ZO NUN

Supplementary Reader in English for Class VIII

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MIZORAM:AIZAWL

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THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a [1]**[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]** and to secure to all its citizens :

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the [2][unity and integrity of the Nation];

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

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1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)

FOREWORD

The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Mizoram, which is the Academic Authority for Elementary Education in the state developed a Supplementary Reader 'Zo Nun' for Classes 6 to 8. These Readers are developed with the primary aim of helping learners to acquire knowledge of Mizo culture and traditions and environment of their own land.

I extend my sincere appreciation to teacher educators, subject experts, teachers and all other stakeholders involved in development of the textbooks. Their collective efforts have ensured that these textbooks truly represent the spirit of *education for all* while nurturing curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking among learners.

It is, therefore, my proud privilege to hand over the Zo Nun Series to teachers and students in Mizoram and I hope that these books will be important tools for learning about the Mizos.

Aizawl
7th November, 2025

CAROLINE ZORAMTHANGI
Director, SCERT
Mizoram:Aizawl

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CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Part IV A (Article 51 A)

Fundamental Duties

Fundamental Duties – It shall be the duty of every citizen of India –

(a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;

(b) to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;

(c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;

(d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;

(e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;

(f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;

(g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures;

(h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;

(i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;

(j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement;

(k) who is a parent or guardian, to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

1 CHITE LUI

A well known river that runs through the city of Aizawl is the Chite river. Years ago, it would not have been wrong to call it the biggest and most well-known river in Aizawl.

But after *rambuai* in 1966 and as Aizawl city expands to this day, Chite river is no longer the biggest within the city limits, but it continues to be the most widely known river that flows through the city. It touches the hearts of people and is thought of with much fondness.

The poet Rokunga has written about the place, its path and how it flows along the outskirts of Aizawl (referred to as 'Zawlkhaw') as follows:

"Zawlkhaw sira luang del del Chite luipui,
A lo luanna zawl khaw lam phei saw hmara'n;
Dan te'n luang del del zel e, chhim tual panin,
Rialtui hmingthang lengngha vangkhua fin turin"

Chite river runs from North to South of Aizawl city. It flows gently along the side of Mualpui as a tributary of Tuirial River. The entire length of Chite river stretches to about 20 kms from its source. As Aizawl City expands, the river has become an invaluable natural border between different localities within the city.

Owing to this expansion, the natural forests have to make way for habitats along the banks of Chite river. This has made it more difficult to point the exact location of the

main river source. Nevertheless, we can say that the most probable source would be around Bawngkawn and its surrounding areas. This means several localities on the northern side of Aizawl city and its valleys are to be included. We would include the hills of Pi Hangi Lunglen Tlang and the hills opposite to Zemabawk as well. If we are to measure the headwater of the Chite river, we would find that it has receded to about 2.90 meters only. If this continues, the river would eventually dry up very soon.

We can say that Chite river is fed by the monsoon rains like other rivers of the hills. During the rainy seasons, the sudden increase in the volume of water often leads to flash floods called *sabereka khuangkaih* in Mizo. But the dry season brings a decrease in the volume of water and the river is reduced to a rivulet or a brook.

From the headwater to the point where it becomes a tributary of Tuirial river, Chite river has over nineteen tributaries of its own; and not long ago these smaller rivers together made Chite a much more formidable river. However, it is very unfortunate that these smaller rivers have become garbage carriers and consequently pollute Chite river. This is mainly because of the rapid growth and development of Aizawl city.

The better known tributaries include the rivers of Tlak, Bangla, Darnam, Theihai and Mirawng from the North; and Hmawngkai, Lungli, Sihpui, Melli and Thingzamchhuah rivers from the South.

Let us find out how River Chite eventually got its name. A river called Sihpui flowed from the valley of Kulikawn on the Southern end of Aizawl city; and this Sihpui river joined Chite river on the foothills of Mualpui hills. At this point where the two river meet the water is salty and many animals and birds would flock to this point to drink the salty water. It is said that birds called *Bullut* are so fond of the place that the area where Sihpui river merges with Chite river is called *Bullut* Brook. Meanwhile, the other rivers that flow from the North besides *Bullut* Brook were less salty and so people said, "Maybe the lump of salt at the source of this river is smaller and it is less salty." So, it is said that they named the river 'Chite' and it is assumed that this is how it got its name.

The second world war impacted Mizoram in many ways. There was active military presence in Mizoram and most of them were Indian soldiers. It also seemed that British soldiers were also a common sight in Aizawl. The increased military presence also meant a demand for labourers. Hundreds of labourers could be seen camping on the banks of Chite river and they depended on its water for their daily needs. In those days, the overflowing river was a rich source of water for hundreds of people.

When seasons change and summer arrives, the water recedes. In the olden days, nothing was better than a day spent out fishing in groups and frolicking on the banks of Chite river. Back then, you could find young men and women of Aizawl busy fishing in the river. With regards to

these young men and women fishing on Chite river, the poet Rokunga wrote:

"Kumsul vei khua thalin khua a sang hle tun kum chu,
Khuangruahpui sur tum si lo vawiin ni chuan;
Luipui dunga len zai I rel ang aw,
Tah chuan lengnghaten laitual an leng an ti.
Lengngha man turin insiam che maw valnema,
Luipui tumbu leh lengnghate kan tawng mahna;
I hnamchem, I kawlzal rawn keng la,
Lengi lung lawm a'n kal che maw valnem."

Chite river did not only provide fish, it was a place for family picnics and washing clothes. It was also a place for crab hunting, a source of fresh water for farmers to drink and refresh themselves after a hard day's work.

It is said that the banks along the river was filled with lush forest which was a sight for sore eyes. Under the canopy of the trees were various plants scattered around. It was also home for different wildlife.

"Thalrum laiin va rinrengin an dawn thin,
Lungrualpui nen suara lengngha kan danna;
Eng siar thal favang ni reng pawl riaiin,
Nung tinrengte lawma'n a rawn chhun eng a."
"A lui dung cham del chhawrthlapui eng hnuaiah,
Kangkang, chhimbuk, thangfen zaite'n lo awi e;
Lungtileng zualin kilva hram thiam zai nen,
Sensiarin chhawrthlapui engin a rawn chhun."

Every time we sing these songs, our mind wonders how it has come to this. Looking at the present state of Chite river, it is hearthening to see the river drying up and become so polluted. The disappearance of flora and fauna makes one wonder what Rokunga would have said if only he lived to see it.

"Fiara tuithiangte luang del del,
Lengi nena luia lengngha kan chhaina;
I sirah thing leh maurua an zing riai e,
Luang del del rawh Piallei a ral hma loh chuan."

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions:

1. Where is Chite river located?
2. Name some of the well-known tributaries of Chite River.
3. Why do you think Chite River has dried up?
4. What should we do to preserve water sources?
5. How can we conserve our rivers?

2 MIZO PUAN

There are many varieties of puan which have been passed down by the forefathers of the mizo people. These designs are unique and have not been reproduced from anywhere else. It is important that the distinct names of puan and their significance are kept alive and preserved.

The aesthetic sense and skills of the Mizos have improved and the designs in a 'puan' have multiplied manifold. Though all the designs in a 'puan' cannot be rightfully claimed as a 'mizo puan', designs in a 'puan' before the 1950s may be claimed as ours. Let us study some of them-

1. **Fenphel:** This could be the first 'puan' of Mizo women. It was not really called 'puan' but called as 'pawnfen' (skirt). It is a small cloth, white in color, wrapped at the waist like 'hmaram' and fastened with 'kawng chilh'. With the passage of time different colours are woven into it. 'Hmaram' is one type of 'fenphel'.

2. **Puanngo:** Puanngo is a plain 'puan' without any pattern. It could be plain white or with a small stripe woven at the edge. The method of weaving this puan is also the simplest, and it is generally owned by everyone. Women bring with them many pieces of this 'puan' to their husband's house when they marry. It is also called 'puanhlap'.

3. **Chhimpuan tlang ṭial:** This ‘puan’ is an improved version of ‘puanngo’. After ‘vailen’ we had different colours of yarn. About 4 inches of the hem of a ‘puan’ was woven with coloured threads. Later, white and coloured threads were woven alternately at about three places to produce patterns in the ‘puan’.

4. **Zopuanṭial:** This puan has a striped border with ‘chhimpuan’ design. There are three or four inches wide vertical stripes in different colours spaced half an inch apart. Similarly, stripes are made horizontally in the same pattern. There is no specific colour for the pattern, and stripes are made with whatever colours available.

   It is usually woven in ‘malkalh’ style. Sometimes a different design is woven at the border which is called ‘Zopuanṭial tlangzeh’.

5. **Naupuakpuan:** The Mizo people carry babies in slings. This makes it easier to do household chores while carrying a baby. In the olden days, mothers often left their babies behind at home while they went to work in their cultivation. They gave responsibility of their babies to the care of older women and young children who carried the babies in a sling called ‘Naupuakpuan’.

