CHAPTER - I

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF POLITICAL SYSTEM OF MANIPUR SINCE 33 A.D
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INTRODUCTION:

The term “Political Status” lacks a precise and standard definition. The reason of which should be traced in the abundant studies made from the interdisciplinary point of view. All are impinging on the subject of ‘growth’, ‘modernization’ and ‘development’ of the new states of the third world. These states are in process of transformation like from feudalism to democracy with participant political culture. The process of changes that had been taken over were related with possession of essential elements of the states, mainly supreme power. In the political history of Manipur, sometime, the state was the under control of the Burmese and the British. But liberated after some years. Thus political status could be trace at three different levels with respect to the population as a whole, with respect to the level of governmental and general systematic performance, and with respect to the organization of the polity¹.

As far as the people of Manipur during the monarchical form of government is concerned, their political status was subject, not political and economic rights. All powers were in the hand of king except the power given to the members of the council of ministers (sixty four phamdous). They were appointed by the king. In other words, there was no people’s participation as political actors in the political system. So their political culture was completely Parochial in character. Full details will be discussed in the next chapter.

Some social theories like James. S. Coleman, G. A. Almond and Talcott Parsons have taken the view that the concept of political status associated with political development can be evaluated in terms of the level or degree of absolute power which the system is able to mobilize. According to this view, state naturally differ in proportion to their inherent resource base with the result that the measure of state is the degree to which they are able to maximize and realize the full potential of their given resources. Pye is critical of this view also on the plea that such an explanation is applicable to case of a democratic political system and thus it ignore the case of development as political status in others where the mobilization of power is deliberately kept limited.

Now the question is that the case of political status is integrally connected with the building of democracy and inculcating values of a democratic order in the minds of the people. Pye differs from these view and the pointed out that such concept would exclude the cases of those

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2. Ibid. p.19
3. Ibid. p.44.
countries where democracy is non-existent and that democracy is a 'value laden' concept, while political status as political development is 'value free'. "To use the building of democracy as the key to political development can thus be seen as an effort to push upon other American, or at least Western, values".

The next question is that is there any relationship with political status and nation building. That means it consists of the organization of political life and the performance of political functions in accordance with the standards expected of a nation. That is why we have needed to analyze the political system and its orderly changes. In this study, even, we cannot ignore the important elements of state with its supremacy i.e. sovereignty. It is internally supreme and externally independent. In brief, it is better to see the process of state building, problem of participation, problem of distribution and nature of the problem confronting a political system.

The written history of Manipur dated back to 33 A.D. even though its existence can be traced back to pre-historic time. Manipur was known to different neighbouring kingdom by different names through the ages. The political history of this erstwhile independent kingdom of Manipur presents the uniqueness in its evolution. There was striking similarity in the evolution of Political System of Manipur with the rest of the erstwhile kingdoms in the sub-continent or across the globe that subsequently evolved itself into a nation state. The concept of nation state was an import of western colonialism.
into the various independent kingdoms of third world countries who themselves later on, constituted into a nation state through an intense anti-colonial nationalist struggle. Here it can be noted that evolution of a political system was conditioned by the material conditions of the existence of the kingdom. The nature of a political system is also accustomed to material realities of a particular epoch. The war, constant fends the expansionist ambitions of some powerful kingdom, the geo-politics of given region were the vital factors in the development of a political System.

When we take about Political System, naturally the concept of politics, political theory and system become essential component of it. Therefore it will be worthwhile to study it briefly. Essentially, the study of politics is inextricably derived from the Greek word ‘polis’ which means ‘City-State’. It was in the Greek city, the debate on the most enduring political ideals like questioned justice, democracy, citizenship and freedom began in the 5th Century B.C. by such eminent philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc. Their ideas from the baseline of subsequent political thinkers and Philosophers are immense.

