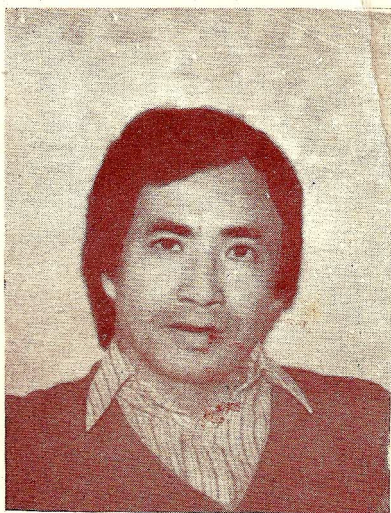


# ZO HISTORY

With an introduction to Zo culture, economy, religion  
and their status as an ethnic minority in  
INDIA, BURMA, and BANGLADESH



*Vumson*



#### About the author

Vumson hails from Tamdeang, Thuklai Post Office area, East Zoram. He studied geology at the Rangoon University, Burma, and the Mining Academy, Freiberg, Germany. He took B.Sc. in 1961, M.Sc. in 1965 and Ph.D in 1969. He is the author of "Element and Mineral Distribution in the Erzgebirge" which is published in German. He worked as a geologist in Burma, Germany, Nowray, Scotland, Ireland, and the United States.

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This book contains the most comprehensive analysis of the people mostly known as Chin, Khyeng, Kuki, Lushai, and Plains Chin. It analyses the effect of imposing several names to these people. The author, Dr. Vumson chooses "Zo" as the common name because most of them call themselves by this name. The readers will find how the Zo people migrated from Western China —Tibet to the valley of the Chindwin and Irrawaddy and then to the Kale—Kabaw—Myittha Valleys and why they migrated to the rugged hill areas they occupy now.

The proud and brave Zo people were colonialized, though they resisted with all their might. Then Japan invaded their country, exposing them to modern industrial warfare and dislocating their social and political behaviour.

When the colonial rule ended they were divided into three countries hopelessly outnumbered by Indians and Burmans. The book analyses how they struggle to survive and retain their distinctive identity.

It is most interesting to see how the same people develop themselves in two forms of societies, one under socialism and the other under free enterprise.

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INDIA, BURMA, and BANGLADESH

by  
**Vumson**



Published by the Author  
C/o N. T. Thawnga, Venghlui,  
AIZAWL, MIZORAM, INDIA.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicated this book to my paternal grandparents for teaching me Zo history, customs, and culture by reciting them over and over again. My grandfather killed over sixty four-legged wild animals, including a tiger. He trimmed two *doltials*. They sold their surplus rice harvest and made some money. When my maternal grandfather demanded an extra-ordinary high bride-price for my mother, my paternal grandfather simply poured silver rupees in a basket and offered as the bride price. My grandfather named me after himself taking his name, Vum and calling me "Son" meaning to narrate, with the hope that I, when I grow up, will tell the world his achievements. I hope this page satisfies his wish. My father did extensive research work on the history of Zo people. His work was published in Khupzathang's "The Genealogy of Zo Race". My mother never went to school. Although she bore ten children she found time to experiment with growing tea, the first in East Zoram. She started producing tea in the early 1950's and today, tea production is the main occupation of three villages and it is being exported to Burma as the "Dolluang Tea".

## PREFACE

Zo people tend to speculate as to where they came from. Some suggest that they are the descendents of the Chinese of the Chin dynasty because they are called "Chin" by the Burman. Some devoted Christians dreamed of being one of the lost tribes of Israel. The following pages are an attempt to clarify the origins of Zo people and their migration roads to their present settlements. I also sought to trace all Zo people and pinpoint where they are to be found and the political and cultural condition they are facing today. The history of the Zo people is very complex because they have many versions of legends and traditions. Their clothing, houses and diet differ from one area to another because of climatic differences within a short distance. The language, though basically similar, has developed into multi-dialects. Even their name as a people has been pronounced in many different ways. I make attempts to compromise these differences so that, at least outside their own land they are known by the same name. In doing so, I take the name used by most Zo people such as Zoram or Zoland. Zo terms used in this book are mostly of the northern Zo people. I view the contiguous Zo settlements as Zoram, statistic shows the user of Zoram outnumber the user of Zogam, and I use East Zoram and West Zoram to cover Zo settlements in Burma and India respectively. I also search for Zo names to replace foreign abusive names such as Chin, Kuki, Tiddim Chin, Plains Chin etc. and use more acceptable and practical names such as Paite for Tiddim Chin, "Pawi for Falam, Haka, and Chhimtuipui people, Lusei for Duhlian dialect speaking peoples, and Asho for "plains Chin".

As a Sizang I had easy access to the history of the Sizang, and depended on older publications for the rest. The result however is far from complete. Many older publications though may very well be informative, but confused between tribal and village names. Some names seem to have been created out of the blue such as Shendus or Yindus. The most serious short coming of this paper is the history of the southern Zo, because I have no access to their verbal or other records.

I will welcome at any time correspondence concerning errors, suggestions for improvement, or criticism of the text as no perfection exist here.

In writing Zo names I have followed the practice in West Zoram, which will have some opposition in East Zoram, because they have followed the Burmese way, and every word of Zo names has a meaning. But conforming to international practice, as every Zo indeed has a family or clan name, this might be a better way in the long run. As for example my given name is Vumson and my clan name is Suantak, so my name should actually be Vumson Suantak.

In front of a few names I add *Pu*. This is how Zo address a gentleman. *Pu* stands for Mister whereas *Pi* stands for Miss or Misses.

## Inscription by Ex-Chief Khuplian, Lophei

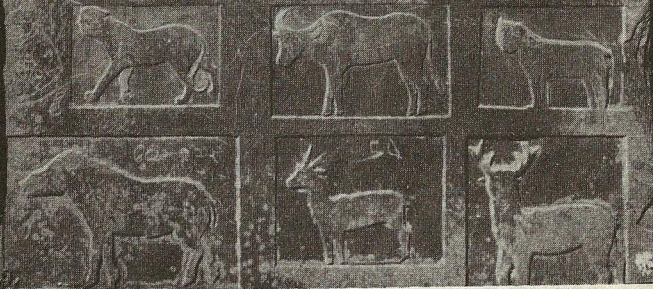
I am the 15th generation down from the house of Thuantak who is the original progenitor of the Siyin Tribe. Being an orphan from childhood I exerted myself all alone in many enterprises by which I became a self-made man with many and various achievements. When the British on 1888 undertook their first expedition against us (the Chins) I attained the age of 20 years and I played an active part in the defence against them. When the British troops marched up the Signalling at No. 5 Stockade the united forces of the Siyins, Suktes and Kamhaus made a good resistance to the British attack which was easily repulsed. On this occasion I personally captured one rifle. When the second expedition took place in 1889 the British, too well armed to be resisted against, carried the day: hence the annexation of Chin Hills. I then rebuilt and settled in Lophei Village which was originally founded by Kiim Lel and was destroyed by the Tashons in my grandfather, Lua Thuam's time. Henceforth my hereditary chieftainship of the Lophei clan was restored to me. Moreover I founded the three villages—Tuisau, Tuival, and Suangdaw all of which have ever since been in my jurisdiction. As I was advanced in age after my service of 40 years as Chief, my eldest son succeeded me to the chieftainship. Being highly pleased with my meritorious and loyal services, His Honour., the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma in 1922 presented me a D.B.B.L. gun as a reward and a good service certificate. And to mention more I was given many good certificates, by the various Administrative officers of Chin Hills. The Burmese text on the inscription may be translated as follows : The Sizang people who dwell in the villages of Lophei, Khuasak, Buanman, Thuklai, and Lamkhai are the descendents of Thuantak. I belong to the fifteenth generation. The history of my lifetime has been recorded in Zo and English.

