

An Early History of Manipur

By

W. Yumjao Singh, *Gavesana Shiromani.*

Rs 10
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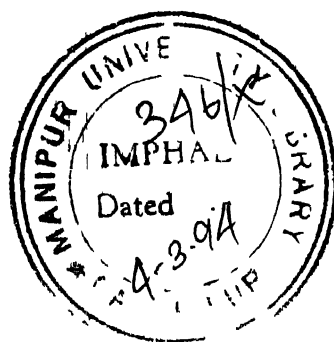
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Publishers' Note.

The present book "An Early History of Manipur" is the third and the second in English of the books by the late lamented author published posthumously. It treats in a comprehensive way the subject matter of the book. It is considered that the book will throw light on the controversial point which agitates the minds of the lovers of history regarding the location of Manipur of the Mahabharata and the existence as an important and ancient country in the annals of India. The contents of the book will speak of itself of the labour and the volume of work the author had put in for bringing out the salient facts relating to Manipur, its people and language. Two important letters in connection with this book—one written by Dr. S. K. Chatterji to the author and the other written by the author to the Director of Historical and Artiquarian Studies, Assam, Gauhati are also published with the book. They will serve, it is believed, as introduction to the book.

W. Lalmani Singh,
& his brothers.

Sagolband, Imphal.

30/12/66.

(ii)

Copy of a letter dated 30th September, 1950
from Dr. Sunil Kumar Chatterji, Head of the
Department of Philology. The University of Cal-
cutta to Shri W. Yumjao Singh.

Dear Mr. Yumjao Singh,

I have to apologise for not having replied
to your letter of July 8 through extreme pressure
of work. I have gone through your typescript
of An Early History of Manipur. I am no student
of history myself—I am not in a position to give
an opinion on your identifications, but I am
inclined to agree with you on the whole. The
Burmese tradition taking Kshatriya colonisation
of Eastern India and Burma to several centuries
before Christ seems to rest on some solid foundation,
and your findings seem to tally with what we
can conclude from Burmese accounts. I would
ask you to go ahead with your work, and publish
it in some monograph form. Why not try the
Journal of the University of Gauhati for this?
You may write to Prof. Birinchi Kumar Barua
in the University, mentioning I suggest publication
of your paper in the University journal.

I am returning your MS under separate
cover.

Please get your MS ready for the press—I mean the MS of the Cheitharol Khumbaba. I wish you to do it in the following manner :

- (i) An introduction to Early Meithei Historical Literature.
- (ii) An introduction to the Cheitharol Kumbaba -
 - (a) Its contents and their historical and Sociological value.
 - (b) Its language - difference between Early Meithei and Modern Meithei. Grammar (in brief) of the language of the Cheitharol Kumbaba, with points of difference from current Meithei. Peculiar and obsolete words. The script—origin of Manipuri alphabet.
 - (c) The date and authorship of the work—historical persons, places etc.
- (iii) The Text of the work in Early Meithei, in Roman characters, with literal English translation opposite.
- (iv) The Text in Modern Meithei in Bengali characters.
- (v) Vocabulary.

I shall be able to get it published from the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal if you can

edit and translate the work along lines indicated above.

Have you seen Mutum Jhulon Singh's Manipur Sahitya Itibas? What do you think of it?

I am leaving tonight for Delhi, and shall return on the 10th of October. Please let me have news of your well-being, & about the progress made in connexion with the Cheitharol.

With all good wishes.

Yours very sincerely,
Sd/- Suniti Kumar Chatterji

W. Yumjao Singh, Esq.,
Sagolband Road, Imphal,
Manipur.

Copy of a letter from the author to the
Director of Historical and Antiquarian studies,
Assam, Gauhati. Dt. 20.9.50.

To

The Director of Historical and Antiquarian
Studies, Assam, Gauhati.

Sir,

Perhaps you may remember me I was a corresponding Member of your Institute before the War, I do not know whether my name has been removed from your list, however, I have been trying to collect material for An Early History of Manipur and am now in a position to say that it is in the way of its completion by this time.

I would think it a great honour if it would be possible to have it published by your Institute, in the present state of things I do not expect to get much help from the Manipur side and the failure to publish my monograph on the Archaic Manipuri Literature has been much discouraging me still I must, I think, first approach the Assam Govt. for anything relating to Manipur whose relations with the Kings of Tekhao were so cordial and friendly, in fact as you are aware in the long history of their relationship the two neighbouring countries had never experienced any sort of hostility between them except mutual help and assistance.

The present book will consist of five Chapters
(1) General Information and contemporary
accounts, — (2) Religious Belief of the People

- (3) The first Indian Colonization of the Valley.
 (4) The Early Kings of the Ningthouja clan
 and (5) Archaeological Evidences, and the Natural
 Resources of Manipur.

I am now rechecking the whole book, if necessary may be retyped, I beg to give a gist of the contents of the first two chapters so that you may form an idea of the nature of the work, if you so instruct me I shall be glad to forward the typed copy to you or shall see you personally with it.

Chapter I.— Its geographical position, — Its area and that of the valley — rain fall, respective homes of the valley people and the hillmen, — a history of Manipur in a history of the valley, — it was almost inaccessible to a large number of armies in olden days, — it was still a connecting link between India and Burma, use of the hills in time of difficulties, — Medieval Burma frequent invasion of it.

Origin of the hill systems of it, — the possible age of valley, — its height, — nature of the hill system, — any piece of flat land is an epitome of the Valley, — the origin of the Valley, — two different views on its origin, the verdict of geologist, it is an old valley. — The Loktak Lake its size, — the Imphal river drains it and the whole valley, — The Barak and the Imphal are the principal rivers of it, the Barak and the Bara of the Mahabharata, its wind. The different names by which Manipur was known

to different people, the origin of the name of Manipur, Mahendrapur and Rajgriha were also other names of Manipur.

The identity of the Manipur of the Mahabharata with it, — we had very little knowledge of history, we had thus to accept what we could not explain its real truth, — reason why the name of Manipur was the first creation of the Mahabharata, — this book is the only old book from which we can gather some information of the locality of Manipur, the first mention of it in the Mahabharata, — the route by which Arjuna came to Manipur, — how often has this route by the sea shore has been used by travellers in the Mahabharata, — Arjuna in at least three trips and Yudhisthira and his party once, it was on the eastern sea shore from northern India to the south, two different routes leading to Manipur one from Bengal and the other from Kamarupa, the waters of five hundred rivers in the Mahabharata was the estuary of the Ganges, — Yudhisthira went thither to the Mahendra Hills which was the boundary between northern and southern India by the sea shore route, — Manipur was not in the limit of the territories covered by Yudhisthira's trip, — thus it was further off the estuary of the Ganges — it was the end of the Indian world with the seas, — the sacrificial horse had therefore to be guided back from it. — Chitrangada was married to Arjuna on special condition, — bride price is

still practised in Manipur, — Arjuna's defeat in Manipur in his last visit, — Babhruvahana and his mother attended the Horse sacrifice, — Chitrangada's character. — An account of Manipur in the *Maharajavamsa*, — political condition of India in the 6th century B. C. — Phayre's opinion, — a trade route via Manipur, Assam and upper India to Afghanistan and thence to Europe in the second century B. C. — a Chinese intinerary of the 8th century A. D. describing a route from Tonkin to Kamarupa via Manipur, — Manipur was known as a land of Brahmans to China and Burma, no beef was eaten in Manipur and future events could be predicted, — Manipur in the first century B. C. — in Jaimini's *Mahabharata* the sacrificial horse is said to have travelled further upto the Kuba valley and Burma, — in it Manipur was a worshipper of Vishnu, her richness in those times, — an account of his *Brikshadesha*, — the location of the peacock land, — in 120 A. D. Manipuri musicians and juglars were presented to the court of China, — general remarks on the route as described above, — concluding remarks, — a revival spirit of Brahmanical religion in the mainland, — disappearance of Buddhism from there, — the epic and Pauranic ages, — the division of the Vedas and their studies, still respect of Gautama in the *Mahabharata*, — discouraging emigration to foreign countries, — stoppage of sea voyage, — a general flow of migrant was stopped and Burma used to attack Manipur, — the combine effect of these

on the history of Manipur,— had this migration ~~was not~~ stopped its political and cultural destinies would have been otherwise.

Chapter two.— Religion and language, — Sayee's remarks on it, — its relation with mythology, — the belief in God, — how can language trace the origin of mythology and religion before language is admitted as a witness she must be tainted of her caste and creed. — Manipuri language has not been carefully tested, — its grouping with the Kuki-Chin Group is conventional, — Grierson's remarks on this point, — has apparently a long and independent development, its similarity with Magadhi Pali, — grammar is the criterion of a language, — Manipuri inflections — words can be borrowed but no borrowing of grammar — Inflections examined and compared with other Indian languages, — conjugational terminations, — its syntax, — rules to trace out corresponding words and roots, Sanskrit from which Manipuri words have been derived if there be such corresponding words, — a biography of words, — a controversy on the termination of ba, — the mode of formation of words in Manipuri and the possible origin of it in other languages as well, — list of words illustrating the application of above rules.

General remarks on the religious belief of Manipur, — their belief in Indra, Vishnu the sun and moon the Vedic gods, — the Manipuri triad, — the tripod seat of the Manipuri immortal Guru, the mystic symbol of Om and the Manipuri

Anjee,—Immortal Guru another name of the present Pole star. — Tripod seat and the Aswins' chariot of three wheels, — Aswins and Agni—what is this Agni, why he is the lord of the house, a Manipuri custom with regard to this belief,—Agni's three knots or ties,—the three feet of Aswins — Vishnu's three feet Aswins three wheels, Agni's three knots and Gurus tripod seat must have originated from something that had something to do with three,—and triangular in shape, — the sun is a second edition of Agni,— the origin of fire,— how it was obtained, who first obtained it according to the Rigveda, — Agni is another name of the Supreme God,— what was the wonder of nature that was known as Agni to the ancient Indians. — Yama and Agni, — abode of Agni Parama Vyoma or Satya Loka, where is this place,— beyond the seven rishis or the Ursa Major,— Agni is Vishnu, — the derivative meaning of Vishnu,— why such a name for him, — the Rigveda with Vishnu,— the three feet of Vishnu with which he is always revolving,— the identity of Agni and Vishnu with Dhruva or the present Polestar,— his holding the whole universe with his three feet,— and why he is the protector of all, — Aditya and Indra, the sun is not Vishnu, he is represented by the mystic symbol of Om - how it represents him,— symbols are but representation of a concrete thing - origin of symbols, original alphabets are nothing but representation of something concrete,— some of the letters of the alphabet that we are now using

under the name of Bengali alphabet,— in Manipuri Om is represented by figure seven in Bengali and Hindi alphabets the main figures are almost the same,— what do they represent,— they represent the Ursa Minor and the Ursa Major, the present Polestar in the centre of three triangular stars is depicted as sitting on the tripod seat or his three feet or his chariot with three wheels of the three knots or column as may be called,— why is the symbol pronounced as such,— what is the voice of God like,— Gopaldeva on all fours with one hand holding the sweetmeat represents Vishnu moving with his three feet and holding the universe, — Phunga the Manipuri hearth, a derivative of Bharga of the famous Gayatri,—their worship of this hearth and its signification,— an iron tripod on the fire of this hearth, the Manipuri name yotsabi for the tripod and its significance, — sa-om the Manipuri signification of the bear meaning beast of Om, its similarity with riksha in meaning as explained by Max Muller, — Phallic worship in early Manipur.

Yours faithfully,

20/9/50

W. Yumjao Singh,
Sagolband, Imphal.

Contents.

Chapter I	
General Information and Contemporary Accounts	1
Chapter II	
On the Religious Belief of the early Manipuris	34
Chapter III.	
On the Religious Belief of the People	... 63
Chapter IV.	
How the Symbol of Pranava Represents God	88
Chapter V.	
Phallie Worship 97
Chapter VI.	
Poireiton the First Indian Colonist that came to Manipur	... 99
Chapter VII.	
Materials for History 123
Chapter VIII.	
Pleiades and the Luwangs 129
Chapter IX.	
Origin of Polo 133
Chapter X	
Draw back in the study of Archaeology in Manipur	... 137
Chapter XI.	
Kings of the <u>Ningthoujas</u>	.. 143

An Early History of Manipur

"True reverence is shown in treating every subject, however sacred, however dear to us, with perfect confidence, without fear and favour, with tenderness and love, by all means, but before all, with an unflinching and uncompromising loyalty to truth"

Max Muller.

Chapter I.

General Information and Contemporary Accounts.

Physical features.—As geography naturally affects the history of a country let us have a glance at the geographical position of Manipur. If we look at a map of India, it will be seen that on the North-Eastern Frontier between latitudes $23^{\circ}50'$ and $25^{\circ}30'$ north and longitudes $93^{\circ}10'$ and $94^{\circ}30'$ east, there is a small tract of hilly country with an area of about 7600 square miles, including a central valley of about 650 square miles. The valley is mainly the home of the Hindu and other valley people, while the adjoining hills have always been occupied by the different tribes of hillmen

in isolated and thinly populated villages, they have been under the suzerainty of the Manipuri kings from time unknown, thus the history of Manipur is the history of the valley. In olden days it was almost inaccessible to a large number of armies on account of the numerous ranges of hills that completely surround it. In times of some national calamities the mountain fastnesses too served as a stronghold where the people could conceal themselves retreating almost the whole population to renew hostilities at the first opportunity available. But luck would have it in spite of all these natural barriers from an early date Burma used to visit Manipur bringing depredation and depopulation very frequently. In those days to reach the plains on any direction required several days tedious journey still Manipur was the connecting link between India and Burma thus its history and civilisation should naturally be influenced by the two.

The valley is 2567 feet above the sea level with an annual rainfall of 50" to 60". It is of rich alluvian soil. Col. McCulloch's speculation on the origin of this valley may be interesting as this has given Brown a clue of expounding a theory on the possible origin of the Manipuris but unfortunately for him, this speculation has been disapproved by a wellknown geologist whose opinion must necessarily be accepted by all. It runs thus "It is impossible to consider the origin of the Loktak Lake without considering that of the Manipur Valley in its present condition. Two different views have

been held on this, one that the whole valley is comparatively recent lake bed and that the lake once filled it and has shrunk to its present size, perhaps in historical times. the other is that the valley is of comparatively ancient date and has been filled in gradually to its present level by debris brought down from the hills by the tributaries of the Imphal river. The rocks of the surrounding hills appear to resemble closely those of the Naga Hills to the north They belong in all probabilities to the Lisang series about the age of which we know nothing definite beyond the fact that it is extremely friable and readily crumbles to form a fine soil precisely like that in which the cultivated parts of the Manipur Valley are deeply buried. Soil of the kind extends on the north-west sides of the lake well down to high water-level and it is only on the east and probably also on the south side, that large deposits of peat are being formed. The peat in these deposits is less coherent than, and not quite so black as that found round the Inle Lake. There is no sign whatsoever of raised beaches at any point.

“This last fact induced Col. Godwin-Austen who was the first man with any knowledge of geology to visit Manipur, to doubt whether the lake had ever extended beyond its present high-water limits. The peaty deposits on its eastern shores are very like those found in other parts of the valley and known to represent swamps that were recently larger than they are now, but even if the

whole of these swamps are completely submerged the greater part of the valley would still be above water."*

The Loktak Lake along with a number of large ones retains water throughout the year. It is about eight miles in length and five miles in breadth after the annual rains, its water is drained by the Imphal river like that of the other lakes of Manipur.

The principal rivers of the State are the Imphal and Barak. The Imphal river with all its tributaries drains all the waters of the valley and the hill sides bordering on the valley as well as the southern hills; it flows through the Chin Hills and the Kale Valley into the Chindwin in Burma. The Barak river which is known to the Manipuris as the Gwai or the Betel nut river before it comes to the plains of Cachar and in all probability the Bara river mentioned in the Mahabharata drains most of the northern and the western hills, it flows through Cachar and the Surma valley into the estuary of the Ganges. In the Surma valley it assumes the name of the Surma.

The same range of hills assume different names at different places, the most well known hills in the Valley or near about it are Koubru, the Nong-maijing, the Lalgol. The Loiing is a general name of the western range of hill bordering on the valley. Some of the hills are more than 8000 ft.

* Records of the Indian Museum Vol. XXII part IV No. 28.

McCulloch writes "The wind blows chiefly from the south-west, and while it does so, the country retains its usual healthiness. An easterly wind, continued for any time, brings with it sickness. Storms are very rare, and those terrific peals of thunder, and brilliant flashes of lightning for which mountain contries are celebrated seldom occur. Sheet lightning is most frequent, luminates the horizon in the cloudless evenings of the mildest weather. In these fine night more specially in September and October, igneous meteors, such as falling stars are very observable"**.

Manipur was known to the different neighbouring peoples by different names to the western Indian people it was known as Manipur, the Mahabharata, the Shreemadbhagavata, Jaimini's Mahabharata and Kalidasa's work designated it by the same name. Let us quote here to show by what names it was known to neighbouring countries, "The country inhabited by the Muneepoores," says McCulloch "is by the Burmahs called Kathe, which term they equally apply to the people; by the inhabitants of Cachar it is named Moglei; by those of Assam Mklea, and by the Shans or those who inhabit the country east of the Ningthee or Khyendwen river it is known as Cassay of which term the Burmese word Kathe is a corruption.*

The present Manipur State is the Manipur of the Mahabharata.—As I have said that in the

** McCulloch's Account of the Valley p. et seq.

Mahabharata and other Sanskrit literature this country under review was called Manipur and there exists some controversy on this point, it will be my onerous task to prove, that according to the **Mahabharata** it was the same Manipur as mentioned there. Of all the Sanskrit works the **Mahabharata** is the only one from which we may expect to make out a connected account to trace the locality of Manipur which played an important part in that epic. Unfortunately if any of our foreign historians or any other scholar makes any wrong statement or conclusion it takes a long time to eradicate it as most subsequent scholars whether Europeans and Indians without any hesitation follow their pioneer. Thus any subsequent scholar, whether he has ever touched the **Mahabharata** or not in the name of it will not hesitate to chew the cud. I hope the reader will pardon me for this somewhat unpleasant remark in view of the fact that the remarks of such scholars about Manipur and its venerable persons even Chitrangada herself are far more unpleasant. However, we all know that the **Mahabharata** is a voluminous book to go through the whole of it carefully is a laborious work, over and above that particular passages of it are very hard to be digested. The author always seems to be very careful to express his thoughts in as few words as possible. Therefore the omission of a single monosyllabic word of the text in a sentence the author may be misunderstood, if he has proposed something at a particular point he will

follow it to the last. In tracing the location of Manipur we may get some illustrations of these facts.

We notice the first mention of Manipur in the Mahabharata in Book II, in Arjuna's pilgrimage for twelve years, we all know his pilgrimage was not merely for the sake of it, but it was to spend twelve years in order to fulfil some condition agreed upon between the the brothers. He left Indraprastha and went towards the north to Gangadwara or modern Hardwar. He had numerous Brahmans and other followers. Here he was courted by Ulupi and spent one night with her. He visited all the sacred places in the vicinity and on the Himalaya mountains. He then descended from the mountains with all the Brahman followers to see the eastern quarters of India. Now we must follow Arjuna very carefully all the disputed points may shortly be noticed, but at the same time Arjuna's programme to see the eastern quarters must not be lost sight of. Thus from Hardwar to Gaya in Bihar or Anga, as it was known in the Mahabharata, according to the Bengali translation of Kali Prasanna Sinha no mention is made of any place that our hero must have crossed or passed through, simply to strictly stick to the programme. This is to keep pace with the truthfulness of Arjuna. After declaring his arrival here in the eastern kingdom of Anga the author begins to write thus :—

অঙ্গবঙ্গকলিঙ্গ যান তীর্থানি কানিচিং । অগাম তানি সৰ্বানি
 পুণ্য যতনানি চ ॥ ৯ ॥ দৃষ্ট্বা চ বিধিবৎ তানি ধনঞ্চাপি দর্দে
 ততঃ । কলিঙ্গরাষ্ট্রধারেণ ব্রাহ্মণঃ পাণ্ডবানুগঃ । অভ্যনুজায়
 শৈশবেন্দ্রো বসন্তে ভবত ॥ ১০ ॥ স তু ত্বরত্যনুজাতঃ কুন্তীপুত্রো
 জনক্যঃ । সহায়ৈবকৈঃ শুরঃ প্রযবৌ যত্র সাগরঃ ॥ ১১ ॥

Here he visited all the sacred places, temples and shrines in Anga, Vanga and Kalirgas and distributed wealth. At the entrance of the kingdoms of Kalirgas all his Brahman followers took his permission to return, thus with reduced number of followers he went to the sea. In those days Brahmins were forbidden to visit Kalirgas except on pilgrimage and as they were cornered there as the followers of Arjuna so they returned. From Kalirgas he was going to Manipur, it is quite here what the Mahabharata writes—

সংগমঃ স্তিত্বা যঃ দমনং ন চ ॥ তদ্বাচ ॥ য যনি
 প্রেতঃ সঃ সঃ প্রভৃঃ ১১ ॥ সঃ সঃ সঃ সঃ সঃ
 সঃ সঃ ১২ ॥ সঃ সঃ সঃ সঃ সঃ সঃ ১৩ ॥

Here he crossed all the kingdoms, other kingdoms and territories and went on looking at the beautiful palatial buildings. He saw the Mahendra hills decorated with ascetics and went slowly for Manipur by the sea coast. This is what the Mahabharata says regarding this trip of Arjuna to Manipur. The contention is here that as the sea coast is mentioned here Manipur ought to be somewhere near the sea and it must not be very far from the Mahendra hills, but it is not impossible to get a

Manipur where it is being looked for as it is too far away to be in keeping with the meaning of the Mahabharata but the first exponent of this theory of Manipur being on the sea coast was determined to establish his findings so he traced out a harbour in the Madras Presidency the name of which began with the letter M but that has been washed away by the sea. According to the programme of Arjuna he was to see the eastern quarters of India but not southern India and it may safely be said here that according to the Mahabharata any place to the south of the Mahendra hills was in southern India. Now let us examine the above verse for ourselves and see to what direction Arjuna was going with his former programme. We have already seen that before reaching Manipur our hero had to cross Kalunga and many other kingdoms and territories which alone would convince us that Manipur was very far away from the kingdom of Kalunga a particular part of which was the boundary of northern India therefore he must not have gone towards the south. Beyond Anga, Vanga and Kalunga too there were other eastern Kingdoms of India, if he were to travel the whole of eastern India he could not omit Manipur which was the end of Indian world with the seas as will be noticed later on. Therefore he intended to go to it by the sea coast i. e. via south east Bengal. Was there such a route in the time of the Mahabharata? The answer is in the affirmative, the details of which are given in Book III. Before

proceeding any further we must deal with the force of the word **शङ्के**: the author has said so much to show that Manipur was far from Kalingas yet he was not satisfied perhaps he foresaw that a dispute may arise as to the real location of this place so by the word slowly he convinced his readers that a great deal of time was required before the destination was reached.

From Yudhisthira's pilgrimage we shall be able to see particulars of this route via the sea coast. During their exile after the dice gambling Arjuna went to the land of gods and Yudhisthira with his remaining brothers and their consort Draupadi went on a pilgrimage under the guide Lomasha a well known ascetic of those days. They were of course accompanied by other followers and left the forest of Kamyaka on the bank of the Saraswati river where they were residing at that time. They went towards the east and arrived at Neimishyaranya where they bathed in the waters of the Gumti river. Yudhisthira distributed numerous cows and much wealth there. After visiting numerous sacred places he arrived at Allahabad and bathed in the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna, then they arrived at Gaya in modern Bihar and thence to the estuary of the Ganges evidently in Bengal, here they bathed in the waters of the five hundred rivers the confluence of the Ganges and Bhahmaputra. They then went to the kingdoms of Kalingas by the sea coast. On their arrival on the left bank of the Vaitarani river

the guide said, "Oh king these are Kalingas where the Vaitarani river flows." Then the Pandavas with Draupadi made ablutions in the Vaitarani river. The king then came to the sea and spent one night at the Mahendra hills according to the instructions of the guide. From Bengal to the Vaitarani river near about the mouth of it, and then to the Mahendra hills by the sea coast Yudhisthira must have been travelling towards the south, but the author of the Mahabharata says from the Mahendra hills they went facing the south, he is not to say anything without rhyme or reason, therefore the only possible solution of this is that the Mahendra hill was at that time the boundary line of the Deccan, thus Yudhisthira and his party entered Kalinga from the north eastern-gate and Arjuna entered it at a point which was not much higher up the Mahendra hills from which he went on by the same route by which Yudhisthira came there from the estuary of the Ganges i. e. from the hill to the Vaitarani river and from there to the estuary of the Ganges, most parts of this route were by the sea coast. Manipur was still very far from there even, so it is said that he crossed all the territories of Kalingas, many kingdoms and territories in stead of mentioning the names of all uneventful kingdoms. Here another question arises, was Manipur within the limits of territories covered by Yudhisthir's journey? Had it been so he must have visited it, on account of the separation of Arjuna he was to have entered into Manipur.

