CHAPTER SIX
Khagemba and His Times (1597-1652)
Khagenba was the eldest son of king Mungyamba, the conqueror of Mungkhong, of Kabaw valley. King Mungyamba married Nongpallon Kainou Changpombi and Koubarol Thokchom Chanu. The chief queen, Kainou Changpombi gave birth to Khagemba, Koiremba and Sanongba. And Thokchom Chanu gave birth to Khomba Pukhremba.

Khagemba was born in 1525 A.D. in the year of Mubakhuthiba according to Cheitharol Kumbaba. Being the eldest prince, he was entitled as Ningthouhanba or Poirei Ningthouhanba. Khagemma or Khagi Ngamba (conqueror of Khagi or Chinese) was given to him by the people because of his birth, when his father conquered the Chinese or the Tai people of Kabow valley. He was also entitled as Sena Hihonbam due to his skill in the riverine naval warfare which was demonstrated during his father's rule in the conquest of Makhao village in which he killed the Chief of the village in 1594 A.D. His coronation title was Meidingu Sana Hiholhan Poirei Ningthouhanba. He was also decorated with the titles for his conquest and expansion of the boundaries of Manipur.


2 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 20.
Khagamba was well educated in the military warfare and administration of the land. He was educated by his father. The royal chronicle says, "King Munyamba gave, training in military warfare to prince Khagamba." He was greatly skilled in naval warfare, cavalry and infantry. Such training of warfare and administration by father to the prince seems to have begun from his time. As a crown prince, Khagamba was well equipped with the qualities of an able administrator and conqueror. His thirst for knowledge was beyond measure. He learnt religious mysticism from different scholars, especially from the learned five scholars of the time namely i) Apoimacha ii) Konok Thengra iii) Yumnam Tomba iv) Soram Sana and v) Khaidem Tomba.

Khagamba ascended the throne in 1597 A.D. Before his coronation he arranged for the coronation battle (Phambalal) according to the customs and traditions of this land. He invaded Tongou for the purpose and captured many war prisoner including Lakpa. His coronation was performed

3 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 20.


5 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 20.
with pomp and grandeur according to the prescribed rites and ritual.

As a conqueror, Khagamba embarked on a policy of military aggrandisement and expansion. He wanted to consolidate Meitei power in Kabaw valley. He invaded the Chindwin or Ningthi river valley and killed Lachap, the her and Shingmit Langkam and collected a house named Moremaba as war booty. Khagamba also defeated on the return journey Chao-kong the battle technician of Jai-Pong Toyang as Nong mit Mengra. 6

Khagamba accordingly, assumed the title of Medingu Taiyemba Heiyel Chaokong Phaba. But he was not successful enough during his expedition against Tangkhul Yitek in which was lost the life of Takhol Phabi, Kabomba Sera, Samloibam Pongramcha etc. He also invaded Sambi Louchang jang in Kabaw valley. He defeated the village and killed its chief Chao-Seng, the warrior and captured Leima Chaoed. The battle extended up to Mansen village and he defeated brave warrior named Thangmung. From this battle, Khagamba won the title of Leiren Medingu Sambi Khagamba, Thengya

6 M. Noren Singh, op. cit. 7.
Yingouroktta Khousaba, Leima Chaosai Phaba. Khagemba also conquered Takhel Langlong in 1603 A.D. and brought Aroi Champa and Tinlongba.  

Khagemba further wanted to expand his territory thus in 1598 A.D. he invaded Kireng Kabui but he was not successful and in the battle Paonam Khor was killed. He subdued the villages of Thingnong, Thingthing and Tanung in 1601 A.D. In 1602 A.D. Khagemba invaded Khagi Khullenbi in the east. In this battle he defeated Chaophaa and Hongsei the Chief and warrior of the community and he was entitled as Chaophaa Hongsei Phaba.  

Khagemba arranged a boat race with his second brother Koiremba (Wangkheilakpa). As Koiremba did not have a good boat for the race, he hired the boat of Sanongba (Yaiskulakpa), the third brother of the king. Accidentally the boat was broken when it collided with the rival boat. There began a grudge between the brothers. Even the king himself told him to give back a new one, Sanongba did not agree. After a long struggle king asked him to leave his country.

