

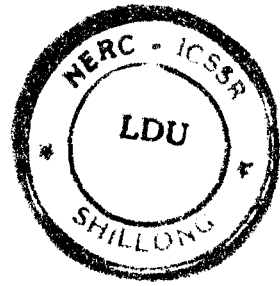
INDIA-THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

MIZORAM

ANIMESH RAY



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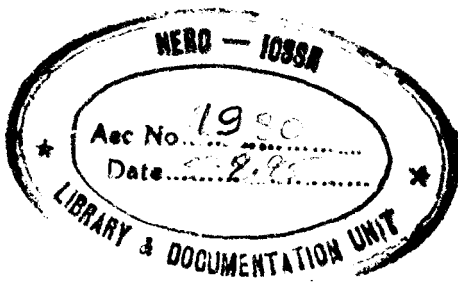


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ANIMESH RAY



NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA



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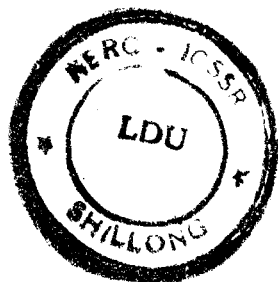
First Edition 1993 (*Saka* 1915)

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Rs. 57.00

ISBN 81-237-0470-4

Published by the Director, National Book Trust, India
A-5 Green Park, New Delhi - 110 016



CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	ix
I. Physical Features	1
II. History	22
III. People	46
IV. Customs, Ceremonials and Old religion	70
V. Role of Church	133
VI. Administrative and Political Development	145
VII. Economic Life and Development Plans	214
<i>Appendix A</i>	239
Geomorphology, Geology, Stratigraphy, Minerals etc. of Mizoram	
<i>Appendix B</i>	244
Rainfall Data of Mizoram	
<i>Appendix C</i>	246
Flora of Mizoram	
<i>Appendix D</i>	250
Orchids of Mizoram	
<i>Appendix E</i>	255
Fauna of Mizoram	
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	257
<i>Abbreviations</i>	261
<i>Glossary</i>	264
<i>Index</i>	269

PHYSICAL FEATURES

Mizoram is situated between 21-58° to 24°29' north latitude and 92°29' to 93° 22' east longitude. The Tropic of Cancer passes near Aizawl town. The state has an area of 21,087 square kilometres.

It is situated on the north-east end of the country. In shape it is rather like a narrow and inverted triangle. The length of the state from north to south is about 277 km. At broadest from the east to west its width is about 121 km.

In the east and the south the state is bound entirely by international borders. In the west, its major length borders the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In the east and the south its border with the Chin Hills and Northern Arakans of Burma extends to about 404 km. In the west the border with Bangladesh is nearly 300 km.

Mizoram borders three states of India - Assam, Manipur and Tripura. Its geographical borders with Assam, Manipur and Tripura extend over 123 km, 95 km and 66 km, respectively.

Physiography

The Mizo Hills or the Lushai Hills, as known earlier, have ranges running from the north to the south which taper from the middle of the state, towards the north, the west and the south. The average height of the hills in the west is 1,000 m, gradually rising to 1,300 m in the east. Some places have high ranges, going upto 2,500 m. The state is interspersed with innumerable rivers, streams and brooks.

The details regarding geomorphology, geology, stratigraphy, minerals, etc., are given in Appendix A.

Rivers

There are a number of rivers in Mizoram. The main rivers and their length are given below.

Table 1.1.
Rivers in Mizoram

Sl. No.	Name of river	Length in Kilometre (in Mizoram)
1.	Tlawng (Dhaleshwari)	185.15
2.	Tiak	159.39
3.	Chhimtuipui (Kolodyne)	130.46
4.	Khawthlangtuipui (Karnaphuli)	128.08
5.	Tuichang	120.75
6.	Tuirial (Sonai)	117.53
7.	Tuichawng	107.87
8.	Mat	90.16
9.	Tuipui (Khawchhak)	86.94
10.	Tuivawl	72.45
11.	Teirei	70.84
12.	Tuirini	59.57
13.	Serlui	56.35

Note : *Tui* in Mizo language means water.