Here this Sindhu Soubir must not be puzzled with modern Sindhu. There are three Sindhus in the Mahabharata, of these it appears that Sindhu Soubir was on the eastern portion of India, as we see that in the chapter on the collection of soldiers we find that Bhagadatta is mentioned as an inhabitant of the Eastern sea, if he were a man of the eastern sea then his neighbour Jayadhartha too might have been an inhabitant of this very sea but where was the sea? Its existence may perhaps be in the Sylhet district or near about it, as the present Haor or Sagor of Sylhet would suggest.

On his arrival in Manipur he visited all the temples and sacred places in it. Once he saw Chitrangada the maiden daughter of the king of the place he was really charmed with the beauty of the girl. The king was approached to permit him to marry the girl, on bearing his parentage and other particulars the king consented on condition that the son that would be born to him would be given to the king as his heir as he had no male issue in lieu of the bridegroom's price which was in vogue in the country. Arjuna married her, in course of time a boy Babhravahana by name was born and Arjuna then determined, to see the Deccan where he reclaimed the five sacred places by killing the crocodiles. He then returned to Manipur once again. The possibility of preventing Arjuna to return to Manipur by the long distance is no question because Arjuna was to spend full twelve years out of home. If we take two years

for his trip from Indraprastha to Manipur he had spent only five years including the three years that he spent in Manipur before visiting the Deccan. When he saw that there were still more than six years yet left to be spent he once again came back to Manipur, this trip might have taken one year or so. In the time of Aurangzeb Manipuri ambassadors to his court used to take about one year for both the journeys, Manipuri pilgrims of Brindaban before the introduction of Railway lines used to take the same time so I take this as the basis of the calculation of Arjuna's journey giving sufficient time allowance for haltings in different places. Thus Arjuna must have spent at least another three years in this second trip after providing two years for the journey to Dwarka and one year that he spent there.

Now let us review another route by which Manipur was accessible in the time of the Mahabharata, in a Horse Sacrifice the horse was to be let loose and a warrior was to follow it in order to defeat the king who would detain it. The task fell on the shoulders of Arjuna at the time of Yudhisthira's Horse Sacrifice. The horse first went northwards and was detained by the sons and grand sons of those who were killed in the battle of Kurukshetra in the kingdom of Trigarta near modern Jalandar. The people of Trigarta were defeated. After this the horse arrived Pragjyotisha where Bajra Datta Bhaga Datta's son detained it, he was also subdued. Thus the horse must

have been travelling by the foot of the Himalayan mountains. It then was detained by the people of Sindhu Soubira the land of Jayadratha. It entered Manipur from the kingdom of Sindhu which might have been near modern Sylhet as the Haors or Sagors of that place might be remnants of the sea of the locality, however, in Manipur there was a misunderstanding between the father and son as a consequence of which a sanguinary battle arose in which Arjuna was completely defeated and his life was saved by the efforts of Ulupi a step mother of Babhruvahana who was then residing temporarily in Manipur at the time of this trouble. Then the horse was guided back towards Hastina as it had travelled the whole world with the sea;

স তু বাহী সমুদ্রান্তা পর্য্যতা বন্ধু মিমাম্ । নিবৃত্তোহভিমুখে
রাজন্ যেন বারংসংহৃতম্ ॥ ১ ॥

i. e. the horse too returned towards Hastina as it has travelled the whole world bounded by the sea. Thus Manipur used to end the Indian world with the seas in other words it was the eastern frontier of India and an Indian who was travelling within his own country need not cross it. When the horse came as far as Magadha it was detained there, but it was soon subdued. From that place it entered Bengal where Arjuna had to fight with the Mlechhas, it then went to the south i. e. the Deccan by the sea coast, whence to the western kingdoms. Babhruvahana with his mother Chitrangada and step-mother Ulupi attended the ceremony. Thus there can be no doubt that Manipur

was in the eastern quarters of India and it was the end of the Indian world with the sea in the east of it, it could be reached both from Bengal as well as Assam. The present Manipur State complies all these conditions in all aspects.

In the Shreemadbhagavata we read this Manipur of Babhruvahana, in Jainini's Mahabharata too a full description of this Manipur of Babhruvahana is found. It is not proposed to discuss here the identity of it with this Manipur lest it might be a mere waste of the readers' time, but it would be suffice if it is said that the land of Trees was nothing but the barbarous people in the surrounding hills who did not know the art of constructing houses for protecting themselves from the weather. Jainini's account of the people of Manipur is exceeding good in contrast to what modern historians with little knowledge of the Mahabharata would say of Chitrangada. In the Thirty-two Dolls of Kalidas mention is made of a pious Brahman of Manipur

Here it seems that it may not be out of place if we make a few remarks on Chitrangada of whom as we have already given some hints some foreign historian has spoken very lightly and injudiciously of her. She lived in Hastina after the Horse Sacrifice though her son left for his home country. Her place in the palace of Hastina was in no way inferior to those of Draupadi, Subhadra, Uttara and others, Sanjaya introduced

AN EARLY HISTORY OF MANIPUR

her to the ascetics and Brahmans just after Draupadi and Sahadeva in Book XV of the Mahabharata. She came back to Manipur when the Pandavas left Hastina forever.

Let us now consider some accounts of Manipur mainly of a Burmese origin Burma, being our next door neighbour, should have had a good knowledge of Manipur from the earliest possible time. According to Col. Geini Rajagraha was another name of Manipur.

In his Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia Col. Gerini mentions the ancient Kshatriya kingdom of Tagaung (Tagaung r Hastinapura) in the Addenda and Corrigenda of which we read, "According to the Burmese Royal Chronicle (Maharajavamsa) Dhajaraja a king of the Sakya race, settled at Munipura about 550 B. C. and later on conquered Tagaung (C1 or Upper Pagan)." If we ponder over the political history of India of those times for a while it will be seen that there was no absurdity of one of the princes of the Sakya dynasty having migrated into Manipur and settled there as the Maharajavamsa asserts. "In or about the sixth century B. C. we find", says the Groundwork of Indian History, "sixteen great states besides a number of smaller principalities flourished in the extensive region between the Hindukush and the Godavari." A rivalry arose among these states each of which sought to establish its authority over the neighbouring states, with the consequence that Kosala was the first

to rise to power and it extended its frontiers in all directions, annexed Kasi and brought the Sakya state of Kapilavastu in the Nepalese Tarai into subjection." It is thus quite possible that either the vanquished prince or some of his near relatives who preferred to be banished rather than vanquished should have migrated into Manipur a far off land where there was no possibility of being molested by the conquering state. As history repeats itself, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Manipuri princes when they were frequently invaded by the Burmese armies banished themselves in Cachar or some other neighbouring states and if possible took an active part in shaping the political destinies of those states, establishing Manipuri colonies over a number of districts.

Sir A. Phayre's considered opinion in his History of Burma p 2 et seq. may be interesting; he says "The Buddhist religion, introduced in its simplest form probably two thousand years ago, has led the people to link their line of descent with that of their first teachers or with those to whom the legends concerning Sakya Muni and his tribe referred. Thus the tradition as to the race from which their earliest kings spring, has made the whole people now bearing the name Mramma, believe that they are descended from those Aryan settlers who reached the valley of the Irawadi from Gangetic India.

"At first sight it appears improbable that any of the royal Kshatriya tribes of Northern India,

should at the early period indicated, have left their homes and penetrated through the wild country of Eastern Bengal to Upper Irawadi. This, however, is what the Burmese chronicles, repeating an ancient tradition, assert, though no adequate cause for the movement is assigned. It would have appeared more probable had the migration been referred to the time when the Buddhists were being overwhelmed in Upper India by the revival of Brahmanical influence. But there is no trace in Burmese tradition of that revolution. The cause assigned in the Burmese Maba Rajaweng for the first migration of the Sakya tribe, is the supposed conquest of the race in Kapilavastu by the king of Kosala before the advent of Goadama.

“While it appears difficult to admit it as a historical fact the alleged foundation of the Burmese monarchy by Kshatriya princes, - and no doubt the claim may have originated among the later kings, as flattering their vanity and upholding their dignity among the people— still there are some existing facts which support the tradition. Professor Lassen after narrating the story as told in the chronicles, though rejecting the time assigned for it in the Burmese tradition, accepts as possibly true that at a time which cannot be precisely determined a prince of Inner India, who had been expelled from his kingdom, passed over the border range which separates India proper from further India with his forces, and these founded a dominion, that in favour of the credibility of the story we have the

concordance of the geographical information with existing localities, and that Indian princes spoke Sanskrit may be most reasonably assumed, although the latest compiled records have come to us in a Pali form. Such is the recorded opinion of the great scholar, after careful consideration of the subject. The route by which the Kshatriya princes arrived is indicated in the traditions, as being through Manipur which lies within the basin of the Irawadi." This is a credit to the Burmese Maharajawong that such considered opinions could not reject it in toto.

From about the second century B. C. there was a regular trade route from China via Manipur, Assam and Upper India to Afghanistan and thence to Europe. Harvey in his History of Burma says, "Upper Burma lay inaccessible, true, it was nearer to China which from the second century Before Christ used trade routes through Burma". A footnote thereto runs thus, "Two were along the Irrawaddy and Salween rivers, the third down the Chinwin river and through Manipur, took the caravans a three months' journey to Afghanistan where the silks of China were exchanged for the gold of Europe."

A Chinese itinerary of the 8th century A. D. will throw more light on this route. In the April issue of the Modern Review 1927 Prof. P. C. Bagchi in his article "India and China" gives details of the route, in this article he has not identified the Chinese name Ta-t'sin still from the context it is quite evident which place is meant.

'Starting from Tonkin the southern centre of all commercial activities of China, the route passes by Yunnansen, Yunnan fou and Tali fou. Going westward it crossed the Salouen at Young tchang (Young tachang fou) on the west of the river. Going westward it reached the town of Chou ko leang (to the east of Momein) between the Showeli and Salouen.

The route bifurcated there, the principal one descending by the valley of the Showeli to join the Irawaddy on the south-west, and the other directly to the west. ...

Starting from Chou ko leang the second route went right westward to Teng ch'ong (Momein), then crossing at Mi the mountains it reached Li-shuei on the Irawaddy (Bhamo or near about to the north). Then crossing the river Long-tsi nan (Mohlyin or Mcgaung) passed the town of Ngansi near which lived the small Brahmins of Ta-t'sin and going westward crossing the river Min-no (Chindwin) reached the country of the great Brahmins of Ta-t'sin (Roman Orient). Then crossing the mountains it reached Kamarupa."

The concluding remarks of Prof. Bagchi on this route is, "In spite of all these difficulties this was frequented now and then as it was the only short route connecting south-west China with Upper Burma and Assam. Indian influences exerted in early times, in Upper Burma, Yunnan, and Szechouan and some factor in the Indian colonization of Indo-Chin can be only explained by the eastern

way of communication, the sole connecting link between eastern India and this unexplored region".

Here it is as clear as daylight that the country of the great Brahmins of Ta-t'sin is nothing but Manipur, because the route was always passing between the latitudes of 25° and 24° 25' north or thereabout

From this we can learn that to the Chinese as well Manipuris were known as Brahmans just they were to the Burmese, in about the 8th century A. D. and there was a small Manipuri colony nearby Mogaung the capital of the Pongs of whom we hear so much in the accounts of Manipur.

Let us here hear other authorities on the subject that Manipuris were known as Brahmans to the eastern people. Col Gerini in his Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia &c mentions two P'o-lo-men States or Kingdoms of Brahmans, about one of them he writes thus, 'Hsiao P'o-lo-men (li. 'Little Brahmans') a kingdom in which the Min-no i. e. the Manipur river rises according to the Man-shu circa A. D. 860 (quoted in Bulletin Ec Fr t iv pp, 171 172). Flowing thence in a southward direction, the river comes to Tou-mi-chia-mu and separates into two branches encircling it. It is quite clear to me that the State here referred to is Manipur, while Tu-mi-chia-mu, or Tu-mi-ka-muk, Tumi-gama (?) is Tammu, or Tamu Ptolemy's Tugma.

"On this kingdom of the Lesser Brahmans, the Man-shu remarks that there no beef is eaten

and that future events can be predicted, (see bulletin Vol. cit p 180) a description which well agrees with the one given in other Chinese records of P'o-lo-men State lying in the neighbourhood of Shepo. There can thus be no doubt that in the latter instance Hsiao P'o-lo-men i. e. Manipur is meant".

Col. Gerini after suggesting the possibility of Kalingas and Andhras penetrating into western Burma, as they were masters of the valley of the Ganges from the frontier of Magadha to the sea, concluded that "the dominion of the Kalingas did not last long". As soon as their power waned and they were driven away by later intruders towards the south of India, an event which according to Sir W. Elliot happened about a century before the Christian Era, their empire was broken up and only its ruins remained to attest its past existence hence in Ptolemy's time we should search in vain for such a dominion. We only find three capital cities-evidently the seats of government as many separate kingdoms or districts - recorded in that region viz Tugma, Triglypton and Mareura.

"The former is probably Tumu in the Chindwin Valley or some other place between it and the Surma river in Silhet ; hence it represents the Chief city of the district of Kachar of Manipur.

"After the fall of the Dravidian power in the above three districts Manipur continued under the Brahmanic rule".

Thus there was every reason that as the Man-shu says no beef was eaten in Manipur. We shall hear more about this as occasion arises.

With regard to the prediction of future events by the people of Manipur Symes in his Embassy Burma says, 'Brahmans, who though inferior in sanctity to the Rhahans, are nevertheless held in high respect by the Birmans, had for ages been accustomed to migrate from Kassay * and Aracan to Ava, where they always met with a favourable reception, and on account of their superior knowledge, were appointed professors of science. A college was established, and certain lands were appropriated for its support ; these doctors composed almanacs, calculated eclipses, and pronounced from their intercourse with the planets, the propitious or adverse season, to attempt any momentous undertaking.' *

In the solemn ceremony of the public entry of Symes' Embassy to Ava in 1795 the retinue of the Engy Teekien or heir apparent we find a special mention of these Cassay astrologers and the passage runs thus, "On each side of his palanquin walked six Cassay astrologers, of Brahmanical sect, dressed in white gowns and white caps, studded with stars of gold." Here Cassay is the Burmese name for Manipur or the Manipuris.

Thus from the earliest time known Manipur was a Brahmanical kingdom and was learned well enough, their fame in astrology reached as far as the distant parts of China.

In Burma too Manipur was known as Ponnea (Pouna ?) i. e. Brahmins. Sir George Grierson in

* Kathe or Kassay are the degraded forms of the Sanskrit word Kshatriya by which Manipuris were known in Manipur.

his Linguistic survey part III vol. III says, "The people (Manipuris) are known to the Burmese as Ponnas that is Brahmans, and Kathe, the latter name comprising the low caste Manipuris.

Here if the account of Jaimini's Mahabharata is omitted perhaps I may not be doing my duty therefore the reader is requested to divert his attention to this splendid authority for a while. Only the Aswamedha Parva of this book is now available so we shall have to consider it, still this alone will speak volumes regarding the location of Manipur, its civilization, religion and so on. Let us first of all try to know something about this wellknown author, he was a staunch supporter of the revival of Hinduism and the first decline of Buddhism in India is attributed to his attempts, as this happened about the 8th century A. D. the book must date about that time. Therefore we are speaking of the eighth century Manipur. From this authority it will be seen that the acquaintance and influence of India far extended from Manipur to Kabo Valley and then to Burma beyond the Chindwin river, because it will be found that Arjuna's Sacrificial Horse came as far as Burma according to this book

✓ We learn from this book Manipur was the worshipper of Vishnu and very much devoted too. Their women were devoted to their husbands. The country was full of palatial buildings and was very rich in wheeled vehicles. It was under Brahmanic rule, that is it was not a Buddhist kingdom. This

is the summary of the account of the country as given in the book, let us now see whether Jaimini's Manipur was identical with our present Manipur so that we may know whether the above summary is applicable to it. According to this book Arjuna had to encounter against a tribe of Rakshasas or giants of Brikshadesha or the land of trees just before entering Manipur. The people as described in this book just at night fall, used to become part and parcel, of the trees with which their country abounded. Their ornaments are said to have consisted of bones. As the book says that very few of them could save their own lives from the attack of Arjuna's force by hiding themselves in mountain depressions, so their home must have been in a mountainous country. The hill people of Manipur still wear bones of animals, conch shells and cowries as ornaments. In those days these people in all probability did not know how to build a house for their own protection and thus at night fall they used to enter into the hollows of trees. This act has been described by Jaimini as their becoming part and parcel of the trees and their country has been named the Tree country. From Manipur according to this book the sacrificial horse went to the kingdom of Mayurdwaja i. e. whose banner was a peacock ; in plain words whose coat-of-arms was the peacock.

It is now our duty to find out where this peacock land was. In Gerini's Researches on Ptolemy's Geography p. 66 we are told, "The northern

part of the Kubo valley, in the Upper Chindwin district, which is the direct route from Manipur towards Burma, by which the founders of that dynasty, must have arrived is likewise, according to Sir A. Phayre, called Maurya ; and is referred to as a district under the name of Mweyin, its Burmese equivalent, in the Po-U-Daung inscription." Further, in the notes we find, "Maurya, Moriya. Moriya still appears in the titles of the chiefs of Kale and Song-sop (Thaungthut or Sumjok) on the Upper Chindwin (see "Upper Burma Gazetteer" part i vol. i p 291). This shows that the Maurya or Moriya region comprised most of the Kubo and Chindwin valleys, from Mwe-yin and Kale on the south upto Song-sop (Thaungthut or Sumjok) on the north , and that it thus lay above Sunaparanta.

Thus we see that this kingdom of Mayur-dhwaja extended from Sumjok on the north to Kale on the south. It must have been independent of either Manipur or Burma in the 8th century, although Kale was destroyed by the Manipuris and Chins about the beginning of the present Burmese era A. D. 639.

From this land of the symbol of peacock the horse entered the country of Beera Burma i. e. the brave Burma.

Thus the route described by Jaimini from India to Burma is the same route by which the early Indian civilization and colonists used to enter

AN EARLY HISTORY OF MANIPUR

Burma and further east, through the present Manipur and thus there is no doubt that Jaimini's Manipur was our present Manipur. It is indeed a very wonderful fact that waves of Buddhist missionaries passed through it from the earliest days still this small kingdom of Manipur did not follow that religion.

As we have already identified Ta-t'sin with Manipur it may be noted here that from this kingdom of Brahmins musicians and jugglers were sent as presents in 120 A. D. to the Chinese court. Let us quote here the full text of Prof. Prabodha Chandra Bagchi, "Yong yeon tr'as, king of the Shan States (Situated in Upper valley of the Salween.) accepted the suzerainty of the Chinese Emperor, received a sort of imperial investiture, and sent in 120 A. D. as presents to the Chinese court musicians and jugglers, all natives of Ta-t'sin."

Let us now close this chapter with a remark of this Indo China route from northern India, it is from the pen of Col. Gerani in his discussion of Indian influences in Yunnan and other parts of China. It runs thus :—

“One should not be in the least surprised at finding so many Sanskrit names of peoples, religions, and cities transplanted here from India, especially from its northern part, and often distributed in a similar topographical order as they originally occurred there. This latter circumstance is peculiarly interesting, and constitutes, perhaps,

the most striking example of what we may be permitted to term toponymic mimicry that we know of. Already we have noticed the homology in the distribution and relative location of geographical names, between the coast of Arakan and the western seaboard of India at similar latitudes. Want of space prevents us from going into further details, beyond saying that the same imitation is carried on with some degree of accuracy, in so far as the relative positions of the topographical names are concerned, from the Gulf of Martaban across to Laos and the greater part of northern Indo-China. In fact, while we have here a second Malva and another Dasarna, representing, respectively, western and Eastern Laos as already noticed, we find farther north, in Yunnan, a second Gandhara, as well as Mithila and Videha or Videhā, a Campa in the east (Annam), and a Malaya in the south (Malay Peninsula).

"The rule does not of course, apply to every place of Indo-China; but, in general, it may be assumed that its northern districts have been given names corresponding to ancient districts of Northern India, while in southern divisions, including the Malay Peninsula, were called after similarly located regions of the south of India. Such coincidences are due to the fact that a double stream of emigrants from India flowed into Indo-China at a very early period. One proceeding from the north, advanced overland through Manipur and Burma, and influenced the northern part of Indo-China as the

Tonkin Gulf and the Chinese borders; the other, coming from the south, reached Indo-China by sea and its influence extended mainly over the Malay Peninsula, Siam, Kamboja and Southern Annam. Thus it will be seen that Northern Indo-China owes its early civilization to settlers from Northern India; while its southern portion, including the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago, is indebted for its ancient development to adventurers and colonists from the Coromandel and Malabar coasts. Once this point, never heretofore cleared up, is well understood, much that is yet incomprehensible and obscure of the early history of Indo-Chinese nations will appear more distinct.

“For the present we are concerned only with that stream of emigration which flowed into Northern Indo-China from Northern India. That such a movement occurred is amply proved by the fact that during the three or four centuries preceding the Christian Era we find Indu dynasties, established by adventurers claiming descent from the Kshatriya potentates of Northern India, ruling in Upper Burma, in Siam and Laos in Yunnan and Tonkin, and even in most parts of South-East China. From the Brahmaputra and Manipur to the Tonkin Gulf we can trace a continuous string of petty States ruled by those scions of the Kshatriya race, using the Sanskrit or the Pali languages in official documents and inscriptions, building temples and other monuments after the Indu style, and employing Brahman priests for the propitiatory

ceremonies connected with the court and State. Among such Indu monarchies we may mention those of Tagong, Upper Pagan, Prome, and Sem-wi (Theinni), in Burma, of Muang Hang, C'hieng Rung, Muang Khwan, and Dasarna (Luang P'hrab Bang), in the Lau country; and of Agranagara (Hanoi) and Campa, in Tonkin and Annam. As far as Yunnan is concerned, we learn from Chinese historians that a Jen-kwo, claiming descent from Sukladhanya-rajā, fifth son of Sri - Dharmasoka of Magadha, was as early as B. C. 122, reigning at Peh-ngai, to the south-east of the Ta-li Lake, and had, shortly afterwards conferred upon himself from the Chinese emperor the sovereignty over the whole territory of Tien (Yunnan). We hear, moreover, that "the oldest traditions connect the Ai-Lao State of Yung Ch'ang with Meng chia ch'wo, son of Asoka."

"If we do not know more of the Indu dynasties founded in the South of China and on the shores of the Gulf of Tonkin, it is due, no doubt, to the fact that the Chinese looked upon the States lying outside the borders of their empire at that period as barbarous, and therefore concerned themselves very little about them. But the names of peoples and cities recorded by Ptolemy in that region, however few and imperfectly preserved, are sufficiently significant to prove the presence of the Indu ruling and civilizing element in those countries, undoubtedly not so barbarous as the Chinese would make them appear. A different

complexion is thus put on the past of those countries and of China withal; for while, according to Chinese accounts the Chinese appear as the civilized nation par excellence and the population outside their southern borders as barbarians, the truth seems to lie rather in the opposite direction, as it was evidently through the medium of those barbarians that China received part of her civilization from India. As a matter of fact the Chinese never yet mentioned or admitted this, but it is as plain as can be that their astronomical knowledge, their calendar, and many of the arts and sciences for which they stood long celebrated as the original inventors, were introduced among them by Hindu travellers or acquired by the Chinese themselves through contact with the barbarians of their southern borders where Hindu influence had long been predominating. The embassy that the emperor Ming-ti sent in A. D. 65 to India where it brought Buddhism to the Chinese, was very likely prompted by and despatched upon the advice of Indus then at the Chinese Court. It seems, in short, to me, that there is ample evidence as to the presence, within Chinese borders, of Hindu and other western foreigners — whither adventurers, traders, or missionaries — early before the Christian Era and before active intercourse by sea could have been established. The presence of this western — chiefly Hindu — element and its influence upon the development of Chinese civilization at a far earlier period than has hitherto

been known or even suspected, commands attention, and can henceforth be hardly overlooked by Sinologists.")

Thus Manipur has been an independent principality in the eastern frontier of India from time immemorial. The earliest land route from India proper to Burma and further east was through this kingdom. Successive bands of colonists, traders, adventurers, and missionaries flowed into the eastern countries from India through this valley of Manipur when there was no facility of going by the sea. Therefore even if we were to leave aside the geological evidence of the age of this valley these contemporary accounts alone would be sufficient to prove the age of it.

As to the identity of it with the Manipur mentioned in the Mahabharata the book itself is the surest proof, the only point on which some special stress may be given is that in the time of the Mahabharata there was a route from Kalinga to Bengal by the sea coast, which was taken by Arjuna from Kalinga to Manipur, by Yudhishthira from the estuaries of the Ganges i. e. from Bengal to Kalinga and the Sacrificial Horse from Magadha and Bengal to Kalinga.

