CHAPTER IV

NIYANG
Hiyang or Hiyang Lamjel (Hi=boat, Yang=speedy, Lamjel= to race) was a boat race of Manipur held annually during the month of Hiyangei (October/November). It was the greatest and most popular festival of Manipur where the sporting event of rowing skill and strength were displayed. In Hiyang, men, women and children of all walks of life in their best attire thronged to witness the game regardless of the weather, heat or rain. It seemed as if the whole population of the country gathered on the bank of the moat where the boat race was held. It is from such enormous gatherings of people at the boat race that a saying is there in Manipur about the identity of a person. The saying runs thus 'Meg Ashi Hiyanga Phooba Ukhidri' which means the man was not seen even in Hiyang Festival.

There is still another saying about an improper demand for a small money at the great festival of boat race. The exact saying is 'Hiyang Yenolingsei da Tumbagi sel thoubua' meaning demanding a small price of a tumba to be paid while watching the boat race.

The origin of Hiyang or boat race can be traced to the reign of Luwang Ningthou Punshiba, descendant of

*Tumba: A waterpot made of dried gourd.
Poireiton in the fifth century. According to Manipuri Manuscript 'Kijin Hiraon', a book dealing with the selection and felling of tree for making boat, one day Lunwarg Ningthou Punshiba made a stroll on the bank of Singda river. The river was over-flooded because of heavy rainfall in the past few days. He found most of the small insects taking shelter on the tops of the Tou (reed) and Shingnang, Saccharum Procerum and besides, he sighted a strange scene of locust (Langban Koujeng Chongbiche) crossing the flooded river, biting a floating dry branch of Khikloi plant, a kind of thatch with its teeth. Again, he saw a mouse cutting a dry stalk of Khikloi on whose support it managed to swim across the flooded river, using its tail as propeller. An idea of making boat by having out an appropriate size of dry wood suddenly struck the king. He sent his chief artists, Nangban Wangmitkhu Khut-Heiba and Nancmana Shinheiba, the two brothers, to bring a big and straight trunk of an Uningthou tree (Phoebe hensiane) for the purpose of making boat. The two artisans with their party went up to Kouba* Ingen Ching (Ingel hill) and selected a big one. After offering the prescribed obligations to the tree, according to a traditional belief of the

*Kouba: Every small hills of Manipur were described as Kouba in front of its name i.e. Kouba Langol Ching-sang (N. Khelchandra Singh).
Meiteis, they felled the tree and brought the trunk down through river to the capital of the Luwangs. A boat of an appropriate size was for first time made by hewing the trunk of the big and straight tree out. After making this boat, the king put the dried and shrunken head of the Sungai (brow antlered deer) on its hirubak as a mark of dedication to his deceased brother, Punjaboi Khutkoiba. The first hiyang lamjel (boat race) was held in the Luwanglee river as a Public Festival. The idea of keeping the head of Sungai on the hirubak was to lead the boat of the Luwang King by his brother during the hiyang festival. This practice of decorating the royal racing boats with the artificial head of Sungai at the hirubak became a tradition in Manipur. Later on, the decoration of long chain like structure representing the body of Taoroinai (vehicle of snake god, Pakhangba) on the upper part of the boat were designed in order to gain the character of Taoroinai since this boat had been used as vehicle of Pakhangba, the Supreme deity of the Meiteis by the Kings, descendants of god Pakhangba.