The animals drawn on the memorial stone indicate Khuplian's hunting trophies : a tiger, a bison, a leopard, a wild pig, a barking deer, and a deer.

SCRIPTIONS BY EX-CHEIF KHURLIANLOPHI

I AM THE 1st REGIMENT SOLDIER FROM THE HOUSE OF  
 THAMMAWATHI THE ORIGINAL PROPRIETOR OF THE MYINTUNG  
 BELONGING TO THE HOUSE OF THAMMAWATHI I FIGHTED MYSELF ALL AS  
 IN 1870 I FIGHTED WITH THE BRITISH I RECEIVED A SELF MADE MAN WITH  
 MY OWN HANDS YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS WHEN THE BRITISH IN THE  
 WENT TO THE FIRST BATTALION AGAINST US (THE CHINESE)  
 I RECEIVED THE RANK OF CAPTAIN AND I PLAYED AN ACTIVE PART  
 IN THE BATTLE OF NOT TELL WHEN THE BRITISH THROUGH  
 THE RANKS OF THE SIKHING STATION AT NO. 3 STATION OF THE  
 UNITED STATES OF THE CHINESE STATES AND KAMHIAU MADE  
 A GREAT RESISTANCE TO THE BRITISH ATTACK WHICH WAS  
 EVIDENTLY SUCCESSFUL ON THE OCCASION I PERSONALLY CAPTURED  
 ONE PRISONER WHEN THE SECOND BATTALION TOOK PLACE IN 1880 THE  
 BRITISH TOO WELL ARMED TO BE RESISTED AGAINST CARRIED THE  
 RANK HELD THE ANNEXATION OF CHIN HILLS I THEN RECEIVED  
 A RANK OF LIEUTENANT IN LEHURI VILLAGE WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY FOUNDED  
 BY KING LUANG WAS DESTROYED BY THE TIBETANS IN 1880  
 FATHER LUANG THAMMAWATHI THEREAFTER MY HEREDITARY CHIEF  
 OF THE HOUSE OF THE CHINESE STATES WAS RESTORED TO HIS POSSESSION  
 I RECEIVED THE THREE VILLAGES - THUSALL THUSALL AND SUANGSAM  
 ALL OF WHICH HAVE EVER SINCE BEEN IN MY JURISDICTION AS  
 A CHIEF IN 1880 I RECEIVED THE RANK OF 10 YEARS AS CHIEF MY  
 ELDEST SON SUGGESTED ME TO THE CHIEFTAINSHIP BEING HIGH  
 PLEASANT WITH MY HERITAGE AND LOYAL SERVICES HIS HONOUR  
 THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF BURMA IN 1922 PRESENTED  
 ME A BELL GUN AS A REWARD AND A GOOD SERVICE CERTIFICATE  
 I WANT TO MENTION MORE I WAS GIVEN A GOOD CERTIFICATE BY THE  
 VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS OF CHIN HILLS

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction to Zo People

#### THE GENERIC NAME "ZO"

The term Zo or Jo was mentioned as the name of a people in a few historical publications of the Indo-Burman peoples. Fanch'o<sup>19</sup> a diplomat of the Tang dynasty of China, mentioned in 862 A.D. a kingdom in the Chindwin valley, whose princes and chiefs were called "Zo". In 1783 Father Sangermo<sup>112</sup> mentioned "the petty nation called JO." G. A. Grierson<sup>57</sup> recorded in 1904 "The name is not used by the tribes themselves, who used titles such as ZO or YO or SHO."

However, because of the Zo peoples' frequent contacts with many different people at their borders the available literature is often confused about which people should be designated as ZO or other names. When the British took possession of Bengal and had their contact with Zo people, the Bengalis told them that the Zo were Kuki, a Bengali word which means something like savage or wild hill people. But when the British came in close contact with the Lusei, they realized that they did not call themselves Kuki. Initially the British used the term "Loosye". However, the British later adopted "LUSHAI" as the official designation for Zo people living in the western part of the Zo country, as the ruling clans of these people were known to them as "Lushai".

There were a few British officers who tried to understand the people they were dealing with; outstanding among whom was Tom Lewin, who said; "The generic name of the whole nation is "DZO"<sup>46</sup>

When the British annexed Assam and Manipur they came in contact with the Hmars, whom to the British were no doubt related ethnologically to the Lusei, but who were not exactly Lusei. Hmar is a Lusei word for north, and the Hmar people were so named because they lived north of the Lusei. Hmar people had come to Manipur and Tripura sometime during the 1600s and they were called Kuki by their neighbours. By about 1850 the Thado or Khuangsai started to appear in Cachar and Manipur;

and the British adopted *Kuki* for the Hmars and "New Kuki" for the Thado.

Under the heading "New Kuki" were included all Paite. When in 1825 the British invaded Arakan and the Southern Zo country they gave the Sho the name *Khyang*. *Khyang* is the Arakanese name for Zo and is an old Burmese word for Chin. When the British came in contact with people of the hill areas west of Kale valley, Chin was adopted from Burmese. "Plains Chin" was the name given to the Asho, because they were found in the plains of Arakan and Burma. Thus the British knew the Zo people as Lushai, Kuki, New Kuki, Khyang, Chin, and Plains Chin.

Lusei and related clans which settled in the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) called themselves Mizo from time immemorial; Mizo meaning Zo people. Lusei designates only people who were ruled by Sailo chiefs, and Mizo now covers all ethnic Zo people.

Languages change naturally and unavoidably as people separate from one another and come in contact with others. We can never be exactly sure of the original name for "Zo" people. Today the people call themselves Zo, Mizo, Cho, Sho, Khxou, Asho, Chaw, Yaw, and Masho; which are similar sounding and which are all equally uncorrupt in their respective Zo dialects.

Zo people find it very difficult to accept a name other than the one they call themselves. The Lusei and related clans who were absorbed under the Sailo chiefs accepted Mizo as their designation, and the name of the former Lushai Hills District was changed to Mizo District at India's independence. The Indian government did not like Mizoram, because they feared that *ram* (land) would mean ownership of the land. Only at the creation of the Union Territory did India accept the name Mizoram.

The term Mizo covers all Zo people, as does Zomi and Laimi, according to their respective users. Zomi is a designation used by the Paite, a people whose men wore a hair knot at the back of their head. Laimi is used by the Lais in Haka areas, in Falam and in parts of Matupi. For the Lais to accept Zo as a name is especially difficult, because they call their southern neighbours Zo; a people they regard as uncultured and uncivilized. Zo students in Rangoon seem to accept Zomi as the common name,

---

Zo people often call themselves Thlangmi, Khalangmi or Khangmi, meaning Hillmen. The word Khlang or Khang should not be confused with Khyang.

and they produce the "Zomi Students Magazine" for students who are Asho, Sho, Lai, Paite and Lusei. Mizo is accepted by all in Mizoram and other adjoining districts, including the Lusei in the Kale-Kabaw valleys.

