Chapter – I

Historical Background
– Origin, Migration, etc.
CHAPTER - 1

GENERAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND-ORIGIN, MIGRATION, ETC.

1. ORIGIN OF THE WORD ‘KUKI’

The origin and meaning of the word KUKI is shrouded in mystery. Different writers present diverse views and opinions. However, no one has given the correct interpretation of the origin of the term KUKI, which can be accepted universally. It is believed that the word KUKI is of foreign derivation in its origin with derogatory meaning thereof. Evidently, it is found in the writing of John Macrae Esq. (1799) in *Account of the Kookies or Lunctas* communicated by J.H. Harington, Esq., in Asiatic Researches Vol. II (1800;141-146). Besides, in the H.B. Rowney’s *Wild Tribes of India, (1882;179-197)*; Walter Hamilton’s *Kukis, Kungkis, or Lunctas* in East India Gazetteer, Vol.II (1828:92-93); D. Lunghna’s *Mizo Chanchin* (Mizo History), Series III 1993:153, etc.

The word KUKI was said to have first been used by the Bengalis to signify dwellers of interior hills. Evidently, the earliest historical reference or notices of these tribes, as they were then known as Kukis, was made in 1777 in the record of about the ‘Kookies’ in the Chittagong Frontier, when Ramookhan, probably a Chakma chief, rebelled against the authority of a cotton farmer employed by the East India Company. The chief called in to his assistance, “large bodies of Kookie men, who lived far in the interior parts of the hills, who have not known the use of firearms, and whose bodies go unclothed,”2 It was believed that the British colonials borrowed and used it in the sense as was used by the Bengalis for their own convenience.

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Besides, according to J.H. Hutton, the name ‘Kuki’ first appeared in the writings of Rawlins on "the Cucis or Mountaineers of Tipra" in Asiatic Researches (II, XII) in 1792.\(^3\) applied to various hill tribes, such as the Lushais, Rangkhols, Thadous, Paite, etc.\(^4\)

Soppitt suggested the etymology of the term ‘Kuki’ as ‘Luahai’ meaning ‘Lua people’\(^*\) and is derived thus Kuki…Kukai…Lukai…Luahai which is today identified to Lushai. In support of this theory Soppitt traced the history of the Lua People as "in some accounts of Burma mention is made of traces having been found of a people (who were) ruled over by the Lua Kings or king in days gone by"\(^5\)

Another version claims that the word ‘Kuki’ has originated from a Chinese word. The literal meaning of ‘Ku’ is lake, that ‘Ku’ is accepted to be the name of a lake in China and ‘Ki’ means the people. Therefore, according to this view, the Kukis are believed to be the original inhabitants of the tracts around the ‘Ku’- a lake in China.\(^6\)

Further, considering the contention of the protagonists of Kukis with regard to the derivation of the word KUKI, they wrote -

"the members of the traditional village labour corps or Lawmapi, who left behind at the village or jhum cultivation in the jungle shout to the group of the Lawmapi members who went ahead of them signifying that the advanced groups are followed by the later groups so that they may wait for them and slow down their

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5. Lua people: In as far as the terminology is concerned, there is a similarity of the term Lua, Lai, and Loi or Lois. The Pawi(Pois)call themselves ‘Lai’ which is commonly known as Chins in the Chin Hills district of Burma. The Pawis and the Chins are the same people. The Pawis and the Lushais have also similar customs and ways of life (Sipra Sen, 1992:85-88). And whereas the Lois are an ethnic group of Manipur classified as Schedule Caste. There is no traces or nothing as such that the Lai people of Chumthupui area in South Mizoram can be identified with the Lois of Manipur.
6. B.N. Bordoloi & G.C. Sharmach Thakur, *Tribes of Assam*, Part II. Tribal Research Institute, Assam, Guwahati, 1988, p. 44. (Hereafter cited as Bordoloi & Thakur)
speed or pace. Hearing the shout which sound as ‘KU’ or ‘KUK’ which signify either that they may proceed without haste or should go faster to catch them up.”

It is probable that the term was derived from such shouting or distant call. And with regard to the term ‘Ki’ it literally means the ‘horn’ of animal. The protagonist claimed that they are the people who preserved the horns of various animals killed. Thus they claimed that the term ‘Kuki’ is formed after the combination of the local term ‘Ku’ and ‘Ki’ thereby signifying deeper meaning when separated. In spite of that, these versions can be said to be highly conjectural for want of historical authenticity.

Contemplating on the given versions of the word ‘Kuki’, it is felt that it is an appellation given to them by the other people of this region. The word Kuki has actually no meaning locally for the people to whom it is applied but it is used as they are identified by it. The term ‘Kuki’ was however, at one point of time not recognized by the people to whom it is applied. At first the name sounded incongruous or absurd but when they were continually called by this name they began to accept it. The names which have only ‘Denotation’ in the beginning later on acquire ‘Connotation’.10

Thus, as per the above version, KUKI does not signify a particular tribe and no single tribe ever called itself by this foreign name. On the naming of the whole tribe as Kuki, Dun writes.

“The origin of the term ‘KUKI’ is not certainly known; but it is said to be derived from a word applied to a system of cultivation by the Bengalis. The whole of the wild tribe who dwell in the mountain district contained between Bengal and Burma. Cachar and Manipur and Arakan have received this designation”11

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8. Ibid.
11. E.W. Dun, A bridged Gazetteer of Manipur, Simla. 1891 P.18. (Hereafter cited as Dun)
The Kukis are also classified as either ‘Old’ or ‘New’ according to the date when they settled down in Manipur. The ‘Old Kukis’ in the case of Manipur as categorized by Col. Shakespear consists of tribes like Anal, Aimol, Kom, Purum, etc. and the ‘New Kukis’ are synonymous with the single tribe – Thadous. However, such classification except for its time elements has no significance.

2. ETHNIC COMPOSITION AND CLAN DIVERSITIES

As noted earlier, the word KUKI is a generic term which includes a number of tribes and clans. The KUKI and CHIN are synonymous. As such KUKI is the term applied in India and CHIN is applied in Burma for the same nationality. The Kukis are described as a nation of hunters and warriors ruled as a nation by their principal hereditary chief of rajahs, but divided into clans, each under its own chief. They are known to their neighbours by different names.

The British knew them by Kookies, Lushais, Pois, Sindus and Chins. The plains people call these tribes ‘Kukis’ or ‘Kuki-Chin’, whereas the Dimasa Kacharis call them Thanggumsea and in Manipur the Meitei name for the Kukis is Khongjai or Khongsai. As such, R.B. Pemberton also refers to them as Khongjuees. The work Khongjai was perhaps a tonal corruption of Khongsai which is one of the ancestral lineages of the Kukis. According to Goswami, the family lines of the Kukis are broadly placed under two ancestral lines of descent, namely Khongsais and Chongthus.

In like manner Lt. Col. Shakespear also writes about the Kukis as -

“...closely allied clans, with well marked characteristics belonging to the Tibeto

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12. Shakespear, Lushai-Kuki, p.147. See also (T.C. Das, The Purum - an Old Kuki Tribe of Manipur, p.19.)
17. Bordoloi & Thakur, p. 44
18. The report on the Eastern Frontier of British (Reprint) Guwahati, 1966 p.6 (Khongjuous generally known as Kookies, Koochungs and Kuki.)
20. Ibid.
– Burman stock. On the Chittagong border, the term is loosely applied to most of
the inhabitants of the interior hills beyond the Chittagong Hill Tracts, in Cachar it
generally means some family of Thado or Khawtlang clan locally distinguished
as new Kuki and old Kuki … in Chin Hills and generally on the Burma border
these clans are called Chins…that these Kukis are also closely allied to the
Chakmahs’, and that the Lushais are more closely allied to the Chiru, Kom,
Khawtlang families and are also related to their eastern neighbours who are known
as China”. 21

He concluded that “there was no doubt that the Kukis, Chins and Lushais are all of the
same race.” 22

The Kuki-Chin is both a linguistic group and an ethnocultural entity. On the basis of
the linguistic classification adopted by G.A. Grierson, the Kuki-Chin is a linguistic sub-family
of the Tibeto Burman group comprising of Kuki-Chin-Mizo (Zo) and the Meitei (Manipuri
speakers). 23 Both, by language and race, there is no doubt that the Manipuris (Meitei) are
closely related with their neighbours and form apart of the Tibeto-Burman family.

With regard to the racial stock of the Kukis, different views and opinions have been put
forth by a number of scholars and British administrators. In spite of that, through linguistic
affinities and ethnic relationships the Kukis are identified with the Mongoloid racial stock of
the Austro-Asiatic group of Tibeto-Burman linguistic family. 24

Another authority on the Kukis, Capt. T.H. Lewin said “The Loosei (Lushai) commonly
called the Kookie are powerful and independent people who are known to the Bengalese by the

22. Ibid.
23. G.A. Grierson, The Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. 3 Part, II & III. According to Grierson the appropriate term
would have been Kuki-Chin –Meitei sub-family.
name of Kookie and the Burmese as the Lankhe”. As regards to the tribal ethnic composition. William Shaw wrote, the Kom, Aimols, Khawthangs, Thadous, Lushais, Chins, Pois etc. are undoubtedly all connected and are Kukis, and that the language alone has many similarities and the syntax is not dissimilar. Again, there are their customs which have a common principle running through them all”.

On the original place of habitat and racial traits, the latest authorities on the Kukis, Carey and Tuck have maintained that,

“without pretending to speak with authority on the subject, we may reasonably accept the theory that the Kukis of Manipur, the Lushais of Bengal and Assam and the Chins originally live in what we know as Thibet (Tibet) and are of the same stock, their form of government and method of cultivation, manners and customs, beliefs and traditions all point to one common origin”.

With authority on the Kukis, Robert Reid pronounced that the Kukis form mingling of clans, speaking dialects of the same language who are known to us by various names, such as Kookies, Lushais, Pois, Shendus, Chins, etc.

It is clear from the above facts, that the Mizos or Lushai are none other than the people known as KUKI in India and Bangladesh and CHIN in Myanmar (Burma). The name ‘Kookie’ was given to the tribes inhabiting the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It is also written in the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Vol.1, 13: 613), that “the first dwellers in Lushai Hills were Kookies”. It can therefore be said that the Lushais are Kookies/Kukis or vice-versa.

