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**CRITICAL ASSESSMENT
ON BIBLICAL ELEMENTS IN KHASI
POETRY (1976-1996)**

(ABSTRACT)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Written Khasi Literature emerged almost simultaneously with the coming of Christian missionaries into Khasi Hills in 1841 when they devised the script for Khasi language. This was done primarily with one objective in mind, namely, the translation of the Bible. Later on, other Christian literatures were developed in the forms of prose, poetry, drama and songs by missionaries and their mission school products.

It is important to note that all Khasi school students, Christians or non-Christians alike of the early part of the twentieth century learnt lessons from the Bible in their schools. As such they were exposed to the teaching of the Bible. The Shillong Government High School took great pain in forming religious habits by allotting time for prayer and scripture reading¹.

Dr. H. Bareh also notes that “the Bible had laid down the basis of Khasi Literature which ranks as one of the largest volume. Many writers later on have sought the light from the Bible in respect of the themes as well as to the literary style and composition”². Sarma in fact comments that “due to the influence of the Bible the Hynniew Trep people jumped on to the public stage from an unknown existence”³. Since Khasi poetry has emerged almost from the very beginning of written Khasi literature, the influence of the Bible on its poets is seen to be very important. In later chapters, this study examines how

¹ Dr. P. Kharkakor, *Biblical Influence in the Pre-Independence Khasi Literature*, New Delhi, 1998

² H. Bareh, *A Short History of Khasi Literature*, Shillong rptd., 1995 p28

³ Jitendra Nath Sarma (ed) THE TELEGRAPH DT 24-4-2001 PAGE 16

Biblical elements form a very important part in Khasi Poetry. We can clearly see that much of the subsequent emerging literature, evening the later period of the history of Khasi Poetry had a strong base on the Bible.

Meaning and Definition of Biblical Elements:

Explaining the meaning of certain terms used in this study is felt important so as to clarify the use of such words.

'Critical' According to the Dictionary⁴ the adjective 'critical' is defined as "involving or exercising careful judgement or observation; nice, exact, accurate, precise, punctual..." It may also be defined as "the art of passing judgement upon literary and artistic matters⁵.

'Assessment': In general sense, the term means "estimation or evaluation⁶ or the art of assessing.

'Biblical' : The adjective 'Biblical' is derived from the word 'Bible'. Bible is the Book of books. It forms one story of humanity in relation to God. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the word Biblical means "relating to, or contained in, the Bible..."⁷. Thus 'Biblical' actually refers to anything relating to or contained in the Bible.

⁴ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Volume II, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970 p 1180

⁵ New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language; Delhi, 1988

⁶ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Volume I, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970 p 506

⁷ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, rptd 1961 p 846

'Element' : This word is defined as "one of the constituent parts, principles, materials or traits or anything ... one of the simplest parts or principles of which anything consists or into which it may be analysed⁸.

Critical assessment of Biblical element in this study may therefore be defined as a critical or careful observation or assessing those principles, constituent parts, materials or traits or the Bible, which are revealed or expressed by the different poets during the period in themes that are concerned with Biblical concepts.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

The study gives a brief discussion on the origin of the Khasis, its language, socio-economic, political and other social changes is given. A short account of Development of Christian churches in Khasi hills and development of Khasi poetry is also given.

There are 29 poems published during the period, which are found to have biblical elements in them. They are arranged in chronological order are follows:-

1. H.Mylliemngap, *Na Pneh U Lum Shyllong*, 1977
2. Jerome Diengdoh, *Ki Mieng Pynpang Mynsiem*, 1978
3. E.W. Dkhar, *Ka Jitlakhai*, 1978
4. Nobait Swer, *Mieng Pynpang Mynsiem*, 1978
5. J.Seraiah Tham, *Ka Rympei*, 1978
6. E.W. Dkhar, *Na Kpep U Sohpetbneng*, 1979
7. B.R. Kharlukhi, *Na Dewlang ka Ri Kynjah*, 1980

⁸ The Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford Clarendon Press, rpd 1961, p 82

8. W.R.Laitphlang, *Ki Myllung Khasi*, 1980
9. F.S. Lyngdoh, *Ki Saimuka na Diengkynthong*, 1980
10. H.W. Sten, *Ka Burom Ba la Jah – Kitab I_III*, 1980
11. H.O.Mawrie, *Kumta Nga rwai*, 1980
12. E.W. Dkhar, *Ka Mamla*, 1981
13. F.S. Lyngdoh, *Na Khriang ki Sairupa*, 1981
14. E.W. Dkhar, *Ka Panjira Ksiar*, 1982
15. E.W. Dkhar, *Ki Siej Khongpong bad ki Sai Rupa*, 1982
16. S.S. Majaw, *Ha Ki Sur ka Poetry*, 1982
17. K.W. Nongrum, *Ka Umpohliew*, 1982
18. E.W. Dkhar, *Tang Jinggainguh Thang*, 1984
19. Nobait Swer, *Ki Sur Miat Dur*, 1985
20. E.K.Nongbet, *Skit Symphiang*, 1986
21. Jerome Diengdoh, *Synjaw Ummat*, 1987
22. E.W. Dkhar, *Dymmiew tngen*, 1987
23. P. Malngiang, *Sonnet*, 1988
24. B.L. Swer, *Ki Dew Ka Dohnud*, 1989
25. G.P. Wahlang, *Ka Sharak Rit*, 1990
26. C. Wolflang, *Ki Sur Phalang Jingmut*, 1990
27. Josting Kharwanlang, *Na La I Trep*, 1992
28. K.W. Nongrum, *Ki Sur Shongsbai*, 1994
29. H.W. Sten, *La Dkut Sohpet*, 1996

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

This work is an investigation into the influence of the Bible on Khasi poetry during the period of study (1976 to 1996). Altogether there are 29 poems having Biblical elements in them which will be taken for analysis.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research as stated above is textual analysis of the selected poems of the period. The King James Version of the *Bible* in English and *Ka Ktien U Blei* in Khasi are used as points of reference for their analyses. Capital letters are used in referring to the pronoun of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as He, Him, His etc. All Bible verses indicated in this Thesis are marked by abbreviation, for example, II King 1:8 refer to the eight verse of the first chapter of the Second Book of Kings.