   The weaving of ‘naupuakpuan’ is very different. Bigger threads are spun, and woven in ‘malkalh’ style which is longer than the usual ‘puan’. The thick weave makes the baby sling sturdy which also makes carrying a baby more comfortable.

To make the 'naupuakpuan' more attractive, stripes are made with black threads. These striped designs are called 'Damte Puan'. It signifies the wish for a healthy baby.

Due to a certain superstitious belief, the number of stripes are odd in numbers. The hem is not stitched, the breadth of the cloth usually measures one 'hlam' of a woman and the length is longer than a normal 'puan'. The frills are generally very long. The frills of 'naupuakpuan' for boys are rolled and twisted, while they are braided for girls.

6. **Mangpuan:** Different clans have 'Mang' with different pronunciations. 'Mang' is used to refer to chiefs or prominent citizens.

   'Mangpuan' is a white 'puan' with black stripes spaced at about a hundred fingers width apart. This kind of puan was worn by Lal Nikuala's 'pasaltha' Hranghleia. There are also horizontal stripes along with vertical stripes. These are called 'Mangpuan tial'.

   Mangpuan is worn only on special occasions. Prominent people hoist it as a flag on occasions like lungdawh or at death to display greatness.

7. **Thangchuahpuan:** This is a men's puan. It can only be worn by a Thangchhuahpa. It is woven in black and red yarn spaced at about a hundred fingers width apart. There are thin vertical and horizontal stripes in white. After the art of dyeing yarns was learnt, green and yellow colors were added to the design. White yarn is also spaced in between. The patterns are made using selutun, mitmural, semit, halkha, etc. As it is a man's

puan, the length and breadth are much larger comparatively.

The recent thangchhuahpuan has the same stripes as the ones woven in the earlier days. However, the embroidery has been excluded.

In the olden days, the chiefs and pasaltha thangchhuah men used the pattern of this puan in their turban as well. The design is also used for shirts these days. They are worn as turbans as a part of traditional Mizo men's attire. It is also used to honour important persons.

8. **Ngotekherh:** In the beginning this puan was in white with thick black transverse stripes of about three or four inches width at both sides of the waist. At the edge of the transverse stripes runs smaller stripes in black and white which is called 'kherh' and the puan came to be known as 'ngotekherh'.

Originally, the puan was designed for men but with the passage of time women began to wear it too. One can hardly find women wearing it in old photographs before the year 1920. This puan continues to be worn till this day. Compared to other mizo puans, the design of this puan has not been altered much. The 'kherh' in this puan is more of a transverse stripe nowadays.

9. **Puanrin:** This puan has a thin white warp with black weft thread. There are white weft threads at wide intervals. This puan is designed to be worn by men and has a very long warp. The length is usually 80 inches and its width is based on the width of the loin loom (around 20-23 inches).

The edges are sewn together, it has no fringe and the hems are rolled tightly and sewn. Puanrin is now modified for women's wear with fringes. However, the puanrin worn by women today is very different from those of the olden times.

10. **Hmaram:** This is a women's skirt. The 'hmar' in hmaram is to be pronounced like the 'hmar' in 'hmarcha'. 'Hmar' means tying a bun at the nape of the neck. 'Am' means skirt. It is not very wide and its width is usually 17/18 inches with a length of 42/43 inches. Since it is not very wide it is worn at the lower part of the waist, fastened with a girdle and its length reaches the knee. The patternss in the hmaram are kawkpuizikzial, disul and lenbuangthuam embroidered in white.The patterns are spaced three to four inches apart and there are thinly weaved patterns in between. The edges are rolled tightly and sewn. It is also called 'fenphel'. It is not worn much nowadays except in traditional dances and mizo cultural shows.

11. **Pawndum (Zawlpuan/Zawlkenpuan):** Even though it is called 'pawndum', it is not entirely black in colour. The first pawndum seems to have been black with five red stripes of about two fingers width. Now, it is woven in black and red yarns with about 3 inches width vertically. To prevent it from splitting, the borders are knotted.

    This puan is not puandum but pawndum (pronounced as pawnto). It is important to pronounce it correctly. When we learn the art of dyeing yarns different colours like yellow, green and blue yarns are used in the stripes. These stripes became known from the year 1950.

This puan is very important in the life of a Mizo. It is included as a part of a woman's dowry when she marries. If a woman does not have a pawndum to take with her the price of the bride is lowered to Rs 20/-. If her dowry of pawndum is torn or damaged, a new one can be woven. If she unfortunately loses her husband to death, this puan is to be used for covering the corpse. Its is called zawlpuan or zawlkenpuan. If a close relative or a close friend dies, pawndum is also used to cover the deceased.

Since pawndum is used for covering the dead, it is usually long to cover the head to the tip of the feet. The tradition of pawndawm as a dowry continues to this day. The stripes of a pawndawn are not always similar and there are different types of pawndum.

Pawndum belongs to men. It is also used to signify unfortunate events and sorrow, it is also used as a symbol for displeasure. It is now often worn in funerals today. It is also used as a clothing in traditional dances. It is still worn today in 'khuallam'.

12. **Tawlhlohpuan:** This also belong to men, it is very long measuring about 80 inches. The warp is thinly strung and black yarn dyed with indigo is used in the weft. They were so skillful that the white yarn is usually invisible. There are regular intervals of about one finger's width transverse stripes in red and white yarns. After we came to have yellow-coloured yarns, there are two lines of yellow transverse stripes at the weft with the red stripes. The edges are carefully sewn together with red and white threads using blanket stitch method. There are no fringes at the hem and are oversewn.

Initially this puan belonged to the richer people and since it is very difficult to weave, not all the rich people do not own it. It was said that the process of weaving tawlhlohpuan takes a very long time and that is why it got the name 'tawlhlohpuan'.

13. **Puanlaisen (puanchei):** Initially this was a puan for men. It was a white cloth with bold red wide horizontal stripe in the middle with black transverse stripes which run vertically at both sides of the hips. The middle red horizontal strip and the main red cloth is woven separately. The yarn used in the weft of the red stripe is red and white yarn is used in the white weft.

    Later, a white warp is strung in the middle of the red warp. Different patterns like halkha, muthlakawi, fanghmamu, semit, mitmurual and others are embroidered in the weft. Different coloured yarns are then used in the warp. The frontal part of the puan is also embroidered in disul or lenbuangthuam patterns.

    The white portion of this puan was woven in the pattern of 'mangpuan tial' for a very long time. It was till the year 1950 that puanlaisen has mangpuan tial. After the year 1950 the warp was strung entirely of white yarn and not like mangpui tial. Sakeizangzia pattern was added to puanlaisen after the year 1955.

    Punlaisen is woven twice and there are two stiches in the puan. It takes a very skilled person to weave this kind of puan as there are many transverse stripes, patterns and embroidery.

    It may not be false to claim that this puan is evidence of the skills of mizo women. The more

experienced and skilled women used to weave in different patterns beyond the usual ones in the red portion which is in the middle of the puan.

The stripes in the warp may have been modified many times but the main pattern has not changed over the years and this has made this particular puan more valuable. The term puanlaisen was changed to puanchei from the year 1945.

Puanchei is one of the greatest and most beautiful puan belonging to the mizo tribe. It is still appreciated till today. It can rightfully be claimed as the puan of the mizo people. It seems that puanlaisen has undergone the most transformations and modifications among the puan belonging to the mizo tribe. Its beginnings as a puan with broad red horizontal stripe in the middle is now filled with intricate patterns and embroideries. A puan belonging to the menfolk has now become known as a puan belonging to women.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. From the 13 puan mentioned in the lesson, name those which are still popularly worn.
2. What is the name of the 'puan' that a woman brings tons as nuptial gift?
3. What is the meaning of 'fenphel'?
4. What is the 'puan' that is worn only on a special occasion? Is it still worn today?
5. Name those mizo puan worn by men. Why do you think men do not wear puan anymore?
6. Which puan is evidence of the skills of Mizo women?

3 LALNU ROPUILIANI (1829-1895)

It is no surprise that the story of Lalnu Ropuiliani occupies a very important place forever in the history of the Mizos. It cannot be denied that she was a great chieftess and a brave one. Ropuiliani is the daughter of Lalsavunga (Chief of Aizawl). Her father Lalsavunga, died young at around the year 1840 while he was the chief of Darlawng.

She got married to Vanpuilala also known as Vandula at around the year 1848. Vanpuilala was one of the more prominent opposser of the British. During those days, a Sailo prince would marry only a Sailo princess. Capt. J. Shakespear wrote, "Vandula has more power and influence than any of his siblings; and unlike his siblings, he opposed the British rule," and "He was the leader and the instigator of the war between the Lushai and the Pawi. He was regarded as the greatest and most powerful chief of the South Lushai Hills."

