CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
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1. Origin of the people

There is a myth that the Mizos have originated as one of the ten lost tribes of Israel. The Rev. Liangkhaia who wrote the first History of the Mizos, suggested that 'the Mizos are the descendants of Japheth, one of the three sons of Noah'. Although this belief is difficult to substantiate, there is at least a possibility of its likelihood. Some people believed that the Mizo had migrated from China during the reign of Chien Lung (the Mizos called Chhinlung), and it was believed that a part of the lost ten tribes of Israel found themselves in China. A Catholic missionary, R.J. De Jaegher wrote that the Israelis who went to China eventually worshipped Chinese gods and became part of Chinese culture. Whether or not there is any real truth in such myths, it seems at least to be a fact that the Mizo people employ a cloth design in a garment used to cover babies.

that is identical to the design in the cloth used to cover Moses when his mother hid him in a river.²

The possible Hebraic connection apart, the Mizos are racially said to be of Mongoloid origin.³ There are a part of the great waves of the Mongoloid race which fanned out of the east and the south of Asia in the past. Further evidence is strong enough that the Mizo people migrated from Yunnan province through the Shan state in Burma. From that Shan state they came further west, crossing the Irrawady river in Burma and leaving some Mizo families known as the Lusi⁴ in Burma, now re-named as Myanmar.

In Burmese language _lu_ means 'tribe' and _se_ means 'ten'. There were ten such tribes in Burma and one of these tribes moved further west. This was the Lushai, initially Lusei tribe. But now the general population of the Lushai Hills is known among themselves by the generic name of _Mizo_ and their language _Lushai_ or _Duhlian_ as _Mizo-tawng_ (Mizo language). And the generic term _Mizo_ means 'highlanders' or 'people of the hill', which comprises of several clans.

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³ Liangkhaia, _op.cit._, p. 1.
⁴ Vanlawma, _op.cit._, p. 3.
or sub-tribes, such as Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Khiangte, Khawlh-ring, Pachuau, Pawi and others. The electoral rolls will give an inquisitive reader the best information.

2. Language of the people

The Mizos are an important hill tribe of the subcontinent. Linguistically, the Mizo speak a Mizo dialect belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family of languages. The Mizo dialect itself is closer to languages of the Burmese and Tibet than that of Chinese. The Mizo language has little or no association with the Aryan languages of India proper. Although there are some minor dialects like, Hmar, Lakher, Pawi, Ralte and others, the Duhlian or Mizo-tawng is the approved official language, the lingua franca of the land. Pioneer missionary James Herbert Lorrain, in his introduction to his Dictionary of the Lushai Language wrote, 'their speech belongs to the Assam-Burma branch of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages'. The following table, then, illustrates the family tree of Sino-Tibetan family of languages:

5. Liangkhaia, op.cit., p. 2.
3. The Land

Mizoram is the abode of the Mizos. Formerly it was known as the Lushai Hills district of Assam. This land is located in the southern corner of a North East India. It is bounded on the east by the Chin Hills of Burma, on the south by the Arakan Hills tracts of Burma; on the west by the Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh and Tripura state of India; and on the north by the Cachar district of Assam and the Manipur state. It lies just within the tropics between.
Latitude 22°19' and 24°19' north and Longitude 92°16' and 93°26' east.

Mizoram has an area of 21,067 Sq.Km. The area was hitherto considered to be inaccessible and impenetrable. The jungles were luxuriant; all types of trees grew in plenty. Parallel mountain ranges run from north to south with narrow and deep river valleys between them. It has natural beauty and endless variety of landscape and is rich in fauna and flora. The country music loving Mizos sing of the flora and fauna of this land, of its animals and birds, of its hills and valleys. Mizo nature poets, therefore, go on singing by glorifying the beauty of these beauties.

4. Social life of the people

The Mizos have a distinct community; and their smallest social unit was the village. The village is usually set on the crest of the hill with the chief's house at the best location, normally at the centre of the village and the Zawlbuk, bachelors' dormitory prominently located near the chief's residence. In a way the focal place of the village was the Zawlbuk, where all young people of the village converged and slept at night. Zawlbuk was the training centre
and indeed, the cradle wherein the Mizo youth was drilled and shaped into a responsible member of the society. One researcher has done a research on the role of zawlbuk and wrote the following conclusion:

The Zawlbuk was indeed a superb institution of the Mizo society which succeeded in building up their unique style of life. While it prevented crude conformity and anomic 'laissez-faire' on the one hand, it implanted in them a deep love of freedom and a real respect for their community based social organisation on the other.7

The Mizo society has no class distinction and no discrimination on the ground of sex. The village exists like a big family and the chief as the father and ruler. Birth of a child, marriage in the village, death of a person or a community feast of any kind arranged by a member of the village and those of yearly festivals were important occasions in which the whole village was involved. When someone died, all the able-bodied young men would go out and dig grave for the disposal of the dead while other members of the community offer condolences to the bereaved family. And this practice includes staying in such houses for a few nights, so that the remaining members of the bereaved family do not feel lonesome and also to lend their helping hands whenever the necessity arise.

In this section, I should not forget to mention the most beautiful ethical code and good form of our society known as *tlawmngaihna*. The word *tlawmngaihna* is an untranslatable term, meaning - to be hospitable, kind, unselfish, courageous, industrious and helpful to others in any manner. So, *tlawmngaihna* to a Mizo stands for that compelling moral force which finds expressions in self-sacrifice for the service of others. It is the core of their philosophy of life. In war or peace, in dealing with individuals or in day-to-day public life, it was this spirit of *tlawmngaihna* which guided their thoughts and actions. N.E. Parry said, "It is really a very good moral code enforced solely by public opinion.... Tlawmngaihna, therefore, deserves every encouragement, as it were allowed to fall into desuetude [sic] it would be most detrimental to the whole of the tribe."8

In a Mizo society some practical principles of self-help and cooperation for the fulfilment of social obligation and responsibilities have been accepted since time immemorial. Construction and repair of village path or inter-village route, of road leading to their jhum cultivation.

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of community halls, of water points and so on were done through voluntary works called hnatlang. Under this hnatlang system the villagers are expected to participate for the welfare of the community; and each family is under obligation to contribute their mite. The same spirit of hnatlang punctuated with tlawmngaihna enjoined the villagers to participate and render all possible helps whenever there is an occasion of death or marriage or any other community special programme in the village.

Closely connected with tlawmngaihna is Mizo hospitality, always shown by most people. Any Mizo would take in a stranger, mikhual (or khualzin/traveller) for a night or two and provide him all free of charge, not only with super, but also with breakfast next morning and a chawfun, a pocket of boiled-rice for lunch for the journey, especially when modern means of transport was unknown.

5. Religion

The term 'religion' may be defined as the human recognition of superhuman controlling power and especially of a personal god or gods entitled to obedience and worship. Religion, in common parlance, is an aspiration, a search
to find favour with the supreme in order to receive blessings and to be absolved from the curse of sins. Different approaches are adopted by different religions. The religion of the Mizos had been described as 'animism', which lexically means, 'attribution of soul to inanimate object or natural phenomena'. The term, however, is now generally used to describe the faith of pre-literate people, depending on memory and oral traditions rather than on sacred literature. It involves the belief in all kinds of spirit with a High God, including belief in some form of life after death. The Mizos, in their animistic beliefs and practices, seemed to have depended on their own genius for the development of their ideas and practices.

One of the pioneer Mizo pastors, Liangkaia believes that the religion of the Mizos had its origin in the consciousness of their need for deliverance from physical illness and from other misfortunes which they attributed to evil-spirits. The earliest known sacrificial incantation indicates a time when they did not know whom they should invoke in time of need. The charm may be rendered in English

as follows: "Oh, hear us and answer us, thou who was worship-
ped by our ancestors". And after sometime, they mentioned
their old homes and the surrounding areas which lengthened
the sacrificial spell or invocation.

At a later period the sacrificial incantation was
addressed to sa and khua. Liangkhaia, again, believes that
the two objects of worship were eventually combined and
became sakhu, a term which has been used for translating
the English word 'religion'. Sa indicates animal life
and he-pig (hog) is sacrificed for this; and khua means
'nature or weather', for this domesticated cow-gayal (mithun)
is necessary. The combination of the words into sakhu may
mean, 'life principle or basis' of the Mizos. Sakhu was
the family of clan God. Clan, here is used to describe a
group of blood related people, speaking the same dialect
within a larger tribe, and descended from same ancestors
not too far off in history. If a man wishes to embrace sakhu
of another clan, he may do so after performing certain cere-
mony, after this he must cut himself off from all connections
with his old clan. Such a man is known as saphun, implanted
into the new sakhu. It was the sakhu who built up, protected

12. Liangkhaia, "Mizo Sakhu", Mizo mi leh thil hmingthangte
   leh Mizo Sakhu (Aizawl: Mizo Academy of Letters, 1977),
   p. 52.
and cared for the family. Women were considered to have no sakhua of their own. The ancient Mizos believed that women and crabs have no religion. It means a woman simply follows the religion of her husband or her father. It was the sakhua of her parents or husband which was responsible for her welfare and existence. Children took after the sakhua of their fathers. Social conventions and legal matters were clearly built on patriarchal system.

According to their old religious tenets the Mizos believe in one supreme being called Pathian (sometimes they referred as Pu Vana), who is the overlord of men, and in ramhuai (demon) who inhabit the streams, the hills, the big trees and the big roots. The ramhuai are the evil spirits, who are responsible for all the ills in this world. They have to be propitiated for health, good harvest and general well-being. A traditional physician, who officiated at such sacrifices are called puithiam. He was regarded as the gifted psychologist and could diagnose the symptoms of illness from the pulse on which skill their effectiveness depended. The sacrifice is called inthawina or a 'ceremonial cure'. Sacrifices to the evil spirits were non-obligatory, only the rich could afford to perform it every time they got ill; the poor, however would do this performance only after long illness.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{13}\) Zairema, Ibid.
The real sacrifices and prayers to the clan-god were offered to the benevolent spirits or gods and could be considered as obligatory sacrifices. It was that prayer which really counts in their lives. Some sacrifices were performed at birth, puberty, marriages and at certain intervals for thanksgivings. It was the family priest known as Sadawt who performed it. The Sadawtho (those Sadawts) are respectable citizens in the society and their office was hereditary. Sadawts are always referred as Lai Sadawt, meaning 'priest of the chief' for they are considered as next to chief of the village. The most important sacrifice a traditional Mizo had to perform was the Sakhaw biak, or worship to the clan-god. Castrated pigs were always be kept by families in good number, the bigger the better for the purpose. If one neglects this sacrifice, it is a common belief that sakhua may get into temper in which case he might withdraw his protection. The family would then be more vulnerable to the attacks of evil spirits.

6. Culture

The word 'culture' may be defined as 'humanity's

14. Sadawt Lianzika, 109 (b.1880), the only living Sadawt informed me about this on 13 December 1989 at Mualpheng Village, Aizawl District, Mizoram.
15. Zairema, op.cit., p. 16.
effort to assert its inner and independent being'. But the most up-to-date definition may be, 'Our culture is that in terms of which our life is organised'. The Mizo culture prior to the advent of the British was what some anthropologists would call 'non-literate culture' because the people had not developed writing. According to a popular oral tradition, the Mizos claimed that they were once given a written language by God as other races were given and it was in the form of the scroll or a parchment. But they were not keeping it properly and a dog ate it up due to their negligence. They were thus, deprived of a script for a long time. As it was a legend, no one knew about the content of that parchment.

However, the Mizos of the past were endowed with good oral tradition. This oral tradition kept the culture of the people alive. They had rich folktales and poetry, which serves as a written document of the family fortunes and deeds of prowess and some of their practices can be traced accurately from the chants used when a family offered sacrifices. Those folktales were as old as the history of the people itself. It tells the story of their habitation, their wars and their hunting days. Inter-tribal, inter-

16. C.G. Shaw, "Culture", Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics, Volume IV.
17. C.H. Kraft, Christianity and Culture (Pre-publication draft, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1973), p. 28.
clan and inter-village warfare were very common in the lives of the Mizos. Attempts to attack, plunder and take captives was the order of the old days. One popular folk-tales spoke of war between the people in the south and the people in the north. Several other inter-clan clashes were recorded in their tales and poetry as well.

