CHAPTER VII

SAGOL-KANGJEI

a) Sagol
b) Kangjei
c) Sagolkangjei
PHOTO PLATE NO. 6

SAGOL (POLO PONY)
SAGOL (Horse/ Pony)

Thangmei Marhanba Nongpok Wauring Atomba
Saren Tang-gam Yada Chikpa
Langoi Moisha Ayangbabu
Langoi Khutmetnaba
Korou Nong Sagol Apsiba
Langoi Ngouba Henba
Sa-Mari Panba
Sumang Wainu Mathakta
Nonglenma Marang Houbada
Langoi Khurup Houbada
Khurup Mapal Houbada
Langoi Khonggul Tadaba Sa
Marjing Langoi Sagoldi
Heingang pat-ta Chaktaba
Ching-U Maqa Sagon-narak-E Haibashi
Sagol Kou-E Haidabara !

The flying Langoi Sagol, which flies in the sky without making marks of the hooves and is a close companion of God Marjing, be called 'Sagol'.

Etymologically, the word Sagol is the corruption of Sagon-naba meaning close companion. Sagol which was a very important animal to the Meiteis as it was associated with the traditional deities of the Meiteis variously known as Samaton Ayangba, Langoi and Moisha usually used in the warfare and also in the traditional game of Sagolkangjei. The

\[\text{1} \quad \text{Khulem Chandra Shekhar (Ed.), 'Umang Lai Khunda' No. 2/3 1980, p.5.}\]
story of the origin of Sagol is given in detail in Owgri, a part of the creation myth of the Meiteis.

In the past, there were plenty of Sagols (Pony) in Manipur where they were kept in wild in the plain and sometimes in the hills. When matured they were caught and tamed for different purposes. There is a belief in Manipur that Sagol was the creation of God Ashiba. God Marjing used it as his vehicle and thus Sagol was an attribute of the God. Further, this beautiful creature was always respected by the Meiteis thinking that though made of flesh and blood it was an abode of many powerful Gods. Its two forelimbs were the abodes of God Lamaba and God Tumaba; its two forelimbs, of God Leisamba and God Tusenba; its mouth of God Khamlanba; its two ears of God Wangbrend; its two eyes of God Atiya Guru; its Trunk of God Yaibiren Pakhangba Taoroinai and its tail of God Thangjing respectively.  

A male Sagol is considered to be a symbol of good luck for a rider because it has no nipple or even the impression of it on the chest by nature. In Manipur Sagol played an important role. Once upon a time Meitei cavalry was very famous in battles and was very helpful in suppressing the uprising of the hill tribes of Manipur. In those days as feuds were very frequent in Manipur every house of the Meiteis used to keep more than one Sagol. It was the most favourite animal.

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of the Meiteis and there was also a dictum, "It would be better to buy a Sagol if my mother was sure to die." Again, an old proverb, "Poor children must learn riding, prince must learn agriculture".

In Manipur, there was a tradition of keeping a Sagol for the king known as YAISHA which was kept at the palace till death. When death a new YAISHA was selected. Similarly, an elephant was also selected and kept as Yaisha in the palace. For the prosperity of the Kingdom, on the advice of the Pandit, Meitei Kings used to celebrate a stallion Sagol of grey colour (Kabrang Ahingba) in the name of God Marjing. The celebration was also performed by an ordinary person if he or she desired to achieve something extra-ordinary. Once Sagol was celebrated it remained stallion forever and was set free. Sometimes young bull was also celebrated in the name of God and allowed to move freely. This was also known as "KAW THASA". Celebration of Sagol was performed not only in the name of God Marjing but also in the name of God Lainingthou Sanamahi (House-hold God). The idea was to keep the pedigree of the Sagol on the increase and also the size of the population of Sagol in Manipur. Among the Kings, King Garibniwaz (1679–1703 A.D.) had exceptionally a strong cavalry of 3000, with it he attacked and plundered Burma (Myanmar) times out of number, and also easily defeated Tekhao (Assam) and Takhel (Tripura). It is recorded in Burmese
chronicle that the Manipur cavalry, "Without stopping, attacked and carried the stockaded positions around the ancient capital of Sangaing, of which he obtained possession". The old door of the eastern entrance to the Kaungmudaw Pagoda still bears the marks made by Garibniwas with the sword as he forced his way to kill the garrison. During the Burmese contact with Manipur, the Burmese monarch enrolled Manipuris into his army in the cavalry corps. When Alaungpaya invaded Sian, he had 500 Manipuri horsemen with him. In the first Anglo-Burmese War in 1824 Bandula had 700 cassay horse to attack against British at Chittagong District. The cavalry of Manipur, better known as the 'Cassay Horse' fought both for and against Manipur in the First Burmese War.

Manipur Sagol, generally below 12.5 hands in height known as polo pony by the British, however, little, the chest of which is very broad, very strong and sure footed. The wild Sagols always remained in the open fields without proper care throughout the seasons. Only the tamed sagols were kept in stables. If their services were not required they were set free as wild and lived in the open fields. Their habitual is the swampy areas near the lakes.

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It is recorded in the Chronicle, 'Cheitharol Kumbaba' that at the time of the King Paikhomba (1666-1697 A.D.) epidemic caused a great loss of Sagol in 1688. Besides, the country had suffered many times from the Burmese invasions after the rule of King Garibniwas alias Pamshaiba (1709-1748 A.D.)

The Burmese carried men, cattles and Sagols with them to Burma. Inspite of it, in Manipur Sagol could not extinct as the Kings of Manipur and his subjects took shelter in other neighbouring areas with their Sagols. The Meitei population survived against all odds in those days. Later, the undying fame of Manipuri Sagol appeared again when the Britishers came to realise the great potentiality of Meitei Sagol in war and in the play of Sagol Mangjei which they had seen with their own eyes. About the Manipur Sagol, Pemberton describes thus, "The ponies of Manseepoor hold a very conspicuous rank in the estimation of the inhabitants of the country to which their peculiarly blood appearance, their hardihood and vigour justly entitle them, they rarely attain a highest exceeding 13 hands, and the average may be considered to fluctuate between 12 and 12½ hands. The country had been repeatedly overrun by the Burmese but they were so numerous, that almost every inhabitant of the country, however humble his rank, possessed two or three. The national game of Hockey, which is played by every male of the country capable of sitting a horse, renders them all expert equestrians.

7 Cheitharol Kumbaba, 1967, p. 43.
and it was by men and horses so trained that the princes of Muneepoor were able for many years not only to repel the aggressions of the Burmese but to scour the whole country east of the Ningthee river, and plant their banners on the banks of the Irrawattee in the heart of the capital of Ava. So deeply are the Burmese impressed with the superiority of the Muneepoorie horse, that up to the present moment, the elite of their cavalry consists of this description of Trooper whom they rarely ventured to meet in the open field. The race of ponies is now, however, nearly extinct, and scarcely more than two hundred could be found in the whole country fit for active service, ...."\(^8\) But, surprisingly, the British merchants did not stop export of Sagols from the Burme that were very similar to Manipuri Sagol or crossed breed or really Burmese Sagol without any proper identification. Moreover, Manipur king could not deny the export of Sagol desired by the British. In this regard, Brown suggests that, 'measures should be adopted, for preserving and improving the race of small hardy ponies indigenous to the country, and this it has been before shown could be effected by simply sending a few undersized stall mares Muneepoor, where they could be kept as brood mares, without any expence to the Government, and of which, after they had become sufficiently numerous, a certain proportion of the produce would fine ready purchasers among the

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wealthy zamindars of the Sylhet District, who within the last two or three years have given high prices for the few Burmese ponies which have been imported into Sylhet through Rungepoor from eastern bank of Ningthoe river. It was not successful as McCulloch has commented, "attempts have been made to improve the breed of horses by crossing them with undersized mares from the Hon'ble Company's stud. But the produce turned out bad, and the climate proved so ill-suited to large horse, that all the mares died in a few years."  

Manipur also could not remain satisfied with the small Sagol but was attracted by the beauty of Arabian horse. It was first brought in Manipur in 1671 from Burma. In 1719 an Arabian horse or Mangal Sha was brought from Burma and demanded 10 (ten) Manipuri Sagols as the price of the former. In 1839 Government (British) at the request of the Narsingh, the then Regent, sent one Arab stallion and eight mares, apparently stud-bred, to Munnipore. In a few years, however, they and their progeny all died.

However, the British did not stop their trade in Manipur and Burma. It was remarked that in 1858 the Manipur

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10 W. McCulloch, "Accounts of Manipur Valley of Hills Tribes", p. 29.  
11 Yumjao Singh, "Manipur Itihas", p. 43  
12 R. Brown, op. cit., p. 17.
king, Chandrakriti asked to bring all the Sagols of this country and among them 100 Sagols were selected. They were carried away by the British with 300 buffaloes.\textsuperscript{13} To their usual routine of trade, takes levied on goods exported from Manipur to Cachar which R. Brown appended in his 'Annual Report of the Mannipore Political Agency for 1868-69(July 1868 to June 1869).

**Exports from Manipur to Cachar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Taxed levied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloths</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarns</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannipore buffalos</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burmah ditto</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto ponies</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To improve Manipur Sagol R. Brown gave suggestion that 'Cabul horses would thrive, as the breed is the one that stands all climate in India probably the best. Arabs, as a rule, don't thrive in the climates of Assam or Eastern Bengal which Mannipore resembles.\textsuperscript{15}

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\textsuperscript{13} Chetharol Kumbaza, 1967, p.338.  
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
When the king Chandrakriti one day found his Sagols in stable were thin, he sent all sarungbas to the stable as punishment in 1854. On one occasion he also helped the British by sending his men led by Khumbong Major to Burma for purchasing Sagol and brought 30 Sagols from there. During his reign, the number of Sagol considerably increased in Manipur and some of them were sent out as Sagol Kangjei became very popular in Manipur valley and also outside Manipur in neighbouring regions.

The mode of collecting beautiful Sagols during the rule of Chandrakriti (1850-1886 A.D.) by the local village owners was criticized afterwards by R. Brown, the then political Agent, who considered it as one of the major factor for degeneration of Manipur Sagol breed. In the later period when the Britishers became acquainted with Manipuri game of Sagol Kangjei (Solo), the demand for Manipuri Sagol and its export outside Manipur became so heavy that the then Political Agent of Manipur, James Johnstone (1877-1886 A.D.) imposed a ban on its export.

Besides, the king had Sagol-lammi or Cavalry Corp. under the leadership of Sagolhanjaba, an Officer-in-charge

17 Ibid.
of cavalry. The post was mainly given to an able bodied man or King's brothers from time to time. Pucessana, cousin brother of Tikendrajit, a famous Kangjeirol held this post. Bagolmakok was also another post of cavalry under the Sagol-hanjaba.

When Manipur became a dependent state of the British after the Anglo-Manipur War 1891, King Churachand (1891-1941 A.D.) processed the nature of maintaining Sagol and Sagolkangjei. The King also selected beautiful Sagols for Sagolkangjei from Ekop-pat, a grazing ground in the south of the valley. During his reign, King of Takhel (Tripura) visited Manipur in 1926. He witnessed Sagol Kangjei with a great pleasure. In their friendly exchange of gifts, Manipur king presented him Hidakphu-Sanayomba-Thambalsaba, Shirangji, Senthak Senga including a beautiful black Sagol named Sagol Ningthou Tonjao Karu etc. In return, the King of Takhel presented him an elephant, later called Takhel-sha. 18

The King Churachand performed Sagol Lamjel i.e. Sagol race that was held once upon the time of the King Kiyamba in 1134 A.D. The king witnessed a betting of 1000 rupees for Sagol Lamjel at Sangaiprou, 3 kilometres from

18 This information is given by Leishangthem Tampha, a Veteran Kangjeirol.
the palace between the son of Ningthoujamba Naharup Lakpa and Gopalmacha, son of Sougaijamba Major where the latter won in 1311 A.D. It was staged again at Sangaiprou between Sougaijamba Gopalmacha and Khabam Lakpa for 1000 rupees in which the former won the race but he was penalised as he had hit at the face of the Sagol of Khabam Lakpa while running and the latter was declared winner by decision in 1912.

The king himself enjoyed with the British Officers by performing equestrian events such as picking up flag from the ground which he picked up three times, and the Saheb (the British) performed the skill of removing his saddle while riding the Sagol with considerable speed.

The kings of Manipur had distinction of receiving presentation from the British officers. In 1847, the British presented a beautiful black Sagol with one charriot and the king Narsingh gave his elephant Yaisha Tompok in return.

The early culture prevailing for appointing Yaisha of Sagol and Samu (horse and elephant) continued which is proved by record which says that "Kartit Thaja, a new Sagol Yaisha was appointed after the death of former Yaisha in 1848". Remarkably, Samjok King also presented 5 Sagols to the king.

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21 Ibid, p. 560.
Chandrakriti in 1851. For consolidated power, in the same year, the king celebrated a Sagol to the God Sanamahi.

The king of Manipur maintained his stable i.e. Sagolsang in the palace under special care. T.C. Hudson remarks, "The Sagolsang take charge of the horses, but when a horse or pony in their charge falls ill, the animal is in the charge of the Wangmanai class, who belong to either to the Khumanthem, meaning those who soothe the Khuman or the Sagonsem (groom) Sagel. The Nayang Sajik department supervises the supplies of fodder and grass for the elephant and ponies." There were some grades attached to the group i.e. Sarunghanba, Sarungnaha and Sarungba. Sunday was the favourite day of Sagol Lamjel or Horse race. Samu Lamjel i.e. Elephant race was once held at Konung Lampak where Cheiraoobi won and then followed Sagol Lamjel on the same day in 1929. The love and affection of the King for Sagol(horse) and Samu (elephant) was so great that when they died, rites were performed in the same way as it was done in the death of a man. In 1931, on the death of Sagol Yaisha the King's Horse, Sagolesamba Nekho of Sagolband was asked for the religious duty of Gira Thangba (one who observes religious vows for the deceased) after death. But in his absence one of his relatives

27 L. Ibungohal and N. Khelchandra, op. cit., p. 603.
called Tompishak was summoned for the same. It is relevant to mention that the Manipuri Sagols were also used for ploughing when there was epidemic which caused death of cows and buffaloes in 1932.