As early as the 6th century B. C. Indian princes from Kapilavastu settled in Manipur. Of the successive waves of Indian emigrants that passed through some might have settled here. Have they left some of their cultures in the shape

of religion, language and tradition to this valley which in the language of Sir Charles J. Lyall is a 'singular oasis of comparative civilization and organized society, set in the midst of a congeries of barbarous peoples?' These words alone will speak a lot if we only remember that they were from the pen of a British officer of high position. In astronomy and a-trology we have seen much evidence in favour of Manipur, as to their religious belief Jaimini and the Chinese Man-shu have given much evidence, but still Manipur is not free from being charged with having been of animistic cult by many who did not get the opportunity of studying the internal life and unrecorded history of the people. In the following few pages let us try what we can learn from such an unrecorded history.

Chapter II.

On the Religious Belief of the Early Manipuris.

As the means of tracing the origin of religion is intimately related to language, we must therefore try to collect necessary information regarding the Manipuri dialect, from the nutshells of which we are going to make a hard attempt of finding out the religious belief of the early people of this valley. It may sound something peculiar that language would be of any use in tracing this subject, let me therefore on the outset quote Prof. Sayce one of the authorities on Philology, in his Principles of Comparative Philology Chapter VIII he writes thus, 'Language, we have said, is the mirror of society, because it is the embodiment of thought. Every word has a history and that history is really the history of the mind. The two correlatives cannot be separated from one another, thought is but internal, language external. Form and content, creator and created these are other ways of expressing the same thing : the statue does not represent more truly the artistic imagination of its sculptor than does the word the mind that shaped it. ****' Words which were once pregnant with meaning may either put on new significations in consequence of social changes ; or long use and acquaintance may deprive them of their sense, so the sole meaning they possess is their mere sound,

or again, their original force may be forgotten, and they may survive as proper names or in connection with obsolete ceremonies ; or lastly, they may be confused with other better known words, and bring about a confusion of ideas. * * * * Indeed, the first act of the consciousness is to ask what is the reason of that which it sees about it ? The formation of a language itself implies a desire to know objects by naming them, and so distinguishing them one from the other. Every name that is given is the summing-up of all attainable knowledge concerning a thing it contains within itself the answer which man attempts to make to that ever-recurring question "why ?" and all the knowledge and experience which he can bring to bear upon it. But the knowledge and the answer of the first man must have been very different from that of a more cultivated era of humanity. The Athenian of the age of Pericles would view the world with eyes very unlike those with which the primitive Aryan gazed upon it. The old name would not express the new meaning, and if it had not expanded with the growing knowledge of the speakers, it would be of necessity cramp and confine the signification within the limits originally assigned to it, and cease to reflect the living knowledge of the day, and to be anything more than an antiquated symbol. Words have a life, because the society which produces them has a life, and just as the old forms of society become dead and misleading, so also do the words which shadow

them forth. They no longer answer truly to objects, and therefore objects must be made to answer to them, and thus a dark cloudland is built up upon these worn out husks, hiding nature and reality from the mind and the belief.

Now this is mythology exactly. Its creation move like the ghost of Homer, in an unreal fairy land, and the sole basis is the names which are given to them, for these names are the heirlooms of a traditional past — the heritage which has come down from the giants of old time; this is their only title to existence and respect. The traditional part, therefore, which has given them their existence, must furnish the key which shall unlock them. We must track the names back historically, until we reach the age when they were living and full of significance. Mythology is founded upon words, and the history of words, therefore, must explain it. But we must not forget that, after all, words will only explain the external side of mythology. It is true that this is its chief and most important side, but, without an inward and sustaining spirit mythology could not have lasted so long and so persistently as it has done, and have blinded the eyes to its manifold absurdities. There must have been an element in it which appealed to the heart of man, and preserved it from being relegated to the nursery, like the fairy tales which yet claim the same origin as the gorgeous mythology of the Greek poets. This element was the religious instinct. Behind the outward

veil of the myth was enshrined the belief in God and the soul, more or less concealed and over-encrusted, it may be, in the course of generations ; but still there it abided almost unconsciously, and kept the old mythology from premature death. As we get at the original conceptions which underlie the several relations of grammar by a comparison of the forms which denote them, so in mythology we must discover the spirit that has given it birth by an inductive comparison of the various forms with which it has clothed itself. These are words and phrases, and consequently Comparative Mythology is but a branch of the Science of Language."

Thus we have seen how far language, mythology and religion are connected and by means of the evidence obtained from language we can trace the origin of the other two. But before language is admitted as a witness she must declare, her caste and creed to the stern judge of Science, and then she must undergo a trying scientific operation to be dissected, analysed and assimilated, the blood of her hearts heart must be tested. If the purity of her blood stands the test in relation to the other correlated languages with which she is to be compared, there and then only is her evidence to be admitted without any reference to the apparent dress in which she may be clothed. It must be admitted that the Manipuri language upto now has never been carefully examined and its grouping in the Kuki-Chin Group of Languages is nothing but conventional, Sir George Grierson's

remarks on this point will clear the statement. In his *Linguistic Survey of India* Vol. III, Part III he wrote, "The denomination Kuki-Chin is a purely conventional one, there being no proper name comprising all these tribes. Meithei-Chin would be a better appellation, as the whole group can be subdivided into two sub groups, the Meitheis and the various tribes which are known to us under the names of Kuki and Chin. I have, however, to avoid confusion, retained the old terminology." He further writes, "Meithei is the chief language of the Manipur valley and has apparently a long and independent development." This remark short as it speaks much as to the age and its not borrowing much from other languages. Indeed its age may favourably be compared with many of the languages of India proper, as will be seen from the subsequent pages. Most of its grammatical inflections and changes may be regarded as a parallel development of the Magadhi Pali, concrete examples of which are postponed for future illustrations as they may be too dry at this moment. As grammar is the criterion of a language so let us here examine the grammatical inflections of Manipuri so that we may pass some opinion as to its blood relation. If some abler hands were to handle it, it would have been nice and desirable, but delays are always dangerous, so some spade work has been attempted with the hope that this may open further field of work for future attempts. The present writer will not care whether his views

modern one has a parrallel use in Hindi, but the *ta* of the ablative of which the old Manipuris had a very gloomy idea has been transferred to the dative as well as the locative case. We have purposely postponed the consideration of the accusative case ending. This case does not seem to have been so important in various languages. In Sanskrit its form is similar to that of the nominative case of nouns of the neuter gender, in Bengali and Manipuri its case ending is prominent in personal proper nouns and personal pronouns, in English too it has its distinctive forms in the personal pronouns if this is to be counted. Before proceeding any further in considering the origin of the accusative case it must be remembered that all the particles which are known to us as case endings were originally words with their full significance which they have lost with a tremendous wear and tear in the long run. In later times no one cared to know what was the origin of such particles and what were the meanings of them, as people are not inclined to argue much with their language and were satisfied if she could serve his purpose in all possible ways somehow or other. This fact will easily be illustrated by the Bengali instrumental case endings viz, *dvara*, *diya* and *karttika* in modern Bengali these appear to have lost sight of the real significations of them and when we learned its grammar we committed them to memory as the signs of the instrumental case and nothing more than that, but their significances are very

distinct as we know *dwarā* is from *dvara* the door, *diya* is by giving and *kirttika* is the means of any action. How did they come to be used as the signs of the instrumental case then? We enter any compound or building through some gate or door, in the same way we do the action of the verb through the word or words of the instrumental case in the sentence i. e. as the gate or door is the means of entering so is the action performed through the means of the object in the instrumental case. in short, therefore it is as if the door of action in the same way the other two particles may be explained. In Manipuri the accusative case is denoted by *pu*, in Bengali by *ke* and in Hindi by *ko*; both *ke* and *ko* in the respective languages signifies who, but the Manipuri particle of *pu* means (*mapu*) lord or master. Take the sentences *Ramko mara*, *Ramke mariyachhe* and *Ramba phure* in such sentences the nominatives are suppressed, but by means of the case ending we can plainly understand that it was Ram and no other else that was beaten, and the sentences may be dissected into who or somebody has beaten Ram and in Manipuri, a master or one who can beat him has beaten Ram so the some one or master has been adopted as its case ending. But in the case of such as *Ekta pakhi dharechhe*, *Ektho chiriya pakra* and *Uchek ama phare*, a bird has been caught, the case endings are not necessary because the bird cannot catch itself it is quite evident that somebody must have caught,

but in the case of Ramko mara if we omit the case ending ko it will always be doubtful whether the nominative is Ram or he is the objective. Thus we see that the speakers of a language are not very particular about rules and formalities, they remained satisfied as long as their language the good housewife of the Mind as Prof. Max Muller called her, can fulfil her duty of expressing the thought precisely and implicitly, hence where there was no possibility of being misunderstood there was no necessity of particular signs or particles. I presume the formation of the accusative case ending may be regarded as one of the examples of the independent career of the Manipuri language following parallel principles with other Indian languages, but marking an independent track of herself.

Let us now come to the conjugational terminations. The present tense is formed by adding i as in Pali and other Indian languages. The past tense is formed by adding e. The present tense is formed by adding ge as in Hindi. But in cases of emphasis and certainty the particle *gani* is used. Some special remarks will be necessary to trace the origin of this conjugational particle. It is a combination of *ge* (the ordinary future tense suffix) and *ni*. According to some phonetic rules to be discussed later on the Sanskrit suffixes *taṇya* and *aniva* become *taba* and *ningei* respectively, as they have a sense of futurity in the original language, so also they convey the same sense in Manipuri, e.g. *taugadaba*=*tau*, to do, *ge*

future tense suffix + *taba* i. e. to be done or a duty. While the other one *ningei* is divided into two of its component parts viz *ni* and *ngei*, the former has become an incomplete verb with three different forms *ni*, *ne* and *no* in the meaning of to be. But as soon as they are used as conjugational suffixes all of them are of futurity. Thus in old Manipuri *ngei + ne* is the suffix to form the future tense. *Gani* of modern Manipuri is a combination of *ge + ni*, as has been said, thus two future tense particles are used to denote certainty or emphasis. We shall see more what important parts this *ni* takes in interrogative and negative futurities. As soon as it comes to this stage of using as the suffixes of these forms, it has been confused with another incomplete verb *natte*, is not, the root of which is to be traced to *na* or *nat* meaning not. In Manipuri *n* and *l* are interchangeable according to some rules so also *l* and *r*, and the remaining portion *te* of *natte* is also used as a negative suffix, as *t* and *d* are interchangeable these *na* and *te* have formed a very important part in various disguises in the future interrogative and negative forms. Almost all the interrogative sentences are formed by suffixing the negative particle *ra* a form of *na*, as in *Nang lakker?* You com-will not? you will come is it not? Will you come? *Ma lakpara?* *Ma* (he) *lakle* (has come) - *ra* (not)? Has he come? *Ma c'atkacara?* *Ma* (he) *c'atkadara* (go-will-not-not)? Will he not go? A few examples of negative sentences may as well be useful.

Touganô, do-will-not, do not do, here the inherent meaning being, do not that you will do. *Ei chatloi*, I go-will not, I shall not go *Ma chatloidara*, he go-will-not-is-not-not? Here the three negatives make a negative sense and thus the sentence means that He will not go is it not? Thus this language has formed most independently with a few radicals or germs originally of Sanskrit origin in the various forms of its verbal conjugations.

As regards its syntax I have tried to translate several sentences of Dinesh Chandra Sen's *Bangala bhashara Itihas* and Kali Prasanna Singha's Bengali translation of the *Mahabharata* word for word and found them to be in decent Manipuri style except that in Manipuri almost all the numerical and other adjectives go after the noun.

Before examining the biography of some of the interesting words that have developed into the formation of this language, we may consider some rules that will guide us to trace out the corresponding Sanskrit word or root from which Manipuri words have been derived if there be such corresponding words.

(1) No Manipuri words commence with a soft consonant, it turns into the corresponding hard one of the same group.

(2) No *r* begins a word.

(3) The first and second letters of the group consonant are interchangeable, so also *ch* and *s* including all its forms, *n* and *l* as well as *l* and *r*,

These are the peculiarities of the language. If any word begins in Manipuri with t we can look for its corresponding word in Sanskrit that begins with t, th, d and dh and so on.

(1) Initial r turns into l, ng or y. R seems to have been one of the most troublesome letter, sometimes it is totally dropped, sometimes it turns into r_g as is noticeable in Magadhi Pali and Pali words in Burma. At least in the case of Surendra the r is doubled as Soraren.

(2) The vowel sign r or ri becomes i.

(3) Final j and ch turns into i strictly speaking into y.

(4) Final lok turns into lou Palak = *Phalou*, protector, Golok = *Korou* = heaven.

(5) Final and becomes ā khandā = *kha* = to wall off.

(6) The vowel sign ou becomes ao. Gou = *kao* = a bull. Dyou = *tao* = sky.

(7) The vowel signs i, e and ei as well as u and ou are interchangeable

(8) Double consonants lose one of them. Swarna = *sana* = gold.

(9) Final an becomes ing. Naman = *Na-ming* = name.

(10) Final y becomes m. kshaya = *kham* to be over.

(11) The word thakura is contracted into *thou*.

These may not be exhaustive, others may come out with the increase of our knowledge and study.

All the rules of philology such as transposition of syllables, false analogy, contraction of syllables and the like play their respective parts in the formation of Manipuri words as well.

Now let us examine the development of some words which Prof. Max Muller called biography of words. Let us first take up some of the most common verbs such as to be, to say etc. The Sanskrit word for the verb 'is' is *bhavati* in Pali it is *bhoti* or *hoti*, in Bengali it is *haya* in Manipuri all the consonants are stripped off and becomes *oi*, Manipuri *hoi* for yes is a derivative of the Pali word *hoti*. Again in Pali *āha*, *āhā*, *uha* and *aha* are the various forms of the Sanskrit verb *aha* say and in Manipuri we have its equivalent *hai*, the *i* of which is necessarily was the conjugational termination of the present tense which in course of time has become part and parcel of the original verb. The Sanskrit root *kit* to fear becomes *Ki* in Manipuri in the same meaning, so also the Sanskrit root *phut* to boil is used in Manipuri in the same form and sense. Let us take a few Bengali words of a colloquial nature e. g. *Taoyan* to heat, in Manipuri *Taoba* to fry, *tubadan* to fold in Bengali is *thuppa* in Manipuri in the same meaning. Many other instances of the same nature may be given, but let us first consider one of the most important verbs 'to do' at first in Manipuri it is 'toubā' from the root *tou*.

The root *tou*, *do*, is a very commonly used verb. Professor Max Muller has derived the English

verb do from the Sanskrit root *dha* to hold. But in Manipuri *to* which is the synonym of do is derived from the Sanskrit root *stu* to worship or praise. With the Vaishnavite people whatever they do is for the service of God, even to take their meal is to serve it according to their phraseology. We have been told that the early Manipuris were worshippers of Vishnu, so they selected this root *stu* or rather it automatically developed to mean do and applicable to any action they undertake. Thus if they do some work it is expressed as worshipping it, perhaps for the early completion of it. By long use the verb has become so common that its users have totally forgotten its original root meaning and being stripped of all knowledge of its original sense, they often wonder the peculiarity of some of the old expressions, the rare remnants, wonderfully useful in tracing the origin of the term. Let us cite here a few examples to clear our meaning, all of these has something to do with *lai*, God or deity whatever you may wish to call, to perform the daily routine service of a temple is often expressed as *lai toubu* to do God, in the modern sense of the verb *toubu*, the expression practically conveys no meaning, as we have lost any knowledge of the original meaning of the verb it only gives the vague idea of offering some service to God in the temple. Another vivid example of this is the Manipuri saying "*lawai langtham khong nambi laitou khuding yuoganbi*," here the word *taitou* clearly means worship of the deity and nothing

more. The mild form of expressing sexual intercourse is *lutouba* to do the deity, as the organs are called deities in Manipuri the action is to do service to them. Thus such few expressions that are now available prove that the verb in question originally meant to do some service to God

In the same way the two nouns *Thou* and *Thabak*, which are derived from the root *coa*, have also lost sight of the original meaning, only a dim idea of it is visible in the phrase *thoutouba* and *mathoutouba*, as they respectively mean to offer something to appease a deity, and to perform a shraddha for the dead

The verval suffix of *ba* in Manipuri is often asserted as one of the points of similarity in Tibetan and Manipuri, but instead of making us to carry such a heavy load across the unsurmountable Himalayan ranges can't we find out the origin of this suffix within the Indian world with the seas? In fact some of the haphazard way of summing up things by some inventive minds is a heavier work than crossing the mountains. In the Indian alphabet there are two different letters for *b* one is represented by the English *b* while the other generally by *v*, this latter if prominently pronounced is represented by *wa*. In most cases this *v* is pronounced just as *b* both in Bengali and Manipuri. Therefore whenever it has to be distinctly pronounced the Manipuris have added some sort of stroke underneath the *ba*, but in Bengali it is replaced by the letters *oya* to be pronounced as

wa. With this much information we can find a striking similarity in this verbal suffix, in both the languages say for example, *louba* in Manipuri and *laoya* in Bengali for to take, *yaoya*, *khaoya* and so on and in Manipuri they would stand as *chatpa*, *chaba* for to go, to eat. In Manipuri all verbal nouns are formed by this form just as we notice in Bengali.

Now let us see the origin of the names of such things as the sun, the moon, fire, water, house and the like which the most primitive men ought to have known. The old Manipuri name for the sun was *taodanba* or *taotanba* as is spelt in most manuscripts, the word is derived from *tao*+*tamba*, according to rule as given above we see that *tao* is the disguised form of the Sanskrit term *dyeu* and *tamba* or *tanba* is from Sanskrit root *tamva* to move, thus the word *taotanba* simply means that which moves in the sky and it has come to mean the sun. In the same way *loitamba* is the old Manipuri name for the moon and it is derived from *loi*+*tamba*, *loi* is the Sanskrit word *raja* night and *tamba* as in the above to move therefore *loitamba* means that which moves at night and it became to mean the moon. It may be noted here that in Sanskrit there are so many words to denote the sun and the moon but the old Manipuris have not selected any of them, but have coined quite a new word for themselves with roots from the same language. In the same way there are so many names in Sanskrit for the fire but these

people did not borrow any of the names but they have adopted a name which must have been the most prominent function of fire in their social life. They named fire *chakmom*, the corresponding Sanskrit word for this is *Yajnamaya*, pertaining to or of sacrifice, therefore it follows that they were engaged in offering sacrifices of fire. *I* is the Manipuri name for water in the Nighantu also *im* is a name for water. We call a house *yum* we never dreamt that it would be related with any Sanskrit word as its origin, but in fact it is derived from *grha* a house in Pali nominative it is *Giyom*, Burmese Buddhist temples were known as *kiyongs* in Manipur which is also nothing but a phonetic decay of *grham* a house, Symes in his Embassy to Ava spelt it as *Kioum*, in old Manipuri it was never spelt as *yum* but it was always *yom*, and it was always preceded by *maral* as for instance *marallol yom* a house. This *maral* is mentioned by Dinesh Chandra Sen as an obsolete Bengali word to mean a house. One of the Burmese names for Manipur is *Yazagyo* which is the Burmese Pali for *Rajagraha*. By the rule of contraction of syllables *ki* has been got rid of and *yom* (and later on *yum*) has been left. *Im* in place of *yum* is often used by foreigners but it is not a Manipuri word, it has been used by people who could not pronounce initial *y* as we pronounce it.

Let us now illustrate, by some examples, the mode of formations of words in Manipuri, perhaps

such has been the general rule governing the mode of development of languages.

Nakong and *na* both means the ear. Both the words can be traced to karna the ear in Sanskrit. According to our rules the word karna would stand as kongna in Manipuri, but by the process of transposition we get *nakong* the ear. By a further process of contraction of syllables *na* is left, both of which signify the same thing. Perhaps the word *naton*, nose, is related with this *na* and by a false analogy it has been applied to the nose.

In Manipuri a place which is almost surrounded by water is known as *Thanga*, the present island of Thanga in the Loktak lake is not perhaps a proper name in old Manipuri there were other thangas, we shall here deal with one of them. The high land at the foot of the Langol hill, bordering on the Lamphel jhil was known as one of the Thangas, as the marsh was under water the place was named so. The first Manipuri settlement under Poireiton was near about modern Landeng on the other side of this Thanga across the Langol hill. Later on a branch of these settlers established a new settlement in that Thanga or island, youngmen from the main colony used to cross the hill to visit their friends in the new colony and perhaps they did so even at night. Their elderly people used to warn them as *Thanga leikai poiganu* so that accidents may happen at night in the jungles of the hill, from this sense any sort of wandering aimlessly was known as *Thanga leikai poiba*. Now

let us trace the origin of the word Thanga according to the rules, th was originally either t, th, d, or db ; let us select d then we get da and ra for ng thus we come upto dar for thang and ka or kha or some letter of the same nature for ga let us take ka for it, we now get daraka, as we know that all double consonants lose one so we get Dwaraka for the Manipuri word *Thanga*. The people who named such places by this name knew full well what sort of land was Dwarka and called all new places by this name if they satisfied all the attributes of Dwarka.

Thambal, the lotus,—the word is formed by the two parts *tham* and *pan*, the last component *pan* means flower, but the other one is always used with any part of the lotus plant such as *thamna* the leaf, *thambou*, the root, *thamjet* the fruit, what is the possible origin of this *tham* the meaning of which is quite obscure to us ? Let us see whether our phonetic rules can help us in our attempt to know its meaning, the Sanskrit equivalent for lotus is *padma*, which in many Indian dialects even in Manipuri is pronounced as *padam*, such as *Padam Singh*, this *padam* has been contracted to *dam* from which we easily get *tham*. But the language forgot or managed to forget that *tham* was originally the flower itself, and thus added another word denoting a flower, while the original *tham* has been used to form other words that have any connection with this flower.

The words *lai* and *yai* both nouns and verb.—In Manipuri almost all nouns are from verbal roots, if any new noun is introduced it is generally traced to its possible roots, the appropriate verbs of most nouns depends upon similarity of roots between the noun and verb. We know the word *lai* comes from *raja* according to the phonetic changes, in old Manipuri it is really used in the meaning of a king it is used to denote God, this usage also is observable in the vedic literature too. As the meaning of its Sanskrit root is to shine, so the verbal form of *laiba*, in the low tone, the meaning of which is not to be difficult, the opposite word of which is *luba* to be difficult derived from the Sanskrit word *duroor dha*, has not lost sight of the original meaning of the root from which it has been derived inasmuch as anything shining is not to be difficult to look for. From the same root we get the word *yai* a precious stone having some supernatural power whether evidently or not. The reason why some supernatural idea has been connected with it is clear from the fact that the original root has some relation with a deity. *Yaiba* the corresponding verb from this radical means to be exposed to heat from fire or the sun, anything shining must be supposed to have its own heat just as the sun or fire does, so it has also got a meaning within the limits of its root,

Lou and the verb *u*. — *Lou* means paddy plant and thus as a secondary meaning paddy-field, its appropriate verb is *uba* to cultivate. *Lau* is derived

from the Sanskrit root *ruh* to grow. It is curious to note that every thing that grows was not *lou* but specially paddy plant was known to the people of this land as *lou*, its possible explanation lies in the fact that as paddy was the main staple food they took much care and interest in the growth of the plants of this corn so they called it as such. From this very root *ruh*, we get the noun *u* a tree and the verb *uba* to cultivate specially cultivating paddy. Here in order to clear up the above derivation it may be useful to state the rules that govern in the interchanges of vowel signs, viz. if the final consonant of a root is dropped the vowel sign of the root becomes briddhi i. e. its power is increased, thus in *ruh* the final consonant *h* is dropped therefore *u* becomes *ou*, but when both the consonants are dropped the original vowel is not at all affected thus we get the noun *u* or the verbal root *u*.

But in the cases of *louba* to bake in the direct heat of fire and *ngouba* to bake without any liquid as the meanings show clearly they are derived from the root *ruch* to get heat or shine but this root does not give us any noun *u*.

We have already seen that the Sanskrit suffix *aniya* or rather the termination *aniya* becomes *ingai* in the same way the word *nyaya* reason or argument turns to *ningai*, but its meaning has been so much degraded that it means disobedience. Perhaps the people were not fond of being argued.

Thu and *thou*, to be quick and to hasten. This root *thu*, *thuba* is derived from the root *dru* having a meaning to be quick as in *druta gati* to go quickly, and its derivative *thouba* also has the same inherent meaning, it is used in different meanings and they may better be illustrated by a few examples we say *shell thouba*, to press for payment, *shaonthouba* to urge a horse, and its adjectives such as *thang athouba*, a sharp knife and *mi athouba* a brave man, in *shel thouba* we press the man for early payment and thus it is to quicken the payment in *shaonthouba* we urge the animal for a quick motion. A sharp knife means it cuts quickly and a brave man too is something like a rash man who is at once without much looking to the consequence if it is good he is brave and if it is bad he is rash.

