

HIGHER AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, MIZORAM



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

*Know Your History*  
*Colonial History through Material Culture:*  
*Heritage Walk at Tlabung*

JANUARY 16 - 19, 2024

*Editors*

Lalhminghlua	Linda Chongthu
A. Lalremtluangi	Zosangzuali Hrahnel
Lalruathlui Khiangte	Benjamin Lalnunfima



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# Colonial History through Material Culture: Heritage Walk at Tlabung

The Second Departmental Publication

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## MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

I am very glad to write about the wonderful activities of the Department of History, HATIM, Lunglei, at Tlabung, Lunglei District, Mizoram.



Amongst the various plans made by the Department of History for the Academic session 2023-24, one of the most important and challenging tasks to sharpen the minds and knowledge of the final year History students, apart from their syllabi, is to organize a field study. With a theme “Colonial History through Material Culture: Heritage Walk at Tlabung”, the program was organized during 16th - 19th January, 2024 at Tlabung, Lunglei District, Mizoram.

The Department of History, HATIM is blessed to visit and study the colonial interests at Tlabung. Out of Thirteen (13) final year History students, eleven (11) students have visited the place and submitted their study reports. Due unforeseen circumstances, an arrangement was also made for two (2) students to visit early Christian burial (*Kristian Hmasate Thlanmual*) at Theiriat, Lunglei on 27th January, 2024 (Saturday) and their study reports and findings are also included. I wish and hope that the reports and findings in this book will be one step to enlarge and add to the knowledge of Mizo history to the readers and gives us enthusiasm and passion to explore more in the future.

On behalf of the Department of History, I would like to give an immense thanks to the Principal, HATIM for his consent and generosity to visit Tlabung. I also expressed my heartfelt gratitude to my colleagues, other Teaching Faculties and Non-Teaching Staff; all the students, HATIM; the local people of Tlabung especially Village Council (VC) and Young Mizo Association (YMA); and all those who had rendered your ceaseless efforts and valuable services for the success of the long awaited and challenging task of this field study at Tlabung.

Long Live.... Department of History, HATIM!!



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

I am truly impressed to have learnt that the Department of History, Higher and Technical Institute, Mizoram is able to publish their field study works for the second time. I congratulate the faculty and students for this yet another achievement.

Conducting on-field study is already quite a task so formidable to carry out. In fact, it is already an achievement and success in itself. But it is rather staggering that the Department of History could not only accomplish the field study, but also are ready to publish their works and findings in such a short period of time.

I have also learnt that the Department was able to carry out their field study in two specific places on two different topics at Tlabung and Theiriat. I am immensely delighted at the commitment and efforts of both the students and faculty towards enhancing and widening the scope of the Department in the institute.

I wish the department all the best in all their academic endeavours so as to keep on growing towards excellency in research and development.



Vuansanga Vanchhawng







## **WALKING THROUGH TLABUNG HERITAGE: A DEPARTMENTAL REPORT**

### **Change as part of culture**

Transition and change are part of human behavior, the reflections of which can be found in culture through interactions as well as in its adaptation to survive. No culture may be said to have remain isolated that cultural significance of others is not observable. Since prehistoric times, groups of humans have always shared cultural products which led to development in cultural evolution, eventually reaching the present day.



Throughout Mizo history, we have learnt that there are multiple occasions of cultural interactions with others which have been essential in our development as a society. There are also multiple cases which are observable where we have further evolved beyond the first contact. Such changes need to be critically observed and examined. They play an essential part in the future course of cultural evolution.

Keeping this in mind and knowing the level of importance of cultural evolution, the Department found it necessary and important to conduct field study in order to understand how interactions with colonial powers have led to the drastic evolution of our Mizo culture. As such, Tlabung, which has served as an important point of cultural interaction was selected for study.

### **Where and When**

Cultural contact happens at the periphery, and Tlabung being a boundary area has seen multiple interactions even before the coming of the colonial powers. Its location and easier access through water route in the past and present has



put Tlabung at a great advantage than other areas. It is also important to see cultural changes as they happen through time and through material cultures. Colonialism has been a great factor for cultural change globally as well within Mizoram. The early Mizo society had been generally isolated with little interactions with others. However, with the various skirmishes in the plain areas between present day Mizoram and tea plantation area of Colonial Assam, Mizos came to have more contact with outside.

Previously known as Demageree/Demagiri, Tlabung has been an important place of contact with the Britishers entering Mizoram from Bangladesh. T.H. Lewin arrived at Tlabung in 1865 where he was instructed to set up military camp and through his measures, the Britishers began to learn about the ways of the Mizos. The entry of Britishers also began to mark colonization's foothold in Mizoram. This opens a new area in the colonial map with northern Mizoram already having prior contact with outsiders as well. In fact, the entry of T.H. Lewin is to take measures in retrieving the kidnapped girl Mary Winchester from the Mizo chief Bengkhuaia and his associates. The success of the retrieval may also be partly credited to the work of Lewin who through his good relations with a local chief Rothangpuia. So, indirectly, Lewin had also contributed to the success of the mission.

**Establishing contact:** There are several key areas of interaction which even in the present day are still existing. They are outlined as follows.

#### **Inspection Bungalow (I.B)** (N22.905836, E92.470437)

Though this can be questioned as the first Inspection Bungalow, it retains its status as part of colonial history which was established in 1871. It has a spacious area with fencing and currently under the care of Heritage Committee of Young Mizo Association (YMA), Tlabung Branch.





Fig 1



Fig 2

### **Rothangpuia Memorial Erection (N22.905958, E92.470568)**

Famous for the name Tangka Rothangpuia, he is regarded in the history of Mizoram as a ruler who made great relations with the British. Lt. Col. Thomas Lewin was fond of him for his peace loving and statesmanship. In 1866, an agreement was reached between Rothangpuia and the British, the terms of their agreement being written on the memorial erection states that they will have common enemies.



Fig 3



**Thangliena Memorial Monument** (N22.905909, E92.470581)

Mostly known by his Mizo name at Tlabung, Thomas Herbert Lewin arrived at Tlabung in 1865. He was popular among the Mizos and eventually married a Mizo maiden named Laldari. He was considered as a friend by the Mizos even in times of political differences. A memorial has been erected in his name with copper plate inscription which reads as:

IN MEMORY OF  
LT COLONEL TOM-HERBERT LEWIN B.S.C.  
ONCE SUPERINTENDENT OF THESE HILL TRACTS  
BORN 1839. DIED 1916.

HE CAME TO THIS PEOPLE IN 1865 & WORKED AMONG THEM & FOR  
THEM FOR NINE YEARS. WHEN LOSS OF HEALTH COMPELLED HIM  
TO RETURN TO ENGLAND

THE PEOPLE TRUSTED & LOVED HIM FOR HIS SYMPATHY & SENSE  
OF JUSTICE. FOR HIS UNTIRING INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE  
& FOR HIS INTERPID & DAUNTLESS COURAGE.  
HE TRAVELLED IN THEIR UNKOWN LAND, VISITING THEIR CHIEFS  
THEIR VILLAGES & THEIR HOMES. ALONE & UNAFRAID.

HE WAS THE FIRST THE FIRST TO INTERPET & WRITE DOWN THEIR  
LANGUAGE. PREPAIRING THE WAY FOR SCHOOLS & PROGRESS.

HE STUDIED & IMPROVED THEIR AGRICULTURE & THEIR LAWS  
& HELPED THEM IN ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES.

THE PEOPLE KNEW HIM AS THAGLIENA. TOM LEWIN.  
& HONOURED HIM AS A CHIEF.

THEY CALLED HIM THE LUSHAIS FIRST WHITE  
FRIEND.

THEY BUILT A HOUSE FOR HIM VOLUNTARY IN TOKEN OF  
THER DEVOTION.

THEIR CHILDREN NOW AVE VOLUNTARILY BROUGHT STONES  
HERE. NEAR WHERE HIS HOUSE ONCE, STOOD & HAVE  
HELPED THE ONE WHO KNEW HIM BEST OF ALL&  
WHO KNEW HOW HIS HEART WAS EVER WITH THIS  
PEOPLE TO BUILD UP THE STONES TO THE MEMORY OF  
THANGLIENA.



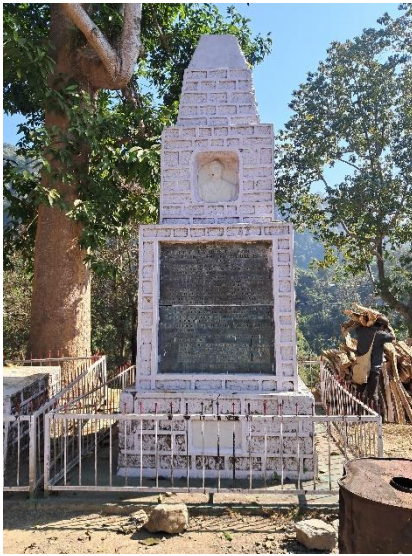


Fig 4



Fig 5

**Missionary Kai (N22.905747, E92.466222)**

The entry of the two pioneering missionaries J.H Lorraine (Pu Buanga) and F.W Savidge (Sap Upa) lies in the heart of Tlabung through Khawthlang Tuipui. It is considered an important and historic in the history of Mizoram. A plaque memorial has been put up by the Mizoram Ṭhalai Kristian Pawl on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016.



Fig 6



Fig 7



**Leprosy Hospital** (N22.904672, E92.474284)

Established in 1978, it is the first and only leprosy hospital in the state. Currently, there is one resident who has recovered but ostracised by his family. He is managed by a caring retired nurse at present.



Fig 8 (Credit: Lalruatdiki Lianhna)

**Post Office** (N22.906304, E92.46711)

To establish better communication, the first Post Office was set up in Tlabung in 1872. It was previously called as Post and Telegraph Office. It has been functioning in the same location since its establishment. With time, the building has also undergone some renovations where some parts are renovated as the original design while some areas have been developed to meet the modern requirements. Some of the old postal materials are still safely kept.





Fig 9



Fig 10



Fig 11



Fig 12

### **Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung** (N22.907677, E92.465714)

To mark cultural and social contact of Mizos with outsiders, Baptist Church was established on March 09, 1911 at Zawlpui Veng adjacent to Thangliena Mual by M. Suaka (Durtlang Lal), Lalduha, Suakthangpuii(wife of Lalduha),Pi Puii. At present there are 525 members out of which there are ten elders locally called as *upa* and eight lower rank leaders known as *rawngbanltu*.





Fig 13

**W.B. Oldham Inscription (N22.91459, E92.47052)**

The road to Pachang from Tlabung was made by W.B. Oldham, who at the time was a Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong. Perhaps to mark or as leave a trace of him, his name was incised on a rock surface at Vantaikhawr where Khawthlang Tuipui flows below. The inscription in Roman alphabets reads as:

W.B. Oldham  
Designed & Traced

At the time of the field study, the inscriptions have been covered by sands due to the previous floods. It was first cleared and then documented. A protective structure has been built over it.





Fig 14

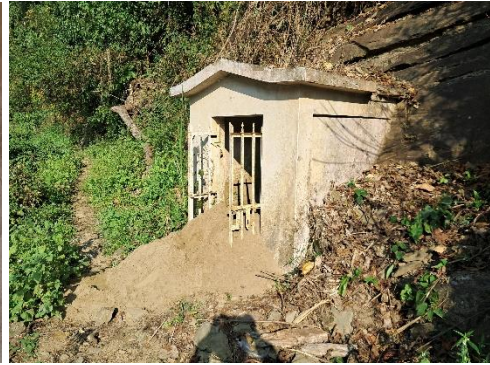


Fig 15

**Thangliana Mual (N22.907718, E92.465984)**

Established on November 09, 1871 in what is now known as Zawlpui Veng, it was initially used as a military camp or base. It is also known as Lewin's playground. Functioning as a ground for the locals, the Forest Department, Government of Mizoram has utilized it for storing logs.



Fig 16



Fig 17



### **Bazar Building** (N22.90709, E92.466108)

In the history of Mizoram, Tlabung was a trading area even before the arrival of the Britishers. In the absence of currency, trade was carried out through barter system. At present, it has developed into a small town with trade being carried out on a larger scale. An artist portrayal of the Bazar at the time when it was known as Demagiri has been put up on the Bazar main building. Among the traders, some Bengalis have been incorporated into the local commerce among the Mizos, where they all share a commercial area. The present-day Bengali business persons are those who inherited from their fore parents coming along with the Britishers. All non-Mizo local business persons are required to have Non-Tribal Trade License that is valid for a year. A local Bengali shop owner, Mr. Poras Chandra Dey was kind enough to share his shop document for the purpose of understanding the nature of trade at Tlabung. The license on the document was valid from April 28, 1983 to March 31, 1984 issued by the Deputy Commissioner of Lunglei. There are three terms in the document which are:

1. This license is cancellable or removable by the Executive Committee as and when thought fit contingent on good condition and behaviour while in the Mizo District.
2. Trading should be done on cash basis only.
3. The license holder should report without fail to the Executive Committee on the expiry of the validity of this license and submit this license.



Fig 18

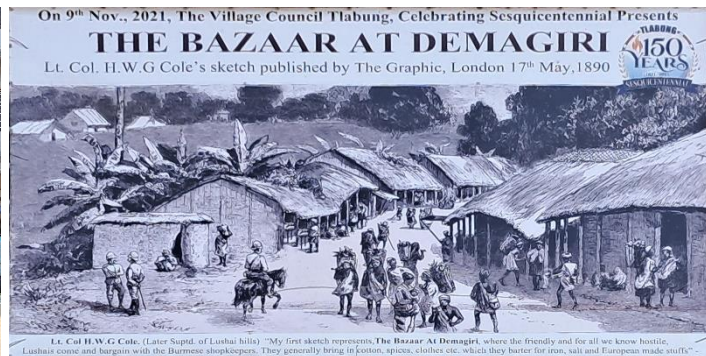


Fig 19



*Colonial History through Material Culture: Heritage Walk at Tlabung*



Fig 20



Fig 21



Fig 22



Fig 23

*Colonial History through Material Culture: Heritage Walk at Tlabung*

**NON-TRIBAL TRADE LICENSE NO 1 /NRT OF 1970**  
**DATE 28.4.1983**

the Lushai Hills District (Trading by Non-Tribals)  
 Temporary Trade License granted for 1 (one) year (period)  
 from 28/4/1983 to 31/3/1984

Name JOGEN CHANDRA DEY Father's name JOGEN CHANDRA DEY  
 Village TLABUNG P.O. TLABUNG Thana TLABUNG  
 District LUNGLEI Address while in Mizo District \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nature of Trade SHOP KEEPER

Rs. \_\_\_\_\_ (Rupees) on account of fees paid  
 on \_\_\_\_\_

1. This license is cancellable or removeable by the Executive Committee as and when thought fit contingent on good condition and behaviour while in the Mizo District.
2. Trading should be done on cash basis only.
3. The License Holder should report without fail to the Executive Committee on the expiry of the validity of this license and submit this license.

Read Explained to me and understood.

Sd/- illigible  
 (Signature of the License Holder)  
 Dated Lunglei, the \_\_\_\_\_

Sd/- C. KAMLOVA 28/4/83  
 for Deputy Commissioner,  
 i/e Revenue, Excise & Taxation,  
 LUNGLEI.

/-  
 RENEWAL/CANCELLATION.  
 No D 3201/T/7/94/14-DEL  
 CERTIFIED TRUE COPY  
 Dated Lunglei on  
 13th March 95.

Rajendra  
 Deputy Commissioner,  
 Lunglei.

Fig 24



**Police Station** (N22.907427, E92.467312)

To help in the administration, the Britishers established the first Police Station in Mizoram which is now located in Thana veng in 1872. A new building was set up in 1889. Along with a residential quarter, the new building is still functional. A section of the old building is still functional.



Fig 25



Fig 26



Fig 27

**Civil Hospital** (N22.906374, E92.470115)

To mark a new and an important introduction into Mizoram is the creation of Hospital, the first of its kind in Mizoram in the year 1872 by Thomas Lewin. Due to an outbreak of fire in Tlabung, the hospital had to be reconstructed. At present there are new buildings to meet the growing demands of health.



Fig 28



Fig 29

**Hari Mandir** (N22.906408, E92.466352)

Perhaps this may be the earliest religious structure in the history of Mizoram established in 1896, prior to the establishment of Christian Church at Sethlun in 1902. Though this was set up initially as a private establishment, it later came to be used by the public. At present, Sarbojanin Hari Mandir Committee is managing the temple. There are various deities such as Shiva Ling, Loka, and Krishna.





Fig 30



Fig 31



Fig 32



Fig 33



Fig 34



Fig 35

### **Other important places visited during the field study**

As the team was walking through the various heritage structures, adjacent to the Inspection Bungalow and Civil Hospital, L.Z.M English medium school (private) was visited to have a glimpse on the present-day school. The team found a chance to interact with the faculties and Fifth Standard students under a welcoming and friendly atmosphere.



Fig 36



Fig 37



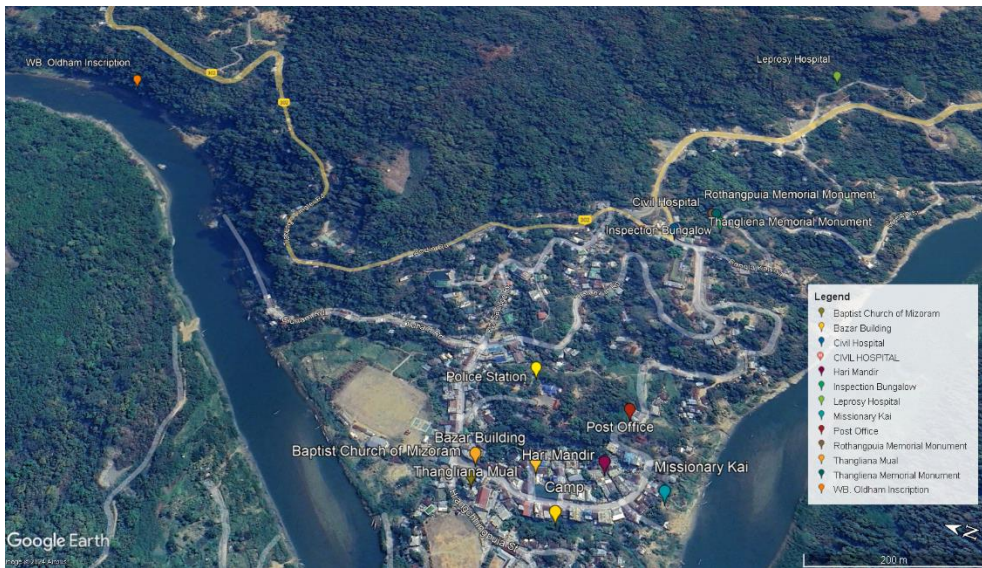
As Tlabung has played an important part and role in the trade network since pre-Colonial times and in the present day, the team ventured to **Kawrpuchhuah** and then to **Thekaduar** in Bangladesh to understand the trade network between India and Bangladesh. Kawrpuchhuah is mostly inhabited by Chakmas with a quick access to Thekaduar in Bangladesh by small boats.

The team observed that many articles of trade such as plates, textiles, and various plastic items etc. are imported through Thekaduar into India. Among the export items from India includes wooden logs that are floated through the river into Bangladesh. At present, the team observed that the international trade and relations are in good terms.



Fig 38: View of Thekaduar from Kawrpuchhuah (left)

Fig 39: View of Kawrpuchhuah from Thekaduar (right)



Map 1: Tlabung historical place locations

### **Cultural continuity**

As popularly known in history that no present may exist without a past, Tlabung has also seen and displayed cultural continuity on various levels. An important feature of change and continuity is the introduction of Christianity from 1911 with the establishment of Baptist Church. This was later followed by the creation of other churches such as Salvation Army, Isua Krista Kohhran, Evangelical Free Church of India, United Pentecostal Church of (Mizoram and North-East). There are also believers of other faiths such as Hinduism and Buddhism.





Fig 40: BCM Emmanuel



Fig 41: Salvation Army

Among the changes worth mentioning is the expansion of trade from barter to currency-based transactions. The articles of trade have substantively changed and increased. The trade is now regulated by the state government.

Changes can also be seen in fashion in comparison to the past. There are extensive developments becoming a semi-urban area. There are educational institutions run by the government as well as private. Communication has developed with transport networks currently undergoing extension. This will reduce the time required to commute between Tlabung and Lunglei. Being at the border area of India, there are also continuous safety measures taken by the Indian government. An interesting feature of note is that being a trading area, cultivation or agriculture is not taken up on a large scale apart from home gardening which is innate in Mizo culture. It may be surmised that this could have been the practice in the past as well. However, with urban development and some areas being converted into agricultural production, Tlabung may see a change in land use pattern.

Among the cultural continuation, almost all houses have domesticated pigs, chickens, goats, dogs, and cats. However, these were not observed on a large or commercial scale during the field study. It is also observable that there is social harmony among the various communities living in Tlabung, sharing and accepting their differences. Though small in size, Tlabung may be said to display a metropolitan lifestyle where different communities come and live in harmony.



Fig 42



Fig 43



Fig 44

Looking into the scale of development and the prospect that Tlabung, as a peripheral and yet strategic in its location is obvious in heading for much larger development and expansion compared to its surrounding localities.

### **Remark**

To look and have a good understanding to culture, change, transition, and development especially in relation to colonialism and border area, Tlabung may present an extremely desirable hotspot for studies in Mizoram. The vast geographical area with its key location and easy access beyond the border makes it an interesting ground for multidisciplinary studies. It is true in saying that Tlabung presents cultural history from the early period to the present day. The friendly environment and support of the locals cannot remain unnoticed. Much of the success of the field study was dependent on it.

### **Acknowledgment**

Gratefulness for the success of the department's field study can be found in many areas. The department would like to thank our Principal Vuansanga Vangchhawng for his understanding, support, and assistance. The active support of Mr. C. Vanlawma and family for providing us accommodation, Tlabung Y.M.A Asst. Secretary B. Lalhuthanga and Village Council Vice President Hmingthansanga Ralte (Hmingtea) for their scholarly lecture, the family of Mr. Lallianzuala Lianhna and Ms. B. Lalnunsiami for hosting the

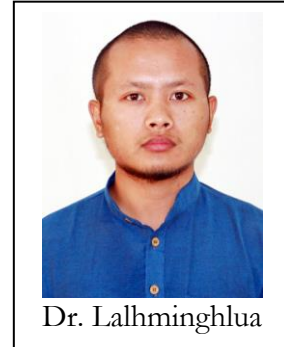


department with a grand dinner. We are sincerely grateful to Upa T. Lalzara for sharing his knowledge on the history of Tlabung. We also extend our gratitude to our drivers Lalramtiam, Lalhmunsiam, Lalruatfela Punte, and Remnalalnunsiam.

## EXPLORING EARLY CHRISTIAN BURIAL AT THEIRIAT: A DEPARTMENTAL REPORT

### Religious dimension: Past and Present

Religion has played a significant role in the way a society functions. It has been integral in the way a society behaves and its understanding of it. What we know of the earlier religious system was the believe in animism and its worship of spirits. Religion was integral in the functioning of society much like the present. There are the what would be called in the present-day term as *priests*, but of two types called *Sadamt* who would perform the religious rituals and *Bamlpu* performing medical related rituals. An assistant to them called *Tlahpawi* may also perform on their behalf.



Dr. Lalhminghlua

To make things interesting for all, the religious set up was made in such a way that the final stage of ritual would raise the social status of the performer irrespective of social background. This is called as *Thangchhuah*, a stage where one was considered to be an all achiever in the physical world and gets an entry into the spiritual dimension of leisurely life without any need for manual labors. Such a blissful dimension! Who wouldn't want to go! The only set back would be the herculean task of succeeding all the required steps by performing rituals, offering feasts, and drinks on multiple occasions. This vortex of *Inlam Thangchhuah* can only be alternated by *Ramlam Thangchhuah* through the skilful display of hunting animals. That too, specific animals! Nevertheless, they did achieve feats of such magnitude. All is well for the achiever. He is all set for the next life.

Then came the religious propaganda of Middle Eastern origin modified to the taste of Europeans and brought by the British missionaries. Time let it sink in the mindset of the Mizos who decided to adopt it for reasons of their volition. However, this onset did not start peacefully. There was a reaction to such



introduction of a different ideology in a world where Mizo society was having its own functional religion. Yes, there were people who did not feel the need of an extra religion. Well, there were those in support of it because of the change and prospects it carries. The very reason to write this sentence is the byproduct of such change. Apparently, it proved to be good enough and now majority of the population has become Christians.

### **Changing the religious dimension in Lunglei: When and where**

By 1900, there were about 40 Christians in the south. Their numbers slowly increased amidst persecutions. To mark milestone, the first church was built in Sethlun in 1902. So, who were the builders? In 1902, there were seven Christian families in Pukpui who were not favored by their chief. Ultimately, there were banished and moved to Sethlun where they build a church. To have a pan view of the social-geography, the present day Theiriat forms much of the area traversed by these Christians. And the rest is history.



Fig 1: Reconstructed Church at Sethlun

### **Practicing the new religious dimension**

Apparently, the new religion suits the needs of the Mizos who began to adopt it and leaving aside their old religion. There began the religious transformation, all happening pan Mizoram with significant changes in society brought by the new religion itself, as well as, those brought in by the new colonial administration. Mizoram entered a new paradigm. Education, health, life style, social mentality all began to change. Within the realm of Christianity, Baptist were not the only one who wanted to inculcate their doctrines into the eager minds of the Mizos. This became the reason for the existence of multiple denominations in the state with its pros and cons.

Those that were banished living far off of Pukpui buried their dear ones in what is now famously known as *Kristian Hmasate Thlanmual* (N22.86941, E 92.78755) at Theiriat Tlang. Here, traces of their actions can be found in multiple locations. Not branching far off from the traditional practice of erecting stones, the new religion took Mizos to a new practice of integrating a corpse and stone erection. Now, one can visit a burial while seeing an erected stone to mark his significance. This was not in the earlier traditional setting. A new stage was set. The introduction of script by the missionaries proved its significance by their use on these stones where it becomes much easier to record and read.



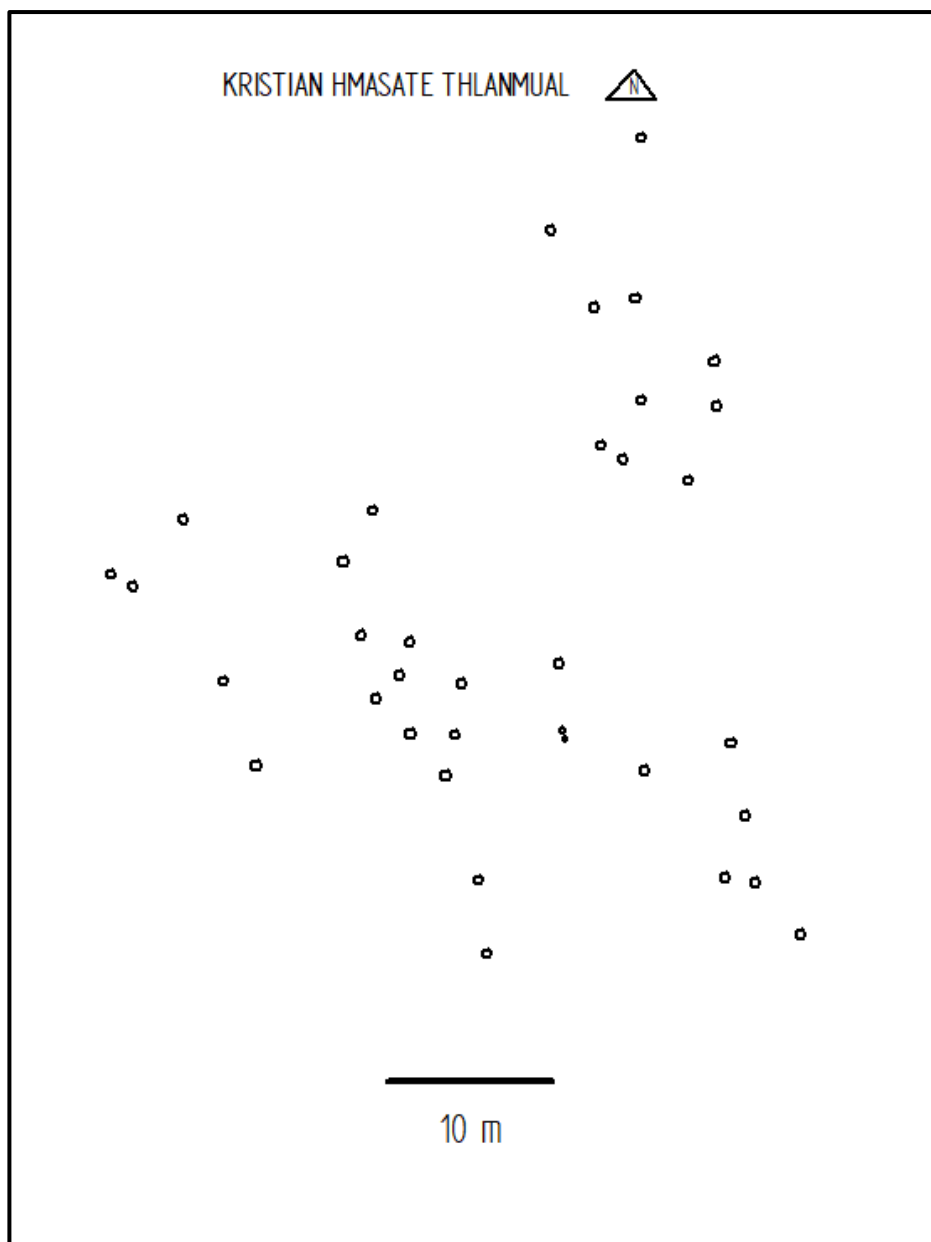


Fig 2: Kristian Hmasate Thlanmual (Credit: Lalruatsangi)

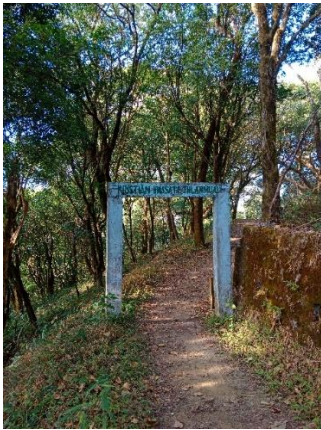


Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6



Fig 7

Fig 3 – 7: *Kristian Hmasate Thlanmual* (Credit: Lalruatsangi)

Traces of Christian activities began to fan out the mountain and with it, the creation of a *tuikbur* (natural water source) called as *Ringtu Hmasate Tuikbur* (N22.871339, E92.785308).