A remarkable change in the decoration of hiyang was introduced by king Thwangthaba (1195-1231 A.D.). He installed the artificial head of Kwakpa Leitonpamba, a prominent warrior of the then Khuman kingdom on the stern (himo).
of his boat. During the period of Thawanthaba, there arose bitterness between the Meitei and Khuman. This enmity resulted in a conspiracy against the Meitei king. In the conspiracy, the Khuman king requested the Meitei king to invade jointly, the Heirem Khunjan. This request was made with a plan to ambush the Meiteis on their way to the Heirem Khunjan. On the way, the Meiteis stopped for a while at a place in the Khuman territory from there the king went out on boat in search of Heiyen, a tasty wild fruit to a place called Heiyen village. Having learnt the movement of the Meitei king, two Khuman warriors - Kwakpa Leitompamba and Haoba Yalaba took positions hiding themselves in a bush for an attack on his return. After this plan was well made, the Khuman king asked his queen, the daughter of the Meitei king, to invite her father to stay the day at Khuman. The queen, who knew everything of the plan, while inviting her father, gave a hand signal not to stay even a moment in the Khuman territory. When King Thawanthaba saw the signal of her daughter he was about to move immediately on his boat straight to his territory. The moment he started moving, the two Khuman warriors caught hold of the head of his boat (Heru). The great Meitei warrior, Taliya Yellangba who was on the boat with the King suddenly reacted and caught hold
of them by hair and cut off their heads with his iron edged car. The chopped off heads were brought with them and the head of Khuman Kwakpa was placed on the stern (hinao) as a symbol of victory over Khuman. The use of artificial human head as a decoration on the stern of the Hiyang Hiren, royal boat of the Meiteis, in the later period, had its origin in it. Thus, in the complete decoration of Hiyang hiren, it had the dragon head in the front and human head representing the head of Khuman Kwakpa Leitonpamba on the stern.  

Hiyang Lamjel or Hiyang tammab, the festival of great boat race, was associated with religious practices. Hiyang Lei kundaaba and Langban Leishatanba were some of the religious practices associated with the use of boats in race and in war. It was during the period of King Koiremba (1507-1512 A.D.) that he introduced boat race in the month of Hiyangei (November).  


*Hiyang Tammab: Speedy boat competition.
*Hiyangei Kundaaba: a ceremony associated with the steering of boat during the month of Hiyangei (November).
*Langban Leishatanba: a ceremony associated with the test of depth of water during the month of Langban (September).
Fig. 3(a)
A TYPICAL HIYANG HIREN

Fig. 3(b)
HIYANG HIREN OF MAHARAJA CHURACHAND
(RENOVATED PARTS IN DOTTED LINE)
(1597-1652 A.D.) moats were dug on four sides of the King's palace at Kangla and consequently boat races were held annually. He also dug a long moat at Langthabal from Thongju to Lilong bazar. In 1638, a boat race between King Khagemba and Vishnu, the Hindu God was held for amusement. He introduced Pane Hiyang (Pana boat race) for the first time in Manipur. What the people of Manipur used to say 'Sanongba higaiwa', a crisis on the broken boat of Sanongba was the endless argument between Sanongba and his brother Khurailekpa Chingsouba about the refusal of the former to return a new boat or the same after repair when the original boat was broken during the boat race at Leisangkhong, hired by the latter. As the problem could not be solved amicably, King Khagemba expelled Sanongba, his younger brother from the country.

Besides Pane Hiyang, ordinary boat races were also held. In the long run, boat race was so popular in the country that in 1683, as recorded in Cheitharol Kumbaba, every Loisang (royal department) also took part in the race. On one occasion, King Garibaniwas (1709-1748 A.D.), Guru

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(Shantidas Goshai) and King of Pong contested in the boat race in 1738. Even the hill tribes also participated in the race. In 1782, there was a boat race between the crown tribals and Kharam tribals in which, the latter won. Remarkably in 1782 boat races for every two different Yumnaaka (lineage) were organised. In the boat race between Ningthouja* and Khuman*, the former was declared winner. In another contest, in 1790, Emu* won over Angou* by three to one. In 1864, Manipuri Muslims joined boat race where two Fangan Penguns (Muslim leaders) acted as Tengmailepaa. When any boat race was held, the head was always in the position of Tengmailepaa. In 1868, in the presence of King Chandrakriti(1850-1866 A.D.), boat race between Longjamcha Major and Kangabamcha Major was held and a picture of which also was taken by a British Officer. On the request of Leimanai* and Ningthoumai* of Thanga, the King allowed them to contest in the boat race in 1869. After Jilla Durbar, in honour of Barlet Shehab, Lord Northbrook, the Governor General and Vice Roy of India, King Chandrakriti arranged

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6 Ibid., pp. 88 & 125.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 145.
10 Ibid., p. 360.
11 Ibid., p. 376.
12 Ibid., p. 384-5.

*Emu: A village near the Loktak lake.
*Angou: A village near the Imphal river.
*Leimanai and Ningthoumai of Thanga: Two separate villages of Thanga hill situated at the centre of the Loktak lake.
a boat race between Angom Zonu and Ningthoujamba Selungba in 1874 on the Barak River.

