

Transforming Teaching for Mission

**Educational Theory and Practice: Anthropological
Considerations for Mission Education
among different Ethnicities in Myanmar**

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About the Author

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Abstract

To a significant extent, Christianity is expressed as a tribal religion among different ethnic groups in Myanmar today. Anthropological study of tribal peoples in Myanmar is critical for mission studies and the continued development of the Christian faith in Myanmar. Each ethnic group has its own distinct culture with varying degrees of similarity with neighboring groups. However, today most tribal peoples have no clear conceptualization of their group's anthropogenesis or their ancestral progenitor. The Union of Myanmar has eight major tribes. Among these, more than one hundred sub-ethnic groups still speak their own languages in their communities though Burmese is the official language in the country. These linguistic and cultural differences among groups further accentuate the differences which exist in Chin Christianity, Kachin Christianity, and so on. Therefore, doing mission studies with anthropological attentiveness toward different ethnic groups is needed and will help improve future Christian mission education. To promote these goals, the "All Racial Mission Studies," a study group for Myanmar Christian mission, has now been initiated for the anthropological study of tribal expressions of Christianity. It is hoped that our study will contribute to the health of the Christian church, to mission studies, and to secular research efforts as well.

Introduction

Protestant mission commemorated its bicentenary anniversary recently in Myanmar. Catholic mission will also soon commemorate its 500th anniversary. Christianity is no longer alien in the Union of Myanmar today. Western-led Christianity had to cease in 1967 when Gen. Ne Win took power and expelled all foreigners – including missionaries – out of the country. Since then, self-governing local churches have been growing among different ethnic peoples of the Union of Myanmar. Christianity continues to spread among the different tribal peoples and thus it has become, to a significant extent, a tribal religion. The expression of Christianity differs significantly from one tribe to another because of linguistic and cultural differences, which anthropological studies have identified for decades. Even among one major tribe, many sub-ethnic groups may have significant linguistic and cultural differences among themselves. Today, Myanmar Christianity as a whole may equally be thought of as differentiated ethnic Christianity. This paper argues that more attention to anthropological concerns in mission education and Christian Studies in Myanmar is needed in both religious and secular circles. This study probes some of the anthropological distinctiveness of various groups of ethnic peoples in order to begin to trace back their anthropogenesis. It examines the colonial era missionary translation efforts and the conversion of the indigenous peoples out of their primal religions so that one can easily see the differences of Christianity among the ethnic tribes of Myanmar.

I. Burman Intellectual Response to Christian Mission

Before discussing the anthropological distinctiveness of various ethnic peoples, it is important to review the Burman intellectual perspective on Christianity in the Union of Myanmar. When Adoniram Judson, the first overseas missionary from America, started his missionary efforts among the dominant tribe of Myanmar, he first encountered the

dominant Burman Buddhist intellectuals. Judson categorized the Burmans into two distinct groups, “the orthodox Buddhists and the skeptical ‘semi-atheists.’” By “semi-atheists,” Judson meant those who no longer practice the Buddhist rituals but had a more vague notion of “Wisdom,” (Maung Shwe Wa 1963: 40) Note that the Theravadins do not believe the Buddha as “a person who exists permanently,” (Phra Sriyansophon 2001: 29). Impermanence (*anicca*) is a critical teaching within Theravada Buddhism.

Postcolonial perspectives of Buddhist Burman intellectuals on the work of Judson and the Protestant missionaries are important to consider here. Dr. Htin Aung, formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of Rangoon, in his Foreword to Helen G. Trager’s book, *Burma through Alien Eyes: Missionary Views of the Burmese in the Nineteenth Century*, (Trager 1966:xi) writes:

Dr. Judson and his missionaries also felt frustrated because they found among the Burmese no religious vacuum which their religion could fill. Since the beginning of their history, the Burmese had professed Buddhism, one of the noblest faiths mankind has ever known; and the Burmese way of life itself had always been under the all-pervading influence of Buddhism.

