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The Making of the Zo:
The Chin of Burma and the Lushai and Kuki
of India through Colonial and Local
Narratives

1826 – 1917 and 1947 – 1988

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Declaration for the PhD thesis

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changed my perspective and made me realize the shortcomings of our discipline. His work was and is invaluable for me. In fact, I have bought and given his books to other scholars because I very much believe in what Harry has argued and the way in which he studies history. His work is central to my thinking and my own approaches. After I read several of his articles and books, I invited him to be a keynote speaker at a conference at SOAS. Over several months and now years of correspondence, we have become friends. I am immensely grateful for his friendship, kindness, openness and generosity. He and his work will always be central to my own work.

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Abstract

This dissertation illustrates the process of how the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas were reinvented into the Chin of Burma and the Lushai and Kuki of India during the British colonial period and in its aftermath after Independence in 1947/1948. Company officials, relying on informants, provided the first written accounts that justified delineation of the Zo mountains and the creation of the Chin, the Lushai and the Kuki.

Colonial civilization projects fostered the Zo to accept colonial dominance by providing opportunities to participate in the colonial state. Christian missionaries brought modernity in the form of literacy. After the Zo learned to read and also write, they began participating in their own reinvention and identity-making.

There were numerous factors that necessitated this construction and identity-making. The topography of the Northern Arakan Yomas makes them difficult to govern. The relative height and distance across the Northern Arakan Yomas prompted administrators to slice them up into manageable units. It is argued that this delineation, initially drawn for the ease of administration, was justified by the British using arguments about ethnicity, culture, and history. They, however, had fostered the re-invention of the past and with it the ethnicity and history of the Zo.

American Baptist and Welsh Presbyterian missions took charge of the western and eastern of the Northern Arakan, respectively. Each group of missionaries determined which Zo language to transliterate creating elite dialects, and thus elite, among the Zo. The reading elite in Asia, America and in Europe began to demand stories, anecdotes and articles about the Zo. Hence, writers and editors relying on very little information, made sweeping generalizations about the new British subjects in the hills.

It is further argued that the Zo eventually began participating in colonial endeavours through working with the British in the governing of the hills, by fighting for the Allied Forces in both World Wars and by serving the Government as police officers in the plains. They eventually began to

reinvent their own histories in order to gain political agency on the world stage as well as to create elite groups among the Zo.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the very first Zo histories, authored by Vumson,¹ was published in 1986.² His aim was to illustrate the shared ancestry, history and culture of the Zo highlanders before annexation of the Chin-Lushai Hills by the British in 1890. He illustrated the factual history of the Zo as a nation³ rather than a collection of unrelated clan-based groups. It was his goal for the Zo to unite rather than fight one another. Eastern Northeast India as well as Northwest Burma is fraught with Zo tribal politics. He hoped that his text would put an end to the in-fighting. Therefore, Vumson focused on a comprehensive history of all of the Zo. He consulted Burma experts such as Gordon Luce and Frederick Kris Lehman⁴ as well as Zo scholars such as Khup Za Go, Siam Kima, Lalliana Mualchin, and Thangzadal on the oral histories of the Zo in all three nation-states of Burma, India and Bangladesh. *Zo History* was a pioneering text which utilized both foreign and local sources and decidedly avoided taking a clan, nation-state or religious perspective.

Vumson argued that the Zo highlanders were wrongly divided by ‘imaginary’ lines drawn on maps creating artificial borders for the ease of British colonial administration. He further argued that these borders caused decades of political and socio-cultural divisions among the Zo. Vumson’s text sparked re-unification movements in India and in Burma. Over time, other Zo histories, written by Zo as well as by western scholars, emerged. Most of these were clan-based, focused on a specific nation-state or took on a distinctly religious tone whether from a Christian perspective or even that a certain group of Zo highlanders are a lost tribe of Israel. Some Zo scholars ignored other Zo groups implying that they have no relation nor shared history with them. Furthermore, some Zo political groups used their histories

¹ Vumson was also known as Vumson Suantak.

² Vumson, (1986). *Zo History: With an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion, and their status as an ethnic minority in India, Burma and Bangladesh*. Published by Author, Aizawl: Mizoram,

³ A ‘nation’ is a territorial community of nativity. It is a form of kinship which is tied to a specific territory and is further defined by a relatively uniform culture. Taken from Steven Grosby’s *Nationalism*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, pg. 7.

⁴ Frederick Kris Lehman also publishes under his Burmese name, Chit Hlaing.

to purport a specific agenda. These political agendas included political independence, recognition as indigenous people, Separatism, belongingness to Israel or deserving of their own state within a given nation-state. Because of different political agendas, locations in different nation-states, lack of access to archival materials, and religious motivations, most Zo histories are contradictory to one another. Moreover, the Zo did not have a writing system until the arrival of missionaries. Hence, Zo history is not only difficult to research but is easily constructed as well. Furthermore, numerous revisionist histories have also been written.

REASON FOR THE STUDY

Given all the contradictory and revisionist histories, a wide-ranging study of the colonial records of the Indian, Burmese and British archives is necessary. For many scholars of the Zo, comprehensive archival access was not possible. Vumson, for example, was exiled from Burma and thus did not have access to its National Archives. Some scholars did not have access to Northeast India due to the Inner-Line Permit which restricted entry into the Manipur and Mizoram. Many scholars in Manipur and Mizoram did not have access to the Burmese or the British archives because of visa issues. Due to the lack of access, most scholars relied on secondary sources. Thus, many Zo histories did not analyse primary sources, instead adopted the perspective of secondary sources. These studies, therefore, lack proper academic rigour. Moreover, many Zo histories were written by non-academics. Thus, theoretical concepts, comparative histories and focus on the existing literature tended to be inadequate. Numerous other Zo histories were written by theologians and politicians and thus, lack impartiality.

This study utilizes the National Archive of Myanmar, British archives, the compiled archival material of the Tribal Research Institute of Mizoram, archival material from the Tribal Research Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the National Archives of Thailand and the National Archives of Japan. Furthermore, oral histories of Zo clans now in Burma and in India, as well as in diaspora, are also utilized. No previous study contains all the material from these mentioned archives and oral sources. Furthermore, this study

does not have either a political or religious agenda; it is an objective, wide-ranging history conducted under the supervision of a history scholar, Michael W. Charney. In this way, this dissertation provides a broader, more academically rigorous perspective than the studies carried-out previously.

Before annexation of the Northern Arakan Yomas, the Zo were deemed savage, primitive, backwards and uncivilized. By implication, they were petty and insignificant; their feuds were dismissed as raiding parties into areas occupied by others or into the plains for food supplies, guns, slaves and the taking of heads for their religious beliefs. Colonial administrators did not, comprehensively, fathom the Zo highlanders and their history. However, while some of the colonial knowledge appears credible; much more is shallow, missing nuanced information of the daily lives of Zo highlanders. Moreover, histories written by colonials also dismissed possible earlier histories. Indrani Chatterjee argues that the Zo have a rich monastic past where relationships and cooperation between highlanders and lowlanders were standard.

Historical evidence further points to the fact that the Northern Arakan Yomas were dynamic with travelers, traders, missionaries and intelligence seekers who moved through the hills before the British colonial era. However much of the information only covers the region wherein which the colonial, missionary, or later the anthropologist was posted or carried-out their study. Others over-generalize aspects of the Zo highlanders assuming, for example, that all highlanders of South and Southeast Asia are more similar to each other than to their lowland counterparts. Without additional studies, including this one, it is difficult to ascertain the level of reliability of earlier work. Therefore, given the precarious political situations of all the Zo highlanders during the colonial era as well as in present day, the field of knowledge has not been expanded enough for anyone to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Zo highlanders and their histories.

EXISTING LITERATURE

Much information on the Zo highlanders is largely based on historical knowledge provided either by colonials or through the oral histories of the

Zo. Many scholars, including the Zo, relied heavily on colonial accounts to supplement their work. Current ethnographies of the Zo in the Chin Hills are non-existent due to the perilous political situation in Burma. The political situation of Mizoram (formerly the Lushai Hills) was also, until recently, unstable and Manipur continues to experience much political turmoil. Still, the Zo highlanders of the eastern side of the Northern Arakan Yomas have been studied more extensively due to marginally better access for outsiders and better education opportunities for the Zo on the inside, in Mizoram as well as in other states in Northeast India as well as larger cities such as New Delhi, Calcutta, and Bombay.

The body of literature addressing the history of the Zo is sketchy. Most studies deal with the Zo from the perspective of either nation-state of Burma or of India.⁵ These tend to give limited information on the highlanders, if at all. For instance, John Cady's epic, *History of Modern Burma*, makes no mention of the highlanders on the periphery.⁶ Arthur Phayre's *History of Burma* mentions the hill tribes in terms of a possible origin in Tibet, but does not detail the history of relations between the Burmese and the Zo.⁷ Dorothy Woodman's colonial administrative history, *The Making of Burma* deals with the Chin of Burma, but she does so in only one of her chapters.⁸ The earliest comprehensive work on the Chin of Burma is Charles Crosthwaite's *The Pacification of Burma*⁹ in which he attends to the relations between the Chin and the Burmese, but does not include the Lushai on the India side. Recent histories of Burma such as Michael Charney's, *The Modern History of Burma*¹⁰ and Mynt-U Thant's *Rivers of Lost Footsteps*¹¹ as well as the *The*

⁵ Histories of Bangladesh address the Zo in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, read for Instance: van Schendel, W. (2009). *A History of Bangladesh*, Cambridge Press: Cambridge.

⁶ Cady, J. F. (1958). *A History of Modern Burma*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca: New York.

⁷ Phayre, A.P. (1883). *History of Burma: From the Earliest Time to the end of the First War with British India*, (Reprint Orchid Press 1998): Bangkok.

⁸ Woodman, D. (1962). *The Making of Burma*, The Cresset Press: London, pages 380-422.

⁹ Crosthwaite, C.H.T. (1912). *The Pacification of Burma*. Edward Arnold: London, pg. 287-303.

¹⁰ Charney, M. W. (2009). *A History of Modern Burma*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: UK.

Making of Modern of Burma,¹² also do not attend to the ethnic minorities in the current Union of Burma.

There are a handful of colonial accounts that have become standard texts for the study of the Zo, both in Burma and in India. Sir Robert Reid's colonial history *The Lushai Hills on the frontier areas bordering on Assam* is a standard text that details the administrative history for the years after the Chin-Lushai annexation of 1890.¹³ Thomas Lewin's *A Fly on the Wheel: How I helped to govern India*, is a personal account of an officer who was posted among the Lushai for several years and illustrates the administrative history and relations between the British and the Zo highlanders in the Lushai Hills.¹⁴ Major Anthony Gilchrist McCall's *Lushai Chrysalis*¹⁵ addresses the administrative history of the Lushai Hills with the expressed purpose of educating other governments dealing with the "backward people" of British-India.¹⁶ McCall also attends to the pre-colonial history of the Lushai Hills, but is unable to make any substantive claims. All three histories focus on the Lushai Hills, effectively ignoring the Zo of the Chin Hills in Burma. Furthermore, these texts only briefly entertain the history of the Zo before British colonial rule.

The Lushai were eventually given their own state under the Union of India, now called Mizoram.¹⁷ The Zo of the Lushai Hills moved into Independence under a different set of political circumstances from the Zo in the Chin Hills of Burma. While they did not obtain the self-determination rights some had campaigned for, they were given access to India's educational institutions; some were established in the Mizoram. Thus, Verghese and Thanzawna's two

¹¹ Thant Myint-U (2006). *Rivers of Lost Footsteps*, Farrer, Strauss, and Giroux: New York.

¹² Thant Myint-U (2002). *The Making of Modern Burma*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

¹³ Robert, R. Sir (1942). *The Lushai Hills: Culled from History of the Frontier Areas bordering on Assam from 1883-1942*. Firma, KLM, Private, Ltd., Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram.

¹⁴ Lewin, T.H. (1912). *A Fly on the Wheel or How I Helped to Govern India*. Firma, KLM, Private, Ltd., Aizawl: Mizoram.

¹⁵ McCall, A.G. (1949). *Lushai Chrysalis*, Firma KLM, Private, Ltd., Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram.

¹⁶ McCall, A.G. (1949). *Lushai Chrysalis*, Firma KLM, Private, Ltd., Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 7.

¹⁷ Mizoram became the 23rd State of India in 1971.

volume texts on the *History of the Mizo*¹⁸ details the history of the Zo from the colonial era to present day and gives a comprehensive history, but very little about the Zo on the Burma side is included. Other histories of Mizoram have the same tendencies, referring to the Zo in Burma only in brief historical sketches of migration or when referring to the colonial border.

More recent academic work by the Zo such as Pum Khan Pau's historical work on the British administration of the Chin in Burma is invaluable for the colonial administrative history of the Zo highlanders on the Burma side.¹⁹ Pau's treatment of colonial history is comprehensive, detailed and clearly presented. He also, however, relied on colonial records to explain administrative strategies of the British. Furthermore, he only attends to the Zo highlanders on the Burma side.. L. Lam Khan Piang's anthropological work on Zo identity focuses on all the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas including Burma and those in other Northeast Indian states such as Manipur and Meghalaya.²⁰ His well-argued work gives insight into the colonial legacy of identity construction purely from the perspective of the Zo. This is not a historical study, albeit, he refers to history but only in terms of illustrating the political borders drawn by colonials as well as their misunderstanding of Zo society. Soong Chul Ro's work on the Zo, referred to as the Kuki-Chin, does provide historical context but only during the colonial era. Joy Pachau's very recent anthropological study of the Zo in Mizoram completely ignores the Zo in Burma, Manipur and elsewhere. In fact, her fieldwork was limited to the city of Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram and thus, does not encompass all of the Zo, rather a small group of urban Zo. Although not explicitly stated, she implies that the Zo of Mizoram do not share kindred relationships with other Zo in Burma, India and even in the state of Mizoram. In this way it is very similar to colonial ethnographies which created different groups of people, the Chin, the Lushai and the Kuki. Either way, none of these recent works have been published, however. Thus, they are not widely available to

¹⁸ Verghese, C.G. and Thanzawna, R.L. (1997) *A History of the Mizos, Volumes I and II*. Vikas Publishing House, Kay Kay Printers, Delhi: India.

¹⁹ Pum Khan Pau (2006). *The Chin and the British 1835-1935*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of History North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong.

²⁰ Piang, L. Lam Khan (2005) *Kinship, Territory and Politic: Identity Formation among Zo People*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi: India

learn from or critique by most scholars of the Zo, both in history and in anthropology as well as other disciplines.²¹

Missionary publications such as J. Merion Lloyd's *History of the Church in Mizoram*²² and Robert G. Johnson's *History of the American Baptist Chin Mission*²³ not only provide valuable information on the activities of early missionaries in the Chin and the Lushai Hills, but also throw some light on the socio-economic history of the Zo. However, these texts are confined to either the Chin or the Lushai Hills depending on which side of the border missionaries were posted. Recent theological scholars include Lian Hmung Sakhong who produced a text dealing with the history of the Chin in Burma with a specific focus on the religious 'transformation' of the Haka, a clan in the central Chin Hills, emphasizing religion, politics, and identity.²⁴ Sakhong does include the Zo on the India side but only in the context of the administrative decisions exercised during the colonial period and on the issue of nomenclatures as they relate to origin myths. Many of his arguments are political in nature including that 'Chin' is the correct nomenclature and ought to be used by all of the Zo. Theologian Manghosat Kipgen's *Christianity and Mizo Culture* is another contemporary text addressing aspects of Zo highlander history.²⁵ Like Sakhong's work, however, this text is confined to one or the other nation-state and does not encompass all of the Zo highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas. Still these works illuminate certain aspects of Zo highland history, including the construction of identities during the colonial era and thereafter.

Only a few texts deal with the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas' history across the borders of Burma, India and Bangladesh. T. Gougin's *Zomi*

²¹ I became aware of these dissertations through Zo organization websites or personal networks.

²² Lloyd, J. M. (1991). *History of the Church in Mizoram (Harvest in the Hills)*. Synod Publication Board, Aizawl: Mizoram.

²³ Johnson, R. (1986). *History of the American Baptist Chin Mission*, Vol. I and II. Published by the Author, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: USA.

²⁴ Sakhong, L. (2000). *Religion and Politics among the Chin People in Burma (1896-1949)*. Department of Theology, Uppsala University, Baptist Union of Sweden, Stockholm: Sweden.

²⁵ Kipgen, M. (1996). *Christianity and Mizo Culture: The Encounter between Christianity and Zo Culture in Mizoram*. Mizo Theological Conference, Aizawl: Mizoram.

History is a valuable history written from the perspective of a Zo highlander. It, however, dwells on the nationalistic agenda of some Zo, advocating eventual 'reunification of Zoland' while at the same time purposely excluding entire groups of Zo.²⁶ It also gives weight to colonial records and less so oral histories.

The only text that fully encompasses all of the Zo in India, Burma and Bangladesh, is Vumson's *Zo History*.²⁷ His history is from the perspective of the Zo highlanders across two thousand years with the colonial era being one rather short phase. His ethno-nationalist history of the Zo details the pre-colonial era to the modern period of all the Zo highlanders. Vumson was a self-taught historian. His narrative is compelling but does not employ standard methods of referencing. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the sources of his assertions; there are not references to which to turn. Furthermore, he acknowledges that some of his Zo "friends" did not agree with every point of his book yet does not specify which "friends" and whether they were scholars or laymen. Also, he does not clarify which points are contested by these "friends."²⁸ Moreover, he freely explains that he did not have enough information on the Southern Zo in Burma, thus, he does not address them comprehensively.

Finally, among anthropological works carried-out by trained western scholars, H. N. C. Stevenson's *The Economics of the Central Chin Tribes*²⁹ and Frederic Kris Lehman's *The Structure of Chin Society*³⁰ remain standard texts for the Zo highlanders on the Burma side. Lehman (Chit Hlaing) carried-out the first, purely anthropological, study in the 1950s. This

²⁶ Gougin, T. (1984). *History of the Zomi*. Published by the Author at Zomi Press, Manipur: India., pg. 4-5, 11-12, 59, 72.

²⁷ Vumson (1986). *Zo History: With an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion, and their status as an ethnic minority in India, Burma and Bangladesh*. Published by the Author, Aizawl: Mizoram.

²⁸ Vumson (1986). *Zo History: With an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion, and their status as an ethnic minority in India, Burma and Bangladesh*. Published by Author, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 334.

²⁹ Stevenson, H.N.C. (1944). *The Economics of the Central Chin Tribes*. The Times of India Press, Bombay: India.

³⁰ Lehman, F.K. (1963). *The Structure of Chin Society: A Tribal People of Burma Adapted to Non-Western Civilization*. Firma, KLM Private, Ltd, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram.

comprehensive work is a major contribution to the knowledge of the Zo on the Burma side. His scientific treatment of 'Chin' society and its elaborate explanation of political, social and kinship aspects may easily be applied to certain aspect of the societies on the other sides of the borders, in India as well. Although Lehman's fieldwork was conducted in the 1950s, the colonial legacy, in terms of the school of thought founded during the colonial era is evident in many of his arguments. Other scholars of the colonial period such as, again, Edmund Leach who focused on the Kachin, Gordon Luce a talented linguist and colonial scholar of Burma and H.N.C. Stevenson one of the last colonial administrators to Burma clearly influenced Lehman's work on the Zo in Burma. One area where this is most evident his focus on Leach, Stevenson, and Luce's arguments, all of whom looked toward the Chin within the context of Burma, not India. is in his focus on nomenclature, a theme central to this project and an issue pervasive in any study of the Zo. Still, the contribution that Lehman and his predecessors made to the study of at least one group of the Zo highlanders (Chin) is invaluable.

Early commissioned officials gathering intelligence on behalf of the Company provide the first information on the Zo; much of which was through informants, although not always explicitly stated. Some information on the Zo derived from informants is actually implied as being first-hand knowledge of the colonial. These colonial accounts, then, offer a glimpse into colonial thought or the *Zeitgeist* of the era. Company men were concerned with colonial administration and possible expansion. But, while it is often argued that they were in the process of "Orientalizing" and of "othering," they also acted in ways the era and their positions dictated. They were concerned with information of military relevance which was generally collected with relative haste.

The fact that most relied on informants is central in that it supports that there was a colonial school of thought still pervasive today and found among contemporary scholars. Reliance on informants was often the only way to obtain any kind of information about Zo highlanders. The hills were too dangerous an area to explore; at times environmental conditions such as the

rainy seasons resulting in floods and mudslides prevented safe travel.³¹ Francis Buchanan,³² in an attempt to explore areas of the Northern Arakan Yomas, learned that no one was willing to take him up to ‘Lushai Hills,’ even by boat. Besides environmental factors, the area was also in political turmoil. There were issues with the Joomea Muggs³³ of Arakan who had been invaded by the army of Ava causing conflict and insurgencies, for example.³⁴ Thus his, as well as other colonials’, only option was to rely on informants to, “content [themselves] with hearsay....”³⁵ Furthermore, many of these terms derived from informants were derogatory unbeknownst to the intelligence gatherers. Thus, informants shaped later perceptions.

Like Buchanan, many officials were skilled scientists. They, and especially Buchanan was able to provide information about the flora and fauna, geography, including topography, and linguistics, and the possible modes of warfare practiced by the people he observed.³⁶ He also provided information on the local ‘political climate.’ His expeditions took place before the Zo were administratively divided; therefore, he reports the existence of numerous ‘tribes,’ villages, and even kingdoms in the Northern Yomas. Major Michael Symes, also a commissioned officer to the Company, eloquently details his time on an Embassy to Ava.³⁷ His accounts illustrate the *Zeitgeist* of the

³¹ van Schendel, W. (1992). *Francis Buchanan in Southeast Bengal (1798): His Journey to Chittagong, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Noakhali and Comilla*. University Press Limited, Dhaka: Bangladesh, pg. xiv.

³² Francis Buchanan is also known as Francis Hamilton. To avoid confusion, he is referred to by the former in this dissertation.

³³ Jumma Muggs is a Bengali word and means, “people without a caste.” They were often refugees around the area of Chittagong. The term is contemptuous and pejorative.

³⁴ Hamilton, F. (1825). “Dr. Hamilton’s Account of the Frontier between Southern Part of Bengal and the Kingdom of Ava,” *The Edinburgh Journal of Science exhibiting a View of the Progress of Discovery*, (edited by David Brewster). William Blackwood: Edinburgh, Vol. I:III, April-October MDCCCXXV, pg. 203-210.

³⁵ van Schendel, W. (1992). *Francis Buchanan in Southeast Bengal (1798): His Journey to Chittagong, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Noakhali and Comilla*. University Press Limited, Dhaka: Bangladesh, pg. xv.

³⁶ It is later argued that linguistics was a key component in the construction process of Chin and Lushai, however, this does not negate the fact that Buchanan was versed in this discipline.

³⁷ Symes, M. (1800) *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava: Sent by the Governor-General of India in the Year 1795*. SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research, U. of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, Vol. 4, Issue 1, Spring 2006.

time. Like Buchanan, Symes refers to numerous groups of people (tribes) in the Northern Arakan Yomas including the Zo.

Colonel Robert Boileau Pemberton and his work on the Northeastern frontier of Bengal is the first comprehensive account of the area now known as Northeast India.³⁸ Pemberton based recommendations about the Zo on the works of earlier colonials, Chinese historians, Italian Missionaries, historians of Hindustan and his own assessments. His recommendations and eventual map is the first indicator of the construction by colonial officials of the Zo into two distinct groups of 'Chin' and of 'Lushai,' and later the Old and New Kuki.³⁹ Pemberton argues that this delineation is based on the historical records linking the Chin to the Burmans in ancient time.⁴⁰ He also drew a line in the north of the Lushai Hills separating it from Manipur. The Manipur delineation, also, causes much debate and is still contested in present day.⁴¹ Still, his *Report on the Eastern Frontier of British-India*⁴² is a standard text on the history of Northeast India.

Alexander Mackenzie's work on the Northeast, some years later, is also a standard source for scholars occupied with the administrative history of Northeast India.⁴³ Mackenzie based much of his recommendations on the earlier writings of Pemberton. In fact, it was Mackenzie, the then Chief Commissioner of Burma, who single-handedly decided to ignore the recommendation of the Chin-Lushai Conference of 1892 to put the Northern Arakan Yomas into a single administration. He, in a telegraph, declared that the Chin Hills were to remain under Burma and not be merged with the

³⁸ Pemberton, R.B. (1835) *Report on the eastern frontier of British India with Appendix and maps*. IOR/V/27/64/160, India office Records, British Library, London: UK.

³⁹ Pemberton, R.B. (1835) *Map of the eastern frontier of British-India, with adjacent countries to Yunan in China*, W380, Map, British Library, London: UK.

⁴⁰ Pemberton, R.B. (1835) *Report on the eastern frontier of British India with Appendix and maps*. IOR/V/27/64/160, India office Records, British Library, London: UK, pg. 120-122.

⁴¹ <http://zougam.wordpress.com/2007/08/03/the-great-pemberton-divide> (last visited November 2011).

⁴² Pemberton, R.B. (1835) *Report on the eastern frontier of British India with Appendix and maps*. IOR/V/27/64/160, India office Records, British Library, London: UK.

⁴³ Mackenzie, A. (1884). *The North-East Frontier of India*. (Reprinted 2007, Mittal Publication, New Delhi: India).

Assam administration. Apparently, he was in agreement with Pemberton's 1835 report that the Chin 'belong' to Burma because of their tributary history.

Other colonial works include, but are not limited to, Thomas Abercrombie Trant's, *Two Years in Ava*,⁴⁴ Bertram Carey and Henry Newman Tuck's *History of the Chin Hills*,⁴⁵ Neville Edward Parry's *Lushai Customs*,⁴⁶ and Thomas Lewin's, *A Fly on a Wheel or How I helped Govern India*.⁴⁷ All of these works reveal the colonial perspective during their given time periods. Most significantly, however, these works illustrate the making of the Zo into the Chin, the Lushai and the Kuki among whom the British Government men were posted during the colonial era. They are the founders of the school of thought that separated the Zo highlanders into major groups, the Chin, the Lushai and the Kuki. Finally, their perspectives are still evident today. Some contemporary Zo scholars are in the process of attempting to reclaim their own histories. Many of these refer to the colonial accounts to prove a shared history.⁴⁸ Some argue that colonial identities were wrongly assigned and contest the colonial borders.⁴⁹ Others claim, however, that their nomenclature was not assigned but existed "since immemorial" arguing that the colonials did not construct these terms or that they were derived from informants, although there is an abundance of evidence that colonials were aware that the Zo did not use these terms for themselves. In this way, claiming that these nomenclatures existed 'since time immemorial' reveals, perhaps, a political or other agendas.

⁴⁴ Trant, T.A. (1827) *Two Years in Ava From May 1824, to May 1826*. (Reprint 2006, Adamant Media Corporation, London).

⁴⁵ Carey, B.S. and Tuck, H.N. (1896) *The Chin Hills: A History of the People, our dealings with them, their Customs and Manners, and a Gazetteer of their Country*, Vol. I. Firma, KLM Private, Ltd., Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram.

⁴⁶ Parry, N.E. (1928). *A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*. Firma KLM, Private, Ltd., Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram.

⁴⁷ Lewin, T.H. (1912). *A Fly on the Wheel or How I Helped to Govern India*. Firma, KLM, Private, Ltd., Aizawl: Mizoram.

⁴⁸ Smith, M. (1999). *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*. The University Press: Dhaka, pg. 220, 266, 279. The author mentions the Zomi National Front, in insurgent group in Northeast India and in Burma as being a 'Chin' organization. The crux of their existence is that they are Zo people who were wrongly divided during the colonial era.

⁴⁹ Pum Khan Pau (2000). "The Sakte Paramouncy in Northern Chin Hills." In *Chin History, Culture and Identity*, ed. K. Robin, Dominant Publishers and Distributors: New Delhi, pg. 128-148.

CONTRIBUTION

The present work traces the historical process of construction and identity-making of three groups of highlanders: the Chin; the Lushai; and the Kuki. It is argued that these were created by and because of the border drawn in 1834 through the Northern Arakan Yomas.⁵⁰ This is the first historical cross-border study of its magnitude. It utilizes archival as well as oral history materials to provide a comprehensive understanding of Zo history. Previous studies were limited by only attending to one side of the colonial borders, Mizoram, Manipur or Burma creating a skewed perception of Zo history. Moreover, most studies focused on the political, administrative, or the religious impact of the border. This study also addresses the above but also examines the lasting impact of division on the making of the Zo in modern day.

This study critiques as well as analyses the reports, accounts, ethnographies, and histories studied for this dissertation. For instance, the role of informants, the character of the authors, the political climate, as well as the agendas of missionaries are addressed and contextualized. Furthermore, contemporary Zo histories are addressed as well. Their political agendas are exposed and flawed perspectives are highlighted. Finally, this is the first study conducted with both an insider as well as an outsider perspective. That is to say, this author is both of Zo and European descent trained in American and British universities to approach history with academic rigor and objectivity. Thus, it is argued that the perspective in this dissertation is unique in that both sides of the colonial experience are drawn upon and analyzed.

SCOPE OF THESIS

Only the Northern Arakan Yomas are addressed in this dissertation. The Zo also dwell in the Southern Arakan Yomas in Burma as well as other parts of Northeast India. These, however, are not addressed. The colonial borders between the Chin and the Lushai Hills as well as Manipur are of focus. It is

⁵⁰ Pemberton, R.B. (1835) *Report on the eastern frontier of British India with Appendix and maps*. IOR/V/27/64/160, India office Records, British Library, London: UK, pg. 120.

argued that these borders, in particular, fostered the making of the Zo into the Chin, the Lushai and the Kuki.

Only the first chapter of this dissertation addresses the pre-colonial era of the Northern Arakan Yomas. The following four chapters deal with the colonial history as well touch upon the period of Independence and its aftermath. The period after Independence, however, is only nominally addressed. Only two of the many Zo movements for autonomy from both governments are illustrated. Numerous other political groups exist. Listing them as well as providing sufficient critique is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

In terms of source material, researching the Zo is challenging. When the British left India at Independence, they only brought back records that they assumed would be relevant for future scholars. For this reason many records were left behind or were lost. That is to say, primary source material on the Zo is scanty, at best. The Northern Arakan Yomas were annexed in 1890, thus much of the information before this era is based on the accounts of informants. These accounts are analysed and it is argued that they influenced perceptions of the Zo. In short, early accounts by informants led the way to the making of the Zo into the Chin, the Lushai and the Kuki.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Mapping

Numerous theories are drawn upon to understand the process of categorizing and construction. For one, all over the colonial project mapping was essential. Maps are more than a geographical rendering of 'governable' space; they are imbued with projections of power and render all elements, including groups of people, into governable units in the imaginary of its creators. For the East India Company, territorial knowledge was fundamental to understand its position on the globe, not only in terms of actual location, but also in the perceived imagery of the Empire. As Matthew Edney makes clear, "Imperialism and mapmaking intersect in the most basic manner."⁵¹ A map

⁵¹ Edney, M.E. (1997) *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India 1765-1843*. University of Chicago Press: London, pg. 1.

tells a story, in this case of the slow and deliberate conquest of south and Southeast Asia.⁵² The colonial map is an illustration of that conquest.

Mapping is a difficult endeavor.⁵³ First, a terrain has to be transformed from a massive three-dimensional space and rendered into two dimensions, on a scale fit for perusal. The map has to track and trace the conquerors as they both were and are in relation to the conquered. A map is more than a stagnant rendition, it infers power and dominance. The map is the evidence and visual testimony of a sovereign's power—of its dynamic actual *conquering*. Edney, about British-India, quotes Arthur Innes, "...the purpose of [the map is] 'to set before the reader the story of the steps by which India came gradually to be painted red on the map.'"⁵⁴ Along with the geography, the mountains, rivers, lakes and streams of the map, the inhabitants also have to be 'painted' red. They are 'painted' red only after being properly organized and depicted in categories. They are also assigned very specific spaces on the map.

A territory can only be mapped once it has been conquered, explored, sufficiently dominated and the space comes to reflect a European perspective. Conquers decide and impose their own perspectives onto the map, the landscape, the flora and fauna and of course the inhabitants. However, this knowledge is incomplete. The reality 'on the ground' is much more nuanced than the map implies. Adam Scott Reid openly admits to creating two groups of people, the Chin and the Lushai, on either side of the early administrative border to avoid confusion, to simplify and to 'see' the map in terms of colonial expansion.⁵⁵

⁵² Matthew Edney cites Emmerson who argues that before the end of WWII, the public sphere was unaware of a region defined as 'Southeast Asia' which at that time was coherent enough of a region to warrant its own academic discipline IN: Edney, M.E. (1997) *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India 1765-1843*. University of Chicago Press: London, pg. 3.

⁵³ Scott, J. C. (2009) *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale University Press: New Haven & London, pg. 1.

⁵⁴ Innes, A.D. (1902) *A Short History of British India*, Inter-India, New Delhi, India, pg. v. IN: Edney, M.E. (1997) *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India 1765-1843*. University of Chicago Press: London, pg. 15.

⁵⁵ Reid, A.S. (1893). *Chin-Lushai Land: A Description of the various expeditions into the Chin-Lushai Hills and the final annexation of the country*. Firma-KLM Private on behalf of Tribal Research Institute of Aizawl, Mizoram: India, pg. 2.

A map also creates territories of inclusion and exclusion. As is argued in this dissertation, in the case of the Northern Arakan Yomas, the Chin were 'included' with other ethnic groups such as the Karen, the Kachin and the Shan in British Burma. The Lushai were eventually linked to other areas in the northeast of India like Manipur, Assam and Tripura.

The map is not only territorial or spatial; the implication is that there must be shared culture, shared history, and thus, a shared future within the borders of one created unit of space. The mapmakers and the surveyors, however, construct this implication. As Edney argues, the mapping of India, for the Company, became the mapping of 'their' India. "They mapped India that they perceived that they governed. To the extent that many aspects of India's societies and cultures remained beyond the British experience..."⁵⁶

Early surveyors had the gargantuan task of rendering the inhabitants of the Northern Arakan Yomas into some sort of logical system that was descriptive and uniform in manner; and above all, depicting them as governable in a assigned space. This was done through the process of enumeration and classification. From a self-contained community, a tribe or clan came to be considered as a whole society, reflecting certain characteristics different from other societies such as those across the political border. Groups' cultures were generalized based on very limited information. They were further differentiated by the artificial borders the colonials created, albeit they justified some of these borders based on their intelligence, despite having obtained information through informants. This anthropological perspective that a small clan's culture can be generalized to the whole of the society was concocted by colonial administrators-cum-ethnographers and served to justify the delineation of territories. One starting point was identifying the inhabitants by their nomenclatures and linking them to specific locations on topographical maps.⁵⁷

Gathering Intelligence

⁵⁶ Edney, M.E. (1997) *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India 1765-1843*. University of Chicago Press: London, pg. 2.

⁵⁷ Suan, H. K. K. (2011) "Rethinking 'tribe' identities: The politics of recognition among the Zo in north-east India," *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 45, 2: 157-187, pg. 162.

In order for a colonial state to expand successfully, intelligence is collected. Only certain intelligence is sought, however, and applied for instrumental purposes—colonial expansion. James Scott argues that much of the information and intelligence gathered was then simplified:

“[Maps created by colonials] did not successfully represent the actual activity of the society they depicted, nor were they intended to; they represented only that slice of it that interested the colonial observer. They were, moreover, not just maps. Rather, they were maps that, when allied with state power, would enable much of that reality they depicted to be remade.”⁵⁸

First, there was almost no information available on the Zo highlanders. Intelligence had to be gathered in order to de-mystify the people of Northern Arakan Yomas. The Company organized the means to collect intelligence about them. It employed geographers, surveyors, scientists and sought out informants. The potential new territories’ resources and inhabitants were explored, mapped, categorized, catalogued, and analyzed. Christopher Alan Bayly emphasizes that colonial officials sometimes misinterpreted information obtained through informants.⁵⁹ This is most certainly the case for the Zo highlanders who, as is argued above, were constructed based on conjecture obtained through the information provided, most likely by Bengalese and Burmans and in some cases by Zo of the plains.⁶⁰ While they acted as informants, they were probably not aware of the greater objectives entertained by the Company. Furthermore, they were surely not aware of the greater impact their information would have decades and even centuries later. The same can be said of Company men such as Pemberton, who although making controversial decisions of delineation, did not intent to

⁵⁸ Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press: New Haven and London, pg. 3.

⁵⁹ Bayly, C.A. (1996) *Intelligence gathering and social communication in India, 1780-1870*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pg. ix.

⁶⁰ As will be discussed later, Carey and Tuck, administrators to the Chin Hills, relied on Myoôk Maung Tun Win, an Arakanese from the Southern Yomas.

leave waves of socio-political turmoil behind. He was carrying out his duty as an officer of the Company, not as an initiator of decades of debates, contestations, and bloody conflicts. His information was passed on to other Company men who perhaps, unbeknownst to them, also became part of the information order which eventually evolved into a school of thought about the people of the Northern Arakan Yomas.

Company officers, as well as others, had no choice but to rely on the information of others. Locals dared not venture into the hills. The hills were believed to be populated by wild, murderous tribes.⁶¹ These wild tribes negotiated the rough terrain with its steep cliffs, numerous deep caves, and tall pine trees with expertise and ease, leaving outsiders vulnerable, destined to face a certain death. The reliance on informants was unavoidable.

Information was paramount in the planning of operations. Given this knowledge, for the purpose of invasions and seizure of the highlands (as well as the lowlands), the terrain with its lakes and rivers, mountains and valleys, was mapped to ensure victory. Lacking proper intelligence could potentially be catastrophic, ending in defeat. Thus, beyond the terrain, the mountains, the valleys, the sources of food and water, the highlanders were assessed as well. At first, the most important intelligence is the military technology of the natives, as well as their strategic capabilities in conflicts. In fact, as is demonstrated below, intelligence--and especially military intelligence, is essential for imperial expansion.

Regarding the conquest of India by the British, Bayly writes, "The quality of military and political intelligence available...was evidently a critical determinant of...success in conquest and profitable governance."⁶² Successful conquest hinges on intelligence being gathered and the resulting military strategies. Informants come from all walks of life. Some are society's outcasts who are forced to eke out a living outside the normative society while others

⁶¹ van Schendel, W. (1992). *Francis Buchanan in Southeast Bengal (1798): His Journey to Chittagong, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Noakhali and Comilla*. University Press Limited, Dhaka: Bangladesh, pg. xiv.

⁶² Baud, M. and van Schendel, W. (1997) 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands,' *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, pg. 1-2.

may be traders or travelers, but might also belong to the 'state' elite. For instance, Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel echo Chris Bayly and James Scott's arguments about informants and take it one step further, "...[state] elites might also be enlisted for state expansionist projects or espionage."⁶³ The person or persons from whom Father Vincenzo Sangermano obtained his information in the 18th Century, for instance, is not cited by him. However, given his position in Burma and his fluency in both the written and verbal local languages, he probably consulted members of the Court of Ava who were state elites.

In terms of border demarcation, according to Baud and van Schendel, these often run along ethnic boundaries, or what is believed to be ethnic areas.⁶⁴ The Zo highlanders legally referred to as the Chin on the Burma side would eventually have their own borders within Burma to separate them from the Burmese of the lowlands and other ethnic minority 'states' such as the Karen, Kachin and the Shan states. The same is true in the case of the Zo on the India side now referred to as the Mizo. They too would eventually become one of the 'races' or states of Northeast India and be separated by an internal border from India proper and the other Northeast Indian states of Tripura, Assam and Manipur.

Along with map making is the sequential name changes or imposition of new names of the newly delineated territories, another means of projecting the power of the state. When the British took Honduras, they renamed it Belize; Rhodesia became Zimbabwe. Burma eventually became Myanmar, renamed as such by the Burmese Military Government, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), to demonstrate their power. The Zo hills did not have a name to change, but the mere fact that the British imposed Chin and Lushai to demarcate two sides of the same mountain ranges signifies its projection of power.

⁶³ Baud, M. and van Schendel, W. (1997). 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands,' *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, pg. 216.

⁶⁴Baud, M. and van Schendel, W. (1997) 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands,' *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, pg.219. They argue that borders have long acted at ethnic boundaries

van Schendel, reflecting upon the resulting creation of area studies, argues, “‘Area studies’ use a geographical metaphor to visualise and naturalise particular social spaces as well as a particular scale of analysis. They produce specific geographies of knowing but also create geographies of ignorance.”⁶⁵ Harry Harootunian makes the same argument, but takes it one step further arguing that the reluctance to cross the, “...administrative/geopolitical and thus disciplinary grids that partition knowledge means only that the information principles of a dominant tradition...continue to authorize the still axiomatic duality between an essentialized, totalized but incomplete East.”⁶⁶ Donald Emmerson argues that the notion of ‘Southeast Asia,’ under which Burma now falls was only created after the second World War giving academic institution departments occupied with the study of societies which were of an ‘American interest.’ “There could be no maps of ‘Southeast Asia’ until the Second World War...[when it became] a single theater of war.”⁶⁷ The bifurcation of the Northern Arakan Yomas into India and Burma, thus into South and Southeast Asia, further resulted in the division of the Zo highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas.

Modernity

It is also illustrated that the Zo, after annexation in 1890, decisively moved toward modernity. There were numerous elements in the move from a preliterate society to one that is modern. First, in order for Zo to modernize, they had to become literate. Christian mission provided the opportunity for the Zo to read and to write. The early missionaries chose specific Zo dialects, mainly those they perceived were spoken by the largest number of Zo in their given mission fields. This, however, led to the canonization of specific languages and with it, certain groups of Zo who would eventually rise to be the elite of Zo society while others were marginalized.

⁶⁵ van Schendel, W. (2002). Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia. *Environmental and Planning D: Society and Space*, 2002, Vol. 20, pages 647-668, pg. 647.

⁶⁶ Harootunian, H. (1997). *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life*, The Wellek Library Lecture Series at the University of California: Irvine, pg. 27-28.

⁶⁷ Emmerson, D.K. (1984). "Southeast Asia: What's in a Name?" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol 15, No. 1, May 1984, p. 1-21.

Utilizing the theoretical frameworks of conversion such as Richard Eaton's work among the Naga in which he argues that conversion cannot be likened to lava flowing from a center to a periphery, this thesis will illustrate that conversion was not a rapid phenomenon. Numerous Zo scholars argue that the Zo converted, or transformed, and accepted Christianity almost immediately. This, however, was not the case. It is illustrated that it took years to convert the Zo. It is further argued that they joined the church not necessarily for reasons of salvation rather to become literate and thus in turn, modernize.

Lorraine Aragon's work among the animist minorities of Indonesia is also utilized. She argues that the colonial state creates favorable conditions for missionaries. This was certainly the case for the Zo highlands. British colonials built infrastructure such as roads, government buildings and telegraph lines for communication. The missionaries, on both sides of the Indo-Burma border, utilized their existing infrastructure and local knowledge, albeit, their being limited. At the same time, depending on their denominations and origin countries, the missionaries also differed in their attitudes toward Zo habits, including, but not limited to the consumption of alcohol.

Another aspect of modernity is the change in cultivation practices, the focus on trading as a commerce, and taxation schemes. British officials believed that that these new methods would result in a decline of raiding, a reduction in crime and better cooperation with the British. Moreover, by utilizing chiefs and headman to collect taxes on behalf of the British, they could govern the hills by proxy. However, after Independence some Zo groups, especially younger generations, who had benefited from educations, rebelled against the chiefs who, they argued, had become agents of the British state.

This dissertation further outlines the reactions of Zo highlanders on both sides of Indo-Burma border to Independence. It is argued that the Zo were ill-equipped to manage the prospect of self-rule and thus allowed Aung San in Burma to advocate on their behalf. The Zo in the Lushai Hills did not vie for independence to the same degree as the Zo of the Chin Hills. They went

as far as drafting a memo which they presented to the last Superintendent of the Lushai Hills. Despite the colonial records which illustrate the above, the Zo argue that they were grievously wronged and that, in fact, they fervently fought for independence in 1947/1948 on all sides of the political border.

After Independence and in its aftermath, the Zo moved into different political directions. Utilizing the colonial records, oral histories as well as the contemporary works of Zo scholars, this dissertation illustrates the many movements and attempts to gain agency outside the realms of their respective nation-states. It is further argued that they also seek recognition on the world stage as being either one of the ethnic minorities of Burma or as Indigenous people of Northeast India.

Finally, further research is suggested. It is argued that the lack of a writing system allowed colonial administrators, based on their own perspectives as well as based on the information of informants to construct a history that was in-line with the colonial endeavour. It is further argued that the current state of Zo society has benefited from constructionist histories as well. Hence, other possible histories must to be entertained, investigated and researched. Thus the archives of China, East India and oral histories are encouraged as focus of further study. Given the recent changes in both, India and in Burma, archeologically studies may also be a possibility now revealing histories not previously considered.

Chapter One

Who are the Zo? How does one write Zo history?

Consisting of parallel mountain ranges rising to heights of over 9,000 feet, this, the most recent acquisition to Her Majesty's dominions, embraces every variety of physical features and climate, from the dense and deadly jungles below, through the tangled mazes of which the ponderous elephant and rhinoceros push their way, to the invigorating summits, crowned with pines, where the sheen of the pheasant's wing catches the eye, as, with lightning speed, he skims down the mountain side.⁶⁸

Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel Adam Scott Reid, 1893

Adam Scott Reid's observation reveals that the beauty of the Yomas with its wide-ranging climate, steep cliffs, dense jungles and exotic animals delighted him. For the same reasons, however, the Yomas are arduous and challenging, both physically and administratively. For the British dealing with the highlanders and their habitat was altogether different from managing the people of the plains.

This chapter explains the problem of writing a history of the Northern Arakan Yomas. It describes Zo life in the highlands. The rugged terrain, the thick jungles, and the varying altitudes, the temperamental climates, and heavy monsoons all played a significant role in the everyday lives of Zo highlanders and their societies. Moreover, these aspects of the highlands also dictated some of the administrative decisions made by the British.⁶⁹ It is

⁶⁸Reid, A.S. (1893), *Chin-Lushai Land: A Description of the various expeditions into the Chin-Lushai Hills and the final annexation of the country*. Firma-KLM Private on behalf of Tribal Research Institute of Aizawl, Mizoram: India, pg. 2.

⁶⁹Pemberton, R.B. (1960), "Journey from Munipoor to Ava, and from thence across the Yooma Mountain to Arracan" by Cpt. R. B. Pemberton, Edited with an

argued that colonial officers did not understand highland societies and tried to employ the same state-expansion methods in the highlands as they did in the plains. They also made an effort to write Zo history as well as classify the Zo according to western standards.⁷⁰ By doing so, the British actually caused decades of confusion and misnomers; a Gordian knot that is still being untied in present day.

This chapter will clarify the incongruities created by colonial-cum-ethnographers by focusing, specifically, on highland society and the nomenclature conundrum and debate. This debate was initiated by Burmese and Bengali informants, colonial officers, Government officials, missionaries, and other outsiders. Later, incorrect, skewed, and invented nomenclatures were promulgated by the Zo themselves, primarily by the Zo political elite. They used colonial based information to write their own histories after Independence in 1947/48. This, it is argued as well as illustrated, were largely based on previous colonial constructs. Additionally, it is argued that the Zo, utilizing a certain agency acquired during the time of British colonial occupation of the hills, 1890-1947, recognized the importance of creating a certain identity for themselves that they might thrive under the British Raj and thereafter.

Company surveyors detailed some of the first descriptions of the mountain ranges, its valleys, rivers, climates, flora and fauna of the Northern Arakan Yomas.⁷¹ Initially, they focused on aspects of military relevance. Later state expansionist efforts focused on Zo society, including the role of chiefs. Unlike wet rice cultivators of the plains, highlanders tended to practice a slash-and-burn type of agriculture called *jhum*.⁷² This results in their having to be in a recurrent search for new, fresh land. This *jhum* may have contributed to other dynamics of highland life as well, such as the lack of a writing system.

Introduction and Notes by Professor D.G.E. Hall. *Journal of Burma Research Society*, XLII, ii. Dec. 1960, pg. 6-83.

⁷⁰ Charney, M.W. (2008). *A History of Modern Burma*, Cambridge University Press: UK, pg. 8.

⁷¹A much earlier survey was conducted by an official of the Tang Dynasty, Fan Cho, in 862 A.D. His account is described in Chapter 2.

⁷² *Jhum* is Burmese for 'swidden' cultivation.

Like many other highland societies, the Zo have stories of a lost script.⁷³ Scripts are typically lost due to some sort of imprudence on their part. They are lost because they did not realize its significance, because they fell asleep or because wild animals ate it, among other avoidable reasons. In some other tales, the Zo were tricked by a ‘cunning’ Burman of the plains.⁷⁴ Either way, without a writing system it is difficult to accurately ascertain the history of the Zo from their origins to their migratory history. Only once the Zo converted to Christianity did they begin to write their own stories. As a result, relatively little was known of them before the arrival of the Company and missionaries. What was known appears to have been shrouded in mystery. This chapter addresses some of the myths that surrounded the Zo highlanders.

Highland communities tend to be clan-based with individual forms of government, unlike the plains which have a tendency toward centralized governments. British administrators were faced with a population that lived in independent communities all throughout the highlands. The lack of a centralized government meant that each chief, whether he ruled one or numerous villages, had to be brought into the colonial fold almost individually. As is explained in this chapter, clan relationships to one another were complex. British administrators attempted to understand and then categorize the highlanders employing the same methods of state expansion as in the plains. They ‘studied’ the Zo, counted them, allocated them to specific regions and speculated on their histories. However, they did not fully understand the complexity of highland life, thus their diaries, reports and ‘ethnographies’ caused perplexity rather than clarity. Furthermore, the Zo highlands are difficult to navigate, yet administrators drew territorial borders through and around them, in the foothills. The Zo were not integrated into the plains. Rather, they were first, ‘stateless’ people on the frontier and then on the periphery. Within only a decade and a half, British colonial

⁷³Scott, J. (2009). *The Art of NOT Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press: New Haven and London, pg. 39, 59, etc.

⁷⁴Vumson (1986), *Zo History: With an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion, and their status as an ethnic minority in India, Burma and Bangladesh*. Published by Author, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 185-186.

administrators transformed all of the Zo highlands into a massive, steep and rugged and perilous borderland on the edge of their Empire.

The Arakan Yomas are a contorted, meandering mass of ridged mountains with deep 'v-shaped' valleys.⁷⁵ They run through the northeast Indian states of Assam, Nagaland, and Mizoram.⁷⁶ They also run through parts of Manipur, which are both highlands and a valley. They run south along western Burma, include the Chin Hills, extend to Rakhine State in Burma and stretch all the way down to the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. Rivers and streams bisect all the Arakan Yoma mountain ranges. The largest river is the Manipur River which demarcates the border between the Lushai Hills and Manipur to the north. The Kolodyne (Kaladan) River flows from the Chin to the Lushai Hills. The Tio River flows between the Chin Hills and the Lushai Hills. Given the rugged terrain and the heavy monsoons, there are times of the year when Zo communities have virtually no interaction or encounters with one another.

The climate of the mountains is markedly different from the plains. It occasionally snows onto the peaks of the mountains which Zo describe as the mountains having vomited⁷⁷ or that snow 'grew' onto the mountain tops.⁷⁸ When compared to the lowlands, the hills are always relatively cool. The valleys are hot and tropical. The temperature of the Manipur Valley, for example, climbs to a humid 32 degrees. Unlike the belief that highlanders are always seeking life in the plains, the Zo preferred the mountains to the valleys like many other highland groups.⁷⁹ James Scott argues that many highlander groups in South and Southeast Asia preferred life in the mountains to the plains and did not seek relocation to the bottomland.⁸⁰

⁷⁵*Ibid*, pg. 22.

⁷⁶The Lushai Hills officially and legally became the 23rd State of the Union of India in 1986. The terms Lushai Hills and Mizoram are both used and dependent on context, i.e. time period.

⁷⁷Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 22.

⁷⁸Chit Hlaing, aka Lehman F.K. (1963), *The Structure of the Chin Society: A Tribal People in Burma Adapted to Non-Western Civilization*. Published by Firma KLM, Private Ltd., on the behalf of Tribal Research Institute of Aizawl, Mizoram: India, pg. 7.

⁷⁹*Op.cit.*

⁸⁰James Scott gives numerous examples of highlanders preferring mountain life, for one to evade the state. Scott, J., *The Art of NOT Being Governed*, pg. 128-129.

There are three distinctive seasons in the Northern Arakan Yomas, hot, wet, and cold. The cold, or “open season”⁸¹ as the British referred to it, begins in mid-November and lasts until about mid-February.⁸² The open season was most suitable for military operations. Highlander raids into the plains or onto other Zo communities occurred mostly in the open season as well.

Given the varied altitude of the Yomas, there is a great variety of flora and fauna. Bamboo is abundant across the whole of the Zo hills. The dominant variety of bamboo is the *Melocannabaccifera*, also referred to as ‘Pear’ or ‘Berry Bamboo.’ This bamboo wreaks havoc once, or twice, a generation. Its life cycle is 48 years and at the end of which it flowers, bears plentiful fist-sized fruit and then dies. Rats devour these fructose-rich fruit, temporarily increasing their fertility rates. This results in an explosion of the rat population. Once the bamboo fruit are exhausted, these plagues of rats turn to the crops of the fields. The result is a serious and devastating famine⁸³ across the whole of the Northern Arakan Yomas.⁸⁴

These famines have played a significant role in the history of the Zo highlanders causing them to migrate to other areas, increase their raids to the plains or request support from their respective nation-states. Three such mass-scale famines are found in the historical records. There are references to a large-scale famine at the turn of the century.⁸⁵ Another occurred in 1959, to which India’s slow response resulted in the Zo, in the now State of

⁸¹Carey, B.S. and Tuck, H.N. (1896), *The Chin Hills: A History of the People, our dealings with them, their Customs and Manners, and a Gazetteer of their Country*, Vol. I. Firma, KLM Private, Ltd., Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 6.

⁸²Newland, A.G.E. (1894), *The Image of War or Service in the Chin Hills*. Thacker, Spink and Co., Calcutta: India, pg. 2.

⁸³Pachau, J. (2011), *'On Being Mizo': A Re-Analysis of Issues of Identity from India's Northeast*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Dept. of Anthropology, Rhodes House, Bodelein Libraries, MS. D. Phil. c. 23841, Oxford University: Oxford, pg. 10.

⁸⁴Pachau only refers to the famine in the state of Mizoram, but it occurs all across the Northern Arakan Yomas.

⁸⁵“Latest Intelligence—Burmah.” *The Times*, May 9, 1892, pg. 5, Issue 3363, Column A: The Times: London, AND Gougin, T. (1984) *History of the Zomi*. Published by the Author at Zomi Press, Manipur: India., pg. 95-96.

Mizoram, to finally opt for independence from India.⁸⁶ The most recent famine occurred in 2006.⁸⁷

Along with the flora, the fauna of the Northern Arakan Yomas has also shaped clan culture. Company officers reported the existence of large, wild animals such as the rhinoceros, elephant, and *mithun*.⁸⁸ The *mithun* was a favourite of the highlanders for sacrificial slaughter during festivals and feasts.⁸⁹ The *mithun* was also used in lieu of redemption fines, as bride prizes, and to show respect to a given chief. Before conversion to Christianity, *mithun* for festivals and feasts were in high demand. This caused significant poverty and thus hardship for some Zo highland communities. After conversion, however, animal sacrifice and feasts were markedly reduced. This resulted in a substantial decline in poverty and hardship.

The Northern Arakan Yomas

Although the Arakan Yomas stretch all the way south to the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, only the Northern Yomas are the subject of this dissertation.⁹⁰ The administrative history of the Northern Arakan Yomas is quite different from that of the south. That is, the borders separating the Northern Arakan Yomas into the Chin Hills, the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) and Manipur had a different impact on the Zo than the southern borders. After the first Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-1826, at the Treaty of Yandabo, the Arakan Yomas in the south and lower Assam were ceded to the British.⁹¹ The Northern Yomas, specifically what came to be known as the Chin-Lushai Hills, remained a frontier of the Bengal Presidency.

⁸⁶Pachau, J., 'On Being Mizo', pg. 108-109.

⁸⁷For more information about the flowering bamboo famines, see for instance: Lalnunmawia, F., Jha, L.K. and Lalengliana, F. (2005). Preliminary Observations on Ecological and Economical impacts of bamboo flowering in Mizoram (North East India), *Journal of Bamboo and Rattan*, Volume 4, Number 4, pg. 317-322 (6) AND Nag, Sajal (2001), "Tribals, Rats, Famine, State and the Nation, *Economic and Political Weekly*," Vol. 36, No. 12, March 24-30.

⁸⁸A *mithun* is a large gaur or bison.

⁸⁹Carey, and Tuck, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 7-8.

⁹⁰Formerly East Pakistan, Bangladesh became its own nation-state in 1971.

⁹¹Snodgrass, M. (1827), *The Burmese War (1824-1826)*, Ava House, Bangkok: Thailand, pg. 264.

The Chin-Lushai Hills were bordered by Manipur and Assam in the north and northwest, by Tripura and Bengal in the west, and by the Empire of Burma in the east.⁹² Whilst the Company administered all of these bordered regions, the Chin-Lushai Hills itself remained unadministered until annexation in 1889-90.⁹³ In fact, the Chin-Lushai Hills was the very last area to be conquered by the British. Parts of the Manipur highlands, for example, were claimed and retained by a Raj.⁹⁴ The now 'Chin-Lushai Hills,' as the British referred to it, was made up of independent Zo societies; there was no central government. The British subdued a series of communities, their chiefs and then claimed the land and obtained revenue in the form of taxes. In 1892, at the Chin-Lushai Conference held at Ft. William in Calcutta, the Chin-Lushai Hills were legally and officially separated to be administered by the Company's offices in the plains⁹⁵ of Rangoon and of Assam respectively.⁹⁶ This marked the first separation of the Zo in the form of an administrative border.

⁹²By then the Company uniformly referred to the Northern Arakan Yomas as the, "Chin Hills" and the "Lushai Hills."

⁹³ Other areas of India were also part of the Bengal Presidency, for example Orissa. For more about the Bengal Presidency read for instance, Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudhuri, H.C., and Katta, K. (1950), *An Advanced History of India*, McMillian: London, pg. Part III, pgs. 729-771, 854-866, and 911-968.

⁹⁴In 1834, Colonel R. B. Pemberton met with the Raj of Manipur who insisted that some portion of the highlands were under his jurisdiction. Pemberton honoured the Raj's claim. Pemberton, R.B. (1835) *Report on the eastern frontier of British India with Appendix and maps*, IOR/V/27/64/160, India office Records, British Library, London: UK, pg. 120.

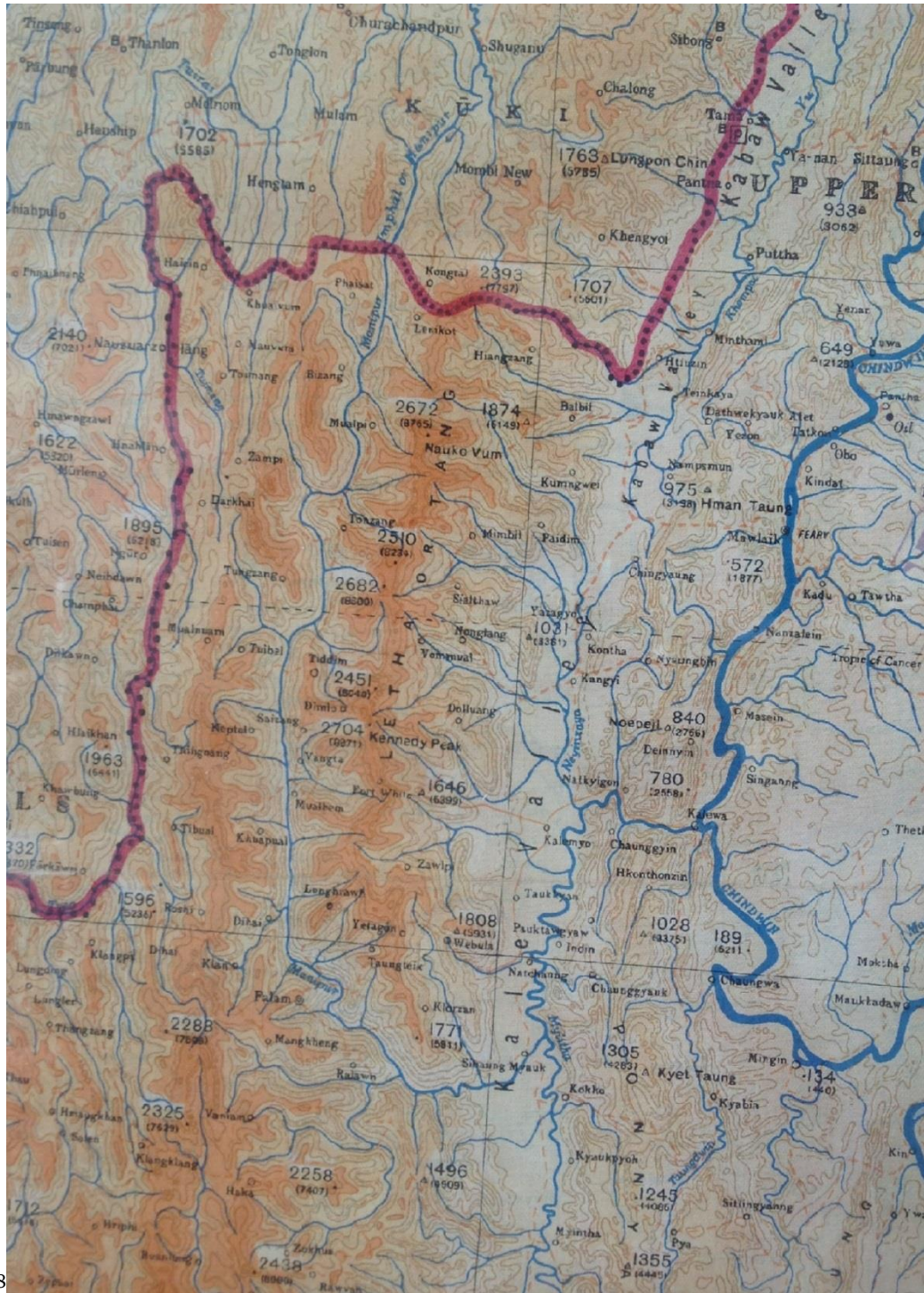
⁹⁵M'Cosh, John (1837) *The Topography of Assam*, G.H Huttman, Bengal Military Press: Calcutta, pg. 4.

⁹⁶Before 1892's Chin-Lushai Conference, the hills were managed by three administrations. The South Lushai Hills and the North Lushai Hills were managed by Bengal and Assam respectively; the Chin Hills from Rangoon. In 1874, the jurisdictions of Assam and Bengal separated.



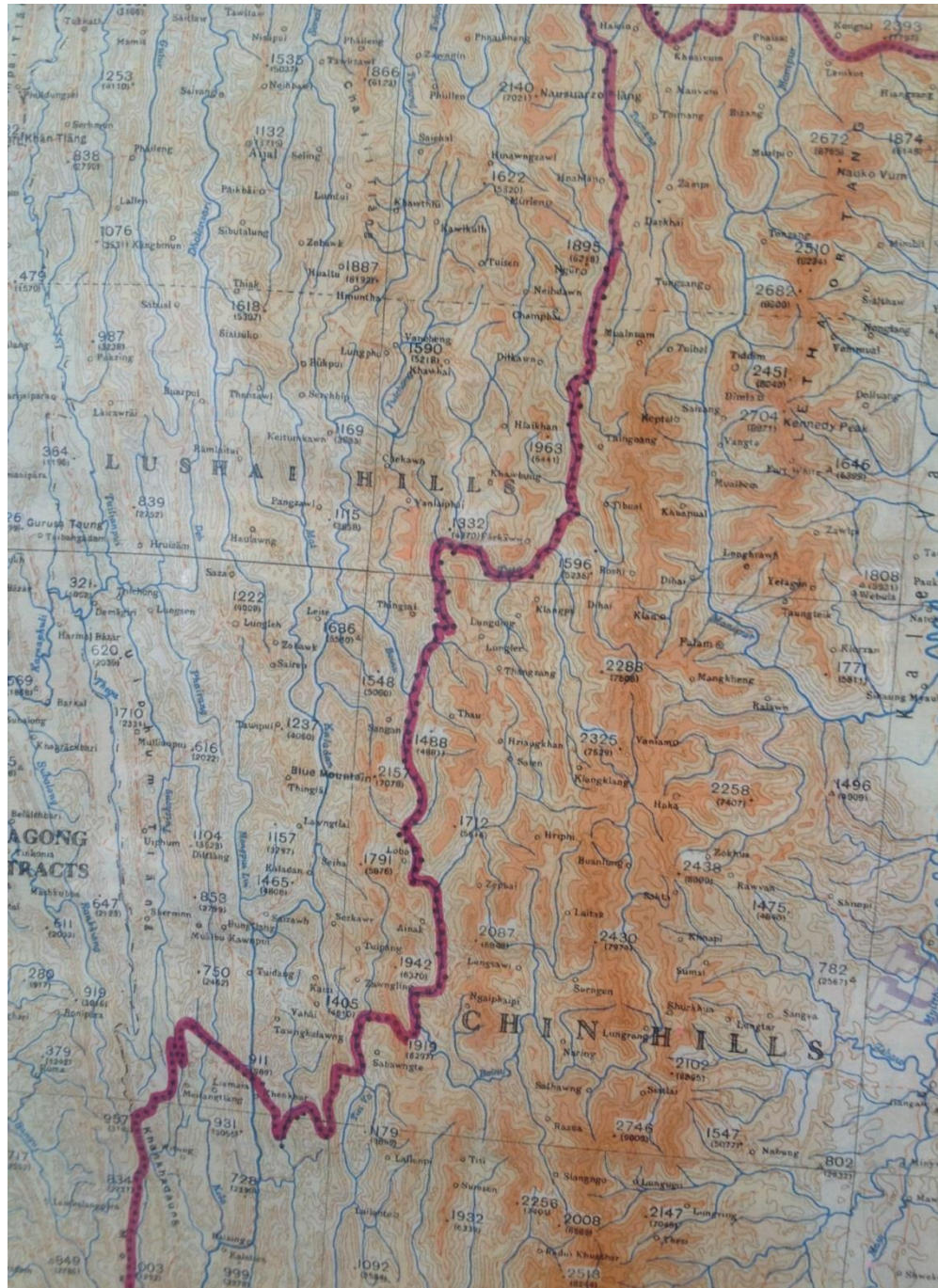
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Map 1: WWII RAAF Pilots Silk Escape Map, Wartime Aircrew, Burma and India's Chin Hills and Lushai Hills, From Bianca Son's Private Collection.



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98 Map 2: Border Separating Manipur (West to East) from the Chin Hills Cropped, WWII RAAF Pilots Silk Escape Map, Wartime Aircrew, Burma and India's Chin Hills and Lushai Hills. From Bianca Son's Private Collection.



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99 Map 3: Lushai Hills and Chin Hills, WWII RAAF Pilots Silk Escape Map, Wartime Aircrew, Burma and India's Chin Hills and Lushai Hills. From Bianca Son's Private Collection

Zo Clans and Groups

Clans are central to a Zo. Anthropologists, including a few Zo scholars, have written on the importance of clan and kinship systems in Zo life. These explain that Zo kinship systems are patriarchal;¹⁰⁰ that marriages are social arrangement for legitimacy, and kinship systems includes relatives from both sides of the parents. Membership in kinship systems is determined by birth. Every person, then, is recognized by kinship terminology such as ‘father,’ ‘uncle,’ ‘older sister,’ and so on.¹⁰¹ Zo have clan loyalty which is, in part, responsible for given histories. Clans are enlarged families; several families make up a community and live together in a village.¹⁰² Ten to three hundred people constitute a village.¹⁰³ Whole villages will move together in search of land or to escape or initiate clan feuds. Sometimes, only part of the village will leave and search for new land. This, however, does not mean that they sever their ties with their clan members left behind. To the contrary, they remain cognizant of their kin relationships and may reunite with them in the future.

Every Zo is aware of her lineage. Some know all their ancestors up to 30 generations. This is expressed and recollected through the oral tradition of rhythm song, where the names of the dead are recited. Typically, some additional information is remembered. This includes how many animals the ancestor killed or wars and battles won against enemies. These songs are sung at feasts, but also to the children at bedtime. Zo believe that clan and kin relations are of the utmost importance and fostered strong ties as well as clan loyalty. This cannot be emphasized enough. Zo live in communities, take very little ownership over material possessions, and do not demand privacy.

¹⁰⁰Chatterjee, I. argues that Zo were not patriarchal, rather practiced polyandry before the British pre-colonial era. This argument has not been elaborated upon in this dissertation, albeit it is worth investigated. For more on Chatterjee’s argument, read, Chatterjee, I. (2013). *Forgotten Friends: Monks, Marriages, and Memories of Northeast India*. Oxford University Press: Oxford., pg. 13, 14, 26, 65, 71, 150, etc.

¹⁰¹Piang, L. Lam Khan (2005), “Kinship, Territory and Politic: Identity Formation among Zo People,” Unpublished PhD Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi: India, pg. 3.

¹⁰² Khai, Sing Khaw (1995), *Zo People and their Culture: A historical, cultural study and critical analysis of Zo and its ethnic tribes*. Khampu Hatzaw, Lamka: Manipur, pg. 149.

¹⁰³Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 8.

They, generally, belong to the group. Major decisions are made with the consultation of the community, including the elders. This aspect of Zo life has changed little. Even Zo communities today, in Diaspora, replicate Zo life of the highlands. Wherever Zo live, clan, kinship and community continues being central to their lives.¹⁰⁴ But, as already illustrated above, colonial officers did not fully understand Zo life and thought the constant relocation was due to their semi-nomadic state. Furthermore, they did not understand the deep-seated clan loyalty, as well as knowledge of their ancestors each Zo carries with her.

Colonial officers fully admitted not understanding the complexities of the clans. First political officers posted in the Chin Hills wrote in 1896:

Our closer connection with the Chins and Lushais during the last five years does not appear to have taught us anything more than we knew twenty years ago...¹⁰⁵

The lack of flat land in the hills dictates that only small numbers of people relocate at any given time. The chiefs left behind on the former site, may still be recognized as their suzerain and tribute will be paid to him or his headman sometime in the future. In the early days of annexation, the Government appeared not to understand the constant movement of clans and communities and erroneously made political divisions on what they believed were the tight geographical jurisdictions of given chiefs.¹⁰⁶

However, one chief may rule over a village in the eastern Yomas, but also have other villages north in Manipur under his jurisdiction. He is a paramount chief. Paramount chiefs existed all throughout the Northern Arakan Yomas, but were not realized by colonial officers until Carey and Tuck were posted in the hills in 1891.¹⁰⁷ In fact, one such case is described below. The powerful chief known as Kam Hau had numerous clans and thus

¹⁰⁴This is based on my own, personal experience, growing up in Zo communities in Germany, Burma, America, Korea and London.

¹⁰⁵Carey and Tuck, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 2.

¹⁰⁶Stevenson, H.N.C. (1944), *The Economics of the Central Chin Tribes*. The Times of India Press, Bombay: India, pg. 15-17.

¹⁰⁷Carey and Tuck, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 125.

villages all throughout the Northern Arakan Yomas. In fact, colonial officers eventually had to ‘pay him off’ when they drew the borders separating the ‘Lushai Hills’ from Manipur.

Villages are independent units, utilizing approximately ten miles in radius of land for its slash and burn or *jhum*¹⁰⁸ cultivation.¹⁰⁹ Company administrator Henry Noel Cochran Stevenson explains Zo highland agriculture:

There are two forms of rotation practiced by the ... [Zo] – regional rotation by cultivating fields in a set sequence, and crop rotation of cold weather beans. The period for which any field is cultivated for a number of consecutive years depends almost entirely on the land available. In the areas inhabited at the same time of the annexation, this period was three, six, or even nine years in succession. In the center the subdivision where land is scarce the most common period is six years, but in the Zahau tribal area and the extreme eastern villages where land is plentiful, three years is more usual. Invariably one field in rotation is set aside for grazing of the village herds.¹¹⁰

As mentioned, the constantly moving villages confused early administrators. As Lt. Col. John Shakespear reported in 1902, “...temporary bamboo villages of the Lushai Hills...move every 5 or 6 years...the population having always been semi-nomadic.”¹¹¹ They thought the Zo highlanders were nomads, in constant search of new sources and areas of food.¹¹² Political officer, James

¹⁰⁸This is sometimes referred to as swidden agriculture which Chit Hlaing argues is actually a Swedish word meaning slash-and-burn.

¹⁰⁹Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 8.

¹¹⁰Stevenson, *The Economics of Central Chin Tribes*, pg. 31-32.

¹¹¹Shakespeare, J. (1912), *The Kuki-Chin Tribes*, Mizoram State Archives, Aizawl: Mizoram, MS/CB5/Pol 54 IN: Pachau, J. (2011) ‘*On Being Mizo*’, Footnote 88, pg. 128.

¹¹²Ambedkar, B.R. (1942). *History of the Frontier Areas bordering Assam*, Open University, Shillong: Assam, pg. 80.

Johnston who was posted in Nagaland and had some dealings with the Zo (Kuki) of Manipur wrote in 1896 that, “The Kukis are a wandering race consisting of several tribes...”¹¹³ The Zo, whether referred to as Kuki, Chin or Lushai or by any other names, did not ‘wander’, they were searching for arable land in order to survive. This seemed to astound colonial officers whose experience had always been with people of the plains. Dr. Francis Buchanan,¹¹⁴ an old hand when it came to surveying unknown parts of the Empire, remarked that their method of moving was so adapt that it would take just one day’s labour to erect a new house and an entire new village.¹¹⁵ Clearly, the Zo did not wander, rather were in a constant state of resettling, utilizing fresh soil of their new locals and moving on.

Some trade existed as well. Pemberton, in his 1834 report, lists the commodities of the mountains used for trade including teak, rice, ivory, and cotton.¹¹⁶ These were traded for items such as salt, coloured yarns and brass pots.¹¹⁷ In fact over a thousand years ago, the Southern Silk route also known as the Tea-Horse trading route ran through the Northern Arakan Yomas.¹¹⁸ That is, trade was conducted in the Northern Arakan Yomas long before the arrival of the Company.

Role of Chiefs and Headmen

Each village had its own government system led by a headman and a chief. Both tended to inherit their positions.¹¹⁹ In some cases, however, powerful

¹¹³Johnston, J. (1896). *My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills*. Sampston Low, Marston and Company, Ltd., Fleet Street: London, pg. 25.

¹¹⁴ Dr. Francis Buchanan was also known by his mother’s maiden name, Dr. Francis Hamilton. The former will be used in this dissertation. His account of Chittagong is addressed below.

¹¹⁵Hamilton, F. (1825), “Dr. Hamilton’s Account of the Frontier between Southern Part of Bengal and the Kingdom of Ava,” *The Edinburgh Journal of Science exhibiting a View of the Progress of Discovery*, (edited by David Brewster). William Blackwood: Edinburgh, Vol. I:III, April-October MDCCCXXV, pg. 203-210, *aka* Buchanan.

¹¹⁶Pemberton, R. Boileau (1835) *Report on the Eastern Frontier of British-India with an Appendix and Maps*, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta: India, pg. 121.

¹¹⁷Mizoram State Archives, CB2/G25, pg. 8., IN Pachau, J. (2011). ‘On Being Mizo’, pg. 133.

¹¹⁸Yang, B. (2004), “Horses, Silver, and Cowries: Yunnan in Global Perspective,” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 15, No. 3, September 2004, pg. 281-322.

¹¹⁹Chin Hlaing *aka* Lehman, *The Structure of the Chin Society*, pg. 107.

chiefs 'took over' other clans who had revolted against their own chief for such reasons as his being, "...infirm, imbecile or a lunatic."¹²⁰ The chief of a different clan would then take jurisdiction over them by founding new villages or absorbing them into his existing ones.¹²¹ Some chiefs became Paramount chiefs, ruling over numerous groups spread-out in the Northern Arakan Yomas.¹²² Both Zo and western scholars disagree on the roles of chiefs and headmen however. This disagreement stems from the fact that there was no uniformity to the differing clans and communities. As H. Kham Khan Suan argues, studying just one clan yields unreliable information. One cannot assume that one clan's culture is indicative of the whole of the society.¹²³ While some cultural generalizations may be made, one clan could operate in markedly different ways from another clan. There are many nuances and disparities exhibited by individual clans which were often missed by colonial administrators-cum-ethnographers. Stevenson, for example, argues that some chiefs were 'democratically' recruited to their positions. In some cases, chiefs ruled over several villages.¹²⁴

Some 'elected' chiefs were chosen based on their social links and diplomatic skills to other clans and communities.¹²⁵ Chit Hlaing,¹²⁶ taking Stevenson's argument further, stated that the chief's powers were, "...more fiction than real." He was instrumental for mediation and thus, "...chiefs are virtually superfluous [in other matters]."¹²⁷ Chit Hlaing, working as an ethnographer among the Zo in the Haka township of the Chin Hills now in Burma, also argues that headmen were the 'real' rulers of communities. Other administrators, such as Neville Edward Parry, did not believe that the chief's

¹²⁰Chatterji, N. (1975). *The Earlier Mizo Society*, Tribal Research Institute Art & Culture Dept. Government of Mizoram, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 34.