The Mizos had three annual festival called Kut, marking three different stages of the agricultural process, because Mizos are real agriculturists. The three festivals are - Chapchar kut, Mim kut, and Pawl kut. Chapchar kut always lasted for three days and three nights, during which drinking, feasting and dancing continued. This Chapchar kut or spring festival may be considered as the most important kut and the time for merry-making and enjoyment for adults. Young men and women, holding one another's shoulder would dance in the village Chief's courtyard day in and out during the festival to enjoy themselves. This kut is perhaps, the gayest of all the three festivals. Mim kut is celebrated with solemnity, in honour of the dead. In this Mim kut or autumn festival, the first fruit of the crops are offered to the dead. Pawl kut is held after paddy harvest. This festival is enjoyed by children and women. They prepare their best food and feed one another in a selected yard called lungdawn with great amusement and enthusiasm.  

Mizos believe in life after death. The spiritual world is to have two compartments, separated by a river. One compartment is called Pialral or haven, where only those who earned the thangchhuah, the title given to distinguish citizen, during their life-time could go. Life in Pialral is luxurious, plenty to eat and no work to do. The other place is called Mitthi khua, meaning 'village of the dead'. All the dead, whose door to Pialral is closed go to Mitthi-khua, where life is dull and colourless, a shadowy existence as in the Hebrew 'sheol'.

Aspirant for the honour of thangchhuah title must give to the public a series of special feasts, seven or eight times. They involved considerable expense and it might take almost one's life-time to complete the whole series and not many people could afford to do it. The alternative way of earning the coveted title is to kill the following wild animals: elephant, bear, wild bison, stag, barking deer, and wild boar. After killing each prescribed animal, a sort of thanksgiving ceremony or a sort had to be performed which again, required the killing of certain domestic animals.

Music is an indispensable to the Mizos in their culture as air is to animate beings. Without it life is incomplete. To be precise, music is part of the Mizo life. From time immemorial the Mizos had their own different zai (or tunes). In fact, Mizo zai were as old as the Mizo history itself. Composers had their own style of composition or particular zai which some call them after the name of the poet, like - Laltheri zai, Lianchhiari zai, Saikuti zai, Darmani zai, Awithangpa zai and so on. Besides these, there is another common style known as the lengkhawm zai, which is the traditional way of singing with drum. So, the Mizos can sing with heart and soul even without musical instruments. That music is deeply rooted in the Mizo life is clearly understood from the fact that they may enthusiastically sing throughout the night till dawn. When consoling bereaved family they sing appropriate songs named as khawhar hla, and when attending marriage party or any other thanksgiving functions they sing a song of joy. In this way, different songs were sung in the right mood on the right occasion. So, sometimes Mizoram is referred by some poets as 'land of music'.

The Mizos can boast of several community and folk dances which have been handed down from generation to generation and developed under the influences of the birds, the beasts, the hills and valleys. Dances like cheraw which is sometimes known as bamboo dance; khuailam, literally translated as dance of the guest; chheih-lam, a dance of joy and exhilaration; chai-lam, dance normally performed on festive occasions are really colourful. Rallu-lam, Sola-kia, Sarlam-kai and Par-lam dances are also quite popular. For all these dances, gongs, cymbals or drums are used effectively.

The Mizo society is a patriarchal system and the youngest son inherits all movable and immovable properties. The elder sons generally moved out of the parents' house after they get married. The youngest son is expected to stay on and look after the parents during their old age until death. When one dies, he is buried in the common burial field called thlanmual and the relatives erect memorial stones after some years. Relatives and friends gather in the house of bereavement and khawhar hla are sung for about a week or so. The spirit of tiawmgaithna may be best shown in times of bereavement and hardships.
7. Arrival of Christian Missionary

As in the entire north-eastern region literature came to Mizoram with the advent of Christianity after the annexation of the land to the British empire in 1890. C.L. Hminga writes,

If the Mizos had not repeatedly troubled the British with their head-hunting expeditions, which culminated in their killing Mr. Winchester and taking away his little daughter, Mary Winchester, to captivity, they would have been left alone as they were. It was to rescue the captive girl and to enter into permanent relationship with the savages (Mizos) that the first major military expedition was launched in 1871 by order of Lord Mayo, the then Governor General of India. The result was twenty villages routed out for offering resistance, sixty villages tendered their submission fifteen important Chiefs promised lasting friendship and Mary Winchester restored in good health in January, 1872. The second and larger military expedition, known as 'Chin-Lushai Expedition', launched in 1889-1890 resulted in the subjugation of most of the country by 1893 which marked the beginning of the British Rule. The Pax Britannica opened the way for Christian pioneer missionaries to enter and begin work in the territory. Mary Winchester said in her letter to Vanchhunga, 'My father's blood was the price paid for you Lushai Christians'.

The first Missionary who set his foot in the land was the Rev. William Williams. Amidst hardships imaginable, he left Sheila, Khasi Hills on February 15, 1891, and arrived

on March 20, 1891, and remained there till April 17. From his own report, he spent most of his short stay in Aizawl among the Mizos, observing their way of life and trying to pick up their language. He distributed Bible pictures and thought the Mizos seemed to know God already when he tried, in his very limited capacity, to tell them about God. He also preached to the Khasi labourers in their language. He was therefore the first to preach to the Mizos about the Christian God. He tried to persuade two or three Mizos to go with him to the Khasi Hills to study. They were all reluctant to accept his offer.

The news of Winchester's killing reached London. An artist in an illustrated English Magazine graphically depicted the poor frightened child (Mary Winchester) being carried off by night through the thick forest, the blazing torch of her sturdy captors lighting the pathway and casting weird shadows among trees. That picture might have stirred the mind of many a Christian in England. A millionaire, Robert Arthington, heard about the untamed hill men, and his interest in the Lushais (now Mizos) and the adjacent hill tribes was kindled. He therefore organized a missionary

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organisation of his own called, "The Arthington Aborigines Mission", with the headquarters at Leeds.

The first two missionaries of the Arthington Mission, Rev. J.H. Lorrain (1871-1940) and Rev. F.W. Savidge (1864-1936) reached Mizoram (Sairang) on the 11th January, 1894. This very date has been accepted as the day of the coming of the Gospel in Mizoram. Both Lorrain and Savidge were members of the Highgate Baptist Church in London. The two friends could find no one to carry their luggage to Aijal, so they made their tent and bed clothes into a bundle and carried it between them. When they arrived on the 13th January,23 in what is now known as the Dawrpui (or Bara Bazar). The Mizos were caught by surprise as they had never before seen the sahibs carrying their own baggage. Some called them Sap vakvai (wandering sahibs) and others said that they were Sap mi ṃ (mad sahibs). The missionaries obtained permission to put up their tent on the parade ground, after paying a courtesy visit to the British Officer in command. But the Officer said to them, "I can't do anything more for you. I have orders not to help you". However, the two dedicated missionaries pitched their tent with

great joy, for they were at last in their dreamland for the glory of God.

For Lorrain and Savidge, the first night in Aizawl was a memorable one. About mid-night they were awakened by the noise of footsteps definitely drawing near to their tent. After a tense pause came a whisper. 'Sirs, sirs'. 'What is it?' they asked. 'Have you a gun?' asked the voice. Lorrain and Savidge debated in whispers inside the tent. If they said 'Yes' it would be a lie for they were unarmed and it was not fair for missionaries to tell a lie. But, if they said 'No' they might attacked them. They were in a dilemma. After sometime, they replied truthfully by saying, 'No, we haven't got a gun' and the inquirer went away. On enquiring about it in the next morning they were told, 'Last night a barking deer came into the village and we came to you because we hadn't a gun with which to shoot'. Had they told a lie that night they would have lost their credibility when they preach the Gospel. They trusted the Mizos implicitly, and soon won their confidence by simple kindness and by medical services. Because of their loving concern and services, the natives on their part conferred upon them an honourable title Zosap meaning 'Sahib

for Mizos' or 'Lushais white men' whereas other Britshers were known as simply Sahib. This coveted Zosap was given to any Christian missionaries who came later to this land. Later, the elder Sahib F.W. Savidge was known as Sapupa and J.H. Lorrain as Pu Buanga for his fair hair and brown complexion.

The Superintendent of Lushai Hills considered that it was unsafe for the two missionaries to stay a mile away from Fort Aijal. They were given a safe place in Bawlumun later named as Tea Garden Hill. They began to build a small house of bamboo, roofed with sungrass, but the unsettled nature of the country made it almost impossible to get labour for it. They managed to finish the hut with the help of one native or two. They started learning the Mizo language seriously to communicate to the people effectively. At the beginning, the people thought that they were simple and wandering sahibs and they could not contact them properly. After a time they put their problem to the Superintendent. Then the Superintendent had forbidden free sale of salt in the shops and had entrusted the missionaries to control this precious commodity. Those who helped the missionaries in erecting a hut were given a letter to obtain salt from the shop. Sometimes they gave salt as wages to the helpers. In this way the natives' impression of the
missionaries changed. They were reported to have said, 'they were not mad sahibs, they obviously own everything in the shops, they must be chiefs'. They, therefore, trusted and obeyed them and cooperated with them in their work.

During their stay in Aizawl (1894-1897), Lorrain and Savidge wrote booklets in Mizo and translated parts of the Bible, using Roman script based on the Hunterian system. It was modified slightly, but in principle it has remained the same and has proved highly successful. The first alphabet they prepared was as follows:

- AW A B D E F G H I J (Chei)
- K L M N O P R T T (Thraw)
- U V Z CH (Chaw)

With the introduction of these letters, the oral tradition was converted into written literature, education began and Christianity set its roots firmly in the soil. Among the first three pupils, Khamliana of the Lungleng village was the first Mizo who could read and write. Therefore, Khamliana was the first educated Mizo and also the first man to write any letter to the missionaries. The other two learners were Suaka, Durtlang Chief and Thangphunga, Chaltlang Chief. Khamliana, the Chief of Lungleng,

was the recipient of 'Kaiser-i-Hind' medal for Public Service in India on the 2nd June 1923. The success story of Khamliana was worth mentioning among the Mizos.26

Arthington believed that it was high time for the evangelists to preach the Gospel throughout the land so that the people would accept Christ as their Saviour. To hasten the day of the Lord was accordingly his object, and the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel was the means to that end.27 It is thus evident that before Lorrain and Savidge had been in Mizoram for eighteen months Mr. Arthington was already eager that they should move on, and had authorized his agent in India, Mr. St. Dalmas, to hand over the field to the Welsh Mission. They came to know also that the Welsh Presbyterian Mission (then known as Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Mission) had formally adopted the Mizo Hills as part of their Mission field before they themselves entered there. A letter that they wrote in June 1895 to C.L. Stephens, a missionary in the Khasi Hills, shows how attached they had become to their work and how disappointed they would feel if they had to leave the Mizos:

We love the people and 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 Luashai 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.

Thus they offered their services to the Welsh Mission who felt however that they could not accept the offer. With the wisdom of hindsight one cannot but feel sad at the refusal.28

The Welsh Mission sent their first Missionary to the Mizos, Rev. D.E. Jones (1870-1947), who arrived in Aizawl on August 31, 1897, and worked till 1926 in Mizoram. Jones had the benefit of studying the language under the guidance of the two pioneering missionaries, and getting to know how they were doing their work. Jones managed to learn ninety new words every day during the four months he stayed with Lorrain and Savidge. After he was left alone, the Khasi Church sent Rai Bhajur Jyrwa to help him and a few other Khasi Christians were of great help to Jones.

Edwin Rowlands (1867-1939) the second missionary of the Welsh Mission arrived in Aizawl on the last day

of 1898. He worked there for about ten years and had a potent influence on the growth of the infant church. He had teaching experience in Texas prior to his joining the Welsh Mission. He was first assigned teaching work but he did also a considerable amount of touring within the length and breadth of Mizoram. On his arrival the Mizos started calling D.E. Jones Zosaphluia meaning 'the old Mizo sahib or missionary'; and they called Edwin Rowlands Zosaphara meaning 'the new Mizo sahib or missionary'. These two Missionaries had the whole of Mizo-Hills as their field of service till the coming of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1903 to work in the South Mizo Hills. Under this new Mission, the pioneering missionaries Lorrain and Savidge received an invitation, which they gladly accepted to return to their first love Lushais. They arrived in Lungleh on March 13, 1903, and from this day North Lushai Hills and South Lushai Hills became separate Mission fields.