From the perspective of an indigenous Buddhist intellectual, Judson and his colleagues, the pioneering Protestant missionaries, were frustrated in their missional failure. Dr. Htin Aung asserts, “As years passed and their endeavors among the Burmese continued to meet with failure, the missionaries were forced to seek converts in the remoter areas where Buddhism had not penetrated and where the pre-Buddhist religion of animism still prevailed (Traeger 1966: xi).”¹

Buddhist Burman intellectuals’ critique of Christian mission efforts may be summarized like this: “Your religion is good for you, ours for us. You will be rewarded for your good deeds in your way—we in our way,” (1966: 75). They point out that missionaries’ approach to “heathens” (due to the latter’s atheistic Theravada ideology) was ineffective as a means of translating the Christian faith. Political scientists in the postcolonial era in Myanmar further stress how Westerners and/or Western Powers entered into their colonial territories via three Ms –Merchandise, Missionaries, and Militaries. It is somewhat simplistically argued that Western colonial power made its approach firstly via merchandise; then it sent its Christian

missionaries; finally, its military advances caused colonialization. After that, Western powers Christianized the colonized. This has so far been the anticolonial view of Christianity in Myanmar.

The present study seeks to highlight tribal groups' agency by making a more complex argument whereby ethnic peoples through their concepts of primal religious systems assimilated the Christian faith. That has been the main reason why the hill tribe peoples of Myanmar continue to profess Christianity today.

II. Hill Peoples' Christianity: the Case of the Northern Chin Hills

I will investigate the primal beliefs of animistic religious system of the northern Chin people, and thereby provide the context in which missionaries engaged in the vernacular translation of the Christian faith. This analysis will enable scholars to have a more in-depth and nuanced interpretation of how and why people converted to Christianity. Andrew Walls asserts (Walls 2004: 71):

In primal societies in quite diverse parts of the world, the Christian preachers found God already there, known by a vernacular name. Often associated with the sky, creator of earth and moral governor of humanity, having no altars or priesthood, and perhaps no regular worship, some named Being could be identified behind the whole constitution of the phenomenal and transcendental worlds.

When the American Protestant missionaries first reached the British Chin Hills by the end of the nineteenth century, there had already been *Pathian*, the Supreme Being in the indigenous Chin vernacular.² By “translating the message” of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Chin people came to know the Christian God in the name of *Pathian*, their native animistic Supreme Being. Why did the American Protestant missionaries employ *Pathian*, the theistic name of spiritism to be identified with the Christian God in the British Chin Hills? What does *Pathian* mean in the primal belief system of the Chin/Zo people? What is *Pathian's* role

and significance? Who was *Pathian* to the Chins or Zo-mi? Who are the Zo-mi? Where did they come from? What are the origins of this name for the deity? It appears that no one fully understands the meaning of *Pathian* in the Chin primal religion. No one is able to say with certainty today the origin and the genesis of *Pathian*. The northern Chin peoples who are Christian worship *Pathian*, but the origin of the term remains obscure.

Since we have little knowledge of animistic beliefs concerning *Pathian* in the Chin/Zo people today, researchers must rely on archival research and oral tradition to articulate the Zo worship and thereby to interpret their conversion to Christianity.³ We shall trace back the origin of the Chin/Zo people and their cultural background so that we shall be able to interpret their conversion to Christianity out of their animistic religion. What was the nature of their belief in animism? How was the Gospel made intelligible to the primal religious understanding of the Chin/Zo people?

Western Christian missionaries' point of view on the conversions of the people is revealing as much as it also poses new questions. Over a hundred years ago, Anglican Bishop Arthur M. Knight noted that the hill tribes of Myanmar are easier to convert. In the preface of the book *Christian Missions in Burma*, he asserted, "The Animist tribes are always ready to accept higher religious teachings, Buddhists, Mohammedan, or Christian. The question is, which will reach them first?" (Purser 1911: x). Does he mean that the ethnic, animistic tribes of Myanmar are keen to adopt world religions including Christianity? He quotes the Deputy Commissioner of the British colonial rule with regard to the Chin people: "You are too late to catch the Chins who are now by thousands living in the plains among the Burman." The Commissioner's suggestion to the missionaries was, "[Y]ou must go to those who remain in the hills away from the Buddhists." "He was right," the Anglican bishop agreed with the British colonial official (1911: x).

But what does the Anglican bishop mean by "He was right?" Does he mean that he "must go to those who remain in the hills away from the Buddhists" so that he might Christianize the colonized hill tribes? How did he regard the conversion of hill people at the time in colonial Burma? How shall we describe and understand the conversion of the Chins and the other hill tribes to Christianity in the British colonial era? Was it Christianization into a form of Westernized Christianity? Alternatively, was it happening in the process of religious assimilation? Lewis Rambo (Rambo 1993: 5) asserts, "Such a problem is a classic issue in missions.