25. Lewin, Wild Races, p.130. See also T.S. Gangie’s “Who are the Kukis? Where are they?” Souvenir of the Kuki Rebellion, 1985. Imphal, p. 36
With regard to the constituents of the ethnic tribal groups and clan diversities of the Kukis, a correct picture is not available in the old Census Reports and other ethnographic notes, as these reports basically relied on the information furnished by the informants rather than on the basis of actual field studies which needed to be carried out. While, as in the Assam Census Report 1911, Major J. Shakespear, the Superintendent of Lushai Hills, groups Lushai-Kuki-Chin people under (15) fifteen ethnic community such as, (i) Lushai, (ii) Khawlring. (iii) Thado, (iv) Ralte, (v) Kiangte, (vi) Lakher (vii) Paithlei, (viii) Raite, (ix) Darlong, (x) Pante, (xi) Routhlei, (xii) Poi, (xiii) Nagente, (xiv) Chunthu, and (xv) Hmar. 29

Lt. General M.W.G. Gob, the Superintendent of Lushai Hills, on the other hand, groups the Lushai-Kuki-Chin people under nine (9) ethnic communities which are mentioned in the Assam Census Report of 1911, viz.; (i) Lushai, (ii) Ralte, (iii) Paite, (iv) Hmar, (v) Thado, (vi) Poi, (vii) Fan-ai, (viii) Lakher, and (ix) Sailo. 30

Further, Soppitt classified the Kukis into four main tribes: Such as – (i) the Rangkhol, (ii) the Bete, (ii) the Jansen, and (iv) the Tadoi. He further identified the Langrong and the Kelma as two sub-tribes of the Rankhols and the Lalongo as a sub-tribe of the Jansens. 31

Shakespeare’s Lushai-Kuki Clans further claimed that the following ethnic groups or clans belonged to KUKI nomenclature:


31. Ibid. op. cit. pp. 2-3.
xxiii) Purum, xxiv) Tikhup (Tukhup); xxv) Vaiphei, xxvi) Khawthlang, xxvii) Khawchhak, xxviii) Thado, xxix) Lakher or Mara (Maring).\footnote{32}


3. THEORIES OF ORIGIN

Several theories about the origins of the Kukis are in circulation. However, the history of people as told by the elders through their traditions is taken like a normal history today. It normally deals with the past events of which no written records in the field of socio-political, cultural, religious and economic lives are available though there exists an oral tradition. By oral tradition we mean messages, which are passed on from one generation to another in the form of folksongs or tales which are told and retold in the society in which they have lived. Literally speaking oral history is the history of the past events which are told by means of Spoken words mostly from the mouth of the elders. It is only after the invention of scripts that normal history is maintained. The Frontier tribes of North East India have generally rich oral traditions, which play an important role in the history of many tribal societies.

Usually history is based on written records or documents or archaeological evidence, which normally do not give first hand account of the illiterate masses or societies who normally form the bulk of the society. Consequently, therefore history has been the history of the few (at

\footnote{32. Quoted from T.S. Gangte’s \textit{Chin-Kuki-Mizo Nationalism}. A paper presented at the general Assembly of Kuki Students’ Organisation held at Tuibung – Churachandpur, Manipur, on the 29th January 2002. See also (Shakespeare, Lushai-Kuki Part I, 1912.)}
best the middle class). Therefore, anthropologist as well as historians generally accept oral history to be a valuable source, though it is a sensitive source for reconstructing the past.

In the absence of written records, the oral tradition may prove to be a successful source in our investigations and it can substitute written records. As many tribal communities have no written records of the past, their origin and history can be reconstructed with the help of oral traditions. One cannot ignore oral traditions because it forms the raw materials from which true history may be derived and sometimes picturised. J.A. Fadiman supports this argument in saying, “A myth, a children’s tale, work song, each may contain its fragment of data, which if recognized and placed in relation to others, may permit reconstruction of the past.”

The frontier tribes living in the international boundary between Burma (Myanmar) and North-East-India are generally known as the Kuki-Chin-Mizo. They doubtlessly represent successive or parallel migration across the mountains of North East frontier extending over thousand years. In Manipur the important leading Kuki tribe are: - such as Thadou, Paite, Hmar, Vaiphei, etc. which have close affinity with each other in terms of language, culture, dress, mode of living, food habits etc. but they prefer to be identified separately by the names of their respective tribes or clans.

Oral tradition is a distinctive feature of the Kukis today as it was in the past. There are neither written documents nor any monumental inscriptions to trace their past history. Moreover, the Kuki had limited contacts with their neighbouring counterparts, which makes the task more difficult. Thus, oral geneology of the Thadou-Kukis, folk tales and songs, legends, poems, etc. are the only source materials. For the Kukis it is very difficult to trace their exact origin and

migrations. Their origin is shrouded in myths and mythologies. Here an attempt is made only to
go through the possible sources of this tribe, associated with interesting legends and theories. A
number of scholars and local writers put forth different theories and by analyzing them we may
find some truthful clues about the history of the Kukis.

A. Creation Theory: The legend current among the Kuki-Chin-Mizo people is that of the
creation story in which Chhura is said to have shaped the world, beating it out flat with his
mallet. 35 There is another legend which explains why the God’s creation of flat land was reshaped.
Shakespeare recounts it as follows:

“There is a legend that the king of water Huai fell in love with Ngai-ti
(loved one) and, as she rejected his advances and ran away, he pursued her
and surrounded the whole human race on the top of a hill called Phun-lu-
buk said to be far away to the north-east. As the water kept on rising, to save
themselves the people threw Ngai-ti into the flood, which thereupon receded.
It was the running off of this water which cut up the surface of the earth
which Chhura had leveled, into the deep valleys and high hill ranges of
which the world as known to the ancestors of the Lushais consisted.”

Further, with regard to the creation story, the Kuki-Chin-Mizos have another interesting
legends which tells about ‘a great darkness’ called ‘Thimzing’ 38 caused by a solar eclipse. The
eclipse was believed to have been caused by a demonic creature called Anik who was believed
to have swallowed the sun for seven days and seven nights. During this time many awful things
happened, such as, the skulls of animals killed in wild games became alive, dry woods also
revived; even stones became alive and produced leaves; and at last man had nothing to burn. In

37. Ibid., p. 94.
that dreadful darkness all, except those whose descendants are now known as Mili Khongsat, had undergone a general transformation, some into various types of animals, others into birds and even flies, thereby depleting the human population.\cite{39} After the terrible catastrophe of Thimzeng the world was once again re-peopled by men and women issuing from a hole with a covering-rock.\cite{40}

B. ‘Khul’ Theory: According to this version the legend asserts that the Kuki-Chin-Mizos are originally from the mythological cave called ‘Khul’ which is equally known to Thadous, Paites, Gangtes, Vaipheis, etc.\cite{41} The name ‘Khul’ or ‘Khur’ as a place of origin is also acknowledged by Anals, Moyon and other cognate tribes. In Mizoram they call it ‘Chhinlung’ or ‘Sinlung’.\cite{42} The Chhinlung or Sinlung theory is also a legend current amongst the clans inhabiting the Falam area in the Chin Sate of Burma.\cite{43} However, the most common and popular legendary stories relating to the emergence of their progenitors is the cave ‘Khul’. Among the interpretation of the legendary stories with slight difference, the one told by the ‘Thadou-Kukis’ seems to contain the most details. They believed that their progenitors originated from the bowels of the earth and they give an account as to how they arrived on the surface of the Earth, thus:

“There was a village in the subterranean region called ‘Nuogam’ which was ruled by a chief called ‘Nuoinampa’ (ruler of subterranean region) who had a relative named as Chongthu*. One day the king’s son Chongthu went hunting porcupines in the jungle with his dog and his Bepas (house-hold helpers) - Lunkim and Lenthang both were brothers.\cite{44} In pursuing the wild game they accidentally discovered a large hole through

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \footnote{Shakespear, Lushai-Kuki, op. cit. p. 92}
\item \footnote{Mangkhesat Kipgen, ‘Christianity and Mizo Culture’ Assam. 1996, in his footnote from Mizo In Fact and Myth.}
\item \footnote{Shaw, op. cit. p. 25.}
\item \footnote{Shakespear. Lushai-Kuki, op. cit. p. 92}
\item \footnote{M. Kipgen, op. cit. p. 34.}
\item \footnote{In some accounts Chongthu is also spelled as Tangthu, Songthu, etc.}
\item \footnote{H. Doungel, op. cit. p.30.}
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
which they perceived and found the land uninhabited. As the land was fit and fertile for
cultivation, he at once thought of establishing a new village. Chongthu left behind his
Bepas to guard the land they discovered instructing them to make a bonfire consistently,
as a signal for Chongthu to know their whereabouts on his return from Khul.\(^45\) Chongthu
returned to Khul and devised a clever plan. He requested his father - Nuoimangpa to
ascend with his people to the new found land but his request was rejected. But, soon an
opportunity came when Nuoimangpa performed the Chon(festival) in which everyone
had to participate. Chongthu knew that his father would not take heed of his request and
therefore determined to provoke him so that he could be expelled from the Khul. In this
Chon Chongthu misbehaved and annoyed his father by brandishing his sword amidst
the participants injuring some of the folks present. Chongthu’s action enraged his father
and he was ordered to leave the subterranean region. Thus, after his dismissal from
Khul Chongthu migrated out of the Khul with his followers. As a mark of preparation to
migrate to the newfound land Chongthu and his elder brother Chongja feasted together.
On their departure Chongja’s party was delayed and only Chongthu’s party moved off.
The path they followed was believed to be the only way in which women and children
could safely journey to the land beyond Khul.\(^46\)

It is said that Khul Kot (the spot of exit) was covered with a huge stone that was lifted by
one of the Chongthu’s men called Vangalpa.\(^47\) In another story, the spot of exit or the passage was
guarded by a snake called Gulheopi.\(^48\) Chongthu was however, not to be thwarted in his ambitions.

