CHAPTER-IX

CONCLUSION

( A Comparative Analysis )
NATURE OF THE STATE: THE TAI

After an examination of the historical development of the state and society of the Tai, the Ahom and the Meitei, a comparative analysis of their social and political formation is made in this chapter. The aspects of the analysis cover the nature of the state, kingship, revenue system, military organization, slavery, and feudal system.

The Tai State of Thailand emerged out of conquest. Apparently it is a prototypic in nature. In a secondary state, union of two systems generally took place. Consequently, socio-political organization of a secondary state was an outcome of the synthesis of the two systems. Either the systems were directly borrowed from the existing one and intermingled with the former or the system was transformed into a new one.

When the Taes conquered Sukhothai, they experienced a new environment. There were considerable non-Tai populations, the Kon and Khmer communities ruled by their own leaders with the cultural and religious traditions.

Socially and politically, the existing populations were filled into Sukhothai society. The intermingling and
supplementing of the socio-political systems of the Tai and the Mon-Khmer socio-political elements took place, when the Tai established their secondary Sukhothai state.

In Sukhothai, the Tai formed the paternal monarchy as the first form of government in which the king personally ruled over his subjects and the king was a father like figure. The foundation of Ayudhya kingdom followed the gradual transformation of the Sukhothai paternal form of government into new territorial form of government.

However, king Boromatrailoknath (1448-1488) concentrated all power to set up direct control over the capital and adjoining territories. Thus personal form of government was established instead of territorial form of government. In such system, the subjects directly held the land from the king. In return they rendered their personal services and some portion of their land produce to the king. To run the administration smoothly, the king also reorganised the bureaucratic structure of the kingdom which was based on the model of feudal pyramid.

It was during the reign of king Mongkut (1851-1868) the traditional bureaucratic structure of the kingdom was transformed into a modern bureaucratic structure. This personal or
centralized form of government continued till the reign of Rama VI of the Chakri dynasty.

**NATURE OF THE AHOM STATE**

The Ahom state was founded by conquest. Typically, it was secondary in nature. Since it was a secondary formation, all socio-political organizations of the conqueror and vanquished nations were intermingled and transformed into a new one.

Paternal monarchy was first form of government. Manpower was organized on personal basis. The Ahom administration was organized on the pyramidal structure in which King and his royal family members were at the apex, the officials at the middle strata and the common people on base line of the administrative structure.

From the beginning of the Ahom rule, the elements of paternal bureaucracy were embodied to the administrative structure. However, the paik system was also organized in the newly annexed areas which led to the increase in the number of new offices of the feudal structure. Such transformation of socio-political structure led to weaken the paternal bureaucracy.
The development of feudal nature of state changed the organization of manpower of the state from direct responsibility to indirect responsibility. And paternal bureaucracy was substituted by monopolised bureaucracy. Thus, all the manpower was indirectly responsible to the king.

**NATURE OF THE MEITEI STATE**

While the Tai and Ahom states were secondary states, the Meitei state was a pristine state which emerged through different stages of historical epochs. All the socio-political institutions developed on the basis of its own socio-political organizations. It was traditional in type. Monarchy was the first form of government. More or less, the state was organized on territorial bureaucratic structure. The personal centralization was the basic nature of bureaucratic monarchical Meitei state. The king was directly responsible for organization of manpower.

However, following the reorganization of kingdom's administration, King Loiyamba (1094-1122 A.D.) introduced Lallup service which was the basis for the establishment of feudal administrative system. Under the state feudal law, the king reorganized the kingdom's administration on the basis of
functional specialization of division without losing the
traditional territorial bureaucratic structure of the state.
The state's feudal nobles systematically organized man-power
whose service was rendered to the state. Hence, the state mo-
bilised state's labour.

With the increase of British influence on the state's
affair from the time of king Gambhir Singh (1825–1834 A.D.)
certain changes were introduced on the traditional bureaucra-
tic structure of the kingdom.

As noted earlier, both the Tai and the Ahom states are
secondary in nature. Paternal elements are prevalent in both
systems. These two governments were organized on the model of
feudal pyramid in which bureaucratic structure prevailed.

The Tai state possessed written law while it was not
found among the Ahoms.

The Meitei state belonging to the early state category
whereas the Tai state is purely secondary in nature. The Tai
state is the product of the amalgamation of two super-strati-
fi ed systems. On the contrary, the Meitei state is founded on
the basis of its own socio-political organisations. Paternal
monarchy was the first Tai form of government but the element of the paternal was not found in the Meitei state.

Bureaucratic elements were prevailing in both governments. Both governments possessed written law.

NATURE OF THE KINGSHIP: THE TAI KINGSHIP

Military factor was a basic factor in the development of the kingship of secondary Tai state of Sukhothai.

Kingship was practised on the patriarchal basis and the paternal monarchy was the form of government. It is realised that relationship between the people and rulers was certainly established on the patriarchal basis.¹

The Theraveda Buddhism was adopted as a state religion by King Rama Kambheng, the Great (1279-1300 AD). The kingdom was larger and kingship was formalized with the Buddhist idea of kingship "Buddhisattva".

with the capture of Angkor Thom in 1431 A.D. by King Boromaraja II, many Khmer Brahmins were transported to Ayudhya and the Khmer concept of government i.e. Deva-raja cult was also imported to Ayudhya. After this, the court Brahmins
who were employed by the king introduced elaborate Hindu rituals particularly on the occasion of coronation ceremony in which the Brahmin priests called down the spirit of Vishnu and Siva to enter the body of the crowned king. The Brahmanic influence supplied the kingship with the majestic aura of mystery and place in cosmic order. Thus, the Tai king was almost assimilated with the divinity specially God Siva. On the other hand, the common subject and Buddhist monks regarded the king as a Bodhisattva. The combination of both theories culminated in the divine status of the king. Gradually, paternal monarch was transformed into divine monarch.

The Tai got the Code of the Thammasat from the Pali Thammasat which embodied a number of the important principles of a monarch from the Mon. The Thammasat describes ideal monarch as king of Righteousness, elected by the people (Mahasamanta). The ideal monarch abides steadfast in the ten kingly virtues viz. almsgiving, morality, liberality, rectitude, gentleness, self-restriction, non-anger, non-violence, forebearance and non-obstruction. For an ideal monarch, there were also four lines of conduct i.e. sasamedha knowledge of food organization, purisamedha knowledge of men, Samapasa, winning the hearts and vacapeyya gentle words. Having got the obedience of these prescribed rules of conduct, the ideal monarch
justifies himself as the king of Righteousness. Through this righteousness the Tai King may attain the dignity of a Cakravartin i.e. Universal monarch.³

From the beginning of the first reign of Bangkok, the Brahmanical influence on the Tai monarchy began to disappear. King Rama I was acquainted with the duties of the Buddhist ideal monarch, the Cakravartin. By issuing a Royal Decree in 1785 A.D. King Rama I. made changes in the procedure of taking of the oath of allegiance. However, the custom of worshiping the images of previous kings before the Buddha was an impious act for nothing could be higher than the three Jewels viz., the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. The shooting at the eye of the people who looked upon the king when the king went out from the palace was stopped by Rama II.⁴

King Mongkut brought an innovation in the tradition of the kingship. It was the custom for all the officials to drink the water of allegiance to the king. He introduced the practice of drinking the water of allegiance as a token of his own loyalty to the whole subject. This made the oath of allegiance, bilateral in place of the former unilateral oath of allegiance. King was free to be seen and shown respect when he came out of the palace. All the petitions submitted to
him by his people were directly dealt by him to realise the problem of the subjects.\(^5\) The Sukhothai paternal relation between ruler and ruled seemed to appear once again.

By abolition of the slavery, and modernized bureaucracy, King Chulalongkorn promoted the cause of Tai kingship. He was regarded as a real upholder of his subjects. Certainly, a large number of people adored him and they used to call him "The Beloved" to this day. His statue on horseback in front of the Annanta Samagom Throne Hall was built with the public subscription in token of the deep gratitude felt by his subjects.\(^6\)

In theory, the law of primogeniture i.e. the eldest son of the superior queen should be the heir, was a customary act regarding the succession to the Tai Throne. Usually a Tai king, ascended to the throne theoretically by election. When the sons of the king were in minor age at the time of the death of king, normally a brother of the monarch was nominated as heir. But the succession rule was frequently broken due to succession conflict, amongst the royal princes. Primarily only the royal blood was considered as eligible for the kingship of the Taiks.\(^7\)

By mobilizing huge human labour, the Tai king constructed
number of canals, buildings and temples, bestowed gifts to
the poor people and always prepared to relieve his subjects
from any eventual natural calamities. Through these welfare
programmes, he gained people's loyalty which accentuated
status of Tai king.

