CHAPTER V
THE MEITEI MARRIAGE RULES

The Meitei clans are ideally exogamous kin groups. As an impact of Hinduisation of the people these clans have been arranged in a scheme of correspondence with Hindu gotras. In this scheme the Meitei clans are redistributed into nine groups with the internal divisions of Moirang clan into Moirang ariba (meaning ‘older Moirang’) and Moirang anouba (meaning ‘new Moirang’), and Chenglei clan into Sarang-Leishangthem and Haorok-Konthou. The scheme of equivalence of the Hindu gotras with the local Meitei clans is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Meitei Yeks</th>
<th>Hindu Gotras</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ningthouja</td>
<td>Sandila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Angom</td>
<td>Kousik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Luwang</td>
<td>Kaishop, Koutrim, Krishnanath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Khuman</td>
<td>Madhukolya/Moudaglya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kha-Nganba</td>
<td>Noimisha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Moirang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Ariba</td>
<td>Atriya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Anouba</td>
<td>Angaras</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Chenglei
   a) Sarang
      Leishangthem  Bhardwaj
   b) Haorok Konthou  Basista

Fig: 5.1 The Meitei scheme of yek / gotra correspondence

1. The marriage rule prohibiting yek-lounaba:

The Meitei yek/ gotras are exogamous kin groups. The law of this form of exogamy, however, seems to work more in ideal terms. As has already been pointed out above, within the clan system there are authentic and attached lineages. Again, the Meitei lineages are as of autochthonic origin and of alien origin. The alien originated persons are known as Harams. It is of two types, a) Nongpok Haram – those coming form the east and b) Nongchup Haram – those coming from the west. Individuals or groups of both harams were attached to the autochthonic lineages. It also so happened that under certain historical circumstances some of the original Meitei people were merged to some of the lineages formed in majority by the harams people. Let alone the cases of elopement a woman by a man, they belonging to two lineages of the same clan, when there occur cases of elopement of a woman by a man from within the same lineage, the rule of clan/lineage exogamy is relaxed provided the group of one of them was of alien origin. Otherwise, rule of exogamy both at the lineage and clan level has been strictly observed until recently. The contemporary cases of intra-lineage or intra-clan marital union, though far and few between, are a matter of recent changes of marital conducts in this society. In the past such intra-clan marriage, if it was held uncontrollable (in the exceptional case of such marriage sought by a king) the lineage of the woman had to be changed to regularize the marriage. For instance, Satpam formerly belonged to Ningthouja clan. King Charairongba who also belonged
to Ningthouja clan wanted to marry Satpam Chanu Nungthilchaibi. To make marriageable with him, a group of Satpam to which his consort belonged was reaffiliated to Khuman clan under his instruction.

2. Sairuk tinnaba

Sairuk tinnaba means belonging to the same Sairuk (tinnaba meaning ‘belonging to’). Some scholars opine that there is a basket known as Sairuk and thus, Sairuk tinnaba means “belonging together to the same basket known as Sairuk”. Sairuk tinnaba is also known as Salai lotpa. Again, B. Kulachandra Sharma (1998) says that the word Sairuk comes from the roots Sai or Salai (clan) and Ruk or Lup (group). Hence, Sairuk tinnaba points to the common reference to an ancestor. The descendants from the same ancestor but who later on became members of different clans are described as Sairuk tinnaba.

![Diagram](image_url)

**Fig: 5.2 Sairuk tinnaba**

If a man married two wives of either same or different clans and if, in such cases, the descendants become members of different clans despite the existence of
patrilineal descent, they are described as belonging to the same Sairuk. For instance, Pakhangba, the Meitei king while taking asylum in Moirang, became the conjugal father of two sons, namely, Mungyang Chaoba and Tangkrup Lumyiba. Descendants of Mungyang Chaoba became the lineage Mungyangjam while that of Tangkrup Lumyiba became Loirenjam. Both lineages belong to the Khwang group of Moirang (Ariba) clan. But the other descendants of Pakhangba and his wife queen

Fig: 5.3 Diagram showing the Sairuk tinnaba relation between Ningthouja clan and a) Mungyangjam and b) Loirenjam lineages of Moirang clan

*The Romans made a distinction between ‘connubium’ which related to marriage considered as a civil institution, and ‘conjugium’ which was a mere physical union.
Laisna belong to the *Ninghouja* clan. Even though the two lineages belong to *Moirang* clan, their members are restricted to have the matrimonial relation with the members of *Ninghouja* clan. The two lineages and all the lineages of *Ninghouja* are taken interrelated in the pool of *Sairuk* or in other word, they are described belonging to *Sairuk tinnaba* group. Again these two lineages are known as the *Salai lotpa* (hiding clan) lineages.

An interesting point worth mentioning here is that the mother of Mungyang Chaoba and Tangkrup Lumyiba was not a legal wife of Pakhangba and so it was not polyandrous in nature. Mungyangchao was issueless. But his wife did not publicly remarry to Pakhangba. Thus, there was the provision of social pater for the children procured through a biological father. Again, children of social pater and biological father prohibit the incestuous relation.

