



Lai Nation in the making

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Abstract

Lai, or Lais are a nationality presently inhabiting the Chin State and other parts of Myanmar, the state of Mizoram and parts of Manipur (India), and Chittagong Division of Bangladesh. Besides the self-appellation *Lai*, they are also known as Chin in Myanmar, and Pawi in India. The available historical accounts of the Lai at the time of the advent of the British in the Chin-Luhsai-Kuki land towards the end of the 19th century clearly point to the hypothesis that the Lai were a nation that was in the making.

Keywords

Lai, Chin, Pawi, Shendoo, Kuki, Lushai, tribe, nationality, nation.

Introduction

In his very important work *Wild Races of South-Eastern India* first published in 1870, Captain T.H. Lewin, Deputy Commissioner of Hill Tracts (Chittagong), Bangladesh, described the Lais ('Shendoos')¹ as a formidable people, who "seem to be more a nation than a tribe"; and the Lais ('Shendoos'), Lewin said, "inhabit the country northeast and east of the Blue Mountain", that is Phawngpui, the highest peak in Mizoram (Lewin, T.H. (1870, 1978:148). In another work *A Fly on the Wheel*, Lewin again spoke of a Lai ('Shendoos') "nation" (Lewin, 1885, 1912, 2005: 163).

A difficult term to clearly define, small notes on 'nation' is given in the *end notes*.²

Typology stages of nation formation

Nation (one or more than one nationality)



Nationality (several tribes)



Tribe (several clans)



Clan (several families)



Family

Usually, the stages of formation of a nation, starting from a family, goes through stages of as illustrated in this chart. Several families form a clan, several families form a tribe, several tribes from a nation. However, this typology is by no means universally applicable or accepted.

Steven Grosby in his *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction* (2005), offers a much simpler version of nation when he says, "The nation is a territorial community of nativity" (Grosby, 2005: 7). A nation here means a group of people bounded by territory, and sharing common perceived kinship. A nation feels like "home." One knows that one is in one's own nation when one feels comfortable and at home, says Grosby. Though some people disagree with Grosby in his definition of nation, his rather simple definition of nation fits those nations such as the Lai nation that do not fit into the normal nation-state model.

Lewin (1839-1916) was considered the chief architect of British rule in the Lushai Hills (Mizoram), he even had a Lusei (Mizo) name Thangliana (Thang-lian-a).

Salient features of the Lais

Lewin implied that the Lais ('Shendoos') could be considered a nation because they had a coherence of government or policy, and because they were culturally and materially quite advanced compared to their surrounding tribes (Lewin, 1870, 1978: 148-9, 162). Speaking about the Lushais or Luseis, Lewin remarked that "they cannot be considered as a nation for they have no coherence of government or policy (Lewin, 1870, 1978: 130). Let us examine certain points that set apart the Lais from other tribes which must have led Lewin, who "laid the foundations of British rule in the Lushai Hills" (Parry, 1932, 1976: 8), to consider Lais as a nation.

To be sure, Lewin did not enter the Lai country, which he said was situated around the Blue Mountain. His attempts to enter the Lai ('Shendoo') country from Chittagong in 1865 failed, he himself was nearly killed. Therefore, his accounts of the 'Shendoo' nation was based on the information he gathered from his informants.

Even without the 'nation' certification by Lewin, the accounts of the Lais richly deserve analysis of their past's glory and put it in perspective.

The historical accounts of the Lais presented herein pertain roughly to a period from 1860 to 1890. The year 1860 marked the British annexation of Chittagong Hill Tracts and the year 1890 marked the annexation of the Chin Hills and Lushai Hills (Mizoram) to the British Empire.

(i) **Master and ruler of entire Kuki-Chin-Lushai land**

When the British appeared in the Kuki-Chin-Lushai land at the end of the 19th century, the Lais were undoubtedly the most powerful people in the whole of Kuki-Chin-Lushai land (Manipur, Chin Hills, Arakan Hill Tracts, Mizoram, Chittagong Hill Tracts)). The Lais were indeed the master of the entire Kuki-Chin-Lushai land.

Carey and Tuck wrote thus, "it must be remembered that the Tashons (Tlaisun: that is, Lais at Falam in the present Chin State, Myanmar, author) held a unique position in the Chinland at this time (1890). All the tribes from Manipur to Haka and from Burma to Lushai owed them nominal allegiance (Carey & Tuck 1896, 1983: 39). B.S.Carey was Assistant Commissioner, Burma, and Political Officer, Chin Hills. Incidentally, Carey was a grandson of the famous British Christian (Baptist) missionary to India William Carey (1761-1834). H.N.Tuck was Extra Assistant Commissioner, Burma, and Political Officer, Chin Hills. Vumson also wrote, "At the time of British appearance Tlaisun (Falam) was undoubtedly the most powerful chieftainship in all Zo country (Kuki-Chin-Lushai land), as their influence stretched from Manipur to Haka" Vumson (1986: 53).

Non-Lai chiefs among the Kuki-Lushai-Chin paid tributes to the Lai chiefs in Chin Hills, and acknowledged the overall suzerainty of the latter. From the Lusei chiefs of Lushai Hills, the Paite chiefs of Chin Hills, the Thado (Kuki) chiefs and chiefs of other tribes of Manipur. (Mackenzie, 1884, 1979: 162; Carey & Tuck, 1896, 2008: 122, 130; Lal Bik 2007: 58). Other non-Lai chiefs from the Chin Hills, Lushai Hills, and the hill areas of Manipur were in fact tributary chiefs of the Lai chiefs. The former were therefore not fully independent, they were semi-independent.

It may be noted that large parts of Arakan Hill Tracts (now Rakhine State), Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh were under Hlawmcheu chiefs whose seat of power was initially at Rengtlang (Bangladesh). The Hlawmcheu chiefs, who came from Falam, later ruled from Lawngtlai, Mizoram, India. In the west, their territory extended as far as the Bay of Bengal, up to Cox's Bazar city and the Chittagong port. In the north, their territory extended as far as the river port of Paletwa on the river Kolodyne, (Hengmanga, 1987: 26-29; DOUNGEL, 2015). Paletwa is 158 km from the Sittwe (Akyab) port. It was said of Vanhnuahtlir, who was so powerful in the eyes of his

people, that but not for the presence of the sea (Bay of Bengal) in the north and the west he would have conquered the entire world!

