CHAPTER - TWO
Pakhangba, the first historical ruler (33-154 A.D.).
Nongda Lairen Pakhangba was the first historical ruler with the title of Pakhangba, who reigned in Manipur valley in the 1st century A.D. The literal meaning of Pakhangba is the one who knows his father or the one who knows the man. Again if we have taken out the suffix "ba" the literal meaning of Pakhangba comes to youth and the word Pakhangba expresses the meaning of the one who is ever youthful.¹ So Pakhangba stands for the title of kings of the tribe of Mangang² or afterwards the Wingthouja.³

Nongda Lairen Pakhangba has been confused with several mythical Pakhangbas found in legends and myths of the Meiteis.⁴ The popular myth about Pakhangba is as follows: Atiya Guru Sidaba after creating Leinarel Sidabi from his own left part of the body, created Ashiba and Konjin Tathokpa and ordered the elder of the two to create the sky or the heaven and the earth. After the completion of the creation, Ashiba again ordered the

¹ Khununglon (MS) under the custody of C. Phogechor Singh.
³ W. Ibohal Singh, Early History of Manipur, Imphal, p. 154.
two brothers to go around the universe seven times to earn the knowledge for his throne which would be given to the one who could satisfy Him with the knowledge. Ashiba as being the more powerful fulfilled his father's order into the work while Konjintuthokpa was worried as he could not carry out the order. Konjintuthokpa sought the advice of Leimarel Sidabi, the immortal mother and on her advice went seven times round the throne of his father and bowed down to his father. On enquiry by his father Konjintuthokpa answered that there was none comparable to his father. He was all in all of the universe, so he earned the experience of going around his father instead of going around the universe. This drew the attention of Atiyanuru Sidaba and He put Konjintuthokpa on His throne and the new ruler was entitled Pakhangba, the one who knows his father.

There is a similar story in Bengal about Chanch outwitting his brother Kartikya in the same manner by not going round the world at the instigation of his mother Harvati while Kartikya made a wish to fly round the world on his peacock. 5

According to tradition there are many able rulers who were entitled as Pakhangba, there was one

Pakhangba for each Chak. Leinung Lonja Ariba in Hayichak, Lolang Pakhangba in Khunung Chak and Nongda Lairen Pakhangba in Konna Chak. Nongda Lairen Pakhangba was an historical personality.

ORIGIN OF NONGDA LAIREN PAKHANGBA

Nongda Lairen Pakhangba was the name of the ruler who established his suzerainty over the seven tribes of the Manipur Valley. He had many other names, such as, Chingwang Ningthou Atengba, Layothang Tanouba, Nongta Takuplik, Leiyingthou Apanba, Chingngu Lanba Apanba, Nong-treng Apanba, Nongpok Poklen, Sana, Ningthem etc. But the coronation name was the most popular name.

The origin of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba is not clearly written or recorded in any historical text so far discovered at present. That is why different scholars have given different opinions; some described him as having originated from outside Manipur Valley while some support the hypothesis of the local origin, somewhere at Kangla or at Kongba.

6 Chak is the traditional time reckoning system of the Meitei. Chak is perhaps derived with Sanskrit Yug. The equation of these four Chaks with Hindu Yug was introduced in the Hindu period the Hayi Chak = Satya Yug, Huye Chak = Tatra Yug, Khunung Langba Chak = Dwapur Yug, Konna Chak = Kali Yug.


8 Angomlon (MS), Kerthong lamlen (MS) both are under the custody of N.Khelachandra Singh, Leithak Leikharol, p.21, Thirel Layat, p.7.
Regarding Nongda Laien Pakhangba's foreign origin it has been opined that he came from the valley of the Brahma-putra. Some scholars traced his original place in the Himalayan ranges. This view is fully supported by J. Ibohal Singh who has propounded the theory of the Hindu Bratta origin of the Chakhan clan of Moriya or Maurya tribe. He traced Pakhangba as belonging to the Himalayan tribe i.e. Tibeto Mongoloid group. It is also believed that Nongda Laien Pakhangba joined the struggle for power on the invitation by Puleiromba, the chief of Angom tribe (who was one of the chiefs with the title of Sorarel or heavenly chief). The invitation of Puleiromba was to make Pakhangba to be the Lord of the valley where there was no ruler. But in other accounts, the invitation mentioned was for him to join the struggle with Poireiton, an invitee of Khamjing Kon Haiheiba, the progenitor and the chief of the Ngamba tribe. The invitation to the two outsiders was due to the defeat of the Ngamba tribe and its ally, the Khaba tribe, in a fight against the Angom leader, Puleiromba during the period of the devastation in the valley.

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But the recorded point seems to be fictitious because of the following reasons, that Angom Puleiromba was the maternal uncle of the Khamchingkon, the chief of the Nganba tribe, as being the son of Pureilemnushu, the younger sister of Puleiromba. Angom Puleiromba became the piba or the chief of Khaba and Nganba clans in addition to his position as both the chiefs were disqualified of becoming a Piba and lastly the silence or absence of the Puleiromba's activities when Khaba and Nganba waged war against Pakhangba as he was a strong supporter of Nongda Laien Pakhangba.

