CHAPTER 5
RELGIOUS LIFE

Our ancient and primitive fore fathers were superstitious in their belief and highly ritualistic in their approach to the deities which they considered possessing supernatural and divine powers. They believed in the existence of different kinds of gods and goddesses. According to them some gods were benevolent while others were malevolent. The benevolent gods blessed human beings with wealth, health, rich vegetable and crops, while the malevolent gods were enemy to human beings. They cause threat and harmed them - inflicting upon them sufferings, hardships, diseases etc. Disruptive natural forces like thunder; storm, earthquake, lightening, epidemic, disease, famine etc. were considered the manifestations of the wrath of the malevolent gods. Different names were given to the god’s and goddesses, and different kinds of sacrifices were offered to appease these gods which they considered responsible for different kinds of diseases.

5. I Early religion.

Eventhough our fore fathers could not specifically mentioned, they believed that among the different kinds of gods and goddesses, there should be one God which was supreme, omnipotent, and omniscient. This God should be the creator of the universe - all living things in the sky and on earth.¹ But the Zomis in general and the Ngaihtes in particular did not worship this conceptualized supreme God in the form of religious cult. Notwithstanding, among the different kinds of sacrifices which they performed in the

past, a sacrifice called *Sumtong Sacrifice* was performed as religious rite. This was because the grand mother of legendary Liando and Thangho, who told Liando and Thanghou on the eve of her departure from the duo, that they should worship her by offering sacrifices whenever they were in trouble and were in need of her help. Therefore, Liando and Thanghou offered sacrifices to their legendary mother every year. This worship of *Liandou Pusa* or *Cult of Liando* became their early tradition and religious practice.\(^2\)

### 5.2 Summary of Liando and Thanghou history

The father of the legend Liando and Thanghou died while they were small children. Their mother left them to get married with another person. The two brothers led a very wretched and pathetic life. While they were at Geltui village the poverty struck Liando and Thanghou could not have square meals a day. One day an old woman who journeyed to their village could not find a place to take shelter in their village. She came to Liandou and Thanghou’s house at night and asked them for shelter. Liando and Thanghou said to each other, “As we have no grandmother let us accept this old woman to be our grandmother”. As such the old woman was made to stay at their house. They left their house during daytime - going to their field, leaving behind the old woman alone to look after their house. Even though they did not store any food grain in their granary, the old woman cooked food every day for the two brothers. Suspicious of the way how she procured the rice grains, Liandou and Thanghou, one day hide themselves and secretly observed how their grandmother procured food for them. They found that when she shook her skirt, rice grains fall down

\(^2\) Interview with Mr.D.Khaizalian 75 years of Upper Lamka on 2.6.2007
on the ground from her body and those rice grains were cooked for Liandou and Thanghou. Due to abhorrence, unable to control himself Thanghou cried out saying, “Kakih” (I disgusted). The old woman heard the voice and said, “if you disgusted me I shall disappear at your sumtong (rice grinding place at the veranda of the house) and, whenever you are in distress and feel lonely and in need of my help offer to me the flesh of a mature chicken every year as a sacrificial offering, so that I can give you my blessings”. Having said these, the old women disappeared at the Sumtong like whirl of smoke. Liandou and Thanghou performed the sacrifice every year. As such they became prosperous and wealthy. They had sufficient cloth to wear; their granary became full of food grains and vegetables, their compound turned into sheds which houses large number of cows, mithuns, dogs and pigs. On the arch of the roof, above the veranda, large numbers of chicken sheds were fixed for chicken breeding, and their reputation spread far and wide. Their mother willing to see the wealth of her children came to Liando and Thanmghou’s house. Liandou and Thanghou gave her worm welcome and collected one egg each from every breeding shed and filled their mother’s basket with eggs.  

5.3 Divinely and spiritual powers

(i) Pathian Lungjai

The greatest almighty God was Pathian lungjai. “Pathian” means God, and “lungjai” means almighty. Pathian lungjai was believed to be possessing power over natural forces. Whenever lightening with loud thunderbolt took place followed by strong

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storm striking and causing violent shaking to houses, blowing violently over trees with heavy downpour, old people use to burne the leaves of a tree called *Kham* tree (Goniothalamus sesquipedalis) and offered it as a sacrificial offering to the *Pathian lungjai*, saying, “*Pathian lungjai jahngai aw*” – (God almighty be merciful). It was a practice in the past that when old people sat down to take their meal a slice of food was kept beside the dining place for Pathian lungjai. Also, when locally brewed wine was sipped by the old people, a small quantity of the first sip was spit out from the mouth, saying “*Pathian lungjai tai aw*”... (God almighty be satisfied with this).^4^.

![Image](image.png)

Liankhogin Guite, Canchipur, Imphal

(ii) **Kau**

*Kau* were mutable spirits; some of them were mild while others were wild. Their true picture or structure could not be described. At night small light balls moving around the houses or in the periphery of the villages could be seen. Such moving light balls were not human creation but they were mobile spiritual beings which were called *kaus*. *Kaus* can be divided into two types. Those *kaus* which thrives in and around the villages were called *Inkaus*, and those which thrive and live in the forest were called *Gam Kaus*. *Inkaus* were comparatively harmless as compared to the *Gamkaus*. Once

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^4^ Interviewd Mr. Liankhogin Guite, 58years old at Canchipur on 27.10.2009.
there was a man returning home from his neighbour’s house late at night. He saw a small light ball by the side of the road. With the aim of extinguishing the light he meticulously watched the ball and suddenly stamped it with his leg. The light ball instead of being extinguished broke into small pieces and stuck to all over his leg upto the thigh. The man tried to remove the light pieces by scratching them with a piece of stone, and lastly cried aloud for help in dismay.\(^5\) *Gamkaus* were dangerous, sometimes very atrocious. There were some people who were called *Kau Zawl*. “*Kau Zawl*” means having alliance with the spirit. The *kaus* of these *Kauzawl* people, sometimes, because of jealousy bite another person who possess some valuable property or things which they like. Such *kau* bitten people suffered torture; the *Kau* tortured them and they spoke sonorously, sometimes grumbling unconsciously, gnashing their teeth with sputum coming out from the throat. The miracle was that if the hair of the person bitten by the *Kau* was cut while he or she was under such subjugation, then the hair of the *kau zawl*, i.e. who possessed the evil spirit was cutted instead of the persons bitten by the *kau*.

Once, some persons went on tour to a nearby village. On their way back to their home one *kau* from the village which they visited followed them and on reaching the house of one of the travelers the *kau* which followed them bit the old grand mother of the traveler who was at their house. The *kau* spoke out and said, “Your daughter did not welcome me warmly, she did not even offere me wine”. When the *Kau* was asked, how could you come? The *Kau* said, “I crossed the Tuima river by swaying on the spider’s web”. Tuima was the name of a river in Churachandpur district. In fury, the *kau* suck the left eye of the old women; the eye bulged out becoming an eye sore which was a malady till

her dead. There were certain methods for treatment of the kau bitten people. If the kau was threatened to be caught with fishing net, the kau may in fear leave the victim. The most effective method of treatment was to bring the flower of a tree called Suangkua (Erythrina glabrescens) near the victim, or put it under his pillow without the knowledge of the kau bitten person. The Kau would instantly leave the person whom it bit.

(ii) Pheisam

Pheisam was a kind of spirit which had only one thigh. “Phei” means thigh, and “sam” means deficit. Therefore, the spirit was called Pheisam. Even though Pheisam had only one thigh it did not suffer from lack of any physical strength. It could fly from the top of one high tree to the top of another high tree. Its single legged nature could be known from the fact that it left behind him a trail of only one side foot print on the sand beds of Zogam rivers, like Tuivai and Tuipi rivers in Churachandpur district, Manipur. The foot prints were more or less same as that of a small baby. Pheisam loved to live in the forest, particularly among the flowers of a tree called Talsing. Pheisam had the power to control forest animals like deer, bear and wild pig etc. and tended them. Hunters could not shoot them unless they were permitted by Pheisam. But those hunters which had relation with the Pheisam could easily hunt these animals; they could kill not only one but even two animals in a single day. Pheisam could also give vested wealth upon those who worshipped him. Property like money, cattle, rice etc. could be enormously bestowed by Pheisam. If suddenly entered into the house of those who feed Pheisam in their houses, their Pheisam could be seen like a small

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6 Liankhogin Guite: op.cit n.4
children moving around their beds or around the fire place, or some times like small snake searching crumbs of food near the fire place. But if propitiation of the Pheisam is rescinded, the Pheisam became atrocious; it withdrew all the blessings which it had bestyowed on the worshipper - ultimately resulting in a very destituted and wretched condition of the worshipper.\textsuperscript{7}

(v) Keuhthang

Keuhthang was a spirit which usually produces two sounds to make known its presence. When asked what is your name? It will produce two sounds - the first sound was interpreted to mean Keuh, and the second sound as thang. Therefore, this spirit was called Keuhthang. Keuhthang did not do much harm to human beings. Sometimes it drops pieces of earth over the beds at night from the roofs of houses. Keuhthang could also be challenged to play the game called Suktum kihek. i.e. one person holding one end of the Suk (rice pounding stick), another person holding at the other end. The two persons will turn the stick clockwise against each other so as to see who is the stronger. In olden days young people sleeping together at the Dormitory often challenged Keuhthang to play the game of Suktum Kihek. At night more than ten young people holding together firmly a very long log as their common pillow with their hands and stabilizing their position challenged Keuhthang saying, “if you dared, come for the Suktum kihek”. As long as the young men were ready Keuhthang would not come, but when they were relaxed, thingking that Keuhthang would no more be coming Keuhthang suddenly turned their pillow, defeating the young men in the game.\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{7} Interviewed Mrs. Vungsiam, 57 years at canchipur on 26\textsuperscript{th} october 2009.

