmais, (5) Khurukhuls, (6) Heiroks, and (7) Kakchings. The Zo population is made up of different clans,

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namely Paite, Hmar, Vaiphei, Gangte, Simte, Zou (Yo), Kom, Purum, Aimol, and others.

From their original migration to Manipur and until the British invasion the Zo people had ruled themselves. The Manipur Rajahs never interfered in their affairs, except for occasional retaliations for Zo invasions. During the British occupation the chiefs or village kings, mostly the Thados, held their traditional rights.

Today the political environment of the Zo in Manipur reflects the diverse designations of the people. The majority of the Zo people in Manipur are, according to Lusei terminology, Paite. Some took the designation "Kuki", and some would like to be called "Chin".

Thados, who are numerically greater than other Zo clans, hold the chieftainships, even in areas where there are other populous clans. Among the Zo, Thados are the most developed, and many serve in the civil service.

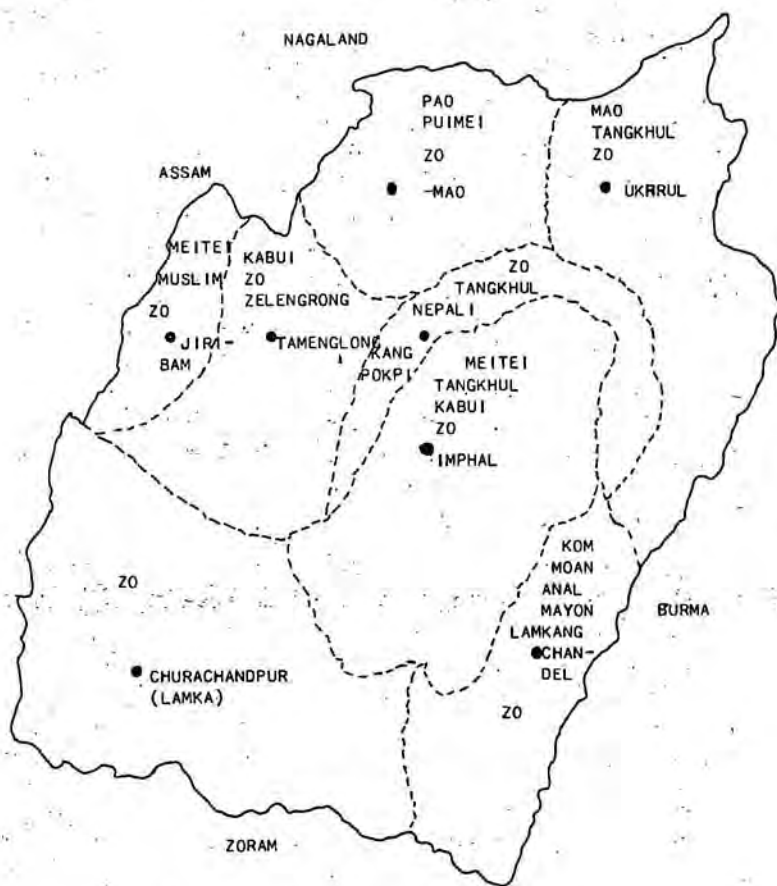
Just before India's independence, Zavum of the Thado clan organized a meeting of most of the Zo tribes in Manipur. The purpose of the meeting was to become acquainted with one another and to discuss common problems to be faced with the change of power from the British to the Indians.

The meeting was not successful, as some leaders left because Zavum insisted that the Thado dialect be used as the medium of discussion. He asserted that Thado were the real "Kuki", and that their dialect should be used as a common language.

The leaders who walked away from Zavum's meeting formed an organization called the khul (Cave) and invited into it all people who share the legend of originating from the cave at Chhinlung.

The khul organization was joined by all Zo clans except the Thados, but the members disagreed on issues to be taken up by the organization.

During the forties, various organizations were formed, such as the Vaiphei National Organization (1944), the Hmar Association (1945), the Kuki National Association (July 1947) and the Paite (Guite/Ngaite) National Council or PNC.



TRIBAL DISTRIBUTION IN MANIPUR

The PNC was formed to preserve Paite cultural identity. In 1952 the PNC put up Thangkhai, a church leader, as a candidate for the Manipur legislature. He was 50 years old and well versed in politics, but his candidacy was rejected by the returning officer. Since Paite was not mentioned as a scheduled tribe, Thangkhai needed to declare himself a Lushai, Kuki or Naga to be qualified.

The absence of Paite on the list of scheduled tribes meant that Paite students were ineligible for scholarships, and other Paite were ineligible for jobs reserved for scheduled tribes. In 1955 the Paite therefore urged that they be included on the scheduled tribe list. The request was granted by the Indian government.

The Paite National Council held their annual meetings between 1957 and 1960 at Hansip, Mualnuam and Thingtam villages. During that time they passed resolution requesting that all Zo areas in India, Burma, and East Pakistan be grouped within India, for the safeguard of economic, social, and political rights. They proposed that the land of the Zo people be called "Chinland". The requests were ignored by the Indian government.

The Kuki National Assembly (KNA), which was formed in 1969, advocated a Kuki state in a meeting held on the 10th and 11th of October, 1969. The general secretary, Ngokholet Ngailut, made a motion to revive the demand for a Kuki state within India. He said that the Kukis were landless, and that their interests had been ignored and neglected. They received no consideration, even in the administrative division of Manipur.

