CHAPTER - FOUR

Emergence of the Feudal State in Manipur
From the 12th century onward we have some historical evidences to indicate the feudal shape of the emerging Meitei state. Feudalism, it is well known, is a western concept based on the socio-economic and political features of Europe but it has been found that feudal system existed in non-European countries including India. "Feudalism is derived from the Latin word fief or fiefdom meaning initially "property in cattle" and later on "tenure or "property in land."\(^1\) Feudalism has been conventionally described to denote a particular type of society and political system which existed in Europe in the Middle Ages.\(^2\) Feudalism as a system with its manifestation in political, economic and social aspects means that a king or the ruler was the owner of the land in his kingdom; it was further rented out by the king to his nobles from whom he realised revenue in form of cash or kind or services. The nobles in turn leased their lands to sub-nobles who were called vassals in Europe who utilized the services of peasants as tenants or serfs who worked as a sort of bonded labour in the fields of the vassals or tenants.

\(^1\) International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Vol. p. 393
\(^2\) Ibid.
The products out of the land were given to the vassals who gave a portion of it to the nobles in their turn their contribution to the king. Such a type of system implies a political organisation which is essentially monarchical in nature on the basis of chiefdom whose chiefs known as the nobles have to render their services, administrative, military and revenue to the king. This system is also based on the stratification of the society into four important classes, the royalty, nobility, peasants, artisans and serfs. Such an economic organisation was essentially an agrarian economy supplemented by low level of industrial development. It has been pointed out that feudalism, although a particular social and political system, is far more dependent upon economic consideration. Therefore, feudalism is a form of government and economic system based upon land tenure, with concomitant social stratification. The feudal character and practices varied from country to country and from time to time. There is no ideal or typical feudalism. R. S. Sharma observes that it is essentially concerned with the realisation of the surplus from the peasant mainly in kind through superior rights in their land and through force labour. Feudalism should prima-

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rily be considered as a mode of production.5

In Europe, the origin of feudal system can be traced from the post Carolingian age (7th century A.D.).6 Charles Martel a Frankish king was impressed, in the battle of Tours in 732 A.D. by the skill of the Muslim horsemen. So he recruited a group of armed Muslim horsemen in his army, gave them land and in return the Muslim horsemen rendered military services to the Frankish king to whom they were bound by an oath. The granting of such land was known as fief or fiefdom. Thus feudalism got its name from this episode. Feudalism represented in essence the obligation of services in return for land or the grant of land or getting the services of tenants. In Europe, feudalism as a system of government and society lasted for several countries. In the Indian context, according to R S Sharma, the origin and development of feudal system is to be sought in the land grant made to the Brahmins from the 1st century A.D. onwards7 and the economic aspect of feudalism in India is intimately connected with the transformation


7 R.S. Sharma, op. cit., p. 263.
of the Sudras who form the lowest caste of the Indian social hierarchy, into peasants from the Gupta period onwards and further depression into semi-serf states. The features of Indian feudalism were different from that of European feudalism; the grant of villages to the Brahmin priest may be compared with the practice of land grants given to Christian churches in Europe, though the Indian Brahmins and their temples were not a well organised group in India. Further, in India the vassals who rented lands from the Zagrdras had to render mainly military and not the administrative services to the noble or the king as it was the case in Europe. In Europe, feudal service originated from military service usually 40 to 60 days in terms of maindays of fixed quota. In India, the peasants or the vassals had to render military service and pay revenues to the immediate lord of the state. Such a feudal structure did not emerge in Manipur but during the period of our study the rendering of feudal services by the peasants to the king through the administrative heads or nobles both in terms of military and productive services was started in Manipur. It should be

8 R. S. Sharma, op. cit, p. 263.

9 Reader's Digest, History of Man, The Last Two Million Years, 1974, p. 219.
remembered that we are not primarily concerned with the historical development of feudal system in Manipur, but the state that emerged in course of history assumed, as noted above, the feudal character which should be elaborated subsequently.

**LOIYAMBA**

King Loiyamba was a great reformer in Meitei society who ascended the throne of Ningthouja principality in 1074 A.D. according to Cheitharol Kumbaba. During his time, many reforms were made on political, social and economic conditions of the country. He also tried to aggrandize the Ningthouja principality consolidating many hill tribes. So the reign of Loiyamba was one of the notable periods in the history of Manipur.

**CONSOLIDATION OF HIS KINGDOM**

Many villages and hill tribes like, Shekta, Haoku and Leihou refused to pay annual tribute to the Meitei king. So, King Loiyamba sent his brother-in-law, Haokhei Lanthaba of Angom clan for an expedition to the village of Shekta and his brother Khamlang Ponshaba to the village of Haoku.\(^{10}\)

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\(^{10}\) O. Bhogesore Singh, *Ningthourol Lambuba*, 1960, Imphal, p. 97.
Two battles were fought very successfully and burnt the
hill villages to ashes. One of the Meitei Lambus (official-
in-charge of the village) went to collect the annual tribute
from Leihou village but he was insulted by the Leihou (Tang-
hkul) tribesmen. Loiyamba himself went to punish the Leihou
chief and villagers. Thus most of the hill chiefs of
northern and western part of Manipur were subdued. After
defeating the Leihou chief, king Loiyamba and his people
sang a peculiar hymn with physical gestures called Ougri
hagen.\(^{11}\) The purpose of the singing of Ougri was to resist
the future rise of the villages against the Meitei.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS OF LOIYAMBA**

King Loiyamba was reknown as a great reformer of
the administrative system of Manipur than as a conqueror.
He divided his kingdom into six divisions, known as Lup.
According to T.C. Hodson the Pana system in Manipur was a
product of king Loiyamba's administrative thoughts. The
word 'Lup' is more suitable for his administrative division
and lup might be the former name of Pana as the word Pana

\(^{11}\) Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 5.

