CHAPTER III

REVOLTS AND CONSPIRACIES

As discussed in the previous chapter Nar Singh defeated the attempts that had been made to dispossess the young Raja Chandrakirti Singh from the throne. But without any apparent reason he desired to retire from the Regency and remain for the rest of his life at Brindaban. He, therefore, sought opinion from Captain Gordon, the Political Agent at Manipur. The latter declined and reported the matter to the Governor-General in Council, pointing out therein that Debendra Singh, the younger brother of the Regent, who would in all probability succeed his brother in the Regency was not the person qualified for the task to be assigned to him. He further mentioned that if the Regency be headed by Debendra Singh it would certainly be a signal for fresh attempts to oust the new Regency and the Raja, and therefore, suggested that the request of Nar Singh should not be complied with. His Lordship in Council concurred in the opinion of Captain Gordon and the request of Nar Singh was turned down.

A man of generous disposition, Nar Singh looked after the Maharani and the young Raja with utmost regard. But the Maharani was always haunted by the fear that Nar Singh would one day occupy the throne by thwarting the claims of her son, the young Raja. She could not imagine that Nar Singh would not stoop so low and consequently she began to conspire against his life. She found in

1. P.C., 16 August, 1841; Nos.118-119.
Debendra Singh a collaborator, who also was an aspirant for the throne of Manipur. But in view of the popularity enjoyed by his brother, the Regent, he knew that it was not possible on his part to bring about his fall by direct action. He thought it best to set the Maharani against the Regent and convinced that Nar Singh would finally banish or murder her son and occupy the throne. Debendra Singh, however, remained behind the scene without involving himself directly in all those affairs. His idea was that if Nar Singh was killed by the conspirators he could easily occupy the throne by removing Chandradirti Singh, but in case of failure of the conspiracy the Maharani and the young Raja would surely be banished. He would, therefore, remain safe and after the death of Nar Singh there would be no difficulty for him to succeed to the throne.

The Maharani won over Thangal, Paosang and some other nobles, who looked to their own advancement by a Government under her authority. The services and honour the Regent attributed to her, therefore, could not save him from the murderous attempt which she had planned against his life. One prince Nabin Singh, who bore an ancient grudge against the Regent presented before the Maharani a plot to murder Nar Singh and received her approval. Prince Nabin Singh was distantly related to the royal family and during the time of Raja Gambhir.

3. Ibid.
Singh he held an important office in the country. But he had been displaced from the post by the Regent and was put under irons instead of brass ones (the custom in Manipur was that Rajkumars were to be chained with fetters made of brass), which inevitably made the Regent an arch enemy of Nabin Singh. The latter, therefore, swore to kill the Regent. The Manipur version that the plot to murder Nar Singh was entirely concocted by Nabin Singh is not tenable, because the latter was not a significant person who could undertake such a conspiracy under his own account and hope for success in the undertakings. Moreover, the depositions of Thockchao, a slave of one Chanamba, formerly Khabam Lakpa, Keithel lakpa Dekab Bhundari, Fungei, Lairikyengba Laloo, Chongtha and other witnesses made it clear the participation and leadership of the Maharani in the conspiracy.

As planned, the conspirators headed by Nabin Singh, entered the Palace in the evening of Saturday, 27 January 1844 and attacked the Regent and wounded him while he was hearing scriptures read in the Temple. Fortunately, Nar Singh could escape with his life but Nabin Singh was caught and beheaded by the guards on the spot. Taking that instant to their heels the other conspirators managed their escape. The news of the failure of the conspiracy was communicated to the Maharani by Thangal while she and other ladies of the Raja's Palace were hearing their scriptures read to them. The substance of the communication was not overheard by any other

4. P.C., 27 April, 1844, No.130.
5. Ibid. Nos.101-102; Depositions taken by Gordon from 27 January, 1844 to 3 February, 1844.
6. P.C., 2 March, 1844, Nos.177-185.
persons present. On receipt of the information, the Maharani left the Capital without making enquiries about the infant Raja, and both of them later left the Capital.

The Maharani and her followers arrived at Cachar in the evening of 3 February 1844. Capt. Lyons, the Superintendent of Cachar, made necessary accommodations for them and sent a Havildar's party for the protection of the Raja and his mother and reported to the Government of Bengal the reasons for their arrival at Cachar. The Supreme Government, however, did not consider it wise to take steps based only on Lyon's report, and therefore, instructed the Political Agent at Manipur to establish facts as to how far the Maharani was concerned in instigating the attack on the Regent. About that time the Maharani also appealed to the Government of Bengal stating that one day she heard an outcry in which she was told that the Regent had been cut down and fearing the consequent danger, and being unable to find Gordon, who had then gone out for an inspection of the Cachar-Manipur Road, fled with her son and placed themselves under the protection of the Superintendent of Cachar. She prayed that her son be enthroned, once again, with the British help.