As the legend goes, he tied his cloth around him and placed a Phoipi (a thick cotton cloth)

\(^{45}\) Shaw, op. cit. p. 29
\(^{46}\) Shaw, op cit. p.25
\(^{47}\) H.Doungel, op. cit. p. 31.
over his head and attacked the great snake, which was blocking the passage, and cut the snake into seven pieces. Even a lion also attempted to retard Chongthu’s egress but Chongthu overcame.\textsuperscript{49} In another account, as it was narrated by some elders, there was a man called Sattong who killed the snake \textsuperscript{50} which blocked the passage. Soon after reaching the new found land Chongthu came into contact with Lunkim and Lenthang through the smoke of their fire, and began to live together.\textsuperscript{51}

It is generally believed that there were seven villages in that Nuoigam, such as – i) \textit{Nuoimang}, ii) \textit{Kholoichal}, iii) \textit{Khopalva}, iv) \textit{Khothip}, v) \textit{Khomang}, vi) \textit{Khokanglai}, and vii) \textit{Khokisupi}.\textsuperscript{52} But Laljang added three more villages such as – \textit{Nuoining, Punte and Khove} thus making a total of ten villages.\textsuperscript{53} The names of three of the seven persons who thus emerged were Chongthu, Vangalpa, and Khupngam – the keeper of the dog, are also mentioned.\textsuperscript{54} But the names of the four others are not known though they are believed to include the progenitors of Meiteis, Nagas, the Burmese and the unknown foreigner.\textsuperscript{55} However, they are not definite about the last three although they are quite emphatic about the number being seven.

In this legendary account, one interesting feature is the emphasis being placed on the number ‘seven’. Thus there were seven important villages ruled by Nuoimangpa in that underworld, the cutting up of the big snake, which blocked the passage or hole into seven pieces by Chongthu’s men and the seven men including Chongthu who \textit{emerged} out of the Khul.

Further, K.Kipgen writes,\textsuperscript{56} that the emergence of Chongthu \textit{from Khul} cannot simply be taken as a myth because it is very much related to \textit{Themthu} (magical charm) chanted by.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} Khakhhotinong Kipgen, \textit{The Thadou Kukis – A brief Account of History and Culture}. 1982. Manipur. p. 9 (Cited hereafter as K. Kipgen)
\textsuperscript{51} Shaw, Ibid. p. 26.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Shaw. p.25
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56} K.Kipgen, op.cit. p.10
the ‘Thadou-Kuki’ physicians, which was verbally handed down to their sons from generation to generation to appease the curse of Nemneh. In case a person is sick, the medicine man makes sacrifice in the name of Nemneh in the hope of appeasing her wrath. So, whenever a ‘Thadou-Kuki’ physician attends a sick person, he recites the lengthy magical charm, the first three lines of which go thus:—

"Khulla kapen, Sheenga kakal, Jonna kakum,
Chopeu kachuh ......."

In free translation the above lines mean:
Born at Khul, climbed the Sheeng (hills), proceeded down
the Jon and settled down at Chopeu .......

From the literal reading of the above quoted lines, the progenitor of the Kukis have come from Khul. From the first four words of the sentences, it is clear that the spot where the progenitors of Kukis migrated was a hilly region. K. Kipgen mentions that not very far from the place called Khul there was a brook with pebbles on its beds and by the side of it the progenitors of the Thadous established their first village called Chopeu.

The Chhintlung legend current in Mizoram adds another interesting piece of information i.e., that the last to emerge was a Ralte couple whose loud chattering made Pathiam (God) shut down the covering stone for fear of over-populating the upper world.

Further, another interesting legendary story emanated from a Burmese priest of Mandalay who explained to Pu. Thangvunga, a Zo historian who went there to trace the history of the origin and migration of these people in 1941, as follows: -

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* Nemneh is Chongia’s wife. According to the legend, she is a widow who was left behind inside the Khul by Chongthu and his men when they were marching out of the Khul to the new found land.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Shakespear, Lushei-Kuki, p. 93
The ancestors of the Mizos came from Sanghai, sent out by a Chinese king to be the followers of his son who was to establish himself. But without following the prince, they cast lots according to which they proceeded in two groups; one group towards the South-West and the other to the South. What number of years they spent between Shanghai and Burma is not known, but the one in 1941 was counted as the 47th generation. When the group came to Burma the Burmese said, “The Chinlu* are coming”. Thus, it is believed that ‘Chinlu’ came to be known as ‘Chhinlung’ in course of time.

As this information is received from a neutral person, this explanation has nothing but the advantage of being readily accepted as the belief of the people that their origin which has been held for long goes back to ‘Khul’ or ‘cave’ which the Mizos call ‘Chhinlung’.

C. Chhinglung / Sinlung Theory: In recent years another theory put forth by some writers is that their forefathers came out of a big cave called ‘Chhlinlung’, which literally when translated means ‘Closed Stone’. It was suggested that Chhinlung or Ch’en Lung is said to mean a Chinese prince rather than a covering stone to whom the Great Wall was closed; and who revolted against his father Shih Huangtai of the Chin dynasty. During his reign, (221 B.C. – 207 B.C.), the Great Wall of China along the northern frontier was strengthened and completed. It can be mentioned here that several hundred thousand men and women adults were forced to work for the construction jobs. As a result many people fled from the kingdom and migrated to the South-West and South-East direction, and it is believed that the Kukis might have joined

* Chinlu: The word ‘Chinlu’ is abbreviated form for Chinese, and ‘Lu’ means people in Burmese. Thus, it is believed that Chinlu came to be known as Chhinlung in course of time.
60. M.Kipgen, op. cit. pp.33-34
63. Zawla, op.cit. p. 2
the group that moved to South-East.\footnote{64} This appears to be a conjecture as no solid proof is found.\footnote{64}

And with regard to the movement of the Prince, as the legend goes, after incurring the wrath of his father, he is said to have left the kingdom and established himself in the Himalayan mountains and then migrated down to the present Shan state of Burma.\footnote{65} The Kukis are believed to be a part of the subject of \textbf{Chin-Lung} whose name they continue to retain as Chhinlung, believing it to be connected with their origin.\footnote{66} This legend is also current among the people in the Falam area of the Chin state in Burma who trace their origin not from the Chhinlung of the covering rock, but to the Chhinlung itself.\footnote{67}

There is still another theory advanced in this connection. The advocates of this theory believed that the Kukis were originally from a city-state settlement called Sinlung, believed to be somewhere in Central China. \textbf{Rohauvung} noted that Singlung is a fortress of rocks from which few could escape.\footnote{68} There are some historians who suggest that the present Singlung or Tailling in South-West China is the place of its location.\footnote{69} Whereas Singlung is to be somewhere in Central China, the exact location of Singlung seems to be between \textit{Chando} and \textit{Szeduam} on the bank of \textit{Yalung} river.\footnote{70} The Singlung tradition has been popularized in one of the Hmar folk songs as:

\begin{quote}
\textit{“Khaw Sinlungah}
\textit{Khaw siel ang ka Zuong suok-a}
\textit{Mile nelle tam-e}
\textit{Hriemi hrai-a”}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
English rendering: -
\textit{“Out of Sinlung}
I jump like a Mithun (Siel)
Innumerable were the people
Children of people”\footnote{71}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[64] H.Doungel, op. cit. pp. 32-33
\item[65] Quoted in P. Misao's \textit{The early life of Kuki-Chins}, in N. Sanajaoba’s Manipur Past and Present, Ed. Vol. 3, p. 136
\item[66] Zawla, op. cit. pp. 6-7
\item[67] M.Kippen, op. cit. p. 34
\item[69] Ibid.
\item[71] Quoted in Lalangawtian, \textit{Who are we?} In the Souvenir of Kuk Festival, Imphal 1990, p. 5
\end{footnotes}
D. Israel / Jewish Theory of origin: This is yet another theory which has been advanced in connection with the origin of the Kukis. In recent years some of the local writers from the Kuki-Chin groups claimed that they were the Mongolian Jews. Some elders among the Kukis had a local tradition that they were originally one of the lost tribes of Israel. They believe that a man called MANMASI was their ancestor-father. One tradition maintains that Manmasi could perhaps be one of the children of Joseph (Israelite) son of Jacob found in the Bible named MANASSEH. It is therefore, quite possible that the word Manasseh was taken wrongly as Manmsi. If so, they could be one of the missing tribes of Israel of the Old Testament. It is to be noted that many ethnic tribal groups in Mizoram, such as, Lushais, ‘Thadou-Kukis’, Hmars, etc. believed that their ancestors migrated from Assyria thus claiming themselves to be one of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

According to N.Lhungdim, the folklores and folktales of the Kukis reveal that they have descended from an ethnic group linked with the Jews in the second half of the first century A.D. after the destruction of the holy city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. In this regard Dr. Khuplaml

73. R. Pudai, op. cit. p. 21.
74. Shakespear, Lushai-Kuki, op. cit. Part-I.
75. Quoted in N.Lhungdim’s The Kuki Economy since 1780 A.D., in Sanajaoba’s Manipur, p. 151.
76. Dr. Khuplama is the founder of National Research Laboratory for conservation of Chin-Kuki-Mizo cultural properties. Since his childhood days his favourite past time had been listening to the old stories passed down from generation to generation. In 1949, he gave up his medical practice and devoted his life entirely towards collection of Kuki folklores. Regarding his life and work, he had written, The Revelation of Ancient Times, The Mythical Heaven, the English translated version of The Wonderful Genealogical Tales of the Kuki-Chin-Mizo, etc.

Further, Khuplama said they had their own writing script termed as Bulpizem consisting of (32) alphabet, which he claims to have discovered through miraculous visions. (See Appendix-VII) This reminds us of the fact that no script other than the Brahmi has been written in visionary character. According to, Dr. Khuplama, the scrol of Manmasites in which the Bulpizem was written got lost during the reign of Chinese King Shih Huangti, which he allegedly dated back precisely to B.C. 214. He firmly stood in his claim that the re-discovery of the Bulpizem reveal the true identity of the people as the children of Manmasi. However, there is no correct emphasis or evidence to establish historical authenticity and its specification in the dating system. Whosoever, his Bulpizem needs further study and investigation vis-à-vis the script of the Hebrews. Besides, there are also several persons among the Kuki society who invented scripts (See Appendix-VII). They do not claim of having Jewish connection unlike Dr. Khuplama. The scripts could have been skillfully manipulated in order to make favourable impression.