In theory, the Tai King was an absolute monarch. He
was the chief executive as well as generalissimo and the su-
preme judge. He was responsible law maker. He made land grants
to his subjects and appointed all the state officials. The
main duties of a monarch were to protect his subjects from
the enemies and to uphold the Buddhist religion.8

Considerably King's power was to some extent limited
by the pervasive influence of Buddhism which could temper
the authority of the king and sheer (upward) force of tradition
(i.e. the patriarchal element and idea of privilege of peti-
tion). The Brahmins exercised a strong check on despotic power
of the king. The king would not dare to antagonize his court
or subject as a whole, since the court was, right and left,
his strength and the people was source of all power. Those
princes, ministers and courtiers instigated revolts, if they
were displeased with their ruler's action. On the other hand,
powerful factions in the palace and in the provinces attribut-
eted effective counterbalance of the absolutist pretention of
the king.9
To a greater extent, the Tai conception of kingship always depends on the religious point of view of the people since an earlier period stage, kings were evolved from magicians. The monarch was serving as an intermediary between this world and supernatural world. The Tai king should propitiate the guardian spirit like Brahma Khanun of the kingdom. The Ayudhian, kings as a upholder of Buddhism adopted the idea of Bodhisattva. 10 with the importation of the Khmer cult of Devaraja, king was identified with the Hindu god Jiva. With the influence of Thammasat, the ideal monarch was frequently described as a king of Righteousness. By associating ten kingly virtues prescribed by Thammasat, the king may attain the dignity of a Cakravartin. In early Bangkok period, the king presided over the ceremonies connected with agriculture like the first ploughing, the ceremony to control the water level and ceremonies for the control of wind and rain. 11

The nature of the Tai kingship was related to the concept of bun supplied by religion. The welfare and sorrow of the kingdom depended on the merit of the king. The occurrence of serious epidemic of cholera and other strange natural disaster might have taken place to show the strengthen of the king's bun. As an ideal Buddhist, the Tai king made merit by adopting the Buddhist norms. Merit was acquired through various
Buddhist norms i.e. supporting the priesthood, by constructing religious buildings and images, by giving alms to the poor and by entering the priesthood.  

**NATURE OF THE AHOM KINGSHIP**

The Tai-Ahom kings on the basis of their myth claimed that they descended from heaven. This myth was legitimised in the acclamation of divine status, but in the Brahmaputra valley, the institution of Tai-Ahom kingship was evolved out of purely military conquest.  

In the earlier period, the Ahom kingship was influenced by their traditional political concept. They lifted themselves to the divine status by assuming the title of Chao-Hpa i.e. heavenly king. Later during the reign of Lihingia Kaja, Brahmanical influence brought a full manifestation to the status of Ahom king. He adopted a new Brahmanical title Swarganarayana (God of heaven), king was assimilated to Hindu god Indra, lord of heaven.  

The combination of indigenous and imported celestial status sanctified the legitimacy and validity of the rule of the Ahom kings.
King Siva Singh alias Sutanpha (1714 A.D.-1744 A.D.) assumed the title of Maharajadhiraaja (supreme king of great kings) which signified the Ahom king's supremacy over neighbouring kingdoms. King Gadaúhar Singh held the title of Kamrup-Bumareswar (king of both Sumerpith and Kamerupa) which indicated the possession of larger territory. Pratap Singha adopted the title of Gajapati (owner of thousand elephants) would probably signify the possession more wealth.15

In the beginning of the Ahom rule, the kingship was hereditary in the male line with a few remarkable exceptions. Generally the law of primogeniture was prevalent but later on such principle was not followed. Usually the Ahom king was both appointed and elected. Polygamy was practised by the kings.16

Only a prince of the royal blood could become a king. All the Ahom kings should be the descendants of Sukapha, the first Ahom ruler. The prince who was to be appointed as a king should be sacred and perfect, free of any blemish, scars or marks of injuries. Personal valour and merit attentively were considered at the time of appointment.17

Ahom Kings promoted the welfare of his subjects by
protecting the people from both external and internal dangers, providing reliefs at the time of natural calamities, organizing public works, encouraging economic activities, undertaking religious works etc. In return, King procured honour, loyalty and tributes from his subjects. 18

King was the highest executive and judicial authority of the state. He commanded the army. He had the power to preside over all the departments of the Kingdom. King was the source of all the honour and titles which were to be emanated from him to officials and others. He could appoint and dismiss all the governors, officials, rajahs and ambassadors. Since, he was the supreme head of the judiciary, he had the right to inflict punishment on the wrongdoers. 19

Even in the absence of written law, in the state administrative affairs the kings were allowed to exercise within the framework of the customary laws and the ancient code of Lord Lengdon. Thus, King enjoyed elaborate power within the core of ancient law. The Ahom King was not an autocrat because his excessive power was largely checked by a body of councillors consisting of five members. At the same time, he sought the assistance as well as advice from this body. The King could be deposed by the councillors in case of the
violation of existing customs and the advice of the ministers, association with undesirable woman, incapacity and delinquency or misdeed on the part of the monarch. 20

The remarkable feature of the Tai-Ahom kingship was that the kings did not use religion as a tool of law to govern the kingdom. 21

NATURE OF THE MEITEI KINGSHIP

The Meitei kingship was evolved out of lineage (patriarchal), conflict, divine and social contract factors.

The Meitei king was embodied with divine status. In early pre-Hindu period kingship was influenced by traditional religious concept. King Pakhangba adopted the title of 'Mei-jingu' (Lord of the Meiteis). He, thus, was assimilated with the god. This identified him as an incarnation of god. 22 The status of the king was developed by King Saokhambaba by assuming new title 'Kingthou' (King). 23 The influence of traditional Sanamahi cult on the Meitei kingship was quite strong. King Khagemba assumed the new title of Lainingthou i.e. Godly king. Hence, the traditional concept of divine status was more strengthened. 24 Later, during the
reign of King Garibaniwaza, the Brahmanical idea of kingship was actively intermingled with the traditional idea. This King was made to be a descendant of Babruvahana son of Arjun, the Pandava hero. He also adopted new title of Maharaja i.e. mighty king. King Bhagyachandra adopted the title of Raja-rishi (priestly king). The supplementation of traditional concept of divine status by the Hindu idea of might status made the Meitei King more powerful one. With the adoption of the Brahmanical Hinduism as a state religion, the King largely used religion as a tool of law to govern the kingdom.

The King’s occupation of the seat of Kangla the centre of the Meitei cosmic world associated with the cultural life of the Meiteis, source of political power and religious ideas also caused to accentuate the divine status of the Meitei king.

Generally, in Meitei society, practice of the nomination and selection of kingship existed. Theoretically, law of primogeniture was applied to the succession but it was not strictly followed. Only the prince of royal blood could ascend the throne. Therefore, only the descendants of Nongda Leiren Pakhangba could become the king of the Meiteis.

King was the supreme head of the state. He could make
law and he was the commander-in-chief of the state army. Nevertheless, the Meitei king was not so despotic and autocratic. All of the important state matters should be placed before the nobles for consultation. In the administrative affairs, King's autocratic power was largely checked by his ministers and scholars or priest. He did not take direct part in the state affairs but presided over on formal occasions like Darbar. The actual administration of the state went to the ministers and officials. He was the only person who could make all the state appointments. Titles and rewards of the state were provided by him. He made land grants to his state officers, Brahmins and Soldiers.

His most important duty was to promote the welfare of the people. He was always ready to protect his subject from both external and internal disturbances. King saved his people from any famine by storing food in state granaries and provided relief to them when the epidemic occurred. By mobilising manpower, he constructed ponds, roads and canals and aid the dredging of river beds. Such welfare programme undertaken by the king in expense of people's energy could gain people's massive loyalty in ensuring the godly status of the Meitei king.

In the early period, both the Tais and the Ahoms were
the paternal kings. Law of primogeniture was the customary act of them. Only the royal blood was allowed to the throne of both government. Both were practising polygamy. They gained their power through socio-religious works. Both kings utilized religion as a tool to rule the kingdoms.