When Manipur came under the British rule, these traditional games, sports and other festival of the Meiteis were completely stopped. However, after a long time in 1900, eight-day long "iyang festival was again organised in which two teams of military platoon also participated. Further, in 1906 King Churachand, KGCI, CIE (1891-1941 A.D.) conducted a boat race as one of the items among the other games like Hukna and Kancie during the Mela (Fair) which lasted for five days. On the day of the ceremonial installation of the King Churachand (1891-1941 A.D.) and Sat nanah (air lancelet hare, KGCI, CIE) was held on the Barak river at Singjamei in 1907. It was for the first time that whitemen also participated in the festival of boat race in Manipur.

In 1941, the ordinary boat races during the regime of King Bodhchandra (1941-1955 A.D.) between the teams, namely Tanasam Kunjo Versus Naitankelsangbam Xangi, orokheivam Lakhap Versus Larenghem Tomba, Taothem Tomochar Jasadar Versus Haorongbam Nakklei Subedar and Sikkha Shaoba, Lurbar

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13 N. Ajkumar Lamahal, et al., 1976, p.119 and also L. Thoneswor Singh, 'Chandrabriti Cilla Chopra', 1992, p.16:
14 L. H. Mangabal and N. Khelchandra, op.cit., p.524:
15 Ibid., p.539:
16 Ibid., p.541.
member Versus Hijan Ibugohal were held.  

17 In 1950, King Bodhchandra organised a great boat race between the king himself and Vishnu, the Hindu god. On Tuesday of Lamda (February/March) King Bodhchandra came out of the palace, sitting on the specially designed sadalfe carried by the two elephants, led by a march of two hundred soldiers of Assam rifles beating drums and playing music for boat race between the king himself with the god Vishnu. The God Vishnu was guarded by Mani Fandit and the King by Amuyaima Fandit. Thokchom Modhu and Kangabam Cojendro acted as Tengmaileppas, the former for the God Vishnu and the latter for the King.  

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The royal chronicle records that on Friday of Mera (October/November), 1954, a boat race exclusively of young girls was held on the moat of Bijoy Sovinda, in which they acted as tengmaileppas and hiroja(rowers).  

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As mentioned earlier, Fana Hiyang or Fana boat races were held usually in the month of Hiyangel (October/November) after the rainy season was over. In some cases,  

17 Ibid., p. 643.  
16 Ibid., p. 647.  
19 Ibid., p. 677.
it was held at any time for amusement purpose. The great Pana Hiyang was commonly held on the moat of the King's palace. It lasted for three days with an interval of one day for the preparations for the final. According to Dr. Brown, 'The boat races occupy three days in September and take place on the moat which surrounded on three sides of the Raja’s enclosure. The ditch is about 25 to 30 yards broad, and at the season when the boat races come off, contains plenty of water. Thus festival is the most important held in Manipore, and great preparations are made for it; stands are erected on both sides of the moat, the one for the Raja being of considerable size and height. The women occupy stands on the opposite side of the moat.  

In fact, in olden days preparations were widely made to make all the spectators comfortable. Stands were erected, one each for the King and the queen; and two for the Tengmaileppas. These stands of the Tengmaileppas were known as Higashang where they used to retire during the races. It was the greatest event of the year, everyone turned out to see the King and the queen. It is mentioned in the royal

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20 R. Brown; 'Statistical Account of Manipur', Calcutta, 1873, p.36.
chronicle that in 1851, ladies of the palace enjoyed the Hiyang festival sitting on the elephants and King Chandrakriti was present at the festival sitting on a beautiful gold ornamented saddle (taibot) fixed on the back of two big elephants which were brought together.

STEERING OF THE ROYAL BOAT:

Traditionally before the beginning of the Pana boat race of the year, the King of Manipur came down to the boat with a ritual and sailed it up and down before the huge crowd. In the same manner, as it was done in the past King Churashand also acted. It was then followed by Pana boat races. Shri Chumgkham Tolen Himosaba was rewarded a gold ring, a Lamthang Khutlat and Khamenchatpa dhoti for he guarded the king on the boat. It is also mentioned that during the visit of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India and Umu, the then Prime Minister of Burma, in 1953, King Bodhchandra steered his royal boat before the two ministers as a mark of beginning of the Hiyang festival.