Interview with Khuplama on 20/07/03 and on 17/09/03 at his residence, New Lambulance, Imphal.
claims that he had sufficient data and information at his command to prove that they are originally from one of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

In recent years some of the Kuki-Chin-Mizo people living along the international India-Burma border have been overwhelmed by the Lost-Tribe-fever. In connection with the Jewish theory of origin there has been claims and counter-claims between the pro-Jewish groups on the one hand and the Christian groups on the other. Evidently, there are some groups among the Chin-Kuki-Mizos who eventually got circumcised and began to live as Jews and observed the biblical dietary laws.77 In Manipur’s south district of Churachandpur, several Synagogues were also set up. The D. Phaiilen’s * Beth Tefillah is one such example among others.78 The rise in the number of the Synagogue and the spread of Judaism families among the Kukis is of a recent phenomena.

However, with regard to the Mizos alone in particular in connection with the supposed Jewish origin, Myer Samra* and H. Halkin’s** finding till today have nothing to establish a connection between the Mizos and ancient Jews. In this regard, Halkin writes:

“There was no Lost Tribe in it. I had found nothing to confirm a connection

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77. Being myself a Thadou Kuki, I have seen for many years that some sections of the Kukis of Manipur and Mizos of Mizoram practicing the Jew’s ways of life in their socio-cultural and religious affairs. I have also seen them observing the Biblical dietary laws. There are a good number of families who also have spread their faith. Even one of my own uncle - Mangpithang Kipgen practice Judaism.

* D.Phaiilen is the name of the locality situated within the vicinity of Churachandpur town inhabited mostly by the Thadou-Kuki speaking Chin-Kuki-Mizo people.

78. In Churachandpur district of Manipur, several other Synagogues have been set up at Musok, Boljou, Mongleumphu, and Matijiang. It was visited by Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail and his companion - Rabbi Avizhek Hanock on August 25, 2003 accompanied by Lemuel Henkhopin Haokip, Ex-Secretary of BeneMenasha Council (BMC) from Mizoram. The Rabbis who came from Israel were said to have arrived at Mizoram’s capital - Aizawl on August 21, 2003. Sources – CHOLLHA, a popular and widely circulated monthly Bilingual Magazine, edited by Benny Khungnami, Issue No. 11, Sept. 2003

Besides, among the Kukis there are Synagogues established in various places of their inhabited areas of Manipur, such as Molnejiang, Tuikan, Karam, Nakhesung, Moreh, etc. Molnejiang is one of the oldest known Kuki villages among the Judaism families. In the year 2002, they have celebrated their 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee. The increase in the numbers though not alarming and the spread of its faith is of course, a recent phenomenon.

*Myer Samra is an Australian Anthropologist, he wrote Judaism in Manipur and Mizoram - A by-product of Christian Missions, A paper which he presented during a seminar at Aizawl in 1992. Prof. Samrah studied this issue and did an empirical study by undertaking fieldwork covering the entire Chin Hills and Mizoram including Manipur. But he failed to convince himself with the conjectural hypothesis.

**Hillel Halkin is a distinguished writer and translator. He was born in New York City and has lived in Israel since 1979. Intrigued by the old legend, in 1998 he accompanied a Jerusalem Rabbi, became a dedicated Lost-Tribe hunter and went to China, Thailand and North-East India in searches of traces of the Biblical Israelites. In November 17, 1999 a reception programme in honour of Halkin and his friends was held at Kuki Inn, Imphal. After his return he published a book in 2002 entitled, Across the Sabbath River - In search of a lost tribe of Israel. New York. (Cited hereafter as Halkin)
between Mizos and ancient Israel. None of the evidence pointing to it had stood up”.

According to Hrangliana, a Hmar expert on the ancient past, the Hmar used to chant as when we celebrated the feast,
The great big water was parted sideways.

In this connection Halkin further observed that, “whatever parting of the big water” took place had been near Champhai,* not in Egypt. All the biblical extras – fire by day, and cloud by night, and enemies drowned, and a sister Moses – had accrued like barnacles when belief in Lost Tribe hood began making waves after World War II”.

However, surprisingly enough, the Hmurs who are an ethnic community of the Chin-Kuki-Mizo people had an interesting folk song sung by them during the Sikpui (Winter) festival pointing similarity to that of the stories of ancient Jews found in the bible. The song of Sikpui dance was thus:

Sikpui inhang kan we laia,

Changtuipui aw; Semma hrili kang intan.

Ke ra lawna, ka lei do aw,

Sunnah sum ang, zanah meilaw in vak e,

Atur a sa, thlu a ruol aw;

In phawsiel le in ralfete zuong thaw ro,

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79. Halkin, op cit. p. 192
80. Ibid., p. 189
81. Ibid., p. 192
82. The Book of Exodus (The second Book of Moses) is a vivid reference to the Jews whom God made a special nation. The Books is filled with accounts of their suffering and their liberation from Egyptian bondage under the leadership of Moses and also the events that followed after they crossed the Red Sea.

*Champhai: Literally in “Thadou-Kuki”, ‘Cham’ means ‘plain’ and ‘Phai’ means ‘valley’. It is a name of the place down which the Hmar had migrated from the Chin Hills. The Tuipui River was flowing near Champhai. According to Halkin, the Hmar’s big water seems most likely referred to the Tuipui River and not the Red Sea in Egypt (Halkin, p. 192)
Sun ra zawla ka leido aw,

Ka ra lawn a, mei sum ang lawn in vak e

Sun ra zawla ka leido aw,

Laimi sa ang chang tuipui in lem zova,

Ava ruol kha la ta che,

Suonglung chunga tui zuong pui kha la ta che. 83

English translation: -

While we are preparing for Sikpui feast,

The big red sea becomes divided.

As we are marching forward fighting our foes,

A cloud is leading us during day,

And by a pillar of fire during night

Our enemies, ye folk, are thick with fury,

Come out with your shields and spears,

Fighting our foes all day,

We march as long as cloud – fire goes a fore

The enemies we fight all day,

The big sea swallowed them like a beast. Collect the quails,

And fetch the water that springs out of the rock.

Dena further writes that, “The story of Tuoni and Neilal refers to the Sikpui festival, which was usually celebrated during the winter season by the Hmars from time immemorial. This is a vivid reference to the Israelites at the time of their liberation from Egyptian bondage

under the leadership of Moses and to the events that followed after they crossed the Red Sea.”

It is also found that the words included in one of the old chants\(^{85}\) of the anti-Christian die-hard of the old religion, the biblical names were found. It was said that the forefathers of *Manmasi* whispered them out the following names of places, which they used to remember at the time of worship, which are:

“You, who are above and whom I worship, Pathian, Khuana, Khuapa, Thlaropa, Thlanrawkpa, Thlanropa, Chunkhuanuleng, Hualhimitu, Khuana, Khuavang, Tera, Apram, Iaksak, Muriak, Iakhawp, Akuptan, Big Red water, Sinai Mountain, the place of the Covenant, Marah, the place you gave us water, the place where we went up and down, Enter Si-awn, Suraleido, Apnitan, Himmelawi, at Lunding, at Kunming, at Mawngkawlawi, at Moirang, at Tuippangpui, at Manding, at Thimkawzing, at Tingtun, at Vangrawn, at Sangring, at Airawhdung, at Homalen, at Chhindung, at Mount Awksaw, at Khampat, at Thanghem, at Ngatan, at Run, at Suk River, at Pangrawn, at Seipui, at Tiao river – who guided us wherever we went – Za Khuana – who is in the place where the sun rises, where the moon rises, where the buffalo dwell, where the cattle dwell, under the eight folds of the earth, under the eight folds of the sea, Omnipresent, Za, Khuavang.”\(^{86}\)

It is to be noted that the words above “Pathian Khuana, Khuapa …… Khuavang” is the different local name used in place of Za, the name of God, believed to have been pronounced secretly by the forefathers of *Manmasi* in order to hide the greatness of the name.\(^{87}\)

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84. Dena’s Folk Tales : (pp viii-ix) Introduction.
85. The old chants (English translated version) given above refers to the chants of the old religion of the children of Manmasi as claimed by Lianpuisuka – an anti-diehard of the old religion who did not believe in Christian God till his death in 1990. It is also called Lianpuisuka’s Will under the caption, “A Hidden treasure is Found”. Halkin, op. cit., pp. 250-251.
86. Halkin, op. cit. pp. 250-251
87. Ibid.
Besides, in the Mizo culture certain elements of similarity are evidently found prior to their adoption of Christianity as their new faith. The evidence to indicate them as part of the descendants or one of the lost tribe of Israel lies in a number of similarities found in their socio-cultural practices as for instance, Tlangmai thawi\textsuperscript{88} (A goat sacrifice), Kelkal sacrifice\textsuperscript{89}, pronounced of names like ‘Za’ ‘Tera’, ‘Apram’ etc. which can be identified with that of Jewish culture.

Further, if the mentioning of the biblical names in the Old Testament is really true in their old chants, with slight variation in pronunciation, such as Apram (Abraham), Laksak (Isaac), Lakkawp (Jacob) and Mount Sinai or the entering of Sion (Zion), or the practice of mock-circumcision, it suggest that they might have been the inheritors of such legacy. Very few people seemed to have knowledge of the old chants. It is to be noted here that with the coming of Christianity through missionaries who preached only about Jesus, in the last part of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the old religion had almost all disappeared. Since, Mizoram had been the adjuncts of British administration that placed the educational system in their hands, the resistance of the Mizo priests and chiefs to Christianity was not effective. Christianity became powerful among the Mizos, which later became an irresistible force. In this connection Halkin writes, “yet deep in their hearts the Mizos knew that Christianity had killed something very vital. Had they read the Hebrew Bible, they might have recognized what this was. The missionaries did recognize it.

\textsuperscript{88} Tlangmai thawi is a public sacrifice. The blood of the goat so sacrificed is sprinkled on the altar and painted the corner post red with its blood. Traditionally, it has to be performed by killing an animal large enough to feed a village. The victim was maimed by an athan or killed with a spear by a Sadawt (Mizo term for Public Priest), and the sacred pieces of the ears and legs were burned together with the altar.