Zosaphara was perhaps one of all the Missionaries, who best grasped the genius of the Mizo character from within. His hymns show that he used words, idioms and phrases with unequalled skill and precision. He was best remembered for his gift of singing and composing of hymns. Gifted in music he translated and composed more than a hundred Christian hymns of which more than eighty hymns
are still in the Mizo Hymn Book called Kristian Hla Bu. On August 12, 1907, alone he was believed to have composed seven different hymns. If that were true, he composed at surprising speed. All the seven hymns are in the Mizo hymn book and are in constant use, in fact, they are among his best compositions. Throughout his life, Rowlands proved himself to be a man of rare courage and resource. He had no patience with the unenthusiastic; and his zeal in work involved him in difficulties on more occasion than one. The land and the people suited him well that he developed an affection for them which lasted the rest of his life. He later worked among various other tribes, but he always had one or two Mizo fellow workers along with him, and they often shared his poverty and hardship. In time he married a Mizo girl, named Thangkungi who survived till his death in 1939 at Rangoon, Burma.

8. Impact of Christianity

Perhaps nothing is more strikingly revolutionary in the life of a community than the almost passing away

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within a century of traditional Lushai polity leading to the emergence of a new dynamic society. Within a few decades from 1894, almost the whole population embraced Christianity. However, for the first converts, the pioneering missionaries had to work very hard for five years. The first was the toughest ones and Khuma and Khara were baptised on the 25th June 1899. They could be considered as the first Bible-men among the Mizos for their zeal of spreading the Gospel. Unfortunately, Khara who later secured a job in the Government, eventually became a backslider\textsuperscript{30} and lost his faith. On the other hand, Khuma remained loyal to his Lord till his death in 1917. After Khuma and Khara, more and more Christians were added to the church; and those new Christians took a very active part in evangelistic work. They went from house to house and invited and persuaded their fellow natives to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. They knew very little about Christianity and preached in simple language such as 'Have you accepted the Gospel?' and 'You, believe in Jesus Christ', but the power of God won the hearts of the hearers. The active participation of the early Christians was one of the reasons for the rapid growth of the church in Mizoram.\textsuperscript{31}


\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 14.
Total conversion to Christianity brought to an end the old religious belief and practices as well as superstitions. One former Superintendent of Lushai Hills observes, "It is upon the people of this nature that the virile impact of Christianity has fallen. The effects, good or evil, upon the people present one of the main factors which must influence the present day administrative approach."32 It is quite true that the change brought about by Christianity was not confined to the social and religious life, but also affected the administrative approach. The British Government was not interested in incurring much expenditure on the administration of Lushai Hills save for keeping the frontiers quiet. Christian missionaries were given carte blanche to guide and mould the life of the primitive society. For that reason, for half of a century (1894-1947) the Church and not the Government was the focal agency for shaping the Lushai Community as Parry observes, "a more active instrument of change than the Government is the Christian Mission."33

The impact of Christianity on the Mizos has been favourable. Exposure to foreign cultural influence has

brought about as Wilson put it, "spiritual break-down of the man whose native values are suddenly assaulted and intellectually undermined before he has a chance of re-
building his life and personality on another set." He may not be totally correct in view of the fact that Mizos believed in Pathian. Nevertheless, the new kind of freedom from sin brought about by Christianity and the change over to value orientation through education while enlarging the political, social and economic horizons of the Mizos, has also uprooted their social and cultural moorings. Caught in this cultural trap they harbour a sense of displacement being unable to find a synthesis between a sharp break with tradition and wholesale absorption of the new culture. Modern Mizos remember the missionaries with gratitude for introducing education and opened their eyes to see the world from a higher perspective.

Leaving aside all those problems brought about by changes in Mizoram, what Christianity did to the Mizos is of fundamental importance. Christianity gave them new dimension, their attitude to life and values changed. They found their new identity in Christian ideals. The philosophical basis of their whole being was transformed. This

is something they found difficult to explain except in saying with nostalgia:

'We live once in the dark and now we are living the light.'

9. Written Literature

The first book ever written (now, forget about that parchment, eaten away by a dog) on the Lushai language was one by Thomas Herbert Lewin (1839-1916) *Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect* (1874) 20 years before the arrival of the two pioneering missionaries to Lushai Hills. Ten years later, Brojo Nath Saha published his *Grammar of the Lushai Language*. Commenting on these pioneering works of the early authors, Lorrain wrote that he and his colleague Savidge found them extremely useful in their early efforts to learn words and phrases, but neither of them pretended to suggest a mode of which could be taught to the Lushais. Lorrain further pointed out, It therefore fell to our lot to reduce the language to writing in such a way that our system could be readily adopted by the people themselves. For this purpose we chose the simple Roman script, with a phonetic form of spelling based on the well-known Hunterian

system, and this, with a few slight amendments adopted since, is still used throughout the tribe with eminently satisfactory result. 36

Besides these two books, C.A. Soppith compiled Rangkhokol-Kuki-Lushai Grammar (1885). All these efforts paved the way to the more systematic and organised efforts of the missionaries. 37

The two pioneering missionaries, Lorrain and Savidge left us valuable documents. During their first four years stay (1894-97) in Mizoram, they produced a series of books which were the first in their respective fields. First, they wrote Zirtanbu (Lushai Primer) and then Zawhna leh Chhanna (Question and Answers book) in 1896. These school textbooks were the first works of the missionaries in Lushai Hills. 38 They put their earnest efforts to the translation of the Bible. They started with the Gospel of St. Luke Luka (21st August, 1895) 39 followed by the Gospel of St. John Johana and the the Acts Tirhkohte Thilit. The two Gospels (St. Luke & St. John) were published by the British

38. D.E. Jones, Reports of 1899.
and Foreign Bible Society in 1898, and the Acts of the Apostles was published in 1899 by the same society. The year 1898 saw the publication of Lorrain's Grammar and Dictionary of the Lushai Language by the Assam Government.\textsuperscript{40}

The first newspaper in Mizo language, Mizo Chanchin Laisuih (The Highlanders' News) was first published in 1898. Most probably, the first issue came out in the month of July.\textsuperscript{41} It featured local news of different villages, Mizo folktales and conveyed the orders of the Government to various chiefs. Though the name of the Editor was not known, he was a Mizo and the newspaper was circulated by the Government in town and villages.\textsuperscript{42} However, the troublesome work of running a handwritten carbon copy newspaper could not last long. Its circulation stopped in the last part of 1899.

The first Christian Hymn Book, Kristian Hla Bu appeared in 1899. The size of the book was $4\frac{1}{2}$" x $3\frac{1}{2}$" having 36 pages, printed at Eureka Press, Calcutta. They made 500 copies only. It contains 18 hymns. The Hymn number one,

\textsuperscript{40} J.H. Lorrain, Dictionary of the Lushai Language, 1940, p. v.
Isua vana a om a, happened to be the first hymn ever composed in the Mizo language which was jointly arranged by Lorrain and Savidge. The tune of this hymn was taken from the English, 'Come, Ye Sinners' (Revised Sankey-Sacred Songs and Solos, No. 376). This devotional hymn sketched the life history of Jesus Christ, starting his first coming to earth and concluded by his resurrection. To know the date of composition, Vaileta (one of the first teachers among Mizos) recorded in his diary that when his brother Lalthawma paid the first visit to the missionaries in February 1896, he had been taught this hymn by the missionaries. From this record it seems that the first hymn was composed during the latter part of 1894 or the first part of 1895.

The first (Primary) School with only a thatched roof on was opened at Bawlhmun, now called Macdonald Hill, on the 1st April 1894. Two pupils joined the class for the very first day and later, four energetic Mizo young men were soon trained to teach other people the script. By then the missionaries acquired additional Mizo words.

Lorrain clearly recorded that their written vocabulary reach approximately 5,000 words on the 10th April 1897. Prior to this, on the 16th September 1895, Lorrain could manage to preach his first sermon in Lushai, which resulted in the beginning of regular Lushai service from the 2nd October 1895. They also built the first Lushai Church on the 6th or 7th October 1896, with an expenditure amounting £1-10-0 only. In that very spot, now stands the Gospel Memorial Stone. The Church building was very close to the School and the residence of the missionaries. Lorrain and Savidge handed over their work to D.E. Jones of the Welsh Mission on 31st December 1897 and the Lushai Hills (Sairang) for furlough in England. Later they worked among the Abor & Miri tribes around Sadiya, Upper Assam.

The Welsh Missionaries (namely, Zosaphluia and Zospthara) had taken up the difficult task of teaching, preaching, translating, composing and compiling books. They found that the publication of Christian literature helped them to convey the message of Christianity to the Mizos. So, with the help of some Khasi Christians who were working...

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45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
in the government offices and the first Mizo literates, the missionaries could produce a number of literature within a short period of time. Among the helpers, the contribution made by the first Mizo literate, Khamliana Sailo is praise-worthy.\(^{50}\) Besides those publications mentioned earlier, a school textbook called, \textit{Zirtirbu Thar} (New Primer) was compiled in 1899. It contains moral and religious lessons and some articles on general knowledge.

The Rev. Edwin Rowlands was assigned teaching work along with other engagements. In 1902, he introduced two new textbooks in the local language. They are \textit{Thu Ro Bu} (New Reader) and \textit{Hrisena Bu} (Sanitation Primer) for the students.\(^{51}\) These Primers are better than the earlier ones in language. Other School books written by Rowlands are \textit{Chhiarkawpna} (Arithmetic, the first for the Mizos), \textit{Khawvel thu} (Geography), \textit{Khawmualpui thu} (Continents & Oceans), \textit{Hma Bu} (First Primer), \textit{Grammatical Primer}, \textit{India ram chan-chin} (Indian History), \textit{Alai Bu} (Middle Book), \textit{English Primer} (in Mizo), \textit{English Reader into Mizo} (translation book).\(^{52}\)

Rowland's contributions for the development of education in Mizoram was praiseworthy. He was a dedicated educationist.

\(^{50}\) D.E. Jones, \textit{Reports of 1899}.
\(^{51}\) Rowlands, "Letter to Shakespear ", Dated June 5th, 1902.
\(^{52}\) G. Vanlallawma, \textit{Thu leh hla}, October, 1988, pp. 16-18.
and real missionary. Therefore, Edwin Rowlands's energy was matched only by his missionary zeal, a zeal which continued to the very end of his career. The desire to evangelist burnt in him as the fire burnt in Jeremiah's bones. "I do not know of anyone who better deserved to be called a missionary," Lloyd remarked of him in his book.

The first monthly magazine in Mizo language, Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Lehkhabu was published from November 1902, by J. Shakespear, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills in Aizawl. It was printed in Dina Nath Press, Syllet. In the first issue of the Government organ monthly magazine, the following articles were written:

1. Sappui thu (English's Wisdom) - Tarmita (J. Shakespear)
2. Vuta leh Lalpuithanga indotirna thu (War of Vuta and Lalpuithanga) - Suakhnuna (Phulpui Chief)
3. Sa kah thu (Shooting of Animal) - Suaka (Durtlang Chief)
4. Aizawl Chanchin (History of Aizawl) - Suaka
5. Chatuan Vawksa thu (Roasting of Pork) - Zosaphlua (D.E. Jones)
6. Ham leh hnam dang thute (Story of other Nations) - Zosaphara

7. Nghaisakna (Mutilation) - Zosaphara (E. Rowlands)

8. Haashang chanchin (Ancient history) - Lahrima (Sebawng Chief)

It was really interesting to know that three chiefs of Lushai Hills had contributed articles in the first ever magazine in Mizoram.54

The translation and publication of three books from the Bible St. Luke, St. John and The Acts were followed by the translation of Matthaisa (St. Matthew), Marka (St. Mark) and I Korinth (the first Epistle of Corinthian) in 1905.55 The Gospel of Matthaisa and Marka were published in 1906 and I Korinth and II Korinth in 1907. In the same year Zosaphara translated Kolossa and Philemona and got those published. In 1911, Zosaphlua translated Thupuan (Revelation) after his furlough and with the help of others the translation of the whole New Testament was completed in 1914. It was published in 1916.

