

CHAPTER VII

Newspaper

A few years after the introduction of Primary education by the missionaries the Mizo learned to read and write their own language. with the increase of the number of day schools and of Sunday Schools the number of literates was also gradually increasing.

The missionaries all over the world used to publish newspapers and periodicals in different places where they worked for the spread of christianity. They felt it necessary to give information about the development and growth of Western science and literature through newspapers and periodicals. In 1818, the Serampore Baptists published "Dig Darshan" (The Signpost), the first newspaper to gain a steady circulation in India.¹ In Assam, too, the American Baptist Mission published the famous monthly "Orunodoi" in Assamese in 1846 for enlightening the people. In 1889, William Williams, a Welsh missionary in the Khasi Hills began to publish "Nongkit Khubor" (The Messenger), the first periodical in the Khasi language.² Similarly, in Mizoram such periodicals could be

1. Orr, J.E., Evangelical Awakenings in India, 1970, p. 27.

2. Morris, John Hughes, The Story of Our Foreign Mission, 1930, Liverpool, p. 40.

brought out from the early years as a result of the literary and educational efforts of the missionaries. The monthly papers which had been published under the care of the missionaries are as follows:-

7:1 Mizo Chanchin Laisuih:

During 1898 and 1899 a monthly newspaper called "Mizo Chanchin Laisuih" (The Highlander's News) was published by the Government and was circulated in the villages. It contained mainly the news of different hamlets, orders of Government, etc. A long account of a visit to Calcutta by some Mizo chiefs appeared in one issue of this monthly paper.³

It was reported that the content of this paper was written by a Mizo. It contained important informations useful for the people of its time. A letter published in this paper was used for learning to read and write in the school.

7:2 Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Lekhabu:

Since November, 1902 a monthly News Magazine, "Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Lekhabu" had been published by the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills. It had been regularly

3. Lewin, T.H., A Fly on the Wheel, 1977 (Reprinted), p. 317

published for about forty-five years. It contained the Mizoram news reported by the villagers, orders or notices of Government, interesting news of the world, science, educational news, incidents, health, history, story, etc. During the early years of its publication it had been printed at Sylhet and later, at the Loch Printing Press, Aizawl. It had been widely circulated and informative to the people.

In the first issue of this newspaper, November, 1902 there were nine articles of which three were written by D.E.Jones and Edwin Rowlands.⁴

The articles about "The Lushai" and "The Lushi" (a tribe living in Shan State, Burma) published in March, 1904 and "The Sylhet" published in June, 1904 were selected lessons for geography subject in the Primary school.⁵

The missionaries contributed valuable articles to this newspaper, e.g., Edwin Rowlands wrote two articles in the issue of January, 1904, another two articles in February, and four articles in March of the same year. Sometimes, he wrote translated hymns or Bible verses, guidelines on the

4. Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Lekhabu, November, 1902.

5. Time Table of the Lower Primary School published in the Mizo Leh Vai Chanchin Lekhabu, May, 1907, pp. 84-85.

school lessons and Time Table to be followed by all the schools. This secular newspaper had been gradually improved both in form and in the printed matter and the articles were of greater interest to the readers. It notably imparted informal education to the people. D.E.Jones also had been an editor of this paper for some time about the year 1910. It also developed the reading ability of the people which further increased the number of literates and greatly developed the Mizo society especially in general knowledge.

7:3 Krista Tlangau:

Since October, 1911 a monthly journal of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission called "Krista Tlangau" which means Christ Herald had been regularly published in Aizawl. Since January, 1914 it has been re-named as "Kristian Tlangau" (Christian Herald). It has been published without any break since 1911 except during the period from January to June, 1945 for want of paper owing to the Second World War.

The Kristian Tlangau has been widely circulated all over the land. The christians of the south Mizoram also contributed many articles for publication. In 1913, more than eighty copies were sent to the south Mizoram every month. The subscription was twelve annas per annum.⁶ After some years

6. J.H.Lorrain, Report for 1913.

of its publication it has been subscribed from outside Mizoram such as Burma, England, Manipur, Assam, etc. In consecutive order the following persons had been the editors of this paper since its publication:- ⁷

Rev. R. Dala,

Rev. D.E.Jones, (Missionary)

Rev. F.J. Sandy, -do-

Rev. E.L.Mendus, -do-

Miss K.Hughes, -do-

Rev. R.G.Jones, -do-

Rev. L. Evans, -do-

Rev. Chhuahkhama,

Rev. Samuel Davies, (Missionary)

Rev. J.M.Lloyd, -do-

Upa Chawngzika,

Rev. C.Ronghinga,

Rev. V.L.Zaithanga,

Rev. Lalbiaktluanga, and

Upa C.Sangzuala.

Eight of them were the missionaries and the rest were natives. The last one, Upa C. Sangzuala is the present editor.

7. Kristian Tlangau, October, 1960, p. 4.

Kristian Tlangau, October, 1989, p. 6.

This monthly paper contains various informations like the minutes of the Presbytery meetings, Sunday School lessons, about the prominent leaders of the church in and outside Mizoram, Spiritual Revival that happened at certain places, sermons, collections of churches, books for sale, various notices from the church, world interesting news, christian teachings, etc. It is quite informative and educative to the readers and is a source of knowledge especially about the church news. It deepens the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and gives reading habit to the Mizo.

7:4 Robawm:

Rev. F.J. Raper, a missionary of the Baptist Mission served in the south Mizoram for the period from 1932 to 1960. He published a bimonthly magazine called "Robawm" from the year 1938.⁸ It was printed at the south Lushai Mission Press, Lunglei. Later, it was published every month.

This monthly paper was widely circulated among the Mizo and proved very useful to the readers for knowledge of the news of the church and Mission schools, current events and other various items. It had been regularly published for about twenty years.

8. F.J.Raper, Report for 1938.

7:5 Mizo Naupang :

Miss Gwen Rees Roberts, Headmistress of Girls' M.E. School, Aizawl published a monthly children's magazine, "Mizo Naupang" in 1954 and 1955. This was the only reading material for children except their school lessons, the Bible and Hymn book.⁹ Later, it was included in the Kristian Tlang-au, a monthly organ of the church.

9. G. Rees Roberts, Report for 1955.