Fig 8 (Credit: Lalruathlui Khiangte)

Another water source that would have been vital to them is *Vai Tui* (N22.872186, E92.787507).



Fig 9 (Credit: Lalruathlui Khiangte)



Map 1: Early Christian social-geographical locations

### **Impact on society**

As Christianity got entrenched deeper, it got increasing followers ultimately to become the most dominant religion in the state. So much is the diversification of denominations that Theiriat now has multiple churches of different denominations. This got metastasized when viewed from a pan state level, all having certain weightage on their own when identity consciousness becomes key in social participation. Obviously, ideology which has always been key in understanding and in the performance of an individual or community, helps in the realization of creating a dominant religion, and the followers who had and presently identify themselves under one umbrella of ideology, continues to perform under the banner of Christianity. Although there are negative sides to it, it also creates social harmony which is critical in the functioning of the society. The new ideology has blended into the spirit of Mizo society in peacefully living with one another which has been a pride of Mizo society.



### **Remark**

Christianity and its impact have been studied and restudied by various scholars. Among the many sources, Christian history at Theiriat in relations with Pukpui is essential in the understanding the development of Christianity in southern Mizoram. Here, ideology can be seen in its physical realization. This objectification of ideology was and is central in the functioning and understanding of being a Christian in the state. The sites that were studied embeds words into materials, something that cannot be negated into the realm of general history where archaeological materials can provide a strong standpoint in the development of Christianity. In fact, it is through these objectified ideologies that the understanding of Christianity may be poised even to begin.

## **TLABUNG: MY BIRTHPLACE AND ITS HISTORICITY**

### **Introduction**

Colonialism refers to a historical period when powerful countries from Europe, like Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal, established colonies in different parts of the world. These countries sought to expand their territories, resources, and influence. The colonizer would exploit the resources of these colonies for their own benefit, often at the expense of the local populations. Colonialism had a significant impact on both the colonial countries and the colonized regions, shaping their histories, economies, and cultures.



Lalruatdiki Lianhna  
2023BA008

Colonialism had a significant impact on the Mizo people, not only culturally and economically, but also religiously. The arrival of missionaries like F.W. Savidge and J.H. Lorrain in the Lushai Hills January 1894 brought about profound changes. They introduced the Mizo alphabet, translated the Bible, and spread the teachings of Jesus Christ among the Mizo. This led to a transformation in the Mizo belief system, replacing superstitions and blind faith with inner peace, happiness, and faith in Jesus Christ. Christianity became dominant, and its influence on Mizo society can still be seen today.

Thangliana, also known as T.H Lewin, was the first Britisher to enter Mizoram in 1865. He arrived in India in September 1857 as an East India Company military officer. His appointment as Deputy Commissioner of Hill Tract helped the British gain a better understanding of the Mizos and their culture. He was known as the white friend of the Mizos and his work has had a significant impact on Mizo literature and society. T.H Lewin made significant contributions to Mizo literature by documenting the Mizo culture and traditions in a straightforward manner. His work provided valuable insights into the Mizos and



their way of life, helping to preserve their cultural heritage. Through his writings, he helped to bridge the gap between the British and the Mizos, fostering a better understanding and appreciation of Mizo literature and society.

In Mizoram, colonialism primarily refers to the British rule during the colonial period. Mizoram including the town of Tlabung, was part of the British Empire's administration in India. The British established their presence in Mizoram in the late 19th century and continued until India gained independence 1947. One major impact of colonialism on the cultural practices in Tlabung and Mizoram was the influence of Christianity. The British missionaries played a crucial role in spreading Christianity and establishing churches in the region. As a result, Christianity became one of the dominant religious and cultural landscape of the area.

From January 16th to 19th, 11 students along with one Assistant Professor of the Department of History went on a field study to Tlabung, located in Lunglei District. As mention above in the topic the main aim was to study and learn history from the archaeological site of Tlabung.



Fig 1: Onward to Tlabung

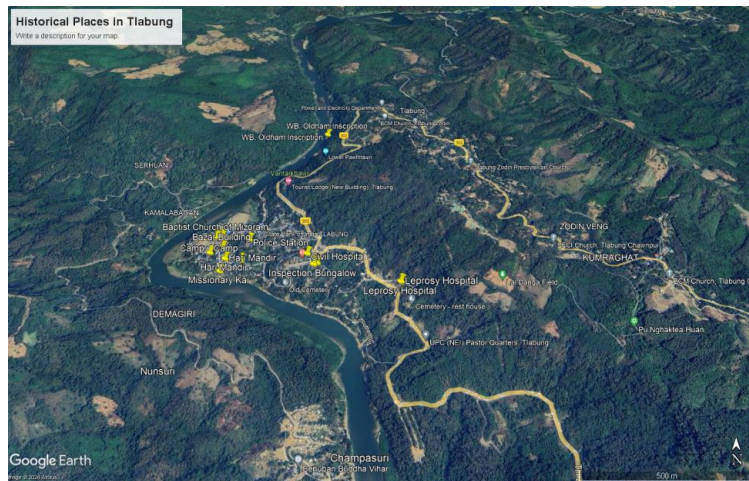
## **Present Day Society of Tlabung**

Tlabung, initially known as Demagree. It is a semi-urban town nestled within the Lunglei district of Mizoram. Beyond its status as a town, Tlabung provides an array of essential services to its residents. Among these amenities are two banks and a post office facilitating convenient financial transactions for the populace. Additionally, Tlabung boasts emergency services such as hospitals and a police station, ensuring the safety and well-being of the community. Contrary to external perceptions, which may suggest a prevalence of inter-marriage among communities in Tlabung, the ground reality presents a different outcome.

In Tlabung there are various religious denominations including Christianity (Baptist, Presbetarian, Salvation, Isua Krista Kohhran, Evangelical Free Church of India, United Penticostal Church of Mizoram, and North-East) as well as adherents of other religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism. Tlabung comprises different localities including Venglai, Vengchhak, Vantaikhawr, Bazar veng, Zawlpui veng, Damdawiin veng, Chanmari, Bawng veng, Venghlun, Zodin, and Chawnpui. The town hosts 15 schools, and common domesticated animals in the area include pigs, hen, goats, dogs, ducks, cats, cows and monkeys. Due to its status as a commercial center, there is no specific occupation that dominates Tlabung.

## **Heritage Report**

Tlabung was established on November 9, 1981. Initially known as Demagree, it later came to be known as Tlabung, derived from the river Vantaikhawr, also called Khawhthlabung flowing through the area. The name 'Tlabung' was based on the river's presence and its significance to the community. Below is a map showing various places in Tlabung.



Map 1: Tlabung

**Inspection Bungalow (I.B)** (N22.905836, E92.470437)

The first Inspection Bungalow in Mizoram was established in 1871 by the British. The Heritage Committee Tlabung Branch YMA took care of this place. It is located in Vengchhak, Tlabung. The bungalow was constructed using different materials such as thatch, corrugated iron sheets, bamboo, cement, and wood. It also features a spacious backyard. In the yard, there are two memorial monuments, the Rothangpuia Memorial Monument and the Thangliena Memorial Monument. Over time, these two monuments were brought together and hold great historical significance.



Fig 2: Inspection Bungalow



**Rothangpuia Memorial Erection** (N22.905958, E92.470568)

Rothangpuia Thangluah was the chief of Khawthlang (1820-1876). Lt. Colonel Thomas Herbert was fond of him owing to his great personality, especially for his commitment to peace and astute vision. He was even called as a friend of the British by General Brownlow. In October 1866, the British and the Mizos reached an agreement during their reign. A term in their agreement reads as:

“British hmelma chu an hmelma a ni anga,  
An hmelma chu British hmelma a ni ang.”

The british enemies will be the mizo’s enemy  
And the mizo enemy will also be the British enemies  
(Translation by author)



Fig 3: Rothangpuia Memorial Erection

**Thangliena Memorial Monument** (N22.905909, E92.470581)

Thomas Herbert Lewin was one of the very first Englishmen to make his way to Mizoram. He arrived in Mizoram through Demagree (Tlabung) back in 1865. The Mizos locally knew him as Thangliena, a name given by them. Upon his memorial monument, these words are etched:

*Colonial History through Material Culture: Heritage Walk at Tlabung*

IN MEMORY OF  
LT COLONEL TOM-HERBERT LEWIN B.S.C.  
ONCE SUPERINTENDENT OF THESE HILL TRACTS  
BORN 1839. DIED 1916.  
HE CAME TO THIS PEOPLE IN 1865 & WORKED AMONG THEM & FOR  
THEM FOR NINE YEARS. WHEN LOSS OF HEALTH COMPELLED HIM  
TO RETURN TO ENGLAND  
THE PEOPLE TRUSTED & LOVED HIM FOR HIS SYMPATHY & SENSE  
OF JUSTICE. FOR HIS UNTIRING INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE  
& FOR HIS INTERPID & DAUNTLESS COURAGE.  
HE TRAVELLED IN THEIR UNKNOWN LAND, VISITING THEIR CHIEFS  
THEIR VILLAGES & THEIR HOMES. ALONE & UNAFRAID.  
HE WAS THE FIRST THE FIRST TO INTERPRET & WRITE DOWN THEIR  
LANGUAGE. PREPARING THE WAY FOR SCHOOLS & PROGRESS.  
HE STUDIED & IMPROVED THEIR AGRICULTURE & THEIR LAWS  
& HELPED THEM IN ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES.  
THE PEOPLE KNEW HIM AS THAGLIENA. TOM LEWIN.  
& HONOURED HIM AS A CHIEF.  
THEY CALLED HIM THE LUSHAIS FIRST WHITE FRIEND.  
THEY BUILT A HOUSE FOR HIM VOLUNTARY IN TOKEN OF THEIR DEVOTION.  
THEIR CHILDREN NOW HAVE VOLUNTARILY BROUGHT STONES  
HERE. NEAR WHERE HIS HOUSE ONCE, STOOD & HAVE  
HELPED THE ONE WHO KNEW HIM BEST OF ALL &  
WHO KNEW HOW HIS HEART WAS EVER WITH THIS  
PEOPLE TO BUILD UP THE STONES TO THE MEMORY OF  
THANGLIENA'



Fig4: Thangliena Memorial Monument

**Missionary Kai (N22.905747, E92.466222)**

Missionary Kai is the place where our first missionaries, Rev. JH Lorrain (Pu Buanga), and Rev. FW Savidge (Sap Upa), first set foot on Mizoram in the year 1903. They were sent by the Baptist Missionary Society. It holds great historical significance as the starting point of their mission in Mizoram. Their presence as

missionaries played a crucial role in introducing Christianity and education to the Mizos, shaping their culture and social development. Near the river of Missionary Kai, there is a building called Ṭawngtaina In. It was officially opened on February 14, 2019, by Rev. JC Vanlalluaia, the President of MṬKP (Mizoram Ṭhalai Kristian Pawl).



Fig 5: Entrance of Missionary kai



Fig 6: Prayer House



Fig 7: Missionary kai

### **Leprosy Hospital (N22.904672, E92.474284)**

This leprosy hospital located in Chanmari is the first and only one in the state. The original building can be seen till today. It was established back in 1978. There was just one person staying there, and one nurse was in charge of taking



care of him and provides him with food. Even though the patient had already healed, his family didn't want him anymore, so he chose to continue staying here at this hospital.



Fig 8: Leprosy hospital

**Post Office** (N22.906304, E92.46711)

The Tlabung post office, established in 1872, holds the distinction of being the very first post office in Mizoram. It is still up and running today. It used to be called the post and telegraph office. In the post office, there are still some historical treasures like stamps, a calendar, a safe lock, and scissors.



Fig 9: Post Office



Fig 10: Stamps and scissors



Fig 11: Calendar



Fig 12: Safe lock

**Baptist Church Of Mizoram Tlabung** (N22.907677, E92.465714)

This Church was the first Church building in Tlabung, established on 9th March 1911. It was located in Zawlpui veng. Currently, this church has 525 members with ten (10) Upa and Eight (8) Rawngbawltu. M. Suaka (Durtlang Lal), Lalduha, Suakthangpuii(wife of Lalduha),Pi Puii were the founders of this church.

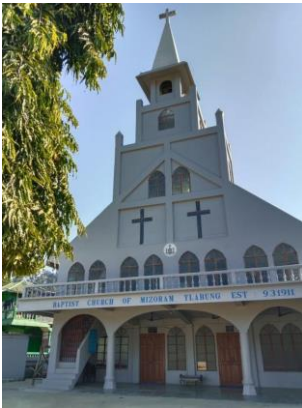


Fig 13: Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung

**W.B. Oldham Inscription** (N22.91459, E92.47052)

W.B. Oldham was a Chittagong divisional commissioner. W.B. Oldham inscription was located in Vantaikhawr. Vantaikhawr route was also discovered by W.B. Oldham himself from Tlabung to Pachang. Due to the previous

flooding, sand got deposited inside the protective structure, which needed to be cleared out before documentation.



Fig 14: Safety structure

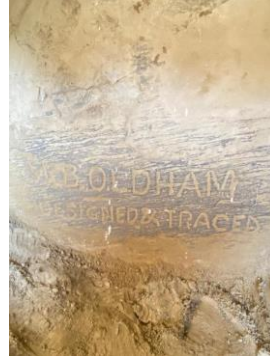


Fig 15: W.B Oldham Inscription

### **Thangliana Mual (N22.907718, E92.465984)**

Thangliana Mual was established in 9th November 1871 in Zawlpui veng. It was also known as Lewin playground. In the past, the field was used as a military base. Later, it served as a playground. But nowadays, the field is being used to store the cut woods by the forest.



Fig 16: Thangliana field



Fig 17: Entrance of Thangliana field



**Bazar Building** (N22.90709, E92.466108)

Tlabung bazar is situated Bazar veng. The market is held weekly on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Additionally, there are several stores lined up in the market and near the market selling jewellery, vegetables, fruits, furniture, spices, clothing and other items. In Tlabung, the shop keepers are mostly Bengali and Chakma.



Fig 18: Tlabung Bazar street view



Fig 19: Sketch of old Bazar

**Police Station** (N22.907427, E92.467312)

The Tlabung Police Station is located in Thana veng and comprises both new and old buildings. The old building established in 1872 by T.H. Lewin and formerly known as an outpost, holds historical significance. The new police station was established in 1889. It can be reach by taking an uphill road from the center of Tlabung town. This building is considered as the oldest police station in Mizoram.



Fig 20



Fig 21

**Civil Hospital** (N22.906374, E92.470115)

In 1872, TH. Lewin established the Tlabung hospital, which became the first caring hospital in Mizoram. Initially, the hospital was constructed in the bus station area of Tlabung. Unfortunately, due to a fire incident in 1984, the hospital burned down. The building was later reconstructed in 1980. The hospital had a single medical canteen. The hospital celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2022.



Fig 22: Entrance of Civil Hospital



Fig 23: Civil Hospital

**Hari Mandir** (N22.906408, E92.466352)

Hari Mandir is the oldest hindu temple in Mizoram, established in 1896. Initially privately owned, it was later handed over to the Hindu community in Tlabung. Now, the temple is managed by the Sarbojanin Hari Mandir Committee in Tlabung. Inside the Hari Mandir temple in mizoram, there are four gods: Shiva linga, Loka (the wife of Kartick Shani Dev), and Lord Krishna. The temple has a community of around 400 members.



Fig 24



Fig 25



Fig 26



Fig 27



Fig 28

Fig 24-28: Hari Mandir

### **Other Places visited**

Apart from the historical places, the Department explore places as follows:

1. **Kawrpuichhuah:** Located near Tlabung, it shares its border with Bangladesh. Kawrpuichhuah is a village mostly occupied by Chakmas, and one can easily reach Bangladesh from there by boat.





Fig 29: Kawrpuichhuah

2. **Thekaduar in Bangladesh:** Thekaduar is mostly inhabited by Chakmas, and it features various types of shops, such as tea stalls and shops that sell clay pots. The goods they sell there are much cheaper compared to Mizoram.



Fig 30: Thekaduar Bazar in Bangladesh

3. **L.Z.M English Medium School:** Located in Damdawiin Veng, the Department of History had the opportunity to interact with class V Students. There were 11 students present and 2 students were absent, making a total of 13 students.



Fig 31: L.Z.M. English Medium School

### **Remarks**

The field study in Tlabung was a great experience for both the students and faculty. It provided an opportunity for everyone to cooperate and work on various activities together. The trip also offered a chance to learn about the rural lifestyle and experience the warm hospitality of the people in Tlabung.

### **Acknowledgment**

We, the fellow students of the History Department, express our sincere gratitude to our Principal, Mr. Vuansanga Vanchhawng, for giving us the opportunity to conduct an archaeological field study. It is truly special that he also provided financial assistance. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Lalhminghlua for his guidance and support during the field study.

Most importantly, Tlabung YMA played a significant role in the success of this field study by allowing us to use of various utensils. We also express our gratitude to Pu C. Vanlawma for providing us with accommodation.

We also extend our thanks to the local people such as Mr. Arjun karmakar for providing information about Hari Mandir, Upa T. Lalzara for enlightening us about the history of Tlabung, Pi B. Lalnunsiami for guiding us in exploring the hospital, Pu Lallianzuala Lianhna's family for hosting a wonderful feast for us. Furthermore, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the sumo drivers, Lalramtiama, Lalhmunsiamia, Lalruatfela Punte, and Remnalalnunsiamia for safely driving us to our destination.

Last but not least, we would like to express our gratitude to the Almighty for guiding us throughout the trip.



Fig 32: Local Interaction with YMA & VC representatives (left)

Fig 33: local interaction with Upa T. Lalzara (right)



## **A REPORT ON ‘KNOW YOUR HISTORY’: HERITAGE FIELD STUDY**

Colonialism in Tlabung began in the 19th century by the British. The British initially established trading posts in the region, but eventually expanded their control over Tlabung and other parts of India. Under colonial rule, the British introduced their own legal and administrative systems, which we can see till today. They also exploited the region’s natural resources such as tea, timber, and minerals, for their own. The British influence extended to various aspects of life in Tlabung including education, language, and culture, which had a lasting impact on the educational system in the region. They introduced modern education systems and infrastructure development, such as roads and railways. The arrival of missionaries like FW Savidge and JH Lorrain in the Lushai Hills in January, 1894 brought about profound changes. They introduced the Mizo alphabet, translate the bible and spread the teaching of Jesus Christ among the Mizo. This led to a transformation in the Mizo belief system, replacing superstition and blind faith with inner peace, happiness and faith in Jesus Christ. The British presence had a profound impact on the social economic and cultural aspects of Tlabung. It led to the spread of Western ideas and influences, as well as changes in land ownership and agricultural practices. During the British colonial period, British troops and missionaries used this route to reach Mizoram. The distance from Chittangong to Tlabung was about 90 kilometres and then another 35 kilometres to Lunglei, which took him five days.



From 16th - 19th January, 2024, eleven (11) students along with one Asst. Professor of the Department of History went on the field study to Tlabung District. The main objective was to study and learn history from the heritage site of Tlabung.

## **Present Society of Tlabung**

Based on an interaction with Hmingthansanga Ralte, Tlabung Vice President Village Council and B. Lalhuthanga, YMA Asst. Secretary of Tlabung, Thomas Herbert Lewin (Thangliana) was the founder of Tlabung in 1871 (November 9). Demagree was the first name of Tlabung “dema” means tla and “gree” means bung. It is also said that Tlabung was named from “Vantaikawr falls”.

According to Tlabung VC and Asst. Secretary there are many foreigners. About 60-70% were not Mizo. According to them the first school was located in Tlabung. They said that “We dare to read it as the beginning of Literature”. Nine Churches were established of today which includes Presbyterian, Salvation Army, Isua Krista Kohhran (IKK), Evangelical Free Church of India (EFCI), Buddhist, Hindu and Baptist. Also, there are many languages spoken in the villages which are Bangla, Pahari, Duhlian (Mizo), Hindi. Their most common domesticated animals were hen, pig, duck, goat, dog, monkey, cats, cow. They also earned their living by fishing and transportation of vehicle by boats. Cross marriage was common in Tlabung. Tlabung uniqueness was that there was no ruling chief in the past.

## **Heritage Report**

Base on local interaction with Hmingthansanga Ralte Tlabung Vice President Village Council and B. Lalhuthanga YMA Asst. Secretary of Tlabung, Thomas Herbert Lewin (Thangliana) was the founder of Tlabung on 9th November, 1871 and he married Lungchem lady named Dari. They also have a son but he passed away when he was a little child. Lewin was the first Mizo to have a white friend. In 1872, Lewin effort is intense. He built the first Hospital of Mizoram, the first Post Office of Mizoram and the first Market of Mizoram in Tlabung. The following are the various archaeological monuments which were documented.

**THANGLIENA MEMORIAL MONUMENT (N22.905909,  
E92.470581)**

Thomas Herbert Lewin was one of the very first Englishmen to make his way to Mizoram. He was the first Mizo's white friend. He arrived Mizoram through Demagree which is now Tlabung back in 1865. The Mizo's locally knew him as Thangliena, a name given by them.



Fig 1: Memorial inscription of Thangliena

IN MEMORY OF  
LT COLONEL TOM-HERBERT LEWIN B.S.C.  
ONCE SUPERINTENDENT OF THESE HILL TRACTS  
BORN 1839. DIED 1916.  
HE CAME TO THIS PEOPLE IN 1865 & WORKED AMONG THEM & FOR  
THEM FOR NINE YEARS. WHEN LOSS OF HEALTH COMPELLED HIM  
TO RETURN TO ENGLAND  
THE PEOPLE TRUSTED & LOVED HIM FOR HIS SYMPATHY & SENSE  
OF JUSTICE. FOR HIS UNTIRING INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE  
& FOR HIS INTERPID & DAUNTLESS COURAGE.  
HE TRAVELLED IN THEIR UNKOWN LAND, VISITING THEIR CHIEFS  
THEIR VILLAGES & THEIR HOMES. ALONE & UNAFRAID.  
HE WAS THE FIRST THE FIRST TO INTERPET & WRITE DOWN THEIR



## *Colonial History through Material Culture: Heritage Walk at Tlabung*

LANGUAGE. PREPAIRING THE WAY FOR SCHOOLS & PROGRESS.  
HE STUDIED & IMPROVED THEIR AGRICULTURE & THEIR LAWS  
& HELPED THEM IN ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES.  
THE PEOPLE KNEW HIM AS THAGLIENA. TOM LEWIN.  
& HONOURED HIM AS A CHIEF.  
THEY CALLED HIM THE LUSHAIS FIRST WHITE  
FRIEND.  
THEY BUILT A HOUSE FOR HIM VOLUNTARY IN TOKEN OF  
THER DEVOTION.  
THEIR CHILDREN NOW AVE VOLUNTARILY BROUGHT STONES  
HERE. NEAR WHERE HIS HOUSE ONCE, STOOD & HAVE  
HELPED THE ONE WHO KNEW HIM BEST OF ALL&  
WHO KNEW HOW HIS HEART WAS EVER WITH THIS  
PEOPLE TO BUILD UP THE STONES TO THE MEMORY OF  
THANGLIENA.

### **INSPECTION BUNGALOW(IB) (N22.905836, E92.470437)**

The first Inspection Bungalow of Mizoram was in Tlabung. It was established in 1871 by the British. It is located in Vengchhak of Tlabung. The Heritage Committee Tlabung Branch was the one who take care of the place. The house was built by a material of thatch bamboo, corrugated iron sheet, cement and wood, it had a huge backyard as well. There are two Memorial erections in the yard which have been brought together in the present day, namely: Rothangpuia Memorial Monument and Thanliena Memorial Monument.



Fig 2: Plaque of IB



Fig 3: Inspection Bungalow

## **POST OFFICE (N22.906304, E92.46711)**

The first Post Office of Mizoram was established at Tlabung in 1872 by the British. The Heritage Committee Tlabung Branch YMA was the one who take care of the place. There is postal material used by the British that are used left behind. The post office was first known as “Post and Telegraph Office”. The post office was built in wood, corrugated iron sheet, brick and cement. There is an entrance on both the front and back side. There is a men and women toilet in the backside of the backyard. Presently there are five employees.



Fig 4: Post Office



Fig 5: Plaque of Post Office



Fig 6: Stamp & Ink pad



Fig 7: Safe



Fig 8: Old calendar



Fig 9: Backyard

**HARI MANDIR (N22.906408, E92.466352)**

Hari Mandir, located in Tlabung Bazar Veng, was the oldest Hindu Temple of Hindu Community in Mizoram, which had its inception in the year 1896. The Temple of Lord Krishna was established with Great Enthusiasm and Integrity by its Founder. There are four gods inside the temple named Shani Dev, Krishna, Loka, Shiva Linga, (L) Lokhindar Chowdhury and (L) Nanda Kumar Chowdhury. Earlier it was the personal property of their family but later it was handed over to Hindu Community of Tlabung. However, it is now run by Sarbojanin Hari Mandir Committee Tlabung. The temple was made with brick and cement, wood and corrugated iron sheet. Each of the god's statue can be locked inside for protection. They also collect the offering in a box and can be locked. They have currently one Priest. Agarbati and candle stand are inside the temple. There is a guest house under the stage. Monday is the day when meat and fish are not allowed. Pooja is held in the morning. Currently there are four hundred members in the temple.



Fig 10: Hari Mandir



Fig 11: Inner view of Hari Mandir





Fig 12



Fig 13



Fig 14



Fig 15

Fig 12-15: Hindu Temple.

### **LEPROSY HOSPITAL (N22.90467, E92.474284)**

The Leprosy Hospital was located in Chanmari. It is the first and only one in the state of Mizoram. It was established in 1978. The original building can be seen even till today. Currently, there is one person staying there and one nurse was in charge of taking care of him and provides him the food. Even though the patient had already healed, his family does not want him anymore so he chooses to continue staying there. The Leprosy Hospital was made with brick and cement, corrugated with sheet. It has a vast compound, there are also goats. It is currently under the care and protection of Heritage Committee of Tlabung YMA Branch.



Fig 16



Fig 17



Fig 18

Fig 16-18: Leprosy Hospital

### **MISSIONARY KAI (N22.905747, E92.466222)**

Missionary Kai is the first place that the British Christian missionaries Rev J.H Lorraine (Pu Buanga) and Rev F.W Savidge (Sap Upa) set their foot in Mizoram on 8th March 1903. They were sent by Baptist Missionary Society (BMS). Missionary Kai is located at Bazar Veng, Tlabung and there is a monument created in their memory for the first place to set their foot in Mizoram by Mizoram Thalai Kristian Pawl (MTKP) on 25th January 2016. There is a large lake known as Tlabung Tuipui.



Fig 19: Missionary Kai Gate



Fig 20: Prayer House



Fig 21: Khawthlang Tuipui – View from Missionary Kai (left)



Fig 22: Missionary Kai plaque (right)

## **POLICE STATION (N22.907427, E92.467312)**

The first Police Station in Mizoram was in Thana Veng, Tlabung. There was two building, the old one, built by the British, was established in 1872. The house was made of thatched bamboo and there is some old material used by the British, such as table, chair, bed and old communication device. The old house was used to communicate with the MRPD. The house door, wall, floor, roof, beam and window are all original.





Fig 23



Fig 24



Fig 25

Fig 23-25: Old Police Station.

The new building was established in 1889. It was renovated by Art & Culture Department under 13th Finance Commission, Director of Art & Culture Department in 2013. The building was made with brick and cement. It has a vast compound and had a comfortable environment. Among the police quarter standing today only one is from the colonial period it was made of thatch bamboo.



