ZO NUN

Supplementary Reader in English for Class VII

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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 KAWTCHHUAH ROPUI

Since the olden days, a stone pillar or structure called lungdawh is erected in almost all the outskirts of a Mizo village. The structures played a very important part in the life of a village. It served as meeting points with their 'lawm' before going to work on their cultivation and the pillars were used for sharpening their tools. In those days, the main occupation in a village was agriculture. Older children would bring their younger siblings to Lungdawh in the evening to wait for their parents to come home from work.

There are two types of Lungdawh:

(1) Monuments erected to mark occasions like a Jubilee, or monuments erected by a group of friends, or by families. They are normally rectangular or square in shape and are erected in a line.

(2) Hranglung – these are erected by the pasalṭha of the village to honour themselves. Rocks are arranged in a circle with nothing inside the circle.

Kawtchhuah Ropui belongs to one of the three such Lungdawh made by early inhabitants of Vangchhe village. The relics of the village show that Vangchhia was once a very big village. Lungdawh are found in three places in the outskirt of the village and they are aligned with each other. There are two such structures in the east and one in the western side of the village. These Lungdawh were not protected till recently. Therefore, most of the lungdawh from the eastern and western side have disappeared except for some structures at the western side. At present, there are 257 undamaged lungdawh and a few partially damaged structures lying on the ground.

In the year 1985, officials from Art and Culture Department, Government of Mizoram visited the site and decided to protect the place. However, since it was not immediately protected by authorities, the stones continued to be taken away. In the year 1993, on the request of Vangchhe Branch YMA, it became YMA Park. Ever since YMA started preserving the stones and trees in Kawtchhuah

Ropui, people from all walks of life visit the place for research purposes and sightseeing.

Kawtchhuah Ropui is located in the eastern side of Mizoram with a latitude of 23.167465° N and a longitude of 29.53332° E (as it appears on the Map of India). It is under Khawbung Rural Development Block of Champhai.

Kawtchhuah Ropui has many remains of the ancient times, and scientists from the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) also came to study these relics. Kawtchhuah Ropui of Vangchhia village was declared as "Protected Monument of National Importance" in 18th March, 2014 and became one of the most important places in the country.

In the year 2016, archeologists from the Archeological Survey of India came to excavate the place for research. They found that there were proper housing areas, water holes, retaining walls, well-planned roads, stone steps, broken clay pots, tobacco pipes, tianhrang and lungkuang graves, roadways, caves, more than 150 stone structures, stone tools and water pavilion.

Carbon dating established that Kawtchhuah Ropui dates back between 1450 AD and 1500 AD. Five guard stations formed like caves carved into stone walls were also found. These caves have a depth of six and a half feet with a width of seven and a half feet, while the interior of the caves measured four and a half feet high.

There are six roads from Kawtchhuah Ropui. The first and second road crossed the Tiau river towards Myanmar, the third goes towards the South-east, the fourth towards the west, the fifth to the North-west, and the sixth towards the North. These roads are called Pipute Lamlian. In some places on the roads, stone slabs are used for pavement as well as for a wall, and some stones are arranged as a bench for rest. Kawtchhuah Ropui is called the Great Convergent Point as all these important roads are joined here.

Although there are no written words on the monuments of Kawtchhuah Ropui, pictures of all the treasured relics of the Mizos like necklaces and dar, darkhuang, spears and shields, musical instruments, wooden plates, different farm and wild animals, birds and fishes, axes and hoes, tobacco pipes and tuibur, combs and different human pictures can be seen. All these pictures are embossed. Pictures of animals seen in Kawtchhuah Ropui were animals whose meat were eaten for food by the Mizos.

Above Kawtchhuah Ropui, there is a hill called 'Laituma nu lunglen tlang' which was named after Laituma's mother. Laituma was a Mizo youth who was stoned to death. It is said that from this hill, his mother spent every day looking at the Ṭiau river where her son was killed, which is located between the international boundary of India and Myanmar. Visitors spend most of their time on this hill. Many important historical places of the Mizos can be seen from this hill, such as Hauhai dil (where Hauhaii hlang originated), chi khur (where salt was dug in the olden days),

legacies of Liandova te unau, village of Lalmanga (origin of Lalmanga nu lawm rawih ni), old village of Pi Hmuaki (buried alive because of her expertise in composing songs), Chawnghawih (where Sailova, the ancestors of the Sailo clan spent his younger days), the origin of Tianhrang thlan - a very popular Mizo graveyard, the village where tawlhlohpuan originates, Buannel ram and Seipui (a place often quoted by Mizo Historians). It is also called the Mizo Historical View Point because some villages where many Mizo words and phrases originated can be seen from this point.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. Where were stone pillars or structures erected by the Mizos in the olden days?
2. Explain the two types of Mizo stone pillars or structures.
3. When was Kawtchhuah Ropui of Vangchhia declared as 'Protected Monument of National Importance'?
4. What is the significance of Kawtchhuah Ropui for the Mizos?
5. Do you think Kawtchhuah Ropui needs to be preserved ? Give reasons for your answer.

Discussion

Divide the class into two groups. One will support the motion 'Importance of preserving Kawtchhuah Ropui' and let the other group oppose the motion. Let each group discuss and prepare their argument point-wise and conduct a debate.

2 MOUNTAINS OF MIZORAM

Mizoram is a hilly region but the mountains are not so very high. The mountain ranges run from South to North with many rivers in between. These rivers flow towards the south or the north and there are some that flow towards the west.

Mizoram is located in an area which gets monsoon rainfall. There is heavy rainfall from the end of May to mid-September every year. Winter and summer seasons are mild. Abundant rain in the region have made the hills rugged and the rain that falls on the hills flow down towards the valleys forming rivers between hills.

Phawngpui tlang: The highest peak in Mizoram is Phawngpui tlang, which is located in the southern part of Mizoram at Lawngtlai district within the Lai Autonomous District Council. The mountain looks blue from afar, so the British used to call it The Blue Mountain. Though the range is not extensive, it is very high measuring 2,157 metres (7,077 ft). The name Phawngpui is derived from Lai language 'Phawngpi' where 'Phawng' means phul (grass) and 'pi' means pui (great), meaning great grassland or great meadow.

On the southern side there is a vast and beautiful grassland called 'Fâr pâk phawng'. It is said that there was a lone pine tree growing in the middle and was then named so because the word 'pak' means alone/one. There are now several pine

trees at Fâr pâk and there is a steep cliff at the side called Thlazuang kham and it looks very dangerous when one looks down the cliff. Phawngpui tlang is a declared national park and the flora and fauna are protected and conserved. The dry season in the mountain is filled with beautiful rhododendron blooms. Rhododendron (Chhawkhlei) is a woody flowering plant which grows in hilly regions. There are many species of animals and birds. Thlazuang kham is also inhabited by a few gorals (sathar). There are also different species of orchids.

