

Brief History of Matu

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I. Before the arrival of Missionaries and the Matu people

(A) The Birth of Matu tribes

The Matu Chin tribe is one of the biggest tribes among the Kuki-Chin[i]. From the very beginning all the chins including Mizo, Zomi, Naga, Laimi, and Asho had lived on hill sides or riverbanks, constituting villages or groups. Among the villages, Matupi (Formerly Known as Ngala village) was the biggest and most populous. The British Gazette mentioned that there were over one thousand houses including paddy barns in the village Matupi. Hakha book records that during those days “Matupi” was the biggest and most populous village in the Chin Hills.

1. Madupi or Matupi

Matupi town was formerly known as Batupui and it was a combination of Batu, which is a tribal name, and “Pui” means “Great”. Thus later, Batupui meaning “Batu the great,” was called "Matupi" though its surrounding villages are still called Batupi. Among the Matu tribes the LUN HANG Ethnic groups, which includes Batu, Thaiphum, and Lungngo. Lungngo was the most populous. Thus, the history of the Matu tribes is based upon these three groups.

A man, called Lung Hang, came from the northern Chin Hills and arrived at Maihal mountain and settled there. His sons were Batu the eldest, Lungngo the second and Thaiphum the youngest. After they had settled down for some years, his sons became grown up and all got married. On the day of dividing the inheritance he tested his sons' abilities making them trend a bow and send an arrow at the Cang Bung Kung (Banyan tree). Only after that they would receive their inheritance and be allowed to found a village and go in search of green pastures.

The youngest son, Thaiphum shot at the lower part of the tree and was provided his inheritance, and he chose to settle in Lunghang village where fertile land was. The eldest son, Batu shot at the middle part of the tree, and the second son, Lungngo shot at the upper part. They were then provided their inheritance and there they were founding a village for 500 years ago. This village was named Hakha from a northern Chin Lunghang village. The Maihel Mountain is situated between Hung lei village in the present Zothung land and Maiphum villages in the Matu Land. The evidence of the original Lunghang village was found in the ownership of land by the tree planted.

Three sons were born to him namely, Batu, Lungngo and Theiphum. They made the choice to settle wherever they wanted to live.

Batu, the first son, went to the southern part and settled at a place called Padaep in Nga leng village. After sometime they moved to the present Matupi or Batupui, Batu (Ngla) village which gradually grew in numbers and became a big village. That is why Batu village is called Batupui or Matupi.

The second son, Lungngo went to the eastward and settled there founding a village, which he named after himself. This village is located in the present Zotung land. Henceforth the clan came to be known as Lung Ngo Ting Paw.

In 1922 the British arrived at the southern Chin; they called Batupui, and according to geographical maps they mentioned Batupui or Matupi. When Matupui became the biggest village in Matu Land, the British Navy arrived at Matupi in 1922, and settled there for some seasons, after the independence of Burma (1948) Matupi became a big township in the southern Chin Hills (now Chin State).

2. Geographical Situation and Location

(a) Location

Matupi township is located at the western part of Myanmar , and situated between latitudes 21.14' and 22.15' North and Longitudes 93.13' and 94.12' east. And it is surrounded: in the east by Magwe division, in the south by Mindat Township , in the west south- west by Paletwa township, in the northwest by Mizoram State of India , and in the north by Than Tlang and Hakha Township . Matupi township is straight-length about 68 –miles from north to south, and 47 miles from east to west. The total area of Matupi township is about 2316.8 square miles (or) 1482752 acres. The main roads are from Matupi to Mindat township is 102 miles long and from Matupi to Haka township is 173 miles long.[iii]

(b) Drainage

In general, Matupi Township is a mountainous region. There is almost no plain in the whole region except hills and mountain ranges. Matupi Township is located at 3560 feet high above sea level. In the township, the highest mountain is the well know Awtaraw mountain 9909 feet in height is the highest peak and Lukil 8408 feet in height is the second highest mountain. Most of streams take their sources form the hills and mountain ranges. The famous rivers of the township are Lemro, and Boinu rivers. The famous streams are Pensong, Kadi, Leatsa, Tilak, Tisi and Vawmpu Streams, Bungtla water fall, the famous water-fall of chin state, is located in Matupi township, Awisi lake, well-known in Matupi township, is located near Ruang village.

2. Climate

In accordance with Koppen's climate classification, Matupi and its vicinity belong to "Ceva" type of climate. The temperature of the coldest month is between 26.6°F and 64.4°F. The average maximum temperature of the hottest month is about 92°F and the minimum temperature is 48°F. The southwest monsoon rain is from mid May to October. The maximum rainfall in June is about 23, 19 inches

(B) The Matu People or Matu Tribes, Before the Arrival of Missionaries

Matu people were cleaner than many other tribes of chins. The Matu used dry bamboo for lights, as Dr. Cope noted that it was much cleaner than using pine for torches, which soot up the interior of the homes. He also gave comment on the cleanliness of the villages and the presence of granaries separate from the house and designed to keep out rats. Dr. Cope was not so complimentary about the dress of the Matu people, however, he said that the men are very immodest; while the Hakha men had a loin cloth. But these people wear round their waists several rings of cane dyed red. The married women were nothing above the waists as do the northern Chins, and they love anything red.

I. Social Systems of Matu People

The southern Chins, Matus differ from the northern Chins in that of various linguistic, geographic, and named tribal entities are linked together in far more widely ramifying, ever expanding, and networks of formal alliance institutions with specialized political offices. In the Matu land (southern Chin Hills) hostile relationships tend to extend far more widely then affined net works, although this hostility has certain positive economic aspects.

There seems to be elements of an over-all system in which each tribal groups takes its place. The system appears to be founded mainly upon the dependency of the southern Chin Hills on trade with its civilized neighbors in Burma and Arakan. More over, the relatively closed character of the southern Chin (Matu people) systems of segmental lineages and affined alliances, which will be examined below, is

connected which the hostile relations between different tribal units and is consequent upon the system of trade.

To show how such a system of inter tribal and inter group relationship works we can take a sample cross section, starting in the east with a group bordering directly upon Burma proper and proceeding into the interior along one or more lines of trades. Such presentation can not pretend to deal with the entire southern Chin (Matu), nor even with all such systems of trade, for there are several systems, which differ as they start from several different points of contact between civilization and the southern Chin Hills.

This analysis of the over-all southern chins tribal system it is necessary to state that the lists of the southern chin peoples found in the early administration reports, in the linguistic survey of India, and in the several decennial issues of the census of India.[ii]

2. Culture of Matu People

There are so many interesting in view of the great cultural, social, and linguistic differences between the Matu people, as southern Chin, and as northern Chin. The people of Matu, comprising Matupi (formerly the largest Chin Hills village) and a number of villages in the north, west, and south, do not all claim a single origin, but there is a fair degree of linguistic unity among them.

Matu is characterized by remoteness and systemic marginality and for these reasons is poorer than any other chin group mentioned here. Trade filters in uncertainly from several directions, and one striking consequence of this in the social organization is the absence of any traditional bride-wealth payments. Matu culture bears the marks of a society that has been literally pushed from all sides into culture (a cul-de-sac)[iii].

The term Matu is at present used by the people of Matupi themselves, in the form of Badu, not they insist that it is only a word of their own. There are reasons for supposing that it is actually a term originating outside the area.

(a) Language of Matu Tribe

The people of Matupi village call themselves Ngala and they speak of their language as Nga-La-ol and of their territory Nga-La-baen.