During Second World War in the year 1942, Manipur was also a battlefield of the Japanese and allied forces. In the battle a large number of Manipuri ponies were killed. It was also regretted by M. Bhattacharya that 'Manipur at one time had a famous breed of polo ponies. Unfortunately on account of incriminate export the breed is now extinct'. In addition, epidemics like sara, black quarter anthrax and rinder pest reduced its population. The break up of the livestock population in Manipur was given in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Livestock</th>
<th>1946-47</th>
<th>1956-57</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>144,053</td>
<td>267,722</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffaloes</td>
<td>16,808</td>
<td>52,195</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total bovines</td>
<td>160,861</td>
<td>319,917</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1,578</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
<td>5,197</td>
<td>12,621</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse &amp; Ponies</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>213</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mules</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donkeys</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>34,412</td>
<td>82,398</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25,961</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>201,320</td>
<td>442,688</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 Ibid, p. 608.
31 Ibid, p. 222.
Moreover, the British army before going back from Manipur after the Second World War, killed all the horses that they used in the war at Khudeiband Lampak, Uripok Kangchup Road. Only a few more survived on the request of local Manipuris. Notable among them were Angom Ningthou Mangsataba of Uripok and R.K. Wangonsana of Sagolband. Later on, two black Sagols known as Karu Machin Manao were born to a mare of Angom Ningthou and became very famous for Sagol Lamjal i.e. horse race not only in Manipur but also in Shillong Race Court. And a mare that belonged to R.K. Wangonsana had given birth to many high breeds mainly mixed colour of red and white. Their progeny still exists. Horse Race or Sagol Lamjal for both Manipuri Sagol and Attarwala (big horse) were held. In 1944, Sagol Lamjal exclusively of the Manipuri Sagols four times and two times for Attarwala at Konung Lampak were held. During the Second World War military horses of Austro-whaler breed were brought in Manipur by the British Army. After the war, a few were left behind to which intermingled with the local ponies. However, their number was so small that they could hardly affect any genetic change to the indigenous ponies. The local people still call any big horse as Attarwala, a corruption of the word, Austro-whaler.

32 This information is given by Smt.N. Maipakpi Devi, wife of late M. Angom Ningthou.
For the development of Manipur Sagol, the All Manipur Polo Committee began to conduct both Sunday Sagol Lamjel and Sagol Kangjei at Konung Lampak, Imphal, as it was decided in the Durbar under the initiative of the King Bishnachandra (1941-1955 A.D.). Punchai Members and Cheirap Members also played Sagol Kangjei regularly. Even Comrade Hjajam Irabot, a well-known revolutionary leader also played Sagol Kangjei as a Punchai member before he went underground. Such initiative helped in the increase of the number of beautiful Sagols in Manipur valley. The All Manipur Polo Club which was established in 1956 also played an important role in revival of Sagol Kangjei in Manipur. The club had its own pony breeding farm, covering an area of 3 acres, at Kroisemba, Uripok Kangchup Road, where most of the Kangjei Sagols (Polo ponies) were maintained under the strict supervision of stable-in-charge. Some of the famous Kangjei Sagols were Kwaklei, Number one, Senbangpaibi, Natrang Angaoba, Khagok and Thagong Arangbi and Koroi etc.

However, measures had been taken by the Department of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry, Services, Manipur not only to protect the animals against the dreaded diseases but also to improve the quality of breed of Manipur Sagol. In 1975, the

35 This information is given by Maharaj Kumar Priyobrata Singh.
Department had brought two stallions, one was bay another was grey in colour from Calcutta. However, it was of little avail. In March 1986, another attempt was made by Manipur Horse Riding and Polo Institute in the same line of thinking. This Institute had brought a thorough bred stallion, Royal Mantle. But, it could not produce the desired result. According to the census report, the Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Services Department of the year 1990, the number of Sagol was only 800. Under a scheme of North Eastern Council (NEC), the Department started the preservation of local breed of Sagol at Thingkai Khumou, Chandel District as an experiment on the hill slopes covering about two hundred acres of land. It was also not successful.

Now-a-days local clubs and individuals are also working voluntarily to improve the breed of Manipuri Sagol and preserve it from extinction as the efficiency of which in Sagol Kangjei was admired by the European teams participated in the recent International Invitation Polo Tournaments held at Imphal Polo ground. The state department of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Services also had its own contribution in saving the Manipuri breed in the state from the possible extinction.

Some physical characteristics of Manipuri Pony:

36 N. Tomoi Singh, 'The Polo and the graceful Ponies', 1990 - an article from the Souvenir of 1st Governor's Cup Invitation Polo Tournament, 1990.
Body measurement: The height of Manipuri pony is within the range of 11 to 13 hands and average is 11 hands. The body length and girth are between 47 to 57 inches and 52 to 62 inches respectively.

Colour: Variable bay of different shades is more common.

Ears: Small, pointed and pricked. The notch at the tip of the air is moderate.

Eyes: Alert and slightly slant.

Nostril: The area of the upper naizzle between the nostril is rather flat and free from deep crisp (not cripsy).

Withers: Not too prominent.

Skin: Thick and rough hairs.

Face: Both convex and concave types are found. It is the presence of concave type which led the earlier British writers to conclude that there is an influence of Arabian blood in this breed.

Tail: Highly set.

Mane: Coarse and upright up to the maximum length of one and half full.

General: Body is thickly set with strong limbs and quarters. Clean legs and looked intelligent.
Character: extremely tough, spirited and capable of extreme endurance. They are sure footed.

The colour of the Sagol determined its character and pedigrees. White coloured Sagol meant for the kings of Manipur and grey coloured for the Yaisha. It is recorded, 'King Khagamba (1597-1652 A.D.) fought on his white sagol against Sanjok in 1614. King Churachand (1891-1941 A.D.) celebrated a white sagol in the name of god Merjing when God Merjing haraoba was performed in 1923 at Heingang. In 1952 one of the favourite white Kangjeisagol (Hora) of King Churachand died and a favourite white Kangjei sagol (Hora) of the King Noshchandra (1941-1955 A.D.) expired in 1953. In Manipur there are Sagol of numerous colours as follows:

Main colours:

1. Angouba (white)
2. Thoubom
3. Hora
4. Leiphol (whitish)
5. Hora Peichak
6. Hora Soingou

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37 This information is given by Leisangthem Tamphe Singh, a veteran Kangjeiroy.
40 Ibid, p. 668.
41 Ibid, p. 673.
2. Kabrang (Grey)  
   1. Kabrang  
   2. Kabrang Ahingba

3. Angangba (Gray)  
   1. Mange – a) Pumman  
      b) Tukhooi  
   2. Mange Mapram  
   3. Mange Maru  
   4. Kori (trick)  
   5. Kori Aghangoa  
   6. Kori Leimu  
   7. Natrang (reddish brown)  
   8. Natrang Soingou  
   9. Kona Mapram  
   10. Kona Seiphol  
   11. Kona Leihao

4. Tishibi (monkeyish)  
   1. Khongdrei – a) Pumman (Flat)  
      b) Tukhooi (Curly)

5. Senabi and Ngourunaba (White & Grey)  
   1. Senabi (White) – a) Pumman  
      b) Tukhooi  
   2. Senabi Amuba  
   3. Senabi Heigoi  
   4. Senabi Tumou

6. Amuba (Black)  
   1. Karu – a) Pumman  
      b) Tukhooi  
   2. Karu Maichak  
   3. Karu Awaoba

7. Arangba (Roam)  
   1. Mange Arangba  
   2. Mange Khongdang  
   3. Kori Arangba  
   4. Mange Khagok  
   5. Kori Khongdang  
   6. Kori Khagok  
   7. Natrang Khagok  
   8. Kori Leimu Khagok  
   9. Karu Khagok
10. Thagong
11. Thagong Arangba
12. Kwaklei Arangba
13. Kona Arangba
14. Karu Arangba
15. Leimu Arangba
16. Uthum Harum or Chhendrang Harum.

Actually these colours are mainly three white, red and black. The Meiteis are very orthodox in the selection of Sagol for Sagolkangjei as the colours of the Sagol and marks on it had its own significance as follows: \(^{42}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour of the Sagols</th>
<th>Its significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Riding a Senabi Heigoi</td>
<td>- meant for the king or the prince. It causes suffer from Leprosy to the ordinary man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. White mark on the face of a grey</td>
<td>- dangerous in riding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Crossed white mark on two feet i.e. one left fore-limb and one right hindlimb</td>
<td>- sudden fall from the mount.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Having chukker on the face below the level of the eyes</td>
<td>- gives unsuccessful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{42}\) This information is given by Shri Thiyam Chaoyaime Singh.
6. An apparent line mark at the middle of the trunk.

7. Having combed hair mark around one of the hind limbs.

8. Entering white colour mark slightly or fully inside the nostril.

9. A chukker just on the throat – a victim of wild animal or buffaloe.

The sagol is sure to die if a dove sits on its back. However, Kangjeiroy having white mark on the head of his grey colour Sagol has many good shows in Sagolkangjei.

As stated above, the wild Sagols were tamed to suit the player's play styles. In taming the wild sagols different methods were used. 43

FIRST METHOD:

The wild sagol was caught and tethered with a hard rope in the field in a radius of about 15 metres. Then the tamer forced the sagol to run around in clockwise or anti-clockwise direction till it was completely exhausted and fell down. Then the sagol was put under bridle and rein. When the horse stood up after a little recovery from the exhaustion, the tamer carefully got on to it. The sagol was led by a

43 This information is given by Shri Thiyam Chaoyaima Singh.
person in the circle. This was done repeatedly so long the sagol was completely under their control. This method is now given up.

SECOND METHOD:

The wild sagol was brought near a pool or on the bank of a river and forced it into the water. In the water the tamer made attempt to sit on its back. In the struggle the sagol was exhausted. After a careful observation of the state of exhaustion, the tamer on its back on the bank and made it walk around in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions. In the struggle in the water, every care was taken in order to avoid water going in its ears.

THIRD METHOD:

In this method, the wild sagol was just caught and physically challenged and controlled using some kind of techniques. This method was not uncommon as it was an effective means to tame a sagol in a short length of time. Sometimes, the sagol, it was not used to carry anything on its back, refused to move and overturned. When the sagol was manageable it was trained for the purpose.

FOURTH METHOD:

The wild sagol was kept at a stable. While the sagol was in the stable, the tamer applied such techniques as touching
and grooming on its body taking out of the stable for a walk together, putting of saddle on its back, putting of reins and bridle in its mouth and putting of weights on its back etc. in order to make it familiar with him. Though the method took a long time it was considered most suitable and systematic.

The wild sagols or horses are naturally very agile. It might have been because of this reason that most of the sagols in Manipur were kept wild and when they were grown up and physically fit, they were tamed using different methods as stated above and trained for the game of Sagolkangjei (Polo) or for any other purposes. In the process of bringing the sagol to a desired standard of efficiency in Sagolkangjei, the sagol was made familiar with certain movements, such as Sega-Yeppe (making contact closely with right armpit of the trainer as the sagol was 11 to 13 hands height), Lick-chatpa (walking with sagol putting under the condition of Sega-yeppe or Sega-chatpa), Yumjen or Huikhongjen (trotting like dog's running when the trainer was on the sagol), Kalsi-macha (a little speed having wide steps of sagol), Khurup-macha (a canter), Khurup-schouba (galloping) and Chunkham (stopping without turning when required or sudden stop).

Later, Kor-Leiba i.e. to run around the circle, Kishi Ani i.e. riding in the form of two knots in clockwise and
anticlockwise with moderate speed and then a little faster. 
Kishi Aham i.e. riding in the form of three knots and finally 
Lairen-Mathok, snake like movements with a speed and Chumkham 
i.e. sudden stop without making its head left or right turn.

The sagol which was not trained properly with these 
movements was not called Kangjei sagol or polo pony. Kwak-
Mangjong, jumping like a crow was a typical style of the Mani-
puri in riding a sagol.

For male sagol, castration was very essential. Normal 
male Sagols seldom obeyed the command because of its weakness 
for female Sagol and could not play properly as they were 
handicapped with its thick neck. Therefore, as soon as the 
male sagols which were kept for the game were matured, their 
testicles were removed with the traditional method. It is said 
that Yarpi Matung Chahi Aham meaning three years after the full 
growth of its teeth, was the strongest period in the life of 
a sagol. Castration was done before or during the training. 
The traditional method used by the Meiteis was very dangerous 
and unhygienic as it was done with a sharp dao or knife, a niddle 
and threat, at home or at the field itself.

Pregnant female sagols were also used for Sagolkangjei 
if they were good in the game. As it was recorded that a
pregnant sagol gave birth to a colt at the stable just after having played the game of Sagolkangjei.

Thus, the role of sagol in sagolkangjei was very important as the game depended upon its efficiency. It was because of the efficiency of the Meitei sagol that they were popularly known as POLO PONY or Kangjei Sagol all over the world.
Fig. 5(a)  
KANGDRUM  
(Polo Ball)

Fig. 5(b)  
KANGJEI KANGHOO  
(Traditional Mallet)

Fig. 5(c)  
SARAK SAJEI  
(Traditional Whip)
Kangjei Kanghoo is a stick designed in a particular shape to hit the Kangdrum or the ball conveniently in the game of Sagolkangjei or Polo. This stick is fixed into a hollowed wooden piece of about 18 cubic inches in an acute angle. In fixing the shaft a kind of indigenous nail known as 'Hui' made of bamboo rib is used. The actual Kanghoo is a seasoned cane-stick (dark red in colour) and the wooden piece is of an oak tree dried not in the sunlight. The oak tree was substituted by another hard woods namely Nageswor (Masua ferrea), Nanap (Cynometra), Heibi (Mayna Spinosa Roxb) and Nobab (Cytrus Buchy), etc. but in exceptional cases. In case of shaft cane-stick, there was no substitution. Generally, cane grown in the valley areas are stronger than that of the hills. However, can of the Langol hills on the western fringe of the valley was a peculiar one. Among the cane varieties*, Leeren lee is the best for making Kanghoo. The length of the Kanghoo was between 46 inches to 52 inches (1.17 to 1.32 mts.) but depended upon the individual and also upon the height of the sagol. A player used to carry more than one Kanghoo when

*Cane Varieties: In Manipur, varieties of cane are available even today. These canes in the valley areas are now rare but plenty in the hills. They can be classified Leeren lee, Leeyai, Leephop (Leethit), Yairimacha and Yairi-shouba etc.
he went to play. While handling the kanghoo a player used
to hold by leaving the rear part of the shaft at about 6
inches to 12 inches which could be extended or shortened
the mallet according to the range of the ball or kangdrum.