During his lifetime, Vandula was the chief of Belpui, Kawmzawl, Baichi, Ralvawng, Aithur, Hnahthial and Denlung. In 1889, he died in the village of Denlung. When her husband died, Ropuiliani ruled in his stead over many villages and came to be known as Chieftess of the South.

Knowing the importance of her late husband's mission, she carried on the rebellion against British oppression, becoming a key figure in the struggle and became the most well known chieftess.

Not accepting the harsh treatment of her fellow Mizo people and how the Bristish treated the land belonging to the Mizo people, Ropuiliani bravely fought back until her eventual capture. It is important to know why Ropuiliani fought against the British. Some of them are:

1. Ropuiliani was against the British Military's plan to construct a road to Burma via her chiefdom.
2. The Chin Lushai Expedition (1889-1890) built cantonments at Darzo, Fort Tregear and Lungleh; and the villagers of Laiṭhuama's village, the son of Ropuiliani are hostile to the occupation, the Britishers built a cantonment at that village. Ropuiliani was immensely against this.
3. C.S. Murray (Asst. Political Officer) and Mr. Taylor were attacked by Zakâpa Fanai and Dokâpa. When the Britishers realised that they were close allies of Lalthuama, they were convinced that Ropuiliani had instigated the attack. This sparked fire between Ropuiliani and the Britishers.
4. The Britishers took for granted that the young men of the villages to be their *kuli* to carry their guns, grains, livestock and other items. Ropuiliani was against this and was reluctant to send men from villages under her chiefdom and her sons' chiefdom. Government clerks were hesitant to enter her villages. This angered the

Britishers even more and was one of the main reason why they wanted to capture Ropuiliani.

5. On 3rd April 1889, when all the Southern Chiefs were summoned to Lungleh for a conference called 'Chief Durbar,' Ropuiliani and her sons chose not to attend. Then on 2nd January 1892, all chiefs were summoned again, she did not show up but only sent her representative. Between 24th to 26th December 1893, a 'Chief Durbar' was held in Lunglei which was attended by over 32 Chiefs and 13 representatives. Again, Ropuiliani and her son Lalthuama refused to attend it. John Shakespeare wrote, "Ropuiliani's hostility can no longer be denied, and her son Lalthuama's insolence and opposition is due to his mother's influence."

Besides those disscussed here, there are probably other reasons for her rebellion and reasons why the Britishers wanted to capture her.

From the onset of August 1893, the Britishers were prepared for the capture of Chieftess Ropuiliani. Then on 7th August 1893, Capt. John Shakespeare, Capt. RHS Hutchinson, Commandant Mr. Pugh and 80 soldiers left Lungleh for a surprise attack on Denlung village in order to capture Ropuiliani. Translator Rahsi Darmaka (Dara) was brought along too. It was about 30-40 miles away. On 8th August 1893, just before dawn, they were positioned on the outskirt of Denlung. After surrounding the village, they marched towards the chief's residence. This panicked the villagers. Ropuiliani and her son, Lalthuama were captured and taken to Lungleh. Our ancestors said that Ropuiliani did not want to march along with them declaring, "I am a chief.

I will not walk." Since they wanted to bring her to Lungleh, they eventually carried her.

From 12th August 1893, the Britishers imprisoned Ropuiliani and her son Lalthuama in a guard room and tried to convince them to surrender, promising them peace in exchange for their obedience. However, she would not surrender; in fact, she told her sons and other chiefs to stand strong against the Britishers when they came to visit her. When the Britishers realised how adamant she was, they considered it necessary to exile her from Mizoram. Then on the morning of 8th April 1894, under military escort, the aged Ropuiliani was carried away from Lungleh. On April 18th 1894, she was imprisoned in Chittagong Jail, a place she had never seen nor heard of. As a state prisoner, she was treated well but due to the sudden change in diet she developed dysentery which took a toll on her health. In jail, Ropuilianai was provided with a translator called Lalarama and unlike other prisoners, she was not guarded by the police but was given four (4) special guards.

From the second week of December 1894, Ropuiliani's health steadily declined. In her comfortable prison room, European Ward of Chittagong Jail laid, Ropuiliani sick and alone, away from her children and grandchildren to take care of her. She had only her attendants to look after her. A fearless and fierce Mizo woman, champion of her land and people lay in wait for her death. The Chittagong Jail Superintendent, fearing that she might succumb to her illness, wrote an order for her release. He

would have someone to answer to if she did. Unfortunately, true to his fears on the morning of 3rd January 1895 (Wednesday), Ropuiliani succumbed on her bed. It was August of 1893 when Ropuiliani was captured. The days she spent in captivity from Lungleh to Chittagong was about a year and a half.

While many regarded Ralvawng village to be the final resting place of Ropuiliani, there are a significant number of people who were certain that it was at Denlung village.

Ropuiliani was a wise, fearless, charismatic, stubborn and a staunch leader who loved her people. She chose prison and isolation from her family and people to being a puppet leader of the Britishers. There are written documents of her by the Britishers who captured and imprisoned her wherein there are accounts that show their awe of her unyielding courage.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. In which village did Ropuiliani rule?
2. Why was Ropuiliani against the Britishers?
3. Why was Ropuiliani captured by the British?
4. Where was Ropuiliani imprisoned? When did she die?
5. Discuss the example qualities of Ropuiliani .

4 MIZO RITUALS FOR THE DECEASED

Everyone is destined to depart from this world, as God has planned death as our final journey. Different cultures have their own customs of preparing the body for burial, and they also have their own beliefs about the journey of the soul after death. Some cultures strictly observe the process of burial; some cremate the body, and some bury the body.

From the early days death and rituals for the deceased are a serious matter for the Mizo people. The rituals and process of burial differ according to the cause of their death. Different names are given depending upon the cause of their death and these are:-

1. Awmlai thi: Awmlai thi means natural death. When a person, due to some illness, old-age, disability or weak constitution, due to some kind of epidemic dies in his/her own bed surrounded, comforted and embraced by his kith and kin, it is called 'Awmlai thi'.

2. Hlamzuih: When an infant dies it is called 'hlamzuih'. There is a difference on how old the infant is to be called as 'Hlamzuih' on its death, though normally if an infant dies before it is three months old it is considered as 'Hlamzuih'. However, if the parents are poor and are unable to perform normal rituals for the deceased as others for the

burial, some babies older than three months were often termed to die as 'Hlamzuih'.

Death on 'Hlamzuih' was not seriously considered like death by other causes. The dead baby was wrapped in a sheet or cloth and a piece of cotton wool dampened with its mother's milk was placed into the baby's mouth to quench its thirst. Some grains of rice was placed in the closed palm of one hand for the baby to eat when it gets hungry. On the other palm of the hand, an egg was placed believing that the egg would roll its way to the land of the dead to lead the baby. Then they put the corpse in a big earthen pot and buried it near their home.

3. Raicheh: When a woman dies during labour or just after the child is born, it is known as 'Raicheh'. In the olden days, it was considered to be the most horrible way to die for a woman. This is the reason why the day after the child is born, the mother is sent by her family to fetch water from the village waterhole the day after the child is born. She would carry a few bamboo tubes of water and slowly return home. If she unfortunately dies after fetching water, her death would not be regarded as 'Raicheh', but as natural death.

When there is death because of 'Raicheh' no woman would do household chores considered to be a woman's role in a household. They would not gather firewood from the jungle nor weave cloth, nor spin or wind cotton at night. The loom of the demised and all her belongings were dreaded. Especially the waist strap on her loom because they feared

and believed that they would die from the same kind of death.

4. Sarthi: If a person dies unnaturally without any illness, but is killed by a wild beast, falls from a tree or is hit and killed by a falling tree or rock, or is killed in a fire, suddenly and without any warning is called 'Sarthi'. It is regarded as the most unfortunate kind of death. It is believed that even if it is not the season for storm or strong winds to be blowing, if there is a person dying of 'Sarthi' Strong winds are sure to blow. This wind is called 'Sar thli'. When a kind rainbow appears near the sun during clear or good weather, it is called 'Sar zam'.

When a person dies an unnatural death and is carried home, the corpse is never taken in through the front door. It is taken round the back of the house and through the back door. They never kept the corpse overnight, and no matter the time of day or night it is found they quickly dug a grave. The corpse is then carried out through the back door and buried immediately. If they did not do this, they used to say, 'Zulin a zui duh'. This means that another unnatural death of 'Sarthi' is likely to happen soon.

5. Za chham lak: Our ancestors believed that the number of deaths in a year would be at least a hundred. If it does not happen, they believed that a sudden death in any one of the surrounding village amounts to that and it was called 'Zachham lak'. This could have meant to make it a hundred death in the community, it was believed that a certain god

called ‘Sanu’ caused this death to happen and the god is to be appeased as it causes sudden pain and eventually death. It can be compared to unknown causes of death in modern times attributed to ‘Heart attack’ or ‘Lungphu chawl’. The ritual for the deceased is similar to those who die of ‘awmlai’.