This state of affairs should be contrasted with that of among the northern Chin. The undeveloped state of southern political organization traditionally made travel between areas hazardous and difficult, consequently it was rare for any group of people not bordering upon Myanmar to have any direct access to Burmese markets. They had to depend upon what was handed over from one village and from one region, to the next.[v]

3. Society of Matu People

We could find the simplest social system in the southern Chin, Matupi. The southern Chin (Matu people) have patrilineal descent with corporate, which are segmentary, though perhaps not consistently so. The corporate functions, farther more, by which the different segmentary levels are to be distinguished, are not in every instance clearly discernible though they exist in principle.

First, there are patrilineal clans. Each village is largely inhabited by a single clan, and the clan of a Matupi village is not found elsewhere, but complications may arise where there are temporary or semi-permanent, but in completely separated, daughter villages attached to apparent village. Where there is only one settlement unit ("ward") within the village, the clan is by definition equivalent to a maximal lineage, hence it is the unit of exogamy and we may speak of village exogamy. Otherwise there is little to distinguish the corporate functions of the clan from those of the village.[vi]

There may be a common ancestor to whom all the clan members are related equally, more by stipulation than by genealogically demonstrated descent, but where is more than one maximal lineage in the village,

the clan is not given the name of any other specific clan name, and no one will respond with a clan designation when asked his lineage affiliations.[vii]

The clan generally owns the village and its lands, but this means little, since control over access to house sites, residence, and use of farm land is in the hands of lineage and lineage segments. There is no political organization at the level of the clan, as such; indeed, the several wards or maximal lineage settlements are quite likely to be at war with one another within the same village.

(a) Custom of Marriage System in Matu Tribes

The major lineage segment is the unit of prescriptive marriage alliance. Each major segment has its own particular set of major segments from which it takes wives and another to which it gives wives. In a given maximal lineage, the set of wife-givers, "Masae" or wife-takers "Cava" for each major segment may overlap the corresponding set for one or more other major segments, but will be the same.

Furthermore, a major segment is not allowed to include in its set of wife-takers "Cava" a lineage that gives wives to any other parts of its maximal lineage "Cava".

In terms of the rules of marriage such a group always figure as a separate unit in the lists of wife-givers "Masae" and wife-takers "Cava" or other major lineage segments, which in turn do not usually intermarry with the maximal lineage settlement of the same name as the first mentioned lineage segment. We can thus formulate a general rule: the name of a major segment serves to differentiate it from maximal lineages or major segments only in its own settlement.

In Matu, minor or minimal lineage segments are always unnamed, but important. The causes which lead to their formation are fundamental factors in the process of cleavage segmentation. Given the rule of prescriptive matrilineal cross-cousin marriage, this kind of segmentary development is exceedingly likely, if not inevitable.

The households which share roughly the same set of wife-givers "Masae" and wife-takers "Cava" are usually collaterally related at a maximum depth of two generations. That is, they are a deceased man's patrilineal descendent households in the first and second generations. These may be called minimal or minor lineage segments. Given the high death rate and the consequent large proportion households in which only one child (or more) survives to the age of reproduction (survivors include girls who cannot continue the patriline), it is not surprising that such minor segments often compares only one or two households.[i]

The southern chin, Matu tribes practice prescriptive matrilineal cross-cousin marriage. This marriage system is fundamentally political in its nature and in its strategic motives. This is the view of sustains of enduring a final alliances between descent groups.

There is a categorical verbal injunction for a man to marry a real or classificatory mother's brother's daughter. The number of cases in recorded Matupi genealogies where marriage were in accord with this injunction, and the number of marriages with a true "M.B.D" mother's brother's, daughter, were considerably greater than chance and demography would have led us to expect. But the "exceptions" were also very numerous. Since these records cover a genealogical depth of twelve generations, we cannot account for this fact by supposing it to express a disruption in the orderly working of the system.

All prescriptive systems of marriage have an attendant prohibition; namely that one must not give women to groups from which one has taken women. In other words, there are always negative prescriptions which state that once a marriage has been made, a reverse marriage may not be made without legal penalty; any marriage establishes a categorical alliance. The Matupi chin further more do not consider even reversals of affined relationship as incestuous. Rather, like other chin, they have well-institutional zed rules for the compensation that must be paid when such alliances are reversed, there by allowing for even these exceptional marriages. These are marriages to established categorical alliances. We have already noted the large number of Matu tribe marriages with people who were not even classificatory "mother's brother's daughter", in spite of positive injunction. Most of these perhaps were marriages into emergent new major lineage segments, but some marriage with old established major segments with whom no a final relationship of one kind or the other had previously existed. These

marriages were looked down on but were not penalized, and were always in conformity with the negative rule, adherence to which exceeded eighty percent of all marriages recorded. In the southern chin, Matu tribes, all lineages are allied to all others, so that, from the viewpoint of ego's lineage, the society is exhaustively categorized into two exclusive groups, wife givers and wife takers, so that the only possible exceptional marriage would in fact be a specifically for bidder one.[1]

It might be thought, nonetheless, that prescriptive asymmetrical marriage must ordinarily involve a prohibition against marrying into lineage's to which one is not already affinely allied. From the viewpoint of exchange and conceptual analysis, an asymmetric prescriptive marriage system requires a minimum of only three categories of lineages: wife-givers (Masae-rhoek), wife-takers(Cava-rhoek), and agnates of ego's own lineage.

Finally, incest prohibitions, in southern chin Matu tribes society generally, forbid both marriage and sexual intercourse, and entered to parents and parent's siblings, own children, siblings and half-siblings, immediate parallel cousins, and all close agnostic collateral, except the systems of wife-givers and wife-takers. I have already indicated that the southern Matu Czhin tribes, rule of marriage is not connected with any sort of class discrimination. The institution of bride wealth exists throughout most of the south, though not in Matupi, but payment for moment from good families is not very different in kind or amount from that for women of ordinary families; the prices are not highly inflated. This is consistent with the southern chin, Matu marriage rules. Manu informants suggested that the family of the bride profits little if at all from this transaction. The institutionalized gifts and the feast that the bride's family must make for the wedding often lost more than the bride price it has received.

This is quite consistent with the Matupi lineage system and with this form of prescriptive marriage. A Matupi wedding entails only a small institutionalized dowry in lieu of the elaborate wedding rites and feasts which would elsewhere be paid by the bride's peoples, and there is no rule of bride service after marriage.

There are, however, numerous small, recurrent presentations due the bride's father or brothers from the groom throughout the post marriage years. This accords with the nature of divorce among Matu, which concerns only the wife, the husband, and any paramour of the wife. The husband must be compensated by another man, and not the wife's agnates, for loss of his wife, or else there is no divorce.

(b) Kinship Terms in Matupi

The Matupi kinship terminology, like much of the Matupi culture, is remarkably little developed. The terminology is congruent with the system of marriage and lineage relationships set forth earlier, but only barely so. The compass of relatives to which kinship terms are extended is extremely narrow, and second degree collaterals are rarely accorded kinship terms in either address or reference, while affines of affines are never accorded kinship terms. Many of the terms listed here are terms of reference only and are not well known. They are said by all informants to be very technical and not in common use. They are actually descriptive expressions such as "the brother of my wife", rather than specialized terms, and are regarded as circumlocutions. "A Pa" Father, father's brother "A Nu" Mother, Mother's sister. "Ka canu", daughter. "Ka capa" Son. "A Pu" Mother's brother mother's brother's son. "A Pi" mother's brother's wife. Mother's brother's son's wife. "A sae" wife's parents, wife's Father's brother's wife. "Maya" elder siblings, parallel cousins. "Mana" younger siblings, parallel cousins. "Cava" child's husband. "Bocina phung" wife-taker line. "Pum ca" father's father's brother. Mother's father's brother. "Numca" Mother's mother.