The Tai kings were influenced by the traditional, the Buddhist and the Brahmanical concepts whereas the Ahom kings were influenced by the traditional and Hinduism ideas. The Ahom king was embodied of divine status when they first appeared in the Brahmaputra valley but it was absent to the Taïs when they established their Sukhothai kingdom.

The Tai kings attained the status of Universal Monarch or Buddhissattva, Divine King and Righteousness. The Ahom kings assumed the titles of Chao-Hpa, Swaganarayana, Maharajachiraja, Kamrup Saumareswar and Gajapati.

The power of the Tai king was checked by his ministers and the Buddhist and Hindu religious ideas. The Ahom king's power was largely restricted by his ministers and the traditional code of Lengdon. But there was found lesser control of the Hinduism over the power of the Ahom king.

The law of premogeniture was practised by the Tai and
the Meitei kings. Only the royal blood was eligible to the throne of them. Both the kings enhanced their power through performing socio-religious works. It is their compulsory task to use religion as a device to govern their respective kingdoms.

The Meitei King was influenced by the traditional and the Brahmanical Hinduism concepts, while the Tai king was influenced by the traditional, the Buddhist and the Brahmanical ideas. The Meitei kings possessed the divine status since the beginning of the Meitei state formation but the Tai king did not embody divine status when their first Sukhothai kingdom was founded. The Meitei kings adopted the titles of Meidingu, Ningthou, Lainingthou and Maharaja while the Tai kings attained the status of Bodhisattva, Divine king and Righteousness.

The Tai king's power was fairly checked by his nobles and the Buddhist and Hinduism concepts. The Meitei king's power was also restricted by his nobles. But the religious control over the Meitei king was not so effective.

**THE REVENUE SYSTEM: THE TAI SYSTEM**

The main sources of Tai revenue were contribution tax
instead of personal service, land or produce tax, custom and inland transit duties, profit from government trading, judicial fees and fines, irregular receipts and tribute.

**CONTRIBUTION TAX INSTEAD OF PERSONAL SERVICE:**

During the Sukhothai period, the sources of government taxes were very limited. There was no more institutions of taxation. All the taxes either in kind or labour directly went to the king. Corvée was the most important form of tax in this period. King extracted the personal service of every able-bodied male section in form of tax in this period.

Taxation system during Ayudhya period was more elaborate than the pre-Ayudhian Sukhothai period. The institutionalization of taxation began with the foundation of Ayudhya by king Ramatibodi I. The service of taxation was put under the Khun Klang or Finance Minister. This time the king continued to enjoy corvée service in form of tax as the Sukhothai king did. In certain ground the tax was contributed in kinds in lieu of personal service. Those people living in an outlying regions were distant and difficult to provide personal service were allowed to contribute in kinds and money. Such system of tax in kind was included bats' excrement
(for the preparation of salpetre which was used in making gun-powder), tin, elephants, span, ivory and rare products. 29

Later on, money was contributed as tax instead of corvée labour. The rich patrons who wanted to utilize the labour of their clients and slaves in full time to their work, paid money to avoid personal service rendered to the state. The skilled artisans and phrai luang contributed money as tax instead of their personal service to the state.

PRODUCTS TAX:

This type of tax collected from various sources i.e. tax on rice products, tax on the cultivation of farms, tax on garden products (fruits and vegetables) and tax on various type of varieties i.e. liquor, fishing, turtles, eggs, island products, gambling and prostitutions, forest products, etc. 30 The state had two modes of taxation on cultivable lands. The cultivable lands which were free from annual excessive or heavy inundation and drought, were claimed to tax on the whole of these area and the cultivable lands which were affected severely by annual floods and drought were imposed tax on only the possible cultivated area. 31 The tax on rice product was collected in kind in early period was replaced by money during the third reign of Bangkok. For the first time one-sixth
of the agricultural products was imposed as tax but it was changed from time to time. The basic transformation on revenue structure began to take place from the time of King Rama III with the introduction of money tax.\textsuperscript{32}

However, leases were given out by King Rama II for the collection of taxes on the manufacture and sale of liquor on gambling institutions and on shops. The system was fully developed by Rama III. Most of the tax farmers were the Chinese and they replaced royal monopoly of collecting taxes on many products. When King Rama IV entered a series of commercial treaties with the Europeans and U.S.A., the royal monopoly of collecting tax was completely given away. With the development of tax farming system in full-swing, king acquired fabulous amount of tax on production items. Taxes on garden products and other varieties were collected tax in form of money.\textsuperscript{33}

**CUSTOMS AND INLAND TRANSIT DUTIES:**

From the time of Ayudhaya period, the state imposed import tax on ships which brought mixed cargoes of manufactured goods frequently entered the kingdom through the Chao Phraya river. The government collected tax from all sundry export
goods from the kingdom. Ship’s measurement tax was imposed on the boat of the foreigner and the Tai according to the size of boats. Tax was also collected from the market and inland transit duties from boats and carts at land were also imposed. 34

PROFITS FROM GOVERNMENT TRADING:

In seventeenth century, the kingdom started to monopolize on trade. The state received profits from the sale of various kind of commercial goods, the purchase or import goods of which the foreign traders were authorised to sell to the state trading expeditions and the sale of a portion of the products of the royal fields and gardens worked by the prisoner/war and corvee labours or phrai luang.

JUDICIAL FEES AND FINES:

Government acquired a small amount of revenue from judicial fees and fines which consisted of fees for sealed title-deeds and fines for the judgement over the disputed land and money matters. 35

IRREGULAR RECEIPTS:

The state received revenue from irregular receipts
like presents from officials and governors, legacies transmitted to the king by the officials after their death either willingly or unwillingly, revenue for public works and the confiscation of wealth of officials and their family.

TRIBUTE

From the time of Sukhothai period, the Tai kings received periodically tribute in form of tax from the subjected and semi-autonomous regions. The state acquired the tribute in form of kinds either forest products or mine products leading to the prestige of the Tai king and increased the state wealth. 36

Officials, monks and monastic lands and prai hivan or prai luang (king's man) who were engaged in trade were exempted from state taxation.

REVENUE SYSTEM OF THE AHOMS

To run successfully the kingdom's administration, the Ahom king collected taxes from different sources i.e. on land or production, tax on the contributions instead of personal service and tax in form of labour, custom tax, land tax, tax on mines market tax, plough tax, tribute, etc.
In the early period, the revenue system and its affair seemed to be limited in scope. There was a considerable development of revenue administration, when the Khel system was reorganised. In the period of the climax of Ahom rule, various kinds of revenue came to increase and a number of revenue offices were created.

Since the early period up to the end of Ahom rule, instead of paying the revenue in cash or kind, each paik was liable to render personal service to state in form of tax. In order to exempt from such service, they remunerated 3.2 each to the state. But the paiks of Kamrupa were liable to pay 3.5/- in lieu of physical service.

Whenever a paik occupied beyond the two puras of granted rent-free lands, they were liable to pay a fixed revenue of 3.1/- per pura. On the other hand, they were given land for their homestead land for which they had to pay a poll or house tax of one rupee only. But in Barheng a hearth-tax of two rupees per family for using a separate cooking place was levied on the people.\textsuperscript{37}

The state received considerable amount of revenue from different mines. Five rupees per head of gold workers and
Iron-workers were levied as a tax but the oil preachers and fishermen were required to pay only three rupees. The iron-workers had to make annual payment of twenty seers of iron per head as tax to the state. The state levied plough tax on migrating raiyats (i.e. palm cultivators) hoe tax on the hill tribes who planted cotton. 38

The state installed numbers of chowkis and custom houses to different places of the kingdom. Taxes were levied on different articles which were exported from the kingdom and imported into the kingdom through these chowkis or custom houses. 39 A tax was also derived from the market which was maintained by the king. Sale tax was collected from the different articles which were sold in the market. The silk weaver had to pay a tax of rupees two per head. The state collected other minor taxes on various fields i.e. tax for offence, toll tax, confiscation, tax on fishing in river and pond etc. The paiks required to supply various articles like cloth poisonous seeds, jute, seri, etc., bullock hide etc. to king. Such kinds of present increased the personal wealth of the king. 40

The state procured occasional tribute from frontier chieftains and tributary chiefs in form of tax.

