CHAPTER II

THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF MIZORAM AND THE COMING OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

Part I

THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF MIZORAM

Due to the inaccessibility of their hills, the Mizos in the past lived a secluded life and had been free from outside invasion. As a result their social structure, political institutions, customs and traditions remained unaltered till they were brought under the British rule and were converted into Christianity. On the eve of British occupation, almost the whole of present Mizoram was under the supremacy of the Sailo chiefs. The entire tract - eastern, western and northern Mizo Hills was under the sway of the descendants of Lallula, who had established himself over northern Mizo Hills by 1840. The Houlongs (Hualngo and Hualhang), a cognate branch of the Sailos were the masters of a considerable part of the South Mizo Hills. Almost every winter when the Mizos were free from jhuming work, they committed daring raids upon the Kuki settlers at Cachar and Manipur, killing many and carrying off many more as captives.

In 1832, Cachar was incorporated into British
territory and was administered by a Superintendent. For resisting the Cachar-Manipur frontiers from the Mizo incursions the Superintendent set up two Manipur princes, Ram Rana Singh and Tribhubanjit Singh. In April 1844 Lalchukla (Laltuaka), son of a Mizo chief Lalroo, raided Kachubari, a Manipur village south-east of Syhlet, killing twenty persons and carrying off six into captivity. This was an act of aggression on a territory under protection of the British. A party of Syhlet Light Infantry under Captain Blackwood advanced into the hills and took possession of Lalchukla's village. The chief surrendered on condition of his life being spared and that he would not be kept in captivity. But he was transported for life after a trial - an act which the Lushais could neither forget nor forgive. This had created a deep-rooted misunderstanding, and all subsequent efforts failed to restore their confidence who now considered the British authorities as their arch enemies. Gaurshailon (Ngursailova), son of Lalchukla, is said to have taken an oath to avenge the wrong in due course.


3. Ibid.
Their Raids:

From this time till 1890, the Mizos were a constant source of trouble to the British frontier. In 1847, they raided and killed at least 150 persons in the Tipperah Raja’s territory. Two years later, in 1849, there were further Mizo raids into Syhlet and Cachar. This time they killed 29 and took away 42 as captives. The expeditionary force sent under Colonel Lister in 1850 which started from Silchar on January 4, arrived at Sentlang, the village headed by Mullah (Ngura) who was the leader on the fourteenth, and burnt down his village. Since Lister’s expedition, “relations with the Lushais (Mizos) in the east continued to be, on the whole, satisfactory”. But in 1862 and 1868 there were further raids. In 1869, two columns of troops under Brigadier General Nuthall were sent, but due to bad weather, they returned without success. On January 23, 1871, the Mizos killed Winchester, a planter at Alexandra-pore and took away his six year old daughter, Mary Winchester. Since then, the Government decided to send a military

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expedition to punish them and to get the captives back.

**Causes of Raids:**

One of the reasons of their raids was their pride in adventures. To them, raids were equivalent to wars. A Mizo who killed a non-Mizo was always received with honour than one who did not. In the same way, the prestige and position of the chiefs were measured on the basis of number of successful raids they made. Death while fighting was considered honourable.

Secondly, the Mizos got accustomed to the use of guns since the first Anglo-Burmese war (1824-26). Gun and gunpowder became a passion to the Chiefs who knew that the neighbouring plain people also had these.

The Mizos indulged in raiding the neighbouring territories for obtaining certain articles like bell-metal plates, bangles, and other materials which they considered valuable were available in the plains.

They made raids to capture slaves or captives. For they needed slaves to do all the jhuming and household works. They had the system of adopting young girls and boys.

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into their clan to strengthen the number.

The gradual extension by the English tea planters of their tea gardens up to the foot hills forests which the Mizos considered as theirs greatly annoyed them for it was taken to be encroachment upon their right. As a result, the Mizos resorted to raids and thereby came into direct clash with the tea garden authorities.

The want of salt and other food stuffs was one of the reasons for the frequent raids by the Mizos on the neighbouring tribes and plainsmen.

The British Policy

As against the raids of the Mizos, the British at first followed a policy of appeasement towards them and presented gifts even to the chiefs who were responsible for armed incursions. For this purpose, they extracted huge amount of money from the tea garden owners. The British officials also tried to maintain friendly relations through commercial intercourse. The Mizos always welcomed

10. R.G. Woodthorpe, The Lushai Expedition, 1871-72, p. 39
traders as friends from whom they procured salt, sulphur, flint, glass, iron, brass, copper utensils and other articles in exchange of rubber, cotton, cinnamon, lac, ivory, wax. Burland recorded that in 1871, 1500 mounds of rubber was procured by traders from the Mizos. The policy of the Government of India towards the Mizos was thus "to leave the tribes alone as far as possible to manage their own affairs, to cultivate trade and friendly intercourse with them, to endeavour to establish personal influence over the chiefs and to maintain such vigilance along the line of defence to deter the tribes from committing raids or to cut off the parties who may attempt them".

