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British Relations With Manipur

1824-1891



By

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P R E F A C E

Inspite of her glorious past Manipur has failed to receive adequate justice in the hands of historians - Indian or foreign. J.Roy in his book History of Manipur has described the history of Manipur from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the middle of the present century in about one hundred and thirty pages. It is a popular work not based on original sources. In his invaluable work The Eastern Frontier of British India Dr.A.C.Banerjee has thrown some side lights on the history of Manipur till the Treaty of Yandaboo, 1826. Alexander Mackenzie in his North East Frontier of Bengal has described some aspects of the relations of Manipur with the Kachhaws or Sooties and the Lushais that settled in the south and the south-west of the State. Likewise, Sir James Johnstone in his My Experiences in Manipur and Naga Hills and Mrs.Grimwood in her My Three Years in Manipur have discussed the political events in Manipur in the eighties of the nineteenth century. The treatment of these authors is sketchy and confined to a few topics over a limited period.

The object of the present work is to describe, in the light ^{of} available sources, British relations with Manipur from 1824 to 1891 - from the outbreak of the First Anglo-Burmese War till the establishment of British Paramountcy in this frontier State. It deals with not only the revolts and counter revolts of this period, but also the slow but steady

process in the extension of British influence and ultimately suzerainty over Manipur. Incidentally, new light has been thrown on the problem of the Kabaw Valley, on the wars of succession after Gambhir Singh, the repercussion of the Mutiny in Manipur and on the Palace Revolution, 1890. In addition to the relations of the Manipuri Chiefs to the frontier tribes, the impact of the British on political organisation and socio-economic life of the Manipuris are also discussed to some extent in this thesis. The introductory chapter provides the historical background apart from the geography of the land and its influence on the people.

The work is based mainly on official documents - both published and unpublished preserved at the National Archives of India, West Bengal State Archives and Manipur State Archives. A large number of secondary works and contemporary and semi-contemporary publications have also been consulted - the text list of which is appended in the bibliography.

I am greatly indebted to Dr.H.K.Barpujari, Professor and Head, Department of History, Gauhati University, for his supervision throughout the course of the investigation. I am also deeply grateful to my revered Examiners for their invaluable suggestions for improvements in facts and language - these are fully and faithfully embodied in the present thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

C.C.	.. Chief Commissioner.
F.Extl.Progs.	.. Foreign Department External Proceedings.
F.Genl.Progs.	.. Foreign Department General Proceedings.
F.Poltl.Progs.	.. Foreign Department Political Proceedings.
F.Sec.Progs.	.. Foreign Department Secret Proceedings.
G.O.C.	.. General Officer Commanding.
Home Pub.	.. Home Public.
India P.D. to C.D.	.. India Political Despatch to the Court of Directors.
India P.D. from C.D.	.. India Political Despatch from the Court of Directors.
K.W.	.. Know Well.
P.C.	.. Political Consultations.
P.Progs.Vol.	.. Political Proceedings Volume.
P.L. to C.D.	.. Political Letter to the Court of Direc- tors.
P.L. from C.D.	.. Political Letters from the Court of Directors.
P.L. to S.S.	.. Political Letters to the Secretary of State.
P.L. from S.S.	.. Political Letters from the Secretary of State.
S.C.	.. Secret Consultations.
S.P.	.. Secret Proceedings.
Q.M.G.	.. Quarter Master General.

INTRODUCTION

Physical and Political Background :

The present State of Manipur lies at the eastern-most corner of the Republic of India. It is situated between $23^{\circ}50'N$ and $25^{\circ}51'N$ latitudes and $93^{\circ}E$ and $94^{\circ}45'E$ longitudes. It is bounded on the north by a series of hills called Naga Hills; on the north-east, east and south by Burma; on the south-west, west and north-west by the present State of Assam. This does not, however, appear to ^{be} the original boundary, for the territorial possessions of Manipur varied according to the strength and weakness of its rulers. Sometimes they held a considerable territory east of the Chindwin River in subjection; at other times their sway extended only over the Kabaw Valley, a strip of territory lying between Manipur proper and the Chindwin, and, when routed they were driven back to Manipur proper¹. The boundaries of ancient Manipur, therefore, cannot be determined with precision. Colonel McCulloch observes : "To the east and south the boundary is not well defined and would much depend upon the extent to which the Manipur Government might spread its influence amongst the hill tribes in these direction"²

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1. Johnstone, James, My Experiences in Manipur and Naga Hills, p.81.
 2. Col. McCulloch, Account of the Valley of Manipur, p.1.

The State consists of a Central Valley called the Manipur Valley or the Imphal Valley and a series of hills, six in number, surrounding it on all sides. The hills cover 7,900 sq. miles and the valley is about 700 sq. miles. The valley is in reality a plateau, its height above the sea is about 2,600 ft. The valley slopes down towards the south and the hill ranges are higher on the north and gradually diminish in height as they reach the southern part of Manipur. The ranges enclosing the valley lie in the general direction of north and south and their appearance is that of irregular serrated ridges, occasionally rising into conical peaks and flattened cliffs and bare rocks. The intersecting lines are deep and steeply enclosed making it a difficult terrain to traverse. The greatest altitude is reached to the north-east where peaks rise 8,000 ft. above sea level.

The valley of Manipur in several respects, resembles in miniature its neighbour, that of the Irawadi³. A traveller by Air will see a flat valley, extensively cultivated and dotted with numerous villages, bamboo clumps and sprawling lakes and rivers. The Imphal River runs, throughout, from the north to the south with a number of tributaries from the hills and plains on either side. The Nambul, the Iril, the Thoubal and dozen other rivers run in the valley. These rivers are not snow-fed. They, therefore, depend on the monsoon for their

3. Hodson, F.C., The Meitheids, Introduction, p.xviii.

volume. The majority of them dry up during winter, but along with the rains they swell up and overflow their banks. However, unlike some of the districts of the neighbouring State of Assam, Manipur is seldom visited by severe and destructive floods. The drainage of the country is excellent, there being a steady fall towards the Logtak lake which again is drained into the Chindwin. There are rivers in the hills also. These rivers share a common feature, long rocky pools, where even in the dry seasons the water is 30-40 ft. deep. The valley they flow in is deep cut rocky gorges, whose sides are clothed with forest wherever it is possible for a tree to grow. The Barak, the Jiri, the Makru, the Irang and the Lockhaw are some of the important rivers in the hills. These rivers, during the rains, become formidable obstacles to the people of the plains and of the hills, whereas, in the winter they serve as important river routes.

The lakes in Manipur vary in size. The Logtak Lake, the largest sheet of water in Manipur or in Eastern India, lies in the south west corner of the valley. In dry season it covers an area of 25 sq.miles approximately and during the monsoon it spreads over an area of 40 sq.miles. Other lakes, the Ikop, the Charang, the Waithou etc. dot the valley in different areas. It has been suggested by some observers that at one time the whole valley was under water and Manipuri traditions also support this conjecture. But R.E.Oldham of the Geological Survey of India rejects this theory on geological grounds⁴.

4. Das, Tarakchand, The Purums, p.17.

The vegetation of Manipur, as that of any mountainous region within the monsoon belt, varies with the shape of the land and with the altitude. The forest is sharply stratified by the altitude. Different types of forests occupy the deep valleys and the peaks which tower 5,000 ft. above them. In the not too distant past the entire territory was covered with thick forests. With the increase in the pressure on land vast forest areas have been cleared to provide land for cultivation. On account of the hilly nature of the state rainfall varies from place to place depending on the elevation. The Manipur valley is the region with the lowest rainfall while the surrounding hilly regions get more rain.

The valley is fertile. The Meitheis inhabit the central valley and the Hillmen in the hills. Manipur contains within its borders a variety of climate from the almost tropical to a near European cold in winter⁵. The heat is, however, never excessive and for eight months in the year, it is most enjoyable. As a whole the climate of Manipur is soft and mild and it attracts settlers from all parts of the neighbouring States.

Manipur, thus, lies in the bower of nature. Her velvety green fields, transparent lakes, zig zag streams and bracing climate induce a visitor to feel as if he is in Kashmir. Nature, indeed, is very bountiful to Manipur. She lavishes all her beauties on Manipur and her landscape affords

5. Ukhrul, Mao, Tamenglong and Churachandpur, the hill subdivisions lying at different altitudes of 6,000, 6,000, 4,300 and 3,000 ft. respectively are cold in the summer and freezing in the winter.

a great relief to the dreary plains so monotonous in other parts of India. The wide fields of waving rice of vivid green during the summer season but changing to a rich gold as the harvest season draws near, the groves of slender trees, broad-leaved plaintains and feathery bamboos, the dark green primeval forests, beautiful rivers and lakes enamour an observer⁶.

Surrounded almost on all sides by mountain barriers Manipur remained practically isolated. She was, however, accessible to the people of the plains and of the hills through her numerous passes and river routes; and in fact, for ages past, the fortunes of the dwellers of the plains and the hills were inextricably interwoven. Though the rivers never formed the highway of communication, there are reasons to believe that Manipur had intimate relations with her sister States through her numerous hill routes. These were used by traders, colonisers and invaders long before the beginning of the

6. Mrs. Grimwood writes in her book 'My Three Years in Manipur' p.1 : "I had my first glimpse of the valley of Manipur.... looking delightfully calm in the afternoon sunshine. Just below us stretched the blue waters of the Logtak Lake studded with islands each one a small mountain in itself. Villages buried in their own groves of bamboo and plantain trees dotted the plain and between each village there were tracts of rice fields and other cultivation. The whole valley looked rich and well cared for" : Sir James Johnston writes in his Administrative Report of Manipur 1877-78, p.1 : "The first view of the valley, when approaching it from Cachar is most strikingthe valley was

Christian Era. Prof.D.G.E.Hall mentions a road connecting lower Burma with India via the banks of the Irawady, the Chindwin and through Manipur. Sir Arthur Phayre writes : "The route by which Kshatria princes arrived (in Burma) is indicated in the traditions as being through Manipur which lies within the basin of the Irawady."⁷ Harvey refers to a route down the Chindwin River and through Manipur which took the caravans three months' journey to reach Afganistan where the silk of China was exchanged for the gold of Europe⁸.

This little kingdom has been known in olden days by a variety of names. In Rennell's memoirs and maps of India it is called "Meckley". In Symes' narrative and in the maps of that period the State is called "Cassay". In Aitchison's Treaties etc. it is called "Meckley". The Burmese called her "Kathe", the Cacharis "Moglai", the Assamese "Mekle", the Ahoms "Maglu", the Shans or those who inhabited the country east of the Mingthee or Khyendwin River "Cassay". It is, therefore, pertinent to enquire as to how the name of Manipur came to be associated with this land. Some observers are of the opinion that this land was given the name of Manipur in or about the 18th

like a world in miniature, a wide plain enclosed on all sides by hills and presenting a varied picture of hills, lakes, rivers and cultivation. To the right lay the great Logtak Lake, in front the wide plain studded with villages, far away to the left the glittering temples of Manipur, while all around and far beyond the valley rise the hills, range upon range, the whole forming the most striking and beautiful panorama."

7. Phayre, Sir Arthur, History of Burma, p.3.

8. Harvey, History of Burma, p.9.

century A.D. But this view is not valid because reference to the name 'Manipur' are found in the Mahabharata. F.C.Hodson is of the opinion that the name 'Manipur' was in existence before the birth of Bhubrabahan^{8a}. Ibungohal Singh, in his book has discounted the theory of locating Manipur of the Mahabharata either in the Ganjam District or in Kalinga⁹. It was a practice in the past to use more than one name for a place, e.g., Kanauj was known as Kushasthala, Mahodaya, Kanyakubja, Gadhipura etc. The varied names used for Manipur, therefore, indicate that the place was well-known and connected with the neighbouring States.

The early history of Manipur is shrouded in mystery. Colonel Girini in his Researches on Ptolemy's geography, however, tries to establish her history centuries before the birth of Christ. He writes : "According to the Burmese chronicle (Maharaja Vamsa) Dhajaraja, a king of Sakya race, settled at Manipur about 550 B.C. and later on conquered Taguang, Old or Uppar Pagan." Similarly, Sir James Johnstone observes: "In the days when the Indian branch of the Aryans was still in its progressive and colonizing stage this district (Manipur) was repeatedly passed over by one wave after another of invaders intent on penetrating into the remotest part of Burma."¹⁰

8a. Bhubrabahan, the son of Arjuna and Chittrangada, the princess of Manipur; Hodson, F.C., The Meitheids, p.7.

9. cf. Ibungohal Singh, An Introduction to Manipur, pp.6-7.

10. Johnstone, James, My Experiences in Manipur and Naga Hills, p.80.

Capt. Dun, writing in the Gazetteer of Manipur, also observes:

"There can be no reasonable doubt that a great Aryan wave of very pure blood passed through Manipur into Burma in pre-historic times."¹¹ It is probable that some Indian Buddhist missionaries went to China through the Hill routes of Manipur to propagate Buddhism. It may rightly be observed that Manipur felt the impact of the Aryans at an early date. However, due to the paucity of materials it cannot be established with authority as to when the Aryan Civilization entered ^{into} the State.

The history of Manipur, nevertheless, upto the closing decade of the 17th century was more or less uneventful. But the beginning of the 18th century saw the dawn of a new era in her ^{Manipur.} ~~history~~. Upto this time Manipur was actually waiting for a strong and able guide to bring her latent energy to fruition. It was at this time Garib Niwaz (1709-1748), one of the greatest rulers of Manipur assumed the political leadership of this kingdom. He defeated the successive Burmese raids in 1712, 1724 and 1725 and established his sway extending over the trans-Chindwin Valley which the enfeebled rulers¹² of Ava were quite unable to check. The expert Manipuri horsemen under him became the terror of Upper Burma. They destroyed villages and Pagodas and got away with their loot before they could be intercepted. Taking advantage of his engagements in Burma, the King of

11. Capt. Dun, Gazetteer of Manipur, p.6.

12. After the death of Minrekyawdin in 1698, the Toungoo Dynasty (1600-1752) was represented by three weak kings : Sane (1698-1714), Taninganwe (1714-33) and Mahadammayaza Dipali (1733-52); D.G.E.Hall, A History of South East Asia, p.324.

Tripura invaded Manipur in 1739. Garib Niwas successfully reduced to submission the Tripuris who had advanced towards Manipur. He established peaceful relations with the neighbouring hill chiefs of Manipur and extended his sovereignty over them. Under his rule, therefore, Manipur began to play an important role in the politics of the North East Frontier of India. But his tragic death at the hands of his own son Ajit Shah¹³ introduced a period of anarchy and confusion in Manipur during which sons murdered fathers and brothers murdered brothers without a single trait of heroism. The inevitable result was that the power of Manipur collapsed. But Ajit Shah's position was far from secure so long his elder brother Sham Shah, who was the rightful claimant to the throne, was at large. He, therefore, secretly murdered the latter and marched straight to the throne. Unfortunately for him in the fifth year of his reign his complicity in the murder of his father and brother came to light. Bharat Shah, another son of Garib Niwas, who had already formed a party, asked his brother to quit the country since he abhorred the idea of dipping his hands in his brother's blood. Finding himself in a helpless condition, Ajit Shah reluctantly left the country and Bharat Shah ascended the throne of Manipur.

In 1753, on the death of Bharat Shah, the chiefs of Manipur appointed Gour Shah, the eldest son of Sham Shah as the Raja of Manipur. In 1755 and 1758, the new Raja had to

13. Garib Niwas was cruelly murdered by his son Ajit Shah in December 1742; Jhaljit Singh, Rajkumar, A Short History of Manipur, p.142.

confront with the Burmese invaders who about this time swept over Manipur. Gour Shah being unable to rule Manipur invited his younger brother Jai Singh to come to his aid. The latter accepted the invitation and agreed to rule the country alternately for a period of five years¹⁴.

During the reign of Jai Singh, Manipur for the first time came in contact with the British Government. The political situations in Manipur, as stated above, led Manipur to look out for a strong power against her arch enemy, namely the Burmese invaders. Jai Singh was convinced that with his limited resources in men and money it would not be possible on his part to repel the Burmese. He had also learnt that Ajit Shah, the ex-Raja, presented his case to the British Government through the Raja of Tripura and declared that he had been unjustly deposed from the throne and expelled from his country. Sensing that probable danger, Jai Singh deputed in July 1762, his Agent Haridas Gossain with a letter to Mr. Harry Verelst, Chief of Chittagong Factory at Chittagong, explaining the reasons of Ajit Shah's dethronement. Haridas Gossain came to Chittagong and consulted the British authorities as to the strength of the claims of his master to the throne of Manipur. Thereupon, the Government of Bengal desired to support Jai Singh¹⁵ against his uncle and to protect him from the aggressive designs of the Burmese.

14. Home Public, 4 October 1762, No.5, Letter from Verelst to Vansittart etc. Dt. Islamabad, 19 September 1762.

15. Ibid.

The arrival of Haridas Gossain at Chittagong was highly opportune. The rapid growth of the Burmese power under Alungpaya (1752-60) was viewed with concern by the Government of Bengal. The Burmese King at the instigation of the French, who were then at war with the English (Seven Years' War, 1756-1763), destroyed the English settlement in Negrais, an island at the mouth of the Irawady¹⁶. It was at this time that Haridas Gossain came to Chittagong and made overtures for an alliance with Mr. Verelst. Accordingly the Government of Manipur agreed to grant forever to the British rent free eight thousand cubits of land at a suitable place in Manipur for the installation of a factory and a fort and also provide every facility for the promotion of trade with the Chinese in the Upper Irawadi Valley. In its eagerness to get British help Manipur Government not only agreed to pay the expenses of ^{the} troops but also promised to compensate the loss suffered by the latter at the island of Negrais; and in return a contingent of six companies of sepoy would be sent to Jai Singh to enable him to recover the territories which had been wrested from him by the Burmese. The terms of the agreement were settled on 14 September 1762¹⁷. This was the first formal agreement between the Government of Manipur and the British Government of Bengal. The terms were favourable to the English. It enabled the British authorities to have a settlement in Manipur destined to serve as a base in an event with a war with Ava.

16. P.Progs., Vol., 1762, pp.232-33.

17. See Appendix A, Treaty of 1762.

The terms proposed were placed before the authorities in Bengal on 19 September 1762¹⁸. But letters from Shah Alum (1759-1806), king of Delhi, praying for immediate British help against Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Afgan ruler, made it difficult for the British Government to despatch any European troops to so distant a quarter as Manipur. But at the same time, it was also felt that they should not miss so favourable an opportunity for concluding an alliance with the Raja of Manipur, as it would open the road for demanding reparations from the Burmese for the repeated illtreatment at Negrais. Despatch of troops to Manipur was deferred, but the treaty of alliance was duly approved on 4 October 1762¹⁹.

In the following year when the political situation in the north-west India was considerably improved, a detachment of troops left Chittagong under Verelst and in April reached Khaspur, the then Capital of Cachar. But it suffered so much from rain and disease amidst pestilential swamps that its progress to Manipur was arrested. Finding Khaspur unhealthy the contingent fell back on Jainagar, on the left bank of the river Barak. However, when the war with Mir Kasim, the Nawab of Bengal, became imminent, the English recalled the troops under Verelst.

18. Home Public, 4 October 1762, No.5.

19. Ibid.

Since the return of the British troops from Khaspur authorities in Calcutta received no communication from Manipur. About this time, Gour Shah since succeeded Jai Singh, confirmed the terms of the Treaty of 1762²⁰ and also sent a communication to the British Government of Bengal to the effect that the Burmese having devastated a great part of Manipur, it was not possible on the part of Manipur to meet all the expenses incurred by the British Government for the troops that was despatched for service of the State. As a token of sincerity, however, he offered 500 Manipuri gold rupees to be valued at twelve silver rupees each²¹. He also assured that the amount spent on his account and the charges for future military assistance would be duly paid in kind. All communications between the British and Manipur appeared to have ceased thereafter. Pemberton rightly observes : "From this period until, 1809, we have no trace of any further intercourse with this petty State"²².

On the death of Gour Shah in 1763, Jai Singh again ruled Manipur uninterruptedly for a period of 36 years. His death in 1799 opened another war of succession. Labanya Chandra (1799-1800 A.D.) succeeded his father but was murdered in 1800 A.D. by his younger brother Madhu Chandra. The latter seized the throne by thwarting the aims of other

20. P.Progs. Vol. 1763, pp.1330-1331.

21. See Appendix B.

22. Pemberton, R.B., Capt., Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India, p.188.

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conspirators. But he too was not destined to rule for a long time. To make matter worse, the Burmese had, about this time, made a further advance in the direction of the Eastern Frontier of India.

Even at this hour of common peril, the Manipuri brothers failed to offer an united front against the foreign invaders;²³ on the contrary they were divided into different factions. Chourjit Singh, the brother of Madhu Chandra Singh, threw off his allegiance and fled to Cachar. Marjit Singh, another brother of Madhu Chandra, joined Chourjit Singh. The combined force defeated Madhu Chandra and Chourjit Singh occupied the throne. But the position of the new ruler was far from being secured. Though Marjit Singh was made the 'Jubaraja' and 'Senapati' he was not at all satisfied. After an unsuccessful attempt to oust his brother Marjit went to Burma and solicited the Burmese King Badawpaya (1779-1819) his aid in getting the throne of Manipur. The Burmese monarch readily agreed; a large Burmese force invaded Manipur and placed Marjit on the throne. Thereupon, Chourjit fled to Cachar with his younger brother Gambhir Singh. At Cachar Chourjit sought assistance from Govind Chandra, the Raja of Cachar, but the latter refused. Later, Chourjit took shelter in Jaintia and began to make plans for invading Cachar in

23. Jhaljit Singh, Rajkumar, A Short History of Manipur, p.182.

co-operation with Ram Singh and Fularam, the two rivals of Govind Chandra²⁴. Gambhir Singh remained in Cachar as a silent spectator of the whole scene.

Marjit secured the throne of Manipur, but his position was relegated to that of a vassal of the Burmese monarch. Soon he got tired of the Burmese tutelage and was forced to flee to Cachar²⁵. Thereafter the three brothers, Chourjit Marjit and Gambhir Singh effected a reconciliation and they divided the whole of south Cachar amongst them. Being unable to cope with the endless trouble created by the Manipuri brothers, Govind Chandra applied to the English in 1820 for the amalgamation of Cachar with the territories of the East India Company. But the British Government then refused to interfere in the affairs of Cachar. The three Manipuri brothers, however, could not pull on together even in Cachar. Chourjit Singh was dispossessed and he took shelter in Sylhet.

While there was disunity among the Manipuri princes in Cachar, the Burmese force overran Manipur. From this time, Pemberton writes : "Manipur was doomed to devastating visitations of Burmese armies which have nine

24. Banerjee, A.C., The Eastern Frontier of British India, p.203.

25. Ibid., pp.329-330.

or ten times swept the country from one extremity to another"²⁶. This dark episode started from 1819, the year Marjit Singh fled to Cachar, and continued till February 1826. During this period, Shuban Singh, Jadu Singh, Jai Singh and Bhadra Singh ruled Manipur one after another, but they were mere puppets in the hands of the Burmese and as such never enjoyed confidence of the people of Manipur. Hirachandra Singh and Pitambar Singh, two princes of Manipur, collected small groups of Manipuris and harrassed the Burmese, but they were unable to repel the invaders and retired to Cachar. In 1823, Pitambar Singh returned with a small force to Manipur and defeated the puppet on the throne and assumed royal titles. Gambhir Singh also re-entered with a force and ousted Pitambar Singh. He made frantic appeals for aid to the British authorities in Bengal against the Burmese, but the latter refused to involve themselves that precise moment.