As Sabine succinctly puts it most modern political ideas such, for example, as justice, liberty, constitutional government, and respect for the law or at least the definitions of them, began with the reflection of Greek thinkers upon the institutions of the city-state. But in the long history of political thought the meaning of such terms has been variously modified, and always that meaning has to be understood in the height of the institutions by which the ideas were to be realized and of the society in which those institutions did their work. However the Greek city-state was quite different
from modern state in various aspects. One important difference is their territorial dimension. As compared with modern states the ancient city-state was exceedingly small both in area and in population. Thus the whole territory of Attica was only a little more than two-thirds the area of Rhode Island, and in population Athens was comparable with such a city as Denver or Rochester? Thus it could be argued that, every known, communities had certain norms of political organisation no matter how big or small, the territory in which community inhabited. But the level of political development is varied depending on the socio-economic and material circumstances of the communities.

Thus when we talk about polity or political system it essentially deals with institutions, rules and regulation pertaining to the governance over a community existing within a particular territorial boundary. Like the same way Manipur, which was known by different nomenclature, also had institutions, rules and regulation for governing her population. In order to systematically analyse the political system under which population of this

Dhanabir Laishram. 1998. *Chaokhatpa Khunai Amashung Meeyam*. Published by Centre for Progress of Manipur (CPM). Imphal, p.2
In early days Manipur also had seven city states like Greek. Their territories and palaces are given below:
1. Luwangshangham - Luwang (Kangla) Palace
2. Imphal - Ningthouja (Kangla) Palace
3. Khongman - Angom (Kangla) Palace
4. Wangoi - Sarang - Leishangthem (Kangla) Palace
5. Mayang Imphal - Khuman (Kangla) Palace
6. Wangjing - Khaba - Nganba (Kangla) Palace
7. Moirang - Moirang (Kangla) Palace
erstwhile kingdom, a brief account of the meaning of political system will be fruitful.

**POLITICAL SYSTEM: MEANING & NATURE:**

Political System is one of the components of broader social system of particular society. The concept of political system and its systematic analysis is of modern origin although ‘Politics’ with diverse meanings attached to it can be said to exist co-tremulously with the origin of human society.

In order to understand the meaning of political system, it will be fruitful to keep in mind several points that apply to any system. In this connection, Robert A. Dahl in his seminal work, modern political analysis mentions the following points as important elements of any system.

1) to call something a system is an abstract way’ of looking at concrete things. A ‘System’ is a perspective art reality that is abstracted from that reality far purposes of analysis; A ‘System’ is a framework with which an observer or analyst approaches or a lens or perspective through which an observer or analyst chooses to view, some reality such as politics.

2) A systems perspective or framework has several key characteristics they are (i) The concept of ‘System’ presupposes elements, parts or components. It is made of identifiable parts (ii) The parts of the system interact with one another and that interaction affects the parts in regular and discernible ways (iii) The system has boundaries.

3) Those adopting a systems approach to some reality or portion of reality typically assume that the ‘System’ they are observing or analyzing is relatively durable or persistent through time.

4) One system can be an element, a sub-system, of another. For instance the earth is a subsystem of our solar system, which is a subsystem of our galaxy, which is a subsystem of universe. The Foreign Relations Committee is a subsystem of the United States’ Senate, which is a subsystem of the congress. The Democratic Party is a sub-system of the American Party System etc.
To sum up the points, 'System' stands for any collection of elements that interact in some way with one another; a galaxy, a football team, a legislature, a political party. Some arising from the various points that constitutes a 'System', Dahl defined political system as a collection of elements that interact with one another and that individually and collectively exercise influence over the individuals and collectivities that make up the elements or parts of the United States of America includes Congress (and its sub-system), the President (and sub-systems of the presidency), the Supreme Court, Political Parties, interest groups, voters, news media and so forth.

As Cheilcote remarked that society is usually viewed as the most inclusive entity within which systems may be evaluated. Systems thus are abstractions of the real society. Any phenomena of society may be viewed as a system or systems. He again wrote that when we speak of a political system, an economic system, a social system or a cultural psychological system, we mean all those variables associated with political life, economic life, social life or cultural psychological life. The variables of any system may include structures, functions, actors, values, norms, goals, inputs, outputs, response and feedback.

