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The Manipuri Tribe in Bangladesh

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The Manipuri Tribe in Bangladesh

Suheli Shaila Ahmed [α] & Abu-Hena Mostofa Kamal [σ]

Abstract- The Manipuri term *'Meetei'* is associated with the Philosophical system of Manipuri. In the processes of self-evolution of God the stage of evolution into man become a contrast to the earlier stages of self-evolution of God. As a taken of recognition of this fact the term 'Meetei' is used by the Manipur who follow this system of philosophy. The term 'Manipuri' does not only mean the Manipuri is Bangladesh. It has got a broader sense. Hence a short discussion of clarification about the term Manipuri and Manipuri is essential. Generally the term Manipuri nears a resident of Manipuri. But in the sense of a citizen we are the confide citizen of Bangladesh and loyal to the state and is- government. But in consideration of our origin, history and genealogy we are well known as Manipuri. Manipuri was an independent state up to the later period of the year 1890. But in the year 1891 after it had been defeated in the open battle with the British, it lost is independence and sovereignty and was made a tributary the British India. After the partition of India in 1947 Manipur become an independent state. Manipur was merged into India on 21/09/1949. The merjer agreement was one at Shillong between the King of Manipur Sir Budhachandra Singh and the Mr. V. P. Messon, Adviosor to the Great of India, keeping witness Shri Prakash the Governor of Assam.

I. Geographical Distribution

Mr. T. C. Hudson (Late Assistant Political Agent in Manipur and Superintendent of the state and also Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute) has described in book "The Meetei's" page-4, about the geographical distribution of the Meetei (Manipuri) that "Historical circumstances account for the rather wide geographical distribution of the Meetei's.

There are colonies in Burma which owe. Their origin the disastrous raids which, made by way of reprisal for the invasions of Burma by the forces of Manipur in the beginning of the eighteen century, Culminated in the great depopulation of the country in 1819, when the Burmese soldiery took with them into captivity enormous numbers of Manipur is of all ages and of both sexes. Political events have conduced to the growth of settlement of Manipuris in Cachar, Sylhet and Dacca, while in Bengal and in the united provinces there are small colonies of Manipuris who have left their country for their country's good.

In the year 1596 king Khagemba came to the throne in Manipur. One day there was a mutual discord created between the king and his younger brother Sanongba. Al last Sanongba fled to Cachar accompanied his mother Maharani Linthoikanbi. From Cachar they went to Sylhet. In 1606 Sanongba invaded Manipur with the help of Mayang & Pathan soldiers from Cachar and Sylhet but was repulsed 30 elephants, 1000 muskets, 1000 Mahamedan Sepoys, Many blacksmith, Goldsmiths, Artisans, washer men, says, Mahood sure captured and kept in Manipuri Muslims (Meetei Pangal) are the generation of the this Mahamedan.

From 1756-1759 Maharaj Joy Singh alias Bhagyachaudra last and regained the throne two times. In 1756 a great military leader named Alaungpaya alias Alompa of Burma sent an army under the command of a distant relative to chastise the Manipuris. Maharaj JoySingh defeated in that war the Burmese overran the country. The Manipuris called it KUNTAK AHANB (the first of the great devastation). In 1778-59 Alaungpaya of Burma defeated Maharaj Joy Singh at the battle of Pallel again. The Manipuris deserted the valley rather than be caught by the Burmese. In his way to Burma Alaungpaya carried more than one thousands of Manipurs into Captivity.

Again form 1764-1793 Maharaj Joy Singh lost and regained the throne at least three times. In 1765 the Burmese king named Hsinbyushin invaded Manipur with a big force. The Manipuris were defeated. Joy Singh fled to Cachar accompanied large number of Manipuris. Maharaj Joy Singh then collected huge force in Assam and defeated the puppet ruler of Manipur who was set up by Burma. The noble of Manipur welcome him as their king.

The new Burmese king, Bagyidow invaded Manipur in 1819. After an unsuccessful fight against the Burmese king Margit Singh of Manipuri followers. From cachar again in 1824 he fled to Sylhet. This event known to the Manipuris as "Chahi Taret Khuntakpa" which means 'Seven years devastation (1819-1826). In that war many Manipuris fled away and scattered to different places of what is now Assam, Tripuri and Bangladesh. In Bangladesh the places where the Manipuris came and settled are as follows: the Manipuri para of Shibgong, Ambarkhana, Raihussainpara, Roynagar, Subidbazar, Sagar dighirpar, Kewapara, NarSinghtilla, Laladighipar, Lamabazar, Manipuri Rajbari.

In 1824 where the first Indo-Burmese war broke out, was helped by the British in his attempts to recover Manipur from the Burmese, Moharaj Gumbhir Singh proposed to enter into Manipuri with his Manipur. Levy which consisted of 500 armed by the British. The

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Permission was granted. The Manipuri Levy marched for Manipuris from Sylhet on May 17, 1825. B. R. Pamberton a British officer accompanied Gambhir Singh, Gambhir Singh was succeeded in his attempt of occupying not only Manipur but also Kabo Valley lying on the east of Manipur. In all his activities he was ably helped by Nara Singh. The war was brought to a close by the treaty of Yandabo signed on February 24, 1826. By it Gumbhir Singh was recognized as an independent ruler of Manipur both by the Burmese and the English Governments.

As soon as war over Gambhir Singh left 300 men in Manipur and return to Sylhet towards the end of June 1825. B. R. Pembarton had accompanied Gambhir Singh to Sylhet reported that the success enterprise was due mainly to "his energy, Perseverance and skill" on December 18, 1825 Gambhir Singh returned to Manipur with his troops.

It was in the year 1829 when a road between sylhet and the Khasiya Lills was constructed Khasi leaders, Kamal Singh and Chowbar Singh rose against the Government and many Government servants were killed. At last at the request of the British, of Monday, 22nd kalel/April-May, 1829 Gambhir Singh left Manipur for Sylhet. as soon as he arrived at Sulhet he assisted the British in conquering the Khasi and Joyanta Lills. Gambhir Singh sepooys captured the Khasi capitgal and made the Raja captive and handed him over to the British. Maharj Gambhir Singh also improved the routes connecting Manipur with Sylhet,

In 1850 Chandra Kriti suddenly attacked Devendrajit Singh of Manipur. In that war Devendrajit Singh and fled to Cachar. From Cachar he was taken to Dacca by British authority. He was at Dacca up to 1871. This is why the people used to call him as Dacca Taba Ningthaou which mean a king who settled at Dacca, Beside this, some Manipuris ware invited by the Nawab Gallim Miah of Dacca from Manipur as couch of Polo game and ultimately permitted then to settle permanently at Tejgaon Manipuripara. This is why we are still wel known as Manipuri because our original migration from Manipur. A pen picture of the language, religion, literature, culture etc. of the Manipuri caste will never be completed unless it is compared equally with those of Manipur state Because the original abode of those people is in Manipur, a state sub-continent.

With regard to the population and settlement in Manipur state some lines adre being quoted here which was published in a booklet named "Manipur A New state" in the 21st January, 1972. 'The population of Manipur according to the 1971 census is 11 lakh. Two Thirds of the population is concentrated in the valley and they are largely the Meeteis (Manipur) while the rest comprises 29 tribes living in the hill who belong broadly to the Naga and Kuki groups. According to the 1981census the total population is 14, 33691.

The above mentioned 29 tribes have their own language too, But among all these languages only Manipuri (Meetei) language is used as a co-ordinating or a general language there. The Manipuri language is used there as the medium of instruction in schools and collages, in keeping records in courts and offices and in Govt. and non-Govt., organizations. Beside this, in the University like Punjab, Delhi, Gauhati of Manipur, the Manipuri language is taught as an optional (alternative) subjects. According to the Manipuri weekly newspaper "MARUP" which was published on 28th December, 1986 from Agartala, India, mentioned that Manipuri language accepted as a major course in the University of Gauhati and it will be worked out from 1989. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee M. A. D. Lit (London) F. R. A. S. B. has been written in his book "Linguistic Situation of the Eastern Zone" about the Manipuri language and literature. This is as follows; "Another highly advanced language of the Tibeto-Burman family in India is Manipuri. It is spoken by not even full one million people some 7 (seven) Lakh only but is quite an advanced literature, worthily having a place in the same line with those of the advanced Aryan language. Manipuri is taught in the University". There are quite number of speakers of Manipuri language outside the state in other parts of India such as Assam, Tripura, Uttara Pradesh and in Bangladesh Sylhet, Dacca and in Burma-Mandalay, Rangoon and other places.