But all attempts of the British authorities to maintain friendly relations with the Mizos became futile as they continued to carry on their raids. The settlement with one chief was often followed by raids by another chief on British territory. The appeasement policy thus failed. The British government decided to send military expedition to punish them and to obtain the release of the captives.

On July 11, 1871, the Governor-General-in-Council decided to send an expedition against the Mizos known as the Lushai Expedition, its object was to avenge the murder of Winchester and to recover his daughter, Mary Winchester. It was also intended, as Reid says, "to establish permanent friendly relations with them, to induce them to promise to receive our native agents, to make travelling in their country safe to all, to demonstrate the advantage of trade and commerce, and to prove to them in short that they had nothing to gain but everything to lose by acting against the British Government".

The expeditionary force, which was divided into columns, one under the command of Brig. General Bourchier started from Cachar. The other column known as the Chittagong Column under the command of Brig. General C.H. Brownlow started from the Chittagong frontier. The Government did not issue any special instruction as to how the tribes had to be punished. General was, however, determined to bring the Mizos under submission so that they behaved...

themselves properly in future. He also wanted to show them the British supremacy. "We could reach them, and that we had the power of crushing any opposition they could made to our occupation of their country"\(^{17}\). The army returned to Calcutta in 1872 after recovering Mary Winchester, and punishing the offenders who had been involved in the Cachar raids in 1868 and 1871. They burnt their villages and granaries, and carried away their cattle. Many captives from British India had been released, although in some cases the captives chose to remain in Mizoram.

**Raids repeated**:

Sixteen years later, the peace obtained by the Lushai Expedition of 1871 was disrupted by the Mizos. It all began with a quarrel between a certain Mizo couple. Due to ill-treatment of Hausata, his wife left him and went back to her father. The father, however, agreed to return his daughter to her husband on condition that the latter must be able to deliver two heads which must not be of Kukis or Mizos. In his pursuit of heads, Hausata killed Lt. J. F. Steward along with his two English bodyguards and one Indian sepoy on the 3rd February, 1888 at a place 18 miles from Rangamati in the Chittagong Hill Tracts\(^{18}\)

\(^{17}\) Quoted by R.C. Woodthorpe, *op. cit.*, pp.40-41. 
On the 15th of the same month, another raid was perpetrated in which six persons were killed, two were wounded, and 23 persons taken captives. This notorious act was committed by the Shendus (Lakhers)\textsuperscript{19}, then considered a non-Mizo tribe by the Mizos\textsuperscript{20}. On 13th December that same year, an attack was carried out on a village near Demagiri in which at least 21 were slain and other 15 persons were taken away as captives. This raid was conducted by three Sailo chiefs namely Nikama (Nikhama), Lungliana and Kairuma\textsuperscript{21}.

The situation was once again critical. The feeling of insecurity caused by these raids had its most serious effect on the British revenue which consisted mostly of tolls on the products of the hills. This had gone down from Rs.89,109.00 in 1876 to Rs.83,222.00 in 1887. In 1888, the revenue collected did not exceed Rs.50,000.00. Even from the financial point of view, another expedition seemed to be inevitable\textsuperscript{22}.

The Expedition of 1889:

The Government now decided to abandon the policy of appeasement towards a people whose basic standard and

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20} At present, however, the Lakhers are counted as one of the Mizo sub-tribes.

\textsuperscript{21} A.S.Reid, Chin-Lushai Land, p.6.

\textsuperscript{22} Sir Robert Reid, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.2-3.
values differed greatly from their own. In order to punish the raiders and to avenge these killings, another "Lushai Expedition", consisting of at least 1100 men was sent to Mizoram under the command of Colonel F.V.G.Tregar of the 9th Bengal Infantry with Mr.Lyall, the Commissioner as Civil Political Officer and Messrs. G.A.S.Bedford and C.S.Murray as Assistant Political Officers. Captain J. Shakespear was employed as Intelligence Officer. The objective of the expedition was defined as:

1. to construct a road in the direction of the Shendus (Lekher)country;
2. to punish Howsata (Hausata) and Jahuta (Zahuala) for the murder of the late Lt. Steward; and
3. to establish and advanced post to be garrisoned by the British troops during the season.

The expeditionary force reached Jahuta's village of the 19th March and Howsata's on the 20th and heard news of Howsata's death. Howsata's grave was examined and underneath his body was found Lieutenant Steward's gun, proving, as Mr.Layll's report says, "that he had punished the right men". The village was destroyed, and so was Jahuta's. The army was successful in establishing a fort at Lunglei.

23. A.S.Reid, op.cit. ,p.50.
be manned by a British officer and 212 of the Frontier Police. A durbar was held on 3rd April in which the three Howlong (Hualhang) chiefs - Saipuia, L. I. Hualhang and Lalthangvunga and Lallunga along with the two sons of another chief Vandula attended, and avowed their loyalty to the British Government. A road was also constructed.

The Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-1890:

While the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal reviewed the 1889 Expedition and considered what should be done in the ensuing season's operations to Mizoram, Lianphung and Zahrawka, the two sons of Suakpuilala raided the Chaur Valley on the Chittagong frontier burnt 24 villages, killed 101 persons and carried away other 91 men as captives. To avenge this, the Government of India decided on 11th September, 1889 to send another expeditionary operation against the Mizos. The expedition called "Chin-Lushai Expedition" in which the Governments of Bengal, Burma and Assam all took part. It was organised on a bigger scale than that of 1888-89. It comprised of more than 4600 officers and men from various regiments. The main objectives of the expedition were, first, to punish the tribes that raided the British territory, secondly, to subjugate them.

25. Ibid., p.11.
neutral tribes, thirdly, to explore the unknown part of the country between Burma and Chittagong, and lastly, to establish semi-permanent posts so as to ensure complete pacification and to make the Mizos recognise the British Supremacy. At the same time the Government of India this time mooted the idea of permanent occupation of the Hills.

The Chittagong Column of the army consisting of 3,400 men was commanded by Colonel Tregear who made Demagiri his base in order to punish the raiders on the Chengri Valley and on Pakuma Rani's village. The Assam Column, commanded by W.W. Daly and consisting 400 men had the object of recovering the captives, to punish Lianphunga for his raid on the Changri Valley, to punish Vuttaia's son for his raid of Pakuma Rani's village. The Northern Column consisting of about 800 men, was commanded by Colonel G.J. Skinner was to join Daly's party at Lianphunga's village. It was accompanied by C.S. Murray as Political Officer.

Daly's party which started from Cachar on the 18th January, 1890, and reached Changsil on the 24th. Six days later, all the captives earlier taken by Lianphunga were brought to Changsil. Lianphunga who was asked to wait for the arrival of Colonel Skinner for a final decision about him, fled away on the arrival of the former at Changsil. fearing that he would be badly treated. Daly advanced and

27. Ibid.
reached Aizawl on 4 February and built a stockade there which became the headquarters of Mizoram. Though Lianphunga escaped punishment the expedition achieved its object of recovering the captives without bloodshed. Apart from this the main work achieved was the establishment of posts at Aizawl and Changsil by the Assam Column, while in the south Fort Tregear, east of Lungleh on the Darzo Range was established and Fort Lungleh was improved.

Annexation and the Introduction of British Administration in Mizoram:

It appears that there was no active consideration on the part of the Government to annex the Mizo Hills to British territory till the last expedition. The future administration of the hills was, however, the subject of active discussion among the authorities. The Government of Assam strongly advocated permanent occupation of the Lushai hills by the British and suggested that the tract should be divided into two halves for administrative purpose, for it was too big for one officer alone to administer. The proposal was accepted by the Government of India, and consequently it was divided into two administrative units, viz. the Northern Lushai Hills and the Southern Lushai.

28. Ibid., p.19.
29. Foreign Department External, Part A, August, 1890, Progs.K.W. No.5.
Hills. The southern part was made over to Bengal with C.B. Murray of Bengal Police as Officer-in-charge with his headquarters at Lunglei. In 1891, this tract was made a district with Captain Shakespeare as Superintendent^30. The northern part was placed under the administrative jurisdiction of Assam with Captain H.R.Browne as Political Officer. He assumed office in May, 1890, with Aizawl as his headquarters. Henceforth, Aizawl, chief Thanruma's village, came to be known as "Fort Aijal"^31. The construction of Fort Aijal was carried out by the Cachar Levy, 200 of whom garrisoned the post, while another detachment of 100 were posted at Changsil Bazar. Browne was instructed to keep moving among the chiefs with the object of establishing political influence and control over them. He was further directed to adopt a policy of non-interference towards the Mizos by allowing the inhabitants to settle their own affairs among themselves^32. This administrative setup was approved by the Secretary of State for India^33. From now on the task before the Government was to consolidate the administration in the land where head-hunting was...

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30. Ibid., June, 1891, Progs. No.68.
31. Ibid., August, 1890, Progs. No.255.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., September, 1890, Progs. No.356.
prevalent, but where the purity of air, and simplicity or nature were not disturbed or even diluted.

Initial Problems:

The British occupation did not immediately bring peace and tranquility in Mizoram. In dealing with the Mizo chiefs the British Government had no definite plan or objective other than to avenge and punish the chiefs who had killed or captured the British subjects. Captain Browne, soon after his arrival at Aizawl in 1890, held a durbar of the Mizo chiefs wherein he announced the deposition of Lengphung (Lianphunga) and Jaraka (Zahrawka), who were responsible for the crime for a term of four years and with a fine of 15 guns.  

A year later, the descendants of Suakpuiilala, or the "Western Lushais" rose against the British for imposing tax and other tributes on the Mizos. This was soon subdued. But the "Eastern Lushais" under their chief Lalburha rose in revolt against the British in 1892. When McCabe with 100 sepoys entered Lalburha's village on 29th February, 1892, the chief readily submitted and complied.

