CHAPTER - ONE

Introduction: Study of Political History of Manipur, Geographical Features, Pre-history, Proto-history, Meitei Cosmogony, Legendary accounts and early rulers.
STUDY OF POLITICAL HISTORY OF MANIPUR

According to G.R. Elton\textsuperscript{1} political history is the history of politics and politics are the activities of man in society. Political side of man's nature refers essentially to the active expression of social organism. Therefore he says, political history is the study of that dynamic activity in the past experience of the human societies which has direct relevance to the organisational aspects of these societies. It is thus concerned with that activities which arise from the fact that men create, maintain, transform and destroy social structure in which they live.

Despite the recent charges against political history that it deals with a very narrow aspect of man's activities, the political history still occupies an important place in the study of the past. If history is the story of changing fortune of man, political history comes first above the other forms of historical study. Political history tells the story of man's political activities in society which shape the fortune and future of man through the centuries.

With regard to the scope and content of political history, it has been stated that "power constitutes the essential theme of political history". Political history describes

the way in which men strive for power and use it inside their own societies. It also tells of the personal battles for ascendency among the powers, maintenance and exercise of their rule and achievement of power through organisation. It also describes the active exercise of power between societies namely the international politics of relation between the states. Therefore what men did in public life; how they lived, how they organised wealth, what and how they thought, how they expressed their sense of beauty, constitute history. The purpose of political history is to relate the phenomenon of action and reaction in political activities of men. Such a study requires the understanding of the structure of the political society, the system of administration and military organisation, laws concerning human relations and inter societal relations. At the same time, political history provides the best possible framework of marshaling the historical evidences to tell the history of men’s past.

Though study of social, economic and cultural history is very important for understanding the history of early Manipur, they exclusively would not be able to provide the history of Manipur without the political history. The history of ancient Manipur, upto the present researches, is more or less the dynastic history of the Ningthoujas. The historical evidences that have been thrown up by intensive
research would enable the historians to reconstruct the political history of Manipur from Pakhangba (33 A.D. to 175 A.D.) to Khagamba of 17th century.

The political history of regional principalities of Moirang, Khuman, Luwang and other clans have to be reconstructed on the framework of political history. This work attempts to present the prehistory and protohistory of valley of Manipur—before the emergence of Nongda Laren Pakhangba. Moreover, there are sufficient historical evidences to enlarge and reconstruct the ancient history of Manipur. This work traces the emergence of the Meitei state from early chiefdoms and clan principalities— to a fulfledged feudal state. Naturally it analyses the historical evidences to present the Meitei society, polity and economy as they were the system in which the Meitei political society worked, grew and developed.

The methodology of presenting the history of the kingdom of Manipur, its polity and social formation is based on historical methodology of the study of the growth of the Meitei state and an analytical query into the emergence of state and society during the period.
GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF MANIPUR

Manipur, the eastern most part of India, is bounded on the north by Nagaland, on the south by Mizoram and Burma, on the east by Burma and on the west by Assam. But in ancient time, it was much bigger than that of the present size. According to Sir James Johnstone, the territories of Manipur varied according to the mettle of its rulers. Geographically, Manipur belongs to the Burmese area and has two series namely Disang series and Barail series.1a The present boundary of Manipur with an area of 22,356 sq. km. more or less remained fixed since the controversial transfer of Kabaw valley to Burma in 1834.

Physically Manipur is divided into the valley and the mountain ranges. The total area of the valley is 1769 sq. km. at an elevation of 792.4 metres (2600 ft.) and the hilly region covers the ninety two percent of the total geographical area of Manipur. The valley as well as hills have a slant towards the south. The hills are inhabited by the hill tribes belonging to Naga and Kuki-Chin tribes while the Central valley is inhabited by the Meiteis.

1a M.S. Krishan, Geology of India and Burma 1960, Madras, p. 73.
The mountain ranges of Manipur belong to the eastern Himalayan system. These mountain ranges are young in age. The general aspect of the hill ranges is that of irregular serrated ridges, occasionally rising to conical peaks and flattened cliffs of bare rock. In the west there are five hill ranges, the Vangai range, the Oinamlong range, Chakha-Nungba range, Khoupum range and Koubru Laimaton range. The old Cachar road, the new Cachar road and several trade routes pass through the western hills of Manipur. In the north there is the highest peak in Manipur, Tenipu peak (9824 ft.) to the west of Mao. From there a range comes down to Karong and then another range. In the east there are the ranges from Seramati peak running southward along the Indo Burma border across Somrah, Kasom, Mapithel and Yamdung and Chin hills. In the central plain, Nongmaiching, Langathel, Langol, Waithou, Karang, Thanga islets within the Loktak lake.