The suzerainty of the Lais (Falam), DOUNGEL said, extended even in Baga and Silchar areas of Assam (India), and the three Districts of Manipur (India), viz., Chandel, Senapati and Churachanpur (DOUNGEL, 2015: 32-3). Citing a document of Pawi/Lai Union, Aizawl, 1996 (Pawi/Lai Union, Aizawl, 1996), DOUNGEL argues that "Lai chieftainship could also be claimed to be extended in Manipur. The reason being, certain sub-tribes of Lai who are now identified, as old Kukies, namley, Anal, Maring, Moyon, Monsang, Lamkang, Purum, Khoitu, Chiru, Chothe, Kom and Koireng had established settlement and occupied South Eastern part of Manipur in the present Chandel District, Sadar Hills Division of Senapati District and some areas in Churachanpur District of Manipur" (DOUNGEL, 2015: 32). Zahau (Lai) chief of Falam, Van Nawl (1852-1918) ruled areas in Manipur among the tribes of Tlangsat (perhaps Thangkhal people of the Zou tribe, author), Thado, Phaipi (Paite, author) and those in Lushai Hills (Ngur, Mualbawk, and Leisen villages in today's Champhai District of Mizoram) besides those in the Chin Hills that included Paite areas under Kamhau, a powerful Paite chief and other areas (Lal Bik 2007: 58).

(ii) **Payment of tributes and taxes to Lai chiefs**

Payment of tributes and taxes to the Lai chiefs by other non-Lai chiefs and their people was the clearest indication and the most concrete evidence of the preeminence of the Lais. In recognition of their suzerainty over them and as a mark of their allegiance to them, non-Lai chiefs paid tributes to the Lai chiefs.

What is meant by tribute?

Tribute, according to Collins Dictionary online, *is a regular payment of money, etc., made by one ruler or nation to another as acknowledgment of subjugation, for protection from invasion, etc* (Collins Dictionary, 2020). Tribute is, Merriam-Webster Dictionary online says, *a payment by one ruler or nation to another in acknowledgment of submission or as the price of protection* (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2020).

Even the most powerful Lusei (Lushai) chiefs, the Sailo chiefs, paid tributes to the Lai chiefs of Falam. Reid wrote, "In 1894 -95 it came to light that the chief of Falam within Burma was demanding and receiving tribute from chiefs within the Lushai Hills... Among the chiefs who had paid to Falam were Kairuma Sailo as well as others even nearer Aizawl (Aizawl)" Reid (1942: 23). R.B. McCabe, Political Officer of North Lushai Hills, also mentioned that Lushai Chiefs told him that each chief had to pay Rs20/- tribute to the "Poi Raja Jahau" i.e. to the Zahau chief at Falam (Cabe, 1980: 29 – 30). Mackenzie recorded names of Sailo chiefs who paid tributes to the Lai chiefs. They were: Suakpuilala Sailo (son of Lalmanga/Thlutpawrha, who died at Tanhril near Aizawl), Vanhnuailiana Sailo (son of Lalsavunga, who died at Champhai), Vuttaia Sailo (son of Lallula, who died at Rullam), Lalgura Sailo (son of Savunga, Buarpui chief) and Lalphunga Sailo (son of Suakpuilala, Tachhip's chief) (Mackenzie, 1884, 1979: 162)³.

Besides, Zahau (Lai) chief of Falam, Van Nawl (1852-1918) directly ruled villages in Lushai Hills, such as Ngur, Mualbawk, and Leisen villages in today's Champhai District of Mizoram (Lal Bik 2007: 58).

In fact, for quite a long time in pre-British period, one can safely assume that all the non-Lai chiefs in the then Lushai Hills paid tributes to the Lai chiefs in Burma. Payment of tributes and taxes ('chhiah') by Lusei chiefs and people of the Lushai Hills to the Lai chiefs is also recorded by indigenous historians such as B. Lalthangliana, Rev. Liangkhaia, K. Zawla, Rev. Zokima, etc (Lalthangliana ed. 1980; Liangkhaia,1938,1976; Zawla, 1964, 1981; Zokima, 1993).

Apart from tributes paid by tributary chiefs such as Kairuma Sailo, etc., the general public also paid taxes ('chhiah') in kind to Lai chiefs. Those items of tax were fowls, beads, mithun or gayal, and elephant tusks (Liangkhaia, 1938, 1976: 52-3).

Even Fanai chiefs of Mizoram, though they were Lais, also paid tributes ('lukhawng') to Falam ('Zauhau') ((Liangkhaia, 1938, 1976: 70).

Powerful Paite tribes/clans to the north of Falam, chief Kamhau ('Kanhaw', Sukte) and Sizang (Siyins) of Burma also paid tributes to the Lai chiefs at Falam. The tributes paid to Falam was triennially (Carey & Tuck, 1896, 2008: 122, 130).

The Sailo chiefs and other tributary chiefs were no doubt left free and independent internally, but the Lai chiefs would definitely have had control on external relations and other aspects of administration of the tributary chiefs that would demonstrate their overall suzerainty. The Lai chiefs also collected taxes from parts of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, as far as Cox's Bazar. Hlawncheu chief Vanhnuaitlir established his chiefdom in these areas in the last decades of the 19th century (Hengmanga, 1987; DOUNGEL, 2015; Manglinga, 1994). I was told by Manglinga Hlawncheu of Lawngtlai that people of Chittagong Hill Tracts continued to pay taxes to Lalhluna Hlawncheu till 1955, a year before chieftainship was abolished in the Pawi-Lakher region of Mizoram. Lalhluna Hlawncheu, who died at Lawngtlai in 1972, was the last Hlawncheu chief to rule from Lawngtlai (his seat of power was located at Lawngtlai Vengpui, or Lawngtlai-I). Manglinga Hlawncheu was a younger brother of Lalhluna Hlawncheu. Even though the areas in CHT under Lalhluna Hlawncheu went to (East) Pakistan in 1947-48, they were not effectively administered. This explains the continued payment of taxes).

It may be pointed out that Lalhluna was a 6th generation chief since Vanhnuaitlir. And Vanhnuaitlir was also the 6th in line of the royal lineage of Hlawncheu chiefs starting from the first known chief Chhannawn of Falam (Hengmanga, 1987: 26-7).

Tributes also came in from areas as far as south Manipur, roughly corresponding to the present districts of Churachanpur and Chandel. People in Churachanpur recall that various tribal chiefs in Manipur paid tributes to the Lai chiefs. Even today, there is one mountain range known as 'Gal Tang' (*Gal* means 'enemy', *Tang* means 'hill' or 'mountain') in the Churachanpur District, so-called because the Lai raiding parties would suddenly come and attack, and swiftly escape through that Gal Tang route (Interview: Mr. Khamchin Pau Zou, 1993). Zahau (Lai) chief of Falam, Van Nawl (1852-1918) ruled areas in Manipur among the tribes of Tlangsat (perhaps Thangkhal people of the Zou tribe, author), Thado, Phaipi (Paite, author) (Lal Bik 2007: 58). These tribes would have surely paid tributes to Van Nawl.

It is clear from the above that the historical and present day popular narrative constructed about the Sailo chiefs' unrivalled superiority and rule in the then Lushai Hills, captured in the oft repeated phrase, 'Sailo ni leh thla kara leng' ('Sailo that straddles between the sun and the moon') is not true. It was a myth.

