CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
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Now, the thesis ergo concludes. On this step the assumptions postulated at the beginning of the work need be referred back to: the still going-on phenomena of fragmentations of the Kukis of Manipur into a number of tribal ethno-lings is probably the cumulative result of the internal differences of culture, language, ethnic origin etc., experienced by this people over their long history; prodigality and elasticity of the missionary activities of Christianity may also be considered as a factor associated with this problem in question; and lastly, the secular spirit of democratic principles of Indian administrate apparatus ferment germinations of ethnic fissions among the people. The concluding remarks now, of course, consist in paraphrasing the empirical substantiation of the said assumption in the light of the relevant material that have been properly explicated in the main body of the work.

Before undertaking this appointed task it is but necessarily rendered, first, to recapitulate the clarification already done above on the retention of the word ‘kuki’ as the name of the people under study.

It has been observed above in the body of the thesis that the people do not have an undisputed collective name of their own. During the British colonial days
they were called by different names by the British administrators: the Chin in
Burma (now Myanmar), Lushai in the land of present-day Mizoram, Kuki in
Manipur, Assam and East Bengal (present-day Bangladesh). It has also been
observed thereat that the so-called Chin people themselves have revolted against
this name for them for reasons of its being exogenous and at the same time
derogatory in its meaning etc. The people settling in the area of so-called Northern
Chin Hills have enthusiastically put forward that their autonym for all of them
including their brethren elsewhere, irrespective the places where they are
scattered, should be ‘zo.’ Paying homage to this name deemed to be their genuine
name, the people of the earlier Lushai Hills have renamed themselves Mizo, in
lieu of Lushai, and their country Mizoram. And, a section of their ethnic
compatriots have, too, strongly asserted that their entire ethnic totality should be
known by the name ‘zomi.’ Though they differently explain justifications of the
two names, the difference between the two may linguistically be reduced simply to
one of variation of word order of a single term; the pre-fix Mi in Mizo becomes
suffix in Zomi, or the suffix Zou or Zo in Mizo is rendered as a prefix of the word
Zomi, and both carry the meaning ‘Zo or Zou people.’ The autogenetic
reconstructions of the two nomenclatures apart, the present thesis has explored the
most probable origin of the root word (zo) of the name in its meaning of ‘Zou
people’, by reconstructing an historical connection of the people with the Miao (or
Meo)/Yao peoples of southern China and northern region of South-east Asian
countries. It has, however, been equally observed that the Zo nomenclature
proposed by the Northern Chins has been disowned by the Central Chins (Pois or
Lais) of Falam-Haka region. This objection also finds its historical justification in
another historical exploration of the thesis as to the separate identity of the Lai
ethnic group who are now concentrated mostly in the island of Hainan. The history
of coming in contact between the Miao/Yao and the Lai, reflected in the Chapter I
of the work, may be called up. This point veritably shows the limitation of the
application of the ethnonym Zo or Zou (derived from Miao/Yao) for the entire
community that has been known by a number of vagarious names. This limited
applicability of one of the names, i.e., Zou apart, tracing the origin of this very
name, as the present thesis has so done in its Chapter I, from an archaic name of
Egypt, i.e., ‘Mizariam,’ has been exposed there to be incongruent with the non-
Egyptian identity of the peoples’ ancestors. On the other hand, it must also have
been observed that in this work the expression Kuki-Chin is used temporarily in
certain contexts to refer to the people at large; the said expression was applied to
the people by some British writers like Grierson. Usage of this nomenclature had
possibly the value of wider application, during the time of British rule, to the
Chins of the then Burma and the Kukis on the Indian side. But, as has already been
pointed in Chapter I of the present work, both ‘kuki’ and ‘chin’ become unpopular
among the people themselves as a part of their name or their full name. Of the two,
however, the word ‘kuki’ and its propriety as the name of the people may further be examined.

