

GANGMUMEI KABUI

**ANAL:
A
Transborder
Tribe of
Manipur**

Foreword by
B. K. ROY BURMAN

095
417

F233
284

ANAL—A TRANS-BORDER TRIBE OF MANIPUR

GANGMUMEI KABUI

Foreword

B.K. ROY BURMAN



MITTAL PUBLICATIONS

DELHI-110035 (INDIA)

ben
NE
301.451095417
KAB

1985

© Gangmumei Kabui (1941-

NEHU Library
Acc. no. 159409
Acc. by 23303
Class by 12/11/87
Sub. Heading by
Cata. by
Transcribed by

Published by :

K.M. Mittal
MITTAL PUBLICATIONS
B-2/19B, Lawrence Road
DELHI-110 035

Distributed by :

MITTAL PUBLISHERS' DISTRIBUTORS
1856, Tri Nagar,
DELHI-110 035.

Printed at:

J.N. Printers, Padam Nagar, Delhi-110 007.

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Foreword</i> | <i>ix</i> |
| <i>Preface</i> | <i>xix</i> |
| CHAPTER 1 | |
| The Anal Country | 1 |
| Chandel Sub-Division | |
| Chakpi Karong Sub-Division | |
| Tengnoupal Sub-Division | |
| Manipur South District | |
| CHAPTER 2 | |
| The People—Their Origin and Migration | 6 |
| Origin of the Name | |
| Migration | |
| Physique | |
| Anal Identity | |
| A Short History | |
| Population | |
| CHAPTER 3 | |
| The Anal Society and Culture | 14 |
| Mojety Paratry | |
| Life Cycle | |
| Birth | |
| Birth Ceremony | |

Naming Ceremony
 Marriage
 Types of Marriage
 Negotiation
 Zupum
 Hmalsa
 Chalsa
 Death and Death Ceremony
 Cultural Life
 Games & Sport

CHAPTER 4

The Religious Life 23
 Gods of the Sky
 Deities of the Earth
 Household Gods
 Concept of Souls
 Rebirth
 Concept of Sin
 Land of the Death
 Concept of Heaven
 Sacrifices
 Nungha Megaliths
 Coming of Christianity

CHAPTER 5

The Village Polity 28
 Constitution of a Village
 Cheitship
 Origin of Khullakpa

CHAPTER 6

The Economic Life 33
 Chakpi River and Anal Economy
 Roads & Communication
 Marketing Centres
 Education
 Occupation
 Nature of Land Use and Ownership
 Agriculture
 Animal Husbandry
 Cottage Industry

CHAPTER 7

General Observation 49
 Inter Village Migration
 The Problem of Identity
 Chiefship

Appendix I

Anal Khullen—A Profile of the Oldest
 Anal Village 67

Appendix II

The Economic Life of an Anal Village :
 —A Case Study of Saluk 80

Index 97

Foreword

Anal habitat is sandwiched in the north by the Naga areas of Maring and Tangkhul tribes and by the Kuki-Mizo Chins of Chin Hills of Burma in the south. To the east is the Shan inhabited Kabaw valley and to the west is the Meitei inhabited Manipur valley. In Manipur there are 45 villages exclusively or almost exclusively inhabited by the Anals. In Burma also there are three Anal villages. Thus the Anals are a transborder tribe, also historically Anal habitat was a buffer zone in between the organised kingdoms in Manipur and Burma.

The problem of buffer communities, which also from time to time play the role of bridge communities is, a matter of considerable theoretical importance. While it is in the interest of the organised states to ensure that the buffer and bridge communities maintain their socio-political identity, such states also try to extend their sphere of influence over the buffer and bridge communities. In other words maintenance of distinct identity by the buffer and bridge communities does not necessarily mean equidistance from the communities which constitute the core of the organised states. This is reflected in the various conjectural explanations given for the origin of the name Anal. All explanations link

up the origin of the name 'Anal' with the Meiteis, in one way or the other. One of the explanations is that 'Anal' was derived from Manipuri word 'Nanba' which means "clean" in contrast to the Burmese name 'Khyen' or "unclean" for the Anals. Obviously while the Burmese perceived the distinctiveness of the Anals, this distinctiveness in their view was tainted with the Meitei brush. But in the regional mythology, the Anal habitat also represented the limit to Meitei hegemony in the early ages. The Ningthoural Lambuba records that a first century coloniser who travelled all over the kingdom passed through a place in the hills, slipped over a messy ground and fell down. The place where he had slipped was named 'Anal' as in Manipur 'Nanba' also means slippery and from 'Nanba' it was corrupted to Anal. Obviously the etymological chess-board is the subjective projection of the meaning of history. But as will be indicated later subjective projection is the time bomb of the future.