Furthermore, a brief resume of the life and works of each poet has been given before the analysis of their respective publication.

REVIEW OF PAST WORKS

Though literary criticism started late in the history of Khasi literature, yet there are some critical works that have been found to be related to this topic. So in this section, I shall make a review of the works of few outstanding critics on Khasi poetry such as R.S. Lyngdoh⁹, H.W. Sten¹⁰, *Ha Ki Sur Ka Poetry*¹¹, Philomena Kharakor¹² and the present scholar¹³.

⁹ R.S. Lyngdoh, *Ka Histori Ka Thoh Ka Tar*, Shillong, 1983

¹⁰ H. W. Sten, *Khasi Poetry: Origin and Development*.

¹¹ S.S.Majaw, *Ha Ki Sur Ka Poetry*, Shillong rptd 1992

¹² P.Kharakor, *Biblical Influence in the Pre-Independence Khasi Literature*; New Delhi, 1998

¹³ L.Kharbuli, Unpublished MPHIL Dissertation, *Biblical Elements in Khasi Poetry (1948-1975)* submitted to North Eastern Hills University, 1999.

CHAPTER II

MANIFESTATION OF EVIL

This chapter analyses the poet's projection evil in human life which the Bible terms as sin, pride, hypocrisy, wickedness, adultery, worldly pleasure, vanity and others. Most of the selected poets in the study reflect on the destructive nature of sin and how it can destroy all of creation through its many manifestation.

H.W. Sten's masterpiece *Ka Burom Ba La Jah* is to a certain extent a reflection of the Biblical narrative of the fall of man. Book I of Sten's poem deals mostly with demons, their strange features, their dwelling places and their works.

In the introductory lines Sten shows the reason why man lost his glory, which is strongly reminiscent of the Book of Genesis in the Bible.

BU BRIEW u tiew pyrshah hukum u Blei.

(Because man transgresses against the commandment of God)

And in another lines of the poem, Sten further sings:

Ka Duk ka hiar pateng haduh ha ngi,

Ka Pang, Jynjar, Sngewsih ruh bad Khuslai

Ki sah bad ngi haduh ba wai jingim

(Thus Poverty, Sickness, Affliction, Sorrow and Anxiety continue to afflict us till the end of our life)

Another manifestation of evil is pride. Pride can bring about the downfall not only of individuals but also of nations. In the light of the preceding discussion, it is not surprising to read

in the Bible that pride is one of the most deadly sins that a Christian has to overcome¹⁴.

A Khasi prominent poet Jerome Diengdoh in his poem "Ngi La Stad Than" (We are too wise), condemns the sin of pride and contends that the wisdom of man is nothing in comparison to the wisdom of God.

"Na jingthaw blei wat la ngi stad than

Ngi dei ki jingthaw briew bla thaw bein tam"

(We are more intelligent than most of God's creature, yet we are still the most flawed of all).

Another poet, Firmly Star Lyngdoh expresses the view that some people are willing to sacrifice their land because of selfishness and pride. According to him, such people will face a terrible judgment on the judgment day. The poet shows the adverse effects of proud words.

Bevan Lionel Swer in his poem "Ka Jingsngewrit" (Humility) while exhorting humility as an importance Christian virtue, concludes that one can understand and practice humility when one knows the evil of arrogance and pride. Thus he writes –

"haei yn shemphang ia jingsngewrit haba kam

lah ban sngewthuh kaei ka lehheh lehmeng

(how can one understand humility

when one does not know what is arrogance).

¹⁴ Pro 6:17

E.Weston Dkhar in giving the title of the poem “Khristan Ka Nam” (Christian in name) focuses on the growing number of so called Christians in the Church. Such types of Christians are found even at the level of Church leadership. It is possible to claim to be Christian and at the same time to practice unchristian acts.

“Suri batriem kup snieh langbrot,
 Ki sma dien Khla ki sma rakot;
 Ki leh mynleh khlem kheĩñ ka sang
 Ka phrung shaduh jaka kyntang”

(Like fearful wolves in sheep clothing, they scent the footprints of tiger and dragon. Abhorring sacrifice, they pretend to be righteous and tread without any pang of conscience the sacred place).

This view is based from the New Testament where such people were inveighed against by Jesus Christ¹⁵. He warns them to beware of false prophets and false teachers; for these would pretend to foretell of things to come and who set themselves up as teachers of others¹⁶.

Trying to give excuse in order to escape the blame for oneself, E.Weston Dkhar in the last line of “Iano Phin Kynnoh Pop?” (Whom you will blame for?) reveals the consequences of sinful nature which lies in the inside of man.

“Ka jingbymman ka pynkha, ka juk ki riew kynsha”
 (Sin, gives birth to a generation of wicked people)

¹⁵ Math 7:15; 10:16

¹⁶ 2Pet 2:1

Sinful acts such as lust, greed and corrupt practices are pleasing to a sinful generation and instead of resisting and rejecting such acts, the people accept and cherish it in their life. When men have been all their days in the service of sin, and have fought under its banners, the wages they will earn, and the reward that will be given them, will be death and a more sinful generation.

In his *Ki Siej Khongpong* (Downward bamboos), E. Weston Dkhar touches certain important biblical truths and themes such as adultery and judgment for sinful deeds.