The important rivers in the northern part of the state are the Tlawng (Dhaleshwari), the Tuirial (Sonai) and the Tuivawl, which flow northwards and fall in the Barak river in Cachar district in Assam. These three rivers, particularly the Dhaleshwari, are navigable for considerable stretches. The Dhaleswari had provided the entry and exit routes for the Mizo Hills through ages. Forest produce like timber and bamboo are floated down the river from the interior of the hills to the plains of Cachar and food, consumer goods and merchandise are taken to the hills by boats from Cachar. Before the road to the Mizo

Hills was constructed about forty years back, administration had mostly depended on this river for transportation of men and material.

In the southern part of the state, the Chhimtuipui (Kolodyne) is an important river having four tributaries—the Mat, the Tuichang, the Tyao and the Tuipui. The Kolodyne enters Mizoram from Burma and flows first westward and then southward in Mizoram and reenters Burma. Although it has some rapids, yet the river is navigable in some stretches in Mizoram. In the west are the Tuichawng with its tributaries, the Mat and the Khawthlangtuipui (Karnaphuli). The Karnaphuli with its tributaries - the Tuichawng, the Phaireng, the Kao, the Deh and the Tuilianpui form the western drainage system. This river, originating in south Mizoram, enters Bangladesh at Demagiri. The port and the city of Chittagong are situated at its mouth in Bangladesh.

The drainage system of Mizoram is very complicated. The rivers, tributaries and streamlets run through the depressions and gorges, forming angular dendritic drainage pattern across the topographic depressions and highs. The slopes of the streams are moderate. In some cases the main rivers are restricted in their comparatively soft shale horizons. The main drainage system in the area falls within the piedmont and straight reaches. The water holding capacity of the soil is low because of its clayey nature.

Some of the near parallel rivers flow in opposite directions. The Tlawng, for 65 km, flows northwards, whereas the Mat on its east and the Deh, on its west, flow southwards. Similarly, the Tuivawl, the Tuichawng and the Tuilianpui have parallel courses for quite a length, but run in opposite directions. The Tuichawng and the Phaireng flow north and join the Deh. After this the Deh turns to the west and meets the Karnaphuli which flows south-west.

The state has heavy monsoon which swells up the

rivers during the rains. Because of the steep hills and narrow valleys the rain water quickly comes down the hills and swells the rivers. In May 1889, 68 cm of rainfall occurred in south Mizo Hills and the river Karnaphuli rose to 15.25 m. The bigger rivers – the Tlawng, the Tuirial, the Karnaphuli and the Kolodyne, have a considerable flow and remain navigable.

Peaks

Mizoram has several high mountain peaks. These generally occur in the east and the south. The ranges in the west are steep and precipitous whereas the eastern sides are somewhat gentler. This has led to the theory that the territory was earlier covered by water which receded from the east to the west. The fact that the Mizo Hills abruptly rise from the plains particularly towards Cachar in Assam gives credence to this theory. This abrupt rise also explains why the three larger rivers are navigable by boats from Hailakandi to Sairang, a few kilometres from Aizawl. The sides of the hills are generally covered with forests and bamboo jungles.

The highest peak in Mizoram is Phawngpui (Blue Mountain) which has a height of 2,157 m. It is situated in the south-eastern part of the state.

The important ranges and the peaks of Mizoram are shown below.

Table 1.2.
Hill Ranges and Peaks in Mizoram

<i>Name of Range/Peak</i>	<i>Height (in metre)</i>
1. Blue Mountain (Phawngpui)	2,157
2. Lengteng	2,141
3. Surtlang	1,967
4. Lurhtlang	1,935
5. Tantlang	1,929
6. Vapartlang	1,897
7. Chalfithlang	1,866

8.	Hranturzotlang	1,854
9.	Zopuitlang	1,850
10.	Tawitlang	1,837
11.	Mawmrangtlang	1,812
12.	Puruntlang	1,758
13.	Hmuifangtlang	1,619
14.	Saireptlang	1,555
15.	Sakawrhmuittuaitlang	1,535
16.	Reiktlang	1,485
17.	Thorantlang	1,387
18.	Buia Hmuntlang (Aizawl)	1,383
19.	Serkawn (Lunglei)	1,222
20.	Lapuitlang (Aizawl)	1,188
21.	South Hlimentlang (Aizawl)	1,179

Note : *Tlang* in Mizo language means hills.

