

Chapter: III

History of Manipur – an Independent Kingdom (A.D 33-1949).

Introduction:

Manipur has come under the influences of cultures of many different ethnic groups who came at various times and contributed to the growth of civilization. The Tibeto-Burman or Sino-Tibetan speaking Meiteis, Naga and Kuki-Chins of Manipur, which is a continuation of an early nation-state in South East Asia, represent a unique South East Asia personality through the ages since the Paleolithic period till contemporary epoch (Sanajaoba 1995). Acharya (1988) noted that Manipur has always attracted historians, traders, invaders and preachers of all hues is indeed significant; it was perhaps due to Manipur suitable climate, fertility of soil and superiority of culture. Cultural superiority is discernible in almost fields. A concrete civilization appears to have evolved in Manipur long before the historic period. The Kings of early Manipur had matrimonial relations with Royal family of Assam, Tripura and neighbouring Shan lands. Manipur had trade relations with the countries like Burma, China, British India, Arab and Greek world. Indian trade route to China and South East Asia also lay through Manipur. These large scale contacts had left far-reaching consequences in the history and culture of Manipur on the one hand and the negotiating far-flung lands on the other.

The state was known by different names to different peoples. Few of them includes — ‘Poirei Meitei Leipak’ or ‘Kangleipak’ to the indigenous people of Manipur more particularly Meiteis; ‘Kathe’ or ‘Ponnas’ to the Burmese; ‘ Hsiao-Po-lo-mein’ to the Chinese; ‘Cassay’ to the Shans; ‘ Moglai’ to the Cacharis and Bengalis and ‘Mekle’ to the Assamese (as well as to the British in the 18th Century) in the pre-Christian period. The Manipuri’s themselves knew the State by as many as 22 names in different ages and at different times. The name Manipur was first officially introduced in the early eighteen century during the reign of King Pamheiba, also known as Garnibniwaz (1709 – 48 A.D). “Mekhala” was another name of the kingdom as indicated by a coin of the same king describing him as “Mekhaleswar”, Lord of Mekhala or Mekhale. These names did not

occur in the pre Hindu literature, especially the chronicles of the Kingdom. The reconstruction of the history of Manipur in the early period was based on the chronicles of the Ningthouja dynasty supplemented by other clan genealogies and some literary sources (Kabui 1991).

Some Manipuri scholars tried to relate Manipur with Mahabharata but it was rejected by scholars from Manipur and outside. Bhattacharya observes that the Manipur mentioned in the Mahabharata was situated near Kalinga and its identification with modern Manipur is not justifiable. Similarly R.C Majumdar observes the description of Manipur in Mahabharata is located in Orissa coast (cited in Sanajaoba 1988). Prof Gangumei stated that after the conversion of the royal family to Hinduism, they claimed to be the descendents of Arjuna, as indicated by the royal genealogy, prepared after Hindunisation. But there was no mention of Bhrabrubahana or Arjuna in the Pre-Garibniwaz chronicles and genealogies of the royal family which was founded by Nongda Lairen Pakhangba (Kabui 1988).

As per the Manipur State Archives, Manipur was ruled by 76 kings since 33 A.D. The development of the political power of the Meiteis was related to the control and organization of resources around the central loci of Imphal, and the entire valley and hills. The Kingdom was later governed based on the written constitution "*Loyumba Shinyen*". This decree was issued by King *Loiyumba* in 1110 A.D and was based on the earlier codes and conventions. The *Loyumba Shinyen* was further expanded by the later kings like *Kiyamba* (1467-1508), *Khagemba* (1597-1652), *Garibniwaj* (1709-1748), *Bhagyachandra* (1763-1798) and *Chourjit* (1803-1813). The latter additions make the decree a complete code on the duties to be rendered by the hill tribes and other communities in the Kingdom (Kabui 2003). Oinam Bogeshwar, the renowned Meitei historian and scholar observed that there was a centralized constitutional Government since A.D 429 (CORE 2007). The power of Manipur was recognized by foreign nations, especially by the Shan with the *1470 Agreement between the King Kiyamba of Manipur and Khekhomba of Pong* in upper Burma. It was followed by the *Anglo Manipur Friendship Treaty in 1762*, *Anglo Manipuri Defense Protocol of 1763*, *Treaty of*

Yandaboo, 1826 between the British government and the Burmese government after the Burmese occupy Manipur since 1819 – 1826 which is still remembered as the “*Seven Year Devastation*” etc. Not only have the Meiteis possessed a distinct political and territorial status for centuries, they can also legitimately boast of a highly literate and developed culture, an advanced literary tradition which stretches back a thousand years, and a distinctive linguistic tradition (Chandhoke 2006). The annexation of Manipur in 1891 by the British became a debate at the British Parliament and Manipur was not annexed to her territory and allowed as an international Protectorate. Independence of Manipur in 1947 and passing of the Manipur Constitution Act 1947 before the contentious merger with India was an important landmark in the history of Manipur.

Manipur was more linked to South China and South East Asian countries. There is a close cultural affinity of the Manipuris starting from household life and the individuals’ temperament to a community way of life and national ethos with the descendents of the Hoang Ho and the Funan civilization. Cultural congruence and parallelism between and among the South East Asians are remarkable despite variations in language and other aspects. Many similar ethnic groups and cultures are still visible across the eastern international border. Sanajaoba (op. cit) observed that as many as for customs of the rituals of the death had been followed in both in Funan and early Meitei society. The Meitei house has ‘*Kai*’ and even the royal palace has erected ‘*Kai*’ which had been a common norm for the Thai construction. The early Chinese and the Meiteis have many a common social tradition like digging tunnels surrounding the house, boat race, copying of scriptures, and the 20 days compulsory military service which the Meitei call ‘*Lallup Kaba*’ among others. Polo was played in Tibet and is one of the traditional games of Manipur. The Meitei practice of writing ‘*Lairel Lathup*’ or the secret history and accounts had been equally practiced in Mongolia which had secret history. The wrestling style of South Mongolia ‘*Bouch*’ is similar to ‘*Meitei Mukna*’ and ‘*Pena*’ (musical instrument) to the “*Morin Huur*’. Besides the Tais (Ahoms in Assam) and the Meiteis had followed age-old practices of writing chronicles unlike several ruling ethnoses in several place. Horam observed that Indonesians, Igorot tribes of Philipinnes, tribes of Sumatra and Burma use similar implements as by the Nagas (cited in Sanajaoba op.cit).

Manipur is one of the routes between South-Asia and South-East Asia and Central-Asia. Chinese trade and civilization was transported to Manipur. Inter alia this was the introduction of silk and silk worm rearing, brick making, gun powder production etc. The trade between Manipur and Yunan province of China is recorded in the chronicle of Manipur at circa 1630 AD. The trade continued as late as 1813 A.D (Gangumei 1998). Various ethnic groups belonging to southern-Mongoloid groups, the Tibeto-Burman, the Indo-Aryans and a sizeable section of Tai (Shans) came to Manipur from pre-historic times down to the present day. The present ethnic groups of Manipur, viz the Meiteis, the Naga tribes, the Kuki Chin tribes and other Indian communities are the descendants of those migrating people. And Manipur and its central valley provided the ecological setting for building up a civilization. These migrating people brought with them varying degrees of technology ranging from the Old-Stone Age, rough-stone tools to more refined Neolithic potters. With the coming of metal tools mostly bronze, cooper and tin during the historical period from Thailand and Upper Burma cultural zone, the metal civilization of Manipur was developed mostly through trades (Kabui op.cit). The trade between the Burma and Manipur was terminated because of the emerging antagonistic relationship between the two powers (Lokendra 1998).

Evolution of the State:

Prehistory:

Manipur being one of the oldest civilizations, the evolution process of the state goes back to pre history. In Manipur prehistoric cultured objects have been discovered. Though archaeological research in the area is still not fully developed, there are evidences of the Old Stone Age, New Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age cultures in Manipur. Further, there are a number of caves and rocks shelters in the hills of Manipur which once provided shelters to the prehistoric men, while the evidence of the Old Stone Age is confined to the hills, the New Stone Age relics are spread over the hills and the valley. It has been stated that Imphal valley may be an important zone of copper-bronze age culture which is a cultural phase of great significance in human history, but still unknown in the entire Northeast India. Manipur appears to have received Bronze Age Culture traits from Thailand and Upper Burma where indigenious early metal age culture developed at a

comparatively early date around 4000 B.C (Kabui op.cit). Post 1970 Manipur evacuations have led to the interference that Hoanbinhian culture also existed in Manipur sites. The archaeological linkage of pre-historic culture also existed in Manipur with the cradle of mankind on the one hand and with the South East Asian pre-history on the hand has been fairly established.

Evolution of Social Structure:

Clan (*Salai*) System:

The ethnic group Meities, as we find it today was formed by the amalgamation of the seven different but close knit and allied principalities, once settled in different parts of Manipur, each independent of each other. The components of Meitie confederacy were: the Meities, Khaba-Ngamba, and Chenglei, Angom, Khuman, Luwang, Moirang. Besides these, there exist several other tribes, such as Mangang, Mangding, Chiren, khende, Heiren Khunju etc., all of whom were in course of time, merged into one or the other seven other principalities. Gangumei (ibid) also observed that, historical evidences indicates the existence of various ethnic groups and lineage in the valley of Manipur, viz, The Angoms, Luwangs, Mangang (Ningthouja), Khaba, Nganba, Sarangthem, Leisangthem, Chenglei, Haorok Konthu, Manting-Mara, Lela Khongnang, Urok Usai, Lokkha-Lokkhu. These ethoses's belongs to the Tibeto-Burman, Tai and other Mongoloids groups were first brought gradually under the political suzerainty of leading clans with their principalities and group into seven clans.

T.C Hodson (1908) also observed that, there were ten clans before they were merged to seven clan. He explained by quoting the traditional ballad "*Numit kappa*" or the man who shot the sun, where mentioned is made of the ten kings. The head or piba of a certain clan is designated as the *Ningthous*, or king of the clan. The ten kings were the head of the ten clans. The seven salais were formed on the basis of powerful Meitei clan system so people talk about only about these clans even though there are more than seven clans in early Manipur. In some period Khaba and Nganba, Sarang and Leishangthem were

separated and it results in the increases to nine. Again when they are unified the seven salais came into existence (Promodini 1987).

During the historical period, there were seven clan of the Meiteis but there were five principalities ruled by five clan chieftains who were also both social and political head of their respective clans. The foremost among them was the Kingdom of Kangla established by Pahangba whose dynasty was the Ningthouja which, though the name was coined later on becomes the name of the clan; the Luwang principality, the principality of Angom, the Khuman principality, and the Kingdom of Moirang. The Khaba who once ruled at Kangla and put up a strong challenge to Pakhangba were already destroyed by Ningthouja dynasty, and Nganba had already ceased to be a political power. During the same period, the Chengleis, the Sarang Leishangthem, The Heiren Khunjan, the Chakpas and the Mangangs had village level chiefdoms (Kabui op.cit). Pakhangba consolidated the seven clans with one *pibas* of each clan. After five days of coronation ceremony, He established villages in different part of his kingdom for easy administration but in course of time, the clans group became stronger with the growth of population, economic prosperity, conquering small weaker groups and addition of captives and newly migrant groups. With the growth of power they became independent groups and made frequent disturbance within the Kangla principality. But Pakhangba controlled the rising power diplomatically by introducing the clan system (Pramodini op.cit).

The seven principalities (or even tribes) again underwent an age long struggle amongst themselves till the Meities or the Ningthoujas finally established supremacy over the rest and absorbed them one by one in a period that covered several centuries. After their assimilation, the name Meitie became the common nomenclature to identify for all of them. Besides the Meiteis belonging to the seven clans, there is a community named the *Lois*. They are believed to be one of the earliest bands of settlers in Manipur who were subdued by the Meiteis. In formers days large numbers of Meiteis who committed crimes against the state or those who violated social customs and traditions were degraded to the Lois community as punishment. These people were then merged into the Meitei

community. The seven clan divisions are similarly to be found among many of the highland communities (Sanajaoba op.cit).

But the question of how and when the seven salais originated is still a matter of controversy. There are several myths and legends which try to explain the origin and interconnectivity of the seven salais. The versions differ slightly from one another, yet all of them agreed in that all the seven salais were descended from “Shidaba Mapu” (the divine ancestry). Contrary to the myths and legends, historical evidence reveals that the salais did not come simultaneously but emerged in different ages and different areas. While four of the salais namely, Angom, Moirang, Khaba-Nganba and Chenglei were in existence and flourished in different principalities years before the beginning of the Christian era; the remaining three, namely, Khuman, Luwang, and Ningthouja emerged around the beginning of the first century A.D. However, there are evidences of the existence of the still known as *Ningthouja Ariba* (ariba-old) before the era of King Pakhangba. ‘A sagei of this group’, ‘*Kanghujam*’ by name is still within the Ningthouja salai founded by King Pakhangba: a member of this group named *Kangpu Pukkanba* became a noble in the court of the King Pakhangba with the title of *Pukkan Selungba* (Manikchand 1988). The independent clan genealogies and chronicles like the *Moirang Ningthourol*, *Lampuba*, *Khumanlon* and *Angomlon* etc shows an independent history of their own though social contacts were established and continued with the Meiteis since or little before Pakhangba time (Kabui op.cit).