Gordon reported to the Supreme Government that the Maharani's assertion that the absence of the Political Agent

7. P.C., 27 April, 1844, Nos.100-103.
8. Ibid.
11. P.C., 27 April, 1844, Nos.100-103.
(i.e., his absence) from Manipur Valley was one of the reasons which induced her to go to Cachar was at variance with her own statement. He stated that his arrival at Bishenpur, seventeen miles from the Capital, on 24 January 1844 i.e., four days before the attack, was known to the Maharani. She could not expect to find him at Mungba on the Cachar-Manipur road. Her avoidance of the new road and the Political Agent were sufficient proofs of her guilt. Moreover, Lieutenant McCullock, the then Assistant Political Agent at Manipur, who was by that time at Cachar, reported that the Maharani had avoided intentionally the new road in order to avoid the Political Agent. Officials, both civil and military, holding authority in Manipur came to the Political Agent in a body and stated that Deka Bhundari or the man who had been employed as the agent of the Maharani had been captured while trying to escape to Cachar and had given evidence in which he implicated the Maharani in the conspiracy. The depositions of Keithel Lakpa Deka Bhundari, formerly Dewan stated further that if the conspiracy had ended in failure the Maharani expressed her opinion that she would not remain in Manipur but would go elsewhere for her safety. The depositions also disclosed the fact that it was the desire of the Maharani that the conspiracy should be executed on Saturday. Pungei and Lairikyengba Laloo stated that the Maharani even calculated to run

12. Ibid.
13. P.C., 2 March 1844, Nos. 177-185.
14. P.C., 27 April 1844, Nos. 101-102; Depositions taken by Gordon from 27 January 1844 to 3 February 1844.
15. Ibid.
upte Bengal had the attempt failed. Further, the depositions of Mingthoujaaba, Pasha, Chabungba Subadar and Khetri Jemadar confirmed the disappearance of the Raja and the Maharani from the Capital immediately after the failure of the conspiracy. Ngangbi, the Raja's grandmother also asserted the truth that Thangal came to the Palace on the night of 27 January 1844 and had a talk with the Maharani. The latter then tied a green garment round her waist and went out by the front door very much upset. When she (Ngangbi) asked what the matter was the Maharani gave no reply; and since then she was not to be seen by any one in the Royal enclosures. The Raja's grandmother also stated that she never saw her grandson along with his mother. Nevertheless, she never heard the Maharani asking about her son, the Raja. Ngangbi, therefore, believed that the Maharani should have known where she could find her son and suspected that the Maharani was involved in the conspiracy. Depositions of princess Konsam Ongbi and other ladies, Taoriya, Takehambi, Aheibi and Apanbi, the Raja's step mother also gave the same opinion.

Gordon, after a careful study of all the above records established the guilt of the Maharani in the conspiracy. He reported: " .......... the statement that the Ranees was concerned in instigating the attack on the Regent is confirmed." "I have no doubt" he wrote, "as to the establishment

16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
of a government in the name of the Raja but under the authority of the Ranee and the substitution of her adherents in the room of the men now holding office having been the objects of the conspiracy." 21

"Of the existence of a conspiracy resulting in the attack on the Regent" continued the Agent, "I have not heard anyone here expressed a doubt and I have received confirmation from a Burmese officer who on my inquiry of him in regard to a Subadar who with his wife and family was ascertained to have absconded on the night of the attack and fled to Kabaw informed me that the Subadar had avowed his knowledge of the conspiracy and had said that he had fled fearing that his knowledge of it might come out in evidence."

Gordon, therefore, suggested that the Supreme Government should not entertain the request of the Maharani for the extension of British help to her and to her son against the people of Manipur. The Maharani and the young Raja had become obnoxious to the whole people 22 and as such their return to Manipur would not be safe even if they were to be backed by the British troops 23. The majority of the people on the other hand, expressed their desire that Mar Singh should immediately be proclaimed Raja 24. Gordon, however, hesitated to give his consent to the wishes of the people of Manipur and referred the matter to the Governor-General in Council.

