CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prior to the main topic of our study, let us have a glance to the historical background of North East states. Assam was ruled before the advent of the British by the Ahoms, a Shan Tribe of South East Asia for nearly six hundred years. The first Ahom conqueror of Assam was a prince named Sukapha. He left his native Shan state in Upper Burma, and entered the Brahmaputra valley in the year 1226. Soon Sukapha adopted the policy of conquest and annexation and also the policy of appeasement and conciliation. Rudra Singh, the son and successor of Godadhar Singh, completed conquest of the whole Brahmaputra valley. But the decline of Ahom Monarchy began from the later part of the eighteenth century. Causes were the repeated invasion of Muslims, the loosely organised system of administration, the weak military system, the enervating climate of the Brahmaputra valley and uprising of Moamarias. The three successive rebellions


of Moamarias shock the foundation of the Ahom monarchy. The cause of their conflict was religion. The Moamarias were worshipers of Krishna and they refused to worship Durga, the court religion of Ahom monarchy. During the reign of Lakshmi Singha (1769-80) they rose in rebellion and deposed the Raja and occupied his capital. Soon they were suppressed by Lakshmi Singha and one of their leaders, Ragha Neog was murdered by Kuranganayani, the Manipuri princess. But Moamaria revolted again and again and this brought untold misery and suffering to the common people of Assam.

In 1788, the Moamarias occupied the capital of Raja Gourinath Singha and drove him to Gauhati. Raja sought military assistance of Lord Cornwallis, the Governor General of India. Cornwallis sent Captain Welsh in September, 1792 with six companies of sepoys. Captain Welsh reached Goalpara on 8th November 1792 and after collecting the detailed information of the situation of the rebellion, proceeded to give help to the Ahom Raja. Soon Captain Welsh suppressed the Moamaria rebellion and reinstated Gourinath on the throne of Assam.

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During the reign of Chandrakanta, (1810-18) the Burmese for the first time interfered in the internal affairs of Ahoms. Chandrakanta sought the military help of the court of Amarapura, Burma in his conflict with Buragohains. The Burmese crushed the opposition, installed Raja Chandrakanta in full power and carried off, in return, a huge indemnity including an Ahom princess. But Chandrakanta was soon deposed and Purender Singh was raised to the Ahom Throne. Chandrakanta again sought the help of Burmese. The Burmese monarch became furious and sent a large army to Assam. Chandrakanta was reinstated and Purender Singhha took refuge to Bengal. Soon, Chandrakanta also found the Burmese to be dangerous allies, for they were now determined to rule over Assam. Helpless and in disgust, Chandrakanta, too, entered into Bengal. Assam thus passed under the control of the Burmese.

Before the occupation of Assam by the Burmese, Manipur was controlled by Burma. In the war of succession, which broke out in 1812, amongst Maniouri princes - Chourajit, Marjit and Gambhir Singh, the Burmese intervened and set up Marjit as the ruler under the suzerainty of the king of Burma. The remaining brothers entered Cachar and drove its ruler Gobinds Chandra to seek protection
under the British Government, Marjit Singh failed to appear at the installation of king Bagyidaw. So the Burmese thought of deposing Marjit. Marjit fled to Cacher and joined his brothers in 1819.

The Burmese established themselves firmly in Manipur and Assam, and this brought them into conflict with the British.

The attitude of the East India Company was at first like a silent observer, but at the intervention of Mr. David Scott, the Joint Magistrate of Rangapur, the British permitted both princes to collect arms and ammunitions from Bengal, the base of operations. It was pointed out by Mr. Scott to the East India Company that in case of the Burmese authority being firmly and finally established in Assam, the position of Bengal frontier would be insecure and that the interest of the British Government would be best served by permitting the refuge kings to obtain necessary means for the expulsion of the Burmese.

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The British did not adopt a clear cut policy. The British might have adopted a strict neutrality by making it impossible for the refuge princes to use British territory as their base of operation or the British might have followed Mr. Scott's advice and helped the Ahom princes to regain their lost kingdoms. The British so far adopted a flexible policy.

The two Ahom princes, Purander and Chandrakanta carried on raids on Burmese invaders and naturally, this provoked Minji Maha Tilaw, the Burmese Governor of Assam. So, the Burmese demanded to the British Government, the extradition of the two fugitive princes and Arakanese who revolted against the Burmese in 1797. The Burmese were making preparation for invading British territory as the British ignored the Burmese demand.

During this time, David Scott suggested to discard non-intervention policy of the East India Company and he further advised to support and encourage the Assamese and the frontier tribes to resist and shake off the Burmese yoke.

The British, at first was very cautious and had not made up their mind to expand their authority to Assam.
Besides, they were very busy with the Marathas, the last contestant for imperial bid. There were western and eastern frontiers where effective British control was absolutely necessary for the maintenance of power in India, lest they should be thorns in their flesh if they fell in the hands of Russia, Burma or France. This calculations of the British manifested itself in conflict that followed which aimed at keeping frontiers - Afghanistan, Burma, Assam and Manipur safely under their thumb.

In Burma, the Dutch, the French and the British failed to establish their trading companies. Finding their effort of no use, the British decided to compel obeisance of the Burmese. Moreover, the Burmese expansion in Assam, Cachar and Manipur and their designs at more territories of Bengal had scared the British. Above all, the increasing Russian interest in Asia, after the fall of Napolonic France forced the British to move ahead in the field. Being alarmed at these state of affairs, on the recommendations of Mr. Scott, the British Government declared Cachar as a British protected state. But the Burmese Governor of the Brahmaputra valley contemplated the invasion of Cachar. Three Burmese forces marched towards Cachar from three different directions.
Lord Amherst, the Governor General now realised that the Burmese were bent on war. Lord Amherst declared war against the king of Ava on the 5th March 1824. Proclamations were issued in the Assamese language calling upon inhabitants of Assam to rise in support of the British in the event of a war with the Burmese. Thus first Anglo-Burmese war broke out in three sectors - Assam, Arakan and Rangoon.

**FIRST ANGLO BURMESE WAR**

**Assam:** In the Brahmaputra valley, the war began in early March 1824 with the advance of British troops from Goalpara under Lt. Colonel Maamorain towards Gauhati. But the Burmese army which had been greatly reduced by desertions and operations in Cachar did not feel strong enough to face the British. They accordingly retired to Upper Assam, fell back upon the fort of Rangpur after committing barbarous cruelties on the inhabitants. Gauhati was occupied by the British. The British forces soon occupied Raha, Koliaber, Maramukh, Jorhat and then marched to Rangpur. The Burmese got despirited by the


lack of reinforcement and division in their ranks. On January 29, 1825, the Burmese fort at Rangapur was attacked. On January 30, 1825 Rangapur was occupied by the British forces. With the fall of Rangapur, the Brahmaputra valley now completely fell under the British control.

Cachar and Manipur: A strong British force was sent against the Burmese in Cachar. After some resistance, the Burmese withdrew from Cachar completely. As the resources of the Government of Burma were fully employed in the defence of Arakan and Irrawaddy no reinforcement could be sent to the support of its troops engaged in hostilities outside the Burmese borders.

The British Government clearly perceived from the very beginning of the war that the establishment of a strong, independent Manipur Government would act as a checkmate against the Burmese. Besides, Manipur hated the Burmese and it was also pointed out by military officers that with assistance of the people of Manipur, a body of

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8 Ibid, p.541.
9 Ibid, p.545.
troops lightly equipped might at the proper season penetrate without difficulty into Burma. A body of troops might, if necessary, further advance into Burma by a direct march of fifteen days. But the king of Manipur had no enough resources and men. Manipur, however strategical its position might be, was not in a position to check the Burmese aggression. So, assistance in the form of arms and money were given to Gambhir Singh by the East India Company to recover the independance of Manipur.

In December 1824, a great effort was made of marching a force towards Burma by way of Cacher and Manipur. But it failed due to the mountainous character of the region, clayey nature of the soil and unusually heavy rainfall and the loss of large number of elephants, bullocks and other transport animals. Gambhir Singh with a levy of 500 Manipuris and Cacheris, provided with arms by British advanced to Manipur, with Lt. Pemberton. After great difficulty, on June 10 Gambhir's force encountered the Burmese pickets stationed 12 miles in advance to the capital of Manipur. On June 11 it was learnt that the enemy had evacuated the stockade in the town. Thus

11 Ibid, p.547.
Gambhir Singh and his force took possession of the capital. The Burmese halted for sometime at Undro. Soon, they deserted Undro and left Manipur. Gambhir Singh drove the Burmese across the bank of the Mingthee river and Kabow valley.

The operation of the British forces in Burma had also been crowned with success. The king of Burma was compelled to accept the terms of peace. A peace treaty was signed by the king of Burma on 24th February 1826, and with this, the war came to an end. This treaty was popularly known as Yandabo Treaty. The war strategically so well conceived operationally so mismanaged in its early stages, had been won at a very heavy cost in men and treasure. No less than 15,000 out of the 40,000 men serving in the British expeditionary forces died, the vast majority from fever and dysentery. Lord Amherst was condemned by the British public and Court of Director of East India Company for declaration of a war as well as for loss of many lives and properties. All Governor Generals before Lord Amherst did not take serious notice of Burmese expansion in the eastern frontier of British

12 Hall, G. D. E., History of South East Asia, p. 599.
empire. Naturally, Burmese took this as a sign of weakness of East India Company and easy conquest of Menipur and Assam strengthened their opinion. So, they tried to attack Bengal. Thus British frontier Bengal was in peril. Thus, during the days of Lord Amherst, neglected problem of many years assumed a threatening problem. So, Lord Amherst grasped the situation and boldly met it.

Yandabo Treaty: It was a treaty of "Peace and Friendship between the Governor General and the king of Burma" (Art 1). The Burmese king must renounced his claims upon the principality of Assam, Cachar and Jayantia (Art 2). The king of Burma ceded to the British, the territories and towns of Yeo, Tavoy, Mergui, Tenasserim and Arakan (Art 4). Burmese would pay Rupees one crore as war indemnity (Art 5). Art 7 admitted of a British resident at Ava, a Burmese envoy at Calcutta and a separate commercial treaty afterwards upon the principles of reciprocal advantages to be negotiated. Loss of men and money were

14 Ibid, p.192.
17 Ibid, p.194.
attributed to Lord Amherst's inability to direct the war properly.

This war had certain significance in the imperialistic march of the British. The war checked the Burmese expansion in Assam, Manipur, Cachar and Bengal. For the first time in the history of India, the British extended its sphere of influence in North East India. The war crippled Burma and she fell into disintegration. Her territorial losses were great, but even greater was the blow to her national pride. Her military power, once the terror of all her neighbours was broken beyond recovery. The war gave to the British a foot hold in Burma and this was a long cherished desire of East India Company. Thus, they could check the French not to move beyond Indo-China.

