

**GANGMUMEI KAMEI**

**ON HISTORY  
AND HISTORIOGRAPHY  
OF MANIPUR**

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**History is the study of the past but it has become a mode of intellectual enquiry. What is the philosophy of History? Is there a philosophy of History? This book is an attempt to answer this question. Prof.**

**Gangmumei Kamei raises several metaphysical issues of History. His analysis of the Historical Method—particularly objectivity and interpretation is of great interest. He deals with historiography in Manipur. His interpretation of regional history of Manipur will be of great interest to the scholars and persons who are interested in the History of Manipur.**

**Professor Gangmumei Kamei is a retired Professor of History in Manipur University. He has written extensively on history and culture of Manipur. He continues to involve in the academic and social issues of Manipur. He combines in himself the role of an academic and social activist.**

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Gangmumei Kamei

*a lover of knowledge and discipline*

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## FOREWORD

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## FOREWORD

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It is a matter of great pleasure for me, both for intellectual and personal reasons to write foreword to Prof. Gangmumei Kamei's book *Philosophy of History and Historiography of Manipur*. The contents indicate the wide range of intellectual concerns covered by Kamei in the book. Many of these are of interest not only for the students of history but also for the students of anthropology and philosophy. I am glad that Kamei agreed to my amplifying some points so as to highlight the interdisciplinary character of his endeavour.

Earlier I had published a brief tract *Anthropology and History : Future of Past*. In my venture to amplify some of the points in Kamei's book, I had a quick second look at it, as well as at some of the books, I had gone through at that time and later. As I have freely drawn upon them, I should make a mention of some of the more important ones, *Indian Society: Historical Probing in memory of D.D. Kosambi* (ed.) R.S. Sharma; *The Problems of Philosophy*, Satischandra Chatterjee; *History of Western Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell; *Forecasting the Future*, Henry Winthrop; *A Vision of India's History*, Rabindranath Tagore; *D.D. Kosambi : On History and Society* (ed.) G. Syed; *The Past and Prejudice*, Romila Thapar; *Anthropology as a Historical Science* (ed.) Mahipal Bhuriya and S. M. Michael; *Explanation and Understanding in Human Sciences*, G. Mahajan, *Anthropology and History*, Evans Pritchard. I have also re-examined the chapter, "Issues in methodology" in my book, *Tribes in Perspective* and Kamei's

earlier publication, *History of Manipur*. I am not mentioning here the well known philosophers of history, like Braudel, Collingwood, Meyerhoff or ethno-historiographers like Cohn and Trigger whom I had covered in my earlier write-up on *Anthropology and History*, and whose writings I have not re-examined on this occasion.

In writing about philosophy of history, I feel it necessary to try to understand what philosophy is all about. As mentioned by Kamei, "Collingwood regarded philosophy as a thought about thought". Clearly the title is towards intellectualism. For ancient Indian thinkers, philosophy is not merely an intellectual understanding of the truth, nor a matter of blind faith and unsteady belief. It is a direct knowledge or clear realisation of knowledge. This knowledge is to be attained through purification of the mind and contemplation of the self. It seems that Bertrand Russell's concept of philosophy in its wider sense, moves in the same direction. In his words, 'Philosophy is something intermediate between theology and science. like theology it consists of speculations on matters as to which definite knowledge has, so far been, unattainable, but like science, it appeals to human reason rather than to authority, whether that of tradition or that of revelation'.

One may not be unjustified in suspecting in this formulation traces of Locke's epistemological dualism. According to this the mind never directly perceives anything external to itself what it knows directly are its own states and processes-sensations, perceptions, images, ideas, etc. But from certain experiences of the mind, we can infer the existence of external objects as their causes. It is, however, difficult to say the sense-perception, whether internal or by itself external, gives us knowledge about reality, including the reality of historical process. But philosophy is not also mere initiative experience of reality. For many thinkers, particularly ancient Indian thinkers, philosophy is a

combination of experience, reasoning and contemplation. This, in its turn, implies that reason *per se*, is not a way of knowing facts, but a way of rationalising or systematising our knowledge or facts. In this perspective, the dichotomy between scientific concept of philosophy and the concept of metaphysics or the study of reality as distinguished from appearances is very much reduced, if not obliterated. It is in this perspective that Collingwood's idea of metaphysics as a historical science of the absolute presuppositions of scientific thought at any period of history assumes its significance. Again this provides a key for transaction of philosophy of history to the realm of science filtered through metaphysics. What, however, is not generally noticed in this transaction, is that science itself is partly relieved of its Baconian load and acquires a qualitative humanist hue. Perhaps, this provides a way out of the difficulty that Bertrand Russell faced in defining philosophy.