Our ancestors took death as a serious matter. The rites of burial depend on the causes of death. The person’s social status and reputation while they were alive played a significant role in the type of ritual and graves are dug accordingly. Different methods of digging graves were used:

i. **Lungkuang Thlan:** After digging a grave in the normal way, the bottom of the grave is laid with stone slabs and piles of stone slabs are laid on all the sides. After laying the corpse, it is again covered with stones. While the grave was being dug, young men went about collecting stone slabs for the grave.
ii. **Tianhrang Thlan:** It is a very deep grave with slopes to lay the corpse in a leaning position. It was usually meant for unmarried men and women.
iii. **Khaukhurh Thlan:** It is usually deeper than a normal grave. At the bottom of the grave, a hole is carved on the side as wide as the grave. The opening of the carved hole is covered with logs. Chiefs and prominent citizens are laid in this type of grave.
iv. **Kuang ur:** This does not involve digging a grave but it is used for disposing of a corpse which is not buried. It means smoking a coffin and the process for ‘Kuang

ur' takes a long time and needs a lot of hard work, that is why only Chiefs could afford it. A huge log big enough to fit a corpse is used for the process of 'kuang ur'. The log is sawn into halves and the insides are carved out. The corpse is then placed inside one half of the hollowed log. In one corner, a hole big enough for a blowpipe is made. The liquid waste from the corpse passes through this hole and a pipe is fitted in the hole with the end of the pipe buried inside the earth. To make sure that no foul smell does not come out of the coffin, the other half of the halved log is used as a lid, and it is sealed with wet clay made from ash.

They built a big fire near 'khumai' and the coffin is placed near the fireplace to heat and smoke the coffin. Every evening, the young men would bring home firewood to keep the fire burning throughout the night. During the day, the older men would relieve them and keep the fire burning the whole day. This continues for about a month, till the flesh of the corpse has decayed and only the bones remained. The bones are then taken out, wiped, cleaned and oiled with utmost care and placed for safe keeping at the bottom of 'thul' and was very much valued.

The eyes of the corpse were made to close shut, and the body too was laid down properly. To keep the lower jaw and chin from falling down a plaited yarn is tied round the chin to the top of the head where it is tightly knotted. They would dress the corpse in their own clothes. If it is a female, they tuck the corner of her kilt at her waist, particularly on

her left side. They would wash the corpse's hands and feet and the face. They would then oil the hair and make a left knot on the hair.

If the deceased was an unmarried young man or a woman the whole community was affected. They would stay up with the corpse for a night. The young men digging the grave never joked while they were digging the grave. Seriously, soberly, silently and sadly, they would work till they finished digging the grave. Generally, when the male head of a family dies, they would 'zalh' him. In some cases they would even 'zalh' women and children. 'Zalh' means making the dead body sit leaning on the wall beside the place where they stock their water and to prevent it from falling, seats are propped up on its sides and they also arranged armrests to rest its lower arms. The head is also tied to a wall, so that it would not bend down.

When a 'Thangchhuahpa' dies he is dressed with 'Thangchhuahpuan' and 'thangchhuah diar'. When a 'pasaltha' dies, as they prepare the corpse, they adorn his corpse with all his important possessions on him as they place his gun in his hands and hang his gun powder horn (Fungki) on his shoulders. If a chief dies, all the guns of the village would be fired, most of the villagers would wear 'pawndum' to mourn the chief.

When the male head of a family dies, they must prepare a feast for the mourners and the grave diggers without fail. This is called 'thlaichhiah'. It is considered an embarrassment for the family if 'thlaichhiah' cannot be

prepared. Thlaichhiah means preparing a feast for mourners and grave diggers. Four legged animals are usually slayed for feast in thlaichhiah. The meat for thlaichhiah is usually refused by young men and grave diggers and they had to be persuaded by the cooks who prepared the feast. It was usually eaten by the elderly, and it was usually prepared on the day of the burial.

The corpse was usually wrapped in 'puanngo' near the time of burial. It was wrapped again with 'pawndum'. Then they stitched the corpse between pointed bamboo sticks at the chest and abdomen. At the head and the feet, they tied the ends of the cloth firmly together with 'lachhum' the unwoven threads of a cloth which have been cut off after the cloth is finished. The mourners around the corpse are mainly the dead person's family, their children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces and their sons-in-law. If the bereaved family was well to do and owned guns, they shot empty barrels in the air and beat a large gong and other gongs that they possess just before the corpse is carried out of the house to be buried. The grandeur of the funeral depends on and is measured by the number of weepers. Generally, the time set for the burial is in the evening, so that they would be able to fill the grave before dark or nightfall.

Our Mizo ancestors believed that when a person dies, their soul or spirit leaves from the top of the head and depart from its body. It would climb to the top of the bed post; from there it would climb onto a beam; from the beam it found its way to the wall; and from there it goes out of the house

through the back door. It would take a trip to Rih lake and come back again. Then it would roam around near its home and wander around on the outskirts of the village. During this period, the family of the dead person would separately put aside a portion of food as a share for the dead person. After a period of three months, they would perform the 'thiṭin' ceremony. The dead person's spirit would set off on its second trip to Rih lake, never to return.

In the olden days, there were no cemeteries. They bury the dead in their front or back yard or under the firewood racks. If a chief dies, they bury him in the heart of the village; and a memorial platform is built on the same day. This place is used for 'chawnghnawh' and 'chai' as part of celebrating 'kut'. If a prominent person dies, they lay a memorial platform in the centre of the village; their platforms are decorated with the heads of different kinds of animals they had shot, the 'thlaichhiah' heads and 'mangpuan'. It was only in 1930 that the Mizos started having cemeteries. The then 'bawrhsap' - CGG Helme (ICS) issued an order to have a functional cemetery for each village. From then onwards, villages started having cemeteries. In Aizawl, 'Mission Veng' already had a cemetery before this order was made.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions:

1. Write the names of different kinds of deaths in Mizo society.
2. Disscuss different ways of digging graves in Mizo Society.
3. Ways of digging a grave these days differ from olden days, what could be the reason? Express your views.
4. Why did the death of a young lady or a young man specifically affect the community? What are your views?
5. What was the ritual for burial of a 'Thangchhuahpa'?
6. From which year did the Mizo people start having cemeteries? What is the reason?

5 MEDICINAL PLANTS

As we have learnt in previous classes, Mizoram has plenty of rainfall with thick and dense forests. Vegetables grow well and many kinds of herbs and trees flourish. From the variety of herbs, trees and vegetables that grow from the soil, many species are used as medicines. Medicinal plants include all the wild plants that grow on their own. Medicines from shops are prepared with other chemicals. But medicinal plants are not mixed with chemicals, they are eaten raw or cooked or the liquid is filtered after pounding them.

For the well-being and growth of human and for healing diseases there are many plants that grow from the soil which can be eaten or applied on the skin. Let us discuss commonly available medicinal plants -

Turmeric: We have learnt a few medicinal properties of turmeric in class 6. Let us disscuss more medicinal properties of tumeric-

1. Clotting of blood (*Thi tling*): A paste made from fresh turmeric applied and wrapped over wounds help in cloting of blood.

2. Food (Meat) poisoning: Juice extracted from fresh turmeric helps cure food poisoning (of meat). For loose motion caused by food poisoning, dried tumeric powder

or freshly crushed turmeric mixed with water may be taken.

3. The bud and the root of turmeric is a good remedy for stomach ache.

4. Drinking freshly crushed tumeric mixed with water is good for dysentery.

5. Turmeric mixed with mustard oil can relieve stomach pain.

6. For people suffering from Asthma, drinking the soup of ground turmeric boiled with crab is another useful home remedy.

7. Turmeric is a good remedy for stomach ailments. It is universally used. Here are two main reasons why it is especially useful for stomach problems:

   i) Turmeric mixed with water and a pinch of salt consumed thrice a day is beneficial for improving stomach problems.

   ii) Dried slices of turmeric mixed with honey is also a useful remedy for stomach problems.

8. Turmeric juice is a good remedy for toothaches and swollen gums.

9. Ringworms and other itchy skin diseases can be relieved by applying turmeric juice.

10. Applying turmeric juice mixed with honey on the thorax can be a remedy for Bronchitis.

11. Jaundice and hepatitis can be alleviated by rubbing a paste made from turmeric and lye (potash solution) on the chest. It is especially beneficial for children.

