CHAPTER II

THE MEITEI KIN GROUPS

The present Meitei society follows the single line of patrilineal descent. Affiliation of a person to a group of kin through descent link is clearly defined for not to occur overlapping of membership. A Meitei individual is assigned, by virtue of birth, membership in a specific descent group traced through the father’s line. As found in other patrilineal societies the Meitei males are far more important than the females, for they are considered to be indispensable ones for the perpetuation of the group. Again, by virtue of this mode of descent some very close relatives are excluded in the Meitei system. For example, mother and father’s parents do not belong to one’s patrilineal group, but father, father’s father and their sisters do. In one’s own generation some cousins are excluded and in children’s generation some nieces and nephews are excluded although they are not necessarily ignored. In the Meitei patrilineal descent system, a member of a particular descent group tries to trace descent through other males from a common ancestor. Brothers and sisters belong to the descent group of their father’s father, their father, their father’s siblings and their father’s brother’s children. A man’s son and daughter also trace their descent back through the male line of their common ancestor. A woman belongs to the same descent group of her father and brothers, but her children can not trace their descent in the same line with them but through her husband’s descent group. Such kin groups with restricted membership, are usually more then just groups of relatives providing warmth and a sense of belonging.

A clan (locally expressed as yek) is the largest kin group of the Meitei. A yek is composed of several sages (lineages). A lineage is again a cluster of families (locally called imungs); but familys are not truly descent groups.
Regarding the periphery Meiteis, though the Loi and Yaithibi follow the same pattern of descent groups as found among the core Meitei, there are varied patterns among the rest. Among the Bamons, who are the Hindu Brahmins, the largest social group is gotra under which there are lineages called sagei. Again, the yek of the core Meitei are adjusted to the gotras of the Bamons (see also Chapter V.). The Pangal are the Muslims within the Meitei fold. Among them, lineage is the largest kin group. The Pangal scholars try to trace their lineages to social group such as Sheikh, Sayyid, Pathan and Mughal. But these social groups are not known by one and all. In the present study, the Pangal expressed about the belongingness to these social groups that they are the descendants of Meitei mothers and they only know about sagei as the sole social and kin group.

Clan:

a) Origin:

There are two schools about the origin of the seven clans (yeks) in the Meitei social system. One school of thought believe that all the clans or yeks were originated from a single personality. The other school of thought believe that the clans were originated from different ancestors.

According to the puya, Khagemba Yumlep, the form of the first human being was copied from the Supreme God called Kuru. From that bodily structure of human being thus formed, the ancestors of the seven clans sprang out. From the heart there emerged Nganba, from the tongue Sarang Leisangthem, from the head the ancestor of Luwang clan, from the right hand Khuman, from the neck Angom, from the eye Ningthouja and from the private part Moirang.

The latter school of thought has variant versions. According to Meihourol Sakok and Meihourol Yimbirel, two old manuscripts, from three gods viz. Mangang, Luwang and Khuman there sprang five motherless gods, namely (i) Tilyrel, (ii) Laiyrel, (iii) Khayirel, (iv) Litaorel and (v) Taoroinai. They had wives who were not given their father’s names. (i) Leikak Leiyarel Chanu gave to birth Leisanglen Asangba, (ii) Leitonglen Chanu gave birth to Leitonglen Atongba, (iii) Leiphuren Chanu bore Leitanglen Lintang Sangba,
(iv) Konphu Leipur Chanu bore Konsourel, (v) Laiyek Laikhot Chanu had two sons, Kuptreng and Sentreng. Six groups developed from these persons and later, into seven groups. From the seven groups there sprang the seven yeks, as follows - (i) Yimuraba’s group, became Khuman, (ii) Yingouraba’s group, Luwang, (iv) Memanba’s group, Angom, (v) Asangba’s group, Sarang Leisangthem, (vi) Arangba’s, Moirang, and (vii) Angangba’s, Ningthem-mayum.

According to the Puya-Leisemba Laigi Wa, Mangangs were descended from Atingkok, Luwang from Atiya and Khumans from Atinga. They were the first Meitei groups that developed, in course of time, into seven yeks. Salai Taret Poklakpa - puya also points to (1) Koubru, (2) Wangbrel and (3) Chingkhei as the progenitors of the Mangang, Luwang and Khuman for the first time.

According to another mythical version for the emergence of the clans, Guru Sidaba, the Supreme God, taking the form of a brown coloured dead cow, flowed down the river. It was associated with the intention to test His sons. On seeing the cow, Kuptreng thought it to be a rotten thing. But Sentreng thought further when he saw the wagging tail of the dead cow. Then they pulled it on the bank. Seven groups of people took shares of it and cremated. In consonance to the parts taken by the groups for cremation, they were named accordingly. These groups became seven yeks. Different parts of the carcass shared by each group is as follows:

1. Ningthouja - Sentreng took the beautiful eye. So, his yek was known as Ningthibam (Ningthiba = beautiful) and from it was derived the Ningthouja clan.
2. Angom - Kuptreng took the white (Angouba) neck and his group became Angom.
3. Luwang - Pammiringba took the brain (Lawai Lemphu)
4. Khuman - Leisangtao took the foreleg (Khumang).
5. Moirang - Konsouren took the stripe (Meiring Marangba) belly.
6. Khaba - Asangba took the lower part of the face (Chenglou Maithong)
7. Nganba - Tumanganba took the bright (Anganba) heart.