The situation was completely altered when the Burmese made rapid strides in their advance in Assam

26. Pemberton, R.B., Captain, Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India, p.86.

and Manipur and also looked wistfully towards Cachar as their natural line of expansion. The authorities in Calcutta were so much alarmed as to the vulnerability of the Eastern Frontier that they had to abandon their former policy of non-intervention; and with it we enter upon a new phase in Anglo-Manipuri relations which will be unfolded in the subsequent pages.

Appendix-A

Articles of a treaty between Hurray Das Gussein, acting on behalf of Jai Singh and Mr. Harry Verelst, Chief of Chittagong Factory on behalf of the British - dated the 14th September 1762 (Home Dept. Public, 1762, 4 Oct., Nos. 2-3).

(1) That the said Jai Singh, his master, shall be assisted with such of the English troops as from time to time can be spared for the recovery of such lands and effects belonging to the said Jai Singh as he hath been dispossessed of by the Burmahs (Burmese).

(2) That for the assistance of such English troops the said Jai Singh is willing and ready to pay at the immediate expiration of every month all and every expense and contingent expenses of such troops then due so long as they may remain in his service.

(3) That the said Jai Singh is willing and ready to join with all his force the said English forces to obtain full and ample satisfaction for all and every injury the said English have from time to time suffered by the Burmese at the Negrairje (Negrais) or any other place during the said Burmah's administration when in any time in possession of Pegu.

(4) That the said Jai Singh will from the time of signing these articles, consider such injuries as have been done by the Burmahs (Burmese) to the said English as injuries done to himself and that the said Jai Singh will ever hereafter be ready to resent any new insult or hindrance the

English trade or people may meet with at Pegu, the Negrairje (Negrais) or any other part or parts at present under the Government of the Burmah Rajah or the Rajah of Pegu also every other power or Government that may interrupt the free trade of every English subject passing into and through their countries.

(5) That the said Jai Singh will at all times fully consider every enemy to the said English as his own enemy and that the said English shall consider every enemy to the said Jai Singh as their enemy.

(6) That the said Jai Singh shall grant such lands as the said English may think proper for the building of a factory and forts for the transaction of their business and protection of their persons and effects in every part under his Government and that whatever part the said English may fix on for their Factory and Fort the said Jai Singh shall also grant a distance of country round such Factory and Fort of eight thousand cubics to the said English free of rent forever.

(7) That the said Jai Singh shall grant permission to the English for an open trade into and through his country free of all duties, hindrance or molestation and that the said Jai Singh will ever protect and defend the said English in the same.

(8) That the said Jai Singh shall not enter into any accommodation with the Burmah Rajah without the advice and approbation of the English nor shall the English enter into

a separate and distinct treaty with the Burmah Rajah without previously advising the said Jai Singh.

(9) Should the English troops with those of Mackley be obliged to march against the Burmah Rajah in order to obtain satisfaction for their mutual injuries received and in consequence make themselves master of the Burmah country the said Jai Singh doth then agree that should the said English then give him full possession of the said Burmah country he the said Jai Singh will then make good to the said English all such losses as they have ever heretofore sustained.

Appendix-B

Proposals made by Anund Sah, Podullo Singh and Chitton Singh Hazarry in the name and behalf of Goursah Singh, Raja of Meckley for an explanation of a former treaty of alliance bearing date the 14th September 1762 made by Hurry Dass Gussein in behalf of Jai Singh and Harry Verelst etc. Gentlemen of Chittagong (Home Department, Public Proceedings Volume 1763, pages 1330-1331).

I, Goursah Singh, Raja of Meckley do confirm a treaty of alliance dated the 14th September 1762 made between Harry Verelst, Randolph Marriot and Thomas Rumbold in behalf of the Honourable East India Company on one part and by Hurry Dass Gussein in the name and behalf of my brother Joy Singh, on the other part, approving and ratifying all and every article of the said treaty of alliance.

The second article of the said treaty stipulates all and every expense and contingent expenses of the said English troops employed in the service of my brother Joy Singh to be paid by him at the immediate expiration of every month.

To this I am to observe that since the Burnese have overrun and destroyed a great part of the Dominions of Meckley, it is not in my power to make such payments in actual species either of gold or silver.

But I agree to pay all such expenses as have already accrued in the English late march towards Meckley and all such expenses as hereafter may accrue in their future march to

Meckley to be paid from time to time in such goods and merchandise as are procurable in my country and which I agree to deliver to the English at Raung Roong at their annexed rates and conditions, but such quantities as are specified in the annexed lists shall be delivered as the first payment immediately on the English troops getting up to Meckley. And I am now willing to pay in ready money towards this agreement, hundred Meckley gold Rupees to be valued at twelve-silver rupees each.

So soon as the English shall enable me to work the gold mine on the banks of the River Barrampooter in the Dominions of Meckley, as well as any other mines of gold, silver, lead, iron, tin, copper, precious stones and mines of all kinds whatever now known or what hereafter may be discovered in Meckley, I am willing and agreed to pay all expenses in the working of the said mines; and also to give the English three fourths of the products of the same towards defraying the general expense of their troops in my employ.

Which products with my goods and merchandise I agree to pay them from time to time, till the whole expense of their assisting me is discharged. When and on all accounts between us being settled and adjusted I am then to be released from any such further stipulated payments. But hereby I agree that the said English are to reside in Meckley as merchants, on the full terms and privileges as stipulated in the aforementioned treaty of the 14th September 1762.

In testimony whereof we have put our signs manual
in Islamabad this day of first day of September 1685 Sauk
Bengal style or the eleventh day of September 1763 English style.

Products of Meckley that Goursah Singh, Rajah agrees
to pay annually towards the defrayment of the expenses of the
English troops employed on his account viz.,

Silk	..	10 mds at Rs 5 per seer	..	Rs	2,000
Iron	..	1,000 " " Rs 4 " md	..	Rs	4,000
Copal	..	1,000 " " Rs 1½ " "	..	Rs	1,500
Dammar	..	1,000 " " Rs 1½ " "	..	Rs	1,500
Wood oil	..	1,000 " " Rs 1½ " "	..	Rs	1,500
Wax	..	500 " " Rs 20 " "	..	Rs	10,000
Elephant teeth	..	100 " " Rs 20 " "	..	Rs	2,000
Agar	..	100 " " Rs 4 " seer	..	Rs	16,000
Camphor	..	10 " " Rs 80 " md	..	Rs	800
Black thread	..	100 " " Rs 20 " "	..	Rs	2,000
Red thread	..	100 " " Rs 20 " "	..	Rs	2,000
Blue thread	..	100 " " Rs 20 " "	..	Rs	2,000
White thread	..	200 " " Rs 20 " "	..	Rs	4,000
Black coss	..	10 " " Rs 2 " seer	..	Rs	800
Meckley cloth from 2½ to 3 cubits broad and a cubit long		500 pcs. Rs 1½ " piece	..	Rs	750
Meckley gold rupee	500	12 silver rupees each		Rs	6,000

Total .. Rs 56,850

Out of the above, Goursah Singh can now give within the period of one month after the arrival of the troops at Raung Roong.

Silk	..	..	5 mds.
Iron	..	..	500 "
Copal	..	..	500 "
Dammar	..	..	500 "
Wax	..	..	250 "
Elephant teeth	..	..	50 "
Agar	..	..	20 "
Black thread	..	..	50 "
Red thread	..	..	50 "
Blue thread	..	..	50 "
White thread	..	..	100 "
Meckley clothes	..	..	500 pieces
Meckley gold rupees			150

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS OF A NEW ERA

Lord Amherst, the Governor General of India (1823-1828), viewed the establishment of the Burmese authority in Cachar as a serious menace to the security of British territories in Bengal. In a letter written to the Court of Directors, dated January 9, 1824, he stressed the strategic importance of the possession of Cachar. "One of the easiest passes" he wrote, "from Ava in Company's possession is through Manipur and Cachar and the occupation of the latter is essential to the defence of that pass."¹ And the occupation of Cachar, on the other hand, by the Burmese, would place the district of Sylhet entirely at their mercy². Influenced by these considerations the Governor General gave up the old policy of neutrality and forestalled the Burmese Government by recognising Govind Chandra as the protected ruler of Cachar. But the King of Burma followed his own way to replace Govind Chandra

1. Majumdar, R.C., British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, Part I, p.100.

2. Ibid.

on the throne of Cachar and ordered his Commanders to arrest the three Manipuri chiefs who had ousted him. Accordingly, early in 1824 Burmese armies converged on Cachar from three directions. In these circumstances Lord Amherst declared war on Burma on 5 March, 1824³.

At this critical moment the Government of Bengal desired to utilise every resource however trifling for the successful operation of the war. They felt the necessity of re-establishment of the Manipur dynasty as a bulwark against the Burmese invaders. Negotiations were, therefore, opened with Gaubhir Singh to set up a strong and independent Government at Manipur so that the country could act as a buffer State between the British and the Burmese territories⁴. They also felt that Gaubhir Singh might prove a useful ally. Gaubhir Singh, who was planning for inflicting a crushing defeat to the Burmese, his sworn enemy, expressed his willingness to co-operate with the British. He was, therefore, allowed to raise in 1825, a contingent known as the 'Manipur Levy', formed of five hundred Manipuris and Cacharis paid and officered by the British. Lord Amherst, however, suspected that owing to the long and intimate relation of the Burmese Kings with that

3. Hall, D.G.E., Europe and Burma, p.111.

4. Banerjee, A.C., The Eastern Frontier of British India, p.244.

principality, the extension of British influence there would be viewed with jealousy and alarm by the Court of Ava. So he decided to settle the question of extending further British help to Manipur upon receiving a detailed report from David Scott, the man on the spot, and the then Agent to the Governor-General, North East Frontier of India⁵. The latter pointed out to the Government of Bengal the vulnerability of the whole of the eastern frontier suggesting that the policy of non-intervention which had been so long the watchword towards the North East Frontier should be definitely discarded and that it was highly expedient to support and encourage the Manipuris to resist and shake off the Burmese yoke. Scott's report convinced the Governor-General of the significance of establishing the independent State of Manipur to the cause of the British Government. Gambhir Singh was thus informed that his only chance of regaining the throne of Manipur depended on the degree of active assistance and co-operation offered by him to the British⁶.

On the conclusion of the terms of agreement between Gambhir Singh and the British, Chourjit Singh wanted to be associated with the enterprise. But the mutual jealousy between these two brothers was so strong that Mr. Tucker, the Commissioner of Sylhet, proceeded to Badarpur in Cachar and assured Gambhir Singh that Manipur would be given to him if he could conquer it and that the British Government would not ask him to admit Chourjit Singh to any share in the Government.⁷

5. Ibid., pp.341-342.

6. S.C., April 20, 1824, Nos.2, 14.

7. Banerjee, A.C., op.cit., p.244.

The latter being disappointed, tried to instigate Manipuri recruits against the British detachment stationed there. His endeavours failed and he was subsequently removed to Nadia and granted a pension of Rs 100 per month⁸.

Towards the close of October 1824, the Burmese army in Cachar retired, but took up a very strong position at Dudpatli⁹, a small town in Cachar. With the object of driving them out, Lieutenant Colonel Bown directed his men against that position. The assault failed and the troops retreated to Jatrapur, a few miles from Dudpatli. On 27 February 1825, Colonel Innes joined the force. The Burmese, thereupon, retreated from the position at Dudpatli and fell back to Manipur. The incessant rains prevented the British troops from following up the Burmese. Nevertheless they occupied Dudpatli and Talain, a station between the frontier of Cachar and Manipur and destroyed the stockade built by the Burmese¹⁰.

The plan of operation on Sylhet frontier, during the campaign of 1825, comprised of the march of a considerable force through Cachar into Manipur whence an impression might be made on the territory of Ava or at least the anxious attention of the Court be drawn to its frontier in that direction. With these views Brigadier General Shuldham was appointed to take the command in the eastern frontier. He decided to march towards Manipur. Captain Dudgeon with Sylhet Local Corps,

8. Ibid.

9. Gait, Sir Edward, History of Assam, p.280.

10. Wilson Documents, No.96.

Gambhir Singh's Levy and a wing of Blair's horse was sent in advance to cover the pioneers. With that object in view, arrangements were made for the construction of a road from Dudpatli towards Manipur.

Shuldham arrived at Banskandi, a town near the bank of the ^{river} Jiri, River on February 1825. The incessant rains and the difficulties of the terrain made it impossible for him to complete the road or to advance towards Manipur. He found that "the country from Banskandy towards Manipur was a continued series of ascents and descents, the route being intersected at right angles by ridges of mountain running nearly due north and south, the base of one spring from the foot of the other with the intervention only of a mountain revulet swollen into a deep and precipitous river after every shower frequent and heavy showers commenced early in February and continued with slight occasional intermission until the proximity of the rainy season rendered the attempt to reach Manipur hopeless."¹¹ On March 11, he reported that "the state of the road is such that it is quite impossible to send supplies on to the advance either on camels, bullocks, elephants or men."¹²

Gambhir Singh decided to take up the task which was condemned as hopeless by General Shuldham¹³. He decided to march on Manipur with his irregulars, namely, the Manipur Levy, which were in the meantime provided with arms by the British.

11. Wilson, Horace Hayman, Narrative of the Burmese War in 1824-26, pp.133-134.

12. Wilson, Historical Sketch, p.49.

13. Wilson, Documents, No.171.

Lieutenant Pemberton, a British Officer, who later became so popular in the history of the North Eastern Frontier of India, volunteered to accompany him. They left Sylhet on May 17, 1825 and failed to reach Banskandi till the 23rd, the direct road being impassable as ⁱⁿ consequence of heavy rains which forced them to make a detour. They left for Manipur on May 25 and after a march of great difficulty and privation, chiefly owing to heavy rainfall, they crossed the borders of the valley on June 10, 1825. On their advance the Burmese left Manipur and stockaded themselves in a village called Undro, about 10 miles from the Capital. Gambhir Singh and Pemberton advanced to attack them, but soon communications arrived that the Burmese had evacuated the valley. Inclement weather together with the lack of supply rendered it extremely difficult on his part to remain at Manipur. Gambhir Singh, therefore, had no alternative but to leave the place for Sylhet leaving a small force of 300 men to guard Manipur in addition to local volunteers whom he had provided with arms. He believed that the Burmese troops stationed on the confines of Manipur would not be able to dispossess the party he had left there. Pemberton reported that the success of the enterprise was due mainly to the energy, perseverance and skill of their ally Gambhir Singh¹⁵.

14. Gait, Sir Edward, op.cit., pp.287-88.

15. Wilson Documents, No.104(A).

Provided with adequate supplies and arms and accompanied by Captain Grant and Pemberton, Garbhir Singh once again left Basmkandi for Manipur on December 4, 1825 and arrived at the town of Manipur on the 18th. On their arrival no Burmese force was found in the vicinity of the Capital but a considerable body of them was stockaded at Tamu, in the south-east corner of the valley. The Sarajok Raja of the Kabaw Valley collected a force of seven hundred men and determined to resist the advance of the Manipuri troops. Thereupon, Garbhir Singh and Captain Grant sent a detachment against them. Finding, however, that the enemy was too strong for the force sent against them, the Commander of the detachment applied for reinforcements. Garbhir Singh and Captain Grant immediately marched to his assistance with the rest of the Levy across the Maring Hills into the Burmese territory and joined him on January 18, 1826¹⁶.

On the 19th, the Manipuri troops effected their advance through thick jungle and were not discovered till they had obtained command of the spots whence access to the stream from the stockade was practicable. The enemy, on perceiving them, opened heavy fire but the men being sheltered by the thicket suffered little. The Burmese made several spirited sorties to drive the Manipuri troops from their positions. But they were resisted with great spirit. Even in their

16. Wilson, Horace Hayman, The Narrative of the Burmese War in 1824-26, pp.252-253.

final attempt they suffered heavy casualties and, therefore, they commenced their retreat. They retired in small groups three or four at a time and had completely cleared the stockade by the night of the 22nd¹⁷.

Subsequently, a detachment of three hundred men was sent forward and succeeded in capturing a stockade on the right bank of the Ningthee River. More than two hundred Manipuris were liberated and many others rescued from captivity. Captain Grant reported : "..... the activity, judgement and skill he (i.e., Gambhir Singh) has displayed on this occasion have proved the justice of the opinion previously entertained of his merits, steady gallantry which, without the usual aids of cannon could force a brave enemy to evacuate a strongly fortified position is a very satisfactory illustration of the character of his followers."¹⁸

The Anglo-Burmese War came to an end by the Treaty of Yandaboo, 24 February 1826. Under Article No.2 of the treaty "His Majesty the King of Ava renounced all claims upon and will abstain from all future interference with the principality of Assam and its dependencies and also with the contiguous petty States of Cachar and Jyntea. With regard to Munnipore (Manipur), it is stipulated that should Gambhir Singh desire to return to that country, he shall be recognised by the King of Ava as Rajah thereof."¹⁹ But it was not clarified whether Gambhir Singh should be treated as the sovereign ruler of Manipur or as a vassal king. The status of Manipur,

17. Ibid, pp.253-254.

18. Wilson Documents, No.166(B).

19. Aitchison, Treaties etc., Vol.II, pp.149-150.

therefore, engaged the anxious attention of the Government of Bengal for it was the desire of the British Government, as stated earlier, that Manipur should be treated as an independent kingdom. The existence of an independent kingdom, inhabited by a people with deep rooted antipathy to the Burmese, between Burma and the British territories, was ^{then} regarded as desirable from the British point of view. It was also felt that it was not safe to allow Manipur to remain a dependency of Burma, because the existence of Burmese hold on Manipur would expose the Sylhet frontier to the danger which had precipitated the last war. It was, therefore, resolved by the Supreme Council that if the Burmese regarded Manipur, which they should not, as their dependency, the matter should be settled by negotiations and an independent status obtained, if necessary, by some concessions on the part of the British Government²⁰. The matter was referred to the Court of Directors at Home and Mr. Crawford, Resident designate for Ava, was instructed to sound the sentiments of the Burmese Court on the point at issue without broaching the subject²¹. Mr. Crawford found that the Burmese treated Manipur as an independent country and wanted the British also to treat it as such. They even ^{desired} ~~claimed~~ that Gambhir Singh, ~~being~~ ~~an independent king,~~ should not maintain Burmese or European officers at his court. Though the problems of the presence of foreigners was not solved, the independent status of

20. Lahiri, R. M., Annexation of Assam, p. 58.

21. S.C., 1826, June 23, No. 18.

Manipur was recognized by the Burmese. As regards the relation with British there was nothing to indicate that Gambhir Singh, who thus became ruler of Manipur, acknowledged the suzerainty of the British. In the Statistical Account of Manipur Dr. Brown recorded in 1873 : "On the conclusion of the Burmese War Manipur was declared independent." Since there was no clear explanation in the said Article, the Government of Bengal began to regard Manipur as a protected State. But the latter was never aware that the status was thus interpreted. This gross misunderstanding, as will be discussed later led to the most unhappy chapter of the history of Manipur in 1891 A.D. For the time being, however, close and intimate friendly relations were established between the two governments²².

ASCENDENCY OF GAMBHIR SINGH :

Towards the close of the Burmese War the condition of Manipur was indeed deplorable. The number of adult male population in the valley dwindled to less than three thousand²³. A large number of people had been killed in action or carried into captivity ~~into~~ or had fled for safety to the Surma Valley²⁴. Colonies of Manipuri refugees grew up in different parts of Cachar, Sylhet and Tripura. Many went as far as

22. Majumdar, R.C., op.cit., p.1028.

23. Brown, R., Annual Report of the Manipur Political Agency for 1868-69, p.65.

24. Allen, B.C., Assam District Gazetteers, Vol.IX.

Dacca for safety. Agriculture and cottage industries were completely ruined. Fields were covered with jungles. The valley presented a very desolate and gloomy appearance.

Gambhir Singh, therefore, had to begin everything from the scratch. He was as good an administrator as he was a bold soldier. In the beginning of his reign life began anew in the valley. Under his guidance, assisted by an able Senapati Nar Singh, a cousin, though of a distant branch, and a faithful Jubaraaja, Jaibir Singh, a son of one of his brothers, the country also gradually returned to normalcy. Agriculture and industry were once again revived. Some of the people who had fled to other places returned. In November 1827, the image of Lord Govinda²⁵ was brought back from Cachar. This enrichment in the spiritual life of the people after the ravages of the last war indicated the return to normalcy in the country. The immigration of Brahmans which was a regular feature since the 15th century and which was suspended during the troubled period of the war years also started once again from the time of Raja Gambhir Singh. The introduction of the Car Festival (Rath Yatra) and the Return Car Festival (Punar Yatra) were important examples for

25. An image of Lord Krishna.

the complete normalcy in the country. He also introduced Gosta Ashtami, which was intimately connected with the religious life of the people. Examining the topography of the land and its relative importance, he transferred his capital to Kanchipur, a place four miles to the south of Imphal, the former capital. The Head-quarter of the Manipur Levy was also located there.

Gambhir Singh had to face immense difficulties within and outside the valley. There occurred an outbreak of small-pox with unprecedented severity for nearly two years and which took a heavy toll of human lives.²⁶ Inoculation, the only safety measure to check this dreadful disease, was never known or practised in Manipur. He, therefore, requested Captain Grant, the Commissioner of his Levy, for the services of a doctor. Grant favourably entertained the request and referred the matter to the Government of Bengal. In recognition of the services he rendered during the last war the Government were pleased to appoint one Muhamad Nazim as the native doctor in the Levy and his pay etc. were charged under the Political Head of the Government. "Not a single death from small-pox" reported Grant, "has been brought to my notice since the arrival of the late Mohamad Nazim."²⁷

26. P.C., 15 May, 1829, Nos. 2-5.

27. P.C., 30 January, 1832, No. 89.

After the death of Nazim, Davideal Sockul was appointed as the vaccinator in Manipur.

Formerly, the Rajas of Manipur extended their sway over the hills occupied by the Kukis and the Lahoopa Nagas. But during the period of the decadence, just before and during the Burmese war, whatever influence Manipur had was gone. Garbhir Singh with the help of the British Officers in his Levy and the arms and ammunitions he received from the British succeeded in subjugating these tribes to the north and south of the State. During that critical period an imposter, giving himself out to be Khwairakpa, an elder brother of the Raja, appeared with a few followers and actually took possession of the Raja's Palace²⁸. The Senapati collected a few sepoys and advanced towards him. The feigned Khwairakpa tried to escape but he was pursued and killed²⁹ and order was restored in the valley.

Immediately after the Burmese war the authorities at Fort William realised the importance of direct communication between Assam and Manipur; since it would facilitate commercial intercourse in times of peace and also help war

28. S.C., 15 April 1831, Nos.3-7.

29. Ibid.

efforts in times of hostilities. To undertake a survey of Assam and Manipur the Government of Bengal deputed in January 1832 Captain Jenkins and Lieutenant Pemberton; and the latter two officers, accompanied by 700 Manipuri troops with 800 coolies advanced from the Manipur Valley via Paplongnei, Samagudting and the Dhunsiri to Mohong Dijua³⁰. They had literally to fight their way to the whole Kutchha and Angami Naga country³¹. Because of the considerable difficulties, the party could not make out a communicable route between Assam and Manipur. With a view to finding out a practicable route upto Assam, Garbhir Singh in the cold season of 1832-1833, marched through to Assam by a route a few miles to the east of Jenkin's track³². But this endeavour also bore no fruit.