¹²¹After annexation of the hills, British political officers would sometimes allot territories and villages to persons who cooperated with them. These men would then be made chiefs of these villages and its inhabitants IN: Chatterji, N., *The Earlier Mizo Society*, pg. 31-35.

¹²²Carey and Tuck, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 125.

¹²³Suan, H. K. K. (2011) "Rethinking 'tribe' identities: The politics of recognition among the Zo in north-east India," *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 45, 2: 157-187, pg. 162.

¹²⁴Stevenson, *The Economics of Central Chin Tribes*, pg. 11-18.

¹²⁵In the Sizang area, this system is referred to as 'Hausa.'

¹²⁶Chit Hlaing is also known as F.K. Lehman. Per his request, the former is used in this dissertation.

¹²⁷Chit Hlaing, *The Structure of the Chin Society*, pg. 152.

powers were superfluous or that one chief ruled over numerous villages. He was stationed among the Zo in the township of Aizawl in the Lushai Hills. There he observed that, "...each village is ruled over by its own chief."¹²⁸ The township of Aizawl was dominated by one ruling clan also referred to as the *Sailos*. In fact, he stated as such and still generalized to other clans and communities, "Each village is ruled over by its own chief. Most of the chiefs belong to the *Sailo* clan, which had established itself as the ruling family before the British took over the hills."¹²⁹

This lack of consensus is indicative of the differing socio-economic cultures of the Zo. As Suan argues, it is not academically sound to make general statements based on limited observation and evidence. In 1893, for example, Reid made statements simplifying the social and political structure of the Zo highlanders,

People [in] this region with dusky tribes,
almost as numerous in dialect and
designation as the villages in which they
live, owning no central authority,
possessing no written language, obeying
but the verbal mandates of their chiefs.¹³⁰

Reid makes major generalizations about Zo highland systems. He was occupied with state expansion, for him, nuance was not essential. Thus, arguing that he was short-sighted is moot. He was acting as a state official not as an ethnographer, although some colonial accounts read similar to later observations made by anthropologists.¹³¹

After annexation, other state officials were also occupied with state expansion and government, but were also interested in more nuanced

¹²⁸Parry, N.E. (1927) *Lushai Custom: A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*. Firma KLM Private, Ltd. on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram: India, pg. 1.

¹²⁹Parry, N.E., *A Monograph*, pg. 1.

¹³⁰Reid, A.S. *Chin-Lushai Land*, pg. 2.

¹³¹Many political officers' diaries and reports read similar to ethnographies. However, these officers were not trained in the social sciences; much of what they wrote was conjecture; their observations were not based on scientifically obtained data.

information about the Zo highlanders.¹³² For example, Parry who was posted among the Lushai a few years later, explained, “A strong chief will control practically everything while a weak chief will be almost entirely be guided by his *Upas* [elders].”¹³³ He continues to explain that a chief’s power is contingent upon his ability to lead, to negotiate and mediate, and to manage his headmen. The village headman was in charge of collecting taxes and dues for the chief.¹³⁴ Anthropologist Chit Hlaing explains further that roles and levels of the chiefs did differ, to some degree, among villages, and was also determined by their ability to lead a raiding expedition and war. Both leadership and raiding required wealth, in the form of weapons, livestock and slaves,¹³⁵ as well as political capital with other [Zo highland] clans and communities with whom to ally.¹³⁶

Zo scholar Vumson notes that although chiefs’ roles differed among communities, chiefs and headmen worked together. Although roles differed among communities, central was the issue of land, the livelihood of the Zo. Thus, all over the Zo highlands, both headmen and chiefs controlled the very lives of ‘their’ villagers for whom land is central.¹³⁷ While Stevenson only focused on chiefs being the ‘lords of the soil’, making decisions on land division, boundaries, and redistributions, headmen participated in and influenced most decisions as well.¹³⁸ Clearly, the political and societal structure of the Zo highlanders is complex and multifaceted. Colonial and contemporary scholars made different observations about the Zo leadership. However, central was always the land issue—the primary cause of tribal conflict. Clearly, colonial scholars such as Edward Leach who studied the Kachin,¹³⁹ N.E. Parry who researched the Lushai, Chit Hlaing and Stevenson

¹³²This does not mean that these state officials did not make any generalization.

¹³³Parry, N.E., *A Monograph*, pg.1.

¹³⁴Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 8.

¹³⁵ For more on slavery in the Northern Arakan Yomas, read for instance: Chatterjee, I. and Eaton, R. (2007). *Slavery and South Asian History*, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis: USA.

¹³⁶Chit Hlaing, *The Structure of the Chin Society*, pg.144-145.

¹³⁷Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 9-10.

¹³⁸Stevenson, *The Economics of Central Chin Tribes*, pg. 81,83, 87, 89.

¹³⁹Leach, E.R. (1954), *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure*. University of London, the Athlone Press: London, pg. Introduction.

who researched the 'Chin,' all made astute observations which earlier colonial officials overlooked. Finally, after annexation, the role of chiefs and headman changed significantly. This change in governance of the Zo and the role of the British is addressed in chapter 3.

Zo Conflicts, Feuds and Wars

The issue of land was paramount for the Zo. Feuds, conflicts and even wars always had some sort of land issue as their nexus. Contemporary Zo scholar from Manipur, L. Lam Khan Piang explains, "The practice of shifting cultivation forced whole villages to search for new land. This constant search causes conflicts, feuds, and hostilities in the Northern Zo highlands; space and suitable land was always an issue."¹⁴⁰ In many cases, communities made up of numerous clans had to split up in order to survive given that large areas of land were scarce. These moves which halted interactions and encounters, also created new communities. As Mangkhosat Kipgen explains:

It was hard to find a flat land large enough to hold large settlements with the result that the group began to split up into smaller groups, often the same family or clan settling in the same village. On account of the difficulties of communication between the now scattered villages maintaining contact with each other become [sic] difficult and infrequent. Naturally, therefore, each locality developed its own way of speaking, dressing, manners and customs.... On those few occasions when they meet it was often in the form of conflict over jhum lands, which created and perpetuated clan feuds.¹⁴¹

Some colonial administrators did not realize that the quest for arable land and feuds among clans was inextricably tied. As stated previously,

¹⁴⁰Piang, K. "Kinship, Territory and Politics," pg. 34.

¹⁴¹Kipgen, M. (1997), *Christianity and Mizo Culture*, pg. 42.

Shakespeare indicated, he assumed that the Zo were, “semi-nomadic.”¹⁴² In fact, some of the feuds were so massive that they occasionally escalated into full-blown wars. One war between two groups of *Sailos*¹⁴³ and their clans (the ruling chiefs of the Zo in the Lushai Hills) lasted around three years.¹⁴⁴

Conflict and wars also sprang up for other reasons, albeit the nexus always seemed to be land related. Some were over tributes, revenge for taking family members as slaves, some disputes over cooperation with the Burmans of the plains or other alliances with rival groups. Vumson details several wars among Zo highland communities as well as large-scale wars between the Zo and other communities in Manipur, Tripura, and Nagaland. One massive war between the Zo highlanders and the Shan of the Kale and Yazagyo valleys began around the year 1850.¹⁴⁵ Only when the British subdued the clan in 1900, did the war cease.^{146,147}

The re-location of whole villages, the differing roles of chiefs who sometimes ruled just one village and in other cases ruled over several villages, even ones that were located significant distances away, confused early colonials. Communities whose loyalty changed from one chief to another when they relocated or when a new chief was chosen based on his abilities, made later scholars reconsider the role of chiefs, as both Chit Hlaing and Stevenson have shown. Clan allegiances changed through marriages and new kinship structures arose. All these dynamics of Zo highland life was markedly different from people of the plains. Colonial officers and administrators did not understand the complexity of highland life. In fact, the highlanders were often dismissed as savage and primitive. These assertions implied a lack of sophistication in all aspects of their lives from cultivation practices to how

¹⁴²Shakespear, J. (1902), Mizoram State Archives, Aizawl: Mizoram, MS/CB5/Pol 54 IN: Pachau, J. (2011) '*On Being Mizo: A Re-Analysis of Issues of Identity from India's Northeast*'. Dept. of Anthropology, Rhodes House, Bodelein Libraries, MS. D. Phil. c. 23841, Oxford University: Oxford, Footnote 88, pg. 128.

¹⁴³*Sailos* refers to the ruling clan.

¹⁴⁴Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 84.

¹⁴⁵Specifically, the war was between the Zo clan 'the Kamhaus' and the Shan.

¹⁴⁶Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 88.

¹⁴⁷ For more details on tribal warfare, read for instance: Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 40-105.

they perceive the world. Realizing this, Stevenson in 1943, commented on European arrogance:

We have too often assumed that we know best in all things—both spiritual and temporal—and grievously underestimated the wisdom of those who formulated tribal custom in the past. They had to build a structure that would last—and it has lasted.¹⁴⁸

Nomenclature: The Naming Game

Deciphering the many terms for the Zo is a complicated task requiring knowledge of both colonial and Zo history.¹⁴⁹ For example, today a Zo from the Northern Chin Hills in Burma may use the district area or township known as ‘Tedim’ as an identity marker. Tedim Township is a colonial construct, however. Tedim is named after a stream of the same name where the British set up a colonial post after annexation in 1889.¹⁵⁰ Tedim, as an identity marker, has now become fixed by the Burmese state, by linguists and other scholars.¹⁵¹ Some Zo have adopted this identity marker as well. The Zo from this area are now referred to as ‘Tedim-Chin.’ Other colonial terms for townships such as ‘Falam’ and ‘Haka’ were also devised during the colonial occupation to refer to people of the hills. These, too, were colonial posts. Here the people are now referred to as the ‘Falam-Chin’ or the ‘Haka-Chin.’ This, however, is a result of colonial simplification necessary for census taking. Michael W. Charney explains that when the colonial state expanded to the rural areas, in this case the Northern Arakan Yomas, “...identities and identification of people were fluid, syncretic, multiple, or even

¹⁴⁸Stevenson, *The Economics of Central Chin Tribes*, pg. 189.

¹⁴⁹See for instance: Chatterjee, S. (1995). *Mizo Chiefs and Chieftdoms*. M.D. Publications: Mizoram, pg. 174-176.

¹⁵⁰Carey and Tuck, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 14.

¹⁵¹See for Instance: Khoi, L. T., (2002), “Conceptual analysis of Tedim Chin ‘heart’ idioms.” *Mon-Khmer Studies: A Journal of Southeast Asian Linguistics and Languages*, 32, 163-174., and Suan, K., (2011), “Rethinking ‘tribe’ identities: The politics of recognition among the Zo in north-east India,” *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 45(2), 157-187.

undefined...”¹⁵² To deal with these indeterminate identities, colonial administrators assigned nomenclatures and regions to classify, categorize and order the Zo, first according to locale.

After annexation of the hills, part of the colonial policy was to civilize the Zo. For one, it was a colonial objective to impart the Zo with different methods of cultivation.¹⁵³ The British’s primary purpose was to stop the Zo from continuously relocating to fresh land and instead to settle in a permanent area, as well as to stop raiding the plains. James Scott argues that it is in the state’s interest to have a settled population. Settled citizens are countable and thus taxable.¹⁵⁴ In this way, the Zo were now fixed to specific regions and were classified according to their locations. Later, British officials would classify the Zo by determining root languages, tracing possible migration patterns and attaching them to specific locations using linguistic methods. Their locations, which became their dialectal group, were coupled with the classification of “Chin” and of “Lushai,” as well as “Kuki.”¹⁵⁵

This method of classification, however, was fraught with problems and debate among Company scholars. The Census of Burma 1911 reads:

No group of languages presents greater difficulties of classification than the Chin. It is unfortunate that Dr. Grierson and Mr. Lowis, approaching the subject from different points of view, the linguistic and administrative, have adopted rather conflicting lines of division of the component parts. While both adopt the geographical division of northern, central and southern,

¹⁵²Charney, M.W. (2008), *A History of Modern Burma*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, pg. 8.

¹⁵³The British believed that permanent cultivations were essential, see for instance: NAM (1905-1906). “Report on the Administration of the Chin Hills for the Year 1905-06,” Acc. 19011, pg. 4-5.

¹⁵⁴Scott, J., *The Art of NOT being Governed*, pg. 5.

¹⁵⁵Grierson, A. (1904). *Linguistic Survey of India, Part III: Specimens of the Kuki-Chin and Burma Group*. Office of the Superintendent, Government Printing Press: Calcutta, pg. 1.

Dr. Grierson puts the Chinbôks, the Yindus
and the Khamis in the southern group
whereas Mr. Lowis places them along the
central group...¹⁵⁶

Colonial scholars could not agree on even basics such as geography, that is, what constituted south, central and so on. Other debates also ensued. These were along the lines of the nomenclatures assigned to the people. Most colonial officers, administrators and officials realized that the nomenclatures of 'Chin,' 'Kuki,' and even 'Lushai' were colonial constructs. The Zo highlanders did not use these terms for self-identification. However, colonials were constrained by their need to 'map' the people, to locate them in specific areas and to differentiate them according to the Government's tables and benchmarks.

'Chin' is a constructed term taken from Burmese informants.¹⁵⁷ Some historians of the Zo, however, quote Linguist and Burma scholar, Gordon Luce to support their argument that evidence exists that the term 'Chin' existed before the arrival of the British¹⁵⁸ and therefore 'Chin' was not assigned to the Zo during the colonial era. This argument, however, does not support the notion that the Zo used the term 'Chin' for self-identification. Luce deciphered a stone inscription at Pagan¹⁵⁹ chiselled during the era of King Kyansittha (1084-1112). During his study of the Pagan inscriptions, in 1954, came across a reference to the 'Khayns.'¹⁶⁰ By 1954, the term 'Chin' had gained legitimacy; it had been in use as early as in the mid-nineteenth century when colonial intelligence seekers had begun to refer to a people

¹⁵⁶*Census of Burma 1911* (In Two Volumes) by Morgan Webb. Manas Publications, Delhi: India, Vol. 1, pg. 196.

¹⁵⁷Soong Chul Ro (2007), "Naming a People: British Frontier Management in Eastern Bengal and the Ethnic Categories of the Kuki-Chin: 1760-1860." Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Hull, pg. 22.

¹⁵⁸Sakhong, L. (2000), "*Religion and Politics among the Chin People in Burma (1896-1949)*," Unpublished Theology Dissertation, Department of Theology, Uppsala University, Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, Stockholm: Sweden, pg. 62.

¹⁵⁹Presented in 1956 in a public lecture at the Burma Research Society in Rangoon and published in 1959.

¹⁶⁰Hla Pe (1959), Review of G. H. Luce, and Pe Maung Tin 'Inscriptions of Burma. Portfolio IV. Down to 702 B.E. (1340 A.D.).—Portfolio V. 703–726 B.E. (1341–1364 A.D.)' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 22, pg. 177-177.

known as ‘Chin.’¹⁶¹ It was not a new term. Luce argued that the term, ‘Khayns’ meant, “fellow, companion, friend or ally.”¹⁶² Luce, when presenting his paper on the ‘University Linguistics Project to the Chin Hills of 1954’ to the Burma Research Society, added that he noted that nowhere on the inscription did it read that the Burmese and the ‘Chin’ ever went to war or experienced any sort of conflict.¹⁶³ This supported his argument that ‘khayn’ meant ‘friend.’

Review of the inscription, however, does not suggest that the word ‘Khayn’ refers to ‘friend or ally.’ In Burmese, the syllable ‘khayn’ requires additional syllables to make the word ‘friend’ or ‘ally. The Burmese word ‘khayn’, or rather when transliterated ‘gyin’, does not mean friend on its own. Friend, when transliterated from Burmese reads, *Thu-nge-gyin*.¹⁶⁴ In this way, it is not likely that Luce interpreted this correctly. Still Luce went as far as arguing that the Burmese had fought many others, but not the Chin with whom, “...it was very likely...peaceful trading operations [were carried-out].” This is rather unlikely. All other records indicate that there were raids from highlanders to the plains that were not peaceful. Furthermore, according to Luce, the inscription specifies that the ‘Chin’ dwelt around the area of Monywa which is 200km east of the Zo highlands in the plains.

Another argument made by Chit Hlaing in 1957 was that ‘gyin’ may also mean ‘basket.’¹⁶⁵ Which, in fact, when coupled with ‘lo’ refers to something ‘round’ made of wicker, cane or straw, such as a basket. Vumson also argues that ‘Chin,’ while being a Burmese word, does not mean friend rather it may mean ‘basket.’ Baskets carried by Zo are tall, are carried on their backs and extend a foot or two beyond the top of their heads. They are made of wicker and, thus gleam in the sunlight. He argues that the Burmese, while travelling

¹⁶¹ The earliest known usage of ‘Chin’ was from Father Vincenzo Sangermano who referred to ‘Kieenn’ mountains in the mid to late 18th century. Over time the denotation for mountain was also used for the people. Sangermano’s account is analysed below.

¹⁶² Luce, G. H (1954), *Chin Hills Linguistic Tour* read at an ordinary meeting of the Burma Research Society held on July 26th July, 1956. Myanmar Book Center and Book Promotion and Services, Ltd. Bangkok: Thailand, pg. 24-25.

¹⁶³ Luce, G.H. (1956), *Chin Hills Linguistics Tour*, pg. 19-31.

¹⁶⁴ Nolan, S. (2008). *Pocket Burmese Dictionary*, Periplus: Singapore, pg. 60.

¹⁶⁵ Chit Hlaing, *The Structure of the Chin Society*, pg. 3.

the Irrawaddy River to the Chindwin, saw a basket-carrying people trailing around the mountain tracks. The Burmese looking up from the valleys saw these 'walking baskets' on the mountain sides and began referring to the Chindwin Valley as the 'Valley of Baskets.' The word for basket, 'Gyin-lo' may have evolved into just 'Khayn' or 'Chin.'¹⁶⁶

Chit Hlaing, however, now refutes this meaning explaining that 'basket' in Burmese is spelled with a medial 'r' (*yayit*), while 'Khayn' is spelt with a medial 'y' (*ya pin*). 'In fact, the *only* thing that the inscription indicates is that at one point in history, around the 11th century, Burmese began using the word 'Khayn' in reference to the Zo highlanders. While the explanation of its meaning 'basket' 'or friend' has been accepted by countless scholars, this argument has successfully been refuted by Chit Hlaing. In fact, he provides *the* most compelling explanation for the origin and the meaning of the word 'khayn' to date. The word 'khayn' means neither friend nor basket. Actually, the word 'khayn' is an old southern Chin word. Chit Hlaing explains:

In Cho ~ Dai languages of the Southern Chin State the word exists still. In Cho it is written Chang, but more properly sounds like *k'chang* and in the Hlet Long dialect ... it is pronounced *kxang*...So, yes, 'Chin' comes, via Burmese, from an original Chin word meaning, in fact, 'a people'...¹⁶⁷

Chit Hlaing continues by deducing that the Burmese who chiselled the stone slab at Pagan in the 11th century must have asked the southern Zo who dwelt in the mountains. They replied in Cho, that there were 'people' up there. But the Burmese, not understanding Cho, thought that 'Chang' was an ethnic nomenclature and began referring to the Zo of the western Yomas across the Chindwin River as 'Chin.' A further explanation might be that the Burmese were referring to fields in the mountains, perhaps even rice terraces. The inscription at Pagan reads "Na Khayn."¹⁶⁸ In Shan, fields are called, 'Na.'

¹⁶⁶Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 3-4.

¹⁶⁷Chit Hlaing, "Ethnicity Theory," pg. 1-7.

¹⁶⁸Luce, G.H. (1956), *Chin Hills Linguistics Tour*, pg. 19-31, Footnote 1.

Thus, the Southern Chin may have been asked who the fields belong to in the mountains. To which the Chin answered, ‘those fields are people-made’ or ‘they belong to people.’ Either way, the Burmese must have also begun referring to the mountains and the valley, as ‘Chindwin.’ Again, Chit Hlaing’s argument is, by far, the most compelling and realistic. Either way, it as has been very clearly shown, ‘Chin’ is an assigned term, not used by the Zo for self-identification.

In fact, Father Vincenzo Sangermano wrote about the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas around the year 1783, over a hundred years before the Company annexed the hills. This is the first account that appears on record and one that influenced others participating in the colonial endeavour.¹⁶⁹ Sangermano worked as a priest and missionary in Ava and while there studied Burmese history, literature, Burmese institutions and cosmology. In his compiled text, *Burma a Hundred Years ago*, Sangermano described a “...petty nation called Jò...in the ‘Chien’ Mountains.”¹⁷⁰ He referred to the Yomas as the ‘Chin Mountains.’ This, again, is in-line with the notion that the Burmese named the mountains and the valley of Chindwin.¹⁷¹ However, it is evident that Sangermano did not venture to the hills himself.

Sangermano relied on informants. These informants were most likely the Burmans of the plains--the people with whom Sangermano had the most interactions.¹⁷² However, later colonial administrators mistakenly began recording ‘Chin’ as being the proper nomenclature for the Zo of the eastern Northern Arakan Yomas. By doing so, they clumped various clans and communities together and referred to all of them, on the eastern side of the Northern Arakan Yomas, as ‘Chin.’ This error led to decades of confusion and debate. In fact, this nomenclature conundrum is a complex issue and

¹⁶⁹An earlier account of a T’ang Dynasty official is also on record now. This account was translated only in 196, however and made no impact on colonial classification systems or nomenclatures. This account is addressed in Chapter 2.

¹⁷⁰Sangermano, V. (1833), *A Description of the Burmese Empire*, (Reprinted 1966, Susil Gupta, Santiago de Compostela: Spain), pg. 43.

¹⁷¹Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 4-7.

¹⁷²Unfortunately, Sangermano does not cite or indicate his informants, unlike Buchanan, who made it clear from whom he received intelligence about the highlanders.

central to many histories written by contemporary Zo scholars in modern day.

The complex issue of identities and identifications are apparent in how a modern Zo might express these. Within the region of Tedim, mentioned earlier as having been a colonial post, are a number of clans such as the Kamhau and the Suantak. Kam Hau was a chief of the Sukte clan who ruled much of the area in the 18th Century.¹⁷³ However, he did not rule over the Suantak clan. Hence, although all the Zo in the Tedim area may be referred to and refer to themselves as ‘Tedim’ there remains some separate identities. That is, a Suantak might refer to herself as ‘Tedim,’ but would also qualify this term by indicating that while she is Tedim; she is also Suantak (who’s clan was never ruled by Kam Hau of the Suktes).¹⁷⁴ While Tedim is a locality, Suantak is a clan. In fact, there are other Suantak in Manipur and Mizoram.¹⁷⁵ This is but one example of a complex identity conundrum which also exists elsewhere in both Burma and in India.¹⁷⁶

Some Zo in India are referred to as the ‘Kuki’. According to Reid, ‘Kuki’ is a Bengali term meaning ‘hill-men’ or ‘highlander.’¹⁷⁷ The term ‘Kuki’ was also derived through informants.¹⁷⁸ One political officer, Mr. Edgar, explained:

I have never found any trace of a common name for the tribe among them, though they seem to consider different families as

¹⁷³Pum Khan Pau (2009), “The Sukte Paramouncy in Northern Chin Hills” in *Chin: History, Culture & Identity*. (edt) K. Robin, Dominant Publishers and Distributors: New Delhi, pg. 128-147.

¹⁷⁴This example is based on my own clan identity. I am a Sizang of Tedim but refer to myself as Tedim when speaking with other Zo from other areas within the Chin Hills of Burma. When speaking with others from the Tedim area, I might refer to myself as Suantak of Sizang specifically. I would not use the term Chin nor Tedim in my everyday life, rather Zo. Zo is a unifying term encompassing all the people of the Northern Arakan Yomas.

¹⁷⁵Khongsai, L. Ngamkhohao Haokip and Michael Lunminthang (eds.) (2012), *Kuki Society: Past, Present, Future*. Kuki Research Forum’s Publication, New Delhi: Maxford Books, 2011. *Journal of North East India Studies*, 1(1), 100-106.

¹⁷⁶The Suantak are also known as the Vaipheis and are grouped into the assigned nomenclature of ‘Kuki’ in Manipur, *see for instance*: Haokip, P.S. (1998). *Zale’N-Gam: The Kuki Nation*. Saurabh Printers: India, pg. 54-55.

¹⁷⁷Reid, A.S., *Chin-Lushai Land*, pg. 5.

¹⁷⁸The role of informants is explored in Chapter 2.

belonging to a single group, which is certainly coextensive with what we call the Kookie tribe.¹⁷⁹

Clearly, Political Officer Edgar acknowledged that there are different families or clans and communities, but makes a rather weak argument that they enjoy some form of unity or that they all use the term 'Kuki.' In fact, Linguist Abraham Grierson made clear that the word 'Kuki' is a Bengalese word for highlander.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, the British used the term 'Kuki' for one group of clans and then 'new Kuki' for yet other clans within the Northern Arakan Yomas.¹⁸¹ Again, this term, like 'Chin' was derived through informants of the plains. Aware of this, Sub-Divisional Officer to North Cachar Hills, Charles Arthur Soppitt, in 1893, wrote:

The designation of Kuki is never used by the tribes themselves, though many of them answer to it when addressed, from knowing it to be the Bengali or a plains term for their people.¹⁸²

The term 'Kuki,' like 'Chin,' has been discussed for more than a century.¹⁸³ One contemporary Zo scholar explains that 'Kuki' is a Chinese word meaning 'people of the Ku lake.'¹⁸⁴ This, however, has gotten very little support from other Zo scholars. Despite this nomenclature being obviously derived

¹⁷⁹ Woodthorpe, *The Lushai*, pg. 10.

¹⁸⁰ Grierson, *Linguistic Survey*, pg. 1.

¹⁸¹The British first referred to the Hmars as 'Kuki' derived from the Bengalis. Later, they used the same term for the clans of Thado and Paite and employed the term, 'New Kuki.'

¹⁸²Soppitt, C.A. (1893). *A Short Account of the Kuki-Lushai Tribes on the North-East Frontier*, Firma KLM Private, Ltd, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 2.

¹⁸³See for example: C. A. Soppitt, *A Short Account*, pg.1-2; Anthony Gilchrist McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, Firma KLM on behalf of the Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Government of Mizoram: India, pg.19-20, G. H. Luce (1985), *Phases of Pre-Pagan Burma: Languages and History*, Oxford University Press: London, pg. 80-81; Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 3; Sing Khaw Khai, "The Theological Concept of Zo in the Chin Tradition and Culture." (B.R.E. thesis, Burma Institute of Theology, 1984), 1-6; Gangte, T.S. *The Kukis*, pg. 19-21, 226; CITED IN: Soong Chul Ro (2007). "Naming a People," pg. 22, Footnote 11.

¹⁸⁴Verghese, C.G. and Thanzawna, R. L. (1997), *History of the Mizos, Vol. I*, Vikas Publishing House and Kay Kay Printers: Delhi, pg. xv.

through informants, many Zo of today have adopted this nomenclature, especially those living in Manipur.¹⁸⁵

Colonial administrators may have also made mistakes with the Zo in the west. This however is still inconclusive. The term 'Lushai' may or may not be a colonial construct. Lieutenant Colonel John Shakespear, in 1912, argued that 'Lushai' refers to the names of the dominant clan.¹⁸⁶ Colonial officers such as Thomas Herbert Lewin, however, explained that 'Lushai' means 'decapitator' or 'head-hunter.' He believed that the term was a compound word, 'lu' for head and 'shai' for, 'to cut' resulting in 'head-hunter.'¹⁸⁷ This meaning was also inferred by informants. It can be argued that because the Zo became somewhat notorious for headhunting, the people of the plains, who were in constant fear of them, referred to them as head-hunters. Other early company officers to the 'Lushai Hills' recorded that the nomenclature 'Lushai' refers to the way in which they wore their hair--in a knot on the back of their heads.¹⁸⁸ This appears also to be incorrect.¹⁸⁹

Today there is some consensus that 'Lu' means head and 'shai' means long. Thus, it either means, 'long hair' or 'long face'. It is important to note, however, that as late as 1949, Zo informants explained to Political Officer Major Anthony Gilchrist McCall that, "...this explanation finds little or no support locally. The origin of Lu seems totally obscure."¹⁹⁰ The Zo in the east refer to the Lushai as Hualngo.¹⁹¹ This word cannot be determined to be correct either. Thus, as far as the historical records reveal, we know that Chin is a Burmese construct most likely meaning 'men' or 'people' mistaken by 11th

¹⁸⁵Haokip, P.S., *Zale'N-Gam*, pg. 3, 50-51.

¹⁸⁶Shakespear, *The Lushai Kuki*, pg. 60.

¹⁸⁷Lewin's theory is based on his knowledge of the Dulhian, the Lushai language. He inferred that 'lu' means head, and 'shai' means to cut. Lewin, T.H. (1912). *A Fly on the Wheel or How I Helped to Govern India*. Firma KLM on behalf of the Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 244-245.

¹⁸⁸Woodthorpe, R.G. (1873). *The Lushai Expedition of 1871-72*. Hurst and Blackett: London, pg. 71, 76, 193.

¹⁸⁹ It is important to note that during WWII, the hill battalions made up of Chin, Kachin and Naga were allowed to grow their hair long and wear it in distinctive knots to indicate to white 'race' they belong. Henceforth, some accounts may have been influenced by this practice. <http://www.burmastar.org.uk/hyde.htm> (last visited April 9, 2013)

¹⁹⁰McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, pg. 19.

¹⁹¹Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 6.

century Burmese to refer to the people of the Northern Arakan Yomas, the Zo. Kuki means highlander in Bengali, but the term Lushai is yet to be analysed thoroughly for its origin and meaning. For certain, it is not a proper name of a clan or group. Thus, it too, is most likely a foreign word derived through informants of the plains.

Either way, according to political administrator John Shakespeare, the Lushai and the Chin share an origin who, "...sprung from the union of Burma..."¹⁹² They share an ancestry; both groups of highlanders are Zo. In fact he also clearly stated, "Nevertheless there is no doubt that the Kukis, Chins, and Lushais are all of the same race."¹⁹³ Adam Scott Reid, much later wrote:

Previous to the Expedition of 1871-72, the wild tribes which had been in the habit of raiding our North-East Frontier, were generally spoken of as 'Kukis'—a Bengali word meaning hill men or highlanders. Since that event, however, the terms 'Lushai' had come into more common use...I believe the Lushais call themselves 'Zao.'¹⁹⁴

Despite this overwhelmingly compelling evidence, some continue to argue about these three terms. One contemporary theologian and politician, Lian Hmung Sakhong, argues that 'Chin' is not a colonial construct and that, for centuries, the Zo have used it for self-identification.¹⁹⁵

He uses a Zo myth of origin to make his claims. This myth is referred to as the 'Chhinlung' cave myth. According to him, this myth existed all

¹⁹²Shakespeare, *The Lushai Kuki*, pg. 2-3.

¹⁹³*Ibid*, pg. 8.

¹⁹⁴ Reid, A.S. (1893). *Chin-Lushai Land: A Description of the Various Expeditions into the Chin-Lushai Hills and the Final Annexation of the Country*. Firma KLM, Private, Ltd., Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 5.

¹⁹⁵ Sakhong received his Doctorate in Theology from the Theology dept. of Uppsala University, Sweden. He is also 'Chin' politician holding numerous positions in organizations related to the pro-democracy movements for Burma, e.g. as Chairman for the Chin National Council and General Secretary for Ethnic Nationalities Council.

throughout the Northern Arakan Yomas from west to east. This statement is grossly exaggerated, however. Only a small number of clans in the western Yomas, now Mizoram and Manipur share this myth.¹⁹⁶ Again, there is no evidence that the Zo ever used the term 'chin' when referring to themselves. Sakhong, however, has tried to connect this western Yomas myth of origin to the term 'chin.' He unprecedentedly uses the loosely similar spelling of the myth, 'Chhinlung,' to make his point. In his text, *In Search of Chin Identity*, he changes the spelling from chhinglung to 'Chinlung' to support his claim.¹⁹⁷ However, 'Chhinlung' is pronounced, s-hin-lung, there is not 'ch' sound. Thus, 'chin' and 'Chhinlung' are not related, at least not phonetically. Furthermore, Sakhong argues that this chhinglung cave exists somewhere in China. To formulate this claim, Sakhong relied only on the writings of politician Hrang Nawl and refers to him as a 'prominent' scholar.

Hrang Nawl was not an academic. He was an anti-Ne Win rebel from the eastern Yomas or the 'Chin Hills.' It was his aim to bring independence to the Chin Hills of Burma. To evade Ne Win's troops, he spent time hiding in Mizoram. Later he was jailed at Mandalay. It is probable that he met Zo from the eastern Yomas during these years. From them he must have learned of the chhinlung cave myth; it did not exist in the 'Chin Hills.' In fact, none of the colonial officers or missionaries posted in the eastern Yomas, or 'Chin Hills' ever referred to this myth or the use of 'chin' for self-identification.¹⁹⁸

Not even political officers Bertram Sausmarez Carey and Henry Newman Tuck in their epic two volume Gazetteer on the Chin Hills published in 1896 refer to this myth. That is, in no way can Sakhong's claim be substantiated. He must have realized this. Later, Sakhong disaffirms himself. He, as a

¹⁹⁶Vumson (2004), Book Review and Discussion: *Religion and Politics among the Chin People in Burma (1996 –1949)*, Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia LXXX, Uppsala University by Lian H. Sakhong, zomilibrary.com <http://zomilibrary.com/main/files/download/454/fullsize> (last visited February 1, 2013).

¹⁹⁷Sakhong, L. (2003). *In Search of Chin Identity: A Study in Religion, Politics and Ethnic Identity in Burma*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Monograph Series, No. 91, pg. 2.

¹⁹⁸Colonial officers posted in the Chin Hills include B.S. Carey and H.N. Tuck, Captain N.E. Newland, and missionaries include Arthur and Laura Carson, Dr. East, J.H. Cope, B. Strait, among others.

member of The Chin Forum,¹⁹⁹ a non-governmental organization occupied with drafting a constitution for the future independent ‘Chinland’ writes, “The term ‘Chin’ is believed to have been derived from the term *Khrang* or *Khlang*, which in the Southern Chin dialect still means people...”²⁰⁰ It appears that Sakhong changed his mind from his earlier claim of a shared chhinlung myth to the term being derived from the Southern Chin. He may have realized that his claim of the chhinlung myth, first existing among the Zo in the east as well as it being responsible for coining the nomenclature ‘Chin’ cannot be supported. At the same time, he repeated that ‘Chin’ was derived from the chhinlung cave myth in his most recent publication in an edited volume, *Chin: History, Culture and Identity* of 2009.²⁰¹ In this publication he also mentions Chit Hlaing’s argument, but does not credit him. Thus, it is unclear why he contradicts himself, in this case within the same article. Either way, the connection between Chin and chhinlung remains as a simple case of hearsay bearing no academic merit.

This is but one example of how the history of the Zo is constructible due to the lack of a writing system before the arrival of Christian missionaries. It further reveals at least one political agenda of those Zo now in the Union of Burma legally deemed as the ‘Chin.’ That is, by claiming that ‘chin’ is the correct nomenclature for the people in the eastern Yomas, many of the other clans and groups, now across the border in India, are dismissed. That is, working for the pro-democracy movement in Burma and rights for the ethnic minorities such as the ‘Chin’ alongside the Karen, the Kachin, the Mon and so on, is a clear-cut agenda. By excluding themselves from the Zo re-unification movements that have sprung up in north eastern India, the ‘Chin’ are maintaining a separate, clearly stated, political agenda.

By accepting another nomenclature and claiming another identity they may be seemingly working toward a different political objective that may negate the pro-democracy movement of Burma. If the term Zo is accepted and used

¹⁹⁹www.chinforum.org

²⁰⁰Sakhong, L. et. al. (2003). *The Fourth Initial Draft of the Constitution of Chinland, Working Group I*, Chin Forum, Chin Forum: Washington D.C., pg. 58.

²⁰¹Sakhong, L. (2009), “The Origin of the Chin,” IN: *Chin: History, Culture and Identity*. Dominant Publishers and Distributors: Delhi, pg. 8-33.

by Sakhong and other 'Chin' politicians, it may appear that they are politically compromised. That is, funding entities, policy makers and other political parties may be confused. It must be noted, however, that some 'Chin,' as part of the pro-democracy movement in Burma accept that they are Zo, but use 'Chin' because the world recognizes the nomenclature 'Chin' as being an ethnic minority of Burma. For them, this term is instrumental, even if it is not factual. Sakhong, however, argues that 'Chin' was used since, 'time immemorial.'

Thus, politicians like Sakhong and others, including Pro-Democracy activist and former Member of Parliament in Burma, Lian Uk,²⁰² another 'Chin' politician, insist on rejecting the word 'Zo' or any variations of it and accepts only 'Chin.'²⁰³ In fact, Lian Uk adamantly protests against the term 'Zo' being used. According to him, its only meaning is 'cool' as in temperature. Furthermore, he argues that the 'Chin' people were named after Chindwin, instead of the other way around as is argued above. Lian Uk, although having been exposed to Sakhong's argument that 'Chin' stems from the chhinlung cave myth, rejects this and writes, "...no scholar thus far can give a satisfactory explanation about the origin of the term 'Chin'..." He continues to argue that although 'Chin' might be assigned by outsiders, "The people lose nothing by accepting [it]; it rather helps them in establishing relations with the international community."²⁰⁴ Lian Uk's concern is only of a political nature.

In fact, other than the Zo around the area of Haka and Thantlang, 'Zo' is an accepted, general word for self-identification. It is important to note that only the Zo around Haka and Thantlang use the word, 'zo' to refer to the communities they dominate and their neighbours to the south. The southerners are considered less civilized by the Zo of Haka.²⁰⁵ The Zo of Haka, throughout history, have been known to dominate and oppress other

²⁰²Lian Uk was Chit Hlaing's interpreter (and informant) during his fieldwork which was conducted in his home township of Haka.

²⁰³Uk, L. (2009). "Emergence of the Chin Hills Regulation 1896: Its Scope and Importance in History" IN: *Chin: History, Culture & Identity*, ed. Robin, K. Dominant Publishers and Distributors: New Delhi, pg. 261-286.

²⁰⁴*Ibid*, pg. 267.

²⁰⁵Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 4-6.

Zo communities. In fact, they are referred to as ‘Hal Ka’ by other Zo. According to Chit Hlaing, ‘Hal Ka’ means ‘bitter request.’²⁰⁶ Thus, they reject ‘Zo’ as a means of self-identification. At the same time, Chit Hlaing explains that they refer to themselves as ‘zo’ in their prayers when referring to themselves in relation to the plains. That is, when they pray that *their* ‘Zo Country’ may be given the abundance of the plains.²⁰⁷ When they refer to themselves as ‘Zo’ however, it tends to be a pejorative term meaning ‘periphery’ or ‘less civilized’ (in relation to the plains people). With the campaigns to redress the nomenclature ‘Zo’ and its many political and unifying organizations of the same name, some ‘Chin’ politicians try to make it clear that they, in no part, participate in Zo reunification organizations. They further make clear that they do not believe in their political causes nor claims of a shared society which may be defined as a Zo nation as explained in the introduction.²⁰⁸

Furthermore, Lian Sakhong takes the debate one step further. He insists that the ‘Chin’ and the ‘Zomi’ are different ‘tribes’ altogether.²⁰⁹ In his *Theology of Divinity (T.D.)* dissertation, *Religion and Politics among the Chin People in Burma (1896-1949)* he often refers to another tribe, “...around Tedim as the Zomi.”²¹⁰ He also makes strong claims about the differences in these ‘tribes’. For instance, according to Sakhong, the Zomi volunteered to be in the Labour Corps for the allied forces in WWI.²¹¹ They were sent to France, Mesopotamia and Iran where, according to him, the Zo were very impressed by western civilization. The ‘Haka-Chin,’ however, chose to stay at home and ‘defend their homeland.’ Abroad, the Zomi realized that the European God was more

²⁰⁶Chit Hlaing, “Ethnicity Theory, pg.1-7.

²⁰⁷Chit Hlaing, “Ethnicity Theory, pg.1-7.

²⁰⁸In 2009, while conducting archival research in Mizoram, some of the ‘Chin’ pro-democracy movement politicians met there (Chin Forum and Chin National Front). It is easy for ‘Chin’ to cross the border from Burma to Mizoram; hence many came from Burma. When the Zo Reunification organization group (ZORO) invited them to a Zo conference, the ‘Chin’ declined stating that first, Burma must achieve democracy, only then can they focus on Zo unification.

²⁰⁹The second syllable ‘mi’ means ‘people.’ That is Zomi means ‘Zo people.’ This, however, has also been a point of contention. T. Gougin, Manipur politician and founder of the Zomi National Congress rejects the usage of only ‘Zo’ given that in certain contexts this term is derogatory meaning ‘less civilized.’ This is further explored in Chapter 5.

²¹⁰Sakhong, *Religion and Politics*, pg. 232-233.

²¹¹*Ibid.*, pg. 252.

powerful than the *Kuah-hrum*, Zo god. Thus, the Zomi converted *en masse*, after returning from the west. Sakhong makes a clear distinction between Chin and ‘Zomi’ implying that the Chin are more loyal and less influenced by western forces. That is, there is an implication that the ‘Zomi’ are not as loyal to the homeland when compared to the Haka who refused to go abroad and instead stayed behind for the sake of the fatherland. While he recognizes that there are kin in Manipur and Mizoram, he argues that Zo should, categorically, be replaced by ‘Chin.’ Again, however, he does not participate nor attend to the academic literature or political arguments addressing the political borders running through the Northern Arakan Yomas.

Either way, the Zo are also in the Southern Arakan Yomas, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh and in Naga Districts of Burma.²¹² It is also important to note that there is no evidence, either way, that the Naga are related to the Zo. This is not addressed in this dissertation. That is, given the limited scope of this dissertation, this study is confined to the Chin Hills of Burma, Mizoram and Manipur. In both Mizoram and in Manipur, ‘Zo’ has, on the whole, been accepted as a general nomenclature for all of the highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas despite Sakhong and other Chin politicians’ assertion that ‘Zo’ is in no way related to ‘Chin.’ In fact, Sakhong disputes Sangermano’s account boldly stating in a footnote that Zo scholars such as Vum Ko Hau and Sing Khaw Khai, “...quite knowingly,” misinterpreted or misrepresented Sangermano’s account of the petty kingdom called ‘Jo’ and argues that it was simply another tribe called Zomi which is an offshoot of Chin.²¹³ Suffice it to say, Sakhong’s reading of history is questionable. He seems to be revealing a larger political agenda. This possible agenda is addressed in Chapter 5.

With literacy coming to the different parts of the Northern Arakan Yomas, at different times in history, through different people and organizations, the spelling of the nomenclature Zo has taken a competitive turn. In fact, just the spelling can cause hot debates. First, the former ‘Lushai’ are now the ‘Mizo.’

²¹² There exists in argument that the Naga are also Zo. This, however, has not been addressed from an academic perspective and is beyond the scope of this dissertation. This author does not make any such claim.

²¹³Sakhong, *In Search of Chin Identity*, pg. 62, footnote 18.

‘Mizo’ literally means ‘people of the hills.’ However, Thanskhomay S. Gangte, who studies the history of the ‘Kuki’ in Manipur, argues that ‘Mi-zo’ is awkward way of organizing the syllables. He indicates that ‘Mi’ means man and that ‘Zo’ means hill. Therefore, the term ‘Mizo’ means ‘Man-Hill.’²¹⁴ He clearly implies that Zomi should be used instead of Mizo. Zomi literally translated means ‘Zo people.’ Thus, Zomi is the most accepted term.²¹⁵ Still, various groups continue to reject the usage of ‘Zo’ since it also refers to, a) a cooler climate and b) uncivilized persons.

Some scholars simply use Zo and Zomi interchangeably. Much of this confusion stems from the colonial records. They referred to the Zo using a number of different spellings such as Jo, Yaw, Yo, Shou, Zao, Zou and so on. Today, Zo is also used to replace the assigned terms of Chin, Lushai, and Kuki and includes Mizo as well. In this dissertation, the term ‘Zo’ is employed to refer to all the clans of the Northern Arakan Yomas who were identified as Chin, Kuki or Lushai by colonial administrators. Still, some additional deconstruction is necessary to explain the dissent over nomenclature.

Employing the nomenclature of Zo is also fraught with debate. Vumson argues that ‘Zo’ refers to the possible progenitor of all the highlanders. His name was Zo or Pu Zo, ‘Pu’ being an honorific title.²¹⁶ His argument is two-fold. First, he bases the argument on Khup Za Thang’s research into the genealogy of the Zo. Khup Za Thang managed to trace back some 28 generations using the oral tradition of the Zo.²¹⁷ Unfortunately, he did not trace back all of the Zo clans, only those around his own village of Buanman near Tedim in Burma. Vumson’s second point, and this is very compelling, is that Zo tend to take the name of their ancestors. They take these names for themselves as well as name their villages and other aspects of their world after him. For example, many village names begin with the prefix, Zo.²¹⁸ These include the villages of Zotung, Zophei, Zokhua, Zopimum, Zomun,

²¹⁴Gangte, T.S. (2010). *The Kukis of Manipur: A Historical Analysis*. Gian Ridhi Offset Printers: New Delhi, pg. 227.

²¹⁵ Piang, “Kinship, Territory and Politic”, pg. 1, 225.

²¹⁶Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 134.

²¹⁷Khup Za Thang, K.A. (1947). *Zo Suanh Khang Simna Lai Bu—Genealogy of the Zo (Chin) Race of Burma*, Taungtawn Press: Rangoon, pg. 6-7.

²¹⁸Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 26.

Zotland, etc. They also refer to their beloved rice wine as Zozu. It appears that the prefix 'Zo' is somewhat primordial. Therefore, it is not improbable to realize that Pu Zo may very well have been a chief or progenitor. In fact, when surveying other clans and communities, the ones that do not use the spelling of 'Zo' use a phonetically similar sounding version of Zo such as Yo, Jo, Cho, Sho, Khxou or Yaw.

L. Lam Khan Piang researched Zo identities from an anthropological perspective. He studied the way in which Zo were classified along dialectal lines and how these were attached to specific locations. That is, colonial officers classified and ordered the Zo according to what they thought was standard. People live in certain areas with their clan and speak the same language. Other people in different areas also live among their clan but speak in a different language, or dialect of the same language. These groups then, constitute what colonial officers called a 'tribe.' But the colonials did not understand highland life and thus made mistakes. Some early colonialists like Captain E. Dun and John Shakespear were cognizant of the fact that clan is the basis for grouping people into 'tribes.' They were also aware that dialects were based on certain locale names. Thus, both clans as well as their locales were used to assign identities.²¹⁹ But many other colonials did not understand this connection. In fact, Shakespear who spent in excess of twenty years among the Zo of the Lushai-Hills, for one, never used the term 'tribe' only 'clan.' He understood that groups were based on lineage systems—clans.²²⁰

Piang's findings illustrate that Zo identities were cross-cut and overlapped by the colonial state which was bereft of Zo socio-cultural knowledge. That is, the colonials did not fully comprehend, for example, the role of *jhum* cultivation on highland life. Furthermore, most colonials did not entertain and thus comprehend the differences between locale and clan names. Finally, after annexation of the hills in 1889-1890, there were some attempts to

²¹⁹Piang, L.L.K. (2008). "Clan, Dialect and Tribe Identity: Emergence of Crosscutting Identity among the Zo People in Manipur," *Indian Anthropologist*, Vol. 38, No. 1, Jan-June 2008, pg. 43-59.

²²⁰Suan, "Rethinking 'tribe' identities, pg. 162-163.

classify the Zo along dialectal lines.²²¹ These, however argues Piang, were also artificial and did not reflect the reality of Zo life. Piang argues that the colonial-constructed identities, which are a concoction of clan, location and dialect, remained intact in the aftermath of Independence and into present day.

Piang deals with the Zo of Manipur in Northeast India, but his findings are easily applicable to all of the Zo in the Northern Arakan Yomas. The Zo in Manipur were categorized into 'tribes.' Among these was the Kuki-Chin group. It has already been established that both Kuki and Chin are constructed, acquired through Bengali and Burmese informants respectively. The Zo did not use these for self-identification until the colonials began using the terms and made them legal in the late 19th century. Although they were divided into specific groups, the colonials realized that the Zo, in all of the Northern Arakan Yomas, shared a similar culture. That is, at the heart of Zo culture are certain belief systems, ways of worship and values that are shared by all Zo across time and space.²²² Still, they continued to use the term 'tribe' instead of terms such as clan or community when referring to individual groups of Zo. Sociologist Virginus Xaxa, addressing the use of 'tribe' by colonials argues that, "Tribes [were] primarily seen [by colonials] as a state and type of society... They represent a society that lacks positive traits of the modern society and thus constitutes a simple, illiterate, and backward society."²²³

In fact, colonial administrators made marked distinctions between plains people and highlanders by employing certain terminologies for the people. The Burmese and Indians of the plains were referred to as 'races' whereas the highlanders became a collection of 'tribes.'²²⁴ These denotations implied levels of civility. Xaxa's definition imposes a value judgment onto the way in

²²¹Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, pg. 1.

²²²Piang, "Clan, Dialect and Tribe Identity," pg. 43-60.

²²³Xaxa, V. (1999). "Tribes as Indigenous People of India," in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Dec. 18, 1999, pg. 3589.

²²⁴Kulkarni, S. (1991). Distortion of census data on scheduled tribes. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 205-208, Chauhan, B. R. (1969). Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 257-263, Chaube, S. K. (1999). The scheduled tribes and Christianity in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 524-526.

which the term was used by Company men. Zo highlanders were, indeed, considered primitive and less civilized. Again, at least one political officer, Shakespear realized that 'tribe' is inappropriate. He used the term 'clan' because he concluded that, "...there is no doubt that the Kukis, the Chins and the Lushais are all the same race."^{225,226} Shakespear was correct, the Zo are effectively the same race, like the plains people, but live in smaller clan-based groups. Thus, Shakespeare understood that they are not necessarily, 'less civilized' than the 'races' of the plains only employ a different means of government; they lived independently of other groups. The term 'races,' however, was also influenced by colonial scholars such as Buchanan.²²⁷

Piang also addresses the concept of 'tribe.' He reviewed numerous ethnographic studies conducted in Africa, Australia and South America. In these areas, a 'tribe' tends to be dictated by clan, by language or dialect and by locale. In this way, it is possible to study these 'tribes' in isolation. However, this is not the case for the Zo. Considering the 'Chin' the 'Lushai' or the 'Kuki' in isolation does not provide a holistic picture of the whole of Zo society. This, however, requires a lengthy discussion and is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Suffice it to say that the Zo were wrongly divided into 'tribes' by early colonial officers. The notion of 'tribe,' as is defined by political officers and later by anthropologists is not appropriate for Zo highlanders or for any other groups for that matter.

The term clan deserves definition as well. Clans are based on actual genealogical trees. Clans are ancestors and living and extended family. Most Zo are able to trace back their lineage numerous generations to a progenitor or a powerful chief. This knowledge was passed from one generation to the next through oral tradition which were in the form of rhythmic songs that were repeated over and over again. These rhythmic songs also contained some additional information about the chief or progenitor such as his

²²⁵Shakespear, *The Lus hei Kuki*, pg. 8.

²²⁶The nomenclature 'Kuki' is also used for Zo highlanders. Its origin and usage is explained in the Nomenclature section.

²²⁷ Charney, M.W. (2006), "Powerful Learning: Buddhist Literati and the Throne in Burma's Last Dynasty, 1752-1885," Centers for South and Southeast Asian Studies, The University of Michigan: Ann Arbor, pg. 127.

accomplishments throughout his life. Chief Kamhau of the Sukte clan composed such a song that was sung for many generations after his death. In fact, Zo still know this song today. An excerpt appears below:

*Setaangkaih nasakciang Teimei,
Kahialna Lamtui hi e.
Sakciang Teimei sang (khang) ciang Lamtui,
a lai ah kamkeihing e.*

My power of collecting taxes extends to
Teimei (poetic word for Meitei/Manipuri) in
the North and to Lamtui (Falam) in the
south, in the middle stand I, the Tiger.²²⁸

Kamhau, proud of his achievements in life, most likely composed this song shortly before his death. Most Zo compose biographical songs in old age. Furthermore, this is just an excerpt of a much longer song which included information about his ancestry and the villages he founded. These songs are central to the Zo. But because missionaries considered these to be an integral part of Zo ancestor worship, they disallowed them upon conversion to Christianity. However, after the Zo learned to read and write from missionaries, they carried on with the tradition of recording the past. Now they were able to chisel their deeds into stone slaps. One such slap, a memorial stone for Chief Khuplian of Lophei, reads (paraphrased):

I am the 15th generation from the house of
Thuantak who is the original progenitor of
the Siyin Tribe...I exerted myself all alone in
many enterprises by which I became a self-
made man with many and various
achievements. When the British in 1888
undertook their first expedition against us...I
played an active part in the defense against

²²⁸Sukte Beh Leh Tedingam Tangthu--The Story of the Sukte Clan (1996),
SukteLabu Bawl Committee: Tedim Myanmar, pg. 37 (translated from Tedim by L.
K. Piang).

them. When the British troops marched up the Signalling No.5 Stockade the united forces of the Siyins, Suktes and Kamhaus made a good resistance to the British attack which was easily repulsed. On this occasion I personally captured one rifle. When the second expedition took place in 1889 the British, too well armed to be resisted against, carried the day : hence the annexation...I then rebuilt and settled in Lophei Village which was originally founded by Kiim Lel and was destroyed by the Tashons in my grandfather, Lua Thuam's time. Henceforth my hereditary chieftainship of the Lophei clan was restored to me. Moreover, I founded the three villages—Tuisau, Tuival, and Suangdaw all of which have ever since been in my jurisdiction...²²⁹

Chief Khuplian, proud of his resistance against the British in 1888, recorded this in his biographical song. Like the way it is written above, oral songs are very similar, highlighting notable events in the lives of Zo.²³⁰

Furthermore and first, self-identification in terms of clan can be overshadowed by other identities. For example, powerful chiefs' names are often adopted by members of his group who are under his jurisdiction by paying tribute to him as well as enjoying his protection. His name is used as a social identity. This does not mean that their clan identity is replaced. To the

²²⁹ This stone slap is a memorial to a chief within my own lineage. He was born around the year 1868 and is one of my ancestors—a great great great-uncle. The stone slap is located in the township of Tedim in the Chin Hills of Burma. Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. Preface.

²³⁰ He also mentions an award given to him by the British for his later cooperation (not featured above). This is an indicator of the relationship between him and the British government. That is, he was what later generations refer to as an 'agent of the state' which was a point of contention between older Zo and those generations that came after annexation. These elitist relationships are explored further in Chapter 5.

contrary, it is added to a list of identities used given the context of a situation. That is, self-identification does not change; a clan identity may be overshadowed, but will always remain intact in that it plays an important role in the kinship idiom. As mentioned above, Chief of the Tedim area was a member of the Sukte clan. Of six brothers he became a powerful chief founding villages and acquiring numerous followers throughout the Northern Yomas. His members came to be known as *Kamhaute* meaning, 'follower of.' When some of his members relocated later or met other Zo, they knew under which jurisdiction they fell because of their acquired self-identification of *Kamhaute*.²³¹

Secondly, Zo highlanders' primary means of cultivation is *jhum*. The terrain of the highlands dictates how much food a piece of land can produce. Hence, clans will break-up into smaller groups and relocate to fresh lands. There, someone will found a new village and becomes its chief. The members, however, will continue to identify with members of their clan left behind. In fact, they may reunite at some point in the future. Thus, the Suantak clan, for example, was borne in the Tedim area of the Chin Hills in Burma. However, some members migrated as far north as the present Manipur. Sub-clans emerged out of Suantak but are still able trace their genealogical linkage back to the House of Suantak (Thuantak). Hence, there are Suantaks now in Burma, Manipur and in Mizoram. In the new locale, members of one clan settle alongside with members of a different clan. They remain cognizant of their origin clan, however.

Finally, most areas are dominated by a certain clan, at least numerically. Their dialect, which differs from other clans within the same group tends to be employed for communication. Eventually, different clans living side-by-side will speak the same dialect. These dialectical changes occurred over numerous generations. Furthermore, they occurred because new groups lived in isolation of one another. Over time, there are more and more dialectal differences, even within the same clans who are dispersed over different locations. At the same time, they are able to communicate with any other Zo;

²³¹The postfix 'te' means, 'to belong.' In this case, Kamhau's people are known as *Kamhaute*.

these dialectical differences are minor. In fact, Thomas Herbert Lewin reported, "The different tribes of Lhoosia [sic] also on our frontier (speak with slight differences) the same dialect; and this, too, in spite of all these tribes being widely scattered apart over the country, and in many cases having no intercourse with each other."²³²

In this way, these Zo then have a clan identity (or more), a local identity and a dialectical identity. When the first colonial officers-cum-anthropologists 'studied' the Zo, they divided them according to their locations. Later, after annexation when colonial officers were posted among the hills, the Zo were further categorized on the basis of their dialectal differences. Once missionaries and anthropologists entered the hills, they enforced differences based on what they perceived were 'tribal' disparities such as their cultures and their dress.

This, argues Piang, caused the crosscutting and overlapping of clan, locale and dialectal identities.²³³ In this way, a Zo who identifies herself as a Suantak from Tedim, speaking in a Sizang dialect may have a stronger sense of kinship toward a Suantak from Manipur than a person speaking the Kamhau dialect also from Tedim (also because the Suantak were never ruled by the Sukte clan now known as Kamhau).²³⁴ Furthermore, a speaker of Kamhau may live in Manipur but long for his home and dialect in Tedim. The assigned identity of 'Tedim-Chin,' in this way, is totally inappropriate. Not only can a person from Tedim live elsewhere in the Yomas and retain his language, he may also change his clan self-identification to the name of her powerful chief. Given all these variations, it is important to emphasize again that 'chin' was never used by the Zo for self-identification. Until, that is, the colonials made the term legal in a series of political acts ending with the implementation of the Chin Customary Laws of 1896.²³⁵

²³²Lewin, T.H. (1870). *Wild Races of the Eastern Frontier* (Reprint 200?) Mittel Publications: Delhi, pg. 248-249.

²³³Piang, "Clan, Dialect and Tribe Identity," pg. 43-60.

²³⁴Like the earlier example of a Suantak, this is based on my own, personal experience.

²³⁵Pyo, M.T. (1884). "Customary Law of the Chin Tribe," IN: Khup, Z.G. (date unknown). *Chin Chronicles*, Published by the Author, Assam: India, pg. 1-85.

By the turn of the century missionaries, unaware of the implications of choosing one dialect over others, typically chose the ones spoken by most of the Zo. That is, the minority who may have preferred a different dialect, but are too small in number and power, had no choice but to accept the dominating clan as being their dialectal group. Since missionaries were posted in areas previously occupied by the British, other smaller villages on the periphery of the larger townships were marginalized. This issue deserves much more in-depth analysis. Young Zo scholars such as L. Lam Khan Piang have researched the process of identity transformation along dialectal lines as a result of the States' intervention. One basic case, that of the eastern side of the Northern Arakan Yomas appears below. This example may be generalized to other parts of the Northern Yomas such as the 'Lushai Hills' and parts of the Manipur's highlands as well.

Today, there are three recognized 'tribes' or dialectal groups for the Northern Chin Hills of Burma. These are Falam, Haka and Tedim. However, there were many more different dialectal groups. The Kamhau dialect eventually changed to 'Tedim' and the 'Sizang' (Siyin) dialects. The Falam dialect of Lazio eventually would just be 'Falam.' In Haka there was at least one more dialectal group, the Thantlang. The latter dialect was referred to as 'Lai' but would eventually come to be known as 'Haka.' Piang argues that, "This whole process of segmentation was sanctified by the translation of the Bible that kept a permanent differentiation among those recognized dialects."²³⁶ Furthermore, over time, these dialectal groups shaped the collective memory of its members. That is, some Zo, no longer 'allowed' to worship ancestors and being grouped into specific dialectal groups, began to accept these assignments as their nomenclatures.

Transliterations

The language issue is evident in the diaries archived by the first missionaries. For instance, Dr. John Herbert Cope, missionary to Tedim, arrived in the Chin Hills of Burma on 1 November 1910. He, like other missionaries, was

²³⁶Piang, L.L.K. (2008). "Clan, Dialect and Tribe Identity: Emergence of Crosscutting Identity among the Zo People of Manipur," *Indian Anthropologist*, Vol. 28, Number 1, Jan-June 2008, pg. 55.

intent on learning the language. However, he quickly realized the language or dialectal differences among the Zo communities. He writes:

The language problem has been the most difficult we have to meet. It was advised by everyone to learn Siyin as all could understand it, although they might not be able to converse in it. Now after three years I find that it was an awful mistake, that Siyin is understood by a mere fraction of the people and that to do effective work I will have to learn a new dialect...At present the Christians are about equally divided between the two leading dialects (Siyin and Kamhau), but next year will find a much larger number in the more numerous language I believe.²³⁷

The above clearly illustrates that missionaries were occupied with the highest number of people speaking the same language. They were not concerned with the minority of people who preferred another dialect, at least not initially. However, later, according to Robert Johnson who studied Cope's private diaries and letters, Cope was frustrated by, "...the old bugaboo of Chin work—the many varied languages. Not being able to use Burmese, he had to use English and translate into Kamhau or into his limited Haka."²³⁸ Five years later in 1914, Cope recorded in his diary that he was working on a dictionary which he intended to have the five main languages of his area on each page. These would be, "Siyin, Tiddim, Saizang, Theizang, and Thado."²³⁹

By 1921, Cope had a good command of several Zo dialects. However, being posted in Tedim meant that much of his time was spent engaged in Tedim, learning Kamhau. At an education conference in Falam with missionaries and Government officials, the question of language was discussed. Years

²³⁷Johnson, R. (1986). *History of the American Baptist Chin Mission*, Vol.I and II. Published by the Author, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: USA, pg. 343.

²³⁸Johnson, R. (1986), *History of the American Baptist Chin Mission*, Vol.I and II. Published by the Author, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: USA, pg. 369.

²³⁹*Ibid.*, pg. 373.

earlier, a Sukte from the Tedim area, Pau Cin Hau, who will be discussed in Chapter 5, created a writing system using symbols. According to Cope, hundreds of 'Chin' poured over his books to learn the new writing system although, he states, that it is an utter waste for their time. That is, Cope was not keen on the Zo 'wasting their time' on Pau Cin Hau's constructed script. Cope was further annoyed that early missionaries focused on the 'natives' learning Burmese. In fact, there was little interest in becoming Burmanized. Hence, he created a script using Roman letters to transliterate a 'native' language. He writes:

[The lack of focus on the script I have created] is aggravated by the new prophet [Pau] who made a written language. He is absolutely illiterate, knowing nothing of Burmese or Hindustani, and yet he has patiently evolved characters for most of the words, there being thousands of them now with others being added. They are a combination of Burmese letters and English figures he has seen somewhere, and like Chinese each character stands for a syllable. However, hundreds of people pore over his books learning this awful writing which will never be the slightest use to them.²⁴⁰

He was intent on the Zo engaging with the Bible and with his transliterations using the Roman alphabet. When it came to Burmese, the Zo had little or no interest. In fact, this came as somewhat as a surprise to Cope. He had assumed that Burmese would be the logical choice of instruction. However, the Zo were not interested to learn it and when they did learn certain phrases or words, they soon forgot them. This is but one example how the relationship between the Zo of the Chin Hills and the Burmese state was constructed. The Zo did not appear to feel at all related or interested in anything Burmese other than occasionally raiding them.

²⁴⁰*Ibid.*, pg. 343.

In any event, a local language had to be selected. A conference was held made up of missionaries and Government officials. The question of the conference was whether groups of Zo would be 'allowed' to use their own dialects or be encouraged to learn and use a single dialect? And if so, which one should be selected? At a second conference with the leading chiefs, it was decided that all Zo could use the dialect spoken around the area of Falam which was called 'Laizo.' That is, those Zo living in and around Haka could understand this dialect as well. Cope was concerned, however and felt that this would interfere with the Zo communicating with their neighbours in the Lushai Hills and in Manipur. That is, he was cognizant of the fact that the Zo had a kin across the administrative borders.

Falam's primary dialect of Laizo along with the Kamhau dialect of Tedim was chosen as the medium for instruction. Burmese and English would be taught as second languages. Cope's own orthography was accepted by Government linguists and he moved forward in transliterating the Bible and textbooks. In 1932, Cope finished the first translation of *The New Testament* into a 'Chin' dialect, Kamhau, its title reads, *Lai Siangtho Thak N.T. Chin, Kamhau Dialect Translated by J. H. Cope, Rangoon 1932*. Before he died, he also translated the dialect 'Lai' spoken around the area of Falam which is understood by the Haka. Thus, the people in Tedim were the first of the Northern Chin in Burma to have, not only the Bible translated, but also who had their first written script using the Roman alphabet. Zo speakers of Lai around the area of Falam also had a script now which the Haka could use as well. However, Cope's prediction of the Zo being linguistically 'cut-off' from their neighbours was soon realized.

The Lushai dialect or 'Dulian' was transliterated by the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Mission Society missionaries, James Herbert Lorrain and Fred Savidge in 1898.²⁴¹ William Pettigrew, posted in Ukrahl, East Manipur for the American Baptist Mission combined numerous village dialects and

²⁴¹ Lorrain, J. H. and Savidge, F. W. (1898), *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Lushai Language (Dulien Dialect)*. Assam Secretariat Printing Office: Shillong, Lloyd, J. M. (1991). *History of the Church in Mizoram (Harvest in the Hills)*. Synod Publication Board, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 29-30. Lorrain continued to add to the dictionary until his death in 1940.

created one language which he transliterated it into the Bible in 1912. He called it the Tangkhul language. On Williamson's request, Thomas Callhan Hodson, in 1905, began transliterating the Thado language which would later come to be known as the Kuki language. Both of these languages, Tangkhul and Thado were being used on the Manipur side of the border.²⁴² Thus, Zo dialects were now divided along administrative boundaries in the Chin Hills, the Lushai Hills and in Manipur. The impact of these transliterations is as Cope feared, division based on the canonization of a dialect and later resulted in differentiating of self-identification.²⁴³

A decade later another missionary, Dr. Chester Strait, was determined to render the Bible into the dominant dialect spoken by the Zo around Haka. The dialect was 'Lai,' the dominant dialect in that township. By 1940 he managed to have *Lai Baibal Ca, The New Testament in Chin: Lai Dialect* published by the American Mission Press in Rangoon. Thus, the Northern Chin Hills had textbooks, newsletters, hymns and the Bible in three 'approved' languages of Government, "Laizo, Haka,²⁴⁴ and Kamhau."²⁴⁵ Thus, the Northern Chin Hills in the east of the Northern Arakan Yomas provides an excellent example of the role of dialectal differences in identity formation and self-identification. Haka Township's dialect called 'Lai' would more often than not come to be referred to as Haka.

Thus, there are three primary groups in this region now, the Tedim-Chin, the Falam-Chin, and the Haka-Chin, three totally constructed nomenclatures that do not reflect the nuances and tradition of the Zo. In short, for the ease of administration, colonial officers assigned identities. First, township identities were constructed based on the location of colonial posts. Over time, these assigned township identities transformed into dialectal groups and thus, dialectal identities. These identities were officially recognized by both

²⁴² For more on the languages of Manipur, read for instance: Haokip, P. (2011), "The Languages of Manipur: A Case Study of the Kuki-Chin Languages," *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, Vol. 34.1, April 2011, pg. 85-118.

²⁴³ Johnson, *History of the American Baptist Mission*, pg. 444-461.

²⁴⁴ Haka was dominated by Lai speaking Zo. However, by the time Robert Johnson wrote the history of American Baptist mission, the Lai dialect had transformed into the 'Haka language.'

²⁴⁵ Johnson, *History of the American Baptist Chin Mission*, pg. 628.

the Burmese and the Indian States. Today, these assigned identities continue to be employed in textbooks and articles by linguists, anthropologists, historians, politicians, as well as by the Zo themselves. This process of self-identification as a function of the colonial state is explored in Chapter 5.

In summary, Dr. J.H. Cope transliterated the first Zo language in the administrative jurisdiction of Burma, Kamhau, using the Roman alphabet into a script. Zo refer to this script as ‘Zolai’ and credit Cope with being, ‘the Father of Zomi Literature.’²⁴⁶ Besides the Bible, he also transliterated and authored textbooks in subjects like, “Geography, Habits of Health, Arithmetic, Nature Study...The Pilgrim’s Progress, [and numerous] newspapers which he circulated around the area of Tedim.”²⁴⁷ As already explained, dialects of the Zo were in a constant state of evolution. This was a function of their *jhum* methods of cultivation and the need to relocate frequently.²⁴⁸ By Cope transliterating Kamhau, he canonized the dialect. That is, it became known as ‘Zolai’ or as outsiders would refer to it, as ‘Tedim-Chin.’

The case of the Zou

It has already been established that colonial officers had difficulty managing the highlanders. The terrain was difficult to negotiate and large areas of arable land were scarce. Thus, the highlanders tended to relocate frequently, often into numerous directions expanding their occupied area. They relocated rather than settled like their plains counterparts giving administrators the impression that they were ‘roaming’ like semi-nomads. Furthermore, it was difficult for administrators to make sense of all the different groups living in the mountains. As illustrated by some of the early colonial accounts, many Government officials and political officers differed in their opinions about all sorts of aspects of the highlanders from their ‘race’ to their histories to, of course, their nomenclatures.

²⁴⁶Another writing system was created by a Sukte named Pau Cin Hau around the same time. This writing system could not compete with Cope’s transliteration. This is discussed in Chapter 5.

²⁴⁷Johnson, *History of the American Baptist Chin Mission*, pg. 628.

²⁴⁸They relocated every 3-9 years, according to H.N.C. Stevenson.

Some borders are said to have existed before the arrival of the British. In Manipur, for instance, Raj Chandrakirti Singh (1834-1844) informed Captain Robert Boileau Pemberton, in 1834-35, that his jurisdiction included parts of the highlands. The Zo chiefs, however, were not consulted. Still, Pemberton drew the line between the Lushai Hills and Manipur, as was advised by the Raj.²⁴⁹ By 1844, Raj Chandrakirti Singh, of Manipur, with the help of Political Agent William McCulloch, settled some Zo, who they referred to as the 'Kuki' and who both men identified as being, "...distinct and quite separate from the Lushais [on the other side of the border]..."²⁵⁰ The Raj quickly conscripted them into his army. Thus, the Zo in this area were left to the Raj of Manipur, the rest of the Zo were included as well as excluded by additional administrative borders. The border of Tedim in the 'Chin Hills' of Burma was drawn 80km to the north. However, some clan related Zo villages were spread across 60-90km north of Tedim. Their chiefs were in direct competition with the dominating clans in the same area of Tedim. The new border bisected this group of Zo, now called 'Zou.'

Some of these Zou left the Tedim area and moved north toward Manipur for a number of reasons. The heredity Zou chiefs contested its agnatic rival clan, the Kamhau-Sukte. In the struggle, the Zou continued to move northward toward Manipur. Eventually, they came to control the hill tracts between Manipur and the Chin Hills.²⁵¹ This border, drawn by Pemberton in 1834, is often referred to as an imaginary line.²⁵² The border effectively divided the Zou into two jurisdictions, that of Manipur and the region of Tedim of the Chin Hills.²⁵³

Unlike many of other groups of Zo, the Zou did not convert to Christianity at the turn of the century. Missionaries could not access the tract occupied by

²⁴⁹ Pemberton, *Report on the eastern frontier*, pg. 120.

²⁵⁰ Sanajaoba, N. (1995), *Manipur Past and Present: The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilisation*, Mittel Publication: Delhi, pg. 34-36.

²⁵¹Zou, D.V. (2009), "The Pasts of a Fringe Community: Ethno-history and Fluid Identity of the Zou in Manipur," *Indian Historical Review*, Vol 39, pgs. 209-235.

²⁵²Zou, D., "The Pasts of a Fringe Community" pgs. 209-235, Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 90.

²⁵³Kiamlou, T. (2007). "The Great Pemberton Divide," *Zougam.com* <http://zougam.wordpress.com/2007/08/03/the-great-pemberton-divide/> (last visited February 12, 2013)

them. Thus, they did not convert until the 1940s. Furthermore, unlike other Zo groups, the Zou were converted by other Zo missionaries. When Cope met with Government officials as well as chiefs to discuss which language to transliterate, they all agreed on the Kamhau dialect because everyone was said to understand it. However, this was not altogether true. The Zou of Burma used a distinct dialect influenced by Zolai of the Tedim area. Zolai, as explained above, was transliterated by Cope. A Zou from the Manipur side of the border, Pu Siahzathang, took the transliteration and made changes to match the Zou dialect. This is the first occurrence of the spelling 'Zou'.²⁵⁴

Using the altered and adapted version of Zolai, other Zou wrote books, composed songs, both folk and modern, and produced Sunday services. Siahzathang transliterated 'Zo' as 'Zou' and canonized this vernacular, and thus created a new and separate self-identification. The usage of the spelling 'Zou,' it may be argued, set the Zou apart from the Zo in Burma and from other Zo groups in Manipur. Since they were relegated to a border tract between the Lushai Hills and Manipur throughout history, it suits them to have a distinct identity.

Finally, although Cope is credited as being the Father of Zomi Literature, some Zo also criticize him for not having chosen a single dialect for the Zo that they might experience unity, albeit, he tried to do so.²⁵⁵ The Zo understand the role of transliterating in their division beyond the political borders. For example, Khup Zo Go argues that there is a trend toward dialectical divisiveness based on denomination, clan, and local influences. He argues that, "...the Bible itself became a victim of this dialectical chauvinism."²⁵⁶ David Zou, along the same lines, argues that the different Bible translations resulted in the canonization of internal differences and arrested the process of ethnic fusion.

²⁵⁴Zou, D., "The Pasts of a Fringe Community," pg. 225.

²⁵⁵See for instance: <http://www.vaphual.net/rev-dr-jh-cope-father-of-zomi-literature> (last visited February 12, 2013)

²⁵⁶Go, K.Z. (1996). *A Critical Historical Study of Bible Translations Among the Zo People in North East India*, Chin Baptist Literature Board, Churachandpur: Manipur, pg. 95.

‘Zo’ and ‘Zou’ like ‘Zomi’ and ‘Mizo,’ are all essentially the same. In fact, Zo scholar, David Zou refers to the numerous political organizations and political movements founded by the Zo in Burma, in Mizoram and in Manipur as all being the same Zo people divided by colonials and missionaries. Zo leaders, who believed they were being relegated and, in a way, accepted their position as a, literally, side-lined people like the Zou, contributed to disunity. The Zo organizations and political movements that attempt to deal with issues such as marginalization, unity, disengagement from other Zo groups, etc., are addressed in Chapter 5. Suffice it to say that Zo movements for unity or re-unification sprung up all over the Northern Arakan Yomas at Independence and thereafter when all groups realized their marginal positions in their respective nation-states. The Zo may not have been wholly ‘united’ in the modern sense--projecting a sense of ‘national’ pride. They, were, however, arbitrarily and somewhat randomly divided into three administrative jurisdictions by colonial-drawn boundaries. These borders ran through the country, within which they moved about freely, engaged in and settled disputes, typically over land, among themselves without a nebulous foreign government before the arrival of the Company.

Arguments for ‘Zo’

The earliest written reference to the ‘Zo’ as a people along with the Zo nomenclature dates from 862 A.D. It was recorded by an official of the T’ang Dynasty. He reported the existence of a “...kingdom...who call their princes Shou.” The official’s report was translated by colonial scholar Gordon Luce in 1961; hence it did not influence colonial officers or administrators.²⁵⁷ Still, an overwhelming amount of evidence exists for the all-inclusive identification of Zo. Many colonial records indicate that the people of the Northern Arakan Yomas referred to themselves by the umbrella term, “Zo” or one of its variations such as, Dzo, Sho, Jo, Shou, and Zou, etc. Even the Haka, who are now most adverse to the term Zo, once referred to themselves by that nomenclature.²⁵⁸ The people around the area of Falam also used the term Zo.

²⁵⁷Fan Cho (862 A.D.) *The Man-Shu or Book of the Southern Barbarians* (Translated by Gordon Luce in 1961 Data Paper: No. 44, Southeast Asian Program, Dept. of Far East Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca: New York).pg. 90.