There are four major agnatic pools concerning *Sairuk tinnaba*. These are given below:

1. *Moirang (Anouba)* section of *Moirang* clan (Kouba Anganga's agnate) and *Angom* clan have common *sairuk* relationship.

2. *Khman* clan and *Luwang* clan share common *sairuk*.

3. *Khaba Nganba* clan and *Chenglei* kin group have *sairuk tinnaba* relation.

4. *Moirang (Ariba)* section of *Moirang* clan (Ngangningsing's group) and *Nganba* section of *Khaba Nganba* clan share common *sairuk*.

In addition to the above four major *sairuk tinnaba* relationship, there are more cases of this relationship. Some of them are given below.
1. *Mungyangjam* and *Loirenjam* lineages of *Khwang* group of *Moirang (Ariba)* clans have the *Sairuk tinnaba* relation with *Ningthouja* clan.

2. The kin groups, namely, *Sarang Leisangthem, Khaba Nganba, Haorok Konthou* and *Moirang (Ariba)* have common *Sairuk* relationship.

3. The kin groups like *Angom, Ningol Laiton (Ningombam and Laitonjam)* and *Moirang Anouba* (Kouba Anganga’s agnate) share common *Sairuk*.

4. *Khaba* section of *Khaba Nganba* clan and some lineages of *Angom* clan such as (1) *Achom Yumlembam* (ii) *Hidam* (iii) *Longmaithem* and (iv) *Tellongbasangbam* have *sairuk tinnaba* relation. The members of the latter four lineages are descendants of Khaba Manao Hunba of Khaba Nganba clan who already entered and merged into *Angom* clan.

5. *Naorem* lineage of *Mangang/ Ningthouja* clan and *Chenglei/ Sarang Leisangthem* clan have the *sairuk tinnaba* relation. Formerly *Naorem* lineage belonged to *Chenglei* clan. But king Naethingkhong (663-763 A.D) had adopted one of its lineal members as his son. Afterwards, *Naorem* lineage became a member lineage of *Ningthouja* clan. Then, the relation between *Naorem* lineage and lineages of *Chenglei Sarang Leisangthem* clan had changed to *sairuk tinnaba* relationship.

B. Kulachandra (1998) mentions that *Sairuk tinnaba* is divided into two types as i) *Sairuk achouba* (big) and ii) *Sairuk macha* (small). He considers the above four relations of *Sairuk tinnaba* as *sairuk achouba* type. It is the blood relation through father. *Sairuk macha* is the relation through mother line which is also known as *pen tinnaba*. (This will again be discussed later.)
3. *Ngaknaba*:

Members of two or more kin groups avoid marital relationship because of certain promise made between ancestors of these kin groups not to intermarry among their descendants. It is interpreted as *Ngaknaba* meaning ‘keeping in word’. It may be because of saving each other’s life during war. For example, during the reign of king Pamheiba (1704-48 A.D) one called Cheksha of *Thangjam* lineage saved one man of *Hijam* lineage and another man of *Salam* lineage from the hands of enemy in a war fought against the Takheis. Then the man of *Hijam* being pleased gave his mother to Cheksha. But Cheksha did not accept the offer. Instead, members of *Hijam* and *Salam*, both of which belonged to *Luwang* clan, promised to keep the *Ngaknaba* taboo with *Thangjam*. Again, it may be the remembrance of an event involving the kin groups. For instance, there is the *Ngaknaba* relationship between *Phurailatpam* and *Gurumayum* which are both lineages of the Bamons. These are of different gotras; the former lineage belongs to *Kasyap* gotra whereas the latter belongs to *Sandila* gotra. It is said that when the ancestor of Gurumayum lineage came to Manipur for the first time the persons of Phurailatpam offered their lodging facility. Keeping the fraternal attitude for this event the two lineages established the *ngaknaba* relation. There are many other cases of *ngaknaba* some of which are given below.


*Ngaknaba*: The forefathers of the four lineages were caretakers of *Luwang* chief Punsiba’s son.

2. *Angom* & *Nakpakhayum* lineages

*Ngaknaba*: The other lineage was assimilated to *Angom*.
3. Lairellakpam lineage of Moirang
(Menjor's descent group) clan &
Angom clan

Ngaknaba: the former kin group
had hinged to Angom.

4. i. Khuyonthem, ii. Mungkhom,
iii. Kiyam iv. Sangambam
v. Pundingjam vi. Sangdonjam
lineages and Angom clan

Ngaknaba

5. Haobam lineage of Khuman clan
(which belongs to Ahallupakpa Senapati's
Phunga-closest kins within the lineage) &
Thongam lineage whose forefathers
were westerners merged to Angom
clan (Nongthonba's Phunga)

Ngaknaba—During a war against the
Takhet, a man of Thongam saved the life
of a man of Haobam. As reward, he gave
his mother but the man of Thongam did
not accept.