On the Indian side ‘Kuki’ has been abandoned by the Lushais (now the Mizos of Mizoram). But, as has already been observed, A. Soppitt took ‘kuki’ to have been a derivative of ‘lushai;’ his scheme of word change from Lushai (Luhai) → Lukai → Kukai → Kuki may be remembered here. This means to say that ‘kuki’ and ‘lushai’ are phonetically one and the same, one assuming the other. ‘Kuki,’ yet, seems to have been adopted more wide-spread; this is the name of the people in Bangladesh, Tripura, Assam and Manipur. This picture stands till to-day in the first three regions; in Manipur it has though seemingly changed by now, the said picture formerly prevailed during the British colonial days, hence Soppitt’s statement: “The term ‘kuki’ itself is too well established to be given up.” Decline of acceptance of Kuki nomenclature in Manipur has been shown with the reasons thereof in Chapter IV of this present work; most of the erstwhile clans of the larger former Kuki population have emerged now as separate, recognized tribal entities under their respective earlier clan names, leaving behind a small residual chunk of individuals under the rubric ‘kuki.’ The law of change operating behind the historical process is undoubtedly to be honoured. One may, however, unearth a parallel truth—a truth of psychological dimension which nevertheless persists in the collective psyche of the outwardly diversified peoples under discussion, that
may be discovered in its implicated form in the people’s dislike to part with the word ‘kuki’ for their generic name.

The thesis has, in its value free stance, interpreted certain telling material as the *raison d’etre* of the existence of this collective psyche of the people as the internalized lingering of a once established order of ‘kuki’ as the group name of the people in their earlier history. The first material that may be employed in this regard is that of the recognition of the Kukis and Laics by the first king of Manipur of the first century A.D. and their employment as his war mercenaries.

The antiquity of the ethnic name ‘kuki’ is now clearly established. The prevalence of their ethnic name also in the erstwhile Indo-Chinese countries of modern South-east Asia has also been implicated on the basis of Yule’s report (*vide supra*: 30) that “the Indo-Chinese countries appear, from Taranatha’s *History of Buddhism*” to have been anciently known as Koki. What may be added here is Grierson’s identification (Gerini 1909:97) of Ptolemy’s Kokkonagara in Malaya Peninsula. He says in this connection: “…that the coast opposite Junkeeylon---that is, the present Tatua-thung and Korbie provinces---was settled by tribes of dog-worshippers....” Here the expression ‘tribes of dog-worshippers may be constructed as suggesting Kuki (‘kokko’ probably phonetically aligned with ‘kuki’) identity of the tribes; hence the place Kokkonagara so rendered after ‘kuki,’ meaning ‘place of Kuki settlement.’ Here, the dog-ancestral cult (this
ancestor being named P’an-ku) of the Miao/Yao (vide supra: 37) and the fact of retention of the name of the dog ancestor P’an-ku in the ethnonym ‘Pankho’ of the name-sake tribe (vide supra: 37) may be referred back to.

A glimpse of the sway of the ethnonym Kuki around the beginning of the Christian era in the whole tract of modern South East Asia has thus been reconstructed. Prevalence of this ethnonym in the days of older antiquity in the more northerly places may also be reconstructed on the basis of C.G. Verghese and R.L. Thanzawna’s information (vide supra: 30) on the naming of lake Ko Ko Nor in Mongolia after the settlement of the Kuki people around this lake.

What has been reported on the antiquity, and historically as well as geographical widespread of the ethnonym in point all points to the historical authenticity of this name. It is in the spirit of the associated historical logic of its credibility that the name Kuki is endorsed in the present thesis for the people under study. There is perhaps still greater antiquity of the name that may be discovered from the history of ancient Asia Minor and the adjoining areas. Truly, much more rigorous and intensive dig into the ancient past of the said land is a clarion call.