34. Ibid., October, 1890, Progs. Nos. 126-144.
with the demands to supply 100 coolies and 20 guns.

In support of the "Eastern Lushais", the Howlong chiefs of southern part (sons of Bengkhuiaia and Savunga) opposed the advance of Captain Shakespear from Lunglei to Aizawl. The Burma column headed by Carey and Captain Roes destroyed the Howlong villages and captured their leader Nikuala. Kairuma, a descendant of Vuta, and his allies also rose against the British, but soon surrendered to Captain Loch when the latter despatched an expedition against him. The following table shows the number of guns surrendered by Kairuma and his allies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of chiefs</th>
<th>GUNS</th>
<th>Demanded</th>
<th>Surrendered</th>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>Demanded</th>
<th>Supplied</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kairuma</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>2350</td>
<td>3650</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepuithangi</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3600</td>
<td>1670</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jataiya(Zataia)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalbuta(Lalburha)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raltienga</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>270</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lungliena(Lungliana)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. Ibid.
38. Bengal Secretariat Record Room, Political A, November. 1896, Nos. 16-17.
Porteous, in his despatch to the Chief Commissioner, Assam, reports:

With the close of operations against Kairuma, it may, I think, be safely prophesied that the long series of Lushai expeditions have now ended, and that no further operations on the scale, which it was thought necessary to adopt against descendants of Vuta, can ever again be necessary.

In order to pacify the chiefs the Political Officer took long tours to the outlying villages meeting the chiefs and exchanging presents and also befriending them. In this way the whole of Mizoram was pacified. This was followed by the policy of consolidation. Gradually, the new administration brought into a change effecting the general life of the Mizos.

**Taxation and Labour contribution:**

On the annexation of the Mizo hills and the assumption of the administration, revenue arrangement was made. In the absence of land revenue, other forms of taxation were introduced. A tax of Re.1/- per house was fixed as House Tax and each house was to deliver 10 seers of rice at the rate of Rs.2/- per mound. In addition, every family

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39. Ibid.
should contribute six free labours annually. The table below shows the amount of collection of House Tax at Rs.1/- per house in northern Mizo Hills for the year 1891-92 and 1892-93.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1891-92</th>
<th>1892-93</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of villages</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of houses</td>
<td>6945</td>
<td>7012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand</td>
<td>Rs.6945/-</td>
<td>Rs.7012/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection</td>
<td>Rs.6338/-</td>
<td>Rs.5807/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrears</td>
<td>Rs.607/-</td>
<td>Rs.890/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1898, this rate of house-tax was revised and increased to Rs.2/- per house.

Forced Labour:

Another new problem created by the British to the Mizo people was the imposition of 'Forced Labour'. The government needed coolies for various works for which they were paid 4 annas per day. As mentioned earlier, the imposition of tax was strongly opposed by Lalburha and other

40. AR., Letter No.1049 P dated Calcutta, 16th March, 1891. From Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.


42. AR, Letter No.92 for P, dated Shillong, the 13th March, 1897. From the 873 Officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.
chiefs which brought them into armed conflict with the British. The administrators on their part fully justified the imposition of forced labour saying that it was the Mizos who forced the British to come to the hills. In support of it, Major Shakespear, the Superintendent of Mizo Hills during 1898-1904 observed thus:

You (Mizos) forced us to occupy your hills, we had no wish to come up here; but you would raid our villages, so we had to come, and so now you have got (to) bear as much of the cost of the occupation as possible. You cannot expect us to spend the money of the people of the plains on importing coolies to do the work that you are too lazy to do except under compulsion.

At the initiative of the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, C.W.Bolton, the system was reviewed in 1897. Accordingly each house was liable to supply one coolie to work for only 10 days per annum and that the enforcement was to be in the hands of the respective Political Officers, and that the rate should be annas 8.

44. AR; Letter No.391P, dated Calcutta, the 8th February, 1897. From C.W.Bolton, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of India.
Problems and Organisation:

The British administration was run on a provisional basis until the official proclamation of the British occupation of Mizoram was made in 1895. As mentioned already, the northern portion was placed under the Government of Assam while the southern portion was placed under the Government of Bengal. But the division of Mizo Hills under two separate Chief Commissioners created a number of inconveniences. After all, the Mizos have the same customs, language, and culture. The rules applied by the Government for running the administration were similar. Under these circumstances, the division was considered only artificial.

The amalgamation of both regions had already been suggested in the Chin-Lushai Conference at Fort William, Calcutta, on 29th January, 1892. This suggestion was again recommended in the second Chin-Lushai Conference held at Lunglei in December 1896. The Governor-General-in-Council accepted the proposal and finally on 1st April, 1898, the amalgamation of the two units was proclaimed. A Notification to this effect was published and the whole of Mizoram was placed under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The post of Superintendent of South Lushai

45. ASR; Foreign A., May 1898 Progs. Nos.13-46.
Hills was abolished and the Political Officer of Aizawl was redesignated as the "Superintendent of Lushai Hills". Accordingly, the Government of Assam, by Proclamation No.977P, appointed Major J. Shakespear to be the first Superintendent of the Lushai Hills.