Plains

There are some small plains in the state scattered over the general hilly terrain. These plains are believed to be possibly the silted beds of lakes which existed at the hill tops. The plains have thick layers of rich alluvial soil. The largest of these plains is the Champhai Plains, situated near the Burma border, 150 km to the east of Aizawl. The Champhai Plains are 10 km long at its widest and 5 km across. This area is now famous for cultivation of rice which is of a very fine quality.

Another such plain area is at Vanlaiphai which is situated 90 km away from Aizawl towards the south-east. The plain is 10 km long and about half to one km wide. The major part of this plain has also been converted into fields for permanent paddy cultivation.

There is another such area at Thenzawl which is situated 90 km south of Aizawl. So far not much permanent cultivation has been taken up in this area although there is very good potential for it.

LAKES

The state has a number of beautiful lakes situated in different parts of its territory.

Palak Lake

It is situated in an almost inaccessible area in the southern part of the state. It is in the Lakher region of Chhimituipui district, 130 km south-west of Saiha, the district headquarters and 5 km from Pahu village. It is an oval lake, 200 m long and 150 m wide, occupying an area of 30 ha.

The legend is that a big village was submerged by a flood or a earthquake and the lake was created. It is believed that the village still exists below the lake. The local people, the Lakhers, generally shun the lake area as they believe that the lake is the abode of demons and evil spirits, who are displeased when people enter this area and the people fall sick, due to the displeasure of the evil spirits. With exception of some very adventurous people the Palak Lake area is not encroached upon for exploration, hunting or *jhum*.

The lake is surrounded by tropical evergreen and moist deciduous forests comprising of species like *Dipterocarpus* sp., *Michelia* sp., *Schina Wallichin*, *Mesua ferrea*, *Chikrassia tabularies*, *Cedrella totona*, *Albizzia* sp., *Terminalia* sp., *Lagerstromia* sp., *Biscofia Javamica*, *Ficus* sp., *Artocarpus* sp., *Tetrameles nudiflore*, bamboos, canes, etc.

There are fish and crab in the lake. Bear, tiger, deer, wild pig and variety of avifauna are found in the surrounding forests. In Mizoram this is the only abode of aquatic birds with the wild duck of different species.

Tamdil

Tamdil is situated in Aizawl district. It is about 110 km south-east of Aizawl town and 7 km from Saitual village. 'Tam' is a shortened form of the Mizo word 'antam' which means mustard plant and 'dil' means lake. Tamdil means a lake of mustard plants. A folklore associated with the lake says that there was a big mustard plant in the place where the lake is situated now and whenever

this plant was cut off, water came out incessantly thereby creating the lake.

The lake is surrounded by tropical evergreen and moist deciduous forest with species like *Schenia Wallichii*, *Chikrassia tabularis*, *Albizzia sp.*, *Artocarpus sp.*, *Merus sp.*, bamboos, etc. The aquatic fauna consists of fish. There are plenty of prawns in this lake. In surrounding forests bear, deer, wild pig and common avifauna are found.

Rungdil

It is situated 14 km from Suangpuilawn village in Aizawl district. It has an area of 2.5 ha. Rungdil means lake of partridge. It acquired this name as at one time it was the habitat of a large number of partridges.

Actually, it consists of two lakes, more or less alike, separated by a narrow stretch of land. It is said that if a pumpkin is cut into two halves and one is put in one lake, it will surface in the other lake. The two lakes are believed to have a subterranean connection.

The lake is surrounded by tropical evergreen deciduous forests. Its flora and fauna are of the same type as found in and around the other lakes in Mizoram.

Rengdil

This is a man made lake unlike the other lakes described earlier which are all natural lakes. This lake is situated in Aizawl district, 150 km to the north-west of Aizawl and about 8 km from Zamuang village.