In his "Tang Jingthala" (ALL VANITY), E. Weston Dkhar alludes the saying of Solomon from the Bible. Solomon, having made trial of natural wisdom and knowledge in its utmost extent, and found it to be vanity. The poet writes -

Ka jingthala jong ki jingthala baroh tang ka jingthala
(Vanity of vanity all are vanities)

Book II of H.W. Sten's *Ka Burom Ba La Jah*, depicts the pleasures that are offered in the vanities fair -

Khlem jain khlem nep ki dih umsgur umstem
Ki tah ka doh, dohkha, ki phan, ki jhur
Lyngngeh rannei ka khlieh ka noh shyntur
(Completely nude, they drank drinks of many colours,
Fating meat, fish, potatoes and vegetables
Losing balance their head bowed down.....)

S.S. Majaw in his "Ka Shnong Jingthala"¹⁷ (City of Vanity) reflects the sinful condition of that particular city. All those things that we see in the City of Vanity are evil and shameful. The poet's depiction of the city, is reminiscences of what the Bible speaks about the 'vanity of vanities'.¹⁸

Hangta da riew sangrang dohnud;
 Jingshai ka hok la kah.
 Bunsien ki peit da mat kynriang,
 Ban tah mationg kim khein;
 Wat ban kawang d'u maw ka ktieh,
 Dohnud la kum mawlein.

(Men with cruel heart where the light of honesty is totally darkened. Such people always looked suspiciously around, looking for ways to hurt others without a care. They had n compunction to throw stones and mud at other people for their heart is as hard as stones)

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

This chapter analyses selected poems which projected Christian ideals and virtues. Christian ideals are those of which serve as standards found in the Bible. These includes themes such as a transformed life, love, hope, humility, grace, true worship, diligence, self denial, friendship, life's meaning etc.

¹⁷ S.S. Majaw, Ha Ki Sur ka Poetry, 1984, Shillong p37

¹⁸ Eccl. 1:2,14

Three of the selected poets, namely H. Myllemngap¹⁹, J. Diengdoh²⁰ and Coralton Wolflang²¹ emphasizes the importance of conversion and the need for a new life in a Christian.

A prominent Khasi poet, S.S. Majaw in his poem "Ka Jingieit" (Love) discusses love as it is expressed by Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians²². The poet chooses to pinpoint only two aspects of the Apostle's discourse on love. He writes

"La nga kren da ki thylliej ki briew

Bad ki Angel.

Haba ngam don ka jingieit,

Nga la jia long

Kum ka wiang rnong kaba sawa,

Ne kum ka shakuriaw ba riew shaw shaw,

(Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, when I have no love I became like a sounding brass or like a clanging cymbals that just makes meaningless noise).

This verse is reminiscent but not identical to the first verse of the Thirteenth Chapter of the Epistle which warns about empty words for words without love have no value. The excellent way of love is not what is meant by charity in common use of the word which is almsgiving, but love in its fullest meaning which is true to God and to man.

La nga don ruh ka jingneit baroh

Kat ban pynkynriah noh ia ki lum,

¹⁹ H. Myllemngap, *Na Pneh U Lum Shyllong*, 1977, Shillong

²⁰ J. Diengdoh, *Ka Mieng pynpang mynstiem*, 1978, Shillong

²¹ Coralton Wolflang, *Ki Sur Phalang Jingmut*, 1990, Shillong

²² 1Cor 13: 1-8

Haba Ngam don ia ka jingieit

Ngam long ei ei ruh em.

(And though I have a great faith which is enough to move mountains, yet when I have no love I am nothing)

Another poet who has chosen to project this theme in his poem is E. Weston Dkhar. In his poem 'Hapoh Dulan' (Inside the Mansion), the poet touches on this fundamental Christian teaching, namely, the depth of God's love for man.

Mano ba sngewthuh ia jingjylliew Blei?

Jingieit ba kyntang H'u briew u theh sei

(Who can understand the depth of God? It is only through His sacred love that He poured on man)

Jerome Diengdoh in his poem 'Sngewrit Nga Phla' (Humbly I Confess), expresses the hope of eternal life which he can obtain through a humble repentance before God.

"Da jingiam briew nga phai sha Me, Ko Trail!"

(With crying I come to you, Oh Lord!)

In "Meingi Ba Kthang" (Bitter Sunrise) Bevan Lionel Swer reflects on a young man's hope even the conditions he faces have become very difficult for him to bear. The poet expresses the hope that good things can be turned out for the best. But he is not sure whether it will come to pass. He says that he has just "a little" hope. Crisis offers both danger and hope. To B.L. Swer it is hope, which is one of the gift of God, that will remain after all things are gone. He writes-

Hynrei balei ngam jaw ummat;

Ioh ka kylla long tang ka synei lade, ka
 Jingpynjot syndon thiaw ia ka salit jingkyrmen
 Ba don hapoh dohnud ba dang rhem jong nga!
 (But why shouldn't I weep
 Less it become self pity, which
 Totally destroy the little hope
 That fans the flame in my heart)

In his poem Ka Jingai-ei Bneng (Heavenly Grace), G.P. Wahlang brings a translation of a famous Christian Hymn, 'Amazing Grace', which has an origin in the Classic Hymns of John Newton composed by the American Melody and arranged by Edwin O.Excel³.

In his poem "Jingim ba la leit" (Past life), Jesaiah Tham shows that the best way to gain peace and happiness is by praying to God. He writes in the following lines.

"Tang kawei, tang kawei jingphylla nga shem,
 Ban pan map, ban duwai ia u Blei nga dem
 Dei hangta nga sngewsuk jai ka mynsiem"
 Only one wonderful thing I have found and
 that is to repent and bow down in prayer before God.
 That is the only way for me to have peace in my heart.

After trying to find pleasure in the things of the world, the poet finally found that true happiness came to his heart only after he repented of his sins and bowed down before God in prayer and humility.

⁷ Website, <http://www.hymnal.net>

In his poem “Jyrsieh” (Miry Clay), Coral Wolflang cries out in prayer for God’s help. He understands his helpfulness to overcome temptations. A Christian is commanded to pray unceasingly²⁴.