(iii) Lai Confederacy

Mackenzie talked of the Lais as "Confederacy" (Mackenzie, 1884, 1979: 163). Collins Dictionary online defines confederacy as *people, groups, nations, or states united for some common purpose* (Collins Dictionary, 2020).

A Lai Confederacy could mean that the Lais ruled by forming alliances among chiefs or tribes/clans, or that the Lais had a loose alliance consisting of independent chiefdoms. Mackenzie must have had in mind the Lai confederacy led by the Falam Council that was prevailing on the eve of the British colonization of the Lai land. There were four powerful realms, or centers of power and influence, among the Lais: Falam, Haka, Thlantlang, and Zokhua. During the latter part of the 19th century where written records are available, Falam realm was the leader of the confederacy.

(iv) Falam Democratic Council

There was once a famous Falam Democratic Council that ruled the entire Kuki-Chin-Lushai land.

"The Falam tribe", wrote Carey and Tuck, "is administered by a council of five chiefs". Carey and Tuck further said that there was another Council of Six Elders that looked after the six quarters of Falam village, and that this Council of Six Elders was subordinate to the Five Council of Chiefs. Speaking about the Falam Council, Carey and Tuck rightly observed thus, "The fact that they have acquired and maintained their rule over all these people speaks well for their power and administration" (Carey & Tuck, 1896, 1983: 148-9). Vumson wrote: "The Tlasun (Tlaisun) made a practice of forming alliances with people they conquered, and by recognizing them as partners in the Tlasun council they became very powerful. The Tlasun council was ruled by a council of elders, selected for their wisdom and social prestige....The policy of the Tlasun was to rally their neighbors and establish a strong

central position...(The Tlasun) made alliances with Shan/ Burmans in the Kale-Kabaw Valley” (Vumson, 1986: 52-53).

Stevenson, who was amazed by the democratic polity of Falam, was later to describe this as 'the democratic Council of Tashon' in his work *The Economics of the Central Chin Tribes* (Stevenson, 1943,1986: 17).

It is now clear that the Lais established a strong and efficient administration in those days which enabled them to administer and control such large territories and diverse peoples.

(v) Alliance with Burmans

The Falam chiefs had an alliance with the Burmans (Shans of Kale or Kalemyo). The agreement was that the Burmans would sell salt, one of the most essential and rare commodities in those days, only to the former and the latter in turn would protect the former from raids by the hill tribes. The Falam Council effectively made use of this Falam-Burman alliance. Their monopoly of buying and selling salt in the Chin Hills and beyond made them rich while the assistance of the Burman army at various battles Falam had had with the Paites (Siyins or Sizang), etc., always turned the tables in favor of Falam (Carey & Tuck, 1896, 2008a: 129-130, 150; Vumson, 1986: 9; *Tashons people*, 2020).

This was obvious. For Falam was quite powerful in itself, but the alliance with still a more powerful power (Burmans) was a lethal military combination no others could beat.

(vi) Chieftainship

The Lais seemed to have had chiefs well before most of their kindred tribes had. This was a pointer to the comparatively high degree of development their society, and indeed their polity, had attained.

We do not know exactly at what time the Lais started having chiefs. It is very likely that they had a chief by the 13th century. By the 13th century AD, they (Chins) were considered “allies or comrades” by the Burmans because the two had an alliance and fought together in wars. At this time, they were in the lower valley of Chindwin river, an area directly east of the present Falam-Halkha (Lehman,1963, 1980: 22). Now, to be worthy of being considered an “ally” by those Burman kings and to be able to face a powerful Sak force, the Lais not only had to be a powerful but also a well-organized group led by a recognized leader- a chief.

At any rate, before they came down from Chin Hills to Mizoram, it is certain that that the Lais had chiefs. We are told that while the Mizos (Lushais) were still leading a semi-nomadic life on the banks of Tiau river around 1500 AD, the Lais were already being ruled by chiefs (Siama,1991: 10).

"The Luseis were late comers in the Chin Hill", wrote Rv. Zokima, and "by the time the Luseis entered the Chin Hills, Paite and the Pawi (Lais, author) were already well settled there. Therefore, they established villages in available vacant areas. It was with the permission of Lai chiefs that the new Lusei settlers established villages. On account of this, Pawi (Lai, author) chiefs continued to have control on the Luseis for quite a long time (Zokima, 1993: 21).

(vii) The four realms

There were four very powerful realms or centers of power among the Lai tribes of the Chin Hills. They were: Falam, Haka, Thlantlang, and Zokhua. As per the records of Carey & Tuck b, 1896, 2008: xxxil, lxxviii, the realms and villages under their rule are listed below (the figures are for a period of about 1890):

Falam realm (Tlaisun or 'Tashons', Zahau or 'Yaows', and Hualngo or 'Whenohs') had 132 villages with a population of 39,215.

Haka realm had 41 villages with a population of 14,250.

Thlantlang realm ('Klangklang') during the same period had 20 villages with a population of 4,925.

Zokhua realm ('Yokwa') had 14 villages with a population of 2,675.

Then there were 45 'independent villages' lying south of Haka having a population of 17,780 (Carey & Tuck b, 1896, 2008: xxxil, lxxviii).

These 'independent' villages were actually not truly independent as they would definitely be under the influence of a powerful Haka realm. Even Hungle village, located at the southern most corner, had had military and matrimonial alliances with Haka (Lehman, 1963, 1980:44, 144).

They ruled over a very large territory and a large population. They were also able to mobilize more resources through collection of tributes and taxes. It is therefore not really strange that the Lais would be the most powerful tribes. It was simply natural. Other non-Lai chiefs in the Lushai Hills and elsewhere would be no match to the Lais because the latter ruled mostly one village and the people were constantly on the move having no permanent villages, and therefore they would be able to muster only a small number of men to fight.

The Paite chiefs also had as many as 64 villages with a population of 10,776 in the Chin Hills area alone during the same period of about 1890. The break up is as follows:

Sizang ('Siyin')—5 villages with 1,770 population;

Sukte ('Sokte')—26 villages with 5,615 population;

Kamhau ('Kanhows')—33 villages with 3,390 population (Carey & Tuck b, 1896, 2008: iii). Paite tribes were also large in number, and were quite formidable and powerful but were ultimately defeated by Falam. As a result, the Paite chiefs also paid tributes to Falam (Carey & Tuck, 1896, 2008: 122, 130; Vumson, 1986: 78-9).

These accounts of villages and population under Lai chiefs of the Chin Hills still excluded many villages in the Lushai Hills and the Chittagong Hills under other Lai chiefs (but were also under one of the four realms), and those villages in the Lushai Hills under the Sailo (Lusei) chiefs who were but tributary to the Lai chiefs in Burma.