The modern notion of political System can be applied at the study of political system and its nature of Manipur encompassing ancient medieval and modern period of Manipur. However it does not mean that the modern concept of political system can be applicable in toto in the study of political system of Manipur since 33A.D. But certain general characteristics of the political system can be seen in its rudimentary from the ancient and medieval kingdom of Manipur like various kingdom and principalities across the Indian sub-continent and Southeast Asia.
Here the application is made with conscious understanding of variables of system which most of the kingdoms had. Therefore the variables of modern political system such as voters, media, political party, interest/pressure groups, public opinion, media etc. which are modern in its origin and evolution were conspicuous by their absence in the ancient and medieval period of Manipur.

**POLITICAL SYSTEM OF MANIPUR SINCE 33 A.D.**

Monarchy was the form of government in early Manipur. The subjects considered their king as the vice-regent of god. So the early Manipur was a theocratic state\(^6\). The king was the pivot of the state. But he was not autocrat. He was a constitutional head so long as the mobility acted according to the chatlam luptin (custom and conventions) of the land. The sixty-four phamdous (sixty-four members of the state assembly) determined the laws and customs\(^7\). These phamdous were competent persons. They were the members of the state assembly. They were not mere creatures of the king. They were men of capacity, integrity and experience. Therefore they could render sound advice to the king. These members were from different regions. They were the leaders of the thirty-two divisions of Manipur. Sometimes, they were selected by the king not from these divisions of Manipur. Sometimes, they were selected by the king not from these divisions. For instance from Pakhangba to Charairongba (33 to 1709 A.D.), the post of Minister was generally held by commoners. But since the reign of Garib Nawaz, the post of the Khwailakpa was conferred upon his eldest son Samjai. During the reign of

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Chandrakriti, Pheijaosana, one of his sons, became the Minister in charge of war. According to N. Ibobi this was done by the king on the reasons of security.

The Manipur valley had no centralized authority before the unification of all clans. All the seven clans namely, Mangang (Ningthoucha), Luwang, Khuman, Angom, Moirang, Khabanganba and Sarang-Leisangthem had their own respective territories, population and kings, who ruled over their clan members. They were commonly known as seven independent communities. These clans fought with each other for acquiring more land, wealth and men.

The far off chiefdom of Moirang and made the matrimonial relation with the Khuman and the Moirang principalities. The Angoms neglected the relations with the Ningthouja after Khuyoi Tompok (154-216 A.D.) and violated the Meitei Chiefdom by raising a revolt against the Meitei during the reign of Sameirang but were subdued by the Meitei.

**FORMATION OF THE MEITEI POLITY:**

Chiefship during pre-Pakhangba period; the chiefship before the time of Pakhangba has been referred to in many accounts. Mention has been made of Awang Pakhang Yoi-renba or Sorarel (Konthoujam lairembi, Moirang Ningthourol lambuba) and their high status in the society. Most of the chiefs of Koubru hill and Selloi langmai were given the title of Sorarel. It is also described that the chiefs of the different regions of Manipur were sent down from Koubru for smooth running of administration as Thangjing the Lord.

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8. Ibid., p.64.
and Chief of Moirang was sent to create Moirang and to administer thereof, Wangbren to defend the southern border and administer thereof, Loiyalakpa, to the north western side, etc\textsuperscript{10}. Thus the nine Laibungthou or the Umanglai Mapan (the deities) were located in different parts of Manipur and they became the chiefs of the respective places.

The chiefship of Koubru ranges was referred to when two brothers of Angom of Khangkhui became chiefs. There were many numbers of Sorarels of Koubru. The elder brother of Angou Puleiromba settled for sometime at Thangal in a range which was an offshoot of the Koubru and came down in search of his brother. Angou was establishing the chiefship somewhere near the central part of the valley when his brother arrived; he was also appointed the chief of some group of people but he went to the Selloi Langmai hill. When one Pakhangba (probably the Sentreng Pakhangba) killed Kainou Chingshomba\textsuperscript{11}, Puleiromba fled to Selloi Langmai hill and ruled there as a chief. In due course other two notable chiefs came up. The two chiefs were the inhabitants of Selloi Langmai hill and they were brought under the terms of inter clan alliance with Puleiromba. The chiefs of Khaba and Nganba had close contact and had the same opinion in fighting with Angou who had driven them away from their abode of Kangla. But many Puleirombas are mentioned among the Angom - Angou Puleiromba, Purang Puleiromba, Chingwanglakki Puleiromba, Chingmit Puleiromba, Khamnung lwai Puleiromba, Tupu Puleiromba, Thanghang Puleiromba, Kainou Chingsomba Puleiromba, etc. Among the three chieftains, the one who was given the title of Luwang Langmaiba was probably a Phunal Chief.