When the Naga fought against the Indians to regain their freedom in 1956, they took revenge against the Thados (Kuki) for ancient quarrels. The Indian (Manipur) authorities did not take any measures to protect the innocent Thado. Thus 60 villages of Thamnlong and Ukrul sub-divisions were wiped out. The people were brutally murdered, mistreated and harassed, and they were driven out of their homes. The trouble continued until 1964. Disappointed Zo (Kuki) youth joined the Mizo freedom fighters, which unfortunately brought more suffering, as more people were killed when Indian forces burned and destroyed their dwellings. The KNA therefore demanded compensation for these sufferings, which was to be paid for by statehood for the Kukis.

After the Paite gained recognition as a scheduled tribe, the Guite, in 1958, formed the Guite National Organization and

claimed that they also were a scheduled tribe. Their application to the Indian government was rejected because Guite, or Vuite is the chief family of the Paite community. They renewed their demand in 1968.

At the formation of the Paite National Council, the Yo were invited to join. They did not join however, because they did not regard themselves as Chin. Instead the Yo in 1948 formed the United Manipur Joumi Organization, which was changed to the United Zomi Organization in 1958. The Yo then demanded a separate Yo district within India. Other ethnic Zo people recognized the Yo organization as a genuine political organization.

In 1961, the Baite clan dissociated itself from the United Zomi Organization and formed a political organization with Tunkhopum as leader. Tunkhopum campaigned during the parliamentary election from the Lamka constituency. His candidacy was rejected however, because Baite was not listed as a scheduled tribe. Frustrated by the rejection, Tunkhopum went underground and fought for a free "Chinland".

After that, the Baite National Union split into two groups. Some Baite joined the Zomi National Organization, and some joined the Paite National Council.

Sometime back in 1942, Genzapau had formed a Vaiphei working committee to study the living conditions of the Vaiphei. The Vaiphei had first joined the khul organization, but, in 1952 they formed the Vaiphei League, and they were successful in listing themselves as a scheduled tribe of India. In 1960 the party was renamed the Vaiphei National Organization.

The Mizo Union of Manipur was formed in 1948 by the Hmars, and they supported the Mizo Union's drive to abolish chieftainships in West Zoram. The Mizo Union of Manipur was less active than other Zo political organizations, although it was the most farsighted. The Union was against the formation of diverse tribal political parties. It accepted, and still accepts, all other Manipur tribes except the Naga, and treats all as Zo.

In 1969 all Zo people's organizations, the Paite National Council, the Vaiphei National Organization, the Gangte Tribal Union, the Simte National Council, the Kuki National Assembly, and the Mizo Union (Manipur) demanded the demarcation of Zo tribal areas and the institution of a Zo tribal district with political and

administrative autonomy. They specified that the district should be within the state of Manipur.

There was real confusion in Manipur about what the Zo people should adopt as their common name. Kuki was not acceptable to most. The Hmars, who according to the British were the Old Kukis, were reluctant to join the Kuki National Association, as they did not feel themselves to be Kukis. The Thado, who were the new Kuki, adopted a resolution in 1942 saying that they did not want to be identified as Kukis and would not identify any other tribe as Kukis. In joining the military or other services the Thado would give their ethnic name instead of the Kuki name. But today Thado seem to accept Kuki as their recognized name.

Chin was a word used by tribes such as Guite (Vuite), Ngaite and Pawi, because of their ethnic affinity to the people of the Chin Hills. Again the Thado and Yo rejected "Chin" as a name, as they do not call themselves "Chin".

In a desperate search for a name acceptable to all the Zo tribes of Manipur, Zo students studying in Shillong in 1970 formed an organization called the "Eimi Organization", or "Our People's Organization". The idea was that all Zo students could join without having to bear the name of a specific tribe. Hmar and Paite students refused to join the organization however, as the Paite already had their own twenty-five year old organization called "Siamsin Pawlpi" (The Students' Association). Its headquarters was in Lamka, and it had a branch in Shillong. There was also the "Zirlaipawl" or the Students Association, which was joined by students who refused to join other associations.

On January 15th and 16th, 1965 all Zo tribal leaders held a meeting at Kawnpui, Manipur. There were also delegations from the Mizo Hills District. The name Mizo was acceptable to many at the meeting, as the MNF uprising had mobilized many Zo people enough that they recognized Mizo as their ethnic designation.

To unite the various Zo political groups, K.T. Lala formed a new party called the "Mizo Integration Council". In 1970 another party called the Mizo Integration Party was formed. The party's sole object was to bring the Zo tribes of Manipur, Tripura, Cachar, Nagaland, and other areas in Burma under a Mizo political setup, i.e., the formation of Greater Mizoram. The Mizo

integration Council submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India, demanding the formation of a single Zo political unit in the 15,000 square mile area inhabited predominantly by the Zo people.