The Manipuri (Meetei) in Bangladesh also speak in their respective houses with their parent, brothers, sisters and other relatives in the same Manipuri language. Of course, Bengali the state language, is their medium of instruction in schools, collages of Universities.

At a certain period in the beginning of 1800 A. P Vaisnab religion was preached in Manipur through Santadas Adhikari of Sylhet. Garibniwaj (Pamheiba) was the King that time. The King was advised by Santadas Adhikari to made his indigenous character obsolete and adapted Bengali character. As opposed by the Guru Louremba Khongnang Thaba, to the religion preached by the Santadas Adhikari, it could not become the state religion but it was in vain. At that time the King's religion was followed by his subjects. So, unwilling subjects were compelled to be converted into Vaisnavism. Santadas instigated the King toburn all the manuscript written in Manipuri script. Garibniwaj, in a religious frenzy, collected the rare manuscripts numbering one hundred twenty. The books were burnt up by the Ramandi preacher with the help of the King. Six of them proved to be fire proof. They were 1.Nonglon, 2.Pakhanba Naoyum, 3.Sinkhol Naoyum, 4.Yambi Thiren, 5.Taorainai Naoyum and 6. Sogok. It should be mentioned here that before setting fire all the important books were taken away by the then librarians and Pandits and kept concealed in the interior of the villages and on and at the foot the kills. This is why Manipuri

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letters were eliminated for a long time of course, after a long period of time those ancient letters of Manipuri (Meetei) language have been recovered.

We know that the Manipuri is also are ancient nation like other ancient nations of sub-continent. Their tradition and culture is also very old, as old the term Manipuri itself. Some lines from the booklet "Manipur A New State" Page-6 about the letter of the Manipuri is quoted here that "The old Manipuri script (Meeti Mayek) which was as old as the origin of the Manipuris (Meeteis). Many of the ancient chronicle anecdotes, family history, Poems, Philosophical discourses, works on astronomy and science are still found in old Manipuri (Meetei) script. These classics were in such a stage of development as the other major Indian classics. The state chronicle the Cheitharol Kumbaba which begins in B3 A. D is still continuing in the Manipuri script, the record is being maintained in the Maharaja's palace."

II. Literature

Manipuri Literature can be distinguished into two stages. (a) Early period in which the literature appears from the very beginning till the end of 1891 and (b) The modern period in which we see the reining and flourishing of English literature. It lasted from 1891 onwards.

a) Early Literature

In the Manipuri tradition the origin of is literature is treated as of unknown antiquity. The dali of archaic Manipuri, of which the modern Manipuri is an offshoot, goes back according to W. Yumjao Singh to about 3400 years ago or the age of the epic. While spoken language occurred very early, it was in 33 A. D that clans of Manipuri, Specially among the luwangs, the Angoms, Khumans and the Moirangs. In 33 A. D the Ningthouja principality under the Pakangba with is settled condition did provide a favourable atmosphere for the development of dialect and literature. the luwangs, The Angoms, the Khumans and the Moiranges were powerful aids to such an advance in literature. In the struggle for supremacy among the principalities the Ningthouja came out triumphant and absorbed other principalities. The Ningthouja dialect become the predominant language of Imphal Valley. In the process of integration, it embraced words from the clans of the Valley as well as from the hills. The Ningthouja language promised to be a great force bringing about co-operation and solidarity among the people the Ningthouja or the Meetei is so common that it is used a synonym for the language of Manipur by long technical usage.

The books written in Meetei scripts reveal that literature was at first oral was transmitted in this way before the use of writing. Example of oral literature have persisted down to the first century A. D. Manuscript such as Lai Srapham and singing of song called, ougri are the instances in point. Laisna was the queen of Pakhannga, the King reigned in the Ningthouja clan in second quarter of the first century A. D.

b) Eight Century Copper – Plates

The oldest text so far discovered is the copper plate inscription of King Khongtekeha who ruled the Ningthouja Kingdom in the second half of the eight century A. D. Reference to the worship of Hari, Siva and Devi are found particularly in the inscriptions but this material is rather obscure for treating it as a piece of beautiful literature.

c) Extensive Literature

The Manipuris produced a large number of books on a wide range of subjects. Here I include in this survey some representative books and their description.

Cheitharol Kumbaba: Kumbaba is the court chronicle. The meaning of the word means the account of years. It sets out briefly in a solemn diction, the reign of Kings from 33 A. D., Important events, eclipses of the sun, the moon, earthquakes, epidemics, cattle epidemics, invasions, victories over neighboring tribes etc. the actual keeping of it has been a familiar one to the Kings since the fifth century A. D. Special kind of development was made in the 15th centuries.

Numit Kappajthe shooting of the sun: This is an allegorical work which gives an account of the shoot of the by a man called Khwai Nongjenba Piba. This scene when interpreted would mean that Khwai Nongjenba Piba experienced enormous difficulties in serving two brothers of the Angom clan who ruled in the central portion of Manipuri Valley. The two brothers are spoken of as two Suns in the book. In order to find relief and release from their tyranny Nongjenba Piba killed one of them and overawed another. The full text of the whole book has already been rendered into English by T. C. Hudson in "The Meeteis".

Poireiton Khunthokpa: The book is supposed to have been written in the third century A. D. the anthropological aspect of ancient Manipuri has been set out in it the words written in archaic Manipuri had to be constructed in the allegorical sense. The real fact underlying the ostensible meaning describes how Poireiton and his horde including men, women and children colonized the area between the Langlol hill and the Kabru hill and brought the primitive people within the pale of civilization.

By the time of migration of Poireiton, the people ware able to use seeds of plants, different kinds of rice and to follow occupations. They were indebted to Poireiton.

Khongjongnubi Nongaron: This book narrates two legends. The first legend is said to narrate how the six girls of Luwang family and their lovers become the six pleiads and orions in the sky by the wish of soraren, the King of Gods. The second legend shows how an

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unfortunate lady named Haosi Namoinu who received sorrows in the hand of her step mother was transformed into a cicada (Cricket) by the Gods.

Nungbam Pombi Luwaoba: Nungbam Pombi Luwaoba is well- known mythological hero of early literature and a number of stories have associated with him in different Puranas (Puyas).

He was the son of Luwang Kumthiba. He married a beautiful maiden of celestial bearing called Kaubru Namoinu. She died prematurely. He loved her with all his heart. He made a terrible vow that he would not perform the funeral rites. So the chance of her coming to life was open. Since he broke all the laws of God and man, Leinung Jhongaren, The God of death sent his two brothers to fight Pomb Luwaoba. Being a strong man the defeated them (emissaries of death) and put them in a dungeon. The time for the return of the some to the place of death being postponed. The God of death himself came. The hero asked for the favour of the restoration of Namoinu's life with devotion. This was granted by the loving God. It conveys the moral lesson that even death has no power to part the lover.

We find an interesting parallel of the story in the story of Savitri and Satyavana and in Orpheuses and Eurydice. The points of difference that interest us in this connection is that in the story of Savitri the restoration of life depends on her devotion while in Manipur it relies on the strength of the hero. In Greek story we find the importance of music as necessaty for the restoration of Eurydice life.

Chainaron: This is a book narrating the annals of Manipuri chivalry. In ancient and early medieval times the right of private Vengeance was recognized within some limits. Heroes could settle their private disputes by appealing to arms. The book contains many stories of people of a bygone age and of many races some of which have become almost extinct fought ate pathetic and must be classed as pieces of fine literature.

Ningthouron Lambuba: This is an account of the expeditions of the Kings of Manipur. Most of them are written in verbose literary style. Many details which are left out in Cheitharol Kumbaba are found in this book. The events are given reign wise, and in the chronological order.

It is a valuable accessory of Cheitharol Kumbaba. So the latter book read with Ninthouron Lambuba gives a good picture of the past events of Manipur.