²⁵⁸ Chin Hlaing aka Lehman, *The Structure of the Chin Society*, pg. 30.

Grierson explains, "It is probable that the Zahao like the Lushais and many of the Northern Chin tribes are probably Zo." Grierson concluded, "The name [Chin] is not used by the tribes themselves who use titles such as Zo, Yo or Sho."²⁵⁹

Thomas Herbert Lewin who lived among the Zo of the Lushai Hills for a number of years wrote a number of books on the subject of language. About the Lushai, he explained, "The word Kuki is foreign to the different dialects of the hills tribes, the nearest approach to it being the 'Dzo'..."²⁶⁰ Even Burmese scholars realized that 'Chin' was not a proper nomenclature. Sing Khaw Khai quotes U Thein Pe Myint, a well-known Burmese writer who studied Chin history. He states, "Even though the people who are called Chin do not necessarily protest their name, their true name, in fact, is Zomi..."²⁶¹

At one point in history, before the pro-democracy movement in Burma was founded, the Zo of the Chin Hills understood that their nomenclature was assigned and that they were related to others across the borders of the Lushai Hills and into Manipur (and even beyond). By 1953, Christianity was flourishing in the Chin as well as in the rest of the hills. In Burma, however, the churches were expected to keep missionary work to a minimum. Buddhism had and should be Burma's national religion, according to the Burmese government. Thus, Christian leaders of the Chin Hills met and agreed that in order to keep the church strong, they should unite and form a church bearing their 'national' name. Ten church leaders came from the three Northern Chin townships of Falam, Haka, and Tedim. The group met in the town of Thantlang where they unanimously adopted the recommendation of the Haka Baptist Association to accept the title of "Zomi Baptist Convention."²⁶² This evidences that at this point in history, the leaders of the Northern Arakan Yomas freely accepted the nomenclature of Zomi, albeit,

²⁵⁹Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, pg. 5.

²⁶⁰Lewin, T.H., (1874). *Introduction to Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect of the 'Dzo' or Kuki Language with Vocabularies and Popular Tales*. Calcutta: India, pg. Introduction.

²⁶¹Mynt, Thein Pe, (1967), *Chin Withitha Taingthamaing Asa*, Burma Translation Society: Rangoon, pg. 127 IN Sing, K., *Zo People and their Culture*, pg. 3.

²⁶² Zou, David Vumlallian. "A Historical Study of the 'Zo' Struggle." *Economic and Political Weekly* 14 (2010): 14-56.

‘mi’ as a suffix was necessary for those of Haka who refer to their less civilized neighbours as ‘Zo.’ By using *Zomi*, it negates this meaning. Only later, once the Zo began participating in the pro-democracy movements of Burma, did some Zo vehemently reject this nomenclature and began using ‘Chin.’

Nearly a thousand years later, came the account of an Italian Barnebite priest. Father Sangermano spent many years in the 18th Century attending to his congregation at Ava and made frequent trips to Rangoon. His was a familiar name among the Burmese, by foreign traders and merchants as well as by Company men.²⁶³ His writing and knowledge about the Burmese Empire was well respected and sought after. Company officer Michael Symes relied on Sangermano’s writing. In an early edition of Sangermano’s work, Symes wrote the forward:

Among the foreigners who came to pay their respects to the English gentlemen was an Italian missionary...he seemed a very respectable and intelligent man, and was held in high estimation by the natives.²⁶⁴

It was from Sangermano’s informants that colonials learned that there were Zo in the Chin Mountains. In fact, Symes and Buchanan repeatedly use the term Zo in their in 1795 reports.²⁶⁵ From the reading of their accounts, it is evident that both Symes²⁶⁶ and Buchanan not only relied on the earlier writings of Sangermano but on informants as well. From these they acquired

²⁶³Company ‘men’ is used because although some were accompanied by wives, daughters and female servants, the majority of Europeans were in official positions were male.

²⁶⁴Sangermano, *A Description of the Burmese Empire*, pg. xxv.

²⁶⁵ Symes, M. ((1800) *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava: Sent by the Governor-General of India in the Year 1795*. SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research, U. of London, School for Oriental and African Studies, Vol. 4, Issue 1, Spring 2006, pg. 89. AND Hamilton, F. (1795) *aka* Buchanan, “An Account of a Map of the Countries subject to the King of Ava, drawn by a Slave of the King’s Eldest Son.” *The Edinburgh Philosophical Journal: The Progress of Discovering in Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Natural History, Practical Mechanics, Geography, Navigation, Statistics, and the Fine and Useful Arts*, for January—April 1820, Vol. II, pg. 263.

²⁶⁶Symes, *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava*, pg. XXX.

the nomenclatures of Chin, Lushai and, the most dreaded for their raids, the Kuki.

By the time Abraham Grierson carried out his massive linguistic survey of India in 1899-1904,²⁶⁷ the Northern Yomas were delineated. Grierson admits that the people he surveyed refer to themselves by other nomenclatures, but that he had placed them into the categories of Chin, Lushai and Kuki thus tying them to their administrative offices in Burma and in Assam.²⁶⁸ He writes, “Chin is a Burmese word used to denote the various hills tribes living in the country between Burma and the Provinces of Assam and Bengal...The names are not used by the tribes themselves, who use titles such as Zo or Yo...”²⁶⁹ In the *1905 Report on the Census of Burma*, it reads, “There are several clans or dzos amongst the Chins.”²⁷⁰ The author assumed that Dzo referred to the word ‘clan.’ That is, census takers were exposed to the term Zo as well.

Along with political organizations, the Zo now began writing their own histories. Besides having acquired the necessary literary skills, they also became aware of the greater world at large. Colonial officers were posted in the hills and had regular contact with the Zo. Missionaries learned their languages and communicated all types of new concepts to the Zo. Furthermore, colonial officers had taken some of the Zo to the large cosmopolitan cities such as Mandalay and Rangoon. In April 1891 after a battle with the Kamhaus, Township Officer Maung Tun Win, working for the British, took some of the chiefs and four other Zo from the area of Sizang to visit Rangoon. Although not explicitly stated, it was surely to impress upon the chiefs the power of the English who controlled Rangoon.²⁷¹ The Zo must have been impressed. This marked a turning point in British-Zo relations. This relationship is explored in Chapter 4. In any event, a writing system, the

²⁶⁷ Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, pgs. 302-304, 348-350.

²⁶⁸ Before 1892, there were three administrative offices: Burma, Bengal and Assam. The office of the South and of the North Lushai Hills in Bengal and Assam respectively, were merged into one office in Assam marking the beginnings of Burma and of India.

²⁶⁹ Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, pgs. 2.

²⁷⁰ NAM Report on the Census of Burma (1905). Chapter X: Caste or Race, Acc. 19054, pg. 199.

²⁷¹ In Pau, *The Chin and the British*, pg. 134.

exposure to new belief systems and the realization of English power played a role in the Zo participating in their own identity construction. As Tungnung Gougin, former Chief of Tuibul Village in Manipur says, “Thanks to western education and the Missionaries in particular....Zomis by now could see how big the world is...and they have to start running with the rest of the races.”²⁷²

The following decades were marked by Zo participation in both World Wars as soldiers in Mesopotamia, Turkey, Iran, and France where they were exposed to the greater world at large.²⁷³ Missionaries frowned upon oral tradition teaching that it is a pagan practice associated with sorcery and magic. Robert Johnson, last missionary to the Chin Hills, addressed Zo songs. He clearly did not comprehend the oral history aspect of these songs. He writes:

Chin songs were generally love songs, war songs, and songs for feasts, many of them with lewd words and connotations. It seemed far better to start the new converts with distinctly Christian songs and with the Western tunes.²⁷⁴

Still, the Zo remained aware of their (possible) histories. Moreover, they were now aware of their position within British-India and the world at large. Besides utilizing oral histories that were left, they also drew upon other literature, such as those written about China; their possible place of origin.

In present day, the nomenclature conundrum has taken on additional variants. Now, nomenclatures are inextricably tied to origin stories. The primary school of thought is that the Zo originated in China. Within this school, however, are further variations; groups with their own notions. The first believes that the Zo originated from China’s Chin (Quin) dynasty (265-

²⁷²Gougin, T. (1984) *History of the Zomi*. Published by Author at Zomi Press, Manipur: India, pg. Introduction.

²⁷³Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 133-135.

²⁷⁴ Johnson, *History of the American Baptist Chin Mission*, pg. 370.

317 A.D.). When trouble arose in Tibet, the Zo were forced to migrate south within the mountains to the Northern Arakan Yomas.²⁷⁵

Others believe that the Zo originated from the Chinese south western state of Wei, which belonged to the Zhou dynasty (403-225 BCE); their princes, were called “Chin.”²⁷⁶ The Han fought against the state of Wei; one of the reasons was to secure natives of southern Yunnan, as soldiers, to open trade with India and to obtain slaves, “..for the south-west had for centuries been a main source for traffic in slaves.”²⁷⁷ According to sociologist Wolfram Eberhard, south of Yunnan in the mountains lived tribes which were primitive and who practiced simple cultivation.²⁷⁸ These may very well have been Zo highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas.

Vumson, based on oral history, explains that the migration was much more hostile than described by Eberhard. He argues the Zo stem from the Ch’iang tribes of the Chou dynasty (722-481 B.C.). Ch’iang tribes dwelled in northwest China between the sources of the Yangtse and Wei rivers. They then fled south because of hostility and conflict.²⁷⁹ D.G.E. Hall, a century earlier, speculated that the Ch’iang tribes not only fled south, they were ‘hunted’ by Ts’in dynasty rulers. Hall explains, the Ch’iang tribes’ original home was in northwest China, northeast of Tibet. Chinese records indicate that hostility from the dynasty toward independent tribes forced them to take refuge in northeast Tibet. Hall further explains that in the first millennium B.C. rulers of the Chinese Ts’in pursued them to the south. Hall emphasizes that the Ch’iang tribes were mountain dwellers whose princes were referred to as ‘Mang.’ Interestingly, the word Mang is a typical Zo name meaning ‘great ruler.’²⁸⁰ According to Hall, they are ‘lost’ for some time and reappear in the kingdom of Nanchao which comprises part of the Northern Arakan

²⁷⁵ Brown, R.G.B. (1926). *Burma as I saw It, 1889-1924*. Government Printing Press: Rangoon, pg. 1718-20.

²⁷⁶Eberhard, W. (1948) *A History of China*, Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, pg. 110-112.

²⁷⁷*Ibid.*, pg. 112.

²⁷⁸*Ibid.*, pg. 113.

²⁷⁹Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 28.

²⁸⁰‘Mang’ is part of my name as well. My namesake was my grandmother, Neam Mang. She, in turn, inherited her name from her (our) ancestors. It is possible that we used ‘Mang’ for centuries or longer.

Yomas, from where they also fled. Hall argues that many escaped through Nanchao into the plains of Burma.²⁸¹ Again, this may be the case. Even more likely is that some of the Ch'iang tribes stayed behind in the mountains and are now referred to as the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas. All of these or variants of each is plausible. Without 'deep' historical knowledge, this is an unanswerable question. The mere fact that this debate exists among scholars, colonial, western and native, in present day illustrates that Zo history is still elusive allowing for numerous interpretations.

Despite the colonial records, some Zo still contend that the legend of the Zo emerging out of a cave, a rock or some sort of hole made in the earth is the one true 'fact' shared by all Zo.²⁸² Yet others take it a step further and argue that the cave is located somewhere in China, waiting to be discovered. Still, most Zo agree that the highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas share a distant past and that they were divided by colonial administrators. As Lieutenant-Colonel A.S. Reid admitted, the political officers constructed two groups of highlanders on either side of the Indo-Burma border. Apparently they did so to avoid confusion. He writes:

I think it would therefore be better to drop the [specific nomenclatures], and divide the people with whom I am going to deal [with] into two broad classes of Lushais and Chins, the course of the Koladyne River forming a line of demarcation.²⁸³

Reid continues by indicating that he is aware of similarities,

...there can be little doubt that the Chins and Lushais are practically one race.²⁸⁴

Reid moves forward and employs these constructions nonetheless.

²⁸¹Hall, D.G.E. (1950) *Burma*. Hutchison Press: London, pg. 11.

²⁸²Sakhong, *Chin Religion and Politics*, p. 61.

²⁸³Reid, A.S., *Chin-Lushai Land*, pg. 5.

²⁸⁴*Op.cit.*

The term 'Zo' is used in this dissertation to refer to the all of the tribes, clans and communities of subject. Zo refers to the people of the Northern Arakan Yomas in the states that are now known as the Chin Hills of Burma and Lushai Hills, later as Mizoram, as well as some others in Manipur.²⁸⁵ It does not imply a specific spatial territory, a specific language or even a culture. This term is all-inclusive. By employing Zo the increasing politicization of Zo highland histories and clan politics can be avoided.²⁸⁶ In this dissertation, no claim of origin, proper nomenclature or a political position is advocated. The term Zo does not imply any value judgment or hierarchy of peoples. The term Zo is taken from Vumson's argument that a 'generic' term is necessary when referring to all the people in the Arakan Yomas. He argued for the recognition of a common origin that perhaps a progenitor named Zo existed. He does not, however, insist upon this probability. He makes clear that given the evidence, the Zo most likely have a shared origin, certainly a shared history.²⁸⁷ While there is no 'hard' evidence that this is a correct term, it is, among the Zo, instrumental and all-encompassing and appropriate for this project.

Census

As soon as the western Northern Arakan Yomas, now referred to as the Chin Hills, were annexed in 1888-89, the Revenue Department of Burma began collecting census data for the Government.²⁸⁸ The Northern Chin Hills were split into three major subdivisions or townships: Falam, Haka and Tiddim.²⁸⁹ This was the first indication that the Zo of the Chin Hills were being 'settled' and thus on their way to becoming 'civilized.' However, due to the constant movement throughout the hills, these assigned townships meant little to the Zo. They tended to move to fresh lands every 3, 6 or 9 years.²⁹⁰ Thus, censuses of Zo highlanders, beginning at the turn of the century, are most

²⁸⁵ It also refers to the Zo that are now in Manipur; there they are also referred to as the Kuki and the Vaiphei, among other terms. Zo also exist in Bangladesh, but are not of subject here.

²⁸⁶Suan, K., "Rethinking 'tribe' identities," pg. 162-163.

²⁸⁷Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 3-7.

²⁸⁸NAM, No. 25 of 1888, Revenue Dept. – No. 826-17R, November 1888, Acc. 12688.

²⁸⁹The spelling later changed to 'Tedim.'

²⁹⁰Stevenson, *The Economics*, pg. 32.

likely inaccurate. After the delineation of the Northern Arakan Yomas, Zo highlanders fell into two, three or more jurisdictions. Still, many communities continued to migrate in search for new lands or sought new areas due to clan feuds. Thus, it is difficult to rely on these numbers to a comfortable degree. The *1911 Census of Burma* recorded that, “...there are 85,788 Chin-speaking persons in Burma.”²⁹¹ The *1911 Classic Encyclopaedia of India* reads that, “...there are 82,434 persons living in the Lushai Hills,” totalling 168,222 Zo highlanders in the Northern Arakan Yomas in the early 20th century. There were others in Manipur not counted as part of these censuses, however. These numbers are now housed in the archives of the capital of Assam, Guwahati.

As of 1986, the best that scholars and statisticians could do was to estimate the number of Zo highlanders in the Northern Arakan Yomas. Vumson estimated that there were around 2.5 million Zo equally distributed between Burma and India. In India, they were scattered throughout the Indian States of Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, as well as in Naga Districts of Burma. Others in Burma’s were in the Kale and Kabaw-Myittha valleys, Arakan State and in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh.²⁹² It seems nearly impossible to accurately ascertain how many Zo are in Burma or Bangladesh today. Illegal migration is rampant from Burma to India, both into states in the northeast as well as to the mainland.²⁹³

Conclusion

This chapter described the Zo highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas who were the last people to be brought into the colonial fold. There were a lot of misnomers regarding their society, history and nomenclatures. Political officers often disagreed on these points. Finally, it was accepted that Zo be referred to as the Chin in Burma, the Lushai in India and the Kuki in Manipur. These divisions were initiated by colonials such as Lt. Col. R. B. Pemberton who represented the Company. He worked with the Raj of

²⁹¹*Census of Burma 1911*, pg. 196.

²⁹²Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 7-8.

²⁹³Illegal immigration of Zo from the Chittagong Hill Tracts into neighbouring India is also evident in NGO reports. Like censuses taken by the state of India, however, numbers recorded do not reflect reality.

Manipur to determine the Lushai Hills and Manipur border. In this way, two states negotiated over the fate of Zo highlanders who were not given agency in the bordering process.

Based on these borders, this chapter explained how the missionaries, at the turn of the century, claimed certain mission fields, moved in, learned the local dialects and eventually canonized them through transliterations. It is argued that this caused further division based on geography and nomenclatures. In fact, one case study, that of the Zou, illustrates how one group, within the marginalized whole of the Zo society, was further marginalized. They eventually claimed the Chin Hills-Manipur Tract leading to their not being converted by foreign missionaries, rather by indigenous preachers several decades later after the majority of the Zo. The Zou, like some other Zo groups, have now broken away and claim a totally separate identity based on political agendas discussed in Chapter 5.

Finally, it is argued in this chapter that the nomenclature of Zo is all encompassing. The discovery and interpretation by Gordon Luce of a Pagan inscription in the 11th century, which refers to a group of highlanders as 'Khayn,' illustrates that this nomenclature was in existence for many centuries. At the same time, it was misunderstood by the Burmans who learned this word from Southern Chin. Actually, in southern Zo dialect, Cho (Asho), 'Khayn' simply means 'people.' Thus, there is enough, even abundant, evidence that Zo is the correct nomenclature. Furthermore, the argument that Khayn means 'friend' has been proven to be incorrect. Khayn only means 'people.'

The nomenclature debate is indicative of the construction of Zo identities. It is more than a debate over the correct names; it causes inclusion and exclusion very much as the borders function. In this way, this debate is a powerful tool used by Zo elites to achieve specific political ends. Not only is there an abundance of evidence that all of the people in the Northern Arakan Yomas used the term Zo for self-identification as well as for their nation, there is equal evidence that they did not use Chin, Lushai or Kuki. The arguments for the latter three terms are based on revisionist histories

legitimizing the artificial political borders drawn by colonials in the early 19th century. Thus, Zo who insist that these nomenclatures, and by extension the borders are legitimate, have now become the mimic men of the British colonists who first constructed the borders as well as the nomenclatures for the ease of administration and effective subjugation.

Chapter Two

On the Edge of Empire: The Way We Were

Introduction

On 25-29th January 1892, at Fort William in Calcutta, the Chin-Lushai Conference was held to discuss the possible amalgamation of the Northern Arakan Yomas, home to many Zo highlanders. Managing the hills from three administrations, Bengal, Assam, and Rangoon²⁹⁴ was an unnecessary expenditure for the Secretary of State and an exhaustive duty for the officers posted in the three administrative posts of the hills. Debate arose between the officers of the Lushai and the Chin Hills. Those of the North and South Lushai Hills argued that the Zo were one race and thus should fall under a single administration. Carey, political officer posted in the Chin Hills, however, opposed amalgamation arguing that the Chin, historically, had always, 'belonged' to Burma. Despite Carey's objections, it was decided that the hills be put under a single administration and be managed from Assam.

Unable to accept the decision of the Conference, in a confidential letter to the Chief Commissioner of Burma, Carey writes:

The Chin has [*sic*] nothing to do with the Lushai or Assam, but belongs to Burma, whilst the Lushai tract can conveniently be placed under Assam. It is on record that as far back as 1871 'The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar is 'regarded throughout the country as the Burra Sahib.'²⁹⁵

His argument was based on his understanding that the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar had the Lushai firmly under control. He used Alexander Mackenzie's 1871 report to support his claim. It must be noted,

²⁹⁴ A second administrative office was located in Mandalay.

²⁹⁵ Carey actually cites Mackenzie report, "...last two lines...on page 160." FDR on Chin Lushai Hills, September, 1892. Aizawl Tribal Research Institute, Department of Arts and Culture, Government of Mizoram: India, Confidential letter: Demi-official letter from B.S. Carey, Esq., Political Officer, Fort White, to the Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Burma,--dated the 4th February 1892.

however, that twenty years had passed since said report was published. Furthermore, frontier officers were not in communication with one another. Hence, unless there were devastating events occurring or in some way related to the 'Chin,' Carey could not have been aware of the current rapport between the British and the highlanders beyond his jurisdiction.²⁹⁶ He also argued that the 'Chin' had a historical relationship with the Burmese:

The Northern and Central Chins border on Burma; they have always owed a nominal allegiance to the [Shan Chief of the] Kalè Sawbwa, and even after the British occupation in 1885 the [Zo] Tashon Chiefs and the [Shan] Sawbwa were on very good terms. The [Zo clan of] Siyins and [the Zo clan of] Kanhaws were tributary to Kalè and years ago were subjected to much harsh treatment at the hands of the Shans, but obtaining guns they got out of hand and harassed the valley; but their object was rather to loot and capture Shans to do their menial services than as warfare against the State.²⁹⁷

Carey tries to illustrate his knowledge of the Chin and their strong ties to the Shan of the Kale valley in Burma. Carey makes clear that the Chin-Shan relationship was as tributaries and the occasional slave taking, but never as pure enemies. The relationship, according to Carey, was long-standing and secure and did not include the Lushai. Carey makes it sound as though slave-taking and occasional harassment did not cause the Shan and the 'Chin' to be adversaries. This sounds implausible. Surely, slave taking and harassment were serious affronts. Carey grossly exaggerates the 'bond' between the 'Chin'

²⁹⁶ Soong Chu Ro (2007). *Naming a People: British Frontier Management in Eastern Bengal and the Ethnic Categories of the Kuki-Chin: 1760-1860*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Hull, UK, pg.25.

²⁹⁷ *Op.cit.*

and the Shan. To make his argument stronger, Carey refers to the map drawn by Pemberton of 1834:

From Captain Pemberton's map published in 1835 and in a demi-official letter to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated the 9th September 1828, he [Pemberton] believed that the Kanhaws were tributary to Kalè and had continued so for many years.²⁹⁸

Carey relies on the writings of early colonials. However, he seems not to realize that much of this information was questionable. That is, Pemberton obtain information about this tributary relationship through informants. Once Pemberton published his report, this assertion had become a 'fact.' Carey's argument is based on this 'fact' and his reading of history. He also relied on the already established borders for the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas, i.e. that there are the Chin and that there are the Lushai (and that there are Kuki in the south of the Yomas and the north in Manipur who were known as the 'old' and 'new' Kuki respectively. Carey argued that the Chin 'belong' to Burma whereas the Lushai should continue to be under the jurisdictions of the Lieutenant-Governorships of Bengal and Assam. Carey reiterated and reinforced the categories established by Company men some sixty years earlier.²⁹⁹ He quoted Alexander Mackenzie's 1871 *Report on the Eastern Frontier* as well as Pemberton's Map and letter of 1835 and 1828 respectively.³⁰⁰

Mackenzie, who wrote the 1871 report, had been promoted to Chief-Commissioner of Burma just two years earlier in 1890. He also attended the Conference. Thus, he supported Carey's assertions. After all, they were based on his very own report. Some six months after the Conference, Mackenzie sent a telegram to the Foreign Secretary in Simla asking:

Has it been decided that administration of Chin Hills is to remain with Burma as stated in

²⁹⁸ *Op. cit.*

²⁹⁹ Reid, *Chin-Lushai Land*, pg. 6.

³⁰⁰ Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier*, pg. 160.

newspapers? If so, I will prepare a fresh scheme for administration of the Chin Hill Tracts.³⁰¹

It is tremendously surprising that the Chief Commissioner was not informed but instead read the final decision of the Conference in newspapers. Communication among political officers as well as to headquarters from the frontiers was limited as is argued above. Still, in response to the above argument, on 2 August 1892, the Government of India telegraphed Mackenzie in Mandalay, “Chin Hills to remain under Burma for the present.”³⁰² This decision marks the first official delineation of the Chin and the Lushai Hills into formal, and legally separate, administrative offices. The only change was to amalgamate the South Lushai Hills with the North Lushai Hills to be administered from Assam. The border was rationalized using the arguments of early Company men such as Pemberton, who in turn relied on the writings of other foreigners who were said to be ‘experts’ on Burma as well as on local informants. In fact, Pemberton states in his report that he utilized the writings of Sangermano, Buchanan and their contemporaries in the late to early 18th Century, nearly one hundred years before Burma was conquered and the Zo highlands became the new frontier.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace Zo construction back to its beginning in order to understand how Company men created the Chin and the Lushai, as well as the Kuki.³⁰³ As the above case at the Chin-Lushai Conference of 1892 illustrates, just two years after the annexation of the hills, these categories were already well-formed and established. This chapter will show, in part, that much of the information used to construct the Zo was based on the early accounts of colonials and their informants. It illustrates that Company officials put a lot of credence into the informants’ reports. For example, one of the first accounts was by an Italian priest, Sangermano, and at least one of his Italian contemporaries, another Barnebite priest. Both men wrote about the Zo in the late 18th century, nearly fifty years before the

³⁰¹ FDR on Chin Lushai Hills, Telegram No. 57.

³⁰² FDR on Chin Lushai Hills, Telegraph No. 59

³⁰³ In a large migratory wave, a group of highlanders who are Thado speaking people were called the ‘New’ Kuki. They were resettled in Manipur by the Raj along with colonial officers, north of the Lushai Hills. The ‘Old Kuki,’ many of whom are of the Bawm clan, remained around the Chittagong Hill Tracts, hence ‘old’ and ‘new’ Kuki.

British began attending to the Zo highlands. They did not, however, write from first-hand experience. Both relied on informants whose identities neither man disclosed. Thus, the construction of the Zo has a long history. Furthermore, this construction was not a unique phenomenon. According to Scott, from a lowland state perspective, highlanders have always been deemed uncivilized. This chapter illustrates that, to the lowlanders and colonials, highlanders were simply lower on their imagined civilization hierarchy.

The Imagined Civilization Hierarchy

Scott explains that state centers are typically located in the plains. The reasons are simple; the state's reach is more effective on level ground. State officials work in the plains where the practice of wet-rice cultivation ensures regular harvests and settled citizens. Their taxes, surplus products and men for labour or armies are easily accessible. The people of the highlands appear to 'roam,' practice *jhum* agriculture and do not maintain a surplus of food. Collecting taxes, soldiers or foodstocks from the Zo proved difficult—the mountainous terrain was simply too difficult to manage. The highlanders were, literally, out of the state's reach. Scott's visual metaphor of reservoirs filled with red ink succinctly captures this argument. Imagine one is holding a rigid map, horizontally between one's hands. On this board in a three dimensional model, are the mountains and valleys of *Zomia*.³⁰⁴ Wet rice fields are symbolized by reservoirs of red ink. They sit on the even ground in the valleys--the lowlands. If one were to hold this map and shift it back and forth, tip it to the left and to the right, the red ink would spill out of the reservoirs. In this visual metaphor, the red ink spills into the valleys and splashes onto the foothills, but not further. It does not travel up the mountains. The ink, in this case, is the power or reach of the state. Hence, the non-stained areas are non-state spaces because the state, literally, cannot

³⁰⁴ 'Zomia' is taking from van Schendel's explanation that 'Zo' means highlander or people on the periphery. Mi means people, hence, they coined the highlands of South and Southeast Asia, Zomia. This, however, is not an accepted term in this dissertation since 'Zo' had a different meaning than inferred by van Schendel and Scott.

reach that high. The state reigns in the lowlands, but it cannot (easily) control the highlands.

When states expand, argues Scott, some choose to evade it by heading toward the peripheral highlands, which become ‘shatter-zones.’ Shatter-zones are regions of, “bewildering ethnic and linguistic complexity.”³⁰⁵ He argues that these shatter-zones are occupied by, “...human shards of state formation...” where all sorts of fleeing people congregate seeking safety and new territory.³⁰⁶ In terms of the Zo highlands, however, the people are surprisingly homogenous. As explained in Chapter 1, Zo dialects are all similar. Furthermore, many aspects of their cultures are similar. Thus, at least for the Zo highlanders, Scott’s argument does not wholly apply. It may be argued, however, that before British colonial rule, the kingdoms of India, Burma and China made little effort to enclose the Zo highlands. Hence, the Zo dwelled in the mountains long before the arrival of the Company. They may have started as independent groups escaping their respective governments. Perhaps, over time, these independent groups were subsumed and *became* homogenous. It is also possible that they migrated down from the mountains of Tibet to get away from the Chinese Empire, as some Zo historians speculate. Perhaps as others have contemplated, the Zo were once Tartars escaping conscription into Genghis Khan’s Mongol army of the 12th century. Without a written history and lack of archaeological evidence, their origin(s) cannot be ascertained. Oral stories, including myths and legends, are the only known historical evidence that still exists today.

One such oral story supports Scott’s argument. Both, Vumson and Vum Kho Hau recount a 14th century story which is primarily told by the Suantak clan. Some Zo had migrated down to the plains in search of larger areas of land. But the plains were not peaceful for the Zo. A cruel Shan prince rose to power in the Kale Valley. He decided to build himself a grand new palace. Paranoia of enemy attacks prompted him to have two moats instead of just the one, dug around his palace. To dig these enormous moats, he forced the Zo to dig night and day. The Shan prince was merciless. It was not only arduous for the

³⁰⁵ Scott, *The Art*, pg. 7.

³⁰⁶ *Op.cit.*

forced labourers, but dangerous as well. An entire bucket with accidentally severed fingers was collected each night. At the same time, the Zo were in constant threat from Manipuri groups who frequently launched attacks against the Zo. The Zo suffered a great deal from the forced labour and attacks from Manipuri groups. Having to be on constant vigil, they were unable to attend to their fields. Food ran out resulting in a massive famine. Like Scott's examples, the Zo escaped (back) to the hills. Vum Kho Hau recounted this oral story in 1963,³⁰⁷ Vumson in 1986.

Some years earlier, in 1925, Assistant Superintendent of the Burma Frontier Service, Leonard Brown Naylor, also recounted the story of a cruel dictator. The story was told by the people around the Siyin-Tedim Area of the Northern Chin Hills in Burma. Perhaps these too, were members of the Suantak clan:³⁰⁸

The legend of the Siyin origin

In former times only the Shans lived in the Kalemmyo Valley. Whilst they were living there the Manipuries attacked Kalemmyo. The Kalemmyo people killed...the Chief of the Manipuries. Because they killed the Chief, the Kale-myo people won... After that the Manipuries again attacked Kalemmyo. Then the Kalemmyo people were defeated because cholera broke out in the town. Therefore, the Manipuries won but they did not administer (the country). At that time a Burmese prince came from below (Burma) and governed the town, and afterwards built a wall all-round the town. During this time the people of the

³⁰⁷ Vum Kho Hau, *Profiles of a Burma Frontier Man: An Autobiographical Memoirs including resistance movements, formation of the Union and the independence of Burma, together with some chapters on oriental books, paintings, coins, porcelain and objects d'art*. Unknown binding; printed by author at Kilmattmaju Press, Bandung, Indonesia, .pg. Appendix.

³⁰⁸ As mentioned in chapter 1, a large number of Suantak are of the Tedim area, but can also be found in Mizoram and Manipur.

Kale-Myo valley were forced to work very hard indeed. It is said that the fingers of the workers, which were accidentally cut off, filled a basket. Therefore the people of Kalemyo, because they suffered too heavily, migrated [to the hills]. One group entered the Chin Hills by way of [the Manipur River]..and are now Lushais. [Others] camped at Kenney Peak...and then descended [to the area of] Sizang.³⁰⁹

The oral story continues by explaining that five brothers founded the Suantak clan, how they lost their writing system as well as the origin of their 'Nat' worship. The word 'Nat' is a Burmese term so it seems unlikely that this story was told exactly in this way throughout the ages. This legend also differs from the one told by Vumson and Vum Kho Hau. The above story explains that the forefathers of the Zo were the Shan who were, "...the only people that lived in the...valley." It also specifies that the new king came from below, meaning Burma, whereas Vum Kho Hau and Vumson's story tells of a Shan prince of the Kale Valley. Naylor's story emphasized that the Shan did not administer Kale, although they presumably attacked it to gain control over the land. Instead, they escaped the new Burmese king and headed toward the hills. There they dispersed into two directions, to the eastern and the western sides of the Northern Arakan Yomas. Later they would come to be known as the Chin and the Lushai. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Zo did not use these nomenclatures until the arrival of colonials. Thus, this too, could not have been told this way throughout the ages.

Naylor recorded this story over some three years and published it in 1925. His primary consultant was Cope who was the same man that first published 'Zolai.' By extension, then, it may be assumed that the Zo had already acquired a worldview. Parts of this worldview are stories of migration and

³⁰⁹ Naylor, L.B. (1925). *A Practical Handbook of the Chin Language (Siyin Dialect) Containing Grammatical Principals with Numerous Exercises and Vocabulary*. Supdt, Govt. Printing and Stationery, Burma, American Baptist Mission Press: Rangoon, BL OIOC, 11103.f.28

origin. Perhaps this story was reinvented or embellished with modern elements. Chapter 5 addresses origin stories in more detail. It illustrates that Zo oral stories, and later written histories, took on decidedly modern characteristics in the process toward modernity. For example, typically three elements are now present in Zo origin and migration stories. First, the Zo tend to link themselves to other 'tribes' very much like the colonials did through their graphs and tables linking 'tribes' to one another. Both oral stories, while they differ in some respects, connect them to the Manipuries. Vumson and Vum Kho Hau's story goes one step further and insists that the Shan are the forefathers to the present day Zo. Second, the stories offer a clear time span through a migratory history. The Zo moved from the plains to the mountains to avoid the cruelty of the prince or kings, and ruthless Manipuries. Finally, the stories tend to have a biblical component. The Zo had to migrate to the mountains due to a devastating natural disaster, in the above cases, these were cholera in one account and a famine in the other. Like the Jews who leave Israel in Exodus to escape persecution, the Zo suffered in the plains and saved themselves by fleeing, here to the hills.³¹⁰ In this respect, the story sounds very similar to other stories of highlanders escaping to the hills.

According to Scott, highlanders chose the hills over the plains to get away from the state. The state perspective of the highlanders is that they are uncivilized; they are, in Scott's words, their 'dark twins.' For every characteristic that describes a civilized, educated, and settled lowlander, the negative mirror image of that characteristic is used to describe the highlander.³¹¹ Highlanders are uncivilized, untaught, and nomadic. Lowlanders are civilized, educated, and settled. To a lowlander, the bottomland is always preferred. While Scott argues that the highlanders actively chose the hills over the plains, there is at least some evidence that the highlanders saw themselves the same way the lowlanders did, as primitive. In at least one of their prayers, that of the Lai around the area of Haka, they

³¹⁰ For more on Mizo oral histories, read for instance: Pachau, J. (2011), 'On Being Mizo': A Re-Analysis of Issues of Identity from India's Northeast. Dept. of Anthropology, Rhodes House, Bodelein Libraries, Unpublished MS. D. Phil. c. 23841, Oxford University: Oxford, pg. 140-159.

³¹¹ Scott, *The Art*, pg. 99-100.

long for abundant products.³¹² The Zo of Haka reciting this prayer refer to themselves as primitive when compared to the plains people.

This prayer suggests that the Zo had the desire to live in the plains, but chose to remain in the hills. Chit Hlaing recorded this prayer in 1957. Perhaps by then, the Zo of Haka had ‘acquired’ a certain taste for plains products. Furthermore, they most likely adopted a lowland perspective of highlanders being uncivilized through encounters with state officials. State officials included colonial officers and their entourage of Indians, Ghurkhas, Chinese and Burmese. Later western missionaries arrived, also with an entourage including plains Zo and Karen that had already converted to Christianity. These state officials and missionaries must have elicited certain ‘uncivilized’ behaviour from the Zo reinforcing their own perceptions.³¹³ The Zo then adopted this perspective, unable to maintain a self-image contrary to that of the lowland colonials and missionaries.

As Scott argues, highlanders’ refusal to be incorporated in the state-systems of the plains deemed them, among other things as being uncivilized, backwards, unpredictable, barbarian, savage, wild, uneducated, unhygienic, immoral, dishonest, cruel and war hungry. Scott illustrates that other highlanders all throughout the mountains of South and Southeast Asia which he calls *Zomia*,³¹⁴ were also considered uncivilized.³¹⁵ These attitudes were

³¹² Chit Hlaing (2009). “Ethnicity Theory, Linguistics and Chin Identity,” IN: *Chin: History, Culture and Identity*. Dominant Publishers and Distributors: Delhi, pg. 1-7 (Published under the name F.K. Lehman).

³¹³ This phenomenon is referred to as Self-Perception Theory. Social Psychologist, Daryl Bem argued that people develop their attitudes by observing their own behavior and conclude what attitudes must have caused this behavior. That is, a Zo who eats with his hands instead of a spoon would conclude that he must be less civilized than their counterparts using spoons. For more on the Psychological Theory of Self-Perception, read for instance: Zimbardo, et. al. (2000), *Psychology*, Allyn and Bacon: Boston, London, Toronto, Sydney Tokyo, Singapore, pg. 413, 440.

³¹⁴ *Zomia* has no relation to the Zo. Scott used William van Schendel’s understanding of ‘Zo’ that it meant ‘highlander’ or ‘people on the periphery.’ van Schendel, in turn, relied on F.K. Lehman’s knowledge of ‘Zo.’ Lehman conducted his fieldwork in Haka, the Haka are the only Zo highlanders who refer to their southern neighbours, who they consider uncivilized as ‘zo.’ ‘Mi’ was correctly understood as meaning ‘people.’ Hence, *Zomia* means uncivilized people who are in the south. Some Mizo scholars, however, insist that Mizo, means ‘People of the Hills.’ To generalize and refer to all of the Arakan Yomas as ‘*Zomia*,’ however is a gross generalization at best. ‘Zo’ also refers to the climate of a certain altitude. ‘Zo’ as is used in this dissertation, refers to all of the highlanders because numerous sources

not unique to Asia, however, they existed elsewhere including in America. In an 1828 American Dictionary, Noah Webster defined both, 'Civilization' and 'Savagism' (barbarianism):

CIVILIZATION, *n.* The act of civilizing, or the state of being civilized; the state of being refined in manners, from the grossness of savage life, and improved in arts and learning.

SAVAGE, *n.* A human being in his native state of rudeness, one who is untaught, uncivilized or without cultivation of mind or manners...*savages*...when uncorrupted by the vices of civilized men, are remarkable for their hospitality to strangers, and for their truth, fidelity and gratitude to their friends, but implacably cruel and revengeful toward the enemies...

SAVAGISM, *n.* The state of rude uncivilized men; the state of men in their native wildness and rudeness.³¹⁶

The above definitions tell us two things. First, there seems to be a linear continuum from being in a state of savagism to becoming civilized. A person is savage or barbarian, until he is educated, learns to appreciate the arts and acquires manners from other, civilized, men. Although not made explicit in this definition, it also means adhering to one of the world's major religions instead of practicing animism or another pagan belief system. Like categorizing nomenclatures and languages, officials of 'civilized' societies could systematically order people into an imagined civilization hierarchy.

indicate that 'Zo' was the term the highlanders used for themselves as well as a possible progenitor. For more on the word, 'Zo' please see chapter 1.

³¹⁵ Scott, *The Art*, pg. 98-126.

³¹⁶ Webster, N. (1828). *An American Dictionary of the English Language* IN: Pearce, R.H. (1953). *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the American Mind*, The Johns Hopkins Press: Baltimore, prologue.

Buchanan for instance, often ordered the people he encountered referring to one group of people, the 'Mru,' as, "more rude," than another tribe he had encountered previously.³¹⁷ Second, the above definitions also illustrate that 'civilized' people all around the world, not only in Asia, had comparable attitudes toward people living outside of a state system, such as highlanders.

In this way, the argument of Edward Said's *Orientalism*³¹⁸ and Victor Kiernan's discussion on the European views toward non-Europeans during the colonial era fall somewhat short. The notion of *Orientalism* began with Said's main argument that aspects of the Middle East and East Asian cultures were depicted in a patronizing manner by American and European writers, artists and designers. These he argued had false assumptions about Asians. They were being essentialized and romanticized to justify colonial and imperial ambitions. Kiernan makes a similar argument. A Marxist scholar of imperial history, he argued that Europeans behaved as *the Lords of Human Kind*.³¹⁹ Like Said, Kiernan argued that colonial expansion had to be justified. He viewed imperial ambitions strictly in terms of hegemonic power structures and argued that Europeans believed that colonialism was inevitable. By fostering racist attitudes toward Asians, colonial expansion was not only validated but also praised. In fact, some went as far as arguing that the colonized gladly invited colonialism. Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Minute*, for instance, compares the number of English versus 'native' books sold in India in the mid nineteenth century. The number of English books greatly outnumbered 'native' books evidencing that Indians appreciated the colonial influences brought by the British. He also stated that one single English book is more valuable a whole library of native texts.³²⁰ Asians were depicted as being unable to create the same level of artistic prose that Europeans could. Furthermore, one way that colonization was a good act in that it included certain notions of what the Europeans deemed was 'civilized'

³¹⁷ van Schendel, W. (1992). *Francis Buchanan in Southeast Bengal (1798): His Journey to Chittagong, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Noakhali and Comilla*. University Press Limited, Dhaka: Bangladesh, pg. 93.

³¹⁸ Said, E.(reprint 2003) *Orientalism*, Penguin Books, pg. 1.

³¹⁹ Kiernan, V. G. (1972), *The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes to the Outside World in the Imperial Age*, Trafalgar Square Publishers: London.

³²⁰ Macaulay, T.B.'s *Minute*, Number 25, IN: Bhabha, H.K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*, Routledge: New York and London, pg. 87.

behaviour and standards. Western mores were somehow superior to those in Asia. What both Said and Kiernan miss, however, is that the ‘savages’ or ‘barbarians’ were not portrayed as *inherently* different from their Western counterparts; rather they are depicted as being *not yet* civilized. They were not ‘othered.’

Both Said and Kiernan do not manage to explain the reasons civilized people consider highlanders uncivilized and backwards and why they should gradually be incorporated into an advanced and superior society. That is, the notion of ‘othering’ does not suffice—they are not inherently different. Instead, the highlanders were considered to be ‘backward’ and naïve; they are much lower on the imagined civilization hierarchy. This notion is also reflected in the dictionary entry above. They are ‘untaught’ in ‘a state of wildness and rudeness.’ But they can be reformed. Some colonial officers, including Thomas Abercrombie Trant, the first colonial officer to travel into the highlands in 1824, speculated that the Zo are the forefathers of the Burmese. In Trant’s view, a barbarian can be converted into a ‘citizen’ if the highlander migrates to the plains where civilisation thrives. In Trant’s opinion, some of the Zo left the hills for the plains. There they became civilized and became the Burmese, while those that stayed behind remained barbarian.³²¹ In Trant’s perspective, highlanders living in small groups without a central state or kingdom are not yet civilized but could be ‘reformed.’

This perspective is not new. Even Fan Cho mentioned reformation of highlanders a thousand years earlier. Thus, Scott’s argument that the ‘civilization model’ of ‘rude barbarians’ existed long before the colonial era addresses the process from a backward person to a civilized one best. Highlanders live in independent units and do not settle in specific areas for very long. Because they choose to live outside of a state’s control, they are in a non-state space. Eventually, even the highlands become incorporated into the state system. One motive, and the most obvious, was to bring the highlands into the colonial fold for economic reasons.³²² However, while the

³²¹ Trant, *Two Years*, pg.240.

³²² Scott, *The Art*, pg. 4-6.

Zo highlands may not have been an economic participant of the state, there is evidence that trade existed in the hills. That is, highlanders often partnered with lowlanders through trade. Evidently the products traded between the hills and the plains were complementary. The hills produced products like beeswax, ivory and cotton whereas the plains produced brass bowls, colourful beads and salt.

During their time as political officers in the Chin Hill of Burma, Carey and Tuck reported that traders from the Kale valley (Kalemyo) hawked their wares in the Tedim area, as they continue to do so today and most likely did for centuries before the arrival of the British. Some groups of highlanders also traded with Burmans who lived in the Southern Chin Hills. At other times spies from one highland village, disguised as traders, would enter another highland village and gather information for a planned raiding expedition.³²³ In fact, trading was prolific enough that spies could easily enter Zo villages in this way. Thus, trading was not introduced with colonialism. The notion that there was no economic exchange and moreover, that the Zo highlands were a sort of no-man's land cannot be substantiated. It may have been deemed by some as a no-man's land because the exact location and activities of highlanders was not known. The central state of the plains was unable to 'keep track' of the highlanders. Also, because they did not have a writing system, they could not employ rule of law. Law is written in texts. Without texts, laws cannot be communicated effectively. This is the case whether a highlander commits a crime, or has a crime committed against him. The state cannot exercise control, but at the same time, it does not offer protection either. After all, highlanders do not provide the state any sort of 'protection money.'

Thus, Zo highlanders were deemed uncivilized because they had not yet learned to read and write, they did not practice wet rice cultivation instead preferred to employ the *jhum* method of agriculture which is more suitable in the hills; large areas of land are not available. They were also considered to prefer isolation, although trading was abundant in the hills. But the colonial believed that the highlanders could be reformed. Through education they

³²³ Carey, *The Chin Hills*, Vol. I., pg. 8, 5, 238.

could move up on the civilization hierarchy. The Zo eventually adopted this perspective coming to see themselves as primitive and savage in need of civilizing.

The Last Enclosure

Scott explains that ‘barbarians’ tend to live on the periphery of states. The people who choose to live on the periphery, as in this case the Zo hills, practiced *jhum* cultivation, hunting, and foraging. However, they are not citizens of a state. Thus these methods of food procurement are intractable to the state. In Scott’s own words, to the state, the hills were ‘fiscally stale.’ Scott also makes the point that the barbarians on the periphery posed a constant threat. Zo highlanders would swoop down the mountainsides and raid the easy pickings of the plains. While trade could have been a complementary exchange of plains and highland products controlled by the state, the Zo, like many highlanders in history, refused to engage in any sort of standard agreement with the states (not the people) of the plains. After all, most products were easily accessible through raids or directly from traders. The state does not have to be involved. Moreover, ‘under the counter’ products procured were not taxed by the state.³²⁴ Thus, highlanders practiced a subversive economy. From a colonial perspective, only by enclosing them into the state would they become ‘civilized.’

A civilized person, then, is a ‘citizen’ that belongs to a state. The civilized person adheres to laws and participates in the society as prescribed. The civilized person contributes to society, literally, by producing surplus food from their paddy cultivation, paying taxes and offering man power when necessary. Catherine Hall, writing about Jamaica as a former colony, argues that the English men and women of the early 19th century believed that black Jamaicans could become like themselves through the process of civilization which included the conversion to Christianity.³²⁵ Colonial administrators and certainly missionaries, who came at the turn of the century, also believed that the ‘backward’ Zo could become civilized. Thus, the Company and the

³²⁴ Scott, *The Art*, pg. 7.

³²⁵ Hall, C. (2002). *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867*, Polity and Blackwell Publishers: Oxford, pg. 25.

Missionaries exercised a division of labour. The British enforced law and order, economic progress and utilized Zo as its labour force. Missionaries taught the Zo other aspects of civility. These included education through reading and writing, certain moral standards and through their many hospitals and medical missions taught the Zo the importance of hygiene—taking care of the body, especially if it belonged to the state.

The Lawless Hills

By living in the plains, citizens pay taxes, but are also protected by the state. It is a complementary relationship. When the states need soldiers, food stuffs and revenue, it turns to its citizens. Zo highlanders, however, refuse to pay taxes to a central state. While tribute was paid to certain chiefs, such as to chief Kamhau of the Sukte clan described in Chapter 1, these tended to be agreed upon by the village chiefs and his constituents. Highlanders' lives in non-state spaces do not have the state to protect them. Their lives are described as being marked by danger and anarchy. One group of highlanders would overtake another group in the middle of the night. Often, they would kill and decapitate for their ritual sacrifices, or worse, make one a slave. The first political officers posted in the hills described them as being overrun by mayhem, lawlessness, dangerous to foreigners but also for the Zo. Carey and Tuck elaborate on Zo feuds, which besides other aspects of Zo life such as slavery, the worship of spirits, head-hunting, raiding and infanticide were all considered uncivilized:

When first we came up to the Chin Hills it was not uncommon...to hear of 40 and 50 persons of the same village having been killed in the five previous years while hunting, fishing, and cultivating.

No one was ever safe: the women worked in the fields guarded by the men; no one ever knew when raiders from many villagers at feud with theirs were lying along the paths,

and piquets [sic] kept guard night and day
on the approaches to the villages.³²⁶

These raids, however, were not punished by any sort of law. Villages were fortified, Zo were on the constant vigil of other groups. If one group took the heads of another, it was inevitable that revenge was exercised upon them. In fact, Carey and Tuck explain that:

Law in criminal matters according to our [English] definition of the word does not exist and the word “custom” must be borrowed to express the arrangement for dealing with crime...Before our coming [to the Zo hills] there were no judges among the Chins; each man protected his private interests, each village defended its rights, and each tribe was guardian of its honour and property.³²⁷

Carey and Tuck made it clear that before their arrival—the civilized, there was no law in the hills, only ‘customs.’ Groups or ‘tribes’ fended for themselves, weaker groups typically lost desirable land and even its members to more powerful groups. Soon, after as the hills were annexed in 1889-1890, the British Government employed a rule of law which is discussed in Chapter 4. Every time Zo highlanders raided traders, another village, or committed crimes such as murder, infanticide, or engaged in slave procurement, trials were held. In order to punish the perpetrators, Zo were jailed, punished with fines and, for the most heinous of crimes such as beheadings, Zo were also threatened with deportation to the plains. This, one colonial superintendent explained, “...they feared worse than death.”³²⁸

Besides headhunting and slavery, both of which were consider heinous, the Zo also practiced infanticide. It was a wholly accepted ‘custom’ by the Zo.

³²⁶ Carey and Tuck, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 227-228.

³²⁷ Carey and Tuck, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 207.

³²⁸ NAM (1908). Political Department Correspondence, File No. 2C-3, 1909, Part 1, Acc. 06628.

Whole villages would support certain cases of infanticide, much to the indignation of the British. However, infanticide was, at one point, also practiced in Europe but the rise of Christianity taught that every human life was created by God and should be protected especially the most vulnerable, infants (and unborn children).³²⁹ The British thought this practice, in particular, made them a cruel people, at best. In fact, the archives have extensive accounts of infanticide carried-out by the Zo. One such account refers to an illegitimate child born in a cultivation hut, rather than in the village. The mother of the pregnant girl, angry with her daughter for the affair, told her to leave the village and make alternative arrangements. The girl went to the hut to give birth. After the infant was born, its father took the child, put creepers around its neck and disposed of it at a nearby creek where it was later found dead. Apparently, the entire village conspired to keep this case of infanticide from the political officers.³³⁰

Captain Lindsay Eliot Lumley Burne investigating this incident produced a whole report on infanticide in the Zo hills. Burne quotes Carey and Tuck:

In the North...when slaves are cheap and girls do not demand the same price as in the South, it was a very common practice to kill any undesirable offspring...Deformed children, idiots, and bastards were usually condemned to die, and were generally taken out into the jungle or placed in a cave and allowed to die.³³¹

Burne is incensed by this 'barbaric act' and proposes that an entire village be fined in such cases because, he argued, that whole villages tend to conspire in hiding evidence and refusing to turn in the guilty party. Eventually, a law protecting unwanted children was imposed upon them by the British.

³²⁹ Starky, R. (1996), *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, pg. 117-120.

³³⁰ NAM (1908). Political Department Correspondence, File No. 2C-3, 1909, Part 1, Acc. 06628.

³³¹ NAM (1908). Burne, L.E.L., *Report on the subject of infanticide as practiced amongst the Siyin tribe*, Acc. 06628, pg. 5.

Imposing a rule of law was not easy. It was, however, essential in the civilizing project. Before beginning the civilizing project, information on the highlanders was sought.

Intelligence gathering had proven successful in India. The same, it was assumed, was true for the fringes of the British Empire.³³² The Company moved in slowly by sending in officials with the expressed purpose of protecting the interests of British subjects working as traders, merchants, missionaries, among others, in Burma. Their covert mission, however, was to seek intelligence for future invasion and occupation. The British, however, were not the first to enter the hills to seek intelligence. In fact, the British Empire, behaved very much like the Chinese Empire a thousand years earlier. Furthermore, the notion that highlanders are uncivilized and barbarian had not changed. Even in the 9th century, the highlanders were deemed barbarian and the same sort of intelligence was sought for possible expansion or to secure the frontiers of empire.

Fan Cho of the Tang Dynasty 862 A.D.

The historical record is rich with Chinese sources that suggest that these others included a collection of traders, merchants, migrants, missionaries and surveyors, some of who travelled in caravans. The Tea-Horse Road, sometimes referred to as the Southern Silk Route, which links trading routes from Yunnan, Tibet, Burma and India, travels through the Northern Arakan Yomas.³³³ On this route, silver, horses, salt, tea and other items were traded and transported. Thus, the Northern Arakan Yomas were lively with people moving through them a thousand years before arrival of the Company.

Over a thousand years ago, the Northern Arakan Yomas were claimed by the ancient Nanchao Kingdom (680– 902 C.E.), an adversary of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.).³³⁴ During the time of Fan Cho, parts of the Northern

³³² Bayly, C.A. (1996) *Intelligence gathering and social communication in India, 1780-1870*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pg. 97.

³³³ Yang, B. (2004). "Horses, Silver, and Cowries: Yunnan in Global Perspective. *Journal of World History*, Vol. 15, No. 3, September 2004, pgs. 281-322.

³³⁴ The Nanchao Kingdom experienced many changes during its era. For more information read for instance: Backus, C. (1981) *The Nanchao Kingdom and Tang China's southwestern frontier*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Arakan Yomas were within the Nanchao Kingdom bordering Annam. Annam was a tributary of the Tang Dynasty. War was imminent between Annam and Nanchao. Fan Cho collected reconnaissance on Nanchao including of the highlanders in the west. In his travelogue, he refers to them as the *Man Shu* or the ‘Southern Barbarians’ (of the Tang).³³⁵ Besides his account offering a glimpse of the Northern Arakan Yomas over a thousand years ago, it also highlights that attitudes of ‘civilized’ toward ‘less civilized’ peoples existed before the 18th century-- before the Company made similar statements about the Zo. ‘Less civilized’ peoples were deemed barbarian in obvious need of reformation, just as Scott argues. It also demonstrates that this perspective existed not only in Europe toward Asians but within Asia as well.

The Northern Arakan Yomas were also home to what China considered its ‘Southern Barbarians’³³⁶ So, although the pre-colonial era of the Northern Arakan Yomas is not a primary focus of this dissertation, Fan Cho’s (樊綽)³³⁷ account is discussed to provide a glimpse into the pre-colonial era of the Northern Arakan Yomas through the account of an intelligence seeker for the Tang Dynasty.³³⁸ Furthermore, Fan Cho’s account is included here to emphasize that the Zo had been in the highlands for at least a thousand years. There was no evidence that they escaped into the hills or preferred the bottomland. That is, all the speculation by colonials that the Zo were in the hills, for whatever reason, and really preferred the lowlands is not supported. After all, during the thousand years, they surely would have had opportunity to resettle in the plains.

Fan Cho was an empire official seeking intelligence just like Company men of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Fan Cho’s inclusion has to be justified further. Linguist and colonial scholar, Gordon Luce, translated Fan Cho’s account in 1961.³³⁹ Before then, non-Chinese scholars of the Zo were unaware

³³⁵ Fan Cho, *Man-Shu*, pg. Introduction.

³³⁶ Fan Cho, *The Man Shu*.

³³⁷ Fan Cho’s (樊綽) is sometimes referred to as ‘Fan Ch’o and Fan Chou. The first spelling is used throughout this dissertation.

³³⁸ Backus, C. (1981) *The Nanchao kingdom and Tang China’s southwest frontier*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pg. 138.

³³⁹ Fan Cho (862 A.D.), *The Man Shu*, pg. Preface.

of its existence.³⁴⁰ Most histories written about the Zo after the 1960s, however, do refer to Fan Cho to illustrate the existence of the Zo long before the colonial era, their relationship to China's ancient dynasties and of course, to provide support for the term, 'Zo,' in the on-going nomenclature debate of the present day. Fan Cho's travelogue also provides an important link to China. This link or connection to China is central to many Zo scholars of the modern era who look toward China as a possible origin. There are no current histories written by Zo that argue for an origin either in India or in Burma. Origins are almost always linked to China, including to Tibet. Thus, Fan Cho has become a significant historical figure for the Zo. Yet, it seems that Zo scholars did not attend to this account in detail. Most quote his encountering Zo highlanders but they do not go further and analyse his perspective. For many Zo scholars, especially those in debates about nomenclature and origin, quoting Fan Cho that there are Zo in the hills suffices. His account, however, deserves explicit analysis, especially in terms of the civilization hierarchy that was not only employed by the British, but by the Chinese as well.

Fan Cho's travelogue illustrates that the information sought about highlanders in the Northern Arakan Yomas, the people on the periphery, tends to be about reconnaissance, as it was during the 17th and 18th centuries. As already explained, most government centers are in the plains.³⁴¹ In the case of Fan Cho, the Zo highlanders were not on the periphery of *his* state, but on the border of an adversary neighbouring state and thus presented a security risk. Intelligence provides information on possible reactions to war, warfare practices and weapons, determines the best diplomatic strategies of negotiation, provides vital intelligence on the hierarchies of power structures,

³⁴⁰ Fan Cho's text was heavily used by Song historiographers, most famously Sima Guang, but fell into oblivion during the Ming Dynasty. The text survived and re-emerged in the *Yongle dadian* (1403, an early Ming encyclopaedia) as *Yunnan shiji* or Historical record of Yunnan. It was then copied into an 18th century collection *Wuyingdian juzhenban congshu* 武英殿聚珍版丛书 (ca 1776 *Siku quanshu*). Subsequently it was reprinted again in Fujian and Guangdong (editions not identified) and copied into private nineteenth-century collections, such as the *Linlang mishi congshu* 琳琅秘室丛书 (1853) and the *Jianxi cunshu huikan* 渐西村舍汇刊 (Wuhu, 1898). Xiang Da (1900-1966) was the first modern authority on this text. His annotated edition was published by Zhonghua shuju in 1962 (*Manshu jiaozhu*). Gordon Luce does not explain where he found this text, but he translated it into English in 1961.

³⁴¹ Scott, J. (2010) *The Art*, pg. 35.

as well as maps the terrain for possible military invasion and later for colonial expansion. Fan Cho depicts the highlanders as not only savage and primitive, but also suggests that they are unpredictable with a tendency toward war. Importantly, Fan Cho, like those to follow him, relied on informants although he did not explicitly state this. Luce, in the introduction, insists that Fan Cho must have relied on informants when generating the *Man-Shu*.³⁴²

Fan Cho's manuscript was forgotten at the beginning of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). It was rediscovered in the 18th Century during a time when knowledge about China intensified.³⁴³ To date, it is the only detailed account of the tension and eventual large-scale conflict between the tributary of Annam and the independent Kingdom of Nanchao.³⁴⁴ The *Man-Shu* reads like an objective account, rather than an interpretive history. Seldom does one encounter any sort of personal comments or emotive statements in travelogues and reconnaissance reports. However, the *Man-Shu* reveals the attitude of a 'civilized' state official toward an 'uncivilized' group of barbarians on the edge of empire. Before addressing Fan Cho's disposition toward those he wrote about, it is useful to look at some background on the man himself.

Governor Ts'ai Hsi of Tongking (经略使) employed Fan Cho around the year 860 A.D. Tongking was situated in the west region of Ling-nan, part of Annam, a tributary state of the Tang Dynasty.³⁴⁵ Ts'ai Hsi employed Fan Cho as a lieutenant and sent him on numerous reconnaissance missions from the Annam capital of Hanoi. One such mission was to Nanchao, which included parts of the Northern Arakan Yomas. Nanchao was an independent kingdom that was in constant conflict, as well as in negotiations with tributaries of the

³⁴² Luce, *Man-Shu*, pg. Introduction.

³⁴³ *Ibid*, pg. Preface.

³⁴⁴ The Ming Dynasty began in 1368. According to Giok-Po Oey's preface in the *Man-Shu*, it is unclear exactly when the *Man-Shu* was lost; the knowledge that it existed, however, was not lost. Eighteenth century scholars went in search of the manuscript; found it and in 1774, compiled 10 different chapters into one manuscript entitled the *Man-Shu*.

³⁴⁵ Some parts of Annam are now known as Vietnam.

Tang Dynasty. In the year 859 A.D., diplomatic relations between Nanchao and the tributaries of the Tang Dynasty broke down.³⁴⁶

War between Annam and Nanchao finally broke out in 862-863 A.D. Tsi H'si along with most of his retainers and family members were killed. Fan Cho, although wounded, managed to escape and in loyalty, carried with him the Ts'ai' Seal of Office.³⁴⁷ The murder of Ts'ai along with the experiences of the bitter battle obviously made an impression on Fan Cho. He resolved to compile all the intelligence he had gathered on his reconnaissance missions into one comprehensive book. Fan Cho believed his compilation would eventually benefit the Chinese court and aid its frontier officials in the future.³⁴⁸

Like many to follow, Fan Cho surveyed the mountains and its inhabitants in case of war. He was interested in the landscape, the rivers and lakes, the climate, the living conditions including areas that were disease ridden, such as the 'malaria valleys' among the mountain ranges. For military purposes, this intelligence was essential. Tang Dynasty troops required detailed maps to negotiate the terrain and set-up strategic areas of attack and retreat. He also detailed Zo highlanders' customs, traditions, and habits as well as described some of the people physically. Parts of the *Man-shu* read much like ethnographic study. For example, he refers to some Zo clans as "black" because of their dark skin color. He categorizes the 'barbarians' according to other physical attributes as well. These include height, stature, shapes of noses, foreheads, and length of limbs. Fan Cho also maps the location of villages. For example, when referring to the 'black' barbarians, he writes that they are from the north—from the "Little Brahman Kingdom" situated in the Northwest of the Lusai³⁴⁹ River.³⁵⁰

Utilizing a map drawn by Fan Cho, one is able to trace his movements to and within the highlands.³⁵¹ His journey begins Northeast/East of the highlands

³⁴⁶ Backus, C. (1981). *The Nan-chao kingdom*, pg. 135.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid*, pg. 138-139.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid*, pg. 138-139.

³⁴⁹ Lusei river has no relation to 'Lushai.'

³⁵⁰ Fan Cho, *The Man Shu*, pg. 20.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pg. Index.

from Annam through Yunnan. He is frustrated and fearful during his journey. Mainly, he is distrustful of the highlanders. Fan Cho describes his interactions with the southern ‘barbarians’ in a memorial to the court which is included in the *Man-Shu*. Gordon Luce insists, that this was not meant to be part of the official text; that it was “wrongly included” and should have been treated as a supplement. Luce further and rather strongly argues that the reading of this, mistakenly included, memorial interferes with the overall text.³⁵² In this memorial Fan Cho sends a message back to China about his inexperience travelling through the highlands:

Because the Southern Man, after Yao-chou, became dependent on and attached to the Man administration, your humble servant could not be expert or familiar with the stages of the two land-routes...I humbly beg Your majesty to send down an official notification ordering a detailed survey. Because the Southern Man are cunning and treacherous, and (the idea of) attacking and plundering is ever present in their minds, whenever they have some leisure ... they practice fighting the enemy. If, then, we do not invade and attack them from all four sides, they are violent and bad persons, and difficult to reform. That is why I record their cities and garrison-towns, their river-valleys and plains—mere dust defiling the audience-screen of the Imperial apartments. Perhaps one might hope to wipe out their host of ant-swarms, and purge forever (these) Ch’iang barbarian rebels. Your humble servant speaks without reserve...³⁵³

³⁵² *Ibid.*, pg. 9.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, pg. 8.

Fan Cho distrusts the highlanders. He is also frustrated with having to negotiate unfamiliar land routes. It was the first time that the Tang surveyed the highlands and its inhabitants; Fan Cho appears to be out of his element. He insists that the highlands ought to be ‘purged forever’ and that they are violent, bad, and ‘difficult to reform.’ As Scott argues, it is assumed that highlanders on the periphery of states should eventually be civilized and absorbed into the state turning them into citizens.

In a later chapter, Fan Cho described the people he encountered and referred to the existence of two kingdoms. These might have been just communities or large clans. He described the Mi-ch’ên kingdoms which were situated along the Mino-Chiang River.”³⁵⁴ Fan Cho described the kingdoms as having no inner or outer walls which is more evidence that the Zo did not settle; they erected new villages every few years.³⁵⁵ They, according to Fan Cho, called their chiefs “Shou.” The ‘Shou’ must have been the Zo. ‘Zo’ transliterated sounds phonetically the same.³⁵⁶ Luce, who translated Fan Cho, used ‘Sh’ for the ‘Z’ which sounds very similar to Zo and has been accepted to refer to the Zo.³⁵⁷ Even, James George Scott wrote in 1924, that, “...the Chins...call themselves Zho...”³⁵⁸ Moreover, according to the map, the Mino-Chiang kingdom was located on the Chindwin River.³⁵⁹ This is more evidence that they not only dwelt in the Yomas in the 9th Century, but they also called their chiefs ‘Zo.’ Furthermore, they lived similarly to when the Company surveyed the area a thousand years later. Fan Cho’s perspective also supports Scott’s argument that the Zo highlands were part of the last enclosure, pursued only for the last century, during the colonial era. Finally, the notion that states and state official perceive people occupying non-state spaces as barbarian and uncivilized is not a new phenomenon and existed at least a thousand years

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 20-22.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 90.

³⁵⁶ Using the google-translate, the phonetic sound in English sound like Zo.

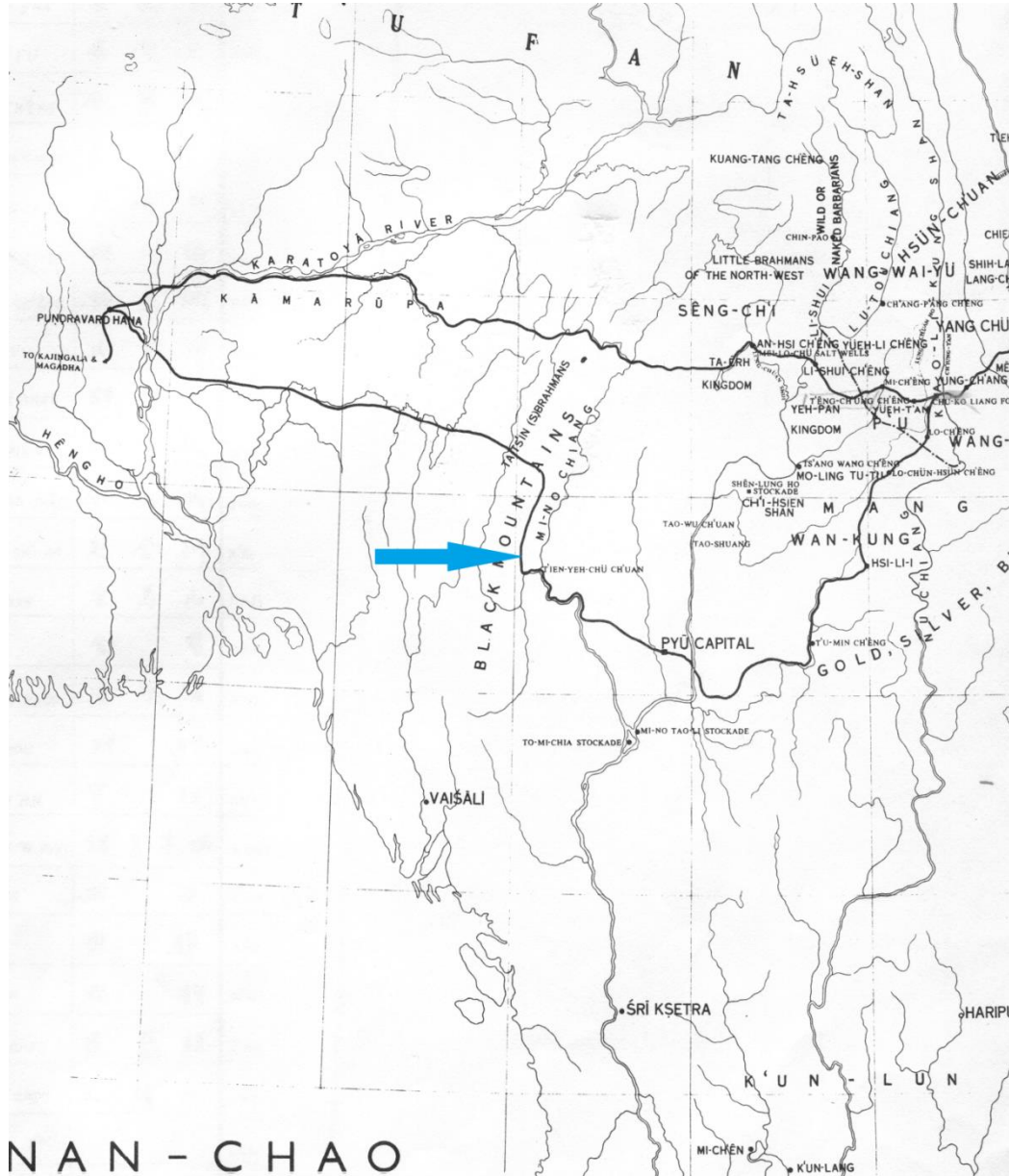
³⁵⁷ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 1. See Chapter 1.

³⁵⁸ Scott, J.G. (1924), *Burma: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, T. Fisher Unwin: London, pg. 20.

³⁵⁹ See map, figure 4.

ago, if not longer.³⁶⁰ They could, however, possibly be reformed if brought into a civilized state system.

Figure 4³⁶¹



³⁶⁰ For interesting historical perspectives of the ‘savage’ read for instance: Pearce, R.H. (1953), *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the American Mind*, The Johns Hopkins Press: Baltimore. AND Williams, R.A. Jr. (2005), *Like a Loaded Weapon: The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights, and the Legal History of Racism in America*, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.

³⁶¹ Arrow pointing to the Mino-Chang Kingdom, today’s Chin Hills. Map of Fan-Chao, 8th & 9th Century, Fan Ch'o *The Man Shu*, pg. Appendix. Used with the permission of the Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca: New York.

However, there are no known accounts between that of Fan Cho and the account of Sangermano, a thousand years later. Such records may exist in the archives of China or of India. There could also be accounts by the many traders and merchants that used the Southern Silk-Trade Route. The Mongols and Tartans may also have encountered the Zo. Either way such records have not been discovered as of now. The absence in the historical records does not mean that the Zo disappeared by leaving the Northern Arakan Yomas and migrated elsewhere, however. They also did not disperse to be subsumed by other groups of people. They did not leave the hills for the plains. To the contrary, according to Sangermano's account, the Zo did not migrate out of the hills. When they 'reappear' in the historical record, they still occupied the Northern Arakan Yomas, pretty much where Fan Cho encountered them in 862 A.D. What the absence in archives does indicate, however, is that scholars were and historians are occupied with other events, elsewhere in the world. Much occurred between the 9th and 18th centuries. Detailing even just the major events of this time period is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, some of the major events and eras are described illustrating some of the reasons historians, scholars, politicians, and other researchers were, possibly, engrossed with other histories, places, people and events.

A Thousand Years of World History

Surely other accounts of the Zo exist in the world. The Northern Arakan Yomas are situated in the middle of Southeast Asia. Trading routes moved through the Yomas. They must have had to stop on their journeys. It is likely that the Zo provided services to people moving through the Yomas. Perhaps they offered them fresh water and food and for this, traded whatever wares the traders were selling. If it was dangerous and those moving through feared the Zo, then surely we would have heard such stories as well. Furthermore, Asia was dynamic during these years. India was growing through a succession of empires into a unified country. China, also, was advanced, experimenting in all types of sciences and technology while Europe was still largely nomadic. Thus, the reason that no other accounts exists, it is argued, is because they simply had not been discovered yet. It is unimaginable that

the Zo were a people ignored occupying such an important mountain range that sits on what is the now the border of South and Southeast Asia as well as parts of China.

Northern India was controlled by the Pratihara Empire from the 6th to the 11th century (6th century – 1036 C.E.). The Empire included areas in what is now known as Northeast India such as parts of Assam. By the late 10th century, however, the empire had reduced to a collection of small states.³⁶² During the time of Fan Cho, it was in its peak in terms of power and prosperity. But again, no records of the Zo have been found in the Indian archives. In the 10th-11th centuries, the Tamil Chola Dynasty had risen to dominate much of Southern India. This dynasty lasted for nearly a thousand years from 300s B.C.-1279 A.D. It pioneered a centralized form of government and established a disciplined bureaucracy.³⁶³ Their rivals, the Chalukya Empire (543-753 C.E.), rose to power in the west and were a source of constant anxiety for Tamil Chola Dynasty. It launched many attacks against the Dynasty.³⁶⁴ The Chalukya Empire was followed by Krishna I (756-774).³⁶⁵ A series of other rulers came and declined. In 780 C.E. Dhruva Dharavarsha came to power. He is often referred to as the greatest leader of India and ruled much of it. North India was now controlled by Sultan Ali Gurshasp Khilji (1296-1316) who started paying tribute to their new masters of the south.

Khilji is noted for being one of the few emperors to successfully defend against the invasions of the Mongols, a triumph few could claim. The Mongols launched a series of attacks, first for plunder, the last to conquer. Sultan Khilji defeated them every time gaining praise from his countrymen and respect around the world. His primary concern was the fortitude of the north-western frontier of Punjab, the Mongols arena of attack toward Delhi, Sultan Khilji's seat of government.³⁶⁶ The north-western frontier was

³⁶² Majumdar, R.C. et. Al. *An Advanced History of India*, McMillian and Company: London, pg. 178-179, 185-186, 351-353, etc.

³⁶³ Stein, B. (2004), *A History of India*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, pg. 26, 90, 120.

³⁶⁴ *Op.cit.*

³⁶⁵ Majumdar, *An Advanced*, pg. 299-302.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 179, 251.

obviously more important than the north-eastern frontier. Thus, there are no records of the Zo found during this era as well. It was also the beginning of the Islamic period in India.³⁶⁷ The Arab-Islamic hegemony was governed from Baghdad. The non-Muslim communities were allowed to govern themselves as long as they paid tribute to their Muslim masters. They were not concerned with expansion. Records or accounts of the Zo have not been discovered during this time either.

In China, after the decline of the Tang Dynasty, it experienced the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms era.³⁶⁸ The Song Dynasty experienced its high point in civilization, experimenting in the sciences and technology from the 12th to the 13th centuries (960-1279).³⁶⁹ However, there was much competition in the Song Dynasty palaces for leadership of the Empire. It was not a cohesive government.³⁷⁰ As the Mongols rose, the Song Dynasty, like the Khilji Dynasty of North India, was attacked over and over again. It was also attacked by the Jin Dynasty and lost the northern Song to them in 1126.³⁷¹ The southern Song (Nan) was consumed with fortifying its navel strength to defend its waters and land border. The Song also used their naval power for missions abroad. Unlike the Khilij, however, the Song was continuously defeated by the Mongols. By 1234, the Northern Song fell to the Mongols with Kublai Khan, Genghis' son, as its leader.³⁷² The Mongols came to control China and much of Southeast Asia, which had been a Song Dynasty trading partner, with Chinese exports greatly outweighing imports. Although the Mongols had been a powerful army, the legacy was not realized by the offsprings. Once the military leaders died and their sons took over little warfare knowledge remained. The Mongol army seemed incapable of defeating even small groups of bandits.³⁷³ They caused no further large-scale

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 275-296.

³⁶⁸ Eberhard, *A History*, pg. 195-199, 225-230.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 229.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 229-230.

³⁷¹ Eberhard, *A History*, pg. 225

³⁷² *Ibid.*, pg. 235.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, pg. 240.

conflicts. By the 14th century, the Ming Dynasty had risen to rule China for the next 300 years.³⁷⁴ Fan Cho's account remained 'lost' during these years.

In Burma, it was the era of the Kingdom of Pagan (849-1297 C.E.). It was the Pagan Dynasty that unified much of the region now known as Burma. Surely they were also interested in the occupants of the Yomas. Pagan was one of the major Kingdoms in Southeast Asia. It experienced its high during the reign of King Kyansittha (1084-1112). It was during this time the inscription naming the 'Khyan' was chiseled. They at least interacted with some southern Zo whose word for people is also 'Khayn.' The people of Pagan misunderstood believing it was an ethnic name. Thus, the term 'Chin' was constructed for the Zo on the Burma side. Either way, clearly King Kyansittha was aware of Zo's existence, yet did not write anything else about them? This is rather hard to believe given that writing was flourishing in all of Asia during this time. There must be records that have yet to be discovered

Father Vincenzo Sangermano

Italian Priest Father Vincenzo Sangermano authored ambitious descriptions of the Burmese Empire in 1783.³⁷⁵ He was considered an expert on all aspects of Burma. Sangermano included everything 'Burmese', from its history, institutions, religions, to the description of the people themselves. He also wrote about the highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas. He was a learned man of his day, fluent in the Burmese language and Pali script. Sangermano spent much of his time studying ancient Burmese texts. This makes his work credible to anyone interested in learning about Burma of the time. In terms of his information on the highlanders, however, the source of his knowledge is questionable.

