

MIZO DRAMA : A THEMATIC APPROACH

By

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CONCLUSION

The present thesis vividly analyses the major themes of Mizo drama from the beginning (1912) upto date (August 1990). After a systematic examination of the topic, it is incumbent on my part to draw certain conclusions which will highlight the brief summary of the major findings of the work.

Readers might have already formed an opinion about the introductory chapter on Historical Perspective. It was written to offer an insight to the social and theatrical background of the period under study, and to associate those factors with each of the play examined. Though attempt has been made to enter each play chronologically, an Appendix IV is added hereto for a quick review. In the chart, I use one new term to specify the type of drama called 'Comi-tragedy'. Though the term is never used by the English, except tragedy, comedy and tragi-comedy; this type of play is however found in Mizo drama. Out of the twelve plays selected for the study, three plays, namely Ukil Hlawhtling by H. Lalsiama, Ramthanga te chhung by Lalhmuaka and Thu

a tawp e lumam by K. Saibela are comi-tragedy type of play because of the mirth and happiness is dominated by a tragic note at the end. Hence, the fourth type of drama, comi-tragedy is discovered in Mizo plays.

The second chapter deals Love as a dramatic theme *in Mizo drama. Love theme, unquestionably is the most important and biggest theme, which every playwright would like to express. For this reason, it cannot be covered in this thesis, all kinds of love and its manifestations. Nevertheless, the major themes of love have been grouped in this way - Romantic and Marital Love, Parental and Filial Love, and Brotherly Love.*

Romantic and Marital Love is again, the fond subject of most playwrights. All the major playwrights have portrayed, at least in their plays, the romantic love or marital love or both. On close analysis, it is found that romantic love leads lovers to another kind of love called marital love. In other words, marriage of true minds or true lovers, to have a genuine fellowship, a lasting rich communion is the end of romantic lovers in Mizo plays. So, love and marriage are closely linked in the hearts of the Mizo playwrights, as we have seen in Shakespeare's plays especially in his comedies.

An examination of Mizo plays has prompted me to draw a systematic conclusion that the romantic love has been developed out of two reasons - love arises out of facial and physical beauty, and love arises out of moral and character appreciation.

The romantic love between Zova and Zeli in Kan tiam tawh si (1982) by C. Laizawna; the white captive (Sap tlang-val) and Princess Pocahontas in Princess Pocahontas, acted in 1940 by Chawngzika and friends has been developed purely from the facial and physical beauty or to be precise, love at first sight. The same attraction brings romantic love between Kapthuama and Rozami in Thla hleinga zan (1977) by James Dokhuma. Love of beauty leads a man or a woman to love and to appreciate the beauty leads a man or a woman to love and to appreciate the beauty of the opposite sex, which tunes his or her heart to the readiness of giving free service to the loved ones. Such kind of urgent love or love at first sight easily finds its expression in gestures, sighs, mild and soft voice which are the languages of love.

Appreciation of character and moral beauty leads two persons to that feeling of attachment, to each other, which is based upon the difference of sexes. The warm and kind feeling or fondness of mutual and tender care have

been added to love which can be now called romantic love. Facial and physical beauty may be appreciated highly but love of moral and character beauty will have upper hand for spiritual union is heavenly. The love of Sangi and Muana in Sangi Inleng (1963) by Lalthangfala Sailo and Malsawma and Remi in Zawlpala Thlan Tlangah (1981) by Khawlungi have experienced the joy of spiritual union of love. The same kind of love is tasted by Rama and Makhumi in Lawm a kim (1989) by Liansailova. When the two lovers have found their affinity of souls, the rest of the affairs could have been a pure enjoyment.

Next, I have examined the place of Parental and Filial love in Mizo drama. Parental love is an instinctive love due from the parents towards their children, the offspring of their own flesh and blood. It can be said that parental love is a must for every married couple who have children. On the other hand, Filial love is a love due to the parents from their children. It has similar status and nature with parental love. It is a key to the relationship between parents and children. Filial love attaches a sense of obedience, respect, duty, responsibility and obligation to parents. And it also implies a spirit of co-operation mutual and constant care especially when the parents grow old and become weak.