(c) Commentary

The point congruent while the marriage systems are: Father's brother and mother's brother are kept distinct, as are father's sister and mother sister. Parent's parallel siblings are merged with parent terms. Mother's brother equal wife's father, while father's sister is distinct both from wife's mother and

mother's brother's wife. The children of father's sister and of mother's brother are likewise distinct from one another and also from parallel cousins, who are merged with siblings. Affine terms are almost always descriptive phrases, rarely used except as terms of reference. The corresponding terms of address do not in particular reflect the marriage system, or even the lineage system.

In view of the lineage system and the stem of marriage, it is clear that formal extensions of kinship go far beyond the range of persons indicated by this list of distinctive terms of relationship.

Traditional Belief in Matu tribes

In Matu, each village (clan) has a distinct ceremonial cycle, a distinct set of myths and gods, and there are served by a ritual officer whose office is not hereditary. Their religion is differently organized. Each village has its own hereditary priests, but a clan although each has a separate original tale may be widely dispersed.

General description of Matu Ancient Religion (Worship)

The Matu, from ancient times, have been serious and sincere in their religious beliefs, and practices. One of the reasons is their clan identity, which implied their religious identity too. Their beliefs may be described as follows:

Matu believed in the existence of supernatural deities/objects within the framework of their traditional religion. They felt that those deities/objects were involved in human livelihood in one way or the other. Thus Matu religion was characterized by belief in personal and impersonal supernatural power, belief in omens, practice of taboos, elements of totemism, and belief in the world of the dead as well as a kind of paradise.

In primitive Matu society in relation with their religious belief, there were some special persons (priests) through whose service and function there can be a communication between the supernatural deities / objects / spirits and common people worshippers. Through the guidance of those special persons the Matu could understand if something was to be done or not and proceed in doing or not doing so.

The Matu, on behalf of the supernatural / unknown as well as for the expression of their beliefs, carried out various practices in terms of rendering family- clan worship, offerings of sacrifices, celebration of the festivals, and establishment of institutions related to the future life. Each of those practices has its own value and significance for the people who did so by bringing good or bad results to them.

In the light of our lists of various interpretations of religion (worships) in the previous point, we can clearly find the problem of having a single description of the Matu traditional religion. The reason is caused by the existence of various religious elements and belief under the umbrella of the Matu traditional religion.

Therefore, instead of making a single description of the Matu traditional religion with the terms like "animism" or "totemism" it would be better to leave room for a descriptive approach to Matu traditional religion. The British who first brought the Matu, under their political control tended to consider the Matu as animists.

Belief of evil (Rhai)

The people of Matu believed that an insane power of evil exists in their own locality such as spirit of river and stream and spirit of spiny and rock, which were to be called personal or common spirit. Personal spirits were capable of intimately helping to local people and harming to strangers. The rock (lung nu) was believed to be more powerfully as evil and was harmful to people. They believed that when the rainy season enters some special rocks make sound since sunset to darkness the people were very much afraid to go near to those rocks, which are believed, to making sounds even to day called "lung to mucp". People believed that it was the evil spirit in the rock is making sound, so they fear death

if they approach those rocks. Like-wise there are certain sterns and rivers, which have evil spirit, which can harm the people unless they are appeased with acts of reverence. In Matu people, Rhai (evil) worship is only a sacrifice offered to the unknown comforter and peace giver of life.

(a) Belief God (Kho, Kho Hni)

Matu people believed many gods such as, "Kho Hni" or "Kho", "Sathui", and "Manurhai" who were supposed to dwell in the phenomenal high mountains with the form of invisibility. According to the testimony of the Matus as well as outsider's description, the Matus believed in Kho" or "Kho Hni" who is one, good and beneficent deity. "Kho" was understood to be almighty, must superior, with highest authority over all other spirits, creator and controller of the world and all things and source of blessing and other good things.

There seems no need to doubt that the Matu believed and considered "Kho" or "Kho Hni" as omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, loving, caring and ever dealing well with human beings because the echo of all there attributes of "Kho" or "Kho Hni" has term found in the beliefs and practices of the Matus. Thus they recognizing a firm belief and faith put by the Matus in the supreme God, Kho, as J. Shakespeare said, "Old Lushei Kuki chin believed naturally in the existence of one supreme God, a God of all humanity and goodness.[1]

Matu people believed the term "Sathui" has as God provider and "Mang Rai" was as spirit of gods. The term Kho Hni (God) denotes the idea of highest not only in the [2]sense of space, but also in sense of transcendence. In other word "Kho Hni" is used height, which existed beyond the sky. They understood "Kho" who is in phenomenal them symbolized with the highest mortars fin religion concept and the land is a sacred gift from " Kho Hni" where a group people inhabited is called "Kho Khat", which means a sacred community of God or the abode of God. In the other way, the Matu concept of "Kho" is associated with the idea of social well being. Matu people believe that all things which from above are associated with "Kho" God and all natural phenomena that come from above are the gift of the supreme being.[3]

2. Concept of Human being "Hlanghing"

According to the Matu terminology human being is termed as "Hlanghing". In the same principle animal is termed "Sahing" and green wood is referred to as "Thinghing" contrast to "Thingduk", Thiangduk, which man's dry wood, dead person. All this is dialectical usage points to the fact that the term "Hing" refers to the state of biological living in contrast to the state of being dead "duck" in Matu. The life "Hingna" begging at the moment of its conception in the word and it (Hingna) operates in its fullness only after the birth. A renewed life "Hing thai nah" or "Hloe" like the life of a transplanted tree is described by "Hing" in Matu and this term is applied to the resurrected life of Jesus Christ in the Bible.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 The Beginning of missionary Work in Matu land

The people of Matu, as we have already known from our general introduction, entered the Matu region sometime around the middle 13th century. Each Matu village has been maintaining its own village chieftianship for local administrative purpose. In those days Matu were considered as 'savages' due to their valiant head hunting practices. They fought among themselves and often made raids on the non-Matu regions. Their endless attacks on those people at last brought an end to their own respective cheftainships and led Matu region to be under the British rule. At the same time this British rule was the means of changing the traditional religion of the Matus into Christianity. However, traditional religion was not totally eliminated even after the people became Christians. These practices are still having some

impact on their Christian life in one way or the other. However, let us see how the Matu accepted the new religion even though they had their own religious beliefs and practices.

2. History of the first American Baptist mission of Burma (now Myanmar)

Myanmar is a country which has special place in the hearts of those acquainted with American Baptist overseas Mission. American Baptist foreign missions began with the creation of the triennial convention in 1814, to support the ministry of Adoniram and Ann Judson in Burma (now Myanmar). With its adherents to the Buddhist faith and its many warlike tribes of animistic beliefs, Myanmar presented enormous challenges to American Baptist efforts to trimly establish Christianity during the decades that followed.

There is no question that the American Baptist mission in Myanmar was highly successful. In trying to interpret the reasons for that success, we almost inevitably find ourselves referring in rather general terms to the mission policies and strategies which guided the effort. To a great extent that misses the point. For the key primarily is found in the incredible courage and faithfulness of the missionaries and local Christians who systematically planted the faith. Those stories are found in the details of their daily lives and, because of the difficulty in acquiring and communicating such information are often missed.

2.2.1 Advent of British Rule

In brief, the political situation in the 1800s was that of an ancient and autocratic kingdom being slowly and painfully incorporated into the British Empire. The British took Tenasserim and Arakan in 1826, most of the delta region, including Rangoon, in 1852, and a large part of the rest of Myanmar in 1885. In the third Anglo-Burma war, king Thibaw was over thrown and exiled and his kingdom incorporated with the British areas of southern Burma . In 1886 the British occupied the whole of Myanmar and Myanmar fell under British colonial rule.

2.2.2 Advent of the first Christian missionaries

The first pioneers of Christian's missions in Chin Hills were Mr. Arthur E. Carson and his wife Laun L. Hardin. They arrived at Hakha (now the capital of Chin State) on the 15th March, 1899, from American Baptist mission. We had celebrated the 100th anniversary in 1999, the arrival of the first messengers of the gospel to the Chins.