4. Pen tinnaba:

Pen means grandmother. So it is the flocking together of individuals to a
common grandmother or in other word, relation tracing through uterine line. There is
another word—Leimung Pen tinnaba. Leimung means 'underground' or 'underrnath'.
Thus, it means the underneath common maternal relationship. Individuals belonging
to different lineages and clans who are related through the character of Leimung Pen
tinnaba have to observe marital restriction among them. An illustrative genealogical
chart of Leimung Pen tinnaba is given here depicting the relationship between the two
groups of *Khaba Nganba* clan (Fig: 5.4). It is given according to the information supplied by Pundit Atombapu Bidyaratna. Some scholars viewed that the relationship considering *Pen tinnaba* was in the past regarded more important than the *Yek* exogamy. But at present *Yek* exogamy is the most important rule regarding the alliance relation among the social groups of the Meitei. The underneath uterine pools of *Leimung Pen tinnaba* and their primeval ancestresses are given below.

There exist the *Leimung Pen tinnaba* relations between/among:

1. lineage members of *Angom* (Khoidom's descent) clan i.e., *i. Kaswam ii. Akoijam iii. Ningombam iv. Laitonjam v. Huirem* and

   lineage members of *Luwang* (Mandom's descent) clan i.e., *i. Khoknam ii. Sambanduram iii. Khoibam.*

   (*Khoidom* is the son of Angom Pureiroma while Mandom is the adopted son of Luwang Punsiba, the biological father being Koubru. But they are sons of same mother – *Liklapicha*).
2. lineage members of the Sarang Leisangthem clan like i. Thangjam
    ii. Tongbram iii. Saraisam iv. Loitam v. Tourangbam vi. Thunganbam
    xx. Chanam xxi. Elangbam x xii. Chingakham x xiii. Sarokhaibam
    xxiv. Maiba Thiyam xxv. Samnom

    lineage members of i. Konhoujam ii. Haorokpam iii. Thangjam Yupanbam
    and

    lineage members of Moirang Aribam Khwang sub clan like i. Haorongbam
    ii. Konjengbam iii. Laikhujam iv. Akuram v. Lisam

    (Ancestress – Huimu Leima)

3. lineage members of Khaba Nganba clan like i. Nongjengbam ii. Khuraijam
    and iii. Khumujam

    (Ancestress – Leichik Nganbi)

4. lineage members of Luwang clan like i. Hijam ii. Salam and

    lineage members of Khuman clan, namely, i. Oinam ii. Maimom
    iii. Langheibam iv. Moicheim v. Laishram

    (Ancestress – Nganu)

(Ancestress – Leinung Yuchakha)

6. lineage members of Khuman clan like i. Akham ii. Ayam


(Ancestress – Chinphurol Leichik)

Fig: 5.5 Pen tinnaba
While discussing about *Pen tinnaba*, we can also see the term *Pi tinnaba*. *Pen* means grandmother whereas *Pi* means mother. Both rules try to cover the cognatic descendants of uterine relationships. The Meitei have patrilocal residence. Not only through a common ancestress, but through the female siblings, the rules of *Pen* and *Pi tinnaba* indicate differential generations of prohibition. Referring the alliance union, all the kins related through *Pi tinnaba* are prohibited at least up to two generations.

![Diagram](image)

*Pen tinnaba* through the Siblingship of mother

A marriageable kin in the Patrilineal Meitei Society.

**Fig: 5.6 Marriage rule in relation to *Pen tinnaba***

In *puyas*, many cases of *Pi/Pen tinnaba* are reported. Some of these cases are given below as according to the said source.

**Kin groups**

1. Leisangkhong group of *Ngangom* lineage of *Moirang (Anouba)* clan and *Huidrom* lineage of *Ningthouja* clan

2. *Atom* lineage of *Mangang* clan 
   the group of *Maikam* lineage who merged to *Khuman* clan

**Relationship**

*Pi tinnaba*
3. Paonam of Mangang and Thangcham Khagokpam of Laingamtaba

4. Yenkokpam lineage of Takyelmapantaba of Mangang clan & Wangpam lineage of Nganba sub clan

5. Leimapokpam of Mangang clan & Sawombung Oinam group of Khuman clan

6. Haokhom & Lamlaitaba Salam (Angom nai) lineages

7. Charoipam lineage of Mangang clan & Moirnag Pukhrampam lineage of Moirang (Ariba) clan

8. Irom of Chingamakhataba of Mangang & Laishram of Loklaopungtaba of Khuman (Telloi Nongchup)

9. Yumnam Santhinpam lineage of Leisangkhongtaba of Ningthouja clan & Moirangthem lineage of Samuloutapa of Moirang (Ariaba) clan
10. Satpam /Siylpatam lineage of Khuman clan & Ningthoukhongjam Lamchamayum lineage of Moirnag (Ariba) clan

11. Langkoncham lineage of Nganba sub clan & Charoipam lineage of Ningthouja (from Charoi Hao) clan

12. Amakham lineage of Khuman (Ariba) clan and Tensubam lineage of Ningthouja clan

13. Huidrom Uyatapam lineage which was merged to Ningthouja clan (from tribe –Hao) & Langkoncham lineage of Nganba sub clan

14. Haobam lineage of Khuman clan & Wangkhem lineage of Angom (Ariba) clan

15. Mungkhom lineage of Angom (Ariba) clan & Leisangthem lineage of Lakoktaba of Chenglei clan

Pi tinnaba

Pi tinnaba

Pi tinnaba: Amakham is bow maker and bird watcher. Tensubam means maker of bow and arrow.