No matter how hard Zo clans try to unite, they seem to have difficulty in adjusting to names which do not reflect their particular clan perspective. An example of this is former Manipur Deputy Minister T. Gougin's stubborn refusal to recognize the designation Mizo. Gougin, in his book "The Discovery of Zoland", strongly advocated the unification of all Zo people, the group designation "Zomi", and a land to be called "Zoland". He explained extensively his reasons why "Zomi" should be used instead of "Mizo". Even then, there is a group who refuse to be Zomi but Zoumi. Some call themselves "Tedim Chin". Nationalist feeling among them seem very high and they wage tribal literary warfare against each other using paper as their weapon, and letters as their bullets. This is very difficult to understand why "mi" meaning people should accompany the name of a people. It sounds rather awkward to say "Iam Zo People"(Zomi) or "/ am people (of) Zo"(Mizo). There is definitely a better term than "Mizoram " which literary means "People (of) Zo Country. On the one hand they talk about unity and on the other they are not ready to adopt, compromise, or sacrifice.

In 1965, during the all Zo political party conference at Lamka (Churachandpur), Laldenga, the MNF leader, wooed Zo young people. His appeal for a sovereign Zoram inspired the young, and violence broke out in 1967 in south Manipur; based on sympathy for the MNF.

The Thado chiefs lost their power in Manipur in 1967. Paukai Haukip won the Lok Sabha seat of southern Manipur on the Congress ticket, and in 1972, Paulian Haukip was elected to the Manipur Assembly on the Kuki National Assembly ticket. In the 1972 Manipur Assembly election the Mizo Integration Council (the Hmar National Union and the Paite National Council), won 13 Assembly seats. They formed a pact with the Naga Integration Council, and with the Manipur People's Party formed the Manipur state government. This shows a united Zo front can achieve great political happenings in their favour. They need only to compromise.

wide gap in development exists between the hill and plains people in Manipur. The relationship is one of chauvinism by the plains people and revolt by the hill people. Tombi Singh⁷⁷ divides the history of Manipur into three phases. The first phase was when the entire population was living in the hills. The second phase was the migration of hill men to the plains. The third phase covered the period, "when the difference became markedly wide and allowed political roles to be played through the instrument of the difference between the hill and the valley." Some Meitei scholars blamed the British for widening the gap, because of the introduction of Christianity to the highlands of Zo and Naga. Tombi Singh⁷⁷ blamed their forefathers; "The present generation has to pay the price of the mistakes committed by the forefathers." But he believes that the relationship is becoming better. "If we recall the social attitudes that existed 30 years back in the sphere of hills and plains relations and compare our memory of those days with the present condition, we are full of optimism and confidence for the future."

The hill (Zo and Naga) and plains (Meitei) peoples' relations therefore are very much the same as between the Burman and the Zo. Tombi Singh gives a solution to the problem; "The only condition is that there should be no further meddling by selfseekers of any category in this very sensitive zone... Warnings have been sounded time and again that no attempt should be made to isolate the hill areas of Manipur from the plains on political or emotional grounds."

Zo People in North Cachar

There are very few publications concerning the role played by Zo politicians in Cachar. One comes across only a few names, such as Thogen Thado, Haulung Hmar, Lalvouma and L. Hmar. (The author regrets not acquiring information on the Zo in Nagaland.)

Zo People in Tripura

I came across a thesis, "The Evangelization of the Tribes in Tripura", by Hrangchal Hnehliana. What I like most about the thesis is that when Hrangchal described the various tribes in Tripura, he titled one of them "The Zo Group". According to

Hrangchal Hnehliana there are seven groups of Zo people in Tripura.

(1) The Molsom : About 10,000 Molsom live in Udaipur, Amarpur and the Kamalpur Sub-Division of Tripura. They migrated through the Chittagong Hills more than one hundred years ago. Because of their association with the Tripuris, their beliefs and religion have been influenced by the Tripura culture. "Like the Tripuris, each village has a chowdhury." However most of their culture and customs are similar to the culture of pre-Christian Zo. Many of the Molsom have paddy lands, although some are very poor. Literacy is very low among them, and it is rare to find an educated Molsom. Recently two or three Christian Molsoms passed their School Final Examinations.

The Molsom call themselves Hindus, but they are in reality animists. Similar to the Jamatia and Kaipeng, the Rai of the Molsom tribe keeps a hard wood idol in the image of Zoawithang. Legend has it that in olden times a super-human Zo named Zoawithang came to live with the Molsoms. Before he died, he made a hard wood image of himself and promised that whenever the Molsom called him by name, he would help them. Now Molsom people worship the idol once a year, and they believe that it will help them in time of war or danger.

(2) The Langrong and Chongrai : The approximately 800" Langrong and Chorai must have come from the east, as their relatives are to be seen in Cachar, Assam. They have primarily occupied the Cachar Tripura borders, so their beliefs have not been influenced significantly by the Tripuris or Hindus. Although they claim to be Hindus, their culture and customs are the same as the non Christian Zo or Lusei. They do not adopt Bengali Hindu names.

(3) The Bong : This group is also called the Bongcher, Hmarchaphang, Langkaih and KOrbong. They came to Amarpur and the Kamalpur Sub-division of Tripura through the Chittagong Hills, and because of their association with the Tripuris, their religion and culture are influenced by Hinduism. They have also adopted Bengali names. Their population is however decreasing by the hundreds every year because of their living conditions.

(4) The Kaipeng and Hrangkhol: These two clans came from the east through Cachar, where their relatives are located. They

have been in Tripura for over a century, and they claim that they are Hindu. Their religion however is a mixture of Hinduism and Zo traditional religion, and today most of them bear Bengali names.