In short, all the burden of state taxation were fallen
on the paiks class. Therefore, paiks were considered to be the core of all the revenue resources. The officials, priests, chamaus and slaves were exempted from any state taxes. More or less the state levied tax directly and indirectly in cash and kind.

**REVENUE SYSTEM OF THE MEITEIS**

The revenue system in early period of the Meitei kingdom was rudimentary in nature. The state received tax in form of presents, tributes and service. The people were so conscious to subscribe their tax to the state directly due to the absence of institutionized revenue officers.

The state levied revenue on land or production mines, forest, trade and commerce, foreigners, culprit and criminal, fishing, tributary tribes and clan, food grains, specific cause etc.

From the early time, the state had to collect at least a portion of the agricultural products as a tax from the people. All sections of the people except state officials rendered 10 days lalup service to the state out of forty days in form of tax. Certainly the people contributed
Later, when the revenue department was well institutionalized, the state had to collect revenue from these sources through state revenue officers. The state collected revenue both in kind and cash.

A considerable amount of income was derived from salt, lime, iron and gold. The people who were living around the lime producing villages were liable to render some portion of their manufacture of lime to the state in form of revenue in kind. Tax was collected from various forest products, i.e. sal, teak, sandalwood, cotton, bamboo, cane and fireworks, honey, wax, ivory, rubber and silk etc. They received large income from the selling of horses and elephants. Apart from this, the distribution and selling of the royal owned cows, bulls, buffaloes enriched the wealth of the king.

In the early period, the state merchants presented precious articles particularly to the monarch in forms of tax which enhanced the royal property. Later, the state introduced direct imposition of tax on exported and imported articles. The state entered to monopolize certain exported items.
i.e. tea seed, wax, ivory and rubber helped to get maximum income. The state received largest amount of money revenue from trade and commerce.

The government imposed fines and fees on culprits and criminals in form of tax. After the transfer of Kayah valley to Burma under the Anglo-Kanipur treaty of 1834, the state got monthly stipend of 7,500 in exchange of it.

All sections of the people except the Brahmins paid tax to the state. Lallup service was the most important form of state revenue. The government successfully generated the state administration with the maximum help of the state Lallup service and income derived from different sources.

The Taifs and the Ahoms collected revenue both in kind and cash. The third estates like the paiks of the Ahom and Phra of the Taifs were the main tax payers of both states. Both governments collected taxes from land or produce, trade and commerce, mine, fishing, forest and tributary vessels. They also got human labour as the most important state tax. Both governments also entered monopolistic trade on certain exported articles. The Tai government did not impose tax on the officials, monks, monastic lands and monastic servants and phrai luang.
who engaged in trade. Certain sections of Ahom subjects such as the officials, religious personals or the Brahmins and chamuas were exempted from state taxation.

Both the Tai and the Meitei kingdoms received tax in kind and cash. The lallup labour of the Meitei and the Phrai class of the Tais were the major tax payer of both the kingdoms. Both governments imposed taxes on land, trade and commerce, judicial fees and fines, tributary vassals, fishing, forest, mines etc. The Meitei state procured a considerable amount of income from the herds but it was absent in the Tai system. The Meitei state practised monopolized trade on certain exported articles as the Tai government performed.

All sections of the Meiteis except the Brahmins were not free from the state taxation. But the certain groups of the Tai people i.e. the official monks monastery land and monastery servants and phrai luang (king's men) who were specially engaged in trade, were exempted from the state taxation.

**THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION: THE TAI ARMY**

Generally, Tai army emerged due to the necessity of the expansion or conquest of territories, the capture of
properties and population and the preparation of defence of lives and property of the people.

In earlier period they organized their army on the basis of family relationship. Since the population was small, all the able-bodied male sections of the land were compulsory for military service under the leadership of the land's chief.

During the Sukhothai period, armies were recruited larger than before. The princes maintained their own army, but at the time of war, all the able-bodied manpower of the provinces joined the royal army and the vassal states also conscript soldiers to the Sukhothai army. 45

The foundation of Ayutthaya by King Rama Tubodi followed the development of new war strategy. The king constructed mud walls and ramparts around the capital city. King Borama Rajabhosoknay's reformation in military organization was remarkable. The kingdom's population was divided into military and civil. The military sector was put under the jurisdiction of Kalaom department, while the civil sector was brought under the control of Mahathai department. 46 Even though, at the time of war, every able-bodied freeman of two sectors was obliged to perform military duty. The use of firearms was known to the
Tai during the reign of King Kam生肖en.

King Rama Thibodi II remodelled the traditional Tai military system on the principle of universal compulsory service in 1518. He issued a book of military strategy. He introduced the registration of able-bodied men for military and civil services. Every able-bodied man between 18 and 60 was enrolled. The creation of Suravastī (registrar) provided a great advantageous to mobilise army in time.

However, King Prajairaja, with employing a select company of Portugese artillerymen inaugurated the art of rounding cannon in Thailand. Foreigners or other races as spy or secret missions to the frontiers of kingdom were introduced. Hence, the Tai military set up was made more competent with the inclusion in foreign military.

Dismantling the several frontier town fortifications used by the enemies as bases for launching attack on Ayuchya, he built brick walls and forts in European design around the capital to replace old mud walls. He also dug out an exterior road outside the already existing one. So king laid the foundation of a stockpile of military supplies, guns and ammunition. The fleet of river-warships was enlarged by introducing and
adding new type of vessels. King improved the fighting arm of the elephants. In 1593, King Nareasuan recruited as many as 500 Japanese soldiers in his army. He strengthened the defence of the kingdom by constructing new forts at Bangkok, Nonthaburi, Ayudhya and other towns built with the technical assistance of French engineers.49

The history of the Tai army underwent change during the reign of Rama IV Mongkut. For maintaining law and order of the kingdom, King founded a police force and organized a small army on the European fashion comprising of a regiment each of Infantry, Artillery and Marines. King could strengthen and modernize navy by introducing steamships for the first time in Thailand navy wing. His son King Chulalongkorn modernized regular Tai army by increasing annual budget and increased Tai army in nine divisions. He also employed several western technicians to modernize the Army and Navy. This modernization programme of army enabled Thailand to match French in Indo-China and could relieve Thailand from imperialist onslaught throughout 19th century.50

The source of the army was the subjects of the King. All the able-bodied men section including the Tai and foreigners mostly the Portuguese and Japanese who were born and resided in Thailand were liable to render military service.
Neither the Brahmins nor the Buddhist monks joined the army but the slaves were used as camp followers and labourers. 51

The Tai army was organized to include wing groups on either side of the main unit, the Van (capital) and rearguard groups. The Tai army comprised of four divisions like infantry, elephant, cavalry which was poorly organized and small in number and navy. 52

The Taes used different kinds of weapons like swords, daggers, clubs, spears, spikes, thunderbolts, axes, bows and arrows and shields. Besides these, they used firearms cannon and artillery. 53

The purpose of warfare of the Taes was not only to plunder wealth including man-power and property but also to conquer territories, to preserve territorial integrity and to protect property and people. From the time of Sukhothai until the advent of the Burmese, they mainly fought war for plundering property and human-labour and acquiring more territory. From the time of king Chakrapat of Ayudhya upto the king Rama V, the Taes fought war probably for the cause of the safeguarding of territory and its people.
MILITARY SYSTEM OF AHOM

When Sukapha entered in the Brahmaputra valley, he was accompanied by nine thousand (9000) unmarried adult men or paik. Under the command of Sukapha, these freemen served as soldiers in the series of wars and conquest. Even after the permanent foundation of the Tai-Ahom kingdom in Assam, these free male section continued to serve militia service. All the state officers from the highest to the lowest were liable to do the military service. No doubt, paik system was the source of Ahom militia. Through this system, the state could mobilize the soldiers whenever required.

The introduction of firearms by Ahom Raja strengthened the power of Ahom army. King Pratap Singh's appointment of the number of military officers brought a dramatic development in the organization and strength of the Ahom army. The state began to organize a regular system of gradation of officers in the army. Hence, the supervision of the paiks i.e. militia was entrusted to all the officers viz. the Dohains, the Phukans, the Baruas, Boras, Hazarika, Rajkhwais and Saikias. The age of the militia was fixed that all the able-bodied males whose ages from 16 to 60 years were obliged to conscript their military service to the state. Although
the Ahoms possessed their own military system from the earliest time, they did not organize the kingdom's standing army till the reign of King Gaurinath. He, however, with the assistance of Captain Welsh set up first Ahom standing army.57

The Ahom army consisted of infantry, cavalry, elephants, navy, artillery and spies. The army used different kinds of weapons like swords, spears, axes, maces, daggers, slings, bows and arrows and firearms or guns.58 The Brahmins and slaves were excluded from the Ahom army.