\textsuperscript{8} Interviewed Mrs Khupzavung, 84 years at Chengkonpang, Churachandpur on 4.5.2007.
(vi) Dawi

Dawi were those spirits which could appear like that of human being with hands and legs. Some of them had pointed face like those of jungle deer while others had face as curve as that of a parrot. As a whole, their nails resembled those of wild animals. Dawis were also divided into gender - masculine gender and feminine gender. In the old traditional tales the story about a very beautiful young dawi lady who fall in love with human being and had even sex with them were told. A story was also told that in ancient times a group of young dawi bachelors visited a human young lady at night. The dawi bachelors were sitting around the fire place with their faces turning away from the light. The young lady suspecting the real nature of her visitors suddenly brought meisel (bundle of burning sticks) to light them, saying, “lenglate mel enphot dih veni e” (let us look at the faces of our visitors). She shouted with alarm when she sows the mouth of the visitors curved like that of chicken. Instantly, the visitors run helter skelter and rushily vanished through the small holes of the house bamboo walls.⁹

⁹ Douzathang Gaite : op. cit. n.5, p. 15.
(vii) Sikha

“Si” means death, and “kha” means ghost. Therefore, “Sikha” mean ghost of dead persons. The word Sikha in common parlance was use to refer to those of any unseen spirits. But as mentioned earlier different names were given to some sections of the spirits. The word Sikha encompasses all those spirits which had not been covered by the different names mentioned earlier. Sikha could be seen in different forms. Usually, at night after a dead body was buried at the common cemetery, spirit having body like that of human being could be seen. Even though their physical feature could not be notice clearly they look like people with white cloth. Male and female Sikhas were also known. An old Sikha lady carrying bamboo basket on her back and smoking with the traditional smoking instrument of the hill people called Buuk had been seen in the past at different places on different occasions by different people. Once an old lady named Khupzen of Sumtuk village in Churachandpur district with the mother of Liankhochinjam, who was the wife of the village chief went to their old field in search of post harvest vegetables, like brinzal, pumkin, yam etc. While they were walking among the tall shrubs and thorns in the field, suddenly they saw shrubs moving and bending as if something was moving over them. On looking towards the moving shrubs they saw a very old lady with her body bending down, going towards the periphery of the field. While they were looking - the old lady suddenly disappeared in the forest. At last they realized that it was nothing but an old Sikha woman.¹⁰

¹⁰ Douzathang : op. cit. n.9, p. 75
5.4 Kithoih (sacrifices)

Human beings were ignorant, but they were often oppressed and subjugated by the superior and more powerful evil spirits. In order to avoid the oppressions and to avert the malicious designs of evil gods and spirits, and to appease them ancient people use to perform certain established procedures of sacrifices and followed generalized means of offering and appealing. When they fell ill they performed sacrifices giving offerings to appease the god or the devil spirit which they believed to cause the disease so that they might be freed from their illness. When they needed blessing also, they had to offer sacrifices to gain the favour of the god which could bestow upon them blessings and wealth. These sacrifices were called Kithoih. Worshiping and offerings were, therefore, the two sides of ancient treatment of supernatural forces and diseases. In the past, modern allopathic medicines were not available as it is today. Laura Carson, the wife of Arthur Carson, the first missionary to Chinram (Burma) also wrote that “their only religion was the sacrificing of animals to evil spirits; it is also their only system of medicine”.11

When a person suffered from any kind of illness the patient use to go to the priest; the priest would try to diagnose the disease by touching the pulse and according to his findings prescribed the animal to be offered for sacrifice.12 The different kinds of sacrifices performed according to the nature of their illness were the following:

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(i) Sumtong kithoih

*Sumtong kithoih* was a kind of sacrifice performed by our fore fathers at *Sumtong* for getting blessing from the spirits. *Sumtong* was the encircled front veranda of the house in the hills where grinding of rice grains took place and the chicken sheds were kept. To execute this sacrifice, a pig essentially a female one was slaughtered in the evening and cooks its flesh for supper to be eaten late at night. When the meat was fully mellowed, the priest cut out small pieces from different parts of the animal’s flesh, like liver, intestine, lip, tongue, heart, tip of leg, finger, tail etc. These were fixed in two iron rod which constituted the offering materials. All the flesh from the skull was removed and makes the skull only bony skeleton. This was called *Salu*. The priest performed his sacrificial services by muttering words of invocation and implanted the *Salu* into the *Bichiing* – (the lower side of the roof near the joint of the roof and the wall). The two rods containing the sacrificial materials were also implanted on the right and left sides of the skull. The skull was first covered with a patch of thatch spreading thinly over it and again it was covered with winnowing basket. The basket was fixed in such way that the sacrificial materials remain hidden behind it. The sacrificial offering was kept in such position during the night. The next morning the priest and *tanupi* of the household council came into the house, just before entering into the house they yielded a sound *Khei*, which signified their arrival. Those who were within the house

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13 Khaizalian n : op. cit. n.2.p.2
would ask, “Are you a good guest or a bad guest”? They would answer and said, “Good guest”. Than those who were inside the house would say, ‘If you are a good guest come inside the house’. The priest with the tanus would enter into the house. They would come inside carrying their bag – made of locally spined cotton called Sakhaupi. The priest resuming his previous days’ sacrifice, would invoke the god saying, “take these offerings of animal’s intestine, heart and other materials, and in turn give us your blessings, give us hundreds of millets and bazara, sons and daughters, young Pumkin and gourd fruits, rice and yam, remove diseases and poverty from us”. After completing his prayer the ceremony was over. The Tanupi removed the winnowing basket and thatched covering from the Bichiing. The house hold family members were free to resume their normal daily activities.¹⁴

Mr. Dongkang and his wife Donkhovung of Behtlehemveng, Rengkai, Churachandpur

¹⁴ Interview with Mr. Dongkang and his wife Mrs. Donkhovung, 82 years at Bethlehemveng, Rengkai on 15.8.2009.
(ii) **Khawbawl kithoih**

This sacrifice was a village or community sacrifice performed at the beginning of every year’s growing season, especially during the month of April. Offerings were made to the deitei which they believed to possess the power to bless human being with rich crops and vegetables, and who could prevent them from diseases, natural calamities like hails, storms, earthquake, epidemic etc. When this ritual was to be performed the village crier made public announcement by walking in the street of the village in the evening, announcing that, “there will be Khawbawl sacrifice of the entire village tomorrow, each and every adult house holder should prepare a small statue of mithun made of mud, and along with it bring a small quantity of tiffin and put them together at the house premises of the village chief”.

Each and every village had its own priest. After lunch elder members of the chief’s council, under the leadership of the village priest slaughtered a pig or a dog, which ever was available, the animal being contributed by the council members every year in turn. The slaughtered animal along with all the statues of mithuns and pieces of tiffin which were brought together by the villagers and deposited at the veranda of the chief’s house were taken to the outskirt of the village, i.e. *Khowmual*. At the *khomual* the priest prepared the *Bawllou-* (items to be offered). The items included small pieces of the animal’s tongue, lip, tail, liver, kidney etc. and put them together with the statue of mithuns and pieces of tiffin on a big leaf, called *Nahthial teh*. With uttering words of invocation, the priest dedicated sacrificial offerings, saying, “*Pathian Lungzai*” (god of almighty), “master of darkness and light, we slaughtered this pig as an offering to you,
take these offerings and bestowed upon us your blessings; give us wealth and prosperity; prevent us from diseases, epidemics, pestilences, storms, drought and famine; prevent our vegetable from birds, rates and other marauders; give us rich crop and good harvest and give us victory over our enemies”. The flesh of the slaughtered animal was cooked in the forest and eaten by the priest with the members of the Chief’s Council and all those who accompanied them in the forest. In the evening the older men and women came together to the chief’s house, they brought their traditionally brewed rice beer and spend the evening, sipping the beer with gossiping and merry making. The next some days were observed as days of restriction, called Zeh tang. Human activities, such as fetching of water, grinding of rice and going out of the village to work in the field etc. were not allowed till the village crier announces that permission is given to all to resume their normal activities.\textsuperscript{15}

(iii) Nuhpi kithoih

Among the different kinds of sacrifices the Nuhpi sacrifice was considered the most venerated and most audacious execution. People suffering from cronic diseases, severe physical weakness, tuberculosis etc. needed this kind of sacrifice. A dog male or femal was killed in the morning by cutting its throat and its meat was cooked by relatives of the patient and his house holds council members. The village priest was engaged for this purpose and remuneration was paid to the priest in the form of one basket full of paddy with a white cloth placed above the basket containing the paddy as its cover, and in addition one bottle of wine, one axe and one part of the shoulder of the

\textsuperscript{15} Interview with Shri Langpum 84 years at Mata village on 10.5.2008
dog killed were given. The offertory materials consisting of a long slender and climbing
tendril called *lingui*, leaves of a tree called *kham* tree, different kinds of *Aieng*
(turmeric), a small branch of *khiang* tree (needle wood), *sesing* tree branch, 3 branches
of *Uilisin* tree, and some branches of bamboo, like small plants with long leaves about 5
to 6 feet in height called *phairuang*. Surrounding the house were erected branches of
sesing tree with its leafy parts and also branches of any other available tree were also
erected as posts with some distances in between them. A long tendril called *lingui* was
stretched from one sesing tree branch to another sesing tree branch forming a network of
ring like fencing around the house. One gate in front of the house was prepared with
sesing tree posts. Some pieces of *phairuang* of certain length binding together were
stretched horizontally above the gate, stretching from the top of one sessing post to the
top of another sesing post. On the *phairuang* branches were fixed two small bushes, one
of *Kham* tree and another of *Uilisin* tree. In between these two bushes was embedded
the skeletal head of the dog; along with it were also embedded seven different kinds of
spices, such as i) *Sutzou*, ii) *Suansan*, iii) *Suanvom*, iv) *Palkheh*, v) *Aikhim*, vi) *Thimpi*
and vii) *Phuartam* (all in local name).\(^1\)

![Scholar with Mr Vumsuan at Mata village](image)

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\(^1\) Interview with Mr Vumsuan, 83 years at Mata village on 7.6.2010.
The sacrificial materials, i.e. the *Bollou* were fixed at an iron rode which was displayed above the gate signifying summoning of the devil spirit which cause the disease. Two miniature statues of human being were prepared - one adorned with feathers of chicken and the other with cut pieces of coloured, locally spinned threads called *sawn*. The statue which was adorned with feathers of chicken along with inflated urinary blader of the animal killed was dropped inside a pit by the pries. The pit was dug earlier infront of the house for that purpose. The offering of the sacrificial material was done by the priest with uttering words of supplication. Culminating his supplication, he says, “*Nang leh sikha na nuainung, kei leh vapi katungnung*” (You and spirit of the beast were below, I and sky were above). Then the priest prods the statue at its belly with a pointed rode and thrust the urinary bladder with stump of *khiang* tree. The urinary bladder burse with loud sound and along with the statue, the broken urinary bladder was buried inside the pit by filling it with earth. The motive behind this execution was that the priest summoned the devil which cause the sickness and was pushed inside the pit and was killed by thrushing with the stump of sessing tree. The time of this ceremony was usually just before sun set. The scene was considered a dangerous war between the priest and the devil in which the devil was defeated. Therefore, it was observed by the common people with fear and psychosis; children and women hiding inside their houses during the execution. The rite was followed by seven days of quarantine with the patient abstaining mainly from eating meat of mithun.¹⁷