Before the British occupation of Burma (now Myanmar) including Chin Hills in 1886, the people of Matus independently lived and heads of various clans were the local rulers or rather the protectors of their clans. Each man had to guard his family with swords, shields and lances. Matu people were conservative, so they were unwilling to adopt any new culture and religion. Matu people and others did not have much contact with others until the arrival of missionary. Before the arrival of missionary into Matu land, the British Navy already arrived at Matupi in 1922, and settled there for some seasons and they mentioned Matupui in their geographical maps. But for Matus people, the first persons to bring the gospel light to the Matu region were Rev. Dr. Joseph Herbert Cope and Rev. Dr. Chester U. Strait in 1930.

2.2.3 Rev. Dr. Joseph Herbert Cope's tour to Matu Land

Dr. Cope starting his tour in late November 1930, and extending to the end of January 1931, he made an extended tour into the Matu and Kampetlet subdivisions (they are now called townships) together with Col.- Burne, the deputy commissioner of the chin hills the highest British official resident in Falam.

It was the first time that an American Baptist missionary visited the Matu land (southern Chin State) which had just recently been incorporated into the chin hills and which now came under Burn's administration.

At that time Dr. Cope was also the honorary inspector of schools and his visit was more for looking into the school situation than for preaching, for he had no pastors at work in the Matu area and Kampetlet areas and thus had no one to interpret for him. Nevertheless, his visit was useful from a Christian point of view, for the American Baptist mission now had responsibility for the evangelization of this southern region also.

Actually, his missionary colleague, Chester Strait, could not cover adequately even the Hakha area, much less this large addition to the southern area and this is why Strait and Cope pled so eloquently for the third missionary family to come for the Falam area, freeing Strait for work in the south.

So all we know is that after leaving the last village, Hnaring in the northern Hakha subdivision on November 30th they passed through the Matu area and entered into and toured the Kampetlet area.

It seems almost certain that they visited Matupi, for Cope refers to being in a large village, "the largest in the Chin Hills , being over 400 houses".

2.3 The First Primary missions School for the Southern Region Matu Land

Dr. Cope reported that there was one new school started for Matu area, using the Hakha language in 1933. At that time the first Matu regional mission school teacher's were: - Sakhawng and Iangkhar. It is not entirely clear that this school was to be in addition to the existing schools. I rather think this was the case although cope mentioned the lack of government money for education or for other purposes also, for that matter. The great world wide financial depression was hitting every where including Myanmar.

(a) Second terms for Dr. Cope tour to Matu area.

In 1938, Dr. Cope went again to the southern chin hills Kampetlet and Matus areas, this time in the accompany of Governor C.B. Naylor, the successor to Burne. They left Kyin Dew and headed west ward for a week of travel to M'Kai Imnu, close to the LemRo river and in sight of villages in the Anakam hills tracts (now Paletwa area).

It was then, from M' Kai Imnu, the party moved steadily north ward up the east side of the LemRo river, thus keeping within the Kampetlet area, through Run Lawng and they were camped at Kai Imnu, their last village in the Kampetlet area. Then, they turned west and crossed the LemRo River into Matu area. There was no dry— Season Bridge built yet cross the river. As the forded, the mule carrying cop's books slipped on the rounded rocks in the river—bed and the box of books was dropped into the water. Luckily only one book was damaged.

The water was deep enough so that cope, riding on his horse, got his ankles wet. In the raining season, of course the river would have been unsociable.

Roads were better in the Matu subdivision and Naylor and cope went through Omswe village to the village, Matupui (now Matupi, which was reached on 3rd February 1938, there is no information at all of his tour after this point.

From one point of view, there letters are not very important to the history of the Christian movement among the chins, for at that live they had no Baptist work in Kampetlet—no churches, no Christian converts, no evangelism working.

By this second tour to Matu area, for cope, to return to school, and there ate about 60 students in attendance form almost a score of villages, which is a very good showing. He was very pleased with improving in his founded new school for Matu peoples.

3. The first inland missionary arrived to Matu land

The first evangelistic work in the Matu area was begun years ago during the time of Dr. Cope and Dr. Strait who towed the area with the help of some of the Hakha pastors.

But the first sustained Christian thrust came during world war II when the Hakha area (actually the Than Tlang section of the Hakha area) sent down two evangelists, Rev. That Dun and Saya Pa Hrek, in 1944.

(a) Biography of Paham Rev. That Dun

Rev. That Dun was one of the pioneer missionaries, who came to Matu land and to sow the seeds for Matu people, to enlighten into the life of Jesus Christ our savior. He was the son of U Duh Tum and Daw Dawi Par, born in 7th September 1912, at Tluangram village, Than Tlang Township. He passed his 4th standard at Bualpi village in Mizoram, India. Before he came to Matu area, he was then employed also local assistant of the headmen of his nature village and also became a faithful deacon in the church. On February 12, 1944, the Hakha—Than Tlang area held her delicate meeting at Thau village, appointed Rev. That Dun and Saya Pa Hrek as evangelists, to begin work among the Matu tribe. The introduce of good news by Rev. That Dun, well for many years and then the Matu people turned to Jesus Christ, our savior.

Rev. That Dun married with Pi Tial Fam, from Belhar village in 1940. They had eight children's, four sons and four daughters. He scarified his lee by working for missionary in Matu land and he was called b heavenly Father on 25th December in 1967.

(b) That Dun's arrival to Matu land

Rev. That Dun already heard about fore evangelists Dr. Cope and Col-Burne that there would be many difficulties for him to be and evangelists in Matu land. But That Dun decided to go as an evangelist for Matu people and he started his journey to Matu land in April 1944. He reached Ngaleng village on May 12th 1944, which was 12 miles away from Matupi. When that Dun arrived at Ngaleng village, he was suspected as to be spy of papan army and a chief U Ta Khawt caught him and handed him over to the army of Lotaw, who later tortured him. That Dun was starved to the point of death without water and food. at the mountain Awtaraw high 8000 feet's, the leader of Ngaleng village, Levi army, wanted to shoot him. But That Dun pleaded to be spared to read the Bible. He opened the Bible saying let the Bible was to be covered of my death, which made the heart of Ta Khawt was frightened to shoot him as the Holy spirit was guiding That Dun. When they reached to Lotaw village the army got angry for bringing That Dun to the village as a captive. The army opened the way of "That Dun" to preach the gospel After he returned from Lotaw to Ngaleng village when where he preached the villages who wre mocleing him. The village chief lost his authority. That Dun was warned to stop preaching because people feared that epidemic disease was affecting the village because of him. However That Dun continued to preach the gospel among the village even if he had evidence one or two. The Christian converts were stepped from worshipping God. That Dun continued to preach the gospel through to Batu village, which was as big village in Chin Hills. He bore the persecution very patiently and secedes. Though he had many problems, he stood for the sake of Christ throughout his life. Saya Pa Hrek, who came together with That Dun was turned back to his native because of his health. But That Dun did not turn back with a job unfinished. Through his preaching day by day the number of Christian increased. After this he decided to settle down to Matupi to evangelize then in 1950. He lived in Longvan Baptist Church. He lived among Matu peoples and he was called by heavenly Father with the name of missionary for the Matu on December 25, 1967. He scarified whole life for Matu peoples and his buried in Matu land. In (1944-1994), his golden jubilee was celebrated in Matupi. He established a church committee in 1955-1966, for Matu Baptist Association he organized women fellowship, Youth fellowship and men fellowship. Due to hard labor and commitment of That Dun, the gospel was brought to the Matu and enlightened the Matu people to believe the creator. He is remembered by Matus, as he was the founder of the Matu Christianity.