According to another myth, Lai Sidaba, the Supreme God, determining to test the wisdom of two royal brothers, Yoimongba and Taootingmang, flowed down the water
current of the Imphal river in the form of the brown coloured dead body of a cow. First, He halted for sometime at the fishing area of Yoimongba. Taking it for a rotten cow, Yoimongba made way to flow it down. But, it remained circulating in the current. After two-three times of effort, he was successful to make it flow down the stream. When the cow reached Taathingmang’s area, it remained standstill despite his effort to flow it down. He perceived it to be an extraordinary thing and pulled it on the bank. On that night, in the latter’s dream, Lord Sidaba disclosed His intention and advised to divide the carcass among the groups of his people and to cremate so as to bring their prosperity.

Accordingly, he summoned the six other group leaders to take their respective shares of the division of the divine carcass. The groups were given specific names according to the parts taken by each of them. Thus the group taking the beautiful eye and private part was called the Ningthouja. The Angom was so called for taking the white neck; the Luwang for taking thebrain portion, the Khuman for taking the foreleg; the Khaba for taking the lower part of face, the Ngaña for taking the bright heart and the Moirang for taking the striped belly.

Another mythological belief about the origin of the Meitei clans hinges around the personage of a divine-being who ruled as the first king of the Meitei state. He was called Nongda Lairel Pakhangba* who took the form of a divine-being during daytime but

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* There may be confusions about the identity of Pakhangba as we find four personalities under the name of Pakhangba. They are (1) Leinung Lonja Pakhangba who remained underneath the earth (Thanglon Thachet, old manuscript) (2) Tangja Lila Pakhangba whose seat was made of Mani - precious diamond (Pakhanga Phambal, old manuscript); (3) Lolang Pakhangba (or Sentreng Pakhangba) who was named as Lolang because he remained hidden, and (4) Nongda Lairel Pakhangba (or Javista) who believed to come from above (or from north). W. Ibohal (1986: 271-272) gives a collection of some eighteen cognomens of Pakhangba. They are (1) Nongta Tukuplik, (2) Nongtreng Apumba, (3) Leinung Lonja Ariba, (4) Laloyang Tanouba, (5) Nongpok Poklen, (6) Umtha Ningthou Yoiremba, (7) Chingwang Ningthou Atenga, (8) Laiyingthou Apanba, (9) Ching-u Langba Apanba, (10) Leinung Lonja Pakhangba, (11) Lai Pakhang Atenga, (12) Tangja Leela Pakhangba, (13) Lolang Pakhangba, (14) Tubi Yoı Nongta, (15) Nongta Lairen Pakhangba, (16) Ningthem, (17) Sana and (18) Javista.
used to get transformed into a human being during night time. He ventured resumptively in
snake form in day time. Nongda Lairel Pakhangba is described as the king during the
Kona chak** which is the last period of Meitei cosmogonical time scale. Thus, Nongda
Lairel Pakhangba was the king in the protohistoric period in Manipur. But, Nogda Lairel
Pakhangba was again mentioned as the Meitei king who succeeded the throne in 33 A.D
(Cheitharol Kumbaba, the royal chronicle). He ruled at Kangla, the palace of the Meitei
which is believed to be the place where the Yeks had emerged (Fig 2.1) and got later
dispersed from Kangla (Fig: 2.2). The deity-king who lived both in human and snake
forms was related to every clan as they have snake-like totemic structures (Fig: 2.3) and
the palace is still believed to be under the supervision of Taoroinai (Fig: 2.4), the steed of
Leinung Lonja Pakhangba. Besides, on the formal occasion of coronation - men töngba
a king has still the obligation of sitting the throne above the cave wherein Taoroinai is
believed to lie.

The process of gathering and organising the people into seven clans during the
reign of king Pakhangba is recorded in the form of a riddle in sacred books. It is expressed
as a phenomenon, related to the fishing expedition of Laisna, wife of Pakhangba along with
six other fairies with basketry implements in a pond called Nongjeng ngatanpham which
is believed to be situated at the Kangla-palace. According to Pakhangba Laihui (old
manuscript),

1) Leikak Leiyaren Chanu Laisna caught Pakhang Yoiren as Tayang Taethingmang
and it became Ningthem / Mangang

2) Laiyip/Ahumnu entraped Nonglum (egg) and it emerged as Tachirei
Yoimongpa.

3) Laphupi Areinu caught goat and it became Khuyon Leikhong (Leikhong =
capital).