The emergence and sophisticated Meitei State under the leadership of the Ningthouja chiefs was a significant development in the history of Manipur in pre-colonial period. The state formation occurred in the valley, and the kings subsequently established their control over the hills (Bhattacharjee 2006) and also to other kingdoms that lay beyond the hills. Their power was recognized by foreign nations especially the Shan principality of Burma in the 15th century and later by the British and many Kingdoms in South East Asia and South Asia. Along with the gradual expansion of political power of the Meitei based on Kangla since 33 A.D, there was a simultaneous process of social formation in the sense of gradual incorporation of clans, tribes and other ethnic groups in the Meitei

social structure. The first salai that was absorbed into the Meitei fold was *Khaba*. Till the beginning of the Christian era, the *Khaba Kings* were ruling at Kangla. The spread of Meitei power from Kangla was precipitated by the possession of rich agriculture land around the pediment regions, increasing number of pigs, hens, cocks, doves and ducks etc, the facilities for rapid boat communication from the *Iril*, *Imphal* and *Nambul* rivers, and the strategic, defense oriented settlement patterns guarded by hillocks and natural barriers around Kangla. The possession of the pony by the northern inhabitants (Chenglei God Marjing was the first horseman) necessitated the utilization of this animals not only for the aristocratic pastime and sports, but as a sure instrument of consolidation, of martial strategies in offence or defense (Manipur State Archives 1988).

In pre-colonial times, plurality was organic, in the sense that the social structure was organized in blood and Kin relationship when Meitei women were deliberately circulated amidst communities, and the circulation of women and blood relationship was the principle of organization of social forms. The establishment of Brahman caste, the introduction of Muslim community, the incorporation of *Nongpok Horam* (eastern comers), *Nongchup Horam* (western comers), and the central lineage forms in the Meitei community included tribals, Hillmen, Shan, Burmese, Chinese, Bangalees and Assamese into the constitution of the Meitei social structure (Arambam No date). The historical evidence demonstrates that Manipur has always provided a broad socio-political framework for integration and frequent assimilation of tribes into the Meitei fold. So it can be view that Meitei formation was a continuous process. But nowadays there is no longer question of tribal or non tribal seeking admissions into the Meitei fold or the Meitei have any political machinery like the former Royal pressure to integrate the people within its fold (Ranjan 1988). Priyadarshini Gangte similarly also opined that, it is likely that the Meitei as distinct ethnic, linguistics, cultural and social entity was formed in Manipur valley which is the melting pot of culture.

Boundary of Manipur:

The present boundary of Manipur with an area of 22,327 sq. km. more or less remained fixed since the controversial transfer of Kabaw Valley to Burma (now Myanmar) in 1834. But in olden days it was much bigger than its present size with fluctuations at various stages. R.B. Pemberton observed as, “The territories of Muneepoor have fluctuated at various times with the fortunes of their princes, frequently extending for three or four days’ journey east beyond the Ningthee or Khyendwen river, and west to the plains of Cachar”(Pemberton1966). Sir James Johnstone also observed that “The territories of Manipur varied according to the mettle of its rulers. Sometimes they held a considerable territory east of the Chindwin River in subjection, at other times only the Kubo Valley, a strip of territory inhabited not by Burmese, but by Shans (Johnstone 1971). At one time the eastern boundary of Manipur extended up to the peripheral limits of China and Burma, while the south-sea remained as the southern boundary and Hiramba’s Kingdom (Dimapur) as the northern boundary (Singh Mutum Jhulon cited in AMCTA 2001). This account is also supported by Alexander Mackenzie’s in his book, *The North-East Frontier of India*. Towards the west the boundary of Manipur, although not properly defined, as referred in the treaty of 1763, was extended upto the Brahmaputra Valley.

In 1835 indeed the forest between the Doyeng and the Dhunsiri was declared to be the boundary between Manipur and Assam (cited in AMCTA *ibid*). Supporting the above account Sir James Johnstone mention in this book “*Manipur and Naga Hills*” that Raja Gambhir Singh reduced several villages to submission, including the largest of all, Kohima, at which place he stood upon a stone and had his foot prints sculptured on it, *in token of conquest*. This was set up in a prominent position, together with an upright stone bearing carved figures and a inscription. The Nagas greatly respected this stone and cleaned it from time to time. They opened a large trade with Manipur, and whenever a Manipuri visited a Naga village he was treated as an honoured guest, at a time when British subject could not venture into the interior without risking of being murdered. Even up to the Naga Hills campaign of 1879-80, the Nagas regarded Manipur as great power of the two, because her conduct was consistent; if she threatened she act. One

British subject after another might be murdered with impunity, but woes betide the village that murdered a subject of Manipur. A force of Manipuris was instantly dispatched, the village was attacked, destroyed, and ample compensation exacted. The system answered well for Manipur; many of the Nagas began to speak Manipuri, and several villages paid an annual tribute. Still up to 1851, we considered that we had shadowy claim to the hills, though we never asserted it (Johnstone 1971).

Hokishe Sema observed that after the establishment of an officer in the Naga hills and his stern action had for some time, brought a cessation of the Naga raids on the British territory. However, trouble arose in another direction. It came from the side of Manipur. The hills areas over which this state had territorial jurisdiction were vague and ill defined. This often resulted in a confrontation with the neighbouring large and powerful villages. In order to solve this problem, in 1872 the boundary line between Manipur and Naga Hills was clearly laid down. At all essential points, and wherever it could be identified, the boundary line of 1872 was retained. The few villages which fell on the dividing line and over which Manipur has acquired control were given to this state. Further, from the *Telizo Peak*, which marked the termination of 1872 line, to the watershed of the main line of hills which divide the effluents of the *Brahmaputra from those of the Irrawaddy*, as far as the *Patkai Pass*, was declared to be the limits of the Manipur State on its Northern frontier. The Naga Hills district was advanced to match with the boundary of Manipur thus determined (Sema 1986).

Chandramani (1970) give a detail description of the boundary of Manipur in his book "*The Boundary of Manipur*". He states that the territorial possession of the **western boundary** of Manipur extends upto the Brahmaputra valley. He supported his claim by quoting from the Treaty of alliance dated 14th September 1762. On November 5, 1832, the Government of Bengal finally resolved to transfer the tract east of the Jiri River between the two branches of the Barak River, over which he had already extended his influence. Thus the territorial extent of Manipur was confined to the two hills Range, the *Kalanga Range* and *Noonjai Range* which are situated between the eastern and the western bunds of the Barak. Thus the line of Jiri and the western bunds of the Barak

formed as the boundary of Manipur and Cachar. His account is supported by report from Manipur State Archives (Manipur State Archives op.cit).

The *Kabaw valley* marked the **eastern boundary** between Manipur and Burma but it remained controversial between the countries because of its economic importance arising out from rich teak woods and to extend their sovereignty over that valley. In spite of the British claims that the Kabo Valley belongs to Manipur Kings; the Burmese Kings rejected the boundary demarcated by the Grant and Pemberton. They supported their argument by quoting the agreement between the King Kiyamba of Manipur and King of Pong of ceding the valley to Manipur in the year 1485 AD. They further add that the King of Pong was not a tributary of Awa 400 year ago. The cede territory comprises the Norjeeree and the Muyalong Hills on the eastern side of the Ningthi River. In spite of the rightful claim of the King of Manipur, the Supreme Government of England ceded the territory to Burma because they felt that *Burma was more important than Manipur* in term of the natural resources which the British are more interested with. Major Burney was therefore directed to announce to the Manipur King that “The Supreme Government still adheres to the opinion that the Ningthi forms the proper boundary between Awa and Manipur but in consideration for his Majesty (King of Burma) feelings and wishes and in spirit of amity and good will subsisting between the two countries the Supreme Government consented to the restoration of the Kabo Valley to Awa and to established of the boundary at the foot of Yoomdounng Hills (cited in Chandramani 1970). But the King was compensated by the Government of British with a sum of sicca Rs 500/- p.m to be paid by half yearly for the loss of the valley. Grant and Pemberton handed over the valley without the consent of the King and the people of Manipur on 9 January 1834 and the treaty was concluded the same day.

The **northern boundary** was marked by the forest between the Doyeng and Dhunsiri in 1835. In 1842 a kind of vague boundary between Manipur and Naga Hills, was laid down by Lieutenant Bigge from the British side and Captain Gordon as the representatives of Manipur. But the Angamis had little regard for the Bigge-Gordon line. In 1854, the Maharaja of Manipur invaded the Angami country and threatened to bring all the hills

under complete subjugation. When the Mozuma Nagas and other headman Heekalay and Nephoo, appeal to the supreme Government for the protection from the Muniporis. Their request was turned down because the Supreme Government opined that Manipur being an independent Kingdom could act independently. However, after the annexation of Manipur in 1891, the territory of Manipur was confined to Mao thanna for administrative conveniences. ***The southern boundary*** was marked by raids by the Lushai tribes on different occasions but finally after many expeditions by the British as well as Manipur King the boundary line was demarcated in 1894 towards Lunglen Hill westwards to Tipaimukh. The proposed boundary ran the course of the Tin Zin River to its source in the Yomadung range thence for 4 miles south west wards the crest of that range and then the course of the Yangdung River to its mouth on the Manipur River. The Government of India accepted the proposed boundary and officially approved it in 1898.

Maharaja Bhudachadra in his proclamation to the first Manipur State Assembly on October 18th 1948 mentioned about the boundary of Manipur to be over a wide area extending as far as the southern portion of China in the north, the gold mines in the Sibsagar valley, the river Chindwin in the east and south, and Chandrapur (Cachar) in the west. Her present are is 8,650 square miles plus 7,000 square miles of the Kabaw valley, including 7,900 square miles of the hills. The treaty of Yandaboo, dated 9th January 1834 ratified between Maharaja Gambhir Singh and the Company. This treaty left us a good heritage, namely the Kabaw valley of 7,000 square miles for which we now get from Burma Rs. 6,270 as annual tribute which according to the spirit of the terms of the Agreement, will cease when the area is reverted to our state.

It can be observed from the above presentation that Manipur was a powerful Kingdom comparing to her small population. She could defend herself and her people for more than 2000 years with few exceptions like the *seven year devastation* (1819-26). The boundary has been fluctuating from time to time but not beyond the present boundary. The present boundary has been maintained for more than two century. After becoming an international protectorate of the British, the boundary remains static. All this accounts were supported by the Maps collected by British as well as by other scholars and

travelers from time to time. Henry Yule map (1500 A.D) is one of the earliest but we have plenty of maps in the nineteenth century.

Kangla as Symbol of Power:

The Kangla:

The recorded history of Manipur begins with the coronation of the first Meitei King, *Nongda Lairen Pakhangba* in 33 A.D. The historical capital and focal centre of the state was *Kangla*, the control of which lay at the roots of all political and religious power. The legendary 'Kangla' complex had been the capital of Manipur from the very ancient times down to 1891. Topographically, Kangla incorporated adjoining stretches of land from the traditional four divisions or *Panas* of the state, namely *Laipham*, *Khapham*, *Ahallup* and *Naharup*, with Imphal forming a separate administrative territorial unit inclusive of the capital Kangla. Kangla was earlier a vast piece of sprawling land, originally a mound or hill east of the Nambul River. It included the ancestral abode of the ruling clan, their burial places, and areas of worship with a host of scared shrines and thatch-roof house spread over its territorial complex. There was the megalithic structure of ritual importance. Geomorphologically, Kangla was the first piece of dry land that emerged after prolonged submersion of the valley under water in probably upper Pleistocene times. The word Kangla emphasizes the fine spread of dry earth at the centre of *Kangleipung*, the area of freshly emerged dry land. It was indeed a piece of life from the cosmic vastness of the embryonic watery void. In fact the Loktak Lake, which lies at the southern side of the valley near Moirang, has its shores right upto Imphal where the General post office stands. It is still known as Loktak Maru (seed of Loktak). Kangla also signifies the central architectural construction of palace, where the king sat for the transaction of his public duties. The big palatial house was constructed with utmost ritual attention and care, with materials for its construction being supplied from different regional areas of the state (Arambam 1991).

The ancient treaties, especially *Sakoklamlen*, *Chinglon Laihui*, *Nuglon*, *Kanglei*, *Layat* and *Kangla Houba* etc laid down the rules for the construction of Kangla. The rulers of Manipur, who belonged to the Ningthouja clan strictly followed the ancient text for the

construction of Kangla (Khelchandra et al 2006). In the manuscript *Kangla Houba*, we find that for the construction of palace hall-pillars were brought by the chiefs of different ethnic communities from their respective localities. Special type of wood was preferred. It was stated that the main pillar of Kangla should be made from the wood of particular tree, *Haiyukhok* found in the *Koubru hills*. The pillar opposite to the main pillar was to be made from the wood of *Chingthang Upan* available in the *Chingkhei hill*. The wood for the pillar next to the main pillar again was brought from *Wangbren hill*. The wood for its opposite pillar made from *Tumitla* tree was brought from *Pishum hills*. The next pillar was brought from the wood of *Taimeran* brought from *Langing Ching* and the next pillar, opposite to the pillar, was brought from *Heibok hill*. *Kangla*, which was a name of a beam, was brought from *Khebu ching*. *Ura-Umdang* (Kanchi), which was a typical bamboo, was collected from *Thanga Karam*. *Charot* of thatch roofing was obtained from *Langmajing hills*. *Paya* (bamboo ribbon) was obtained from *Wabagai*. *Sanayumbi*, another pillar, was brought from *Thangjing hills*. *Khagen*, another beam, was collected from *Langol hills*. The four pillars for the four directions were to be brought from the four *pannas*- *Ahallup*, *Naharup*, *Khabam* and *Laipham*. Later these *pannas* were renamed as *Leikais* (locality)- *Khwai*, *Yaishkul*, *Khurai* and *Wangkhei* respectively. The chiefs of these *leikais* were made responsible for the collection of different kinds of wood as mentioned above, whenever the need arose. It appear that this arrangement of constructing Kangla from woods brought from different places was an attempt to integrate and consolidate the people living in the valley along with the people of the hills. This settlement pattern was singular and effectively maintained since Kangla was the capital of many ethnic communities so each of them had to share their wealth with a sense of responsibility (Sanasam 2006).

