

# INTRODUCTION

## —Roots beyond Root

—NAOREM SANAJAOBA

### PROTO-HISTORIC MEETEI DISPERSION AND SETTLEMENTS

All the native ethnic groups of the present state of Manipur had, at one time or another, been the cognate of the Meetei in Manipur. Meeteis themselves were a melting pot of seven major ethnic groups belonging to seven major principalities. In the multi-ethnic state of Manipur, all the native hill tribes bearing separate ethnic names in the past and later, known in two broad categories viz., 'Manipuri Naga' and 'Manipuri Kuki' [Chins] had shared common ancestry and common past with the Meeteis. Manipur, which had been known throughout the ages as *Meitrabak* (Meetei-leipak) or *Kangleibak* and also by more than twenty names, is a geographical expression and subsequently, Manipuri has become a composite nomenclature of the multi-ethnic nationality, based upon the geographical expression. The new nomenclature Manipur had been adopted in the eighteenth century during the regime of maharajah Pamheiba (*Garibnawaz*). Meetei Puyas including '*Sanamahs Laikan*' had recorded the alteration of the name of the independent country into a Sanskritised term 'Manipur', two centuries and a half B.P.

The dispersal of the Meeteis and their settlements in several countries and parts of Asia, the emergence of Manipuri diaspora beyond their original root in the state of Manipur had been the legacy of Manipuri history in Asia. Pan-Manipuri settlements in Myanmar (Burma), Bangladesh (erstwhile east Pakistan), Tripura, Cachar, Assam, North-eastern states and in some of the enclaves like Nabadwip, Saudi Arabia, and Brindavan could be traced to medieval period and even to the remote past. We can identify the periods of Manipuri settlements in different areas of Asia with the help of literary sources and other available evidence, drawn from local, national and external materials.

The first phase of dispersal of Meetei population coincided with the early stage of Meetei ethnogenesis during the reign of proto-historic

Meetei king Kangba\* and his predecessors in the pre-Christian era. The Meetei ethno-dispersion also continued during the regime of the first Meetei king in history in 33 A.D. according to the Manipuri royal Chronicle '*Cheitharol Kumbaba*', which is also endorsed by another important Meetei chronicle '*Ningthourol Lambuba*'. Meetei Puyas and early literature vividly record the details of Meetei ethno-dispersion and dispersal of the Meetei outsiders the geography of present Manipur into the neighbouring countries in Asia. Along with the natives in the neighbouring states and countries, early Meeteis constitute the autochthones, who are considered and accepted to be the first settlers in the respective threshold states. Details of the common ethnogenesis of 'Manipuri Nagas', 'Manipuri Kuki-chins' and the Meeteis had been clearly described in the chapter 'The Roots', written by the author (in Manipur Past and Present volume III) and hence, the author does not feel the need for repetition of the same ethnogenesis story-line for want of space and brevity.

Kangba, the son of Tangja Lila Pakhangba is said to be the first proto-historical king of the Meeteis in the pre-Christian period. His son and successor Moriya Phambalcha is said to have reigned in the early proto-historical *Meitribak*—land of the Meeteis in 1,397 B.C. The tradition has been espoused largely by the Meetei revivalist scholars, who subscribe to the traditional Meetei religion—the *Sanamahi* and its traditions. The Sanskrit scholars, who grafted the alien religion and culture of Sanskritisation in the Meetei ethos since the eighteenth century A.D., however, rewrote the Manipur history retrospectively in order to suit and justify the imperatives of Sanskritization, which is undoubtedly a late comer though.

At the instigation of one Hindu priest Shantidas Gosain, Meetei holy books (Puyas) had been consigned to flames at around 9-10 a.m., on the 23rd day of Wakching in 1729 A.D, 268 years B.P. The event paved the way for Sanskritisation and the name of the country had been changed to Manipur. The royal Chronicle '*Cheitharol Kumbaba*' does not at all include the Sanskritised interpolations or, extrapolations barring the post-proselytisation writing for the last couple of centuries in the two millennia-old history of Manipur. The author, therefore, relies more on the genuine Meetei literary sources and traditions in writing this chapter than giving unwarranted credence to the concocted versions and the 'HOAX', made out by the harbingers of cultural colonialism, notwithstanding the strong official endorsement of the explicit concoctions, which had been a result of enormous painstaking efforts of social expansionism, as charted by the Gangetic belt. Some of the Aryan scholars spent their life and energy in preparing the concoctions for the cause of expansionism and cultural colonialism.

\*See N. Sanajaoba, Kangba Matamgee Yelhoungei—Khunai, in Anouba Eechel, March, 1999, Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Assam, pp. 49-56.

'*Ningthou Kangbalon*' presents a brief genealogy of the Meetei kings in the pre-Christian era. King Kangba had nine sons viz., Koikoi, Teima, Yangma, Tesrot, Urenkhuba, Urenhanba, Irem, Khabi and Langba. As recorded in *Kangbalon*, Teima became Meitei. Yangma went to the west of Manipur and spread over to Mayang (Cachar and beyond) in the west of Manipur. Tesrot went to Takhel (present Tripura) and became Takhel (Tripuri). Urenkhuba spread over as Moirang people, Irem went to the north and became Pasa—the people to the north of Manipur. Khaba went towards the east and became the Chinese people. Langba went to the south and spread over his descendants (30:3). The name of Manipur was 'Tilli Koktong Leikoilel' in Kangba period (30:4).

In another book, *Ashamba Kumpaba* (31:3), three kings bearing the same name Kangba reigned in the past in Manipur. It states that the descendants of the nine sons of the second Kangba, known as Kangba Kangkhan, gave birth to the ethnoses viz., Meitei, Mayang [Cachari] Takhen [Tripuri], Kuch Pathan, Moirang Thokchom, Tilipasa of the Burmese nationality, and Chinese (31:6). King Kangba Kangkhan, the son of queen Silpeeileima, who introduced the tradition of Meitei Sanamahí religion had nine princes, who reigned as independent kings in nine countries. These nine kings, who descended from the common Meitei king had been instrumental in the ethnogenesis of people in the neighbouring countries of Manipur (32:75). Leima Taritnu had nine sons. Six of them found themselves inconvenient to stay in *Kangleibak* (known as Manipur since the 18th century A.D.). Kongkoi who gave birth to Pong spread over as Kabo (Burmese). Yangma assumed the life style of Mayang and lived as Mayangs (Cacharis and others in the west). Tesrot, Urenkhuba, Irem and Khabi underwent the ethnogenesis to become Takhel (Tripuri), Kusu Pathan, Tili Pasa, Chairen—Chinese respectively (33: 58).

The Meitei literary sources indicate the transborder, transnational ethnogenesis in Burma, China, Cachar, Tripura, Western countries, Afghanistan areas as a projection of early Meitei ethnogenesis. The trans-Himalayan Mongoloid belt reaching out the border of Afghanistan starting from Far East, Central Asia and South Asia constitute a compact ethno-cultural zone. The Meeteis and their ethno-genetic dispersion had remained a component in the dynamics of the formation of the above ethno-cultural zone.

*Poireiton Khunthok* is another precious chronicle of the Meitei nationality in the past. In the process of the settlement undertaken by Chingkhong Poireiton in Manipur, his progeny had been advised to spread over in the neighbouring countries of Manipur. It had been recorded in the above chronicle as follows (34:19) :

"You who desire to be a Mayang should carry the sword at your left side, take betel nut, bear a pair of conch, carry a bag of cowrie shells and reach out the land of the Mayangs. You who would like to be a Takhel (Tripuri), should wear white

dhوتي, carry the sword at the left and visit the land. You who would become a Kabo (Burmese) should shave off the beard, coil up your hairs on the head, and provide a bamboo hat to your son. Should you give birth to daughter, she should leave the place by wearing phanek. The one who should be a Tangkhul (original Meetei cognate tribe, clubbed under Naga banner due to Naga-isation in the recent past) should wear the dhوتي with a slant, and the shawl straight down the shoulders and use creeper's coil at the calf. —"

The Meetei ethnogenesis and ethnogenetic dispersion, as mentioned above have also been cited in another book under the same title (35:31). The earliest settlers in Manipur like Konglouton Louthiba, Chakpa Chakaringba Tangmaringba have been mentioned in old books like *Pudin* and *Pakhangba Phambal*, among others (35 : 31). Several Meetei literary sources demonstrate the emigration of the early Meeteis to other countries during the period of Pakhangba, who ruled Manipur in 33 A.D..

The old sources record as many as three Pakhangbas and sometimes, as many as three hundred sixty Pakhangbas. Nongda Lairal Pakhangba, who came to power in 33 A.D. is widely known as Pakhangba by usage in Meetei history. At a time when, Pakhangba ascended the throne by defeating several powerful enemies like Khaba and ruled the country in the midst of enemies, he assumed the role of a real man and husband at night in the presence of his queen and assumed another role like a diety or, semi-god in disguise during the day time as his security-cover. The legend runs metaphorically in this way : Pakhangba is a god in day time and a human being at night.

Meetei emigration had also been mentioned in '*Chengleiron*' (36 : 17). In the 5th century A.D., during the reign of Meetei king Naokhamba, Chingjen Naran Panggalba left his homeland in order to settle at Pasa. Addressing his uncle Thangyi Khongjromba, Chingjen Naran Panggalba beseeched, "Oh, father, I myself, your son would not settle here in Meitei Poirei. Let me visit to the west far away from the Thongnang (Mayang) and settle at the Pasa land" (36 :17).

Convenience, temptation, adventurism, trade and commerce are the strong motives for early Meetei emigration and settlement in other parts of South Asia, beyond the frontiers of their homeland.

During the regime of Khui Ningomba, Pengsiba and Naokhamba, starting from the 4th century A.D., Manipuri traders reached out on horseback to upper Burma and China. Manipur had been a trade route in the early period. It linked up China and eastern countries with Assam — neighbouring countries of Assam. India had hardly touched Assam till the annexation of Assam in 1826 by British India. Migration and settlement in trickles would have occurred in the early period. Assam had received several waves of immigration from India in the west and eastern countries like Yunan, Tibet, China, upper Burma and South Asia. They spilled over

to Manipur in historical times. The spill-overs had been a two-way and reciprocal affair. Assamese and Bengalis had been assimilated in large numbers in the Meetei fold and Meeteis also settled in large numbers in friendly states like Assam.

Two-way migrations had been facilitated at a time when Sylhet-Cachar sector had been exposed to the western gate of Manipur in the 8th century A.D. The route had been further expanded in 1536 A.D., when Assam-Manipur road had been considerably improved. Pan-Manipuri settlements had been automatically promoted on the basis of the friendly relations. There is a viable speculation that the Manipuris, known as Moglais then had settled since 1603 A.D. in Taraf, in the present day Bangladesh. Meeteis could have settled in Sylhet during the reign of Manipur king Pamheiba (*Garibnawaz*) in the period 1709-1748.

It is on record that Moirangthem Govinda had settled at Khaspur in Cachar in 1764-65 A.D. Meeteis had also settled at Bishgaon in Bangladesh in 1804 A.D. In 1813 A.D., ancestors of Sanasam Kaminikumar Singh, the revenue minister in Bira Bikram Kishore Manikya's cabinet had settled at Trip in Tripura. Pan-Manipuri settlements, which started since the 4th century A.D. till the 19th century A.D. had been sporadic, intermittent and casual, considering the choice of settlement according to their convenience and trade facilities.

The other reason for Manipuri settlements outside Manipur could be attributed to the matrimonial alliances that materialised in between the Manipuri and other ruling houses. Unlike the proto-historical ethno-genetic dispersion of the ancient past, the Meetei matrimonial alliance is not traceable beyond the twelfth century A.D. In the 12th century, Meetei king Thawan Thaba had married Mayang princess Chingurembi. Her retainers had been absorbed in the Meetei surnames viz., Taimujam, Oinam and Sanasam. Six Lairemna Phou-oibis of Manipur had left Manipur during the regime of king Thawan Thaba (37:131) for Cachar. Following the annexation of the Kabo valley to Manipur by king Kiyamba in 1475 A.D., Kiyamba's daughter had been given in marriage to the Pong King (7:37). In 1526 A.D., the Manipur Assam road had been opened up and Tekhao Leima Khongnambi had left for Assam (13:24).

In 1536 A.D., Kabomba—the king of Manipur had sent a Manipuri girl in marriage to Ahom king Suhumung and the Ahom king reciprocated by sending a few Assamese girls as the wives of the Meetei king (22:102). The Cheitharol Kumbaba records that in 1557 A.D., Mayangleima Monshambi and in 1565 A.D., Mayangleima Tarungambi had entered to Cachar (13:27), during the regime of Meetei king Mungyamba. It further records that in 1585 A.D., Mayangleima Koirembi, in 1602 Mayangleima Tokshenusung had left for Cachar, and in 1601 A.D., Kaboleima Snahekpisung had left for Burma. Sanongba, the younger brother of Meetei king Khagemba also had married a Tripuri princess.

The Royal chronicle—*Cheitharol Kumbaba*—had also recorded the

departure of Akoijam Chanu Yangnu- Takhel Leima for Tripura in 1609 A.D., of Kaboleima Snapubi for Burma in 1610 A.D., of Mingthoingambi married to Burmese king for Burma in 1654 A.D. (13:43). In 1688 A.D., Nonthoujam Chanu Thoibi was married to a Burmese prince (13:53).

In the late 17th century, princess Chakpa Makhao Nagambi, daughter of Meetei king Charairongba had been married to Burmese king; but the Burmese failed to treat her properly and the Manipuri-Burmese relation was found to be at a low ebb. The Awaleima went to Burma in 1704 A.D. (13:56).

In the 18th century, princess Hariseshwari, daughter of Manipuri king (Meeteis had been re-named as Manipuri and *Meitrabak* as Manipur in the 18th century; hence the Sanskritised term is used subsequently) Jaisingh had been given in marriage to Tripura king Manikya. Kashichandra Manikya of Tripura had married Manipuri princess Kutilakshi in the 18th century.

The Assamese-Manipuri relation had been found to be consistently ideal and harmonious for centuries, unlike the changing relation of other states *vis-à-vis Meitrabak (Kangleipak)* that is Manipur. In 1768, Gourshyam's daughter princess Kuranga Nayani had been wedded to Ahom king Rajeshwar Singh. Manipuri retinues in their hundreds had settled in upper Assam areas namely – Hansora and Borkula.