22. P.C., 27 April, 1844, Nos.101-102; Depositions taken by Gordon from 27 January 1844 to 3 February 1844.
23. P.C., 2 March 1844, Nos.177-185.
24. Ibid.
25. P.C., 23 May 1850, No.123.
Before receiving any definite instructions from His Lordship in Council the ministers of the State went on pressing the Political Agent that since the Raja had fled from the country and the custom of Manipur did not admit of the guddi being vacant, Nar Singh should immediately be proclaimed as the next Raja. By that time His Lordship in Council thought it wise to abstain from any interference in the internal affairs of the State and intimated that Nar Singh could be recognised as Raja if he agreed to the decision of making some provision for 'the deposed family', (i.e., the Raja and his mother, the Maharani). His Lordship in Council further informed Nar Singh that the amount of the above provision need not be large and might be assigned out of the amount granted by the Supreme Government as a compensation for the loss of the Kabaw Valley so that it could be paid regularly by the Supreme Government. Nar Singh agreed to pay ₹ 80/- to Chandrakirti Singh and another ₹ 20/- to his mother, the Maharani, from the Kabaw money and the Supreme Government subsequently recognised him as the Raja of Manipur in September 1844.

It was evident from the above that R.C. Mazumdar's theory—that Nar Singh 'subsequently usurped' the throne of

27. P.C., 23 May, 1850, No.119.
29. P.C., 28 September, 1844, Nos.191-196, Nar Singh to Gordon, 4 August, 1844.
Manipur, as stated by Dr. R.C. Mazumdar, is far from the truth. No records have, till this date, been found to show the least inclination of Nar Singh towards the throne of Manipur. It was obvious that if he desired to be the Raja of Manipur he could have done so immediately after the death of Gambhir Singh. His services to the people, the popularity he enjoyed and his allegiance to the throne were the sufficient proofs of it and, therefore, the question of 'usurpation', even if he aspired for the throne, would never come up because of the fact that in such a case also, he would have been the choice of the people. When the young Raja fled to Gachar and the guddi was left vacant, it was only natural that he would occupy it as desired by the people and on the approval of the Governor-General in Council. Dr. Mazumdar might have based his argument mainly on the facts supplied by Gait in his 'History of Assam.'

REVOLTS:

Immediately on his accession to the throne Nar Singh received the news that Manipuri princes, Gunadhwaja, commonly known as Chuba, Meleikhomba, Purno Singh and Sachouba Singh, who were by that time at Gachar, were preparing for an attack on him. The news frightened the people.

32. " .......... in 1844 the Queen Dowager attempted to poison the Regent but failed and the latter then usurped the throne"; Gait, Sir Edward, History of Assam, p. 348.
33. P.C., 23 May 1850, No. 113.
so much so that it had caused the rise of the prices of the necessaries of life nearly three times. The Raja, therefore, intimated the news to Captain Gordon. The latter, fearing danger, reported the matter to the Supreme Government, suggesting thereby that the princes in question should be removed from Cachar. The Supreme Government, however, did not accede to their immediate removal from Cachar but desired that they should be warned that they were liable to be removed into Bengal at any time if their proceedings were such as to create disturbance in Cachar or on the borders of Manipur.  

A timely warning was made to the princes but it was disregarded. So, the only way to prevent the attack contemplated by them was to arrest the parties before they entered into the Jiri jungles. It was reported that although the princes were powerless they made their further endeavour to enter Manipur after the arrival of the Maharani at Cachar. Since then the latter tried to instigate the above princes for an attack on Manipur and sent her men to Calcutta to procure necessary arms. It was believed that without the help from the Maharani the princes would not have it in their power to undertake an attempt of that kind. The Maharani, who had her followers at Manipur, thus became the prime mover of the whole plot. The Government of Bengal suggested that Kar Singh should make all efforts to discover the supporters of the

34. P.C. 3 April, 1847, Nos.120-122.
35. P.C., 9 November, 1844, Nos.120-122.
Maharani in the valley and crush the conspiracy on the spot. Lyons, the Superintendent of Cachar, But Captain who held different views desired that the authorities at Fort William should try immediately to remove the princes in question from Cachar. But the Supreme Government considered that the guilt or innocence of the above princes should be established first by investigations before the Government was called upon to determine as to their disposal. The removal of these princes was also suggested by Capt. Gordon pointing out that if they were driven out of the frontier district of Cachar without provisions the possibility of creating any sort of disturbance in Manipur could be checked. Lyons, after a careful study of the movement of the above princes, finally expressed the opinion that without removing the Maharani and her son from Cachar, peace in Manipur could not be secured. The evidence of Raja Gopiram Haomacha, personal attendant of the Ex-Raja Chandrakirti Singh, revealed that the young Raja and his mother were continuously planning for a revolt against Manipur. The evidence further revealed that the Maharani granted £ 500/- to the above princes to buy guns etc. and thus, year after year, they were collecting men and money for an attack on Manipur. Jiban Singh and Mutua Gourmani Singh, son of Bolaram Singh, resident of Malugram in Cachar, also told the same story. The evidence of Salam Punshi Singh, resident of Manipur stated that the young