¹⁷ Dongkang & Mrs Donkhovung : op. cit. n.14
(iv) **Uiha-oh sacrifice**

“Ui” means Dog, “ha” means teeth and “oh” means put around the next. Therefore, *Uiha-oh* sacrifice means the sacrifice where the teeth of dog were made as beads of ring and put around the neck of the sick person, i.e. garlanding. Children suffering from diseases due to warm attack needed sacrifice of this kind. A dog was killed. The priest uttering the words of supplication spitted his wine upon the body of the dog, cut the throat and chopped out the lower jaw about one and half inch in length with some teeth attached to it. The jaw was tied with thread and hanged around the neck of the sick person. As in the case of other sacrifices, the priest performed the offering and the family members of the patient had to undergo taboo for some days.\(^{18}\)

(v) **Gampi kithoih**

People suffering from sudden illness with high temperature needed this kind of sacrifice. The idea behind this was that demons caught the spirit of the patient and put in fire to torment him. Therefore, his temperature rose high. A piglet of three fist measuring was used as the animal for this sacrifice. The priest with members of the household council carrying the pig, the main *tanupi* carrying a fowl inside a bamboo basket on her back and with the sacrificial materials left the village and went to the outskirt of the village, i.e. *khomual*. The *bollou* -materials to be sacrifice consist of an image of mithun made with mud, an image of bell, leaves of *Kham*, pheleck and *longbarh* (different tree leaves) etc. The priest killed the pig and the flesh was cooked by the volunteers of the house holder at the outskirt of the village. The priest performed the ceremony, offering all the materials which they had prepared. In the rhyme of

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\(^{18}\) D.Khaizalian : op. cit. n.13.
invocation the priest said, “You come from Tibet, passing through China valley and then Burma valley, crossed the Chindwin river, than following the Thantlang range crossed the Gentang hill, and then entered into this house of (name of the patient), take these offerings of supplications and prayers and set free the man which you have tormented”.

After accomplishing the established procedures of supplications they ate the meat. They searched for an insect among the weeds and caught a living spider. The spider was put inside a cup made of bamboo and brought it to the house of the patient. On reaching the house the tanupi asked those who were at the house, has it comed? They answered and said, “Yes it had comed”. After entering the house the priest opened the bamboo cup with muttering words of gratitude and set the spider free. Then the sacrificial offering was over, but before entering the house, the tanupi laid some branches of trees on both sides of the fencing gate as a sign of performing sacrifice and observance of taboo. Travellers were not allowed to enter into the house during this period of taboo. In case any person violated this, he was liable to be fined. In the evening, locally brewed wine was brought to the house of the sacrifier by relatives. Old people sipped the wine and spend the evening with gossiping and merry making.\(^{19}\)

\[\text{(vi) Muallam kithoih}\]

This sacrifice was in many ways same as that of Gampi sacrifice. Here the patient suffered from serious illnesses, sometimes, even muttering, probably due to attack by diseases like delirium, pneumonia etc. It was their conceived idea in the past that the patient’s soul was caught by the evil spirit of the forest. A pig was killed for this sacrifice. The priest wearing a new cloth called Kortongak and carrying all the

\(^{19}\) Vumsuan n : op. cit. n.16.
sacrificial material with some of the close relatives of the patient went to the Khomual. Here the priest performed a dancing feat by beating the dry horns of mithun as his dancing bell. This he performed as a means to summon the evil which caught the patient’s soul and to appease him so that the patient’s soul might be released. The procedure of offering, words of supplication and other processes of this sacrifice were same as that of Gampi sacrifice.

(vii) Loutui sacrifice

*Loutui* sacrifice was another kind of sacrifice which the priest often suggested to be executed in order to get release the patient from his illness. The idea behind this sacrifice was that the devil dwelling in the brook or marshy places nearby the patient’s paddy field used to catch the soul of the paddy field owner. This state of captivity became manifested in the form of illness. Therefore, the soul must be liberated from the devil’s hand. This could be achieved by making happy the devil by offering materials with which he pleased. The sacrificial material consisted of one miniature statue of mithun and one bell, phelek, longberh etc. The *tanupi* of the household council carrying all these materials with one hen inside a bamboo basket on her back and went to the paddy field of the patient followed by relatives and the priest. The priest killed the cock by cutting its throat and sprayed its blood over the waters of the brook and around the sources of the water of the marshy places with prayers for liberation of the patient’s soul. This was called *Loutuibia*. After completing all the procedures they came back to the house of the patient in the village. As a sign of having performed the sacrifice small
branches of trees were hanged on the house top of the patient and the family members underwent abstinence for three to four days.\textsuperscript{20}

5.5 Coming of Christianity

The Ngaihtes lived mainly in two different countries, i.e. Myanmar and India; and thus coming of Christianity among them took place at different times. Therefore, coming of Christianity among the Ngaihtes can be studied under two phases. The first phase consisted of the coming of Christianity among the Ngaihtes living in the Chin Hills of Burma and the second phase consisted of the coming of Christianity among the Ngaihtes living in Manipur, especially in the south district.

(i) Coming of Christianity in Burma

Two Roman Catholic priests namely - Pimenta and Boves were the first to come to Burma to propagate Christianity when the Portugese mercenaries under the leadership of de Bruto established themselves undisputed lord in Syriam. Hundred years later in 1720, two Italian priests, Sigismund Calchi and Joseph Vittoni, who accompanied Alexandria Monsigu Mazzabarba as Ambassador of Pope Clement XI to Chinese Empire, were directed to Burma to establish their mission in Burma. King of Eva gave them permission to preach. They made little progress and suffered many setbacks. Few local churches, a boy school and home for orphans were established at Syriam in 1749. The difficulty for the Burmese to embrace Christianity was that Buddhism which was spreaded during the reign of king Ashoka had deep rooted into their religious cult. Buddhism was adopted as state religion and the king was regarded not just a ruler but as

\textsuperscript{20} Khuzavung : op. cit. n. 8.
‘the defender of their faith throughout his kingdom. If a native Burman became a convert, he was called Kala, which means “foreigner”. Conversion of Burman Buddhists to Christianity had always been viewed as an insult to Buddhism, the country and the people. One of the outstanding missionaries among the Catholic Fathers was Sangermano who came to Burma in 1783 and retired in 1806.\textsuperscript{21} The eighteenth century Christians consisted mostly of Portuguese descendents from previous centuries, other Europeans, who had married native women, traveller merchants and some natives from Malabar Coast.

After the pioneer Catholic priest two protestant missionaries, namely Marden and Charter were sent to Burma by the London Missionary Society in 1807. Marden was replaced by Dr. William Carey who engaged himselfs actively in translating extracts from the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible and compiling a dictionary and grammer in Burmese language.\textsuperscript{22} Ann and Adoniaram Judson were other missionaries of the American Board of Commission for Foreign Mission who came to Burma in 1813. The first missionary hospital at Haka was established under the funding of Baptist Church in St. Louis. Inspite of their best efforts and dedicated works in Burma, the American missionaries were not very much successful among the Buddhist Burmese, but they won the hearts of many people from the three ethnic groups of the Chin, Kachin and Karen.\textsuperscript{23}

It was during the so called “hight imperial era” of the British colonial rule that Christianity made stride forward, especially in the Chin Hills among the Chin people.

\textsuperscript{21} Sing kho khai: Zo People and Their Culture, Churachandpur, 1995, p. 66. \\
\textsuperscript{22} Vumson: Zo History, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1980. P.143 \\
\textsuperscript{23} Mr. Lian H. Sakhong: Op. cit. n.12. p.116
The colonial authorities made the missionaries their close allies and they were allowed to operate freely anywhere in the British colony. Thayetmyo was established to be the first mission headquarters mainly for the Asho tribe of the Chins in 1888. The Asho Chin Baptist Convention had its root from this station and became one of the largest Conventions in Burma. Arthur Carson and Laura, a young couple missionary from Columbus City, Iowa, also came to Burma.²⁴ Preoccupied by the interest to evangelise among the whole Chin race and also taking advantage of the invitation of Captain Dury, the then Superintendent of the Chin Hills, Carson moved to Haka on 15th March 1988 and purchased thirty acres of land at the cost of rupees forty five. This place became the headquarters of the Haka Baptist Association. Also the Chinn Hill Baptist Convention was formed at Hakka in March 1907, which later grew into todays Chin Baptist Convention, one of the largest church groups in Burma. Dr. East, and Dr. John Gustav Woodin accompanied by his wife Bassie were another contemporary missionaries of Arthur Carson who had came to Burma and served as medical missionary Doctor at Haka Missionary Hospital. Finally the Tiddim station was opened in 1911.²⁵

The military junta in Burma restricted entry of foreigners into the Chin Hills of Burma. So access to the Chin people for personal contact and field work in the hills and remote villages become difficult. Therefore, detailed research work about the entry of Christianity into different villages, remote areas and particulary among the Ngaihte people is left for future research scholars.

²⁵ Lian. H.Sakhong n : op. cit. n. 23. p. 145
(ii) **Coming of Christianity in Manipur**

Initially, Christianity came to Manipur through two groups of Christian missionaries. The first group was the American Baptist Mission led by Reverent Pettigrew with a view to preach the Christianity among the Meiteis. Another group was the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Mission who sent missionaries, like Dr. Fraser and Watkin Robert to preach the gospel among the Lushais of the erstwhile Lushai Hills, and then the message spreaded to the south district of Manipur.