7 Ningthouroli Lembuba, p. 282.
Taigambi, Sanongba’s mother supported her son. She made a conspiracy with the king of the Cachar. So the Cachari king ordered his two generals Bimbal and Yakharek to invade the kingdom of Khagemba. It is recorded in Cheitharol Kumbaba that the Thongnang Mayang (Kacharis) invaded Manipur as near as Chekshong through Kangchup and the people were alarmed. The queen mother and her son took shelter at the palace of Phenta, the capital of Khuman. The Mayang forces were encamped at Khamlang Meikoi hill. With the order of the king, Surja Lairik Yengbam Jagat Singh and other King’s forces killed three Mayang soldiers. After this event the king made a truce with Yakharek the commander-in-chief of the invading Kacharies. The invaders retreated to their home country. Sanongba Yaiskulakpa accompanied the Kacharis to their country.  

MUSLIM INVASION

The Kachari king used to errand the Meitei king three times and as the messenger was too high-handed, he was ordered to be put to death. So in 1606 Sanongba came at the head of a big army. The Mayangs were encamped at Khuroi Haora Lamangtong while the Meiteis had their camp

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8 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 21.
at Haoyel Yangcipur (Thoubal). The invasion was on a grand scale. The three leaders of the Mayangs, Maikatao, Thongnang Phancha and Lengmasha suffered from the attack of King Khagemba and some of their leaders were killed. Accidentally, when Khagemba fell from his horse he was caught by Munongba and Longmasha. But by the skill of Nongsamei or Jagat Singh Khagemba escaped from them. Again the Meitei army surrounded the camp of the general Mahamadani who was requested to aid in the battle by the king of Cachar.

Khagemba, with the help of Lairom Nongsamei made a strategy for the success. He sent a messenger to Mahamadani Shak for the negotiation. Nongsamei used his own wit of the plot and he requested both sides to disarm their weapons. The Muslims agreed to the request of Nongsamei. At this moment, the Meitei army surrounded all the Muslims and asked them to surrender. Thus, the Muslim invaders were defeated and made to make their settlement on the bank of the Imphal river.

**EXPERITION TO KAPAW VALLEY**

Khagemba intended to extend his kingdom unto Samroik. So in 1607, he attacked the territory of the Samroik and som...
of the leaders like Khumukcham Kapo, Maopicham Phongnga, Koirang Chingka and Wangkheilakpa Keisha were killed. In the meantime, some hill chiefs with the chief of the Mangsa village made a conspiracy to defeat Khagembha. Mangsalakpa sent Kharchata to invite Khagembha for the invasion of Okshu village decisively and when Khagembha came through the hills, the Chakpa lambu Nongdayamba who knew the language of the hill people had heard the disclosure of the plot among the hill chiefs. Thus Chakpa lakpa made a plan to save king Khagembha from the danger.

When Khagembha found no means of defeating the enemies, Laien Nongshamei informed and requested the Muslim soldiers who were made captive and stationed at Kontong at the border of the Kabau to help the king. They agreed to help king Khagembha. With the help of the Muslim soldiers, king Khagembha captured the chiefs of Kontong Kyeng, Mangsha, Tumu including Samsok. 10

Taking advantage of the absence of the king in the valley, the Maring-Tarao tribes invaded the kingdom and collected the booty. The Marings were encamped at Karongthel and they marched up to the foot hills of Keipee. On hearing the news, the Meitei forces with some Muslim soldiers were

10 N. Norendra op.cit. p. 8.
encamped at Keithelmanpi and Pukharambathen. The Meitei army was successful to conquer the villages of Maring such as Karongthel, Lambi, Khunpi, Tangkang, Machi, Kangngoi, Khentei and Kangngoi Khunou.11 Thus Khagemba subdued the Maring-Tarao and some of the hill chiefs on his return journey.

After the conquest of Samsok and Maring Tarao, Khagemba got an information from the Mughals to have a relationship with Manipur. But the Mughals planned to capture king Khagemba by hiding the string of the boat under the water surface. Khagemba and his bodyguard, Atom Mombijambe and other arrived at the spot. When Khagemba put his first step on the boat, the Mughals began to shoot their canon and guns towards the Meiteis while suddenly pulling away the boat by using the hidden rope. At the same moment Khagemba caught three of the Mughal soldiers including Anankhan and Makhankhan. The Mughal’s boat sailed out with Atom Mongbijambe so the wise Lairik-yengba Jagat Singh who was expert in the western language shouted to return the bodyguards of the king immediately. Thus Khagemba escaped from the Mughal conspiracy.

