



# The Camera as Witness: A Social History of Mizoram, Northeast India

*Joy L. K. Pachuau, Willem van Schendel*

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The Camera as Witness lifts the veil off the little known world of Mizoram and challenges - through unpublished photographs - core assumptions in the writing of India's national history. The pictures in the book establish the transformation of this society and the many forms of modernity that have emerged in it. It emphasises how 'indigenous people' in Mizoram used cameras to produce distinct modern identities and represent themselves to themselves, consistently contesting outsiders' imaginations of them as isolated, backward and in need of upliftment. The authors demonstrate how mostly amateur photographers used visual images to document a historical trajectory of heady change and continual reinvention, producing distinct modern identities. By virtue of its use of visual sources and its engagement with a wide range of important discourses, this book is relevant for students, historians, social scientists, political activists and general readers looking for a fresh approach to Northeast India.

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