We have got the word *nungthin*, for daytime, in Manipuri; a history of its development to this form may be interesting. In old Manipuri this was expressed by *korou-nong thin*, heaven divine *thin* and we know that *thin* is only a phonetic change of the Sanskrit word *dina* daytime. The apparent cause of daytime being used with such words is that in olden days daytime was regarded as a heavenly bliss; and when time came for more word economy the first portion *korou* has been dropped off, but the second portion *nong* has been detained and both the word has been combined to express the meaning that *thin* itself originally denoted, and in course of time it has

formed modern word *nungthin*. Although the original meaning of the Sanskrit word Nara of which nong is the Manipuri form, was the divine spirit, in time they forgot every possible idea of it and by a false analogy they have coined the word *nongma* one day. Here we must not forget the ancient Indian conception of day, and may compare with the Manipuri notion, both the words *deva* a god and *divasa* day are derived from the same root.

The word *nuti* every day perhaps comes from the word *nungthin*, but it is so much confused with the other words *nitya* and *niti* that it is not very easy to make a definite demarcation, however, if it is pronounced as *nuti*, it may be from *nungthin* and if it is *niti* it is from *nitya*. We often say either *nutichargi lakkani* or *nitichargi* etc. Which is a contraction of *nityachara* and by a false analogy *char* has been added to *nuti* as well.

In old Manipuri *kongyang* is the word for bamboo. Its Sanskrit equivalent according to the phonetic rules would be something like *karamara*, *garamara* or *gharamara*, but my friend Pandit Raj Tombapu informed me that in Sanskrit there is a word *karmara* for bamboo. Although the word *wa* is the modern name for bamboo which is said to be commonly used from Burma to Tippera still our old name for bamboo was *kongyang*.

The Sanskrit word *Naman* for name has turned into *naming* in Manipuri but this *na* has

been confused with the second personal pronominal prefix and thus only *ming* has been left to mean name; thus with the pronominal prefixes of *i*, *na*, and *ma* it is now being used.

Here a few Sanskritic words are given below with their corresponding Manipuri words :—

Goloka—*Korou*. Heaven

Shyalak—*Shelou*, brother-in-law.

Palak—*Phalou*, protector.

Bhurlok,—*Phumlou*. We shall speak more about this when we deal with the first colonists into Manipur,

Shrnga,—*Ching*, mountain.

Shrngavera,—*Shing*, ginger.

Trnathakur,—*ningthou*, king,

Trnathakur—*tingthou*, dubgrass, since its being used in sacrificial and other religious rites.

Trnakhar,—*Tingkhang*, thorn.

Mastak,—*Matok* or *makok*, head.

Swarna.—*sana*, gold.

Talli,—*taloi* (old Manipuri for wife),

Swakiya—*sageingai*, relatives and kinsmen.

Sampad,—*pot*, things i. e. property.

Prema—*pema*, an affectionate girl.

Rajan thakur—*Laingthou*, this form is used in the vocative as well as in the nominative cases.

Ahan,—*Ahing* by a false analogy it come to mean night in Manipuri.

Naming,—

Naman,—*Namina*, name vide above.

Ira, ilang,—*irat*, *lat*,—to worship, to maintain a temple for worship.

Ayah,—*yot*,—iron.

Arka—*angkot*, a medicinal plant with beautiful flowers.

Pran,—*pan*,—to live.

Taranga,—*tarang*,—waves.

Im,—*i*,—*water*. vide Nighantu, *udaka namani*.

Kshaya,—*kham*, to be over,

... *...kam*,—dried up as of fruits and rendered not suitable to be eaten.

Laya,—*lomba*, to end to come to the summit.

Puya,—*pum*, to rot.

Shuya,—*shumba* to lull to sleep.

Chhed,—*chhet*,—to tear.

Mar,—*mang*,—to lose.

... *...mang*,—to lose one's caste, to be unclean.

Dharma,—*thonga*, this word is specially used to denote the king and queen of the dead being compounded with *ren* or *lairemma*, as in *Thongak lairemma* to queen of the land of death. The reason why the site of this queen of the dead has been selected at the southern side of the Langol hill is quite obvious from the fact that the first colonist were on the opposite side of the Langol hill, perhaps when a new branch of their own established a new colony in that region this land of the dead was removed further south across the Nambul river and thus the foot of the Makoi hill was recognized as such. *Thongaren*, Dharmendra, King of the dead.

Karmar,—*kongyang*,—bamboo.

Thakurani—*thourani*.

Surendra,—*Soraren*, Indra. The last syllable ren or len has been adopted as a suffix to denote chief or prominent.

Rajendra,—*lairen*, emperor,

ningthouren, which is derived from
orthakur + ren.

Nara,—*nong*,—this word is used to mean rain, *nong ngan'*, the dawn, *nongdamba*, God's ordain and various other words that has something to do with the divine spirit or the heavenly firmament.

Kharapat,—*khangpok*,—a hut.

Dwara, dor,—*thong*,—door.

(Dharana),—*thang*,—to hold, to carry.

Gari,—*kang*,—ear.

Nuri,—*nung*,—pebbles.

Ghuri,—*khung*,—a top.

Pura,—*pung*,—both a city as in Hastina mapungyai, and a drum in which case pur in the sense of hide of which a pung is made.

Kara,—*khong*,—foot. In Sanskrit kara is hand but by a false analogy it has come to mean the foot in Manipuri, in the same way.

Ghut,—*khut*, hand but originally *ghut* means the ankle, but it has been used in Manipuri in the meaning of a hand. Let me illustrate here an instance of this false analogy in a recent word of our own time. A bicycle was introduced in Manipur after the Manipur affairs of 1891, the people took much interest to see men running in a sitting position and sometimes rather very often

falling down, the vehicle whenever left alone will never stand itself, but will always lie down. They must give some name for this, they knew it was a gari, and they had perhaps some gloomy idea of the vehicle known as *eka* in western India, thus someone has given it the name of *ekagari* and by this time even a child of tender age knows what a bicycle is.

Kula,—*khul*—a village, perhaps in olden days each village was occupied by persons of the same clan.

Raya,—*lam*,—land, the original meaning of *raya* is wealth, but it has been used in Manipuri to mean landed property in general.

Khamaya,—*Khovmom*.—God.

Yajna,—*chakmom*, fire.

Gou,—*kao*,—cattle.

Dwou,—*tao*,—as in *taodama* above.

Rajas,—*Loi*, night. vide *Loijing*, *loitamba* above.

Khaj,—*khoi*.—to plough, from this root the verb *khoiba* to mean to do horticulture has been derived, the verb *koiba* in the low tone meaning to walk aimlessly is derived as well.

Raja,—*lai*,—God, vide above.

Swaraj,—*sulai*,—those who have common deity.

Rava,—*yawa*,—voice, In old Manipuri.

Kuch,—*khui*,—withered.

Kacha,—*ki*, moustache.

Ralam,—*kl*,—wealth, a vedic term.

Darce or dari,—*thare* (in old Manipuri).—a mountain depression, thus a low land or surface of the earth.

Budahi,—*potthi*,—intelligence.

Iru,—*ru*,—seed, as in *maru marang* seeds.

Buk,—*puk*, *pibuk* (old Manipuri) stomach.

Aditya,—*atiya*,—the sky.

Kona—*kona*.—angle.

Maithunam,—*thuna*, *thunam*,—sexual intercourse, to be soiled.

Stha,—*thaba*,—to plant.

Nyaya,—*Ningai*,—argument.

Shand,—*Sha*,—a beast. The bull or rather cattle was the earliest known domestic animal, in course of time it has been applied to all domestic animals, such as *shan* from *sha*+*ahan*=the old beast the cow, *shagon* from *sha*+*akonba*=beast of a later date, *shamu* from *sha*+*amuba*=a black beast and so on and it has come to mean all the beasts in general.

Kanda,—*ka*,—room.

Khanda, *kha*, to partition

Chanda,—*saba*,—to be hot

Danda,—*ta*,—a spear.

Ru,—*laoba*, to shout.

Ruch,—*louba*,—to hako see above.

Rub,—*lou*, paddy, from this root we get u a tree vide above.

Kung,—*Kouba*,—to call.

Phulla,—*phou*,—paddy that which put forth flowers.

Phut,—*phutpa*,—to boil.

Kit,—*kiba*,—to fear.

Jab,—*cha*,—son or daughter. *jah apatya namani* Ningbantu.

Khosa,—*kusa*, skin, (khosa is Bengali).

Tumba,—*tumba*,—bottle gourd.

Ikshu,—*chu*,—sugarcane, by the rule of contraction *ik* is dropped and *shu* is left which according to rule turns to *chu*.

Ranga,—*ngan*,—red, from which *langba* variegated is derived.

The Sanskrit pronouns *asmin*, *adas* have found their way into Manipuri in the forms of *asi* and *adu*

We can add this list with more words, in consideration of space we may leave it here.

Let us close this section with the following remarks

The affirmative interjection *hoi* = yes and its corresponding negative form *mai* = no are respectively derived from *haya* = to be and the Sanskrit form of *ma* = not, with the addition of *i* the Manipuri verbal ending of the present tense in order to be keeping with *hoi*.

But Mr. Huson moved heaven and earth to show its similarity with Tibetan and Burmese. But it proved to be beyond his power so he very wisely invented a lost root *mak*. As far as we know he did not possess a workable knowledge of Manipuri thus an attempt on the part of such a scholar to establish a lost root of such a language is but to be pitied.

Chapter III.

On the Religious Belief of the People

We have already shown that in the Manipuri vocabulary Soraren is nothing but another name for Indra the Vedic god in disguise. Just as Indra is used in the Vedic literature both for the deity and the spacious firmament so also Soraren is used in both the meanings in Manipuri. Therefore without much labour it may be asserted that the Rgvedic Indra was nothing but the blue sky. All the Manipuri traditions regarding this Soraren are identical to those regarding Indra, because in our tradition thunderbolt is his arm, he is the rain giver and still the blue sky is their Soraren. It is a matter of regret that one of the writers on Manipur has passed his remarks thus, "Indra, the sky God, has his counterpart in the Meithei system, where the Deity Sorarel possesses all attributes generally assigned to Indra, with whom he is now identified by the ingenious Hindus." If the identification of Soraren is to be charged with committing any fraud or the like, it is not known what might have been thought when so many things of European names were identified with things of Rigvedic literature. From the earliest time possible Manipur was in the Indian territories and successive waves of Indian

colonists passed through it to Burma and further east, thus their traditions and religious belief must have been identical without doubt their language as well, If the Aryan Indians could have imparted much of their civilization and religion to people outside their own country, is there any reason to doubt that they must have kept Manipur alone in the dark? The answer is very simple, moreover we think that in accordance with the geographical position of Manipur which is practically cut off from the rest of the world by so many ranges of hills to cross which was a tedious task, if anything whether in the shape of religion or culture, once entered it, it would take a firm root there and it would not be possible to change it with so much ease as may be expected in a better situated country, perhaps this was the main reason why Buddhism could not affect Manipur although the whole of India even further than that was under the sway of this religion. It must be stated that the identification is a matter of fact, and a scientific one too, over and above that there is the historical fact in support of the possibility of there being such a case. No new comers or identifiers can ever create traditions to suit his identification, nor can a community manufacture such traditions to suit their sweet will.

From a comparison of the vedic accounts and the traditions of the Manipuris we come to know that Indra was the blue sky for whose worship we read so many hymns. But Indra was not the

only vedic god that has made his way in the religious belief and mythology of the people of Manipur. Savita, the Sun god and Soma the moon god had their counterparts in their religious system, under the disguised form of Sanamahis and Pakhangba. But Guru Shidaba or Atiya Shidaba, the Immortal Preceptor, or Immortal Aditya was their Supreme God, who sustains the whole universe including this world. In previous pages we read that the people of this country were Brahmanical and worshippers of Vishnu, it is here proposed to discuss whether this worship of the immortal Guru or Aditya was identical with the worship of Vishnu or only a form of animistic worship as some of our modern historians who would not care to dive into the facts, but would make any conclusion in a time saving way. According to the accounts of the land this Immortal Guru or Aditya is said to have had two sons or assistants, and by the will of their Immortal Father the whole universe was created and at his will it is being maintained. Of these two assistants one creates and the other destroys it, it is thus evident that the father and the sons as mentioned in this account are nothing but the Preserver, the Creator and the Destroyer of the Hindu triad, it therefore follows that the Immortal Guru was the Vishnu of the vedic literature in a different name. It may be noted here that according to Shanti Parva in the Mahabharata Guru is another name of Vishnu, as it is included in his thousand names there.

As most of the vedic gods were wonders of nature whom they glorified as such on account of their superhuman powers, in the same way in the Manipuri mythology too, gods were wonders of nature, take for instance Sanamahi molten gold, in the Rigveda Savita is called Hiranyapani, having golden arm on account of the golden rays of the sun but in Manipuri tradition he is molten gold in consideration of its similarity of such a plate. In the Rigvedic literature Savita is called amivaha, destroyer of diseases, so also our Sanamahi too is the amaiba a phonetic decay of amivaha, a physician. Thus it is evident that our Sanamahi is the sun just as Savita is.

In the Manipuri triad Sanamahi is the creator, the moon is the destroyer if we think of the fact that the sun is the source of all life and germination of the vegetable kingdom, the moon is the measure of time, which alone destroys everything in this creation. Thus in the Hindu mythology the Anantashayya or the eternal bed on which the Supreme God is said to be resting is represented by a snake with thousand hoods which shows that He exists in eternal time which as a venomous snake will destroy all except the One who is taking His rest on it. In the same way our Pukhangba too is often represented by a snake, because he is the moon, the time measure that will kill everyone and his being known as the ancestor of our royal family is accounted for in the fact that they

AN EARLY HISTORY OF MANIPUR

67

It is quite natural that until the people could definitely form the idea of the destructiveness of the moon, in consideration of the beauty and the charming coolness with its gradual increase and decrease they regarded him as a jar of nectar, it is perhaps for this reason that in the ninth book of the Rigveda though Soma is addressed as the measure of time (vide) (ix-86-41 and 45) he was addressed as the destroyer of the enemy (ix-6-30) thus showing a dim idea of his destructive propensity. In fact this idea of the moon god's properties was not so predominant in the vedic literature. In the same way the destructive functions of Pakhangba were manifest in the mythical accounts only, but as a personified king none of his destructivity is manifest beyond the fact that even in this sphere he is represented by a serpent. In India proper this eternal time has been personified in Mahadeva, the Destroyer of the triad who, more or less, represents the moon, inasmuch as he is known as Shashishekhara, one whose crest is the moon and the serpent with which he is decorated represents the destructivity of time eternal. In this respect we have noticed a very suitable quotation in Durga Das Lahiris preface in his translation of Mandal I, Anuvak IV and Sookta 15th of the Rigveda as follows :-

‘জন্যনঃ জনকঃ কালো দ্ধগত’মাত্রেয়’ মতঃ ।

अनात्रः—“अनादिनिधनः कालो रजः संहर्षनः श्रुतः ।

कलनां सर्वकृतानां स कालः परिकीर्तितः ॥”

Thus the time measure in course of time might have been personified as the destroyer of the whole universe.

If the two assistants of the immortal Guru were the sun and the moon, what was the wonder of nature that was worshipped by these people as Vishnu or Guru? With all my deep and profound respect for the commentators and scholars past and present, I beg to advance another identification of Vishnu according to the old tradition and belief of a people who were almost entirely secluded from other parts of India, and thus they might not be affected much by being contaminated by ideas of a later period.

In the Manipuri mythological account the immortal Guru is said to be seated on a tripod seat which is the source of this world.

Another name given to him is Atiya Shidaba the immortal Aditya, i. e. this Aditya exists eternally while the others may not be. In Manipuri Atiya is another synonym of the blue sky though we know that it is the equivalent of Aditya.

He is represented with the peculiarly shaped Indian mystic symbol of Om having a figure seven for its main body and sometimes with numerous dots round the figure but never above the Nad-bindu ... Any old Manipuri manuscript begins with

this symbol, sometimes with the dots and sometimes without them. Its local name is Anjee, a phonetic change of On+jee the honorific suffix of jee

This Guru Shidaba is another name for the pole star and the three stars in the middle of which he seems to appear representing the three pods of his seat. It may be noted that in the old Manipuri literature, the Guru means something more than a spiritual guide, as it means an acharya or risbi, a sage, as well. Thus Brihaspati is their Sagonsen Guru and Shukracharya was their Irai Guru. Sagonsen means a keeper of horses and Irai means water or blood deity. In fact many of the wise and intelligent kings and countiers were Gurus. But of all these, the wisest of the wise, was their Immortal Guru and the rest were the mortal Gurus

We have already referred to the tripod seat of Guru Shidaba, has such a seat ever played its part in the vedic literature? If so who was the god that occupied it? Has he anything to do with the immortal Aditya of the Manipuris? In the Rigveda the Aswins are said to have a chariot of three wheels with a triangular shape. For all practical purposes these two whether a vehicle or a seat has a great resemblance. But who are the Aswins or Twins of the Rigveda? The Nirukta says, "According to some they are heaven and earth; day and night according to others. Some take them to be the sun and the moon, (while) the

historians regard them as virtuous kings." It further says, "One is called the son of night, the other the son of dawn". In the Rigveda the sun is the son of dawn. It therefore follows that of the Ashwins one is the sun and for the other we must look for some other deity that has the same attributes as the sun with the only difference that it is the son of night, i. e. it appears at nightfall. In the Rigveda Brhatbhaou or the greater sun is another name of Agni, fire, (vide 1-36-15), and again in x-88-6 we read that at nightfall Agni is on the top of all the worlds, and in the morning he rises as the sun. Thus we find that Agni is a nocturnal deity and solar in nature or attributes, with the only difference that he is greater than the sun. In two of the Mandals of the Rigveda we find that one of the wheels of the car of the Twins is in the topmost firmament (vide 1 019) and VIII-224), which is also the place of Agni (vide 1-592). Thus it may be seen that the sun and Agni are the two deities that represent the Twins or the sun is the son of dawn and Agni is the son of night. But here also another question arises who is Agni? We know Agni is fire, but from the above it has been seen that Agni is something more than our ordinary fire, so wellknown to us. In fact it is our aim to find out what was the wonder of nature which was known to the ancient Indian Aryas as Agni, in the vedic literature he is one of the most peculiar deities with attributes that are com-

monly mentioned of him therein being quite different from those of our terrestrial fire, these may be summed up as follows :—

(1) He is Jataveda or one who knows his own brith or that of every other thing created.

(2) He is the lord of the universe (vide 1-12-2).

(3) He is the lord of the house (vide 1-12-6). If we compare this universe as a house of which he is the head then, it allegorically may mean that he is the guardian deity of this universe as in (2).

(4) He is often addressed as the Vaishwanara or the devine spirit of this universe.

(5) He is the head of the heaven i. . he occupies the topmost of the heaven (vide 1-59 2).

(6) He is the nave of this world and holds the rest of the wolds (vide 1-59 2).

(7) Agni holds everything (vide III 7-1 & V 8 4).

(8) He is the messenger of gods or he comes down to this world and takes all the offerings to other gods.

It is therefore we are to find out some wonder of nature that had most of the above attributes and was known to the old Aryans of the Rigvedic time as Agni that was regarded by them as the source of our fire, and on account of the great

popularity of the latter, the term has been absolutely used to denote our terrestrial fire and the other fire has almost been forgotten except a few traces here and there, in the history of language, instances of this kind is not very rare.

In VIII-29-6 of the Rigveda it is said that Agni knows the birth of all devas or deities, it has already been said that he knows the birth of everything created, if this is the case he is the oldest of all, in other words he is the Supreme God who is unknown and unknowable

(2), (3) and (4) Come under the above category.

Regarding the belief of fire as the lord of the house i. e. an individual dwelling house, an old Manipuri custom may be cited here, In almost all the typical Manipuri houses, just about the center of it a place is assigned for preserving fire, an iron tripod is placed on it, this fireplace is known as Phunga and the iron tripod as yot-sabi, we shall hear more about these. To this fire thus preserved the more orthodox sect of the people daily offer whatever they have to eat and the general belief is that those who do not fail to perform this sacrifice daily would not be in want of their food, at least, if not of wealth. At the time of a formal entry of a newly built house they have to take in fire first of all and preserve it least for five consecutive days. Most of us do not know why we do it but as an old custom

we must do it on this occasion. Perhaps this is one of the remnants of the Indian belief that Agni or fire is the guardian deity of a dwelling house, and the vedic attribute of fire as the giver of wealth. As the gastric fire is to the creature so is Agni to the whole universe.

In various other hymns of the Rigveda we learn that Agni's abode is in the highest heaven that is no other devas or shining bodies or deities are above him. This is an important point to be remembered for our identification of Agni.

It is almost the same thing to say that Agni is the nave of every thing or he is holding every thing in this universe, as the nave is to the wheel so is Agni to the universe, to say that he holds everything in this universe is nothing but another way of expressing that by means of centrifugal and centripetal forces he is keeping the whole universe in its proper order and nothing is allowed to be dislocated i. e. he sustains it as Vishnu does it.

In VIII-39 9 of the Rigveda we read that Agni abides in a place where there are three vandhanas (knots or ties literally), let us try to understand what are these vandhanas in reality. In I-47-2 we hear of the triangular car of the Ashwins as having three vandhanas Wilson translated it as three columned that is having three columns or posts. Again in I-34 9

and 12 we hear of this triangular car of the Ashwins as having three strong wheels, in other words indestructible ones. We therefore learn that the three vandhanas of the car of the Ashwin must remind us of the three wheels of it. In VIII. 39-9 we hear of the abode of Agni as having three vandhanas or columns, Wilson's version of it is three elementary regions. Again in VIII-8 23 we come across with as Ashwin having three feet which remind us the three feet of Vishnu. Sayanacharya's version of these three feet is the three wheels of their car, Wilson also took the same meaning but still it can easily be compared with the feet of Vishnu or the tripod seats of Guru Shidaba. Thus whether these three vandhanas are columns or wheels or feet there is ample evidence to say that the abode or vehicle or seat of either Agni or the Ashwins has a close connection with something that looked like or was considered as by various persons or sects, three columns, wheels, feet or legs of a seat. They were all apparently triangular in shape. As we have already noticed that Agni was regarded as the Supreme Being and in X-88-6 we read that at night Agni is on the head of all the worlds, in the morning he appears as the sun, this would reveal the fact that Agni was seen throughout the whole nights without anything like the setting of other shining bodies, and in order to preserve his indestructibility in the morning he appears as the sun. Thus the sun is nothing but another edition of Agni which

is always indestructible. ३३१ These three Vaudhanas, feet, wheels or so are represented by the iron tripod of the phunga.

In order to understand the origin of the conception of Agni being the messenger of gods we ought to try to understand the Indian Aryan idea regarding the origin of fire and its discovery. In the Rigvedic literature in X-79 & we find a description of Agni as a flash of lightning accompanied by Marutas or winds dispelling rainclouds. In fact the first three verses of this hymn remind one of lightning under the name of Agni, who is an expert rain giver and his flashing among the rainclouds is more or less his activities to send forth the rain. In these and some other verses such as VII-3-6 that may be regarded as having some reference to lightning no special name is given to it, but the general appellation of Agni has been used all the same. People must have noticed for days and years a flash of light descending sometimes as far as this world, it returned to its place in time i. e. it extinguished in due course. Thus of all the devas or shining ones Agni was the only individual deity that would come down to this world, and would take back with him all the offerings of the mortal land to be shared among the devas or deities on high. As they observed this phenomenon of Agni coming down and going back for a long time Trita one of the members of the Bhrgu clan, obtained fire

on the surface of the earth, vide i-58-6, Vibhoo-
 va-a was the name of the father of Trita and
 there are many Rigvedic hymns which are said
 to have been composed by the family members
 of this Trita. Perhaps this incident was performed
 with great pomp and ceremony deserving the occa-
 sion. In fact the obtaining of fire must have been
 regarded as obtaining God Himself. The pheno-
 mana of Agni's coming down to the mortal land
 and going back was the cause of calling him the
 messenger of gods and this would have been the
 cause of calling Agni by the other name of Vanhi.
 But the name Agni must have preceded the event
 of Trita's finding of fire, as we find this very name
 to have been used before the occurrence. Thus
 the summing up of all available information for
 giving such a name to fire much necessarily be
 of the celestial Agni from whom it was supposed
 that our terrestrial fire descended on earth. We
 have said so much about Agni so far now let
 us try to see what was the wonder of nature
 that was named Agni before the discovery of fire
 as described before.