Fig 26: New Building



Fig 27: First Police Quarter

### **CIVIL HOSPITAL (N22.906374, E92.470115)**

Civil Hospital Tlabung was the first Hospital in Mizoram. It was established in 1872 by Lt Col. T.H. Lewin. In 2022 they celebrated their 150 years. It was erected on 29.11.2022. Currently, it is located in Vengchhak. Based on local interaction, the hospital was located downhill side of the current location. As the original hospital was burnt before 1977, most of the document was burnt along the building. It has a vast and comfortable compound. It is the only hospital in Tlabung.



Fig 28: Civil Hospital entrance



Fig 29: Hospital



Fig 30: View from new building



Fig 31: Hospital Hallway

**ROTHANGPUIA MEMORIAL MONUMENT (N22.905958, E92.470568)**

Rothangpuia was the chief of Khawnthang during 1820 - 1876. He was a strong supporter of peace agreement during the British and the Mizo Chiefs war. In October 1866, the British and the Mizo Chief made a peace agreement in the name of “sa ui tan”. A term in their agreement reads as:

“British hmelma chu an hmelma a ni a nga,  
An hmelma chu British hmelma a ni ang.”



Fig 32: Rothangpuia's Memorial Monument

**W.B. OLDHAM INSCRIPTION (N22.91459, E92.47052)**

WB Oldham Inscription was located in Vantaikawr. He created the road. WB Oldham was a Chittagong Division Commissioner. Due to the previous flooding sand were deposited inside the protective structure which had to be cleaned first before documentation.





Fig 33: W.B. Oldham Inscription

### **BAPTIST CHURCH OF MIZORAM (N22.907677, E92.465714)**

Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung was located in Bazar Veng. It was established on 9th March, 1911. It was the first Church in Tlabung. Currently, there are 525 members with 10 Upa and 8 Rawngbawltu.



Fig 34: BCM Church of Tlabung



Fig 35: BCM compound

### **THANGLIANA MUAL (N22.907718, E92.465984)**

Thangliana Mual, located in Zawlpui Veng, was established on 9th November 1861. It is also known as “Lewin’s Playground”. Initially, the field was used for a military base and barrack. Currently, the field was used as a playground for kids.



Fig 36. Thangliana Mual

### **BAZAR BUILDING (N22.90709, E92.466108)**

Tlabung Bazar Buildings are usually small, mostly variety store. The shop keepers are usually Mizo, Bengali and Chakma. There are various kind of stores such as Mobile store, Restaurant, Hardware, Vegetable shop, Convenient store. Friday is their special market day. Taxis are more common than rickshaw.



Fig 37

Fig 38

Fig 37 & 38: Tlabung Bazar View.



Map 1: Locations/localities with historical significance in Tlabung.

## Other Places Visited

Apart from Tlabung, other places like Kawrpuichuah, Thekaduar in Bangladesh, LZM English Medium School were visited which helped us in understanding and gaining more knowledge about these places.

**Kawrpuichuah:** Kawrpuichhuah is a village located in a few miles away from Tlabung. It is located on a border line sharing its border line with Bangladesh. The village was occupied by Chakma. The road condition is very good and it is very pleasant place.

**Thekaduar (Bangladesh):** To reach Bangladesh, travelling by boat is required. There were many boats which are used as travelling and transportation for their income. Teaks were exported and sold on Bangladesh border side. The resident of Bangladesh border purchased like toys shop, clothes, pot, charcoal, plastic, tools and many other things. These products are cheaper than other places in Mizoram.



**LZM English Medium School:** LZM English Medium School is located in Vengchhak, Tlabung. Having an interaction with Class V students, there are 13 students in which 11 are present and 2 are absent. Photo session is also having with them.

## **REMARKS**

Our Department of History students and Sir Lalhminghlua went to Tlabung for Archaeological Field Study to study the historical materials which still exists like Mandir, Post Office, Police Station, IB, Hospital and some oldest material that used by the British. It was indeed a very enlightening and refreshing trip. We have a lot of fun; we learn many things that we did not know. This kind of activities help the day's scholars and the residence to have more brotherhood and sisterhood.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

We are very thankful to our Principal Vuansanga Vanchhawng for granting us the permission to have field study including financial and transportation assistance. The success of our field study was partly due to him. We give our thanks to Sir Lalhminghlua for guiding us and helping us in our field study.

We are grateful to the local people of Tlabung especially to the Tlabung VC and Asst. Secretary of YMA, C. Vanlalawma for renting us their house, and our drivers Lalramtiam, Lalmunsiam, Lalruatfela Punte and Remnalalnunsiam, Upa T. Lalzara for providing a useful information about Tlabung. And also, thanks to Arjun K.K for guiding us and showing their religious temple. It is important to know and learn about historical places in Mizoram. It is our duty to cherish and protect our cultural treasure.

## TLABUNG AND ITS INTERESTING COLONIAL HISTORY

From 16th to 19th January, 2024, eleven students along with one Asst. Professor of the Department of History, HATIM went to Tlabung for a field study with an aim to study the History of Tlabung through material culture.



Reuben Vanlalruatdika  
2123BA067



Fig 1: Onward to Tlabung

### Introduction on Colonialism

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another, it is a policy of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying with its settlers and exploiting economically. The word colonialism derived from the Latin word 'colonia'. The standard definition of colonialism is "a policy and practice of a power in extending control over weaker peoples or areas". Historians have classified four different types of colonialism that have been practiced throughout the ages, namely- Settler Colonialism, exploitation colonialism, Surrogate colonialism and Internal colonialism.

Colonialism had brought many developments and changes in Mizoram. The Christian missionaries made an alphabet for the native (Mizo) to use as their own. Colonialism brings education and this is one of the most important changes brought by the colonialist. Health care and hygienic practice were taught to the Mizos which had a deep impact and positive effects on the Mizos. The Mizos known for their unhealthy life situation, known for their blood thirsty head-hunters custom after colonisation changed their way of life, converting into Christian.

### **General History of colonialism in Mizoram**

The entry of the British marked a turning point in Mizo history. Chief Bengkhuaia incident is one of the main reasons why the British enter Mizoram, when he kidnaped Mary Winchester. The British were enraged and send a troop to save her which led to their interaction with the natives. The British who entered brings development in almost every aspect of the Mizos life, they brought education, change their religion, their way of life.

The Mizos known for their uncivilised life, their brutal practices that terrors other people from outside Mizoram known as savages by the people outside their land. Even called by savages by the British are now become civilised, lived a much more modernise life, they let go all of their old beliefs taking on another religion, they let go all their customs that are considered inhuman like head hunting and killing and rampaging other villages. The Mizos changed their way of life all to the work and colonisation of the British.

### **Present Day Socio-Economic of Tlabung**

Tlabung is a place located in Lunglei district and the total population of Tlabung town regarding 2023 census reported that about 6,100 people are living in the town. Mizo language (Duhlian) and Bengali language were mostly used by the local people. The population consist of different tribes like Mizos, Chakmas,



Bengali, Pâng (part of mizo tribe), Bâwm and Paharis. Tlabung, formerly known as 'Demagree or Demagiri' (Dema means 'tla' and Gri means 'bung', according to T.H. Lewin and other whitemen), is a town built by T.H. Lewin. Tlabung never had any kind of ruler or chief to rule them since it started which made it very different from other Mizos village that ever existed which were always ruled by a chief. Some people also says that Tlabung got its name by the rocky cliff and falls of 'Vantaikhawr' located in Tlabung.

There were different denominations in Tlabung such as Baptist, Presbyterian, Salvation, Isua Krista Kohhran (IKK), United Pentecostal Church (UPC) - Northeast and Mizoram, Evangelical Free Church of India (EFCI). Other religions like Buddhist, Hindu also existed. The Baptist Church of Tlabung, established on 9th March, 1911, was the first ever religious related building ever build. Tlabung thought to be infested with other tribes, mixing with other people - other than Mizos is not true as most of the Mizos married people from their own tribe.

### **Entry of Colonialism through Tlabung**

Tlabung, located in the southern part of Mizoram, is a town established by the British who came to Mizoram. Lt. Colonel T.H. Lewin, along with his troops, came to Mizoram in 1871 and camped on a certain place which was known as Thangliana Mual. (Thangliana is a name given by the locals and mostly known as Thangliana). The reason of his arrival was to rule and conquer the natives but instead he befriended the natives and established a new town. He married one of the natives named Dari, a maiden from Lungchem village. They had a child but does not live long. Before and after creation, Tlabung was a town mostly occupied by the British and some Bengali and Mizos. Unlike other villages and towns in Mizoram, Tlabung never had any kind of chief to rule, instead they were under the direct rule of the British.

### **Historical Reports**

**Hari Mandir** (N22.906408, E92.466352)

The first ever and the latest temple Hindu Mandir (Hari Mandir) in Mizoram was built in 1896 at Bazar Veng, Tlabung. The temple, dedicated to Lord Krishna, was established with great enthusiasm and integrity by its founder (L) Lokhindar Chowdhury and (L) Nanda Kumar Chowdhury. Earlier it was personal property of their family but later it was handed over the Hindus community in Tlabung and now was run by Sarbojanin Hari Mandir Committee Tlabung. This religious building is used for different religious purposes like praying and all. Four idols were placed inside the temple namely- Shiva Linga, Loka - wife of Kartick, Shani Dev and Lord Krishna. There were about 400 members and the temple is under the care of the Hindu priest.



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6



Fig 7

Fig 2-7: Hari Mandir and religious idols

**Missionary Kai** (N22.905747, E92.466222)

Missionary Kai is located at Bazar Veng, Tlabung. The two Christian missionaries namely, Rev J.H Lorraine (Pu Buanga) and Rev F.W Savidge (Sap Upa) used this flowing river, now known as Missionary Kai, to reach Tlabung. They had arrived on 8th March, 1903 with the help of a small boat. Missionary Kai was the first place in the southern part of Mizoram where a white man set foot. Missionary Kai got its name as it was used by the missionaries to reach the southern part of Mizoram and build it after two years of their arrival. Missionary Kai was used for washing, bathing, fishing and even for transportation by the locals. A monument (a building) named Prayer House (Tawngtaina In) was also built and opened on 14th February, 2019 to mark the arrival of these two missionaries on this land.



Fig 8



Fig 9

Fig 8 & 9 Missionary Kai

### **Inspection Bungalow (IB) (N22.905836, E92.470437)**

Inspection Bungalow, located at Vengchhak, Tlabung, was the first ever Inspection Bungalow build in Mizoram in the year 1871 by using various materials like wood cut-in different sizes, masonry stone for steps, bamboo-break and made as a bamboo sheet were used to construct its walls, corrugated



iron sheet for its roof, iron nails, glass were also used for its and a pointy wood thing was placed on its roof. Two memorial erection - Rothangpuia Memorial and Thangliena memorial erection, about 16 feet were placed on the side of the courtyard. On these two-memorial erection, on the surface of it their information was erected which could be seen even today. These two memorial erections and the Bungalow are under the care of Heritage Committee, Tlabung Branch YMA. It renovated by Art and Culture Department Under 15th Finance Commission. The Bungalow is the work of the British and is still in a good shape and has a spacious backyard too.



Fig 10



Fig 11



Fig 12



Fig 13



Fig 14

Fig 10-14: Inspection Bangla

**Rothangpuia Memorial Erection** (N22.905958, E92.470568)

Rothangpuia Thangluah, born in 1820 was one of the Mizo great Chief in the eastern part of Mizoram. He ruled over certain villages like Thehleph, Lungsen, Lungrang South, Uiphum Tlang, Tiente, Sirte, Mualkur, Beckham, Lungno, Zuangzawl Phai, Rangte, Bawrkawlh Tlang, Maudang, Dikhaw hmun and Kanghmun. During a war between the Mizo and the British, known as ‘Vailen lai’ by the Mizos, Rothangpuia clearly knew the importance of keeping Mizoram safely and to kept the honours and dignity of the Mizo chiefs, he clearly saw the need and importance of signing an agreement with the British. In October 1866, representing all the chiefs of the eastern part of Mizoram, made an agreement ‘sa ui tan’ with the British in which “the British enemies will be their enemies and their enemies will be the enemies of the British”. The British were also able to take back Mary Winchester (Zoluti) from the Mizo Chief, Bengkhuaia captivity peacefully with the help of this agreement. Rothangpuia, with all his peace wanting personality, his greatness and for all his great works, was very much liked by Lt. Col. Tom Lewin Herbert, Superintendent of the Chittagong Hills Tracts. General Brownlow also called him as ‘Friend of the British’. His memorial erection was also placed on the side of Thangliena memorial erection on the courtyard of IB.



Fig 15: Rothangpuia Memorial Monument

**Thangliena Memorial Erection (N22.905909, E92.470581)**

T.H Lewin, also known as Thangliena by the Mizos, was the one who brought different changes and development in Tlabung. He was sent by the British Government to subdue the Mizo chiefs and to rescue Mary Winchester but instead became friends with the locals and even founded Tlabung town on 9th November, 1872. He was called and known as the First white man the Mizos had as a friend. Although Thangliena did not stay for a long time at Tlabung, he had accomplished and brought lots of changes for the people. He established the first ever Inspection Bungalow (IB) in Mizoram; brought development in the field of education; built the first ever hospital in Mizoram. His good works were still remembered and cherished by the people as he was the pioneer for Tlabung creation and its early development. In memory of T.H Lewin a monumental erection was placed on the side of the courtyard of the inspection Bungalow which he built. On this erection relief inscription style was used and the following words are what had inscribed on the erection:

IN MEMORY OF  
LT COLONEL TOM-HERBERT LEWIN B.S.C.  
ONCE SUPERINTENDENT OF THESE HILL TRACTS  
BORN 1839. DIED 1916.  
HE CAME TO THIS PEOPLE IN 1865 & WORKED AMONG THEM & FOR  
THEM FOR NINE YEARS. WHEN LOSS OF HEALTH COMPELLED HIM  
TO RETURN TO ENGLAND  
THE PEOPLE TRUSTED & LOVED HIM FOR HIS SYMPATHY & SENSE  
OF JUSTICE. FOR HIS UNTIRING INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE  
& FOR HIS INTERPID & DAUNTLESS COURAGE.  
HE TRAVELLED IN THEIR UNKNOWN LAND, VISITING THEIR CHIEFS  
THEIR VILLAGES & THEIR HOMES. ALONE & UNAFRAID.  
HE WAS THE FIRST THE FIRST TO INTERPRET & WRITE DOWN THEIR  
LANGUAGE. PREPARING THE WAY FOR SCHOOLS & PROGRESS.  
HE STUDIED & IMPROVED THEIR AGRICULTURE & THEIR LAWS  
& HELPED THEM IN ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES.  
THE PEOPLE KNEW HIM AS THAGLIENA. TOM LEWIN.  
& HONOURED HIM AS A CHIEF.  
THEY CALLED HIM THE LUSHAIS FIRST WHITE  
FRIEND.  
THEY BUILT A HOUSE FOR HIM VOLUNTARY IN TOKEN OF  
THEIR DEVOTION.  
THEIR CHILDREN NOW AVE VOLUNTARILY BROUGHT STONES  
HERE. NEAR WHERE HIS HOUSE ONCE, STOOD & HAVE  
HELPED THE ONE WHO KNEW HIM BEST OF ALL &  
WHO KNEW HOW HIS HEART WAS EVER WITH THIS  
PEOPLE TO BUILD UP THE STONES TO THE MEMORY OF  
THANGLIENA





Fig 16: Thangliana Memorial Monument.

### **Post Office (N22.906304, E92.46711)**

Post office, governmental building and located at Bazar Veng, Tlabung, was built in the year 1872 during the colonial period. This post and telegram office is still existed even today. The materials, which were used during the time of its construction like seal, ink pad, a box made of iron called safe lock, are still available. The post office does not go through much changes, most of the parts are still from the colonial period.



Fig 17



Fig 18



Fig 19



Fig 20



Fig 21



Fig 22



Fig 23

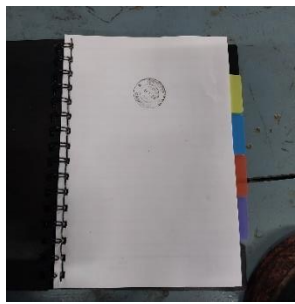


Fig 24



Fig 25



Fig 26



Fig 27

Fig 17-27: Post Office





**Leprosy Hospital** (N22.904672, E92.474284)

Leprosy Hospital located in Chanmari, Tlabung is the first and only hospital in Mizoram state build to aid people with the sickness of a disease called Hansen's disease (leprosy). It was established in the year 1978 and it was the work of the British considered to be the work of T.H Lewin. This leprosy hospital it's management and building are under the care of the Heritage Committee, Tlabung Branch YMA. Patients disowned by their family due to the disease were also allowed to live here even after recovery. One recovered patient is currently living in this hospital and was under the care of a retired nurse Mrs. Khuangkungi.



Fig 33



Fig 34



Fig 35



Fig 36

**Thangliana Mual** (N22.907718, E92.465984)

Thangliana Mual (Tlabung Field) is located at Zawlpui Veng. Thangliana Mual was used by the British troops who came to Tlabung under the command of Charles Henry to rescue Mary Winchester and to subdue the Mizo chiefs. The troops were led by Brownlow and T.H Lewin with 150 numbers in total. They used this field to camp and build barracks too. Thangliana Mual is still existed today and is used by the locals for different purposes like games and sport and also used to store teak logs.



Fig 37



Fig 38

### **Police Station (N22.907427, E92.467312)**

Tlabung Police Station stand as an Outpost in the year 1872 under T.H. Lewin and was later turned into a full working Thana in 1889. It was renovated by the Art and Culture Department and the old Police Station was under the care of the Heritage Committee Tlabung Branch YMA. The new Police Station building was built right next to the old one and also located in Tlabung, Thana Veng. The Police Station is the very first Police Station that ever existed in Mizoram.



Fig 39



Fig 40



Fig 41



Fig 42

### **Tlabung Bazar** (N22.90709, E92.466108)

Tlabung Bazar, located at Bazar Veng, had a long history dated back to the times of colonial period. T.H Lewin, during his times in Tlabung started the marketing system a much more developed marketing system like establishing new building. He even contributed 3,000 rupees for the construction of Tlabung Bazar. Barter system was commonly used. A new building was built and a sketch by Lt. Col. H.W.G which was made and published in the year 17th May, 1890 by the Graphic, London. This sketch is hung on the wall of the new building (bazar building) and it depicts how the old bazar used to be and some words were also written along with the sketch which tells the history of how the Lushais came here to bargain with the Burmese shopkeepers. The Lushais generally brings cotton, spices, cloths, etc., which they barter for iron, salt and other European made stuffs. The creation of Tlabung Bazar and its building rested on the hands of T.H Lewin. Retailing shop and wholesaling shop were mostly run by the Bengali. These small shops were located near the bazar building. Within the building the lowest part and the rest are used to sell clothes. Some of the Bengali shopkeepers had a long history and some of their shops were opened during the creation of Bazar and was passed down to family members.





Fig 43



Fig 44

### **W.B. Oldham Inscription (N22.91459, E92.47052):**

W.B. Oldham was a British Chittagong Divisional Commissioner. W.B. Oldham Inscription is made to mark the work of W.B. Oldham – construction of the roads leading from Tlabung to Pachang. In order to preserve the inscription, it was covered with a small sized wall, and small gate was opened on the front and it also had its own roof. This inscription was carved on the surface of a rock and also located near Vantaikhawr and still exist today.



Fig 45



Fig 46

### **Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung (N22.907677, E22.907677)**

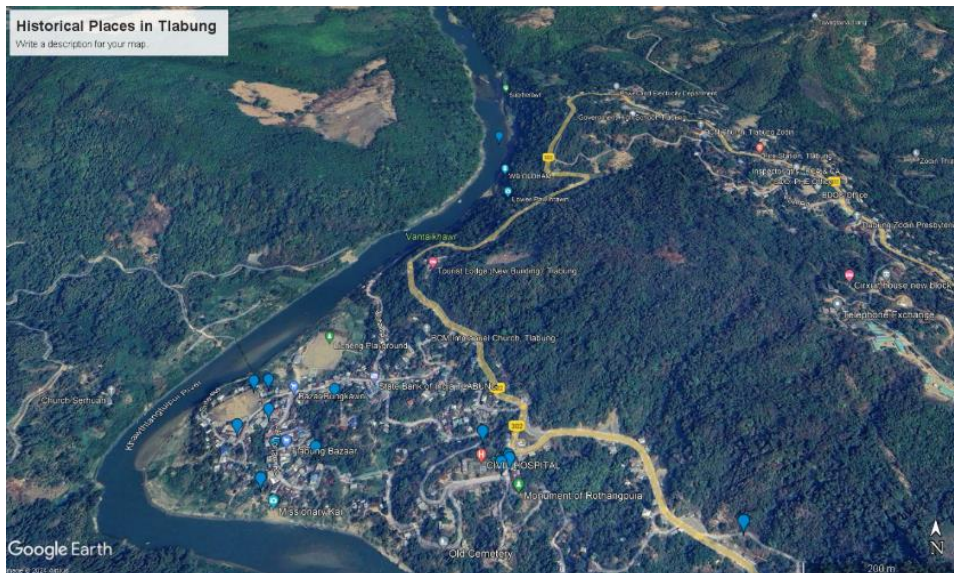
Baptist Church of Mizoram (Tlabung) was started by M. Suaka, Lalduha, Suakthangpuii (wife of Lalduha) and Pi Puii. M. Suaka was the chief of Durtlang

## *Colonial History through Material Culture: Heritage Walk at Tlabung*

and during his visit Tlabung, along with his three friends, they established Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung on 9th March, 1911. Tragically, Pi Pui died due to leprosy disease. The Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung was the first ever church to build in Tlabung.



Fig 47: Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung.



Map 1: Historical places in Tlabung

### **Places visited apart from Tlabung**

Other places like Kawrpuichhuah, Bangladesh and LZM English Medium School, Tlabung were visited apart from Tlabung town, which helped in the understanding and the gaining of more knowledge.

**Kawrpuichhuah:** Kawrpuichhuah is located only a few miles away from Tlabung. It is a borderline sharing its border with Bangladesh. The village is mostly occupied by the Chakmas. Mizos are rarely, maybe not at all seen residing here.

**Thekaduar, Bangladesh:** Along with Kawrpuichhuah, Bangladesh border and its inhabitants and the shops owned by the locals were also visited through the water-ways using boat as a means of transportation. It was also commonly used by the local people from Tlabung as a means of conducting businesses with the locals. Teaks were exported and sold on the other side of Kawrpuichhuah, i.e., Bangladesh border side. The residents of Bangladesh border owned different shops and sold different items like toys, clothes, pots and other things with a cheaper price.



Fig 48: Bangladesh Bazar.



**LZM English Medium School:** LZM English Medium School was established in the year 2000 fro, KG to Class 8. It is one of the places that got visited by the students of history on 17th January, 2024. Majority of the students are Mizos.



Fig 49: LZM English Medium School.

### **Remark**

The journey took by B.A VI semester History Department to Tlabung with the aims of studying Tlabung History, a history that covers a period of colonization was a successful one and a vast amount of knowledge of Tlabung history was obtained and gained by the students of history. More knowledge was also gained from other places visited. Tlabung and its inhabitants are friendly and interesting.

## **Acknowledgement**

By the grace of God and through His guidance the field study was a successfully concluded on 19th January, 2024. We would like to honour the Principal, Vuansanga Vanchhawng for granting a permission to have a field study on Tlabung and also making the field study programme possible to take place in the first place through a financial support. We would also like to give thanks to the two drivers - Lalruatfela Punte and Remnalalnunsiam. We also give a heartfelt gratitude to our fellow classmates Lalruatdiki Lianhna and her family for helping us and aiding us when we need help and also for providing us an evening meal before going back. We would also like to give thanks to C. Vanlawma who rent us a place to stay during our times in Tlabung. We also have an interaction with Tlabung Village Council President, Hmingthansanga Ralte, who acts as a resource person for us and B. Lalruatthanga, Tlabung Y.M.A President, we would also want to give thanks to these two for providing us an information on Tlabung history. Upa T. Lalzara also helped by providing a valuable information on Tlabung history which give us a better understanding on our studies. I would also like to give my heartfelt gratitude and thanks to my fellow classmates for their cooperation and for sharing their knowledge and sources with me.

## A REPORT ON TLABUNG HISTORICAL PLACES

**Introduction:** Colonialism is a policy where one country seeks to extend political or economic authority over the people and physical territory of another country. Generally, economic dominance and exploitation of resources are the primary aims of a country indulging in colonialism.

Mizoram is one of the states in Northeast India. The people in the state are called Mizo. The settlement of the Mizo tribes, in the earlier periods, seems to be based on clans, which means each clan lived in their own village. The chieftainship with a particular chief's clan was not practice during this time. The British occupy the Lushai Hills in the early 1890's. During that, time people in the Lushai Hills were still primitive and backward. In the pre-British period, the cultures and traditions of the Mizo had its own unique features. Their cultures and traditions had its own beauty and distinctiveness, and they were only sometimes mixed with the outside world. Before the annexation of Mizoram by the British, in the late 19th century, each village was an independent unit of administration, under a chief called "Lal" who played the role of a dictator. A Chief's power was measured by the number of his followers. They were the executive authority and the dispenser of justice.

The department of History, Higher and Technical Education Institute Mizoram (HATIM) organized a field study in Tlabung from 16th to 19th January 2024 for the 6th-semester students. The main aim was to learn and study the history of Tlabung.



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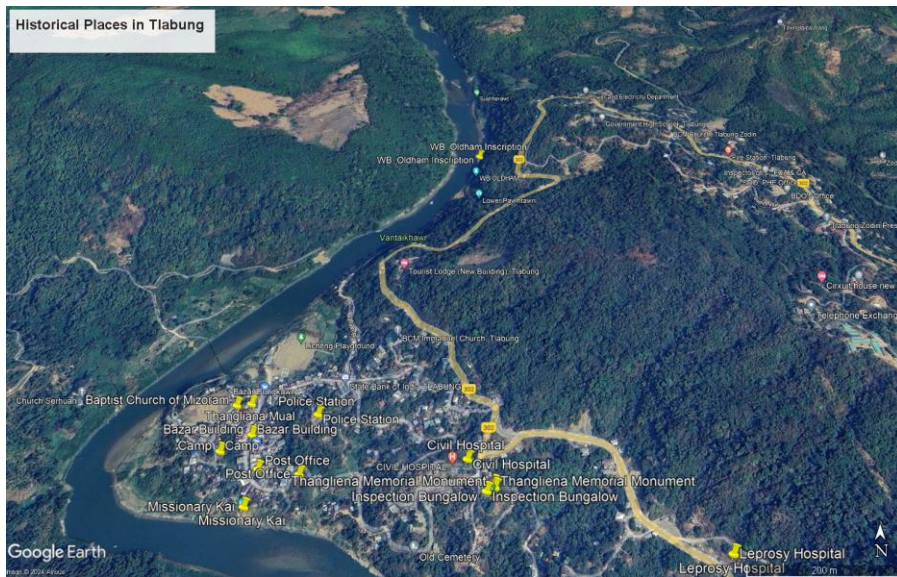


Fig 1: Onward to Tlabung

### **Present day Society**

Tlabung is located in Lunglei district near the border of Bangladesh. There are many other tribes like Chakma, Bengali, Pang and even Bawn. There are different kinds of churches: Presbyterian, Salvation Army, Isua Krista Kohhran (IKK), Evangelical Free Church of India (EFCI), United Pentecostal Church of India (UPC), and United Pentecostal Church of North East. There are even Hindus and Muslims. The people in Tlabung domesticate animals like dogs, cats, pigs, cows and goats.

**Field Study Report:** Tlabung was also known by the name after Vantaikhawr Falls. Below is a map of various places in Tlabung.



Map 1

### **Missionary Kai**

Missionary Kai (N22.905747, E92.466222) Bazar Veng is the place where the British missionaries Rev. F.W. Savidge (Sap Upa) and Rev. J.H Lorrain (Pu Buanga) came to Mizoram using boat. It is still an important religious place. Near the Missionary Kai, there is a prayer house for Mizoram Thalai Kristian Pawl.



Fig 2: Missionary Kai



Fig 3: Tlabung River



Fig 4: Prayer House

## Civil Hospital

Civil Hospital (N22.906374, E92.470115) was established by Thangliana in 1872 and since then it has become the first hospital of Mizoram. It is located in Vengchhak. The building was reconstructed in the year 1980.



Fig 5: Civil Hospital Tlabung



Fig 6 : Notice Board

## Inspection Bangalow

Inspection Bangalow (N22.905836, E92.470437) is the first Inspection Bangalow (I.B) in Mizoram. It is located in Vengchhak and was established in 1871 by the British. Near the Inspection Bangalow there are two memorial erections of T.H Lewin and RothangpuiaThangluah.



Fig 7: Monument (left)

Fig 8: Inspection Bungalow Building (middle)

Fig 9: I.B Building Back Side (right)



## **Leprosy Hospital**

Leprosy Hospital (N22.904672, E92.474284) is the first and only Leprosy hospital in Mizoram. It is located in Chandmari and was established in 1978 by the British. In the Leprosy Hospital, there was a healed patient who was abandoned by his family, yet he still lives in the Leprosy Hospital.