36. Ibid.
37. P.C., 19 October, 1844, Nos.166-167; Gordon to Lyons, 28 September, 1844.
38. P.C., 9 November, 1844, Nos.120-122.
40. Ibid.
Raja was involved in the party. His statement further continued that the young Raja even wanted to accompany the princes up to Manipur. But due to difference of opinion in fixing the dates he was kept aloof from the actual encounter. The Supreme Government, therefore, thought that the case should be left to the discretion of the Superintendent of Cachar with a provision for consulting the Political Agent at Manipur in determining whether the young Raja and his mother should be allowed to remain in Cachar under surveillance or they should be obliged to take up their residence at Sylhet so that their future designs could be checked in due time. It was felt that the Maharani should be transferred to such a place where she could not be able to secure money and assistance from her followers against Nar Singh. The suggestion of her removal to Faridpur or at Mymensingh or any other stations as was deemed fit by Lyons and Gordon received the approval of the Supreme Government. However, it was decided that the Maharani would be safe enough even at Cachar or Sylhet if she was kept under limited surveillance by the local authorities, and was made to understand that any attempt to disturb the peace of Manipur would certainly lead her to being placed under greater restraint or even removal to some other distant stations.

While measures were thus taken up in full swing to prevent their advance towards Manipur, the above princes

41. Ibid.
42. P.C., 9 November, 1844, Nos.120-122.
43. Ibid.
started on the night of February 1, 1850 to attack Manipur. Captain G. Verner, the new Superintendent of Cachar, sent a Subadar's party to intercept their advance. Information to that effect was also immediately sent to Captain McCullock, since he succeeded as the Political Agent at Manipur,

pointing out that on the night of February 1, 1850 Gunga Singh, a Manipuri, came to the Superintendent's house and reported that the Manipuri princes in question had marched towards Manipur for an attack on the State. Gunga Singh also stated that he had seen a number of muskets and Manipuri sepoys at Meleikhomba's residence. On receipt of this information the Superintendent sent a detachment of the Sylhet Light Infantry Battalion proceed immediately to Meleikhomba's barea and to prevent them, if possible, from making a start. But the party was late. They reached Meleikhomba's barea after the princes and their followers had started for Manipur.

McCullock and Nar Singh, on receipt of the above information, advanced with their troops to intercept the party. About that time, the Superintendent of Cachar reported that the detachment he had sent to follow up the princes and their party returned being unable to find their whereabouts. After collecting information that the princes's party were hiding

44. P.C., 23 May 1850, No.111.
45. Ibid., No.112.
46. Ibid., No.113.
47. Ibid.
in the jungles, north of Lakhimpur, the Superintendent sent a police force to attack them. But the party once again made their escape without any encounter with the police force and secreted themselves amongst the Nagas to the north of Cachar and west of the Barak from 14th to 18th February 1850. On the 19th, they crossed the Barak and on the 20th and 21st they moved to the north of the river. But suddenly on 23 February they attacked the village of Langa, a Naga village lying at a distance of one day's journey from the Capital 48.

Immediately on receipt of the above intelligence the Raja's troops moved upon the Langas, and Debendra Singh, the Jubaraja, also established himself at the base of the hill where the Langa road led to the valley 49. But they found no trace of the invading force there. Soon they learnt that the invaders had marched towards the valley. They were pursued by the troops and the advance guard attacked the raiders and shot two of them and made another two prisoners. Later, Chuba was shot dead while attempting to make his way into Burma, Meleikhomba was killed in his flight to the west and the other two princes were killed while escaping to the north.

48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
To make matters worse, Netrajit Singh, one of Gambhir Singh's nephews, who was banished to Ava by Gambhir Singh himself and was very lately in high esteem there, tried to attack Manipur with a large force. War Singh reported the matter to McCullock. Through the latter's endeavours the threat from Netrajit was checked before it could reach the valley of Manipur.

A study of movement of the rebels reveals that they failed for various reasons. It exhibited lack of leadership of the princes specially in calculating the then prevailing political situation in Manipur. They were simply guided by an impression that they should attempt a revolt against Nar Singh, no matter what his stand with the people might be. And as regards Meleikhomba and his party, the base 'underestimation' of the popularity Nar Singh enjoyed by that time and the praising 'overestimation' of the Maharani's stand with the people were, undoubtedly, the mistakes that they should not have committed. The inevitable result was that the people of Manipur stood against them. But quite unaware of these developments they simply followed the Maharani's leadership. They, therefore, carelessly overlooked the probable dangers that might come against them from Nar Singh and the British

officers on the spot. It thus weakened their strength, and
enfeebled them, and they were subdued ruthlessly by the over-
whelming power of the two forces. Had the princes been able
to examine the situation correctly, had they been able to
create a feeling of hatred in the minds of the people of Manipur against Nar Singh, the course of events would have been
otherwise.