We have already said something regarding
 the three vandhanas of Agni, and in i-143-3 and
 vii-57 it is said that Agni is born in the highest
 part of heaven i. e. in Paramavyoma in the language
 of the Rigveda. Where was this Paramavyoma?
 So far we can form a very vague idea of its
 height and other particulars. In iii-29-4 we read,
 we place you Jataveda Agni, above the world and

in the nave of northern altar to carry offerings. This may throw some light regarding the whereabouts of the abode of Agni and consequently the position of the highest part of the firmament which was known as Pramavyoma in the Rigvedic literature. As the hymn says it is above the earth, and is on the northern altar it must be on the northern part of the firmament, and by the expression in the nave of the northern altar we are to understand that it is towards the northern axis of the earth in other words its position is towards the north pole as the word nave indicates. Thus Agni's abode must be something just in a straight line with the north pole of the earth or near about it. Let us now look out some further means of obtaining more lights. We have already said that with the ancient Rishis Agni was another name of the Supreme Being and in one of the hymns addressed to the Supreme God under the name of Vishwakarma x 82.2 we read that He resides alone in a region beyond the Greater Bear. There are seven regions as mentioned in the vedic literature and the Greater Bear is the next highest one and the region of Satya truth or ever existing is the highest, as such by the topmost firmament we are to understand that the abode of Agni is in the Satya loka or the ever existing or non destructive region.

What was the wonder of nature that was known as Agni to the ancient Indians of the Rigvedic time? How can we identify him and where

can we find him ? Can we possibly get all the information from the Rigveda itself ? In I-143-2 of the Rigveda Agni is said to have been born in the Parama vyoma that is it is his abode, the derivative meaning of the word is the best and exalted Om the mystic symbol, but the general meaning of it may be the highest heaven. But both of these meanings are very vague and do not give us any idea of the whereabouts of the abode of Agni. In I 35 6 it is said that there are three Dyulokas or heavenly worlds that is Jana, Tapa and Satya Lokas, two of them i. e. the first two which are lower than the third one are nearer to the sun and the other one or the third one leads to the abode of Yama, in other words the third, the highest one is the abode of Yama. Thus we see that Satyaloka or the seventh world the highest one of the ancient Indian universe of the seven worlds is the abode of Yama, which was known as the Parama vyoma which as we have seen is the abode of Agni. Here the question arises are Agni and Yama different divinities residing in the same region or are they the same god by different names ? In the Rigveda the word Yama is found to have been used as a synonym of Agni (vide I-163-3 and 4) thus Yama and Agni are the two names of the same god, therefore Parama vyoma the abode of Agni is consequently Satyaloka the highest world. Let us again try to see whether we can find some further evidence in support of it from the Rigveda

itself. We have already seen that Agni was the Supreme God of the Rigvedic Rishis and in the tenth Mandala of the Rigveda we find two hymns to Vishwakarma the maker of the universe, the Supreme God who created this universe with nothing, holds it and can see on all sides and so on. When the universe became far extended it into two (1), the Dyuloka, the heavenly worlds and (2) the Bhuloka the earthly worlds. Regarding the abode of this Supreme God we read that he resides alone beyond the region of the Seven Rishis, the constellation of the Greater Bear. According to the ancient Indian accounts this region is the 6th one and the one beyond it is the Satyaloka or the 7th and the highest region or the Ursa Major, the Parama vyoma or the Dhruvaloka.

In the Rigveda we find that Agni is Vishnu (vide II-1-3 and X-1-3). Here it is proposed to collect information regarding Vishnu as much as possible in order to facilitate the identification of the wonder of nature that represent Agni. In the Rigveda we meet with Vishnu for the first time in the 22nd Shukta of the first Mandala. Before proceeding any further let us try to understand what was the conception of the earliest of the early people of India regarding one of their ancient gods rather than Supreme God who was known to as the Vishnu. As the name of some thing is the sum total of all available information of the thing concerned and the derivative meaning

is to throw a light on the original conception of the people who gave the name regarding thing; let us here see the original meaning of Vishnu. The word is derived generally in two ways viz, (1) Vi-ash to eat that is that which devours every thing, (2) Vish to enter that to which everything enters, both of these are very strange and may baffle anyone why should the ancient Indians should have given such a name to their Supreme God. The general conception of God is he is just and kind to us all, who blessed us with food, wealth and everything comfortable in this world and if we live an honest life he will bestow upon us a blessed and superior place even after death and in the next life too. Therefore it is apparently very odd on the part of the ancient Indians to say that God devours everything in this universe, but it reveals all the same a very high and lofty conception of God on the part of the Vedic Rishis who knew that in this creation every thing will succumb to time and God alone is eternal and not liable to any destruction whatsoever; but after its destruction where they will go, is it a mere case of annihilation?—No it is not so they will all be absorbed to him. This fact has been expressed in the simplest way of being devoured by him and the second derivative meaning is also quite clear. In our investigation of Vishnu we must not lose sight of all the attributes of God such as his indestructibility and eternality and the like, thus any wonder of nature

that would represent him must necessarily fulfil all these attributes.)

A general perusal of the Rigveda and a study of the hymns of Vishnu as found in it, it would impress the reader that Vishnu was the most secret of the secrets with the ancient Rishis and they preferred to say the least about him. The Rigveda in itself is an unsurmountable mountain, the language is the hardest rock that defies the strongest hammer but at the same time its general import is very pliable and would be bent to any direction according to the view point of the student who attempts to study it. With all these difficulties Vishnu seems to have been shrouded with a veil or curtain through which no one can have a distinct view of him beyond the formation of a dim idea of him. With all these difficulties let us here also make some attempt to glean something regarding this unknown and unknowable Vishnu. I must confess my weakness in this subject but myself imposed task of studying the religious belief of the early people of Manipur has as duty bound compelled me to do so.

In the Rigveda we often hear of the three feet of Vishnu with which he is said to be moving or revolving in a regular motion. In the Rigveda we often hear of the three vandhanas or columns of Agni, or the three wheels or feet of the Aswins or the three feet of Vishnu, there any god that has something to do with Vishnu has a regular connection with the numeral three just as the

immortal Guru of the early Manipuris who is said to have a tripod seat, this three whatever they be, are triangular in shape as it is evinced by the triangular car of the Aswins and tripod seat of the Guru. Each of these three represents the three feet of Vishnu, by a systematic revolution of which the whole universe is revolving in a regular motion that keeps the whole universe in it proper position. Thus Vishnu is said to be holding what he is to hold i. e. Dharmanidharayan — the derivative meaning of Dharma is to hold which well suits here and Sayana too has given this derivative meaning in various instances. In other words these three feet along with the rest of the universe is revolving round and round Vishnu, that keeps the seven worlds in their proper position. The Rigvedic Rishis must have been acquainted with the laws of centripetal and centrifugal forces even in those remote days. When they saw that all the heavenly bodies were revolving round something, they conceived the idea of their revolving round Vishnu who holds them all or keeps them in their proper positions. In this connection some hints of the ancient peoples' conception of the origin of the other heavenly bodies may be found in the fact that they were as if so many dusts from the feet of Vishnu that rise from them in this motion and these covered all the quarters. The word Pamshure evidently suggests this interpretation. In various other instances the word raja meaning dust is often used

which is interpreted by Sayana as lokas or worlds. vide I-154-1.

In I-156-5 we read of three Sadhasthas of Vishnu or his joint occupants of the same region, in like manner Agni too has three Sadhasthas vide I-47-4. But in I-154-1 the word Sadhastha is found without the numeral adjective tri and Sayanacharyya has interpreted it as worshippers' common abode Satyaloka and even hints the establishment of Dhruva. Thus this Sadhastha is nothing but the highest heaven — the seventh world or the Dhruvaloka. In his commentary on Sookta 155 of the Rigveda Sayana says that Dhruva is but a form of Vishnu vide I-155-6, moreover, as we have already seen Vishnu and Agni are identical and the latter is Dhruva therefore the former too is Dhruva according to the Rigvedic evidence as well. In the Rigveda the word Dhruva is very vaguely used to denote the present Polestar, in fact as far as I can trace out it does not directly used to denote the star, but it only to be inferred by an assimilation of all the attributes of the star and in the way the word has been used to indicate having those attributes. In the Pouranic accounts and old Manipuri traditions it has been more evident. Thus by the three columns, the three wheels of the triangular car, or the three feet or the three legs of the tripod seat are nothing but the three triangular stars in the middle of which the present Polestar is seen to exist alone thus the Maker of the universe is described

as living alone in the highest sky beyond the Ursa Major. The regular revolution of these three stars is described as the movement of the three feet of Vishnu, and the phenomenon that the whole universe is seemingly moving round and round the present Polestar that never sets and rises, has been described as his holding the whole universe. Thus the eternality of God is being established and in order to convince every one it has been said that in the morning Agni descends to the sun to give light to the world. This Agni—the soul of the universe is the Bharga of the famous Gayatri, which is consequently nothing but a prayer for the worship of the Supreme God Vishnu. In the Rigveda one of his epithets is Gopa vide I-22-14 and III-55-10 just as Agni is Gopa (V-12-4) that is the protector of all, inasmuch as he does not allow anything to fall or out of its place in short he sustains everything in their proper places, he is Adab-ya because no one can obstruct him from his holding such a vast universe. He is said to be the befitting friend of Indra, because Vishnu small as he is holding the boundless universe which may be possible with Indra the personification of the vast, unlimited, eternal and indestructible sky. But Vishnu is doing this with some of the unviolatable strict rules or the laws of centripetal and centrifugal; here the adjective befitting it means that the magnitude does not count in the friendship but in the real merit.

Now let us try to say something about the old Manipuri belief of the Immortal Guru's another epithet of Atiya, a phonetic modification of Aditya, the word Atiya is also spelt as Atinga which is vouchaped by the phonetic rules as r, ng and y are interchangeable. The ordinary meaning of this word is the blue sky and thus a secondary meaning of it is nothing or in the Indian vocabulary Shunya. Let us here see why it has so much changed in its meaning viz from Aditya to the sky. In IV-23-8 of the Rigveda the word Ritaveda is used to mean Indra and Sayacharya in his commentary has explained the word rita as signifying Indra, Satya, Aditya or Yajna; in I-71-3 Agni is Rita, in IV 21-11 Indra is Satya just as we have shown Agni is Satya, in I-59-6 Vaishwanara Agni is the rain giver just as Indra is and another adjective of this Agni is Vritabana which we know is most exclusively used with Indra, there are other adjectives which are commonly used both for Indra and Agni in the Rigveda. Thus there is no doubt that Agni is Indra. Therefore if Aditya is a Synonym of Indra Agni is also Aditya. But in I.164-11 Aditya is adressed as Agne i. e. O Agni, thus Aditya is Agni, we know that Vishnu is also Aditya therefore the immortal Guru of the early Manipuris is also Aditya. But there are a number of Adityas in the Rigveda which of the Adityas is this one? In most of the Rigvedic commentaries Vishnu is identified with the sun and thus he is the solar Aditya. But the abode of the

Vaishnavite Aditya, as we have seen, is the highest heaven, while the sun does not occupy such a height. In X 72-8 and 9 we find that Aditi had eight sons she kept seven of them near her and the youngest one Martanda was sent to a distance. Aditi lived with her seven sons on high heaven with pleasure and the other, Martanda by name was placed for the mortal world. Martanda is another name of the sun. Therefore the home of the solar Aditya was at a distance from the others. Again in the Rigvedic Universe there are seven worlds and the solar world which is known as the Maharloka is the fourth one but as we have already seen that the abode of Vishnu is the seventh or the highest one therefore Vishnu and the sun are quite different Adityas and cannot be the same. In the Bhagavadgeeta too Shree Krishana in pointing out that anything prominent was his attribute, said that of all the Adityas he was Vishnu and of all the shining bodies he was the sun. Thus Shree Krishna's evidence must be regarded as one of the highest authorities. Therefore the Aditya that represents Vishnu or Agni is something different from the solar Aditya and he is maintaining the whole universe including the sun himself. This Aditya is sustaining the seven worlds as if the whole universe were a car of one wheel that has got three naves and never becomes slack, it is harnessed with seven horses that have different names; by a regular movement of this car we are having our days, nights, years and

seasons. As we have seen that Indra is the personification of the blue sky and Agni is another name of Indra who is also an Aditya therefore the old Manipuri name of Atiya for the blue sky from Aditya has nothing to wonder. Vishnu is represented by the mystic symbol of Om and in the following few pages let us try to investigate to trace the origin of such a symbolization.

Chapter IV

How the Symbol of Pranava Represents God.

In the Vishnushasranam or the thousand names of Vishnu Panava or the Indian mystic symbol of Om is another name of Vishnu. The symbol represents the Hindu Supreme God and according to Puranic accounts it represents the Hindu triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara. This was perhaps the most ancient symbol of the Indian Aryans as it has to be uttered at the time of the recitation of the Vedic hymns. In the old Manipuri literature almost all its manuscripts begin with a figure which in most cases looks like a peculiarly formed figure seven with the usual nad-bindu on the top, in some cases numerous dots are put down always under the nad-bindu, indicating that none of them are higher than the nad-bindu itself. The Manipuri name of this symbol is Anjee i. e. Omjee, m turning into n before j. But the jee is the Hindi honorific suffix. It therefore follows that as the Vedic hymns were to be uttered after reciting Pranava so also all the books in Manipur had to be read after uttering this symbol.

In the first stage of human civilization man could not form an abstract idea and every symbol is the outcome of some concrete idea. Thus, every old symbol that represents some abstract idea, was

at first invented to represent something concrete, although the modern man who still uses it might have forgotten its origin. It must also be admitted that the individual letters of any original and old script were pictures drawn to represent some concrete objects. This picture writing in course of time, according to the mentality of the people who first adopted it either remained the same picture writing or became phonetic or sound writing that is every letter either stands for the same thing it represents, or a sound that may suitably be represented by this symbol or picture. In the latter case the possessors of these scripts usually lost sight of the origin of these symbols and mostly remain contented if they know the sound of the symbol or letter and can recognise it by the sound it represents. If we can take the trouble of diving deep enough into the subject we however get at least some clue of it. Let us here examine some of the letters of the Bengali alphabet, in choosing this script for my investigation it may be stated that it is not because I am more perfectly acquainted with this script but because there are grounds to believe that it is the outcome of some natural development of some particularly old age. It was the Bengali figure that made its way into Arabia and then into Europe; the so-called Arabic figure was at all borrowed from India. No one denies the fact if the corresponding figures of the two scripts are carefully compared and scrutinised, giving sufficient

allowance both for additions and alterations as well as the wear and tear in writing for such a long time.

The Bengali letter ka is the gradual development of the picture of a kalasa or a water jar. In manuscripts of an earlier period in Bengali character found in Manipur very often the letter cha is not so well formed as it is seen in printing, but it was of a roundish nature. In our childhood when we began to learn the Bengali alphabet our tutors used to assign some epithet to many of the letters in order to help the young learners in remembering letters, such an epithet for the letter cha was ring-shaped i. e. having the shape of a ring. If it was a ring in my childhood there is no room for doubt that it first represented a chakra or the wheel in short it was the picture of a round thing the wheel. The letter chha is the picture of a chhatra or umbrella of an earlier period with its tail as the handle of the umbrella, while jha was that of a jhari or water pot with a spout. In the same way da was the picture of danta or the teeth, pa was the picture of a patra or leaf with a twig, pha was a phala or phula i. e. a fruit or flower and ma was that of a mukh or human face. The Bengali letter ha represents the hand with the fingers somewhat closed and turned up at the wrist. The Bengali figure one represents the wrist. The Bengali figure one represents the waxing moon, two the hands as in the case of

ha and so on. It therefore naturally follows that the mystic symbol of Om too which represents God himself was the picture of something that was regarded as the symbol of God. But one of the most conspicuous attributes of God with the old Hindus was his indestructibility or his ever existence. But could this attribute be represented by ? The sun rises and set, it is the same thing with the moon and almost with all the stars and wonders of nature, they do not seemingly exist at all times so they cannot represent God in the true sense of this attribute of his. In order to trace out the origin of the mystic symbol we must look for some wonder of nature that satisfy the attribute of existing for ever.

In Bengali it is represented by an O with the usual chadrabindu on it. In Hindi too it is almost of the same figure with the exception that in this case it has an additional stroke a badly shaped O and the peculiarly written figure seven of the Manipuri symbol are almost the same to look at, and many people from the west who chance to see such a symbol at the beginning of an old manuscript would read it as Om. But it has already been said that the Manipuri one has got numerous dots at particular places. These prominent differences in particular details of the same object and symbol in different localities would lead one to conclude that it was the development of the same idea and object with some addition or

alteration to the original one according to the difference of localities. In fact these minor differences are of great importance in tracing their origin. The Bengali symbol is very terse and concise while the stroke of Hindi would suggest that the wonder of nature that is represented by this symbol must have something like it, though of minor importance as may be inferred from its absence in both Bengali and Manipuri. The numerous dots of the Manipuris that at first seem so many meaningless things put down merely to waste the valuable time of the writer or copyist, are in fact the most suggestive signs, as they apparently suggest that they are so many stars if they are at all the stars it can easily be inferred that the symbol itself too are some stars or some constellation or constellations representing the mystic symbol or in other words that wonder of nature that would faithfully be represented by this symbol. Of all the wonders of nature the star which the Hindus call the Dhruva star is the only one that would fulfil the condition. This is the only heavenly body that never sets or apparently changes its place, one night is passed it is seen seated in some particular place of the heaven, night after night season after season it occupies the same position and the same conspicuousness. The stars of the Ursa major are turning round and round it unceasingly, it occupies the place above the Ursa Major just in the middle of three stars that also is obviously turning round it. The

whole system of stars are apparently turning round and round this star so this eternal star must have been regarded by the ancient Hindus as their Supreme God in those early days. The home of the people who discovered this symbol must have been necessarily somewhere the whole phenomenon of the revolution of the Ursa Major could be seen above the horizon and the position of the O or figure seven with the Dhruva star on its head could be seen in a position not at all upset as may be observed from various places of India. The word Polestar has purposely been avoided as it is rather ambiguous inasmuch as it is not the permanent Polestar and its eternality may be regarded lasting as long as it is the Polestar but the Indian term Dhruva or Satya or ever true is very well suited to the old Indian idea, as the permanency of the star as such is guaranteed by the fact that the east will always be the east and so on, the earth will continue to revolve round and round its orbit and the stars of the Ursa Major and in fact the whole universe as is seen in Hindu accounts, will continue to revolve round about this star, the eternality of it is a foregone conclusion. It is needless to quote the various accounts given in the Vishnupurana whoever have a curiosity or interest may easily refer to it.

Thus the two constellations of Ursa Major and the Ursa Minor represent the mystic symbol with

the present Polestar just in the middle of the three stars that represent the tail of the porpoise of the Vishnu Purana. The two overlapping triangles in the centre of which the ghata or water jar for the puja is placed, are nothing but a representation of the three revolving stars that perpetually turn round and round the perpetual star. Here a question may arise, why this symbol has been pronounced as it is to the exclusion of any other sound. In the Rigveda it will be seen that the sound of the thunder cloud is the voice of God which is the sound of this symbol as well vide VII-101-1. In the old Manipuri literature the voice of god is his image although this remark may speak much for itself yet it may be asked what is this voice of god and what is it like? In some other book it is said that the voice of god is just like the one that we can internally hear if we shut our ears with the tips of our fingers. Therefore it is quite clear why the sound of the symbol as it is. It is needless for me to speak anything of three and seven cows or three and seven firewoods and so on of the Rigvedic literature all mean these three and seven stars of the two constellations, that are milching the milk obtained from the perpetual star or supplying fuel for the preservation of the universal sacrifice i. e. the creation for the sustenance of the whole universe.

Gopaldeva or the baby god in the posture of moving on all fours with one of its hands

holding a sweetmeat reminds us of the permanent star and its tripod seat. His lifted hand holding the sweetmeat is the emblematic representation of holding the universe and his being supported by the two legs and one hand is to represent the tripod seat. The Manipuri phunga or the hearth is another representation of perpetual star with its three emblematic stars.

Let us here cite an instance in which we may have a glimpse of the way in which the old Manipuris form an idea of this perpetual star. The Manipuri word Phunga—a hearth is a phonetic derivative of Bharga of the famous Gayatri. The inherent meaning of this word is indeed misleading let us here try whether we can get some sort of explanation from the Manipuri notion of their Bhunga. We have already seen that Agni shines at night in the highest heaven and descend to the sun during the day time, that is Agni which is Vishnu in the main cause of its being so worshipful. This Bharga of the Manipuris is the sacrificial fire of the household, almost all the orthodox people of our childhood used to offer to this fire daily whatever they had to eat for the day. An iron tripod with three teeth between its three feet is placed on this hearth, the three feet and the three teeth representing the three revolving stars of the perpetual star just as in the case of two overlapping triangles. But that of this iron tripod is really very peculiar as it is called the iron female beast what is this old female

beast where does it get such a name, it has no relation with any beast whether male or female, old or young, did the old Manipuris give this peremptorily, without any reason whatever? But that is also absurd, there must have been some reason of it. All these thoughts lead us to think of the bears of the Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, was this idea to be prevalent among the ancient Manipuris as well? Can we possibly get some further of this? The Manipuri word for a bear is Sha-om i. e. the beast of Om, it has already been said that the three and seven stars of the two constellations go to the formation of the mystic symbol, thus the old Manipuris too had a dim idea of a bear having something to do with the symbolisation of this representation of God himself. This is strange enough to think of the old Aryans from the eastern end of India to Europe such a common idea about this bear might have been spread in the earliest days of the early. But at any rate these are undeniable facts, recorded in the undying and unperishable human thoughts. To come to our topic of Bharga it is quite clear from the old Manipuri belief that it is only the fire that exists in everything of this universe and give life to all and maintains everything created.

The ultimate aim of all true knowledge unbiased with any pre-conception is the attainment of truth — the concrete truth which cannot be totally demolished nor can be kept concealed

for ever, but will come out as such some day or other, however dimly it might have been shining.

Chapter V.

Phallic Worship.

It may be interesting to say that ancient Manipur was not free from the worship of Shiva and Durga. The origin of the Phallic worship is attributed to Dravidian influence, the famous Durga temple at Hiyangthang where so many pilgrims, specially at the time of the annual Durga Puja, visit the place is nothing but a natural stone sign of female organ. There are also various places which are dedicated to Shiva, some of the oldest Phallus of Shiva from the hill side of Chamairembi, near the Hydro-Electric power house have been removed not very long ago. But the female sign which is apparently the oldest one as may be suggested by the nature of the stone on which it is carved may still be seen in the same Chamairembi hill. The stone on which the sign is seen is so big that most of the people who sees it at first take it for a stone boat left unfinished. It has been very badly attacked by its exposure to the weather. Some sort of protection may be useful to keep one of the rarest remnants of

time immemorial, I hope the boulder has not been further damaged by any human action, the Hydro-Electric authorities, at the time when I visited the place for the first time, were not at all eager to have its existence known to the public in general, because if there be a huge crowd of pilgrims to visit the place, as it is with Hiyang-thang, it is feared that some sort of damage to the dam, they have made for the storage of water may be the result. This consideration alone prevented me to build a tin shed to protect it from its exposure to the sun and rain. A removal of it from original site is also too risky at the same time any conservative mind would not like the idea. In Manipur so far the existence of such an apparently old relic is indeed very rare. I have been told that near about the place there was a big Phallus, the male organ, it was removed by some foreigner before my visit. It was said that along with it there were various stone wares seemingly used in its worship. The loss is irreparable and a further loss will eradicate all the possible signs left so far, what a pity !

Chapter VI.

Poireiton the First

Indian Colonist that Came to Manipur.

In the old manuscript of Poireiton Khamthokpa we find that a band of colonists came to Manipur to settle in this land under the leadership of Poireiton consisting of men and women. They are said to have come from the land of death. The manuscript says a mole that was molested by a fellow creature, a long tailed black cat, he went by burrowing the earth and came to the land of death, whose king was the Khamthokpa Thongaren or Dharmendra i. e. Yamaraj or the king of death. The land of mortal land i. e. Manipur at that time was inhabited by creatures not much better than the mole itself. They could not make fire so they were ignorant of it, thus their food consisted of raw meat of the beasts or birds that one another could prey upon. Vegetables were unknown as they did not know the art of digging the ground, and did not know the use of any agricultural implements. This was the state of things in Manipur in those days. Even such a land the mole is said to have arrived at the land of Yamaraj, who asked him who he was and wherefrom did he come. When the mole acquainted Yamaraj all the necessary information, he again asked the condition of his native land, as he asked him to send a party of colonists

the mole too related everything of his native land's condition, at last the king of the dead could guess that the mortal land was very fertile and it would be good to send there some colonists. But the king was too old to go himself so he proposed that his younger brother Poireiton should go with a band of colonists consisting of husbands and wives, at this the younger brother of the king complained to him that he was not married as yet so he did not like to go there without a consort, as the people of the mortal land were very fond of finding fault with other people. This was perhaps on account of the fact that if he were to go there as such people would accuse him of marrying a non-Aryan wife. The king then determined to give his younger brother one of his queens but the elder queens objected as they too were old enough as the king himself, at last it came the turn of the youngest queen Liema Loi-naot-bi i.e. a queen who like a flower that passed hands married her younger brother-in-law and she became known by this name henceforth.

