CHAPTER-III

HISTORY OF EPIGRAPHY OF MANIPUR

EPGRAPHY MANIPUR

The art of epigraphy encroached in Maipur in the late medieval period of the history of Manipur. As almost all the modern scholars have the conventional opinion of the periodisation of the historical time of Manipur as - (1) from the 1st century to 1450 A.D. as the ancient historical period, (2) from 1450 to 1825 A.D. As the medieval historical period and (3) from 1825 to the present day as the modern historical period, the introduction of epigraphic inscription in Manipur is presumed to have been in C.1700 A.D. It is evidenced by the inscribed stone of Konthoujam Lairemma. It is from the facts and finds of the provision of the palaeographic and calligraphic points of views of the scripts of the Meitei alphabets written or inscribed on the stone inscription. Even though the literature of the konthoujam Lairemma Stone inscription mentions the names of both the Meitei lords (Meidingngu) - (i) Khagemba (1597-1652 A.D.) and Charairongba (1607-1709 A.D.), the time of inscribing the stone inscription is to be attributed to the date of Meitei lord Charairongba. Hence the art and culture of epigraphy flowered out during the reign of the Meitei lord Charairongba because the cult of the goddess Chingthang Laireima or Chingthang Leima mentioning in the inscription itself was not introduced or flourished during the regime of Meitei lord Khagemba. ¹ Even the goddess Panthoibee of the popular and familiar Panthoibee cult was nomenclatured as "APANBEE" ²
THE EARLIEST INSCRIPTION OF MANIPUR

The earliest inscription or inscribed stone in the kind of a royal proclamation is mentioning in the royal chronicle (Cheitharol Kumbaba) of Manipur for the first time in the socio political history of Manipur. The chronicle states as:-

......... Heisnam Hiyambagee Kum Shaka 1620......... Poinu tha ........... 4 ne Eraila Wayen Thouda Kheeipikpu Nungda Lairik Iramduna Lai Kasagee Phura Mamangda Yunglamme.........

Transcreation

A stone slab inscribing the judicial regulations has been erected in the front of the brick temple of Divine Kasa on Friday, the 4th day of the Meitei month of poinu opine in 1620 Saka corresponding to a date of the 3rd week of December, 1698 A.D.

This inscription may be treated as the earliest Manipuree provided its prevalence in 1698 A.D. by the literary source or evidence but it is not physically in existence to this day or no evidence excepting the statement of the royal chronicle shown above informs its physical existence. Hence, the earliest inscribed stone as epigraphic inscription of the state is to be recommended as the stone inscription of Konthoujam Lairemma, still surviving in the bower of the goddess at Konthoujam village about 15 km on the west of the Imphal town.

2 = Ibid: P41
3 = Ibid: P 61
Some of the Meitei scholars opine that the Khoibu stone inscription mentioning as the official declaration of Meitei lord Kiyamba (1467/1508 A.D.) by beginning the legend of the inscription as "Shri Lainngthou Kiyambagi Yathangne" (It is the order of honourably divine lord Kiyamba) is assumed as the earliest inscription of Manipur. Regarding this they claim that this royal edict, as the language and legend itself exhibited was scribed during tenure of office of Meitei lord Kiyamba. But they do not consider and think of the facts of the introduction and inauguration of adornment of the regardful denomination of the Sanskrit word "Shri" (means honorable or a title of great respect) 4) and "Lainingthou" a later derivation of "Laiyingthou". The titles Shri/Sri was introduced by Meitei lord Garibaniwaza (1709-48 A.D.) 5 and "Laingthou" was invented or Inaugurated by Meitei king Khagemba (1597-1652 A.D.) 6 Hence this legend cannot be written during the regime of Meitei king Kiyamba. So the points and views of palaeographie forms, figures, structures, etc. and collegraphic features, models, designs etc. of the alphabetic letters employed in the epigraphic inscription, the time of incision of this Khoibu stone inscription may be awarded to a date of either in the regime of Meitei king Chourajit (1803-13 A.D.) or more preferably in the reign of Meitei king Marjit (1813-19 A.D.)

4 =Catherine Schwarz and three others: Chambers English Dictionary (New Delhi) : Pp 1363 and 1428.
EPIGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF MANIPUR

Epigraphy, one of the living source of history had crept in the territorial jurisdiction of the sovereign, autonomous and independent kingdom of at about the closing of the 17th century A.D. but began to yield its product in C. 1700 A.D. as cited above. To speak the Manipuri have a little pieces of inscriptions which may be called the specimens of the late historical period in relation to the epigraphic culture of Manipur. Even though the stone inscriptions had a little earlier of about a century as the material of Meitei lord Labanyachandra (1798-1800 A.D.) The transaction of the epigraphic metal plate as recorded in the royal chronicle goes as under:-

...... Thoudam Khongjombagee Kumdi Shaka 1721.......Thawan Tha II Langmaichengda Meidingu Poirekhombana Waroi - ElI Wa Mahaki Kabo Kowoan Pere Khongbabu Khongpharoi Haiduna Adygee Mahutti Kounong Kouba Phungga 1, Khongchai Kouba (Phungga) lga 2 mase Kattuna Pere Khongbam Kouna Yumnak Lephalle II Lauwen Pere Kongbane Haypharoi Hayduna Seina Shal Amna Wakhei - e II Yumngba Shellungba, Govinda Wahengba, Brindaban Shellungba 2 mada Haydoktuna Laisikyengba Tulashi Naranbu Koree Mapakta Lairik ihal-e II 7