Pi/Ee tinnba

Pi/Ee tinnba

Pi tinnaba
16. Akham lineage of Khuman clan & Arupam lineage of Luwang clan

17. Salam lineage of Luwang clan & Langpoklakpam lineage of Ningthouja clan

18. Thoukaocham (Thounaojam) lineage of Luwang clan & Maibam lineage of Khuman (Ariba) clan

19. Huidrom lineage of Leisangkhongtaba of Ningthouja clan & Phammihanpam lineage of Luwang clan

20. Salam lineage of Salam makhong of Luwang clan & Yumnam Moibunglakpam lineage of Ningthouja clan

21. Leimapokpam lineage of Ningthouja clan & Hijam lineage of Luwang clan

22. Huidrom lineage of Leisangkhong of Ninghouja clan & Ngangom lineage of Moirnag (Anouba) clan
23. Saram lineage of Thangmeipal of Luwang (descent line from Khemasing) clan & Keisam lineage of Nambultaba of Ningthouja (descent line of Manik, an artisan) clan

24. Wangkheirakpam Ahan lineage of Ningthouja clan & Hawaipam lineage of Moirangkhom of Khuman clan.

25. Paonam Yimlel lineage of Ningthouja clan & Kshetri Sanchilamayum migrated from the west (Nongchup Haram)

26. Haobam lineage of Khuman (Ahallupakpa Senapati’s Phunga) clan & Thangcham lineage which was attached to Angom clan (Nongchup Haram Cheksa Nongthonpa’s Phunga)

27. The group of Waikhom lineage of Thoubaltaba of Ningthouja clan which was formed by westerners- Nongchup Haram & Waikhom lineage which was also attached to Luwang clan
28. *Ngangom* lineage of Yairipoktapa of *Luwang* clan & the group of *Yensembam* lineage which was formed by westerners of *Ningthouja* clan

29. The group of *Hijam* lineage of Yairipoktaba which was formed by *NongchupHaram* of *Luwang* clan & *Sanaham* lineage of *Ningthouja* (Gouri's *phunga*) clan

30. *Laishram* lineage of Uchekon of *Khuman* clan (descent group of Phatrasing) & *Kshetri* lineage (Khanachaopam) of Angtha of *NongchupHaram* (descent group of Manik Khompa)


32. *Ngangom* lineage of *Luwang* (Chingsampa's *Phunga*) clan & *Kabo Kengoimayum* lineage from *Kabo*
33. The group of *Keisam* lineage of Yairipok which was and formed by *Nongchup Haram* of *Ningthouja* clan & the group of *Phoukeisangpam* lineage which was also formed by westerners attached to *Moirang (Anouba)* clan

34. *Waikhom* lineage of *Thoubaltaba* of *Ningthouja* clan formed by the men from *Nongchup* & forming the attached group of *Salchenbam* lineage (*NongchupHaram*) of *Khuman* clan

35. *Sanasam* lineage attached to *Ningthouja* clan which was formed by the men from *Nongchup* & the *Nongchup* people forming *Oinam* lineage of *Khuman* clan

36. *Ngeirangpam* of *Ningthouja* clan formed by the men of *Nongchup* & *Khullem* lineage of *Haorangtaba* of *Khuman* clan formed by the men of *Nongchup*
37. Yenkhom lineage of Ningthouja \( \text{Pi tinnaba} \)
(Tamu Supitra’s descent group) clan &
\( \text{Hajari Samjetsabam & Kabo Konthoucham} \)
lineages of Chenglei (Mitong
\( \text{Laiphamlakpa’s descent group} \) clan

5. Pu tinnaba

In the patrilineal Meitei society, there is also a rule known as \( \text{Pu tinnaba} \). \( \text{Pu} \) = grandfather) It also indicates a differential generation of prohibition. Some cases as recorded in \( \text{puyas} \) are given here.

1. Chenglei, Loktombam, Konthoujam kin groups have \( \text{Pu tinnaba} \) relationship.
2. Yumnam Santhilpam lineage of Ningthouja clan & Phammihanbam of Luwang clan have \( \text{Pu/Ee tinnaba} \) relationship.
6. Khayonthem lineage of Angom (Ariba) clan & Thokchom of Moirang (Anouba) clan are related through \( \text{Pu tinnaba} \) link.
8. i. Hijam and ii. Salam lineages of Luwang (Langmai) clan & (most lineages of ) Khuman clan have \( \text{Pu tinnaba} \) relationship.

6. Mungnaba (forbidden):

\( \text{Mungnaba} \) in relation to marriage can be classified according to the basal factors as blood relation(\( \text{Ee-mungnaba}\)), food, kin term, costume, etc.(\( \text{Shaijama} \ldots \). 1998:100). Of these, \( \text{Ee-mungnaba} \) is considered to be the most important sofar as descendants of distant generation are concerned. Descendants of sisters of the same
Fig: 5.7 Genealogical Chart Showing Ee-mungnaba.

parent up to five generations from the sisters are called Ee-mungnaba. Again, descendants of women of the same grand parent are considered to be Ee-mungnaba up to three generations from them.