Kuranga Nayani occupied a significant place of her own in Assam history because of her immemorable role in the resurrection of the Ahom ruling dynasty at a time, when the Ahom king had been dislodged by the Moamarian insurrection. The areas, where the Manipuris settled had been known to the Assamese as Moglow Khat or, Malow Khat or, Malow Pathar. The Manipuri queen had arranged to dig up a pond known as Moglow Jiekar Pukhuri—the pond of daughter of Manipur. The rebel leader Ragha Moran Borua had been given a deadly blow in the midst of a traditional ceremony by Kuranga Nayani and later on, done to death by the Ahom soldiers. *Cheitharol Kumbaba* records that the Tekhao Leima had left for Assam in 1768 A.D. (13:112).

Tripura king Krishnakishore Manikya, who reigned in Tripura during the period 1829-1849 had married three daughters of Manipuri king Marjit viz., Chandrakala, Akhileswori and Bidhukala. Tripuri royal house and ruling clan had several descendants from the Manipuri princess. Tripura ruling house had become synonymous with Manipuri ethos and grandeur for these reasons.

Tripura king Beerachandra Manikya had married Bhanumati, the daughter of prince Tulajit, the son of maharajah Bhagyachandra also known as Karta or Jaisingh. All the descendants of Tulajit had settled at western Agartala and Sylhet. Tripura king Radhakishore Manikya had succeeded Beerachandra Manikya in 1896 A.D. and he made the Manipuri princess Ratnamanjuri—daughter of Manipuri king Marjit, the queen of Tripura. Meetei maidens—Nirupama and Khamabati had been married

to Tripuri prince Nabdwickishore Devabarman. Nirupama gave birth to Kumar Sachin Devabarman—the father of Indian music director S.D. Barman. Prince Nabadwickishore had shifted his house to Kumilla Rajabari in Bangladesh. Manipuri settlements in these countries and states from the 12th century onwards had been the result of the matrimonial alliances that the Manipuri ruling house entered into with its counterparts all around. The inhabitation had been further compounded by Manipuri emigration following wars, devastation and other compulsive reasons like political dissidence, as commonly found among the powerful political centres in Manipur.

In 8th century A.D., Meetei king Khongtekcha had frequent military confrontations with North Bengal. Prisoners of war must have been naturally taken away by both the warring parties. Bangla elements had been assimilated among the Meeteis and in turn, Meeteis could have settled in foreign lands like Bengal. From the last part of the 13th century A.D., during the regime of Meetei king Khumomba, wars took place in between Manipur and Burma. The hostilities continued for nearly five centuries and a half barring periods of occasional, fragile and elusive peace. In the 14th century A.D., king Kongyamba had defeated the Thongnang (Mayang) and crushed their leaders, long haired Apha-Cha, Tingkulaba, Lakka Shumkatao and Arin Arangtao. Two hundred Mayangs had been taken captives (37:193). A non-aggression agreement had been reached in 1604 A.D. between the kings of Manipur and Cachar; reciprocal migration since then could have been a fact of life. Manipur and Bharata mainland had no links whatsoever, because of the inaccessible vast span of dividing space.

At the end of the 17 century A.D., Meeteis of the Oinam family had settled at Bishgaon in Bangladesh. In the middle of the 18th century A.D., Chitsai and his followers took settlement in Cachar. Till the middle of the 18th century A.D., Meetei settlements due to compulsive reasons like war and political dissidence, outside Manipur in South Asia had been occasional and sporadic. However, Meeteis passed through the exodus and deportations on a massive scale in three major historical events in 1755-1758, 1768 and in 1819-1826 A.D., as a result of recurrent Burmese invasions and devastation of Manipur. D.G.E. Hall, F. Hamilton, Burmese records, Assamese history and Manipuri royal chronicles corroborate the massive deportation of Meeteis to Burma, although they differ in minor details and chronological figures, since the Burmese recording system consistently made room for error of one or two years.

In 1873-78 A.D., trade between Manipur and Mayang areas had improved and king Debendra and his followers had also settled at Dacca. After 1891 Anglo-Manipuri wars, Manipuri freedom fighters, who had been sent to Andamans by the British had later on been settled at Darrang in Assam, since they had been prevented from entering Manipur by the British.

## RISE AND FALL OF MANIPUR

The rise of Manipur as a regional power reached its zenith during the reign of Maharajah Pamheiba *alias* Mayamba (also known by non-Manipuri name Gopal Singh or, Garibnawaz). The Burmese had been recurrently defeated by the Manipuri army. The decline of Manipur power in the middle of the 18th century threw open the space for the rise of Burmese power under the leadership of Alaungpaya. Massive Manipuri-exodus and massive deportation of the Manipuris by the Burmese invaders characterised the later half of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th century. A brief sketch of this significant period of time in Manipur history is drawn here.

D.G.E. Hall writes (6:407) about maharajah Garibnawaz, "Under Gharib Nawaz (1714-54) its expert horseman became the terror of Upper Burma. They destroyed village and pagodas and got away with their loot before they could be intercepted. On more than one occasion they defeated Burmese armies sent to hold the frontier. They had recently been converted to Hinduism, and their Brahmins incited them on with the promise that they would obtain blessedness by bathing in the Irrawaddy at Sagaing. In 1738 they camped near Sagaing, stormed the stockade built to defend the famous Kaunghmudaw Pagoda erected by Thalun, massacred its garrison and burnt every house and monastery up to the walls of Ava." Manipuri raids in Burma continued till the year 1749.

E.W. Dun who made his studies of the Manipuri-Burmese wars on the basis of Burmese chronicles and records along with Manipuri chronicles (7:38), had recorded the defeat of the Burmese army by Manipuri forces in the years 1725, 1735, 1738, 1739 and 1749, among others. During the rise of Manipur power, the boundary of Manipur had expanded further beyond the existing boundary in the twentieth century (39:37). Capt. R. Boileau Pemberton wrote about (38:21) boundary of Manipur, "The territories of Manipur have fluctuated at various times with the fortunes of their princes, frequently extending for three or four days journey east beyond the Ningthee or Khyendwen (Chindwin) river (nearer Irawaddy), and west to the plains of Cachar." He also wrote, "The victorious career of Gureeb Nuwaz clearly proves, that during his reign, the Muneepoorees had acquired considerable power; and as the events just narrated are drawn almost exclusively from Burmese historical works, and are the acknowledgements of a defeated enemy, all suspicion of their truth must cease to exist" (38:41).

In the post-Pamheiba (Garibnawaz) period, history had turned the table against Manipur. Three major devastations ensued in Manipur following Burmese invasions : first devastation in 1755-1758, the second in 1769 and the third in 1819-1826. The survival of Manipur after passing through successive devastations in a short span of seventy years is not only enigmatic but also a piece of miracle, which only the generation that

survived the holocaust and onslaughts could have described. The angel of history saved the race from a total clean-up, so that those who survived could at least narrate the story to their progeny. The resilience that Manipur could acquire in the event of series of devastations proved her ability to survive in history.

Manipuri settlements in Myanmar (Burma) took place on a massive scale in 1758 and 1769, as a result of deportation of several thousands of Meeteis from the Manipur valley by the Burmese invaders inside the Burmese homeland. In the seven-year-devastation that occurred during the period 1819-1825, several thousands of Meeteis—the Manipuris from the valley—had once again been taken as captives by the Burmese invaders. In all possibility, majority of the Meeteis, who had been deported in the first and the second waves could have been fully Burmanised. However, the Manipuri settlers in the third wave could resist the total Burmanisation process to some extent and they could, with insurmountable difficulties, maintain their ethnic and national identity to the barest minimum. The three waves of Manipuri settlements in Burma are described as a part of the painful events of Manipur history. The events that led to the Manipuri deportation are briefly examined in this chapter. The ethnic memory of the Pan-Manipuris centres around these events.

The geo-politics in South Asia in the middle of the 18th century and early part of the 19th century explains the historical events. Firstly, British and European colonialists like the French and the Portuguese contended for their colonial market-base in South Asia in the substantial period. In order to checkmate the British aggressiveness and intrasigence, the French and the Portuguese had supplied tactical weapons and guns to the Burmese, who opposed the British intrusion in Burmese spheres of influence. Secondly, neighbouring countries like Siam (present Thailand), *Meitrabak* (Manipur since 18th century) or, *Cassay* as it was known to others and China had blunted Burmese intentions and aggressiveness in material terms. The Mons defeated the Burmese; the Peguers and the Arakans remained hostile to Burmese rulers. The Shan—erstwhile Pong kingdom had been friendly to Manipur since the regime of Manipur king Kiyamba in 1475. The equation of power-relationship as it existed in the material time, compounded by Manipur's dominance for a substantial period of time during the reign of king Garibnawaz till 1749 over the Burmese power, disabled the Burmese to play a vital role in the regional set-up.

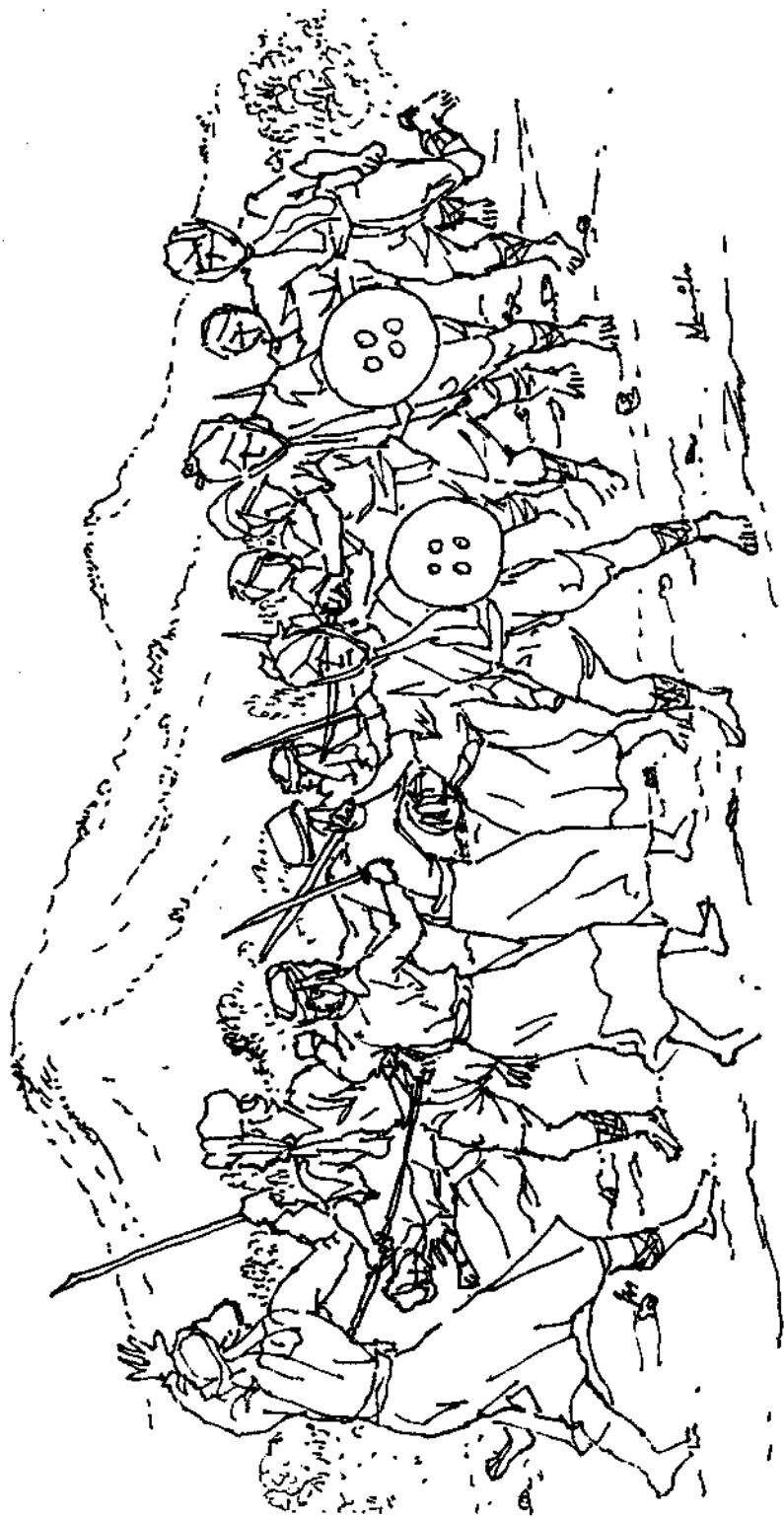
Thirdly, rise of Alaungpaya from the ordinary ranks to the highest position of a ruler and the establishment of a strong *Konbaung* dynasty since his regime consolidated the human and material resources of a greater, stronger and enlarged Burma in multi-national and territorial terms. Fourthly, the abdication of maharajah Garibnawaz, which had been followed by relentless, ritualistic palace-intrigues, fratricidal wars and ongoing infightings among the near and remote ruling-clans had pushed the Manipuri power to its nadir and abysmal base. Compounded by restive situations in the Manipur hills, natural calamities like floods

and epidemics of all kinds, the existence of Manipuri people even in the absence of Burmese invasions and devastation remained a doubtful proposition. But for the best Manipur-Assam relations, which became a near-permanent proposition, the surrounding countries like Cachar and Tripura occasionally demanded their pound of flesh from a devastated Manipur.

The deplorable situations made the Manipuri princes more bold, aggressive and ruthless at times. The events are briefly unfolded. The deplorable state of affairs as found in Manipur had also been further worsened by the ambitions of dissident Manipur princes like Chitsai, Bharatsai, Khelleinungnang Telheiba and Marjit, *et. al.*, who sought foreign military intervention in their internal affairs, and in the fratricidal wars. This attitude gave legitimacy to subsequent foreign including British intervention in the recognition of Manipur kings in the last part of the 19th century and in the subsequent periods. Recognition of Manipur kings by the British till that period was not contemplated. The Burmese army, led by a relative of Alaungpaya, equipped with European fire arms invaded Manipur in 1755 and defeated the Manipuri army, who used traditional weapons like spear, arrow and swords. The Manipuri defeat led to the primary devastation of Manipur, which was known as '*Khul-tak-Ahanba*' (7: 39). E.W. Dun, R. Boileau Pemberton (38:41) and Jyotirmoy Roy (12:46), among others, acknowledge the *Khul-Tak-Ahanba* event in their works. Alaungpaya's expeditions in Manipur in 1755 has been covered by R.K. Jhaljit (22:176), A.C. Bannerjee (1:57) and D.G.E Hall (6:430), among others. On earlier events, the Burmese army did not have the opportunity to induct fire arms, but in the nineteenth century their palace arsenals, reached upto 35,000 muskets which had been largely rejected weapons of the French. After fighting pitched battles, prince Bhagyachandra (Chingthangkomba) repulsed the Burmese invaders. D.G.E. Hall writes about the 1755 Burmese expedition in Manipur, (6: 430): "A punitive expedition, the first of many, against Manipur wrought fearful havoc."