7 =Ibid : P176
**Transcreation:**

Meitei lord Loirenkhomba finalized the ruling of the recognition of two new families under a surname on Sunday, the eleventh day of the Meitei luni solar month of Thawan in 1721 saka, the sponsorial year of Thoudam Khongjomba corresponding to a date of the last week of August, 1799 A.D.) The relative information of the royal decision was that instead of the family belonging to the Louwan Pere (trumpet like musical pipe) peper of shan ethnic group who were made to retire from the profession the descended families of Gousang and Khongjai (the residents of Impahl urban area) are allowed to be under family of Perakhongbam (or the piper/blower of pere instrument) as a State recognized family and they paid a fee amounting to sal (about 21.645 milligram) of gold for nullifying the entitlement of the surname (Perakhongbam) to the family of Lawoan. Tulashi Nmon, the Lairikyengba Hanjaba as the head of the Ministerial staff was made to inscribed all the information on the copper plates by ordering to Yumnam Govinda and Wahengbam Brindaban the two royal office bears by His Highness to issue the copper plates as the testimony of the recognition of their families. From the above information it is observed that the use of metal plates as the texture of epigraphic culture was entered into the epigraphy of Manipur since 1799 A.D. But the utilization of iron plates was taken up in the later period of the due course of the epigrammatic art.
KONTHOUJAM LAAIREMMMA INSCRIPTIONS (1 & 2)
40 x 39 cm.

MM. FECIT NO. 1 & 2
Courtesy: Mutua Museum, Imphal
THE LINE OF EPIGRAPHICAL HISTORY

The line of the epigraphical history of Manipur is based on the account of living inscriptions. As it were safe to line up the chronological dating on the basis of the exiting stone inscription, information of inscription in the chronicle and written statements of the preceding researches in this field, the approach is made as follows:

1. The inscribed stone of Khonthoujam Lairemma as aforementioned inscribed in C. 1700 during the regime of Meitei lord Charairongba (1697-1709 A.D.)

2. The Konthoujam Lairemma stone inscription was followed by the Ningel stone inscription of meitei lord Garibaniwaza (1709-48 A.D.). This stone was incised and erected in 1658 Saka (corresponding to 1736 A.D.){eq}^8\)

3. The Ningel stone inscription of Meitei lord Garibaniwaza was supported, associated and followed by the praised and post issued coins of rounded and square coins. These coins were incised at least the single work denotative work "Shri" in Devanagari script to point out the issuing authority is none other than the Meitei lord Garibaniwaza. The other coins issued by this Meitei lord have the legends of one two, three and four lines in the Devanagari and Assamee Bangali scripts. {eq}^9\)

4. The above cited epigraphic coins of Meitei lord Garibaniwaza were followed by the inscribed coin of initial letter denotative symbol of Deevanagari "Cha" under the authority of Meitei lord chit shai (1748-52 A.D.) {eq}^{10}\) This Meitei lord had other names, such as Ajit Shai, Sanahal Sahmeirang, Sanahal Moiramba and Menkhomba.

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8 =Ibid : P 699
10 =Ibid : Pp.55-56
NINGEL INSCRIPTION OF KING GARIBANAWAJA
93 x 53 cm.

MM. EECI, NO. 3

Courtesy: Mutua Museum, Imphal
But did not employ his any of the other names more than his popular name if he had regarded this nomenclature so as to the initial letter of his name to denote his actual appellation as the authority of the then Meitei kingdom.

5. The coin of Ajit Shai in the line of epigraphic specimen was followed by the legend depicted gold and silver coins of Meitei lord Gourasham (1753-59 & 1762-63 A.D.) as provided by P. Gunindra Singh.\(^{11}\)

6. In course of the line of the epigraphic history of Manipur the coins of Meitei lord Gourashyam was followed by the Ningel stone inscription of Meitei lord Bhagyachandra (1759-62 & 1763 - 98 A.D.) On the enquiry with regard to this stone inscriptions, the native villagers of Ningel reported that the inscribed stone slab was taken away by a contractor of civil works since 15 years back. So the legend of stone inscription is not in the availability. Again, the royal chronicle provides the information of erections of stones on the river bank of Teiyai (Tuibai at present) as the border pilar (?) and at the center of the Haimeng village of Khongjai (both the lands are in Chuachandpur District at present)\(^{12}\)

But it is not mentioned or known where there was inscribed stones in relation to the epigraphic culture. Some persons who had toured these reported that one of stone has its inscription on one of its facet. But no legend of the inscription is availed and so the case of these stones erected in 1787 A.D. is kept in abeyance for epigraphy.

7. The coins of Meitei lord Chingthangkhomba issued on, before or after the date of erection of the inscribed stone at Ningel village also subsisted the line of the epigraphical history of Manipur.\(^{13}\)

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\(^{11}\) Ibid : Pp 57-58


8. Meitei lord Labanyachandra introduced the production of inscribed copper plates as the followed up peace of the metal plate inscription for more than the depicted coins in the history of epigraphy in Manipur.

9. The gold coin and belmetal coin issued by Meitei lord Labanyachandra in 1799-1800 A.D. and in 1798-1800 A.D. and in 1798-1800 A.D. respectively also supplemented the flow of the line of the history of epigraphy of Manipur. The belmetal coins are depicted in denomination of coin issued authority by the initial letter of the name. But the gold coin had the legends on both the obverse and reverse side of the rounded coin as

Obverse:- "Shriman Manipureevara Shri Harshachandra nripavaresya saka 1721."

Reverse:- "Shrinalad Radha Govinda padaravinda makaranat madhukarasys."