Added to all this was the factor of the most powerful Paite chiefs such as Kamhau ('Kanhow') chief of Tedim, and Sizang who also paid tributes to Falam, this demonstrated the latter's submission to Falam (Carey & Tuck, 1896, 2008: 122, 130). Earlier, Khanthuama who was the father of Kamhau, became chief of Sukte at Mualbem with the help of Falam (Zahau and perhaps Tlaisun, and not 'Zahau and Falam'). On account of their help, Khanthuama paid tributes to Falam. Khanthuama gradually became very powerful. Consequently, he conquered large parts of Manipur and defeated several tribes there such as Thado, Zou, Vaiphei, Guite, Ngaihte and Khuano. These tribes henceforth paid tributes to Khanthuama (Vumson, 1986: 78-9).

Compared with the number of several villages and their large populations found among the Lai chiefs in Burma, the Lusei chiefs of Lushai Hills had just one village each under their rule. The top five chiefs of Lusei in the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) with the largest number of houses including their population (1890-1892) are listed below:

Liankhama who ruled Zawlnghak village having 825 houses, population 4,260.

Kalkhama who ruled at Sentlang village having 800 houses, population 4,000.

Pawibawia who ruled at Khawruhlian village having 712 houses, population 3,460.

Sailianpuia who ruled at Reiek village having 650 houses, population 3,250.

Buangtheuva who ruled at Hmunpui village having 583 houses, population 2,915.

These Lusei chiefs and their villages along with the number of houses and their population are meticulously recorded by RB McCabe. RB McCabe was Political Officer, North Lushai Hills from 1890 to 1892. Rev. Liangkhaia has copied those figures from RB McCabe (Liangkhaia, 1938, 1976: 98-99). The list of top five Lusei chiefs in terms of houses and population under their rule are made from the list of chiefs in North Lushai Hills, and excludes those from the South Lushai Hills. But it is certain that the Lusei chiefs in South Lushai Hills were much more less powerful, and they had even smaller number of houses and population under their jurisdiction.

Thang Tin Lian (1895-1947), a Zahau chief at Falam (Tlahmun), ruled over as many as eighty three villages in Burma (Vanlalpeka, 2012). The number of villages under Thang Tin Lian's rule was eighty two, according to (Lal Bik 2007: 4). Van Nawl, Thang Tin Lian's father, ruled even a much larger area. Van Nawl's rule extended to villages in Manipur among the tribes of Tlangsat (perhaps Thangkhal people of the Zou tribe, author), Thado, Phaipi

(Paite, author) and those in Lushai Hills (Ngur, Mualbawk, and Leisen villages in today's Champhai District of Mizoram) besides those in the Chin Hills (Lal Bik 2007: 58).

(viii) Warfare

The fact that the Lais had the whole of Kuki-Chin-Lushai land under their suzerainty spoke well of the organizing capacity in war and the superiority of the Lais in the art of warfare.

Carey and Tuck talked of the “considerable tactical ability” of the Lais (Chins) who “are cat-like in their movements” Carey & Tuck (a. 1896, 1983: 27,32). Lt. Latter wrote that the Lais “are known to us (British, author) by their devastations on those tribes which pay us tribute: the suddenness, secrecy and never-failing nature of these attacks cause them to be held by the rest in the dread of which it would be impossible to give an idea” (Latter, 1846)).

Among the Kuki-Chin-Lushai, the Lais were perhaps the first to have guns. Vumson stated 1775 as the year of ‘first recorded use of firearms’ among the Kuki-Chin-Lushai. This year the Lais at Halkha used guns in their war against the Luseis. The latter, who did not have guns, were beaten and eventually driven across the Tiau (Vumson, 1986: 62; Carey & Tuck: 1896, 1983: 153).

However, it is quite probable that the Lais had had guns before 1775. Vumson himself opined that tribal wars on a large scale must have broken out between 1500–1600 (Vumson, 1986: 84). These wars must be a product of the introduction of firearms. Lehman argued that the introduction of firearms in the Chin State led to some sort of “population explosion”, “great tribal wars and political expansion”, and “hegemony” of the Lai chiefs led to, apart from other things, eventual expulsion of other non-Lai tribes westward across the Tiau (Lehman, 1963, 1980: 25-26). Liangkhaia also opined that the Lais had had guns by 1700 (Liangkhaia, 1938, 2002: 52).

Parry writes, “The Burmese are said to have had firearms in 1404” (Parry, 1932, 1976: 45). The Shan who lived in eastern and north western Burma, bitter enemies of the Burmese (Bamar), would also soon have gotten guns after its introduction in Burma in 1404. It is most likely that the Lais obtained their first gun from their immediate neighbor, the Shan (Burmese) of Kale (Kalemoyo) with whom they had close military alliance.

The Lais mastered the art of making gun powder. Luseis indeed learnt the art of manufacturing gun powder from the Lais. T.H. Lewin wrote that it was from the Lais ('Shendoos') that the “Lhoosai learnt the art of manufacturing gun powder” (Lewin (1870, 1978:14). Ch.Saprawnga's assertion that the Mizos (Luseis) knew how to make gun power right away when they acquired guns was not correct (Saprawnga, 1990: 14). "It is difficult to know from where they learned" the art of making gun powder (“Mizo pi pute mak ve zia chu silai an neih rual hian zen siam dan zu thiam ve nghal tlat pek a. Khawi lam atanga an zir nge hriat a har hle...” Ch.Saprawnga *Ka Zin Kawng*, 1990: 14). Mr. Ch.Saprawnga was a very prominent politician of Mizoram. He was a Chief Executive Member of the Mizo District Council, Member of Legislative Member of Assam, and Member of Parliament from Assam.

Besides, the Luseis are said to have obtained their first gun from the Lais. It is said that one Lai arms dealer, while instructing a Lusei how to operate a gun, repeatedly used the words ('Tihin a') si lai, si lai'. Hence, that Lusei man thought 'si lai' must be the name for the gun. Therefore, the Lusei name for a gun now is "silai". 'Tihin a si lai', or for short 'si lai' in Lai language means 'it shall/must be'. *Silai* does not make any sense in Lusei Lushai language. In Lai language, a gun is known as 'meithal' which means 'an arrow of fire', *mei* means fire and *thal* means arrow.

The art of making stockades was also known to the Lais before other tribes such as the Lushais knew about it. Shakespear told us that the art was copied by the Lushais from the Lais (Chins) (Shakespear, 1912, 1988:56)

The Lais had a knife known as 'kingkawtnam', made only by the Halkha people. The knife was used to cut off trophy heads from enemies in war and in the ceremonial dances celebrating the taking of heads. Made of steel, Lehman said that the knife was "of excellent workmanship" (Lehman,1963, 1980: 31).

The Lais seemed to be more warlike and martial than some of the surrounding tribes. They seemed to be more qualified to be described as 'head-hunters' than others. Shakespear said that Lushais and their kindred clans made raids for loot and slaves, and not for heads. He wrote, in the case of the Lushais, "the killing and taking heads were merely incidents in the raids, not the cause of it. I think that the Chins or Pois are an exception to this...the glory of bringing in a head was sufficient to send a young man and his friends off on the raid (Shakespear, 1912, 1988:60).