(a) Johnson's tour to Matu (1951)

Johnson's party consisted of sin men, Rev. Lal Hnin, Van Bik, Ram Hlun, Boi Nawl and Chan Tling, and including Rev. Johnson. They reached the Matu area, Radui on 10th January 1951. At that time the Matu's preachers were That Dun and pa Hrek and they had already arrived in Matu area since 1944. In 19th January 1951, Johnson and party at Ngaleng and were met by Saya's Pa Hrek and That Dun, both graduate of northern chin, Hakha Bible school. In 20th January 1951, Johnson and party arrived at Matupi and meet by U Sang Ning, a Member of Parliament, and a groups of Christian policemen and students. Matupi is head quarter for the government ion Matu area. There were no Christians in the village proper, but the policemen and school children have a little bamboo church built recently. They held a service that evening in the village, but it was not well attended considering the siege of the place, ever 300 houses.

Matupi was a government center only in 1948 with independence. The houses for the A.R (Assistant Resident), clerks, port office, schools, and policemen are very poor, just bamboo and thatch, good for (3) or (4) years.

4. Brief history of "Hlimsang" in the Matu subdivision

The first evangelistic work in the Matu area was begun years ago during the time of Dr. Cope and Dr. strait who toured the area with the help of some of the northern pastors. But the first sustained Christian thrust came during World War II when the Hakha area (actually the Than Tlang section of Hakha area) sent down two evangelists, sayas That Dun and Pa Hrek, in 1944. All went well for many years and many Matu people turned to Christ. Then came the "Hlimsang" movement, introduced evidently by Matu people returning from periods of coolie labor in the Lushai hills. Due to the poverty of the people, many Matu have the custom of working elsewhere during the slack seasons in the fields, and others move away for periods of years and then eventually return. "Hlimsang" movement discredited itself by the exercises to which it went. For it resulted in a lowering of morality and a naïve interpretation of the realness of Christ's second coming, which result in people neglecting work and education in order to wait for the consummation of the kingdom of God.

Unfortunately, about 1958, this 'Hlimsang' movement spread from Lushai into Hakha area, affecting first the border villages of Dawn, Ralpel, Bung Tlang, and Lungler. Then it continued south, along the border down to Ngaleng, Matu area. In 1962 it spread to the southern part of the Chin Hills, the Matu area. At that time, U Za Hoe was one of the deputy commissioners, living at Mindat, ho had responsibility for the Matu, Paletwa, and Kampetlet subdivisions. Two of the Baptist pastors, accepted Hlimsang as an acceptable expression of Christian practice and an aid to evangelism. One of there had lived for 7-years among the Lushais and had accepted their practices. The other man had studied under Johnson for a whole, but only as a special student. Actually, only one of the sin ordained man working in the Matu area at the time had finished formal Bible school training, and that was Rev. That Dun who has graduated from the Hakha school in 1950. Most of the Matu pastors thus were relatively untrained. At any rate, the "Hlimsang" movements bean early in 1962 in the Matu area and swept rapidity over the area, especially in the regions around Valangte and Lalui villages. It even took hold in Matupi the administrative center, and affected zone of the high school students. The government threatened to discipline their students, because they were, dancing beating drums and singing all nights and could not attend classes the rest day.

(b) The strength of the "Hlimsang" movement

Za Hoe, the deputy commissioner, was very active in opposing the movement, and the government came close to imprisoning two of the Baptist pastors during the raining season of 1962 for opposing "Hlimsang". Although there was no way to determine how man of the Christians in Matu area believed in and practiced the Hlimsang customs. In 1963, the Christian endeavor annual meeting was held at

Ngatu village, of the 1, 460 present, about 40 or 50 people were dancing, beating drums and singing in Hlismsang fashion. It must be remembered that this dancing is not social dancing nor is it a carry over of the chin animist cultural dances. Rather, it takes place not only in homes and in courtyard but also right in the church building, and it is intended as an act of worship of God.

There were hundreds, perhaps a thousand, Matu Christians who believed in and supported the “Hlismsang” movement at the time, even though all did not indulge in the dancing and “speaking in tongues”. Most of these seemed convinced that the holy spirit was manifesting himself, that those who danced did it as act of worship, just as David danced before the lord, and that those who babbled out enthroned words were having the same miraculous experience as the apostles had at Pentecost.

By experiences of “Hlismsang” movement, Dr. Johnson noted concerning various songs to which people danced during the series of the meetings this in response to the suggestion that it was the Matu song book, which was at fault. It was not Matu hymnal, which merely had Matu words for standard Christian hymns, but the way in which the songs were sung which caused trouble. It was so far removed from the original tune.

(c) The way of treating for “Hlismsang” movement

During Dr. Johnson and parlay arrived at Matu area, John did give sermon to one of the Sundays morning and trying to explain the true nature of worship acceptable to God, what really did happen on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts (2: 1-4), the non—Biblical nature of ‘Hlismsang’ and its dangers, and he concluded by asking the Matu area people to do four things: -

- (1) Stop using the drum, use instead a song leader to keep up the tempo.
- (2) Follow the correct tune and tempo and not singing in the “Hlismsang” style,
- (3) All pastors and preachers should papoose “Hlismsang” by preaching and example and,
- (4) All deacons should forbid dancing inside the church and at association meetings, and then try to stop the dancing in the home, when done as an act of worship.

When Dr. Johnson arrived back at Hakha, on April 5, 1963 , he made along written report on “ Hlismsang” to the Zomi Baptist connection executive committee. Then, the report, went later to the Burma Baptist convention the Burma Baptist missionary fellowship, and to the Burma Christian council. The ZBC—EC took actions on the matter. They informed the sub-divisional officer, Matupi, and the chin supreme council, Kalemio, that “Hlismsang” is opposed to their Baptist principles, teachings, and practice, and that they do not give it any support and that they will do their best to stop it wherever it is found in the Zomi Baptist convention area. (ZBC—EC 63/27).

5. Formation of the Matu Baptist Association

For the whole Chin Hills , Zomi Baptist convention was formed in 1953, the location for its office was Falam, then headquarters of the chin hills commissioner.

At that time many Matus became Christians and established churches. In 1953 there were about 700 believers in Matu areas. As Johnson said that some Matus were hungry for learning the word of God. They were allowed to study theology in the bible school in Tedim. They were: -

1. Pai Thai from Awkla village,
2. Khua sue from Kala village,
3. Reng Ma from Cang Tak village,
4. Thang Zer from Bawiring village,
5. Ngai Tim from Lalui village,
6. Pin Tui from valang Pi village,
7. Am Cang from vapung village.

Zo-Matu Association was organized by Zomi Baptist convention (Z.B.C), meeting held at Lalui, 5th April 1957. The worker in the Matu area founded by the 9Z.b.C) and affiliated with the Hakha Association as of April 1957, were: -

- (1) Rev. That Dun...Matupi
- (2) Rev. Pa Hrek ...Matupi
- (3) Saya Cang Sul ...Matupi
- (4) Saya Ngai Tim... Lalui village
- (5) Saya Than Ceu ... Rung village
- (6) Saya Par Kum ... Tuisip village
- (7) Saya Reng Ma... Kace village
- (8) Saya Thang Zer... Bawiring village
- (9) Saya An Cang ... Vapung village.