Fig 10: Leprosy Hospital Sign Board



Fig 11: Leprosy Hospital Building

## **Post Office**

Post Office (N22.907427, E92.467312) is the first post office in Mizoram. It is located in Bazar Veng and was established in 1872 by the British. Some materials used by the British are still present. This post office used to be known as “Post Office and Telegraph Office.”



Fig 12: Post Office Building



Fig 13: Stamp and Old Calendar



Fig 14: Mail Box

## **Hari Mandir**

Hari Mandir (N22.906408, E92.466352) Tlabung is the first Hindu Temple in Mizoram, it is located in Bazar Veng which was established in 1896. This temple of lord Krishna was established with great enthusiasm and integrity by its founder (L) Lokhindar Chowdhury and (L) Nanda Kumar Chowdhury. Originally the personal property of their family, eventually it was handed over to Hindu Community of Tlabung is now run by Sarbojanin Hari Mandir committee Tlabung.



Fig 15: Hari Mandir



Fig 16: Notice Board



Fig 17



Fig 18



Fig 19



Fig 20

Fig 17 - Fig 20: Idols inside Mandir

## Police Station

Police Station (Thana) (N22.907427, E92.467312) Tlabung is the first police station in Mizoram, it was established in 1872 and located in Thana Veng.



Fig 21: Police Station



Fig 22: Old Police Station



Fig 23: Plaque

## Baptist Church of Mizoram

Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM) (N22.907677, E92.465714) was the first church building in Mizoram. It is located in Bazar Veng and was established in 1911. This church has around 525 members, along with ten Upa and eight Rawngbawltu. BCM was constructed by M. Suaka, Lalduha, Suakthangpuii and Pi Puii.





Fig 24: BCM Biak In



Fig 25: Monument

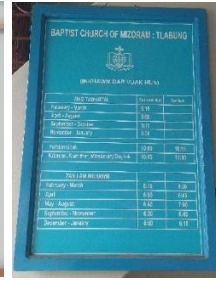


Fig 26: Notice Board

## ThanglianaMual

ThanglianaMual (N22.907718, E92.465984) is located in Zawlpui Veng, Tlabung was established on November 9th, 1871. This field was originally used as a military base. Nowadays, it has been transformed into a playground and is also utilized for the purpose of storing teak logs.



Fig 27: ThanglianaMual



Fig 28: Wooden Log

## W.B Oldham Inscription

W.B. Oldham (N22.91459, E92.47052) served as the Commissioner of the Chittagong Division. Due to the previous flooding, sands was deposited inside

the protective structure, which needed to be cleansed before documentation could proceed.



Fig 29

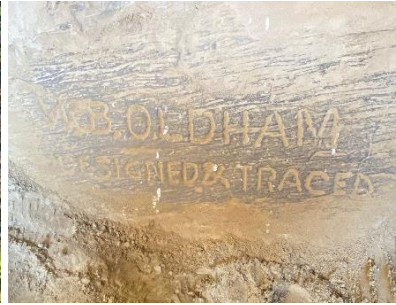


Fig 30

Fig 29 & Fig 30: W.B. Oldham Inscription

### **Bazar Building**

The Bazar Building, located in Bazar Veng at coordinates N22.90709, E92.466108, was primarily the shops were owned by Chakma and Bengali. T.H Lewin initiated the establishment of this bazar, contributing 3000 rupees towards its construction. Additionally, on front of the Bazar building, there was a sketch made by Lt. Colonel H.W.G.



Fig 31: Bazar Sketch

**Thangliana Memorial Monument (N22.905909, E92.470581)**

Thomas Herbert Lewin was one of the first Englishmen to set foot in Mizoram in 1865. He assisted the Mizo chief and eventually married a Mizo woman named Dari.



Fig 31: Thangliana Monument

**Rothangpuia Memorial Monument (N22.905958, E92.470568)**

Rothangpuia (1820-1876) was known as the chief of Khawthlang. He was also acknowledged as a friend of the British. During his reign, an agreement forged between the British and the Mizo ruler.





Fig 32: Rothangpui Memorial Monument

### Remarks

The field study proved to be successful, and we feel exceedingly fortunate to have had the opportunity to embark on such a refreshing and enlightening journey. It was a beneficial experience for all participants, as we gained valuable insights and knowledge. The warm hospitality extended to us by the people of Tlabung was truly remarkable. This field study significantly enriched our understanding and broadened our horizons.

## **Acknowledgement**

We would like to thank to our esteemed principal, Mr. Vuansanga Vanchhawng for permitting us to conduct a field study in Tlabung. We are also thankful to C. Vanlawma for providing us with accommodations during our stay. Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the local community, as well as Y.M.A Assistant Secretary B. Lalhuthang and Vice V.C Hmingthansanga Ralte, for generously sharing their knowledge of Tlabung's history with us. In addition, we extend our thanks to Lianzuala Lianhna and his family for their warm hospitality since our arrival.

We are grateful to Tlabung Y.M.A for lending us dekchi, cups, and a gas stove. Lastly, we wish to thank the people of Tlabung for their invaluable guidance and enlightenment, which have truly enriched our field study and experience and made it more memorable.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our parents for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout this journey. Additionally, we express our gratitude to the Almighty God for his blessings and guidance, which have enabled us to undertake this enriching field study experience.

## **HERITAGE WALK AT TLABUNG, LUNGLEI, MIZORAM**

From 16th – 19th January, 2024(Tuesday) eleven students along with one Asst. professor of the Department of History went on a field study to Tlabung located at Lunglei District, Mizoram. The aim was to study and learn the history of Tlabung, Lunglei District, Mizoram.



Vanlalhlana  
2123BA073



Fig 1: Onward to Tlabung

Tlabung was founded by TH. Lewin (Thangliena) on 9th November 1871. The first name of Tlabung is 'Demagree or demagiri'. The word dema means 'Tla' and 'Gree' means 'Bung'. Tlabung was named after 'Vantaikhawr' fall, a hilly cliff. There was never any kind of ruler from the beginning and this marks its difference from other localities or areas of habitation in Mizoram.

### **Introduction on Colonialism**

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. The word colonialism derived from the Latin word 'colonia' which means a place for agriculture. The standard definition of colonialism is a policy and practice of a power in extending control over weaker peoples or areas. Historians have classified four different types of colonialism that have



been practised throughout the ages, namely- Settler Colonialism, exploitation colonialism, Surrogate colonialism and Internal colonialism.

The entry of Britishers in Mizoram was only towards the end of British colonial rule in India. Chief Bengkhuaia's incident is one of the main reasons why the missionaries enter Mizoram. When he kidnapped Mary Winchester, the British were enraged and send a troop to save her leading to interaction with the natives. Colonialism had brought many developments and changes in Mizoram. The Christian Missionaries developed alphabets for the native (Mizo) to use as their own. Colonialism brings education and this is one of the most important changes brought by the colonialist. Healthcare and hygienic practice were taught to the Mizos which had a deep impact and positive effects on the Mizos. The Mizos known for their unhealthy lifestyle, known for their bloodthirsty headhunter's custom after colonisation changed their way of life, converting into Christianity.

Tlabung located in the southern part of Mizoram and was established by Britishers who came to Mizoram. Lt.col T.H Lewin with his troops came to Mizoram in the year 1871, with his soldiers camping in what is now known as Thangliana Mual. Thangliana was a name given by the locals and is popularly known by this name currently. To rule and to conquer the natives and their chief is the reason of their arrival but instead befriended the natives and even married a native maiden from Lungchem village known as Dari. They had a child but soon passed away. Tlabung had been mostly occupied by the British and some Bengali and Mizos, under a direct rule of the British and also maintained by the British.

Presently, there are many tribes like Mizo, Chakma, Bengali, Pahari, Pang, and Bawm residing in Tlabung. As such, there are different kinds of religious institutions such as Baptist Church of Mizoram, Baptist Masihi Sangati, Chakma Baptist Church, Presbyterian Church of India, The Salvation Army - Tlabung Corps, Isua Krista Kohhran (IKK), Evangelical Free Church of India (EFCI), United Pentecostal Church of Mizoram, United Pentecostal Church of North East India, Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim.

## **Heritage report**

### **Missionary Kai (N22.905747, E92.470115)**

Missionary Kai is the first place where the British Missionary set foot in the southern part of Mizoram. It is located in Bazar Veng, Tlabung. The two missionaries who came to Tlabung was Rev. F.W. Savidge also known as ‘Sap Upa’ and Rev. J.H. Lorrain also known as ‘Pu Buanga’. They were sent by Arthington Aborigines Mission. They preached gospel for four years and left Mizoram in December 31st 1897. On March 18, 1903, they were sent by Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) setting foot at Tlabung and moved eastward where they then settle at Serkawn, Lunglei.



Fig 2



Fig 3

### **Inspection Bungalow (N22.905836, E92.466222)**

The first Inspection Bungalow in Mizoram located in Tlabung, Lunglei District was brought into existence 145 years ago by the founder of Tlabung, Tom Herbert Lewin and his men in 1871. For construction of the said building they use different kinds of materials like thatch, cement, corrugated iron sheet, wood, and the mansion was built on levitated floor. There are two Memorial erections within the compound - Rothangpuia Memorial Monument and Thangliana Memorial Monument. The Heritage Committee under Tlabung Branch YMA looks after this place.



Fig 4



Fig 5

Fig 4 & 5: Inspection Bungalow

### **Rothangpuia Memorial Erection** (N22.905958, E92.470568)

Rothangpuia Thangluah (1820 – 1876) was the chief of Khawthlang. Lt. Colonel Thomas Herbert was fond of him owing to his great personality, peace and astute vision. He was also called friend of the British by General Brownlow. During his reign the British and the Mizo's ruler made an agreement on October 1866. A term in their agreement reads as-

“British Hmelma chu an hmelma a ni a nga,  
An hmelma chu British hmelma ani ang.”



Fig 6: Rothangpuia Memorial Monument

### **Thangliena Memorial Monument (N22.905909, E92.470581)**

Thomas Herbert Lewin was one of the first Englishmen to set foot on Mizoram during the British rule. He arrived from the southern part of Mizoram at Tlabung in 1865. The Mizo's named him as Thangliena. His memorial reads as

-

IN MEMORY OF  
LT COLONEL TOM-HERBERT LEWIN B.S.C.  
ONCE SUPERINTENDENT OF THESE HILL TRACTS  
BORN 1839. DIED 1916.  
HE CAME TO THIS PEOPLE IN 1865 & WORKED AMONG THEM & FOR  
THEM FOR NINE YEARS. WHEN LOSS OF HEALTH COMPELLED HIM  
TO RETURN TO ENGLAND  
THE PEOPLE TRUSTED & LOVED HIM FOR HIS SYMPATHY & SENSE  
OF JUSTICE. FOR HIS UNTIRING INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE  
& FOR HIS INTERPID & DAUNTLESS COURAGE.  
HE TRAVELLED IN THEIR UNKOWN LAND, VISITING THEIR CHIEFS  
THEIR VILLAGES & THEIR HOMES. ALONE & UNAFRAID.  
HE WAS THE FIRST THE FIRST TO INTERPET & WRITE DOWN THEIR  
LANGUAGE. PREPAIRING THE WAY FOR SCHOOLS & PROGRESS.  
HE STUDIED & IMPROVED THEIR AGRICULTURE & THEIR LAWS  
& HELPED THEM IN ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES.  
THE PEOPLE KNEW HIM AS THANGLIENA. TOM LEWIN.  
& HONOURED HIM AS A CHIEF.  
THEY CALLED HIM THE LUSHAIS FIRST WHITE  
FRIEND.  
THEY BUILT A HOUSE FOR HIM VOLUNTARY IN TOKEN OF  
THER DEVOTION.  
THEIR CHILDREN NOW AVE VOLUNTARILY BROUGHT STONES  
HERE. NEAR WHERE HIS HOUSE ONCE, STOOD & HAVE  
HELPED THE ONE WHO KNEW HIM BEST OF ALL &  
WHO KNEW HOW HIS HEART WAS EVER WITH THIS  
PEOPLE TO BUILD UP THE STONES TO THE MEMORY OF  
THANGLIENA

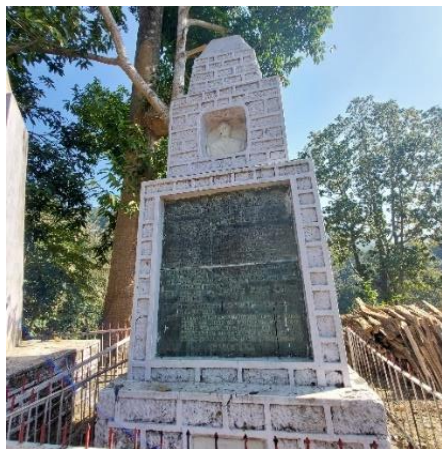


Fig 7: Thangliena Memorial Monument



**Hari Mandir** (N22.906408, E92.466352)

The first Hindu temple in Mizoram was also located in Bazar Veng, Tlabung which was established on 1896. This temple of lord Krishna was established with great enthusiasm and integrity by its founder Lokhindar Chowdhury (L) and Nanda Kumar Chowdhury (L). Earlier it was the personal property of their family, eventually it was handed over to Hindu community of Tlabung, and it is now run by Sarbojanin Hari Mandir Committee Tlabung. Their four gods were kept inside the temple namely – Shiva Linga, Loka wife of Kartik, Shani Dev and Lord Krishna. There are about 400 members in this community.



Fig 8: Entrance of Mandir    Fig 9: Shani Dev    Fig 10: Loka (wife of Kartik)



Fig 11: Shiva Linga



Fig 12: Lord Krishna

**Civil Hospital** (N22.906374, E92.470115)

The first hospital in Mizoram was established at Tlabung Vengchhak in 1872 by Lt. Colonel T.H. Lewin. This hospital was a victim of Tlabung fire that broke out in 1984 and most of the important documents were burnt along with the building. Some portions of the old building are still standing while other sections have been renovated.



Fig13



Fig14

Fig 13 & 14: Civil Hospital Tlabung

**The Leprosy Hospital** (N22.904672, E92.474284)

The first and only leprosy Hospital in Mizoram is located at Tlabung Chanmari and was established in the year 1978. Presently, there is only one recovered patient living in the hospital. A retired nurse takes care of him and provide food as well. Even though the patient is healed his family don't want his return, and will continue to stay there for the rest of his life. The Hospital is maintained by Sub-Divisional Hospital, Tlabung, Lunglei Mizoram.

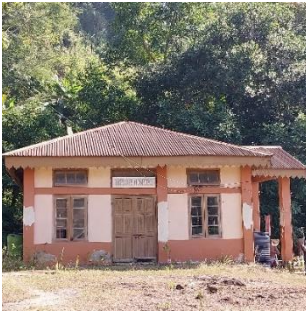


Fig 15



Fig 16



Fig 17

Fig 15, 16, 17: Leprosy Hospital

### **Post Office (N22.906304, E92.46711)**

The first Post Office of Mizoram was established by the British in 1872. The post office used to be known as “Post and Telegraph Office”. The post office was built using woods, cement, brick, corrugated iron sheet. There is some postal material used by the British that are left behind like stamp, ink pad, calendar, and there are five employees as of today. These building per se are not an architectural masterpiece but it is an important heritage asset that contribute to the character and history of Mizoram.



Fig 18



Fig 19



Fig 20



Fig 21



Fig 22



Fig 23



Fig 24

Fig 18 – 24: Post Office

### **Police Station** (N22.907427, E92.467312)

The first Police Station in Mizoram located in Tlabung was constructed by the British and established in the year 1889. The station is located on the hill top approachable by an up-hill road from the center of Tlabung.





Fig 25



Fig 26



Fig 27



Fig 28

**Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung** (N22.907677, E92.465714)

BCM Tlabung was the first church building located in Zawlpui Veng, established on 9th March 1911. The founders of this church were M. Suaka (Durtlang Lal), Lalduha, Suakthangpuii and Pi. Puii. Presently, this church has 525 members with ten Upa and eight Rawngbawltu.



Fig 29: Baptist Church of Mizoram

**W.B. Oldham Inscription (N22.91459, E92.47052)**

W.B. Oldham was a Chittagong Divisional Commissioner. W.B. Oldham inscription is located in Vantaikhawr. He is known for building a road from Tlabung to Pachang. Due to the previous flooding, sands have been deposited inside the protective structure which had to be cleansed first before documentation.



Fig 30



Fig 31

**Thangliana Mual** (22.907718, E92.465984)

Thangliana Mual was established in Zawlpui Veng Tlabung on 9th November 1871. This field is also known as Lewin's playground. In the past, the field was used as a military base and later on it turned into a playground. Presently, it is used for the purpose of stocking teak logs.



Fig 32



Fig 33

Fig 32 & 33: Thangliana Mual

**Bazar Building** (22.90709, E92.466108)

Tlabung bazar was established by TH. Lewin in Bazar Veng while he stayed in Tlabung. The market is held on every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. There are many stores that sell many kinds of things like vegetables, fruits and jewellery. Most of the shopkeepers were Bengali, Chakma.



On 9<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2021, The Bazaar At Tlahoung, Celebrating Sesquicentennial Presents

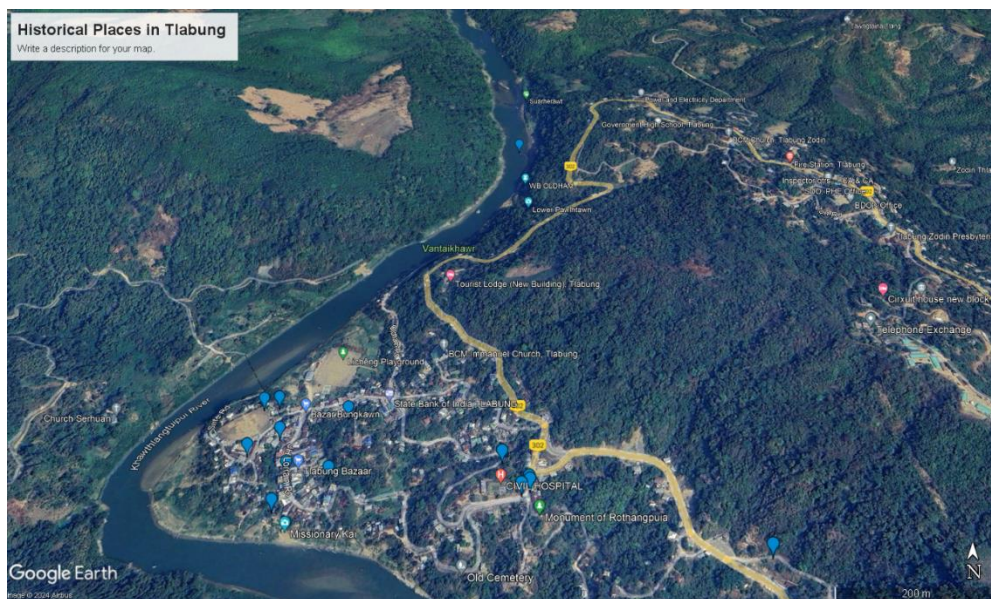
**THE BAZAAR AT DEMAGIRI**

LE. Col. H. W. G. Cole's sketch published by The Graphic, London, 17<sup>th</sup> May, 1890

150  
YEARS  
1840-2021

LE. Col. W. G. Cole's (Last Sketch of Jorhat India) - My first sketch represents the bazaar at Demagiri, where the British and for all we know have a bazaar every week with the Japanese also known. The picture is being arranged to show the British and for all we know have a bazaar every week with the Japanese also known.

Fig 34 & 35: Bazar Tlabung



Map 1: Tlabung historical locations



### **Other area visited**

**LZM English Medium School:** LZM English Medium School was established in the year 2000 and was visited by the Department of History, HATIM on 17th January, 2024. From Kindergarten to Eight Standard, most of the students are Mizo.



Fig 36: LZM English Medium School Tlabung

**Kawrpuchhuah:** A place located only a few miles away from Tlabung along the borderline with Bangladesh is Kawrpuchhuah, a village mostly occupied by the Chakmas.

**Thekaduar (Bangladesh):** Located on the opposite side of Kawrpuchhuah, Thekaduar in Bangladesh was visited by locally made small engine boat. It is commonly used by the locals even from Tlabung community as a means of conducting businesses. Teaks were exported and sold to Bangladesh. The

residents of Thekaduar owned different shops and sells toys, clothes, pots and other things at a much cheaper price.



Fig 37: Thekaduar, Bangladesh

### **Remarks**

The Department of History students and faculty went to Tlabung for field study, to study for the historical materials and the first things that are established in Mizoram like Hospital, Post Office, Police Station, Inspection Bungalow, etc. The people have shown hospitality and welcomed, providing needs and requirements.

## **Acknowledgement**

First of all, by the grace of God we are able to have field study. We are very grateful to our Principal, Mr. Vuansanga Vanchhawng for granting us permission and supporting us financially. We would also like to give thanks to our two drivers, Mr. Lalruatfela Punte and Mr. Remnalalnunsiamia who drove us to Tlabung safely and another two drivers Mr. Lalnunsiamia and Mr. Lalramtiamia who drove us back to Lunglei. To our fellow classmates Lalruatdiki Lianhna and her family for helping us and aiding us when we need help and also for providing us dinner before going back. We would also like to give thanks to Mr. C. Vanlawma who rent us a place to stay during our times in Tlabung. We also have an interaction with Tlabung Village Council President Hmingthansanga Ralte, who was our resource person and B. Lalhuthanga, Tlabung Y.M.A President. We would also want to give thanks to them for providing us an information on Tlabung history. Besides them, Upa T.Lalzara also helped us and provided us valuable information on Tlabung history and helped us to have a better understanding. I would like to give thanks to my fellow classmates for their cooperation and for sharing their knowledge and sources with me.

## **A REPORT ON ‘KNOW YOUR HISTORY’ – COLONIAL HISTORY THROUGH MATERIAL CULTURE: HERITAGE WALK AT TLABUNG**



### **Introduction**

Colonialism is defined as ‘a control by one power over a dependent area or people. It occurs when one nation subjugates another, conquering its population and exploiting it, often while forcing its own language and cultural values upon its people.

The British occupy the Lushai Hills in the early 1890s. During the time people in the Lushai Hills were still primitive and backward. In the pre-British period, the cultures and traditions of the Mizo had its own unique features. Their cultures and traditions had its own beauty and distinctiveness and also, they were hardly mixed with the outside World. After the advent of the British many cultural traditions and practices were changed. It can be said that many cultural and social practices of the Mizo faced a threat because of the colonial influence.

With colonial encounter the Lushai Hills experienced a gradual socio-cultural transformation, from primitive lifestyle to a more sophisticate and modern lifestyle. Actually, it was the work of the missionaries that brought changes among the Mizo. The society, culture, religion, politics, traditions, customs and standard of living took a great leap towards modernization because of the efforts of the missionaries. The pioneer missionaries introduced not only a more advanced and sophisticated lifestyle, but they also promoted education among the Mizo. The history of education among the Mizo started in 1894 with the efforts of two Christian Missionaries—Rev. F.W. Savidge and Rev. J.H. Lorrain. The Mizo had no written form of language before the arrival of the missionaries and they had only oral communication.



### **Changes in religious beliefs and practices**

In the early Mizo society omen, superstition and blind faith was common. The early Mizo believed in the existence of Pathian (God) in the form of Sakhua. Sakhua is a combination of two words Sa and Khua. Therefore, Sakhua simply refers to a form of Supreme Being who had control over nature and the humanity in the traditional Mizo society. Sacrifices to Sa was made with pigs and sacrifices to Khua was done with gayal. These sacrifices can be performed only by Sadawt (Priest). It is important to know that these sacrifices were made to please the creator so that they could excel in agriculture throughout the year and also for good fortune.

### **Political changes**

In the traditional Mizo society, village chiefs and the Zawlbuk occupy a central figure. The system of chieftainship and Zawlbuk was the main administrative institutions in the traditional Mizo society. However, the system of chieftainship was abolished in 1954 and the village administration among the Mizo vested upon the village council. The chief was a generous ruler and did a lot of good work for his people. Hardly, no one died of starvation during their reign and the chief had his main concern for his people. But there was no unity between different chiefs and village raids were still very popular.

From 16th to 19th January 2024 the department of history went to Tlabung on a field study along with one Asst. Professor. The students of History Department were 13 and out of 13 two were unable to attend the field study due to family problem. The main aim of the field study is to learn the Colonial History through Material Culture of Tlabung, Lunglei District.

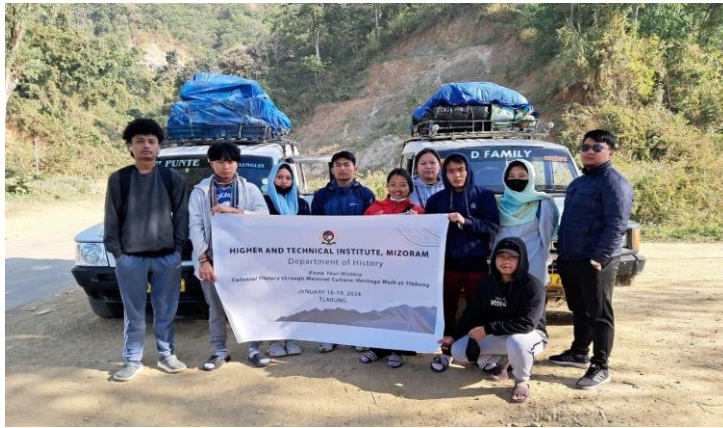


Fig 1: Onward to Tlabung

### **Present day society of Tlabung**

Tlabung, formally known as Demagree, is located in Lunglei district and Tlabung is a semi urban town. Unlike, other chieftdom areas Tlabung did not have any historical chief. This town was established in 1871 when T.H Lewin was sent to this place by General Charles Brown Low. Lewin came to this place on 1865 with 150 troops. They cleared the forest for setting up the Military camp at the place now called Thangliana mual. There are thirteen (13) neighborhoods in Tlabung namely- Chawnpui veng, Saron veng, Arthai veng, Zodin, Electric veng, Venglai, Vengchhak, Zawlpui veng, Venghlun (it was also known as Metor ) Bawngveng, Chanmary, Bazar veng, Vantaikhawr veng . There are two Banks, State Bank of India and Mizoram Rural Bank and also one SBI ATM booth both of which are in Bazar veng. For emergency there is Hospital and Police Station are available. There are also important Offices like,vPost Office(Bazar veng), DC (Zodin veng), Forest department(Zawlpui veng),PWD Department and PHE Department located in Zodin veng . They have one Petrol Pump and it is located in Chanmary and also prepared an electric charger for electric vehicl . They have two field Thanglian Mual and Licheng field. There is one helipad as well and it was also renovated now and the BSF are living around there.

Based on Job-card report there are 1400-1500 houses. There are nine churches among whom the most popular ones being Baptist Church of Mizoram and IKK (Isua Krista Kohhran). Their most domesticated animals were pig, hen, goat, dog, duck, cow, cat and monkey. They also earn their living by catching fish which were sold in the market.

## Heritage report

Tlabung was established in 9th November, 1871 by T.H. Lewin. Also known as Demagree, Tlabung is the place where the British set their foot in Mizoram. The British established various buildings some of which are visible. Below is a map of various places in Tlabung.



Map 1

## Missionary Kai

Missionary kai (N22.905747, E92.466222) is the place where the British missionary set their foot in Mizoram on 8th March 1803. The British missionary came by boat. The first two Missionaries who came to Mizoram were JH. LORRAIN and FW. SAVIDGE. They were sent by the Baptist Missionary

Society, London (BMS). Missionary Kai is located in Bazar veng and it is considered an important location for the Mizos because it is the place where the Christians enter Mizoram. They build a prayer house near this to mark this event.



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4

## Civil Hospital

Civil Hospital (N22.906374, E92.470115) is the first hospital in Mizoram which is located in Vengchhak and it was established in 1872 by L.T. Col. T.H. Lewin. Base on the inhabitants, the hospital is located in the downhill side of the current location. The original building was unfortunately burned down in 1984, the important file was burn along with the building.



Fig 5



Fig 6



Fig 7



## **Post Office**

This is the first Post Office (N22.906304, E92.46711) in Mizoram and it was earlier known as Post and Telegram Office, established by the British when they enter Mizoram in the year 1872. There are still some historical treasures like stamps, scissors, safe box and calendar. During their period social media was not invented and the letter was their main mode of contact with other villages.



Fig 8



Fig 9



Fig 10

## **Inspection Bungalow**

Inspection Bungalow (N22.905836, E92.470437) was established in 1871 by the British and it was located in Vengchhak. The building was made by thatch bamboo, wood, cement, and corrugated iron sheet. In the yard of this building there are two Memorial Monument namely: Thangliena Memorial Monument and Rothangpuia Memorial monument. The heritage committee take care of this place.



