



## Deteriorating Situation in India Can Be Summarized as 'Massive, Systematic and Dangerous: UN Special Rapporteur

There is a “steady” and “alarming” erosion of fundamental rights, particularly of religious and other minorities from the review of communications from 2011 to now in India, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Issue had told United States Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Issue, Fernand de Varennes, told USCIRF that the situation in India can be summarised in three words - “massive, systematic and dangerous.”

In his opening remarks at a hearing on policy options for advancing religious freedom in India, organised by the USCIRF in Washington DC on September 20, De Varennes said: “India risks becoming one of the world’s main generators of instability, atrocities and violence, because of the massive scale and gravity of the violations and abuses targeting mainly religious and other minorities such as Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and others. It is not just individual or local, it is systematic and a reflection of religious nationalism.”

He mentioned that the most recent is perhaps symptomatic: “On 4 September, myself and 18 other colleagues expressed our alarm about reports of serious human rights violations in Manipur, including alleged acts of sexual violence, extrajudicial killings, forced displacement and other ill-treatment where the victims were from the predominantly Christian Kuki minority last May.”

Beyond dry statistics such as 160 persons reportedly killed and thousands of homes and hundreds of churches burnt down, he said some of them would have heard of a video which was circulated on social media of two women from the Christian Kuki community being paraded naked, beaten and gang raped. There was inaction from authorities until this video caught the international attention.

“I saw that video, and what it showed was hatred against women because they were considered a threat, unworthy, less human because they belonged to a despised religious and ethnic minority. It was only after the shock and outcry and pressure from outside that men from the Hindu majority were finally arrested and charged. These individuals circulated and behaved with complete impunity for months despite the highly visible, public and horrific nature of what occurred. This is not an isolated incident,” he said.

The UN Special Rapporteur also said they receive multitudes of reports of attacks, rapes and lynchings of members of religious minorities, of national, state, and local religiously discriminatory policies and laws targeting religious conversion, interfaith relationships, the killing of cows, the wearing of hijabs and other practices restricted or prohibited which makes a mockery of freedom of religion and non-discrimination guarantees for religious and other minorities.

Human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists, face harassment, surveillance or even detention under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act. Non-governmental organizations have also been targeted and in some cases closed under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act.

A study noted a 786% increase in hate crimes against minorities between 2014 and 2018. It is also widely acknowledged that hate speech and content inciting violence against religious minorities in social media in India is widespread, increasing, vitriolic, involving incitement to violence and even calls to genocide, and largely left unchallenged by State authorities. Official silence over violent attacks and rhetoric is encouraging majority nationalist groups to even more brazen violence with a religious tint.

Mr. Fernand de Varennes further said the violence in Manipur is also a warning of the dangers of inaction. The danger is that left alone many more ‘Manipur’ may erupt. India ranks as eighth country at the highest risk of mass killings. This is mainly because of the targeting of religious and other minorities, and is symptomatic of large-scale scapegoating and dehumanising of Muslims and religious ‘others’ that could lead to a slide towards horrific atrocities.

In his additional information, the Rapporteur mentioned that with India’s national elections scheduled for early 2024, there are concerns that the targeting of minorities, and human rights defenders will worsen. Indian authorities have not taken any tangible steps to hold perpetrators of abuses against minorities to account.

“There has been a dismantling of basic freedoms and democratic backsliding, a trend captured by several indicators on global freedom, press freedom, internet freedom and the targeting of civic space and HRDs. Indian justice system has not always intervened with the legal force and independence that such a situation would require to safeguard constitutional rights and reassert the duty of India to uphold its international human rights obligations,” he said.

The gravity of these long-standing developments is compounded by the absence of a UN human rights presence in India as well as the lack of a robust independent national human rights mechanism in India. Regrettably, India has not engaged with the Special Procedures in years, as it rarely responds to letters nor received visits by Special Procedures since 2017. Communications from the Special Procedures are largely disregarded, Varennes added.



## No Exclusive Area or Building Available for Temporary Prison in Gangpimual STC: Sources

The Subsidiary Training Centre, Border Security Forces, Gangpimuol, Churachandpur, has reportedly requested the State government that some other place may be utilized for “Temporary Prison.”

The State Government vide orders of even number dated 01-06-2023 had declared the premises covered by STC BSF, Ganpimul, Churachandpur District as ‘Temporary Prison’ under Sub-Section (1) of Section 3 of the Prisoners Act, 1894.

In view of the urgent requirement of making the Temporary Prison so declared functional in the context of the present law and order situation, the Governor of Manipur on September 22 had designated SDO Churachandpur and Officer-in-Charge of Churachandpur PS as Superintendent of Jail and Jailor of the above Temporary Prison in addition to their normal duties and assignments without any extra remuneration with immediate effect and until further orders.

However, it is learnt from reliable sources that the BSF Campuses are designed and laid out in such manner that there is no exclusive area or building which can be converted into prison. The BSF also reportedly requested the State government to make some other arrangements at their end.