11 Cheitharol Kumbabe, p. 21.
Khagemba Langjei, p. 15.
ADMINISTRATION

The administration of king Khagemba was notable for his acts of noteworthy deeds which are indicated by many valuable historical documents. It can be divided into civil and military administration. During his reign he gave military training to both men and women. All the officers of the state were the military officers during the war time while they were civil administrators during the peace time.

The king was the head of the state. He delegated his power and functions of civil administration to his nobility and officials from time to time according to the advice of the executive heads among whom the most prominent figure were Lairykengba Nongsemai and Mahamadani Shah. And he also took the advice from the Meihous (the scholars). He was all in all in the state and everything in the state belonged to him. The executive heads were the same as mentioned during the previous reigns. They were entitled by the Meiteis as Ningthou Pongba Tara (ten executive heads).

Khagemba used to consult an assembly of Phamdous (nobles or people's representatives) consisting of 39 nobles among whom 20 were from Khembam division or pana and 12 were from Leipham division or pana. They had their
meeting place at Cheirap. There were also 32 Hidangs (assistant). They were not seated in the Cheirap. They served in their different departments. All such 71 posts of high ranking officers were appointed from the privileged group which was seen during the reign of Khagema. These Phamdous had their different powers and functions according to the advice of the king.

During his time, some new departments (loisang) were added such as 1) Shamushang (Elephant) 2) Shagolshang (Horse) 3) Dulairoi (Palanquin) 4) Lalmi Yarekshang (Army Barrack) 5) Dulaipaba (Police Chief) 6) Mayang Hishaba (Boatmaking) 7) Sangomsang (Live stock) 8) Pangal Sanglen (Muslim depart ) 9) Singga Khangba 10) Telli Loishang (oil crusher) These Loishangs or departments had different power and functions.

During the reign of Khagema nine Buildings (Sanglen) of the Village deities (Umanglais) were also introduced as well as four (4) Shangkhuba and Sanglen of each Pana. Important subordinate military branches were 1) Khongmi (infantry) 2) Sagoltongba (cavalry) 3) Samutongba (elephant corps) 4) Pothang (Transport) including riverine navy. There were several workshops for making war weapons in lalmi loishang/ military department).

12 N. Manijao, Matamgi Khonglei Takpa Puya, p.30.
Department of law and order during the time of Khagamba was fully organised. Police department was under the name and style of Dulaipaba. The department of foreign affairs was loosely known as Leirik Yengba Loishang which was newly established. Taxes were collected from land, salt, etc. The another department which was commonly known as Meru Sanglen looked after the education of the state. Palace Department was constituted of 1) Keirungba Yarékahang (Department of Civil supply) (ii) Leima Senba (Royal household) (iii) Humairo (iv) Chong (flag) (v) Keirungba (chief of state granaries) (vi) Pema (music) (vii) Tanyeiba (time keeper) etc. Urungba Loishang (Department of forest) was also organised. The Shinaiba Loishang were also established for the purpose of building of houses, halls etc. under the control of Sanglen lakpa (Chief supervised.)

The Pana system was continued. Even though the valley was divided into 6 Lups during the reign of king Loiyamba, the distribution of the division of labour among the different departments and offices was only four during the time of king Khagamba. There were eight heads of
departments in each Pana but the head of the Pana was known by different name, Pukhrāmba in Laipham, Khursilakpa in Ahallup, Wangkheilakpam in Khabam and Yaiskulakpa in Naharup. Some high ranking officials were assigned to enjoy the palanquins; amongst them some were allowed to enjoy the use of tall parasol (Phē-Khoushang for senior officials and (Pē-Khoutin). 13

The valley was divided into thirtytwo (32) 14 administrative divisions from the very ancient times. Each division was made up of at least two or three villages and each village was constituted of two or more Leikais. Each leikais was a composed of several houses. Each administrative division was under an officer and his assistant.