\textsuperscript{89} The Kelkal sacrifice is nothing but a family thanks giving offering by killing a goat. The blood of the dead goat is painted on the doorstep with the green branch and tied it to the outside of the door to stop the strangers from coming in. After slitting the goat’s belly, the heart and liver is removed and wrapped in a leaf and then it was laid on a shelf above meant for Pathian. The sacrifice has to be performed after sunset, and its meat was to be consumed without any left over before dawn making sure that they break none of its bones (Halkin, op. cit. p. 214-215).

A Hindu practise also is similar where in the left over is buried within the premises of the householder depending upon the availability of the animals or birds. But the custom remained more or less the same everywhere. The idea was to pacify the god/goddesses.

Similarly, among the Thadou-Kukis during the occasion of family worship or offering called Huan, a white rooster is sacrificed by all the households and though the flesh eaten off, the bones are preserved without breaking it and was laid on the magic basket ‘Dobom’. (See also Lethkhojam Haokip, M.A. op. cit. p. 20).
for they avoided teaching the Old Testament and delayed translating it for decades. It was a deliberate move to suppress and organize things which benefitted them.

With regard to the old pre-Christian culture of the Kukis in Manipur and other neighbouring parts of the state, its survival and continuity suffered a serious setback, which eventually, lead to perpetual disappearance although the Hindu Meiteis in the valley were capable of holding its embraced Hindu religion of a great civilized nation, against the colonial faith. It is to be noted here that despite the acceptance of Christianity for material and cultural advancement in the beginning by the Kukis, the old socio-cultural practices was so deep rooted in the social system that its practices were still retained within the memory of the few elders in the form of oral tradition.

E. **The Milui theory:** There are three types of references according to the Milui theory indicating the Jewish connection. These are:

i) *Themthu* (The old priestly chants), *

ii) *Lapi* (The traditional folk song),

iii) *Gollui Thusim* (The traditional folk tales)  

Firstly the old priestly chants serves as an important oral source for the study of the ancient past. Normally, the knowledge of the priestly chants were confined to the priests alone, unless someone either from the family of the priest or any other person of the village who took keen interest and dreamed of becoming a priest memorized the chants. As such everybody does not knows, and the knowledge of the *Themthu* is limited to the priest and those interested few that too under exceptional circumstances. Some of the old priestly chant of the ancient past is given as follows:

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90. Halkin, op. cit. p. 194
91. Information about the Manmusi tradition indicating the Jewish connection was collected during a thorough and exhaustive discussion with the Khuplams and also with reference to his field notes at his residence on 17th September 2005.

*‘Themthu’ is similar to the word ‘Themth a of the Meitei Lan which also means the sacred songs or poems of the sacred kinds in early societies. These similarities need to be understood for the benefit of common social origin theory.
Hei, rhei, yah, Hei, rhei, yah, Hei rhei yah!

Pusha, Pasha momna, Leisanpa, Tuitobin in,

Tuirim phat Sel in notan,

Tuinah, hangman chemkale

Nelpi chimlemiit laaja Pho sel kasune,

To mung teng sakol keipan, Elo katim, chungnun teng'a

Valhou mupan, elo kathonim

Valhou mupan, tai valtah, Manmasi chate kahtuwe, Selah! 92

Free English translation:-

The flesh of my forefather, the flesh of my father
where there was the beginning of the red-earth man,
Then the water plugged,
I cross the dark water well!
In victory, my sword held up, and shows the greatness of my triumph,
My enemies fall like mud slides, I spear the Mithun,
I'm strong as a horse to call elo, I call elo ever after,
I'll be free as flying bird over the mountains,
And overcome all obstacles
Honor is mine, for we are the children of Manmasi! Selah!

Another Themithu recorded by Dr. Khuplam from the same informant which had been
recited traditionally during the course of their migration from one place to another as: 

He, He, He, eye, eye, yah

92. This Themithu was entered in diary, on December 29th 1972, along with the notation Seizanch Lhunghum of Namzong, the record being preserved by Dr. Khuplam.

The word 'Selah' (meaning again and again) is found all over the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament.
Chunga Pathen nouija Pathen kahin lhai ji,
Leisanpa a hung koun chun,
Tuito bin mun a hung chun,
Khol kip – kholjang muna hung chun,
Tuisogiet munna hung chun,
Tuipi san dingpi nouija hung chun,
Tuipi san dingpi nouija jan sagi le sunsagi a hung koun doh le chun,
Chungkhopi muna hung chun,
Jen sagi Thimpi jin khumle chun,
Khojing puimuna hung chun, chungkhopi muna hung chun,
Kabul muna hung chun, taihe muna hung chun,
K hotan noui ning boulia hung chun, Mongbun muna hung chun,
Kongjam muna hung chun, Tuihavan muna hung chun,
Khojepai munna hung chun, Soma kai Lhang Dingpi nouija
hung chun, Thimphut muna hung chun, Tongbun muna
hung chun, Thingkangphai munna hung chun,
Tuitti joulmuna hung chun, Chindung Dingpi lhang neilhun,
Sah un, Simalam mano-in, mallam mano-in,
Pu houvin eihin juijin Pah ouvin, eihin juijin,
Pusha-Pasha dingleh, mitphai, haphat na dingin eihin juihen,
Changha mim lhan eihin juihen,
Nao lhan eihin jui jingu hen,
Mannasi chate dingin. Aborizah
Free translation:

He, He, he, eye, eye, eye, yah!

God of the above, God of the below, we adore you.

As coming from the Leisan pa upon Tuitobin,

Upon khokip-kholzang. Upon Tuisogiet,

Coming under the great Red sea, Coming under the great Red Sea,

For seven days and nights,

And upon the darkness of Leiduppi-Leithaopi,

For seven days and seven nights

And upon Chungkhopi, and upon Kabul, and upon Taibe,

And upon Khotan, and upon Mongalawi, and upon Kongjam,

Upon Tuithavar, and upon Khojepui, and upon Somakai Range

And upon Thimphut, and upon Tongbung, and upon Thingkangphai,

And if you come out of Tuiting-jiol,

You’ll come upon Chindung-ingpi,

Onward to the south, onward to the north!

May the good of our eyes and the good of our teeth follow us!

May the spirit of bountiful crops follow us,

May faithfulness follow us!

For the children of Manmisi, Aborizah.93

The above lines of the priestly chants are supposed to be the combination of the legendary creation of earth and the man – LEISANPA, and the origin and migration of the children of

93. The above Thenthlu (priestly chants) was copied down by me after a brief explanation by Dr. Khuplum dated 17/09/03 on Wednesday at his residence at Old Lambulane, Imphal.
Manmasi. It is to be noted here that so far most of the writers\(^94\) on Kukis who tried to trace their origin never went beyond Khul.

Secondly, in one of the traditional folk song (LAPI) connected with the biblical Red Sea during the migration of legendary progenitor Vanthang and his people, according to Khuplam\(^95\), is given as follow:

\[
\begin{align*}
Kuipi Mangpa chonlaijin \\
Thim tuipi sanpa hung kan'e, \\
Sunleh meilom mah, \\
Janleh meikoungin pui-e, \\
Sunsot jankho-a, \\
Mella mah, Valhume \\
Gampul sabang tuipi-in, \\
Mim vagoul te mano, don ding Lhangtheng song, \\
Chunga hung long doh, \\
I khai-e, Selah!
\end{align*}
\]

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\(^{94}\) Writers like William Shaw in his "Notes on the Thadou Kukis" (pp 24-26) have traced their origin upto the limit of the legendary KHUL, believed to be somewhere in China. Similarly, the Anus also believed that they came out of the mythical cave called "Khol" or "Khul" in their legends -- the 'Anus of Manipur' by Capt. Rajendra Singh 1951 Delhi (p4). Besides, recent writers on Kukis and the subject in question such as K. KIPGEN's "The Thadou Kukis", 1982, T.S. Gangte's "The Kukis of Manipur" 1993; H. Doungel's "Sociological study of the Customary laws of the Kukis", an unpublished Thesis, 1992; N.Hangshing's "Khul Kon Ho Thusini" (History of the Caves or Khulhuns), L.N. Khongkai's "The Kukis-Anthropological studies ...", 1994 (T.C. Das, The Purums - An old Kuki Tribes of Manipur 1945 Calcutta etc) in which studies have revealed that nothing is known beyond Khul, in as far as the origin is concerned.

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\(^{95}\) The above folk song is also called "Tuipi sankan Lapi", which means folk song about crossing the Red Sea and thereafter. About VANTHANG, literally, 'Van' means heaven above and 'Thang' means fame. Thus, VANTHANG means a very popular and fame man from heaven above. According to Mannashe tradition of Khuplam, Vanthang came from heaven above and married Lhangnei, the daughter of Tuisogiet and gave birth to a son named Mannashe. In this connection if Mannashe is identified with Vanthang as Joseph, it has only a partial resemblance. The Joseph of Genesis did not descend from heaven just as Yahweh (God) did not create three Adams. The information is collected from Dr. Khuplam about the oral text supposedly linking with the Mannashe tradition with that of the biblical ones found in Exodus of the Holy Bible. Khuplam's migratory route map is given in Appendix-XI.
English translation:

During the celebration of the great festival,
The great red water dried up,
We were led by clouds by day,
Columns of fire by night,
Behind my enemies pursued day and night,
Swallowed up by the great sea like a plague,
The birds moving onward!
Out of the rock, upon the holy mountain,
That came out flowing water,
We fetched, Selah!

And lastly in one of the lengthy traditional folk tales of Changkhapu* in the Khuplam’s version, the word “Aborizah” is being pronounced by the protagonist – Changkhapu several times before the ending of the episode. In contrast, the word “Aborizah” or anything of that sort neither appeared nor found anywhere in Paokhohang Haokip’s version of the same story. After all, the story of the Changkhapu is a very popular folktale among the Kukis. All the folk song’s, folk tales, and Themthus (magical chants) also appeared to be biblical narratives reworked by native storytellers.