Powers of the Superintendent:

Although the internal administration of villages was left with the chiefs, the Superintendent was empowered to regulate their succession. On the death of a chief normally he was succeeded by the eldest son in the case of Sailos, by the youngest in case of others. In case of any dispute arising out of succession, the Superintendent was authorised to divide the chief's village among the sons. He was also empowered to determine the boundaries of lands occupied by the chiefs and to settle any disputes regarding such boundaries. The Superintendent had the right to punish chiefs and headmen, and to depose them for their misconduct, subject to the approval of the Chief Commissioner. The Superintendent and his assistants were authorised to levy tribute and extract labour. He was vested with extra judicial powers and he had the upper hand in the Police administration. He enjoyed the power to issue orders to the Commandant of Police in all matters. The criminal

46. Sir Robert Reid, op.cit., p.60.
47. AR; 13th August, 1897. Chief Commissioner's letter dated 17th July, 1897.
justice was ordinarily administered by the Superintendent and his assistants. Without the special permission of the Superintendent, no professional pleader was allowed to appear in any case in the court. He was to keep registers of cases and submit returns whenever the Chief Commissioner demanded. In the administration of Civil Justice, the Superintendent and his assistants had to take special cognizance of the well-established Mizo customs. The court was guided by the spirit of the code of civil procedure. He was competent to pass death sentences or to transportation and imprisonment. All sentences over three years' imprisonment could be appealed to the Chief Commissioner within 60 days whose decision was final. The Governor-General-in-Council, however, owned the right to review the proceedings of the Chief Commissioner.

The post of the Superintendent continued to exist till 1952 and S.N. Barkataki was the last Superintendent as well as the first man to hold the post of the newly designated Deputy Commissioner of the Lushai Hills in that year.

During the period under study, several remarkable changes in the sphere of administration were introduced. In 1898, the 'Land Settlement' was introduced by J. Shakespear demarcating the land of each chief within which he and his people could freely move and use it for jhuming.
according to their conveniences. The scheme was successfully carried out and it was the system on which the present land demarcation of each village is based.

With a view to better administration, in 1901-1902, the whole district was divided into two sub-divisions. Aizawl and Lunglei. The two sub-divisions were again divided into circles. Aizawl sub-division had 12 circles and Lunglei sub-division 6 circles. While Lunglei was placed under a Sub-Divisional Officer the Aizawl sub-division was placed directly under the Superintendent of Mizoram. In each circle an Interpreter was appointed as a "link" between the authorities and the chiefs. The system worked well for 40 years. During this period, twenty three chiefs had an interview with the Viceroy, Lord Curzon when he was at Silchar in 1920. In 1940, the Lushai Hills Durbar and later District Conference of Chiefs were held with the object of strengthening the relations between the authorities and the chiefs. The conference of the chiefs became an annual feature till Independence.

49. Sir Robert Reid, History of the Frontier Areas, Shillong. 1942, p.44.
50. Sir Robert Reid, op.cit., p.61.
British Policy on the Mission to India:

When Warren Hastings took charge as the Governor of Bengal in 1772, the British had already became a territorial power in India. From that time their strength was on the increase and their empire expanded. The East India Company was no longer to remain a mere trading concern, but was destined to be ruling power in India. Within the next fifty years, almost three-fourth of India, through wars and annexations, was to come under the control of the Company, so that by 1818 the British dominion in India was to be more extensive than that of Akbar in 1600.

Since England was the trustee of India's moral welfare, it was the Christian churches in England now believed that they had a sacred mission to introduce the Gospel into India. The Government also advocated bold steps, including the appointment and support of Protestant missionaries for propagating the Gospel so that prejudice might give way to reason and falsehood to truth. They were confident that the introduction of Christianity would bring

not only spiritual blessings, but also material prosperity to India.

During the British rule, the first Christian missionary comprising of Ziegenbalg and Plutschau came to India in 1706 under the protection of the Danish King, and established themselves at Tranquebar in Tanjore. When the first British missionary, William Carey arrived in Calcutta in 1793, the Bengal Government had already prohibited preaching in its territory due to the fact that they believed Indians were peculiarly sensitive in the matter of religion and "any interference with the religion of the natives would eventually insure the total destruction of the British power". Therefore, Carey had to make Serampore, a Danish settlement, his headquarters. Likewise, the missionaries of the London Missionary Society who arrived in 1798 had to settle in the Dutch town of Chinsurah on the Hooghly river.

The British Government changed their anti-missionary policy in India when the Charter Act of 1813 incorporated

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three significant provisions relating to the position of education and the church. An Episcopal Organisation was established, and missionaries of all faiths were allowed to enter India and the Indian Government was authorised to spend one lakh of rupees (about 7,500 Pounds) from surplus revenues for Indian education.