Among the rivers of Manipur, the Barak, the Irang, the Imphal, the Iril, the Kongba, the Thoubal, the Nambul etc. are worth to be mentioned. All the rivers fall either in the Loktak lake, the greatest lake of Manipur or in the Imphal river which reaches Burma through a gorge in the hills and became a tributary of the Chindwin river, a tributary of Irrawady river of Burma. The Barak flows
into the Surma then to the Brahmaputra.\(^2\)

Besides these rivers, there are also many important rivers in the hill area. Among them the Leimatak, the Lokchao, the Chakpi, the Khugs and the Langba may be mentioned.

All the rivers of Manipur provide the ecological environment for a very remarkable culture and civilization in the valley of Manipur. These rivers and the fertile banks provide livelihood to the people who live in their watershed system, though during the rains they turn into demons of destruction and bring forth the alluvial soil enriching the fertility of the land.

Manipur has a large number of lakes which have been greatly reduced during the past one century. Loktak lake being the most remarkable accumulation of water in the valley towards the south-western corner whose banks grew up the principalities of the Morung and the Khuman. There is a cluster of low hills in the lake forming a group of tiny islets known as the Thanga. This lake provides livelihood to a large number of people. To the south of the lake is Kaibul Lamjao, the great floating

swamp, famous for its brow-antlered deer known as Sangai found only in Manipur. Waithou lake, Iko lake, Kharungpat lake and Pumlen lake are also important lakes. They are lying on the east of the Imphal river. Like Loktak lake, these lakes have immense utility as fisheries.

Apart from these lakes there are a number of marshes like, Utropat, Sangaipat, Laphupat, Leningangpat, ungampat, Lamphelpat and Porompat. In the dry season, most of them are dry and serve as grazing ground but are full of water during the rainy season.

The entire forests of Manipur are included in the Himalayan system, which is dominated by mixed types of forests. The hills of Manipur are covered with rich forests. The total area of land under forest in the state is 14365 sq. km. There is no forest in the valley. In Manipur we find four types of forest. They are 1) Tropical moist semi-evergreen, 2) Tropical most deciduous, 3) Sub-tropical pine and 4) Dry temperate.

NAME OF THE COUNTRY

In the early days there were different names of Manipur. The literal meaning of Manipur is the land of

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3 R.P. Singh, Geography of Manipur, 1982, Delhi, p.33.
Different versions are given about this name Manipur. The name is from Mani, a jewel, this jewel was formerly in the possession of the ra-jas of the country ages ago. Another version is that, "Near Nungoibi and between Taibangthong there is a stone with supernatural power known as Mani or precious stone on account of which the place is known as Manipur." Sanamani Laikan, a Manipuri historical work mentions that the name 'Manipur' was first officially introduced during the reign of King Garibnawaz (1709–48). The other names of Manipur are Kanglai-pak Poireipak and Meitrabak. According to the different Chak or ages of Manipur there are different names of Manipur for four Chak – Tili Kkokom – Ahanba in Hayi chak, Mira Pongthoklam in Haya chak, Hana Semba Kona Loiba Tili Kok Leikoirom in Khunung Langba chak and Muwa Palli in Konachak. Manipur was also known by a variety of names by her neighbouring states. In Rennell's Memoirs and maps of India it was called Meckley. The Burmese called her

4 Quoted from, W. Yumjao Singh, Report on Archaeological studies in Manipur, Bulletin No.1, p. 75.

5 Sanamani Laikan (MS).


7 N. Khelchandra – Ariba Manipuri Sahitya Itihas, p. 2.

Kathe, the Cachar's name was Moglai, the Assamese Meklo, the Ahoms Maglu and the Shans who inhabited on the east of Ningthi or Chindwin river called her Cassay. 9 King Garibniwas issued a coin which described the king as Mekhalewor (Lord of Mekhale). This coin indicates that Mekhale was another name of Manipur (Mekhaleswor, the lord of Mekhale).10 Aryanagar, Mahendranagar 11 were Hindu names given to this land after conversion into Hinduism.

THE PEOPLE

The people of Manipur are composed of three major ethnic groups, the Meiteis of the valley, the Naga and the Kuki Chin of the surrounding hills. In the later period, it was classified into different groups like the Meiteis, the Hill tribes, Bisnupuriyas, the Manipur Muslims, the Mayangs and the Lois.