**Christianity in Ukhrul District**

With the permission given by A. Portious, the then Acting Political agent of Manipur, Rev. Pettigrew reached Imphal on 6th January 1894. In order to start his work and to have closer intimacy with the local people Pettigrew opened one Lower Primary school on the top of a small hill at Moirangkhom. After associating with some school children for 6(six) months and teaching them the gospel of love, Maj. Maxwell, the then Political Agent of Manipur returned to his office after his furlough. He told Pettigrew
that the Manipur Government did not allow him to remain in the valley and as the entire hill areas of Manipur was also under the British rule, he could find a place anywhere in the hill. Like the call of Abraham, not knowing where to go, Pettigrew wandered here and there for some time. He first moved southward and came to Senvon village in 1895 where Kamkholun was the village chief. As he did not find the local people receptive to his mission, he came out of Senvon village reached Songsang village and than Mao village. Mao village too was not congenial for his intended work. He then moved further eastward and reached Ukhrul. Atlas! He found Ukhrul was suitable and the people were responding to his call. He started his work by opening one Lower Primary School in the year 1897. Initially, the school began with only 20 children. Slowly the Gospel message grew into the hearts of the people. 12 persons were baptized according to Christian faith in 1901. The number of believers increased to 70 in 1907. This school became the first mission school in Manipur. Many tribal leaders, like Teba Kilong, Longkholel Kilong, Seilet Singson, Jamkithang Silhlou, Dengkhup etc. had their schooling education at this primary school. The first Baptist church called Phungyo Baptist church was established at this place.26

**Christianity in Churachandpur District**

Churachandpur district, formerly known as Manipur south district occupies the south western part of Manipur. It is almost rectangular in shape and lies between Longitude 93.15 E and 94 E, and latitude between 24 N and 24.3 N. The biggest district in the state of Manipur has a total area of 4570 sq. km. It is bordered by Myanmar and

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Mizoram on the south, by Mizoram and Assam on the west, by Tamenglong and Jiribam circles on the north, and by Bishnupur and Chandel district on the east. According to 2001 census the population of the district was 2,27,905. Out of which 93.19 percent were tribal people constituted by 14 different tribes. The density of population is 50 persons per square kilometers with literacy rate of 74.67 percent, the highest among all the districts in Manipur. The Deputy Commissioner with its headquarters at Churachandpur administered the entire district through five Sub Divisional Officers with their staffs stationed at the five sub-divisional headquarters. The names of the Sub divisions with each headquarters and the major tribes living in the sub-divisions are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Sub Division</th>
<th>Headquarters</th>
<th>Major Tribes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Parbung</td>
<td>Parbung</td>
<td>Hmar, Paite etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thanlon</td>
<td>Thanlon</td>
<td>Paite, Hmar, Gangte, Simte, Vaiphei, Thadou etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Henglep</td>
<td>Henglep</td>
<td>Thadou, Vaiphei, Gangte, Simte, Vaiphei, Thadou etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Singat</td>
<td>Singat</td>
<td>Paite, Vaiphei, Gangte, Zou, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Churachandpur</td>
<td>Churachandpur</td>
<td>Thadou, Paite, Hmar, Vaiphei, Gangte, Mizou, Simte, Zou, Meitei, Kom, Chiru etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[27\] Rev. Dr. Lalhmuoklien: *Gospel through Darkness*, (Churachandpur, Nehru Marge, Rengkai: Smart and Offset Printers, 2009), p.3
Part of Churachandpur Town

Various Christian mission Boards and individual missionaries in England made dedicated and strenuous efforts to send the gospel message to the savage and backward people of the North East India. The first such mission board was the Arthington Mission of England, who sent F.W. Savidge and his friend Rev. J.H.Lorrain to India. They reached Aizawl on 13th March 1894. At Aizawl, apart from their missionary work they devoted most of their time in learning Mizo language and writing small books and translating the New Testament part of the Bible into Mizo language. They devised Mizo alphabet which was later on modified slightly. Before they left the Mizo hills in 1897 they had completed the translation of the books of St. Luke, St. John and parts of the Acts of the Apostles of the Bible.28 After F.W.Savidge and J.H.Lorrain, it was David Evan Jones of Welsh Presbyterian mission who came to Aizawl in 1897 and sent the translated Gospel books to London where it was printed and sent back to Aizawl. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission also sent Dr. Peter Fraser with his wife, and Mr. Watkin Robert to Aizawl in 1908. These new missionaries purchased 104 copies of the

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Gospel of John from the earlier missionaries and sent them to different village chiefs and the persons who they considered influential leaders. One of these copies reached Kamkholun, chief of Senvon village in the Tipaimukh Sub-division of Churachandpur district. He read the book but could not understand the meaning. Desirous of knowing the contents of the book he wrote at one of the blank spaces available in the book as, “Pute aw, non laibu piak uh hon hilhtu omlou in a ngaihna kathei kei uh, nou hong unla hong hilh un”– (Sirs, we can not understand the meaning of the book which you send to us without explanation, you should come and explain it to us by your self)- and send the book back to Dr. Fraser and Mr Watkin Robert through a messenger. 29

On receiving the book back and the note, Dr. Fraser and Watkin Robert were very happy. They thought that their prayers had been answered and they considered it a Mecidonian call and decided to go to Senvon village. With the guidance of two persons, namely Lungpau and Thangkai, who were from Manipur and staying at Aizawl for pursuing their schooling education. Watkin Robert set out for Manipur on 30th January 1910, following the village riddle paths and passed through villages like Zokhosang, Sifa, Changzawl, Luangpawn, Phuaibuang, Daidou in Mizoram, and Parvachom village in Manipur, and finally reached Senvon. Chief Kamkholun and his villagers were very happy to see the Missionaries. The Missionary and his two friends were given warm reception and accorded magnanimous hospitality. Both the visitors and the visited were glad to discuss about the gospel message contained in the book. 30

After discussion and sharing their ideas each other for some days the missionaries left Senvon on 7th February 1910 with the assurance that they would come back to Sevon for continued work. They returned to Aizawl via Taithu, Patpuimun, Sartuinek villages and crossing Tuiluang (Barak) river they halted one night at Vervek village in Mizoram. On that night Thangkai and Lungpau dedicated their life to become Christians and follow Jesus Christ; thus becoming the first two Christians from Manipur south district. After reaching back Aizawl Dr. Fraser searched among the 50 students who were staying at his boarding school to accompany him to Manipur for the continued gospel work. Three persons, namely (i) Savoma, (ii) Thangchhingpuia and (iii) Vanzika volunteered themselves to follow the Gospel torch bearers. Watkin Robert and Dr. Fraser with these three dedicated persons and guided again by Lungpau and Thangkai journeyed to Senvon village again. After passing through Saitual, Vatin, Suangpilon and Vanbawng villages they had to cross the Tuivai river to reach Manipur. Due to heavy rainfall the Tuivai river was flooded and their journey was delayed for some days.

After crossing the river they were overjoyed and moved forward, singing the following song in full ecstasy.

_Aw Pathian, Nang in Tangthupha nonpia,
Kipahthu konhilh (3) Na kiangah,
Halleluia, (3) Amen._

(Aw God you have given us good gospel
We give thank to thee
Halleluia, (3) Amen).
They reached Senvon village on May 7, 1910. This day on which the good mission team reached Senvon village is the day which is observed today by majority of the Churches in the south district of Manipur as the “Missionary Day”\(^\text{31}\)

![Senvon village under Chief Kamkholun](image1)

![Watkina R. Robert with his wife Mrs Gladys](image2)

### 5.6 Churches under the North East India General Mission (NEIG)

A place called Kawnzar near Senvon village was developed as the headquarters of the missionary team who came to Manipur. A school was established in 1911 with Thangchhingpuia, Vanzika and Savoma serving as teachers. In December 1913 their missionary organization was christened by Watkin Robert as “Thado Kuki Pioneer Mission”, probably because Kamkholun chief of Senvon village was a Thadou and the Kukis seems to be in majority in that area during that time. In 1913 Dala and Taisena were appointed as the Chairman and Secretary of this Thado Kuki Pioneer Mission respectively. They worked with another 22 missioneries, collectively known as evangelists. They taught in the school and during their leisure time they went to different

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villages, preaching the gospel, organized crusades, revival camps etc.$^{32}$ God blessed their work marvelously. More and more persons belonging to different communities like Paite, Simte, Thadou, Gangte, Vaiphei, Lushai, Zo etc., were converted into Christianity. The Gospel message which started from Senvon soon transformed into a mighty tornado and engulfed the whole of south district within very short period.$^{33}$

As the gospel spreaded beyond Manipur the name of the organization was changed from Thadou Kuki Pioneer Mission to “North East India General Mission” (NEIGM) in 1925 with its headquarters shifting from Senvon to the mission compound, near Churachandpur in 1930. From 1910 to 1947 all the Christians belonging to different tribes - Simte, Paite, Zo, Hmar, Gangte, Vaiphei, Lusei, Thado etc were serving the Lord under the umbrella of the North East India General Mission (NEIG). During that time the Lusei language was the lingua franca. The Bible as well as Hymn books were printed in Lusei language and they were read and sung in Churches. However, the common men, specially women and children found it difficult to understand the language because of slight differences in language among the different

$^{32}$ Rev. P.K.Englian te Nupa : op. cit. n. 3. p. 22
Kuki, Mizo, Zomi tribes. It was proposed at the Parbung Presbytery held on January 17, 1947 that printing of the Bible and Hymn books in different dialects should be made so that each and every person should have the Bible and the song books in his or her own language and use their own languages in worship services and on Sunday school teachings. The proposals were discussed at the Annual conference and it was again discussed at the Lungthulien conference held in 1948. Finally, the NEGI Mission General Assembly held at Saikot village on March 5, 1953 agreed the different communities to form their own Presbyteries on communal basis fulfilling the aspirations of the common people. These presbyteries would have a highest joint administrative body, called “Leaders Conference”. At the Leaders Conference each Presbytery would send 15 of its members to represent their Presbytery. The different presbyteries under the NEIG Mission are the following.

(i) Evangelical Synod Church (ESC)

The Gangte speaking Christian community held its first conference at Chiengkonpang, Churachandpur from 30th October to 1st November 1953. Presently, this Synod has a population of 8831 souls residing in 40 villages spreading across different parts of Churachandpur district. In all 13 dedicated pastors are actively involved in their masters’ services. The present governing body with Rev. Lamkhosat Gangte, Chairman, Rev Khaigin Gangte, Vice Chairman and Rev. L.Sata Executive Director with twelve Executive Members managed the day today affairs of the Synod.

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35 Interviewed with Rev.Lamkhosat Gangte 56 years Executive Secretary on 26th January 2010 at Chengkonpang, Churachandpur.
(ii) **Gangte Baptist Association (GBA)**

Basing on the faith of “born again”, and “revival”, preached during 1958-1970 by famous preachers like Sha Hu, Zathangvung, Thangluta etc. the Gangte Baptist Association was formed on June 1982 under the leadership of Kampu Gangte and Henkho Gangte at Chengkonpang. Presently, T. Gangte is now leading the working body of five Pastors, five Evangelist teachers, ten Missionaries with six office staff of the GBA organization pivoting over 2000 souls with its headquarters at Chengkonpang, Churachandpur.  

(iii) **Evangelical Church Association (ECA)**

The Evangelical Churches Association (ECA) represents the Thadou-Kuki speaking Christian community. Founded in 1952 at Molnom village and having its first Annual Conference at Tolphei village in 1953, the ECA celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1977 and Golden Jubilee in 2002. The entire area inhabited by the ECA members was

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Interview with T.Gangte 52 years on 27th January 2010 at Chengkonpang, Churachandpur.
devided into two regions- Kaihlam Nuai (lower Kaihlam), and Kaihlam Tung (Upper Kaihlam) with its headquarters at Churachandpur town.  