Lengteng tlang: The second highest mountain in Mizoram is Lengteng tlang. It is situated in the north eastern part of Mizoram in Champhai District at the Mizoram, Manipur and Myanmar border. It was often said to be higher than Phawngpui tlang but when it was recently measured, it was 2141 metres (7070 ft) high. It is the highest peak along the extensive and famous Sialkal mountain range. Because of the great number of crickets (thereng) on the mountain, the Paihte tribes called the mountain 'Lengthe tlang' where 'lengthe' means cricket but with the passage of time the mountain came to be known as 'Lengteng tlang'.

Lengteng tlang is long and rugged and it towers over the surrounding mountains. Though the mountain is high, it does not offer much scenic view from the top. It is filled with dense forest and the weather is very cold in winter. Ants and mosquitoes are very rare here.

Though the mountain is covered with dense forest, food crops grow well in the eastern part of the mountain. There are many species of wildlife especially serow and goral.

Lurh tlang: This mountain lies to the south of Farkawn village in eastern Mizoram on the Myanmar border. It is said that our forefathers felt that this mountain towers over the other mountains (sang bik lurh) and called it Lurh tlang. It is 1935 metres (6350 ft) high. The eastern side is craggy and many unusual caves are found which serve as homes for gorals (sathar). The mountain is very cold in winter and summers are mild with soft breeze blowing in the air.

The land is fertile and food crops prosper here. Trees and bamboos grow well and wildlife is still in abundance. The State Bird of Mizoram -Vavu is said to still inhabit this mountain till today.

Lurh tlang holds an important place in Mizo history and is said to be inhabited by fairies and spirits.

Ṭan tlang: On the northern side of Lurh tlang there is another beautiful and high mountain called Ṭan tlang between the villages of Vaphai and Farkawn. Its height is 1929 metres (6350 ft) and is the fifth highest mountain in Mizoram.

It is claimed that this mountain is one of the most famous mountains since the days of the Mizo forefathers. This is because many spirits and fairies are believed to live on the mountain with their chief Lalchungnunga. These spirits and

fairies from Ṭan tlang and Lurh tlang are said to call out to each other now and then. Though the range of Ṭan tlang is not long, the tall peak stands out even from a distance. Below Ṭan tlang on the eastern side there is a place called Ṭhasiama se no neihna.

The top of the mountain is flat with green meadows. Different kinds of trees which are found in the eastern parts of Mizoram like fah, thil, khiang and then are found on the mountain. The blossoms of Farṭuah and Vaube on the slopes of the mountain are a beautiful sight. The mountain is cool with breezy wind and has mild temperature. Few wild animals are found here and according to legend, these wild animals are looked after by fairies.

Mawmrang tlang: This mountain is located in the north eastern part of Mizoram on the mountain range of Ngopa. Notable villages near Mawmrang tlang are - Thanglailung, Phullen, Luangpawn and Changzawl. It towers at a height of 1812 metres and is one of the highest and famous mountains in north eastern Mizoram. It has a spectacular sloping terrain. The highest part of the mountain slope is given the name Mawmrang.

The weather is mild during winter though it sometimes snows when the weather becomes extremely cold. Like other high mountain peaks, it enjoys a cool breeze. With a solid rock formation, the rocks found here are said to be hard.

Because of the fertile land in this region trees and bamboos thrive well and big trees can be found here. Flowering plants

are in abundance along with medicinal plants. Wildlife and birds also thrive abundantly.

Mawmrang tlang is famous since the olden days. The spirit of the mountain is said to have more authority than spirits of other mountains. The chief of the spirits of the mountain is Sahmula and his son is Sabereka. Sahmula also had a beautiful daughter named Lengthuampuii.

Reiek tlang: Reiek mountain is located not very far from the southern side of Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram. It is the 17th highest peak in Mizoram with a height of 1485 metres. Though it is not a very high mountain, it has a breathtaking view and its location being not far from the state capital makes it a great tourist attraction.

The eastern part of this mountain has a gentle slope while the western side is steep and craggy. It is surrounded by beautiful and lush meadows. Grass and small plants grow where the soil is thin and trees grow in places where the soil is dense.

This mountain has always been popular from the olden days. The chief of the spirits on this mountain is Khuangtuahlali who attempted to be greater and braver than the spirits in the surrounding mountains.

Hachhek tlang: One prominent mountain in the north western region of Mizoram is believed to be Hachhek tlang. It is situated in the Mizoram and Cachar (Assam) border and has a long mountain range. It is said that as the shape of the

mountain looks like a hatchet (hachhek), it was given the name Hachhek tlang. Though it has a long range, there is no particular rising peak. Belkhai tlang, Saisaih tlang, Tuidam tlang and Kawrtethawveng tlang are some of the higher and popular peaks on the mountain range.

The land is fertile and trees and bamboos thrive well. The weather here is a combination of both the hot weather of the plains and the cool weather of hilly regions making it hotter than the mountains in the east of Mizoram.

Ṭawi tlang: Another well-known mountain in Mizoram is Ṭawi tlang. It is located in the south eastern side of Aizawl and is said to be the most prominent mountain in central Mizoram. It is a big mountain surrounded by dense forest, it looks like a tree with thick foliage and was therefore given the name Ṭawi tlang. The mountain range ascend towards the north and the height is 1837 metres (6177 ft).

The forest in this mountain is very dense, and snow sometimes fall during the cold winter season. The summers are also cool with light breezy air. There are many varieties of trees and animals and is used to be a good hunting ground for hunters. The mountain is also rich in medicinal plants and orchids. Rhododendron thrives well and dry seasons are marked with blooming rhododendron flowers.

Hmuifang tlang: Hmuifang tlang is located in the northern side of Mizoram between Aizawl and Thenzawl village. It is a high mountain and the peak has a rolling green meadow. It

is a very popular mountain and is also a great tourist attraction.

It is said that the mountain is named Hmuifang because a small fruit bearing tree called lenhmui grows plenty on this mountain. It is 1619 metres (5308 ft) high and offers a great view as there is no other high mountain nearby. The highest peak is called Dodala Lung tlang.

Even though it cannot be claimed as a very high mountain, it is spectacular as it rolls toward the north and south direction. The view of the rugged terrain is breathtaking from the nearby Sialsuk tlang. The peak is formed by a group of small hillocks with grassy glade. The trees that grow along the edge of the glade makes it look more beautiful. The grass is green during the monsoon season but becomes brown with dryness in winter.

At the base of the mountain there is the source of the famous Tuirial river and further to the west flows Changte river. The weather on top of the hill is never unpleasant as there is plenty of cool breeze. The base of the hill and river banks are filled with trees and bamboos and big trees are also abundant even though trees are scarce on top of the hill.

Hmuifang tlang is now along the national highway making it easier for tourists to visit and it is equipped with parks and recreation centres. It is a great venue for shooting films and other events and it attracts people from all parts of Mizoram.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. Name any five mountains in Mizoram.
2. Trace the origin of the name 'Phawngpui tlang'? What is its height?
3. Which mountain base form the source of Tuirial river?
4. Which mountain is home to Vavu – Mizoram State Bird?

