

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Christianity started in the eastern Mediterranean and rapidly developed in size and influence over a few decades. By the fourth century Christianity had become a predominant religious minority in the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of India. Christianity was legalized in the fourth century, when Constantine 1 issued an edict of toleration in 313. On twenty-seven February 380, Ruler Theodosius 1 enacted a law establishing Catholic Christianity as the official religious belief of the Roman Empire. Following the Age of Discovery, through missionary work and colonization, Christianity proliferated to America and the rest of the world. From the seventh century onwards, Islam Religion conquered the Christian lands of the Middle East, North Africa and much of Spain, resulting in oppression of Christianity and numerous military struggles, including the Crusades, the Spanish Reconquista and wars against the Turks. In the early twenty-first century, Christianity has between 1.5 billion and 2.1 billion disciples, constituting about one-quarter to a third of the world's population (George 2009).

Martin Luther in 1517 protested against the sale of indulgences and soon moved on to deny several key points of Roman Catholic philosophy. Others like Zwingli and Calvin further criticized Roman Catholic commandment and worship. These challenges developed into the movement called Protestantism, which repudiated the primacy of the pope, the role of culture, the seven sacraments, and other philosophies and practices. Reformation in England started in 1534, when King Henry VIII declared himself the head of the Church of

England. Starting in 1536, the monasteries all through England, Wales, and Ireland were dissolved. Partly in response to the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church engaged in a substantial process of reform and renewal, recognized as the Counter-Reformation or Catholic Reform. The Council of Trent clarified and reasserted Roman Catholic philosophy. During the following centuries, antagonism between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism became deeply entangled with political struggles amongst European states. Meanwhile, the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492 brought about a new wave of missionary activity. Partly from missionary zeal, but under the impetus of colonial expansion by the European powers, Christianity spread out to the Americas, Oceania, East Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. All through Europe, the divides caused by the Reformation led to outbreaks of religious violence and the establishment of separate state Religions in Western Europe: Lutheranism in parts of Germany and in Scandinavia and Anglicanism in England in 1534. Ultimately, these differences led to the outbreak of conflicts in which religious belief played a key factor (Ibid).

## **5.2 The origins of Christianity in India**

The Indian church is very ancient but they differ as to how early the Gospel was brought to India and who or what agency brought it and to which part of India. No book or inscription or monument of the first two centuries exists to enlighten us on the origin of Christianity until the third century when the ancient Christian writers began to mention the church in India. The historians of the origins of Christianity in India have to depend mainly upon traditions both within India and outside and occasional references in later writers. (Philip 1998)

Broadly speaking there are two views among the historians as to the origins of

Christianity in India. One view is that the Indian church has an apostolic foundation arising out of the apostolic activity of St. Thomas in the first century. The other view is that the church was founded in India at a very early date (during the course of the first three centuries) by Christians from East Syria. The more general view is that the church had its origin in the first century in the apostolic activity of St. Thomas. The St. Thomas community (Syrian Christians) in South India holds the apostolic foundation of their church as an article of faith. This view is based mainly on two traditions, one existing among the St. Thomas Christians in Kerala and the other among the East Syrians. There are some references in early Church Fathers, both the western and Syrian, supporting the view that St. Thomas's activity was in India (Ibid).

According to Western tradition, following the well-established trade routes, St. Thomas, reached India sometime in the middle of the first century. He preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, converted many to Christianity, including members of royal families, suffered martyrdom in India, and was buried there; later his mortal remains were transferred to the West (to Edessa) where they were paid due respect and venerated. (Sangma 1987)

According to Indian tradition, after visiting Socotora (an island in the Arabian Sea off the north-east coast of Africa) St. Thomas came to Muziris (Cranganore or Kodungallur) on the Periyar estuary north of Cochin in about AD 52. He is said to have preached and converted people in the Jewish colony. He traveled south and converted high caste Hindus and established churches in seven places (Maliankara, Palayur, Parur Gokamangalam, Niranam, Chayal and Quilon) in four of which places Syrian churches still exist. He then went to the eastern coast where he died as a martyr in AD 72. There is a tomb in

Maylapore (near Madras), which is believed to be that of St. Thomas. This tradition has been persistent among the St. Thomas Christians for centuries and the community entertains little doubt as to the truth of the tradition. There are a number of different versions of the tradition expressed in songs and stories, all of them of later dates. But it is important to note that there is no other rival tradition in the church with regard to its origin and there is no other country in the world that claims that St. Thomas died there. (Philip 1998) The next contact was with the Persian or the East-Syrian Church whose Bishops were said to have evangelized the Indian people between 250 and 300 A.D. These Missions were followed by the Portuguese Missionaries starting from the close of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. Next Christian Mission to have arrived at India was the Danish Mission. But all these Missions carried on their activities outside the geographical boundaries of Northeast India and their activities had no bearing on the region. (Sangma 1987)

### **5.3 Spread of Christianity in North East India**

Roman Catholic missionaries made the earliest Christian contacts with North East India in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some of them were looking for a route to Tibet; others were visiting a large Christian community associated with the Moghul garrison at Rangamati in Lower Assam. For reasons not known this community disappeared by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but a smaller Catholic settlement of refugee 'Portuguese' soldiers dating back to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century did survive at Bondashill in the present Cachar District of Assam. The Bondashill Christians did not evangelize the local population and remained isolated and outside the mainstream of the Christian movement. Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Serampore Baptists established stations at Cherrapunji in the Khasi Hills and Gauhati in the Brahmaputra

valley, but this work was not continued after the death of the last of the Serampore Trio in 1838 (Downs 1976).

Substantial mission work leading to the establishment of permanent Christian communities began when, at the invitation of the British Commissioner, American Baptists from Burma opened a station at Sadiya in Upper Assam in 1836. The original objective of this Mission was to find ways of reaching the Shan territories of northern Burma and the interior of China. It was not until 1841 that it turned its full attention to the inhabitants of the Brahmaputra valley. For the next twenty years its work was centred on the three churches organized in 1845 at Gauhati in Lower Assam, Nowgong in Central Assam and Sibsagar in Upper Assam. During this period it worked almost exclusively among the Assamese people and church membership remained small.

The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists (later renamed the Welsh Presbyterians) took over the British Baptist station at Cherrapunji in 1841. There they established the Nongsawlia Church around 1846, the first church to be organized in the hills. The Welsh Mission experienced great difficulties during its first thirty years of work. It was only in the 1870s that a substantial number of Khasis began to turn towards Christianity.

During the 1960s the American Baptists began work among the Garos, the second major tribe of the present Meghalaya. The Christian Movement among this people, initiated and largely spread by members of the tribe, grew rapidly with the result that by 1900 there was a community of nearly 10,000 persons associated with the Garo Baptist churches. At the turn of the century the largest concentration of Christians in North East India was in Meghalaya. During the 1870s and 1880s the Baptists had also begun work in

Nagaland, but growth there was much slower. Except for members of the Ao tribe, large numbers of Nagas did not turn towards Christian until the third and fourth decades of the present century.

In 1862 the Anglican Society for the propagation of the Gospel took over a small mission that had started by two members of the Basel Mission near Tezpur on the north bank of the Brahmaputra thirteen years earlier. This work was mainly among Cacharis. Anglican mission work was thereafter closely associated with the tea garden chaplaincy programme and was mainly confined to tea garden labourers in Upper Assam. The Anglican community in North East India was never large.

Like the American Baptists, revived Roman Catholic interest in Assam was associated initially with attempts to find an easy route to some other place like Tibet. In 1850 Assam was attached to the Vicariate Apostolic of Lhasa. Missionaries stationed in Gauhati made several attempts to reach Tibet. These efforts ended and Assam was returned to the jurisdiction of the Vicariate Apostolic of Bengal after Frs Krick and Bourry were killed by a tribal chief in what is today Arunachal Pradesh.

Assam and Bhutan were added to the Prefecture Apostolic of Krishnagar in 1870 and responsibility for work in these regions was given to the Foreign Missionaries of Milan. Though a priest took up residence at Gauhati in 1872 most of his work consisted in ministering to European Catholics. Significant missionary work only began after 1889, when the Prefecture Apostolic of Assam, Bhutan and Manipur was created and entrusted to a young German order, the Salvatorian Fathers. Noting the Protestant success in the hills the first Salvatorian missionaries made their headquarters in Shillong. A station was also

opened in the neighbouring Jaintia Hills in 1892. In the meantime Catholic work on the plains was revived, mainly among the tea garden labourers from Chota Nagpur, many of whom had made Catholic contacts in their homeland. Catholics, Baptists, Anglicans and Lutherans all found the tea garden labourers the most fruitful field of work on the plains.

During the 1870s the Santhal Mission of Bengal established a colony in Goalpara District where they eventually undertook a highly successful self-support scheme based upon tea garden operations. Though the neighbouring Boros were evangelized the primary relationships of this community were with churches in Bengal rather than with other Christian groups in Assam. The Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church of Chota Nagpur also followed its members to the Assam tea gardens and organized them into churches. During the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century new work was begun in Manipur by the American Baptists and in Mizoram by the Welsh Presbyterians and the British Baptists (Ibid).

#### **5.4 Spread of Christianity in Manipur**

The earliest pioneer Christian missionary of Manipur was Rev. William Pettigrew. In 1890, at the age of 21 he came to India as a member of the Arthington Aborigines Mission of the Church of England (Karotemprel 1993). But in February 1896<sup>1</sup>, he changed his mission to that of the American Baptist Mission due to the fact that the Arthington Mission did not employ married missionaries. (Singh 1996) As a result there was a change in the way of worship.

Here is a case study from a knowledgeable, educated and aged informant. She was the first gazette officer among the tribal women of Manipur and the sister of the first

theological graduate in Manipur. She remembers seeing Mr. & Mrs. Pettigrew as a young girl.