In a logico-rational framework it is easy to perceive that if geography and need of surrounding kingdoms for a bridge-buffer zone foreclosed the idea of the creation of a kingdom, it had several implications for the life of the Anals. They were not expected to generate surplus for the market. If they did, fluctuations in the flow and terms of transactions of commodities would have led to the intervention of one or the other of the organised state powers. Circulation of commodities could take place either through annual cycle of festivals at village and inter-village levels or through periodical raids and exactions. Also there could be conspicuous destruction of own property for earning social prestige.

All the three modes of disposal of surplus were found to exist among the Anals in varying degrees. It however appears that circulation of products through inter-village festivals had a less important role. This suggests that buffer role of the Anals in between the Meitei kingdom and the unstable kingdoms in Burma was more important. It is in this context that Pethas or strongmen who at different periods led the tribe to victory in inter-tribal feuds have come to occupy a special place in the lores of the tribe.

Though the Anals did not form a kingdom, their political organisation did not remain stagnant. Prof Kabui has given an indication of the evolution of the political organisation of the Anals. This is reflected in three terms used for a village chief: Khurwung, Kolapa and Khullakpa. Khurwung means chief of the village, Kolapa or Kholpu means owner of the village and Khullakpa is a Meitei word, which stands for the administrator of the village. Historically some villages had a treaty of subsidiary alliance with the Meitei King; those villages had only Khurwung and no Khullakpa. But some villages were also under direct subjugation of the king. These villages had Khullakpa. Prof. Kabui has given a case history of how in one village the office of Khurwung was reduced to that of a Khullakpa by the King. The differential reckoning of these two offices continue even now among the Anals and allied tribes of the region. The concept of ownership of the village associated with the functionary called Kolapa or Kholpu is a complex one. Among the Anals land within the jurisdiction of the village is considered to be owned

by the community. But within this broad perceptual configuration there are various shades of rights. One right is the right of serving as the bond between man and nature through invoking the intervention of the supernatural. Kholpu represents this right. Thus he symbolises the unified hegemony of the tribe over the wild animals found within the jurisdiction of the village. He is owner of the village in this limited sense. When a game is hunted, he gets a small portion of the meat as a token of his right. But as regards access to the land, forest and other land based resources. Kholpu does not enjoy any special prerogative. Subsumed within communal right there is also right of individuals over land, developed by them for wet cultivation. Use of this right is however regulated by community norms. Besides, the individuals having rights over particular plots of land, cannot pass out the same to outsiders without the consent of the village community. It seems that there is considerable confusion in official quarters about the land system prevailing among the Anals and as a result an attempt to carry out survey and settlement operation in the area had to be abandoned in the midway.

The political process among the Anals has undergone some change with the introduction of statutory village authorities. But it seems that in the long run the moral norm of the traditional village authority prevails. And for this there is good pragmatic consideration. In post-independence period while many benefits are flowing to the tribal area through development activities, depletion of resources is also taking place as a result of commercialisation of forest products and agriculture. The

tribal communities are aware that as isolated political entities it will not be possible for them to safeguard their interest or to take advantage of the welfare schemes. A race for identity expansion ensues among them. This takes place in two forms; for which I have in several publications used two terms; infra-nationalism and proto-nationalism. When the process of identity expansion is promoted by the traditional elite, through adapting, the functioning of traditional communication network to serve the modern needs, it is infra-nationalism. But there is also a phase when the motive-force and direction of identity expansion can be provided by the educated elite, through modern type of formal association. Such a process can be termed as proto-nationalism.