Fig 11



Fig 12



Fig 13

**Thangliena Memorial Monument:** Thomas Herbert Lewin was one of the very first Englishmen who came to Mizoram. Thangliena Memorial Monument (N22.905909, E92.470581) was located near the Inspection Bungalow it was made up of copper plate, masonry stone and iron fencing. It is the Memorial Monument of Captain T.H. Lewin the first English who came to Mizoram. They call him the Lushai's first white friend.



Fig 14: Thangliena Memorial Monument

A memorial stone was made for him and his story were written like this in the inscription:

IN MEMORY OF  
LT COLONEL TOM-HERBERT LEWIN B.S.C.  
ONCE SUPERINTENDENT OF THESE HILL TRACTS  
BORN 1839. DIED 1916.  
HE CAME TO THIS PEOPLE IN 1865 & WORKED AMONG THEM & FOR  
THEM FOR NINE YEARS. WHEN LOSS OF HEALTH COMPELLED HIM  
TO RETURN TO ENGLAND  
THE PEOPLE TRUSTED & LOVED HIM FOR HIS SYMPATHY & SENSE  
OF JUSTICE. FOR HIS UNTIRING INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE  
& FOR HIS INTERPID & DAUNTLESS COURAGE.  
HE TRAVELLED IN THEIR UNKOWN LAND, VISITING THEIR CHIEFS  
THEIR VILLAGES & THEIR HOMES. ALONE & UNAFRAID.  
HE WAS THE FIRST THE FIRST TO INTERPET & WRITE DOWN THEIR  
LANGUAGE. PREPARING THE WAY FOR SCHOOLS & PROGRESS.  
HE STUDIED & IMPROVED THEIR AGRICULTURE & THEIR LAWS  
& HELPED THEM IN ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES.

THE PEOPLE KNEW HIM AS THAGLIENA. TOM LEWIN.  
& HONOURED HIM AS A CHIEF.  
THEY CALLED HIM THE LUSHAIS FIRST WHITE  
FRIEND.  
THEY BUILT A HOUSE FOR HIM VOLUNTARY IN TOKEN OF  
THER DEVOTION.  
THEIR CHILDREN NOW AVE VOLUNTARILY BROUGHT STONES  
HERE. NEAR WHERE HIS HOUSE ONCE, STOOD & HAVE  
HELPED THE ONE WHO KNEW HIM BEST OF ALL&  
WHO KNEW HOW HIS HEART WAS EVER WITH THIS  
PEOPLE TO BUILD UP THE STONES TO THE MEMORY OF  
THANGLIENA.

### **Rothangpuia Memorial Monument**

Rothangpuia Thangluah(1820-1876) (N22.905958, E92.470568) was the chief of Khawthlang. He was even called as a friend of the British by General Brownlow. During the reign of Rothangpuia the British and the Mizo ruler sign an agreement on October 1866.The sign of the agreement ia as follow:

“British hmelma chu an hmelma a ni a nga,  
An hmelma chu British hmelma a ni ang”

“The British enemy was their enemy,  
Their enemy was the British enemy”  
(Translation by: C.Lalremtluanga)



Fig 15: Rothangpuia memorial Monument

### **WB. Oldham Inscription**

W.B. Oldham inscription (N22.905958, E92.47052) was located in vantaikhawr. WB.Oldham was the Chittagong Divisional commissioner. Oldham found himself a way from Tlabung to Pachang. The people appreciated it and it was preserved and conserved under Art & Culture.



Fig 16: W.B. Oldham Inscription

### **Leprosy Hospital**

Leprosy Hospital (N22.904672, E92.474284) is the first and only Leprosy hospital in Mizoram. It is located in Chanmari. It was established in the year 1978. The Heritage Committee of Tlabung Branch Y.M.A take care of this hospital. Now there is only one patient named Robiram Chakma, aged 75. In 1983 he was admitted and had nowhere else to go. He found a living by weaving and other works. His food was provided by Nurse pensioner Pi Khuangkungi.





Fig 17



Fig 18

### **Baptist Church of Mizoram**

Baptist Church of Mizoram (N22.907677, E92.465714) was the first Church in Tlabung. The founder of this church was M.Suaka (Durtlang chief), Lalduha, Suakthangpui (w/o Lalduha), Pi Puii (died due to leprosy at Chondronga Hospital). It is located in Bazar veng. It was established on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1911. Later, bifurcated into Immanuel Church in Venglai.



Fig 19: BCM, Tlabung

**Thangliana Mual** (N22.907718, E92.465984)

Under the leadership of Thangliana along with 150 soldiers this area was cleared for setting up the military camp which later came to be converted into a proper playground. It is located in Zawlpui. In present day, it is used for stocking log.



Fig 20



Fig 21

**Police Station**

Police Station (N22.907427, E92.467312) is located in Thana veng. It was established in 1872 by T.H. Lewin and it was called as Out Post. Later, it was established as Thana in the year 1889. The old police station was renovated by Art & Culture Department Under 13th Finance Commission in 2013. At present, it is looked after by the Heritage Committee, Tlabung Branch YMA.



Fig 22



Fig 23

## **Hari Mandir**

Hari Mandir (N22.906408, E92.466352) is located in Bazar veng. It was established in the year 1896. It was also located in the opposite side of the Missionary Kai. There were four different deities inside the Mandir, namely Krishna Shiva Linga, Kartik, Shani Dev and Loka (Kartik wife). They used to pray in evening at 5:30 pm and early in the morning. In front of the gods there was a table called agarbatti stand made from iron and sand, after they finished praying, they light up the agarbatti. There are around 400 members in this Hindu religion.



Fig 24



Fig 25



Fig 26



Fig 27



Fig 28



Fig 29

Fig 24-29: Hari Mandir

## **Bazar building**

Bazar building (N22.90709, E92.466108) is located in Bazar veng along the road. The buildings are generally small, mostly variety store. Many of the shop keepers are Bengali and Chakma. There are many different kinds of shops such as hardware, mobile store, restaurants, vegetables shops, convenient store etc. The sketch of old bazar is hung on the wall building till today.

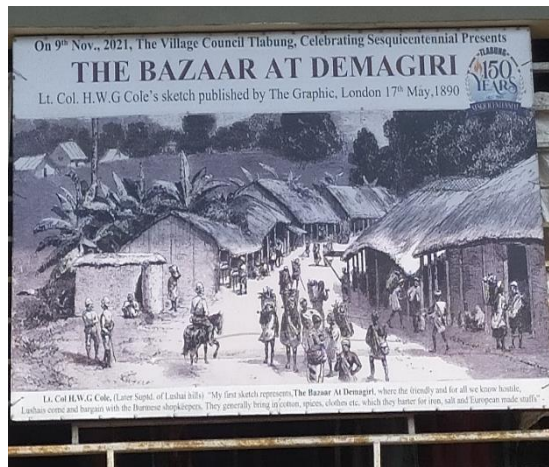


Fig 30: Sketch of old market

## **Other Places Visited**

Apart from the field study, the department of history visited some other places like:

1. **Kawrpuchhuah:** Kawrpuchhuah is located near Tlabung and shares boundaries with Bangladesh. The people living in kawrpuchhuah are Chakma and Bangali, they can easily reach Bangladesh by boat.
2. **Thekaduar, Bangladesh:** The inhabitants of Thekaduar are mostly Chakma. They have many shops and the goods they sell are much cheaper than in Mizoram.



3. **LZM English Medium School:** LZM English Medium School is located in Damdawiin veng. We had the opportunity to interact with Class V students and take photos with them. There are 11 students and 2 were absent, making a total of 13 students.



Fig 31: Thekaduar in Bangladesh (left)

Fig 32: View of khawthlang tuipui (middle)

Fig 33: LZM English Medium School (right)

## Remarks

The field study was successful, and we enjoyed it together. It was beneficial as we learned and saw many things. We already know that Tlabung is the first place where the British set foot in Mizoram, and they constructed various types of buildings. Some of these structures, such as the Post Office, Hospital, and Police Station, are still visible. We visited and explored them and it was also very beneficial for us. The field study also gave us a better understanding of Tlabung history and the people who resided there. The people of Tlabung are very welcoming, and care about us and very open to us and were generous.

## Acknowledgement

We thank our respected Principal Mr. Vuansanga Vanchhawng for granting us and allowing us for this field study at Tlabung and also for providing us a money. The success of this field study was partly due to him. We also thank Y.M. A Asst. Secretary B. Lalhuthanga and Vice V.C Hmingthansanga Ralte

(Hmingtea) for their local interaction. We also thank to the sumo driver Lalruatfela Punte and Pa Siam for picking us from the hostel and bringing us to Tlabung. We also extend our gratitude to Arjun K.K the one who look after the mandir and allowed us to enter the Mandir, he also tells us about the story of Hari Mandir and the names of the four different gods. He also has a brief explanation about their religion. We also thank Lallianzuala Lianhna (Pu Tetea) and his family for welcoming us from the day we arrived, and for accompanying us in visiting different places and also for their invitation for dinner as well.

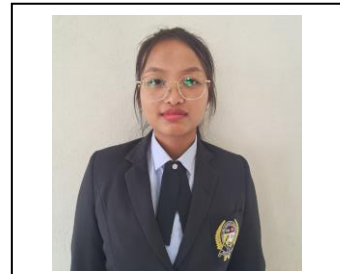


Fig 34: Local interaction with Pu B. Lalhuthanga (left) & Pu Hmingthansanga Ralte (Middle) (front row)



Fig 35: With Pu T Lalzara (right) (front row)

## **A REPORT ON ‘KNOW YOUR HISTORY’ – COLONIAL HISTORY THROUGH MATERIAL CULTURE: HERITAGE WALK AT TLABUNG**



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### **Introduction**

Colonialism is defined as “control by one power over a dependent area or people.” It occurs when one nation subjugated another, conquering its population and exploiting it, often while forcing its own language and cultural values upon its people. The British occupy the Lushai Hills in the early 1890’s. During the time people in the Lushai Hills were still primitive and backward. In the pre-British period, the cultures and traditions of the Mizo had its own unique feature. Their cultures and traditions had its own beauty and distinctiveness and they were hardly mixed with the outside world. After the advent of the British, many cultural traditions and practices changed. It can be said that the cultural and social practices of the Mizo faced a threat because of the colonial influence.

### **Changes in religious beliefs and practices**

In the early Mizo society omen, superstition and blind faith was common. The early Mizo believed in the existence of Pathian (God) in the form of Sakhua. Sakhua is a combination of two words Sa and Khua. Therefore, Sakhua simply refers to a form of Supreme Being who had control over nature and the humanity in the traditional Mizo society. Sacrifices can be performed only by Sadawt (Priest). In the pre-British period sacrifices occupied an important place in the religious beliefs of the Mizo. Sacrifices were believed to be the major sources of all kinds of blessings, good harvest, and health from Pathian (God). Also, the early Mizo society was dominated by blind faith and superstitious beliefs. Because of these blind faiths there were many social problems.

The impact of colonialism upon the Mizo was not only cultural and economic but it was also religious. As a result, the first Christian Missionary Rev. William Williams reached the Lushai Hills on 15th March 1891. Later two Missionaries F.W. Savidge and J.H. Lorrain reached the Lushai Hills on the 11th January 1894. The missionaries created the Mizo alphabet “A, AW, B”, translated the Bible, introduced formal education and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ among the Mizo. The missionaries changed the belief system of the Mizo which was based on superstition and blind faith. Finally, Christianity dominated the religious sentiments of the Mizo and the fear of evil spirits and demons were substituted by inner peace, happiness and faith in Jesus Christ. Moreover, it is true from the fact that Christianity along with colonialism completely changed the belief system of the Mizo society which had its impact till date.

### **Political changes**

In the traditional Mizo society, village chiefs and the Zawlbuk occupy a central figure. The system of chieftainship and Zawlbuk was the main administrative institutions in the traditional Mizo society. However, the system of chieftainship was abolished in 1954 and the village administration among the Mizo vested upon the village council.

Moreover, as a result of colonialism political consciousness developed among several educated individual and as a result the first Mizo political party Mizo Union and many other political parties like United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO) and the Mizo National Front (MNF) were established on 5th July 1947 and 28th October 1961 respectively. Moreover, the political awakening even started freedom movement from the Indian Union.

It can be noted that the impact of British colonialism in the Lushai Hills had many positive changes on the culture and social practices of the Mizo. The decline of Zawlbuk was clearly a result of the emergence of the missionaries and day schooling. The formal education introduced by the missionaries completely changes the outlook of the Mizo society and make way for modernization in the Lushai Hills. Moreover, the prohibition of Zu was also another impact of



colonialism among the Mizo. It is important to mention here that the efforts of the British led to the decline of bawi (Slave) system among the Mizo. It generates awareness regarding human rights and its issues among the Mizo. Furthermore, the efforts of the missionaries ended the traditional belief system of the Mizo which was dominated by blind faith and superstition. Christianity completely changes the social practices of the Mizo a sense of brotherhood and positive communal feeling was generated by Christianity among the Mizo. These changes also resulted to a drastic transformation on the lifestyle and practices of the Mizo. Finally, it is a fact that colonialism was the main reason for modernization of the culture and society of the Mizo. But it is equally important to note that the impact of colonialism had ended many cultural events and practices which are impossible to revive today and even in the near future. From 16th to 19th January 2024, eleven students with one Asst. Professor of the Department of History went on a field study to Tlabung, located at Lunglei District. The main aim of this trip was to study and learn about the history of Mizoram through the Material Culture of Tlabung.



Fig 1: Onward to Tlabung

### **Present day socio-economic condition**

Tlabung is a semi-urban town in the Lunglei District of Mizoram, which is located around 94 km far from Lunglei. Unlike other chieftdom areas, Tlabung

did not have any historical chief. This town was established in 1871, only after the advent of T.H. Lewin, who was sent to this place by General Charles Brown Low. Lewin came to this place on 1865 with 150 troops. Before Lewin's arrival, he first sent his troops and they cleared the forest and build a barracks at the place now called "T.H. Lewin Playground". It was only after the barracks that this area was inhabited by the civilians.

According to local interaction and from the documents and inscriptions they have, Tlabung was established in 9th November, 1871. It is an urban town with different ethnic groups and different cultures but they all lived in harmony and unity. It was said that, Bengali tribe were the earlier settlers in Tlabung. However, Tlabung is a part of Mizoram and all the administration like their community housing management and governance function just like other part of Mizoram. They have two separate Village Councils with a total number of seven members each. For a Village Council to form, at the least around 500 to 1000 households are required. There are eleven localities in Tlabung and this township is a home to six ethnic groups and five languages are spoken, namely Duhlian, Pahari, Bangla, Chakma and Hindi. The Mizo language also known as Duhlian is commonly spoken and is also the local language in this township. There are different religious communities such as Christian, Buddhist and Hindu. Seven churches were established as of today including one Buddhist and Hindu temples.



Fig 2: Venghlun Locality



Fig 3: Bazar Locality



Fig 4: Vengchhak Locality

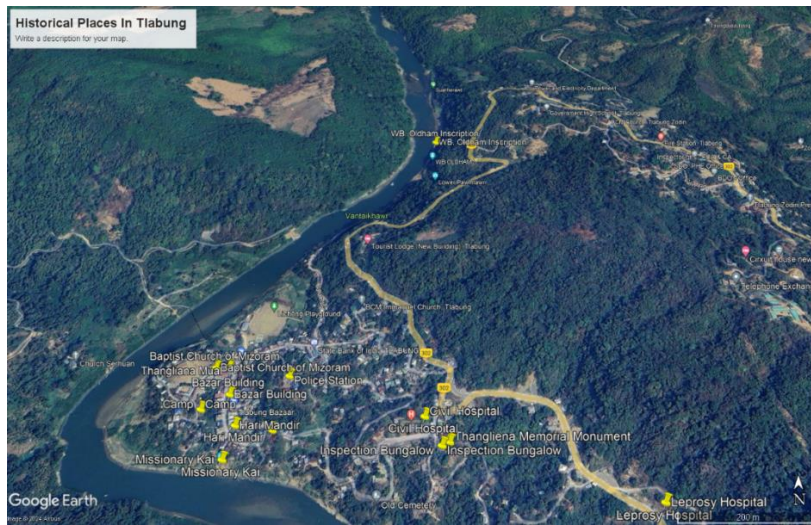


Fig 5: Tlabung Tuipui

In terms of occupation, Tlabung is a commercial area due to which there are numerous traders as well as government offices. At present, there are many fishers who feed their family solely from their catch. Due to its commercial activities, owning and making gardens and cultivations were not prevalent since fore parent's time. Presently, National Highway 302 is under extension and development.

### **Heritage reports**

Tlabung was established in the year 1871 on 9th November. It was also known as 'Demagree' and later came to be called as 'Tlabung'. This name was derived from fall at Vantaikhawr River locally known as 'Khawhtlabung' that flows throughout the year. This name was shortened and came to be called as Tlabung till the present day. Young Mizo Association Branch Heritage sub-committee members have worked hard to preserve British works in Mizoram.



Map 1

**Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung** (N22.907677, E92.465714)

Baptist Church of Mizoram Tlabung was established on 9th March 1911 located at Zawlpui locality. It is the First Church in Mizoram. Currently, this church has 525 members with 10 church elders and eight Rawngbawltu. The founder of this Church were M. Suaka (Durtlang Chief), Lalduha, Suakthangpuii(w/o Lalduha), and Pi Puii (she died of leprosy in Chondronga). Presently, six churches have been separated from here.



Fig 6: First Church in Tlabung



**Missionary Kai** (N22.905747, E92.466222)

Missionary Kai is the place where the first Christian Missionaries Rev. J.H. Lorrain (Pu Buanga) and Rev. F.W. Savidge (Sap Upa) first set their foot on Tlabung. It is located at Bazar locality. They were sent to Mizoram by Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) to preach the Gospel among the tribals. They arrived at Tlabung on 8th March, 1903 by boat from Tlabung River.

In present day, a Prayer House is built in memory of the missionaries which was opened on 14th February, 2019 by Rev JC Vanlalluaia, the then MTKP President. There are also crops and livestock/ranch houses near the area.



Fig 7: Entrance of Missionary Kai



Fig 8: Prayer House

**Inspection Bungalow** (N22.905836, E92.470437)

Tlabung Inspection Bungalow is the first Inspection Bungalow (I.B) in Mizoram. It is located in Vengchhak locality. The bungalow was made using different materials like thatch, corrugated iron sheets, cement, bamboo and wood. It also had a beautiful backyard. It was established on 1871 by T.H. Lewin and renovated by Art & Culture Department under 15th Finance Commission in 2013. There are two Stone Memorial Monuments in the yard namely; Rothangpuia Thangluah (1820-1876) and T.H Lewin Memorial both of which were erected by YMA Tlabung Branch.



Fig 9



Fig 10



Fig 11



Fig 12

**Rothangpuia Memorial (1820-1876)** (N22.905958, E92.470568)

Rothangpuia Thangluah was the Mizo Great Chiefs from the West. He was the one who stands on behalf of all the Western Chiefs during the British and the Mizo Chiefs Agreement known as “Sa-Ui Tan”. One of the agreements they made was “The British enemy will be their enemy, and their enemy will be the British enemy”. Under this Diplomatic Agreement, Mary Winchester (Zoluti) was taken back from Sailam Chief Bengkhuaia by the British. Lt. Col. Thomas Herbert Lewin (Thangliana, then Superintendent of Chittagong Hill Tracts) was very fond of Rothangpuia for his ‘peaceful character’ great works and great vision. Gen. Brown Low even called him a “British Friend”.



Fig 13: Rothangpuia Memorial Erection

### **Civil Hospital (N22.906374, E92.470115)**

Civil Hospital Tlabung was the first hospital in Mizoram located in Vengchhak locality. It was established in 1872 by T.H. Lewin and since then it became the first caring hospital of Mizoram. The old hospital which was built by the British was burnt down and the location of the hospital was moved uphill. In 1980, the building was reconstructed.



Fig 14



Fig 15

### **Thangliena Memorial Monument (N22.905909, E92.470581)**

Lt. Col. T.H. Lewin was the first British officer who set his foot in Tlabung and settled here for nine years. During his stay, he had done many works for the development of the tribals. He was considered as a true hero for the tribals. He

was a great man and love the Mizo people. He even married a Beautiful Mizo girl name Dari from Lungchem village and had a baby but died before attaining age. 'The Lushais' even called him "THANGLIANA" and the Lushais First White Friend. A memorial stone was made for him and his story were written like this in the inscription:

IN MEMORY OF  
LT COLONEL TOM-HERBERT LEWIN B.S.C.  
ONCE SUPERINTENDENT OF THESE HILL TRACTS  
BORN 1839. DIED 1916.  
HE CAME TO THIS PEOPLE IN 1865 & WORKED AMONG THEM & FOR  
THEM FOR NINE YEARS. WHEN LOSS OF HEALTH COMPELLED HIM  
TO RETURN TO ENGLAND  
THE PEOPLE TRUSTED & LOVED HIM FOR HIS SYMPATHY & SENSE  
OF JUSTICE. FOR HIS UNTIRING INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE  
& FOR HIS INTERPID & DAUNTLESS COURAGE.  
HE TRAVELLED IN THEIR UNKOWN LAND, VISITING THEIR CHIEFS  
THEIR VILLAGES & THEIR HOMES. ALONE & UNAFRAID.  
HE WAS THE FIRST THE FIRST TO INTERPET & WRITE DOWN THEIR  
LANGUAGE. PREPAIRING THE WAY FOR SCHOOLS & PROGRESS.  
HE STUDIED & IMPROVED THEIR AGRICULTURE & THEIR LAWS  
& HELPED THEM IN ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES.  
THE PEOPLE KNEW HIM AS THAGLIENA. TOM LEWIN.  
& HONoured HIM AS A CHIEF.  
THEY CALLED HIM THE LUSHAIS FIRST WHITE  
FRIEND.  
THEY BUILT A HOUSE FOR HIM VOLUNTARY IN TOKEN OF  
THER DEVOTION.  
THEIR CHILDREN NOW AVE VOLUNTARILY BROUGHT STONES  
HERE. NEAR WHERE HIS HOUSE ONCE, STOOD & HAVE  
HELPED THE ONE WHO KNEW HIM BEST OF ALL&  
WHO KNEW HOW HIS HEART WAS EVER WITH THIS  
PEOPLE TO BUILD UP THE STONES TO THE MEMORY OF  
THANGLIANA

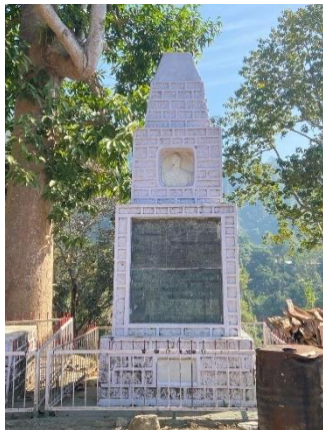


Fig 16: T.H. Lewin Memorial Erection



**Leprosy Hospital** (N22.904672, E92.474284)

Leprosy Hospital is the first and only Leprosy hospital in Mizoram. It is located in Chanmari locality and was established in the year 1978 by the British. The Heritage Committee of Tlabung Branch YMA take care of this hospital. Presently, there is only one patient who is around 70 years of age. In 1983, he was admitted in this hospital and even after his recovery he had no home or place to go. In short, he was abandoned by his family. He found a living by weaving and other works. However, he is no longer able to weave and therefore earn money for himself. His daily needs are provided by Nurse pensioner, Mrs. Khuangkungi.



Fig 17



Fig 18

**Police Station** (N22.907427, E92.467312)

Police Station in Tlabung is the first Police Station in Mizoram, located in Thana Veng situated near Bazar. It was established in 1872 by T.H. Lewin and it was called as an Out Post. Later it was renamed as 'Thana' in 1889. The old Police Station built by the T.H. Lewin was renovated by Art & Culture Department under 13th Finance Commission in 2013 to be looked after by Heritage Committee Tlabung Branch YMA. However, many of the planks, corrugated iron sheet, windows and doors are still the same which were used during the colonial period. Even though a new building was formed, one of the rooms in the old building is still being utilized for Mizoram Police Radion Organization. Tlabung Police Station was under the care of Sub-Divisional Police Officer and till today there are 23 Mizoram Police Service (MPS).



Fig 19



Fig 20



Fig 21



Fig 22

### **Post Office (N22.906304, E92.46711)**

Tlabung Post Office was the first Post Office in Mizoram. It was established in 1872 by T.H. Lewin. It is located in Bazar locality. It was formerly known as “Post and Telegraph Office” and later changed into Post Office. There are still some historical materials like stamps, scissors, safe box and calendar (made up of a plank) which were used by the British during the Colonial period. The post office is still functionable and five workers are presently employed. However, the important documents like blueprints were not kept by them. One of the employees mentioned that the original architectural design of the post office made by the British are kept in the Headquarters, Aizawl.



Fig 23



Fig 24



Fig 25



Fig 26



Fig 27

### **W.B. Oldham Inscription (N22.91459, E92.47052)**

W.B. Oldham Inscription was located in Vantaikhawr. Oldham was the Chittagong Divisional Commissioner. He discovered this route and wrote his name on the stone. Later, this route was known as W.B. Oldham Road. Due to the previous flooding, sand got deposited inside the protective structure, which needed to be cleared out before documentation. The people appreciated it and it is preserved under Art & Culture.



Fig 28: Safety Structure



Fig 29: W.B. Oldham Inscription

**Thangliana Mual (Lewin Playground) (N22.907718, E92.465984)**

Thangliana Mual, also known as Zawlpui Mual, located in Zawlpui locality, holds historical significance as it is the first place in Mizoram where the British Government under T.H. Lewin and his followers established a military base. Presently, it is being utilized by Forest Department to stock Woods.



Fig 30: Entrance of T.H. Lewin Playground (left)



Fig 31: T.H. Lewin Playground (right)



**Hari Mandir** (N22.906408, E92.466352)

Hari Mandir is located in Bazar locality, which is situated in the opposite side of the Missionary Kai. It was established in the year 1896 and it is also the first Mandir in Mizoram. There are four different idols inside the Mandir namely; Krishna, Shiva Linga, Kartik, Shani Dev and Loka (Kartik wife). They used to have their devotion in the evening at 5:30p.m and early in the morning. In front of the gods, there is a table called “Agharbatti stand” made from iron and sand, under these table stands was a black dustbin. After they finish praying, they used to light up agharbatti. They remove their shoes and hat before entering the temple. There are around 400 members in this temple. They did not eat any kind of meats including fish and egg on every Monday. This temple is run by one Batchu (priest). There is a guest room under the stage.



Fig 32



Fig 33



Fig 34

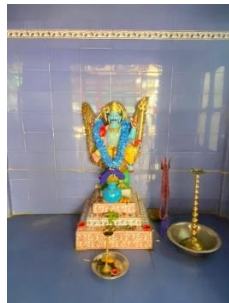


Fig 35



Fig 36

Fig 33 – 36: Deities inside Mandir

### **Bazar Building** (N22.90709, E92.466108)

The Bazar Building which is located in Bazar locality, Tlabung is also the first Market in Mizoram started by T.H Lewin during his stay in Tlabung. He even contributed 3000/- Rupees for the construction of Bazar Building. Later, the new building was built and a sketch by Lt. Colonel H.W.G was made and published in the year 17th May, 1890 by the Graphic London. The sketch was hanged on the wall of the new building till date. The market is weekly open on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and early in the morning. They sell different kinds of vegetables, fruits, furniture, spices, clothing and other items. This market was famous for dry seafoods. Most of the Shopkeepers were Bengali who run their business from their forefathers during colonial period, besides Chakma also owned and run many shops.



Fig 37: Bazar Street View



Fig 38: Sketch of Old Market

### **Other Places Visited**

Apart from Tlabung, there were also other places which were visited on the last day of the Field study. Namely, LZM English Medium School located in Damdawiin Veng, Kawrpuichhuah, and Thekaduar in Bangladesh. Thekaduar was accessed by boat from Kawrpuichhuah. The people living there were mostly Bengali and Chakmas. They mainly earned their livelihood through small businesses. Most of the goods sold were much cheaper as compared to Mizoram.



Fig 39: View from Bangladesh



Fig 40: Thekaduar Bazar



Fig 41: With LZM Class-V Students



Fig 42: Kawrpuichhuah

## Remarks

The field study to Tlabung was a successful one. Just as the theme “Heritage Walk at Tlabung” we visited heritage places in Tlabung by foot. The field study offers a great opportunity for the students and the faculty as it helps in co-operating with one another. It even helped students to experience different kinds of activities which was never done in our own household. It also helps us in improving the knowledge of the students. This kind of activity helps us in acquiring greater understanding and creating a good bond of friendship between the students.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We are very grateful to our respected Principal Mr. Vuansanga Vanchhawng, for granting us the permission, for supporting us financially and also for providing us a free transportation. The success of our field study was partly due to him. We had a successful field study with the good co-operation, sincerity and hard work of our Asst. Professor Dr. Lalhminghlua and my fellow classmates. We also give thanks to all the Asst. Professors in our Department for supporting us and their efforts in raising funds for the Field Study.