\textsuperscript{10} Wangbren Khunkumlong (MS).
\textsuperscript{11} N. Ibochouba, Angom, Seminar paper, 1985, organized by SIRI of Manipur Studies, Angom Khonghou (MS).
As there was no absolute power in the country, the different groups were trying to extend their respective hegemony. The hill dwellers were more powerful than low land people or valley people. The hill people were known as ‘Lai’ (god) probably the superior class and the plain people known as ‘Saroi’ the interior group. Thus, almost all the powerful chiefs of Manipur were hill dwelling people until the period of king Urakonthouba (568 - 658 A.D.).

EXPANSION OF MEITEI KINGDOM

The Meitei kingdom originally had a limited territory up to the reign of Khuyoi Tompok which had a boundary at Hannaching Chingmei in the north, Iril and Kongba river in the east, Lamdaibung in the south and Iroisenba in the west. In the early times, there were no expansions of the territory of the kingdom. By the time of Urakonthouba, the northern boundary of Meitei kingdom was at Khumidok in north Imphal. Some lands were transferred by the Khuman chief whose daughter was the chief queen of Naotingkhong (663-763 A.D.). Thus, the Meitei kingdom was extended up to Saompal (about 14km. from Imphal)\textsuperscript{13}. There was no much change of the boundaries of Meitei up to 1014 A.D.

King Loiyamba, the great statesman of the 11th century was the first king of Manipur who tried to extend the boundaries of Manipur to the hill area. Ningthourol Lambuba describes some hill villages to be under king Loiyamba\textsuperscript{14}.

Thawanthaba was the next king who extended the suzerainty of the Meitei to the hill villages of Manipur. He defeated many tribal villages. He

\textsuperscript{12} S. Moirangamba & Kh. Kumar, \textit{Sakok Lamlem}, p.35.
\textsuperscript{13} Khuman Ningthourol Lambuba (unpublished)
\textsuperscript{14} Ningthourol Lambuba, p.77.
also defeated the Heiremghunjan and the Khuman principality. Thus, the paramountcy of the Meitei state was recognised by almost all the tribes and ethnic groups who were settling on the northern side of the valley and upto Hiyanglam Wabagai in the south.

The Meitei kingdom did not clash with the Moirang principality before Thangbi Lanthaba (1302-1324 A.D.). During his time he defeated the Moirang and also raided the hill village of Marings at Khambi Melyongching and Sekku hill villages. Tabungba (1359-1394 A.D.) lost his life along with his faithful nobleman in the hill village of Chingehong. After him, his son Punshiba subdued the hill villages of Tangkhul Monthou Koireng in Koubru hill village and Maring. He too defeated the Thanga Kambong. But he lost his life when he tried to expand his boundary against Moirang. So Ningthoukhomba, his son and successor (1435- 1467 A.D.) crushed the Moirang principality and brought it under his rule in 1435 A.D. King Ningthoukhomba also extended upto the boundaries of Kabaw valley by defeating the hill villages.

Kyamba (1467-1508 A.D.), the diplomat king made his foreign alliance with the king of Mao-Shan Chaopha Khekhom-be of Pong in upper Burma. With the help of the Pong king, Kyamba annexed the southern portion of the Samsok present Thangdut including the area at Loijiri on the north, the hill area under the name of Miyatong in the south.

King Lamgaingamba (1512-1523 A.D.) tried to extend the boundary of Manipur by conquering the hill villages of Lamkang, Tusuk, Koireng in the south Samphu Narumching in Khoibu range in the east. He also invaded the Teong Lammapak of Kabaw valley and extended his overlordship to the conquered area.
King Chalamba (1545-1562 A.D.) also expanded the kingdom after he defeated the villages of Lanhang in 1558 A.D., Anan in 1559 A.D., Thingnong, Meinung and Narum 1560 A.D. and Ithing in 1561 A.D. His son Mungyamba (1562-1591 A.D.) extended his kingdom upto Thanggang and Nongmei in Burma by defeating the native village chiefs.