In analyzing the Milui theory of the old priestly chants (Themthu), the traditional folk songs (LAPI) and the traditional folk tales (GOUILLUI THUSIM), the utterance of the biblical Hebrew words was clearly evident. Words like ‘Za’ or ‘Zah’ might have been possibly derived from Hebrew words “Yah weh”, “Elo” which comes from the Hebrew words “Elohim”, and ‘Aboriyah’ which

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* Changkhapu: In breaking up the name into three parts ‘Chang’ literally means alone, whereas ‘khat’ means ‘one’ and ‘Pu’ is a masculine ending, which means ‘The lone-man’. He was a poor orphan according to the legend. In spite of that, in terms of personality and character he was strong, courageous and handsome, who ventured out, for which fortune favoured him.

possibly derived from Hebrew word “Haborey Yah” were found. The word “Selah” which is found all over in the Book of Psalms is also found in the Themthus. But in the absence of historically authentic documents its certainty is doubtful as the words could have been either possibly planted in the Themthus, Lapi’s and in the GOULLUI THUSIM or the documents could also have been skillfully fabricated in order to make favourable impression. It is also possible that the anti-Christian die hard of the old religion could insert the biblical names in the old chants.

The Jewish connection of the Milui theory with regard to their origin as has been supported by a few Kuki groups is also based on the comparative study of the history of the Jew’s and their socio-cultural life as recorded in the Holy Bible with that of the oral culture of the Kuki-Chin-Mizo people prior to their adoption of Christianity. The evidence to indicate them as part of the descendents or one of the lost tribe of Israel lies in a number of similarities found in their socio-cultural practices. In the LAPI of the Red Sea song mentioning of the big or great red water, holy mountain, the people led by clouds by day and columns of fire by night, similar to that of Mizos and the Hmar’s Sikpui festival ‘Red Sea song’ is all about indications of the history of ancient laws after their liberation from the Egyptian bondage. Similarly, the Mannasi tradition of retaining their own god name ‘Ya’, the practice of circumcision, the frequent use or repetition of seven times concerning the number, the Mizos ‘Kelkal’ sacrifice, the Thadou-Kukis “HUN” (white rooster sacrifice) etc. are evidently a part of their socio-cultural practices. Besides, dim recollection of the memories of land or memories of coming from a land else where, crossing of the Red

97. Out of curiosity, I went on to look deeper or cross-examined the words like ‘Elo’, ‘Selah’ and “Aboriyah”. However, to my great disappointment I haven’t come across these words so far in any of the Themthus or the priestly magical chants of D. Lekhohan’s, “THEMPU HO THU” (Magical chants of the Priests), Published in 2000 P D. Besides, Paokhoang Haokip folk tale’s “THUSIM THUM” published in 1998 and his ‘Khangaui-Khaglhui LAKAWI LA’, (Folk songs of the old and new generation) which never mention the words ‘elo’, ‘Selah’ and even ‘Aboriyah’ in his version of the ‘Changkhapat’ story. Further, I consulted several elders aged about 70-80 years about the words but unfortunately, none of them knew the meanings nor familiar with the words except from the Bible.
Sea in which the chasing enemies drowned, and similar biblical features like Pu Vangthang's story\(^{98}\) told to Dr. Khuplam surprisingly bore the imprints of the ancient biblical Israelites which cannot simply be co-incidental. It therefore, appears that there are certain elements of similarity. And at the same time it is also found that there are great differences in their socio-cultural and religio-political life.\(^{99}\)

To recapitulate the theory, such priestly traditions, folklores and folksongs where it contains elements of biblical features are indication of being having a Jewish background. This suggests that the Chin-Kuki-Mizo people are also one of the inheritors of such a rich legacy or they must have been one of the recipients of the Jewish culture. In this regard, Halkin contended that only the so-called Miluis or the 'old people' consisting of Lenthangs, Changsams and Lunkims were the original children of Manmasi who were believed to have inhabited the hills of Southern Manipur before the Kukis arrived in the fifteenth century.\(^{100}\) Speculations were made by Halkin that the Miluis were not Kukis but were integrating into the Kuki society after their contact with them and were adopting the Kuki ways of life and religion which eventually led to their local tradition too, and got absorbed into the Kuki Society.\(^{101}\) This conjecture was based on the legends in which Lenthangs and Lunkims who survived the Thimzin (Great darkness of seven days and seven nights) by burning of the skulls and bones of the game they had killed, were already living on the Earth when Chongthu or Chongza party came out of Khul.\(^{102}\)

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98. The story of Pu Vanthang was clearly the same as the story of Joseph in the Bible found in Genesis, in which Joseph - a native of Canaan ably interpreted the dream of the Egyptian Pharaoh as a result of which Joseph soon found himself at the top of Pharaoh's Government. Like wise Pu Vanthang of Leiduppi-Leithaopi had a humble beginning. On one occasion he was summoned by the Chief of Tuisogiet to interpret the dreams he had. Pu Vanthang not only interpreted his dreams accordingly but also gave advice for which he (Pu Vanthang) was appointed to look after the storage of rice to meet the outbreak of natural calamities like famine and hunger which eventually did happen. It is to be noted that the Milui theory of Pu Vanthang story told to Dr. Khuplam had many parallels with the Bible. It is, in this regard, conceivable that the Biblical story of Joseph could have become a Kuki folklore, whereby Leiduppi-Leithaopi could be the land of Canaan and Tuisogiet could be equated with Egypt. Pu Vanthang could be identified with Joseph and the Chief as an analogous to the Pharaoh of Egypt. (Tuisogiet - the land of eight rivers, needs further investigation.)

99. H. Doungel, op. cit. p. 34
100. H. Halkin, pp. 319-322
101. Ibid.
102. Shaw, pp. 24 -26
To conclude, while the myths and legends cannot reveal the true historical facts, one cannot wholly depend upon it as a complete and authentic source of information. Thus, in spite of advancing myths and legends by Halkin that the Miluis were only the original children of Mannasi or Mannasites identified with Manasseh, there is nothing definite to establish that they were different people with different origin. If the Miluis of the Mannasi tradition indeed be the children of Manasseh, one of the lost tribes of biblical Jews as stated by Halkin, then the non-Milui Chin-Kuki-Mizos who came out of Khul or Chinmlung might also be indeed other lost tribes of Manasseh of the same biblical Jews. It is because the legends suggested that they were the same people right from the days of Khul or Chinmlung as noted earlier. If the Jewish connection theory is considered hypothetical, subjective and conjectural, then more research is required with the involvement of biblical scholars, historians, ethnographers, anthropologists and the linguists to make the claim more of an established fact than it is now and again worldwide acceptance.

4. HISTORICAL COURSE OF MIGRATION

With regard to the general population movement of the Tibeto-Burmans (Mongoloid) people various writers speculated Central China to be the place from where the initial migration begins. In the general population movement of the Tibeto-Burman races who now inhabit the South-East Asian countries, the Kuki-Chins were part of it. A local Hmar historian Hranglien Songate observed that the Mizo or the Kuki-Chin originally came from Central China, following the mass migration during the pre-Christian and early Christian era. It is clear that the Kuki-Chin belonged to Tibeto-Burmans of the Mongoloid stock and the fact that they came from the East is not disputed. However, legends and folklores associated with reference to their

103. H. Halkin: op. cit. p. 347
migration other than Dr. Khuplam local tradition are few. As such it is also not possible to give a definite date with regard to their migration.

It is generally accepted that the Mongoloid races who now occupy the South-East Asia and also the North East India of which the Tibeto-Burmans are a branch had their original home in North Western China lying between the upper courses of the Yang-Tse and Huang-ho,\textsuperscript{105} rivers of China. The view is based on traditional, philological and anthropological studies. According to Enriquez,\textsuperscript{106} these people have migrated in three waves as given below:

1) The Mon-Kmer (Talaing, Palung, En Riang, ma, Pale, Khais and Annime) which also includes Khasis;

2) The Tibeto-Burman which comprises of Pyu-Burmese-Kachin, Kuki-Chin and Lolo;

3) The Tai-Chinese, which includes Shan, Siamese and Karen.

Basing on the study made by a team of linguists about the philological spread of the Tibeto-Burman people, Grierson made the following comment on the general population movement of the people to the southward direction from China as:

"Further India and Assam have been populated by successive waves of Tibet-Chinese invaders, each advancing in turn down the courses of one or more of the principal streams, the Brahmaputra, the Chindwin, the Irrawadi, the Salween, the Menam and the Mekong and driving its predecessors nearer to the sea-coasts, or into the mountain fastnesses which overlook the valley."\textsuperscript{107}

The migration of the Kuki-Chin people to the present habitat has been a realm of speculation for the anthropologists and the historians. In the opinionaire of the mass thin antiquity.

\textsuperscript{105} G.A. Grierson, Linguistic Survey of IndiaVol. Part I, reprinted, 1967; Motila, Banarssidas, Delhi


\textsuperscript{107} G.A. Grierson, Ibid.
original home from where the migration starts, and their historicity of their civilization has been established by their contact with the Chinese, Shan and Burman civilization. It is the established fact that migration or movement of the general population has taken in different waves in an extended period of time which overlapped each other. It is believed that the Tibeto-Burman group speaking the Kuki-Chin languages, comprising the Naga group, Proto-Meitei and the Kuki-Chin group, migrated into Manipur from the Kabaw valley of Upper Burma, either along the course of the Manipur river and or across the Tengnoupal Hills.\footnote{108} covering several centuries in different waves. In analyzing the historicity of the migration of the Tibeto-Burman group, and on the basis of historical linguistic and racial affinity, the people of Manipur and some of its neighbouring states have moved about within the general region of South West China and South East Asia over considerable distances for many centuries, until the recent past. Thus, the close-relationship of the several Tibeto-Burman groups can be established.