Nongda Laien had a mysterious origin. His actual parents are not shown clearly. Even in the Ningthouja genealogy his father is not mentioned. Some scholars of ancient Manipur tried to alleviate him to a divine status and origin to conduct the ancestor worship as he was the progenitor of the ruling Ningthouja dynasty. Regarding the mother of Nongda Laien Pakhangba, she was the ablest lady who could handle the problems of the three rival tribal chiefs and they were persuaded to lend support to Nongda Laien for the throne of the devastated country.  

13 Kalachand Singh, Sagei Salailon, 1966, Imphal, pp. 30-34.
14 Pakhangba Laihui (MS).
was her activities which put Nongda Laien on the throne in midst of the disorder and great difficulties among the different tribes. The mysterious origin as recorded in many Meitei Puyas or literary texts veiled the personality of Nongda Laien Pakhangba by making him a great god than a king of flesh and blood. The myth theory of the mysterious origin of Nongda Laien Pakhangba may be summarised as follows.

Nongda Laien Pakhangba was described as the Sun god, Atya Guru Sidaba in his two fold disguise presented himself to be a lady and ordered Taoroinai who was the personification of Ashiba at the core of the moon, to go the Sun and to bring down the god and to bestow it to his second fold disguise on the earth. Taoroinai in his turn brought down the god in a form of a divine cloud egg in his mouth as a nonglum i.e. cloud egg. He was stammering while he was going to hand over it to the lady on the earth for which he was called as stammering progenitor or Puleiromba in Meitei. The lady sustained the Nonglum for which she was called as the lady sustainer or Yabirok. She took care of the Nonglum warmly and took all the risk to hatch the Nonglum to becoming the young one to administer the devastated country.

But other geneological evidences in different
texts describe Pakhangba's parentage thus as born of Taoroinai and begotten by Atingkok, born of Leihak Leiyaren Chanu and begotten by Konjin Tuthokpa, born of Leitanglen Chanu and begotten by Leishantlen, born of Konphu Laiphu Chanu and begotten by Leilanglen Tangshangba born of Laiyok Laikhot Chanu begotten by Konsouren, born of Leinung Yabi Yakha Chanu and begotten by Sentrung, born of Laishra and begotten by Pakhangba, Khui was born.

Even though there were some discrepancies and gaps in linking up of the genealogy it is possible to prove that Pakhangba was not formless, figureless, spiritual personified object but a human being. And his mysterious divine origin is nothing but to put him to the highest level among the human beings as the interpretation and quality adduced to him as the trunkless and the rootless i.e. Mapam Unaidaba, Mara Lichettaba. Thus the origin of Pakhangba was reserved for obscurity as it was the habit of oriental writers to describe the hyperbole of the migration and coming down from the highlands descending from the heaven and the Meitei scholars knowingly concealed the humble origin of Pakhangba. So, in conclusion, this theory of divine origin will do nothing for the history but to intensify the

15 Khagemba Yumbi (MS) Khagemba Yumlep (nc) etc.

social status of the main role and its supporters in the events of the facts of history.

The mother of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba was described as 'Piritnu, Ahumnu, the daughter of Marenghouba, Nongda Nongkhallembi transformed himself to be the mid house wife represented as the queen to three chiefs.' The version shows that Yabirok was the nickname given to a lady in disguise, who espoused three chiefs namely, Puleiromba, Luwang Langmouba and Thangl Sorarel under different names of Piritnu Ahumnu and Mairenghouba Chanu, whilst her actual name was Nongda Nongkhallembi and assumed the nickname Yabirok to conceal her activities which were performed only for the welfare of his son Nongda Lairen Pakhangba.}

In the genealogy of Ningthouja, mother of Pakhangba was Leinung Yabi Yakha Chanu. This name is mentioned rarely in the entitled name of Yabirok Leinung Yabi Yakha Chanu along with the version "Chakha Nurol Pirol Yambi" which is translated by W.I. Singh as polyandrous lady belong to Chakha. But this should be translated as "one who had many ancestors and ancestresses". So, Leinung Yabi Yakha Chanu and Nongda Nongkhallembi were not different persons but of the different titles only. Thus, this lady

\[17\] Khagemba Yumbi (MS).
who was separated from her lord and left alone by the
devastation of the Manipur valley took the name of Nongda
Nongkhallambi to hide her true identity in the center of
the Imphal valley. After she met again her husband in the
person of Puringlen, she began to make up her mind to
establish a kingdom in the valley and after her child was
born, she assumed different names to be queen to three dif-
ferent tribal chiefs to gain their support for his help-
less son and by her skill wedged the three Sorarele to prop
Pakhangba to the kingship of the Kangla.

The name of the father of Pakhangba is seldom
mentioned in the text. In accordance with the genealogical
line of Ningthouja, it is found that the father of
Pakhangba was Sentreng who was entitled as "Sentreng
Pakhangba." But according to the myth, the father
of Pakhangba was the Sun. The allegorical writing of the
Meitei scholars is always found in many Meitei ancient
texts. Again according to tradition and customs, the
Meitei compared the kings or able lords as the Sun. 18

But for the ancient period the Sun denoted Nongpok
(literally means East) who had other different names 19 as
Chingwanglakki Puleiromba, Kainou Chingshomba, Nongpok -

18 Numit Kappa, edited by G. Bhogeshor Singh, mentions
the king or the chief brothers as Sun.

19 M. Chandra Singh, Panthoibi Khongun, 1972, Imphal,
p. 47.
Ningthou, Nongpok Malang Humoiles, Chingwlanglakki Nongmaiba, Puringlen, Ponoarlen, Puthiba, Taoroinai and Puleiromba. According to the text, Lairen Pinaibalen, Sentreng was the father of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba, thus the another name of Nongpok Ningthou is Sentreng.20

But the mystery in the version is the presentation of Nonlong to Leinung Yabirok, because some scholars are of the opinion that Pakhangba was born before he was given to Yabirok and as an egg, and Pakhangba was brought as a boy to look after with the care of Yabirok. But such meaning will make Yabirok only a foster mother who adopted Pakhangba.21 Puringlen or Poubrulen came and espoused Yabirok more than two years and she became conceived.