3 ATTIRE OF MIZO MEN

Mizo men wore a kind of skirt made from the peel of Hruikhau and for protection from rainfall, a shirt-like top called Hnawkhal which is also made from Hruikhau till the time they settled in Run valley. 1600 years after they settled in Lentlang hrenpereng was woven and worn tightened with vaiza rope.

After they learnt the art of weaving puanngo, men also began wearing puan like the women. They also wore ngotekherh and puanrin. They did not wear tops or innerwear. Hrenpereng was worn only when they went to work in their cultivation or while hunting and fishing during which wearing puan was inconvenient.

Mizo men wore turban (diar) on their head and the common man's turban was white while a Thangchhuah male wore striped turban. Their turban was a long cloth which was wound around the head with the end tucked in. It was wound perfectly round. Diar was the main head-dress of Mizo men. As it was wound many times round the head, the head could not easily get wet when they walk under the rain.

When pasalṭha brought home the heads of the enemies that they had killed, male children had a chance to knife them as well, which made them eligible to wear chhawn on their heads. Chhawn can be worn by those who had killed the enemies during 'ral lu lam' and is worn for one week. Young men who are notorious and ill-mannered were scolded with the saying "I will strike you with my chhawn''.

One of the Mizo men's attire in the oldern days was Dartawnsuk. It was made from a thin copper. At the end, a tassel of wool or a flower was attached. This was worn at the side of their turban during festivals and on the occasion of 'mi lu lam'. It moved up and down when they moved around or when they danced. Another thing worth mentioning is 'Arkeziak', though it was not exactly a part of the clothing of a Mizo male. When they go out on a battle, it was taboo to come home in the afternoon with the heads of enemies, so they used to camp on the outskirts of their village. They made lots of sounds so that the villagers would hear them and the villagers hearing their sound would get excited and were neither able to sleep. Young women and mothers braided black, white and red yarns, and this was called 'Arkeziak'. In the morning the entire village would welcome the fighters at the Kawtchhuah with the chief's wife, wives of the village elders and the young women with rice beer. They would garland them with Arkeziak. The chief's wife would also present them puan, Ṭhihna and Darbu which was a great show of respect. They would wear the 'Arkeziak' during 'Ral lu lam'.

Men would also grow their hair which they tie in a bun. Hmar/ Duhlian had their bun at the back of their heads and

Pawi at the top of their heads. To secure their buns they use Thimkual/ Kingkul ke sei. After 1930 only a few men made buns. After returning home from the invasion of the Germans in 1918, men started cutting their hair short.

Mizo men used to wear necklaces such as Ṭhival, Ṭhifan, Ṭhihna and Ṭhipui. They also wore Ṭhimal. These necklaces are said to be meant for men. Men usually took great care of themselves. The more particular few changed the thread of their necklaces everyday. They believed themselves to be attractive when they wear necklaces. In the past, there were more attires for men than women, and men were more meticulous. The prosperous ones wore Ṭhipui and those who could not afford it wear Ṭhipawl. The chiefs wear Ṭhipui and an old saying "Ṭhi behlo thute chu engvak ni suh" originated from this. A few rowdy young men wore tiger's tooth as necklace. Some wore the white hair of goats. After the year 1926, men started wearing shirts, pants and ties, but there were some who still wore necklaces.

The Mizo chiefs had a distinct style of clothing. They could attach Vakul feather on their turban but like others they could not wear Thangchhuah puan or dira ṭial without first performing thangchhuah. Men who had performed Thangchhuah were allowed to stripen their puan. They could also wear diar tial. A striped puan called Mangpuan was worn only at a grand ceremony and on a special occasion. While errecting Lungdawh, Mangpuan could be flown as a flag. This was a gesture to commemorate their greatness.

The brave hearts of a village who stood courageously against enemies and ferocious animals were covered with Tawlhlohpuan. When they learnt the art of making clothes,

they spun very fine threads and wove them meticulously. The cloths were folded in the middle and they made holes for the neck and arms and sewed it together using 'raw chang' and 'sakuh'. To make the neck hole, it was put against a Chhemthei and a hole was cut along the outline of the 'chhemthei' with a knife. This was the first type of Tualtah kawr that they wore. Some writers called this type of cloth 'Hnawkhal' and it was thigh-length. A type of clothing called Dawlrem, which were indigo-dyed with red and white stripes were also very popular. The clothing of men and women in the past were sewn together under the arms. These were sewn with great care using 'pawnpui' sewing technique.

For a long time men did not wear collared shirts. They wrapped a Puanngo on top of their shirts. It is said that after the invasion of Abor in the year 1911, men began wearing collared shirts. Others say that they had traded with Hringchar before the year 1840, and wore clothes made in the mainland. Among the wealthy people, men were more fashionable than women. In the year 1917, when men were attired with coats, neckties and shoes, women, even when attired at their best, did not wear any shoes. Even after wearing collared shirts, neckties and coats, men still wore puan to dress themselves.

Mizo men gradually ceased wearing puan, though there were some who still favoured puan and wore it for a long time. After the year 1970 some men were still seen wearing puan. It has not been long since men stopped wearing puan in their households, even after 1990 some could still be seen wearing puan.

In the beginning, Puanlaisen, Ngotekherh and Puanrin were meant for men. Ṭhifen, Ṭhival, were also necklaces of men. These clothing and necklaces were taken over from men by the women. After these items were popularly worn by women, men ceased wearing them.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. Describe the kinds of turban worn by Mizo men in the olden days.
2. Discuss how Mizo men tied their hairs in the olden days.
3. What were the different kinds of necklaces worn by Mizo men?
4. What is the meaning of the saying 'Ṭhibeh lo thu te chu eng vak ni suh'?
5. Who were entitled to wear Tawlhlohpuan in the olden days?

4 NUCHHUNGI

Nuchhungi Renthlei was born at Ralvawng on 7th February, 1914. Ralvawng village is located in the south of Mizoram to the east of Lunglei and can be reached on a one-day journey by foot. Her father was Hmingliana Renthlei and her mother was Lalthanglovi. She was the youngest of her siblings and all were girls thus she was given the name Nuchhungi. She was fondly called Nu-i and some called her Nutei. She was of medium height on the taller side.

In 1934, Nuchhungi started working as a teacher under the Welsh Mission in a Girls' School. When she began holding a secure job, those who had criticized her mother for making her attend school began to praise her mother for being sensible and practical, and many came to realize the importance of schooling and therefore enrolment in the Girls' School increased.

Her favourite subjects were Mizo literature and domestic economy in which she always secured good grades. Her teacher Mrs. Zirtiri was a learned person who had the ability to find out the talents and interests of her students. She was patient, truthful and diligent. She was

quick to recognize her students' talents and interests. She was able to unearth the many talents of Nuchhungi which she herself was not aware of.