In the valley, it is mostly inhabited by the Meiteis, the Manipur Muslims, the Mayangs,

9 N. Khelachandra, op. cit., p.2.


11 Mani and Mangi - Vijay Panchali Vol. 466, Imphal, p.4.
the Lois and the different sections of people. The origin of Manipuri or Meiteis is altogether obscure. Some Manipuri scholars once claimed that they were the Hindu descendants of the great Pandavas referring to the Great Indian epic, the Mahabharata. According to them Babrubhahana, the founder of the ruling dynasty was the son of Arjuna, the third brother of the Pandavas by marrying Chitrangada, the princess of Manipur during the period of his wandering. Since the accession of the Babrubhahana, they asserted that they had been Hindus. According to the linguistic and ethnological study of George Greirson, T.C. Hodson and S.K. Chatterjee, the Manipur language fall into Kuki Chin family of Tibeto-Burman linguistic group. In view of physical structure and appearance, the Manipuris are distinctly Mongoloid with the oblique characteristics of the group such as scantiness of hair on face and chest, broad cheek bone and oblique eyes, flat nose, long and straight black hair etc. According to R.E. Pemberton the the Manipuris were descendants of a Tartar colony, which probably migrated from the north-west border of China during the sanguinary conflicts for supremacy which took

13 M. Kirti Singh, Religious Development in Manipur in the 18th and 19th centuries.
place between the different members of the Chinese and Tartar-dynasties in the 13th and 14th centuries. 14

U. McCulloch and R. Brown propounded their views that the people who dwelt in the valley had their origin from the neighbouring hill tribes. The basis of their contention is as follows: "from the most credible tradition the valley appears originally to have been occupied by several tribes, the principal of which name were Koomal, Locwang, Noirang and Meiteis all of whom came from different directions." 15 These pioneer-British writers laid emphasis on the similarities of language between the Meiteis and the hill tribes, adopting the Naga custom at the time of coronation of the Meitei king and the preservation of some common customs and superstitions between the Meiteis and the hill people. James Johnston, E.W.Dun, R.Brown give a very contrasting view after a close examination of physical appearance, habitation and constitution that the Manipuris although a fine stalward race descended from a Indo-Chinese stock of Mongoloid origin. Some of them showed a regularity approaching the Aryan type. It was due to the passing of the successive waves of Aryan bloods through the valley into Burma in pre-historic times. 16


15 M. McCulloch, Valley of Manipur, 1980, p. 4.

Thus, from the above discussion it is clear that the Manipuris or the Meiteis are the composite race of admixture blood in which the Mongoloid blood is more predominant. Many immigrants of Aryan stock were absorbed in the local population of the valley of Manipur in the course of their migration to Burma through the valley leaving evidence of absorption on the physique and culture of the people. In this way the history of Manipur witnessed the process of ethnic fusion inspite of her mountain barriers and the continuous flow of immigrant settlers has been a continuous process century after century either from east or the west. These people migrated from the east belongs to the Chinese Tibetan, Burmese and Shans. The subsequent immigrants from the west namely the Brahmins and the Bishnupuriya were also integrated into the general fold of the Manipuri population.

There are considerable population of Musalmans or Meitei Pangal who are descendants of Muslim immigrants into Manipur. They chiefly reside to the east of the capital. The Muslim population appears, before the devastation of the country by the Burmese, to have attained a very considerable amount but, as was the case with all the other sections of the Manipuri community.

17 R.K. Jhalajit - A Short History of Manipur, 1968, p.11
the greater portion of it was carried into captivity by
the ruthless invaders and the present Musalmans are the
descendants of the few that they escaped being captured.
But they are undoubtedly descended from the Bengalis chiefly
from the district of Sylhet and Cachar.

Another section of people known as Bishnupuriyas
deserves special mention in the society of the valley of
Manipur. Previously they were known as Mayangs as some
of them were the war captives captured by king Khagamba
from Cachar in the early part of 1715 A.D. The Bishnu-
puriyas are settled in Ningthoukhong, Nachou, Ngaikhong,
Khelen, Ngaikhong Khunou near Loktak lake and in Wangjing,
Heirok and Khangabok. They were descendants of immigrants
from eastern Bengal who came to Manipur in different
periods.

Apart from the Musalmans and the Bishnupriyas, a
separate group of people known as "Loi" are scattered in
the valley. In the general estimation, the Loi people
are not a different group from the ethnic point of view
with that of the Meiteis. They are a section of Meiteis
who were composed of indigenous Meiteis and others expelled
by the king from the society for violating certain norms
of social customs and usage. Rather than this,
those prisoners who were captured at the time of war and aggression were also included into the Loi section. The Lois settled at Sekmai, Andro, Chairel and Chandrakhong speak a different dialect but with a considerable mixture of Meitei words.