### **Case 1**

Name of the Informant: Mrs. A. Thomas

Age: 88 years old

*“Ina nganuilakha iramli Rev. William Pettigrew ungrada shanao mayarnao katonga kashan kachon kadha-dhar ngavailaka shongfa lak-kharip nganinglaka khangaran kasa chi thei. Kha shanglaka awo W. Pettigrew chi sigui tonglaga Somdalwui eina kashangnada shangrasai. Awui azak theikhaleoda honda khalei mibingna ‘Ithumwui Awunga kahuilu huimilu’ kachi laa hi saya.*

*Ina laa sathei phok kahai eina ilila khararnaobingli ngasoda la katamli chang ngasakda laa hi sai.*

*Still away, still away, still away to Jesus, still  
away, still away home. I have no longer to  
stay here...*

*Laa hi tamkhuilaka, Tangkhulwui Associationli vasada, awo Pettigrewna ringphana haida laa khangahanli Iramna 1<sup>st</sup> khuihaowa.*

*Vareshimli kapam kala pamkhongwui ara khangachei chila phaningunga. Haokaphok liva ithumna pamkhongli khuktilaga seiha sai kha naodava chikatha pamkhongchi khuishok haowa.*

*Ishi shimkhurli ina naongalava paishona. Ina ishiwui sei kala silui homma kha Ishamei, Oja Phanitphangda theikhangarok, Manipurwui khare Theological graduatena ili lairik tamngasak ngaiya. Kha shimkhurli Ina paisho sahaoda ishava ishavana machiho ngaimana, langmeida anina Vareshili makatom mana. Ishameina ishava-ishavali chotlak eina suikhuilaka ilila lairik tamkhavai chiho haowa. Ina Ukhrulli akha tamlaka thili ishameina ili Kangpokpi Schooli lairik tamkhavai thanvami. School vakaka atamli awo W. Pettigrewwui Bungalow vamanna chili Madam Pettigrewli ashiwui compoundli kazat thei. Chiwui thili a kazahaida Jahas eina England unghairada shai. Kha shanglaka ava Okathui kanthuihairada shaluishitta. Chili ina Class I eina tangda tamma. Chiwui thili Ukhrul li hanunglaka Class II hi Ukhrul Mission School kala Class III to IV hi U.P School Ukhrul li tamma. Chiwui thili Imphal talaka 'Tamphasana High School' li kum khani tamma. Class VII wui einava Kohima Mission High Schooli vatam haowa. Class X makupsang chao ranglakha kalashilak eina Okathuiwui rairei kakhane rashokrot haoda Sahib bing zatthuiki kachi tahaova. Imphalli Japanna Baomb thahaida shimla maungpai thuwa. Chieina ishamei Oja Phanitphangna Jorhat Mission Hospitalwui medical Directorli ili Kohima wui eina shangphungkhui khavai povai. Chieina Nursing Director Miss Parcelna ili kaphungkhui khavai Jeep akha chihokada ili kathankhuiya. Chili ina Nursing tamkhuilaka naoda Manipur Tribal shanaowui ngachaili remeithui kachi Gazetted Officer kasa samphanga. Ina katatam pamli Sahib bingna mathalak eina yangsang miya.*

*Iramli Vareshi sadhadhar lakha tui kachungkha shoka. Awunga eina hangvabingna Vareshibingli maleishi thuda furlong khani kathum tada kasham shok haowa. Chiwui thili kaikhala vareshi sangaihaowa. Chieina athumna awungawui khamaya khuilaka vareshi samamanda ramli pamma. Kha athumna kashamkakai vareshibingli ngasoda Church vaka*

*kahai eina ngathumda awunga eina hangva bingna athumwui shim sakhailaka ot lithuimi haowa. Chieina vareshibingna S.D.O Peterli valaka vahanga kha Peter shebna mavareshibingli michang sahaowa. Chiwui thili kha leilaka iramli Kuirang (Tiger) akha unгда sakei makeipaithuwa. Chieina iramwui kathanna bingna S.D.O Peter shebli Kuirang chi kapthat mikhavai vapoya. S.D.O Peter shebna mayamida ralaka iram awo Vamung Khongshango anina naomei singriplaga thingtung akhali kalaga rimpamma, kala mavareshibinglila, vareshibinglila mayarnao kachiva kazei singlaka apam akhali ngathumsalu laka nongmei khon kasha tharan rarasaluda hangmi kahaina. Kala thingrong akhawui apheili fanao akha hokhailaka rimpamma. Ngaraisan kahai eina mavareshibing chiya khor ungmangkhuirada ungser haowa. Pung kathum kata atamli Kuirang chi ungrasai. S.D.O na rida kappa. Kuirang china S.D.O wui thingrongli kakida hotnai. Chieina awo Vamungna Kuirang chi kapsei tahaowa. Naomeikhon sakhaleoda athumna ngasamrai. Chieina S.D.O na ngahanna- mavareshibing chiya kali vahao? Vareshibing china ngahankai, athumva khor ungmangrada ungserhaira. S.D.O na malung vatlak haowa chieina Tigerwui asachi athumli mamipaimara kala nathumna ningkachang lam chila nathumna khuiserhaoluda hangmi.”*

English translation:

*“I remember seeing awo (uncle) William Pettigrew coming to my village on a horse and our villagers were greeting and welcoming him, lining up on both sides of the road in their festive clothes. Right after he reached we sang a song titled; ‘Save Us Our King.’*

*When I started growing up I used to go for singing practice with my seniors and we sang the following song in Tangkhul Association singing competition.*

*Still away, still away, still away to Jesus, still  
away, still away home. I have no longer to  
stay here...*

*Awo Pettigrew was so excited to hear us singing in English and we (my village)  
won the first position in the competition.*

*I also remembered the way the sitting arrangement in the Church was changed. In  
the beginning we used to kneel on the pew and later this pew was removed and we followed  
the usual Baptist way of worship.*

*As the youngest daughter in my family, I was assigned by my parents to look after  
our family cattle (cows and buffaloes) with other villages but my brother, the first  
Theological graduate in Manipur known as Oja Phanitphang encouraged me to go to  
school. My parents did not want to send me away as I was the youngest daughter but my  
brother's continued persuasion, convinced my parents to send me to school.*

*I was sent to Ukhrul and studied in Ukhrul for a year. Then I was taken to  
Kangpokpi and studied there upto Class I. In Kangpokpi I remember seeing Mrs.  
Pettigrew. Later we heard that she was shipped to England due to her illness and that she  
passed away. I returned to Ukhrul and studied Class II in Ukhrul Mission School and  
Class III to IV in U.P School Ukhrul. Thereafter I went to Imphal for further studies and  
got admitted at 'Tamphasana High School'. After studying in Imphal for two years my  
brother admitted me in Kohima Mission High School. Unfortunately before completing  
Class X, the World War II broke out and thus the Christian missionaries had to leave. I  
could not go back home, as there was a bombing in Imphal by the Japanese armies. My*

*brother wrote a letter to the Medical Director of Mission Hospital, Jorhat and consequently, the Nursing Director Miss Farcel sent a vehicle (Jeep) to pick me up from Kohima. From there I completed nursing and later became the first Gazetted Officer among the tribal women of Manipur. Wherever I studied I was taken good care by the Christian missionaries.*

*In the initial stage of conversion, there was a crisis between the Christian and non-Christian in my village. The chief and the village elders hated Christians and thus exiled them from the village. Later some of the villagers wanted to become Christian but they were scared of being thrown out of the village. Thus they took permission from the chief and village elders to become Christians and yet not be ostracized from the village. But when they were away for Church service to the place where the exiled Christian lived, the chief along with the village elders destroyed their houses and ransacked their belongings. A report to the then S.D.O named Peter was of no avail as he has on the side of the non-Christian. Few days later a tiger roamed about the village and killed many domestic animals. Thus the village elders requested Peter to gun down the tiger. He and awo (uncle) Vamung Khongsango waited for the tiger on the trees with guns. A puppy was tied on the foot of a tree to attract the tiger. He told the rest of the young men (including Christian and non Christian) to get ready with spears and hide somewhere, only to come when they hear the gunshot. They waited long but when the tiger did not come, the non-Christians went back home to quench their thirst with rice beer. When the tiger appeared around 3 p.m. they shot the tiger. As Peter did not see the non-Christians and found that they had left for rice beer, he was so furious that he told them that they should not share the tiger meat and gave an order that they (Christian) can acquire the land of their choice.”*

The Manipur war of 1891 attracted William Pettigrew attention to work in Manipur. He sought permission from the administration in Manipur for his permit. While waiting for his permit at Silchar, he came into contact with the Manipuris in Cachar and spent three years there to learn their language. Making use of his newly acquired knowledge of Manipuri, he wrote the first Manipuri Primer and Manipuri Grammar including English-Bengali-Manipuri dictionary. Later, he was assigned the task of reducing Meitei vernacular into writing. This enabled him to enter Manipur in spite of the fact that the Manipur administration did not allow Christian missionaries to work freely in Manipur to avoid hurting the religious sentiments of the people. On February 6, 1894, he arrived in Imphal and began to work among the Meiteis (Karotemprel 1993). After his arrival, he started his work by opening a primary school for boys in his name at Singjamei. But he was strongly opposed by the orthodox Hindus of Manipur and was forced to withdraw. They suspected that it was an attempt to build an in-road upon the Meitei culture by imposing Christianity. Tension and fear crept into the minds of the people. The arrival of Major Maxwell, political agent in Manipur set things at rest and the tense situation was brought under control (Singh 1996). He asked Pettigrew to either leave Imphal and work in the hill areas of Ukhrul or stop his missionary work as no preaching was to be permitted among the Hindus (Luikham 1948).

### **5.5 Spread of Christianity in Ukhrul**

The work of Christian missionaries started in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century among the Tangkhuls. Till then, the non-Tangkhuls were hesitant to enter their territory because they practiced head hunting culture though the British administration has outlawed it. But it was a Christian missionary called William Pettigrew who bravely entered their land and spread

the Gospel. He landed at Ukhrul on 7th January 1895 and started mission work in February 1896. (cited in Solo 1986) When the local people saw the white man for the first time, they took him for a spy or an agent of the government. Raihao, the headman of Hunphun village (now Ukhrul Town) heard commotions and people were running with their spears and shields as if in war. He enquired as to what was happening and there he saw a white man standing and trembling. He stopped the villagers from doing any harm to the white man and asked the new comer about his whereabouts and his business in their territory. The white man saluted the headman Raihao and begged begged to be saved from the angry villagers. Thus it was from this moment that Raihao befriended Pettigrew (Prongo 1996).