*Ningthourol Lambuba* records the Burma-Manipur war without stipulating the specific years. The resistance war, launched in defence of the realm by Manipur king Linwai Phallou Maramba (Gourshyam) against the invading Burmese army, the destruction of Burmese concentrations and gunning positions by Manipur king had been described in details in *Ningthourol Lambuba* (37:10). Alaungpaya's ambition to invade in Manipur had coincided with prince Bharatsai's submission to Alaungpaya for reinstating him to the throne of Manipur. In *Hiyanggei* month of 1756, prince Bhagayachandra along with Shaikhom Khabam Lakpa resisted the Burmese army, who passed through Samsok; and Gourshyam after resisting the Burmese invaders at Kakching had to make a retreat (25:130).

Manipur royal chronicle '*Cheitharol Kumbaba*', which had been given primacy over an equally respectable chronicle—'*Ninthourol Lambuba*'—had recorded Burmese invasion in 1758. The chronicle recorded the



SKETCH - 1 : Seven-year-devastation, 1819-1826



SKETCH - 2 : Seven-year-devastation 1810-1826

devastation in 1758 in these words : "On Friday the 28th day of *Hiyanggei* month (1758 A.D.), king Maramba had left for fighting against the Awa (Burmese invaders)... On Tuesday, third day of *Poinu* month, Meetei garrison at Kakching made retreat. On Tuesday, the 11th day of *Poinu*, as the prince (Bhagyachandra) failed to succeed at the Leishangkhang battle, the country had suffered destruction. The Burmese remained for nine days. In course of time, Meeteis had descended from Manipur hills and re-established the kingdom" (13:122). Gangmumei Kabui writes that in the 1758 Burmese-Manipuri war, Alaungpaya had taken Manipuri prisoners in large numbers and skilled persons like boatman, silk - workers and silver smiths (10:267). Deportation of thousands of Manipuris and their enforced settlement in the Sagaing and Amarapura districts of Upper Burma, use of the services of Manipuri astrologers and Manipuri cavalry by the Burmese king are noted by D.G.E. Hall. (6:433). Enforced Manipuri settlement on a massive scale in Burma is traced from the primary devastation -- '*Khul-Tak-Ahanba*' -- of Manipur during the period 1755-1758.

The second wave of Manipuri settlement in Burma took place during the period from 1764 to the second Burmese devastation of Manipur in 1768. Hsinbyusin had succeeded Alaungpaya. He repeatedly invaded Manipur during his reign (1763-1776). Anglo-Manipuri Defence and Commercial treaty had been signed between Manipur representative and Mr. Verelst—Chittagong chief of the East India Company on the 14th September, 1762. It was the first treaty of its kind entered into by the British power with any country worth substance in that period in the continent. An additional Anglo-Manipuri Agreement—protocol of the 1762 treaty had also been signed on the 11th September, 1763; but British forces led by Mr. Verelst who was commissioned to assist a friendly power—Manipur could not reach Manipur because of the insurmountable logistical disadvantages. The disadvantage weakened Manipur and irreversibly enhanced the advantage of Burmese aggression to a high degree.

Bhagyachandra also known as Chingthangkomba or, Jaisingh who ruled alternately with his brother Gourshyam till he ascended the throne in 1764, fought relentlessly with the Burmese invaders till 1782 and had succeeded to substantially contain Burmese intrasigence for another seventeen years. Subsequently after the primary devastation in 1755-1758, sponsored by the Burmese invaders under the leadership of Alaungpaya, Manipur suffered from three closely knit devastations in 1764, 1769 and 1772 in quick succession as a result of Hsinbyusin's invasions in the already devastated Manipur. Royal chronicle—*Cheitharol Kumbaba*—records these consecutive Burmese devastations of Manipur.

The chronicle records: "In the month of *Wakching* 1764 (*Shak* 1686), the general Ibungo Shija Haricharan left for fighting against the Burmese. They made a retreat being unable to defend the realm after fighting at Tamu with the Burmese. Naharup Hajari, Kshetri Cheitanaya, two of them had been killed. On Friday, the 28th day of *Phuiren*, the maharajah

left for the war against the invaders. The country had been devastated. The king rushed to Cachar and reached Assam" (13:124).

Manipur did not succeed in repulsing the Burmese invasion in 1769. The British forces failed to reach Manipur in 1763 and to assist Manipur in repulsing the Burmese, inspite of the Anglo-Manipuri mutual defence treaty, 1762 and the protocol, 1763. In similar vein, 80,000 Assamese soldiers who reached the Manipur borders in order to support Manipur king could not succeed to reach Manipur due to logistical failures; and the Burmese invaders had succeeded in grievously injuring the festering wound of a devastated Manipur. History favoured the Burmese.

During the crisis period, Moirang chief—the maternal uncle of maharajah Bhagyachandra—Khelleinungnang Telheiba—sponsored internal insurrection within Manipur and had invited the Burmese to raze Manipur to the ground. He had offered his daughter Sahamju Leima to the Burmese king (25:135) and arranged the Burmese warriors to take two princes—sons of maharajah Bhagyachandra—Labyanachandra and Madhuchandra into captivity. The '*Lat Kata Ran*' (war in the midst of cutting the creepers), which was the popular name for the Assamese expedition to Manipur against the Burmese invasion did not materialise. In 1768, Manipuri soldiers had killed Moirang chief Khelleinungnang Telheiba on his return journey after the betrayal of his motherland.

The royal chronicle *Cheitharol Kumbaba* has recorded: "The Assam king had presented six elephants to the king. Maharajah had shifted his capital to Chajing. Sinaiba Ghanashyam Moirengjam, Khagindra had accompanied the Burmese; the country had been devastated. King Chingthangkomba had taken refuge in Cachar. It took twenty days." (13:125). *Ningthourol Lanbuba* recorded the courage, skill and bravery of Bhagyachandra in retaliating against the invasion (37:25). The Kaungton treaty, signed in between Hsinbyusin and the retreating Chinese war leaders in 1769 on the failure of the Chinese to take over Burmese Kaungton stockade, had emboldened Hsinbyusin's soldiers to devastate Manipur. D.G.E. Hall writes "To appease it (Hsinbyusin's wrath at the return of Chinese from Burma) they led off their forces to attack Manipur. There they won a decisive victory which caused the raja to flee to Assam. Then having placed a Burmese nominee on the throne, they deported thousands more Manipuris to Burma." (6:436).

Francis Hamilton wrote in 1807 about the massive deportation of Manipuris to Burma in 1768, "Manipur is only the name of capital (*sic.* since 18th century only): the country and the people subject to the Raja of Manipur are by themselves called Moitay (Meetei). The Manipur priest above mentioned said, that the Brahmas or Burmas invaded his native country about the year 1768, and for eight years remained there, committing every kind of devastation. The country previously had contained a very great number of horses and other cattle, not above one in a hundred of which was left behind. He thinks that the Burmas carried

away or destroyed 3,00,000 persons of different ages and sexes; and indeed it was alleged, when I was at Ava, that 100,000 captives remained near that city." (9:81).

Historians of Manipur endorse the occurrence of second devastation of Manipur (10:270), deportation of Manipuris in large numbers (10:272) and their deportation concept to Ava (10:274). A historian does not agree with the Manipuri deportation in 1758, let alone the massive deportation in 1769 (22:177). The overwhelming literary sources had clearly recorded the massive Manipuri deportation to Burma in the 1758 devastation and the 1769 devastation as well.

After a series of devastations, the fourth one in chronological order which closely followed on the heels of the first three devastating events, before the death of Hsinbyusin in 1776, took place in 1772. The *Cheitharol Kumbaba* has recorded the Burmese destruction in 1772 as follows: "On Monday the 25th day of *Wakching*, the maharajah left for fighting against the Burmese. Saturday is the first day of *Phairen* month. On Sunday, the second day of the month, the country had undergone destruction. The maharajah left for refuge in Cachar. The Burmese had stayed for five months." (13:127).

The Manipuri settlements during the four devastations in 1755-58, 1764, 1769 and 1772 in the Burmese soil had been massive, enforced; and they were a painful outcome of Burmese invasions in Manipur. A considerable chunk of the Manipuri settlers had been put into the service of the Burmese king in a number of sectors; and it was possible that several thousands of them might have been Burmanised in the totality. This proposition is born by the fact that the present Manipuri population in Burma, as found in Burmese official census records, is merely a small fragment of the Manipuri population, that would have been recorded in the normal population growth rate but for the Burmanisation of the Manipuri captives in the first a few stages. About three lakh Manipuris had been totally Burmanised.

During the Burmese invasion in and occupation of Manipur in 1819-1825, Manipur had been razed to the ground; thousands of Manipuris had been tortured, executed, molested and maimed and several thousands had also been dragged in herds as prisoners of war to Burma. The devastation, which was the fifth in the chronological sequence of devastation, left an indelible mark in the Manipuri psyche for generations. The deep scar prevails even today.

### III

#### MANIPURI EXODUS AFTER SEVEN-YEAR-DEVASTATION : 1819-1825

The seven-year-devastation, committed by the Burmese invaders during the period 1819-1825 in the soil of Manipur is known as '*Chahi Taret Khuntakpa*' in the history of Manipur. Several thousands of Manipuris

had been maraudered by the Burmese invaders during the four successive devastations, as mentioned above and several thousands had also been deported to Burma. A large chunk of the Manipuri expatriates had been put into the service of the Burmese king and nation. At the time of the fifth and so far, the largest devastation in 1819, the Manipuri population was 55,000 and the population had been reduced to 10,000 at the end of the seven-year-Burmese devastation (28:19). The surviving adult population in 1826 was 3,000 (12:72). The Burmese government refused to repatriate tens of thousands of Manipuris, they had taken away even after the enforcement of the Yandaboo treaty in February, 1826.

Manipuri settlement in Burma had been massive and involuntary. In this context, the seven-year-devastation remains the most significant event in the mind and legacy of Manipuri nationhood. The events are unfolded in this small and cursory chapter. Manipuris, who might have lost their own small legitimate place in human history, find their very existence against all odds and ordeals as an enigma, considering the smallness of their population and the successive devastations, one of which could have easily wiped out any national entity and existence for good. Nations, which lacked the resilience to boldly withstand the hostile onslaughts of history had been long forgotten and buried into oblivion. Manipuris defied the rule and chose to withstand the hegemony and onslaughts.

On the fateful 2nd day of *Wakching* in 1819, the Burmese soldiers of king Bagyidaw invaded Manipur. Manipur king Marjit fought the invaders—his own one-time ally from the 5th day of *Wakching*, and as the Manipuri army had been defeated, the Burmese came to hold the sway over Manipur on the 12th day of *Wakching* in 1819 (13:216).

Seven thousand Manipuri soldiers, who resisted the invasion had been outnumbered by the 30,000 strong Burmese soldiers, who swarmed at the Manipur capital Imphal (18:84). The king took refuge in Cachar and the invaders thrust upon a reign of terror in the country. Burmese general Pakhan Wun and Kanewoon invited a Manipuri prince Joysingh to descend from the hideouts in the hills along with the Manipuris under his influence. The ambitious prince, who had fallen into Burmese trappings along with thirty thousand Manipuris had been taken as prisoners of war to Burma (13:216). Royal chronicle *Cheitharol Kumbaba* records the figure of the prisoners as three 'Lakha'; by usage, one lakha could have been ten thousand. The Manipuris had been tortured, dragged by the cane ropes, which passed through the ears and palms. Many of the prisoners of war had also been roped round the neck and dragged from Manipur to Burma. The event took place on Tuesday, the 10th day of *Phairen*, 1820 (22:231). The royal chronicle records the year as 1819, the day remaining the same. (Manipuri calculation is a bit different).

The Burmese military conduct of war had been found brutal and dehumanizing. The Burmese king had to torture, and exterminate in the most brutal way, even the Burmese soldiers, who did no brutally torture

and exterminate the enemy population under their occupation. At one time, the king ordered that his most faithful general be roasted alive, but the general escaped the punishment.

During the seven-year-devastation, the disabled, handicapped, old-aged persons, children, women, the sick and the injured had been driven into houses with closed doors, by keeping burning red-peppers inside, till they succumbed to death. Girls had been molested before the eyes of their parents and married women, before their husbands. Houses, royal palace-enclosures had been razed to the ground, the crops had been totally destroyed. W. Ibohah describes the ghastly scene: "... for which the sucking mothers killed their own babies by smashing on stone slabs lest their cry should give attention to the marauders roaming in search of women and be caught and humiliated, in the hands of the Burmese occupation forces" (28:326). Human life and rights had been trampled and denigrated by the occupation forces hailing from outside Manipur till the Manipuri militants, guerrillas and freedom-fighters, who had been feared as *Dakus* (terrorists) by the occupation forces, retaliated in their own unconventional tactics against the military occupation of their motherland, 53 days after the Burmese occupation of Manipur. No more respectable name than *Daku* had been given to Manipuri patriots by the Burmese and their puppets among Manipuris.

In Assam also, the Burmese carnage spread like wildfire. *Tungkhungiya Buranji* had recorded: "Virgins were deflowered before their parents and wives before their husbands; infants served as throwsticks to drop down mangoes from trees; all property and belongings had to be surrendered unconditionally and spontaneously on pain of mutilation or death;" (26:207). The carnage had engulfed the Meetei population and properties, and left a nearly clean slate to the future.

In retrospect, the Manipuri-Burmese relation had been found to be belligerent for nearly five centuries and a half, since the 13th century. Both the countries had evolved their own versions of history. Manipuri victory over Burma had important place in Manipur history and in their turn, even Aung San Suu Kyi can not help but consider Manipur and Assam as vassal states of Burma (3:52) even to-day, just because the Burmese devastated Manipur and Assam for some years in the early 19th century.

These versions of history are not exceptions through out the world. Bertrand Russel writes in his book, *Principles of Social Reconstruction*: "History, in every country, is so taught as to magnify that country: children learn to believe that their own country has always been right and almost always victorious, that it has produced almost all the great man, and that it is in all respects superior to all other countries." (p. 104). He did not fail to leave a word of caution too: "The defenceless children are taught by distortions and suppressions and suggestions. The false ideas as to the history of the world which are taught in the various countries are of a kind which encourages strife and serves to keep alive a

bigoted nationalism" (p. 105). Neither Manipur nor Burma had remained exceptions; however, the Burmese had gone a step further when their kings from Alaungpaya and his descendants upto Bagyidaw—had assumed the British to be effeminate traders and Burmese king would march upto England to spread her empire. These false assumptions had been substantiated by several British war-time records, which had been published subsequently as books. With this perception in view, we present the historical facts.