Khagamba introduced the differentiation of the ranks in among his state officials. Different ranks were marked by the shirt, gown, choti, turban, armlets and bracelets which were worn according to their service to the state. He also introduced the system of checking the power and functions of the public servants. The restriction and prohibition on the phamdous or other officials

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13 Phamlon (MS).

of Khagamba are highly remarkable. Some of them were the immigrant officials\textsuperscript{15} of the east and west. They were not allowed admission into the three colleges of priests known as Maiba Loishang or Sanglen i.e. Amaiba Loishang, Amaibi Loishang and Asheiba Loishang or Sanglen. The lower class of slaves like phunganaie were not allowed to be a public servant of Pana Loishang. The lakpas or leaders like leikai lakpa, Lulpakpa, Lambus, Chungkhalakpa were also given some judicial powers. These general officials had their responsible and respectable seats in the court.

The judicial administration of Khagamba was a watermark in the history of Manipur. Khangjeng and Nongshaba Chhairak which were believed to be deities of justice were installed i.e. courts during the time of Khagamba. In the judicial administration, the king was the highest authority. The king’s order was the final but he did not try a case on his own accord.

The king introduced some new system of land laws and measuring units as Sawa Lamjel which were measured

\textsuperscript{15} The immigrant officials meant the war captives like Muslims.
by the length of the arm stretches along with four fingers' width.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{MILITARY ADMINISTRATION}

In the military administration, the king was the commander-in-chief of all the armed forces. At the very beginning, the army of Khagembha was mainly composed of the people of the kingdom and the divisions of the army were only four in number as if there was a militia known as the Lallups. But after his contact with the Muslims of Sylhet and the Nayangs (Kacharis) in the military engagements with the king of Kachar and the Shans of the Kabaw valley, there were many foreign immigrants in his army. There were as many as 1000 Muslim soldiers. And the top officers of the Muslim army was Mahamadani the general and the brothers of the king of Tarap a small principality in eastern Bengal. Laien Nongamei, a well known scholar of the Western language was the general next to the king. His original name was Jagat Singh. The exact strength of the army of Khagembha was not yet found but the presumption was about 3000.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} N. Ibobi Singh, Manipur Administration. 31.

\textsuperscript{17} Nongshamei Puya.
Khagamba made many military reforms for the improvement of the military power. He introduced cavalry which was of only about 200 in number and whose deadly weapon was Arambai. The Meitei soldiers were expert in the boats and the battles were brought in the rivers and lakes. The Hiyang or the boat races were regularly performed as the state sports. Khagamba also established Yerek Shang (quarter for the armies) and such was kept under Keirungba. The staffs of the office had different duties.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Regarding the matter of foreign policies, Khagamba did much improvement. Lairen Nongamei was entrusted with the establishment of the friendly relationship. There were understanding and exchanges of ideas with the westerners and Khagamba. During his time, a bridle path was opened upto Makak.18 Thus he established more favourable relations with the west, the Ahom and the Cacharis. Kangleirol a Manipuri text records the relations between the Meiteis and the Mayangs in 1606 A.D. There was a special political relation with Tarap identified Muslim principality in and around the present Sylhet district of Bangladesh.

18 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 25.
Khagamba took up a number of development programmes for the welfare of the people. He selected or appointed Naharakpa, Pakhanglakpa, Ningolakpa at the best level of the education. Such educational light was thrown down from the immigrants who possessed scholarship and education in the Sanskrit school of thought and the Oriental way of education. During his reign, re-organisation and elaboration of the Meitei script was thoroughly made. The king supervised the compilation of Meitei books and introduced the education system to be made available to the people over and above the learning and studies of himself and the royal princes.19


As a medium of exchange to facilitate trade in the essential commodities Khagamba introduced the coinage

19 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 23.

20 Ibid., p. 24.
system in 1620 A.D. 21 His coins of bell-metal had the legend of Ma the Meitei letter and the first letter of his name Mayang Ngamba. Khagemba also introduced the measurement of paddy and rice as follows:

**Paddy measurement**

- Khuchak or Mut $= 12 \times 1$ Utong or Utong Meruk
- Utong $= 16 \times 1$ Laitang = Utong Meruk 16
- Laitang $= 2 \times 1$ Likhai = Utong Meruk 32
- Likhai $= 2 \times 1$ Sangbai = Utong Meruk 64
- Sangbai $= 2 \times 1$ Pot = Potma.