However, Gangmumei Katui does not agree that Liklabicha Nongtamnu was a mother of Pakhangba. He supports W. Ichal Singh's view that Yabirok was the mother of Pakhangba. As stated above, Yabirok has been described as "Leinung girl, Yakha girl, a Chakha with numerous ancestors and ancestresses, a royal lady, three times queen, married to three chiefs successively Leinung Yabirok begets Nongta Lairen Pakhangba."22 The Manipuri text runs thus, Leinung

20 Y. Mohendra & N. Birachandra, op.cit.
21 Ibid.
22 Khagemba Yumbi (Ms).
Yabi Yaka Chanu, Chakha nurol Pirol Yambi Yumjao Leima Oibi, Leinung Yabirokna Nonqta Lairen Pakhangbabe\textsuperscript{23} Ningthourol Lambuba describes Yabirok as "grand madam Meitei queen Leinung Chakha Yabirok of numerous ancestors and ancestress, handsome and beautiful, the cream of the Leihou and Leinung three times queen and married to the chief successively." Gangmumei Kabui does not agree with J. Ibohal Singh's description of Yabirok as a polyandrous woman as the Meitei phrase "nurol pirol yamba" means "one who has numerous ancestors and ancestresses." According to him the Meiteis were never a polyandrous people though there was polygamy among them.\textsuperscript{24} It can be concluded that Yabirok was the mother of Pakhangba.

However there are several views on the identification of the father of Pakhangba which has been discussed in the above paragraph.

Father of Nonqta Lairen Pakhangba is projected in the genealogy of the Ningthouja clan to be Sentreng. Mohendra and Birachandra argued that Sentreng was one of the aliases of the father of Pakhangba and his real father was Luwang Langmaiba of the Luwang clan and the social father was Puleiromba, the chief of the Angom clan. These

\textsuperscript{23} Quoted by Y. Mahendra & N. Birachandra, Pakhang-bagi Hourakpham Thiba, 1982.

\textsuperscript{24} Gangmumei Kabui, A History of Manipur from the earliest time to 1836 A.D. (unpublished), p. 98.
two personalities were associated with the capture of the throne of Kangla by Pakhangba. However, it is not possible to accept the view that they were father (real and social) of Pakhangba. W. Ibohal Singh suggests that Pakhangba's father was Likleng who was holding the post of Tupu. Likleng was a Luwang officer known as Luwang Langmaiba. The original name of Pakhangba according to W. Ibohal Singh, based on Leimarel Naoyom and Leithak Leikharol, was Nongta Tukuplik. According to Leithak Leikharol "Taoroinai went up to the sky in the guise of a Tupu (meaning an officer or a guide) and got a divine cloud Nonglum which could become Pakhangba from Atiya Sidaba. The name of Taoroinai when he was under the guise of Tupu was Likleng. Tupu gave the cloud egg to Yabirok, three times queen and married successively to three chiefs and the name was Nongta Tukuplik." The same text says that after his birth Pakhangba was also called Layon Lang Tanouba. When he was hiding, he was called Leikhanba Mihikshang Keining. According to Gangmumei Kabui, though some mythical elements are added in the legendary accounts, Nongta Tukuplik or Layon lang Tanouba or Leikhanba was born of Yabirok and a Tupu named Likleng. Pakhangba was thus the son of Likleng, a noble of the Luwang clan who was a Tupu and later on a Langmaiba. Because of

the comparatively low origin as he was not a royal prince, his ancestry was suppressed and put in a mysterious way by him or by his successors. 26

Nongda Lairen Pakhangba was born under a bixa plant on the bank of Nungcheng and this place was named Akokshang Kangla. From Amubi writes that Nongda Lairen Pakhangba was born at Kongba Meirombi 27 in the jurisdiction of Angom principality and where is observed the annual ceremony for Sajibu Cheiraoba (Sajibu Leithong Phatpa and Kongba Leikhun Phunba) in memory of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba and Puleiromba.

As his father perhaps died early, his mother took up the responsibility of bringing him up. Yabirok was politically an ambitious woman and she befriended with the three chiefs to gain support for her son in the struggle for the throne of Kangla. She took help from the Angom chief, Mangang chief and a Luwang officer. No mention is available about his educational training. But it is given in the popular tradition that Pakhangba had a good military training at his residence or hideout at Nongpok Leihouching.