In a kanghoo which was especially made for an
offering to god or goddess on the occasion of Lai-haraoba*
or Lai-chaklon-katpa*, a traditional ritual of Meiteis Hui
or the indigenous nail was not used. Even the oldest royal
clan i.e. Ningthouja Ariba*, Kanghoojam; a decadent of the
king Kangba continue to practise the offering of kanghoo to
their ancestral deities. The offering of Kangjei-kanghoo
symbolises union of the two, male and female deities. The
shaft cane denotes the male deity and the piece of wood, the
female deity. It was an expression of the fertility cult.1
There is also belief among the Meiteis that the hockey stick
or kangjei kanghoo protect them from the evil spirits, from
the various diseases and bestows child on the childless couple.

*Lai Haraoba: A worshipping ceremony to the gods and goddesses
or deities by the Meiteis of a particular clan.
*Lai-Chaklon-Katpa: An offering ceremony to the gods and
goddesses or deities by the Meiteis of a particular clan.
*Ningthouja Ariba: The oldest clan of the royal blood of
the Meiteis.

1 T. Bokul Singh, 'Manipur-Muslim Kouba Lairikki Maramda'
Here it may be mentioned that from the Moirang Kangleiron, an ancient text, tells the story of Henjunaha*, who protested himself from the attack of 61 Sarois (evil spirits) with the help of Kanghoo which had already been offered to their ancestral deities, where he came out of his house to meet his girl-friend, Lairoulembi on Saturday night of Lamda (Feb/March).

KANGDRUM (POLOBALL)

Kangdrum or ball in the game of Sagolkangjei was made of bamboo roots anywhere in Manipur. The particular bamboo root known as 'Utang-Wa' is the best for Kangdrum. Kangdrum made of the root of Kewa (Açava americana L.) was also used as

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*Henjunaha: According to the story in the Moirang Kangleiron, Henjunaha was a handsome young boy had a girl-friend called Lairoulembi. On their previous meeting he promised her that he would come to meet her at night on the next day. But it was on Saturday of which 61 Sarois (evil spirits) were given their food for the year and any human life was restricted to come out at the same night on that day because he or she was sure to kill by them for their food. But when Henjunaha came to understand the dangerous night for him to meet his beloved Lairoulembi, he could not remain at home. He pick up a celebrated Kanghoo and came out to meet her. All 61 Sarois having seen the coming out of Henjunaha distinguished themselves as human beings and assembled in a dinner party at a field where he was cordially invited to enjoy the dinner with them. Henjunaha was reluctant but stayed for a while. He was offered some food to eat by them. Surprisingly, when he took up his food, he found a finger of human being that proved all the gatherings were not human beings but 61 Sarois. He soon came out by running for escape. They also followed after him. While running, by his celebrated Kanghoo moving around his body he was defended himself from the attacks of the Sarois and no Saroi could touch him. Accidentally, when he was near the gate of his beloved Lairoulembi his celebrated Kanghoo had slept away from his hand and resulting him a victim at that moment. Before he could enter into the gate he was caught by them and killed on the spot.
a substitute to bamboo football. Like Kanghoo, Kangdrum also
was made locally and painted white with lime. Only the dried
Kangdrum or ball was allowed in the game. The diameter of the
Kangdrum was about 3½ inches having 14 inches circumstances
and its weight not exceeding 130 grams. The kings of Manipur
who were aware of Sagolkangjei maintained properly their ne-
cessities. It can be quoted from the Chronicle, Cheitharol
Kumbaba during the reign of King Chandrakriti that on the
occasion there was a crisis about the supply of Kangdrum for
Sagolkangjei, the king outcasted 4 Selungbas (nobles) as pu-
nishment in 1858 A.D.²

GENERAL RULES:

1. Kangjeibung (Playfield):

A standard Kangjeibung was a rectangular field of 210
yards and 100 yards in breadth. But the game was also
played in a field of a little lesser size or larger
field.

2. Kangjeiroy:

He was a well trained player of the game of Sagolkangjei
or Polo. The player could ride any size of sagol.

² L. Ibungohal and N. Khelchandra, 'Cheitharol Kumbaba',
1967, p.324.
3. Fopham (Positional play):

A team consists of seven players. Their positions are defined as follows:

1) Pan-Ngakpa
2) Pan-Ngakchang
3) Pallak
4) Langjei
5) Pallak
6) Panjen-Chang
7) Panjenba

When the play was about to start, the players of the teams assembled in the centre of the playfield in such a way that the team which was about to hit towards south direction stood in a row with their faces towards the east and that of the other team towards the west opposite to each other as shown in the figure 6. Before the start of the play they marched together towards the west near the starter. The senior team which was recognised by the state between the playing two teams or senior players on the side of the team were always on the south in the row.³

Fig. 7.
POSITIONS OF THE SAGOLKANGJIE PLAYERS
According to the positions the players were given different roles in the play. Pan-Ngakpa i.e. full back went down the goal line. Pan-Ngakchang i.e. half back was positioned above the Pan-Ngakpa. Both Pallak were in pivot positions near the left and right sides of the side lines. Langjei, centre player remained at the centre. Panchen-Chang followed Panjenba who a forward player in Sagolkangjei, Panjen-Chang and Langjei and Pallak used to follow Panjenba to make up the stroke in the attempt to make up the stroke in the attempt to make a score. There was no off-side.

WAYENBA(s)(JUDGE(s)):

Judges were selected by the Kangbural, the head of tournament committee which consisted of Hantre Hunba Ama (one starter), Matai-Yangba Ani (two line judges), Panjal Paba Ani (two goal judges), Panjal Eba Ama (one scorer) and Moibung Khongba Ama (one buglar). It was the duty of the Kangbural to control the entire game.

Hantre Hunba i.e. starter was well dressed with white dhoti, white shirt and with a big turban called Pa-khangba Tollok. Sometimes he put on king's gift clothes like Khamenchappa dhoti and wide turban etc. His duty was to start, re-start and stop the game. The Huntre-Hunba with the permission of the Kangbural threw the ball for the start with a respect to the king, the Queens and nobles if they were present.
In a special match, Hantre-Humba offered the ball
to the King or the Chief Guest to throw it into the field
for the start of the match saying loudly 'Huntre' i.e. start.
Matay-Yembba-Ani, the two line judges sometimes acted as
Huntre-Humba throwing the ball in the field from the side
lines. They also put on clean white clothes like Huntre-Humba.
Panjal Paba Ani i.e. two goal judges counted the number of
Panjal or goal scored. Both of them were positioned at two
ends of goal lines. They were also required to dress like
Huntre-Humba.

Panjal Eba who kept the record of the goals scored by both
teams and announced the total number of goals during the
periods of Pal-Omha i.e. change of ends during half time and
at the end of the game. His dress was plain dhoti and shirt.

Moibung Khongba sounded his conch according to the indica-
tions made by the Kangbural, Huntre-Humba, Panjal Eba and
Goal Judges. Care should be taken to avoid any misunder-
standing among the judges. At the start of the play, every
goal scored, stoppage during the half time, at the ends of
half time and at the close of the game the Moibung Khongba
blew his conch in a long tune to make the sound hear by
everybody. He also wore a white uniform.

In the preparation of the Kangjeibung particularly
Imphal Pologround the king engaged the prisoners in level-
ing the ground, cutting grass and collecting the Kangdrum
or ball in the play.4

SAGOL SAGOT-ASURA (HORSE’S EQUIPMENTS):

A Sagol was required to equip with a Meitei Saban
(Manipuri saddle), a traditional saddle and Meitei Samai
Yachen i.e. a traditional rein. Meitei Saban was light but it
looked too big for small sagol as it consisted of 1. Ukang
made of four pieces of wood (Oak, Hebi, Kureo and Nageswor)
joined by means of cane thread and covered with row hide
where a number of Hui i.e. nails made of bamboo ribs were
fixed to make it tight; 2) Two Nakthang i.e. tempered leather
flaps made of buffaloe or Mithun hide tightened with strap
in both sides; 3) Laiyum i.e. a decorated piece of soft
leather or cotton fastened with lace tightly at the Sarum
Ukang i.e. a thick pad in between the back of the Sagol and
saddle; 5. Two Likaps i.e. stirrups suspended underneath on
both sides of flaps where Khongnets i.e. stirrup irons were
fixed, having narrow holes so that it could not insert the
full length of the feet except the toes; 6. Meiri i.e. fas-
tening cotton or woollen rope around the tail of the Sagol
to make the saddle tight and it prevented upward lift and

4 This information is given by Shri Sanjam Mani Singh,
vetran Kangjeiruoy.
Fig. 8(a)
MEITEI SABAL
(Traditional Meitei Saddle)

Fig. 8(b)
MEITEI SAMAI YACHAN
(Traditional Meitei rein)
forward slip to which some little woollen or cotton balls (Laloo) were attached, the purpose of which was to excite the Sagol and to give some scanty protection from the blows and 7 Fuklee i.e. girth made of wool or cotton passing through Sanamkhang i.e. guard pad below the wooden part but just contact with the body of the back of sagol so that it never run backward or forward when tightened the saddle. The weight of the Meitei Saban was about 12 to 12.5 Kgs. The colour of Ukang (wooden part) and Nakthang (leather flaps) were enamelled permanent black Khe made from Khe,00*, a tree where Meiri (tail portion) was red but its balls (Laloo) were white. The Nakthangs were tempered by the hot ash of burned paddy-skin. The Layum i.e. upper portion for sitting had a lining of a mixed colour threat of white and black called Kum-Chatpa.

Meitei Samai Yachan consisted of rein made of Faya Thouri i.e. rope made of bamboo strips which was covered with cotton threat or silk. It fastened the iron rings at either ends of the bit. The length of the common rein was about 8 feet and 2 to 2.2 inches diameter finishing it with two big balls at both ends. Only a common bit called Thounam Maru or Chonam Maru (snaffle bit) i.e. having two big balls at both ends like garlic or seed of Thounam plant (a typical plant) which were joined in the middle was commonly used.

* Khe,00 i.e. the celebrated thetsee or Varnish tree is found in profusion in every part of the Kabaw valley in Jurma (Myanmar).
The headstall carried a framework called Samai to protect the blows. A leaf like hard hide covered by the soft wool or cotton was on the forehead extending small branches on both sides and above the head where nine wool or cotton balls were attached. The colour of rein and headstall were red and also a lining of a mixed colour threat of white and black known as Kumchatpa described above. It was designed with decoration for protection of the head of the Sagol. Decorated saddles with gold or silver were used by the kings and the princes of Manipur.

COSTUME OF KANGJEIROY (PLAYER’S EQUIPMENT):

For Sagolkangjei a player should fulfill all the necessary equipments especially for safety measures as well as performing the art of the game. The riding costume for the game were viz. 1. Scanty dhoti wearing above the knees, 2. Phurrit Saikakpa i.e. a short sleeved jacket (velvet or cotton), 3. Koyet Angouba i.e. white turban which was tucked up by a Khadangchet i.e. a rolled up piece of cloth binding around the face from head to chin with a knot under the jaws; 4. Khongym i.e. a thick wool or cotton guards covering from the lower calves upto above the knees tightened with a sharp or lace and 5. Khong-Ningkhang i.e. a piece of leather or
**Fig. 9(a)**
KOYET-KHADANGCHET
(Turban with Chin belt)

**Fig. 9(b)**
KHONG-XOM
(Chin guard)

**Fig. 9(c)**
PHURIT SAIKAKPA
(Scanty Shirt)

**Fig. 9(d)**
KHUNINGKHANG
(Heel Guard)

**Fig. 9(e)**
PHEIJOM AKOUBA
(Scanty Photi)
cloth held by straps. For play a Kangjeirouy should carry Kanghoo i.e. mallet in his hand and a Sharak*.  

SANABAGI MATAM(DURATION OF PLAY):  
There was no definite period of time for Sagolkangjei. Duration of the play depended on the sagols. However, the game was normally played for about two hours.  

SAGOL SINBA(CHANGE OF SAGOL):  
During play any Sagol could be replaced. A player could play more than one sagol if he had extra. But transfer of Sagol from one team to another team was strictly prohibited.  

MHOOT HAPPA(SUBSTITUTION OF PLAYER):  
One or two more players could be substituted during the play when any player was injured or unable to play.  

*Sharak(Sha = Sagol, rak = to control) is different from the common stick or whip but an unique and particularly designed for controlling the sagol whipping on its thigh but severely on its soft part of the body, if necessary. There are two types of Sharak, one small for sagolkangjei and another big, heavy and long for taming Sagol, but a medium size is commonly used. The common Sharak had five small branches of thicked hide at the top at least 10 to 14 inches in length. The total length of the sharak is 25 to 26 inches weighing about 150 gms. Whipping is done suddenly before and after sagol is on the run. While whipping left hand is raised with the sharak upto the shoulder level and whipped directly on the thigh or soft part of the body of the sagol according to the desired speed.
MATKET KHANBA (CHOOSING OF SIDE):

It was customary and traditional to choose the southern side by the elders or senior team known as Phamenda Leiba i.e. by virtue of their elderly position.

LANTHOKPA (OUTSIDE BALL):

When the Kangdrum or ball went outside the sidelines which was known as Lanthokpa. The ball would be thrown in by the side judge or line judge in a height according to his liking.

PANJAL CHANBA (SCORING OF GOAL):

When the ball or Kangdrum passed or crossed the goal line it was declared as a Panjal or scoring a goal.

After a clear panjal or a score the play would be resumed with the throwing of the ball up by the Mantre Sunba at the centre of the ground. Players of the both teams should gallop immediately at the centre so as to enable them to carry the ball with their hands or the sticks.

WINNING OF THE GAME:

Scoring a panjal i.e. a goal only in a match was not regarded as a winner. According to the old tradition there
were three ways of winning the game viz. Scoring of first seven goals, number of goals to be scored announced before the play and number of goals conceded before the play.

In the first method a team which could score first seven goals would be declared as a winner. Fan-onba i.e. change of ends would take place only when either of the team scored four goals first. If any of them could score seven goals complete by either of the team, the game would be postponed till the next day.\footnote{M.I. Singh, op.cit., p.6.}

In the second, the number of goals to be scored fixed before the start of the play. The team which scored the required number of goals first was declared as a winner.

In the third, a team which considered itself to be superior conceded some goals before start of the game in favour of its opponent with the hope of scoring more goals in addition to the conceded goals.