* Ougri hagen is of two types, one for destructive
and another for constructive. But this Ougri hagen is for
destructive way.*
was a borrowed word from the Shans. The six lups were 1) Lupleh-Lup, 2) Kongja-Lup, 3) Thouja-Lup, 4) Khurai-Lup, 5) Chingja-Lup and 6) Khaja-Lup. Thus his authority was recognised in almost two-thirds of all people of the Imphal valley and by some surrounding hill tribes.

The Lup system was based on the Lallup service; from each lup or the administrative division, a team of workers were sent to the king to render lallup services. Each lup consisted of a number of families, clans and tribes. Each of the families of different Yumnakas (surname of the family) was also awarded their appropriate duty according to their lineage (Yumnakas). All the administrative reforms were mentioned in the Loiyamba Shinyen. Loiyamba Shinyen is a royal edict and important historical document for the reconstruction of the social and economic history of Manipur. On the practice of lallup system was based the military service later both military and civil services. And economic division of labour throws light on the period which was important for the emergence of feudalism in Meitei.

12 It is assumed that the term 'Pana' was brought in Manipur by late Shan immigrants as the Pana or Panna division was there in Yunnan (P Gogoi - Jai and Jai Kingdom, 1968, Gauhati, p. 22.

13 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p.8.
society. Thus lallup system became a kind of tax to the state, paid not in cash or kind but in service. Every able adult from 16 to 60 years except some privileged persons who were exempted by the king had to work for a fixed number of days (10 days in 40 days) for the state. The client was not paid anything by the state for the purpose but was fed during his work and he executed it as his duty as a subject of the state.

ANALYSIS OF LOIYAMBA SHINYEN

The Loiyamba Shinyen consists of all the laws and customs of different duties of variable ranks from the highest authority to the ordinary people of different families and lineages. According to this royal edict, people determined that the law was the order of the king which he promulgated once or twice in a month. He also took the consent of the people from time to time and he was assisted by a machinery of a council of noblemen in his administration. Religious functions of the important deities of the kingdom were also assigned to different families of different clans and entitled different surnames for different duties. The assignment of the priest and priestess is also mentioned for different duties like, singing hymn for healing the sick, performing rites,
offering of sacrifices and preparation and arrangement for allotment of such ritualistic performances. The animal sacrifice of the pre-Hindu religious custom of the Meitei people of the period are well projected. Different duties of the Maiba (Shaman) regarding the performances and singing of different hymns are also mentioned.

'Loiyamba Shinyan also mentions the development of textile industries in Manipur. In this field also Loiyamba divided the weavers and dyers in separate categories. The weavers produced different design of cloths and the dyers produced yarns of different colours extracted from the colour of the flowers, leaves, barks and stems of the plants and trees.' It further mentions the industrial development for making tools and implements of war, weapons and battle equipments of the time.

Many state officials like Pukhramba, Nongthonba, Khwairakpa, Yaiskul Lakpa, Hiyangloi Hanchaba, Chongkhal Lakpa, Hanchaba, Yumlingloi Hanchaba, Yimangloi Hanchaba, Phamthakcha, Naichulakpa who were under the name and style of Ningthoupongba or ministers were assigned to administer for different divisions of the kingdom as well as to deal with the duties of the king, etiquette of the royal court, the royal customs, prize and donation to be awarded to the
nobles, administration of justice and keeping of the local
time, to wait upon the queen, royal painters, court singers
to serve on procedures to be followed during the delivery
of the royal children are described. The above analysis of
Loiyamba Shinyen of king Loiyamba shows that the feudal
duties and services to be rendered by the different tribes
and the history of evolution of Meitei state and social
system in Manipur had vividly emerged.\textsuperscript{14}

After a peaceful reign of 48 years Loiyamba died in
1122 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Loitongba. Since the
reign of Loiyamba, the chronology followed in Cheitharol
Kumbaba can be relied on.

\textbf{LOITONGBA}

During the time of Loitongba the Seloi Langmais
revolted against the Meiteis. He arrested many nobleman
of Seloi Langmai like Kege Naokhongtom, Tolmu Naokhongcha,
Atom Naethingba, Kok Marong Hinaoba and punished them for

\textsuperscript{14} See, a. Khulem Chandrashekhar Singh, Loiyamba
Shinyen, 1975, Imphal.

b. Gangmumei Kabui, A brief note on Loiyamba
Shinyen: A Royal Edict on Social distribution of economic
and administrative functions, in proceedings of the NE
Indian History Associations, Third Session, 1982, Imphal.

c. M. Ibohal Singh, Constitutional History
of Manipur, Chapter III, Loiyamba Shinyen, A Written Con-
titution of Manipur, 1986, Imphal.
their act of rebellion. He introduced an indoor game called Kang Shanaba and other kinds of plays like to play on a top with a thread, and a circle whirling of piece of a wood by means of a pulley.\textsuperscript{15} Kang is played by the parties matching on two sides and still now, it is continued as a state game of Manipur. So the reign of Loitongba saw the introduction of such games in Manipur. There were no much administrative reforms during his time. He ruled about 28 years.

ATOM YOIREMBA AND HEMTOU IWANTHABA

Atom Yoirembo succeeded his father in 1150 A.D.\textsuperscript{16} On seeing the conspiracy of his younger brother Iwanthaba to dethrone him, he expelled Iwanthaba from Meitei Kingdom. Iwanthaba fled to Khuman and took shelter there for some time. Then with the help of the Khumans, Iwanthaba rebelled against his brother and occupied the throne of Kangla. Atom Yairembo was compelled to leave his kingdom for the Khuman principality. He had a reign of 13 years. Hemtono Iwanthaba ascended the throne in 1164 A.D.

\textsuperscript{15} Ningthourol Lambuba, p. 103.