The Ahom army adopted different war tactics of advance, retreat, scorched-earth policy, delaying time, outflanking movement, causing diversion in enemy's ranks, guerrilla warfare etc. For effectiveness of defence, obstruction and offensive operation, the soldiers used to construct forts, fortifications, embankments and ditches.59

The Ahoms had different mode of war. Till the end of 16th century, they were waging war against the neighbours to expand and consolidate their kingdom. From the beginning of the 17th century upto the end of 18th century, they were fighting against the Muhhammadans and Maomaries to defend their empire. With the event of the 19th century, they were
struggling against the Burmese to save the kingdom and to regain the independence.

THE MEITEI MILITARY SYSTEM

Military organization was found since the reign of the first Meitei king Nongda Lairen Pakhangba. Although the kingdom did not possess professional regular soldiers, the king acquired enough militias when the war was declared. Because, every able-bodied male section voluntarily accepted to render militia service to the state at the time of war.

The military organization was further developed during the reign of Khuyoi Tampok by introducing a new system of alerting the people i.e. by beating the war drums. The introduction of the use of cavalry by king Urakonthouba strengthened the kingdom's military power. The introduction of callup system also brought a basic development in the military system of the kingdom. Under such system, the eligibility age of all the able-bodied men who voluntarily provided military service to the state was fixed from 16(sixteen) to 60(sixty) years.

Another development took place in the field of military
organization during the reign of King Khagamba. The use of the gun and gun powder was known to the Meitei army. However, the responsibility of the organization of different military wings were entrusted to the respective departmental heads (i.e., Shagolhanjaba - in charge of cavalry to responsible to mobilize cavalry forces at the time of war. Shamuhanjaba - in charge of elephant and Hiroi Hanjaba - in charge of navy etc. carried out their respective duties as Shagolhanjaba did). Once again military organization was made an under the change after the first Anglo-Burmese War. King Gambhir Singh with the assistance of the British India Government for the first time set up a standing army of the kingdom of Manipur.

The Brahmins, scholars and slaves were exempted from the military service. In some instance, the womenfolk under the command of Queen fought against the enemy.

The full complement of the kingdom's army consisted of infantry, cavalry, navy, elephants and labour. Different types of weapons like swords, shields, spikes, spears, bows and arrows, fire arms, arambai (sling), muskets etc. 63

Various war tactics according to the difference of the
might of the enemy were adopted by the Meiteis. They adopted offensive forward move and combat fighting against the hill tribes and neighbouring principalities. When the Cachar Muslims invaded in Manipur, King Khagemba wisely used the tactics of burning heaps of green reeds (Tou). Such burning could produce the sound of many rifles guns.\textsuperscript{64} Owing to the superiority of the Burmese army in strength and weaponry, the Manipuris used the tactics of guerilla warfare.

The kingdom's aims of war were to plunder against the hill tribes and to conquer the neighbouring clan principalities which were left on the way of complete unification. The Meiteis adopted offensive warfare against the Pongs and the Ahagis (Chinese) while they were in a defensive position against the Kacharies and Takhels (Tripura). The Meiteis fought both defensive and offensive wars against the Burmese. The war against the mighty British empire was particularly to protect Manipur's independence.

In the early period, the required equipments of the army were arranged by the soldiers themselves but later with the evolution of different offices relating to military affairs, the essential equipments were mainly supplied by the state.

For the defensive purpose, the state constructed
moats, walls, fortifications and trenches. Even the capital sites were always constructed strategically.

The state used different war signals to make the people alert and to mobilise soldiers within the short moment. A big drum (Kangla Pungjao) was beaten five times, when the war was declared and the horsemen were sent by the king throughout the kingdom to inform about the declaration of war. Such systems of war signal were replaced by the gun-fired systems since 1627. When the war was declared, guns were fired five times. 65

Generally, all the able-bodied male section of the Tais and the Ahoms performed state militia service. Only the male section of the Tais between the ages from 18 to 60 years would serve as a state soldiers whereas the able-bodied Ahom male section between the ages from 18 to 60 years rendered state militia service. Both the armies were divided into 5 major divisions like infantry, cavalry, elephants, navy. They founded their respective standing army with the assistance of the Europeans. These two kingdoms used some similar weapons like swords, daggers, spears, axes, bows and arrows, shields, lances and guns. But the difference is that while the Tais used clubs, spike and thunderbolts, the Ahoms used sling and maces.
The Ahom army adopted different war tactics of advance, ritual, scorcher-earth policy, delaying time, outflanking movement and guerilla warfare, while the Tais followed surprise attack, guerilla warfare, false retreat, blockade and frontal attack. For the defence purpose the Tais constructed fortifications, forts and moats and brick walls. But the Ahoms constructed forts, fortifications, embankments and ditches. The Tais employed foreigners in their army but it was unknown to the Ahoms. The use of steamship was known to the Tais but the Ahoms had not the idea of such steamship. The Ahoms had their spy department. Though the Tais used spy, they had no proper spy department. All sections of the Tai people except the Brahmans and the Buddhists, were serving to the state military service, but in Ahom kingdom, the Brahmans and the slaves were never called for the state militia service.

All the able-bodied male section of the Tais and the Meiteis would provide the militia service to the state. The eligibility age of the Meiteis soldiers were fixed between 16 to 60 years, while the Tai soldiers' eligibility ages were prescribed was from 18 to 60 years. Both kingdoms constructed fortifications, forts, moats, brick walls for effectiveness of defence. The full complement of both army consisted of infantry.
cavalry, elephants and navy. They set up their respective standing army with the help of the Europeans. Most of their weapons were similar, but the difference is that whereas the Heiteis used arambai, the Tais used the clubs and thunderbolts. The knowledge of steamship was known to the Tais, while the Heiteis did not have the knowledge of such scientific steamship. The Brahmins and the slaves were excluded from the Heitei state militia, whereas the Brahmins and Buddhist monks were excluded from the Tai state military service. The Tais appointed the foreigners like the Portuguese and Japanese residing in Bangkok to their army; but the Heiteis did not employ any foreign elements to their army. The Heiteis used different war signals like beating big drums, spread of news by sending horsemen and cur-fires to make alert people but types of war signals were not known to the Tais.

THE TAI SLAVERY SYSTEM

After the establishment of Tai kingdom of Sukhothai, the society was soon moving towards the class society. Number of social classes appeared to exist in the Sukhothai society. Slaves formed the lowest strata of the society. The main original sources of the slaves were the war captives, local deserters or criminal persons, sold persons and voluntary conversion. The first group of slaves was enslaved to the king whereas
the second and third groups of the slaves were made the servants of the nobles and riches.66

Tai slavery was well institutionized after the foundation of the Ayudhaya kingdom. According to the law on slavery laksana that, there were seven types of slaves (1) those who had been redeemed with property (2) children of slaves born in the house of the master; (3) slaves given to children by their parents (or inherited), (4) slaves who were acquired as a gift (5) slaves who were reduced from imminent perils and legal penalties (6) slaves who were supported in times of famine (7) slaves who were conquered in war.67

Seven types of servants can be again broadly divided into two categories like privately owned servants, government owned servants. Privately owned servants were mostly fiduciary servants. Some of these servants were distributed among the officials as a reward for their service. Government owned servants mainly derived from prisoner of war or crime redeemers. Some of the government owned servants were given to the monasteries by the king to cultivate monastic lands or other sundry jobs. The slaves in Thailand consisted of redeemable and non-redeemable.68

Usually the sale of temporary or redeemable slaves
were made effective with a guarantor. The master could demand compensation from the guarantor, if the slaves ran away. Though the master could inflict light punishment on them, he should not hurt or kill them. In case, death occurred, the master was condemned with fine and punishment. The contract of selling of non-redeemable or absolute slaves had been done without a guarantor. In case, the slaves ran away, the master had to bear the loss. They were under the complete control of their master. If they were hurt at the time of punishment, the price of the maltreated slave was reduced. 69

The interest bearing slave was made a security for a debt. The sold servants got freedom to live at any place he liked and to do any work he wanted but it was compulsory to pay interest to the master. 70 The Tai slaves continued to increase its number due to better condition of the slaves than the Tai freeman. Therefore, number of the Thrai Luang or freeman were willingly made and sold debt slaves to avoid corvee. 71

Though the Tai slaves occupied the lowest strata of the society and were reduced to the portable object, they were safeguarded by the laws promulgated from time to time by the king. The laws protected them from severe punishment and death penalty. At the same time, they were always ready to
They enjoyed extensive privileges and often better their condition than phrai luang. Like other subjects they were granted sakdina rank 5 rai and also given the right of inheritance of property. They were given the chance of redeemed from the clutch of slavery.