** Here we can remember the time scale of Meitei in cosmogonical character. There are
two broad time scales- (1) Hangko and (2) Chak. Hangko is subdivided into (a) Ko
Hangko (b) Thoi Hangko (c) Tayo Hangko and (c) Poi Hangko where as Chak has subdivisions
as - (a) Hayi Chak, (b) Haya Chak, (c) Langba Chak and (d) Kona Chak.
Fig 2.1 Map of Kangla showing site of emergence for the seven clans
A. Enlarged portion of the same map
(Site of emergence - Enclosed by red coloured dotted line)
Original size: 35cm × 62.5cm
Courtesy: Mutua Museum, Imphal
Fig 2.2 Movement of the early Meitei settlers in the valley of Manipur
Fig 2.3 Totemic paphals for Meitei kin groups and Javista Pakhangba
(Courtesy: Pakhangba Yangbi, an old manuscript: 13th folio)
Fig 2.4 The horned serpent called Taoroinai: steed of Leinung Lonja Pakhangba and gardian of Meitei palace
(Courtesy: Paphal Lambuba, an old manuscript)
4) Mangwaipi Tonthangnu (*Mangwaipi* = one who knows past days) entrapped ox and *Khuman* was emerged.

5) Chitnu Sachipi caught deer and it bloomed as *Moirang*. *Khaba* was in danger.

6) Tungwaipi Tonthangnu (*Tungwaipi* = one who knows before hand caught buffalo and *Luwang* was separated.

7) Therepa Chanu Langkappi entrapped tiger and *Nganpa* was born. *Khapa* was saved from extinction.

After this Laisna could not remain at Kanglei (palace) and hid at a hilly area by changing her name as Thoinu Ahongpi. The *puya*, *Khagemba Yumbi* (old manuscript) gives the origin of the clans as follows.

1. Leikak Leiyaren Chanu was the Meitei queen *Leisna. Pakhangba Ningthem* was born.

2. Laiyipi was Ahumnu. *Nonglum* (egg) was brooded. *Angom* was generated.

3. Laphupi was Mareinu. Goat was entrapped. *Khuyenthem* was born.

4. Tonthangnu was the Mangwaipi. She caught elephant. *Khuman* was born.

5. Thoinu was the Tungwaipi. She caught buffalo and *Luwang* was born.

6. Langkappi was the girl of Theretongbam group. She entrapped tiger and *Nganpa* was born.

It is also mentioned in the same manuscript that after this occasion, *Pakhangba, Angom Khuyenthem, Khapa Nganba, Luwang, Sarang Leisangthem, Haorok Konthou, Manting Marang, Lera Khongnang, Thang 'nga Kampong, Lok'ku Lokhan, Heirem Khunchan, Lokkha Haokha* merged under seven clan systems.

In support of the second school of the origin of seven clans from different ancestors, there are some other *Puyas* mentioning about the existence of different peoples before the
emergence of Yeks. According to Khundarol (old manuscript), the different groups during Chak period were (1) Lok’khom, (2) Yuha Lok, (3) Loklen, (4) Lallem, (5) Loktu, (6) Khomtu, (7) Sibu Kang Chikpa, (8) Ngang Chengba and (9) Leitakpa, etc.

According to Thirel Layat, there were Sageis of (1) Tingseng of western origin, (2) Khoiseng that became Heirem Khunjjan, (3) Mantang that became Manting Mora, (4) Naosang that became Haokha Lokha, (5) Kurang that became Lera Khongnang, (6) Naoseng that became Tomson Pason, (7) Purang that became Kumbi Khongyang and (8) Tora that became Itham Monhou. Naoseng was distributed again in the hilly areas as (1) Ahao, (2) Ahaoreng, (3) Ahao ngama, (4) Songpu, (5) Thopsel, (6) Ngasel, (7) Pauksari, (8) Lamtang (9) Saram and (10) Maram.

Coming back to the organisation of clans during the reign of king Pakhangba, in addition to mythical story, some notable changes are mentioned in these sources. As for instance, Haorok Konthou was transformed to Chenglei. Heirem Khunjjan became part of Luwang. Kambongthi Wairaba’s group was distributed into Luwang, Tangkhul and Ningthem. Lok’kha Haokha became Ningombam, Laitonjam and Kaswam. But some part of Lok’kha Haokha entered into Ningthem during the king Yaraba. Urok Usa went to become hill people. Lera Khongnang was assimilated to Chakpa.

Historically in the earlier times also, there were fusions of the chiefdoms so as to bring a total change and the entire population became to be known under the community name “Meitei”. Formerly, there were not the system of chiefdoms. Instead there sprang out clans. The Ningthouja became the real head of the Meitei universe. (The focal places of the clans are given in Fig: 2.5.) While writing the origin of the Meitei, R.Brown (1873: 57), referring the most credible traditions, described the valley of Manipur to have been occupied by several tribes, the principal of which were Khuman, Luwang, Moirang and Meitei and all of them came from different directions. He also mentioned that at one time the Khuman appeared to have been the most powerful one after its declension of the Moirang tribe. But by degrees the Meitei subdued all of them and the name Meitei had become used for them all. Thus the Meitei state was viewed to be formed out of protohistoric fusion of seven cognate chiefdoms spread over the wet agricultural areas of the valley (Arambam 1986: 32). For the coherence of the Meitei kingdom and people, many scribes were also believed to employ by the Ningthouja. As the Ningthouja had the authoritative
Fig: 2.5 Map of the valley of Manipur: Seven clans and their focal places
power, the chiefdom was also believed to be systematized particularly from the reign of king Khagemba (1597-1652 A.D.) and onwards. The effect of this confederacy was the establishment of 7 Yeke (clan) throughout the whole Meitei people with a tinge of snake-cult, as Pakhangba was described to be a snake god. However, from some Puyas, it is known that during the reign of King Naopangba (428-518 A.D.) the yek names were distributed to his subjects. In the organisation of the clans, the seven days in a week were also related to the ancestors of the yeke. R.K. Sanahal (1997: 31) provides the correlation of the seven yeke with the days of a week as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Ancestor</th>
<th>Yeke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sunday</td>
<td>Kuptreng</td>
<td>Angom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Monday</td>
<td>Sentreng</td>
<td>Ningthouja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tuesday</td>
<td>Pammaringba</td>
<td>Luwang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Wednesday</td>
<td>Leisangtao</td>
<td>Khuman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Thursday</td>
<td>Konsouren</td>
<td>Moirang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Friday</td>
<td>Asangba</td>
<td>Khaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Saturday</td>
<td>Tumangba</td>
<td>Nganba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The seven yeke of the Meitei were formed out of the reduction of nine earlier communities, each of which was known as a salai. The scheme of the reduction are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yeke</th>
<th>Salai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mangang/Ningthouja</td>
<td>(i) Ningthouja,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Angom</td>
<td>(ii) Angom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sarang Leisangthem</td>
<td>(iii) Chenglei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/Chenglei</td>
<td>(iv) Haorok Konthou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Khaba Nganba</td>
<td>(v) Khaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(vi) Nganba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Luwang
6. Khuman
7. Moirang