Sangermano was not the only Italian priest in Burma during this time.

Geatano Maria Mantegazza arrived in 1772 and with the support of the Barnebite order in Italy promptly opened a school in Chautyaywa.³⁷⁶ He also

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 252.

³⁷⁵ Sangermano, V. (1833), *A Description of the Burmese Empire Compiled Chiefly from Burmese Documents by Father Sangermano*. Susil Gupta: London. *Other copies of the same work are entitled, *The Burmese Empire a Hundred Years Ago*.

³⁷⁶ Schwarzttberg, *Cosmographical Mapping*, pg. 687-698.

studied the Burmese language and Pali script spending the years between 1772-1784 in Burma. Mantegazza worked with a Burmese judge at *Hluttaw Kyaungdago* of Yedena³⁷⁷ who helped him with translations and most likely served as his informant, or as Harry Harootunian expresses about informants, as his ‘partner in the field.’³⁷⁸ According to historian, Helen James, “[the Burmese judge and Mantegazza had] a noteworthy intercultural friendship,” working closely together to produce a number of publications.³⁷⁹ Mantegazza surely knew Sangermano and although we are unable to locate any co-authored texts, Mantegazza’s, “Dialogue between a Chin and a Siamese,”³⁸⁰ most likely influenced Sangermano. The fictional dialogue features two characters who compare the merits of Catholicism to Buddhism. The highlanders’ reputation as being primitive and wild, made them an ideal vehicle for a contrarian example the Catholic priest found useful to conjure up for the purpose of his arguments against Buddhism.

Mantegazza, like Sangermano, did not travel to the highlands but relied on the accounts of informants. One of Mantegazza’s fictional characters is a ‘wild Chin’ while Sangermano refers to the highlanders as Zo. Thus, although these two men most likely interacted with one another, it appears that they used different informants. Unfortunately, the names of their informants were not divulged, we only know of the judge that worked with Mantegazza. The judge was elite in Burmese society who was most likely provided with all types of information by those seeking his favour or even just respect. Moreover, these informants, as well, may have relied on yet other informants or hearsay. Mantegazza uses the term ‘Khién’ instead of Zo. This is most likely because ‘Chin’ was already adopted by the Burmese via the Southern Chin who referred to the Zo highlanders, as ‘people’ during the 11th century. That is, Sangermano’s informants must have been Burmese who had adopted, what they believed was an ethnic nomenclature, ‘Chin.’ At the same time,

³⁷⁷ *Hluttaw Kyaungdago of Yedena* refers to a house of legislature or a group of lawyers and judges working for the King of Burma.

³⁷⁸ Harootunian, H. (2012). “Memories of Underdevelopment After Area Studies: The Desire called Area Studies,” *Positions: Asia Critique*, Vol. 20:1, Winter 2012, pg. 7-35.

³⁷⁹ James, H. (2005). *Governance and Civil Society in Myanmar: Education, health and environment*. Routledge Curzon Press: New York, pg. 87-89.

³⁸⁰ Mantegazza, *Dialoghi tra un Khién*.

Sangermano also refers to a kingdom named Zo. Thus, some of his informants were also aware that some highlanders referred to themselves as Zo. That is to say, through their contradiction, it can be surmised that the men did not share the same informants.

The highlanders had a reputation for raiding the plains, for headhunting and carrying slaves back to the hills. It is entirely possible that these informants also got their stories from others afraid to travel to the highlands themselves. That is, like Buchanan's trip through Chittagong illustrated a few years later in 1798, the highlanders were shrouded in mystery.³⁸¹ This is more evidence that Sangermano as well as Mantegazza's impression of the 'wild' highlanders was most likely obtained through informants since neither man was recorded as having taken the trip himself. One or both men may have also relied on additional texts not yet discovered in this research. Either way, both men were devout Catholics occupied with bringing salvation to Burma, not to the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas.

Although Sangermano was a missionary to Ava, he spent a lot of his time, especially after retirement, among the English in Rangoon.³⁸² His years in Burma totaled twenty-five from 1783-1808. Sangermano was, according to Barnebite Father Jardine, set on learning the language and history of Burma in order to influence the Buddhist Burmans to denounce their religion and gain salvation through Catholicism. Jardine also emphasized Sangermano's elite status and that he was a source of information for the 'English' in Burma.³⁸³ Jardine explains:

“...[Sangermano was] enabled to place at the service of English officials much

³⁸¹ van Schendel, W. (1992). *Francis Buchanan in Southeast Bengal (1798): His Journey to Chittagong, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Noakhali and Comilla*. University Press Limited, Dhaka: Bangladesh, pg. xx.

³⁸² Sangermano, *A Description*, pg. Preface.

³⁸³ Jardine refers to the 'English' which implied Company officials, who could also have been Scottish or Irish. Furthermore, there were others in and around Burma during his 25 years, thus, he may have shared information with others such as merchants and traders from Europe or the Middle East, as well.

information, of the utmost use...to the administrators...”³⁸⁴

In fact, he was commissioned to create a chart of the Port of Rangoon which so impressed the British, that the East India Company gave him a pension for life.³⁸⁵ After his death, a note was found among his things; it was not part of the main text and most likely intended for someone who would assist in compiling his work—it was not meant to be published. In it, he makes clear that his primary sources were the writings of elite sections of Burmese society and history. Sangermano fully admits:

In what I have said of the superstitions, astrology, religion, constitutions of the Talapoins, and the sermons of Godama, I have not followed the tales and reports of the common people, but have carefully consulted the classical writings of the Burmese.³⁸⁶

He was aware that there were numerous ways in which to obtain information. Thus, in reference to his Burmese history, he makes clear that he did not rely on the reports of ‘common people.’ Therefore, the information he gathered about the Northern Arakan Yomas must have been acquired through informants since he was occupied with Burmese history not the highlanders and since there was nothing written about the Zo. Unlike Francis Buchanan some years later, Sangermano makes no mention of his informants; he presents the information with the same sort of authority as other aspects of his work. He describes a people who, with their sorcery, have instilled fear in the plains people.³⁸⁷ The plains people of Burma, for Sangermano, were civilized, had a world religion, employed a writing system, and took some pride and care in recording their history and belief systems. Thus, he acquires the perception his informants, the plains people, have about the highlanders.

³⁸⁴ Sangermano, *A Description*, pg. Xxv.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. xxv.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. Xxxviii.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 43-44.

Major Michael Symes and Dr. Francis Buchanan

During the time of Sangermano and Mantegazza, the Company began commissioning its own surveyors. One notable officer was Major Michael Symes who was a resident to the Embassy at Ava in 1795.³⁸⁸ His primary role was to secure the safety and interests of English merchants in Burma. He wrote extensively about the areas in and around Ava, including of the highlanders in the Northern Arakan Yomas. According to Symes, their habitat ran contingent to Assam and lied between Arakan and Ava. His perspective, addressing several elements considered in this dissertation, is best captured in his own words:

[The Zo are] a harmless untaught race, that inhabit the lofty mountains which divide Arracan from Ava, and who, as children of nature, delighting in their wild and native freedom, are for the most part insuperably averse to hold any commerce with the people of the plains.³⁸⁹

Symes' quote exemplifies the general sentiment toward Zo highlanders in 1797 during a time before the Company waged war against Burma. This quote rings similar to later quotes made by other Company surveyors and officers. However, there is one very significant difference. Symes refers to the Zo as 'harmless.' The highlanders did not cause the Company serious problems until it moved toward and into the Northern Arakan Yomas. He writes that the Zo are 'untaught,' which is indicative of other accounts focusing on the 'primitive' or 'barbarian' nature of the Zo. Furthermore, he also suggests that they are 'children of nature,' meaning they are not yet civilized like people of the plains. Finally, like many accounts and like the argument forwarded by Scott, it was suggested that the Zo are, "...what we were like before we

³⁸⁸ Symes, M. (1827). *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava sent by the Governor-General of India, in the Year 1795*. Constable and Co.: Edinburgh.

³⁸⁹ Symes, M. (1827). *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava sent by the Governor-General of India, in the Year 1795*. Constable and Co.: Edinburgh, pg. 204.

discovered...civilization.”³⁹⁰ In this case, for the Zo engaging in legal and official trade (commerce) with the plains is ‘averse’ to them. Engaging in ‘commerce’ suggests the involvement of the state through paying taxes.

Another significant contributor to the making of the Chin and the Lushai, as well as the Kuki, was Buchanan. He gave at least three accounts of areas in and around the Arakan Yomas. Like Fan Cho, Sangermano, Mantegazza and Symes, Buchanan relied heavily on informants instead of solely on his own observations. Buchanan also resided in Ava during 1795. Commissioned by the Company, he along with Major Symes and Ensign Thomas Wood mapped the unknown highlands. The drawing of a map was of the utmost importance to the Company. Maps were essential not only for security but also for expansion. Maps were necessary for the drawing of borders, delineating the Empire’s peripheries and for slicing up specific areas into manageable geographical units of administration. In this case, the Northern Arakan Yomas appeared almost insurmountable, difficult to negotiate, dangerous both in terms of the terrain and because of its ‘wild’ inhabitants who were entirely different from the people of the plains. In his journal, Symes insists that the intention of the trip was, “...merely to point out the relative situation of the Kingdom of Ava, with reference to other countries, and to ascertain its local position on the globe.”³⁹¹ At this point in history, neither Symes nor Buchanan indicated that their survey is anything beyond mapping the region. Again, the men relied on local informants to provide them with information which they then tried to ‘transform’ into European standards. A map was eventually drawn, but not in Ava, rather elsewhere by a Mr. Alexander Dalrymple relying on the information provided by Buchanan as well as by Wood. Apparently, they did an excellent job. Symes quotes Dalrymple:

...This part of Indian geography has hitherto remained an inexplicable obscurity, and although much light has been thrown on the

³⁹⁰ Scott, J. (2009) *The Art*, pg. Preface.

³⁹¹ Symes, M. (1800) *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava: Sent by the Governor-General of India in the Year 1795*. SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research, U. of London, School for Oriental and African Studies, Vol. 4, Issue 1, Spring 2006, pg. ix.

subject in consequence of the Embassy, of which this Work lays an account before the Public, not only from the astronomical observations by Ensign Thomas Wood, which do him the greatest credit, but from the great mass of native geography, which the assiduous pains of Dr. Buchanan, who accompanied the Embassy in a medical capacity, have accumulated from various persons.³⁹²

Dalrymple acknowledges Buchanan's use of informants and even praises him and Wood for being able to utilize this information to help render a reasonably accurate map. However, Michal Symes, to supplement Dalrymple's acknowledgment, points out:

These maps obtained by Dr. Buchanan from the natives, although they elucidate the geography, cannot be considered as positive documents for the construction of an accurate map of these countries, not being laid down geometrically, nor having even scales affixed; indeed, it is not certain that any of them were meant to be laid down by any uniform scale; the wonder is, that there should be anything like uniformity.³⁹³

Thus, although informants provided what seemed to be relatively accurate information, Symes is skeptical about the precision of the scale. Precision and accuracy was a Company obsession when it came to rendering the geography of India into suitable military maps. Matthew Edney argues that by focusing on measurements, on uniformity and accuracy, they believed that

³⁹² Buchanan, "An Account," pg. 90.

³⁹³ Symes, *An Account of an Embassy*, pg. x.

they were practicing ‘science,’ while the natives were not.³⁹⁴ The lack of uniformity exercised by the locals suggests that there is a lack of order; a lack of a centralized system. While the above quote itself relates to map making, it also demonstrates the perception that the locals, who are providing Buchanan with this geographical information, are not yet ‘as’ civilized as the British. In fact, in a later article in the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal*, Buchanan introduces the map as having been ‘drawn by the eldest of a slave’—a local person and adds a caveat:

Together with the maps, I shall add some short explanations, that may appear necessary to render [it] intelligible to European men of science.³⁹⁵

The importance of science and statistics was also mentioned by colonial administrator Adam Scott Reid. About certain areas of the Northern Arakan Yomas, he cantankerously remarks:

...it would be a hopeless task to attempt the description of places which cannot be visited, or the collection of accurate information regarding a country where every enquiry made by a European is viewed with the most jealous suspicion and where the collection of statistics is looked on as a mere folly.³⁹⁶

For men of science and precision, dealing with the information presented to them by the locals must have seemed like an unmanageable puzzle. They attempted to transform local knowledge into European standards but realized that it was impossible. Furthermore, they were under the impression that locals were suspicious and thus, purposely tried to deceive them whenever

³⁹⁴ Edney, M. (1997). *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London, pg. 32.

³⁹⁵ Buchanan, "An Account," pg. 90.

³⁹⁶ Reid, *Chin-Lushai Land*, pg. 73.

possible. For Reid making sense of the places was much like the nomenclature conundrum for Buchanan, both were unmanageable puzzles.

Like trying to map the terrain, Buchanan is unable to reconcile the plethora of nomenclatures. He dismisses them as being the product of the ‘vulgar’ tongues of the locals. Like, many historians to follow, Buchanan remarked:

Nothing, indeed, can equal the confusion that arises in the study of this peninsula’s geography, from the variety of names given by different people to the same countries and places [and people].³⁹⁷

With the dismissal of the idea that the complexity of nomenclatures actually relate to the nuanced reality of the area, the first justification for later categorizing is evident. Buchanan argues that even Homer, when referring to the use of differing nomenclatures, exclaimed that:

...one [nomenclature is] in the vulgar tongue, or as Homer would have said, in the language of men, the other in the Pali language Mgadha or Sangskriat, that is, in the language of the gods, or first colonists in India.³⁹⁸

Still Buchanan also makes some attempts to trace the history of the Zo highlanders while collecting data for a map. He conjectures a possible past:

Before the arrival of the Chinese, the country seems to have been occupied by numerous rude tribes, who, like the invaders, were of the great Tartar race; and these, united with their conquerors, seem to have produced the offspring, which now constitutes the civilized portion of the nations termed by Europeans,

³⁹⁷Buchanan, “An Account of a Map,” pg. 93.

³⁹⁸*Ibid.*, pg. 92.

Anamitic, Siammese, Burma, Malaya, and Pegu....although a very large proportion of the country is still held by tribes in the original state of rudeness, unacquainted with literature, divinity, law...³⁹⁹

Buchanan's attitude illustrates the sentiments expressed by Fan Cho a thousand years earlier. It seems like Fan Cho, Sangermano, Mantegazza, Symes and Buchanan were all of the opinion that the highlanders were not *yet* civilized; they are untaught. He especially emphasizes that the 'rude tribes' are 'unacquainted with literature, divinity [and] law.' They are low on the civilization hierarchy. Buchanan continues by describing his drawn map. He lists the different people inhabiting areas in Assam, Tripura, in the Shan country, as well as the Northern Yomas. He explains:

...[the] country of the *Io* or *Yo*...between two chains of highlands, the mountains of the *Khiaen* on the west....⁴⁰⁰

Buchanan groups the highlanders into two groups, the Chin and the Zo. He must have been informed that both dwell in the hills. Sangermano, evidently, was under the impression that the mountains, like the Chindwin valley and the Chindwin River, were called Chin. Similarly, Sangermano referred to them as the Chin Mountains. Buchanan calls them the "mountains of the Chin," As explained above. Yet Sangermano's contemporary, Mantegazza, used a fictional 'Chin' character. There was no consensus on the proper nomenclature during this time. Some even used the terms interchangeably or contradictory. Either way, Buchanan refers to two groups of people, the Zo and the Chin. However, confusingly, he places all of the Chin into a single group later within the same text:

The *Khiaen* form one of the rude original tribes of the peninsula, and the greater part is entirely independent of any more cultivated

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 92.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pg.263.

race; but those who live towards the south
are exposed to the inroads and commercial
oppressions... and submit to a limited
obedience. ⁴⁰¹

Buchanan, who wrote his account some years after Sangermano, believes there are two groups of people, the Zo and the Chin. While this may be a rather small point, it is indicative of the larger issue which is that colonials were eager to make sense of the data they obtained whether through local informants or from each other. Moreover, in the above quote, Buchanan insists that Zo highlanders living towards the south, in the foothills—closer to the lowlands, were subject to ‘limited obedience’ or law. He believed that those closer to the plains were more civilized in that they were able to follow some aspect of law. This again infers their low status on civilization hierarchy but also implies that those closer to the plains are more civilized than those further away. Scott explains that altitude tends to be correlated with levels of civilization. In his own words, “It is no exaggeration to say that the presumptive level of civilization can, from a valley perspective, be often read as a function of altitude...the thinner the air you breathe, the less civilized you are.”⁴⁰²

The explorative expedition of 1795 commissioned by the British Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava, carried-out by Major Symes, Dr. Francis Buchanan and Ensign Wood, was deemed a great success. The group mapped the region, identified different ‘races’ and overall managed to gather the intelligence necessary for colonial expansion. By focusing on state relevant information, they also accomplished to further the construction of Zo highlanders.

The Company was wholly impressed and satisfied with the work of Buchanan and commissioned him for another survey in this region. He travelled extensively throughout areas of West Bengal, the Chittagong Hill Tracts and

⁴⁰¹ *Op.cit.*

⁴⁰² Scott, *The Art*, pg. 100.

Assam.⁴⁰³ His rich travelogue illustrates his encounters with numerous Zo clans and groups. According to van Schendel it is the earliest detailed account of late eighteenth-century Bengal, Arakan, Tripura, Cachar, Manipur, and Burma that we have.⁴⁰⁴ The Company, however, was not aware of its participation in the construction of identities through their representative's narratives. Determining the viability of colonial expansion was essential. Its primary interest was of an economic nature. Thus, on his assignment, Buchanan kept a daily diary of all the relevant factors for growing spices, including soil conditions and available livestock in the area.

Buchanan not only reports on the characteristics of soil and livestock, he also gives detailed accounts of the people he encounters. Like other colonials-cum-ethnographers, he placed a lot of emphasis on linguistics. He created language categories and compared different dialects looking for similarities, differences, and language roots. Buchanan also described them physically and classified the different "races" of people. For example:

To judge from external appearance, that is to say, from shape, size, and feature, there is one very extensive nation that inhabits the east of Asia. This natives may be distinguished by a short, squat, robust, fleshy stature, and by features highly different from those of an European. The face is somewhat in shape of a lozenge, the forehead and chin being sharpened, whilst at the cheek-bones it is very broad : unless this be what is meant by the conical head of the Chinese...⁴⁰⁵

Buchanan described the Zo in terms of their physical attributes in much the same manner as he described the plants and soil conditions in the area. As

⁴⁰³ van Schendel, W. (1992). *Francis Buchanan in Southeast Bengal (1798): His Journey to Chittagong, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Noakhali and Comilla*. University Press Limited, Dhaka: Bangladesh, pg. Introduction.

⁴⁰⁴ *Op.cit.*

⁴⁰⁵ Buchanan, F. (1799). *A Comparative Vocabulary of Some of the Languages Spoken in the Burman Empire*. (Reprint 2003, SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2003), p. 41.

Charney explains, the plants, animals and the people had to be essentialized so that they could be incorporated in a systemized classification scheme in order to bring understanding to the West.⁴⁰⁶ Even though he compares their features to Europeans, he links them to the Chinese, a ‘race’ with which Europeans were already acquainted.

Buchanan grouped the ‘languages’ he encountered and explained that one of the four dialects existing in Burma was that of a Zo (Yo) language. He writes, “The third dialect of the Burma language is spoken by a small tribe called *Yo*,” and provides context for the people using this language:

There are four governments of this nation,
situated on the east side of the Arakan
mountains, governed by chiefs of their own,
but tributary to the Burmans.⁴⁰⁷

Buchanan, in all three of his Zo accounts, described Zo ‘tribes’ as well as ‘kingdoms.’ He also used the terms ‘Chin,’ ‘Lang-na,’ ‘Kukie’ and ‘Ma-ras’ at other times-- they all appear interchangeable. That is, it is not clear whether he thought they were different groups of people, different clans or communities.⁴⁰⁸ Equally important, he stated that the kingdoms east of the Arakan Mountains are tributaries to the Burmans. Pemberton in his 1834 report on *The Eastern Frontier of Bengal*⁴⁰⁹ mentioned consulting Buchanan’s earlier work. Pemberton eventually drew the line between Manipur and the Sagaing Division of Burma based on his belief that some Zo were tributaries to the Manipuri Raj. This border is very much contested today. How Pemberton made his decision to draw this border, as well as its impact on the Zo of Manipur, is addressed in Chapters 3 and 5. Buchanan may have been referring to the Southern Chin, at times referring to them as “Yo,” but it is not entirely clear whom he meant. The Lang-na could have been the Langmang of the Lushai Hills. The Mara and Kuki are also north.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁶ Charney, *A History*, pg. 8.

⁴⁰⁷ Buchanan, *A Comparative*, pg. 43.

⁴⁰⁸ van Schendel, *Francis Buchanan*, pg. 97 AND Hamilton, “Dr. Hamilton’s Account,” pg. 203-210.

⁴⁰⁹ Pemberton, *Report on the eastern frontier*,” pg., Introduction.

⁴¹⁰ The Old Kuki can also be found in Bangladesh.

Both Cary and Vumson indicate that there are other, southern Zo sometimes transliterated as 'Yo.' These were under the control of the Northern Zo around the area of Haka.⁴¹¹

Like Sangermano, but for different reasons, Buchanan did not travel to the highlands. He was ambitious and eager to do so, but was unable in 1795 or 1798 to find guides. Stories of Arakanese conflicts and raids drove fear into those Buchanan encountered and they refused to take him up into the mountains.⁴¹² Because travel to the Northern hills was unfeasible, he relied on informants. Unlike Sangermano, however, he lists these informants. Some are commoners like wood cutters, others hold governmental positions.⁴¹³ Still, although he credits them, some of the information they provided caused confusion. van Schendel explains that Buchanan had a difficult time separating legend from truth. For instance, he was told about a strange people, the 'Langman' of the Lushai Hills, who are said to sleep in trees like baboons.⁴¹⁴ From the above, it is apparent that the Zo highlanders were shrouded in mystery; some accounts of them were even of the bizarre, such as claims that they slept in trees. The fact that even informants had their own, widely incorrect, notions about the highlanders and repeated these is noteworthy. Other pieces of information, equally unlikely, were passed on as truisms as well.

It is entirely plausible that informants embellished their reports about the 'natives.' We know that highlanders victimized them during raids; some of their kin were carried off as slaves, or worse, murdered for their heads. Highlanders were the 'boogie men' of the hills. The Zo were obscure and very much feared by the people of the plains. Buchanan is still interested in them, however. He wanted to at least see these people. According to van Schendel, the only other first-hand information he had of the Kuki was from a captive

⁴¹¹ Carey, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 162 and Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 76.

⁴¹² van Schendel, *Francis Buchanan*, pg. Introduction.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, pg. xv.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. xx.

in the Chittagong District.⁴¹⁵ In fact, Buchanan is the first colonial official to record an encounter with the Kuki:

“...[to] satisfy my curiosity [the informant]
⁴¹⁶ promised to send for Koongkies and
Tiperah...In the forenoon [Chief] Kaung-la
pru sent me six Lang-ga men and two
women. They had entirely Burma
countenances, but were very ill favoured, and
seemed to be still more rude than the Mroo
or Mo-roo-sa. To cover the nakedness they
held in their hands small pieces of Cloth, that
surrounded their waists; but this, I was told,
was on account of their having come among
strangers for at home both sexes go
absolutely naked.⁴¹⁷

Here Buchanan employed his imaged civilization hierarchy. The Kuki were ‘more rude’ than the Mru. He bases this assessment, in part, on their nudity. Later, anthropologists made the same observations about the highlanders being ‘naked’ and photographed them as such.⁴¹⁸ van Schendel argues that, nudity was a visual maker, “variously [used] for primitivity, underdevelopment, indecency and indigeneity.”⁴¹⁹ But, as Carey and Tuck explain, the temperature of the highlands is relatively cool compared to the plains. It is unlikely that they were, indeed, naked ‘at home.’ Instead, it makes more sense that the highlanders, who were visitors to the plains, found the valleys overwhelmingly hot and thus removed their clothing. Later anthropologists, like Emil Riebeck, in order to gain scientific

⁴¹⁵ Van Schendel, Francis Buchanan, pg. xv, footnote 7.

⁴¹⁶ His informant was a chief named Kaung-la with whom Buchanan stayed during his 1810 journey in the southern part of Bengal. IN: Hamilton, “Dr. Hamilton’s pg. 203-210.

⁴¹⁷ van Schendel, *Francis Buchanan*, pg. 93.

⁴¹⁸ von Fürer-Haimendorf, C.(1939). *The Naked Naga*. (Reprint 1962, Nagendar Misra for Thakcer, Spink and Co.: Delhi). For an interesting article on the politics of nudity see for instance: van Schendel, W. A Politics of Nudity: Photographs of the ‘Naked Mru’ of Bangladesh. *Modern Asian Studies*, 36, 2 (2002), pp. 341–374.

⁴¹⁹ Van Shendel (2002), “A politics of Nudity: Photographs of the ‘Naked Mru’ of Bangladesh,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 36, 2, pg. 341-374.

knowledge of the 'natives' had them undress in order to photograph them. This gave the impression that they generally led lives in nudity.⁴²⁰ Buchanan most likely did not ask the locals to undress. However, he does emphasize nudity; it determined his impression of the level of civility. For him, the lack of clothing was positively correlated with the level of barbarianism.

Buchanan continues by exalting the positive impact of the English, while identifying the elements that order the Zo lower on the imaged civilization hierarchy:

...ever since they had become tributary to the English, by living under Kaung-la-pru [a Bengali chief and English subject], they have enjoyed peace... formerly [before British protection] they had Wars [and were] made...slaves. Among themselves they have slaves in the same manner... They have no writing, nor Priests; nor could I discover any belief in God, nor in a state of future existence.⁴²¹

Twelve years later in 1810, Buchanan, this time commissioned to gather a different type of intelligence, once again headed toward the Northern Arakan Yomas. The colonial state was now ready to expand. This time, more than ever, military intelligence was essential. Buchanan was to ascertain and predict the reactions of the highlanders, "in case of rupture" against the Burmans by the British. The British, under the impression that the 'ethnic' divisions were robust, sent in Buchanan to ascertain their reactions to a war between the Burmans and the British. Charney mentions that Buchanan exaggerated ethnic hostilities for political reasons. Thus, he used terminologies such as 'kingdoms' and 'nations,' rather than 'tribes' groups or communities.⁴²²

⁴²⁰ *Op.cit.*

⁴²¹ van Schendel, *Francis Buchanan*, pg.93.

⁴²² Charney, *Powerful*, pg. 125-128.

During his trip to ascertain ethnic reactions, Buchanan gives an extensive survey of the people he encounters including the Zo highlanders. He listed five 'nations' including a Zo nation:

...The last of the nations is named *Yo*. It inhabits the Westside of the Burmese kingdom, between it and the savage tribes bordering Tipurah. It also has a common origin with Burmese, has long been subject to them and ...enjoys great privileges.⁴²³

Again, Buchanan referred to nations and kingdoms rather than communities, clans or even tribes. Buchanan not only exaggerated ethnic hostilities, but also their origins and erroneously conjectures that they shared a common ancestry with the Burmese. Furthermore, he indicates that the Burmans are their suzerain. First, the highlanders and Burmese languages shared a common origin; they were both in the Tibeto-Burmese linguistic family. Second, according to Buchanan, there were interactions and encounters between the highlanders and the Burmans. Moreover, Buchanan also emphasized that the Zo nation differed from the "savages" in Tripura, their neighbors.⁴²⁴ The distinction between the Zo nation and the savages of Tripura is perplexing. Given that he did not travel to the Northern Arakan Yomas, he must have relied on informants as well as exaggerated differences between these highlanders. Perhaps, as Charney argued, for political reasons. There was indeed a rupture. The British declared war against the Burmese in 1824.

The First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-1826

After a series of 'unprovoked' attacks by the Burmese of Arakan, the British declared war against Burma in 1824. The primary reason for the declaration was for:

⁴²³ Dr. Francis Buchanan, "Account of Burma and Pegu and the Steps necessary in case of a Rupture," *Home* 388, no. 21, ff. 599-613.

⁴²⁴ Dr. Francis Buchanan, "Account," ff. 599-613.

[the] preventing of future encroachments of the warlike and ambitious neighbour, whose arrogant pretensions and restless character had so frequently interrupted the relations of peace subsisting between the two countries...⁴²⁵

Major Henry Havelock, in 1828, gave different motives for the First Anglo-Burmese War:

The first war against the Burmans arose out of a singular, and audacious, but perfectly deliberate attempt on the part of the semi-barbarous court of Ava to deprive the British Government in India of a portion of its Eastern provinces.⁴²⁶

The war was primarily over control of what is now known as Northeast India and for the expansion of British Bengal. The British had certain designs on the eastern provinces and were already protecting them from Burman aggressions. The Court at Ava, according to Havelock, was ignorant as to the happenings beyond its own frontiers. Furthermore, Havelock argues that the Burmese, influenced by, “..the delusions of judicial astrology...”⁴²⁷ were set on claiming areas under British protection. These areas included parts of Arakan, Assam, Bengal, and Tripura. Another officer, Trant, explained that when Arakan in 1783 and later Assam and Manipur in 1821 finally yielded to the Burmese armies, other minor states on the Northeast frontier would fall, “...an easy prey to the [Burmese] invaders and were thus placed in contact [with the British].”⁴²⁸

⁴²⁵ Snodgrass, *Narrative of the Burmese War, Detailing the Operations of Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell's Army from Its Landing at Rangoon in 1824, to the Conclusion of a Treaty of Yandaboo, in February 1826*. (Reprint 1997, Ava House: Bangkok, pg. B of the Introduction.

⁴²⁶ Havelock, H. (1828). *Memoirs of The Three Campaigns of Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell's Army in Ava*. Serampore: India, pg. A.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. ii.

⁴²⁸ Trant, *Two Years*, pg. 4.

The Burmese, according to Trant, were not intimidated by the British presence and in fact thought the British were in fear of them. Trant therefore, contends that, “..it was evident that a rupture must ensue,” because he, explains, “The rapid rise of the Burman power, coeval as it was with our own in Asia...supposing itself superior...a war would, of course, be inevitable.”⁴²⁹ Furthermore, given the significant mercantile intercourse between British sea-ports and Rangoon, “...it became necessary to exact for the British flag that respect and exemption from insult to which it was entitled, but had not hitherto obtained.”⁴³⁰ Thus, this war was not just one of power or territory; it was also commercial in nature. The Company was intent on defeating the Burmans.

Sir Archibald Campbell led the three Campaigns against the frontiers of Burma.⁴³¹ The first major battle occurred in December of 1824 in Rangoon during the heavy monsoon season. The second battle was initiated by Maha Bandula, Commander and Chief of the Royal Burmese Armed Forces (1821-1825), and played out in near Rangoon. Burmese elephants were marched toward the enemy, but the Burmese forces were quickly defeated by the superior weaponry of the British army. The third and final battle commenced when the British took the capital city of Mrauk-U in Arakan.⁴³² The Treaty of Yandabo was signed with the assistance of British and American citizens residing in Burma, including Dr. Adoniram Judson, first American Baptist Missionary to the Empire of Burma, and others who provided information to the Company. These included, “...all the men of science in their suites...”⁴³³ which surely included Buchanan and Wallich. Havelock concludes:

All these had furnished information to the state, and the public, which will be praised as considerable, whenever it is fairly compared with their opportunities for observation.⁴³⁴

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 4-5, 7.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 7.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, pg. iii.-v.

⁴³² Snodgrass, *Narrative.*, pg. 12-47.

⁴³³ Havelock, *Memoirs.* pg. 197.

⁴³⁴ *Op.cit.*

The first Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-1826 concluded with the Treaty of Yandabo. The Treaty was signed by General Sir Archibald Campbell from the British side and Governor of Legaing, Maha Min Hla Kyaw Htin on 24 February 1826 from the Burmese side.⁴³⁵ The Treaty stipulated the cessation of certain areas including some which bordered parts of the Northern Arakan Yomas, including areas in Assam and Manipur.⁴³⁶ Other areas ceded were Arakan and parts of Tenasserim.⁴³⁷ The Burmese also agreed to a cease-fire in Cachar and Meghalaya and agreed to pay the British government a total of one million pounds sterling over four instalments. The British army maintained its occupation until the full payment had been made.⁴³⁸ During the course of the war and immediately after, the Company took more surveys of the Northern Arakan Yomas, parts of which were now under its official jurisdiction. The hills, however, remained unruly for another sixty-five years.

Before delineation, surveyors did not make major distinctions among the people, albeit, some observed that there were numerous “nations, kingdoms or tribes,” inhabiting all of the hills as Buchanan and Symes’ accounts illustrate. Buchanan, however, failed to clarify the groups and clans often using terms such as Chin, Zo, and Kuki interchangeably, including variations in their spelling and referring to some groups as ‘nations.’ Now that the Company had acquired parts of the Northern Arakan Yomas, Company officials sought more specific information about the highlanders.

Thomas Abercrombie Trant

Thomas Abercrombie Trant was present in Sir A. Campbell’s Army during the First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-1826; he was an eye-witness.⁴³⁹ He was a talented young soldier who quickly rose up through the ranks to obtain the

⁴³⁵ Thant Myint-U (2002). *The Making of Modern Burma*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pg. 20.

⁴³⁶ Reid, R. (Reprint 1978) *The Lushai Hills Culled From History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam From 1883-1941*. Firma KLM Private Limited on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram: India, pg. 2.

⁴³⁷ Snodgrass, *Narrative*, pg. 274-286.

⁴³⁸ Cady, J. F. (1958). *A History of Modern Burma*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca: New York, 74.

⁴³⁹ Trant, *Two Years*, pg. 11, 416.

position of Captain in Campbell's Army.⁴⁴⁰ Unlike Sangermano and Buchanan, however, he was not highly educated. Sangermano was fluent in Burmese and the Pali script. He spent twenty-five years in Burma and was so cartographically skilled that he was able to draft a map of the port of Rangoon. Buchanan was also highly educated, holding numerous degrees in science and having carried out several surveys of Asia. Both men had spent many years of their lives in Asia. Thomas Trant was just nineteen in 1824 when he arrived in Ava with only a basic education.⁴⁴¹ Yet, it would be his role to obtain essential intelligence on the highlands for the Company.

Trant's main purpose was to identify those aspects of the terrain which would be useful for moving armies through Arakan. There he encountered 'Zo' of the southern hills. While the southern hills are not of subject here, his account is included because it provides some basic information about the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas as well. Trant describes rivers and lakes, land routes and identifies sources of drinking water.⁴⁴² Since much intelligence already existed on what would later become 'India,' Trant used it as a point of reference comparing the Irrawaddy to the Ganges for example. Like other intelligence gatherers, Trant did not travel all the way up to the Northern Arakan highlands himself, relying on the stories told by informants. He refers to a slave-taking, headhunting, raiding group of highlanders that dwell in the Northern Arakan Yomas known as the 'Kuki.' As explained in Chapter 1, this term is a Bengalese word denoting 'hill people or highlander.' Trant clearly obtained this intelligence from informants.⁴⁴³ According to these informants, the Kuki were just one reason that the Zo highlands were a place of great danger.

⁴⁴⁰ [Noticias Biograficas do Coronel Trant, by F. F. M. C. D. T. (a Portuguese monk), Lisbon, 1811; Wellington Despatches, vols. iv-x.; Napier's War in the Peninsula; Royal Military Calendar, v. 316; Gent. Mag. 1832 i. 371, 1839 ii. 653.]

⁴⁴¹ 'Basic' Education refers to a military education he received at the Military Academic at Croyden. Literacy rates for the Britain were still rather low during this time, was around 50%.

⁴⁴² Trant, *Two Years*, pg. 442.

⁴⁴³ Soppitt, C.A. (1893) *An Outline Grammar of the Rangkhoh-Lushai Language*, (Reprint 1978, Tribal Research Institute, Firma KLM for the Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Govt. of Mizoram: India), pg. 63.

Although he lacked formal higher education, he still postulates on Zo highlander history. Trant speculated that:

The original inhabitants of the plains, were the Kieaans, who now inhabit the mountains; and a party of emigrants from Hindostan, who, pleased with the appearance of the country, took up their residence at Chagain, where they built a town, and resided for some time unmolested. Many years had elapsed, when a horde of Tartars poured in from Thibet, and willingly exchanging their bleak, inhospitable plains for the more fertile valleys watered by the Irrawaddy, soon overran and conquered the whole country, except a small portion of Arracan....In the course of time, the invaders intermarried with the original inhabitants, and became the founts of a new race, ancestors to the present Burmese.⁴⁴⁴

Trant's account of history is conjecture at best. Unlike the general notion that highlanders eventually descended to the plains to start civilizations, he contends that they were first plains people. He does not explain, however, why he believes the Zo returned to the hills. He only states that the Tartars intermarried with the Burmese and created the Burmese 'race.'

According to native scholar Vumson, many Zo highlanders originated in Tibet, but moved down the mountains and into the plains of Burma and Shan country before escaping back to the mountains.⁴⁴⁵ Vumson utilizes the oral history and legends in his historical accounts. Although this thesis relies primarily on written records, the following offers a very relevant oral account of plains people escaping to the hills, hence, its inclusion here. According to

⁴⁴⁴ Trant, *Two Years in Ava From May 1824, to May 1826*. (Reprint 2006, Adamant Media Corporation, London), 240.

⁴⁴⁵ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 42.

Vumson, Zo escaped into the hills. As described in an oral story above, some clans have an oral story of their escaping a cruel Shan prince who forced them dig a moat around his palace. The loss of severed fingers from accidents and constant attacks from Manipuries led the Zo to seek refuge in the hills. As Vumson explains: “... Zo people, although not all having exactly the same stories, have legends of their being in the Chindwin-Kale-Kabaw-Myitha Valleys [at some point in history],”⁴⁴⁶ and that, “[they] had to fight their way out of the valleys.”⁴⁴⁷ Vumson suggests that it is very likely that the Zo people led a peaceful life without tribal conflicts [in the valleys]. However, after being forced into manual labor by the state which left them vulnerable to the Manipuries, who could easily attack them in the valleys, the Zo escaped to the hills. The Zo song about their being in the plains and then seeking refuge in the hills mentioned a bricked-walled city of Kale in Shan country. The song reads:

Ania la chap don a kho a, e e e e
 htoan za na baleng a hpuan a, e e e e
 apok a poichi a oat limit it, c e e e
 htoan za na baleng a hpuan a,
 ane ye olo ve dimo e, e e e e
 si sho e lo po e hnaung e, e e e e
 son sho e a toan e sy c. e e e c
 kanau o suam ei o htui yo

Translation:

To the upper country
 To the plains and dry grasses
 To the brick city of our forefathers
 To the plains and dry grasses
 Which are so charming
 Let us, hie, come along! [sic]
 Let us haste with every speed

⁴⁴⁶ *Op.cit.*

⁴⁴⁷ *Op.cit.*

Oh my fairy-like young brother⁴⁴⁸

This song makes clear that the Zo escaped and sought refuge among the hills. This supports Scott's argument that highlanders escaped the plains to evade the long reach of the state because of mandatory taxes and conscription, but also to avoid being used as forced laborers.⁴⁴⁹ This particular song is sung by the 'Acho Chin' who make the southern Arakan Yomas their home. The song also mentions that the highlands are home to their forefathers. Thus, the 'tribal' conflict over land in the hills was not a deterrent when compared to the hardship of manual labor imposed on the Zo by the cruel rulers of the valley, i.e. the state.

In fact, Piang argues that the root cause of tribal conflict and warfare in the highlands is due to competition over fresh, arable land.⁴⁵⁰ Scott argues and which is supported by Zo legends, they did, in fact, escape into the hills from the valleys at a point of state-expansion efforts in the plains.⁴⁵¹ Lt. William Bisset, who accompanied Trant in 1824-1826, also mentioned Zo escaping to the mountains:

On their ancestors being driven from their
fertile plains to seek as asylum from
oppression amongst the wild recesses of the
mountains, the tyranny of the Burmese
Government still followed.⁴⁵²

Bisset believed or was informed that the Zo sought asylum in the hills from the oppressive Burmese Government which, apparently, followed the Zo to the hills. Perhaps this is the reason the Zo had to 'fight their way out of the valleys' and escape to the hills. However, he emphasizes 'government' rather

⁴⁴⁸ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 38-39.

⁴⁴⁹ Scott, *The Art*, pg. 11, 17, 23, etc.

⁴⁵⁰ Piang, *Kinship, Territory and Politic*, pg. 39-40.

⁴⁵¹ Scott, *The Art of NOT Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press: New Haven and London, pg. 40.

⁴⁵² Bisset, W. (1830). *Narrative of the Route marched by the 18th Regt. M.N.I. from Pekang-yeh on the Irrawadi River, to Aeng, in Aracan*. By Lieut. Bisset Q.M.G.D. (1830), pg. 83-89.

than just the Burmese. Perhaps by this time, the ethnification of Burma has subsided and it was recognized that it was not the Burmese on the whole, but the Burmese Government that harassed certain groups in Burma.

Other Company officers commented on the highlanders and their ambiguous relationship to the Burmans of the plains. Some also expressed a sense of paternalism toward the 'wild, untaught, children of nature' who, they were certain, would appreciate the protection of the British. In fact, some argued that they would even become willing subjects of the Company. Yet, Bisset, accompanying Trant on this expedition writes:

The Kyanns are nominally tributary to the Burmese, who however, derive little benefit from their wild and untaught vassals, except from those who have been allowed to enter the plains and have there settled. I saw many who seemed very happy, and, to do the Burmese credit, were not at all oppressed.

Bisset contradicts himself here. Earlier, in the same official report, he stated that the Zo suffered from Burmese subjugation; the Burmese Government even followed them into the hills. But here he argues that those that were 'allowed' to settle in the plains, "...were not at all oppressed." This observation, again, speaks to the level of civility of lowlanders when compared to highlanders. Anyone who settles in the plains enjoys a relatively good life according to this paradigm. Bisset continues to explain his informants' perspectives as well as his conviction that the Zo would enjoy being subjects of the British. He also states, again, that the Burmese oppress them contradicting himself:

To speak generally of their character from what I have heard from those who have been in the habits of daily intercourse with them for these last 20 years, I would say that their civilization would be of much importance to us, and could be accomplished without much

difficulty. Conciliation is the only means. The Kyanns among themselves, pleased with their natural freedom, are rather a social race: they have, from the strongest of reasons, been taught to look on strangers as enemies. The Burmese, the only people they ever knew, they have only known as their oppressors. But now within the territories and under the protection of a Government famed for its liberality, temper, and mildness, and whose policy is grounded upon the principle of moderation, the Kyanns will find protection, and, gradually gaining confidence, may become useful subjects, and worthy of our consideration.⁴⁵³

Bisset recognizes that the Zo would make ‘useful subjects.’ He also states that his Government is one that is fair and just. This, also, sounds rather paternalistic. The Zo are like wild children in need of protection from the tyranny of the Burmese. He compels the Government to consider the potential of Zo as subjects.

Trant and Bisset’s accounts make marked distinctions between high and lowlanders. As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis makes clear that there are northern as well as southern Zo. This thesis, however, focuses on the northern Zo because of their unique political situation before and after annexation of the ‘Chin-Lushai Hills.’ Both, Trant and Bisset’s narratives illustrate the general sense that there is a difference from plains people and highlanders. The way Trant views these differences supports Scott’s argument that states and therefore, state officials, consider plains people to be more civilized, learned, and predictable. The lowlanders are juxtaposed to the highlanders as their being uncivilized, untaught and capricious. Furthermore this is Trant’s official report to Government. His personal account, *Two Years in Ava*, reads much more favorable toward the Zo

⁴⁵³ *Op.cit.*

highlanders. Perhaps he gleaned his experiences for military relevance in the official report. Yet, one cannot help but notice the extremes in his comparison of high to lowland Zo:

The [southern-plains] Kicaams are quiet, inoffensive set, and must be distinguished from the Kicaams of the mountains, inasmuch as they have placed themselves under the Burman Government, and are liable to be called upon quota of men in case of war, pay taxes, whereas the others are quite independent. Residing in the most remote and unfrequented recesses of the mountains, the Kicaams hold themselves aloof from, and are entirely independent to the rest of mankind, whom they consider their enemies and lawful prey and acknowledging no sovereign...⁴⁵⁴

Trant contrasts the groups of Zo; those closer to the plains and those in the highlands. The lowland Zo pay taxes, join the army if needed and are 'inoffensive.' They are 'good' citizens while the highlanders are 'bad' citizens. The Zo highlanders are a total contrast to their lowland brethren, or as Scott argues, highlanders are the 'dark twins' to lowlanders. To the highlanders, everyone is a possible enemy. They prefer to live in small independent units who often prey on the citizens of the plains. Scott gives numerous examples of lowland states holding highlanders in the same light as Trant. In the Mediterranean world, for instance, both Christian and Muslims states considered highlanders as 'barbarian.' The Bedouins were regarded as 'wild men' the "precise opposite of the ...urban ideal."⁴⁵⁵ Trant takes on a decidedly state perspective in the above description, like the Muslims of the Mediterranean world who strongly felt that being urban is ideal, Trant

⁴⁵⁴ Trant, T.A. (1826). *Report on a Route from Pakung Yeh in Ava, to Aeng in Arracan. By Lieut. Trant, of the Q.M.G.* Dept, pg. 1136-1157.

⁴⁵⁵ Scott, *The Art*, pg.101.

believes the southern, lowland Zo are more civilized than their highland counterparts.

Trant continues to provide a description of Zo highland life. The tone of his narrative, again, implies that they are barbarian and savage:

...they herd together in small parties of thirty and forty, and select some fertile spot in the neighborhood of a mountain stream, sufficiently large to cultivate grain for their consumption. There they erect miserable dwellings, and with the produce of the land, consisting of rice and turmeric, continue to subsist themselves. The rivers furnish them with abundance of fish, they will eat any animal, however disgusting it may be.⁴⁵⁶

First of all, Trant refers to their 'herding' together much like livestock. He makes Zo groups sound random instead of realizing that most of these groups are comprised of clans along ancestral lineages. He also fails to recognize that there are clear-cut roles among the Zo clans such as chiefs, headmen and the numerous kin relatives who each hold a specific role in the groups. In some cases, several groups acknowledge a paramount chief who resides elsewhere. Second, he refers to their dwellings as 'miserable' only providing his impression rather than describing the houses or huts. This, he may have thought, suffices since the stability of dwellings is central for military intelligence, not the details of how dwellings are utilized by families. Third, he makes the blanket statement that the Zo will 'eat any animal, however, disgusting...' He clearly considers the highlanders primitive and barbarian. Furthermore, their being able to consume any animal implies that they are able to survive in the hills, never having to surrender to an army because they lack food. They will eat anything the jungle provides. While Trant, in his personal account, speculated on the history of the Zo, in this official report, he made clear that their history is, 'lost in fiction.' It is

⁴⁵⁶ Trant, *Report*, pg. 1136-1157.

likely that Trant did not believe that he was qualified to postulate on Zo history for the Government. Still, he made a slight attempt to convey his impressions:

The origins of the Kicaams⁴⁵⁷ is lost in fiction, and of the details of their early history the present race know little except from vague traditions, verbally transmitted from one generation to the next. They, however say that in former days the plains of Ava and Pegu were peopled by their race, and under the dominion of one of their kings, when a horde of Tartars made a sudden irruption [*sic*] from the northward, and overran the country. For some time the interlopers kept the appearance of friendship with the aborigines of the soil, but becoming daily more formidable, and having secured a footing in the land they threw off the mask, and electing a king amongst them, declared themselves independent of the Kicaams king. The Tartar chief then sent to the Kicaams and desired their allegiance, stating, that it was contrary to the dictates of nature that two kings should reign, or that two races of people should exist in the same land, and having deposed the Kicaam king, and put many of the chieftains to death obliged the others to seek for refuge in flight. The remaining chieftains therefore with the attendant villages collecting all their cattle and other valuables, availed themselves of the first opportunity of escaping from the

⁴⁵⁷ Trant alters his spelling from Kicaams to Kicaans in the chapter contents of *Two Years in Ava*, pg. Table of Contents.

thralldom in which they were held, and fled to the lofty and remote mountains on the frontiers of Siam, China, and Arracan, where they considered themselves safe from the persecution of their conquerors, whom they left in undisputed plains.⁴⁵⁸

The Zo have thousands of oral stories, including ones about their ancient history. That at one point they were overrun by Tartars (also known as Mongols), however, only appears in Trant's official report and in his personal account, *Two Years in Ava*.⁴⁵⁹ The story in the latter reads a bit differently. He does not mention that the Tartars deposed a Zo king forcing them to flee to the mountains. Instead of the Zo fleeing, Trant writes that they intermarried with the Tartans and thus, a new race, the Burmese was born. The Tartars did, in fact, conquer everything from the Yellow Sea to Eastern Europe in the early 13th century. The Zo, however, do not recount this story in this way. They have some stories indicating that they left the plains to the hills in order to escape cruel kings, as is addressed above, but not of the Tartars.

The Zo also do not mention being forefathers to the Burmans. Hence, the two stories contradict one another leading to the conclusion that they must have been told by different informants or were based on Trant's own reading of history. Again, this demonstrates how the history of the Zo is easily constructible. They do not have a writing system, hence their history can only be speculated upon. While Trant must have constructed these stories, they sound similar to the legends of lost writing systems told by different highland groups. That is, stories attempt to make sense out of something not understood. This makes Scott's argument about purposely 'lost' writing systems compelling. Instead of 'preliterate,' Scott uses Leo Alting von

⁴⁵⁸ Trant, T.A. (1826). Report on a Route from Pakung Yeh in Ava, to Aeng in Arracan. By Lieut. Trant, of the Q.M.G. Dept *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1842), pg. 1145-1146.

⁴⁵⁹ Trant, A.T. (1827). *Two Yeas in Ava from May 1824, to May 1826*. (Reprint 2006, Elibron Classics, Adamant Media Corporation. Unabridged from a replica facsimile of the edition published in 1827 by John Murray: London), pg. 240.

Geusau's term, *postliterate*.⁴⁶⁰ Refuge-seeking highlanders, in addition to significant changes in social structure and subsistence methods, abandoned their writing systems in order to 'frustrate' lowland state routines. In this way, they could simply invent or shift their histories, much like their ethnicities given the circumstances. Yet, just like the stories of lost writing systems, it is curious that Trant learned this story, presumably, from an informant and that he was wholly comfortable accepting this version of history and repeating it in his reports. Moreover, it is equally remarkable that, relying on his own reading of history, that he made sweeping statements about Zo history. It is entirely possible that the Tartans came down and drove the Zo to the hills to escape their domination. However, there is no evidence to support this claim nor do the Zo have oral stories telling of an exodus to the mountains because they were overrun by Tartars. Thus far, the only stories known of their escaping the plains tells of cruel rulers who forced them to dig moats around a palace.⁴⁶¹

Trant, as he did in his *Travelogue* from Ava in 1824, explained that some of the royal family left the plains for the hills and that the Zo now had no knowledge of their royal pasts. One of the reasons is that the Zo broke up into smaller groups in the hills. Over time, Zo groups became distinctly different from one another, both in the way they viewed themselves as well as in the dialects, dress and customs.⁴⁶² Moreover, Trant explains that the Zo refused to adapt to their more 'civilized' neighbors in this way, which demonstrated their, "...innate love for liberty and freedom."⁴⁶³ Bisset, in his *Travelogue*, indicates that in the distant past the Zo had kings. But he too suggests that by the early nineteenth century kings no longer existed amongst the Zo highlanders.⁴⁶⁴ Either way, construction was well under way. Trant clearly said that their history is lost in fiction, yet creates two elaborate possible

⁴⁶⁰ Scott, *The Art*, pg. 220.

⁴⁶¹ Luce, G. (1959). "Geography of Burma under Pagan Dynasty," *The Journal of the Burma Research Society*, June 1959, 43., Vumson (1986). *Zo History: With an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion, and their status as an ethnic minority in India, Burma and Bangladesh*. Published by Author, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 38.

⁴⁶² Suan, "Rethinking 'tribe,'" pg. 157-187, Piang, "Clan, Dialect," pg. 53, Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. Preface.

⁴⁶³ Trant, *Report*, pg. 1146

⁴⁶⁴ Bisset, *Narrative*, pg. 88-89.

‘stories’ and presents them as fact. Later, the Zo themselves constructed histories, an issue addressed in chapter 5.

Two years later, in 1827, Company surveyor John Crawfurd, who was also on an embassy to Ava, reported on the ‘tribes’ of the Burman Empire including the Zo. Like Trant and Bisset, Crawfurd did not elaborate on the differences among northern highlanders; he simply clumped them together.⁴⁶⁵ He also employs the imagined civilization hierarchy. He creates a hierarchy of Asian civilizations by explaining that the Chinese are the most civilized, followed by the Hindus, the Burmans and then by the, “tribes or nations” around Ava.⁴⁶⁶ He groups the Shan and Arakanese together with the ‘Chin’ and makes clear that these tribes are tributaries to the Burmans.⁴⁶⁷ At this point in history the primary objective appears to study the Burmans and in relation to them, their neighbours and tributaries.

Also, like Sangermano, Symes, Buchanan, and Trant, Crawfurd draws information about the ‘tribes’ from informants. He does take a short trek toward the foothills near Falam but fails to acquire much useful information about the Zo on this expedition.⁴⁶⁸ On his excursions around Ava, Crawfurd was accompanied by Buchanan’s successor Wallich. He reports that the mountains are only scantily inhabited having come across just two villages; an odd assessment given that the hills were quite populated according to other historical records, including that of Trant. The only actual encounter Crawfurd has with a Zo is that with a slave at the Court of Ava who, having been found guilty of murder, had two round shaped scars carved on his face indicating that he was a ‘man killer’ and would spend the rest of his life as a slave.⁴⁶⁹ Still, Crawfurd lists some of the tribes and authoritatively states:

⁴⁶⁵Crawfurd, J. (1829). *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to The Court of Ava*. Bentley, Bell and Bradfute: Edinburgh, pg. 372 (he spells Chin “Kheyns”).

⁴⁶⁶ Crawfurd, “On the Peoples,” pg. 492.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 493, 494.

⁴⁶⁸Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy*, pg. 765.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 766.

These [tribes] are numerous and civilized,
nearly in the order in which I have
enumerated them.⁴⁷⁰

Crawfurd continues to use the Burmans as a means of comparison. Every 'tribe' or 'nation' including the Zo is suggested to follow the cultural projections of the Burmans. The Burmans first practiced tattooing, the other tribes and nations like the Shan, the Arakanese and the Zo followed suit. In this way, Crawfurd appears to be under the impression that cultural practices such as the manner of dress and languages starts in the plains and eventually makes its way up to the mountains.⁴⁷¹ It is assumed by valley dwellers, in this case the Burmans, as well as observers such as Crawfurd, Trant and so on, that lowlanders are superior because they developed writing systems, discovered wet rice cultivation and the arts. Lowlanders also believe that highlanders envy their advanced societies. It appears that Crawfurd and Trant shared this sentiment. Cultures and customs of the plains are emulated by the highlanders. In fact, as earlier mentioned, Chit Hlaing explains that one ritual prayer exercised by the Zo around the area of Haka asks the spirits to give to the zo country (their country on the periphery), the abundances of the *vai* (*vaai*) country, (of Burma in the lowlands).⁴⁷² For the Zo around Haka, Burma is the 'vaai' and they are, in relation to the Burmans, in 'zo' country on the periphery.⁴⁷³ As explained in Chapter 1, Zo refers to a nomenclature. Here, however, 'zo' means 'to be less civilized' as is used by the Zo around Haka who have trouble adopting the term Zo as a nomenclature because to them it means primitive. Thus, as is explained in chapter 1, the Zo from the area of Haka resist the nomenclature 'Zo' because it means, 'uncivilized' or 'people on the periphery.' This is further evidenced by the ritual prayer translated by Chit Hlaing in 1957 and again in 2009. What is important to note here is that the Zo highlanders appear to be

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 93.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 96-99.

⁴⁷² As explained in Chapter 1, for the Zo around Haka, the word 'zo' also refers to the lowlands. Hence, their prayer described in Chit Hlaing, aka Lehman, F.K. (1963) *The Structure of Chin Society: A Tribal People of Burma Adapted to Non-Western Civilization*. Firma, KLM Private, Ltd, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 179.

⁴⁷³ Chit Hlaing, "Ethnicity Theory," pg. 1-7.

envious of the abundance of the plains. It must be argued, however, that at this point in history, many of the Zo were already converted to Christianity; many had served as police officers, border guards, as administrative clerks, indigenous missionaries as well as soldiers in both World Wars. Thus, this prayer may have been constructed only after the dawn of modernity with the arrival of the missionaries. Given the lack of a writing system, it is difficult to trace the earlier prayers and whether the Zo expressed 'envy' toward the plains before the turn of the century. And if, as Scott argues, culture radiates from the center out and upward, then why did literacy not make up to the hills?⁴⁷⁴

Either way, chapter 5 deals with the modern era of the Zo. From the above, however, it is obvious that the same sort of construction occurred later when Colonel Pemberton went to the Northern Arakan Yomas and drew the border based on the accounts of Sangermano, Buchanan, Trant, and Crawford. He cited Zo highland history, although as Trant states, their history is lost in fiction.

More Company officers surveyed the hills after the First and then the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1824 and 1852 respectively. They came to believe and imagine that the highlands were populated by a collection of different clans and groups, many of whom were at war with one another. At the same time, they also compared highlanders to lowland Burmese and Indians. In these cases, these different clans and groups of highlanders were referred to as a single entity. As Symes indicated, the hill people did not wish to engage in commerce with the plains, deducing two types of people, highlanders and lowlanders. In many cases, highlanders were compared to plains people in their physical attributes. Mountaineers were seen as more capable soldiers, easily negotiating difficult terrain, possessing stamina necessary for warfare and, psychologically, they were considered more loyal than plains people. Arguments justifying this perception are obvious; mountaineers were more robust than plains people. Others, however, also compared the plains people to the highlanders in terms of their possible origins. Company administrators began formulating the notion that the highlanders of the Arakan Yomas

⁴⁷⁴ Scott, *The Art*, pg. 224.

migrated southwards from Tibet, over the Himalayas and south to the Arakan Yomas. And while it was considered possible that they shared an ancestry with the Burmans, they tended to dismiss a shared ancestry with the Indians. As R.S. Reid argued, “..they are not Indians ...”⁴⁷⁵

Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation is to illustrate the process of categorization and construction, as well as trace the process to its beginning. Zo highlanders were ordered and clumped into three groups of people on three sides of a colonial-drawn border. Primary sources are utilized to demonstrate early perceptions of Zo highlanders; one by an Italian missionary priest, Father Vincenzo Sangermano working in Ava and Rangoon, the three accounts by Dr. Francis Buchanan in 1795, 1798 and in 1810 commissioned by the East India Company and one by Captain Thomas Trant, participant in the First Anglo-Burmese War as well as some others. Colonel Pemberton cites all these early accounts in his 1834 report.

One very early, pre-colonial narrative is also included. Fan Cho’s account of 862 A.D. however, did not influence colonial cartographers. His account was not translated and published until 1961, thus it did not influence Pemberton’s decision to delineate the Chin and the Lushai Hills as well as the southern border of Manipur. Its inclusion here is to show that the highlands were a dynamic trading route during the pre-colonial era. The Zo were not isolated in the hills, they must have been exposed to others before the arrival of the Company. It also supports James Scott’s argument that highlanders are considered ‘less civilized’ by lowland government officials because they resist incorporation into lowland state governments. They are viewed as ‘barbarians’ for resisting the state rather than being ‘othered’ for not being European. It also shows that they are simply lower on the ‘imagined civilization hierarchy.’ Fan Cho is also included because at the point of modernity, in the mid-twentieth century, when native Zo began writing their

⁴⁷⁵ Private Papers of Sir Professor Reginald Coupland, Letter from the State Secretary of India, Leopold Charles Amery regarding the recommendations of Governor Reid and Messr, Mills and McGuire on the “backward areas of Burma, Assam and Bengal,” June 30, 1943, Box 5/2, ff. 16-121, Bodelein Library, Rhodes House, Oxford University, pg. 20.

own histories, Fan Cho is usually cited. His account has become a significant primary source for the argument that the Zo did have a history long before the colonial era and that at that time, the nomenclatures of 'Chin,' 'Kuki,' and 'Lushai' among others did not exist; they were constructed by colonials who obtained these terms from Bengalese and Burmese informants. Finally, reasons for the absence of other records on the Zo are speculated upon. Given that Asia was dynamic between the accounts of Fan Cho and Sangermano, others must have encountered Zo highlanders. These accounts, however, have yet to be discovered in the archives of China, India, among other places from where traders were either coming from or going toward through the highlands.

All of these accounts illustrate that the intelligence gatherers employed an imagined civilization hierarchy which has previously been considered an 'othering' process. By assuming that others are 'not yet civilized' it is implied that they are reformable—that they can be taught through a series of civilizing project to eventually emulate Europeans. That is, Europeans could create a people, in the case the Zo highlanders, in their own image. First, by turning the most barbarian of people into civilized subjects, they would demonstrate their proficiency in conquering other, inferior peoples around the globe who would eventually not only become subjects of the Crown, but would come to resemble their already civilized European subjects as

Chapter Three

Colonial Perceptions Evolve into Facts

Introduction

Writing a Zo history poses many challenges and obstacles. First, the archival records on the Zo before annexation are scanty. The Zo highlands were considered too dangerous to enter; even informants did not want to travel through the hills which were said to be populated by dangerous headhunting hills tribes. They were shrouded in mystery, such as their sleeping in trees, as explained in Chapter 2. Moreover, the highlands did not become a frontier of the Bengal Presidency until the close of the Third Anglo-Burmese War of 1885. Thus, colonial accounts before annexation in 1890 are almost non-existent. Only a handful of records exist and these are mostly of the Zo in what is known as Northeast India.

Second, as Chapters 1 and 2 have illustrated, as historians of the Zo we are forced to rely on the colonial accounts derived through informants. We also have to consider the colonial imaginations of the time. The British had been in India for nearly three centuries before annexation of the hills. Other colonial entities, such as the Portuguese, occupied parts of Asia as early as the 13th century. Thus, much had been written about colonial subjects before the British encountered the Zo. The British, writing about the Zo highlanders, had already formed images and attitudes about them. Thus, stereotypical depictions and lowland state-centered perspectives influenced their accounts. Furthermore, the informants of the plains also had stereotypical notions of the highlanders which were communicated to the British. Therefore, colonial perspectives were rather shallow in their address of the Zo highlanders. Colonial officials focused primarily on the military-relevant aspects of the Zo and the highlands. Thus, much information, especially more complex and nuanced aspects, were disregarded. This, however, was the nature of colonialism. Administrators, officials, officers, as well as civilians were simply unable to conduct in-depth studies of the Zo. They lacked, time, resources, training and some desire to make sound assessments of the Zo. Stereotyping was instrumental during the colonial era. They addressed only the relevant

characteristics and behaviors of the highlanders which were directly related to or influenced the colonial endeavor.

Third, highlanders were pre-literate before the arrival of missionaries and did not keep written records of their pasts. The Zo did have a wealth of oral history, but as is argued in Chapter 5 and which has already been inferred in the previous chapters, many of these oral stories were altered or changed all together. That is, political agendas drove many of the Zo histories produced by the Zo. Because many Zo highlanders, in their respective nation-states, are in politically precarious situations, Zo histories, especially those written by the Zo are agenda driven. Furthermore, most of the Zo histories were written by theologians and politicians. This fact is also addressed in Chapter 5. It is argued that most Zo histories are constructed for the purpose of gaining political agency. Moreover, it is typically the elite; the leaders, politicians, religious figures and elders who write Zo histories. Their histories, in turn, influence the studies conducted by non-Zo and younger Zo generations. Moreover, their arguments are often disguised as facts and eventually take on an element of truth. These are repeated and reiterated by other Zo and eventually become 'fact.' Therefore, oral history, while valuable, cannot always be considered reliable. Oral histories are certainly no more reliable than Zo histories written by politicians.

Colonial information seekers and informants relied on the few existing records when they looked toward the highlands as their new frontier. As is illustrated in Chapters 1 and 2, informants played a significant role in furnishing colonial officials, officers and intelligence seekers with reports about the Zo. Some of these writings were from sources such as Sangermano, Symes, Buchanan and Trant. All of whom provided the British Government with intelligence on the Zo. Others came from the locals such as the Burmese and the Bengali of the plains. These were utilized by the next generation of colonial officials, officers and now administrators of the Northern Arakan Yomas such as Pemberton, Lewin, Burney and Bisset. Eventually this knowledge accumulated and dominated narratives, reports, accounts and other information of the Zo resulting in generations of ignorance. That is, what emerged was a lineage of knowledge. Information is passed from an

intelligence seeker to a writer, whether a colonial official or a civilian unrelated to the British-Raj. They repeat the information heard or read and most often do not cite the original source. Thus, readers of these narratives come to assume that what they are reading is fact not contrived information obtained through unreliable sources.

This manner of obtaining information has obvious drawbacks. Inaccuracies of an earlier writer are repeated, reiterated and the information is redistributed. Sometimes the original source is separated from the information as in the case of nomenclatures as well as other, more complex, aspects of the past. In this way, misnomers, inaccuracies and simplifications take on an element of fact taking on a sense of truth. It could be argued that this is the Sleeper Effect. This psychological phenomenon occurs when a highly persuasive message, e.g. 'all highlanders are headhunters,' is presented without any sort of disclaimer or verifier that might arouse suspicion of the credibility of the source. For instance, a Burmese who has fallen victim to a highlander raid or a Bengali who seeks the privileges which accompany providing intelligence may not be valid sources of information. When these informants are not mentioned in the narratives of the Zo highlanders, only the information or message is incorporated and forms the readers' attitudes and impressions. That is, a reader with no information about the source has no opportunity to question the reliability of the information.⁴⁷⁶

This chapter illustrates the 'knowledge lineage' started by the first writers of the Zo such as Sangermano and continued by later colonial officials like Pemberton. The next generation of colonial officials such as Mackenzie used Pemberton's 1835 report for many of his writings sixty years later. Moreover, as reading materials about the colonies became more prolific, other audiences relied on this information about the Zo as well. These included missionaries actively searching the world for new mission fields.

⁴⁷⁶ For more on the Sleeper Effect read for instance: Schulman, G. I. and Chrysoula, W. "Salience patterns, source credibility, and the sleeper effect." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 34.3 (1970): 371-382.

There is an abundance of documents on the Company's and later the British Government's occupation of India and Burma. Archival material on the Northern Zo remained scanty after the early reports and surveys of Symes, Buchanan and Trant, all of whom did not fully enter the 'interior' of the hills. However, there was a proliferation of information on the Zo after the First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-1826. Some reports appeared in Newspapers as well as in the missionary magazines of England and America. While the historical records of the British Government produced frontier reports, scientific information on flora and fauna, soil, climate and terrain, political officer's diaries detailed accounts of raids to the plains, tribal warfare and particulars about the Zo's characteristics, missionaries were scouting the globe for potentially new mission fields. When excerpts of colonial accounts and reports appeared in newspapers, periodicals and in the short stories and novels about the mysterious highlanders of Asia, the missionaries had found a new people ideal for conversion to Christianity.

After the close of the First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-1826 a new Northeastern frontier was born. The new frontier extended beyond the foothills of the Northern Arakan Yomas. The enclosure of the last region bordering China, the Zo highlands, was beginning. Certain areas of the hills were now part of the Company's territory. It faced the task of demarcation to create manageable administrative units. They would try to accommodate the former territories of existing local kingdoms and Princely States. They would also rely on the earlier surveys and reports of their compatriots and informants. The most pivotal figure of demarcation was Colonel Robert Boileau Pemberton. He drew the borders on the map he used to survey the area. This map and the borders drawn demarcated the Chin Hills, the Lushai Hills, as well as the borders between Manipur, Burma and the Lushai Hills. Histories written by Zo scholars about their own pasts almost always include Pemberton's decisions of 1835 which marked the beginning of separation and, perhaps, the most important moment in the making of the Zo into the Chin, the Lushai and the Kuki through the sheer tenacity of repeated information and the borders which were based on it.

This was also a period where print media increased. The Mission Baptist Press in the Dutch town of Serampore disseminated thousands of reading materials to the reading classes in Asia, as well as those in Europe and in the Americas. The reading classes were the elite who were privileged enough to benefit from higher education, leisure time for reading, and resources to purchase printed materials. The reading classes included British officials, missionaries, and businessmen. It also included other educated in India and in Burma, as well as in Europe and in the Americas during the mid-nineteenth century. In fact, information from and about the Company was of interest to readers in Europe and in America as well. They were exposed to information about the Zo highlanders. This information was used, it is argued, to construct the highlanders based on the needs and interest of that reading class which included Company officers and other officials.

Newspapers, magazines and journals picked up articles appearing in Asia's periodicals.⁴⁷⁷ Benedict Anderson refers to this period as the time of 'print-capitalism', stating "...print-capitalism...made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate to others, in profoundly new ways."⁴⁷⁸ In the case of the Zo, readers in Europe, America and in Asia could now learn about the distant 'natives' on the fringes of their Empires. Thus the increase of reading materials, many created in Asia, contributed to the construction of the Chin, Lushai and Kuki. One contributor to newspapers and articles was Thomas Herbert Lewin, who was the first British official to enter the Zo highlands and live among them. He was instrumental in the construction of the Zo as the Lushai on the western side of the Northern Arakan Yomas, now known as the Mizo.

Purpose of this Chapter

⁴⁷⁷ Greenspan, E. et.al. (2003), "Book History" Annual Journal of the Society of Authorship Reading and Publishing, Inc., Vol. 6, Pennsylvania State University Press: PA, USA, pg. 26, 50-51, etc., AND Ghosh, A. (2003), "An Uncertain" Coming of the Book": Early Print Cultures in Colonial India. *Book History*, 6(1), 23-55 AND Kumar, D. (1994). Calcutta: the emergence of a science city (1784-1856). *Indian Journal of History of Science*, 29(1), 1-8.

⁴⁷⁸ Anderson, B. (1983), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso: London & New York, pg. 36

The drawing of borders is a precarious responsibility. Matthew Edney argues that colonials mapped the India they perceived and that they governed:

To the extent that many aspects of [the inhabitants] societies and culture remained beyond the British experience.⁴⁷⁹

Edney further argues that the British “deluded” themselves that their knowledge enabled them to draw appropriate maps. What they drew was actually British India. The British were obsessed with accuracy, science and history. Thus, when bordering, they based many of their decisions on natural borders and what colonials believed were existing territories of local rulers. They were also concerned with good governing. When natural borders or knowledge of previously held territories did not exist, they drew the lines that made logically the most sense when it came to managing the area. However, it would soon be realized that highlanders’ notion of territory differed from those of the plains and certainly from those of the British.

Lowlanders settle around their specific rice paddies and pay tribute to a larger, central government, whether kingdom or princely state. Highlanders did not settle in the same way. Practicing the *jhum* method of agriculture meant that there was constant movement within the hills as groups of Zo searched for new land at times driving other groups away. The Zo did not claim specific land rather regions as well as mountains, lakes and rivers. They had relationships to specific areas and it was understood by other Zo, that the area of Sizang, for instance, would always remain in the legacies of every Suantak whether they remained there or moved to other areas. As mentioned, the Suantak clan took an area near a mountain spring named Sizang in the ‘Chin Hills’ of Burma. While some groups of Suantak left to look for other fresh arable land they would forever identify with the area of Sizang.

Furthermore, colonials read each others’ reports, accounts and diaries. There was a clear lineage of knowledge being compiled in the Government buildings of British-India. Pemberton read the official letters, reports and

⁴⁷⁹ Edney, *Mapping*, pg. 2.

surveys, which were produced by the ‘first’ generation colonials.⁴⁸⁰

Pemberton was also an avid consumer of other types of work such as the articles, periodicals and newspapers flourishing among the reading elite. This chapter illustrates the extent to which these reading materials constructed or made the Zo into the Chin, the Lushai and into the Kuki.

Another purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how much of this information influenced those beyond British-India in Europe and in America. Missionary magazines, newspapers and periodicals also featured stories of the Zo. These shaped them further. At least one account written by Thomas Herbert Lewin describing a meeting between a chief and a British General is compared to an embellished newspaper report which appeared in a Calcutta magazine that compared a savage Zo to a British ‘gentleman.’ Thus, it is argued that demarcation of the Northern Yomas was based on information derived through a number of sources, many of which were erroneous.

This chapter also introduces Lewin, the first foreigner to live among the Zo. Some of his actual experiences are detailed to give the reader an opportunity to view the Zo through a colonial lens that presented the Zo as barbaric highlanders who willingly, however, accepted a British man as their white chief. Lewin believed that he could reign over the Zo called the Lushai. For a time, it appeared that Lewin was an effective chief. The Zo had indulged Lewin and enjoyed the advantages of having him among them. However, as soon as Lewin left and the tea plantations sprung up in the foothills, the Zo retaliated. Lewin after all was not a chief to the Zo. He was an elite British officer who crafted a relationship with the Zo elite (of the area) and tried to demonstrate that they accepted British rule in their territory. As soon as Zo society was threatened by encroaching upon what Zo felt was ‘their’ land, however, they fought back resulting in the British’s decision to launch the Lushai Expedition of 1871.

Aftermath of the First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-1826

⁴⁸⁰ Pemberton, *Report*, pg. Preface.

The First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826) was expensive, British losses, “...in men and money were considerable.”⁴⁸¹ It cost the Government in excess of twelve million pounds Sterling to fight this war - one of the most expensive fought by the Company in India an equivalent of 14-40 Billion pounds in 2013.⁴⁸² According to William Ferguson Beatson Laurie this war also had a significant impact back in Britain being partially responsible for its 1833 recession.⁴⁸³ Nearly 50 percent of the men fighting in the war perished either from bullets or from disease.⁴⁸⁴ Colonials realized that locals were much more adapted to the climate, terrain and other aspects of the geography. In fact, eventually local soldiers would be utilized by the Company to fight its other wars.⁴⁸⁵ Although the treaty of Yandabo (1826) guaranteed the cessation of Assam, Arakan and Tenasserim and a large indemnity payment from the Burmese to the British, the war was not a success. There was tension between the Company and the Burmese. For months during the conflict, the Burmese refused to negotiate with Company officials. Christopher Alan Bayly argues that neither the British nor the Burmese learned much about each other during the war, resulting in false assumptions on both sides.⁴⁸⁶ Major John James Snodgrass remarked that:

Every day's experience [during the conflict] only increased our disappointment, and proved how little was known of the character of the nation we had to deal with.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸¹ Dautremer, J. (1913). *Burma Under British Rule*. T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd: London, pg. 49-50.

⁴⁸² Figure based on a UK site that calculates relative worth of pounds: <http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/>

⁴⁸³ Laurie, W.F.B. (1853) *The Second Burmese War: A Narrative of the Operations at Rangoon, in 1852*. Orchid Press: Bangkok, pg. 14-16.

⁴⁸⁴ Dautremer, *Burma*, pg. 49 reads that, “The total number of troops who landed after the first action in Rangoon was 3, 586 men, without counting officers. The reinforcements that were sent came to be about the same total. Out of these 3,115 died, and of these 150 were killed in action. Out of 150 officers, 16 fell in action and 45 died of disease,” pg. 49.

⁴⁸⁵ Hangen, S. (2005). Race and the politics of identity in Nepal. *Ethnology*, pg. 49-64.

⁴⁸⁶ Bayly, *Intelligence*, pg. 114-115.

⁴⁸⁷ Snodgrass, M. J. (1827). *Narrative of the Burmese War, detailing the operations of Major General Sir Archibald Campbell's Army*. (Reprint 1997 Ava House, Bangkok: Thailand), pg. 16.

Future relations between the Burmese and the British were uncertain. There was anxiety on both sides. King Tharrawaddy declared that he would not honour the Yandabo Treaty of 1826. The British refused to leave Rangoon until the Burmese paid the indemnity payment. The Company had to recover from the costly war and procure revenue through economic endeavours and taxations. Times were tough for the Company and economic expansion was necessary for survival. Snodgrass, who gave an extensive narrative of the war, finished his book by outlining all the possible revenue-generating activities such as trade in Pegu and Ava. He also insisted that British imports could be increased; most persons already owned at least one piece of European clothing and would surely delight in other foreign products which the British could tax. He also made clear that under the Company's watch, Chinese and Siamese merchants would increase their trade as well.