\textsuperscript{16} Ningthourol Lambuba, mentions that Atom Yoirembo was not a coronated king.
CONFLICT WITH THE KHMANS

One day, king Hamtou Iwanthaba went for deer hunting at Irom Meijrao to the South of Imphal. There he pierced a deer with his spear, but the wounded deer escaped into the Khuman territory. The Khuman principality hid the deer with the spear of Iwanthaba. Thus, it became one of the initial causes of the conflict between Ningthouja and the Khuman. Hamtou Iwanthaba invaded in the Khuman principality at Uchiwa. In course of his raid Iwanthaba beheaded a queen of the Khumans who was engaged in agricultural work. He came back with the head of the queen as the head hunting was practised by them. So the Khumans followed Iwanthaba upto Yaorou and challenged his superiority. King Iwanthaba delayed the Khumans for five days and fought a strategic battle to defeat the Khumans. So, according to underhand strategy king Iwanthaba and his men approached from different directions towards the Khuman. Thus in this decisive battle, the Khuman warriors were absolutely defeated. This was a successful military strategy of Iwanthaba. He reigned for 32 years with his queen Khuroingambi of Angom clan.

17 Ningthourol Lambuba, p. 144.

18 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 5.
THAWANTHABA

Thawantha was a worthy son of Iwantha. He ascended the throne in 1195 A.D. His reign was also a notable period in the political history of Manipur. He tried to consolidate his kingdom by subduing some more hill tribes beyond his boundaries and his policy of matrimonial alliance with Angom and Khuman strengthened his power. He married two ladies, one from Angom clan, Langmaibi and another from Khuman, Shamphabi and also gave his daughter Chingkhei Thanbi in marriage to the Khuman king, Aton Punshiba. 19

In the early stage of his rule, he made a good relationship with Khuman. But it did not last long. The chief queen of Thawantha, Langmaibi made a conspiracy with the servant of Khayoiron Mente Phabi 20 and Pukhramba. Thus, king Thawantha suspected his beloved queen Khayoiron Shamphabi as the conspiracy took to show her as a delinquent and the king ordered to kill her. On the other hand, the Khuman king Punshiba wanted to take revenge upon Meitei


20 Ibid.
king for her daughter's unlawful murder. So with this intrigue he invited Thawanthaba to help him against the rebellion of Heirem Khunjan. On the contrary he also invited the chief of the Heirem Khunjan to help him against Meitei king.

Thawanthaba accepted the invitation of Khuman chief and he soon responded and proceeded with his forces towards Khuman for the help. He defeated Heirem Khongtekha, the chief of Heirem Khunjan. To counteract it, the Khumans were arranging to raise their sword against Meitei force, but in a plot to resist the escape of the Meitei king Thawanthaba, one of the important warriors, Kwakpa Leitom Panba of Khuman was killed by Taoriya Elangba by chopping Kwakpa's throat by the rudder ear. As a revenge for the murder of his daughter and his minister Kwakpa, Punshiba killed his wife Wangamlon Kainou Chingkhei Thanbi, the daughter of Meitei king Thawanthaba and sent her dead body to Meitei as the Meitei did in the case of Khayciron Samphabi. In a dramatic decisive battle, the Khumans were completely defeated and crushed. As a remembrance of the escape of the Meitei king Thawanthaba and the plot of the Khuman, till now, the Meitei put the sculpture of the head of the Khuman noble Kwakpa on the Hiyang Hiren or the royal boat of Ningthouja.
CONSOLIDATION OF HILL VILLAGES

Thawanthaba consolidated most of the hill villages. He invaded the Mahou village on the south and killed the Thawa Langjeng, the chief of the Mahou village. The name Thawanthaba was given to him after this event of Thawanthaba's victory and his former name was king Ayangba Sarichongba. In the north he defeated Marong and Langtha villages and he fought successfully against Arong in the south west and Langmeithel villages in the south east. Thus many villages of various regions were kept as dependent villages under Ningthouja principality.

CHINGTHANG LANTHABA AND THINGBAI SELHONGBA

Thawanthaba's successor was his son, Chingthang Lanthaba and his succession to the throne was in 1213 A.D. Till then the intimacy of Khuman towards the Meitei was continued. So Chingthang Lanthaba broke the intimate relation and raided the Khuman country and the chiefs including Nongyai Haoba Khana Tompokpa were captured as captives. Then, he drew his attention to other tribes and on refusal of payment of annual tribute by Kamu tribe in the north of Meitei, Chingthang Lanthaba made an expedition

21 Ningthourol Lambuba, p. 126.
against Kamu village and defeated them. He ruled for 11 years on the Meitei throne. Thingbai Selhongba ascended the throne in 1242 A.D. and ruled for five years. He was succeeded by Puranthaba, son of Chingthang Lanthaba.

Puranthaba

Puranthaba ascended the throne of his late father in 1247 A.D. When Puranthaba ascended the throne, there was one rumour about the death of the Khuman king. Puranthaba sent his errand to Khuman to give Keiren Keijao (royal coffin) as a token of regard and respect to matrimonial relatives as a policy of trust.

The Khuman king got furious at the false news of his death. So, he ordered to kill the Meiteis whenever the Khumans found, but when he came to know about the cause of the forged information that was wrongly manufactured and informed by the Seloi Langmai, his temper against the Meitei was turned to the Seloi Langmais. He carried out a raid on Seloi Langmai hill. The Khumans, on their way to Seloi Langmai hill met the Meitei army at Poirou who were probably waiting to punish the Khumans for their previous charges against the Meitei. Thus, the Khumans were completely defeated by the Meiteis. It was the last out-
door defeat of the Khuman against the Meitei or the others. So, the reign of Puranthaba was a remarkable period in the political history of the time by defeating the Khuman. Next, Puranthaba fought with the Chakpas and brought Chakpa Khongjing, Koireng Leikhampok, Ngaochaibung and Kouba Koutai under Meitei suzerainty. He reigned for about 16 years.

**KHUMOMBA**

Puranthaba was succeeded by his younger brother Khumomba in 1263 A.D. In the early years of his accession he invaded Thangal village in the north and defeated the chief of Chingshong and Maimu, a warrior of Chingshong. He also made an expedition towards the hill village of Lishinglok in the south and he won over the village of Lishinglok.