(5) The Ruankum : Compared to the first four groups, the small Ruankum group, sometimes called Kukis, migrated to Tripura relatively recently. They may have come through the Chittagong Hills, where they had been in touch with the Lusei or other Zo people. As they had previously lived in the hills they have had enormous difficulty living in the plains, and they have as a result lost many of their people. They live apart from the Tripuris and retain their traditional religion, custom and culture.

(6) The Darlong : The Darlong migration to Tripura may be dated at about 1840 to 1850. When they first arrived, the Maharajah of Tripura welcomed them and gave good cultivable land. Although the Tripuris call the Darlong "Kukis", their original home was in Mizoram in the Darlong Hills. They total about 4,000 people and dwell in the Kailashahar Sub-Division, and occupy the Jampui and Sakhan Hills.

(7) The Lusei or Mizo Group : In about 1905, six hundred Lusei, under chief Dokhuma Sailo, migrated to Tripura and settled on Hmuntha Hill, near Kumarghat. However, many lost their lives from cholera, so that after a few years, the Lusei moved to the Jampui range on the border of Mizoram. After the mautam of 1911, more Lusei under chief Hrangvunga Sailo settled on the Jampui range. The chief of the Darlongs gave them rice for their first year on the Jampui range.

According to Zotinkhuma Colney¹⁰¹, most of the Zo in Tripura settled there a long time before the advent of the British in 1761. The Zo people now constitute a dominant section of Tripura's population. Among them, Kukis were the first settlers and Halams, Darlongs, and Lusei followed. Hinduised Zo today have a flickering awareness of their Zo ancestry. Colney wrote : "There is no doubt that these people are among the earliest inhabitants of Tripura. The Kukis . . . were the first to have migrated and settled in the hill ranges of Tripura. They came in two separate streams. One from Lunglei via Lushai Hills and the other from Manipur close at the heels of the Maharajah of Tripura, in the 15th century A.D. It is surmised that certain sections of them might have been accompanying Maharajah of Tripura and offered

him valuable services in establishing Tipperah Kingdom (or Tripura Kingdom) in the 14th century A.D. The tribes preferred hilly areas for settlement and the plain areas were left untouched till the non-tribals came and settled there. The Kukis then, spread their settlements over to the south and north of Tripura, dividing themselves into several groups or clans, as many as 25 clans".

Zotinkhuma Colney divided the Zo people of Tripura into four groups : Kukis, Halam, Darlong, and Lusei. It seems that he applied the name Kuki as understood by the Tipperas. However it suggests that all the early settlers (Kuki, Halam, and Darlong) were called Kukis. The Halam (Earth Road) are the southern Kuki. Halam clans are Mursum or Mualthum, Hrangkhawl, Kaipeng, Bawngcher, Langrawng, Chawrai, Rokhum, Rupini, Koloï and Darlong. In 1971 there were about 20,000 Halam.

Some early Zo settlers converted themselves to Hinduism and worshipped the goddess Kali. Some of them claimed Tripuri appellation through acculturation. The missionaries converted most of the non Hindus to Christianity. Zo people in Tripura are producing pineapple and citrus fruits, which they export to the plains. Altogether there are about 50,000 Zo people in Tripura. They have no political organizations of their own.

Khawtinkhuma, the first Zo with M.A. degree, and who had been very active in the Mizo Union and Mizo politics, was from Tripura.

CHAPTER 8

ZO PEOPLE IN BANGLADESH.

A part of Zoram lies in the eastern part of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh (the hilly areas east of the subdivisions of Ramghar, Rangamati, and Bandarban). The area is geographically contiguous to the Chin State and Mizoram. The Zo clans in Bangladesh are Bawmzo, Asho (Khyang), Khami, Lusei, Masho (Mru), and Parikhu. Rajput66 also mentioned a Kuki tribe.

The Masho were the first to come to these areas. They settled in the north Arakan-southern Zo country during the 11th century. One Masho was King of Arakan during the 14th century, which suggests that they were powerful. The Khami came and lived with the Masho for about two centuries in the Kaladan valley. By that time the Masho had grown weak and the Khami drove some of them to the west. The Asho driven by the Burman came and lived to the north of the Khami and Masho some time during the fifteenth century. -Then came the Lakher from the Haka or Lai area to Kaladan or Chhimtuipui area during the seventeenth century. The aggressive Lakher were much feared in the Asho, Khami and Masho areas. Lewin118 reported in 1867 that from the source of Pi chaung to its tributary with the Kaladan there was no settlement whereas two hundred years ago, before the Lakher appearance, the valley was thickly populated. Lewin wrote: "the Kookies and Shendoos have emptied it." The Asho were clamped between the Lakher and the Khami. The Asho therefore split into two groups, one group moving southward along the Arakan Yomas. The Asho then settled down in lower Arakan and Burma— In the Minbu—Sandoway areas. The other Asho group remained in the Paletwa-North Arakan-Chittagong areas, a part of their settlement fell to India in 1937 when the British divided their colony into Burma and India.

Lewin"" wrote in 1870 that the Masho and Khami came to the Chittagong Hills District two generations ago. The Pankhu have the same hair style as the Lusei, and they must have come to this area when the Lusei migrated to Mizoram. Bawmzo, a tributary of the Zahau clan, came much later than the Lakher.