Still, times continued to be uncertain. It took the British Government four years before it sent a new Resident to Ava in 1830. Major Henry Burney arrived in Ava on 23 April 1830 with the expressed purpose to:

...open postal communication with the new acquired provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim; to hasten the payment of the indemnity due from the Burmese; to encourage British trade to watch the Burmese Government, and collect all manner of information on the Court.⁴⁸⁸

The Company was determined to recover from the war and put clear objectives into place for Major Burney. He was to ensure that political officers and administrators could communicate with one another. The Company could not rely on informants in Burma. Obtaining intelligence from locals worked in India, but did not in Burma. In India the British figured out that the subcontinent was, "...straddled by a complex and highly sophisticated information systems..."⁴⁸⁹ The British learned to infiltrate these networks listening in to the Indians. They also controlled news writers and placed their own spies in religious centers, bazaars and among military men

⁴⁸⁸ Dautremer, *Burma*, pg. 49.

⁴⁸⁹ Bayly, *Information*, pg. 97.

and wanderers.⁴⁹⁰ With the information obtained, they accurately predicted coalitions of Indian powers and strategized their manoeuvres. These methods of reconnaissance proved successful and they assumed the same for the fringes of their empire, in Nepal, Burma and the Northeastern frontier.

Bayly argues that the Burma elite, like those of Nepal, were able to control the flow of information to the British. This was "...a sharp contrast to the porousness of Indian information systems."⁴⁹¹ When they did gain information the level of interest of highlanders, in this case the Nepali, in colonial affairs surprised the British. Moreover, their war tactics were wholly feasible. They would draw the British into the hills and use their experience as highlanders to slaughter and defeat the British in terrain that they had mastered and the British could not manage.

In fact, the Nepalese preserved their independence during the colonial era, perhaps in part, due to the promise of their being vengeful and astute war strategists.⁴⁹² The British also worried about other potential, yet unlikely, coalitions such as between the Burmans and the Marathas, an Indian warrior caste in the western Indian sub-continent. An alliance between the Burmans and the founder of the Sikh's Rajit Singh further concerned British officials.⁴⁹³ Only one thing was certain after the British took Rangoon, the Burmese army tried to draw them into the dangerous interior of Burma about which little was known. Moreover, the Burmese continually refused to negotiate maintaining an aloof disposition toward their British enemy. The British really did not understand or have much intelligence about the Burmese. The different character, at least in some respects, of the Burmese from the Indians and Bengalis surprised them.

Snodgrass stated that during the conflict, "Neither rumour nor intelligence of what was passing within...posts ever reached us."⁴⁹⁴ Furthermore, although Michael Symes was praised for his intelligence seeking on the character, habits and customs of the Burmese while a Resident at Ava, it was recognized

⁴⁹⁰ *Op. cit.*

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid*, pg. 100.

⁴⁹² Bayly, *Information*, pg. 112-113.

⁴⁹³ *Op. cit.*

⁴⁹⁴ Snodgrass, *Narrative*, pg. 16.

that Symes' observations were during times of peace. Certainly, behaviour is different during times of conflict when there are uncertainties and novel circumstances.⁴⁹⁵ Given the continued state of insecurity in Burma, Burney was to 'watch the Burmese Government' to anticipate its reactions to possible future conflicts.

The gathering of intelligence by Company officers on the new frontier now became paramount. Pemberton, posted in Manipur, received an urgent message from Burney at the Court of Ava. He was to make a journey through the unchartered territory of the Northern Arakan Yomas and beyond into the foothills of Manipur. The circumstances and reason behind the 'urgent' message are unknown. It is feasible, however, that Burney aware of the tensions in Burma, the perilous position of the Company and the state of King Tharrawaddy's declining mental health felt that Pemberton's expedition had to be carried-out with a serious degree of urgency. It was altogether possible that the Treaty of Yandabo would not be honoured and hence, frontier security was imperative. The overarching mission of colonial expansion to procure revenue was maintained by officials.

Captain Pemberton set out from Manipur on 14 July 1830 in the midst of the rainy season.⁴⁹⁶ This in and of itself illustrates the desperation of the British. It was the time of the monsoons which caused the Manipur River to flood the Yomas. The terrain was steep, slippery and only some areas offered viable shelter for men on expeditions. Moreover, the highlanders posed real danger for any foreigner moving through the hills. People defending their villages could subject them to attacks. It was the very most inopportune time to survey the Northern Yomas. Furthermore, officers really did not know what to expect of the highlanders. Information about them was scanty, inconsistent or even non-existent. Bayly explains that as officers moved toward the fringes of the Empire, they were, "...confronted by a virtual

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., pg. 286.

⁴⁹⁶Pemberton, R.B. (1960). "Journey from Munipoor to Ava, and from thence across the Yooma Mountain to Arracan by Cpt. R. B. Pemberton, Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Professor D.G.E. Hall. *Journal of Burma Research Society*, XLII, ii. Dec. 1960, pg. 7.

information famine which slowed their advance and sometimes put the whole edifice of their power in peril.”⁴⁹⁷

Aware of the lack of intelligence about the new frontier and its inhabitants, Pemberton writes:

When, at the commencement of the Burmah war, our ignorance of the whole frontier became manifest, and it was found that the records of Government furnished no information that could in the slightest degree direct or facilitate the advance of those armies, which it became evident were necessary to preserve the integrity of our dominions, much undeserved obloquy was directed against local officers, who had, in some instances, for a series of years been employed along the line of frontier: they were expected to afford information, which could only have been obtained by personal examination...”⁴⁹⁸

Pemberton’s frustration is evident. Although many officers were ordered to collect valuable intelligence, knowledge of the geography and the inhabitants of the frontier remained elusive. In referring to the Zo highlanders, he simply stated, “The mountains ... were known to be inhabited by fierce and unconquered tribes...”⁴⁹⁹ Pemberton studied the intelligence provided by the earlier surveys carried-out by Trant, Buchanan, Symes, Havelock and Crawford, as well as others including Lt. John Bisset. He also consulted other works of history such Marco Polo’s *Travels*, Du Halde’s *China*, Macartney’s *Embassy to China* and the *Calcutta Christian Observer*.⁵⁰⁰ He was well-read man who believed that with his knowledge he could make educated assessments of the Zo highlands and eventually of the Zo people. Like Edney argues in terms of mapping British India, Pemberton deluded himself to think what he observed was fact. What he saw were the Zo through a clouded colonial lens which insisted that the Zo were barbarians that needed to be

⁴⁹⁷ Bayly, *Intelligence*, pg. 97.

⁴⁹⁸ Pemberton, *Report*, pg. 2.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 2.

⁵⁰⁰ Pemberton references all the sources in the preface.

conquered, not only for the sake of British expansion, but also for the Zo who were in dire need of civilization.

The Great Pemberton Divide

Many feuds occurred in the Zo hills. Competition over land was typically the nexus and often resulted into warfare sometimes-lasting decades. Murders, decapitations, raiding, slave taking and revenge killings were commonplace in the Northern Hills. All this bloodshed drew the attention of the Company to whom the highlands were the new frontier. One particular event of 1826 may have led to Burney's 'urgent' message to Pemberton to survey the hills, despite it being the perilous rainy season.

The British official David Scott and 'Garos' chiefs of the Khasi Hills met in 1826 and agreed upon the construction of a road through their territory from Assam into Sylhet.⁵⁰¹ In the Zo hills, however, chiefs were not as willing to cooperate with British officers. Unless, that is, they accepted certain contracts such as the paying of protection money to the henchmen of certain Zo groups. Every year groups of men from Sylhet headed into the hills to procure wood during the open season. To ensure their safety, Zo highland chiefs demanded protection money. When a *Zaminidar*, a police officer, withheld that protection money, the Zo retaliated. They murdered several of the woodcutters and in a show of terror brought the decapitated heads to the British in the plains. Like the infamous horse's head found in the bed of a movie director who had disrespected members of a certain family in the epic novel, "The Godfather," the message was clear.⁵⁰² Organized crime dictated by certain Zo ruled the hills, not The East India Company.⁵⁰³ Sylhet being in Bengal was under the jurisdiction of the Company. The murdered

⁵⁰¹ Imperial Gazetteer of India, Volume 15, pg. 31.

⁵⁰² Puzo, M. (2009). *The Godfather*, Arrow: New York, pg. 82. Woltz a movie producer refuses to cast a member of the Corleone family in a movie, the family retaliates by putting the decapitated head of Woltz's prized race horse in his bed.

⁵⁰³ The use of the term, 'crime' is not wholly appropriate given that British law did not yet exist in the Zo Hills. However, it is clear that the Zo knew they were violating some sort of law of the British since they had built the road toward to Sylhet.

woodcutters were British subjects. When their severed heads were presented to the British in the plains, they were mortified. The Company intervened by banning all the Zo from trading in the markets of Sylhet. First, they clumped all the Zo together by banning all of them, and second, they had now experienced, first hand, the retaliation of Zo against intruders. This event is pivotal in Zo history; it is important for anyone studying the Zo including Zo scholars. Some Zo scholars have recorded this story but their versions of this account differ.

Vumson explains that a 'Lushai' chief named Vutian ordered the murders.⁵⁰⁴ Verghese claims that a Kuki chief named Buntye massacred the woodcutters not a Lushai chief as Vumson explains.⁵⁰⁵ British official Mackenzie, in 1884, also argued that it was a Kuki chief, albeit, an informant probably obtained his information. To date, the real story has not been determined and is not of central interest here. Instead, interesting is not only the fact that stories differ, but also that both Zo scholars use the colonially assigned terms Lushai and Kuki, a phenomenon addressed in Chapters 1 and 5. Moreover, the Lushai scholar, Verghese cannot accept that it might have been a Lushai chief and blames a Kuki. This gives us a glimpse into the on-going tribal politics of the Zo in modern day. The Kuki are deemed the most violent, ruthless, cruel and unruly of all the Zo groups. In fact, some Kuki scholars argue that other Zo often scapegoat the Kuki.⁵⁰⁶ Either way, controlling the Zo of the hills became paramount. As explained earlier, Burney in Ava sent an 'urgent' message to Pemberton to survey the Northern Hills immediately.

Pemberton's report was to give a general description of the chain of mountains, the Arakan Yomas from Cape Nagris all the way North to Assam, the frontier of the Bengal Presidency. He was also to determine the nature of the passes and subdivide the region into three administrative jurisdictions. Finally, he was to ascertain possible routes for commercial or military endeavours. As for the highlanders, Pemberton was to further the survey of Buchanan who withdrew from further inquiry after the commencement of

⁵⁰⁴ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 108. pg. 166-167.

⁵⁰⁵ Verghese, *History*, pg. 166-167.

⁵⁰⁶ Gangte, P. "Significance of Kuki Uprising." *Journal of North East India Studies* 1.1 (2012): 61-80.

the First Anglo-Burmese War 1824-1826. Company ignorance of the highlanders and how to manage them was obvious. Hence, tribal warfare was uncontrolled and rampant between the first and second Anglo Burmese Wars of 1824-1826 and 1852 respectively in the Zo highlands and further east.⁵⁰⁷ The British did not realize, however, that this tribal warfare was not chaotic or more rampant than it was previous to their arrival. Zo society and its member behaved as they always had. As is explained in Chapter 1, the highlanders were not unaccustomed to foreigners moving through the hills, hence, the arrival of the British was simply just another event that would most likely pass.

Trouble was looming in the Northern Yomas. Protection of British subjects in the 'Lushai Hills,' the western side of the Northern Arakan Yomas bordering Manipur was entrusted to Manipuri chiefs working with the Company. By this point in history, officers began referring to the Zo highlands on this side of the eventual border as the 'Lushai-Hills.' Vumson, based on oral history, explains that many Zo groups moved north during the 1840s into the areas of the Yomas demarcated as part of Manipur.⁵⁰⁸ The colonials denoted these groups as the New Kuki while those that stayed behind or migrated south to the Chittagong Hill Tracts became the Old Kuki.⁵⁰⁹ In fact, Pemberton, working with the Raj of Manipur, resettled the Kuki on Manipuri land and referred to them as the New Kuki whereas those that stayed behind became the Old Kuki.

The Zo clans known as the Kamhau⁵¹⁰ from the east continued to push other clans and groups into the area Pemberton allotted to Manipur in 1835.⁵¹¹ There was also significant movement of other people including the Naga in the Cachar area as the Kamhau rose in the east. By this time, Bengal was

⁵⁰⁷ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 109 AND Verghese, *History*, pg. 168-179.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 107.

⁵⁰⁹ Prakash, V. (2007). *Encyclopedia of North-east India*, Vol 3, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors: Delhi, page 1402.

⁵¹⁰ As explained in chapter 1. The Sukte clan gave birth to a great leader called Kam Hau. Thus his followers took on the identity of Kamhaute 'te' meaning 'belonging to.' Thus, 'the Kamhau' are actually Sukte who changed their names. Kamhau eventually became a paramount chief, ruling over several villages, driving out other clans, see chapter 1.

⁵¹¹ *As explained in the introduction, this dissertation lacks primary colonial sources for the early 'Mizoram' history due to difficulties accessing the archives in Aizawl.

firmly in the hands of the Company. When Zo raided the plains, they were now striking British subjects. The British acted swiftly by trying the responsible chiefs and deporting them out of the hills. Believing they had achieved dominance in the eastern Yomas, tea plantations were established around areas of Cachar in Assam. The British soon realized the Rajah, who was reported by Pemberton to be in control of the hill tribes, was unable to stop brutal tribal warfare.⁵¹² As Indrani Chatterjee shows, tribal warfare was not uncommon but due to the complex governing system had little to do with the British. However, the influx of tea plantations did encroach on what the Zo felt was their territory. The residents of the tea plantations, in many cases friends and family of British officers, preferred not to be exposed to what they felt was outlandish behaviour.⁵¹³

Residents of the plantations witnessed the 'horror' of warfare among the Zo in the hills. Nearly 150 people were murdered between the years 1826- 1850. 'Lushai' Chief Sukpilal, they understood, was responsible for many of the murders. In January 1850, Colonel Frederick Lister of the Sylhet Infantry was ordered to punish Sukpilal. Lister organized a meeting for peace negotiations with Sukpilal. The two men met and made a vow of friendship. Some 249 Thado (New Kuki) captives, held in Sukpilal's village(s) took the opportunity and escaped. As soon as Lister left the 20 Thado still in the village were massacred in revenge for the escaped captives. Lister, realizing that the Lushai chiefs had not acknowledged the Rajah of Tipperah who had resettled the Thado or his vow of friendship, now recommended that the Company supply the weaker Zo tribes, the Thado, with arms.⁵¹⁴

A levy of 200 Thado men were raised and supplied with arms to protect themselves against the Lushai and also to stop the brutality disconcerting the British settlers of the tea plantations. The Lushai, realizing that the British had taken control of the hills by arming the Thado, made gestures of peace such as sending presents to the British including an elephant tusk. Other chiefs stepped forward asking the British for help in protecting themselves

⁵¹² Pemberton, *Report*, pg. 120.

⁵¹³ Chatterjee, I. (2013), *Forgotten Friends: Monks, Marriages, and Memories of Northeast India*. OUP India: New Delhi, pg. 339.

⁵¹⁴ Vumson, *Zo History*, 108-110.

against Sukpilal and other Lushai chiefs.⁵¹⁵ Some among the Zo elite stepped forward realizing the advantages of aligning themselves with the British against other Zo. However, the British now actively, or perhaps unknowingly, engaged in ‘the divide and conquer’ process that worked in the past. They did not comprehend, however, that the Thado and other Zo groups were already divided.

Pemberton had to make sense of the situation in the Northern Yomas as Burney insisted and delineate the hills into manageable units as soon as possible. Before dealing with the borders, Pemberton resolved to gather other necessary intelligence about the Northeastern frontier. His report contains pages upon pages of detailed information on the rivers and lakes, their lengths, their locations, with longitude and latitude measurements. He also focused on the soil and everything else relevant for military operations. Like the scientists Buchanan and Wallich and even the missionary Sangermano, he evaluates many aspects of the frontier but his focus is only of a military nature. Moreover, like the earlier surveys, he searched for a means of categorizing the Zo highlanders. Given Bisset’s report that remarked on the Zo tributary relationship to the Burmans, Pemberton made similar connections:

There are few circumstances more calculated to arrest attention in considering this chain of mountains, than the number and variety of tribes by which it is inhabited...the Kupooees, known in Bengal as the Nagas, who reside on the several ranges of hills between the latter country and Cachar, and the Khongjuees, who under the more generally known names of Kookies, Koochunges, and Kuci, stretch from the southern borders of the Muneepoor valley to the northern limit of the province of Arracan: these are succeeded by the Khyens...Besides these, of the tribes, occupying the mountains...will be conveniently alluded to when describing the states to which they are severally tributary, and of which

⁵¹⁵ *Op.cit.*

not even the names were known, until the later operations against Ava forced us into unwilling contact with them.⁵¹⁶

Pemberton made some astute observations about the groups and that there are differences among them. He indicated that the groups of the north differed from those of the south in cultural aspects and methods of cultivation. However, he also generalized about the whole of the highlanders in other observations. For example, all of the Zo highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas are inherently lax in their way of life. Again, the notion that highlanders were uncivilized is evoked. Pemberton, however, does not believe that the Zo highlanders could be reformed—taught to be civilized. He dismissed them as primitive destined to remain as they are—barbarian:

Such a state of society, it must be evident, is wholly incompatible with any mental improvement, or any advance in the arts; they pursue the same unvarying course of employment, felling timber and tilling the ground assiduously, during the season of cultivation, and after their crops are reaped, either resign themselves to the unrestrained indulgence of feasting and dancing, or in planning expeditions against the village of some less powerful tribe.⁵¹⁷

Pemberton attempted to list the numerous clans, but admitted that it is an overwhelming task. Furthermore, he made clear that ‘they are known’ by terms given to them, for example, by Bengali informants. For him, the most important factor when referring to the Zo was, “to which [states] they are severally tributary...”⁵¹⁸ They must have been tributaries to a state. Being tributaries to given states, then, determined how they were categorized and where the boundary was drawn. After the drawn boundary, they were then constructed to be similar to one another and somewhat different from other Zo groups across the borders. What nomenclatures were assigned by the British was a direct result to which states, they believed the Zo belonged.

⁵¹⁶ Pemberton, *Report*, pg. 14-15.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 17.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 14-15.

He respected the information provided by earlier surveys, but was also somewhat critical of the material derived through informants adding a caveat:

It has been asserted, that some of the principle chieftains of the southern or Kookee tribes, could raise a force of 8,000 men; but this may safely pronounce to be an exaggeration: the mutual distrust, which has been before alluded to as existing among them, is wholly incompatible with the unity of feeling by which such a force could alone be assembled.⁵¹⁹

Pemberton was aware that such exaggerations occurred, yet in reference to the Chin, he happily accepted one supposition of a tributary relationship although admitted that this was highly unlikely. He referred to a story of a Manipur Rajah:

The Rajah [in Manipur explained that a] portion of his subjects who reside in the plains is almost entirely composed of Shan, while those on the hills west of Kulé are all Kyens, or wild mountain tribes, who tender but a very imperfect submission to his authority. The force kept up by the Kulé Rajah principally consists of these Kyens, who are only occasionally called upon; and it is probable that, in a case of extreme urgency, he might be able to raise a force of 5,000 men from among the Shans and Kyens; but the latter could never be depended upon for service beyond his own district, and even then the reverse would cause their immediate dispersion, and return to the fastnesss in the hills.⁵²⁰

Here again Pemberton consulted a person that he believed was in a position of power. To some degree, he was correct, the Raj did possess some power and he certainly was an elite in the area. Thus, the two men cooperated in the construction of a tributary relationship which did not really exist, but the

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 18.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 120.

façade of one was enough for both men to agree on where the border would be drawn.

Pemberton also kept a diary of his expedition. A group of scholars working in Burma, including John Sydenham Furnivall, Gordon Luce and Pe Maung Tin, founded the 'Burma Research Society' in 1911. They explained that the aim of the Society's journal was to publish articles on the subjects of Art, Science and Literature of and about Burma and its neighboring countries. Like the periodical *Gleanings of Science*, this journal had a wide readership within Asia as well as in America and in Europe. The construction of the Zo, as well as the rest of Burma and its people, continued. This time it was not by a group of military men, rather by a set of elite scholars who, in Dorothy Woodman's sentiment, "Made Burma." They believed that they were educating others about the British Raj and its new subjects.

Pemberton's journal was resurrected in 1960 and appeared in the *Journal of Burma Research Society*. Hall gave the forward. It illustrated Pemberton's resolve to survey the hills but also provides a glimpse into his character. Impressions, opinions and perspectives of a personal nature are included in the journals of British officials like Trant and Lewin as well as Pemberton which their official reports do not.

Introducing Pemberton's journal Hall writes:

The present document contains his personal record of what must have been by far the most colourful and adventurous of all Pemberton's expeditions. This one was originally intended as a survey expedition, though in fact it added considerably to his knowledge and yielded useful data later to be included in his *Report*.⁵²¹

Nowhere in Pemberton's journal did he describe his expedition as being colourful or adventurous as Hall suggested in the introduction. But occasionally Pemberton offered some personal remarks usually related to the

⁵²¹ Pemberton, "Journey," pg. 43-46.

difficult terrain and one about his Portuguese-Burmese interpreter whose behaviour he found rather appalling. Although carried-out during the perilous monsoon season, Pemberton's journal of the area was comprehensive. Hall explained that it was quite a feat for Pemberton to have managed to conduct this survey at all. Pemberton travelled from Calcutta to Burma and then down to the Chindwin through the "deadly Kabaw Valley..."⁵²²

An entourage of Burmese officers, Indian soldiers including Ghurkhas, coolies and the interpreter, accompanied Pemberton. They were to travel from Calcutta to Ava. Annoyed, Pemberton realized that a Burmese map sent from Ava showing the route to Calcutta was incorrect. Once again, he felt deceived by the Burmese who pretended to be his partners in colonial expansion into the hills. He wrote:

We know that the Burmese map sent from Ava to Calcutta was incorrect. We know perfectly well that no river is crossed on the route into Kubo via Muchee and Kampang, and told Major Burney while in Ava that the map, with which you had found fault, was wrong. We therefore decline going by the Northern route or dividing our party.⁵²³

Pemberton believed that the Burmese were trying to trick him and lead him into danger jeopardizing his mission. Apparently, the Burmese had drawn a non-existent river through a part of the route forcing the party to move further north. He also indicated that the Burmese had added places such as villages onto the map, places that also did not exist. Pemberton was worried. It was the rainy seasons, the Burmese, he felt, were untrustworthy trying to steer him into dangerous areas. Moreover, he was to enter a country not previously known. The highlanders were feared, known to be head-hunters, raiders and violent toward foreigners entering their territory. Pemberton implied that the Burmese may have been trying to push Pemberton and his party into the hands of headhunting highlanders.

⁵²² *Op. Cit.*

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, pg. 8.

In fact, Pemberton gave numerous indications that he distrusted the Burmese. When the party reached the place where there was supposedly a river, which the Burmese had drawn, Pemberton showed his interpreter that no such river existed. Pemberton was livid. Yet, his interpreter did not acknowledge the potential danger of relying on an inaccurate map. It was dangerous because it did not represent the true terrain and because it implied that the map may have been altered deliberately rendering Pemberton vulnerable. The informant rather dismissed Pemberton who wrote:

[The interpreter] said very naturally that he had no authority to do anything on the subject [of a falsely drawn map] but hoped that I would clear up all the difficulties of the business on arrival at Ava, and expose the falsehoods and misrepresentations...The interpreter is a son of a Portuguese by a Burmese mother, and was a resident for some years at Rangoon. He speaks English with some degree of fluency, but it is extremely difficult at times to unravel the meaning which is hid under his volubility.⁵²⁴

Pemberton did not like nor respect this interpreter and found it increasingly frustrating trying to communicate with him. In fact, he elaborated upon the man's questionable character and history as a spy and informant. Pemberton explained:

[The interpreter] was sent into Sir Archibald Campbell's camp during the war as a spy, but was apprehended in a rather ridiculous way. Some of the European soldiers had got an inkling of his real character, and that he spoke English. One of them, to ascertain the truth, turned unexpectedly to him and said in English: 'Take your drink this dram, my lad, and make the most of your time, for you have not half an hour to spare. You will be hanged.' The poor devil began

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 11.

immediately to beg hard for his life in very intelligible English...⁵²⁵

Interpreters were necessary in the colonial endeavour. They were not only interpreters but also informants and local functionaries, which existed all throughout the Empire. In the records of the East India Company are listed the names and functions of translators under the employment of the Company from the 17th century. These were trained in given capacities and specialized in knowledge of the necessary function for which they supplied information.⁵²⁶ However, not all interpreters were well trained. Missionary William Carey detected that his servants, like Pemberton's interpreter, mixed words, "...with some corrupted English and Portuguese words," resulting in convoluted sentences. He warned his fellow countrymen that relying on them will result in problematic dialogue with men of respectability.⁵²⁷ Pemberton's frustration was evident. He went further by exposing the interpreter's questionable past that deems him untrustworthy.

Pemberton also begins to make clear what he believed the differences between Europeans and Asians were. Pemberton was aggravated and infuriated by dealing with the Burmese officers who had handed him the incorrect and deceitfully altered map. He recounted, in an unrelated incident, a violent disagreement between Burmese traders and the interpreter. One of the traders took his *dao* or spear and ran toward the descendant of the Portuguese, the interpreter. Pemberton witnessing this episode wrote:

[When the Burman ran toward the interpreter, he] showed his 'gentle' blood of European origin, and, though unarmed, seized the *dao* with one hand the flowing tresses of his opponent with the other. ⁵²⁸

He did not fight back nor thrashed the Burmese man, which he was wholly capable of doing, expounded Pemberton. In this way, he implied that the

⁵²⁵ *Op. Cit.*

⁵²⁶ Cohn, B. (1996). *Colonialism and its forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, pg. 16-17.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 30-31.

⁵²⁸ Pemberton, "Journey," pg. 15.

Burmese were natural-born killers while the Europeans were not. That is, on the one hand he disliked the interpreter when he behaved like a 'native' but respected him when his European nature was revealed. This type of construction and identity making would later be repeated toward the Zo highlanders.

Pemberton detailed his experience in the Northern Arakan Yomas. His primary focus was on the terrain, access to water, which he found difficult to obtain as well as the climate. Initially he was not all that interested in the Zo highlanders. Three months into his journey, however, he asked to meet a Zo highlander. He recorded this encounter:

After breakfast I sent for one of the Kyen women, being anxious to see the tattooing of the face, for which they are so remarkable. She came attended by her husband, and I certainly never saw anything more hideous than the deformity produced by this disfigurement of the countenance. I found the account of their habits and customs, given by Trant in his work, very correct, but the names of things and persons were, as might have been expected, less so.⁵²⁹

This was the only time Pemberton reported meeting a Zo. The practice of tattooing was typically only found in the Southern Arakan Yomas. For Pemberton then, the 'Chin' of the north and south were one group of people. He further implied that his journey was compromised by Trant's inaccuracy in terms of names of places and communities. Yet Pemberton made similar mistakes. About Trant's account, he concluded that an entire day of his journey through the Yomas, "...was thus effected [by Trant's inaccuracy]"⁵³⁰

The following day, he continued his journey and came upon a town he referred to as "Yo." He did not speak much of the inhabitants. As expressed in Chapter 1, 'Yo' may be referring to another group of southern Zo

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 71.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 71.

neighbouring Haka who changed their transliteration to 'Yo.'⁵³¹ However, he later described a village of "Kieaans." As Vumson argues, village and clan names were often confused.⁵³² In fact, here he relied on Trant and explained,

[The village] is described by Trant as a Kieaan village, but is now inhabited principally by Burmans.⁵³³

It is doubtful that Burmans moved to the highlands and forced Zo out of their village. It is plausible that a mix of Burmans and Zo shared the village and communicated primarily in Burmese, albeit, no other reference to such a case during this time has been discovered. Pemberton's journey took over two months to complete. He drew the map that delineated the Chin and Lushai Hills and Manipur to the north.⁵³⁴ Both borders confined the Zo highlanders to a bounded territory categorized by a series of colonial officers and later, by the political act of formally creating two separate administrations at the Chin-- Lushai Conference some sixty years later in 1892.

Pemberton's Borders

Pemberton, aware of the economics involved, addressed the possible sources of revenue by moving into the Northern Arakan Yomas. Before he begins describing another journey, Pemberton elucidated, in some detail, the state of the border to China.⁵³⁵ He realized that the borderlands were rich for trading in precious stones:

[portions of the Upper Irrawaddy] was even
then known as the emporium of trade
between the Burmese and Chinese, in which

⁵³¹ See chapter 1, Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 76. Carey and Tuck, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 162.

⁵³² Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 3-7.

⁵³³ Pemberton, "Journey," pg. 72.

⁵³⁴ See the Appendix for R. B. Pemberton's 1835 map.

⁵³⁵ Pemberton, R. B. (1837), "Abstract of the Journal of a Route Travelled by Captain S.F. Hannay, of the 40th Regiment, Native Infantry, in 1835-36, from the Capital of Ava to the Amber Mines of the Hukong Valley on the South-east Frontier of Assam." *SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research*, Vol 3, No. 1, Spring 2005

our aspiring merchants were most anxious to share.⁵³⁶

The Burmese and Chinese, both of whom fortified their borders, protected this particular area of Upper Burma. Captain Hannay reported that no foreigners except the Chinese were allowed to navigate the Irrawaddy in the highlands close to the border with China. He further wrote that no local was allowed beyond the post unless they had a special license from the Burmese. Unfortunately, he did not elaborate more on this. He indicated that the area is wholly in the hands of the Chinese. Other colonial officers spoke extensively about raiding methods between highlanders and Chinese traders. In fact, one painted a vivid picture of this area as being rich in trading exchanges and encounters.⁵³⁷ According to these accounts, Zo highlanders frequently visited Calcutta and then moved toward the China border to trade. Thus, Zo moved north, beyond the assigned borders of Manipur and Assam. According to Hannay, Zo highlanders frequently visited Calcutta and then moved toward the China border to trade. Thus, Zo moved north, beyond the current 'assigned' borders of Manipur and Assam.

The boundary on the Northeastern frontier had remained imprecise. Pemberton finally delineated the northern boundary between the Kale Valley and Manipur running east and west, citing that the Kule Rajah insisted that it was his territory. Pemberton was confident in the Rajah's insistence. Again, two elites came together and collaborated on the drawing of the border:

The right of Muneepoor to the territory in question having been thus formally acknowledged, a compensation was granted to the Rajah of that country for the loss of it, which his son and successor has ever since continued to receive from the supreme

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 198.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 221. Hannay explained that the Zo highlanders 'are natives of Yo.'

Government; the Burmah authority again
prevails in Kubo...⁵³⁸

Pemberton founded his decisions of demarcation on this assessment of tributary relationships. He defined what he believed were the borders between the Lushai Hills and Manipur to the north. This line is imaginary; it is perfectly straight, drawn from the source of Namsailung to the confluence of Cachar, Tripura, Manipur, and the Lushai Hills. He wrote:

Between the mountains which have been...mentioned as forming the eastern boundary of Muneepoor valley, and the Ningthee river, there is a narrow strip of level country called the Kubo valley, which, commencing from the foot of the hills...terminates on the left bank of the Kathé Khyoung, or Muneepoor river, which falls into the Ningthee, and marks the southern limit of the Kule Rajah's territory.⁵³⁹

He further explained that Kubo meant 'Shan' and that:

...[the border] had been keenly disputed by the Burmahs and Munipoorees, and the document adduced by either party had been examined with the most laborious care by Major Burney, Captain Grant, and myself: the result of our investigations were submitted to the Government in a series of the most detailed reports, and it was finally determined to allow the Burmahs to have it, as a measure of political expediency.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁸ Pemberton, *Report*, pg. 119.

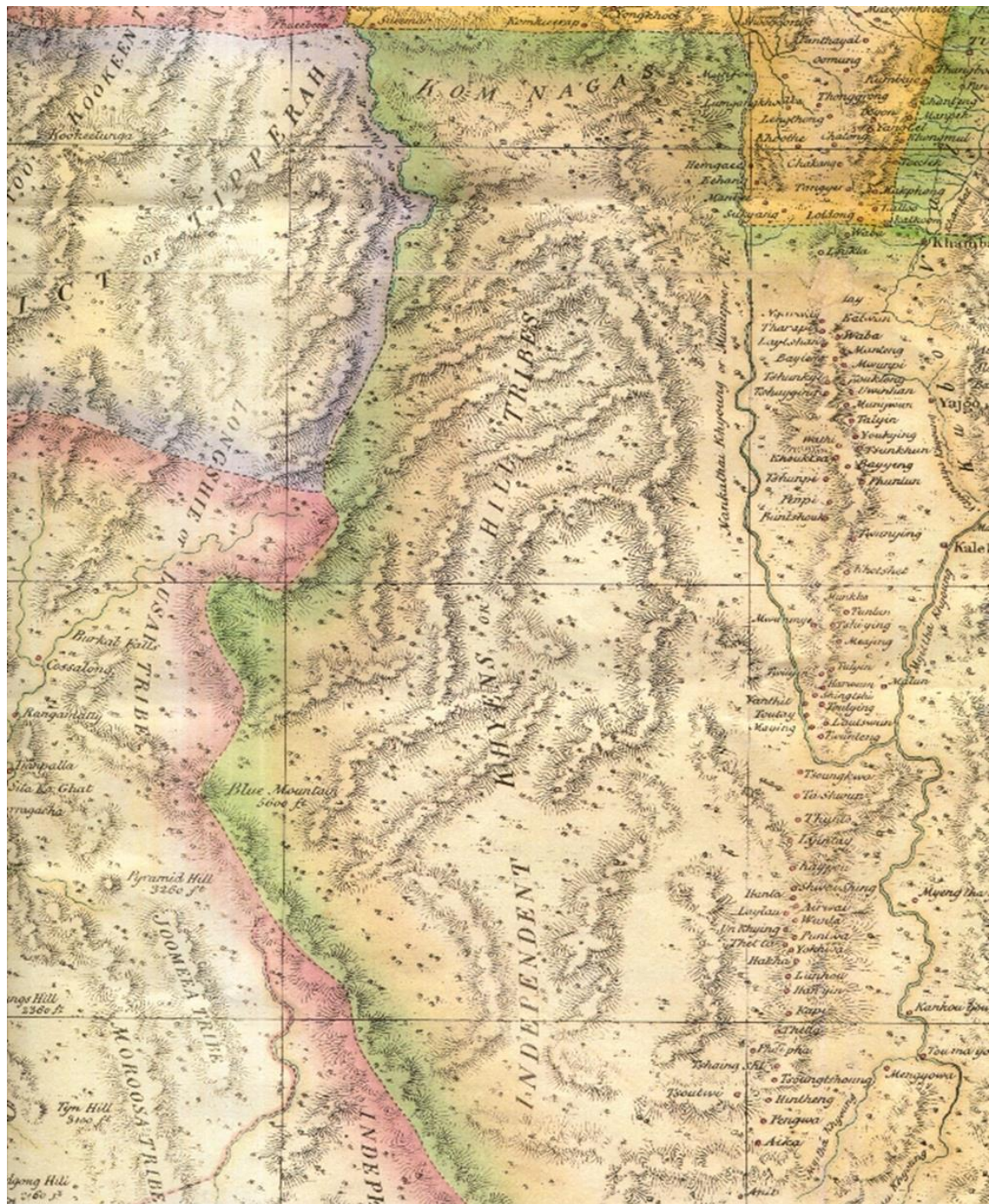
⁵³⁹ Pemberton, *Report*, pg. 116.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 118-119.

As Pemberton explained, they were determined to give this piece of land to the Burmese for matters of political expediency. This border was and is under dispute by Manipuris in present day.⁵⁴¹ These political movements are described in Chapter 5.

⁵⁴¹ The 'imagined' border is discussed in chapter 5.

Figure 4⁵⁴²



542 Pemberton Map (1838) Map of eastern frontier of British India, with adjacent countries extending to Yunan in China by Robert Boileau, sheet 4/4. Oriental Lithographic Press: Calcutta, used with permission from the British Library, London, Maps Reading Room, Shelfmark W3801 © **The British Library Board**

Pemberton had become an expert on the frontier. After publishing his *Report*⁵⁴³ he was often consulted on the Northern frontier. Beyond his survey taking for military purposes, he began to write more about the highlanders themselves. Captain S.F. Hanney in 1835-1836 travelled through the Northern Arakan Yomas from Ava to the Amber Mines of the Hukong Valley on the South-east frontier of Assam. Pemberton introduced this journal:

From the termination of the Burmese war to the present period the spirit of inquiry has never slept, and the most strenuous exertions have been made by the officers employed on the eastern frontier to extend our geographical knowledge to countries scarcely known but by name, and to acquire some accurate information regarding the manners, customs, and languages of the various races of men by whom they are inhabited.⁵⁴⁴

Being fully aware that much information was disseminated to the journals, newspapers and to readers in Asia, Europe and America, Pemberton made clear that some of the information that appeared in earlier publications was inaccurate. In fact, Pemberton wrote that it was “generally known” that Captains Symes on his embassy to Ava along with Ensign Wood of the Engineers who charted and delineated the lower portion of the Irrawaddy provided erroneous information. At the same time, Dr. Buchannan took an extensive survey of the area, charting its terrain, flora and fauna, and recorded the surrounding towns, their sizes and populations. In this way, ...the attention of Europe was first extensively drawn to this field of inquiry by the publication of Symes, whose exaggerated view of the civilization, power, and resources of the Burmese empire were generally adopted. ⁵⁴⁵

Pemberton emphasized that Europeans accepted these original impressions, despite their being incorrect. He insisted that better surveys had been conducted after Symes but that these were, effectively ignored. One reason

⁵⁴³ Pemberton, *Report*.

⁵⁴⁴ Hanney, *Abstract*, pg. 197.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 197.

may be that impressions had already influenced other narratives and imaginations depicted in illustrations and the like. Just like the knowledge lineage of the above, Europeans also assumed attitudes and perspectives from early sources of information, which may not have been credible and reliable sources. Pemberton stated:

[Symes exaggeration were accepted], while the more accurate estimates of his successor...were treated with comparative disregard.”⁵⁴⁶

In this way, Pemberton was aware that impressions of Asia and Asians were being formed by the writings of colonial officers. Ironically, Pemberton also contributed to this impression-making in that he participated in the construction and categorizing of the Chin, Lushai and the Kuki allotting the Chin to Burma based on what he believed were tributary relationships.

He wanted to make clear that only the intelligence gathered on expeditions by military men had credibility. Pemberton argued that his survey, as well as Trant’s and others mentioned in his writings, were based:

...not on the vague reports of half civilized savages, but on the personal investigations of men whose scientific attainments enabled them to fix with precision the geographical site of every locality they visited.⁵⁴⁷

Pemberton made clear that intelligence obtained through informants is of little value and in fact, may even distract readers from the truth. He was adamant that readers in Europe and in America, whether involved in colonial expansion efforts or not, should be provided with truthful and correct information. Some of these consumers were most likely attending to the colonies in Asia as a matter of interest, while others, such as the missionaries, began to consider bringing the word of God to these newly charted populations on the fringes of the British Empire.

Thomas Herbert Lewin

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pg.198.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 197.

Lewin was the first British officer who journeyed to the Zo hills, took the appointment of Superintendent of Hill Tracts and remained there for a number of years.⁵⁴⁸ He was disgruntled with the Foreign Service after the Munity of 1857. At one port, a British party surrendered to rebel Indian forces in exchange for the promise of a safe evacuation to Allahabad. Instead, the rebels murdered them in a gruesome display of revolt against the East India Company. Lewin went to Cawnpore (Kanpur) port, site of the infamous massacre where British women and children were hacked to death and dismembered with meat cleavers.⁵⁴⁹ Reflecting on what he saw he wrote:

I stood beside that well, and saw the mass that lay down in the darkness, which I knew to be the bodies of my countrymen and women...we saw the actual white-clothed women and children who had been thrown into that dark pit...a never-to-be-forgotten horror...On the walls [of the courtyard] were splashes of blood and marks of sword-cuts many so low down on the walls that they must have aimed at little children or at poor crouching women shrinking from the blows...⁵⁵⁰

This experience shaped Lewin perspectives in many ways. He came to loathe the Indians and Bengalis of the plains, seemingly never forgiving them for this horrific episode. Lewin expressed this again some fifty-five years later in his memoirs:

The horror of this place laid hold on us all, soldiers and officers, most of us newly arrived from England. The men clustered together, swearing deep oaths of vengeance against the whole race of those who were guilty of such atrocities.

⁵⁴⁸ Lewin was the third Superintendent of the Hill Tracts. He was preceded by two other officers who were both removed from their service. The first was rumoured to be mentally unstable killing raiding highlanders with his bare hands, the second one, insisted Lewin was too conventional and rule-oriented for an appointment among Hill tribes.

⁵⁴⁹ Stein, *A History*, pg. 226-227.

⁵⁵⁰ Lewin, T.H. (1912), *A Fly on the Wheel or How I Helped to Govern India*, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 6.

Nonetheless, he was ready to serve the Company. After several assignments in Calcutta, Hazaribagh and Noakhali, eight years had passed since his service began in 1857. Again, Lewin remarked on his feelings toward the Bengalis, “..I loathed the race...”⁵⁵¹ He was finally sent to Chittagong where he found the people more favourable. He wrote:

I conceived a great liking for my new district, and by the end of the year I had comfortably settled...Socially, and well as officially, I found the change from Noacoly to Chittagong delightful.⁵⁵² I had found that at least one-half of my district was peopled by men and women of a like nature to myself, [including some members of] hills tribes; they were pleasanter to deal with, more manly, more easy to understand, that the cringing, cowardly, lying, litigious Bengalis...⁵⁵³

Lewin stayed at Cox’s Bazaar to recover from what may have been a bout of malaria. There he had much time to indulge in his racist thoughts toward the people of the plains. Cox’s Bazaar had a long history by the time of Lewin’s arrival in the 1860s. Symes negotiated with the Governor of Bengal, Warren Hastings, to have Captain Hiram Cox sent to Chittagong in 1796 as a British Resident to protect the interests of British subjects there, as well as to rehabilitate refugees.⁵⁵⁴ One of his missions was to deal with the century long conflict between the Rakhine and the Arakanese.

Driven out of Burma, the Arakanese were refugees and found a safe haven at Cox’s Bazaar. In fact, many communities at Cox Bazaar had suffered at the hands of the Burmese. According to Hall, there was real xenophobia among the Arakanese, Mughls, Indians, Bengali, and Portuguese, as well as by the English and other traders and merchants toward the Burmese during Cox’s

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid*, pg. 110.

⁵⁵² *Ibid*, pg. 124.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid*, pg. 135.

⁵⁵⁴ Kumar, Awadhesh (2006), “The Mags refugee problem and early Anglo-Burmese Relations (1794-1818),” *Facets Of Indian History* pg. 223.

office.⁵⁵⁵ The same attitude existed by the time of Lewin. At first, the small European community who all hated the Burmese was to his liking. There were tea planters, rice merchants, traders and Government officials. Others were refugees stranded in the Bazaar. Lewin worked with Bengali and Indians who served the British. His perception of them was confirmed. He detested the Indians and Bengali and expressed no particular interest in the Burmese. He looked toward the highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas as a people he wished to encounter.

Lewin felt that Indians and Bengali were deceitful, corrupt and apathetic with bigoted and elitist dispositions. Yet, Lewin shared their sentiments. He was a racist and did not hide this fact. He often expressed his loathing toward litigious people who served the British Government. The drawback of using them as informants in intelligence gathering was also not lost on Lewin. In his journal, he writes:

In the spring of 1865 I started on my second journey in the Chittagong district, determined, as far as possible, to see men and things with my own eyes, and not through the dirty spectacles of native officials who hang on to the skirts of every English officer in India...⁵⁵⁶

He was drawn toward the blue mountains of the Northern Arakan Yomas where the highlanders dwelt. From time to time, groups known in Chittagong as the Kuki and Lushai swept down the mountains to the British territories of the plains, killing, burning, taking heads, collecting slaves and stealing food stocks. Lewin was consumed with learning more about them:

I collected with avidity all the stories I could hear of the wild tribes, the Kúkis, Mrúngs, and others, who dwelt on our borders and traded in our frontier marts, and who occasionally made forays into British territory for the purpose of taking heads and obtaining slaves. I found, however that little reliable information was

⁵⁵⁵ Hall, D.G.E. (1955) *Michael Symes: Journal of his Second Embassy to the Court of Ava in 1802*, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.: London, pg. Introduction.

⁵⁵⁶ Lewin, *A Fly*, pg. 131.

obtainable...wood-cutters [who banded together during the winter season as groups each year] were acquainted only with the tribes who were nominally under British control; while of the Kúkis, Lúshais, Shendús, and other independent tribes they spoke of with bated breath, recounting fables evidently unworthy of credence, stories of men with tails and villages built in trees—a host of improbabilities.⁵⁵⁷

Lewin was exposed to imaginations, stereotypes and horror stories of frightening highlanders. He dismissed these as unreliable--as conjectures based on fear. He understood that many stories were constructed. Even other locals to the region did not know much about the Zo. The wood-cutters' 'bated breath,' as Lewin describes, may have been the result of the 1826 murdered and decapitated woodcutters from Sylhet. Lewin expressed his profound interest and curiosity about the highlanders going as far as proposing that he take an expedition into the Northern Arakan Yomas without the military support of Government. This was unprecedented. Typically, expeditions were carried out with the purpose of gathering intelligence for military and colonial expansion. He may have ostensibly argued for reconnaissance in his proposal but was clearly inquisitive about the Zo highlanders. After all, "...there were whispers of monkey-men with tails that slept in trees.⁵⁵⁸

Lewin decided to find out for himself. After getting permission to journey to the Northern hills, he wrote enthusiastically:

Rising...somewhat unwillingly, one fine clear morning at six o'clock, I solaced myself by the view of the blue distant hills, with fleecy cloud lines floating here and there on their summits; they seemed to lay a spell upon me and to beckon me towards them. The hill country for the most part lay beyond the limits of the Chittagong district, and therefore outside my legitimate sphere of action. There was an English officer in charge of this undefined hill territory, and I had

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 142-143.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 157.

occasionally met him on his visits to Chittagong; but he seemed strangely unaware of his opportunities, speaking of the hills as hateful, and seeming to know little and care less about their inhabitants...All the hills [were] practically unknown, and much of it had never been visited by Europeans.

Although permission was granted, he would be on his own, without 'official' protection from the British Government. This news did not deter Lewin; he would take the journey accompanied by only a small entourage. He packed his bags full of colourful beads, brass rings, scarlet cloths and lots of hard liquor. Wood-cutters told Lewin that the Zo enjoyed strong drink. In fact they reported to Lewin that:

...the hill-men, were great drinkers, and hard-headed to boot; so I took with me some bottles of spirits of wine, which I hoped would floor the strongest head among them.⁵⁵⁹

His choice of presents illustrated that Lewin, although enthused about encountering Zo, believed that they would be most delighted by colourful objects and by liquor. He did not pack books, sketches of European monuments, maps, or any other objects that might demonstrate western civilization. As is explicated in Chapter 1 and 2, 'civilized' lowlanders look upon highlanders as not yet civilized. Symes referred to them as the 'children of nature.'⁵⁶⁰ He rendered them as being childlike. Their penchant for drink implied a lack of self-control and restraint. Their raiding did the same, like children, they took what compelled them. The presents Lewin chose reflected the mind-set of an adult who brings delightful objects to an immature child not yet civilized. While he spoke of the Zo with affection, he did not think they were like himself, an educated white elite man from the west. He had already dismissed most of the people he encountered in the Raj and was now looking for others to meet and form opinions about.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 144.

⁵⁶⁰ See Chapter 2.

Lewin typically not an early riser woke up the morning of his trip full of vigour and excitement on 14 November 1865. His gear consisted mostly of presents:

...I started my expedition in to the unknown country towards which I felt so irresistibly impelled.⁵⁶¹ ...the bulkiest part of the baggage was the two bales of presents for the hills people, and these being the sinews of war were specially looked after, and packed carefully before anything else on the back of the largest elephant.”⁵⁶²

He was aware that being a police officer, exploration was not part of his job description. His responsibilities were of law and order, not of exploration and adventure:

...I kept carefully locked within my own breast, knowing full well that exploration or discovery formed no part of the duty of the ‘perfect policeman.’ All I wanted was to get loose in the hills, after which, ‘vogue la galère’ – we should see what we should see [come what may].⁵⁶³

Lewin’s early journey was joyous. He exclaimed:

I experienced a growing sensation of delight at having at last cast loose from civilized man....a few days more of travel would place me beyond reach even of the post, and that consequently, by no possibility could I be recalled from my journey.⁵⁶⁴

As Scott argues, the highlanders are generally looked upon as the way ‘we’ were before we became civilized.⁵⁶⁵ For Lewin, being away from other military men implied a certain freedom, one without rigid laws and strict

⁵⁶¹ *Op. Cit.*

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, pg. 147.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, pg. 146.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 147.

⁵⁶⁵ Scott, *The Art*, pg. 4, etc.

rules of daily life. During his time at Cox's Bazaar, he had complained about the rigidity of military life.⁵⁶⁶

He seemed to enjoy being among the Zo. About his role among them, he wrote:

I found the idea of my position as a Government official conveyed but a vague impression to the minds of these uncivilized people; so I took my standing among them as a chief, paramount in the district, but subject to yet a greater white chief in Calcutta...I was determined to test my position as chief, in the local fashion, by calling on all the Toung-tha in the vicinity to build me a house. ⁵⁶⁷

Lewin lived among the Zo for numerous years. Upon arrival, he behaved like a chief. He ordered that houses be erected for him in whichever villages he was visiting. Like a patriarch, he gave the Zo gifts of food and drink and entertained them in his home. He became fluent in the Zo dialect called *Dulian*. They accepted him as a white chief. While Lewin thought it was because they also respected him, the Zo surely knew that an alliance with a British would be to their benefit. They amused him by behaving like his followers, after all, he had power, drink and gifts novel to the plains. Lewin was delighted by his new found chieftom. He referred to the Lushai but was fully aware that they are not only a set of clan based groups, but also that 'Lushai' was an assigned term. They referred to themselves as well as to all highlanders as *Dzo*.⁵⁶⁸

The closer he felt to these people the more he began to loathe his Bengali servants. At one point, he simply ordered their return to Chittagong since they, according to him, were useless, lazy, and weak in character and temperament and might even prove to handicap Lewin who believed that if

⁵⁶⁶ Lewin, *A Fly*, pg. 147-148.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid, *A Fly*, pg. 247.

⁵⁶⁸ Lewin, T.H. (1874), *Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai dialect of 'Dzo' or 'Kuki' Language: with Vocabularies and Popular Tales* (notated). Calcutta Centralized Press: Calcutta.

real danger did appear, these Bengalis would simply run away anyway. When it came to the highlanders, he wrote:

[They are a] kindly, natural people on the whole, my intercourse with whom strengthened my feelings of jubilation at having for a time escaped the plains and the dwellers therein.⁵⁶⁹

After his first expedition, he left the Zo hills and was received by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Sir George Campbell, who praised him for the expedition he had carried-out under his own volition and responsibility.

Lewin was promoted to the rank of Captain and became Superintendent of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.⁵⁷⁰ There he managed three districts, one of which was under constant attack from the Kuki or as he explained, “[by their] more properly...own generic title of Lushai.”⁵⁷¹ That is, he realized that the Kuki could have been the ‘Lushai’ he knew. They all were definitely the Zo. He participated in the construction of the Lushai who occupied the eastern Northern Yomas. He does not, however, indicate that the ‘Chin’ on the other side, might also be linked to the Lushai or the Kuki, which he seemed to realize was not a term, they, themselves employed.

Lewin recognized that the Zo highlanders were not one group of people, rather a collection of clans or groups and that the information about them was capricious. He was further astounded by the lack of interest the British officers in charge expressed about the highlanders. They only ‘hated’ them. Lewin felt that it was an opportunity to visit regions and meet people unknown. This way he could discover a people among whom he felt respected. Lewin referred to the Kuki and to the Lushai but only mentioned the Chin, in his 318-paged journal, one time. It was clear that a certain division of the highlanders had already begun. He assumed that he would not encounter Zo from the Burma side. However, the highlanders that traded in the marts or that raided the plains very well may have been Zo from the Burma side or Chin as they were called. Lewin, being under the jurisdiction

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 152.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 186.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 189.

of India, might not have learned of the Chin or maybe he simply was not interested in the people on the eastern side of the Northern Yomas.

Lewin became fluent in one of their languages or dialects known as *Dulian*. He came to be seen as a chief and felt close to the Zo highlanders to whom he usually referred to as the Lushai but on numerous occasions mentioned that, "...the whole nation is known as *Dzo*."⁹³ By the time Lewin met and lived among the Lushai in the late 1860s, the Chin and the Lushai Hills were under the three different administrations created by Pemberton thirty years earlier. This is one reason he only spoke of the Chin in one single instance. For a time, Lewin managed to convince the Lushai to stop their raiding upon the plains, to reduce tribal warfare, stop the taking heads and revenge killings. After his departure however, raiding, among other highland atrocities resumed. By the time Lewin met and lived among the Lushai in the late 1860s, the Chin and the Lushai Hills were under the three different administrations created by Pemberton thirty years earlier. This is one reason he only spoke of the 'Chin' in one instance. For a time, Lewin managed to convince the Lushai to stop their raiding upon the plains, to reduce tribal warfare, taking heads and revenge killings. After his departure however, raiding, as well as other highland 'atrocities' resumed.

My friends the Lushais...considered that their compacts with me left them quite free to attack other districts; and so, uniting forces, they had committed a series of forays of the most aggravated character in the neighbouring district of Cachar, killing several Europeans, and carrying off Mary Winchester, the little daughter of a planter, with many other British native subjects, into captivity.⁵⁷²

Lewin brought some peace to the Lushai Hills. Oral stories tell us that he discarded the English way of life, walked barefoot, wore Lushai clothes, spoke only in Lushai (*Dulian*) and very much enjoyed the hill drink known as

⁵⁷² Lewin, *A Fly*, pg. 255.

Zo *zu*.⁵⁷³ Highland life among the Zo suited Lewin as his friendship with Chief Rothangpuia suggested.⁵⁷⁴ However, in 1867 due to illness and dysentery, he left the hills to recover in Chittagong. During his two-year absence, the Zo resumed raiding the plains including the tea plantations of the foothills. The Zo were loyal to Lewin following his request to stop raiding the plains. They were not, however, loyal to the British Government. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the people among whom Lewin lived were the very Zo that had committed the raids. Lewin insisted that it was groups from the western side of the Northern Yomas, the Zo under the jurisdiction of Burma. According to them, they carried out the raids, murdered European planters and kidnapped the daughter of planter, Mary Winchester. Lewin, having become familiar with different clans, insisted that the ‘Shendu’⁵⁷⁵ were responsible.⁵⁷⁶ Cary and Tuck explained some years later that the Shendu are groups of Zo who were under the control of the Zo from the area of Haka in the Chin Hills.⁵⁷⁷ Like Lewin’s relationship to the Lushai, Carey and Tuck were the elite of the Chin Hills and would be instrumental in the construction of their identity. Moreover, they also worked primarily with the elite of the Zo and in this way, collaborated with them. Their story is explicated upon in chapter 4.

The Reading Elite Participate in the Making of the Zo

Bisset accompanied Trant on his expedition through areas in the Yomas in 1824-26. His observations appeared in the *Gleanings of Science* in 1830.⁵⁷⁸ This was an era where print-makers were becoming increasingly busy disseminating information among the reading classes in Europe, the

⁵⁷³ According to John Whitehead, he also had a Lushai female companion during this years in the hills IN Whitehead, J. *Thangliena: A Life of T.H. Lewin Amongst Wild Tribes on India’s North-East Frontier*. Kingsdale: Sterlingshire, pg. 410-420.

⁵⁷⁴ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 111.

⁵⁷⁵ The Shendu wear long clothes around their heads. Thus, their name was derived from the Burmese word for ‘turban.’ Like the constructed terms of Chin, Lushai and Kuki, Shendu may very well have been a colonially assigned nomenclature as well.

⁵⁷⁶ Lewin, *A Fly*, pg. 255.

⁵⁷⁷ Carey and Tuck, *Chin Hills*, pg. 3.

⁵⁷⁸ Bisset, W. (1830). "Narrative of the Route Marched by the 18th Regiment, M.N.I. from Pakang-Yeh, on the Irrawadi River, to Aeng, in Aracan by Lieut. W. Bisset, Q.M.G.D." *Gleanings from Science*, Vol. 11, 1830, pg. 83-89.

Americas and in Asia. Benedict Anderson's argument that print-capitalism influenced and shaped eventual nationalism is supported by the notion that:

...[those who were literate during this period, were also the]...producers for the print-market, and they were linked, via that silent bazaar, to consuming publics.

Who were the consumers? In the most general sense: the families of the reading class...note that as late as 1840...almost half of the population [in Europe] was still illiterate...⁵⁷⁹

The reading classes included Company officials, missionaries, and businessmen, as well as other educated members of the public working in India and in Burma, as well as in Europe and in the Americas in the mid-nineteenth century. In fact, information from and about the Company was of interest to readers in Europe and in America as well. Thus, they were exposed to reports, stories and other information about the Zo highlanders. This information was used, it is argued, to construct the highlanders based on the needs and interest of that reading class which included Company officers and other officials.

The Baptist Missionary Press first established at Serampore, a Dutch town in West Bengal, and later based in Calcutta, supplied readers with numerous printed materials from Christian pamphlets, Indian literary works, and Bible translations.⁵⁸⁰ It also printed periodicals dealing with aspects of India and its "science." The Press supplied the College at Ft. William with much of its material, for example.⁵⁸¹ By the mid-nineteenth century, the Press produced in excess of 212,000 works of literature.⁵⁸² Among these works was the periodical *Gleanings of Science*. Its editors boasted the accomplishment of dissemination

⁵⁷⁹ Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso: London & New York, pg. 76-77

⁵⁸⁰ Chancey, K. (1998). "A Star in the east: Controversy over Christian Missions to India 1805-1813." *The Historian*, Vol. 60, Issue 3, 1998, pg. 507-522.

⁵⁸¹ Murphy, S. (2009). Imperial Reading?: The East India Company's Lending Libraries for Soldiers, c. 1819-1834. *Book History*, 12(1), 74-99.

⁵⁸² Greenspan, "Book History," pg. 26, 50-51

among the readers in India and in the West. In the preface of its second volume, it read:

[A] great advantage secured by periodical publication, in a cheap form, is the general diffusion of knowledge, and the consequent application of it to the common purposes and business of life...communication is one of the duties impressed upon us by the growing by the growing spirit of the age.⁵⁸³

One major aim of the periodical was to render information in its simplest form so that readers could easily learn about a great deal of subjects without much superfluous or overtly detailed information.⁵⁸⁴ This also meant, however, that much nuanced information was not included. Readers would get a basic, generalized version of accounts and stories. Sometimes only an excerpt was printed. Thus, general perceptions about Zo highlanders were based on very little actual information. An excerpt of John Bisset's report appeared in *Gleanings of Science* in 1830. Although the man himself did not achieve fame, his observations were influential in the construction of the 'Chin.'⁵⁸⁵ In his original report, Bisset refers to the history of the 'Chin,' a history which appears to be taken from Trant's account of 1824-1826. Although it is not a verbatim reprint, it reads in a similar fashion to Trant's report.⁵⁸⁶

The original history of the Kyanns, the present undisputed possessors of these mountains, is lost in fiction as to be little worthy of belief; and even those parts which are known of the present race, are nothing but vague traditional legends. They relate, however, that in former times the rich plains of Burmah and Pegu were peopled by their ancestors, who were governed by

⁵⁸³ *Gleanings of Science*, Vol. II, 1830, Baptist Mission Press: Calcutta, Preface and List of Subscribers.

⁵⁸⁴ *Op.cit.*

⁵⁸⁵ Bisset's name was often misspelled Bissot and the Kyenns, as Bisset first spelled it, is often spelt Kuyens in these other publications.

⁵⁸⁶Trant, T.A. (1826). Report on a Route from Pakung Yeh in Ava, to Aeng in Arracan. By Lieut. Trant, of the Q.M.G. Dept *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1842)*, pg. 1145-1146.

a race of kings when an eruption of the Tartars from the north overthrew their dynasty...Thus [they were] compelled to seek independence amidst the lofty mountains of Aracan, Chinah, and Siam..all trace of their former kings lost in oblivion. Left without any leader or chief, the interest of social intercourse pointed out the necessity of having someone to whom they could look up, and the elder of each tribe was generally chosen.⁵⁸⁷

The escape of people away from the plains to the highlands is not a novel occurrence, according to James Scott. He argues that people elected to move to the hills, out of the state's reach to avoid the expansion of lowland states.⁵⁸⁸ It appears impossible for Bisset, Trant and even Pemberton to imagine that people could survive in small independent groups. The implication is that properly functioning states require a king, an ultimate leader. This is evidenced by Pemperton's persistent search for tributary states to whom he can link the Zo highlanders and delineate the Northern Arakan Yomas accordingly.

Bisset's report, like those of Trant and Pemberton before him, mentions the tributary relationships of the 'Chin' to the Burmese. Bisset explains that:

The Kyanns are nominally tributary to the Burmese, who however derive little benefit from their wild and untaught vassals, except from those who have been allowed to enter the plains and have there settled. I saw many who seemed very happy, and, to the Burmese credit, were not at all oppressed.⁵⁸⁹

The report continues to explain the religious beliefs of the highlanders. This is taken, *verbatim*, from Bisset's report by *The Athenaeum*. This literary magazine was published in London between the years, 1828-1921. This

⁵⁸⁷ Bisset, "Narrative," pg. 83-89. *some portions of this report is also cited in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

⁵⁸⁸ Scott, *The Art*, pg. 128.

⁵⁸⁹ Bisset, "Narrative," pg. 87.

particular article was disseminated in the same year as Bisset's in October 1830. Its basic focus is on the moral and ethical beliefs of the 'Chin.' It reads:

[The following account of the people is abridged from a paper by Lieut. Bissot...in a Calcutta Journal]. The Kyanns acknowledge no supreme being; nor have they the most distant idea of the creation. They worship a tree, named by them *Subri*. Which produces a black berry, of which they are fond. They suppose a peculiar substance is sent from above for their worship, which is searched after and adored with superstitious awe. As soon as a thunder storm has ceased, and nature becomes calm, they repair in a body to the spot, where, from the destruction on any tree, the substance is supposed to have fallen, and commence digging for it with great care: on being found, a hog and cow are immediately sacrificed and eaten, when it is given to the *Pasin*, who uses it as a talisman in the case of the sick—they possessing the most sovereign contempt for all kinds of medicine. Their ideas of right and wrong are confined to their relative care of their flocks and families. The good man is he who takes care of his father and mother, looks after his hogs and cattle, eats the most meat, and enjoys himself in drinking a liquor distilled from grain: the bad man is the abstinent, as he is thought [an] untrustworthy wretch for not enjoying to the utmost his power the blessings nature has bestowed.⁵⁹⁰

The Athenaeum, although not a religious publication, emphasized Zo belief systems. It highlighted the seemingly absurd worship of a specific tree and the Zo's penchant for consuming liquor. However, it also indicated that the

⁵⁹⁰ Bissot, Lt.* (1830), "The Kyanus or inhabitants of the Mountains between Burmah and Arracan." *The Athenaeum*, London 1830, 156 (1830: October 23, pg. 669. *Lt. Bisset's name is misspelled in *The Athenaeum*.

Zo lived in groups or clans. The goodness of a person was measured by the level of devotion to family and clan. The primary implication of the excerpt, nonetheless, is that these were uncivilized highlanders without a proper belief system and a weakness for drink. Bisset's excerpt sparked interest among missionaries. Not having enjoyed much success in Burma among Buddhists⁵⁹¹ or in India among Hindus,⁵⁹² they had discovered a new mission field in the Northern Arakan Yomas.

There was a revival of Evangelism in the 18th Century. Magazines and posters featured recruitment sections for new missionaries to head to the newly acquired corners of the world to missionize. One such fundraising poster appeared in the 1900s in England. It is a drawing of an embroidered piece of cloth with several colours on it. Each colour and its number of stitches represent the number of persons adhering to a world religion, or none at all. They include yellow for Protestants, scarlet for Roman Catholics, brown for Jews and so on. The poster's headline reads, "A Plea for Missions," and, "Population of the World, 1,424,000,000...every stitch represents one million Souls." The largest color takes up about ¾ of the stitches which are black and reads, "Heathen, 856,000,000."⁵⁹³ According to Historian David Mitchell, by the 1900s Great Britain and Ireland could support 10,500 missionaries around the world.⁵⁹⁴ While the Americans could not equal this number, they also joined in the missionizing efforts. The Zo would soon appear on 'missionary maps' as souls ready to be saved in both Europe and America.

The *Baptist Missionary Magazine* in Boston published the Journal of Mr Kinkaid about the Chin highlanders in 1834. This is the first time the Chin were linked to the Karen of Burma, another ethnic group which generally occupied the eastern delta of Burma. The Karen, like the 'Chin,' practiced

⁵⁹¹ Maung Shwe Wa and Sowards, E. (1963) *Burmese Baptist Chronicles*, Burmese Baptist Convention, Rangoon, pg. 2.

⁵⁹² Young, R. J. (2004). Review: Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800–1860. *The Review of English Studies*, 55(222), 816-817.

⁵⁹³ Mitchell, D. (1972), *The British Empire: Light in the Darkness: Missionaries and the Empire*. Time Life International: NYC., pg. 729.

⁵⁹⁴ Mitchell, *The British Empire*, pg. 730.

forms of animism.⁵⁹⁵ American Baptist Adonarim Judson to Burma, who sought refuge in Tennaserim during the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826), met a Karen slave and managed to convert him to Baptism. He was the first convert of Judson's in Burma.⁵⁹⁶ Although Chapter 4 addresses conversion, one quote appears here to illustrate that the construction of the Chin, and in this case of similarities between Chin and Karen, began as early as 1834, sixty years before the first Zo highlander in the Chin Hills of Burma converted to Christianity. Furthermore, a missionary made the link between the 'Chin' and the Karen. Not mentioned were the Lushai or the Kuki across the borders. The journal reads further,

The Kyen, something like the Karens, without priests or temples...are inoffensive to travellers...and their features are very much like Karens.⁵⁹⁷

This constructed link between the Karen and the Zo implies similar characteristics in terms of their societies and dispositions as well as their shared difference to the Burmese. Even their facial features were said to be similar. Furthermore, the assertion that the Zo were, 'inoffensive to travellers' is obviously fallacious. The Zo highlanders were notorious for their raiding expeditions that included killing and slave taking of lowlanders. For missionaries, the Zo not being dangerous and inoffensive made them more attractive for a missionizing project. Finally, the connection between the Zo and the Karen was improbable. The Karen occupied the very eastern delta of Burma, which is over a thousand kilometres southeast of the Northern Arakan Yomas. In terms of a mission, however, this imagined link is most conducive in that it implied that the Zo could easily be converted just like the Karen. Moreover, by emphasizing the similarities of Karen to Chin, previous concepts including that the Zo were brutal head-hunters could possibly be

⁵⁹⁵ 'A form' of animism is used here because some theologians, e.g. Lian Sakong argue that the Chin practiced Patheism which is similar to Baptism. This argument is examined in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

⁵⁹⁶ Mason, F. (1843). *The Karen apostle: or, Memoir of Ko Thah-byu, the first Karen convert, with notices concerning his nation*. Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, pg. 9.

⁵⁹⁷ Kincaid, E. (1834). "Mr. Kincaid's Journal: Embarkation for Ava." *American Baptist Magazine, Missionary Register*, Vol. XIV, 1834. John Putman: Boston, pg. 111.

dismissed. It was in the church's best interest to construct a people fit for conversion to Christianity.

A Chin -- Karen connection was made again five years later in 1839 in the publication, *Travels in Southeast Asia*, which was also published in Boston. Howard Malcolm, of the eastern Northern Arakan Yomas, writes:

The district is sometimes called *Yo*, or *Jo*. The language is essentially Burman, but spoken with a dialect intelligible only to themselves...Most of the people are entirely without religion, like the Karens; the rest are Boodhists [*sic*]. They are an agricultural and pastoral people, enjoying a country of extreme salubrity and fruitfulness. The *Kyens* are sometimes called the *Boo-as*, and sometimes *Na-gas* and by the Burmans *Chins*. They occupy part of the Arrakan and Munipore frontier, chiefly the mountains...Some of the tribes are tributary to Burmah, others to the East India Company, and some are completely independent...Hamilton regards them as one of the original tribes of Farther India, and that, under various names, such as Karens, Kookies...&c., ...The hill tribes are fierce and dreaded by all their neighbors...Those under Burman authority pay their tribute chiefly in ivory, wax, coarse cottons, ginger, and turmeric. ⁵⁹⁸

There were several errors in Malcolm's assessment. As discussed in Chapter 1, nomenclatures were often confused with area names. In this quote, Malcolm assumed 'Zo' referred to an area rather than a people. He also assumed that they must have been Burmese at some point in their history. This was another misnomer. Perhaps Malcolm was unable to imagine that

⁵⁹⁸ Malcolm, H. (1839). *Travels in South-Eastern Asia, embracing Hindustan, Malaya, Siam, and China; with notions of numerous Missionary Stations, and full account of The Burman Empire; with Dissertations, Tables*, Vol. 11, Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln: United States, pg. 203-204.

the Zo could have possibly migrated from Tibet of China. To him, they must have come from the plains of Burma.

Interestingly, Malcolm reported that the Zo were a people without religion; animism was totally dismissed by him. Maybe Malcom felt that animism, sometimes related to sorcery and magic, was too strange of a belief system for missionaries to encounter. Furthermore, he may simply have been unaware that the Zo had a belief system at all. He is a missionary writer, thus claiming they have 'no' religion opposed to an unknown form of religion was very much different. That is, their current belief system would surely influence the likelihood of conversion. Finally, he may not have spent enough time among the Zo or learning about them to make any real assessments. He gathered very little information yet made sweeping generalizations, much like how the early colonial officials took information from informants and formed impressions based on this, often very scanty, information. The Zo-Karen link is very much a matter of fact here. The great distance between the Arakan Yomas and the Delta appears lost on Malcolm. Furthermore, the term 'Boo-as' does not appear in any of the historical records consulted for this dissertation. One group of Zo of the Northern Yomas are the 'Pois', 'Pawi' or 'Paite,'⁵⁹⁹ perhaps Malcolm misunderstood the pronunciation and assumed they were 'Boo-as.' Finally, he also mentioned that they are referred to by various names such as Kuki but also, again, adds 'Karen.' Overall, Malcolm's report was littered with erroneous information. Yet, his authoritative voice gives the impression that he is an expert.

Malcolm's assessment was based on the information acquired through his reading of previous accounts and through informants. Some were based on his own observations, but he did not make clear which ones. There were numerous misnomers in his report. First, he explained that the district was sometimes called Zo. This must be from very early sources including from the work of Father Sangermano who told about a 'petty kingdom' whose princes were called 'Jo.'⁶⁰⁰ Second, Malcolm, like *The Athenaeum* contributor Kincaid and others after him, link the Karen to the Zo (Chin) of Burma. Third, he

⁵⁹⁹ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. preface, 56.

⁶⁰⁰ Sangermano, *A Description*, pg. 43.

explains that Zo are also related to the Naga. The Naga are generally found in what is now known as Nagaland further North of the 'Chin-Lushai Hills' of Northeast India; a connection may exist but was not established.⁶⁰¹

Furthermore, Malcolm makes clear that the term Kuki is just another name for the Zo. Malcolm must have been unaware of the border drawn just four years earlier; he made no significant distinction between the Zo of Burma and the Kuki describing them as coming from 'farther' India. This connection, thus, is interesting in that the Zo are linked to other highland groups, the Kuki and the Naga, all being notorious for headhunting, slave taking and for raiding of the plains. Yet he also connects them to the Karen of the Delta among whom the missionaries had experienced success. Again, there was no connection established between the Karen and the Zo. This link was entirely constructed. While it was constructed, it eventually took an air of truth, of fact. For example, the last missionary to Burma, Robert Johnson, insisted that they referred to each other as cousin-brothers and repeated this imaginary connection again in 1986. Johnson's account is addressed in Chapters 4 and 5. Again, information becomes fact when it is separated from the original source. This, again, maybe due to the Sleeper Effect where messages and source separate and only the message remains to shape attitudes and perceptions.

Malcolm specified that the Burmese referred to the Zo highlanders as the Chin using this specific spelling. This is the first time that this spelling occurs in the record. Thus, it is unclear who first used this spelling. If colonial officers or officials used the spelling 'Chin,' then obviously Malcolm was exposed to their reports and other narratives. If, however, Malcolm was the first to employ this spelling, then the British obviously obtained information from his account. Sangermano, Crawford, Symes, Havelock, Buchanan, Trant, Bisset, as well as Pemberton all used different variations in their spellings of 'Chin.' These writers, whose work was disseminated among the reading elite of Asia, America and of Europe, must have been very influential

⁶⁰¹ There are many arguments claiming a Zo – Naga connection. This, however, has not been satisfactorily established. Nagaland is further North in the Arakan Yomas, a Naga district also exists in Burma. However, the Naga issue is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

and widely read. That is, it is possible that colonial officials picked up this particular spelling rather than the other way around. Finally, like other accounts and reports, Malcolm described the relationship between the Zo and the Burmese as being tributary in nature.⁶⁰² This relationship was pivotal in Pemberton's decision to split the Northern Yomas and in allotting the 'Chin' to Burma and the Kuki to Manipur. In terms of Zo belief systems, Malcolm repeated, almost verbatim, portions of Bisset's account which reported Zo's worship of a tree as well as other aspects of their culture.

Finally, Bisset's excerpts appeared, yet again, in another 1830 publication, *The Asiatic Journal*.⁶⁰³ It quotes Bisset's report of the 'Kyanus' having no supreme being, their focus on clans rather than communities, the mountains which they believe held spiritual powers and the way in which crime such as murder is punished by them. In short, Bisset's report appeared in numerous publications immediately after its first appearance in *Gleanings of Science* in 1830. It contributed significantly to the perceptions of the Zo highlanders on the 'Burma' called 'Chin' by Burmese informants and colonials.

Furthermore, it was distributed in both, England and in the United States of America. Hence, Bisset's observations and impressions had significant exposure. His descriptions also appear in the *American Baptist Magazine* four years later in 1834.⁶⁰⁴ This particular periodical was disseminated in Boston among the public interested in foreign Baptist missions. That is, aspects of Bisset's account were featured in missionary and religious publications. This surely contributed to the Chin Hills of Burma becoming a mission field for the American Baptist Mission.

Through the influx of publications such as periodicals, newspapers, religious registers, and journals, this is imagined, constructed, and reiterated information was and disseminated in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth

⁶⁰² Malcom, H. (1839). *Travels in South-Eastern Asia, embracing Hindustan, Malaya, Siam, and China with notions of Numerous Missionary Station, and a full account of the Burman Empire*, Vol. II, Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln: Boston, pg. 203.

⁶⁰³ Bisset, "Miscellanies," pg. 341-343.

⁶⁰⁴ Kincaid, E. (1834). "Mr. Kincaid's Journal: Embarkation for Ava." *American Baptist Magazine, Missionary Register*, Vol. XIV, 1834. John Putman: Boston, pg. 110-118.

century. In fact, the periodical *Gleaning of Science* lists among its many regular subscribers is one Lieutenant. R. B. Pemberton, of 'Munnypore.'⁶⁰⁵ Thus, Pemberton was like to have learned about the 'Chin' from Bisset's report, among others, which appeared five years before the publication of his *Report on the Eastern Frontier*⁶⁰⁶ and by his own admission, influenced Pemberton's decisions.⁶⁰⁷ That is to say, Bisset explains that the 'Chin' tributaries to the Burmese, if only nominally.⁶⁰⁸ The argument that the 'Chin' are tributaries to the Burmese is also the same argument used later by the Chief Commissioner to Burma Alexander Mackenzie and by the Political Officer posted to the Chin Hills Carey in 1892, over sixty years later.

Mid-Nineteenth Century

Although British-India, established in 1608 as the East India Trading Company, had gradually expanded its dominions over some two-hundred and fifty years, constant dissent continued throughout the late eighteenth and early mid-nineteenth century. Some of these were triggered by caste disputes, others were religious in nature. Hindus and Muslims were in a constant state of conflict. For instance, rumours in the ranks of bullet castings with cow and pig grease, which had to be torn-off with their mouths, causing them to be defiled caused alarming conflict. There were also stories of officers forcing every soldier to convert to Christianity. Furthermore, *sepoys* were disquieted from losing their land rights and by the increased taxation of the Company. Furthermore, with colonial expansion, *sepoys* were now expected to serve in unfamiliar regions including during the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852.⁶⁰⁹ Other areas of dissent also existed. Rebellions broke out in the Punjab, in the west of British-India, in Madhya Pradesh, central British-India, as well as other regions around Delhi, Utter Pradesh, and in the plains around the Ganges in Calcutta and Dhaka. The

⁶⁰⁵ *Gleanings of Science*, pg. Preface and List of Subscribers.