There are some Zo people who believe that Chin could be the designation for all Zo people. For example, the Paite National Council (PNC) of Lamka (Churachanpur) in Manipur has speculated that the name "Chin" originated with the Chin Dynasty of China. In a letter to the Prime Minister of India in 1963, the PNC suggested that Chin people be unified into one territory. The PNC cited the Linguistic Survey of India by G. A. Grierson<sup>27</sup> and said; "The word 'Chin' is supposed by authorities to be a corruption of the word 'Jen' or 'Man'." The PNC chose "Chin" because under "Chin, as a genus, come all Kuki tribes; whereas Kuki as a species is a sub-group of Chin, or in other words, Kuki is another grouping system excluding some tribes under Chin. Hence Chin is a wider denotation and Kuki a narrower denotation." However, T. Gougin<sup>24</sup>, also from Lamka, insists in his book, "The Discovery of Zoland" that *Zomi* is the right designation for Zo people. *Mi* means people, and *Zomi* is the right sequence of syllables, in contrast to *Mizo*.

Hrangnawl, a former parliamentarian from Haka, believed the word Chin, Ciin or Tsin was the original name of the Zo people, and he suggested that it originated in China. His suggestion is based on the fact that there are many places in Zo country which have "Ciin", "Tsin" or "Chin" as names—such as Ciinmual, Chintleng or Tsinkhua. Hrangnawl has also suggested that "Chin" could have come from Ciinlung, Chhinlung or Tsinlung, the cave or rock from whence according to legend the Zo people emerged into this world as humans.

Many Zo people however cannot accept the name Chin, because they have never called themselves by that name, and, moreover, they know that the name Chin was officially used only after British annexation. As mentioned earlier, the British adopted it from the Burmans.

It appears that the Burmans called the Zo people Chin from their very early contacts in the eleventh or twelfth century A.D. When the Burmans moved down the Irrawaddy River and came to the Chindwin they discovered a basket carrying people occupying the river valley. Hence they called the river "Chindwin", meaning

"the valley of the baskets" as "chin" means basket in Burmese. The general Burmese population accept "chin" to be a word for basket, and they explain that the Zo people were so called because of their habit of carrying baskets. B. Lalthangliana<sup>40</sup> of Mandalay University, Department of Burmese History, agrees with this explanation.

Professors G. H. Luce<sup>48</sup> and F. K. Lehman<sup>41</sup>, authorities on Zo history and anthropology, speculate from the way "Chin" was spelled on Burmese inscriptions that "Chin" can mean ally or friend. They base their interpretation on the assumption that Zo and Burman peoples were not hostile to one another at the time of the Burmese inscriptions. But the inscriptions also reveal controversial slave trading along the Chindwin River. This could mean that there were, in fact, hostilities between the inhabitants of the Chindwin valley and the Burmans. Thus "Chin", meaning ally or friend, is the modern political interpretation, and "Chin", meaning basket, is the Burmese tradition.

Zo people do not accept the interpretation of Chin meaning ally or friend. When the 1950 Burmese encyclopedia defined Chin as "ally", Tunaung, an MP from Mindat, protested in the Burmese Parliament and accused the Burman of politicizing the name. Haugo, the first Zo in East Zoram to receive an M.A. degree and a lecturer at Mandalay University wrote; "Whatever it meant or means, however it originated and why, the obvious fact is that the appellation 'Chin' is altogether foreign to us, it has been externally applied to us. We respond to it out of necessity but we never appropriate it and never accept it and never use it to refer to ourselves. It is not only foreign but also derogatory, for it has become more or less synonymous with being uncivilized, uncultured, backward, even foolish and silly. And when we consider such name calling applied to our people as 'Chinboke' (stinking Chin) we cannot but interpret it as a direct and flagrant insult, and the fact that we have some 'rotten friends' is no consolation."<sup>29</sup>

Zo people have many variants of the same name to choose from. The varieties are :

1. The people in Tedim, Lamka, Falam, Mizoram, South Haka and part of Matupi call themselves "Zo"—for instance Zomi, Yo, Zo, Mizo, Zotung, Laizo, Zokhua.
2. In south Falam and north Haka areas, people call them-

selves Lai. They deny that they are any kind of Zo at all, and have reserved the term for southern Haka (division). The Haka regarded these people as relatively uncultured and uncultivated. But the Haka or Lai call their own country "Zo country" in prayers at major feasts of merit. According to Lehman; "This is a typical instance of the somewhat arrogant social posture of the Haka people, for which they got the name Hal Kha (bitter demand) ... Haka are, regionally considered, Lai (central), and for them the term 'Zo' means only Chins as a whole, at one level, or their own subordinates to the south, as another level of reference." *Laimi* means "our own people" or "our own Haka people". In Zo language *lai* means centre, and the Lai people believe that they are, or were, superior to all other Zo people because of their position at the center of the universe.<sup>43</sup>

3. In southern Zo country (Mindat, Matupi) people call themselves Sho or Khxou, depending on whether they live in the drainage of Yaw Chaung, in the vicinity of Mindat, or in the drainage of the Hlet Long stream. To the east of Lemro, Sho call themselves M'kang, and at Matupi, Ngala. In the region between Mindat and M'kang country Sho or Khxou stands for the people as a whole, and local people call themselves N'men.<sup>43</sup>
4. In Paletwa people call themselves "Khumī" or "Khamī". However Khumī or Khamī means village people and it is not a clan name.
5. The name "Mru" in Arakanese comes from the word "Masho" which, when written in Arakanese, becomes Mru.<sup>29</sup>
6. Zo people living on the plains of Burma, in Arakan, in the south west Chin State, and in the Chittagong Hills are called "Khyang" in literature, but call themselves "Asho".
7. In the Yaw area, people call themselves "Zou", which is written by the Burmese as "Yaw".<sup>29</sup>

There are intellectuals who translate Zo as "Highlanders". They automatically conclude that the people call themselves 'Zo' or 'Highlanders' because they live in the highlands. This is simply absurd because they called themselves "ZO" when they lived in

the plains of the Chindwin Valley. Zo might mean highland but never highlanders. Another translation of Zo as "uncultured or uncivilized" comes from the Haka's bawiphun or royalty, who regard their southern Zo neighbours as uncultured and uncivilized.<sup>43</sup> To translate Zo as "uncultured or uncivilized" because of Haka attitudes towards their neighbours is misleading and cannot be taken seriously. A people will never adopt or care for a name used to degrade them.

The actual translation of zo in the Zo common language may be termed as follows : Zo people divide a mountainous region into two climatic zones. The higher part of the region is characterized by cold, wet, and damp climatic conditions, which have geographical natures of ever-green forests, where potatoes, maize, and sulfur beans may be grown. These areas are covered with rain clouds in the monsoon rainy season. The sun is rarely to be seen. Such a place or area is denoted by the term 'Zo' in distinction from the 'shim or chhim', which is generally lower in elevation and with a warmer and drier climate, where bamboo thrives and hill-side rice may be grown. The generic name "Zo" has no relation with the geographical-climatic term "zo".

Zo people have a tradition of naming their clans after the head of each clan. Hualngo are descendents of a man named Hualngo, and the Zahau, Kamhau and other Zo clans each carry the name of their founder. It must have been the same with Zo. Zo or a very similar sounding name must have been the name of the Zos' originator. The "Genealogy of (Chin) Race" by Khupzathang shares in this interpretation and postulates a man named 'Zo' as the founder of the Zo people. (See Table 1)

The author chooses Zo as the designation of all Zo people, because it appears to him that Zo is the most widely used name, whether it be Zo, Yo, Jo, Cho, Sho, Khxou, or Yaw. The author does not insist that "Zo" is the proper or right designation. However, he believes that names such as Kuki and Chin which originated as abuse names should not be adopted as designation of a people. Such names could hinder understanding between the abuser and the abused. It will be in the interest of all Zo people to be known by a common name most possibly Zo.