As the account goes, she was a very intelligent lady, it was she who was arranging to take all things that would be necessary for the colonists on their arrival in the mortal land, she took along with them various seeds and implements for agricultural purposes, paddy seeds were the most important ones. In Manipur till this day there is a sort of paddy which is sweet scented and is of a reddish black colour known as Poireiton's sweet

‘scented paddy.’ It is still believed to have been brought by Poiraiton and if it is cultivated in a corner of one’s paddy field no pests can damage it, of course I am not competent to say how far this is the fact, but still there is such a belief among the agriculturists of Manipur. Among the agricultural implements that they brought along with them axes and sycles were not excluded. Cattle too were brought along with them, there is ample evidence that they brought various metals along with them including gold and silver. As soon as they arrived at the foot of the hill through which they had to cross so many ranges of hills to arrive at the place of their destiny, the party was confronted by a stone door which had to be opened before they entered the inside. It seems that it was almost a difficult problem as to who should encounter with such a door, at last a cow whose one horn was decorated with gold and the other with silver subdued it. When we hear of such a decoration of the horns of cattle with precious metals it naturally reminds us of the bullocks of Baroda that have much longer horns that are decorated with a sort of white metal. The horns of these Baroda bullocks may not be much shorter than that of a buffalo though not similar in their shape. If these facts are put together it seems that in former days when India was ~~more~~ prosperous than it is now the horns of cattle were decorated with caps of precious metals. The party began to proceed in their way to their destiny

and at one stage they were stopped by a tiger that was crouching on the way. Various birds offered to turn the animal out of their way on some condition or other but all of them failed, at last a hornet that is said to have been brought by Leima Leinaotabi offered to fight with the tiger, and he was successful in his encounter by biting the animal on the whorls of his hairs. This was a great turning point in their journey and in a short time without any further incidence arrived at their journey's destination. The place of their arrival was at the Turaorok some way on the banks of modern Heibirok just to the west of the village of Maklang towards the west of the valley. We shall hear more of the hornet that fought with the tiger any how, it seems that it may be interesting to the readers to say that the path must have been through the old Manipal Oor road as may be inferred from the place of their arrival. This route goes from Imphal to the valley village of Maklang just mentioned above and then through various hill villages such as the modern village of Maringdongba near the hill saddle of Ngaprum Chingjenz and then Haajong and several other villages the most important ones may be mentioned as Langkhong on the left bank of the Irang river and then Khebuying after crossing the river, Akhui and Atengba and then to the valley of Cachar probably at a place near about the scenes of the Burmese attack of Cachar in later days in pursuit of the Manipuri princes

who took shelter there in the early part of the Nineteenth century.

The colonists must have enjoyed much in their journey through these hills, sceneries of those hills are simply charming with various stalwart trees of an economic nature such as Nageswars, Wallnuts and various timber trees as well as 'Tejpata' and other economic trees that seldom come to him in account of the badness of the means of transport. Cines of various sizes and lengths are abundantly found and fern trees too may be seen on the way. Wild beast and various game birds too are very common. At particular places the hill breezes are sweetened with various wild flowers which are so much pleasant to the traveller that he would naturally be willing to find out what was the name which such a pleasant smell was coming, but on account of the complaints of the porters and steepness of the mountain sides he would naturally give up the idea with a great despondence. Almost all the names of the rivers that we have to cross on this route have something to do with the Vedic word 'I' meaning water such as the Iyei, Irang and Gwa, the last name means betelnut river that is in olden days betelnut from the west were imported to Manipur by this river. Moreover the canes mentioned above were of great utility in olden days as most of the rivers had to be crossed with suspension bridge mainly constructed with these

canes a single strip of which was often long enough to reach the breadth of those rivers.

From this place of their arrival they turned towards the south to find out most suitable place of their settlement and see the creeks and corners of the mortal land, it is not necessary to mention all the places that they visited. After visiting the southern portion of the land they came to the south eastern quarters of the land. It appears to me that it may be interesting to say that in this connection mention is made of Tamu and thus it was in those days in the Manipur territory. From Tamu, in all probability through the Kabo Valley, they entered the Tangkhul hills. Turning towards the north-western boundary of the mortal land at last they came to the southern foot of the Langol Hills. In this journey mention is made of the various places and new things that they met for the first time. It may be interesting if it is mentioned that tows were not acquainted with the new corners and thus they had no name of this bird in their own language. Thus it is quite clear that in the mainland of India it was known till then. On their arrival at the foot of the hill as mentioned already the party determined to settle down nearby, though not at the southern foot of the Langol hills. There is ample evidence that they enjoyed a feast at this place to celebrate their arrival there. This was on the banks of the modern Punsikhong a small mountain stream during the rains and

during the dry season it is no better than a small pool, they used the water of this in the feast referred to above. In imitation of this the Luwang people whenever they perform an ancestral worship by offering a feast they have to use the water of this streamlet and for their leaves for the rice plate they have the same kind of leaves that their forefathers had to use it in their picnic party. They prescribed time for this worship is the last part of the Hindu month of Pousha and the beginning of Magha but the most striking thing that may lead to the establishment of the date of the arrival of this party. The twigs, that they used for sprinkling water and probably for turning out flies as well, were that of a tree which in these days does bear leaves whether old or young at the mentioned time and appears almost dried up, new leaves of this tree begin to appear just in the month of Baishakha, the plates that they used for serving out rice for the feast were some leaves that too dry up in the winter and totally fall down. This would give us an almost exact date of the time of their first arrival if we can find out the approximate number of year that may take in such a change of the seasons of the year. But my knowledge of the rules of the transgression of the earth's movement is so meagre that any calculation of it on my part would amount to a mad man's attempt, so I leave it for some abler person who may be interested enough in such things and I think, I may be able to supply

further details of it if such a gentleman is at all willing to calculate it. The party then settled down in the valley on the other side of the Langol Hills, apparently extending from the modern village of Lamdeng i. e. the beautiful land, to the foot of the Luwangjyng Hills a few miles to the east of the village of Phumlou. The name of their capital, at least at the time of Luwang Ningthou Punshiba was known as Pamang a derivative of the word Brahman i. e. the land of Brahmans. The word Phumlou is also a derivative of Bhurlok and as such it was known to them. This division of Manipur Valley was perhaps very sacred to the new comers and was known as the land of five rivers where actually five rivers flow till this day — probably a vedic reminiscence of the Punjab. In a short time they became very prosperous and populous, their cattle became numerous perhaps by grazing in the grass of the fertile land. There is still a strip of land just at the foot of the Langol Hills and to the east of the village of Lamdeng which is known as the Luwang Sungol lok or the mountain side where there was the khuti of the Luwangs i. e. the grazing land of the Luwangs, in time their cattle became so numerous that they had to find out another suitable place of their khuti, they had to select it as far as beyond modern Kangla tongbi to the east of it about seventeen miles from Imphal on the Dimapur—Manipur Road, the village is still known as Luwang Sangol. A few years after their

colonization they became so numerous in their population that it was found necessary to expand their home land and look for another place suitable for the settlement of a branch of the population. They selected as site that was not too far off from the site of the mother colony and it was on the other side of the Langol Hill at a particular place just on the foot of the hill but almost surrounded by the waters of the modern Lamphel jheel which was not dry as it is now. They gave the name of this new colony as Thanga a derivative of Dwarka according to the rules of phonetic modification as given above, it was not very far from the place where they once enjoyed their celebrated feast. There was still this branch of their colony till the time of Ura Konthouba a king of the Ningthoujas, we shall hear of him and his son Naotthingkhong more later on. From the information so far we have gathered it may be obvious that the new comers were known as Luwangs soon after their arrival in this valley, another familiar name of these people was Nungbal not to be confounded with Nongban an epithet of the Angoms. The word Luwang was a derivative of Rupavan the beautiful and Nungbal those who came from inside the earth i.e. the low lands.

We have so far avoided to give the Sanskrit equivalent of the word Poireiton, let us therefore make some attempt to know its origin, the process of changing such words in their phonetic development in old Manipuri is known as Poireitaba i.e.

a development according to the Poire is who settled down. It is quite evident that if the colonists came at all from a Sanskrit speaking land the word Poireiton must necessarily be of a Sanskrit origin. According to our phonetic rules it must be something like Paja+ri+ton or Paryaton, if it be of a Sanskrit origin. The most approaching word to both of the forms suggested is in Sanskrit Paryyatana meaning a travail. If we were to analyse the word Paryyatana we shall find it that by the phonetic rules it will stand in Manipuri as Poireiton for Pa-ryya tana, as j or y turns into i it will stand as Po-ri-ya-ton, the second y is transposed in order to retain the sound of r intact. We have already said that the pronunciation of this letter was a problem with the old Manipuris, it takes the forms of various letters whether its sound approaches to it or not, Here the second syllable is accented therefore the sound of the i is increased or intensified to ei, thus from the Sanskrit word Paryyatana we get the word Poireiton in Manipuri. But this very word has given birth to some other words e. g. poi indicates to travel or walk as in Lamboiba — roaming in the land meaning an ascetic, as the word Poireiton connotes the idea of a traveller settling down at a particular place without returning to his homeland so the second syllable lei or rei as it is found in the word indicates the meaning of to stay or live and the last syllable gives rise to the word ton — young or youngest. because they

had a very dim idea that their leader was the youngest brother of Yamaraj, thus they thought that some portion of the word that denotes their leader must have to do with his youngership. Thus the vocabulary of the new comers began to be augmented by such portion of a word or their combination or that of such or independent words that dimly conveyed to them some inherent idea of their homeland. Here another question arises as to how a verbal noun has come to mean the person who performed the action. The word Poireiton must have had some qualifying word, as the leader of the travel or the like, but in course of time the people might have lost sight of such a qualifying word and the very word signifying the action has been used to denote the person who performed the action.

From the preceding pages it will be noticed that the name of the land of their adoption is never mentioned as Manipur, therefore the time of the coming of the colonists in question must have been prior to the time of the writing of Vyasa's Mahabharata inasmuch as the word Manipur in Sanskrit means navel, and Vyasadeva, in consideration of the similarity of the physical features of the land to the human navel, has given such a name in his epic, to denote the land where Poireiton and his party established their colony. Thus the Sanskrit name of Manipur denoting the present Manipur was purely an invention of the writer of the Mahabharata. Just as the comparison of the similarity

of the navel with the valley surrounded by the hills will convince the possibility of the origin of this name. The navel is raised on all sides with a depression in the centre, so also this land has a depression in the centre and is surrounded by ranges of hills which are far higher than the Valley itself.

These Luwangs were known as Luwang shun-puba i. e, those who brought cattle along with them. In fact the first domestic animal that was acquainted with these colonist was the cow. From the evidence of the language the possibility of our statement will be seen because the derivative meaning of Shan for cattle is sha—shan meaning the oldest animal, and the fact that sha is the Manipuri equivalent for the Sanskrit word Shanda, will prove that the present Manipuri meaning of sha a beast was derived from the fact that of all four-footed animals the cow was the first domestic animal of the Manipuris and from a similarity of all four-footed animals this name has been common to all such animals, at the same time as further time passed on in order to avoid the ambiguity of the meaning of the word another word was introduced to mean the oldest animal. This may as well be taken another example in which the language of this colonist was gradually developed. At a latter period the horse was introduced in the land of their adoption, so its name was known as shagon the animal of a later time. The introduction of this new animal according to tradition

was not later than the time of Luwang Ningthou Punshiba, the long lived king of the Luwangs who was fourth in descent from Poireiton. This new animal became very important domesticated beast with the Luwangs though not of an economic utility as the cow was, but they were more so useful in other respects they became later on the most indispensable animal in their various games and in a later period the famous Cathe Horse in the Burmese wars that fought both on the side of the allies of Manipur as well as on the other side were the offshoots of the animals that was introduced at a later period by the Luwangs. It is traditionally admitted that the famous game of (Polo) in Manipur was introduced by this long-lived King of the Luwangs, and one part of the foot of the Luwangjing hill which is just close to the capital of the Luwangs is still known as the Sagollakpa chingjil i. e. the hill foot for training horses and among the Manipuris there is still such a belief that the rudest possible horse if trained in this special spot, can easily be tamed. The tradition is that (Luwang Ningthou Punshiba) trained his horses there. In old Manipur polo was a counter part of the national game of boat—race which preceded the polo. This boat race too was introduced by the Long Lived King of the Luwangs, there is an interesting story how this king of the Luwangs introduced a boat for the first time, by the manuscript of (Hijan Hirao) we are told that the king was one day roaming on the bank of

their river the Luwang-i he saw a mouse cutting the dried stem of a particular grass and let it float in the water of the river, the little creature then jumped on the stem and by means of holding it he managed to cross the river very easily. The king was struck with wonder at the sagacity of the mouse and later on he thought that if he too were to cut a large tree and hollowed it out properly it could easily carry him just as the stem of the grass could carry the mouse. With this intention he sent out a party of wood cutters to the Ingen ching which is not very far from the capital of the Luwangs to cut a noble tree that was both straight and very big. A boat of this kind was regularly made. It is interesting to note that the time of the first launching of this boat a couple of deities i. e. a god and his consort are said to have been among the boarders. Had the names of these deities been given in the manuscript itself they would have been a tremendous evidence of the nature of the religious belief of the people but unfortunately this is not the case. But if we put all the facts together it will be seen that the god mentioned here was no less than the vedic god Vishnu with his consort Lakshmi though an introduction of a later period. The Manipuri boat-race of a later period was introduced in toto in imitation of Luwang Punshiba's boat and boat-race. This king's boat is said to have been painted with red and yellow derived from the orpiments, boats of the later period

too were painted in the same way. In the annual boat-race too Vishnu was to take part in the racing just before the actual contest, the same figure of a deer's head that was put on the stern of the first boat of the Luwang Ningthou in its first launching had still to be used in the later day boat-races, even as late as the time of Khagemba we know that Vishnu was worshipped in (Lairikyengbam Leikai) there is an image of Vishnu made of metal in the time of Khagemba presented by him to one of his wellknown courtiers. The fact that Jaimini in his Mahabharata has given an evidence that in his time Manipur was devoted to the worship of Vishnu there is ample reason to say that this couple god of Luwang Ningthou Punshiba that he took on board his first boat in its first launching with so much devotion was nothing but Vishnu and his consort.

Now let us turn our attention to the possible place from which these new comers came for this reason we shall have to collect all possible information that may conduce to successfully prove this very important question. We know that from the account of Poireiton Khunthokpa, these colonist came from the land of death. Where was this land of death according to our Hindu belief the land of the death i. e. the kingdom of Yamaraj was to the south-west, therefore if the Manipuris or the colonist had a correct idea of the land of their original home and the place of their adoption we must understand that the former was

The moon was another Vedic god, although according to some Vedic scholars Soma was regarded as the juice of the special plant but in many places it will be seen that inspite of these opinion Soma was lunar in nature inasmuch as Soma was the measure of time or the longevity of one's life, he is the killer of the enemy, and killer of all, if we just think of the facts that the moon is the measure of time and time alone can kill everything whether animate or inanimate it will be clear that the Vedic term Soma is more applicable to the moon more than any other thing. In various places Soma is addressed in the Rigveda as Raja apparently in it the original meaning of the word it conveys the idea of a shining body but in course of time it has come to mean the king, so in many instances we hear of the lunar dynasty in our Indian accounts Manipur too was not free from this idea whether right or wrong. The ancestor of the Ningthoujas was named Pakhangba the youthful since the moon is always very conspicuous at the time a few days prior to or after the fullmoon so he has been given this name, the fact that the moon is seen born in the sky and dies again and again and very often attains its youthful age so he has been called by the Manipuris as such. It is derived from Pa-father - khanba to know, then how does it come to mean youthful? In one's life the sense of desire of becoming the father of a child is most strongly felt therefore from this sense the word

pakhang in Manipuri is used. How is it that in the case of Pakhangba he has been represented as a snake?—We know it well in many of the manuscripts the moon is addressed as Loidam thaja Pakhangba the moon youthful, if our Pakhangba is the moon why the ancestral deity of the Ningthoujas whom we call Pakhangba has something to do with the snake. We have already seen that the moon is the measure of time as such he kills everything existing in this universe, that is he is the most poisonous thing known to us as a snake is also a very poisonous reptile that kills all the men wherever possible, here lies the allegory of Pakhangba's description as a serpent. This is not the singular instance of the killer of everything being represented by the symbol of a snake we all know that our Mahadeva is a destroyer of this creation he too in the Puranas is said to have poison in his throat and he is represented as wearing serpents as his ornament thus there is no wonder why Pakhangba should be represented by a snake. Thus it is clear that Pakhangba was not a man in flesh and blood, but he is only the Somaraj of the Vedic literature. But in later days it was conceived that a personage so important as Poireiton himself ought to be connected some how or other with the most important ancestor of the Ningthoujas. So he has been said to have married a sister of Pakhangba. In Manipuri geneology an account of the mother is very important a lack of this was regarded as a very

important drawback. Both the two brothers of Sanamahi and Pakhangba was Guru the immortal preceptor but it is most necessary to mention the name of Pakhangba, her mother's name was Leinung Yabirok i. e. Leinung—lowland from inside the earth—yabi—making a sound—lok a pool of water thus it stands as such that Pakhangba's mother was a pool of water that is not seen in Manipur but in the low lands of the mainland of India at the same time it makes some sort of sound, such a pool of water cannot but mean the sea, therefore the mother of Pakhangba was nothing but the sea. In the Pauranic account of the Hindus the moon is said to have been found from the sea as such there is no wonder to say that moon has been described as the ancestor of the Ningthoujas. Whenever we speak of the mainland of India as the low land we must remember the altitude of the Valley of Manipur.

Thus these and many other deities of the Vedic age were crowded with various deities of a later period even heroic chiefs or ancestors of the land became to occupy the seat of a deity, many of the hills that were regarded as the protector of directions were no more hills but a deity of a very important nature, in this way Naothingkhong, Khagemba, Paikhomba and many other kings of Ningthouja clan occupied the places of deities of the land. During this period which may be called the mythological period various terms which were used in earlier days indicating the

general process of their development have assumed very far off meanings from the original ones. Let us illustrate it with one or two instances, there is small village in the western suburb of Imphal, the original meaning of this name came from Pat — a fishery and Shoi — the site where the huts of the fishermen who were living there temporarily for catching fish. Therefore it is quite evident that these huts became numerous with as the fishery became gradually dried up in course of time. No doubt that there are various proofs that there was a fishery in the village which is known as Patsoi with a floating forest known as Taoba Umang the floating forest which was completely surrounded by the waters of the fishery and in the middle of it the forest trees were standing this forest has been connected with the Ningthouja king Naothingkhong and the meaning of the word has been so well twisted that it is almost impossible to a man who has not seen the place and keenly observed it to infer that there was a fishery there and the origin of the name of this place owed to it, and he will simply believe what account of the name of it has been given by the mythological people. According to them in the account of the love making of Nongpok and Panthoibi there is an episode in which it is said that both agreed once to meet at a place near this village but when they came to this place they failed to meet one another and thus from this account the name of the place was

known as 'Patsol' from 'Pa' or 'mapa' the actual site was missed, the meaning of 'shoiba' in its verbal form means to miss. This is purely a deceitful account that would impede the course of human knowledge. It is needless to multiply other instances of this nature, but it will suffice if we say that various explanations of this nature are far more abundant in this period of the history of Manipur. Unless we are well armed to cope with such doubtful environments it is almost impossible to surmount these difficulties. The accounts of this period is mainly responsible for the unexpected distortion of the real history of the land. Let us cite here a very familiar account in the history of the well known Garibnewaz or Pambeiba he was a living man about 250 years ago, but mysterious mythological accounts have arisen in connection with this historical person it is almost impossible to extricate him from a Naga origin though purely a son of the king of Manipur, if person of such late period were so much shrouded with some of the most peculiar accounts it is impossible to know anything of a very remote days. The simple reason for the attribution of a Naga origin of this celebrated king of Manipur was very simple and devoid of any mythological account. He worked to demolish all the superfluous and mythological deities of the land with the help of the Religious reformer Shantadas from Sylhet. Some of the orthodox people were not pleased with him and Anangam Goni

one of the courtiers and very well learned man was among them. He was an expert astrologer who could precisely predict many things of future occurrence. He wrote an anonymous book said to have been written about hundred years ago of Garibnewaz's time. It predicts the number of years that each king should reign after Khagemba it is curious enough that upto the time of Garibnewaz the regular names of kings were given and after that the first letter that would begin the names of such kings are only given. The predictions are so far well accurate though it is most difficult to explain the ambiguous meanings of those words that are used in this book, any how in some part of this book he has written that in such and such years a king named Garibnewaz would become the king of the land and he would destroy all the existing deities of the land and he was of a Naga origin, simply denoting that he had done all this which a Naga would only do. But along with this remark so many accounts connecting the king with a Naga origin have astonishingly been acquainted with this king that it is almost useless to count all of them and they are almost well-known to many students of Manipuri history. It is really wonderful that around the personage of Garibnewaz a man of the other day because in history two or three hundred years is of no count, should have arisen and those very people who had a fresh memory of this king should have listened to such

an account in stead of throwing it as useless, One tactics of the writer of this book is that he forbids some persons who would not have some qualifications from reading his book, and that the book must not be read out to more than two ears, it was very carefully carried out and those persons who read it secretly manufactured in various ways as to the Naga origin of the king even during his life time in all probability.

Chapter VII.

Materials for History.

Most useful materials for an early history were most hopefully expected from stone and other inscriptions, existing manuscripts dealing with various topics and numismatics, in the first two items any one would hopelessly be deceived. Most of the stone inscriptions and copper plates so far has been discovered are of a later period not earlier than the time of Garibnewaz or his predecessor, it is almost the same thing with manuscripts. Most of the books traditionally reputed to have been of a time much prior to this king on a careful examination have been found to have reasons to believe that they were written in the time of this king. The possible reasons of this is the fact that this reformer collected all the existing books of the land and burned them down and whatever was spared was all interfered by him with some insertion or the like. Such is the general condition of the numerous manuscripts of Manipur. In numismatics some hopeful results may be recorded. Of course there are some books that had accidentally escaped from his hands or were not touched as something trifling. Among such books the Poireiton Khunthokpa may be regarded as an unperishable monument.

It deals with the Indian colonization of Manipur as has often been referred to. The vivid description of the primitive people of the land is wonderfully in conformity with the findings of the modern experts, they did not know the use of fire, had no implements for digging the ground, thus they were ignorant of any idea of agriculture or horticulture, and they lived just like so many beasts of the forest, on fact in this book they are described as wild cats, pheasants and the mole. Their mode of living was a contrast to that of the more blessed people of the land of death, a band of whom came to colonise in the new land. The author has devised an interesting plan to prove that the colonists came with their womenfolk. For this purpose Poiraiton has been made to say that he would not like to go to the mortal land as a bachelor and his elder brother offered him one of his queens as his wife. This statement would show that among the ancient Indians a younger brother could marry his brother's wife. Sita's reflection on the conduct of Lakshman on the occasion of his being called by Rama for help in his pursuit of the golden deer, and the refusal of the former on the ground that it was not the voice of Rama must have been sanctioned by the usage of the land. The marriages of Tara and Mandodari to Sugriva and Vibhishana respectively must not have been on account of their being monkeys or giants or Rakshasas, there must have been such a practice

throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Another fact that accounts for the avoidance of the flesh of a fowl by the Hindus may be due to the fact that this bird was not known to the ancient Indians, as it was not known to Poireiton and his party on their arrival in this land. It was perhaps introduced from the east to the mortal land prior to Poireiton's arrival there. If he were actually the younger brother of the king of death he might have sent some of these birds as well as some other things that was new to him or the people of the land of death as presents to his elder brother. The fact that he never assumed the title of a king of their new home would show that he recognised the authority of the home land as most of the colonies of modern days do and as such it must have been his interest to send such things to his original homeland. Thus the Aryan inhabitants of Sylhet of those days must have seen this bird from the east probably imported to the mortal land from China or some other distant land, it might have not been very common in the land of their new home as some of its original inhabitants thought it worthy of presenting to Poireiton. As most of the conservative people do not like to eat anything new or what their forefather did not do so it must have been avoided by Poireiton's people and those of the land of death. The title of Poireiton was Iyuwa chingkhong Poireiton which means our master who is as high as a plateau

on the mountain foot (but not as high as the mountain i. e. the king) and sometimes the phrase "Khongphang atonba" the younger from the bifurcated stream i. e. the younger child of the same mother or in other words the younger brother of the king of death, is as well added.

The standard of civilization of the new comers was not at all low as they knew the use of iron implements and working of various metals, they knew how to make cloths. This book may be regarded as an anthropological work of early Manipur.