The monastery owned servants were exempted from taxation and state service, whereas the other sections of the slaves bore the burden of the state service and divided their time between the service of the king and that of their masters, giving six months each in a year. But while they were working for the king, they had to work for their own maintenance.72

King Chulalongkorn adopted number of plans to abolish slavery in Thailand. For the first time in 1900, the slave system in North-east Thailand was effectively rooted out.

\textbf{Ahom Slavery System}

The sources of the Ahom slavery were the war captives, sale of children, purchase of the hill tribes and debts. Another source of slave was derived from many persons who voluntarily placed themselves under the protection of some great men in return for food.73
In the early period, slavery was unknown to the Ahoms. However, the development of permanent wet-rice cultivation required more labour for maintenance and reclamation of fresh agricultural area. The process of the changing trend of productivity pattern of Ahom society would mainly attract the prevalence of slavery under Ahom rule. Meanwhile, most war captives were enslaved.

Besides the king, the chief nobles had their private slaves got from war captives and bought from the hill tribes for service in the drudgery of the household and the field works. All the persons of respectable position had also their own slaves. From time to time, slaves were certainly provided to religious institutions.

The slaves were entirely under the control of their masters. Therefore, they obeyed to do all the household works and field work. Since they could be sold and purchased, they were almost similar to property. They never possessed personal liberty.

So far as the condition of the slaves is concerned, the slavery was not a painful institution during the Ahom period and its institution was not encouraged. They were exempted
from state service and any state taxes. They enjoyed many privileges in a family of their master. Their master provided food, cloth, shelter, ornaments weapons and gave bride-price. In brief, they provided all expenses of their servants from birth to death. Slaves voluntarily made bondage themselves under the rich men on account of their poverty and they could return their free condition, if they wished. Finally Ahom slavery system was abolished by David Scott. 77

MEITEI SLAVERY SYSTEM

In Manipur, slavery originated from the war captives, indebtedness, criminal activities, adultery and sale and purchase. 78

Slavery existed in Manipur since the pre-Meitei state formation. 79 During the reign of King Kyamba, the institutionalization of slavery emerged. This system was known as Mina Phunga which consisted of two kinds like Leima Nai (slave of the queen) and Winghou Manai (slave of the king). 80 The responsible factor for making enslavement of numbers of people was the king. King made to increase number of slaves by purchasing people, by captivity war captives. Of course, Mina Phunga began during the kingship of King Garibaniwaza. 81 King Chandrakriti innovated Mina Phunga in certain aspects. These slaves
who did not belong to any clan were amalgamated into different clans. 82

The entire Minai Phunga was categorised into two divisions such as Manungloi and Mapalloi. The first one was slaves from the valley, while second one was slave from the hills. The Manungloi Minai Phunga consisted of as many as nine sub-classes i.e. Ningthou Manai (slaves of the king), Leima Nai (slaves of the queen), Awun Nai (dowry slaves), Lai Manai (slaves of deities), Ayokpa (slaves who are maintained of the palace), Minai chanba (slaves who were regarded as absolute wealth of the lord), Asenba (temporary slaves), Lengpul (slaves who had to bear temporary hardship), Keis (low caste slaves served as store-keeper of royal grainary) and territorial slaves. 83

Slaves could be utilized by their owner at any household and field works. Since they were reduced to transferable property, they were even given as bride-price of the princess. King had to own four kinds of slaves i.e. Ningthou Manai, Ayokpa, Lengpul and Kei. Queen was allowed to own her own slaves. Slaves were given to the deities.

The masters treated their slaves as part of their
family and most of time they were avoided from the cruelty of
the masters. Whenever the slaves did not satisfy with his ma-
ster, he could go to other master where he expected to get
better treatment. But the new master was to pay the price of
the slave to the former master. If they were successful to
British territory, freedom was their prize. Debt slaves could
be redeemed, when they cleared the sum due. Theft and criminal
slaves were also redeemable; it was after some fixed period.
In Manipur slavery was hereditary. It was abolished with the
establishment of British rule in Manipur.

The sources of the origin of the Tai slavery and the
Ahom slavery were almost similar. The slaves were not only
owned by the kings but also they were given to the nobles and
religious persons to own. The condition of both kingdom's sla-
ves were always better and fairly treated by their masters. The
Tai and Ahom slaves were exempted from the status of the slaves
under certain particular ground.

The Tai slaves were categorised into seven which was
broadly divided into redeemable and non-redeemable. There was
not found the classification of Ahom slaves. The Tai slaves
were authorised to own the land and inherit it. Such rights
were not provided to the Ahom slaves. King Chulalongkorn the
fifth king of Chakri dynasty was the responsible for the
Disappearance of the Tai slaves, while the slaves of Atom came to be extinct with the establishment of British rule in Assam.

Probably, there was no more differences of the original ground of the Tai and the Meitei slaves. The Meitei slaves were divided into Manungloi consisted of nine sub-classes and Npoppeoi whereas the Tai slaves were classified into seven types. Again the Tai slaves were broadly categorised into redeemable and non-redeemable which was not found among the Meiteis. The Tai slaves were owned by the king and his family, nobles and the Buddhist monks. But the Meitei slaves were given to the Brahmins while the king and royal family and nobles owned slaves. The Tai slaves had right to possess on land and it could be inherited. Such rights did not exist for the Meitei slaves. Both kingdoms' slaves were warmly treated by their owners. In some specific cases, they could exempt themselves from the position of slave. However, the Tai slaves came to disappear amid the modernization programmes undertaken by King Chulalongkorn, whereas the Meitei slavery system was abolished, when the British rule was introduced in Manipur.

FEUDALISM

Feudalism is a stage of civilization. The origin, character and practices varied from region to region and from time to
time according to their own socio-economic development. "The word from the Germanic fehu-od (from which is derived the English and French fief) that is property in cattle and latter "tenure" or property in land-stresses the importance, in the system, of land tenure and the rights and privileges attached to it."6

"Feudalism, in the limited technical sense to which some scholars would restrict the term, means a social system of rights and duties based on feudo-vassalitic relations i.e. a system of land tenure and personal relationships in which land (and to a much lesser degree other sources of income) is held in fief by vassals from lords to whom they owe specific services and with whom they are in a bond of personal royalty, having done homage to them before being invested with their fief. In a broad sense the term denotes what some scholars would prefer to call feudal society, a form of civilization and type of society with certain general characteristics beside the mere presence of lords and vassals and fiefs. In such a society those who fulfill official duties whether civil and military do so not for the sake of an abstract nation of "the state" or of public service but because of personal and freely accepted links with their overlord, finding their remuneration in fiefs which they hold hereditary (this is specially the case
with military functions, an upper layer of professional soldiers and a material outlook being conspicuous feudal traits). 7

According to R. C. Sharma, "feudalism is largely concerned with collecting the surplus from the peasants mainly in kind through superior rights in their land and occasionally through forced labour". 8 This definition more or less fits into the political and social formation of three Asiatic nationalities under study.

THE TAI FEUDAL SYSTEM

The emergence of feudal system or Sakdina in Thailand is directly related to the early socio-political formation of the TaIs.

Since the beginning of the establishment of Sukhothai, the Tai society apparently continued to organize on military line. All the able-bodied were liable to render both civil and military services to the state. During this time, king's governing power was concentrating at the capital city whereas the neighbouring territories were ruled by the princes who held the lands as fiefs from the king. On the other hand the princes was apportioning out their lands to a semi-hereditary
obility. In some aspects provincial administration would resemble a kind of feudalism.