Among other books, the Bible Stories Pathian Lehkhabu Chanchin translated by Pastor Challiana and Sapupa was published in 1910. In the same year, Pastor Chuaautera tran-

slated John Banyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* with the title of *Kristiana Vanram Kawng Zawh*. This novel was dramatised and acted by Mizo actors in various places.

With rapid progress of education among the Mizos during 1894 and 1910, there was a great imbalance between the demand for reading materials and a shortage of supply. This was so because there was no printing press in Mizoram. However in 1909, a small printing press of manual operation was presented by a gentleman (his name not mentioned) to the Mission in Lunglei, and it was the first printing press ever installed in Mizoram.\(^56\) The installation of this press solved, to some extent, the supply deficiency and it gave a great fillip to the popularisation of education.\(^57\) The second printing press, Aijal Christian Press was installed by Dr. P. Fraser at Aizawl in 1911. Nevertheless, these two small hand driven machines alone were not sufficient to meet the growing demand for the reading materials. Having learnt the necessity of printing press and in appreciation of their selfless services, Maj. G.H. Loch, the Commandant of the Lushai Hills Military Police, donated a treadle machine press to the Welsh Mission in 1915.\(^58\) Therefore,

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the services of three printing presses quickened the flowering of Mizo literature.

The publication of a monthly church magazine called the Krista Tlangau (Herald of Christ) first saw the light in October, 1911. The title Dr. Fraser gave to this magazine is significant. Every Mizo village had its 'Tlangau', the village crier or announcer. He was one of the village officials and whenever a chief wanted to make an announcement or send out a command to the villagers he would despatch the Tlangau to announce it. Everyone knew that the Tlangau did not speak or shout to them in his own name but in that of his chief and then understood it. This new magazine was also meant to have the same result. The 16 pages monthly magazine, printed in the Lushai Christian Press, Aijal was edited by R. Dala. One copy cost one anna. Let us see the content of the first issue:

1. Editorial - R. Dala
2. Hriattirna (Notice) - Editor
3. Korea - No name
4. Hrilhfiadna (Explanation of Matthew 2:18) - No name
5. Kan tih amin rul tam (He gave us more than we did) - Zakunga
6. Tirhko Chamberlena (Apostle Chamberline) - Zakunga
7. A shilling hnuhnuung ber chu - No name
   (His last shilling)
8. Kohran Dan (Church's law/rules) - R. Dala
9. Tirhko lekha thawn (Apostle's letter) - Thankunga
10. I Petera 1:24,25 (Explanation) - Thanga

The Krista Tlangau was soon re-christened Kristian Tlangau (Christian Herald) as a monthly Mizo Christian magazine (now 32 pages/1990), produced without a break since 1911. (The Church in Khasi Hills had a regular organ only from 1937 – Ka Pateng Khristan and with increasing circulation up to the present). Though a journal of the Presbyterian Church it maintains its independence and a notable feature of its history is that it has never been subsidized from outside, a record that very few church magazines anywhere could emulate.59

We have been tracing the origin and development of written literature in the Mizo language till the publication of the Thuthlung Thar (New Testament of the Bible). When we read the January issue of Mizo leh Vai Chanchin, 1913, the first recorded account of dramatic stage performance of the Mizos appeared, which will be studied in detail in the following chapter.60

The contribution of the missionaries and the Churches towards the development of Mizo literature cannot be over-emphasized. They did not only provide the printed materials but opened their eyes to wider horizon to the world of literature and changed their outlook on life. The codification of Mizo language and publication of Christian literature in that language not only paved the way for the development of Mizo literature but also resulted in the emergence of Mizo language as the only language, the lingua franca as it were, for the entire Mizoram.  

10. The Origin of Mizo Drama

No one knows when the first dramatic performance really began in the history of man. However, the natural development of drama, in its simplest form seems to be first the deed, then the story and the true play. The origins of drama have always been deeply rooted in the religious instincts of mankind.

Fear, sympathy and curiosity appear to have prompted the beginnings of drama in its religious origins. Hope

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came later in the process. Men danced, performed and disguised themselves to honour to placate or to deceive an unseen being or a known danger: for example, lightning or a particular animal, say Lion. By dramatic means they attempted to cut the fear down to size and to cope with it. Then, fear provokes the desire to escape. Sympathy prompts a wish to approach. Curiosity leads to attempts, using imitation and incantation, to find out the secrets or the wishes of good and evil spirits, of ancestors or of gods. The 'mysteries' of existence — birth, puberty, marriage, death — became surrounded by ritual performances that tried to explain these things as well as to dedicate them to particular gods or spirits. When people became more sophisticated the dances, performances and disguisings were made into plays that attempted to explain fears, sympathies and curiosities: "to hold, as it were, the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."  

Among the primitive races like the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, the deeds of their gods and heroes were often represented at yearly festivals. This is true of the Mizos as

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well. Our forefathers really enjoyed their yearly festivals with dance and rice-beer, and a kind of religious sacrifices were given to their gods with solemn functions. It was the customs of the Mizos of the past to organise **Ral-lu-lam** (Head-dance), to hold a dance in celebration of a head taken in a raid and **Sa-lu-lam** (Animal-dance), to hold a dance and a feast to celebrate success in the chase and to perform **ai** ceremony for the head of the animal killed. **Ai** ceremony look forward to the blessing for another kill and to control the soul (of the killed/slain) in after-life. When killing an enemy it was obligatory to perform the **ai** ceremony. This was done not only with a view to getting the spirit of the slain into the power of the slayer after death, but also to show the slayer's overall superiority. The souls of these animals and men killed would accompany the man on his way to Paradise (or **Pialral**). The dispenser Pawla would be convinced to see the procession of the hero with so many wild beasts and raiders and would welcome the hero in the main entrance of the **Pialral**. As I have just mentioned two instances involved a series of actions and deeds, which formed the background of the Mizo Drama.

There are three periods in the development of Mizo Drama:
I  The Root Period - Religious or Entertainment (1912-1924)

II  The Budding Period - Moral or Early Plays (1925-1958)

III  The Flowering Period - Artistic or Modern Plays (1959-1990)

I

THE ROOT PERIOD

The root of the Mizo drama began to grow with the celebration of the grandest Christian festival in the land, Christmas. The missionaries and a few native speakers celebrate Christmas day, by entertaining children and giving them a special feast on December 25, 1903. It turned out to be a yearly activity and in 1904, the Baptist missionaries of the South Lorrain and Savidge joined the Christmas feast in Aizawl, organised by Jones and Edwin Rowlands. Celebration of Christmas day increased each year. In 1912, Christmas day was celebrated in most of the villages with grand feast. The Christmas Day, 25 December 1912, will be remembered in the history of Mizo drama, because in

the evening of this very day, the first ever dramatic performance was held in the small thatched roofed theatre of Thakthing Veng, Aizawl. With the initiative of the missionaries, the most successful function of variety entertainment was shown to the people for the first time. The well attended function was really enjoyed by the theatre-goers of that night.

The Christmas Variety Entertainment programme consisted of twenty six items. Most of the items were songs. The missionary had carefully arranged different Christmas songs to be sang by the whole gathering. The missionary selected boys and girls for a particular item and another item for all children, then only young women, only mothers, and playing of pathephone and so on. Those who had presented their special numbers sang the song so sweetly and it touched the heart of the listeners. Besides speech and singing, seven other humorous dialogues were performed in the land for the first time. These items were acted along with make-believe gestures, which really amused the people. The first one was Sap mi khual leh Tawng let ling tu. (English

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66. Ibid.
Stranger and Interpreter). When the foreigner arrived in Mizoram for the first time, the native Mizos were really surprised to see such a man with fair skin and brown hair, not knowing the language, but uttering something. They came around him with a puzzled look, then a close look and touching his hands and feet. One determined person stepped out and interpreted whatever he said to the people around. It was a make believe interpretation and when they really understood the language later, it was a funny encounter for them. And they would repeated the same thing with certain variations in the process.

The other items like Krismaa hria leh hre lo (One who knows the meaning of Christmas explained to his friend its significance), Kristian leh Kristian lo in biak na (a dialogue between Christian and non-Christian), Sap putar leh Mosolman putar lem in biak na (a dialogue between an English Old-man and Mosolman Old-man), Khasi Dialoch (a dialogue between two Khasis) could be an interesting and amusing presentation in that function. It is quite true that a dialogue of any kind is unavoidable in a theatrical performance. Actions and dialogue are complimentary elements in a drama. Without these elements the plot of a drama will be meaningless.

The most memorable show was the item number nineteen of the Variety Entertainment, Borsap lem, leh thu ohhia
nei tu 2 leh rasi lem chang be (Superintendent's Court Scene). This particular item may be recorded as the first short play ever staged in Mizoram. It was not simply a combination of dialogue and action, but it has a plot, a short story to portray, hence a play.67 It was about a greedy man, who had stolen his neighbour's goat. The owner reported the matter to the Borsap (Magistrate). The court summoned both of them to appear before the District Magistrate. The thief therefore, invited the Rasi (Circle Interpreter) to defend him and gave the Rasi a good amount of money. Meanwhile, the Borsap was informed about the bribery. The court decided in favour of a legal owner of the goat. The disillusioned convict, helplessly asked the Rasi to return his money. Then, the embarrassed rasi had nothing to say, but simply produced a bleating sound of goat, be... be... and he went away.

The dramatic characteristics of such performance should not be overlooked. The first show was a grand success. It was repeated in the next year. After the public feast, on 25 December 1913, Christmas Entertainment programme was organised. The missionary had delivered a speech on Christmas, mentioning the birth of Jesus Christ was significant for the Christians all over the world. After that,

67. Laltluangliana Khiangte, "Mizo Lemchan Chanchin" (Unpublished manuscript).
a group of actors performed a meaningful drama. And the choir sang one Christmas song, "Oh Merry, merry, Christmas chime."\footnote{68}

It was therefore, the practice of the day, to organise a variety show every Christmas Day. Not only in Aizawl, but also in different villages, the evening of the Christmas day was observed as show-time.\footnote{69} After two or three years, the dramatic performance was shown in the church occasionally. Even the missionary used the method of reciting and action, a kind of short play to inculcate certain moral and religious lessons in the church. For these reasons, it may be concluded that the foundation of Mizo drama was obviously connected with the ritual of the church. The missionaries were benevolent enough to make some shows and entertainment programmes in the church, which were quite helpful for the origin and development of Mizo drama.

The third wave of \textit{Spiritual Revival} came like a fresh outburst in 1919, (the first in 1906, second in 1913). It came upon the Christian with extraordinary power, and nothing was ever quite the same in Mizoram after its occurrence. The emphasis was on the Cross and suffering of Christ,


\footnote{69. Pi Chawntuahi (Mrs Pasena) the lone surviving member and one of the choir members of the 1913 Christmas, informed me about this with some other information on 17.7.88 at her residence.}
revealing the love of God for man and demanding the corollary of brotherly love and Christian affection. There were often Christian love-feasts. Hymn singing became much more popular and the use of drum, which had previously been very sparing, spread to every church at this time. Such a great change in the lives of the people had switched the dramatic instinct off from the gradual growth of Mizo drama. Stage performance and other entertainment programme were abandoned even during the Christmas season, and dedicated themselves to singing and dancing with profound joy. Frankly speaking, the spiritual revival had thrown the dramatic performances out of the Church and was a major setback in the development of Mizo drama.

II
THE BUDDING PERIOD

The first Mizo dramatic performances are moralistic in spirit. The effect of the religious teaching was great. It closed the early Christmas entertainments in the Church. The immediate result was the emergence of secular drama.

About this time, Pasena (1893-1961), who had just returned from London after taking his Diploma in Education, came back to Aizawl in 1925. His training was useful to the Mizos not only in the field of education but also in the Mizo dramatics. In those days, the people were very much tempted by the Puja Variety Show of Bengali Babus at Babult-lang (Officers' Complex) and the Nataak (live performance) of 1st Assam Rifles Regiment at Drill Shed in Aizawl. The time was really ripe for theatrical revival, which had been faded down as a result of spiritual awakening. Pasena came forward to stir-up the latent dramatic instinct of the people. His participation in the dramatic art suited the time for, he was a free mixer with all sorts of friends. Pasena was trusted by the natives; also an advantage for a foreigner.