The language of this book is apparently of an earlier period than that of various other manuscripts. In addition to this book there are many other pamphlets that incidentally give useful information for the investigation of a student of history such as the Hijan Hirao and Thounirol of which we made some reference regarding the god and goddess of Luwang Ningthou Punshiba and the possible way of finding out the date of Poiraiton's arrival in the land. An assimilation of these and other facts coupled with old tradition may ultimately contribute much to the solution of complicated problems, the process may be slow and tedious enough, but the result obtained in this way may in most cases be unassailable. Things that are evidently of a trifling nature may sometimes reveal important historical facts of a singular

nature. But this is most unfortunate that a student of Indian history must collect his materials from isolated facts that may be found here and there.

In the collection of old coins there a few pieces of the second century of the Christian era, its legend is in the Devanagari script. Gold as well as silver coins were in use in Manipur, but the smallest and most common coins were of bell metal. Ingots of gold, silver, copper and the like were also used as coins which may remind one of the Niskas of ancient India. In the Treaty of Alliance between Gourshyam and the East India Company mention is made of the Manipuri gold coin. Its value was fixed at Rs. 12 per piece. Mention is made of a silver coin of Chourjit Singh but unfortunately none of the coins of precious metals have come to our notice. The bell metal coins are known as sels in Manipuri meaning bell metal. Here it is proposed to reproduce the writer's remarks on these coins as was printed in the Archaeological Studies in Manipur with necessary additions and alterations.

Recently some pieces of bell metal coins that were intended to be melted down by the braziers were purchased from a brazier. Four of them seemed very old and the President of the Manipur State Darbar was good enough to send rubbings of these to the Calcutta Museum for expert opinion. In the meantime attempts have

also been made here as well to decipher them, and as a result, of which the following may be reported.

The earliest coins were of flat squares and bear inscriptions with dates.

Chapter VIII.

Pleiades and the Luwangs.

In old Manipuri there is an interesting manuscript known as JKhomjongnubi Nongarol, which describes in an allegorical way how the two constellations of Pleiades and Orion were so many lovers and how this love episode ended. In that book the Krittikas were regarded as so many girls of the Luwang family and the Orion as so many Naga youngmen. In the story it is told that the girls often used to go out in search of fish outside the habitation of their colony where they chanced to meet the Naga boys, some how or other they became attached to one another and became devoted lovers. In time the secret love was known to the whole Luwang population and the girls were put to much privation and shame, they therefore contrived with the Naga boys to run away to heaven and live there without being known to and molested by anyone. They settled everything for the journey and fixed the place where to meet for the journey, but on the appointed day when the girls arrived at the foot of the hill from where they were to ascend the heaven their lovers were not found there, at this they were much disappointed, but still they determined to proceed on their journey and thus they left for heaven without the boys. The boys were

coming behind them and on the way they overtook the girls, they all went together to Indra the king of heaven to pray him to assign some place for their residence, but the king of heaven who knew everything of their love affairs and refused to comply with their request on the ground that his heaven was not intended for persons who would make unbecoming love so they were not allowed to live together there. But as they beseeched him for his favour they were told that they would be able to meet one another at a particular time of the year, and they would fall down in the netherland and would not be visible to the world. This is the gist of the story.

The allegory of the story is that when the Luwangs saw that the Kritikas were followed by the Orion, they described the phenomena as so many lovers pursuing their beloved ones, but the fact that at the time of their setting they took different quarters has been described as the disappointment in their love, while the phenomenon of the total disappearance of the two constellations at a particular time of the year has been described as their union through the blessing of Indra.

But the most important point to be solved here is what was the cause of the Kritikas being called the girls of the Luwang family. Why should they be called them as such to the exclusion of other stars? The colonists without rhyme or reason should not have given such a name, let

us try to investigate the possible cause of such mental activities of the old people. The Manipuri equivalent of the Krittikas is Khomjongnubi which may be expounded into Khom + jong + nubi = kham or khang sky + jong from chong = char to 'roam + nubi from nupi women, we know in Sanskrit kham is sky and char a root meaning to roam therefore the meaning of the word stands women roaming in the sky. If the colonists were at all a Sanskrit speaking people why did they discard the original name of Krittika and replace it by a new name? If we can solve this question the reason of the Krittikas being called as the girls of the Luwang family will be clear. Before proceeding any further in the investigation we may cite here another instance in which it will be seen that the ancient Luwangs took a great fancy of the Krittikas. There is a story that when the Long-lived King of the Luwangs thought that his time of living in this world had expired, he ascended heaven from the top of the Langjing Hill and occupied his place among the Krittikas. If we put all these facts together we come to the conclusion that at the time of the arrival of the colonists the Krittikas were rising on the eastern hills just at sunset and at the time of their departure from their original home it was not the case, they thus took a great fancy of them and regarded them as coming along with them for the colonization, if they were a party of the colonists they must

be regarded as girls of their family, at least there cannot be any wonder in it. As they were the first of the Deva Nakshatras (vide page 54-55, Tilak's Orion published in the year 1893) the Long-lived King of the Luwangs was supposed to have lived with them — his clan's ladies to the exclusion of other Deva Nakshatras.

From this episode can we infer that the Krittikas were rising in Magha the time of the arrival of the Luwangs in the Mortal land? If so we may take it as another datum for calculating the date of the arrival of Poironton in this land. They gave a new name to this constellation because as they knew that the word Krittika was no more applicable to their new idea so they invented this name to suit the new idea.

Chapter IX.

Origin of Polo.

The Manipuri word for polo is Sagonkangjei that is kangjei on horseback. We shall presently see what is kangjei, if we put all the possible informations and evidences pertaining to this kangjei we shall see that it was not at all an imported game but originated and gradually developed in Manipur itself. Kangjei means kang a disc like nut or fruit of a creeper which abounds in the hills and jungles of Manipur and chei a stick. Some active and inventive boys hit this hard nut with a stick and found that it travelled a long distance or rolled on, thus a couple of them stood on both ends of a marked field and competed who could hit it furthest and he who could hit it to the boundary scored a goal. This was the origin of kangjei that is a kang and chei. The original meaning of Kang is a cart or car derived from a garih. In this place the nut has been called a kang on account of its similarity with the wheel of a kang. This hitting from one end to another was replaced by a competition as to who could hit the kang first by running after it and at the same time expanding the area of the field, to such a game the number of players could be increased to any convenient figure. This must have been a very good physical exercise and at the same time made the boys active and nimble.

Later on when the lookers on found that it was a good game, even the more active individuals among the grown up people played it.

Sooner or later they found that the kang was not conveniently suitable for a lively and well competed game on account of its shape and size, this led to the invention of a ball made of the root of the bamboo, this would roll a considerable distance if not obstructed and was more convenient as it could be made of any size. Although it was no more a kang still for want of a better word they named it a kangdrum that is a round kang. This was the origin of a kangjei in Manipur and so long they played it on foot. But as time passed on some of the adventurous men thought it would be more lively if they could play this kangjei on horseback, they called it Sagonkangjei, thus from a child's play we see that the world famous game of polo was originated.

This game was introduced into England by British Officers from Cachar who learnt it from the Manipuri refugee who took shelter there during the Burmese depredation of Manipur. Any British Officer who witnessed this game in Manipur would highly speak of it, during the palmy days of Manipur it was one of the most cherished and popular games, it was so much popular even a man who could not afford to buy a pony would also like to play it, in this connection there is a short story that once a man's mother died

suddenly and at this the son said he was very unfortunate that he did not know that his mother would die had he known it he would have sold his mother to purchase a pony. We have seen some picture of Akbar playing polo perhaps this was introduced in his own time and was quite a new thing there so the people or Akbar himself took a great fancy of it and thus the picture had to be painted. We hear of such appellations of polo in Manipur as 'polo in its home' from the writings of British Officers. Ras dancing and polo are two of the most well-known contributions of Manipur of a world wide fame. On account of the popularity of this game in olden days Manipuris were well expert in horsemanship in the last Burmese Wars the Kathe Horse that is Manipur Cavalry was well known, they both fought on the side of the English as well as on the Burmese as the Manipuri war prisoners who lived in Burma for a fair length of time were enlisted by the Government of that land as cavalry men and they fought against the British and those men of Gambheer Singh fought against the Burmese. These manly sports were much encouraged by the rulers of Manipur to make their people active and warlike so that they might become good officers and soldiers, such policies and other concomitant factors were the only cause of Manipur's holding its own some how or other before a formidable foe for any length of time.

The vicissitude of the fortune of the kang is to be pitied, the game of kang was first played with it, but later on its place has been replaced by something else and in the case of kanjei too it has been dethroned without any mercy, none is to be blamed this is the way of the world.

Chapter X

Drawback in the Study of Archaeology in Manipur.

As Archaeology is subservient to a perfect knowledge of history in a land like Manipur where no reliable old records are available a study of this subject is of vital importance. There are some manuscripts as well as traditions in which it is stated that at different places various manuscripts and things of an archaeological importance are buried under ground. A regular search of these may satisfactorily serve the purpose of a student of history if his attempt were successful to a certain extent. But to identify the actual spots as mentioned in the manuscripts that hints as the place where these articles are to be found is not an easy matter, as the general practice for the hint of the actual site is to mention a tree near which it is to be found or the mention of a streamlet on the source or bank of which the thing in question is to be found. The tree may not be standing till this day, the real source of a hill streamlet is indeed a very vague word it has got numerous branches to determine which was regarded as the real source of it at the time of writing the book is always doubtful. The bank of a streamlet is all the same a very dangerous statement as well.

If we were fully to depend on such statements it is only to show our own madness. Moreover the Maharajas were very cautious before granting any permission to look for such under ground anti-quarian things and to unearth them. It has been a general belief that such an act would either shorten their longevity or reign. The origin of this superstition may be attributed to the fact that rajas and maharajas were generally very greedy and meddlesome and they would at any convenient time attempt to take possession of them and thus without much serving the purpose for which they have been preserved would destroy them. The man who wanted to preserve them spread the rumour if it is opened the ruling prince would die early, in that case the prince is the custodian for the safety of the thing concerned.

The present writer had met with at least two such discouraging gestures the first was about a manuscript said to be found at the foot of the Srivan hill about four miles from Imphal on the Dimapur-Manipur Road. Its existence might have been known to the villagers in the vicinity, as most of them used to talk about it with some accuracy. It was said to have been at the foot of the creeper known as the Mabdavilata where the villagers used to worship some god during the Cheiraoba or the last day of the year. It may be interesting to note here how such

manuscripts might be preserved under the ground without being damaged at a very early date. But there is a process of preserving it from the attack of white ants and nature. The books are wrapped in Leihoura leaves that look something like the plantain leaf but resist the attack of white ants and underground heat and moisture. To augment its resisting power as well as to make the bundle waterproof two or three coatings of Khe a black varnish obtained from the juice of a tree of the same name that grows in the Kabo valley are given. Such a packet will remain in tact for a considerable number of years under the ground. The Loi population of the valley who are migrants from the south-eastern direction used to bury books wrapped in this way in the cremation grounds of their fathers and other old relations with their ashes. Such packets are sometimes by chance are unearthed in clearing and preparing an old and abandoned cremating ground of such people. The present writer was fortunate enough to have seen one or two books said to have been found in this way but they were not interesting enough, as they were the same books as may be obtained now, as far as it is remembered one of them was a copy of the Poiraiton Khunthokpa but the handwriting was bad.

To come to our manuscript of the Srivan hill the Maharaja was approached through the then

Political Agent to get permission for unearthing it, accordingly the Pandit Loising, the office of those who professionally deal with old manuscripts, were consulted, it was declared that if the manuscript were unearthed the reign of the Maharaja would be shortened. In order not to hurt the feeling of the Political Agent in rejecting his recommendation the writer was persuaded to abandon it for the sake of the Maharaja. But during the last World war II some time after ten years or so of the attempt to unearth the manuscript the Sriven hill was occupied by Military and in their earthwork it is said later on the manuscript was found and as none of the people could not read its contents it was destroyed unrecorded for, it is said it consisted of four or five leaves. I do not know how far the story is true at the same time the site has been much interfered and considerably altered. If it were true here the question of shortening the life of king or Emperor was not at all involved, and the traditionally or professedly old manuscript without being of any use whatever has been lost for ever.

Later on another permission was sought for opening some flat stones at a particular spot at the foot of the old Lalhambung as it is spelt in the old manuscripts. This time it was done through the President of the Manipur State Darbar. This mound is a huge artificial hillock of

pre-historic nature, it faces towards the east, the nature of the soil of it is quite different from the adjacent soil, it was probably thrown up with earth of a hilly nature, it is in one quarter of Imphal and an unshaped stone too is put up at some distance from the foot of it. At a little distance from its foot an area about four by five feet was discovered to have been paved with flat stones on the surface of which silts and decomposed roots of grasses have formed a decent layer on which now grasses grow regularly and when pricked with a pointed iron rod, the nature of the underlaying stones was quite perceptible. Here it must be admitted that the preliminary examination was done without any permission because it was thought that if no displacement or alteration was done there could be no charge of trespass as the place is open to public traffic. A curiosity naturally arose to know what there might be underneath these stones moreover from the sound of the pricking it struck the mind that the stones were supported by something underneath of course this is a mere supposition and guess. But the permission was refused on similar grounds as in the former one. We know that the excavation at Taxila or at Mohenjodaro or any other place has not either shortened the reign or longevity of an emperor or king or even a zamindar, but such is the drawback in Manipur. If anything of an antiquarian nature were to be found there its value would be far

higher than the life of any mortal men or their so-called reigns. In India we have no more rajas, maharajas and emperors whose longevity or reign so much concerned with these antiquarian curiosities there cannot reasonably be any objection to its opening now.

Chapter XI.

Kings of the Ningthoujas.

The clan to which the modern rulers of Manipur belong are known as the Ningthouja or sons of the king. Pakhangba or the youthful is recognized as the ancestral founder of this family, but we have already seen that he was only a personification of the moon. It is of no use to repeat those arguments once again here, and leave this with the remarks that this clan must have been another party of colonists of the successive waves of Indian migrants that used to visit this valley in those olden days. In the Chetharol Kumbaba which is regarded as the most authentic record of this clan and consequently of the whole valley is rather of a later period, there it is admitted that he did not come with Poiraiton whose sister though according to this book was married to him, he is said to have come down from heaven. Thus he was not a human being but some god or deva that is a shining body of the sky. Thus the colonists who were the founders of this clan must have been of the Lunar dynasty and in order to keep a link of their lineage with the moon all the puzzling allegories have crept in. The policy of this clan with the neighbouring powers was very tentative, they knew where to strike and where to avoid it, they would

adopt and introduce in their land whatever was good and useful. This faculty along with other important factors contributed much to their fitness and survival, this may be illustrated by the facts that even in historical times they were those who tried successfully to introduce religious reforms in the land when the people were much degenerated, they would not hesitate to introduce or avail themselves of the method of spear-wielding of the Maram tribes of whom they were the overlords, and we know that the main sports of boat-race and polo were of pre-historic days but on the merits of the games they introduced them sooner or later in their own land. In the following pages we shall deal with the history of this most important clan of early Manipur and in doing so we shall mainly depend upon the Cheitharol Kumbaba, as it is the best available authority though recording events of important nature in the way it is done in the book began in the fifteenth century of the Christian era. Thus there may be possible doubts as to the authenticity of the accounts given regarding the period preceding that date.

The book now known as the Chertharol Kumbaba is something like a diary of the annual or daily transactions of the State of an important nature, this was first founded by King Kiyamba in the year of 1406 Shakaabda, but all the important events of all his predecessors from Pakhangba down to his immediate predecessor have been included. In this book there are thirty-eight kings

from 'Mekhangba' to 'Kiyamba' extending a period of 1478 years' reigns. Some of the earlier kings are said to have been semigods and are said to have reigned for a considerable number of years, some of them are said to have reigned for 120 years, hundred and ten years and hundred years and the like. To a scrutinising critic it would be something historically impossible, if this book would have avoided the addition of the accounts of the preceding period its value would have been much considerably increased in the eye of a student of history. This book from the time of Kiyamba i. e. the conqueror of Kiyang Khompat to Gambheer Singh may be regarded as concise and practical, for the supply of historical materials as may obviously, expected from a book of this nature. The main defects of the book may be classified as (i), there are instances in which an important event is recorded to have happened on a particular date and the result of which may be expected some time later on, but such an expectation is not, in particular cases, fulfilled however it may be important to a zealous reader. The apparent reason of this was on account of its being entrusted to numerous hands, the next person who was to put down the events of subsequent dates might have ignored the importance of it or he might not at all know that in the preceding dates its cause had been recorded. (ii) Another event commenced at a particular date its result took some months to be known but

it is recorded along with the commencement of the event at the same time recording the intervening events with their dates later on. (iii) Many a fact that would throw a slur on the character or motive of the reigning king are somehow or other hushed up for example if a new king comes to the throne by murdering his predecessor who was his near relative the fact will never be mentioned but it will end the whole affair by saying that his predecessor died on a particular day. Defects of this nature in a book like the Cheitharol Kumbaba which is maintained by the State is unavoidable because the dispersion and its resultant withdrawal of an army under the personal command of a king by pressure of the enemy is nothing but a retreat, until he is totally defeated, in search of a better position from which a more successful blow may be given, without any regard to the place of retreatment.

These are the defects of this seemingly very important book which if it were written under the careful supervision of a single person, of course I am not speaking of its being written by the same man throughout the whole centuries, the inevitable changes are not to be counted, it would have been of immense value from a historical point of view. It is written in the old Manipuri script and language, some writer on the subject of Cheithaba has attempted to misrepresent it by coining a word Chahithaba which curiously enough is not found in the Manipuri vocabulary. This

word was perhaps more convenient for him to trace the derivative meaning, at the same time he adds "the derivation of the word chahitaba is obscure, some say it is connected with the word chahi or chai = a stick and taba means to count, to 'count by sticks' so on. He seems to have puzzled the meaning of a chei = a stick with that of Chahi = a year and thus both jumbled up, they are quite different words having those different meanings. The word cheithaba is connected with a ceremony the origin of which is of a very ancient nature. On the occasion of the last day of the year a man holding a long pole of bamboo on the top of which bells were tied was engaged to announce the coming year. He used to shout his slogan in every public road or street thus from Chei = a stick, here the pole of the bamboo and laoba to shou, the word chsi-raoba has been used in the Manipuri vocabulary to mean the advent of the new year. So far the ceremony was an outdoor one, but in the year 1406 Shakabda it became an indoor one in the time of King Kiyamba, in which the holding of the stick was abandoned, and the ceremony was performed in a meeting consisting of the king himself, the king of the Angoms and various other high officials and important citizens, this practice is being done upto this time. In this ceremony the man who is to declare the coming year had no more to hold the stick but had to abandon it, thus from chei a stick as

to abandon we get the word Cheithaba to mean the man from the verbal noun to the agent as we have stated in a previous chapter in connection with some other word. By the king's order every year was to be named after the person who performed the ceremony and from this particular year in the Cheitharol Kumbaba the names of these persons are always put down along with the respective Shakabdas. Although the mode of the ceremony had changed the word cheiraoba to mean the end of the year has still been retained in the tongue of the people. The whole meaning of the Cheitharol Kumbaba is thus to count the year according to the series of the performers of the ceremony. An abridged account of the kings of Manipur as found in the Cheitharol Kumbaba will be found in the following pages. The accounts of the first seven kings who were demi-gods and the 8th one who is said to have reigned for ninety years have been left out. It is not proposed to translate the whole book here as it will be too lengthy, so it is expected to come to Khagemba or Garibnewaz as the most. In most of the battles that the kings fought numerous prisoners were captured their names have been left out in this book.

In the year 440 Shakabda Sameirang became king his half brother, Thamanglang founded the first Ningthouja family as non-sovereign to the

throne. During his reign he fought against the Angoms whose king Kwakpa Thawanthaba was killed and they were subdued. All the heroes were given a feast. He reigned for fifty years.

In the year 490 Shakabda Konthouba became king, in his time the Angoms attacked Haakap, chingsang somewhere near the new Luwang colony at Tharga, but on their return Konthouba ambushed on the banks of the Naga rivulet and killed all the Angom soldiers except ten men. This was the cause of the trouble of his son Naothingkhong who was at that time in the land of the Angoms at his father-in-law's house. Konthouba reigned for ninety years.

Naothingkhong became king in 585 Shakabda, in 620 Shakabda Samlung a brother of the Shan king Sukan Pha after conquering Pasa (where ?) came to Manipur and lived here for ten years, he returned towards the north by the source of the Iril river. He reigned for hundred years. Here we see these non-semi-god kings too reigned for an unexpected number of years later on the fifteenth and nineteenth kings too reigned for 89 and 90 years at their disposal so they disposed them of very liberally.

A contemporary account of this contact of Pongs (Shans) which Manipur is mentioned in various books on the history of Manipur by European Officers, but most of them seemed to have obtained their dates mainly from the Manipur

source, which do not synchronize with those given by Gait in his History of Assam which is the most elaborated one of all other accounts, a quotation of it is given below. "The traditions of the Ahoms regarding the origin of their kings tally very closely in their main features with those preserved by the Shans of Upper Burma, of which an account has been given by Ney Elias in his History of the Shans. There are, as may be well understood, many differences in matters of detail, and especially in the names of the various rulers and the places where they reigned. A more noteworthy point of divergence is that the Shan chronicles, while they contain no reference to Sukapha's invasion of Assam, claim that Samlulgha, the brother of a king of Mungmau who ascended the throne in 1220 A. D., and gained several notable victories in Upper Assam, where he defeated the Chutias, as well as in Aracan, Manipur and other countries. The two stories, however, are not necessarily incompatible, and it is quite possible that, while Sukapha was pushing his way across the Patkoi, with a small body of colonists, rather than of military invaders, and establishing himself in the south-eastern corner of the Brahmaputra Valley, the general of another Shan State may have entered the valley by a more easterly route and inflicted a series of defeats on the Chutias, whose kingdom was well to the north of the tract where the Ahoms made their first lodgment"

In this quotation we do not get the name of the king whose brother Samlungpha was, while in the Manipur account we find that his brother's name was Sukanpha not Sukapha as it was in the case of the Assam colonist. So far Sukanpha has been suspected as a mis-spelling or mis-pronunciation of the Manipuri, but there are reasons to believe that they were different persons inasmuch as Samlung's brother's capital was Mungmay and he ascended the throne in 1220 A. D. while the founder of the Ahom kingdom in Assam left Maulung apparently the name of the Shan state to which he belonged in 1215 A. D. with a following of eight nobles, and 9000 men, women and children. Thus the dates do not tally as well as they came from different places. In the list of Ahom kings we get such names as Sukhangpha and Sukhampha one of which in the Manipuri way of pronunciation may easily become Sukalpha or Sukanpha, thus there is ample grounds to say that they were different persons of different times. This Samlungpha is said to have lived in Manipur for ten years according to Manipuri accounts, a ten years' acquaintance with such a historical person is not a matter to be ignored at all, the inquisitive mind of the people must have played much in finding out various particulars of the honourable guest and conqueror of their land who established his residence just on the other bank of the Imphal river facing the Palace of the king of the land. As regards

the different in the dates - a difference of more than six centuries it is impossible to determine at the present stage which party is to be blamed. From the Manipur account it would also be clear that Samlung knew the route to his native land via the Patkoi hills so he left Manipur by the source of the Iril river. At any rate it must be noted that the Manipur date of the invasion of Samlung must have been much antedated as we know that the two brothers Khunlung and Khunlai descended from heaven in the year 568 A. D. in the country of Mungrimungram i. e. before that date they were unknown in the country. There were intrigues among the brothers, for 135 years the political condition of the land must have been very weak and the internal affairs would not allow to send any foreign expedition by about 698 A. D.

In Shakadda 685 Khongtekcha became king. In his time sixty-three heroes of Moirang attacked his territory but they were all killed. Khongtekcha reigned for ten years, after him there was no king for eleven years.

In Shakabada 706 Keirecha became king, he reigned for fifteen years.

In Shakabda 721 Yaraba became king, he reigned for twenty-two year.

In Shakabda 743 Ayangba became king, he fought against the Khumans who were defeated.

The mud fortification of Ayangpalli was made in his time. He reigned for 89 years.

In Shakabda 832 Ningthoujeng came to the throne, he attacked Hangei and brought numerous cattle and pigs. This was a small village now extinct to the west of Imphal at a distance of about seven miles. He reigned for thirty-nine years.

In Shakabda 871 Chenglei Ipan Lanthaba became king, in his time those of the Luwangs who were coming on boats in the Luwang-i river were all captured. This was the first time that the Ningthoujas ever attacked the Luwangs. The meaning of his name is one who sent soldiers on the bank of the river of Chenglei that is on the Luwangli river which is the modern form of Luwang-i. It may be remarked that most of the names of kings as found in the Cheitharol Kumbaba are not their personal names but some title that was given according to the deeds of valour at the time of their coronations or reigns, thus Kiyamba was a title given to him as he conquered Kiyang Khampat, Kiyang+ngamba a conqueror. Chenglei Ipan Lanthaba reigned for twenty years.