Mission to North East India:

The nineteenth century witnessed an amazing growth of Christianity in Asia. It was a century of missionary zeal and expansion of the Church. North East India even with its diversities, inaccessibility and problems of communication was no exception, and this part of India was exposed to the Gospel in the early part of the nineteenth century. The Khasi tribe in Assam had the privilege of being the first to hear the Word of God. In 1812 the Christian message was brought to this people by Krishna Chandra Pal, an evangelist of William Carey, and the first fruit of the Baptist missionary work in India. He was able to convert two Khasis. The mission started work among the Khasis in 1833, but it was closed down in 1838.

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8. Ibid.
Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission resumed the work in 1841 among the Khasis and Jaintias, establishing a branch at Cherrapunjee, the then British headquarters of the district.  

**Assam:**

The permanent occupation of Assam by the British started at the close of the Anglo-Burmese War in 1826. In the case of Assa, it was not the missionaries who initiated the idea of sending mission, but Major Francis Jenkins, the Commissioner and Agent to the Governor-General in Assam. He found that the Khamtis at Sadiya were not only a nuisance, but treacherous and tricky as well. He thought that "the only thing that will make them better is christianity." According to P.T. Phillip, Major Jenkins extended an invitation to the British missionaries of Bengal to come over to Assam. The English Baptists thought that it would be more convenient for the American Baptist Missionaries in Burma to go to Assam. The American Baptist missionaries readily responded to the call.

The Reverend Nathan Brown and his wife and the Reverend O.T. Cutter and his wife were the first American

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Baptist missionaries to enter Assam. They set out from Calcutta on November 20, 1835 and reached Sadiya after a strenuous journey of 800 miles up the Brahmaputra river on March 23, 1836. Miles Branson, another missionary arrived at Sadiya on July 5, 1837, and afterwards in 1838 he moved to Jaipur. In the course of time, mission work took root in Assam, spreading also to the Naga Hills and Garo Hills in 1840 and 1868 respectively.

Khasi, Jaintia, Naga and Garo Hills:

By the time the Christian missionaries came to Maram, other hill tribes of the North East India had already received the Gospel and the missionaries had established their centres of works in the form of schools and evangelical centres.

As mentioned earlier, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission had already established its centre at Cherrapunjee in 1841 to work among the Khasis and Jaintias. During 1878-88, the number of converts in the western area of the Khasi Hills increased from 203 to 684. In the same period, a theological institution (now a theological college) was set up at Cherrapunjee, with John Roberts as its Principal to train local Khasis in evangelical work. The

12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
following table of statistics given by Jones shows the position of Christian works among the Khasis and Jaintias.\(^\text{15}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Churches and preaching places</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students in schools</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>2666</td>
<td>4625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people who came to</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>3326</td>
<td>9567</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sibcharan Roy was the first Khasi to pass the Entrance (Matric) Examination in 1880.\(^\text{16}\) Two Khasis, Solomon Blah and Dohori Ropmay were among the earliest Christian graduates of the Calcutta University,\(^\text{17}\) passed in 1898.

Annaman was the first Khasi matriculate girl from the Calcutta University (around 1900).\(^\text{18}\) A High School was established by the Mission at Shillong in 1878.\(^\text{19}\)

Rev. Miles Bronson was the first missionary to the Nagas. He moved his family to the hills on 13th March, 1840, and commenced his work among the Nagas.\(^\text{20}\)

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17. Nalini Natarajan, op.cit., p.68.
18. Ibid.
school was started at Mopungchukit in March, 1875. Mrs. Clark started a school for girls in early March, 1878.\textsuperscript{21} The church was growing, and seventy-nine persons had been baptized by 1889.\textsuperscript{22} In 1888 eight day schools were functioning in different villages which were operated by Christian missionaries.\textsuperscript{23}

Since 1840 the American Baptist missionaries were trying to spread Christianity among the Garos in the borders of Goalpara and Garo Hills. With the intention of opening a station, Mr. Stoddard shifted his mission centre from Goalpara to Tura in 1868.\textsuperscript{24} The position of mission work can be seen from the report of The Second Assam Triennial Conference of 1889 which gave the position of the mission work thus:\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
  Church members & 1,180 \\
  Students & 1,072 \\
  Schools & 54 \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

The coming of the mission to Mizoram:

Mizoram was an unexplored and almost unknown land to the outside world even after the British had occupied

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., pp.56-57.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Viola Kathlene G. Momin, Missionary Activities in Garo Hills, M.A. dissertation, G.U., 1974, pp.30-33.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Report of the Second Assam Triennial Conference, 1889.
\end{itemize}
other parts of North-east India. In their secluded life, the Mizos maintained their own culture and their traditional beliefs and practices, language, codes of justice and morality.  

The British expeditions, however, had paved the way for the coming of the Christian missionaries to Mizoram. Even before the coming of the missionaries there had been a prophecy made by some people that the white people across the ocean would come over and that their message would be obeyed and accepted. Darphawka was one of those who prophesied this. He further said that all his daughters would have got married by the time the missionaries arrived in Mizoram. The Christian missionaries made their appearance into Mizoram not long after this prediction, and by that time all of Darphawka's children were already married.  