**FIGHT WITH THE SHANS OF KABAW VALLEY**

During Khumomba's time the Senbi-Kabaw or the people of Kase-Shan of Kabaw valley invaded the Khuman principality. The Khumans could not face the invaders and they sought

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for help from the Ningthouja king and the Moirang king. Khumomba accepted the request of the Khumane. Thus, he proceeded with his army towards the Khuman principality and drove out the Kabaws. This was the first battle between the Kabaws and the Meitei in the history of Manipur. After this battle, Khumomba stayed for sometime at the Khuman palace and won the name of Khumomba or Khun-khomba or the organiser of disordered villages of Khuman along with former name Konba Miyomba and he then came back with a Khuman princess.

During his time a salt mine was explored and he made it to work at Ningel. It is also said that two men from Sylhet came to Manipur, who could construct a variety of temple architecture.

Moramba

Moramba, the son of Khumomba ascended the throne in 1278 A.D. The strained political relation with the Khuman was still continued even though his father married a Khuman

24 Ningthourol Lambuba, p. 163.
25 Ibid., p. 169
26 Miyat (MS).
lady. He sent an expedition against the Khuman and fought at Leitang. By this time too the Khumans were defeated and Moiramba captured one Khuman couple called Thanchi Naokhong and Langshum. After this battle, he fought with the Moirang at Ningthoukhong. He successfully clashed with the Moirang and brought some Moirang noblemen as war prisoners.

Then, Moiramba turned his attention towards the hill villages. He raided Theichep village of Naku Nibilok to the north-west. Moiramba defeated Theichap Haotrao and captured one of the most worthy warrior named Karirong. Thus, Moiramba ruled successfully for 24 years.

**THANGBI LANTHABA**

Thangbi Lanthaba became king in 1302 A.D. He consolidated some hill tribes under his sovereignty. On the very outset, he marched towards Maring village in the south-eastern corner of Manipur. Thus, he proceeded up to the boundary of Chenglei.

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27 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 7.

FIGHT WITH MOIRANG

The contemporary king of Moirang was Laichingkhu Telheiba. He had a beautiful daughter called Leima Yoiren Tompokpi. The Meitei king Thangbi Lanthaba also called Yoiren Tompokpa intended to marry the Moirang princess. So, he sent a messenger to Moirang and asked for her hand. But Loichingkhu Telheiva refused to the proposal for the hand of his daughter. On the other hand, the messenger after seeking her hideout, met her and gave a ring to the princess. Yoiren Tompokpi herself agreed to the marriage with the Meitei king. So, she disclosed the secrecy of the plan to the Meitei in which she requested the Meitei king to invade Moirang, so she herself could manage to elope with the Meitei king while the battle was in progress. And Thangbi Lanthaba responded to the proposal of the princess in the plot. By defeating Moirang king, Thangbi Lanthaba married the Moirang princess Yoiren Tompokpi. The most remarkable account of his time is the matrimonial relation with the westerners (Bodo). Chingurembi, the daughter of Thongnang Khong Maringba was married with the prince Kuakpa Thawanthaba, the son of Yumkhu Chanu, the third wife of

king Thangbi Lanthaba.\textsuperscript{30} Therefore it is perhaps proper to point out that it was not in the reign of Naethingkhong that Chingurembi was married to a Meitei king, as attempted by R.K. Jhalajit Singh and W. I. Singh.\textsuperscript{30A}

Some minor expeditions were also sent after this battle with Moirang. He also raided the Shekku hill village on the north-west. He fought successfully and subdued the chief of Shekku village. He ruled for 22 years.

**KONGYAMBA**

Thangbi Lanthaba was succeeded by Kongyamba, the son of king Puranthaba (1247-1263 A.D.) in 1324 A.D. During the time of his accession to the throne he made an expedition to Kongyangphai village lying on the west of Ningthouja principality. All the warriors of Kongyangphai including Konggoitra, the chief of Kongyangphai were defeated. After this battle, he was known as Kongyamba. During his time, the Mayang, a group of people from the west of Manipur invaded Kouba Ingel hill (also called as Kouba Hinglan hill).\textsuperscript{31} Kongyamba went to resist them and fought success-

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\textsuperscript{30} Tekhaolon (MS).


\textsuperscript{31} Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 8.
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fully and many foreign warriors like Samtaiba Ateraja, Tingkoraja, Lakasumkatao Aring Ayangtao were captured.

Kongyamba's next expedition was against the Chakpa, who settled at Khuroi Haora Lammangoong (present Bishenpur). The Chakpas were defeated and some of them including women and children were captured.

TELHEIBA TONABA

Telheiba, the son of Kongyamba succeeded his father in 1335 A.D. After his accession to the throne, he sent some expedition to the other principalities and villages. On the south-west, the Heirem Khunjan ruled as an independent principality after reorganisation of their old principality at Chairen. King Telheiba invaded Heirem Khunjan at Chairen Theichengpung and defeated the chief of Heirem Khunjan and some of his warriors. 32

Towards the north, Telheiba tried to consolidate his principality. His following expedition was against Marem, a tribal village at Yangphan Chaklikpok hill range and defeated them. During another expedition he burnt the Shaipu village and totally destroyed the village. In this

32 Chaitharol Kumbaba, p. 8.
battle the chief of Shaiwu village, Shanlungba was captured.

Telheiba was succeeded by Tonaba in 1355 A.D. There is not much information about his reign. He ruled very peacefully for five years.

**Tabunba**

Tabunba, the son of Telheiba became king in 1259 A.D. He subdued the rebellion of Marem tribe at Chaklipok and forced them to pay tribute annually. Songlokeika, the chief of the Marem was captured.

His next expedition was at the Chingshong village lying on the north of Ningzhou's principality. The chief of Chingshong village refused to pay annual tribute to Ningzhou king. He himself went to Chingshong village to punish them for the matter. When Tabunba arrived at Chingshong he was charmed by the beauty of Lala Shangnu, the wife of the Chingshong chief Khamlangba. The news shocked the heart of Khamlangba and he made an underhand plot to kill king Tabunba. When king Tabunba arrived for the yearly tribute, he and his bodyguard, Acojamba Tonkhaba were killed in the Chingshong village, which made
Chingshong, the bitterest enemy of the Meitei. The Meitei never left Chingshong without reducing it to ashes.