STRUGGLE FOR POWER

When Pakhangba grew up there was political vacuum

26 A History of Manipur, from earliest time to 1636 A.D. p. 99.

in Imphal valley. The tribes and clans who were inhabiting the valley did not have the capacity to build up a strong principality. There were some tribes like the Khabas who once ruled over the Kangla. The Khabas under the leadership of Khaba Nongchungba also aspired for the vacant throne of Kangla. The Angoms under their chief Puleiromba were fully prepared to back Pakhangba in the struggle for the throne. As stated above Puleiromba was persuaded by Yabirok, mother of Pakhangba to support her son. Therefore, it was on the invitation of Puleiromba supported by the Luwangs, the Chakpas and former ruling tribes like the Mangangs that Pakhangba left his hideout for the Kangla. According to Pakhangba Phambal, Pakhangba came down to the valley and proceeded along the Lilwai river (Iril river) to the east of Hanaching and conquered the tribal villages of Lishi, Thangwai, Nucheng, Kaihou, Naokhal, Haochu and Tangkham and marched to Kangla. He was welcome by the chiefs of Angom, Luwang, Mangang and the Chakpas, and occupied the Kangla. Pakhangba Phambal makes an allegorical mention that the royal palace was a three room house. Pakhangba accepted the middle room, Puleiromba occupied the anterior room and Luwang Langmaiba occupied the posterior room of the royal house.

According to Chakra Khunda Khunthok, Pakhangba fought against the Khabas under the leadership of Khaba Nongchubza. In this struggle, Pakhangba was defeated by the Khabas and was forced to take refuge in Moirang principality. According to a tradition recorded in some text, Pakhangba was in hiding at Moirang for many years. Some of his follower families were, Mungyang Chaoba and Tengkhuyama who established the sub-lineage of Mungyangjam and Loirenjam who, though belonging to Moirang clan cannot intermarry with the Ningthouja clan. While staying at Moirang he got support from Moirang Chaoba Soupon Ngamba. According to a tradition prevalent in Moirang, Pakhangba took refuge in Moirang as he was defeated by Puleiromba. This tradition has no basis, because Puleiromba was his promoter and not a rival for the throne. However, as clearly indicated by Chakra Khunda Khunthok the forces of Moirang came in support of Pakhangba and defeated the Khabas who were completely suppressed. Some Khabas surrendered to Puleiromba, some fled to the hill and became Tangkhuls and some became Kabuis of Nungnang village in western hills. A group went to the north and settled at the foothills of the Koubru. One Khaba named Nonganba surrendered to Pakhangba himself. However, the Khaba - Pakhangba rivalry continued throughout the reign of Pakhangba. But the defeat of the Khabas at the hands of Pakhangba destroyed the political power of the Khabas.
There is a tradition recorded in Kangla Sanglen Puba Puya, a manuscript quoted by N. Manijao in his Sandrembi Chaishra and O. Bhogeshor Singh in his Ningthourol Sheireng referring to a mysterious wise man named Pongaota or Poinaota who gave advice to Pakhangba and to Poireiton at times whenever needed. Pongaota is represented as having advised the brother of Poireiton named Thongarel and his people to migrate to Imphal valley. Though the historicity of mysterious wise man cannot be established, the activities carried out by the personality to whom he gave advice appeared to be historical.

One of the claimants to the throne of Kangla according to Pakhangba Nongkarol, a historical text of the 18th century was Poireiton. Poireiton Khunthok (colonization of Poireiton) gives a very interesting account of the adventures of Poireiton and his group who migrated from the Khamnung country to Imphal valley. Poireiton Khunthok does not contain anything about his claim to the throne of Kangla. In this work, he is projected as a colonizer and a religious innovator. In Pakhangba Nongkarol, there is a reference that Poireiton and his hordes proceeded to the Kangla. Pakhangba heard about Poireiton's march and confronted him on the way. Pakhangba defeated Poireiton and confiscated his royal costumes. It may be stated here
that Poireiton was a prince and his elder brother Thongarêl was the king of Khamnungr country. Poireiton lamented that his wife and costumes were forcibly confiscated by this prince. Later on, he realised the identity of Pakhangba, Poireiton was defeated in a physical duel by Pakhangba. Even though Poireiton was trying to escape by pretending himself to be dead or to be mad, ultimately he acknowledged the power and supremacy of Pakhangba. Thus Poireiton, a prince who was the leader of a horde of colonisers was defeated by Pakhangba. Meanwhile another group of people from Khamnungr country under the leadership of Thongarêl with his sister Laïsa or Laishra came to Manipur from the eastern tract. When Thongarên reached the valley, he sought for settlement in the country. Nongda Lairen Pakhangba made a matrimonial relation with the new comer Thongarên by taking his sister Laïsa in marriage who afterwards played an important role in the administration of the country.

After Poireiton was discovered as the brother of Thongarên, Pakhangba made him a village chief (Khun-Ningthou) of the Poirei. Kangrai Sanglen Puib Puia mentions that Poireiton made his settlement at Lamtang not far from the area of the Luangns. There is a view that Poireiton was sponsored and supported by the Luang clan and Pakhangba was supported.

\[29\] Pakhangba Nongkarol, p.2.
by the Angom is not corroborated by any historical source. Rather Poireiton, if the clan geneologies of the Luwang and the Khuman are to be believed, is projected as one of the ancestors of the Luwangs and the Khuman clans of the Meiteis. On the other hand, reliable historical texts indicate that the Luwangs and the Angoms gave strong support to Pakhangba and accepted his suzerainty.

CORONATION OF PAKHANGBA

After defeating the Khabe and Poireiton, the prince from Khamnung country, Pakhangba was welcome by Puleiromba the chief of the Angoms, Ningthem Apamba of the Mangangs and Luwang Langmaiba, a chief priest of the Luwangs and leaders of the Chakpa tribe at the Kangla which was the capital of the ancient Meitei kingdom. Whoever occupied the Kangla was regarded as the king of the country, Pakhangba marched into the Kangla from the north followed by a large retinue of followers and supporters. The three clan chiefs made the necessary arrangement for the coronation of Pakhangba.