Climate

The state gets a good rainfall. During rains the climate in the lower hills is humid and enervating. Malarial fever was a common feature during and after rains, particularly in the lower area. It is quite cool and pleasant on the higher hills even during the hot season. A special feature of the climate here is the occurrence of violent storms

during March-April. Heavy storms come from the north-west and they sweep over the hills in the entire state.

Rainfall is generally evenly distributed. The crops seldom suffer from drought. Mizoram as a whole gets an average rainfall of about 3,000 mm with Aizawl town having 2,380 mm and Lunglei 3,178 mm.

Temperature in the state varies from about 12°C in winter to about 30°C in summer. Winter is from November to February. There is generally no rain or very little rain during the winter months. Winter is followed by spring which starts at the end of February and continues till the middle of April. In April, storms occur and the summer starts. In April and May temperature goes up to 30°C. The hills are covered by a haze. Heavy rains start in June and continue upto August. September and October are the autumn months when the rains cease and the temperature is usually between 19°C and 25°C.

The rainfall data for the state is given in Appendix B.

Forests

Forests in Mizoram are of three types. The first type, which is the predominant forest in Mizoram is the tropical wet evergreen with dense tall trees. The second type is tropical, semi-evergreen. Here also evergreen is predominant, but dominants include deciduous species. The third type is the montane sub-tropical. These are broad leaved evergreen species. There is an admixture of tropical, sub-tropical and temperate elements in these forests. Tropical semi-deciduous forests are found in the lower areas and sub-tropical evergreen forests predominate at higher elevations. Forest area upto 1,000 m altitude is occupied mainly by tropical forest types. However, many typical sub-tropical and even temperate species are also present. In higher altitudes mixed forests of conifers - oaks and rhododendrons, etc., occur. These forests show a very clear vegetational stratification. However, the application of conventional criteria of the vegetational

classification based on altitudinal gradient does not apply in Mizoram.

Jhum and other biotic factors have been affecting the forest area in Mizoram. Yet certain patches of virgin forest are still found in the state. Mizoram forests are rich with numerous species which are generally found in the Himalayas, Burma, China, Thailand and Malaysia.

Of the total geographical area of 21,09,000 ha of Mizoram, 40 per cent of the area is under bamboo. Total availability of bamboo per year in the state has been estimated at 81 lakh tonnes. The bamboos are mostly found in abandoned *jhum* areas. *Jhum* and bamboo have rotationality of about five years. Due to difficulties in access and transportation more than two-thirds of the bamboos are not commercially exploited.

At intervals of 25 and 50 years bamboos cause catastrophe in the state. At this periodicity, bamboos flower all over the state. The rodent population suddenly increases enormously. Flowers and seeds are eaten by rats which multiply in astonishing numbers. They devour, apart from bamboo flowers, all the standing crops resulting in famine in the entire hills. The 50-year occurrence of flowering is of great intensity and the resultant famine is called *mautam* (great famine). The famine which occurs at 25-year interval is called *thingtam* (short famine). The last *mautam* took place in 1959 and the last *thingtam* in 1983.

Jhum has adversely affected the forest wealth of the state to a great extent. The villagers cut and burn forests for their cultivation with extensive damage to forests which do not get time to recoup. A study made, by the Mizoram Government reveals that about 50,000 families in Mizoram, constituting about two-thirds of the population, depend on *jhumming* for their livelihood. This results in destruction of forest in 40,000 ha every year, and the loss is estimated at Rs. 100 crores per year. Apart from *jhumming*, there are other pressures on forest. The people entirely depend on the forest for their fuel,

and construction material for housing. The fast denudation of forests is also leading to soil degradation. Because of the biotic pressure, the ecological balance primarily based on forests, is being seriously disturbed. Because of the hilly terrain adequate green cover is essentially required for protection of the top soil. The depletion of forest has also adversely affected the fauna. Wildlife in such terrain requires proper cover which can only be provided by a good forest.