12. Drinking freshly ground turmeric mixed with a little water can help in alleviating appendicitis.

13. Swollen body parts can be relieved by applying turmeric paste and exposing oneself to sunlight.

14. For snake bites, eating fresh turmeric and applying it on snake-bites is beneficial.

15. A mixture of fresh turmeric and 'Japan Hlo' leaves with a little water consumed in the morning and evening is said to be good for cancer patients..

16. Wrapping a slice of raw turmeric on a wart can help it heal faster.

17. Poultry contagion can be remedied by making chicken consume the juice extracted from turmeric twice a day. Application of turmeric solution can also be used to heal wounds of various other animals.

Ginger: The specific name for ginger plantation in Mizo is called 'ling'. Ginger is a very useful medicinal plant and it is very expensive in many regions of the world. Here are the different medicinal uses of ginger:

1. Ginger juice may be applied in poisonous insect bites.

2. ‘Thakpui’, a stinging plant, causes severe burns on the skin when touched. The burn can be relieved by dabbing the cooled water from boiled mashed ginger on the burn.

3. Corn (Clavus), a form of skin disease can be cured by rubbing the paste of ginger and limestone for 2 minutes every now and then throughout the day. The corn can vanish within a week or so.

4. Caterpillar thorns stuck on the skin can be alleviated by wrapping a mixture of ginger and tobacco residue over the affected area.

5. Fomenting muscle pain may be massaged for about half an hour with solution made from boiled ground ginger.

6. Swimmer’s ear can be relieved by dropping warm ginger juice into the ear. But this should be done with extreme caution.

7. Toothaches caused by cavities can be relieved by chewing raw ginger or even rinsing the area with ginger juice.

8. Eating raw ginger can help remove fish bones stuck in the throat.

9. Dysphonia and cough can be relieved by consuming roasted ginger.

10. Arthritis and any form of joint aches can be cured by rubbing a mixture of ginger juice and oil (preferably mustard oil or sesame oil). Pain in joints caused by high fever can be relieved by drinking ginger boiled with jaggery and betel leaf.

11. Asthma: Can be relieved by consuming ginger mixed with honey. It is also useful for cold and cough.

12. Hiccups and nausea: Drinking a mixture of ginger juice and onion is useful.

13. Various allergic reactions from eating meat like fish etc. can be relieved by using ginger. Adding ginger to meat can help prevent food poisoning.

14. Ginger can help improve haemoglobin levels and boost production of breast milk for lactating mothers. The juice of crushed ginger is consumed for these. Eating fresh ginger and adding it to various dishes is also beneficial.

Pineapple: Pineapple is highly rejuvenating, healthy and flavoursome. Let us discuss its various medicinal uses.

1. Seizures: Pineapple is a useful remedy for seizures. Grinding the fruit with its leaves and consuming the juice as well as drinking plain pineapple juice can be highly beneficial.

2. Meningitis: The fruit as well as the bud of the plant is said to be good for meningitis.

3. Asthma: The fruit boiled with *Dawlpawl* and sugar is beneficial.

4. Kidney problem: Drinking the boiled ground leaves is beneficial. This should be continued until it is cured. The leaves that grow at the tip of the fruit can be boiled and consumed as medicine. One glass should be consumed three times a day -morning, afternoon and night. (Discoloration of urine due to kidney problems can be cured by consuming this)

5. If a patient with fever becomes unconscious, ground pineapple leaves rubbed from head to toe can help revive the patient. (It is said to have healed a number of such victims)

6. Ground budding leaves of the plant can be used for enema. It has no allergic reaction, and there is no need for restriction of diet.

7. Ground pineapple soaked in water can be used as a remedy for meningitis. The solution may be used to massage the whole body of the patient.

Garlic: Garlic is an exceptionally good medicinal plant. Let us discuss its various uses.

1. Dysentery: About 10 cloves of ground garlic and mixed with a glass of water consumed before meals can help alleviate dysentery. Adding freshly ground raw turmeric helps enhances its benefits.

2. Consuming 3-4 cloves of garlic with each meal can be a good medicine for people with high blood pressure (hypertension).

3. The juice of ground garlic has restorative uses for whooping cough.

4. Boiled garlic mixed with a few tablespoons of honey is used to alleviate whooping-cough, fever and improve blood circulation.

5. The resin obtained from garlic can be used as a treatment for numerous skin diseases when applied on the skin.

There are a number of other medicinal uses of garlic. It is used as a remedy for urinary tract problems, bloating, stomach problem, bone and joint aches, asthma, even cancer and various other diseases. Consuming two or three cloves of garlic with each meal is highly beneficial and alleviative. However, consuming too much of garlic at a time is not recommended.

EXERCISE

Write five points on the significance of these medicinal plants.

1. Turmeric
2. Ginger
3. Pineapple
4. Garlic

6 THE FEARLESS CHIEF ZAKÂPA

God created humans into men and women. Women are considered weaker and gentler than men. Developed nations give importance to respecting and uplifting the status of women. Today gender equity laws are being implemented to protect women from sexual harassment and from being maltreated.

During the olden days, our Mizo ancestors treated women well and never let them do tough and dangerous works. Protecting women from wild animals and enemy attacks was the responsibility of men. If women were captured by enemies, it was considered forbidden to mistreat them. Laying hands on women was not taken lightly.

Protecting and caring for women by Mizo men was considered a must in the past. There was a Mizo Chief named Zakapa Fanai who was ready to surrender his chieftainship in order to protect the dignity of women.

Zakapa Fanai was the chief of Khawhri village during the British rule and the top British official was called 'Bawrhsap'. The 'bawrhsap' travelled around different villages and was

respected and feared by people and chiefs everywhere they went. Charles Steward Murray was the "bawrhsap" of the southern part of Mizoram who was given the nickname "Marliana" by the Mizos. Marliana requested Zakapa's wife and the women of his village to sleep with him but Zakapa staunchly refused which led to a huge turmoil.

Zakapa Fanai is the third son of the Fanai chief Dokhama, his brothers were Zaduna, Lianchema and Pazika. He was born in 1839 and was said to be brave and feared nothing since his childhood. In 1864 he became a chief with his own land and his village Khawhri had about 300-400 households.

The second 'vai len' was in 1889 and from 1890 the British ruled over Mizoram. "Bawrhsap Marliana" started his journey to visit the Chhimtuipui area in the southern part of Mizoram from February 1891 with 50 soldiers and visited different villages. Before reaching Khawhri, he sent a message to Zakapa saying, "Tell Zakapa, the chief of Khawhri that I am spending a night in his village and he should find a woman to sleep with me." This infuriated Zakapa so much that he did not bother to look for a woman to sleep with the 'bawrhsap'.

When they reached Zakapa's village, "Marliana" and his soldiers settled at "Zawlbuk" and asked for a carrier which Zakapa provided. When "Marliana" asked if Zakapa had found a woman for him, it was said that Zakapa replied saying, "I found one, but she ran away." This angered Marliana and he said, "You do not want to give me a woman,

so, you must give me your wife. If you cannot give me a woman, I will burn your whole village." This angered Zakapa so much that he grabbed his gun and said, "You can burn it if you want!" and pointed his gun on Marliana's chest. The chief's nobles thought this was not a good idea forced Zakapa to remove his gun. Marliana spent the night in the village without a word.

Marliana became angry and ordered, "All the barns of Zakapa's village must be burnt tomorrow." When Zakapa heard about this, he got furious and summoned his brothers and all the men of his village. He said, "If Marliana and his men burn down our barns, we shall also burn the place where he and his men are staying before they leave" .

Marliana, followed by 30 soldiers set out to burn down Zakapa's barns which were about two miles away. He left behind 20 soldiers to wait for them including two experts in heliograph and a cook. As soon as Marliana and his men started burning the barns, Zakapa and his men started to burn the Zawlbuk from each corner. They tried to take as many lives of the soldiers as they could and the houses near the Zawlbuk were also severely burnt. The place where Marliana and his men burnt Zakapa's barns is known as 'Buhkangkawn' to this day.

The soldiers who were in the village saw Zakapa's men moving towards the forest with their guns. This made them anxious and heliograph experts were sent to signal their people in Lunglei and Darzo. The experts carried their mirrors to higher grounds to send signals, but they were

stopped by Zakapa's men, Pawngvina and his friends. Pawngvina and his friends blocked the sunrays with a cloth and their mirrors could not work to send signals. Even when they changed positions, Pawngvina and his friends followed them everywhere they went. At last, Pawngvina could not take it anymore and finally killed the soldiers with his spear.

Meanwhile, the young men of the village surrounded the soldiers staying in the Zawlbuk and burnt it. They managed to kill three soldiers and the cook, leaving many injured. Those that survived were chased away and they dropped coins and many copper vessels which were collected by Zakapa's men.

One of Zakapa's most trusted and brave men, Pawngvina is famous for his short temper. It is said that after a hard day's work when he comes home tired he was once greeted by a dog and he said, "Uipui lawma nui rual ka ni lo ve" looking ready to hit it with his knife. When he goes up a steep path carrying a heavy load, instead of saying, 'Hui ha,' like most people he would say, 'De de dei, de de dei dei dei.' It is said that weaker people did not dare to be anywhere near him.