King Khagemba strengthened the frontier of Manipur and consolidated the Ningthouja rule over the hills and drove away the foreign invaders from the west.

The policy of conquest and defence was not the only way for extension and expansion of the boundary of Manipur. The policy of integration and amalgamation was also adopted by the Meitei kings like matrimonial alliance and the mutual helps among the kings.

CREATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY:

*Mobility And Officialdom:*

As the form of government was monarchy, naturally the king was the sovereign with absolute power. But in practice, the monarch’s power was greatly limited by the ministers and traditional nobles who were selected from different parties of the kingdom to attend the royal court. Public opinion was an important factor that restrained the power of the king and the whole state. Some scholars had tried to show the federal and democratic nature of the monarchy in Manipur. But it is not an accurate description of the monarchy in this kingdom.

The functions of the monarchy were numerous as the king was the head of all the state transactions in general, they were administrative, social, financial, religious and private functions. All these functions were executed by the king himself or by his order by delegating powers to his officers like

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Ningthou Pongba Tara (the ten nobles who acted as a sort of advisor counsellors) and 64 (sixty four) Phamdous (Phamdous were the representatives of people selected from every administrative division). They assisted the king in the administration of the kingdom. The posts of the Ningthou pongba Tara existed during pre-Pakhangba’s period, as Numit Sana Khomdon was searched by the Ningthou Pongba Tara from his hiding place. They were composed of Pukhranba, Nongthonba, Hiyangloi Hanjaba, Chongkhanba Hanjaba, Iningloi Hanjaba, Imangloi Hanjaba, Khwailakpa, Yaiskullakps, Naikhulakpa and Phamthakcha in the later period. Some exclusive functions of the king in the private life were still in the hands of the monarch; even some of them were checked by the elders of the royal family. There were close relation between the king and the officials.

In the civil administration, there were the executive, legislative and judicial functions. The executive function included internal affairs normal duties of governing of the state and other functions entrusted to them by the nobles or representatives of the people. The judicial function was channelised by many courts from lowest to the highest, cited as Khundin (village court), Panaloishang (like district court), Kuchu and Pacha. Kuchu was the highest court while Pacha was a special court for the females. These two Courts were established during the reign of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba and Cheirap, the highest court was established during the reign of Khuyoi Tompok under the advice of Thongak Kurumba or Langol Kurumba or Mangang Pun-shibs

by appointing Angou Panba, the social head of the Angom (piba) as the Langjei Phamba (sitting at the centre) or the chief justice. But the decision of the king was final.

_Military Organization:_

The Meitei state was more or less based on military system. The military organisation was an important branch of any government. In the history of Manipur military organisation was found since the time of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba. Reference was made to an army with them pakhangba occupied the Kangla. Even though the posts of the nobles were created in the later part of the idea of well-trained and well organized army had existed since his reign. During the time of Khuyoi Tompok, son of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba, the military organisation of the country was further developed and a new system of alerting the people by beating the war drum was introduced; he was the innovator of the drum.

The strength of the army was not fixed as it consisted of all the able men from 16 to 60 years of age under the lallup system which will be described in a later stage. Every male was obligated to act as a soldier. Compulsory military service was to be performed by the people.
Infantry was the only main wing of the military system of early time. The weapons were daos, swords, shields, spikes, spears, logs, bows and arrows, knives, etc. The making of gun was started during the time of Khagemba. The mode of warfare was mass attack at one time and destruction of everything and reducing the enemy villages to ashes. If any battle was fought, the conquerors collected whatever they got and war booty and even the beautiful ladies for them.

There was no separate department of military administration and the king was the supreme commander. During the peace time, they were the civil servants, craftsman, artisan, cultivator and workers of the state. The king could delegate his military power and empowered any person in the state from time to time, in emergencies and in the time of need.