As noted by Kamei, according to Collingwood, philosophy of history is the enquiry into the special philosophical problem created by the existence of organised and systematised historical research. This apparently posits two operational strategies for a practitioner of historical research. One operational strategy is to carry out "organised and historical research" according to the methodology of historiography and then delve into the philosophical implications of the output of the historical research. The other operational strategy is to ingrain the essence of philosophy in the historical research method itself. Collingwood, as distinct from the Positivists, has opted for the second strategy. "All history is re-enactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is studying". But how does this reenactment take place? This is a problem common to modern ethnography and history and perhaps to all the human sciences. According to Chinese Taoist philosophy, the highest attainment of man is the identification of man himself with the reality of things. This

identity is not a concept of mediation or rational synthesis of the subjectivity of man and the objectivity of things. It is the direct spontaneous mutual solution which takes place at the absolute moment in his approach, rooted in ontology provides a backdrop for philosophy of history; but it is difficult to operationalise in historiographical research.

From critical realistic perspective, Herbert Read suggests, "We see what we want to see, and what we want to see is determined not by inevitable laws of optics, or even by an instinct for survival, but by the desire to discover or construct a credible world". This is reflected in the Euro-centric writing of the Western philosophers during the dawn of the colonial era. It was none other than the great philosopher Hume, who wrote in 1748, "I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general for all other species of man ( for there are four or five different species) to be naturally inferior to the whites". Then again in his observations on the beautiful and sublime, Kant (1764) claims that the fundamental difference between the black and the white races of man appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in colour. And yet Kant was a philosopher of the sublime. Hegel, echoing Hume and Kant, claimed that Africans had no history, because they had developed no system of writing and had not mastered the art of writing in European languages. Levy Bruhl tried to establish the impossibility of philosophical dialogue and obvious non-existence of a tradition of organised philosophical system among the peoples of Africa. As against these great seers of the colonial era, Asike, a contemporary African scholar writes about the philosophical sagacity that permeates the world-view of the African peoples.

The feasibility for re-enactment in the historian's mind, the thought of those who are being studied may perhaps be derived from some of the anthropological traditions.

The Hermeneutic theory of the nineteenth century often spoke of the circular structure of understanding, but always

within the framework of a formal relation of the part and the whole or its subjective reflex, the intuitive anticipation of the whole and its subsequent articulation in the parts. According to this theory, the circular movement of understanding runs backwards and forwards along with the text and disappears when it is perfectly understood. As against this approach Heidegger describes the circle in such a way that the understanding of the text remains permanently determined by the anticipatory movement of fore-understanding. The circle is neither subjective nor objective but describes understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter. The anticipation of the meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity but proceeds from the communality that binds us to tradition.

Hermeneutic understanding is close to Husserl's phenomenological approach. In his philosophical system neutral field of consciousness or 'intuition essence' is a priori self evident and may also be prelogical. Here, the concept of prelogical does not imply 'illogical'. What Husserl means is that the principles categorising Western thought may not be present in the thinking of the entities under study.

Drawing upon Herber and other theorists in the same wave length, Mahajan begins with the assumption that when we choose a particular mode of explanation or understanding an object, we construct the object differently from the ones that are not chosen. Apart from hermeneutic understanding, the modes chosen by us are causal explanation, reason-action-explanation and narration. Underlying causal explanation is the belief generally held by social scientists, that the nature of reality is based on order rather than chaos and that much of this order has to do with cause and effect sequences among phenomena that he cannot scientifically prove with certainty that any given relationship among phenomena is one of cause and effect. Because of

