CHAPTER-IV

HOLY PLACES OF KANGLA AND ITS RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS
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The Manipuris had performing their own distinctive ritual festivals since immemorial times. These are the Laiharaoba, may consider as ritual theatre; the Lai Chaklon Katpa, the festival in honour of the Sagei Lai, the gods of the clan; the Apokpa Khurumba, held in honour of the ancestors of the family; the rituals held for the household deities Sanamahi and Leimaren, etc. Kangla is regarded as the holiest place for the Manipuris. It is a center of pilgrimage for all the Manipuris who are residing in Manipur, neighbouring states and some parts of outside countries. It is believed that Lord Pakhangba resides under Kangla and ruled the kingdom of Manipur and the Universe. It is also believed that there are 360¹ important holy/sacred places in Kangla. Some of the important holy places in Kangla are highlighted in the following outlines.
PAKHANGBA PUNG (MOUND)

The general conception is that (9) pheidoms (plots of land) made up Kangla. Diagonally to the north of this pheidoms lies the sacred Pakhangba pung. The rulers of Manipur pray at this holy place to attain long life. The reigning deity of this sacred place is in the form of a snake. Blood is offered in worship to appease the God. East of the Nonghum-shang at a distance of about twenty five (25) khudup and to the south-east of the Yumjao there is a Yai stone in Godly appearance, while in colour and facing south called Hing Sana. When worship by offering blood, the king is blessed.

PAKHANGBA KHUDA

At the center of the Shangai Luplenka of the Yumjao (traditional Manipuri dwelling house) lies the stone called Pakhangba Khuda or Sana Hing Pakhangba. It is forebidden to touch and move the stone because it is the abode of the Pakhangba. When Pakhangba reveals itself worship, offering pig.
PAOTAK PUNG

Patoka pung is located near the Uttra, the ancestral coronation hall of the Manipuri kings, at a distance of three (3) Khudup (traditional unit of measurement roughly equal to a yard). At this sacred place lies a Yai stone facing west in Godly appearance. The stone is red in colour. Worship by offering blood it certainly conveys prediction.

NATA PUNG

At a distance of twelve (12) khudup from the Makru Ching and twenty seven (27) khudup away to the north of Khaba Pung, there is a stone pot covered by stone lid. The pot contains the eternal fluid of the Almighty Guru, when it dries up it signify bad omen and when the pot is full it denotes peace and prosperity of the kingdom. Close to this pot lies the Nata pung, the sacred place of a Yai stone in human form, black and facing north-east. When worship with the blood of the sendrang (the sparrow) the deaf king will be cured.
YAOREI KHUKAM TETNOU YOTLI KHINGBA CHING

At a distance of three (3) khudup to the south-west of Shinnai pung lies the stone named Yaorei Khukam Yotli Khingba ching in human appearance, facing north-east, purple in colour. Worship with the blood of wild ox, you escape death.

YAORIEBI

Yaoreibi lies to the south-east of Khunthong at a distance of eleven (11) Khudup. There is a Hi stone in two forms – one Godly and other in the form of a Cat (TOKPA) named Yaorei Leiyanbi Khukai Lainamung representing the Goddess Leimaren, who assaulted the khuroi hen (Khuroi Yenbi in Manipur). Here also lies Yai and Hi called Oulouton Louthiba Worship offerings fowls – Thikri, Thinggrong and Khabrangchak for place prosperity and long life of the king.
At a distance of eleven (11) Khudup from Nonghum Shang is Yumjao located. Yumjao has nine (9) Ka (plots or rooms). In the front Ka (room) there lies a Yai stone of white colour is Godly appearance called Pureiromba. Worship it offering goat-wishes are of brown colour in human form called Lukangla. Sacrifice white hen and pray to dominate and defeat rivals. There is also a Yai stone, two steps away from the cross-center of the Yumjao in Godly appearance having golden colour facing east. This Yai stone is at a depth of seven (7) khudup from the surface. There is another Yai stone in the stomach of the Ngayen, at a depth of four (4) khudup in human form and golden coloured. Both the stone face each other and they are called Leima and Ningthou (the queen and the king). Because of these two Yai stone kingdoms is governed by the king and queen. Worship the Yai stones offering pig- the king live long. In the middle room (ka) i.e. Talo Yapham Chaklou pung, there is a Yai stone in human form, golden in colour and with the smell of Laphurit (a native plant) facing south.
This is called TARA CHANINGKHAKNA CHASHOUBI ISHING KHUMNA NONGKHAIBI NGANPHAM LEITTAKPI LEIPHUREN NAMUNGBI. This is the place where rice in balls (chadum) are hanging in plenty. Worship offering pig-plenty of food is ascertained.