There had been repeated occasions in which British Government had to look to Manipur for help for the defence of the Eastern Frontier³³. In 1832 Garbhir Singh was asked to render his assistance against the insurgent Khasis. The Raja himself proceeded with a large force and helped the British. When the defence of the Sadiya frontier was placed under consideration of the Supreme Council, the Agent to the Governor-General was even inclined to make over this part of

30. P.Progs., 5 March, 1832; 30 April 1832; 20 March 1833.

31. Ibid.

32. P.Progs., 14 January 1833; 30 March 1833; 30 May 1833.

33. Lahiri, R.M., op.cit., p.109.

the territory to Gambhir Singh³⁴. In the same year Gambhir Singh, accompanied by Gordon, reduced to submission³⁵ the Angami Nagas who had created troubles in the British frontier. Gambhir Singh was later given a free hand over the Angamis, perhaps with the object of creating Manipur as a bulwark against their incursions³⁶.

THE JIRI FRONTIER :

The western boundary between Manipur and Cachar was not properly defined³⁷. Since early 1827, Gambhir Singh made steady penetration into the area west of the Barak River which formed the boundary between Manipur and Cachar. This region abounds in excellent timber besides valuable ivory, wax, grass and bamboos³⁸. Gambhir Singh nourished the desire of annexing that territory to Manipur and brought various Naga clans that occupied this tract under his authority.

In 1828, on a complaint lodged by Govind Chandra, the Raja of Cachar, against Gambhir Singh, Mr. Tucker, Commissioner of Sylhet, called upon the Raja of Manipur to explain his conduct. But Gambhir Singh rejected the claim that the Barak had ever formed the line of demarcation between Manipur and Cachar. He explained that he had merely brought the independent Nagas under his sphere of influence³⁹. A few months

34. Ibid., p.110.

35. Johnstone, James, My Experiences in Manipur and Naga Hills, p.34.

36. P.C. 14 Jan.1833, Nos.69-70; 30 March, No.110.

37. Barpujari, H.K., Assam in the Days of the Company, p.74.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., p.75.

later he occupied an Ilaka, known as Chandrapur, and constructed houses for the settlers from his territory. When he was asked by the Commissioner to remove the Manipuris from the Ilaka, he claimed it as an inheritance⁴⁰. Gambhir Singh's inability to present documentary evidence and the intervention of Mr. Scott, Agent to the Governor General, under advice from the Supreme Government together dismissed his claim on the Ilaka. The Agent wrote to the Government that Gambhir Singh could not be considered as entitled to hold the Ilaka of Chandrapur even should it be true, as he alleged, that it was granted to his father⁴¹. The Agent, however, was of the opinion that it might be expedient that the Raja of Manipur should be given some other small tract of land in Cachar for the purpose of settling a few of his followers with a view to the safe custody and transport of military stores between Sylhet and Manipur⁴². The proposal received the concurrence of the Governor-General in Council and it was observed that if necessary Gambhir Singh should be required to pay a fair and reasonable compensation either directly to Govind Chandra or through the British Government⁴³. The Raja of Cachar objected strongly to make over to Gambhir Singh any part of the territory for the purpose of erecting a magazine as suggested by the Agent. But ultimately he agreed to cede such a tract to Government for fifteen years after which it had to be renewed, if necessary⁴⁴.

40. Ibid.

41. S.C., 30 May, 1829, No.1.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid, No.6.

44. S.C., 31st July, 1829, No.22.

Shortly after the acquisition of the above tract Garbhir Singh set up a police establishment at Chandrapur and encouraged its Thannadar directly and indirectly to commit acts of aggression⁴⁵. He also began to interfere indirectly in the internal politics of Cachar which had naturally provoked the wrath of the Agent to the Governor-General, who in a private letter asked him to desist from such proceedings. However, these remonstrances hardly produced any change in the attitude of the Raja of Manipur⁴⁶.

In the meantime the authority of Govind Chandra had been challenged in Cachar by his formidable rival - Tularam. Although the early relations between Govind Chandra and this chief were on the whole cordial, Tularam later on shook off the allegiance of the Raja of Cachar and joined hands with his father in the hills of North Cachar. The Arzee of this chief shows that Govind Chandra had murdered his father and uncle^{and} had caused some of his people to be overpowered and put in irons⁴⁷. The Raja of Cachar treated him (Tularam) as an usurper and ridiculed him as the son of a slave girl⁴⁸. Tularam on the other hand, aided by his two cousins, Govind Ram and Durga Charan, caused much alarm to the Raja⁴⁹.

The enmity of Garbhir Singh and Tularam made the position of Govind Chandra insecure. The situation was further aggravated by his oppressive measures and with the strained relations with his Cachari subjects whom he deprived of the loaves and fishes of the State. To make his administration

45. Barpujari, H.K., op.cit., p.76.

46. Ibid.

47. S.C., 30 May, 1829, Nos.2-3.

48. Barpujari, H.K., op.cit., p.76.

49. S.C., 30 May, 1829, Nos.4-5.

efficient the Raja had to employ a large number of officers from the southern part of Bengal and dismissed the greater numbers of his Cachari subjects who had offended many of his kith and kin. The later being highly dissatisfied fled to Jayantia, Comilla and Tipperah and some joined hands with Tularam⁵⁰.

On April 24, 1830, Govind Chandra was murdered in his Capital⁵¹. On the previous night a gang of Manipuris in concert with some attendants entered the Royal apartment and killed the Raja and several members of his family and set fire to the palace. On receiving the news Mr. Furgund, the Magistrate of Sylhet, hurriedly posted a detachment to Cachar and reported the matter to the Government of Bengal. The Government appointed Lieutenant Fisher, who was by then on survey duties at Sylhet to take temporary charge of the administration in Cachar with the powers of a magistrate and collector⁵².

It was strongly suspected that Gambhir Singh instigated the murder of the Raja of Cachar. It was also believed that Tularam had a secret hand in the murder of the Raja⁵³. Ram Govind, acting Vakeel on the part of the British Government at the Court of Raja Govind Chandra was suspected to be privy to the whole plot⁵⁴. Kirparam Brahman Cachari in his deposition⁵⁵ stated that he had seen about thirty Manipuris

50. P.C., 20 Oct., 1830, Nos. 35A to 35C, Fisher to Scott, Sept. 20, 1830.

51. Barpujari, H.K., op.cit., p. 82.

52. P.C., 18 June, 1830, No. 53.

53. P.C., 29 Oct., 1830, Nos. 35A-35C.

54. P.C., 4 June, 1830, Nos. 29-31.

55. Ibid.

with 'muskets and sword' which belonged to the late Raja of Cachar and the "golden necklace" of the late Raja on the neck of one of the sirdars. He further pointed out that one Suintaba, blind in one eye, a subject of Gambhir Singh, had in retaliation for some previous offence, killed Govind Chandra with a sword⁵⁶. The depositions of the persons who were connected with the crime established reasonably that Gambhir Singh sent his agents to Cachar to kill Govind Chandra⁵⁷. Evidence proved that a party of armed men from without, assisted undoubtedly by some of the Siphahis in the Raja's own service, penetrated the interior of his dwelling and murdered him there. Lieutenant Fisher, after making a thorough and detailed study of the case, opined that the existence of domestic conspiracy was more certain than was at first supposed and that the Raja was murdered through the machination of Gambhir Singh. Though there were considerable number of Cacharis holding situation in the Raja's family about the time of his murder, there was no direct proof of their participation in the crime⁵⁸. Fisher further reported that though the murder was committed by the followers of Gambhir Singh and probably by his orders, yet several principal Cacharis in the Raja's family were also more or less implicated. It was even possible that the conspiracy might have been hatched among the junior officers without the direct concurrence of Gambhir Singh⁵⁹. However, a close examination of the evidence indicated the complicity of Gambhir Singh.

56. Ibid.

57. P.C., 18 June, 1830, No.54.

58. P.C., 29 October, 1830, Nos. 35A-35C.

59. Ibid.

The Government of Bengal wrote that the presumptive proof against Gambhir Singh as the instigator of the murder was very strong⁶⁰. While doing so the Government also considered the repeated disputes between the two chiefs over several matters, and only about a fortnight before the occurrence, Govind Chandra had to solicit the Agent to the Governor-General for military aid against Gambhir Singh, who was reported to have despatched a force to seize Cachar in concert with Tularam. The Agent, therefore, asked Gambhir Singh to tender his explanations for the charge made against him in connection with the murder of Govind Chandra and to surrender Heeramund, Smtaba and such others who were suspected to be involved in the crime⁶¹. However, the Government ^{of Bengal} did not approve of the suggestion to arrest Gambhir Singh in the event of his visit in Sylhet⁶².

Several claimants appeared to the vacant throne of Cachar. Gambhir Singh requested the Government of Bengal to allow him to hold the country of Cachar for twenty years in return for an annual revenue of Rs 15,000/-⁶³. Captain Grant supported Gambhir Singh's claim. He was under the impression that the acquisition of Cachar by the latter would provide him with sufficient means to build up a stable and efficient Government so necessary for the security of the North-Eastern Frontier. If Cachar be ceded to the Raja of Manipur, Grant also believed that there were ample chances for assimilation of the two peoples in Cachar and Manipur who had been warring

60. P.C., 18 June, 1830, No.54.

61. P.C., 25 June, 1830, No.45.

62. Ibid., No.46.

63. P.C., 14 May, 1832, Nos.109-119.

all along with each other. Cachar being separated from Manipur by a series of ranges of hills and deep rivers and its inhabitants speaking a dialect quite different from the language of the Manipuris, Captain Jenkins and . Pemberton did not support Grant's argument. They, therefore, opposed Gambhir Singh's claim on Cachar. The Government of Bengal concurred with the arguments of Jenkins and Pemberton. Moreover, on the receipt of the proceedings of the murder of the late Raja, the Supreme Government felt it impolitic to permit Gambhir Singh to profit by a crime which was suspected to have been committed at his instigation and deemed it inexpedient to transfer the country of Cachar to the Raja of Manipur. Accordingly Cachar was annexed on August 14, 1832.

... Pemberton however, desired that if it were not possible to transfer the whole district of Cachar Gambhir Singh should at least be favoured with the cession of the tract east of the Jiri River between the two branches of the Barak River, over which he had already extended his influence. The Governor-General in Council entertained grave doubts as to the propriety of ceding a portion of Cachar in the face of objection raised by Capt. Jenkins. The Council, therefore, desired to have more details from the local authorities. On receipt of the expected reports from Grant and Pemberton and being convinced of their cogent and forceful arguments the Government of Bengal finally resolved to relinquish the tract on November 5, 1832 to Gambhir Singh on conditions as given below :

"(i) That he should withdraw his thanna without delay from Chandrapur : (ii) that he should not obstruct the trade between Manipur and Cachar by exaction of exorbitant duties : (iii) that the Nagas occupying the hills ceded to him should have free access to the plains for the purposes of barter and sale : (iv) that he should keep the communication from Jiri to Manipur in order for the transit of laden cattle throughout the year : (v) that he should be ready at all times to afford the assistance of a portion of the Manipur Levy and also to furnish porters and labourers whenever their services might be required by the British Government."⁶⁴

THE PROBLEM OF THE KABAW VALLEY :

The Kabaw Valley is a narrow strip of level land between the mountains which form the eastern boundary of the Manipur Valley and the Ningthsee River. "The term Kubo(Kabaw)" Pemberton writes, "is employed by the people of Muneepoor (Manipur) to designate not only the Shan, but the extensive race itself together with the tract on the opposite bank of the Ningthsee River, extending to the Naojeeree Hills, was called by them Maithai Kubo and by the Burmese Kathe Shan, while that portion of Shan comprised between the eastern foot of the Naojeeree Hills and the right bank of the Irawathi(Irawadi) River was Ava Kubo or Mrelap Shan"⁶⁵ The Valley was divided into the Sumjok, the Khambat and the Kule divisions

64. As quoted by Barpujari, H.K., in his book Assam in the Days of the Company, p.95.

65. Pemberton, R.B., Capt., Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India, p.116.

respectively. Apart from its economic importance arising from rich teak woods, the Rajas of Manipur and Burma thought the possession of the valley indispensable for the border security of their respective countries and naturally they endeavoured to extend their sovereignty over that valley. No wonder, therefore, successive border disputes arose in that valley during the years following the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26). The necessity for demarcation of a well defined boundary was, therefore, keenly felt by both the parties and the Government of Bengal came forward as the arbitrator over the intricate problem. In fact, no mention, whatever, was made of the valley in the Treaty of Yandaboo and nothing was discussed at that time about the boundary between Manipur and Burma. The Government of Bengal felt it to be just and proper that all the places and territories in the ancient country of Manipur, which were in possession of Raja Gambhir Singh, should belong to that Raja as the authorities in Calcutta, hitherto, calculated the importance of keeping Manipur as a buffer State between British India and Burma. The Sunjok and Khambat Divisions of the valley as far east of ^{the} Ningthee or Kyendwin were accordingly given to Manipur⁶⁶ on April 1826 and the Ningthee formed the boundary between the countries⁶⁷.

Soon after the conclusion of the Treaty of Yandaboo some Burmese troops crossed the Ningthee River and entered the Valley. Instead of renewing hostilities, Gambhir Singh

66. Ibungchal Singh, Lairenmayum, An Introduction to Manipur, p.137.

67. Meckenzie, Alexander, North East Frontier of Bengal, p.176.

thought it wise to leave the matter to the decision of the British. The Supreme Government, therefore, took great pains to demarcate a proper boundary between Burma and Manipur. The Burmese, on the other hand, made no friendly offers. Several attempts that had been made subsequently saw no sign of amicable settlement. In early 1828, the Government of Bengal appointed Captains Grant and Pemberton, the two British officers in Manipur, as the Commissioners to settle the dispute. In that same year the latter met the Burmese Commissioners on the bank of the Ningthee River, but the season was far advanced and the two parties decided to postpone the meeting till the following year.

In the meantime the Burmese interpreted that the Ningthee was not the Kyendwin (Chindwin).⁶⁸ They falsely represented that it was a river flowing to the west of the Kabaw Valley and tried to back their claims by sending a map to Calcutta showing the Ningthee and the Chindwin as two different rivers. The authorities in Calcutta returned the map to the British Commissioners in Manipur to enquire into the report whether any such river shown as the Ningthee in the map existed. Grant and Pemberton proved the deception of the Burmese and their report was forwarded to the Resident at Ava.⁶⁹

The date for the next meeting was fixed in early 1829; but no Burmese Commissioners appeared. The Supreme Government desired the settlement in favour of Garbhir Singh and directed Grant and Pemberton to

68. Meckenzie, op.cit., p.177.

69. Jhaljit, Rajkumar, A Short History of Manipur, p.215.

proceed to the Ningthee. The Burmese were, however, invited to meet the British Commissioners, in January 1830, pointing out to them that if they failed to come on the appointed date the boundary would be fixed in their absence permanently.

As scheduled the meeting with the Burmese Commissioners, accompanied by Major Burney, British Resident in Burma was held in January 1830 on the bank of the Ningthee River. The Burmese strongly denied the conquest of the Kabaw Valley by Gambhir Singh during the late war and ~~the~~ rejected the boundary demarcated by Grant and Pemberton⁷⁰. They asserted that the Manipuris had come secretly into the valley and taken possession of the country while the boundary question was under discussion with Sir A. Campbell, the Commander of the Oversea Expedition, in the First Burmese War. But Grant and Pemberton did not agree with their argument and recommended the valley in favour of Gambhir Singh pointing out that the valley was in possession of Manipur occasionally in earlier periods as well as for twelve years during the reign of Raja Chourjit Singh (1800-1813), the then Raja of Manipur. The Burmese on the other hand claimed the valley as their own and cited that the Khambat and the Sumjok divisions of the valley, 1,300 years ago were under them. They denied the possession of the Kabaw Valley by Manipur occasionally in the ancient times as well as for a period of twelve years during the reign of Raja Chourjit Singh. They also rejected the claims of possession of the Sumjok, the Khambat etc. by Manipur before the

70. S.C., 30 April, 1830, Nos.3-4.

conclusion of the Treaty of Yandaboo. The strongest argument in support of their claims was that the Kabaw Valley was separated from the authority of the Chief of Manipur and annexed to the Burmese Empire under the Burmese Governor for a period of eleven or twelve years before the First Anglo-Burmese War⁷¹. In support of their contention they produced an old inscription on a stone in the Pagoda of Koungmhoohan to show that Samjok was subject to Ava in the Burmese year 1012 or 1650 A.D. and denied that any grant of the territory eastward of the Kyendwin was ever made to Manipur by the great grandfather of the then Raja of Pong, an important and powerful Shan kingdom of Upper Burma. They challenged documents and other proofs produced by Manipur as to date and manner in which she originally came into possession of the town of Tamu, Khambat etc.⁷².

The British Commissioners denied the Burmese claims and maintained that the valley belonged to Manipur and produced records from the chronicles of that State and proved that Kyamba (1467-1508), the then Raja of Manipur, with Khikhoaba, the contemporary Raja of Pong, both agreed to fix a boundary between their countries and Kabaw was ceded to the former in 1485 A.D.⁷³. They laid before the Burmese Commissioners a book which proved that : (1) the Pong Raja was not a tributary of Ava 400 years ago : (2) that the Khambat and the Samjok were tributary of Pong and (3) that the Pong Raja then ceded to Raja

71. S.C., 19 November, 1830, Nos.4-11.

72. S.C., 30 April, 1830, Nos.3-4.

73. Ibid.

Kyamba all the country comprised between the Naojeeree and ⁷⁴ the Myalong Hills on the eastern side of the Ningthee River.

The Commissioners, no doubt, agreed that the Burmese had been, for twelve years, in possession of the Kabaw Valley before the last war. This transaction took place in consequence of a successful attempt through the aid of the Burmese made by Raja Marjit Singh to deprive his elder brother Raja Chourjit Singh of the Chiefship of Manipur. Kabaw, which for the preceding 15 years had belonged to Manipur, was then annexed to Ava - it was a reward for the good service rendered by the latter ⁷⁵. They, therefore, reminded ^d the Burmese Commissioners that the reconquest and the former possession were the only two points for the consideration and that the Ningthee River must be the boundary between Burma and Manipur ⁷⁶. Grant and Pemberton further told them that the conquest of the Kabaw Valley by Raja Gambhir Singh before the Treaty of Yandaboo was correct, because, they were present at the time of the capture of Tamu. In support of their argument they also produced printed narratives of the Burmese war - one, dated, 23 January 1826, written from Tamu and the other dated, 3 February, 1826 from Monfu, on the western bank of the Ningthee River as proofs of their statements ⁷⁷.

The Burmese Commissioners paid little heed to the argument put forward by the British Commissioners.

74. Ibid.

75. S.P., 19 March, 1833, No.1.

76. S.C., 30 April, 1830, Nos.3-4.

77. Ibid.

In these circumstances, Major Burney, the British Resident at Ava, therefore, invited Pemberton to have a further discussion with the Burmese ministers. On his arrival at Ava, the latter found it impossible to convince the Burmese of the rightfulness of the claims of Gambhir Singh to the Valley⁷⁸. Major Burney brought home to the Burmese Ministers that the deputation of Captain Pemberton to Ava was itself a proof of the desire of the British Government that the question regarding the boundary of Manipur should be settled in the most amicable manner. He added that Pemberton's earlier actions had received entire approval from the Governor-General and that the officer was not empowered to renew or enter into any further discussion of the subject⁷⁹. The King and ministers of Burma firmly believed that if they could secure, in the same manner as Gambhir Singh had done, the aid and services of the British officers to represent their case before the Governor-General, His Lordship would not decide the question against Ava. The Burmese ministers further enquired of Major Burney if the Governor-General could remove Raja Gambhir Singh and place Marjit Singh on the throne of Manipur, for under such an arrangement they hoped to maintain friendly relations between Manipur and Burma.

Major Burney informed that the decision made by the Government in favour of Raja Gambhir Singh had already been reported to the authorities at England and as such the discussion could not be reopened. To conciliate the Ministers, he pointed out that the Government might sacrifice a part of the indemnity

78. Ibid.

79. S.C., 19 November, 1830, Nos.4-11.

(under the terms of the Peace Treaty of 1826) if there was no objection on their part to the inclusion of the Kabaw Valley in Manipur. The Ministers considered the proposal favourably, but dared not to communicate their feelings to the King, who, they knew, would burst out into a violent rage, the consequences which might be a serious one⁸⁰. The Burmese King, till then, bore an implacable hatred against the British and was determined on retrieving the losses which the last war had inflicted upon him. He was keen on the subject of the Kabaw; he expressed his vexation that the British not only supported the Manipuris but also desired to give them a portion of his own territory. Major Burney felt that if the matter was pressed further, it would bring another war. He remarked : "Had our determination regarding the Kabaw Valley been communicated to the Court in 1827 at the time when it sought so much to obtain some delay in the payment of the Third instalment and at the time when the king's weak mind had not taken up this subject, I think, there would then have arisen little or no difficulty. But now, there are grounds of probability that the determination of the Governor General-in-Council in favour of Munneepore may ultimately produce a collision between the British and the Burmese States."⁸¹

In the meantime, a Burmese deputation went to Calcutta and waited upon the Governor-General to make an appeal against the British decision in the Kabaw Valley. Major Burney was,

80. S.C., 21 January, 1831, Nos. 6-8.

81. S.C., 19 November, 1830, Nos. 4-11.

therefore, called upon by the Supreme Government to reach Calcutta so that he could join in the discussions. A perusal of the official records of Ava convinced Burney that the claims put forward by the Burmese could not be so lightly set aside. Apart from this, the political insignificance of Manipur as a buffer State, had led him to support the Burmese case notwithstanding vehement opposition from Grant and Pemberton. Though convinced of the right of Manipur to the Kabaw Valley, the Supreme Government concurred in the views of the Resident on the problem. It was felt that Burma being more important than Manipur it would not be expedient to uphold the right of the latter, and subsequently it was decided to accede to the request of the King of Ava that the valley should be restored to him and the eastern foot of the Maring Hills should be considered the boundary between Manipur and the Burmese territories⁸². Lord William Bentinck, in his Minute, 26 February 1833, remarked : " to the humiliation to their pride and to their reduced if not extinguished power I think it will be both generous and expedient to grant them this gratification and Gambhir Singh be awarded a compensation for the loss."⁸³ Major Burney was, therefore, directed to announce to the King that "the Supreme Government still adheres to the opinion that the Ningthee forms the proper boundary between Ava and Munneepore but that in consideration for His Majesty's (i.e. of the King of Burma) feelings and wishes and in the spirit of amity and good will

82. S.P., 16 April, 1833, No.77.

83. S.P., 19 March, 1833, No.1.

subsisting between the two countries the Supreme Government consents to the restoration of the Kubbo Valley to Ava and to the establishment of the boundary at the foot of Yoomadounng Hills."⁸⁴

Grant and Pemberton persuaded Gambhir Singh to accept the new arrangements. They appealed to him in the name of friendship and assured him that the new arrangement would be found highly beneficial both to him and as well as to his country.⁸⁵ They communicated to the Raja the final approval of the Government to the sum of Sicca Rs 500/- P.M. to be paid by half yearly instalments as compensation for the loss of the valley; and if circumstances arose by which the territory in question ever again reverted to Manipur the compensation granted would cease from the date of such restoration.⁸⁶ Grant and Pemberton thus handed over the valley to Burma on 9 January 1834, and a treaty was concluded on the same day between Manipur and Burma.⁸⁷ Gambhir Singh expired on 9 January 1834, the very day on which the valley was transferred to Burma. The arrangement for carrying out this agreement into execution was entered into by his successor.