In the 13th century, the Kabos (Burmese-Shans) invaded Khuman principality; king Khumomba of *Meitribak* (Manipur), assisted by the Moirang principality, repulsed them. By an agreement reached by the Pong king (Shan of Burma) and king Kiyamba of *Meitribak* (Manipur) in 1475, a large chunk of Kabo valley had been annexed to Manipur. The Manipur-Burma boundary had been settled by including the Kabo valley within the border of Manipur. Manipur king Khagemba had defeated the Khamarans (the Burmese as they were known at that time) in 1648. Manipur king Khunjaoba had defeated the Samjok king in 1653 and 1659 and also the chief of Kabo valley in 1657 (22:123). The Burmese intention to invade Manipur had been pre-empted by Manipuri intrusion into Burma in 1693 during the reign of Manipur king Paikhomba. His life and account had been presented by Ningombam Manijao (20:—): Paikhomba had collected tributes from the Kabo valley. Manipur had a special envoy—'Awapurel', who handled Burmese affairs and diplomacy.

Manipur's attempts to establish the peace process with the Burmese by maintaining matrimonial alliance with the Burmese ruling house could not succeed; it remained a zero-sum game. Manipur king Charairongba had offered his daughter Chakpa Makhao Ngambi in marriage to the Burmese king; but after some time, she had been ill-treated. Before his death on the 7th day of *Ingen* in 1709, he had entrusted with his son Pamheiba to take revenge on the Burmese royal house (22:141).

*Cheitharol Kumbaba* had recorded the Manipuri-Burmese wars like any other routine events, without furnishing the military details and Manipur's victory over the Burmese. Another equally authoritative chronicle—*Ningthourol Lambuba*, however, eulogised the extraordinary military successes that Pamheiba (Garibnawaz) had attained successively over his Burmese counterpart. Pamheiba destroyed Burmese military installations (37:350), collected 1,000 guns after defeating Samsok king (37:358), defeated the Burmese once again (37:360) and devastated the Burmese by reaching upto the Irawaddy river (37:373). D.G.E. Hall describes the defeat of the Burmese by Garibnawaz in details (6:408). He writes that the "Burmese resistance to this new threat was seriously hampered by the Manipuri raids, which continued until 1749".

By drawing exclusively from the Burmese historical records, among other primary sources, E.W. Dun described as to how Garibnawaz, with as many a thirty thousand Manipuri army, defeated the Burmese army in

as many as seven wars including the wars in 1725, 1735, 1738, 1739 and 1749 (7:38). Manipur power eclipsed the Burmese at a time when Garibnawaz reached the zenith. With his abdication from the throne in 1749 and five-year instability, which followed till 1754 during the reign of his sons Ajitsai and Bharatsai, Manipur power had slid down to abyss. *Shamsokngamba puya* (4:16) describes the personal courage and military skills of Garibnawaz. His words in the battlefield could reverse the adverse battlefield-situations. An excerpt from the above *puya*:

*Tayam Nakhoibu Khoyam Karigee Nantai Leirakpano.*

*Lairel Eibu Leiye. Lairel eepa Meitengu Tubi*

*Charairongba Kharam Tusuk Ngamba Mapari Panba*

*Hathmongbu kharophaba Keiren Nausongbada*

*Songlophaba eibu leiye. Tayam Nakhoibu Khoiram*

*Namai Leigano.* (Why would you soldiers turn your face from the battlefield? I am here with you. Do not turn back your face from the battle).

Decline of Manipur power and coincidental rise of Burma under Alaungpaya, whose dynasty would last a century and a half, compounded with the shifting balance-of-powers between the British imperialists and British India on the one hand and the European imperialists on the other hand had been instrumental in ascertaining the political status of South Asian states including Manipur, Burma and British India. The political process, involved in the power-equations had brought about the concomitant demographic changes, which affected Manipur considerably. The internal political instability of Manipur since 1749 until 1754 facilitated Alaungpaya's convenient defeat of Manipur. The Burmese king had used fire arms on a large scale, — a gift from Europeans in Burma, in his invasion of Manipur. Victory, therefore, came easily to him.

The successful liberation of Manipur from the clutches of the Burmese by Bhagyachandra after several decades of struggle had been a landmark in medieval Manipur history; however, the end of his regime did not hold on the cohesiveness of the power-elite in Manipur any more. From the year 1799 on the death of king Bhagyachandra, fratricidal wars occurred in the Manipur ruling house (7:41), which had been weakened so much so that it could not withstand any feeble onslaught from across the border.

Four kings — the collateral princes — Labnyachandra, Modhuchandra, Chourajit and Marjit had reigned from 1799 until 1819 — the year in which the Burmese invaded Manipur. During these twenty years of instability and divisiveness, Labnyachandra had been killed by Modhuchandra, who in his turn had also been done to death by his brother: Chourajit had revolted against his brother and ascended the throne and his brother Marjit assisted by the Burmese army of Bowdapaya, dethroned him in order to ascend the throne in 1814. Marjit's six-year rule witnessed relative economic growth and deceptive peace. Manipur as a whole did not turn

up to withstand the Burmese aggressive intentions and aggression in 1819, because of the post-Bhagyachandra instability, divisiveness, infights and the unscrupulous ambitions of the Meitei princes, who had been addicted to throne. The failure of primogeniture rule in succession could also be the primary cause.

The Burmese invasion of Manipur in 1819 may be attributed to several reasons – both official and private. Most of the texts on the subject happily turn to the formal statement of the Burmese king Bagyidaw, who succeeded king Bowdapaya in 1819. Marjit Singh, king of Manipur became the king of the realm because of Burmese help and military support. He was invited to attend the coronation ceremony of Bagyidaw in 1819 as a vassal king. But by distrusting their (Burmese) intention, Marjit declined to honour the words for his appearance at the installation of the king and the Burmese immediately invaded Manipur (7:42). Marjit's refusal to attend the ceremony remaining the apparent and official reason of Burmese invasion, the other effective, accumulative and mutually supportive causes induced the unscrupulous decision-making of the Burmese king.

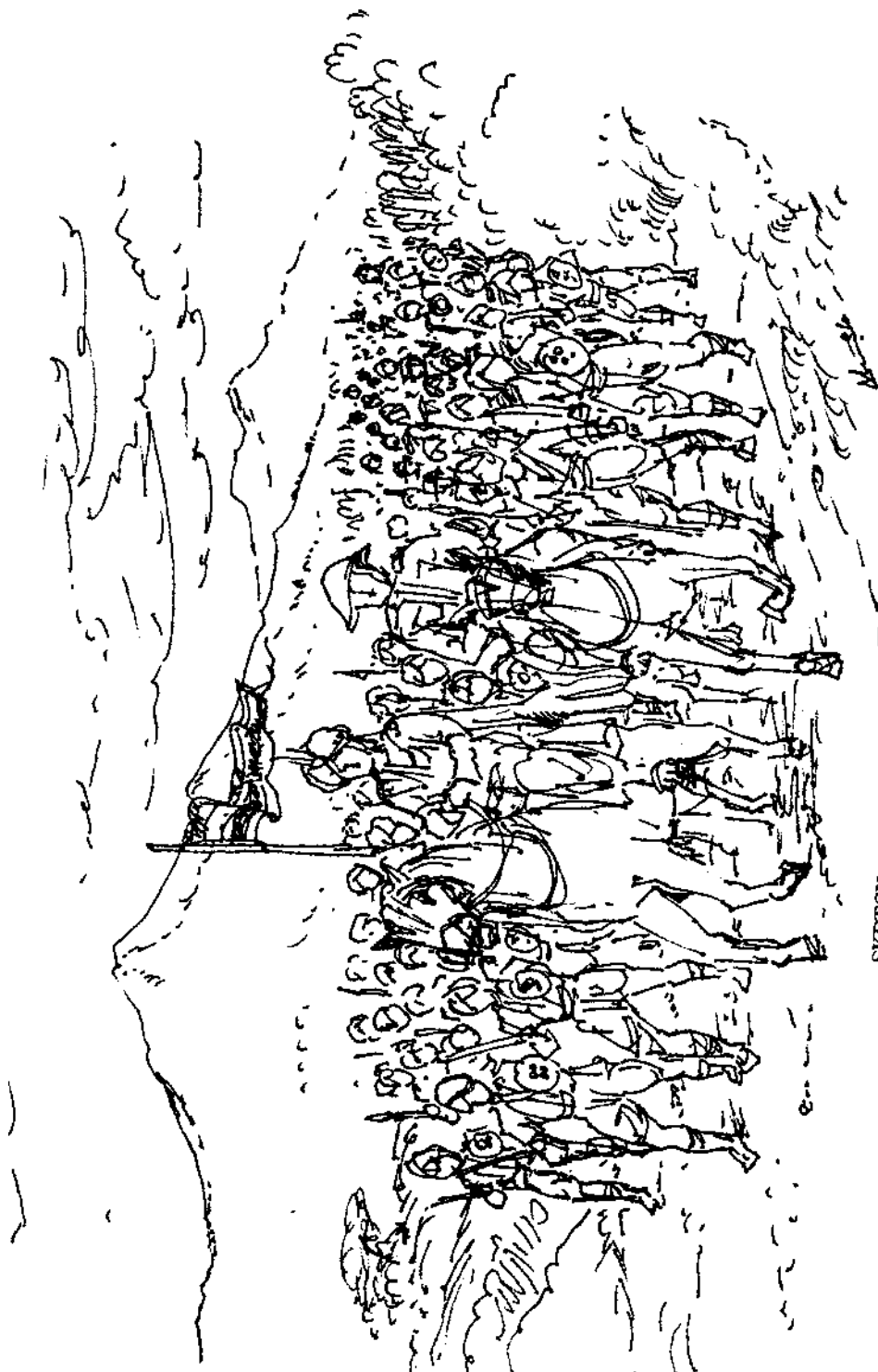
Firstly, the Burmese king had suffered from a feeling of insecurity and jealousy. Bagyidaw heard of the news of Marjit's construction of a gilded palace, gilded temple and two luxurious ponds with gilded paraphernalia. Economic reasons had also further re-inforced his state of economic insecurity and jealousy. The indolent, dark and short-statured Burmese king had to shift the capital from Amarapura to Ava by ultimately exhausting the state exchequer and the treasure, accumulated by his ancestors from war booty, among others. These economic reasons would however, be revealed later at the time of their inability to pay war compensation to the British as per the Yandaboo treaty, 1826 and the state of Burmese economy, as reflected in the Anglo-Burmese Commerce treaty, 1826.

Secondly, the Burmese ethos of *Letza-kya* (taking of revenge) comparable to the primitive blood-feud, coupled with the bitter memory left to their arrogance by the victory of Manipur king Garibnawaz on seven major engagements triggered off like a sleeping monster, only to be awakened by Marjit's refusal to honour Burmese king's invitation. Added to this Manipuri-fixation, was the psychotic behaviour of Burmese king Bagyidaw, who ordered the immediate execution of the architect of his throne in the event of a thunderbolt damaging his palace and the throne. Only after the execution of the innocent architect, Bagyidaw's disturbed mind partially cooled down. The feeling of insecurity had been externally re-inforced by the repeated failure of the Burmese in their wars against Thailand (known as Siam by that time). So, the fire within the Burmese court and king had to burst out towards the west of Burma viz., Assam, Manipur, Cachar and Bengal – the line of least resistance.

Thirdly, W. Ibohal Singh has identified one of the reasons in the palace intrigues, as found within the harem of Burmese king (28:323).



SKETCH - 3 : Seven-year-devastation, 1819-1826



SKETCH - 4 : Seven-year-devastation, 1819-1826

The Burmese prime minister had illicit affair with the queen. Bagyidaw's younger brother wanted the assistance of Marjit in that delicate affair and Marjit did not come to render his timely service in that situation. The queen alleged that Bagyidaw was mad and the mad man immediately despatched his army to invade Manipur.

Fourthly, rise of Alaungapaya dynasty and general Mahabandula's commendable military achievements had not only underestimated the British military presence and fire-power at a time, when the British decided not to interfere in Manipur, Assam and the region in the neighbourhood, but also over-estimated the capability of the undisciplined Burmese forces and their military resources. Their imaginative occupation-plan first included Bengal and then, England. The Burmese military perception and expectation was lifted so high that there was little left with their military imaginations.

A.C. Banerjee notes, "The King was let to believe that his troops would easily march to England. The chains in which the Governor-General (of British) was to be brought to the king were coated with gold" (1:225). The wild imaginations of ruthless rulers had given history a bad name.

These real, apparent and also misconceived reasons led the Burmese to invade Manipur and devastate the entire country for seven years by razing it to the ground. Official account indicates that the entire valley was covered with 'dense grass jungle and extensive swamps' at the time of expulsion of the Burmese by Manipur levy (1:262). Manipuri hero-prince Herachandra and his 800 guerillas were Manipur's formidable and lethal answer to the Burmese occupation army, who reigned supreme for seven years in a devastated country — Manipur.

#### IV

#### HERACHANDRA AND HIS EIGHT HUNDRED GUERRILLAS

*How has this country been ravaged? — Herachandra*

*Allright, we fight on. — Yumjaotaba*

The above dialogue between the great hero Herachandra and his cousin Yumjaotaba, as clearly mentioned in the royal chronicle—*Cheitharol Kumbaba*—briefly enunciates the purpose of Manipuri resistance to the overwhelming Burmese occupation army. No leader other than Herachandra had rendered any commendable service to Manipur at the time, when the independent country needed the last straw for national survival and therefore, justifiably, his name remains at the top of freedom fighters in that catastrophe and in the hall of fame of the patriots.

The Burmese occupation army and their puppet government ignominiously called the Manipuri freedom fighters as terrorists, militants (*Dakus*) and the leader of the militia as gang-leader (*Daku Ningthou* meaning Bandit king). Somehow, the Burmese terminology that sneaked into Manipuri vocabulary over-stayed and he was known as *Daku-Ningthou* even in *Cheitharol Kumbaba*. Paradoxically, *Daku-Ningthou* had

been accepted as a highly honoured title in a war-torn country like Manipur. On the 53rd day of Burmese invasion in Manipur, Herachandra made his offensive against the occupation army.

Herachandra, the son of maharajah Labanyachandra, who won the clandestine support of the mass and admiration—E.W. Dun wrote, cut off many of small detachments of the occupation army (7:43). His military feats in defeating a Burmese force is also recorded by A.C. Bannerjee (1:215). The royal chronicle—*Cheitharol Kumbaba*—has recorded his military success under the heading—the king (*Meidingu*) Herachandra (13:216). Herachandra, supported by his cousin, Yumjaotaba (Pitambar Singh) had defeated a large Burmese detachment (12:61).