While Nuchhungi was training in a boarding school under Mrs Zirtiri, they took care of motherless babies and the teachers would take turns caring for these babies. They slept with these babies in turn and simultaneously taught in the school.

When she finished teacher training in the year 1933, Mrs. Zirtiri invited her on a tour to villages. They organize worship service wherever they went and after each service Mrs. Zirtiri used to display slides on the story of Jesus Christ which Nuchhungi explained in Mizo.

While she worked under the Mission, the English missionaries had great confidence in her. She supervised boarding schools for girls in many places on their behalf. She did not work only at Serkawn but also in the villages as and when needed where there were other boarding schools for girls. After she stayed in the boarding school for girls at Serkawn for some years, she was sent to a boarding school for girls at Darzo in 1938 with 2 other teachers.

Before she left for Darzo, Mrs. Zirtiri gave her some notebooks and said, "We will make Serkawn Graded Reader and you must compose as many Mizo stories as possible for the Reader". So Nuchhungi used to compose Mizo stories usually at night time which was her best free time and as

kerosene oil was scarce, she wrote under a dim candlelight late into the night.

In early March 1939, she was sent to manage a boarding school for girls at Thingsai with 2 teachers and 20 students. In 1940, she was sent to manage a boarding school for girls at Cheural.

Nuchhungi worked as a teacher for a very long time and worked for 18 years under the Mission, from 1934 to September 1952. She worked under the Government for 30 years, from October 1952 to 1982 and after working for a total of 48 years she retired in February 1983. She also attended meticulously to her household and family and she was very punctual while working in school, she was sincere and dedicated in her work which is exemplary.

In 1986, she was awarded the Padma Shri in Literature due to her many contributions in the field and received a medal and a certificate from the President of India, Giani Zail Singh. She was the first Mizo woman to be awarded the Padma Shri.

She was brought up in a Mission school and her perseverance, obedience, diligence, self-control and punctuality could be seen at all times. While she was in Darzo in 1938 supervising the boarding school for girls, she wrote many Mizo stories. Serkawn Graded Reader Book I, II, III were prescribed as textbooks for Primary Schools in Mizoram for a long time.

Earlier, there were Class A and B before children enter class I in schools. These classes required separate textbooks and Class A studied Zirna Bul Bu and Class B studied short stories composed from words in Zirna Bul Bu called Primer which was also known as ZOVI BU. There are 8 short stories in this book and was studied in schools for many years.

Apart from stories and poems, Nuchhungi wrote dramas and short plays such as *Red Indian Naupangte*, *Khawvela Naupangte, Savawm Pathum,* and *Puanseni* which were enacted by students. She produced 15 audio albums on Mizo children's stories and were very popular among children.

Nuchhungi was very skilled in all the tasks and crafts of a Mizo woman. She could sew and knit and could provide clothing for the family without help from others. She pounded rice, collected fire-wood, fetched water, wove and did her gardening all the while doing with her teaching work. She worked in schools for many years and was never late for school, not even once.

In 1965, the Assam Publication Board printed her book on games played by Mizo children and songs of Mizo children. This book was revised, enlarged and reprinted in 1994 and was renamed 'Mizo Naupangte Infiamna leh Hlate'.

Nuchhungi Renthlei was an honorable woman who contributed much to education. She was practical, diligent

and hardworking and her literary works are valuable to education in Mizoram. She is indeed a wonderful gift for Mizoram.

EXERCISE

Fill in the blanks.

1. Nuchhungi Renthlei was born on _____ at Ralvawng village.
2. Nuchhungi worked as a teacher in 1934 under_____.
3. Nuchhungi's favourite subjects during her school days were_____and _____.
4. Nuchhungi received The Padma Shri in_____. She was the first _____ to be awarded The Padma Shri.

Answer the following questions.

1. What are the things we can learn from Nuchhungi's life?
2. Describe the examplar qualities of Nuchhungi during her career as a teacher.
3. What did Nuchhungi contribute for Mizo children?

5 FESTIVALS

The exact origin of Mizo festivals is uncertain. Some believe that it started from Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi while some others believed it to be later than that. However, fellow hill dwellers in Burma also have festivals and it is assumed that festivals were celebrated before our forefathers migrated to Burma. With the change in times and advancement in the society, better and more cheerful ways of celebrating festivals evolved. The mode of celebrating these festivals during the early days when Mizoram came under the government were already version modified by our ancestors. How the modified festivals celebrations originated and were celebrated can be seen as follows:

PAWL KÛT:

While our ancestors settled in the Run valley and some in Shan state of today, there was a famine for 3 years. Many people died and some migrated. But in the 4th year the famine was over and they became rich and no place was big enough to store their crops which were stacked on top of each other. The rich harvest was used to feed their livestock which brought prosperity.

During this time there was a Kawlni chief at Suaitlâng who said, “There is a Khawzim God who has blessed us with riches and we are able to eat well again. Our wealth has no

limit and we are very grateful. Let us make a night of non-vegetarian dinner and each family should butcher a chicken and cook more rice than usual. On that night no family should eat dinner on their own and must invite their neighbours. Let us share our riches with others. Let us make even the poorest families in the village happy". His elders also agreed with him. One morning, the village-crier announced, "For 3 years our village has suffered deadly famine, but there is a Khawzim God who has blessed us and made us rich again so let us eat all kinds of good food and meat. Tomorrow morning each household should kill a chicken so that even the poorest can celebrate, everyone should invite their neighbours and eat dinner together joyfully". So every family invited their neighbours for the great meat feast. Everyone had plenty of rice and meat, and even after they were full, there were still leftovers. These leftovers were force-fed on each other, some who were too full ran out of the houses but were still being force-fed on their way out and everyone was happy.

The next day, the more prosperous people in the village killed their pigs. Some young men made Sakuhuilût, and they gathered rice straws from nearby paddy fields and covered the Sakuhuilût at the end of which they placed pork. Then they crawled in the Sakuhuilût and fought to eat the meat. The meat which they competed to eat was called "Luh kût sa". And with the passing of time, any meat cooked for festivals was called "Luh kût sa".

With the passage of time the word 'luh' was removed and was called 'kût'. They continued feeding each other with

rice and meat. This is called "Chhawng hnawh" which means feeding others with our plenty. It is now called "Chhawng hnawt". When they collected rice straws for sakuhuilut, they accidentally collected some unharvested rice stalks. The owner was very unhappy about it but the chief and the elders said, "No one should complain about anything used during our meat feast, if you do not want your rice straw taken you should have been ready before the feast. Except for a few people, all have completed their rice harvest. So, from now on no one must complain but should have their crop harvested well on time".

Therefore, the festival was called Pawltlak Kût. When the new year arrived anything in the field that had not been kept inside the 'Thlâm' could be taken. The festival was then again renamed 'Pawl Kût'. The New Year celebration of today is actually the pawl kût of our ancestors.