\textbf{For twenty goals match}

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Manipur Maharaja} & \textbf{Vs} \textbf{Saheb (British)} \\
\hline
\hline
\text{III} & \text{III} \\
\hline
\text{X} & \text{V} \\
\hline
\text{VIII} = 15 & \text{III} = 5 \text{ Total: 20 goals} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
For ten goals forecast match

Fig. 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ahanlon (Senior)</th>
<th>Vs</th>
<th>Naharol (Junior)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>II</td>
<td>IIII</td>
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<tr>
<td>. . .</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>IIIIII = 10 goals</td>
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<td>. . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>. . .</td>
<td></td>
<td>IIIIII = 15 Total: 37 goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scoring system was employed in the manner of ethnic Meiteis' counting system Cheichat i.e. counting by means of small sticks.

FOULS:

Any dangerous actions, such as striking hard on the opponent's Kanghoo or directly on the hand, riding across in a closed distance, pushing opponent's sagol by one's mallet, using abusive languages, hitting on the face of the opponent's sagol either with the mallet or the sharak etc. sometimes committed by a player was known as Thakshi-Khashi-Leitaba, were described as acts of indiscipline. Only the Kangbural had the authority to exclude such indisciplined Kangjeiro from the play. However, the King was the over all authority. The Hantre Hunba also could make a cordial request to the Kangbural to remove the Kangjeiro or his sagol if they looked dangerous as a precaution. The Kangbural was expected to grant his permission for removal of the player or sagol and substitution was allowed.
When the game was very frequent, its skills rapidly developed and it was required to vigil carefully for its promotion and amendment of the previous rules. In 1928 the King Churachand, KCSI, CBE of Manipur declared Tupnaba i.e. riding across, Hairou i.e. hooking the Kanghoo with a strike in the air and Kangjei Yeithaba i.e. striking the Kanghoo of the opponent down as fouls.  

**TECHNICAL FOULS:**

There were also some technical fouls committed by the players. Kanghoo Maning Hanba i.e. hitting into the opponent's abdomen by the shaft of the Kanghoo when they came close to each other, Khuning-na-Thinba i.e. striking with elbow near the armpit when bumping and Sagol-Kakhong-Louba i.e. hooking one of the opponent's forelimb legs of the opponent's mount with mallet while approaching parallel.

**PAN-ONBA:**

Pan-Onba i.e. changing of ends was done in the first place when four goals were scored by either of the teams; when half of the total goals were scored; and in the third goal it was optional. Before Pan-Onba half an hour time was given for rest.

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6 M. I. Singh, op. cit., p. 5.
SOME PRACTICAL SKILLS IN SAGOLKANGJAEI:

There were some skills needed in Sagolkangjei. Some of them were as follows:

1. AKHINBA YEIBA i.e. free hit from the spot.
2. YETKI-KHUTHAI i.e. striking near side.
3. OGI-KHUTHAI i.e. striking off side.
4. YETKI-MANING-HANBA (Yetki Nakta Hanba) i.e. striking backward near side.
5. OGI-MANING-HANBA (Cigi Nakta Hanba) i.e. striking backward off side.
6. MANZI-HANBA (Cross hit)-
   a) Kangak Makha or Matha i.e. Under neck cross hit.
   b) Karang Makha i.e. Under body cross hit between the fore limbs and hindlimbs.

LANJAL (Scoring the goal from the hit outside the boundary line):

It was a goal scored by the mount from outside the boundary line. Here, though the sagol was outside the boundary line, the ball or Kangdrum was very much within the line.

Fig. 12(a)  Fig. 12(b)
**MANGMIN-MABA (TO BUMP ASIDE):**

It was the pushing of the forward mount out forcibly by another mount of the defending team while following the kangdrum towards the goal line in such a way that the former might not avail of the opportunity to hit the Kangdrum or the ball.

![Fig.13(a)]

**TUNGDA-NGAMLAHMA-HENGATPA (OVERTAKING THE OTHER MOUNT):**

Overtaking was not unknown in sagol-kangjei, but it was on the risk of the mount overtaking as he might face the dangerous back stroke.

![Fig.13(b)]  ![Fig.13(c)]

**KANGDRUM-OKPA (CATCHING THE BALL):**

Kangdrum-Okpa was the catching of the ball with hand when when it was in the air at a considerable height. But when he scored the goal he had to toss the bill and hit it. While the ball was in his hand any player of the rival team could hit on his hand in order to make the ball fall, not on any part of the body of the player or the mount.
KANGHOO-LOUBA (HOOKING THE MALLET):

It was hooking of the mallet of the rival player without any strike in his attempt to hit the ball either in the air or on the ground.

KANGDRUM-NGAKPA (BLOCKING OF THE MALLET FROM BEING HIT THE BALL):

It was the blocking of the stroke of the attacking player by the defending player with his mallet from being hit the ball which happened to approach near him.

KANGHAI-AHUM (THREE SIMULTANEOUS HITS):

The most exciting skill in traditional sagolkangjei was Kang-Hai-Ahum i.e. three continuous hits by a player in a considerable speed from the near side. It was mentioned categorically that 1. Chindonda haiba i.e. extended forwarded hit in clockwise, parallel to the mouth of the sagol; 2. Sayangda Haiba i.e. a closed hit from the side of the middle part of the body and 3. Saning-Khomba i.e. hitting of the ball from behind the sagol stretching the whole body flat with his back downwards.

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Fig. 14
Fana Kangjei or Fana Sagolkangjei were played among the Panas. Fana may be defined as a division of Manipur belonging to different families of the Salais. Fana Kangjei was introduced long time ago between the two panas i.e. Khunja and Naija. Later, each pana was sub-divided into two panas. From Khunja, Laipham and Khaba or Arong and Apao and from Naija, Ahallup and Naharup were divided. Besides, another two panas - Hidakphana and Potsangba were also developed constituted within the circles of the king's administration. The last two panas were known as Fana Khumei. They were not allowed to play with the former four panas. Sometimes, the former four panas formed into two groups of seven players each namely - Laipham and Khabam combined and Ahallup and Naharup combined or Ahallup Laipham and Naharup Khabam etc. This kind of Sagolkangjei was known as Chere-Kare.  

There was also another pana system of the Imphal circle. In the system the whole Imphal circle was divided into four - Khurai (North-east circle), Angkhei (South-east circle), Khwei (North-west circle) and Yaiskul (South-west circle) respectively.

8 M.I. Singh, op.cit., p.4.
Khurai was known as Laipham; Kangkhei as Khabam; Khwai as Ahallup and Yaiskul as Neherup.\(^9\) When Ming Tao Woon, a Burmese messenger visited Manipur in 1607, an exhibition match of Sagolkangjei in which King Chourjit (1803-1807 A.D.) also participated, was played between Khwai and Yaiskul.\(^10\) On the basis of the performance in the Sagolkangjei, any player of the local clubs could become a pana Kangjeiroy (Pana player) with the declaration of '\textit{Kaana Hunba}', i.e. declaration of being a player of the pana lup or pana circle.\(^11\) It was believed that the system was introduced from the period of King Khagemba (1597-1652 A.D.). No player was allowed to play pana Kangjei without \textit{Kaana Hunba}. The player should give his name and other particulars in detail including Khudei tara i.e. ten white lowels, Kabok Phingairuk Ama i.e. a good quantity of sweets made of rice and sugar, and Heiruk Luknairuk Ama i.e. a small quantity of different varieties of fruits. Then Sanglen Lakpa* of the Pana Loisang i.e. Pana Office, enrolled his name in the relevant pana and from that day on which he was declared as one of the pana Kangjeiroy of the particular pana.


\(^11\) N.I.Singh, op.cit., p.3.

*Sanglen Lakpa—one of the post held in a particular Pana.
Here it may be mentioned that Pana Loisang were especially established for smooth running of the king's administration not only to protect the kingdom at the time of war but also to promote the religious and cultural activities at the time of peace. However, so far as the game sagolkangjei concerned, these Loisangs actively participated in the Pana Kangjei, a top class polo competition. In the competition, if any player, who had not been formally enrolled as pana player with the declaration mentioned above, was found playing, he would be expelled from the pana forever and Sanglak Keirungba, the in-charge of the Pana Loisang, be outcasted by the order of the king, for he included such player in the Pana Kangjei. For instance, in 1857, all Sanglak Keirungbas of Laipham Pana were sent into exile by the King Chandrakriti, for they included Sorokhaibam of Chandrakhong, a member of a Loi (outcaste) community in their team.12 Here it may also noted that it was the prerogative of the king to transfer any player from one pana to another. In 1863, Takhellambam Lemba Jatra and his whole family had been transferred from Potsangoam to Khabam Pana.13 Kiba Ahiran and his group from Potsangba to Shailup Pana14 and in 1912, Takhellambam Kriti from Midakphanba to Khabam Pana.15 In 1921, the then king included both the brothers of Hangun Heikam Chao as in the Pana team.16

12 L. Dungohal and N. Khelchandra, op. cit., p. 334.
13 Ibid., p. 461.
14 Ibid., p. 502.
15 Ibid., p. 557.
16 Ibid., p. 587.
KAANA-HUNBA was a system to standardise the game of sagolkangjei and other cultural activities introduced in the country. Actually pana kangjei was not an ordinary kanghai played by the local players in different parts of Manipur but it was among the experienced spirited Kangjeiros (players) selected by the Pana Loisang. In Pana Thokpa or admission of a player into the pana kangjei he was required to show his skills and talent and there he could need to play till he retired from the game.

The pana players wore white phiejom i.e. white dhoti and Koyet achouba i.e. a big sized white turban which was either decorated with a distinct colour fastened with a pana khadangchet i.e. a piece of cloth, coloured for the particular pana that rolled up round the face from the head to chin with a knot under the jaws leaving ten to twelve inches suspended from the chin such a way that the remaining cloth could be used to remove sweat from the face. The shirt Phurit-Saikakpa i.e. a short sleeved jacket introduced or painted with the particular pana colour and khongyom i.e. a thicked wool or cotton leg guards were used. The prescribed uniform colours were:

1. Ahallup pana  - White colour
2. Naharup pana  - Yellow colour
3. Khabam Pana   - Green colour
4. Laipham pana  - Red colour
5. Hidakphanba pana - Black colour
6. Potsangba pana - Blue colour
The colours of Khadangchet and Phurit Saikakpa would be the same. Such dresses were not usually worn in any ordinary match except in pana kangjei.  

**NERA KANGJEI**

Every year, in the month of Nera (October/November) Sagolkangjei was regularly conducted in Manipur known as Nera Kangjei which continued up to the month of Lamda (March/April). By studying the origin of the Nera Kangjei the different aspects of this game can be understood.

Apokpa Marup Manipur has explained the astronomical aspect of the ancient people of Manipur through Nera Kangjei. "Sagolkangjei is a national calendar of a people - a small section of mankind ... when winter comes in Sagol Kangjei begins to be played. When the Sun sets in the west at the winter evening, by means of God-gifted intuition evolved from the imaginative creativity, the advanced set 'Sun's swifly running Sagols (horses) whereas the advancedly set the Sun itself is symbolised as a ball (Kangdrum). As ideas are the real foundation of culture, which is too close to life itself to be defined. The God gifted intuition of the imaginative creativity feels that the swifly chasing the advancedly

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17 M.I. Singh, op. cit., p. 3.
set the sun as if the beautiful smart sagols (horses) are swiftly chasing a wonderful ball flying with great speed. But if there had been no mountains in all directions in this global area, such an intuition of imaginative creativity regarding the ideological foundation of the culture of Sagolkangjei internationally termed as Polo by the Britishers would have been utterly impossible.

The astronomical significance of Sagolkangjei indicates both 'Winter Solstice' and 'Summer Solstice' respectively termed as 'Koombi' and 'Kaalen'. Koom means to come down bi means mapi (perfection) or Mani-oina (perfectly). The Sun is farthest from the equator at the time of Summer and Winter solstices (22 December). What the Sun is farthest from the equator at Winter solstice, termed as Koombi in the Sino-Tibetan Meitei lol (as proclaimed by the Manipur official language Act 1979 in Section 2(e). Koombi means the Sun's ultimately coming down from the equator whereas Kaalen means the Sun ultimately coming up towards Chingkhei (Northeast direction) from the equator (23 June). Kaa means Kaakhat-lakpa (to come up) and len means completely.

From the view point of Astrophysics also the significant meaning of the word Saakol (Sagol) is that as if time and space cannot be separated from each other. That is to say as if time is always with space, Sun's rays are
always inseparately with Sun itself. The joint form of
the Sun itself along with its ray is astrophysically termed
as Saksol also. Similarly while playing Sagolkangjei, the
horse riders are always chasing the ball by running very
swiftly. The significance of the culture of Sagolkangjei's
having been being played since time immemorial by two sides
having 7 horses per side indicates respectively the seven
solar-week-days from Sunday to Saturday and seven yaks (in-
different colours) of the Sun's rays with heat manifesting
seven different seasons from the viewpoint of Holy Sakok
Thiren (alias Holy Pakhangba Kangleiron). The two directions
of playing the Polo indicates both Winter solstices and Summer
solstices. The idea of Astronomy is also one foundation of the
Polo culture.  

According to Shri Atompapu Sharma, Pandit Raj, Nara
Kangjei is a seasonal religious occasion which comes after
the Sajibu Kang, an indoor game as they indicate the two
Ayana's (Uttarayan and Kakshinarayan) of the year. Kang starts
from Sachiphu (March-April) known as SACHIPHU KANG till
Engen (May-June) when spring season (Basanta Reetu) comes
for a year. During the rainy season the sun is covered with
clouds known as 'LAI YAHIPPA' or 'LAI-CHEPPA' (Sleeping of

18 Apokpa Marup, 'Astronomical & Spiritual Significance of
Sagolkangjei' - a pamphlet.
God) When the winter season (Sarol Reetu) comes as there is no cloud in the sky, the Sun can be seen clearly. This is called Lai-Yahouba i.e. waking up of the God. In Meiteilon (Manipuri language) Sagolkangjei is also known as Kangjei. The word Kangjei means Kang to be played with stick. The literal meaning of Kang is rath or chariot. The Meiteis believe that this chariot is that of the Sun drawn by seven horses. The Meiteis use to call the sun as Numit*(day) having seven days of the week and seven different colours . . . .

As it had seven days (Numits) and seven colours, each team consisted of seven players in the game of Kang and Kangjei. The different seasons in the Meitei Calendar are given as Ayan, Reetu, Mass and Tarik etc.