In recent years, however, there has been prolific growth of forest in the interior of Mizoram. With shifting of villages from the interior to the roadside and control on movement, there was substantial reduction in human interference with forests. This resulted in natural regeneration of vegetation. It is a pleasure to see how green and variegated is the forest of Mizoram now.

The different types of land cover in Mizoram as estimated by Landsat imagery are shown below.

Table 1.3
Different Types of Land Cover in Mizoram

<i>Type of Land Cover</i>	<i>Area (in sq km)</i>
1. Closed (good) forest	4,190
2. Closed forest affected by shifting cultivation	13,520
3. Degraded forest affected by shifting cultivation	2,600
4. Non-forest	640
5. Water bodies	140
Total	21,090

The present reserved forests in the state were earlier known as the inner line reserved forests. These were constituted in 1877 in the border of Cachar district under the Assam Forest Regulation. The villages traditionally had their own forest reserves in their respective *ram*

(land), administered by the respective chiefs. On abolition of chieftainship, these are now under control of the village councils.

The areas under different types of forest in Mizoram are shown in the Table below.

Table 1.4
Different Classes of Forest in Mizoram as in 1987

<i>Class of Forest</i>	<i>Area (in sq km)</i>
1. Reserved forest	7,127
2. Forest under control of District Council/Village Council (Protected Forest)	3,568
3. Unclassified State Forest	5,240
Total	15,935

Flora

Many plant explorers have studied flora in north-east India. But Mizoram has not been explored except for some sporadic visits by botanists. Hence, even now, much is not known about the flora of Mizoram. Some description of flora of the state is given in Appendix C.

Orchids

Generally orchids which are abundant in Mizoram are prolific in temperate evergreen forest areas. These areas are ideal for their growth. More than 150 species of orchids have been collected from the state. Some of the common orchids found on the humus covered floor of the forests are *Calenthe* sp., *Goodyera procera*, *Habenaria* sp. and *Phaius* sp. etc. In Mizoram orchids of epiphytic nature are more in number than the terrestrial ones. Orchid genera like *Anoectochilus*, *Bulbophyllum*, *Cymbidium*, *Dendrobium*, *Eria*, *Pholidota*, *Liparis*, *Saccolabium* and *Vanda*, etc., are well represented by different species. They occur on main trunks of lofty trees. They also occur

in different ecological niches of the steep ravines. A thorough survey of this group is likely to reveal many orchids of ornamental value which would be new in the orchid world. They would also prove useful for commercial purposes and hybridization programme.

Some of the varied, beautiful and rare species of orchids are endemic to Mizoram. Many are with fine foliage and beautiful flowers which are of interest to garden lovers and horticulturists.

However due to overexploitation orchids have depleted considerably in Mizoram. Many species are now under threat due to fast expanding economic activities in the state. Unless some urgent steps are taken to document, conserve and multiply the threatened species, many of them would become extinct before their potential is realized.

The Botanical Survey of India has taken some steps for *ex situ* conservation of rare, threatened and endemic taxa of orchids and other interesting plants of Mizoram in the orchidaria and botanical gardens in Shillong.

Description of the orchids found in Mizoram is given in Appendix D.

Fauna

Mizoram though very rich in fauna has not yet been thoroughly surveyed for its faunal resources. In 1986-87 there was a multi-disciplinary expedition organised by the Geological Survey of India to the Blue Mountain in Mizoram. The Zoological Survey of India participated in this expedition. Information available on faunistic resources of the state is mostly based on the results of this expedition. The fauna of Mizoram is described in Appendix E.

Mizos always regard guns as prized possessions. The British administration liberally issued gun licences in every village. This is the main reason for the extensive damage caused to the wildlife in Mizoram. In fact administration used to reward the killing of wildlife.

The annual administration reports of the Lushai Hills used to show figures of wildlife killed and rewards given. For example, the administrative report of the Lushai hills district for 1905-06 gives the following figures for six months upto October 1905.