22 Ibid., p. 349.
23 Ibid., p. 551.
24 Ibid., p. 666.
LU-NAO-TABA:

This was a religious ceremony performed when the royal boat was brought down on the water. In the ceremony the royal boat well decorated with ornaments was named by the royal priest. Mantras were also recited for the prosperity and longevity of the life of the king. In September, 1843, the royal boat, the head of which was made double headed dragon having two feet long horns covered and decorated with gold and gems, the entire body glitter with small glasses and the stern flat, was named 'Chaitynadas' by the royal brahmana priest, Shri Bhaktibrash Thakur, a devotee of Shri Govindaji, and then dedicated to the God Vishnu; and thus, the regent, Narasingh, performed Lu-Nao-Taba. On the day of Lu-Nao-Taba, a boat race was held between Emu and Enou, before start of the actual pana boat races. It was the prerogative of the king to appoint the tengmaileppas from amongst his men. In the contest, the prescribed norms were not violated. However, in 1870, at the performance of Lu-Nao-Taba, Mingonba Sanaba and Mongthonba, the two heads, had violated the norms decorating their clothes with gold and silver.

25 Ibid., p. 260.
Consequently, they were caught by Anamsang (a royal office) and their clothes were burnt by the royal soldiers at the market place. This practice of Lu-Nao-Taba was not compulsory before the commencement of the pana boat race. In 1680, Pana boat race was held without Lu-Nao-Taba. However, in 1933, during the time of King Churuchand, Lu-Nao-Taba ceremony was performed, before the beginning of pana boat race between the two son-in-laws of the King, Soibam Birchandra and Meismam Kanhai in the name of Emu and Engou. Soibam Birchandra won in the first contest and Meismam Kanha won in the second.

In most of the pana hiyang, four panas took part. They were Ahallup, Maharup, Khabam and Leipham. Dresses of distinctive colours were given to them. Black was for Ahallup; white for Maharup; red for Leipham; and brown for Khabam. On the first day of Pana hiyang, the contest was between Leipham and Khabam. It was followed by Ahallup and Maharup after an interval of one day. Sometimes, these four panas were combined to form two teams in such a manner that one team of Khabam and Leipham and another of Ahallup and

28 Ibid., p. 449.
29 Ibid., p. 612.
another of Naharup and Khabam or Naharup Khabam. Besides, the above four panas, there were another two panas, Hidik-phamha and Potsangba. They also participated in the Pana boat race but both were not allowed to contest with the former four panas or any combined team.

Traditionally, in Pana boat race, the royal priests also performed an atonement rite of any of the boat reached the goal in a wrong track. In 1862, in the pana boat race, atonement rite performed for coming both the boats of Leipham and Khabam in the wrong tracks. Sometimes, the royal boats used to follow in the race.

For performing hiyang festival, a great preparation was made. Games like Larjel (foot race), jumna (wrestling) and Kangjei (Gagolkangjei/Khongkangjei) were also played in the intervals. Col. McCulloch rightly describes, "The Heeyang continues for three days. The first day is devoted to a boat race between the Kachum and Leiphum Pun-nehe, followed by a match of Hockey on horse-back .

wrestling, putting and jumping. The second day is devoted to the same description of matches between the Ahallup and Naharup. And the third to a repetition between the Hitakpalba and Potsangba".31 The Pana teams were arranged in order of seniority. In the contest, the senior pana was always on the right side, and the junior on the left. Thus, Leiphum, Ahallup and Potsangba were to be on the right side and Khabam, Naharup and Hitakpalba on the left.