Loiyumba Shilen: There is a work called Loiyumba Shilen which literally means distribution of labour by Loiyumba. Loiyumba was a King of Manipur (1024-1122 A. D.). It gives a lengthy discussion on the particular occupation for every family. According to Loiyumba's mandate, the King, the queen and the nobles have their own code of conduct appropriate to their station life. The nights and duties of a noble are those of an ordinary subjects. It was infact the traditional order of Manipuri society, a society which by the help of it formed a homogeneous polity inspite of the diverse ethnic and social groups of all ages and characters within it frame work, the Manipuris maintain their civilization and protect the country from external aggression and terrible anarchy. In ancient and medieval Manipur, the people followed it in it completeness. Akin to but different from this, is a book called Masin which is other wise known as Loiyumba Shilen.

Leiron: This is a collection of verses describing a number of beautiful and famous flowers growing in Manipur. The shape, colour, the origin in many cases fanciful, the time of the year in which they bloom are described. They were meant to be sung.

Takhel Ngamba of Samjok Ngomba: Garibniwaj was great as soldier too. During his reign the Burmese and the Tripuris invaded Manipur simultaneously in 1723. He defeated the Tripuris invaders who came from the South-West of Manipur and the Burmese invaders who came from the South-East. Takhel Ngamba describes his victory over the Samjoks, a branch of shans living on the Burma side of the present Indo-Burma border.

Manipuri Version of the Ramayana: The reign of Garibniwaj (1709-1748) was an important mile-stone in the program of Manipuris Literature. A large number of books were written in his reign. Among them must be mentioned the Manipuri adaption of the Ramayana from the Version given by Krittivas. The works produced were not translations of Krittivas Ramayana but original works generally following his work. The authors duty acknowledge their indebtedness to Krittivas. Most of the cantos of the Manipuri Version of the Ramayana have come down to us. We may get the remaining cantos if the present hunt for the old books is intensified.

Ashwammedha, Janmejay Sarpajan, Virat Parva: The reigns of Moharaj Joy Singh and his sons also produced much Manipuri Literature. They began to write books with hand-picked stories from the Mahabharata at their times. Ashwammedha, Janmejay Sarpajan and some other books fall in this category.

Drananjay Laibu Ningba & Sonamanik: These are fictions but a different sort. They are not wirtte like our modern novels but more in the nature of stories found in Sanaskrit-story books. They were written in the eighteenth century which, from the standpoint of the history of Manipuri Literature, must be kept in the medieval period.

Langlon: The title of the book literally means a series of snares. The man who wants to progress is surrounded by a series of Pitfalls. A wrong step will land him into difficulty. The book warns him of the Pitfalls, or snares as it wants to call them. The book written by Wahengbnam Madhab Ram in the reign of

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Bhaghyahandra. It was printed by the late W. Yunjao Singh. It has been reprinted by the Manipuri Sahitya Samity.

Travel Books: Books falling in the category are Bhaghyachandra Ganga Chatpa, Jila Darbarete. The first describes in detail the pilgrimage of Bhaghyachandra. The second is an account of the four of Maharaj Chandra Kriti to meet Lord North brook, the Governor General of India in August 1874. Khahi Ngamba, an account of Gamhir Singh's subduing the Khasis at Sylhet may peshaps be included in this category.

Genealogical trees: Manipuri Literature is very rich in a class of books called Meihaoron and Yumdaba. They describe the genealogical trees of different families of different class. The Manipuris may be divided into people of the seven class. A most important book giving the genealogical trees of different families is Sangai Phamang still maintained in the palace of H. H. the Maharaja of Manipur.

Books of Immigration: The Manipuris maintain book which shows the immigration of different categories of people in different period of history. Books of this class include Bamon Khunthak, Lairikyengbam lon, Khetri lon, Nongpok Haram, Nongehup Haram. The first is an account of the arrival of different Brahmin families in Manipur. The second deal with the arrival of the Lairikyengbam families. The third is about the arrival of the Khetrimayums. Nongpok Haram mentions what families came from the East and in what time. Nongpok Haramis about the arrival of people from the West.

Hidaklon: It gives a list of medicinal herbs of Manipur. It also prescribes medicines for different ailments. Thebaron is a book dealing with the tantric way of curing diseases, which are classified under nine categories.

Astrology: The number of books of this and allied categories, Shibika, Leichinhon etc, fal in this cagegory.

Beside, the number of books mostly in ancient Manipuri script published so far by the scholars would come to about a thousand.

III. Modern Manipuri Literature

During the period between King Joy Singh and King Chandra Kriti many religious books from Sanaskrit and Bengali were translated into Manipuri. The work which was started by Garibniwaj was continued by Jay Singh and finally concluded in the reign of Chandra Kriti with the adoption of Assamese-Bengali script and since the reign of Garibniwaj in the 18th century A. D. the people began to give their cultural expression in Sanaskrit and Bengali language also. By this time the enthusim of the people for their creative literature was on the ebb. But this could not continue for long. Born out of an insatiable urge for promoting mother tongue, a great movement arose in the early part of the twentieth century of which the pioneers included some Europeans and non-Manipuris like Rev. Pettrigiew, Mr. Wince and Ramsundar Roy besides some Manipuris like Makar Singh, Munal Singh, Jatiswar Singh and Haodijam Chaitanya Singh. This movement for fostering the growth of Manipuri Literature was patronized by Sir Churachand Singhgi during his reign (1891-1941 A. D.).

The first printed Manipuri work published by the political agent of Manipur was a book on the history of Manipur entitled "Manipurer Itihas" which was printed in the year 1890. Manipuri literature, Modern in form and content may be said to have started thus from the early part of the 20th century.

a) Novel

The publication of Dr. Kamal's Madhabi in thirties of this century was followed by wide diversity of production of many novelists of different tastes and walks of life. This novelists all relied very much upon a story and they all called up before their reader's imaginations a considerable variety of human personages acting in flesh and dress as their creators describe fresh for his Madhabi-a novel containing a good story told in his romantic style. The novel depicts the sacrifice of an unsophisticated girl. Madhabi who inspired by the noble ideals of self-negation determined to forego everything in this mundane world and dedicate herself of the service of humanity.

Labang-Lata: A novel of Kh. Chaoba based on an important period of the history of Manipur (1597-1652 A. D.) the glorious reign of Khagemba Maharaj is perhaps the Manipuri history novel. A glimes of the reign of Khagemba could be recalled with it pomp and grandeur in the page of this novel and the romantic love theme of Labanga a sepoy and Kunjalata the princess is incorporated to make the novel more romantic and colourful. The whole atmosphere in the novel is highly romantic.

Jahera: A voluminous novel of H. Anganghal Singh, depicts the love between a Manipuri youngman, Kunjo and a Muslim girl, Jahera this is the first novel in Modern Manipuri literature that deals with such a theme. Anganghal writes with passion and a consciousness of the social problems and his attempt in this regard is noteworthy.

Jhadokpa: A novel of R. K. Shitalgit, depicts the principle of service and Karma yoga ss incorporated in the Bhagabad Gita. Second one is Ima shows the unbounded love of maternity and the same theme is again revived in his third novel Ruhini in this case, the love being of a sister for her borther.

Laman, Khudol, Aroiba Paodam and Eikhoi Tada: This five novels are written by H. Guno Singh. In these novels he let his stories ramble on with much of love and abundance of incident. Keeping to story and

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characterization in the traditional way he filled his tales with spirit of romance.

Radha: It is written by Km. T. Thoibi Devi. A novel from a purely feminine outlook. She continued to develop the traditional novel in her generous romantic way, speaking much of the soul.

Marup Ani: A novel of R. K. Elagbam, shows the devotion of the novel to the portrayal of childhood of two infants a boy and a girl in the background of the second world war. The sentimental story of the two infants is told in the novel with sympathy and directness of style.

Jat Onba: A novel of Ram Singh, dealing with the problem of caste system.

Imana Eibu Manghanbani and Eidi Oktabini: This two novel written by Kh. Iboha Singh. The writer shows the sexual conflict of man and woman and seamy side of this expect of human life that remains unexposed as an open secret.

Chaobi: A romantic novel of Dr. Bhagya.