LAIRENBA

Tabungba reigned for 35 years and was succeeded by his son Lairenba in 1394 A.D. During his time Tolongba, the chief of the Angoma revolted against the Ningthouja's Lairenba was defeated and dethroned. Thus the Ningthouja's throne was occupied by Angoma for about five years. But Cheitharol Kumbaba mentions it as an interregnum for five years. Lairenba died without any issue and Ningthourol Lambuta does not mention the account of Lairenba as he was not a coronated king.

PUNSHIBA

Punshiba, the younger brother of Lairenba ascended the throne by expelling the Angom usurpers. It was an important time for the consolidation and expansion of Ningthouja kingdom to hill areas. When he ascended the throne, the Moirang invaded and occupied some parts of Ningthouja principality. Punshiba invaded Moirang at Sholbung and won the battle, thus he recovered the area of Ningthouja. He raided in the area of Thanga Kambong. He

won the battle and captured some warriors of the Thanga Kambong and brought them to settle in the Ningthouja principality. To the west, Punshiba raided Patsoi area.

CONSOLIDATION OF HILL TRIBES AGAINST TANGKHULS

After he consolidated some valley areas king Punshiba turned his attention towards the hill tribes. On the east he raided the Tangkhul hill village called Koihoi Cheng-khaipung Moren Thu village. In the north Punshiba raided against Koirang village and defeated it. After a successful battle with the Tangkhul and the Koirang, he directed his attention towards Maring Kangoi hill in the south-eastern corner of Manipur. King Punshiba fought very vigorously during his missions of consolidation of his boundaries. He also made Andro, a privileged class of village for their help in favour of Punshiba against Mairang. He subdued the tribal chiefs of Purum, Itok, Nungbi and Nunghar for their revolt against the Meitei.

King Punshiba died after a successful reign of 28 years. But according to Miyat, a Meitei Pays, king Punshiba

34 N. Khelachandra, Presidential speech, Manipur Shahitya Parishad, 1983.
negotiated with the Moirang king Sanahongba and he went to Moirang for a royal feast. When Punshiba returned from Moirang, one of his singers sang, describing Moirang as a tributary of the Ningthoujas; and on hearing this the Moirangs followed them and killed king Punshiba and his army on the Loktak Lake.

**NINGTHOUKHOMBA**

Ningthoukhomba, a worthy son of the worthy father ascended the throne in 1432 A.D. Ningthoukhomba wanted to take revenge against the Moirang for the murder of his father as well as their arrangement for subsequent invasion to Ningthouja kingdom. King Ningthoukhomba sought help from the Kabau or Shan king. But the Shan king did not accept his invitation. On refusal of his request for help against the Moirang, Ningthoukhomba made a plan and killed the queen of the Kabau. Ningthoukhomba, p. 219.

excusers of the murder with evidences. He said that if they were Meitei they were to use their packet of meal with Leihoura, a kind of plaintain leaf and if they were Moirang they were to use the lotus leaves. Thus the Kabaus were forced to misidentify the murderers as the people of Kege Moirang.

EXPEDITION TO MOIRANG

A joint force of the Kabau and the Meitei invaded Moirang principality. In the early stage of the battle the Meiteis seemed to be losing at the hands of Moirang. They fought by making river cross bunds on the Imphal and the Nambul rivers. The Moirangs were naturally very skillful on the water battle. But one man called Laitonjam Chauba of the Meiteis broke down the bund at night during the battle, thus it rescued all the Meiteis from the danger. The Meiteis fought very tactfully on the land battle with Moirang and all the Moirangs were beheaded and buried at Moirangkhom36 (buried area of the heads of the Moirangs situated in the proper Imphal area). From this time onward, the Moirang principality became a dependent principality of

36 Meitrabakki Wari, p. 63.
Ningthouja and all the successors of king Sana hongba were the vassal rulers under the Ningthoujas. 37

Ningthoukhomba's next expedition was against hill tribe called Akla. The Akla warriors were totally defeated including some Senbi-Kabaw warriors. Changchari, the chief of Akla and Khaigeipung, his son and some people were arrested as war captives. After this success he raided, Zaraoc Louchinghei lying on the east and south of Imphal. In that battle, Konde Sharding Langsiba, the brother of Khulakji was defeated.

While Ningthoukhomba was in Akla, the Tangkhula invaded his capital from the northern side. It was a very dangerous situation to defend the attack of the Tangkhuls as there were no enough men in the palace of the Meitei. But, queen Linthoi Ngambi solved the problem. She changed her dress on the royal male dress as her husband and she very tactfully welcomed the invaders and treated them cordially as allies as done in earlier times. She asked in her husband's voice why all of them did not render their help while he was in Akla but the

37 N. Khelachandra Singh, Presidential address, Manipur Sahitya Parishad, 1983.
disguised queen Linthoingambi gave a warm welcome to the Tangkhuls and pretended to join in the entertainment of the king’s victory against Akla by enjoying feast and drinks. She served very strong kind of wine and the Tangkhuls were drunk very much that they could not even stand properly. Thus, the queen without any fight arrested all the Tangkhul rebels and protected the throne of the king for her husband. She defended the royal prestige of the reigning dynasty.

During the absence of the king, Queen Linthoingambi suppressed most of the tribal revolts including Tangkhul rebellion of 1435 A.D. cited above. And afterwards she also made some minor expeditions like, Kabui Yangla village and Wairi village, a cultivated area of Senbi-Kabaw tribe in the east and Khongyang Kumphi Leishokpung on the south. In the west he raided against Kege and defeated Haomura Haotonba of Moirang.