“Ah Blei to da na bneng

Ban lait na ka jingriam”

(Oh God please give me your heavenly protection so that I will not fall into temptation)

Firmly Star Lyngdoh in his poem “U Diengsning” (A Sycamore Tree), feels inspired to offer a song of praise to God when he looks at the sycamore tree. The poet in this poem expresses the Biblical teaching of offering true worship which should come from the heart. It should not be something that is carnal. He writes:

Nga ruh ban long kum me nga kwah,

Ngan rwai iaroh I’u Blei ba lah;

Wat ha ki sngi ka jingshitom,

Nuksa jongme ngan bud rukom

(Like you I want to sing praises to God. Even during the days of affliction and suffering I will continue to follow your example of praising God).

²⁴ Phil 4:6

In his poem “Ka ĩngmane Hapoh Ri Khlaw” (The Church In Wilderness) G.P. Wahlang speaks about true Christian worship²⁵ which is not in form but rather in the spirit of man.

“Jingmane Blei ba shisha long,
Mynsiem ba ai ym ka rongphong”
(True worship is
In spirit and not mere ritualistic)



The title of E.W. Dkhar’s poem *Tang Jinggainguh Thang* (Only Burnt Offering), talks about the importance offering burnt offering in thankfulness to God. Burnt offering refers to a sacrifice offered to God by letting it be consumed by fire, so that it ascends to God while being thus consumed. Part of every offering was burnt in the sacred fire, but this was wholly burnt, a “whole burnt offering”. It was the most frequent form of sacrifice in the Old Testament of the Bible. The poet offers his own burnt offering to God through his songs of worship when he sings-

“Tang da jingrwai nga ainguh ia me Trai
Me long ka kpait ka thymmei ka tynrai;
Ia ka kyrteng ba ha khlieh tam jong me;”
(With my song , I offer thanksgiving to You Lord for
You are the beginning, the source and origin of all
creation. I offer them to you, God Almighty)

The poet Coralton Wolflang is inspired by the Biblical teaching on the unique nature of ants in showing diligence. In his poem “Ki Dkhiew Kiba Stad” (The Wise Ants), appreciates

²⁵ John 4:23-24

this important Christian virtue. In exhorting this virtue, the poet writes –

“Nga shong ban bishar, ia ki nga peit kai

Ki dkhiew kiba rit ki ai jinghikai”

(I sat down and watched these small creatures,
the ants and I learned a very valuable lesson)

Another poet, E. Weston Dkhar, in his poem “Shaphrang Shaphrang Khynnah” (Move Forward Children) also touches on this theme. He encourages young people to be diligent particularly in their search for wisdom and fame. In the following lines, the poet encourages youths to strive for what is good with all their might –

“Haba phi trei jingtrei,

La buit la bor to sei

(Whatever work you find you should do, do it with all
your might)

In his poem “Khristan ka Nam” (So called Christian), Weston Dkhar explains that denial of the self is the mark of those true Christians.

I’u brieve ka pop ki da sahnar,

Jingim thymmai ka la synshar”

(The sinful nature of man is crucified and thus a new life
rules over him)

Many Khasi poets have expressed their view on the meaning of life according to Christian teaching. In his poem "Jingim U Briew" (Life Of Man), Firmly Star Lyngdoh compares man's life to that of a flickering light when he writes –

Jingim u briew ha ka pyrthei

Ka long kum Sharak rit

(Man's life in this world is like a little lamp).

In his poem "Uei une u briew" (Who is man), H.O Mawrie alludes the title of the poem from the Bible²⁶. The Psalmist in beholding the glory of the heavens, asked the question, "What is man ...?" The poet highlights this biblical fact when he talks about the authority and dominion of man over all creatures in this world-

"Na ki jingthaw ha ka pyrthei,

Ia u la buh kyrpang

Bu'n long kynrad halor kiwei

Bu'n synshar ia ki lang"

(Man is created specially among all the creatures in the world to rule and to be the master over all of them

In "Uei u briew" (Who is man), another poet, E.Weston Dkhar speaks of man as the masterpiece of creation. Considering the wonderful creation of man the poet could not but express in astonishment.

H'u Briew ba paw shynna, ka jinglong Blei.

Bla mang, b;la thaw, da ka matti? Jong U

Napdeng jingthaw baroh ki jingkyrkhu

²⁶ (Psa. 8:4 with Job 7:17-18; Psa. 144:3; Heb 2:6).

H'u brieve kham khraw, kham palat ia kiwei."

(The Divine trait is clearly reflected in man. He is predestined and created by God's own hands.

Among all creatures, man enjoys God's choicest blessings far greater than those enjoyed by other creatures.)

In his poem "Ko Tiewkulap" (Oh Rose), the poet, Coralton Wolflang gives a figurative allusion to the transitory, temporal nature of human life. The significance of the rose is its beautiful colour and sweet odour and for giving delight to its beholders. After appreciating the beauty and fragrance of a rose, the poet writes –

Ko Tiewkulab ngi ruh kumjuh
Tang katno ngi la tlor'
Na pyrthei bak ngin phet jynduh
Ynda la poi ka por

(Like a Rose we will also wither within a short time, we will depart from this world forever.

CHAPTER IV

Life after death : eternal glory and eternal shame

The Bible clearly teaches about the existence of life after death for all human beings. In fact life on earth is just a mere fraction of time. When compared to eternity a place which awaits every one after their death. However, eternity is not a continuation of life on earth. Heaven and hell are the only two

places that a person spends eternity after his life. Before that there is God's final judgment after the Second coming of Christ.

The poet W.R. Laitflang in his poem "Ka Jingiap U Tang-Nga" (The death of the self) summarises the terrible consequence of a selfish and proud life when he writes:-

Mynsiem ba maian, jingim ba kordor
 Ka wai ia ka met ban basa tang shipor,
 Ka spah kam salia wei dei ba ka por kan ieh,
 Ka leit la jingleit, ba namar ka kyrkieh.