CHANDRAKIRTI SINGH AGAIN RESTORED:

After the death of Nar Singh on 11 April 1850, his
brother Debendra Singh succeeded him on the throne of Manipur.
McCulloch reported the matter to the Governor-General in
Council and suggested that the succession of Debendra Singh
should be recognised immediately. While the matter was under
the consideration of the Governor-General in Council Chandra-
kirti Singh claimed that he was the rightful claimant to the
throne and even threatened that he would forcibly occupy it
if his claim was not recognised. McCulloch rightly observed
that if Chandrakirti Singh be allowed to remain at Cachar,
the peace of Manipur and its frontier would be disturbed and
the authority of Debendra Singh might be weakened. He,
therefore, suggested that the Superintendent of Cachar should
be authorised to take immediate steps for removing the Ex-Raja
and other members of his family whom he considered likely to
be concerned in any fresh attacks on Manipur. McCulloch

52. Ibid., No.119, Translation of a letter from Chandrakirti
to McCulloch, 14 April, 1850.
53. Ibid., No.118.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
also suggested that the Superintendent should be allowed to convey the decision of the Supreme Government to the Ex-Raja that if he was implicated in any attacks on Debendra Singh or if the peace of Manipur was disturbed through his machinations, it would inevitably lead to the forfeiture of the grant that he received from the Government of Manipur. In case the Ex-Raja was removed to Dacca, McCullock held the view that a police guard, under the immediate orders of the Magistrate of Dacca, should be placed on him. However, if the Ex-Raja reconciled after a time, to his position and decided not to leave Dacca without permission from the Supreme Government, the Magistrate should be given his discretionary power to withdraw the guard.

The question to be decided by the Supreme Government was whether Debendra Singh should be recognised as the Raja of Manipur or whether he should be informed peremptorily that the Government held a different view on the question of succession and, therefore, his case would not be considered favourably. However, it was felt inexpedient to refuse the recognition to Debendra Singh as the next Raja and withdraw the Political Agency from Manipur and leave the State in the hands of the contending parties to fight for the throne between themselves until one or the other should completely be subdued. The position that the Supreme Government occupied

56. Ibid., No.122.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
in the meantime in respect to Manipur gave it a right to interfere in the internal affairs of the State in order to preserve the country from the state of anarchy.  

The supreme Government, concurred in the opinion of McCullock. Debendra Singh was recognised as the Raja of Manipur in June 1850 and arrangements for the removal of Chandrakirti Singh to Dacca were made. To prevent his evading the orders of the Government, the Political Agent was instructed that a small guard of the Sylhet Light Infantry Battalion should be placed on him. While arrangements were thus being made for the removal of Chandrakirti Singh from Cachar, Bhuban Singh and Shetu Singh, two sons of the late Raja Nar Singh, came to Cachar and took up his cause and made preparation for an attack on Manipur. The Governor-General in Council, on receipt of the information, considered it to be a grave danger and instructed the Superintendent of Cachar to increase the number of the guards on the Raja. Accordingly Verner increased the number of sentries from eight to twenty with instructions to keep strict vigilance on the person of Chandrakirti Singh.

59. Ibid.  
60. Ibid.  
62. Ibid., No.27, Verner to Halliday, 12 June 1850.  
63. Ibid.
The Ex-Raja lived in a barrack which was situated within a hundred and fifty yards from the Superintendent's house and had a bamboo paling around it. It was thus kept apart from other houses and was not more than forty-five yards long and thirty yards broad, and with five sentries posted in different directions and one of them at his door, Verner was satisfied that before the arrival of the boats in which the Ex-Raja had to be removed to Dacca, Chandrakirti Singh would not be able to manage his escape. Inspite of these measures, on 10 June, 1860, the Ex-Raja, with eight of his followers, managed his escape without being seen or heard by any one on guard.