We also give our heartfelt gratitude to Mr. C. Vanlawma and his family of Zawlpui locality, Tlabung, for providing us a place to stay and for supplying our needs during our stay. We are also very grateful to Mr. Lallianzuala Lianhna and his wife Mrs. B. Lalnunsiami for guiding us and took care of everything we needed before we arrived in Tlabung despite their busy schedule. They also prepared a delicious dinner for us at their house. Also, we are very thankful to Mr. T. Lalzara of Zawlpui who resided near our camp for sharing and imparting us his knowledge. We are also thankful to Mr. Hmingthansanga Ralte, the Vice-President of Tlabung Village Council, and Mr. B. Lalhuthanga, Assistant Secretary of YMA Tlabung Branch. And all the drivers Lalramtiana, Lalmunsiamia, Lalruatfela Punte, Remnalalnunsiamia without them our trip to Tlabung would not be possible.





Fig 43: Local Interaction with B.Lalhuthanga(left) & Hmingthansanga Ralte(middle)



Fig 44: Local Interaction with Upa T. Lalzara

## **A REPORT ON TLABUNG COLONIAL HISTORY**

### **Introduction**

From two directions, the British army invaded Mizoram on 1st September 1871, from Chittagong column and Cachar column. Chittagong Column – Charles Henry Brownlow the commandment of General and Captain Thomas Herbert Lewin (a political Officer in Chittagong Hill tracts) were appointed to compile. Under General Bouchier's command it was from Cachar column. Mizoram also experienced colonial influence from British rule in India. Mizoram was taken over by the British in the late 19th Century which in many ways changed the social structure from political to formal education, hospital, culture, administration and religion etc. Due to colonialism Zawlbuk was replace. As Mizoram was under the British it segregated the Lushai into two parts on 1st April 1898, the Southern Lushai Hills was under the administration of Bengal and the Northern side of the Lushai Hills was under the administration of Assam.



H. Lalthianghlina  
2123BA020

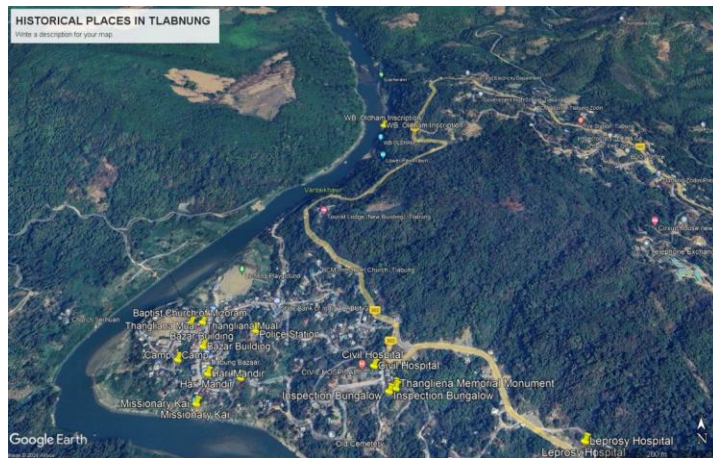
The Department of History from 16th - 19th January, 2024 (Tuesday to Friday), eleven students along with one Asst. Professor went on a Field Study to Tlabung located at Lunglei District. As mentioned in the above topic the main aim of the field study was to learn Colonial History through Material Culture. Some of the visited places were Inspection Bungalow, Baptist Church of Mizoram Tlabung, Thangliana Mual, Missionary Kai, Hari Mandi, Post Office, Civil Hospital, Police Station, W.B. Oldham, Leprosy Hospital, Kawrpuichhuah.



Fig 1: Onward to Tlabung

## Heritage Report

When Thomas Herbert Lewin who was named Thangliena by the people of Tlabung was sent to Tlabung to take back Mary Winchester (Zoluti) from Mizo Chief Bengkhuaia, he entered to the Tlabung Village on 9th November, 1871 and the year was recorded as the formal establishment year of Tlabung Village. The previous name of the Tlabung was Demagree, 'Dema' means 'Tla' and 'Gree' means 'Bung'. Tlabung was also known as the name after Vantaikhawr Falls. Below is a map of various places in Tlabung.



Map 1

**Inspection Bungalow** (N22.995836, E92.466222)

It was the first Inspection Bungalow in Mizoram, established in the year 1871 by the British. The Heritage Committee Tlabung Branch were the one who looked after that place. And was located in Vengchhak, Tlabung. It was built of wood, cement, corrugated iron sheet, thatch bamboo, coloured in green and white colours. In the yard of Inspection Bungalow there are two Memorial erection which were brought together in the Present - day, namely: Rothangpuia Memorial monument and Thangliena Memorial Monument.



Fig 2: Inspection Bungalow



Fig 3: Monument plaque



Fig 4: Memorial Monument for Rothangpuia and Thangliena (left)



Fig 5: Hook (right)



**Rothangpuia Memorial Monument (N22.905958, E92.470568)**

Rothangpuia Thangluah, he was known as the Chief of the Westside (Khawthlang). Lt. Col. Thomas Herbert was fond of him owing to his great personality for one thing peace and astute vision. He was even called as a friend of the British by General Brownlow. During his reign on October, 1866, the British and the Mizo's ruler made an agreement. A term in their agreement reads as:

“Britishhmelma chu an hmelma a ni ang,  
An hmelma chu British hmelma a ni ang”.



Fig 6: Memorial monument of Rothangpuia

**Thangliena Memorial Monument (N22.905909, E92.470581)**

Thomas Herbert Lewin was given a Mizo name Called Thangliena, when he came to Tlabung, Mizoram in the year 1871, and he was also known as the first Lushai White friend.

IN MEMORY OF  
LT COLONEL TOM-HERBERT LEWIN B.S.C.  
ONCE SUPERINTENDENT OF THESE HILL TRACTS  
BORN 1839. DIED 1916.  
HECAME TO THIS PEOPLE IN 1865 & WORKED AMONG THEM & FOR  
THEM FOR NINE YEARS. WHEN LOSS OF HEALTH COMPELLED HIM  
TO RETURN TO ENGLAND.  
THEPEOPLE TRUSTED & LOVED HIM FOR HIS SYMPATHY & SENSE  
OF JUSTICE. FOR HIS UNTIRING INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE  
& FOR HIS INTERPID & DAUNTLESS COURAGE.  
HETRAVELLED IN THEIR UNKOWN LAND, VISITING THEIR CHIEFS  
THEIR VILLAGES & THEIR HOMES. ALONE & UNAFRAID.  
HEWAS THE FIRST THE FIRST TO INTERPET & WRITE DOWN THEIR  
LANGUAGE. PREPAIRING THE WAY FOR SCHOOLS & PROGRESS.  
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WHO KNEW HOW HIS HEART WAS EVER WITH THIS  
PEOPLE TO BUILD UP THE STONES TO THE MEMORY OF  
THANGLIENA



Fig 7: Memorial Monument Thangliena

### **Baptist Church Of Mizoram Tlabung**

It is the first Church building in Tlabung established on 9th March,1911 and is located in Zawlpui. There are 525 members among them there are ten (10) Upa

and eight (8) Rawngbawltu. The founder of the British Church were M.Suaka (Durtlang Chief), Lalduha, Suakthangpuii (Wife of Lalduha) and Pi Puii (Pi Puii died due to leprosy in Chondroguna, Bangladesh).



Fig 8: Tlabung BCM



Fig 9: Plaque

BAPTIST CHURCH OF MIZOIAM - TLABUNG		
(MIZOIAM DAH VLAH TLABUNG)		
2010-2011		
	Jan to Dec	Total
Offering	1,100	1,100
Gifts	1,100	1,100
Interest	1,100	1,100
Income	1,100	1,100
Expenses	1,100	1,100
Balance	1,100	1,100
Total		
Jan to Dec	1,100	1,100
Total	1,100	1,100

Fig10: Notice

### **THANGLIANA MUAL** (N22.907718, E92.465984)

Zawlpui field was established on 9th of November,1871 under the leadership of Thangliana. In the olden days the name of this field was known as Zawlpui Field and now renamed to Thangliana Mual. This field has a history. In this very place, Charles Henry Brownlow along with 150 soldiers met Barrett and they used it as their main camp center. Presently, it has been a year since they used it for stocking logs.



Fig11: Thangliana Mual



Fig 12: Log storage

**Missionary Kai** (N22.905747, E92.470115)

The first place where the British Missionary set their foot in Mizoram on 8th March, 1903. The names of the missionaries were J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge both of them were given Mizo name, as Lorrain looked so brown and they give him a name called Pu Buanga and just like that Savidge also looked very old so they give him a Mizo name Sap Upa. Missionary Kai is located in Bazar Veng, Tlabung near the Kai there is a building called TAWNGTAI IN (Prayer House) and it was re-built and opened it on 14th February, 2019 by Rev. JC. Vanlalluaia president of MTKP.



Fig 13: Missionary Kai



Fig 14: Tawngtai In



Fig 15: Tlabung River



Fig16: Plaque



**Bazar Building** (N22.90709, E92.466108)

Located in Bazar Veng, there are several stalls lined up in the market near the bazar shed market selling like vegetables, clothes, furniture, chilly etc. most of the shopkeeper are Chakma, Pahari, Bengali. The market is held on Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday, in front of the bazar there is an old sketch of the bazar as well.



Fig 17: Clothes store

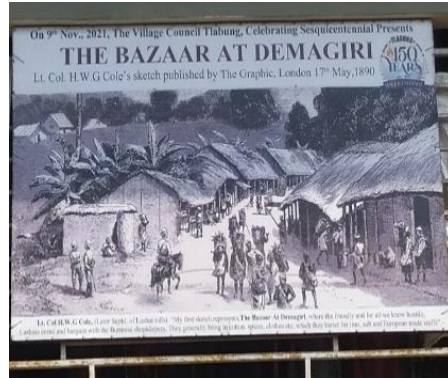


Fig18: An old sketch of Tlabung Bazar

**Hari Mandir** (N22.906408, E92.466352)

The mandir was established in the year 1896 and is located in Bazar Veng and is also the first Mandir in Mizoram. It is located in the opposite side of the Missionary Kai. Inside the Mandir there are four (4) different gods, namely- Krishna Shiva Linga , Kartik, Loka and Shani dev. They usually come to pray in the evening at 5:30 pm. In front of their gods there is a table called agarbatti stand made of iron and sand, once they finished praying, they put the agarbatti in that sand. Mandir is fenced with cement and the top roof is made up of corrugate iron sheet. There are around 400 Hindu members.



Fig19: Hari Mandir



Fig 20: Notice Board



Fig 21: Agarbatti stand



Fig 22



Fig 23



Fig 24

Fig 22 – 25: Idols inside the temple

### **Post Office** (N22.906304, E92.46711)

The first Post Office of Mizoram established in the year 1872 by the British, located in Bazar Veng. The olden name of this post was Post and Telegram Office. Currently there are five employees in the Post Office and the head of the Post Office is Thangchawng Haukip. The Post Office here have few original collections that are still there such as stamp, calendar board and safebox. The safebox is inside the Post Office where half of the box is buried, it was used for safekeeping.



Fig26: Post Office



Fig 27: Old calendar



Fig 28: Old Stamps

### **Civil Hospital** (N22.906374, E92.470115)

It is the first Hospital in Mizoram and was established in the year 1872 by Lt. Col. T.H. Lewin. It is located in Vengchhak, based on the local interaction the hospital is located in downhill side of the current location. And in the year of 1984 the original hospital was burned, most of the important document was burned along with the building. Some part of the old buildings still remains and some have been renovated.



Fig 29: Civil Hospital



Fig 30: Hospital Building



Fig 31: Monument

### **Police Station** (N22.907427, E92.467312)

It is the first Police Station in Mizoram and it was established in the year 1872. It was located in Thana Veng, and is looked after by the Heritage Committee Tlabung Branch YMA. It was also the work of Lt. Col. T.H. Lewin (Thangliena)

but at that time it was still outpost, but it was renovated in the year 1889 for Police Station. The old building is still used as MRPO communication.



Fig 32: Police Station



Fig 33: Plaque

### **W.B. Oldham Inscription** (N22.905958, E92.47052)

It is located in Vantaikhawr, a distance away from the village. W.B. Oldham was the Chittagong Division Commissioner and he wrote his name on the Stone and people of Tlabung really appreciated it so much and preserved it under conservation of Art and Culture. W.B. Oldham also found out a road from Tlabung to Pachang.



Fig 34: Oldham Inscription



### **Leprosy Hospital** (N22.904672, E92.474284)

It is the first and only Leprosy Hospital in Mizoram located, in Chanmari. It was established in the year 1978. Presently a person named Robiram, 75 years old lives in the Leprosy Hospital. He was hospitalized in the year 1983 as a patient. He has been cured but as his family had abandoned him so he was unable to return home. So, till today he stays there in the Hospital. Weaving is his main occupation and he is looked after by a nurse pensioner Pi Khuangkungi.



Fig 35: Leprosy Hospital (left)

Fig 36: Leprosy hospital building (middle left)

Fig 37: Monument of Leprosy (middle right)

Fig 38: Old Monument of Leprosy (right)

### **Present Day Society of Tlabung**

Tlabung, formally known as Demagree, is located in Lunglei district and Tlabung which is also a semi urban town. There are thirteen (13) locality that exist in Tlabung namely- Chawnpuiveng, Saron veng, Arthaiveng, Zodin, Electric veng, Venglai, Vengchhak, Zawluiveng, Venghlun (it was also known as Meteor ) Bawngveng, Chanmary, Bazar veng, Vantaikhawrveng . There are two Banks, State Bank of India and Mizoram Rural Bank and also one SBI ATM boot, both of them are in Bazar veng. For emergencies there is a Hospital and Police Station available. Some of the important Office like, Post Office (Bazar veng), DC (Zodinveng), Forest department (Zawluiveng), PWD Department and PHE Department are also located in Zodin veng. They have one Petrol Pump which is located in Chanmari and also a prepared electric charger for electric vehicle. They have two field Thanglian Mual and Lichengfield. There is one helipad as well which was renovated and the BSF are living around there.

Based on Job-card report there are 1400-1500 houses. There are nine churches namely – Baptist Church of Mizoram, Isua Krista Kohhran (IKK), Evangelical Free Church of India (EFCI), United Pentecostal Church of Mizoram and North-East and there are also non-Christian like, Buddhist and Hindu. 60%-70% of the ethnicity in Tlabung were Pang, Bawm, Bengali, Pahari. And there are four languages spoken in Tlabung which are Pahari, Duhlian, Hindi and Bangla. Unlike other chiefdom areas, they did not have any historical chief.

### **Other Places Visited**

**Kawrpuchhuah:** Kawrpuchhuah is far from the Tlabung around 15 Km. Kawrpuchhuah is in the border and most of them are Chakma and Bengali. It has been a trading center as well, some of the goods are taken from the Bangladesh and sold in Tlabung. Mode of transportation is boat where fishing, selling vegetables are also their main occupation.

**LZM School:** Lalzama Memorial English Medium School Tlabung (LZM School) is located in Vengchhak and was established in the year 2000. The school's Motto is "Education is to achieve good quality".

### **Remark**

I believe that our objectives were really achieved and the Field Study a successful one. It was beneficial one as we got to visit many places where we learned its history and its important significances. The surrounding of the Police station, Hospital and Missionary Kai were so great. Had the road condition of Tlabung been better, it has many capabilities to become can be one the most visited place and a commercial hub. The people of Tlabung are nice, approachable and welcoming.

## **Acknowledgement**

We thank our respected Principal Mr. Vuansanga Vanchhawng for supporting us and allowing us for this Field Study at Tlabung. The success of our Field Study was partly from him. We also heartly thank to the Y.M.A Asst. Secretary B. Lalhuthanga and Vice V.C Hmingthansanga Ralte (Hmingtea) for their local interaction. Arjun K.K the one who looked after the Mandir for telling us about the story of Hari Mandir and allowed us to enter the Mandir, and also gave a brief explanation.

We really thanks to C. Vanlawma, the owner of the house for renting us out his house for from 16th -19th Jan 2024. We also want to thank the sumo drivers Lalruatfela Punte, Lalramtiama, Lalhmunsiamma and Remnalalnunsiamma. We also thank Lallianzuala Lianhna (Pu Tete) and his family for welcoming us from the day we arrived, and for the dinner invitation. We like to thank Mrs. B. Lalnunsiami for helping us and providing information about the civil Hospital with a brief explanation.

We give thanks to Pu Zara for their insightful guidance and for sharing the rich history of Tlabung.

## **JOURNEY THROUGH TLABUNG'S HISTORY: DISCOVERING CENTURIES-OLD CULTURAL HERITAGES IN MIZORAM**

The transformative impact of Christianity on the Mizo people, emphasizing the changes in their cultures and traditions. To connect this with colonialism, it's essential to recognize that the introduction of Christianity was often intertwined with colonial endeavors.



Grace Lal̈tanpuii  
2123BA017

During the colonial period, missionaries played a crucial role in spreading religious and cultural influences. The arrival of British and missionaries in Mizoram led to significant shifts in the Mizo way of life. Colonial powers, through their administrative and missionary activities, brought about socio-cultural changes that influenced the Mizo community.

The control exerted by missionaries on the social and cultural aspects, as mentioned in the essay, reflects the broader impact of colonialism on indigenous societies. The adoption of Christianity often accompanied efforts to reshape local cultures in accordance with Western ideals. The essay's mention of the fading traditional festivals and the dominance of Christmas as the main festival highlights the enduring influence of colonial-era changes.

The British colonial occupation of the Lushai Hills in the early 1890s brought significant changes to the traditional Mizo society. Before colonization, the Mizo people had unique cultural practices, but colonial influence led to alterations in their traditions. The introduction of Christianity by Welsh and English missionaries had a positive impact, replacing nature worship and superstitions. The Mizo society, previously bound by superstitious beliefs and social rules, underwent transformations, impacting practices like house construction and sickness rituals. Colonialism left a lasting impact on the traditional beliefs and practices of the Mizo people.



The Department of History, HATIM, conducted a field study in Tlabung from January 16th to 19th, 2024, within the Lunglei District. Asst. Professor Dr. Lalhminghlua guided the study, focusing on exploring Colonial History through the lens of Material Culture in Tlabung.



Fig 1: Onward to Tlabung

### **Present Day**

Tlabung, also recognized as Demagree, stands as a semi-urban hub within Mizoram's Lunglei district. Going beyond its status as a town, Tlabung serves its residents with crucial amenities. With two banks and a post office in the vicinity, financial transactions are seamlessly conducted. The town prioritizes safety and health, featuring emergency services such as hospitals and a police station.

Contrary to external perceptions of prevalent inter-community marriages in Tlabung, the reality on the ground presents a different narrative. The town embraces diverse religious beliefs, including Christianity (Baptist, Presbyterian, Salvation, Isua Krista Kohhran, Evangelical Free Church of India, United Pentecostal Church of Mizoram and North-East), alongside followers of Buddhism and Hinduism.

Tlabung is characterized by distinct localities like Venglai, Vengchhak, Vantaikhawr, Bazar Veng, Zawlpui Veng, Damdawiin Veng, Chanmari, Bawng Veng, Venghlun, Zodin, and Chawnpui. Housing 15 schools, Tlabung places a strong emphasis on education. As a commercial center, the town's economic

landscape is diverse, with no single occupation dominating the area. Their most common domesticate animals are hens, pig, goat, duck, dog, monkey, cats and cow. They also earn their living by fishing and transportation of vehicle by boats.



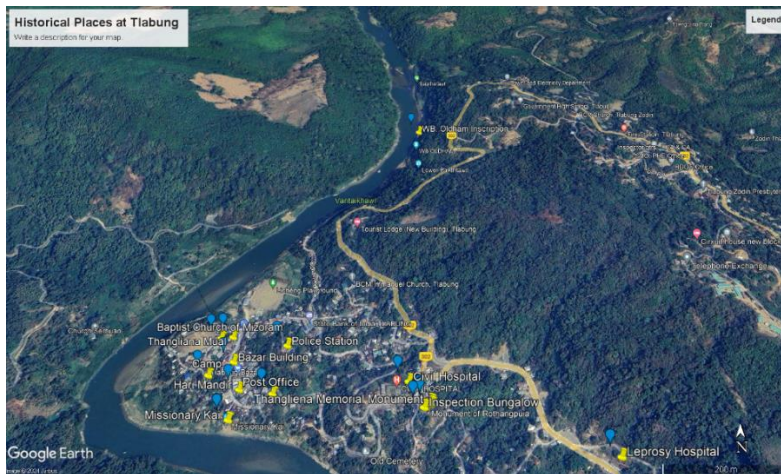
Fig 2: Transportation of vehicle by boats (left)

Fig 3: Tlabung street view (middle)

Fig 4: Tlabung street view (right)

## Heritage Historical Report

Tlabung was established on November 9th, 1871. Its original name was 'Demagree,' derived from 'Dema' meaning 'Tla' and 'Gree' meaning 'Bung.' However, some sources suggest that Tlabung is also named after 'Vantaikhawr.' Below is a map of various places in Tlabung.



Map 1: Tlabung

**Civil Hospital, Tlabung** (N22.906374, E92.470115)

This is the first hospital in Mizoram. It was established in the year 1872 by Lt. Col. T.H. Lewin. The hospital reached 150 years in 2022. It is currently located in Vengchhak. Based on local interaction, the hospital is located on the downhill side of the current location. One of the old buildings is still standing, while the other has been renovated. As the original hospital was burnt in the year 1884, most of the important documents were burnt along with the building.



Fig 5: Entrance of Civil Hospital



Fig 6: Civil Hospital

**Missionary Kai** (N22.905747, E92.466222)

Missionary kai is located in Bazar veng, Tlabung. This is the first place where the British Missionary set their foot in Mizoram. The first two missionaries who came to Mizoram were Rev. J.H. Lorrain also known as Pu Buanga and Rev. F.W. Savidge also known as Sap Upa. They were sent by Baptist Missionary Society, London (BMS). Currently there is a prayer house



Fig 7: entrance of Missionary Kai (left)



Fig 8: Prayer House (middle)



Fig 9: The Missionary Kai (right)

**Inspection Bungalow** (N22.905836, E92.470437)

Inspection Bungalow is located in Vengchhak, Tlabung. It is the first I.B in Mizoram, established in the year 1871. It is looked after by Heritage committee, Tlabung Branch YMA. For construction they generally used thatch bamboo, corrugate iron sheet and wood. In present day, there are two Memorial erections in the yard.



Fig 10: Inspection Bungalow



Fig 11: Back yard

**Rothangpuia Memorial Erection** (N22.905958, E92.470568)

Rothangpuia Thangluah was Khawthlang chief. He was known as a friend of the British by General Brownlow. In October 1866, Rothangpuia and the British maid an agreement. A term in their agreement was:

“British hmelma chu an hmelma a ni anga,  
An hmelma chu British hmelma a ni ang.”

“British enemies will be their enemies,  
And the Mizo enemies will also be the British enemies.”  
(Translation by: Grace Laltanpuii)





Fig 12: Rothangpuia's Monument

### **Thangliena Memorial Erection (N22.905909, E92.470581)**

IN MEMORY OF  
LT COLONEL TOM-HERBERT LEWIN B.S.C.  
ONCE SUPERINTENDENT OF THESE HILL TRACTS  
BORN 1839. DIED 1916.  
HE CAME TO THIS PEOPLE IN 1865 & WORKED AMONG THEM & FOR  
THEM FOR NINE YEARS. WHEN LOSS OF HEALTH COMPELLED HIM  
TO RETURN TO ENGLAND  
THE PEOPLE TRUSTED & LOVED HIM FOR HIS SYMPATHY & SENSE  
OF JUSTICE. FOR HIS UNTIRING INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE  
& FOR HIS INTERPID & DAUNTLESS COURAGE.  
HE TRAVELLED IN THEIR UNKOWN LAND, VISITING THEIR CHIEFS  
THEIR VILLAGES & THEIR HOMES. ALONE & UNAFRAID.  
HE WAS THE FIRST THE FIRST TO INTERPET & WRITE DOWN THEIR  
LANGUAGE. PREPAIRING THE WAY FOR SCHOOLS & PROGRESS.  
HE STUDIED & IMPROVED THEIR AGRICULTURE & THEIR LAWS  
& HELPED THEM IN ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES.  
THE PEOPLE KNEW HIM AS THAGLIENA. TOM LEWIN.  
& HONOURED HIM AS A CHIEF.  
THEY CALLED HIM THE LUSHAIS FIRST WHITE  
FRIEND.  
THEY BUILT A HOUSE FOR HIM VOLUNTARY IN TOKEN OF  
THEIR DEVOTION.  
THEIR CHILDREN NOW HAVE VOLUNTARILY BROUGHT STONES  
HERE. NEAR WHERE HIS HOUSE ONCE, STOOD & HAVE  
HELPED THE ONE WHO KNEW HIM BEST OF ALL&  
WHO KNEW HOW HIS HEART WAS EVER WITH THIS  
PEOPLE TO BUILD UP THE STONES TO THE MEMORY OF  
THANGLIENA



Fig 13: Thangliena's Monument

### **Leprosy Hospital (N22.904672, E92.474284)**

Leprosy hospital is located in Chanmari. It is the first and only Leprosy hospital in Mizoram. It was established in the year 1978. The hospital is looked after by the heritage committee of Tlabung branch Y.M.A. In the present day, there is a person named Robiram Chakma, aged 75, who resides there. He entered the leprosy hospital in 1983 as a patient but has since been cured. Unable to return home, he now lives in the hospital and earns a living by weaving. His food was provided by Nurse Pensioner Pi Khuangkungi.



Fig 14: Leprosy Hospital (left)

Fig 15: Department of history along with Mr. Robiram Chakma (left)

**Baptist Church of Mizoram** (N22.907677, E92.465714)

The Baptist Church of Mizoram, established on March 9, 1911, in Bazar Veng, Tlabung town, is the first church with 525 members, including 10 Upa and 8 Rawngbawltu. Notably, it later gave rise to Immanuel Church in Venglai. The founders of BCM were M Suaka (Durtlang chief), Lalduha, Suakthangpuii (wife of Lalduha), and Pi Puii (who unfortunately passed away due to leprosy.)



Fig 16: Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung

**Thangliana Mual** (N22.907718, E92.465984)

Thangliana Mual, also known as Zawlpui Mual, situated in Zawlpui Veng, served as a strategic location for the British when they first arrived in Mizoram, being used as a military base.



Fig 17: Thangliana mual

**Police Station** (N22.907427, E92.467312)

The police station is located in Thana Veng. According to heritage records, it was established in 1872, although workers claim it was founded in 1889. In 2013, the Art and Culture Department renovated it under the 13th Finance Commission. The Tlabung branch's Heritage Committee of Y.M.A oversees the old police station.



Fig 18: New Building



Fig 19: Old Building



**Bazar Building** (N22.90709, E92.466108)

The Bazar Building in Bazar Veng, once a modest structure, housed a variety of stores, with shopkeepers predominantly being Bengali, Chakma, and Bangla. The shops included hardware stores, restaurants, and convenient stores, among others. Today, the building carries a large sketch depicting the old bazaar, preserving the historical character of the area.

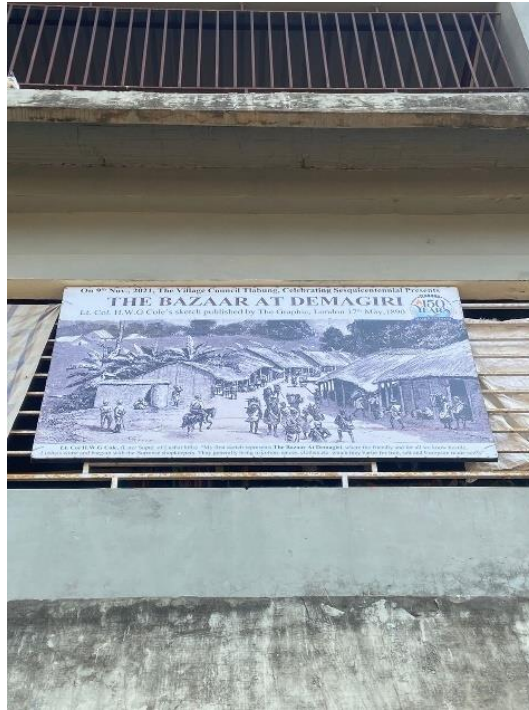


Fig 20: Sketch of Old Bazaar.

**W.B. Oldham Inscription** (N22.91459, E92.47052)

The W.B. Oldham inscription, situated in Vantaikhawr within the Chittagong division, was inscribed on stone by W.B. Oldham. The community appreciated its significance, leading to its preservation and conservation under the domain of Art & Culture.



Fig 21: Safety structure of WB. Oldham (left)

Fig 22: WB. Oldham inscription (right)

### **Post Office (N22.906304, E92.46711)**

The first post office in Mizoram, situated in Bazar Veng since 1872, initially operated as the Post & Telegraph office. Over time, it has transformed into the present-day Post Office (Dak in), where relics from the British era, including old stamps, ink pads, calendars, and safety locks, are still on display.