Sources said, currently more than 750 recruits are undergoing basic training at the STC and the basic infrastructure available at the STC is already fully occupied. Further, more than 600 recruits are likely to join in the month of October 2023 followed by 544 in the month of December. It learnt that the STC is already hard-pressed for infrastructure and exploring alternate accommodation arrangements for those recruits.

There are more than 150 families including women and children residing in the campus. The Kendriya Vidyalaya from class 1 to 12 is also functioning at the STC due to which a large number of children of different age groups remain present at the STC.

The campus has more than 6 Kms of perimeter with undulating ground and thick vegetation without boundary wall/ fencing for security. Presence of more than 700 recruits who are yet to complete their basic training, families staying at the Campus, presence of children attending class 1 to 12 at Kendriya Vidyalaya, increases the security requirement at the STC.

In view of above factors and threat analysis due to ongoing present security scenario in the area, the security forces are facing difficulties in maintaining campus security due to limited security personnel available at the training location, sources added.

## Critical Patients in Lamka Face Untold Miseries, Says Top Doctor



A top doctor in Lamka (Churachandpur) district has told NDTV that critical patients in the district need urgent transport to specialist hospitals due to lack of supplies, facilities and medical professionals.

“Those suffering from serious cardiac problems and conditions like brain haemorrhage need fast intervention, which unfortunately is impossible to get due to no proper transport,” said the Doctor.

Helicopter services from Churachandpur that was announced by Home Minister Amit Shah in early June flew for some time and stopped. It hasn’t been restarted yet. “The helicopter service can save a lot of lives. This is the immediate priority,” he said.

Many patients from the Kuki-Zo tribes who suffered from critical illnesses have died in Churachandpur since they couldn’t be transported to Guwahati in Assam or Aizawl in Mizoram, the doctor said. Manipur’s capital Imphal has some well-equipped hospitals, but road blockades and the risk of violence are too much of a risk for patients to attempt a drive to Imphal. An ambulance was set on fire in Imphal West’s Iroisemba in early May, killing an 8-year-old child, his mother and a relative.

“The drive to Aizawl takes 12 hours to a full day, sometimes two days if the road conditions do not allow it. We request the central government to restart the helicopter service. That’s the only way to take critical patients fast to good hospitals,” the doctor said, explaining the problems in taking critically ill patients by road in the hilly region in the absence of the helicopter service.

In a district with population in lakhs, the number of specialist medical professionals is too low to handle the sheer number of patients awaiting treatment. Churachandpur urgently needs cardiologists, neurologists and other such doctors.

“Even if there is a working equipment, you need someone to operate them. There is no one left,” the doctor said.

One solution amid the volatile situation that the centre can consider is to bring such doctors in a one- to two-week rotation to the district, the Churachandpur doctor told NDTV. Diagnostic centres are under a lot of strain as testing equipments need maintenance and materials such as fluids and kits run out.

## Youth of Manipur with Meitei MLAs Fail to Take Resolution on Manipur Mayhem

A 25-member team of representatives from Youth of Manipur, a newly formed outfit, today met with a Member of Parliament from Imphal and 25 Meitei MLAs in Delhi to chalk out ways to solve the Manipur mayhem in the wake of ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki communities.

However, the meeting could not arrive at a concrete resolution due to the absence of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh. The Meitei MP and MLAs, who are currently in Delhi, were forcibly sent by the Youth of Manipur to find out ways to resolve the conflict with the Central leaderships.

As the meeting could not arrive at a conclusion in the absence of N. Biren Singh, the Youth of Manipur called the Chief Minister and the remaining other MLAs, both from ruling and Opposition, to reach Delhi as soon as possible to find a fruitful conclusion.

In a social media post, the leader of Youth of Manipur said the MLAs, CM and MP must reach Delhi at the earliest in the interest of Manipur (Kangleipak) so that there can be a collective voice from the people's representatives and Youth of Manipur.

The outfit warned that Manipuri youths along with mothers of Manipur and clubs are prepared to take up needful steps if the remaining MLAs and MP do not respond and fail to reach Delhi.

The representatives of YoM left Imphal for Delhi yesterday to meet the Meitei MLAs who were camping in Delhi. Weeks ago, the MLAs had signed a resolution, drafted by the YoM, to take responsibility in solving the crisis with the Centre.

## Border Fencing Work for 70km to Begin: N. Biren Singh

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on Sunday held a meeting with officials of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and deliberated a plan to begin construction of an additional 70 km of border fencing along the Indo-Myanmar border.

He was joined by Chief Secretary, Vineet Joshi IAS, Director General of Police, Rajiv Singh IPS, and officials from the Home Department.

In his press conference at CM Secretariat yesterday, Biren had said that the border fencing at vulnerable areas along the stretch of 398 Km was given utmost importance and has instructed to take up border fencing work for about 70 Km in vulnerable areas.

Biren said, "In view of the rise in illegal immigration and drugs smuggling from the neighbouring country, safeguarding our porous borders has become an urgent necessity."

## Heli Service Between Lamka and Aizawl launched

The state government on Sunday launched helicopter service connecting Churachandpur - Aizawl for better facilitation of connectivity services.