**Rice measurement**

- Khuchok (a hand) or Mut $= 12 \times 1$ Utong = Utong Meruk 1
- Utong $= 30 \times 1$ Chengkok or Cheng 1

He further estimated that a man needed 2 utong (tube) of rice in a day. So a man needed 60 utongs (two chengkok) in one month. One Sangbai of paddy might produce 30 utongs of rice and so two Sangbaits of paddy would produce two Chengkoks. Therefore a man needed at least two Sangbaits of paddy in one month (30 days) and under this estimation

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a man would need 12 pots of paddy in one year. Thus such 12 pots of paddy were collected as the land revenue for a piece of land known as one Pari (about 2.5 acres) which could produce 48 pots. 22

Khagemba built the brick walls of the palace by introducing the brick industries in his kingdom. 23 He made improvement of internal communication repairing the roads, paths, bridges and by dredging and widening the water ways. He also made the highways to have a commercial relation with surrounding countries. He founded the village of Ngaprum by collecting villagers from Maring Khunbi, Karangthen Lamlong and Kangoi. The village of Wangoo, Sugnoo, Langthabal, Pallel and Hao-chong were also founded and made the settlement area for the immigrants and war captives. He arranged to guard the deity Wangbrel at Sugnu by collecting the people from the seven clans. Such establishment of village was proved by the stone inscription of Haochong. 24


23 Cheitharol Kumbabs, p. 23.

24 Haochong Stone Inscription, ( Manipur University Museum).
This stone inscription is inscribed during the reign of Gambhir Singh, when Shri Nara Singh was the Jubraj. The inscription indicates that king Khagemba who was the organiser of the Haochong village as recorded by Chetharol Kumbaba.

King Khagemba made many reformation in the Meitei society for the better economy and status of the people. Politically composite communities of the kingdom were 

i) the Meiteis (composite of the people of seven saleis),

ii) Muslims, iii) Mayangs iv) Keis, v) Lois, vi) Hill people and vii) Kabaws (Shan). He introduced different strata and privileges of the officers by supplying different dresses and equipments and also allowed them to enjoy the palanquine according to their status. The pipe hookah was also started in 1610 A.D. The wearing of crown instead of the turban (koyyet) and some modifications of turban were introduced. Salutation was introduced and the gradation of the junior and senior officers were marked by bowing down. The social reformation of king Khagemba was beyond measure. He introduced the luxurious life of the royal harem by supplying different types of dresses to the ladies. He used to adorn with the Khoicha Langmei to identify him to be a state servant.
The construction of high building and gilded house was also started during his time. The architecture of 5 storied building, the temple architecture of Wangoi, the architecture of nine faced buildings, inauguration ceremony of the building, brick walls around the palace compound to decorate moimit (rounded designs) on the top roof of the coronation hall were started during the reign of Khagemba.

Khagemba dug the new beds of rivulets. He made the water flow from the old beds which would be seen from the event of the Sing-cham-mei rivulet reclamation the broadened area of the Yaiskul Pana. He also dredged the water-ways which were used as main commercial transportation of the valley. He made improvement in the road from Wangthonbi to Hoitraobi for internal traffic and constructed the Makak road to travel to Cachar, Tekhao and other western countries.

For the economic development of the country he not only collected taxes, war-booty, tributes but also introduced the collection of gold dust from the rivers and the rivulets. Before Khagemba or even before the Muslim

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25 Chingda Satpi Ingele, p. 72.
settlement in the kingdom, the system of agriculture was jhuming and open broadcasting cultivation. But, the Muslims who were skilled in the transplantation of the paddy plantation introduced the transplantation system. In this connection there is one reference that when the Muslims were arranging to transplant the paddy, the Meitsis who knew little about the agricultural system seeing the Muslims pulling out the plants for new plantation thought that the Muslims were trying to escape. Due to the misunderstanding of the Muslims plan the king captured and banished them to the Kabaw border. But when the king was endangered by the Mering Tarao and four Kabaw Khunthok Lakpas Laren Nongamei requested them for help and after conversation about the causes of their exile the reconciliation was made between them.26 Khagemba introduced the culture of the Taotobi a very quick growing specie of paddy sown only in the swampy area. He also arranged to culture many vegetables and instructed the Muslims to do so. And they came with many agricultural products. Heinou or the mango was brought in this land by Sapramahmad Khamba. It was also reported that the coconuts were also first imported during the reign of Khagemba and the rounded

base of pana, a Meitei musical instrument was substituted by the shell of the coconut, which was formerly made by the tuber root of the bamboo.