The next room (Ka) is called OMLAM CHIK and there lies a Yai stone. The Yai called sum is embraced by TAOROINAI biting its tail with His teeth. White hens are sacrifice here and worship. In the next room there lies a Yai stone in Godly appearance, greenish-brown in colour facing north-west called HAYICHAK, which eat cows. Sacrifice cow and worship. There is another Yai stone in the next room called NGANBA, red like cloud, God-like in appearance. Sacrifice goat. The next room has also a Yai stone called KHEKHOMBA with the colour of the earth (soil) facing south-west. The Yai stone is the progenitor of THANGA KAMBONG UROK USHAI. Sacrifice cow. In the adjacent room there is another Yai stone called HISANA NONGDREN CHIKHAMBA, motley red in colour and God like in appearance facing south-west. The Yai is the progenitor of the MOIRANG. There is a Yai stone in the next room in
human form, black in colour facing south called KHUMAN. Sacrifice pig the king enjoys long life.

YAICHAMPAT

On the bank of the KUMSHANGPAT at a distance of twenty seven (27) khudup to the south-west, there lies the sacred place of YAICHAMPAT.

TEN (10) SACRED SPOTS OF YAI STONES

There are ten (10) Yai stones, at a distance of three (3) khudup from the SANA SHANGAI called HI and YAI. They are in human appearance and are white, brown, brownish red in colour. They are called SHAJIBI, YAISANA, LEINUNG, HIPOKPI, YAIPOKPI, NUNGMU TUMDABA, TAOBI LOINAI, HIKUBI, YAIKUBI and YAIKUBI respectively. They are embraced by TAOROINAI, with his tail in teeth. Sacrifice pig and cow, the king live long.
LUKHRAPAT

Lukhrapat lies at the north-east corner of the ten Yai stones. There are two Yai stones called MANEM and MAMOU. Both of them are in human form and white in colour. They are also called CHINGKHEINU. They are the children of LEIMAREL. When this is revealed the KHONGJOMNUBI will come to each. Sacrifice hen.

HANJING HANJANG

At this scared place, there is a Yai stone in human appearance, golden in colour. The Yai stone represents the Guru and Leimaren. For long life of the king sacrifice pig at this sacred place.

HIRUSHANG

Hirushang lies to the east of HANJING. There are two Yai stone, a depth of four (4) khudup below the surface. Godly in appearance brown in colour. Sacrifice pig to secure long life of the king.
MANGLEN

It lies to the north-east of Uttra. The actual place where the sacred spot of Manglen lies on the south of the Thengru Ching at a distance of four (4) khudup. This is the cremation ground of the kings of Manipur. Manglen is believed to have been developed by Maharaj Garibaniwaz in 1738 A.D. The royal chronicle “Cheitharol Kumbaba” mentioned that Maharaj Nara Singh was cremated here at the Manglen. It is also believed that if cow was sacrificed the king of Manipur live long.