An important aspect of Manipuri novel is translation. Translation have been made from different language mainly Bengali. M. Koireng Singh who translated Bankim's Kapalkundala into Manipuri is the first translator. One of the prominent translators is A. Shyamsundar Singh who translated into Manipuri all the novels of Bankim Chandra besides translating some Sarat Chandra's and Rabindranath Tgores. Another translator of renown is Surchand Sarma who under takes translation of the novels of Sarat Chandra into Manipuri.

b) Poetry

Modern Manipuri Poetry distinctly falls into two groups: the Poetry of Dr. Kamal and his contemporaries representing the early phase and the poetry of more "Modern" and younger poets representing the "Zeitgeist" of the contemporary world picture. The two groups are different in their outlook, style and technique. While in the poetry of the elder group a lyrical outburst and unstinted love of Manipuri after an eclipse of many years are the predominant strains like the twittering of birds in an early dawn, the new poets become more critical and conscious of the declining faith and growing fear in harmony with the major trends in life and literature of this age. Dr. Kamal's Leipareng a collection of his poems, contains beautiful lyrical poems written in the romantic style. Thainagi Leirang of Kh. Chaoba contains among many other themes, poems chiefly inspired by the glorious that was Manipur. Khamba Thoibi Sheirang written by Anganghal Singh. An epic containing 38000 lines and published in 8 volumes based on the legend of Khamba Thoibi is great contribution to Manipuri literature. In the page of the great epic is throbbing the hopes and aspiration, the culture and ideals and above all, an atmosphere of a vast humanity of an age perhaps never to come again. Shingle Indu a long narrative poem containing in parts beautiful lyrical pieces is another important poen of H. Anganghal Singh. A. Dhorendra Singh who wrote Kansa Bodha Kabya an epic poem on the style and technique of Michael Madhusudan Dutta's Meghnad Bodha Kabya is a significant poet of this group. Beside this, there are many other poems say, Tonu Laizing, Sheidam Sheirang, Sheirang Anauba, Vasanta Sheirang, Kabo Loi and Lamja Ani, Ikhou Langba and Ketaki, Shatningbi Khongjom Tirtha, Thamoi Paodam, Wa Amata Haige Talenga, Rekha etc.

In the field of translation from other language, the name of H. Nabadwip Chandra Singh will be remembered for his translation of Michael Madhusdan's Meghnad Bodha Kavya up to canto VI into Manipuri. Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali translated into Manipuri language by S. Krishnamohan and A. Mina Ketan Singh in their own approaches while Kh. Gourkishore Singh translated Kalidas's Meghdoot into Manipuri. Kumar Shambhav, Raghubansa, Birangana Kabya have been translated into Manipuri besides many other important books.

c) Drama

The first Manipuri play Palgalini was stayed in 1905. The name of S. Lalit Singh a veteran actor, director and playwright is connected with the development of Manipuri drama. Ch. Mayurdhwaja Singh and H. Irabot Singh also made significant contributions to Manipuri drama Sati Khongnang Thaba of O. Birmanngal Singh, Kege Lamja of Surchand Sarma. Sita Banabas of A. Minaketan Singh, Imphal Thoibi, Miss Bottle, Matric Pass, Mani Mamou, Helcina Puba, Indiada Nambo Thaba, Looda Mi Changba, Ani Thokna Ching Kahire Thamoi of G. C. Tongbra. The most vital life-blood contemporary Manipuri drama is translation from other language, mainly from Bengali.

Beside this these are many books on short stories, critical essays, Linguiswcs Indology etc are published by the different on Manipuri writes.

d) The Games and Sports

The Manipuris lived a Spartan life and sports and games were popular as much as among them as in the west. Small children play games which formed a part of Lai-haraoba ritual. Elderly people play out-door games of which Khong Kangjei (Foot hockey), Sagol Kangjei (Polo), Lamchel (race), Hiyang Tanaba (Bout race) wrestling, Jhabal Chongba, Jubi Lakpee (Manipuri Rugby), Kekere Ke Sanaba, Khangjing Sanaba etc. the indoor games are Kang Sanaba and Athavi Keiyen or chattrang (chess) etc. Here I am giving the short description of the each game mentioned above.

e) Sagol Kangjei (Polo)

The Manipuri word for Polo is Sagol Kangjei i,e hockey on horseback which was connected with the mythology of creation. It is originated and developed in

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Manipuri and travelled beyong Manipur into the parts to be honoured as it game. According to one account, God Marjing invented it. Great personalities of Manipur in historical times, Such as Luwang Guru Punsiba, King Khagemba and Pamheiba (Garibniwaj) are said to improve this game from time to time. A white ball made of the root of the bamboo called Kangdrum and stick which is prepared from well-seasoned came or a long shaft of bamboo are used in this game. The head of the stick is placed at an obtuse angle to the shaft. The number of players on both parties was generally fixed at seven. It is played even by ordinary villagers. The costume consists of a scanty dhoti, well-tucked up so that thighs are almost bare, a pair of thick woolen goiters reaching from the ankle to the knees and whip in the left hand. The ponies are strong and it bridle is adorned with big pompous colour cotton. On each side of the saddle there are curved shields of leather. Polo is a remarkable contribution made by Manipur. In the book "Encyclopedia Britannica" vol-XII, Page 811 mentioned regarding the Polo game that "The English game of Polo was introduce from Manipur where it forms a great national past times. T. C. Hudron, once an Assistant Political officer in Manipur describes the game thus "To describe the game is beyond the powers of any but an imaginative and practiced pen for in respect of brilliance of play, constant excitement, dashing courage, skill and popular enthusiasm there is no game equal to it. According to the booklet "Manipur A New state", "that the first Polo club of India was started at silchar, drawing inspiration from Manipur Polo and from there it went Calcutta and beyond."

Khong Kangjei (Foot Hockey): The Khong Kangjei (Khong = Foot, Kang = ball or round object, Jei, from root chei = to hit) which is played by every naked little boy on the waste hands surrounding villages. This game held during the Iratpa day of Malem Ima (Durga Puja). It is played with seven players on each side and every player has a stick about four feet long shaped like a hockey stick. A peculiarity of this game is that a player never leaves his opponent. A player is allowed to carry the ball in any manner he likes. He can even kick by hitting it with his stick. During a game a player carrying by a rival player and then they have to wrestle with each other before the ball can be taken up again. This trial of strength is known as Mukna (Manipuri style of wrestling) which has it own laws and is also a separate, original game in it own right. Khong Kangjei is a game which requires much physical stamina, speed and agility.

Lamchell (Foot race): The game usually held in July. It is conducted in basis of Panna. At first there are a race from each panna at a time. The winners are selected for the final trial. The distance to be run by them is half mile. The winner in the trial will get reward.

Hiyang Tanaba (Boat race): It is held during the month of September. This sport still arouses tremendous the people. The royal bouts, two in number, carry symbols of "chingalai" at the helm. Seventeen rowers in each bout pull hard at the oars and the object of the race is for one bout to foul the other and trap it near a bank as it move forward. The bouts are thus close together and the race is generally won only by a boat or two. It is a religious festival where God is worshipped throngh boat race. This game is used with great a caution.

Mukan (Manipuri Wrestling): This is one of the oldest Manipuri sports and is a trial of strength like wrestling anywhere. What make it special is that it is generally played on the last day of Lai Haraoba (worship of the sylvan deity) right in front of the deity as a part of the ceremonial function and the function is not considered complete without this game. In this game the balanced of a man is broken by means of legs on the legs. It is practiced by raising the opponent some three feet high and fell down opponent by means of the right thing or left thing which he raises, it is the fond hope of every Manipuris youth to become Yatra or the best wrester of a particular village.

Yubeelakpee (Manipuri Rugby): Yubee is Manipuri for coconut and Lakpee means snatching. This game is played by the young wrestlers in a fixed area. It is also sometimes played between two sides of seven players. It is one versus the rest, which may be five or fifty. Except for the participants own direction, there is no limit to the number of players. The coconut is so well oiled that it can give the lip even a spike. There is only one goal side.

A man with the oiled coconut stands at the opposite end of the goal. The rest from $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the inch in thickness. A player has to shoot a point from a fixed position. It the parties hit the target twice with the Kang then Lamtha is adopted. Lamtha is played by propelling the disk on it flat side along the surface of the ground by the force of the middle finger of the right hand acting of the finger of the left. At the end of half a duration of the play, interchange of directions takes place of the two terms the one who can hit the target for a greater number by two chekpheis (shooting from a standing position) and one Lamthe is the winner.

f) Dances

There are according to one classification eight kinds of dance. These are (1) Laiharaoba dance, (2) Leima Jagoi, (3) Leisham Jagoi (4) Rasa dance, (5) Notapala Kirtans, (6) Sansenba, (7) Khubak Isei, and (8) Folk dances.