(iv) **Evangelical Organisation Church (EOC)**

The Vaiphei Christian organization known as EOC has its headquarters Secretariat building at Phailian.D. Due to communal riot broken out in the Churachandpur district in the year 1997, a desire to join a common mainline church arose among the Vaiphei Christian community. The Special Assembly of the EOC held at its mission headquarters, D.Phailian on March 10, 2001 considered the joining of the Mizoram Synod and to work with it as a partnership mission. The Emergency Council of the Executive Board called on October 22, 2001 took decision by vote - 239 members voted in favor of joining the Mizoram Synod while 120 voted against the decision. Henceforth, the EOC became divided into two - one joining the Mizoram Synod and the other remaining a constituent body of the ECCI.  

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(v) **Evangelical Baptist Convention (EBC)**

The Evangelical Baptist Convention of the Paite community has its headquarters at New Lamka with its main working office building called *Dorca Hall*. Even though, EBC was formerly a presbytery of the NEIG Mission, it shivered its ties with the NEIG Mission and became a member of the Baptist World Alliance, vide Resolution No. 17/97 of the 49th Evangelical Convention Church Annual Conference held at New Lamka on 13th December 1997. An Executive Secretary with three Directors executed the organizational work at its headquarters, and one Divisional Superintendent with its staffs each stationing at the seven Divisional headquarters spreading across Manipur and Mizoram discharged the works at the division level. The latest, 2009 Census of the EBC revealed the following statistics: Villages 168, Houses 8861, Churches 151, population 52874, Pastor 41, Elder 617, Sunday school building 64, Sunday school attendance 31988 and number of Church quarters 137.

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39 Evangelical Baptist Convention: *KumsimKhawmpi 61 veina 2009 Agenda Bu*(EBCC, Conference Pethuel, NewLamka, December 5-8, 2009), P.42
(vi) **Manipur Presbyterian Church Synod (MPCS)**

The Manipur Presbyterian Church Synod consists of two Presbyteries – (i) The Tuithaphai Presbytery and (ii) The Manipur Gam Presbytery. Tuithaphai Presbytery comprises of those persons who had migrated from Mizoram to Manipur and wanted to maintain good relation with the Mizoram Presbytery. The Manipur Gam Presbytery is a mix congregation of people belonging to Vaiphei, Zo and Kuki communities. The first commissioning of the two presbyteries was held at New Lamka Presbyterian Church on 19th November 1960 at 2.00 p.m. attended by 95 representatives from different places - including i) Assembly moderator, ii) Assembly Secretary Senior, iii) Moderators of Khasi Jaintia Synod - all from Shillong, iv) members of Mizo Synod from Mizoram and v) members of Chachar Hills Tribe Synod from Assam. The total population by that time was 10,025.40

(vii) **The Baptist Church of Manipur and the Chin Baptist Association (BCM & CBA)**

On 26th January 1958 the Teddim Chin speaking people consisting of thirty eight members gathered together at Bungmual village. They sung songs together and prayed together whole heartedly. The result of this joyous gathering was the birth of a new church called the ‘Baptist Church of Manipur’ (BCM). Siamkhum became the leader with its headquarters at Thingkangphai village. After several years, due to divergent ideas among thems, a new group known as “Chin Baptist Association” (CBA) came into being and this new group was affiliated to the Manipur Baptist Convention (MBC)

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40 Manipur Presbytery Church Synod : *50 Golden Jubilee (1959-2009) Souvenir*, (Churachandpur : IB Road, 2009), pp. 1-4
which has its headquarters at Imphal, Manipur on October 5, 1961 at the serial number 9 of the membership list. As such it is also known as MBC No.9. CBA.⁴¹

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Office of the Chin Baptist Association (CBA)  
New Lamka, Churachandpur  
Dr. En Za Sian  
Executive Secretary CBA

(viii)  **The Independent Church of India (ICI)**

Rev. W.Roberts, founder of the NEIG Mission left the NEIG Mission on account of the issue of financial mismanagement leveled against him by H.H.Coleman and founded a new organization consisting of about 4892 people known as “the Indo Burma Pioneer Mission” (IBPM) in 1929 with its headquarters at Lakhipur, Assam. Those factions in Manipur who were willing to follow Roberts’s leadership called themselves “Independent Church” and had its headquarters at Pherzawl village. From 1956 Rochunga Pudaite took over charge of the IBPM from Rev.W.Roberts and the headquarters of IBPM was shifted from Lakhipur to Sielmat village on January 24, 1957. From that time onward the Independent Church and the IBPM worked together at the same headquarter. At the suggestion of Rev.Rochunga Pudaite, for better co-

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ordinated mission work the Independent Church and IBPM had a join meeting in the month of July 1961 and formed the Independent Church of India.  

Rev. J.L.Songate  
Executive Secretary ICI  
Partnership Mission Office  
Sielmat, Churachandpur

(ix) **New Testament Baptist Christian Association (NTBCA)**

Prior to and a few years later of the Second World War of 1945 the few early Ngaihte Christians at different villages in and around Thanlon village were under the guardianship and patronization of the Evangelical Convention Church, which was a congregation of the Paite community and was a branch of the NEIG Mission. But for closer ties and better deal, the Ngaihte Christians collectively joined the Kailham Presbytery of the Hmar community in April, 1957 and remained attached to it till November 1957. But the Simte speaking Ngaihte Christians convened a meeting at Mongon village in 1957 and formed the “Simte Christian Association” shunning their relationship with the presbytery of the Hmar community. With a view to further association with foreign missions which can give moral, spiritual and financial support Th.Henzamang, who worked as a compounder for a short period at the hospital run by

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42 Interviewd with J.L. Songate, Executive Secretary, ICI at Sielmate, Churachandpur on 16th July 2009.
the Baptist Mid Mission near Alipur, Silchar, Assam, contacted the missionaries of the Mid Mission and sent information to the leaders of the Simte Christian Association about the possibilities of forming an alliance between the Simte Christian Association and the Baptist Mid Mission. Rev. James Garlow and Rev. John Wilkens of the Mid Mission visited Thanlon, Zoutung and Suangpeh villages in Manipur in the month of October 1957 and work out the modalities for their confederation. At the Annual Conference of the Simte Christian Association held at Thanlon village in 1958, attended by Rev. James Garlow and Rev. John Wilkins, the tie between the Baptist Mid Mission and the Simte Christian Association was concluded amidst gathering of large crowd and grand feast. The result was the birth of the “New Testament Baptist Christian Association (NTBCA)”.

3.7 Churches under other denominations

(i) The Catholic Church

The coming of Catholic church dated back to the preaching of Catholic faith by Rev. O. Marengo SDB, the then Bishop of Dibrugarh and Rev. Fr. A. Ravalico SDB,

44 Interview with Rev. Nengzachin 78 years on 7.10.2008 at Beulahlane, Churachandpur.
during the year 1956 which was followed by touring of fathers Fr. Joseph Mattan, accompanied by Fr. Ravalico to different villages in Churachandpur district reaching Pangsnag, Ranakot, Pamjal villages, etc. The Catholic Church had so far established three parishes in Churachandpur district. They are the Good Shepherd Parish at Churachandpur established in 1963, the St. Thomas Parish, Singngat established in 1978 and St. Xavier’s Parish, Thanlon established in 1975. The population of Catholic community in Churachandpur district now lies between 3000 to 4000.

(ii) The United Penticostal Church (UPC)

The United Penticostal church was established by Sangkhuma on 14th February, 1953 at Ranakot and Sangkhuma was appointed its first Pastor. At the instance of Rev Lerthansunga - Salem veng, Churachandpur became its headquarters from 1957.


46 Interview with Catechist Dominic 57 at Churachandpur Donbosco School on 15.3.2010)

47 Fr. L. Jeyaseelan: op. cit. n.45. p. 100.
(iii) **House of Yaveh**

Not only oral preaching but also megazines, pamphlets, articles, newspaper etc. also plays a very important role in spreading the gospel among the people. From reading a megazine called “Mount Jion Reporter”, published in Israel a new sectarian Christians called “Church of God” came into existance in Manipur south district during the year 1960-70. Their important leaders were Kumlai Vimzakap Ngaihte and Ginzamung Israel. Same as earlier, another megazine called the “Plain Truth” published in the USA flashed almost an identical doctrine as that published in the Mount Jion Reporter. The outcome from reading of this megazine was the birth of a second new sect called “World Wide Church of God”. The propounder of this doctrine was Ginvum Ngaihte of Hanship village in Thanlon Sub-division, Churachandpur district. Many neophytes joined this sectarian formation during 1966-70. Still, another sect emerging out from reading another magazine called “Sacret Name Broad Caster” publishes from Bethel; P.A., USA, was “Assemblies of Yahweh”. These three sectarian Christian groups congregated under the caption “Assemblies of Yahweh” with their headquarters at Bethel; P.A.USA. After 20 years this congregation became divided into the “House of Yahveh” and the “Assembly of Yahveh”.