THE SACRED SITE OF MANGANG GURU

There is a stone three (3) khudup deep under the earth on the eastern side of the SHANGAI and in between two SANA KHONGNANG (TREE). Under this stone their leis a golden house. This is the abode of the MANGANG GURU. Worship and sacrifice pig to attain long life.
MARING KHUNBIROK

At a distance of five- (5) khudup north-west of the SUMANG and four (4) khudup deep under the earth there lies a Yai stone. This was the Yai stone shot by KHWAI NUNGJENGBA. The sacred place is called MARING KHUNBIROK OR TAOHUIRENG AHANBA. Worship with white hen.

MAHOUCHANALOK

The rear room of the Yumjao is called MAHOUCHANALOK. This is the place where Poireiton sat in justice.

MAYAI PUNG

At a distance of seven (7) khudup to the east lies the MAYAI PUNG known as MANTHAK THAYAIROK NINGSHONG MAOBIROK KHALING LONGBA CHING. This sacred place is also known as TAPU-TAKUP PUNG.
SHUMSHANG

At the south room of the SHUMSHANG there is a Yai stone in human form, green in colour called AHUMNU a deity in trance is in front of the Yai stone. Sacrifice pig at the sacred place to defeat rivals. ASHIBA GURU as bright as the sun in human form called LEINUNG LONJA ARIBA resides at the center of the middle room. Sacrifice pig, the king lives long. In the next room there is a Yai stone in human form, brownish in colour facing north. It represents LEIMAREN and is called THONGAK LAIREMMA. Sacrifice pig. The rooms at the back and front of the shumshang is forebidden for the king. To the east of the shumshang, at a distance of one and half (1½) khudup, there are three (3) Hi stone in human form, reddish white in colour and facing east. They are known as SHIDANUBI, KHAMDIPUBI and LAM LEIMA and also known as LEIYAREN MEERAKPI collectively. Sacrifice cow, the king will not die. There are also KHAMNU KORPHU and YOTSHUBI to the east of shumshang at a distance of twenty four (24) khudup beyond the PHEIDEKPI.
SANAGI SHANGAI

At the corner of the Kangla and to the south-east of the Ushoi there lies the SANAGI NUNGLON SHANGAI, inside the Shangi...
there lies the YAIMARU SIDABI NUNGBI which is none other than the Almighty SHIDABA. Gods in the heaven are in attendance above as THAKAN and Gods of the netherworld are also at attendance as the TANGBAN (throne) and several Gods are in attendance to the Almighty SHIDABA, who is in Godly appearance with sparkling colours facing south-east. He is called OM sacrifice cow and worship.

CHINGSHU CHINGJAO SHUM

Chingshu Chingjao Shum also known as Shumshang has three rooms (Ka). At the north-east of the Shum there is a Yai stone in human form, reddish-brown in colour, who is none other than CHINGKHEI GURU and known as SHAMPHULEN EHAI NGANGBA, facing north-east, at a depth of five (5) khudup beneath the earth. Sacrifice white buffalo, the king live long. At the south-east of this, there is a Yai stone called SHUMJIK YAI in human form facing LAHING. Sacrifice pig for prosperity. At a distance of four (4) khudup from this corner, there is a HI stone in human form, blue in colour, facing south-east, which is called LINGBA LINBI. Both the LINBA LINBI is also known as LINBI SHUYON MARINBI.
LAISHIDABA met His two offsprings at PUNGMU. Because of that it is known as AHUI ARANGBA. The HI stone is at a depth of three (3) khudup below the earth. Worship by sacrificing cow-land is prosperous. At the south-west corner, there are two Yai stones in Godly form with the colour of the birth-mark known as CHA, facing south corner. The lips of the Yai stones are moving. Worship both offering pig and hen for long life of the king and prosperity of the land. The Yai stones are at a depth of two (2) khudup below the earth. There are another Yai stones to the north-west corner. It comes out of the NONGLUM motley coloured and God like in appearance called PAKHANGBA NUNGMU RAJA ARANGBA. Worship with wile ox the king lives long.