On the receipt of this news Verner sent immediately a Subadar's party with sixty men of the Sylhet Light Infantry Battalion to check, if possible, the Ex-Raja's advance. The information was conveyed to McCullock asking him to take up necessary steps to check his advance to Manipur. Verner, however, could not say how the Ex-Raja and his party got off but he believed that there must have been gross neglect on the parts of the guards or the guards might have been tampered with in some way or other. After a careful study of the movements of the Ex-Raja, the Superintendent submitted a report with his observations. He held the view that the escape had been planned before the guard was placed on the Ex-Raja and the coming of the sons of Nar Singh to Cachar made the attempt easier and successful. Drawing the attention of the Supreme

64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
Government to the measures that he had undertaken for the removal of Chandrakirti Singh from Cachar, the Superintendent stated that had the boats arrived at Cachar in proper time as he had desired, Chandrakirti Singh would have been removed to Dacca or, at least would have been on his way to Dacca. On receipt of the reports submitted by Verner, the Supreme Government instituted an inquiry to find out how the Ex-Raja had managed his escape. The depositions of the persons who were on the guard revealed that sheer negligence had been committed by the person whose function it was to guard Chandrakirti Singh. It was also suspected that the sentries who were on duty between eight and ten on the night of 10 June, 1850, the day on which the Ex-Raja made his escape, were not properly instructed to see whether he was safe in his barrack or not. Unfortunately for the guards there was heavy rainfall in that night and it was dark also. But no arrangements for light etc. were made, and the inner sentry, who was placed in the barrack, could not see whether the Ex-Raja was there or not. The Supreme Government believed that the guard received no orders to see the Ex-Raja at any time, and therefore, confirmed that the escape of Chandrakirti Singh was chiefly due to the negligence on the part of the Guard Commander. The barrack in which the Ex-Raja lived was surrounded by bamboo paling on three sides and by the Jiri River.

66. Ibid., No.203.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., No.204.
69. Ibid.
in the east. No person, therefore, could get out without making a noise in breaking it and no person could climb it. If the sentries who were placed there with loaded muskets, had watched carefully, there ought to have been no difficulty in preventing the Raja from his escape. The Governor-General in Council took Verner to task for the escape of the ex-Raja from Cachar. His Lordship in Council believed that had the Superintendent taken his responsibilities seriously, the escape could have been averted, and, therefore, he was asked to explain his conduct.

In his explanation Verner stated that the escape of Chandrakirti Singh was not his fault and solemnly declared that he did everything that he could do to the best of his judgement to prevent the Ex-Raja's escape. He expected that the delay in getting Chandrakirti Singh off to Dacca in consequence of his not having been able to procure boats in Cachar would be overlooked. Moreover, he stated that before 30 May 1850, nobody thought it likely that the Ex-Raja would make his attempt to escape. But on the 30th when information reached him that the Raja and the other princes intended to make an attack on Manipur, the Superintendent immediately called on Lieutenant Le.Cave, who was in command of the guard and instructed him to increase the guard upto twenty sepoys. Orders were also given to him that no person should be allowed to leave the compound after dusk and that at night not more that five people

70. Ibid., No.205.
should be allowed to admit in it. The Superintendent further
stated that he had personally instructed Cave to direct
the guard 'to see every night that the Raja was in the hut.'
He also believed that it was but natural to suppose that the
guard 'should see and ought to see' the person it was guard-
ing. He, therefore, maintained that the Ex-Raja could not
have escaped, except through the neglect of the sentries.

It was hard to imagine how the Ex-Raja and some of his follow-
ers were able to get out of the barrack without having been
or heard by any one of the guard or without the guards' know-
ing how or when they had managed their escape. After examin-
ing the above explanations minutely the Governor-General in
Council exonerated all the accusations on Capt. Verner, the
Superintendent of Cachar.

After their escape from the guard, the Ex-Raja and
his party, along with the sons of Nar Singh, arrived at Jiri
River. After crossing the same they again took up their
position on the Kalanaga Hills on 24 June 1850 and there they
were joined by a large number of Manipuris, both from Sylhet
and Cachar. The object of the Ex-Raja was to regain the throne
of Manipur, if possible by fair means, and if not, by force
of arms. He earnestly hoped that the people of Manipur would

71. Ibid., No.205.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., No.206, Offg. Secy. to Supdt., Cachar,
29 November, 1850.
76. P.C., 16 August, 1850, No.27.
come over to him and actually a section of the people had advanced in his favour in the valley of Manipur itself. On receipt of the news of their onward advance Debendra Singh and McCullock took up all necessary measures to check the progress of Chandrakirti Singh and his party. However, strangely enough, the Ex-Raja had overcome all the oppositions that had placed before his progress and finally established himself in his former Capital at Langthabal, three miles from Imphal, on 6 July, 1860.