It will be evident, from the above, that the transfer of the valley had been decided without any reference to the Raja of Manipur. The surrender of the valley as apprehended by Sir E. Barnes, the then Commander-in-Chief, would do but little good in appeasing the wounded pride and the angry feelings of

84. Ibid., No.2.

85. S.C., 11 July, 1833, Nos.14-15.

86. S.C., 10 January, 1834, Nos.4-5.

87. Aitchison, Treaties etc., Vol.I, pp.220-221. See Appendix D & E.

the Court of Ava and did a great deal of harm to Manipur. He felt it to be an unwise attempt to conciliate an enemy and a very probable means of converting a friend into an enemy. Sir.E.Barnes, therefore, strongly desired that the Government should revise the decision⁸⁸. But the latter paid little attention to what the Commander-in-Chief entreated. The relations with Burma continued to be unfriendly for the Burmese Kings could neither forget nor forgive the lessons they received in the hands of the English only a few years before and determined to undo the Treaty of Yandaboo. The Burmese monarch Tharrawaddy (1837-1845) expressed : "The English beat my brother, not me. The Treaty of Yandaboo is not binding on me, for I do not make it."⁸⁹

Actually, within 18 years of the transfer of the valley, the Second Anglo-Burmese War broke out in the time of King Pagan (1845-52). Sir James Johnstone observed: "We had an agent Colonel Burney at Ava, and the Burmese who were not disposed to be at all friendly, constantly tried to impress on him the fact that all difficulties and disputes would be at an end if we ceded the Kabaw Valley to them - that territory belonging to our ally Gambhir Singh of Manipur. Of course, the

88. S.P., 19 March, 1833, No.11.

89. Dodwell, The Cambridge History of India, Vol.v.
p.560.

proposal should have been rejected with scorn and a severe snub given to the Burmese officials it was not realized that a display of self confidence and strength is the best diplomacy with people like the Burmese and with a view to winning their goodwill we basely consented to deprive our gallant and loyal ally of part of his tributaries."⁹⁰

90. Johnstone, Sir James, op.cit., p.86.

Appendix-C

A translation of the conditions entered into by Raja Gumbheer Sing of Munnipore, on the British Government agreeing to annex to Munnipore the two ranges of Hills situated between the eastern and western bunds of the Barak - dated, the 18th April, 1833. (Aitchison, A Collection of Treaties etc. Vol.1 Part I, pp.123-124).

The Governor-General and Supreme Council of Hindoostan declare as follows :- With regard to the two ranges of Hills, the one called Kalanaga Range, and the other called the Noonjai Range which are situated between the eastern bund of the Barak and western bund of the Barak, we will give up all claim on the part of the Honourable Company thereunto, and we will make these Hills over in possession to the Raja, and give him the line of the Jeeree and the western bund of the Barak as a boundary, provided that the Raja agrees to the whole of what is return in this paper, which is as follows :

1st - The Raja will, agreeably to instructions received, without delay remove his Thanna from Chandrapore, and establish it on the eastern bank of the Jeeree.

2nd - The Raja will in no way obstruct the trade carried on between the two countries by Bengali or Munnipooree merchants. He will not exact heavy duties, and he will make a monopoly of no articles of merchandise whatsoever.

3rd - The Raja will in no way prevent the Nagas inhabiting the Kalanaga and Noonjai Ranges of Hills, from selling or bartering ginger, cotton, pepper, and every other article the produce of their country, in the plains of Cachar, at the Banskandee and Oodharbun Bazaars, as has been their custom.

4th - With regard to the road, commencing from the eastern bank of the Jeeree and continued via Kalanaga and Kowpooms, as far as the valley of Munnipore - after this road has been finished, the Raja will keep it in repairs, so as to enable laden bullocks to pass during the cold and dry seasons. Further, at the making of the road, if British Officers be sent to examine or superintend the same, the Raja will agree to everything these Officers may suggest.

5th - With reference to the intercourse already existing between the territories of the British Government and those of the Raja, if the intercourse be further extended it will be well in every respect and it will be highly advantageous to both the Raja and his country. In order, therefore, that this may speedily take place, the Raja at the requisition of the British Government will furnish a quota of Nagas to assist at the construction of the road.

6th - In the event of war with the Burmese, if troops be sent to Munnipore, either to protect that country or to advance beyond the Ningthee, the Raja, at the requisition of the British Government will provide Hill porters to assist in transporting the ammunition and baggage of such troops.

7th - In the event of anything happening on the Eastern Frontier of the British Territories, the Raja will, when required ^{assist} ~~against~~ the British Government with a portion of his troops.

8th - *The Raja will be answerable for all the ammunition he received from the British Government and will, for the information of the British Government give in every month a statement of expenditure to the British Officer attached to the levy.

*As the connection of the British Government with the Munnipore Levy and the supply of ammunition to the levy have ceased, this clause is inapplicable to present circumstances.

Seal

I, Shree Joot Gumbheer Sing of Munnipore, agree to all that is written above in this paper sent by the Supreme Council, dated, 18th April 1833 (A True Translation).

Signed in sealed in my presence
(Signed) F.J. Grant, Commissioner.

(Signed) Geo. Gordon, Lt.

Adjutant, Gumbheer Sing's Levy

(Signed) Shree Joot Rajah
Gumbheer Sing.

Appendix-D

Agreement regarding the Kubo Valley, dated Sunnyachil Ghat, Ningthee, 9 January, 1834. (Aitchison, A Collection of Treaties etc. Vol.1, Part II, pp.220-221).

First - The British Commissioners, Major Grant and Captain Pemberton, under instructions from the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council, agree to make over to the Woondouk Mahamingyan Raja and Tsarudaugicks Myookyanthao, Commissioners appointed by the King of Ava, the towns of Furmao, Khumbat, Samjok and all other villages in the Kubo Valley, the Ungoching Hills and the strip of valley running between the eastern foot and the western bank of the Ningthee or Kyendwen river.

Second - The British Commissioners will withdraw the Munnipooree Thannas now stationed within this tract of the country, and make over immediate possession of it to the Burmese Commissioners on certain conditions.

Third - The conditions are, that they will agree to the boundaries which may be pointed out to them by the British Commissioners, and will respect and refrain from any interference, direct or indirect, with the people residing on the Munnipooree side of those boundaries.

Fourth - The boundaries are as follows :-

1. The eastern foot of the chain of mountains which rise immediately from the western side of the plain of the Kuboo Valley. Within this line is included Moreh and all the country to the westward of it.

2. On the south a line extending from the eastern foot of the same hills at the point where the river, called by the Burmahs Nansaweng, and by the Munnipoorees Numsaeelung, enters the plain upto its source and across the hills due west down to the Kathekhyoung (Munnipooree River).

3. On the North the line of the boundary will begin at the foot of the same hills at the northern extremity of the Kubo Valley and pass due north upto the first range of hills, each of that upon which stand the villages of Choetar, Noongbree, Noonghur of the tribe called by the Munnipoorees Loochoopa, and the Burmah Lagwensoung, now tributary to Munnipoor.

Fifth - The Burmese Commissioners hereby promise that they will give orders to the Burmese Officers, who will remain in charge of the territory now made over to them, not in any way to interfere with the Khyens or other inhabitants living on the Munnipoor side of the lines of boundary above described, and the British Commissioners also promise that the Munnipooris shall be ordered not in any way to interfere with the Khyens or other inhabitants of any description living on the Burmah side of the boundaries now fixed.

(Seal) Sd/-P.J.Grant, Major	0	Commissioners
(Seal) Sd/-R.B.Pemberton, Capt.	0	

Sunnyachil Ghat, Ningthee, 9th January, 1834.

Appendix-K

Agreement regarding compensation for the Kubo Valley, dated, the 25th January, 1834. (Aitchison, A Collection of Treaties etc. Vol.1 Part I, pp.124-125).

Major Grant and Captain Pemberton, under instruction from the Right Honourable Governor-General in Council, having made over the Kubo Valley to the Burmese Commissioners deputed from Ava, are authorised to state -

1st - That it is the intention of the Supreme Government to grant a monthly stipend of five hundred Sicca Rupees to the Raja of Munnipore to commence from the 9th day of January 1834, the date at which the transfer of Kubo took place, as shown in the Agreement mutually signed by the British and Burmese Commissioners.

2nd - It is to be distinctly understood that should any circumstances hereafter arise by which the portion of territory lately made over to Ava again reverse to Munnipore, the allowance now granted by the British Government will cease from the date of such reversion.

Sd/-F.J.Grant, Major

Sd/-R.Boileau Pemberton, Capt. Commissioners.

Langthabal, Munnipore

January 25th, 1834.

CHAPTER II

TENTATIVE INTERVENTION

There had been frequent disputes on the question of succession to the throne of Manipur. To avoid repetition of the succession revolts after his death, Gaubhir Singh desired to nominate his successor during his own life time. He was convinced that it would be a matter of necessity on the part of the Government of Manipur to prevent anarchy and confusion which, in all probability, might take place in the event of his death unless an arrangement was made under the sanction of the British Government. Since the people of Manipur did not follow strictly the law of primogeniture, he could not dare to nominate Chandrakirti Singh, his infant son who was born to him in 1831, a few years before his death. The succession of Nar Singh, his favourite Senapati, was, therefore, almost a certainty. But in deference to the Raja's wishes, Nar Singh desired that prince Chandrakirti Singh should be the next successor. There still remained other pretenders - Tribhubanjit Singh, Jogindrajit Singh and Jaibir Singh, three of the nephews of Gaubhir Singh, whose claims the Raja could not set aside so lightly. He invited the nobles of Manipur and the British officers, particularly Grant and Pemberton, to offer

their suggestions. This eventually led to the beginning of British intervention in the internal affairs of Manipur.

Tribhubanjit Singh, who had the strongest of claims, was the son of the ex-Raja Chourjit Singh. He was intelligent and discreet and would not be found deficient either in steadiness or in the capacity to take decisions¹. He, having resided for many years with his father at Nadia, had also the advantage of coming in contact with the British authorities. If the people of Manipur had been given the option he would have been selected undoubtedly. And if the memory of his father be considered the choice also must have gone on him. His father being the elder brother in point of descent, his claim was superior to that of the other two. But his open enmity with his uncle, the reigning Chief, distracted favours from those who had to support him in his candidature.

Tribhubanjit Singh, who was by that time at Sylhet, came to Manipur on June 2, 1828 and represented himself before Garbhir Singh². On his arrival, he appealed to his uncle for an adequate means of his subsistence and his candidature. But the Raja paid no heed to his entreaties and treated him harshly and went to the extent of not having any discussion on the matter with him³. However, Tribhubanjit Singh, accompanied by his mother approached the Raja for the second time

1. P.C., 7 November 1833, Nos.123-124; Grant to Robertson, 28 September, 1833.

2. P.C., 16 December, 1831, Nos.91-94; Memorial of Tribhubanjit Singh, 11 November, 1831.

3. Ibid.

but he was not given an interview⁴. On the contrary, Gambhir Singh demanded from Tribhubanjit Singh two hundred rupees as a part payment of a debt incurred by his father and alleged that the prince had come there to avenge the defeat of his father⁵. Extremely disgusted Tribhubanjit Singh returned to Sylhet. But he could not forget the insult and indignities meted out to him by his uncle. He, therefore, began to act against Gambhir Singh which inevitably made him the arch enemy of the Raja.

The next nephew, Jogindrajit Singh, son of the Ex-Raja Marjit Singh, who was also by that time at Sylhet, was an energetic young man⁶. Major Grant believed him to be brave, intelligent and enterprising, but at the same time he considered him rash, headstrong and imprudent⁷. Jogindrajit Singh, during his stay in Manipur, made no secret of his feelings of enmity towards the Raja, but exhibited them in the most open and undisguised manner upto the moment of his leaving the state, though the folly of such conduct was frequently pointed out to him. On his return to Sylhet Jogindrajit Singh also acted in a manner which incurred the displeasures of Gambhir Singh. The latter, therefore, could not forgive him and the question of his succession was dropped⁸.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. P.C., 30 May, 1833, Nos.86-111; Robertson to Macnaghten, 8 March, 1833.

7. P.C., November 7, 1833, Nos.123-124; Grant to Robertson, 28 September, 1833.

8. Ibid.

As to the third nephew Jaibir Singh, the Jubaraia, Mr. Robertson, Agent to the Governor-General, held the view that he was totally wanting in vigour and energy⁹ and, therefore, on the demise of Gambhir Singh, he was likely to be set aside¹⁰ and as such his case should not be favourably considered.¹⁰ Since he was in the good book of the Raja he would have been selected by Gambhir Singh as his successor had he not been blessed with a son of his own. This prince was a young man at his early twenties, retired and reserved but certainly not deficient either in common sense or personal courage. If a choice were to be made between Jogindrajit Singh, the selection, of course, would be in his favour¹¹.

After the perusal of the backgrounds of these nephews the authorities in Calcutta expressed their opinion, as to who among the nephews of Gambhir Singh was likely to be the successor. They were were convinced that if any of these nephews be adopted as the Raja's heir and recognised by the British Government, there would be no doubt about his loyalty to the British as well as the loyalty of the people of Manipur to him¹². The Supreme Government, therefore, strongly urged that there was no immediate necessity for determining the individual who was to stand next in order of succession. The Government, further, considered that it might be better that Major Grant

9. Ibid.

10. P.C., 30 May, 1833, Nos.86-111; Robertson to Macnaghten, 8 March, 1833.

11. P.C., 7 November, 1833, Nos.123-124; Grant to Robertson, 28 September, 1833.

12. Ibid.

should take more time to calculate well the merits of the three individuals, from among whom the selection was to be made, before any positive order on the subject should be issued¹³.

To avoid the difficulties of choosing the successor from among the above nephews, Major Grant suggested that the Supreme Government should consider the right of recognising Chandrakirti Singh as the next successor. If the Supreme Government did so, he believed the Raja would be pleased¹⁴. In such a case, he further felt that a Regency had to be instituted to take charge of the Government of Manipur, if the Raja's death occurred during his son's minority. At the head of the Regency Grant desired to place Maisnam Ningol Kumudini Devi, the Maharani, a woman of sound judgement, masculine firmness, strong mind and discretion and a person suited for the occasion. She was to be assisted by Nar Singh, on whom Gambhir Singh had justly placed the utmost reliance and confidence¹⁵. Major Grant was also convinced that many objections might be urged against the existence of a minority, but still¹⁶ it would be the only arrangement to satisfy the rival parties. If on the other hand, the Government be of the opinion that the recognition of the Raja's son was a sufficient precaution, he thought it wise for the future tranquility of Manipur that the succession be recognised publicly. Robertson, examining Grant's suggestion, observed : "Regarding the succession of

13. Ibid.

14. P.C., 19 December, 1833, Nos. 85-93; Robertson to Macnaghten, 5 October, 1833.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

Manipur all that I thought desirable was that the local authorities should be provided with instructions for their guidance in the event of an accidental vacancy."¹⁷ He, therefore, recommended that in the event of the sudden demise of the Raja the British officers in Manipur should be authorised to proclaim immediately his infant son as the successor and the Maharani as the Regent¹⁸.

Before a final decision was arrived at as to whom the guddi of Manipur be handed over after him, Gambhir Singh died on, 9 January 1834, at the age of forty six. Subsequently, Mr. Robertson reported to the Supreme Government that since measures for placing Chandrakirti Singh on the guddi, having been spontaneously adopted by the influential members of the Darbar, including War Singh, with the apparent concurrence of the people, he should immediately be recognised as Raja of Manipur with a Council of Regency at its head during his minority. The Governor-General in Council approved the suggestion.¹⁹ To prevent any attempt that might upset the latter's authority and endanger British influence, the Supreme Government also made a public avowal of its determination to uphold the infant Raja and its intention to punish any parties attempting to dispossess him. Thus, impending danger from a probable war of succession was averted and perfect order prevailed in Manipur.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Aitchison, Treaties etc., Vol.I, p.121.

The Governor-General remarked : "It is not my intention to enter into the various subjects adverted to in Major Grant's report but merely to observe that the measures adopted on the occasion of it appear to have been judicious and everything seems to promise a state of tranquility for the future."²⁰

However, the question of choosing a Regent for the infant Raja became a problem to both the Government of Manipur and the Government of Bengal. ~~Mr.~~ Robertson, supporting Grant's view, as stated earlier, recommended the Maharani to be the head of the Regency. The people of Manipur, although willing to bestow the Maharani all the honours and emoluments of a queen, did not cherish the idea of being governed by a woman.²¹ They preferred Nar Singh and wanted him to be entrusted with the guardianship of the infant Raja²². Moreover, they believed that his good sense might give every promise of benefit to Manipur. His loyalty to the late Raja and his conduct towards his infant nephew confirmed the good opinions already entertained of him. The people of Manipur, therefore, desired that Nar Singh should be appointed officially as the Regent by the Supreme Government. Such an official recognition of ~~him~~ his Regency would make all classes of people in Manipur feel secure.²³

In a discussion with Nar Singh, at which Grant, Pemberton and Gordon were present, Grant proposed that some

20. P.C., 11 May, 1836, No.101; vide Minute of Lord William Bentinck.

21. P.C., 3 April, 1834, Nos.127-128; Robertson to Prevelyan, 27 February, 1834.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

other influential men should be associated with Nar Singh in the Regency, but the Senapati refused²⁴. The Senapati and other Sirdars' plea was that a divided authority was against the custom of the country²⁵. The point was, therefore, not pressed lest it might give rise to future quarrels and disputes among themselves. Thus, Nar Singh was appointed as the Regent of the infant Raja and the Government of Bengal also recognised the Regency and the arrangements made to run the administration during the minority of the Raja²⁶.

In the event of the demise of the infant Raja on the reopening of the succession question, the Supreme Government was determined to exercise its discretion in acknowledging any arrangements made by the people of Manipur, because it had no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of that country unless it was absolutely essential²⁷. However, Major Grant suggested the need for definite instructions to be furnished to the British officers at Manipur as to how they should act in such an eventuality. He knew that in such a case the Jubara and the Senapati were likely to be the claimants to the throne. The right of the Jubara rested upon his near connection with the late Raja. Gambhir Singh, therefore, would have certainly adopted him as his successor in the case of the death of his son during his own life time. The late Raja had openly indicated his feelings and wishes towards this nephew

24. P.C., 27 April, 1844, Nos.101-102; Gordon to Currie, 5 April, 1844.

25. P.C., 3 April, 1834, Nos.127-128; Grant to Robertson, 22 February, 1834.

26. P.L. to C.D., P.C., 6 April, 1835, No.14.

27. Ibid.

as the successor to the throne. The claim of the Senapati, on the other hand, was a question of expediency and not of right. His efficient administration and the popularity he had enjoyed made it all the more likely that he would be the favourite of the people²⁸.

Examining the character, ability and popularity enjoyed by the Jubaraja and the Senapati carefully, Robertson reported to the Supreme Government that it would certainly be unwise to support the claim of the former in opposition to the latter²⁹. He reported that nomination of the Senapati as the successor would, on the other hand, be objected to by the people in consideration of his near relation to the infant Raja and the fearful temptation to which he would then be exposed to remove the only obstacle to his own and immediate recognition³⁰. The Agent, therefore, preferred that the Supreme Government should, for the time being, remain silent and exercise its discretion in the event of the actual death of the infant Raja³¹ for he believed that nomination of the Jubaraja against the Senapati or the Senapati against the Jubaraja would certainly lead to displeasure from a considerable section of Manipur. The Supreme Government, being convinced of the arguments put forward by Robertson, abandoned the idea of supporting either of the claimants to the throne of Manipur.

28. Ibid.

29. P.C., 3 April, 1834, Nos.127-128; Robertson to Trevelyan, 27 February, 1834.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

However, it was evident from ^{that} the above the question of Nar Singh came out prominently and, therefore, his succession in the event of the death of the infant Raja was almost a certainty.

In almost all the above transactions, the question of the Jubaraja was neglected. He was, therefore, the only sufferer by the above arrangements³². Immediately after the death of Gasbhir Singh, he and another nephew of the late Raja fled from the Capital and placed themselves under the protection of Grant and Pemberton, who were by that time at Tamu for the transfer of the Kabaw Valley as discussed in the previous chapter. These princes, after some time, returned to the Capital. Soon after his arrival in the Capital Jaibir Singh decided to settle in Bengal. His decision received the approval of the Government of Manipur. This was considered advisable as it was not unlikely that evil advisors might have instigated him to disturb the peace of the country. Further his presence in Manipur would be a constant source of alarm to the Regent in particular. After communicating his intention to the Maharani and the Senapati, Jaibir Singh, without any apparent cause, again changed his mind and remained at his own risk at Manipur, admitting at the same time that his stay in the country might cause disturbance and lead to the loss of many lives. However, in consequence of a message he received from the Maharani, recommending him to adhere to his first

32. Ibid.

resolution, he left the country in February 1834³³. On the eve of his departure from Manipur, he was allowed to carry with him his private property³⁴.

The Jubaraja who thus left Manipur arrived at Calcutta in April 1834 in a state of utter poverty. The Government of Bengal, sanctioned an advance of rupees one hundred to him for his maintenance. With regard to the future prospect of the Jubaraja, the Supreme Government entertained no wish that he should return to Manipur in the face of objections from the ruling authorities there. But if the rank of this prince and the close relationship in which he stood to the late Raja were considered, it was felt that the Government of Manipur should make a small allowance to him to keep him above want³⁵. Mr. Robertson suggested that a farm of waste lands in Cachar be given to the Jubaraja in order to help him establish a colony there with the few followers attached to him, and that a small advance, in terms of money, be sanctioned to assist him³⁶. Robertson's suggestion received concurrence from the Governor-General in Council and Jaibir Singh was subsequently allowed to settle at Cachar.

33. Ibid.

34. P.C., 4 September, 1834, Nos.58-59; Grant to Jenkins, 18 July, 1834.

35. P.L. to C.D., 6 April, 1835, No.14.

36. P.L. to S.S., 13 July, 1835, No.29.

REVOLTS :

Being dissatisfied with the above arrangements, Towkhai Ngamba, a nephew of the late Raja, and another prince came from Cachar to contest the throne of Manipur. They were, however, defeated at Maklang, ten miles from the Capital on the Manipur-Cachar route³⁷. Similarly, Tarring Khomba, the eldest son of Labanya Chandra, a quiet and well disposed man, was instigated by a younger and more turbulent brother; and he also tried to upset the Government of Manipur³⁸. On receipt of the above information, the Government of Manipur instituted an enquiry which led to the instant flight from the Capital of the two princes with their adherents. After eight or ten days pursuit they were found in hiding with about twenty followers near the hills on the eastern side of the valley (i.e. Nongmaiching). A scuffle took place in which one of them was killed and Tarring Khomba himself was slightly wounded³⁹. After this defeat Tarring Khomba committed no more acts of aggressions. Peace was restored once again in Manipur.