While both infra- and proto-nationalism are movements for expansion of identity, there is an important difference between the two; apart from the differences in the nature of elite and medium of communication. The constituents of infra-national mobilisation are basically concerned with protecting not only their traditional control over the resources associated with them, but also with retaining the traditional pattern of the use of the same. They are essentially moral entities. They are aware of the functioning of the nation-state power; but their response to the same is in moral terms and not in political terms. On the other hand proto-national entities not only strive to retain their traditional resource base, but also demand share of services and resources developed by the welfare state. Also without striving for independent power, they expect share of state power. The proto-national entities are also likely to represent what Arrighi

et al. describes as "fusion of class and status group in a nation-state perspective, where the nation-state is a part of the world system", based on profit maximisation and featured by perpetuation and accentuation of disparities.

For the crystallisation of the proto-national process of identity expansion, emergence of an educated elite as a distinct social category, and large scale commercialisation of indigenous resources is necessary. Among the Anals though there has been some spread of education including higher education, it is difficult to say that educated elite as a distinct category, having controlling voice over the affairs of the community, has been able to consolidate itself. In the context of the prevalence of insurgency in the region for about two decades till the mid 70's, quasi military, underground elite was both a brake against and a partial reinforcement of the educated elite. In the given state of the development of infrastructure in North East India as a whole, as also for geopolitical reasons, commercialisation of products has also not taken place on a significant scale. Hence at this stage the process of identity expansion among the Anals is taking place broadly in terms of the parameters of infra-nationalism, with occasional forages into the realm of proto-nationalism. As in infra-nationalism the overall framework of social action, seeks its legitimisation from traditional sources, the statutory panchayats introduced in the area, have also to conform to the traditional norms.

Apart from intra-community social relations, the pattern of the inter-community social relations also tend to derive its sanction from tradition. But as in case of conjectural history, in identifying contem-

porary features of tradition also a selection process goes on. As a result, the orbits of identity expansion as well as the levels of identity expansion go on changing and thus reflecting their identity dilemmas. The first dilemma centres round the question of fundamental alignment in the cultural landscape of the region. As mentioned by Prof. Kabui in the present monograph and a number of earlier papers, John Shakespear in his 'Lushai Kuki Chin' (1913) described the Anals as an old Kuki tribe. Following him many anthropologists, administrators and some persons belonging to the tribe itself, have grouped the Anals with the Kuki fold. But during last two decades, most of them started to align themselves with the Nagas. Broadly in this region, these two groups represent two ideologies relating to control and management of land based resources. The Naga ideology focusses on communal system of control and management of resources; the Kuki ideology accepts the prerogative of the chief to a much greater extent. Articulating with these two ideologies, the procedures for choice of chiefs also differ in these two constellation of tribes. In Naga frame of social action, the chief is elected by the people; in Kuki frame chiefship is hereditary. While Anal dialect is closer to that of the Kuki-Mizo group, they do not have a uniform system in all the villages, in the matter of control of or access to resources and in the choice of the chief. It seems that in the older settlements the communal system has been more crystallised; on the other hand in the comparatively newer settlements there is a greater dependence on the entrepreneurial qualities of the chief. Again in the matter of choice of chief also, the Anals represent

a compromise between the two principles. While normally the son succeeds the father in the office, confirmation by the community is needed. There are also cases where the chief had nominated his successor, but the latter could hold the office only after confirmation by the community. It seems that Anals represent a transition from migratory movements of the Kuki-Mizos (necessitating entrepreneurial prerogative of the chief) to stable settlements (based on routinisation of decision-making process through collective inter-communication). In this transition, alignment with Naga constellation perhaps marks ascendancy of the Nagas in the social-political prestige scale in the region.

Apart from the fundamental alignment with regional sway, the Anals have ventured into localised alignment more drawing upon conjectural history. One such movement was for unification of all tribes with common origin from a mythical cave (Khul) so that they could serve as a pressure group in the state legislature. This did not go far. Another movement, called Pakan movement was based on the tradition of common origin a number of small tribes like Mayon Monsang, Lanagang, apart from the Anal. This movement received a shot in the arm when the underground Nagas lent their support to it in the 60's. But with the establishment of Autonomous District Councils in the early 70's, some of the constituent tribes, particularly the Mayon and the Monsang, felt more inclined towards a smaller identity movement called Mon movement. All these movements represent a conscious quest under the aegis of the traditional elite, but drawing upon the communication skill of the emerging elite,

to harness the traditional resources of culture for crystallising viable ethnic identities.