Western missionaries seek to find the ‘pure’ convert, while the converts themselves assimilate the faith in the categories relevant to them.” Could one say then that the conversions of the hill tribes in colonial Burma was a “pure” conversion, which the Western missionaries sought? Or shall we say it was the converts themselves who assimilated the faith in ways the missionaries neither anticipated nor fully understood?

In order to understand the conversion of the hill tribes of Myanmar, one must study “the four components: cultural, social, personal, and religious systems” of the hill peoples as Lewis Rambo (1993: 7) believes “to be the most crucial to an understanding of conversion.” I will provide a necessarily brief exploration of these various dimensions with regard to the Chin people. The origins and the nature of their primal religious beliefs and practices must be explored in order to comprehend their forms of religious cognition and their meaning and modes of religious change from animism to Christianity.

We must begin with history. Who are the Chins? The Chins are Tibeto-Bumese speaking people who originated from the Tibetan plateau. They are believed to have migrated into the plain region of the Irrawaddy River in Myanmar before the Burman dominant tribe migrated. Generally speaking, the Chins in the Chin Hills of Myanmar are classified politically into three groups: the northern, the central, and the southern people. The Chin tribal sub ethnic peoples are called, Zo-mi, Lai-mi, and Khu-mi respectively, meaning Zo people, Lai people, and Khu people. Mizo (aka Lushai) in the Mizoram State of India, is the same tribe of Zo people who share the Ciim Nuai chronicles and genealogy.⁴ Besides the hill-dwellers, there have also been other tribal Chins in the plains, namely Asho, and Yaw, meaning the Sho people and the Yaw people respectively. Vum Ko Hau, (Vum Ko Hau 1963) a native scholar, believes that all the tribes and sub-ethnic clans of the Chins are descendants of one progenitor—Zo; since the various tribal names sound closely similar in the monotone of one syllable “Zo, Yo, Yaw, Cho, Sho, etc.”⁵ He anthropologically sees all the sub-ethnic tribes of the Chins as “one and the same Zo (Yaw, Jo) race” under the umbrella of Zo (Hau 1963:297-312). He confidently asserts, “From time immemorial we call ourselves Zo (Jo, Yaw). This fact had been admirably recorded by Father V. Sangermano since the year 1783 when he made his headquarters at Ava A few early writers also recorded the fact that we Zo (Jo, Yaw) people inhabited areas between Assam and the Irrawaddy River,” (Hau 1963b:238).

Therefore, Zo-mi or Zo people simply mean the descendants of Zo the progenitor. Thus, in any case, generally speaking, a Zo person or a Zo-mi implies any person who belongs to any sub-clan of the Zo people such as Zo, Yo, Yaw, Cho, Sho, etc. The ‘northerners’ genealogically believe that they are offspring of a progenitor, namely Zo who was the founder of the Zo people. Even though Zo people have many different dialects and clans, in Christianity they hold in common their name for the Supreme Being, namely *Pathian*. Who then was *Pathian*? What is the meaning of the word *Pathian*? Before Christianity came into the territories, the Zo/Chin people worshiped independently following their own form of tribal religious belief. In their animistic belief *Pathian* was the kind and gracious Supreme Being. Did they then worship *Pathian*? What was the relationship between the Zo people and *Pathian*? Vumson asserts, “Zo believe in a supreme God or *Pathian*. God [*Pathian*] is good. He gives health, richness, children and other human wishes. God [*Pathian*] is never cruel and never hurts people. Therefore Zo people never sacrifice or offer anything to appease God [*Pathian*],” (VumSon 1986: 16). However, in practice the Zo worshiped *Zinmang* / *Zinleng* or *Khuazing* as the supreme one in their social and religious systems. They never had any sacrificial worship ceremonies to *Pathian* in their social and religious life. For the Chins/Zo people⁶ *Pathian* was not a regional supreme one, but rather a universal being in their cosmology. While they believed in *Pathian* on the one hand, they also trusted in traditional priests or shamans to worship or appease the local spirits in order that *dawi*, the evil spirits, might not be harmful to them. It will be more correct to say that Chins made bargains with the regional *dawi* to gain advantage. Vum Son rightly interprets, “Zo people fear spirits or devils who are under the rule of the king of spirits. The spirits (*dawi*, *huai*, *khuazing*) brings sickness and misery [*sic*] unless treated with due respect. Rituals have to be performed and sacrifices made so as to appease the spirits” (VumSon 1986: 16).