At the Kangla, according to Pakhangba Phambal, three chiefs (Sorarela) namely, Puleiromba, Luwang Langmaiba and Ningthou Apanba presented the arms and weapons and the coronation costumes to the victorious prince. People of different ranks, officials and nobles, swordsmen, priest and singers were
invited to the ceremony and Pakhangba and Laisna were coronated as the king and the queen of the Meitei kingdom. According to the same text the new king was given a title of Tubi Yoinonga Nongta Lairen Pakhangba. It is mentioned in popular tradition recorded in Sunglen Puba Puya that the coronation took place on first day of the Meitei month of Kalen 30 (June-July). It is also stated that the chiefs of four leading clans, Puleiromba, the Angom chief, Khunthiba of the Luiang, Ponglahen of Moirang and Arong of the Khuman clan brought water from the Nungcheng pond in the Kangla and poured on the king and queen. 30A Scholars and priests, singers and poets, and the 64 nobles were also invited, cloths were changed, the king and the queen sat below the royal umbrella. The coronation robe was presented by Puleiromba, the chief of the Angoms to Pakhangba. This act of investiture of Pakhangba by Puleiromba accorded to Angom chief a higher ritual status in the court of the new king though politically he accepted the supremacy of the new king. The new king and his wife were made to sit in the Kanglamen and the final ceremony of the instalation of the king was performed. The coronation ceremony and its

30 Sunglen Puba Puya reproduced in N. Manijao Singh Sandrembi Chaishra.

30A This might have been a later interpolation.
significance was given great importance in several historical
texts including Phambalon or the coronation rules. Thus
after a bitter struggle, Pakhangba was installed as a king
of Kangla. Other tribes extended help and loyalty to Pakha-
ngba. He was also given the title of Meitingu or Meidingu,
chief of the Meiteis.

REIGN OF PAKHANGBA

Pakhangba was a meritorious king who laid the
foundation of the Meitei social and political structure,
cultural and religious life. However, one should be care-
ful to scrutinise the later historical and literary sources
which give a highly exaggerated picture of Pakhangba as the
originator of legal reform and administrative institutions.
Gangmumei Kabui writes "Nongda Lairen Pakhangba was an
extra ordinarily gifted ruler. Though the background of
this prince before he became the ruler was comparatively
unknown, the reforms he introduced during his reign led
the foundation of the social and political structure,
cultural and religious pattern of the Meiteis. Perhaps
later historical and literary sources made an exaggerated
praise of Pakhangba. Every institution, law reform and
convention had been made to trace its origin to this prince.
Had he been really as innovative and reformative as it had
been projected, Pakhangba perhaps had a high level of aware-
ness in the political, social, religious and cultural affairs and his background must have connections with a superior culture or civilization."

Pakhangba was the founder of a new dynasty which later on came to be known as the Ningthouja. He also founded a clan which was the backbone of the Meitei society, state and nation. The way Pakhangba was made the king may be regarded an instance of popular selection of a ruler by the people and their leaders.

Pakhangba was a very good administrator. He built up the governmental machinery consisting of nobles and officials as mentioned in Pakhangba Phambal who were responsible for the administration of the country. In the beginning, Pakhangba was given help in maintaining the administration by the three clans namely, Luwang, Angom and Mangang. There are references to officials like Pukhriam, Nongthon and Amais and other clan chieftains who were popularly known as Ningthou Pongba Tara (10 regional chieftains) and 64 people's representatives known as phamous. Contemporary evidences do not give details of working of


32 Ibid.
the administrative system. The following departments of the government were established by Pakhangba. 33

1. Laipham Sanglen
2. Kuchu Sanglen
3. Khaba Sanglen
4. Naharup Sanglen
5. Pacha Loishang.

However a study of later historical works dealing with Pakhangba presents a picture of a well developed governmental machinery. The state functionaries may be divided into i) the Monarch, ii) the court consisting of the nobles & iii) the popular Assembly of the subject.

The monarch was entitled as the Kangle Mayum Taretki Piba Thoupuba. He was all in all in the state. He was assisted by two of his official known as the Nonthonba and Pukhrana. Again there were ten executive heads who carried out the direct administration of the state. 34 They were appointed from the different parts of the state. They were i) Nonthonba, ii) Pukhrana, iii) Khwairakpa, iv) Yaiskullakpa, v) Hiyangloihanjaba, vi) Chongkhallakpa,

33 Kanglei Sanglen Puba Puya (MS).
34 N. Ibobi, Manipur Administration, 1976, Imphal, pp. 59-83.
vii) Imangloihanjaba, viii) Imingloihanjaba, ix) Phamthakcha & (x) Naikhurakpa, Nongthonba seemed to be of
the Ningthoupongba (chief of the executive members). He was
closest to the monarch.

The popular assembly was constituted with all the
peoples of the state. There were 60 household families of
the Angom, 34 families of the Luwangs, 64 families of the
Khumen, 32 families of the Moirang, the followers and immi-
grants of Nongda Laien Pakhangba and same families of
Chenglei.35

For the judicial administration of the state, the
highest court was the Kuchu which had its official building
at the north-western portion of the Kangla. The monarch
himself was seated in the court but it was presided by
Puleiromba. The members of the court were the ten Ning-
thoupongbas; and some nobles were allowed to take seat in
the court. The court dealt with all the civil and criminal
cases of the state except the cases related to the ladies.