Riverine navy was simultaneously developed. But the principalities of the Khuman and Moirang wholly depended on boat army. The surrounding hills in the Ningthouja kingdom and Moirang principalities provided enough timber for boat making. The dug-out canoes were used both for transportation in the river and lakes, and as war machines. The cavalry or horse force was developed at an early period. Naethingkhong Phambal Kaba refers to horse riding soldiers used by king Urakonthouba against the Salloij Langmais. Later on cavalry became a dreaded wing of the armed forces during military campaigns against Shan and Burmese. The famous sling type weapon known as the Arambai was the most effective weapon of the Melted cavalry, Cavalry could be built up because of the abundance of ‘Ponies’ in Manipur valley.

17. Thanglon Thangchat (MS).
They were kept by many families including the nobles. Elephants came to be associated with the Manipur army, specially in the Burmese wars in the 18th century.

**Lallup System:**

During the reign of Meitei king Loiyamba (1074-1112 A.D.) a new order of militia was introduced. With the development of the different villages Loiyamba established a regular available force to render service to the state at any time. So he and his nobles decided to order every subject to spare a few days in a month, “each male between 17 and 60 was supposed to render to the state ten days labour out of every forty”.¹⁹ The lallup in another sense was organised with the objects of war. Lallup means war organization; ‘lal’ means war and ‘lup’ means association in Meitei vocabulary. The lallup organization was a military organisation, but in the piping times of peace it was made to play a part in the economic life of the country.²⁰ Thus, the actual introduction of lallup system was during the reign of king Loiyamba which was supported by the royal chronicle²¹.

Under the lallup system, the manfolk was to attend the capital. In the early stage of lallup organization, the people were alerted for defence of the country. If anybody failed to respect to the assigned duty, he was punished.

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¹⁹. Gazetteer of Naga Hills and Manipur, 1905. Mittal Publication, New Delhi, p. 115
Sometimes, double inflection was noted out for negligence of duty which was expressed by the Meitei ironical proverb, “Lallupshu Kaba Washashu Chaba” (attendance of lallup and receipt of rebuke).

T.C. Hodson observes the following on the Lallup system.\textsuperscript{22} The definition of ‘Lallup’ was given to me by an experienced authority is the duty of appearing at the king’s office (loisang) ten days, and doing the proper work of the grade to which the person belonged. For the following 30 days he remained at home. If a man did not come to his lallup, he forfeited one rupee and for this sum a substitute was hired. The following is the vernacular statement. “\textit{Ningthouja Loisangda (amasung office-da) numit tarani kadu-na lallupki thabak toururage numit kunthrani mayumda leijei. Lallup karaduna mi aduna toklabadi lallup amada lupa ama louba houni, asina mahut mi neknei.”} Khundin is a branch of lallup and consists of the duty of seeing that the men liable to lallup, are regular in attendance and cover cases of illness where a substitute is provided. “\textit{Lallup Kagadaba leiba adubu khundin kooajei. Mi adugi karigumbada thabak leiba amadi ana ayek leiraduna lallup karoidaba leirabadi lajjarabasung, mihut pirabasung khundin numitta karakadaba lallup chingba, machahalna chingba kaduna khangnaba haonei”}.

“\textit{Chingjin-langan thao kai haibadi}” There was special duty to be performed in the months of Asin or Bhadra. The absentee made a bargain

\textsuperscript{22} T.C. Hodson, 1908. \textit{The Meitheis}, Low Cost Publication, Delhi. p.62.
for substituting a man who received the sum of four which extended for
three months and according to which the substituted received six rupees.

"Mayumda kumduna tha ani loisangda sarkargi numit khuding thabantouyei, mi aduna karoi hairaga mi amade chinginlangpan haibatouge
haiba asimada rupe mari wasa ani, matamdi langpantha Meratha."

The last regulation mentioned is the "Aka akum thingba". This referred
to any special work. In cases where the man of any areas found that the
work imposed on them was beyond their powers it was possible to call in
man from the whole area till the work was finished. "Lam amada thabant
achabo khun ama aniduna ngamdaba thabant hoklabadilam adugi mimakheilallupkadunathabant loidrioba makheitougelalluptilam
amaramdagi mina (hum kotli) loi".