(vii) Luwang
(viii) Khuman
(ix) Moirang

b) Inter- and intra-clan relations:

Relationship between Angom, Ningthouja and Luwang clans is shown in Fig: 2.6. Leikak Leiyairel Chanu was the ancestress of Angom and Ningthouja clans. Her descendants up to the generacion of Kuptreng and Sentreng are given in sacred texts. Khakpa Ningthou Chanu appeared to be the ancestress of Angom clan but the genealogical link from Kuptreng to Khakpa Ningthou Chanu is not mentioned in these sources. Likewise, the genealogy of Ningthouja clan from Sentreng to Leinung Yabirok can not be traced in these pujas. In the passage of time, the Ningthouja became a ruling group of the Meitei state. Since the period of king Charairongba (1697-1709 A.D.) the princes have separated from the rest of other lineages within the clan. They became to be known as Ningthemcha or Rajkumar. Again, the sons and daughters of a king are referred to as Maharajkumar. However, the children of the siblings of the king are addressed as Rajkumar. At present, there are nine lineages under the collective name, Ningthemchamayum (i.e., lineage of Ningthemcha). These are Keithelmapantaba mayum, Yaiskullaka mayum, Pachahanbam, Yubraijangsa/ Urungpurelmayum, Kartabansa, Lourungpurelmayum, Mantri mayum and Narsinghbangsa/ Senapati mayum.

Regarding the inter-clan relation between Angom and Luwang, it is stated that Liklabicha Nongtamnu was the mythical linking ancestress. She was the wife of Soraren Pureiromba, the Angom chief. Khoitom Phanteck was their son. Liklabicha had a secret relation with Koubru and subsequently, she gave birth to a son called Mantom, who was later adopted by Luwang Punsiba of Luwang clan and his barren wife Haosiyang (Pu) Yangpa Chanu. Khoitom Phanteck became successor of Angom chief whereas his half brother Mantom became descendant of Luwang clan and the descent group of the latter was also known as Lera Khongnang. Though they became members of different clans, there prevailed exogamous relations between their descendants under the social rule known as Leinung Pentinnaba (supra pp. 169-172).
Since the period of King Charairongba (1697-1709 A.D.) the lineages of princes were separated from the main trunk of Mangang. The lineages are Ningthemcha or Rajkumar including Yaiskulakpamayum, Pachahanbamayum, etc.

*kin groups are written here in italicised words.

Fig: 2.6 Relation among Angom, Ninhouja and Luwung
Fig: 2.7 Relation between Luwang & Khuman
Proper account of Moirang was started from the sons of LEINUNG YUCHAKHA CHANU NGANG SAPI.

NGANGHUNTHOK once went to KOUBRU tracing his ancestral site but returned Moirang later. So, his descendents are known as Moirang Anouba.

Fig: 2.8 Moirang Genealogy
Fig: 2.9 G.T. of Khaba and Nganba
Chinphurol Leichik Nganbi was the common ancestress of Luwang and Khuman. But in some phuyas, the genealogy of the two clans is traced from Piyainu (vide Fig: 2.7). Thawaren, Poireiton and Khongkhang Atonba were her sons and Laisna was her daughter. Thawaren gave his wife Leinaotabi to his younger brother Poireiton and sent them to the land of the Meiteis. However, he was defeated by Pakhangba and his mission was unsuccessful. But, Pakhangba married his sister Laisna. Later, the descendants of Poireiton became the Luangs and the descendants of Pakhangba became the Ninhoujas. Luwang Punsiba was an able descendant of Poireiton. He had nine wives. Nganurol Chanu was his fifth wife who gave birth to two sons, Lungba and Nungthongngai. The descendants of the former became the Khumans and those of the latter became the Langmaichingtaba Luangs.