(Mysterious spirit, precious life hire a body for temporary shelter. It doesn't concern for wealth, when it times to leave, It goes its own, because it's in haste)

In the last Stanza the poets warns the readers to live a life worthy of their conduct in this world. Otherwise their death will be shameful one.

Kiwei la phim niew, ia phi ruh ei ban niew,
 Kum syiem la phi im, hei! Phin iap kum u ksew.
 (If you don't value others, none will value you either,
 As a king you may live, You'll die like a dog)

B.L. Swer in his "Riew Marwei" (A Loner) summarizes about a question on the mystery of life and death. In this connection, even the Bible has no specific answer concerning the mystery of life and death. He writes-

"Don shibun nga ong ha phi
 hapdeng ka jingkha bad ka jingiap
 kaba pynlong ia phi ia nga ki

jyrwit jabieng?

Kiba pynkylla ia phi ban ym pynsngewthuh

Ia nga ne nga ia phi.”

(There is so much, I tell you.

Between birth and death,

Making you complex; things

That makes understanding short)

P. Malngiang in his “Ki Sonnet” chapter IX speaks about the nature of death, the poet, as a Christian doesn’t fear death. Instead he writes –

“Jingiap hangno kein ka jingjop jong pha?

Shano ka sngi lyngien ba triem, ba pha

Da shun iu khun bynriew satlak pyrthei”

(Death where is your victory? Where is your fearful sting that you envy human kind around the world).

E W Dkhar in the Sonnet on “Baje Kynjah” (Solemn Bell) summarizes a biblical thoughts and experience in time of the death of his fellow believer. The poet expresses his shock and condolence when he heard the sound of a Chapel Bell ringing a funeral tone.

“Baje kynjah kam shlan ban tied khlem daw,

Bikur Angel, ia syiem mariang ban shaw,”

(Solemn bell dare not to ring without a cause

Angel’s trumpet to welcome the nature’s king)

In his elegy for “Premkar”, H.W. Sten speaks about death’s icy hand, which makes no discrimination between rich and poor

or young and old. It keeps vigilance day and night. For Premkar it was at his 77th year that death came to him. Sten writes –

U phuh hynniew phew hynniew tam ki snem

U sieng ha kam minot bym kut ha tdem

(He blooms seventy seven years plus. His fragrance and diligent work never end in smoke)

The moment cruel death took Premkar's life reflects the limitation of man's life in this world. The Bible clearly indicates the average age of man's life is "threescore years and ten; and if by strength they are fourscore years"²⁷

S.S. Majaw in his "Ka Shnong Jingthala" (City of Vanity) expresses that a life well spent will be worthy of keeping in remembrance.

La ki iap, pynban dang im,

Ha sur ka rwai parom

(Though they died, yet live

In the sound of folksong)

Expressing his hope for the restoration of the glory of his nation, B.R.Kharlukhi in "U Lum Diengiei"²⁸ (Diengiei Peak) expresses his hopes to experience it only after the end of life in this world. The poet believes that all the word of the Lord i.e. the promises of God in the Bible would be fulfilled²⁹ after that day

"Lada ka sngi khatduh kan wai

Ban pyndep khoit ka ktien U Trai"

²⁷ Ps 90:10; Heb 9:27

²⁸ B.R. Kharlukhi, *Na ki Dewlang ka Ri Kynjah*

²⁹ PS 33:4; Matt 24:34; Rev 17:17

(If the final day will end
To fulfill all the word of the Lord)

In “U Pilgrim” (The Pilgrim), J Tham speaks about the characteristic of a Pilgrim, who always looked for an eternal city. He acknowledged his faith and never turned back. He longed for a better land and died in the faith³⁰. The reason that the poet has for his strong determination to remain steadfast in his faith is the hope for a future reward that he will receive from God. He put that in the following lines-

“U tip bha ba lawei
Un pdiang ka nong ba im”
(He clearly knows that one day
He’ll received his reward)

In lines 10-11 of “Ka Tiewlasubon Bad L’u Shylluid”, Nobait Swer speaks about the Righteous Judge, a term taken from the Bible ³¹. By ‘righteous judge’ it means the Lord Jesus Christ.. The poet writes-

“I’u rit I’U ria um ju thom bor-leh bymdei
Da jingsheptieng ia u Nongbishar ba hok”
(He never dominate the poor people
Being afraid of the Righteous Judge)

W.R. Laitflang in his “Ka Jingsaham” shows that the after death man will one day stand before the judgment seat of God when he writes:-

³⁰ Heb 11:8, 9, 10,13, 15 & 16

³¹ II Timothy 4:8

La bha la sniew, u briew un paw-
Shisien ka sngi ha l'u nongthaw.

(Whether good or bad, man will face
One day before his Creator).

Another poet who speaks about the aspect of life after death is P.Malngiang. In his Sonnet he expresses the hope of the poet for the crowning day when he writes –

“Hynrei nga tip U Trai jongka, U Blei
Ka mareh thong ynda kut ngan ym duh
Ka pansngiat ksiar ngan phong, ngan iai pyrto”
(But I know Its Lord, God
After finishing the race, I'll not missed
The golden crown to wear, I'll praise forever)

S.S. Majaw in his “Oh! Great Shemaiahs” alludes the word ‘Shemaiah’ ‘Pharisees’, quotations from the Bible and speaks about a severe judgment to proud, pretended and hypocrite people when he writes -

Over it. Remember
The price of Lord's Doomsday,
Oh! Great Shemaiahs,
Players with Religion,
But not with Omnipotent God
Who ever sentenced;
“Woe unto you, Pharisees,
Verily, I say unto You
I know you not”.