5.8 **Beginning of Christianity in village under Ngaihte chieftainship**

(i) **Sumtuk village**

Evangelist Thangkai, who was one of the first Christians from Manipur south district was the first to come to Sumtuk village and preach his new faith among the villagers. But due to inconsistency of Christian principle and the old traditional way of

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48 Interview with Ginvum Ngaihte 67 year at Bungmual village on 20.3.2010
worship, like sacrifices and offerings to the gods and goddesses by the older people. Christianity could not find easy way to go. However, the successful sowing of Christianity among the Sumtuh villagers could be ascribed to Mr. Tongpu Tungnung of Mata village who worked consistently with dedication and prayer. In the year 1936 the Govt. constructed the Tuivai Bridge between Songtal and Sumtuh villages. In the following year, i.e.1936 Evangelist Tongpu came to Sumtuh village to preach Christian principle. According to S. Ngulzathang Shoute, residing at Beulahlane, Churachandpur who attained the age of 92 years in 2009, he was borned and brought up at Sumtuh village. During his adolescence, guided by Evangelist Tongpu they started worshiping God according to the Christian doctrine inside the granary of Chinkhopau. The first Christians converts were - Thangzaneng and Kailal. These pioneer Christians were followed by another group consisting of Chinkhopau, Gindailou, Tualzagin, Vumzagin etc. The early preachings were made in Lushai language. S.Ngulzathang said “I read the first chapter of Book of Saint John 8:12 of the Bible and came to know that - In the beginning was the word .......In him was life and, the life was the light of men. I was convinced by these words and I became a Christian”. 49

On account of the death of his sister in-law, Evangelist Tongpu left Sumtuh village for his home and never came back. The Sumtuh villagers invited Thangsum to continue the work of evangelist Tongpu. Thangsum was a resident of Theigotang village situated on the bank of the river Guun (Imphal rover) to the east of Tuining village near Myanmar border in Singat Sub-division. For transporting his goods and family members

49 Interview with Mr.Ngulzathang, 92 years at Beulahlane on 6th December 2009
S.Ngulzathang, Vungchin and Chinkham went to Theigotang village - staying there for three days. During their stay at the village the villagers prepared

Fare well feast by killing a pig. They ate the sumptuous and delicious meal coalesced with fish and wine. On their way to Sumtuh they participated Christmas celebration at Sinzawl village. Soon after their arrival at Sumtuh village the New Year celebration started. With the setting of New Year 1939, construction of church building commences. Thangsum worked as a teacher as well as Pastor. After completion of the church building, the Second World War, locally known as Japan Gal broke out. A contingent of 1000 army men arrived at Sumtuh village. The army commander asked if he could be lodged inside the newly constructed church building. The elsewhere leader, Thangsum giving permission the commander was housed at the church building for three days. Because of the proximity of his house with the church S.Ngulzathang worked as the church bell ringer and became the drum beater during the early days of Christianity. Besides men, early women Christian converts were (i) Nianghoih, (ii) Khupzaniang, (iii) Lamzaniang, (iv) Pihang etc. During those days the Christians at Sumtuh village were parts of the North East India General Mission (NEIG) which later
became apart of the NTBCA.\textsuperscript{50} The Sumtuh village celebrated the completion of hundred years of christianity in Sumtuh village on 7.2.2010 with grand feast and thanks giving to the almighty\textsuperscript{51}.

(ii) \textbf{Zoutung village}

Dongzagou, a resident of Zoutung village but now staying at Simveng, Churachandpur narrated his childhood days story. He said that he could faintly recollect his memory about the preaching of the Gospel message delivered Pastor P.K.Englian on the top of an elevated spot at Zoutung village football ground, saying “Jesus Christ shed his blood on the cross”. Other early preachers who came to evangelise were Thangyang and Laibat. Zoutung village was established in 1906 by Henkam Thangsing and became chief as well. With persons migrating from Dialkhai and Thanlon villages the number of persons increased and the households of Zoutung village increase to about 30. During those initial days Christianity was unknown. At the top of the village hill, near

\textsuperscript{50} Interviewed Mr. Lutgin 94 years at Bible Hills Rengkai on 15\textsuperscript{th} August 2009
\textsuperscript{51} Centenary celebration of Christianity at Sumtuh village disc.Recording.
the village vantage – Daahmun - a place called Pathian mun – (Place of God) was prepared. At this place worshiping and sacrificing to the early deities were made.

Mr. Dongzagou of Simveng

Even though Dongzagou could not recollect the details of Pastor P.K.Englian’s sermon, he could vividly remember some of the early villagers who became Christians. They were: (i) Khaizagin, (ii) Khuptun, (iii) Chinzakhup, (iv) Helsoi, and (v) Daigin.

With the implantation of Christian faith among the villagers a primary school was opened by Vungdal followed by Tualzagin. The first Christian believers were initially divided into two groups. One group joining the North East India General Mission (NEIGM) while the other group joining the Independent Churches. Both from the headquarters of the NEIG and the Independent Churches teachers were sent to Zoutung village to establish separate schools of their own. But none of these schools could survive for long. After that the Christians were converged under the congregation called Assembly, which belonged to the Hmar community and then they were converted to the Convention Church under the patronization of the Paite community. Since 1945 a well organized church with a mission school was established under the guidance of NEIG
Mission. Khualthang was posted at Zoutung village to look after the welfare of the Christians.\(^{52}\)

(iii) Thanlon village

Thanlon, one of the biggest among the Ngaihte villages was under the chieftainship of Lumthang, a brave and versatile village chief when Christianity inroaded into the village. Evangelists like Thangvang Guite, Lungpau, Thangkai and Pastor Vanchhunga first preach the gospel among the Thanlon villagers. They came, preached and went to other villages. During that time the Christian Evangelists faced steep oppositions at several places. They were mocked, stoned and turned out of the villages. Thanlon village was no exceptional. Zagin, who was once an inhabitant of Thanlon village but now migrated to New Lamka, Churachandpur narrated the way how Christianity was opposed at Thanlon village. Once, Pastor Vanchhunga on his ministerial service came to Thanlon village from Tinsuong village. He taught the villagers about the scripture at one of the secluded places in the village with fear in his mind. To know his new teaching and also with the willingness to see the new itinerant, the villagers came in large number to the place where he was teaching and listen to his sermon. Chief Lumthang knowing this called his village crier and asked him to enquire and confirm whether Pastor Vanchhunga had really comed and how many people attended to his preaching. After confirming the truth, the village crier reported the matter to the village chief - telling him that Pastor Vanchhunga had really comed and several people had attended to his sermon.

\(^{52}\) Interview Shri Dongzagou, 63 years at Simveng, Churachandpur on 15\(^{th}\) August 2009.
The chief got furious and told him to go back to the spot and shoot the Pastor at his eye with his sling. The village crier obediently went back and as told by the chief aimed at the Pastor with his sling while he was preaching and shot him. Luckily, the pellet did not hit his eyes but hit at his fore head and due to profuse bleeding the Pastor’s Bible and shirt were stained with his blood. The early Christian preachers were turned out from the village upto Tuipi river to the east and upto Tuizang river to the west. The people of that time found it difficult to accept the new Christian faith because the Christian preachers’ alleged drinking of wine as immoral and prohibited its practice. But the older people loved drinking wine as it was a means of entertainment and also performed their sacrifices and offerings with wine to appease the devil spirit which caused the disease and got free from their illness. Such kind of early practices hindered the quick pace of Christianization at Thanlon village.53

Despite steep opposition, the living gospel penetrated into the minds of the people. As learned from the mouth of Pu Nengzagou he and a few other people became Christian on June 9, 1935 and started worshiping inside Phoh Buk. Phoh Buk was a temporarily built house with thatch roofing. The early known Christians were Nengzagou, Lutzakhai, Kamzarin, Thangchingou, Khupzakham, Thangkhokam, Kamkhogin, Dongkhosei, Thongzadou, Hellam, Kamleng and Khupzakhai. With the sprouting of the seed of Christianity at Thanlon village the NEIG Mission sent Pastor P.K.Englian to look after the Christian community from 1939 till he was transferred to Kailham village in 1943. Even after his transfer to Kailham village Thanlon village remained part of his area and he visited the village very often for many years. Thus,

53 Interview wuth Dongkang : Op. cit. n. 17
Pastor P.K. Englian became a spiritual guide and a source of spiritual blessing for the people of Thanlon and its surrounding areas.\textsuperscript{54}

(iv) \textit{Leizangphai village}

It was around the year 1947 Ramlian Hmar, Lungpau Vaiphei and Thangkai Vaiphei etc. came to Leijangphai village to deliver the gospel message. Later on Nengzagou of Thanlon village also came for the same work. No opposition was levelled against the coming of Christianity into the village. Zamnang, a senior citizen from Leizangphai village who attained the age of 87 in the years 2009, said that when Christianity entered into the village it was he and his friends who carried out the village affairs and village administration. When asked how he became a Christian, he narrated that he read the Bible by himself and came to know that “\textit{God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son}”. He found that he was the one whom God so loved. He was fully convinced and became Christian.\textsuperscript{55} The other early Christians were (i) Zamnang, (ii) Paokhovung, (iii) Nengkhogin, (iii) Nengzalam, (iv) Khaizagin, (v) Kamlam, (vi) H.Loukam etc. With only seven families, consisting of a little over 20 members Christianity started in the village. Under the leadership of Ngulzathang, a devout Christian, a thatched church was constructed in the year, later than 1950. Bamboo poles tying together were utilized as benches in the church. Nevertheless, after some years their leader Ngulzathang migrated to Tuikumuallum village and never came back. Thangkai, one of the first two Christian converts in Manipur south district was sent to look after the Christians at Laizangphai village by the Kuki Pioneer Mission from its headquarters

\textsuperscript{54} H.Chinthang Ngaihte :Simte Kuola Gospel Lutdan (An Article published in the Souvenir of ICI).
\textsuperscript{55} Interviewed Pastor Zamnang 87 years at Leizangphai village on 29.11.2009 3.00 p.m.
at Senvon village. Unfortunately, he migrated to Singtom village and lived there till his death. With People migrating from Gamhui and Pamzal village, the population of Leizangphai village increased and Christianity became well rooted. Zamnang became the first Pastor. The church at Leizangphai was affiliated to the New Testament Baptist Church in 1958.  

(v) **Dumsau village**

Pastor Khaizatong said that prior to his coming to Dumsau village he was residing at Mongon village in Thanlon Sub-division and by that time he had already been a Christian. His contemporary pioneer Christians and also founder of Dumsau village were Thongzakham, Thangkhotong and Chinzakhup. According to him, Evangelist Dengkung and Evangelist Thomlian Leivang were the first to set foot on Dumsau village to preach the gospel. The fruit of their labor was the coming of neophyte Christians like Henchinpau, Kamkhomang, Semminthang, Heldong etc., and among women Chingzahat, Tongniang, etc. Having no church building for a pretty long

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56 New Testament Baptist Church, Leizangphai: *Golden HabileeSouvenir* unveiled on December 17, 2008 at Churachandpur. p. 2
time, the early Christians used to go to Mualbem village for attending Sunday worship services among the Hmars and also their children attended the children Sunday school teachings there. It was around 1956, after shifting the Dumsau village from the top of Dumsau hill to the valley below the church building construction started with the initiative of the younger pioneer Christians. During that time Pastor P.K. Englian of the North East India General Mission (NEIG Mission) with its area headquarters at Tuikham village looked after the Dumsau village Christians. The Dumsau Christians thereafter joined the Simte Christian Association and after a brief period it became part of the New Testament Baptist Christian Association (NTBCA). Pastor Khaizatong said, “Garlow himself and along with three of his associates visited Dumsau village as part of their tour to visit the different NTBCA churches situated at different villages and they were lodged at their ongoing, but incomplete church building construction.”