Celebration of Pawl Kût: With the passage of time, Pawl Kût came to be considered as a festival for children. Every household had to eat rice and meat on the night of the festival, and many eggs were also boiled. Those who had grandchildren roasted the gall-bladder of a chicken. And the roasted gall-bladder was used as necklace and the children were very proud of their necklaces. In the evening, children dressed up and brought rice, meat and eggs on a plate to the Kawtchhuah Lungdawh and had chhawng hnawh. Teenage girls attended wearing Puanrin and put Vakiria on their heads. The young men, young women and men also attended. Mothers carrying and holding the hands of their young ones also went to the Lungdawh for

Chhawnghnawh. Rice, meat and boiled eggs were fed to each other while chanting "Chhawng, chhawng, chhawng".

CHAPCHAR KÛT:

This festival originated in Suaitlâng under the Kawlni chief. Once the chief and many young men went hunting but came back empty-handed. The chief took pity on his people and he donated a pig and asked his men to contribute chicken. They invited the young men and young women of the village and had a merry feast. They were merrier than when they were successful on a hunting trip but since all of them could not be accommodated under one roof, they continued enjoying outside. The intoxicated elders put their arms around each other's shoulder and swayed right and left feeling very happy. As children were enjoying the scene the elders said, "Our audiences should carry rice beer jugs". So, they carried the jug around and fed the elders. This was the origin of chai and carrying rice beer during festivals. This festival was celebrated after harvest. It was celebrated as thanksgiving to celebrate their success in harvest with good health. This festival was for everyone but it was specially meant for the young men and young women as they were usually the ones who celebrated the most.

Celebration of Chapchar Kût: They prepared for this festival beforehand. Rice beer was fermented. The men and young men went out hunting for meat for the festival. Young men, young women and children collected the rice beer that had been fermented by the villagers. When the day of the festival arrived, the village-crier announced the day for the

Lusei and Ralte to slaughter their pigs. The Lusei and Ralte slaughtered their own pigs on the designated days. They asssigned different days for slaughtering the pigs of the Lusei and Ralte because Mizoram is the land of the Lusei and the Ralte.

They first announced a day for slaughtering of pigs for the Lusei, and the next day was for the Ralte. This is because it was taboo to take out the meat slaughtered by the Lusei on the same day. Then they fed each other at the Lungdawh like in Pawl Kût.

After Chhawnghnawh was done at the Lungdawh, the young men and young women danced outside performing chai at the chief's yard. On this night they had to dance till dawn. If they could not dance all night long, they were not allowed to continue dancing. It was usually celebrated for 3 to 7 days. The longest Chapchar Kût celebrations in Mizoram were:

1) Kawilam tlo – At Ruallung, where a parrot had to bring ears of rice to the village.

2) Chawngtui village – They celebrated so long that they had no time to farm which resulted in famine.

MIM KÛT:

This festival originated from the story of Tlingi and Ngama. Tlingi and Ngama were a very devoted couple. Unfortunately, Tlingi died and Ngama grieved for a long time. He cried so much that one day he died crying and went to the village of the dead. There he saw Tlingi who had

become very thin. Ngama asked her why she had become so skinny to which she replied that food was very scarce in the village. She told Ngama to go home immediately and to send her vegetables from their garden. Ngama went home immediately and he soon woke up from his death. He went to their garden and brought many vegetables. Ngama was blind with tears because he missed Tlingi, and he fell down beside the bamboo tubes used for holding water and dropped all that he was carrying. He left all his vegetables there and cried, "Tlingi, eat these vegetables that you have sown". And then he died crying again and went back to the village of the dead for the second time. He saw Tlingi had become healthier and happier. When he asked her why she looked healthier and happier, she told him it was because of the food that he had sent. Ngama woke up and went home again. From then on, Ngama sent Tlingi his first harvests every year. When people came to know about this, they also started doing the same. This was how 'mitthi thlai chhiah' and 'Mim Kût' started.

Celebration of Mim Kût: - This festival is meant for the deceased. In the olden days, the chief and his elders decided the time for celebration of Mim Kût and was usually celebrated after the harvest of corns. The family of the deceased kept aside different things for the dead. They pounded rice flour, made bread basket and placed them on the graves, drank rice beer, sang memorial songs, and cried longing for the deceased. Before the festival, the children collected corns. They carried bread baskets and were very contented while their parents were grieving. After 3 days, the

ceremony of placing things at the graves ended, and edible things that had been left for the deceased were allowed to be eaten. The days of mourning and offering food for the dead came to an end after this.

After the third day, the souls of the deceased were sent to their own place, and they left the place of the living unwillingly to go back to the land of the dead. As they bid farewell to the deceased, the month of celebrating Mim Kût came to be known as 'Thitin thla'.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. Discuss the three important festivals of the Mizos and write when these festivals are celebrated.
2. Explain the origin of 'Chhawnghnawh'.
3. How did 'Chapchar Kut' originate? How was it celebrated in the olden days?
4. Write your opinion on how Chapchar Kut is celebrated in these modern time?
5. Which is the festival meant for the deceased? How was it celebrated in the olden days?

6 MEDICINAL PLANTS

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 different chemicals. But medicinal plants are not mixed with chemicals, they are eaten raw or cooked or the juice 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 consumed or applied directly on the wounded skin. Let us discuss some commonly available medicinal plants -

Indian Gooseberry: It is not only a healthy fruit but a good medicinal plant which contains many nutrients. Apart from the fruit, the bark, the leaves and the roots all have medicinal values. It is beneficial for -

1. Gynaecological problem: It is good for women with gynaecological problems to drink the juice of the crushed fruit mixed with water.

2. Lung-Problem: Taking one full tablespoon of the dilated juice of the crushed fruit three times a day is said to be good for people with lung problems.

3. Dysentery (Santen): The juice of the crushed bark is beneficial for dysentery. The crushed fruit mixed with citrus juice is also helpful.

4. Tetanus: The crushed bark bandaged on the wound and drinking the juice is good for people suffering from tetanus.

5. Allergy (Hnamsai): Eating crushed gooseberry is said to alleviate rashes and itches from allergy.

6. Jaundice (Mit liam): The juice of the crushed fruit mixed with honey is good for jaundice.

7. Hypertension and heart problem: For hypertension and heart problem, eating about ten gooseberries daily is effective.

8. Cough: To alleviate cough, the juice of the crushed fruit mixed with honey is effective.

9. Stomach-ache: The juice of the bark and the fruits crushed together is effective. Eating substantial amount of the fruit is healthy. If there is no fruit, the juice of the bark may be taken.

10. Asthma: Two teaspoons of the juice of the crushed roots taken thrice daily is effective for asthma.

11. Anemia: A person having pale skin and weakness due to low level of hemoglobin may take the following mixture:

    a) Half a cup of gooseberry fruit crushed with a little water.
    b) Two tea-spoons of sugar.
    c) A quarter cup of water.

12. Mouth ulcer: The green leaves boiled with three cups of water till the water is reduced to one cup should be put in the mouth. Mouth, tongue, gum problems can be alleviated.