The first women committee was organized in Matu Association conference held on February 12, 1958, in Longven Matupi. They were: -

- (1) Daw Van Hrang...President
- (2) Daw Sung Ting... Vice President
- (3) Daw Ma Sui... Secretary
- (4) Daw A Keng... Member
- (5) Daw Dawi Tlim... Member
- (6) Daw Rai Ding... Member

In 1963, Zomi-Matu Association was divided into two Association as Zotung. Baptist Association and Matu Baptist Association because of the great Hlimsang movement was spread it. The first Matu committee workers were appointed as the following,

1. Rev. That Dun... President
2. Rev. Pa Hrek... Vice President
3. Rev. Khua Sue... General Secretary
4. Rev. Reng Ma... Assistant G/S
5. Saya Cang Sul ... Treasurer
6. Rev. Ngai Tim ... Assistant Treasurer
7. Rev. Zung Nawm... member
8. U A Zong ... Member
9. U Ton Hlong... Member
10. U Cang Kile... Member
11. U Pa Ngo... Member
12. U Ca Lue ... Member

CHAPTER THREE

C. The Present Situation of Matu Baptist Movement

Before the coming of missionaries the Matu people adhered to their indigenous religion, but in during the second world war Christianity was introduced to the Matu people from Americans via the northern Chin Hills. Today the majority of population is Christian. As we have already mentioned in chapter Two, the advent and influence of British rulers and Christian missionaries has taken over the Matu religion and culture. What the missionary gave to the Matu people is western Christianity. Therefore we

will try to understand God in Matu traditional religion as a means of constructing a theology based on a radically monotheistic understanding of God which will reaffirm, reinterpret, and redirect church traditions and help solve the problems caused by theological confusion and conflicts in that particular context. We will conclude with the challenge to the western theological context and its application in the development of genuine Matu Christianity.

1. The Role of the Diviner in Matu Land

In the Matu animism, the diviner played an important role in the community in the spiritual affair. The evil spirit in Matu animism seems to have manifested itself in a self-conflicting manner in the life of the diviner. For the evil spirit caused misfortunes, diseases, pain and death on the one hand, and on the other, the same spirit manifested itself through a diviner as liberator. At this point, the Jesus also believed that only Beelzebul, the ruler of the evil spirit, could cast out the evil spirit, and so they accused Jesus as Beelzebul. But Jesus explained, "It Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself, how then will his kingdom stand. But if it is by the spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. "Matt 12:24-30)".

So what is explained here is the reality that the true freedom comes only from the spirit of God. Traditionally, the Matus believed not only in the existence of the evil spirit such as "Rai" but also in the existence of God, the creator "Khio".

To discuss the role of the diviner in the Matu community, it was seen that the diviner was the sole spiritual communicator between the evil spirit and the men who were inflicted by those spirits. In a way, the role of a diviner in the Matu animism was synonymous in form to the role of Christ in Christianity who was and is the sole mediator between God and men, although their roles served for different purposes. Christ is the anti—spirit who never interned to sacrify the desires of the spirit nor is the one when ever committed in their will. The diviners were in the opposite direction. They were considered to have the ear of the spirits and to foretell events either bad or good. They were summoned in illness to prophesy whether the patient would live or die. They could also offer what propitiation would be favorable to the spirit, what animals should be killed and even offences that have been committed. Through the aids of the diviner sometimes, Patients got relieved, at least for temporary, from their affliction. The question here is, did the evil spirits practice self-exorcism? If not, how could the diviner exorcise the spirits by the power of the same spirit? Is the kingdom of the evil spirits divided? This complexity explains rather the mysterious nature not only of the functions of the evil spirits but also of the power of nature that is impinged upon the human life. The animistic Matu people believed in many spirits embodying in the trees, the forest, the rocks, the fountains, the winds, the fields, the eruptions, the rains, the clouds, the winds, the fire and so forth.

In other words, the Matu peoples, before they accepted the Christianity, did not merely believe in the existence of these there are many) spirit, but feared of their destructive and possessive powers. So when the missionaries saw how the Matu peoples suffered from such fears of being inflicted by the spirits, and how they suffered from such affliction, they made it a starting point where the Gospel of Christ was to be carried out aggressively.

Hence, the cultural exorcism practiced among the spirit—inflicted seem by the missionaries, clearly as the glorious works of God, while such a work was considered by the indigenous Christians to day as gloom and doom to their cultural existence.

2. Cultural Change for Matu Peoples

Cultural change among Matu people, came in two ways, one was in political power that is the British rule, and other was in the spiritual power that is the coming of the missionaries with the power full

Gospel of Christ. The form we began in so the British rules and the Christian missionaries, though they belong to different nationalities, British and America, cooperated in their mission to the Chin tribes, The British not only allowed the missionaries to enter the Chin Hill where there was no civilization, no literacy and no spiritual hope but they also used them, in some instances, as the superintendent of the British school education for the chin Hills Matu area, at that time. The British outlawed slavery, head hunting, revenge and the power of chiefs (Boei) was greatly eroded in over them chin people, but for southern area, cultural structure of the Matu chin society has no class system from the beginning. In other way, one can say that animism also prepared the Matu peoples for Christianity, for the Matus had no class system, like other chin tribes do, and no written dogmas to hinder them from becoming Christians.

Blood sacrifice to spirits enabled the Matu peoples to comprehend Christ's supreme sacrifice and atoning power of his blood. The belief in entrance to heaven in the equivalent Christian term is now possible through faith in Christ. For Christ has given the Matus people Christian power and wisdom to overcome all the destructive works of the evil spirits, they no longer need to fear the spirits nor need to approach the diviner for help. The Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) and to serve as the highest permanent priest for all who approach God through Him (Hebrew 7: 24-25) . The Matus peoples today firmly believe that the Holy spirit in them is much stronger than the evil spirits when they feared before, and consequently this knowledge leads to them to a new step of life.

3. Foundation of Union Theological School (UTS) in Matupi

In may 1981, the Zomi Baptist convention (ZBC) held three days long meeting at Falam facing on the vision (C. C. O. C.) Chin Christina one century follow up programmed. The staff of (Z.B.C.) C. Hrang Tin Khum (G/S) conducted it. The Zomi Baptist convention look forward the necessity of establishing a certain theological school in southern chin, under the leadership of Pau Khan, and the union theological school was opened by Hniar Kio as the director and the evangelist of mission department of Zomi Baptist convention, one June 1, 1984.

The union theological school is situated at Cangbong quarter in Matupi township. The (U.T.S.) training was conducted by Zomi theological college, which is affiliated to Myanmar Institute of Theological College (M.I.T.) and finance, rules and regulation was under the decision of evangelistic and mission department of Z.B.C. The union Theological School was raised to the union theological college with the Bachelor of theology program started in 1999-2000. Academic year. Now, so many evangelists are produce from this (U.T.S.) and serving in various parts of Zomi Baptist Convention and its mission fields.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES IN UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

(1) Aims and Purpose

Union theological college is both an academic and applied center of theology. Its life and thought interpenetrate the life and thought of Christian church and its historic and contemporary expressions of faith and witness. It conceived of theological education as the power to understanding and realization of the Gospel in our context, particularly the content of the dejected. Theological education is a means to transform the total person in order to equip him or her to become an agent of change in terns of Gospel. It is that which enables the transformation and liberation of the whole society.

From its origin as the first seminary of the Baptist churches in Chin State , the college had been related to the Baptist churches. Today it maintains that the while also supporting strong ecumenical commitments in both faculty and student body.

Throughout its history members of the college have sought to be responsibly involved with society at local, international levels. In undertaking its primary academic and professional purpose of U.T.C. aims are as follows,

(I) To conceive and build a relevant theological education taking into account the hopes and aspirations, the cries and struggles of the dejected that have been neglected. This is done by making use of resources that have not been brought into the process and content of theological education before.

(II) To pass on the values, traditions, attitudes and visions of a new society in order that people may live the Gospel in solidarity with there struggling for their humanhood.

(III) To prepare women and men for representative Christian ministers so that they may perform the traditional ministerial functions and be equipped to develop innovative ministries to a changing world.