Between 1925 to 1933, Pasena prepared and directed six extempore dramatic performances, which were staged in Sikulpui Hall, the popular name for Boys' Middle English School at Mission Veng, Aizawl. All these dramas were enacted not only for entertainment but also for moral lessons. His first dramatic show - Heroda Chawimawina (King Herod's Glory), a tragedy was staged in 1925 at Sikulpui Hall by the actors of Mission Veng. King Herod was glorified by his countrymen with a song of praise:
In honour of his everlasting greatness, his daughter, the best dancer of the age, danced around the king's throne, which really pleased the king to promise whatever she asked for. The dancer Salome, after consulting her mother asked for the head of John, the baptist. The grief striken king was helpless, but to give order for the head, and John was beheaded. Pasena dramatised this story from the Bible and it ended with a sad note from the King.

Pasena dramatised two other stories from the Bible — Fapa Tlanbo (The Prodical Son) staged in 1927, and Khualbuka mi a (A fool at the Inn) staged in 1933. The other three were his own inventions: Tinreng daih khawl (Robot or a machine with brain) staged in 1928, Ransa Khawmpui (Animals' Conference) staged in 1929; and Rorelna (Court) staged in 1933. These plays were designed to preach moral principle for day-to-day living. Ransa khawmpui vehemently protests the use and drinking of wine in the society, which is the

71. P.S. Chongthu, My Informant, who constantly renders his help while writing the history of Mizo drama informed me about this.
source of all evils. Roreina depicts the life of a bad boy who was punished by the court. It further shows the reward of sin and its effect in the family.

The first part of the budding period in Mizo drama may appropriately be named as Pasena Age or Period. His influence can be seen in the dramatic art of his contemporaries as well as his successors. Being an educationist, he was keen to set an example for other writers and I considered Pasena as 'a pioneer of Mizo dramatics'. Besides his own works, he helped Chuaauthuama to produce Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice, which the Mizos remembered as Sailoka. This is the first Shakespearean play acted in Mizoram. It was in 1929 at Sikulpui Hall.72

The next important dramatist was Lalkailuia, the son of Reiek Village chief. Lalkailuia's style is different from his predecessor. Two of his most important works were based on Mizo folktales. He dramatised one of the popular love stories ever told from the time of the forefathers. The title of the play was Tualvungi and Zawlpala, staged in 1935 at Assam Rifles Drill Shed. This is the first Mizo love story ever staged in the land. Lalkailuia also had dramatised another popular folktale called, Liandova

te unau. It was shown in the same year at the same place. This very story is again re-dramatised by another playwright, which will be studied in detail in the following section. Lalkailuia was not only a dramatist, but also a good actor. He himself used to play leading role in his drama.

The second and better half of the budding period may rightly be named as Chawngzika Age, which officially started from 1934. In 1934, Krista Palai (Ambassador for Christ, translated into Mizo by Challiana) was dramatised by Chawngzika. It seems that this play is the first written play with a typed copy in Mizo language. It was staged in 1934 at Sikulpui by the Aijal Theatre Performers, under the directorship of the playwright himself. It was done for raising Pawngi's Memorial Fund. Entry ticket was sold for the first time in this particular show. (For photo of the performers, see Appendix - I).

In 1938, Chawngzika dramatised (with the help of Rev. Samuel Davies) the translated novel of the Kristiana Vanram kawng Zawh, which was shown in Sikulpui and later in Dawrpui Sikul. According to Samuel Davies, who directed the play, this was the first drama in Mizoram.\textsuperscript{73} The Rev.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
Samuel Davies (came 1937 and returned in 1951) happened to be a Diploma Certificate holder of the London School of Drama. He took active part in dramatic society. His coming was a blessing for the theatrical performers. He introduced various techniques like, disguise, lighting system background music, scenery and encouraged decorations and systematic presentation. In order to improve Mizo drama and theatrical performance, he organised drama competition called Zosiami Cup in 1940. This Cup is named after the name of her first daughter Zosiami. Three dramatic parties joined this first drama competition on the 3rd October 1940. The result was -

First Prize : Mission Veng Y.L.A. (Young Lushai Association) and the title of their drama - Princess Pocahontas. (For photo see Appendix - III).

Second Prize : Kulikawn Y.L.A., title - The Black Corner of Aijal in 1999. (For photo of the actors, See Appendix - III).

Third Prize : Wolf Club, title - One Good Turn Deserves Another.

The entry fees were collected for War fund of British Empire, and the total amount reached rupees seventy (Rs.70/-). The Cup was a running trophy, those who can win for the second will take the Cup permanently. But due to Second World

74. Zosiami Cup Drama Competition Report, Kristian Tlangau Thubelh, (October, 1940), pp. 81-82.
War, the competition was never organised again in the following years.

The prize winning drama, *Princess Pocahontas* (1940) was credited to Chawngzika. The story is adapted from the lives of some Red Indian, which the author had heard from some missionary. This story depicts the personal life of the Princess, who systematically rescued the white captive, *Sap tlangval* from her fellow red Indian warriors just before the white man was sacrificed to their gods and goddesses. The play ends with the marriage of the Princess and the *Sap tlangval*, who in fact developed love at first sight. The Superintendent of Lushai Hills, who watched the comedy expressed his views on the play: "It was marvellous; the English actors were no better than them."^75

Chawngzika adapted a few Biblical stories into plays. *The Royal Robes* (1948), *Rabboni* (1948), *Christmas Spirit* (1949), *The Star of Christmas* (1950), and *Naamana* (1950) were some of his plays staged under his own supervision. He translated and dramatised some stories from other literature and he even published some articles on drama in local monthly journal. Besides these, Chawngzika and Samuel Davies

jointly dramatised and acted some four to six plays. All these plays were meant to portray certain moral meanings above its amusing elements. Samuel Davies, one missionary in the land, inspired the Mizo dramatists of the time. His contribution to the development of Mizo drama is noteworthy.

The next important dramatist was Lalzuithanga (1916-1950). He was both a writer and an actor. His first play, The Black Corner of Aijal in 1999 achieved success, which won the second prize in the first drama competition of Zosiami Cup, held in 1940. The prize was donated by Samuel Davies and his wife. It is a prophetic play. It shows action in 1999 as George Orwell wrote 1984 a novel. The Black Corner of Aijal in 1999 is a detective story about one youngster, who frequents an hotel with a bar, who is later sentenced to death for robbery and murder. It was a well played drama and the missionaries remarked as "there is no difference with the English drama." The author himself acted the hero part in the show.

Lalzuithanga was, again, both a musician and a comedian. In October 17, 1941, he organised The Cosmopolitan Variety Entertainment at Assam Rifles drill shed. Among

76. Ibid.
the variety items, Lushai Fantasy and Hawaiian Fantasy were staged along with musical arrangement. One interesting note was written at the bottom of the programme sheet, as

NB: Mi hrisel tha lo tak leh naupang lutuk chu Horrible chhuah dawn hian pawna chhuah theih a ni.77
Meaning -
Those who are very unhealthy and children may go out when Horrible is to be shown.

The Horrible is a tragedy. However, the protagonist of the play was hanged to death at the very outset, then his ghost reappeared while the Doctor had been undergoing post-mortem. The strange transformation in the process was really horrifying.

During thirty years of its development, the Mizo drama improved in various techniques. Pasena, Lalkailuia, Chawngzika and Lalzuithanga made names for themselves. Meanwhile, their contributions to the development of Mizo drama and their roles as actors were highly appreciated. I have, therefore, considered them as the 'four touch-bearers' of the Mizo drama. Samuel Davies's inspiration

77. The Cosmopolitan Variety Entertainment Programme.
for the improvement of their geniuses and skilful adaptation of capabilities helped the Mizo dramatists greatly. He is till today considered as a 'leader of Mizo dramatics'.

III
THE FLOWING PERIOD

The new plays differ radically from those dramas produced and staged earlier because they tended to represent life as it was. The new artistic plays, of course, have purpose: religious or moral but the motive is always subordinate to the chief end of representing life itself. The theatrical and stage performances have been developing for fifty years, from the first root planted in 1912 and the first printed play appeared in 1963. During this period the dramatic art was acquired by a group of actors in almost every village. When the Gospel Golden Jubilee was celebrated in 1944, Samuel Davies dramatised the coming of Christianity into play, Thuhriltu, 'the herald' acted in Aizawl. About this time, almost every village started organising dramatic performances. But the first published play, Sangi Inleng by Lalthangfala Sailo appeared in 1963.

Once the play is printed and published, our curiosity
and inquisitiveness have been focussed to the text. This prompted me to a brief account of each playwright and the outlines of each play. The writings follow the year-wise publication of the play.

Lalthangfala Sailo (1933 - ): Son of Dohleia, the Chief of the Lungdar village, L.F. Sailo was born at W. Lungdar, Mizoram. He had graduated from the St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, in 1959. He, after passing B.A., immediately joined the St. Paul's High School, Aizawl, as Assistant Teacher in 1959. It was in this year that Sangi Inleng was written.  

After three years in 1963 it came out as the first printed play in the Mizo language. Some information about this first play is as follow:

Title of the play - Sangi Inleng
Name of playwright - Lalthangfala Sailo
Year of Publication - 1963/1000 copies
Printer - R. Vanlawma Press
Republic Veng, Aizawl

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78. Sangi Inleng was first acted in October 1959 at MZL Hla Kutpuai held at Mizo High School, Aizawl, (Music Festival).
Genre/Type - Tragi-Comedy
Structure - Chapter - XIII (Length as 1st Edn. 1963, 64 pages)
Scenes - XIII (as 2nd Edn. 1969, 60 pages)
Characterisation - Fourteen characters in the fray.

Sangi Inleng, literally means Sangi's suitor. The protagonist of the play is the heroine Sangi (Rosangi) herself. The main suitor if Hranga (Zahranga) but Sangi loves her original boy-friend Muana (Lalmuana). Two mediators for the marriage Bela and Kunga and Sangi's parents Ngura and Thangi are helpless to fulfil their proposal. Mawii helps Sangi, while Hliri opposes her. Others are minor characters.

The outlines of the play, Sangi Inleng (1963) is as below:

It is in Kanghmun Village, the Guest Speaker preaches in the Church and a good sound of singing is heard from Ngura's house. While Ngura and his wife Thangi are chatting by the fire-side, two mediators Bela and Kunga enter to seek the favour of Sangi for Hranga, the only son of the well-to-do family of the Village Ngura gives a green signal and asks the mediators to come again for a final decision. Meanwhile Thangi wants to make final agreement there and there. She, therefore put forward a strong pressure to Sangi, to accept Hranga the love child of a family
as husband. When Sangi hears it, she protests because Hranga as 'old by birth, funny smile, one who plays clumsy whistling with mouth'.... 'Ghost, Demon, that Evil-Spirit? If you want, marry him'. However, her mother keeps on busy to force Sangi to marry Hranga and she continues Sangi to accept him for various other considerations than love. But Sangi said she will not surrender herself for Hranga, till her death and waited for the intervention of her lover Muana and asks him to do the best he can for their re-union. After a long time the fixed date arrives, but Sangi is not yet prepared. She writes her last letter for Muana disclosing her love once more and telling him that her love for him will live forever. Her friend Mawii, despatches the last letter to Muana in the last hour of the wedding day. Knowing all the circumstances, Mawii asks Muana to act as quick as possible and move down to the Cave, where the wounded Tiger chased Sangi as his easy prey. However, Muana arrives in time to the spot, to kill the tiger thereby to save her life. When Sangi regains consciousness Ngura readily offers Sangi to her real lover Muana, to live in peace for the rest of their lives.

The second play of Lalthangfala appeared in October 1969. This play is adapted from one of the most popular folktales of the Mizos. The same story was often staged by various actors in the past. It is a skillful work which should be studied systematically to appreciate the dramatic art of the author:

Title: LIANDOV A TE UNAU
Playwright: Lalthangfala Sailo
Year of Publication: 1969/1000 Copies
Genre/Type
- Comedy

Structure
- Five Acts, with Eighteen Scenes.

Characterisation
- Around twenty characters.