PERIOD OF INTERIM SETTLEMENT

After the treaty of Yandabo, the East India Company assumed in their hand the administration of Assam. But the British did not take over direct administration of the whole country at once. Immediately after the withdrawal of the Burmese, the British Government restored Manipur to Gambhir Singh, Hatak to Baraenapat, Cachar to Gobind Chandra under the protection of the British Government. The British
guaranteed the sovereignty of Raja Gobind Chandra over Cachar on condition of his paying an annual tribute of Rs. 10,000. The engagement with the ruler of Jayantia was similarly respected.

Manipur was given to Gambhir Singh with the status of a sovereign ruler. Art 2 of the Yandabo Treaty also recognised Gambhir Singh as the sovereign Raja of Manipur.

After the war, Assam came under the control of the British and it became necessary to devise some comprehensive plans for administration of its internal affairs. As a provisional arrangement, Mr. Scott and Col. Richards were appointed joint Commissioners for Assam - Mr. Scott as the senior officer had the privilege of over-riding the junior Commissioner on all questions falling under joint deliberations. Besides, Mr. Scott was the sole authority for negotiating arrangements with native princes and chiefs. For the administration of criminal justice, a provisional tribunal was set up under Col. Richards. The East India Company was thinking to hand over Upper Assam to an Ahom prince, so Mr. Scott made little alteration in the existing institution as possible. In Lower Assam, a radical change was introduced. The Pyke system was

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18 An Assamese ryot under the Ahom kings whose duty was to render service to the king and state at fixed periods of the year.
abolished and revenue and judicial establishment was
placed under the superintendence of the Assamese
Sheris Taddera. As lower Assam was to be permanently
retained by the Company, Mr. Scott tried to encourage
trade, commerce and agriculture of the land and devised
a scheme for developing the resources of the country and
improving the economic condition of the people.

INSURRECTIONS AND REbellions

The establishment of British rule was not made
without opposition from the people of Assam. Soon,
insurrections and rebellions broke out in Assam valley.
The aim of these rebellions was to drive the British out
of Assam.

The Assamese nobles monopolised all privileges of
Assam for nearly six hundred years. But under Scott's
administration, social and economic hierarchy vanished.
It affected nobles of former Ahom monarchy. So, they
remembered the promise of the Company made on the eve
of the Anglo-Burmese war, that they had no intention of
annexing any portion of the Brahmaputra valley. Mr. Scott
apprehended troubles as he felt the pulse of the nation,
so he recommended to the Company authorities to hand over
Upper Assam to an Ahom prince. But authorities at Calcutta did not take Mr. Scott’s recommendation and tried to please Assamese nobles by employing them in responsible posts. But the Assamese were greatly affected by the abolition of Pyke system. As a result, a series of insurrections and rebellions broke out in the valley.

The first rebellion broke out towards the end of 1826 under the leadership of Gadachar Singh, supported by Government of Burmese. It was crushed and second rebellion broke out under the leadership of Rupchand supported by original conspirators. The Khese also broke out in open rebellion towards the beginning of 1829.

The Singpho insurrection broke out in the year 1830. But Captain Neufville crushed the rebellion. After this, another rebellion broke out in 1842 with the connivance of the Burmese Governor of Hukalong. But this was also completely suppressed.

ANNEXATION OF NORTH EAST INDIA BY THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

Cachar: Gobind Chandra was reinstated as the Raja of Cachar under the terms of Badarpur and his ancestral territory except North Cachar Hills was formally handed
over to him.  

Cachar was in a chaotic state owing to prolonged incursions made by rebel Tularam and Manipur princes and aggravated by Burmese invasions. Gobind Chandra soon found himself involved in a sea of problems, internal as well as external. Gambhir Singh, Raja of Manipur slowly penetrated into the area west of the river Barak which formed the boundary between Cachar and Manipur. Gambhir Singh brought the tribes inhabiting this area under his authority. Soon a conflict arose between Cachar king and Manipur king regarding possession of Chandrapur. David Scott, the Agent to the Governor General had to intervene and he dismissed the claim of Gambhir Singh and instead of Chandrapur, fifty Kulebah (local measurement of land in Cachar) of land in the same tract was given to Gambhir Singh.

The Chief of North Cachar Hills, Tularam repeatedly descended on the plains of Cachar and committed atrocities. But the British authorities brought a compromise between the two chiefs. Gobind Chandra had no heir. So, he appealed to the British Government to allow him adopt a child with

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19 Anglo Cachar Treaty, Pudderpore, 1825. Extracted from Assem and Neighbouring States - Acharyya N.N., p.16.
a view to continue the line of succession. During such
critical time, Gobind Chandra was murdered on 24th April
1830. According to J.B. Battercharjee, the crime was
committed under orders of Gambhir Singh, the Raja of
Manipur. On the other hand Lt. Fisher held that domestic
conspiracy was the cause of murder of Gobind Chandra,
Gour Shyam, Salaram Singh, Ridyananda, Ramgovind and
several others were sentenced to death by the Magistrate
and the Supreme Government commuted the sentences to
transportation of life.

There were several claimants to the vacant throne
of Cachar. Indrprabha, the eldest queen of late Raja
requested the Company to confirm her in her hereditary
possessions. Tularam, the Chief of North Cachar Hills
claimed the rule of Cachar as a descendant from the ruling
family. The Forty Sempungas asserted their right to elect
the Raja from amongst their own rank. But the most serious
one was Gambhir Singh who applied for a lease of Cachar


21 Battercharjee J.B., Cachar under British Rule in
North East India, p.54.

22 The Forty Sempungas was a Council which had right
to elect Raja of Cachar if there was any dispute
amongst the claimants to the throne of Cachar.
for 20 years on an annual tribute of Rupees 15,000.

This claim was supported by Captain Grant, Commissioner of Manipur but opposed by Captain Jenkins and Lieutenant Pemberton. On 9 July 1832, the Governor General in Council approved the annexation of Cachar to the British dominion. Accordingly, by a proclamation on 14 August 1832, Lieutenant Fisher annexed the plains of Cachar into the British dominion. After annexation, it was formed into a district with head quarters at Silchar and was placed in charge of a Superintendent, who was subordinate to the Commissioner of Assam. The first Superintendent was Captain Fisher.

On 5 November 1832, the tract east of the River Jiri was given to Gambhir Singh on conditions that (i) he should remove his thana from Chandrapur and establish it on the eastern bank of the Jiri, (ii) He should not obstruct the trade between Manipur and Cachar by Bengalis and Manipuris, (iii) He should not prevent Naques inhabiting the hills ceded to him and they should have free access to plains for trading purposes, (iv) He should keep the

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23 Proclamation of Governor General in Council 14 August, 1832 Assam and Neighbouring States Historical Documents - Acharyya N.N., 1983, New Delhi, p.162.
communication from Jiri to Manipur in good order for transit throughout the year. (v) He should readily afford assistance of a portion of Manipur Levy and also to furnish porters and labourers whenever required by the British Government. 24.

The cessation of the tract marked the policy of appeasement followed by the British Government towards Manipur. This appeasement policy was based upon the fear of another Burmese invasion. Besides, the Government of India was influenced by a feeling that Gambhir Singh might be required to make sacrifices in the Kebow valley which was under his occupation ever since the Treaty of Yandebo and on which a decision was still awaited.

Khasi Hills: Between the Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills lies a mountainous terrain inhabited by a bold and warlike people - the Khasis.

After the acquisition of Assam valley, Mr. Scott, Commissioner of Assam conceived a bold idea of establishing direct communication between Assam and Sylhet via Khasi Hills. This road must be useful from military

point of view, besides, Mr. Scott wanted to extend British influence in this hill.

So in 1826, Mr. Scott induced the Raja of Nungklow for permission for residence of some British subjects. So he concluded a treaty for the purpose. In 1829, a misunderstanding arose between officers engaged in construction of the road and the local people. Apart from this, the Khasis feared that the British would establish their sovereignty as a result of development of communications. "To the above causes of discontent was added the jealousy of the Raja excited by erection of building in his territory and by the display of wealth and grandeur on the part of the British Government which had tended to lower him in the eyes of his own subjects." 25

Thus, the Khasis revolted under the leadership of Tirot Singh. On 5th May 1829 the rebels massacred an innocent Englishman and some Bengalis in the senatorium of Nungklow. The British survey party was attacked and two officers together with followers were massacred. The British subdued the revolution completely after four years, Tirot Singh surrendered with his followers and was

sentenced of life imprisonment in Dacca. Rajan Singh, nephew of Tirot Singh was installed as Raja of Nungklow, on the 29th March 1834\textsuperscript{26} and Captain Lister was appointed as the Political Agent and stationed at Cherrapunji, which was made the Capital. In 1866, the Capital was removed to Shillong and the British rule over the remaining portions of the Khasi Hills was consolidated. The British entered into an agreement with other Chiefs belonging to other regions. The Chiefs surrendered some powers to the British Government and they were left free so far as internal administration of their territories was concerned.

\textit{Jaintia Hills: After the first Anglo-Burmeese war, Ram Singh, the Raja of Jaintia was pardoned by the Company and he was confirmed in the possession of Jaintia Hills. Thus, Ram Singh reigned as a vessel king under British Government.}

Soon the period of peace came to an end. In 1832 two British subjects had been seized by a band of men from Jaintia. A few months later, they again seized four British subjects and sacrificed three of them before Goddess Kali. On receipt of the news, Mr. Robertson, Agent

\textsuperscript{26} Pemberton R.B., The Eastern Frontier of India, Reprint 1979, Delhi, p.236.
to the Governor sent a letter to Ram Singh to surrender the culprits. In the meantime, Ram Singh died on 25th September 1832 and he was succeeded by his grand nephew Rajender Singh, a lad of 17.  

Mr. Robertson drew the attention of Company for the renewal of the treaty concluded with former Raja Ram Singh. Further, he recommended that a sum of Rupees 10,000 must be exacted from the new Jaintia Raja for the benefit of protection accorded to the people. According to the instruction of Company, the Agent met Rajendra Singh and proposed that the Raja should renew the treaty with the British Government on condition of paying to the Company an annual tribute of Rupees 10,000. But Rajendra Singh wanted 15 days to reconsider the matter before the "Dolois". But Mr. Robertson wanted immediate decision, so he held up the conferring of the title "Raja" to Rajendra Singh.

Six months had passed without any communication from Rajendra Singh. So Mr. Robertson sent reminder after

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27 Memorial of Rajender Singh, Rajah of Jyntia 1836 quoted from Assam and Neighbouring States Historical Documents by Acharyya N.N., 1983, New Delhi, p.186.