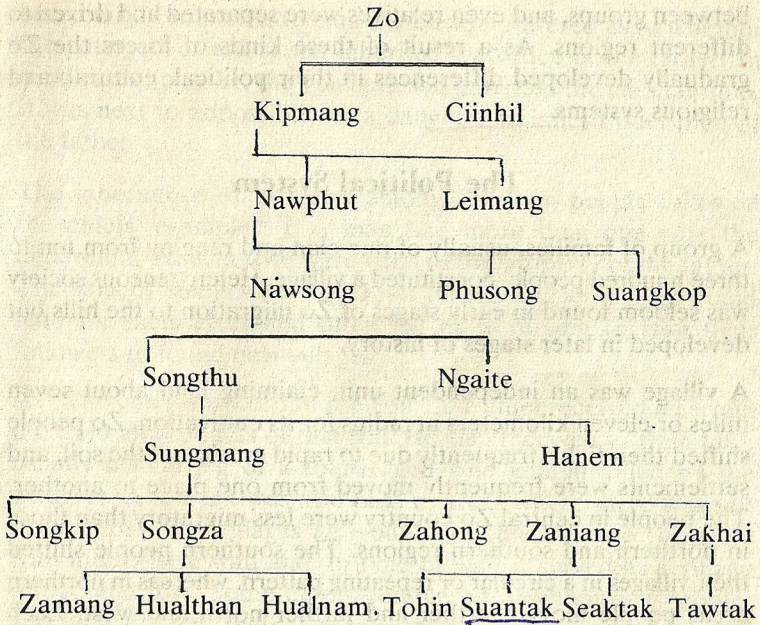


Table 1. Genealogy of Zo people after Khupzathang<sup>36</sup>

### Zo Population

There are currently about two and a half million Zo people. About half of them live in the Indian part of Zo country (Zoram), half a million are in the western part of Zoram (Mizoram), 180,000 in Manipur, 50,000 in Tripura, and some scattered in Nagaland, Cachar and the state of Meghalaya. In Burma 400,000 live in the eastern part of Zo country—East Zoram or the Chin State, 300,000 in the plains of Burma, 50,000 in the Somra Tracts and the Hkamti or Naga District, about 150,000 in the Kale-Kabaw-Myittha valleys, and about 40,000 in the state of Arakan. In Bangladesh, about 50,000 Zo occupy hilly regions between the Sangut and the Karnaphuli Rivers.

The Zo people, occupy a contiguous region of about 60,000 square miles not counting Asho settlements in lower Burma and Masho settlements in Arakan.

### Zo Society

Lack of communication, tribal wars, and lack of arable land in the country they adopted as their home caused Zo people to lose their racial harmony. As they grew in size quarrels erupted

between groups, and even relatives were separated and driven to different regions. As a result of these kinds of forces the Zo gradually developed differences in their political, cultural, and religious systems.

### The Political System

A group of families, usually of one clan and ranging from ten to three hundred people, constituted a village. Heterogeneous society was seldom found in early stages of Zo migration to the hills but developed in later stages of history.

A village was an independent unit, claiming land about seven miles or eleven kilometers in radius for its cultivation. Zo people shifted their fields frequently due to rapid erosion of the soil, and settlements were frequently moved from one place to another. The people in central Zo country were less migratory than those in northern and southern regions. The southern people shifted their villages in a circular or repeating pattern, whereas in northern areas people moved farther and farther north and west. Each village had its own government, and a chief or a headman functioned as administrator for the village. Generally the duty and power of the chief or village headman was similar among all Zo. Hereditary chieftainships were common in the northern part of the country, whereas in the southern part a headman or a village leader ruled the village. In some instances chiefs ruled over several villages.

The chief or headman had political and judicial powers, he controlled to varying degrees the daily lives of the people. Land division, disposal, sequestration, and redistribution within the village boundary were his responsibilities. In northern Zo country the village headman collected taxes and dues for the chief. In southern Zo country, where no chief (*Matu*) arose, the headman or village leader lent his name to the village.<sup>43</sup> The village headman was usually assisted by his councillors, the number of which was determined by the number of village houses.

The chief usually owned the land or, as Stevenson<sup>83</sup> put it, "the chief is the Lord of the Soil." However there were chiefs who did not completely own the land. In the Sizang area the chief and commoners each owned their own fields, which were handed down over generations from father to son. Chieftainship was

hereditary. From clan to clan the custom differed as to whether the youngest or eldest son inherited the office of the father. In most cases however, the youngest son inherited the chieftainship. It was next to impossible for a daughter to inherit the office of the father.

The inheritance of property among common people followed the chiefs' examples. If a man had more than one wife the children of the first wife were heirs to the property of the father. The sons of chiefs who would not inherit a chieftainship could fend for themselves and often led or were sent to take their followers to found new villages.

As "The chief was Lord of the Soil", the chief received a certain tax from all products of that soil. He also received a "flesh tax", usually a hind leg of a four-legged wild animal killed by the villagers. A salt tax was also paid in areas where there was salt production. The villages also built the chief's house complete with a defensive wall and, in time of war, it served as a village refuge and fort. Some chiefs conquered neighbouring peoples and typically sent their sons to rule over conquered villages. In some cases chiefs recognized the chieftainships of conquered people, as long as an alliance or tribute fee was paid.

At the time the British conquered the Zo people Falam had developed itself into the most powerful of chieftainships in Zo country. They had done this through development of a political organization comparable to democratic types of government found in the western world. Each Falam chief was aided by a council of elders, although they were not necessarily of aristocratic origins and could even be from among the slaves or conquered people.

In waging war the Falam never fought alone but invited their allies to fight with them. They formed alliances with the Shan Sawbwa of Kale, as a result of which the Falam became the traders of the Zo, supplying salt to even the most remote regions of the country. They also knew how to exploit their subjects. When they subdued the Zanniat rebels, they made the Zanniats carry trade goods from the plains without payment.

The Falam people integrated all people and treated all peoples equally and without prejudice. Thus the Falam were not only powerful but enjoyed the trust of most of the Zo people from the

Lushai Hills to the Burmese border. They might one day have united all Zo people under their domain, had not the British appeared on the scene. Even today the Falam are not clannish; any newcomer to Falam is accepted as one of them, so that the town of Falam is the most pleasant in the whole Zo area.

There were other common bonds beside those of the chieftainship practice in Zo society. In the central part of the country, where individuals owned land, the people practiced some form of capitalism, but the overall Zo social structure was communal (communism). The communist theoreticians Karl Marx, I. Lenin, and Mao-tse Tung desired human equality and assumed they could move human beings from greed to generosity. In western and other so called civilized countries this has proved a failure. But the Zo people have always practiced a form of socialism within their communities. This form of socialism is called *Tlawmngaihna* in the Lusei dialect, which means "love of less".

Samuelson<sup>70</sup> explained *Tlawmngaihna*; "Tlawmngaihna implies the capacity for hard work, bravery, endurance, generosity, kindness, and selflessness. The forefathers emphasized this value of action to their progeny. In days of both happiness and misfortune, the concept of Tlawmngaihna was a stabilizing force."

"If a person grew sick or died in a village other than his own, the youth of that village would carry the dead body or sick person back to his own village. When the Mizo people traveled in a group, the youngest man's duty would be to obtain firewood to cook food for the rest of the company. If an older man's basket became too heavy a younger man would help relieve the load. Later on, the elders would honour the man who had the greatest Tlawmngaihna by letting him drink rice beer first in the get together."