Even though some scholars claim that the polo was introduced before Nongda-Lairen Pakhangba and during the time of king Kangba, it did not have enough evidence for support. It is recorded in Cheitharol Kumbaba that it was introduced during the time of king Khagembha. Regarding the Manipur or Meitei hockey style playing with wrestling, it was recorded to have been introduced in 1621 A.D. but according to Kangjeirol, the technology of hockey was played before polo during the time of king Khagembha. So it can be concluded that some rules and regulations both polo and hockey might have been amended during the time of Khagembha.

Again among the individual games Yubi-lakpi or snatching the coconut was the most heroic and manly game. The same game was played among the Tai Khamtis and women's race was also introduced during the reign of Khagembha. Decorative prizes and ornament of golden and silver hackles, Pariphi (a cloth) salt, paddy, etc. were given as reward as in the heroic deeds.

Khagembha's time was marked by the immigration of the Brahmins of the families having the surnames of
Kongalailatpam, Aribam, Tampaklailatpam, Samulailatpam, Sagolailatpam based on the appearance of the family deities which they brought to Manipur. Some Muslim families were also given their surnames according to their deeds and professions allotted to them. x

Different immigrants from the east and the Hindus from the west were totally absorbed in the main Meitei community. There were higher Hindu castes along with the low Hindu castes. The status and the position of the immigrants have already been discussed in the political administration. Even though there were different castes, groups of communities were based on the customs and tradition of the persons involved at the lower level courts, Kajis, Moulabis in among the Muslims, Khulakpa, Luplakpa in the hill areas and Panalakpa and Leikailakpa in the Meitei villages. The firm foundation for unified kingdom under the name of Manipur was laid down during the reign of Khagemba.

Khagemba's period was a period of interactions of the different cultures in Manipur. The state religion was officially, the Meitei religion and Khagemba was the patron and promoter of the Sanamahi and Pakhangba cult. Even though some scholars claim that the Sanamahi cult was of pre-historic or protohistoric antiquity, there is no reliable
evidence to support their theory since almost all the
cultural books of records were not earlier than Khagemba's
time and even the oldest books like the Poireiton Khunthok
described only the Shamanistic cult or Amaiba cult. Khagemba
Langjei, Pakhangba Nongarol, Sanamahi Laikan, Nongsamei
Puya, Miyad Singkak and Wangoi Laipham Puya refer the seat
of Leiningthou Laiwa Heiba (Sanamahi) at Wangoi or Leishang-
khong. The Pakhangba cult which is revealed in the religi-
ous texts like Pakhangba Yangbi, Taoroinai Yangbi, etc.
show some similarity with the Naga cult of South India
and elephant dragon cult of Yu-nan.

Even though Khagemba was a true devotee of Sanamahi
Pakhangba which was the root of the Meiteism he had faith
in other gods of the Meitei who were established according
to the theories of late priest of his time and before his
time. But the installation of the gods with some kinds
of altars in a hut or in temples was started during his time
being perhaps influenced by the Brahmanical Hinduism. The
Meitei cultural canvas had been greatly widened and en-
riched by the migrant Hindus and Muslims.

From some religious texts we find that for Nine
Umanglais, bowers and altars were installed during this
period. The nine deities were: i) Koubru, ii) Marjing,
iii) Thangjing, iv) Wangbren, v) Nongpok Ningthou, vi) Nongsaba, vii) Sorarel, viii) Pakhangba and ix) Sanamehi. He had full faith in them and worshipped them from time to time. Blood sacrifice according to the Shamanistic cult of Poireiton was the main theme of worship. Even though there were many of the orthodox Brahman immigrants, the offering of animal blood to the deities were the most popular way of propitiating the deities. Thus Khagemba differentiated the Meitei cult from other religion.