Under the Kuchu court there was a special court for
women known as Pacha, Laisna the consort of Nongda Laien
Pakhangba and the wives of the ten Ningthoupongba were the mem-
bers of this court. The protection of the women's right

35 Sandrembi Chaishra.
was the main duty of this court and the court dealt with all the cases relating to women.

There was another court under the name of the Nongdamba Sanglen. The top priest or the greatest scholar of the state presided over this court and the scholars were the members of the court. This court was rather cultural than judicial. It dealt with the cases relating to the customs and traditions of the people under which the main categories were the family cases, the pibaship, (head of lineage) worship and sacrifice etc. There were also Amaliba and Amaibi Loishang (male and female preceptors' office). They supervised religious worship and sacrifices. Nongdamba Sanglen kept the records in oral form before the establishment of Kaibarol Sanglen (record collection and social prosecution office).

There were piba courts which dealt with the minor cases of the tribes, clans or sub-lineage. They were only limited to the jurisdiction of the clans only.

The capital punishment was the execution. But the execution was never awarded to women. The capital punishment for women was the public exposure which was known as Khungoinaba. The minor punishment was the flogging and exposing in the public place. Execution of accused was awarded by means of trial by ordeal. There was a system
of trial by ordeal between the two megalithic stones. It was believed that the two megaliths were personified as the megaliths on the northern side as Pakhangba the chief justice and the administration of the seven tribes and the megalith on the southern side was Pongnaota. And it was their firm faith that if the accused committed the wrong and if he spoke the lie, the two megaliths compressed together until the accused was dead. This trial was entitled as the Wayel Micha. The capital crime was waging war against the state. Compromises and excuses were the best means for the trial and the punishment.

MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

There was no organised regular army in the state but there were compulsory military service for every able bodied man in the state. The king was the overlord and commander in chief of the state army. He delegated his power to command a troop in the state affairs to the state high officials. Even though there was no regular set-up in military organisation, all the individuals would assemble in a moment when the news of the battle was spread and heard.

SETTLEMENT OF IMMIGRANTS

With the establishment of a settled government at Kangla, a large number of immigrants migrated to Imphal
valley. They were led by different leaders like Poireiton, Takhuk, Lukhok Poinaota and Thongarel. Of these immigrants Poireiton was the most imminent. According to tradition Pakhangba settled then.36

1. Thongarel’s group was settled at Nonglen Chingkhong and their area came to be known as Naharup at the later century.

2. Poireiton’s group settled at Laemieng.

3. The Khabas and the Nganbas were defeated by Pakhangba were settled in the north and north-west of the Kangla kingdom. However the political boundaries of the clans like the Angoms and the Luwangs became indistinct as they accepted Ningthouja suzerainty.

**COLONISATION OF POIREITON**

The settlement of immigrants by Pakhangba in different parts of his kingdom is referred to in different literary works like, Pakhangba Phambal, Pakhangba Nongkarol, Meitei Puwari and the most celebrated Poireiton Khunthokpa (migration of Poireiton). Of all these leaders of immigrants, Poireiton was the most widely known coloniser. The said work deals with his adventures in his mission to Manipur

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36 Kangleei Sanglen Puba Puya (MS).
valley. According to Poireiton Khunthokpa, a man visited Khamnun (the land of dead) and invited its king Thongarel to come to the land of the living i.e. Manipur valley. Thongarel asked his younger brother Poireiton to go for this colonising mission. However, Poireiton was a widower and told his brother the king that he could not go without a wife. Thongarel sent his second wife Leinaotabi to go with his brother for the mission. Leinaotabi agreed and she made a detailed preparation for the journey. Different varieties of paddy including scented rice known chahao, agricultural implements, animals, potteries, gong and paddy husk were collected. Poireiton's team consisted of men, women and children, artisans, priests and medicinemen.

From Khamnun, Poireiton passed through mountainous regions and river valleys. The book refers to the journey of Poireiton through the Kabuw valley and hills of Manipur. He came across many tribal groups like the Shans, Chakpa, Anale, Mayon, Tangkhul, Kabui, Maring, Thongnang and Poireis. He visited nearly a hundred villages. And the book refers to the naming of his places on the basis of adventures of Poireiton.

The objective of his colonising mission was an attempt to find the fruit of immortality. He brought one hundred and eight (108) items of fruit that could be eaten
raw and another one hundred and eight (108) items of food that could be eaten after cooking. His mission took a long time. Poireiton and Leinaotabi suffered greatly. Poireiton had a number of personal tragedy, six children, four boys and two girls died. At last he failed to get the fruit of immortality and his group was completely tired, Poireiton admitted that there was no immortality for men. Ultimately, he arrived at Lemdeng village and settled there.