"...this... code of morals made it obligatory for every Mizo to be courteous, considerate, unselfish, courageous, industrious and willing to help others, even at considerable inconvenience to oneself. When everybody was hungry, a man would eat very little, leaving the bigger portion of food for friends... walking one whole day over rough terrain in order to give important news... a man risks his life to save his friends... These are all Tlawmngaihna or 'to need less'.<sup>40</sup> It might be called "self denial and acceptance of pain". In a village community, the building of one's house is the responsibility of all, and only basic material

needs to be collected by the owner. The villagers will build a widow's house from scratch. The field of a sick person is attended by all the villagers. When a hunter brings home a big four-legged animal the whole village shares the meat, and all the villagers are automatically invited when there is a wedding. The whole village goes into mourning for a dead person."

### Culture and Custom

Village sites were chosen with an eye to both defensive position and available water. A preferable site was high on a ridge so that it was easily defensible, but these places were difficult for the women who had to carry water from streams below. The Zo who most often migrated—the Lusei, Thado, Hualngo and villagers in southern Zo country—built their villages on tops of ridges. Most villages in the central part of the country were situated on slopes where it was easily defensible and where stream water could also be brought to the village using bamboo or wooden flumes. The same pattern of village sites are found in Zo country today, although villages are no longer threatened by wars.

There is no village planning. Houses are built on plots which are more level than the surroundings. A yard in front of the house is sought, but the village layout is no one's concern. One of the characteristics of a Zo village is a *khan* or *lungdawn*, a memorial stone in memory of a powerful man. Usually situated on higher ground than the village houses, an evergreen Bayan tree is planted to give shade to the place. Memorial slabs are decorated with drawings of animals that the man killed in his time, and wooden carvings of men and women are erected there as well. These places serve as a meeting ground, or as a dancing arena during ceremonies, and as a place of offerings to the spirits. The skulls of animals killed during feasts for the dead are hung at the *khan*, in belief that these animals will accompany the dead to his new world. Any man can erect such a monument for himself or for any important relative, and a village can have several *khan*.

Traditional Zo houses are generally substantial constructions. Rectangular in shape, Zo houses are usually constructed on a slope, and often earth has to be moved to obtain enough flat ground for a fireplace and working space in front of the house. Animals are kept beneath the house, so that part also has to be

flattened. Half of the house has an earthen floor, and the other half has flooring of planks or split bamboo. This type of house is common among those who are less migratory. For those who move often, one side of the house might be only a few inches above ground, with the opposite side quite high. Migrants seldom move earth. A house is generally divided into a living room (inner room) and a work room. Hunting trophies, the skulls of animals shot by the family, are shown on the dividing wall between the two rooms. In the living room are the fireplace, the master's bed, the children's bed, and anything that has value to the family. The master bed is next to the fireplace and is also used as a bench to sit near the fire for warmth. As the house has no windows the inside is almost always dark. The work room of the house is in the front, where firewood and grain pounding equipment are kept. Most domestic work is done in this part of the house, which is more of a verandah than a room, as it is open at the front. Life revolves around the verandah during warmer days of the year. In front of the house is the deck or platform, the *doltial*. The size of the platform can indicate the wealth of the owners and is usually made of teak wood planks. The *doltial* usually measures about twelve by four yards. Rich people have two such *doltials* joining each other, and at one end are two planks twelve yards long and a yard wide. The long planks are laid about a foot higher than the main platform and serve as a comfortable sitting platform.

Staple foods for central Zo people are maize, millet, sulphur beans, beans, peas, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, melons and other crops that grow in colder regions. These crops can be grown in the zo area with its cold and high altitude. In *sim* or *chhim* areas (hotter climate) of Zo country, and along deep river and stream valleys, rice is the staple food. Meat is scarce as is sugar and milk. Honey is obtained only in small quantities. Because of these shortages the people often suffer from vitamin deficiency, and they are often simply hungry for meat and *zu* (rice, corn or millet beer).

Zo culture is very much connected with *zu*; although some western writers have suggested that Zo culture is a *mithun* culture. A *mithun*, a grass eating animal, is the most important domestic animal, and the wealth of a man is judged by the numbers of his *mithun*. But if Zo culture should be symbolized by anything it should be *zu*. *Zu* represents one of the main

characteristics of the Zo people, and *zu* is more than just rice beer, as has been suggested by some Western writers.

Zo people hold feasts on occasions of happiness or grief. Successful hunts of small animals, or a visit by a distant relative would be celebrated with a feast. A *mithun*, a pig or a cow would be slaughtered, and several pots of *zu* would be consumed. A man is very proud when he kills a tiger, an elephant, or a vulture, and such occasions are times of great celebration. Killing an elephant is to achieve man's maximum masculinity. Among birds the hornbill is the most highly prized, and the killing of it would be celebrated with a *sa-ai* ceremony which raises a man's social status.

The Zo celebrate many other kinds of feasts as well. Wedding feasts take at least two days (varying among different clans)—one celebration at the bride's home and another the next day at the groom's. A rich harvest of grain (over one hundred baskets) would also be celebrated with a feast. If a person believes he is wealthy, a *khuangcawi* or *tong* ceremony is performed. Other traditional ceremonies vary from clan to clan. A rare but important ceremony with great feasting was the *ral ai* or *gal ai*, when a man had killed an enemy and decided to celebrate his triumph. This was revived during the Second World War, when Zo soldiers were killed in action. The relatives of the deceased sought revenge by killing enemy soldiers. As it was dangerous to perform the *ral ai* during the war, heads of the enemy were kept in utmost secrecy, and a *ral ai* ceremony was performed after the war. Thus, when a man performed the *ral ai*, he performed it more often in grief than in happiness.

The most frequent celebration is the feast of grief. The death of a person is followed by a great feast in remembrance of the dead person. The rich may slaughter several animals, but the poor become much poorer, because they too want to send their loved ones on the way with at least one animal. The animal meat is eaten at the home of the dead, and the remains are distributed to relatives. (In Sizang area the "wife-giver" receives the neck portion of the animal, a substantial amount.)

For all these feasts *mithun*, cattle, pigs and other animals, depending on the wealth of the people, are slaughtered, and a great amount of *zu* is consumed. This might seem like a waste, but in reality it is the heart of Zo civilization.

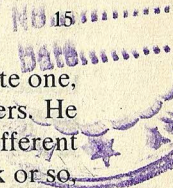
Those who celebrated *khuangcawi*, *tong*, *sa-ai*, or *ral-ai*, and all others who achieved something in life composed songs telling of their past, their success in war, the capture of slaves, and the loss of their loved ones. These songs recorded personal as well as community history. Songs recorded the poor and rich, the loss of sons, daughters, brothers and sisters, and great hunts. The songs were sung during feasts and were handed down from one generation to the next. For a people who have no writing, the recording of history has been possible only because these songs were sung repeatedly. Still it is amazing that songs of twenty generations ago, such as "The Song of Pu Songthu", are still remembered.

Songs are sung not only during feasts, but whenever there is a gathering. At the death of a child, the mother, the aunts, or the sisters recite, step by step, the child's life story. Likewise, kneeling beside the deathbed village women recall in song, composed at the instant, the story of the death as they saw it. When a boy falls in love he sings a song expressing his feelings to the girl, and the girl replies with a song. When chiefs or village elders are to decide a matter of war and peace, they would rather compose a song than explain details to the village council.