![Pastor Khaizatong at National Games village](image-url)

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57 Interview with Mr. Semminthang, 70 years at Langol village on 13.8.2009.
58 Interview with Pastor Khaizatong 83 years at National Games village on 19.12.2009
(vi) **Tangnuamvillage**

Before coming to the present day Tangnuam village site, the early few Tangnuam village dwellers resided at a place called *Zaanglian* which was a hamlet of Phailian village located at the site of the present day Lamka College. Mangkholam son of Dala was the Phailian village chief during that time. The village chief and his cohorts resided on the western side, while the hamlet residents with Vumzakham as village chief resided on the eastern side. Inspite of the government orders that the residents of a village less than 15 houses could not be recognised as a full fledged village, the Zaanglian village chief Vumzakham received tributes such as paddy tax, animal tax, etc. from his villagers’ eventhough the village had less than 20 houses. It was during that time Christianity came to the village through the preachings of several evangelists like Thangsingpuia, Lungpau, Thangkai, etc. The early Christians converts in the village were Nengzatun, Chinzasuan, and Vumzalam etc. During the period between 1942-43 a small and narrow thatched house was constructed and it was used as a church. They were looked after by Evangelist Kaichingen of the Assembly of the former Kuki Pioneer Mission. The Second World War locally known as *Japan gal* broke out in 1943. The people of Zaanglian fled to Tonglon village while those of Phailian village fled to Tualphei village. After the war in December, the same year they came back to Phailian village. Their houses, fruit trees and the church building remained safe and intact. Surprisingly, as if it was a sign of an omen, an animal belonging to the squirrel family but slightly bigger in size than squirrel locally known as *Leikakpi* entered into the church. They caught, killed, fried and ate up.
The year 1944 was the year like the Israelites receiving manna from the sky while travelling in the desert of Egypt. This year was also a year of hectic campaign by the Christian Evangelists - inviting the villagers to become Christian. The government fed the people by supplying rice through different rice distributing centres. Tools and implements like spade, vessel, and cow etc. were also distributed as help to the cultivators by SDC Khupzathang for their resettlement after enduring war torment. By utilizing government supply materials they cultivated their fields. Evangelists Chinlang, Vunghon, etc. came to the village and organized worship services with singing songs, beating their small drums in tune with their songs, inviting people to become Christians - requesting to give their names as a sign of accepting Christian faith. The villagers were also asked to abandon their old ways of offering sacrifices to their goddesses and also cast away or burned their idol boxes. Vumzalam said that after his conversion to Christianity he was baptized by Pastor Thangsingpui.

By that time few villages like Lamka, Ngathal, Singkangphai, Phailian and Lingsiphai had come into existence in the Tuitha river valley. Greater part of the valley remained under cover of dense bushes of thatch, scrub and trees. With the intention of establishing a separate village the Zanglian residents purchased the present day Tangnuam village site from Palum, chief of Singkangphai village by paying one buffalo. Thangkhopao Kipgen, the then SDO gave them permission to establish the village. During harvesting in the year 1945, huts were constructed at the newly purchased land for temporary storage of their food grains. After harvesting in December 1945 construction of dwelling houses began, and in January 1956 people came to occupy their
new houses which marked the beginning of permanent settlement in the new village. With only 13 houses during the first two years worship services started temporarily inside the house of Vumzalam, and then at the house of Tuankhokam. Construction of church building near Nengkhanpau’s residence started in 1947. On completion, the building was inaugurated by Evangelist Rumpu of the Hmar community. The church remained affiliated to the then Presbytery of the Kuki Pioneer Mission. On January, 26th 1958 a new church emerged out of the existing church. The old church was affiliated to the Convention Church which later came to be known as Evangelical Baptist Convention (EBC) and the new church came to be affiliated to the Baptist Church of Manipur (BCM). The important early leaders of EBC were Tualkhokam, Thongkhozam, Zamkhotuan, Chinzalian, etc. and that of the BCM were Thangzachin, Vumzalam, Vumzagou, Nengkhothang, Singnang, Mr.Khailang, Mr. Nengzalian etc.59

(vii) Dialkhai village

The first preachers of the new gospel at Dialkhai village were evangelists of the then NEIG Mission like Tuanggin, Thangvang, Goihpum, Dala, Dr.Savom etc. They occasionally came to Dialkhai - preaching the message around the year 1932- 1934. Christianity was neither vehemently opposed nor it was warmly welcomed. The older people in the village were stern and adamant to follow their old customs and practices. They like drinking their locally breed wine, offering sacrifices to the goddesses while suffering from desires. But the younger generation - mainly the youth were receptive to the new seedling of faith. Zamzachin 86 years old who earlier lived at Dialkhai village but now migrated to Mission veng, Lamka in 1998 said that, “the first Christian

59 Interviewed Shri Vumzalam 78 years at GBC Campus, Churachandpur on 25.1.2009.
preachers preached by standing on the *Inka-tau*. (extended veranda of the house). The intoxicated older people challenged and tried to provoke the Christian preachers by shouting at them saying “your mouth might get tired, stop speaking, your words will be of no use”. In order to avoid direct confrontation and as an alternative arrangement, the Christian preachers also invited the Dialkhai and Mualpheng villagers who were interested to listen to their messages to meet at Dialkhai and Mualpheng village boundary range and taught them Christ teachings.

Transcending their earlier worships and sacrifices, persons like elder Vungzalang, Nokvum, Pumkhothong, Tualkhothon, Kamzachin, Lingzathang etc. became the first Christians. These first batches of Christian converts were followed by the second group of of younger persons like, Zamzachin, Chinzadou, Langvum, etc. A thatched worshiping house was constructed at the top of the village hill. A register book was kept inside the house where the names of the early Christians were recorded. Their first teacher was Pastor Zamkhothang. The early Christians could merely read and write. In the absence of their teacher, if somebody spoke on his behalf by standing on the Pulpit, he got nervous and trembled with the pulpit shaking.

During that time the village society was a mixed composition of Christians and non Christians. The Christians worshiped on the nights of Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday morning and Sunday night, while the non Christians indulged in organizing sacrificial feast, offering and worshiping to their animism. The village authority dominated by the non Christians use to organize village social works, like clearing of village paths etc. on Sundays in clash with the worship of the Christians. The village
chief used to issue orders for imposition of a fine of one vessel of wine or striping off of
the tip of the axe of those who were absent from the social work. The older people
scolded the younger Christian converts by saying, “what ye younger people knew
about”? You will be tortured hell - bent”. The first church was constructed on the top
of the village hill near the village chief’s house. It was the place where human beings
and Keuhthang (evil spirit) use to fight against each other. The purpose of locating the
church at that place was aimed at deterring the disgusting activities of Keuhthang. From
the top of the village hill the church building was shifted, first to a nearby place where
the Lanken tang village path descended, and finally near the village foot ball field. To
celebrate the newly constructed church building with grand feas the village people went
to Tuivai river to catch fish. A basket full of fish was caught. While they were
discussing in the evening about the programme for celebration the next day, the village
crier Zingkhotuan cried out loudly saying, “Japanese army will be arriving tonight,
whosoever can leave our village should leave the village and take shelter some where in
the forest and also hide your property”. Before dawn the Japanese army contingent of
about 30 arrived at the village and lodged at the newly constructed church building.
From its inception the church was affiliated to the NEIG Miassion. Later, it became a
unit of the Evagelical Convention Church (ECC), and now Evangelical Baptist
Convention (EBC).\footnote{60 Interview Shri Zamzachin 86 years and his wifemat Chapel lane on 27.2.2010}
Lamzang village

Pumsuan, chief of Lamzang village said that, “Due to his stiff opposition to Christianity at Tonglon village, the Tonglon villagers called him tiger”. Prior to become a Christian he followed the religion propounded by Pauchinhau. Pumsuan said that a child who could just begin to walk was seriously sick. They pleaded to the god of Pauchinhau for the child’s healing. But there was no response. Pumsuan alleged Pauchinhau’s god as, “a god which cannot speak, a god which cannot give answer to our prayers and cannot be stir up to anger”. This allegation was conveyed to Watkin Roberts, who was a medical doctor working as a Missionary in the NEIG Mission with its headquarters at Mission Compound, near Churachandpur. Dr.Roberts and his students came to Tonglon village to discuss with Pumsuan about the Christian doctrine. They brought a book written in Mizo language. Roberts taught Pumsuan about the message contained in the book. When Pumsuan found it difficult to understand the words of Dr. Roberts, as he was an Englishman, Thangkhai who accompanied Dr.Roberts helped Pumsuan to understand. After Roberts and his party left Tonglon village, Tualdam and Senpu were sent back to Pumsuan by Roberts for further consultation and discussion. After four months of hectic discussion Pumsuan was fully
convinced and he confessed that he had decided to accept Christianity. He was the first Christian convert at Tonglon village and later became the founder and chief of Lamzang village.\footnote{Interview Mr.Pumsuan 103 years, chief of Lamzang village on 13.6.09. and Evangelist Kamkhogin of Tangnuam village on 10.3.2010.}

Singou 80 years, now residing at Lamzang village also said that he was born at Suangbem village in the Chin Hills of Burma. From Suangbem village they migrated to Pangmual and then to Lamzang village in the year 1947 - the year in which the Lamzang village was established. By that time there were only 8 houses at Lamzang village. On January 10, 1947 the first meeting to establish a church was held at the residence of Khupkhovial, Khupkhovial, Khupneng, Liansong, Singou, Kamsuan, Chinvung, Lamkhoching, and Ngaizaniang, and Ginnem attended the meeting. At the meeting Singou was appointed the first chairman of the church building committee.\footnote{Ibid.} He was baptized by Pastor Thangsingpuia of Khopuibung village in 1947 and his marriage with Ngaizaniang was solemnized by Pastor Lalthanliana in 1949. A small house was constructed and inaugurated by Pastor Thangchhingpuia on March 23, 1947 and was used as the first church. Liansong and his wife Zenkhoman were the first couple to knot the tie of marriage according to the Christian holy matrimony in the newly built church. In 1958 under the leadership of persons like Pumsuan, Chinzagin, Chinzathang, Lamkhopau, Khupneng, etc. a separate church was constructed.\footnote{Interviewed Pastor Kamkhojam 86 years at Tangnuam village on 27.2.2010.} Thus, two churches come into being. The earlier church was affiliated to the Evangelical Convention church, now known as Evageklical Baptist Convention (EBC), and the second church was
affiliated to the Chin Baptist Association (CBA). The EBC church celebrated its Golden Jubilee on 10.1.1997\textsuperscript{64}. The following Pastors had served at the Lamzang EBC Church:

