her songs in Awithangpa’s tune which contained three lines. Her versatility with any theme and the use of simple language made her songs immensely popular with the people. We can see her closeness to nature from her use of imagery and metaphors drawn freely from it. In her song, the eagle, the horn bill and the dove are often used to symbolize a lonely lover:

*Muwanlaiin van zawlah di a au,*  
*Kepawh ka di mual a liam e ralah ka au ve.*  
(The lonely eagle up on high calls for its mate, likewise, I too call for my love that has gone afar)

Among the variety of themes, her songs of great warriors are worth mentioning. She not only sings on the subject of their brave deeds but also challenges and encourages the young men to be courageous.

To sum up, the contribution of Mizo folk songstresses on the development and evolution of the genre of Mizo songs up to the present day has been powerful and meaningful.

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Reiek Tlang and its Lores

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Reiek Tlang, or Reiek Hill is situated ten miles west of Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram, and in between them flows the State’s longest river known as Tlawng Lui. Reiek Tlang itself is just a little more than 4000 ft. in height. When viewed from the east it appears to stretch out into a wide expanse while towards the south-west it is banded by high rocky ledges and steep precipices. Towards the north of the peak of Reiek Tlang the village of Reiek is situated. Some distance below it, sits the village of Ailawng.

Just below the peak of Reiek Tlang is a vast open track of grassland, but the peak and the rest of the ledges are all exposed layered rocks. An old famous Mizo myth called *Van Indona* or War of the Heavens is believed to have taken place here on this very hill, and the chief participants belonged to this place as well.

The queen of the demon spirits of Reiek Tlang was Khawluahlali and she had a beautiful daughter named Ngaietii. She ruled well and all the demon spirits of the hill were happy and lived in harmony until trouble finally arrived in the form of the demon spirit of the Tlawng river who decided to flow southwards through the passage between the two hills of Reiek and Lungdar. However, the demon queen Khawluahlali would not hear of it. The very idea of the river dashing along the banks of her territory where her subjects lived was something she could not tolerate. Because the demons of the hills were considered superior to the river demons, the Tlawng river demon had to concede defeat. Disgruntled and greatly offended, he decided to show his anger by taking a circular turn and coursing back. This spot is still known as ‘Tlawng nuar’ or ‘Tlawng in a temper’ and lies right beneath the great height of the protruding rock that juts out of the peak of Reiek Tlang.

This victory was considered a great achievement by the demon spirits of Reiek Tlang and they were confident that this was the end of their troubles. While they were happily preoccupied dancing and celebrating, the *Chawngchen,* the demon spirits of the famous Chhawrpial Tlang, lying towards the west of Reiek Tlang, arrived to raid and make war with them. Busy with their celebrations, the Reiek demons were unaware of the great threat posed to them. Seeing this, the demons of Chhawrpial planned to kill them all by crushing them from a great height with the weight of the great protruding rock of Reiek Tlang. With the aid of great wedges, they started to hammer at this great projection and caused cracks to appear. Realizing the
impending doom of the Reiek demons, the demons of Khuangkhai Tlang, though aware of their inability to join the actual war due to their small number, revealed to the Reiek demons the conspiracy of the Chhawrpial demons to destroy them and take as slaves any who remained alive.

On being thus informed, the demons of Reiek left their Chawngchen celebration and immediately transformed themselves into sialsir or falcons, flying out in great numbers. Thus began the great battle that took place in the air high above the ‘Tlawng nuar’. Blood and feathers scattered and flew about as they battled on as birds high up in the air, and many plummeted to earth without heads, and some without their wings. The fierce battle ended with the defeat of the aggressors and it is said that those who finally managed to return to Chhawrpial Tlang were very few in number.

This great battle caused many lives to be lost and their blood darkened the waters of the ‘Tlawng nuar’ below. Though victory was theirs, their happiness was marred by the death of the demon queen’s beautiful daughter Ngaitei, who died in the battle. The queen went into deep mourning for her daughter and would watch the sunset sitting upon the great rock projection at the peak of Reiek Tlang, her thoughts filled with nostalgia and sad memories. It is said that the edge of the rock projection bears the dented imprint of her bottom as well as that of the cotton yarn balls that she wound while sitting on the edge for long hours. Besides this, one can also see the fissures and cracks on the great rock caused by the wedges of the Chhawrpial demons in their efforts to dislodge and roll it down.

It is remarkable that this same demon queen figures in several other Mizo myths, such as the war with the demon spirit Sahmula of the famed Mawmrang Tlang of the north, and another with the demon spirits of Inbuk tlang, now situated in Myanmar.

Endnotes
1 The name of a sacrifice involving a 3-day celebration of feast and dancing given by an individual or a family of high status in the village community, which was the first of a series of sacrifices and feasts to ensure entrance to the Mizo Paradise known as Pialral.