There are many tribal communities in Manipur, which may be broadly divided into: 1) The Nagas and 2) Kuki-Chin. The Naga groups of Manipur are: i) Zamis, ii) Liangmei, iii) Kongmei, iv) Mao, v) Maram, vi) Thangal, vii) Tangkhul, viii) Maring, ix) Anal, x) Moyal, xi) The Monsang, xii) The Lamgang and xiii) Tarao. They live in western, northern and eastern hills of Manipur. Some Nagas are found in the valley of Manipur.

The Zamis, Liangmei and the Kongmei occupy the Tamenglong district in western hills of Manipur. They are kindred tribes. The Mao, the Maram and the Thangal live in the northern hills. The Tangkhuls inhabit the Ukhrul district bordering Burma. The Marings, the Moyal, the Monsang, the Anal, Tarao and the Lamgang occupy the Chandel district in the south-west bordering of Burma.

The Kuki Chin groups are: i) Aimol, ii) Kom, iii) Purum, iv) Gangte, v) Peite, vi) Simte, vii) Thadou, viii) Vaiphei, ix) Hmar and x) Zou. They inhabit in
the Sadar hills, Churachandpur and Chandel district of Manipur. Tribes like Chothe Chiru claims to be Naga.

Most probably, the Aimol, the Chothe, the Chiru, the Koieng, the Kom, the Purum, the Anal, the Hmar, the Lamgang, the Moyon, the Mensang, the Gangte, the Vaiphei migrated to the southern hills of Manipur before the 16th century. And the another remaining tribes like the Simte, the Paite, the Zou, the Thadou migrated to Manipur in the 18th centuries. The Mizos have settled down in Manipur in recent years.

During the period covered by the present study most of the population except the Kuki tribes like Thadou, Paite, Zou, Simte had migrated from south-east Asia and occupied in different regions of Manipur. During one and half millennium of the Christian Era, the ethnic fusion almost completed in the valley of Manipur. And the Meiteis had emerged as the builders of a remarkable civilization in the valley of Manipur while the various hill tribes remained in their village societies, which were autonomous but greatly isolated from the mainstream of the political and economic processes that had overtaken the dwellers of Umphal valley.
Pre-historic period is a period of the man's social development before written record. It is also defined as an account of pre-literate or non-literate people. Here, though no regular written historical accounts are available in case of Indian History until the middle of the 3rd century B.C. still it has a well developed literature, prosperous way of life as described in the hymns of Vedas and Sutras, the earliest of which easily goes back to C.1,500 B.C. But since it is not written down it is called the proto-historic stage. For the reconstruction of the history of these periods the source materials are the remains of the material cultures of the bygone days like, stone tools, bone tools and weapons, potteries, domesticated or wild plants and animal collected for food. Thus like other places of the world, in Manipur also such archaeological remains are found for the reconstruction of the pre-historic and proto-historic periods in Manipur.

As man first lived and took shelters in the caves and on rock shelters and also as given by the Meitei text and archaeological finds, our attention is naturally drawn to the pre-historic caves and rock shelters. Among

18 Angom Khonghou (MS) Ningthourol Lambuba, p.1.
the archaeological caves and sites so far discovered are Khangkhui Cave, Tharon Cave, Napachik, Machi, Nongpok Keithelmanbi explored by the State Archaeology Department under the supervision of O.K. Singh and Sangaithel and Kameng which were excavated by W. Yumjao Singh in 1925.

**Khangkhui Cave (old stone age)**

Khangkhui cave is a limestone cave. It is located in Ukhrul district of eastern Manipur at about 11 km. from Ukhrul town towards the south-east. The caves are on the range of the hill. A stream which is a tributary of the Thoubal river flows near the western foothill of the hillock. Thus, the site is suitable for habitation and settlement site as water could supply easily for human necessity for shelter from wild animals and natural encounters and takes an important role during the pre-historic period. Khangkhui exploration was carried out in 1969 and 1972.

There are three caves: one is like a big channel on the western slope of the Khangkhui range and the other two on the eastern slope from the first cave that lie on

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the western slope. O.K. Singh discovered a big chopping tool with a handle of unique type as a surface collection while he was carrying on exploration. The second cave is situated on the northern side of the first one. The third cave which is the biggest one of all the three explored situates at a little higher towards the south of the second. From this cave many stone articles, bone tools are found. Limestone was the chief material for making tools in the cave. Thus, from the collected artefacts from Khangkhui it is conjectured that the people and the type of the culture of the Khangkhui belonged to late stone age culture.