It is believed that the Kuki-Chin people pass through the Himalayan Mountains in the southward movement from China as evidenced from an old ballad preserved by the Hmars.\footnote{109} And that on reaching Tibet from China during the movement of the population of the Tibeto-Burman groups they had a split and sub-divided into several groups. But they continue to move-on despite following different routes until they reached Burma in three waves.\footnote{110} The Kuki-Chin historians and other local scholars are also convinced that among the Tibeto-Burman, the Kuki-Chin in particular, made further advance and the groups tracked into Burma through Hukwang valley, along the Chindwin basin and Kabaw valley.\footnote{111} They are further believed to have migrated along

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\footnote{108}{G. Kabui: Genesis of the Ethnosis of Nagas and Kuki-Chin Published by Naga Students Federation, p. 25}
\footnote{110}{T.S. Gangte: \textit{The Kukis of Manipur: A History Analysis}, New Delhi 1993 p. 18 (Cited hereafter as T.S. Gangte, \textit{The Kukis})}
\footnote{111}{G.H. Luce, Old Kyaung Kse and the Coming of the Burnaus, \textit{Journal of Burma Research Society} quoted by Lalthangliana XIII, June 1959 p. 89}
the Chindwin basin and Irrawady rivers till they reached the shores of as far as Bay of Bengal. Thereafter, the Kuki-Chin are believed to have turned back to the North and scattered throughout the length and breadth of the North Eastern states of the Indian territories. They also migrated to the Shan country.\textsuperscript{112} Thus they are scattered on both sides of the territories of the existing Indo-Burma boundary lines. Due to paucity of evidence about their past historicity there is no unanimity among the local writers and historians as to the date of the migration of the forebears of the Kuki-Chins down to Burma. While F.K. Lehman and G.H. Luce estimated it to be during the first few centuries A.D.,\textsuperscript{113} a local historian K. Zawla’s accounted it to be only in the beginning of 950 A.D.\textsuperscript{114} According to Luce the most probable date was the middle of the 8\textsuperscript{th} century while allowing the possibility of the period between the fourth and eighth century A.D. B. Lalthangliana has also agreed for the eight century A.D. as the possible date for their arrival to the Chindwin valley.\textsuperscript{115} By going even beyond Luce, Lehman assigns the date very close to the beginning of the Christian era.\textsuperscript{116} Moreover, Mangkhosat Kipgen regards the earlier date as the most likely because of the wide distribution of the Zo family and the extent of variant cultural traits which must have taken centuries of separation.\textsuperscript{117} It was hereafter that the Kuki-Chin people came into contact with the Burmese in the Kabaw valley and a comparatively developed society was built up\textsuperscript{118}.

A. Khampat settlement in Burma: As noted earlier, the Tibeto-Burman group of which particularly the Kuki-Chin people entered into Burma sometime in the early centuries of the Christian era. During the historical course of their migration, some of the groups are believed to have separated from the main group. The core group moved down to the Chindwin valley. While some section which

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{112} H. Doungel, \textit{op. cit} p. 35
  \item \textsuperscript{113} The structure of Chin Society: A tribal people of Burma Adapted to a Non-Western Civilisation 1966, reprinted Aizawl : Tribal Research Institute 1980. p. 13
  \item \textsuperscript{114} \textit{op. cit} p. 7
  \item \textsuperscript{115} B. Lalthangliana, \textit{History of Mizo in Burma}, Aizawl: ZawlBuk Agencies, 1977 p. 71
  \item \textsuperscript{116} F.K. Lehman, \textit{op. cit} p. 13
  \item \textsuperscript{117} \textit{op. cit} p. 37
  \item \textsuperscript{118} G. Kabui, \textit{op. cit} p. 29
\end{itemize}
entered Manipur consists of Anal, Lamkang, Purum, Maring, Chiru, Kom, Aimol. Chothe, Tarao etc. known by the Meitei as the Khongjais. There is another section or group such as the Biates, Halams etc., who proceeded further into Cachar and Tripura. The core group which migrated down to the South of Chindwin river further broke into several groups some of whom entered into the Chin state whereas other scattered as far as Chittagong Hill Tracts and some others in the plains of Sandoway district who later on became very much Burmanised in religion, language and culture. The core group that moved eastward reached Mandalay and togetherly settled side by side with the Burmese. From Mandalay they moved out again and settled at Khampat in the Kabaw Valley for centuries together as the ethnic tribe claimed. Khampat is believed to be a large town, the peaceful settlement at this place is regarded as one of the most glorious chapter in the course of their historical migration. It is always remembered by the people especially the Lushai-Mizo group. It was in this place that all the major clans, who now inhabit the Chin state of Burma, Mizoram, Manipur, Cachar and Tripura are believed to have lived together under a great chief sharing the same culture and language.

According to tradition, the Burmese Prince was said to have married the daughter of their chief for which he gave a golden rosary called Khampat (the town was named after it). They made their permanent settlement at this town which was well built with a definite plan, surrounded by strong walls, and also protected by Canal from four sides ensuring security from the point of external aggression. It was believed that the

119. M. Kipgen, op. cit. p. 38
120. “The Racial Map of India” as shown in the Census of India 1931 Vol.XI Burma Part-I which shows Kala-Chin population in these area including Mandalay (4,507) as 163,368 persons, little less than the population of Chin Hills and Upper Chindwin together with 177,832 persons.
121. Quoted from L. Z. Sailo’s “An Early Account of Mizo” in Manipur – Past and Present Vol. 3 by N. Sanajaoba. p. 213 Hereafter cited as Sailo’s N. Sanajaoba
122. M. Kipgen, op. cit. p. 39
123. Ibid
124. Sailo’s N. Sanajaoba’s Manipur. p. 213
settlement lasted for about two hundred years. In the opinion of K. Zawla, the cruelty of the new chief coupled with a great famine that claimed many lives forced the people to leave Khampat in or around 1170 A.D. In this connection however, Lalthanngiama gives different opinion that the departure from Khampat was due to the invasion caused by a stronger enemy which most probably would have been none other than the Shans. This might be possibly true as the historical evidence have shown that the Shans had already established in the Chindwin valley during the eight century and even had “exacted obedience from Assam, Cachar, Tipperah and the Shan chief in Kabaw valley were its tributaries”, in addition to Manipur. It is an established fact that the forebearers of the Kuki-Chin ethnic families once lived in the Chindwin valley which was then part of the Shan kingdom of Pong. According to Brown, an aggrieved chief of Khampat (Khumbat) was attacked by a combined force from the king of Pong and Manipur, which destroyed his fortification and forced him to flee. Thus, analyzing from above after establishing a fairly long settlement in the plains of Kabaw valley, the outbreak of famine would not have been the only reason strong enough leading to forced migration into the Chin hills en masse. Besides, there is no record of the involvement of Shans in the expulsion of Kuki-Chin ethnic families.

B. Entry into the Chin Hills: The territory of the Chin Hills is one of the most stronghold where many ethnic families settled for centuries together. After leaving their settlement at Khampat in Burma, some groups of the Kuki-Chin ethnic families made their inroads into the hills of Manipur through Chin Hills. The majority group moved to the direction of Southwest which later came to be known as Chin Hills. They established their settlement at Tiddim. Falam.

125. K. Zawla, op. cit.
126. B. Lalthanngiama, op. cit p. 88
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
Haka and some other places. Some of the groups further moved down to Zoting, Matupi and the Mara areas up to the extent of extreme South of the Lushai hills. And still parts of the ethnic families consisting of the Pautus, the Hualngos, the Khawlhrings, the Darlongs, the Hmarns, the Thadous, the Gangtes and allied clans moved westward and made their settlement which later came to be known as Lushai hills.\textsuperscript{130} It is believed that many groups of ethnic Kuki-Chin families left the Thlan Tlang (Than Hill) and settled themselves at the Len Tlang (Len Hill) range in or around 1466 A.D.\textsuperscript{131} before making penetration into the Lushai Hills. This group consisted of the Luseis or Lushais, the Kawlni (Ralte), the Chawgthus, the Khiangtes, the Hauhnar, the Chuango, the Chauhang, the Ngente, Parte and Punte,\textsuperscript{132} living in a clan-wise village settlement.

**C. Lushai Hill settlement:** After many years of settlement at the various places of Chin Hills, the constant warfare among themselves forced the Lushais and its cognate clan to migrate further to the west across the Tiau river to the Lushai hills (present Mizoram) sometime between 1700 and 1730 A.D.\textsuperscript{133} This migration was believed to be the outcome of the onslaught of the Pawi's which comprised the ethnic families of Falam, Hakas and Suktes. With this point in view it can be deduced that the fear of the numerous Pawis who were stronger and better organized on the one hand the need for better jhum land for cultivation on the other, compelled further migrations. Thus, the above circumstances necessitated the Sailo Chief to combine several villages into one, which led to the formation of the first township called Selesi in about 1740 A.D.\textsuperscript{134} in order to withstand the menace of the Pawis.

It is to be noted here that surprisingly enough, the same ethnic families were engaged in fighting among themselves for contest of supremacy of their own clans or tribes. There is

\textsuperscript{130} M. Kippen, op. cit p. 41
\textsuperscript{131} K. Zawla: op.cit. p. 12
\textsuperscript{132} N. Sarujampa's Manipur p. 214
\textsuperscript{133} V.I. Siama : Mizo History (in Lushei) 1953 5th ed. 1967 p. 17 AIZAWL
\textsuperscript{134} M. Kippen, op. cit p. 44
evidence of constant inter and intra-clan feuds. It is believed that as each clan and tribe were 
living separately to others a feeling of close kinship was also no longer strong. As a result 
strained relationship developed and hence, a feeling of jealousy and selfishness. They lost their 
common identity and nationalistic character. They began to think in terms of clans and lineage-
segments often leading to a tendency of narrow-outlook which was detrimental to their unity. 
This sort of unhealthy relationship perpetuated the inter and intra-clan feuds. The resultant 
outcome was that the weaker sections or groups often abandoned their earlier place of settlement 
for fear of the stronger ones in search of some places elsewhere. Mangkhosat Kipgen observes 
that the expulsion of the Zo (Kuki-Chin) people from the plains of Burma, was the greatest 
turning point in the history of the tribe as it represented a set-back from a civilized to a primitive 
life.135 Thus, their scattered settlement in the midst of difficult terrain, the high mountains and 
the deep gorge which separate them and the poor communication and a threat are believed to be 
the greatest obstacles to forming an organic unity. The impact had permanent influence on the 
socio, political and economic life of the people.