While fixing the date the hymns of Saroi Khangba i.e. the offering of oblations to the evil spirits of the country, he calculated that both Sachiphu Kang and Mera Kangjei are 4320 years old. When he compared it with the calculation of the Hindus-Jotish Bidya page 79 of Shri Kumud Ranjan Das it was more than 4000 years ago that Sagolkangjei is known. 19

*Numit: It is also known as days by the Meiteis, Ngash Numit i.e. Today, Ngarang Numit i.e. Yesterday, Hayang Numit i.e. Tomorrow, Nongmaiing Numit i.e. Sunday, Ningthoukaba Numit i.e. Monday, Leipakpokpa Numit i.e. Tuesday, Yumshakeia Numit i.e. Wednesday, Sagolsen Numit i.e. Thursday, Irai Numit i.e. Friday and Thangja Numit i.e. Saturday etc.

19 Atompapu Sharma, 'Meitei Kritan', pp.163-64.
According to M.I. Singh, when Mera Tha i.e. month Mera approaches on the day of Hari Uthan (12th day of Hiyangei) the God (the Sun) wakes up and the game of Sagolkangjei begins.20

The astronomical and religious significance are all secondary. The most important thing was the physical culture of the early inhabitants influenced by the geographical and climatic conditions of the country. The Meiteis who had accustomed themselves to horse riding, thought of a game which could be played on horse back. Ultimately, they found it in Sagolkangjei. The most suitable time for the game was the winter season from the month of Mera (September/October). And it becomes one of the most important cultural activities of the Meiteis.

PREPARATION FOR MERA KANGJEI:

When the date and day of the commencement of the Mera Kangjei was announced, the wife of the participating player kept everything like pan, fruits, flowers and sweets, etc. ready one day before and encouraged her husband like anything with the hope that her husband could be able to score more goals in front of the public. In the early morning

20 M.I. Singh, op. cit., p. 4.
of the day on which Mera Kangjei was to be commenced the wife entrusted the girls of her family or locality with the work of making garlands, pans and any other necessary articles. In the evening, after lunch, the Kangjeiroy who dressed in white uniform with turban, sitting on the Mang-gol i.e. the frontal side of the house was looking for an auspicious moment to be indicated by his own breathing for setting himself on his way to the ground. When he thus set out he was greeted with fumes of incense and a pot of water on a Tang-ga, a banana leaf that made in a circular shape. Remarkably, when a player scored a goal, immediately after, his wife came out of the crowd and garlanded him and also fed pan with her fingers to his mouth. In return, the player again garlanded his wife and gave a half share of the fan which he had received from her. It was the excited moment of the crowd. When the husband sent forward from his mount to his wife coming up with a garland in the hands the crowd made joke that the husband bowed down to his wife.  

**HAPTA KANGJEI (WEEKLY SAGOLKANGJEI):**

*Hapta Kangjei* meaning weekly practice of Sagolkangjei, introduced from the time of the King Khagemba (1597-1652 A.D.).

The word 'hapta' was not in use earlier but it came to be used during the period of the King Chandrakriti when the

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21 'Rojer', a monothy journal 56th Issue, 1975, p. 55-60.
Gouriya Vaishnavism had its influence in Manipur which will be discussed later. As already discussed, with the establishment of Pana Loisangs in the royal court, regular practice of various indigenous cultural activities such as Mukna, Khong Kangjei, Sagolkangjei, Hiyang and Lamjel etc. was made. The six different panas namely Laipham, Khabam Ahallup, Naharup, Hidakphanba and Fotsangba took part in the Hapta Kangjei or Hapta Sagolkangjei of the selected pana players on every Thursday and Sunday of a week at the Imphal Nupal Kangjeibung.

Pana Kangjei was organised on the advice of the king in the month of Keza (September/October). It continued till the month of Lamda (March/April). In the later period the system of Hapta Kangjei provided the British officers rooms to play Sagolkangjei with the Pana Kangjeirois in their practice session. With the merger of Manipur in India 1949 and the subsequent abolition of Pana Loisangs this practice of Hapta Kangjei was brought to a stop for some time. But with the establishment of All Manipur Polo Club it had appeared again. And a large number of local Polo Clubs came to be established. Local polo clubs of the eastern side of Manipur valley had its practice session on every Saturday and that of the western side on every Sunday on the eve of Annual Polo Tournament.22 No wonder, clubs which were to far from

22This information is given by Shri Thiyam Chaoyaime of Thiyam Konjin.
Imphal also came for practice and returned on the same day. As far instance, Kwakta Polo Club, located at about 55 Kms. from Imphal in the South of the valley used to come for practice for the ensuing Annual Polo Tournament.

The word Hapta meaning week came to be used in Manipur as a Bengali influence through her contact with the Indian people and the Brahman immigrants. And the word Chakkar(round) used in every round of the play was also borrowed from the Hindustani language.

CHAK-KANGJEI(VILLAGE KANGJEI AFTER LUNCH);

Besides Pana Kangjei and Nera Kangjei, there was still another game of Polo popularly known as Chak-kangjei which was more or less similar to Hapta Kangjei in the history of Sagol-kangjei. Though Imphal Mapal Kangjeibung(polo ground) was a common place in the heart of the capital, in the villages, grazing grounds were used as Kangjeibungs where Nukna, Khong-kangjei and other activities were also held. The villagers in their leisure time played this kind of Chak Kangjei(literally Chak=rice, Kangjei=Sagolkangjei) meaning Sagolkangjei played on lunch. It was a common practice in the villages that some individuals or villagers were invited to the particular village for a friendly Sagolkangjei match to be witnessed by the communities of the surrounding villages. The players
thus invited were provided with lunch by the host village before the match. It was after this match on lunch that this kind of Sagolkangjei was named Chak-Kangjei. Unlike Pana or Mera Kangjei there was no restriction to the inclusion of any popular player of Pana Kangjei in either of the team or to their exclusion. Sometimes, even the king came to the village to enjoy the Kangjei match. In Chak-Kangjei, rules of Kangjei were to certain extent relaxed. However, the village elders conducted the match with utmost care. Such friendly match of Chak-Kangjei was so frequent in Manipur valley that almost all the villages organised it in their respective villages during the period of six months, Mera to Lamda (September/October to March/April).

It was from this friendly match of Chak-Kangjei that many good Kangjeiros could be produced for Pana Kangjei in Manipur. Actually, in the villages the village players were trained in their local fields by the local elders for the match. They also learnt from the friendly match in which many famous players were invited to play for or against the village team. Any individual who successfully exhibited his talent and skill in the game was given royal favour. Thus it may not be wrong to say that villages in Manipur were the places where the world famous Sagolkangjei (Polo) was nurtured.
POT LANBA (GIVING PRESENT OF FOOD AND OTHER ITEMS):

Pot lanba, making the pana players a present of something by their supporters, was an unique feature of Meitei culture in Nagolkangjei and other games and sports in Manipur. It was done usually when the contest between the two panas was very keen as an encouragement to their pana players. Such gifts were also given to the King, Queens, nobles and important persons who were present on that day. Sweets like Kabok*, Lallu*, fruits, pan and flowers or garlands were some of the important items. These items were brought on the Lukmais, decorated broad plates made of bamboo and in the Phinngairuks, decorated baskets having covers made of bamboo nicely by the well-dressed womenfolk of the different panas.

Potlan-naba, exchange of gifts between the supporters of the rival teams was also not unknown. The exchange of sweets, fruits, pan etc. was done in the field before the king, queens, nobles and the fans. The articles thus exchanged were distributed to the spectators who sat very close to them before the start of the match. This was known as Shabok-Namai-Taba. When the match was very excited and goals were scored,

*Kabok: It is made of rice and chuhl, made from Sugarcane in different shapes.
*Lallu: It is also made of rice and chuhl, made from sugar-cane.
the remaining of the articles presented were distributed from time to time, during the half time and also at the end of the match.

REWARDS/PRIZES:

After the final match, both the winner and runners up were awarded prizes by the King or the Chief Guest. This was known as Mana-Nathum-Pihe or Mana Nathum Yenthokpa. The prizes were very simple that each player received Mana-Phee, a long white cloth of different qualities and sizes and some salt plates. While receiving these prizes, players fell prostrated before the King or the Chief Guest. Then the players who were lying stretched out on the ground, were covered with Mana-Phee long white clothes and the salt plates were handed over to them.

DEAD RECORDS:

During the play, players who died in the play were recorded in the royal chronicle, Cheitharol Kumbaba. On Sunday Sagol Kangjei (Hapta Kangjei) a player of Thokchom family fell down from the Sagol and he was declared dead in 1897. 23

The same thing had happened to Samuelatpa Samon Gourachandra of Khongman in 1933 at the Palace Kangjeibung.\textsuperscript{24} Besides, there was an interesting incident that on the death of famous Kangjeiroy, his family organised a Sagol-kangjei match as a part of Shradha Ceremony to which all his player friends were invited. It was done either on his request in his life time or as desired by his family and friends as a symbol of his/the deceased love of Sagol-kangjei. For instance, Shri late B. Tomal Singh of Mayeng Langjing village and late Elangbam Chaoyaina of Oinam Sawombung village, Sagol-kangjei match was performed on the day of their Shradha ceremonies instead of \textit{Pala Leisi}, singing of religious songs accompanied by musical instruments. In 1967, unlike the earlier instances, a large number of Kangjeiros including King's men in white uniforms (dhotis and shirts) took out a long procession from Sagolband Tera Keithel, Imphal to Mangkhei Konung, Imphal at the Asti Loukhetpa, a ceremony performed on the 6th day of the death of Shri Thingbaijam Tomboi, an eminent Kangjeiroy of the time of King Churachand, before the Shradha ceremony to be carried out on the 13th or 14th day.

In order to become a good Kangjeiroy, it is said that player should have four things - 1. Shabu Nungshiba, 2. Pukning-

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p.614.

Shabu-Nungshiba means the love for animal. In the olden days, the animal meant only the Sagol which served the mankind from the time immemorial. To love Sagol was not simply love by man but to culture Sagol for its purposeful activities in connection with Sagolkangjei without much cruelty. To preserve the lovable character of Sagol and its pedigree constituted the histories of man and the mount. The most spirited animal was to nurture by man from generation to generation.

Pukning-chan-naba is a mutual understanding between the man and the Sagol. Both of them were trained to have their understanding each other. In the initial stage of the training rein was very important as it tells the direction that the player wanted the horse to move. In the advance stage, the Sagol was so sustain that a little pull of the reins made the sagol know the feeling of the player to such an extent that a slight pressing with the reins in hand on its neck, the sagol efficiently responded and moved in the desired direction in the play. The instinctive power of the

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25 This information is given by Shri Thiyam Chaoyaima, Thiyam Konjin.
Sagol was so well developed and strong that it had a natural tendency to behave according to the feeling of the rider.

**Thakshi-Khashi** literally means the proper behaviour and the disciplines. As Sagolkangjeei originated and developed as a royal game it was played under the command of the king with strict discipline and proper behaviour. The costumes and manners were strictly observed by the players. Infringement of the rules of Sagolkangjeei and playing of rough are termed as **Thakshi-Khashi-Leitsaba** which is seriously viewed as disrespect to the king, queens, nobles and elders of the villages who were normally present in the match. Indiscipline players were sometimes exile in the **loki villages** (Out caste villages) for a period of time or the whole life as a punishment. It may be the reason why in most of the Sagolkangjeei, half trained and vicious sagols were not used and half trained players were not included in either of the team as it disturbed the play and created an ugly scene. Therefore, discipline is very important in Sagolkangjeei so as to create a friendly atmosphere in the game.

**Mathou-Masak-Khangba** means the sense of responsibility. As it has been stated that every player was given a position in the field. They were supposed to play according to their positions with a sense of responsibility in any
situation of the playfield which was sometimes far and wide with the goal lines widen as much as that of the field where scoring of goals could be made from any position. It is here that the skill and the extra-ordinary talent of the players can be vividly seen.

In the olden days, Sagolkangjei was considered to be the fastest game in the world. In Manipur where the game is said to have its origin, as discussed elsewhere, this is still one of the traditional games of the Meiteis.
SAGOLKANGJEI(POLO):

Sagolkangjei literally means a game in which players on horse back try to hit the ball into a goal using long handled hammers. It was originally introduced by King Kangba of Manipur, whose reign was put between 5000 B.C. to 3100 B.C. mythically/fictitiously.

(According to Pandit Raj Atombapu Sharma, Vidyaratna, famous Sanskrit Scholar, Sagolkangjei was played in Manipur in the year of the introduction of 'GAVA MAYAN JAJNA'( 3100 B.C.). In his book, "Prachin Manipuriya Panchang" an ancient Manipur Puya, it is described that the word 'Kang' was derived from the Sanskrit word 'Kranti' meaning start of the month and the movement of the Sun from one Nakatra or Rashi to another called 'Sankranti' i.e. end of the month. So, with this idea of the movement of the Sun of its Kranti orbit, the game Kang(indoor) and Sagolkangjei(outdoor) were played.¹ It was the system of adjustment between solar year and lunar year by adding intercalary days. Both Kang and Sagolkangjei made the Calendar of the Meiteis in two syans, Utarayan and Dhakshi Narayan. He also mentioned that the seven players of each team was assumed to be the seven days of a week. Again

the wooden Kang, which was similar with the Greek Sun symbol was played with the sticks by the players on the horse back from the month of Mera (September/October). This kind of game which began from the month of Mera came to be known as 'MERA KANGJEI'. It continued to play upto the month of Lamda (March/April). His view was endorsed by Shri Maibam Iboton Singh, a well-known sportsman and Sagolkangjei player of the time of Sir Churachand Singh, KCSI, CBE (1891-1941 A.D.), the then Maharaja of Manipur. He expressed that Sagolkangjei introduced in the year Gava mayan jajna 3100 B.C. was 5070 years old in the year 1971 A.D. 4

As recorded in the Kangjeiron Puya, Sagolkangjei was again introduced by the King Nongda Laien Pakhangba (33-154 A.D.), when he introduced his wife, Laisana to his nobles in his royal court where god and goddesses also attended. It was on this day that God Marjing suggested to play a game of Sagolkangjei as an expression of their happiness on the recognition of Laisana as queen. Two teams were made consisting of seven players each. The team which stood in the east was

3 Ibid, p.163.
4 Maibam Iboton Singh, 'Sagolkangjei' an article in Reetu, a monthly Manipuri journal, 41st Publication 1971, p.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position of players</th>
<th>1. Marjing</th>
<th>Pan Ngakpa (Full back)</th>
<th>2. Thangjing</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Khamlangba</td>
<td>Pan Ngak Chang (Half back)</td>
<td>2. Khoriphaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Erum Ningthou</td>
<td>Palluck (Pivot)</td>
<td>3. Wangbrel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Ekop Ningthou</td>
<td>Langjei (Centre)</td>
<td>4. Yangoi Ningthou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Erong Ningthou</td>
<td>Palluck (Pivot)</td>
<td>5. Nambul Lakpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Nongsaba</td>
<td>Pan Panjan Chang (Half forward)</td>
<td>6. Okneral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Panthoiba</td>
<td>Panjenba (forward)</td>
<td>7. Loyarakpa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the first Saturday of Lamda (March/April) in 46 A.D., the function was held in presence of the gods and goddess at the palace called Kangla where Sagolkangjei was played. In the interest of the play, seven goddesses offered sweets and presents to the players. Then they offered water also for drinking and it continued to play. The play returned after changing sides and continued to play till the equal number of goals were scored by both the teams.  