The coronation ceremony was conducted at the sacred *Kangla* and is known as the *Kangla Men Tongba* or *Phambal Kaba*. The more respectful alternative to address the king is to refer to the *Phambal Minghul* or the coronation name derived from whatever the king would catch or conquer at the traditional *Phambal Lal*, "an excursion of the king before the coronation (or *Phambal Tongba* or *Men Tongba*)." Before coronation the designate-king is ordained to proffer clothes for deities and even to live with the royal

deity, '*Yumjao Lairembi*' for five days according to M. Jhulon Singh." As a tradition Angom Piba or clan would offer royal robe for coronation, itself attended, among others, by all his Naga Chiefs. Kaomacha records that in 411 A.D the coronation ceremony of King Naokhamba was performed by the 64 Phamdous and other nobles, as per '*Phambal Lon*' or Manipuri Puya (Khelchandra 2008).

The act of accession to the throne of the Meitei king, like its counterparts in Southern-Mongoloids South-East Asian Kingdoms, was not simply a political act of affirming the ruler's right to get obeisance from the ruled. It was to be a serious invocation to the ancestral spirits to help secure the life power for affecting the welfare and prosperity of the realm. The entire rituals were built up on traditional cosmogonies, embellished by the cult of veneration of ancestors and belief in the fertility principle. The cult of the placenta was also deeply embedded into this principle. The coronation celebrations revealed therefore, deep socio-cultural layers in structured relationships between the ancestors, the ruler and his people, encapsulating the past, present and future in one solid time frame, and generating one huge theatrical exercise the governing ideology of the state (Arambam op.cit). Apart from being a seat of power, Kangla is the nerves centre of Meitei cosmology and in fact, a miniature version of the land of Meiteis and the surrounding tribes. It is the very embodiment of the myths, the State, the philosophy, the culture, the arts and literature, the concept of design and architecture all rolled together. It is believed to be the place where first settlement was established. It is the cradle of the evolution of culture and tradition of Manipur. According to Meitei belief, there is a relationship of homology between the physical world and the parts of a human being. Following this homology, Kangla was the navel; the head is represented by *Koubru hills* in the North West; Loktak lake – the pelvic zone. Kangla, therefore, occupied a strategic area, a vital connection that gives life-blood to the child. Kangla therefore plays a crucial role in transmitting energy and life power to all parts of the system (Brara 1998).

The idea presented is similar with Arambam (op.cit). He observed that Kanga becomes organically related to the physio-geographically setting of the state in a special manner. It occupies the ritual centre in Meitei cosmogonic thought. Pre-Hindu Meitei belief system

provides a biological homology of the physical state functioning like a human organism, where Kangla occupies the navel, the hollow in the belly left by the detachment of the umbilical cord. In the bio-physical structure of the state, the Koubru hills in the north-west the early settlement areas in pre-historic times, is regarded as head; the three rivers, Iril, Imphal, and Nambul are regarded as the main arteries of the body, and Loktak lake as the pelvic zone. The drain at the Chindwin beyond the “*Sugnu Nungthong*” (Stone Door of Sugnu) was regarded as the rectum. He further describe another belief system which talk about Kangla as the microcosm of the state, the miniscule representatives of the macro-organism of the body, had within its geographic confines the macro-representation of the entire body symbolized by specific allocation of ritual areas. The macrocosm was present in the microcosm itself. The Koubru hills or the organic head was represented by the physical presence of the shrines of the first creators, the *Aseeba* (Sanamahi), and *Pakhangba* temples along with the Okshang (Pig’s house 7), slightly to the northwest of the coronation seat. The breast of the organism was represented by the *Sanathong* (Golden Door) and *Kangla Uttra* (House of the Public Duties) at the south-east of the coronation site. The main arteries of the body was now represented by *Khongs* (rivulets)- the Laikhongm Khakhong, Marongkhong etc, which washed the central areas of the historic site in a semi subterranean drain system. The coronation seat (*Phammoimit or Phallangmei*) which was a stone at a cave (Surung) was regarded as eye-the all seeing, light emitting centre in the human organism. This symbolic representation of the coronation seat as the eye or light (Nongmoinu) was however, to be intermixed later on with the seed giving placental and serpentine homologies. For according to “*Phampallon*” (Book for coronation), the coronation seat was where the placenta of seven ancestral father were buried. Again, the book “*Leihou-Namfalol*” gives the place of the coronation seat in the cranium of the ancestral father (ancient serpent-dragon with nine horns), the two sides of the seat being placed in the area between the two horns of the deity. Kangla therefore, perform a vital function in the human organism of the state, transmitting energy and life-power to all parts of the system.

Even though the period of Kangla’s existence dates back to antiquity but the royal chronicle gives many references to the construction of ‘*Kangla*’ by successive reigning

kings in Manipur. The major landmarks in the growth of '*Kangla Fort*' were constructed by King Khagemba (1597 - 1652 A.D.) - the conqueror of the Chinese. The royal chronicle records that in 1632 A.D., Khagemba constructed a brick wall at the western gate of '*Kangla Fort*'. It appears that the art of brick making was acquired from the Chinese prisoners who were captured during the Chinese invasion of the eastern frontier of Manipur. His son Khunjaoba (1632 - 1666 A.D.) improved on the fortification and beautification work of '*Kangla Fort*'. It is said that the king excavated a moat (Thangapat) on the western side of the '*Fort*'. During his period, the power and prestige of Manipur was at its peak. Burmese kings/chiefs approached him to settle their disputes and beg the hands of Manipuri princesses. The present state symbol Kanglasha (Dragon by British) stood in front of the *Uttra* toward the west, facing west. The Chronicle *Cheitharol Khumpapa* records the construction of the *Kangla Sha* in Saka Era 1726 (1804 A.D) during the reign of Maharaja Chourjit. The Burmese destroyed the two fabulous statues of the two Kanglasha (Nongsha) again in 1844. But after the British conquest of Manipur on 27 April 1891, the two Nongshas were blow off by the British on Monday the 14th day of ingel (i.e. 20th of July) in 1891. The Fort was further improved and enlarged by king Garibaniwaz and after him by successive kings of Manipur. Since the reign of Maharaja Bhagyachandra (1762 - 1798 A.D.), due to repeated invasion by the Burmese, '*Kangla*' was deserted for several times. Maharaja Gambhir Singh, with the help of the Manipur Levy, liberated Manipur from the hands of the Burmese invading forces which occupied Manipur for seven years. This period of Burmese Rule is known as "*Chahi Taret Khuntakpa*" (Seven Years Devastation) in the annals of Manipur. Gambhir Singh, however, established his capital at *Langthabal* which is now known as Canchipur. During the reign of Nara Singh, the capital was shifted to '*Kangla*' in 1844 (Khelchandra et al op.cit). *Kangla* has indeed had been connected with never ending cycle of human action since the dawn of Meitei consciousness. A host of struggles, fights, deaths, births and dramatic happening ad centered at *Kangla* from time immemorial. In these areas, were associated physiognomic revelations or mythic memories of creation, of birth of the creator gods and goddess and deeds of many supernatural cultural heroes of the ancestral past (Arambam op.cit). After Manipur was defeated by the British in 1891, the '*Kangla*'

has been under occupation by the Security forces/Assam Rifles. The Assam Rifle vacated the Kangla in 2001 after a violent protest by the people of Manipur.

Joykumar (2006) observed that People look at Kangla from different perspectives. The people who believe in the traditional religious practices regarded it as scared place. Therefore they are trying to install the images of deity inside the place. Because of the construction of temple of Govindaji, the people of who believe in Hindu religion thought that, it is also a scared religious place of Hindu religion. The people who worked on culture took it as an important cultural site and historians took it as an important historical monument. They are all corrected from their own angles. This is quality and beauty of this place “Kangla” he furthers add, Kangla is the history of people of Manipur is Kangla and history of Manipur is Kangla.

Form of Governance:

Manipur had gone through certain phase of administrative changes ranging from village polity to constitutional monarchy like many ancient countries of Europe and Asia. For a longer period its history the kingdom was under the system of centralized monarchy based on feudalism. Centralized monarchy is one where the socio-economic and political activities of the state are concentrated around the king as the ultimate authority in the area of his sphere of influence. On the other hand, feudalism is characterized by granting of fiefs, chiefly in the form of land and labour, in return for political and military services, a contract sealed by oaths of duty and devotion. The grantor was lord of grantee (Goshwami 2006). With the foundation of the Ningthouja dynasty, the social and political development of the Meitei's was centered around the ruling dynasty. Monarchy was the prevalent form of government. Gangumei observes that the state emerge as a result of the gradual growth of human civilization with development of economic organization, social order and steady livelihood. The King was the head of the state and all veto powers were vested to him. However there was no evidence of centralized king's power. The autocratic rule of the king and his power was controlled and limited by the *Ninghou Pongba Tara, Nine Khunpangthous, Sixty four Phandous and Clan Pibas*. The Angom

Ningthou was the most powerful. He was the head of the 64 Phamdous. He was always on the advice of the *Maichous* (Pandits). Both the King and Council of Minister controlled each other. There were some traces of democratic elements. Even if, the King was the head of the state, public opinion was an important factor that restrained the power of the King and the State. However with the increase of King's power, the monarchy form was strengthened. It also depends on the power of the Council of Minister. If the Angom Ningthou and other members were weak, the King could use his autocratic power. Otherwise his extraordinary powers were checked and control by the powerful nobles (Promodini op.cit). Sanajaoba (1991) opined that the king, himself by exercise of auto-limitation did not take any major decision, without the aid and advice of the "*Pongba Tara*" and the "*High lords*" although the reasons behinds the adoption of the Meitei 'Rule of Law' of that age and civilization are very little known. Successive Meitei Kings established good administrative relationship between the centre and the other subordinates groups and tributary hill tribes.

The governance of the country was based on the written constitution "*Loyumba Shinyen*". Prof Kabui (1998) observed that it is a royal edict (Constitution) on the social distribution of economic and administrative functions proclaimed by King Loiyumba of Manipur (1074-1112 A.D). It is an important historical document for the reconstruction of the social, political and economic history of Manipur. This decree was issued by Loiyumba in 1110 A.D. The decree was based on the earlier codes and conventions during the previous reign as there are references to them in the text. The Loyumba was further expanded by later kings like Kyamba (1467-1508), Khagemba (1597-1652), Garibniwaz or Pamheiba (1709-1748), Bhagyachandra (1763-1798) and Chourjit (1803-1813). This expanded document was edited by Khullen Chandrasekhar Singh and published in 1975. There is another text known as *Mashin* as pointed out by N Khelchandra. If we read together then it will give a mine of information on the social and economic history of Manipur. The decree of Loiyumba deals with the distribution of occupation according to Yumnaks (*families*), assignment of duties to priests and priestesses, assignment of the works of maintenance of abode of village deities (*Umanglais*), creation of administrative department (*Loishang*), duties and function of the

kings and queens, royal etiquette, titles and decorations awarded to the nobles, administration of justice, keeping of standard time and many other things.

Maichou Oinam Bogeshwor in one of his unpublished monographs, traces the Meitei style of administration, based on joint collaboration between the people and the King, which has been expressed by the proverb “*Leibanka Nama, Ningthouna Nama*” meaning “One part by the people and another by the king”, all powerful arbitrary, despotic was probably not a model of Meitei monarchy. The constitutional framework-in its early pattern, with little sophisticated-was found during the period of *king Neophangba in 429 A.D.* and the administration of the Meiteileipak was done by 10 cabinet ministers, known as “Pongba Tara” viz Nongthongba, Khwairakpa, Yaiskul Lakpa, Naharus Lakpa, Ahallup Lakpa, Hiyangloi, Wangkhei Louremba, Khurai Angouba, Pukhangba, and Chonghanba, over and above 64 high lords representing 32 administrative units (cited in Sanajaoba op.cit).

The Council of Minister (*Ningthou Pongba Tara*) was regarded as a vital organ for the administration of the country. Their importance lay in the fact that the king feels that he should have diverse views in dealing with his people and the country. The king should enlist the competent person as minister. It is not hereditary. The members of the council can be represented by any person who is considered of marked ability and loyalty to the throne. Earlier without the approval and cooperation of the Council of Ministers the King does not act on any issue of national importance. But during the period of Pamheiba, he overrules his Council of Minister and adopts Vaishnavism. This depends upon the personality of the King. The strength of the council of Ministers varied from time to time. Out of the sixty four Phamdous, ten were selected and known as “*Ningthou Pongba Tara*” Therefore generally the strength of Council of Minister was 10 till the time of King Loyumba (1074 A.D). Afterward the strength was reduced to nine and during the period of King Garib Niwaz, the number was again increased to twelve including his Chief Queen. The post of Chief Queen was replaced by *Awa Purel* (foreign Minister) during the time of King Chandrakiti. The *Awa Purel* was associated with the military

rather than the civil organization. The *Pandit Achouba* (Chief Pandit) was also treated as member of the council during emergencies (Singh 1976).