Table 1.5
Wildlife Killed in Mizoram in 1905

<i>Wildlife Killed</i>	<i>Reward given</i>
11 full grown tigers	Rs. 180/-
10 full grown leopards	Rs. 50/-
4 half grown leopards	Rs. 10/-
203 full grown bears	Rs. 1015/-
97 half grown bears	Rs. 242-8-0
25 wild dogs	Rs. 226/-
Total	Rs. 1723-8-0

The administration report of 1916-17 shows that the wild animals killed during the year included 26 tigers, 26 leopards, 159 bears and 91 wild dogs. The encouragement for killing wildlife initially came from the necessity to protect life and property. The destruction of wildlife continued over the decades wantonly. It was destroyed for food, skins and just for pleasure in hunting. Total number of guns in the district was 1,066.

During the early British rule in the Mizo Hills, a rich wealth of wildlife was found in the area. The early gazetteers report that wildlife included elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, leopards, Himalayan black bears, Malaya bears, bisons, several kinds of deer, gurals and serows.

Because of indiscriminate hunting, wildlife started becoming scarce. In the entire state wildlife is threatened because of damage due to encroachment and shifting cultivation. The 1961 census report said that there was not much wildlife in the district excepting a few herds of elephants, a few tigers, leopards and bears, mithuns and

bisons had disappeared. Wild dogs were fairly common. Both Himalayan black bear and Malayan bear were still somewhat common. Game birds were becoming scarce.

Fish was also becoming scarce although at one time there were plenty of them in the rivers and lakes of the state. Big mahseers were common earlier, but have now disappeared.

Attempts are now being made to protect wildlife. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, has prohibited hunting of animals. A wildlife sanctuary has been set up at Dampa in Aizawl district, 15 km from Phaileng village. The area of the sanctuary is 572 sq km. It was started on January 20, 1976 and its wildlife consists of tiger, elephant, leopard, bear, deer, sambhar, serow, wild pig, etc. In the wildlife sanctuary, steps are being taken to improve the habitat by providing water points, regulating entry of men and cattle, stopping encroachments, taking steps against poaching and creating awareness about their protection.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Mizoram has a number of places which are of historical interest and are associated with folklore, legends and stories which are passed on from generation to generation. A deep sense of belonging and togetherness of the Mizos has been interwoven with these places, which form a very important part of the history and culture of the race.

Phawngpui

The Blue Mountain, which is the highest mountain peak in Mizoram, 2,157 m in height, is known as Phawngpui to the people of Mizoram. It is situated close to the Burma border, on the curve of the river Kolodyne, in the Chhimituipui district. The nearest village is Sangau. This is a very sacred peak, considered to be the abode of the gods. Once a year ritual sacrifices are offered here.

Commanding a majestic view over the hills and the valleys, this peak presents the most enchanting scenic beauty in Mizoram. There is a semi-circular beautiful cliff in the western side called Thlazuang Khamm which has a sharp and deep fall. This is the habitat of the wild mountain goats. This cliff was believed to be haunted by spirits.

On the peak, there is a level ground about 200 ha in area. This place is surrounded by matted bamboo groves, and other beautiful flora. Varieties of butterflies, including some rare species, are found here. On the east one can see a deep green forest. On other side at a great distance, villages are silhouetted in a big canvas of wavy hills.

Orchids and rhododendrons of the Blue Mountain are famous. The isolation of the place has allowed many rare species of flora and fauna to survive.

Milu Puk

Milu Puk means cave of skulls. There is a big cave situated near the village Mamte in Lunglei district, about 130 km from Lunglei town. In this cave a big heap of human skeletons was found. The skeletons appeared to be of people who were taller than the Mizos and might have belonged to some other race inhabiting the area before the Mizos came. The legend is that these people belonged to a tribe called 'Tlau'. Once long ago, they suffered from a severe famine. As the villages were independent under different chiefs which were at war with each other, these people could not leave their village in search of food which resulted in many of them dying for want of food. The survivors decided to go elsewhere and entered the cave where all perished due to starvation. This is a pathetic story of famine which had frequently cast its dreadful shadow in Mizoram. It also tells of the miseries of lonely villagers who dared not move out of the village for help, as they were scared of their neighbourhood.