10. Meitei lord madhuchandra alias Tamlenkhomba (1800-03 A.D.) had also filled up the gap to effect the breakup in the line of the epigraphic history of Manipur by coin depicted initial letter Devanagari Ma (it is to somewhat in the likeness of the Bangali Ma) of his authoritative name Madhuchandra.

11. The coins of Meitei lord Madhuchandra in the line of history of epigraphy were followed by the gold coin issued in 1809 A.D., silver coins of one rupee denomination coin issued in 1812 A.D., silver of half rupee denomination coin issued in 1804 A.D. and silver coins of quarter rupee denomination coin issued in 1807 A.D. by Meitei lord Chourajit

14 = Ibid, Pp. 66-67
15 = Ibid, Pp 69-72
KHOIBU INSCRIPTION NO.1
50 x 58 cm.

MM. FECIT NO.5

Courtesy: Mutua Museum, Imphal
waving Pamheiba (1803-113 A.D.) in the progresssing line of epigraphy of Manipur. These coins have longer legends as of the coins of Meitei lord Labanyachandra.

12. The Khoibu stone inscriptions, which were in four members totally (one is lost and only three of them have been left as remainder and now in the authentic and authoritative custody of the Manipur state Museum, Imphal) followed in the continued line of the epigraphic history of Manipur. As aforesaid the dates of inscription of these khoibu stones are awarded to the date of whether the regime of Meitei lord Chourajit or in the reign of Meitei lord Marjit (1803-19 A. D.)

13. The Khoibu stone inscription is succeed by the stone inscriptions and coins of Meitei lord Marjit. The stone inscription now standing in the Meitei Kangla capital erected by Meitei King Marjit. This inscription defining the boundaries of the Kangla capital is probable to raise the stone slab in 1819 A.D. when he had extended the boundary of the Kangla toward the north eastern corner, named as Khurai Khunpham Konung Meitei lord Marjit erected another 'Stone inscription at Leiishangkhong (at present Wangoi) A brief account of this inscription is displaying hereunder.

\[\text{Ibid, Pp 73-76}\]
\[\text{Ibid: Pp 75-76}\]
\[\text{=Lm ibungohal and N. Khelchandra: Op,cit: Pp 215-216}\]
\[\text{=Ibid: P.13}\]
KHOIBU INSCRIPTION NO.2
32 x 36 cm.

MM. FECIT NO. 6

Courtesy: Mutua Museum, Imphal
Shri Panchajukta Manipura Purandara Mayang Ngamba Maharaja
Shri Birachandra Singh Meitengngu Nongpok Wairiang Pamheipana
Sempa Mayangngamba Keithenne II Saka 1741 Makmei 26ni Thawan
thatane II Lairikyengpa Shridananda Prashuttama 2 mana ibu Lairikne II.

Transcreatin

It is the market place organised by the respectable Birachandra
Singh alias Meitei lord Nongpok Wairiang Pamheiba, the conqueror of
the Mayang and whose name is adorned with honourable words five
times as the lord of Manipur. It is on the date of 26th day of Manipur
lunisolar month of Thawan in 1741 saka (corresponding to a date of the
last week of August 1819 A.D.). The legend and inscribing are carried
out under the conduct of two royal ministerial office bearers namely
Shridananda and Prasuttama).

14. The Konthoujam Lairerma stone inscription is succeeded by the
stone Inscription of Ngaprum Cheengjeng. It was written in old Manipuri
language and archaic Meitei script on Sunday the 17th day of the
Manipuri lunisolar month of Hiyenggei in 1684 saka (corresponding to a
date of the 3rd week of November in 1762 A.D.). The extracted a few
lines of the legend of the ngaprum Cheengjeng exhibited as 21

"Saka 1684 Ngariyanba Pallingna Cheithaba Kum Hiyanggei 17 ni
Panba Nongmaiijingda Ibane, Khang-o" II

Translation

It is to be known this erected inscribed stone was carried on
Sunday, the 17th day of the Meitei lunisolar month of Hiyanggei in 1684
saka.

21 Ibid: P.12-13
15. The stone inscription of Ngaprum Cheengjeng was followed by the two stone inscriptions of Haochong Kabui village (now in Tamenglong district of Manipur) in the line of epigraphic Manipur. The first stone affords its date of inscription as 22 Sakabda 1764 Meetuwa Muhon Senga Chaithaba Kumda (corresponding to "Sakabda 1764 Meetuwa Mulhon Senga Chaithaba Kumda (corresponding to 1842 A.D.) Ibane Khang-0 II" The second inscribed stone exhibited its date of incision as the first stone as 23.- Sakabda 1766 Longjamba Patra singna chaithaba Kum (corresponding to 1844 A.D.) da Ibane'II

16. It is also reported that an inscribed iron plate issued under the name of the authorization of meitei lord Bhagyachandra (1763-98 A.D.) to the hill village of Chothe tribe in Bishenpur district is in existence in the villalge authority of the particular village. 24 The report added also that it was written in the Assamese Bengali script. Hence, it is observed that it was of late period. Probably issued during the regime of Meitei lord Chandrakeerti Singh (1850-86 A.D.), K.C.S.I. under the forged name of the authority of Meitei lord Bhagyachandra.