this, he may not even use the terms 'cause and affect' in his communications; instead he talks about relationship among variables. Mahajan has drawn attention to another dimension of causal explanation. Several theorists suggest that linking together of two variable objects points to the existence of a law which may or may not remain unstated. But they argue that it follows from a covering law-model, and that a successful prediction is an attribute of a scientific explanation. It, however, seems that those who hold this view fail to differentiate between prediction and prophecy. Prediction implies a perception of probability, prophecy implies a claims of certainty. While predictions in social sciences have a lower probability of success, than those in physical sciences, this by itself cannot be a ground to abandon the causal relation enquiry. At the same time, this cannot be the only mode of approach to reality. One of the others, is reason-action explanation. In this framework actions are distinguished from events and intentionality is the distinctive attribute. This approach assumes that historical agents are rational persons; they choose a particular cause of action because they feel that this would enable them to pursue and realise their goals, desires and interests. One of the pitfalls in this approach is that it fails to take note of the role of subconscious in the reason-action-paradigm.

The narrative mode upholds a series of happenings about an identifiable and determinate objects. Reference to one continuous object provides coherence to the story and offers basis for indentifying all those incidents that are relevant for explaining the event. As distinct from chronicle, it presents every event in the series as a consequence of the mediation of the action of different agents. The difficulty in this approach is that "consequence" tends to be assumed on a single causal basis. In such situations many would argue in favour of multi-variant analysis, but this means complete rejection of phenomenological approach. Which is associated with the

humanist engagement of the researcher with his own self. In this context hermeneutic understanding all already discussed becomes relevant.

But hermeneutic understanding presupposes 'psychic unity of mankind' as postulated by many thinkers even in the ancient ages and reaffirmed in anthropology by Bastian in the late 19th century and by Evans Pritchard and others in recent decades. Structuralism of Levi Strauss has elaborated it with great sophistication.

In Straussian framework, societies differ from one another just as their surface grammars differ but there is a deep common. Levi Strauss believes that basic thinking occurs as sets of contrasts; day and night; black and white; life and death. Such dualism shows up in the superstructure in various ways, for instance, in moiety organisation and in myths. What is, however, important to note is that Strauss does not see deep structures as determinative and causal but as providing surface variety. Though there are universal deep structures, cultures are also moulded by their physical and social environment. Obviously, Strauss prefers to be cautious and draws an intellectual rabicon line. But Leach does not have any hesitation to cross the rabicon line and speak of "inspired guess work".

Consciously or unconsciously, many historians go in for "inspired guess work". But then one has to win the hurdle race of establishing the authenticity. Truth and error are characters of judgements or propositions which are verbal expressions of judgements. To establish the authenticity of the understanding of a historical event or historical situation, the pertinent questions are: how truth and error are constituted and how they are known or tested. Chatterjee suggests, that there are four main theories of truth and error which bear on these two questions. These are known as the intuitionist, the coherence, the pragmatist and the correspondence theories of truth and error.

According to the intuitionist theory, while truth is intrinsic to one kind of knowledge, error or falsity is intrinsic to a different kind. Such assertion that one is seeing two moons in the sky can be immediately invalidated as a statement of error; but judgement about truth remains problematic. Subjective certitude or consciousness of objectivity as such, cannot be accepted as a test of truth.

There are two main schools, namely, Logical Positivists and Hegelians holding the test of coherence. To realists coherence as a criteria of truth may mean the agreement of one kind of experience with those of a different kind, or it may mean consistency of one belief or judgement or proposition with other so as to form a system. The idea of samvada which is accepted as a test of truth by some Indian logicians brings out the first sense of coherence as agreement among different kinds of experiences. Thus, the visual perception of an object is found to be true when it coheres with, i.e., agrees with the tactual and other kinds of perception of the same object. The other idea of coherence as a logical consistency of beliefs or judgements in a system is endorsed by Bertrand Russell, L. T. Hobhouse and others. But Russell qualifies his acceptance of the test of coherence by stating that while it increases probability, it can never be given absolute certainty, unless there is certainty already at some point in the coherence system.

Hobhouse is in the same wavelength as this approach and calls it 'consilience'. According to him validity below to judgement as forming a consilient system.