Administrative System:

From the very beginning of introduction of centralized administration, the kingdom was broadly divided into two categories i.e. the administration of the centrally located valley and the administration of the surrounding hills. The administration of the valley was again sub-divided into urban and rural administration. Likewise for the hill areas, the administration was again sub-divided into administration of the hills areas adjoining to the valley and administration of the hills areas far and wide from the valley (Goshwami op.cit). Oinam (2005) observed that, in the traditional political set up, relationship between the ruler and its subjects, between the conqueror and the vanquished, are marked by submission in the form of tribute either through 'cash' (gold), kind or labour. There were three forms of subjecthood that the people had to adhere under the king. Those were (i) *phamnaiba*, (ii) *lallup*, and (iii) *loipot*. All the inhabitants as subjects of the king constitute the aristocrats, commoners and vanquished (applicable to the hill tribes). In accordance with their nature of relationship with the king as the subjects, each has to undergo and perform certain forms of obligation as duty towards the king (state). The king possessed the divine rights and each individual under his political control owe allegiance to him. The aristocrats were known as *phamnaiba*. They were exempted from undergoing any physical labour. Their duties were to assist the king in both the day-to-day administration as well as military affair depending upon the nature of the job. This was characterized by hierarchy. The chiefs, priests, and the selected favourites of the king, particularly those who have martial connection with the royal family and were appointed to the high office, formed the aristocracy and served the king by performing 'non-labourious service' (fandom) (Bhattacharjee 2006).

Those subject-commoners who were directly under the administration of the king had to provide labour to the king in the form of *lallup*. This labour was compulsory for all the commoners between the ages of 16 to 60. *Loipot*, on the other hand, was a means of

administrative and revenue control of the king to his subjects, who are not directly under his day-to-day administrative fold. These are the people, who have been conquered, defeated or controlled. Most of the hills tribes of Manipur where Manipur king could lay his military expedition fall under the category. The significance of Pakhangba's reign lies in his bold attempt to turn the tide against joint family system by introducing *Lallup* (forced male labour in return for land-use) and to also restructure the then disorganized society in his kingdom into four Pannas or divisions and consolidate the system of administration, including stationing of 400 regular militia always available in Kangla. And this system of Lallup 'was first introduced, it is said, in the reign of Pakhangba, and it has undergone little change since.' For it remained in force till the Britishers overran Manipur and abolished it while introducing land revenue system based on permanent land settlement to farmers so as to realize land revenue with which modern administration with proper budgeting could be had (Khelchandra op.cit). *Lallup* literally mean Association for War (Lal-War, Lup- Organisation or Association).

Ethnicity was first introduced in the governance of Manipur during the colonial rule when they separated the administration of the hill tribes from that of Manipur valley. The Maharaja was entrusted with the administration of the Meitei inhabited valley with the help of Manipur State Durbar while, the President of the Manipur State Durbar, a British ICS officer was to administer the hill tribes who were sub-divided into the Nagas and the Kukis. And the British indirect rule was introduced in the hills areas. The British further recognized the Kuki Chiefs and the headmen or the Khullakpas of the Nagas who were authorized to administer their villages through the tribal customary laws (Kamei op.cit).

Valley:

For efficient administration, the people were divided into four *Pannas* (administrative division) to pay service to the Meitei King. The Pannas was believed to have started during the Pakhangba period but the date of establishment is uncertain. But during the period of the Loyumba, he systematized the administrative division of the country by creating six lups. *Khongchalup, Nongmailup, Angoubalup, Leichol Lakpa Talong Khombalup, Khurailup, Liphambamlup and Khangjeilup*. The six lups were perhaps the basis of the development of the Panna system at a later historical period (Kamei op.cit). Initially there were four Pannas namely *Ahallup* (comprising of old men), *Naharup* (comprising of Young men), *Laipham* (ancestral are of worship), *Khabam* (Kha-south, mapham-place). Later on two more pannas were added comprising of the Tangkhuls and Lois. The Lois was *Hidakphanba* (those who attend the Hookah or tobacco) and the Tangkhuls were *Potsangba* (watchman). The potsangba later become potsangbam and assimilated to the Meitei fold. Each panna is headed by a head called ***Panna Lakpa*** and next to him s the ***Lallup Chingba***. He served as an intermediary between the officers in Kangla and men in the villages. ***Machahal*** is the position next to Lallup Chingba, who assists him during the meeting with the Lallup providers. Each of the four principal pannas was divided into two departments, ***Sanglen*** and ***Sanguba***. The office of the Sanglen department looks after the service of the King, while those of Sanguba looks for the Queen (Brara op.cit).

The system of Pannas is more or less similar with the present day district. Each pannas consist of number of families and tribes. The head of each family or tribe would select from his families and tribes who can render ten day service (lallup) to the king for and on their behalf. The liability of the Lallup commenced as soon as a man reached the age of seventeen- sixty when he becomes entitled to cultivate one part of land (about one hectare) with tax in kind exacted by the King. This ten-days-service is so arranged that a man works his ten days and has an interval of thirty with regularity all the year round. In default of his Lallup, the man had to forfeit one rupee, and or a substitute is hired. In the case of permanent illness or disability, a man under sixty may be excused from labour,

but notice must be given and the authorities satisfied of the true nature of the case". In the event of an individual wishing to escape his turn of duty, he must either provide a substitute or pay a certain sum, which sum goes to pay for a substitute if required, or the rest of the lallup may agree to do the extra duty receiving the money. In no case does the money paid for exemption go to Government. A payment of twelve annas will, it is said, exempt a man for forty days. Over every Lallup or class of labourer independent of number is an officer named the "*Lakpa*" who is responsible for the performance of the prescribed duties. There is no lallup for women (Khelchnadra op.cit). There is also a branch of lallup called *Khundin*, the duty of which was to see that men liable to lallup performed their task well. Lallup cover all state works (M Ibohal 1988). To summon all these lallup to the Kangla at the king's command, a big royal drum (*Kangla Pungjao*) had to be beaten five times to herald invasion by attacking enemies or declaration of war. Subsequently cavalry unit would be utilized to inform the people and gang up the lallup. Every able-bodied countryman had to report running to the Kangla. Such signal used to play a vital role, as the palace had very few regular infantry. After 1627, the Kangla drum was replaced by gunshots (Khelchandra ibid).

In terms of peace it did work for economic development and in times of war, it becomes military service. As a matter of fact, there was hardly any works which are not covered by Lallup. It is a glaring and indispensable fact that Lallup system was the pivot of the governmental machinery of the early Manipur state (Ibohal op.cit). This practice was considered as 'forced labour' by Maxwell, the political agent of Manipur (1892–), and the system was later abolished. Similarly Brown viewed it as 'an institution of the greatest consequence to the people of Manipur. However, Oinam observed that, this form of institution had several positive sides. It not only kept the subject responsible to the state but also was economically self sustained with king's rewards (land allocation) to the people in return for *lallup* (Oinam op.cit).

Besides Lallup, there was another system of work allocation called "*Yumnak Mashin*". Under this system, each 'Yumnak' (household) of each of the seven salais has its own "*Mashin*" (work), interesting to note that the work done by each yumnak determines

name, for instance the Yumnak Khoirem meaning Khoi-Bee and rom-rearing. In this way all the Yumnak have their own respective allocation of work. The works are so prepared that to cover the socio-economic, political, religion and cultures aspect of the society (Ibohal op.cit). Lallup was attended by the male population while Yumnak Mashin was attended to the work assigned to the Yumnak. This development of Lallup system was the manifestation of the emergence of feudalism in the social, administrative and political structure of the Meitei Kingdom. The Lallup was better administered through the administrative and social divisions. Loiyumba introduction of the six administrative units called Pannas was a significant contribution to the strengthening of the working of the feudal service system of Lallup. The Lallup system was in existence the centuries preceding Loyumba rule (Kabui op.cit). After Manipur was defeated by the British in 1891, Regent Major Maxwell had taken the charge of the valley as Superintendent of the state. On the occasion of investiture of the Raja Churachand (before he was sent to Ajmer), in April, 1892, the Lallup system was abolished on 29th April 1892 and house tax was of Rs 2 was imposed for every house occupied by a male adult as a substitute for Lallup (Goshwami op.cit). After the assumption of the Maharaja Churachand in 1907 and subsequent introduction of the Manipur Administrative Rules 1907, the Manipur State Darbar (MSD) was responsible for the valley administration and the hill administration was entrusted to the Vice President of the MSD, a British official. The Raja was the President of the MSD.

Hill:

The administration of the hills adjoining to the valley was almost in uniformity with that of the valley. The hill people inhabiting these areas had to perform Lallup like the people of the valley. On the later period many tribal villages adjacent to the valley were also given village wise duties (not surname wise which is the case of the valley), like *Kabuis of Lamangdong* (Bishnupur) were asked to grow *sugarcane* for the royal family, *Kabuis of Wakha* (a village situated some six kilometers east of Kangla), near the foothill of Nongmaiching were asked to grow *Kaphoi* (Pomegranate), *Kabuis of Keikhu* were to supply plantain leaf, *Kabuis of Ngariyan hills* (situated some eight kilometers south east

of Kangla) to supply *Karpur* (Camphor). They are also known as *Karpur Sungba Kabui*, *Sandand Senba Kabuis* were asked to look after the royal cows, *Lamtan Kabuis* to plant *Kwa* (betel nuts) etc.. For the hills areas lying far and wide from the centrally located valley, some sort of indirect administration had prevailed. In these areas, two tier administration systems were in existence. First, the people had to render service regularly to their respective *Ningthous or Khullapas*. They were under his direct control. However in the case of some tribes, the authority of the Ningthou or Khullapa was absolute whereas in case of some other tribes, the Khullapa or Ningthou had to exercise limited authority. Secondly besides performing their duties for the village and the village chief, the people in the hill had to render service to the state. They had to co-operate with the state administration at the time of war campaign, hunting expeditions, Pothang during the visit of royal dignitaries and officials, cutting of timber for various purposes of the state etc. The King does not interfere in the administration of these villages as long as the Khullapas or Khunbus or Ningthous remain peaceful and render service to the state administration. Prof Gangumei stated that during the reign of king Charairongba (1697-1790) the kingdom of Manipur had established a department in charge of hill tribes known as *Haomacha Loisang* and his lost son (Garibniwaz or Pamheiba) was made in-charge of the department. It was established to look after and regulate the activities of the hill people. However Padmashree Khelchandra suggested that *Haomacha Loisang* had existed since long and Meidingu Charairongba had only reorganized it (Goshwami *ibid*).

Noted anthropologist B.K Roy Burman pointed out that the Anal which is located at the buffer zone between Burma and Manipur has used three terms for the village chief: Khurwung, Kolapa, and Khullakpa. Khurwunng means chief of the village and Kolapa or Kholpu means owner of the village and Khullakpa is a Meitei word, which stands for the administrators of the village. Historically some villages had a treaty of alliances with the Meitei King, those villages had only Khurwung and no Khullakpa. But some villages were also under direct subjugation of the King. These villages had Khullakpa. Prof Gangumei Kabui has given a case history of how in one village the office of Khurwung was reduced to that of a Khullakpa by the King. The differential reckoning of these two offices continues even now among the Anals and allied tribes of the region (Roy Burman

1985 foreword to Gangumei, Anal-a Transborder tribes of Manipur). Imchen (2006) observed that ,over the years, a number of Meitei designations appeared in the hills to facilitate political relationships. R Brown reports that among the Kabuis or Rongmeis there were three hereditary officers, i.e., *Khullakpa*, *Lalukpa* and *Lampu*. The *Khullakpa* was the village chief; whereas *Lalukpa* was in charge of the Lallup or Laliup labour service extracted by the Meitei Raja. Khasim Ruviah refers to an administrative post, called *Luplaka* (or *Luplakap*), which was known to the Tangkhuls. “In those days, just below the headman (Awanga), there was a senior councilor, called *Luplaka*, or group leader-who represents the next oldest clan to that of the headman’s clan. The *Luplakpa* assist the village headman in all affairs of the village administration. He was the next to first man among the equals-the headman. As a group leader, he might initiate (sic) in all the administration affairs. But in any case he could not override the rights and obligation of the other councilors”.

The other Naga segments, namely, Moyon, Monsang, Lamkang and Tarao have also assimilated certain features of the Meitei structure in their politics. Among the Moyon’s two moieties, viz, *Sumphuw* and *Jungvain*, the *Iruwung* or headman’s post was held by the *Sumphuw* moiety, while the post of *Khurfu* (rituals head) was reserved for the latter. The traditional structure had the *Iruwung* heading a council composed of *Khurfu*, *Vankhrah* (aide to *Khurfu*), *Pakhanglak*, *Ningolakpa* and *Nahalakpa* (controller of young boys, girls and youth respectively), *Jupan* and *Keirung* (caretakers if rice beer for elders in session), *Serung* and *Keirung* (tax collector) and *Changlu* (village crier). Their oral tradition points to the development of a chieftaindom of sorts alongside the Moirangs of the valley. It is said to have emerged around the seventh century A.D under one Kurkham Ngoru clan. He is said to have controlled twelve villages at that time. There is an account of the Moirangs and the Moyons going on war in their narratives. Kurkham was lost in the battle with Moirangs (the Moirangs knew him as Konggam Ningthou). The latter erected a monolith in honour of their slain enemy. His sword was buried in the ground and in course of tome a bamboo grove grew at the spot. The Moyons say that this grove was still around when the Chandel district headquarter was established in this place in the era of independent India. Today, a monument erected around this place in his honour is

called the *Ruwth-iphon* or memorial stone. Eventually, the Meitei functionary posts were introduced into their village administration (Imchen *ibid*).