After Marliana's men burnt the barns, they spotted thick smokes which made them uneasy. They thought that the Zawlbuk was set on fire and they immediately rushed back towards the village. Zakapa and his men, expecting Marliana and his soldiers to return laid in wait to ambush them. Marliana expected an ambush and sent two of his bravest men to the front. But these two men were

immediately shot to death by Zakapa's men. They cut off their heads leaving two headless corpses on the road. They took their position again, ready to ambush the other soldiers.

As soon as Bawrhsap Marliana and his men heard the gunshots, they retreated at once and saw the two headless corpses which shocked Marliana, "So this is how it is going to be!" he sadly whispered. He knew that it would be impossible to pass through Zakapa and his men, Marliana and his men fled in despair towards the west along the mouth of Pa-awh river and continued towards Lunglei. The elders explained, 'Marliana ran away bare foot in fear of losing his life.' Zakapa continued to follow Marliana and made him his sole target. He sarcastically shouted to him, 'Marlian! As one chief to another, let's fight, stop! You haven't even slept with my wife yet'. Even though Zakapa chased him and wanted to take Marliana's life, his men stopped him by saying, 'Chief, he is afraid of you, that is why he is running away, stop running after him.' Although Zakapa was reluctant to leave without killing the person who burnt down all his barns and who tried to sleep with his wife, his men could finally persuade him to return to his village. This incident occurred on 10th February, 1891 and 30 barns were burnt down to ashes, and six of Marliana's men lost their lives.

Marliana wrote about the incident 12th February, 1891 and said that they reached Zakapa's village on 8th February, 1891. He let the luggage carriers (puakphur) of Dokapa return to their village and from here Zakapa was to provide

them assistance. Not only did he refuse to assist them, but Zakapa was away in the neighbouring village which was Lalchhuma's village and even rejected when they sent messengers to go back to his village saying he was busy looking for carriers. He also wrote that he went to meet Zakapa on 10th February with Mr. Taylor and a translator, he ordered Zakapa to follow them and if he refused there would be consequences. But Zakapa refused the order and 30 soldiers along with Marliana marched towards Zakapa's village to burn down the barns. They left behind Hav. Maj. Sangram Singh and 20 men to guard their equipment. He continued writing that he did not expect Zakapa to fight against him and he thought that the barns were only half a mile from where they were staying. He added that if he had known that the barns were two miles far, he would not have gone to burn down the barns.

Marliana did not stay long at Lunglei and went to Calcutta where he reported the incident to the Viceroy. The Viceroy sent J. Shakespeare, commonly called 'Tarmita' by the Mizos to investigate the case. Tarmita then set out from Lunglei to arrest Zakapa.

Zakapa had the feeling that somebody would one day come to arrest him and take revenge for what had happened. He left Khawhri village and went towards north to stay with his siblings. Tarmita continued to search for him, and believed that Zakapa was staying in Khuangthing. Since he could not find Zakapa anywhere it is said that he tortured many people of Khuangthing village.

Since Tarmita could not capture Zakapa so easily he said to one person, 'Put a steel bucket beside Zakapa, and I will give you 300 rupees'. That person went up to Zakapa and put the steel bucket beside him. Then Tarmita said to Zakapa who was sitting beside the bucket, 'Zakap, you have been arrested'. Zakapa, smoking a pipe resisted by saying, 'I am not Zakapa, he is a chief, look at how my hair is tied, I am not a chief but a commoner,' But they insisted on isolating him anyway. Zakapa escaped from his capturers while they were not looking, he was eventually captured again as the village was surrounded by soldiers.

Tarmita explained, 'Zakap, I am going to arrest you, I want you to tell me what exactly happened between you and Marliana, you don't have to be frightened'. Zakapa then explained everything that had happened right from the start, how Marliana asked for women to sleep with and how Marliana then asked for his wife. The issue was set to be resolved with the Viceroy in Calcutta. The incident that happened between Zakapa and CS Murray (Marliana) was in 1891 and Zakapa was captured either on 31st December, 1895 at midnight or in the early morning of 1st January, 1896.

Zakapa was then taken to Calcutta by Tarmita to meet the Viceroy. Marliana and Zakapa had their trials there and Tarmita was a translator for Zakapa. Zakapa said before the judges in the court, 'He asked for women to sleep with him, I refused. Then he asked for my wife, I refused again. That is why he burnt all my barns with all the rice which is stored in the burns and that started all the trouble.' Marliana

strongly denied by saying, 'I did not ask for women or even for his wife.' But the judges did not believe what Marliana had said. The Viceroy then harshly counselled Marliana, and Zakapa was declared innocent. J. Shakespeare 'Tarmita' replaced Marliana as 'Bawrhsap' of the southern part of Mizoram on 16th April, 1891. Marliana was the first 'Bawrhsap' of the southern area for only 15 days. The British placed Zakapa in jail in Calcutta for less than a year so that they do not lose face with their countrymen and to maintain Marliana's reputation. He was then released in the middle of 1896.

As soon as he set foot in Mizoram, Zakapa gave a detailed report to the Aizawl 'bawrhsap'. Back in those days North and South Lushai Hills were under one Superintendent, who was J. Shakespeare 'Tarmita' who was no stranger to Zakapa. The government order that took away Zakapa's chieftainship was cancelled, and he was allowed to set up a village and be a chief again. With this order in hand, he went to his brother Zaduna, and both planned on setting up a new village. He called back all the people from his village who had fled in fear and set up a new village within his brother Zaduna's domain at Hmuntlang. He named the new village Sailulak, in remembrance of the elephant which his father Dokhama killed which was stolen by a Sailo chief but was again taken back. Zakapa died at the age of 75 on 28th December, 1914 at Sailulak.

Zakapa was no ordinary chief, but a 'Thangchhuahpa'. He stood for the rights of women and was ready to put his

life on the line to save them. The consequences did not trouble him, even if he was to suffer and even lose his chieftainship. He was a brave chief and is highly renowned and respected even to this day.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. Whom did Zakapa defend? How did he protect them?
2. Write down the heroism of Zakapa.
3. Do you think Marliana's request to Zakapa was appropriate? Why did Zakapa refuse Marliana's request? Do you think he did the right thing?

7 BIRDS OF MIZORAM

One morning, Rema and his little brother Mawia went out to hunt birds. Rema shot down two birds, Mawia shot one too; they went home with their catch. A bird which is so small, so beautiful and with a sweet voice is killed within a few moment; they are not in any way harmful for human being, why do they have to kill them?

When they reached home, one of their relatives Hminga, who was working away from their village visited them. When Hminga saw the dead bird he felt very sorry for the bird. Hminga was troubled when he learnt that Rema and Mawia had no idea of the harm in killing birds. So he told them why it is harmful to kill birds.

Hminga said, “When you kill a bird, you are also hurting their mates, their babies, who could die due to loneliness. Just imagine other people hurting your parents or your siblings, wouldn’t that make you sad? So you should stop hunting birds.” Rema and his brother gloomily looked at the birds that they had shot, they felt pity for the birds and then made up their mind to stop hunting birds.

Rema and his brother learnt about birds and their significance, they spread the word to their friends too. One

day in school, they talked about birds and one of their friends said, “Both of you know a lot about birds, please tell us different names of birds.” Rema and his brother enthusiastically told them the names of all the birds that they know-

1.	Bawng	11.	Chhuantuar
2.	Bemkawng	12.	Chingpirinu
3.	Buarchawm	13.	Daikat
4.	Bullut	14.	Dawntliang
5.	Chawngzawng	15.	Hrangkir
6.	Changkak	16.	Kawlhawk
7.	Changsen	17.	Kawlrit
8.	Chhawlhring	18.	Thloh
9.	Chinrang	19.	Tuklo
10.	Chhimbuk	20.	Thuro

Rema continued, “A few days ago, one of our relatives saw the birds we shot down and he told us the necessity of conserving birds and wildlife. From then onwards, our family stopped hunting birds,” their friends listened attentively. “What is surprising is that we imagined ourselves as birds, and we realise the harm in hunting birds,”

his little brother added. “What is so important about conserving birds? There are so many of them,” one of the boys commented. Then Rema sat on the table and scanning the face of his friends said “From what I’ve heard from my elder cousin Hminga, there are very few birds in Mizoram now and birds that migrate during winters are decreasing by the year. Due to cutting down of trees ‘kawlhawk’ are hard to find, birds which were commonly seen in the past are no longer seen these days.” One of them said “I have not seen ‘Kawlhawk’ yet but my father said that they use to fly high in the air in groups and that it was always a beautiful sight.” Rema commented, “Yes, it’s true, my cousin Hminga said the birds do not come to stay in our place anymore since they could not find food here and also because we keep hunting them. He also mentioned that during the nest building season they are often hunted which results in their decrease. Think about it, baby birds in a nest is left without a mother to feed so it dies due to hunger as its mother is shot down. This is very cruel. He says “If our parents are not there anymore to feed us, we might also die due to hunger. Just like those baby birds without a parent to feed then died because of starvation. It is very upsetting.” The other boys were left speechless.