In Hegelian form of coherence theory, a system of thought may be formally consistent but materially false, and therefore, not true. For them truth in its essential nature is that systematic coherence which is the character of a significant whole, and significant whole as an organised individual experience, self fulfilling and self fulfilled. This, however, implies a process, which is dialectical in character. When an

entity or event appears the thesis appears; it is countered by the emergence of its opposite-the antithesis. The conflict between the two resolves itself as a synthesis, which, taking some elements of both thesis and anti thesis elevates both, bringing about a new and higher event. In turn synthesis becomes thesis, is negated again by its antithesis, resolving again in a new synthesis. The measure of historical truth lies in the grasp of this process. The historical event, although irreversible and autonomous, can nevertheless be placed in its dialectic, which remains open but at the same time conforms to the plan of providence. Hence 'it has a model in the dialectics of spirit itself and the dialectical method of Hegel stands or falls with its fundamental assumption that thought and reality are identical. This would have been true, if when we think of anything the thing always comes into existence. This criticism does not completely deny the role of idea in history; but it is obvious that coherence between idea and reality as in Hegelian framework is of limited validity. The pragmatist theory of truth and error is advocated by William James, E.C.S. Schiller, John Dewey and others. James postulates that an idea becomes true in so far as it leads to certain experiences which verify it and it is useful in so far as the experiences it leads to fulfil its function in one's actual life. In other words for James, truths are processes which possess only one common quality, namely, they pay. In Schiller's theory 'true' is the term for the positive value of successful prediction and is opposed to falsity which is the negative value of a failure to predict. Pierce who first introduced the word 'pragmatism' defines truth as follows: "The opinion which is fated to have been ultimately agreed to by all who investigate is what we mean by truth and object represented by this opinion is real". This means that truth is the ideal which we are to attain by endless scientific investigation and that a particular statement or proposition is true in so far as it is provisionally established by investigation.

Dewey's theory of truth agrees in the main with that of Pierce. But he prefers the words 'warranted assertibility' for knowledge or truth. The pragmatists are not satisfied by the agreement between our ideas and their corresponding cognitive experiences. They insist further on the agreement of the ideas with such other experiences as result from our activities in relation to the objects represented by the ideas. It has been criticised by many that in actual life situation, this approach, reduces "the true" to "the useful" and thereby obliterates the distinction between truth and error.

The correspondence theory exists in many forms. First the old school of common-sense or naive realism, according to which truth and that all our normal perceptions are true in this sense. But if every knowledge or experience reveals objects as they really are, we cannot explain how different persons perceive differently as sometimes opposite qualities in the same thing at the same time.

The theory of naive or natural realism with correspondence notion of truth is presented in a modified form by new-realism. Some of the new realists suppose that there is a structural identity between the content of knowledge and the object known. They adopt a searchlight view of consciousness and speak of it as a cross section of reality. Just as a searchlight by playing over a landscape and illuminating its different parts makes a separate section of them from other parts not so illuminated, so consciousness is the cross section or collection of objects illuminated by it and the things themselves become contents of knowledge. This approach involves an element of selection in the focus of the searchlight or in other words in the "attention" of the consciousness. One may, however, ask whether it is a matter of accident or is determined by some agent?

The question of determination will be addressed to separately. As regards new-realist theory of correspondence, it is criticised that even if it is true in case of visual and tactual

images, it hardly holds good in case of other kinds of images and far less of ideas and percepts.

Modern critical realism approaches the correspondence theory of truth from a different vantage point. According to it there are three distinct factors in any knowledge, namely, mental state, data and object. The data of knowledge are the character complexes through which the object is presented to the mind. In case of some data only (i.e. those presenting primary qualities), we may say that they are in a sense the character of things or objects. Knowledge is true in so far as it corresponds to its objects in the sense that the character complexes through which the objects are known are identical with the real characters of those objects. But in complex historical situations, the data may be incomplete, may be perceived out of context and in such cases the knowledge may be erroneous.

There are also other types of correspondence theory of truth, relevant for historical research method. According to one, truth of knowledge means its correspondence to some experience; according to another it consists in its correspondence to some fact which may or may not be experienced. The first is called 'epistemological' and the second, the 'logical' theory of correspondences.

According to epistemological theory, a judgement is true when it agrees with given facts or experiences, and false when it fails to do so. Against this formulation it is argued that if the truth of a judgement consists in its correspondence, not to an independent object, but to a mere presentation, then even an illusion will have to be regarded as true knowledge, since there is in it an actual presentation of the illusory object.