Given this complex picture, can one say that the animistic Chins were monotheist? How did they understand and deal with their deities? In fact, the compound word *Pathian* – the name of the Chin deity – seems to have been derived from the Chinese 天 *T’ien* [*Thian*] which implies heaven or heavenly deity. Chin language and the Chinese language here are pronounced the same: *θ i-an*. Etymologically speaking, the 天 *T’ien* [*Thian*], meaning heavenly, with the prefix *Pa* simply means father and/or masculine, the compound term *Pathian* thus implies heavenly father which has made it an apt use as the term for the Christian God.

Sing Khaw Khai suggests (Sing Khaw Khai 1995: 112, 117) that the term *Pathian* “seems to have had originated with the concept to Heaven” since the word *Pathian* originally represents “an object sacrifice” to Heaven, and *Pathian* “was never viewed as bearing demonic characteristic features although the deity was not clearly conceptualized” (Sing Khaw Khai 1995: 112, 117).

Does this mean that the Chins had adopted their traditional deities from the ancient Chinese? Alternatively, are the Chins themselves the lineage of the Chinese or the Jewish Chinese? Interestingly, the beliefs of the hill tribes of Myanmar contain biblical legends in their theistic religions of animism. When the missionaries reduced the vernacular language systems into Roman script, to their surprise they discovered that some biblical legends existed among these hill tribes of Myanmar. Some missionaries wondered if these groups were descendants of the lost tribes of the Jews. The hill tribes were still preliterate as the missionaries first reached them in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century colonial era. Since they had no written records of their history, only oral traditions have been available to be documented in recent decades.

Many animistic beliefs and practices among the hill tribes are held in common though particularities differ in many areas. Regarding the commonality of the hill tribes, Purser rightly asserts his missiological perspective in his book *Christian Missions in Burma*: “The habits, the language, and the physical appearance of these various tribes are widely dissimilar. But while they differ in almost every other particular, they are united by their religion: they are all possessed with a common reverence and fear of the spirits; they are all Animists (1911: 22).” It may be that their animistic beliefs, “with a common reverence and fear of the spirits” in their social and religious life, did in fact make the hill tribes easier to convert to Christianity in colonial Burma. The present study argues that the primal beliefs and animistic religious cognitions of the hills tribes in the spirits had been one of the most helpful basic conditions for the missionary translation of the Christian faith in colonial Burma in the early twentieth century.

III. In Search of the “Strange Names of God”: Other Ethnic and Sub-ethnic Peoples

When the Protestant missionaries first arrived at the hill villages of the Chin Hills during the last year of the nineteenth century, they had three options to transliterate the divine name of the Christian God for the people of the Chins: *Pathian*, *Zinmang* and *Khuazing*. The missionaries chose *Pathian* (the Universal Supreme Being) as the most proper word for the Christian God, and their choice has turned out to be an appropriate one for the political “northerners.” In other words, the Protestant missionaries “Pathianized” all the deities of the different sub-ethnic Chin peoples into one divine name of God—*Pathian*. Pathianization of Chin Christianity, however, is problematic among the other sub-ethnic groups of the Chin/Zo peoples. It seems that *Pathian* is intelligible only among the “northerners” Zo-mi and the so-called ‘southerners’ Lai-mi. The real southerners such as the Matu, Dai, Khumi, Asho, and so on have no indigenous connection to *Pathian*; they have their own deities with different names in their primal religious system.