7. Ee-omnaba (under carrying of blood):

When Sairuk macha or Pen tinnaba is out of the forbidden line of marriage i.e. mungnaba, the cognates are drifted towards a prohibitive relationship known as Ee-omnaba. Particular lineages still remember the past link and observe the taboo to marry. For example, Arubam and Akham have the relation of Pen tinnaba. Arubam belongs to Luwang clan while Akham belongs to Khuman clan. But they do not inter marry keeping their past prohibited relation intact.
8. Hindu marriage rule in the Meitei

A very important manuscript about the rule of marriage in the post Hinduism is *Sambandh Nirnay* written in 1790. In it, the marriage rules are shown by way of illustrations using an ego. But instances were given specially from the individuals of the Bamons.

It was initiated by stating the relationship of *Pitribandhu*. *Pitribandhu* are i. Father's father’s sister’s son, 2. Father’s mother’s sister’s son and 3. Father’s mother’s brother’s son (Fig: 5.8).

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Fig: 5.8 Illustration of *Pitribandhu* (P = *Pitribandhu*)
The rules regarding each *pritibandhu* are reproduced below:

i. Counting from the *Pritibandhu* who is father's father's sister's son, there is the marital restriction up to three generations. The fourth generation is free from this restriction. (Fig: 5.9, I)

Reference:

G = generation, ___ marriageable line, P = *Pritibandhu*, ▲ = Ego, Italicised = *Gotra*

Fig: 5.9 Marriagable rule in relation to P₆
ii. There is the restriction up to second generation to be related affinally with the sisters of Pitribandhu. It is loosen from the third generation excluding her generation. (Fig: 5.9, II)

iii. Pitribandhu's stepmother's daughter is marriageable. (Fig: 5.9, III)

![Family Tree Diagram]

**Fig: 5.10 Marriage rule in relation to P₁ and P₃.**

iv. Generation is counted upward from that of Pitribandhu who is father's mother's brother's son. Upto the third generation marriage is prohibited. (Fig: 5.10, IV)
v. There is the marital restriction up to the second generation for the cognate of this Pitribandhu’s sister. (Fig: 5.10, V)

vi. Regarding the Pitribandhu – father’s mother’s sister’s son, there is the prohibition rule up to the third generation (including the Pitribandhu) (Fig: 5.11, VI)

vii. The prohibition rule is applicable up to two generations excluding the generation of the sister of the Pitribandhu. (Fig: 5.11, VII)

Fig: 5.11 Marriage rules of Father’s mother’s sister’s son.
viii. The daughter of the Pitribandhu's step mother is not considered within the prohibited circle. (Fig: 5.11, VIII)

ix. A man can not marry a woman having the same name or number of Pravara. Pravara indicates the gurus of ancestor-Gotra. But, he can marry her daughter.

For example,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lineage</th>
<th>Gotra</th>
<th>Pravara</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Kanoujimayum</td>
<td>Bhardwaj</td>
<td>Tin(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kulimnayum</td>
<td>Sandilya</td>
<td>Tin(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Choudhurimayum</td>
<td>Kasap</td>
<td>Panch(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Guruaribam mayum</td>
<td>Kasap</td>
<td>Tin(3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, 1, 2 and 4 are not marriageable.

3 and 4 are not marriageable.

1 or 2 with 3 are marriageable.

According to Karandikar, the association of Pravara with Gotra is found only in the Dharmasastras and not in the Manusamhita. Pravara indicates a school of ritual or learning to which a person belonged. The Kshetriyas and the Vaisyas had no Pravara and they had to borrow the Pravaras of their Brahmmin teachers to perform the rites, because 'gods do not accept the offerings of those who have no descent from a rsi.' Thus, the Brahmin utilized the Pravara organisation and consequently linked it with the Gotra organisation (Kapadia 1955: 129).
It is also required to know about Sapinda and Gotra. It is the rule that one should marry a woman who is an Asapinda i.e. the one who is not a Sapinda. They are Sapinda whose Pinda, bodily corpuscles are Samana, one. Manu (9: 186-187) marks the Sapinda relationship in terms of offerings to the ancestors; ‘to three (ancestors) water must be offered; the Pinda circulates among the three, the fourth is the giver of these (offerings); the fifth has no connection’. In other sense, it contributes to prohibition of marriage within a certain degree of propinquity.

Gautama, a Sutra -writer allowed marriage in the eight generation from the father’s side and sixth generation from the mother’s. He declared that one marrying a Sapinda relation of the father and the mother becomes an outcaste. Sapinda is regarded as an Aryan entity by Trautmann (1995).