5 Kangjeiron, an ancient Puya (M5).
Queen Laisana, Soinaota, Koubru, Songpok Ningshoub, Salairen, Tekhelkhomba, Tungmalongba, Naisomba, Chakmalingba including many other gods and goddesses and mortals witnessed the game.  

(During the reign of King Broungba (984-1074 A.D.) Sagol-kangjei was well popular when the four Jatras strongly supported their pansas in the play. Then it was again played during the reign of King Kyamba (1467-1508 A.D.). In his time a little change was made in the game. In 1606 during the reign of Khagemba Fana Kangjei was introduced for the first time in Manipur at Imphal Mapal Kangjeibung, the present Imphal Football ground in the month of Mera (September/October). It was also known as Mera Kangjei. Chere-Kare match was also introduced during his reign. It came to be played regularly and became a national game of Manipur. It is recorded in the chronicle, Cheitharol Kumbaba that a special match of Sagol-kangjei was organised in which one team fielded 10 players including the then King Charairongba (1697-1709 A.D.) and another of 100 players. The King's team of 10 players won

6 Khelen Thokcham (ed.), Souvenir, the 7th SAI Games, 1993.
7 Thokchom Komol Singh, "Maitrabakki Mukna Kangjei Amasung Sagol Kangjei g  Houatkham", Mayang Imphal, 1985, p.35.

*Jatra was a title/name given to those person who won in the Mukna competition i.e. a traditional wrestlers.
the match and the looser was fined a buffalo. It indicates that in those days the Meiteis were very much used to the use of horses through the regular practice for Sagolkangjei known as Pakchen and could served as cavalrymen in the time of war against Manipur where the system of Lallup* was prevalent. (It was King Garibniwaz (1709-1788 A.D.) who fought successfully against the Burma and Ahom with his efficient cavalry. Again his successful campaign against Burma was the reflection of the efficiency of the Kangjeiroy (Polo players) who were dreaded and known as Cassay Cavalries with the royal patronage.)

After Garibniwaz (Pamheiba), little of the Sagolkangjei was heard of due to the repeated Burmese invasions of Manipur. During the reign of Chingthangkhomba alias Bhai-gyachandra (1763-1798 A.D.) and his interest in the propagation of Vaishnavism in Manipur, which is indicated by the introduction of the world famous 'Rash Dance' derived from Lainarsoba, a traditional ritual festival of the Meiteis. However, it appeared again during the time of King Labeinachandra (1798-1901 A.D.) as it was evident from the incident in which the king was killed by his cousin brothers immediately after he dismounted from his horse after the end of the match at Imphal Mapal Kangjeibung. In 1809, the use of

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belled Kangérum (belled ball) was introduced by King Chourajit (1803-1813 A.D.) in Sagolkangjei.\textsuperscript{13}

The Sagolkangjei which was so popular a game, was not heard for about seven years in Manipur due to the Burmese devastations known as 'Chahi Taret Khuntsakpa'\textsuperscript{*}(Seven Years Devastation of Manipur) of 1819-1825 A.D. However, when prince Gambhir Singh liberated Manipur with the help of the British in 1826 and established his rule and he revived the game in Manipur. He also planned to kill Gobind Chandra, who fled to Cachar. Brown says that 'Marjit in his flight took with him a celebrated horse who fled Cachar' (Annual Report of the Munnpore Political Agency 1869, p. 62). With Burmese aid he again invaded Cachar. About four years after the flight of Chourajit, Marjit determined upon invading Cachar to revenge himself the loss of his pony, Gobind Chandra, who had taken it, having succeeded his brother as Raja (Ibid.). However, Marjit could not rule for a long time, as he failed to respond to the summons given by the king of Burma, Bagidoa, to attend his court. The king of Burma invaded Manipur. This led to the complete devastation of Manipur which lasted for seven years.


\textsuperscript{*} Chahi Taret Khuntsakpa: The Seven Years Devastation was caused by Prince Marjit as he invited the Burmese king to help him in the occupation of the throne of Manipur and also in taking revenge the king of Cachar, Gobind Chandra, who wrested forcibly his (Marjit's) horse, especially trained for Sagolkangjei when he came to take asylum in Cachar after he had failed in his attempt to capture the throne. Brown says that 'Marjit in his flight took with him a celebrated horse who fled Cachar' (Annual Report of the Munnpore Political Agency 1868-69, 1870, p. 62). With Burmese aid he again invaded Cachar. About four years after the flight of Chourajit, Marjit determined upon invading Cachar to revenge himself the loss of his pony, Gobind Chandra, who had taken it, having succeeded his brother as Raja (Ibid.). However, Marjit could not rule for a long time, as he failed to respond to the summons given by the king of Burma, Bagidoa, to attend his court. The king of Burma invaded Manipur. This led to the complete devastation of Manipur which lasted for seven years.
who fled to Sylhet when Marjit invaded Cachar and took revenge on him for the loss of his brother Marjit's horse. This resulted to the disappearance of Cachar kingdom.

Of course, a new era of Sigolkangjei had began with the establishment a British Resident in Manipur. Captain R. B. Pemberton expresses his view about the game of Sigolkangjei that it is the national game of hockey which is played by every male of the country capable of sitting a horse, renders them all experts equestrians and it was by men and horses so trained that the princes of Maneepoor were able for many years not only repel the aggressions of the Burmaha, but to scour the whole country east of the Ningthee river, and plant their banners on the bank of the Irrawattee in the heart of the capital of Ava.  

Sigolkangjei was no longer meant for the royal families only but also for common people and villagers living in the distant villages in the valley. During the reign of King Chandrakriti (1850-1866 A.D.) he even summoned all oldmen in the country and asked them to play Sigolkangjei in the month of May, 1838 A.D. There were many friendly Sigolkangjei match, Princes Vs nobles, Panas Vs Panas, black princes Vs white princes, princes

14 Capt. R. Boilean Pemberton, 'Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India', 1866 (Pnt.), p. 34.
Vs in-laws, King Vs in-laws (Sija-Mawas) and Gerot (Military court) Vs Cheirap (Civil court). In the match women folks distributed delicious food to the players and spectators. Sometimes they also danced as an encouragement to the players.

(There is a note that is not clear in the image.)

It was in his time that the British tea planters showed Sagolkangjei at Cachar, a British province in Assam (14 August 1832) that was played by the Manipuris who settled there with a great enthusiasm they learnt the game from the Manipuris.) Since the opening of the road to Assam facilitated cultural contact with Assam in 1536-37 and in due course of time a large number of Manipuri villages were established by fisher in the eastern part of Cachar. In fact, the inhabitant of Manipur in Cachar were about 10,723 according to Census report given in 1851. The Manipuris, Hindustanis and Bengalees, who migrated during British Rule have since made Cachar their permanent home, and the bulk of them use Bangla as a spoken language. As the British Officers had little knowledge about Sagolkangjei in Cachar they wanted to exchange their views for their advancement of the game among the officers posted at Imphal, Manipur. The Cheitharol

17 Ibid.
Kumbaba, the Royal Chronicle, refers that on the fullmoon of Hiyangai (November/December), 1854 some British officers visited Cachar to play Sagolkangjei as they were invited by their European colleague. The first International Sagolkangjei match was played between the British and Manipur with the permission of the King Chandrakriti of Manipur at Imphal Mapal Kangjeibung. On Monday 12 Fairen (February) 1855, a match was played between Victoria team and Iulinina team of Manipur. For the first time the British attempted to establish a club for Sagolkangjei on the Manipur soil but failed as they could match with the native players and moreover, the social system that prevailed in Manipur did not permit the native people to mix with the Whiteman as they were considered as unclean. The Cheitharol Kumbaba refers to the dismantling of the king's hut when two British officers who newly arrived from Cachar and were not aware of their social status in the Manipuri society, entered into the hut built temporarily at Mapal Kangjeibung (Imphal Polo ground) as their entry was regarded as defiling to the king. Then, the British decided to start a Polo Club at Cachar, where

19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., p. 342.
the society was comparatively liberal. Two British officers, namely Lieutenant Joe Sherer and Captain Robert Stewart initiated the work. In March 1859, a meeting was held at Stewart's Bunglow and they established the Silcher Polo Club. The founder members of the club were - 1. Captain Robert Stewart, B.C. Silcher, 2. Lieutenant Joe Sherer, A.E.C. Silcher (later Treasurer), 3. Julius Sandman of Chutle Sheel, 4. James Davidson of Coobung, 5. James Clermetly of Haalakandi, 6. Arthur Brownlow of Haalakandi, 7. Earnest Schardt of Silkuri, 8. W. Walker, Bograhit, 9. C. Stewart, Uru Urruna Bund. With this establishment a new polo rule was framed under which no intoxication was allowed by the players. Encyclopaedia Britannica says, "... the first Europeans known to play the game were some British tea planters in Assam who had learned the game in nearby Manipur and formed the first European Polo Club in 1859 at Silcher and their polo club at Silcher was the first of its kind in the world. Soon the Indian army followed their example. Had it become to welcome their interest by the Manipuris the first polo club might have

established in Manipur and interested British officers like Colonel McCulloch might led in the scene. Colonel McCulloch, it is true played, but he began life in Manipur as an Assistant Political Agent. In 1861 the game is supposed to have introduced at Ducca by Captain Gustace Hill. In the course of the next few years Calcutta merchants on their various business trips to Cachar saw the game being played and decided to introduce it in Calcutta. A start was made in the Ballygunj parade ground and in March, 1863, the Calcutta Polo Club was formed. In the same year polo spread in Kanpur, Lahore and Amabala etc. The British Military officers who posted in Manipur took it at Burma that immediately started to play this game at Tamu. When Lieutenant Joe Sherer visited Calcutta in 1863 he taught polo among the players of the Calcutta Polo Club and promised them to send best Manipuri Polo team if they asked for. No later, an invitation came in 1864 from the Calcutta Polo Club to the Silchar Polo Club. Consequently, a team comprising of seven Manipuri Polo players known as 'the Band of Brothers' by the British were sent to Calcutta. They were 1. Tulshi Singh, 2. Chaoba Singh, 3. Amu Singh, 4. Uma Singh, 5. Tubal Singh, 6. Aumaba and 7. Mangepa respectively. With their small hardy mounts and scientific

26 Ibid.
play they easily defeated the Calcutta team inspite of the larger and faster ponies of the latter. 28

In the same year of their visit to Calcutta, the Colonel Kintinze, the Assam Chief Commissioner visited Manipur. He was one of the British officer who played Sagolkangjie with the king for the first time in Manipur. It is recorded that on Friday 27 Lamba (March), 1864, there was a friendly Sagolkangjie match between Ningthem (King Chandrakriti) and Le saheb (Colonel Kintinze, Chief Commissioner of Assam). 29 In the match in which the king himself participated, T.C. Hudson says, 'the Panam Ningthou Senba, whose duty is to keep royalty in all the apparatus for polo, the Takhen Fungyeiba beats the gongs, and is it attendance on the Raja when he plays polo or witness a polo match, the Penakhongba accompany the Raja and Rani on their travels and play the pena ....', 30 Only Sarunoba (a post who would accompanied with the king when riding) can ride before the king. 31 He was guarded by two Sarunbas-one in front and another in rear. 32

No person should mount in front of the king while he was sitting or walking. Even in the Pana Sagolkangjei, all the players, while they entered into the field, walked in with their mounts.\footnote{This information is given by Leisangthem Tempha of Singjamel, a veteran Kangjeiroy.}

With the beginning of the Manipuri polo players playing outside Manipur, in December 1869, a team of eleven Manipuri players thirtythree horses were sent to Tuwa Tulli (Tupa Tulli), a Burmese garrison at Cacher, in Assam to play against the British's Manipuri team. The Manipuri players were 1. Lungmeitshema Chandrakanti, 2. Aheicam Radhu Singh, 3. Kongkha Kesha, 4. Thockchao Nawang, 5. Samon Phureilatpam Manik, 6. Yenkhom Chaoba, 7. Hijase Angangmacha, 8. Soraisemba Towrowa Mechal, 9. Yelangba Cheiteina Reiari, 10. Yambemba Redem Singh and 11. Samon Samureilatpam Kam respectively. In thirteen goals match no goal could be scored by the British's Manipuri team. When the Manipuri team made British's Manipuri team with ten players with an addition of another three in team which should be seven players only. They (British's Manipuri team) could score only two goals. In another contest, when the British's Manipuri team played with nine players against the seven of the Manipuri team, the former could score only one goal. In seventeen goals' match also the British team could not score even a goal. It was only when
another three players were added to the British team that they could score only two goals. The Manipuri team won all the match... Later, the British asked Manipuri to play between themselves. The captain Saheb gave the Manipuris a sum of 3,120/- (Rupees one hundred twenty) as reward as an expression of happiness to see the skill of the Manipuri players in the game. When they returned they were also given one hundred rupees and mormon turbans by the then Maharaja of Manipur. 34 Later, the British had staged another Sagolkangjee on Thursday 19 Mera (September/October) 1870 in Manipur. 35 On the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII) paid an official visit to India in 1875, an exhibition match of Sagolkangjee was again held at Calcutta. 36 In this connection, Brown, Political Agent of Manipur went to Calcutta to play Sagolkangjee and came back in the same year. 37 Brown says, '.... a game formerly peculiar, I believe, to Manipore, but which of late years has spread over and become popular throughout a large portion of British India. 38 Indeed, as it spread, and its popularity increased among the Europeans as one of the most disciplined game in the world. In December 1862, under the leadership of Artillary Major Chongthamacha, the Manipuris played against the British at Cachar where...