## **Case 2**

Name of the Informant: Mr. H.A. Wungrampan (Raihao's great grandson)

Age: 28 years old

*“Awokharar Rashingli mahakhami chi ishawo Raihaona ramnaobingli hangchithei. Kachara mi rara kala ana Tangkhuli kahor khuirara kachi hi Rashingli mahamihairasai. Ana chiwui kakhalat matheisamana chieina anao mayara Angayungli hithada hanga, chikatha mi chi nana mungdaleilakha atamli ra-akha ali mathalak eina samilu khiwuivang khala chilaga mipa china mang hi khalatmi shapra da hangthi haowa. Hithada mang hi mathang mathang sada Angayungna anaomayara Yomnangli kala ana anaomayara Raihaoli hangmaronna. Awunga Raihaowui atamli mang chi ungshung haowa. Kahora khuikharawui kakhalat hi masoila mipa hina hangmirada ana aramnaobingli hanga. Naoda athumna kahorawui kakhalathi lairik katamhili litei da bhap takhui. Hithada sada Rev. William Pettigrewna Hunphunli khara hi Ishawo khararli hangmaranhairasai. Ali Hunphunli shimpam akha mi. Ana apam chakhamei phada Tangkhul kha kateilila yaovai.*

*Ana Paoyi khala vayanga, chiwui thili Shiroi kaphung, Khangkhuida valaga naomeithuida Hunphun hina phameithuirada hili ungasamlui haowa.”*

English translation:

*“My great grandfather Raihao narrated his great grandfather Rashing’s vision to the villagers. Rashing, had a vision of the white man’s coming. In his vision a white man told him that he would bring light among the Tangkhuls. He could not understand what it meant but he told this to his son Angayung before he died. He further instructed him that if during his reign, such a man happened to come to Ukhurul; they should not harm him but should treat him with hospitality for the man might reveal to them the meaning of his vision. The vision of grandfather Rashing was orally transmitted from Angayung to his son Yomnang and finally to Raihao. Thus it was during the reign of Raihao as the headman of Ukhurul, the vision came true. He told them that this man would explain what the light meant. In due course of time, they realized and understood the meaning of light, which was education. Thus the coming of Rev. William Pettigrew’s to Ukhurul was foretold to my great great grandfather. William Pettigres was given a plot of land at Ukhurul. He visited some of the Tangkhul villages in search of the best place in regard to climate, drinking water and various other things like dialect that would be appropriate to use as Tangkhul language to carry out his work. For every Tangkhul village has different dialects named after the village, which is hardly or not understood by another village. In his search for a suitable location he went as far as Paoyi village and on his return from Paoyi he went to Shiroi Mountain and further to Khangkhui village. Having wandered through some of the neighboring villages he finally came back to Ukhurul and decided it to be the most ideal place for his missionary work.”*



Plate 5.1 The statue of Raihao erected in Awungtang (chief's colony)



Plate 5.2 The present chief's house decorated with buffalo skull

Initially the Tangkhos suspected the Christian missionary and would not talk to him but in course of time they became friendly. During that period a Tangkhul of one village could not communicate with Tangkhul from different village due to difference in language. Pettigrew mastered Ukhul language within a few months and was able to communicate with the people through this language. He introduced the Ukhul dialect as the common media of all the Tangkhul Naga through his writings of Tangkhul primers, translation of Gospels, hymns, Bible and other books in Ukhul dialect, which later on became the lingua Franca of the Tangkhul Naga.

The Tangkhuls were illiterate and thus he felt the need of educating them for the effective propagation of Christianity. His plan to start a school at Ukhul was taken to Raihao. Pettigrew was flatly told that the Tangkhuls need no education as they had their own script written on a skin of an animal but that a dog carried it away. The missionary convinced him by saying; "I met the dog on my way here and had brought back the script!" The school building was completed in January 1897 but the people suspected that the white man came to take away their children to a far away country where they would either be killed or made into slaves. This was their ignorance and some of the village warriors even came with spears and shields to cut off the head of the missionary and his wife. Once again Raihao saved them.

In the meantime, the Political Agent, Major Maxwell, came to Ukhul on his way to Somra tract the missionary reported to him that the elders refused to send their children to school. Maxwell warned the elders that if they were found absent from school on his return he would have them severely caned or sent to jail. After this warning Raihao, the headman of Ukhul consulted Pettigrew and agreed to send some boys to school.

### Case 3

Name of the Informant: Mrs. Ruimila

Age: 75 years old

*“Ishavana Vareshi ungzangwui khararchan hangkachithei chi phaningung chinga. Atam chitharan vareshina worshim lingkamilala khipakha makangaimani ji. Athumna chiwui kankhanala matheisamani ji. Awunga Raihao zangda katamnao 21 chi saklak eina ngahot khuiya ji. Humpumwui awunga Zingthan nala Hunphun awungali atam chiwui Political Agentna hangkhamachit chi theilaga aramlila masoila hangmachitra sarada phaninglaga anala aram yaronnao 15li 1996 kumli worshimli chihovai. Katamnao bingwui ngachaili kaikhava mathanthup, tamngailak eina tammi ji. Kaikhaliva ngarikna haida chotlak eina rakhuiyi chi.”*

English translation:

*“I remember how my father used to tell about the Christian missionaries and their related activities. When the Christian missionaries opened a school no one was willing to attend the school. They didn't even know what it was all about. With great difficulty only 21 students were sent to school with Raihao as the leader of the group of students. The chief of Humpum (a neighbouring village of Ukhrul), Zingthan, knowing the warning of the then Political Agent to the chief of Ukhrul, thought that a similar demand would come to him and therefore sent 15 boys to the school in 1996. Some of them were more enthusiastic in their studies than others. The behavior of the students, during the initial stages was wild. With great patience they were gradually induced to proper behavior.”*

Despite government's support, Pettigrew had a tough time at the start. He tried to win the confidence of the people and convince them that he was not an agent of the Government planning to remove their young men to the outside world. Pettigrew, however, was believed to be associated with the government, both as a missionary and an education officer of the state. At the very outset, suspicion of the missionary's action had been rankling in the minds of the people just as the missionary had no faith in the people's habit of taking rice beer. It was the custom of the people to offer a cup or two of rice beer to any visitor or visiting officials on tour. Here, the missionary's principle of total abstinence ran contrary to the age-old custom of the people. The missionary gradually convinced the people and people began to understand what he was trying to say and began to respond. As far as education was concerned Pettigrew spent six weeks persuading the villagers to send their children to school. The Ukhul mission students were the first to accept Christianity and twelve men viz., Rumthao Hollei, Kashung Sangmayang, Kashung Maninglum, Samrar Ramkaiphang, Shaiza Leishishan, Shaiza Mangaleng, Langtangvano Sakhayang, Kasarnao Shangam, Chiphang Kaphungkui, M. Haora, K.Mashokring, and S K. Thiksa were baptized on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1901. On the same day Rev. William Pettigrew dedicated the first ever Baptist Church at Ukhul. Two men were baptized on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1903 (PCPC 2002). Gradually the number of converts increased and in 1906 twenty-five new converts were added. By 1907 the number of converts rose to seventy but Rev. Pettigrew was not happy as the new converts failed to maintain the standard of a true Christian life. There was great opposition to Pettigrew when he tried to discipline them (Serto 1996). In 1907 Rev. Pettigrew brought out a list of rules that all converts were expected to follow. Many refused, only 7 out of 70 remained firm and obedient to the Lord. They are: Rumthao

Hollei, Shaiza Leishisan, Miksha Shimray, Luikham Thisan of Ukhrul, Kuishon, Machongthei of Kampha and A. Poromsingh of Pheiyang. In 1910, one boy and 10 girls were baptized (PCPC 2002). From 1915 to 1917, the numbers of converts have increased year by year in a normal way; from 63 in 1915, 235 in 1916 and 335 in 1917.



Plate 5.3 Phungyo Baptist Church, the oldest Church in Ukhrul (above), a monolith (below left) & the statue of W. Pettigrew (below right) erected in front of the Church

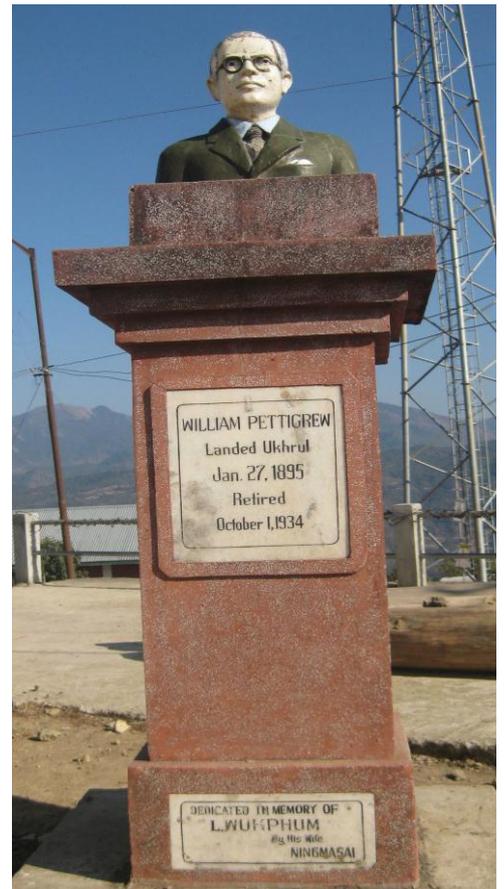




Plate 5.4 The pond christened as 'William Pettigrew Rakhong' (above) with the statue of William Pettigrew (below)



In his report he wrote, “Miksha who entered the school as a raw hidden boy in 1903 with two others of the same kind who entered later and who all three became Christians in 1906 and 1907 took hold of the reigns and upto the present Miksha is still Headmaster of the School besides pastor of the Church. He has now five teachers under him, all of them taught and trained in this school, and who are converts under the influence of the teaching given there”. (cited in PCPC 2002) In his report ‘My Twentyfive Years 1897-1922: At Ukhrul Mission school’ (cited in Kamei *et al.* 1996), he inscribed, “From the point of view of the mission it is a source of gratitude to Almighty God to know that with one or two exceptions all our mission workers evangelists, pastors and teachers are products of the school, the majority of them having come to Ukhrul as raw heathen lads, have heard the Gospel, believed and been baptized.” Often he mentioned that the educational programme of the school and the Sunday school classes had greatly helped him in converting people to Christianity. Many of the students at the schools, later left as forgiven person, determined to live a life of obedience and with zeal of preaching the word of God. Most of the students who had studied at Ukhrul Mission School either for long or short periods converted to Christianity.

The spread of the Gospel of Christ through the ministry of education alongwith the missionary’s evangelization had a tremendous impact. This was the first method Pettigrew adopted in converting the local tribes to Christianity. As the motive of the missionaries was to spread the Gospel of Christ, their chief objective in giving education to the tribesmen was to propagate Christianity. Pettigrew believed that education could illuminate the individual mind, which in turn would arouse conviction in the truth of the Gospel. With

this aim he invited the tribesmen to learn how to read and write. As the local people were superstitious and ignorant they failed to respond favourably at the beginning.