The ancient rule of Sapinda (sharing a common body), according to Vasistha, permits marriage to take in seven degrees from the father and five degrees from the mother and it is quoted by all castes from the highest to the lowest when asked about marriage practices of northern India. In almost all castes in the northern Zone the marriage of cousins (removed even by two or three degrees) is viewed with great disfavour though a few cases occur as exceptions. A person (1) must not marry in his patri-family which can be called the patri clan in some cases and (2) must avoid marriage with the children of his mother’s siblings and cousins and (3) with the children of his father’s sisters and the children of his fathers female cousins. The rule is the same as the one which was in vogue in northern India. A passage in the Rgveda contemplates marriage with the mother’s brother’s daughter or the father’s sister’s daughter (Kapadia 1955:124). The cross cousin marriage is prohibited in Meitei society and it may perhaps be because of the superimposition of Hindu doctrine. A more detail discussion regarding this topic is carried on in another chapter.
Avoidance of marriage into (1) his father's i.e. his own Gotra (2) his mother's Gotra (3) his Dadi's i.e. father's mother's Gotra and (4) Nani's i.e. his mother's mother's Gotra which is known as 'four Gotra' rule and which is resembling Australian eight class system is in vogue in northern Zone.

Gotra system of marriage exists among the Meitei under the influence of Hinduism of Bengal and Bengal practises following the above mentioned northern zone type of marriage rule.

In the Sambandh Niranay, marriage rule regarding the Matribandhu is mentioned. The above mentioned rule concerning Pitribandhu is described as the rule that was minimised from seven degree to 3 degree. It was according to the compromising condition set out by the then king Karta. Matrisapinda was also relaxed reducing the prohibition from five generation to four generation system.

![Family Tree Diagram](image)

Fig: 5.12 Illustration showing Matribandhu
Matribandhu is delineated by the relations—(1) mother's mother's sister's son (2) mother's mother's brother's son and (3) mother's father's sister's son (Fig: 5.12).

x. Prohibition of marriage is extended upto three generations including the Matribandhu identified as mother's father's sister's son. Prohibition to marry disappears in the fourth generation. (Fig: 5.13, X)

![Family Tree Diagram](image)

Fig: 5.13 Marriage Rule in relation to Matribandhu –MFZS

xi. Union of two individuals is not allowed for three generations in reckoning five generations of the Matribandhu who is mother's mother's brother's son. The fourth generation down from the Matribandhu is marriageable. (Fig: 5.14)
Fig: 5.14 Marriage Rule in relation to *Matribandhu* – MMBS

xii. The daughter of the *Matribandhu*’s stepmother is a marriageable mate (Fig: 5.15).

xiii. For the descent of mother’s father above five degree but up to nine degree, marriage is prohibited to their descendant daughters and it is allowed to daughter’s daughter. (Fig: 5.16, XIII)

xiv. Upto five upward generations, the same rule applied to *Matribandhu* is followed. So upto third degree, marriage is prohibited. (Fig: 5.16, XIV)

xv. Women having the same name with that of mother is not marriageable. If she has been already engaged, her name is to be changed by a Brahman after taking the consent of her parents.
Fig: 5.15 Marriageability tie with *Matribandhu*’s step mother’s daughter.

Fig: 5.16 Marriage rule regarding MF descent line.
xvi. Step mother's brother's daughter is restricted to marry. But her daughter is out of the prohibitory bound. (Fig: 5.17)

![Fig: 5.17 Step mother's brother's daughter's status for affinal tie.](image)

xvii. Father's sister's step daughter is not a too close relative to avoid marriage. (Fig: 5.18)

![Fig: 5.18 Marital rule regarding father's sister's daughter](image)

xviii. The prohibition of marriage becomes free for the relationship that exceeds three Gotra separations. (Fig: 5.19)

xix. Marriage is not allowed to the woman who has been a choice of a king or guru or father or elder brother or younger brother or married one.
xx. Guru's daughter is avoided to be married whereas his sister or grand
daughter is granted to be married.

\[\text{Fig: 5.19 Marriage & \textit{Gotra} separation rule}\]

xxi. Lastly, in the old manuscript, \textit{Sambandh Nirnay}, it is also mentioned that
even though a woman's daughter separated by more than seven generations,
the social defilement is observed and shared by both families. Then, the ego is
not allowed to marry her.

Among the Meitei Pangal, lineage exogamy prevails just as found in other
areas of the core Meitei and periphery-Meitei.

\textbf{Forms of Marriage:}

Monogamy is the most favoured form of marriage. Polygyny is also prevalent
among the Meitei society but polyandry is absent. King Bhagyachandra had 94 wives,
Marjit had 50 wives; king Devendro in a short reign of three months, managed to amass ninety six wives, etc. The wives of king are also given separate titles; the first is known as Maharani, the second as Apanbi Ahal (Apanbi =ruler, Ahal = elder), the third as Apanbi Naha, the fourth as Leimakhubi (Leima =goddess/wife, Khubi =young) and subsequent wives are known as Ningthem Matu (the king’s wives). In polygamous households the husband’s attention to the several wives is strictly regulated according to precedence, the eldest getting twice the nominal share of the wife next to her (Hodson 1908: 77). But in actual practice, the rules were often broken. At present, such a rule is not strictly followed.