According to Shri N. Khelchandra Singh, "The crews vary from sixty to seventy in number. Besides the crews, there are seven persons on each boat attending to the steering and cheering of crews. Of them, five are stationed towards the hirubak and the remaining two towards the hinag. They are clad in Pheijom (Meitei dhoti), Thuri (shirt), and Ningkham Shamjin (Costume of ancient Meiteis). But ordinary crews are clad with shirt and Pheijom but well tucked up. They also wear an ordinary turban which serve as the distinguishing mark.

of the rival teams. Those who are at the hirubak in order of their seniority are known as Tengmaileppa, Chang, Nathang, Langjei and Ton. The tengmaileppa is also known as hidangba, the chief of the boat. He is standing in the front with a paddle in his right hand which supporting on the bow of the boat. Leaning on his paddle he encourages the efforts of his crews rhythmically by stamping violently with his right foot at intervals and by waving a piece of cloth or handkerchief with his left hand. The next man, the chang is also not directly participating in rowing. His duty is to attend and guard the tengmaileppa. But the remaining three vix., Nathang, Langjei and Ton are actively participating in rowing and steering the boat. The other two who are at the Hinbo act as the Helmsman of the boat. They are known as the Neq-Koireng and Nouse. 32

On the occasion of the great annual boat races, in which, in former days the Raja used to take part, the steersman of the competing crews wear a Khomen-chatpa dhoti, and to add to the dignity of the high-coiled pagri with fringed ends permitted to them..... 33

32 "Reetu" 39th issue (Journal) published by the Cultural Forum, 1971, p.34.
days of hiyang each pana wore their own distinctive dresses. The seven crew leaders were entitled to use either Lollei* or Ningkham Samjin* except Hidakphanba and Potsangba.

Besides, every crew member of the combined pana teams was fastened with a belt of small cloth on their waist. Yellow belt was used by Leipham-Khabam; Rosy or light red belt by Ahallup-Naharup; and white belt by Hidakphanba and Potsangba in the contests.

When the pana teams with a strong group of fans and noisy supporters came to the moat, they used to sing a song called Hirao Ishei. Sometimes, they came beating drums and playing music to their Jigashang. Then, the tengsmai leppas with their respective crews boarded their respective boats. In case the king did not participate but graced the occasion, the tengsmai leppas first rowed their boats towards the Jigashang of the king, gave salute to him in their traditional style, and offered various articles (Athen-pot). After due honour was given to the king, they proceeded to the starting point. When everything was ready a thrilling sound of a gun-fire was suddenly made hear. This was the

*Lollei: A long tailed turban of special type used during the time of boat race only. Its shape is like the head of prone.

*Ningkham Samjin: Traditional costume of head or head gear.
signal for the start of the race. The crowd looked at the race without taking their eyes off with a great noise, cheering and boosting the morals of the crews up.

In the race, rowers used their strength all out to win over their arch rival. And very often as they were over-excited, unfair means like seizing and blocking the boat of the rival team were used. Sometimes, it resulted in the physical clash and bloodshed. Dr. R. Brown writes, "the race itself differs from most boat-races in the fact that here the great object is for one boat to foul the other and bore it into the bank, so that one side of the boat is disabled, the man not being able to use their paddles, the boats are thus always close together until at the finish, when the race is usually won by a foot or two only". It is recorded in Cheitarol Kumbaba that in 1853, the Ahallup and Naharup pana clashed physically in pana boat race. In the clash, the former was found guilty. However, on their request the king excused them.

Since the start of the boat race, supporters of the two rival teams known as Khongbanchenba, running hilter-

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34 R. Brown; "Statistical Account of Manipur", Calcutta, 1873, p.82.
skelter on the edge of the water after the boats, cheered and boosted the morals of the team of their pansas up. Even the King himself acted in the same way as Khongbanchenba in favour of his team. In a boat race held in 1863 between the sons of ministers and children of the royal families of the palace, represented by Kangaba Mjeri and Ibungshi Thaba (prince) as the tengmaileppas, the King (Chandrakriti) himself acted as Khongbanchenba. Sometimes, Khongbanchenbas, as they were over-excited, jumped into the water and pushed the boat of their pana. They even pulled the rival boat up and tried to overturn it without thinking of the risk. Another very curious feature of the game was that at the peak of the race, if the boats happened to come very close to each other, the crew of the either boat suddenly jumped into the rival boat to capture the tengmaileppa. If the tengmaileppa was captured successfully by either of the team, he became a slave and had to pay the price of a slave to the winning boat. These events often led to serious scuffles in which the offended crews retaliated using their paddles freely resulting in blood-