⁶⁰⁶ Pemberton, *Report*.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, page number not specified.

⁶⁰⁸ Bisset, "Narrative," pg. 87.

⁶⁰⁹ Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudhuri, H.C., Kalikinkar, D.'s (1950). *An Advanced History of India*, MacMillan and Co., Ltd: London, pg. 812.

Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 had its apex in the region of Bengal where the Government had its seat in Calcutta.⁶¹⁰

The great Indian Mutiny and Civil Rebellion of 1857 was a fatal blow to the Company. A large number of *sepoys* in the Bengal army, who were loyal to the British during many previous rebellions, now rose against the Company.⁶¹¹ They were set on restoring previous ruling dynasties. The civil society attacked the modernizing projects of the British such as law courts, Christian missions and government offices. The Mutiny marked the beginning of the East India Company's end. In November 1858 the Government of India Act was instituted. A Secretary of India was appointed and made a member of the Westminster Cabinet. Although many of its members would be former East India Company directors, they were now officially under the British government.⁶¹²

The North-eastern frontier, however, was untouched by the Mutiny. The political turmoil in British India and in Burma would not have a direct impact on the Arakan Yomas. It would, however, indirectly impact them. The first colonial officer of the Lushai Hills, Lewin arrived in Calcutta in the year 1857 immediately after the Mutiny. He was an eager young man and ready to serve until he realized the massacres that occurred in Cawnpore and elsewhere. He immediately, as explained above, came to loathe the Indians. Lewin's experiences in India were now under the British government rather than under the East India Trading Company. The Government of India Act of 1858 was passed. The Company liquidated its assets and transferred its functions to the British Crown headed by Queen Victoria (1837-1901).

Colonel Robert Gossett Woodthorpe detailed all the atrocities carried-out by the Zo in the preceding years. The British were still reeling from the 1843 massacre for example. Lalhrina, a powerful Zo chief died. To honour his father his son Lalsuktla, along with 200 Zo, attacked the Bengali village of

⁶¹⁰ For more on the Mutiny of 1857, read for instance: Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudhuri, H.C., Kalikinkar, D.'s (1950), *An Advanced History of India* MacMillan and Co., Ltd: London,pg. 805-812; and Col. G. B. Malleson, *The Indian Mutiny of 1857* (Reprint 2005, Rupa & Co. Publishers, New Delhi: India).

⁶¹¹ Stein, *A History*, pg. 226.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, pg. 250-251.

Kochabari in Pertabgur. They returned to the hills with twenty-two decapitated heads and six slaves.⁶¹³ Since the Bengalis were British subjects, the Government sent Captain Blackwood and a Sylhet Infantry to the hills in order to 'negotiate peace terms' with the Zo. Instead of talking with them, however, Blackwood arrested and tried Lalsuktla deporting him for life. The British firmly believed that they had the hills under their control.

As is argued, the Government was concerned with economics. Hence, they began exploiting the land by building tea plantations. The Lushai in 1869, for example, destroyed tea garden buildings and burned down plantations. Plantations were attractive raiding sites. Bamboo houses, lined in rows and stocked with guns and foodstuffs while their inhabitants tended to the fields, made raiding not only attractive but also simple. Lushai clans also attacked Naga⁶¹⁴ just a few weeks later presumably in the seeking of new fertile land forcefully driving the Naga further north as they had also done in the 1840s.⁶¹⁵ For colonial administrators, this was just another atrocity.

The Company was outraged by the murders and kidnapping as well as by other tribal feuds. Orders were given for a massive punitive expedition. Lord Mayo, Viceroy of India writes:

...our opponents must...be severely punished; but besides this, it will be necessary to give the expedition a definite object...The restoration of the captives...the infliction of a fine...the surrender of ... guilty parties...but the main object would be to endeavor to enter into relations of a permanent character with the savages; to make them promise to receive into their villages from time to time native agents of our own. ⁶¹⁶

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, pg. 108.

⁶¹⁴ The term Naga is also a construct; Capt. Butler linked the term to the Hindi word, 'nanga,' the Sanskrit 'nagna' and the Bengli 'nangta' which all meant 'naged.' IN Kumāra, B. B. (2005), *Naga identity*. Concept Publishing Company. pg. 24

⁶¹⁵ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 109.

⁶¹⁶ Hunter, W. W. (1875). *Life of the Earl of Mayo, fourth Viceroy of India: Vol. I*.pg. 230 cited IN Lewin, *A Fly*, pg. 255-256.

The Zo were to be incorporated into the fold of the state. Other Zo, such as the headman in some cases the chiefs, would be made agents of the Government and be used to collect taxes, check on the progress of things, and act as liaisons between the Zo and the Government. First, however, the Zo would have to be subdued; the hills had to be annexed by force. British dominance had to be demonstrated to the Zo.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that Pemberton delineated the Northern Arakan Yomas in ways he believed was most reasonable. As a person educated in the West, he relied on the writings of his predecessors, his notion of government and confidence in being able to understand people unlike himself. Like other colonials, the British were under the impression that the hills were chaotic, unruly and that the tribes were independent, yet paid tribute to larger states. It was understood by this time that the Zo were not nomads, but colonials failed to recognize that Zo did have relationships to their land, the mountains, rivers and streams. They did have sense of territory over areas within the hills. They were not randomly searching for new land only to survive. Furthermore, only during this time did the colonials come to understand that there were chiefs that headed their village yet that there were also paramount chiefs who ruled over many villages and other chiefs.

This chapter also showed how information was disseminated among the reading elite. Lt. John Bisset's report, for example, was picked up by a local periodical and appeared in numerous other publications thereafter. American as well as British missionary magazines began disseminating information on the Zo highlanders as well. Based on Bisset and the lack of understanding of missionaries, the Zo were described as being in dire need of salvation. Their activities from keeping slaves to infanticide was viewed as being entirely immoral. They did not understand that slavery, infanticide, beheadings and other aspects of Zo cultures had functions within the society. The British not only had a lowland perspective, they also had a western perspective and believed that they had to reform the Zo. The British wanted to create a people like themselves.

This chapter further told the story of Thomas Herbert Lewin, first colonial administrator who was appreciated and accepted by the Zo highlanders on the east side of the Tio River. Lewin was honored by the Zo who made him into a local white chief. Lewin, as well as his biographer John Whitehead who authored his biography in 1943, truly believed that Lewin understood the Zo, that he was a most respected white chief. What both Lewin, Whitehead as well as other colonials missed however, was that Lewin was a racist. This is evidenced by the way in which he speaks of the Indians and Bengali.

While his story of living among the ‘Lushai’ is romantic there is no reason to assume he was not a racist toward the Zo as well. That is, he moved into the hills and then immediately took on the actions of a typical chiefs insisting that they erect houses for him. In reward, he gave them gifts of colorful beads and liquor. Clearly by this deed alone, he demonstrated that he actually felt that the Zo lacked the sort of sophistication of a white man. Given that we do not have all the oral stories of those days, we do not know what the Zo actually thought of him. We do know that many years later a statue was erected in Lewin’s honor. However, by then, Franz Fanon would have argued, the colonials had achieved success by creating a local elite in their own image.⁶¹⁷ In Fanon’s own words, “The European elite undertook to manufacture of a native elite...they picked out promising adolescents; they branded them with a red-hot iron...”⁶¹⁸ Lewin accomplished this with the Lushai and specifically with the Chief Rothangpuia (Rutton Poi) whose is the only name we know of those among whom Lewin lived.

Moreover, the articles that appeared in newspapers made clear that the chief, when compared to the British gentleman looked more like a trapped wolf than a chief. What was lost on these editors was that it was them who were the trappers. Lewin chose the Zo referred to as the Lushai to make in his imagine. They were to be the elite of the Zo highlands. The Chin were dismissed since they were under the jurisdiction of Burma and later Carey and Tuck and the Kuki on the other side of the Manipur border now belonged

⁶¹⁷ Fanon, F. (1963), *The Wretched of the Earth*, pg. Preface, 9,

⁶¹⁸ *Op. cit.*

to McCulloch. They also needed scapegoats, hence, the Kuki became the murderers, the most lawless and cruel, the worst of what Zo society could offer.

Shown, also was that the colonials planned on taking chiefs and making them their agents. They would become the ‘mimic men’⁶¹⁹ of the British. That is, they would represent the Empire in the hills after the Northern Arakan Yomas were fully annexed. The Lushai Expedition of 1871 was the first move into the hills deemed to be ‘punitive.’ It can also be said that it was an identifying mission. The British chose the very headmen and chiefs that would comply with their objectives. The British officers sent the rest out of the hills. Thus, the creation of a local elite was underway. The Zo would never be able to turn back, back to their being highlanders largely unaffected by the expanding Empire. They had either to participate in the colonial endeavor or be wiped off the face of the British map forever.

⁶¹⁹ To read about mimicry see for instance: Bhabha, H. (1994), *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, New York, pg. 85-92, 86, 105, 167, etc.

Chapter Four

The Expeditions and the Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion

Introduction

Thomas Herbert Lewin furnished the British with military-relevant knowledge about the groups of Zo he had come to know as the Lushai in the western Northern Arakan Yomas. He also reported on aspects of the hills' terrain, climate, sources of water and other military-relevant intelligence. Thus, he informed the officials in Bengal and Assam on conditions in case of war, attacks or other conflicts. Lewin also reported on aspects of highland government and society. He, however, did not fully comprehend the culture of the highlands and the role of chiefs in terms of their authority. As explained in Chapter 1, the role of chiefs differed from one group of Zo to the next. Chiefs often inherited their positions. Paramount chiefs making decisions about land over several villages also existed among the highlands. Kamhau of the Sokte clan, for instance, was such a chief. He ruled over numerous villages from the area of Tedim up North to Manipur. In other cases, chiefs were elected democratically and voted into the positions due to their ability to lead, negotiate and to create associations with other chiefs. Thus the role of chiefs differed from group to the next. However, most chiefs made decisions about land, which was always central for the Zo and their survival.⁶²⁰

Lewin was certain that some Zo groups would remain loyal to him as their white chief. He entered the hills, behaved like a chief, asked villagers to erect a house for him in whichever village he visited and dolled out presents, food and drink. He learned the *Dulhian* dialect, wore Lushai clothing and lived like a highlander. They christening him *Thangliaena* and treated him as one of their chiefs. He, however, greatly over-estimated his level of authority over the Zo in his absence. Lewin may have been influential over certain groups in the Lushai area of the Zo hills, but did not have sweeping power all over the Northern Arakan Yomas. He did not even have much authority over the whole of the Lushai Hills, only over certain groups. Furthermore, Lewin

⁶²⁰ See Chapter 1 for more detail on the role of chiefs and headmen, pg. 15-16.

assumed that his authority and demand to stop raiding the plains would be honored even in his absence. But as soon as he returned to the plains to recover from illness, the Zo returned to their raiding, slave procurement, beheadings and revenge killings as they had done for centuries before. Lewin had no authority over the Zo. They placated him in exchange for his resources.

While Lewin was among the Zo, they appeased him by treating him like a chief. He had, after all, possessions the Zo desired. Lewin totally failed to realize his limited influence over them. Moreover, his friends, who were chiefs, also had limited authority in the Lushai Hills. As Lehman argued, the chiefs were nearly superfluous; it was the headmen who had the real power. Thus, Lewin overestimated his role, his influence and level of authority. After all, the Zo resumed their previous way of life as soon as Lewin returned to the plains. In 1870-1871 the Zo carried out a mass-scale attack on the tea plantations of the foothills. These plantations had encroached upon their territory. The Zo had no choice but to attack in order to protect their territory—their precious land. For this reason, the Zo united against the British to reclaim their land.

Lewin observed that the Zo in the Lushai Hills were not united. Each group was concerned only with its own interests. This was believed by most officers who were in direct contact with them and those that encountered them in battles, skirmishes and other conflicts.⁶²¹ They did, however, on occasion meet with other chiefs to discuss matters related to their 'nation'. The attacks in 1870-1871 may have been a reason to unite against the encroaching British. In this way, it can be argued that the Zo were united enough to be referred to as a 'nation.' To them, a nation was not a nation-state with a government at its center. To the Zo, nation was a form of kinship:

...[a] territorial community of nativity. One is born into a nation. [It is] one among a number of forms of kinship. It differs from other forms of kinship...or various 'ethnic groups' not merely by the greater extent of its territory, but

⁶²¹ See for instance Pum Khan Pau's PhD dissertation, "Hopkinson's Recommendations," pg. 31.

also because of its relatively uniform culture that provides stability, that is, continuation over time.⁶²²

“Zo unity” expressed by a relative uniformity of culture was not understood by the British who saw them as independent groups vying over land and power, ready to murder, kidnap and destroy people and villages of other clans and groups. This is what gave the British the impression that Zo groups were separate, independent units in constant competition and feuds with other groups. This independence also made the Zo hills easier to infiltrate employing the divide and conquer method which had often proved successful in other parts of the world throughout history.⁶²³ Hence, when the Zo acted in unison against the invasion of the tea plantations, the British were dumfounded by this show of unity. The Zo had worked in conjunction, planning the attacks and then carrying them out systematically all over the foothills of the Northern Arakan Yomas.

Purpose of this Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the events of the massive punitive expeditions of 1871 and 1890 into the Chin-Lushai Hills. It is argued that for the Zo and the British Raj, these expeditions were pivotal in their (shared) colonial history. First, the reasons for annexation of the Northern Arakan Yomas are described. Second, how borders are drawn and enforced is addressed by reviewing the argument of officers and administrators at the Chin-Lushai Conference of 1892 which separated the Chin-Lushai Hills into two different provinces, Burma and the Bengal Presidency. These borders created territories of inclusion and exclusion. That is, certain clans and communities that did not reside, at that time, on a particular side of the border were excluded. The Zo of the Chin Hills were eventually included with other ‘ethnic groups’ in Burma such as the Karen, the Kachin and the Shan. The Lushai were included with other groups now in the Government of

⁶²²Grosby, St. (2005). *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, pg. 7.

⁶²³ Divide and rule (or conquer) refers to the method of breaking up large entities of power, into sections or parts, each weaker than the sum of all their parts, keeping them from linking up and *Divide et impera*.

Assam or in the Bengal Presidency such as the Kuki and the Naga. This chapter illustrates this inclusion and exclusion.

Furthermore, the purpose of this chapter is also to illustrate the type of information appearing in the reading materials of the West. As already introduced in Chapter 3, it is argued that these were instrumental in the construction of the Chin, the Lushai and the Kuki for readers the reading elite in America, Europe and in Asia. These constructions, it is argued, were first conceived by British officials and their informants in British-India but eventually became a global perception. Thus, this chapter illustrates the last major military movement into the hills to subdue to the Zo highlanders, after which they would colonize the Zo beyond mere territory, but in terms of their minds as well. That is, the military action laid the foundation for other Westerners to move into the Zo hills and through a series of intrusions turn the Zo into civilized' subjects of the British Raj.

The tea plantations that had sprung up all over the foothills in 'Zo territory' were reason for retaliation against the British invaders. The British did not understand the notion of land ownership of the Zo. Although there were no deeds or land markers such as pillars that the land belonged to the Zo highlanders; they felt it did belong to them as it had over several generations. While there may not have been a centralized government in the Zo hills that doled out land the way lowland systems of government managed their spaces, it was understood that in the Northern Arakan Yomas land was acquired through competition and warfare. European tea planters, often the friends of British officials working for the British government, sitting comfortably, often with local mistresses, on their plantations enjoying the fruits of the highlands did not comprehend that they were encroaching on precious Zo land.⁶²⁴ Furthermore, the Zo were not consulted, no durbars⁶²⁵ were held, no protection money was offered and certainly the British did not entertain paying taxes to the Zo. Continued attacks on the plantations forced the British to intervene. The Zo were striking British subjects, some of whom

⁶²⁴ Chatterjee, *Forgotten*, pg. 340.

⁶²⁵ The word 'darbar' is an old Mongol word and refers to ceremonial gatherings under the British Raj.

were friends, and directly impacting a source of revenue. Given that England was in a dire state of recession, the plantations were necessary and had to be protected from the Zo.

Colonial officials resolved that it was time to conquer the Zo and their highlands. What they referred to as atrocities, including the raids and attacks on the tea plantations, gave ample reason for officials to give permission for expeditions into the hills. The British would take substantial action against the Zo by employing massive “punitive” measures to punish the Zo as well as to show them that they were intent on ruling the Northern Arakan Yomas. Moreover, British officials had begun entertaining Zo systems of government and using them for their own advantage. They would use the chiefs and headmen to collaborate with the British Government by becoming ‘agents of the state.’⁶²⁶

The Lushai Expedition of 1871 and the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1890 were cogitated as ‘conquering’ events for the annexation of parts of the Northern Arakan Yomas referred to as the Chin-Lushai Hills. The Lushai Expedition of 1871 is explained, but simply in terms of what led up to it and how it influenced notions of colonial power in Asia as well as back in the West. The Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1890 is also detailed, but only in terms of its military significance for the British Raj and the Zo highlanders. The Zo realized that the western technology of warfare was superior to their own.⁶²⁷ On the battle field, the Zo had little chance to withstand the British war machine. The British brought in other highlanders such as Gurkhas, who were accustomed to the mountainous terrain and climate. They also brought elephants, mules, artillery and small arms. Furthermore the British were supported by an entourage of coolies who would cook, carry supplies and act as look-outs leaving the soldiers, many of them sepoys,⁶²⁸ to the task of warfare.

⁶²⁶ Stern, R. W. (1988). *The cat and the lion: Jaipur State in the British Raj*. Brill: The Netherlands, pg. 70.

⁶²⁷ Carey, *The Chin*, pg. 153; Vumson, *History*, pg. 112.

⁶²⁸ A ‘Sepoy’ is a local serving in the British army. These were typically Indians.

The punitive expedition of 1871, “[was] one of the most important military expeditions in the mid-nineteenth century.”⁶²⁹ This, as well as the 1890 punitive expedition, was a pivotal moment in the colonial history of the British Raj and the Zo. The expeditions marked the beginning of the final annexation of the Zo-the very last people to be brought into the colonial fold of the British Raj. According to Chatterjee, British ignorance flourished on the tea plantations, just like it did inside the government buildings of the Raj. The Zo were cut-off from their land and in this way, ‘forgot’ their pasts.⁶³⁰ It was also the beginning of legal separation by a number of British government political acts, including the Chin Lushai Conference of 1892.

The British, realizing the massive military action they were about to execute, sent reports and narratives back to London. These reports were turned into articles and were published beyond the halls of Government buildings. Newspaper articles appearing in the West about these expeditions are summarized to illustrate the way in which the British presented themselves and their colonizing activities in British India to their compatriots back home. The recession was felt in Britain; news of conquering in Asia brought a sense of progress and hope to those that suffered from the economic decline sweeping Europe and America. The ‘Long Depression’ sometimes referred to as the ‘Depression of 1873-96,’ was deeply felt in England. Hannah Arendt argues that expansion of power in the colonies equaled expansion of capital for England. Hence, colonialism was supported and approved of by the British in England.⁶³¹ They were thrilled that the British Empire was growing in Asia as well as in parts of the world bringing the recession to an end.

As is illustrated in Chapter 3, there was an increase in print capitalism during this era.⁶³² Information about the Zo highlanders, as well as other aspects of the British colonial project, became more prolific. There was a serious demand for such reading materials among the reading elite. Readers in England, as well as in Asia, learned of the Zo highlanders during this period.

⁶²⁹ Chatterjee, *Forgotten*, pg. 340.

⁶³⁰ *Op.cit.*

⁶³¹ Arendt, H. (1973). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: Boston, pg. 137. Arendt further argues that the Depression impacted the whole of Europe as well as America.

⁶³² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pg. 36.

In fact, entire publishing houses were dedicated to focusing on quirky and entertaining aspects of Asia from its people to its animals. Writers such as Rudyard Kipling, who was born in the Bombay Presidency in 1865, authored dozens of short stories inspired by his having grown up under the British Raj. He is also known for his poems and novels such as *Mandalay* (1890), *Gunga Din* (1890), *The Man who would be King* (1888) and *Jungle Boy* (1906). Kipling is best known for the very controversial poem, *The White Man's Burden*, which described the duty of the white man to bring civilization to the natives of British India as well as the duty of white men to dominate the developing world.⁶³³ *The White Man's Burden* was published in 1898, a few years after the final punitive expedition into the Chin Lushai Hills.

These texts were meant to entertain and delight their readers with funny sketches, beautiful photographs and anecdotes about life in the British Raj. The "Orient" was entertaining, mysterious, exotic and altogether different from the west. These stories, poems and novels also emphasized the importance of the white man in Asia. He was a teacher, a mentor, a sort of benevolent parent for the uncivilized locals who could learn from their white masters. Unstated, of course, was that these stories would also justify the ongoing colonial project in British-India from a financial perspective. One such book emphasizing the Zo was Arthur George Edward Newland's *Image of War or Service in the Chin Hills*.⁶³⁴ It illustrated how information about the Zo highlanders was constructed into very simple elements accessible for readers in the West.

Over time, the Zo also redefined themselves. Given that raiding would be against the law, they tried to reconstruct themselves into new people. One way was to accept the foreign religion which entered the hills at the turn of the century, after complete annexation of the Northern Arakan Yomas. This would eventually lead toward the Zo working alongside the British in the hills and in some cases, moving to the plains with special purpose. That is, as police officers, British Raj clerks, and as local Christian missionaries.

⁶³³ Kipling, R. (1994). *Collected Poems of Rudyard Kipling*, Woodsworth Publishing: London, pg. 334.

⁶³⁴ Newland, A.G.E. (1894) *The Image of War or Service in the Chin Hills*. Thacker, Spink and Co., Calcutta: India.

The Lushai Expedition of 1871-1872

It was clear that the Viceroy of India, *Lord Mayo*, realized that only certain clans were responsible for the numerous raids onto tea plantations as well as other attacks. Yet he referred to the entirety of the expedition as the “Lushai Expedition.” He declared:

I cannot think that the expedition ought to partake of the character of those which have from time to time been undertaken on the North-Eastern frontier for the chastisement of a particular tribe or clan. It does not appear that whole villages or tribes take part in the Lushai attacks, and it is difficult to trace particular raids to any particular tribes...”⁶³⁵

Woodthorpe was also aware of there being numerous groups of people in the ‘Lushai Hills:’

The Lushais with whom we became acquainted during our journeyings, belonged to the different tribes, the Lushais, Paites, or Soktes, and Pois.⁶³⁶

However, in order to carry-out the expedition, a term for all the Zo highlanders in the west was utilized, thus it was referred to as the ‘Lushai Expedition.’ Furthermore, the object was not just to punish certain groups. Woodthorpe explained that the Government did not wish to exterminate the frontier people, rather bring them into the British colonial fold. Government wanted to:

...convert them into allies to raise a barrier Between...frontier districts and other more distant races.”⁶³⁷

The Government wanted to expand into the foothills. They planned on making highlanders their subjects and cooperatives in revenue generation,

⁶³⁵ Hunter, W. W. (1875). *Life of the Earl of Mayo, fourth Viceroy of India*: Vol. I., pg. 230.

⁶³⁶ Woodthorpe, *The Lushai*, pg. 71.

⁶³⁷ Woodthorpe, *The Lushai*, pg. 6.

either by allowing roads and train tracks to run unmolested through the hills or perhaps by exploiting the natural resources of the hills. Furthermore, the Zo would act as buffers, as a human border-zone protecting the Government from 'more distant races.'

After a series of strikes by Zo against the tea plantations, the British Government struck back. Woodthorpe was ordered to head the Expedition. Being familiar with the problems on the Northeastern frontier, he wrote:

[the] North-eastern frontier...has ever been a fruitful source of trouble and expense for the Government of its Empire...[the hills] are inhabited by fierce and predatory tribes for ever making raids on the neighbours' villages, burning and plundering them, and carrying off the inhabitants.⁶³⁸

On 10 January 1869 a group of Zo from the Lushai Hills attacked the tea-gardens at Nowardbund. Another party attacked just four days later on the 14th. More attacks occurred in early February. In the next the winter of 1870, Government officers were sent in and found dozens of skeletons of people who had been murdered by the Zo. This made a serious impression on officers. It drove fear into them and Government was alarmed. It has yet to be established whether these attacks occurred in cooperation and conjunction or occurred simultaneously because it was the winter, the season most conducive for expeditions, warfare, and raiding. What was clear, however, was that the Government realized that they had no choice but to react.

In July 1871, the Governor-General ordered the Lushai Expedition. It was to consist of two columns, one from Chittagong with the second from Cachar. West of the Tio River would not be affected. That is, the Chin Hills were not attacked during this punitive expedition. It would be another eighteen years before the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-1890 which annexed the hills completely and which also led to the ultimate and formal separation of the

⁶³⁸*Ibid.*, pg. 3.

Northern Arakan Yomas. The Governor-General put Woodthorpe in charge of carrying out the Lushai Expedition of 1871.

The expedition would be carried out by the British who would also utilize as coolies and sepoys locals more familiar with the terrain and climate of the Zo hills. Woodthorpe, in his report, explained that all the local manpower conscripted by the British Raj included:

... all races, Punjabis and Hindustanis from up-country, Megirs, Nagas, Cachari Kookies from Northern Cachar Hills, and Nepaulese Goorkhas.⁶³⁹

The British, understanding the value of gifts, sent from the Deputy Commissioners a large silver-gilt goblet and claret jug with an inscription thanking the chief Sukpilal for his services in the previous years. It was the hope of the British that Sukpilal would continue to support the British effort in the Zo hills. It was assumed that Sukpilal was a powerful paramount chief. He had worked with the Government, supplying it with information. Woodthorpe does not hide his negative sentiment toward the highlanders, indicating that such a gift is ridiculous for a people who may store potatoes in such a magnificent vessel.⁶⁴⁰ He wrote:

...presents arrived at the Deputy-Commissioner's for Sukpilal. They consisted of a large silver-gilt goblet and claret jug, with inscriptions to the effect that they were presented by the Government of India in recognition of his former services.

It is sad to think these not very appropriate ornaments for a rough bamboo house, where they would have shone conspicuously on the floor from among the family stock of yams, potatoes, &c, never found their way to Sukpilal...[who]

⁶³⁹*Ibid*, pg. 56.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pg. 59

had conducted himself so unsatisfactorily a manner that it was not considered proper to present him...⁶⁴¹

At time Woodthorpe wrote this report, he must have already been aware that it was Sukpilal who was in possession of young Mary Winchester. Thus, he has a negative disposition toward the chief.⁶⁴² Still, although he considered the highlanders primitive, savage and uncivilized, he also realized how they might be instrumental in the furthering of the Empire. One way was to work with the chiefs directly. In some cases this had been a successful method of control. The Government believed that they could maintain peace in the hills by utilizing native agents and by supplying certain chiefs with annual payments. Before the state could work with chiefs, however, the hills had to be annexed.

The Indian Government Army moved into the Northern Arakan Yomas on 8 October 1871. The two columns were to stay in contact via telegraph lines and eventually meet inside the hills. Lewin, posted in Calcutta, was brought back to join the Chittagong column. Lewin was uneasy about mounting an offensive against the people whose chief he had become. Lewin met Brigadier General Sir Charles Brownlow on 28 October in Chittagong to discuss the operation. Brownlow was to lead the Chittagong column. Lewin sent a message to his friend Chief Rothangpuia not to be alarmed by any warlike preparation he might hear. Lewin also guaranteed him and his followers, Rothangpuiate, safety. It was determined that the Zo, referred to as the Howlong, had been responsible for the attack on the tea plantations and kidnappings. Rothangpuia and his minor chiefs met General Brownlow.⁶⁴³ Rothangpuia would assist Brownlow; they would ally together against the Howlong groups. Lewin reported in his diary that the two men met and shared breakfast with each other as well as with the troops who were mostly

⁶⁴¹ *Op.cit.*

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, pg. 246.

⁶⁴³ Lewin, *A Fly*, pg. 258.

made up of Gurkha soldiers. A *guyal* or mithun⁶⁴⁴ was slaughtered in honour of the visit and plenty of hill beer was provided.

This event was recorded by both, Lewin as well as by the newspaper, the *Calcutta Observer*. In a point of departure, these two versions are compared to argue that the reading elite in Asia, America and in Europe desired stories, articles and anecdotes about highlanders that were entertaining.

Furthermore, as is argued in Chapter 2 and 3, the reading elite participated in the making of the Zo highlanders; they took part in the construction of the people in British-India.

Lewin's journal entry of that breakfast was mundane and matter-of-fact. His journal read:

On the 22nd of November the General visited Rutton Poia's village...the chief met our party and conducted the General to the village, where we breakfasted on provisions which we had brought with us, and were regaled with hill beer. A *guyal* also was killed in honour of the visit, and two basketful of flesh were sent to camp for our consumption.⁶⁴⁵

However, in *The Calcutta's Observer* of 1 December, the story of the breakfast was featured. For author it only indicated that it was made by an anonymous contributor. The contributor was presumably Lewin. This article, referring to that same breakfast meeting was obviously embellished by the editors and perhaps by Lewin as well. The article read:

The General stood for a long time sweeping with his glass the grand stretch of hill and dale that lay before him, RuttonPooia [Rothangpuia] standing beside him dirty and stolid, with his cloth thrown toga-fashion over shoulders. It was a strange contrast, -- the one a type of English soldier

⁶⁴⁴A *guyal* or *gayal* is a form of gaur also called mithun. It is a domesticated Indian bison typically found in Northeast India.

⁶⁴⁵ Lewin, *A Fly*, pg. 264.

gentleman, the other an anti-type of treacherous savagery, looking indeed more like a trapped wolf than a forest chief.⁶⁴⁶

These two versions highlight the construction of the Zo. They also illustrate the way in which stories were embellished. Moreover, John Whitehead, who authored Lewin's biography and other texts about Northeast India in the mid-twentieth century, believed that Lewin truly connected with the Lushai. Whitehead presents Lewin as a hero for both, the British and for the highlanders. He fails to entertain the notion that Lewin may very well have embellished this story or that his attitude toward the highlanders was not as untainted as he presented. That is, we know that Lewin had strong racist attitudes. He loathed the Bengali and the Indians. He also refers to the highlanders as primitive and uncivilized on numerous occasions. Racism is not always expressed as a negative sentiment, at times it manifests in the attitude that others are not as intelligent or civilized as them. His visit with Mary Winchester in 1912 reveals his attitude further.

She first sent a letter to Lewin which was humble and sincere. She told him about her life since returning to England and thanked him for his courageous acts in saving her. She also 'apologizes' for so eagerly wishing to have a chat with him about the Hill people, she understood, he had come to love. She continued her letter by exalting the work of the missionaries. She wrote that the Lushai have found God and were becoming good Christians. Finally, she explained that she was willing to travel to see him instead of her inviting him. Lewin does not appreciate the letter nor does he wish to see her for reasons unknown.

After Mary Winchester's visit Lewin recorded his attitude toward her:

Mary Winchester was a stuck-up conceited little half-caste woman, and I am sorry I had her down here, but Mother wished it.⁶⁴⁷

Lewin almost cruelly dismissed her as being a 'conceited little half-caste.' This was clearly a racist statement. First, he refers to her as stuck up and

⁶⁴⁶Quoted in Whitehead, pg. 218-219. Get the newspaper from the archives

⁶⁴⁷ Whitehead, *Thangliena*, pg. 383.

conceited. Second, he refers to her as, “a little woman.” She had become a school headmistress, was a mother of three children. She was accomplished for her day. Finally, he calls her a ‘half-caste.’ Lewin accepted her visit because his mother wished it. He clearly did not want to see her. Thus, Lewin’s sentiment toward the highlanders, and in this case, toward a child born to a Zo mother, was not as Whitehead presented. Lewin, after all, had racist tendencies.

By this point in history, there was an image already constructed of the Zo highlanders. The earlier excerpts taken from Lt. Bisset’s account, for example, focused on the primitive nature of the highlanders. *The Calcutta Observer* article, too, implied that highlanders were barbarian, uncivilized, especially when compared to the English General, a ‘gentleman.’

Rothangpuia faced a serious dilemma. If he supported the General the Howlong would, after the close of the expedition, surely come and destroy his villages, “root and branch.”⁶⁴⁸ After some discussion, Lewin advised that Rothangpuia should ally with General Brownlow but that Lewin himself would ensure a group of fifteen men was left behind to protect his villages and people.

The eventual plan was not to take over the entirety of the hills immediately, but rather certain tracts which were critical in the colonial project. First, safety had to be ensured for the foreigners who were moving goods, military supplies, and communications, among other items, through the hills. These items, communications and people were all supporting the colonial expansion and revenue generating opportunities of the British Raj, and thus had to be assured that they would not be molested by highlanders when moving within the tracts. The tracts between Assam and Sylhet of Bengal, for instance, ran through the Northern Arakan Yomas. Chapter 3 mentioned the 1826 murder of Sylhet woodcutters which prompted Major Burney to send in Pemberton to survey the area and identify the important tracts on which roads for transport, trading, and communication could be built. They also wanted to learn Zo government systems, as well as to understand the role

⁶⁴⁸ Lewin, *A Fly*, pg. 264.

and power of chiefs for eventual partial-domination of the highlanders beyond just the tracts running through their 'territory.' The Government believed that by supplying local chiefs with annual payments in order to keep the peace within and among tribes, by promoting trade with the Burmese and by providing food stocks and introducing better systems of cultivation to the Zo highlanders, raiding would cease.

First, the Lushai Expedition of 1871 would demonstrate British Military might to the highlanders as well as to readers in the West. Cachar, site of the tea plantation from where the six-year-old Mary Winchester was kidnapped, belonged to a district long annexed by the Government. After the last Rajah of Cachar, Gobind Chundra died in 1832, the British took the area. A pillar indicating Government presence was erected at the tri-junction of Manipur, Cachar and the Lushai Hills.⁶⁴⁹

The attacks on the tea plantations in the years preceding the Lushai Expedition of 1871 were especially heinous. Entrepreneurial tea planters had received grants from the Government and founded new plantations, some willingly and despite the possible danger, moved further north into the hills. But the Zo fought back. These attacks, as well as others involving attacks on other Zo communities, sealed the fate of the infamous wild head-hunters of the frontier.

Like the Lushai and the Chin, the Kuki were now viewed as large groups. The separation of jurisdictions became salient for the British. The Chin were on the eastern part of the Yomas, the Lushai on the western part and the (new) Kuki were north in Manipur. It was not a time for differentiating clans or even recording them by Government. The Northern Arakan Yomas had to be conquered first and be brought under its dominion. James Scott argues that states have to make societies manageable. He argues that states have to identify groups of people for either conscription, taxation and in the prevention of rebellions.⁶⁵⁰ In this case, they had to be identified in terms of

⁶⁴⁹*Ibid.*, pg. 7.

⁶⁵⁰ Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press: New Haven and London, pg. 2.

enemies or rebels against the state as well. Willem van Schendel argues that rebels often 'hide' behind borders.⁶⁵¹ Government needed to expand its jurisdiction beyond the foothills of the Yomas and make them British subjects. The Northern Arakan Yomas were mapped, but only in its most basic and simplest manner. The enemies and their locations had first to be identified. In Scott's words:

These state simplification...[are] like abridged maps. They did not successfully represent the actual activity of the society they depicted, nor were they intended to: they represent only that slice of it that interested the official observer.⁶⁵²

Furthermore, there was constant activity in the hills. Some movements were small. These were in the form of small groups searching for new land or larger movements or migrations, where numerous groups were driven out of a given area, like in the case of the Naga who were driven out by the powerful Kamhaute (followers Kamhau from the area of Tedim) in the mid nineteenth century. The military maps, including Pemberton's 1835 rendition of the Northern Arakan Yomas, were snapshots. Pemberton's listed the major groups of people, "Independent Khyens" or Hill Tribes, "KomNagas," "Longshie" or "Lusai" Tribes, etc. and used a colour scheme to demarcate the borders around Manipur and Burma. The Tio River separated the Lushai and Chin Hills, west to east, and the border to Manipur. This border is still vehemently contested today.⁶⁵³

Either way, according to Lewin, some of the Lushai clans must have worked together to rise up against the tea plantations. That is, in a matter of a relatively short period, numerous plantations were hit. Raids, almost simultaneous in date but emanating from different groups, were made on the

⁶⁵¹van Schendel, W. (1997). Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia. *Environmental and Planning D: Society and Space*, 2002, Vol. 20, pages 647-668, pg. 647.

⁶⁵²Scott, *Seeing*, pg. 3.

⁶⁵³ To read more about the Manipur insurgencies and border issues see for instance: Premanada, H. (2009). India's Look East Policy and the Political: An Interrogation into the Survey of the 'Global' in Manipur. *Look East Policy and India's North East: Polemics & Perspectives*, 210.

Chittagong Hill Tracts, the semi-independent state of Hill Tipera, Sylhet, Cachar and Manipur.⁶⁵⁴

The Company was aware that raids, murders, attacks and slave taking were happening among the highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas. The Government had no jurisdiction over the highlanders however. They could punish them if they attacked British subjects, but not if they targeted other highlanders. Captain John Stewart, the Deputy Commissioner of the Lushai Hills, was asked to speak to leading chiefs about the constant raiding of plantations. Stewart was to offer the highlanders money in exchange for the captives abducted from the plains. Although the chiefs agreed, they did not free the captives.⁶⁵⁵ Years passed with chiefs holding on to captives and continually harassing other tribes as well as British subjects working on the tea plantations.

The Lushai Expedition closed in February 1872 with numerous losses of life. The Indian Government ordered that all the muskets belonging to the Zo be given up and fines in the form of fowls and pigs to be given to British soldiers and officers. The Viceroy Lord Mayo, who had been following the proceedings of the Lushai Expedition, died back in headquarters. There was a sombre feeling among the officers and the troops. The invasion was not deemed a total success, not all Lushai chiefs submitted to Government. Reflecting on the expedition, Woodthorpe wrote:

Hill-men dread the invasion of foreigners, more on this account perhaps than any other—I mean the introduction of strange diseases. Small-pox and other diseases have from time to time been spread among them by traders...⁶⁵⁶

Woodthorpe realized that the Zo were not fond of foreigners. But like the missionaries who followed, he firmly believed that they could only benefit from British influence. Soon they would be brought to realize the benefits of

⁶⁵⁴ Reid, A.S. (1893). *Chin-Lushai Land: A Description of the Various Expeditions into the Chin-Lushai Hills and the Final Annexation of the Country*. Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 9.

⁶⁵⁵ Woodthorpe, R.G. (1873). *The Lushai Expedition of 1871-72*. Hurst and Blackett: London, pg. 23.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pg. 327.

civilization. For now, showing the superiority of European power as well as protecting British subjects whether Indian, Bengali or English was paramount. This, the Government believed, they had achieved.

This result of the expedition was more than the demonstration of power for the Lushai. Entire villages, seeing the way the British military machine moved into the hills, deserted to Manipur, others became followers of Kamhau and other paramount chiefs. Between 14 and 18 February, nearly 800 Zo left for Manipur.⁶⁵⁷ The issue of land and food continued, however. Raids, feuds, slave taking and ritual sacrifices continued. Yet, General Brownlow announced that his column had done its work:

Its four month campaign had reduced two powerful tribes and brought it fifteen chiefs, rescued many captives [and slaves] and added to our maps in detail three thousand square miles of hill country.⁶⁵⁸

Brownlow was satisfied with his accomplishment. In terms of the captives, including young Mary Winchester, he failed to mention that many of the slaves actually refused to leave their captors. The British could simply not comprehend the reality of life in the Zo hills.

Final Annexation of the Northern Arakan Yomas

According to the colonial records the many clan and group feuds continued in the Zo hills after the close of the Lushai Expedition of 1871. Furthermore, while certain chiefs were now under some control of the British, many having been deported out of the hills and jailed in places such as Kale and Mandalay, the Zo hills were by no means subdued. The British felt the continuing raids, kidnappings, murders and other acts were atrocities. These contributed to the resolution of carrying out the massive and expectedly last punitive excursion to subdue the Zo, coined the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1888-1890.

⁶⁵⁷*Ibid*, pg. 328.

⁶⁵⁸Reid, *Chin-Lushai*, pg. 37.

British administrators in the offices of the Superintendent of the Northeast Frontier in Cachar, the Chief Commissioner of Assam in Guwahati and in the Chief Commissioner of Burma at Fort William in Calcutta felt that feuds among the Zo highlanders, especially across the province borders, had to be brought to an end. Furthermore, the continuing raids into the plains, attacking what were now British subjects became insufferable to the British. As Chatterjee explains, the many tea plantations that sprung up in the foothills were manned by friends of colonial military officers making these attacks almost 'personal.'⁶⁵⁹ Thus, colonial officials, although they did not state so in the memos and reports generated and shared between frontier officers, regional and colonial centers, were intent on subduing the Zo once and for all. Finally, and perhaps most important, because the Zo highlands were situated between trading routes such as Calcutta and Kale and thus, raids interfered with the business of not only economic endeavors, but also expansion. The tracts had to be made secure. Attacks and disruptions of tracts within the hills could possibly interfere with the trading, communication and travel through the hills. Moving people, goods, equipment and maintaining communication between Calcutta and Kale via Rangoon had become too costly for a Government which was already financially strained. Thus the Zo highlanders had to be subdued in order to allow traders, colonial officers and other merchants to move freely and safely within the hills and for telegraph lines running through them not to be disturbed. Lower Burma was also in flux during the era.

King Thibaw 1878

In 1878 the King of Burma, King Thibaw Min (1878-1885) took control of Upper Burma after a succession massacre. In the last days of his father King Mindon's life, his allegedly most dominant wife reportedly summoned all other possible successors to the throne to her Mandalay palace. There she had them ruthlessly put to death by edict to insure that her son, Thibaw Min, would become King.⁶⁶⁰ His short reign was marked by mayhem, increased

⁶⁵⁹ Chatterjee, *Forgotten*, pg. 340.

⁶⁶⁰Thant Myint-U (2001).*The Making of Modern Burma*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pg. 157.

taxation of peasants and a possible alliance with the French, with whom the English were at war.⁶⁶¹ Furthermore, it was believed that King Thibaw Min planned to reclaim Lower Burma which had been in the hands of the Company and later in the hands of the British Government for over thirty years.

For the British, control of Upper Burma was necessary for many reasons. Sir Charles Haukes Todd Crosthwaite, Commissioner of Burma was set on a war against King Mindon because:

Burma will be, in all likelihood, the last important province to be added to the Indian Empire. Eastward the Empire has been extended as far as our arms can well reach. Its boundaries march with Siam, with French dominion of Tongking, and on the East and North for a vast distance with China. Our convention with France for the preservation of the territory which remains to Siam and long friendship of the latter country bars any extension of our border in that direction. It is improbable that we shall be driven to encroach on Chinese territory; and so far as the French possessions are concerned, a line has been drawn by agreement which neither side will wish to cross.⁶⁶²

Upper Burma stood in the way of the Empire's longest possible reach to the borders of China, Thailand, and Vietnam.⁶⁶³ King Thibaw, who still controlled Upper Burma, had to be removed from this throne. Numerous reasons were cited for the declaration of the Third Anglo-Burmese War of 1885 but this desire set the context.

At a Rangoon Town Hall meeting on 11 October 1884 discussion of annexing Upper Burma led to the conclusion that a third war would be waged against

⁶⁶¹Woodman, D. *The Making*,, pg. 230.

⁶⁶² Crosthwaite, C. (1912). *The Pacification of Burma*. (Reprint 2012 General Books, Memphis: USA, pg. 1.

⁶⁶³ For more on the history of Indo-China, read for instance: Norden, H. (1931). *A wanderer in Indo-China; the chronicle of a journey through Annam, Tong-King, Laos, and Cambodgia, with some account of their people*. HF & G. Witherby.

the Burmese.⁶⁶⁴ It was argued that King Thibaw and his management was responsible for administrative decline and creating chaos around the country.⁶⁶⁵ British intervention, it was argued, was necessary.⁶⁶⁶ The resolution to annex Upper Burma was supported by many Westerners, both English and American, by some Chinese, by missionaries and even a few Burmese and Indians. However, like the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852, many felt the reasons given for war were inadequate. In fact, some argued that war should be avoided all together; that the king had not caused significant economic trouble, nor that the Mandalay Massacre was reason enough for the British to intervene.⁶⁶⁷ Debates in the London Chamber of Commerce continued for a year. Eventually, the Chamber sent a petition to Sir Winston Churchill; war was declared.

The war lasted just three weeks from 7-29 November 1885. The Indian Government captured King Thibaw Min and deported him, along with his sister, his wife and their children, to the island of Ratnagiri in India. In 1886, all the king's possessions were transferred to the British.⁶⁶⁸ Upper Burma and by extension the entirety of Burma was now controlled by the British in India.⁶⁶⁹ Crosthwaite launched the operation coined 'pacification.' The Company spent the next two years stamping out dacoity, rebellions and insurgencies.⁶⁷⁰ Crosthwaite commented:

⁶⁶⁴Woodman, *The Making*, pg. 230-231.

⁶⁶⁵Thant Myint-U (2001).*The Making of Modern Burma*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pg. 163.

⁶⁶⁶ Some historians argue that Thibaw was simply exercising damage control left by his late father King Mindon whose policies were outdated and not on-line with the increasing global economic demands. Thibaw's government faced serious lack of revenue and the fear of increased taxation of the British, which in part lead to the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852, left Thibaw in numerous quandaries regarding economic policy. For more on King Thibaw's reign read for instance: Thant Myint-U (2001). *The Making of Modern Burma*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pg. 163-185.

⁶⁶⁷Woodman, *The Making* pg. 232.

⁶⁶⁸ Carey, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 20.

⁶⁶⁹ For more detail on the Third Anglo Burmese War of 1885, read for instance: Thant Myint-U, *The Making*, pg. 186-198.

⁶⁷⁰ The term dacoit refers to Burmese or South Asian robbers.

To a loosely organized nation like the Burmese, the occupation of the capital and the removal of the King meant nothing. They were still free to resist and fight.⁶⁷¹

In terms of the frontier, the British felt that the Burmese government was rather indifferent to the raids and disturbances of the Zo highlanders to the plains. The British Government, however, felt strongly that it had to protect tracts within the highlands as well as stop the raiding to the plains. Crosthwaite referred to the 'Chin' as a semi-savage tribe living in the mountainous region, the 'other' side of the Burma-Bengal border was now of focus for those occupied with Burma. Of the mountainous region wrote Crosthwaite:

[it] forms very long in comparison to its width. The broad ends marches with the south of Manipur, the Naga Cachar...the people are split up into numerous tribes and clans speaking many different dialects. The only system of government was that of headmen of villages, or at the most of a small group of villages, and consequently negotiations with the Chins as a people were impossible.⁶⁷²

The Northeast Frontier remained problematic. Years of punitive expeditions and interference by Government had done little to temper the clan and group feuds in the Lushai Hills and Chin Hills, as well as areas of Cachar, Tripura, Manipur, Assam and north toward Nagaland. After the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852 and the Lushai Expedition of 1871-72, political officers were posted throughout the Northeast. Movements, both migratory and temporary, of Zo groups continued. The borders drawn by Pemberton were now recognized and made official by Government. Officers posted in the hills tried to enforce them but lacked manpower. Officials often learned of border crossings only after the fact. Either way, these borders made no impact on the highlanders who effectively ignored them. One Zo oral song tells us that Zo highlanders were aware of the border because the Government had erected border pillar(s). One oral song refers to these pillars:

⁶⁷¹ Crosthwaite, *The Pacification*, pg. 2.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, pg. 100.

As I gaze from the opening in the heavens I beheld my only son pushed about like boundary pillar...⁶⁷³

The pillars erected by Government on the tri-junction of Assam, Cachar and the Lushai Hills meant very little to the Zo. As the song says, they were 'pushed about.' Thus, the competition over land was not diffused by pillars. Some Zo groups were in feuds competing over land, others over long held conflicts. At least two groups of Zo on either side of the Burma-Bengal provinces, the Chin Hills and Lushai Hills border were in a constant state of feuding.⁶⁷⁴ The Sukte with Kamhau as their chief from the area of Tedim in the Chin Hills and the Sailo clan in the Lushai Hills were in constant feuds and full blown wars.⁶⁷⁵ Alexander Mackenzie's *The North-East Frontier of India* details all of the feuds, wars, migratory movements and the Government's reactions and interventions dealing with the entire Northeastern frontier, albeit, his work does not encompass all of the Northern Arakan Yomas.⁶⁷⁶ Mackenzie focused on the Northeast frontier and thus the Lushai Hills, on the western side of the Northern Arakan Yomas, are included whereas the Chin Hills in the eastern side of the Northern Arakan Yomas, are not taken into account having already been allotted to the administrative jurisdiction of offices in Rangoon in the Province of Burma.

Bertram Carey and Henry Newman Tuck's *The Chin Hills: A History of the People, our dealings with them, their Customs and Manners, and a Gazetteer of the Country*⁶⁷⁷ also addressed the Northeastern frontier. But since they were political officers for the Chin Hills which was under the jurisdiction of the Province of Burma and made clear that the 'Chin' were tributaries to Shan of Burma they do not address the 'Lushai' or any of the groups on the other side of border.⁶⁷⁸ They do refer to other Zo highland

⁶⁷³Vum Kho Hau, *Profiles*.pg. 344

⁶⁷⁴ The Kamhau and the some Lushai clans from their respective side of the Chin-Lushai Hills border were in a constant state of conflict; these feuds would take them back and forth across the border, much to the dismay of political officers in charge of their given jurisdictions. IN Pau *The Chin*, pg. 68-71.

⁶⁷⁵ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 85-98.

⁶⁷⁶ Mackenzie, *The North-East*, pg. 287-328, 341, 359, 363, etc.

⁶⁷⁷ Carey, *Chin Hills*.

⁶⁷⁸*Ibid.*, pg. 3.

tribes but staunchly maintain, [those] tribes have almost disappeared from the Northern Chin Hills [to the other side of the border]...⁶⁷⁹

Thus, the administrative delineation was clear. Zo communities crossing boundaries was now a case of border breaching between the Provinces of Bengal and Burma under the British. Furthermore, although some administrators recognized the similarities among the tribes spanning the Northern Arakan Yomas, Carey and Tuck, by emphasizing that the Chin are tributaries to the Burmans, appear to be convinced that the Zo clans and groups truly have nothing significant in common with the Zo in the Province of Bengal--in the Lushai Hills. Moreover as mentioned in Chapter 2, Carey would eventually argue that the Chin belonged to Burma just like other ethnic minorities such as the Shan and the Karen.

Both administrations made different attempts to manage 'their' provinces within the Northern Arakan Yomas. Captain Raikes, after a short period spent in Kale ridding it of dacoits, requested the chiefs of the Chin Hills meet him in the plains for a durbar. Some chiefs did venture down into the valley of Kale to meet the British officers. However, several chiefs refused, believing that the British intention was to make the whole of the Zo highlanders eventual slaves. Instead they sent warriors on their behalf posing as chiefs.⁶⁸⁰ According to Political Officers Carey and Tuck, Captain Raikes was under the impression that the men sent from the Sizang clan were chiefs.⁶⁸¹ Oral history tells us, however that the Sizang 'chiefs' were warriors posing as chiefs.⁶⁸² These warriors were sent to act as chiefs but did not have the power of chiefs. They could not make any decisions, give any assurances or properly negotiate with the British in any way. The Zo did not trust the British and perhaps thought they were lured to the plains in order to be deported or murdered.

⁶⁷⁹*Ibid.*,pg. 3-4.

⁶⁸⁰ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 113-114.

⁶⁸¹Sizang was spelled Siyin during the colonial era.

⁶⁸² Carey and Tuck name the 'chiefs' and in footnotes give some detailed information about them. Vumson, however, argues that they were warriors. See Carey, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 22 and Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 113-115.

On 26 March 1887 a meeting was held between colonial administrators led by Captain Raikes and some 'Chin' chiefs in a Kale Monastery to discuss the future administration of the eastern Northern Arakan Yomas now referred to as the Chin Hills under the Province of Burma. On the agenda was that the chiefs recognize a Shan Sawbaw, Maung Pa Gyi as a British Government Governor of the Kale valley. This meant that all slave procurement to the Shan valley cease immediately. Furthermore, the Chin Hills sat between Chittagong and Kale. A trading route would have to pass through the Chin Hills. The chiefs were asked to allow traders, merchants and others to move freely and unmolested through the hills. Moreover, the Government expected the chiefs to supply local coolies who could manage the terrain easily for transport. Finally, the British had plans to visit the Letha range where later Fort White would be erected in the area of what the British called Tedim. In

Only the chiefs of Sizang sent imposters on their behalf. Chiefs from other clans and groups did attend. These included minor chiefs such as those under Kamhau, chiefs from the area of Haka and the area of Falam. The speaker of the delegation, Tunsuang, after conferring with the chiefs, replied to the British. They were aware of the new Sawbaw of the Kale valley and had already recognized him. Thus, they would not procure slaves from the Kale valley. As for promising that foreigners moving through the tracts between Chittagong and Kale could do so unmolested, the British would have to meet with Zo of the south. They all refused to give assurance to Captain Raikes' requests explaining that they were unable to control all of the groups; they did not want to take responsibility for attacks or raids on traders, soldiers, merchants or others moving through the Northern Yomas. Each clan would react to foreigners moving through 'their' territory or villages as they saw fit. Thus, some of the Zo now officially under the Chin Hills suggested that the trading route be redirected further south through Tashon or the Lushai Hills under the Bengal Province.⁶⁸³

Tunsuang made it clear that no British trading route should be made through the Sizang country, rather he suggested the Pawi area near the south.⁶⁸⁴ The

⁶⁸³*Op. cit.*

⁶⁸⁴*Ibid*, pg. 114-115.

Zo of Sizang and of Pawi had been in a long standing feud for some decades. Thus by suggesting that the British trading route be moved through area of Pawi near Falam they were putting the Falam in the potentially precarious position of having to deal with the British trading route and supplying coolies.⁶⁸⁵

Furthermore, the Zo were aware of British occupation of the plains. A chief from the Tashon clan, Sonpek, explained to Captain Raikes that he understood that Burma now belonged to the British and that they could do with it as they liked, but they, the Zo nation were to remain independent.⁶⁸⁶ In terms of raids upon the plains of Kale, Chief Sonpek explained that he could not control the activities of other clans and groups although he was willing to support the British if raids did occur.⁶⁸⁷ He also warned that he could not control all of his own people. While Sonpek would not oppose the British trading route through his domain, he could not control his villagers and warriors. He could not guarantee the safety of traders and did not want to be held responsible should anything happen to British subjects.⁶⁸⁸ Captain Raikes understood Chief Sonpek's arguments and resolved to explore the possible trading route between Calcutta and Kale through the Tashon area and the Lushai Hills now in the Bengal Province. Again, Sonpek explained that he was unable to assist the British in this endeavor. Ending the interview, Sonpek returned to the Chin Hills, presumably to commune with other chiefs.

The chiefs were suspicious, believing that the British most likely intended to make slaves of them. Sonpek, agreed with the suggestions of older chiefs to oppose British domination whenever possible. Their suspicions were proved partially correct. Despite the Zo of the Sizang area telling the British not to

⁶⁸⁵ The feuds between the Pawi and the Zo of Sizang is based on oral histories, see for instance: Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 74, 78, 84-88, etc.

⁶⁸⁶ Cary and Tuck explain that Chief Sonpek was a 'Tashon.' Native scholars employ the spelling Con Bik. His protection of ShweGyoByu is very much heralded as having been a heroic act against Imperialism. The Burmese named a street after him, Bo Sun PekLan which is in the Pabedan Township in Rangoon. A second street named after him is in the No. 7 Ward in Burma's new capital, Nay Pyi Daw. For more on the colonial accounts involving Chief Sonpek see: Carey, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 22; and Reid, *Chin--Lushai Land*, pg. 235.

⁶⁸⁷ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 114-115.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid*, pg. 115.

move through Sizang country, they heard that the British were building a road nonetheless. After all, the British had to move through the country, every chief of every area opposed and warned them. Still, the British chose the area of Sizang unaware that these Zo would cause them the most trouble during Chin Lushai Expedition a few years later. Perhaps Tunsuang's warning to keep the British away from the Sizang area was not convincing enough. It may be argued had an actual chief met with Captain Raikes, more impact may have been made. It was the Zo of Sizang, after all, who proved the most difficult to subdue in the whole of the Zo highlands. Woodman entitles an entire section of her work, *The Making of Burma*, "The Siyins Again"⁶⁸⁹ and details continued resistance by the Zo of the Sizang area.

Either way, warnings to the British fell on deaf ears; the Sizang retaliated. Other feuds among Zo clans occurred as well. Zo clans attacked one another within the Chin Hills as well as in the Lushai Hills where migration continued to move north. Additionally, to make matters even more chaotic and perilous, the Sawbaws (Shan chiefs) of the Kale valley revolted against the British. One of Sawbaws, Shwe Gyo Byu, took refuge under Chief Sonpek in the Zo highlands. Shwe Gyo Byu's royalists fled from Mandalay and joined their Sawbaw under the protection of Sonpek in the Zo hills.⁶⁹⁰ The generation of chiefs before Sonpek and his contemporaries who had worked with Lewin and promised cooperation to the British had either died or were too old to rule over their clans. The younger generation sought the freedom enjoyed before the British took Burma and Northeast India. The Zo were ready to rebel and fight the invaders.

Captain Raikes, expecting mayhem and attack after ordering the Zo highlanders to forfeit the 'rebel' Shwe Gyo Byu, fortified the foothills of the Kale valley with a line of posts. These, however, did nothing to deter the Zo of Sizang. They marched into the valley ready for warfare. Aware of this and outraged by the audacity of the Zo to not only provide safety to the Shan rebels, but also to refuse to turn them over to the British, the obviously stronger and mightier power on the continent, were enraged. Brigadier

⁶⁸⁹ Woodman, *The Making*, pg. 397.

⁶⁹⁰ Carey, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 25.

General Faunce decided to challenge the Zo and to bring them under British dominion and forever stop the rebellions exercised by the Zo against the British. It was determined to deal first of all only with the Zo of Siyin (Sizang) and to inflict on them such a crushing blow as not only to cripple them for the future, but also to terrify the Tashons into giving up the rebel Shwe Gyo Byu, his followers, and the Shan captives.⁶⁹¹

On the other side of the border, mayhem also ensued. The Lushai Hills had been quieted by the 1871-72 punitive expedition detailed above. In 1888, however, everything changed. Lieutenant J. F. Stewart was carrying out a reconnaissance mission south-east of Ragamati of the Lushai Hills on the Bengal Province side of the border. Like the officers posted in Kale, Lt. Stewart's expressed purpose was to scout out and create a trading route through the hills. He managed to travel from Ragamati to Demagari where he received word that a group of clans from the west of the Northern Arakan Yomas were on a serious warpath heading his way.⁶⁹² Important to note is that just a few years earlier, Lewin lived in Ragamati. Thus, the Zo were familiar with the British in this region and had even made one a chief. It seems while Lewin might have believed his existence among the Zo was marked by mutual trust and respect, it appears that the Zo had a very short memory of such cordial relations. Although Stewart was warned, he decided to dismiss the warnings and carried on with his mission. During the night, which according to Reid:

...is the one almost invariably chosen by the
Chins and the Lushais to attack their
unsuspecting victims...⁶⁹³

Reid was correct, the attack of Stewart and his party occurred in the middle of the night. His entire party was murdered. Stewart's body and later his severed head was found thrown into a ravine.⁶⁹⁴ While formally the reason for the attack and murders were ultimately unclear, both colonial as well as

⁶⁹¹*Op.cit.*

⁶⁹² Reid, *Chin-Lushai*, pg. 40.

⁶⁹³*Op. cit.*

⁶⁹⁴For detail on the murder of Lt. Stewart and his party, read for instance: Reid, *Chin--Lushai*, pg. 40-47.

Zo histories suggest that at this time a chief named Howsata had quarreled with his wife. She had sought refuge with her father who demanded ‘the head of a foreigner’ for the restoration of his daughter as Howsata’s wife.⁶⁹⁵ The ‘head of foreigner’ referred to the head of anyone other than members of their own clans for reconciliation.⁶⁹⁶ The war party came upon Stewart unexpectedly but decided it was too good of an opportunity to pass up. They took numerous heads including Stewart’s. The warring clan had moved across the border from the Chin Hills to the Lushai Hills, where the attack occurred. Administrators on both sides of the border were now involved in dealing with the attack and discussions about a cooperative punitive expedition followed.⁶⁹⁷

The Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1888-1889

This massive expedition began with a smaller one just in the area of Sizang of the Chin Hills. On 4 February 1888, under General Brigadier Faunce, accompanied by Sir George White and Major Raikes advanced toward the area occupied by Sizang clans. Learning of the advance, the Sizang set fire to their own villages and left to hide in the jungles. They remained in the jungles for a whole two years dodging the British.⁶⁹⁸ The British, realizing that the Zo highlanders were not easily intimidated and would resist occupation, called for a larger force to subdue these resisting Zo highland tribes. Numerous columns were organized on both sides of the Chin-Lushai border. Officers from the provinces of Bengal and from Burma worked in conjunction. The expedition was large in scale and numerous London newspapers featured the event with elaborate sketches and descriptions. One article addressed the connection between the ‘Chin’ and the ‘Lushai,’

General Symons will proceed to attack the
Tashons, the most powerful and unruly tribe
of the Chins in the Northern Baungshe
country, who have been in the habit of

⁶⁹⁵ Reid, *Chin-Lushai*, pg. 45-46.

⁶⁹⁶ Chatterjee, *Mizo Chiefs*, pg. 94.

⁶⁹⁷ Reid, *Chin-Lushai*, pg. 45-47.

⁶⁹⁸ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 121.

raiding in the Burmese districts now under British protection. Their usual haunts are the hills bordering the Kubo valley, to the south of the India native state of Manipoor, but they make predatory incursions eastward as far as the Chindwin. The Tashons ruler whose name is Sonpek, and whose capital, Ywama, is rather a large village or town of two thousand houses, can muster ten thousand fighting men. Their neighbours are, the Siyins, the Kanhows, and the Bonshais, are equally hostile in disposition.[sic]All these Chins are of a race kindred to the Lushais, Shendus, and Kukis, who have often given much trouble on the Bengal frontier.⁶⁹⁹

The focus of the article was on Burma Province's Chin Hills and made a connection to the Lushai on the other side of the Bengal border. The article also made clear that these Zo highlanders were 'from' two different domains, one belonged to the Province of Burma, the other to the Province of Bengal, although they were considered and understood to be 'kindred.' In fact, Reid after the Chin-Lushai Expeditions, remarked:

Many of the characteristics and customs of the...Chin...are equally applicable to the Lushais. The Tashon tribe [for example] was split up into numerous factions; the leaders of which, from their jealousy and distrust of each other, hindered the practicability of combined and unanimous action, either in

⁶⁹⁹ "The Chin-Lushai Expedition," *The Illustrated London News*, March 8, 1890, pg. 294.

resisting the advance, or in accepting the terms, of a common enemy.⁷⁰⁰

The Zo highlanders in the Northern Arakan Yomas did not appear united to the British as Reid's quote suggested. The Zo exchanged little information with others, continued to be loyal only to their own clans and groups, and were ready to murder each other over land or other disputes. But when their nation was threatened, they were able to unite against the outside threat, in this case, the British. Thus, the British underestimated the Zo and their willingness to work together against them.

The Chin-Lushai Expedition made an impression on officers and on the rank and file British soldiers, as well as on the highlanders themselves. General Faunce commented that the Sizang were, "[the] Most difficult enemy to see or hit I ever fought."⁷⁰¹ Still, the Zo highlanders could not defend themselves against the technologically advanced weaponry of the British. Eventually, all Zo highlanders in both provinces surrendered to the British. By the close of 1890, several chiefs held ceremonies of peace and friendship with British officers. Arrangements for indemnity payments and retribution were agreed upon. Zo highlanders of both provinces also agreed to stop raiding and chiefs and headmen were now employed to act as agents of the state by collecting taxes on behalf of the British.⁷⁰²

British officers were now scouting the Northern Arakan Yomas to survey the terrain and render it into military maps, to collect collies for transport, to impose fines, to free slaves and to make the highlanders forfeit their guns. The Northern Arakan Yomas, despite it not being in a state of war, continued to be tense with the continued British occupation a source of great duress for the Zo. Furthermore, the clans continued to settle their internal disputes as they saw fit. The British, however, frowned on some of these actions which in

⁷⁰⁰ Reid, *Chin--Lushai*, pg. 226.

⁷⁰¹ Brigadier-General Faunce' report, No. 305C., dated the 25th April 1889; Captain Raike's diaries. Private and official correspondence during the expedition and information received from the Chins (1889-1895) IN Carey, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 28.

⁷⁰² For detailed descriptions of the Chin--Lushai punitive expedition of 1888-1890, see for instance: Pau *The Chin*, pg. 126-161, Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 124-129, Reid, *Chin--Lushai* (entire text).

one case included the killing of an escaped slave. The escaped Burmese slave sought refuge among the coolies working with the British. He did not like being with the township officer and returned to his master, who killed him upon arrival. The British used this incident to impose heavy fines on the Zo.⁷⁰³ The British took it upon themselves to regulate the affairs of the clans and some of the Zo retaliated, despite their having made an oath of friendship. In fact, in one last act of major defiance, the Zo of the Sizang area conspired and assassinated the township officer, Maung Tun Win⁷⁰⁴ and other locals working on behalf of the British.⁷⁰⁵ According to Vumson, the Zo of Sizang planned to assassinate Political Officer B.S. Carey but he was called away to the Southern Arakan Yomas.⁷⁰⁶ Thus, unbeknownst to him, his life was spared.⁷⁰⁷ A Sizang police officer beckoned for Tun Win and the others to meet him for reiteration their peace agreement with the British. The doomed township officer organized pigs and rhinoceros' horns to be sent for the meeting. A Kamhaute warned a British Political Officer that treachery toward the township was planned, reinforcements were sent, but it was too late. On 9 October 1892 Township officer Tun Win and two interpreters, Aung Zan and Aung Gyi, along with some 30 soldiers were ambushed by the Zo of Sizang. All three, along with numerous Burmese soldiers, were assassinated.⁷⁰⁸ Again, the *London Times* picked up the story and reported it back in London.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰³Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 130.

⁷⁰⁴Myookis Burmese for Township Officer

⁷⁰⁵Pau, *The Chin*, pg. 130-133.

⁷⁰⁶ Vumson does not discuss the attempted assassination of Political Officer Carey in his *Zo History*. However, in a later article in reference to a Zo of Haka theologian's dissertation, Vumson wrote: "(This is a comment I wrote on the Chin State Capital in response to Dr. Lian Hmung Sakhong's book. He writes), 'Since the arrival of the British, Haka became the capital of Eastern Chinram until 1964.' When the British annexed the Chin Hills, they first established the camp at...Ft. White...In 1892, the Sizang chiefs...planned the assassination of Carey...However, on the appointed day, Mr. Carey was ordered by his superiors to go somewhere else and the Myook...was assassinated. "How Chin Capital Was Moved," <http://chinlandtoday.info/how-chin-capital-was-moved/> (last visited December 2, 2012).

⁷⁰⁷Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 131.

⁷⁰⁸ Carey, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 83-84.

⁷⁰⁹Our Correspondent, by Indo-European Telegraph, 1892. "Burmah," *The Times*, October 12, 1892, pg. 5, Column C.

Other clan disputes continued throughout the Chin Hills. Carey and Tuck detailed the differing feuds that continued after the Chin-Lushai Expedition.⁷¹⁰ In fact, Carey and Tuck attempted to record the histories of the Zo on their side of the Burma-Bengal border, including the history of the Zo clans of Sizang and the Tashons, for example.⁷¹¹ Furthermore, though Carey and Tuck recognized that there were similarities, they also acknowledged that there were differences among Zo. This was most likely due to their having lived in separate groups.⁷¹² They also recognized similarities with Zo highlanders on the other side of the newly drawn border. They wrote,

There can be no doubt that the Chins and the Kukis are one and the same race, for their appearance, manners, and customs, and language all point to the conclusion.⁷¹³

Whereas the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas shared aspects of the same culture, there appeared to be little unity among the Zo clans in the Chin Hills, the Lushai Hills or among the Kuki of Manipur. Each clan appeared to be fending for itself. The British enjoyed speculating on the history of the Zo, yet did not fully entertain the impact of British presence among the Zo. Perhaps their presence in the hills causes disunity or at least allowed for more competition of favors, novel items, and privileges. In fact, some of the clans began aligning themselves with the British going as far as reporting atrocities planned by an opposing clan towards the British, as the above case demonstrates. In short, while the British assumed that there was no unity before the drawing of the border, there had come times when Zo highlanders came together against a shared enemy.

A historical shift had happened in the hills. The Zo highlanders had been subdued and made subjects of the British Raj. People, both military and civilian, in Asia and in the west had a keen interest in these new subjects. The publishers Thacker, Spink and Co., of Calcutta brought information of

⁷¹⁰ Carey, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 104-114.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 118-141.

⁷¹² For more on tribal and clan feud read for instance: Pau, *The Chin*, 54-86, etc. and Piang, *Kinship*, pg. 39.

⁷¹³ Carey, *The Chin Hills*, pg. 135.

these new subjects to its readers. Like the early intelligence sought by Fan Cho, Sangermano, Buchanan and others as well as elsewhere in the British Empire, also offered simplified reports in the form of short stories, poems and magazines.

Targeting the Reading Classes with quirky tales of Zo highlanders

Surgeon-Captain Arthur George Edward Newland travelled the Northern Arakan Yomas of the Burma Province in 1892 to introduce the Chin Hills to the reading classes in Asia and in the west. He made clear that the Zo were a collection of clans (they called tribes), rather than one group of people. He compiled an illustrated book of the newest acquisition of the British Empire. Newland's readers were not interested in detailed military operation descriptions. "We will not weary the reader...but rather to entertain him."⁷¹⁴ In the introduction of this illustrated book, it reads:

This history of our dealings with these tribes in one long tale of forbearance on our part, and unprovoked aggression on theirs, marked at but too frequent intervals by the murder of our most devoted frontier officers and the subsequent punitive expeditions. The conversion of Upper Burma into the British province changed our relations with these tribes, which thus had become surrounded by British territory, and could no longer be treated as mere frontier tribes, with whom the less we had to do the better. The tribes in these hills bordering on Burma are usually known as Chins, and those bordering Bengal and Assam as Lushais.⁷¹⁵

Political Officer J. D. MacNabb, who wrote the introduction, clarified that the groups on either side of the border were grouped together and are 'usually

⁷¹⁴ Newland, *The Image*, pg. 9.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 2.

known' as the 'Chins' and the 'Lushais.' Again, this was clearly for the purpose of administration. Furthermore, it was also evident that there were numerous clans. While this seemed rather obvious, the Zo on the Burma side who came to be known by the Burmese, then by the British as the 'Chin' would later enter into decades of heated debate about this nomenclature. Some Zo scholars, namely Lian Sakhong argues that Chin was not assigned, rather it was based on the oral legend that the Chin emerged out of a cave in China called Ciinlung (pronounced as 'Si eeee lung') even having conveniently changed the spelling of the cave to 'Chinlung' to support this rather weak argument gaining some political currency among western funding entities, as is described in Chapter 1.

In fact, the Zo did not always behave in unity. One way this was evident is by MacNabb's emphasis on the Sizang rebellions. The Zo of Sizang, more than any other Zo clan, resisted British occupation. The murder of Lieutenant Stewart was committed on the other side of the border, in the Province of Bengal within the Lushai Hills. However it was a raiding party from the Chin Hills moving toward the west which murdered Stewart and nearly every member of his party. It was this one group that wreaked havoc for all the other Zo tribes. Thus there were clans resisting the British on both sides of the border, as well as attacking one another. However, the Sizang rebellion, along with the murder of Stewart, gave the British the final resolve to subdue and annex the Northern Arakan Yomas. The first punitive expedition was directed only toward one of the clans in the 'Chin Hills.' Political Officer MacNabb writes:

A punitive column was sent out to avenge this outrage in the open season of 1888-89...[and] was sent into the country of the Siyin tribe, who, refusing to surrender their Burmese captives, had all their villages destroyed...⁷¹⁶

MacNabb emphasized a specific group, the Zo of Sizang, here. He further summarized the different columns from their points of attack and onto which

⁷¹⁶Newland, *The Image* pg. 2.

'tribes.' To illustrate the actions of certain clans and Government's reaction, other incidences were recounted as well.⁷¹⁷ Finally, MacNabb's pessimistic attitude toward the Zo highlanders is illustrated in the way in which he closes the introduction of *The Image of War or Service in the Chin Hills*:

It is a land that produces nothing but the savages who inhabit it. A thorn in the sides of all who have to do with it, it has no future, and appears capable of no development. I have never met an officer who has been in them whose dearest wish has not been to get out of them !...What may be the immediate future of the Chin Hills it is impossible to foretell, but it is to be hoped that the Chins will in due time settle down into peaceful and law-abiding subjects of Her Majesty the Queen-Empress.⁷¹⁸

Newland also distinguished different groups throughout the pages of this photobook. For instance, he explained clan supremacy:

Years and years ago the Kanhows were the most powerful of all the tribes, and ruled the roost: then their day passed, and the Hakas became supreme; but, when we came into the country, the Hakas had faded, and the Tashons had come to the front. And it is said that, had we not come, the Tashons in turn would have given place to the [another clan].⁷¹⁹

Newland also explained that Chin feuds lasted generations:

⁷¹⁷*Ibid.*, pg. 2-5.

⁷¹⁸*Ibid.*, pg. 6-7.

⁷¹⁹*Ibid.*, pg. 74.

It is a proud and happy moment for a Chin
when he kills an hereditary foe.⁷²⁰

Newland, having toured the Chin Hills after the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1888-1890, closed *The Image of War or Service in the Chin Hills* as follows:

Such is the situation in the Chin Hills at the present moment. A Chin – Lushai Conference recently met at Calcutta to decide on the future policy to be pursued in reference to these hills. The Government of India has now published the result, which is that Lushailand, converted into one charge, is to be handed over to Assam, while the Chin Hills, also probably made into one charge, will continue to be administered by Burma.⁷²¹

The Chin – Lushai Expedition of 1888-90 ended with the establishment of a road connecting Chittagong and Kale. Aizawl was selected as the North Lushai outpost, and the other outposts were established throughout the Northern Arakan Yomas on both sides of the Burma–Bengal provinces.⁷²² Small skirmishes continued throughout both provinces, but on the whole, however, the Chin-Lushai Hills appeared to be subdued. Just two years later, *The Times of London* reported:

The whole of the Burmah-Chin country has been traversed during the past season by our troops, who have met with hardly any opposition, and the Chin Hills...have been brought under British officers, It is hoped

⁷²⁰*Ibid.*, pg.79.

⁷²¹*Ibid.*, pg. 90.

⁷²²Vumson, *Zo History*, pg.

that these operations will soon make these
hills free...from crime.⁷²³

As mentioned, Newland's *Image of War or Service in the Chin Hills* was published by Thacker and Spink. They also published numerous other illustrated books targeting the reading classes of Asia, England, Europe and America. Their books were not like the newspaper articles of the time, but were rather meant to entertain readers. Thacker and Spink specialized in illustrated books about the colonial project in British India. Their list of publications included books on the wild animals of Asia and 'tribes' on the frontier. Their list of publications were indicative of the *Zeitgeist*, and they believed there was a keen interest in books about the natives in Asia. Their titles included:

Behind the Bungalow, “..the present work describes...the Human officials [rather than the animals]...with their peculiarities, idiosyncrasies, and, to the European, strange methods of duty...[and] each chapter contains Character Sketches of the Native Tribes who in India render us service”⁷²⁴

An earlier advertisement for the illustrated book reads:

It is illustrated by 34 full-page Collotypes of Instantaneous Photographs, and 160 interspersed in the reading. No work has yet appeared, in Europe or America, of this beautiful character. ...only a small edition is printed, Messrs Thacker, Spink & Co. hold themselves at liberty to raise the price upon publication...From its nature the book cannot

⁷²³Our Correspondent, by Indo-European Telegraph, 1892. “Latest Intelligence-Burmah.” *The Times*, May 9, 1892, pg. 5, Issue 3363, Column A.