It was their superiority in warfare that enabled the Lais to extend their rule over a vast territory and drive out the weaker tribes from the Chin Hills. While in the Chin Hills (1500-1700), Luseis/Lushais did not yet have guns but the Pawis and the Burmans most likely had them, Liangkhaia wrote. Being afraid of the Lais in the south, the Luseis raided only those tribes in the north who now settled in the hill areas of Manipur, he further said (Liangkhaia, 1938, 2002: 52,56). The Lusei and other cognate tribes left the Chin Hills and settled in the present Mizoram around 1700-1800 mainly because of 'fear of the Pawi ral' ('ral' means enemy, warrior, army, invasion, attack) (Liangkhaia, 1938, 2002: 52, 56, 83). "It is said", Lewin remarked, "that the Lushai ('Lhoosai') have been driven northward and westward by the Lais ('Shendoos'). (Lewin, 1870,1979: 148).

There was one incident Lusei (Lushai) historians loved to tell, the 'Thlanrawn massacre' that took place in 1760. In this incident, a Lusei chief Lallula (1730-1807) enticed a large number of Lai warriors from Thlanrawn (Lai) village to gather at his village Zopui (later named Samthang). All but three of the estimated 300 Lai warriors were killed by Lallula and his men (Liangkhaia,1938, 1976: 52-55; Chaudaia, et al, 1996, 2018: 1-30).

But the story of this incident does not warrant such a glorification as an act of bravery, a skilled execution of warfare, a befitting revenge, or still less a victory of the Luseis over the Lais as is being made out to be in the Mizo (Lusei) history books.

Perhaps the most powerful Lusei chief of his time, Lallula, a tributary Lusei chief to Thlanrawn village ruled by a Lai chief Thanchhuma, fooled Thanchhuma and his men to come to Zopui village to collect their usual tribute and taxes. Lallula even got warriors from surrounding villages to help him in his scheme to butcher the Lais. Once in the Zopui village, Thanchhuma and his men were made to drink so much of liquor that they were totally drunk. And while they were sleeping, Lallula and his men put water in the muzzles of the guns belonging to the Lais. Then the Luseis had killed the helpless Lais. Only three out of 300 Lai warriors were said to have escaped, the rest of them got killed in their sleep. However, Lallula and his people left the village for fear of a reprisal from the Lais and moved westward to Sialsuk near Aizawl, and beyond. So frightened was Lallula that as a safety measure he even requested some Lais from Hauhulh clan to settle with him at Sialsuk. He then got a daughter from the Hauhulh family married to his eldest son Lalpuiliana (Liangkhaia, 1938, 1976: 52-55; Chuaudaia, et al, 1996, 2018: 1-30).

In victory, men do not run away. Much of Lallula's post-Thlanrawn life was spent in mortal fear of the ghosts of Thlanrawn. In 1792, 32 years after Thlanrawn incident, Lallula gathered as many as ten Lusei chiefs at S. Sabual village to wage an all out war against the Lais of Chin Hills. But his plan failed for want of support from other chiefs (Chuaudaia, et al, 1996, 2018: 1-30).

He even composed a song that says it all:

Hrum sawm pui khi tu chawi mahin dang zo awm lo ve,

Ka vah nan lamtluang a sei e Tlawng ralah (Chuaudaia, et al, 1996, 2018: 1-30).

A rough English version of the song would be:

No one can stop the Lai people,

I wander far and wide, even beyond the banks of Tlawng River.

The famous village Selesih, claimed to have as many as 7,000 houses, was also founded precisely on account of the fear of the Lai invasion (Liangkhaia, 1938, 1976: 52). But the village soon disintegrated. It was obviously too large to sustain a large population for a longer period.

The bravery, tactical skills, weapons of war, large men power, large territories under their rule, material resources at their disposal, the Falam Council, etc., enabled the Lais to be successful in wars and battles.

(ix) **Lai national characters**

Considering the Lais as a nationality rather than a tribe or tribes, two characteristics stand out among others. One is that they were brave, martial and warlike. Another is that they were expansionist.

They were undoubtedly the strongest among the Lushai-Kuki-Chin peoples because they were, inter alia, brave, martial and warlike. The Lais were said to be brave because the legendary Thlanrawkpa gave them a fighting dao. Shakespear wrote: "Thlandropa gave a number of presents; to the ancestor of the Pawi or Chin tribes he gave a fighting dao, while the ancestor of the Lushais only received a cloth, which is the reason that the Pawi tribes are braver than the Lushais" (Shakespear, 1912, 1988:93-94).

A male dormitory called *Zawlbuk* among the Luseis (Lushais), prevalent among several other tribes, was absent among the Lai tribes. Although a very important institution in itself, a male dormitory is basically a village garrison meant for security of a village. Its absence among the Lais meant that they did not feel the need for it. They had no real rivals in the land; that is, until the advent of the British.

The first British to have died in Mizoram also died at the hands of a Lai chief, Hausata Chinzah chief of Lungtian (near Saiha/Lawngtlai), at Rangamati (Talbung, near Lunglei) on February 3rd 1888. Hausata and his team killed Lieutenant J.F. Stewart, a team leader of a survey party, and two other white men Corporal McCormick and Private Owens besides an Indian 'sepoy' named Theka Ram Chhetri. Hausata had to carry out this expedition for two reasons: one, to pacify his father in law Zahuat Chinzah, a powerful Thlantlang chief in the Chin Hills, who demanded a 'white man's head' for the return of his daughter Ngundawng who was temporarily separated from her husband Hausata. Another reason was to thwart off the British design to encroach upon a territory Hausata claimed as his. (Hengmanga, 1987: 62-63; Dounge, 2015: 68-9).

In their pursuit of territorial expansion, the Lais had pushed Luseis and other tribes from the Chin Hills while the Luseis in turn pushed other tribes such as Hmars, Kukis (Thadou), etc., that already inhabited the then Lushai Hills (Zawl, 1964, 2011; Liangkhaia, 1938, 1976; Lalthangliana, 2001; Lewin, 1870, 1979: 148; Carey & Tuck, 1896, 2008: 135; William. (1929:5).

The Luseis/Lushais composed songs to express their helplessness against the Lai invasions:

I lal lua e Phunthanga,

Kawh tinah chhiah i lawr e,

Sat mai zel a aw e.

(Liangkhaia, Liangkhaia, 1938, 1976).

A rough translation of the song goes something like this:

You are too powerful Phunthang,

You collect taxes from every village,

(Those refusing to pay) you cut them to pieces.

(Phunthang was a 'Councilor' of chief Thanchhuma of Thlanrawn village, Chin Hills)

Hrum sawm lo lian ka dawng zo lo ve,

Kan chang sialin Tiaupui dung a zui an ti a.