Liandova and his younger brother Tuaisiala are the two most important characters in the play. Pi Fangi, an old woman of the next door and the Princess Tuaichawngi, who later became the wife of Liandova are the other major characters in the play. The rest of the people are subordinate or minor characters.

The gist of the play is as below:

The father of Liandova and Tuaisiala now knows that he is dying. Liandova and his mother look after the ailing father of the house, in a Charchhawn locality of a particular Mizo village. Liandova constantly asks his father to keep on breathing and live with them longer still. But the father pronounces his last words to his wife, exhorting her not to lose faith but to go on courageously, and to his sons, not to worry anything about their mother. The mother, thereafter, promises loyalty to her husband not to get married again, but look after their sons properly till herself is dead. The grand old woman Pi Fangi rejoices to hear such a beautiful promises made by the mother .... So, the father dies. However, a short while after the death of her husband, Liandova's mother embraces Thangseia for her husband and eloped with him, while Liandova and Tuaisiala were crying knowing that they are really helpless to convince her and stay together. They do not have any social status but the villagers put them to the lowest, poorest of the poors. They do not enjoy their share and are not given any due consideration in
the society. But the virtue in Liandova's character finds its way in its own part. King Lersia becomes the unexpected guest of the two brothers one day. As a result of their warm welcome and petty consideration, Lersia stretches out his helping hands for the two brothers. Hence they are increasing each day, and becoming one of the richest families in the village. Such undiscovered wealth is secretly recognised by the princess through Pi Fangi, and then, Tuaichawngi agrees to become the wife of a disguised poor man Liandova, and crowns him in the selection ceremony. The new couples proved to be a real family and it ends with the Grand Khuang-chawi festival. The family members - Liandova, Tuaichawngi, Tuaisiala and also Pi Fangi are all on the big drum and the people carry them in the steer with full ornamentation and honour.

Mr. Lalhmuaka (1915 – ?): Lahmuaka is the second playwright among the Mizos, who published his first collection of short plays in October 28, 1965. This book on plays called Lemchan Bu contains six short plays, out of which four are written by the compiler Lahmuaka himself, two being contributed by his two neighbours. Lahmuaka published and claimed this book to be 'the first ever published drama (play) book in Mizoram'. Lahmuaka perhaps had not seen Sangi Inleng by Lalthangfala Sailo (1963), the first printed play in the Mizo language. However, Lahmuaka has produced seven short plays; but he is by far the most prolific.

dramatist among the Mizos. Three plays by him are found in Drama Pasarih, a collection of plays, published by the Zoram Writers' Club in 1981. His plays, with a short gist are as follows: (1) Lo Kir Leh Mai Rawh (1965) is the first play in Lemchan Bu. It is a comedy. There are more than ten characters in the play out of which three of them play vital roles. The main protagonist Liana and his elder brother Hminga and their father Pa of Chawngawih village control the main plot of the play.

One day when the Father gives the day's work instruction to the two brothers, Hringa responds fairly as usual, whereas Liana murmurs for their continuous hard work with no enjoyment. From that day Liana's rebellious attitude towards his father's administration bursts. The heavy daily routine work renews his anger each day. He, therefore asked his father to give all his share of the estate. He puts forward a heavy pressure so that he can go away with his share to enjoy the world. The father tries his best effort to cool down Liana's dream of luxurious life, but the destined son collects his share and leaves the house.... The father thereafter, reaffirms his real love for him while giving his money, and asks him to live circumspectly with tears in his eyes and a broken heart. The father watches his younger son leaving his house for a distant country. Living luxuriously with a crowd of friends, Liana squanders all his wealth till he becomes empty handed. There was a great famine in that land and Liana began to beg for his living. He looked after pigs to earn his food for no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he decided to go back to his father and to work as one of the hired man in his father's house, the father saw him and was filled with joy and compassion for
him. He quickly ran to his son and threw his arms around him and asked him, 'Taite, are you alright? How are you? Tired? How happy I am!' The runaway son asked forgiveness while the father commanded his servants to bring all good clothings for him, and to kill the fattened calf for the feast of celebration. This makes the older son Hminga quite angry and he refused to go home as a sign of protest. But the father pleaded by asserting him that all his belongings were his and to make himself happy for his lost brother is found and the dead brother is alive again. So, they began to live as a happy family.

In this play, the Chorus played an important part by singing different songs which relates the mental conflict of the hero and his surrounding atmosphere. The play, is an adaptation of the parable of the Prodigal son from the Bible.80

(ii) Ranthleng Mak (1965): In this short play, more than twenty characters are introduced. The story outlined about the biblical account of the wonderful manger, in which the unexpected new born baby who would rule the world was born.

(iii) A ni mai thai (1965): This is a morality play. The boss Lucifara and his colleagues discussed the best method to convert a righteous man to a sinful life. To deceive a man to hell is the purpose of their meeting.

(iv) Mautam tam (1965): The great famine of 1960-1961 and its effect on the people is the target of this play. The playwright focuses a typical Mizo life in a famine hit areas of Mizoram.

(v) Pathian thu nung-Mizoramah (1981): This play first appeared in 1981 edition of the Zoram Writers' Club Series 5, called Drama Pasarih. Three of the seven plays of this book are written by Laihuaka of Zotlang village. Pathian thu nung-Mizoram-ah is a historical short play, which depicts the fertility ritual for good harvest of the ancient Mizo religion and the early life of new believers who suffer stern resistance from their chiefs. Being cast out of their villages, they gathered in a Christian village called Saitual, there are enlightened chief Dorawta had welcomed every Christian to profess their faith freely.

(vi) Sumdeng Zu (1981): The play portrays one kind of drinking festival in a typical Mizo society. The chief and his counsellors, with the help of some more prominent citizens of the village convene such a special meet, in which Tlangval tiawmngai ber, the most perfect gentleman of the village will be awarded Nopui, a special Wine Cup and only after that the rest of the people will drink in an ordinary Cup called Noleng.
(vii) Ramthanga te ehhung (1981): The seventh play of Lalhmuaka will be studied in detail later as his first play. The dramatist introduced more than ten characters which revolve around the central figure Ramthanga. The title of the play itself suggests 'the family of Ramthanga'.

The story runs like this:

Mr Ramthanga has been employed as LDA (Lower Divisional Assistant) in the Department of Supply & Transport, Mizoram. Due to his habit of heavy drinking, Ramthanga could not carry out his routine work in the Office, but spent most of his time in a small home made wine cottage. In a particular month, he paid the lion share of his wages (Rs. 300/- out of Rs. 450/-) to the wine seller Mrs. Vungi, and he could hardly gave Rs. 50/- to his wife Rokimi for the management of the whole family. When Rokimi argued about it, the father became more angry not to listen to her. Ramthanga made no sign of improvement in his duty and after a fair warning, the Director had no other alternative but to discharge him from his service. Ramthanga, as he proposed earlier, met the Minister in charge to reinstate him in the post, but the Minister who never drink anymore could not act foolishly against the Department executive's fair deal. There is no alternative, the mother decided to search for a daily labour work for feeding their children. A sad note of the mother, 'Oh, you drank the whole family', hiding her face as a sign of woe.

In Lalhmuaka's book, Lemchan Bu, there are two short plays written by two other playwrights. They are: Lal Chibai an buk a by Mr. R.K. Dingliana and Isua Neih Ka buh Zawk by Mr Lalsamliana.
Dingliana's only play is again a Christmas play, which is more or less the same with Ranthleng Mak. But the setting and names of the characters (with Mizo names) are different, while the main story relates to the birth of Jesus Christ in the small township of Bethlehem.

Isua Meih Ka Duh Zawk, a play by Lalzamliana should be examined in detail. This comedy has a good plot. Among the eight characters, Lalsangliani has become the heroine of the play. The well to do family of the town Vanlalliana and his wife Zuithangi had only one daughter Lalsangliani. They loved her excessively and endowed with sufficient money and all other amenities were provided, while Lalsangliani is studying her B.A. Degree in Shillong. As others do, she has got a boy friend called Ropua, to whom she made beautiful promises. In the same way, Ropua had been waiting for her completion of B.A., and then M.A., after which they planned to have a nice time together. The parents also eagerly waited for their fortunes which they expected to receive through the marriage of the boastful daughter to an enlighten son-in-law. Meanwhile, there was a great change in the life of Lalsangliani, after she received Christ as her personal Saviour. She, therefore, wrote a long letter describing her new found joy and her life long ambition to serve the Lord in a distant country where the
Gospel was never preached before. Her parents reacted to this letter and sent urgent telegram for her quick return. As soon as Lalsangliani reached home, her father scolded with all those painful words and threatened to disown her if she does not repent in that particular night. Left alone, Lalsangliani meditates and thinks over again her decision to serve the Lord. She loves her parents so much but then, she decides to follow the footsteps of Jesus. While singing one song - *I Would Rather Have Jesus* with all her heart, tears flow down her cheeks and Lalsangliani prepared her baggage. Early in the next morning she leaves her home and utters, 'Lord, how I enjoy my home, but I'll carry your Cross by leaving this house, for I have chosen you. Please be my Guide.' When she starts for her unknown destination, the father realizes that his daughter means well, he seeks her advice and explanation of her new found Saviour. The mother and cousin sister also reconcile themselves to Lalsangliani's faith.

H. Lalsiama (1909-1983): Born in 1909 at Thilthek village the second son of Mr Venga and his wife Suaki. He had served as Rahsi, Forest Guard, Headmaster (M.E. School), and Assistant Teacher in High School (St. Paul's Aizawl). By qualification he passed I.A. (Intermediate Arts). After doing 47 years of teaching job, he retired
from his daily teaching work on the 12th March 1977. Out of his literary writings, only two short plays will be discussed in this paper.

Lalsiama’s only two short plays are Pa Awk Hrawl and Ukil Hlawhtling. These plays were first published in 1970 for the textbook of Classes VII and VIII in High School Mizo Vernacular.

(1) Pa Awk Hrawl (1970): The richest family in the village Neihkunga and his family used to help the needy and spent their money lavishly for the poorer section of the society. In spite of that the generous couple Neihkunga and Malsawmi had been suffering from a serious ailment and they were in their death-bed. Their two children Laltawia, a boy of six years old and Riangkungi, a girl of four years, did not exactly know the condition of the parents. The parents, knowing that both of them were about to die, think over how their children would lead a life after their death. Pensive mood and careful consideration made them realise that it would be best to leave them in

82. H. Lalsiama, Mizo Vernacular, p. 30.
83. Ibid., p. 73.
the care of Thatvunga, the younger brother of Neihkunga. They therefore informed the matters to Thatvunga of the Pherzawl village. In the mean time, Neihkunga and Malsawmi died and Thatvunga took over the whole charge of looking after the household and the two children. Thatvunga, sold off whatever is possible, then he returned to his own village to support Laltawia and Riangkungi. His wife Chalchani was overjoyed to see such a huge amount of money and decided to oppress her neighbour with those wealth. However, when she came to know about the messages and testament of will put forward by the dead father, Chalchani broke out with anger and disgust. She then proposed for the dismissal of the boy and the daughter. Accepting her suggestion, Thatvunga led the two kids into the thick jungle and left them there to die. Nevertheless, Thatvunga and Chalchani could not enjoy their wild luxurious lives for long. Before the expiry of even a year, all their domesticated animals were eaten up by a roaring tiger and they themselves died one after another.