However, the helicopter services will be subjected to weather conditions, said a release issued by the government in this regard.

The fare for Churachandpur to Mualpui Helipad (Mizoram) has been fixed at Rs. 4500 while the fare from Mualpui via Lengpui Airport, Aizawl, Mizoram is slated for Rs. 6000.

Booking of tickets for the heli service can be done at DC's Office, Lamka.

T Khaiminlal Haokip, BO, SDC (Mobile No :8837420509) and Lianzapau Samte, Office Assistant, DC's Office (Mobile No. 8974452664) have been assigned to facilitate the booking of tickets at Lamka.

However, the DC's Office has informed that booking of flight tickets cannot be done yet as the official flight schedule plan is yet to be received from the operator, M/s Global Vectra Helicorp Limited (GVHL).

## Assam Rifles and Manipur Police Recover Weapons & War-Like Stores



Acting on specific intelligence regarding the presence of weapons and war-like stores in the general area of Chingkhei Ching Range in Imphal East District, a joint team of Assam Rifles and personnel of Lamlai Police Station carried out a search operation in the general area on 24th September and recovered One 303 Rifle and 10 Grenades.

The recovered items have been further handed over to the Police.

SUNDAY SPECIAL

The Name “Kuki” and “Zo” (Yow)

Due to the vast extent of their ancestral domain and historical contact with literate valley-based civilizations at multiple nodes, the group of closely related tribal people who inhabited the mountain ranges between Bengal and Burma plains was known by the formers by different names in history, besides their indigenous names.

**From ancient Indian civilization (in the west), they were variously known as:**

- o **Tilabharas** – in Mahabharatas
- o **Tiladai** – by Ptolemy’s Geography,
- o **Thalutae** – by Pliny’s History
- o **Kuki** – ancient inscriptions, Tripura royal chronicle, in Hindu mythology, Buddhist text, etc.
- o **Hallam** – is another name for Kuki in Tripura

**From Manipur (in the north), they were generally known as:**

- o **Hao** (sometime Khaki-haos, southern tribes) – in Royal chronicle
- o **Khongjai** or **Khongchai** – in Royal chronicle
- o By their various tribal names

**From Burmese civilization (in the east), they were known as:**

- o **Khyan** or **Khyang (Chins)** – text, inscriptions, etc.
- o **Jo (Yaw)** - text

**From the further east (Chinese), they were known as:**

- o **Mi-no** or **Shou** – Tang Chinese chronicler of the 9th century

**From our indigenous classification,** we have several tribal and clan names which overlapped each other. and out of that the following was most widely accepted and collective in nature:

- o **Zhō** or **Zo** (pronounced as Yow or Zou) – Indigenous collective name – referring to the geography we were/are inhabiting, the rolling mountain country we called *zow* or *tang/lhang* – it is not the name of a person(s) – it has been referred to in the colonial texts, folk narratives and popular languages.
- o **Mi-Zo** – Indigenous collective name – referring people (*mi*) of the hills/mountains (*zo* or *zou*) or highlanders – referred in colonial text.

Of the above names, the most widely collective, historically tangible and that survived time are **Kuki, Chin** and **Mizo**. **Zhō** or **Zo** also always stood the test of time, colonial and postcolonial onslaught. Behind the back of Kuki, **Khongjai** (Manipur) and **Hallam** (Tripura) also continue to survive but it refers only to section of Kuki/Zo people.

For a historical point of view, we cannot disown/dispense with the name **Kuki, Chin, Mizo** and **Zo**. As the first three names

have been owned up and restricted to section of our people, **Zo** is the only alternative left with us now for a common platform and for our collective name.

As the colonial and postcolonial divide-and-rule persisted, more and more names, both of indigenous and invented, came into being, both in collective term as well as to the atomization of the tribal universe. In due course of time in postcolonial political reorganisation process, collective terms like Mizo, Khulmi, Hallam, Komrem, Hmar, Zomi, etc., have been adopted against the colonially popularised nomenclature **Kuki, Chin** and **Lushai** while sections of them still cling to them. What has become very clear from the ongoing process of disowning whatever is “colonial”, and the revival of the collective indigenous names, one that has tangible historical consistency is the name **Zhō** or **Zo**. It is this name **Zo** that remains the only acceptable collective name across the groups of people who knew themselves in different names in the present. While this is adopted as our common collective platform for unity, it is also pertinent that we should not give up Kuki, Chin and Mizo for historical tangibility and connectedness lest we will render ourselves into people without history.

**Historical Root of the name KUKI, ZO, CHIN and MIZO**

It is necessary for all to look into the historical trajectory of the various terms or names we knew ourselves or known by the “others” so that the proposed unity forum may be understood within its historical conjunction in time.