Prof Kabui (1985) observed that the name Anal is given by the Meitei. This argument is accepted by the authority of the Anal tribes. There is even a living Legend that the Meitei God of water and rain Wangburen married *Shangnu*, a girl from Anal Khullen. It is believed that Meitei King of Manipur had contacts with Anal Khullen as early 16th century. He further stated that there was a tradition current among the Anals of southern region especially in Anal Khullen. Once a dispute arose between two persons of Anal Khullen, named Khoruwung and Chamtung for the *Khulpuship* of the village. The dispute becomes so serious that the matter was referred to the king of Manipur who had established his authority over this village. He further adds that the position like *Mantra*, *Senapati and Meitei Lampu* were introduced and other villages copied them. It was not only in Anals area but also among the Tangkhuls, the Maos and the Kabuis that the Khullakpa and the subordinate office bearers were introduced. Among the Kukis of Manipur too, the king instituted a number of posts with high sounding titles similar to those in use among the meiteis like the *Khullapas*, *Lup-lakpas*, *Zupalba and Meitei Lambu or Lampu*, etc. it is also evident from *Loyumba Shinyen (royal edict)* that the hill *Lambus* were officially deputed by the state to performed certain duties. In Shinyen, the role of Lambu is mentioned while settling disputes. The English version which was translated by Chandrasekhar and Sanajaoba reads as “ *You the Nongton Amaibi, dip the Laija Phusing (offer of khayom lakpa by the use of unburnt earthen pot). Throw the Khalei Louka (the first sowing of seed in the field), and act the part of Tangkhul Nurabee (on the first day of sylvan festival, a Tangkhul lady digs in the paddy field with her seven maids; meanwhile the Tangkhul youths assert rival claims; the Meitei Lambu sits on judgment*” (cited in Goshwami *op.cit*). There are many historical accounts that illustrate the enforcement of administration of Manipur in hills areas.

The British administered the hills of Manipur since 1891 through the political agent who was also the superintendent of the state. After the abolition of the Lallup system in 1892 a sum of rupees three per house per annum was imposed in the hills areas. Though Lallup

was abolished, a new system of forced labour was introduced. The Manipuri hill tribes had to supply coolies for road making, transportation, survey, police and the military. The Tangkhuls were forced to serve in the Chin Hills in 1893. The Kabuis refused to pay the house tax for four years and Mr F.L. Crawford, the Assistant political Agent had to resort to force in February and March 1894. In 1893, the hills areas were divided into Mao, Ukhrul, Tamenglong, Tengnoupal and Churachandpur division. Each division was placed under the charge of a Sardar with seven Lambus. With the Assumption of the authority by Raja Churachand on 15th May 1907, the raja became the president of the Manipur State Darbar (MSD) and an English ICS officer namely as W.A. Cosgrave (1907-1910) was appointed as the vice president of the MSD. The Manipur Administrative Rules 1907 was introduced under which the hill administration was placed under the vice president of the MSD. The Maharaja and other members of the MSD were not permitted to take part in the hill and tribal affairs. Thus the hill administration of Manipur was always placed under the supervision of the British official since 1891 (Goshwami op.cit). The British urged that the system is to save the hill tribes from the long reign of tyranny and oppression perpetrated by the Meitei King. But a close examination of the system revealed that the colonial master was pursuing a policy of divide and rule. In similar line Prof Lal Dena states that they (hill man) were not treated not so much as human beings but merely a human machine for doffing trenches, carrying loads and building base camps. The purpose of the policy was to extract as maximum services from the hill people and if they objected to the British colonial design, the valley people were directed against them to this end in order that the blame goes to the valley people. Thus the colonial officers tried to blame on the Rajah and the Meiteis (cited in Goshwami op.cit).

During Independence:

In the post-independence period, the representatives of the hill tribes were appointed as Ministers of the State which had never occurred in the history of Manipur. In the election of 1948, 18 seats were reserved for the hills but not on the basis of tribes, the remaining seats were for the valley including Mohammedans. Democracy had provided the opportunity for participation in the governance of the State either as Ministers or

members of the Assembly. Every community was represented except the Mao as there was no election due to political agitation. The election of 1948 was the endorsement of the State by the people of Manipur in a democratic way. There were 8 Naga MLAs - 5 Tangkhuls, 2 Zeliangrongs and one Monshang, the other 9 were Kuki-Chins including Kom and Paite. In this short-lived experiment in constitutional monarchy, the tribal people accepted the primal position of the Maharaja as the head of the kingdom and leadership of the Meiteis in the democratic set-up as the Chief Minister was a prince appointed by the Maharaja. The hill people accepted the Maharaja as the symbol of unity of the kingdom. This symbol was destroyed when the State was merged with the Dominion of India in October 1949. The Merger destroyed both autonomy and democracy of Manipur and brought a bureaucratic Central rule under a Chief Commissioner. This was, in practice, the continuance of the colonial rule, a mere replacement of the white men by the brown sahibs of the Government of India. This was a most unfortunate political development in the modern history of Manipur which was as disastrous as the British conquest of Manipur of 1891 in its consequences. Had the Government of India permitted the continuation of the working of the Manipur State Constitution within Indian Union, the people would not have felt the change from the Maharaja to the Chief Commissioner (Kamei 2003).

Economic System:

The Meitei supremacy in the Manipur valley began with the establishment of their control over the fertile agriculture land. The Meitei occupy the northern plains that were the most fertile area in the valley. The Manipuri Muslims (pagan - who was war captives) were experts' agriculturist and they were expected to teach the Meiteis the technique of paddy transplantation. Therefore they were allocated the land on the banks of rivers. The Brahmins were settled along with the Meiteis. The subdued Lois and other groups including those who had to undergo punishment for offences, immigrants and those captured in wars and other who were not liked by the king due to various reasons were forced to settle in marshy lowland which is less fertile (Bhattacharjee op.cit).

Agriculture was the main occupation and also the main contributor to the kingdom economy. In the early parts of its civilization, the mode of cultivation was primitive and production was mainly for local consumption only. Tradition and myths as recorded in number of literary texts indicates that the ancient Manipuri practices shifting cultivation. *Loyumba Shilyen* the edicts of the King Loyumba mentioned the adoption of the wet rice cultivation by the Meiteis. Another ancient's text *Panthoibi Kongkhul* refers to the plantation of varieties of crops and paddy by *Nongpok Ningthou and Panthoibi*. The Chronicles refers to several irrigation works by dredging the rivers and making drainages to drain out the water from low-lying marshy areas. King Taothingmang is remembered for his skill and techniques for making the valley suitable for cultivation.

People in the hills practiced slash and burn or Jhum cultivation whereas the peasant communities in the plain areas practiced wet rice cultivation. The method and technology of the production was fairly developed as compared with those of the neighbouring communities. E.W.Dun refers to striking similarities between the agricultural practices of Manipur and those of East Bengal. Two fundamental forms of cultivation- (i) *Punghool*, in which seeds was directly sown in the wet ploughed fields and (ii) *Lingba* in which transplantation of seedlings from the nurseries were extensively used in the valley areas of Manipur. The tools and implementation of cultivation were also not qualitatively different from those in east Bengal. Animal power, particularly bullocks and buffalos were commonly used in drawing plough and carts. *Langol* (Iron tipped single hoe plough), *Kangpot* (sledge), *Cheirong* (paddy thresher) etc were the important implementations of cultivations. *Yot* (spade), *Thangjou* (multi-purpose large dao) and *Sinjang* (a solid iron hand axe) were also commonly used though the use of wheels cart was not popular during the 19th century. The soil was fertile. Silts brought from the hills by the numerous streams constantly enriched the upper layers of agriculture land in the valley area. It was believed that even in the time of harvest failure due to some reason or other, crops from only the Thoubal (now a district) area was sufficient to feed the entire population. The valley people had also developed through the centuries their own system of water management. Through the indigenous methods of *Thingel* (dam/dykes), *Khong* (canal), *Tutengba* (dredging of rivers) etc, the people of Manipur valley succeeded in

harnessing 142 cm of annual average monsoon rain to their advantage and made the place one of the most fertile rice producing areas in the entire region (Lokendra 1998).

The people in the valley have mastered the art of dredging rivers and digging new courses in the first century A.D and the peasantry had become a solid aspect of life. By the fifth century, wet rice cultivation through irrigation systems of dams and canals known as the *Ethei-Loukhong* complex were carried out. The developed culture of crops husbandry especially for rice, led to the abundance of rice production in the valley and stability of the food economy. Brown reported paddy yields of 2,700 kg per hectares on the worst land and 4,320 to 5,400 kg per hectare on the best land. He estimated a yield of 4,954 kg per hectare on the average which is not much below the yield in post-Green Revolution Manipur. In spite of the stability of the food economy and high surplus of agriculture, the manufacturing sectors was extremely weak and of subsistence in nature. The principal manufacture at the turn of the nineteenth century was coarse, clothes, muslin and silk. Silk was traded with Burma and Yunan. Chinese also took away wax, ivory, cloths and ponies from Manipur (Priyoranjan 2005).

The land system in the valley can be broadly classified into *Ingkhol* (homestead land) and *Lou* (paddy field). All the land in the kingdom theoretically belonged to the king. However one third of the total land was under his direct control and another one third (or more than that) was in the possession of the members of the ruling family, the brahmins and the sepoys. The kings used to grant land to the priests, temple, officials and other favourites either permanently or for a specific period. The commoners were only the users of the land on payment of taxes. The king required a large labour to cultivate the huge land under their direct control. They extracted labour mainly through the *Lallup* system (compulsory service to the king). The land under direct control of the king was cultivated for them for the *Lallup kabas* (lallup attendants). In return of this lallup service an individual was entitled to cultivate for his own support one pari (2.5 acre) of land, but he was required to pay a tax in kind for that land. The tax varied from two to thirteen basket of paddy per pari per annum. The favourites were required to pay only two baskets, but from the commoners twelve baskets of paddy were realized on an average

for each pari of land. In time of war and emergencies the demand for tax used to be higher than usual. Aristocrat and the sepoys were exempted from tax but they have to pay tax if they cultivate more than their fixed proportion. The king also allowed the Meiteis to stabled new villages in reclaimed land on payment of taxes. This privileged was not extended to others (Bhattacharjee op.cit).

The Ingkhol are those land occupied by the household and the garden and were free from revenue and could be sold at the pleasure of the owner. It was inheritable and transferable. The *Kotwal* was n charge *Ingkhol* land within the Imphal areas where he kept a register showing the name of the owner and location of the lands. Most of the Lou or paddy fields were subjected to payment of revenue in cash or kind. At the village level the headman act as the agent of the king that looked after the cultivation and was responsible for the realization of tax payable by the cultivators in his village. Howell wrote that an officer called *Lourangba* (Officer in charge of paddy field) was given the responsible to collect revenue payable in rice whereas another officer known as *Phourangba* (Officer in-charge of paddy) was responsible for the collection of revenue of paddy. The actual collection at the village level was done by the village- *Lou panaba* (watchman of paddy fields) and it was from his *Keis* (Granaries) that the Lourangba used to take rice as was required. The Lourungba also maintained the settlement records. The Tax payable Lou are (i) Tounalou, (ii) Sarkari Lou, (iii) Phamlou. The Tax free lou are (i) *Sepoy Lou* (Kings Army), (ii) *Manalou* (State awardees), (iii) *Brahminlou* (Priest), (iv) *Templelou* (Forest deities), (v) *Royal familylou*, (vi) *Maharanilou* (vii) *Panglou* (person of distinguish service in war) (Lokendra op.cit).

Table No 3.1: Distribution of Land for cultivation during 19th century

A. Tax Paying Land			
Sl No.	Type of Tenure	Amount of Land under each Tenure	Rate of Revenue Per Pari
1	Taona Lou	5,000 Paries	6 Chenggoks of rice
2.	Sarkari Lou	3,700 Paries	Different rate of revenue depending on the type of tenure
3	Pham Lou	1,200 Paries	1 Pot of Dhan
B. Tax Free Land			
Sl No.	Type of Tenure	Amount of Land under each Tenure	Rate of Revenue Per Pari
1	Sepoys Lou	9,000 Paries	Revenue Free
2	Mana Lou	3,000 Paries	Revenue Free
3	Brahmins Lou	2,500 Paries	Revenue Free
4	Royal family Lou	1,000 Paries	Revenue Free
5	Maharani Lou	600 Paries	Revenue Free
6	Temple Lou	600 Paries	Revenue Free
Grant Total		26,500 Paries	
1 Pari = 2 and Half Acre		1 Pot = 2 baskets of 60 lbs (R Brown)	
2 Chenggoks = 3 Mound of Rice		12 Pots = 15 mounds	

Source: N Lokendra 1998

In addition to agriculture, the handloom was almost household for the Meiteis and considered as a respectable craft. The Pagans lived in the riverbanks and they grew vegetables, besides depending on agriculture. The agriculture yields for the Lois and other groups including those who had to undergo punishment for offences, immigrants and those captured in wars and other who were not liked by the king due to various reasons were not enough for subsistence so they also engaged on other occupation like fishing, basketry, salt making, lime making, iron work and such other professions which the high status Meiteis would refuse to perform (Bhattacharjee op.cit). Trade added to the economic prosperity and supplemented the agricultural income. The volume of trade was small as such. The bulk of the exports consisted of livestock like ponies, buffaloes, elephants. Forest products like rubber, tea seeds, wax, elephants tusk, etc and textiles like

silk and coarse cloths were also exported. Finer textiles and goods of low volume were the main items of imports from the Cachar valley of British India (Priyoranjan op.cit).