(1) Laiharaoba Dance: Nongpokning thou alias siba one day went to the western hills of Manipur where he saw Panthoibe alias Durga doing shifting cultivation with her parents and others. At the very sight they fell in love with each other. But Panthoibi was married to one Khaba; but he olid not go near her as he saw her as one very

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fearful and ugly. Being unable to bear the pang of separation she eloped to Nongpokningthou and they remained as husband and wife. After their union they staged a performance mainly on the events which took place before their union, beginning from the creation of the world etc, with all the Gods and Goddesses taking parts, which now called Laiharaoba.

The first dance is Shinkaklol, the second one is Leitainungdai and 3rd is paring Lang sang, in these 3 (three) dance the world is created. These are solo or duet. Then came Laipow in which image of God is created for worship. These played various sports by dance and song this is a group dance.

The classical dance of LaiHaraoba is purely a ceremonial dance. It is performed only before the Laisang (temple), after observing necessary and incidental Irat (pujas), of the God for whom the performances is held. The dancers must have a special mode of wearing their dresses. The men must use turbans and dhotis. The woman use Phaneks (a kind of Loin cloth), transparent inaphis (scarf). The antiquity of Phanek can be dated much earlier. The embroidered garland of lotus and bees on it border testify to it. Married women cover their heads with cloths which touch their shoulders. Unmarried ladies wear a crown which is made of red velvet from which the small ribbon of gold hang down the forehead. All events of the Laiharaoba dance have different significance. It has been in existence since the beginning (Pre-historic days) up to this time without any change. Mr. Constantine, Asstt. News Editor of all India Radio, written in his book "Manipuri-Maid of the Mountains", Page-154 that Laiharaoba dance is the mother of all Manipuri dancing and it is the longest festival in the world. It lasts full five months, from February until June and takes place in various parts of Manipur valley, as if arranged in turn. In any village which celebrates Laiharaoba the festival lasts about a fortnight. From birth Manipuri (Meetei) females are born as dancers and every year from babyhood the females begin to take part in Laiharaoba dance invariably.

g) Nota Pala Kirtan

Under the influence of Vaisnavism, the Sankirtan forms (nat) of dance were evolved. The performance of Sankirtan is preceded by the following feautures: 1. Invocation to the images of Radha and Krishna, four earthen pots or Ghatas representing Chailanya, Nityananda and Avdaita and Bhaktas, 2. Beginnign of adhibas in the mandali where the Kirtan of Guru, 3. Upasona of the five Vaisnava saints and bhaktas. The preceding night is spent in singing glories of God and listening to the stories and 5. Night vigil of the owner.

The Sankritan hall (nata Mandap) having a stage, in the centre is erected in a suitable place. It is supported by bamboo pillars and covered with foliage and branches of trees, flowers, creeper and paper-cut designs. The pillars and the ceiling are ornamented with clothes and other decorations. The pandal or central pillar is set apart for the puja. Generally, every temple has a nata mandap attached to it the dimension, design, auditorium and arrangement of the seats are determined according to the religious texts. A piece of cloth is placed on a rounded plantain leaf and is used as the Sana for lord Krishna to sit on. Circular banana leaves cut into decorative designs with lamp, pan and fruits are kept near the Tulasi plant. The arrangement of flowers and fruits amidst the cups of plantain leaves kept in shape by bamboo pins imply the artistic urge of them. A flag is dedicated to the lord to remove obstacles in the performances. Four earthen pots are placed in the four corners of the Mandapa to indicate places of worship.

The artists from a choreography in the centre of the pavilion. Two mridanga players sit on the left and right of the temple resting on the knees and toes. Next to the mridanga players on the left side stands the Dohar followed by others. The other side is formed with Isei Hanba (The main Singer at the middle of the circle). They show dandabat pranama to the assembly before taking their seats.

After the distribution of the incense and flowers and clothes to the artists the Mandap Mapu (President) utter the following a line some distance away from him. The man with the coconut is to run to the goal. Again, there is no hard and fast rule except that punching, beating, and kicking the fellow, in short subjecting him to mayhem, is forbidden. The man starts running with the coconut towards the goal. His opponents close in. They fall on him preventing him from proceeding. A knot of the men wriggling on top of one another. They are all plucking at the coconut simultaneously. All the time the man with the coconut is lying on the gerund unable to get up and unwilling to part with his precious possession. When he gets up or loses his grip, the coconut is snatched away. Immediately the crowd, including the one cheated of the coconut, goes for the new opponent. The man is able to run a few metres with the coconut but not many. Before that the others jump on him like cheetahs. The end of the game comes quicker if the tussle takes place near the goal area and the man is within easy reach of it so that in case he can slip out of the others' grisps, he can dart through the goal signs on time. When he is able to do this, the fresher among the spectators marvel no end at finding the man in one whole piece after all the buffeting and tearing he was put through by his comrades of the meadow.

Yubeelakpee can at times be somewhat tiresome. If the players stand huddle together and stationary with the holder of the 'ball' unable to move an inch in such situation, the referee disperses the bunch and the game start all over again. The person who will

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be winner in this game he will be rewarded with dhoti, shirts, clothes and other native presents.

Kekere Ke Sanaba: This game is only played by the women. In this game a number of women join hands dancing round in a circle and chanting the precious of Raja Chingtung Komba in his fights with Naga to the north.

Khanging Sanaba: This is a game generally used to play in the night when the moon is clear, by males and females of the country. A long piece of bamboo green suitable for the purpose, placed in the middle part. When a party of males, say a dozen or more in number, will catch the same by the one end, and a party of the female sex of the same number will hold the bamboo by the other end, then both party will pull that bamboo with all their might until one of the party is defeated.

h) Indoor Games

Kang Sanaba: This played on a mud floor and consists of hitting target fixed on the floor with a hand, smooth oblong shaped that object called the "Kang". The tradition of this game goes back to ancient times and there is mention of it in the Manipuri epic legend of Khamba and Thoibi. The ruling deity of the game is said to be "Panthoibi". Kang is played strictly during the period between the Manipuri New year's Day and the Ratha Yetra festival. It is a game of two teams each of seven either males or females usually mixed up. A round object Kang which is the seed of the creeper (uri) is used in this game. It is about words (dhavni) "Balaha Prabhu Nityai Chaitanya Avdaitya Kahata Santo Sadhu Masurasa Vani hare hare". The Inridanga players start with the bola "Ten Ten Ta Tak Tang" representing the chaitanya and Nityai the founder of Gerutra Seet. The conch player plays his first blows the conch when the Pung player plays his first movement. It is followed by the alapa (improvised introduction to a melody) of a raga, ta, ri, ta, na and then by bolas and striking of Kartalas. The main singer songs Viz, Sabha Vandana, Guru Vandana, Goura chandrika and Padavali songs in succession. Such songs are necessary in all occasions.

The mridanga players make use of Tintala (Trikuka) 7 beats and 3 stresses, Tanchep (Chatura Shrajati Ektala) 3 beats and 1 stress and Munkup (Tyastra Jati Ektala) 3 beats one stress.

Rajmel has, by and large, become an important cholam in Manipuri Kirtan. It is a kind of dance performed by the palas with seven 7 beats and 2 stresses in the villoon vita laya. Rajmel consists of six party, namely, Bedighata, Lambighata, Melhou or Melbung (the beginning and important part of the mela) seughata, Mel Ahonba (the middle of the mel), and Mel Athaba (The finishing part of the mel). Besighata, Lambighata and Setughata are the rhytum patterns of the mel. At the stage of Besighata all the musicians including the two drummers more anti clock wise up to a full round and prostrate with each other on the ground and then start singing. At Lambighata the body bends a little. It passes to Melhou (Real Rajmel) a definite pattern of shythm in the vilamvita Laya (slow tempo) with seven beats and two stresses. This is followed by Setughata which leads to a movement called Mel Aonba in Madhya laya (Medium Tempo). The Mel is finished in Mel Athaba with a fast tempo (druta laya). In it all people in the assembly short Stobha (sound with no particulars significance). The action pertains to Garuda who carries Radha and Krishna. The singers represent this Garuda. Their movements depict how the bird soars high into the sky sound of the flight is represented by the Shobha ganas. More is thus meant than what it appeals to the sense.