With regard to the faunal remains found from these caves, Dr. Badar identified these remains as belonging to Cervus, Sus, Bovine and wild forests. According to him these cannot be older than the late pleistocene. The bone tools are comparable with the faunal remains of Kurnool cave which have been reported to be of late pleistocene. Again the stone tool industry which seems to be local made is also closely comparable with that of the Choukeseian of China. Thus, from the above discussion of the antiquity of Khangkhui caves it is concluded as the late pleistocene or early Holocene. 20

Another archaeological site with evidence the paleolithic culture in Manipur is Songbu cave in Chandel district which was recently excavated by the State Archaeology Department of Manipur.

The discovery of other caves like Hundug cave another limestone cave and Purul cave in the Purul village did not yield any finds. Song Ring rock shelter of Beyang village of Tengnoupal also did not yield any finds.

The pebble chopper found at Machi, Chandel district indicates a very old age. Typologically they are comparable with the tools of old stone age or paleolithic. Thus, from the above findings one can conclude that Manipur was inhabited since the paleolithic or old stone age.

As stone age is divided into the Paleolithic (old stone age), Mesolithic (middle stone age) and Neolithic (new stone age) and many Neolithic and Mesolithic remains are also found in Manipur. The important Mesolithic and Neolithic sites are discussed below.

THARON CAVE

Tharon cave is situated in Tamenglong district of Manipur. The villagers call the cave as "Kalenki" meaning 'the house of bats'. The altitude of the cave
site is 3200 ft. above sea level. The rock type of the area is sandstone of Barail series. A stream called "Kalemkimagu" is flowing on the southern side from the caves. There are five caves and these caves were probably formed due to weathering of the rocks. The antiquities collected from Tharon Caves like, pebble tools, flake tools, edge ground tools show the existence of pre-historic people in and around the cave. It seems that the stone tools from Tharon are like that of findings from Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Philippines. According to O.K. Singh the date of Tharon is fixed around 6000-5000 B.C. based on from the typo-technological studies. These discoveries reveal existence of Haobinhian culture in Manipur which flooded the whole of the south-east Asia. In this regard the proto-Australoideal people must have been settled in this cave before the advent of the Tibeto-Burman group in the region.

Another important Neolithic site is Nongpok Keithelmanbi situated at the foothills of the eastern mountain ranges on the right bank of the Thoubal river. A salt spring is also found at Nongpok Keithelmanbi and it was used before the commercial salt was imported from outside.

O.K. Singh's exploration of Nongpok Keithelmanbi was during 1982-84. From different three localities at Nongpok Keithelmanbi, many pebbles, split pebbles, flake choppers, pebble with pick edge, pebble with better mark and ordinary pebble were collected. He further collected choppers and handmade pottery decorated with cord-mark but a few are plain.

The culture of Nongpok Keithelmanbi can be divided into Paleolithic, Haobinhian, corded ware and carved paddle impressed ware cultures. The carved paddle impressed wares are being associated with metal. O.K. Singh further opines that it is quite likely that people of Nongpok Keithelmanbi could exploit the environment to a great extent for their economy and findings of glazed ware shows that there was probably a cultural contact with south-east Asia including south China.

NAPACHIK

Napachik is another neolithic archaeological site of Manipur. It is a small hillock in the northern part of Wangoo village lying on the right bank of the Imphal river. Exploration of Napachik site was conducted under the supervision of O.K. Singh in 1981. The whole deposit is essentially of hill washed sediments and has
seven layers in structure. Each and every layer preserves cultural materials either Haobinhian or Neolithic or both. The cultural remains collected from this site are choppers, scrapers, flakes, edged ground knife, grinding stone, ground and polished celts and potsherd, tripod by wares, plain and corded wares. It further collected microliths and potsherds from another site.

The artefacts collected from Napachik site give an important cultural affinity to the Haobinhian tool complex of south-east Asia. And it is surmised that a Neolithic culture equipped with ground and polished cults and handmade cordeal tripod wares which have affinity with Chinese Neolithic culture arrived at Napachik around second millenium B.C.22

Thus, from the above findings, it can be observed that Manipur valley was already inhabited by the stone age people. It is further pointed out that the Haobinhian culture remains show the migration of Austroloid to Manipur before the advent of Tibeto-Mongoloid who followed them around 1000 B.C.