D. Expulsion of earlier inhabitant of Mizoram (Lushai Hills): The arrival of Lushais and its 
associated clans to Lushai hills posed a threat to the earlier inhabitants such as the Thadous and 
Hmars. R. Pudaite claimed that of all the tribes the Hmars were the first to enter Mizoram and 
settle at Champhai136 and surrounding hills. In the north of Lushai hills, the Thadous established 
themselves after dislodging the earlier inhabitants, such as Halams, Hrangkhawls etc. and forcing 
them to migrate to Cachar, Tripura and Sylhet where they came to be called the Kukis137 owing 
to the repeated inter-tribal warfare especially between the Poi’s (Pawis) and the Lushais, the 
Hmars who were considered to be one of the earliest settlers were also drivenout of Champhai

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135. M. Kipgen, op. cit p. 42
136. R. Pudaite, op. cit. p. 32
137. Shakespear, Lushai-Kuki, op. cit. p. 6
and they were finally forced to migrate into Manipur, Cachar, North Cachar Hills, Assam\textsuperscript{138} and Meghalaya probably in or around 1780 A.D.

William Shaw also records that the Pois (Pawis) and Thadous were often at dagger’s drawn. Their enmity entailed destruction of several Thadou villages such as Sailhem, Songbem, Songlhu, Lasan etc. Nevertheless, the Thadou refused to submit to the Pois and therefore started moving northwards again.\textsuperscript{139} After subjugating the recalcitrant associated clans and consolidating their position the Lushais under the leadership of their Sailo Chief whom they considered to be the most powerful of all the chiefs had prepared to take on the Thadous who Shakespear describes as being “as highly organized as themselves”.\textsuperscript{140} In the ensuing contest for supremacy, the aggressive Lushais under the leadership of their Chief Lallula got the upper hand, as a result of which the Thados (Thadous) and Jansens were driven out of the northern Lushai Hills into the Cachar district. It took place somewhere between 1840 and 1850.\textsuperscript{141} But according to Grierson, the Lushai Chief Lallula drove the Thadous from Lushai Hills about in 1810.\textsuperscript{142} Shakespear also writes that the expulsion of the Thadous into the plains of Cachar or the Southern hills of Manipur took place in about 1848 A.D.\textsuperscript{143}

Further, E.W. Dun also records that “the Kuki race is at present moving northwards. The progress can be easily traced within the memory of man and they even moved across the valley of Cachar and Manipur and occupied the lower slopes on either side of the Barrail range. The people on the spot have thus been led to classify them as old arrivals and new arrivals.\textsuperscript{144} It could be mentioned here that inspite of suffering defeat at the hands of the Lushai still some

\textsuperscript{138} Lal Dena, The Hmars Through the Ages in N. Samajaba’s Manipur (Ed) p. 264
\textsuperscript{139} Shaw, op. cit. p. 45
\textsuperscript{140} Shakespear, Lushai-Kuki, p. 6 and c.f. Liangkhaia p. 63 who wrote Mizo Chanchin 1978 4th ed Alizawl.
\textsuperscript{141} A.W. Davis, Gazetteer of the North-Lushai Hills, 1815, Reprint 1987, Delhi p. 3
\textsuperscript{142} G.A. Grierson, Linguistic Survey of India Vol-III part - III, Delhi 1904, p. 49
\textsuperscript{143} Shakespear, Lushai-Kuki, p. 6 (Based on the time of arrival the Thadous and its cognate clans were categorized as ‘New Kuki’ to differentiate from the earlier emigrants who were called ‘Old Kukis’
\textsuperscript{144} E.W. Dun, Abridged Gazetteer of Manipur, Simla 1891 p. 20.
section of the Thadous as well as about half of the Hmars who accepted the suzerainty of the Lushai or Sailo Chief stayed back in the then Lushai Hills as is evidenced from the diverse ethnic families living together in the present Mizoram. As per the 1961 Census of India, there are eighteen clans viz, i) Lusei/Lushai ii) Ralte iii) Khawlhring iv) Khiangte v) Renthlei, vi) Chawngthu vii) Paihte or Vuite viii) Pawi or Pawite ix) Hmar x) Lakher (Mara) xi) Thado or Thadou xii) Chawngte xiii) Ngente xiv) Tlau xv) Pautu xvi) Rawite xvii) Zawngte & xviii) Vangchhia. They are the same ethnic families who are closely related linguistically and culturally, speaking the dominant Lushai language and identify themselves under the nomenclature Mizo.

With regard to the historical course of migration particularly the Thadou-Kukis of Manipur after their expulsion from the Lushai Hills, they took to three routes (See Map-1). The first group consisting of Sithous, Singsons, Changsans, Lhanguum and others moved up in the north Cachar hills. The second group consisting of "Sangnao and Khaochangbung Chiefs of the Sithous and their adherents moved up along the hills between the Barak river and the valley of Manipur. The third group which was mainly composed of Haokip clan under the leadership of the Chahsat (Chassad) Chief moved up along the hills on the East of the valley of Manipur and so came in due course of time to this present village. In the opinion of Shakespear their entry into the hills of Manipur took place in or about the middle of the 18th century. Further, Johnstone also writes that about the year 1845, the new immigrants soon poured into the hill tracts of Manipur in such a manner as to drive many of the older inhabitants.

Thus, the Thadou-Kukis and its cognate clans moved on to the North Eastern region of

146. Shaw, op. cit. p. 45
147. Ibid.
148. Shaw: p. 46
149. Shakespear, Lushai- Kuki, op. cit. p.188
150. J. Johnstone, Manipur and Naga Hills (Delhi) Reprint 1971 p. 25
MAP - I

MIGRATORY ROUTES OF THE 'THADOU-KUKIS'

Map not to scale
India including Manipur where they finally settled. In spite of the large scale migration right from the plains of Burma there is however, a great number of the same ethnic families still living in Burma and Bangladesh which shows of their scattered settlement.

5. PLACES OF SETTLEMENT

As noted earlier, among the numerous Kuki-Chin ethnic families, the Thadou-Kukis have been forced to vacate their hearth and home several times by a more powerful and superior tribesmen belonging to the same ethnic group. During the historical course of their migration, they were hard pressed by mountainous and high terrain of the jungles in the midst of wild animals. They used to lead nomadic life which was no better than what was portrayed in the Social Contract Theory of Thomas Hobbe's State of Nature as to the origin of state, "Kill whom you can, Take what you can" concept of life which was the usual prevailing norm, where life was no less than "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish."151 the one element which constitute the nature of the life of the Thadou-Kukis in particular and the Kuki-Chins in general during those days was to be constantly engaged in restless pursuit as a means for survival or of continued existence. In this connection, referring to the Thadou-Kukis Johnstone noted that,

"Recently they were driven north by the kinder but more powerful tribes and their first object was to secure land for cultivation."152

Consequently, their settlement is found scattered now in most of the north-eastern state of India, parts of Burma and Bangladesh i.e. the three contiguous independent countries which became the land of their permanent home. The largest chunk of its population is heavily concentrated in the surrounding hills of Manipur. To ascertain where the Kukis are

152. My Experience in Manipur and Naga Hills, London 1870 p.26
settled, Captain Pemberton, Joint Commissioner, in Manipur in his report on the Eastern Fronteirs
of British India wrote:

"The Khongjuees (Khongsais) who under the more generally known names of
Kookies (Kukis), Koochungs and Kuci stretch from the southern borders of
Muneepoor (Manipur) valley to the Northern limit of the Province of Arracan
that the Kookies have been gradually advancing for years in a northern direction
and have hitherto established themselves on the rages which were originally
occupied by more northernly tribes committed such fearful aggression upon the
latter, as to compel them to retire and leave an unoccupied tract between themselves
and these formidable opponents."\textsuperscript{153}

In this connection E.T. Dalton in the Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal also observed
that:

"The Kukis are now found as neighbours of the Nagas in Assam and in contiquity
with the Mugs of Arracan. The Hill country occupied by them extends from the
valley of the Koladyne, where they touch on the Khumis, to Northern Kachar and
Manipur, a distance of about 300 miles".\textsuperscript{154}

Similarly, William Shaw also writes about the places of their settlement in Manipur as:

"The Kukis lived in a large area of hilly country bounded by the Angami Naga of
the Naga Hills District in the North, the Province of Burma in the East, the Chin
Hills and Lushai Hills in the South and the District of Cachar in the West. Mainly,
it may be said they occupy the hills of the state of Manipur on all sides of the
Imphal valley."\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{154} Tribal History of Eastern India, Cosmo Publications, Delhi, 1973 (Reprint) p. 44
\textsuperscript{155} Shaw: op.cit. p. 11
With regard to the general population movement and their final settlement, Carey and Tuck also observed that the drift of migration has changed and towards the North, The Nwite (Gwite), Vaipe (Vaiphei) and Yo (Zou) Chins, who within the memory of man resided in the Northern Chin Hills have now almost entirely recrossed the northern border, either into the hills belonging to Manipur or to the South of Cachar.\textsuperscript{156}

Based on the study of the Andamanese, Nicobarese and Hill Tribes of Assam, A.M. Meerward, too, mentioned the territories inhabited by the Kukis that their neighbours to the North are the Nagas and the Manipuris, to the East the tribes of the Upper Chindwin and the Chin Hills, on the South those living on the Hill tracts of Chittagong, while on the west they are bounded by the plains of Sylhet and the Hills of North Cachar. He also further mentioned that the Kukis are very migratory, and their settlement can be found dispersed among other tribes, such as the Nagas, the Cacharis etc. They are split up into a great number of tribes.\textsuperscript{157} Thus, considering about the places of settlement as noted above, the territories inhabited by the Thadou-Kukis in particular and the Kuki-Chin ethnic families in general are found to have scattered widely covering the Western part of Burma and the Eastern range of Chittagong Hill Tracts and Sylhet region of the present Bangladesh. In India, the scattered settlement of the Kuki-Chin or the Kuki-Chin-Mizo is found almost in all the North Eastern states of India. Therefore, being so widely scattered, they have the privilege of occupying the strategic locations involving political implication in the history of the Kukis.

\textsuperscript{156} Carey & Tuck, op. cit., p. 2
\textsuperscript{157} A.M. Meerward: The Andamanese, Nicobarese and Hill Tribes of Assam, New Delhi, Reprint, 1919, p. 129