Now, the concluding remarks veer round the thrust points of the work, i.e., probe into the phenomenal process of segmentation and fission among the Kukis of Manipur.
The ancestors of the Kukis in Manipur, old group and new group, came to this state in several waves in most cases with their respective separate tribal names. In other words, they had completed their respective distinct tribal formations already in the Chin Hills or probably even before. Here, it may be pointed out that particularly among the Northern Chins whose members migrating to Manipur, Assam, Tripura and Bangladesh the Britishers later called the New Kukis, the autocratic rules of their hereditary chiefs induced the villagers to leave their original villages in search of new lands one after another where leaders of the migrating hordes assumed power as chiefs of the new villages and exercised the same autocratic and taxing rules, and in the process new tribes were formed and named after the clans of the chiefs. After first coming across their ethnic compatriots in Tripura, erstwhile East Bengal (later East Pakistan and finally Bangladesh) and Assam, particularly in its Surma and Barak valley, on the way, whom the Britishers picked up the word 'kuki' for their common name, and observing ethnic affinity of these Kukis with the like peoples in Manipur applied the same name also to the latter groups of peoples of this state. While recognizing these peoples of Manipur by the name 'kuki', those British officers undertook a grouping of the said peoples to the effect that their separate tribal identities became reduced to the status of several constituent class of a single composite tribe, the Kuki; J.S. Shakespear's *The Lushei Kuki Clans* (1988) bears testimony to this fact.
While relegating the tribal identities of the people to clan identities, as represented J.S. Shakespear’s work, this British scheme of internal reclassification of the people provided a boon in disguise on the part of the people in the sense that under their new collective name given by the Britishers, and accepted by them temporarily though it was, a sense of awareness of their ethnic oneness ushered in their minds. Resultantly the Kuki National Assembly was first formed in 1947 among the Kukis of Manipur at that time when acute movements of Mizo nationalism and Naga nationalism emerged in the ethno-political scenario prevailing in their vicinity. As has already been pointed out above in Chapter IV (vide supra: 106), the KNA (Kuki National Assembly), after change of its complexion from being initially a social organisation to a political party, dreamt of a separate state for the Kukis. All the Kuki tribes/clans joined the movement, excepting the Hmars. The Thadou chauvinism, however, weakened down the strength of the KNA, leaving behind in it the Thadous alone, and they forming the new organisation in the year 1947 itself, named the Khulmi Union, this time with the membership of the Hmars thereof. Meanwhile, a scene of self-assertion of the Kom tribe emerged within the organization of the Khulmi Union itself; this trend culminated in the formation of the Komrem Union in 1949 by the Koms in alliance with their closest relatives, the Aimols, Chirus, Chothes, Koirengs, Purums, Kharams and Taraos. This step of ethnic formation of the Kom was soon followed suit by the Anals and their cognate tribes, namely the Lamkangs,
Moyons, and Monsangs under the name of Pakan Union in 1950. These two happenings severely affected the internal organization of the Khulmi Union which, pulled down under these circumstances, was finally put to its acid test in 1952 in which year the first General Election to the Indian Parliament took place. One Thangkhai Paite filed his nomination papers as a candidate for the election, but his nomination was officially turned down on the ground that he did not identify himself as a Kuki, and the Kukis of Manipur were then constitutionally recognized collectively under the expression ‘Any Kuki Tribes.’ The incident flared up anti-Kuki feelings among the Paites, which brewed up finally to the establishment of the Paite National Council in 1956.

The year 1953 was a land-mark in the history of tribal ethnic identifications of the Kukis who had been earlier were put together under the convenient administrative single expression “Any Kuki Tribes.” The Kaka Kalekar Commission (1953) instituted by the Government of India to update the list of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes of India, based on the liberal democratic outlook of the principle of secularism, heard to the separate demands and representations of the individual tribes of Manipur for their inclusion as separate tribes in the list of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes to be recognized by the Government of India. On the spree of this Indian secularism there returned as many as 21 separate recognized Scheduled Tribes of Manipur that may, at least
historically, be treated as of general Kuki ethnic background. The list thereof came out in 1956 (vide infra: 245, Appendix No. VI). The collective entity ‘Any Kuki Tribes’ thus got ethnically segmented and fissioned.