(IV) To foster the distinctive community of those who shares common faith and commitment as expressed in corporate worship, mutual call and the varieties of experience in a life together.

(V) To inquire into all aspect of theological truth, using all pertinent disciplines and from within a basic commitment to the Christian tradition, to reappraise and reformulate the Christian faith in response to our increasing knowledge.

(VI) To improve study, instruction and ministry and to apply appropriate academic and professional standards of research teaching learning and preaching.

(VII) To engage responsibly in the social struggles of our time, teaching and learning, how to incarnate the Christian Gospel in the society a round us and the world, and to maintain effective communication with Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA), and particularly with the summaries and colleges of this system and other centers in Myanmar and abroad. So that all may benefit from common work and reciprocal counsel.

(b) COMMUNITY LIFE AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

Union theological college believes in all enabling all members of this community students, members of the faculty their spouses and children, non-teaching staff and their families to grow together and lives as a community formation of personality and character is done more outside the classroom in the way the members of the community great each other, relate themselves to others men, women, children. The character is molded in the daily morning worship service in the hostel, dinning, on the plays fields, in the library and in their formal social meeting. All there are an integral part of the process of personality and character formation.

This is to help mould a rich and wholesome community. The following are some of the significant domains of union theological college's community life. The local churches arranged host family for the students who came from distant places. This is the hospitality of the local people's makes student fell at home.

(I)Worship Programmers

Union Theological College intends to impart theological education in this connect of Myanmar spirituality and therefore, views the spiritual life of the students and the whole communality as an important dimension of the spiritual formation. Spiritual life is molded and strengthened by the daily morning worship and evening worship services. The college observes the Sunday by attending different denominations (churches) in Matupi town, youth fellowship in the evening for it is believe that the opportunity and possibility of sunning various liturgies of different confessional traditions enriches the corporate worship life of community.

The celebration of regional festival like (the starting of eating the vegetable from their fields plants in their fields) Kho tre. Etc, provides opportunities to interpret the gospel in the cultural content of the

society. As such, all students and staff members are to attend and participate in these activities for, wholesome spiritual development.

The vesper service is observed once a week on Thursday. The faculty members and a times quest preachers will be incited to conduct the service at assisted by the final year students.

(II) Sermon Evaluation

Tuesday morning worship is denoted to final year students' worship evaluation. The final year students will have the opportunity to demonstrate the community, their ability, maturity and spiritual growth in conducting a worship service. Students are encouraged to create new and innovative orders of worship and demonstrate their skills and laments in conduction worship and preaching, bringing into it the actual life issues with theological reflection. To offer constructive critique during the evaluation session, on the next day, the entire faculty members and students are expected to take part in evaluation worship sessions.

(III) Practical work programme

The concurrent practical work to congregation related ministers such as Christian education. Sunday school, work among youth and women. Hospital visit and involvement in worship and preaching during the four years period of students. The rural exposure programme during December breaks (Long gospel programme) and the internship programmed for a period of five months of during third year study provides ample opportunity to have a guided experience and engage themselves in the work of congregations and other life situations that motivate them to learn and to serve, discover for themselves the meaning of the gospel, and develop the essential sensitivity, ability and responsibility to lead others.

IV. Hostel Life

The college has two Hostels: That Dun memorial Hostel for men and smiting Hostel for women. Life in the hostels is an effective process of building up friendships, understanding and helping tenderize among the students, students manage their own mess. It is responsibility of students to look into the cleanliness both in the rooms and the hostel premises as well as the campus to maintenance a healthy environment. Adhering to the rules and regulations of the hostels and there by maintaining discipline strengthen this process. This should be treated as the sacred opportunity to grow into maturity.

The rules and regulation as approved by the management and given to the students for the maintenance of the spirituality and fellowship of the community should be strictly adhered to the management will notify other rules and regulations regarding the daily life of the students.

V. College Administration and Finance

The staff council administers the college academic sub-committees with students' participation. The student representatives the staff sub-committees as well as student committees and leaders will be elected by students at a meeting convened by the principal either at the end of each academic year. These representatives will hold membership for a period of one academic year. It is the policy of the college to encourage both women and men students to participate in the sub-committees to learn and exercise participatory administration.

The budge comes from the governing body of seven Baptist Associations, appropriation from Zomi Baptist convention, messing, tuition and other fees. Contribution such as stipend and gift are also received form friends, and abroad. Full-time workers are paid from the administration fund. For others, the following methods are utilized.

All the churches that belong to seven Baptist Associations in southern chin state are requested to contribute the require some amount of the budget for college annually.

Fund raise cum fieldwork is made once a year. The sum of 200, 000 Ks is at least received every year. This is specifically used for making college furniture and other as necessary items.

The college also receives grants from Association for Theological Education in South east Asia (ATESEA), the Diana swards scholarship Fund and David Za Hre Liam memorial scholarship fund. The funds are allocated to help the needy students and the students from pastor's family who are studying in college. David Za Hre Liam memorial scholarship fund is especially allocated to aid students who are from the outreach. All awards are presented to the recipient by the honorable persons of Matupi.

INTERACTION BETWEEN MATU TRADITIONAL CONCEPT AND CHRISTIAN FAITH

3. Matu Term for Salvation

When Matu people adopted Christianity as their religion, they experienced the idea of salvation as liberation from social evil, superstitious beliefs and practices and from the fear of evil spirit. To explain the concept salvation, they adopted four important concepts such as Tlan (redemption), Hluan (save), Loeih (Liberation), A Kang (Protection).

(a) Tlan (Redemption)

The term "Tlan" means release or deliverance of a person from judicial custody by paying penalty. Matu had quarrels with their neighboring villages over the boundaries of their land. Such disputes led to constant conflicts and bitter enmity. If a person was captured by other villages during the conflict one had to pay for the release of that person a large amount of money or a thing equals to the money at least one "Mithun". The hostage would be put in stocks till the demanded thing was received. This payment of money was called "Tlan" redemption with the coming of Christianity the enmity between the different villages vanished. They felt the need of accepting each other and respecting human life. The people realized themselves as prisoners of sin and they found Jesus Christ as the redeemer. The freedom that the gospel brought to Matu people has transformed the bitterness and hatred among them into mutual acceptance.

(b) Hluan (Save)

The release experienced by a person. When someone takes away a heavy load from his/ her back, which a person has been carrying a long time. In Matu's agricultural economy, women have a major role. Women are not spared from the hardest jobs. Along with all usual domestic works they were to clear jungles for cultivation and carry a basket full of newly harvested paddy on their back to home they are not allowed to drink water on the way and are not expected to take bath till the harvest is finished. This custom is known as "Tuisi tuem". Usually the farmland is far away from their villages, so their sufferings are beyond description. This custom is practiced in the name of their religion.

Men have to bear a separate burden. They fell trees to clear a new land for cultivation. They carry the eldest woman in their village to the new land to sprinkle the animal blood there. After that ceremony the woman is not supposed to touch the ground till she reached her home. All Matu's really longed for a deliverance from these kinds of religious practices. Due to the fear of curse and catastrophe from the angry gods they endured the sufferings.

When the gospel of Jesus Christ was preached to them, they were freed from all kinds of superstitions. They accepted this freedom joyfully. This freedom is known as "Hluan". They confessed that Jesus Christ is their savior.

(c) Loeih (Liberation)

The word “Loeih” means the freedom from bondage. It is not only an external freedom, but also more meaningfully the freedom of mind from anxiety and fear of death. The usage of this term has a specific background. Originally each Matu village is largely inhabited by a single clan. There was no local government to keep the life peaceful. So struggles between the neighboring villages are common. People are afraid to go from one village to another. If there is an acute necessity for a person to go from one village to another, even though it is only one day journey, he had to take three or four days to escape from the attack of other villagers. So the fear of death was always in their life. If that person safely reached his destination he would say “I am saved”.