The state authorities realizing the importance of Pettigrew work had already appointed him as Honorary Inspector of schools. His knowledge of Manipuri and Bengali languages and the valuable service rendered by him during his brief stay at Imphal attracted the attention of the political agent who invited him to assist the government in establishing schools in various parts of Imphal, Ukhrul, appoint teacher and prepare a curriculum with the help of the teachers. He remained the Honorary Inspector of School till 1902, when he left for the first furlough, facilitating the preaching of the gospel through education. It was also during this period of furlough; Pettigrew took two years course at the Livingston-Medical College for Missionaries and studied dentistry and surgery along with practical work done in the outdoor dispensaries in the slums of East London. He applied his medical knowledge in Ukhrul after his arrival there with the help of Mrs. Pettigrew, which ultimately paved the way for establishment of a hospital in Ukhrul in 1920 (Singh 1996). Pettigrew opened and supervised schools in various parts of the state. Very often he went with his students to the neighbouring villages to preach. Although there were restrictions against religious preaching in the valley in the government sponsored schools, he managed to distribute copies of the scriptures to the students as free 'literature'. Pettigrew believed that this work, though time consuming, was a valuable preparation for a time when preaching could be done openly. Pettigrew's continuance in Manipur depended upon the goodwill of the government. He was the only missionary permitted to reside in Manipur till 1917. During this period Pettigrew had done much work for the Government, and helped them in raising a Labour corps. During the First World War 1914, Pettigrew

was commissioned to France as an Army captain by the British authorities. He was further entrusted to recruit labour corps to France from the people of hill areas of Manipur. Through his missionary influence, he successfully recruited the labour corps. After Pettigrew's return from war, he pleaded for a second missionary family to work in Manipur. It was due to Pettigrew's war service that the state Government permitted a second missionary to work in Manipur in 1917 and the Mission centre was shifted from Ukhrul to Kangpokpi in 1919. (Ibid.) The government, as an expression of gratitude for his service permitted Crozier a doctor, to come to Manipur in 1917. A further petition from the Assam Reference Committee to allow the headquarters of the A.B. Mission to be shifted from the isolated station at Ukhrul, to a more central part of the State, was granted by the Maharaja. That year Crozier established a school there in 1917-18. Many people of the surrounding villages were educated in this school. The mission schools proved to be the base for the future expansion of the mission work. Missionaries employed these mission school educated students for evangelization in the surrounding villages. Some discontinued their studies and took up other responsibilities. Some went to the villages as teachers and some as evangelists. One of them was Mr. Ruichumhao from Somdal village.

#### **Case 4**

Name of the Informant: Mr. Ringkahao

Age: 98 years old

*“Mr. Ruichumhao hi William Pettigrewwui lairik themlak kahai katamnao akhana. Ana Jorhat kala Shillongli lairik vatamma. Shebshi kathanna binglila tarakha ngachon miya. Awui ngachon khami manga eina Mr. Pettigrewna okathui rairei khare chili chihova*

*khavai mayarnao kapangkhui. Ana Varewui vang otram ngatha haorada Shillong wui eina hanunghaowa.”*

English translation:

*“Mr. Ruichumhao was a brilliant student of William Pettigrew. He went for further studies in Jorhat and then to Shillong. He used to render help to the British administrator on their request. Mr. Pettigrew recruited labour corps during the World War I under his leadership. He returned from Shillong High School and told the missionaries that he would not go for further studies, but must answer the call of God and give Christ to his people.”*

The missionaries, William Pettigrew, in particular made arrangements with the state government for the award of scholarships to deserving students.

## **Case 5**

Name of the informant: Mrs. A. Thomas

Age: 88 years old

*“Ili hauli pharasanglaga zingkum 2 shakha kakahai eina ishi katonga vareshi sahaowa. Ishameiva vareshi sakhareli zangda shimli maleisamana. Zingkum kathum/mati kakahai eina khawui kathanna bingna naoshinao katonga lairik tamphalungrada Schoolli vai. Iwui atamli Oja Suisana tamchithei. Ana a, b, c; 1, 2, 3 kala Manipuri mayek tamchithei. Chiwui thili ‘Tanglen Lairik’ hoda Tangkhul tui eina kakapi chi tamchithei. Chi kathem eina, laala, Biblela patheihaowa.*

*Naoda zingkum tharuk/shini shakha kaka eina, Ishamei (Oja Phanitphang) na ili Kangpokpili lairik tamkhavai thanvai. Chili Class I eina tangda tamkhui. Chiwui thili Ukhrul Mission Schoolli Class II tamkhui kala Upper Primary (U.P) School Ukhrul li*

*Class III eina IV tamkhui. Class IV li Scholarship mikhavai porikha kathali zanglaga, ina first khuida kachang changli Rs. 4/- mida Imphalli 'Tamphasana Girl High School' li tatamda class V eina VI tamkhui. Chiwui thili Kohima Mission High Schoolli Class VII eina thuilaga matric eina tangda shangtamma. Chilila kachang changli scholarship Rs. 8/- mida, ina ringphalak eina khavat maleila lairik tamkhui"*

English translation:

*"I was born in a non-Christian family but when I was about 2 years old my whole family became Christian. As my brother was one of the earliest Christian converts he did not stay at home. When I was about three or four years old the village elders made it compulsory for all the children to go to School. Oja Suisa was the teacher of that time. He taught us the English alphabets and numerals as well as Manipuri alphabets. After learning the alphabets and numerals, he taught us a book called 'Tanglen Lairik' which was written in Tangkhul. Subsequently, we could read the Bible and Hymnal.*

*When I was six or seven years old, my brother (Oja Phanitphang) took me to Kangpokpi where I studied upto Class I. I then studied to Ukhrul Mission School and studied Class II and studied Class III to IV in U.P School Ukhrul. I stood first in the Scholarship exam and was awarded a scholarship of Rs. 4/- per month. I then went to study in Tamphasana Girl High School, Imphal, for two years. Moreover, I got a scholarship of Rs. 8/- per month from Class VII upto matric in Kohima. Therefore I did not have any financial problem in my student days."*

The possibility of getting a scholarship served as an additional motivating factor. As a result the students took their studies seriously and became more supportive. People

began to make requests for the establishment of more schools. The subsequent schools established in different villages ultimately led to the growth and strengthening of Christianity. All the school established in different parts of the state subsequently was not mission schools. Some of them were government sponsored or government aided schools. From 1901 number of converts had increased year by year. Gradually, more people were inclined towards the gospel and they in turn went on to convince others about the faith. Baptism at Ukhrul in the early period is shown in the following Table.

**Table 5.1 Baptism at Ukhrul in the early period (Year-wise)**

<b>Year</b>	1901	1903	1906	1907	1910	1915	1916	1917	1921	1923
<b>No. of persons</b>	12	2	25	32	10	63	235	335	295	1018

Sources: PCPC, 2002

Souvenir: TBL Centenary Ukhrul, 1996

Lt.Col.H.St.P.Maxwell, the political agent of Manipur, in 1897 made education compulsory. He issued an ultimatum to the village chiefs and elders to either send some children to school or face imprisonment and canning. A Lower Primary School (L.P. School, also known as Combined School for 3-4 villages) was established in 1905 at Phadang village in collaboration with the mission work of Rev. William Pettigrew. The government and the mission jointly looked after education. Although the government as a matter of policy did not officially support mission work yet through the numerous schools Pettigrew and other church workers were able to successfully evangelize many people (Ruivanao 2008). The gospel was initially taught in school and those converted into

Christianity spread the gospel in their own village and neighbouring village till all the Tangkhuls converted into Christianity.

**Table 5.2 Christian population of Manipur**

Year	Total population	Christians		Population of Ukhrul district		Population of Tangkhul	
		Population	% of total population	Total	Christian	Total	Christian
1927							2000*
1931		10,000					
1961	780,037	152,043	19.49	48590	39296	43943	37390
1971	1,072,753	279,243	26.03	62,229	57250	57851	
1981	1,420,953	421,702	29.68	68,340	67871	79029	78387
1991	1,837,149	626,669	34.11	109,952		1,07,244	106,172

Sources:

Arokianathan. 1982. Tangkhul Folk Literature. Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages.

Census of Manipur

\*Downs 1971

IHA (Immanuel Hospital Association) Ukhrul

Souvenir: TBL Centenary Ukhrul, 1996

TBCA (Tangkhul Baptist Church Association) office, Ukhrul

Shimray, U.A. 2006. 'Naga Population Scenario and Immigration'. In *A Monthly Journal: The Legacy*, Vol.-4, No.5, September. Ukhrul: CENTSHIRED.

The above table shows that there is a marked progress in the number of Christian converts each year. It took almost a century to get all the Tangkhuls converted into Christianity.

## 5.6 Growth and spread of the Church

The spread of Christianity in the initial stages was slow. There were many factors for its slow growth.

### **Case 6**

Name of the Informant: Mrs. Kamreiphy

Age:60 years old

*“Ishawona rarhaoda ishava eina ishavali ngasopam iji. Kala ana Vareshi sangaihaoda Ishavali Vareshi sahaokada khangahan eina ishavana malung vatna haida thangkha zat mamizaman iji.”*

English translation:

*“My aged grandfather a dependent on my parents, seeked his son’s permission to become a Christian. It seemed my father did not appreciate his request and was so angry with my grandfather that he did not give him food the whole day.”*

### **Case 7**

Name of the informant: Mr. Shangzan

Age: 50 years old

*“Ishayi eina ishawoli vareshi kasa wuivang marlak eina rekharek iji. Ramnaona anili ning ngacheihaolu maningakha kasaka tandi mirada hangmachit iji. Kha anina ning makhangachei wuivang ramwui eina kasham haowada hanga. Chiwuivang anina varewui otram khangathabingwui shimli shimzun khuiyada hanga.”*

English translation:

*“My great grandparents were tortured mentally and physically for embracing the new faith. The villagers warned them to change their mind or otherwise they would be punished. But my great grandparents would not and therefore they were ostracized and chased out of the village on the ground that they disrespect their belief system. Thus, they went to take shelter in missionaries’ house.”*

### **Case 8**

Name of the informant: Mrs. Ramngamla

Age: 49 years old

*“Ishayi eina ishawochi vareshina laa kasa shalaga vareshi sangailak hao iji. Chieina ani khani chi vareshim vakaphok haowada hanga. Kha thangkha vareshiwui kathanabingna vareshibingli zam reiphalungrada kahang eina mareirar thuda vareshim kaka ngasam hao iji. Naoda Catholic wui kathanabingna zam manglala vareshi sapai kachiwuivang vareshi salui haowada hanga.”*

English translation:

*“My great grandparents wanted to become Christian because they were inspired by Christian hymns. They attended the Church till the time they were asked to stop consuming rice beer. They were so fond of rice beer and thus giving it up was next to impossible. As a result they stopped going to Church. Later in their life they were persuaded by the Catholic missionaries and thus converted into Christianity.”*

It was only after 1920, that the spread of Christianity increased by leaps and bounds and a large number of people converted to this new faith. A movement of considerable size started which alarmed the custodians of the old beliefs and serious persecution followed. Some converts were beaten, some were fined, and some were chased out of the village. Some British Government officers supported those who resisted the further spread of Christianity. This active persecution continued throughout the mission period. In the Tangkhul area Government supported the chiefs who opposed the establishment of churches in their villages. The first convert of a Kachai village, the late S. Shangyom, was driven out from the village in 1925 and was not be permitted to return till 1931.

Another reason for the slow diffusion of the faith was that the early converts who were swept into the church seemed to have reverted to their traditional faith after some time. The reason for their reversion was their inability to keep pace with Christian laws, which were new to them and their inability to keep away from the village functions. Hitherto, the people were heavy consumers of rice beer that was strongly opposed by the Church. The Ukhrul church, which was organized in 1902, had 70 members by 1907. In trying to discipline the converts Pettigrew faced opposition. The matter came to a head when he forbade the Christians from participating in a village festival called '*kathi kasham*' ceremony. In 1908, Pettigrew drew up a list of the rules that Christians were expected to follow.