**The name KUKI and its connection with other names and ZO:**

1. **Panchakhanda Copper-plate inscription of Tripura (641 CE):** mentions “Kukis” as people who owned land and cultivated paddy – it is the land grant given to five saintly Brahmins whose land bordered in the east “by the settlements of the Hānkulā **Kukis**, within which paddy is cultivated by the Tengkori **Kukis**” (Bhattacharjee: *38th NEIHA Proceedings*, 2017).
2. **Itā Copper-plate inscription of Tripura (1194 CE):** mentions land-grant to the saintly Mithila Brahmin whose land bordered with “the Kuki inhabited land in Manukula Pradesha bounded by Langlā hill on the east”. (Bhattacharjee: *38th NEIHA Proceedings*, 2017).
3. **SRI RAJMALA, Translated by Dr. N. C. Nath, Tribal Research & Cultural Institute, Government of Tripura, 2020**  
- *Rajmala* (The royal chronicle of Tripura)

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consistently used the term “**Kuki**” synonymously with ancient “**Kirats**” or “**Kiratas**” throughout the pages.

- The royal chronicle of Tripura *Sri Rajmala* is a testimony of Kuki presence in the history of eastern Bengal and the mountain country between the plains of Bengal and Burma. It also testifies the place of Kukis in the Hindu mythological and cosmological world order. It recorded how Kukis and their lands have been conquered by Tripura and how Kukis have been part of the Tripura state formation in the *present* Manipur western hills, northern Mizoram, Cachar valley and Tripura (which were once part of Tripura kingdom).

- It mentions about the “**Kukis**” associated with the foundation of Tripura kingdom in Hedamba (Cachar), its conquest of “**Kuki land**”, and its association with ancient “**Kiratas**”.

- Kukis were associated with Tripura kingdom as its subjects, soldiers and also in their celestial Hindu world order.

- As subjects, Kukis are revenue paying community to Tripura – “**Kuki hills**” was rich in gold, silver, copper, clothes, yaks and goats (p. 26).

- As soldiers, they fought for Tripura kingdom for centuries, Kuki chieftain (Sardar) commanded the Tripura army units.

- It also mentions how the Kukis had been a great devotees of Lord Siva of the Hindu pantheon. On one instance, Lord Siva was fallen in love with a Kuki woman in which his wife Parvati was very angry and “catching her by the hair trampled her throat under foot. As a result of this the Kuki woman had her throat split in two. Since then, the Kuki women have a low voice”. (p. 44). In another instance, king Dhanya Manikya heard about Siva-linga in Kuki land and the dealing of Lord Siva with Kuki women (Kukini) there. He sent his son-in-law to bring the Siva-linga from there but the Linga “escaped” on the way and returned to “its original site” in the Kuki land. (p. 91).

4. **Taranatha (1608), History of Buddhism in India**, translated from Tibetan by Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, edited by Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, Motilal, Delhi, 1990, p. 330:

- Mentions the people inhabiting the mountain ranges between Bengal and Burma as “**Ko-ki**” and that mountain highland as “**Ko-ki country**”.

- Taranatha mentions (chp. 39) that “from the time of Asoka [the Mauryan Emperor of 3rd Century BCE], *sanghas* were established in these Ko-ki countries”.

- “Kuki” is originally derived from the Tibetan Buddhist usage of “Ko-ki”, meaning, the “birth of incarnate Buddhas” or “incarnated Buddhas” (followers of Buddha). (See, Indrani Chatterjee (2013), *Forgotten Friends: Monks, Marriages, and Memories of Northeast India*, OUP, New Delhi, p. 2.).

khung, and paid his homage there. (The story goes that) Lord Mahadeva had kept a **Kuki** woman there, whom Parvati found out later on, and catching her by the hair trampled her throat under foot. As a result of this the **kuki** woman had her throat split in two. Since then the **kuki** women have a low voice.

This story is widely circulated in Tripura.

There was another curious story current in the city of Chambula to the effect that S'iva had assumed the Linga form by himself in that place. By night S'iva had amorous sports with the **Kuki** women. (By day) his body was mistaken for a stone and thrown away by the people. When a hundred or two hundred

At that time the king got reports from **Kukis** as to the dealings of S'iva with the **Kuki** women (**Kukini**)<sup>6</sup>. He heard also that gold was produced in the **Kuki** land. A son-in-law of the king was named Hopa Kalau. He was deputed to the **Kuki** land to bring the S'iva-linga from there. He reached the Kirata land after some days and took the S'iva linga with great care. He put it into a betel case (panbata) and wrapped it in cloth. Then he set a seal on the packet and sent it to the king in great haste. When it was presented before the king, it was found that the S'iva linga had already escaped from the case somewhere in the way. It was learnt that the linga was there in the betel-case upto the other bank of the river Manu. But while the beared was crossing that river, the linga returned from there to its original site. On hearing this the king was

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Tāranātha

CHAPTER 39

ACCOUNT OF THE SPREAD OF THE DOCTRINE  
IN THE **KO-KI** COUNTRY IN THE EAST

Eastern India consists of three parts. Of these, \*Bhaṃgala and \*Oḍiviśa belong to Aparāntaka and are hence called the eastern Aparāntaka. In the north-east, \*Kāmarū(-pa), \*Tripurā, \*Hasama are called \*Girivarta, i.e. surrounded by mountains. Proceeding further east from this region, (one reaches) \*Naṃga-ṭa on the slopes of the northern mountains. Bordering on the sea are \*Pukhañ, \*Balaku, etc,—the country of the \*Rākhañ—and \*Haṃsavati,<sup>1</sup> \*Mar-ko etc, the country of \*Muñāñ-s. Further, \*Cak-ma,<sup>2</sup> \*Kam-bo-ja etc. All these are collectively called \***Ko-ki**.<sup>3</sup>