The closing part of rajmel obhinaya is associated with some taboos. No sitting is allowed for the Stobha is to be shouted by the singers and the audience all standing together. It is mentioned in the Sastras that persons who enjoy this dance of the audience number of births. In ancient time, the audience stood up and helped the natas by their clapping in honour of the dance together. But this tradition already changed now. The audience's participation replaced by the blowing of conches as a short cut device.

The Nata Pala artists have a good musical talent which they used to advantage in singing the sacred songs and in injecting emotional elements into the audience. The audience weeps and lies flat on the earth before the drummers and singers as a mark of their humility. It serves as prologue to the Rasa lila and no religious festivals are complete it.

Kartal Chalam and Pung Chalam are riginally part of Sankirtan. At intervals pieces of home spun cloth, money and pan are distributed to the drummers, cymbalists and conch player on behalf of the Sankirtan holders as a part of their dakhina. Another feature is that many pieces of clothes are given to Iseisakpa, Dohar, Khonbangba and two mridanga players who have been recognized as having done eminent service to the Kirtan programmes.

Pung means drum and the chalam mean chalana. As a technical term it means the dance performed by two mridanga players in a nata pala. Pung chalam has a definite role in dhumel with performance of a hundred pung players. The different types of dhumel are enumerated below:

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Type		Patron Kings
Maha dhumel	⟷	Maharaj Bhagya Chandra
Nityai dhumel	⟷	Maharaj Marjit
Gouta dhumel	⟷	Maharaj Narasingh
Lairema (Devi) dhumel	⟷	Maharaj Chandra Kriti

No other dance has ever excited so deep an admiration as did the mridanga talas among other Manipuri dances. The movement of the mridanga player is initially soft and joyous. It gradually gathers momentum till it becomes very vigorous. It is interesting to see how they dip and spin sound around on one foot. It involves a brilliant display of steps, heaps, squats and turns.

The Mridunganga players put tilaka marks on their forehead and put on garments in the form of "Trikata" (The typing of three konts at three places as decreed by the Sastras). In place of the usual turbans, the singers put on special turban (Koyet) on the occasion. They make use of gloves in beating the drums. Of special interest in their chalam is the flicking of head and dropping of the turban into the row of surrounding singers.

Nupa Pala which is a form of Meetei Kirtan came to be identified with kartal or cymbal dance. The palas dance whit cymbals. Kartal which are large cymbals are played by men. The dancers with Dohar (imitator of the chief singer) as it leader performed the rhythmic movements by striking the cymbals. The movements are determined by tune, rhythm and sentiment of the song. The movement relates to head, neck, shoulders, arms, waist, thigh and keens and feet in accordance with the specific points of dance. In appreciating an unique dance like kartal chalam. Faubian Bowers writes "The chief contrast in the choreography of the dance is between the angular side steps of the dancer's feet and the delicate swaying and rounded curves of the arms. A they wave the vibrating kartals, the air is showered with their after tonal resonance. The trailing tassels weave sinuous abstract designs in space. The dance ends conventionally with the dropping of the bells clapping three times, picking the bells up again and then repeating the three claps with bells."

An usual feature of kirtan is the dance performed by the female dancers. It is called Nupi Pala which may be of two kinds according to it nature and place. An example of palace Nupi Pala is Rasesvari Pala and Jalkilepala, an example o fvillage Nupi Pala is seen in the Mandaps in connection with Hindu festival such as Jhulan Yatra, Devi Puja etc. This is dance with small cymbal in which the whole village takes part.

i) Rasa Lila

Rasa lila of Manipur is a word to conjure with. The country has international recognition as a centre of Polo and Rasa lila. The dance of Manipuri has been highly appreciated by eminent poet like Rabindranath Tagore. The Rasa, the epitome of Manipur classical dance is religious. There are certain taboos out of which the following deserve notice according to the ancient codes. Rasa is to be performed after midnight and continues till down. Secondly, it is performed at specific times in specific places, viz, mountain-sides and far off temples. Thirdly, being of religious background the Manipuri Vaisnaves are allowed to enter the mandal in course of the Rasa lila and non-Manipuris have to stand outside it. Fourthly, when the dance starts, the area becomes sacred and no one either the owner or one in the audience can move close to the dancers. Fifthly, it is considered to be a sin to talk or to walk out at the time of Pranama Bhangima (second Bhangima) the spectators cannot move their body. They must remain steady, meditate on god all the time. There is a rule concerning the age limit to the male child playing Krishna in the Rasa. He should be a child of six or seven years so that Krishna's love affairs with the gopeis can be freely brought out in the dance. The age of the gopeis is not restricted. By Rasa lila we mean the amorous play of Radah and Krishna with the milk-maids of Brindabana. It revels the sublime and metaphysical love of Radha and Krishna and of gopies devotion to Krishna, the full incarnation of God.

It is held that Sri Gobindaj appeared to Joy Singh in a dream and reveled the mystic dance to him. In another vision the lord command the kind to engage his own daughter Sijalairobi to play the role of Radha in the dance. King Joy Singh was the father of Rasa Lila. He carried out his promise to lord Gobindaji with the help of Pandit well first Manipuri Rasa Lila to Sri Gobindaji on the 11th day of the bright half of the month of Mera/Krattika, 1779 on the occasion of the installation ceremony of Sri Gobindaji. A new technique was evolved by him by making a wise selection of all dances then prevailing with the touches of what were commemorated in Brindabana. He has substituted the following names for those used in Laiharaoba. 1. Tintala (7 beats and 3 stresses) For Sinkalon (Nongdon Jagoi) 2. Rajmel (7 beats and 2 stresses) or Leitai Nogolai and 3. Tanchep (3 beats and 1 stress) for paring Lamsang. Several elements must have contributed to the evolution

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of this Rasa dance. The king showed great skill in mastering all branches of learning, specially song, dance and drum beating. Laiharaoba has been transformed beyond recognition into Rasa by him. The nucleus of Rasa developed from and name of the Laiharaoba.

The Manipuri Rasa can at best be divided into following kinds.

Maha-rasa: A great rasa celebrated on the full moon of Karttika (December).

Kunja-rasa: Arbour rasa performed during Dasara on the 8th day of the month of Aswin (Nov.)

Vasanta-rasa: Spring rasa played on the full moon day Chaitra/March–April.

Nitya-rasa: Everyday rasa performed at any time.

Diva-rasa: Day time rasa performed in all seasons.

Nartana-rasa: Rasa performed on appointed days only.

Asta Gopi and Asta Syam: A rasa held in April.

The first origin of the three dances are attributed to King Joy Singh and the rest evolved during the time of Chandra Kirti Singh. The rasa performances have gone through a fairly chequered history.

The first three rasas may be classified into two, viz, Sri Gobiuda rasa and Vijay Gobinda rasa according to another forms the abhisara. the images of Raseswari (at first Sija Lairoibi) and Gobidaji were placed at the centre of the rasa madala. It is a dance with two images in the centre and the gopis dancing around them. In the role of abhiaras are present. Most of the rasas performed in the villages belong to the second type.

Maha rasa: The Maha rasa has been set forth particularly in Rasapanchadhyai of Bhagavat Purana. On the full-moon night of Karttika, Lord Krishna reaches Brindababa to perform Rasa Lila. Radha and the gopies maddened by the love of Krishna, enchanted with the melody of his flute left their home and the joy of dance. It also contains the Bhangi Pareng Achouba and Brindabana Pareng as the gopies to well come the lord is depicted. In the second part (actual dance) the gopies including Radha thought out of their pride and fortune, that Krishna loved them most. The third part depicts the disappearance of Krishna form the gopis, jealous and love-lorn made tedious search and implored the trees, birds and animals to find Krishna. Radha threatens to kill herself in the celebrated lyric called Gopigita. The fourth part depict reappearance of Krishna to meet all of their the gopis premseva towards Him, questioning, Him by the gopis, His answers to their questions and a Jalakeli. He multiplied Himself and danced cosmic rasa and with each. It shows how God hankers after true love and how egoism cannot be the means of self-realization. The dance closes with a message of Krishna urging them to return home.