23 Ibid: P. 13
24 Ibid: P. 13
ANDRO INSCRIPTION
44 x 54 cm.

MM. FECIT NO. 8

Courtesy: Mutua Museum, Imphal
17. A stone inscription standing at the market place of the Andro schedule caste village is credited to have been erected as the royal edict of Meitei lord Punshiba (C 1404-32 A.D.) sponsored by the Burmeese appointed Regent Nongpok Chenglen Khomba (alias Meitei lord Jedu Singh) or Laiyengthou Cheengkhombi Pamheipa, Nongpok Wailong lamlokpa as the inscribed stone exhibited. The inscribed stone is also marked by the inserted heading like dating of 'Sok 1744' in Meitei archaic script. It is observed that this dating of 1744 saka (corresponding to 1822 A.D.) was an addition in the later period because it does not have the Meitei traditional writing inaugural sign of Anji ( ) which is seen only on the starting line of the main legend of the stone inscription. The guest of the legend goes as 27-Sok 1744
Shri Hare Shri 5 Juta .............Layyingthou Cheengkholmelem Pamheipa Nongpek Waerang Lam lokpa sana Yathang Yeepouthou Ningthou Punsipana.

Transcreation

Anji (the divinity learning and knowledge and salutation to the lord of universe):- It is the royal order of His Divinity Chingkholmelem Pamheipa, the conqueror of the kinds of the eastern countries and whose name is adorned with the title of honour five times, that, my ancestral king Punshiba had .................

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25 = Lm Ibungohal and N Khelchandra Singh: Op cit, P.220
27 = Ibid Plate No VII
HEISNAM LAAIREMMA INSCRIPTION NO. 1
45 x 70 cm.

MM. FECIT NO. 9
Courtesy: Mutua Museum, Imphal
18. The Andro stone inscription cited preceding was succeed by the copper plate epigraph of Andro village issued under the authenticity and authority of Meitei lord Cheenglen Nongdrenkhomba alias Raja Gambhir Singh (1825-34 A.D.). This copper plate, written in Manipuree common language in the Assameese Bangali script is at the village of Andro and it is dated the 12th Kartika, 1755 saka as 1045 Chandrabda (corresponding to date of the last week of April, 1833 A.D.) 28

19. The Andro stone inscription is also followed by the stone inscription of Heisnam lairemima "issued by Meitei lord chinglen Nongdren Khomba in 1040 chandabda in the live of the epigraphical history of Manipur. This stone inscription erected in 1040 Chandabda (corresponding to 1828 A.D.) before the temple of Divine Panthoibe for enaugeration of her prayer hall (just 50 metres from the south eastern gate of the 1st Battalion Manipur Rifles to outlet to the National Highway No. 39) 29 is now preserving in the needy revised shrine hut of Divine Panthoibe near the south eastern gate of the 1st BN M. Rifles. 30

20. The inscribed stone of Andro is also further followed by the engraved and inscribed stone of Raja Gambhir Singh carried and elevated in the month of Magha in 1754 saka (corresponding to January February, in 1833 A.D.) 31 This stone inscription or engraving is erected in the theme and idea of "Meritaspiration" for domination of about 48 Naga villages of Khepumei/Kohima 32 The statement in this regard put forward by the royal chronicle is displayed as below. 33

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30 =Ibid : P.25
32 =Ibid : Pp.242-243
33 =Ibid : P.243
HEISANM LAMREMA INSCRIPTION NO. 2

Courtesy: Museum Imphal
MM. FEGIT NO. 10

40 x 42 cm.
Honourable Meitei lord chenglen Nongdren Khomba conducted to engrave and inscribed two stone slabs, one for laying in the front of an erected stone and another for erection as cited and the stone for laying is engraved the foot prints of His Majesty and to be erected stone is carved the figures of a lion (Meitei Style) and a Bantin {Bibos banteng, fam Bividae} Then His Majesty along with all the tribal villagers erected and inaugurated the engraved and inscribed stone with a grand feast prepared with the meat meal of the curries of one buffalo {Bos bubalus or Babulus babulis fam, Bovidac}, one he goat {copra sibirica, fam, Bovidac} and one hundred pigs {sus serofa, fam, guidac}. The Kohima stone inscription of Meitei lord Gambheer singh is identified by inscribing the name of the Meitei lord as the devoted and faithful servant of His Majestic divinity Govinda, the most honourable emperr of the land as :-

"Shreela Govinda Maharajakee Manai Shree Meitaingu Chinglen Nongtren Khomba Maharaja"
It is written two semicircular lines in the Assamese Bangali script on the top of the engraving. This inscribed stone of Kohima is reported to have been in the custody of the Nagaland Museum. 34

21. The Kohima stone inscription is followed by the stone inscription of Meitei lord Leiren Nongda sentreng Mank Khomba alias Raja Nara singh (1844/50 A.D.) 35 The legend, written in the old Manipuree language and archaic Meitei alphabet describes the date of the beginning of the construction and inauguration of the temple of her divine goddess Heisnam fairemma alias Panthoibee. It is appeared to have been erected the inscribed stone on the same day of the start of the temple construction carried out by the then Meitei lord Nara Singh. Lunisolar months of Kalen and Ingngu respectively in 1765 saka, the sponsor year of honourable Ahongsangbam Joi/Jaya (corresponding to the two dates in the 2nd fortnights of June and July respectively in 1843 A.D.) the location of the Shrine temple of Heisnam lairemma has already been stated above in No.(18)