From the time of Aśoka, *sangha*-s were established in these \***Ko-ki** countries. Later on, these gradually grew large in number. Before the time of Vasubandhu, these were only of the Śrāvakas. Some of the disciples of Vasubandhu propagated the Mahāyāna (in these places). For sometime, the continuity of this tradition just survived. However, from the time of king \*Dharmapāla on, there were in *madhya-deśa* many students from these places. Their number went on increasing so that during the time of the four \*Senas about half of the monks of \*Magadha were from \***Ko-ki**. Thus, in these countries the Mahāyāna was widely spread and the difference between the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna disappeared, as it had happened in the kingdom of Tibet,

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5. G.R. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia (further India and Indo-Malaya Archipelago)*, London, 1909, pp. 744:

- Mentions the connection between the “Kuki” who call themselves as “Zhô” or Zo and the ancient tribes of India known as “Tilabharas” of the Mahabharatas, the “Tiladai” of Ptolemy’s *Geography* and the “Thalutae” of Pliny’s *History*.

**Tilabharas=Tiladai=Thalutae=Kuki=Zhô (Zo)**

6. Gordon H. Luce (trans.), *Man Shu (Book of the southern Barbarians)*, Data Paper No. 44, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1961, p. 90.

- To the Tang Chinese chronicler of the 9th century, *MAN SHU (Book of the southern Barbarians)* the proto-Chin-Kuki people were referred to as “Mi-no” or “Shou” people; and the Tangs knew the Chindwin River as *Mino-chiang*. It will be well to remember that the Mi-no Shou of the Tang Chinese record, the Kyang or Chin of Burmese inscriptions, the Kuki of Bengali manuscript, and the Khongchais of Manipuri chronicle are historical names of the Kuki (Zo) people given by their literate neighbours in different locations at different periods of history.

7. Williem van Schendel (trans.), *Francis Buchanan in Southeast Bengal (1798): His journey to Chittagong, the Chittagong Hills Tracts, Noakhali and Comilla*, UPL, 1992, p. 94.

- Francis Buchanan (1798) recorded from the account of Kuki people he had interviewed during his survey that “They name their own tribe Zou [Zo]”. He also found other names being called by their neighbours such as **Lang-ga** by the Ma-ra-mas, **Lingta** (Lungta) and **Koongky** (Kuki) by the Bengalis and from where “we [British] have corrupted into **Kooky**, or as it is written in the Asiatic Researches **Cuci**”.

8. JG Scott (1900), *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, vol. I, part I, p. 452.

- Scott also quoted from some earlier studies that the Kuki people were known by different names from different directions and by different literate society but they knew themselves as “Zhô”.

- a. North [west] (Bengal) – Kuki
- b. Central – Zhô
- c. East (Burma) – Khyin (Chin)

9. Father Sangermano (1893), *The Burmese Empire: A Hundred Years Ago*, p. 43.

- He described tribal people living on the Chin Hills and to the east of that mountain as **Jò (Yaw)** or **Chien** (Chin).

(5) *Tilabharas* = Ptolemy's *Tiladai* and Pliny's *Thalutae*? According to Longhena these would be the Kuki of North Kachar and of the hills near Manipur, who have the god *Thila* among their deities. Kuki is one of the terms by which the Chin-Lushai tribes are collectively designated, whereas they call themselves *Zhò* (see “Upper Burma Gazetteer,” part i, vol. i, p. 452).

MAN SHU Chapter X.

No. 10. Names of the Various Barbarian Kingdoms Bordering on the Southern Man.

Mi-no kingdom and Mi-ch'ên kingdom. 1

They are both kingdoms bordering on the sea. They call their princes and chiefs *Shou*.<sup>2</sup> The Mi-no have long white faces, the Mi-ch'ên short black ones. They are by nature polite and respectful. Whenever they address anyone, they come forward making a bow at each step. The kingdoms have no cities with inner or outer walls. In the middle of the hall of the Mi-no king's palace, there are great pillars cut and carved in patterns, and adorned with gold and silver. The Mi-ch'ên king lives in a wooden stockade on the margin of the sea, in the water. The four feet of the house consist of stone lions. These, moreover, are covered with planks, scented wood being used for everything.

Burma, but they did not seem to understand the language of the country, a proof perhaps of their not having been long dependent on Kaung-la-pru. They name their own tribe *Zou*. By the Ma-ra-mas they are named *Lang-ga*, which by the Bengalese is corrupted into *Lingta*. By the Bengalese they are commonly called *Koongky*, which we have corrupted into *Kooky*, or as it is written in the Asiatic Researches *Cuci*.