I argue that the “missionary translation” of the name of the Supreme Being for these ethnic groups should be indigenized. The Christian God should correspond with the term for Supreme Being held by these regional groups so that the people might worship the Christian God in their own vernacular understanding. This is unfortunately not the case today. “Southerners” have to worship God in the name of *Pathian*, the Supreme Being of the “northerners.” For example, Matu people have their own Supreme Being in the name of *Khoo* who created the universe and rules over it. The Matu Christians should worship God in the name of *Khoo* in their vernacular. However, they worship God today in the name of *Pathian* instead of *Khoo*. By employing *Khoo* as the Christian God among the Matu people, Christianity and Christian mission education might have a transformational effect for Matu theologizing – in theory as well as in practice. In fact, *Pathian* seems to be meaningless or unintelligible today among the southern Chin sub-ethnic groups. For each sub-ethnic group of the southern Chin tribes the names of their primal deities ought

to be employed and semantically reconfigured as to convey that of the Christian God today so that they might worship God in a way more fully indigenized in their culture and tradition.

There are similar examples to the problem experienced by the Matu in other groups as well. The Asho, another sub-ethnic tribe of Chin people, has a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, namely *Hli* in their primal religious system. According to Taw Sein Ko (Taw Sein Ko 1913: 8), a Burman scholar in the early colonial era, *Hli* is a goddess. Today, however, the Asho people worship God in Christianity in the name of formulated *A Pa Hli Bway*, simply meaning “Father God.”⁷

In the case of the Kachin people, just like their cousins the Tibeto-Burman-speaking Chin/Zo people, the American Protestant missionaries Christianized them in the name of *Karai-Kasang* the Jingphaw vernacular Supreme Being.⁸ Thus, all Kachin sub-ethnic peoples today worship *Karai-Kasang* in Christianity. Kachin peoples today profess Christianity and worship God in the common name of *Karai-Kasang*. In fact, all the sub-ethnic groups of the Kachin peoples surely would have had a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being whom they would rather pronounce in the almost common *Hpan Ningsang* – *Chye Ningchyang*. *Hpan Ningsang* means “the Almighty One who creates” and *Chye Ningchyang* means “the Almighty One who knows.” A Kachin would pray uttering “*Hpan Ningsang* – *Chye Ningchyang*” especially when he encounters danger and difficulty.

Just as their cousins the Chins did not worship *Pathian* in their primal religious system, the Kachins did not worship *Karai-Kasang*. Rather, they would appease the other evil spirits simply because of fear. Gilhodes (1995: 94-95) advocates for *Karai-Kasang* regarding him as “a good being” in the primal religious system of the Kachins. Eventually, the Kachins worship *Karai-Kasang* in Christianity. Today, a Christian Kachin, in whatever sub-ethnic group, will surely say in his prayer, “*Wa Karai-Kasang e!*” saying, “Oh, Father God!” Alternatively, one may also utter, “*Phan Wa Ningsang e!*” Or, “*Chye Wa Ningchyang!*” Here *Wa* means father: the missionaries seemed to introduce the Christian God as the heavenly father *Wa* to the Kachin peoples. Note that, like the Chins, almost a hundred percent of the Kachins today profess Christianity in the name of *Karai-Kasang* the primal deity. Here we would argue that the Protestant missionaries’ transliteration of the name of God among the hill tribes is appropriate. One obviously sees that Christianity has been expanding in the different vernacular names of God.⁹

With regard to the study of religious conversion and in search of the Supreme Being among the Karens, Rev. Harry Ignatius Marshall's book *The Karen People of Burma: A Study in Anthropology and Ethnology* (Marshall 1922: 211), is the best. When the American Protestant missionaries reached the Karen jungle dwellers, they found three distinct spiritual concepts of religion, namely, 1) *Pgho* referred to magical power or force; 2) *Hpi Bi Yaw* referred to an animistic goddess; 3) *Y'wa* referred to the Creator. Marshall explained, "Among the Karen we find traces of three distinct religious conceptions, which have left their impress upon the people," (211). Accordingly, Marshall explains the Karen believe that the deities have *pgho* the power or force to perform wonderful things. A person who performs a magical works is called "*pgha a pgho*" meaning a man of power—*pgho*. In their primal animistic beliefs of their religious system, the Karens had numerable spirits with various powers including the goddess *Hpi Bi Yaw*. The Karens, like the Chins and Kachins, would appease the spirits "by continual offerings, sacrifices, and tabus" as Marshall says. With regard to the animistic religious thought of the Karens, Marshall asserts, "To keep on good terms with these numerable spirits consumes a large part of the time and thought of the Karen" (1922: 211). The third and most vital conception of the Karen primal religious system is the belief of the existence of a Supreme Being, namely, *Y'wa* in the Karen vernacular. Today, a Christian Karen would pray to God saying, "Maw Y'wa" meaning "Father God" in its English translation.