34. L. Ibumgohal & N. Khelchandra, op. cit., p. 386.
35. Ibid., p. 392.
they brought with them one hundred and fifty segols. John-
stone remarks, "... in my time one of the Maharajah's sons,
Puccasena and the artillery major, were the champion ....
I never played myself much as I should have enjoyed it. Had
I been a highly experienced player, able to contend with
the best in Manipur. No doubt, Sagolkangjei was popular
and unforgettable one to the English but with a series of
development, Sunday evening was favourite day."41

Another Sagolkangjei expedition was led by A. C.,
Primrose C.S., the then Political Agent, with nine Manipuri
players to Cachar. There they played Sagolkangjei against
the Cachar team and defeated the latter easily twice in two
successive match for two days. 42 About the dresses of Polo
players and the match played in 1887-1890 Mrs. St. Clair Grim-
wood writes, "The Maharajah rode a beautiful pony on a golden
saddle with large flaps on each side to protect his legs,
also of gold. The pony's bridle was made of gold cord, and
his head and back covered with ball of short white cotton.
These saddles are really curiosities, and are peculiar to
Manipur. The balls of cotton are arranged to protect the

40 James Johnstone, 'My Experience in Manipur and Naga Hills'
1896, p. 136.
41 Ibid., p. 135.
42 K. K. Sananal (ed.), 'Haoelijumba Cheiteinya Singhi Leirik-
sing Punsinba', p. 57.
pony's side from being hit at polo, and the whole turnout is very well made, though the rather heavy for small steeds.

It was a fine sight to see the Senapati (Commander-in-chief of Manipur armed forces) play polo. He was very strong, it fact the Manipuris to tell us that he was the strongest man in the country. He could lift very heavy weights and throw long distances and to see him send the ball skimming half across the ground with one hit was a very pretty sight. He could do strokes that few Manipuris knew which is saying a great deal for an average player at Manipur can beat most English men. The Senapati was a magnificent rider, and he was always mounted on the beautiful ponies. He wore a very picturesque dress for polo a green velvet squave jacket edged with gold buttons, and salmon pink silk turban. He had long hair, which he used to twist up into knot at the back of his neck, and he always looked very nice on these occasions. All princes played polo. There was one called Zillah Singh, a boy of about seventeen whom we used to call poem. He was a slight graceful looking lad, and he used to ride a tiny mite of a pony, and never troubled himself with too many garments. His turban was always coming off, and his long black hair streamed in the wind as he flew about all over the ground. Even the little son of the Maharajah used to play. He was a dear little fellow, of about eight years old, and once a week there was generally a youngsteer's game, in which all the
Plate No. 7(a)
HAPTA KANGJEI (WEEKLY SAGOLKANGJEI PRACTICE)
AT IMPHAL MAPAL KANGJEIBUNG (POLOGROUND)

Plate No. 7(b)
A SAGOLKANGJEI MATCH AT IMPHAL
MAPAL KANGJEIBUNG (POLOGROUND)
little royalties used to perform and remarkably well too, considering how young most of them were.\textsuperscript{43} T.C. Hudson writes, "To describe the game is beyond the powers of any but, an imaginative and practical pen for in respect of brilliance of play constant excitement, rashness, courage, skill and popular enthusiasm, there is no game equal to it".\textsuperscript{44} In those days there were prominent players owned by kings, princes and nobles for their pana teams among them, Saonam Oja Rona of Uripok and Keisam Oja Tomba of Thangmeiband. The last two persons were the only players who could match with prince Tikendrajit (Senapati) in Sagolkangjei.\textsuperscript{45} Prince Sucasana was also a very good Sagolkangjei player and always Senapati's rival in the game. It can be mentioned about the animity between the two princes, Tikendrajit and Sucasana so far Sagolkangjei was concerned. When Tikendrajit was about 12 he was taught Sagoltipba (horse riding) by a famous Sagolkangjei teacher, Bedam Singh. Tikendrajit was so well taught riding that no sagol wild or tamed of his father, Chandrakriti, King of Manipur was there which he could not mount. Even his teacher Bedam Singh was also overwhelmed by his

\textsuperscript{43} Mrs. Ethel Grimwood, 'My three years in Manipur', Delhi, 1975, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{44} T.C. Hudson, 'The Meiteis', 1926, p. 50.

\textsuperscript{45} M.I. Singh, Sagolkangjei, an article in 'Reetu', a monthly journal, 41st Publication, 1971, p. 3.
courage. One day, on the order of Prince Puccasana (Sagolhanjaba), his two servants caught a beautiful saogol of prince Tikendrajit and kept it in hiding. When the prince Tikendrajit came to know it, these two servants were inflicted heavy punishment by Tikendrajit, it enraged Puccasana. Besides, Tikendrajit did not want prince Puccasana to be Sagolhanjaba (Head of the cavalry). In a polo match between Prince Tikendrajit’s team and King Surachandra’s team, the former was defeated intigated his men to cut jokes for his defeat. This caused the hostility between Tikendrajit and Puccasana and this animosity resulted to Anglo Manipur War, 1891.46

(In the war, Manipur lost her sovereignty and came under British rule on Monday 18th, Achibul April, 1891.47 After the installation of a new king, Surachand (1891-1941 A.D.), Sagolkungjai was again played in the first Public Mela in 1892, 1841 (April).48 It was during the absence of His Highness that in memory of the Queen Victoria’s 60th years on the British throne, all the countries who were under the dominion were celebrated a big festival in 1897. Manipur also performed this festival with her enriched cultural activities in which

48 Ibid., p. 316.
Keisam Tomba, a famous Kangjeiroi was rewarded a Sago(lhorse)
of Rupees one hundred. When Maharaja Churachand was honoured
at his first appearance in the Durbar Hall with his ministers,
nobles, Sagolkangjei exhibition was held as one of the favou-
rite items in 1901(Saturday 5 Hiyangei). When the prince
of Wales visited India, a team of 85 members including Mahar-
rajah, went for Delhi to demonstrate Sagolkangjei as a part
of the festival. The Royal Chronicle states, "On Saturday
6 Hiyangei(November), 1902, Maharajah, Wood Saheb*, Nethor Babu*,
thirteen Kangjeiroi altogether eightyfive members went for
Dillip(Delhi) Durbar*. T.C. Hudson says that a party of polo
players went to Calcutta on the occasion of visit of H.M. (His
Majesty) the King. When Prince of Wales, to India, and again
to Delhi to perform before the multitudes which assembled
there in 1901. There is evidence that the popularity in India
of Polo as an organised form of sport is in part attributable
to the enthusiasm of British Officers who saw that there were
sporting possibilities talent in the game as played by Mani-
puri teams in Cachar and Calcutta. During those days the

49 L. Ibungohal & N. Khelchandra, Cheitharol Kumbaba op cit, p. 516.
50 Ibid., p. 527.
51 Ibid., p. 529.

*Wood Saheb = Major Albert E. Woods
*Nethor Babu = Babu Nithor Nath Banerjee
*Dillip Durbar = It was Second Delhi Durbar for the Installation
    of His Majesty of King Edward VII as Emperor
    of India in January, 1903.

In the later period 1. Huralattapam Oja Sanjai Sharma of Bemon Leikai, 2. Sorem Oja Thouranisabi of Nagamapol, 3.

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During the reign of Maharajah Churachand, some of famous jagols and others were as follows:55

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of Jagol (Horse/</th>
<th>Owners</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Karu</td>
<td>Tonjao</td>
<td>Moirang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Menabi (Aijok)</td>
<td>Khabam Lakpa</td>
<td>Imphal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Menabi</td>
<td>Raja Lumber Singh</td>
<td>Nongmeibung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mange Khongdang</td>
<td>Maibam Samden</td>
<td>Wangkhei</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

54 This information is given by Shri Leisangthem Tampha of Singjamai, a veteran Kangjeiroi.
55 Ibid.
5. Natrang Sakphabi  
6. Khongjei  
7. Kori Khong-go  
8. Mange Maru  

Name of Pigeon
9. Higao Leicheng Arangba Chongtham  
10. Leicheng Arangba  

Name of Bulls
11. Tangkhul (Kona)  
12. Khagok Karan Lekpa  

(When Manipur was under the British, the word 'Polo' had officially been recognised in the Manipur State Darbar. In the year 1891, when the reign of Administration in Manipur was under the British suzerainty with one British officer as President of the Maharajah's Darbar, they included a Head in Manipur State Budget under Major Head No.1 under the title of "Polo Establishment" and maintained a team of polo players. The game was played thrice a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) at the well known Imphal Polo ground (Kapal Kangjeibung) situated to the north of present Raj Bhavan (Governor's Bungalow). The polo players became Government employees. Apart from the payment of players monthly emoluments, the Government of Manipur had also provided the players with polo ponies and other necessary equipments (saddles, reins, polo sticks and
polo balls). A good player received rupees ten monthly and in addition to that two sagols including equipments.

This practice of the employee players was known as 'Hapta Kangjei'. According to Leishangthem Tampha, a veteran Kangjeiroy, 'Maxwell, the then Political Agent did not play Segol Kangjei. One day when he saw Hapta Kangjei playing by the selected players at the inner palace ground i.e. Manung Kangjeibung Achouba, Kangkhei, he asked the Maharajah to send some players at Hapta Sunglow i.e. Mapal Kangjeibung for playing Segol Kangjei with the British officers. The king sent four Kangjeiros i.e. 1. Keisam Oja Tomba, 2. Thingbaijam Oja Tomboi, 3. Thingom Oja Amuyaina and 4. Wahangbam Oja Chaoren. As a child he (Leishangthem Tampha) began to play with them .... They also taught the British Segol Kangjei, but they (the British) could not make themselves familiar with the different strokes like off-side hit, backward hit, cross hit and corner hit except near side hit. All the games were played under International Polo Rules at Mapal Kangjeibung for ten minutes for each Chakker with an interval of five minutes. Among the British officers Sur Saheb (President, Manipur State Durbar), Nodal Saheb, Doctor Saheb (Civil Surgeon), Engineer Saheb (State Engineer), Telegram Saheb (British Officer - in - charge of

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Telegram office), Platoon Saheb (Commandant of Assam Rifles), etc. participated. It was in the Napa Kangjei that Bor Saheb (J.C.Haggins Esp ICS) the then Political Agent led one team and the Maharajah the another at Napalkangjeibung. Besides, there was a historic match between Ningthounai i.e. King's servants and Leimamai, i.e. Queen's servants led by the Maharajah and Maharani at Imphal Napalkangjeibung on Wednesday 12 Doinu (November/December), 1920 Ningthounai won by sixteen goals. 56

As the capital of Manipur had already shifted to Wangkhei area, eastern side of Imphal after the Anglo Manipur war, 1891 all the necessary requirements of a palace were being made gradually including playfields. A big beautiful field was reserved especially for Wangkangei known as Manung Kangjeibung Sichouba (Inner Polo ground). At the northern side of the palace there was another big field called Konung Lampak. It was inaugurated on Friday, the 1st Lamba (March) 1922 with Shere-kei match between the combined teams of Ahallup and Laipham on one side led by Maharajah and Maharup and Khabam on another led by Raja Lumber Singh, Bor Senapati, eldest brother of His Highness. The game was

56 L.Ibunghonai & N.Khelchandra, op.cit., p.584.
won by Maharajah. A new development was there in Hapta Kangjei or weekly match with the introduction of the Youths by the permission of the king known as Hapta Machu and they practised mainly at Konung Lampak. British officers always played with Hapta Achouba, senior group while the members of Cheirap Court and Sadar Panchayat played with both parties of Hapta Achouba and Hapta Machu alternately. No doubt, among the kings of Manipur, King Churachand KCSI, CH, was a famous one. As the king himself involved in Sagolkangjei, it became one of the most disciplined games in Manipur.

There were four main Kangjeibung (Polo field) in the heart of the town, Imphal namely, 1. Banung Kangjeibung (Inner/inside the Kangla), 2. Napal Kangjeibung, the present Imphal Polo ground, 3. Banung Kangjeibung Achouba (Wangkhei) and 4. Konung Lampak (Palace ground) of which Napal Kangjeibung was the famous polo ground. However, Banung Kangjeibung Achouba also witnessed a very special event of Sagolkangjei. It may be quoted from the speech of Shri H.K. Priyobrata Singh in connection with the ceremony of the Natya Academy Award, 1991 of Late Thangjam Chaoba Singh that Shri Thangjam Chaoba was also a well known Kangjeiroy (Polo player). He related a story about a unique match between Chanlon (Senior team) and

Maharon (Junior team) in which he was in the junior team. He was summoned by the Maharajah (Churachand) and he came with three sagols at Kanung Kangjeibung Achouba. The game was started at noon with a firing of Top Gun, ordered by the Maharajah and the Maharajah himself was also present. It continued without breaking half time but only substitution of Sagols were permitted. It was stopped at about 5 P.M. with the same fire when the ball could not be seen in the dark. He said senior team won the match very easily. Old senior players could score 27 more goals than the juniors where two baskets of Kangoram (Solo ball) were used. Another historic event was also told by Shri Naisam Iboston Singh who himself was in the junior team that in 1928 during Maharajah's reign a Jagolkangjei match between Senior and Junior team was held at Kanung Kangjeibung Achouba. The Maharajah observed the play very dangerous. Later he ordered to stop Jagol Tuchaba i.e. riding across closely against an opponent and Heirou i.e. hooking the mallet above the mount at any height in Jagolkangjei. Then these techniques were regarded as fouls in future.

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60 Presidential speech of K.K. Priyoorata Singh.
gathering which sits in a orderly mess on the banks living
the pologround is a competent critic, and while the excep-
tiveness of individuals meets with approving cheers of Xam-
phrei or very good. Numeric laughter is the portion of ambi-
tious, but unskilful player who essays in vain some difficult
stroke. 63 In 1941, on the completion of Maharajah's fifty
years of reign, Fana Sagolkangjei was played and the Maha-
rajah himself distributed one blanket to every participants.64

The Maharaja loved this game of Sagolkangjei so much
that even during the Second World War, when the Japanese
attacked the capital with heavy shelling, this game was played.
It may be cited that when the Japanese planes were hovering
overhead they hid into the trenches and pits around the polo-
ground and came out to play when the planes were out of sight.

The Maharajah of Jaipur, a great enthusiast for Sagol-
kangjei witnessed one of these plays when he visited during
the war .... In consonance with the democratic set up, the
Maharajah in council established a separate body called the
Manipur State Polo Committee. The relevant council resolution
No. 9 of 1945 reads as follows:

63 T. I. Hudson, op. cit., p. 50.
64 L. I. Bongohel & J. D. Chelchandra, op. cit., p. 632.
Manipur State Polo Committee be formed with the following gentlemen. They will frame rules, run the annual Polo tournament and take such steps as to improve the standard of and popularise polo playing in Manipur which is the home of the game.