13. Burn: On burn caused by fire or hot water, the crushed dried leaves should be applied.

14. Eye problem: The crushed pit of a gooseberry should be boiled and the soup may be used to wash and clean the eyes.

15. Low blood pressure: Drinking boiled gooseberry juice is effective.

16. It is a good source of energy for the weak and elderly people.

Apart from all these, it is beneficial for those suffering from Vitamin-C deficiency, stomach problems, urinary tract problems, hiccups and it also helps in clotting blood. It is an immunity booster and eating the fruits fresh, dried, crushed or pickled is beneficial for health.

Bitter berry: Bitter berry can grow well in farms and kitchen gardens and is a good medicinal plant. Its medicinal values are:

1. The crushed fruit may be applied as below: -

   a) Herpes zoster: It should be applied on the blisters.
   b) Tooth-ache: The juice should be used to impregnate the aching tooth.
   c) Poisonous insects bite: It is used as an antidote to kill the poison of insects like centipedes, bees, scorpions, etc. During the non-fruit bearing season, the flowers are crushed and applied on the bite.

2. Bleeding nose: Drinking the juice of the crushed roots mixed with rice water is effective.

3. Infection with maggot formation: The dried fruits are burned and the infection is smoked with the fume and all the maggots are released from the infection.

4. Dysentery and loose motion: Eating the cooked and raw fruit as well as drinking the water in which it is cooked is effective.

5. Jaundice: Eating the cooked and raw fruit as well as drinking the water in which it is cooked is effective.

6. Hypertension: Eating the cooked and raw fruit as well as drinking the water in which it is cooked is effective.

7. Seizure/ Convulsion in children: The root roughly crushed cooked with rice (it does not need to be fully cooked) may be given in small quantity to the child.

Sugarcane: Sugarcane is used to make jaggery and in other places it is used for making sugar. It is a very good medicine but it should be used with caution. Its medicinal values are:

1. Bronchitis: Drinking warm juice of sugarcane mixed with crushed ginger is effective.

2. Excessive salivation: Drinking the juice or chewing the stem is effective.

3. Jaundice: Chewing the stem and drinking the juice is effective.

4. Sugarcane juice helps in maintaining a healthy digestive system and prevents infection.

5. Sensitive teeth/ Ha ṭim: Jaggery made from sugarcane, and tingly teeth from sour citrus fruits can disappear by eating jaggery.

Things to remember:

1. Sugarcane and its by-products-jaggery, sugar, sweet biscuits, etc. should not be taken on an empty stomach for those who have ulcers. It boosts acidity and can cause heartburn. Other things should be eaten before consuming them.

2. People with diabetes should avoid sugarcane and its by-products should be taken in moderation.

3. Sugarcane contains energy boosters and gives strength and it is also good for hypoglycemia. But for people who are inactive, it is better to eat less sugarcane and its by-products.

Silverberry: Silverberry is a shrub with woody stems and long-thorns. The fruits are usually the size of a thumb. The fruit turns yellow before ripening and becomes red when ripe. It is very sour but when it ripens, it has a sweet and sour taste.

Its medicinal values are:

1. It is beneficial for women with gynaecological problems. Drinking the boiled skin of the roots, the juice of the crushed leaves, the bark of the tree and the leaves are all said to be good for women.

2. For treating melasma, the leaves are boiled and one bottle of the water taken three times a day is said to be effective.

3. Extracting thorn: If a thorn is stuck in the skin, the branch of a silverberry is heated in fire and placed on the affected area. It can gently draw out the thorn.

Other benefits of silverberry:

a) The flower is good for the heart and is also used for preventing hemorrhage.

b) The fruit is useful for preventing hemorrhage.

c) The roots are beneficial for arthritis.

Ash Gourd: It is one of the most popular vegetables grown by the Mizos, and it makes a good dish. Its medicinal values are:

1. Snake bite: The juice of the crushed leaves are good when massaged on the affected area. The fruit is also beneficial.

2. Uterus problem: A mixture of raw ash gourd with sugar can cleanse the uterus. The juice produced from this mixture when preserved in a pot is good for treating swollen uterus.

3. Cholera and loose motion: Eating the crushed flower is effective for cholera. Eating the raw or cooked fruits as well as drinking the water in which it is cooked is effective. The raw fruit is said to be very effective for treating cholera.

4. It is effective for treatment of food poisoning. It is also effective in alleviating rash and itches caused by food poisoning or allergy.

5. Dysentery: A large quantity of the juice may be consumed but it is more effective to eat the raw fruit.

6. Ash gourd boosts hemoglobin level by drinking the water used for cooking or the raw juice. The juice produced

from a mixture of ash gourd and sugar is said to boost hemoglobin levels.

7. The crushed dried roots mixed with warm water is said to be very effective for asthma.

8. For people with diabetes, eating the cooked fruit as well as drinking the soup is effective.

9. It is also said to preserve corpses for a long time. Sliced ash gourd is placed along with the corpse to prevent it from foul smell.

10. It is effective to eat plenty of ash gourd for people suffering from urinary tract infections, kidney problems and epilepsy.

11. Applying warm cooked ash gourd is effective for caterpillar rash.

Phuihnam/ Clerodendrum Glendulosum: A very popular Mizo dish called phuihnam/Clerodendrum Glendulosum is an effective medicinal plant. It thrives well in farms and in kitchen gardens. Its medicinal values are:

1. The main medicinal source is the soup of cooked leaves of the plant. It is used for -

   a) Hypertension: The soup and the boiled leaves are good for hypertension.

b) Diabetes: The soup and the boiled leaves are said to be effective for reducing blood sugar.

2. Stomach ache in children: The juice of the crushed leaves are used to massage the stomach.

3. Heart and kidney problem: A patient may be made to drink the soup in the evening as much as he can. If there is a heart problem, the patient may feel drowsy till the next day, but if there is a kidney problem there would not be any change.

4. Burn: The crushed leaves are applied and bandaged on the wound. This also prevents scar.

There are many more medicinal plants which are not discussed here. What we use and how we use them depends on where we live.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. Write down 5 medicinal values of gooseberry and elaborate its benefits. (You may also mention its uses which are not mentioned in the lesson)
2. What are the uses of sugarcane? Mention the benefits of its juice.
3. What medicinal plant is effective for treating snake bite?
4. What medicinal plant will you use to extract thorn from the skin?
5. What medical plant is used for treating cholera and dysentery?
6. What are the benefits of Clerodendrum Glendulosom?

7 FISH FROM MIZORAM

There was once a young city boy called Venpuia who travelled to his grandfather's village during his school vacation. He enjoyed life in the village much more than he expected. There was no traffic and it was not crowded which made him like it even more. He found village life very relaxing.

His grandfather thought that as village life was so different from city life, the young boy might find it boring and would feel restless. One day Venpuia's grandfather asked, "Mama, are you bored in our village? There is nothing iteresting for you, do you find it boring?" But Venpuia unexpectedly replied, "Grandpa, the weather is pleasant and clean, I don't find it boring, there is no noise and it is so peaceful. I like it so much more here". His grandfather said, "Oh! I was afraid that you might find it dull, I am happy that you are enjoying your stay here."