Fig 23: Post Office



Fig 24: Stamps



Fig 25: Calendar

**Hari Mandir** (N22.906408, E92.466352)

Hari Mandir, established in 1896, is Mizoram's oldest Hindu temple. Founded by Lokhindar Chowdhury and Nanda Kumar Chowdhury, it transitioned from personal ownership to being managed by the Sarbojanin Hari Mandir Committee of Tlabung. The temple, erected two years after missionaries arrived in Mizoram, stands on the Missionary Kai site. Hosting deities like Krishna, Loka, Kartik and Shani Dev, it holds significance as the believers discovered a child's footprints in red paint, interpreting it as visitation from their God.



Fig 26: Hari Mandir



Fig 27



Fig 28



Fig 29



Fig 30



Fig 31: Foot Print

Fig 27- 30: Deities inside the temple

### **Other Place Visited**

The Department of History explored not only the historical places at Tlabung but also LZM English Medium School, Kawrpuichhuah and Thekaduar in Bangladesh. During their visit to LZM School in Hospital Veng, they engaged with Class V students, with 11 present and 2 absent, totaling 13 students. Kawrpuichhuah, a small village, is majorly a home to the Chakma community and features a significant border where India and Bangladesh demarcate their countries. The Department extended their exploration to Bangladesh during their visit.



Fig 32: Dept of History with LZM student (left)

Fig 33: Thekaduar in Bangladesh (right)

### **Remarks**

The Department of History, accompanied by our teacher, Sir Lalhminghlua, visited Tlabung to explore existing historical artifacts like the Post Office, Mandir, Missionary Kai, Police Station, Inspector Bungalow, Hospital, WB. Oldham Inscription, and various materials used during the British era. This trip proved to be highly memorable, providing both enjoyable experiences and valuable insights into Mizoram's history. It fostered a strong bond among students and the teacher, enhancing our relationships.



## **Acknowledgment**

Firstly, I would like to express gratitude to God for providing us with the wonderful opportunity to visit Tlabung Town. Secondly, heartfelt thanks to our Principal Mr. Vuansanga Vanchhawng for granting permission for this trip and to all those who generously funded and contributed to its success. Special appreciation goes to Mr. C. Vanlalawma, the owner of the camp, for his hospitality and care. A big shoutout to the drivers, Lalramtiamia, Lalhmunsiamia, Lalruatfela Punte and Remnalalnunsiamia, for safely driving us to our destination. A special note of thanks to the Lallianzuala Lianhna's family for their assistance during our stay. Last but not least, I want to acknowledge Lalruatdiki Lianhna for guiding us around Tlabung town. Special thanks is extended to Nurse B. Lalnunsiami for providing us with a tour of the old hospital building and to the post office worker for showcasing the old equipment and documents used during the British era. Additionally, our gratitude goes to the police for showing us the first police station in Mizoram and providing us access to historical documents. Most importantly, sincere thanks to the VC Vice President, Pu Hmingthansanga Ralte, YMA Assistant Secretary, Pu B. Lalhuthanga, and Pu T. Lalzara for their insightful guidance and for sharing the rich history of Tlabung. Finally, the Department of History expresses heartfelt gratitude to the warm and welcoming community of Tlabung; their hospitality created connections that extend beyond the exploration of the town's cultural and historical treasures.



Fig 34: With Mr. T Lalzara (left)



Fig 35: Interaction with Pu B. Lalhuthanga & Pu Hmingthansanga Ralte (right)

## **A REPORT ON KNOW YOUR HISTORY - COLONIAL HISTORY THROUGH MATERIAL CULTURE: HERITAGE WALK AT TLABUNG**

### **Introduction**

Mizoram has experienced colonial influence from British rule in India. The British took over Mizoram in the late 19th Century. The colonial influence had changes in administration and culture. Colonialism shapes the history and development of Mizoram. The colonial era also brought changes in the religious practices and beliefs; it came with the introduction of Christian religion. Colonialism had an impact on Mizo society, culture and religion. The missionaries, FW Savidge and JH Lorrain, arrived in 1894 at the Lushai Hills and brought a lot of changes. The missionaries introduced the Mizo alphabet, translated the Bible and spread the teaching of Jesus Christ. It led changes in the Mizo beliefs and replaced old beliefs and superstition with inner peace, happiness and faith in Jesus Christ.



Fakhunlawmawma  
2123BA016



Fig 1. Onward to Tlabung

The Department of History, Higher and Technical Institute of Mizoram (HATIM) organised a field study at Tlabung from 16th to 19th January. The main purpose for this field study is to have a better understanding of our history in Tlabung.

### **Present Day Society of Tlabung**

According to Hmingthansanga, Vice President of the Village Council, based on the Job Card report there are 1400-1500 houses. It is belief that there are approximately four languages spoken in Tlabung which are Pahari, Duhlian, Hindi and Bangla. 60%-70% of the population in Tlabung were Pang, Bawm, Bengali, Pahari. There are nine churches in Tlabung namely: Presbyterian, Salvation Army, IKK (Isua Krista Kohhran), EFCI (Evangelical Free Church of India), Buddhist, Hindu and Baptist. Inter-marriage is not common in Tlabung.

Many of the local occupation relied on shopkeeping. Some of the locals engage in fishing and transportation by boat. They also made possible transportation of vehicles in the river by boat.

### **Archaeological Report**

Thomas Herbert Lewin also known as Thangliena was sent to take back Mary Winchester and arrived at Tlabung on 9th November 1871. The year 1871 was recorded as the establishment year of Tlabung. Tlabung was also known as Demagree, 'dema' means 'tla' and 'gree' means 'bung'.

### **Missionary Kai (N 22.907741, E 92.465602)**

Missionary Kai is the first place that the British Missionary set their foot in Mizoram on 8th March 1903. The first two missionaries sent to Mizoram were Rev.JH.Lorrain also known as Pu Buanga and FW Savidge also known as Sap Upa.They were sent by Baptist Missionary Society(BMS), London.

Missionary Kai is located in Bazar and there is a memorial monument created in their memory for the first place to set their foot in Mizoram by Mizoram Thalai Kristian Pawl in 25th Jan, 2016.



Fig 2: Missionary Kai



Fig 3: Prayer House

### **Inspection Bungalow (N 22.905836, E 92.470375)**

The first inspection Bungalow (I.B) was established at Tlabung in 1871 by the British. It is located in Vengchhak. The I.B was currently under the care and protection of the Heritage Committee of Tlabung Branch YMA. The house was built in material of cement, wood, thatch bamboo and corrugated iron sheets. In the yard of IB there are two memorial erection which have been brought together in the present day namely: Rothangpuia Memorial Monument and Thangliena Memorial Monument.





Fig 4. Inspection Bungalow

**Post Office** (N 22.906304, E 92.46711)

The Post office was first named “Post and Telegraph Office”. This was the first Post Office of Mizoram established in 1872 by the British. The post office is located in Bazar, Tlabung. There are some old materials used by the British such as stamps, ink pad, calendar and safe lock.



Fig 5: Post Office



Fig 6: Plaque

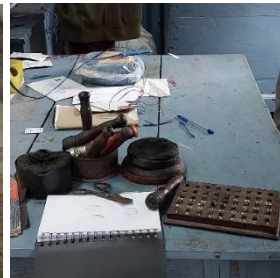


Fig 7: Stamps, Ink pad & Calendar

The building is made with the material of bricks, cement, wood, thatch bamboo and corrugated iron sheet. There is an entrance on both the front and backside of the house. Currently there are five employees in the post office. In the yard there is a memorial erection for the post office placed by the Heritage Committee of Tlabung YMA Branch.

**Leprosy Hospital** (N 22.904672, E 92.474284)

The Leprosy hospital is the first and only one in the state of Mizoram. It was established in 1978 located in Chanmari, Tlabung. The original building still stand till today. It had a vast compound and a memorial erection is placed for the leprosy hospital by the Heritage Committee of Tlabung YMA Branch.



Fig 8. Leprosy Hospital

Currently there is one patient living who is already healed as his family disowned him. The patient lived in the hospital and the nurse working supplied him with food and the patient earn a living by weaving and sold them. The building is made with the material of brick, cement and corrugated iron sheet.



Fig 9. Hospital plaque

**Police Station** (N 22.907427, E 92.467312)

The Police Station is located in Thana veng, Tlabung. It is the first police station in Mizoram. It has a huge compound with a good environment. Out of all the quarters standing only one is from the colonial period. There are two buildings built by the British. The old building was first established as an outpost in the year 1872 by the British. The old building still had its original material such as the wall, beam, roof, door, floor and window, only some beams were renovated and replaced by the Arts & Culture Department under 13th Finance Commission. The old building was made with the materials such as wood, corrugated iron sheet and thatch bamboo. Certain materials used by the British such as bed, table, chair and communication device. The old building was used to communicate with the MRPD. The building is under the care and protection of the Heritage Committee of Tlabung YMA Branch. Later it was renovated and established as Police Station in the year 1889. The building was made with cement and bricks.



Fig 10. Outpost in 1872



Fig 11. Police Station

**Baptist Church of Mizoram** (N 22.907677, E 92.465714)

It is the first church in Mizoram located in Zawlpui. Baptist church of Mizoram was established in 9th March 1911. This church currently has 525 member with 10 Upa and 8 Rawngbawltu.



Fig 12. BCM Church

**Thangliana Mual** (N 22.907718, E 92.465984)

Thangliana Mual was used by TH Lewin for his army barrack in the past. It was established on 9th November 1871 in Zawlpui Veng. It is also known as Lewin Playground.



Fig 13



Fig 14

Fig 13 & 14: Thangliana Mual

**Civil Hospital** (N 22.906374, E 92.470115)

This is the first hospital in Mizoram established in the year 1872 by Lt Col TH Lewin. Based on local interaction the hospital is located downhill from the



current location. Among the buildings standing only one building is from the colonial period. The Hospital was caught fire in 1977 and most of the old documents were burned.



Fig 15. Civil Hospital



Fig 16 Hospital Building

**Hari Mandir** (N 22.906408, E 92.466352)

Hari Mandir located in Bazar Veng is the first Hindu Temple in Mizoram which was established in 1896. There are four God statues inside the temple, namely: Shiva Linga, Shani Dev, Khrishna and Loka, wife of Kartik. Each of the gods' statues have their own gate which can be lock for protection. They currently have one priest. A box has been placed to collect offerings.



Fig 17. Hari Mandir



Fig 18



Fig 19



Fig 20



Fig 21

Fig 18-21: Hindu gods

### **Rothangpuia Memorial Monument (N 22.905958, E 92.470568)**

Rothangpuia was known as the chief of Khawngthlang Lal during 1820-1876. During the war with the British and Mizo Lalte, he was a strong supporter of

the peace agreement. In 1866 the British and Mizo Lalte made a peace agreement in a form of “Sa ui tan”. Their agreement term stated:

“British hmelma chu an hmelma a ni ang,  
An hmelma chu British hmelma a ni ang”



Fig 22: Rothangpuia Memorial Monument

### **Thangliena Memorial Monument (N 22.905909, E 92.470581)**

Thomas Herbert Lewin also known as Thangliena, a name given by the Mizos. He arrived in 1865 in Mizoram in Demagree which is now known as Tlabung. TH Lewin was the very first Englishman to make his way to Mizoram. He was the first Mizo's white friend.

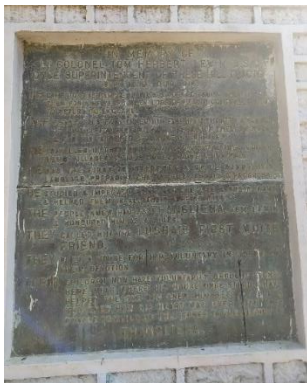


Fig 23: Thangliena Memorial Monument

IN MEMORY OF  
LT COLONEL TOM-HERBERT LEWIN B.S.C.  
ONCE SUPERINTENDENT OF THESE HILL TRACTS  
BORN 1839. DIED 1916.  
HE CAME TO THIS PEOPLE IN 1865 & WORKED AMONG THEM & FOR  
THEM FOR NINE YEARS. WHEN LOSS OF HEALTH COMPELLED HIM  
TO RETURN TO ENGLAND.  
THE PEOPLE TRUSTED & LOVED HIM FOR HIS SYMPATHY & SENSE  
OF JUSTICE. FOR HIS UNTIRING INTEREST IN THEIR WELFARE  
& FOR HIS INTERPID & DAUNTLESS COURAGE.  
HE TRAVELLED IN THEIR UNKOWN LAND, VISITING THEIR CHIEFS  
THEIR VILLAGES & THEIR HOMES. ALONE & UNAFRAID.  
HE WAS THE FIRST THE FIRST TO INTERPET & WRITE DOWN THEIR  
LANGUAGE. PREPAIRING THE WAY FOR SCHOOLS & PROGRESS.  
HE STUDIED & IMPROVED THEIR AGRICULTURE & THEIR LAWS  
& HELPED THEM IN ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES.  
THE PEOPLE KNEW HIM AS THAGLIENA. TOM LEWIN.  
& HONOURED HIM AS A CHIEF.  
THEY CALLED HIM THE LUSHAIS FIRST WHITE  
FRIEND.  
THEY BUILT A HOUSE FOR HIM VOLUNTARY IN TOKEN OF  
THER DEVOTION.  
THEIR CHILDREN NOW AVE VOLUNTARILY BROUGHT STONES  
HERE. NEAR WHERE HIS HOUSE ONCE, STOOD & HAVE  
HELPED THE ONE WHO KNEW HIM BEST OF ALL &  
WHO KNEW HOW HIS HEART WAS EVER WITH THIS  
PEOPLE TO BUILD UP THE STONES TO THE MEMORY OF  
THANGLIENA

**W.B. Oldham Inscription** (N 22.91459, E 92.47052)

WB Oldham was the Chittagong Division Commissioner. The inscription was located in Vantaikawr. The inscription was covered in sand and need to be dug for documentation.

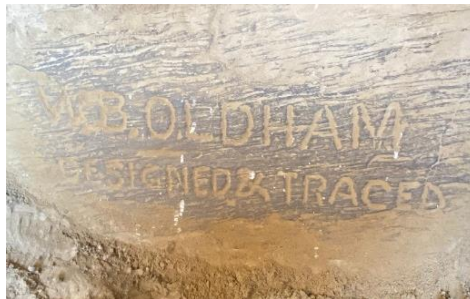


Fig 24: W.B. Oldham Inscription



### **Bazar Building** (N 22.90709, E 92.466108)

Bazar buildings located in Bazar veng contain various kinds of stores like convenience store, mobile store, hardware, restaurant, vegetable shop. Taxis are more common than rickshaws in Tlabung. Friday is marked as their special market day for groceries.

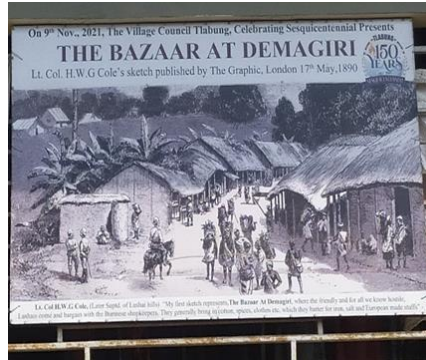


Fig 25: Tlabung old Bazar sketch

All the locations of sites and localities are shown in map as follows.



Map 1: Locations/localities with historical significance in Tlabung

### **Other places visited**

Apart from Tlabung, other places like LZM English Medium School, Kawrpuichhuah and Thekaduar in Bangladesh were visited. It helped in understanding and gaining more knowledge.

**LZM English Medium School** was also visited. The staff were very welcoming and accepted us to look around the school. The school is located in Vengchhak.

A village named **Kawrpuichhuah** is located a few miles away from Tlabung, located near and sharing the Bangladesh borderline. The village were mainly occupied by Chakma and a very small percentage of Mizo can also be found.

**Thekaduar** is located in Bangladesh near Kawrpuichhuah, both share the borderline. To reach Thekaduar, boat is required for travelling as it is separated by a large river. The inhabitants used boats as their means of transportation between the two villages. There are many shops situated in Thekaduar such as toy store, clothes, pots and many other things. Teaks were exported and sold on the other side.

### **Remarks**

This field study was a very enlightening and refreshing trip. Compared to other towns and cities Tlabung was not very well developed but due to many historical sites present in the villages gives us very valuable information of our history. The people of Tlabung welcomed us with great hospitality. This field study has enriched us with knowledge about cultural history.

### **Acknowledgement**

I am grateful to our Principal Vuansanga Vanchhawng for allowing us this field study. I also thanked the YMA Asst. Secretary B. Lalhuthanga Ralte and Vice

VC Hmingthansanga for their interaction. Arjun KK for allowing us to enter and explain to us about the Hari Mandir. We also give thanks to the sumo driver Lalramtiama, Lalhmunsiamia, Lalruatfela Punte and Remnalalnunsiamia for picking us from the hostel and bringing us to Tlabung. And we also give thanks to Lallianzuala Lianhna for welcoming us and invite us for dinner.

## **A REPORT ON KNOW YOUR HISTORY - COLONIAL HISTORY THROUGH MATERIAL CULTURE: HERITAGE WALK AT TLABUNG**

From 16th - 19th January, 2024(Tuesday), eleven students along with Dr. Lalhminghlua went on a Field Study to Tlabung located at Lunglei District. The main aim of this field study was to learn Colonial History through Material Culture. Some of the places visited were Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung; Thangliana Mual; Missionary Kai; Post Office; Civil Hospital; Inspection Bungalow; Police Station; W.B.Oldham; Leprosy Hospital; Kawrpuichhuah.



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Fig 1: Onward to Tlabung

### **Colonialism in Mizoram**

During the colonial period, Mizoram was part of British-ruled Assam, impacting its administration, culture, and economy. The period led to changes in agricultural practices and economic structures. In 1972, Mizoram became a

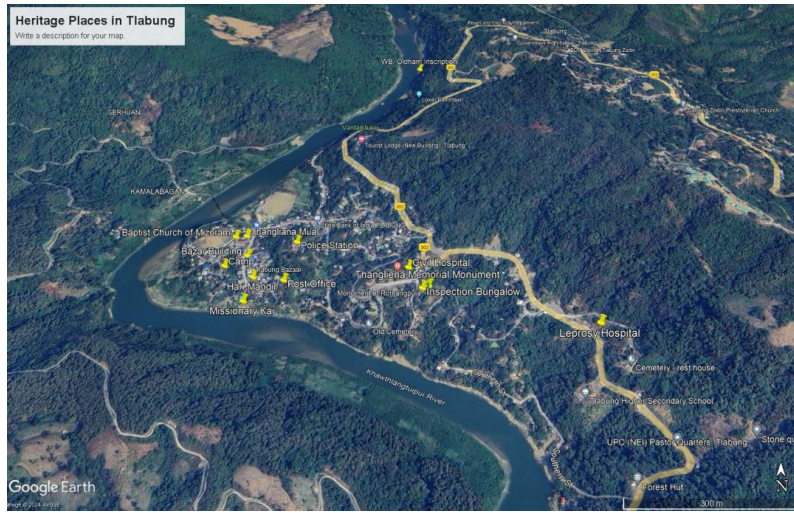


separate Union Territory, a pivotal moment shaping its history and identity. The transition spurred efforts to preserve Mizo culture and traditions, reflecting the enduring spirit of the local community. Colonialism had a significant impact on the culture of Mizoram. The British colonial rule introduced new systems, institutions, and cultural influences that shaped the region. For example, the spread of Christianity during the colonial period has had a lasting impact on the religious landscape of Mizoram. The missionaries introduced Western education, which led to changes in language, education, and social practices. Traditional customs and practices also underwent transformations due to colonial influences. It's fascinating to explore how these historical events have shaped Mizoram's unique culture today.

Colonialism had a devastating impact on many indigenous communities, including systemic racism, poverty, economic inequality, violence, cultural loss, and the tragic issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. It's crucial to acknowledge and address these negative legacies. Colonialism often disrupted traditional ways of life, imposed foreign systems, and marginalized indigenous peoples. Under colonial rule, the high taxes, forced labor, and exploitation they endured were truly unjust. It was inspiring to see how the Mizos stood up against these oppressive activities and revolted against the colonial powers. The Mizo chiefs played a crucial role in leading their people and fighting for their freedom. Colonialism often involved the imposition of authority and control, which stifled the indigenous communities and their ability to govern themselves.

### **Heritage Report**

Tlabung Village was built up on 9th November, 1871 by Thomas Herbert Lewin commonly known as Thangliena by the native of Tlabung. The previous name of Tlabung was “Demagree”, ‘Dema’ means ‘Tla’ and ‘Gree’ means ‘Bung’. Tlabung was believed to be named after “Vantaikhawr Falls”.



Map 1: Heritage places in Tlabung.

### **Inspection Bungalow (I.B)**

The first Inspection Bungalow in Mizoram was established in 1871 by the British, which is located in Vengchhak Tlabung. Considering its historical significance, the Heritage Committee Tlabung Branch take care of the place. The house was built up of thatch bamboo, corrugated iron sheet, cement, and wood, it had a huge backyard as well. There are two Memorial erections in the yard which have been brought together in the present day, namely: Rothangpuia Memorial Monument and Thangliena Memorial Monument.



Fig 2



Fig 3

### **Rothangpuia Memorial Erection**

Rothangpuia Thangluah (1820-1876) was the chief of Khawthlang. Lt. Colonel Thomas Herbert was fond of him owing to his great personality for one thing peace and astute vision. He was even called as a friend of the British by General Brownlow. During his reign the British and the Mizos ruler made an agreement that is on October, 1866. A term in their agreement reads as-

“British hmelma chu an hmelma a ni a nga,  
An hmelma chu British hmelma a ni ang.”

“The British enemy was their enemy,  
Their enemy was the British enemy”  
(Translator: Esther Lalhimpuii)



Fig 4: Rothangpuia Memorial Erection

### **Thangliena Memorial Erection**

Lt. Colonel Tom Herbert Lewin (1839-1916) was a former superintendent of this hill tracts. He was the one who built Tlabung Village but he did not stay for a long time. During his stay he established the first hospital in Mizoram and also established the first Inspection Bungalow in Mizoram. He brought development of education in Tlabung. The people in Tlabung called him the Mizo's first white friend.



Fig 5: Thangliana Memorial Erection

### **Baptist Church of Mizoram**

Baptist Church of Mizoram, Tlabung was established on 9th March, 1911. It was the first Church in Tlabung and located in Zawlpui, Tlabung. Currently, there are 525 Church members, among them there are ten Upas and eight Rawngbawltu.



Fig 6: Baptist Church, Tlabung



## **Civil Hospital**

Tlabung Hospital was established in 1872 by Thomas Herbert Lewin to be the first caring hospital of Mizoram, which was rebuilt in the year 1980. It is located in Damdawiin Veng, Tlabung. The hospital celebrated its 150th anniversary in the year 2022. The first Hospital was burnt down in the year 1984 and renovated just above the previous place.



Fig 7: Entrance of Civil Hospital



Fig 8: Civil Hospital Campus

## **Leprosy Hospital**

The Leprosy Hospital was established in the year 1978, it is located in Chanmari Tlabung. It was the first Leprosy Hospital in Mizoram besides it is the only Leprosy Hospital existed in Mizoram. The hospital is under the management of Heritage Committee Tlabung Branch Y.M.A. Currently, there is one patient in the hospital though he is already healed his family disowned him. He is under the care of Nurse Mrs. Khuangkungi.



Fig 9: Building of Leprosy Hospital (left)



Fig 10: History student with Mr. Robiram Chakma (Resident) (right)

## Post Office

The first Post Office of Mizoram was established in the year 1872 by the British. Located in Bazar Veng, Tlabung, it was first named “Post and Telegraph Office”. The Office is built up of bricks, cement, wood, thatch bamboo and corrugated iron sheet. Currently there are five employees in the post office, there are some old materials like old stamp, calendar, ink pad and safe lock.



Fig 11: Post Office



Fig 12: Old Stamp



Fig 13: Ink pad



Fig 14: Calendar

## **Bazar Building**

The Bazar Building is located in Bazar veng, Tlabung. The shops are mostly run by Bengali, Chakma and Bangla. T.H. Lewin started the marketing system during his reign in Tlabung and he even contributed 3000/- rupees for the construction of Bazar Building. Later the new building was built and a sketch by Lt. Colonel H.W.G was made and published in the year 17th May,1890 by the Graphic London, the sketch was hung on the wall of the new building.

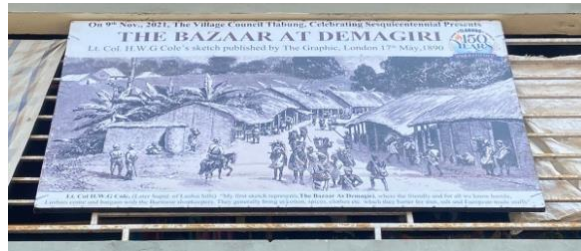


Fig 15: A sketch by Lt. Colonel H.W.G

## **Missionary Kai**

Missionary Kai is located in Bazar Veng, Tlabung. It is the place where the first Christian Missionaries Rev. J.H. Lorrain (Pu Buanga) and F.W. Savidge (Sap Upa) set their foot when they arrived at Tlabung on 8th March,1903 by boat. They were sent to Mizoram by Baptist Missionary Society to preach the gospel in South Lushai Hills. A prayer House is built in the memorial of the missionaries which was inaugurated on 14th February,2019 by Rev. J.C. Vanlalluaia of MTKP President.



Fig 16: Entrance of Missionary Kai



Fig 17: Missionary Kai

## **Hari Mandir**

Sarbojanin Hari Mandir is the oldest Temple of Hindu Community in Mizoram established in 1896. The Temple located in Bazar Veng Tlabung, was established by its founder Lokhindar Chowdhury and Nanda Kumar Chowdhury. In the early days the Temple used to be private property but later it was handed over to Hindu Community Tlabung, and currently the Temple is run by Sabojanin Hari Mandir Committee Tlabung. They have four Gods and their names are Krishna, Shivalinga, Loka (Wife of Kartik), Shani Dev.





Fig 18: Hari Mandir



Fig 19: Front view

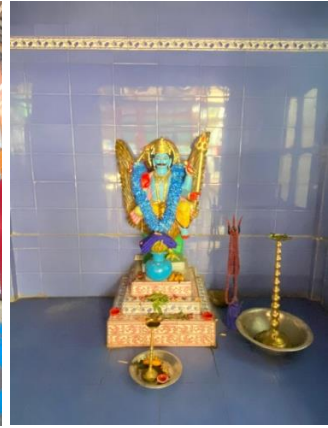


Fig 20: Kartik



Fig 21: Shiva Linga



Fig 22: Krishna



Fig 23: Loka



Fig 24: Footprint of God found inside Mandir

## **Thangliana Mual**

Thangliana Mual which is also called Lewin's Playground was established on 9th November, 1871. It was the first place where Lewin and the British Army settled and built army camp.



Fig 25: Entrance of Thangliana Mual



Fig 26: Thangliana Mual

## **W.B. Oldham Inscription**

WB Oldham was the Chittagong Commissioner Officer. WB Oldham inscription situated in Vantaikawr. WB Oldham discovered a road connected from Tlabung to Pachang. This route was later known as WB Oldham Road. WB Oldham wrote his name in the stone wall which was later preserved and conserved by the Art & Culture Department.



Fig 27: Protection structure

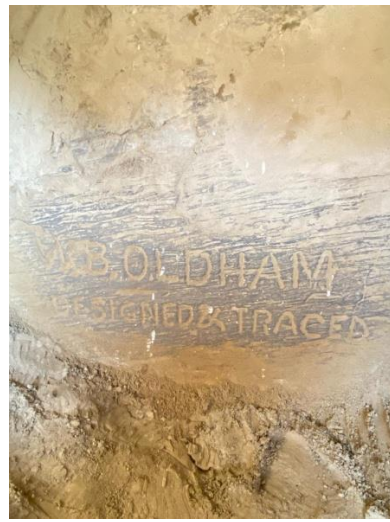


Fig 28: W.B. Oldham Inscription

## **Police Station**

The first Police Station in Mizoram established in the year 1872 which was located in Thana Veng, Tlabung. Earlier this Police Station was used as an outpost only, later it was turned into a formal Thana. The Police Station was renovated by Art and Culture Department under 13th Finance Commission. Even till today the Police Station still exist and function.



Fig 29: Old Building of Police



Fig 30: Current Building

### **Other places visited**

Apart from Tlabung, there were other places which were visited. The following are the places which were visited.

**Kawrpuchhuah:** It is located at some distance away from Tlabung, Kawrpuchhuah share its border with Bangladesh. Kawrpuchhuah is a village which is mostly occupied by Chakmas, from Kawrpuchhuah Bangladesh could be easily reach by using boat.



Fig 31



Fig 32

Fig 31 & 32: View of Kawrpuchhuah

**Thekaduar (Bangladesh):** Without actually reaching Bangladesh its border was visited. The people living here are mostly Chakmas, and owned different kinds of shop like tea stall, shop that sells pots made out of clay. Even though it was not a big and fancy market most of the things that are sold here are cheaper than Mizoram.