Manipuri historians R.K. Jhaljit, Gangmumei Kabui and Sarangthem Boramani *et. al.* among others, had written about the courage and achievements of the hero, who accomplished the fire-fighting, patriotic task in the thick of the Burmese military occupation. The role of the Manipuri guerrillas, who the Burmese occupation army feared most as terrorists and militants, in Manipur history had no contender in the field. The low profile, attributed to Herachandra and national liberation guerrillas, had, however, been refurbished in appropriate sense and proportion by Pandit Moirangthem Chandrasing, who wrote the historical novel—'*Daku Ningthou*' in 1951.

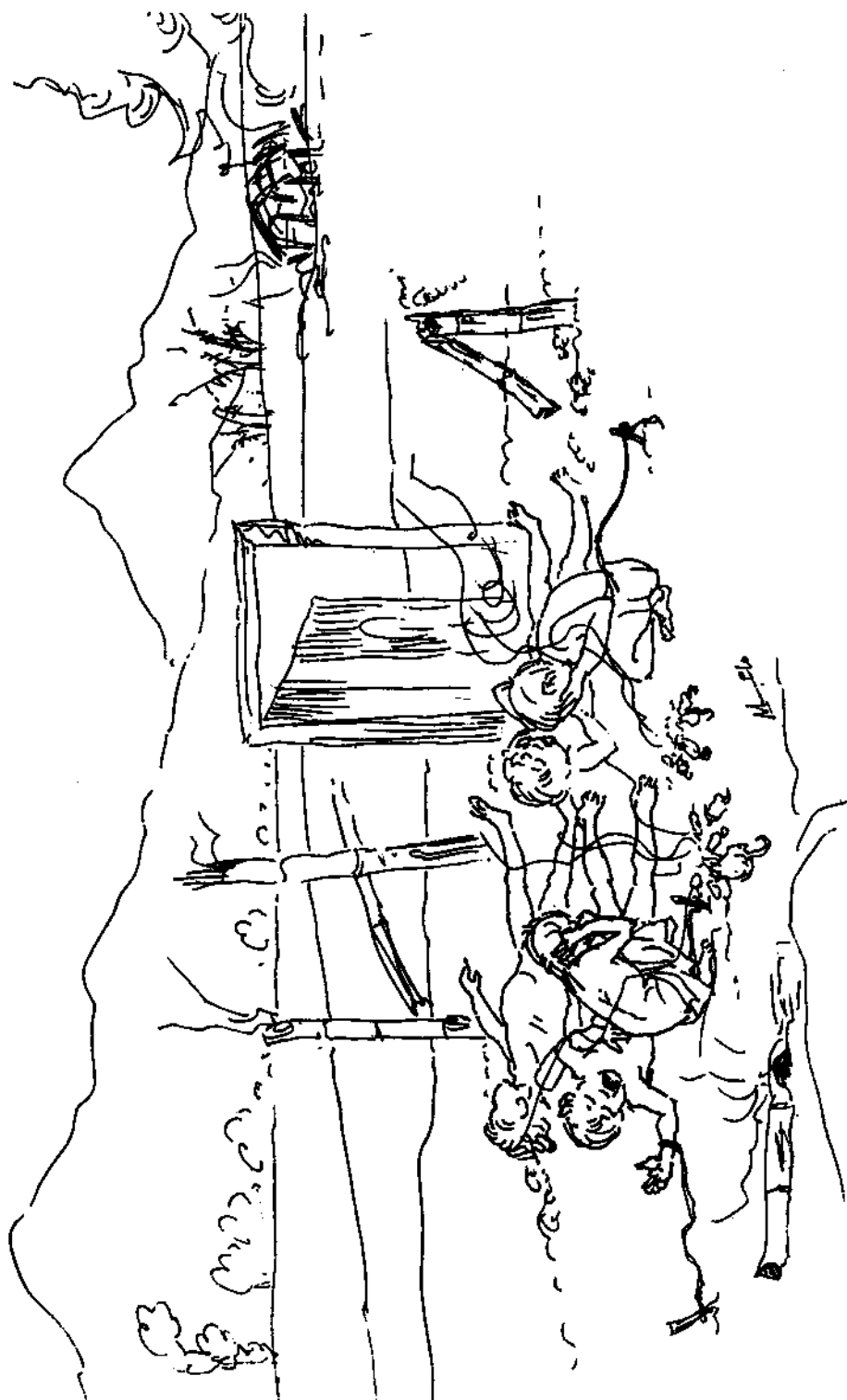
Herachandra, who ingeniously evaded himself from the endless liquidation of the princes by the ruling prince, by hiding among the Kuki tribes in the hills, had descended from Manipur hills and installed the guerrilla garrison by recruiting the desperate Manipuris, scattered elsewhere in the thick of the Burmese invaders, on Friday, the 3rd day of *Sajibu* (Manipuri month) in 1819 (13:216). *Cheitharol Kumbaba* has recorded his secret wars. More details have been enriched by Pandit Chandrasing. The puppet Manipur administration, installed by the Burmese occupation army had known him as terrorist (*Daku*) for terrorising the Burmese and their handpicked puppet Manipuri regime. He was considered to be a great hero to the Manipuris.

The great Manipuri hero lacked the military resources to combat with the conventional army of the enemy in regular warfare. The guerrillas who hide themselves in the tree tops routinely killed the small groups of Burmese detachments and buried their dead bodies. The terrorised Burmese detachments had to move always looking at every tree-top (25:21). '*Meitei Leima Kanba Lup*' (Herachandra's guerrilla garrison), later on made direct strike on Burmese army in semi-conventional military engagements in several places of Manipur (*see* Introduction to *Daku-Ningthou*).

The first ambush was organised at Phubala, at Thinungkei and also at Ngangkha Lawai (16:22). On the 6th day of *Kalen*, 1820, the guerrillas pursued the Burmese soldiers, who later on ceased any movement. On the 9th day of *Kalen*, 1820, Herachandra, Angom Subunathmani, Akoijam



SKETCH - 5 : Seven-year-devastation, 1819-1826



SKETCH - 6 : Seven-year-devastation, 1819-1826

Khampa, Elangba Amu, Meiyengpa Shyam, and Moirangthem Labangga had attacked on 500 Burmese soldiers, who came to collect paddy from Moirang—27 miles distant from Imphal and killed 200 of them. Yumjaotaba, the son of maharajah Modhuchandra, who came from Cachar offered 2 horses, 2 swords and 3 guns to Herachandra, who had already in his possession 50 horses, 12 guns and 800 guerrillas.

The two princes conspired to trap the Burmese general Kanewoon, who was left in Manipur after another general Pakhanwoon left for Burma. Yumjaotaba collected paddy for the Burmese soldiers from Sekmai and temporarily enjoyed the confidence of his enemy who offered him 40 horses, 20 guns and two swords gilded at the hilt, purportedly for defeating Herachandra. Both the princes had executed 200 Burmese soldiers at Heiyen. The guerrillas took positions from Uchiwa Khundon to Heiyel towards the Loktak lake. They had killed the Burmese soldiers at Chaobok also.

On the 4th day of *Ingel*, 1820, Herachandra and his guerrillas had killed nearly all the Burmese soldiers, who had been camping at Kakching in the southern Manipur near Burma border. The guerrilla garrison was highly mobile and logistically superior to the otherwise arrogant occupation army. They had destroyed the Burmese camp at Khomidok in the northern side, immediately after the destruction of Burmese encampment at Thoubal in southern Manipur. The guerrillas had reorganised themselves at Moirangkhom in Imphal area.

Herachandra prepared a stockade at Singjamei on Monday, the 7th day of *Ingel*, 1820. He was looking for the Burmese movement by hiding near Chinga Pishum hillocks. On Wednesday, he had engaged with the troop led by Amupalapa. Guerrillas, led by Moirang Labangga had reconnaissance near the route of the Burmese troops. Labangga's troop intercepted the enemy from the front side and Herachandra's troop blocked the enemy from the rear. Moirangthempa Labangga had killed Burmese field-commander Amupalapa. Some of the enemy soldiers had also been captured.

Ten thousand additional Burmese soldiers, led by Burmese general Pakhanwoon and Kanenwoon reached Kakching on Tuesday, the 16th day of *Mera*, 1820. Herachandra and his soldiers resisted the overwhelming Burmese re-enforcement at Chinga hillock in Thoubal on Friday, the 20th day of *Mera*, 1820. The Manipuri heroes with their ill-equipped, untrained guerrilla troops could notwithstanding the disproportionately large Burmese army, and left for Cachar. On Sunday, the 9th day of *Phairen*, 1820, the two Burmese generals had carried away three lakha (*sic.* thirty thousand) Meeteis as prisoners of war to Burma. *Cheitharol Kumbaba* has recorded the event (13:218). The royal chronicle has not recorded the subsequent guerrilla offensives, which ensued the black day in the history of Manipur.

Pandit Moirangthem Chandrasing (16:77) wrote that Manipuri guerrillas made offensive wars on the Burmese soldiers at Tengnoupal

hills on their way back home. Herachandra's guerrillas had ambushed the enemy at Maklang and killed many of them. In another theatre, the patriotic Manipuri guerrillas had assisted the Cachar soldiers in killing 4,000 Burmese soldiers in Cachar (16:79). Burmese general Atongwoon had fled for his life from Cachar. Herachandra's troop had intercepted the fleeing Burmese in Manipur border and finished off several of the enemy formations. The British officials had to admire his achievements.

There are two versions about Herachandra's becoming the Manipur king for a brief while. A version has recorded him as a king and another version has contradicted by stating that he never intended to become king. His elder brother Yumjaotaba had been the king for sometime till Gambhir Singh forcibly took over the throne in 1821. His two wives Yaikhom Chanu and Usham Chanu had one son each, but his sons left no descendant. It is believed that the great patriot and hero, prince Herachandra might have breathed his last in the first half of May, 1821, and might have been cremated in an unknown grave (16 : 7). Gazetteer of Burma (1880) however, records Herachandra's ambushes against the Burmese in 1822 (vol. I. p. 327).

## V

### GAMBHIR SINGH & MANIPUR LEVY LIBERATION OF MANIPUR

Gambhir Singh, assisted by his brother Nara Singh, who led the dare devil Manipur levy constituted by 500 Manipuri soldiers, had been instrumental in the liberation of Manipur from the Burmese military occupation for seven years since their invasion in 1819. Out of five princes of Manipur, who took refuge in Cachar viz., Chourajit, Marjit, Gambhir Singh, Nar Singh and Bishwanath also known as Khongjai Ngamba, only the first three had inveterate political ambitions; and of the first three, Gambhir Singh was the only capable leader who had foresight, diplomatic and military clout and indomitable liberation-theology. As much as prince Herachandra was Manipur's answer to Burmese occupation and devastation till 1821, so was Gambhir Singh, Manipur's timely answer to Burmese occupation of Manipur till its liberation in 1825. Manipuris invariably give answers to history, when question of survival has been raised to them. It is equally true to other deep-rooted nations as well.

Manipur chronicle—*Cheitharol Kumbaba* had recorded the achievements of Chingien Nongdren Khomba, popularly known as Gambhir Singh. The other chronicle—*Ninthourol Lambuba*—does not specifically indicate the details of the Burmese occupation period in 1819-1825. British Secret Proceedings (28th November, No. 6) took note of Gambhir Singh as the ablest of the Manipurian princes', who was 'unwilling to enter into negotiations with the Company at the time of Burmese invasion' (23:52).

He had displayed 'a degree of gallantry, energy and zeal that evoked strong commendation from the British General in command', wrote R.M.

Lahiri (23:14). Pemberton, who assisted the military leader Gambhir Singh in the repulsion of the Burmese occupation forces wrote that the military success that Gambhir Singh won over the Burmese was due to his' energy, perseverance, and skill ' (22:243). *Tunklunggiya Buranji* failed to mention Gambhir Singh. British captain Grant had his report about Gambhir Singh: "The activity, judgement and skill, he (*sic.* Gambhir) has displayed on this occasion, has proved the justice of the opinion previously entertained of his merits" (12:68). The British Supreme Council shared the same opinion.

*Ninthourol Lambuba*, in as many as one hundred fourteen pages, had recorded Gambhir Singh's military feats and eulogised his victory over the Burmese and trouble-shooters from Manipur hills inside his territory. His killing of Burmese military commanders – Pakhep, Kanewoon, Lekya Soitongba and Atong Woon had also been recorded (11:105). His military and diplomatic moves and role in shaping the power-equations will be discussed later. His liberation of Manipur from the Burmese occupation had also been re-inforced by his contribution in the first Anglo-Burmese war. R.M. Lahiri puts his place in this way: "Gambhir Singh proved a most valuable ally in the Anglo-Burmese war. Not only did he help the British government in expelling the Burmese from Cachar but he was mainly instrumental in driving out the Burmese from Manipur. He advanced as far as the Ningthee (Chindwin) river and even drove the Burmese out from the Kubo valley, which originally belonged to Manipur and which later on became a bone of contention between Manipur and Burma" (23:53). Kubo valley issue has been shelved since 1949 (21A:23), following the annexation of independent Manipur state by dominion of India on 15th October, 1949. Manipur's arch rival – Burma remained independent of the British and the Indian dominion unlike Manipur.

The Burmese overran Manipur and Assam in 1823. Gambhir Singh became king in Manipur in 1821 for a brief while and left for Cachar, which was a spring board for liberation of Manipur and which incidentally happened to be the strategic target of the Burmese for their inroads to the British territory of Bengal. Manipur princes had their writ run into the strategic area of Cachar, which had a weak king Govindachandra. The British had, therefore, to play Manipur card for strategic reasons. In 1821, Manipur had suffered from mass epidemic and unimaginably high level of inflation. A mound of paddy (*Shangbai*) would cost 12,000 *Shel Makhai* (about Rs. 400, in 1821 or Rs. 10,000 in 1999 value). Four puppet kings appointed by the Burmese central administration viz, Joy Singh, Jadu Singh, Raghava Singh and Bhadra Singh acted as Manipur rulers till the Inga month in 1825 (13:223). The invaders did not rule the country directly.

Manipuri prince Chourajit ruled at Sonaimukh in Cachar as king, Marjit Singh, in Hailakandi of Cachar and Gambhir Singh in the rest of Cachar. Biswanath Singh and Nara Singh did not have any share in ruling Cachar nor did they harbour any political ambition. Govindachandra, ruler of Cachar had a difficult time till he was given

protection by the British, however, he was killed four years after the conclusion of the First Anglo-Burmese war, on the order of Gambhir Singh. Whereas prince Nara Singh had acted as the military *alter ego* of Gambhir Singh, Bishwanath Singh *alias* Khongjai Ngamba had the least role in the military designs and operations.