34 =N.Khelchandra Singh : Op cit : 14
22. The regime of Meitei Lord Chandrakeertti Singh (1850-86 A.D.) was the golden time of the epigraphical art and culture of Manipur. At least two important copper plate inscriptions and several stone inscription (most of them were perished) were produced during the period under study. Brief accounts of some inscription of the stone and metal textures are portraying hereunder as the specimens of the epigraphic history of Manipur: -

a) Inscribed copper plate of upgradation: -

His Highness Chandrakeertti Singh issued a testimony of class upgradation Arambam Jaya Singh and his younger brother Ghana Singh from the scheduled class of Tengkhan to the general class of Arambam in the tune of an inscribed copper plate. This copper plate dated Wednesday, the 9th day of wakhching month of the luni solar month of Kartika in 1772 saka (corresponding to a date of the 3rd fortnight of October 1850 A.D.) The legend is written in the Manipuree general language and in Assamese Bangali script is shown in translated form of the Roman Alphabet by a known scholar 36 and he also informs its custodian as the Manipur State Museum, Imphal 37

b) Inscribed copper plates of phayeng: -

W. Yumjao Singh, the pioneer archaeological researcher in 1935 A.D, explored the copper plates archaeologically. The plates have seven in number and they are written in the archaic Meitei script and common Manipuri language with the sprinkle Sanskrit words and tantric seedwords. 38 these sheets of copper plate inscription is attributed to have been a work of meitei King Khongtekcha (C.763-73) by many bygone scholars as the legend of the inscriptions itself displayed as if commanded by King Khongtekcha himself. 39
With furnishing a date of 721 years but no era is mentioned. With regard to the chronology of these copper plates W. Yumjao Singh put forth his opinion to be in the date as "much older than a century" in 1935 A.D. But now a days the screen of secrecy with regard to the dating of these copper plates are opened and known to all that these plates were offered with a beautifully embroidered cloth named Shashaba Ngashaba at present to the divine god Shawang (Sorarel in Meitei, Lengdon in Ahom and Indra in Hindu) by Queen mother Maisna Kumudinee to bestow safe and sound to his son king Meitei lord Chandrakritti on his journey and holding Jila darbar in 1874 A.D. Jila darbar was nothing other than the meeting between Raja Chandrakritti along with some of his nobles and Sir North Brook, the viceroy and Governor General of India accompanied by the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The meeting was held on the 9th /10th August, 1874 on the board of the Viceroy's yatcht on the river Barak following in the Silchar, Kachhar. The purpose of the meeting as proposed by the Viceroy was to seek permission to sanction a plot of land in Kohima in the Naga hills to erect a British trading depot there. But as rumour spreaded as if for capture of the Meitei lord and some complains the Meitei lord were being there, the Manipuree specially, the queen mother were much frighten from the imagination of the captivation of Raja Chandrakritti.

35 =The sponsorial person of this year is provided as Hahongshangbam Prem Singh - Lm Ibungohal & N. Khelchandra : Op. cit. :Pp232 &701.
36 =N. Khelchandra Singh : OP. cit. : P 15
37 =Ibid : P. 15
39 =Ibid : P.32
40 =Ibid : P.31
41 =Ibid : P.13
some of his nobles and Sir North Brook, the viceroy and Governor General of India accompanied by the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The meeting was held on the 9th /10th August, 1874 on the board of the Viceroy's yacht on the river Barak following in the Silchar, Kachhar. The purpose of the meeting as proposed by the Viceroy was to seek permission to sanction a plot of land in Kohima in the Naga hills to erect a British trading depot there. But as rumour spreaded as if for capture of the Meitei lord and some complains the Meitei lord were being there, the Manipuree specially, the queen mother were much frighten from the imagination of the captivation of Raja Chandrakritti. So the queen mother worshiped and offered to the sawang of phayeng the tantric adored copper plates and the beautifully embroideres cloth on the use of his son's departure to Silchar in 1874 A.D. As the date of the copper plates of Phayeng is reasonable to award the date of inscription in 1874 A.D. 

c) The inscribe stones of accountable number were also produced the regime of Sir Chandrakritti Singh, K.C.S.I. Among the stone inscription the Chibu (Chi, means salt; bu, means spring) inscribed stone along with the engraved stone are worthy to mention as the specimen of the species of the line of epigraphical history of Manipur. This inscribed stone of Chibu Khongjai/Kuki (preferable, the Paite)village, dared as "Shak 1793 Wakkching Thagi Humni Panba Thangja" (corresponding to Saturday, a date in the 3rd week of January 1872 A.D.) is related to the Lushai invasion by the British government of India. This is an inscribed stone erection in the expiration of winning merit for conquest and suppression of 112 Khongjai villages flourished by then in 1872 A.D. The inscription is incribed in the Assamese Bangali alphabet and in the then general Manipuri language.
The transliterated legend of this stone inscription in the Roman alphabet is shown by a reknown scholar in one of his book\textsuperscript{42} The account of the inscribed and engraved stone slabs of chibu are also transected in the Royal chronicle of Manipur as under\textsuperscript{43}

......Laishram Purnasingee kum shaka 1791.........Wakching Tha.......6 ni Leipakpokpada Chipu Thumkhong Huk-e II 8 ni Shagonsenda Shri Panchajukta maharajagee Padachindha Yeknaba Tuyaidagi Nung 4 Chingduna pada chindha yek-e II Nung 2di Thangjing Meitei Manaoo Yek-e II Idi Jarnel Sahepkee Hui Yekpee-e II......II 11ni Longmaichingda sowai jamba Menjor Kangabu Menjor, 2 manchingna siphai 2000, Khongjai 1000, Begaree 4000 shupna, Mee 7000 asina Patasanggee Madakta Nung Mapei Ani Peiremne II...... II 16 ni Eraida Ningthemgee Padachindha yekpa, Namnga Nongsha Yekpa, Thangjing Matei Majao yekpa, Ayekpa Kheibik Thumkhong 2 magee Marakta yung-e II...... Nung yekpa Meedu Mongjamcha Dharmmeshor kalikorada Kabana yek-e II