36 Ibid., p. 356.

*Price of a slave: According to E.W. Bum, value of a slave was Rs. 60 (Gazetteer of Manipur, p. 24) and in some cases, according to T.C. Hudson, the value was Rs. 50 (History Today, p. 548).
shed and other acrimonious consequences. 37 Having seen the peculiar custom in vogue at the boat race, T.C. Hudson writes, ".... and by old custom the steerman of the defeated boat, becomes the slave of the steerman of the winning boat, a custom which interfered with any plans for the promotion of sport among the military police, for the native officers of the battalion thought that it would be necessary for them to pay the usual fine of fifty rupees on each occasion of a race between the companies". 38

The boat which reached over the line of the rope first, was declared winner and its tengmaileppa raised his paddle high up in the air as a sign of his victory so that everyone in the crowd recognised him, and then turned in the direction of the king or the deity, he showed his respect by prostrating himself on the boat.

The race was not decided in one contest. A second contest was also conducted. After the first contest, they were allowed to take rest in their respective higashangs where light refreshment was also given. In the second or final

contest, no change in sides and boats should be there. When the competition was over, the participants went back in procession singing the song called **Higaron Ishai**. The song was sung by the winning party up to the home of their chief, tangmaileppa who was with them in the palanquin. In boat race, there was no question of tie. It was decided in such a way that this team won in the first and that team in the second contest.

The racing boats were usually hewn out of a single trunk. Since the trunks were meant for making personal boat of the king, great precautions and preparations were made at the time of cutting the tree down. Royal priest offered the Lupa (silver) and Sana (gold) Komyai before the day of its felling as the price of the spirit of the tree. Mantras were recited to protect forthcoming evil consequences. Even fowls and pigs were sacrificed in the true sense of exchanging life with the spirit of the tree.\(^{39}\) This kind of boat was made when the tree was found after looking for three generations.\(^{40}\) **Hiyang Hiren** was a boat meant only for the king. The making of **Hiyang Hiren** was not an easy work. The chief artisan employed many

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\(^{40}\) Ibid., p. 11.
persons. After completing the making of the boat the royal priest performed all the customary rites and gave life to the new boat and named it.

Boats used by the following kings at their times are given below:

1. **King Naethingkhong** (663-763 A.D.)
   - Karangkhang Semailai-Phaba

2. **King Khongtekcha** (763-773 A.D.)
   - Lungja-Lalhaba-Cinu-Sopha
   - Raja-Phaba;

3. **King Keirencha** (784-799 A.D.)
   - Kangtek-Nenjinba-Yangtek-Chaichinba;

4. **King Yaraba** (799-821 A.D.)
   - Kangda Lannaba;

5. **King Ayangba** (821-910 A.D.)
   - Haokhe Ikung-Lanthaba-Ahui-Kollangba Phaba;

6. **King Mingthoucheng** (910-949 A.D.)
   - Haokei-Sayan-Phaba;

7. **King Chengleil Ipan Lanthaba** (949-969 A.D.)
   - Nongyai-Haochashila Shenthang Phaba

8. **King Yanglon Keiphaba** (969-984 A.D.)
   - Yanglou-Lanthaba;

9. **King Irnengba** (984-1074 A.D.)
   - Ithai-Lanthaba-Khamba-Haorok; Khamba Saraphaba;

10. **King Loiyumba** (1074-1112 A.D.)
    - Awang Kouba Leihou Ngamba, Haothang Saoyen Phaba;

11. **King Loitongba** (1112-1150 A.D.)
    - Haoshi Ngamba Yelik-Yellang Phaba;
12. King Iwanthaba  
   (1163-1195 A.D.)  
   - Wasei Ngamba Chabombi Phaba;