Throughout the whole affair the Senapati acted with the utmost discretion. He ordered to the officers who went in pursuit of the princes not to do any personal injury, and instead of entertaining resentment

37. Ibungohal Singh, Lairenmayum, An Introduction to Manipur, p.189.

38. P.C., May 1, 1834, No.64; Grant to Jenkins, 31 March, 1834.

39. Ibid.

against Tarring Khomba he had evinced great anxiety for his recovery⁴⁰. A discharged Jemadar, who joined the prince, confessed and revealed the object of the conspiracy : it was to place Tarring Khomba on the guddi and from the circumstances of his being the eldest son of the late Raja's eldest brother they expected to have been joined by a large number of the inhabitants of the State⁴¹. But contrary to their expectation the conspirators were not joined by a single individual of any consequence. It was, however, suspected that some Manipuris residing in Cachar, Sylhet and Tippera accompanied Tarring Khomba in his last endeavour.

Shortly after Tarring Khomba, another attempt to the throne of Manipur was made by Jogindrajit Singh, son of Marjit Singh. The Ex-Raja, who was then living, supported the claim of his son and appealed to the Supreme Government in an Arzee⁴². He said that when he was ^{Raja} King of Manipur, he made his son Jogindrajit Singh Jubaraia and reigned in the country for a long time. But during the last Burmese war he lost his power. However, when he was called upon by the then Agent, Mr. David Scott, he stated that he helped the British troops in the wars at Cherapunji. Gambhir Singh's death, therefore, led him to demand the throne for his son and permission for their return to Manipur. Supporting his father's claim, Jogindrajit Singh also appealed to the Government of Bengal, pointing out thereby that his ancestors always held the Rajaship of Manipur⁴³

41. Ibid., 40. Ibid.

42. Arzee of Marjit Singh, 17 February 1834; P.C., 20 March 1834, Nos. 38-40.

43. Ibid.

and referred to the services he rendered to the Honourable Company in the Jiri Jungles and on the hills during the last Burmese War. In consideration of his services he further claimed that Major Grant proceeded to Manipur to restore the country to him. But since the country was then laid waste it was placed under the management of Gambhir Singh for its cultivation and improvement. Moreover, he himself and his father were directed to assist the British troops in the war against the Khasi insurgents in 1831, which they accordingly did. After Gambhir Singh's death they claimed their right to the throne : "We are, therefore, by all means entitled to the raj of Munneepore and nobody else can have a just claim to the same."⁴⁴ But the Supreme Government turned down their claim.

Disappointed thus at the rejection of his claim, Jogindrajit Singh took up arms against the Government of Manipur. He collected about one hundred muskets and prepared for an attack on the State. George Gordon, the Political Agent at Manipur, however, saw no probability of Jogindrajit Singh's success in any attempt he might then make against the authorities at Manipur⁴⁵. Nevertheless, the Political Agent, as soon as he was in receipt of the information, reported to the authorities at Fort William the expediency of preventing the individual in question from making such an attempt. Under the advice of the Government of Bengal, the Superintendent of

44. Ibid. Arzee of Jogindrajit Singh, 17 February 1834.

45. P.C., 28 February 1838, Nos.35-37.

Sylhet immediately sent a detachment of the Sylhet Light Infantry to secure the person of the prince. But information reached them that Jogindrajit Singh had forcibly effected his escape from the guard with an armed band of twenty or thirty followers and was supposed to have proceeded to Mani-pur⁴⁶. The information was given to the officers in Cachar. The Raja of Tippera was also called upon to render his service in retaking the prince and thus preventing his designs from being executed⁴⁷. A reward of fifty rupees had been, long since, offered for any certain intelligence about Jogindrajit Singh⁴⁸. Subsequently, it was intimated to the Government of Bengal that the detachment of the Sylhet Light Infantry had surprised Jogindrajit Singh, killed two of his Sirdars and a Sipahce, besides taking four Sipahce prisoners, fourteen muskets, a quantity of ammunition, two colours, his Savaree Dhola, a spear and three elephants⁴⁹. Ganesh Jenadar of the British Company, who pursued the prince, had cut down ~~two~~ two men with his sword and was at the point of striking at Jogindrajit Singh. But the prince fired and shot him dead⁵⁰. Immediately, he took to his heels and ran into dense jungles, and his followers dispersed in single file; so he could not be followed⁵¹. Information having been received that the prince had established himself at a village between the two

46. P.C., 3 January, 1838, Nos.83-84.

47. Ibid.

48. S.C., 18 July, 1838, Nos.34-39; Lyons to Gordon, 19 May, 1838.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

branches of the Jiri, in the territory of Manipur, Captain Gordon sent a party of four hundred men for the purpose of apprehending him, if possible, and to follow him if he tried to escape. This force surprised the prince and put him to death on June 11, 1838⁵² when he was trying to escape. With his death the revolt of Jogindrajit Singh came to an end.

On his return to Sylhet from Manipur, prince Tribhubanjit Singh applied to the Government of Bengal for financial help. The Government, considering the status of the prince, granted him Tuccavee loans for his establishment but soon experienced difficulties in recovering the advances made to him⁵³. The amount due from him was Rs 2,610/- and its recovery was feared to be impossible⁵⁴. The Supreme Government were of the opinion that little could be expected from the exertions of so neglected a person as Tribhubanjit Singh. The Court of Directors also approved the decision of the Governor-General in Council to seize the lands assigned to him if he could not repay the loan within two months⁵⁵. His inability to pay off the amount led him to be placed under restraint by G.R.Lyons, the Superintendent of Cachar, but considering his status as a prince, he was released⁵⁶. The Superintendent also

52. Ibid. Gordon to Lyons, 28 June 1838.

53. P.C., 7 Dec. 1840, Nos. 84-85; Gordon to Maddock, 27 Nov. 1840.

54. P.L. from C.D., 26 January, No. 2 of 1842.

55. P.C., 7 December 1840, Nos. 84-85; Gordon to Maddock, 27 Nov. 1840.

56. P.C., 7 June 1841, Nos. 59-61; Gordon to Maddock, 22 May. 1841.

suggested that a pension, however small, be given to him⁵⁷. About this time Tribhubanjit Singh received the news of the death of his uncle, Gambhir Singh. He, therefore, appealed to the Supreme Government for the throne of Manipur and the superintendence of Govindaji which the government refused to entertain intimating him that his claims were inadmissible⁵⁸.

Being dissatisfied, Tribhubanjit Singh made an attempt on Manipur, somewhat similar to that made by the late princes, Tarring Khomba and Jogindrajit Singh. The prince with his armed followers started for Manipur and reached the Cachar frontier, across the Jiri River in April 1841. Nar Singh, therefore, thought it necessary for the peace of Manipur that he should collect as many sepoyas as possible and defend the State from such an incursion⁵⁹. Troops were, therefore, sent to intercept him. Seventy men of the Sylhet Light Infantry, under the command of Subadar Adjodya Singh, came up with the prince and his followers on April 29, 1841 in one Manipuri village, on the left bank of the Jiri River. In the exchange of fire one Havildar was killed and a sepoy wounded⁶⁰. Sentinels were immediately posted around and went out for the prince, but Tribhubanjit Singh made his escape. The Subadar, therefore, sent one Jemadar Abdul Hussain with 23 men to Lakhimpur to follow the prince. They secured the prince's principal sirdar and two followers, but the prince himself

57. Ibid.

58. P.C., 3 July, 1840, No.49; Memorial of Tribhubanjit Singh 23 December, 1839.

59. P.C., 25 January, 1841, Nos.94-95.

60. P.C., 7 June, 1841, Nos.59-61.

and some of his followers escaped by swimming⁶¹. Although he had been fortunate enough to escape, yet his force had been intercepted and dispersed. A large number of arms and ammunition were captured on the night of the 29th and morning of the 30th April 1841⁶². The Governor-General in Council congratulated Subadar Adjodya Singh for the zeal and perseverance with which he pursued Tribhubanjit Singh and for the good leadership which he displayed in capturing a part and in dispersing the remainder of that person's followers. They also gave him reward⁶³. His Lordship in Council was also of the opinion that the principal adherents of Tribhubanjit Singh should be kept subject to punishment or at least in temporary restraint; that the inferior followers might be discharged on entering into recognizances for their future conduct, and that the coolies be dismissed unconditionally⁶⁴.

Tribhubanjit Singh, with his brother Ram Singh and some other princes, together with sixty men, once again, came on Manipur as far as Mongba, a small outpost in the Manipur-Cachar frontier. Although they were seen by a body of the Regent's men, they managed to escape⁶⁵. Information about their position having been collected, a party under the Regent himself proceeded against the invading force and surrounded them late in the evening of 14 May 1841. The prince and his

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. P.C., 28 June, 1841, Nos.128-32.

party had cut their way through the surrounding force and killed several men. Although some of his men were also killed, his brother wounded and some other deserted, Tribhubanjit Singh came on with about thirty men, crossed the valley without interruption and made a desperate attack upon the Regent's palace on the morning of 15 May 1841⁶⁶. The young Raja and his mother had, for safety, been residing in the Regent's palace. With the Regent's family, they were immediately removed under an escort to a distant place, a few miles from the Palace⁶⁷. The invading party, after having killed many men and having been joined by many Manipuris (who deserted them at day-light), took possession of a walled enclosure surrounding the Magazine of the palace and directed heavy fire on the Regent, who with a few men was defending himself to repel the invaders. Attempts had been made to dislodge the enemy from their position. But the prince with his brother and a few men shut themselves in the Magazine. About 10 O'clock in the morning the door was burst open. Ram Singh, the prince's brother, was found dead and Tribhubanjit Singh himself having been seized was murdered while he was being brought to the Regent⁶⁸. With the execution of their leader, the invading army was immediately reduced to submission. During the whole encounter the Political Agent, who was not involved in the affairs, thought it better to remain

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

passive keeping the Residency on guard⁶⁹. Of the attacking party several prisoners were taken and penalties were awarded to twelve of the adherents of the late prince⁷⁰.

On May 16, 1841, a party under a prince named Karaba made an abortive attempt to dislodge Chandrakirti Singh from the throne of Manipur⁷¹. A similar attempt was made in September from Cachar by three Manipuri princes, Parbatar Singh, Narendrajit Singh and Nilambar Singh⁷². The British authorities in Manipur and Cachar decided to put these princes under strict military guard and send them away from Cachar, if possible, to check probable future disturbances⁷³. The decision received concurrence from the Supreme Government⁷⁴. The princes were accordingly transferred to Dacca⁷⁵, where they were kept under confinement. After enduring prolonged hardship the princes prayed for their release⁷⁶. They desired to settle permanently either in Dacca or in Comillah⁷⁷. On the recommendation of Mr. E. I. Gordon, the Commissioner of Dacca the Governor-General in Council acceded to their request and subsequently the princes were released⁷⁸.

69. Ibid.

70. P.C., 27 March 1844, No.14.

71. P.C., 28 June 1841, Nos.128-132.

72. P.C., 18 Oct. 1841, No.58; Gordon to Lyons, 27 Sept. 1841.

73. Ibid.

74. P.C., 5 April 1842, Nos.96-97.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

QUESTION OF PITAMBAR SINGH :

Mention may be made in this connection that Pitambar Singh since his defeat in the hands of Gambhir Singh, in 1823, settled at Ava and was vested with the command of the Cassay (Manipuri) Horse⁷⁹ by the Burmese Government. When the news of the death of Gambhir Singh reached him, he appealed to Major Burney, the Resident at Ava, for permission to return to Manipur complaining that the town which the King of Burma gave to him as a Jagir, could not maintain his family. The Resident, therefore, reported the desire of the Manipuri Prince to the Governor-General in Council adding his observations to the effect that if the prince be permitted to go back, the Burmese would feel offended, because a large number of the Manipuris who by that time had become the loyal subjects of Burma would be likely to follow him⁸⁰. His return to Manipur, most probably, would also give great dissatisfaction to the Regent and to the followers of the infant Raja. But Pitambar Singh assured Major Burney that he had received invitation from the Regent himself asking him to return to Manipur. He appealed that the Burmese Government could not object to his return, because of the fact that he came to Burma voluntarily, and that he would not disturb peace in the country.⁸¹

79. P.C., 19 December 1883, Nos.85-93; Robertson to Macnaghten, 5 October 1833.

80. P.C., 28 March 1836, Nos.50-52; Burney to Macnaghten, 3 February 1836.

81. Ibid.

Burney, therefore, suspected that some leading men in Manipur were dissatisfied with the conduct of affairs there and had invited Pitambar Singh in the hope that with his help and influence they could effect a revolution in the Government of Manipur.

The Supreme Government referred the matter to the Political Agent at Manipur and the latter objected to the return of Pitambar Singh. The prince's assertion that he⁸² was invited by the Regent was denied by the Regent himself. Further it was informed that Pitambar Singh, the most determined enemy of Gambhir Singh, had been taking active part against the British and Manipur Governments. His Lordship in Council, therefore, could not approve of the return of Pitambar Singh to Manipur.

The Court of Ava too was not agreeable to the return of the prince unless the Government of Bengal insisted upon it⁸³. But the King later changed his opinion. He held the view that Pitambar Singh was the rightful successor to the throne of Manipur. Being alarmed the Supreme Government had to take necessary measures for defending Manipur should the King of Burma encouraged the return of Pitambar Singh. On the recommendation of the Political Agent five companies of the Sylhet Light

82. P.C., 13 June 1836, Nos.11-12; Gordon to Macnaghten, 15 May, 1836.

83. P.C., 18 July 1836, Nos.53, 114; Burney to Macnaghten, 24 May, 1836.

Infantry were immediately stationed at Lakhimpur to meet any emergency in that quarter. The threat from Burma was thus averted and the long drawn dangers within and outside the State were checked by the timely intervention of the Government of Bengal.

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CHAPTER III

REVOLTS AND CONSPIRACIES

As discussed in the previous chapter Nar Singh defeated the attempts that had been made to dispossess the young Raja Chandrakirti Singh from the throne. But without any apparent reason he desired to retire from the Regency and remain for the rest of his life at Brindaban. He, therefore, sought opinion from Captain Gordon, the Political Agent at Manipur. The latter declined and reported the matter to the Governor-General in Council, pointing out therein that Debendra Singh, the younger brother of the Regent, who would in all probability succeed his brother in the Regency was not the person qualified for the task to be assigned to him. He further mentioned that if the Regency be headed by Debendra Singh it would certainly be a signal for fresh attempts to oust the new Regency and the Raja, and therefore, suggested that the request of Nar Singh should not be complied with. His Lordship in Council concurred in the opinion of Captain Gordon and the request of Nar Singh was turned down.

A man of generous disposition, Nar Singh looked after the Maharani and the young Raja with utmost regard¹. But the Maharani was always haunted by the fear that Nar Singh would one day occupy the throne by thwarting the claims of her son, the young Raja. She could not imagine that Nar Singh would not stoop so low and consequently she began to conspire against his life. She found in

1. P.C., 16 August, 1841; Nos. 118-119.

Debendra Singh a collaborator, who also was an aspirant for the throne of Manipur. But in view of the popularity enjoyed by his brother, the Regent, he knew that it was not possible on his part to bring about his fall by direct action². He thought it best to set the Maharani against the Regent and convinced that Nar Singh would finally banish or murder her son and occupy the throne. Debendra Singh, however, remained behind the scene without involving himself directly in all those affairs. His idea was that if Nar Singh was killed by the conspirators he could easily occupy the throne by removing Chandracirti Singh, but in case of failure of the conspiracy the Maharani and the young Raja would surely be banished. He would, therefore, remain safe and after the death of Nar Singh there would be no difficulty for him to succeed to the throne.

The Maharani won over Thangal, Paosang and some other nobles, who looked to their own advancement by a Government under her authority. The services and honour the Regent attributed to her, therefore, could not save him from the murderous attempt which she had planned against his life. One prince Nabin Singh, who bore an ancient grudge against the Regent presented before the Maharani a plot to murder Nar Singh and received her approval³. Prince Nabin Singh was distantly related to the royal family and during the time of Raja Gambhir

2. J.Roy, History of Manipur, pp.87-88.

3. Ibid.

Singh he held an important office in the country. But he had been displaced from the post by the Regent and was put under irons instead of brass ones (the custom in Manipur was that Rajkumars were to be chained with fetters made of brass), which inevitably made the Regent an arch enemy of Nabin Singh. The latter, therefore, swore to kill the Regent. The Manipur version that the plot to murder Nar Singh was entirely concocted by Nabin Singh is not tenable, because the latter was not a significant person who could undertake such a conspiracy under his own account and hope for success in the undertakings⁴. Moreover, the depositions of Thockchao, a slave of one Chanamba, formerly Khabam Lakpa, Keithel lakpa Deka Bhundari, Pungei, Lairikyengba Laloo, Chongtha and other witnesses made it clear the participation and leadership of the Maharani in the conspiracy⁵.

As planned, the conspirators headed by Nabin Singh, entered the Palace in the evening of Saturday, 27 January 1844 and attacked the Regent and wounded him while he was hearing scriptures read in the Temple⁶. Fortunately, Nar Singh could escape with his life but Nabin Singh was caught and beheaded by the guards on the spot. Taking that instant to their heels the other conspirators managed their escape. The news of the failure of the conspiracy was communicated to the Maharani by Phangal while she and other ladies of the Raja's Palace were hearing their scriptures read to them. The substance of the communication was not overheard by any other

4. P.C., 27 April, 1844, No.100.

5. Ibid. Nos.101-102; Depositions taken by Gordon from 27 January, 1844 to 3 February, 1844.

6. P.C., 2 March, 1844, Nos.177-185.

persons present⁷. On receipt of the information, the Maharani left the Capital without making enquiries about the infant Raja, and both of them later left the Capital⁸.

The Maharani and her followers arrived at Cachar in the evening of 3 February 1844⁹. Capt^{ain} Lyons, the Superintendent of Cachar, made necessary accommodations for them and sent a Havildar's party for the protection of the Raja and his mother and reported to the Government of Bengal the reasons for their arrival at Cachar. The Supreme Government, however, did not consider it wise to take steps based only on Lyon's report, and therefore, instructed the Political Agent at Manipur to establish facts as to how far the Maharani was concerned in instigating the attack on the Regent. About that time the Maharani also appealed to the Government of Bengal stating that one day she heard an outcry in which she was told that the Regent had been cut down and fearing the consequent danger, and being unable to find Gordon, who had then gone out for an inspection of the Cachar-Manipur Road, fled with her son and placed themselves under the protection of the Superintendent of Cachar¹⁰. She prayed that her son be enthroned, once again, with the British help¹¹.

Gordon reported to the Supreme Government that the Maharani's assertion that the absence of the Political Agent

7. P.C., 27 April, 1844, Nos.100-103.

8. Ibid.

9. P.C., 30 March, 1844, Nos.130-134.

10. P.C., 18 May, 1844, Nos.216-217.

11. P.C., 27 April, 1844, Nos.100-103.

(i.e., his absence) from Manipur Valley was one of the reasons which induced her to go to Cachar was at variance with her own statement. He stated that his arrival at Bishenpur, seventeen miles from the Capital, on 24 January 1844 i.e., four days before the attack, was known to the Maharani. She could not expect to find him at Nungba on the Cachar-Manipur road. Her avoidance of the new road and the Political Agent were sufficient proofs of her guilt. Moreover, Lieutenant McCulloch, the then Assistant Political Agent at Manipur, who was by that time at Uchar, reported that the Maharani had avoided intentionally the new road in order to avoid the Political Agent¹². Officials, both civil and military, holding authority in Manipur came to the Political Agent in a body and stated that Deka Bhundari or the man who had been employed as the agent of the Maharani had been captured while trying to escape to Cachar and had given evidence in which he implicated the Maharani in the conspiracy¹³. The depositions of Keithel Lakpa Deka Bhundari, formerly Dewan stated further that if the conspiracy had ended in failure the Maharani expressed her opinion that she would not remain in Manipur but would go elsewhere for her safety¹⁴. The depositions also disclosed the fact that it was the desire of the Maharani that the conspiracy should be executed on Saturday.¹⁵ Pungei and Lairi-kyengba Laloo stated that the Maharani even calculated to run

12. Ibid.

13. P.C., 2 March 1844, Nos.177-185.

14. P.C., 27 April 1844, Nos.101-102; Depositions taken by Gordon from 27 January 1844 to 3 February 1844.

15. Ibid.

upto Bengal had the attempt failed¹⁶. Further, the depositions of Ningthoujaaba, Peeha, Chabungba Subadar and Kahettri Jemadar confirmed the disappearance of the Raja and the Maharani from the Capital immediately after the failure of the conspiracy¹⁷. Ngangbi, the Raja's grandmother also asserted the truth that Thangal came to the Palace on the night of 27 January 1844 and had a talk with the Maharani¹⁸. The latter then *tied* a green garment round her waist and went out by the front door very much upset. When she (Ngangbi) asked what the matter was the Maharani gave no reply; and since then she was not to be seen by any one in the Royal enclosures. The Raja's grandmother also stated that she never saw her grandson along with his mother. Nevertheless, she never heard the Maharani asking about her son, the Raja¹⁹. Ngangbi, therefore, believed that the Maharani should have known where she could find her son and suspected that the Maharani was involved in the conspiracy. Depositions of princess Konsam Ongbi and other ladies, Taoriya, Takhelambi, Aheibi and Apanbi, the Raja's step mother also gave the same opinion²⁰.

Gordon, after a careful study of all the above records established the guilt of the Maharani in the conspiracy. He reported : " the statement that the Ranee was concerned in instigating the attack on the Regent is confirmed." "I have no doubt" he wrote, "as to the establishment

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

of a government in the name of the Raja but under the authority of the Ranee and the substitution of her adherents in the room of the men now holding office having been the objects of the conspiracy."²¹

"Of the existence of a conspiracy resulting in the attack on the Regent" continued the Agent, "I have not heard anyone here expressed a doubt and I have received confirmation from a Burmese officer who on my inquiry of him in regard to a Subadar who with his wife and family was ascertained to have absconded on the night of the attack and fled to Kabaw informed me that the Subadar had avowed his knowledge of the conspiracy and had said that he had fled fearing that his knowledge of it might come out in evidence."

Gordon, therefore, suggested that the Supreme Government should not entertain the request of the Maharani for the extension of British help to her and to her son against the people of Manipur. The Maharani and the young Raja had become obnoxious to the whole people²² and as such their return to Manipur would not be safe even if they were to be backed by the British troops²³. The majority of the people on the other hand, expressed their desire that Nar Singh should immediately be proclaimed Raja²⁴. Gordon, however, hesitated to give his consent to the wishes of the people of Manipur²⁵ and referred the matter to the Governor-General in Council.

21. P.C., 23 May 1850, No.119.

22. P.C., 27 April, 1844, Nos.101-102; Depositions taken by Gordon from 27 January 1844 to 3 February 1844.

23. P.C., 2 March 1844, Nos.177-185.

24. Ibid.

25. P.C., 23 May 1850, No.123.

Before receiving any definite instructions from His Lordship in Council the ministers of the State went on pressing the Political Agent that since the Raja had fled from the country and the custom of Manipur did not admit of the guddi being vacant²⁶, Nar Singh should immediately be proclaimed as the next Raja. By that time His Lordship in Council thought it wise to abstain from any interference in the internal affairs of the State and intimated that Nar Singh could be recognised as Raja if he agreed to the decision of making some provision for 'the deposed family', (i.e., the Raja and his mother, the Maharani)²⁷. His Lordship in Council further informed Nar Singh that the amount of the above provision need not be large and might be assigned out of the amount granted by the Supreme Government as a compensation for the loss of the Kabaw Valley so that it could be paid regularly by the Supreme Government.²⁸ Nar Singh agreed to pay Rs 80/- to Chandrakirti Singh and another Rs 20/- to his mother, the Maharani, from the Kabaw money²⁹ and the Supreme Government subsequently recognised him as the Raja of Manipur in September 1844³⁰.