Transcreation

The hollow wood trunk from which the salty water is to be taken out is fitted in the salt well of Chibu on Tuesday, the 6\textsuperscript{th} day of the Manipuri lunisolar month of Wakching in 1793 saka, the sponsorrial tear of laishram Purna Singh (corresponding to 16/1/1872 A.D.). On Thursday, the 8th instant (corresponding 18/1/1872 A.D.) the foot prints of His Majesty whose name is adorned with five honourable titles is engraved by drawing up four agreeable stones from the bank of river

\textsuperscript{42} =N.Khelchandra Singh : Op. cit. : P.17
\textsuperscript{43} =Lm Ilbungohal & N. Khelchandra Singh : Op. cit. Pp
Tuyai (Tuivai, at present) Two stones scribed the anthropomorphic figures of the divine couple of lord Thangjing and Goddess Korenleima (Ngongshabbee). One of the stones drawn the figure of a dog for the denotation of Ganel sahep (General Nuthall)...... On Sunday the 11th instant (corresponding to the 21st instant) two pebble heaps are raised up by 7000 men made up of 2000 Meitei sepoys, 1000 Khongjai sepoys and 4000 porters under the command of Sowajamba (Balaremna Singh), Major and Kangaba (Thangga Singh), Major....... On Friday, the 16th instant (corresponding to 26th instant) all the engraved and inscribed stones engraved His Majesty's footprints, the divine couple of Thangjing, to be erected stone scribed with the figure of Lion (Manipuree style) are raised in the middle of the two salt wells. The man who engraved and inscribed the stones is Mongjam Dharmeshor, an official of sculpture painters' institution.

It is reported that the inscribed stone of the engraved and inscribed stones of Chibu was destroyed some 8 years back from today (2002).

23. The coins, even though they mostly on the purposes of numismatic currency on the main render services for the purpose of the epigraphic art and culture. The coins issued by Raja Gambhir Singh (1825-35 A.D.) and Raja Nara Singh (1844-50 A.D.) have their values in the line of epigraphical history of Manipur. The former case has coins depicted the following legends 44

"Obverse - Shri Radha Govinda Charana Savakasya side
Reverse - Shri Gambhira Singh nripvarasya Chandrabda 1043".

These legends are depicted in the Assamese Bangali script. The latter case of Raja Nara Singh the obverse side of the coin has the depiction of legend as 45

"Shriman Manipuresvara Shri Nara Singh Nripabarasya, saka 1763."

This legend of Sanskrit language is depicted in Devanagari alphabet. From the above legends it brings to light that the above mentioned coins of Raja Gambheer Singh and Raja Nara Singh were depicted the legends on or before 1043 Chandrabda (corresponding to 1831 A.D.) and 1763 Saka (corresponding to 1841 A.D.) respectively.

24. Other inscribed stones like :-

i) Stone inscription at Lamdeng, written in Manipuree archaic language and script and providing the account of Poireton, is also lying within the range of the line of epigraphical history of manipur. Poireton is mentioned by the Meitei scrifyures 46 as the great progenitor of the Meitei clans Luwang and Khuman. He was also described as the elder brother of Laisna, the queen consort of Meitei lord Nongda Lairen Pakhangba, (C. 33/34-154 A.D.), the first historical king of Manipur. 47

ii) Inscribed stone of Khoibu Maring village written the taboo of the village mentioning the village as the residential abode Meitei lord Sameirang (C. 518-68 AD) his queen mother Yaoreiba chunu and elder brother Thamanglang 48, the progenitor of the Meitei family of Yengkhom. This inscribed stone written in archaic Meitei script and a transitional language of archaic and premodern Manipuri languages is also within the circle of the line of epigraphical history of Manipur.

iii) The inscribed stone of the Moirangkhom Leipung (eastern mould) written in archaic script and semimodern Manipuree language regarding the total defeat of the Moirang clannish insurrection (in 1466 A.D.) is also a piece of material of the line of Manipuree epigraphy.

iv) The inscribed stone of Nawang Lashang dated 1733 saka (corresponding to 1811 A.D.) defining the land of Nawang Lasang is also another piece of the specimen of the epigraphical material of Manipur.

v) The inscribed stone of Meitei King Chandrakriti Singh at Moirang probably inscribed and erected in 1859 A.D. with the construction of a spare palace of Sir Chandra Singh regarding the erection of the palace, the royal chronicle reported as Yunnam Chaobagee Kum Shok 1780...... Lamada Tha......22ni Eraida Moirangda Ningthemgee Shanggai Shai-e II.

**Transcreation**

The palace building of his royal highness is constructed at Moirang on Friday the 22nd day of the Meitei Iuni solar month of Lamda in 1780 saka, the sponsorrial year of Yunnam Chaobee (corresponding to date of the 2nd fortnight of April, 1859 A.D.) This inscribed stone of Moirang is not available at present but no report of its destruction is not yet found. It is also to be accounted as a material of epigraphy of Manipur.