In Shakabda 891 Yanglou Keiphaba became king, in his reign a tiger was caught at Langthabal, (here his name indicates the same thing as kei means a tiger and phaba to catch). Embroidery work on the borders of female clothes

was introduced in his time. He reigned for fifteen years.

In Shakabda 906 Irengba became king, he fought against the Moirangs at Ithai and he was successful, he also defeated the Khumans at Taknakha. He reigned for ninety years.

Loiyamba became king in 996. In the Chai-tharol Kumbaba there is a legendary account in connection with this king's reign in which the gods and men worked together for the king. I cannot at all understand what is the import of this, it is not possible for gods appearing in person to work for the king. It appears that Loiyamba was matrimonially connected with the king of the Angoms who was described as his brother-in-law, though from which side is not mentioned. This king of Angoms defeated the people of Sekta for Loiyamba. Among the list of war prisoners we find the surname of Tao in two cases. It has been specially mentioned because later on we shall come across with this surname an assimilation of these may help us in tracing who these people were. The people of Haogu refused to pay tributes so his elder brother Khamlang Patmsaba was sent to subdue the village, they were defeated. The Naga village of Leihou that refused to pay tribute was also defeated by the king himself. He reigned for forty-eight years.

In 1044 Shakabda Loitongba became king, in his time the game of Kangsanaba was introduced. It is an indoor game between two parties

each consisting of seven persons either males alone or males and females mixed up. It is played by propelling a flat substance originally the fruit of the creeper of which we have already read in connection with kangjei and polo. This was the first and preliminary edition of kangjei or polo. It is a very lively game the player must accurately shoot the point to which he must steadfastly concentrate all his attention. Although it is an indoor game still it requires a good deal of physical exercise and activity. Until very lately it was very popular among the people. He reigned for twenty-eight years.

In 1072 Atom Yoiremba became king, his brother whom he turned out ran to the Khumans. He reigned for thirteen years.

In 1085 Shakabda Iwanthaba became king, He attacked the Khumans at Uchiwa. The queen of the Khumans who was attending a party of women working in the paddy field was beheaded by the Meiteis. In retaliation of this the former attacked the latter and defeated them. He was on the throne for thirty-two years.

In the year 1117 Thawanthaba became king. The Naga village of Chingsong was defeated and the whole village was burned down. In his attack on Koijing Koimabou Thawa Langjeng was taken prisoner and thus he was given the title of Thawanthaba. On the north of the banks of the

Irong there was a fighting and he took two war prisoners. On the western hills on the Iyei river he attacked the Naga village of Arong, there too he was successful. He defeated the village of Langmeithet. At the request of the Long-lived king of the Khumans he made alliance with him and marched against the Heirem Khupjans by boat, the latter were defeated. After this Thawanthaba had a quarrel with the Khumans on account of a dispute regarding his daughter Chingkhethanbi and a battle was fought in which he was successful. The jewel of Soubal yai of the Khumans was also taken as a booty. He was on the throne for thirty-six years.

N. B. In the text the names of numerous war prisoners are given in all the battles that were fought by the various kings, but for the sake of brevity their names have been omitted, they must have been absorbed among the Meitei population as time went on.

In 1164 Shkabda Thingbai Selhongba became king, he reigned for five years.

Puranthaba became king in 1169 Shkabda. There was a fighting with the Khumans at Poirou on the east, where the Khumans were defeated. On the north at Kouba Leikhampok, the village of Kouba Koutai was defeated and the Chakpas
~~Ukhanthabainarak~~ Puranthaba

In the year 1185 Shakabda Khumomba came to the throne, he conquered the Naga village of Thangal on the north, its chief was taken prisoner. As the Kabos invaded the Khumans he went to assist the Khumans, the allies were successful in dispersing the Kabos. He was on the throne for fifteen years.

In Shakabda 1120 Moiramba became king. He fought with the Khumans at Leitang and defeated them. At Ningthoukhong too he fought against the Moirangs and defeated them. The Naga village of Maki was also defeated. He reigned for 24 years.

We have seen that during the reign of the preceding king Meiteis had conquered as far as the Thangal village i. e. as far as Keithen Manbi on the Dimapur-Manipur Road, this village still exists at about two miles on the east of this road, but Moiramba conquered Maki, it is very difficult to ascertain the exact site of the village still it may be conjectured that the village must have been between modern Kangpokpi and Karong because here we see most of the mountain streams have their names the termination of ki along with the Manipuri word lok denoting a mountain stream or depression such as Tiki, Hao ki, Majat ki and so on. Still it must be noted that the expansion of their territories was a slow progress, a village that they had once conquered might become powerful once again and might easily rise in revolt and re-assert their inde-

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We have seen that during the reign of the preceding king Meiteis had conquered as far as the Thangal village i. e. as far as Keithen Manbi on the Dimapur-Manipur Road, this village still exists at about two miles on the east of this road, but Moiramba conquered Maki, it is very difficult to ascertain the exact site of the village still it may be conjectured that the village must have been between modern Kangpokpi and Karong because here we see most of the mountain streams have their names the termination of k along with the Manipuri word lok denoting a mountain stream or depression such as Tiki, Haki, Majat ki and so on. Still it must be noted that the expansion of their territories was a slow progress, a village that they had once conquered might become powerful once again and might easily rise in revolt and re-assert their independence.

In Shakabda 1224 Thangbi Lanthaba ascended the throne, the Maring Nagas were conquered. Moirangs were attacked as its king was not willing to give his daughter in marriage to the Meitei king, they were defeated, on the south a battle was fought with Nagas on the Sekka hill, he reigned for twenty-two years.

N. B. The Marings are a tribe of Nagas occupying the north-eastern hills of Manipur on the Manipur-Tamu Road, but no particular village of the Marings is mentioned here. No mention of the Naga tribes of the south is mentioned here, still they were not the Kukis since in the Manipur accounts we do not hear of them until we come to the latter or middle of the seventeenth century of the Christian era.

In 1246 Shakabda Thangbi Lanthaba became king, he attacked the village of Kouyangphai on the west whose chief was taken prisoner. In his time the Mayangs attacked Manipur and were defeated at the Kouba hinglenching (modern Ingenching about ten miles from Imphal on the Dimapur-Manipur Road). He fought against the Chakpas at Khuroi haora Lamlangdong and they were defeated. This was the old name of modern Bishenpur or Lamangdong. He reigned for eleven years.

N. B. The word Mayang seems to have been used to signify the low class Bengalis, Tipperas, Cachars and others, but the higher class

people were known as Marbak that is a foreigner but without any distinction of their caste or class those who came to attack their own land were known as Mayangs but later on its significance has been much extended. Therefore it is very difficult to determine who these Mayangs were, but in a very old Bengali pamphlet entitled Ballal Charit or the Biography of Ballal Sen of Bengal there is a passage in which it is said that Ballal revolted against (attacked?) Manipur about the thirteenth century of the Shaka era. The accounts given in both sides are too meagre to come to any definite conclusion but there may be a possibility of coming further lights with further knowledge of history. Among the names of Mayang war prisoners who were captured in this campaign there are two persons whose surname was Tao, so far the writer does not know there is such a title or something similar to it as Dhap, Thon or Dou or the like among the people of Bengal.

Telheiba became king in the year 1257 Shakabda, he invaded the Chairons Heirem Khunjans by boats at Chaironthaijangpung, he defeated them. He attacked a Naga village at Yangpham chaklikpok on one of the branches of the northern hills, he was successful. He reigned for twenty years.

In 1277 Tonaba became king, he was on the throne for five years.

In 1281 Shakabda Tabungba became king as the Nagas of Chaklikpok failed to bring their tribute of cotton carpets, he marched against the village but the chief of it in order to revenge the wrong done to his wife, killed both king Tabungba and his servant Akaojamcha Tonkheiba. He reigned for thirty-five years.

In 1316 Lairenba became king, he was on the throne for five years. There was no king for the next five years.

In the year 1326 Punshiba came to the throne, he attacked the Moirangs at Soibung and fought with the Changakambongs. He attacked the Tangkhul Naga village of Monthou, whom he defeated. On the north he attacked the Koirangs on the Koubru side and defeated them. He defeated the Marings too. He was on the throne for twenty-eight years.

In the year of Takhen Ramcharan 1702 Shakabda when king Bhagya Chandra was reigning Manipur at Kanchipur had the Cheitharol Kum. baba re-compiled by his uncle Ananta Shayee Khwairakpa, as the book became extinct on account of the depredation and depopulation of the land due to the frequent invasions of the Burmese. Irom Shyamaram and Oinam Anandaram were the writers of this book.

Another instance of the activities of this prince in this direction was the small book - a manuscript

of course— known as the Bijoy Panchali, it is written in Bengali verse and mainly deals with the biography of his father Gopal Singh alias Garibnewaz. Ananta Shayee strongly espoused the cause of Gourshyam and his brother Jai Singh alias Bhagya Chandra Singh the two sons of Shvam Shayee an elder brother of Ananta Shayee. During the reigns of these two young princes the condition of Manipur was most deplorable. In an action against the Burmese invaders Gourshya is said to have fallen from his horse and thus one of his legs was crippled. Soon after this he died and Jai Singh became king permanently, he too was not spared from the Burmese attacks and had to voluntarily exile himself in stead of losing his independence. He had to take shelter as a refugee sometimes in the court of the Cachar king and sometimes in that of the Ahom king of Assam. Ananta Shayee might have easily asserted his own power at any time, but he never did it; and was eagerly waiting the return of his nephew, zealously doing everything possible to facilitate it. He used to hold various responsible posts during the reign of Jai Singh, who on his part too was much devoted to his uncle. In fact his devotion to this uncle was so strong that it is said on the strength of the manuscript of Larel Lathup that Jai Singh at the time of his coronation had his uncle coronated before him. In short there is every reason to believe that the grateful Jai Singh never denied any

royal prerogative to his God-fearing uncle in all possible ways.

In Shakabda 1358 Ningthoukhomba became king. He fought against the Moirangs with Hitha Langloingamba of the Angoms, Yaiskullakpa, Sana illuplen Lakpa Kongyamba and Tollongkhomba Tumu Langi Lanjingba. Moirang was defeated.

In the year 1265 he marched against the village of Akla and during his absence his queen and others were taking shelter at Tangkham numerous Tangkhuls from various villages came to capture them, but they were all captivated. There is a pretty little story how the queen defeated these hills people. On their approach the queen knew it thoroughly well that she had no means of getting rid of the hands of her enemies as they were too numerous, so she pretended that she should submit to the Nagas and invited them to drink wine while she was preparing to follow them. In the meantime she made a strong tincture of wine and tobacco leaves which when drunk made them all senseless and thus she made them all captives. Prince Kiyamba the next king was born here. Ningthoukhomba too was successful in his Akla expedition. He was on the throne for thirty-five years.

In 1389 Shakabda his son Kiyamba succeeded him at the age of twenty-four years. In 1392 he

offered a methun at the foot of the Khari hill so that he might conquer the Kabo Kiyangs. For this purpose he made an alliance with the Shan king Choupha. Khyakhom Pha. The Chindwin river which was as wide as one hundred fathoms was crossed by a bridge made of gold and silver. They sat on golden chairs placed on a golden mat and ate from the same golden plate and drank from the same golden bowl. Kiyang was conquered which was divided as follows, the territory of the Shans was from the place where dwarf mango trees grow, the portion of the Meitais consisted of all the territory known as Mungkhong Mungyang, on the east it was to the Loiari, on the south it extended upto the hill of Miyatong where dwarf mango trees grow; the whole of the Kabo Valley was the portion of Manipur. The eastern portion of Swansoop was the share of the Shans and the western part was that of Manipur. This is the story how the Kabo Valley was annexed to Manipur in that year. King Lamkiyamba and Angom king Kiyamba too were born in this year.

These are some of the typical defects of the Cheitharol Kumbaba. Lam Kiyamba became king in Shakabda 1433 but how did the writer know that he would be the king at least twenty-seven years ahead. Kiyamba of the Angoms too was not their king at the time of his birth.

In the year 1406 Shakabda Hiyangloi first celebrated the ceremony of Cheithaba.

Namoi's year was 1407 Shakaabda.

Khurai Omba's year was 1408 Shok, the two Loisangs or offices of Ahallup and Naharup were founded, Thang-: Lamleiyangba and Iwangbamcha Namba were respectively the Superintendent of them.

Khwai Haomu's year was 1409, king Koiramba was born. (Evidently he was the second son).

Lamlei Mutokai's year was 1410 Shok.

Lamlei Wahak's year was 1411 „

Akangjam Nunga's year was 1412 „

Khuraijam Tomma's year was 1413 „

Khoiri Jatra's year was 1414 „

Angoucha's year was 1415 „

Mikappa's year was 1416 „

Loukhambam Tharoi's year was 1417 Shok.
Angom king Khomjomba died at Lalhang.

Ongaibam Taba's year was 1418 Shok Angom king Loijangamba ascended the throne.

Khumuran Tah's year was 1419 Angom king Loijangamba was on tour.

Lamdai's year was 1420.

Samukchi's year was 1421.

Kharisa's year was 1422.

Songlera's year was 1423.

Lamlei Wareppa's year was 1424.

In Lamlei Chanouwa's year, 1425 Shakaabda Mayangs invaded the country Angom king Loi-jangamba and others opposed them. but as the

was not successful to turn them out he was reinforced by a party under Prince Nongthomba and others, the Prince is said to have been marching on the back of a buffalo the horns of which were turned down. On his arrival at the front he rebuked the Angom king very mercilessly and said that his father was killed by the Chingsong Lalhang Nagas like a fish, salt or a vegetable so he would never be able to defeat the Mayangs and he should quit the front. The Angom king was weeping but he fought along with them and the Mayangs were defeated, two mounds on the beheaded skulls were made and war prisoners also were taken. But among the names of the war prisoners we do not find any with the surname of Tao as in the previous case.

In an extract from a Memoir of Cachar by Lieutt. Fisher dated 1821 we read of an invasion of Manipur by Rajah Naladhwaja of Cachar, we quote the following from the Govt. Records, "The only remarkable circumstance in this reign was the conquest of Munnipoor by the Rajah. The causes of the quarrel with that country (or ?) whether indeed there were any at all are now unknown but it appears that the people of Cachar were successful and that Neladudjh restored Munnipoor to the Raja of that country on the following fanciful conditions.

1st. That a bamboo which he had planted

in the town of Munnipoor should remain for ever a memorial of his conquest.

2nd. That the people of Munnipoor should shave their heads and tie their hair in knots like the Burmans.

3rd. That they should construct no buildings more than 12 cubits wide.

Regarding the approximate date of this Cachari king's reign we quote the following from the same Memoir, "The early history of all nations is commonly much intermixed with fables; that of Cachar will be found to partake of this fault and also of a degree of uncertainty in later periods arising entirely from the want of regular annals. It is pretended that this kingdom from its foundation (the date of which is however uncertain) has been always governed by our (one?) family the descendants of one man, Bhim the second son of Raja Pandu who on arriving in Cachar found it in possession of a demon or giantess and her brother Herrun from whom it is said the country takes its ancient name - Bhim after killing Herrun in single combat married his sister by whom he had a son called Gutukhas who governed the country after his father's death and was succeeded by Meghban his son from whom the Rajahs of Cachar are said to be descended. After Meghban there is a blank in the history which extends over an uncertain period of time to the reign of Neladudih who is supposed to

have lived about 250 years ago (ago ?). It is probable however that his reign should be placed back at least 400 years as there are documents in existence by which it appears that Tumbva dudjh the third in succession from this prince governed Caubar in the year 1388 of the Bikramdut which corresponds with the year 1464 of the Christian era."

Thus according to the dates available from this Memoir there is a difference of seventy four years between the dates of the two countries concerned but that of the Memoir too cannot be taken as an exact one, Gait's History of Assam is silent about this matter, however, there must have been Cachari invasion of Manipur at about the time as given in the Manipur Chronicle, but both the parties claim to have been the successful one. But it is rather more possible when there was a great loss of men on both sides, they came to some compromise and both boasted of their own success in their respective territories.

In Hapba Langwa's year 1426 Shakabda Prince Nongthomba died, King Koiremba, pierced his ears, here again the title King has been given to Koiremba.

In the year of Chongtham Ata 1427 Pongsangngambi died. There was the ceremony of Ukaikappe, this was the old form of shooting Bavana at the time of Kwakjatra on the last day of Durga Puja in our modern days.

In the year of Ukai Sanga 1428, Kanglatongbi died.

In the year of Khonkhomba 1429 Shok king Kiyamba died at the age of sixty-four and was on the throne for forty years.

In Shakabda 1429 king Koiremba ascended the throne at the age of twenty, the Tangkul Naga village of Khamson was conquered.

Langpokpam Mera's year was 1430 Shok.

Haobam Khori's year was 1431, at the time of the boat-race in the month of Hiyangei king Koiremba insulted queen Luwangbi at this her father Angom king Loijangamba was furious, but he was appeased when he was feeding his people at Langmeithet. Probably he did it in collecting men for a revolt.

King Koiremba once again insulted him by refusing an interview. The king and his followers wore silver beads strung on black threads dyed with kum. — Kum is a vegetable dye obtained from the leaves of a plant known by the same name, it is not indigo as some suppose it to be. The leaves by some process of fermentation become an indigo coloured paste, later on by neutralizing it with oyster shell ashes and the like it dyes to a brilliant colour which is very fast. — All the Angoms were murdered, their king Loijangamba too died, i. e. he was also killed.

In the year of Lamlenngamba 1432 Shok Khoibu was conquered. Angom king Kiyamba too ascended the throne.

Sanathoiha's year was 1433, Angom king Kiyamba was on tour, King Koiremba was on the throne for four years and his age was twenty-four years. His maternal uncle's family Leisangthem was killed to the last men. Here the chronicle is silent as to whether he was killed or removed from the throne alive but it seems he was killed by the Angom king with the members of his maternal uncle's family who supported him.)

In 1433 Shok Lamkiyamba ascended the throne.

Khagokpam Pangara's year was 1434.

Yengkhoiba's year was 1435 Shok. Prince Nonginphaba was born.

In the year of Chabungbam Laka 1436 Leitang was defeated, king Lam Kiyamba had a boat-race and was also on tour.

In the year of Kanmang nga 1437 Shok king Tangjangamba was born.

In the year of Hisabamcha 1438 Yaiskullakpa Sana yangnu was born.

In the year of Chakhombam Tora 1439 king Kabomba was born.

In the year of Haoba Khongyungba 1440 Shok, Araichampra was defeated. Lam Kiyamba celebrated the first entry ceremony of Yumjao the big house.

In the year of Amakcham Khomma 1441, there was an outbreak of smallpox.

Khwai Chanouwa's year was 1442 Shok.

In the year of Nongpokpam Khaningwa 1443, Sikhong was conquered, the first entry ceremony of Kangla was performed.

In the year of Uthumbam Langhei 1444 Shok the village of Sairem was conquered. Those who were engaged in raising the level of the roads by throwing up mud were given to wear tussles of white threads, Princes Serembi was born. King Lam Kiyamba was on the throne for eleven years, his age was thirty-eight only.

In the year 1444 King Nonginphaba came to the throne at the age of ten years.

Leichon Akha's year was 1445. King Nonginphaba's mother was a paramour of Angom king Kiyamba who wore egret feathers dyed red with lac, queen Changning Phabi mother of Nonginphaba told him that it was not a custom of the Angoms, at this the Angom king was furious and killed both mother and son, the king died in the year of his ascension.

Kabomba ascended the throne in 1445, Sambun was defeated.

Moirang Kabochonba's year was 1446.

Henaoba Khanarong's year was 1447 Shok.

Laisram Khaba's year was 1448, Chakpa

Charoibam Kowa's year was 1449, the big mound on the bank of the Nambul was made.

Mayanglamba Laiya's year was 1450. Lamgai was conquered, the big mound of Kairam was made.

Onghnam Kamkhai's year was 1451, Princess Serembi was married.

Khurai Thangkokmanba's year was 1452, Sambam was conquered, there was small-pox.

Nganglom Khangsera's year was 1453, Tuson Nagas were conquered.

Laiton Sera's year was 1454, Tipperas were defeated.

Wairokpam Loma's year was 1455, the canal known as Takhen Khong or Tripura Canal was dug.

N. B. As the people of Tripura used to come from the southern route or their home is towards the south these people were known to the early Manipuris by the word Takhen the derivative meaning of which is Dakshin the south. There was cattle disease.

Thiagujam Yuhemba's year was 1456, cattle disease continued.

Leichonbam Lalumanba's year was 1457, route to Assam was opened. Assam queen Khongnambi was sent and the elephant Tekhaongamba too came.

N. B. The Manipuri name for the Ahom Kingdom of Assam was Tekhao which is derived from the Dikhu meaning those who lived on the banks of the river. It is indeed an exceptionally noteworthy case that in the long course of Manipur's dealing with the Ahom kings we do not find any instance of any sort of hostilities, it was always friendly between the two kingdoms we find instances of one or the other helping the other at the time of their difficulties but none of them attacked the other, it is a very rare case in the history of Manipur, she was either attacked by one of her neighbours or herself used to attack one of them wherever it would suit their convenience.

From the text it is clear that a Manipuri lady was given in marriage to one of the Ahom kings that is who was then reigning and an elephant was sent to the court of Manipur as present. In the text mention is made of the fish trap known as the Tekhaoru that is a fish trap of Assam which was introduced in the same year. In Gait's History of Assam (p. 94) a brief account of this is found, which runs thus, 'In the same year (1535) envoys were sent to the Raja of Manipur and presents were exchanged.' In the dates given in the records of the two countries there is a difference of two years but we must remember that the one is in the Indian era of Shakabda while the other as given in Gait's History

is in the Christian era and they begin in different months and at the same time a trip from Manipur to the capital of the Ahom court or vice versa was not a question of days but at least a question of three months or so including the return journey therefore this difference is not a matter of much importance and thus fairly tolerable.

In the year of Lamlei Thamamba's 1484 Angom king Lalhangngamba was born.

Ataiwa's year was 1459, all the men of Satpam family were put to death. There was a flood but it subsided very soon.

Wairokpam Sanaruk's year was 1460, King Kobomba pierced his ears, he was also on tour.

Laiminga's year was 1461 Shok Kabomba went on tour.

Aton Keisomba's year was 1462, Kale was conquered, its chief was taken prisoner, there was smallpox.

Tari Napachao's year was 1463, Kouba Chana's attack was repulsed.

King Kobomba was on the throne for eighteen years, then his age was twenty-six.

Tangjamba ascended the throne at the age of twenty-nine in 1463. Paobam Phala killed Thokchao Chamba Pukhramba at the time of expelling King Kabomba from the throne. Haobachena son of the Pukhramba was in the shelter

of the Angom king Loijangamba whom Paobam Phala attacked for his refusal to deliver Chena to him, Chena too in his turn attacked Phala from inside the house of the Angom king and killed him instantaneously. Thus the boat-race of Hiyangei was stopped. Princess Taibombi's maternal uncle Takhel was born.

Hinaobam Khomma's year was 1464.

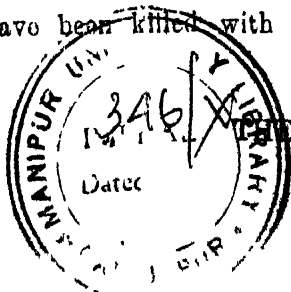
Irom Phana's year was 1465.

Nukram Chuta's year was 1466, king Tangjamba was on tour, Princess Sanayanbi too was born. He was on the throne for three years and was thirty-one years of age.

Ever since the eventful instultation of the Angom king Loijangamba by the young and obstinate prince during the campaign against the Mayangs the throne of the Ningthoujas was in a very precarious condition. Apparently Loijangamba was an official of the Ningthouja kings but he was very powerful, he had his own territory, his services to the Ningthouja clan was rather one of obliging them. To give a blow to his pride was not easily cured. Thus during the short period of forty years or less there were not less than five kings, each of them were the victims of political assassination and murders, whoever would incur the displeasure of Loijangamba was doomed to death man or woman, even his own paramour the widowed queen - mother of Nonginphaba - was not spared for the trifling crime of

telling him that the red egret feather was only to be worn by the Ningthouja kings and not by the Angoms. During this period we hear no more of the territorial expansion of the Ningthoujas or any thing that would contribute to their progress and prosperity, except that the first friendly relation with the Ahom kingdom of Assam was established for the first time during these days of turmoil

The most remarkable fact in the character of Loijangamba was that if he so wished he could have annexed the territories of the Ningthoujas to his own and usurped their throne, but he never did his - he would honour the old practice that the throne of the Ningthoujas was for the Ningthoujas and that of the Angoms was for the Angoms. The internal turmoil of the land continued till the end in 1469 Shakabda, - in his old days he was too in all probability was murdered but no such mention is made in the records. In course of two years his two immediate successors too met the same fate, one of whom is said to have been killed with his family.



THE END.