The Christian missionary who first set foot on Mizoram was Rev. William Williams of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Mission who had been working at the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Hearing about the people he came to survey the inhabitants and to see if there would be any chance of preaching the Gospel there.

On 15th February, 1891, Rev. Williams left Shillong and after travelling more than one month he arrived at Aizawl on the 20th March, 1891. The primary object was to explore the prospect of religious work in Mizoram. Though he was allowed to stay only for a month, he preached the Gospel through a Khasi interpreter, and developed a great interest for the Mizos. He left Aizawl on 17th April, 1891 and went back to Khasi Hills. There he persuaded his Mission to adopt Mizoram as a mission field and to appoint him there. Unfortunately, his death due to typhoid in the same year shattered all hopes of starting a new missionary field among the Mizos. Before his death, however, he left a report of his journey which brought to light the prospect of founding a new field for the Mission among the tribes in Mizoram.

During his short stay at Aizawl for 29 days from 20th March to 17th April, 1891, he had an opportunity to speak to the Mizo people. He distributed to them picture cards bearing the picture of Jesus Christ and thus tried to influence them. It was from his report that the church

leaders came to know of the Mizos or Lushai. Rev. William’s visit constitutes an important landmark in the history of Christianity in Mizoram. As a follow-up programme and in pursuance of William’s initiative, the General Assembly of Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church in 1892 approved the proposal to begin missionary operations in Mizoram as soon as it should be found practicable.\(^{32}\)

The Arthington Aborigines Mission.

In England, a wealthy Christian, Robert Arthington, hearing of Winchester’s death in the Lushai raid, became greatly burdened to send the Gospel to the fierce head-hunting tribes of north-east India. So he established the "Arthington Aborigines Mission" for this purpose.\(^{33}\)

About the same time (in 1880s), James Herbert Lorrain, an English youth, was deeply impressed by an artist’s pictorial illustration of the kidnapping of Mary Winchester and prayed to God that he might be sent as a missionary to this tribe. In December 1890 he left his job as a telegraphist in the London Post Office and sailed for Calcutta with the Arthington Aborigines Mission, not knowing where he would serve.\(^{34}\) From Calcutta he moved on to a place called

\(^{32}\) Welsh Foreign Mission Report, 1898.


\(^{34}\) Donna Strom, op. cit., p.29.
Brahmanbaria where there were some missionaries of Baptist Missionary Society. There he was joined in 1891 by Frederick W. Savidge, a schoolmaster who became his lifelong friend and co-worker.\(^{35}\)

While at Brahmanbaria they heard of the Mizo people and were determined to do missionary work among them. The military authorities were adamant in their opinion that it would be unwise to allow missionaries into the Mizo Hills at that time because the land had only recently been brought under the British administrative control and the country was still in a very unsettled state.\(^{36}\) Hence, Lorrain and Savidge returned to Calcutta only to apply permission afresh. They were again refused entry owing to the outbreak of rebellion in Mizoram, but after waiting for a year, they received permission from the Chief Commissioner of Assam to enter the North Mizo Hills division "entirely at their own risk".\(^{37}\) First they came to Silchar, the headquarters of Cachar district, from there they took a country boat on Boxing Day (the first week day after Christmas) 1893 for Mizoram.\(^{38}\)

\(^{35}\) Ibid.


After seventeen days' journey, they came in sight of Sairang, the first village in Mizoram, where a few Bengal traders were settled. Not finding coolies for their luggage, they carried their own goods on their back and walked up the mountainous tract for some thirteen miles and at last they reached "Fort Aijal" and settled down. To them Fort Aijal "seemed as if we had been transported to the regions of Paradise when compared with Sairang." Fort Aijal was on an elevation of about 1212 metres above the sea and was occupied by the British officers and two regiments of Goorkhas and Bengal Infantry. The two pioneer missionaries entered Fort Aijal on 11th January, 1894 (Thursday) - the date still remembered in Mizoram as the beginning of Gospel Witness.

The British Officer received them graciously, but said, "I have orders not to help you ... but go anywhere you like." At Fort Aijal, the missionaries chose a spot about a mile away upon which to pitch their tent. They were close to a Lushai village, and their arrival was a signal for men, women and children who turned out and crowded round them. The missionaries learned a few words and sentences

40. Ibid.
of Mizo language, picked up from the Bengalis who traded among them, and they used their little knowledge as much as they could. 43

In a very interesting account of their first experience the missionaries wrote thus:

At first they stared at us very suspiciously, and were amazed at the idea of a white man knowing something of their tongue. The village chief and his wife came to receive us with great ceremony, bringing with them a bottle of their native beer and a very substantial glass to drink it from, but declined it with thanks. 44

By means of an interpreter they made known their object in going there, and soon the Mizos began to show signs of becoming friendly. The youngsters displayed their zeal by picking up all the weeds on the spot where their tent was to be raised, and the older ones assisted them so much, that in a very short time they had a comfortable place to sleep in.