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“In their northern extension these tribes are collectively known as “**Kuki**. The term Lushai, which is applied farther south, is not “recognized by the people themselves, who use the name **Zhò**. “Shendu is also a synonymous title for the Lushai tribes. In the “country between Bengal and Burma, the tribes are known as **Khyin** “in the east, and by a variety of local names in Bengal. The whole

41. To the east of the Chien mountains, between 20° 30' and 21° 30' north latitude, is a petty nation called **Jò [Yaw]**. They are supposed to have been Chien, who in progress of time have become Burmese, speaking their language, although very corruptly, and adopting all their customs. These **Jò** generally pass for necromancers and sorcerers, and are for this reason feared by the Burmese, who dare not ill-treat them for fear of their revenging themselves by some enchantment.

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10. John Shakespear (1912), *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, Macmillan, London, p. xiv.

- They also called themselves as “Mi-zo” (Mizo). Shakespear noted that “Among the people themselves the Lusheis are sometimes spoken of as Dulian, at the derivation of which I will hazard no guess, and the general population of the hills is spoken of as Mi-zo”.

**On the proposed ZO UNITED forum**

Having had a brief idea about the different names we were known or knew ourselves in the past, and in the present, we cannot but recommend for the fulfilment of the proposed ZO UNITED as a forum for united efforts. At the moment, this provides the only possible platform where we can agree to disagree the divides that entered so deep into our society in time and in contents. It is the result of unity we have been showing thus far in the current conflict situation. The unity that we show, and indeed in the hard-show, will become meaningless if it could not take us to such a logical conclusion, a common and collective forum like ZO UNITED. We are compelled to come together by circumstances.

While we have come together under a common umbrella, we should, however, continue to abide by the old and existing names and maxims we have for historical continuity, intellectual propriety and for posterity. The forum should recognise them in all while all the existing organisations should recognise ZO UNITED as a common formation for all.

**Accounts of the Kukis in Sri Rajmala (translated by Dr. N. C. Nath, Tribal Research & Cultural Institute, Government of Tripura, 2020)**

- Mentions accounts of the “Kukis” who were considered to be part of the ancient “Kiratas” and of the “Kukiland” which was conquered by Tripura kingdom from its inception.

- Kukis association with Tripura kingdom as subjects, soldiers and in their celestial world order of Hinduism are clearly described.

- “Kuki hills” was rich in gold, silver, copper, clothes, yaks and goats (p. 26).

- They brought different kinds of animals for sacrifice to the coronation puja and served in cutting the animals for puja (p. 34).

- Hedamba King had his capital on the river Kapila in the land of the Langrongs, Kukis, etc. (p. 39).

- Lord Siva was fallen in love with a Kuki woman. In the city of Chambala, “Lord Mahadeva had kept a Kuki woman there, whom Parvati found out later on, and catching her by the hair trampled her throat under foot. As a result of this the Kuki woman had her throat split in two. Since then, the Kuki women have a low voice”. (p. 44).

- The Kuki soldiers served Tripura kingdom at the frontline during the battles with enemies (p. 50).

- Because of the large numbers of Kuki soldiers in Tripura army who fed on anything including insects, it was said that the kings of Gauda (eastern Bengal) honoured/feared Tripura kings. (p. 58).

XIV

INTRODUCTION

form the bulk of the subjects of the Thangur chiefs. In this monograph Lushai is used in this wider sense, Lushai being used only for the clan of that name. Among the people themselves the Lusheis are sometimes spoken of as Dulian, at the derivation of which I will hazard no guess, and the general population of the hills is spoken of as Mi-zo. Among inhabi-

Now, presentations of horses and elephants were pouring in day by day. The Kiratas paid their annual revenue alongwith presentations. The brought gold, silver, copper, clothes, yaks and goats of the kuki hills with abnormal horns and beautiful white fleece (fur) and beard. They brought also valuable “aguru” wood (agallochum) and gong bells made of brass, iron and bell-metal (kamsya).

The kiratas were nude and boisterous people. They were in the habit of eating almost all kinds of flesh-elephant, horse, mouse, cat, tiger dog, snake etc. They saw king Trilocana, paid their devotion (or allegiance) to him, and declared their support to him.

Now on the eighth day of the bright fortnight in the next Asadh (June-July) various things necessary for the puja were collected. As many as a hundred thousand animal sacrifices were made with buffaloes, yaks and goats supplied by the Kiratas. Fish, tortoise and swine they brought by big loads without number, sacrifices of sheep, ducks etc. and offering of cakes knew no bounds. Men of other tribes, Naga, Kuki etc. duly performed the bali-dana (cutting off the victim) in the puja. The king, the deodai and all others (associated with the puja) should have physical and mental purity. This is a rule. Animal sacrifice is also a necessity.

King Daksina made Kehalangma-his headquarters, while the Hedamba King had his capital on the river Kapila, where such tribes as the Langrongs, Kukis etc. dwelt. At last (Daksina) accepted that area as the extreme boundary of the Hedamba kingdom.

khung, and paid his homage there. (The story goes that) Lord Mahadeva had kept a Kuki woman there, whom Parvati found out later on, and catching her by the hair trampled her throat under foot. As a result of this the kuki woman had her throat split in two. Since then the kuki women have a low voice.