The logical theory of correspondence is advocated by Bertrand Russell. According to him a proposition is true when it corresponds with some real occurrence or fact. There seems to be a parallel in logical realism of Nyaya school of Indian

philosophy. The Nyaya believes in an independent facts. According to it, the truth of knowledge consists in its correspondence with objective facts, while coherence and practical utility are the tests of truth in such cases in which we require a rest. It defines truth of all knowledge as correspondence of relations.

While truth consists in correspondence, the criterion of truth is, for Nyaya, coherence in a broad sense. But coherence here is different from what objective idealism projects. The Nyaya coherence is a practical test and means the harmony between cognitive and conative experiences or between different kind of knowledge.

There is a point of view that different theories of truth as discussed may be shown to supplement one another. Perhaps this is possible, if as Mandelshohn suggests, exchange and amalgam of elements of different propositions and perspectives is effected. An outstanding example of this is antagonistic amalgam of elements of Hegelian idealistic dialectics and dialectical materialism of Marx.

Marx found in Hegelian dialectics, a frame, which from the opposite end, could be used for materialist appreciation of history. Dialectic materialist analysis tries to demonstrate that the production of the means of existence exercises a determining influence upon all other human activities, thus conditioning social, political and spiritual processes as a whole. It is in this sense that the production by men of the material conditions of their life is the tool of history. In producing material goods, people simultaneously produce themselves as social individuals, as the result of their productive activity is always, not only use values, material and spiritual values, but society itself, man himself as bearer of social being. For this reason, the history of the development of social production is always the history of social development of individuals, their own history, and vice versa. Dialectics enter into the process through mismatch between means of production and

relations of production leading to relentless struggle for new equation. From Marxist perspective Kosambi observes, "History is the presentation in chronological order of successive changes in the means and relations of production."

Dialectical materialism is misinterpreted by many to mean economic determinism; but on this, Engel's letter to J. Block written in 1890 should have served as the corrective. In the words of Engels, "According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have even asserted".

Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless abstract, senseless phrase". In the same letter Engels gave great importance to political forms, constitution, juridical forms, religious views also. This in a way envisages the importance of the history of specific social entities (Marxo-history) in grasping the process of transformation of mega-social formation. The term more in currency is ethno-history rather than micro-history. I would have gone in for the term micro-history. But as Kamei has used the term ethnohistory in his book, I am sticking to the same in the Foreword to the book to avoid confusion. Ethno historical enquiry is not only related to the probe into the subaltern life-scape but is related to the totality of human life scape. History of humanity is, in the long run, indivisible, ethno-history in isolation is mutilation of history.

Trigger has observed that of late ethno-historians are turning to anthropology for fulfillment of some of their professional requirements. He, however, makes a distinction between ethno-historians and conventional historians. Ethno-historians habitually rely more than conventional historians, upon oral traditions and other sources of data, such as archaeology, historical linguistics, physical anthropology and comparative ethnology to supplement the written records.

B.S. Cohn further differentiates between ethno-historian and colonial historian. Usually ethno-historian has first hand field experience, knowledge of indigenous society and its functions; thinks in systematic functional terms, rather than in terms of accidents and particulars, uses his general knowledge of social and cultural organisation and constructs his units in terms of such concepts as 'segmentary lineage based society', 'peasant society', 'patrimonial society', tries to perceive historical events from position of the indigenous peoples, rather than of administrators and is more interested in the impact of colonial policy and practice than in the genesis of these policies in the metropolitan society.

This differentiation between ethno-historian and colonial historian by Cohn while reflecting the perspective or cultural pluralism, seems to be rather too formal in appreciating the meaning of history. While ethno-historian will have to give primacy to the non dominant indigenous point to view and to the micro context in its temporal depth, he need not confine himself to the micro-context only. Micro context in temporal depth is only the starting point, and in terms of this operational strategy, the so-called ethno-history is micro-history. But micro-context must not be ignored. Otherwise there would be hardly any difference between him and the colonial historian. For instance, one can take up the 19th century history of North East India, as presented by a colonial historian, Mackenzie and as presented recently in a historical monograph. Mackenzie had first prepared in 1869 a *Memorandum on the North East Frontier of Bengal*. Later in 1884 he brought out a revised publication, *History of relation of the government with the hill tribes of North East Frontier of British Bengal*. The shift in focus from one publication to the other is quite important. In the first one, the geo-political context of the colonial rule and its objective becomes important; in the second, one can completely ignore geo-political context and overall colonial commercial and strategic