Remarriage:

Second marriage is very rare among the Meitei commoners. Rarely, a remarried is required to undergo a second ritualistic marriage performance. Once married, a woman is not allowed to be ceremonially and ritualistically married though she can be the socially recognized wife of a person. Second marriage is conducted only through a simple civil contract. Regarding secondary marriage, dialectical observation shows instances of levirate. In the old manuscript as Panthoibi Khongul it was written that if the widow could not return Mangkat (gift given by man to the wife to be’s family; it is price of bride so that she may merge to the grave yard of the husband’s lineage) she was owned by the deceased husband’s younger brother. At present, scarce evidence of younger levirate is reported from Andro village. Though it is not a deviated form of marriage among the Muslim world, it is not appreciated by the Meitei Pangals (Muslims). In the present study at Bengun, Mayang Imphal, the Manipuri Muslims feel perplexed despite discerned existence of the norm in the Muslim universe. There was only one case here and it was disclosed very shamefully.
Senior levirate does not exist among the Meitei. But there is terminological support of its existence. During the reign of king Chandrakriti, its was a punishable conduct and a Pangal for practising senior levirate, was sentenced to prison. The woman was shamefully treated at markets (Royal Chronicle, 376p). One person of Wangkheimayum lineage for taking elder brother’s wife was sent to Sagonmang along with the woman. (of cit. p. 389).

Some say about the social distinction of a widow from others in terms of her attire. A lower garment having a motif known as Hijam mayek is meant for widow. But this pattern is again described by some as the designatory of Luwang clan (Bahadur, 1973:p.8) Hindu widows apply black Chandan on their face and also, they wear a saffron coloured cloth known as Pungou phanek.

The society permits both simultaneous and restricted forms of sororate.

Ways of acquiring mate

Engagement:

It is the ideal form of marriage. The procedure of marriage through engagement involves spatial differentiation even within Manipur. Besides, it also possesses time consuming stages. But after Waroipot Puba (Waroi = completion of engagement, Pot= good/gift Puba= giving /transporting) and Heijingpot (final engagement by throwing fruit-serving party), the bride is partially belonged to the groom. If she elopes away with another man after this stage, their parents have to compensate for all the goods brought from the prospective groom’s side. Regarding
geographical differentiation, ritual proceedings and costumes adorn by the bride are varied.

At Thanga, an island village in the Loktak lake, if a girl child is engaged or arranged for a male child by their respective parents to be married when they attain adulthood, a bamboo pole is erected in the court yard of the girl as a sign of indicating her ‘being engaged’ status.

Two different types of engagement are found prevailing in the Meitei society. In the first type, a series of engagement is conducted. Finally, on an auspicious day, ritualistic Luhongnba is performed and the bride is brought at the residence of the groom. After five days later, a feast is given by the bride’s parents.

The second type of engagement is followed at Kwatha, the sole Meitei village in the hilly region of Manipur. It is known as Haijaba /Nijaba. It is also known as Khoidou Kaba. (At Fayeng, the eldest daughter’s husband is known as Khoidou.) After the completion of seeking the hands of the girl for three times, on an auspicious day, the groom is brought to the bride’s residence along with his cloths and sweets plus wine. With a ritualistic ceremony, he is left to stay at the bride’s house. He has to remain for four years serving at the house of his father-in-law. After this period, his parents come back to take their son and his wife. This function is known as Yumthokpa. Led by a healthy, charming young mother who is neither a divorcee nor a widow, the husband’s party brings ceremonial goods including sweets, fruits, wine, flower, and pig to the house of the girl. The pig is carried particularly by a man who marries a woman from the lineage of the groom/husband. ‘Let the cloth be exchanged with flower, let the sieve be changed with dish’- it is the word murmured by the coming party. After the function, the couple resides permanently following virilocal norm. When the wife is brought, she is accompanied with bed, almirah, utensil,
cooking pots, talisman, cloth, dog, etc., as her dowry. After three days of *Yumthokpa*, the wife’s parents hold a feast. Thus, in a word, Kwatha’s rule of residence can be considered as matri-patrilocal.

**Capture:**

It is a one time prevalent mode of marriage. At present, it is evident nowhere. When a woman is deflowered of her virginity, she faces a social look-down. To avoid the social look-down, the victim sometimes surrenders to the captor.

**Elopement:**

It is the consequence of mutual romantic love between a boy and a girl. At many places, elopement is not accepted for ritualistic and ceremonial marriage. At Andro, the boy’s family takes her as the in-law on the same night she has left her natal home. The information of her presence to their’s is delivered to the parents on the same night. At some other places, marriage is held on the very night of her coming to her groom’s place as a sign of elopement.

In the present day Meitei society through the strokes of traditional as well as Hindu marriage, the rule is complicated. Hindu rules of marriage superimpose upon traditional practices for a long period and afterwards, since 1930s Meitei revivalism has been started. Again, complexity of modern world also affects in loosening the norms. Elopement becomes realistic dominance over the idealistic engagement as the former is more favoured by youths. Besides, it is the social organisational solution in the social structure as described by Raymond Firth. A couple, at present can get the wedlock facility if they elope together thereby setting aside even the clan exogamy rule. The Hindu–Meitei society has caste–tier regarding marital aspect. This is softening by elopement in the modern day. Again, inter community marriage is
restricted. But if one elopes beyond the community bound, a pseudo-kinship relation is established for the alien-girl and marital bond is tied for them only. In other word, the union that is against the social code is to some degree excused through elopement.