R. Brown writes,23 "the general system of Lallup is based on the
assumption that it is the duty of every male between the ages of 17 and 60 to
place his services was the disposal of the state, without remuneration for a
certain number of days in each year." The system of lallup was first
introduced, it is said, in the reign of Pakhangba, and it has undergone little
change since. The number of days thus placed nominally at the disposal of
the state is ten days in every forty. The ten days service is so arranged that a
man works his ten days and has his interval of thirty with regularity all year
round. On an individual coming of age to perform Lallup, he is entitled to

p.83.
cultivate for his support one paree of land, subject to the payment in kind of the tax to the raja. 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 goes to pay for a substitute if required, or 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 or labour independent of number is an officer named the ‘Lakpa’ who is responsible for the performance of the prescribed duties. There is no lallup for woman. This lallup is often miscalled forced labour. “Each individual liable for Lallup or force labour for the state is entitled to cultivate for his support one paree of and, equivalent to about three English acre, subject to the payment of the regular law, in king. 24

From the above accounts it can be concluded that lallup was not merely a warfare organisation but also an public institution. There were no regular officers separately in the lallup service in the olden days. Lallup was feudal service to the state both for military and revenue purpose. B.C. Allen calls it force labour. 25

25. B.C. Allen, opecit., p.115.
Revenue System:

It has been assumed in the theories of state formation that only when a community produced surplus which could be given as revenues by the people, the institution of the state emerged. The Meitei state during the period of present study grew up gradually to become a consolidated and a well ordered feudal state in the 15th century. Historical evidences are not sufficient enough to reconstruct the history of revenue system in ancient Manipur. But the royal edict of king Loiyamba known as Loiyamba Shinyen with later modifications and another works known as the Mashin and Loina Shinlon give some sketchy information about the revenue system. From the 15th to 17th century we have more or less dependable sources of information.

The early Meitei state did not realise revenues as such from the subjects. But services were rendered by the people to the state under lallup system which has been discussed above. The lallup service is both military and productive activities. In this lallup service the state gave quota of revenue to be rendered in term of kind. Loiyamba Shinyen fixes the quantum of tributes to be paid to the state by different communities and Villages. Generally, revenues were collected during the time of harvesing. Tributes were also an important source of revenue of the state. Many of the conquered communities had to pay tribute in forms of essential commodities like, cloths, cattle, baskets, forest products, herbs, agricultural products etc. The tributes were also divided into two forms; annual and occasional tributes.
The greatest source of revenues was the tax on land specially cultivable paddy fields. It is likely that when the people were shifting cultivators and were living under a subsistence economy, no tax was imposed on lands but when settled agriculture was introduced, the state imposed taxes in forms of certain quantum of paddy as taxes. Though the state or the monarch asserted its sole proprietorship or ownership overall the land in the kingdom, as T.C. Hodson writes, “The system (of land ownership) is of severalty, as is to be expected in the country where permanent settlement is possible, but the number and importance of the protests which have from time to time been made against the unrestricted alienation of land by Manipuris to Muhammadans and other persons of alien descent, the vigorous denunciation of the speculative tricksters, who took out leases for the waste lands near outlying villages and charged exorbitant rest for grazing or grass cutting and the strength of the village system afford evidence that the real nature of the tenure of non-arable land was communal and joint while cultivated fields were held in severalty, a sure proof that we have to deal with a state of affairs halfway between absolute joint tenure and perfect severalty”.

However, the king could allot the lands for settlement of war captives and of the individual cultivation from Nongda Lairen Pakhāngba to Mungyamba, rewards were given to war heroes or scholars in the form of land and cloth (Laiphi phimu) but from the time of Khagemba (1591-1652) grants were abolished and he introduced a new system of awarding cloth

prizes under the name and style of the designing of the land as ‘pariphi’ equivalent to the prize of one pari of land.

Lourungpurel was the head of the land revenue department. He collected, with the help of revenue officers in form of taxes (12 pots of paddy per hectre). In other revenue matters, Keirungba and several Selungbas took the charge of collection of the forest products, tributes and made payment in the need thereof. Later on, there were appointed some Lambus or collector-cum-intermediary between the monarch and the general people, under the Selungba. The revenues of the country were received from different sources. It was collected into two ways, i.e. in cash and in kinds or as labour in lallup.