interest and project the relations of the government with the hill tribes as informed by altruistic intention of carrying out 'the white man's burden' against the backdrop of intertribal conflicts or antagonistic relations of the tribal peoples with Ahom rulers. In fact, this is exactly what Mackenzie had achieved in his second publication. Unaware of the over all colonial policy, not only many among tribal peoples agree with him, but as a recent historical research, under the aegis of a renowned Indian University shows, some non-colonial historians also agree with him. In the research publication referred to, an Assamese scholar had described the British administration in the early 19th century as revolutionary in character. Giving priority to the improvement of the general conditions of the people, Jenkins suggested, "it could be done by the operation of the land survey by ascertaining and fixing every man's possession and defining the demand of the government upon each individual". "The common people who were not involved in the resentment of the deprivation of rights and privileges of the nobility but had to suffer from a miserable life due to political turmoil, devastation caused by famine and economic oppression were naturally satisfied with the change of administration". After saying all these the scholar however admits that "a newly adopted measure of the European Government to impose tax on all kinds of lands including the waste lands and those so far considered as tax-free, created dissatisfaction among some people". Even than the scholar failed to take note of the fact that by this approach, vast tracts of communal lands were usurped as state land and a large area was leased out to tea-estates, most of which belonged to Europeans and another slice of large area was declared as state owned reserved forests. Chon's normative approach to ethno-history does not guard against this type of lapse. In fact some recent trends in ethno-history's concern seem to be moving in the direction of creating capsules of history for influencing the historical process. Wernhart, for instance, after stating that from the methodical point of view,

ethno-history uses the historical method but in its interpretation it proves to be an ethnological discipline, convenes itself as structural history and tries to show by means of this research approach the cultural changes and development that have taken place in an ethnic group observes that ethno-history thus constructed is necessary for implementing same programmes of exogenous origin.

Such trends confirm the observation made earlier that Cohn has failed to take note of the dynamic aspect of history itself. As observed by Teggart, the contemporary historian presents only such matters as from his views are of importance. The historian sets out to create a whole and his whole is of necessity the organisation of a body of facts from the point of view of some a priori interest. In the philosophy of history, Meyerhoff mentions that value emotive meanings, ideological concepts invariably enter into the study of history. These are subject to change and social climate.

In the contemporary world, where macroscopic view of human situation is percolating all sections of society, this dynamic perception of the meaning of history has also been discussed by Kamei in the present book as a corrective against universalising the particularistic "Universal" of the West.

It is obvious that there is no unchanging past. With shift in the focus of interest in the world view of peoples the contour of the past will go on changing. The future of the past is thus a continuous present. With a slightly different reasoning Evans Pritchard presents a similar view. He distinguishes the effect of one event from the memory of the event. As memory is socially selective, perception of the past goes on changing. Proceeding further Pritchard observes that, perhaps it is in this sense that Croce had stated that all history is contemporary history.

In the second part of the book Kamei has discussed in considerable detail the historiography of Manipur with

particular focus on the life history of Meitei polity. He mentions that traditional Meitei concept of history is expressed by the Meitei word *puwari* (story of forefathers).

An interesting fact of historiography of Manipur was that the person who is believed to be the first historical king, *Pakhangba*, was preceded by the divine *Pakhangbas*, but the historical *Pakhangba* was not originally claimed to be divine. Divinity was later imputed to him. The time of *Pakhangba*'s reign is ascribed by some to 33 A.D. But others to 3rd/4th century A.D. It was only on the mid-17th century, that *Khagemba*, indisputably claimed divine kingship of Manipur. These two flash points in Manipur's history are worth being reflected upon.