The other reason that led to a dissemination of Christianity was the small number of missionaries working in Manipur. The state government did not allow more than one missionary till 1917. The only missionary at that time was the Pettigrew couple who were working tirelessly among the people. Besides, much of Rev. Pettigrew's time during the

initial stage was devoted towards educating the people by establishing schools. The missionaries, especially the Protestants, often exalted the Bible as the ultimate source of authority. They established a conditional for an individual to be able to read it in order to worship God. As such, much of his time was spent in school, and mission work naturally suffered to an extent.

The attitude of the state authorities of Manipur, which never encouraged Christian missionary activity, was another reason. The American Baptist Mission deputed Pettigrew to the Tangkhul Naga area on its own without the initiation of the state authorities in the territory. His service was also not desired by the people of Manipur. He simply came on a mission as a volunteer for the good cause. The Political Agent only assisted the missionary in securing a foothold at Ukhul. Thereafter, the political Agent informed him that he could only assist the missionary in promoting education in the hills and in the improvement of communications between the valley and Ukhul. The Political Agent also promised to sanction some amount for school building and did not object to the proposal of the building being used for religious services after the school hours.

However the situation improved in the following decades. Since most of the early converts were school children coming from different villages, Christianity began to penetrate to many villages through these student converts. In 1910-11, Pettigrew visited the hitherto unvisited hill areas of Manipur, as Superintendent of the first census of the hill areas. He undertook the work of census with the help of Christian teachers and students of Ukhul School. The contacts made at this time proved useful in opening the way for Christianity in various parts of Manipur. In 1911, another missionary family, Rev. U.M. Fox and his wife came to Ukhul from America and were stationed with the Pettigrews.

The two families worked together for a year after which the Pettigrews went on a furlough. During the absence of the Pettigrews Fox took complete charge of the Christian work in Manipur. They opened the gate for higher education by sending boys to high school and also introduced carpentry, which had a great impact on the economic life of the people. They dedicated five years of valuable service to the people.

The first Tangkhuls that were converted to Christianity in 1901 were the 12 students of Ukhrul Mission School. The very next year in 1902, the first Ukhrul Baptist Church was organized in Manipur. It was the first Baptist Church in Manipur. Even after the establishment of the Ukhrul Baptist Church the Tangkhul Churches did not really begin to grow until after 1920. As mentioned earlier, the hills were divided into three administrative divisions and Ukhrul was one of the subdivisions. With the increase in the number of Christians it became difficult to supervise them. Thus, in 1910, the mission work in Ukhrul sub-division was sub-divided into three work fields viz. the western, Northern and Eastern circles. There was no southern circle as no local Churches were organized yet in that area. Three Superintendents were appointed for supervision of their respective circles- R. Ruichumhao for the Western, S. Kanrei for the Northern, and T.Luikham for the Eastern. The circles held regular Bible classes and organized conferences regarding local needs and interests. The circles met annually for formulating mutual concerns and programmes and the local Churches under their respective circles were administered on Baptist principle. These measures helped in the growth of the Baptist Churches in Tangkhul area. The Tangkhul Naga Baptist Association then directly supervised the Ukhrul mission. When Pettigrew moved out from Ukhrul as a result of

shifting the mission centre to Kangpokpi, MK. Shimray was appointed as the incharge of the mission station and headmaster of the mission school at Ukhul.

In May 1921, there was a new spiritual awakening among the Tangkhuls, led by two young men, Miksha Shimray and Thisan the pastor of the Church, which resulted in a large number of conversions. About 295 individuals were baptized that year and 200 more were in the waiting list. The new spiritual movement, which began in 1921, was accelerated further in 1923, by the 'Manipur Revival' that reached the Tangkhul area in the spring of 1923. In 1923, 1018 people were baptized. The 'Great Revival' not only stirred up the Churches but stimulated extensive evangelistic activity. The missionaries had some reservations about the revival from the beginning but nevertheless hoped it would work for the good of the Church. In the Church people reached emotional frenzy. Thus, in 1926, Crozier denounced it as the "spasm of 1923".

Following the revival, the Tangkhul Christian volunteers began to visit Mao area. For instance, in 1924, Yirei of Somdal was sent to Mao Naga area as an evangelist. He worked there for about two years and died without much tangible result. After him, Ngashanphung of Ukhul was sent in 1926, to continue his work. He worked there till 1928. The result was that several Mao boys came to study at Somdal Village School where they were converted into Christianity. On their return, they spread the Gospel among their own people.

In the Tangkhul area all the Churches and village schools had become self-supporting by 1925. Pastors and teachers were paid out of local church association funds. Church buildings were constructed almost by voluntary labour and at the expense of the

Christian Communities themselves. By 1927, there were about 2000 Tangkhul Christians. In 1928 when Manipur Baptist Convention replaced Manipur Baptist Association, permission was granted to the missionaries to evangelize the entire hill region of the state. Thus access was gained to many more tribes.

The Tangkhuls were very active in evangelizing the neighbouring tribes. As mentioned earlier they sent evangelists to Mao area as early as 1924. In 1932 two evangelists, T.Luikham and G.H. Maya went to Somra Nagas (the name by which Tangkhuls Nagas are known there) in Burma (Myanmar). The Tangkhuls planned to take up a permanent work there, but eventually gave up because of objections from Burma Mission. The local people were not ready to accept the new faith except in the case of one young man-Thabung who was baptized by the Tangkhul missionary.

In the 1940's two important Christian organizations were formed. One was the Christian Endeavour Union (CEU) and the other was the Women's Society. The Tangkhul Christian Endeavour Union was established in 1941 but the Second World War hindered its normal activities. In 1947 its activities were revived again, however due to lack of funds it could not function well. It was only in 1955 that it became well organized with full time workers. Champhang Jajo became the first CEU promotes.

The Tangkhuls women's society was founded in 1946, at the association meeting, which was at Huining (Halong) Baptist Church. In this meeting the missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Supplee encouraged the Tangkhul women to start work for the women's Society and said that they should start meeting in their respective Churches. Mrs. Supplee contributed the first subscription for the society. At the meeting Rs. 9.25 was collected for the women's

society fund. The Tangkhul women's society was then organized. The first office bearers were, R. Sanamla of Ukhrul—chairperson, Phaniltla of Huining—vice-chairperson, Hangmila of Ukhrul—secretary, Ningmasai of Teinem—treasurer.

The Second World War affected the work of the Tangkhul Baptist Church. Tangkhul area was a battleground. Regular Christian work could not be maintained and many Church buildings were destroyed. For about six months normal life was grounded to a halt. Scores of villages were razed to the ground and villagers fled to the jungles to save their lives.

### **Case 9**

Name of the informant: Mr. Shimray

Age: 82 years old

*“Ishava-ishavana okathuiwui rairei kakhanewui khararchan hangchithei thei chiya. Ila katetenaova phaningunga kha nganuina sahaokada atam chiwui kachot kachang chi mathada matheikhuimana. Ishava-ishavana hangda ishiwui shimla mei kachuili zanghaoda yongung yongva sada kaphungli zangngathum pam iji. Ngathum zathaoda Sundaylila yarui ngarumda seiha kasa makhuiamana ji. Hunphunli remeikapta sakaka vareshim chila nongmei kala meina zakshilak eina sazahaowa kha raiwui thili semkaluishita da hanga.”*

English translation:

*“My parents used to tell us how they suffered during World War II. I was small so I could vaguely remember the scenario of war and couldnot really understand the hardships. My parents said that they ran helter-skelter since their house was caught on fire. We hid in the jungle for days and we could not gather together for worship on Sunday. The first Church*

*building of Ukhrul was also badly affected by fire and gunshot but it got repaired after the war over.”*

Nevertheless the challenge was met and recovery after the war was rapid. By 1950, Tangkhul Church with more than 10,000 members was the largest and strongest of a single tribe in Manipur. (PCPC 2002)

### **5.7 Persecution period in Ukhrul (1916- 1925)**

Mr. Thikham succeeded Mr. Raihao as the chief of Ukhrul after he expired. During his headship from 1916- 1925 the Christian were oppressed and discriminated for he was awfully against Christianity. They were tortured physically -beaten up and covered their bruised body with *lenghui* (a kind of thorny plant that sting). The inability to bear the torture made them leave their houses and shift to a place where the Christian missionaries lived. The Christian household in that colony kept increasing and when it crossed 20 households, they wrote a memorandum to the government to provide lease. Their memorandum was granted and thus Mr. A.R. Hollei became the first chief of that colony.

#### **Case 10**

Name of the informant: Masotmi

Age: 45 years old

*“Reda vareshiwui otram khangathabingna pamkasa apamchi, vareshibingli rekakharek atam wui eina tang akha ngasahaowa. Atam chitharan Pettigrewna Church wui khararnaobingli hithada ngahana, “Beautiful hill” kachi hili hunphun tuina kathada hangrakhala? Chieina athumna “Phungyo” chiyada kahang eina chithakha apam hili Phungyo hohaosada mayangarok haoda 1916 wui eina thuilaga Phungyoda zathaowa.”*

English translation:

*“The place where the Christian missionaries settled became a colony during the period of persecution in Ukhrul. During that time Pettigrew asked the Church elders about the meaning of “Beautiful hill” in Tangkhul language. They said that it is called “Phungyo”. Therefore Pettigrew decided that their colony should be called Phungyo and thus that colony has been known as Phungyo since 1916.”*

Later in the year 1937 the prosecutor Thikham apologized for his wrongdoings and asked forgiveness to the Church leaders and converted into Christianity.

The then SDO, L.L. Peter was furious to know that many had started converting into Christianity. He started persecuting Christian and gave the following general notice: 1. Preaching Christianity is restricted (vide order no. 123/Uk/P/2/12/1924), 2. Exchanging letter regarding Christianity is restricted (vide order no. 14-dated 14/11/24) and 3. Open preaching/ evangelistic work is restricted (vide order no. 106Ukh/P/7/11/24). He filed several cases against Christians and punished many. They were beaten up, sent to jail, used them as forced labour etc. (PCPC 2002). Peter took undue advantages of the people in the name of the government. During the paddy plantation season he forced them to work on the road for two or three weeks, used them as porters to carry army rations between Imphal and Ukhrul and even sexually assaulted young ladies. Later a petition to remove him from Ukhrul was submitted to J.C. Higgins, the Political Agent. Having found the allegations against Peter to be true Peter was transferred to a distant place (Ruivanao 2008).

## **5.8 The arrival of other denominations**

The first Catholic missionary to set foot in Manipur was Fr. Ansgar Koenigsbauer who visited Imphal in 1912. He was graciously received by the King and was granted permission to open a mission house in Imphal. Unfortunately, due to the limited resources of the Assam Missions, both in terms of personnel and finances, the opportunity thus afforded could not be availed of. It is said that Fr. Leo Piaseski also visited Imphal a few times during those years, probably, only to meet his Irish Catholic friend, Dr. Mc Hiver, the Medical Officer of Imphal.