Leiphurel Chanu was the mythical ancestress of the Moirangs. But the two sections of this clan i.e., Moirang Ariba and Moirang Anouba were the descendants of Ngangningsing and Nganghunthok who were the sons of Leinung Yuchakha Ngangsap. Once, Nganghunthok went to Koubru hill and ruled there. But, his descendants came back to the land of the Moirang. So, this group became to be known as Moirang Anouba meaning ‘the new Moirang’ where as the other group was known as Moirang Ariba meaning ‘the old Moirang’ (Fig: 2.8).

Khaba Nganba is a clan formed by two social groups locally described as Salai. The two Salais are known as Khaba and Nganba. Leichik Ningthou Chanu alais Leichik Nganbi was the ancestress from whom the two groups are said to have descended. But, in some books, Pureilemmusu (who is shown rounded in Fig: 2.9) was described as the focal ancestress for the emergence of the two groups of this clan.

As found in sacred books, the mythical originator of Sarangleisangthem clan were Atingkok and Taopiaoinai. But, Huimu Leima (who is shown rounded in Fig: 2.10) was the important ancestress from whom the main sections of this clan emerged. Her son named Lokpa was the progenitor of the group (Salai) known as Haorok Konthou. Her son Lamleksang merged to the Kabui tribe. Her other sons Yimthangba and Lokton Atonba were the progenitors of the other Salai known as Chenglei Sarang-leisang. Within this Salai group, Pathanghan was the ancestor of Chengleibam, Naosaram, Soraicham, etc., lineages; Yunaoori Yaimuba was the ancestor of Leisangthem, Khakokpam,
Fig: 2.10 G.T. of Chenglei Sarang Leisangthem
Maiwam, etc., lineages; and Kamu Atonba was the ancestor of Sarangthem, Wairokpam, Chanam, etc., lineages.

c) Clan taboo:

There are food-taboos for all the clans. The tabooed things are given below against the respective clan names.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Taboo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mangang/Ningthouja</td>
<td>Sebot linmanbi (a kind of vegetable creeper), Ngarin (spiny eel-Macrognathus aculeatus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luwang</td>
<td>Lamkhumu (pigeon), Kabokang (water hyacin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khuman</td>
<td>Tera (Bombax malabaricum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moirang</td>
<td>Moirang Khanam (a kind of plant), Sendrang (swallow-Hirundo rustica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kha-Nganba</td>
<td>Keisumla (a kind of thorny climbing plant), Moirang Khanam (a kind of plant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarang Leisangthem</td>
<td>Chongaraba (myna), Changkhak (Dryopteris pilixmass)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig: 2.11 Clan and taboo of the Meitei

d) Clan and ancestor worship:

The Meitei believe in ancestor worship. Despite the question of following Hinduism, they have faith in the power of spiritual ancestors. The manifestation of this belief is found in the Apokpa worshipping of the people. The worship is performed at the level of lineage or family or individual. But it involves the appeasement of their respective clan
ancestors and ancestress. *Apokpa* is prayed at lineage level with annual offerings to the deceased souls. At the family level or individual level, *Apokpa* worship is practised in order to obtain wealth, extra power to subdue others and to become a fertile and prosperous family. The rites are performed inside the house of the family or person(s) concerned. At the lineage level, the praying is held at the house of *Piba* (lineage leader) where there is the sacred site locally known as *Apokpa Khubham*. A man seeking intensification of good fortune and power, prays *Apokpa* at night. The month of the worship is also related to the desired end of the worshipper.

During the marriage ceremony also there is a ritualistic observance praying *Apokpa* (ancestor) for the successful future life of the couple. This is known as *Apok Asa*.

The indispensable items offered in the ancestor worship can not be eaten by others than the lineage members. Even what remains are buried so that birds or animals or other persons could not see or touch it. In the case of individual worship of *Apokpa*, the remains are buried inside the house or homestead. In marriage ceremony, the fruits of *Apok Asa* (offerings to the ancestor) which are placed in a *Phingairuk* (a kind of basket with lid) are distributed among the close kins of the family within the lineage (close kin or *Phunga Pumba* in a lineage will be discussed later). By observing the essential items, as well as the uttered words used in *Apokpa* prayer, one can know a brief account of the clans. Some of the uttered words that refers to the origin of the clan; important day, month, time for the worship; mythical midwife of the ancestor; symbolic colour of the clan; star of the clan; place from where sacred water will be taken for the worship; flower, leaf, fruit, fish, sword, fire wood to be offered; mode of kindling fire; and shoot to be used for sanctification purpose, etc., are given below.

1. *Ninghouja*: Free translation of uttered words - Leitak Leiyarel Chanu embraced the sun. Pakhangba was born. Important Day - Thursday, Month - *Inga* (June-July) - full moon day; Time - close to midday. Mythical *Naoroibi* (midwife) - Yabirok; Colour - bright red; Star - *Thayai* (δ,ε Sagittari, junction star δ Sagittari); Sacred water - Nungjeng pond (at Kangla); Flower - red lotus; Leaf - lotus leaf; Fruit - lotus fruit; Fish - *Sareng angangba* (*Sareng - Wallago attu*); Sword - *Chakhang* (Fig: 2.12a) Fire wood - *Sahi* (*Pasania dealbata*); Fire - ignited with steel and flint; *Naheiba* (sanctification) with - *Urung* (a kind of plant).
a) *Chakthang* - Sword of *Ningthouja*