(Liangkhaia, Liangkhaia, 1938,1976).

A rough translation of the song goes something like this:

I cannot repulse the invading force of the powerful Lais,

Our gayals are driven along River Tiau.

After the Thadous settled in Manipur, the Lais conquered them and pushed them still further north. "The Pois next harassed the Thadous and it is admitted that the then large Thadou villages were destroyed by them viz:- Sailhem, Songbem, Songluh, Lasan, Tuithang, Chasat and Lhutin....started the general movement towards north again." (Shaw, 1929: 45).

Vanhnuaitlir Hlawncheu of Falam extended the Lai domain as far as the Chittagong port in the west (Bangladesh) and the Paletwa river port on the Kolodyne river in the north west (Myanmar). Mr. Zirkunga, a resident of Laimi Para village, Bandarban Hill District in Chittagong Hills Tracts, told me that at Cox's Bazar, which is located on the longest natural sea beach in the world: 150 kms, there were Bawm tombs. The tombstones measured about 5-6 feet in height and about 3 feet in breadth, encircled by vertical stones and the upper surfaces of the tombs were evenly covered with small stones. There were such typical Bawm tombs in other part of the CHT including the tomb of chief Liankung near Bandar town. He further said that Chakmas living there, locally called Tangchangya Doinak (known as Tongtongya in Mizoram, author), also testified that the tombs indeed were those of the Bawm people. While the Chakmsa are still there, most Bawms left the Cox's Bazar and other plain areas for the hilly areas on account of pressures from the Bengalis (Interview: Zirkunga, 2020).

Hausata Chinzah was furiously expanding in the west towards Karnaphuli river (Bangladesh). Hausata claimed vast areas in the western part of Lushai Hills up to the Karnaphuli river in the Chittagong Hills as parts of his chieftom. In his campaign to extend his domain, he had conquered and plundered Lungsen village in 1881 then ruled by Lalchheuva Thangluah. They brought home a large number of mithun and other animals from Lungsen. The expedition team made a night halt at a saddle between Lunglawn and Theiriat (now parts of Lunglei town). The animals were tied to trees, etc., during the night to prevent them from escaping. On account of this incident, the place was called 'Sethlun', or 'Sethlunkawn' (Hengmanga, 1987: 62-63; Doungel, 2015: 65-9). ('Se-thlun' means 'mithun tied'; 'se' means mithun, 'thlun' means to tie; 'kawn' means a saddle: the author). But 'Sethlun' was renamed 'Hrangchalkawn' recently.

(x) Housing and permanent settlements

Writing in 1895 – 96, Carey and Tuck remarked that the “houses in the Haka jurisdiction are the finest in the hills” and that the capital of Falam was “magnificent” (Carey & Tuck, 1896, 1983:142,176).

While most tribes (in Kuki-China-Lushai land) were still moving constantly from place to place leading an unsettled and nomadic life, the Lais already had permanent villages and were leading a settled life (Shakespear,1912, 1988:8).

Good houses and settled life indicated that the economy was quite developed and the society was quite advanced as well. Permanent and well built settlements also meant that the Lais did not have, for quite a considerably long period of time, enemies strong enough to defeat and dislodge them from their settlements.

In The Gazetteer of Burma (1880), HR Spearman aptly recorded that the Lais “would seem to be among the more civilized of the wild tribes for they are rich in poultry and pigs and some amongst them have wooden houses” (Spearman,1880, 1983: 1856).

It is on this that Shakespear also called Lushais and Kukis as 'semi-nomadic'. He said," The Lais ('Chins') are of finer physique and, owing to their having permanent villages, the differences between clans have become more marked than among the semi-nomadic Lushais and Kukis" (Shakespear, 1912, 1988: 8). The Kukis then living in Manipur also were yet to live a settled life. Johnston wrote in 1896 that, “The Kukis are a wandering race consisting of several tribes...” (Johnson, 1896: 25). The Kuki are found almost everywhere throughout Manipur. "We are like the birds of the air," said a Kuki to T. C. Hodson, "we make our nests here this year, and who knows where we shall build next year (Hodson 1911: 2)

(xi) Dresses

Looking at the different kinds of dresses Lais have for both men and women, it is clear that the people were highly skilled artisans and that their society had attained a fairly high level of cultural development and sophistication.

Way back in 1870s, Hunter said of the Lai dress which he found was “more ample than that of the independent hill tribes” (Hunter (1876, 1973:65). Lewin told of fine Lai man`s garments and of very handsome women`s home spun garments. A Lai woman and man "are distinguished by a decorum in the matter of dress that, from our knowledge of the other tribes, would hardly be expected" Lewin said (Lewin (1870, 1978: 148-9, 162).

And in the words of Lehman, “the elaborately embroidered and multi-colored blankets and skirts, woven exclusively by women on belt looms” of the Halkha (Lai) people were “among the elaborate products of the Northern Chin Hills”. Lehman went on to say that the Halkha women were “in many respects the most skilled artisans” (Lehman,1963, 1980:165).

Some old people living at Lawngtlai often recall an incident involving Miss Chapman. In 1932, on seeing the dresses of the people at Cheural village, a Lai village in south Mizoram, an impressed Miss Chapman, a Christian missionary working at Serkawn under the London Baptist Mission, was said to have remarked that the Lais definitely qualified to be a nation and not just a simple 'barbaric' tribe.

Apart from a very high degree of technical sophistication and artistic skill involved in making the dresses, the sheer number of different traditional dresses worn on different occasions separately by men and women, speak for themselves. Women alone has 25 different kinds of garments & adornments, excluding 7 others worn by both sexes specifically on a "Bawi Lam" day (feast of banquet). The 25 garments & adornments are: 6 kinds of blankets or 'puan'; 5 kinds of skirts; 2 shirts or blouses; 4 belts; 3 necklaces; 3 wristlets; 2 hairpins. Men too had 13 different kinds of garments apart from other 7 worn on 'Bawi Lam' day (Hengmanga,1982:119-120).

Rosaline Varsangzuali in her Ph D thesis, *Evolution of Mizo Dress: A Historical Study* (2017), observes: "Notwithstanding the multiplicity and ambiguity in the origin of Lai as an ethnic category, they have achieved cultural advancements especially in dress making. Some of the finest clothing and dresses in history are the handiwork of artisans and weavers of the oldest and advanced civilizations. Through their expertise they refined the techniques of their dress making skills and improve their products. This process perhaps can be applied to the Lai production of dresses. The expertise of the Lai women in weaving is rather superior. They developed beautiful cloths with intricate weaving patterns. The use of silk in their dress shows off their skill beautifully" (Rosaline, 2017:82)

(xii) Dances

Lai dances are one of the best and technically most sophisticated of folk dances. It is said that the English missionaries thoroughly enjoyed taking part in performing Lai cultural dances like 'Pohlohtlawh' and 'Chawnglaizawn' for their lively and vibrant styles, the latter being likened to a rock-n-roll dance.