This story is widely circulated in Tripura. There was another curious story current in the city of Chambala to the effect that S'iva had assumed the Linga form by himself in that place. By night S'iva had amorous sports with the Kuki women. (By day) his body was mistaken for a stone and thrown away by the people. When a hundred or two hundred

security of the king's brothers. Thousands of flags of multifarious colours moved with different regiments armed with different weapons. The king started the expedition on an suspicious moment. The kuki soldiers moved first as the advance party and constructed houses.

them. The Jand king got the report from his men. He asked the Prince with a smiling face, 'The Kukis of your kingdom prey on insects' The prince bowed down to him and said, are you held responsible for the various food habits of the different subject people of your kingdom? Men belonging to different tribes are there in my train. The kukis and the Kirats are there. My father has sent them with me. These people feed on diverse objects. But there has never been any evil practice in Tripura. The Gauda-king realized that he was a great king, who had diverse races as his subjects. The Prince was all the more honoured since. The Gauda king became more and more pleased as days rolled by.

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- The Kuki chieftain (Sardar) commanded the Tripura army (p. 77).

maintained their usual eatings lines (Panikti). The king sat on an elevated platform there and asked a **Kuki** Chieftain (Sardar) to count the soldiers present there. The soldiers were engaged in cooking and eating in a merry mood. The chieftain went before them to do the counting. He performed the counting by touching the ranks with a wooden cooking stick (anna yasthi) of the army.

Now you are mine'. Hearing this the Thanangchi chief got irritated and said 'I will not hand over this elephant to you or to the Tripura King, I am not a servant to the king of Tripura. I will not part with this white elephant. Fight if you will and that is all'.

In course of time the Yuvaraj picked a quarrel with the Hedamba king. He realized that it was due to his evil days. So he left Hedamba and repaired to Purvakul. There he had to fight a protracted battle with the Khuchang **Kukis**. He fell into a swoon on being hit with a poisoned arrow (in the battle), but survived on the score of his virtuous deeds. He passed some days in the village called Hailakandi. There he came to have a dispute with the Hedamba king. When he came over to the eastern bank of the Catheng river, the king made preparation for a fight with Hedamba<sup>6</sup> and the Khucungs. Govardhan Kabra went to belabor the khucungs and won a decisive victory.

- During the reign of Dangar Fa there was the rebellion of Thanangchi Kukis who refused to help Tripura king in his war and who refused to give up their "white elephant". They live in an "army cantonment" on the Thanangchi mountain and had only one entrance. It was besieged by Tripura army and conquered only after more than one year with the help of a huge dragon (raptile) they could climb up the rocky cliffs of Thanangchi "cantonment" and eventually conquered. "Then they slew all the menfolk there. Blood flowed like a river on the Thanangchi fort". (pp. 77-79).

Now, there was an army cantonment (Thana) at Thanangchi during the reign of Dangar Fa. But the Thanangchi troops did not join hands with the king. There was a white elephant at Thanangchi. The king of Hedamba asked for it through a messenger. The messenger of the Hedamba king came to the Thanangchi Chief and said, 'you are a servant of the Tripura King.

The cantonment (Thana) was situated on a high mountain and had only one entrance. The Hedamba king failed to enter it despite his best efforts. He persisted for long six months, but still the Thanangchi authorities did not surrender to Hedamba. It is due to the **Kukis** (of the Thanangchi) did not join king (Dhanya Manikya). The Thanangchi **Kukis** forcibly robbed other people while passing by that way or Thanangchi robs the **kukis** by force if they try to come to this path (of sub-mission to Tripura).

Thus the Thanangchi cantonment was brought under control. According to the royal practice, a station officer (Thanadar) was posted there. The Durga Puja festival is celebrated there in the name of the king. Since then that thana came to be known as a city of Tripura.

General Raykacag wrote to the king as to how the Thanangchi thana was subdued and annexed. The Maharaja was very glad to learn this. Since then the General was treated like a son (by the king). The General presented before the king all valuable things that fell into his hands as result of the fight. The king sent him a lot of clothes as his reward.

for two days. Then the king said to his queen Amaravati, your brother Chatra Nazir is highly intractable. He wants to become king of the **kukis** with the help of many chieftains (samanta).

- During king Kalyan Manikya the Kukis came down with huge presents. (p. 176).

At that time the king got reports from **Kukis** as to the dealings of S'iva with the **Kuki** women (**Kukini**)<sup>6</sup>. He heard also that gold was produced in the **Kuki** land. A son-in-law of the king was named Hopa Kalau. He was deputed to the **Kuki** land to bring the S'iva-linga from there. He reached the Kirata land after some days and took the S'iva linga with great care. He put it into a betel case (panbata) and wrapped it in cloth. Then he set a seal on the packet and sent it to the king in great haste. When it was presented before the king, it was found that the S'iva linga had already escaped from the case somewhere in the way. It was learnt that the linga was there in the betel-case upto the other bank of the river Manu. But while the bearer was crossing that river, the linga returned from there to its original site. On hearing this the king was greatly surprised at heart. He pondered over the matter for a while and then said to himself. The lotus-feet (of Siva) that even Brahma is unable to touch, I, the lowest of the low want to catch hold of.