It was evident from the above that R.C. Mazumdar's ~~theory~~ that Nar Singh 'subsequently usurped'³¹ the throne of

26. P.C., 2 March, 1844, Nos.177-185.

27. P.C., 23 May, 1850, No.119.

28. P.C., 15 June, 1844, Nos.174-179.

29. P.C., 28 September, 1844, Nos.191-196, Nar Singh to Gordon, 4 August, 1844.

30. P.C., 30 November, 1844, Nos.112-116.

31. Mazumdar, R.C., British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance Part I, p.709.

Manipur, as stated by Dr.R.C.Mazumdar, is far from the truth. No records have, till this date, been found to show the least inclination of Nar Singh towards the throne of Manipur. It was obvious that if he desired to be the Raja of Manipur he could have done so immediately after the death of Gambhir Singh. His services to the people, the popularity he enjoyed and his allegiance to the throne were the sufficient proofs of it and, therefore, the question of 'usurpation', even if he aspired for the throne, would never come up because of the fact that in such a case also, he would have been the choice of the people. When the young Raja fled to Cachar and the guddi was left vacant, it was only natural that he would occupy it as desired by the people and on the approval of the Governor-General in Council. Dr.Mazumdar might have based his argument mainly on the facts supplied by Gait in his 'History of Assam.'³²

REVOLTS :

Immediately on his accession to the throne Nar Singh received the news that Manipuri princes, Gunadhwaja, commonly known as Chuba, Meleikhomba, Purno Singh and Sachouba Singh, who were by that time at Cachar, were preparing for an attack on him³³. The news frightened the people

32. " in 1844 the Queen Dowager attempted to poison the Regent but failed and the latter then usurped the throne"; Gait, Sir Edward, History of Assam, p.348.

33. P.C., 23 May 1850, No.113.

so much so that it had caused the rise of the prices of the necessaries of life nearly three times. The Raja, therefore, intimated the news to Captain Gordon. The latter, fearing danger, reported the matter to the Supreme Government, suggesting thereby that the princes in question should be removed from Cachar. The Supreme Government, however, did not accede to their immediate removal from Cachar but desired that they should be warned that they were liable to be removed into Bengal at any time if their proceedings were such as to create disturbance in Cachar or on the borders of Manipur³⁴.

A timely warning was made to the princes but it was disregarded. So, the only way to prevent the attack contemplated by them was to arrest the parties before they entered into the Jiri jungles. It was reported that although the princes were powerless they made their further endeavour to enter Manipur after the arrival of the Maharani at Cachar. Since then the latter tried to instigate the above princes for an attack on Manipur and sent her men to Calcutta to procure necessary arms. It was believed that without the help from the Maharani the princes would not have it in their power to undertake an attempt of that kind³⁵. The Maharani, who had her followers at Manipur, thus became the prime mover of the whole plot. The Government of Bengal suggested that Nar Singh should make all efforts to discover the supporters of the

34. P.C. 3 April, 1847, Nos.120-122.

35. P.C., 9 November, 1844, Nos.120-122.

Maharani in the valley and crush the conspiracy on the spot. Lyons, the Superintendent of Cachar, But Captain / / who held different views desired that the authorities at Fort William should try immediately to remove the princes in question from Cachar³⁶. But the Supreme Government considered that the guilt or innocence of the above princes should be established first by investigations before the Government was called upon to determine as to their disposal. The removal of these princes was also suggested by Capt. Gordon pointing out that if they were driven out of the frontier district of Cachar without provisions the possibility of creating any sort of disturbance in Manipur could be checked³⁷. Lyons, after a careful study of the movement of the above princes, finally expressed the opinion that without removing the Maharani and her son from Cachar, peace in Manipur could not be secured³⁸. The evidence of Raja Gopiram Haomacha, personal attendant of the Ex-Raja Chandrakirti Singh, revealed that the young Raja and his mother were continuously planning for a revolt against Manipur³⁹. The evidence further revealed that the Maharani granted Rs 500/- to the above princes to buy guns etc. and thus, year after year, they were collecting men and money for an attack on Manipur. Jiban Singh and Mutua Gourmani Singh, son of Bolaram Singh, resident of Malugram in Cachar, also told the same story⁴⁰. The evidence of Salam Punshi Singh, resident of Manipur stated that the young

36. Ibid.

37. P.C., 19 October, 1844, Nos.166-167; Gordon to Lyons, 28 September, 1844.

38. P.C., 9 November, 1844, Nos.120-122.

39. P.C., 23 May, 1850, No.113.

40. Ibid.

Raja was involved in the party. His statement further continued that the young Raja even wanted to accompany the princes upto Manipur. But due to difference of opinion in fixing the dates he was kept aloof from the actual encounter⁴¹. The Supreme Government, therefore, thought that the case should be left to the discretion of the Superintendent of Cachar with a provision for consulting the Political Agent at Manipur in determining whether the young Raja and his mother should be allowed to remain in Cachar under surveillance or they should be obliged to take up their residence at Sylhet so that their future designs could be checked in due time. It was felt that the Maharani should be transferred to such a place where she could not be able to secure money and assistance from her followers against Nar Singh⁴². The suggestion of her removal to Faridpur or at Mymensingh or any other stations as was deemed fit by Lyons and Gordon received the approval of the Supreme Government. However, it was decided that the Maharani would be safe enough even at Cachar or Sylhet if she was kept under limited surveillance by the local authorities, and was made to understand that any attempt to disturb the peace of Manipur would certainly lead her to being placed under greater restraint or even removal to some other distant stations⁴³.

While measures were thus taken up in full swing to prevent their advance towards Manipur, the above princes

41. Ibid.

42. P.C., 9 November, 1844, Nos.120-122.

43. Ibid.

started on the night of February 1, 1850 to attack Manipur.⁴⁴ Captain G.Verner, the new Superintendent of Cachar, sent a Subadar's party to intercept their advance. Information to that effect was also immediately sent to Captain McCullock, since he succeeded as the Political Agent at Manipur⁴⁵, pointing out that on the night of February 1, 1850 Gunga Sing Singh, a Manipuri, came to the Superintendent's house and reported that the Manipuri princes in question had marched towards Manipur for an attack on the State. Gunga Singh also stated that he had seen a number of muskets and Manipuri sepoys at Meleikhomba's residence⁴⁶. On receipt of this information the Superintendent sent a detachment of the Sylhet Light Infantry Battalion^{to} proceed immediately to Meleikhomba's baree and to prevent them, if possible, from making a start. But the party was late. They reached Meleikhomba's baree after the princes and their followers had started for Manipur.

McCullock and Nar Singh, on receipt of the above information, advanced with their troops to intercept the party. About that time, the Superintendent of Cachar reported that the detachment he had sent to follow up the princes and their party returned being unable to find their whereabouts.⁴⁷ After collecting information that the princes' party were hiding

44. P.C., 23 May 1850, No.111.

45. Ibid., No.112.

46. Ibid., No.113.

47. Ibid.

in the jungles, north of Lakhimpur, the Superintendent sent a police force to attack them. But the party once again made their escape without any encounter with the police force and secreted themselves amongst the Nagas to the north of Cachar and west of the Barak from 14th to 18th February 1850. On the 19th, they crossed the Barak and on the 20th and 21st they moved to the north of the river. But suddenly on 23 February they attacked the village of Langa, a Naga village lying at a distance of one day's journey from the Capital⁴⁸.

Immediately on receipt of the above intelligence the Raja's troops moved upon the Langas, and Debendra Singh, the Jubaraja, also established himself at the base of the hill where the Langa road led to the valley⁴⁹. But they found no trace of the invading force there. Soon they learnt that the invaders had marched towards the valley. They were pursued by the troops and the advance guard attacked the raiders and shot two of them and made another two prisoners. Later, Chuba was shot dead while attempting to make his way into Burma, Meleikhomba was killed in his flight to the west and the other two princes were killed while escaping to the north.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

To make matters worse, Netrajit Singh², one of Garbhir Singh's nephews, who was banished to Ava by Garbhir Singh himself and was very lately in high esteem there, tried to attack Manipur with a large force⁵⁰. Nar Singh reported the matter to McCulloch. Through the latter's endeavours³ the threat from Netrajit was checked before it could reach the valley of Manipur.

A study of movement of the rebels reveal that they failed for various reasons. It exhibited lack of leadership of the princes specially in calculating the then prevailing political situation in Manipur. They were simply guided by an impression that they should attempt a revolt against Nar Singh, no matter what his stand with the people might be. And as regards Meleikhomba and his party, the base 'underestimation' of the popularity Nar Singh enjoyed by that time and the praising 'overestimation' of the Maharani's stand with the people were, undoubtedly, the mistakes that they should not have committed. The inevitable result was that the people of Manipur stood against them. But quite unaware of those developments they simply followed the Maharani's leadership. They, therefore, carelessly overlooked the probable dangers that might come against them from Nar Singh and the British

50. P.C., 21 May 1852, No.138.

officers on the spot. It thus weakened their strength, and enfeebled them, and they were subdued ruthlessly by the overwhelming power of the two forces. Had the princes been able to examine the situation correctly, had they been able to create a feeling of hatred in the minds of the people of Manipur against Nar Singh, the course of events would have been otherwise.

CHANDRAKIRTI SINGH AGAIN RESTORED :

After the death of Nar Singh on 11 April 1850⁵¹, his brother Debendra Singh succeeded him on the throne of Manipur. McCullock reported the matter to the Governor-General in Council and suggested that the succession of Debendra Singh should be recognised immediately. While the matter was under the consideration of the Governor-General in Council Chandrakirti Singh claimed that he was the rightful claimant to the throne⁵² and even threatened that he would forcibly occupy it if his claim was not recognised⁵³. McCullock rightly observed that if Chandrakirti Singh be allowed to remain at Cachar, the peace of Manipur and its frontier would be disturbed and the authority of Debendra Singh might be weakened⁵⁴. He, therefore, suggested that the Superintendent of Cachar should be authorised to take immediate steps for removing the Ex-Raja and other members of his family whom he considered likely to be concerned in any fresh attacks on Manipur⁵⁵. McCullock

51. P.C., 23 May, 1850, No.116.

52. Ibid., No.119, Translation of a letter from Chandrakirti to McCullock, 14 April, 1850.

53. Ibid., No.118.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

also suggested that the Superintendent should be allowed to convey the decision of the Supreme Government to the Ex-Raja that if he was implicated in any attacks on Debendra Singh or if the peace of Manipur was disturbed through his machinations, it would inevitably lead to the forfeiture of the grant that he received from the Government of Manipur⁵⁶. In case the Ex-Raja was removed to Dacca, McCulloch held the view that a police guard, under the immediate orders of the Magistrate of Dacca, should be placed on him. However, if the Ex-Raja reconciled after a time, to his position and decided not to leave Dacca without permission from the Supreme Government, the Magistrate should be given his discretionary power to withdraw the guard⁵⁷.

The question to be decided by the Supreme Government was whether Debendra Singh should be recognised as the Raja of Manipur or whether he should be informed peremptorily that the Government held a different view on the question of succession and, therefore, his case would not be considered favourably⁵⁸. However, it was felt inexpedient to refuse the recognition to Debendra Singh as the next Raja and withdraw the Political Agency from Manipur and leave the State in the hands of the contending parties to fight for the throne between themselves until one or the other should completely be subdued. The position that the Supreme Government occupied

56. Ibid., No.122.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

in the meantime in respect to Manipur gave it a right to interfere in the internal affairs of the State in order to preserve the country from the state of anarchy⁵⁹.

The supreme Government, concurred in the opinion of McCulloch⁶⁰. Debendra Singh was recognised as the Raja of Manipur in June 1850 and arrangements for the removal of Chandrakirti Singh to Dacca were made⁶¹. To prevent his evading the orders of the Government, the Political Agent was instructed that a small guard of the Sylhet Light Infantry Battalion should be placed on him⁶². While arrangements were thus being made for the removal of Chandrakirti Singh from Cachar, Bhuban Singh and Shetu Singh, two sons of the late Raja Nar Singh, came to Cachar and took up his cause and made preparation for an attack on Manipur⁶³. The Governor-General in Council, on receipt of the information, considered it to be a grave danger and instructed the Superintendent of Cachar to increase the number of the guards on the Raja. Accordingly Verner increased the number of sentries from eight to twenty with instructions to keep strict vigilance on the person of Chandrakirti Singh.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. P.C., 16 August 1850, No.26.

62. Ibid., No.27, Verner to Halliday, 12 June 1850.

63. Ibid.

The Ex-Raja lived in a barrack which was situated within a hundred and fifty yards from the Superintendent's ^{quarters} ~~house~~ and had a bamboo paling around it. It was thus kept apart from other houses and was not more than forty-five yards long and thirty yards broad, and with five sentries posted in different directions and one of them at his door, Verner was satisfied that before the arrival of the boats in which the Ex-Raja had to be removed to Dacca, Chandrakirti Singh would not be able to manage his escape⁶⁴. In spite of these measures, on 10 June, 1850, the Ex-Raja, with eight of his followers, managed his escape without being seen or heard by any one on guard.

On the receipt of this news Verner sent immediately a Subedar's party with sixty men of the Sylhet Light Infantry Battalion to check, if possible, the Ex-Raja's advance. The information was conveyed to McCulloch asking him to take up necessary steps to check his advance to Manipur. Verner, however, could not say how the Ex-Raja and his party got off but he believed that there must have been gross neglect on the parts of the guards or the guards might have been tampered with in some way or other. After a careful study of the movements of the Ex-Raja, the Superintendent, submitted a report with his observations. He held the view that the escape had been planned before the guard was placed on the Ex-Raja and the coming of the sons of War Singh to Cachar made the attempt easier and successful⁶⁵. Drawing the attention of the Supreme

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

Government to the measures that he had undertaken for the removal of Chandrakirti Singh from Cachar, the Superintendent stated that had the boats arrived at Cachar in proper time as he had desired, Chandrakirti Singh would have been removed to Dacca or, at least would have been on his way to Dacca.

On receipt of the reports submitted by Verner, the Supreme Government instituted an inquiry to find out how the Ex-Raja had managed his escape. The depositions of the persons who were on the guard revealed that sheer negligence had been committed by the person whose function it was to guard Chandrakirti Singh⁶⁶. It was also suspected that the sentries who were on duty between eight and ten on the night of 10 June, 1850, the day on which the Ex-Raja made his escape, were not properly instructed to see whether he was safe in his barrack or not⁶⁷. Unfortunately for the guards there was heavy rainfall in that night and it was dark also. But no arrangements for light etc. were made, and the inner sentry, who was placed in the barrack, could not see whether the Ex-Raja was there or not. The Supreme Government believed that the guard received no orders to see the Ex-Raja at any time⁶⁸, and therefore, confirmed that the escape of Chandrakirti Singh was chiefly due to the negligence on the part of the Guard Commander⁶⁹. The barrack in which the Ex-Raja lived was surrounded by bamboo paling on three sides and by the Jiri River

66. Ibid., No.203.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., No.204.

69. Ibid.

in the east. No person, therefore, could get out without making a noise in breaking it and no person could climb it. If the sentries who were placed there with loaded muskets, had watched carefully, there ought to have been no difficulty in preventing the Raja from his escape⁷⁰. The Governor-General in Council took Verner to task for the escape of the Ex-Raja from Cachar. His Lordship in Council believed that had the Superintendent taken his responsibilities seriously, the escape could have been averted, and, therefore, he was asked to explain his conduct.

In his explanation Verner stated that the escape of Chandrakirti Singh was not his fault and solemnly declared that he did everything that he could do to the best of his judgement to prevent the Ex-Raja's escape. He expected that the delay in getting Chandrakirti Singh off to Dacca in consequence of his not having been able to procure boats in Cachar would be overlooked. Moreover, he stated that before 30 May 1850, nobody thought it likely that the Ex-Raja would make his attempt to escape. But on the 30th when information reached him that the Raja and the other princes intended to make an attack on Manipur, the Superintendent immediately called on ^{Lieutenant} Lt. Cave, who was in command of the guard and instructed him to increase the guard upto twenty sepoy. Orders were also given to him that no person should be allowed to leave the compound after dusk and that at night not more than five people

70. Ibid., No.205.

should be allowed to admit in it⁷¹. The Superintendent further stated that he had personally instructed Lt. Cave to direct the guard 'to see every night that the Raja was in the hut'⁷². He also believed that it was but natural to suppose that the guard 'should see and ought to see' the person it was guarding⁷³. He, therefore, maintained that the Ex-Raja could not have escaped, except through the neglect of the sentries. It was hard to imagine how the Ex-Raja and some of his followers were able to get out of the barrack without having been seen or heard by any one of the guard or without the guards' knowing how or when they had managed their escape⁷⁴. After examining the above explanations minutely the Governor-General in Council exonerated all the accusations on Capt. Verner, the Superintendent of Cachar⁷⁵.

After their escape from the guard, the Ex-Raja and his party, along with the sons of Nar Singh, arrived at Jiri River⁷⁶. After crossing the same they again took up their position on the Kalanaga Hills on 24 June 1850 and there they were joined by a large number of Manipuris, both from Sylhet and Cachar. The object of the Ex-Raja was to regain the throne of Manipur, if possible by fair means, and if not, by force of arms. He earnestly hoped that the people of Manipur would

71. Ibid., No.205.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid., No.206, Offg. Secy. to Supdt., Cachar,
29 November, 1850.

76. P.C., 16 August, 1850, No.27.

come over to him and actually a section of the people had advanced in his favour in the valley of Manipur itself. On receipt of the news of their onward advance Debendra Singh and McCulloch took up all necessary measures to check the progress of Chandrakirti Singh and his party. However, strangely enough, the Ex-Raja had overcome all the oppositions that had placed before his progress and finally established himself in his former Capital at Langthabal, three miles from Imphal, on 6 July, 1850⁷⁷.

The success of Chandrakirti Singh may be explained by the fact that all the sepoys who had been sent against him ^{traitors to} proved ~~to~~ Debendra Singh. On his arrival on the valley he was again joined by many more people⁷⁸. Debendra Singh, had been, thus, betrayed by his own soldiers and more than half the people of Manipur also went against him. Moreover, the Government of Bengal, at that critical time, had suddenly changed its policy of interference. Instead of supporting Debendra Singh they had instructed the Political Agent at Manipur to withdraw to the British territory any moment he found situation dangerous⁷⁹. It was a fact that Debendra Singh's accession to the throne was not acceptable to the whole people of Manipur. They on the contrary desired to see the son of Gambhir Singh establish himself, once again, in his rights. Besides that the combination of the sons of the two great heroes of the last Burmese War, Gambhir Singh and Nar Singh, and their combined attack, ... sounded the bugle call to

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid., No.30.

the Manipuris, and as a result not a single man in the State dared⁸⁰ go against them even if he had ~~the~~ a good chance of doing so. McCulloch rightly observed that with an exception of two or three hundred people, all deserted Debendra Singh on 12 July, 1850⁸⁰, the day on which he fought his last battle with Chandrakirti Singh at Langtnabal. Being unable to protect himself and his own throne, Debendra Singh fled from the country on the night of 12 July, 1850.

The success of Chandrakirti Singh, was due to the sympathetic considerations of his people. He arrived at Imphal on 13 July, 1850 and proclaimed himself as the Raja. He visited the Political Agent on 15 July, 1850 and intimated him that Manipur belonged to his father Gambhir Singh and his uncle Nar Singh. He, therefore, succeeded in re-occupying the throne and appointed Bhuban Singh his Jubara and Shetu Singh Sengapati⁸¹. Chandrakirti Singh admitted to his having escaped from Cachar. But since he occupied the throne of Manipur with an overwhelming support from its people he appealed to the Governor-General in Council that His Lordship in Council should recognise his succession⁸². His Lordship in Council, in view of the changed circumstances, believed that the officers on the spot had made a grave mistake in supporting Debendra Singh against the wishes of the Manipuris, who had their inclination

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid., No.35.

82. Ibid., No.36, Translation of a letter from Chandrakirti to McCulloch, 17 July, 1850.

in favour of the family of Gambhir Singh. Lord Dalhousie, the then Governor-General of India, recorded that Chandrakirti Singh appeared to be most acceptable to the State of Manipur and suggested that his succession be recognised publicly so as to avert civil war in the State⁸³. Thus Chandrakirti Singh was recognised as the Raja of Manipur in September, 1850⁸⁴.

Soon after his accession, Chandrakirti Singh, instead of trying to establish his position among the people of Manipur, adopted a series of oppressive measures which compelled many of them to flee from the country⁸⁵. Instead of alleviating oppression, the young Raja and his ministers undertook hard measures to prevent their flight from the State. Many persons had, therefore, been apprehended and placed in chains. As a result of these oppressions some members of the royal family fled to Cachar and started to collect men and money for an attack on the new Raja. About that time, to make matters worse, intimation also arrived at Manipur that Debendra Singh was planning an attack on the State. It was believed that he was invited by a small party in Manipur. It was also suspected that a body of the Lushais, who were stockaded on the banks of the Jiri River and who were thus interrupting communication with Manipur, contemplated to join Debendra Singh⁸⁶. The Political Agent, therefore, suggested that the Supreme Government should increase the strength of the guard that was by that time placed on duty at Manipur⁸⁷. He further pointed out

83. P.C., 3 Oct. 1851, No. 1; Minute of Lord Dalhousie, 13 Sept. 1851.

84. P.C., 31 January, 1851, No. 122.

85. P.C., 13 Dec. 1850, No. 199, McCulloch to Halliday, 8 Sept. 1850.

86. Ibid., No. 209.

87. Ibid., No. 210.

that though the Burmese frontier was quiet about that time he feared that a continuance of the agitation between the rivals, without demonstrations of displeasure from the side of the Supreme Government, would, once again, induce the Burmese to assist Netrajit Singh, the Manipur prince, who was then in much favour at Ava as stated above. Concurring in the opinion of the Political Agent and with a view to prevent, if possible, the people from joining Debendra Singh and his party, it was made known publicly through the Superintendent of Cachar that should any person or inhabitant of Cachar aid, assist or accompany any of the princes for the purpose of making an attack on Manipur his property would be confiscated and be sold by auction and that if caught he would otherwise be punished⁸⁸. Though preparations were thus made to check his advance, Debendra Singh, with all his followers, started on the night of 17 October, 1850 for an attack on Manipur. Accordingly, the Superintendent of Cachar immediately sent a party of the Sylhet Light Infantry Battalion to stop the progress of Debendra Singh. But the Ex-Raja's party managed its advance and made an encounter with the troops that were sent by Chandrakirti Singh. In the engagement some of Debendra Singh's followers were wounded and killed and the rest were dispersed. The Ex-Raja's endeavour thus ended in total failure.

88. Ibid., No.213.

Debendra Singh, however, made a fresh attempt. This time he sought either the throne or death⁸⁹. In a letter addressed to the Governor-General in Council he claimed the throne of Manipur as his birth right. He stated that it was with the approval of the Governor-General in Council that he succeeded his late brother, Nar Singh and, therefore, appealed that His Lordship in Council should put him once again on the throne of Manipur, and if not, the Kabaw allowance of Rs 500/- per month should be granted to him⁹⁰. His requests were turned down. Being disgusted Debendra Singh attacked Manipur. But before crossing the ranges of Hills that separate the valleys of Cachar and Manipur, he had an encounter with the British troops in which his cousin Kishore Singh was killed along with ten other followers. This altered his position and the Ex-Raja, being unable to endure the difficulties, surrendered to the British and subsequently he was kept in confinement in Dacca⁹¹ till he died in 1871.