29 Dolois meaning an assembly of Hill chiefs.
reminder to Rajendra Singh to apprehend the culprits of 1832 accident within 20 days. Mr. Robertson recommended to the Company to punish Rajendra Singh for non-delivery of culprits.

Mr. Jenkins succeeded Robertson as Agent of the British Government. He was a sensible man and according to him Rajendra Singh must be recognised as the Raja of Jaintia, and Rajendra Singh must surrender culprits as a condition, precedent to his recognition as the Raja. Rajendra Singh at last apprehended four of the offenders so long demanded by British Government and delivered to the British authorities. But after six months, on 15th March 1835 the British Government annexed the ancestral possession of the Raja, the plain area of Jaintia. The grounds assigned for this summary act were the non-delivery of the offenders implicated in the atrocities of Gobha, the occurrence of a similar cause of offence in the year 1821, and the participation of the king himself in those ghostly crimes.

The Raja expressed his unwillingness to be the ruler of unremunerative hills, thus administration of hills also passed in the hands of British Government.

To an impartial observer the Jaintia annexation policy of the British Government was an extreme measure. One may wonder as to how in the face of written acknowledgement testifying to surrender of the criminals, the British Government could charge the non-surrender of the culprit as the sole cause of annexation of Jaintia Hills. Moreover, it was strange indeed to hold Rajendra responsible for an outrage committed in the time of his predecessor 32.

Matak: In May 1826, the Bar Senapati, the Chief of Matak entered into an agreement with the British Government 33. Accordingly, the Chief of Matak acknowledged the supremacy of the British Government. Further, he agreed to furnish to the British Government a contingent of 300 pykes in time of war as well as in peace. No tribute was however demanded from him 34.

32 Memorial of Rajender Singh, Raja of Jyntia 1836, pp.189-190.


34 "Kubooliyest of Bar-Senapates 1826" - The Agreement between Bar Senapati and Mr. Scott, p.67 of Historical and Constitutional Documents of North Eastern India by Manilal Bose.
The Bar Senapati died on 2 January 1839 after nominating his second son, Maju Gohain as his successor. The British Government proposed to levy an annual sum as Rupees 10,000 as tribute from the Matak Chief. This proposal was opposed by Maju Gohain. As a consequence, Matak was annexed by the East India Company in 1842 and added to Lakhimpur district.

Sadiya: Sadiya was in the care of a Khampati Chief. In 1835, a dispute arose between Sadiya and Barsenapati of Matak over a tract of land. The British Political Agent at Sadiya directed both chiefs to appear before him. But the Sadiya Chief forcibly occupied the tract and refused to appear before the British Political Agent. The British Government immediately abolished the post of Sadiya Chief and annexed it to the British Empire. In 1842, a proclamation was issued announcing the incorporation of Matak and Sadiya in British Empire.

The Abors and Miris: The Miris were living in the plains and hills of northern bank of the Brahmaputra. The Abors were living in the hilly country between Dihong

35 Barpajeri H.K., Assam in the days of the Company, p. 146.
36 Ibid, p. 147.
and Dibong rivers, the Bor Abor were living in the inner ranges. In 1836, the Abors came into contact with the British. For sometime, they were in peace but afterwards they constantly gave trouble to the British. So in 1862, the Deputy Commissioner entered into an agreement with Abors. 37

The Mishmis: In 1825, the British came into contact with the Mishmis 38. The Mishmis gave a lot of trouble to the British. But the British Government did not like permanent occupation of their territories as the Mishmis were wild tribes. So, the British Government adopted the policy of conciliation and defence in relation to the Mishmis.

The Mikirs: Before the occupation of Assam by the British, the Mikirs owed allegiance to the Ahom kings. The Ahom kings appointed their chiefs and took tribute from them. In 1838, the British brought them under revenue settlement and tried to raise their standard of living 39.

39 Ibid, p.28.
The Garos: The Garos were a terror to the people of the plains. In 1816, the Garos invaded the territory of the Kerisbari Zamindari. The British Government sent David Scott, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar to settle the conflict. David Scott came to know that the cause of the conflict was oppressive rule of the Zamindars. So he proposed that in order to end the conflict the Garo Hills must be placed under the direct control of the British Government. The Governor General-in-Council accepted the proposal and placed the Garo Hills under British administration.

Upper Assam: On April 24, 1833, Purander Singh was formally installed as Raja of Upper Assam by Major Adam White, Political Agent, while lower Assam continued to be under the control of the British. But he had to face many difficult problems. There were anarchy and misrule for more than half a century, besides he had to tackle the worst of feudal abuses. He tried to rehabilitate the country and tried to restore customs,

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40 Mr. Scott's Report of 1816, Assam and Neighbouring States by Acharyya N. H., p.139.

traditions and institutions of his predecessors. So he revived the old Patra Mantri system. Raja inaugurated a series of reforming measures commonly known as Regulations of Purander after consulting Political Agent and Patra Mantris. Purander not only tried to reform the administrative abuses but also the morale of his subjects. He knew that a thorough overhauling of the whole system was highly needed but that would mean a revolution. But he wanted reformation and not revolution. 42

Some of the measures of Purander Singh affected nobles and higher classes of the society. So, they attempted to ruin him. During such time, major administrative changes took place in North East Frontier of Bengal. In January 1834, the Supreme Government abolished the office of the Political Agent and Commissioner of Rangapur and in its place created a distinct office of the Commissioner and Agent to the Governor General for Assam and North East of Rangapur 43. Francis Jenkina, a commissioned officer of the 1/24th

43 Barpujeri H.K., Ibid, p.120.
Native Infantry and son of Rev. Jenkins was nominated to the post.  

Soon, a conflict arose between Raja Purander and F. Jenkins over the right of interference. Therefore, F. Jenkins referred the matter to the Supreme Government.

Soon, Purander faced a difficult problem that there was a rapid fall in revenue. According to Art 2 of his Treaty with East India Company in 1833, he had to pay an annual tribute of Rupees 50,000 to the Company. The Raja failed to meet his obligations. In March 1836, the Supreme Government abolished capitation, house and hearth taxes in Lower and Central Assam. The abolition of these taxes adversely affected Raja Purander's exchequer. This measure encouraged fishermen, braziers, weavers, gold-washers and potters of Upper Assam to emigrate into adjacent British territories. The Raja lowered the taxes on these communities in order to put a stop to the exodus. He drew attention of the Supreme Government to the harm done to him by their new measures. So Raja requested the

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44 Ibid, p.120.

45 Treaty with Poorunder Singh, Raja of Assam, 1833
Extracted from Assam and Neighbouring States by Acharyya N.K., p.66.

Supreme Government to reduce the tribute. In spite of sympathetic and reasonable consideration of the Political Agent, Adam White, F. Jenkins rejected the demands made by Purander Singh as totally inadmissible. F. Jenkins directed the Political Agent Adam White to make a personal survey of the state of affairs of the Raja's territory. After surveying, Mr. White recommended reduction of tribute\textsuperscript{47}. But these recommendations failed to convince Mr. Jenkins. Thus, there were two conflicting views - the view of Political Agent and that of Commissioner of Assam. The Supreme Government directed the Commissioner himself to proceed to Upper Assam to have personal knowledge of the actual state of affairs in the territory of Raja Purander\textsuperscript{48}.

Accordingly, Commissioner F. Jenkins visited Upper Assam and found that it possessed vast potentialities of iron, salt, and coal. Besides, the soil of Upper Assam was found to be best suited for cultivation of tea. Mr. Jenkins submitted a report to Supreme Government and recommended immediate resumption of Upper Assam because

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, pp.126-129.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, p.131.
the administration of Raja Purandar Singh was the worst of its kind. 49

On receipt of the report, the Vice-President in Council after consideration of all circumstances came to the conclusion that the experiment of monarchy had miserably failed. So, it would be improper to leave the territory any longer in the hands of Purandar Singh. Lord Auckland, the Government General also determined an absolute resumption of Upper Assam.

But during this time, a constitutional crisis broke out. When the proposed resumption of Upper Assam reached the ears of the Court of Directors, they reminded Indian Government of their instruction issued on the occasion of the annexation of Jaintia, which laid down clearly that in future no territory of any native prince would be annexed without the previous sanction of the Court of Directors.

Lord Auckland referred the matter to the discretion of the President-in-Council. Vice-President-in-Council reviewed the whole case of Purandar Singh with reference

49 Ibid, p.137.
to the order of the Court of Directors, Vice-President came to the conclusion that the order of the Court was not applicable to the case of Purander Singh and any delay in the measure of resumption would be faced with worst consequences. So, they authorised Jenkins to adopt necessary steps for resumption of Upper Assam. On 16th October 1838, Mr. White announced the change of Government by a general proclamation \(^50\) and made Purander Singh retire on a pension of Rupees 1,000/- per month. Thus ended the experimental rule of the last Ahom king in Assam.

We may observe that if the Commissioner of Assam took an impartial decision of the real situation, the unfortunate Raja would not be deposed. There was no fair trial of the Raja's administration and in the words of Purander Singh no opportunity was given to him to answer the charges that were levelled against him. Here we find clash between policy planners and ground officers and on many occasions the orders passed by the Court of Directors were not carried out by subordinate officers in India. We also see that from a far away place, the Board of Directors could assess the real situation prevailing in Assam better than men on the spot.

\(^{50}\) Barpujari H.K., p. 139, p.172.
Lushai or Mizo Hills: Mizo literally means highlanders. It is believed that the original home of Mizos was east of the Shan State, in the Falak sub-division of the Chin Hills district in Burma. They migrated from that region and finally came to the present Mizo Hills, Tripura, Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, Manipur, North Cachar Hills and Naga Hills.

The Lushais is the name of one of the tribes of Mizo Hills. They raided plains of Cachar when Cachari kings were weak and even after Cachar was annexed by the British Government. To end these Lushais raids, Lushai Hills was placed under British administration after the expedition of 1889. North Lushai Hills was placed under the control of the Chief Commissioner of Assam and South Lushai Hills under the control of the Lt. Governor of Bengal.

North Cachar Hills: In between the district of Nowgong in the North, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills in the East, Cachar proper in the south, there is a hilly tract. This tract belonged to Tularam Senapati. Formerly, he was in command of a wing of foot soldiers of Gobind Chandra, the

51 Rao V.V., Century of Tribal Politics, 1979, p.29.
Raja of Cachar. Soon, Tularam shook off the yoke of Gobind Chandra and joined hands with his father Kahi Dass who had established a principality of his own in the hills of North Cachar. Gobind Chandra always treated Tularam as an usurper and Tularam on the other hand repeatedly descended on the plains of Cachar and caused much atrocities to subjects of Gobind Chandra.