All Zo people settled in the hills, whereas the Chakma (Arakanese)

and the Mogh (Burmese) dwelled in the valleys. The Chakma, who belong to the Tibeto-Burman group of people, are Thet or Sak people according to the Burmese language. They came to the area when Bur/na destroyed the Arakan Kingdom. Arakanese dissidents against the Burmese administration took refuge in Chittagong Hills, which was under the British administration. They were to a certain degree the cause of the first Anglo- Burmese War in 1824. The King of Burma, His Majesty of the Golden Foot and the White Elephant and the Raja of Arakan, the lord of a whole people and of one hundred and one countries, demanded that the dissidents, who were chiefs, to be delivered -to Burmese authorities. As an example, in 1795; 5000 Burmese soldiers marched to the English district pursuing rebellious Chakma chiefs. When the English gave up two of these chiefs they were "put to death with atrocious tortures". Among the dissidents were some Masho. To what extent Zo people were involved in opposing Burmese rule cannot be ascertained, however the Anglo- Burmese War brought a part of the Zo country under British colony.

The population according to the 1951 census was :

Bawmzo	977
Asho	1300
Khami	1951
Kuki	1972
Lusei	1379
Masho	16121
Pankhu	627

Spielman¹⁰⁶ in 1965 counted 4,900 Bawmzo and 1,100 Pankhu. In 1965, Rajput estimated the Masho population as 16,000 and the combined population of Bawmzo, Kuki and Lusei as 15,000. Braun⁶ estimated the Masho population as 20,000. Altogether there are perhaps 50,000 Zo people in Bangladesh, and they are clearly outnumbered by the 125,000 Chakmas, 66,000 Moghs or Marma, 37,000 Tipperas, and 87 million Bengalis.

The Lusei occupy the hilly regions around 23 degrees north latitude, and Bawmzo and Pankhu are found at about 22.5 degrees north. There are about thirty Bawmzo villages. They divide their area into five zones : (a) Saichal (North Area), (b)

Bawmlai, (c) Parighawi, (d) Sunthla, and (e) Ramthar.

Asho are found to the south of the Bawmzo and Pankhu. Masho and Khami are in the southern part of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. There are some 200 Masho villages^ and their westernmost villages lie around the town of Ahkhadam.

Zo people in Bangladesh have not involved themselves in politics, except during the creation of Bangladesh, when some of them had to take refuge in Arakan.

The Lusei, Bawmzo and Pankhu are Christians, whereas the Masho and Khyang indulge in the Zo tradition of making offerings to the spirits.

CHAPTER 9

ZO PEOPLE EAST AND WEST

The entrance to East Zoram (the Burma side) is via Kalembo and Kyauktu. Kalembo lies in the Kale-Kabaw valley and Kyauktu lies in Arakan. The gateway from India to West Zoram (Mizoram) is Silchar. As one approaches West Zoram from Silchar one ' finds that there are very few Zo people living in the plains of Cachar, and this is especially the case after the racial disturbances of 1979'.

It is completely different in the Kale-Kabaw valley. Politically the Kale-Kabaw valley is under the Burmans, but the economy and trade is controlled by Zo people. From Kalembo to the Zo- Burma boundary (nine miles) Zo people are in the majority. These people live like Burman and speak their language fluently. While they have never attempted to influence the Burman, they have copied many customs from them.

Neither East or West Zoram show much progress. Shifting cultivation is still practiced, as has been the case for centuries, and there is very little cash crop cultivation.

West Zoram is totally devoid of trees because of shifting hillside cultivation practices, in which fields are rotated every three to four years. Wood as a result is a rare commodity, especially in or near towns. In this regard the area around Aizawl needs special mention. After so many years of ruthless exploitation the area is so bare of trees that it shows the little regard Zo people have for discipline—or perhaps it is their ignorance of sound environmental practices?

Compared to West Zoram, the East Zoram countryside still has trees. This is primarily because the east has nearly 14,000 square miles of land, whereas the west has only 8,000 square miles, and the population of East Zoram is less by some 100,000 people than the west. There seems to be some recognition of the deforestation problem in both the east and west, as there are now some efforts to grow teak.

In East Zoram most of the sub-divisional capitals are connected by dirt roads. Travel by jeep or on top of trucks is becoming a

luxury however because of the extremely high fares demanded for a ride. This is due to the scarcity of gasoline, which is available only on the black market. A gallon of gasoline costs between thirty and forty-five kyats, which is one third to one half of a policeman's monthly salary.

The first and only paved road in East Zoram reached six miles from the Zo-Burman border, and the Burmese Government had been sanctioning an additional half a mile of paved road every year. In 1981 the government made a generous contribution to the welfare of the Zo people by sanctioning six more miles of paved road construction.

In west Zoram travelling is a little more comfortable. There is bus service between most of the bigger towns, and the main roads are all paved so that travelling time is shortened. These paved roads were built after the MNF uprising, and they are sometimes called "Pu Laldenga's Road". Without the MNF uprising West Zoram surely would not have these roads as they were mainly built for the mobility of Indian troops.

Contact with Burmans in the east, and with early Europeans in the west, brought changes in dress styles for Zo men. Puan, or the Zo traditional blanket, is slowly being exchanged for western style trousers in West Zoram and for the Burman style longyi in East Zoram. Loincloths are now seen only in very remote villages, and shirts are completely western style iri^both the west and east areas.

Women in the east are adopting Burmese hair styles, and in the west there is a mixture of traditional and western style hair. In general the women no longer wear their hair long but are cutting it short. Traditional hair styles in the east may still be found in remote places or are worn by older women.