b) *Puk'kak* - Sword of *Angom*

c) *Tondumba* - Sword of *Luwang*

d) *Tonkakpa* - Sword of *Khuman*

e) *Yenbatok* - Sword of *Moirang*

f) *Laithang* - Sword of *Nganba*

g) *Khanthong* - Sword of *Sarang Leishangthem*

Fig: 2.12 Swords of seven clans
2. **Angom**: Free translation of uttered words - Angouba begot Angom. Sararen Namungba was entitled Tingouren Sentreng. Thayibi Ahumnu collected Nonglum (egg) Month - 12th day of Ingen (July-August); Day - Monday; Time - morning; Star - Thadon (Ω, ι, σ, γ Sagittari, junction star σ Sagittari); Naoroibi - Khakpa Ninghou Chanu; Sacred water - Kongba Meirombi; Flower - White lily; Leaf - Larong; Fire - Meiba (flirting wood with bamboo strip on dry leaves); Naheiba - Tairel (Toona ciliata); Sword - Puk'kak (Fig: 2.12 b) Colour - white; Fruit - Heiba (Ficus sp.); Fish - Sareng angouba; Firewood - Upal (Quercus sp.)

3. **Luwang**: Free translation of uttered words - Sararen Marikpa Tagur begot Luwang with the title Bhinpatlen Hing Hing. Tungwaip Thoinu collected buffalo. Poireiton was born. Month - Wakching (Jan-Feb); Day - Friday; Time - dawn; Star - Guru Sidaba; Sacred water - Lamphel; Fire - incense of burning Khoiju (Inula cappa) and Leikham (Sesquipedalus guniothalamus); Naheiba - Shoot of Ukhok (Alhizzia lebbek); Leave - Larong; Flower - Melei (Dendrobium sp.); Fruit - pineapple; Fish - Sareng; Firewood - Heikru (Emblica officinalis); Sword - Tondumba (Fig: 2.12 c); Colour - very bright blue; Naoroibi - Piyainu.

4. **Khuman**: Free translation of uttered words - Imuraba begot Khuman, the spirit is Wangbaren in the name of Timmureng Leihingchi. Mangwaibi Tonthangnu collected elephant. Month - Full moon of Sqijbi (April-May); Day - Tuesday; Time - midnight; Star - Thayai (δ, ε Sagittari, junction star δ Sagittari); Naoroibi - Piyainu; Sacred water - Pumlen lake; Flower - Leisang (Michelea montana), Kwaklej (Venda coerulea); Fire - 7 Meithang (Mei = fire, thang = times); Fish - black Sareng; Leaf - Kwakla (Pterospermum acerifolium); Fruit - fig; Sword - Tonkakpa (Fig: 2.12 d); Naheiba - Pungphai (Dactylocterum aegyptiacum); Colour - black; Firewood - Chaokhong (Polygonum orientale).

5. **Moirang**: Free translation of uttered words - Sararen Purangba begot Moirang (Ariba) in the name of Tinlanglen Sararen Purangba. Chitnu Leima collected deer. Ngangningsing was born. Month - Lamta (March-April); Day - Saturday; Time - night; Star - Chingiaroibi (α, β Geminorum, junction star β Geminorum); Colour - stripe in green; Naoroibi - Leinng Ngangsa; Sacred water - Lektak lake; Flower - Yerumlei (Dendrobium sp.); Leaf - Khangla (Butea minor); Fish - striped Sareng; Fruit - Kangrou,
Fire - 3 Meithang (Mei = fire, thang = times), Naheiba - Naothing; Sword - Yenbatok (Fig: 2.12 e) Firewood - Kuhi (Passania pachiphylla).

6. Kha-Nganba:- Free translation of uttered words - Memanba begot Khaba in the name of Tinsanglen. Therelongbam Chanu collected tiger, Khamjingkon was born. Month - 10th day of Kalen (May-June); Day - Sunday; Star - Saing Telheiba (λ Orizonis, junction star λ Orizonis); Time - morning; Colour - striped in green; Naoroibi - Puroi Lembusu; Sacred water - Leitang; Flower - Leisang (Michelea montana); Leave - Leihoula (Amomum sp.); Fire - incensed fume of Leikham (Sesquipedalus guniothalamus); Naheiba - Napu Nasel; Sword - Laithang Chinaiba (Fig: 2.12 f); Fish - Sareng having red strip; Fruit - Heibung (Garcinia xanthochimus); Fire wood - Chingyensil (Antidesma diatrum).

7. Sarang Leisangthem:- Free translation of uttered words - Asangba begot Chenglei. Sararen Laphubi Leimanu who was the mother of Nungou Yumthagba, collected goat. Month - 26th day of Phairel (Feb.-March); Day - Wednesday; Time - night; Colour - brown; Star - Rikha Saphaba (α Orizonis, junction star α Orizonis); Naoroibi - Huimu Leima; Leaf - lotus leaf (Thamna Thayai); Fire - 5 Meithang; Sacred water - Taknakha at Arapti; Flower - Leisang (Michelea montana), Leikham (Sesquipedalus guniothalamus); (Fig: 2.12 g); Fish - Sareng having striped ear; Firewood - Nongleisang (Xylosma longifolium).