Fig 33: Thekaduar, Bangladesh

### **Present Society of Tlabung**

Thomas Herbert Lewin (Thangliana) was the founder of Tlabung in 9th November, 1871. The previous name of Tlabung was “Demagree”. Based on interaction between B. Lalhuthanga YMA Asst. secretary of Tlabung and Hmingthansanga Ralte Village Council Vice President of Tlabung. There are many foreigners about 60-70% were non-Mizo and there are many languages spoken in the village such as Bangla, Duhlian, Hindi and Pahari. Different denominations of Christianity are in Tlabung - Presbyterian, Baptist, Salvation Army, IKK (Isua Krista Kohhran), EFCI (Evangelical Free Church of India). Apart from this, Buddhism and Hinduism prevails in Tlabung. Intermarriage between Mizo and non-Mizo is not uncommon. The most common means of occupation are agriculture, fishing, rearing domesticated animals like pigs, ducks, dogs, goat, chicken.



Fig 34



Fig 35

Fig 34 & 35: Street view of Tlabung Bazar

### **Remarks**

The field study was quite successful as the aims and reasons of this field study were met through the exploration of Tlabung and through the study of Tlabung History. A vast amount of knowledge about Tlabung and its history was obtained and this made the field study successful. All their historical places are under a good care of Heritage Committee Tlabung Branch YMA. As Tlabung share boundary with Bangladesh, trade and commerce exist among them. There are multiple goods traded between India and Bangladesh and from Bangladesh variety of goods like household goods, clothes, etc. are imported.

### **Acknowledgement**

We are very grateful to our respected principal Mr. Vuansanga Vanchhawng, for granting us the permission to have this field study and supporting us financially

and providing us free transportation. I also express my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. C.Vanlalawma for giving us a place to stay during our field study. A special thanks to our drivers Lalramtiana, Lalhmunsiana, Lalruatfela Punte, and Remnalalnunsiana for safely driving us to our destination. We are also very grateful to the local people especially Hmingthansanga Ralte Vice President of Village Council Tlabung and B.Lalhuthanga Asst. Secretary of YMA Tlabung and Mr. T. Lalzara as we gained a profound rich history of Tlabung from them. And we are also very thankful to Mr. Lallianzuala Lianhna for inviting us to have a dinner at his place. Last but not the least, I am most thankful to my classmates who made the field study successful, it is truly remarkable and wonderful for everyone's contribution.



Fig 36: Local interaction with B. Lalhuthanga & Pu Hmingthansanga Ralte (left)

Fig 37: Local interaction with Pu T. Lalzara (right)



Fig 38: Onward to Lunglei

## **EXPLORING THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF THEIRIAT: FROM ANCIENT TRADITIONS TO PRESENT DAY CHRISTIANITY**

Mizo inhabits the hilly terrain in the northeastern part of India in the state of Mizoram. The adoption of the name Mizoram by the Mizo people occurred in 1972. The Mizo community comprises various sub-tribes, each distinguished by unique rituals, ceremonies, and dialectical nuances. However, the early 20th century witnessed a significant shift as Mizo sub-tribes embraced Christianity, leading to the gradual erosion of differences among them. Traditionally, religious and cultural practices governed social interactions among the Mizo people, characterized by a "nomadic habit and volatile mentality" prior to British and missionary influence.



Lalruatsangi  
2123BA045

The arrival of Christian missionaries, notably J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge from the Arthington Aborigines Mission in 1894, catalyzed a profound transformation in Mizo society. Education and Christianity reshaped the perspectives and worldview of the Mizo people, giving rise to a new cultural identity. Despite retaining elements of their traditional customs and traditions, significant changes were evident, marking a departure from the past. By 1900, despite facing persecution from village chiefs, the number of Christians in the southern region of Mizoram had grown to around 40. Instances of violence and discrimination against Christians were commonplace, with incidents such as beatings and expulsion from villages occurring frequently. In Pukpui Village, Christians faced opposition from the village chief, leading to their expulsion and subsequent relocation to Sethlun. The establishment of the first indigenous church in Mizoram in 1902 marked a milestone in the spread of Christianity among the Mizo people. The influx of Christians from various villages further bolstered the Christian community in Sethlun, leading to the rapid spread of the faith.



In 1904, the first Christian Conference was convened, resulting in the employment of four evangelists to spread the Gospel. Among them, Thankunga emerged as a prominent figure, forsaking his chieftainship to become an evangelist and later a pastor. The impact of Christianity extended beyond religious realms, influencing social and cultural practices among the Mizo people. The dismantling of the Bawi system and changes in the role of Zu, a traditional alcoholic beverage, reflected the evolving landscape shaped by Christian teachings.

Traditional Mizo festivals underwent modifications, with Christian celebrations supplanting indigenous ones. The prohibition of alcohol consumption within the church framework underscored the moral authority wielded by religious institutions in Mizo society. Christianity also brought about changes in death practices, with traditional rituals giving way to Christian customs. The introduction of church bells to announce deaths, the prominence of funeral services conducted by the church, and the evolution of tombstones as enduring markers of faith and remembrance exemplify the cultural transformation brought about by Christianity in Mizoram.

In conclusion, the development of Christianity in Mizoram represents a multifaceted process encompassing religious, social, and cultural dimensions, shaping the identity and ethos of the Mizo people in profound ways.

### **Present day religious status**

Mizoram, located in Northeast India, has a predominantly Christian population, with Christianity being the dominant religion in the state. However, there are also minority communities practicing other religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.

Christianity holds a significant presence in Mizoram, with the majority of the population adhering to various denominations of Christianity, primarily Protestantism. The influence of Christianity extends to various aspects of social

and cultural life in the state, including education, governance, and community practices. Some of the distinct churches include:

1. Presbyterian Church of Mizoram
2. Baptist Church of Mizoram
3. Roman Catholic Church
4. Seventh-day Adventist Church
5. Salvation Army
6. Mizo Synod of the Presbyterian Church of India
7. United Pentecostal Church
8. Evangelical Church of Maraland

These churches play a significant role in shaping the religious identity and practices of the people of Mizoram.

While Christianity is the predominant religion, there are minority communities practicing other faiths. Hinduism has a small but notable presence in Mizoram, particularly among immigrants and individuals from other parts of India. Additionally, there are smaller communities of Buddhists and Muslims in the state.

### **History of Pukpui with Special Reference to Darmaka**

The survey that has been conducted in Theiriat can only be understood from the context of Pukpui where Christianity as a religion has been outcasted by the Chief Darmaka. Hence, its necessity in outlining its historical nature.

Pukpui village, situated in Lunglei, Mizoram, holds a rich and ancient history. Before the advent of Christianity, the village was renowned for its powerful chiefs and tribal customs. The people of Pukpui were known as headhunters, a practice evidenced by the display of enemy heads at the outskirts of their fields. Additionally, conflicts with neighboring tribes often led to captives being taken as slaves, some of whom eventually settled permanently in Pukpui. Adjacent to

Pukpui lies Kawmzawl, a town closely intertwined with the village's history. Notable Mizo chiefs, such as Sailo Lal and Lal Seipuia, resided in Kawmzawl, contributing to its significance in the region. One prominent figure, Lalseipuia Sailo, ruled over Chhimbial and relocated from Valcheng to Kawmzawl in 1883. Under his reign, Kawmzawl prospered, boasting an impressive population of 300-400 households.

After Lalseipuia's departure from Kawmzawl, the village faced challenges in relocating due to water scarcity. Eventually, they settled in Riatte for two years before moving to Zopui. Lalseipuia directed his son to Thangte while he himself relocated to Baichi, accompanied by the revered Prophet Darphawka. Both Lalseipuia and Darphawka passed away in Baichi.

Darmaka Ralte, an esteemed interpreter for the British, played a significant role in the village's development. Recognized for his exceptional skills, he was rewarded with Pukpui Tlang and utilized his influence to establish a village in Pukpui. Despite initially residing in Rahsiveng, Darmaka officially settled in Pukpui in 1901, earning the moniker Laldara. His upbringing in Aizawl and experiences as a merchant in Burma shaped his journey to becoming the first Mizo to hold a government job. Darmaka's pivotal role extended beyond interpretation; his deep understanding of Mizo society made him a valuable informant for the British. His contributions were acknowledged through various rewards, including a gun, a medal for the Lushai Expedition (1889-1893), and the choice between 200 rupees and land, ultimately opting for the latter at his wife's insistence.

The establishment of Pukpui village by Darmaka occurred between 1893-1894, coinciding with his tenure as a government interpreter. Despite his newfound leadership as a village chief, Darmaka remained steadfast in his loyalty to the British. The introduction of Christianity brought new dynamics to Pukpui, with a few individuals embracing the faith. However, tensions arose as the Christian practices conflicted with traditional customs, leading to their exile to Sethlun and later Theiriati in 1906. In conclusion, the pre-Christian era of Pukpui village epitomizes a time of cultural richness, leadership transitions, and interactions with colonial powers, setting the stage for its evolution in Mizoram's history.

## **History of Theiriat**

**Introduction:** In the early 20th century, the establishment of Theiriat Tlang as a village in Mizoram held unique historical significance. The nomenclature "Theiriat Tlang" finds its roots in the abundant presence of trees known as "Theiriat" in the area, predating the settlement of any inhabitants. Even upon the establishment of the Christian community on May 20, 1909, the name "Theiriat" endured, a testament to the enduring connection with the region's natural surroundings.

**Formation of Theiriat Tlang:** The ruler of Chhimbial, Seipua, driven by a fervent desire to create a settlement, faced challenges in locating a suitable site due to the scarcity of water. After an exhaustive search, he eventually settled in the region encompassing Theiriat to Kawmzawl, Ramzotlang, Saitluk, Zopui, Khawthir, Baichi, and Riatte. However, on May 8, 1902, an incident transpired in Pukpui village where Chief Dara expelled Christians from the community for observing the Sabbath and abstaining from attending church services on that day.

**Relocation and Settlement:** Having resided in Sethlun kawn for seven years, in 1906, the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Lunglei designated five mountains for Christians to select as their settlement. The options presented were Thehle, Theiriat, Ralvawng, Darzo, and S. Vanlaiphai. Ultimately, the Christian community opted for Theiriat Mountain as their settlement location. Despite initial challenges, specifically the absence of a water source, the devoted members engaged in prayer and continued their search. After two days, their persistence bore fruit as they discovered a suitable water supply. Subsequently, a well was diligently dug. In the spring of 1908, construction commenced on a settlement at Theiriat Tlang. This endeavor culminated in the community's relocation from Sethlunkawn to Theiriat Tlang on May 20, 1909.

**Leadership and Legacy:** The ruler of Theiriat was Lalvûta, the second son of Rolûra, who was the second son of Tlutpâwrha, the son of Seipua, the Chhim Bial chief. Lalvûta's father, Seipua, passed away in Riâtte before they reached Theiriat Mountain. His body was processed through kuang ur in Baichi, and



Seipuia's bones were laid to rest in Baichi. In 1931, Lalvûta relocated from Dawn to Valcheng. Desiring to be in Theiriat, he sought permission from the Commissioner. A vote was conducted in the village, allowing residents to express their preference for or against having a chief. Ultimately, those in favor of having a chief prevailed by three houses. Subsequently, Lalvuta Sailo, known as the benevolent ruler, was appointed to govern Theiriat. During Lalvuta's leadership in Theiriat, he governed with due consideration for the church. Lalvuta passed away on 22.12.1953 at the age of 53. His son, Lalchhuma, succeeded him, overseeing villages such as Theiriat, Valcheng, Dawn, Zobawk, and Thangte. Lalchhuma assumed the role of a church elder at Theiriat Baptist Church on 22.8.1960 and passed away on 3.12.1993.

***Legacy and inactivity:*** As mentioned earlier, in 1902, Christians expelled by Pukpui Lal Dara stayed on Sethlun Road for seven years and established a strong church. The Apostles and Church Leaders had already decided to contribute one-tenth of their new crops. After moving to Theiriat in 1909, they continued this practice within the church. Since Mizoram's first Baptist church was relocated to Theiriat, Sethlun Road, where the initial Baptist church stood, has remained inactive for 50 years.

### **Field survey report**

**Sethlun village:** The reconstructed model of earliest Christian church at Sethlun was documented. The locals have rebuilt it to resemble as much possible as the earliest construction. The materials and style of construction show how buildings were built in the past using combination of wood and bamboo with thatched roofing. The dimension of the building is:

<b>Dimensions (m)</b>	
<b>Length</b>	5.17
<b>Breadth</b>	3.45
<b>Height</b>	3.05

Seats have been arranged inside the church along the length of the building. There are five rows of wooden plank seats arranged in two columns. The length of the plank measures approximately 1.27 – 1.29 m in length set up at a height of about 0.4m in height. The floor has been made of mud. There are two windows and an only door made in the traditional *tlengrel* style.



Fig 1: Reconstructed church inside a protective structure



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6

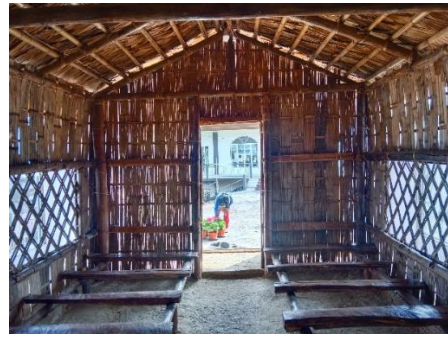


Fig 7

Fig 1-7: Reconstructed early Church at Sethlun

## **Theiriat**

The field study at the early Christian burial site in Theiriat revealed a total of 35 headstones. While some graves were well-preserved, others were partially hidden underground, with only the tops visible. Many inscriptions on the headstones have faded over time, making it challenging to read the names and dates of demise. Despite these challenges, all the legible inscriptions have been documented.

Of the 35 headstones, 13 were male and 16 were female, with four graves remaining unidentified due to deteriorating conditions and faint engravings. The stones are majorly of sandstone while a few have been done using granite. Some graves have been reconstructed using cement and iron bar as fencing. Various shapes were observed, including square tops, half-round tops etc.

The names inscribed on the stones are as follows.

Sl. No.	Names	Age	Date of Birth	Date of Demise
1	Zadinga		22.02.26	01.08.26
2	Unidentified			
3	Thanghlira		22.07.1923	08.06.24
4	Baby Lianthuami			
5	Baby Kawmchawli		16.07.1922	27.05.23
6	Bulthanga Khiangte	55		
7	Lalauvi	27	1896	15.03.1923
8	Zathuami Khiangte			
9	Lalkhuma	91		
10	Rochawnghluti	89		
11	Biakkungi		25.09.1923	18.12.1923
12	Thangnghilhlovi	45		16.11.1926
13	Langmawia Khiangte	22		13.02.1930
14	Thanchhumi Tlau		19.05.1925	26.03.1930
15	Thatkunga Chhehlawm	45		08.09.30
16	Rualchhingi	35		Dec 1927
17	Hrangthuama		Feb 1910	20.03.26
18/19	Saikhuma		1913	28.10.23
20	Unidentified			
21	Dotinthangi	64		1915
22	Chalzachhingi	48		22.10.1915
23	Dawnlovi	30		
24	Saithangi	29		July 1917
25	Unidentified			
26	Thanchhimi	60		1915
27	Vanthanga	13		Feb 1915
28	Pawnglaia			16.06.1909
29	Chawngkunga			
30	Biakhrangi			
31	Thanthuami			
32	Unidentified			
33	Lalsiama	07	1915	1922
34	Biaksanga			

Table 1: Inscriptions on grave stones



Grave number 18 has an additional erection which has also been recorded. Some graves were unable to be identified or read due to various factors such as faint engravings or deterioration. Additionally, the age and date of birth were not available for all individuals. The grave stones have been plotted and shown as follows:

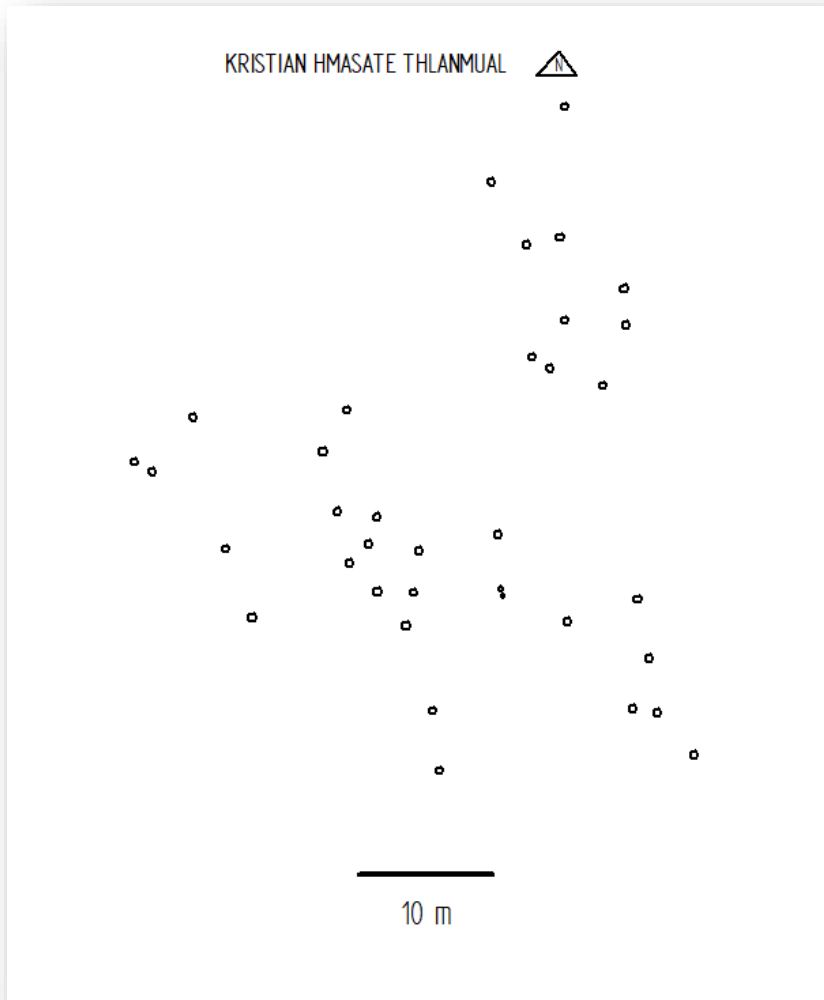


Fig 8: Cemetery layout

Some photographs of early Christian burial site at Theiriat are as follows.

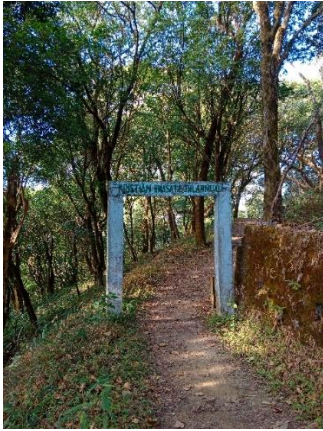


Fig 9



Fig 10



Fig 11



Fig 12



Fig 13

Fig 9-13: Early Christian burial site

### Remark

The religious landscape of Mizoram reflects a predominantly Christian society, with minority communities practicing other religions. While Christianity plays a

central role in shaping the state's identity, the coexistence of diverse religious beliefs underscores the importance of religious tolerance and harmony in Mizoram's social fabric.

The documentation of names and dates of death from the early Christian burial site at Theiriat provides valuable historical insights into the individuals interred there. Further efforts are needed to preserve and protect this significant cultural heritage site for future generations.

Engaging in a comprehensive field study at Sethlun and Theiriat provided valuable insights into the cultural heritage of Mizoram. Exploring the intricate architecture of Sethlun's old church unveiled layers of historical significance, offering a glimpse into the spiritual practices of our predecessors. At Theiriat, the examination of early Christian graves deepened the understanding of ancestral roots. The experience was both enlightening and enjoyable, fostering a connection with the past and emphasizing the importance of preserving our rich history for future generations.

### **Acknowledgement**

We express deep gratitude to our esteemed Principal, Mr. Vuansanga Vanchhawng, for his unwavering support, financial assistance, and provision of transportation, crucial to the success of our field study. The collaborative efforts, sincerity, and dedication of our Assistant Professors and fellow classmates played a pivotal role in the study's accomplishment. Special thanks to Miss Hannah Lalnunpuui for her warm welcome and assistance in Sethlun. Heartfelt appreciation goes to Sir B. Lalruatfela for facilitating our trip through Sethlun and Theiriat with utmost care and diligence.

## **A REPORT ON EXPLORATION OF EARLY CHRISTIAN BURIAL AT THEIRIAT**

**Introduction:** History is documentation of the past event and it is the study of change overtime and it covers all aspects of human society. History teaches us many things that we don't know about the past and knowing the history of our early Christians is one of the things we have to do as we are the people of Mizoram. Having an exploration of the history is one of the guidelines for the students to know their history well, and this exploration of the early Christian history would be the treasure for the Department of History. Accordingly, villages of Theiriat and Sethlun in Lunglei District were chosen for the exploration of the early Christian history.



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### **History Of Pukpui**

Pukpui is a village in Lunglei town. The origin of the name Pukpui comes from the area that is now occupied by the Indian army. The cave below the army area at the entrance of the village has generally been considered as the source for the name of Pukpui. However, there are others who said the name comes from the numerous caves that are found within and the vicinity of Pukpui. There are such as Puksel, Pukthiang, Phunchawngpuk Pukinkhar, Pukmal, Sazapuk, Mungekpuk etc. Pukpui was established by Darmaka. Lal Dara was born in Hmuizawl. His father was Romana and he had a good wife called 'Peri' (Hmaiperi). The people of Pukpui village have been self-sufficient since the early days.



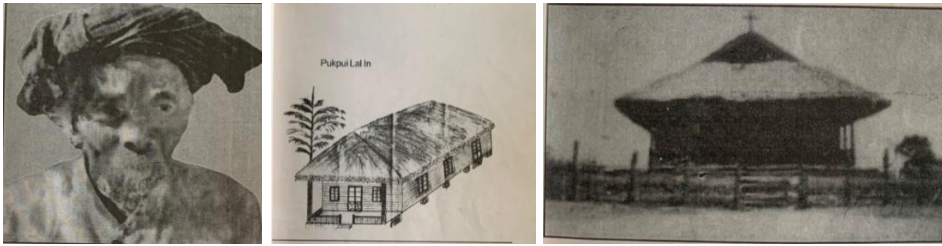


Figure 1: Lal Dara (Pukpui Lal) (left)

Figure 2: Pukpui Lal In (middle)

Figure 3: Pukpui Biak In (1935-1945) (right)

### History of Theiriat

***Theiriat village name origin:*** Theiriat tlang is called ‘Theiriat tlang’ because of the Theiriat tree as it was similar to Theiria. On 20/5/1909, Christian occupied the town and its name was changed to Theiriat. After the Christian occupation, the ‘Mount of God’ was also called ‘Chhim Arsi’ because of the careful lifestyle of the inhabitants. Before the 1950s, these names were popular.

***Short statement of Theiriat Lal:*** Lal Vuta was the second son of Rolura. Lal Vuta’s father Seipua died in Riatte before they reached Theiriat Mountain. His body was processed in Baichi and Seipua’s bones were buried in Baichi in 1931. From here, they moved to Dawn and then to Valcheng.

***Number of people at the beginning of Theiriat:*** Theiriat village was founded in 1909 with 40 households and 200-270 inhabitants. There were immigrants from various villages and the households and population increased rapidly, soon reaching 300 households.



Figure 4: Hand drawing of early Theiriatic village

### Early Christian Burial

Before Christianity came to Mizoram, our ancestor worshiped spirits and offered sacrifices to them. However, after the British missionaries came to Mizoram, our ancestors became Christian and the early Christians were buried in Theiriatic mountain. There are 35 gravestones in the graves of the early Christians, some of which have been renovated and rebuilt. The distance between the graves and the proximity of the graves is recorded. It took about 5 hours to measure the distance between the graves and do other necessary things. All the gravestones are recorded with their names and ages and all the gravestones are photographed as well.

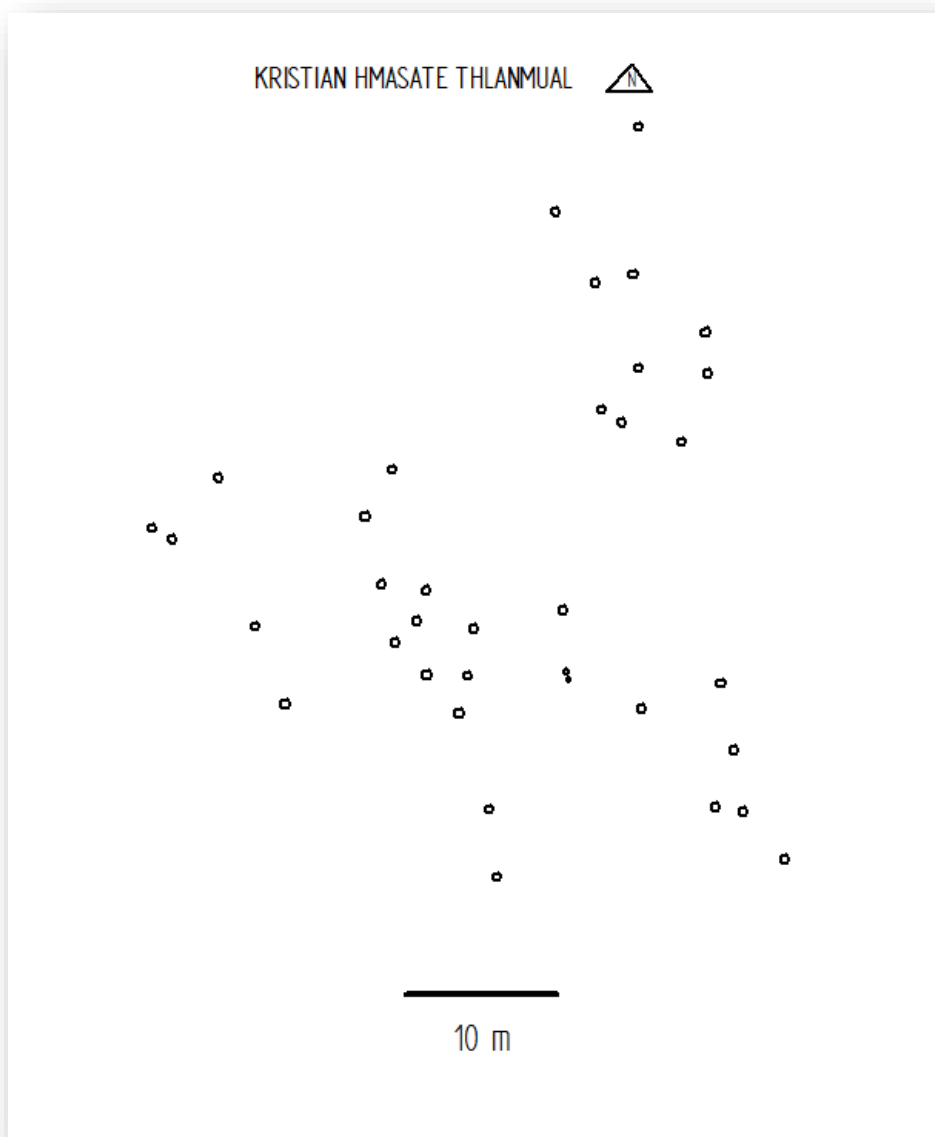


Fig 5: Lay out of graveyard



Figure 6: Early Christian's grave



Figure 7: Early Christian's grave

## **Other Place Visited Outside Theiriat**

### **Sethlun**

On 11th January, 1894, J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge arrived in Mizoram to spread Christianity and to make the mizo people believe in Christ. All the tribes of Mizoram were converted into Christian through the ministry of the two Welsh missionaries. The first Baptist church in Mizoram was established at Sethlun, Lunglei. On the way to Theiriat, Sethlun Baptist Church was first visited. Here, there is a small building which has been reconstructed in the same style and pattern as was used for Church service by the early Christians. Many materials were used like wood, bamboo, clay, hnang, dap and the roof were made by Siallu (*Borassus flabellifer*).





Figure 8: Thatch wall



Figure No 9: Inner top structure

The main door is slide able and made with dâp, wood and hnâng. There are five rows of wooden seats which is able to be fit in with around 20 people. There is also a lectern for the preacher made using hnâng, dâp and bamboo. Inside this structure, there is also 'Buhzêm' made out of dâp, hnâng and bamboo as well. Information boards are put up inside.



Figure 10: Wooden seats



Figure 11: Inner view



Figure 12: Lectern



Figure 13: Buhzêm

### **Acknowledgement**

We would like to give thanks to our respected Principal Mr. Vuansanga Vanchhawng for allowing us and giving us a bus to have this exploration in Theiriatic and Sethlun. We are also thankful to Miss Hannah Lalnunpuii from the Department of English for accompanying us in visiting Sethlun Baptist Kohhran. We also thank to our bus driver Pu B. Lalruatfela for taking us safely and also, we are very thankful to our department teachers for giving us a chance to have this memorable field study. The field study was successful and we are very fortunate to explore such an amazing place of early Christian history. This field trip will be a treasure for the Department of History.

*Colonial History through Material Culture: Heritage Walk at Tlabung*





## *Colonial History through Material Culture: Heritage Walk at Tlabung*







DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
HIGHER AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, MIZORAM