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MEGALITHIC CULTURE

Apart from stone age culture, Manipur is rich in the field of Megalithic culture. At the end of the stone age period Megaliths were erected as monuments in connection with their culture, traditions and customs. Among the three types of Megalithic culture, i) the Kista and cists, ii) the Manhir, iii) the Dolmen, Manhir is mainly found in the northern areas found at Mao-Maram, Mao-Bazar, Wilong, Purul village, Tharon, Wangoo, Kakching, Salangthel, Ukhrul, Khoupum, Keithelmanbi and widespread in the valley. In the hill areas megalith both of stone and wood are raised by the Naga and Kuki tribes. The purpose for this Megalithic culture is mainly to commemorate the victory, ceremonial remembrance, migration, memorial for dead etc. During the reign of king Punshaba of Meitei king (1404-1432) "U" Hongba was practised. This is a kind of Megalithic culture. Stone erection of various types for various purposes as well as the elevation of mounds all over the valley are found abundantly.

The prehistoric period is the time of the first human movement through Manipur and the prehistoric men established their habitation either in caves or in the hills. The hill ranges also provided the ecological environment for settlement in the early pre-historic
period of Manipur. As indicated by the faunal remains the use of the fire either for giving heat to them or for burning his meal was known. Then, again the people of Tharon, as indicated by Haobinghian culture materials of the cause appear to be the cross hybrids of the Austroloid. The Mongoloid peoples migrated during the Neolithic period.23 The Mongoloid after dividing themselves from the Mongoloid cradle began to occupy different places. Thus the Haobinghian cultured Mongoloid as well as the Tibetian premier Mongoloid coming through the same route and the courses of the present Imphal river were seen as carrying their culture in the hills and valley of Manipur.

THE MEITEI COSMOGONY:

The myth, legends and traditions recorded in a large number of literary works give an interesting account of the creation of the universe and man. The cosmogony of the Meiteis is presented here just to indicate that the Meiteis knew of the past origin and creation.

Kasha Nongthou, the Almighty who is in the form of rounded shot of catapult spherical and exhibits no starting or ending point as well as no redicle and pendencle and

convergence of all the lights bearing the countless
colours, buzzed and recollected all the
ideas for the creation of the universe. 24

The right portion of the Almighty became the
divine He-being and assumed the little Sangtaram Tanouba
and the left portion became the divine. She-being with
the name Santhuplang Nungtarengbi. The Almighty called
upon the divine Atiya the endless and Atingkok the
immortal to create the universe Atiya was entitled as
Ashiba. It is in Manipuri vocabulary known as Shithaba
(Shiba = being on an errand) Atiya Shidaba was asked to
create the earth. Water was created by him but he could
not create the earth. He consulted the supreme God who
showed the whole universe in His mouth. Moss and water
hyacinth were created, Atingkok and Taopiloinei were
created, so also Omthi (the fog) and Meishanupi (the head).

Then a tortoise was created on the back of the
tortoise in the water, then the earth was created. Atiya
Sidaba broadened the earth with the four gaurs in each
of the four corners they were Pisatao in the west, Kari
in the south, Kara in the west and Nongtamkhua in the
north. Atiya Sidaba brought forth Nongsit Harapa, the

mischiefous wind in consultation with Konchin Tuthokpa. The created earth is shattered by Harapa and turned into cloud. The broken pieces of earth were collected and recreated by Ashiba. He created an eel. Atiya Sidaba by riding on the spiny fins ascended up to the Almighty to narrate all the events. Again the earth was destroyed and it turned into snow. Then Atiya Sidaba brought forth a black beetle and sent him to Almighty to pray for the earth. Thus with the direction of the Almighty the earth was recreated. When Haraba was thinking of scattering the earth, the supreme God brought forth Khoinou, the goddess from his navel and sent her out to interrupt Haraba by giving her divinity with the like of Nongthang Leima. Thus Ashiba completed the creation of the earth.

Atiya Shidaba came to the Almighty who again directed him to create layers of the celestial spheres. So Atiya Sidaba by riding an owl created the first layer. Atiya Sidaba intended to construct another layer on the Paphan and Paphan layer was constructed on the top of the layer of owl. Then Atiya Sidaba brought forth the bear and the elephant, and made two layers. Thus, Atiya Sidaba created the earth and 9 (nine) layers of spheres.  

The Khamung Ingel Leishemba Puya gives a different version from that of Leithak Leikharol. The version is as under.