Thus, Queen Linthoingambi took a great role in the expansion of the Meitei kingdom and the peaceful reign of Ningthoukhomba. He died in 1467 A.D. after a successful reign of 37 years.
Kyamba who was known as Thangwal Ningthouba ascended the throne succeeding his father, Ningthoukhomba, who built up the united Meitei principality. Comprising almost all the portion of the plain of Manipur, including the division of Kanglei, Langloii, Lanlot, Khuroi, Ngangoi, Kege, Theirei and Seloi. He started having a diplomatic relation with the Mao-Shan state of Pong. Accordingly, the two states resolved to conquer the Kabaw Kiyang. For denoting time to come and to join with each other, they were to adopt an orchid called Khongamellesi parted from the same piece of a plant flowering of which would indicate the time for starting from their respective lands for the expedition to Kabaw valley. As the flower which was adopted in the Pong capital flowered as the natural factors endured there, the

38 Pemberton brings to our notice that the Manipur called the Mao-Shan kingdom by the name of 'Pong' of which the city called by the Burmah Mongaung and by the Shans Mongmoorang, was the capital. And further that Hao-Hkam-Hpa succeeded to the throne of Pong. If that be so then Pong was just the Mao-Shan empire to the east of Manipur of which Mong-Kwang and Mong-Mac-Kong (or Mong-Mo-Long) were the capital cities. The word 'pong' is foreign to the Shans. The Meitei probably pronounced the Pong 'p' for 'b' as pong. The word Pong is a Bodo word of Dima-Cha vocabulary. So, Meitei took the Pong or Pong to denote the Mongaung or Monkang in Patkoi hill of Mao-Shan Empire.
Pong king, Chaopha-Khekhomba (Sao-Ngan-Pha) hurried to the appointed spot with his force for their preplanned invasion. As the Meiteis did not turn up for the agreed purpose, the force of Chaopha-khekhomba waiting for them at the spot of the battle camp for one month, but not getting any information of the Meitei, he was returning to his country and felt deceived by the Meiteis. But on their way they met the Meitei force for the appointment. When they were asked for the late arrival Meiteis were shown the flowering plant. Then, both the forces were reconciled with the conclusion that due to the climatic variations between Manipur and Pong, there was a difference of time in the flowering of the orchid.

The allied forces encamped at the Khari foot hill, where Meitei Thangwai Ningthouba (Kyamba) sacrificed a mithun for the victory in the battle of Mong Kawang. The allied force attacked the Shan people of Mong Kawang. Thangwai Ningthouba suffered a lot in the battle but he was rescued and was under the protection of Nanba Sanaba Nonglen Haibikhong. But the allied force defeated the Mongkawang and

39 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 9.
their territory was divided between the Mao-Shan and Meitei and they were included in their states. The demarcation was carried out by two nobles, Mahou Wangbi Shunba of Meitei and Chaopok Tete of Mao-Shan. The territory given to the Meiteis was the whole area of Mungkhong Mungghai (Mong Kauling or Mao king) in the inclusion of Loijeri on the east, and Miyatong (Mo-Nyin) Heinoukhongnembi, the place where the dwarf mango grove extended including the whole area of Khari. The division of the territory on the north of Samsok (Thangdut or Taungthout) while the Meitei possessed the territory on the south of Samsok. From this event the Meitei king Thangwai Ningthouba won the popular name Kiyamba or the conqueror of Kiyang.

MINOR BATTLES

Again, there were records of his conquest of Makhan village of the north with the defeat of Laithang, the Makhan chief and gaining the title of conqueror of Makhan in 1496 but he suffered in the death of Khongjomba the Angom chief. The Mayang force advanced as near as Amchi Munglaikon in the west in 1504 A.D. An army under the command of Loijangamba, the Angom chief was sent. But the Meitei suffered the loss of many soldiers and re-enforcement

41 Sorareal Nacha Khunkumba or Pong Meitei Layyen Lairik (MS) in the custody of N. Khelachandra.
of the theme under the command of prince Nongthouba including Apujam Haoba, Wangkheirakpam Kongyamba, Kambam Sekmu, Hijam Haoba as the leader with the whole divisional warriors of Yaiskul were delivered and the Mayang were defeated with the capture of Mayang leaders Nungma Chengma, Teima Chengma and Langnga Teima. There was erection of two mounds at Lallupel as the memorial of the success and Kiyamba was adorned with the title of Amchi Lanthaba. He also conquered Chapang in the north-east and Chingshong in the north with the killing of the warriors, Taoba Serang and Manbi and imprisoned Haonu Tangja Samphabi, the mistress of the village.

Kiyamba governed the state on the traditional principles of administration. He established good relations with the Moirang which was newly added during the regime of his father. He appointed Nanba Sayaba the Moirang noble as the departmental head of the Naharup Pana, even though it was not institutional but attached to the power and function of the king or delegated to a person or others with. the status of a noble or of an appointed person of the king. A policy of making the state of Manipur known and ultimately recognised by the neighbouring foreign countries was also vigorously followed. And the Shan state of Burma specially,

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42 Cheitharol Kumbaba, 10 and M. Nodiya, op.cit.
the kingdom of Pong recognised the sovereignty of Manipur state under Kyamba.

Kyamba's reign was a milestone in the growth of Hinduism in Manipur though it was confined only to the Brahmin immigrants of the kingdom. He was presented a stone by the Pong king Chao-Pha-Khekhomba revered as the Phaya (deity) with his necklace in which there was a small horned boar to keep in the Phaya. Kyamba brought it and exposed to his nobles to identify the manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the superior one of the Hindu trinity with the name and style of Vishnu Chakra. Further, he pleaded to assign to worship it by a Hindu Brahmin for the prosperity of the country. So, Kyamba, after a long search for a Brahmin, found one Brahmin near the Khuga river and he was entrusted to worship it as Vishnu, according to the Hindu rites and rituals. As Kyamba's capital was at Khuroi Haora Lamlangtong or Lamangdong (present Bishenpur) the Deity was worshipped and after this Lamangdong is known as Bishenpur (the city of Vishnu). This marked the introduction of Visnavism in Manipur as well as the formal recording of the Hindu Brahmin immigrants and their migration. Chao-phu-Khekhomba also presented a guava plant as a preventive medicine for the epidemic of cholera and dysentery which established the idea of herbal medicine for
curing the then disease and virus of epidemics. Kyamba made the exchange of the Meitei drummer Sekata with the Shan piper Loucoan the servant of the Pong king for cultural exchange of music and dance and others. Chaopha Khekhomba also sent a golden case cupboard for installation of his Phaya or Lord Vishnu on altar.