In the east women wear Burmese Htami or Zohnik in longer lengths, as did traditional Hakas, but the traditional short split skirt is slowly fading from mode. In the west many women wear skirts on top of their traditional puan, although in remote villages the puan is still very much in use. In towns like Aizawl some women wear high heels, despite the steep roads, but more practical barefooted women still walk side by side with them. In the east the Burmese slipper is the most common footwear for those who can afford them.

The adoption of Burmese dress in the east does not mean that the Zo are completely Burmanized. The primary reason is price, as the-availability , of materials, especially during the days of socialism, depended on the availability of cash. At that time even the cheapest Burmese style clothing was not affordable for most people.

The eastern Zo people have also freely taken the Burmese language. Zo and Burmese languages, as members of the Tibeto- Burman language group, are similar in many ways, and it has not been very difficult for students to learn Burmese. To an outsider it appears that the eastern Zo are proud to speak Burmese. It is less pride than practicality however, as there is no other common language in East Zoram, and Zo people with different dialects have taken to communicating in Burmese.

In West Zoram Zo.people do not copy from the Indians. For example, no Zo women ever wears a Sari. People avoid speaking the Hindi or Gachari languages. If a few people know Hindi it is only because they were in the Indian Army or in Vai schools. A western Zo feels embarrassed to speak in Hindi if the other partner is a Zo.

In East Zoram, with the exception of some soldiers, there are very few Burmans. In West Zoram, although the Sixth Schedule and the Chin Hills Regulation are enforced, there are many Indians. One reason for this greater mixture is the presence of the Indian Army and the Central Police Reserve Force. Another reason is that road construction is under the Border Road Task Force, which hires its road construction workers from Vai country. Zo people prefer traditional cultivation to working in road construction.

The Vai road construction workers, who are paid Rs. 300 a month, save as much as Rs. 250 a month, and after working for some time have enough money to open shops in Zoram. The Vais are slowly taking over the economey of West Zoram, as most of the bigger shops are owned by Indians, and new Indian owned shops are springing up in every corner. Zo people seem unable to compete with the Vais as they concentrate their efforts on local products and in the opening of tea shops. An example of how helpless the Mizo state government has been in dealing with the Vais problem was shown by the case of Lala. Lala came to Mizoram with a year's permit to work as a contractor, but at the

end of the year he opened a contractor business in Aizawl. In protest Zo civil leaders went to court and sued to close his business and have him leave Zoram. The district court in Aizawl did order Lala to close his business, but it is impractical to carry on law suits against all people such as Lala, who had built so much influence with some people.

Although Zo people in the west resist copying Vai languages, dress and other ways of life, they have copied a habit which has made them economically dependent on the Vai. Betel chewing is widely practiced in West Zoram, and betel nuts and other ingredients are imported from India. Betel chewing is not yet practiced in eastern Zo country.

Another contrast between the two parts of the Zo country is in the use of foreign languages. In Falam and other towns in East Zoram, almost all sign boards, even the names of villages, are written in Burmese, whereas in West Zoram no signboard except for post office and army camp signs are all in the Zo language. Eastern Zo people seem to be less motivated toward industrial development. Almost all furniture in West Zoram is produced locally, whereas people in East Zoram use the most primitive furniture, or if anything is modern it is imported from Burma. It is now difficult to acquire traditional Zo stools, such as the cane stool, in East Zoram markets.

The state government of West Zoram, or Mizoram, is to a certain extent free in the handling Mizo affairs, although there is much complaint about its activities. The Lt. Governor, a Vai, is the real administrator in West Zoram. The Chief Minister, is taking orders from the Lt. Governor. In the east the Chairman of the Chin State Council, is a figure head. It is the president of the Burmese Socialist Programme Party who has the say in government. The party chief in the Chin State is not free to plan and develop, because planning is done by the central committee of the Burmese Socialist Programme Party.

Thus the two positions, the Chairman of the State Council and the President of the Socialist Programme Party of the Chin State, have nothing to say in governing the country. Due to immense subsidization by the Indian government, because of the MNF uprising, there is a lot of money in circulation in Mizoram. Every initiative by the people for development is recognized and

accordingly compensated by the government. In East Zoram the people are in fear for such initiatives because of possible nationalization of any productive property they might develop.

Amidst these economical, cultural, and political separations the quest for close contact and togetherness is still very strong. Unofficial trade goes on between east and west, and intermarriage across the border is common, although Burmans do not appreciate the close relationship of the Zo peoples. As an example of cultural exchange a music group called Zodi, from Tahan, visited Aizawl in 1980. The group became so popular that All India Radio of Aizawl was very often requested to play music by the group. In 1981 another music group from Tahan, the Vulmawi, visited Aizawl. They became so popular with the people of West Zoram that they decided to tour the whole western area. They appeared in Kolosib, Serchhip, Lunglei, Saiha, and Champai, from where they returned to Tahan.

On the government side there is no dealing between the two Zo states, and the Burmans and Indians are closely monitoring nationalistic movements among the divided people. On one occasion Burmese Army border contingents broke up wedding ceremonies, accusing the people of the west of being agents of the MNF.