The Almighty Atingkok Maru presented from his right side the male form and female form from his left side entitled them as Saliren Amamba and Ingkheiren Lairrembi. Both were instructed by Maru to complete His notion by creating the universe. The god and goddess came downward and assumed the title of Atiya Guru Sidaba and Leishiren Leipunbi as they were playing down the land at Langleipung. They produced nine gods and seven goddesses respectively for levelling the universe. After completing their work they kept all the objects and inmates according to their mode of virtues.

Thus Tengpanpa Mapu, the Almighty himself brought forth Atiya Sidaba from his thigh. He asked the Atiya Sidaba to create man, Atiya Sidaba created seven groups of frog accordingly. It was not accepted by the Supreme God. He created a seven groups of monkeys which were also rejected as the first. Thus, the seven frogs and monkeys were set on in the water and hills respectively. Then Atiya Sidaba and Ashiba created man in the image of God. Thus man was created.
The legendary period of the past of the Meitei is divided into two different times, i) starting its epoch from the Hancha epoch and ended with the 'Chak' epoch and ii) only dealing with the Chake. In the first stage there were four Hancha, which are Kahangka, Thoihangka, Tayohangka and Poihangka. The rulers of the said hangkas were Almighty or Taibangmapu, Nongthou or Atiya Guru Sidaba, Konsengeana Phuhing Sidaba and Koubarel or Divine Koubru respectively. The dates are 19,55,88,935 years, 16,29,906 years, 57,845 years and 11,79,900 years. During these year the total number of the kings were 108 and the name of the land is recorded as Poirei Namthak Sarongpung.

These Hangkas were followed by Hayichak; the administrator or leader of this period was Pakhang Yoiren Tompokpa and there were 130 kings and it was about 20,88,000 years. The name of the land was Leitam Kangoi-pung. The following time was the Haya and there were

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27 Ningthourol Singkak Macha (MS).

28 S. Moirangamba & Kh. Kumar, Sakok Lamlen, p.3.


Ningthourol Singkak Macha (MS).
120 kings and the leader was Tangja Linla Pakhangba and it was about 17,20,000 years. During this time the name of the land was Mira Pongthoklam and Sama Leimayon.

The second version deals with the Chaka. In the Hayichak the rule of the animals is mentioned. First of all the turtle ruled about 7 lakhs and 1 thousand years, the Boar about 3 lakhs, the elephant for 4 lakhs and the snake for 2 lakhs of years. In the Hayichak the Nganbas were the ruler and the name of the land was 'Mongpiru' and the capital was at Awangmongpi Chin-mang. There were 27 kings. The Hayachak was followed by Khunungchak and the ruler was Leima Kangkhal and Ningthou Tari. The name of the territory was Thanghutwa and the number of years is 6 lakhs, and the number of kings were 36.

Thus, in the above ages so many rulers were mentioned, but Kanglei Sanglen Puba Puya gives 163 kings.

30 Jayadeva Kabi - Gitgovindam.
31 Saei Salairol Yimchangba Yimnak Setpa (MS).
33 Kanglei Sanglen Puba Puya (MS).
A list of the kings is furnished herewith.

**Chiefs of Hayachak**


**Chiefs of Khunungchak:**

33) Tharai Telheipa, 34) Chaklei Yaimapa, 35) Sana Ngangchangshu. 34

The account of these rulers is not available but the accounts of some important kings may be counted as follows:

According to tradition and myths, the first king or divine ruler was Atiya Guru Sidaba who was succeeded by his son Konchin Tuthokpa or Pakhangba Yoiren Tompokpa.

The next ruler was Tangja Lila Pakhangba. He married Silleima Leihou Ningthou Chanu or Silleima Leitang Ningthou Chanu. She gave birth to Kangba.

Kangba: In many Puyas the time of king Kangba is described as the time of the beginning of human settlement. The existence of man was dependent upon the nature. Food stuffs were collected from the natural gifts as rice was collected from the site of Chaksoupung, fish was hanging on the trees at Ngayan hill, meat also was collected from Sayan, wine was flowing in channels and clothes were produced at the hillock of Chingpathi. 35 There were not accounts of rites and rituals of

34 Khagemba Yumlep (MS).

disposal of the dead than the ceremonial homage to
residing hillock. 36

King Kangba married Leima Tarinu who took the title
of Leima Kangkhan. They had nine sons, Kangkoi, Teima,
Yangma, Tsesarot, Wurenhubu, Wurenhulu, Yiren, Khapa
and Langpa. They became the progenitors of different tri-
bes and clans.