Throughout Zo history marriage customs seem to have been uniform, with bride prices and "wife-givers" and "wife-takers" characteristic of the Zo people. Different prices are asked for different brides, with social status and physical perfection determining price. Past relationships between the two clans involved can also play a role in determining price. Sometimes the bride price can be only symbolic, which means the expenses of the wedding ceremony are counted as the bride price. If a poor boy is not in a position to pay, he may be allowed to pay later, or a boy can escape paying the bride price if he elopes with the girl, or if he simply moves into the house of the girl and waits until the girl is ready to marry him.

Social customs relating to marriage are important, such as "wife-taker" and "wife-giver" relationships. When a boy is eligible for marriage, and if he does not have a girl friend, his parents or relatives will look for a bride for him. In choosing the bride priority is given to girls from the clan of the boy's mother. Usually the daughters of the mother's brother are the first considered. If an eligible girl is available from the mother's clan the parents or relatives send an ambassador to the girl's parents

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to ask for her hand. The ambassador's job is a very delicate one, and he has to present his mission with traditional manners. He also has to offer a pot of *zu* or a cock (different for different clans). The return of these gifts, which might be in a week or so, means that the proposal has been rejected. There is no reproach for being rejected. If the gift is not returned, then the ambassador and the girl's parents negotiate the bride price, and arrangements are made for the wedding. The girl's parents can decide the size of the animal to be slaughtered at their house and also the amount of *zu* to be made available. After all these are agreed upon, the marriage ceremony is performed. Thus, the mother's clan is the "wife-giver" and the clan of the son is the "wife-taker". If a boy marries a girl from a different clan than his mother's, his sons can still marry girls from their mother's and grandmother's clan, thus continuing the "wife-giver" "wife-taker" system. It is regarded as distasteful to marry a paternal aunt's daughter, because a man (extended to his children) has social obligations to his in-laws, and the marrying of a daughter of a paternal aunt makes the social relationship impossible. The social obligations are exercised during ceremonies and in times of grief. A man and his children take care of work related to ceremonies; i.e., slaughtering animals, and the preparation of food and *zu*. It is the man's duty to please his in-laws, or in other words the "wife-taker" has the duty to please his "wife-giver". However, the "wife-giver" is not superior to the "wife-taker". It is merely tradition, and the "wife-giver" can not make demands upon the service of the "wife-taker". The "wife-taker" simply feels an obligation to please, respect, and be thankful to the "wife-giver". A quarrel between in-laws is regarded as most distasteful.

Marriage is uncommon between tribes, and unheard of with other races, foreigners, or slaves. Illegal cohabitation would be such a disgrace to a family that they would be cast out from their community. It is paramount to keep clan or family pure. Once married to a different tribe, descendents can never become pure again. Even today in some parts of Zo country the purity of the girl's parents is considered ahead of all qualities of the girl.

*Zawlbuk* is the word used to describe the custom of bachelors staying overnight at a designated house, and it is an important social feature of Zo life. The Lusei call the house a *zawlbuk* or bachelor shelter, which usually is built in the center of the village. It is used especially by bachelors as their common sleeping

house. The Paite people do not have *zawlbuk*, but the bachelors sleep in the house of the *thiampui* or high priest. They call it *sawm*. The Pawi (Haka and Falam people) will sleep in the house of a beautiful girl. When a boy is in love, he will ask his friends to sleep with him in the house of his girl friend. The bachelors use these house to spend their leisure time. It is a place for learning the trade of hunting, warfare and the like; even how to court girls.

### Religion

Zo believe in a supreme God or *pathian*. God is good. He gives health, richness, children and other human wishes. God is never cruel and never hurts people. Therefore Zo people never sacrifice or offer anything to appease God.

Zo people fear spirits or devils who are under the rule of the king of spirits. The spirits (*dawi, huai, khuazing*) live on earth, below the earth, in the sky, in springs, trees, caves, mountains, streams, houses, and even in the human body. There are some places which are agreed upon as strongholds of the spirits. They are Rih Li (a lake) in Falam district, Mt. Victoria or Arterawttlang in the Kanpetlet area, Paha, a great limestone cave near Tuingo, Nattaga—the door of the spirits according to the Burman, a stream in Tedim area, and others. Each village has a certain location where people believe spirits reside. Spirits are either like human beings, are small people with only one leg, or are giants that stride across the peaks of the hills. The spirits have immense strength and power, can transform themselves into anything, but most commonly take the form of snakes. The spirits bring sickness and misery unless treated with due respect. Rituals have to be performed and sacrifices made so as to appease the spirits. Moving to a new village, to a new house, or cultivating a field requires the blessing of the spirits. Sickness is a punishment by the spirits who are unhappy with a person or family. Offerings are performed by priests. An animal, such as a red cock, a sucking pig, a dog, or a *mithun*, the type of which depends on the seriousness of the illness, is slaughtered for the offering. The meat offered to the spirit is only a small portion of the animal; i.e., the liver, the head or the legs, and is combined with one or two cups of *zu*. The remainder of the meat and *zu* are consumed by the family and the priest.

In some cases the priest fights against the spirit. Sickness is caused by a spirit who enters the body or by the spirit being caught in the soul of the body. In such cases the *thiampui*, the high priest, recites a verse composed to drive away the spirits. These verses are handed down from one generation to another. The sick person's body is then painted with pungent-smelling spices. The spirit, who is believed to dislike the smell of spice, then leaves the body. In other cases a sick person has to drink fresh dog's blood, over which a sorcerer has chanted, to drive away the spirits. Epidemics and plague are caused by invasions of angry spirits, who roam the country at night searching for victims. People make mud pellets and shoot them with bows at the entrances of houses through the whole night, to bar entry of the spirits.

People also fight spirits with arms. A woman in Buanman village said that she was snatched by a local spirit who lived in a cave near the village. She said the spirit wanted to marry her. She often disappeared from home or work, and she said her spirit lover usually came to her in the form of a snake and, wrapping itself around her legs, flew her off to the cave. Her lover offered her a lotion which would transform her into the same kind of spirit, but she refused repeatedly. The villagers soon became angered and went to the hill opposite the cave, from where they shot missiles from their weapons into the cave. When they entered the cave, they found seven dead snakes. The woman, who was in the cave at the time of the attack, said that her spirit lover was killed as well. After that she was abducted no more.

Zo people believe in life after death, although it is said that a person can be reborn only if death is violent and instantaneous. The dead live forever as ghosts and keep their social status. Zo also believe that a person can be born again as another human being. One such tale is of a boy who was born with a scar. When the baby, named Thangngin, could speak it told a story of being hurt by somebody and talked of things a child could not know. Thangngin, who was later a Christian pastor, was embarrassed because he could not reconcile his position as a pastor and his experiences as a reborn person. He told his story very reluctantly. He did not remember many of his experiences, because his parents objected and they had had the priest recite a sorcery verse to make Thangngin forget his past.

Thangngin was a young man at the time of a Falam attack on Khuasak during the 1840s. When the Falam occupied a part of the Khuasak village, he saw the Falam searching for survivors. To escape being captured he hid himself in the attic of a house, on the shelves used to hang cobs of corn. A Falam warrior with a spear found him. The warrior shouting, "I am the son of my father," pierced Thangngin's breast with his spear. Thangngin said that he felt very warm and fell asleep immediately. When he awoke he saw a headless corpse lying beside him. On inspection of the corpse he found that the body was his. He felt the body and settled down among other people. He could not recall how long he lived with these people. On one hunting day they caught a bear. On their way home, as they carried the bear, he realized that he was with strange people. Some were carrying the bear, and others were on top of the bear eating the meat. To think over the strange behaviour of these people, he went to a nearby hill and watched from a distance. From there he saw that his companions were ants, and that they were carrying a black caterpillar. When he returned to his friends they were, like him, all human.