When Gobind Chandra died without any issue he was one of the claimants of the throne of Cachar. But his claim was turned down by the British Government.

In 1832, Tularam descended in the district of Dharampur which was under the management of a native officer appointed by British Government. Tularam committed much atrocities and carried away several people and murdered two British subjects Sonaram and Mathur. As a result, Central portion of Cachar i.e. western part of his dominion, including Dharampur was forfeited and annexed to British empire and a new treaty was concluded with Tularam on 3 November 1934 by which he was allowed to retain only the eastern portion of Cachar Hills. He agreed to pay a nominal tribute of 4 pairs of elephant's tusks each weighing thirty five

53 Treaty between Tularam Senapati and British Government on 3rd November, 1834 - Assam and Neighbouring States by Acharyya N.N., p.162.
seers in token of subjection which later on was commuted to a cash payment of Rupees 490\textsuperscript{54}. But his territory was often harassed by Angami Nagas.

The early British relations with these chiefs in North East Frontier had been determined mainly by exigencies of the situation. Faced with many problems like Khasi insurrections, Singphos insurrection, Ahom Prince's uprising, British officers avoided another hostility from Tularam, so he was confirmed to his hilly possessions. But in 1842 it was revealed that Tularam's territory possessed immense wealth i.e. coal, lime stone, iron-ore, salt, ivory, lac, wax etc. Another reason was that British Government wanted to subdue Angami. Besides, Senapati was completely disabled by old age in 1844, made over the territory to his sons\textsuperscript{55}. But the Senapati's sons could not control Angamis. In 1854 the territory was finally taken over by the British and the five surviving members of the Senapati's family were pensioned off\textsuperscript{56}.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, p.162, Art.2.

\textsuperscript{55} Gaik Edouard, A History of Assam, Reprint 1984, Gauhati, p.311.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, op.311-312.
In 1867, when the Naga Hill district was formed North Cachar was parcelled out between the district of Nowgong, Cachar and Naga Hills.\textsuperscript{57}

**Nagas:** In 1835, the British came into contact with Patkoi Nagas. These Patkoi Nagas raided the British protected villages, and gave trouble to the Assam Government. To end the trouble the British Government made an agreement with all chiefs. In January 1832 Captain Jenkins, Pemberton and Gordon with 700 Manipuri troops and 800 porters marched through Mao and Angamis villages from Imphal to Nowgong to explore a suitable route for opening up a direct communications between Assam and Manipur.\textsuperscript{58} During such exploration, the British came into contact with Kacha Naga and Angami Naga. The Angamis frequently raided the plains. Therefore, the British thought to subjugate them. After much considerations, the British thought of keeping one strong post in the hill area to protect the plains from frequent raiding of Angamis. So the British formulated a policy of active control of Naga Hills. "In 1873, Sir George Campbell, the Lt. Governor, thought that the

\textsuperscript{57} Rao V.V., A Century of Tribal Politics, p.27.  
\textsuperscript{58} Asoso Yonou, Rising Nagas, Delhi 1974, p.72.
only satisfactory course was to establish political
influence over the tribes without any assertion of actual
sovereignty over the tribal areas. Accordingly, Naga
Hills was placed in charge of Chief Commissionership of
Assam. In February 1877 the Mozemah people attacked the
Cachari villages. This changed the policy of non-
interference of the Government. The Government of India
proposed to establish a headquarters station in the
interior of the hills and to strengthen the administration.
The Secretary of State for India agreed to the policy and
as such, on 14 November 1878 Kohima was occupied and made
headquarters of the district.

On 13 October 1879, Mr. Damant, the Political Officer
of Naga Hills was shot as he was attempting to enter the
village of Xhonoma and some of his escorts were also
killed or wounded. The Angamis then rose in a body
and besieged the stockade of Kohima for eleven days. The
Kohima garrison suffered a lot for want of food and water.

61 Asoso, The Rising Nagas, p.100.
but Colonel Johnstone, the Political Agent of Manipur arrived in the nick of time with a force of 2,000 troops, supplied to him by the Raja of Manipur and lifted the besiege. A campaign against the Angamis ensued, in the course of which everyone of the thirteen villages that had entered into hostile coalition was occupied or destroyed. They then submitted and agreed to pay revenue, to supply labour which required and for each village a headman was appointed who should be responsible for law and order and for carrying out the wishes of Government.

Tripura: The British Government came into contact with Tripura during the reign of Ishan Chandra Manikya. The British Government's soldiers of the 34th Native Infantry stationed at Chittagong revolted in 1857. The defeated soldiers entered the territory of the Tripura king and sought protection. But the king was not in favour of those soldiers and he issued orders to arrest them and delivered them to the British authorities. The Kukis raided Tripura in 1860 and 1861. They even crossed Tripura and plundered some villages within the British territory. To prevent further Kuki raid, there was an

63 Johnstone James, Manipur and Naga Hills 1971, Delhi, pp.149-157.
agreement between the king and the British authorities. Those agreements were (i) to establish five frontier posts of twenty men each (ii) to establish a stockade of 150 men on the Feni river connected with the posts by a road (iii) to bear expenses of 6 sergeants provided by British Government in order to train the king's force (iv) to provide facilities for a topographical survey of Tripura.

After the death of Ishan Chandra Manikya, his brother Birchandra Manikya became the ruler of Tripura in 1862. Birchandra Manikya was a reformer. He abolished slavery. The British Government took away a tract of 850 square miles from Longai river to Dhaneswari river in an unjust manner by taking advantage of Lushai revolution. The Kukis raided Tripura several times. In January 1871, a party of 200 to 300 Kukis raided on a number of villages in Tripura. The Kukis extended their raids in Cachar and Sylhet. In the raids, several Europeans lost their lives. In 1871, a political agent was appointed to reside at Agartala with the object of protecting British interests on the frontier, which suffered from Lushai raids carried out through Tripura into British territory. Mr. A.W.R. Power was the first Political Agent
for Tripura. But in 1878, the appointment of Political Agent was abolished.

**Manipur**: Manipur is situated in the north eastern frontier of Indian Union. It has a common border with Nagaland on the north, in the east lies the Somra Tract and Upper Chindwin district of Burma and in the west, lies Cachar district of Assam. To the south, there are the Chin Hills of Burma and Union Territory of Mizoram. Manipur covers an area of 22,347.2 square kilometres.

In ancient times, Manipur was known by different names. Burmese called her Kathe, Cacharies called her Moglei, Assamese, Mokli etc. To her inhabitants, the country was known as Meitrebak, Poirei, Kangleipak etc. The present name 'Manipur' was adopted after the valley was influenced by Hinduism. According to tradition, the valley was once under water, Lord Shiva and Parvati wanted to perform 'Ras Leela' in the valley, Mahadeva pierced the hill Chingmunghut with his trident and drained out the excess water and thereby rendered the

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valley habitable. When Lord Shiva and Parbati performed 'Raa Leela', the valley was bright with the help of a 'Mani'. From this, the valley came to be known as Mani (diamond) pur (place) meaning, the place of diamond. Manipur can be divided into two geographical regions i.e. the hilly region and the valley region. The hill is inhabited by different hill tribes - the Kabui, Koirang, Man, Kache, Maram, Tangkhul, Lushai, Paite, Simte, Sukte, Thadou, Waiphei, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Haer, Kom, Aimol, Anal, Maring, Monsang, Moyam, Purum etc. The valley is mostly inhabited by the Meiteis. But there are also tribal people who migrated from hills, Muslime, Mayang (Indiens), Nepali etc.

The British Government came into contact with Manipur during the reign of Raja Jai Singh. A Treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive was negotiated on the 14th September 1762 with Hari Das Goswami on behalf of Manipur Raja Jai Singh and Mr. Verelst, Chief of Chittagong in which the aid of a contingent of British troops was promised, whenever the Raja might find it expedient to attempt the recovery of such portions of his territory as had been wrested from him by the
Burmese. Jai Singh promised, in return, to make such grants of lands to the British as might suffice for the establishment of a factory and fort. In January 1763 a contingent of British troops under Mr. Verelet left Chittagong for Manipur, and reached Khaspur near Pedarpur, but they suffered heavily due to rain and disease. They were eventually recalled to Bengal. But the negotiations was broken for some unknown reasons. Jai Singh was driven four times into exile by the Burmese.

The most notable Burmese invasion of Manipur was in 1819 during the reign of Maharaja Marjit Singh under the great Burmese general Mingimah Bandula. The Burmese occupied Manipur from 1819 A.D. to 1826 A.D. During this time Manipur was devastated and there was chaos and anarchy everywhere. This dark period in the history of Manipur was known as "Chahi Taret Khoontakpa" or seven year devastation.

Raja Marjit fled to Cachar, where Chourajit and Gambhir Singh were also taking shelter. Soon the three

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brothers reconciled and usurped a great portion of the
dominion of Cachar king Gobind Chandra.

On 5 March 1824, the first Anglo-Burmesse war broke
out. The British Government clearly perceived from the
very outset that the establishment of a strong, independent
Manipur Government would act as a checkmate against the
Burmesse. Besides, the Manipuris hated the Burmesse and
it was also pointed out by military officers that with
the assistance of the people of Manipur, a lightly
equipped body of troops could penetrate into Burma in
proper season. But Manipur raja had no enough resources.
So Manipur however strategical its position might be,
was not in a position to check the Burmesse aggression.
So every assistance was given to Gambhir Singh 'the most
enterprising of the three brothers' in arms and money
to regain his independence of Manipur. So Manipur levy
of 500 men was raised.

In 1823 a nephew of Gambhir Singh, Pitamber Singh
led a force into Manipur and dispossessed Subol who was
installed by the Burmesse Government. Gambhir Singh also

69 Bhuyan, S.K., Anglo-Assamese Relations, p.519 and
Hilli, D.G.E., A History of South East Asia, Reprint
1985, p.638.

70 Pemberton, R.R., p.47.
marched to Manipur and Pitamber fled to Ava. At this time, Manipur was so utterly devastated that Gambhir Singh was unable to maintain his force. So he returned to Cachar. A quarrel between Gambhir Singh and Chourajit caused Chourajit to retire at Sylhet. At this time, Burmese returned to Manipur and were also in possession of the Brahmaputra Valley (Assam) and the Burmese threatened to annex Cachar to Burmese Empire.

Gambhir Singh co-operated with British troops in expelling the Burmese from Cachar. A force of 500 men of Gambhir Singh was subsequently increased to 2,000 and Manipur levy was placed under the command of Captain Grant. This force expelled the Burmese from Manipur, made Ningthoe river eastern boundary of Manipur.  