Pukzing Cave

Pukzing cave, which goes 25 m inside, is the biggest cave in Mizoram. It is situated at Pukzing village near Marpara in the western hills within Aizawl district. The story goes that the cave was carved out of the hills by a very strong man called Mualzavata, the name meaning a person who could clear hundred ranges of forest in one day. He was such a strong man that he could make the cave with only his hair pin as the tool.

Lamsial Puk

The cave Lamsial Puk is situated near the village Farkawn in the south-east side of Aizawl district. This cave carries gruesome evidence of a fight between two neighbouring villages in which many warriors were killed. The bodies of the warriors of the Lamsial village were kept in this cave. The village is no longer there. But there are many skeletons in the Lamsial Puk which recall this gory incident.

Kungawrhi Puk

It is a big cave situated on a hill between Farkawn and Vaphai villages in the south-east part of Aizawl district. The folktale associated with this cave speaks of a beautiful young girl named Kungawrhi, after whom this cave was named. She got married to a brave young man, Pnathira by name. When the couple was going to Pnathira's village after the marriage, some spirits, bewitched by her beauty, abducted her. The spirits brought her to this cave and kept her confined in it. She was later rescued by her brave husband from the cave.

Thansiamama Seno Neihna

This literally means a place where a man called Thansiamama saw the calf of a mithun. There is a barren hill top, about 2,000 m high, near Chawnglui village in Aizawl district, near Burma border. The top of the hill has a

beautiful flat land but it is almost inaccessible because of the steep hill. A folklore says that Thansiam, who lived very long and became a very old man, was once searching for his missing mithun. He saw a calf at this hill top. The missing mithun had climbed up the hill, an impossible task, and given birth to the calf at this place. This is a story of hallucinations of old and lonely men.

Sibuta Lung

This is a memorial stone found at Tachhip village, 20 km from Aizawl town. It was erected by a Palian Chief about 300 years ago. A young orphan, Sibuta, was adopted by the Chief. He killed his adoptive father and became the Chief over 2,000 houses. But he failed in his love life and was jilted by a girl. For having his revenge he put a young and beautiful girl, Darlai, in a big pit on which he wanted to erect a memorial for himself. The huge rock was dragged with great pains from the bed of the Tlawng river, 10 km away. The stone was bathed with the blood of three human beings who were sacrificed. The stone was erected putting Darlai alive on the pit below the stone.

Phulpui Grave

There are two graves at Phulpui village in Aizawl district. Zawlpala, chief of Phulpui village, married the legendary beauty, Talvungi of Thenzawl. She was subsequently married to the chief of Rothai, Punthia. But she could not forget Zawlpala. After many years when Zawlpala died, grief stricken Thalvungi came to Phulpui, dug a pit by the side of Zawlpala's grave and induced an old woman to kill her and bury her in the grave. The love story, the graves and other associated places at Phulpui are attractions to visitors.

Memorial of Chhingpui

There is a memorial stone for a beautiful young woman called Chhingpui in a place between Baktawng and

Chhingchhip village on the Aizawl-Lunglei road. Chhingpui came from a noble family and was extraordinarily beautiful. From among the many young men wanting to marry her, she chose Kaptuanga and married him. They were very happy. But bad days came upon them when war broke out between the rival chiefs. Chhingpui was kidnapped and killed. For days all the villagers mourned her death. Kaptuanga could not bear the loss and killed himself. Chhingpui's memorial has kept the love story alive among the people.

Pangzawl

Pangzawl village of Lunglei district is associated with the tragic folklore of Chawngungi. She was a very beautiful girl sought for by all young men. But her mother demanded a very high bride price which could not be afforded by anyone. Ultimately, the chief's son, Sawngkhara, won her by using a magic drug. However, she died soon after the marriage. Sawngkhara lived the rest of his life mourning the death of his beautiful, young wife. The village has many places associated with this love story.

Mangkahia Lung

At Champhai in Aizawl district, near the Burma border, there is a very large memorial stone called Mangkahia Lung (Mangkhaha's stone). It is 5 m high with heads of mithun engraved on it. This was erected around AD 1700 in memory of Mangkhaha who was a very prominent chief of the Ralte tribe.