Internal trade was carried on essentially by women in the various open bazaars in the valley. And a great number of markets were established during the period of Meidingu Senbi Khagemba (1592-1652) in different places by observing suitable conditions of business transactions relating to respective areas. In the market all selling and buying are done by women. The women who are involved in this trade mostly belong to age group of 45-70 years. The women from different places come to this market and it is a glaring example of the way the Manipuri women are struggling for their existence. All the essential commodities are made available here. The power of the market women of Manipur were demonstrated on various occasions (Indira and Devi 2004). The first Nupi Lan-1904 (Women War) as well as Nupi Lan of 1939 are glaring examples. It is not only an economic centre but also a political centre as well. In order to develop trade with the people from the hills, a *Hao Keithel* (Tribal market) was developed at Imphal. The most important bazaar in the valley was the *Khwairamand Bazar* or *Sana Keithel* at Imphal. The women's market of Manipur is the only market of women in the north-east region of India and probably could be the only in the world. The economy was better even during the colonial rule in Manipur (1891-1947) (see table below). The administrative report of 1894-95 writes, 'At the present moment a two years' food surplus is stored in the village'. Productivity levels declined as new land was taken up for cultivation and as such we have taken the lowest of the productivity reports. If productivity levels are scaled down further by 23 percent, the economy was still generating 22 and 12 percent rich surpluses in 1931 and 1941 (Priyoranjan op.cit). The table shares the surplus rice production and exports trends:-

Table No 3.2: Area, Production and Rice Surplus in Manipur (1891-1941).

Year	Valley Population	Area (Hectare)	Demand (Tonnes)	Rich Production (Tonnes)	Surplus (Tonnes)	Percent Surplus
1891	1,35,782	26,500	28,107	38,160	10,053	26
1901	1,91,207	42,283	39,580	60,755	21,175	35
1931	2,86,843	71,316	59,376	1,02,695	43,319	42
1941	3,43,694	75,370	71,145	1,08,533	37,388	34

Source: Priyoranjan 2005

Table No 3.3: Rice and Chira (in tones) Export from Manipur during 1901-40.

Year	1900-01	1911-12	1924-25	1932-33	1934-35	1938-39
Rice	2,655	4,107	7,589	10,541	9,334	14,143
Chira	-	-	-	-	5,311	7,551
Total	2,655	4,107	7,589	10,541	14,645	21,694

Source: Priyoranjan 2005

Judicial System:

The efficiency of government means the efficiency of the judiciary. In early societies the administration of justice was a private affair but sometimes it was administered with the help of the community. The punishment for breaking the community law was given before the whole people of the community so as to prevent others from breaking the community law particularly customary law. Such type of administration of system was prevalent in the early Manipur. The criminal law of the early Manipur was very simple. When a complaint was received, Dolaipada (Police) was sent to arrest the accused. When the accused was produced before the court, trial was at once commenced by giving punishment or oral examination. The Royal Edicts are the earliest materials sources for criminal law, and the most important among them was the Edict of Meidingu Naophangba (429 A.D). The Edict of *Meidingu Naophangba* chalked out a brief account

of crimes and punishments of ancient Manipur. But the various accounts in short are available from Cheitharol Kumbaba, The royal chronicle of Manipur. Further, Nangshamei Puya and the annual Administrative reports of the Political Agents and the writing of British Administrators in Manipur also attributed some information about criminal justice system (Nongmaithem 1988).

Before 1709, the kings of Manipur sat in the Cheirap Court (Highest Court) and disposed all the cases in consultation with the sixty four phamdous. He took active parts in day to day administration of justice. But in 1715, during the Garib Niwaz (Pamheiba) a reform was introduced. The administration was handed over his nobles but the king remained the highest appellate authority. In Manipur there used to have four kinds of court over and above the king court (*Kuchu*) which is the highest. The courts were: (i) Courts concerning religious matters, (ii) Court concerning secular matters, (iii) Court for females, (iv) Military courts. The court can be divided into Cheirap Court (Similar to Supreme Court) which has both original and appellate jurisdictions and Village court that tried small cases (Singh op.cit).

The *Kuchu* was instituted during the reign of the king Nongda Lairem Pakahngba (33 A.D-154 A.D). It was the highest court having comprehensive jurisdiction of the state. In the court the king and his nobles tried serious cases. The king presided over the hearing. It was situated in the south western corner of the Kangla (the area of the old palace). It was regarded as a sacred spot in which all oaths with other Yeks and tribes were formally sworn. The Cheirap court which is the Supreme Court is administered by the Angom Ningthou (chief) with the nobles. The strength of the court varies from time to time depending upon the king. Sometimes it was sixty four reduces upto thirty. After the annexation of Manipur by the British in 1891, there are many reforms in the legal system of Manipur. In 1892, the strength of the Cheirap was reduced with the introduction of five magistrates which sat in Imphal. At the village level the delivery of justice was done by the village headman and elders of the village. Appeals against the decisions of the village court could be taken to Cheirap. It was usually conducted at the house of the village headman or at the village Mandop (community hall). In 1892-93, for the purpose of administration

of the judicial system, the valley was divided into eleven circles with a panchayat court in each circle. Each circle contained about one thousand houses. The strength of the panchayat court was five including the village headman. Similar to the village justice system, the hill areas were tried by the village council which consists of Khullakpa (headman), Luplakpa, Khunpu and Yu Phalba and some village elders. Oath taking was very common among the hills for delivering justice (Singh op.cit).

Punishment in early Manipur society is of various kinds. Women and Brahmins were exempted from death sentence and imprisonment. Treason or conspiracy against the king was the highest offence in the state. The highest punishment to be inflicted on the accused was death sentence. But the nature of punishment awarded for this offence varied from time to time. But sometimes the king adopted lenient attitude toward offender and sent to Loi and Naga villages. Offence of Murder was also awarded death sentence. Such punishments were given to all the people involved in the activities. Mutilation of Limbs was given to offender of stealing, theft, robbery etc. Kidnapping and murder were punished by blinding the offenders. Whipping and other corporal punishment were administered in case of general quarrel, beating of any person without sufficient cause and trading in man. Cases of assault and petty offences were punished by flogging with a cane on the shoulder of the accused. Sometimes the culprit was severely beaten and exposed in the bazaar for the said offences. Another feature of corporal punishment was *Phaouba* (exposed in the sun). Banishment means sending away to Loi village was very common form of punishment. Imprisonment was given to the offender as it gives sufficient time to the accused to change his law breaking behavior (Nongmaithem op.cit). The jail or Keishumsang or Koidi or Awashnag or Shumsang was established by Raja Naothingkhong. It was situated within the palace. In 1895 a small branch jail containing 25 convicts was established at Foijing, 9 miles from Imphal. Again in 1896-97 another branch jail for forty convicts was established at Bishnenpur or Lamangdong (Singh op.cit). Dismissal from office and deprivation of rank, fines and attachment, enslavement and punishment for cowardly soldiers, were common form of punishment.

Table No 3.4: The establishment of Police (Civil and Armed Battalions) in Manipur (AD 33 - 1826).

Sl. No	Civil Police	Year	Reigning King	Armed Battalion
1	Establishment of Lallup, Patcha Pheida, Panchayat	33	Pakhnagba	
2	Leikai Lakpas and Ningol Lakpas	2 nd Century	Khuyai Tompok	
3	Establishment of jail	664	Naothingkhong	
4	Laws Codified	1074-1112	Loyumba	
5	Establishment of 18 police Out posts	1467-1508	Kiyamba	
6	(i) Establishment of Doliapas (Civil Police) (ii) Dolaipabas replaced Loishanglois	1596	Khagemba	
7	(i) Changes in the functioning of Patcha Pheida. (ii) Establishment of Shanghuba Shanglakpa in charge of Jail and Law and order (iii) Khurailakpa made in charge of Flaw and order of Khurai. (iv) Pacha Hanjaba made in charge of Pacha	1709-1740	Garib Niwas	
		1824	Gambhir Singh	Establishment of Manipur Levy (Army)
		1825	Gambhir Singh	Mr. Grant & Pemberton Attached to teach drill and Discipline to Manipur Levy (Army)
		1826	Gambhir Singh	Manipur Levy was changed to State Military Police.

Source: Singh Ibomcha (2007).

Religion of Manipur:

Manipur presents a unique cultural, ethnic, linguistics and religious profile not to be found in any region in India. While the Sanamahi trait prevailed over majority of the people in the valley of Manipur particularly among the Meitei's, Christianity made a profound effect on the tribesman inhabiting the hilly districts of the Manipur and converted most of them to Christianity. But the Indigenous gods is seen to be worship by some of the tribal communities particularly Kabuis and Meiteis. The fact is Vaishnavism practiced by Meiteis in Manipur consequently became a peculiarly Manipuri Vaishnavism in form, adopting aspects of olden culture and modified by it. Before the advent of Hinduism following the event of oath taking known as *Nongkhrang Iruppa* in 1724 A.D during the reign of King Pamheiba, the Meiteis professed their traditional Sanamahi religion and even after this oath taking event by several hundreds of Meiteis under the threat of ostracization by holding the "*Nongkhrang*" plant, those who disapproved the new religion defied the harsh prerogative of the King, social ostracization at the instances of émigré priests and professed their conventional religion. Even today, every Meitei household worships Lord Sanamahi with whom the real Meitei spirit had been merged and they follow the ceremonies of Hinduism and outward forms without lending and emotional attachment whatsoever (Sanajaoba op.cit).

The pre-Hindu deities celebrated by the Meitei's can be broadly into three groups. The term *lai* (god) is used generally to cover all the categories of god, although it also has narrow meaning when applied specifically to the first of the three groups (Parrat 1980). Kamei (op.cit) observes that forty five were assigned to look after forty five abodes of deities (Umanglais) which were scattered all over the kingdom. Parratt broadly classified Umanglai into four groups.

- (i) *Ancestors* or deities which were believed to have had a human existence at some point in the past. Examples of these are Pakhangba, Nongpok Ningthou, Poireiton.
- (ii) Important Lai associated with one particular *yek*.

- (iii) *The domestic deities* known as *Yumjao Lai*, which are the possession of particular clan or family groups.
- (iv) *Tutelary deities*, i.e. guardian spirits connected with particular places or areas. There are various places in Manipur which are regarded as scared. These are often hills, which are associated with a particular deity. Examples are hills in Moirang and Nongmaiching which are associated with Ningok Ningthou and subsequently with Siva after the advent of Hinduism.

Brara (op.cit) observed that everything pertaining to the religious realm was preceded by the word *Lai* such as Laishang (temple of God), Laipham (place of gods), Laining Lambi (ways of god), Laipao (message of god) etc. The Meiteis believe to have one hundred and eight god in addition to Atiya Sidaba (Sky God), Sanamahi (Household deity) and Pakhangba (Mangang Ancestor, who later become the originator of all Salais). She broadly classified the Lais into three groups

- (i) The Directional Deities
 - (a) *Wangburen or Wangpurel* is a deity residing in water. He is the guardian of the southern part of the Manipur State. He is depicted as a deity riding a black tiger. He is anger and terror personified. He drowns people, and creates floods. He should be kept in good humour with all devotion. Gold necklaces and sexual indulgence is strictly forbidden during his worship. His main temple is at *Sugnu* on the bank of Imphal River.
 - (b) *Koubru* is the directional deity of the North-West. It is believed to be the place of origin of the Meiteis. The Deity was worship annually by the king with the sacrifice of goat's sheep's etc, in order to avoid famine. His temples are located in the Loi village of Sekmai and Phayeng.
 - (c) *Nongpok Ningthou* is the most prominent and dominant god among the Meitei. He is the guardian of the eastern direction and over the years has become the central deity of the Lai Haraoba festivals.
 - (d) *Thanjing* is the directional deity of the South-West direction. His temple is at Moirang.

- (e) *Marjing* is the protector of the North-Eastern direction and also the protector of animals. The Manipur version of polo and hockey are traced to him. Polo is originated from Manipur. People invoke and worship him with a polo stick and a ball when any animal in their house becomes sick.
- (ii) Household deities
- (a) *Phunga Apokpa*, is worshipped in every household. An iron tripod called *Yotsabi* is placed on the fire (*phunga*). The fire is to be kept burning day and night. Every Meitei first offer to this deity and then eat his/her food. When a new house is built, a fire should be kept burning for five days before entering the house for living.
- (b) *Sanamahi* is the most important deity in every Meitei house. Everyone takes the blessing before undertaking any activity. Although he is worshipped everyday, his main worship is done on the last day of the Meitei chak (year), which corresponds to the middle of March in the Gregorian calendar. Some Kabuuis tribes also worship him, although unlike the Meiteis, they offer the sacrifice of fowls, pigs and yu (rice beer) etc.
- (iii) Ancestral deities:
- Ancestral worship forms the basis of all worship in Meitei society. The ancestors of the *salais* are called *Apokpa*. Every *sageis* has its own ancestors or deities, who are worship according to their prescribed norms. Thus for example, *Laishram sageis* will worship *Laishram Lairembi* as its sagei deity, *Sanamahi* as its household deity and *khuman Apokpa* as its salai deity. Besides these major ancestral deities there are also some immediate ancestral spirits called *Kasai*. These spirits are worshipped on the occasion of *Ipanthaba* (on the sixth day of the delivery of a child) and also on *Cha-woomba* (rice giving ceremony) to the tree month old baby.