Thus, the Meitei clans possess various ritual symbols and observe certain reciprocal ceremonial relations. They also have sacred names, sacred water sources (reminiscence of their chieftdoms), honorific title, specific colour in the totemic manner (as they use flags of their respective colours at some occasions to signify their clan), and other mystical affiliations and ceremonial statuses.

Lineage:

Lineage is the genealogical segment of a clan. Agnatic kinship relation of lineages is called Sagei. Sagei is always an agnate relationship between groups of persons and is only one between persons by virtue of their membership of groups. When one asks about the surname of a person, the term Yunnak is used. Even the compound word Yunnak-Sagei
is used to designate his cognition. But, sometimes Sagei is used as the relationship of a lineage group whereas Yumnak refers to the lineage group. The lineage affiliation of a woman is changed owing to the patrilocal rule of residence at marriage.

a) Lineage in Span:

Within a lineage of whatever span, each grade of segmentation is functionally significant. Each segment has its focus of unity and an index of its corporate identity, in the ancestor by reference to whom it is differentiated from other segments of the same order in the lineage organisation. Sacrifices to the shrine of the ancestor for instance, require the presence of representatives of every segment of the next lower order. Sub-lineage of a span emerges in any of its activities as a system of aliquot part. If the segment becomes too large or too far-stretched to maintain its solidarity, the elders of the lineage and Piba, further segment it by a system called of Yumsetpa or Yumkhaiaba.

For a better knowledge of the segments of lineage, an example is taken up. Mutum is the maximal lineage that belongs to Ningthouja clan. It emerges from the descendants of King Irengba (984-1074 A.D.). Irengba had two wives - Haoreima Tamheibi and Haoreima Pidongnuphabi. Haoreima Pidongnuphabi had a son, Khamlang Pamsaba who married Angouba Nganglou Lanthaba Chaniu. From their descendants Mutum was emerged.

Mutum, the maximal lineage has major lineage segment names according to the places of habitation. The lexicon taba meaning ‘settled at’ is affixed to the place name. e.g., Lalhambung taba meaning ‘settled at Lalhambung’. Sometimes the segment has other suffixes also and thus, Mutum has segments under the name Mutum Thangsaba, that is, Mutum, the maker of Thang (dao), Mutum Waisemban, etc. The segments in our example of lineage are-(i) Lalhambung taba, (ii) Mutum Tangleihataba, (iii) Mutum Nambul taba, (iv) Laphupok taba Mutum, (v) Mutum at Angom, (vi) Mutum Khwaitaba, (vii) Mutum Sagolband taba, (viii) Kaboleikai taba, (ix) Mutum Waisemban, (x) Mutum Nahakpan Wangkhei taba, (xi) Mutum Khurai taba, (xii) Mutum Khongman taba, (xiii) Mutum Hidaksungba, (xiv) Mutum Sanakhonba, (xv) Mutum Luptarou taba, (vi) Mutum Ayamhanbam, (xvii) Thoubal taba, (xviii) Haorang taba Mutum, (xix) Sangaiarou taba, (xx) Mutum Phougakchao taba, (xxi) Mutum Khullen taba, (xxii)

These major lineages are further segmented, into minor lineages, each bearing the names of the lineage of orientation and the place of new habitation. An example of it is - Khongman dagi khaiba Mutum Chandrakhongda leiba i.e. Mutum at Chnadrakhong, who are separated from Khongman taba major segment.

Sub-segmentaton into minimal lineages carries on each being identified by the name of the piba, such as Mutum Nambul taba Birsing and Mutum Nambul taba Jaising. (Amubi 1994: 234-236)

The smallest segment has the relationship, known as Phunga Punba (having a common hearth). The members of this cognate segment observe the phu-kainaba (phu=earthen pot, kainaba = broken), that is, breaking of earthen cooking utensil on the occasion of the death of one of its members. They collectively observe Yum-Mangba or social defilement on child birth. An example of phunga punba is illustrated in G.T. (Fig: 2.13).

In the cited example, the phunga punba group only encircles upto 3 generations antecedent to Piba. But the 3rd ascending generation means the great grandfather of present Piba. However, it is not the common norm to cover merely upto great grandfather. In other phunga punba groups there are found larger cluster of more generations as the members of the lineage do not wish to be segment.
Fig: 2.13 G.T. of a Mutum Nambul Taba Segment showing the Phunga-Punba core by dotted lines.
b) **Lineage Name**