Administrative Divisions (Pana System):

N. Ibobi Singh argued on the basis of an ancient manuscript called Khunthok Nipan lamyenba that before 1074 A.D. the Ningthouja kingdom was divided into 32 divisions. Each division was divided into villages. However, the most popular form of administrative division was originally the Pana system. The administrative divisions were both territorial and functional. The two supplemented each other. It has been claimed that the pana system was personal and not territorial according to T.C. Hodson. The word Pana is recorded in chronicles during the 16th century. It has been suggested that the earlier name of pana was lup and in 1074 A.D. Loiyamba according to

28. Ibid., p.88.
Cheitharol Kumbaba established six lups. Pana was Shan word which was perhaps used in Manipur after the conquest of Kabaw valley. Several scholars argued that panas or lups were first established during the reign of Pakhangba. Originally there were four lups, Ahallup, Nahalup, Khabam and Laipham. However, Cheitharol Kumbaba, records the introduction of six administrative divisions during the reign of Loiyamba28 namely, (i) Luplenlup, (ii) Thouchalup, (iii) Kongchhalup, (iv) Lupkhubs lup, (v) Chingchalup and (vi) Khaichalup. Therefore, the four administrative divisions which were supposed to have been established by Pakhangba was a latter manipulation. In later years the panas were territorial divisions became functional divisions of the people. The six panas were grouped into three bigger groups. Laipham pana and Khabam pana were known as Khunja; the Ahallup and the Naha-lup pana were collectively known as the Naija; the Potsa-ngba and Hidakhalba were known as Pans khumsi (inferior pana). The lallup service was rendered, through the panas. It appears that the panas were meant ‘for military purposes but it was utilised for economic, cultural and social purposes later on. The armed forces were organised on the basis of pana. Other feudal services were rendered on the basis of pana, so also sports like, boat race, wrestling, hockey, horse hockey and race.

Every pana was divided into two departments, Sanglen and Sangkhuba. In each department, there were about 10 (ten) officers. For example, the officers of the Sanglen were Lakpa, Dewen, Hanjaba, Pakhanglakpa, Nahalakps, Chingshuba Ahan, Chingshuba Naha and Keirungba. Officials
of Sangkhua ware Lairen lakpa, Hanjaba, Hidang, Pakhanglakpa, Nahalakpa, Chingshuba Ahan, Chingshuba Naha.

The capital which was the heartland of the Ningthouja kingdom, which was located at the Kangla, it was divided into four administrative divisions namely, Khurai, Wangkhei, Khwai and Yaiskul. The four lakpas were appointed from amongst the royal princes and great importance was given to them.

Thus one could find the concrete political system of Manipur since 33 A.D. But all the subjects had challenges that could determine the political status of the country e.g. problem of state building, problem of participation and problem of distribution.

This problem (state building) arises when there is a serious threat coming from the side of a domestic or neighbour countries so that the very question of the survival of the state comes into the forefront. A war or aggression occurring in the international sphere or a change in the political goals of the powerful phamdous (council of ministers) may create serious threats to the very existent of the political system. But centralization of powers to the king, he could overcome all these problems. State building is commonly associated with significant increases in the regulative and extractive capability of the political system (monarchy in Manipur), with the development of a centralize and penetrative phamdous related to the increase in these capabilities, and with the development of attitude of obedience and compliance in the population.
Problem of Participation:

Basically subjects of the king could not participate in the decision making process because of monarchial form of government. Nevertheless, the sixty four phamdous who were appointed by the king from various panas (Administrative Division) could participate in the political system. Even they reacted against the willingness of the king. So they are kings of the king. Thus the king could not be autocratic ruler.29

Problem of distribution: In feudal society there arise the problem as how wealth should be distributed or opportunities be given to all without any artificial discrimination. In other words, there was no distributive justice and mechanism of corrective justice. But the king recognized the talent and merit should be the deciding factor in the midst of equal opportunities for all. In reality equal opportunities lies only in the hand of royal family and families of phamdous. From these accumulated discontentment, in the later part of the political history of Manipur, People reacted against both feudal lords and colonial masters.