**Patron:** His Highness Bodhchandra Singh, Maharaja of Manipur.

**Chairman:** K.N.T.S. Singh, Hon'ble Chief Minister

**Jt. Secretary:**
- L. Bhoongobal Singh, Judge, Chief Court.
- Nalibam Iboton Singh
- Huidrom Mezhachandra Singh, Retd. Subedar Major
- Md. Quazi Walli Ullah - Polo Secretary (ex-officio Secretary).

Thus the Manipur State Polo Committee came into being from the aforesaid date, which framed rules, held tournaments and exerted their every effort the improvement of the standard of the game as well as the popularisation of polo playing in Manipur as advocated in the aforementioned resolution of the council. 65

With the political integration of Manipur on 21st September, 1949 and subsequent transfer of administration to the Government of India was dealt blow to this game of Sagol-kangjei. The Government by order No. 7 of 3.12.49 served a

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65 The Committee (Publisher), 'History of Manipur State Polo Committee', 1961, pp. 5-6.
three months notice to the polo players of the said establishment to hand over their ponies to the Commandant, Manipur Rifles. However, in 1955 at the instance of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, the All Manipur Polo Club was established with Mr. P.C. Mathew, ICS, Chief Commissioner of Manipur as President and Shri Maibam Ibton Singh as Secretary, Kumari Subita Sen Kehta, a devotee of Manipur dance (now awarded Padmashri) gave maximum support at the initial stage of its establishment.\textsuperscript{66} The club was registered under Act XXI of 1860 in the year 1956.\textsuperscript{67} In the first Bagol-kangjei tournament only 12 local clubs had participated but in the subsequent tournaments the number increased to 78. Later, the clubs were given grant-in-aid by the Government of Manipur in the range of ₹1,500/- to ₹1,1500/- through the All Manipur Polo Club. Some of the clubs were:\textsuperscript{68}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Club</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
<th>Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cima Polo Club</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Anaphelam Polo Club, Linam</td>
<td>Linam</td>
<td>₹1,500/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Linam Lwambung Polo Club, Linam</td>
<td>Lwambung</td>
<td>₹1,000/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hyangthang Polo Club, Hijam Jawang</td>
<td>Hyangthang</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{66} This information is given by Shri Moirangthem Gojendro Singh.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} This information is given by Shri L.Tampha Singh, a veteran Kangjeiroy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Thiynkonjin Polo Club, Thiyam Chaoyaima</td>
<td>m.1,500/-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thiynkonjin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Charangpat Polo Club, Charangpat</td>
<td>Konsam Apabi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Thoubel Polo Club, Thoubel</td>
<td>Keizakpam Abbu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Tenth Polo Club, Tenth</td>
<td>Moirangthem Yaima</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Teckcham Polo Club, Teckcham</td>
<td>Moicam Barchand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sangei Yumpham Polo Club, Sangei Yumpham</td>
<td>Md. Allimuddin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Kumbi Polo Club, Kumbi</td>
<td>Gourschandra Charna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Sincha Polo Club, Sincha</td>
<td>Md. Allimuddin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Irong Polo Club, Irong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Awang Leimakpam Polo Club, Leimakpam</td>
<td>C. Bebi Charna</td>
<td>m.1,500/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Utlo Polo Club, Utlo</td>
<td>Leishram Tomba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Minchouphong Polo Club, Minchouphong</td>
<td>Sukhrungam Seojee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Neirang Polo Club, Neirang</td>
<td>Neirenang Unindro</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Kwakta Polo Club, Kwakta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Lourenao Polo Club, Lourenao</td>
<td>Lourenao Cura Singh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Kabyi Leimakpam Polo Club, Leimakpam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Rha-Junjana Polo Club, Rha-Junjana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Sarutou Polo Club, Sarutou</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Facitek Polo Club, Facitek</td>
<td>Sihere Hideng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Uchiwa Kanhel Polo Club, Uchiwa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Thoubal Ningombam Polo Club, Thoubal Ningombam</td>
<td>Okram Keshe</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Khurai Polo Club, Khurai</td>
<td>F. Jugol</td>
<td>₹ 1/-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Behu Leipham Polo Club, Ginem Sawombung</td>
<td>E. Chaoyaima</td>
<td>₹1,000/-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Waheng Khuman Polo Club, M. Jilla, Waheng Khuman</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Isok Polo Club, Isok</td>
<td>Lalito</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. 1st Manipur Rifles, Imphal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. 4th Assam Rifles, Imphal, Kangla</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last two polo clubs also took part in the tournaments organised by the All Manipur Polo Club. The AMPC received financial assistance of ₹700/- for the first time. Later it increased to ₹1,500/- to organise annual Sagolbangjei tournaments at different places in the valley and for the payment of monthly stipends to the selected players and also for the maintenance of the stable, situated at Eroisemba (near Geological garden). The players who were given a monthly stipend of rupees ten regularly are as follows:  

69 This information is given by Shri Sanjam Mani Singh, a veteran player.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of player and Address</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Keirakpam Babu, Thoubal</td>
<td>Player</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Konsum Apabi, Charangpat</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thangjam Maharat, Khurai</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gandher Singh, Top</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hijam Nawang, Hiyangthang</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Md. Alimuddin, Singha Yairipok</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Md. Kalimuthin, Singha Yairipok</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Maibam Chaoja, Leimapokpam</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Maibam Chandras, Leimapokpam</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Samursiltpam Kesho Sharma,</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leimapokpam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Samursiltpam Kaipak Sharma,</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leimapokpam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Moirangthem Lilla Singh, Tentha</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Moirangthem Babu, Tentha</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Md. Allimuddin, Sangai Yumpham</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pukrambam Dajo, Ningthoukhong</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Keisam Iromcha, Cinam</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Gouramani Sharma, Kumbi</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Slangbam Choyaima, Cinam</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sawombung</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Slangbam Tonsana, Cinam</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sawombung</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Leisangthem Tampha, Singjamei</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Thiyam Chaoyaima, Thiyam Konjin</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Wahengbam Jilla, Waheng Khuman</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Gurahari(MR), Banom Leikai</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Asem Borajao, Cinam Sawombung</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Mutum Tomba, Cinam</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rs.10/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Senjam Mani, Uripok</td>
<td>Stable-in-Charge</td>
<td>Rs.100/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Chongtham Chaoja, Singjamei</td>
<td>Player-Cum-Stable-in-Charge</td>
<td>Rs.100/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1962, a team from the All Manipur Polo Club (AMPC) was invited to Delhi where M.I. Singh, Secretary, Md. Allimudin, Chongtham Chaoba, Md. Allimudin (Senga), Gandher, Keirak Sabu were sent. In the same year, in April 1962, Mr. J. K. Galbraith, Ambassador of United States, visited Imphal and expressed his desire to witness Sagolkangjei. M.I. Singh arranged a match at Imphal Mapal Kangjeibung. Mr. Galbraith insisted M.I. Singh himself to play by saying, 'I want to see your polo technique'. He is the man who can toss and hit the ball in the mid air.

'It was during the time of Raina, the Chief Commissioner of Manipur that regular Hepta Kangjei and Panag Kangjei could not be organised as the permission for the tournaments was to be obtained from the Deputy Commissioner, Imphal and also as the ground which was earlier exclusively for Sagolkangjei was being used for and some other purposes.'

In an article, "Manipur Polo must not be allowed to die" by Gayatri Devi of Jaipur published in Sports World on 6th May 1983 describes, "At the recently concluded polo tournament in Manipur, 27 different Clubs took part in the

70 This information is given by Shri Fuyam Jugol Singh, former Secretary of All Manipur Polo Club.
71 Ibid.
tournament and as many as 205 players participated. Two tournaments were run simultaneously - one following the rules of Manipur Fana Polo and the other adhering to the rules of modern Polo. The latter is referred to as the Indian Polo Association style.... Tentha beat the Manipur Rifles in the I.P.A. Final and Khurai beat Tentha in the Manipur Fana Final. The Manipur Fana game was the most interesting and there were some incredible spills. One horse actually turned a complete somersault but both horse and rider were up and back into the game in seconds. All this added considerable excitement to the game. Khurai is a small superb of Imphal and many of the spectators hailed from there, therefore, the Khurai team had tremendous support from the crowd. Amongst the interested spectators were nine veteran players - one of them was 91 years old and another over 80 - they were all well past 70 and they were a most appreciative audience watching every move of the game.72

As recognised by the Indian Polo Association, New Delhi, the Manipur Horse Riding and Polo training Institute, Imphal (Est'd, 1977) organised the first State Level Naorem Hazari Memorial Polo Tournament in 1985 at Mapal Kangjeibung. In May, 1990, this Institute also organised First Governor's

Invitation Cup. The trophy was donated by K.V.Krishna Rao, the then Governor of Manipur. In the same year Major Gurnam Singh (Retd.), a veteran Kangjeiroy (Polo player) arranged a non-residential Sagol Kangjei for one month under the International rules.

Recently, Manipur could stage "MANIPUR POLO, 1991" (First International Invitation Polo Tournament, 1991) from 16th March to 2nd April at the historic Imphal Mapal Kangjeibung. This was organised by the International Cultural Conference and Festival (ICCAF) Manipur, Imphal in which seven teams had participated. 73

Participating teams:

1. BRITISH TEAM:
   i) Arnd Kuchel
   ii) Gorina mussagens
   iii) Edward H. Forbes
   iv) Charlotte Louis Seymour
   v) Albert Victor James Edward

2. ZIMBABWE TEAM:
   i) Peter Bowen
   ii) Glenn Johnson

73 Souvenir 'Manipur Polo'91' organised by ICCAF, Manipur.
3. **German Team:**
   i) Thomas Gissler
   ii) Dirk Baumgaerther
   iii) Ingo Pyko

4. **Australia Team:**
   i) David Lawrence
   ii) James Russell
   iii) William Rex
   iv) MCS April Davis
   v) Linsey Jamson
   vi) Warren John
   vii) William Walter
   viii) RS. Rex

5. **Fort William (India):**
   i) Sir Shwanwar Singh
   ii) Lt. Vikram Singh
   iii) Major Ram Singh
   iv) Major KS Chouhan

6. **Binaguri Polo Club (India):**
   i) Lt. Foonam Ali
   ii) Capt. NS Raj Purohit
   iii) Col. KVS Jamwal
   iv) Capt. Harjinder Singh

7. **Manipur:**
   i) G. Ningthemjao Singh
   ii) Md. Abdullah
iii) M. Khelen  
iv) M. Manihar  
v) M. Adhiram  
vi) L. Kumar  

The Second International Invitation Polo Tournament was held at Imphal Mapal Kangjeibung in February, 1992 in which following teams were participated.  

**TEAMS IN MANIPUR POLO, 1992 (FEBRUARY)**  

1. MANIPUR  
   1) M. Manihar - (Captain) Tentha  
   2) Md. Abdullah - Faobitek  
   3) J. Naba - Thangmeibang  
   4) L. Kumar - Khurai  
   5) Md. Ningthem - Irong  
   6) Md. Ningthem - Faobitek  
   7) L. Lemba - Hiyanglam  
   8) Md. Ladu - Yairipok  

2. FORT WILLIAM  
   1) Major KS Chouhan  
   2) Lt. Vikram Singh  

3. GERMAN  
   1) Ingo Pyko (Captain)  
   2) Harjinder Singh  

---

*Souvenir, Manipur Polo, 1992 (February) organised by the Manipur Horse Riding and Polo Institution.*
3) Peter Farrari
4) Nils Grundmann

4. AMERICA
   1) Willy Mayberry (Captain)
   2) Dominic Webber
   3) Thomas Winter
   4) Edward Forbes

In the same year the Third International Invitation
Polo Tournament, 1992 (November) was also organised. In the
tournament the following teams took part. 75

TEAMS IN MANIPUR POLO, 1992 (NOVEMBER)
AT IMPHAL POLOGROUND

1. KENYA
   1) Tim Phelan
   2) Peter Griffiths
   3) Simon Kuseyo
   4) Charles Nightingle

2. AUSTRALIA
   1) G. Rodwell
   2) Ian Johnson
   3) Wayne Rodwell
   4) Owen Readhead

---
75 Souvenir, Manipur Polo, 1992 (November) organised
by the Manipur Horse Riding and Polo Association.
3. **UNITED KINGDOM**

1) Nik Simpson
2) Alex Puaca
3) Jim Paltridge
4) Giles Greenwood

4. **EURO-AFPO-ASIAN COMBINE**

1) Maj. KS Chouhan
2) Dr. Caroline Hahn
3) Wayne Rodwell
4) Peter Griffithe

5. **MANIPUR**

1) Md. Abdullah
2) Th. Birchandra
3) S. Naba
4) M. Manihar
5) Md. Ladu
6) W. Ibungobi

Although the women did not play Sagolkangjei in the past, they started taking interest in the game in the 1970s. The First Exhibition Match of Sagolkangjei for Women between Manipur Equestrian Association and Thoubal District Polo Club was held in February, 1992. And again, in the month of November of the same year the First International Invitation Polo Tournament for women was also conducted at Imphal Pologround
in which Manipur, United Kingdom and Kenya were participated.

**PARTICIPATED TEAMS (LADIES)**

1. **UNITED KINGDOM**

   1) Mary Gailpin
   2) Camilla Wilson Black
   3) Dr. Caroline Hahn
   4) Beth Read

2. **KENYA**

   1) Rowana Murray
   2) Lucinda Voorspuy
   3) Sophei Grattan
   4) Julia Readhead

3. **MANIPUR (INDIA)**

   1) E. Sunitibala Devi
   2) S. Sunita Devi
   3) Y. Medhapat Devi
   4) N. Ashakiran Devi
   5) E. Ibeni Devi
   6) E. Hemabati Devi
4. **EURO-AFRO-ASIAN COMBINE**

1) Dr. Caroline Hahn  
2) Sophie Gratten  
3) Mary Gailpin  
4) E. Sunitibala Devi

Among the foreign women players, Lucinda Voorspuy of Kenya may be especially mentioned. She came as a player with her three months old child. Her child was given the name Mani Voorspuy after the name of Manipur in memory of her visit to this place. Now, this game of Jagolkangjei has become very popular to the womenfolk in Manipur.