After three days, his grandfather said, "Tomorrow we will go to our fish pond. If Mama is leaving the day after, we will go and catch some fish for him to take home." When morning came and after they had their meal, they went to their fish pond. They had three ponds, one in which they kept the smaller fish and in the other two they kept the bigger ones. They caught the fish with a net; and kept the bigger

ones and freed the smaller fish. They put the fish they caught inside an ice-box.

Venpuia left for home the next day. His parents were delighted when they saw the fish he brought home. He told them about his grandfather's fish pond, how they caught the fish and how he enjoyed it. He asked his father, "Dad, are there fish elsewhere as big as those from the pond in the village?" His father replied, "Of course, there are many fishes bigger than these. There are many big rivers here in Mizoram, some flowing towards the South and some towards the North. In those big rivers you will find many big fish."

Venpuia asked, "What are the other big fishes in Mizoram other than Thaichhawninu?" His father answered, "Another big fish is Nghabual and they can even grow to be bigger than you. Nghabual is like the fish that you brought home and they have large scales. Nghavang, Nghatun and Nghariliah are also be very big fishes."

Venpuia said, “Then, Dad, have you seen an eel? Grandfather talked about it but I haven’t seen it.” His father said, “Yes, I have seen an eel, it cannot grow very big but it is one of the longest fish. We call it ngharul because it is long like a snake. I have seen one that was about 6ft long in the big river, and I have even caught one once.”

“So, Dad, how do they catch fish in the river?” he asked. His father replied, “There are many ways to catch a fish from rivers, but recently some people started using limestones, poison and other harmful techniques to catch fish. This is very harmful for the environment and the government prohibits such ways of catching fish. It is a punishable offence leading to a fine of large sums of money and imprisonment for many years. The traditional ways of catching fish using different nets like len, lensuah, lenkhang and fishing poles do not cause harm to other fish and water animals. Besides, when we catch fish using traditional methods, fishes get numb for a while and become active again. This is an ethical way of catching fish and the population of the fish do not diminish in numbers”.

Venpuia gazed at his father and asked, “Dad, what do you mean by a school of fish? Do the fish just swim together in a group?” Shifting in his seat, his father explained. “My dear son, a large gathering of fish means a group of the same species of fish which are about to lay eggs swim together to produce their young ones searching for a place to lay eggs. They usually choose a place where streams and the rivers meet and where the water is fresh and cool. So, a school of

fish means a group of the same species of fish swimming together to lay their eggs. After they lay eggs, they leave their eggs to hatch by themselves".

Venpuia enquired, "Why do they have to be conserved these days?"

His father answered, "Some people often try to catch the whole school and the fish are disturbed as they are about to lay eggs. To prevent people from catching such schools, the fish have to be conserved". His father continued, "They are conserved and guarded from people trying to catch the school", and they both laughed.

"Dad, you talked about harmful ways of catching fish, can you tell me why it is harmful? If the main aim is catching fish, how can it be harmful?" He asked his father.

His father pondered, "If fish are caught using harmful ways, it harms other living things in the river. For example- when a generator is used to catch fish, the electricity that flows in the river will kill or injure several fish, causing wounds that could not heal afterwards and results in unhealthy fish. If they are poisoned, the poison flows through the water and kills not only fish, but all other living organisms including oysters."

"If there are no fish in the rivers, the organisms that clean our river waters will be gone and water will become dirty. So, we should protect not only fish in the rivers but all living things along the banks of rivers which is the duty of everyone." Venpuia then asked another question, "Dad, how

many varieties of fishes do you know?" and his father smiled and said, "I know quite a lot. I know smaller fishes like Dawnṭial, Nghachik, nghyadawl, nghameidum, sarba, kawnghram, nghazawngek, nghalim, hmursawp, tiaulim, lengphar. The bigger ones I know are Phar-awng, Nghahrah, nghalerh, nghavawk, nghazangrek and nghafunglawr.

Let me tell you the names of all the fishes I know. I have told you the names of some bigger fishes but let me add a few more - Thaichhawninu, Zawngdulinu, nghakhing, nghasen, nghavang, nghatun, nghakulram, nghabual, nghangiai and ngharilrah. Apart from these, there are other varieties of fish but these are the more common ones. I forgot to mention Nghakhing and Nghasen before, they could grow to be very big. Now, you will know that we have many big fish in our rivers." And with that they ended their conversation on fish.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. What is meant by 'school of fish'? Why are they conserved?
2. Mention any five fish found in the rivers of Mizoram and describe them.
3. What are some of the harmful ways of catching fish?Why is it harmful?
4. Discuss the importance of preserving rivers.

8 INSUKNAWR

Two friends, Sanga and Kima were walking together towards their village sports ground where the village was going to celebrate YMA Day. Competition on Indigenous Mizo Sports is organized every year. Members of different sections of the YMA prepare for the event as this is the only event in a year where a major sports function is organized, and is always enjoyed by all.

Kima said, “This year I am going to play Insuknawr in the middle-weight category. Come, let’s play together, even if we lose, it would still be fun”. Sanga replied, “Fine, I would like to play too”. Just then they met one of their friends with a young man from the city who had come for the YMA Day. They sat and chatted together.

The visitor took out a voice recorder from his bag and said, “I know different kinds of games but I don’t know how Insuknawr is played. Can you explain it to me?” Another friend sitting with them also said, “Yes, you should explain it to him. When he goes home, he is going to write about it, so he needs to understand it well.” Sanga said to Kima, “You should explain it to him, you know the game better than I do.”

Kima explained, “Earlier, a wooden rice pounding pestle was used in Insuknawr. But now bamboos as long as ‘hlam hnih’ or shorter are used for Insuknawr. A large and strong ‘Phulrua’ is also used and to prevent accidental injury the ends are cut very blunt and smooth. There is a mark made

in the middle, and is placed exactly on a line marked on the ground. Both the players place one end of the bamboo under their arms and hold it with both hands. The referee makes sure that the middle of the bamboo and the line marked on the field are in the exact same position. As soon as he releases the bamboo, the players start to push each other away. The one who can push away his opponent is the winner. Cheating is not allowed in sports and games, and selfless brave young Mizo men prefer to lose than cheat, so this game is played fairly. Though it is important to be strong in this game, skill is also an important factor in Insuknawr. Some players pin their opponents making them immobile and easily win the game. Pinning is not considered cheating but rather a skill in playing this game. Is my explanation clear?" The visitor replied, "Now I understand! I am excited to watch the game now. Do they classify the players according to weight or do they just pick opponents at random?"

Sanga then answered, "Unlike other sports played around the world, the players are divided into large, medium and small sized men and are categorized according to their appearance. But in some villages, they may categorize it according to weight, like - below 60 kgs, below 70 kgs and above 70 kgs. The main aim is not in winning the prize nor being the strongest, but rather the fun and enjoyment in playing the game.