There is another fear, which suppresses the minds of the people. That is the fear of evil spirit (Rhai) like spirit of rivers, spirit of rocks, spirit of trees and spirit of streams. In order to avoid death by these spirits the people had to keep away from these places.

After arrival of Christianity these superstitious beliefs vanished from the minds of the people. They started to love each other. They realized inner peace and freedom when they accepted the fact that there is a God who is almighty, controlling the power of nature, and also loving and concerning about the well being of all human beings.

(c) A Kang (Protection)

For ancient Matu making (Patai) (covenant) was a usual custom. This covenant was made between two different families. The agreement would be to protect each other from other's attacks, and to help each other in times of need. As a sign of the covenant a “Mithur” (a kind of big cow) is to be killed. The blood of the “Mithun” is served to each other and made certain oaths, promising to be faithful to each other and not to break the covenant from generation to generation. After making covenant both families were of the covenantal families accidentally killed some one the other family had to protect the murderer from the retaliation of the family members of the killed person. This way of saving one person's life was known as “A dann Puei” (Protection). With the arrival of the love of Jesus Christ this practice got changed as the rivalry and enmity disappeared Matus felt no need of making a ceremonial covenant to protect and help each other. They heeded the lesson of loving their neighbor as themselves. They found their security and eternal help by entering into a new covenant with God who can never change.

4. Zoethen (Grace or Blessing)

In Matu language there is no direct word for “grace”. In fact, they understood grace as blessing of God “Zoethen”. But it is different from the term luck. Luck, in Matu is “A Kam” which is adopted from the word “Kaan” in Burmese. The major difference is that the word luck or good fortune comes to a person through his labor when he/ she gets more than what is expected. On the other hand, but blessing “Zoethen” is received not by human effort. Therefore the Matus also understand it as the gift of God. In order to know the favor of God, they followed a practice. At the tip of a long erected bamboo pole they hung a symbol of a cross and applied animal blood. People used to shoot at that symbol of cross (Sa tlock). If any one could shoot at the symbol of cross, they believed that God's mercy is upon him. This act and its result are called “Zoethen”. It stands also for earth, health and delight. They are considered to be a gift of God known as “Kho” or “Khohni”. Matu people used the above mentioned concepts to illustrate the salvation through the grace of God, and more precisely salvation is the gift of God. God shows no favoritism. All human beings can be the recipients of God's blessing or salvation.

5. Matu traditional concept of life and its future

Matu tradition considers long life in this world as blessing and views it as reward for keeping social order of the traceable community, death, particularly, sudden death is considered as a terrible misfortune, and is often interpreted as divine punish meant for the breach of social code. They believed that in the future world a person would have to reap the consequence of past misdeeds and to suffer from the circle of rebirths in this world. The dead is traced like as if he were really living. In this earthly world a person has to perform religious festival at least three times by killing mithun for his spiritual survival. At his funeral, a person is offered everything that he might need in his next life. Matus believe that a dead person goes to the dead village to “sel khui kho” through a gate which is situated between the earth and the dead village. This celestial gate is guarded by a mythical being the evil one like the rock with the open mouth. The dead has to appease the evil one like the open mouth, because of this traditional reason the killing of not animal is required for one’s funeral ceremony. The animal sacrificed is offered to the dead to accompany him to his abode. This animal sacrificed alone is sufficient for entering into the avode of the dead villages. Traditional belief implies that the dead could bring all the things to spiritual world, that are given to a person at his funeral ceremony and all the riches and social prestige that he accumulated in his life time. They prefer to die natural death rather than accidental death “Sai cet”. The Matu idea of eschatology is concerned with the need to pursue worldly things. A person is believed to be transmuted to another form of life at the moment of his death. She/ he puts on in the next life the clothes, which he/ she wears at the moment of her/ his death. This belief involves that if a person is captured by evil spirit e.g. rocks or rivers he becomes under the power of the evil spirit. An animal sacrifice at his funeral will deliver his spirit.

6. God our “Kho Khohni” in Matu Chin Today

Before the coming of missionaries the Matus people adhered to their indigenous religion, but in during the second world war Christianity was introduced to the Matu people from Americans via the northern chin hills. Today the majority of population is Christian. As we have already mentioned in chapter two, the advent and influence of British rulers and Christian missionaries has taken over the Matu religion and culture. What the missionary gave to Matus people is western Christianity, therefore we will try to understand God our Kho in Matu traditional religion as a means of constructing a theology based on a radically monotheistic understanding of God which will reaffirm, reinterpret, and redirect, church traditions and help solve the problems caused by theological confusion and conflicts in that particular content. We will conclude with the challenge to the western theological content and its application in the development of genuine Matu Christianity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the coming of the Gospel of Christ to the Matus land is therefore a significant step for the animistic Matus both to the loss and rediscovery of their own history, culture, languages, and religion.

This step is also the beginning of their Cultural Revolution and new anodes to the promise land that flows with milk and honey that is of the greater civilization, growth, and maturity.

In their long journey to a century, the Matus have come across with many political, social, cultural and economical changes and even the unprecedented challenges. Speaking from a cultural perspective, there were a lot of changes in the Matu culture and social life, and these changes had many to do with the way they have believed in their missionaries God. For God whom their missionaries taught them has been God who powerfully destroyed all works of evil spirits embodied in the human culture and moral attitudes.

Since 50 years the Gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached in Matu land. It has removed several social evils. In the beginning the main missionary concern was the establishment of the churches. However, at the end of the 20th century, same changes happened because Matu Christians began to analyze their context situation. Matus want to understand Christian message in their own cultural context. The process of contextualization continues. Thus gospel becomes real and relevant. It is very important to deepen the interaction between the Christian faith and Matu culture. It is possible to cognize similarities among

different culture. It helps to develop mutual understanding and respect for each other. It is important that Jesus' liberation can be relied in Matu situation. The Gospel of Jesus Christ helps to improve the Matu communist as a whole.

But, the advent and influence of British rulers and Christian missionaries has taken over the Matu religion and culture. What the missionaries gave to Matu people is western Christianity. Thus, Christianity automatically came, they thought, with colonization and civilization. In fact, Christianity is not indigenous to the Matu people because it was not born in this region, it was borrowed from missionaries with a western form of culture. Actually, the traditional religious belief helped people it understand Christianity better.

Hence, in summary, God of the Holy and God of light have made them the Matus, find themselves in the unholy and wretched condition to their own existence and have made them feel estrange to their own culture. And yet God has given them, his wisdom and knowledge to discern the good from the bad, the Holy from the unholy and the light from the darkness.

We know that Christ has exorcised demons out of the man, but at the same time we also know that Christ has restored him to the normal life and asked him to continue to live and work for God's kingdom. In fact, God whom our missionaries taught us shall not only the greater but he shall significantly be the reformer and educator of our animistic culture and social life. We proclaim that Christ has saved us from the binding power of darkness to the liberating power of light and so we now have a new principle of life and a new form of culture- a culture that is no longer demonic and oppressive in form and structure.

Christ has become hence not only the reformer but also the fulfiller of all our self—hood values inherent in our own culture (Matt. 5: 17). In the Gospel of Christ, we are purposefully given a new direction to a new life, to new desisting, and to a new set of cultural values.

For the 21st century, the Matu Christians need the right motives and aims for our mission. Training and theological education may be every important for missionaries, but our motives and aims are more important then training and theological education. Financial resources may be another problem, but money will not solve all our problems. The right motive may be the one, which can solve our financial denominational, situational, and contextual problems most effectively in the mission of the Matus-tribes in the 21st century.

Now, Matus people become a new Christian, changed from old animistic believers and we should have to try to follow our righteous way of life and imitate our "Faith" for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13: 7)