In 1948, Fr. O. Marengo and Fr. A. Collussi visited Ukhrul at the invitation of some of the students of the village studying in Catholic schools in Dibrugarh, Guwahati and Shillong. The Maharaja of Manipur gave them an audience, and at the request of the students, gave them permission to open a mission in the hills. He cautioned them not to evangelize the plains of Manipur.

The 1940s were rough years for the Tangkhul Baptist Church. A schism broke out in 1946, mostly on the grounds of payment of salary to the evangelists and pastors. Some of the leaders decided to join some other Christian Church. Some went to Assam and joined the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) mission.

Around that time, a student by name Marious Hongrey, hailing from Ukhrul, was baptized in Dibrugarh, —the first Catholic from Manipur. Soon after that, another student from Hundung, Dominic Shomi too embraced the Catholic faith in Shillong.

In December 1951, Dominic Shomi returned to his village for vacations. Being an educated and much loved young man; the dissident Baptist leaders met him and discussed

their problem with him. He spoke to them about the Catholic Church. At their request, he wrote to Bishop S. Ferrando of Shillong, requesting him to send a priest to instruct them. The Bishop directed Rev. Fr. Marochino, the resident chaplain of the Sisters working in the Military Hospital in Kohima, to visit Hundung. After a hazardous journey, he arrived in Hundung on February 10, 1952. On the following day, after having instructed the people on the essential tenets of the Catholic Church, he received into the Church 33 families with 350 members to the Church. (Pudussery 1993)

### **5.9 Progress of other denominations**

The progress of other denominations (i.e., Catholic and SDA) in Ukhrul is not so remarkable comparing with that of Baptist mission. According to the Government of India 2001 census, the town has 3241 households with a total of 20,156 (11,514 male and 8,642 female) population. There are three Christian denominations—six Baptist churches, two Catholic churches and three Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) church in Ukhrul town. (see table 3.2, p.48)

The reasons for less progressive of other denominations vary though the main reason according to the Catholic is that “the Protestants were habituated to think that the areas where they worked were their sacred precincts where no one else should step in. So they came to consider the Catholics as intruders.” (Pudussery 1993)

The present study reveals that the time of arrivals also has something to do with the limited progress of other denominations.

## Case 11

Name of the informant: Mayopam

Age: 65 years old

*“Tangkhulli Catholic hi 1952li haophoka. Atamchiliva Ukhrlwui mi kachung kachava Baptist sahairasai. Zam mareikharar kaikhamang vareshi masala leisai. Catholicwui kathanabingna Tangkhulnao kaikha zam mareirarmada vareshi masathuwa kachi kasha eina athumna thangmeilak eina sada athumli zam manglala vareshi sapaiyada kahang eina athumna ringphalak eina vareshi sahaowa.”*

English translation:

*“ The Catholic started their mission only in the year 1952, by that time almost all the people of Ukhrl had converted into Baptist except for a few who could not restraint themselves for taking rice beer. When the Catholic missionaries realized that taking rice beer is the only reason for not converting into Christianity, they dealt with it wisely. They assured them that they can continue taking it even after becoming Christian. People who were ready to become Christian gladly accept the offer.”*

Another reason for slow growth of other denominations according to my informants is that some of the Baptist leaders who decided to join other denominations during 1940s became Catholic. As a result the Baptist of Ukhrl considers Catholic as a faction/conflict group. The same reason is applicable with the SDA too because some of the Baptist leaders who came out for the same reason during 1940s became SDA. Of course they could win a handful of soul but not much because the Tangkhuls are fond of pork meat. There are not so many people who could give up pork meat and red tea in the name of religion.

## 5.10 Reasons for conversion

Reasons for conversion can be broadly divided into two—spiritualism and materialism.

### 5.10.1 Spiritualism

#### Case 12 (a)

Name of Informant: Mr. Rumthao

Age: 93 years old

*“Romans 3:23 & 24. Mi saikora morei saserhaoda Varewui tekhamatei chili makashungrarmana. Kha Varewui lukhamashan lemnet chiwui athi shurda Jesu Christana ngatang khamiwui manga eina athumli mashungmihara.*

*John 3:16. Khikhala jila Varena apuk-apagvali leishina kahaiwui vang awui Naohonaotong chi mi, khikhalajila ali shitkasanga mi kachiva kashiman mavaila katang makhavai kharing samphangra.*

*Atungli mikahai Bible verse khani hina ili matuimiya. I ngnuida leilakha, Vareshila masaranglakha Vareshiwui Worshimli kaya kala Vareshimla k aka jiya. Varewui tui kasha samphangching salala ning khangatei hi khiwuivang eina tarkar sakhala kachihi ina bhapa mata samana. Ihi kapha mina da ina phaningsai khiwuivang khala jilaga ihi ishava-ishavawui kahang nganalaka kala khararnaoli khaya shitheilaka. Khalila malimana kala kakapik tuilamamatuimana. Kha inaRomans 3:23 &24 hi palaga machuk kazak kachi tharan I hi morei kaphunga ngasasai kala iwui morei mangathumrar thuwa. Chiwuivang eina iwui morei saikorachi huikhamiya Varivarali hangphata awui nao ngasahaowa. Kachiva Varewui tuili hithada kapihai “Kha ithumna ithumwui morei Vareli hangphatakha*

*ana awui tuingashit chi makaimara, kala mashun chi samira: ithumwui moreila pheomida khayon sakahai saikorawui eina ana tharmira. I John 1:9.”*

English translation:

*“Romans 3:23 &24. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

*John 3:16. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

*The above two Bible verses spoke to me. When I was a boy I went to a mission school and used to attend church even before conversion. In spite of hearing God’s word regularly, I could not understand why I needed repentance. I thought that I was a good boy because I obeyed and respected my parents and elders. I neither stole nor lied. But when I meditated on Romans 3:23 &24, I acknowledged my sin and could no longer cover up my iniquity. Thus I confessed my transgression to the Lord who forgave the guilt of my sin. I then became the child of the Lord. For the Bible says “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9.”*

**Case 12 (b)**

Name of the informant: Ningreingam

Age: 60 years old

*“Ina Vareshi shimkhurli rarkasalala Vareshiwui maramli tarakha matheimana. Varewui paokapha tui toilak eina mangana samana. Iva mashitkasang, ningmaong kazar mi sasai. I kala ishi shimkhurna Vareshirinli makhamaya kala zakshida kasa maningmana. Thada*

*thuklak eina bhap makata kala maning kasang maya. Kha thangkha ina mi akhali samphanga kala china ili ningot tarakha sangasaka. Mipa china ili Churchwui khamongli Varewui paokaphawui maramli kakapi lairiknao akha miya kala hithada hanga, “Varewui rao akha sada ina nali hi khamina”. Ngazinshong ina lairik chi payanglaga Varewui maramli mathameida theingai haowa. Ina Varewui tuila paphok haowa kala Churchla kaphok haowa. Atam chitharan ina laa kasali ningsang sahaoda Church choirli laa thankhami ngasahaowa. Kala chiwuivang eina Church toilak eina kaki kaji tahaowa. Varewui tui ningsanglak eina khangana hi zingkum 25 wui lungli china kharena. Varewui mina tamkachithei chi ina mathalak eina matheishing khuirar mana. Ina ali khikha katharing maleilakla ngazeka; kala arui ina phaningunglaka atam chili ina ali khikha lukhamashan maleila zakshilak eina phayet kahai thai. Ana tamchitheida khalei chiwui einala ina makhamaya tarakha phashoka kala khangahanla tarakha ngahanna kha ina chiwui ngahanka khami samphangki kachiwui mahutli iwui ning wuklung chingri kahai maleithuwa. Thang ngaya matakak eina I thihaoki kachi thada phaningkhui. Kala chili I thihaosi kachiva meifa vara kachila thei. Chieina ngathor thakva imang seiha sakhavai ina kaphungli vai. Ina Varivarali ningtonglak eina seiha salaka iwui morei pheomikhavai poya. I nali khuisang haosi kachiva nawui pao khamatha tamchitheira da ina chithang hang kahai chi phaningunga. Ina shok kahai chi majuk mamanda shongfali zatta kala chili iwui ning wuklung chingri vari haowa. Morei sakahaiwui ning machingri kharar saikora chi khuithuimi haowa. Chithangwui eina thuilaka iwui mirin Jesu Christawui pao hashok kavaiwuivang chikat haowa.”*

English translation:

*“I knew very little about the Christian faith, though I was born and brought up in a Christian family. I never heard any preaching of the gospel on a regular basis I was a skeptic. My family and I were not religious rebels. We were simply oblivious to real Christianity. One incident in particular that touched me deeply concerned a man I met. At the door of the church the man handed me a gospel tract, and remarked, “I deliver this to you as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Looking at it later that evening, I was curious to know more about God. I began reading the Bible and attending Church. My passion for music, led me to the Church choir where I became the choir director. Therefore I had to be in Church regularly. For the first time in my 25 years, I began to pay close attention to a minister’s sermon. I was not able to understand clearly from his preaching. I used to converse with him freely; and I now think I criticized his sermons unmercifully. I raised so many questions and objections against his preaching but instead of having my questions answered, I began to notice a growing restlessness within myself. One night a strange feeling came over me as if I were about to die. I knew that if I did I should sink down to hell. Early in the morning I went to the woods as I felt that I must pray alone. I poured out my heart to the Lord and asked forgiveness for the wrong things I had done. I recollect to have said, “If I am ever converted, I will preach the gospel”. I soon reached the road that led to the village and began to reflect upon what had passed; I found that my mind had become most wonderfully quiet and peaceful. All sense of sin and consciousness of guilt departed from me. From that day onward, my life was devoted to telling others about Jesus Christ.”*

**Case 12 (c)**

Name of Informant: Ruivanao

Age: 98

*“William Pettigrewna Ukhruilli khawunghi athumli leikashiwuivang einana kachi bhap kata samkaphang wuivang eina ishava-ishava Vareshi sahao iji. William Pettigrewna ali sathat khavai kasa bingli pheokhami, langmeida athum wuivang kapha sakhami chi theilaka athum matak khak hao iji.*

*Athumlila akha eina akha leishi khangarok kala yangkashi binglila leishikhavai tamchithe iji. Ishava-ishavana hangda anaMatthew 6: 14-15 chi latlui latluida tamchithe iji. Chili hithada hanga, “Nathumna mibingwui khayon khamang chi pheomi akha kazingramli khaleiya navanala nathumli pheomira. Kha nathumna mibingwui khayon khamang mapheomiakha navanala nathumwui khayon khamang mapheomimara.””*

English translation:

*“My parents got converted after they perceived that William Pettigrew came to Ukhruul out of love. They were amazed when the William Pettigrew forgave those people who tried to kill him and instead did everything that was good for them. He lived an exemplary life.*

