



PRISM

OF THE

ZO PEOPLE

**PRISM OF THE
ZO PEOPLE**

2008

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Preface

The First World Zomi Convention held at Champhai, Mizoram between May 19-21, 1988 declared thus,

"We, the people of Zo ethnic group... are descendants of one ancestor. Our language, our culture and tradition, and no less our social and customary practices are clear evidences of the ethnological facts... our historical records and footprints, both written and unwritten in the sands of time testify the truth of our common ancestry..."

The Zomi or Zo people occupy a contiguous geographical areas measuring about 96,540 sq.miles, have common primordial name (i.e. Zo) common history, cultural affinities, belief system, economic life and cherished the dream of restoring their glorious past. They remain independent, self-sufficient and were never subjugated until the advent of the British imperialist. They governed themselves according to their traditional polity and legal system ensuring justice for all. The consequences of British imperialism proved disastrous and painful for the Zomi as they were subjected to subjugation, segmentation, division and confusion. As a result their primordial identity was almost completely forgotten and neglected.

The colonial ethnographers' encounter with the Zo people compounded the problem of national name as they identified Zo people with different imposed names – Chin, Lushai or Kuki- having a strong bearing on where they are and who their informants were. The Zo people and their land was dismembered, bifurcated and appended to three sovereign countries – India, Burma and Bangladesh – by British imperialists to fit their own administrative conveniences without Zo people's knowledge and consent. The state boundaries within the nation-state further scattered Zo people and they became ethnic minorities wherever they are. They are deprived of their socio-economic, political and cultural rights and were subjugated as aliens in their ancestral homeland.

Nevertheless, it was the British themselves who later realised the undeniable common anthropological, historical, cultural and ethnic traits, existing among the Zo people whom they called Kuki, Chin or Lushai. Thus, the Britishers convened the famous Chin-Lushai Conference at Fort William in 1892 and decided to amalgamate the Chin-Lushai country (Zoland). The process of bringing Zo people under a single administrative unit is not realised completely till today. Initially the Zo people were politically ignorant to take full advantages of such bold steps initiated by the British, however today, they are aware of their true national identity and steadfastly pursue the vision to restore their glorious past. It is also important to note that, the British administered Zo people indirectly; exclusively enacted created Acts, Sanads, Regulations, etc. to govern the Zomi.

The book called “**Prism of the Zo people**” published to commemorate the 60th Diamond Jubilee Zomi Nam Ni, 2008 is a modest attempt intended to be a reading materials providing some basic informations about the people, their history, land, culture, economy and traditions as a Nation. Most of the papers are researched-based write-up either send directly or is extracted from book/thesis written by immortal Zo researchers and scholars. The Publication Board is aware of the limitations in bringing out the book. It does not contain all the informations and materials towards a comprehensive understanding of the history, culture, economy and politics of the Zomi. However, we hope that it inspire the readers to take more interest in the issue. It may reinvigorate the spirit of oneness among the Zo kindreth tribes and take them to higher level of patriotism; bring forth peace and fraternity amongst them, and led them toward preserving, promoting and protecting their Indigenous Rights as a nation.

Publication Board,
The 60th Zomi Nam Ni
Celebration Committee

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