The success of Chandrakirti Singh may be explained by the fact that all the sepoys who had been sent against him proved traitors to Debendra Singh. On his arrival on the valley he was again joined by many more people. Debendra Singh, had been, thus, betrayed by his own soldiers and more than half the people of Manipur also went against him. Moreover, the Government of Bengal, at that critical time, had suddenly changed its policy of interference. Instead of supporting Debendra Singh they had instructed the Political Agent at Manipur to withdraw to the British territory any moment he found situation dangerous. It was a fact that Debendra Singh's accession to the throne was not acceptable to the whole people of Manipur. They on the contrary desired to see the son of Gambhir Singh establish himself, once again, in his rights. Besides that the combination of the sons of the two great heroes of the last Burmese War, Gambhir Singh and Nar Singh, and their combined attack, sounded the bugle call to

77. Ibid.  
78. Ibid.  
79. Ibid., No.30.
the Manipuris, and as a result, not a single man in the State dared to go against them even if he had a good chance of doing so. McCullock rightly observed that with an exception of two or three hundred people, all deserted Debendra Singh on 12 July, 1850, the day on which he fought his last battle with Chandrakirti Singh at Langtnabal. Being unable to protect himself and his own throne, Debendra Singh fled from the country on the night of 12 July, 1850.

The success of Chandrakirti Singh was due to the sympathetic considerations of his people. He arrived at Imphal on 13 July, 1850 and proclaimed himself as the Raja. He visited the Political Agent on 15 July, 1850 and intimated him that Manipur belonged to his father Gambhir Singh and his uncle Nar Singh. He, therefore, succeeded in re-occupying the throne and appointed Bhuban Singh his Jubaraja and Shetu Singh Senapati. Chandrakirti Singh admitted to his having escaped from Cachar. But since he occupied the throne of Manipur with an overwhelming support from its people he appealed to the Governor-General in Council that His Lordship in Council should recognise his succession. His Lordship in Council, in view of the changed circumstances, believed that the officers on the spot had made a grave mistake in supporting Debendra Singh against the wishes of the Manipuris, who had their inclination

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80. Ibid.
81. Ibid., No.35.
82. Ibid., No.36, Translation of a letter from Chandrakirti to McCullock, 17 July, 1850.
in favour of the family of Gambhir Singh. Lord Dalhousie, the
then Governor-General of India, recorded that Chandrakirti
Singh appeared to be most acceptable to the State of Manipur
and suggested that his succession be recognised publicly so
as to avert civil war in the State. Thus Chandrakirti Singh
was recognised as the Raja of Manipur in September, 1850.

Soon after his accession, Chandrakirti Singh, instead
of trying to establish his position among the people of Mani­
pur, adopted a series of oppressive measures which compelled
many of them to flee from the country. Instead of alleviat­
ing oppression, the young Raja and his ministers undertook
hard measures to prevent their flight from the State. Many
persons had, therefore, been apprehended and placed in chains.
As a result of these oppressions some members of the royal
family fled to Cachar and started to collect men and money
for an attack on the new Raja. About that time, to make matters
worse, intimation also arrived at Manipur that Debendra Singh
was planning an attack on the State. It was believed that he
was invited by a small party in Manipur. It was also suspected
that a body of the Lumhais, who were stockaded on the banks
of the Jiri River and who were thus interrupting communica­
tion with Manipur, contemplated to join Debendra Singh. The
Political Agent, therefore, suggested that the Supreme Govern­
ment should increase the strength of the guard that was by
that time placed on duty at Manipur. He further pointed out

83. P.C., 3 Oct. 1861, No. 1; Minute of Lord Dalhousie, 13 Sept. 1851.
84. P.C., 31 January, 1851, No. 122.
85. P.C., 13 Dec., 1850, No. 199; McCulloch to Halliday, 8 Sept. 1860.
86. Ibid., No. 209.
that though the Burmese frontier was quiet about that time he feared that a continuance of the agitation between the rivals, without demonstrations of displeasure from the side of the Supreme Government, would, once again, induce the Burmese to assist Netrajit Singh, the Manipur prince, who was then in much favour at Ava as stated above. Concurring in the opinion of the Political Agent and with a view to prevent, if possible, the people from joining Debendra Singh and his party, it was made known publicly through the Superintendent of Cachar that should any person or inhabitant of Cachar aid, assist or accompany any of the princes for the purpose of making an attack on Manipur his property would be confiscated and be sold by auction and that if caught he would otherwise be punished. Though preparations were thus made to check his advance, Debendra Singh, with all his followers, started on the night of 17 October, 1850 for an attack on Manipur. Accordingly, the Superintendent of Cachar immediately sent a party of the Sylhet Light Infantry Battalion to stop the progress of Debendra Singh. But the Ex-Raja's party managed its advance and made an encounter with the troops that were sent by Chandrakirti Singh. In the engagement some of Debendra Singh's followers were wounded and killed and the rest were dispersed. The Ex-Raja's endeavour thus ended in total failure.