Mawia commented too, “U Hminga also said that if there are no sounds of bird chirping in the forest, it will be very lonely for human beings. Even at home, if there are no ‘chawngzawng, vamur, tlaiberh or their chirping, it will be very quiet.” Their friends remained silent pondering on what they just heard. Rema than continued, “U Hminga said that

the birds safeguard our trees and bamboos, they protect them from insects and animals that destroy our foods, as these insects and animals are food for them." He informed his friends that killing birds is illegal and protecting other animals is their duty. Their friends listened attentively and they all told each other to talk about the importance of conserving and protecting birds and other animals to their families, then they all went home happily.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. Why do you think that the population of birds have declined in Mizoram?
2. Write down the name of different birds mentioned in your lesson.
3. Write down the importance of birds.
4. Imagine there are no birds in Mizoram, write down the possible bad effects it would have.

8 INSAIHRUIPAWH

One day, Pu Biaka spoke on different kinds of 'Mizo Infiamna' at Tluanga's school. Tluanga and his friends were listening with interest. They asked all kinds of questions as 'Mizo Infiamna' is to be organised in their village.

Pu Biaka mentioned different kinds of 'Mizo Infiamna' as follows -

1. Inbuan
2. Inchai
3. Insuknawr
4. Insukherh
5. Inkawibah
6. Inselemchaih
7. Insakeibuluah
8. Inlenthul/inhnawk
9. Invaibah
10. Inhawngbi
11. Inpangawzial
12. Insaihruipawh
13. Insalem
14. Inarpasual
15. Inbawlvawm

The event of 'Mizo Infiamna' at Tluanga's village was about to begin, he and his friend Zama were very interested. As they want to know each and every detail of the games, they wanted to get as close as possible where the games are

being played. Tluanga said, “My grandfather was very good at ‘insaihruipawh’ in his younger days, sometimes he was a champion and other times he came second too, I loved hearing his stories which my father told me, but I do not know exactly what ‘insaihruipawh’ is, so I am going to learn all about it today.” Zama was also not aware of ‘insaihruipawh’; they regretted that they did not ask Pu Biaka when he spoke about it.

They finally reached the place where the event was held; a large crowd has gathered in the venue. Different kinds of games were being played; some of the games sounded quite entertaining as the crowd cheered loudly. There were many different competitions and the supporters were cheering hard, the competitors too tried their best to win, and it appeared as if everyone was making their best efforts.

Tluanga and Zama kept strolling around; they reached a place where elders and middle-aged men gathered. They were all chattering loudly. They both wanted to clear their doubts, looking around at the men, not sure whom to ask. After a while, they spotted an elderly man sitting alone, Tluanga timidly asked, “Ka pu, we would like to ask you something, is it okay?” The old man smiled and gestured to them, “Come here, you may ask whatever you want to know,” he said, he was quite amiable. Zama and Tluanga walked towards the old man and sat beside him.

The old man said, “Boys, what do you want to ask me, aren’t you going to watch all those games?” Tluanga quickly

responded, “Yes, we came to watch the games, but before that we want to clarify our doubts, so we’d like to ask you some question first.” The old man replied, “Alright, ask me anything, if I know the answer, I’ll give you the response, but I may not be able to answer all your questions, okay?” Zama and Tluanga asked, “Ka pu, we wanted to know about ‘insaihruipawh’. My grandfather used to tell me about it, he used to play it when he was young, people also said that he was one of the strongest men in his days.” The old man got quite interested and making himself comfortable, he asked “Who is your grandfather, might I know him?”

Tluanga said, “You might know him, my granddad is Thangreia, he died a few years back.” “Goodness! Are you Thangreia’s grandson? I know him very well, he was indeed a strong man, and he was a champion in Mizoram many times. He even beat those that are bigger than him.” The old man replied.

“You know my grandfather?” He rarely talks about things other than ‘insaihruipawh’. He used to tell me stories about how they played the game even before my father was born. But he never explained how ‘insaihruipawh’ was played, that is why we do not understand the game,” Tluanga continued. Zama also added, “We will watch the match only after you tell us what it is, and how it is played.”

The old man said, “Is that so? If you really want to know let me tell you. During my youth I also used to play ‘insaihruipawh’; but I never was able to beat your

grandfather, as he was so strong." He drank water to clear his throat as he was coughing, and then he continued.

"Insaihruipawh is different from 'inhrui pawh'(tug of war), a loop is made at both the end of a long rope, to secure the loop it is tied firmly. Then two people, who are playing crouch down facing opposite sides; they put their heads inside the loops, bringing the rope down their chests and passing through between their legs. Then facing opposite side they begin to pull as if they are walking away from each other, as the game is played in a crouching position, it is very easy to scratch the knees. Apart from that, it is easy to hurt the neck making it difficult to win unless you are really strong," the old man answered.

"Ka pu, if the head is put inside the loop, doesn't the loop tighten on their neck? if the loop begin to tighten during the match, it might choke the person to death. It sounds so unsafe," Zama said. The old man replied, "As I have said earlier the rope is tied firmly so that the loop cannot tighten. Even if they pull with their might, it does not tighten. If this was not the case, it could be very risky."

Zama asked, “ka pu, how do you declare the winner? The old man smiled and replied, “Before they begin the match, a line is marked between them on the ground right in the middle. As soon as they start the match, the player who could pull their opponent across the marked line is declared the winner. The game cannot be played unfairly; there are no specific skills involved either. However, pulling vigorously is not allowed, that is why being strong alone helps the player in winning. Some players play shouting, trying to intimidate their opponents; they shout and scream trying to pressurize their opponents”.

The time has come for ‘insaihruipawh’, and as it was the game they had eagerly waited for, they tried to watch as closely as possible. Both Tluanga and Zama sat on the corner of the field. The old man whom they met earlier approached and they both led him to a good spot. The old man told the match officials, “These are Thangreia’s grandsons; trying to follow their grandfathers’ footsteps they have came to watch the match.” As most of the crowd knew Tluanga’s grandfather, they even came forward and shook his hand.

Then the match began. It started with men’s light weight category which was very entertaining. Though being strong is very important, both Tluanga and Zama soon found that as they are pulling each other using a rope, the weight of the players can make a big difference. However, those that appear to be heavier or lighter can be of the same weight category and can be equally strong.

After a while, the man's heavy weight match started. Some of the participants were verytall and sturdy, some were tall and slender, some were well-built and the heavier ones looked to be hard to pull, but none of them were scared of their opponents. Though it is a competition they all knew it is a game, which made them play fairly and not try to win by unfairly means.

They were deeply engrossed in the heavy-weight category match. As the players exert their energy, they became wet with sweat and they are covered with sand as they struggle to win the match, which makes it more entertaining. Tluanga and Zama were convinced that their grandfather Thangreia must have been very strong as he could win in the heavy weight category and they were very proud of him.

The announcer came forward, announcing different names of people who were winners in 'insaihruipawh' in the past. The old man whom Tluanga and Zama met earlier also stood up, and they came to know that his name is 'Sailuta'. Tluanga recalled that his grandfather had mentioned Sailuta's name. They were amazed that they had been interacting with one of the winners of 'insaihruipawh', so they felt very happy and satisfied.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. Write down 15 (fifteen) Mizo games mentioned in your lesson.
2. Write down the steps of ‘insaihruipawh’game.
3. Do you think it is necessary to promote different Mizo games? Write your reasons to support your answer.

9 FRUITS OF MIZORAM

A teacher named Zakunga suddenly entered the classroom of class VIII

Students : Good morning, sir

Teacher : Good morning, sit down. I am not going to take class today, as it is Friday tomorrow, I plan to visit my farm so I would like to ask you all if you could join me? Anyone interested?

Rinsangi : I would love to join you.

Lalkhuma : Sir, what are we going to do anyway, are we going there for a picnic?

Teacher : Yes, it could be a kind of picnic. In my farm we have all kinds of fruits especially fruits that are found in forests rather than vegetables and plants. Your generation is not aware of fruits of Mizoram, therefore we can leisurely study winter fruits. Would you like that?

Muanpuii : Yes, I am in. (Looking around she feels that the others were also excited to visit the farm.)

Teacher : Alright, if you are coming with me, come at the usual school timing, remember that we are going to the forest so dress accordingly and wear skid proof shoes. As the winter sun is strong, it would be a good idea to wear a hat or cap if you have one.