As a recipient of Jawahar Lal Nehru Fellowship, in the mid 70's I tried to make a rapid survey of the socio-cultural processes of the bridge-buffer communities in North East. Prof. Gangmumei Kabui voluntarily participated in this common intellectual venture. Though as indicated by Prof. Kabui, in the study of the Anals, I participated to a limited extent, the credit for the historical and empirical data included in the present monograph entirely belongs to him. Besides, through intensive academic interaction with him spread over a number of years, my own concepts about bridge-buffer communities and infra and proto-nationalism have attained sharper focus. I avail of this opportunity to express my gratitude to Prof. Kabui. Also, I thank him for the valuable contribution that he has made towards our understanding the tribal dynamics of the region, through his analytical case study of the Anals.

B. K. ROY BURMAN

Preface

This is a brief account of the Anal tribe of Manipur. The Anals are undergoing fast changes in their social and economic life as a consequence of many forces released by India's independence : education, christianity, development programme and democracy. The account is a product of a small research work undertaken by in the mid-seventies. This is, therefore, in no way an exhaustive work on the tribe.

I had the privilege of getting guidance and encouragement from Professor B.K. Roy Burman in the conduct of the research and preparation of this book. When he was a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellow, he visited the Anal area and helped me in the field work itself. I am greatly indebted to him for the excellent, intellectual and personal guidance given to me.

Further, he kindly wrote a Foreword to the book, bringing out the theoretical implications of the ethnography of the Anal tribe. I am grateful to him for this kindness.

I would like to thank Mr. W. Ibochouba Singh, IAS, Deputy Commissioner of Tengnoupal District, (now Chandel District), Mr. Ng. Mono, Chairman of the Tengnoupal Autonomous District Council,

Mr. M.A. Sattar, Chief Executive Officer, District Council and Mr. Birendra Kumar Singh, Assistant Commissioner of Tengnoupal District, the late Mr. R. Thoma, the redoubtable Chief of Komlathabi, the colourful grand old man of Tengnoupal District, other Anal chiefs, elders, teachers and church leaders, Mr. S.P. John, Mr. Angnoh, Mr. H. Thungam, the Chief of Anal Khullen and his wife for the help rendered in this work.

I am also grateful to Mr. Kaikhotinthang Kipgen, my former student and now a Magistrate who did the field investigation. I would also like to thank the Department of Tribal Welfare, Government of Manipur for the financial assistance given for the project.

I am also grateful to the Jawaharlal Nehru University Centre of Post Graduate Studies, Imphal where I worked at the time of research, to Mr. L. Rabindranath Sharma my Stenographer who did the retyping of the manuscript.

Lastly I am grateful to Mr. K.M. Mittal of M/s Mittal Publications for having agreed to publish the book.

GANGMUMEI KABUI

The Anal tribe is found both in India and Upper Burma. Their ethnic frontier crosses the political boundaries of the two countries. Originally, this small group of the Tibeto-Burmans, speaking Kuki-Chin dialect migrated from the rugged mountains and wide river valleys of Upper Burma to the south western hills of Manipur across the Chin hills. They established cultural and political relations with the Meiteis of Manipur valley. Now they occupy the Chakpi river basin as their homeland.

Ethnically and linguistically linked with the Kuki-Chin section of the Tibeto-Burmans, the Anals had acquired social and cultural traits which are nearer to their northern neighbours, the Nagas. Their geopolitical situation has made the Anals a classic case of a bridge-buffer community between the Nagas and Kukis. This had led to the problem of identity of Anal community itself.

Socially divided into two moieties—Masum and Mulcham, the Anals live in a well-knit social organisation, the customary laws and traditions are as well adhered to by the people themselves despite modernization specially the coming of the Christianity since the colonial times. But their cultural life which was once enlivened by the performance of magnificent ceremonies, rituals and festivals which were always accompanied by beautiful dance and songs, is facing the challenge of modernity.