The cult of Lainingthou Nongsaba was introduced authoritatively during his reign. The deity was believed to be the incarnation of the Supreme Almighty to punish the wrong doer. The boon of the deity was first shown at the Mantak hill village and then spread to the Moirang Pukhran Leikai. The following virtue of the deity was shown in Chothe Nungshuk hill village. By then Moirang Sathi, the descendant of the chief of the Moirang principality called Leyi Lanthaba went to the Chothe Nungshuk village to try his luck in quest for wealth and was overwhelmed by the deity’s virtue. After some time Moirang Sathiba became a well known royal scholar of Moirang as well as a rich man. Mungyang Ngairakpa and Yumnam Tomba, two Meitei traders came to Moirang for fish trade, both happened to stay in the home of Moirang Sathiba for a night.
At that time, they had about the deity and had stolen the idol and arrived at Leishangkhong. When they arrived at Kanglei, they narrated the accomplished virtue of the deity and king Khagemba erected the abode of the deity at the preserved area of the Chenglei clan.²⁷

Khagemba in the company of Nongsamei and others was interested in the philosophy of Tantric Hinduism but he was more inclined to the introduction of reforms in the Meitei religion and thought.

As in the case of the Mera Haochongba, annual festival for the hill people for the political and social integrity of Manipur, Khagemba also made his way towards the pleasing of the deities. He introduced the annual festival of Laiharaoba.²⁸ All the rites and ritual, songs and music and dances were composed by the five scholars or Maichous stated above. During his time, many sects of the Hinduism such as Saivism, Saktism and Vaishnavism entered into Manipur.²⁹ And it is believed by some scholars that some of the Hindu mythological stories were absorbed into the

²⁷ Nongsaba Laihul (MS).

²⁸ Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 24.

folk culture of Manipur such as the creation of the universe by Asheeba by the order of the Guru Shidaba and the Phangkhong Koiba or going around the universe by Ganapali or Ganesh or Kartikya by order of Lord Siva and succession of the throne of Siva by Ganesh with the advice of Durga.

The cult of Santhong Mariba which was worshipped as family deity in each house hold was transformed and absorbed into the Sanamahi cult. Even though he was influenced by many religions he never deviated from the old Meitei religion. He also believed in rebirth and transmigration of human soul. He heard all the doctrines of all the religions himself and learnt the rich and important religious ideas from reknown scholars and philosophers of his court.

During the reign of Khagemba many valuable records for the history were written on Agarbak and the local made papers. The ink was also locally prepared; thus, it showed the technological development of the time. The widely approved books of records of Khagemba were Chekhong, Khagemba Yumlep, Khumanlon, Angomlon and Khagemba Shingkap, Leithak Leikhalol, Khangonoi Yangmoi and Singkhai Langkhal.31

31 Ibid. p.13.
As Khagemba was a seeker of knowledge, he generally heard all the ideas and thoughts of learned scholars and demonstrated his eternal thirst for knowledge. He asked the five reknown scholars to reveal to him the secret of salvation of his soul. The five scholars taught him philosophy, spiritual practice and belief of the Meiteis to gain the knowledge of the universe and the Almighty. To the knowledge of three incarnation of God one of which was in his own birth according to which the king himself would be incarnated three times. To Khagemba was revealed by the five scholars (Maichous). He wanted to keep the secret of salvation to himself and thought that in order to prevent the spread of the teaching of the five scholars of the secret of salvation, the five scholars would be better executed. Thus, after much thought, Khagemba resolved to kill all the famous five, instead of their advice for welfare of his life and his soul. Thus, at a moment of human weakness, he caused the end of the lives of the five scholars. The five Gurus before breathing their last, told Khagemba that though he did not keep his promise they blessed him with divinity and would be born three times as kings.

32 Matamgi Khonglei Takpa Puya, p. 49.
But the treachery of Khagembba had foiled and destroyed all the good teachings of the five scholars. So he could not bear the pang of his sin against God. To gain peace of mind, he kept the company of scholars like Shankaragiri Leirikyengba Nongsamei, Kabaw Akrocha and Takhel Puriklai (Khagembba Lamsang). But they could not bring consolation to Khagembba's mind.

So, Khagembba could not forget his soul's rebirth i.e. 'to die for birth and to bear for death' of the five scholars and he breathed his last on the Sunday of Ingel (July) of Soirom Mishang's year of 1652 A.D.33

33 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 30.