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47. Lm Ibungohal & N. Khelchandra Singh: Op.cit.:P.1
49. K. Yaiskul Singh: Ashamba Meitei Itihas (1st part) (Imphal 1973) P. 79
50. Personal finding.
vi) As reported the total number of erected inscribed stones at the Khoibu Maring village, Chandel district, Manipur is five but only three of them are in the collection of Manipur State Museum, Imphal. The two inscribed stones are also the pieces of materials of Manipuree epigraphical culture.

vii) There are two inscribed stones at the previous site of the market place of Wabgai [at present it is known as the Wabagai Keithel macha (the small market of Wabagi) inscribed during the reign of Meitei lord Churachand Singh K.C.S.I., C.B.E. 52 (1891-1941 A.D.) Even though these legends concerned to the past market of Wabagi and written in modern Manipuree language and archaic Meitei script they are to be accounted as the properties of epigraphical art and culture of Manipur.

viii) The inscribed stone of Hiyanglam Khundo (outskirt of Hiyanglam village) is not available now a day. No account regarding this inscribed stone and its legend is found but it is to be kept in mind that it is also a property of the epigraphy

ix) The inscribed stone erected at the Tarao tribal village in the Tengnoupal sub division of Chandel district, Manipur. Even though no account regardingt this stone is in hand at present it is generally understood that it is a certificate of conferment of privilege to the village and ethnic class of the Tarao people as those of the Khoibu Maring village. This stone is also to be owned by the epigraphy of Manipur.

52. Knight Commander f Star of India, Commander of British Empire.
x) Another inscribed stone erected in the front of the building of the village social institution of Ahallup Pana just near the temple of Divine Panam Ningthou of Andro village. It is also a piece of property of the epigraphy of Manipur.

xi) The inscribed stone of Meitie lord Marjit (1813-19 A.D.) standing at the old market place of Ningel village. Thoubal district, Manipur is also one of the valuable property of the epigraphical history of Manipur.

xii) An inscribed stone once erected at Shikhong village, Thoubal district, Manipur (near on the south of Ningel village) is also reported. But this specimen of the property belonging to Manipuree epigraphy is not found now a days.

xiii) An inscribed stone erected at lekha locality in Wokha district of Nagaland is also sunk down under extinction. The legend of this inscription is liable to the account of Meitei King Cheengthangkhomba (1768-98 A.D.) in his course of to and from journey from Manipur to the Ahom country during 1765-67 A.D.)

xiv) The inscribed stone of Kumbee is also a specimen of testimony of grant of privilege. The facsimile of this inscribed stone was extracted and collected by the State Archaeology, Government of Manipur.

xv) An inscribed stone at Keibung is also a valuable material but the legend of the stone, written in Assamese Bangali script in the Manipuree common language cannot be deciphered now a days due to the wear and tear of time. Some of its accounts for tiger hunt and caught is transected in the royal chronicle as below. 53

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53. The facsimile of this inscription is under the custody and the inscribed stone is under the protection of the State Archeology, Manipur.
LEISHANGKHONG INSCRIPTION
50 x 25 cm.

MM. FECIT NO. 7

Courtesy : Mutua Museum, Imphal
The solar equinox (of the year 1840 A.D.) was happened on Saturday, the 10th day of the Manipuree lunisolar month of shajibu in 1761 saka, the sponsorial year of saraisham Hari (corresponding to a date of last week of April, 1840 A.D). On that day the caught tigers are calculated and accounted to obtain a total number and then effected to inscribed the tigers caught total within a year by honourable crown price (later Raja Nara Singh) comes to 26 (twenty six).

xvi) The inscribed stone of Thoubal Athokpam is also a precious gem in the political history of Manipour. It is inscribed in colloquial English language and Roman alphabet. The legend of this inscription reminds the events of the last Anglo Manipuree war, 1891 to guard and protect the sovereign autonomous independence of the Meitei kingdom more than the short down of Leivtenant Grant, a Britainic military Officer of the 12th Madras (2nd Burma) Regiment.

xvii) The Kabui tribal inscribed stone erected at the center of the village of Awangkhul, Tamenglong district, Manipur also joints the mainstream flow of the epigraphical history of Manipur. The legend of this stone is written in Kabui traditional colloquael language and in newly introduced Kabui script called "Anji Hek" in C. 1960 and elevated the stone in the
xviii) Those stones which have been in association with the engraved stones and have the inscriptions in alphabetic nomenclatures of the engravers. The engraved stones so far discovered as the archaeological treasures of Manipur are. (i) Hanuman engraved stone (discovered near the western gate of Kangla, at present in the custody of Manipur State Meseum), (2) Foot prints engraved stone at Tipaimukh, Churachandpur district, Manipur (3) Foot print (of Meitei king Khagemba \(^{54}\) engraved stone in the shrine of divine Sanamahi at Wangoi Imphal West District, Manipur, (4) Foot print (of Meitei lord Chingthangkhomba) engraved stone at Tenggoljang, (5) Engraved and inscribed stone at Khongngakhul, Tamenglong district, Manipur, (6) Foot print of Raja Chandrakeerti engrave stone at Ningel, (7) Foot print of Raja Chandrakeerti at Wangjing, Thoubal district, Manipur, (8) Engraved stone at Phunal hill, Chandel district, Manipur, (9) Foot print [of Raja Devendra Singh (1850A.D.)] engraved stone in Kachhar, Assam, (10), (11), (12) Foot print (of Meitei lord cheengthangkhomba) engraved stones at Wokha town, Wokha district, Nagaland, (13) Foot print (of elephant) engraved stone at Sanahal lokchao, Senapati district, Manipur, (14) Foot print (of anonymous engraved stone at Jatrik, (145) Foot print ( of Raja Chandrakeertti) at Chilu (1872) A.D.), (16) Foot print (of Meitei lord Garibaniwaza) engraved stone on the bank of Junal river, Churachandpur district, Manipur, (17) Foot print ( of Chingjeng Naral Pangganba, the legendary hero, engraved stone at the foothill of Cheengmeirong (found nowhere at present),