At the conclusion of Yandabo Peace Treaty, after the end of Anglo Burmese War in February 1826, Gambhir Singh was recognised as the Raja of Manipur. Here one must remember that the Treaty of Yandabo (1826) was a treaty signed between two imperialist countries i.e. British and Burmese and destiny of the petty state of Manipur

71 Roy, J., History of Manipur, p.68.

72 Acharyya, N. N., Assam and Neighbouring States - Historical Documents, p.53.
lying between the British and the Burmese were decided without any representative from the state.

Gambhir Singh proved to be a useful ally of the British. On 18th April 1833 a treaty was concluded between the British Government and Gambhir Singh. According to this treaty, Jiribam was annexed to Manipur. On 9th January 1834, the British Government handed over Kabow valley to Burma and on the same day Gambhir Singh expired. In order to compensate Manipur for her loss, the Supreme Government decided to give the Raja a monthly stipend of Rupees 500/- which could continue till the reversion of the Kabow valley to Manipur. Thus Manipur lost Kabow valley. The decision taken regarding the cession of Kabow valley to Burma was a clear example of injustice done by a superior power to an inferior.

Gambhir Singh was succeeded by his infant son Chandrakirti Singh. The administration was carried on


74 Agreement Regarding Kabow valley - Historical and Constitutional Documents of North East India by Manilal Bose 1979, p.81.

by Nara Singh as the Regent. In 1835 'Manipur Levy' was handed over to Manipur Government and in the same year British Political Agency was opened in Manipur. Lt. Gordon was appointed as the first Political Agent of Manipur.  

Soon Maharani Kumudini, the mother of Chandrakirti suspected Nara Singh and planned a conspiracy to murder Nara Singh but it failed. She fled to Cachar with Chandrakirti. The flight was considered as an abdication of Chandrakirti. The British recognised Nara Singh as the king of Manipur in 1844 and governed the country until his death in 1850.

Nara Singh was succeeded by his brother Debendra Singh. Meanwhile Chandrakirti Singh marched towards Manipur to claim his father's throne. Without much difficulty, Chandrakirti Singh became the king of Manipur for the second time in 1850 and Debendra Singh fled to Cachar. At the beginning of his reign, his relationship with the British Government was not cordial. Soon Chandrakirti realised his own position and he abjured all hostile

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77 Mc Culloch, M., Valley of Manipur, Reprint 1980, Delhi, p.9.
activities and reestablished friendly relation with the British. So in February 1851 Chandrakirti was recognised as the king of Manipur by the British Government and with this an assurance of stability was given by the British Government. Here we have seen a convention that Manipuri Rajas had to request the British Government for his recognition without such recognition it seemed that they were afraid of sitting on the throne of Manipur.

In the year to come Chandrakirti remained a loyal friend and ally of the British Government and he never walked beyond the lines drawn by the British Government. He helped the British during the Sepoy Mutiny (1857), Kohima expedition (1877), Maram expedition (1880), and Anglo-Burmese War (1885). So the British Government was satisfied and conferred Chandrakirti the highly honoured title K.C.S.I. in February 1880 by the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Sir Stuart Raylay.

Chandrakirti died in 1886 and Manipur was once

78 Dun, E.W., Gazetteer of Manipur, p.46.
79 Johnstone Sir James, Manipur and Naga Hills, 1971, Delhi, p.179.
again plunged into anarchy and confusion. The struggle for gaddi was renewed. Surchandra the eldest son of late Maharaja, ascended the throne. On the recommendation of Sir James Johnstone the political agent of Manipur, the Government of India agreed to guarantee the succession of Surchandra.

The other sons of Chandra Kirti who held important offices of the state during the reign of Surchandra were as follows:

1. Surchandra - Maharaja.
2. Kulchandra - Juba (heir-apparent).
3. Tikendrajit - Senapati (Commander-in-chief).
4. Jalakriti - Chief of the army.
5. Pakasana - Sagol Hanjaba (In charge of horses).
8. Angousana - In charge of roads.

Maharaja Surchandra, Keshorjit, Pakasana and Gopalaana formed one party and the remaining brothers formed another party. The causes of the hostility were almost all minor and personal matter. "The spark that kindled the blaze
arose out of a very small matter indeed. Young prince Zilla Singh had been quarrelling with Pakesana over everthing and anything that could be found to be quarrel about, and at length the Pakesana got the Maharaja to forbid Zilla Singh to sit in the darbar at the same time depriving him of some small offices of the state which he usually performed. One night, about midnight (21-22 September 1890) when the Maharaja had retired and the rest of the palace was wrapped in slumber, the young prince (Zilla ngamba) collected a handful of followers and with his brothers Angousana climbed the wall leading to the Maharaja's apartment and began firing of rifles into window.\textsuperscript{81} Maharaja instead of ordering his guard and rousing his men into action, immediately left the apartment and fled to the Residency for safety\textsuperscript{82}. Maharaja expected help from the Political Agent Mr. Grimwood\textsuperscript{83}. But the Political Agent did not give him help although the Chief Commissioner of Assam offered the Political Agent armed

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\textsuperscript{81} Grimwood Ethel St. Clair, My Three Years in Manipur, p.138.
\textsuperscript{82} Cheitharol Kumbaba, p.480 and letter from Ex-Maharaja Surchandra to J.W. Quinton, Chief Commissioner of Assam 14th November 1890 Documents of Anglo-Manipuri War by Kheichandra, p.16.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, p.16.
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assistance from Kohima. Knowing the attitude of Political Agent, Maharaja decided to abdicate the throne and requested the Political Agent to make arrangement for his journey to Brindaban. The Regent paid Rupees 1000 in the ex-Maharaja to meet the expenses on his way to Brindaban. It appeared that the Political Agent was in favour of the rebels.

After the abdication, Yubraj Kulachandra ascended the throne of Manipur and the Political Agent himself recommended to the Government of India to recognise Kulachandra as the Raja of Manipur.

At first, the British Government was in favour of restoration of the throne to Surchandra. Because, they

84 Letter from Mr. Grimwood the Political Agent, Manipur to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Shillong No.9. No.288, dated 25th September 1890, Manipur Assam Secretariat Proceedings, Foreign-A July 1891 - Documents of Anglo-Manipuri War by Khelchandra, K., p.6.

85 Assam Secretariat Foreign-A. Progs. Nos.11-12 letter from the Regent Kulachandra to J.W. Quinton, Chief Commissioner of Assam Dated 15th Aswin 1812B.

86 Letter from Surchandra Singh Ex-Maharaja of Manipur to J.W. Quinton, Chief Commissioner of Assam, 14th November, 1890.
had considerable doubt that if Kulachandra was recognised the real power of the state would go to his brother Tikendrajit. But Mr. Grimwood and the Chief Commissioner of Assam Mr. Quinton were opposed to restoration of Surachandra to the throne of Manipur. After considerable discussion the Government of India issued their final orders (letter no. 363-E dated 21st February 1891) as follows.

"(A) that the Senapati (Tikendrajit) should be removed from Manipur;

(B) that the Jubraj, i.e. Kulachandra, should be recognised and that the ex-Raja should not be restored.

(C) That the Chief Commissioner should visit Manipur and make known on the spot the decision of the Governor General."

This order was a compromise between the view of the Government of India and the view of the Political Agent of Manipur.

To implement the decision of the Government of India, Mr. Quinton left Golaghat with 400 Gorkha sepoys under the

87 Reid Robert, History of Areas Bording Assam 1942, Shillong, p.55.
command of Col. Skeen on 7th March 1891. The Chief Commissioner was instructed that the decision should be kept secret till he personally declared it in Manipur and to use some wise method to arrest Tikendrajit so that the Chief Commissioner might not face any strong resistance. Mr. Quinton sent Mr. P.R. Gordon, the Assistant Commissioner of Assam, an advance party to study situation in Manipur. P.R. Gordon arrived at Imphal on 15th March 1891. As soon as he arrived he told Mr. Grimwood that the Government of India was going to deport Tikendrajit from Manipur. Mr. Grimwood was astonished and told Mr. Gordon that Tikendrajit would not give in so easily. Then they went on discussion on many matters in connection with September Palace Revolution. After the end of the discussion, P.R. Gordon sent a telegramme to the Chief Commissioner of Assam giving all relevant informations regarding ouster of Tikendrajit from Manipur. On 17th March Mr. Gordon

89 Assam Secretariat Foreign-A Praga, September 1891 No. 176 dated Shillong, the 10th April 1891 from Lieutenant P.R. Gordon Assistant Commissioner to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Assam.

90 Ibid.

91 Assam Secretariat Foreign-A Praga, September 1891 Dated Golaghat May 1891 No. 335 from Lt. P.R. Gordon Assistant Commissioner to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.
left Imphal and met Mr. Quinton at Karong on 18th March. According to the advice of Mr. Gordon, Mr. Quinton sent a message to Mr. Grimwood to join him at Sekmai. Mr. Grimwood joined the Chief Commissioner at Sekmai on 21st March and had a long private talk with the Chief Commissioner. After this, there was a consultation between, Mr. Quinton, Col. Skene, Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Cousins and a plan was made to arrest Tikendrajit by Mr. Grimwood in Darbar the next day. Tikendrajit was a friend of Mr. Grimwood, naturally, he felt unhappy. On 21st March the Chief Commissioner's party arrived at Sekmai. The Commissioner sent a letter from Sekmai Thana on 21st March to the effect that he would hold a darbar in the Residency at 10 a.m. the following day, and communicated some secret order.

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92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Assam Secretariat Foreign-A Progs. September 1891 No. 176 dated Shillong the 10th April 1891 letter from Lt. P.R. Gordon Assistant Commissioner to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Assam. D. A. M. W. W.
96 Foreign Department Secret-F, September 1891 No. 130 petition from mothers, sisters, Renis, daughters, servants etc. of the Regent and the Senapati to Viceroy and Governor General of India dated the 26th June 1892. National Archive of India extracted from Rebellion in Manipur 1891 by Majumder R.C. in the book Peeps in Manipur by Sanahal R.K., p.49.
Before the arrival of the Chief Commissioner's party at Imphal rumours were abroad that the Chief Commissioner was coming to Imphal to reinstate ex-Maharaja Surchandra Singh. So in the evening of Saturday, 21st March, a great number of Manipuri Sepoys marched into the palace.

Tikendrajit with 50 soldiers received the Chief Commissioner's party at Awang Sekmai. On the same day, the Chief Commissioner's party arrived at the Capital. The Regent Kulachandra with his brother received the Chief Commissioner of Assam with 13 gun salute. The Chief Commissioner told Raja Kulachandra that on that very day at 12 a.m., there would be a darbar at the Residency and the Regent with all his brothers should attend it. So preparation for the darbar was made in the Residency. "The doors of the darbar room were all locked.