Soon after Debendra Singh's disappearance news reached that two sons of Nar Singh, Bhogendra Singh and Angou Singh, who were by that time at Cachar, were preparing for an attack on Manipur. These princes had helped Chandrakirti Singh in his escape from Cachar. They had aided and assisted him in

89. Ibid., No.213.

90. P.C., 18 May, 1851, No.16, Debendra Singh to McCulloch, 20 February, 1851.

91. Ibid., No.16, Debendra Singh to Secretary, Govt. of India, 24 April, 1851.

occupying the guddi⁹². However, without any apparent reason, they again collected a large force and moved on Manipur, probably with the intention of their own advancement to the throne. These repeated attacks and preparations for attacks on Manipur caused a great deal of vexation and annoyance to the authorities both in Cachar and Manipur and it also kept the whole people in a state of alarm. J. McCulloch, therefore, reported to the Supreme Government that the advance of the princes' party should be checked before descending to the Valley of Manipur. However, before receiving any instruction from the Government, information reached Manipur that the advance guard of the princes' party had reached the Leimatak River, twelve miles from Bishenpur⁹³. By that time it was also reported that one prince Khunjaoba Singh, a brother of the late Raja Nar Singh had joined the party. The combined party advanced from Leimatak and entered the Manipur Valley near Phubala, a place lying approximately forty miles to the south-west of Imphal in the morning of 12 May, 1851⁹⁴. Immediately on receipt of the news, Chandrakirti Singh sent a strong force to check their advance. The Raja's troops made a surprise attack on the invading party and two princes, one a brother and the other the eldest son of Debendra Singh were killed⁹⁵. Bhogendra Singh and the other princes, who participated in the attempt, were captured and kept in confinement.

92. P.C., 13 December, 1850, No.220.

93. P.C., 13 June, 1851, No.118.

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

Soon after the above incident McCulloch reported another projected attack on Manipur under one prince Meleikhomba Singh⁹⁶. Chandrakirti Singh met the party at Phoi-jing, nine miles from Imphal on 24 November, 1852. In the encounter several members of the invading party were killed and Meleikhomba, their leader, was made prisoner. By that time another attempt, under one Prince Rajjit Singh, was also reported. Nobody could say where he came from but it was believed that this prince made his advance with the followers from Agartala⁹⁷. However, his advance was checked and consequently the threat was averted before it could reach the valley of Manipur.

The reign of Chandrakirti Singh was thus disturbed by different ambitious scions of the royal family, who from time to time attempted to seize the power. In 1852 Naol Singh, a son of Madhuchandra Singh, Kanhai Singh, a son of Marjit Singh and Pheiraba came from Cachar with a large number of followers and attempted to seize the throne of Manipur; but they failed⁹⁸. Soon after this, Maipak Singh, a descendent of Garib Niwaz raided Manipur from Cachar, first in 1859 then again, in 1862 to dislodge Chandrakirti Singh but he was defeated and captured in his last attempt. In 1864 Kanhai Singh again tried to enter Manipur with about two hundred followers. But he was defeated by the 33rd Native Infantry near the Jiri

96. P.C., 4 April, 1851, No.114.

97. P.C., April, 1851, No.119.

98. Dr.Brown, Statistical Account of Manipur, pp.69-70.

River⁹⁹. In 1866 Gokul Singh, a son of Debendra Singh, along with Kala Singh, led a raid on Manipur from Cachar. He and his party were defeated and Gokul Singh was captured, two years after, in Kooch Behar and was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment¹⁰⁰. In 1869 he was, however, pardoned but detained as a political detainee in Hazaribagh till he was released in 1875.

It was evident from the above that Chandrakirti Singh suppressed all the attempts that were made to oust him from the throne of Manipur. In every encounter he was, however, supported by the Government of Bengal. It would seem therefore, that it was impossible for him to retain the throne had not the British power been solidly behind him.

99. Ibid.

100. F.Politi.A., May, 1881, Nos.197-198, K.W. from C.C.Assau, Exiled Manipuri Princes in Cachar, 24 January, 1881.

CHAPTER IV

TRANSITION

During the First Anglo-Burmese War, Gambhir Singh was allowed to raise a contingent known as the 'Manipur Levy' paid and officered by the British Government¹. This Levy rendered splendid services during the later part of the war with Burma and successfully drove the Burmese out of Manipur². Considering, therefore, the services rendered by Gambhir Singh and his irregulars the Governor-General in Council allowed the Manipuri Chief to increase the strength of his Levy to two thousand men and to appoint Captain F.J. Grant and Lieutenant R.B. Pemberton as the Commissioners of the Levy and another British officer, Lieutenant George Gordon as its Adjutant.

Shortly after the restoration and recognition of Gambhir Singh as the Raja of Manipur the Supreme Council decided, with rather undue haste, to withdraw subsidies payable to Gambhir Singh on account of the Manipur Levy³. But Manipur at the time had not settled down to normal and peaceful conditions and the troops were busy in subduing the refractory hill tribes, as stated above; and no one was certain about the future designs of the arrogant and disgruntled Ava authorities. At that time the withdrawal of the British help

1. Supra., p.27.

2. F.Politi. 'A' Progs., April 1864, No.107; Memorandum on British relation with Manipur.

3. S.P., 23 July 1826, No.18.

could have spelt disaster to Manipur and the security of the whole North Eastern Frontier would have been greatly imperilled; for to the Burmese Manipur was the key to Assam and Cachar⁴. The British officers at Sylhet pointed out that it was essential to the tranquility of the North Eastern Frontier that Manipur should be kept an ally devoted to the Company's interests and it was observed that it would not be prudent economy to risk the State for the sake of a few thousand rupees (Rs 18,000 a month)⁵. David Scott, the Agent to the Governor-General rightly observed that the time was not ripe to withhold the services of the British officers and the subsidies payable to the Government of Manipur and, therefore, strongly held the view in favour of the retention of the Levy. Scott's report opened the eyes of the authorities in Calcutta and Gambhir Singh was once again allowed to increase the strength of his Levy upto three thousand men. Thus, during the time when Gambhir Singh needed the services of a strong force at his command, particularly in his attempt to bring the whole of the hills and plains of Manipur under his effective control, the Manipur Levy, indeed, began to play a significant role.

Inspite of the advocacy of the local authorities, the retention of a body of irregulars like that of the Manipur Levy did not find favour with the Governor-General in Council. On March 28, 1833, Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General of India, while reviewing the activities of the military

4. Lahiri, R.M., Annexation of Assam, p.55.

5. S.P., 15 September 1826, No.37.

establishment in Manipur, questioned the utility of the policy of identifying the British interest, with those of the petty State of Manipur which was separated from the Company's dominion by an extremely difficult tract of country. The advantages of retaining connection with Manipur appeared to His Lordship very problematical as the enquiries conducted by Pemberton and Jenkins clearly showed that the small State was still considered totally incompetent to defend itself against Burmese invasion^{5a}. The Governor-General however, did not rule out the necessity of retaining a small garrison of British troops under the direct command of British officers. His Lordship in Council observed that the presence of a British detachment in the State would certainly increase the feeling of security in the minds of the Manipuris. The Supreme Council, however, invited opinions from the local authorities. Scott, Agent to the Governor-General adhered to his earlier opinion about the retention of the Levy, but held a different view on the question of keeping a garrison of British troops in Manipur. He felt it advisable to place only two hundred and not the whole strength of the Levy under the sole and immediate control of the British officers in the State. This divergence in opinion between the man on the spot and the authorities in Calcutta finally led the Supreme Government to the conclusion that the question of retention of the Levy should entirely be handed over to the discretion of the Government of Manipur.

5a. F.Poltl.A.Progs. April, 1864, No.107; Minute of Lord William Bentinck, 25 March, 1833.

THE POLITICAL AGENCY :

On 7 February, 1835, British superintendence over the Manipur Levy was withdrawn^{5b}. The Governor-General in Council, however, thought it expedient to retain the service of one British officer in Manipur 'for the preservation of a friendly intercourse and as a medium of communication with the Government of Manipur and as occasion might require with the Burmese authorities on that frontier, and more specially, to prevent border feuds and disturbances, which might led to hostility between the Manipurians and the Burmese.'⁶ With this object in view, His Lordship in Council instituted in March 1835, a separate office known as the Political Agency in Manipur with Lieutenant George Gordon as its first Agent⁷ on a consolidated salary of Rs 12,000 per annum.

The duties of the Political Agent were to preserve a friendly intercourse and to serve as a medium of communication with the Government of Manipur and the Burmese authorities on the frontier and more especially to prevent border feuds in that direction⁸. In the discharge of his duties the Political Agent was informed that he had to receive instructions from and correspond directly with the Secretary to the Government of India in the Political Department. The Agency was thus kept under the direct control of the Government of India upto 1867. But in 1867, a question relating to the transfer of the Agency from the direct control of the Government of India to that of Bengal arose and subsequently, with the institution of Assam into a separate Chief Commissioner's province in 1874 the above Agency was placed under the control of the Chief Commissioner of Assam⁹ and the Political Agent was instructed to forward his letters through him (the Chief Commissioner) under flying seal.

5b. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. See Appendix F; List of the Political Agents from 1835-91.

8. P.C. 14 November, 1856, No.17.

9. Mackenzie, Alexander, North East Frontier of Bengal, p.160.

The establishment of a Political Agency in Manipur did not necessarily mean that the Rajas of the State had to conduct their administrations under the dictates of the Political Agent only. From the above Minute of the Governor-General it was evident that the duty of the Political Agent at Manipur was like that of an ambassador. "The Political Agent is dependent on the will and pleasure of the Maharaja for everything."¹⁰ "His very word and movement are known to the Maharaja. He is in fact a British Officer under Manipur surveillance. If the Maharaja is not pleased with Political Agent he cannot get anything, he is ostracised, from bad coarse black atta which the Maharaja sells him as a favour, the dhobi who washes his clothes and the Nagas who work in his garden : he cannot purchase anything at any price. The court is almost openly hostile, though they have pliancy enough to pretend to a great regard for the Political Agent and the Sirkar."¹¹ Since the past history of Manipur showed that the State had been the scene of civil wars, murders, devastation and misery under the nominal control of her chiefs, the presence of a Political Agent at Manipur, as a rule, assured security, peace, order and comparative prosperity in the State. But this did not necessarily mean that the Political Agent had to keep in control the movements and ambitions of the Raja and the other princes in Manipur and to impose restrictions in the use of guns, muskets and ammunitions that had

10. J.Clark, *Precis of Correspondence regarding Manipur affairs*, p.23.

11. *Ibid*.

been given to them by the British for the purposes of the defence of the country¹². He was distinctly instructed by the Supreme Government that the right to interfere in the internal affairs of Manipur was above his jurisdictions.

Thus, the early history of the Political Agency allowed no room for interference in the internal politics of Manipur. However, when a long series of succession wars and revolts occurred one after another in the State, the reigning Chiefs solicited more and more the help and protection of the British Government for their own protections and advancements to the throne. This new development led the Supreme Government to believe that Manipur could not stand without the British help and, therefore, began to consider her as one of the protected states. But the meaning of this 'protection' raised by the Supreme Government, nevertheless, did not arise from any bilateral agreement, but was purely a unilateral act of the British, who, cautiously supported the Government of Manipur to make it stable and strong so that the Burmese might not have a foothold again in that State to attack the adjoining British districts. The Government of Manipur simply regarded the British as an ally always sympathetic to the cause of the state but never as 'a sovereign protector'. This gross misunderstanding in the interpretation of the word 'protection' between the two Governments led to a series of unhappy incidents in the history of the Anglo-

12. P.C., 13 December, 1850, No.190.

Manipuri relations as will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

CHANDRAKIRTI SINGH AND THE POLITICAL AGENT :

In 1844 Captain W. McCulloch succeeded Gordon as the Political Agent of Manipur. The early relations between Chandrakirti Singh and the Political Agent were far from being friendly. He could not forget the indifference of McCulloch to the repeated requests he had made, while he was at Cachar, to restore the throne of Manipur. At last when he managed to occupy the guddi purely by his own prowess, the Kabaw Valley compensation was again suspended and there was also delay in recognising him as the Raja of Manipur. This further offended him. McCulloch was aware of the displeasure of Chandrakirti Singh but he was convinced that the Raja would finally be able to realise his strength and position. However, in 1850 things changed from bad to worse. McCulloch, after collecting information from Yumnaba Lila Singh Subadar, the Officer-in-charge of the northern Nagas, reported that Chandrakirti Singh had supplied arms and men to Gaumai Nagas of Konomah Village, who were by then in a state of rebellion against the Hon'ble Company¹³. The report revealed that eight Nagas from the above village came to Manipur and presented two elephant tusks and a slave to the Raja of Manipur for the latter's help against the British¹⁴. Major Jenkins, the Agent to the

13. P.C., 27 December 1850, No.148, McCulloch to Chandrakirti, 7 September 1850.

14. Ibid.

Governor-General, North East Frontier, also reported that a considerable section of Manipuri Sepoys had ascended the Gaumai Hills for the purpose of giving aid to the Gaumai Nagas¹⁵. After the perusal of the above records, the Governor - General in Council directed McCullock to inform Chandrakirti Singh that His Lordship in Council had learnt the news of the Raja's help to the Gaumai Nagas with surprise and, therefore, expressed concern on the circumstances that were connected with the arrival and reception of the above Nagas at Manipur.¹⁶ The Supreme Council further instructed McCullock that the latter should inform Chandrakirti Singh that though the Government had generously left to Manipur perfect independence as to its internal management, it would not tolerate any action that might evince the Raja's intention of supporting any enemies or rebellious subjects of the Supreme Government¹⁷.

Chandrakirti Singh was also informed that before the Supreme Government had recognised him as the Raja of Manipur, he should not try to involve himself in any matter that might establish a strained relation between him and the Government. When McCullock conveyed the displeasure of the Supreme Government to Chandrakirti Singh, the latter denied the charges against him. However, the Raja instituted an inquiry and therein, he found out the truth that the Gaumai Nagas came to Manipur with one elephant tusk and a slave to Chongtha Selungba

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., No.152, Halliday to McCullock, 27 December 1850.

17. Ibid., No.367, Jenkins to Halliday, 9 December 1850.

and the latter, with the consent of Shetu Singh, the Senapati, accepted the above presents with an understanding that the above Nagas be helped with men and money from Manipur. Since the Senapati was involved in the Gaumai incident, Chandrakirti Singh reported to the Government that he had degraded the former and had deprived him of all the insignia of office and that a guard was placed over him¹⁸. After this incident Chandrakirti Singh abjured all hostile activities towards the British, and the Supreme Government, in return, guaranteed the Raj of Manipur to him and to his descendents and agreed to prevent by force of arms, if necessary, any attempt that might dislodge him from his power¹⁹. Thus the marked hostilities between Chandrakirti Singh and the Supreme Government came to a peaceful end. However, the Political Agent was instructed to help the Raja in the execution of his administration and, if necessary, in the protection of his subjects against any oppressive act of the latter; because the Supreme Council believed that if such measures were not taken properly the Raja's rule might be tyrannical. The authorities in Calcutta, however, knew that the above instructions were clearly outside the purview of the Political Agent and, therefore, might be interpreted as a sign that they intended to interfere gradually in the affairs of Manipur so that they could gain the upper hand in the domestic matters of the State by reducing the status of the State to a nominal independence.

18. Ibid.

19. Aitchison's Treaties etc., p.243.

REPERCUSSION OF THE MUTINY :

Chandrakirti Singh realised that the inhabitants of Manipur needed peace and prosperity. He also knew that it was not possible on his part to establish a stable Government in his State without the active support and sympathy of the Supreme Government. In view of these circumstances, he did not attach undue importance to his status as an independent ruler, but began to establish more friendly relations with the British. By that time Mutiny broke out in India. On receipt of the information, the Raja called upon the Political Agent and offered his assistance²⁰. McCullock accepted the Raja's help and reported the matter to the Supreme Government. Since there was no suspicion of a mutinous spirit by the men of the Sylhet Light Infantry in Cachar by that time, the Agent conveyed the Manipuri Chief that he found no immediate necessity of calling on the latter's help in that affair. However, the Agent expressed his opinion that if anything happened to that frontier he had more confidence in the Raja's friendliness.

On 18 November, 1857, three companies of the 34th Native Infantry broke into open mutiny²¹. When this news reached Manipur it caused considerable sensation in the State. As the mutineers advanced north-wards it was also rumoured that they were making for Manipur²². After marching through the jungles of Tipperah the mutineers entered the district

20. S.C., 28 August, 1857, No.140, McCullock to Edmon Stone, 18 July, 1857.

21. Barpujari, H.K., Assam in the Days of the Company, p.174.

22. P.C., 28 May, 1858, No.139, McCullock to Secy. Govt. of India, 12 February, 1858.

of Sylhet with the object of joining in Cachar Varendrajit Singh, alias Sana Chahi Ahum, a son of the late Raja Chaurjit Singh, who along with Parbatar Singh and Nilambar Singh attempted for the throne of Manipur as narrated in the previous chapter²³. At a place known as Latu they encountered a detachment of the Sylhet Light Infantry on December 18, 1857 and succeeded in killing its Commandant Major Byng. But they were closely followed and repeatedly attacked by Lieutenant Ross until they were reduced to a paltry few who escaped into the jungles.

On December 25, intelligence of the action at Latu was received at Manipur. The Manipuris in Cachar were supposed to guide them upto Manipur. Chandrakirti Singh, at the request of the Political Agent, ordered four hundred men under a Major to start for the Jiri, the boundary between Cachar and Manipur, to intercept the mutineers, should they come that way. If Narendrajit Singh ever conceived the project of gaining the throne with the help of the mutineers, it was rightly felt that, he would have had a fair chance of success, for the idea of a revolution was always attractive in Manipur²⁴. But it was observed that his success would be a signal for anarchy in the State and a danger to the security of the frontiers in that direction. McCulloch, therefore, held the view that if the prince and his party be kept away by the British detachment from entering into villages and procuring food, they would,

23. Supra., p.85.

24. P.C., 28 May, 1858, No.139.

apparently, be of little consequence, even if they were joined by evil-disposed Manipuri Princes. The Political Agent rightly observed that the crossing of the Hills that separate the valleys of Cachar and Manipur without food would surely be their death. McCulloch by that time realised that the Manipuris did not understand the meaning of the Mutiny. They held a different opinion on the outbreak and were convinced that the mutineers would do no harm to them. However, Chandrakirti Singh had a different sentiment. He was always sympathetic to the cause of the British. Taking advantage of the sympathies of Chandrakirti Singh with the British, the Political Agent induced the Manipuri chief that a prince with the mutineers would possibly bring a revolution in Manipur and a revolution would certainly bring the Burmese into Manipur and thus might alter even his position in the State. If the Raja could keep the mutineers out of the State, the fear of a revolution in Manipur might, perhaps, be averted²⁵. Chandrakirti Singh concurred in the opinion of McCulloch and arrangements for checking the advance of the mutineers towards his State were immediately made. Information to the above effect was also given to the Superintendent of Cachar.

On 15 June, 1858, six Manipuris, who joined hands with Narendrajit Singh, were arrested by the Superintendent of Cachar. An extensive conspiracy, involving many of the princes and most of the Manipuris in Cachar and some in Sylhet, was suspected to have been planned for an attack on Manipur.

25. Ibid.

On receipt of the information Chandrakirti Singh sent more troops to intercept their advance. Subsequently, the Manipuri troops made an encounter with Narendrajit Singh's force. A scuffle took place in which several mutineers were made prisoners. Narendrajit Singh was arrested while trying to escape to Manipur.

McCulloch desired to send Narendrajit to Cachar for trial. But the prince received severe wounds in his last attempt against Manipur and, therefore, the Political Agent did not urge his immediate removal from the State. Considering the relationship in which the above prince stood to him, Chandrakirti Singh also expressed his desire of carrying the trial of the former in Manipur, and even if he was found guilty in the trial, the Raja still adhered to the opinion of keeping his cousin in confinement in Manipur. The removal of Narendrajit Singh was not at all appreciated by Chandrakirti Singh²⁶. However, when the Raja saw that a group of his nobles and a considerable section of his subjects were in favour of detaining his cousin in Manipur, he changed his mind and ordered the latter's removal to Cachar under strict military guard. Nevertheless, Chandrakirti Singh appealed to the Supreme Government to spare his cousin's life even if the latter was found guilty.

Narendrajit Singh was tried at Manipur and found guilty of joining the mutineers of the 34th Native Infantry while he was in Cachar²⁷ and his property in Cachar was

26. P.C., 11 June, 1858, No.109.

27. P.C., 16 July, 1858, No.23; Stewart to Secy. Govt. of India, 8 June, 1858.

confiscated. He was sent to Cachar as a political prisoner. However, his wives and children were allowed to go everywhere they pleased and a small allowance was granted to them out of the above confiscated estate²⁸.

Besides Narendrajit Singh, other princes, Khwairakpa, Kanhai Singh and Haojao Singh were also arrested in early 1858 on suspicion of their entertaining hostile designs against the British²⁹. The above princes managed their escape but were recaptured and sent to Alipore Jail as State prisoners.

Throughout the above proceedings the conduct of Chandrakirti Singh had been most praiseworthy. He and eight of his officers were the only men in Manipur who seemed to have a heart in what they were doing. McCulloch, therefore, proposed the recognition of Chandrakirti Singh's service in the shape of a reward so that he could show it with pride to his own people. Since Gambhir Singh had been honoured with the reward of a sword and a belt in recognition of ^{his} service in the Cossiah Hills, the Political Agent suggested that his son Chandrakirti Singh also should be honoured, at least, with the above rewards for the service he rendered in the last outbreak. During the Mutiny, Chandrakirti Singh evinced his good disposition by sending his troops to the Cachar-Manipur frontier and by assisting the British effectively in exterminating the mutineers. In addition to a sword and a belt, McCulloch, therefore, suggested a dress of honour also to be

28. Ibid., No.24.

29. P.C., 26 August, 1859, No.27.

given to the Raja³⁰. As for the eight officers, Chingakhamba Pukhramba, Chingakhamba Dewan, Nepra Selunga, Swaijamba Selungba and his brother, Khumbong Selungba, Nandabapu Lairi-kyengba Hunjab and Gokul Thakur, the Political Agent suggested small gifts. The Governor-General in Council concurred in the opinion of the Political Agent and presented a dress of honour, a sword and a belt to Chandrakirti Singh in 1859 for his active co-operation in the last Mutiny and robes of honour to his above mentioned officers. Roma Singh, one of the two majors who actually fought against the mutineers was awarded the mutiny Medal.

The causes of the failure of the mutineers to enter Manipur were manifold in character. The Raja and the people of Manipur never understood clearly what the mutiny meant to them. The Raja was supposed to make his subjects revolt against the British; but on the other hand, he himself was always sympathetic to the British cause. He extended his help to the latter any time he was called for. Thus the combined strength of the two forces of the British and that of Manipur stood as an impenetrable barrier for the mutineers. Moreover, the object of the Manipuri Prince Narendrajit Singh who led the mutineers, was different from those of the mutineers. His intention was more to advance his personal cause to gain the throne of Manipur than to support the spirit of the mutiny. Naturally, therefore, the people of Manipur did not sympathise with the mutineers. They, on the other hand, suspected

30. P.C., 16 Sept. 1859, No. 22, McCulloch to Simson, 27 July, 1859.

that the mutineers were supporting the prince in his attempt to gain the throne of Manipur. If the ruling chief of Manipur had cared for the cause of the mutineers, and if Narendrajit Singh was motivated by unselfish designs, the course of the mutiny in Manipur would have been otherwise.