The statemanship of king Kyamba in peace and prosperity, communal harmony in bringing the unity of the hill people and plain people which enforced the law for administration of justice among his subjects and tributary communities is illustrated by the epigraphic record of the one of the four inscribed stones of Khoibu Maring village, 55 k.m. on the south east of Imphal in the Chandel district, Manipur. Even though it was epigraphed in the later period, it was treated as the edict of king Kyamba's (1467-1508 A.D.) statemanship.

King Kyamba started to observe Cheithaba the Meitei new year's day in place of Cheiraoba which was introduced during the time of king Naophongba (428-515 A.D.). The great king Kyamba breathed his last in 1508 A.D. at the age of 64 after ruling for 40 years.

43 Sorarel Maha Khunkhumba (MS).
44 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 10.
45 Ibid.
KOIREMB A

King Koiremba ascended the throne at the age of 20. On the very outset of his occasion, king Koiremba subdued Kansoi and captivated Yonba and Upheiba as the war prisoner. On the feista of traditional boat race of Hiyangei (the 8th lunar month of the Meiteis) in 1510 A.D. Loijangamba the Angom chief who was the father of queen Luwangti felt hurt and angry at the mockery praise of his daughter. Therefore she was prevailed upon to separate from the king and stay in her parental house when offering Lunch at Langmeipung at present Minuthong. For this reason Meitei king Koiremba did not recognise the dignity of the chiefship of Loichangamba. So, the Angoms revolted against the ruling Meitei king for hunting the dignity of the status of their chief but they were defeated and Loichangamba the chief and leader of the revolt was killed in the battle. Koiremba suppressed the Khoibu village of Maring tribe and captured Mangal Oklaba. In 1512 A.D. king Koiremba died after ruling for four years.

LAM KYAMBA OR LAMGAINGAMBA

Langaingamba or Lamkyamba (the conqueror of Lamgai or Lamkyang or the Kyang village in Kase Shan territory)
succeeded Koiremba. Before his accession the Leishangthem clan of his step mother's family interrupted and they were subdued and crushed. His former name was Nongpok Sana Louba Choinu Sana Khampanba the collector of the gold from the east. The name was because of his habits of collecting emitted gold offered to the departed soul by excavating the burial grounds in the Shan states. He was in the territories, probably in exile by the political conflicts with his brother Koiremba.

He invaded the Lamkang village and captured the Lamkang chief and won the epithet of Lamkang Ngamba, the conqueror of Lamkang in the south. And he also raided Tushuk village, defeated the chief and forced them to enclose the village of Kotha which produced betalnut. In his next expedition he raided the Koirang village and killed its chief Nonglu, the brave, along with the chief's son Lirube and daughter Yothabi Thangthaba. He was given the title of conqueror of Koirang. In 1519 A.D. he invaded Khoibu. In the next year, he defeated Oklaba and his last conquest for the token of his superiority was held at the village of Tumu in the Khari village or Kyang territory and won the gratitude of Senbi Tumu Ngamba or Senbi Lam Kyamba (conqueror of Tumu of Kyang).

46 Ningthourol Lambuba, p. 241.
There was famine in 1515 A.D. and epidemic of smallpox in 1520 A.D. He introduced the wearing of the white turban of Paklo by the political village sanctuary. 47 This is the evolution of the uniform wearing by the state political officials. Koiremba died in 1522 A.D.

Lamkamba had three queens viz., Chakkha Tangkhul Ngamba or Tangkhombi, Khayeoirol Changningphabi and Chingphurol Nongin-phaba and begot three sons each queen Kabomba, Nongin-phaba and Tangjamba respectively.

Lamkamba was succeeded by Nong-in-phaba at the age of 10. After the expiry of the king, Queen Khayeoirol Changning phabi had an affair with the Angom chief, Kyamba. When Changningphabi charged Angom chief Kyamba for decorating the turban with the red dyefather of Ura (cormorant like shay) as not a customary practice of Angom clan in connection with the colour ornamentation, this angered the Angom chief who killed both the mother and his son, the king in 1524 A.D.

KABOMBA

After the murder of Nong-in-phaba the activities of Angom were subdued and prince Kalamba was an throne at the

47 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 22.
age of six in 1524 A.D. under the regentship of his mother queen Chaklei Tangkhombi. He married Nongpallon Haorchongambi of Angom clan. On the very outset of the expansion of his kingdom, he seized Pallu village of the community of Sangsang (Thangdut or Samshok) of Kabau valley and defeated the leader of Paichoukong with the collection of many booty including the reknown pony Morambi. He got the title Kabomba after conquering Kabau. Next, he proceeded towards the Leimatak to the west of the valley of Manipur and captured many Tripuri Bodo leaders including the Chambiyacha who were the brazier of beltmetal disc, Telong the drummer, Hekajong Clinker.\(^48\) He then turned his expedition towards Naorengpai Lengpai (Kashom). Then he defeated Sanpum tribal chief Konchen Lanchung. He proceeded upto Sarei hills and defeated the Monsang tribes and captured its chief Kalloih Pikeiba and got the title of the conqueror of Monsang. Not only this, Kabomba also proceeded to Haorchong Kabui village and conquered the village.

During his reign, a monumental mound of Lampum Kaimom was erected in 1528 A.D. and 1529 A.D. There was an epidemic of small-pox in the year 1531 A.D. The war captives of Takhel (as Manipuri name for the Tripuris)

\(^{48}\) Ningthourol Lambuba, p. 251.
were initiated to dig a canal in the urban area of Wangkhei which was known as Takhelkhong in 1534 A.D. He inaugurated the route from Imphal to Tekhao meaning Assam in the year 1536 A.D. Kabomba established the foreign diplomatic relations by the matrimonial alliance by giving lady Khongnambi (probably a princess) to a Tripuri prince in marriage. As a result of this he got elephants from Assam and learnt the arts of bamboo and cane fishnets.