97 Letter from Lt. A.R. Gurdon to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Assam.
98 Cheitharol Kumbaba, Ibid, p.482.
100 Cheitharol Kumbaba, Ibid., p.482 and Assam Secretariat Foreign-A Progs. September 1891 Dated Manipur 25th March 1891 No.213 letter from Kulachandra (Regent) to Llanddowre, Viceroy of India.
with the exception of the one by which the princes would enter, and guards were stationed in the adjoining rooms, as well as all round the house and in the verandas. Written orders of the Government of India had to be translated into Manipuri, so Rassiklal Kundu was ordered to translate it into Manipuri. But the Head Clerk, Rassiklal Kundu could not get it ready in time. At scheduled time, the Maharaja and his party arrived at the gate of the Residency. They were kept waiting in the hot sun for a long time. The suspicion of Manipuria grew more and more. While waiting at the gate they began to ponder the reasons of the extraordinary nature of holding of the darbar at the Residency instead of the palace and why on a sunday. Besides, that day happened to be Ekadasi, a day of fasting for the Hindus. So, some of them entered the Residency ground and took note of all elaborate military arrangement and they informed all these to Tikendrajit. Then the suspicion of the

101 Grimwood, E. St. Clair, My Three Years in Manipur, 1975, Delhi, p.179.


103 Letter from Kulechandra to Henry Charles Keith Marquis of Lord Lansdowne Viceroy.

104 Petition from mothers, sisters, Ranas, daughters of the Regent and Sanapati to Viceroy, Ibid.
Manipuris were confirmed and Tikendrajit and Angousana returned to the Palace.

When the translation was completed, the Chief Commissioner came to know the absence of the wanted man - Tikendrajit. So, he postponed the darbar and scheduled it again for the next day (23rd March) at 9 a.m. and further reminded the Regent that Tikendrajit must attend the next day's darbar.

On 22nd March at about 5 p.m., Mr. Grimwood, accompanied by Lt. Simpson and Rassiksel Kundu went to see the condition of Tikendrajit. But they were not permitted to meet Tikendrajit as he was too ill to come out.

On Monday the 23rd March at about six a.m., Political Agent with Rassiksel went to see Tikendrajit. Again Tikendrajit refused to meet them. No one turned up at the darbar at 9 a.m. A message came from the Regent that Tikendrajit (Senapati) was too ill to leave his house.

105 Ibid.
106 Reid Robert, Ibid, p.56.
107 Petition from mothers, sisters, Rantis etc. of the Regent and the Senapati, Ibid.
109 Letter from Lt. P.R. Gurdon Assistant Commissioner to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Assam paragraphs 2.
At about 1 p.m. Political Agent sent his Head Clerk to the Palace of the Senapati. But the Senapati refused to see him. At about half past four on that day, Mr. Quinton sent Mr. Grimwood and Lt. Simpson to the Palace and to disclose the decision of the Government of India to the Regent. But Maharaja expressed his inability to decide the matter without consulting his ministers.

The Maharaja was given time to discuss the matter with his ministers. Then Maharaja held a meeting with his ministers including Tikendrajit. In the meeting, Tikendrajit said that he was willing to give himself up if it was considered best. But other ministers refused the deportation of Tikendrajit from Manipur. The Regent then wrote a letter to the Chief Commissioner expressing his thankfulness for recognising him as king of Manipur, but with regard to banishment of Tikendrajit, he expressed his inability to take any decision due to illness of Tikendrajit. The Political Agent asked the Maharaja to

112 Khelchandra N., Ibid, p. 27.
surrender Senapati or give him a written authority to arrest him. When the Maharaja declined all demands of the Political Agent, the Political Agent sought an interview with Tikendrajit. The Regent immediately sent a subedar with a message to Tikendrajit (Senapati) and told him if he was well enough, he must meet Mr. Grimwood. Tikendrajit granted the interview and Mr. Grimwood accompanied by Mr. Simpson and Rassiklal Kundu went to the Palace of Tikendrajit. The Senapati came down in a Palanquin. The Political Agent told the Senapati about the British Government's decision and he tried his best to make Tikendrajit surrender but the Senapati refused. He on the other hand questioned the authority of the Government of India to interfere in the internal affairs of Manipur.

Mr. Quinton determined to use force where persuasion had failed. He held a secret meeting of military officers. Some of the officers opposed the decision of Mr. Quinton.

103 Khelchandra N., Ibid, p.27.
104 Ibid, p.27.
and they expressed their decision to wait till the arrival of 200 Gorkha soldiers from Silchar, who were already on their way to Imphal. But Mr. Quinton prevailed. In the meantime, a message was sent to the Regent that Mr. Quinton and his party would leave Imphal the next day. So they expressed their desire to witness Ras Leela dance that night and also further requested to arrange coolies. Accordingly, 400 coolies were arranged and a Ras Leela dance was performed. In the early hours of that very night (i.e. 24th March) Lieutenant Brackenbury, Captain Butcher and Lieutenant Lugard marched from the Residency to attack Tikendrajit's house. A hundred men of the 42nd and 44th Regiments were sent to surround the house, and if possible, capture the Senapati. About 30 men of the 42nd Regiment were sent to scale the outer wall of the fort and to get round behind the main gate and open it, and about 120 men were kept in reserve under Colonel Skene near the Polo ground. About half an hour after

107 Roy J., History of Manipur, p.121.
109 Letter from P.R. Gurdon Assistant Commissioner to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Paragraph 3.
110 Ibid.
the party that was proceeding to the Senapati's house started, shots were heard and then the firing became general\textsuperscript{111}. After a sharp struggle, the British force obtained possession of Tikendrajit's house, but they could not find Tikendrajit\textsuperscript{112}. The British army committed atrocities on men, women and children and even they violated the sanctity of the Brindaban Chandra temple and destroyed many idols. Pukhramba Tanka Singh resisted bravely\textsuperscript{113}. He killed many army and died bravely. The British forces occupied the house of the Senapati and mercilessly killed many boys, girls and cows. They burned down many leikais (locality), i.e. Yambem Leikai, Usham Leikai, Saikhom Leikai\textsuperscript{114}. The Regent, Maharaja Kulachandra also declared war against the British, orders were issued to all outposts\textsuperscript{115}. Heavy guns were fired and severe fighting continued for the whole day. Khumbong Subedar, Leisang Jamadar, Athokpa Dewan, Chongtha Mie, Paona Subedar,

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{113} Cheitharol Kumbaba, pp.482-483.
\item\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{115} Khelchandra N., Battle of Khongjom, p.30.
\end{itemize}
Niranjan Subedar fought bravely in order to resist the British troops. Khumbong Subedar, Leisang Jamadar, Athokpa Dewan died in battle. Manipuri sepoys encountered British troops. The situation became critical when telegraph wires were cut off and residency was attacked. Wangkheirakpo and Prince Angousana's forces defended the Eastern inner gate of the Palace. Colonel Samu defended the South gate and Yankholba Rudra Singh defended the Eastern gate. By order of the king, Yaiskul Lakpa and Wangkhe Lakpa attacked the residency from the west. Lt. Brackenbury, Subedar Hemchand, one Havilder and some other sepoys were killed, Lt. Lugard and some officers were severely wounded. So the British raised white flag, at about 8 p.m. 'Ceasefire' siren was given. According to advice of Chief Commissioner, the Political Agent sent a letter to Kulachandra asking on what condition the firing shall cease.

117 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p.483.
118 Statement of Lokendra Birgit Singh, Wangkheirakpo in Empress versus Lokendra, 1891 extracted from Kelchandra, Battle of Khongjom, p.31.
120 Kelchandra N., p.31.
121 Letter from Gurdon P.R. to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam Paragraph 5.
would stop. Kulachandra sent a reply that he would stop firing if the British surrendered their arms. There was a discussion between Mr. Cossins and Mr. Grimwood as to the precise meaning of the word 'surrender'. The Chief Commissioner suggested that there should be an interview with Senapati in order to ascertain the precise meaning of the term 'surrender'. Meanwhile a Manipuri messenger came and said that the Senapati wished to meet the Chief Commissioner halfway between the Residency and the Palace in order to discuss matters. So, the Chief Commissioner along with his four officers, Col. Skene, Mr. Cossins, Lt. Simpson, Mr. Grimwood and a Bugler came to the Palace without escort.

When the British officers reached the western gate of the Palace, Thangal General gave a warning to Chief Commissioner's party that it was not safe for British officers to go to the Palace enclosure at night and that too after the fighting, so advised them to return to British Residency. But Yenkhooiba Major said that

122 Ibid.
123 Ibid.
124 Ibid.
Tikendrajit wanted to meet Mr. Quinton.

A darbar was held, Tikendrajit, Thangal General, Col. Samu, Giridhari, Angom Ningthou, Chongtha Mia and others were present and there was a great anger, excited crowd outside the darbar room. Tikendrajit asked the Chief Commissioner to surrender arms but the Mr. Quinton replied that they could not surrender arms as they belonged to the British Government. Although, there was much discussion, there could not be any settlement. The Chief Commissioner expressed his desire to postpone the meeting till the next morning.

While the meeting was held inside the Palace, an enraged mob collected outside the Palace. They were incensed by the previous night's incident. When the British officers got up to return to the Residency, there was a great shouting from the excited mob. Tikendrajit sent Angousana, Giridhari, Angom Ningthou and one minister to escort Mr. Quinton's party up to the Residency. When the five English officers emerged from the Darbar, the crowd

125 Khelchandra N., Battle of Khongjom, pp.32-33.
126 Ibid, p.33.
127 Petition from relatives of the Regent and Tikendrajit to the Viceroy.
began excited and cried "Haatlo Haatlo" (kill, kill).
Suddenly, Lt. Simpson was struck on his head with a sword.
Col. Samu called out to the people to desist. The British officers came back to the Darbar room. Mr. Grimwood was speared to death by Kajau alias Aukhramba Phingang 128.
The British officers were saved by Angom Ningthou and they were detained in the Darbar house 129. Tikendrajit on hearing the noise came back to the Darbar house and looked after safety of the English Officers 130. In the meantime, General Thangal came there. Tikendrajit retired after handing over the matter in the hands of Thangal General. But he was influenced by the protest of men, women and children who suffered a lot in the last night's British attack. They demanded to execute the remaining

128 Statement of Mia Singh in Queen Empress VS, Mia Singh Document No.9 - Khelchandra - Battle of Khongjom, p.XXXVIII.

129 Ibid.

130 According to the petition of the relatives of the Regent and Tikendrajit to the Viceroy of India-on hearing the noise, Tikendrajit came back to the Darbar Hall and sent away the attackers, placed the three English Officers in the Hall and carried the wounded Simpson, himself into the Hall. He said that he would enable the English gentlemen to reach the Residency as soon as the excited people became somewhat tranquil.
British officers. The old general was already much aggrieved at the behaviour of the English officers and the British Government and he ordered Public Executioner to execute the remaining English officers. 131. Jamsadar Usarha and Jatra Singh came running to Tikendrajit and told him that Thangal General had given orders to put the four Englishmen to death 132. Tikendrajit at once came to the Darbar Hall and asked Thangal General to desist from such action 133. Then he "slept for three or four hours on his seat in the top-guard" 134. Thus at about 2 a.m. of the 24th March 1891 the four British officers (1) Mr. J. U. Quinton, C.S.I., I.C.S., Chief Commissioner of Assam, (2) Lt. Col. C. Mad Skene, C.S.I., 42nd Gurkha Rifles, (3) Mr. W. H. Cossins, I.C.S., Assistant Secretary to the Commissioner, (4) Lt. W. H. Simpson, 43rd Gurkha Rifles and a Gurkha Bugler were executed 135.