Conclusion

Today one sees that Christianity has become a tribal religion in the Union of Myanmar. It is critical to recognize the different expressions of the Christian faith in the many different ethnic groups in Myanmar: Chin Christianity, Kachin Christianity, Karen Christianity, etc. This paper has illustrated that even among these ethnicities, there are sub-ethnicities and sub-clans which differ from one another linguistically and culturally and that these differences must be well-understood in order for Christian mission and the Gospel to be more faithfully appropriated by various groups. For example, Chin Christianity should be differentiated as Zo-mi Christianity, Lai-mi Christianity, Cho Christianity, etc.

This paper claims that greater attention to anthropological research in Christian mission studies will make mission education and Christian Studies more vital both in terms of religious practice and in the secular understanding of people in Myanmar. By doing so, Christianity and/or Christian mission studies will surely grow as an exciting subject in Myanmar and Southeast Asia. Deeper anthropological insight will also further strengthen future Christian mission in theory and in practice.

Notes

1. Dr. Htin Aung was formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of Yangon, and Chairman of Burma Historical Commission. He had been to Columbia University in New York in 1964.
2. The Chin Hills became well known in 1896 when the British decreed the “Chin Hills Regulations”. For details of the regulations, see Khup Za Go, *Zo Chronicle: A Documentary Study of History and Culture of the Kuki-Chin-Lushei Tribe* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, First Published 2008: 61-71). Zo people, who call themselves Zo-mi, *mi* meaning man or people, have been known as Chin people. The present study shall use the term Zo people, Zo-mi, and Chin /Chin people interchangeably. For a more detailed study of the Chin people, see Vum Ko Hau, “History of the Zo Mi (Chin) Race” in *Profile of a Burma Frontier Man* (Bandung, Indonesia: Self-published 1963: 297-312); and Vum Son, *Zo History: With an Introduction to Zo Culture, Economy, Religion and Their Status as an Ethnic Minority in India, Burma, and Bangladesh* (Aizawl, Mizoram: Self-published, 1986).
3. We are especially thankful and indebted to Robert G. Johnson who distinctively accomplished a complete Christian mission history of the Zo people; and to Chester U. Strait whose research has been in both Master of Theology and Doctor of Theology studies of the Chin animistic religion. We also would like to thank and credit some Zo-mi native scholars particularly to Vum Son, Vum Ko Hau and Sing Khaw Khai, whose scholarly contributions provide us with valuable studies concerning the origin and culture of the Zo people.
4. *Ciim Nuai* is reported as the first migration location for the Zo-mi the “northerners” from the Kale-Kabaw valley. The time line is estimated about C.E. 1500 that the Zo people moved away from the Kale-Kabaw valley to the hilly regions of the Chin Hills. A group of them who call themselves Zo-mi first settled at the valley named “*Ciim Nuai*,” meaning “underneath the *Ciim* plants,” in the northern region of the present Chin State in Myanmar.

5. Vum Ko Hau is a scholar of the Chin/Zo people: he received his PhD in Anthropology from Charles University, Prague whilst he served as the Ambassador of the Union of Myanmar to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Austria. He was well-known as a frontier leader in unifying the union together with Aung San.
6. The present study employs the term “Chin” and “Zo people” interchangeably.
7. Via correspondence with Salai Htun Hlaing, an Asho elder, ex. Head of State and Division level Education Department, he asserts that there had been the belief in the existence of a Supreme Being in Asho primal religion. According to him, the deity name “*Hli*” is used as the Christian God, and thus “*A Pa Hli Bway*” meaning Father God, is applied today not only in the Holy Bible, but also is everyday use in the Asho dialect as well.
8. Kachin peoples are also called Jingphaw in the tribal name of the majority. There are at least six more sub-ethnic groups among the Kachins, namely, Jingphaw, Maru (Lawngvaw), Atzi, Lashi (Lachid), Hkahku, and Rawang.
9. There also are other minority ethnic groups among the hill tribes of Myanmar who profess Christianity: for instance, the Lisu, Lahu, Akha, Pa-O, Wa, etc., who have their own vernacular names of God. The present study has been challenged to investigate also the other tribal peoples’ anthropogenesis and their religious conversions to the Christian faith.

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