Kabomba was coronated in the year 1539 A.D. according to Cheitharol Kumbaba. He took up the defensive measure against the Shan aggressor, in the year 1542 A.D. In the same year Kabomba died at the age of 24.

TANGJAMBA

Kabomba was succeeded by his elder brother Tangjamba at the age of 26. Paobam Pala, the supporter of Tangjamba to the throne killed Thokchaojamba Pukhramba, the sustainer of late king Kabomba and whose son Haoba Chena took flight to Loichangamba the Angom chief for his life. Paobam Pala insisted on Chena but the Angom chief did not agree to the demand. So, Paobam Pala came to kill the Angom chief. While they were exchanging the matters about their grieved person, Chena who was lying in wait behind the door fell
upon Pala and put him on the sword. No change to the political system was made during his three years of reign 1542-45 A.D.

CHALAMBA

After the expiry of Tangjambe's rule there was a political interruption as the preceding three brother rulers brought down any heir to succeed them. So, the council of Ministers appointed Kainou Chalamba the son of Sanongba Lalukhomba on Nongpallon Haechonganbi.49 Sanongba Lalukhomba was the second brother of king Kyamba who was designated as the administrator of Wangkhei division (Wangkhei lakpa). Chalamba ascended the throne at the age of 32 in 1545 A.D.

During his reign the Angom revolted against the ruling power under the chief Loichangamba and he was killed in the battle. The Angoms were driven as far as Selloi Lengmai, their hill territory. The vacancy of the traditional post of Angom chief in the Meitei court was filled by appointing Tushengamba of Angom to the said post.

King Chalamba extended his territory to the river source of Kaina on the east one of the range of Selloi

49 Chekhong (MS).
Langma hill and defeated the courageous hill chief Kabu. Next, his attention was drawn to the west. He raided a small settlement of the Mayang planters of areca-nut and defeated village chief Rasakul and earned the title as usual the conqueror of the western Mayang in 1551 A.D. He then proceeded towards the south upto Kharam and defeated the Chiru chief Arengpu Thungkang of Chiru village.

In the year 1552 A.D. the route to Phayeng was opened and a mound named Sayampung (collected animal mound) was erected at Kongyangphai in 1553 A.D. In 1555 A.D. the canal from Heiyen to Leishangkhong was dug. As recorded by Cheitharol Kumbaba the foreign relation was established by undergoing the matrimonial alliance with the Mayangs of north-west, by representing with Monambi's marriage with Mayang prince (as he was entitled as Mayang leima) the queen of royal bride of Mayang. No information in comparative studies with the Mayang history is available.

There were two territorial divisions of Khunja, consisting of Khabam and Laipham and Naija consisting of Naharup and Ahallup in the territorial divisions. The building of Ahallup Loishang was reconstructed with a feast of merit. He died in the year 1562 A.D. at the age of 48.
MUNGYAMBA

Nambol Koubak Ningthou, Mungyamba whose previous name was Thangwai Ningthou Kyamba ascended the throne in the year 1562 A.D. at the age of 18.

Mungyamba began to expand his dominion with the invasion of Mungkhong Mungyang or Khamran. He defeated the chiefs of village including the reknown Akla of Thangmung village and won the popular name Mungyamba or the conqueror of Mungyang. During this year, he made an attempt to subdue the Tangkhula but was defeated with the loss of the lives of Tekcham Khoiba and Khamba U trongba. In the next year he invaded Chakpa Pupun village and captured Konongsha with Panganba and proceeded with the conquest of Khuroi with the prisoner of Yangba Lamba and Mareng.

In 1570 A.D. Sagang village in south Manipur valley was subdued with the capture of Monthou. He defeated Nongdem Lamkang with the help of Sankhomba and Kwakpa. He made an expedition to Samsok but he turned his attention to the Anal villages which resulted in the defeat with the death of Amon Ayamba, Keisam Wwa, Thingbaijam Piba in the clash. He collected booty with the suppression of the villages of Kambong Mangpal, Kahaw Kakching Lengkhu, Waikhong
and Chashat. In the year 1573 A.D. Mungyamba raided Samakhu the Kabui village and subjugated the village. He collected war booty from Thingnang Yingthing and Tarang village. In the next year, he seized the villagers of Haitok and Yanglet of Lanhag. Mungyamba then invaded Tonti village and he defeated the Moyone, Chingshong villages. He was defeated in his attempt of encroaching Samok with the loss of Khurai Lokwa in 1582. Mungyamba invaded Kyang and succeeded with many booty including Chaoshoi, the queen of the village and also was successful in the battle of Tonsang in the same year. He defeated Kangku Kangoi village of Ningal. He again proceeded upto Aesipung of Anal while he was harbouring his boat at Makhao, the Makhao tribesmen ambushed them and caused great loss but he defeated the Analis with the imprisonment of Khongchumba and Lanchumba, the chief and noble of the tribe.

Mungyamba introduced the weaving of wax clothes in his accession year, and it was celebrated with a feast of merit.  

50 Cheitharol Kumbaba, p. 17.
with fermented bamboo shoots, observance of
culture, of veneration of wine etc. During Mungyamba's
time a horde of people having the habit of barbarian
came out to Manipur under the leadership of Maidana in
1576 A.D. 51 The king killed Maidana with the grace of
Thangkhoubomba and Ta Khangshunaha, a dao and a spear
with magical power. He tidied up the administration of
his predecessor lallup service was also prevalent. The
construction of state godowns (Keis) for storing paddy
was also taken up by him. There were Keis at Chajing and
Mongsanggei. Under this lallup service, every able bodied
man was a soldier during war and handicraftsman, artisan,
builder or carpenter during peace time.