Their friend then said that the games and sports programme was about to start. So they moved towards the sports ground where the games were being held.

When it was time for Insuknawr, the game began with the smaller sized men. In one corner of the sports ground, there was an insuknawr competition for the children which was also very entertaining. The players in the small sized men category in Insuknawr were playing enthusiastically. They shoved hard and some fell down, but nobody was hurt.

It was then time for the medium sized category. As there were many participants, it was held in two venues. Sanga and Kima also defeated whoever they had played with. The visitor was also really enjoying the game and was cheering loudly. Though Sanga was not a skilled player, he was very strong and made it to the last eight players. Kima was a strong and skilled player and easily defeated all his opponents. When the next round began, Sanga was unable to defeat his opponent and eventually lost, unable to win a prize. But Kima defeated all the opponents he faced as he was very skilled. Even when his opponents were in a low stance digging their feet in the ground, he could still prod them up showing his skills. Among the last of the strongest

four, Kima still defeated his opponent until only one was left. If he defeated him, he could become the winner.

The time came for the final round between Kima and his opponent Pu Hranga. Whoever wins the final round would be declared the champion. But Kima thought that being young, he still had chance to play many more times in the future, so he made up his mind. The game started between Kima and Pu Hranga. In the first round, Pu Hranga won, and in the second, Kima won. They had to play one more round and whoever won this round was going to be the champion. It could be the last chance for Pu Hranga to play this game as he had grown quite old.

In the final round though Kima strongly prodded he did not use all his strength and so Pu Hranga won the game. Pu Hranga understood what happened and while they shook hands he whispered, “Kima, you are very considerate, if you had used all your strength, I know I do not have any chance in winning, thank you.”

Kima, Sanga and the visitor celebrated Kima’s first runner up win at a nearby restaurant. The visitor exclaimed, “What I have experienced today is really wonderful, and I have witnessed the value of our culture and I am really thankful. It is really wonderful so I will pay for all this food.” Sanga said, “Yes, it is truly great, you have seen with your own eyes how the game Insuknawr is played, and that is the real Mizo spotman spirit. It is not only the competition; but the good-heartedness and selfless value that resides behind the game.”

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. Your lesson mentioned that 'Cheating is not allowed'. What does cheating mean?
2. What is your most favourite indigenous Mizo games? State your reasons.
3. What kinds of materials are used for 'insuknawr'? How is it played?
4. Were indigenous Mizo sports played for enjoyment or as a competition? What are the reasons?
5. Write down five health benefits of playing sports and games.

9 RIH LAKE AND MITTHI KALKAWNG

Our forefathers believed that when a person died, the departed soul travelled to the land of the dead through a particular path. They believed the dead lived in two places, they called one of the two as Mitthi Khua and the other as Pialral. Anyone who died followed the same path, their soul left the body from the crown of the head treading up to 'tungchaw' beside the bed and moved along 'khanchhuk'.

Moving towards the back of the house along the 'liang' and emerging at 'ditip', it then went down 'kawltuk', and finally left for Rih Dil.

The Hmar clan believed that the soul goes to Thlanpial, and the Pawi clan believed it goes to Zinghmuh. And it was assumed that all these departed souls also crossed Rih Dil.

Therefore, the dead were described as “Rih tlang mual liam” and “Rih sang kai” in poems and songs.

As it was believed that all the deceased cross the Rih Dil, one of the shrubs that grew around Rih Dil was called “Mitthi pal”. To the west of Rih Dil there was a place called ‘hruai kawn’ from where it was believed that the soul departed.

Beside Rih Dil there was “Mitthi Kawtkai” and all dead people who crossed the Rih Dil stepped on “Lung rah buk” and it was said that the stone clicks all the time.

After stepping on the stone, it was believed that they begin to enter the world of departed souls. There are many stories on how the soul crosses Rih Dil. One such story is narrated as follows-

A long time ago, there was a lot of wildlife around Rih Dil, where hunters used to go hunting. Once a group of friends went hunting and set up camp on the shore of Rih Dil and spent the night. When the night became still, they heard the sound of people walking and talking. They also heard the voice of a woman. When they thought about it, there was not a village nearby as they were in a dense forest so they found it very strange.

But they heard the noisy chatter again. When they listened carefully, the sound of their chatter became closer and one of them thought he heard his wife's voice and was very shocked.

One voice exclaimed, "Oh! You have also come?"

They heard the female voice saying, "Yes, I have come unexpectedly. I did not even have time to say anything to my children. I wonder if they know that I have placed some banana to ripen on top of the fireplace and the smoked meat that I stored inside a pot? My husband has gone hunting and so they will not have good meals to eat before he returns home."

One of the men believed it was his wife and said, "I will wait for her and I will catch her." He went outside the tent and waited.

The night was pitch dark and he could not see anything, but he felt that many people were passing him, and he could hear their voices. When the voice of whom he believed to be his wife approached, he caught her and held her. He said, "I know you are my wife. Why did you leave while I am away? The children will be very worried. You cannot leave, I forbid it," and he held her tightly.

His wife replied, "Let me go, you cannot hold me back, my time has come, and I have to leave, let me go."

But her husband did not let her go but held her tighter. She changed herself into a snake and coiled around him. He

still did not let go of her. His wife said in exasperation, “Almost all of my friends have gone without me.” She changed herself into a firefly and escaped between his fingers and flew away from him.

When morning broke, the man hurriedly went home. When he reached his house, his wife had really died and her corpse was still there.

To confirm the voice he heard, he checked the top of the fireplace and saw five ripe bananas. Then he checked the pot and he found that the smoked meat was stored exactly as was said. From then on, they believed that the voice they heard at the shore of Rih Dil was the soul of his wife departing for the land of the dead.

When a person dies, their soul still yearned for the land of the living even after crossing Pial river. On their way to the land of the dead, they climbed a mountain called Hringlang Tlang. From top of that mountain, they could clearly see the land of the living. From Hringlang Tlang, the souls of the dead gaze at their old village, they could see all the places where they had lived and they shed tears longing for the living.

But there are two unusual things in Hringlang Tlang, one is an exquisite flower called Hawilopar. As they look around the place in loneliness, they cannot fail to notice it. As soon as they see it, they wanted to pick it and clip it on their hair. As soon as it was picked and clipped on, they no longer have any desire to look back at their old place.

The other one is a pond of crystal clear water at the top of the mountain which was very appealing. Because it was so alluring one could not go past without drinking. As soon as they drank the water, they completely forgot all about their homes and their old lives and became very eager to reach the land of the dead, and from there they happily went straight to Mitthi Khua.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. What lake did the departed soul pass according to our Mizo forefathers? Describe the journey of the departed soul to Mitthi khua/Pialral.
2. Where did Hmar people and Pawi people believe their soul would go after death?
3. From which mountain did the departed soul view the land of the living? What things are there on that mountain and for what purpose did the departed soul use them?

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