(ii) Ukil Hlawhtling (1970): The title suggests 'a successful lawyer'. Zirliana, a successful lawyer finds it a tough time even to earn a daily living. His wife Lalawti has been complaining about her worn out clothes and all other old fashioned instruments and facilities.
Zirliana agrees that new ways and means of acquiring something must be devised now. Thereafter, he set out to the main market and visited a rich cloth merchant. After a fair deal, Zirliana agreed to take six metres of suit piece at the rate of Rs. 24/- per metre. The merchant Sumparlawma readily cut the required cloth material and handed it over to him. Zirliana did not have ready money to pay, but suggested that he will give the money after an hour in his residence. Further, he informed Sumparlawma that he will be offered a nice lunch cake by his wife, and left for home. Soon after Sumparlawma closed his shop to proceed to Zirliana's house. Meanwhile, another debtor Lianbela interrupted. Sumparlawma refused to see him, but directed him to meet the Police and face the Court. When Sumparlawma reached Zirliana's house, he was told by the wife not to speak loudly lest the voice disturb the mental illness of her husband. Standing amazed, Sumparlawma demanded the money from them. The wife looked so surprised and claimed that her husband never go out, but sleeps all the time. The embarrassed merchant left the house. The wife then, congratulated Zirliana for his tactic of getting a valuable material. A shortwhile after, Lianbela came to meet Zirliana for his legal help. Zirliana jumped off from his bed quickly and met Lianbela casually. Lianbela agreed to pay Rs.500/- if he is acquitted which Zirliana accepted on the ground
that Lianbela was a poor shepherd. So, they appeared togethertogether before the judge. Sumparlawma accused Lianbela for stealing his sheep. Then, Zirliana defended Lianbela maintaining that Suparlawma never paid his wages and with no other alternative but to steal a sheep. As soon as Sumparlawma saw his debtor Zirliana, he mentioned his clothes and demanded for the price. This confused the judge greatly. Besides, Sumparlawma could not express his charge in a proper way for he mixed up his anger towards Lianbela and Zirliana. He continuously uttered strange and disconnected outburst before the court. On the other side, Lianbela could only utter the bleating sound of a sheep. Methodically, the lawyer called Sumparlawma as a madcap and Lianbela as a man half lived among man. The confused judge therefore dismissed the case without punishing either party. The successful lawyer then asked Lianbela to give him Rs. 500/- for his legal aid; but Lianbela was wise enough to keep on producing the bleating expression as taught by Zirliana himself. Zirliana could not force him to pay the money for Lianbela knew well that the judge would not like to listen to his parrot like talking any more. So ends the play and the lawyer's legal adventure.

Selthuama (1910-1971): Selthuama's only play Saikuti published in 1975 was found in Mizo Zia Rang.
The Mizo poetess Saikuti had tucked one small stone in a particular branching edge of tree in the gateway of Thingsai village. The play simply depicts how this stone is named as Saikuti lungzeh.

James Dokhuma (1932-): The youngest son of Hrangchina and Kapkungi of Sialsuk village, Dokhuma was born on the 15th June 1932. After passing class five he joined the Assam Rifles, where he acquired a workable knowledge of English, Urdu and Hindi, and was awarded proficiency certificate in Hindi. After retirement he served as the Hindi Teacher in St. Paul's High School, Aizawl. He taught four years there before actively involving himself in politics. As a writer he became the first Mizo recipient of Padma Shri Award for Literature in 1985. He is an essayist, novelist, dramatist and story-teller. He would be best remembered as novelist, for his novels portray his best thought and imagination. However, we shall now look at his dramatic works. He has four plays to his credit. I may say that all the four plays of Dokhuma are 'literature of propaganda'. Here they are -

(i) Tumna chu hlawhtling thin (1976): He wrote this play in response of the invitation of the State Social Education Officer, Mizoram. The Social Education Wing of Education Department, Mizoram, published the book for the
uneducated adults who were taught to read and write in their free time. This play is designed in such a way that the illiterate adult may be imparted with non-formal education and to lead them formal stream of education.

(ii) Hmasawnna (1978): At the request of the Director, Community Development, Government of Mizoram, Dokhuma prepared this play, which was published by the Mizo Writers Association. Three different stories are linked to meet the purpose of preaching community development slogan. The story takes ignorance as a stumbling block to development and how knowledge spurs man to follow various developmental process one after another, and to make him wiser and wiser each day.

(iii) Hausak aiin Hrisel a hlu zawk (1978): The Community Development Department also invited Dokhuma to prepare a play on 'Nutrition and Development'. Therefore, he wrote this in 1978 and was published by the Mizo Writers Association. In this play, Dokhuma could follow a proper plot for the story, with a better characterisation.

(iv) Finna Haahruai (1980): The fourth and the last play so far, published in 1980 by the Social Education Wing. In this play the palpable design of inculcating certain lesson to the community people was almost absent.
It is a true play in which the artistic beauty can be seen even in the stage performance. The play dramatises some important events in the lives of early Mizo believers. The preaching of one new convert Lalthawma was strongly and sternly resisted by the chief Vanrikhuma. When Lalthawma preached about Jesus, the chief caught hold of him and hit him with a firewood and then ousted him from the village. In spite of all those oppositions and humiliation, Thanzingi agreed to accept Christianity and follow the footsteps of her cousin brother Lalthawma. The moment she believed, Thanzingi was thrown out of the house and was totally separated from her family. In those days, the new believers were mocked and humiliated by the villagers. Thanzingi had no other choice, but submitted herself to the Missionary at her earliest opportune moment. She received education and stability in her faith. The missionaries constantly inspired the new believers to preach the relatives. Therefore, Lalthawma and Thanzingi visited different villages and once again alighted in Vanrikhuma's village. Thanzingi earnestly prays for her parents, and she constantly asks God to bring and show them of his love. But it takes time. The stiff resistance form the conservative native could not stop and spoil the enthusiasm of the preachers. Their constant work and prayer were heard by God, and even the most hateful chief became Christian. The very parents of
Thanzingi also embraced Christianity and received their daughter with love and repentance. The village chief also recounted his hateful behaviour and his wrong doings for his citizens and asks God to forgive him and to lead him and his people in the right path to Godliness.

Lalsangzuala: The only Mizo play so far, published outside Mizoram is the Christmas Drama (1977) by Lalsangzuala. It was printed in Churachanpur, Manipur. The play depicts the very life of modern youth, how young men and women used to spend the Christmas festival for their own sake. With fried chicken and drink some other eatable things were served in special party night. Life was easy and care-free. And the play satirized the folly of the contemporary society. And even the older generation could not understand how the young people would like to enjoy life in their own way.

K. Saibela (1935- ): One of the Church elders of Republic locality of Aizawl, Saibela is the son of Tlangkhuma of Biate village. An Arts graduate by education, he joined the church’s ministry for full time engagement as manager of the Bookroom, under the framework of the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram. He contributed some fictional works in Mizo literature. Two of his many short plays were printed and published by the Zoram Writers'
Club in 1981 under the collection named *Drama Pasarih*, a collection of seven plays.

(i) Chhura leh Naa (1981): Saibela has dramatised the most popular folktale of the Mizos, *Sakhming chullo Chhura leh Naa* as the sub-title. This short play was awarded the third prize winner in Mizo Cultural Club Drama Competition, held at Shillong in 1962. The two comic characters, Chhura and Naa were said to have blood relation, may be brothers or cousins. The play highlighted some important adventures and encounters made by the two comedians. Naa was a cunning, but a lazy fellow, whereas Chhura was rather diligent and straight forward man. The play, therefore, relates all those fortunes and misfortunes in the life of Chhura, incorporated with the zealous intervention of Naa in the affairs. There is dialogue but no good plot in the drama.

(ii) Thu a Tawp e Lumam (1981): Another prize-winning play of Saibela was written in 1980. The playwright here clarified that the plot of this drama aims at depicting 'character makes fate'. There are twenty six characters in the play, and Zoduhawma, who latter qualified for the M.Sc. Degree and became an important Officer is the main character in the play. Zoduhawma was a poor boy, who could not afford to obtain good clothes, and meet most expenses
during his school days. He worked hard in his studies though looked down upon by classmates coming from well-to-do family. After sometimes some of his friends had to discontinue their education because they fell into bad habits. By this time Zoduhawma passed M.Sc. and joined Government service. He remembered his friends, especially Rally, who came to seek for his help for survival. Zoduhawma kept up his warm friendship and allotted work to Rally and his son under his department. Rally readily accepted the offer. A short-while after, Rally failed to maintain discipline and acted as carefree lazy authoritarian. Zoduhawma reprimands him for his wayward style of life and then, terminates Rally from his service.

C. Sangzuala (1937-): Full time editor of the Presbyterian Church's monthly Christian magazine *Kritian Tiangau*, Sangzuala is one of the elders of Chaltlang Presbyterian Church in Aizawl. Born on 25 May 1937. Sangzuala passed Bachelor of Divinity examination. His only published drama was included in the *Drama Pasarih* (1981) but the manuscripts was completed on October 26, 1977.

*Mizoram Sande Sikul intan dan leh a than zel dan* (1981): It tells about the origin and development of Sunday School, in Mizoram, that is, from 1894 to 1975. The writer of this play never observed the unity of time, place and
action. The zeal of the missionaries were clearly seen in the play. They believed that this can be the best and most effective way of preaching the Gospel among the Mizos. Such a quick and systematic progress may not be found anywhere except in Mizoram. Starting with two to three pupils in 1894, the Sunday School enrolment reached over one lakh in 1975. The great enthusiasm shown by the people (in fact 43 characters in this drama) of Mizoram was the very foundation of Mizo Sunday School Union, as it really was in the drama. The missionaries and the early church leaders were the characters of the play, with no specific hero or heroine.

Khawlkungi (1927- ); The first and only woman playwright so far, Khawlkungi was born on 14 September 1927, at Aizawl. Khawlkungi wrote a few plays, and some stories but only one play was published in 1981.

(i) Zawlpala Thlan Tiangah (1981): The fictional Christian love story of Khawlkungi was dramatised and printed in 1981. The original script of fiction was later published in 1983 with a slight change in the title called Zawlpala Thlan Tlang. However, the main plot of the story remain the same. The very title suggested the love story of one Mizo folktale - Tualvungi leh Zawlpala. Khawlkungi's heroine Vanlairemi's father was buried in the very hill where the legend suggests Zawlapala's corpse was laid. Hence the title of this play arised.
The story begins with the heroine herself. Vanlalremi looked after her dying father. The father, Upa Liana, knowing that he was dying any moment instructed and consoled his only daughter. He read the Bible, and refused to eat anything. He assured her that God will be with her throughout her life. He added that Remi should maintain her innocence and chastity and asked her not to get married to any man who used to drink wine. Vanlalremi eagerly accepted her father's last words and began to cry when the ailing father passes away. A young drunkard from the village well to do family Lalmuana stepped in, while Remi was quite busy in arranging things in the house. Lalmuana, who was attracted to Remi's beauty found the convenient time to ask Remi's favour and began to embrace and to sleep with her. The bereaved Remi hit him with the nearby iron and escaped to tell the neighbours of the fate of her father and of the evil intention of the young man.

Vanlalremi was all alone after father's death. She was then taken to her maternal uncle Ruala, who was addicted to drinking. Remi was badly treated and life became unbearable in the house. Besides, Ruala proposed that Remi should marry Lalmuana, so that he could get hold of Lalmuana's double barrelled breech-loading gun. Remi vehemently protested, but had no other choice but to flee from her uncle.
With the help of Hmingthangi, who later became as her true friend, Remi was taken to one missionary to Aizawl called Pi Zaii (Miss Katie Hughes). In the lady missionary's house Remi learned stitching, sewing, and all other domestic works including reading and writing under the guidance of the missionary.

Not long after she has adjusted herself with a new life, Vanlalremi met Malsawma, a Mission School teacher and leader of the Boys Scout. With the advice of Pi Zaii, Remi decided to go to Reiek village in search of her maternal uncle Ranga. On the very same day, Malsawma sailed to Reiek but stung by a green ovoviviparous snake, while entering the old farm hut. Remi found that it was Malsawma, who slept in the corner with pain. She therefore looked after him and asked him to stay in her maternal uncle's house for the time being in Reiek. Malsawma assumed the Headmaster Office in Reiek, and he became deeply in love with Remi. Unconsciously, Remi had already developed a strong attraction to Malsawma. When the two lovers exchanged their feelings and deep regards for each other, they developed pure romantic love which led to a secret engagement. In Reiek village there was another young girl Lalkhawthangi who had tried her best shamelessly to win the love of Malsawma. But Malsawma refused to show any favour. Just to
vex Malsawma, she had affairs with Naik Vanthanga and unfortunately she conceived while Vanthanga availed leave in Reiek. Her brother Lahluna blindly accused Malsawma as her partner without ascertaining from Lali. Malsawma won the case in village court, but the Mission authority had to take action against him. However, the suspension from Middle School, Headmaster made him join Army as Indian Commissioned Officer. After the training days were over, he came out to Mizoram as 2nd Lieutenant, availing leave, and married the same lover Remi who had faithfully waited for him. They were blessed with a son and lived a happy married life. They play ends with the climax of their love, when the couple made a function of memorial stone erection on the grave of Remi's father at Zawlpala Thlan tiangah, a particular hillock in Phulpui.