The British had to contend with Mahabandula—one of the greatest generals Burma had ever witnessed. His terrific mobility, battle sense and unique art in making stockades had been acknowledged in the British war records. Snodgrass wrote about the great Burmese general, "The character of Maha-Bandoola seems to have been a strange mixture of cruelty and generosity, talent with want of judgement, and a strong regard to personal safety, combined with great courage and resolution, which never failed him till death" (1: 486 fn). Gambhir Singh and Nara Singh had indomitable personal courage and they personally made deep penetrations in the fortified positions of the enemy. The British had witnessed his operation-style in the Talain battle in Cachar. When the Burmese invaded Cachar, in 1823, Gambhir Singh repulsed the invaders and had occupied the entire Cachar as his kingdom. Manipuri and British forces combine demolished the 10,000 strong Burmese forces in Cachar (24:63). Burmese soldiers in terms of thousands had been liquidated on three to four occasions. When they made retreat to Manipur, the Manipuris harassed them. R. Brown wrote about the event.

The battle of Talain was fought from 6 to 8 July, 1824. British acknowledged the role played by Gambhir Singh in the battle of Talain (1:253). Both Gambhir Singh and Nara Singh had played their military cards more or less equally in the battle of Talain. At the time, when the British failed to make a dent on the Burmese stockade at Talain, captain Grant pleaded for the physical participation of Gambhir Singh and Nara Singh (14:10). Manipuri record—'Tilain Landa Narasing' (Narasing in Tilain battle), has recorded the destruction of the wooden stockade-structure of the Burmese, deep penetration inside the enemy concentration and hand-to-hand fight by Nara Singh in Tilain (14:13). The physical description of bowing their head to Nara Singh by Pemberton, David Scott and Captain Grant has also been recorded. They were great military commanders—if not genius—destined to play in small theatres and given the right opportunity to play in great wars, they could have proved their legitimate claims in history of the wider canvas. The Brits admitted their craft and depth.

The above mentioned book mentions the boundary of Manipur, as agreed upon by the British officials, "The boundary of Manipur touches upon Sylhet (Srihat) in the west and Dikhu river the Assam to the north. It reaches to the south, the place where the Akamhao settle upto the Lusei villages. We (British and Manipuri) should live harmoniously" (14:14). The garrison, led by prince Nara Singh passed through Baddarpur and Shidheshwor temple, fought the Burmese at the Tilain stockade.

Another garrison, led by Gambhir Singh demolished the Burmese stockade at Tupachuli (25:28). The two princes acted in co-ordination.

The British considered Assam, Manipur, Cachar and Jaintia as strategic domain in the western plank—Arakan, Pegu and Rangoon, the main Burma areas, as strategic operational areas for containing the Burmese military onslaughts. Gambhir Singh figured very high in the British scheme of anti-Burmese alliances. The British had full knowledge that Gambhir Singh happened to be the poorest, but the most capable prince, who had luckily survived with a petty sum of Rs. 50 per month as a soldier in the ranks of Govindachandra's army. Then, he rose to new heights. In November, 1823, British Calcutta Council pleaded for negotiation with the three Manipuri princes (23:47). Gambhir Singh objected to the claims of Chourajit and Marjit Singh. In order to bring Gambhir Singh into active alliance, the British had eased out both Chourajit and Marjit to Nadia and Sylhet by paying a token monthly allowance of Rs. 100. Gambhir Singh had been left free to his own self and military designs bereft of the routine obstructions, given by his two brothers. Chourajit had handed over his sword *Brajasing* to Gambhir Singh in symbolic gesture to defeat the Burmese and to cleanse the sword in Chindwin river, which Gambhir Singh invariably did on February 1, 1826.

In January, 1824, the Burmese from Manipur, Jaintia and Assam made full-scale invasions in Cachar. On the 4th March, 1824, British declared war on Burma. On the 6th March, David Scott and Govindachandra, ruler of Cachar had reached an agreement, by which understanding Cachar came under the protection of the British. The British avoided to provide the measure at the beginning. A similar agreement had also been reached between Jaintia ruler and the British agent. In April, 1824, David Scott and Gambhir Singh reached an agreement for making military offensive against the Burmese for which enterprise, the British would provide military training, arsenals and material support. In the meantime, in the eastern plank, general Campbell took over Rangoon on 11 May, 1824. On 16 October, Campbell had reported that general Maha-Bandula had reached Danubyu. The Burmese general had led the operation with 60,000 soldiers, supported by artillery in December, 1824; he was repulsed, however, by the British.

David Scott-Gambhir Singh agreement had accommodated contingency arrangements. In case of any incidental defeat of the Manipur levy, led by Gambhir Singh at the Burmese hands, he should be allowed to rule in a suitable place either in Cachar or, Sadiya or, in a right place in Assam. On one occasion, British officials favoured Gambhir Singh's annexation of Cachar; but the British did the same instead. The supreme government even considered that the eastern frontier be handed over to Gambhir Singh (23:109). Those proposals, however, did not materialise. The admiration and trust, the top British military hierarchy reposed in the Manipuri prince had not wavered at any stage.

Unlike the big force, placed under the command of British general Shuldham who failed in his mission, Manipur Levy of Gambhir Singh was a small, highly mobile and motivated military machine, which promised victory. R.M. Lahiri wrote about the constitution of Manipur Levy (5:A.II)—“Every assistance was afforded to Gambhir Singh in arms and money to recover the independence of his country. A detachment was raised denominated as the “Manipur Levy” which was financed and officered by the British Government. And to placate Gambhir Singh, it was further proposed that even if he would fail to retain the possession of Manipur, he would receive a provision in land either in Cachar or in Assam for himself and his followers” (23:53). In spite of the British tactical support, Manipur levy was hundred per cent Manipuri garrison, directly placed under the military leadership of Gambhir Singh and supported by prince Nara Singh. The British and the Manipuris mutually helped each other on similar terms on several occasions. The members of Manipur Levy were as follows :

**MANIPUR LEVY OF RAJA GAMBHIR SINGH  
AS ON 30TH JULY, 1824 (MEETEI SOLDIERS)**

<b>Cavalry</b>	Shroop Singh
<b>Sirdars</b>	Nund Singh
1. Rusimon Singh	Joy Singh
2. Doomroo Singh	25. Bandabun Singh
3. Nubin Singh	Luchmun Singh
4. Kerty Singh	Hurry Singh
<b>Troops</b>	Din Singh
Coolindrew Singh	Churkur Paun
Lukun Singh	30. Mugul Singh
Rency Singh	Chunder Money
Tomal Singh	Kerty Singh
5. Lelanhund Sharma	Kissun Chunder
Khaleshur Sharma	Diah Ram
Chandur Singh	35. Gobind Singh
Dhur Singh	Mohun Sing
Kheyrow Surma	Purun Singh
10. Sharney Singh	Kissun Singh
Poorum Singh	Surroop Singh
Shaik Salenah	40. Din Singh
Hem Singh	<b>Infantry</b>
Diah Ram	<b>Subedars</b>
15. Uchual Singh	Joy Singh
Mudun Singh	Umoo Singh
Poolan Singh	Ram Singh
Hurry Singh	Kerty Singh
Beer Singh	5. Joy Singh
20. Toolah Singh	<b>Jamadars</b>
Brija Singh	Partho Singh
Dhun Singh	Sam Ram Singh
Rutun Singh	Loll Roy
5. Burdun Singh	Chaugush Khumbali
Umoo Singh	20. Madhob Singh
Chunder Monay	Shawam Ram
Singh	Poornoo Singh

- Lung Singh  
 Bhowan Singh  
 10. Koomud Singh  
*Havildars*  
 Fallap Singh  
 Mohun Singh  
 Chununjoy Singh  
 Uhung Singh  
 5. Tamfajao Singh  
 Chand Singh  
 Indou Singh  
 Nund Singh  
 Ruskah Singh  
 10. Indour Money Singh  
*Naiks*  
 Braja Nund  
 Melap Nund  
 Neelmune  
 Chunder Singh  
 5. Prain Singh  
 Joy Ram Singh  
 Rusanund Singh  
 Gorn Singh  
 10. Uchoot Singh  
 Luchmun Singh  
 Suroop Singh  
 Murybah Singh  
 Sanjau Singh  
 15. Kumuda Nund  
 Singh  
 Neerunjan Singh  
 Soodigh Nund Singh  
 Buroo Singh  
 30. Gour Singh  
 59. Sampoorun Singh  
 Choubah Singh  
 Lung Singh  
 Hem Singh  
 35. Sham Ram Singh  
 Poorno Singh  
 Balram Singh  
 Ruamuni Singh  
 Romah Singh  
 40. Bagant Singh  
 Chunder Muny Singh  
 Beero Singh  
 Chauba Singh  
 Ghahee Singh  
 45. Pookchro Singh  
 Chauba Singh  
 Poorares Singh  
 Tool Singh  
 Umoo Singh  
 50. Joy Ram Singh  
 Uchaw Singh  
 Kadoo Singh  
 Lallow Singh  
 Nubram Singh  
 Chunder Muny Singh  
 Shaik Rifye  
 25. Shaik Soobul  
*Seepoys*  
 Uchoot Singh  
 Moorooroy Singh  
 Sam Singh  
 Chundar Sani Singh  
 5. Lychichana Singh  
 Tool Singh  
 Bhyjoe Singh  
 Sadhoo Singh  
 Mukoond Singh  
 10. Bendalum  
 Singh  
 Tool Singh  
 Umboo Singh  
 Mucktah Singh  
 Toolah Singh  
 15. Sunatun Singh  
 Pookoocha Singh  
 Dhununjoy Singh  
 Chunder Muny Singh (Sick)  
 Busoo Singh  
 20. Tool Singh  
 Dhununjoy Singh  
 Diah Singh  
 Balah Singh  
 Heerah Singh  
 25. Mudun Singh  
 Dhurn Singh  
 Laban Singh  
 65. Sotwan Singh  
 Shoun Singh  
 Goon Singh  
 Joy Ram Singh  
 Govind Singh  
 70. Autul Singh  
 Mohun Singh  
 Judoo Singh  
 Bindabun Singh  
 Chauba Singh  
 75. Joyram Singh  
 Dhun Singh  
 Mufaum Singh  
 Rutun Muni Singh  
 Nerruttum Singh  
 80. Chundur Singh  
 Narain Singh  
 Dhununjoy Singh  
 Tharun Singh  
 Khooling Singh  
 85. Tool Singh  
 Boodhee Ram Singh  
 Kerty Singh  
 Diahmund Singh  
 Labin Singh  
 90. Urjoon Singh

55.	Muyan Singh Birh Singh Tharun Singh Mubahundur Singh (Sick) Gour Singh	Suttun Singh Myrun Singh Roopanund Bulram Singh
60.	Unund Singh Gopaul Singh Modoo Singh Udhova Singh	95. Roopo Nund Singh Bulu Singh (Sick) Chaund Singh Nur Singh Roopah Singh Nuba Singh Chouba Singh
100.	Hcerah Nund Singh Dhun Singh Chunder Muny Singh <sup>1</sup> Chunder Singh Nubchunder Singh	40. Deah Ram Singh Poonun Singh Shanachand Singh Nund Singh Shurbanund Singh
105.	Nur Singh Chandoo Singh Chunder "	145. Tullah Nand "
	Luckun "	Heam "
	Toolou "	Bulram "
110.	Bon "	Ununtham "
	Lukhun "	Shundor "
	Govind "	150. Sherry "
	Dhun "	Sunatun "
	Khur "	Kuroonah "
115.	Joram "	Govind "
	Kerty Singh	Joy Singh "
	Bhurat "	155. Sampoorun Singh
	Indour "	Tamjud "
	Mohour "	Tamrou "
120.	Surroop "	Umah "
	Udhoob "	Koomud "
	Pooroo Suttun Singh	160. Goopu Bhuru Singh
	Khadoo Singh	Rusheeka Singh
	Mudun "	Myrah Singh (Sick)
125.	Buham "	Chunder Singh
	Soobul "	Mookund "
	Bhuwany "	165. Diop "
	Uttaram "	Poorun "
	Bendaban "	Dhirda Nund Singh
130.	Bulram "	Kmood Singh
	Lunchmun Singh	Toolah "
	Koomuda Nund Singh	170. Joowah Nund Singh
	Roopa Nund Singh	Ukcelah Singh
	Nudheeram Singh	Bullou "
135.	Shooram "	Chudur "
	Khoombah Singh	Buham Singh
	Bamur Singh	Chaub "
175.	Chundor Muny Singh	215. Thanjou Singh
	Ruttun Muny Singh	Tullah Nund Singh
	Dhurmo Singh	Koounja Nund Singh
	Roop Singh	Neerunjun Singh
	Chundur Singh	Attual Singh (Sick)
180.	Govind Singh	Chundur Muny Singh
	Poorun Singh	220. Nudneoo Singh
	Umboo "	Chudur "
	Chundur Muny Singh	Rushooka Singh
	Purun Singh	Pookoolah Singh