⁷²⁴ W. Thacker, Spink and Co., Calcutta (1894). *A Select Catalogue of Works, Chiefly Illustrated, Published by W THACKER & CO., 87 Newgate Street, London, and THACKER SPINK & CO., Calcutta, W. Thacker & Co., 87 Newgate Street: London, pg. 8.*

be reprinted, and subscribers will possess a work of extreme beauty, interest and rarity.⁷²⁵

Thus, first editions of this book were only available in Britain and perhaps, in India. Consequently this book, like the newspapers and periodicals featuring early accounts of Zo highlanders, was only available to the reading elite, and even then in limited number. After the close of the Chin-Lushai Conference of 1892, detailed in the next section of this chapter, information in the form of photos, illustration, stories, reports and military narratives about the Zo highlands became attainable for anyone who had access to publishing houses such as Thacker and Spink as well as to other reading materials: if, that is, they belonged to that small class of people who were literate and could consume these new sources of information. In fact, one advertisement for another illustrated book about the frontier, reads:

We have no doubt that this amusing book will find its way into every Anglo-Indian's library.⁷²⁶

These books were target to both, readers in India as well as in the West. All sorts of opportunities were created through the occupation of India. The East India Trading Company, later British-India, continued to be a source of revenue as well as entertainment. Many foreigners lived in India and wrote of their experiences. Readers in the west delighted in these stories. They were not of a political or military nature. They were anecdotes about life in Asia:

It is a pleasantly written book about the insects and other torments of India which make Anglo-Indian life unpleasant, and which can be read with pleasure even by

⁷²⁵ W. Thacker, pg. 3.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 9.

those beyond the reach of the tormenting
things Eha describes”⁷²⁷

Endorsements by newspapers and periodicals about Thacker and Spink’s
books read for example:

There is plenty of fun in ‘Behind the
Bungalow,’ and more than fun for those with
eyes to see. These sketches may be an
educational purpose beyond that of mere
amusement; they show through all their fun
a keen observation of native character and a
just appreciation of it. –*The World*⁷²⁸

The Zo, like other people in British-India and elsewhere were routinely
constructed. Authors felt comfortable to comment on the character of the
‘natives.’ Again, these descriptions were simplistic renditions based on very
little information. Writers took this information and made sweeping
generalizations. They participated in the making of the people of India. That
is, they took basic information, whether observed or read, and then
reiterated, repeated and disseminated these to others. These others, then,
would repeat the process until finally, the original source is forgotten and the
assessments of the natives become a kind of truth. As was explained in
Chapter 2, this may be referred to as the Sleeper Effect.

There was a high demand for such periodicals, books, sketches and poems.
Other periodicals that endorsed Thacker and Spink books included *The
Queen*, *The Graphic*, *Bath Chronicle*, *The Liverpool Mercury*, and *The
Weekly Times* and *The Scotsman* which, in one case wrote,

Their exuberant fun [of the book] at the
same time may well attract the attention of

⁷²⁷Both endorsements in W. Thacker, Spink and Co., Calcutta (1894). *A Select Catalogue of Works, Chiefly Illustrated, Published by W THACKER & CO., 87 Newgate Street, London, and THACKER SPINK & CO., Calcutta*, W. Thacker & Co., 87 Newgate Street: London, pg. 7.

⁷²⁸W. Thacker, pg. 9.

the ill-defined individual known as ‘the general reader.’ –*The Scotsman*⁷²⁹

Eventually, as this above endorsement reads, the general public would also show interest in this type of reading material. Thus, the purveyors of such reading materials enjoyed success. Moreover, Thacker and Spink were Joseph Rudyard Kipling’s chief publishers. Kipling, who was born in Bombay, wrote numerous short stories and books about subjects such as British soldiers in India (1865-1936). Kipling had a wide readership that included Europeans and Americans in the west. He was central in the construction of British India.⁷³⁰ In fact, George Orwell referred to Kipling as “The Prophet for British Imperialism.”⁷³¹ His work, as well as the ones featured about the Zo highlanders, helped shape perception about the people in India.

The events of the late 19th century are of much interest to the contemporary native scholars occupied with the history of Zo highlanders. The borders which were drawn by Pemberton and enforced by Government before the annexation of the Northern Arakan Yomas are debated and contested. The Chin–Lushai Conference of 1892, which formally legalized the borders after annexation and defined the eventual nation-state border, is of much concern for contemporary native scholars of the Zo highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas who are now in the nation states of Burma and (Northeast) India. In fact, all the proceedings related to the Chin-Lushai Conference have been compiled by the Tribal Research Institute of Mizoram for native scholars scrutinizing these borders. The Zo highlanders who were allotted to Manipur also attend to this border in their writings. The general consensus is that the border unjustly separated the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas into the Chin Hills, to be administered by the Province of Burma, and the Lushai Hills, administered from Bengal, and some to Manipur under the

⁷²⁹*Ibid.*, pg. 9-11.

⁷³⁰For more on Kipling and his contemporaries read for instance: Raskin, J. (1979). *The Mythology of Imperialism: A Revolutionary Critique of British Literature and Society in the Modern Age*. Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, E.M Forster, D.H. Lawrence, and Joyce Carey. Random House: New York.

⁷³¹Parry, B. (1993). The Content and Discontents of Kipling's Imperialism. *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location*, 221-40.

administrative offices in Assam. Telegrams, memos, letters, demi-official and official correspondences related to the conference are detailed below and all were taken from the compiled documents on the proceedings housed in the Tribal Research Institute of Mizoram under the Government of Mizoram in Aizawl.

The Chin-Lushai Conference of 1892

In preparation for a conference to be held in Calcutta, entitled the Chin-Lushai Conference of 1892, numerous memos and telegrams were exchanged among political officers and administrators of Government in India. The subject was the future administration of the newly annexed Northern Arakan Yomas. The Chin Hills and the Lushai Hills, however, were not the only matters for discussion. Also on the agenda were, "...various matters connected with military situation in Assam, Manipur and Chin--Lushai Country."⁷³² The cost of administration was disproportionate to the area and population. The Secretary to the State of India sent a telegram to Government of India, along with a copy to the Finance Department:

The existing arrangements, under which these newly incorporated tracts are administered partly from Bengal, partly from Assam, and partly from Burma, according to the province to which each portion is adjacent, were no doubt necessary, in the first instance, as a temporary expedient, but I shall be glad to learn that the suggestion contained in the last sentence of your letter, for consolidating under a single authority, subject to the control of one administration the entire area inhabited by Lushais and

⁷³²FDR on Chin Lushai Hills, September, 1892. Aizawl Tribal Research Institute, Department of Arts and Culture, Government of Mizoram: India (Reprinted 1981). Telegram No. 1832, dated the 14th of November 1891, from the Secretary of the Government of India, Home Department, to The Military Department.

cognate tribes, is receiving your serious consideration.⁷³³

To support the proposal to hold a conference, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Chief Commissioner of Burma, sent a demi-official letter to the Viceroy of India nearly two months before the conference:

Of course it is inconvenient that three different Local Governments and one Native State should be concerned in the management of the same great block of hills. But it is a mistake to treat the tribes inhabiting these hills as though they are one and the same people. Ethnologically they may be so, but politically they are a congeries of independent, and even hostile communities, looking out of their hills towards the plains from which they severally draw their surplus of salt and (hitherto) of slaves. The Chins on the east look to Upper Burma ; those on the west to Sandoway, Kyaukpyu, and Akyab.⁷³⁴

Mackenzie relied heavily on Pemberton's 1835 report contending that the 'Chin' or group of 'tribes' in the eastern Northern Arakan Yomas were tributaries of the Shan and hence of the Burmese and for this reason should be allotted to the Burma Province. At the same time, he recognized that they were 'ethnologically' the same but believed, as is argued in this dissertation, that they were by no means united and rather tended to be hostile toward one another. At the same time, Mackenzie, like Pemberton used tributary relationships as justification for demarcation of the Chin-

⁷³³ Foreign Department Report on Chin Lushai Hills, September, 1892. Aizawl Tribal Research Institute, Department of Arts and Culture, Government of Mizoram: India (Reprinted 1981). Telegram No. 61 (Political). dated India Office, London, the 17th of September 1891, From the Secretary of State of India to The Government of India. ⁷³⁴*Ibid.*, Telegram No. 28. Extract from demi-official letter from Sir A. Mackenzie, K.C.S.I., Chief Commissioner of Burma to the Viceroy, dated Rangoon, the 19th of December 1891.

Lushai Hills (as well as with Manipur). Mackenzie and later, Political Officer Carey reiterated Pemberton's assertion numerous times in the 1884 report, *The North-East Frontier of India*⁷³⁵ and during the Chin-Lushai Conference of 1892, respectively. Mackenzie would stick to his contentions even after the resolution of the Chin—Lushai Conference to administer the Northern Arakan Yomas as one administrative unit, rather than two or three separate entities.⁷³⁶

In short, after the final punitive expedition in 1888-1889, the regions of the Chin Hills and the Lushai Hills of the Northern Arakan Yomas were finally seized and subdued. Colonial administrators discussed the possible amalgamation of this block of hills. Before the conference, dozens of telegrams and memos were sent back and forth among the officers of the three administrative centers as well as to the Commissioner of Burma, Alexander Mackenzie. Many who would attend the Conference to make the final decision of administration argued that the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas ought to be managed by one single administration.⁷³⁷

Administrators working under the Province of Burma, however, vehemently opposed the amalgamation of the hills. In fact, some months before the actual conference, *The Times*, back in London, succinctly reported the major issues regarding the possible amalgamation of the Chin—Lushai Hills. The correspondent appeared to believe that only Burma could manage the Chin Hills leaving the Lushai Hills to the offices of Assam or to the Province of Bengal. This report appeared on 5 June, 1892:

The question of the future administration of
the Chin Hills is now under consideration.
The Government of India proposes to give

⁷³⁵ Mackenzie, *The North-East*, pg.163, 171-172.

⁷³⁶ The Resolution of the Chin-Lushai Conference was to the Chin-Lushai Tract be brought under one administration. It was also resolved that North Lushai Hills and the South Lushai Hills should be brought under one administration of Assam. Foreign Department Report on Chin Lushai Hills, September, 1892. Aizawl Tribal Research Institute, Department of Arts and Culture, Government of Mizoram: India (Reprinted 1981). Official Letter from The Secretary H.W.G. Cole, Chin Lushai Conference, to The Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, No. 31, Fort William 29 January 1892.

⁷³⁷FDR, Telegram Nos. 22-30, September 1892.

Assam complete control over the hills, a suggestion believed to come from Lord Roberts. The Government of Burmah have written strongly protesting against this step, which the highest authorities here consider would not assist pacification. Chins raids are always been into Burmah, and the Chins have scattered settlements in Burmese territory and intermarry with the people of the Kubo and Kale valleys. Indeed, their whole social and commercial relations with the outside world are with Burmah. For some months of the year communication between Assam headquarters and some of the outlying posts in the Chin Hills would be via Rangoon. Further Assam has not been so successful in managing frontier tribes as to justify the hope that a speedy pacification of the Chins would follow under its rule. If our troops are withdrawn from the hills they must occupy posts in the deadly Kubo and Kale valleys. The military authorities here consider the proposal made by the Burmah Government at the Chin—Lushai conference the best that can be made in the circumstances—that is to say, to control the hills by local levies of Chin police by the Burmah military police, and by troops.⁷³⁸

On 29 January of 1892, at Fort William, a Government compound in Calcutta,⁷³⁹ the ‘Chin-Lushai Conference of 1892 was held to determine the

⁷³⁸Our Correspondent, by Indo-European Telegraph, 1892. The Indo-Burmese Frontier Tribes,” *The Times*, June 6, 1892, pg. 5, Issue 33657, Column C.

⁷³⁹ Fort Williams served as both, a Government building as well as a college in Calcutta. For more on the functions and offices of Fort William, see for instance,

future administration of the Northern Arakan Yomas now spanning the provinces of Burma and Bengal. Up until then, the Chin Hills and the Lushai Hills, as the British referred to them, were managed by three different administrations. The eastern Zo highlands or the Chin Hills of the Province of Burma were administered from Rangoon; the western Zo highlands or the South and North Lushai Hills of the Bengal Province were administered from Calcutta and Assam, respectively. The border drawn by Pemberton separating the Kale Valley of Burma and Manipur, as well as the line he drew from the source of the Namsailung River to the confluence of Cachar, Tripura, Manipur and the Lushai Hills, was wholly accepted and reiterated by Mackenzie and even by another political officer, James Johnstone, who incidentally said in 1896, “To the south of Manipur, the Chin and the Lushai tribes were quiet.”⁷⁴⁰ Thus it appears that although administrators communicated with one another in official letters, every day disturbances in others’ jurisdiction went unnoticed unless significant for the whole Northern Arakan Yomas. This line on Pemberton’s 1835 map, upon perusal, is perfectly straight running east to west and thus it is wholly possible that this line was entirely imaginary, as is argued by numerous native scholars including Vumson⁷⁴¹ and Thuankham Kiamlou.⁷⁴²

Shakespear, Superintendent of the South Lushai Hills, argued that it was simply inconvenient to administer one single ethnic entity by three different authorities. Shakespear continued by arguing that the Zo highlanders ought to manage their internal matters on their own and that different administrations, with their own particular policies, would just complicate the settling of these internal disputes.

The Commissioner of Chittagong, David Robert Lyall, echoed Shakespear’s opinion and supported the amalgamation of the hills. Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Charles Alfred Elliot also agreed, albeit his argument went

Krishna Dutta (2003) *Calcutta: A Cultural and Literal History* (Cities of the Imagination). Singal Books: Calcutta, India. Pg. 71

⁷⁴⁰ Johnston, J. (1896). *My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills*. Sampston Low, Marston and Company, Ltd., Fleet Street: London, pg. 93.

⁷⁴¹Vumson, *Zo History* pg. 90.

⁷⁴²ThaunkhamKiamlou (2007). “The Great Pemberton Divide,” www.Zougam.com (last visited January 3, 2009).

beyond their belonging to one ethnic group, “All the savages, whether called Chins, Lushais, or by other names, who have never come under the British control before...should be under one Officer...” He continued to argue that if the Zo highlanders fall under different administrations, corruption would ensue, that the savages are “...thoroughly alive to the advantage of playing off one administrator against another...[compromising the authority and power of officials].”⁷⁴³ Other officers, however, disagreed and argued that the Zo highlanders of this area were not of a single ethnic group and emphasized their hostile relationships toward one another.⁷⁴⁴

Still, the resolution of the Conference was to put the whole of the Chin—Lushai Hills under one administration, that of Assam.⁷⁴⁵ A month later, after the decision, a Political Officer posted in the Chin Hills, Carey, wrote a confidential letter to the Chief Commissioner of Burma, Alexander Mackenzie arguing the majority decision would be a mistake.

Political Officer Bertram Carey had been stationed in the Chin Hills for numerous years, during which time wrote an impressive two volume book on the history of the Chin Hills based on his experiences and communication with the people. Carey also relied heavily upon the earlier writings of Mackenzie⁷⁴⁶ and on his Burmese interpreter, Maung Tun Win⁷⁴⁷ along with

⁷⁴³FDR Telegram, “The tribes realized, during the Chin--Lushai Expedition of 1889-1890 that British officers operated under different orders of their respective administrations...”In Telegram No. 21.

⁷⁴⁴ Note by Sir Charles Alfred Elliot (September, 1892). FDR, Nos. 30-40, Question raised in the military department for members of the Chin--Lushai Conference to consider their reply

⁷⁴⁵ Chin Lushai Conference, No. 4 from The Secretary, Chin Lushai Conference to The Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, Fort William, the 29th of January 1892, FDR on Chin Lushai Hills, September, 1892. Aizawl Tribal Research Institute, Department of Arts and Culture, Government of Mizoram: India (Reprinted 1981).

⁷⁴⁶ Mackenzie, *The North-East*.

⁷⁴⁷ Carey, *The Chin Hills* explained, “MyoôkMaungTun Win was a young Arakanese, who was appointed to the Chin Hills in 1889; he served with great credit in the Chin--Lushai expedition of 1889-90...He was a most excellent officer in every respect, being zealous, honest and plucky.” Page 83, footnote 2. Carey trusted him because, MyoôkMaungTun Win was an officer of ‘great experience’ with the Chins and he had with him other interpreters who all “...knew the Chin character thoroughly and I had the greatest faith in their opinion,” pg. 83.

two other informants: Aung Gyi, who had served as interpreter to numerous officers, and a southern Zo named Aung Zan.⁷⁴⁸

Their inclinations toward Burma shaped Carey's perception and he argued that the Chin had nothing in common with the Lushai and that they, like other 'races' such as the Shan, Karen and Mon simply belong to Burma.⁷⁴⁹ Former Chief Commissioner of Burma, Sir Charles Crosthwaite, supported Mackenzie, arguing that they must be administered separately; primarily agreeing that the Zo highlanders in the Chin Hills belonged to Burma.

Carey, in a letter addressed to the Chief Commissioner of Burma, Alexander Mackenzie writes:

You have asked me on the practicality of working with ... the Chins under Assam...I consider the plan impractical for some years to come, and adviseable never...the variety of tongues...the total absence of sympathy between the Chins and the Lushais, and the different trade route which theses tribes respectively use, coupled with the amazing difficulties of road and telegraphic communications, fully convinced me that the Chins should remain undisturbed under Burma, an arrangement which, in my opinion, is not only to the benefit of the Chin, but is imperative for the good interests of Burma.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁸ The interpreter named AungZan was a 'tame' Chin from Ateywa. However, his name being similar to or even the same as BogyokeAung San started rumours that the Bogyoke may have actually been part Chin. No evidence supporting this rumour has been established, however.

⁷⁴⁹ The Karen occupy the eastern delta and the Shan are in the Northeast of what is now Burma there are two of Burma's 'official' ethnic minorities

⁷⁵⁰ Confidential Demi-Official Letter from B.S. Carey, Esq. to Political Officer, Fort White, to the Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Burma, --dated the 4th February 1892. FDR on Chin Lushai Hills, September, 1892.

In this letter, Carey expressed some affinity for the Chin as well as an allegiance to Burma. He emphasized the ‘total absence of sympathy’ between the tribes on either side of the Burma—Bengal province’s border. He, like other officers, informants, and administrators, clumped all the tribes in the Chin Hills under the Province of Burma and the Lushai tribes under the Province of Bengal into two distinct and opposing categories. He further argues:

The Chin has nothing in common with the Lushai or Assam but belongs [*sic*] to Burma, whilst the Lushai tract can conveniently be placed under Assam. It is on record that as far back as 1871 ‘The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar is [*sic*] regarded throughout Lushai country as the Burra Sahib’ (page 160, last two lines, North-Eastern Frontier of Bengal). The Northern and Central Chins border on Burma ; they have always owed a nominal allegiance to the Kalé Sawbwa and were on a very good terms. The Siyins and Kanhaws were tributary to Kalé and a year ago were subjected to much harsh treatment at the hands of the Shans, but obtaining guns they got out of hand and harassed the valley ; but their object was rather to get loot and capture Shans to do their menial services than as warfare against the State.⁷⁵¹

Again, Carey cited Pemberton and his delineation of Kale and the Chin Hills in 1835. He further stated:

The above extracts agree with what I have learnt here, and without hesitation I state

⁷⁵¹FDR Confidential Demi-Official Letter from B.S. Carey, Esq. to Political Officer, Fort White, to the Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Burma, --dated the 4th February 1892.

that the Chins were tributary to the Shans, hence to the Burmese Government ; and I fail to see why Burma should give away its Chin Subjects to Assam any more than its western Shan States.⁷⁵²

He continued by arguing that the Chin mixed well with the Burmans in the markets of Kale, for example, and that, “It is an entirely mistaken idea that Burma is subjugating an alien tract. Government is merely redeeming its own, or, in plain words, ruling Chin land with a firmer hand than the Sawbwa did.”⁷⁵³ Carey does not stop there with his argument, he takes it even further, “I have tried to show that it is an impracticality for Assam to work Chin land, also that Chin land is as much part of Burma as the Shan States, Karen Hills, &c. and also that all the Chin sympathies and associations have always been with Burma and not with Lushai or with Assam...”⁷⁵⁴

Others, however, argued for the amalgamation of the Chin-Lushai Hills. In a note from an author only known as R.G.W. we see:

Another thing that strikes on in reading the reports of different political officers in the Chin-Lushai Hills, is that they are laboring under considerable difficulty in consequent of the whole country not being under one administration...The hillmen know that their immediate and visible rulers owe allegiance to three separate great chiefs, whom they hear of as the Lord of Assam, the Lord of Burma, and the Lord of Bengal, and they do not understand that these three Lords in turn own allegiance to a higher than they ; nor that they all work together for the food of the

⁷⁵²*Op. cit.*

⁷⁵³*Op.cit.*

⁷⁵⁴*Op.cit.*

Empire. This is contrary to all their experiences.⁷⁵⁵

Hence, at the Proceedings the following was recorded:

The Majority of the Conference are of opinion that it is very desirable that the whole tract of country known as the Chin—Lushai Hills should be brought under one administrative head as soon as this can be done. They also consider it advisable that the new administration should be subordinate to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.⁷⁵⁶

Despite Carey's argument to divide the Chin—Lushai Hills, the resolution of the Conference reflected the majority opinion and it was agreed that the Chin—Lushai Hills should be brought under one Administrative head, that of Assam in India despite the area having been allotted to two different British Raj provinces and one native State. However, given that the hills were not completely secure, this would be made official only when communication in the form of telegraph lines was established. This would serve not only officers communicating with Government, but also officers communicating with another, across the Northern Arakan Yomas.⁷⁵⁷ It had been noted by Shakespeare that he did not know what was going on elsewhere in the hills; there was no effective means of communication.⁷⁵⁸ Thus, it had to be made clear to the Zo highlanders that interfering with the telegraph lines would be severely punished; they used the wires to make bullets.⁷⁵⁹ Even the London Times back in England reported on the use of wire to make bullets, and it was

⁷⁵⁵FDR K.W. No. 3. Notes of our dealings with the savage tribes, and the necessity for having them under one rule., dated 1st October 1891.

⁷⁵⁶FDR No. 1383, dated Simla, the 25th of July 1892.

⁷⁵⁷ As mentioned, some Political Officers, like Captain Shakespeare, were annoyed that he could not communicate with other officers. As John Johnstone posted in Manipur, reported that the Chin-Lushai Hills were 'quiet' in 1886, which is an incorrect assumption, he obviously had very little communication with political officers posted in surrounded areas, rather only communicated with the Government in Assam (in the case of Manipur).

⁷⁵⁸FDR K.W. No. 3. dated 1st October 1891.

⁷⁵⁹ Newland, *The Image of War*, pg. 67.

a serious issue for political officers set on building communication telegraph lines through the hills.⁷⁶⁰

Despite the decision to bring the hills under one administration at the conference, the resolution would not be realized. On 1 August 1892, the Chief Commissioner in Mandalay sent a message to the Foreign Secretary to the summer capital of the Indian Government, Simla. The telegram inquired about the state of the Chin—Lushai Hills: “Has it been decided that administration of Chin Hills is to remain with Burma as stated in newspapers? If so, I will prepare fresh scheme for administration of Chin Hills Tracts.”⁷⁶¹ In an immediate response the very next day, on 2 August 1892, six months after the Chin—Lushai Conference, the Government in Simla telegraphed the Chief Commissioner in Mandalay. The memorandum simply read, “Chin Hills remain under Burma for the present. Copy of Government of India Resolution was forwarded to you...”⁷⁶² The Zo highlanders were to remain separated, those in the Lushai Hills to be administered from Assam in India; the Chin Hills fell under the jurisdiction of the Province of Burma under the British Raj. Zo native scholars, politicians, policy makers and other leaders in the modern age argue that this decision unjustly divided their ‘nation.’ They do not mention, however, that the Zo highlanders were not unified before this border, but would only come together and unify against the border some fifty years later.

The decision to draw a permanent line through the Northern Arakan Yomas inhabited by a large collection of clans and communities of Zo highlanders changed not only their future but their perceived pasts as well. With the coming of Christian missionaries, the Zo would learn to read and to write. Over time, they would come to understand the political systems imposed by the Government and learn to operate within it. Their new education and their participation in Empire as police officers, border guards, State agents and indigenous missionaries marks a major paradigm shift for the Zo

⁷⁶⁰Our Correspondent, by Indo-European Telegraph, 1892. “Burmah,” *The Times*, October 19, 1892, pg. 5, Column D.

⁷⁶¹FDR No. 57. Telegram dated the 1st August from The Chief Commissioner of Burma, Mandalay to the Foreign Secretary, Simla..

⁷⁶²FDR Telegram No. 1438-E., dated the 2nd August 1892. From the Foreign Secretary, Simla to The Chief Commissioner of Burma, Mandalay.

highlanders. With conversion to Christianity came modernity. This in turn gave Zo highlanders the opportunities to seek education and to employ agency in their own political predicament as ethnic minorities in the ‘scheduled areas’ on the periphery of the Empire.

The Zo’s perceived pasts were changed by the argument that the British divided and thus conquered them. The Northern Arakan Yomas were rife with feuds, conflicts and full-blown warfare. As land for cultivation was scarce, the competition for land between groups dominated tribal relations in the hills. Early informants and later administrators who were posted in the hills recognized these collections of clans and communities but referred to these collections of clans and communities as either the Chin or the Lushai and when they referred to yet other groups, they employed other umbrella terms such as Kuki, Naga, and Manipoories.

These terms and perceptions of the Zo highlanders were picked up by periodicals and newspapers. They printed information about the Zo highlands, including the Chin—Lushai Punitive Expedition of 1888-1890. There was much interest about the happenings in the British Raj. Later, after the Zo highlands were officially annexed by Government, British officers supplied publishing houses such as Thacker and Spink, & Co., with photographs and quirky anecdotes about the Zo highlanders. Readers in Asia as well as in the west had an “appetite” for stories and photos of the Far East. Rudyard Kipling, born in India in 1865, won a Nobel Prize in Literature; many of his books were written about British soldiers and other characters of India. It is argued that these stories are similar to the intelligence sought during State Expansionist efforts. The information was presented in a simplistic form easily consumable by readers not involved in military endeavors.

Conclusion

This chapter traced the final annexation of the Chin-Lushai Hills of the Northern Arakan Yomas resulting in the division of the Zo into the Chin and the Lushai Hills as well as into Manipur. The Lushai Expedition of 1871 proved unsuccessful. Lewin’s involvement with the Zo known as the Lushai

proved inconsequential. He was able to control the Zo while he lived among them, but after he left, raiding resumed. The Zo were not only attacking each other, but also targeting the new tea plantations which had encroached upon precious Zo land. Many tea plantations were managed by the friends of British military men. Tea plantations were encouraged by the British. They brought in much needed revenue. In fact, tea planters were given financial incentives to manage the plantations. In a show of unity, the Zo struck several tea plantations around the same time. Whether they worked in conjunction is lost to history-for now. The mere fact, however, that the Zo took dozens of lives during a very short period of time as well as kidnap a British child was reason enough to carry-out the Lushai Expedition of 1871.

The British Empire and its subjects were attacked, murdered and kidnapped. British soldiers were sent in for a punitive expedition. For a time, some Zo clans and groups seized their raiding even presenting the British with embassies and presents. The British accomplished their operation and deemed it a success. For a time, the Lushai Hills were quiet.

Over the next decade, however, raiding, warfare, slavery, and murder continued. The British used the legal designation of the plains people being British subjects to organize the final annexation. When a British officer, Lt. Stewart was murdered, the British moved in with military might. They hit the Chin Lushai Hills from three sides and at the expense of many loses of life, eventually subduing the Zo. They were now under three jurisdictions. Two were in Assam, the third under Rangoon. At the pivotal Chin Lushai Conference of 1892, it was agreed that the highlands be managed by one administration. However, Carey, relying on the arguments of Pemberton and Mackenzie, fought the resolution; Mackenzie agreed and separated the two districts.

During this time, readers in Asia as well as in Europe and America began learning of the people in the British colonies. They demanded stories, illustrations and anecdotes of life in the Empire. Publishing houses were dedicated to bringing this type of reading material to the reading elite. They

furthered the construction of the Zo as the Chin, the Lushai and the Kuki of the British Empire. They now participated in the construction of the Zo.

The Zo way of life was restricted. Raids were made illegal, political officers were posted among the hills. Chiefs and headman were made agents of the state by collecting taxes and liaison between the Zo and the political officers. This was a time when the Zo also began accepting the presence of foreigners as their new rules. They could no longer exercise their previous culture and began participating in the construction. Some worked with the British such as Lewin's friend Ronthangpuia, other used their relationships with political officers to gain privilege. The Zo were no longer moving in the hills. They were beginning to settle, to adhere to census taking and accepted paying taxes to the British. They were becoming British subjects through a process of civilization that had the state at its core. Dissent continued, yet most revolts were squashed by the British who often managed to pit Zo against one another.

The Zo did not have a written history of these accounts. Instead, they continued with the oral traditions. These however, to a large degree, were lost. Once the missionaries came in just a few years later, oral stories were dismissed. Thus, the Zo had the opportunity to redefine themselves in relation to the British who had accomplished their divide and rule method of conquering.

This annexation was the beginning of a new people brought into the colonial fold of the British Empire but kept excluded from the rest of British India as a 'backward' people. This was the most significant moment in Zo history. They began the process of constructing themselves, employing the agency to manage their lives under the Indian Government.

Chapter Five

Modernity through literacy—not Christianity

Introduction

At the turn of the century, numerous changes occurred in the socio-political culture of the highlands on both sides of the Burma-Bengal (later Assam) border, in the Chin and Lushai Hills. Areas around the hills such as Assam, Tripura and Manipur were all claimed by the British at various times between the 17th and 19th centuries. By the early nineteenth century the British had managed tax collection schemes from the small kingdoms and princely states surrounding the Zo highlands.⁷⁶³ The Chin Hills and Lushai Hills remained a borderland until the late 19th century when the hills were annexed in a massive and bloody punitive expedition.

After the final annexation of the Chin-Lushai Hills in 1890, the eastern side of the Northern Arakan Yomas were attached to Burma, the northern and southern Lushai hills were merged and fell to Assam. Thus, two native states, one in Burma the other in India were born.⁷⁶⁴ Toward the close of the nineteenth century British civilization projects in the Chin-Lushai Hills were underway. These projects took on numerous forms. There were agriculture schemes to encourage Zo to give up *jhum* cultivation. British officials argued that the new methods of cultivation would yield more crops and thus, raiding would cease. They, however, did not comprehend that raiding was not always about acquiring food stocks. Raiding had other purposes beyond the scope of this dissertation. Suffice it to say, that raiding had a strong sociological element in that it served, for one, as a bonding ritual for the Zo. Raiding parties often consisted of numerous groups which came together through the alliance of chiefs.

Either way, British officials believed raiding would stop if the hills produced enough crops. In fact, Newland introduced crops such as giant corn which

⁷⁶³ Chatterjee, I., (2010). *Slaves, Souls and Subjects in a South Asian Borderland*. Colloppapers, Agrarian Studies, Yale:

www.yale.edu/agrarianstudies/colloppapers/o2chatterjee.pdf, pg. 1.

⁷⁶⁴ Some Zo ended up on the Manipur side of the Manipur-Lushai border.

eventually became the staple for the Zo.⁷⁶⁵ He also introduced coffee, something the Zo had never tasted and the westerners greatly enjoyed. It was also a high revenue producing crop. The new cultivation practices encouraged Zo to settle and consequently become countable, taxable, conscriptable and overall, manageable, as Scott would argue of the highlands generally.⁷⁶⁶ An effort to boost trade was also made. Trading with the plains as well as within the hills was organized and managed by the British who received revenue by taxing the goods that moved through the hills.

In the Lushai Hills, the British opened three bazaars beyond the Bengal Presidency border to encourage trade within what is now known as Northeast India.⁷⁶⁷ Again, the British claimed that it would stop raiding of the plains. If goods were available within the hills, there was no need to look for them elsewhere. The British would also tax goods brought to the bazaars from the traders coming from Cachar, Tripura, Manipur and other kingdoms. In this way, they could increase their revenue, something not mentioned outside of the colonial records.⁷⁶⁸ In fact, the British were so intent on keeping these bazaars running that heavy security at the bazaars had to be organized to keep the traders from feuding and eventually abandoning the bazaars.⁷⁶⁹

To collect taxes from Zo villagers, on both sides of the border, the British utilized the headmen and sometimes chiefs. These headmen or chiefs, it is argued, became agents of the British Raj.⁷⁷⁰ Those headmen who did not comply with the 'new order' of the hills were deported out of the hills, sometimes for life. The stipulations and new roles for them were listed in the *Chin Hills Regulations Acts of 1896*. That is, after annexation and the Chin-Lushai Conference of 1892, the British drafted and began to enforce a

⁷⁶⁵ Kelly, D. (2003), *Kelly's Burma Campaign: Letter from the Chin Hills*, Tiddim Press: London, pg. 32.

⁷⁶⁶ Scott, *The Art*, pg. 2-12.

⁷⁶⁷ Verghese, *A History*, pg. 263-268.

⁷⁶⁸ *Op. cit.* The Lushai Bazaars were explained by the fact that the British taxed traders from outside the Lushai hills was minimized.

⁷⁶⁹ Verghese, *A History*, pg. 263-268.

⁷⁷⁰ Zorema, J. (2007). *Indirect Rule in Mizoram 1890-1954*, Mittal Publication: New Delhi, pg. 58-64.

new and unique set of laws in the Chin-Lushai Hills which were different from those of the plains.⁷⁷¹

Although these were referred to as the Chin Hills regulations, they were also applied in the Lushai Hills.⁷⁷² These regulations specified the powers of the headmen. They also outlined the power the British had over Zo. For instance, the British under these regulations had the power to remove the headmen from his current jurisdiction and put him in charge of any other clan, group or village they so chose. These regulations marked the beginning of official and legal cooperation of chiefs and headmen with the British.⁷⁷³

In order for the Zo to understand and adhere to the Regulations, they had to learn to read as well as write. This, the British officials, left to the missionaries. In certain parts of the Northern Arakan Yomas and other areas of what is now known as Northeast India, missionaries had already built school with some success. Zo learned to read the Christian Bible but also other texts including the regulations ordering the Chin and Lushai Hills. A few Zo also became Christians, converted by American Baptist missionaries in the Chin Hills and Welsh Presbyterian missionaries in the Lushai Hills. These two groups of missionaries came from different continents, had different belief systems, albeit, both were Christians and did not attend to other Zo across the borders. The number of converts as well as the rate of success was grossly exaggerated by Zo scholars, as is explained below.

Zo highlanders realized that their new found knowledge was essential for them. They learned the ability to read and write, understood what the more civilized people deemed barbarian such as consuming too much alcohol, dressing indecently and the focus of only one's clan or group rather than adhering to rules and regulations, not only in their daily lives but also the laws of a centralized government. They also came to understand that by exercising a degree of agency, they had a chance to thrive under these new conditions.

⁷⁷¹ Go, *Chin Chronicles*, pg. 86-101.

⁷⁷² Go, *Zo Chronicles*, pg. 61-72.

⁷⁷³ *Op.cit.*

The Zo sought education, employment and other opportunities in the plains where, John Sydenham Furnivall argued, a plural society thrived, “comprising numerous groups...[but] meeting only in the market place.”⁷⁷⁴ The Zo, although in the plains, did not integrate into lowland society. For instance, they studied at the universities of Rangoon, Mandalay and Serampore where they founded their own student unions often with Christian values coupled with the intention of maintaining certain Zo traditions such as Zo National Day.⁷⁷⁵

Some of these student unions eventually evolved into dissident movements, first toward the aging chiefs who had become state agents and then toward the British. Many Zo realized that they had been conscripted by the British as soldiers in both world wars yet could not be depended upon at Independence to give them political agency and the opportunity to exercise self-determination from or within either nation-states of Burma and of India. As Bayly explained, “...members of recently armed and self-aware minorities such as the Naga, Lushai and Chin, sought autonomy and looked with suspicion on the new nation-states.”⁷⁷⁶

Finally, in the years between Independence and 1988, Zo agitated against the legacy of colonial borders. These borders, some Zo groups argued, wrongly divided the Zo causing nearly a century of separation from kin and with it Zo culture, tradition, and national pride. Further movements for separatism from the nation-state of India as well as from the Union of Burma sprung up on all three sides of the borders in Manipur, Mizoram and in the Chin Hills.

Eventually the Zo moved in different political directions. The Zo of Northeast India continued with movements of separatism from the nation-state of India as well as re-unification of the Zo. Many of the Zo of Burma, however, joined the pro-democracy movements of Burma (later Myanmar). Given that they were now one of the many ethnic groups, they adopted the nomenclature of Chin going as far as arguing that they have been Chin ‘since time

⁷⁷⁴ Furnivall, J.S. (1960). *The Governance of Modern Burma*, Institute of Pacific Relations: New York, pg. 22.

⁷⁷⁵ Zo National day is celebrated on February 20th. The Zo from

⁷⁷⁶ Bayly, C. and Harper, T. (2007). *Forgotten Wars: The End of Britain’s Asian Empire*, Penguin Books: London, pg. 293.

immemorial' and in this way divorced themselves from other Zo both, from others in Burma as well as in India.

Purpose of this Chapter

The purpose of this final chapter is to address the shift from a preliterate society made up of numerous independent clans and groups to one that was engulfed by the British Empire. The Zo eventually attempted to gain control of their society employing the agency acquired during the colonial period of the highlands (1885-1948) and in its aftermath (1948-1988). This chapter will illustrate certain historical shifts as well as the role of the Zo during this period in their history.

These shifts are reviewed in terms of Zo highlander participation. This is a point of departure from previous chapters which were organized in a tightly chronologically order and gave weight to colonial records. The focus of this chapter is on the Zo rather than primarily on the actions, narratives and political acts of the British. The socio-political movements toward re-unification of the Zo are also illustrated to show how these historical shifts in the modern period of the Zo impacted the construction of identities. In short, this chapter focuses on only certain pivotal moments and movements which led to the future and current state of the Zo society.

One very important movement, for instance, was that of Pau Cin Hau, a Zo from the area of Tedim.⁷⁷⁷ He not only created a new religious movement but with it devised a new writing system. This writing system emerged during the early phase of Christian missionary activity in the hills and was in direct competition with it. However, it was not robust enough to compete with the promise of modernity that Christian missionaries brought to the highlands. This chapter illustrates the attempt of some Zo highlanders to create their own 'versions' of religious movements.

⁷⁷⁷ Nginsuanh, S.(1968). *Brief History of Laipian: Pau Cin Hau and History*; Rangoon University Chin Students Culture and Literature Subcommittee Annual Magazine, Rangoon, 1968-1969.

The process toward modernity, it is argued, occurred before conversion and continued beyond separation of Burma from India in 1935 and Independence from the British in 1947/48. This process of modernity and the reclaiming of identity is an on-going process for the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas. Conversion was but one element of this long process. In this way, conversion and its emphasis on literacy were vital elements in the making of identities through the construction of historical narratives by the Zo exercising modernity. Furthermore, as was already illustrated in Chapter 1, it is argued in this chapter that missionaries were instrumental in the socio-cultural⁷⁷⁸ division of the Zo in the Northern Arakan Yomas.

After the turn of the century, the Zo of Northeast India were effectively isolated. Under the Government of India Act in 1919, all the tribal areas of Assam were officially declared, 'backward tracts' because they were said to be populated by 'aboriginals.' They were excluded from, "...the competence of the Provincial and Federal legislatures."⁷⁷⁹ The management of the Lushai Hills fell to the Governor who could act in his own discretion. The Lushai Hills eventually became Mizoram, the 23rd State of India.

The Chin Hills were made a 'Special Division of The Chins' in Burma's 1947 Constitution. A minister in charge of 'Chin Affairs' was to be appointed. The minister was to represent all issues related to the Chins from North to South. The minister's primary duty was, "...in particular all matters relating to recruitment to the civil services in the Special Division..."⁷⁸⁰ They were officially marginalized by the Constitution and their continued service in the civil sector was encouraged. They had, after all, proved ideal as soldiers, clerks, police officers and border guards under the British Raj. They would maintain these positions after Independence. The Chin Hills remained a Special Division until 1962 when the Military carried out a coup-de'-tat and

⁷⁷⁸ Rambo, L. R. (1993). *Understanding religious conversion*. Yale University Press, pg. 142, 148, 154, etc.

⁷⁷⁹ Ray B. (ed.), (1996). *Reorganization of Northeast India Since 1947*, Ashok Kumar Mittal: New Delhi, pg. 57-58.

⁷⁸⁰ *The Constitution of the Union of Burma (1947)*, Part V.- Special Division of the Chins, Form of state No. 196 – 197, pg. 55-56.

General Ne Win became the dictator of the State Peace and Development Committee (SPDC).⁷⁸¹

Religious conversion, new methods of trade and agriculture, compliant chiefs cooperating with the British in their tax collection schemes, literacy, Zo participation in Britain's wars and Zo migration to the plains in search for opportunities were all part of the modernizing project initiated by British officials. However, resistance and dissident activities as well as alternative local religious movements were also indicative of the move toward modernity. These, however, were not supported by the British. In fact, it was the British who were often targeted in these rebel movements.

Finally, it is argued that the elite of Zo society, the chiefs, the headmen and the elders cooperated with the British. It is argued in this chapter that after Independence, the Zo on their respective sides of the border moved into different political directions resulting in disunity and discontent. They relied on the same information as had the colonials. In this way, the Sleeper Effect had taken hold; the original sources of prejudiced informants of the plains was now separated from the content of the construction. Zo history was now taken, in part, from the colonial records. Zo scholars relied on the writings of missionaries and colonial officers from Buchanan to Mackenzie; they did not question the reliability of much of their perspectives. For the Zo, it was as the early colonials described and the Zo elite supported. There were distinctly different people occupying the Zo highlands. While their cultures may have been similar, many Zo now argued that they were not a 'nation' by any means; they were independent of each other.

Furthermore, tribal feuds on their given side of the borders continued. Those clans and groups that had worked with colonials and missionaries had gained privilege which now manifested into better education, better held positions and more opportunity within their respective Indian states or in Burma. Instead of tribal warfare, Zo began attacking each other through argument, writings and by carving out specific niches in order to gain privileges among NGO organizations and governments in the West.

⁷⁸¹ Smith, *Burma*, pg. 195.

That is, different Zo groups vied for the few and limited resources available from the west by crafting themselves into perfect recipients of aid, both financially and actually in terms of infrastructure, politically through the UNHCR, for instance, and by presenting themselves as the primary groups on the world stage, as this author has argued elsewhere. That is to say, elite among the Zo communities emerged.⁷⁸²

The Zo and Modernity

Any project addressing the process of a preliterate society toward modernity requires some reliance on theory. Theory helps explain the paradigm shifts experienced by societies who move from being pre-modern to embracing and exercising modernity. Moving toward modernity happens at numerous levels in society. One is the religious conversion to Monotheism, the belief in one single god or oneness. Polytheism, the belief and worship of numerous gods or spirits, is rejected. Arjun Appadurai rejects the legacy left by Western social science thinkers such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim who all implied modernity is a “single modern moment.”⁷⁸³ The implication is that there is a rupture that breaks a society from its past and hurdles it into a new future, one that is modern. Zo scholars who have addressed conversion of the highlanders reject the notion that modernity was a process. Rather, they adopted the notion that modernity was a single moment. They argue that Zo, almost immediately, transformed from a pre-modern society to one that was modern with Christianity as its sole and shared belief system.

Still, the arrival of Christian missionaries to the Northern Arakan Yomas marks one step in the beginning of modernity for the Zo. It was the beginning of their quest for political agency and the participation in the making of their own identity (ies). Modernity is defined in a number of ways. To avoid the pitfall of engaging in a philosophical discussion, modernity in this dissertation is defined as, the process of change from a relatively small,

⁷⁸² Son, B. *Conversion*, pg. 1-24-33, etc etc.

⁷⁸³ Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Public Worlds, Vol. 1, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis and London, pg. 2-3.

closed society to the adherence and participation in the bureaucracy designed for revenue of a larger state, in this case, the expanding state of the British Raj. As is argued, colonialism was about economics. Thus, modernity is also defined by Zo highlanders' participation in the capitalistic interests of the British Raj. Finally, modernity also applies to the era after conversion, at Independence and in its aftermath. That is, this phase, while being also defined by being a modern era, is further extrapolated upon as the era of Zo agency in their own move toward modernity.

The perspective that conversion and with it modernity was a moment of rupture is evident in the histories of conversion by native scholars of the Zo highlands. Lian Sakhong, for instance, insists that conversion was a not a radical change but rather a transformation since Zo animism was similar to Baptism for the Zo around the area of Haka in the Chin Hills of Burma.⁷⁸⁴ He suggests that a transformation happened relatively quickly and encompassed all facets of the Zo highlander society.⁷⁸⁵ They only had to be exposed to the Baptist Gospel and conversion occurred.⁷⁸⁶ Another Zo scholar, Chin Khua Khai writes:

...when the gospel of Christ was preached,
the majority of Zomis turned to
Christ...The church grew steadily in
number.⁷⁸⁷

Mangkhosat Kipgen opens his book on Christianity among the (Zo) in Mizoram with an equally inflated comment:

The unusually fast growth of Christianity
in Mizoram and the vigour of its life were
the two factors that had attracted my

⁷⁸⁴ Sakhong, *Religion*, pg. 215-216.

⁷⁸⁵ Son, B. (2007). *Conversion of the Chin of Burma: The Creation of an Elite*. International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam: The Netherlands., pg. 27.

⁷⁸⁶ Sakhong emphasizes Baptism over other Christian denominations, hence, its emphasis here.

⁷⁸⁷ Khai, C. K. (1999). *Dynamics of Renewal: A Historical Movement Among the Zomi (Chin) in Myanmar*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation for the Faculty of the School of World Missions and Institute of Church Growth, Fuller Theological Seminary, UMI, Ann Arbor: USA, pg. 164.

attention as a student of the history of
Christianity.⁷⁸⁸

The same sentiment is prevalent among the Zo highlanders now in Manipur. Thangkhomang S. Gangte, introducing the history of the Kuki in Manipur stated:

The advent of Christianity was an epoch-making event...If any religion can play a vital role in changing the life-style of a society, it is the Christianity and its mission that have effected this miraculous change among the Kukis of Manipur.⁷⁸⁹

Gangte does not mention literacy or any other aspects that accompanied the conversion of Zo highlanders. The records contradict that the advent of Christianity was epoch-making. Rather it was literacy that brought the Zo into a state of modernity where they began to participate in the British Raj and exercise agency. Only a few converted to Christianity in the first fifty years of the mission.

Zo politician Gougin, like Sakhong, take the argument further and suggest that before the advent of the missionaries, the Zo already believed in one supreme being. They refer to this as pantheism.⁷⁹⁰ Gangte further stated:

From 1891, the Zomis saw the new light, new faith known as christianity [*sic*]*—*the first resultant outcome of British administration. The period 1890-91 marks as a great transitional period ...⁷⁹¹

⁷⁸⁸ Kipgen, M. (1997). *Christianity and Mizo Culture: The Encounters between Christianity and Zo Culture in Mizoram*, Mizo Theological Conference, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. preface.

⁷⁸⁹ Gangte, T. (2010). *The Kukis of Manipur: A Historical Analysis*, Gyan Ridhi Offset Printers: New Delhi, pg. 40.

⁷⁹⁰ Gougin, *Zomi*, pg. 17; Sakhong, *Religion*, pg. 44.

⁷⁹¹ Gougin, *Zomi*, pg. 25.

Gangte implied by the above comment that conversion happened almost as soon as the British arrived in the Northern Arakan Yomas. He repeated this assertion a second time later in his text. Thus, Zo scholars generally argue that conversion is at the heart of modernity. They further contend that conversion occurred relatively rapidly, in this case, immediately after annexation. At the same time, most Zo scholars address the missionary history, yet do not admit that conversion was rather unsuccessful, slow at best. Moreover, many who were converted in the early days, years after the arrival of the missionaries, denounced the church a short time later. Thus, all these Zo scholars exaggerate the rate, number and speed of conversion to Christianity.

It was not only Zo scholars, however, that have grossly exaggerated the impact of conversion in the Northern Arakan Yomas. J. Meririon Lolyd, on the history of the church in Mizoram, wrote:

As a tribe they have undergone what is tantamount to a complete conversion...According to the Mizos themselves they are now 95% Christian. Animism, their old religion is virtually extinct. It was so even in 1944...⁷⁹²

Lloyd takes it further and argues that some criminal Zo complained that the missionaries should have come sooner. Lloyd, like the Zo scholars is a self-proclaimed Christian. Thus, his perspective may have been impacted by the belief that the Zo must have converted quickly although the missionary histories are to the contrary.

Zo scholar Vumson argues that conversion in the Chin Hills did not happen rapidly. In fact, the first four years of the missions (on both sides of the Burma-Bengal border as well as in Manipur) proved rather unsuccessful.⁷⁹³ It took six whole years before the first Baptism of two Zo was held in Aizawl; one of the converted Zo, a young man named Khuma, denounced the church

⁷⁹² Lloyd, J. (1991). *History of the Church in Mizoram: Harvest in the Hill*, Snyder Publication Board, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. Preface.

⁷⁹³ Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 143.

a short time later. This author also argued that conversion was slow and not all encompassing.⁷⁹⁴ Kyle Jackson goes one step further and argues that the Christianity existent in Mizoram is in fact, not as orthodox as is implied by the above scholars.⁷⁹⁵ He argues that it was the medical interventions of the missionaries that persuaded the Zo to join the new religion. In fact, most missionary stories have some form of healing narrative in the nexus of their conversion stories. Statistics also support that conversion did not happened rapidly.

The 1888 Burma Census for example reported that 0.7% of the population in the Chin Hills claimed to be Christian.⁷⁹⁶ These were most likely outsiders or Zo from other areas such as from the south or from the Northeast. Either way, Christian missionaries arrived in the Chin Hills and the Lushai Hills after the above census in 1899 and 1896 respectively. The first person in the Chin Hills was not converted until five years after their arrival. The first person in the Lushai Hills was converted two years later; one denounced the church a short time later. Conversion took a very long time to achieve.⁷⁹⁷ In fact, by 1911, The Census of Burma reports an ever smaller percentage of Christians in the Northern District of just 0.4 per cent.⁷⁹⁸ While these numbers may not be accurate, they are indicative of the fact that Zo highlanders did not covert quickly to Christianity as is claimed by some Zo historians. That is, the percentage of Christians in the Northern District of the Chin Hills between 1888 and 1911 actually decreased from 0.07 per cent to 0.04 per cent.⁷⁹⁹

The historical records indicate that there were not very many Christians in the Zo hills in the year 1944. Lloyd does not provide sources, thus we are

⁷⁹⁴ Son, *Conversion*, pg. 51.

⁷⁹⁵ Jackson, K. (2009). *Mizos, Missionaries, and Medicine: Religious and Medical Contact in the Lushai Hills*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Dept. of History, SOAS, U. of London, pg. 23-30.

⁷⁹⁶ NAM, Burma Revenue Department—No. 326-17R, dated 1888, pg. 1-2, Acc. 17884.

⁷⁹⁷ Vumson, (2005) "Book Review and Discussion of Lian Hmung Sakhong, 2000 "Religion and Politics among the Chin People in Burma (1896-1949). Zomi Library Online 2005, pg. 1-2.

⁷⁹⁸ "Census of Burma 1911 (In Two Volumes)" by Morgan Webb. Manas Publications, Delhi: India, Vol. 1, pg. 101.

⁷⁹⁹ Census date for Assam was not obtained for this dissertation.

unable to trace this argument. However, sources consulted for this dissertation written in the 1940s contend that, in fact, there were not many Christians at that time. For instance, a 1944 survey carried-out by the Japanese who were ready to attack reported that most Zo were, in fact, not Christian. Moreover, only a few were literate:

Although Chin peoples live next to Burmese who are either Buddhist or Muslim, their religious influence is not apparent probably due to poor transportation. Instead they believe in spirit. The name of spirit is numerous, and they do not have common spiritual figures like Burmese, Karen, and Kachin. Northern mountain people ... do not even believe in spirit. Haka people in south believe in the world after death called Mithi-kwa, and this world is divided in paradise (Pwethi) and hell (Sathi-kwa). But they believe their conducts before death do not determine whether they go to paradise or hell. If they die naturally, they go to paradise. But if they are killed, they will remain in hell unless they fulfill their revenge...Literacy rate of Chin people in Chin hill region.

Total	130,789
Literate	1,906
Illiterate	128,883
Speak English	81 (men only)

People who understand letter is 1.5% of the total population. Women's literacy rate is extremely low.⁸⁰⁰

Thus, only a few Zo had accepted Christianity by 1944, fifty years after the arrival of missionaries to Zo hills. Stevenson, who wrote of the Chin in 1943, only mentioned Christianity in Chapter 13. In fact, he gave enormous details about the Zo belief system. These details are explicated beyond the abstract; Stevenson explained how they impacted the every-day economics of the Zo in the Chin Hills.⁸⁰¹ If most of the population, even if just a margin of the population was fervently Christian, he surely would have attended to it. Stevenson explained the nominal impact of the American Baptist Mission in the Chin Hills:

The effect of Mission activities.—Up to the time these notes were taken that A.B.M.* [American Baptist Mission] was the sole one operating in the central hills and of all the tenets followed by the Mission the only one which had any real effect on the progress of the Christian faith was the prohibition of beer-drinking and feast-giving...The people simply ignored the Mission and only 3% became converts to Christianity over the course of several decades.⁸⁰²

However, while only a very small margin claimed to be Christian in 1944, some of the church teachings did impact the everyday lives of the Zo. Stevenson explained that:

⁸⁰⁰ 中西健一著、1944年、「ビルマの自然と民族」、養徳社、191項—220項
Kenichi Nakanishi, 1944, Nature and People in Burma, Yotoku-sha, p.191-220.
Translated by Duke Nagoya.

⁸⁰¹ Stevenson, *The Economics*, pg. 11-22.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*, pg. 161.

...while converts did not increase, the Mission teachings had the not unforeseen effect the Chin to imaged defects in his own social system.⁸⁰³

Stevenson details the impact of the Pau Cin Hau cult, described below. He contends that the cult was a variation of Christianity and better suited to the local conditions.⁸⁰⁴ That is according to Stevenson, the Zo did not convert to Christianity *en masse* as many Zo scholars claim. Lehman (Chit Hlang) also addressed Christianity in his 1963 Monograph. Lehman, who carried-out his ethnography in 1957, indicated that whole villages claim to be Christian but, "...are only nominal Christians." Moreover, he reported that, according to Cecil Hobbs, the church had managed to convert 20% of the Zo to Christianity. Lehman added a caveat, however:

Data collected more recently indicate that *at most 22 per cent* of the Chin Hills population has ever adhered to this church, and for some years the percentage has been declining so that now the church just balances its regular loss of members with new conversions. The other Christian churches (Catholic, Seventh-Day Adventists, etc.) have far fewer converts even in the very restricted areas in which they operate. Most Chin Hills villages are either all pagan or include a handful of Christians, many of whom have converted while in residence elsewhere...The basic ideology of traditional Chin religion continues to flourish almost everywhere in the hills [emphasis added].⁸⁰⁵

⁸⁰³ *Op.cit.*

⁸⁰⁴ *Op.cit.*

⁸⁰⁵ Lehman, *The Structure*, pg. 219-220.

This chapter will review accounts from the colonial records to establish the level and rate of conversion. It is argued that contemporary Zo scholars make the sweeping statement that conversion was fast and rapid. However, this was not the case. In fact, it is astounding that Zo scholars have so grossly exaggerated the number and speed of conversion to Christianity. Lorraine and Savidge in the Lushai Hills also faced difficulty. They spent four years reducing the *Dulhian* language into a script. Their first convert was an invalid who, on his death bed, decided that he was a Christian.⁸⁰⁶ Welsh Presbyterians took over the Lushai mission field at the turn of the century. Arthington no longer supported Lorrain and Savidge and both men realized that their work of translating the Bible into a local dialect was completed. They moved further north into Assam and then to back to England. The Welsh, upon their arrival resolved to indigenise as many Zo as possible, that preachers of the same race would be the most effective.

Lorrain returned to the Northern Arakan Yomas, this time to the southern Lushai Hills and beckoned his brother, Reginald, to join the mission. Without the support of the Welsh Presbyterian or the Baptist Missionary Society of London, Reginald founded the Lakher mission in 1907 among the Zo known as the Mara. There was little success among the Mara. He asked that some indigenized Lushai missionaries come to his mission and indeed, some were converted. Finally, the British took notice of the missions because, “—the spread of literacy was to be encouraged as conducive to good citizenship.”⁸⁰⁷ However, here as well, the first person to convert accepted the Christian God a whole three years later in 1910. Only one more boy was converted five years later.⁸⁰⁸ Author Whitehead suggested that this was God’s plan; the Zo were simply difficult to convert.⁸⁰⁹

Clearly, the church on both sides of the border did not enjoy the sort of success suggested by Zo scholars. Conversion was slow and those that did convert often denounced the church later. In fact, colonial accounts just a few

⁸⁰⁶ Lewis, *The Lushai*, pg. 33-34.

⁸⁰⁷ Whitehead, J. (1989). *Far Frontiers: People and Events in North-East India 1857-1947*, Basca Putney: London, pg. 136.

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, *Far*, pg. 139.

⁸⁰⁹ *Ibid*, *Far*, pg. 140-150.

years after the Lorrain arrived do not address Christianity as being an important element of Zo highlander life. Neville Edward Parry's monograph on Lushai customs, published in 1928, mentioned Christianity just one time and then only in relation to the village priest.⁸¹⁰

The biggest impact, it seems, was the literacy that accompanied the missionaries—not the notion of salvation by accepting the Christian God. Upon Lorraine's retirement in 1921, he commented:

Our old boys are to be found in all positions in their country. Among them are pastors, evangelists, schoolmasters, sub-assistant surgeon, dispensers, clerks, surveyors, soldiers and many others.⁸¹¹

It appears that the mission's most valuable currency was teaching the Zo to read and write. This way, they were able to embrace modernity and participate in the empire. No longer were they just the highlanders on the frontier, but were now citizens able to modernize within British-India. The exaggeration by Zo scholars in terms of the level and speed of conversion is astonishing. Perhaps this is part of the re-construction of their history. In fact, not a single history, consulted for this dissertation written by Zo scholars mentions the difficulty of converting Zo highlanders. They do not emphasize the many years that not a single person accepted the Christian God, or the many who converted and then quickly denounced the church again later, and finally, the speed with which the Gospel is said to have spoken to the Zo highlanders. Vumson is the only that addresses this misnomer many years after the publication of his own *Zo History* in a Book Review.⁸¹²

⁸¹⁰ Parry, N.E. (1928). *Lushai Custom: A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*. Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 7.

⁸¹¹ Zorema, J. (2007). *Indirect Rule in Mizoram 1890-1954*, Mittal Publications: New Delhi, pg. 68-85.

⁸¹² Vumson, (2001) Book Review of Sakhong's Dissertation.

The process of conversion and bringing marginalized highlanders into the colonial fold is not straight forward, however. Lorraine Aragon in her work on the highland communities of Indonesia explains that:

While colonialists use religion and moral training to bring converts closer to their moral universe, they simultaneously must maintain...[an] isolated economic, ethnic, and political universe for the converted.⁸¹³

Although the majority of Zo highlanders on both sides of the Bengal-Burma province border and those in Assam eventually converted to Christianity, the British kept the Zo highlanders somewhat isolated from the state centers of the plains in the early part of the 20th Century. The hills were first, ‘excluded’ seemingly for their own protection as marginalized minorities and scheduled for later development. It simply meant, “outside the direct control of the Provincial Legislature.”⁸¹⁴ In fact, in the Lushai Hills, the Government setup numerous bazars with the expressed purpose of isolating Zo highlanders from the plains, economically, as well from going across the borders to trade or raid as is mentioned above.⁸¹⁵

Richard Eaton did a comparative study of Naga conversions to Christianity.⁸¹⁶ Eaton compared groups of Naga, who are a collection of clans and groups further north, in the Arakan Yomas. Missionaries entered the Naga Hills in the state of Assam in 1828.⁸¹⁷ Much like the Zo highlanders of

⁸¹³ Aragon, L. V. (2000). *Fields of the Lord: Animism, Christian Minorities and State Development in Indonesia*. University of Hawai'i Press: Hawaii, pg. 7.

⁸¹⁴ Verghese, *The History*, pg. 344.

⁸¹⁵ Reid, R. (1944). “The Excluded Areas of Assam.” *The Geographical Journal*, 103 (1/2), 18-29; Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. 245.

⁸¹⁶ Eaton, R. (1997). “Comparative History as World History: Religious Conversion in Modern India,” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, pg. 197-209.

⁸¹⁷ Assam was earlier divided into different kingdoms such as the Ahom and the Kamrup. During the Mughal period, lower Assam, bordering Bengal was annexed to the Mughal Empire. Assam was annexed by the British only when the Ahoms, rulers of Assam, approached the British to drive away the Burmese from their country in 1826. In 1838 Assam was incorporated into the Bengal Presidency to be separated again as a Chief Commissioner province in 1874. British Assam included all the present Northeast Indian States except Manipur and Tripura. For more on the history of Assam, read for instance: Shakespear, L.W. (1929). *The Assam Rifles*, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Government of Mizoram: India.

the Northern Arakan Yomas, they practiced forms of animism before the arrival of Christian missionaries. The Naga, like the Zo, were preliterate before Christians brought a writing system and modernity with it. The way in which the Naga and Zo converted is also similar, with some differences among groups. Furthermore, among the Naga, two ‘prophets’ emerged claiming to have been chosen by god to take on the role of prophet and leaders.⁸¹⁸ The Herake movement, like the Pau Cin Hau movement managed to claim some followers.⁸¹⁹ Also like the Pau Cin Hau movement, it was abandoned by most highlanders who came into contact with it. Again, these movements are indicative that Zo highlanders as well as other highland groups like the Naga sought alternative ways of modernizing. They exercised their agency. This adds to the argument that conversion happened rather slowly and that modernity was a process, not a moment as is argued by some Zo scholars, especially those addressing religious conversion.

As Eaton argues, one cannot view the spread of Christianity to the peripheries of states as a naturally occurring phenomenon like, “...lava flowing outward from some central point, engulfing and incorporating all that it passes...” Like Eaton, this author agrees that conversion occurs as a means of “creative adaptation.”⁸²⁰ This is very true for the Zo highlanders who adapted to the world religion of Christianity toward the end of the twentieth century (not at the beginning of the 19th century as Zo claim). Furthermore, it is argued that the missionaries were also belligerent in their methods of conversion. They forced their way into the Zo hills and over a series of years with the support of the colonial Government left the Zo with little choice but to convert to Christianity.

The Missionaries

Both the American Baptist Society and the Aborigines Mission were intent on civilizing the Zo highlanders in the respective domains. Generally, the British

⁸¹⁸ Longkumer, A. (2010). *Reform, Identity and Narratives of Belonging: The Heraka Movement of Northeast India*. MPG Books Group: Great Britain, pg. 2.

⁸¹⁹ It is important to note there that the Hereka movement was not a religious movement per say. It was more of an anti-Kuki movement. This movement is explicated below.

⁸²⁰ Eaton, "Comparative," pg. 244.

were mostly appalled by the state of the Chin. Although they, themselves, were not engaged in missionary work in the Chin Hills, colonial officers thought a new sense of law and order was good. Reid reported that:

The [Zo] men were perfect Savages in appearance, and, beyond a blanket... were in a state of nudity as far as the conveniences of society were concerned.⁸²¹

Thomas Babington Macaulay's famous address *Minute on Indian Education* of 1835 reads:

These are the systems under the influence of which the people of [British] India have become what they are. They have been weighed in the balance, and have been found wanting. To perpetuate them, is to perpetuate the degradation and misery of the people. Our duty is not to teach, but to unteach them - not to rivet the shackles which have for ages bound down the minds of our subjects, but to allow them to drop off by the lapse of time and the progress of events.⁸²²

Macaulay address reveals the sentiment felt by the west toward the 'natives' of British India. The Zo, like other locals to the areas, were to be untaught, to be brought into the colonial fold through education. Christianity was just one part of the civilization scheme. Missionaries for the Lushai Hills would later write:

⁸²¹ Reid, A.S. (1893). *Chin-Lushai Land: A Description of the Various Expeditions into the Chin-Lushai Hills and the Final Annexation of the Country*. Firma KLM, Private, Ltd., Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl: Mizoram, pg. 194.

⁸²² Macaulay, T.B. *Minute on Education* on February 2, 1835. Bureau of Education. *Selections from Educational Records, Part I (1781-1839)*. Edited by H. Sharp. Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, 1920. Reprint. Delhi: National Archives of India, 1965, 107-117.

Whilst a few of the national custom are worth saving for the innocence and picturesqueness, the majority require the patient energy of the missionary to uproot and destroy...⁸²³

One former colonial administrator, Major-General Ian Lyall Grant, wrote the forward to *Kelly's Burma Campaign*:

The task [of Norman Kelly at the beginning of WWII]... would be to win the hearts and minds of isolated communities and to introduce them to the benefits of education, modern medicine, and law and order.⁸²⁴

And so, the missions on both sides of Burma-Bengal Provinces border actively engaged in missionary work.⁸²⁵ The British and the missionaries agree, the Zo were in need of salvation. Rarely do missionary histories reflect the confrontational stance taken toward many aspects of highland culture. For instance the first American Baptists, Laura and Arthur Carson were appalled by the amount of *zu*⁸²⁶ that was consumed by highlanders on a daily basis. Equally revolting was the habit of smoking by women and children, not to mention practices such as infanticide, suicide and decapitation. They saw the highlanders as filthy, immoral heathens in desperate need to be converted to Christianity. Laura Carson on her and her husband's Arthur Carson's arrival to the Chin Hills wrote:

⁸²³ Lewis, *The Lushai*, pg. 67.

⁸²⁴ Kelly, D. (2003). *Kelly's Burma Campaign: Letters from the Chin Hills*. Tiddim Press: London, pg. Forward.

⁸²⁵ There are dozens of histories written by local as well as western scholars on the conversion of the Northern Arakan Zo highlanders. This dissertation is not occupied with conversion, rather modernity. For more on conversion histories, read for instance: Johnson, R. (1986). *History of the American Baptist Chin Mission*, Vol. I and II. Published by the Author, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: USA., Lloyd, J. M. (1991). *History of the Church in Mizoram (Harvest in the Hills)*. Synod Publication Board, Aizawl: Mizoram.

⁸²⁶ *Zu* is the rice liquor distilled in the hills. Before conversion, *zu* was an essential element in rituals, feasts as well as in the daily lives of all highlanders, including children.

But as the crowds flocked about us on the evening of our arrival, I looked about in vain for the cleaner, less repulsive, higher-class people. My heart sank, for I could not tell the chiefs from the coolies. All were dirty and filthy beyond description.⁸²⁷

She also commented on the drunkenness of the Zo, a behaviour she had encountered while a child in Little Rock, Arkansas in America. She grew up in fear of the Indians whose love for liquor, they called firewater, led them to debauchery, frightening the young Laura. She recalls seeing drunken Indians in her childhood:

...the Winnebago Indians camped near our place and had to pass our house when going to and from town. Although, when sober, they were friendly and harmless except for thieving, when filled with 'firewater' they not infrequently took advantage of there being no men about, and committed such depredations that women and children were in terror of the sight of them...⁸²⁸

Later, as an adult, Carson encountered some Burmese drunks and again, was frightened by them.⁸²⁹ For her, the consumption of liquor was directly related to the impossibility of conversion. She felt that drink interfered with Christianity. Thus, *zu* was strongly discouraged in the Chin Hills. When some Chin finally were converted, the fact that they stopped drinking was often highlighted. To illustrate that the Zo eventually came to understand the emptiness of drink and that it kept them away from God as Carson believed, she wrote:

⁸²⁷ Carson, L. (1927). *Pioneer Trails, Trials and Triumphs: Personal Memoirs of Life and Work as a Pioneer Missionary Among the Chin Tribes of Burma*, Baptist Board of Education, Dept. of Missionary Education: New York, pg. 162.

⁸²⁸ Carson, *Pioneer*, pg. 10.

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 122.

One morning Ko So, a hard drinking Chin man...to whom the gospel had often [been]preached...took out an alabaster idol about eighteen inches long, very heavy and very white, and held it out to the Missionary saying, 'I want to give this to you. I have no further use for it.' 'Why, what do you mean?' asked the missionary. 'Well, it's like this,' he said, 'For many years I have had this god in the forks of a tree...but it has brought me no peace. You have told me of another God. I am drunk most of the time, I have no peace of heart, and my children are all going wrong. I want to put them into school. I want to be a Christian. In proof of my sincerity I have brought you the god I have worshiped all my life...'⁸³⁰

Carson was pleased with herself. For her, giving up both drink and false idols were central to becoming a good Baptist. The story, indeed, is inspiring for anyone sharing her belief system. There are other elements of interest in this conversion story, however.

She did not elaborate on some aspects of this conversion story. The existence of an eighteenth inch alabaster idol means that either the Zo highlander acquired it through trade or in a raid. He understood that it was an 'idol' instead of an object of décor. This sounds very much like Chatterjee's arguments that, in fact, a monastic past thrived in the highlands, a past the colonials failed to capture or chose to ignore. According to Chatterjee as well as other sources such as Chinese text detailing the Southern Silk Route, the Zo were not isolated in the hills nor did they flee to the hills to avoid the state. Rather, they had a monastic past and some elements, such as this idol,

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 126.

remained.⁸³¹ The monastic past of the Zo deserves much more study and is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Suffice it to say that the existence of this idol suggests that some archaeological evidence of a vibrant monastic past may still be unearthed.

At the same time, Carson's story sounds idealistic, perhaps more so than realistic. The language alone is too sophisticated for a Zo who would have had to struggle to manage English of this niveau. Perhaps to demonstrate the power of the gospel, as Carson surely felt, allowed her to embellish this story with the hope of being convincing and thus encouraging of other missionaries. Moreover, the man indicated that he would like his children to attend school. He may have been exercising his agency on the behalf of his offsprings whom, he felt would benefit from attending school. He wanted them to become modern; his conversion was central to this endeavour.

In Manipur missionaries actively searched mission fields that did not, as they put it, "smell" of any other religions.⁸³² They too insisted that the Zo convert to Christianity and they were uncompromising. When the Zo finally converted, they were immediately treated with privilege including moving into a mission house. It was the belief and method of the Manipur missionaries including William Pettigrew to separate the newly converted from his past, totally and absolutely. In fact, the Manipur mission was aggressive, hardnosed, and stern toward potential converts. This, some Zo scholars argue, won them the respect of the British. Given that only some Zo, the Kuki fell to Manipur, its missionaries are not described in detail.

However, like the missionaries in the Chin and the Lushai Hills, the Manipur missionaries were unyielding, forceful, insistent, and almost aggressive in their attitude that the Zo simply had to give up their old ways and join the modern world. Furthermore, in Manipur more so than in the Chin and Lushai Hills, missionaries emphasized the existence of Hindi in neighbouring states. Thus, they isolated their converts, like Chatterjee suggests, in order to

⁸³¹ Chatterjee, I. and Eaton, R. (2013). *Forgotten Friends: Monks, Marriages, and Memories of Northeast India*, OUI India: Delhi, pg. Conclusion.

⁸³² Singh, K.M. (1991). *History of the Christian Mission in Manipur and Neighbouring States*, Mittal Publications: New Delhi, pg. 52.

for them to 'forget' their former friendships.⁸³³ And as McCauley, in his minute emphasized, they had to be 'un-taught.'

On the other side of the border in the Lushai Hills, missionaries had the same sentiments toward the Zo. The first missionaries to the Lushai Hills, John Herbert Lorraine and Fred W. Savidge, also commented on the filthy state of the Lushai. They did not, however share all the same opinions. For instance, the Welsh seemed less consumed than the Baptists about the drunken behaviour of the Zo.

The Welsh Missionaries were less concerned about the consumption of *zu*. They focused a great deal on the practice of headhunting and tried to understand it not a savage means of warfare, rather a way of worshipping the collection of their gods. Lewis explained that Shakespear had already furnished them with some of his expertise on the head-hunters:

When the missionaries first settled in Aijal, it was taken for granted that the Lushais, like the Pois (inhabitants of the Chin Hills), were head-hunters. This was a very natural conclusion, seeing that the Lushais were known to decapitate the bodies of those whom they slew in warfare, while they would always carefully remove their own fallen friends lest a similar fate should be theirs. But according to such an authority as Major Shakespear, Superintendent of the Hills, there is no proof that their numerous raids were simply to get heads. 'Of course, a man who had killed his man was thought more highly of than one who had not, and, therefore, when a man did kill a person, he brought the head home to show that he

⁸³³ Chatterjee, *Forgotten*, Conclusion.

had been speaking the truth.’ What if the meaning lay deeper!⁸³⁴

Whether Shakespear was an ‘expert’ on headhunting was not established. What has been argued, however, is that Shakespear was often misinformed, yet made sweeping generalization about the Zo and their culture.⁸³⁵ This too, is beyond the scope of this dissertation but deserves further study. Chatterjee and Eaton have already explicated Shakespear’s misunderstanding of slavery in South Asia including the Lushai Hills.⁸³⁶ The fact that the British furnished the missionaries with information and what they felt was their expertise is evident in the colonial and missionary records.

The missionaries to the Lushai Hills entertained the notion that the Zo were actually more capable of spirituality than their demeanour suggested. In fact, the missionaries were firm in their belief that the Zo appreciated them and were ready to be converted; after all, their lives were filled with low ideals and spiritual darkness. Lewis wrote:

Before his friends, the missionaries came, their faces shining with a light which never glowed on sea or shore, the Lushai had been dwelling in a land of the shadow of death, beautiful and bright as were his native hills...imagination...coloured the scenes with the materialism of low ideals.⁸³⁷

Charles Keyes addresses the relationship between colonialism and conversion; between the British and the missionaries.⁸³⁸ He argues that colonialism creates favourable conditions for Christian missions. Religious

⁸³⁴ Lewis, G. R. (1907). *The Lushai Hills: The Story of the Lushai Pioneer Mission*, The Baptist Missionary Society: London, pg. 19

⁸³⁵ Chatterjee, *Slaves*, pg. 6-7.

⁸³⁶ Read for instance: Chatterjee and Eaton on *Slavery*,

⁸³⁷ *Op.cit.*

⁸³⁸ Keyes, C.F. (1979). *Ethnic Adaptation and Identity: The Karen on the Thai frontier with Burma*. Institute for the Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia: USA, pg. 221.

conversion, in some cases, allowed easier subjection of the local population. It is logical to reason that colonialism created conducive conditions for missionaries. Colonial survey takers already charted territories, built roads and transit buildings, set up communication channels and named regions and ethnic groups. Their existence in new mission fields also implied a certain order of law. That is, it was safe for missionaries to set up their churches, schools and hospitals in annexed areas. As Pum explains, "Under the *Pax Britannica*, Christian Missions employed education and medical health as important tools to spread the Gospel to the 'animist' Zos."⁸³⁹ They also brought a new order and law in the form of moral values and in this way, modernity to the hills that was in line with economic endeavours of the British Raj. Essential to conversion is literacy. After all, world religions rely on texts.

Literacy and Modernity

Language, like other information, is vital for the conquest of new territories. Company men were not the only colonizers interested in the local languages; missionaries also studied the languages of British India. In 1814, English Baptist Missionary Felix Carey published a book of grammar on the Burmese language while posted in Dutch-India Serampore near Calcutta.⁸⁴⁰ For obvious reasons, missionaries had different reasons for learning the languages of British India. While Buchanan, as well as others, were mostly interested in how to further the interests of the East India Company and later the British Empire, missionaries had a different agenda, that of converting and acquiring new souls to the faith of Christianity.

First, they were to learn the local languages and then teach the locals to read the Christian Bible transliterated in the chosen local dialect. As is explained in Chapter 1, transliteration had a direct impact on the division of the Zo highlanders through the canonization of chosen texts. This early into their missions, however, their seemingly only motive was to bring the Zo to

⁸³⁹ Pum K.P. (2012). "Rethinking Religious Conversion: Missionary Endeavour and Indigenous Response Among the Zo (Chin) of the India-Burma Borderland." *Journal of Religion & Society*, Vol. 14, (2012), pg. 1-17.

⁸⁴⁰ Hall, D.G.H. (1932). *Felix Carey, The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (October 1932), pg. 473-492.

Christianity. They were also to create a network of churches and sweep the hills with the word of the Christian God. Carson explained the plan of the mission:

We were summoned to meet the Board in Boston, where plans were discussed for opening up a new station in the heart of the Chin Hills, where no missionary work had ever been done by any denomination. It was the plan of the Board to form a chain of missions working both ways from the new station which we were to open up connecting with our lower Burma Missions in the Southeast and with those of Assam to the Northwest.⁸⁴¹

Thus, missionaries had their eye on mission fields that were first annexed by the British. They also wanted to create a large network that spanned the Arakan Yomas from the south, all the way up to Assam's Northwest. The missionaries were intent on success among the Zo. Christian missions had suffered in the plains. Baptist Missionaries worked closely with Company scholars studying the different cultures, languages and (possible) histories of the people in British-India and in Burma. However, the relationship was strained. For example, the Company accused missionaries of provoking the revolt at Vellore in 1806. Apparently, soldiers believed the rumour that their officers were going to force them to convert to Christianity. Not only were missionaries not welcome in Burma, foreigners on the whole were treated with suspicion. Furthermore, it was actually illegal for any Burmese citizen to accept a new religion; hence the mission was precarious in the first place.⁸⁴² There were also issues back in England. According to William Womack, there was a perception on the behalf of the Church of England that

⁸⁴¹ Carson, *Pioneer*, pg. 145.