Kunja rasa: Kunja rasa depicts the daily play of Radha and Krishna in the Kunja (a bower) of leaves and flowers made by their companions. The pretension of Radha to spurn the amorous advance along with the separation is precluded in this dance. After performing abhisara (setting out to meet the lord), they give a vivid description of Brindabana dance Bhangi Paring only. The rupa barnan (description) and Parthana continued after the Bhangi till end of the dance. It ends with offering of Kunja arati in which the whole audience takes part.

Basanta rasa: This is the dance performed by Krishna with Radha and other gopis in the spring season/sajibu. There is an injunction which is laid down for the performance of this rasa among the people. It means that the village rasa is not allowed unless it is first performed by the palace. But such injunction are not appropriated to those Manipuri villages which are located outside of Manipur. On the full moon day of chitra (sajibu) which makes the spring festival of colours and holi, the dance is conducted to commemorate the rapprochement between and Radha after a painful separation. The chief feature of this dance is the emergence of Chandravali, a rival of Radhika whose claim for Krishna has been a constant interest in the Gauria Vaisnavism and even more particularly in Manipuri Vaisnavism. It consists of the following items (1) It begins with the singing in praise of Brindabane by the Sutradharas to be followed by abhisars; (2) The next portion is constituted by aberkhela; (Sprinkling of vermilion),, Krishna's is love for Chandravali, Krishna's dance and Radha's resentment and leaving of the rasa mandal. (3) The third part pertains to Krishna's discovery of the blue veil vhich Radha had thrown away in her Jealus fury. Krishna makes advances to her with the help of Lalita and Visakha. The last part deals with the scene where Radha angry, because of his relation with Chadravali pretends of Spurn his advances. Krishna in his plea to be forgiven speaks, "Dehi Pada Palava mudaram", I fall prostrate at your feet. Without your love I cannot live. Take pity upon me. Place your feet which are as lovely as lotus petals upon my head. "Radha half pacified tenderly reproaches Krishna. Then she joins him to perform the rasa.

Nitay rasa: This is an addition by King Chandra Kirti Singh in which the abhisara and happy play of Radha and Krishna are shown in dance. The concept of disappearance of Krishna and the separation and reproaches of Radha are left out of account. King Chandra Kirti founded the variety of rasa which features prominently.

Diva rasa: According to M. Amubi Singh, Diva rasa was introduced. It is performed in ordinary Sari. In Nartana and Asta Gopi and Asta Syam there is an interesting dance between one Krishna and eight gopis namely Lalita, Visakha, Citra, Campakalata, Tungavdya,

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Indurekha, Ranga devi and Sudevi. In the latter is shown the sport and dance of eight Krishna and eight gopis. Nartana rasa is also founded by King Chandra Kirti Singh. It is also performed as the usual daily rasa on appointed days only. Such other types of rasa I.e. Haisya Sangi were similar to Nartana dance.

j) Costumes, Ornaments and Make up

It is but proper, to say a few words about the costumes, Ornaments and make-up of Manipuri Rasa-Lila. The costume was seen in the dream dance of Shri Gobindaji by King Joy Singh who desired the ritual. In Langon Langdai (a scribed to King Joy Singh) the dresses, mode of dressing ornaments are described in detail. It is indispensable for the performances of rasa according to the unbroken tradition of Manipur. The ornaments and make-up were created by the makes who take to the duty of washing, cleaning and dressing the dances properly. A potloi Setpa (a ornaments) rents them out the performance. A suit of such costumed usually last forty of fifty years since they are seldom worn. The rasa costume for Radha and gopis also is used in marriage ceremony. The style of hair dressing varied with the type of rasa.

They follow some rules as far as practicable. For Moharasa the dancer's hair is done in the form of a coil at the top of the head. For Kunja-rasa the hair knot is at the side of the head while in Basatarasa as well as in other Lilas, the hair is worn in a knot at the back of the head. They usually do their hair with flowers round the coiffeur. Followers form an important item in the hair dressing of Manipuri dancers.

The costume for Krishna consists of blue silk dhoti which signifies the blue God even though he is traditionally described as wearing yellow garments (Pitovasa). His face always painted white and not blue. In dressing on the rules of Krishna and Balarama the maker must observer the rule that he should begin form the toe and go slowly up the head. On the head of Krishna there is a crown of flowers topped with chura (Fan-like piece embossed with silver, Jari and peacock feather). Bracelets, arm-banols, anklets and profuse arnaments are in different parts of the body. He carries a silver flute tasseled with flowers.

The costumes for Radha and gopis are the same except in Diva-rasa which is performed in Sari. It consists of an embroidered brightly coloured silk skirt, a black blouse, a short flair of silver gauze over the silk skirt, a girdle round the waist and a veil covering the head serve for them. The skirt of green for Radha and fed for gopis is richly decorated with coloured stripes, sewed bits of mirrors, gold appliqué and some patterns. In design the skirt resembles the mirrored and embroidered skirts of the milk maids of Guzarat. The skirt is so designed as to hide the part of the body of the limbs. It is called Kumin. At the waist over the top of the skirt is a wide flounce into lage waves and extend almost straight over the card board lined skirt. It is called Poshwan which is made of silver Jari and framed mirror. It is about 5 yards in length. The blouse which they call Resham Phurit is of green or red velvet. A round the head a dancer weres a thin muslin veil studded with glittering mica and gold or silver stars. The veil is of white, purple green or red colour. For the Maharasa the veil hangs in front and covers the entire face as well as back. There are various ornaments for the head, breast, waist, neek. They are valuable articles of Manipuri work man ship. Rings, bangles, bracelets and armbands of gold form item of hand. Ornaments of the foot are made of silver Jari beads and sequences. Ornaments of the hand and foot are common the Krshina and the gopis.

k) Sanseba (cowherd dance) and Gaura Lila

Gopal Gostha lila is performed in Karttika Saptami. Sri Krishna's game, his association with pastoral boys, Yasoda's love for her son is depicted in this dance. The young Krishna and Balarama are taught by Narada the tasks of cattle breeding. The gopas request Yasoda to send them to the task of tending the cattle in the field. Yasoda does not approve of it for feat of demons. At last she agreed coupled with Krishna's own request. Krishna, Balarama and the gopas perform Kandukakrida, ball game and dance with éclat.

Then they go to Tandava forest where they fel the tree of the forest. They feel hungry and eat the fruits. Dhenukasura, the master of the forest rushed toward the gopakas in order to kill them. Balarama and Dhenukasura have a serious combat after which the former kills the demon with his mighty plough. then they start playing again. Another emissary of Kansa named Vakasura comes there. He arums the form of a huge raven, catches Krishna is his beak, but Krishna ultimately destroys the demon.

l) Udukhala (Lila)

Krishna childish tricks and practical jokes with gopas and gopis form the main subject of this dance. He in association with the gopas steals curd, butter, and milk, and when questioned, accesses someone else. He organizes children's raids into the orchards of cowherds, teases and harasses the gopis. They lodge complaints with Yasoda against him. On hearing them, Yasoda (Mother) ties him to a udukhala (Mortar) with a rope sound his waist. Krishna extricates himself from the rope. He drags the mortar after him. It falls on it side and rolls after him till it get struck fast between two trees which are up rooted and fell down.

m) Vasak and Khubak Isei

Vasak and Khubak Isei are the dances for girls and women alike. Khubak Isei is the dance performed to the accompaniment of musical sound made by the clapping of hands. The Manipuris perform the latter in connection with ten-day Rath-Yatra of Load Jagannatha. Khubak Isei became very popular in Manipur after the

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Manipuris accepted the Gauria form of Vaisnavism. Khubak Isei is in two forms i.e., the tandava form and the Lasya form. The Tandava form manifests it-self in the height of virility and Lasya form assumes artistic fineness. Both in Khubak Isei and Vasak, one mridanga player is requisitioned. Vasak has some differences with Khubak Isei. Vasak can be held in all seasons. Khubak Isei is to be performed involve the use of clapping of hands that Khubak Isei speaks about, since the palas use Mandila (small sized cymbals).

n) Folk Dances

There are a number of colourful Manipuri folk dances, the most well-known of which are the Jhabal-Chongbi (Jumping into the moonlight night), dhol and tafat dance, Augrihangen, Chingkheirol, Thengkou and Khana Thoibe dance. Most of them have a religious back ground.

A Thabal chonghi performance which begin shortly full moon day of Phalguna (Mach-April). Young men and women form circle with hands joined to each other. The participants at first echo the words of one Isei Hanba (Principal Singer) who stands in the centre of circle. The leader of the group intermittently starts "Haribol" (Hail to God) and sings religious song.