Now, one can make a review of the whole process of the intra-group relations within the single ethnic block, the ‘Kukis’ in the light of the theoretical, assumptive frame for understanding the phenomenon, underlying the present work. Here, one necessarily remembers the basic principle of a structure, i.e., a structure consists in its inherent process of the interactions of two basic forces the force of combinations and recombination of the elements of the structure, and at the same time, the force of divisions and fissions of these combinations and recombination of the same structural elements. As the title of the thesis indicates, it gives its thrust on the fission pole of the structural process of ethnic relations of the Kukis of Manipur.

Working of the unifying force in the relations of the Kukis in Manipur has been observed above in the formation of organisations, namely the Kuki National Association (KNA) and the Khulmi Union at the bigger scale, and the Komrem Union and the Pakan Union at the smaller scale. Side by side with that unifying process it has also been observed simultaneously that these unifying organizations crumble down one after another. It was proposed at the beginning of the work to examine this process in the light of an inherent traditional conflict internalized
over time in the minds of the people out of the external historical cultural and social relationships of conflicts experienced by their ancestors in their past history. The first motion of the said historical relation of conflict among the people may be moved on the historical fact of the conspicuous internal differences between the Zou/Zo section and the Lai (or Poi) section of the people which is best perceived in the Chin Hills phase of their history, differences which find their deeper root in the prior history of the relations of the Miao/Yao and the Lais in northern Southeast Asia and southern China. In the Chin Hills of Myanmar these differences speak when the Lais/Pois strongly object to their ethnic identification under the name zo or zou. And, in the present state of Mizoram also there has been this sort of opposition and conflict between the Mizos and the Maras of south-eastern corner of Mizoram, whom the Mizo call the Lakkers, and the Lai-speaking of that part of Mizoram. As has been observed above in Chapter III this internal conflict between the majority Mizos and the Lakkers along with the Lais (both of Poi or Lai ethnic background) found their historic expressions in the establishment of the Lakher Independent Evangelical Church of Maraland, (later renamed the Evangelical Church of Maraland) and the Church of Jesus Christ and the Baptist Church of Lailand as fall-outs of reactions and resistance of these local peoples to the imposition of Lushei language as the standard language in the Church and in translation works of the Bible.
In Manipur the Zou-Lai (or Poi) ethnic polarity seems to have been submerged though certain elements of the latter may be traced to some extent. The original Poi identity of the Paite tribe, as the name so suggests, has been pointed out in the Chapter I. Probably because they later became subjected to the rule of the Suktes while they were in the Chin Hills, they are now in favour of identifying themselves as a Tedim (Northern Chin) tribe. The major chunk of the Kukis, particularly the New Kukis, of Manipur, who were until recently officially recognized as the Thadou, and their off-shoot tribes were driven out of Northern Chin Hills in the 19th century by the Suktes of Northern Chin Hills. It is perhaps this historical reason of enmity of these peoples with the Suktes that makes the Paites dislike ethnic alignment with the Kukis. They do not manifestly antagonize the Kukis obviously not because of their Poi/Lai origin. One may notice a second set of Poi/Lai elements in the Maring/Khoibu tribe(s) of south-eastern Manipur; but they have forsaken any ethnic link with the Kukis after their departure from the Khulmi Union in the early nineteen fifties. Presence of Poi/Lai elements may be sensed in the North District, now renamed Senapati District of Manipur; though these elements appear to have been lost into oblivion elsewhere in the said region, one village, namely the Lai village thereof, and another village, named the Poi village in Ukhrul district of north-eastern Manipur may perhaps be suggested to be two instances of survival of the original Poi/Lai population in the two peripheral locations of Manipur, albeit their identifications as Naga village since long ago
probably because of their pretty long existence as minor pockets in the Naga
dominated areas. At present, there is, however, want of detailed relevant ethno-
historical researches for ascertaining the historical authenticity of the claims.