Realizing that he was an ant, his wish was to be reborn as human. To be reborn he needed to enter the body of a woman. However whenever he approached a woman he was repulsed immediately. How, he did not remember, but one day he became a bee. Being a bee and trying to reach a woman was much more difficult than being an ant, because as soon as he approached a woman, she would drive him away. Then, one day, he became a flea. After becoming a flea, he was successful in getting into the clothes of a woman. He could not recall how he came into the body of the woman, his mother. When Thangngin was born, he had a scar on his breast and he was said to have told his story as soon as he could speak.

Another story is told of a boy with a forehead scar who was born in Khuasak village in the late 1940s. As soon as the boy could recognize people, he was afraid of a certain man, Ngalphuakpa. After the boy could walk he cried and hid himself behind objects whenever Nagalphuakpa came for a visit. He also threw himself flat on the ground whenever a gun was fired. When the child could speak, he related that he had been a Japanese soldier who lived in the forest after Japanese troops left the area. The villagers had hunted down the lone Japanese soldier, and it was

Ngalphuakpa who had shot the soldier, hitting him in the forehead. Also in this case, the parents suppressed the child from telling his stories.

### Zo Language

The Zo language is grouped with Tibeto-Burman languages, and Zo people who study English and Burmese in school find Burmese to be the easier language to learn, even though they may already know Roman script. A student in Manipur found the Meitei language easy to learn because it is similar grammatically and in vocabulary to the Zo language. In West Zoram (Mizoram) students find Hindi as difficult as English, because English and Hindi are Aryan languages and they have little affinity to the Zo language. The Zo people are not multi-lingual as characterized in literature, especially in Burma. Zo people have indeed diverse dialects, many of which are not easily intelligible to those using other dialects. The worst example perhaps is between dialects of the southernmost Zo and the northernmost Zo.

Professor Gordon Luce<sup>49</sup> analyzed 700 words of Zo language common to at least three Zo dialects. From these 700 words 230 words are common in all dialects of the Zo people. From the northernmost Zo, the Thado-Khuangsai in the Naga Hills (Somra Tract), to the southernmost Zo, the Asho in the Sandoway-Thayetmyo area, the use of words common to the 700 word base are as follows :

Thado-Khuangsai	554 words
Tedim	591
Hualngo (Lusei)	631
Khualsim (Falam)	627
Haka	573
Asho	383
Khumi	381

From this table it is possible to divide Zo people into two linguistic groups, the northern group with more than 500 common words and the southern group with less than 500 common words. The dialects of the northern group, though differing in some words, are intelligible between groups if the people are patient.

The southern Zo dialects are similar to the northern dialects, but differences lie in the words that are borrowed from the Burman and the Arakanese, with whom the Asho, Khumi and the Masho had been in contact for centuries. Comparing the Lusei and the Haka, or Falam dialects, one finds many words borrowed from Burman in the Haka and Falam dialects, whereas the Lusei borrowed many words from Indian or English languages. For example; as there was no word for "school" in the Zo language, it has been borrowed from English and Burmese. Thus school is called *sikul* by the Lusei, whereas it is *saang* for the Paite of Tedim. The Paite of Manipur say *sikul*, the Falam say *tlawng*, and the Haka say *siang*. *Saang*, *tlawng* and *siang* originated from the Burmese *kyaung*.

In East Zoram there has been no common language, and Zo political leaders have not touched the subject as it has been a very delicate matter. On one hand no representative has wanted to see other than his own dialect being claimed as the common language. On the other hand, Zo leaders have feared possible repercussions from the Burmese government if they put too much emphasis on a common Zo language. It would be contradictory to the Burmese government's policy of completely abolishing the teaching of Zo language in schools in the "Chin State". Just after independence the Zo language was taught in primary school up to the fourth standard. The Revolutionary Government of General Ne Win reduced it to the elementary grades, after which Zo language was allowed to be taught up to the second standard only. At present no Zo language is taught in the schools. Thus the question of a Zo common language in East Zoram was ended by the Burmese government.

Of all Zo dialects, the Lusei or Duhlian dialect is the most widely spoken. It is the common language in West Zoram, and it is spoken by almost all Zo people in Manipur and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Hualngo and Lusei dialects are the same. It was said the Sailo chief Lallula encouraged use of the Duhlian dialect by all his subjects, and since then it has been used successfully as a common language by the Lusei. Today more than half of the Zo people use the Lusei dialect. Haka or Lai, Falam or Laizo, and Tedim or Paihte dialects are very similar to the Lusei dialect—so much so that in conversing each group uses its own dialect. The best example is seen in Tahan where all Zo tribes

live together as neighbours. Therefore, if there should be a common language for the Zo people, the Lusei dialect is the ultimate choice.

The following Table shows how Zo dialects differ from one another, and for comparison, from Meitei and Burmese.

English	Meitei	Lusei Hualngo	Paite Tedim Thado	Pawi Lai Matu	Asho	Khumi	Sho Muan	Burmese
one	amah	pakhat	khat	pakhat	hnat	ha	tumat	thit
two	anih	pahnih	nih	pannih	hnih	nya	hnih	hnit
three	ahum	pathum	thum	pathum	thum	hum	thum	thung
four	mari	pali	li	pali	li	palyh	khli	li
five	manga	panga	nga	panga	ngaw	pang	hma	nga
six	taruk	paruk	guk	paruk	sok	tureu	chuk	cheuk
seven	tareh	pasarih	sagih	pasarih	sih	saryh	chih	khunit
eight	nipan	pariat	giat	pariat	set	taja	cheit	sit
nine	maipan	pakua	kua	pakua	kua	takaw	kao	ku
ten	thara	sawm	sawm	pahra	ha	ho	hra	tase

### Zoram (Zoland)

The land occupied by the majority of the Zo people extends from a latitude of about 25 degrees 30 minutes North in the Somra Tracts facing Mt. Saramati, and in Nagaland across the Namtaleik River and the North Cachar Hills, to about 20 degrees 30 minutes North. The Asho live further south of the Arakan Yomas, Irrawaddy valleys and Pegu Yomas (below Prome and Sandaway). All these areas fall between 92 degrees 10 minutes East and 94 degrees 20 minutes East. The north-south length of the Zo country is roughly 350 miles (560 km) and it is generally about 120 miles (192 km) wide.

The majority of the people occupy the Indo-Burman ranges, a series of parallel mountain chains trending north-south along the India-Burma boundary. The mountain ranges are a continuation of the Naga and Patkoi hills, extending as far south as Arakan Yomas. East Zoram lies in the eastern part of these mountains and is higher than the western mountains (West Zoram or Mizoram).

The highest peaks in these ranges are Ngulluvum, Innbuk,

Thuamvum (Kennedy peak), Lentlang, Kharantlang, Rungtlang, and Arterawttlang (Mt. Victoria), which is the highest peak in Zo country at 10,400 feet or 3412 meters. The other peaks are in average about 8700 feet or 2854 meters high. In West Zoram the highest peak is Phawngpui (Blue Mountain), which is 6598 feet or 2164 meters high. At the north and south ends of Zo country the land is less rugged and rises from 2000 to 4000 feet, or 656 to 1312 meters.