Even the well-known 'Cherawkan' ('bamboo dance') in Mizoram, perhaps the most popular traditional dance among the Kuki-Chin-Lushai, was developed by the Lais. The actual name in Lai is 'Rawkhhatlak' performed only on the death of a woman who has died in child-birth. The Mizos (Luseis) performed the dance purely for amusement and without any religious significance. The Mizo name of the dance 'Cheraw' or 'Cherawkan' is said to have originated from the name of a village called Cheural where Miss Chapman was treated to the dance in 1932 (Hengmanga,1982: 103-105).

(xiii) Language

The Lai language, especially Halkha, seems to be older and more rich in vocabularies than other languages of the Kuki-Chin-Lushai people.

Lai language has, over the years, enriched the other Kuki-Chin-Lushai languages. For instance, Mizo (Lusei) language, the most widely spoken and most dominant of all the Kuki-Chin-Lushai languages today, has been greatly enriched by the Lai language.

Long ago in the past while still in the hearth of Chin Hills, historian K.Zawla wrote, the Luseis (Mizos) were yet to have a song of their own since they did not know how to compose a song. But the Lais already had songs of their own composition even by then. One day, the Lusei people hired one Lai gentleman to teach them how to compose a song. The gentleman was given one 'puan' (shawl) as his fee. (Zawla, 1964, 2011: 306-7). In due course of time, the Lais were successful in teaching the Luseis how to compose songs on their own (Malsawma, 1979, 112, 141-2).

'Hlado' or a Hunter's Cry or chants were all composed in Lai, and were borrowed by Mizos (Lusei) and Maras (Lakers) alike from the Lais. 'Bawh-hla' or Warrior's Cry or chants also had originated from the Lais (Parry, 1932, 1976:179; Malsawma,1979:144). Besides, most of the Mizo (Lusei) idioms and phrases known as 'tawngupa' are plain Lai.

All these suggests that the Lusei people were once a part of the Lai family and that the Lusei language itself, today the most developed and the most widely spoken among the Lushai-Kuki-Chin peoples, have originated from the Lai language. Perry was in fact led to remark that "Lushais and Lakhers alike are branches of the tribe known in Burma as Chins (Lais)" because the former borrowed 'Hlado' from the latter (Parry, 1932, 1976: 179).

'Mizo' Linguists such as Rema Chhakchhuak and S.L.Changte now have proved, accepted and declared that Mizo (Duhlian) language has originated and developed from Pawi (Lai) language (Chhakchhuak, 2019: 56). Let me quote at length S.L.Changte who writes: 'Mizo language which is said to have been mostly originated from what we called the language of Pawi (Lai) (as it is commonly know) who were inhabited in the area of Chindwin valley and Kabow valley which is in the western corner of Burma. Mizo and Pawi are closely related. The style of living, behavior, culture and tradition, attitude of these two groups are almost the same. As a result, the Language of Mizo could not be separated from the language of Pawi (Lai). They are like the two items of the same pot. Because most of our typical language, folk songs, folklore and folktales are mostly originated from what we call Pawi (Lai)" (Changte, 1996: 713).

(xiv) 'Lairam Middle Kingdom' complex

As already noted, 'lai' connotes the idea of the Lai people's superiority complex (Lehman, 1963, 1980) akin to the Chinese Middle Kingdom Complex. The Lais fondly call their land 'Lairam' or 'Lai Ram' ('Laitlang' is an equivalent of 'Lai Ram'. Tlang means 'mountain, hill, country, land'), which means the 'land of the Lai people', the 'Central Country', the 'Central Land', the 'Middle Kingdom' (Lai means 'middle', ram means 'kingdom', 'land', 'country'). Lairam in other words connotes the 'Lairam Middle Kingdom' complex a la the Chinese Middle Kingdom complex. The Chinese people used to think that they were the most civilized people on earth and that they lived at the centre of the universe surrounded by barbarians.

Similarly, the Lai people once upon a time felt that they lived at the centre of the universe and were superior to all others surrounding them. No other name of a tribe within the Kuki-Chin-Lushai group conveys such a positive and profound meaning as 'Lai'. From the analysis of the characteristics of the Lais and their domain, the Middle Kingdom Complex they had developed over the years was most appropriate. The 'Lairam Middle Kingdom' complex, in other words, was developed on solid foundations.

(xv) Uniqueness of *Lairam*

Three things are worth noting here.

(i) Apart from the British who were but aliens, the Lais were the one and only people that had, at one point of time, the whole of Kuki-Chin-Lushai land under their rule. They not only ruled over the vast Lushai-Kuki-Chin land but also Chittagong Hill Tracts, and parts of Assam bordering Mizoram.

(ii) Of all the Kuki-Chin-Lushai tribes or nationalities, the Lais were the one and only people who were truly free and independent, never being under the rule of other people at any point of time in history, till the British came in the 19th century.

(iii) Among the Kuki-Chin-Lushai people, it was only the Lai chieftdom or Lairam (Lai country) whose territory extended up to sea. Hlawncheu's rule, during Vanhnuitlir and his son Liankung, extended up to the Bay of Bengal at Cox's Bazar and Chittagong Port, both now in Bangladesh. Their northern territorial boundary also extended up to the river port of Peletwa on the Kolodyne river.

Therefore, among the Lushai-Kuki-Chin peoples, the Lai people were the greatest and the strongest, and ruled over the largest territory in the recorded history.

Lai nation in the making

Thus, as the 19th century was drawing to a close, one nation was about to be born: a Lai nation. Indeed a nation in the making.

Master of the entire Kuki-Chin-Lushai land, the Lais were expansionist. During this period, the Lai territorial expansion was going on in full swing towards the west, south west and north west of Chin Hills. Along with territorial expansion and military campaigns, rapid developments were taking place in economic, cultural and political fields. Internal as well as external trade was developing. The Lai cultural realm of influence was rapidly expanding. And most of all, political organization was developing (Lehman, 1963, 1980: 25-28, 139-142, 152-156).

Another half a century or so of an uninterrupted Lai reign in the vast stretch of land under their suzerainty would have most probably led to two major developments. It would have led to consolidation of their rule throughout the land and more importantly in the peripheries. It would also have led to the emergence of a unified and central authority among the various Lai chiefs. The next logical step was to unify and integrate the land and its people: a move towards the formation of a nation-state. Stated differently, an emergence of a unified central authority would lead to the foundation of a kingdom, a Lai Kingdom. There was a distinct possibility of the emergence of a Lai Kingdom and a Lai Nation-State in the light of the above historical accounts of the Lais.