1. Pastor Thangchhingpui
2. Pastor Lalthanlian
3. Pastor Nengthon
4. Pastor Langin
5. Pastor Thanglian\textsuperscript{65}
6. Pastor Englian
7. Pastor Zamgin
8. Pastor Lalzem
9. Pastor Lalkhoghin

(ix) Khuangnung village

Pastor P.K.Englian of N.E.I.G.Mission could be ascribed as one of the pioneer preachers who brought the message of Christ at Khuangnung village. Under the leadership of Upa.T.Chinzakhup the first believers constructed a thatched church in the year 1953. The church was at first localized as it was called, i.e. self maintaining and supporting with its own income without any interference into its affairs from any outside authority till 1957. Towards the end of 1957 consultation with the leaders of the Baptist Mid Mission, having its headquarters at Alipur, Assam and leaders of the Simte Christians started for establishing relationship. Joint meetings between the leaders of the present CBA, NTBC and Missionaries of the Mid Mission were held at Tangnuam and Dumsau villages to find out any possibility of joint affiliation to the Mid Mission. But due to differences in dialect and doctrinal concepts such a joint affiliation to the Mid Mission was not a possibility. As the majority of people inhabiting Khuangnung village belonged to the Simte community, the Khuangnung church was at first attached to the then Simte Christian Association during 1958, and than to the NTBCA. The NTBCA

\textsuperscript{64} Evangelical Baptist Convention Lamzang: Golden Jubilee 1947-1997 Souvenir.p. 3
\textsuperscript{65} Interview with Shi Sinkhopau 56, Secretary, Lamzang EBC Church on 27.2.2010 at Lamzang village.
Church of Khuangnung village celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2008 with its Golden Jubilee Souvenir 1958-2008 publication.\(^{66}\)

**(x) Simveng**

Settlement at Simveng in Churachandpur town started in the year 1974 with M. H.Kamliand and Lianthang as the first two settlers. In course of time people migrating from different villages like Zoutung, Pamjal, Thanlon, Sumtu, Leizangphai and other villages. During the year 1981-82 the number of people became sufficiently large to establish a new and separate place of worship. Even though, the immigrants were new to Simveng they had already been members of different Churches at their earlier places of settlements. Under the initiative taken by H.Kamliand a meeting was convened at the residence of Pu Paudailou on 7.4.1982 (Thursday) to consider how to establish a new Church at Simveng. The meeting was attended by 19 members. But due to different ideas, the meeting ended *Kikhuaikhen*–(like divided bees) without any decision. However, the second meeting was convened again by H.Kamliand at the residence of T.Kaizadou on 15.4.1984. It was attended by 17 members. This time four resolutions could be made. The resolutions were: i) to establish a new Church, ii) to form a Church building Committee, iii) to search a place for construction of the new Church building, and iv) to get approval from the parent NTBC Church at New Bazar for establishment of a new Church and start collection of funds for the same purpose. At the meeting the first Church Committee was constituted and its members were: Chairman (Convenor) H.Kamliand, Secretary L.Thongkhanpau, Treasurer T.Kaizadou, Dongthang and Lamhau as members.

\(^{66}\) Interviewd H.Kamliand 67 at Zion Ta’ng Simveng, Churachandpur on 13\textsuperscript{th} March 2010
The meeting also entrusted T. Kaizadou and S. Khamchinkhup to search a plot for the site of the new Church construction and Th. Zamchinkhup and H. Khamchinkhup were also entrusted to collect funds from the villagers for the building. While the process was gaining momentum, a plot of land costing Rs.5000/- was purchased in 1983 by making advance payment of Rs.4,000/-. This advance money consisted of Rs.3,000/- extended as help from the parent New Lamka NTBC Church and Rs.1,000/- taken as loan from Pu Kaizadou. The remaining Rs.1,000/- was paid on 26.2.1984 out of the fund contributed by the villagers. Having fully paid the price of the plot, construction of the Church building began - the members contributing whatever they could in cash or in kind. Notably, worth mentioning was the role played by women folk. They weaved cloths, sold them and gave the profit out of it for the church construction. After the church building was completed it was on 29th December 1985 the building was inaugurated and was dedicated to the Almighty God by Rev. H. Thangliankham.

Interview with Mr. Kamliand : Op. cit. n. 66

NTBCA Church
Simveng

Rev. Thangliankham of Beulalane,
Churachandpur

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67 Interview with Mr. Kamliand : Op. cit. n.66
(xi) **Behiang village and its neighbouring areas**

Lushai Evangelists led by Laltluanga came to preach Christianity among Behiang villagers and its surrounding areas. Settlement at Behiang village began in 1922 and the year of coming of missionaries was believed to be around 1935. The missionaries came to the village, developed intimacy and friendly relationship with the villagers. First they prepared their agricultural fields and led a settled life. They did not tell the villagers about the scripture immediately after their arrival, but first inculcated the knowledge of reading and writing among the villagers. One primary school was established at Behiang village by the missionaries in 1951. Thangchinhau of Suangdai village acted as the school teacher. Lushai script (now Mizo script) was taught with Lushai language as the medium of instruction. As such, Paodomang chief of Behiang village said that his father and mother knew Lushai language.

A story about a stream locally known as *Tapido* which had its sources near the village was a tale told story. When the villagers drilled the water and use it pimple developed on their bodies after which they dared not used the water. But when missionary Laltluanga and his companions went to the source of the river, read the Bible, sung songs and had prayers; the river water since then had no more effect on their bodies. The first persons to become Christians were Ginkhai Naulak, Goihkhoching, etc. After the Lushai Evangelists left the village their places were taken over by Pastor Kamkhogin and then by Pastor Goukholian of the NEIG Mission. Even though the
Church, at the beginning was under the NEIG Mission, it was later on switched over to the BCM.  

(xii) Pamzal village

It was the Evangelists of the NEIG Mission who propagated Christianity among the Pamjal villagers. The villagers believed that Pumkhokai, a resident of Pamzal village who was a sepoy would be able to speak about the gospel because of his experiences in the military service. A bushell was tied to the main pillar called Sutpi inside the house of the chief. Pumkhokai standing by the side of the Sutpi spoke about his activities in his military service and the villagers listened to his speech as if he was speaking about the gospel. While he was speaking, he was told that it was time for him to sip the locally breed wine called Zu which he occasionally did. The Pamzal village Christian community was at first part of the Simte Chrisatian Association which later came to be a unit of the New Testament Baptist Church Association (NTBCA). At present there are three churches. One belonged to the Assembly of God, another known as the Baptist Local Church and the third one known as NTBCA.

(xiii) Minzang village

The Minzang villagers were indulging in worldly enjoyment, vulgar drinking of wine and extravaganza eating of meat and beef. During the early times of the founding of the village which was about 1947, notably wine at Minzang village was very cheap and very dearly. During that time one pot of indigenous wine cost Rs. 10/- at Thanlon village, while it cost Rs.3/- at Seital village, i.e. a village near Minzang village from

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68 Interview with Mr. Paodoumang 72 years, Chief of Behiang village at New Lamka on 14.3.2010
69 Interview with Mr. Pauzamoi, Chief of Pamzal village at Simveng, Churachandpur on 23.2.2009.
where the Minzang villagers procured wine. Evangelist Ruata from Saidan village and his companions were the first to propagate the Bible teaching at Minzang village. Nengzachin and Vungnuam were the only two people who had already been there as Christians before the coming of the Bible doctrine preachers. Thangchinkhai testimonied that he had the willingness to become a Christian after paying patient hearing to the messages delivered by the gospel Evangelists and gave his name to them signifying his turning to Christiany. Thus Thangchinkhai followed by his wife Nemngaihching became the first couple to become Christian. Invited by this first couple, the second couple who became Christians was Kaikhosoi and his wife; the third couple was Amkholun and his wife. These people were later on followed by other villagers. Under the leadership of these first believers the first church was constructed in the year 1957. The church bell without which the church construction was incomplete was donated by the chief of Kangvai village. With donation of two pots of rice, one each by Mr. Thangchinkhai and Amkholun and other donations in case and in kind by other believers the first christmas celebration was performed with joy and spiritual awakening.

The Minzang church was first affiliated to the Independent church which was an association of the Hmar, Lusei and Vaiphei communities with its headquarters at Kangvai village. Kaikhosoi and Thangchinkhai went to participate at the Independent Church Annual Conference as delegates from Minzang village. But from 1958 the Minzang church became part of the New Testament Baptist Church Association (NTBCA). Pu Kaikhosoi, an elderly man was appointed as the first Pastor in 1960. He was succeeded by Pastor Thangchinkhai from 1970 and served in that post till 1992.
The power of the Holy Spirit worked into the minds of the people. Nungkhokam who performed ancient sacrifices as priest abandoned his work and became a Christian by throwing away all his priestly materials. Also, it was a rare case and uncommon faith, when Kamzathang did not believed in allopathic medicine but believed in God’s healing for his illnesses. He said, “Can we be a Christian if we believed in medicine”. He firmly confided in James 5:14-15 of the Bible which states:

“This is any sick among you: let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with the name of the lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick.” 70

(ii) Mongon Village

An ardent and energetic Evangelist Thomlian of NEIG Mission hailing from Phaitong village was the first to brought Christianity to Mongon villagers. He had also gone to Mizoram for preaching and also had undergone theology training. Probably he was sent to Mongon village by his parench church to preach the gospel. Young men and

70 Interview with Thangchinkhai, a senior citizen of Minzang village on 6.6.2010, now migrated to New Lamka.
women were prompted to embrace Christianity at the beginning but without consistency in their commitment. Many of them abandoned the new sect and backslided. The first known persistent Christian converts were Oikhokai, Phahoih and Dimzou, etc. It was said that when Phahoih knelt down in dedication to the Lord and prayed her brothers in protest against her becoming a Christian pull out her hands from her posture of prayer. Chinzavung, wife of Thangchinzam was born in the year 1927 at Mongon village. As she stated the spontaneous growth of Christianity took place between 1920 and 1930. Christian travelers used to put up at their house in large numbers because the non Christians refused to welcome the Christians as their guests. Zacin and his wife were the first Christian couple. The first Christians called themselves as Paula pawl (Paul’s party). The first church was constructed at Mualvun (hill top of the village). During the early time of entry of Christianity into the village no obstruction was posed to it. An evangelist known as Dengkung was sent to Mongon village by the Independent Chruch of the Hmar community to look after the Mongon village Christians. But when he came to the village a good number of Christians had already been there.  

Mrs Chinzavung w/o Thangchinzam
Upper Lamka, Churachandpur

Interview with Mrs. Chiinzavung 82 years w/o Thangchinzam 87 years at Upper Lamka on 6.6.2010