88. Ibid., No.213.
Debendra Singh, however, made a fresh attempt. This time he sought either the throne or death. In a letter addressed to the Governor-General in Council he claimed the throne of Manipur as his birth right. He stated that it was with the approval of the Governor-General in Council that he succeeded his late brother, Nar Singh and, therefore, appealed that His Lordship in Council should put him once again on the throne of Manipur, and if not, the Kabaw allowance of Rs 500/- per month should be granted to him. His requests were turned down. Being disgusted Debendra Singh attacked Manipur. But before crossing the ranges of Hills that separate the valleys of Cachar and Manipur, he had an encounter with the British troops in which his cousin Kishore Singh was killed along with ten other followers. This altered his position and the Ex-Baja, being unable to endure the difficulties, surrendered to the British and subsequently he was kept in confinement in Dacca till he died in 1871.

Soon after Debendra Singh's disappearance news reached that two sons of Nar Singh, Bhogendra Singh and Angou Singh, who were by that time at Cachar, were preparing for an attack on Manipur. These princes had helped Chandrakirti Singh in his escape from Cachar. They had aided and assisted him in

89. Ibid., No.213.
90. P.C., 18 May, 1851, No.16, Debendra Singh to McCulloch, 20 February, 1851.
91. Ibid., No.16, Debendra Singh to Secretary, Govt. of India, 24 April, 1851.
they again collected a large force and moved on Manipur, probably with the intention of their own advancement to the throne. These repeated attacks and preparations for attacks on Manipur caused a great deal of vexation and annoyance to the authorities both in Cachar and Manipur and it also kept the whole people in a state of alarm.

McCulloch, therefore, reported to the Supreme Government that the advance of the princes' party should be checked before descending to the Valley of Manipur. However, before receiving any instruction from the Government, information reached Manipur that the advance guard of the princes' party had reached the Leimatak River, twelve miles from Bishenpur. By that time it was also reported that one prince Khunjaoba Singh, a brother of the late Raja Nar Singh had joined the party. The combined party advanced from Leimatak and entered the Manipur Valley near Phubala, a place lying approximately forty miles to the south-west of Imphal in the morning of 12 May, 1851. Immediately on receipt of the news, Chandrakirti Singh sent a strong force to check their advance. The Raja's troops made a surprise attack on the invading party and two princes, one a brother and the other the eldest son of Debendra Singh were killed. Bhogendra Singh and the other princes, who participated in the attempt, were captured and kept in confinement.

92. P.C., 13 December, 1850, No.820.
93. P.C., 13 June, 1851, No.118.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
Soon after the above incident McCulloch reported another projected attack on Manipur under one prince Seleikhomba Singh. Chandrakirti Singh met the party at Phojing, nine miles from Imphal on 24 November, 1852. In the encounter several members of the invading party were killed and Seleikhomba, their leader, was made prisoner. By that time another attempt, under one Prince Radjit Singh, was also reported. Nobody could say where he came from but it was believed that this prince made his advance with the followers from Agartala. However, his advance was checked and consequently the threat was averted before it could reach the valley of Manipur.

The reign of Chandrakirti Singh was thus disturbed by different ambitious scions of the royal family, who from time to time attempted to seize the power. In 1852 Naol Singh, a son of Madhuchandra Singh, Kanhai Singh, a son of Naret Singh and Pheiraba came from Cachar with a large number of followers and attempted to seize the throne of Manipur; but they failed. Soon after this, Maipak Singh, a descendent of Garib Niwas raided Manipur from Cachar, first in 1859 then again, in 1862 to dislodge Chandrakirti Singh but he was defeated and captured in his last attempt. In 1864 Kanhai Singh again tried to enter Manipur with about two hundred followers. But he was defeated by the 33rd Native Infantry near the Jiri

96. P.C., 4 April, 1851, No.114.
97. P.C., April, 1851, No.119.
98. Dr. Brown, Statistical Account of Manipur, pp.69-70.
In 1866 Gokul Singh, a son of Debendra Singh, along with Kala Singh, led a raid on Manipur from Cachar. He and his party were defeated and Gokul Singh was captured, two years after, in Kooch Behar and was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. In 1869 he was, however, pardoned but detained as a political detenue in Hazaribagh till he was released in 1875.

It was evident from the above that Chandrakirti Singh suppressed all the attempts that were made to oust him from the throne of Manipur. In every encounter he was, however, supported by the Government of Bengal. It would seem therefore, that it was impossible for him to retain the throne had not the British power been solidly behind him.

99. Ibid.