Rempuia : Sir, do we have to bring tiffin?

Teacher : Of course. Bring plenty of drinking water too. Also you should bring jaggery or sweets in case you feel famished to record what you will see and experience. Bring a notebook and a pen. You would not regret bringing up a big handkerchief to wipe your sweat.

Nunpuii : Sir, how far is your farm from our school?

Teacher : Look beyond the window. (They all looked out). See that hillock over there, it is just on the other side of that, it is a little less than 2 miles from here. Do you think you can make it?

Rinzuali : I know I can easily make it.

Zothana : If Rinzuali can make it, I obviously can! (They all laughed.)

The next morning…

Teacher : Are you all here? Have you brought all the things that I asked you to?

Rinsangi : Yes sir, we do. We are all ready.

Teacher : Okay, then let's make a move. We should all walk together, no need to hurry, but do not fall behind. If anyone trips or is feeling weak, we will all stay together and wait for each other.

They started off towards the farm. They were so excited that no one seemed to feel tired. Not even an hour had passed when they were about to reach their teacher Pu Zakunga'sfarm.

Teacher : Alright, we have to take that path. We have finally reached our farm. Are you tired? Let's take a rest for a bit. You must be thirsty, drink your water. (They took out their water bottle and quenched their thirst while wiping their sweat.)

These two mango trees are landmarks for our farm. This is one of the mango variety of mango is called 'haifavang'. It is almost off-season now but look, there are still a few ripe ones. If you can get them down by throwing stones, we will eat them.

(The boys started throwing stones and managed to get two down which they picked up and Pu Zakunga sliced the mangoes and they all shared among themselves.)

Rinzuali: It is really sweet as it is already ripe.

Teacher : Alright, let us tour the farm now.

(They carried their bags and went on their way.)

Look down there, there are plenty of gooseberries. Gooseberry is good for health and is often used as a medicine. Moreover, deers often eat the fallen fruits. We will pluck some when on our way back. But, caterpillars are commonly found on the tree, so, boys who are not afraid of caterpillars should pluck the fruit.

Nunpuii : Okay then, I will eat the plucked ones. (Smiling, then they went on.)

After walking for a while…

Teacher : Look, our 'pangkai' tree is also bearing a lot of fruit. The yellow ones are ripe; those that are green in colour are not yet ripe. The green ones are sour but is quite tasty if you grind it. The ripe ones can be eaten without the peel. There are 4 or 5 seeds inside which is sweet and sour. Surprisingly, pangkai bear its fruit not at the tip of its branch but on its branches and its trunk, As the tree is not very tall, two of you should go and pluck some. Are you ready to pluck some?

Not even responding to the teacher's question Rempuia and Zorema rushed down towards the tree. They easily climbed the tree. Zorema plucked a bunch of ripe 'pangkai', took a big one, bit it and ate it.

Zorema : It is so delicious, Rempui have you tried it?

Rempuia : It is really delicious.

Muanpuii : Bring us some too. Don't finish them all.

(Pu Zakunga grinned cheerfully watching them)

Rempuia and Zorema came back with two bunches each of 'Pangkai', they all watched expectantly.

Teacher: Now you can all eat it. But remember not to eat too much at once. As I have already told you when you grind the unripe fruit, it can be very tasty. If there are ripe ones I don't think you would like to try the unripe 'pangkai'.

Zothana: It really tastes good! We should spare two bunches for later to eat with salt.

Teacher : Alright, let's move on. We have almost reached our hut. Before that we will reach 'khawmhma hmun'. 'Khawmhma' tree is not as tall as other trees but the fruits are at the tip of the branches, to pluck the fruit we have to cut off the branches. Look, it is ripe at the top. The ripe fruit is brown in color while the raw

ones are green. It is very sour and the birds really like it. See, the birds are eating too. We will make two 'kawihsapir', and the boys can break the branch with it and collect the fruit.

(He cut down two thumb sized branches from a tree to make 'kawihsapir') Alright, who will go and pull the branch?

Zothana and Lalkhuma hurriedly grabbed the 'kawihsapir' and began to pull the branches.

Teacher : Don't pluck too many, because you will not able to eat much. If it is not dried in the sun and ground, it is not easy to eat so much. Also remember that the white acid can stick to your hands and clothes. I don't think you would like to take home so much. Right?

Rinzuali : Sir, what is white acid in 'khawmhma'?

Teacher : The white particles that cover the small fruits are the acid. There, they have brought the 'khawmhma'. Look carefully. As I have said earlier, those that are available at the market are already dried and ground.

Zothana and Lalkhuma arrived. They tasted the fruits while examining there.

Nunpuii : Oh! It is still so sour though it's already ripe…

(Making a face because of the sour taste.)

Teacher : Alright, hold them by the branch and bring them, let's move on towards the hut.

(They continue walking towards the hut.)

They finally spotted the hut…

Ruati : Sir, is that your hut? It looks really comfortable. Come, let's go faster.

They reached the hut…

Teacher : Alright, as it is not yet time to eat, leave your tiffin here but carry your water bottle. Behind that hillock there are different kinds of fruits, come let's explore that side too. However, let's rest for awhile. Drink your water and if you have brought snacks with you, eat some. There is a saying, 'While resting in the hut, a cool breeze will blow if you whistle soothingly'. (The students wiped their sweat with their handkerchief.) Now we should make a move, if we wait till you are fully relaxed it might make you weaker. (After putting their water bottle back in their bags they left the hut to move forward.)

After walking for a while…

Teacher : This is ‘tuairam’ tree. The trees are not tall yet but it bears fruits. Can you see the fruits?

Rempuia : Yes, I can see them.

Teacher : Can anyone of you climb the tree to pluck them?

Zorema : Sir, let me try to climb. (He climbed up and tasted the fruit) Though it is quite sour it tastes really good. There, I’ll drop the fruits, try to catch them. (As soon as he told them to catch, he began dropping two/three bunches, and they couldn’t catch them. They picked them from the ground and started eating them.)

Teacher : ‘Tuairam’ must be one of the rarest fruits now. Zorem, throw down whatever you can reach; but be very careful.

Zorema continued to threw down the fruits, his friends caught some and picked up those which fell on the ground.

Teacher : Share the fruit; you might not get a chance to eat it again.

Lalkhuma then handed out the ‘tuairam’.

Teacher : Come, let’s go back to the hut. It’s time to eat. After finishing lunch we’ll visit the other side of this hillock. If we spend too much time, you might get too tired when we go home. (Everyone

had ‘tuairam’ in their pockets and they headed towards the hut.)

After they finished their lunch, they rested for a while. The girls seem to be tired, however, their faces still beamed with excitement.

Teacher : Okay, before we start again, record whatever you have seen in your notebook.

They took out their notebooks and pens, they spent around 10 minutes discussing and writing their observations…

Teacher: Alright, shall we make a move? We are not coming back to the hut so put all the things you want to take back inside your bag. (They put all the things they want to take back inside their bags and continued to move again.) We will take a different path; follow me, we have to go this way. Do you see that fruit? That is ‘theipalingkawh’, but it is still unripe. Even if you can pluck it you wouldn’t like the taste, because it will still be bland.

Ruati : I would like to try it. Lalkhum please pluck some anyway. (Lakhuma then plucked some from the lower branches). Oh! It really is quite bland. Do you want to taste it? (The others smiled and shook their heads to decline off the offer.)

Teacher : Those four identical trees are ‘tawitaw’. Although it is not the tastiest of fruits, it is very

healthy. Animals, especially deer love to eat it. Moving a bit from here there is 'tling', it is a rare fruit. Should we go there to see it? But the area is a bit rough and uneven, so it might be difficult for the girls.

Nunpuii : (Mumbling softly) If that is the case, I don't feel like going.

Muanpuii : Me too…it seems to be a bit far also.

Teacher : (Laughing) Okay then let's take a turn here, shall we go home now? We will go home through the other side of the hillock, there may possibly be 'theitat' and 'zawngbalhla' on our way back.

They went home taking the path round the other side of the hillock.

Teacher : Look, the tree down there is 'zawngbalhla'. There may be ripe ones, but don't try to get those, you might get too exhausted.

They continued walking…

Teacher : There, those trees up front above the road are 'theitat'. You can get it if you want.

The students must have been tired; they just smiled and looked at each other.

Teacher : (Smiling fondly) Alright, pick those that are on the ground and take them home so that you can

study them. Remember that you will have to write about the fruits, so it will be important for that. While going back we still have to pluck some gooseberry near the entrance of the farm. You can take home as many as you want.

They picked the gooseberries which were on the ground, and they headed home.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions:

1. Write down the names of fruits that you know which are found in Mizoram.
2. Give a detailed description of the following:
   i) Khawmhma
   ii) Pangkai
   iii)Tuairam

3. What is your favourite fruit? Write down fruits that are imported in from outside the state.

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