In the last stanza of “Ka Iam Briew Ki Por Basniew” (Baffling Lamentation), J Tham challenges the readers to keep on struggling as Christian in order to earn the ultimate reward, which is nothing but heaven when he writes –

“Iai khih man ki kynta
 Ban pdiang la ka bynta
 Ka bneng ka nong jong ngi”
 (Be ready in each hour
 To receive your own share
 Heaven our Reward)

In his “Khristan ka Nam” (Christian in name), E.W. Dkhar describes about the remarkable characteristic of Christians in his time. He saw in them purity, accountability and speaking truth which are the marks of normal Christians. The reason for living such life is because of the desire to obtain heaven. He writes-

“Ki khuid sotti, ki lah ban shaniah,
 Na jingshisha kim lah kynriah;
 La palong shiah ki dei ban thiah,
 Ka jubanlak horkit kim kdiah;
 Lynter ka khmat ka um ka tngen
 Namar ka bneng pyrthei ki len.’
 (They are pure, be counted for,
 Never forsake from truth;
 They rather sleep in thorny bed,
 And never break the promise.
 Their faces are always happy
 Because of heaven, they deny the world)

In the last stanza of “Longbriew III”, J. Tham, having hope after afflictions in this life, alludes the word ‘promised land’ from the Bible. He speaks about a place of final destination that God has promised His people.. Tham sees this earthly life as one saturated with pain, suffering and afflictions. Thus he expresses his yearning for the Promised Land, the place of eternal rest. The poet expresses this in the following lines –

“Ynda lyngba jingeh ngan ioh ia ka thong,
Bad u Blei ban shong ha ka ri jingkular.”

(When through afflictions I’ll reach the goal
To live with God in that Promised Land).

J. Diengdoh³² in “Harud Duriaw” (On the Seashore), while standing on the seashore, the poet ponders upon the reality of life and life after death. He speaks about ‘hell’ an eternal place of punishment for the sinners and joyful paradise for the believers.

“Shiliang duriaw ka don jingim bapher?
Kin shah bishar hakhmat U Blei hajrong?
Ka don ka paradise ba kmen lynter?
Ne dujok ding sngewtriem kumba ki ong”
(Is there a different across the sea?
Will they be judged before God above?
There will be an eternal happy paradise?
Or fiery hell as someone says?)

³² J.Diengdoh, *Synjaw Ummat*, Shillong, 1987

Another poet, J. Diengdoh³³ in his “Harud Duriaw” (On the Seashore), alludes the word “paradise” from the Bible when he writes-

“Shiliang duriaw ka don jingim bapher?
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“Ynda lyngba jingeh ngan ioh ia ka thong,
 Bad u Blei ban shong ha ka ri jingkular.”
 (When through afflictions I’ll reach the goal
 To live with God in that Promised Land).

H.W Sten in “U Premkar” of *Ka Burom Ba la Jah* (Lost Glory), brings one of the most important doctrine of Christian faith, Christ’s Second Coming, a millennium reign of Christ, Rapture and the future condition of Christian life when he writes –

Ki thiah shipor haduh turoi kan riew
 Lu syiem kin pdiang ha suin kin kiew
 Bad U kin wan ha ri bun seng thymmai

³³ J.Diengdoh, *Synjaw Ummat*, Shillong, 1987

Ki syiem lyngdoh kin long ha ri jingshai
 Shihajar snem, ki angel kin synshar
 Kat kum bu syiem u la ai ia ki kular
 (They sleep for a while till the trumpet sounds
 Their king to receive in the sky they'll be caught up
 With him they'll return to the new kingdom
 A thousands years to reign with angels
 According to the promises given by the King

In "Harud Duriaw" (On the Seashore) of *Synjaw Ummat*, while reading the epitaph, an inscription written from a portion of the Bible, J Diengdoh reminds the readers about one of the hope of the Christians, waiting the Second coming of Jesus Christ to this world. He writes-

"Ki snem kha bad jingiap, ki kyntien Blei....
 Iano da ki spah snem kumne ki ap?
 (Years of birth and death, divine words...
 Who for hundred years are they waiting for?)

In his poem, "U Lum Kynsha", W.R. Laitflang summarises the horrible thought that comes to the mind of the poet about a graveyard. In stanza 5 he brings a biblical teaching about resurrection of the dead and life after death.

Hangne ki thiah, kin khie shawei
 Kum jingiohthiah, phin phylla lei"
 (Here they sleep, then awake somewhere like a sleep, don't be surprise)

H.W.Sten concludes the elegy of "U Premkar" by an epitaph, an inscription on a tomb. In the epitaph he again reminds the hope of Christian about the resurrection of the saints and the sound of Jesus Christ's returning to this world. He writes-

U ap kyrmen haduh turoi kan riew
 Un khie ha ket bym pyut shaneng u kiew
 Khlem thait khlem lwait un her ha thapniang sim
 Lu syiem ban tan, junom bad u un im.

(Waiting hopefully till the trumpet sounds to awake in an incorruptible body and to go up in bird's wings without tiredness or faint welcoming the King and live forever.)

In "U Premkar" H.W. Sten deals with lots of biblical elements in Christian teaching including temporary staying in the grave, Christ's Second Coming, a millennium reign of Christ, Rapture and the future condition of Christian life when he writes-

Ki thiah shipor haduh turoi kan riew
 Lu syiem kin pdiang ha suin kin kiew
 Bad U kin wan ha ri bun seng thymmai
 Ki syiem lyngdoh kin long ha ri jingshai
 Shihajar snem, ki angel kin synshar
 Kat kum bu syiem u la ai ia ki kular

(They sleep for a while till the trumpet sounds. They would be caught up in the sky to meet the King. Later to return with Him to the new kingdom and reign for a thousands years with angels according to the promises given by the King)

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters have shown the importance of the Bible in shaping the minds of Khasi poets. They have also presented how Biblical elements form a very important part in the projection of themes in their poems. This Chapter gives a summary of the preceding chapters which is as follows :-

CHAPTER I starts with brief introduction on the emergence and development of Khasi Poetry. It explains and clarifies the meaning of certain terms used in this study. The Chapter discusses the objective of the study and then presents a historical perspective and the significant social changes in Khasi Hills during the period of study. The Chapter also reviews past works that are related to this topic. Lastly, a brief resume of the life and works of each poet is given before the analysis of their poems.