After keeping apart the Paites from the larger Kuki collectivity in Manipur
on the ground of their Lai/Poi origin, its remaining people are again divided into the
Old Kukis and the New Kukis on the basis of the earlier and later, respectively, of
their landing in this State. This old-new division of the people assumes also its
ethnic complexion. Each of the two groups has its own distinctive features: the
tribes of the Old groups have characteristically more or less democratic village
administrative system, their chiefs are more or less democratically selected, and
they speak greater mutually intelligible dialects; and the tribes of the New group
have more autocratic village polity with their hereditary chiefs at the apex of power,
and their speeches are more intelligible inter se than with any of the Old group. The
two peoples concerned are more aware of these differences between and betwixt
them, and of the consequent respective internal oneness within each.

But, the feeling of oneness of the tribes of the Old group, however, cannot
pull them together all the time. They have been on the track of falling apart from
one another. This trend was led by the Hmars, a tribe of this group. The Hmars of
Manipur looked more to Mizoram for their destiny, forsaking their relations with
their Kuki brethren, both of the Old and New groups, of Manipur. It may be
remembered here that their ethnic name ‘Hmar’ was given them by the Lushai: (modern Mizo) in the meaning of ‘Northerners’; they later occupied the terrain bordering on both northern Mizoram and southern Manipur after being driven out by the Lusheis from interior Lushai Hills. The earlier historical interaction they thus had with the Lusheis induces the Hmars the feeling of more attachment to the Lusheis (now Mizos).

The Old Kuki tribes of Manipur minus the Hmars are again divided into two small blocks on the basis of difference of degree of affinity among them as Komrem and Pakan, the first comprising the Kom, Aimol, Chiru, Chothe, Purum, Tara and Kharam, and the second, the Anal, Lamkang, Moyon and Monsang. The first group may be characterized by, among others, their mode of kinship organization, namely tripartite social organisation in a multi-clan system whereas the latter group, by their moiety organization, except in the case of the Lamkang. Inclusion of the Lamkang into the latter group appears to be due to the influence of ethnic alliance of the other member tribes. The Unions formed by the two groups, namely the Komrem Union and the Pakan Union have, however, suffered from the vested, dominating interests of the leading tribes.

Most of the Kuki tribes, old and new, of Manipur were for official purpose dumped together under the single expression “Any Kuki Tribes” before 1953. The Government did not then recognize them officially by their separate tribal names.
Only when the Kaka Kalekar Commission recommended in 1953, on the demands of the separate identities of these tribes, did the Government of India amended in 1956 the list of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes of India, under which as many as 21 tribes of general Kuki ethnic ground became formally recognized as separate Kuki tribes. Thus the constitutional arrangements of the Government of India sharpened and accelerated the process of separate tribal formations among the Kukis of Manipur. In 2003, again, there three more tribes, namely the Tarao, Kharam and Any Kuki Tribes are added to the list of recognized Kuki-Scheduled Tribes of Manipur. What is more, some of the Kukis now classified under ‘Any Kuki Tribes,’ the Chongthus, the Mates and the Khoibus, have recently launched their separate movements for their fresh inclusions in the list of the recognized Scheduled Tribes of Manipur. Now only a section of the larger Kuki Community, named under the Khongshai, remain satisfied with their official recognition as a Scheduled Tribe of Manipur under the expression ‘Any Kuki Tribes.’

There has been a close relationship between the division of the Kukis of Manipur into those add 24 tribes and the process of the expression of the Christian missions in Manipur both before and after the official recognition of these tribes by the Government of India as Scheduled Tribes. It seems that the said relationship has been expressed in two ways: one in which the multiplication of the several Kuki tribes on account of sundry dialectal and other differences in