131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid.
After this, it was announced that the Chief Commissioner and his party would not return to the Residency 136. Residency was attacked by the Manipuris. At about 2 a.m. of the very night, a party consisting of the remaining officers, Mrs. Grimwood and Lt. Gordon together with about 100 men left the Residency for Cachar 137. They marched straight along the Rishnupur road. After encountering some minor resistance on the way, the party met Cap. Couly’s party on 26th March. With Cap. Couly and his 43rd Gorkha Light Infantry, they marched to Cachar 138. On 30th March they reached Maku and then reached British territory 139. Soon after the evacuation, the Residency was set on fire 140. After the British troops had evacuated from the Residency, Manipuri troops were sent to all directions to pursue the fugitives. Leiten Major was sent at the head of one hundred soldiers towards the west 141. Yenkhobi Major was

136 Letter from P.R. Gordon to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, paragraph 5.

137 Ibid, paragraph 6, 7.

138 Ibid, paragraph 8.

139 Ibid, paragraph 9.

140 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p.484

141 Ibid.
sent at the head of one hundred soldiers towards Burma road, Laishraba Major at the head of one hundred Manipuri soldiers towards the north unto Mao. About 50 British sepoys were arrested and put in the Jail. On Thursday the 26th March Prince Angou Senapati and Thangal General at the head of one hundred soldiers were sent towards Cachar. They proceeded upto Youyangtek on Saturday 28th March and then returned to Bishenpur.

Lord Lansdowne, the Viceroy and Governor General was at Mainitul on the night of Sunday, 29th March 1891, when he heard for the first time that Tikandrajit could not be arrested and Chief Commissioner's party were in the hands of the Manipuris as war prisoners. He came back to Simla and quickly called a meeting of his Council and then ordered the British troops to advance on Manipur.

142 Ibid.
143 Ibid.
144 Ibid.
145 Ibid.
146 Extract from 'Manipur' compiled from the columns of the Pioneer Allahabad 1891 from the book Documents of Anglo-Manipuri War - Kholchandra N., p.102.
In Manipur, on hearing the news of the execution of the British officers, Jamadar Birbal Nagarkati of the 43rd Gurkha Infantry stationed at Langthabal went to Tamu and reported the matter to Lt. J.W. Grant of the 12th Madras Infantry. Grant at once marched to Imphal with his troops. The Government of India on receiving the message from Grant declared war against Manipur on 31st March 1891.

By the first week of April 1891 three columns of troops at once marched towards Imphal from three different directions i.e. Kohima, Silchar and Tamu. Kohima Column was commanded by Brigadier General Collett. C.B., Silchar column by Lieutenant Colonel Rennick and Tamu column by Brigadier General Graham C.B., General Collett was given the overall command of the whole operation.

The first Government instructions to the Officer Commanding were issued on April 6th 1891, when it was

147 The History of the Third Burmese War 1890-91 period VI compiled under the orders of the Quarter Master General in India in the Intelligence Branch by Capt. J.H. Parsons Simla 1893, p.57. - Documents of Anglo-Manipur War.


149 Extract from 'Manipur' compiled from the columns of the Pioneer Allahabad 1891 - Documents of Anglo Manipuri War by Khelchandra, p.106.
hoped that the Chief Commissioner and his party were only prisoners\textsuperscript{150}. He was authorised, in case the Darbar tried to make conditions about the release of the prisoners, to promise immunity from punishment with death or transportation to any person he thought fit, provided they were not guilty of actual murder\textsuperscript{151}. If he was not in telegraphic communication with India, he was to use his discretion regarding the best means of insuring the release of the prisoners and to re-assert the political supremacy of the British Government\textsuperscript{152}.

On 13\textsuperscript{th} April 1891 seeing the altered circumstances, the General Officer commanding was again instructed to capture the Regent and others in authority and no terms should be offered to them. They should be tried by a Court and punishment should be public and striking. He was further advised to demolish part of the Palace buildings\textsuperscript{153}.

In Manipur, due preparations were made to meet British troops. The Regent sent 800 soldiers under

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
Khairakpa, Laisraba, Jaabhunab Major, Meigrujamha Poila and Maibya Tamra Singh Subedar towards the north to defend against the British column coming from Kohima. One thousand soldiers were sent to the west under the command of Rejukumar Kala Singh, Sagol Hanjaba, Sana Ngangba Lourung Puren, Yenkhoiba Poila, Longjambe Poila to oppose the British column from Cacher and seven hundred sepoys were sent under Maipak Sana alias Lokendra Birjit Singh, Wangkheirakpa and Audra Singh Yenkhoiba Major to meet the British column from Tamu (Burma). The Regent appointed Subedar Paona Brajabashi and Chongtha Mia Singh to the posts of Majors and 400 soldiers under the two Majors were re-inforced to resist the British troops from Burma. The Manipuri forces under Wangkheirakpa and Yenkhoiba Major made stockade at Thoubal. The Maharaja ordered Wangkhei Meiraba Poila with a party of Manipuri soldiers to proceed to Pallel via Kakching and Majors Paona Brajabashi and Chongtha Mia to proceed to Pallel by the Burma road. On 19th April 1891 (Sunday) the


156 Ibid, p.487.
Manipur troops consisting about 400 soldiers led by Major Generals Paona and Chongotha Mie left for Tamu. They reached Thoubal on Monday, 20th April, 1891 and made their camp on the western side of the Khongjom River. They dug trenches on the north-western side of the Khongjom River. On 22nd they were fully encamped taking position in trenches.

In the meantime, there was hand-to-hand fighting with Wangkhei Meiraba Poile's troops and the British troops at Kakching near Manao Hill. Meiraba's troops was outnumbered by British troops and many Manipuri soldiers and Meiraba died in the battlefield.

By this time, the British troops from Tamu occupied Pallel, Kakching and Langathel. The British army was camping at Langathel Hill under Brigadier General Graham, C.B. His forces consisted of two numbers of Mt. Battery, Royal Artillery with four guns, 2nd Battalion Oxfordshire Light.

157 Souvenir, Khongjom War, 1891, Published by Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Manipur, paragraph 2.
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid, paragraph 3.
Infantry with about 200 men, 4th Battalion Kings Royal Rifle Corps consisting of 1/2 (half) Battalion, 2nd Battalion of Fourth Gorkha Regiment, 2nd Burma Battalion of Madras Infantry 161.

Having realised the weak position of the Manipuri troops, the two Majors requested the Commander-in-charge of Manipuri force at Thoubal for immediate supply of high Calibre Pounders. But the request was turned down by the Commander of Manipuri forces at Thoubal 162.

Early on the morning of 23rd April 1891, the British army fired guns from Langathel Hill Camp towards the Manipuri Camp 163. But the bomb could not destroy the Manipuri Camp. So, they fired again another two bombs—one against the bamboo camp and another against the position of Manipuri soldiers on the northern side of the river. Chinglen Sana, a brave disciple of General Paona died while trying to destroy one of the bombs 164. The British soldiers then fired another bomb with burning

161 Ibid, paragraph 4.
163 Souvenir Khongjom Day, paragraph 5.
164 Ibid, paragraph 5.
nozzle to the bamboo camp. The bomb exploded in the camp and some soldiers were injured. General Paona rushed to the spot. In the meantime, the British soldiers had already marched unto the camp side and hand-to-hand fighting started between Manipuri soldiers and British soldiers. The British Infantry soldiers rushed out to take their position. By realising the British tactics, General Paona ran along the river bund of Khongjom to meet the British troops. After killing many British troops, General Paona took rest on the slope of the Khaba Hill. He was sitting alone watching the dead bodies spreading all over the place. Suddenly the British army surrounded him. He was offered favourable position, terms and conditions for the settlement. But General Paona offered himself to be killed than surrender. So, the British beheaded him. The dead body of Paona was placed at the foot of the Khaba Hill and the British soldiers gave a general salute to pay respect to the departed soul of Paona. Khongjom Day is observed in

165 Ibid.
166 Ibid, paragraph 6.
167 Ibid.
168 Ibid.
Manipur every year on 23rd April in memory of Paona and other martyrs who died in Khongjom for the defence of their motherland.

There is a controversy whether Paona breathed his last on 23rd April 1891 or on 25th April 1891. According to N. Khelchandra, Paona died on 25th April 1891. This was the last day of the Khongjom war. 170

But according to P. Pholendrajit Singh, the eldest grandson of Paona, Paona laid down his life on 23rd April 1891. "It was on Thursday evening the fourteenth day of Vaisakha Sakabda 1813 (23rd April 1891) that Paona Brajabashiki breathed his last." 171

In order to settle the controversy, the Government of Manipur constituted a Committee on the 15th May 1981 under the Chairmanship of Y. Vaime, the then Speaker of Manipur Legislative Assembly. The Committee after examination of State official records and local traditions and customs recommended that the proper date of observing Khongjom Day should be 23rd April. The controversy was

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170 Khelchandra N., Battle of Khongjom, pp. 48-51.
at last settled by an order of the Governor of Manipur on 11th October 1982. Soon, the condition of Manipuri forces in all three fronts deteriorated. The three British forces marched towards Imphal. The first column to reach Imphal was Silchar column. On the morning of 27th April (Monday) Colonel Rennick's force occupied the Capital at 7 a.m. and hoisted Union Jack over the Capital. They found the palace empty and whole area presented a deserted appearance. Thus Manipur fell into the hands of the British. This war was the last war of independence for Manipur. It was an unequal war between a small state and an empire, between the Manipuris and the British. The defeat of Manipuris was loss of independence and marked integration of Manipur with British India.