Kangkoi:— Kangkoi, the eldest son succeeded his father
and he was given the title of Mariya Phampalcha which is
more popular in the books of records. It is believed
that an era under the name of 'Phalcha Kumkhai' 37 was
established by him.

There are distinguishing physical and cultural
features that Mariya's physical appearance was Kangoi
(Toad) and his cultural habit was "Yinga Kumdame, Yingel
Kumkhai". 38 meaning the coming of the rainy season.
There were not much changes during his period and he was
believed to be the last king of Heya-Langbachak.

Khagamba Yimlep (MS), Khagamba Yumpi (MS).


38 Wingthourol Singkak Nacha (MS).
Maria was succeeded by his son Koksuba. He married Leima Wureim Khaocholpi, the daughter of Changleipam Nongtamton and Tarangkhoinsu.

Koksuba was succeeded by Tonkolpa. Agriculture was developed during his time. His wife was Sarangnupi and gave birth to Pitingkoi who succeeded his father. He is described as a man of devotion to God. He married Atengnupi.

Lampicha, the son of Pitinkoi became the king. He was attributed as Muwa Ningthou Langkol after whom the title of Muwapalli was given to the land.

The next king of Lampicha was his son Sopaipa who was described as a king of Changlei under the name of Ningthou Sapaipa in Panthoibi Khongkul. He tried to improve the country. Panthoibi was engaged to him but Panthoibi the daughter of Laien Taoroinai Tubi Thiyang-kok did not agree to the proposal.39 So Sapaiba undertook the marriage with Angang Nongkhainupi.

Maputhiba or Puthiba succeeded Sapaiba. During his time agriculture was developed and he himself was much interested in this field. He had two daughters viz.,

Soupon Yairen Chanu and Sanakhongnang Leima. Their Loutarol or the way of the neighbouring area of Heirem Kereching Khunchan Lallumthel demonstrated the olden system of tilling for agriculture in Manipur. According to Kangbalon there was plentiful production of paddy. So, the place was known as Khurai-Ahongei in the north east of Imphal.  

Lamkaingamba succeeded Puthiba. He married Kuthapnu and gave birth to Khing Khing Langba. Khing Khing Langba became the king after Lamkaingamba. He had six wives. Only, the last wife Pennu gave birth to a son. The other five queens made a plot to throw the child into the jungle with his mother. But they were saved by the brother of the king and the child was called Sana Manik Khomba.

Sana Manik Khomba became the king and he was assumed as the last king of his dynasty.

The next ruler was Toukaingamba of Hiwung Thanghi and his brother Tenthaheipa succeeded him.

The next king was Tingko Ngamba.

40 Soupon Yairen Chanu Loutarol (MS).

41 L. Nitai, op.cit., p.11.
Another group or dynasty began with the rule of Tangja Langan Pakhangba. He married with Thaton Leima and she gave birth to Kuptreng and Sentreng.

Kuptreng administered the territory while Sentreng was in his infancy even he was given the chiefship by his father and his nobles. Again when he was fit to administer the territory, he was out of the palace. He did not return for a long time. So, the people insisted Kuptreng on ascending the throne with a pompous coronation. Every arrangement was made ready. On the very day of coronation while Kuptreng was just about to ascend the throne with the rites and rituals, Sentreng suddenly appeared in the scene and claimed the throne as an heir as it was awarded to him by his father. Thus, Kuptreng agreed to the claim of his younger brother and changed his dress. This made the subjects as well as the two brothers happy, and Kuptreng presented his same coronation dress to his younger brother Sentreng and celebrated the coronation ceremony and proclaimed to make the law of coronation in relation to the dress of coronation as follows - "The coronation dress which will be clothed by the time of coronation of the Kanglei or Meitei king should be worn by the Angoupanba or the chief of Angom before the coronation and he will present the
same dress to the Meitei king."^42 According to the tradition Santreng had two wives, Sanalembi Chaishra. Sanalembi gave birth to Mechi Sana Leinung Khomba and he succeeded his father. He died without any issue. ^43

There were some rulers after Mechi Sana Leinung-Khomba. After Sana Nganchengshu's period there was a big flood in the valley and valley people began to settle in the hilly area. After the flood, the Khaba's group came down from the northern plateau of Kangpokpi towards the valley. ^44 They made an alliance with the Chakpa and established a chiefdom around Furumching or Kangla. The Khabas ruled for some time but they clashed with the rising power of Angom under Puleiromba and his allies Thangyi and Luwang Langmaiba who were given the titles of three Sorarels.


^43 Kanglei Sanglen Puba Puya (MS).