Khawkungi's contribution to the development of Mizo drama should not be overlooked. Her only published play *Zawlpala thian tiangah* (1981) won a good fame. More than twenty of which remain in manuscripts a few of which will be referred to in relevant chapters.

C. Laizawna: Laizawna started his writing career with one play called *Kan tiam tawh si* (1982). It is still the only play by him till the time of writing. He had written and published a good number of short stories and novels.
Kan tiam tawh si (1982): Two lovers, sitting under the bush in a particular hillock outside the village exchange words of love. Overpowered by sex urge, Zova pleaded with Hmuni to yield in there itself. The girl's philosophy of a real love goes to an opposite direction. She confesses that she really loves him but is determined to realize the love only after a proper ceremonious marriage according to the tenets of the Church. She is blessed by the playwright with a rare wisdom. The boy was still studying and her plan for the marriage is laudable; she is ready to wait till Zova graduated.

Zova then reached Aizawl to continue his works in the office in the day and attended college classes in the evening. The lonely lover had contemplated all the time about love and its effect on man. One of his co-worker could recognise that Zova was in love and feeling lonely. And he, along with others, tried to make Zova off his thoughts by teasing and discussing some other topics in a light mood.

The play has double plot. In another village, Puia loved Zeli so much, but Zeli pressed him to abstain from drinking in order to share their mutual love. Puia, with all his might agreed to put off the idea and the habit of drinking. His parents also consistently gave good instruc-
tion not to drink and behave properly in the society and to study well. Putting all those pressures at the back of his mind, Puia decided to win the love of Zeli by abstaining from wine. The lovers in this sub-plot agree to marry after Puia completes his studies. The academic attainment counts in this play; because only a boy with good academic background is expected to shine in the Mizo society of the playwright's world.

In Aizawl, the chowkidar of Zova's department, Rema invites Zova to have a dinner in his house. On that very night Zeli arrived from the village to continue her education in the same College. When Zova and Zeli had their first contact in that house, before any dialogue, both of them were very much impressed by facial and attitudinal considerations. In the soliloquy, it was all cleared that Zova loved the new girl from somewhere and he recollected all his pleadings and promises made to Hmuni. Zeli, in the same way surrendered herself for Zova and she no longer remembered her acceptance to become the wife of Puia in her village. When love at first sight originated in the minds of the two lovers, the fate of their own respective friends become shaky. With the passage of time, Hmuni and Puia did not have any alternative but to rush into the spot of contact, where the disappointing lovers find themselves
to be the right match. Zova and Zeli made convincing refusal for Hmuni and Puia respectively and they decided to get married. With a hasty development, Puia and Hmuni agreed to the same procedure to follow. Respective arrangement was made and the two pairs of lovers undergone marital services in the same place, to be solemnised by the same Pastor. The play ends with the entertainment caused by the unusual comic behaviour of Rema, and their happy friendly association and hasty preparation of party in the house of Rema, in Aizawl.

H.K.R's: The playwright abbreviated his name which remains unknown. His only play Khawchhak Lungpui (Detective drama) appeared in 1984, printed by R.D. Press, Electric Veng, Aizawl. It was a patriotic endeavour on the part of the playwright to try to maintain the lively social life of the Mizos. With the passage of time, the social life of the people underwent drastic change. Western civilisation and eastern civilisation had side effects on the lives of the people. The play severely attacks the introduction and misuse of various drugs and all other evil practices, mainly flowing in from the east.

Sophocles's *Oedipus, the King*, into Mizo, now in manuscript only.

**Diktea Vahvaihna (1986):** The playwright put 'truth is left alone in the street' in the cover page of the book, which is the sub-title of the play. The plot developed from the greed and folly of the contemporary society into a tragic drama. The protagonist Diktea, in the play, disclosed the very picture and temperament of the contemporary society, where truth never prevailed. For a just and righteous man, there was no place in the present society. And the tragic disappearance shows how truth is left alone in the street while the people live in the house, closing and locking their door from inside.

**Laltluangliana Khiangte (1959–):** Another playwright, Laltluangliana Khiangte's drama was written and acted in 1982 at Shillong. The title was *Thupha ka rawn chawi e*. His father Tlanghmingthanga was a teacher and one of the elders of the Presbyterian Church. His grandfather the Rev. Lianghkhaia happened to be the first Mizo historian and the winner of Mizo Academy Award, the first literary prize instituted in Mizoram. Khiangte had written more than ten plays, of which four were published.

**(1) Nu leh pa bum-mahni inbum (1987):** It was published by SCERT. The plot depicts the lives of contemporary
Mizo society, in which parents were often deceived by their children. This play deals with the life of one young girl who spent her life and money luxuriously in the town, neglecting her studies. After sometimes, she found herself to be the most unfortunate girl by conceiving a child. The play ends with the moral tone of the heroine that 'to deceive parents is to deceive self'.

(ii) Faki te chhung (1987): This short play is found in Thungaihnawm-Thalaite tan, a collection of essays and dramas, published by SCERT. The main character Faki was a religious girl in the Christian way. Her friends enjoyed the worldly pleasures with all their boy friends, but Faki abstained from all those meaningless entertainments. Like her friends, her family members were involved in Christmas Eve joy. However, Faki becomes the console of her brother, who met with an accident that night, and all other family members and her endless endeavour led them to a good and religious footsteps. The play, in the end, focusses the joys share by the family and the complete changes of the family set up.

(iii) Thawmmawia (1988): This morality play was written in 1984, but published in 1988 at the Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Lungpho YMA. The conflict of good angel and bad angel in the mind of Thawmmawia during the happy occa-
(iv) Thawmvunga (1990): This short historical play appeared in the Hnam Lungphum, an Annual Magazine 1989-1990 of Mizo Students' Union, Shillong. The hero, Thawmvunga proves himself to be an extraordinary pasaltha, warrior by helping the king against the assault of his enemy counterpart. The heroic intervention of Thawmvunga amidst the confrontation between the two chiefs, Vuttaia and Lalpui-thanga has been surpassed by any bravery act in the history. The play ends with the return of the hero and his subsequent marriage with the princess.

Some more mature plays of Laltluangliana Khiangte is expected to come out in the near future. Such as Zorama, a tragedy written in 1988, Duhawma leh Lalfaki, Chharmawia and Thupha ka chawi, comedies, all written in 1989.

Lalsiama (1931- ): Lalsiama was born at Sailam village. His first drama was staged at Lawngtlai in 1961. That script on Nu Mawl was lost. Five of his short plays were published in two books.

(i) Zoluti an man (1987): It is a historical play about a Mizo chief Bengkhuia who attacked Alexandrapur Tea Estate, killing Winchester and capturing his daughter Mary Winchester. Mary had been kept in Sailam for a year,
but the British Expeditioners took her back. From that story, the Arthington Mission reached the dark Mizoram to preach the Gospel. And his agent set their feet on January 11, 1994, at Aizawl.

(ii) Zonun (1988): It is a collection of four short playlets. The four plays are - Ka ha Jaiga, a short play written in 1962 at Tuipang which depicts the variation of the Mizo social life. The second play - Pastor leh Zurui (1986) deals with the life of a drunkard and the Pastor's invitation to visit at least some congregational services. The drunkard dies when the Pastor revisits him, saying that it was too late. The third play - Mene, Mene Tekel Upharsin, written in 1970 tells how Daniel explained, the dream of the King. The last play - A Setana a zam ta, written in 1970 at Baktawng, is about a rich man's son who decided to follow Jesus, leaving aside all those treasures and pleasures. When the man really dedicated his life to Jesus, his old master, Satan was immediately desperate and was defeated by the power of God.

R. Lalthmawia: Lalthmawia has written his only play Buannel Farm in 1987, which was published in the same year. The story goes like this. The hero Hminga was a mere student with no special qualities, but a diligent boy. He would do any work to earn his living. Whenever
he was on holiday, he tried his level best to earn something. With the passage of time, he got a master's degree. He availed department loan for his own industry named Buannel Farm, which was quite productive after sometime. The Farm's products were popular and distributed over the whole country. A special award for successful industry had been awarded to Hminga, and the thanksgiving celebration closes the play. This is a propaganda play and the playwright depicts the dignity of labour in the life and works of the hero.

Lalengmawia Ralte (1947- ): Lalengmawia was born at Biate village. He was popularly recognised as novelist, but two of his published plays will be mentioned in this context.

(i) Nausen Vang (1988): It highlights some events on the night when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The Shepherds and the three Wise men from the east sought for the new born king in the King Herod's palace. Hence, the King Herod tried his best to find out the new born king, so that he could ironically greet him in his own ways. The tragic result was, each male-born child below two years was all killed because of that very new born child called Jesus.

(ii) Khawiah nge (1988): Published together with Nausen Vang in a book named Christmas Drama. This play
Khawiah nge traces the life and endeavour of the fourth wise man from the east. Due to his late arrival, all his efforts were frustrated.

Lalengmawia had written some more plays, but those are still in manuscripts.

B. Thanhranga: This playwright has written only one play, Harh Rawh, published in 1989, with its sub-title as 'Vengtu Drama'. The playwright depicts the contemporary society and seeks to inject his patriotic fervour; so that his country-men are aware of assimilation of any kind. The play shows that the natives have been pushed to oblivion that if they do not wake up, all developmental and business activities would be controlled by others. However, with the exhortation and deeds of the two characters Hera and Hmufiaha the natives undertook a giant step for the production of indigenous goods, which ushered as industrial revolution.

Liansailova (1949- ): Another interesting playwright Liansailova produced his first collected plays in 1989. He is a son of Mr Vana of Mission Vengthlang, now working as Librarian after passing his graduation in Arts. His book Lawm a kim (1989) consisted of four plays.

(i) Lawm a kim (1989) is a comedy, and was written in early 1989. A character named Rama came to Aizawl in search of his father, after the death of his mother. With the advice of another man from a village, Rama contacted one prominent citizen, Rina, and stayed in his house. Without openly announcing his real purpose, Rama willingly tackled every work ahead of him. He developed a close intimacy with the daughter of Rina named Makhumi. Makhumi, however, could not treat Rama as a mere male servant in the house. She was quite impressed by Rama and his behaviour. She, therefore, began to act like a lover, speaking in a softer manner and meaningful ways. Rama was reluctant to respond as it should be, for fear of missing his main purpose. As the investigation had turned out to be in a most unexpected way, Rina realised that he was the real father of Rama, but married for the second time in Aizawl. Such a shocking news was unbearable for Makhumi, who already fallen in love with Rama. It was, nevertheless disclosed that Makhumi was the adopted daughter in the family, and
the parents allowed to continue their love as usual to make themselves husband and wife. The wedding was organized and the new family lived happily.

(ii) Duaia a duai bik lo (1989): A character, an illiterate man, could not really understand the wordings of a song. Later, he was convinced that he had to learn reading and writing. After mastering the basic thing for reading and writing, he could read the book and knows the correct composition of words. Duaia, therefore, reads one song from the song-book and he understands the content correctly. He is so surprised and happy to know that he is no longer an ignoramus.

(iii) Krismas Drama (1989): In this play, the performance was based on the events of Bethlehem, when Christ Jesus was born. The new born baby of Mary was greeted by the humble Shepherds and the three Wise men of the east.

(iv) Tlai ngailo Pathian (1989): In this play, the two lovers Liana and Mawii were prepared to get married. Meanwhile, the whole plan was shattered by the intervention of Rovi, who accused the groom to be Liana as an agent of her pregnancy. This made the parents of Mawii quite angry enough to cancel the proposal. But the confession of Bela to the effect that he was the cause of pregnancy
of Rovi solved the problem. Then, the parents change their mind and allow the lovers Liana and Mawii to unite.

Liansailova had written some more plays. Amongst which, Zovi te chhung was the prize winning drama, circulated in cyclostyled copies.

I have shown in the first chapter, the development of only one literary genre, namely, Mizo drama. I believe the account will help other scholars to see what I sought to know in a correct perspective. But for the nature of the plays, I refer the esteemed readers to Appendix IV in which I have made an effort to list as well as to classify the plays in the language.