185. Dhurmoo Singh (Sick)  
Heeroo Singh  
Nubut Singh  
Poola Nund Singh  
Poorun Singh  
190. Roosa Nund Singh 230.  
Diah Nund Singh  
Kerty Singh  
Ubhu Singh  
Madhoo Singh  
195. Ram Singh  
Gowoor Singh  
Neelah Nund Singh  
Koomade Nund Singh  
Bhowanund Singh  
200. Taunjoo Singh  
Hurry Narain Singh  
Ram Chundun "  
Ganga "  
Tuli Singh "  
205. Luknauth Singh  
Bulram "  
Khungjoy "  
Dhuneer "  
Tapoop "  
210. Tomun "  
Beedor "  
Umoo "  
Surpoph "  
Poornoo Singh  
Mookun "  
255. Indoo "  
Kumbah "  
Suddah "  
Chooramuni Singh  
Koomdoh Singh  
260. Hoorah Singh  
Myhah Singh  
Joy Singh  
Chundur Singh  
Tanjoo Singh  
265. Madhoo Singh  
Buaoodam Singh  
Ramanund Singh  
Diooram Singh  
Tanjoo Singh  
270. Nul Singh  
Ungoo Singh  
Bhlooram Singh  
Sherdam Singh  
Myoorah Singh  
275. Kukeelah Singh  
Keertybah Singh  
Tanjoo Singh  
Refy Mohammed  
Lool Mohammed  
235. Burkootoolah  
Loll Mohamed
225. Diop Singh  
Bulhun Singh  
Chunder Singh  
Umyah Singh  
Rushuk Singh  
Jugdah Singh  
Joy Singh  
Gowoor Singh  
Lili Singh  
Heam Singh  
235. Tharun Singh  
Nuram Singh  
Soodrah Singh  
Joy Singh  
Kaoombuh Singh  
240. Tajou Singh  
Nimah Nund Singh  
Chunder Sam "  
Umboo "  
Urunta Ram Singh  
245. Tool "  
Gowoor "  
Lall "  
Ruseeka "  
Indoor Mury "  
250. Dhooju "  
Heam "  
Tanjoo "  
290. Umboo Uttul "  
Govind Singh  
Lukhun "  
Jughah "  
Chun "  
295. Diah "  
Indur Mury Singh  
Khetury Singh  
Nundoo Singh  
Ram Singh  
300. Ubhen Singh  
Nur "  
Chund Sam Singh  
Koomud Singh  
Khulyanund Singh  
305. Purnanund Singh  
Chytina Nund Singh  
Nund Singh  
Dhanoo Singh  
Shuroopha Singh  
310. Rutun Mury Singh  
Kokcelah Singh  
Diah Nund Singh  
Moogy Umah Singh  
Khurrung Singh  
315. Sherda Nund Singh  
Govind Singh  
Gambhy Singh  
Khulah Singh  
Bhurdur Singh

- |      |                     |      |                         |
|------|---------------------|------|-------------------------|
|      | Harry Singh         | 320. | Diah Nund Singh         |
|      | Roop Singh          |      | Chundur Singh           |
|      | Mohumed Nazir       |      | Poorna Singh            |
| 285. | Nurrutum Singh      |      | Ruttun Singh            |
|      | Luohun Singh        |      | Khylah Singh            |
|      | Purshooram Singh    | 325. | Soolloo Singh           |
|      | Roopah Singh        |      | Sooloo Singh            |
|      | Burunanund Singh    | 363. | Bull Singh              |
|      | Thybah Singh        |      | Gour Singh              |
|      | Muduah Nund Singh   |      | Bull Singh              |
|      | Shuroopah Singh     |      | Khellah Singh           |
| 330. | Sanjoo Singh        |      | Beharee Singh           |
|      | Roopah Singh        | 370. | Jeeva Nund Singh        |
|      | Bulram "            |      | Khyla Singh             |
|      | Churan Singh        |      | Soorooya Singh          |
|      | Sheram "            |      | Goopan Churu Singh      |
| 335. | Jooglon "           |      | Krishna Nund Singh      |
|      | Tyrah "             | 375. | Pianund Singh           |
|      | Poomah "            |      | Nund Lall Singh         |
|      | Leelah "            |      | Suroopah Singh          |
|      | Tool "              |      | Umoo Singh              |
| 340. | Murbah "            |      | Nemy Singh              |
|      | Chun "              | 360. | Kooroodah Singh         |
|      | Shordanund Singh    |      | Diah Nund Singh         |
|      | Kandoo Singh (Sick) |      | Toil Singh              |
|      | Muny Chandur Singh  |      | Mohim Singh             |
| 345. | Soorpah Singh       |      | Doul Singh              |
|      | Moorary "           | 395. | Joy Singh               |
|      | Bheram Nund Singh   |      | Rughoo Muny Singh       |
|      | Samkissur Singh     |      | Dhurum Singh            |
|      | Madhoo Singh        |      | Jughah Singh            |
| 350. | Shokhur "           |      | 390. Tool Singh         |
|      | Gunga Singh (Sick)  |      | Khubah Singh            |
|      | Khubah "            |      | Jedoo Singh             |
|      | Khylenund Singh     |      | Joogulah Singh          |
| 355. | Kylebah "           |      | Mudun Singh             |
|      | Ruttun "            | 395. | Toombah Singh           |
|      | Jeebah "            |      | Panggultaul "           |
|      | Chunder Muny Singh  |      | Chowbah Singh           |
|      | Kerty Chundur Singh |      | Lukhun Singh            |
| 360. | Keyla Nund Singh    |      | Chunder Muny Singh      |
|      | Hulding Singh       | 400. | Poorum Singh            |
|      | Nubchunder Singh    |      | Teluck Singh            |
|      | Bhoon Singh         |      | Sanahul Singh           |
|      | Shurpanund Singh    | 440. | Hurry Singh             |
|      | Kookilah Singh      |      | Khoolung Singh          |
|      | Woolul Singh        |      | Beer Singh              |
| 465. | Gowoor Singh        |      | Guny "                  |
|      | Tull Singh          |      | Roopa "                 |
|      | Chunder Singh       | 455. | Roomah Singh            |
|      | Neelabhoojo Singh   |      | Nuhul "                 |
|      | Gowoor Singh        |      | Sajao "                 |
| 410. | Roopa Nund Singh    |      | Joobah "                |
|      | Soobul Singh        |      | Bulram Singh            |
|      | Susund "            | 450. | Shaik Shubah            |
|      | Ruttun "            |      | Shaik Seba              |
|      | Koonedah Singh      |      | Shaik Prem (on command) |
| 415. | Bhurut Singh        |      | Shaik Brow              |

	Roop Chundur Singh		Shaik Lobah
	Taunjoor Singh	455.	Shaik Chybah
	Nur Singh		Shaik Khambah (on command)
	Chundur Singh		Shaik Sayja
420.	Booddhyram Singh		Dhurmah Singh
	Govind Singh		Roop Chundur Singh
	Roopenund Singh	460.	Prem Singh
	Chundur Singh		Uchoot "
	Gowoor "		Nubeen "
425.	Lutkhur "		Unund "
	Suchee "		Gopy "
	Sekhur "	465.	Jusoodah Singh
	Peruit "		Sanjow "
	Bhyroo "		Premamund "
430.	Lochur Singh		Moorybah "
	Foolunguny Singh		Saum "
	Soobeet Singh	470.	Mohun Singh
	Ruttun Singh		Bijanund "
	Beer Singh		Khum "
435.	Keesurup Singh		Khella "
	Koondoo Singh		Poorum "
	Chowbah Singh	475.	Khella Singh
	Lymah Singh		Chowbah "
	Khambha Singh		Shajeb "
	Roopanund Singh		Chundur "
	Heam Singh	490.	Surrop Singh
580.	Jusooda Singh		Ganga "
	Booman Singh		Muthoor "
	Soondra Singh		Parthoo "
	Neermah Singh		Unund "
	Mudun Singh	495.	Prem Singh
485.	Amudun Singh		Sooranund Singh
	Gra Singh		Prem Chundur Singh
	Poorun Singh		Jesoban Singh
	Bamon Singh	500.	Soum Chand Singh*

Both Gambhir Singh and Nara Singh were undergoing military training in 1824, at a time when the 10,000 strong Burmese force was on the verge of leaving Dudpati near Silchar, possibly for rendering reinforcement in other fronts near Delta region. Brigadier general Shuldham along with a large brigade, equipments and supplies etc. had been commissioned towards Manipur for making engagement with the Burmese. The distance from Calcutta to Ava *via* Manipur—1,052 miles could be covered in 107 days according to British logistics (38:154). They had to effect the possession of Ava in one season and had no alternative than falling back upon Manipur, as Pemberton reported. General Shuldham reached Banskandi in Cachar on the 24th February, 1825 for neutralising the Burmese in Manipur and proceeding towards Burmese capital.

Wilson document [No.98] recorded that a road had to be constructed from Dudpati to Manipur (1:259). Pioneers had been constructing roads from Banskandi to Jiri under the supervision of Gambhir Singh and a

\* Record maintained by Lt. Con. Innes Commanding, Sylhet Frontier  
[Secret Consultation, 30th December, 1825, No. 29-30]

British official (22:241). General Shuldham had proceeded to Dudpati by using elephants, camels, 5,000 bullocks, by carrying heavy artillery and he took a month in mobilising his troops from Dudpati to Banskandi. As Wilson Documents [No. 99-103] recorded, the general had reported that the 'state of the road is such that it is quite impossible to send supplies on to the advance' [1:486]. After leaving small detachments in Cachar and Sylhet, he moved to Dacca.

As Wilson document [No.171] had recorded, 'physical difficulties of an insurmountable nature' was the reason for general Shuldham's failure in his mission. The complete failure of the British campaign launched under a brilliant general had ironically given an opening to Gambhir Singh to reverse the dismal failure into victory. He had succeeded, and so he won a modest place in the history of that period. The simple reason for his military success could be attributed to a common but significant fact, that whereas general Shuldham was obliged to complete his campaign, prince Gambhir Singh had an obligation which should not be compromised with the insurmountable state of road and other disadvantages. He had to make history.

In the other front, situations worked to the advantage of the British. General Cotton zeroed down on the 5th March, 1825 near Danubyu, where general Maha-Bandoola had to operate. On April 1, general Maha Bandoola had been killed and with that event, the field had been cleared out for the British. Demolition of an enemy general in person was the usual British tactic.

Manipur levy, constituted by 500 Manipuri soldiers, led by Gambhir Singh and Nara Singh with a volunteer—lieutenant R.B. Pemberton set out on the 17th May, 1825 from Sylhet for the liberation of Manipur. History would not be the same again after the opening of a new chapter by the Manipur Levy—a tiny but highly cost-effective garrison in comparison to the colossal brigade of general Shuldham.

The modest campaign of Manipur Levy reached Maklang in Manipur on June 10, 1825 and stepped into the Manipur palace on the 12th June, 1825. Gambhir Singh captured the Burmese general on the 25th day of June in 1825. Manipur Levy cleared the Burmese camps out of Manipur and destroyed whatever traces or detachments that over-stayed in Manipur.

He reached Sylhet on the 29th June and had collected 1,500 guns from the British. In *Point*, general Nara Singh fought with the Burmese for five days and defeated them without raising a fight after laying siege on the Burmese stockade for 5 days. Edward Gait wrote about how Gambhir Singh cut off the water supply to Burmese stockade and compelled the Burmese to retreat (8:289). His military ingenuity and resourcefulness had been fairly assessed by his enemy and the British. After the destruction of the Burmese stockade on the Ango hills by Gambhir Singh and Nara Singh jointly, the Burmese left for home (25:29). They had re-occupied Kobo valley, which had been ceded to Burma by

Marjit. They captured Burmese capital at Kalew, destroyed the palace of Samjok king and reached upto river Chindwin. They planted the flag of Manipur victory in that site of Chindwin.

*Cheitharol Kumbaba* had recorded: "By planting flag (of Manipur) at the bank of the river Ingthee (Chindwin), areas all around Ingthee had been colonised" (13:225). The other records also endorse that on February 1, 1826, Gambhir Singh had planted the flag and conquered the areas upto Chindwin river [15:185]. In December, 1825, Campbell had taken over Yandaboo in Burma. Liberation of Manipur from the Burmese occupation-army, by Gambhir Singh and his Manipur Levy had been materially and physically completed. Yandaboo treaty would, however, provide the final instrumental format that would cover not only Manipur but also Assam and other neighbouring areas. '*Shrihater Itibritta*', written in Bengali language also recognised Gambhir Singh as a unique hero in history.

### GAMBHIR SINGH'S DIPLOMACY

Manipur kings had institutionalised diplomacy and the conduct of foreign affairs, to be more particular, from the 13th century, and witnessed recurrent Burmese hostilities, projected against Manipur. Burmese affairs had been handled by '*Awapurel*' (a Burmese specialist) and the rest of the affairs has been looked after by the *yubaraj*, *senapati* and the king as well. In 1823, Gambhir Singh hesitated to enter into strategic alliance with the British, as he feared that Manipur's independence could have been subordinated to the British's vital interests. However, British agent David Scott and Gambhir Singh had entered into understanding that their common strategic interests would have to be defined while keeping the Burmese factor as the primary stumbling block for both of them.

Gambhir Singh's lack of material resources had been more than compensated by his unusual military leadership-qualities, which need not be questioned particularly after British general Shuldham's dismal failure, inspite of the assistance extended by Gambhir Singh to Shuldham in terms to logistics and mobilisation of forces. The British was in bad need of a military leader, capable of neutralising Burmese intrusions in Assam, Manipur, Cachar, Jaintia and the positive Burmese designs to capture British territory in Bengal *via* Sylhet; Gambhir Singh was the best answer and none of the princes in any of the countries could offer himself as the alternative or, reliable ally. The mutuality of vital interests brought about in the military-diplomacy of Gambhir Singh was a qualitatively different paradigm-shift, acceptable to the major player – the British.

Gambhir Singh's emergence as the peerless sole leader, undeterred by the ambitious princes – Chourajit and Marjit following David Scott- Gambhir agreement in 1823, British rejection of the Marjit's unending prevarications and Chourajit's intrigues among the ranks of the Manipur Levy, and Nara Singh's selfless services to the cause of Manipur, had twisted the events, which otherwise could have been reverted to the same old zero-sum game of Manipur palace-intrigues. They gave a shape to the history.

The strategic perception of the Manipur prince did not lose sight in steering clear, a way-out of the Burmese expansionism and the British imperialism. Two important parameters had been deeply ingrained in Manipur's diplomacy and external affairs. *Firstly*, Assam-Manipur friendship since the 15th century had been durable and considered to be a constant. Manipur-Pong friendship had re-inforced the relationship. *Secondly*, Manipur's permanent distrust of Burmese intentions and Burmese belligerency against Manipur since the 13th century, which endured for more than five centuries, was considered a proven fact.

Within the intermediate range of foreign affairs, Cachar and Tripura figured into the fluctuating strategic-map of Manipur till matrimonial alliance had removed adverse designs of the Tripuri ruling-house; and Cachar had been used as a spring-board of the Manipuri princes, the Burmese intruders and the British policy-makers. A notable feature, found in Manipur's internal affairs was the ongoing palace-intrigues among the princes in the post-Garibnawaz period on the one hand and the tribal opportunistic raids ventured, whenever the Manipur kings left the palace for military campaigns. The tribal raids had been routinely subdued and tributes had been collected; but like the palace intrigues, the opportunistic raids had been perceived as a domestic evil, which warmed up the heels of the Manipur king almost day and night.