CHAPTER II analyses the elements of evil which the Bible terms as sin, pride, hypocrisy, wickedness, adultery, worldly pleasure, vanity and temptation. Most of the selected poets in the study reflect on the destructive nature of sin and how it can destroy all of creation.

H.W. Sten's masterpiece *Ka Burom Ba La Jah* is to a certain extent a reflection of the Biblical narrative of the fall of man. Other poets such as J.Diengdoh, F.S Lyngdoh and B.L. Swer show how pride can bring about the downfall not only of individuals but also of nations. In the light of the preceding

discussion, it is not surprising to read in the Bible that pride is one of the most deadly sins that a Christian has to overcome³⁴.

Speaking against the sin of hypocrisy, E.Weston Dkhar in giving the title of the poem "Khristan Ka Nam" (Christian in name) focuses on the danger of the growing number of the so-called Christians in the Church.

Trying to give excuse in order to escape the blame for oneself, E.W. Dkhar in the last line of "Iano Phin Kynnoh Pop?" (Whom you will blame for?) reveals the consequences of sinful nature and wickedness which lies in the inside of man.

In his *Ki Siej Khongpong*, E.Weston Dkhar touches certain important biblical truths and themes such as adultery and judgment for sinful deeds. Christian does not favour lust; and is against adultery. So Manik and Mahadei has to face the consequence of what they did, and they died a shameful death.

Speaking about worldly pleasure, B.L. Swer in his "Da Jingieit, Tangba" (with Love, But) tries to prove the vanity of things he loves in this world. The world here seems to include pleasure, beauty, friendship, wealth, fame etc. There is such a story in the Bible about a wise man who tried to seek satisfaction through things in this world.

In his "Tang Jingthala" (ALL VANITY), E.W Dkhar alludes from the saying of Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon,

³⁴ Pro 6:17

having made trial of natural wisdom and knowledge in its utmost extent, and found it to be vanity.

The Book II of H.W. Sten's *Ka Burom Ba La Jah*, shows the items present in Vanity Fair where one can find pleasures such as drink, drugs, lusts, of all sorts, murder, witchcraft, gambling, theft, and all kind of wickedness-the lust of the eyes, the lust of flesh and the pride of life. All those things that we see in the vanity fair are against the teaching of the Bible³⁵.

S.S. Majaw in his *Ka Shnong Jingthala* (City of Vanity) reflects the condition of that particular city. All those things that we see in the City of Vanity are evil and shameful.

Speaking about the struggles and temptation in life, B.L. Swer in his "Na Ka Bynta Jongnga" (For Me) summarizes the struggle of man in doing good.

CHAPTER III analyses poems with Christian ideals and virtues. Christian ideals are those, which serve as standards for humans. Those includes themes such as a transformed life, love, hope, humility, grace, prayer, true worship, diligence, self denial, friendship, redeeming the time, life's meaning, etc.

Three of the selected poets namely H. Myllemngap³⁶, J. Diengdoh³⁷ and C. Wolflang³⁸ express the importance of experience conviction and accepting a new life as a Christian.

³⁵ Isa 41:29; Ps 10;7; 12:2; Eccl. 1:2,14

³⁶ H. Myllemngap, *Na Pneh U Lum Shyllong*, 1977, Shillong

³⁷ J. Diengdoh in his *Ka Mieng pynpang mynsiem*, 1978, Shillong

³⁸ C. Wolflang, *Ki Sur Phalang Jingmut*, 1990, Shillong

H. Myllemngap's poem 'Kut Jingmut Triang' (To be firmly determined) shows how victory starts from the instant that a change takes place in a man's heart. He uses the biblical term "new life", which refers to a state where something anew is implanted in the soul, something which was never there before.

C. Wolflang in the poem 'Sawdong Ka Ri' (Nation) from his *Ki Sur Phalang Jingmut* calls upon the whole Khasi nation to repent of its wrong doing and to run to God for mercy. The people were likened to the prodigal son of the parable narrated in the Bible³⁹.

A prominent Khasi poet, S.S. Majaw in his poems "Ka Jingieit" (Love) discusses love as it is expressed by Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians⁴⁰. Another poet who has chosen this theme is E.W. Dkhar. In his poem 'Hapoh Dulan' (Inside the Mansion), the poet touches this very fundamental Christian teaching, which is the depth of God's love for man.

J. Diengdoh, in his poem 'Sngewrit Nga Phla' (Humbly I Confess), humbly expresses the hope, which he can obtain through humble repentance before God. It stresses the sorrowful regret that constitutes true repentance. In Christianity, crying and weeping for sins and weakness is the way to receive mercy from God.

³⁹ Luk 15: 11-24

⁴⁰ 1Cor 13: 1-8

In “Meingi Ba Kthang” (Bitter Sunrise) B.L. Swer reflects on hope however little that can encourage a person even when life has become very difficult to bear. To B.L. Swer it is hope, which is one of the gift of God that will remain after all things are gone.

In his “Ka Jingai-ei Bneng” (Heavenly Grace), G.P. Wahlang brings a translation of a famous Christian Hymn, ‘Amazing Grace’, which has an origin in the Classic Hymns of John Newton composed by the American Melody and arranged by Edwin O.Excel³.

In his “Jingim ba la leit” (Past life), J Tham shows that the best way to happiness is by serving God alone.

In his “Jyrsieh” (Miry Clay), C.Wolflang kneels down in prayer for God’s help. A Christian is commanded to pray unceasingly⁴².

In “U Diengsning” (A Sycamore Tree), while looking at the outstanding characteristics of a Sycamore tree, encourages F.S. Lyngdoh to sing a song of praise to God. Understanding the whole duty of man is to fear God and serve Him⁴³.