⁸⁴² Maung Shwe Wa and Sowards, E. (1963) *Burmese Baptist Chronicles*, Burmese Baptist Convention, Rangoon, pg. 2.

the Serampone mission threatened its authority.⁸⁴³ Other conflicts between the mission and the Company were also evident and resulted in strict censorship⁸⁴⁴ forcing the Mission Press to move to Calcutta where mission activities could be monitored.⁸⁴⁵

The first American Baptist Missionary, Adoniram Judson, was converted by English Baptist Williem Cary in 1812.⁸⁴⁶ By then, missionaries preaching to Hindus were not welcomed in British India. Furthermore, America had just declared war on England. The English retaliated against the Americans for maintaining neutrality during the Napoleonic Wars.⁸⁴⁷ Thus, Americans were even less welcome. Because of the war, English and American Baptist missionaries separated and sought mission fields elsewhere. When the Company ordered all missionaries to leave India, Judson moved to Burma.⁸⁴⁸

When the First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824 broke out, Judson was jailed in the infamous death prison at Ava. He remained there for nearly two years. At the close of the First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-1826, Burma ceded parts of Tenasserim, Assam, and Arakan to the British in the Treaty of Yandabo.⁸⁴⁹ Judson, after his release from prison, began visiting and preaching to the animist non-Burman people, the Karen of Tenasserim. Among them, he enjoyed success, albeit, his first convert was a slave who he purchased from a Burmese. He had been made a slave after a seriously criminal past including numerous murders. After Judson converted, Ko Tha Byo, he made him an indigenous missionary to the Karen. Released from slavery, Ko Tha Byu missionized the Karen of Tennaserim and within twelve years converted over a thousand Karen to Christianity. American Baptists

⁸⁴³ Womack, W. (2005). *Literate Networks and the Production of Sgaw and Pwo Karen Writing in Burma, c.1830-1930*, Unpublished Dissertation, Department of History, School for Oriental and African Studies, No. 2648, pg. 82.

⁸⁴⁴ Chancey, K, 'The Star,' pg. 509.

⁸⁴⁵ Womack, *Literate*, pg. 84.

⁸⁴⁶ Judson was not the first missionary in Burma, but because his predecessors did not remain there long, Judson is often referred at the first American Baptist having spent some 25 years in Burma.

⁸⁴⁷ Thompson, P. (2000) *Cassell's Dictionary of American History*, Cassell Wellington House: London, pg. 641-643.

⁸⁴⁸ Womack, *Literate*, pg. 89.

⁸⁴⁹ Snodgrass, *Narrative*, pg. 274-286.

back home realized the potential of new mission fields in Burma as well as in the Northeast Indian state of Assam, also ceded to the British in the treaty of Yandabo of 1826.⁸⁵⁰

As explained in Chapter 3, American Baptist Eugenio Kincaid travelled from Boston to Burma around the year 1834 to scout this potentially new mission field. Kincaid seemed very impressed with the area and the people. His observations, published back home in Boston, must have been influenced by the report that appeared in *Gleanings of Science*. Early constructions linking the first converted ethnic group, the Karen to the Chin appear in an article about Kincaid's trip published in the Baptist Missionary Magazine in Boston.⁸⁵¹ He writes:

These mountains are inhabited by a race
of people called *Kyen*, something like the
Karens...they have no letters, and are kind
and inoffensive to travellers.⁸⁵²

It reads that the Chin are similar to the Karen. The comparison of Zo to the Karen is instrumental for the missionaries whose articles appearing in the west meant to inspire future missionaries. Since the Karen had proved to be easily convertible, the Chin would also easily accept the teachings of the Bible.⁸⁵³ Kincaid, assumed that despite the distances separating these people, they were more alike to each other than to their neighbours the Burmese and the Indians. The Karen and Chin connection would be maintained for many years thereafter. For example, a hundred and fifty-years later, last American Baptist Missionary to Burma, Rev. Robert Johnson wrote:

⁸⁵⁰ Shakespear, L.W. (1929). *The Assam Rifles*, Firma KLM on behalf of the Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Government of Mizoram: India, pg. 1-3.

⁸⁵¹ Kincaid, E. (1834). "Mr. Kincaid's Journal: Embarkation for Ava, Rangoon," April 6, 1833, Missionary Register, *The American Baptist Magazine* (1834), pg. 101.

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*, pg. 101.

⁸⁵³ In-depth research on the conversion of the Karen was not conducted for this dissertation. That is, the conversation rates may also be as exaggerated, as they were for the Zo.

There is an affinity between Chins and Karens, and I have often heard Chins speak of Karens as 'cousin brothers.'⁸⁵⁴

There may be some similarities between the Karen and the Chin. These, however, have not been explored in a wider context. The Karen and the Chin really share just one obvious aspect of their culture. Both practiced animism before conversion to Christianity and before the introduction of a writing system.

As illustrated in Chapters 1-3, before the invasion of the Northern Arakan Yomas, relatively little was known of the highlands as well as about its inhabitants. Most of the information was derived through informants. Given that the British had not invaded or attacked the Northern Arakan Yomas at this period in time, there was a pervasive perception that the highlanders kept to themselves unless on a raiding path. As Kincaid assumed and repeated, the highlanders were "inoffensive to travellers."⁸⁵⁵ This perception would change significantly once the British began having hostile encounters with them.

Either way, construction of the Zo as the Chin and the Lushai, as well as the Kuki by missionaries had begun in the mid-19th Century by the American Baptist Missionary Society and by Welsh Presbyterians sending letters about the Zo back to Wales. Before annexation, however, missionaries from either America or from England and Wales were not permitted to enter the Chin-Lushai Hills until much later in the 1890s. Before then, the British deemed all of the hills unsafe. Zo highlanders had struck the British in a series of raids and attacks over the years. Dozens of highlanders as well as lowlanders from the plains were killed or taken away as slaves. As explained in Chapter 4, the daughter of a tea British planter, Mary Winchester in Alexandrapur of the Cachar foothills was kidnapped; her father was murdered.⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁵⁴ Johnson, R. G. (1988) *History of the American Baptist Chin Mission*. UMI Dissertation Services: Michigan, pg. 10.

⁸⁵⁵ "Mr. Kincaid's", pg. 111.

⁸⁵⁶ Woodthorpe, *The Lushai*, pg. 5-6

Missionaries did not venture to the Lushai Hills until 1891. Missionaries had been active in and around the area of Assam and Manipur. The Welsh missionary, William Williamson visited Mizoram from the Khasi Hills (Meghalaya) where he had been posted.⁸⁵⁷ He suggested the Lushai Hills as a possibly fertile mission field for the Presbyterians.⁸⁵⁸ J. Merrion Llyod speculates that Williamson, on a visit to a Syllhet prison, met some Lushai chiefs. His interaction with them may have triggered his interest in the Lushai Hills.⁸⁵⁹ By then both sides of the Chin-Lushai Hills had calmed and Williamson took a trip south to Aizawl. His impressions of the Lushai Hills being a rich and fertile mission field were expressed in a letter to the mission in Wales. His letter was so emotive and inspiring that it was printed in its entirety in a Welsh Newspaper in May of the same year.⁸⁶⁰

Based on Williamson's recommendations, the Englishmen Herbert Lorraine and F. W. Savidge arrived in Mizoram from Scotland in the year 1892. The two men both worshiped at the Highgate Baptist Church in London. They met again in India. Together they worked for the Aborigines Mission under the leadership of Mr. Robert Arthington a wealthy businessman from Leeds who believed that it was his duty to spread the Gospel to India. Upon first arriving in India, they stayed with American Presbyterians who lent them some support. Dr. T. Jones was in charge of Silchar and introduced the two young men to the local Bazaar where they met numerous clans and communities living in the area now known as the Lushai Hills. Lorraine and Savidge longed for Aizawl. Finally in 1893, Company Political Officer A.W. Davies, in charge of the North Lushai Hills, gave them permission to enter the Lushai Hills.⁸⁶¹

The Hills were still in turmoil; no locals wanted to enter them. Unable to find coolies or any other sort of support, Lorraine and Savidge were forced to

⁸⁵⁶ Lloyd, M. J. (1991) *History of the Church in Mizoram: Harvest in the Hills*. Synod Publications Board: Mizoram., pg. 35-36.

⁸⁵⁷ Meghalaya is just south of Assam.

⁸⁵⁸ Lloyd, *History*, pg. 18-19.

⁸⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 17-18.

⁸⁶⁰ Letter from Williamson, printed in *Y faner ac amserau cymru* (The Flag and Times of Wales), May 1, 1891. Wales.

⁸⁶¹ Lloyd, *History*, pg. 26.

carry their own gear through the thick jungles and steep terrain through the Northern Arakan Yomas from Silchar a hundred miles south to their new mission field, Aizawl. The two men worked diligently to render the Lushai language into a phonetic script using the Roman alphabet and planned on staying on. However, after two years, Mr. Arthington ordered the two men to a new mission field.⁸⁶² They refused believing that real success would take additional years. By the time they left the Lushai Hills in 1897, their relationship with Arthington was severed. A few years later, the Lushai Hills having been abandoned as a mission field by Arthington, had a young Welsh man named D. E. Jones, on behalf of Calvinist Presbyterian Mission, turn up in Aizawl in 1897. Aizawl was very much a ‘cosmopolitan’ town during this period in time. According to Llyod, the town was comprised of Khasi carpenters, Ghurkha soldiers, Punjabi builders, Bengali government administrators, Santali dirt removers and carriers (coolies), Assamese police and Chaprassi government messengers. Aizawl was referred to as, “Vai-kal” - the place of foreigners.⁸⁶³

On the other side of the Northern Arakan Yomas, American Baptists had moved in and established a mission on March 15, 1899. They, too, had problems finding coolies and the like to help them navigate into the Chin Hills. Finally, they managed to acquire a motley crew of helpers. Laura and Arthur Carson entered the Chin Hills in March of 1899. Accompanying them was an Indian cook and his Burmese wife, two Christian Chin girls presumably from the southern Arakan Yomas, and a handful of Chinamen.⁸⁶⁴ The Company had erected a fort at Haka and thus there was sufficient infrastructure for a mission. They offered the Carsons a small two-bedroom house for rent. The British Superintendent assigned two Sepoys to provide security to the group. Laura wrote:

Haka is situated on the side of a great mountain. It is a military post where are stationed sixty Sepoys with three English

⁸⁶² It was Worthington’s policy to move missionaries every 2-3 years.

⁸⁶³ Lloyd, *History*, pg. 40.

⁸⁶⁴ Carson, *Pioneer*, pg. 158.

officers. Chin villages abound on the neighboring hillsides. Many thousands of people are accessible from this place, not one of whom is a Christian and not one can read and write in any language. Their only religion is the sacrificing of animals to evil spirits; it is also their only system of medicine. To these poor people we hope to introduce the elevating, uplifting influence of the gospel of Christ and teach them the Way of Salvation.⁸⁶⁵

The British had set up the external infrastructure; the missionaries would now bring spiritual salvation. Two converted Karen preachers joined the group as well. The connection between the Chin and the Karen first evoked by Kincaid would be repeated for the next hundred years. The construction of similarity between ethnic minorities was now taking shape. This was further supported by the Political Officer Carey who had argued that the Chin simply belong to Burma, as did other ethnics such as the Shan and the Karen at the Chin-Lushai Conference of 1890 just eight years earlier.⁸⁶⁶

The clans in the Lushai Hills were now actively being compared to other people in the Northeast frontier in Assam and under the Bengal Province.⁸⁶⁷ Of course, given that they were now under the jurisdiction of different administrations and the flow of information went from the Political officers in given provinces to the Superintendent of the Province who was either in Rangoon, Calcutta or Assam.⁸⁶⁸ Political officers did not share information

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 161.

⁸⁶⁶ The Chin-Lushai Conference is explicated upon in Chapter 4.

⁸⁶⁷ Johnston compared clans in Manipur and in the Naga Hills to one another, for example see: Johnston, J. (1896). *My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills*. Sampston Low, Marston and Company, Ltd., Fleet Street: London, pg. 23-29, etc.

⁸⁶⁸ The lines of communication are addressed by Soong Chu Ro, who mentioned the line of communication from Cachar to London in the 1830s. He does so with an emphasis on the location of archival records. A study of the flow of information from the Northern Arakan frontiers to the provinces of Bengal and Burma and to the state of Assam has yet to be carried out. Soong Chu Ro (2007). *Naming a People: British Frontier Management in Eastern Bengal and the Ethnic Categories of the*

with other political officers on other provinces, except through official reports and Gazetteers as in the case of Shakespear's awareness of Carey and Tuck's two volume text on the Chin Hills. Therefore, communication was primarily with other political officers posted in their given dominions. Some administrators like Shakespear, however, studied and attended to information beyond his domain. He, therefore, understood that the terms "Lushai" and "Chin" did not suffice; that these were designated to the collection of Zo groups for the ease of communication and administration. That is, he recognized that there were similarities among clans, yet each clan was its own entity, independent of the next. The border had administratively separated them. While they did not seemingly appear united before the border, the border did create artificial borders for the Zo highlanders. Shakespear seemed to understand this. But instead of arguing the he thought the Zo migrated, as a group, from Tibet or China or even theorizing that they are a collection of groups and clans brought together in the hills by either accident or heritage, Shakespear fully admitted that he does not understand the historical relationships of the clans. He explained, "I have purposely avoided enunciating any theories [about the history and origins of the Lushai]." He further wrote:

This term Kuki, like Naga, Chin, Shendu and many others is not recognized by the people to whom we apply it, and I will not attempt to give its derivation, but it has come to have a fairly definite meaning, [but the] term Lushais, as we now understand it, covers a great many clans ; it is the...name of a clan, which under various chiefs...came into prominence...the general population of the hills is spoken of as Mi-zo.⁸⁶⁹

Kuki-Chin: 1760-1860. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Hull, UK., pg. 24-25.

⁸⁶⁹ Shakespear, J. (1912). *The Lushai Kuki Clans*. MacMillian and Co., Ltd. St. Martin's Street: London, pg. xiii-xiv.

Shakespear made clear that the terms were assigned. He also made mention of the Chin but given Carey and Tuck's Gazetteer, directs the reader to their work in the Chin Hills on the others side of the border. Despite Shakespear's understanding, other administrators and political officers like Carey, believed that there were marked differences, as is explicated in the Chapter 4. The missionaries, however, did not have access nor attend to information about other Zo highlanders beyond the domain to which they were assigned. Furthermore, it was the American Baptist Society that sent the Carsons to the Chin Hills under the Burma Province and the English that sent Savidge and Lorraine to the Lushai Hills under the jurisdiction of the state of Assam.

Pau Cin Hau

During the missionary era, the Zo on both sides of the border began realizing the importance of religion and with it, a writing system. Many converted to a local cult resembling Christianity, the Pau Cin Hau movement. In 1902, a Sukte from the area of Tedim created his own religion along with a writing system. According to the historical records it was the first writing system ever created by a Zo highlander. The Pau Cin Hau alphabet has 57 characters and is easily learned.⁸⁷⁰ It appears that the alphabet was intended for all of the Zo to adopt. That is, it is not exclusive, rather inclusive of all Zo highland groups containing elements of many of the dialects spoken.⁸⁷¹

Pau Cin Hau was born in 1859 and according to oral history had a normal childhood.⁸⁷² He was in his thirties when the British moved in to annex the hills; first attacking the Sizang area, Pau Cin Hau's home, in the early part of the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1888-1890. As he had prophesized, his village was destroyed in the early part of the expedition. His family fled north for a time. During this time, Pau Cin Hau claims to have received many revelations from the supreme being known to many Zo highlanders as *pathian* or *pasian*. As explained in Chapter 1, although Zo highland clans and groups feared 'evil' spirits, they also believed in one supreme being or 'god.' Pau Cin

⁸⁷⁰ The Pau Cin Hau script has received a lot of attention from Linguists especially those occupied with endangered languages.

⁸⁷¹ Pandey, A. (2011). "Proposal to Encode the Pau Cin Hau Alphabet in ISO/IEC 10646" to UTC and WG2, University of Michigan, pg. 2.

⁸⁷² Vumson, *History*, pg. 148.

Hau had predicted the destruction of the Tedim area but was dismissed. He composed a song expressing his disappointment. It reads in part:

Though God of Gods, reigning on high, I
heard a hint – They word. Unheard,
unknown in days of yore...⁸⁷³

Pau Cin Hau was said to be so devastated by others dismissing him that he lived as an invalid for some fifteen years.⁸⁷⁴ Pau Cin Hau insisted that he received many prophesies and instructions from *pathian* such as not to kill animals, do heavy work, engage in commercial activities, to not argue or lodge complaints on a special day Pau Cin Hau called the *Laaini*. The *Laaini* day was reserved for the worship of *pathian* and his teachings.⁸⁷⁵ Much like the Christian Sunday, *paithan* had his day as well. Pau Cin Hau received many more visions two of which, it may be argued, had a direct impact on the modernity and progress of the Zo highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas.⁸⁷⁶

First, according to Pau Cin Hau, all sacrifices to the *dawi* or evil spirits had to stop. Sacrificing animals, food stock and other elements essential for Zo highlander life was a great burden on families, clans and even entire communities. Vumson argues that elaborate and frequent sacrifices resulted in poverty. Pau Cin Hau may have realized this and thus, he expressed to other Zo highlanders that *pathian* no longer expected *dawi* sacrifices. Furthermore, *pathian* is said to have brought a writing system to him. The writing system was all inclusive and could be learned by any Zo highlander. This would be a unifying system. All civilized people of the plains, for example, had a writing system and used it for communication. Thus, Pau Cin Hau's movement was a carbon copy of Christianity. It had all the necessary elements including the workshop of one supreme god on an assigned day. Furthermore, the movement allowed Zo to accumulate wealth. An over-

⁸⁷³ *Op.cit.*

⁸⁷⁴ Nginsuanh, S. (1968-1969). "Brief History of Laipian : Pau Cin Hau and History." *Rangoon University Chin Students Culture and Literature Subcommittee Annual Magazine*, Rangoon, 1968-1969. (page unknown)

⁸⁷⁵ *Op.cit.*

⁸⁷⁶ Vumson, *History*, pg. 147-153.

abundance of sacrifices was no longer necessary. Pau Cin Hau's god allowed wealth, a day of rest, provided a writing system that was all inclusive and came to communicate in visions.⁸⁷⁷

Although the historical records indicate that Pau and his family fled north where he lived as an invalid, it is entirely plausible that he travelled up to Assam where missionaries, as mentioned previously, had already enjoyed success. He may have seen the churches and witnessed the teaching of a writing system along with the basic elements of Christianity. Yet, his was not Christianity; it was a belief system brought by foreigners and was in direct competition with it. *Laipian*, as it came to be called, was a factor of modernity.⁸⁷⁸ It represented two dialectical desires of the Zo highlanders at the turn of the century. They wanted to modernize like others in Northeast India had already achieved and that the missionaries promised was possible for the Zo as well. They also brought a better method of healing that did not require costly sacrifices. But they did not want to join the religion brought by foreigners. These foreigners, while proclaiming to bring salvation, also interfered with the everyday lives of the Zo. They frowned upon *zu*, did not understand the importance of oral history and generally worked in conjunction with the British officers to control the Zo through their chiefs, headman and new laws not experienced by the Zo before.

The first to accept *Laipian* were Zo highlanders around the area of Tedim. They took the system and spread it along with Pau Cin Hau's teaching beyond the Chin Hills and to areas such as to Manipur, the Lushai Hills and even beyond. According to the 1931 Census of India, 35,7000 people in the India-Burma Provinces had adopted the Pau Cin Hau religion.⁸⁷⁹ Over time, he and his religion have taken on some mystery. In fact, there still exist some Pau Cin Hau followers. The University of Rangoon Magazine published in 1968-69 reported that around 20,000 still followed *Laipian*. The article emphasized that 'Chin' of Burma tried to reclaim their culture and traditions,

⁸⁷⁷ Nginsuanh, S. (1968-1969). "Brief History of Laipian : Pau Cin Hau and History." *Rangoon University Chin Students Culture and Literature Subcommittee Annual Magazine*, Rangoon, 1968-1969. (page unknown)

⁸⁷⁸ 'Laipian' means 'Creator of language,' hence the movement came to be referred to it this way given that the writing system was central to the movement.

⁸⁷⁹ Nginsuanh, "Brief," pg. unknown.

all of which were 'stolen' from them by first, the Company, then by the British and finally by the Christian Missionaries. The Pau Cin Hau movement is indicative of Zo highlanders' attempting to reclaim their own identities. Those that converted to Christianity and espouse it, dismiss Pau Cin Hau, his writing system as well as his religion insisting that he was a heretic. Again this movements deserves further study.

Heraka

There was another religious revival around the same time in other areas of the highlands, in areas occupied by the Naga. The Heraka movement, as described by Anthropologist Arkotong Longkumer was a reform movement originated from a local animist religion. It was adopted by a large Naga community, the Zeme, during the era of British colonialism. This religion was brought by two prophets, Jadonang (1905-31) and Gaidinliu (1915-93) from Manipur. They managed to gain a large following that still exists today.⁸⁸⁰ The British, however, accused both prophets of causing trouble in the Naga highlands. They hanged Jadonang for alleged human sacrifice and jailed Gaidiniliu who spent 18 years of her life in prison.⁸⁸¹ This movement, however, was not as much about religion as it was anti-Kuki. As explained earlier, Pemberton in conjunction with the Manipur Raj of 1834 relocated some Zo highlanders to Manipur. They were called the 'New Kuki' and faced xenophobia in Manipur.⁸⁸² For the want of space, this movement is not elaborated upon. However, it is argued that both movements sprung up during the era of colonialism to reject the intrusion of colonial officers and missionaries who were set on impacting, controlling and dominating those among who they worked and preached.⁸⁸³ Zo's quest for agency is evidenced by these movements.

At the same time, the Zo continued to engage in internal warfare. The Heraka movement was disguised as religious revival, but at its heart it reacted to the

⁸⁸⁰ For a fascinating contemporary Anthropological account of the Heraka movement read for instance: Longkumer, A. (2010). *Reform, Identity and Narratives of Belonging: The Heraka Movement of Northeast India*. MPG Books Group: Great Britain.

⁸⁸¹ Longkumer, *Reform*, pg. 2.

⁸⁸² *Ibid.*, pg. 60-64.

⁸⁸³ *Ibid*, pg. 157.

Kuki who had recently encroached on their territory. Although the leaders of Heraka were hanged and jailed by the British authorities, the anti-Kuki sentiment which existed before the movement and continued thereafter, exploded into a full rebellion in 1917. What was lost on the British, however, was that it was not a war against the British. It was a war against the Kuki who the British had allowed to enter Naga territory.

This movement, like Pau Cin Hau's movement, demonstrated a certain desire for agency among the highlanders. Modernity had arrived in the hills by western colonialists whether Government officials or preachers. A religious movement among the highlanders may have served as a unifying force. That is, in order to counter British and missionary occupation, some highlanders may have realized the importance of joining forces. However, while both movements managed to claim some followers, they did little to halt the occupation of the western foreigners.

Either way, the British were now present in the hills, on both sides of the border. There they worked with chiefs to control and manage the whole of the Zo. In the Lushai Hills, the British instructed political officers to:

...keep moving about among chiefs, with the object of establishing political influence and control over them, and induce them to submit themselves gradually to our rule.⁸⁸⁴

Chief Hau Cin Kup

Political officer Carey was already working with chiefs and headmen in the Chin Hills during this time, the late 1890s. Furthermore, the British continued to collect intelligence on the Zo highlanders. For instances, there a numerous memos about "Influential Personages in Upper Burma"

⁸⁸⁴ Instructions to Captain Browne, the Political Officer of north Lushai Hills contained in Chief Commissioner of Assam's letter No. 1468-P dated April 1890 IN Verghese, *History*, pg. 295-296.

communicated to the headquarters in Rangoon.⁸⁸⁵ Hau Cin Kup had one such entry. Hau Cin Kup's entry reads that he is of the Kamhau tribe, is a chief and...:

...has been friendly during the past season, and has ably assisted Political Officers by providing a large number of coolies when required. Has great influence, and is respected by the tribe.⁸⁸⁶

Hau Cin Khup was indeed a powerful chief. He, like his ancestor chief Kamhau before him, managed to acquire a large following. Although his following had grown weak, it was revived during the colonial era. In fact, it was revived because of the colonial attacks during the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1890. That is, his ancestry had been royalty in the Northern Arakan Yomas long before the arrival of the British. Hau Cin Khup was just a teen-ager when the colonials attacked the Zo highlands with its three columns and powerful weaponry. After defeat, Hau Cin Kup refused to surrender and give up his numerous slaves. Carey often emphasized the immaturity of Hau Cin Kup. In fact, Carey explained, at length, the role of Hau Cin Kup in the Colonial history of the British:

This Chief is young and ambitious, but unable to maintain unaided on account of his youth and the superior influence acquired by his uncles and cousins before his birth. He consequently appealed to me to help him to gain and keep the position which is his by right of birth and custom. I eagerly espoused his cause, placed him in his proper position, and have stood staunchly by him; for this Howchinkup has repaid me handsomely; last year he

⁸⁸⁵ NAM, 1894, List of Personages in Upper, Burma Compiled in the Intelligence Department, Burma District, May 1894, Acc. 3303, pg. 11, 27.

⁸⁸⁶*Op.cit.*

disarmed his clan and this year he has disarmed several of the Thado villages for us, including villages which were then claimed and are now owned by Manipur.

During the Boundary Commission he saved us the expense of making a base 60 miles from Tiddim by guaranteeing and fulfilling his promise to ration the party and protect

the stores without military guards. Later, again, he played an active part in the Siyin operations, and his name certainly deserves to be mentioned amongst those who contributed to the successful conclusion of the campaign.⁸⁸⁷

He gained so much power that he would make difficult requests of the British officers. For instance, after many Zo were converted, Hau Cin Kup had a disagreement with the Karen Sunday school teacher, *Saya Po Ku*, and asked the British Government to deport him. They however declined this request. Thus, Hau Cin Kup took it upon himself to destroy the church buildings, including the school, for which he had paid.

British officers were utterly out of their element. They did not know whether to appease Hau Cin Kup or deny his wishes for another school to be built elsewhere. Numerous telegrams were sent back and forth between the frontier and the Zo hills. It was recognized that despite conversion, the Zo still maintained their culture of following chief's orders. The Chin Hills Regulation of 1896 further stated that the British were not to intervene with internal disputes. Yet, by honouring Kup's requests, he would be regarded as the chief of the British as well. The Government was in a quandary. They had

⁸⁸⁷ Carey, *Chin Hills*, pg. 246-247.

created an elite but were unable to maintain their position of ultimate 'lords of the soil.'⁸⁸⁸

Finally, however, the British officer yielded to Hau Cin Kup's requests justifying their decision they explained:

I feel that the leaders of the Society would recognize that, if the Mission is to succeed among the Kanhows, it is not good policy to have the Chief antagonistic; and as a last resort, I think that the Society might be approached, unofficially, to help settle this awkward dispute. It seems to me that all that is need to win over Howchinkup is a round table discussion, a change of tactics on the part of Mr Cope [the missionary] and the transfer of *Saya Po Ku*.⁸⁸⁹

Rev. Cope, however, was appalled that the British would allow a Zo so much power, especially when it came to the mission. He wrote telegrams and letters to the British insisting that they not honor Kup's requests. Cope addressed all aspects of the case in immense detail with the strong and substantiated argument that Kup was not to interfere with the mission. However, the British officials elected to honor Kup's request some two years after its initiation. The Zo had gained the power to exercise their agency even under British occupation. This case, one of many, highlights that the Zo had realized their own power and could employ agency to participate in their own lives. The British realized that it was absolutely necessary to work with the local chiefs and headmen, the elite of Zo society. Finally, the American Missionaries realized that they would not be supported by the British, at least not in this case.⁸⁹⁰

⁸⁸⁸ NAM, Political Department Notes, File No. 2C.-8, 1914, Acc. 07108, pg. iii-10.

⁸⁸⁹ NAM, Political Department Notes, File No. 2C.-8, 1914, Acc. 07108, pg. iii,

⁸⁹⁰ *Op.cit.*

It is also important to note that Kup was Pau Cin Hau's childhood friend. Thus, as he rose in status among the British and thus with the Zo, his friend 'took over' the religious aspect of the hills. This relationship, not thoroughly explored here, deserves much attention. It implies that there may have been an alliance between these two childhood friends to employ a division of labor to bring the Zo into the modern era, Pau through worship, Kup through economic power along with his relationship to the British.

Either way, on 1 January, 1918, the British presented Kup with a Certificate of Good Service. He was rewarded for assisting the British. They presented him with a gun and a certificate.⁸⁹¹ When Carey left his duty as political officer of the Chin Hills to return to England, he wrote a personal letter to Kup thanking him for his assistance and friendship over 25 years. Other chiefs were also praised by the colonial Government. As is illustrated in Chapter 1, Khuplian of Lopei village was honoured by the Lieutenant Governor of Burma in 1922. He was rewarded with a gun as well as a certificate. Upon his death, the British honour was chiselled into Lian's memorial stone.⁸⁹² The Zo were proud for being honoured by the colonial Government. They did not expect, however, that at Independence, the British would simply leave British India and ignore their demands and wishes for self-governing in exchange for their services.

The political officers understood that by working with chiefs they had a chance of control. In fact, at times political officers expressed frustration with the colonial Government's decisions-making back in Headquarters, which seemingly understood very little about the Zo highlanders. This is illustrated in one letter from Political Officer Brown to Government (endorsed by Carey) about moving the Chin-Lushai Hills border further east, encroaching on what was now under Burma's jurisdiction. It reads in part:

You know my views on the subject. Your line should be the best available which gives to Lushai the people of that race, and which gives to the Arakan Hill Tracts the

⁸⁹¹ Go, *Zo*, pg. 79.

⁸⁹² Vumson, *Zo History*, pg. Preface.

people allied to your people. Let me advise you not to surmise or prophesy as to what these inhabitants in the country, whose future you are to discuss, will do in the event of the line being drawn in this latitude or in that latitude. I mean, do not prophesy that they will all come under your wing wherever the line may be drawn. The people will go where the lands are best for cultivation...⁸⁹³

Officer H.A. Brown was clearly annoyed and frustrated by the proposal of a border shifting. He, like other officers, had come to understand that the Zo highlanders would try and maintain independence to the upmost degree and that assuming that they would easily 'come under the wing' of the British was a gross misjudgement of Zo highlander character. In fact, Zo were crossing the borders all the time and continued to raid, murder and procure slaves when necessary. The British were incensed that these behaviours continued. They realized that although the Northern Arakan Yomas were divided into different jurisdictions, the officers from their respective domains had to communicate with officers from across their borders.

Mr. W.J. Reid, Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner in Assam wrote to the Government of Burma:

The Superintendent of the Lushai Hills recommends that the officers on the border districts of the two provinces should meet as often as can be conveniently arranged, that all information, which any of the three

⁸⁹³ NAM, Demi-official letter from B.S. Carey, Esq., C.I.E., Officiating Commissioner, Arakan Division, W.S. Thom, Esq. Deputy Commissioner, Northern Arakan, --No. 624-7P.-5, 1908, dated the 31st of December 1908. Acc. 6579, pg. 1.

receives should be communicated to the other two officers promptly...⁸⁹⁴

They were correct in their assumptions. Many Zo highlanders would remain defiant against the new British presence in the hills. Still, the next decade was marked by relative peace until, that is, the First World War broke out.

World War I and Dissent

By the time the First World War broke out, dissent of some Zo highlanders was evident. The Government set a fixed-number of young able-bodied men from every clan and every village for the French labour camps. They insisted that Zo highlanders from both, the Chin Hills and the Lushai Hills, forfeit their young men. From the Lushai Hills, 200 men per month were supplied to the British war effort.⁸⁹⁵ The conscripted soldiers obeyed Government's demands and joined the Allied Forces. About a million soldiers and half a million non-combatants were sent abroad to fight in the Allied Forces. It was already established that the Zo highlanders, like the Ghurkhas of Nepal, were inherently designed for warfare; they were an ideal martial race. The ones that did not fight were utilized to load weaponry for the front and on their return evacuated the wounded. The Zo, as labours, were equally valuable.⁸⁹⁶

When more men were demanded for conscription, however, chiefs of the Chin Hills refused to allow their young men to leave. In fact, numerous chiefs of different clans joined forces and openly revolted against the British in 1916. The Kuki in Manipur reacted the same way, they refused to send any more young men. Ironically, the political officers were unable to deal with the situation because most of their conscripted police force had already been sent to join the war efforts. A scholar argued that the reason the Kuki rebellion hit such a high is because there was procrastination on the part of the British who did not know how to manage the increasingly precarious

⁸⁹⁴ NAM, Political Correspondence File No. 2c-9, 1914, Part I, From Mr W.J. Reid, Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, --No. 491P, dated the 30th January 14.

⁸⁹⁵ Verghese, *A History*, pg. 340.

⁸⁹⁶ Vumson, *History*, pg. 134.

situation.⁸⁹⁷ There was a flourish of telegrams being sent back and forth from the hills to Headquarters in Rangoon. These records reveal that the British did not realize the reasons for the uprising. The Superintendent from the fort at Haka wrote:

Impossible to assign cause with certainty,
but probably work of ...Haka and other
discontented Chiefs, who by spreading lies
about our Labour Corps have worked in
the natural reduction in number of officers
in the hills as a sign of weakening our
power. Some thirty or forty villages are
said to be concerned wholly or in
part...Regret vagueness of information,
but impossible to get certain information
till more surrender.⁸⁹⁸

The political officers were in the dark even assuming that some 'lies' were being spread. However, it was also a show of defiance on the part of the Zo. They began to realize that they, if united, could rebel against the British whose demands were constantly increasing. Since the annexation, the Zo hills were infiltrated by British political officers, by their entourages from cooks to coolies, by missionaries who also had entourages in the form of indigenized preachers from the Southern Zo hills and from the area of Karen. Not only were the hills occupied by these foreigners, but the Zo were also expected to adhere to the new Regulations which included paying fines, dues and when crimes were committed, it was the British that held the trials. Moreover, the British had the power to deport Zo out of the hills and lock them up in plains jails.

The British, however, were not easily defeated once they chose to occupy a certain region and its people. Laura Carson telegraphed Missionary

⁸⁹⁷ Vergheze, *The History*, pg. 342.

⁸⁹⁸ NAM, Telegram from L.T. Daun, Esq. Assistant Superintend, Chin Hills, Falam to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, -No. 1919, dated the 26th December, 1917, ACC., 07435, pg. 14.

headquarters in America. She sent an urgent message without much detail only that she was in grave danger and could not explain her situation.⁸⁹⁹ The British was outraged and prepared for war. The British moved in and without much surprise defeated the Haka who had risen against the conscriptions of soldiers as well as the increasing demands of the British

A simultaneous rebellion erupted among the Zo now in Manipur who the colonial referred to as the 'New Kuki.' These were originally Thado but were resettled in Manipur during the time of Pemberton and thereafter. They rose against the British by first attacking Government buildings, harassing British subjects and once again, by attacking the tea plantations in the foothills. The British struck back hard. The Kuki uprising, like the Haka uprising came to a close at the end of the open season in 1919. Zo historians report that harsh sentences were carried-out. Most chiefs thought responsible for the uprising were jailed at Imphal and sentenced to 15-20 years. There they were tortured in order to extract more information about the instigators of this war.

However, the British were unable to obtain any more information and in an unprecedented move, sent the chiefs from Imphal to India where they would be unable to exercise any sort of control of their clans in the Zo highlands.⁹⁰⁰

Kuki politicians argue that it was the Naga that supplied the British with vital intelligence causing their defeat.⁹⁰¹ This has not been established. However, the Kuki and Naga have been in conflict ever since. It is difficult to ascertain, however, whether the War of 1917-1919 caused this conflict or whether the accusation toward the Naga was a result of current struggles between the Naga and the Kuki.⁹⁰² Either way, the hills were by no means peaceful. Feuds and conflicts continued. On the whole, however, the Zo seemed to accept defeat by the British. Instead of fighting them, they began working with the British. The soldiers that returned from the First World War brought with them tales of distant lands, technology, western women of the night, and

⁸⁹⁹ NAM, From L.P. Briggs, Esq. Consul of the United States of America at Rangoon to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, -No. 310, dated 30th November 1917, Acc., 07434, pg. 4.

⁹⁰⁰ Haokip, *Zale'n-Gam*, pg. 185-258.

⁹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 251.

⁹⁰² For more on the Kuki, read for instance: Gangte, T.S., (2010). *The Kukis of Manipur: A Historical Analysis*, Gian Ridhi: New Delhi.

above all a monetary wealth not experienced in the highlands before.⁹⁰³ Before leaving the highlands, Zo believed that the sun rose in the mountains. Upon their return they were convinced that the sun rose from the ocean.⁹⁰⁴

As Zo became educated through the efforts of the missionaries, on both sides of the border, the opportunities opened up for them. They were recruited as policemen and army officers. They now used education as a means of furthering their marginal status within the Northern Arakan Yomas. The British, however, were not keen on seeing every single Zo educated. They realized that education would possibly hamper their control over the Zo. Thus, the British actively closed schools on the Burma side of the border. They chose only the children of chiefs to attend schools. Again, they were in the construction of an elite. This elite group of Zo would work in conjunction with the colonial government to control the rest of the highlanders and continue extracting taxes, conscripted soldiers, and manual labour when necessary.

World War II and the Tedim Road

By 1940, most Zo highlanders had converted to Christianity. While it was not a single modern moment, rather a process, they did eventually accept the Christian God, learned to read and write, fought in World War I on the side of the British and now realized their agency within the British Raj. World War II brought with it another chance to exercise agency. One specific road, the Tedim road played a pivotal role in WWII.

The Tedim Road connected Imphal in Manipur to Tedim in the Chin Hills. This road is nearly 300km long and was built for the sole purpose of transporting military supplies during the war.⁹⁰⁵ The British relied on the Zo to support their war effort. They fought abroad as well as at home in the Northern Arakan Yomas defending it from the invasion of the Japanese. British officers wrote of their time in the Chin Hills, for instance. Dr. Desmond Kelley collected his father's letter sent during the time of the war to

⁹⁰³ Vumson, *History*, pg. 137-139.

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 134.

⁹⁰⁵ Pau, P.K. (2012). "Tedim Road-The Strategic Road on a Frontier: A Historical Analysis," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 36, No. 5, September-October 2012, 776-786.

his family back home in England. The truisms learned in the early constructions of the Zo were reiterated by Kelly. He wrote:

The Chins are a hill race, vigorous, warm-hearted and very hospitable – the name ‘Chin’ is said to mean ‘comrade’. They were loyal and tough...⁹⁰⁶

The construction and identity making of the Chin were alas, effective. No longer were they presented with the caveat that they do not refer to themselves as Chin. Also it is accepted that Chin means comrade, as Luce had argued in 1961. Kelly continues by referring to Chin history:⁹⁰⁷

They were originally headhunters and a warrior race that had given the British a tough time between 1888 and 1894...The Chins have many features in common with Lushais of Bengal and Assam to the west, and the Kukis of Manipur in the north.⁹⁰⁸

While he mentioned the Lushai and the Kuki he does not explain why they are across the border, nor is it necessary given that he is telling the story of his father, a British political officer who was posted in Tedim in WWII. According to Major-General Ian Lyall Grant, Kelly persuaded the Chins to fight on behalf of the British instead of the Japanese. He led them in guerrilla warfare and brought them to build a road from Imphal to Tedim, now known as the Tiddim Road.⁹⁰⁹

Information about the Zo had taken on a romantic tone. They were comrades of the British, loyal and hard-working. They were a warrior race, tenacious, able to follow and carry out order and robust. The British too, had come to appreciate the Zo. They thought of them as allies in the war against the Japanese and praised their efforts. In fact, even King George V was so

⁹⁰⁶ Kelly, *Kelly's.*, pg. 26.

⁹⁰⁷ Desmond Kelly is Norma Kelly's son. He is also a retired Psychiatrist. Thus, it is rather odd that he would repeat that the Zo are a 'warrior-race.'

⁹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 27.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. xiii.

impressed by the Chin, he made clear that he would be delighted to meet a delegation of them. The Chin were called to London, from France where they were fighting, and met the King of England. The Zo were now citizens--subjects of one of the greatest Empires in the world. Their service was recognized; they even enjoyed an audience with the King of England, George V.⁹¹⁰

In 1939 when it was apparent that the war would play out in the Chin Hills against the Japanese, the Governor of Burma, Sir Archibald Cochrane ordered a Durbar in Falam on 2 April.⁹¹¹ A speech addressed to the Chin read, in part:

I know that in Mr Naylor you have an officer who is equally determined to do all in his power to bring prosperity to the Chin Hills. The welfare of the people of the Chin Hills is a direct responsibility of the Governor of Burma and, while as Governor I look to you yourself to conduct your affairs wisely and to be energetic in making the hills healthier, more prosperous and better to live in, I wish you to know that your interests are my interests and your efforts at betterment will always receive the help and encouragement of the officers of Government who serve under my direction.⁹¹²

The speech continued with a plethora of benefits including better education programs, better medical care, the posting of veterinaries in the hills, better

⁹¹⁰ Ibid., pg. 30-31.

⁹¹¹ According the historical records, it was his intention to participate in the Durbar, but was called away. He ordered Desmond Kelly to take his place instead.

⁹¹² Kelly, *Kelly's*, pg. 33-34.

employment and more opportunities economically. Kelly also emphasized the impending service of the Zo in the war effort against the Japanese:

You will be interested to know that over 200 Chin recruits are being taken every year into the Burma Defence Force and that in course of time an equivalent number will be returning to their homes having earned their pensions or gratuities and acquired a wider knowledge of the world. It is my hope that after retirement Governor's Commissioned Officers and other ranks will make use of the education, training and discipline which they acquired while service with the Burma Defence Force for the benefit of the whole community when they return home.⁹¹³

The Zo were actively recruited as soldiers in the Burma Defence forces. Many recruits were sent to Singapore and Malaya to fend off the Japanese invasion. Kelly did not realize that the Chin Hills on the fringes of the Empire would soon become a major battlefield. In fact, the historical records reveal that the British under-estimated the Japanese.⁹¹⁴

In the open season of 1942, the Japanese attacked North East India. The British had fortified the ports; entering Burma through the Bay of Bengal was pointless. It was the most strategic point of entry. There were only seven officers in an area of 10,000 square miles and the possibility of communication was almost non-existent.⁹¹⁵ The Japanese recognized that there were few British officers posted in the Northern Arakan Yomas, thus it was a perfect point of entry. British officers realized the precarious position

⁹¹³ *Op.cit.*

⁹¹⁴ Pum, *The Tedim Road*, pg. 779.

⁹¹⁵ NAM, Secret Letter from the Office of the D.O.C., Falam dated 20 August, 1943. Acc. 00102, pg. 20.

of the Zo Hills and began sending troops to the hills. Kelly wrote a letter to his wife indicating that a war in the Hills was imminent.⁹¹⁶

The Zo had to be prepared. The Deputy Office of the Chin Hills began a campaign of propaganda to instil in the Zo that they were to support the British but that they would also be defending themselves. Again, the British used the chiefs and the elders to communicate the seriousness of the situation. The Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Chin Hills reported:

On my way back from Tiddim I met Kelly...where I also saw the Siyin elders. I gave them a pretty straight talk of their position, pointing out that it was not a question of them defending us but of defending themselves. I think they now realize that there is much more to be lost by taking a weak line against the Japanese than there is by fighting the Japanese.⁹¹⁷

The Zo realized that they could choose to support the Japanese. However, although the colonial records suggest that the Zo had to be persuaded to fight on behalf of the British, the Zo themselves, did not entertain supporting the Japanese. For the Zo, this was not really their war, rather the war of the British. But by the 1940s the Zo had experienced the advantages of cooperating with the British. Officers were comfortable that the Zo would support the British war effort as well. The Deputy Office sent an update to Rangoon:

As already noted my main propaganda theme has been that it is better to fight the Jap and keep him out of the Hills altogether [*sic*] than to hope for mercy from him in exchange for apathy. This line can only result in the hills becoming a

⁹¹⁶ Kelly, *Kelly's*, pg. 109-110.

⁹¹⁷ NAM, Office of the Deputy Commissioner Chin Hills, Dated Falam, the 1st August 1943, Acc. 00102, pg 1.

battle field, with consequent loss of life and property. On the whole I am very pleased with moral in all areas visited.⁹¹⁸

Later, officers panicked. There was a flourish of exchanges from the frontier to headquarters. These were primarily related to the impending attack.

In the Lushai Hills, the British formed the Lushai Brigade. Their primary role was to collect reconnaissance and harass the Japanese lines of communication.⁹¹⁹ According to Zo scholars of the Lushai Hills, the Lushai served 'cheerfully.'⁹²⁰ Unfortunately, there are very few first-hand accounts written by the Zo who served in either or both world wars. However, one Lushai soldier, Thenphunga Sailo did write of his experiences in World War II. While the Zo of the Chin Hills studied at the universities in Burma, the Zo on the Lushai side of the border attended school in India such as Serampore College. The Zo of the Chin and the Lushai Hills were rarely in contact other than through trade within the hills. In the plains of British-India, they were separated. Zo of the Chin Hills studied in Rangoon and Mandalay alongside Burmese and other ethnic minorities of Burma. The Zo of the Lushai Hills and Manipur also studied in the plains. Their classmates were made up of Indians, Naga, Garos and Khasis.⁹²¹ The war, however, would bring the Zo together once again.

Sailo was in his fourth year at Serampore when news of World War II broke out. A student of mathematics at that time, he recalls that there was, "war hysteria all over the country."⁹²² Many professors and students eagerly joined the war effort. Sailo was sent to the area of Falam and introduced to Stevenson who explained that the Chin were very loyal to the British and planned to harass the Japanese as much as possible. Later, Stevenson confessed that he had been worried whether the Zo from the Chin and the Lushai Hills would work together. They did, however, work together under the leadership of Sailo. By this point in history, impressions of each other

⁹¹⁸ *Op.cit.*

⁹¹⁹ Verghese, *The History*, pg. 352.

⁹²⁰ *Op.cit.*

⁹²¹ Sailo, T. (2000). *A Soldier's Story*. Author: Calcutta, pg. 22.

⁹²² *Ibid.*, pg. 24.

had been formed. Sailo reports that the Chin were rather savage when compared to the Lushai. When a Chin decapitated a Japanese, he took the head and danced around it in celebration. Sailo implies that this act would not have been carried out by the Zo in the Lushai Hills.⁹²³

The Zo in Mizoram had come to identify with colonials and now made the Zo on the other side into the savages and primitives in great need of civility. Thus, the Zo in the Lushai Hills now became the mimic men of the British by placing themselves higher on the civilization hierarchy than the Zo in Burma. Furthermore, again, the information and stereotyping that was provided by informants and later informants-cum-colonial officers, now separated from the original sources, thus the impressions, it can be argued, had been subjected to the Sleeper Effect. No one questioned sources of information, they only internalized the message, namely that the Zo on different sides of the border were different and in this case, more savage.

Either way, the Zo did support the war effort during WWII. Generally, the Zo were praised by British officers to fending off the Japanese beyond the Tedim road. Newspapers back in London reported the success of the Zo in the Chin Hills.⁹²⁴ The Zo and the British were now on the same side of this war. In an ironic turn, they now shared information about the barbaric nature of the Japanese. Lieutenant Sir Geoffrey Evans wrote in his diary:

According to the Hakas, the Japanese were omnivorous creatures who devoured everything it was humanly possible to eat...I've been told on various occasions that while the pigs' food, a mixture of the residue from making *Zu* and plantain stems, was being boiled up, a party of Japanese had arrived and, having taken it off the fire, had eaten it with relish. This

⁹²³ *Ibid.*, pg. 36.

⁹²⁴ "More Gains in Burma," *Evening Telegraph*, Saturday 21 October, 1944, pg. 8.; "Jap Attack Beaten Off," *Derby Daily Telegraph*, Derbyshire, England, Friday 13 October 1944, pg. 8; "Japs Lose Chin Hill Keypoint," *Gloucestershire Echo*, 07 November 1944, pg. 4.

consumption of pigs' food had made even
the Chins look down on the Japanese.⁹²⁵

The Zo had achieved what may be deemed as civility. Their being able to look down on another people meant that they were civilized. Fifty years after annexation of the Northern Arakan Yomas, the Zo learned to read, write, and had become aware of the world at large. They were able to make decisions about their role in global matters, such as the participation in this war. They were praised by British officers for the gallant service.⁹²⁶ They had climbed the civilization hierarchy and were now above other people and seemingly enjoyed their new positions; they seemed grateful to the British having shared the above story the colonial officers.

Vum Ko Hau: An example of Zo Agency

Vum Ko Hau serves as a perfect example for the agency required by the Zo. He was a stenographer, trained by the British, before the war. He was set on becoming an officer in the British Raj. After the war, he applied for an Emergency Commission to which the Director of Education, Alexander Campbell, replied with a letter sent by a British officer on behalf of Hau.

The letter suggests that Hau is an ideal candidate as a commissioned officer or as an armed police officer in the Zo hills or in Burma.⁹²⁷ Hau, while waiting for the appointment returned to politics. During the Japanese occupation, he was the Chief politician of the occupied Chin Hills.

Furthermore, he was the chairman of the Chin Leaders' Freedom League founded to ensure the interests of the Zo in the Chin Hills were met. Hau also complained bitterly about the British officers who were posted in the hills. He wrote:

Most of these [posts] were filled by
irregular British officers who had seen
some service in Burma or the Frontier

⁹²⁵ Evan, G. (1964). *The Johnnies*, Cassell: London, pg. 192.

⁹²⁶ Hau, *Profiles*, pg. 74.

⁹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 75-76.

Areas but whose educational qualifications were uncertain.⁹²⁸

Hau was confident that his education and service has superseded those of the British officers. He had moved beyond the British. Clearly, the Zo had become agents in their own plight and would now turn to politics in order to participate in the making of their own futures. Hau explained:

I had tasted what independence was; what an independent action looked like. I had experienced being a master of my own affairs for the first time [during the war and later Japanese occupation]. I had managed to look after the affairs of my own people during the British withdrawal.⁹²⁹

The Zo of the Chin Hills were now bitter toward the aging chiefs who so eagerly cooperated with the British before the wars. They now sought independence from the British. Hau attended the first Panglong meeting along with Bogyoke Aung San. By this point, the Zo of the Chin Hills, “had not decided that the future of the Chin Hills should be.”⁹³⁰ Aung San assured Hau that he would look after the Chin interests; that they should not be neglected as the British had. He promised to bring education, hospital and roads to the Hills. Hau praises Aung San as being one of the most sincere Burmans he had ever met, although Aung San, to some, was a controversial figure.⁹³¹

Independence

⁹²⁸ *Ibid*, pg. 77.

⁹²⁹ *Ibid*, pg. 78.

⁹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 79.

⁹³¹ Charney explains that Aung San faced much opposition, including from Saw and his Myochit Party. Others also opposed Aung San due, as Charney argues, their personal jealousy. Furthermore, Aung San was not a favourable figure in the eyes of the British. Winston Churchill referred to Aung San as a ‘traitor rebel leader’ and that insisted that he was cruel toward the loyal Burmese during the war. Later and in present day, rumours exist that Aung San was actually part Chin. This rumour has not been substantiated, however. It only shows that the Chin felt a strong affinity toward him.

On February 12, 1947 at Panglong, Bogyoke Aung San met with Chin leaders of the Northern Arakan Yomas⁹³² and members of the interim Burmese government to discuss the future of the Union of Burma.⁹³³ While the Chin leaders agreed to join the Union in the interim, they had just one major objective, eventual economic and political independence from it. A witness present at the Panglong Conference reported that,

[The] chieftain told me, 'I do not know anything [about the committee]...As for the future, we would like to remain as in the past...independent of other people.'⁹³⁴

On the other side of the border, a similar meeting took place. On August 14 in Aizawl, Lushai leaders met with L.L. Peters, British Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, and drafted a memorandum insisting on independence from the authority of India.⁹³⁵ The memorandum read:

[We] have nothing in common with the plains...wherever [we] go, [we] carry with [us our] primitive customs, cultures and mode of living in its purest origin, always calling and identifying [ourselves] as Mizo.⁹³⁶

Furthermore, the Zo of the Lushai Hills referred to Professor Reginald Coupland's recommendations. He had received a report from the Frontier authored by the officers posted in the Lushai Hills. They, in turn, referred to Reid's suggestions. These read, in part:

⁹³² Other members of the Union of Hills People, the Shan and the Kachin, were present as well. The Panglong conference is addressed in Chapter Six.

⁹³³ Tinker, H. (1967) *The Union of Burma: A Study of the first years of Independence*. Oxford University Press: London, pg. 25.

⁹³⁴ *Ibid.*, footnote 1. (taken from Burma Frontier Area Committee Enquiry, *Report*, Part II, pg. 37).

⁹³⁵ Verghese, C.G. and Thanzawna, M.C.S. (1997) *A History of the Mizos*, Vol. II, Vikas Publishing House, Pvt., Ltd. Kay Printers: Delhi, pgs. 2-3.

⁹³⁶ Chawngkunga, C. (1998) *Important Documents of Mizoram*. Art & Culture Development, First Edition. RTM Press: Aizawl, Mizoram, pg. 307.

We consider that the problem of the hill tracts of Burma and Assam is a single one. [The Zo] cannot be classed as “Indian”...or “Burmese.” ...the present boundary between the two countries must be regarded as entirely artificial.⁹³⁷

Copeland argued that the border be eliminated and that Zo ought to be given autonomy and that, in time, they would efficiently learn to govern themselves. However, at the time of Independence, the Zo of the Lushai Hills did not address border issues. Rather they wished to be given the opportunity to join a dominion, perhaps of East Pakistan.

It was clear that both groups of highlanders, on either side of the Northern Arakan Indo-Burma border had the same objective.⁹³⁸ Both wanted independence from the Governments of the plains.⁹³⁹ However, joining one another and reunifying of the Chin-Lushai Hills was not a serious possibility for either group.⁹⁴⁰ It was only several years later when the Zo realized their precarious positions on both sides of the Indo-Burma border in the nation-states of India (in the Lushai Hills as well as in Manipur) and of the Union of Burma.

On 19 July 1947, Aung San and seven out of ten people in the Council Chamber of the Secretariat Building to discuss national security were

⁹³⁷ Coupland, R. Private Papers. MSS. British Empire, S. 403, 1931-1945 India, Box 5, Files 2, The Constitutional Problem in India, f.f. 116-121 1943 June 1. Letter from the Amery about the “backward areas”, with a note by Reid and a commentary in it by Mills, Mitchell and McGuire, giving their “agreed personal views on the future of the hill tracts of Burma, Assam and Bengal.” Odelien Library, Rhodes House, Oxford: United Kingdom.

⁹³⁸ Other Zo highlanders were allotted to a third-nation state, that of East Pakistan south in the Arakan Yomas. This border is not addressed in this dissertation because it was not administratively part of the Chin-Lushai Hills during the colonial era.

⁹³⁹ It is important to note that ‘both groups of highlanders’ refers to leaders of the groups; it is not clear if this was a majority campaign.

⁹⁴⁰ The last superintendent of the Lushai Hills, L.L. Peters was asked by Lushai leaders to address this possibility, however, written evidence of his either addressing this verbally or in writing is not in the record.

assassinated.⁹⁴¹ Saw would later be hanged for the murders. The Zo of the Chin Hills were devastated. They composed many oral songs in memory of Aung San. One reads:

ZangSi Lun leh, VaiTui Lun mang

No hawn thiam zo lai tan zia.

Vaiman Ngamzang, Lun ang siat sa,

Ngam ngi a zial, kik veu tia

The Lordly Siyin and the Lordly Burman!

Your statesmanships have shone around the world

The fair Valley of Burma, prostrated under unknown Lord

You two have retrieved into your folds.⁹⁴²

He was a hero for the Zo of the Chin Hills. His assassination, they believed, meant further oppression, this time by the new Burmese government. In order to bring independence, the Zo had agreed to join the interim government of Burma. This would prove to have been a mistake. They did not demand legal recognition as being independent from the government of the plains, in Burma.

Hau would not rise up as one of the leaders of the Zo in the Chin Hills. First on his agenda was to replace unpopular chiefs with popular headmen. He realized that the chiefs, after decades of being agents of the British, no longer represented the Zo, rather their own selfish interests. Hau also abolished slavery and forced labour.⁹⁴³ The Zo of the Chin Hills were taking charge of their own futures.

⁹⁴¹ Charney, *A Modern*, pg. 68-69.

⁹⁴² Hau, *Profile*, pg. 98.

⁹⁴³ *Ibid*, pg. 105-106.

The Zo of the Lushai Hills also realized that they would have to take their futures into their own hands. Verghese, et.al. argue that, “up to the Second World War, there was no visible political awakening...”⁹⁴⁴ The chiefs in the Lushai Hills had enjoyed great privileges under British occupation; they were agents of the state. The British gave them much power including doling out *jhum* land. As explained in Chapter 1, land was a constant issue in the hills. Thus, the fact that the chiefs were put in control over land allotment was resented by the Zo. In 1948, the young Zo in the Lushai hills revolted against the chiefs. They also wanted to be given the chance to link-up with the Zo of the Chin Hills and others in Manipuir. The special privileges for the chiefs were eventually abolished and the demands for their own hills state reiterated.⁹⁴⁵

Whenever the bamboo, described in Chapter 1, flowered famine hit the Zo hills. The bamboo, which flowers every fifty years, bear high fructose fruit. Rats devour these and thus, there is an explosion in the rat population. The Zo in the Lushai Hills did not receive special support from the Indian State and thus, movements toward Separatism began. The Mizo National Front (MNF) was founded with the expressed purpose of becoming a separate state. The Zo in ManipurIn Burma, Ne Win, in a coup-de'-tat took control of the country and led the country under his military dictatorship in 1962.⁹⁴⁶

The following decades were marked with constant turmoil for the Zo on both sides of the border. The Zo had obtained educations and now began writing their own histories. Because of the precarious political situations, these histories often reflected an agenda for political purposes. Explicating on these movements is beyond the scope of this dissertation; suffice it to say, however, that the Zo in their respective states moved into different political directions. The Zo of India began their quest for land rights under the United Nations. The Zo of the Chin Hills joined the pro-democracy movement of Burma.

⁹⁴⁴ Verghese, *A History*, pg. 354.

⁹⁴⁵ Verghese, *A History*, Vol. 11, pg. 8-10.

⁹⁴⁶ Charney, *A History*, pg. 108.

Over time, the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas grew more distant from one another. In fact, as this author has argued elsewhere, the Zo of the Chin Hills from the area of Haka, began rising as an elite group of Zo. They initiated numerous movements including the Chin National Front (CNF) which eventually evolved into a political party.⁹⁴⁷

Fluid Identities

Numerous groups of Zo have separated themselves from others in a quest for political agency. This phenomenon, as well, is beyond the scope of this dissertation. That is, this type of study is best carried-out by anthropologists occupied with matters of identity, ethnicity and the formation of groups. However, two such Zo groups are briefly explained below to illustrate how some Zo's quests have manifested for recognition by their respective governments as well as by the greater world at large.

The first group is a small group of Zo from the township of Haka. They use academic arguments to separate themselves from other Zo, purporting that they have been Chin since "time immemorial" and are direct descendants of the Burmese. The other Zo, they argue, are simply sub-groups called Zomi.⁹⁴⁸ As is argued in Chapter 1, the nomenclature of Chin was adopted by the Burmese. As Lehman argued, 'Chin' is an old southern Zo word for 'people.' The Burmese mistakenly thought 'Chin' was an ethnic nomenclature and began employing it to refer to the Zo of the eastern side of the Northern Arakan Yomas.⁹⁴⁹ Some of these Zo have obtained educations and make compelling, however erroneous, arguments to elevate themselves beyond other Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas.

This group of Zo on the Burma side of the border refuses to recognize other Zo as their kin. They separated themselves into a small group and used conversion narratives as a tool to gain political power by claiming the prophet's power or *Heilbesitz*.⁹⁵⁰ The creation of an elite group of Zo from

⁹⁴⁷ Son, *Conversion*, pg. 3-5.

⁹⁴⁸ Sakhong, *In Search*, pg. 19.

⁹⁴⁹ Chit Hlaing, *Ethnic*, pg. 1-7.

⁹⁵⁰ Gerth, H. H. and Mills, C. W. (1946) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Oxford Press: New York, pg.

the area of Haka is not a new nor unique phenomenon however. In fact, it may be argued that this elite status among the Zo of the Chin Hills began during the colonial occupation of the hills. For instance, British officers posted in the Chin Hills decided to close some of the school and create a central school in Haka. In fact, political officer Tuck proposed to build a hostel in the area of Haka for the sons of chiefs. This way, they would benefit from the education provided by the American Baptist Mission.⁹⁵¹ The Zo of the area in and around Haka became somewhat of an elite region within the Chin Hills.

To solidify the elite position of the Haka, Sakhong claimed, “Since the arrival of the British, Haka became the capital of Eastern Chinram.” Actually Carey and Tuck were posted in the area of Tedim at Fort White. After the assassination of the township officer, however, they moved to the area of Falam and made it their headquarters, or the capital of the Chin Hills. In a series of covert actions, Zo from Haka, managed to claim the area of Haka as the Chin Hills capital. These actions, however, were carried out in the mid-twentieth century, not during the time of British occupation of the hills.⁹⁵²

Other groups of Zo in Manipur and Mizoram as well as in Burma now engage in serious tribal politics at the levels of academe and politics. David Zou, for instance, addressed the Zou of the borderland between Upper Burma and Southern Manipur. Zou illustrates how this particular group of Zo highlanders managed to sustain a fluid identity under changing historical contexts. For instance the Zou campaigned for recognition as one of the scheduled tribes of India in 1956.⁹⁵³ In this way, the Zou clans secured a recognized position within in the Indian state as an officially recognized Scheduled Tribe. While this brings agency and some protection under that state, it also differentiates them from other Zo, e.g. the Kuki, and thus supports Zo division and clan/group or ‘tribal’ conflicts.

⁹⁵¹ NAM POLITICAL DEPARTMENT MEMO Chief Secretary’s Office, 1921. Political Dept. No. 15C-11: Hotel with the necessary outhouses at Haka for the Sons of tedim Chiefs who attend the ABH School, May 1921. ACC. 4356.

⁹⁵² To read the details, read for instance: Suantak, V. (2012) “How Chin Capital Was Moved,” <http://chinlandtoday.info/how-chin-capital-was-moved/> (visited April 2, 2013).

⁹⁵³ Zou, *The Past*, pg. 209-235.

In the quest for political power and agency, other Zo resorted to revisionist histories. They have redefined their ethnicity as part of identity politics. One group of Zo, for instance, now claims that they are one of the lost tribes of Israel and argue for repatriation to Israel. In fact, Israel has recognized them as a lost tribe of Bnei Menashe and is making plans to repatriate these Zo. Israel politicians are being accused of using the Zo, referred to as Shinlung, to settle them in dangerous parts of Israel including the Gaza Strip. This group of Zo, however, seems undaunted by this possibility and continues to purport that they have maintained an ancient identity to Israel.⁹⁵⁴

While the Zo were not united a single government, they all practiced the same basic culture across time and space. Anthropologist Piang argues that the Zo experience is tinged by a shared primordial identity.⁹⁵⁵ Most scholars, colonial administrators and officials as well as the missionaries recognized that the Zo of the Northern Arakan Yomas shared a heritage, a culture and thus a history as is explained in Chapter 1.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrated that after annexation of the hills in 1890, the Zo moved toward modernity. First, colonial officials began implementing new methods of cultivation. This, they assumed, would stop the raiding of the plains. They did not understand, however, that raids were not always about seeking food supplies. In this way, as Chatterjee argues, the colonial officers were ignorant to reality of Zo society. Colonial officers also implemented trading among the Zo as well as to the plains. They then taxed the products resulting in revenue for the British Crown.

Furthermore, the colonial government began working with the chiefs. They employed a non-interference method of governing in the hills. This method was effective, the headman collected taxes on behalf of the British. In turn, they were allowed to govern their clans and groups without the inference of the colonial government. Eventually, however, some Zo revolted against the

⁹⁵⁴ Cook, J. (2010), "Israel plans to repatriate 'lost Jewish tribe' in India. <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/asia-pacific/israel-plans-to-repatriate-lost-jewish-tribe-in-india> (last visited January 16, 2011).

⁹⁵⁵ Piang, *Clan*, pg. 43-59.

chiefs. They argued that the chiefs had become like the British, oppressors. Moreover, many chiefs and headman defrauded the Zo, as well as the British, by pocketing fines, taxes and other dues.

This chapter also illustrated that conversion to Christianity was not, in fact, fast and in high numbers. All of the missionaries, the American Baptists on the Burma side of the border as well as the Welsh Presbyterians of the Indian side of the border, took years to convert Zo. Moreover, many of the first converts denounced the church a short time later. What brought the Zo to the church, however, was not its promise of salvation, rather literacy and modernity.

Their quest for literacy was also demonstrated by the high number of followers acquired by Pau Cin Hau's movement called *Laipian*. Hau most likely visited the areas where missionaries were already active and recognized the impact of a writing system. That is, although he claimed that he was ill and an invalid for years, it is argued that he travelled to further into Northeast India where he observed the modernist impact of the missions. He further recognized that instead of supporting the missions among the Zo, he would start his own movement. Pau grew up in the area of Tedim where Kup also rose as a chief. It is fair to assume that the two men knew each other and were, perhaps even friends. It is plausible, therefore, that they struck up an alliance with a division of labor to liberate the Zo. They would work together with Kup managing economics and politics and Hau dealing with spiritual matters and modernity through literacy. However, in terms of Pau's attempt, another movement emerged in the Naga Hills, it however, did not have a writing system nor purported to be a new religion. It was guised as a revival movement but was actually an anti-Kuki rebel group. British officers tried the leaders of this movement; sentence one to death and jailed the second for life. Perhaps this is what caused the Zo of the hills to abandon or ignore *Laipian* in order to convert to the western religion of Christianity.

Statistics and the accounts of officials and others present in the hills in the 1940s reported that conversion and literacy was very low. Still, by the time the Zo fought in the Second World War, the Zo had begun to modernize. One

way to achieve modernity was working with the British as already argued above. Hau Cin Kup, in particular, cooperated with the British officers. They provided him with privileges in exchange for his being allowed to exercise his authority of his followers.

At the time of Independence, the Zo highlanders of the Chin Hills believed that Aung San would campaign on their behalf and ensure that they gained eventual autonomy under the newly organized Burmese government. The Zo on the India side drafted a memorandum to the Superintendent expressing their desires to choose either becoming a Dominion like East Pakistan or that they be given the choice to merge with another, existing dominion.

Aung San was assassinated and the Zo of Lushai did not become nor join a dominion. Both groups of highlanders became a marginalized group within their respective nation-states. The years after Independence were marked with significant changes too complex and beyond the scope of this dissertation. One way, however was for certain Zo groups to vie for special recognition from its respective governments and from the world at large. It was illustrated that these small movements of Zo created groups of elite that would rise to either dominate politics or to separate themselves from other Zo in a quest for political agency, often at the expense of other Zo.

Thus, although the Zo failed to gain political independence, both groups moved toward modernity. Revisionist histories insist that they converted to Christianity early on. However, it is clear that this is yet another means of modernizing and employing strategy in order to become political participants in their own futures.

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to explore and identify the historical shifts and their accompanying narratives that contributed to the construction of the history and identity of Zo highlanders. The aim was to trace these shifts from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial era of the Northern Arakan Yomas, site of the borders that separate the Chin Hills of Burma, the Lushai Hills⁹⁵⁶ and the highlands of Manipur of Northeast India.

These historical shifts, this dissertation illustrates, contributed to the making of the categories of Chin, Lushai, Kuki and of Zo. Very few written records about the Zo highlanders exist in the archives of the former East India Trading Company and later, the British Raj. The records that do exist make clear that before the arrival of the British, very little was known about the people of the Northern Arakan Yomas, at least by the west.

The earliest record of the Zo was found in the archives of the T'ang Dynasty of the 9th century. This record, however, was unknown before the mid-twentieth century when it was discovered and translated by a scholar of Burmese history, Gordon Luce. Other records of Zo may exist in other Chinese archives, but they have yet to be unearthed. Further records may also exist in the annals of the dynasties, princely states and petty kingdoms of West Bengal and East India on the whole. Indeed, other early records indicate that this area of the globe was once a dynamic theatre of activity providing a corridor that separates eastern China from the plateau of Tibet and the lush lowlands of East India. Thus, almost certainly more information in the form of documents and archaeological material exists about the history of the Zo highlands, which were so ideally located.

At the same time, the Zo hills are defined by their rugged terrain, deep valleys, varied altitudes and sometimes challenging climate, especially during the rainy seasons. They are a complete geographical opposite from the lush, fertile, climatically predictable and flat terrain of the plains. Thus, political

⁹⁵⁶ The Lushai Hills are now known as Mizoram which is the 23rd state of India.

scientist James Scott's argument that there existed a dichotomy between highlanders and lowlanders throughout the course of history is compelling. He argues that the highlands are populated by groups of people with the shared common agenda of fleeing the states of the lowlands. The daily lives of highlanders, like their terrain, are a complete opposite experience from the people's experience and terrain of the plains. This persuasive argument, however, was not substantiated by the research carried-out for this dissertation. At the same time, conclusive evidence that Scott argument is wholly flawed was also not ascertained.

That is, a history of the Zo highlanders before the arrival of the British and later the missionaries is difficult to research. Records of the Zo, other than the Tang Dynasty's very early account, found and studied for this dissertation were confined to the early 18th to the late 20th century during the time the highlands were the frontier of the Bengal Presidency and later during the time when the hills were annexed and occupied by the British Raj.

Furthermore, Indrani Chatterjee argues that during the mid-nineteenth century, colonial officials had developed numerous agendas that would end in the forgetting of histories, former relationships and exchanges between the highlanders of the Northern Arakan Yomas with traders, travellers, missionaries, rulers, wanderers and people of the plains.⁹⁵⁷ She focuses on colonial scientific knowledge schemes which were unable to grasp the complexity of relationships between the communities of highland and lowland Asia. These complex relationships were replaced by a 'new colonial order.' Whatever their pasts may have been, these were ignored, dismissed or reinterpreted by colonials.

Indeed, the people of the Northern Arakan Yomas were treated as a people without a past by the colonial officials that sought intelligence about them in the early 19th century. Scholars and other elite were unable to fathom a

⁹⁵⁷ Indrani Chatterjee specifies the forgetting of former relationships of Zo highlanders to their monastic pasts and does not address the all of the possible counterparts listed above. Chatterjee, I. (2013), *Forgotten Friends: Monks, Marriages, and Memories of Northeast India*. OUP India: New Delhi, pg. 339-342.

complex history that was not tainted by the Zo being refugees, warriors, or inherently incapable of a civilized existence; at least until the arrival of the British. However, it was the elite that defined civilization and ordered the highlanders on their imagined civilization hierarchy beneath themselves. The highlanders were dismissed as barbaric and primitive savages. Whatever their pasts may have been, was not as important as allowing them entry into the fold of the colonial state by participating in a series of civilizing projects.

Still, possible pasts had to be entertained. Thus outsiders and foreigners furnished them with a past that, to them made the most sense. For them, the state was always central, thus the highlanders were either in escape from or on their way to a state. As chapter 3 illustrates, Zo relationships to states were defined in only one way, not in terms of friendship or cooperatives, but rather in terms of tributary or adversary relationships. Thus, the civilization projects began.

First, as is illustrated in Chapters 1 and 2 and by the argument above, the Zo were provided with possible pasts. Along with these pasts, nomenclatures and other identifiers were assigned to them always in an ordered system that placed them lower on any of the hierarchies defining civilization. Their languages and dialects were deemed to be in the Tibeto-Burman linguistic category, being far removed, yet loosely linked to a state-centred past. Their belief systems were also ordered. According to the major salvation religions practiced by people who considered themselves enlightened and at the top of the scale, the Zo were placed at the very bottom. They were believed to worship trees and discarded fruit. They also engaged in human sacrifice that included head-hunting instilling fear into those that would encounter them.

Indeed, the Zo practiced headhunting but it, as an instrumental function of their society, was equally dismissed as was the practice of slavery, infanticide, and warfare over land. Stories about the highlanders were riddled with the exotic, mysterious and horrific. Those that first entered the Northern Arakan Yomas approached them with angst and impending doom unless

accompanied with superior skills of warfare that included technology, manpower and knowledge in the form of maps and other intelligence.

As the highlands were slowly being incorporated through a set of civilizing projects, along with punitive expeditions, other information about them was disseminated. After annexation of the hills in two bloody punitive attacks, the Lushai and the Chin Lushai Expedition of 1871 and 1890 respectively, the highlanders were brought to their knees convinced that co-existence with the British unavoidable. Thus, aging highland chiefs and headman began working with the British avoiding being deported, removed from their kin and land to rot in unknown jails. They carried out tax collections and mediation. Eventually they came to appreciate their positions of privilege and authority as agents of the British state. Younger chiefs and their friends exercised efforts to offer Zo alternatives by creating local religions that were similar, yet more intimate, than the religion of the western elite, Christianity. Younger chiefs rebelled. But the civilization projects were powerful. Eventually a few younger chiefs surrendered and took advantage of the immediate opportunities of elitism among their own. Homi Bhaba would have argued that they had become mimic men; Franz Fanon would have said that they redefined themselves in the image of the colonial officials. What the elite felt was a total disregard for human life, illustrated through stories of headhunting, random killings, infanticide and suicide was no longer emphasized. Instead, their being entertaining to readers whose approval was necessary for the civilization projects to continue, was highlighted in the reading materials of the drawing rooms, libraries, classrooms and churches of the elite. They learned that the Zo highlanders were ideal for a further civilization project in the form of Christianity.

Missionaries from both, America and Europe were encouraged to bring salvation to the pathetic backwards people of the hills. Yet, they refused to be converted-to be civilized, perhaps realizing that they would always remain on the lower ranks of pre-determined scales. Their notions of community life were dismissed. Instead missionaries focused on the elite among the highlanders. They chose carefully rendering only those dialects into the

written word they felt were dominant-most important. Unbeknownst to them, they created a whole new set of elite and marginalized people among the highlanders.

Literacy allowed the Zo to participate in society at the world stage. They soon forgot their pasts and connections to other highlanders, their culture and their land. They accepted their position as lower-ranked citizen on the grand civilization scale devised in the west. After two World Wars in which they honoured their new position as subjects, they were dismissed and discarded. The promises made by the British in conjunction with their own elite were not honoured. At Independence, the Zo were relegated to the margins of new nation-states. Over time, other Zo elite emerged intent on reclaiming their pasts as well as their dignities. But, most Zo had forgotten their pasts. Thus they adopted the pasts furnished to them by the British colonials in the early days. They added and subtracted from these pasts as they redefined themselves.

Much of their focus was on managing their present. Thus, these pasts were constructed to meet the agenda of these new historians. Borders were contested, ignored promises were highlighted, and possible futures were emphasized. The highlanders understood that in order to participate on the world stage, they had to move further up on the civilization hierarchy. Thus, they joined forces with the civilized recognizing those that were more barbarians than even themselves, such as the Japanese who feasted on pig's fodder.

In the aftermath of Independence, these new histories were committed into texts. Political parties, committees and new communities were formed. These reflected those of the colonial days, yet they almost always failed to unite, to recall lost memories and bring peace. Thus far, not one movement has been able to include all of the Zo by not excluding anyone. That is, these new histories, almost always exist at the expense of other groups. Only a handful of Zo scholars have, thus far, reached back far enough into memory to recall and reclaim a past that was long forgotten. Perhaps the future will bring

more scholars, both Zo as well as outsiders, that will write a history that is closer to the truth than anything we have recalled thus far.

Therefore, future studies are encouraged. Archaeological materials as well as oral history studies have to be researched. Cooperation among Zo as well as with outsider scholars has to be fostered. The archives of China of India and elsewhere have to be scoured to find material, both written and physical to provide glimpses of the forgotten past. This study, like many others of the Zo, is confined to a very small time frame. Surely a longer past exists waiting to be discovered.

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Tunzan. Demi-Official Letter from J. M. WRIGHT, esq., I. C. S.,
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