Thus, the feudal mode of administration of the early Tai was primarily organized on the basis of territoriality.

King Borametrailoknat set up a more centralized form of government in which personal or functional specialization substituted the territorial basis of feudal rule. He firmly set up Sakkina (i.e. Sakkina means right, na means rice field = right on rice field) system. It embodied in the two laws issued in 1466 like the Law of Military Heirarchy and Law of Civil Heirarchy and Provincial Heirarchies. These two laws record elaborate hierarchical land allotment ranks for the royal family and its attendants, nobilities, commoners and servants. Thus, the Tai feudalism is originated out of the landed possessions granted to freeman by the king directly.

However, following the introduction of Sakkina system, the Tai society was divided into Chao (king and his royal families), Khunung(noble), Phrai(commoner) and That(slave). King was the sole proprietor of all the land under the feudal Sakkina system. Hence, he made land allotment or Sakkina grade to all the officials or nobles and commoners, according to their
status, titles and officials positions and such grant was extended to the slaves.

The sakdina rank of 100,000 to upper or prince 5,000 to 40,000 to Chao Fa or royal brother and down to 500 (i.e. 500 sakdina rank was given to Rom Ratchweng (Offspring of Rom Chao) were respectively provided by the king. The feudal nobles were given the sakdina grades ranging from 30,000 for Somdej Chao Phraya down to 400. The Phraes were given sakdina grades ranging from 300 rai to 10 rai. The sakdina rank of 5 was given to the That or slave.92

The feudal lord class was entitled as Phudi and its members were used as Nai. Phudi consisted of Chao formed by royal family and Khunung formed by officials. They possessed great amount of lands and enjoyed all kinds of privileges, they avoided the manual work. Therefore, they were living parasitically on the taxes both in kind and service rendered by commoners or phraes. The Khunung or nobility groups were allowed to enjoy lifelong tenure office. But it was not on hereditary basis. Their offsprings were free to apply for their own sakdina ranks from the king. All levels of Thailand's political institutions of both civil and military which were the mainstay of the feudalist state machinery were held by
the nobles. They never enjoyed salary because Sakdina seemed to represent their pay. The feudal nobles were categorised into seven grades like Phya, Pra, Luwang, Khun, Ruen, Riu and Tai.

Below the Sakdina rank of 400, there were Sakdina ranks of 300 to 100 which were given mun and phan. They were the petty officials of the villages. They were living on corvee and levy attributed by the phrai or commoners. Even though they belonged to officials, they were not considered as Khunng or nobility.

The phrai or the freeman was the fundamental basis of the Tai feudalism. The Sakdina grade ranging from 300 rai to 25 rai were given to this section by the king. It was categorized phrai som and phrai luang including of phrai sui (craftsman).

Phrai som directly belonged to and served for princes and nobles. When young men reached at the age of 16, they were allowed to enter the category of phrai som. All the unmarried phrai som, at the age of marriage, were given Sakdina grades ranging from 10 to 15 rai; and after getting married they were provided Sakdina ranks ranging from 20 to 25 rai.
After they were the nobles' men, they performed all kinds of old civil and military jobs for their patron nobles. Since they belonged solely to a particular feudal lord, they were considered as private property. Hence, they could be sold and given out as gift by their patrons. The right of the possession of phrai som by the nobles and princes affected the king's political and economic centralization programme of the king. 97

The Phrai luang belonged to the king. They received allotted land as the phrai som get from the king. They were liable to provide corvee for the king for six months every year (during the reign of King Narai). They worked in building palaces, opening up road, digging up canals and construction of fortifications. Apart from the six months service rendered to the king they mainly devoted to work rest of their time to cultivate their own plot and they were liable to give nine-tenth of their farm produce to the royal treasury as rent for the land. They also had to donate gift and work for the officials. Of course, their period was reduced from 6 months to 4 months during the Lhanapuri period. Again it was reduced to 3 months in a year during early Bangkok period. They rendered corvee service until they reached at the age of 60 years. 98

King's taking of the phrai som after the loss of the
nai of them, and resettlement plan of war captives were the important reasons for increasing the number of phrai luang. At the same time, their numbers decreased due to their excessive levy and service and the introduction of the money payment for the exemption of corvee. None of the phrais were unable to work for other patrons without the permission of their nai (owner). All kinds of phrais were not allowed to change their residence at their will. The status of phrai was properly fixed and it was inherited from generation to generation. A phrai who possessed outstanding military valour and high position long religious career were promoted to the status of nobles.

According to the feudal state law, the monks and foreign immigrants i.e. Chinese, Europeans and Japanese, were excluded from the Sakkina system.

The last social category of the feudal system in Thailand was 'That' or slave. They were granted Sakkina rank 5 rai under the feudal pyramid, besides this, they were granted certain free time to do their own productive activities. They rendered their respective service to their different owner. Although they were solely considered as the private property of their nai, they were given many right under feudal law.

The Sakkina system mainly advocated three feudal
obligations for the commoners i.e. corvée, levy and military service. All the social burden was fallen on the third estate. It provided a great advantage to the king to monopolize political-economic aspects of the kingdom.  

103

The age-old jadaina was brought to disintegrate with the monetization of kingdom's economy and the privatization of land ownership. Finally, king Chulalongkorn abolished it.

THE AHOM FEUDAL SYSTEM

In the first fifty seven years of the Ahom rule, the Ahom monarch directly controlled over all free Ahom paiks. By the close of the 13th century king Subinpha for the first time distributed his Ahom subjects in equal proportions between the Bar Gohain and the Burha Gohain, whereas the monarch retained the non-Ahom subjects.  

104

No doubt, the Ahom feudalism originated out of the allotment of the state paik militias to the officials by the king. The allotment of paik militia to the officials continued to loosely organize till about the end of sixteenth century. In the first half of the 17th century, the feudal structure of the Ahom kingdom underwent considerable development with the sudden territorial and population expansions.
Usengpha Pratap Singh introduced new administrative military officers and paiks were systematically reorganized into khels. The state khels were allotted to the nobles.

Under the feudal administrative law, the Ahom society was broadly categorized into King and his royal families, nobles and commoners or paik. The ruling feudal class comprised of three groups like Cohains and civil-cum-military officials, priests and hereditary vassal chiefs.

About a lakh paiks each was put under the jurisdictions of respective Cohains. For personal use and rendering services to the state, the Bura Cohain was allotted 10,000 paiks, the Bar Cohain, 4000 paiks and the Barpatra Cohain 6000 paiks. On the other hand, the civil-cum-military officers who were vested with the command of a certain number of paiks were explicitly graded like the Bar-Barua and Bar-Phukan, Phukan, Rajkhowa, Hazarika, Saikia and Bora. Their gradation was entirely depended on the held of the paiks allotted by the king. The Bar Barua and Bar Phukan were respectively allowed to command as body of 12,000 paiks but in case of Bar-Barua, number was increased. Paiks 6000 men were commanded by a Phukans, 3000 men by a Rajkhowa, 1000 men by a Saikia and 20 men by a Bora. A part of the allotment of paiks, all the Cohains and officers
of different ranks were allowed the usufruct of large tract of lands. All the feudal officers of the state were honorary and tax free. 107

Probably, the allotment of number of paiks to these nobility class dignified their status, wealth and power. The paiks became an instrumental bridge to link between the state feudal officers and the monarch. The entire feudal state structure depended on the utilization of paik-labour. At the expense of paik labours, the monarch controlled them. 108

All the male population between the ages of 16 and 60 years respectively excluding the nobles, priests and slaves were liable to provide service to the state. This was called 'paik' which was organized by Suklenmung Garganya Raja into gots of four adult males who were obliged to render manual service to the state in return each of them get 2 Pura of wet rich land. But in the reign of Rajeswar Singh, the number of men got was reduced to three. The first man or mul of each got was obliged to render four months state service in a year after the completion of mul's routine work, the second man or dowal of each got continued the work while the third man or tewal of each got looked after the domestic affairs of the absent mem-
ber. 109
Usually, when a boy reached the age of 16 years, his name was enrolled in the Paik register. King Pratap
marga reorganized the paiks into Khels or guilds which were provided with a regular gradation of officers. The paiks were granted two puras of rent free lands for cultivation purpose.

For the cultivation of additional land beyond this granted rent free land they were charged of fixed revenue of .1 per pura. They gave poll or house tax of 3.1 for homestead land. The paiks had to pay 3.2 each to the state for exemption from state service.