For the present scene, to observe types of marriage, data on 974 marriage cases are given in tabular form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.1</th>
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<td>Type of Marriage</td>
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<td>Type of marriage</td>
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<td>Engagement</td>
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<td>Elopement</td>
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<td>Capture</td>
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The table reveals that majority of the marriages found at present is elopement which is followed by engagement. Only 4 cases of capture are found.

Social adjudication for deviated mating:

During the erstwhile rule of kings, there were severe punishments for deviating norms of marriage. The punishment norm was first initiated during the reign of king Khagemba (1597-1652 A.D.). Exiling at Haojongpan was started by king Chandrakriti (1850-1886 A.D). Social ostracism and exiling at places called Sugnu, Thanga, etc., were also punishments for the culprits who breach marital norm.
The British abolished these rules (Bahadur 1973). Punishments for deviated mating and some such instances in the historic period are given below.

One who kept incestuous relation to the kin related as sister or mother was degraded to the group Yaithibi. At one time the Yaithibi wore blue cloths so that they could be distinguished and detected from a distant place. They were regarded as outcaste. At present, excommunication from the family or lineage as well as locality lingers as punishment for the offence in marital matter. In May, 1999, one Priyobarta cohabited with FZD Naobi. For this, they were socially boycotted by some local associations, namely, -1) Takyel Khongban Mahila Mandal and 2) Takyel Khongban Pungsungbam Leikai Women’s Welfare Association.

For taking mate within the same clan (Yek), the wrong doer was exiled at a place known as Haojongpan.

For, adultery a man was sentenced to prison (Royal Chronicle p. 377) or imposed fine (op cit. p. 373).

Levirate was prohibited. For cohabiting with younger brother’s wife, one Thokchao Chirai was exiled to Haojongpan during the reign of king Chandrakriti. It is quoted from Royal Chronicle.

For taking wife from Kameng, four persons were not allowed to return their homes and sent to Kameng to live.

In 1870, a man of Laishram lineage for taking his niece of Thongam lineage was exiled to Haojongpan.

For sexual offence with a Pangal woman, Yelangbam Maibi was forced to merge to the Pangal society.
For aberrant mating to kin related as aunt and mother, the culprit was exiled to Pallel and Langathel.

But one interesting case of marriage is seen in the genealogy of Khaba –Nganba clan. One Haoba, son of Nganba Sirai kangcha (father) and Loklou Khamellakpa Chanu (mother) had two wives who were related as aunt (FZ) and niece (BD)

\[ \text{Nganba} \quad \text{Siraikangcha} \quad \text{Loklou Khamellakpa Chanu} \]

\[ \text{Haoba} \quad \text{Langmai Ningthou Chanu Manem} \]

\[ \text{Puyam Chanu} \quad \text{Tona Khaideim} \]

6. – Tekcha Ahanba
7. – Yumlembam Chanu
8. – Thongai Yumtangba
9. – Langmai Ningthou Chanu
10- Yumlembam Chanu
11.- Thinbam
12 – Wangba Atonba
13 – Huimureima

**Fig: 5.20 G.T. Showing polygamy: Wives related as aunt and niece.**

One who marries girl belonging to Bamon was to be driven out to a place called Sambal.
For a marriage between a Brahmin man and a Meitei woman, his son can not cook for the Maharaja or men of high rank. But he may be a Purohit of common people.

For a marriage between a Brahmin man and a Loi woman, his son is not respected as such in Brahmin or the Meitei society. He can not be a Purohit.

For a marriage between a Meitei man and a Brahmin woman, in past, the Meitei was banished to Haochongpal to become a Loi. It was like marrying his mother. At present, the woman is excommunicated by her parents.

For a marriage between a Meitei man and a Loi woman, he had to become a member of Loi people.

For a marriage between a Loi man and a Meitei woman, she becomes Loi; the man's position is not affected, for the better or for the worse.

If a commoner marries a Rajkumari, his social position becomes higher.

Men who marry widows or women who have been divorced are not turned out of society, but they lost status. They can not be Piba of a Sagei. They can not serve or touch the Maharaja. They can not cook in the public feast held at royal office or residential areas. The same [rule] applies even to men who marries a widow or divorced Rajkumari, even though she is the daughter of the ruling Maharaja. A Rajkumar who marries a widow or divorcee can not rightly succeed to the Gadi though he may do so by force. (Higgins 1998: 87-88. taking source from Pandit Achouba)
Dissolution of Marriage:

Marital tie is dissolved by divorce. Divorce can be initiated by either of the couple. At Kwatha if the divorce seeker is the husband, he has to pay not only a heavy fine, he may also get brutal whip. At the time of divorce, the wife goes back to her parental home along with her dowry. If the divorce is sought by the wife, it would not be a too much serious problem. In front of the villagers including Khullakpa and village elders she would announce that she has no objection when her ex-husband marries another woman. As the villagers approve their divorce she would leave his house for her family of origin.