Parrat (op.cit) has pointed out that even though all the three sects had entered Manipur during the last quarter of the 17th century, it was Chaitanya Vaishnavism which was accepted by the King Pamheiba (1714- 1754) in 1714, and it subsequently began to influence among the Meiteis. Immediately after the initiation to Hinduism, Pamheiba

changed his name to Garibniwaz and declared Hinduism as state religion. The Hindu concept of '*Divine Kinship*' was indeed what Pamheiba needed to legitimize his rule in Manipur. Further, since Vaishnavism represented a more progressive ideology, it had attracted the attention of many people though it certainly did not grow unopposed. He destroyed many traditional Lais (Local Dieties) and also burnt many books on ancient literature. The event is still remembered today as the '*Puya Meithaba*'. Along with it Garibniwaz took up a numbers of measures to spread Vaishnavism in Manipur. He ordered to discontinue all the ceremonies and rituals of the old Meitei faith and they were substituted by the Hindu ceremonies and rituals. With the advice of the Santidas Mahanta , the king destroy the image of Sanamahi, the greatest deities of Umanglais (family) of the Meiteis. As a result of this, it was believed that, the king's son and wife was seriously ill (both mentally and physically). The king was perplexed. All the advice of the Hindu priest was in vain. At last the king requested the Meitei Maiba (Pandit) a priest known as Moirang Lalhanba to cure the miserable position of his wife and son. With the advice of the priest, the king re-installed the image of Sanamahi. After that the princes and queen recovered. Even today, every Meitei worships Sanamahi in every family from above incident. The king and the people worshipped both the god (Manipur State Archives 1988). In the context of strong resistance from the traditional religion and its leaders, he could not have completely ignored the interest of the Maiba and Maibis. King Bhaighyachandra (1820-1849) further consolidated Vaishnavism in Manipur but he however continued to encourage the ancient Gods and he used to worship "Sanamahi", the traditional family deity (Lokendra op.cit).

Shakespear (1913) observed that Manipur figures as a Hindu state in the list of the Feudatory states of India, and Hinduism is the State religion, but when we have said this we have by no means stated the whole case, for alongside of Hinduism we have the worship of the *Umanglais* Forest gods and various other distinctly non-Hindu cults, which are practiced by good Hindus as well as by those who have not yet abandoned the faith of their forefathers. As a matter of fact even the best Hindus in Manipur, except perhaps a few of the most holy Brahmans, cannot be said to have abandoned the ancient faith; rather, they accepted the Hindu pantheon in addition to the old gods of their own

country. McCulloch (1857) observed that the hold of the Hinduism among the Meiteis was at a superficial level, it was “professed not from the conviction but because it (was) a fashion”. In fact the brand of Hinduism that the Meitei practices had some unique local variations and it represented a blending of various elements of traditional Meitei religion and Hinduism. While there was an increasing popularity of the worship of many Hindu mainland gods and goddesses there were also an equally strong hold of the traditional gods of the Meiteis. He further wrote, “Children upto 10 to 12 years of age eat every sort of food without regard to Hindu notion of purity and impurity... The very early marriage of Hinduism are not approved of... and never take place”. He further wrote, “Sati was unknown and widows were not treated as in Hindustan” and they might “...marry again, eat such food and dress in such style as they please”. He also wrote that it was a common practice for “old people to abandon altogether Hindu observances”.

The state of affairs of Manipur is closely paralleled in Burma and Japan. Most Japanese follow Buddhism and Shinto which is the pre Buddhist religion. It is believed that there are no written rules to Shinto, and there is little organization of the faith, which makes it very flexible. While Buddhism is more "organized," it is also relatively flexible. This is why Japanese can comfortably adopt both Buddhism and Shinto into their lives without conflict (Buddhists argued that some of the Shinto *kami* were Buddha's, thus helping to close the divide). The resemblance is closest in the case of Burma, for there, as in Manipur, only one conversion has taken place. The state religion, in Burma Buddhism, and in Manipur Hinduism, existing side by side with the more ancient faith. As a simple matter of fact, it is undeniable that the propitiating of the *Nats* is a question of daily concern to the lower class Burman, while the worship at the pagoda is only thought of once a week." Similarly, in Manipur, although most of the inhabitants of the valley profess Hinduism and are strict in observing many of its customs, they are also ardent supporters of the *Umanglais*, who seem practically identical with the Burmese *Nats*. The *Umanglais* of Manipur are better off than the *Nuts* of Burma, for they are officially recognized and some of them receive tax-free lands for their maintenance, and are every bit as much honoured as the Hindu gods. Each set of divinities has its own ministers. Krishna and the other Hindu gods are served by Brahmans, while the local gods have

their own priests and priestesses, known as *Maiba* and *Maibis*. The Raja is the recognized head of both religions. As a Hindu the Manipuri calls in the Brahman on occasions of births, marriages, and deaths, and observes the Hindu festivals, but in sickness he consults the *Maiba* and he worships the gods of hills and rivers of his country as his forefathers did before him (Shakespear op.cit).

Arambam (2008) prefers to use the term “*Meiteinisation of Hinduism*” rather than “*Hindunisation of Meitei*”. He differs with the point of Sanskritisation of the Meitei as observed by some scholars. He further add he used the *Meiteinisation of Hinduism* as a concept on the strength of the indigenous culture itself, which did not indicate total surrender of the society to the higher religion, but used the higher culture for indigenous needs of the day. He further adds, there is no massive re-orientation of social and cultural forms as seen in Hindu-Meitei society today. In the similar pattern Brara (op.cit) observed that, even though the new religion succeeded in diluting, and sometimes, even disintegrating, the rites and rituals pertaining to the traditional Meitei faith. A few Hindu rites and rituals were also adopted and incorporated. Yet, in the event of bringing a child to this world, and sending the soul of the being back to heaven, the required rituals were and still are conducted by the maibas and maibis. All the others intermediate rites-of-passage were influenced by Hinduism, which nevertheless retained some of the traditional cultural characteristics. With new elements incorporated and old elements modified, the rites and rituals pertaining to this society evolved as “*Meitei-Hindu rituals*” rather than just Hindu rituals.

It can observe from the above account that the traditional religion of the Meiteis could not be eroded in-spite of the King repressive measure by adopt Hinduism. So the King and his few wise men synthesized the new religion with the traditional religion. The concept of Hinduism has a different form in Manipur as describe by Lokendra Aramabam as “*Meiteinisation of Hinduism*” and “*Meitei-Hindu rituals*” by Brara. It is further supported by that fact that, in every household of the valley of Manipur particularly among the Meitei, a small area is reserved in the room of the household elders for the traditional god “*Sanamahi*” irrespective of their religion (Hanjabam 2008).

Puya or the Literature of the Meitei's:

The possession of the rich literacy heritage would have been impossible, unless the people of that age had developed the language and alphabet or scripts. Dr Sunitkumar Chatterjee estimated the age of the Meitei language and literatures: 'The beginning of this old Manipuri literature (as in case of Newari) may go back to 1,500 years, or even 2,000 years, from now. He further wrote "Manipur Literatures is most emphatically an advance Modern Indian literatures, and cannot be described as the background literatures of the so called Advasi or primitive people-the Manipuri writers are already in the frontline of modern Indian writing and translation (cited in Sanajaoba op.cit). George A. Grierson write that Meithei is the chief language of the Manipur valley, and has apparently had a long and independent development... the Manipuries are mentioned in the Shan Chronicles so early as 777 A.D. Probably owing to the fact that it has developed into a literary language, their forms of speech gives the impression of possessing a peculiar archaic character. Although they have become subjected to Hinduism, they have not adopted any Aryan tongue; Meithei is the official language of the state which all other tribes have to use in their dealing with the rulers" (*Linguistics Survey of India, Vol-III, part III*). Noted Littetaturer Nandalal Sarmah noted that Meithie literature was close to Chinese literature in both religious and secular literatures in the ancient periods. He further mentioned that novels were written for the first time in China and also the oldest fruit of Manipuri literatures is novels *Meitrabak* 1960). CIEFL Linguistics Professor Nadkarni wrote that "Meitei has a varied and rich literary tradition dating back to the 1st century A.D and most of this literature is in Meitei Mayek (W Tomchou Singh 1986 cited in Sanajaoba op.cit). Wahengbam Ibohal (1985) observed that the Meiteilon was borned in about 800-850 A.D.

The Meitei literary heritage, pooled by the early and medieval literati and illuminati, which are mostly in early manuscripts or copied or rewritten in the case of political upheavals in some cases is estimated to exceed one thousands. The intellectuals reservoir of manuscripts, which are in the personal custody of the "Maichous" and many of which has been published in modern Meitei enriched the knowledge of a number of human

disciplines viz., Administration, Arts and Culture, astrology, Charms and Mantras, creation theories, Dictionaries, Fine Arts, geography, Geology, Health and Hygiene Genealogy. Poetry, Prediction, Prose, religious philosophy, Scripts Supernatural stones, Yek, Salais and Miscellaneous aspects (Khelchandra quoted in Sanajaoba op.cit). Few of them in Manipuri title includes *Cheitharol Kumbaba, Ningthourol Lumbaba, Numit Kappa, Leithak Leikharon, Chainarol, Panthoibi Khongul, Nungan Pombi Luwaoba, Loyumba Shinyen, Sanamahi Leikal, Mashin, chadda Laihui, Chakpa Khunda Khunthok, Naothingkhong khunghoklon, Poirenton Khunthokpa, Pakhangba Nongkarol, Laishemlon and Sakok Lamlel etc* are some of the outstanding Meitei early scriptures which record the story of human evolution, the myths, legends, pre and proto-history and the history of the seventy-four kings who ruled in the country since 33.AD till the merger of Manipur with the Union of India in 1949 (Sanajaoba op.cit).

Most of the works of the early and medieval Manipuri literature contain no particulars name in respect of their authors, compilers, and editors. Every Pibas has (family head) or his eldest male descendent was allowed to have a copy of the relevant *Yumdaaba Puyaa* (family genealogy) from the *Amaaiba Laoishing* (Department of Royal Archives and Records). The “World View” of the Meiteis is not merely frozen into the classics and archaic manuscripts, but is given adequate respectability in the form and festivals if the traditional Lai Haraoba, which is celebrated all over the land annually in the place, where the traditional sylvan deities are worship (Sanajaoba op.cit). The Manipur State Archives had a good number of collections written in the ancient Meitei script which can be broadly classified into Political history, General Administration, Culture and Religion, External Relations, Military Administration etc

Ethnic relation:

Whenever we talk of ethnic relations in Manipur, the term ‘Hao’ always comes in the fore fronts as the people staying in the hills and those staying in the valley but link their ancestry in the hills is term as Hao by the Meiteis. But how and when the term was coined is not exactly know. But many people in the hill as well as in the valley believe it

as a derogatory word, without trying to understand the reality of it. And even misuse the term for the political gain. Paojailung Thaomei observes that the people originated from Mahou are known as Hao. The land bounded by the hills is also known as Haorei i.e. the place where the Hao settled. He further opined that in olden days when we point south we use to say 'Haorei kha' (Haorei South), Heorei-awang (Haorei North), and so on. The ancient text 'Ningthourol Lambuba' states that the ancient people of Haokap Chingsangm Khunpham Ngangchenga were gradually called Hao (Ibohal cited in Goshwami op.cit).

Prof Kangjiya believed that the term Hao is derived from the Kabui word Hao meaning 'hills'. Because it is believed that, the term is derived from a very old Kabui settlement at Langol hills which was known as Chingsang khunpham Nganchenga. Similarly, Thokchom Angouyaima observes that the term Hao is 'old'. He further rejected Mr. K. Zhou observation that "The word "HAO" is derived from one of the name of the Suhte King called Mr. Kamhao Suhte, who rose up just after King Chandrakirti in 1850-51. to support his point stronger, he opined that King Charairongba (1697-1714) was the next successor of king Paikhomba (1666-1697). He consolidated the relation between hill and plain people and constructed "HAO-MACHA LOISANG" (Tribal department) for the hill people at Kangla. King Charairongba was father of King Pamheiba (Garibniwaz). Thus the word 'HAO' was used by meeteis during the reign of Charairongba period (1697-1714) (Angouyaima No Date http://www.e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=news_section.opinions.My_opinion_to_the_article).