The paiks were given different names according to their assignment when a Paik went to the battle field under a military Phukan or sarua etc., he was known as Kari. The paiks which were attached to the Gohains were called as Bil-latis, the paiks devoted to the royal family members were called as Meis, the paiks were provided to the religious persons were known as Dewalis and the paiks assigned to the nobles were called as Likoos. The paiks might be compelled to work on the feudal noble's field and rendered civil and military service to the state in addition to work on their own own farms. The grant of number of paiks to the nobles became a basic
reconciling measures between the feudal nobles and state relationship.

There was a group of people with a higher rank above
the paiks and below the nobles. They were promoted from the
paiks according to their merit and they were exempted from
physical service of the state. 114

The expansion of territory and its population followed
the reclamation of new cultivable land led to cause of full
development of Ahom feudalism; but on the way of centraliza-
tion, it was highly restricted by the age old vassalage, tri-
balism and kinship tie. However, Ahom feudalism came to be
extinct with the establishment of British supremacy over the
Assam valley.

THE MEITEI FEUDAL SYSTEM

Since the time of Mongda Lairen Pakhangba, the state
loosely controlled over the productive force i.e. labour. The
state utilized the energy of every able-bodied male section
of the state both in civil and military works without using
state expenditure.

The reorganization of the kingdom's administration by
ling Loiyumba followed the development of Lallup system which was the manifestation of the emergence of feudalism in Meitei society. The process of feudalisation also began in the management of handicrafts and industries. Under this Lallup system, every male between the ages 16(sixteen) and 60(sixty) years was obliged to render feudal service to the state. Each of the families of different lineage was provided with their suitable duties according to their different lineages. The Meitei feudalism originated out of the exploitation of free labour who obliged to render feudal service of both civil and military to the state, by the king through an intermediary element like nobles or state officials.

The establishment of six administrative divisions of Lallup by king Loiyumba strengthened the feudal Lallup service. In every division the state machineries organized manpower and from each division, a team of labours were sent to the state to provide feudal Lallup service. But they were obliged to perform state service only the ten days out of forty days. The exemption of the state Lallup service from any Lallup worker on the ground of the illness and the acceptance of the substitution of the Lallup service by paying money were generally allowed. The feudal Lallup service was applied to all the
kingdom's population like the Meiteis, Pangals (Muslims), Brahmans, Phunghanai (slaves), Keis, Lois and Nagas. All the state machineries i.e. officials, Rifas, chief of the tribes and clans and the immediate family of the Rifas were relieved of heavy duty, but according to their official position, they provided their non-manual feudal service to the state (i.e. Rifas acted as personal attendants of the King or Kingthou selba. 116

Later, the feudalism was expanded when the state owned cultivable lands were granted to the nobles, Brahmans, temples and soldiers. 'All the lands belonged to the king and he gave away or retained as he desired'. 117 According to Iboongohal, 'In Manipur there were four kinds of revenue free lands like (1) Kingthou lou (King's cultivable land) personally enjoyed by the King, (2) Lairou (cultivable land of god), a grant of land for the maintenance of some particular temples, (3) Lugun lou, land given to the Brahmans on the occasion of their taking sacred thread, (4) Lands given to the officials and the title holders which were subsequently known as Khoropos and Tolob lou. There were another two kinds of land namely Siphai lou (soldier lou) and the lands held by the civil population. The village in Manipur valley were divided into Siphai (soldier) and civilian villages. The Siphai villages got one pari of land per head.
from the lands aroused their villages free of revenue. The civilian villages got one pari of land (2½ hectares) per head from the fields around their villages but they were to pay land revenue."\(^{118}\)

The feudal Meitei society had different social strata like king and his royal families, officials, and commoners. The feudal nobles consisted of different hierarchies such as officials, Brahmans, and chieftains. The state did not impose revenue on land donees. That the granted lands were rent free. In addition to these granted lands, they received soldiers and peasant labours from the state for their personal guard and for the cultivation of the land. The peasants spent not only extra days of labouring on the state but also worked on the fields of feudal nobles.\(^ {119}\) Surplus production produced by the commoners was, however, extracted as a revenue through the general control exercised by the state.

Being granted homestead and agricultural lands by the king, the Brahmans were put to different leikais both as a state agent and spiritual heads who had direct access to the king. This signified the King's utilization of religion in the state's administrative affairs. King also granted rent free lands to
certain temples. Such act signified the Meitei King as an
upholder of religion.

For the supervision of particular villages, King
appointed feudal agents like Kalarajas who supervised over
the villages of Heirok, Khengaoek and Singthoukhong and Nud-
hiraja for Kakching, while the Lekpes and Khulakpas looked
after other general villages.

On the process of feudalization, the clan chiefs also
became feudal lords of the state. When they were absorbed to
the Meitei state, their political status was loosened. At the
same time, clan land was also annexed to the Meitei Kingdom
(i.e., his ownership right on land was also passed to the
Meitei king). However, the clan subjects had double feudal
allegiance to their chief and king. They owned the land in
the name of Meitei king. They were brought within the fold of
the Meitei state feudal system.

The Tai feudalism emerged out of the landed possession
granted to every freeman, whereas the Ahom feudalism originated
out of the allotment of the paik militias to the state offi-
cials. The Tai state granted lands to the nobles consisted
of Chao and Khunung, Phrai included of Phrai som and Phrai
luang and slaves, while the Ahom nobles were given the paiks by the king. The Tai feudal nobles were divided into seven grades, whereas the Ahom nobles were categorised into eight grades. The religious persons and foreigners were excluded from the Tai feudalism, but the Brahmins and slaves were not included to the Ahom feudalism. The land was the basic device to measure the Tai feudalism, while the paik militia labour was for the Ahoms. The phrai consisted of phrai som and phrai luang including phrai sui, were liable to provide their services to the state and nobles. And the Ahom paiks were distributed to the nobles and religious personal. The period of the state service of the phrais (particularly Phrai luang) was fixed to 6 months in a year but the period of their state service was reduced later on. The paik labours who were named according to their assignment. They were liable to provide 4 (four) months state service in a year. When a Phrai reached at the age of 18 years, he was required to render feudal state service and he continued such work upto 60 years. When a paik labour of the Ahom reached at the age of 16, he was liable to provide state feudal service; but he expired, when he attained 60 years old.

Both the Ahom and Tai nobles were freed from any state manual service and taxes. The Phrais and the paiks of the Tai and Ahoms were granted land. These two-third estates were the
producers and tax payers of both kingdoms. Under the feudal law of the Tais, the slaves were granted some portion of the state land to own but it was not practised by the Ahoms. The Tai state feudal system was abolished by its own ruler, while the Ahom feudalism was wiped out with the introduction of British rule in Assam.

While the Tai feudalism emerged out of the landed possession granted to every freeman, the Meitei feudal system was evolved out of feudal services rendered by the Lallup labours to the state through the nobles. The state granted lands to all the sections of people such as nobles consisting of the religious persons, chais, slaves, but the religious persons and foreigners were excluded from state feudalism. Under the Meitei state feudal law, the nobles and the militias were granted lands and the Brahmins were within the fold of state feudalism. The Tai feudal nobles were clearly graded, while such a system of gradation was unknown to the Meiteis. Both the Meitei and Tai feudal nobles were free from manual service. While the Tai nobles were freed from state taxation, the Meitei nobles paid tax to the state.

The ages of the Meitei Lallup labours who were required to provide their feudal service to the state, were prescribed
from 16 to 60 years; but for the phrais the ages were fixed from 16 to 60 years. The Phrais was considered as an instrumental device to generate the Tai feudal administration as the lalup labours did for the Meiteis. The lalup labours rendered 10 days out of the forty days, while the phrai provided 6 months in a year but it was reduced later on. The lalup labours remained always without institutionalized classification but the phrais were categorized. The phrai and lalup labour of the Tai & the Meitei respectively were not only the producer & tax payer but also the source of state labour. The Meitei feudalism passed away with the introduction of British rule in Manipur but the Tai feudalism was rooted out by king Chulalong Korn.

Therefore, the polity system of the three nationalities show similarity and dissimilarity. While the basic structure of the state was feudal in character, the Meitei state was a clear case of primitive political formation and the Tai and Ahom states were secondary type which emerged out of the conquest.