The capital of West Zoram, Aizawl, lies at 3700 feet or 1214 meters above sea level, whereas Haka (Halkha), the capital of East Zoram, is at 7500 feet or 2460 meters. The valleys between ranges are mostly v-shaped gorges, and there are very few flat areas to serve as agricultural land. Because the elevations can vary quite extensively temperatures also vary greatly. In the valleys of the larger rivers, such as the Run or Manipur Rivers, the climate is sub-tropical. Ten miles or 16 kilometers away, however, at an elevation of 6000 feet (2000 meters) and at the top of mountain ranges, the climate is rather moderate. The climate is "monsoon" and rain falls from May to October. Average rainfall for the year is between 70 inches (178 cm) and 170 inches (432 cm). Average yearly rain in Aizawl is 82 inches (208 cm), Lunglei 138 inches (350 cm), Haka 90 inches (228 cm), and Kanpetlet 109 inches (276 cm). In one year Haka had 118 rainy days and Kanpetlet 127 days. Summer temperatures range between 64 to 84 degrees F (17 to 29 degrees Centigrade), and winter temperatures are between 37 and 75 degrees F (3 to 24 degrees Centigrade). Some places, like the town of Haka, are chilly in winter and temperatures can drop below the freezing point in the night and frost form on the grass. Snow falls very rarely, and when it does the people call "the mountain has vomited."

To overcome the cold, Zo people built houses with thatch roofing and often double layered split bamboo walling. The houses were separated into two parts. One part was completely closed except for the main entrance with a door. In this part of the room, the people cooked, slept, and spent their evenings sitting around the fire place during the colder periods of the year. To conserve the heat during the night, the glowing charcoal was buried under ashes, to keep that part of the house comfortably warm during the night. Around the fire place was the master bed, usually two wooden planks about five feet wide combined.

The pillow was a rectangular wood place about 4 inches in diameter. The children slept on the other side of the fire place. The guests slept on mats on the third side of the fire place.

This might explain the assertion that Zo people were filthy and never washed themselves. This is, of course, partly true in some areas. Zo people did not wash themselves at regular intervals but randomly whenever they come across a stream or a pool of water. Their water supply at their own dwellings might not be enough for body washing, as it has to be carried up hill from the water fountain or another source. Although they might have washed themselves clean, the smoke, ashes, and dust made them quickly dirty again. When nights were not cold, the front part of the house, which is open at the front, is used for almost all activities including sleeping purposes.

Because people did not have many warm clothes, the blanket that were used in the night might have been the only cloth to protect the body from the cold during the day. This was very much the practice of every Zo during the earlier days when shirts and pants were unknown to them. To cover the private parts, the women wore very short or mini skirts which barely covered the upper part of the thigh. They usually covered their breasts until they became mother. After becoming a mother, hiding of the breast is not deemed necessary. In some parts of the Zo country, young or old Zo women never hid their breasts. Men usually wore loin cloths; however older men may have worn nothing at all except a blanket when it was cold. To prevent the freezing of their hands in times of warfare, the men slept with hands dipped in cold water during the winter nights.

In higher parts of the mountain ranges, pine and rhododendron flourish. In lower areas teak, bamboo, and similar plants are abundant. Farmers grow potatoes, maize, millets, sweet potatoes, plums, and apples in the higher altitudes. Rice, oranges, and pine apples are grown in the lower valleys. Except for the lower part of Zapan (Kaladan), all rivers flow turbulently through rugged country. They are full of rapids which carry boulders and silt. During the rainy season these rivers are especially formidable. All of Zoland is hilly, except for small stretches of plain. The largest such plain is the plateau in the Champhai-Cikha area. Others are near Thlanthlang, Khuabung, Letak, Buangtu, Mungplang, Khuaphual, and Botsung. In these flat areas wet cultivation

is practised, using animal power. The low lying Paletwa and Kolosib areas offer the best agricultural land.

There are very few lakes in Zoland. The biggest lakes are Rih Li in the Hualngo area in East Zoram and Palk Lake in the south of West Zoram.

Because of the rugged nature of the land, communication and transportation are difficult. At the present time dirt roads connect towns in both East and West Zoram, and the Kaladan river is navigable from Paletwa to the Indian Ocean. In addition, the Tlawng or Dhaleswari streams could in the future be developed for navigation.

Production from Zo country is limited to agriculture. A few products, mostly fruits, are being exported. Blessed with a variety of climate, Zo people can produce almost all types of fruits, tropical or temperate. There is a noticeable improvement in this field. Other products, such as silk and turpentine, are becoming popular. The potential also exists for exportation of furniture and similar products.

In the past, elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, wild dogs, bison, deer, and wild boar inhabited Zoland. With the appearance of firearms these animals have become nearly extinct. Fish in the streams have been ruthlessly killed with dynamite and poison, and most of the rivers and streams in Zoram are empty of larger species of fish.

Zoram is predominantly made of silty shale and sandstone. Limestone and igneous rocks are also found. The silty shale and sandstone are relatively soft formations, easily washed away by rain, which results in landslides. Because of this, roads built on the slopes of the mountains are difficult to maintain. Ngawcinpau named these rocks "Zoflysch" because of their similarity to the Flysch rocks of the Alps in Switzerland. The oldest rocks in Zoram are the schists, that make up Arterawttlang (Mt. Victoria). They were deposited some six hundred million years ago. The "Zoflysch" was deposited some fifty million years ago.

Basic igneous rocks displaced into the "Zoflysch" during the building of the Indo-Burman ranges, some thirty to forty million years ago. Suangdongtlang (Webula), Bukpivum, Ngullumual (Mwetaung), Leisan, Nattaung (Dawimual), and many small peaks along the Zo-Burma border are built of chromite and nickel

bearing ultrabasic rocks. Garnierite, a nickel silicate mineral, was discovered by Ngawcinpau, the first Zo geologist, on the Ngullumual. The nickel content was 1.19 to 4.59 percent.

Ngullumual has the economic potential for nickel mining. The author discovered chromite in these same ultrabasic rocks. Other important minerals found in these rocks are talc, from which talcum powder is made, and asbestos, which is used as insulation material in industry. Other commercially interesting rocks are slate and limestone. Slate is used traditionally as roofing material. Limestone can be used for the manufacture of cement. Abundant limestone is found in Lungrangtlang (Haka), and Paha (Tedim).

Burman

The oral genealogy of Zo claims that a man named Zo was the ancestor of all Zo people. The genealogy however does not record time or location and may not be as accurate as it is often claimed. The genealogy may also contain only information about those who were powerful with those less successful being omitted. Estimates based on oral history account for approximately twenty years a generation of Zo people. Assuming a generation to last twenty years, Zo people have been in existence for only about seven hundred years. Therefore genealogy as the Zo regard it cannot be wholly depended upon as a source of information. A written genealogy of the Zo Race, was compiled by Kapuhting of Burman in 1974. The written genealogy was based on information from only parts of Zo claim and thus neither the written genealogy nor legend reveal the true origin of the Zo people (see Table 1).

Origins in China

Zo legend asserts that the Zo were originally from a cave called Guinang which is given different locations by different clans. The legend cannot be accepted as fact because it is contradictory to known facts of now human origin. The physical features of Zo people, yellowish or brownish skin, brown eye, black hair, stained eye prominent cheekbone, wide nose, and flat face suggest their relation to the modern Malay tribes of the Mongoloid Race. By analyzing Zo language and comparing with other languages anthropologists concluded that Zo language is related to the Tibeto-Chinese language and



Festive Lusei dress