It has been always viewed that filial love is a compelling love to the agents of the offspring. In the same way, the popular notion is that parental love is an inherited love. They are reciprocally adjusted. So, even if the father and the son had been parted by unavoidable circumstances, the two loves are unconsciously regenerated in one's feeling. This familial love is a biological instinct and it demands re-union for the full realization of parental and filial love.

When we examine the Mizo plays, one salient feature has come out clearly. Mizo playwrights have depicted that the paternal love is always greater or deeper than the maternal love. Fathers are considerate, warm and loving to children, though they are the upholder of family discipline. They really want the welfare of their sons and daughters by giving all those good instructions and moral lessons even in their death-beds. Mothers are rather depicted as less considerate and running after for their benefits and sometimes for their selfish ends. They are, in fact, the victim of patrimonial system of family. As a result, even the filial response is always more to the father side.

The third section of love is named Brotherly Love. It is a love of man towards his fellow man. The term 'brotherly love' indicates the closest fellowship of man

to man in an attitude characterized as a brother (or sister), as one would treat his brother in the flesh. Therefore, this term signifies a very close relationship of human beings.

Brotherly love is inextricably linked with society and religion. Because of this, may be, the Mizo playwrights have seen the brotherly love from two angles. One is Need-love which is always link with Mizo tlawmngaihna or Mizo societal life and the other is the Christian concept of brotherhood or brotherly love which is deeply religious. By need-love I mean to say the love which sends help and comfort, of various colours, to the needy. The recipient of this love always enjoys the warm friendship shown to him by reflecting the same sweetness but not as demanded, to the giver. In Sailo's Sangi Inleng (1963), Mawii renders all her help and comfort to the needy friend Sangi but she never expects anything in return. Besides, Mawii's zeal is in her tlawmngaihna itself. She is always ready to help Sangi even at considerable inconvenience on her path. She is courteous and industrious enough by self-denying to do whatever the situation demands during the disappointing period of Sangi's life.

The second point is the Christian concept of brotherhood or brotherly love. Mizo playwrights may be called

Christian playwrights, for they always tinge their dramas with Christian concept of love and good moral. Accordingly Christian brotherhood or fellowship is portrayed nicely by Upa Chawngzika, the first Mizo playwright/dramatist with a written script. The value of true friendship or brotherly love is the underlying theme of his three dramas namely, Pheikhawk Siamtu, acted in 1938, Travelling Companion, staged in 1950, Martina - Where love is God is, shown in 1951. James Dokhuma, in his Finna Hmahruai (1980) and Khawlkungi, in her Zawlpala Thlan Tlangah (1981) have depicted the Christian communion and genuine companionship through their characters.

The third chapter traces the place of Wealth in Mizo drama. Mizo playwrights employ this theme in their dramatic exposition of life in various ways. The desire for being rich or acquiring riches is, most probably, innate in all human beings. The lure for being rich is indeed so great, that, very few would be able to resist the temptation when it faces them. Money is a great mystery and it is present in every sphere of human life in the present day to day living. It is a shore to which every human craft is anchored. In fact, money gives the social atmosphere to give men food, shelter, comforts and amenities of life and even privacy. So, it is safe to say that our society

is built with money and we are tied to money. Money is a means to acquire more riches or wealth, for wealth commonly refers to money in abundance or valuables accumulated in possession.

The Mizo dramatists and playwrights had touched and approached the problem of riches and its consequences, (which I have found out) into two ways.

In the first case, wealth, mostly in the form of money is seen as a valuable possession, which can be used effectively. Few playwrights among the Mizos, have depicted money as a spring-board to happiness. In Lalthangfala's Liandova te unau (1969), money is used as a helpful servant or instrument for attaining a coveted status. Because of his hidden riches or wealth, Liandova could become the son-in-law of the village chief and also the Khuangchawi pa, (the one offers a series of prescribed public feast, for free consumption, for the attainment of Khuangchawi status). In Chawngzika's drama Hausakna nun dik tak, acted in 1938, had displayed the righteous life of a wealthy man, which shows that money alone is not the source of all evil.

The second approach, as taken up by the Mizo playwrights, is to show the evil effect of money or wealth.