The missionaries were astonished when some of the more daring Mizos rolled up their coat-sleeves to see if they were really white underneath their clothes, and exclamations of surprise greeted them when they discovered that they were even whiter there. Many of them inspected their legs by taking out their shoes, and uttered the same expressions of amazement. Whether they have a gun was

44. Ibid.
almost the first question the Mizos asked them and the Mizos were astonished to hear that the missionaries had no deadly weapons with them at all.

The two pioneer missionaries learned the common Duhlian dialect from the Mizos who came to sell rice and vegetables. Soon they translated a hymn and started a Sunday School. Within four years they reduced the language to writing (using the Roman script), and translated the Gospels of John, Luke, and the Book of Acts, and wrote A Grammar and Dictionary of the Lushai Language, which later became the foundation of education in Mizoram.45

"Arthington had a strong prejudice against institutionalization of missionary work; the primary task is proclamation - as soon as a small Christian fellowship had been gathered in one tribe, the missionaries should press on to regions as yet unreached."46 Lorrain and Savidge therefore knew that they could not remain long in Mizoram as Arthington's missionaries. They also came to know that the Welsh Presbyterian Mission (then known as Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Mission) had formerly adopted Mizoram as part of their mission field before they themselves entered there, and that Mrs.St.Dalmas, Arthington's Agent in India, had

officially handed over the field to the Welsh Mission. Under the circumstances they offered their services as evangelists to the Welsh Mission.

We love the people and the country very dearly, and have all along been cherishing the hope that our whole lives would be spent in leading these tribes to Jesus. As you know, we are Baptists, and of course, your Mission would not feel justified in taking us on as regular missionaries, but we have such a longing to remain and work for Christ in Lushai that we would only be too glad if your mission would accept us as evangelists whose work it would be to preach the Gospel, leaving all church matters to the regular missionaries.

The Welsh Mission could not accept these two members of the Highgate Road Baptist Church, London, either as their missionaries or evangelists. Since then, Lorrain and Savidge pleaded the Welsh Mission for sending immediately some missionaries to Mizoram to replace them. Their request was granted, and on the arrival of the Welsh missionaries, they left Mizoram. The two sick young men, Taibawnga and his friend, whom they converted as pioneer missionaries in 1896, died after two years later in the small hospital of the day. 

The Welsh Presbyterian Mission:

In accordance with the resolution of the Welsh Presbyterian Church General Assembly of 1897, the Rev. David Evan Jones proceeded, few weeks after the meetings of the Assembly, to Mizoram, to continue the missionary operations.


began by Messrs. Lorrain and Savidge. Sailing from Liverpool on the 25th June 1897, he arrived at Calcutta on 25th July and reached Silchar on 8th August, 1897. From Silchar he was accompanied by Dr. T. J. Jones, and the Khasi evangelist, Rai Bhajur and his wife. After a journey of 19 days, they arrived at Aizawl on 30th August, 1897 and were heartily welcomed by Messrs. Lorrain and Savidge. The two pioneers greatly helped them for four months. D. E. Jones expressed how much he learned from the two pioneer missionaries and how much he missed them when they left Mizoram. In his first year's report he revealed the role assigned by the Mizos to the pioneer missionaries like this -

"If they had come here before the Government, they would have had their heads chopped off. But now they are supposed by some to be gods only they themselves did not like to say so."

The next year in December, 1898, a gifted musician and missionary, Edwin Rowlands, joined Jones. The two men toured much of the north Mizoram, preaching, giving simple medicines, and teaching reading, particularly to children. Gradually people responded, and on 25th June, 1899, Jones baptized Khuma and Khara, the first Mizos and thus laid foundation of the Church in Mizoram.  

50. Letter from D. E. Jones to Mr. Thomas, dated Aijal, 18.1.1898.
Mizo Sap:

The missionaries found the Mizos very friendly, hospitable, honest, sincere, warm-hearted, intelligent, painstaking and with plenty of initiative.\(^5^2\) They cooperated with the work of the missionaries, and in fact, started regarding them as members of their own community. Out of love, they called the missionaries Zo-sap, or Mizo Sahib, Zo being the contracted form of the word Mizo. Not content with merely calling them Zo-sap, they even gave Mizo names to each of their beloved Sahibs. Thus, Rev. J.H. Lorrain was very affectionately called Pu Buanga, and Rev. F.W. Savidge was called Sap Upa. Rev. D.E. Jones and Rev. Edwin Rowlands were given the names Pu Zosaphuluia and Pu Zosaphara respectively.\(^5^3\) Sap usually connotes any white European, but other Europeans working in Mizoram were not called Zo-sap. Therefore, when they used the very word Zo-sap, they meant only their missionaries.

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53. The word Pu prefixed before the names is used in the sense of 'Sir' or 'Mr'. Buang means 'big brown'. Thus Pu Buang was "Sir Big Brown". Upa means 'elder', thus Sap Upa (Savidge) was 'an Elder missionary'. In the Mizo name of D.E. Jones, hlui means 'old', and Zosaphuluia was the 'older missionary'. The word thar means 'new'. Thus Zosaphara was the 'new missionary'. 