Goshwami (op.cit) observes that the term 'Hao' in Meitei language is 'tasty', i.e., good without prefix 'a' and suffix 'ba'. Meitei call one of the most beautiful flowers, Lei-Hao, the best rice Chak-Hao and so on. The term "Hao" also features in the name of the Meitei deities, Kings, queens, clan name etc. For instance, One of the name of Pakhangba mother is 'Inung Haobachanu'; the name of the wife of King Taothingmang is called Haonukhu; the name of the queen of king Kainou Irengba is Haoreima Tamheiba and Haoreima Pidongnu; there is also Meitei female deity call Haoreima Sambubi which is also known as Nongthang Leima; lastly, there are numbers of sageis (clans) called Haobam, Haideijam, Haobijam, Haorongbam, Haoibam and Haorokcham and so on. He

thus concludes that the term is not a derogatory term. If it is derogatory, how will the Meitei mentioned to the name of the Kings, Queens, Deities and clans.

The people of the valley believe that the mountains and hills of Manipur are the abode of their ancestors. Even today they visit these mountains and hills and worship the *Surungs* (caves), *Leikhun* (holes inside earth) and *Leikut-Leirai* (gorges) situated in the hills as their original abodes of their ancestors. *Kangkhui Surung* (Kangkhui caves) in Ukhrul district of Manipur east is regarded as ancestral abode of the Angoms Clan (one of the seven clan of the Meiteis). Similarly is the mountain of *Thanjing*, *Nongmaiching* and *Koubru*. The hill people believes that Koubru mountain and its surrounding highland as the first human settlement from where people migrate to different direction. The first Lai Haraoba of the ancestors of both the hills and valley people is believed to have taken at Koubru Haraobel at Koubru hill (Goshwami op.cit). Ng Kanjia referring to ancient texts like *Koubru Chingoiron* and *Chingni Chuplen* stated that there are more than fifty sacred places in the Koubru hills where the hill and the valley settle before the separation of which mentioned can be made of *Sanggai Yumpham Achouba*, *Sangai Yumpham Macha*, *Amam Leisalok*, *Saroithel*, *Nung-Yangkok*, *Nung-Sunbal*, *Nung-Suk*, *Sanathong Ikon*, *Pokpi Leisanu*, *Meeren Pontinpham*, *Pakhangba Laikhom* etc cited in Goshwami ibid).

The Meiteis, the Nagas and the Kuki-Chin-Mizos had inbuilt affinities in the course of the ethno-genesis process. In the living folk traditions of the Meities, Nagas and Kuki, they are said to be brothers, although the interpolation differ. The old Kuki-Chin has been a part of early Meitei folk traditions and the Nagas have also been components throughout. One of the Puya *Leithak Leikharol* describes that in mythology, *Waheng Chantou*, *Thikleng* and *Marong* innovated the hills while *Chakmaringpa*, *Taomaringpa*, *Ukonglen* reconstructed the valley. It also describes that several Meitei families and the hills people were the same. In the time of Poireiton Khunthok, metal tools had been used, people weave Haophi (clothes of the hill tribes) and people with slanted eyes (Chinese features) remained. Seven clan systems of the Meiteis has also been found to have existed in the ethnic structure of the hills viz., Tangkhul, Mamring, Kabui, Koireng, Anal,

Chothe-Kom and Moyon and Mongsang, among others. The Chiru and Mao-Marams too might have similar structure (Sanajaoba op.cit).

The history of Naga and Kukis which co-inhabits the hills areas of Manipur since time immemorial includes peaceful co-existence and conflicts. Friendship known as *mangai* in Tangkhul dialects or *kajol* in Kuki dialects and *etao* in the Meitei language exemplifies the traditional camaraderie between members of the two communities. Many Naga and Kuki speak the Meitei language. The proficiency in Meitei language among the tribes varies with the distance from the vally and depth of intercourse with the valley in the past. Among the tribes, the Tangkhuls and Kabuis are well verse in Meitei language. In many cases, especially in the villages, members of the two communities speak each other dialects. They had been intermarrying and also practiced the same religious faith, Christianity. Next to the Meiteis, The Thadous-Kuki tribe constitutes the largest population followed by the Tangkhuls. Demographically, both the Naga and Kuki ethnic groups are more or less of equal importance (Haokip 2009). Inter-marriage between the Meitei and different communities has been established since time immemorial.

Gangte (2007) briefly illustrated the land holding among the Kukis and Nagas in Manipur as follows:-

Table No3.5: Land holding among the Kukis and Nagas in Manipur

SI No	Districts	Kukis	Nagas
1	Churachandpur	100	Nil
2	Chandel	75	25
3	Senapati	50	50
4	Tameglong	35	65
5	Ukhrul	30	70

Source: T.S.Gangte (2007).

Imchen (op.cit) illustrated the interdependence of the people and valley of Manipur through the economic exchanges. The Nagas in the hills depend on the valley traders for the crude metal which is necessary for making their *dao* and spears. The valley traders in turn obtained from the *Lois* which settled in the foothills of Manipur. The raw materials

for weaving by the tribals of the hills are also obtained from the valley. Similar is the case of the earthen pot which is manufactured in Shugnu and Chairen. The tribals in turn bring vegetables, fruits either to sale in the market or for exchange with goods of their interest. The *Ngai sanaba* (freinship) between the hills and the valley was very popular. The *Hao Keithel* is still to be seen in the Imphal. The indispensability of such a close and ancient relationship is clearly evident from the facts that the Meiteis still continue to regard the same by observing presentations of '*Tangkhul Leirum Phi-cloth*' as a compulsory item among the marriage-gifts to their daughter-brides, and indispensably using of tribal dresses and costumes and also the forms of dances of the Tangkhuls and Kabuis during their Laiharaoba performance, and even by their kings and queens during the time of their coronation ceremonies attiring only the tribal dresses (Phambal-Tongba occasions). So also the Meiteis had adopted their 'spear fighting techniques' in four different names – *the Meitei Ta-Khousarol, the Tangkul Ta-khousarol, the Kabui Ta-Khousarol and the Maram Ta-khousarol* clearly indicating that there had been very close relationship in between these sections of people (Singh 2003). A folk song often sung at the Lai Haraoba reveals that, whether it be the settlers of the hills or that of the valley, both are of the same stock. The song '*Chingda Taba Mahaige, Tamda Taba Mahaige, Wakon Tanoi Noi...*' when sung in its indigenous and primeval tune significantly expresses 'oneness' and deep relationship that exist between these groups of people (Gangte 2007).

Roy Burman (2001) noted that the clan names or surnames of five chieftains' families of the Tangkhul Naga of Ukhrul districts are similar to Meitei surnames and are suggestive that they are the descendents of the families which fled the valley. The affinity between Nagas and the Meiteis is also established by alluding that Manipur kingdom was one of the seven clan principalities. It is also commonly cited that king Garib Niwaz or Pamheiba who consolidated the Meitei rule in the 18th century, was a descendent of a Meitei father and Naga mother. During the Lai Haraoba ceremony, a Meitei man wears the traditional Tangkhul dress and performed a ceremony at the end. He further adds the Treaty between the Manipur King and Tangkhul Chief of Hundung was a good example. But the signing of treaty was because of the harmonious relationship and should not compare the Hundung Chief as par with the Meitei King. The Foots prints of the two

Meitei King carved on two slabs of stone at Hundung is a token of conquest similar to the one at Kohima at present day Nagaland. The Nagas greatly respected this stone and clean it from time to time.

According to the traditional belief of the Tangkhuls it is said that in an early period, a Tangkhul left his home for the valley who became a king there and who later on came to be known as PAKHANGBA, who is a dynastic god or deity of the Manipuris still worshipped ardently by all of them - this belief has no doubt some relevance regarding the appearance of Pakhangba in the valley, as according to the puyas (purans) of the Meiteis, Nongda Lairen Pakhangba (Jabista), the great is described to be a "heaven born" person. Since there is actually no such a thing as "heaven" in the high space physically the above proverb should have meant only to a high place i.e. a hill or mountain (Singh op.cit). Traditionally the Tangkhuls have enjoyed close relationship with the Meiteis of the Manipur Valley. Tangkhul folk tales and songs collected by Arokianathan (1982) have numerous references to interaction with the Meiteis of the valley but no reference to interaction with the Nagaland based Naga tribes. The Meitei Kings and the Tangkhuls chief used to have martial relations, the Tangkhuls Chiefs host the Meitei army in the hills, the Meitei and the Tangkhuls participated in each other festivals and ceremonies, the Meiteis visited the fairs and markets in the hills for trading and the Tangkhuls used to work in the valley for livelihood. Because of the intense two way interaction describe above, Manipuri words entered into the vocabulary of the tribals dialects (Ghosh and Kumar 2005).

The cultural function of the "*Mera Wa Yungba*" which is celebrated in the month of october is an important function to remind the relationship between the people of hill and the valley. There is a belief that the people of the hill and the valley have originated from a small place in the hill while the younger brother went down to the valley in search of livelihood and the elder brother stay back at the hill. In order to commemorate the linkage, both the valley and the hill people celebrated in a particular way. In the valley a long bamboo post is erected with a light at the top of it in every household so that the people of the hill can see it. The belief is that, when the younger brother left the hill, he

promised his brother that he will put up a light in the month of Mera (October) to show that all are fine and doing well in the valley. In reciprocate to this, the hill people burn a part of the hill which is called “*Langmai Thaba*” to show prosperity and well being. Apart from *Mera Wa Yungba*, another ceremony called the “*Mera Hou Chongba*” is celebrated in the same month. The entire Tribal chief, village headman under the Kings was invited to the Palace at Kangla on this particular day. The Tribal headmen as well as the Village heads exchange gifts and wishes during this particular function. These promote greater amity between the hill and the Meiteis. It is celebrated with greater vigour (Hanjabam op.cit).

It is a fact that it was a group of Kuki Chiefs, particularly Haokip Chiefs, who determined to help the Maharajah to resist the Merger. Here, to be specific, a group of Kuki Chiefs was led by the Haokip Chief of Chassad, whom the Chief of Aihang, Chief of Nabil, Chief of Lonpi and many other Haokip villages supported. These Chiefs went to the extent that about 200-300 volunteers with muzzle-loading guns were kept at the gate of Palace to protect the Maharajah and his kingdom. This is the account of the events on the last minute events before Maharajah Budhachandra Singh had to leave for Shillong, to sign the Agreement against his will (Haokip 2008).

Common Deities:

Lainingthou Sanamahi: It is the household deities of both the hills and the valley though the names are different from community to community. *Lainingthou Sanamahi* and *Dampaipu* of Kanbuis is said to be the same deity. Sanamahi worship is also a part of the *Luiru* (seed sowing) festivals of the Tangkhuls. Kom, Purums, Marings, Chothes also worship a diety similar to Lainingthou Sanamahi. **Konthoujam Leireima:** *Konthoujam Leireima* of the Meiteis and *Haigonhang Chanu Dilenglu* of Kabuis are the same. In both stories the lady went to her parental home where she eat forbidden food and separated with *Sorarel* (god of heaven). It can be noted that the *Lai Haraoba festival* of the Konthoujam Leireima could not be observed until the Kabuis at the Konthoujam village facilitated some presentation to the Deities. **Lainingthou Nongsaba:** Lainingthou

Nongsaba is believed to be the incarnation of *Chingu Khoiyum Sidabi* is a common deity of both the hills and the valley. It is said that the deity was taken secretly from Thayaipok Khamba of Mantak village to different location but it was finally brought back to the original place during the time of meidingu Khagemba (1597-1652). The Kom communities of Mantak village still worship the deity at its original place.

Haoreima Sambubi: This is the story of *Haorema Sambubi* of the Tangkhul and *Meidingu Tabungba* (1359-1394), the King of Manipur. The Meiteis believed that she is the incarnation of the Panthoibi. Thus the Meitei worship this deity (Tangkhul Lady) as one of the important deity. **Lainingthou Chothe Thangwai Pakangba:** He was the king of Moirang who married Khamlangtaobi, daughter of the Chothe Tamang Khul. Chothe believed that *Lainingthou Chothe Thangwai Pakangba* was of Chothe origin. The Chothe worshipped the king at *Chothe Nungsukhung*. Chothe also believe in Sorarel and Sanamahi. **Ibudhou Thanjing Koirel Lai:** the Koirang community believed that the deity was taken by the Moirang after their defeat at the Hand of the Moirangs. It is worship by both the Meiteis and the Koirang community. **Langol Tarung Leireima:** Langol Tarung Leireima belongs to Maram tribe name *Makinei* and *Ingallei* when married to the King *Paikhomba* (1666-1697) of Manipur. The king sneaked into the Maram village in order to recover his father head from the Maram chief but he later fall in love with the daughter of the chief. Ingallei was married to the king but she was forbidden to enter into the Palace. She was later driven out when the King was on expedition. After her death she becomes Langol Tarung Leireima, an important deity of the Meiteis.

Wangbren Khana Chaoba: It is the ruling Meitei deity of the south respected and reversed by both the Anals and Meiteis. *Wangburen* married *Shangkhurembi* or *Shangnu*, the only daughter of Anal chief Mongyam Ngamba. He won the hand of the daughter after defeating the Anal youths in various competitions. Relics believed to be connected with the legend are still seen at a place known as Hungke-pa in Anal Khullen in Chandel district of Manipur. **Nongpok Ningthou- Panthoibi:** It is the ruling Meitei deity of the east but Nongpok Ningthou is believed to be a Tangkhul youth who had a relationship

with Apanbee alias Panthoibi – a lady belonging to Wangam or Poirai-Ningthouja.

Konthong Leireima: The Meitei deity is worshiped by both the hill and valley by constructing the temple at Moreh in Chandel District of Manipur (Goshwami op.cit).