Nation as a self-governing nationality, as is often defined by some, usually takes centuries of rule and consolidation anywhere in the world. The process of nationality formation was already taking place among the various Lai tribes, notably under the rule of Falam. A few more years of consolidation of their rule, which was distinctly possible, would have given birth to the emergence of Lai nationality: from tribes to nationality to nation.

However, all this was not to be. The British came in. The emerging and fledgling Lai nation was ruthlessly suppressed, crushed and nipped in the bud.

Arakan Division was annexed by the British in 1826, Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1860, both Chin Hills and Lushai Hill in 1889-90 and Manipur in 1891. The Lais were forced to live in three different countries: Myanmar, Bangladesh and India.

The British conquest and the eventual annexation of the land was such a blow to the Lais, the hitherto unchallenged power in the entire land (Hengmanga, 1987: 64-5).

The response of the Lais to the Whiteman's colonial rule was captured vividly in songs such as these two (Hengmanga, 1987: 64-65)

1. *Vairang pa chu, i khir chang se an khua leiah,*

Thangnun valni than kan bau ai,

Than kan bau ai e.

Roughly translated, the song means:

Let the Whiteman return to his land,

So that we the strong and brave warriors can again seek glory and fame,

Far and wide.

2. Zai nan theih khawm thahlei chuai mai vawr ai u.

Tuchan Vairangpa kai le,

Kan chhan zei zawn ngahlh lo kan si.

Roughly translated, the song means:

Whatever song there is in your mind,

Sing it to your heart's content,

For we are under the White men's occupation,

And we do not know what our future is.

End notes

1. In referring to the Lais as a nation, T.H.Lewin used a term 'Shendoos', a generic name applied to both the Lais (Pawi) and Maras (Lakher). The Maras are actually a branch of the Lais as concluded by N.E. Parry. Parry widely considered the most authoritative author on the Maras, wrote, "The Maras are a branch of the Lai tribe of Chins" (Parry, 1932, 1976:1).

Taken out separately from the Lai group, the Maras as a separate ethnic group or tribe, would not fit to be considered a 'formidable nation' from available parameters or characteristics. As it was, the Maras on their own felt insecure while living in the then south Lushai Hills so much so that they asked to be ruled by prominent Lai royal clans of Hlawhching, Chinzah, etc., from the Chin Hills. Accordingly, the Lai royal families then ruled over the Maras of south Lushai Hills (Doungel, 2015). The political history of the Maras is in fact mostly all about the history of their chiefs who were Lais.

Lewin is widely considered an architect of British rule in the Lushai Hills. Lewin, Parry said, "laid the foundations of British rule in the Lushai Hills" (Parry, 1932, 1976: 8). He was popularly known in Mizoram as 'Thangliana' (Thang-lian-a), perhaps a derivation from his own English his name 'Tom Lewn'.

2. Nation, Nationality

A small note on the meaning of nation and nationality has been inserted here. Till recently, the terms nationality and nation were used interchangeably. Now they are used as more or less two distinct terms, but even those who have distinguished between them have, by no means, in agreement as to the difference. This is obviously due to the fact that both nation and nationality have to share the same adjective form 'national' and have the same root "natu", a Latin word which connotes the idea of birth or race. The word 'nation' is derived from a Latin word "natio" which means *born*. Etymologically, a nation is a people descended from a common stock.

Nation has now definitely become a political meaning while nationality has no specific political meaning. The state is a political organization. It may or may not be coexistent with nationality. Where a state is exclusively composed, or nearly so, of one nationality we get a nation- state: one state (read nationality), one nation. But in the modern world practically there is no state with only one nationality. Even Japan and Hungary, considered closest to be examples of 'one state, one nation', do not strictly qualify. Apart from the native Ainu nationality, which has been demanding autonomy over ancestral domain, Japan has Chinese and Korean nationalities. Hungary has Magyar, Turkish and Austrian nationalities.

Nation means self-governing nationality. Or, a nation equals state plus nationality.

In the words of James Bryce, a nationality is "a population held together by certain ties, as for example, language and literature, ideas, customs and traditions, in such a way as to feel itself a coherent unity distinct from other populations similarly held together by ties of their own", whereas a nation is a nationality "which has organized itself into a political order either independent or desiring to be independent" (James Bryce quoted in Kapur, 1984: 122-3).

FACTORS: Factors which make a people a nation are *said to be* common language, common historical traditions, common religion, etc. But the presence or absence of these factors do not make or unmake a people into a nation. Examples from the real world proves this paradox.

For many people language is the first important factor of unity, and hence one essential condition for attaining nationhood. But there are several examples of exceptions to this rule. Despite having a common language in Arabic, toady's Gulf countries are divided into many nations such as Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, etc. Switzerland is a nation despite having three languages, French, German and Italian. Similarly, one can cite countless examples on other factors such as common historical traditions, common religion, etc. That is, on the role these factors play in the formation of nations or nation-states around the world as well as the myth of the indispensability of them all in forming nation-states. For instance, Jews and Greeks were widely scattered all over the world for a long time, but they retained a very strong sense of unity so much so that people often spoke of Jews or Greek nation, or nationalism of the Jews or Greeks.

Nationality, then, is an elusive idea, difficult to define. It cannot be tested or analyzed by formulae. Harold J.Laski was right when he said, “The idea of nationality is not easy to define, for there is no measurable factor to which can be traced” (Laski,1987: 219). In view of the difficulty in defining it precisely, Ramsay Muir has observed that “a nation is a nation because its members passionately and enormously believe it to be so” (Muir,1916: 51).

Rupert Emerson on ‘Nation’, ‘Nation in hope’

One of the most authoritative writers on the issue of nationality in the post-1945 era is Rupert Emerson. According to him, a nation “is a community of people who feel that they belong together in the double sense that they share deeply significant elements of a common heritage and that they have a common destiny for the future” (Emerson, 1970: 95). Emerson also talks about a people or nationality that is not yet, “a nation in being but only a nation in hope” (Emerson, 1970: 94).

Steven Grosby in his *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction* (2005), offers a much simpler version of nation when he says, "The nation is a territorial community of nativity" (Grosby, 2005: 7). A nation here means a group of people bounded by territory, and sharing common perceived kinship. A nation feels like "home." One knows that one is in one's own nation when one feels comfortable and at home, says Grosby.

3. Mackenzie most likely misspelled ‘Suakpuilal’ as ‘Sookpilal’. Names of other chiefs were misspelled as well. Therefore, the most likely correct names have been provided in this book.

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Interviews:

Mr. Khamchin Pau Zou, M.A.(Philosophy) student, Delhi University. Zou Hails from Churachanpur in Manipur. He was interviewed by the author in Delhi, in 1993, and again in 2020 on phone in Delhi.

Mr. Manglinga Hlawncheu, Lawngtlai, 1993. Manglinga Hlawncheu is younger brother of Lalhluna Hlawncheu, the last of Hlawncheu chiefs at Lawngtlai. Lalhluna died in 1972, Manglinga is still alive.

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