*They were also taught to love one another—even to love their enemy. My parents said that he repeatedly preached them from the book of Matthew 6: 14-15 which says “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.””*

**Case 12 (d)**

Name of the informant: Ningatei

Age: 95 years old

*“Iramnao kaikhava varewui lukhamashan leikashi tui shahaoda vareshi sangaisalala kameowui khaonkashili ngacheehaida masamana. Athumwui kayangli shunkahai wonra (thing la ngalungkui) chi makhuishok lengmana. Athumna khangachee pava wonra chi phurkashok pali kameowui khonshat tada kathila shokpaishina kachina. Chieina ina Vareshiwui varena kameoli pangshap leimeiya kachi chithei khavai athumwui wonra chi phurshokmi haowa. Ili khikha kala kashi makashok chi theilaga athumla vareshi sahaowa.”*

English translation:

*“Some of his villagers were not willing to convert into Christianity though they were convinced to some extent that the Christian God is a powerful, merciful a God that would answer their prayer. Their fear of conversion was the worry they had over the need to discontinue practicing their traditional cultural practices like erecting poles, stone monuments etc. in the courtyard. I had to prove to make them understand that the Christian God is more powerful. Consequently I removed the poles and monuments from their courtyard. When they learned that no harm falls on me, they converted into Christianity.”*

**Materialism****Case 13 (a)**

Name of the Informant: Mrs. Nimri

Age: 69

*“Vareshibingwui mirinchi theilaga Ila lairik tamngai haowa. Athumna lairik tamkhuilaga lui mavala ringphalak eina shorkarwui ot sada okthuiya. Langmeida athum bingchi khaya kalaka. Chiwuiwang eina ishava-ishavali Mission Schoolli lairik tamngasak khavai poi. Chithalaga ila kala ishava ishavala vareshi sathuihaowa.”*

English translation:

*“I saw that the lives of those people who converted to Christianity were comfortable and easy. Moreover they got government jobs and were no longer dependent only on agriculture. They became more authoritative and gained more respect. Seeing their new and changed lives I also wanted to receive education. Therefore I requested my parents to send me to Mission School. I gradually converted to Christianity and brought my parents close to Christ.”*

### **Case 13 (b)**

Name of the informant: Ngasaiphung

Age: 60 years old

*“Vareshi kathada sahaokhala kachiwui khararchan akha ishava ishavana hangchitheiya. Achalakha iram Khangkhui awunga chi vareshili chin kalak sahaoda vareshibingli khawui eina kasam hao iji. Kha naoda ana okathuiwui rairei khare chili Franceli valaga chiwui eina hankhaungli kasham kahai bingli hounglui haowa ji. Kathakhala chilaga Franceli khava tharan athumli shoi salu kaji eina kachungava masatheithuda pangva shoi sai iji kha ava chingarada awui aming kapitheisahaoda aliva chiwuiwang eina khaya shi iji.*

*Chiwuivang eina ana vareshi saakha aramnaobingla lairik katam samphangrada phaningkhuida vareshi sakhavai katommi iji.”*

English translation:

*“There is a very fascinating story about conversion, which my parents told us. In my village (Khangkhui), once the headman was strongly against Christianity and hence converts were exiled. Surprisingly after his return from France (World War 1) he called back all those people on exile. While in France they were asked to give their signature. While many of them could not write their names and gave a thumbprint fortunately the headman could at least write his name. As a result he was given regards. This made him believed that if people embrace Christianity then they will surely receive education. Thus from then on he promoted Christianity.”*

**Case 13 (c)**

Name of the informant: Ruivanao

Age: 98 years old

*“Vareshi kasahi akha eina akha macha khangarokwui einala ngavai. Somdal khawui hangvabingna yaruili bichar mathada masamili athumna nguiyada kaphananga pali sa kala zam konglaka phaza khangarumli akachang sathui haowa. Kaikhava kakong chi mika khavai maleimada ngalei khayorla zanga kala kaikhava leiman tarakha phungkhui. Chiwuivang eina mi shinina shimkhur 70 wui mathun salaka khawui hangvali ngashunga. Athum saikorachi vareshi sahaoradala tai. Chiwuivang eina athumna Ruichumhaoli vasamphanga kala athumna khawui hangvabingli otsak mangarum ngaithurada hanga.”*

English translation:

*“There is a case of conversion just because they wanted to be different from rivals. The village Council of Somdal village was more interested in imposing fines and penalties upon innocent villagers on false charges and convictions. Guilty persons and parties had to bring meat and local wine as penalty. The village council consumed these articles. What was supposed to be dispensation of justice became a means of enjoying bacchanalian meals by the elders. Many families had to sell their fields and lands to pay the fines and later on went into debt. The villagers found it unfair and biased. Out of despair the villagers fought back. They selected seven persons representing 70 families. Significantly, all of them decided to become Christians. They met Ruichumhao and told him about their decision to become Christians. They also expressed their desire to dissociate themselves from the village elders, which could mean effectively cutting their relationship with the village.”*

**Case 13 (d)**

Name of the informant: Yaruigam

Age: 89 years old

*“Ishava khanong sasaya. Ana kameoli phakaphaya kala sharphahor toilak eina khuikasaya. Ana kakaza kaikhala raimishapa kala kathinaolila chan ngazekshapa. Chikatha chi sakhavai kameoli kaphachi marakhaliva lui khayorla zanga. Kha naoda ana varewui otram khangathabingna khikha machikatla kazat raimi kashap chi theilaga ali kasatlak haowa kala chiwuivang eina vareshi sahaowa.”*

English translation:

*“My father was a folk practitioner. He performed sacrifices and rituals on all the important occasions. He could heal sicknesses to some extent and could even converse with the dead. He approached kameo (deity) and offered sacrifices that sometimes reached to the extent of making people sell even immovable properties. But when my father saw the Christian missionaries who healed the sick without offering any sacrifice, he was impressed and converted.”*

**Case 13 (e)**

Name of the Informant: Ningreiwon

Age: 55

*“Reda ishayi ishawova dukanwui ari chi mashaingaiiki chi iji. Chi shaiakha athumwui kameona malung vatpai shina da phaning iji. Varewui otram ngathame bingna athumli ngairon eina bhap takhangasak eina shaiphok naowa da hanga. Chithada anili kakaza raikhami wuivang vareshi sathuihaowa.”*

English translation:

*“My grandparents were initially not willing to accept modern medicines. They believed that they would offend their deity by taking medicines. The missionaries, however, gradually won their confidence. In appreciation for the service rendered to them by the missionaries they became Christians.”*

**Case 13 (f)**

Name of the informant: Mr. Sochipem

Age: 30 years old

*“Iwui Sunday school ojana vareli khuikasangwui ringkapha khararchan hangchitheiya. Chiya, William Pettigrewna Tangkhulnaobingli hithada hang iji, “nathumna shitsangchaoda Jesuwui ming eina poakha, nathumna kapopo chi mira.” Chiwuivang eina athum kaikhana bartin miluda panglak eina seiha sada khaleichi William Pettigrewna shakhui haokada, athumwui shitkasang masuita khavai ana bartin chi ngathumda haimihao iji. Athumna seiha kasa ngahanka khami chi theilaga vareshi sahaowa da hanga. Hiwui otsot hi MBC wui centenary 1996, Imphal li khamayonli skit eina ngareo kachithei chi ila choir member akha sasahaoda theikhuiya.”*

English translation:

*“My Sunday school teacher used to tell us a very interesting and a true story of conversion. The story goes like this, “William Pettigrew told the Tangkhuls that if they pray and ask anything in the name of Jesus and if they believe that He will answer their prayers they will definitely receive what they ask for. Interestingly some innocence people prayed aloud and asked for a bucket. William Pettigrew overheard their prayer and thus he stealthily placed a bucket for them. As a result they got converted.” This particular scene was brought out in the form of a skit in the centenary celebration of MBC in 1996 in Imphal where I was also participated as a student choir member.”*

### **Case 13 (g)**

Name of the Informant: Mrs. Suiningla

Age: 53 years old

*“Ishayi eina ishawova ramnao chungkhameina vareshi sathuihaoda anila vareshi masa akha yaruirinli maokathui thahaoda vareshi sakahainada hanga.”*

English translation:

*“My great grandparents converted as they wanted to be with the dominant group. Christian members increased by leaps and bounds and dominated hau (traditional belief system). When the later became recessive, they found lesser space in public life. This compelled them to become Christian.”*

One thing that can be drawn from all the above cases is that there was always an influence other than the spiritual that attracts a person to convert.

## **5.11 Biographies of some of the early church leaders**

### **5.11.1 T. Luikham (1890-1975)**

T. Luikham was one of the first educated people amongst the Tangkhuls. He belonged to the first Christian generation. He was born in 1890 and as a small boy he saw the coming of the first Christian missionary William Pettigrew. He was one of Pettigrew students. He was baptized, when he was sixteen years old on 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1906 by W. Pettigrew in a small pond, which is now christened as ‘William Pettigrew Pond’ in Ukhul. By 1907 the

Christians numbered seventy but Rev. Pettigrew was not satisfied as the new converts failed to maintain the standard of true Christian life. There was increasing opposition to Pettigrew when he tried to discipline them. Rev. Pettigrew drew up a list of rules that all the converts would henceforth be expected to follow. He was one of the 7 out of 70 who remained firm and obedient to the Lord. After his school education he served as a teacher in Ukhrul Mission School for three years i.e. from 1918-1920. Thereafter, he worked as a Superintending Evangelist, of North-Eastern Area, Manipur for more than two decades—from 1921-42. It was during this time that the then SDO of Ukhrul, Mr. L.L Peter persecuted many Church leaders and imprisoned Mr. T.Luikham. In 1932, along with Mr. G. Maya took the Gospel to Somrah tract, Burma. Mr. Thebung from Somrah accepted Christ and was baptized in the year 1948. From 1945-55 he laboured under Evangelist Eastern Area, CBCNI. His interest in writing evolved in works like the ‘English Tangkhul Dictionary’. He authored many books, such as ‘Tangkhul okthot Mayonza’, ‘History of Manipur Baptist Christian Golden Jubilee’ etc.

#### **5.11.2 M.K Shimray (1895-1967)**

M (Miksha).K Shimray was born in 1895. He began his schooling in the year 1903. He was also one of the educated persons among the Tangkhuls. His date of Baptism was 7-10-1906. He underwent training at Serampore Theological College, Calcutta and started teaching in the year 1912 at Ukhrul M.E School. Two years later he became 2<sup>nd</sup> Master and then the headmaster of the said school. Mr. William Pettigrew gave his incharge of looking after the Church to him when the Mission headquarters was shifted to Kangpokpi and therefore became the pastor of Phungyo from 1917-1927. Rev. Pettigrew wrote about him thus:

“Miksha who entered the school as a raw hidden boy in 1903 with two others of the same kind who entered later and who all three became Christians in 1906 and 1907 took hold of the reigns and upto the present. Miksha is still Headmaster of the School besides Pastor of the Church.”