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(18) Shamulai (Visnu incarnation of fish in the feature of half anthropomorphic Visnu on the upper portion and half fish figure on the lower portion ) engraved stone at Yairibok Bamou Leikai, Thoubal District, Manipur, (19) Engraved stone at Khoupum, Tengnoupal district, Manipur (20) Engraved stones at Salangthel village, Churachandpur district, Manipur and (21) Foot print (of anonymous) engraved stones at (i) Poiching Khek, (ii) Pengoan, (iii) Lengbang, (iv) Maitao , etc. and other engraved stones elsewhere in the territorial jurisdiction of Koupum sub division belonging to the Manipur culture of rock engraving have also supplemented the line of the history of Manipur Epigraphical art and culture.

xix) Among rock engraving of other figures and forms more than foot print which have any alphabetic expression of name or other alphabetic denotative word, line, etc. are also to be accountable and accounted into the epigraphical treasures. "The rock engravings of Manipur are mainly confined to (1) Feanggu, in Tharon, Tamenglong district, (2) Tharsong pathel in Khoibu Maring hills, Chandel district, (3) Hundung in Ukhrul district and (4) The Bhanggai range in Tipaimukh sub division of Churachandpur district of Manipur.

The stones are the main and chief texture of the epigraphical culture of Manipur. So the most numerous specimens of epigraphic inscriptions is found in this texture to trace out the vivid structure of the line of epigraphical history. A list of the stone inscriptions in the order of succession of dates is highly essential. The list is prepared in the tabulated manner as: -
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<th>Language</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<td>Lamdeng Khunu, Imphal West, Manipur</td>
<td>Archaic Meitei Script</td>
<td>Archaic Manipuree</td>
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<td>Stone Inscription at Eething, Moirang Boshenpur District Manipur</td>
<td>Eething, Moirang Boshenpur District Manipur</td>
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<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lost</td>
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<td>Moirangkhom earthen mould, Imphal West, Manipur</td>
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<td>Not known yet.</td>
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<td>Stone Inscription at Tarao village Chadel District, Manipur</td>
<td>Tarao village Chadel District, Manipur</td>
<td>Archaic Meitei Script</td>
<td>Common Manipuree</td>
<td>Not known yet.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Malbakhul, Imphal West, Manipur</td>
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<td>Stone Inscription at Shribon, Imphal, Manipur</td>
<td>Shribon, Imphal, Manipur</td>
<td>Archaic Meitei Script</td>
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<td>Saikholng Thoubal District, Manipur</td>
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<td>Kholangman Pandita Leikai Imphal East, Manipur</td>
<td>Archaic Meitei Script</td>
<td>Common Manipuree</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
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**NOT DATED STONE INSCRIPTIONS**
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<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
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<td>Undated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The epigraphy and epigraphical history of Manipur are always associated and accompanied with the coinage and engraving arts and cultures as it were done else where in every kingdom of the world. From the above list of the stone inscriptions which is the principal and chief specimens of epigraphy it is brought to light that the flow of the history of epigraphy of Manipur was started since the regime of Meitei king Charairongba (17697-1709 A.D.). Even though coinage and coin currency was introduced in 1620 A.D (1522 Saka) during the king Khaagemba, the issued coins by three predecessors, viz Khagemba (1597-1652 A.D.), Khunjaoba (1652-1666 A.D.) and Paikhomba (1666-1697 A.D.) are not worth to take up for consideration of epigraphic importance. Again these three Meitie lords did not introduced inscribed stone, rock engraving and stone engraving. Hence it is concluded that Meitei lord Tubee Charairongba introduced the epigraphy of Maniopur and the epigraphical history of Manipur, tool was started from his regime.

The following down stream of the epigraphical history of Manipur may also be drawn up from the above furnished list of the inscribed stones. As the dated inscribed stones are arranged in order of dates they can show the breakless flow of the current of the epigraphical history of Manipur since 1697-1709 A.D. to until now with the supports and supplements of issued coins and stone and rock engravings. Now a days to prepare and inscribed stone is easy but generally the inscriptions are done with Roman alphabet in English language e.g. the Memorial stone of Wangkhei Meiraba at the hillslope of ManaoCheeng at Kakcheeng sub division, Thoubal district.
The most important prop of the stone inscription to draw of the linear history of epigraphy of Manipur is the coinage. Every Meitei king who are accounted as Sovereign autonomous and independent king, prior to 1891 A.D. had minted coin in his name at least before his coronation to issue the same grand commemoration. The coins were also issued at other times also according to the economic essentialities and needs of the kingdom. Legends of initial letter of the name of the king as denotation, names of worship god in one line, word; two lines. coin issuing day legend in two, three or four lines along with the name of the issuing king without date etc. were depicted on the obverse or reverse side on both the sides.

These legends can be treated as the inscriptions on the metal plates with regards to the epigraphic points of view. The consecutively successive denotive and connective legends depicted to identify the coin and the king in vice verse. The successive kings were Meitei lords.

The inscriptions of metal plates such as copper and iron sheets are very few in number. Most of them are also appeared to be the testimonies of grants upgrading of families and villages. But they also readily bring up the epigraphy and its history of Manipur.

The stone and rock engravings propped up the epigraphical history of Manipur by acknowledgements of the arts and culture of drawing, carving, incising, scribing and inscribing as well as writing and reading.

From the above facts and finds it is evidence that the epigraphical history of Manipur streaming down since 1700 A.D. and continuing to flow down upto this day.