

MANIPUR

TREATIES AND DOCUMENTS

(1110-1971)

(VOLUME ONE)

Naorem Sanajaoba



Manipur, known as 'Meetei Leipak' or 'Kangleipak' in the two millennia old Meetei manuscripts had experienced some form of constitutional government under a proto-Constitution in 429 A.D. which was reduced to a final format in 1110 A.D. Constitution entitled 'Loiyamba Shinyen' during the regime of King Loyumba. Manipur's State Constitution Act, 1947 was the final document embodying the genius of the people of Manipur, which preceded other constitutions adopted in many of the South and South East Asian countries.

Manipur's love hate and war relationship with Britain commenced with a treaty in 1762 and was put to test in two successive Anglo-Manipuri wars in 1891, which created storm in British public opinion in Britain. The *Times* and *The Daily News* of London poured in the events continuously to the British public. The debate in British Parliament covered more than 200 pages on Manipur. The native rule under the limited protection of the crown was continued. Manipur merged with the newly born Indian Union in 1949. The selected treaties and historical documents will enlighten some of the obscure events in the history of Manipur.

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A member of nearly a dozen international and national legal forums of repute, he had contributed more than a hundred research and socio-legal papers and articles in a number of national, regional and international conferences or forums. His published works are: 'Industrial Tribunal Working, Procedure, Judicial Trends', 'Socio-legal Problems and Developing Society', 'Law and Society: Strategy for Policy Choice 2001.' He has edited with an introduction and article of his own, 'Basic Issues on Center-State Relation'. He has edited three volumes of Inter-disciplinary and Total History and a book of Treaties. Volume I of Manipur Past and Present was published in January 1988 and Vol. II in 1991.

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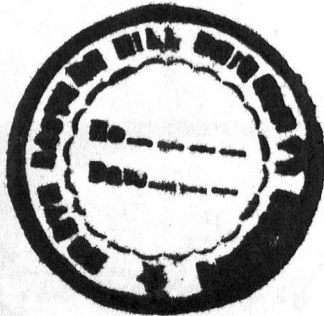
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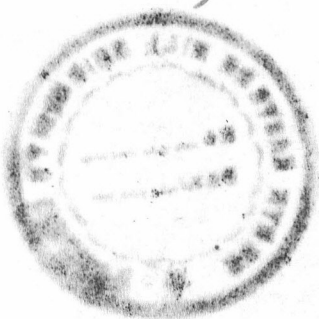
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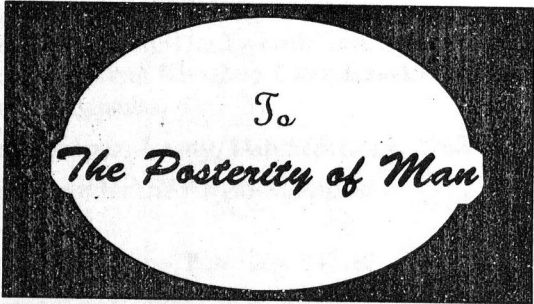
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To

The Posterity of Man

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INTRODUCTION

Manipur, which was rightly known in the ancient and medieval Meetei manuscripts—one of the richest intellectual heritage in South East Asia—as 'Poirei Meeteileipak' or 'Kangleipak' had its *situs* practically equidistant from the Indus Valley Civilization in the west and the Hong Ho Civilization in the Far East. A comprehensive account of the land, people and civilization of the two millennia old state had been given in the treatise 'Manipur: Past and Present—The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilization' volumes I, II and III, which attempted to present a total or complete history of this South East Asian Civilization.

The Meeteis who happened to be a small ethnos in the pre-Christian era had widened its fold by assimilating six other major ethnoses or sub-nationalities, which enjoyed considerable political autonomy till the assimilation. As the things stand today, despite its ethnic significance which would normally be too narrow to be pointed out, the term 'Meeteis' had gradually widened for historical reasons to incorporate in the recent past western immigrants of different cultural roots under the terms like 'Meetei Bamons' (Meetei Brahmins) and 'Meetei Pangals' (Meetei Muslims) etc. The political integration would be complete and more adequate, should all the native and indigenous ethnoses in the state indicate a liberal attitude to the wider connotation of the term; however, the ethnic processes in the state are yet to reach a plateau stage, since many ethnoses are vigorously participating in the moulding of sub-nationalities or nationalities, although in the plain area the process of national formation passed through the universally accepted stages of the formation of clan and tribes as early as the pre-Christian era.

The entire achievements in the history of the state happily belong to the Meeteis and her sister ethnoses. The Meeteis had a

centralised administration for at least two thousand years and (under the political Constitution of King Naophangba in 429 A.D., which was reduced to writing in 1110 A.D. by King Loyumba), they had the opportunity to defend the country through thick and thin— even at the cost of more than half the Meetei population, which was lost, following the Burmese invasion in the early 19th century and also at the cost of the lives and glory of Meetei king, generals, prince and nobility, following the second Anglo-Manipuri war in 1891 and even at the cost of many young lives in the wake of a number of mass movements following and after the merger of the state with the Indian union. Naturally, the documents and treaties of the state have to be primarily related to the central administration, although the purpose for which they were meant, had to serve all the people of the ancient state. One could easily fail to comprehend the total achievements recorded hitherto in the history of Manipur—historically known as Poirei Meetei Leipak Kangleipak—lest the unique contributions of the Nagas and Kukis of the realm should be given full credit by the historiographers and the social scientists in equal measure. The history of the realm belonged to the Meeteis, the Nagas and the Kukis; this sense of belonging transcends the rhythms which the common past had passed through. The two major ethnoses comprising of 29 ethnic components at present had been ethnically linked with the ethnic Meeteis in the past, although religions which had treir sway from outside, had considerably distanced them culturally—not politically and socially not economically. The achievements of the Meeteis in history would have been impossible without the large scale contribution of the 'Nagas' and the 'Kukis' of Kangleipak of the past or of the present state of Manipur. The oral history, folk tradition and other auxiliary sciences of historiography give solid testimony to the above facts. Every folk tale would repeatedly refresh the memory of the future generations that they were brothers born of the same parents at certain point of time in the past, and they led their own cultural encounters in their own ways for survival and the question who achieved more or who achieved less is less relevant for the purpose of a people's history wherein every individual or group is significant.

The documents, treaties and instruments of the past legitimately belong to all the indigenous people of the present state,

who were the real masters and managers of these instruments at the relevant periods of time. The publication of these documents would be of considerable use to historiographers, social scientists and policy-makers inside and outside the country. The editor-compiler of the volume would have found the compilation nearly impossible without the help and assistance of institutions of eminent academics who had extended unreserved co-operation in many ways. This has already been acknowledged in *Manipur: Past & Present*, volume I and also in the present volume. The editor would fail in his duty, if he does not express his warm appreciation of the magnanimity and dynamic entrepreneurship of the youthful publisher, Sri K. M. Rai Mittal who is at the helm of affairs of Mittal Publications, New Delhi.

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