back
respects of custom and manner between and among them break up of the larger Christian Missionary organization into small missionary units and the associated churches inspires expressions of stronger tribal ethnic assertions. Chapter III of the present work provides a lucid picture of the entire process of ethno-religious interactions between and betwixt of the Kuki tribes of Manipur. As regards the first expression of the relationship, the independent mission of the Indo-Burma Thadou-Kuki Pioneer Mission may, for instance, be recapitulated here: this mission was set up in 1910, but got split in 1930, because of certain internal conflict, into the Indo-Burma Pioneer Mission (IBPM) and the North-east India General Mission (NEIGM). In 1931 on dialectal ground the Hmars left the IBPM and established the Independent Church of India, out of which again in 1973 a new denomination branched off under the name the Evangelical Free Church of India. On the other hand, the NEIGM with a change of its name into the Evangelical Congregational Church of India (ECCI) had constituent ecclesiastical organizations based on dialectal groups: the Evangelical Convention Church (ECC) now changed to Evangelical Baptist Convention (of the Paite), Kuki Christian Association renamed the Evangelical Churches Association (of the Thadou speakers), Evangelical Organisation Church (of the Vaipheis), Evangelical Assembly Church (of the Hmars), Evangelical Synod Church (of the Gangtes), Evangelical Church of Manipur (of the Baities), and United Evangelical Church (of the Analas). And, the other manifestation of the relationship under study may be
observed in the dissolution of the ethnic fronts constituted by a few tribal groups, dysfunctioning of Komrem Union and Pakan Union, for instances. In the case of Komrem Union the ethno-centric interest of the Kom tribe, and such ethnocentrism of the Anal in the case of the Pakan Union, are the main factors, respectively for the debacles of the two Unions.

Having felt alarmed by the ever current trend of tribal fissions among the Kukis of Manipur, a group of individuals representing several Kuki tribes of the State have launched a movement to undo the divisive trend, and rather to unite their tribes into a single tribal collectivity under a common ethnic nomenclature i.e., Zomi. This is what the people themselves call the “Zomi Movement” for which the Zomi National Congress was founded in 1972, whose first assembly was convened at Zouveng village of Churachandpur in July, 1983. To its disappointment, the movement is, however, not fully fruitful. It can gain support of individual members from various Tribal groups under its ambit, but not of these tribes at the group level. The Thadou and the Hmar en block object it outright; this is a major obstacle to it because without the participation of these two major tribes the drive of this movement remains incomplete. Moreover, many of the Old Kuki tribes have of late tended to change their ethnic allegiance to the Naga fold under the recent onslaught of the rising expansionism of the Naga nationalism in Manipur. Within the pôle of the New Kuki block itself those who remain as
residual population after the separation of its major chunk into the currently recognized Scheduled Tribes of the Kuki ethnic background are asserting their separate tribal identities with expectation of their recognition by the Government of India as Scheduled Tribe(s). The cases under this spree are those of the Chongthus the Mates and the Khoibus.

The separation of the tribes from one another has been all the more trailed by mutual conflict particularly among the major tribes. With reference to this context the cases of the Hmar-Thadou/Kuki Conflict and the Paite-Thadou/Kuki Conflict have already been described at some length in Chapter IV. Among the Thadou/Kuki themselves internal conflict arises, on which also certain details have been reported above. Among the Maring, whom the larger Kuki community have claimed to be the latter’s ethnic compatriots at least on the ground of their earlier historical relations in the Chin Hills of present-day Myanmar, a similar trend of conflicting relations has taken place; of the three components of the Maring, namely the Maring proper, the Khoibu and the Saibu, the first two have recently been pitted against each other over the issue of the Khoibu campaign for their tribal identification separate from the Maring. The third components, i.e., the Saibus seem to be preparing themselves to follow up the Khoibus blow.

It would be interesting, however, to observe that while experiencing a long historical process of internal tribal ethnic severality there has emerged a re-uniting
tendency, at least at the symbolic level, among the Kukis of Manipur as well as among their geographically closest ethnic compatriots, i.e., the Mizos of Mizoram, a phenomenon which one observes in the 'Kut' festival which all the Kukis, irrespective of their separate tribal identifications, almost voluntarily and spontaneously participate. This trend appears in the scene since the 1970s. One has yet to see the efficiency of this emerging cultural mechanism of the people, and the level of its impact, on the recombination of the diverse elements in their overall restructuring process.