Here it may not be irrelevant to recall what Machiavelli stated in *The Prince*. Kingdoms known to history have been governed in two ways: either by a prince and his servants, who as ministers by his grace and permission against in governing the real realm, or by a prince and by barons, who hold their positions not by favour of the ruler but by antiquity of blood". These are two pure types of kingdom organised on patrimonial principle and feudal principle. But in actual historical situation there would be various permutations and combinations of elements of these two principles. In Manipur there has been always permutations and combinations of elements of these principles and the shifting permutations and combinations, are along with other things, related to changes in the boundary of the kingdom as well as to the changes in the social composition of the peoples brought in subordinate relation to the king, either as direct subjects or as subsidiary allies or as tribute paying population through the straps recognised by the king.

It seems that after passing through a phase of confederacy of extremely localised polities, *Pakhangba* succeeded to establish a patrimonial kingdom with a limited jurisdiction. For a long time the fiat of his successors also did not cover

the whole of Imphal valley. Around the later part of 11th century, when the Ningthouja King Taothing Mang a distant successor of Pakhangba attempted to cross Angom territory, to help his brother in irrigation work, he was challenged by an Angom archer of Funan village for trespassing into their territory. The king was injured by an arrow of the archer and the place where it happened was called Nganglau (blood-red place). It was only expansion of the jurisdiction of the kingdom through conquests by successive kings involving twist and turns strain to the pluralistic ethos, cherished by the people. Historiography is not mere method of history; historiography is also a vacuum cleaner of history

Prof. B.K. Roy Burman

Chittaranjan Park,

New Delhi

## INTRODUCTION

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**On History and Historiography of Manipur** is an anthology of research papers on different aspects of the historical method and regional historiography of north-east India and Manipur written at different times. These papers deal with the analysis of the historical philosophy, historical method and different aspects of historiography concerning Manipur. There are a couple of papers on interpretation of history. This book was earlier published by Manipur University Research Club where the members were the research scholars. And the circulation was more or less limited to the research scholars. The earlier title was "Philosophy of History and Historiography of Manipur" (1997). There are many requests from friends that the work may be reissued. The original publishers, the research scholars belonging to different academic disciplines are now well established in their professions. Professor N. Joykumar Singh, Director, Centre for Manipur Studies of Manipur University took the initiative for the present publication for which I thank him with a sense of satisfaction and gratitude.

I would like to reproduce an extract from the preface to the earlier publication in which I wrote, "History and Historical studies have been my life long profession. Now history has become a highly theoretical academic discipline. It is now recognized as a social science with all its ramifications. It has been a convergence of circumstances that I could come with contact with some of the brilliant minds

of the country, leading historians, anthropologists, sociologists, economists and men of letters. As a social activist, I have been exposed to the complex realities of a plural society like Manipur. These two exposures strengthen my academic roots. And I have learnt a lot from the indigenous social laboratory of Manipur. I have tried to apply the multi-disciplinary approach in tackling several research problems including historical issues. As a student of history, I have always tried to understand the meaning, significance, concept, method and interpretation of history. The papers of the volume were earlier published in different journals. Sometimes, these papers will appear lacking cohesion, and not having a comprehensive and systematic exposition on philosophy and historiography.”

I express my gratefulness to the past research scholars for engaging me to formulate my thoughts on the historical problems and social science research issues when I was teaching History in Manipur University. I would like to mention the names of Dr. L. Bishwanath Sharma of Philosophy Department of Manipur University, K. Jitendra Sharma, L. Gojendra and Mrs. N. Nalini for their help.

I have retained the highly illuminating metaphysical foreword to this book, written by Professor B.K. Roy Burman for which I am extremely grateful to him. I thank Shri Nilmani Singh, Shri A. Kamei and Dr. Ram Kamei for the cover design

I am also thankful to Shri M.P. Misra, the proprietor of Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi for publishing this book at a short notice.

Imphal

11<sup>th</sup> April, 2006

*Gangmumei Kamei*

Gangmumei Kamei

## ON HISTORY

"We have called history the 'Science of men'. That is still far too vague. It is necessary to add 'of men in time'."

**Marc Bloch**

"All history is history of thought and therefore all history is reenactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is studying."

**R.G. Collingwood**

"History is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past."

**E.H. Carr**

"Historian's duty is to separate the truth from the false, the certain from the uncertain."

**Goethe**

"Historiography is not mere method of history; historiography is also a vacuum cleaner of history."

**B.K. Roy Burman**  
from the Foreword

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