The identification of original homeland of Poireiton is a problematic issue. W. Yumjao Singh identifies the original home of Poireiton with Sylhet in eastern Bengal. He regards Poireiton as the leader of band of Aryan colonizers to Manipur valley. Poireiton, according to him a corruption of the Sanskrit name Prayaton to Purohit. On the other hand, W.I. Singh identifies the Khamnun country with Tsa-Kang-La in eastern Tibet. Poireiton's migration according to him was from Sana Kangla to Saganthenzong to Mali river across the Chakhan Pali and then to Chindwin river to Somrah tract in Burma and then to Poi village in Ukhrul to Lilwaiyi, then to Sagolmang in northern Imphal valley and then to Kanglatonghi in north-west Imphal valley.37 This is a purely conjunctural statement. A textual examination of Poireiton Khunthokpa shows that he came from

37 W.I. Early History of Manipur, p. 114.
Khamnung to Kabaw valley and Tengnoupal hills before he entered into Manipur valley. Therefore the entry point to Manipur would not be through Lilwai (Iril) river in Ukhrul but through the routes across the Tengnoupal hill and Manipur valley. According to Pakhangba Nongkarol, Poireiton was a contemporary of Pakhangba. W.I. Singh, on the other hand, thinks that Poireiton was ten generations older than Pakhangba. Poireiton founded according to him the Poirei principality, which came to be known as Poireipal. He even suggested that Poireiton might be a descendant of Abhiraja of classical Sakya ruling house of Voriya in the Kabaw valley as found in Burmese Chronicle.

His hypothesis contradicts his identification of Khamnung in Eastern Tibet. Poireiton Khunthok does not mention anything about the founding of the Poirei kingdom by Poireiton. The text says that Poireiton met many Poirei Meiteis in villages in the foothills and ultimately settled at Lamding. Therefore, Poireiton could not be regarded as the progenitor of the Poireis or the Meiteis. The text further refers to a number of chiefs and rulers who had ruled in Imphal valley (the land of living). Poireiton, however, is found in clan genealogies of the Meiteis. Poireiton Khunthokpa gives very valuable account of social, religious, economic and geographical account of Manipur valley, Kabaw valley and hills between the two. The text
indicates a well organised social and cultural life of the people.

SOCIAL CONDITION

The foundation of the whole Meitei society was laid during the reign of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba. Gagumumai Kabui observes, "After having achieved his political objective of occupying the throne at Kangla covering the Mangang, Angom and Luwang clan territories and having defeated the Khabas and Nganbas, Pakhangba became the recognised head of the Meitei confederacy. In the social affairs, the Khuman and Moirang had come under the fold of the Meiteis, though political autonomy was maintained for several centuries. The greatest achievement of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba was the social consolidation of the different ethnic groups and tribes under the seven clans. The Luwangs, the Angoms, the Mangangs (later on Ningthouja), the Khabas, the Nganbas, the Sarangleishangthem (Chengleis), the Khumans and the Moirang came under the Meitei social confederacy. There were many social groups who after accepting a status of a clan within the greater Meitei social fold. The word Meitei means only the people who were directly within the clan of the founder of the dynasty. Poirei appears to be a name with a bigger social connotation that Meitei during the time of Pakhangba but later on
Meitei covered all the ethnic groups which were brought under seven clans. We do not have contemporary historical evidence of how Pakhangba created seven clans, though at least five tribes accepted the clanship under his political supremacy and social confederacy the Luwang, Angom, Mangang, Khaba, Ngauba, Sarangleishangthem. Perhaps, later chroniclers and writers under the directive of the rulers had described Pakhangba as the head of the seven clans and king of the Meiteis. The social integration of these tribes provided the strongest political support to Pakhangba's kingdom. Later writers had created myths in order to mystify the origin of the clans (salais) which were brought under the marriage rule known as yek system. 37A

The followings were the marriage rules according to tradition believed to be adopted during the reign of Pakhangba.

1. Nobody was allowed to espouse the same family, clan or tribe (restriction of cohabiting the same blood line).

2. No one would marry with the one who was within the range of three generation of the same grand mother.

3. None would marry any person of the same father but of different mother of different family, clan or tribe.

37A Gangmumei Kabui, A History of Manipur from earliest time to 1836 A.D. (MS).

4. None would be subjected to nuptial of a person of the same mother but of different fathers of the same family or different family, clan or tribe.

5. No man would be allowed to enter into the ritual marriage with the divorced wife or ritual married or non-ritual married wife of same one rather than the man himself.

6. No person would be permitted to ceremone the remarriage of the widow.

Thus, everybody who would disobey these provisions, and anybody who acted against these provisions was disqualified of the chiefship or Pibaship.

In connection to the prohibition of the food stuff the assembly also resolved that

1. Any person who avoided the traditional ancestral food stuff and habituated on the forbidden food stuff would not be accepted to govern the state or the land.

2. And any person habituated in the prohibited food would not be admitted in any kind of social relation with the other people or those who had ethnic affinities.

3. Let the same food habitual groups be inhabited together in the same compact localities, with the introduction of these above system there existed the "Meitei Chinchak Namungnaba" (The Meitei forbidden food.).
Nongda Lairen Pakhangba introduced the colour distribution of the seven salais and he changed the colour of the Angoms from red to white in their dresses and equipments. Thus he distributed the colour designed as under.

1. Angom Salai - White
2. Ningthouja Salai - Red
3. Luwang Salai - Blue
4. Khuman Salai - Black
5. Khaba - Nganba Salai - Green
6. Moirang Salai - Brownish Yellow

Customary dress rules were only confined to the salai colours but white was used in the ceremonies and observation by the priest and priestess.