*Cheitharol Kumbaba* and *Ningthourol Lambuba* are the most authoritative literary sources of Manipur history. Both of these sources excel the others in different aspects. The actors, who played in the diplomatic theatre or, political equations of one kind or another, including the minutest details for nearly two millennia had been mentioned in these sources. Political actors starting from Khasi king Tirot Singh to Queen Victoria had been mentioned in Manipur history; but in the early, medieval and until recent times, India or *Bharata* had not at all figured into Manipur's bilateral relationship. Modern history and the later part of *Kumbaba*, however, mentions names of one or, two Indian leaders, who paid diplomatic visits to Manipur. Some of them had been denied the permit to enter in Manipur. In fact, India was as good as unknown countries like Iran, Afghanistan, Greece, Sri Lanka or Cambodia in the history of Manipur. However, some historians made vain attempts to re-construct a past, which did not exist at all, even by giving non-Manipuri names retrospectively to Manipur kings by way of fabrication and other virtually questionable means. Gambhir Singh did not imagine to seek assistance of any Indian prince at the time of national catastrophe like the seven-year-devastation, for the simple reason that no political relation had ever existed with any of them in the past. Even the British factor was a new element in 1819 inspite of the 1762 treaty.

The British agent and board had twisted their non-interference policy towards the countries in the west of Burma like Assam etc. The British had always considered the independence of Manipur as a strategic constant in their shifting paradigms of diplomacy, with the full knowledge

that Manipur lacked prosperity and resources to fill her coffers. That policy continued considerably long. British annexation of Burma in 1885 with the assistance of Manipur soldiers did not tempt them to re-consider the state of their neutrality towards Manipur. William Bentinck, unlike other British officials, had always considered Manipur as a petty state [21:150] and undermined her strategic importance.

The British did not intend to annex Assam to its empire; but they had to annex Assam in 1826 to British India. Annexation-spree continued henceforth. After annexation of Kamrup and Goalpara, they annexed Cachar in 1832, Upper Assam in 1838, Sadiya-Matak in 1842 and Cachar hills under Tularam in 1854. Burma's turn came rather late in 1885 after the Third Anglo-Burmese war. The historical significance of Gambhir Singh in the canvas of contending expansionism and imperialism could be best understood in terms of the fact of Manipur's remaining independence. However, he reluctantly made compromise with the British vital interest in bringing Kobo valley under the Burmese jurisdiction for the sake of appeasing the Burmese court, which, however would not remain peaceful without venturing two more Anglo-Burmese wars.

David Scott and other British officials had considered the Manipur prince and his friendship indispensable, unlike the high-brow boss like Walliam Bentinck, who had the same mind-set of Bagyidaw. They made the offer that in case of the failure of the Manipuri prince in the campaign in 1825 against the Burmese, Gambhir Singh should get enough political space in Cachar or Assam. The prince had also assisted the British in the arrest of Khasi king Tirot Singh (17-Khahingamba) in advancing the British vital interests in that period. Manipur jurisdiction spread over the Naga hills and even beyond; and stone inscriptions had been left for a long time as evidence in Kohima, among others. The Yandaboo treaty, 1826 had given an official format of the political equations that existed and the culmination of Burmese invasions in Assam, Manipur, Cachar and Jaintia. Manipur Levy had its legitimate share in blunting Burmese military might in Cachar and Manipur and hammering out a peace treaty in the medium of Yandaboo treaty, although the primacy of British dominance had not been a matter of doubt. The Manipur king had to relinquish Kobo valley to Burmese by acting within the framework of an unsuccessful British appeasement policy [21D:18], which could not prevent two more Anglo-Burmese from breaking out.

## VI

### THE YANDABOO TREATY, 1826

Of the two treaties, signed on the 24th February, 1826 and the 23rd November, 1826, between the British and the Burmese authorities, the former—the Yandaboo treaty, has been directly connected with the political status of Manipur and the position of maharajah Gambhir Singh, who the Burmese king and court had perceived to be a formidable threat to Burmese expansionism. There were two texts of the Yandaboo treaty,

1826—one, the standard English version and two, the Burmese version, which was conceived to be '*Aktiwen Dau*'—the royal licence, since the Burmese king always considered any bilateral agreement as his royal licence, unlike the European perception of a bilateral instrument or, the treaty. Yandaboo treaty was not reached without a persistent British pressure on an unyielding Burmese king and the nitty-gritty of Manipur Levy's role in the western front.

The military defeat of the Burmese forces at the hands of the British military commanders resulted to peace negotiations in October, 1825, December, 1825 and January, 1826. The Melown peace negotiation (6:640) between Burmese royal representative Kolein Menghie (1:340) and British representatives—Mr. Robertson and Mr. Archibald Campbell had focused on the need for Burmese de-occupation of Manipur, Assam and Arakan and payment of a war compensation to the tune of two crores of rupees as indemnity by the Burmese to the British. It was later on reduced to half only—one crore of rupees to be paid in instalments.

Kolein Menghie was ready to give up Assam and Manipur, but not Arakan at any cost. It may be noted that the Arakanese had a dominant Indian and Bengali ethnic-strain and they remained independent till 1784. Till 1824, the Burmese had executed about four lakh Arakanese out of a population of five lakh. Burmese culture of decimation of other races had been quite well known, as in the case of Manipur and Assam as well. The British did not interfere with Burmese domination in Pegu, as the Pegu people had little difference with the Burmese in the ethnic and cultural sense.

Kolein Menghie pleaded that the Burmese custom did not allow him to pay war indemnity to others except asking for the reimbursement of the expenses, incurred in making invasions in other territories. Robertson said that since the customs differ on that score, the custom of the conqueror was acted upon (1:341). There was more Burmese obsession with Gambhir Singh than with the concern over Manipur. Kolein Menghie was ready to give up Manipur and Assam, but could not give up Gambhir Singh. Till the last breathe, general Maha-Bandoola could not lose his fixation with the Manipur prince. He always sought for British co-operation in finding the Manipur princes, but it was futile.

Governor General minutes, 12th May, 1827 No. 39 had recorded Governor General William Bentinck's statement on the subject: "I do not estimate lightly the value of the points virtually conceded by the Burmese authorities viz. — the recognition by their Government of Gambhir Singh's perfect independence" (23:55). The text of the treaty had, therefore, tilted more to the person of Gambhir Singh than to the independence of Manipur, which was an uncontested historical fact.

Before the final format of the treaty had been signed, both the foreign powers viz., the British and the Burmese had signed, both the treaty on the 3rd January, 1826, but the Burmese king refused to ratify the treaty.

General Campbell announced the resumption of hostilities from January 18 and the hostilities continued for a few days till the Burmese king accepted to sign the agreement. Following the march of the British army from Ava to Yandaboo in four days, the Burmese king had concluded the treaty of Yandaboo on the 24 February, 1826. The English version is given below:

The treaty of Peace, between the Honourable the East India Company on the one part, and His Majesty the King of Ava on the other, settled by Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell, ... and executed at Yandaboo in the Kingdom of Ava, on this twenty-fourth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty six, corresponding with the fourth day of the decrease of the moon Taboung, in the year one thousand one hundred and eighty-seven, Guadama era.

*Article 1st.* There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honourable Company on the one part, and His Majesty the King of Ava on the other.

*Article 2nd.* His Majesty the King of Ava renounces all claims upon, and will abstain from all future interference with, the principality of Assam and its dependencies, and also with the contiguous petty states of Cachar and Jyntea. With regard to Munnipore, it is stipulated that, should Gumbheer Singh desire to return to that country, he shall be recognized by the king of Ava as Rajah thereof.

The British version remaining the standard text, the Burmese version was an expression of the '*Aklwen Dau*' (royal licence), since the European treaty concept could not be fully conceived by the omnipotent king Bagyidaw, whose authority had been directly and allegedly derived from the heaven. The Burmese text runs as: "The king of Burma shall no more have dominion over, or the directions of, the towns and country of Assam, the country of Ak-ka-bat (Cachar) and the country of Wa- tha-li (Jyntea). With regard to Munnipore, if Gan-bee-ra-shing desire to return to his country and remain ruler, the King of Burma shall not prevent or molest him, but let him remain." (1:408).

G.T. Bayfield reported the result of the Yandaboo treaty on the basis of the proclamation of the Governor General in Council, dated 11th April, 1826 as follows:

Burmese ceded to the British, the territories and towns of:

- 1st. Ye, Tavoy, Mergui, Tenasserim, and Arracan.
- 2nd. The King of Ava ceased to have dominion over the states of Cachar, Jyntea, and Assam.
- 3rd. *The Burmese acknowledged the independence of Manipur, and the right of Siam, to the benefits of this treaty (38:LXXI) (emphasis added).*

Article 2 of the Yandaboo treaty had assumed, by implication, the independence of Manipur and it explicitly mentioned Burmese recognition of Gambhir Singh as the Manipur king. The Calcutta Council did not leave the independence of Manipur to any possible abortive misconstruction by the Burmese court and king. It was prepared to hold negotiations, if necessary in order to restore independence to Manipur, with the Burmese and in order to maintain the independence of Manipur, it was prepared to make concessions, if required (23:53). In all sense of the term, independence of Manipur was perceived to be unnegotiable, from the British diplomatic *realpolitik*. Manipuris stood for their independence for ages to come, even against the near-total devastations.

The supreme government at Calcutta after referring the issue of Manipur independence to the Court of Directors directed major Burney, resident at Ava to feel the pulse of Burmese court. Burney reported that the *Burmese would not interfere with the independence of Manipur* (1:367). The concept of having two versions of the treaty did not at all disturb the independence of Manipur under all circumstances. As regards the cession of Kabo valley to Burma, the British did the mistake with the full knowledge that it belonged to Manipur. Till 1832, William Bentinck acknowledged that the valley belonged to Manipur. In order to make appeasement to the Burmese court, he transferred the valley on the 9th January, 1834, on conditions of lease to Burma (21:23). MMc Culloh reported that the boundary was given up to please the Burmese (19:8). Details of the lease of Kabo valley from Manipur to Burma and other transactions are found in Dr. Bayfield's supplement in Pemberton Report.

The Manipuri and Assamese prisoners of war, who had been indignantly addressed in ignominious terms by both the Burmese and the British had also been a subject of Article 11 of the Yandaboo treaty. The Burmese text is given as follows:

*Article 11th.* This treaty shall be ratified by the commissioners appointed by the king of Burma; and all English, American, and other black and white Ku-la prisoners shall be delivered to the British Commissioners...

After the conclusion of the Commercial treaty in November, 1826, Mr. Crawford had discussion with the Burmese authority for the release of the captive *Cassays* (Manipuris) and Assamese (Crawford Journal, 38: LXXIX). It had drawn the attention of Archibald Campbell; but the Burmese had been apathetic to the issue of releasing the captives. Burmese ministers refused the release of Manipuri and Assamee captives of war by arguing that they were not prisoners of wars, but Burmese subjects. Thousands of Manipuris had settled in Burma from that era. The pan-Manipuris thus spread their roots in South Asia and got themselves integrated into the respective states and countries in Asia.

## REFERENCES

1. A.C. Bannerjee, *The Eastern Frontier of British India, (1784- 1826)* 1943, edition, 1986.
2. Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, 1884.
3. Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom from Fear*, 1991.
4. Bhogeswor, *Shamsok Ngamba (Puya)*, 1987
5. B. Kulachandra Sharma, *Wangkhei Meiraba Athouba*, 1996.
6. D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South East Asia*, 1987.
7. E.W. Dun, *Gazetteer of Manipur*, 1886.
8. Edward Gait, *A History of Assam*, 1905, edition, 1990.
9. Francis Hamilton, *An Account of Assam (1807-1814)*, 1940.
10. Gangmumei Kabui, *A History of Manipur-I*, 1990.
11. Haobam Bilasini, *Ningthourol Lambuba-2*, 1994.
12. Jyotirmoy Roy, *History of Manipur*, 1973.
13. Khelchandra, N, ed., *Cheitharol Kumbaba*, 1989.
14. Kh. Sorojini, *Tilain Landa Narsing*, 1981.
15. Lairenmayum Iboongohal, *Introduction to Manipur*, 1987.
16. Moirangthem Chandrasing, *Dakuningthou (Herachandra)*, 1951, edition, 1995 with an Introduction by B.Kulachandra.
17. Moirangthem Chandrasing, *Kha-Hi-Ngamba*, 1967.
18. Mutuwa Tombi, Imphal, *Cultural History of Kangleipak- I*, 1993.
19. M. McCulloch, *Valley of Manipur*, 1859.
20. Ningombam Manijao, *Meitingu Lainingthou Paikhomba*, 1994.
21. Naorem Sanajaoba, ed:
  - A. Manipur Past and Present, (the Heritage and Ordeals of a Civilization) volume-I: History, Polity and Law, 1988;
  - B. Manipur Past and Present, volume-II: Philosophy, Culture and Literature, 1991;
  - C. Manipur Past and Present, volume-III: Nagas and Kuki-Chins, 1995.
  - D. Manipur Treaties and Document, (1110-1971), vol-I, 1993.
22. R.K Jhaljit, *A History of Manipur*, 1992.
23. R.M. Lahiri, *The Annexation of Assam*, 1954.
24. R. Brown, *Statistical Account of Manipur*, 1874.
25. Sarangthem Boramani Singh, *Meitei Ningthourol*, 1994.
26. S.K. Bhuyan, *Tungkhunggiya Buranji*, or History of Assam, 1681-1826 A.D., 1933.
27. Tensuba, K.C., *Genesis of Indian Tribes, Meiteis & Thais*, 1993.
28. Wahengbam Ibohal, *The History of Manipur*, 1991.
29. W. Yumjao Singh, *An Early History of Manipur*, 1966.
30. Nongthombamcha Angou Luwang, *Ningthou Kangbalon*, 1976.
31. Yengkhom Bheigya, *Ashamba Kumpaba Amashung Yengkhom Shageilon*, 1982.
32. Shri Bhaygaya Yengkhoiba, *Leithak-Leikharon*, 1994.
33. Sri Hijam Mani, *Ngamdai Leitei Langdai Puya Meihouba*, 1960.
34. Sri Moirangthem Chandrasing, *Poireiton Khunthok*, 1979.
35. Sri Yaima Singh, *Poireiton Khunthokpa*, 1971.
36. Sri Nongmaithem Manaoyaima Singh, *Chengleiron*, 1989.
37. Oinam Bhogeswor, *Ningthourol Lambuba- 1*, 1967.
38. R.B. Pemberton, *Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India*, 1835.
39. See his other features. Professor N. Sanajaoba, *Manipur Puwaari Kunshuba Chahi-cha*, National Research Centre, Imphal, 1997.
40. *Gazetteer of Burma*, vol. I, 1880, Gian reprint, 1987, N.D.
41. N. Sanajaoba '*Chahi Taret Khuntakpa (1819-1825)*', in Thoudang daily, 28.10.1998 to 4.11.1998, ed. N. Biren; see his article in Thoudang, 1.1.2000, p. 3, Imphal.