NUNGOIBI

It is a sacred place for worship to the Goddess of war. This place lies to the west of Kangla Men Surung. When the king of Manipur came back successful from the battle field, a ceremony known as HUIYEN LALLU CHANBA was performed. This
ceremony was performed on the occasion of kwaktanba held annually on the day of tenth day of Mera.

KANGLA MEN SURUNG

This is a sacred and important place at kangla where the kings of Manipur performed their coronation ceremony known as Phambal Tongba with elaborate rite. The result of the coronation ceremony is very important because according to the result it is known whether the king will be able to rule the country for a long period or not. It is also believed that under the coronation seat lies the Paphal of Taoroinai (in serpentine from with knots at four corners and the head biting the tail).

This is one of the most significant sacred spot where coronation ceremony was performed for every new king. This ceremony is known as Phambal Tongba with elaborate right.
SITE OF LORD WANGBREN:

Lord Wangbaren is also one of important God in Kangla. The sacred place of Lord is located to the south-eastern corner of Kangla. Wangbaren is regarded as the protector of the south east direction. He control flood and natural calamities. He also safe the lives of human beings from death in water by his divine power.

SITE FOR LORD KOUBRU

This sacred place is situated on the north-western corner of Kangla and is worship for good rainfall etc.

NUNGJENG PUKHRI

Nungjeng Pukhri is believed to be place of Lord Pakhangba. It is located to the north west of the Uttra. For the Apokpa khurumba (Ancestor worship) of Mangang/Ningthouja clan water of this pond is necessary. In the religious festival of Pakhangba cheng hongba and
Sanamahi chenghongba, the khayom lakpa a religious rite in which eggs, uncooked rice and coins were put in plantain leaves, folded and tied together with bamboo strips and ultimately immersed into the holy water of Nungjeng Pukhri, were performed at this sacred pond.

**NUNGJENG MACHA**

A sacred pond for worship of Lord Pakhangba, it is located to the north-west corner of the Nungjeng Achouba.

**LAININGTHOU THANGJING:**

The sacred place of Lainingthou Thangjing is in the south-western side of Kangla. He is regarded as the incarnation of Pakhangba. Thangjing is the protector God of the south-west direction. He is also worshipped as the ancestral deity of Kege and Moirang. It is believed that worship of the Lord Thangjing brings the defeat of rivals.
SITE FOR THE TEMPLE OF NONGSHABA

Nongshaba is a primeval deity of Manipur. The Maharajas of Manipur used to worship this deity. LANBAOTABA ritual was performed on all important occasions.

IMPORTANT FESTIVALS

HIYANG TANABA

Boat race on the river or moat is known as Hiyang Tanaba. Hiyang Tanaba is one of the most important festivals of Manipur and various preparations are required for it. On both sides of the moat ‘Shang’ (Stand/hut) are erected for the Tengmaileppa and his Hirois (Sailors). The Shang are known as Higashang. The shang for the king was of considerable size and height. The queen and other women occupied the one on the opposite side of the king’s stand. There is also another shang or stand erected for the royal dignitaries.
It is also believed that the Hiyang Tanaba festival as well as making of boat was introduced by Luwang king Hongnem Luwang Punshiba. Actually Hiyang festival is observed in the month of Hiyangei. Later on it is performed in other month also as an amusement. Hiyang, boat race is also performed on the 11th day of Langbal.