13. King Thawanthaba  
   (1195-1231 A.D.)  
   - Kubui Ngamba Sajon Phaba;

14. King Chingthang Lanthaba  
   (1231-1242 A.D.)  
   - Kanu Ngamba Yekchambu Leiraba Phaba;

15. King Punthamba  
   (1247-1263 A.D.)  
   - Khongjai Ngamba Arok Akhu Athing Arang Phaba;

16. King Khumomba  
   (1263-1278 A.D.)  
   - Kingthouokpa Funglen Khomba;

17. King Moiremba  
   (1278-1302 A.D.)  
   - Leitang Ngamba Thangji Khongnachan, Langsam Mateimnang Phaba

18. King Thangbi Lanthaba  
   (1302-1324 A.D.)  
   - Thangbi Ngamba Nura Phaba;

19. King Kongyamba  
   (1324-1335 A.D.)  
   - Chakpa Thongjao-Lanthaba-Xhoen Mayanu Phaba;

20. King Telheiba  
   (1335-1355 A.D.)  
   - Kadam Sokna Thinba Khunjam Ngamba;

21. King Punshiba  
   (1404-1432 A.D.)  
   - Mara Phaba;

22. King Kiyamba  
   (1467-1508 A.D.)  
   - Tollong Ngamba Hem Nupi Phabi Chawanbi Phaba;

23. King Lankiyamba  
   (1512-1523 A.D.)  
   - Shambum Ngamba Marangba Phaba;

24. King Kabomba  
   (1524-1542 A.D.)  
   - Purum Ngamba Choukhong Phaba;

25. King Chalamba  
   (1545-1562 A.D.)  
   - Makhan Ngamba Naichamba Phaba;
26. King Mungyamba  
(1582-1597 A.D.)  
- Mapao Ngambi Sarurak Phabi;
- Yangoi Isham Thouba Mingthou  
  Rokpa Punglam Thoiba;
- Wakei-Tsendamba-Khamlou  
  Yohicheng-Phabe;
- Chakpa Tangkhul Ngamba  
  Tongtong Thawa Phaba;
- Tongjeng Jupchongba Wangcheng  
  Ngamba Neitha Phaba;

27. King Khagamba  
(1597-1652 A.D.)

28. King Khunjaamba  
(1652-1666 A.D.)

29. King Faikhomba  
(1666-1697 A.D.)

30. King Charairongba  
(1697-1709 A.D.)

31. King Pamheiba  
(1709-1748 A.D.)  
- i) Wakei-Juikchaoba Panch  
  Marai Phaba,
  ii) Tongjeng Isham Chaiba-  
      Lakta Landa Meetphaba,
  iii) Tongjeng Wakei Sheltoppa  
      kharan Nawaitagi Taret  
      Shengoi Yokpa;

32. King Chingthangkhomba  
(1763-1798 A.D.)  
- i) Madhev Dasi-Huyen Aruba  
  Phaba,
  ii) Loibi Lagang Ngamba,
  iii) Pattanaba Loibi Lagang  
  Ngamba Huyen Chengbu  
  Phaba;

33. King Gambhir Singh  
(1825-1834 A.D.)

34. King Mara Singh  
(1834-1850 A.D.)  
- i) Lalita Madhav-Chonglem  
  Khomba-Chambun-Heiri-  
  Noppa-Heikaran Kangamba  
  Anal Nanhou-Chaiba  
  Kabrang Lan Yamthaba  
  Khamaran Bachanwe Phaba
  ii) Cheiteinadas;
35. King Devendra Singh  
(1850 A.D.)

- Ouriyukta Rongba Wakei  
- Hiren Khanba Ponglen  
- Chaibirokpa Wakei Menkhonba  
- Thostaret Phaba Tongojeng  
- Poklen-Khomba-Awa Phendra  
- Phaba-Hamba Kasom Ngamba  
- Loibi Kajairokpa Wakei  
- Hiren Khanba Awang Phendra  
- Phenji Lokpa;

36. King Churachand  
(1891-1941 A.D.)

- Awang Phatlou Leimakongi  
- Shamu Khongma Phangma  
- Indallakpa Famen Lokki  
- Ihamchaibe Wakei Khamlang  
- Pamsaba.

Since royal boats were important vehicles in Manipur during the time of peace and war, the king of Manipur established an office called Hiyangloisang under the head of Hiyanglooi Hanjaba. Hiyanglooi Hanjaba was also one among the top ten of the royal court. Hiyanglooi, Hidang and Hingphaniaba were the different posts under him. In the palace, royal boats were kept in a specially constructed boat-house called Hijagang. On the eve of their removal from the Hijagang for the great event, the boats were given an atonement rite by the Leiba, the traditional priest uttering long incantations called ampa-atou and ampa-shou.

41 "Hiyanglon" and "Hiron Tengtha" both MSe.