Because of the scarcity of necessities in East Zoram people are developing a culture which is close to that of the Burmans. Cases of robbery, murder and other crimes are increasing. In West Zoram thefts, robbery and other petty crimes are unknown. If there is murder, it is political. But in both east and west discipline seems to be lacking. Whether it is at the post office, at cinema houses, or at bus ticket offices people push and pull to get what each one wants. There is no such thing as first come, first served.

West Zoram is progressing economically with an astonishing speed. They share the progress made in India. Whether it is in Aizawl or in Lamka, Zo people benefitted from the policies of the Indian central government. Taking new constructions as barometer of progress, East Zoram fall hopelessly behind West Zoram, although there had been some progress after the Burmese government allowed a few private enterprises. If Zo people in the east can not show economic progress as their brothers in the West, they can always fall back on socialism. The only set back will be the shortage of people's basic material needs.

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Glossary

- Bungpui, Banyan tree
- Burma Rifles, British recruited Burma Army, mostly ethnic Karen, Kachin, and Zo
- chhim, same as sim, warm low lying areas
- Chin, Burmese name for Zo people
- Chin Rifles, Zo Army Battalions, non-integrating at first later integrated with Burmese soldiers
- Chin Hills Battalion A Zo Army Battalion stationed in Falam during the British occupation
- Ciintlang Ciin mountain
- Dawi spirit, same as Huai, Khuangzing (differing Zo dialects)
- Doltial Teak plank platform
- Duwa Kachin chiefs .
- Gal-ai To celebrate the killing of an enemy: same as Ral-ai
- Hangke men's rock
- Havildar Military rank (Urdu)
- Hlimsang Christian revivalism. People sing and dance in ecstasy in the church
- Huai see daw
- Kawl Burman or Burmese
- Khan same as lungdawn; memorial site; characterized by a slate slab or wood curvings; a place, of rest where wooden benches or rocks are arranged for sitting purposes. The site may be shaded by Banyan trees
- Khuangzawi same as Tong or Tonh; highest grade feast of merit-There are certain eligible rules to perform the ceremony
- Khuazing see daw
- Khul cave
- Kyats Burmese currency; official exchange rate 7.35 kyats to a dollar
- Kukris crooked knife carried by every Gurkha soldier
- Lai at secretary or to write
- Laipian the birth of writing
- Lawki the religion of Pauchinhau
- Longyi men's rock (Burmese)
- Loosye same as Lusei
- Lubeam Gurkhas
- Lungdawn memorial stone (same as Khan)
- Mautam flowering of bamboos, accompanied by multiplying rats which eat up grains resulting in famine
- Meitei the people of Manipur as they call themselves
- mi man or people
- mithun sial or sia or kikawng; domestic animal reared for meat and prestige
- Mizoram Zo people's land
- Naik Military rank in urdu
- Pathian God
- Pasian God
- pawlpi community of association

• Pu	Mr. : the actual meaning is grandfather
• puan	cloth
• puandum	black cloth for mourning ram land same as gam
• ral-ai	ceremony to commenorate the killing of an enemy or enemies; see gal-ai
• Rih-Li	The biggest lake in Zoram
• Rupees	Indian currency :approx. 10 Rupees = one Dollar
• Sa-ai	Ceremony to commemorate the killing of a wild animal
• Saang	school
• sepoys	British Indian soldiers
• sial	mithun
• subedar	military rank (officer) in Urdu
• tlawng	school
• thiampui	priest
• tlawmngaihna	to love less: self-sacrifice
• tong	same as khuangzawi; a ceremony for one's richness
• tongh	Zo measurement; elbow to finger tip
• upa	elder
• vai	foreigner or barbarian
• var	river; in most cases means Manipur River
• veng	neighbourhood
• zawlbuk	bachelor's hut
• zu	vermented grain; Zo national drink

ABBREVIATIONS

• AFPEL	Anti-Facist People Freedom League
• APHLC	All Party Hill Leaders Conference
• BRTF	Border Road Task Force
• BSPP	Burma Socialist Programme Party
• CNO	Chin National Organization
• CEM	Chief Executive Member
• EITU	Eastern India Tribal Union
• INA	Indian National Army
• KNA	Kachin National Army
• KNDO	Karen National Defence Organization
• MNA	Mizo National Army
• MNC	Mizo National Council
• MNF	Mizo National Front
• MNV	Mizo National Volunteers
• MU	Mizo Union
• PNC	Paite National Council
• PWD	Public Works Department
• SIA	Sizang and Sukte Independent Army
• UMFO	United Mizo Freedom Organization
• UMPP	United Mizo Parliamentary Party
• YLA	Young Lushai Association
• ZNF	Zomi National Front

Acknowledgement

Acknowledgment

October 4, 2011 by [thawngno](#) [Leave a Comment](#)

To write the history of Zo people has been a difficult task. I was not trained as an academic historian and the work was done in my private time, without instruction, mandate, or proscription. I have had difficulty in understanding clearly the discussions of earlier writers and expressing thoughts freely in the English language. Therefore, it was necessary to approach many friends and acquaintances for help.

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There are many others whose names are not mentioned here but nevertheless contributed to this work.

I would like to thank those named and unnamed for their support. Without them it would not have been possible to produce this book. My special thank goes to Ed Burgess for editing and typing the Manuscript. Zamlianvung, my daughter, gave me all the support in all processes of preparing this book.