The progress of this dance is proclaimed for miles around by the rhythms of dholak, a common instrument peculiar to this dance. When the dance progresses, they go round jumping anti-clock wise. They may either walk straight around the circle of form the movement of a Python i.e. Lairen Mathek chatpa. In Lairen Mathek participants form two or three rows according to their numerical strength and dance by walking sideways, wearing back and forth and progressing forward very slowly. Lf it special movement is the swinging of the sight leg over the left followed by the left leg over the right. Faubion Bower says "The meter is simple four-four and the dancer's locked hands rise and fall with the swinging legs. While continuing the jumping, the circle from time to time breaks and an inter wining chain is formed which winds in and round the dance area". Atombabu Sarma holds that the Meeteis have been observing this dance since the earliest time. In this the dancers imitate the rising of Usa or the rays of the day break. Hence it is called Ke-Kre-Ke chongbi.

The performance of this dance in early times was Keiyen, in honour of God Sanamahi who in anger threatens the destruction of the world. In the chronicle is set forth how this event takes place. It is related that Pakhanba, the younger son of Guru Sidaba wins the throne by the advice of his mother, Leimaren Sidabi. It is ordained by the Almighty that Sanamahi and Pakhanba should rum a race round the world seven times and the winner obtain the thorone of Kanla. Pakhanba round s the throne of Guru Sidaba seven times that he has done the tour. He is duly recognized as the rightful successor of the world. When Sanamahi returns the world from his weary circumambulation, Pakhanba proves to him that he had returned much earlier. When the fraud is discovered, Sanamahi is infuriated and rushes at Pakhanba. The Violence begins to tell upon the world. Guru Sidaba sends nine Gods and seven Goddesses to supplicate Sanamahi. They encircle Pakhanba by holding each other's hands and jumping anti-clock wise so that Sansmahi can not break the circle. They sing songs which are in the form of riddles and overall effect is to called Keiyen or Ke-Kre-Ke Chongbi performed in an open air with two persons. i.e. Sanamahi in the sole of a tiger outside the circle and Pakhanba in the role of a cock inside it. They enact the theme of attempt of the life of the people to stop the tiger. When the person representing Sanamahi (tiger) attempts to enter the arena the dancers prevent him. When he succeeds in entering the arena within encircle of dancers, the dance provides say easy path to Pakhanba to go out on the arena.

In the 18th century Thabal Chongbi and Ke-Kre-Ke dance were merged with Yaosang (Dola-Yatra) festival. Thabal Chongbi dance lasts for six days beginning from the 15th Lamda (February-March) purnima (Full-Moon day) to the 20th Lamda. Night is considered to be the appropriate time for the performance of this dance. Both Ke-Kre-Ke and Thabal Chongbi appear to be performed by young boys and girls. By the length of their arms they form into a ring at the courtyard or any open air space.

Augrihangel and thenkou, Principle of classification being the constructive and destructive aspects of God. Augrihangel is a dance of victory which symbolizes the ways and means of a good government. Both thenkou and augrihangel are performed to mark the properity and destruction of a particular country. The conquest of a particular country and the appeasement of a terrified deity are the occasions for this dance.

Chingkheirol is a dance of ancient Meetei Sadhakas (Spiritual aspirants). It is a Lasya type. Khamba-Thoibi dance appears to have been current among the people in the pre-Vaisnava period. It is duet of male and female partners, a dance of dedication to God Thanjing in the dancing ground. It is a dance which tells the story of a village youth, Khamba who fell in love with Thoibi, the Princess. Khamba married Thoibi after a series of heroic feats, but it all ends in an unhappy death at the hand of Thoibi through inadvertence. The exile of Thoibi (Loikumba) by her father and the coming back to Moirang are also depicted in the dance and song. This dance through extremely by the generality as based on historical facts. The dance has been given religious value by the scholar and the pedan.

o) Marriage and other Related Ceremony

The institution of marriage was governed by certain rules of exogamy and endogamy. It was ordained that a marriage should not take place within

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the same Yek or gotra and in that sense it is exogamous. A part from it there was another Sairuk tinnaba (Sairuk exogamy) which related to the prohibition of marriage among persons who are of the same mother but of different fathers. Prohibited range of marriage is contracted if the persons belong to different Haram (descendants of persons coming from the west or the east). A Mayang Ningthouja (people from the west and merged in Ningthouja Salai) may marry a Meeithei Ningthoua (Pure Ningthouja). It came into vogue in later times. Inter-caste marriage was not encouraged in most cases. The endogamous attitude has somewhat relaxed and softened in later times. The marriage of a Brahman bridegroom with a Ksatriya, Vaisya or Sudra in Gaudharba form of marriage is sanctioned by society.

In short, a marriage in order to receive social sanction had to be endogamous as regards caste (Feli into diuse later) and exogamous as regards the Yek-salai or gotra and sapinda relations. Ostracism is a serious matter which entails the ex-communication of the society as well as of the family. Those who married within the prohibited degree of kindred then they are made out caste.

The Manipuri society recognized eight forms of marriage namely, Brahmya, Kaiva, Arsa, Prajapatya, Gandharba, Aura, Raksyas and Peisaca. The first of marriage is described as suitable in the society. In caste of elopement the bride and bridegroom and kept separately and the moment the parties succeeded in performing the ceremony in the form of Brahmnya rite, the former (Raksyas) marriage rises to the status of Prajapatya. If, on the other hand they fail to observe the rite, it goes down to the level of Gandharba. A valid form of Gandharba marriage must involve some performances in which the bride has to par through Loukhatpa (receiving into favour the woman by the guardian) Tin lai Thaba (offering of articles to the deity). In the latter, special articles are brought by the bride. The Kabok (Mudky) is dedicated to a family God and distributed among the people.

In marriage bridegroom's father ordinarily initiates the proposal. When bride's father is agreeable grooms father, in his absence, his elder brother of any male near relative with some elderly men and women go to bride's house taking sweets, fruit and Nan. Bride's parents and some neighbors remain waiting at the house of the bride. Then dedicating some of what is brought to the family God and others they were distributed to all present and the parents of the bride and the bridegroom embrace each other and prostrate to one another and the function is thus finished and bride and the groom are thus bethroted. This ceremony is called waroipot. After some days the same ceremony is held in a more pompous form which is called Heijpot. The auspicious timing is fixed by the astrologer. In all these ceremonies the Manipuris fostered custom in which the bridegroom's party goes to the bride's house with special articles say sweet, Pan and other things with a basket containing rice covered with a cloth called chiruk Nungsang which is placed at Phunga Lairu a small hole near the fire place (Manipuris original Place of Worship) on the day of marriage.

The actual marriage ceremony commences with the arrival of the bridegroom's party at the Mandap where is performed the Sankirtan. The bride is received by the mother of the bridegroom at the gate. Three torches are kindled and parched rice are thrown over the bridegroom. Then the priest recites the mantras and the ancestry of the pairs up the great-grand parents. Then Sapta-Paradaksina takes place; the bride walks seven times round the groom to the sound of the mridanga. After completing each round the bride casts flowers upon the groom's head. Then they seat side by side on a bench which is placed at the centre of the marriage Rall. Garlands are mutually placed by them. The chaders of the bride and the bridegroom are fastened together. Suitable songs are sung a that moment.

After marriage the bride is taken to groom's house with her dowry. The Phanek is folded in opposite way. All the baskets and box containing dowry are kept closed by the bride's party. In the morning of the fifth day of the marriage groom's party goes to bride's parents house and open this Chiruk Nungsang hangba. And in the afternoon of the same day the bride's party go to groom's house and those basket and the box and the Phanek is folded in the ordinary way, which is called Lubakchengbon-Kaiba. In all the marriage ceremonies special articles are taken for the family Gods by both the parties and those articles are dedicated to the family Gods of the families, which is known as tinlaithaba and is the most important and essential ceremony of marriage. A feast takes place on the fifth day in the house of the bride. This is called "Mangani chak kouba". At the 7th or 8th month of pregnancy a special puja is performed by Maibee which is called Kokthok Chamthokpa and on the sixth day of the delivery (in the morning) another puja is done by the Maibee which is called Yupanthaba. And at night Sasthi puja is performed according to Shastras.

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