The desire for riches can blind a man to the higher thing to the extent that 'wealth is his/her god'. In that case, riches or prosperity can be the cruelest curse ever obtain by man. Therefore, the Mizo playwrights have seen that to evaluate everything in terms of money, to make the love of wealth the driving force of life, cannot ever be anything else than the most perilous of sin.

The theme of 'Power' is dealt in chapter four. Power, as sociologists and social psychologists typically viewed, is the degree of control that a person or a group has over other persons or groups. Power is thus, viewed in terms of relationships. Such power may manifest in a number of ways. The agent who possesses power has resources to force his will on others. These resources often stem from social relationships and the individual's position in a group or society.

In the context of Mizo drama, the theme of 'power' can be studied from three angles, as (a) Kingly power, (b) Money power, (c) Status power.

In the traditional Mizo society, Kingship was hereditary until it was abolished in the fifties of the present century. Mizo playwrights, however, never depicted the evils of a disputed succession, usurping, conspiracy and

all other inter-clan clashes and battles for supremacy. For this reason, the present section of Kingly power deals with the social position or authority of the King rather than the political and administrative power problems.

The King (or Chief) obviously, is the head of the society, the parent guardian and sole authority of his village area or his kingdom. In his village, the power of the king is unlimited.

Money power has been discussed in Chapter III. It is clear enough that wealth is the source of power.

Status power refers to power arises out of one's status in the society. In fact, status may be characterized in terms of rights, privileges, prestige, power etc. relative to others in the social hierarchy. In the ancient Mizo society, possession of virtually some kind of material objects, like big gongs, guns, and other valuable articles become a symbol of one's status or one's riches. Of course, wealth creates social status and the rich man is understood to have enough influence in his locality. Khawlkungi's Zawlpala Thlan Tlangah (1981) gives a clear picture that a gun of Lalmuana makes the status of the owner. Lalmuana is seen as a powerful citizen, because of his wealth.

Besides, King, his elders or nobles wealthy citi-

zens and titled men, the professional people occupied a secured position to exercise their power. The priest, the village blacksmith, the village crier are always prominent in each village. In modern days, government officials and Church officials (including all missionaries) are considered as important and powerful persons.

The fifth and the last chapter of the thesis presents Religion as one of the themes in Mizo drama. Religion is a system of beliefs, practices, and philosophical values concerned with the definition of the sacred, the comprehension of life, and salvation from the problems of human existence. All men in all societies ultimately must face certain problems of life. In that situation, religion is essentially an institutionalized or traditional path to salvation. It is both social and psychological phenomena because it stresses fellowship in the development, teaching and perpetuation of religious insight and knowledge.

By religion, in the Mizo context, the playwrights mean to talk about Christianity. Since all the Mizo playwrights are Christians, the theme religion or religiousness is all pervading in their plays. Their philosophy is deeply linked with Christian faith and belief. True, direct adaptation of biblical stories are to be found in the work of some writers. When we examine the secular plays, it

is still true that the underlying moral is quite religious or biblical. It is therefore, justified that the collective philosophy of Mizo playwrights is 'Virtue rewarded and vice punished' in the end. The ungodly or irreligious characters were always punished or they get themselves lost in their world without the notice of the majority of the people. Their ends were, mostly death and sufferings. Whereas the godly or religious people attained success or blessings in a number of ways. The sufferings or problems of the good characters have been made clear as the play moves to the solution or end stage. Most of the Mizo plays are comedies and when the play really ends the godly or good character achieves high position as we find in Sailo's Liandova te unau and Saibela's hero Zoduhawma in Thu a tawp e lumam and the happy marital union as in Kan tiam tawh si by Laizawna, in Zawlpala thlan tlangah by Khawlkungi and in Lawm a kim by Liansailova and so on.

After a careful observation I have estimated that the playwrights are caught by the societal situation and framework itself. Right from the genesis of the Mizo drama, the people who took active part in theatrical work were those good Christians. The audience in the theatre also expect some moral lesson from the drama, really acted in the stage. Therefore, if moral lesson is to be inculcated

the religious tone must be the dominant theme of the play. Things are always seen from the Christian perspectives and the result of the expression of thought is most of the time quite religious.

Finally, these findings are expected to be of value to future scholars of Mizo drama and literature.