In his “Ka ĩngmane Hapoh Ri Khlaw” (Church In The Wilderness) G.P. Wahlang speaks about true Christian worship⁴⁴ which is not in form but rather in the spirit of man.

⁷ Website, <http://www.hymnal.net>

⁴² Phil 4:6

⁴³ Eccl 12:13

⁴⁴ John 4:23-24

The title of the E.W. Dkhar's *Tang Jinggainguh Thang* (Only Burnt Offering), itself means a burnt offering or thankfulness to God. The poet starts his burnt offering by singing song of worship to God.

In "Ki Dkhiew Kiba Stad" (The Wise Ants), C. Wolflang shows how the lesson he learns from the small creatures like ants inspire him to challenge young people to strive for diligence and unity.

In his poem "Shaphrang Shaphrang Khynnah" (Move Forward Boy) E.W. Dkhar encourages the youth to move forward in their life especially in searching for wisdom and fame.

In his poem "Khristan ka Nam" (Christian in Name) of *Ka Mamla*, E W Dkhar explains that the presence of God in their life is the mark of those true Christians.

In his poem "Na Ka Bynta Jong Nga" (For Me) B.L.Swer, shows that friendship is one of the influential factor of his life that he wants to keep in remembrance. The mark of true friendship is loyalty and commitment to help in time of need⁴⁵.

F.S. Lyngdoh, E.W. Dkhar and C Wolflang speak about the meaning and purpose of life in a Christian's life. In his "Jingim U Briew" (Life Of Man), F.S. Lyngdoh compares Christian's man's life to that of a light that shines in the darkness.

⁴⁵ Pro 17:17; 1 Sam 18:1-4

Both H.O Mawrie and E. Weston Dkhar pose the question of who is man. While Mawrie shows how he owns his existence to God, the creator and sustainer of all things⁴⁶. E.Weston Dkhar speaks of man as the masterpiece of God's creation.

In his "Ko Tiewkulap" (Oh Rose), C.Wolflang on the other hand, ponders over the transitory, temporal nature of human life. He likens it to a rose with its beautiful colour and sweet fragrance.

CHAPTER IV deals with issues of life after death from the Christian perspective, issues such as Death, Heaven, Hell, Paradise, Second Coming, Resurrection of saints, Millennium reign, Final Day, Judgment, Reward etc.

W.R. Laitflang in his "Ka Jingiap U Tang-Nga" (The death of the self) summarises the terrible consequence of selfish and proud life. The poets warns the readers to live a life worthy of their conduct in this world. Otherwise their death will be shameful one.

P. Malngiang speaks about death as a vehicle that God, uses to lift his people out of their earthly troubles and give them mansions beyond the clouds. Therefore the poet feels that he has no reason to fear death instead he insults death cruel works.

⁴⁶ Gen.1:26-28; 2:7; Job 33:4; Rev.4:11; Psa. 139:14-16; 104:30; I Cor 11:9; Isa.45:12

The poet, Weston Dkhar expresses his shock and pain when he heard the sound of a Chapel Bell ringing a funeral tone to announce the death of a fellow member of his church..

In his elegy "Premkar", H.W. Sten speaks about death's icy hand, which makes no discrimination between rich and poor or young and old.

S.S. Majaw in his "Ka Shnong Jingthala" (City of Vanity) expresses that a life well spent will be worthy of keeping in remembrance.

B.R. Kharlukhi expresses his hopes to experience restoration after the end of life for the poet believes that all the word of the Lord i.e. the promises of God in the Bible would be fulfilled⁴⁷ after that day. J Tham speaks about death as the end of a journey for a Pilgrim.

Other poets who speak about life after death warns readers of the judgement that awaits all human being after they die. Nobait Swer speaks about God as the Righteous Judge. W.R. Laitflang also reflects on the day he will one day stand before the judgment seat of God after the end of his life on earth..

P.Malngiang, on the other hand expresses the hope of receiving the crown from the Master Creator after he passes away from this world. A Christian believe that after death the person suddenly awakes in the Lord's presence to be with

⁴⁷ PS 33:4; Matt 24:34; Rev 17:17

Christ⁴⁸ and to receive the crown from the Lord- Incorruptible Crown⁴⁹, Crown of Rejoicing⁵⁰, Crown of Righteousness⁵¹, Crown of life.⁵², Crown of glory.⁵³ and Crown of Gold⁵⁴.

The poet, J Tham, like Malngiang, encourages his readers to keep on with their struggle to live as Christian in order to earn the ultimate reward in heaven. He also speaks about a place of final destination that God has promised His people. To him this is the Promised Land, a place of eternal beauty where there are no more trials and temptation.

H.W Sten brings one of the most important doctrines of Christian faith, Christ's Second Coming, a millennium reign of Christ, Rapture of the saints and the future condition of Christian. He also concludes the elegy of "U Premkar" by reminding the hope of Christian about the resurrection of the saints and the sound of Jesus Christ's returning to this world.

J Diengdoh reminds the readers about one of the hope of the Christians, waiting the Second coming of Jesus Christ to this world. W.R. Laitflang summarizes the horrible thought that comes to the mind of the poet about a graveyard. He brings a biblical teaching about resurrection of the dead and life after death.

⁴⁸ Phil 1:23; John 14:3

⁴⁹ 1Cor 9:25

⁵⁰ 1 Thes 2:19

⁵¹ 1 Tim 4:8

⁵² James 1:12

⁵³ 1Pet 5:4

⁵⁴ Rev 4:4

All of the above poets are influenced by the Bible to a very great extent in their understanding about the presence of evil, the challenges the trials and suffering in life. They also reflect on death and accept it as a natural vehicle God uses to take his people home. Finally, they encourage others as well to persist in Christian living so that they will receive the eternal rewards from their Creator.

In conclusion, one can see that the Bible continues to influence Khasi poetry and it continues to be the source of inspiration to many Khasi poets as is witnessed by the analysis of their poems in Chapters II, III and IV.

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