Tomb of Vanhimailian

Vanhimailian Sailo was a great chief who ruled over Champhai. A tomb was erected in his memory overlooking the vast Champhai plain. The tomb which was damaged, later was reerected in 1871-72.

Tualchang

Near Tualchang village in the eastern part of Aizawl district, there is a row of stone slabs. The largest of the rocks is 3 m wide, 1 m thick and 4.5 m high. It is the biggest monolith in the state. The origin of these monuments is not known. It is believed that these already existed when the Mizos came to this territory. In 1893 Lt. Col. Loch, Commandant, Lushai Hills Military Police, reerected the rock slabs which had fallen down.

Eastern Villages

Some of the eastern villages of Aizawl district are associated with stories of a great war between the Lushais and the Pawis. The tales of the last war in which the Pawis were routed speak of the defeat of the Pawi chief Thangliana by a combined Lushai force. Thangliana was the chief of Halkha village, now in Burma. He went to war with Nikuala, chief of Leng village. Kairuma, chief of Biate village went in support of Nikula. Thangliana overran the villages of Lungdar, Biate, Sialhawk, Khawai, Charlang and Vangtlang. The Lushai force marched through Lungdup and Tualte villages and halted at Chawngtlai. When Thangliana was on his way to attack Champhai he was ambushed by the Lushais headed by Hranghleia and China and was killed, along with a valiant warrior Robilha. Their heads were brought as souvenirs by the Lushais.

Lungvandawt

Lungvandawt means a stone reaching heaven. A very tall beautiful chiselled pillar made of stone about 75 cm in diameter and 3m in height is found between Biate and Lungdar in the eastern part of Aizawl district. The story goes that in ancient times this stone pillar was very tall, almost touching heaven and hence nothing could go in between. Once a peacock squeezed into it and got crumbled into pieces. It appears that this probably was a very tall

memorial stone of a chief of the Biate tribe who was resident of the area before the Lushais came and defeated the Biates who mostly went down to the plains of Cachar to settle there.

Khawnglung Run

Khawnglung village, situated in Lunglei district near its border with Aizawl district was crucial in the famous north-south war of Mizoram which occurred between 1856 and 1859. The north was under two dominant chiefs - Vuta and Vanhnuailiana. The prominent chief in the south was Rolura. Khawlung, which was the crucial village in this warfare, was well fortified and situated on top of a hill. Lalpuithanga was the chief of the village. The villagers felt safe as there was only one approach to the village which was well defended. One night the northern force took the village by surprise and massacred the villagers. The raid (*run* in Mizo language) of Khawnglung with its gory details are remembered in these villages.

Buddha's Image near Mualchang Village

An engraved image of Lord Buddha has been found about 8 km away from Mualchang village and 50 km from Lunglei town. On either side of the Lord's image there are images of dancing girls. On another slab of stone there are engravings of foot marks and various articles like spear head and dao. It appears that these engravings were done by metal chisels as there are marks in nearby stones which indicate the sharpening of metal implements. This place being situated near the Chittagong Hill Tracts has been under Buddhist influence for a few centuries in the past. It is felt that perhaps these engravings were made by some Buddhists from those tracts before the Mizos came into the area.

Thangliana Lung

At Demagiri there is a memorial stone erected in memory

of Captain T.H. Lewin who was the first Britisher to enter Mizoram. He was DC of Chittagong Hill Tracts and entered Mizoram through Demagiri in 1865. He was very friendly with all the tribesmen and was regarded as the first white friend of the Mizos. They honoured him by giving him the Mizo name of Thangliana which means 'greatly famous'. He was with the Mizos for nine years and wrote the first book in Lushai language. His memorial stone at Demagiri shows how the Mizos held him in great esteem.

Suangpuilawn Inscriptions

At Suangpuilawn village in Aizawl district there is a stone with inscriptions which have not been deciphered as yet. The stone slab of the size of 1m length and 1 m width is placed by the side of a stream. The Mizos believe that the writing on the stone was done by some ancient people in the area.