Naheikon. On the eve of the actual race, the maiba again performed the rite of Konyai Hunba, an offering to god Pakhangba by throwing gold and silver into the water. The rite was accompanied by a long prayer to god Pakhangba to protect the kingdom from enemies and to bestow peace and prosperity on the country. Each of the boats was then ceremoniously offered a piece of cloth (Khudei), a garland and pieces of sacred langthrei (Varonia -ivergana -enth Composita) leaves. 42 The rites of Konyai Hunba was thus on no account be omitted.

As the time passed, the glorious and colourful royal boat races became a thing of the past since the end of the regime of King Bodhchandra (1941-1955 A.D.) and with the abolition of monarchy by the Government of India. However, many ordinary boat races are still remained to continue in connection with the festival of Laiharaoba and many other occasions. But now-a-days a famous boat race is still going on. It is held annually on the occasion of Heikru Midongba, a religious festival. The origin of this religious festival can be traced to the time of Ireeenga (984-1074 A.D.). During his reign Huny and Narot, two evil spirits came out to destroy Manipur. Their attempts were

foiled by a pandit called Langol Lukhoo. When they were defeated in the hands of the said pandit, they confessed themselves to the king. Then they advised the king to worship God Fakhangba and to perform the festival of Heikru Hidongba for the prosperity of the country. The king in consultation with Pandit Langol Lukhoo, performed Heikru Hidongba. As done before in the royal boat races, the rite of Konyai Humba was also held to forecast the possible consequences from the boat races. In the former days it was not popularly recognised as one of the biggest festivals of Manipur as pana boat race. The festival of Heikru Hidongba became gradually popular only when it was celebrated in the name of the God. Sijoy Govindaji installed by Ananta Shai (Nongpok Leirik-hamba), the uncle of King Shaiyachandra of 18th century, a stout devotee of Lord Krishna, at Sagolband about a mile from the capital Kangla. On Tuesday, Hiyangsei (November) 12, 1779 the idol of Shri Shri Sijoy Govindaji was brought to the moat, now called Sijoy Govinda Thangapat and kept on a boat, before it was housed in the temple; and then Heikruhidongba festival was held as usual. The present Sijoy Govinda Thangapat or moat was about 50 feet in breadth and nearly

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43 Hiran Sana; 'Heikru Hidongba', Pp. 4-6.  
44 Ibid., p. 4.
one mile in length. The most was at first called Tubi-irel and later on it was named as Moirang Leima by Ananta Shai as his gratitude to the Moirang princess who helped him in his escape from the jail of Moirang. But with an understanding between the King Bhaigyachandra and his uncle Ananta Shai, the festival was held in the month of Langban (September), 1780, not in the month of Miyangai (November) at the same place. From this year onwards annual festival of Heikru Hidonoba has been regularly celebrated till date. The festival is still celebrated independently by the descendants of Ananta Shai without any interference of other royal families.

Since Heikru Hidonoba was held only for one day at Sagolband Bijoy Govinda, the King of Manipur also enjoyed it. Like Pana Miyang, stands for the King and the queen were especially reserved but opposite to each other. The king in such festival was always accompanied by god Vishnu. Another stand for the God Vishnu was also provided. Unlike pana hiyang there were only two teams but their preparations were not less than that of the pana competition or royal boat race.

Plate No. 3(a)
TWO TYPICAL ROYAL RACING BOATS FORMING A COMMON PLATFORM IN WHICH MAHARAJA BODHACHANDRA WAS SITTING AT THE CENTRE

Plate No. 3(b)
ANNUAL BOAT RACE IN THE HEIGRU HIDONGBA FESTIVAL
assembled on both sides of the moat to watch the festival. The idols were worshipped on the deck itself and offered *Heikru* (edible fruit). The most special offering was the two garlands, one made of 108 numbers of *Heikru* with *hup* leaves (a typical grass) arranged alternately and the another made of paddy. People from different walks of life offered flowers and fruits to the idols, while it sailed along the banks of the moat. After sometime two *tengmaileppas* came down with their crews on their respective boats and they sailed towards the place where idols were placed. There they prayed and received the garlands from the priest. Then they were ready for the boat race. This boat race was more or less similar with the *Fana* boat race in all respects. But the impact of the boat race in *Heikru Hidongpa* on the mind of on-lookers is so great that they could easily imagine how enjoyable the great festival of Hiyang was, in the earlier time.

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*Hup*: *Setaria Pallidefusca.*