From the literal sources such as *Khagemba Yunlep* (for the Meitei lineage), *Bamon Khunthoklon* and *Bamon Meihoubrol* (for the Meitei Bamon), *Nongsamei Puya* (for the Meitei Pangal), etc., we can observe the patterns of assigning lineage names. In tabular form, the pattern of naming lineages is given. (Table 2.1) where we find that the lineages are named according to the occupations they were assigned. It is another feature of naming of the lineage that they were so named on the basis of the character and habit (including physical character e.g. tall, short, etc., and behaviour such as idle, good, etc.) of the ancestor. Among the *Bamon*, the lineage name is given after the ancestor's name (for example, *Dhyandasmayum, Bagindramayum*, etc.) whereas among the Pangal, lineages of toponymic pattern (for example, *Thongkhongmayum* for settling near the bridge, *Thoubalmayum* for settling at Thoubal, etc.) stand as a second dominant pattern. Again, among the Bamons and Pangals, the lineage-names are given after ‘Former descent/origin’ of the ancestor or in other words, the lineages are named deriving from the antecedent kin group-title (for example, *Gosaimayum* lineage of the Bamons is named after the former line Gosami descent group) Some of the lineages of the Bamons and Muslims (Pangal) who migrated from the west of Manipur were named according to the chronological differences of their arrival to this land. Lineages named *Anoubam* (new), *Aribam* (old) etc., of these peoples are examples. Again, some of the lineages were named commemorating certain interesting or remarkable mythical phenomenon or event at the time of the ancestors; for example, *Leishangthem* was named after the mythical phenomenon of emerging this lineage from the tongue (lei) of the Creator. And, *Nameirakpam Moirang Ningthoumayum* was so named when an antecedent member of this lineage came to present a conch to the king, his conch was snatched away on the way. He caught the thief by the tuck of his cloth. From this event, his lineage name was assigned as *Nameirakpam* (catching by the back tuck of loin loom). In addition, his grandfather held the office of Moirang Ningthou. Just so, emerged the lineage title of *Nameirakpam Moirang Ningthoumayum*. 
Table 2.1
Pattern of naming lineages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of lineages</th>
<th>Bit</th>
<th>Meitei Bamon</th>
<th>= 71</th>
<th>ii)</th>
<th>Meitei Pangal</th>
<th>= 72</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(used in this table)</td>
<td>iii)</td>
<td>Meitei</td>
<td>= 431;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>= 574</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Bamon</th>
<th>Pangal</th>
<th>Meitei</th>
<th>Meitei Universe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>p.c.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>p.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Professional</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38.03</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Toponymic</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Character</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Former descent/ Origin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chronological</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ancestor’s name</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Occasional/ Phenomenal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Not known</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) The Chain in lineage:

Most of the Meitei lineages are affiliated to one of the seven clans each. There are, however, lineages bearing the same name in more than one clan. A person of Usam lineage, for instance, claims that his lineage belongs to Luwang clan. But, this lineage name occurs in other clans like Moirang, Angom and Ningthouja as well. A.Tomba Meetei (1996: 53) acknowledges such a lineage is affiliated originally to one clan.

The Meitei lineage may be of ‘autochthonic’ and ‘alien-originate’ types. Lineages of alien origins are assigned putatively to one of the seven clans by the then king. Such lineages of alien origin are expressed as Haram which is again of two types: Nongpok
**Haram** and **Nongchup Haram. Nongpok Haram** means the people who came from east whereas **Nongchup Haram** designates the men from the west. Many of the people of both **Nongpok Haram** and **Nongchup Haram** origins were given independent lineage names under the seven clans of the Meitei, though some of them were assimilated into or attached to certain already existing lineages. Their attachment to an independent lineage has been locally expressed as **inba** (following the independent lineage). Again a few of such lineages of alien origin were not enlisted in the royal record, a position locally expressed as **latam chandaba** in Meitei language. Examples of such lineages are **Beisamayum, Lambalmayum**, etc. Again, some families of alien origin were assimilated into certain local independent lineages. For instance, a family group of Bengali origin had settled at Thanmeiband in Imphal and later got merged into **Khumanthem** lineage of **Khuman** clan. The existing descendants of this group in the lineage have now lost their original identity. This group is recorded in the text as **Thanmeiband tabaKhuman inba Khumanthem**. Thus, the Meitei lineages can also be divided into (i) authentic and (ii) attached. An authentic lineage is a lineage that has independent existence and constituted by members of direct line of agnatic descent from the lineage founder. Attached lineages are those identified as **changkhiba** - coalesced into another lineage. Supposed Mr. A earlier belonged to **Kumabam** lineage of **Moirang** clan. He was driven out under certain circumstances and delinked from his lineage because he had done some unpardonable misdeed. He got shelter at ease in the **Sarungbam of Ningthouja** clan. He and his descendants became **Sarungbam** thereafter, however, of **Moirang** clan. **Sarungbam of Moirang** clan is also defined a **changkhiba** lineage into the authentic **Sarungbam** lineage of **Ningthouja** clan. In other words, **Sarungbam of Moirang** clan is a **changkhiba** lineage from authentic **Moirang** clan and a lineage which has lost its original lineage name. Thus, at present **Sarungbam** lineage name occurs in both **Ningthouja** and **Moirang** clans.

Again, an autochthonic lineage may exist as authentic or attached lineage due to some unexpected circumstances. A lineage of autochthonic origin may become attached to an alien originate lineage. In the same way, an alien originate lineage may exist in authencity or in attachment to another autochthonic or alien originate lineage. The attachment of lineage may also be between two autochthonic lineages.

**Some synonymous lineage name might have emerged into different clans. Thangjam** is a lineage which is found authentically and without any discrimination under different clans.
of Angom, Luwang, Khuman and Moirang. Thangjam is the lineage, the entitlement of which is conformed to the profession of iron smithy. Thus, the iron smiths in any clan might have borne in the lineage name of Thangjam. And, this can be interpreted as allotment or historical concidence.