Vumson

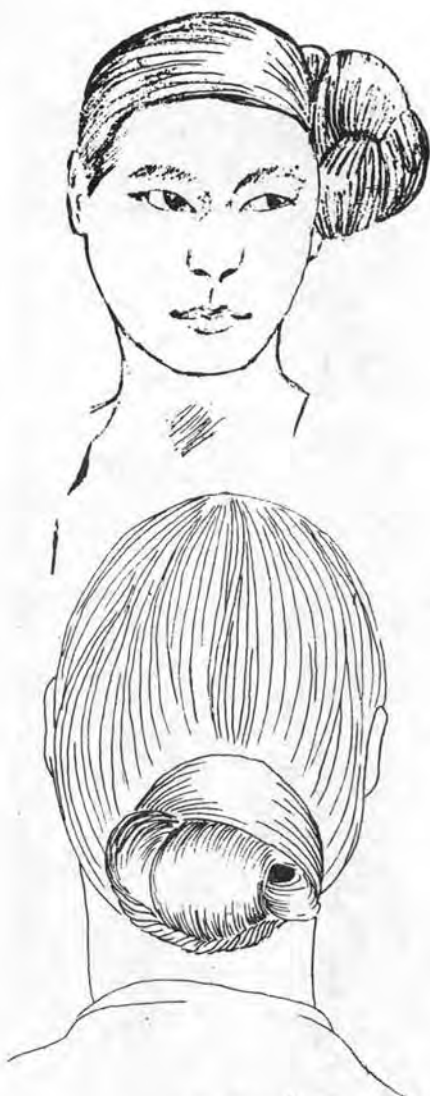
September, 1986



Zo girl drinking zu



Dancing girl with traditional skirt and festive hair dress



Men's hair style : Hair knot positioned:
Masho at the side of the head
Pawi on top of the head
Paite and Lusei at the back of the head



Zo's mean of transportation : basket on the back



A Zo house with teak planks. Parallel mountain ranges run from north to south in the background." A familiar sight in Zoram. Foto: Otto Esche



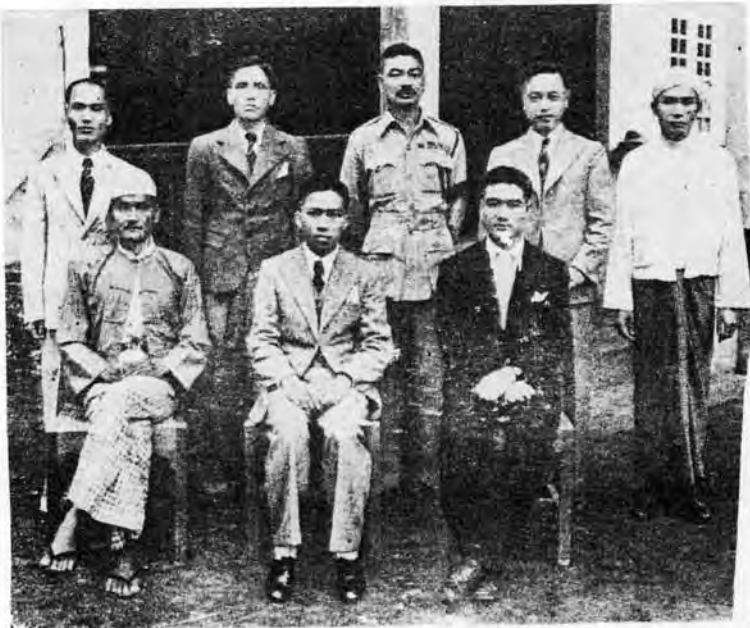
Woman pounding grain at the front part of the house. She wears the much valued pumtek beads. Woman smoking water pipe. Foto: Otto Esche



Khaikam, Chief of Khuasak, went underground and opposed the British for five years



Bridge on the Manipur River between Lumbang and Falam. At the river the climate is tropical and at Lumbang three miles away it is sub-tropical. Foto: Otto Esche



Zo representatives in the Executive Council of the Governor of Burma (1947) Backrow : Zavum (Naga-Hkamti Hills), Savutta (Falam), Captain Mangtungnung (Tedim), Ngunto (Haka), Htathlaing (Paletwa) Frontrow : Wuamthumaung (Kanpetlet), Vumkhohau (Thuklai), Thawngcinthang (Tedim): Courtesy of Pu Vumkhohau

Vumkhohau was the Deputy Councillor and Thawngcinthang, the Secretary

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Writing created by Paucinhau. Courtesy pu Khupzong



R. Vanlawma, founder of Mizo Union and Mizo National Front



Chiefs Kiomang of Haka (Photo), Thawngzakhup of Saizang, and Hlurhmung of Lumbang is signed the agreement to join Burma at the Panglong conference.



Vumkhohau with Lord Atlee, who as British Prime Minister gave Burma and India independence.



Lt. Colonel Sonkhopau, a Zo soldier, fought for Zo independence



From L to R : Townluia, MNF Chief of Staff Laldenga, President of MNF, Mrs. Laldenga and Rinchhana cabinet Minister.



The legendary Rih Lake



Hrangnawl, leader of Chin National Organization and a former member of Parliament, led Zo freedom movement in East Zoram.



When the sweet voice of Lalsangzuali Sailo is broadcast from Aizawl, Zo people in East and West tuned their radios to hear sing.

ZORAM

----- International and state boundaries
 To settlements outside Manipal and Chin State
 - - - - District boundaries

Scale 1:1700000 approx.