**MUKNA (MANIPURI WRESTLING)**

It is an indigenous style of wrestling which has been in Vogue since the existence of the Manipuri society. In Mukna, two male partner (opponents) by holding the loincloths tried to throw and hold down the opponent. There are specific rules, costumes and technique of Mukna. Some of the main techniques are Ningong (Hip throw) to left and right, Longkhrou (specific throw by twisting the opponent’s calf) left and right, khudong (throwing the opponent by raising him high), Khu-Theibi, Chepching, Kaplak Kotpi, Heibongkabi, Ngakthi Chappa, Suptek, Chaokot, etc. Each of the above mentioned Lous (techniques) have also their defensive counter Lous.
In a match of Pana Mukna, two teams each consisting of seven (7) players compete together. Each of the players has distinctive names; i) Yatra, ii) Yatra Mathang, iii) Langjei, iv) Langjei Mathang, v) Langjei Ahum Mathang, vi) Langjei Mari Mathang and vii) Khomdon. The game of Mukna is generally played on the last day of Lai Haraoba before the deity as a part of the ceremonial function and the function cannot be completed without this game. Henceforth, the indigenous game of Manipuri Mukna is relating to the cosmological era of the theory of creation.

POLO

Polo is the national game of the Manipuris. The game is used to have been introduced during the time of King Kangba of Manipur. To quote a few lines from page 221 of the “Introduction of Manipur” by L.M.I. Singh, “The motherland of polo is Manipur. Manipur puran says, in the mythological time it was played by Gods ........... In the historical age it was played on the occasion of recognizing Laisana as the wife of Pakhangba in and about 33 A.D.” Polo was first introduced in India in 1863 by Major General Sherar. He brought two
teams of Manipuri natives from Manipur to Kolkatta, where they played an exhibition match. In 1864 polo was brought to England by the 10th Hussars. There are two pologrounds at Imphal. One inside the Kangla Fort is known as the Manung Kangjeibung, which is located to the west of the Shri Govindaji temple and the other one outside the Fort called Mapan Kangjeibung, which is located to the north of the British Residency (present Raj Bhavan). During British period, from 1891 to 1947, the national game of polo was encouraged so much so that polo players and polo choukidars were appointed on monthly pay for the state under Major Head – No. 1 – Administration Vide Manipur State Budget upto the year 1949-50. Afterwards, the game was discouraged and the posts of polo players were abolished. Also the playground outside the Manipur Fort known to the local people as Mapan Kangjeibung was used for some other purposes.
RAS – LEELA

A combination of all pleasant forms of rasas is known as ras and the divine play of Shri Krishna with the Gopis at Brindabana is generally known as Ras Leela. There are five forms of Ras Leelas performed in Manipur. They are Maharas, Kunja Ras, Basanta Ras, Nitya Ras and Diba Ras. The first three were composed by Maharaj Bhagyachandra who reigned from 1759 to 1798 A.D. Nitya Ras was evolved during the reign of Maharaj Chandrakirti Singh (1850-1886) and Diba Ras during the reign of Maharaj Churachand Singh (1891-1941).

Note : King Bhagyachandra did play an important part in the formation of the Ras Lila, which thereafter became an important aspect of Manipuri religious art, and extended its influence throughout the whole of the sub-continent.

MERA HOUCHONGBA

Mera Houchongba is an important festival of Manipur. The festival is held in the Manipuri month of Mera Thabung. Captain
E.W. Dun says, “This festival in October lasts for only one day; it is a gathering of the hill tribes under the Manipur Government, and is a curious sight on account of the great number of different tribes assembled, with their curious dress and weapons, differing from each other in feature and language, but all unanimous in one particular, to get drunk as speedily, and remain so long, as possible. The Hillman indulge in feats of strength before the Raja, such as carrying heavy weights, etc. They also indulge in was dance and Sham fights. The sports of the day conclude with a feast.”

In fact, the festivals provide the common platform to strengthen the bond of love and unity between the plain and hill people. This one-day glorious event, is celebrated with great care and expectation. It breaks at walls of caste and creed, ethnic differences and thereby establishing the peaceful and universal spirit. The kings of Manipur took great care to regale the hill brethren and organized the festival with much care.
The festival of Mera Houchongba has started since time immemorial. All the kings of Manipur celebrate this festival of erstwhile kingdom. The festival was in practice upto the reign of Maharaj Bodhachandra Singh. For some years the festival was out of practiced later, it was revived and revitalized by todays Manipur.