Before the fall of the Capital the Regent, Tikendrajit and other important leaders went underground. The common

172 Manipur Gazette Extraordinary published by Authority No.266 Imphal, Friday, October, 15, 1982.
173 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p.491.
174 Assam Secretariat Foreign-A, Progs. No.275. Telegram No.221 M dated Shillong the 29th April 1891 from Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Assam to Secretary to Government of India Foreign Department message from Karong dated 29th April.
people also out of fear fled away from their houses.

Soon after the occupation of the Capital, Commander of
the British forces, General Collet announced the occupation
of Manipur by the British and ordered the people of
Manipur to surrender all arms and ammunitions to the
British. The British Government further announced that
any assistance to Kulachandra, Likendrajit and Thangal
General by anyone would lead to his execution. On 13th
April 1891 the British Government issued a proclamation
offering rewards for the capture of the following persons:-

I. The Manipur Regent Reward Rs.5,000.
   Description:- Age 35 years; very stout; dropsical;
   height about 5 feet 8 inches; complexion darkish;
   small moustache.

II. The Senanati Reward Rs.5,000.
   Description:- Age about 32; taller than Regent;
   stout; very strongly built; small moustache and
   whiskers; one of his front teeth slightly broken.

III. Dolaioi Manjaba Reward Rs.2,000.

IV. Zilla Singh Reward Rs.2,000.
V. Thangal General Reward Rs.2,000175.

In the meantime, Miranjan Subadar was arrested on 2nd May 1891.176 Thangal General was surrendered on the 7th May 1891177. The Regent was captured on the 8th May178. Angou Sana was arrested on 18th May179. Zille Ngamba captured on 21 May180. Tikendrajit was arrested in the evening of Saturday 23rd May from the house of Thokchom Dewan, Chinga Mathak181. Wankheirakpa was captured on

175 Assam Secretariat, Foreign-A, Progs.No.3 Correspondence Relating to Manipur, p.11, Enclosure No.17 from Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Purma to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India Foreign Department, Rangoon 14th April 1891.

176 Ibid, No.295, Telegram No.135, dated Karong, 4th May 1891 from Chief Pol.Officer, Manipur to Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Assam.

177 Ibid, No.311, Telegram No.139, dated 8th May 1891 Keithelmanbi from Chief Pol.Officer, Manipur to the Secretary to Chief Commissioner of Assam.

178 Ibid, No.318, Telegram No.141, Keithelmanbi 9th May 1891 from Chief Pol.Officer to Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Assam.

179 Ibid, No.345, Telegram No.181, Manipur 19th May 1891 from Chief Pol.Officer to Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Assam.

180 Ibid, No.346, Telegram No.298, Shillong 21st May 1891 from Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Assam to Secretary to Government of India Foreign Department, Simla.

181 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p.492 and No.347 Telegram No.197, Manipur 23rd May 1891 from Chief Pol.Officer, Manipur to Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Assam.
the 10th July 1891. A special Court was formed under the Presidency of Lt. Col. John Mitchell for the trial of the persons responsible for the war and trial of prisoners commenced on 11th May 1891. The charges framed against Tikendrajit who was considered as Chief culprit were:

1. Waging war against the Empress of India.
2. Abetment to the murder of four British officers.
3. Murders.

Tikendrajit for his defence prayed to the Court to allow him to bring a qualified lawyer from Cachar. The Court refused to give such permission and advised him to appoint anyone in Manipur as his defence counsel. So Janaki Nath Banu, a businessman from Imphal who had no legal knowledge was appointed as his counsel. There were also instances of omissions and misinterpretations by the interpreter Parthua Singh appointed by the Court.

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182 No.373, Telegram No.294, Manipur 11th July 1891 from Chief Pol. Officer, Manipur to Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Assam.

183 Ibid, No.327, Telegram No.149, Manipur 12th May 1891 from Chief Pol. Officer, Manipur to Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Assam.


185 Roy,J., History of Manipur, p.132.
The Court found Kulachandra, Tikendrajit and Thangal General guilty and passed dead sentences on all of them. Both Kulachandra and Tikendrajit appealed to the Governor General in Council against the decision of the Court.\textsuperscript{186} Then, they were asked to submit a written statement but not allowed to engage any barrister to plead for them in an open Court. Barrister Monomohan Ghose accordingly submitted a petition on behalf of Kulachandra and Tikendrajit\textsuperscript{187}.

Regarding the charge i.e. waging war against the Queen Empress it may be argued that the Chief Commissioner and his party had waged war against Manipur state. In fact the British forces without declaration of war attacked Tikendrajit's house when all people were asleep. The Manipur Government had never waged war against the British Government, only she acted in self-defence. Acts of state done in self-defence in unavoidable circumstances incur no liability and constitute no offence\textsuperscript{188}. So, the charge was without foundation. The Treaty of Yandabo of

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid, p.132.

\textsuperscript{187} Ghattacharyya, M., Gazeteer of Manipur State, 1963, p.88.

1826 granted independence to the Manipur State and that treaty remained in force during the Anglo-Manipuri War of 1891.

The Governor General confirmed the death sentences passed on Tikendrajit and Thangal General and commuted the death sentence into one of transportation for life in respect of Kulachandra and Angou Sana. The order was announced on 13th August 1891 and in the evening of the same day Tikendrajit and Thangal General were executed at the present Sahid Minar. Kajao was hanged. It appeared that the Government of India had already decided upon the punishment to be meted out and the special Court was set up for the sake of legal formality. So John Gorst rightly said that the British Government did not like to have able men in Native State and that in fact was the real reason for getting rid of Tikendrajit.

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190 Assam Secretariat Foreign-A, Progs.No.346, Telegram No.298 M, Shillong dated 21st May 1891 from Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Assam to Secretary to Government of India Foreign Department.

191 Simla Record – I Foreign Department Secret-I Progs. No.132, Telegram, dated 28th May 1891 from the Viceroy, Simla to the Secretary of State London.
After the end of the war, there was a lot of deliberation about the future status of Manipur. Mr. Ward, the Chief Commissioner of Assam recommended that Manipur must be annexed to British Empire as a punishment of waging war against the queen Empress of India. However Lord Landsdowne the Governor General of India, was of opinion that Manipur would remain as dependent of British Empire and internal administration must be handed over to a ruler, who would be acceptable and to be recognised by the British Government.

It was declared that the descendents of Gambhir Singh had committed offences against the British Government. So, the Chief of Manipur state had to be selected from amongst the descendents of Nara Singh 192.

As a result, the British Government appointed Churachand Singh, son of Choubiysima and grandson of Raja Nara Singh as a ruler of Manipur 193. Here, we may mention that the British invaded Manipur because Tikendrajit and his party dethroned Maharaja Surchendra, who was recognised by the British Government. If this was the

192 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p.495.
193 Ibid.
real reason of British intervention in the internal affairs of Manipur, why was Surchandra not re-installed to the vacant throne of Manipur? The real reason was that the British Government wanted to put on the throne of Manipur a prince, who would be ignorant, loyal, subordinate and would never cross the lines drawn by the British Government. For this reason, they selected a young prince and then sent him to Mayo College of Ajmir for his education. The real reason behind his education was to train the young prince to be loyal and faithful to the British authorities, so that he became a pillar of the British Empire.

CONCLUSION

We have studied the history of annexation of the North East States of India to British Empire in detail. What are the conclusions?

In the course of sixty seven years (1824-1891), the whole of North East regions were either annexed or subjugated to the British Empire. Before the 1st Anglo Burmese War (1824-25), North East region remained almost secluded from the political influence of India. The British for the first time in the history of India united
the whole of north eastern region under one authority. Not only this, the British brought these impenetrable region in the cultural history of India.

The annexation and subjugation policy followed by the British Government towards north eastern region varied from time to time. They did not like to interfere in internal administration of the regions, and they followed conciliatory policy as far as possible. When they were forced to interfere, they entrusted the internal administration to a ruler, which was acceptable to the people. Actually, they did not want direct administration of this impassable mountains and impenetrable jungles. Because, they were actutely cost-conscious as their aim was primarily economic considerations. For a long time, the East India Company was not interested in North East regions, as it was not economically and financially viable. They were interested in this region only when they were threatened by the imperialistic design of the Burmeses and the French.

On some occasions, the method of annexation pursued by the British Government in India cannot be justified by observers. In the resumption of Upper Assam, the
Commissioner of Assam did not take impartial decision of the real situation. If the Commissioner took an impartial decision of the real situation, the unfortunate Raja would not be deposed so soon. There was no fair trial of the Raja's administration and no opportunity was given to him to answer the charges that were levelled against him.

Here, we find a clash between policy planners and ground officers and on many occasions the orders passed by the Court of Directors were not carried out by subordinate officers. The Board of Directors condemned local officers when Jaintia affair came before them and they disapproved the policy of local officers. They felt deeply for the unfortunate Raja and advised the Bengal Government to treat him leniently. Besides, it was a wrong move and accusation to hold Rajendra Singh responsible for an act which was committed when he was a mere boy. It is remarkable that from a far away place, the Board of Directors could assess better the real situation prevailing in Assam than men on the spot.

The responsibility of the unfortunate incident after Palace revolution in Manipur goes to Mr. Quinton. A more
A statute person could have served the British interest better. We cannot blame Mr. Grimwood, as he had only to obey the orders of his superior officers. Mr. Quinton's move to arrest Tikendrajit in the darbar, who was Juba of a state, was very undiplomatic. It seems that he lacked high diplomatic skill of Lord Dufferin in the 2nd Anglo-Burmese War. Had Mr. Quinton knew how to handle Tikendrajit and his associates, there might not be Anglo-Manipuri war.

Apart from this, it was extraordinary that the Darbar was to be held on Ekadesi day, which was a day of fasting and religious rites for Manipuris. To call the darbar on Ekadesi was impolitic. This annoyed religious sentiment of Manipuris and violated traditional customs. Besides, when the Regent and his followers arrived to Residency on scheduled time, they were kept waiting in hot sun for hours without sufficient reasons and proper royal reception. This further enraged royal elites, as this was against Meitei custom and aroused reasonable suspicion against the scheme of things and the mission of Mr. Quinton. In the words of Mrs. Grimwood "Had there been no reason for keeping the princes waiting
at the gate things might have ended very differently” 194.

After the British Residency raised white flag, Quinton wanted to go to the palace to find out the precise implication of the word “surrender”. Would it be safe to go to the palace when feelings of Manipuris were running high by the previous night’s incident?

Tikendrajit lost his balance of mind as well as royal diplomatic qualities. So he meekly submitted to whimsical mood of Thangel General in killing the four English officers. Mr. Grimwood said, “I myself knowing the Yubraj so well thought that he would be clever enough to see his own advantage in keeping them as hostages” 195.

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194 Grimwood, My Three Years in Manipur, Reprinted, 1975, p.183.