- During the reign of Krishna Mani, the Khuchung Kukis rose up against him in rebellion. It was suppressed. (p. 223).

to their respective posts held previously. Then the high-lander **Kuki** subjects arrived with horses, yaks and clothing. They also brought dishes, gong bells (ghong), elephants tusks and other presents to the king. They gave these presents to the king, and received cloths and ornaments as their rewards (inam)<sup>7</sup>.

- The General then conciliated the Kukis of the east and took the southern Kukis by force of arms. Thousands of them were asked to take their presents to the king of various items from their hills. The general himself came later and presented the king with "profuse gold, silver and drapery". (pp. 80-81).

Raykacag then left for the Kirata-inhabited regions. At first he conciliated the **Kukis** of the east. The southern **Kukis** he subjugated by armed clashes. Having stationed himself at Sambul, a prominent place of the time, he deployed emissaries to such regions as Chaimar, Chaibem, Thakaceb, Khamaceb, Rangagrang etc. As a result the tribes Chaka Rankhal, Khama Rankhal, Gunaircha, Kharchung, Marchil and **Kuki** – all beginning from the eastern frontier (purvakul) met Raykacag with rich present, as was the custom all along.

wood, Kirata swords and spear. Thousands of **Kukis**, all stark naked, came to the king taking with them various things and horses of different colour. The king was highly pleased to see their presents. But they spoke ill of the General before the king thus: It is long two years since the General went there. He is not in a mood to return. Rather, he wants to become king. There are lots of beautiful girls (or girls of officers called Badua) in that area. He enjoy their company in diverse way."

Hearing this the king smiled and said, 'Why do you speak ill of him? Raykacag is my worthy son.' He then issued an order for immediate return of General Raykacag to the capital. Upon this the General placed an army officer (Laskar) in charge of the Sambul Thana. And returned to the capital with huge gifts. The king was sitting on the throne when the General made his appearance with the gifts. King Dhanya Manikya was highly pleased to see the profuse gold, silver and drapery (presented by him).

\*\*\* The royal chronicle of Tripura *Sri Rajmala* is a testimony of Kuki presence in the history of eastern Bengal and the mountain country between the plains of Bengal and Burma. It also testifies the place of Kukis in the Hindu mythological and cosmological world order. It recorded how Kukis and their lands have been conquered by Tripura and how Kukis have been part of the Tripura state formation in the *present* Manipur western hills, northern Mizoram, Cachar valley and Tripura (which were once part of Tripura kingdom).

- When the king Dhanya Manikya conquest Catigram he received a report from the Kukis about the dealing of Lord Siva with Kuki women (Kukini). He heard also that gold was produced in the Kuki land. He sent his son-in-law to bring Siva-linga from there but the Linga "escaped" on the way and returned to "its original site" in the Kuki land. (p. 91).

**Thingkho Le Malcha (charred wood tied with chilli):** A war symbol; a pre-arranged secret code agreed upon by the Kukis to inform the people about the commencement of war and on receiving this, one has to remain alert and be ready for the battle.



# DID YOU KNOW?

## 45 Years of Secessionist Movement Against INDIA

**The People's Liberation Army (PLA)** was established under the leadership of N. Bisheswar Singh on **September 25, 1978**. The PLA aims to organise a revolutionary front to liberate Manipur from India. In 1989, the PLA formed a political body called the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF). RPF runs a government-in-exile in Bangladesh. MM Ngouba is currently the self-styled Acting President of the RPF. It has a Vice-president, a General Secretary, Secretaries in charge of Home, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Publicity and Communication, Social Welfare, Health and Education.

PLA recruits were trained in guerrilla warfare in Challam, beyond the Somrah Tract, in north Myanmar during the eighties. PLA is also reported to have contacts with Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). The ISI's nexus with the PLA came to light through a document recovered in January 1991 from Biren Singh alias German, the Finance Secretary of the RPF (the political wing of the PLA). It has a government-in-exile in Bangladesh where the PLA has set up a number of bases in the Sylhet district. Several PLA camps in Myanmar and Bangladesh are currently known to exist.

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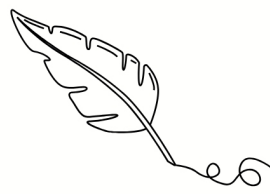
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## What a Mother Says at Her Son's Funeral

(for the fallen Hnam warriors)

If I should start shedding tears  
I know it would come with black clouds  
and rain, pouring over the land, the fire,  
and your gun, and that no white handkerchief  
could ever dry it.

Let me instead cover my head in traditional  
warrior black shawl. Because I know, Aw Lalpa!  
I know, and it is enough, that whenever  
the names of these hills are called,  
your name too shall be called along now.  
Because your blood will continue to flow  
as long as the rivers of this land continue to flow.  
Because by making this land your eternal  
resting place,  
you have ensured a resting place for your people.

*Hosea Khawbung*