During the second part of his reign Nongda Lairen Pakhangba introduced to award prizes to the heroes and nobles of the state. The incident and prizes were rewarded by putting his royal costume such as wrapper, but gown, the ornamental pacheng and feathers. He kept it in the Kuchu, the highest court and announced that these dresses would be worn in appropriate time and there would be worn as the state prescriptions as prizes for the justice, valour etc. 39 After the declaration everybody present

39 Kanglei Sanglen Puba, (MS).
N. Ibobi, Manipur Administration.
Nandalal Sharma, Meitrabak.
approved the decision.

Nongda Lairen Pakhangba arranged for the administration of the hill under twelve chief, viz., 1) Chingshong Lakpa Maningthou, 2) Langmai Ningthou Ningngou Yimthangba, 3) Chingshong Maningthou Phunal Telheiba, 4) Makeg Ningthou, 5) Kharam Ningthou, 6) Mombi Ningthou, 7) Chashet Ningthou, 8) Moring Ningthou, 9) Chothe Ningthou, 10) Theyong Ningthou, 11) Mapao Ningthou and 12) Toya Ningthou. These chiefs along with some of their noblemen administered their respective villages. Thus the division of the hill people and the plain people came into being in the government of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba.

**CHRONOLOGY OF PAKHANGBA**

It is difficult to trace out the exact date of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba due to the lack of reliable sources. Regarding the chronology of Pakhangba there are different opinions. According to Cheitharol Kumbaba, Nongda Lairen Pakhangba ascended the throne in Kalyabda 3135 (33 A.L.). In the Nongpik Haram (MS) it is given in the Kalyabda 4695 Kyamba became the Meitei king. Thus according to this the year of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba was (4695-1434 = 3261) Kalyabda. Pukhrambas Parijat’s Manipur Purabrita proposes that the regnal period of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba was 39a. Ibid.
296-416 Sakabda (374-494 A.D.) and the view of Pandit Raj Atombapu Sharma is in 783 A.D. According to W.I. Singh the date of Nongda Leiren Pakhangba was in (960-1020 A.D.).

The royal chronicle, Cheitharol Kumbaba is recorded in two Eras viz., the era of the Kalyabda and Saka Era. The Era of the epoch of Kali is a pure Hindu era which was always in use by the Vedic Hindu or Brahmanical Hindus. Again the Saka Era was assumed to have been established from the commemoration of the coronation of Kaniska, the Kushan Emperor of India. Cheitharol Kumbaba dated the accession of Pakhangba as the 3135th year of Kalyabda and the commencement of the 1st Saka era was after 45 years of his reign. Regarding this there is an equivalence with the date of Indian History calculating from the dates of Mahabharata war, that R.S. Tripathi dated the war in 3102 B.C. and J. Rao thinks that the war took place in 3139 B.C. as according to a tradition Krishna passed away at the commencement of the Kaliyuga after the lapse of 36 years from the Mahabharata war. Thus the date of commencement of the era of the Kali epoch was given traditionally as (3102 - 36 = 3066 B.C. and 3139 - 36 = 3133 B.C.). So the Kalyabda mentioned in Cheitharol Kumbaba

is somewhat similar with the last one. But the date of Kali Kumshing is found vague as it is seen from the above facts.

Regarding the date of Saka Era, its equivalencies is 78 A.D. = 1 Sak, it was started after 45 years of the accession of Pakhangba. Therefore, the accession of Pakhangba was 33 A.D. Until and unless a conventional chronology is established we are compelled to follow the date in accordance with the date of Cheitharol Kumbaba. Put a separate note and observations are necessary for the purpose.

Nongda Leiren Pakhangba after reigning a long period of 120 years went to a solitary place by delivering the changes of the state to his son Khuyoi Tampok born of Laisna. According to another tradition the last day of Nongda Leiren Pakhangba was given to, one day when Laisna was out of the residence young Khuyoi Tampok was attended by Teitou Ningthou Khaba Toushuba, by that time Nongda Leiren Pakhangba happened to arrive in the homestead with tattoo in his wearing. Khuyoi Tampok ignored him but Khaba recognised him and insisted on Khuyoi Tampok to take up some action on the encroacher.

41 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 2.
So Khuyoi Tompok rashly took up his Longsha Mapal Pamba (9 arrow head branching spear) and attacked the unknown father and killed him.

Another version of the last days of Pakhangba was that Pakhangba and Laisna lived in constant fear of the Khabas who were defeated by Pakhangba. But the Khabas always were waiting for an opportunity to revenge over Pakhangba. Pakhangba and Laisna lived at Leithampok near the Nungcheng pond at Kangla and Pakhangba lived as the god in daytime and lived as human at night time. Knowing her husband's nature, Laisna requested Pakhangba to make her a god in daytime. Pakhangba refused her request as she was an immigrant from Khamnungen with Thongarel. One day Pakhangba asked Laisna and her friends, Chitnu, Thamnu, Phunu, Airinu, Thera Langba, Chanuton, Thangnu to come for fishing at Nungcheng. He also came to meet them. On the way Khaba Toushupa speared Pakhangba and killed. The dead body of Pakhangba was thrown to the Nungcheng Pond. After waiting a long time Laisna knew the incident and she picked up the dead body from the Nungcheng pond. After the death of her husband Pakhangba, Laisna fled the Kangla capital and lived among the Seloi Langmai. The Khaba assassinated Nongda Lairen Pakhangba. The ruse of Khaba was fulfilled. Thus ended the life of the founder and the progenitor of the Ningthouja dynasty and the state.

42 Pakhangba Laihui (MS).
43 Pakhangba Phambal, p.29.