From 1927-42 he was employed as the headmaster of Kangpokpi Mission School. He was one of the longest serving headmasters of that school. Many tribal leaders were his students. Again he rendered his pastoral service in Phungyo Church from 1954-56.

### **5.11.3 R.S. Ruichumhao (1896-1933)**

R.S. Ruichumhao, popularly known as Haopha, hailed from Shongran (Somdal) village of Ukhrul district. He was born in 7<sup>th</sup> May 1896, which was also the year Rev. William Pettigrew came to Ukhrul village

A Lower Primary School (L.P. School, also known as mission School combined for 3/ 4 villages) was established in 1905 at Phadang village (about 5 km from Shongran village) in collaboration with the mission work of Rev. William Pettigrew. Those days nobody was interested in education and so the government had to coerce the villages to send some students to the school. From Shongran village, 20 children from various clans were selected. R.S Ruichumhao was one of them. Threats, force and persuasion were used to herd them into the school. When he was 9 years of age he began his education in Phadang Mission School where he remained 3 years till he was admitted into Ukhrul Mission School. From this School he learned a great deal about spiritual teachings, which separated him from the old and teachings of his father. At one point of time his father even threatened to kill him because he did not listen to what he believed on the other hand, he

could not make him understand though he knew his belief was quite wrong. He got baptized in 1909 after which he championed for Christ among the Tangkhuls.

During this period, the British administrators outlawed headhunting practice though from time to time this law was broken. To avoid being victimized, the students from Shongran on their way to Phadang would travel on higher grounds and ridges and avoid thick-forested low areas. Therefore he requested his parents to find him a place with one of their relatives at Phadang village. His parents made an arrangement to stay with their relatives, Maishula and her husband Paisho in Phadang. The family found the boy very lovable and honest. They loved him as their own. Ruichumhao on his part faithfully took care of all the family chores. Meanwhile, he continued to shine academically. Ruichumhao always stood first in the class, which earned him the respect and affection of his teachers. Maishula remarked to her husband that the boy's good character and diligent acts were signs of his coming greatness. Ruichumhao also narrated his dream to her. In his dream he was rolling up and down the royal bed in the courtyard of the chief of the village. Maishula interpreted the dream as a mark of fame that he will have some day.

Having finished the Lower Primary education he preceded in 1908 he went to Ukhrul to study for five years from 1908-1912. He interacted intimately with Rev. William Pettigrew, the missionary and founder of the school. During his stay at Ukhrul, Ruichumhao had an extraordinary experience. He narrated the experience to Pettigrew saying that on his way to the bathroom he found himself engulfed in flames but that his body, hair, clothes were not even singed nor did he feel the scorching heat of the fire. Pettigrew advised him to cherish the experience and interpreted the experience as God's power and favour to be poured upon him in the future.

With the help of Pettigrew and the headmaster, plans were made for his further studies at Jorhat High School, Jorhat, Assam. Ruichumhao was 17 years old when he journeyed to Jorhat. After finishing class VIII (eight), he proceeded to Shillong (then in Assam State) for his high school education with the help and recommendation of his teachers and school. However, as he was beginning class X he was summoned back to Manipur by the Political Agent, Lt. Col. H.W.G. Cole and the Raja of Manipur for the purpose of acting as one of the interpreters for 2000 laborers from Manipur enlisted to go to France during World War 1. Pettigrew took maximum advantage of his position as missionary and School Inspector by using his converts and his students to help him in the Labor Corps enlistment.

An official requisition for 2000 recruits to go to France as Labour Corps was sent to all the villages of Manipur. Then the order reached the Tangkhul Naga tribe of Ukhrul district, they gripped with fear of the unknown. They thought this was a governmental ploy to steal their young men and properties and thus some began digging holes to hide themselves and their household items. When Ruichumhao saw this pandemonium, he embarked on a whirlwind tour meeting the chiefs and elders of the villages convincing them that defying the government order would only bring reprisals and punishment upon them. On the other hand, co-operation would bring material benefit and welfare to the people.

In France they worked for about 1 year and 6 months as laborers in the battlefields. Every morning and evening, he would lead those who were willing to prayer and worship. Every morning at 4.30 a.m. he would go to a quiet place in the forest and pray for the laborers, soldiers, the wounded, the dying, and for the quick end of the War. Some of the

Tangkhum laborers became Christians after returning from the War. This is without ignoring the role of Ruichumhao's preaching and teaching to them.

On his return from France after the World War 1 he was offered the post of Circle Officer in view of his honesty and strict discipline. But he declined the offer because he was already committed to his mission of spreading the gospel. He became the headmaster of the Ukhrul M.E. School and the Somdal L.P School. In 1921 he gave up his headmastership at Ukhrul to become the pastor of his village giving up his prestigious position, status and salary. From 1920 to 1930, he served as the Superintending Pastor cum Evangelist of the western region of Ukhrul area. He also felt that itineration is essential for the excess of a mission. He went to many Tangkhum villages preaching the gospel. Many a times he was called by God to travel to the neighbouring villages to settle disputed that existed between the Christian and non-Christian those days.

In 1931 he was afflicted with tuberculosis. The doctor advised him to take maximum rest. He contemplated on the advice for quite sometime but his passion for evangelism overshadowed his concern for his own health. His burden for his people could no longer confine him to his bed. Trusting in God's grace he decided to risk his life by taking the gospel to all the Tangkhum villages. He died on 17<sup>th</sup> of January 1933 at a young age of 37. (Ruivanao 2008)

#### **5.11.4 Ngashanphung Luikham (1898-1979)**

He was born on 1898. He was sixteen years old when he was baptized on 2-9-1917. He became a teacher of Mission School Hundung (Humpum) from 1918 to 1919. From 1920-24, he was teaching in Mission School Ukhrul. Thereafter he went to Mao and

taught in Mission School Punanamai, Mao from 1925-26. He was back to Ukhrul in 1927 to take up a pastoral service at Phungyo Baptist Church and continued till 1934. He became a pastor-cum-teacher in Grihang village since 1935 till 1936. Again he worked as a pastor-cum-teacher in Shiroy village from 1937-49. He labored as a pastor of Paorei Baptist Church from 15-2-50 to 3-3-63. He dedicated four years service as a pastor at Langdang Phunghon Baptist Church i.e., from 1964-67. Despite his old age and long-term services for the Lord he toiled wholeheartedly as a pastor of Hunphun Baptist Church from 1971-75. After his lifelong service on earth, he went to be with the Lord on November 1979.

#### **5.11.5 Kanrei Shaiza**

Kanrei Shaiza was also one of the first educated and Christian converts among the Tangkhuls. He was born one year ahead of the coming of Rev. William Pettigrew i.e., in the year 1895. He was baptized in Ukhrul on 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1906 by Rev. Pettigrew. Like the other early converts he too became a teacher of Mission School, Ukhrul from 1909 -1911. He took up the same post from 1915-1917. He was among the labour corps who went to France in the year 1917 during World War I. When he returned in 1919 he resumed his job as a teacher and continued till 1921. He became the Head Evangelist of Northern Circle in 1922. Later in the year 1924 he again chose to take up his profession of teaching. He worked in Mission School, Kangpokpi in 1925. He then returned to his village Ukhrul Mission School and gave his best service for almost five years i.e., from 1925-29. In 1935 he was proposed to be an Evangelist of South Circle. With an aim of preaching the gospel to the students he took up his passion of teaching and labored at Govt. U.P School and at the same time serving as an Hon. Pastor of Phungyo Baptist Church from 1937-39. From 1940- 1952 he was teaching in Ukhrul Govt. High School.

### **5.11.6 Chinaochin Shingnaisui (1899-1982)**

Chinaochin was also a strong believer of Christ. He went to Mission School and converted into Christianity. He was born on 1899 and baptized on 2-9-1917 by the first foreign missionary Rev. W. Pettigrew. He became an Evangelist of North Circle in 1934. He took the courage to go to Somra Tract (Upper Burma) and worked there for a year i.e., from 1934-35. By 1936 he became the Evangelist of North Sardar. He was a teacher of Kangpokpi Mission School from 1936-39. During his service as a pastor in Phungyo Baptist Church from 1939- 40, he was appointed as the Head Evangelist of Chinjaroi Circle. He died on 1-4-1982. (Sources: PCPC 2002)

### **5.11.7 Vashumnao Phanitphang (1903-1977)**

Vashumnao Phanitphang was born in the year 1903 at Talui village. His father was V.S. Makharing and mother Vayurla. He had two younger sisters, (L) Ngalashingai and Thinengla. He married R. Shangsana daughter of Kahaosan Rungsung of Talui Village. They were blessed with eleven children.

Vashumnao studied up to class III at Talui Govt. U.P School. He then studied Class IV and V at Ukhrul Govt. M.E School. He was baptized in the year 1920 at his village. He passed out Class VI from Kangpokpi Mission School in 1924. He continued his education at Jorhat, Upper Assam and completed Matriculation in the year 1932.

From 1932-1934 he studied at Welsh Mission Theological College, Cherapunjee, Assam (now in Meghalaya), and passed Diploma securing First Class. Later the said Diploma came to be known as Graduate in Theology (B.Th.). He was the first theological graduate in Manipur. His graduation in Theology was a blessing to the Tangkhul and

Manipur Christians. As the only graduate theologian he had to go far beyond his village to reach the gospel to the unreached areas.

He was appointed as Superintending Pastor, Manipur North East Western Sector in 1935. He rendered his service for five years.

Manipur Christian Association (MCA) was formed in the year 1917. In the later part of 1928 MCA was reorganized and the name was changed to Manipur Baptist Convention, under which Manipur churches were divided into three Associations, viz. North East Association, Sadar Association and North West Association. This division was done on regional basis and not on tribal line. The Ukhrul area, which was known as Manipur North East, was again sub-divided into Eastern Sector and Western Sector. Phanitphang was appointed to be Evangelist for both the Sectors. When the overseas missionaries were ordered by the Govt. of India to leave the country he and few of his colleagues had to shoulder the heavy responsibility to take care of the Churches in North East India. He served as a General Evangelist from 1940- 1959. He took a break from his service for a year for further studies in Serampore College. He returned with B.Th. degree in 1951 and continued his service.

Phanitphang was elected as an Executive Secretary of Manipur Baptist Convention in 1960. He retired from MBC on 31.03.1976. Having rendered a long service, three terms (fifteen years), he was awarded a gold medal on the day he retired. By the beginning of 1977 his health began to fail. On 03-09-1977 he breathed his last. (The Tangkhul Theological Association, 2010)

All the sacrifices and dedications of the missionaries did not go in vain. Today, almost all Tangkhul are Christians. Taking the field Ukhrul Town as an example, the changes at various levels of society can be seen in the following chapter.

**Note**

1. The Assam mission records indicate that the Missionary union took over the Manipur field from the Arthington Mission on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1896.