The Anals are politically organised at the village level, Chiefs and their councillors administer the village land, maintain law and order and justice. The coming of democratic norms with India's independence has affected the Anal political system. The greatest change is in the realm of economic development.

The traditional *jhum* cultivators are resorting to wet and terrace cultivation; educational changes have come. The study of two villages,—Anal Khullen and Saluk—brings out the phenomena of continuity as well as change in Anal Society.

Prof. Gangmumei Kabui (born 1941) was educated at Imphal and Gauhati University where he got M.A. (History) for which he was awarded University Gold Medal and S.K. Bhuyan Prize (1961).

He started his teaching career as lecturer at Imphal College (1962-64), where he later became Head of History Department, Post-Graduate Section, D. M. College, Imphal (1964-72). Later he joined as Associate Professor and Head of Division of History in Jawaharlal Nehru University, Centre of Post-Graduate Studies at Imphal in 1972. Thereafter he became a Fellow. After joining Manipur University in 1981 he became a Senior Fellow in History (1984) and Dean of Student' Welfare.

He is associated with a large number of academic and social organisations. He was Organising President and, later on, General Secretary for several terms of Manipur Cultural Integration Conference (since 1967). In this capacity he was deeply involved with the movement for the establishment of University, Medical College, Agricultural College and State Kala Akademi in Manipur.

Among other positions held by him are :

(i) General Secretary, Manipur Historical Society (1978), Treasurer and later on Vice-President, Manipur Council for Social Welfare. (ii) Founder Secretary, Institute of People's Action at Awangkhol (1977). (iii) Member, Advisory Committee in Customary laws codification of Tengnoupal Autonomous District (1976). Vice-President, North East-India History Association (1983). (iv) Chairman, Committee on Writing Regional Composite History of Manipur, sponsored by the Government of Manipur. (v) Member, ICSSB Advisory Group on Social Science Research in North East India, National Executive Members, Himalaya Seva Sangha, Honorary Wild Life Warden, of Manipur (Hilla); Member of Senate. Academic Council and Syndicate of Manipur University.

MUST FOR ALL LIBRARIES & SCHOLARS

LATEST ARRIVALS

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING IN INDIA—*A. S. Prasad*,
Rs. 275/-

ASSAM MUSLIMS : POLITICS & COHESION
—*B. J. Dev & D. K. Lahiri*, Rs. 110/-

BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN NORTH EAST INDIA
—*M. S. Barkataki*, Rs. 165/-

ECOLOGY, ETHNOLOGY AND NUTRITION
—*S. Patel*, Rs. 90/-

EDUCATION AND WORLD HUNGER—*S. N. Prasad*, Rs. 70/-

AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF NATURAL HISTORY (2 Vols)
—*A. H. Miles*, Rs. 495⁰⁰ (Set)

THE GREAT CLASSICS OF INDIA—*E. Wilson*, Rs. 225/-

THE LIVING RACES OF MANKIND (2 Vols.)—*H. Hutchinson*,
Rs. 1200 (Set)

LANDS AND PEOPLES OF THE WORLD (6 Vols.)
—*J. A. Hammerton*, Rs. 2500 (Set)

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC ENTERPRISES
—*A. K. Singh*, Rs. 100/-

THE PUNJAB CRISIS : CHALLENGE & RESPONSE—*A. Sami Uddin*,
Rs. 295/-

RESETTLEMENT PROBLEMS OF RETIRED ARMY OFFICERS
—*M. K. Singh*, Rs. 75/-

SELECTED THOUGHTS OF INDIRA GANDHI : A BOOK OF
QUOTES—*S. K. Dhawan*, Rs. 200/-

TOWARDS A POST DEVELOPMENT ERA: ESSAYS ON POVERTY,
WELFARE & DEVELOPMENT—*S. Dasgupta*, Rs. 110/-

TENANCY & EFFICIENCY OF FARMING IN A DEVELOPING
ECONOMY—*R. N. Tripathy*, Rs. 140/-

WOMEN IN CHANGING SOCIETY : A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL
STUDY—*S. N. Sahai*, Rs. 250/-

MITTAL PUBLISHERS' DISTRIBUTORS

1856, TRI NAGAR, DELHI-110035 (INDIA)