

## Muslim Institutions in Manipur

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Muslims came into Manipur by the beginning of the 17th Century A.D. Since then there has been a continuous immigration of Muslims into Manipur. They are known as Panggan by the Manipuris. According to the report submitted by the members of Muslim Panchayat during the reign of Sir Churachand Singh, K.C.S.I., C.B.I. there were about 40 (forty) Muslim Sub-Clans (Yumnak) in Manipur.<sup>1</sup> But according to Prof. Janab Khan's 'Manipuri Muslim' the number of Muslim Yumnak in Manipur is about fifty. The largest number of Muslim settlers belong to that group which had been captured as war prisoners in 1606 A.D. during the reign of King Khagemba. Those war prisoners were allowed to settle in Manipur by the King who provided them with land, food, wives and other facilities. The number of prisoners captured was about 1000 soldiers and attendants altogether.<sup>2</sup> These new settlers were given their respective occupation and they began to participate in the administrative affairs of Manipur by attending 'Lallup'. For the safeguard of the interests of this minority community several institutions were established.

The main objective of this paper is to contribute a few important clues towards making a history of the muslims of the early period of this territory. It is pity that the young Muslim scholars of Manipur have no free access to indigenous sources.

The important Muslim institutions or offices that were prevalent during the reign of King Khagemba were :- Panggal Shanglen, Panggal Phundrei, Panggal Ingkhol, Panggal Ingkhol of Keikhong, the department incharge of Shinga pipers (Shinga- a kind of musical instrument) and Kazi Loishang

The 'Mangol Shanglen' that existed earlier was later converted into an institution entitled as Mughal Shanglen for the Muslims of Manipur after the immigration of a few Mughal princes during the reign of King Paikhomba.<sup>3</sup>

These institutions as well as their management were in force in Manipur from the 17th Century to 1891 (This paper will not study anything about the Muslim institutions during the British and post British period).

(i) **Panggal Shanglen**

This was the most important of all the Muslim Institutions/Loishang in Manipur. In the Shang (Office) the Shanglen-lakpa presided. This was the office which supervised and looked after all the Muslims of Manipur and all the Muslim offices or institutions in this territory. Besides this the institution was entrusted with the task of collecting fodder for the royal horses, elephants, muthuns etc. The Muslims who attended lallup in this office were responsible for this task.<sup>4</sup> Those Muslims who served in the capacity of state army also attended this office and performed usual lallup of an army. They were under the control of Shanglen-Lakpa.

(ii) **Panggal Phundrei**

The Muslims who were on lallup duty in this office performed all the works related with lathes (Phundrei). They manufactured hookah vase, Hookah stem, tip of pe (a kind of Umbrella used by the kings and nobles) etc. by means of lathes. The technicians must attend Leikhong (another State office) for engaging the pullers there.

Some of the Muslim technicians relating to Phundrei attended another royal office 'Yarek Shang' and performed lathes works. There they made fleg tip, smoking pipe of the hookah, Phei (stand for earthen pots), legs of stools, book stand, legs of the Shairuk (a kind of bamboo basket) with a lathe.<sup>5</sup>

(iii) **Panggal Ingkhol**

Those Muslims who were on lallup duty in the Panggal Ingkhol of Khombitok Heinoukhongnebi engaged themselves in growing and supplying suger cane, pulses, all kind of flowers, corriander, Pankhon (eatable herb), hop (a herbal plant) Chantruk (eatable herb), Kaba (an eatable seed), Afang (intoxicated seed) etc. They ought to supply the seeds of these herbs and plants. One man was to pay six measure of molasses and pulses each. They must also supply seed of the onion,

**(iv) Panggal Ingkhol of Keikong**

This Ingkhol (Ingkhol-Kitchen garden ; but in reality it was royal farm for vegetable) was entrusted with the task of growing mustard, garlic, onion, taro (specially for its root) as well as supplying their seeds, roots and leaves.<sup>6</sup>

**(v) The Department of Shinga Pipers**

All the men who attended 'lallup' in this office performed the task of piping Singa (Musical instrument) when the king went out, in the war, in all religious ceremony and in the death rites of the royal family and to attend the Lakpa of the Four Panna.<sup>7</sup>

**(vi) Kaji Loishang**

King Khagemba established this institution for the Muslims only with a view to settling any dispute that arose out of the Muslim customs.<sup>8</sup>

**(vii) Mangol Shanglen**

The details of this institution are not available. It can only be learnt from oral tradition.

**Conclusion**

It has already been mentioned above that the main objective of this paper is to lay before the public the indigenous sources about the Muslim institutions in Manipur.

After a study of the composition and functions of the several Muslim institutions, we can get some invaluable pieces of information. Firstly, the administrative system under the early Meitei Kings was very commendable and far sighted.

Secondly, the minority groups were well looked after and offices were established for safeguarding the interests of the minority community.

Thirdly, now it is quite imperative for the historians and scholars of Manipur to discover all those published and unpublished especially dealing with the administrative system of Manipur from the earliest period to the British period.

Fourthly, I would like to suggest that after a careful study of the Muslim society and institution in Manipur the lost part of the Mughal history can be constructed

Lastly, I am of the opinion that there was a well established lallup system and the division of labour in ancient Manipur.

#### Notes and References

1. Panchayet Report, submitted by the Muslim Panchayet and signed by its five members that existed during the reign of Raja Churachand Singh, K.C.S.I.
2. L. Ibungohal & Khelchandra, *Cheitharol-Kum-Baba, Imhal*, pp. 21-22,, *Khagemba Lanpha* (unpublished chronicle), p. 1.
3. Bhogeswor and Janab Khan, *Nongshamei Puya*, p. 104 ; *Panggan Thorakpa* (unpublished chronicle), p. 106.
4. *Thougal Muslim* (unpublished chronicle), p. 30.
5. Ibid., p. 25; *Shangpanabagi Muslim*, p. 23.
6. Ibid., pp. 28 29.
7. *Thougal Maslim*, p. 35; *Leiloi Lingkhatpa*, p. 1.
8. *Khagemba Lanpha*, p. 5.