PROBLEMS IN THE POLITICAL AGENCY :

Shortly after the Mutiny, the Civil Finance Commission under Sir Richard Temple observed, in February 1861, that the Manipur Agency should be abolished immediately³¹ because of the fact that the nature of the then existing Anglo-Burmese relations made the position of the Political Agent at Manipur much less important³². Moreover, the huge amount of expenditure that was allotted to the Agency year *after year* was another argument put forward for the abolition of the Agency. If the Agency be abolished, the Commission opined that Rs 14,000 per annum would be saved, and as for the continuation of the British relations with Manipur, the Superintendent of Cachar might be instructed to watch over the internal affairs of the State³³. The proposition submitted by the Civil Finance Commission had adverse effects on Manipur. Every British subject desired to quit the State at the earliest opportunity, trade with Burma almost ceased and the unoffending Nagas and Kukis who had been induced by former Political Agents to come down to the valley of Manipur from their respective hills were immediately seized and enslaved by the authorities in Manipur³⁴.

31. F.Poltl. 'A', May, 1861, No. 258; The Civil Finance Commission to Young, 26 February, 1861.

32. Ibid.

33. J. Clark, op.cit., p. 23.

34. Ibid.

Examining the above developments in Manipur, McCulloch once again, reported to the Supreme Government in favour of the retention of the Agency. He wrote : "Many a serious matter has been settled by the Agent which, had it been left to the Burmese and Manipuris themselves, would have resulted in the subversion of Manipur. To remove the Political Agent, would, I believe, be to give Manipur to the Burmese."³⁵ Considering the importance of keeping a responsible British officer in Manipur, specially for bringing law and order in the Burmese frontier, Captain Stewart, the Superintendent of Cachar, also expressed his opinion in favour of the continuation of the Agency. He reported that the duties of the Political Agent were to prevent border feuds, to put down the oppressive measures of the Government of Manipur and to keep a check over the general conduct of the administration of the State³⁶. Stewart, therefore, held the view that the effect of withdrawing the Political Agent would lead to immediate anarchy in Manipur, and taking advantage of that apparent withdrawal of British protection from the State, the border tribes and other Manipuri princes, who had a dozen factions amongst themselves, would split against their Raja and try to place their own man on the throne. The Superintendent of Cachar reported that the Political Agency in Manipur should not, in any case, be withdrawn wholly from Manipur. If the

35. As quoted by Alexander Mackenzie in his book North East Frontier of Bengal, p.156.

36. F.Poltl.'A', October, 1861, No.214.

Supreme Government believed that the continuation of the Agency as a costly affair, he suggested that the Agent might be reduced to the rank of an assistant under the Superintendent of Cachar³⁷. After the perusal of the reports submitted by McCulloch and Stewart, the Supreme Council at last decided to continue the Agency in Manipur. Lord Canning, the then Governor-General of India, remarked: "..... the Manipur Agency may be abolished. McCulloch reported his favour for the continuation of the Agency. The internal administration, the hill problems necessitated the continuance of the Agency."³⁸

Thus, with the concurrence of the Supreme Government the Political Agency in Manipur was retained and Dr. Thomas Dillon was appointed to succeed McCulloch to the Agency³⁹. But in October, 1863 the question of its abolition once again, arose. Dr. Dillon's highhandedness made the position of the Political Agent extremely critical. He soon became an arch enemy of Chandrakirti Singh, the ruling Chief, because he began to exercise powers and privileges originally not assigned to his office. He also began to interfere in trade and commerce of the State and kept some of the officers of the Raja's Court in confinement without the latter's consent and also tried to arrest some of the Manipuri princes. He abused the Raja and threatened his mother, his ministers and the Raja himself with punishment. He also violated the laws which had been framed and had been in force relating to the Hill tribes, particularly,

37. Ibid.

38. F.Poltl. 'A' Progs., April, 1864, No. 110, Notification Foreign Dept., 6 April, 1864.

39. F.Poltl. 'A', October, 1861, No. 213.

the Nagas and the Kukis in Manipur. Unable to cope with Dillon, Chandrakirti Singh appealed to the Supreme Government for the latter's immediate removal from Manipur and for the appointment of a successor who would understand the sentiments of the people. The proceedings of Dillon could not but compel the authorities in Calcutta to give a second thought over the whole issue - the continuation of the Political Agency in Manipur⁴⁰. Since Dillon had entirely misunderstood the objects of his appointment as the Political Agent⁴¹, the nature of his duties, the relation in which he stood to the Raja of Manipur and the transaction of his duties in respect to the internal administration of the State, the Supreme Council ordered him to leave immediately for Sylhet⁴². Chandrakirti Singh was, at the same time informed that the subject of filling up the vacancy was under the consideration of the Government.

As a matter of fact the Government of India had decided to withdraw the Political Agent and Mr.H.Beveridge, the officiating Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector of Sylhet was directed to recover the records and other properties belonging to the Manipur Agency to Sylhet. After collecting the records Beveridge submitted a report wherein he strongly urged the continuation of the Agency⁴³. He reported that Chandrakirti Singh and his ministers were not in fault, that they had always shown their obligations to Gordon or McCulloch, the

40. F.Poltl. 'A', November 1863, No.63; Bayley to Chandrakirti Singh, 20 November 1863.

41. Ibid., No.6, Bayley to Dillon, 6 November 1863.

42. Ibid.

43. P.Progs. April 1864, No.102, Memorandum on Manipur, Beveridge to Aitchison, 26 January 1864.

former Political Agents at Manipur from the start. The report of Beveridge brought about a revulsion of feeling in the mind of Lord Canning, the Governor-General of India. He expressed : "The people including the Raja himself were very anxious that the Agency should be maintained. If the Agency be maintained clear and distinct instructions should be given to the Agent limiting his interference with the direct administration of the country to the preservation of the rights required by the British Government under treaty and to promoting good Government by his advice to the Raja and discouragement of the system of monopolies, forced labour and slavery."⁴⁴

Thus the Political Agency in Manipur was allowed to continue and McCulloch was reappointed to succeed Dillon. The combined efforts of the Raja and the Political Agent had brought about many changes in the political structure and social and economic life of Manipur. But it became a problem for the Government of India to find a suitable man for the post of the Political Agent at Manipur. The persons who filled the vacancy after retirement of McCulloch were not fit for the post until 1877⁴⁵ when Lieutenant Colonel James Johnstone accepted the post. "Manipur, to which Colonel Johnstone

44. Ibid., No.110, Notification, Foreign Dept., 6 April 1864.

45. See Appendix F : List of Political Agents 1835 to 1891.

was appointed in 1877, was called by one of the Indian Secretaries the Cinderella among Political Agencies."⁴⁶ "They'll never," he said, "get a good man to take it." "Well", was the reply, "a good man has taken it now."⁴⁷

In spite of it the proceedings of the Political Agent was looked with suspicion by the Manipur Government. Johnstone's movements were closely watched and whenever he went spies, open or secret, followed him. Though it was very disgusting Johnstone did not object to it. He went on carrying his duties, maintaining the dignity of his office. By fair dealings and free discussions, he soon became successful in disarming the suspicion of the Government of Manipur⁴⁸. He wrote : "In my dealings with the Durbar, I always tried to bear in mind that I was the representative of the strong dealing with the weak whenever it became necessary for me to interfere, I did so with great firmness, but always tried to carry the Maharaja and his ministers with me."⁴⁹

After the retirement of Johnstone, the Supreme Government never realised that great care and caution should be taken in filling the vacancy. The records of the past plainly showed that the appointment of a Political Agent was always a

46. As quoted by J.Roy in his book 'History of Manipur', p.111.

47. Ibid.

48. Johnstone, Sir James, My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills, p.95.

49. Ibid., p.110

delicate one, but no pains seem to have been at any time taken to find a suitable man; if one happened to be appointed it was a matter of chance. "The work may not have been of a nature requiring the very highest class of intellect, but it certainly did require a rather rare combination of qualities, together with one indispensable to make a good officer, namely a real love for the work, the country and the people."⁵⁰ In 1888 Frank St. Clair Griswood, a junior officer of Sylhet, who had recently arrived from England, was sent to Manipur as the Political Agent. But he had hardly remained there for about eleven months and had gained some knowledge about Manipur when he was suddenly transferred to Shillong. After the death of Mr. Heath, Griswood was again called upon to fill the vacancy in October 1889. It did not take a long time on the part of the Government of India to feel the consequences of its thoughtless policy. Appointment of inefficient persons and frequent changes of the incumbent gave opportunity for domestic squabbles within the royal family of Manipur. The climax of this unstable policy and bungling diplomacy was the Manipur War of 1891 as will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. Had the Foreign Department of the Government of India been cautious from the very beginning, such the War of 1891 might have been easily averted and the history of the Anglo-Manipuri Relations would have been recorded otherwise.

50. Ibid., pp.273-274.

Appendix F.List of the Political Agents from 1835 to 1891.

<u>Names of the Political Agents</u>	<u>Length of Service</u>
1. Captain George Gordon	1835-1844
2. Major W. McCulloch	1844-1862
3. Dr. Thomas Dillon	1862-1863
4. Major W. McCulloch	1863-1867
5. Dr. L. Brown	1867-1872
6. Colonel Thompson (Offg.)	1872-1872
7. Dr. L. Brown	1872-1875
8. Captain Durrand (Offg.)	1875-1875
9. G.H. Danant (Offg.)	1875-1877
10. Major General Sir James Johnstone	1877-1886
11. Major Trotter	April 1886-July 1887
12. Mr. Frank St. Clair Grimwood	Dec. 1887-Feb. 1889
13. Mr. Heath	Feb. 1889-Sept. 1889
14. Mr. Frank St. Clair Grimwood	Oct. 1889-March 1891
15. Lieutenant Colonel H. St. P. Maxwell	1892-1893.

CHAPTER V

PROBLEMS ON THE FRONTIER

The transfer of the Kabaw Valley, in 1834¹, could in no way solve the Burma-border problems permanently. Although the Burmese frontier remained quiet for some time, troubles, started once again from the late fifties of the nineteenth century. With a view to avoid probable dangers in future, Chandrakirti Singh soon after his accession to the throne of Manipur, desired to establish a strong military outpost in that direction. But the wars of succession and revolts that had been directed against him and the rebellious designs of the Nagas, in and around his country, distracted his attention from establishing a strong outpost in that frontier. Taking advantage of the unsettled Government in Manipur, the Samjok Tsawba, the Burmese Governor, began to commit raids on the villages in the Manipuri side of the Kabaw Valley.

On 14 December, 1855, Lungsung and Maroo villages in the territory of Manipur, were attacked with muskets, and their inhabitants were plundered². Immediately on the receipt of the news Chandrakirti Singh sent a detachment of six hundred men in that direction³ so as to intercept the advance of the raiders. Captain McCulloch, the Political Agent, volunteered

1. See Appendix D; *Supra*, pp. 63-64.

2. P.C., 15 February, 1856, No. 112, McCulloch to Beadon, 17 January, 1856.

3. *Ibid*.

to accompany the detachment and he visited the devastated villages. On his arrival the Political Agent was informed that the raid was committed by the inhabitants of the Pungjum village, on the Burmese side of the Kabaw Valley. He, therefore, called the Chief of the village for an explanation. The Pungjum Chief came but he emphatically denied any knowledge of the attack being committed by his people. The Chief, on the other hand, reported that the outrage had been committed by the Sooties⁴. After the perusal of the reports submitted by the Pungjum Chief, McCulloch made a thorough study of the raid with personal visits and enquiries and finally discovered that the attack had been committed by the Sooties and not by the Pungjum villagers as was reported earlier⁵.

The incident mentioned above worsened the strained relations that had already existed between Burma and Manipur. However, no major dispute arose in that frontier till the late seventies of the nineteenth century. But suddenly in December, 1877, the Kongal Thanna, a Manipuri stockade in the frontier, was attacked by a body of armed men from the Burmese side of the Kabaw Valley and ^{eight} twenty ~~men~~ were killed⁶ of whom twenty were burnt alive. When the news of the above unprovoked attack reached Manipur, Lieutenant Colonel Johnstone, the Political Agent at Manipur, proceeded towards Kongal with a large Manipuri force and reported the matter to

4. *Infra*, p.167.

5. P.C., 28 March, 1856, No.133, McCulloch to Edmonstone, 8 March, 1856.

6. Administrative Report of the Manipur Political Agency, 1877-78; p.9.

the Supreme Government⁷. The Governor-General in Council referred the case to the Burmese Government but the latter denied any knowledge of raids or excesses which were alleged to have been committed by the Burmese soldiers or Burmese subjects, on the villages, on the Manipuri side of the Kabaw Valley. They also denied the charges of attacking, plundering and killing the Manipuri guards at the Ihanna⁸. The Burmese authorities, on the other hand, alleged that a group of Manipuri soldiers came to the Kongal outpost and frequently sent men to persuade, threaten and terrify their subjects, within the jurisdiction of the Samjok Chief, to remove to the Manipuri side of the valley and pay revenue to the Raja of Manipur. Since the above actions of the Manipuri soldiers had an adverse effect on the Burmese villages, in the frontier, the authorities in Mandalay urged the Supreme Council that the latter should instruct Chandrakirti Singh not to repeat such acts in future⁹. His Lordship in Council invited opinion from the Chief Commissioner, British Burma, to the validity of the Burmese complaints.

After the perusal of the records relating to the raids and outrages in the Burmese frontier, the Chief Commissioner found out that (i) in 1877, corresponding to the Burmese year 1239, the inhabitants of the Samjok Division of the Kabaw Valley went to the Kongal outpost and attacked the Manipuri guards and burnt the outpost; (ii) that in 1878-79,

7. Ibid.

8. F.A.Poltl.E. Progs., February, 1883, No.168, Burgess to Grant, 24 December, 1881.

9. Ibid., No.169, Foreign Minister, Mandalay to C.C., Burma.

corresponding to the Burmese year 1240-41, certain men of the Kuki tribe, belonging to the Samjok Tsawba, attacked the village of Tangakat, in the territory of Manipur, pillaged its properties and made a large number of the inhabitants prisoners; (iii) that in 1880, corresponding to the Burmese year 1242, the inhabitants of the Samjok Division attacked and burnt Chingsaw village on the Manipuri side of the Kabaw Valley, killed forty-five persons and carried away three captives; (iv) that in January, 1881, corresponding to the Burmese year, Pyatho 1242, the inhabitants of the Samjok Division entered and attacked the Chattik village in Manipur and killed two men; (v) that in February, 1881, the inhabitants of the above Division attacked the Moowa village of Manipur, killed fifteen persons and took away five captives and plundered the Koondat and Koongyang villages and (vi) that in August, 1881, corresponding to the Burmese year, Wagoung 1242, the Choongan tribe, under orders from the Samjok Tsawba, entered the Chounghoon village in the territory of Manipur and attacked its inhabitants¹⁰. The Chief Commissioner held the view that Johnstone's report against the Burmese for the attack on the Kongal Thanna was correct and, therefore, instructed the Burmese authorities not to encourage such raids in future.

The authorities in Mandalay denied the charges. On the other hand they complained that in February, 1881, four villages on the Burmese side of the Kabaw Valley were, once again, threatened by the Manipuris and the latter, after

10. Ibid., No.70; Statements made by the C.C., British Burma, 27 November, 1881.

stationing themselves in the Kongal Thanna, with about six hundred soldiers, sent men and induced the villagers to remove themselves to Manipur and pay taxes to its Raja¹¹. They further reported that in September, 1881, the Manipuri soldiers of the above Thanna came to the Burmese side of the Valley and persuaded Tohao, Chief of the Burmese villages in the Valley, to go to Manipur and threatened to attack his villages if their wishes were disrespected¹². After the perusal of ^{all} the whole records, the Government of India was convinced that the boundary between Burma and Manipur had to be demarcated, once again, so as to prevent future raids and other misunderstandings between the two countries.

Since Manipur was by that time in close alliance and friendship with the British Government, the Governor-General in Council deemed it expedient to protect the territory of Manipur from probable Burmese inroads. His Lordship in Council desired to act as an arbiter in solving that intricate problem and invited co-operation from the Government of Burma. The points that had to be discussed were (i) the causes and places of such depredations and encroachments as had been made on the frontier; (ii) the best mode of demarcating the unsettled boundary in the frontier; (iii) the prevention of future depredations and encroachments in the frontier and (iv) the title and residence of the Burmese official

11. Ibid., No.169, Foreign Minister, Mandalay to C.C., British Burma.

12. Ibid., No.170, Statements of the Kyauaing Minister, Mindan Kyawgong and Myozayays of Samjok, 27 November, 1881.

at Samjok who looked after the peace and security in the frontier¹³. The territory north of the old town of Thoungh-woot, inhabited by the wild tribes of Kyens, had never been accurately demarcated and, therefore, the above tribes had repeatedly attacked and plundered the Manipuri outposts and villages in that frontier¹⁴.

With this object in view, the Supreme Government, in September, 1881, appointed Johnstone as the Boundary Commissioner and R. Phayre, Major Badgeley, Ogle, Lieutenant Dun, Dr. Watt, Oldham as his assistants and Lieutenant Angelio as the Commander of the escort party that consisted of one hundred and fifty men of the 12th Kelat-i-Ghilzal Regiment and fifty Frontier Police, so as to demarcate a boundary line between Manipur and Burma¹⁵. The party left for the Kabaw Valley in the latter part of September, 1881 and made Kongal Thanna the base camp¹⁶, which was situated at the foot of the eastern slope of the Youmadoung Hills, that portion which the Burmese called the Malain Range and on the banks of the river Nummea. This Thanna, as shown in Pemberton's map or in the Treaty of 1834, had always been within the territory of Manipur and close to it there were some salt wells, in an old village called Shein, in the territory of Manipur, which had long been a subject of envy to the Samjok people who asserted that the wells

13. Ibid.

14. F.A. Polt. E., February, 1883, No. 180, from the Diary of R. Phayre, 22 November, 1881.

15. Ibid., No. 179.

16. Ibid., No. 175, Johnstone to Secretary to the C.C., Assam, 28 January, 1882.

belonged to them. The Kongal Thanna was, therefore, established as a check post against their possible incursions.

The Boundary Commission, from the start, had to deal, not only with the natural difficulties of the frontier but also with the obstructions and hostility of the people of Samjok. Because it was reported that the Samjok Tsawba had prepared to resist with arms the Commission from entering the Kabaw Valley. With a view to avoid the above hostilities, Johnstone invited the Samjok Tsawba to extend his co-operation in the demarcation of the boundary, but the latter refused. However, the Commissioner made one more effort to win his co-operation in the settlement of the boundary and deputed Major Badgeley and R. Phayre to Samjok for that purpose, with an instruction to visit the Pagan Woon at Tamu and return via the Moreh Thanna and the Aimole Pass so that they could have a survey of the territory in dispute¹⁷.

Badgeley and Phayre returned from Samjok on January 1, 1882 and reported that the territory in question had never been visited by the Commissioners¹⁸ who settled it in 1834 and the line as shown in the map as the Pemberton's Line had never been drawn by that officer¹⁹. On receipt of the report the Supreme Government felt it right to survey the territory, once again, and entrusted Johnstone with that work. The latter deputed Badgeley for the survey of the territory. Badgeley made

17. Ibid.

18. Major F.J. Grant and Capt. R.B. Pemberton.

19. F.A. Polt. E., February, 1883, No. 174; Geidt to Grant, 6 February, 1882.

a thorough survey of the territory and prepared a new map and discovered that The Pemberton Line was found neither to represent correctly nor to coincide with the terms of the agreement of 1834²⁰ and reported the need for the alteration of the scale used in the former map (i.e., in the map prepared by R.B.Pemberton)²¹. The Pemberton Line, under the terms of the Treaty would have had to run a little far to the west of the Ungoching Range. In support of his arguments, Badgeley pointed out that (i) Pemberton never visited the head of the Kabaw Valley; (ii) that the Survey of India proved Pemberton's map, in so far as the North East Frontier of India was concerned, to be incorrect; (iii) that the location of The Pemberton Line contradicted the wordings of the Treaty of 1834; (iv) that his late survey had elicited the fact that all or almost all the raiding Kukis lived on the Malain Range and not on the Ungoching Hills; (v) that the Malain Range and not the Ungoching Hills had to be the true boundary between Burma and Manipur and that (vi) The Pemberton Line included a large portion of the level Kabaw Valley to Burma which, no doubt, was not the intention of the framers of the above Treaty²². He, therefore, pointed out the necessity for the demarcation of a new line of boundary between Burma and Manipur.

Johnstone concurred in the opinion of Badgeley and him invited a commission from the Government of Burma so as to help in the demarcation of a new boundary between Burma and Manipur, but the latter extended no friendly offers. However, with the

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., No.179.

22. Ibid.

approval of the Supreme Council, he demarcated a new boundary that started from a point on the Muma River, a few hundred yards south of the Kongal Thanna and marked on both sides by stone cairns; then east, skirting the spurs of the Malain Range to a point on the Teleyu River; thence north, following the course of the said river to its course and then running along the water line of a low ridge connecting the Malain and Ungoching Ranges and then following the course of the said stream till it reached the Mupunga River, thence the Kuson Range as the boundary between Burma and Manipur²³. The line, thus drawn adhered strictly to the terms of the Treaty of 1834 and was so well defined as to prevent any misunderstandings between Burma and Manipur in future and information to that effect was also given to the authorities in Mandalay, pointing out therein the right of Chandrakirti Singh to occupy the territory, assigned to him, under the new demarcation.

The Burmese Government refused to recognise the new demarcation as the boundary line and ordered the Samjok Tsawba to pull down the boundary stones thus erected and to protect the Burmese subjects in that territory²⁴. The Government of India accepted Johnstone's boundary and asked the Government of Burma not to instruct the Samjok Chief to pull down the boundary stones erected by the Commissioner²⁵. It also authorised the Government of Manipur to resist with arms any

23. Ibid., No.175, Johnstone to Secretary to the C.C., Assam, 28 January, 1882.

24. Ibid., No.189; C.C., British Burma to Foreign Secretary, 8 March, 1882.

25. Ibid., No.190; Foreign Secretary to C.C., Rangoon, Tele. No.413 E.P., 9 March, 1882.

threat to the destruction of the above boundary marks²⁶. However, in 1884 the Burmese Government threatened to demolish the Kongal stockade and pull down the boundary stones.²⁷ Subsequent to the above proceedings, a murderous outrage was committed, on 23 March 1885, on a party of six Burmese, while they were in the village of Kondung, by a party of armed Kukis from Manipur²⁸. Thus it was evident from the above that the demarcation of a new boundary line between Manipur and Burma could, in no way, solve that frontier problem. By that time to make the situation worse, the Third Burmese War broke out in 1885.

Mr. A. J. Morgan, Manager, the Bombay-Burmah Trading Corporation, wrote to Johnstone that on 15 November, 1885, Messrs. Allen and Ross, ^{two members of the Corporation} came in a steamer upto the Kabaw Valley and reported the news of the Burmese War²⁹ to him and to Messrs. F. Ruckstuhl and J. Britto, who were by that time in the valley and asked them to move down to Kalay. Since seventy eight elephants of the Corporation were placed under his care and the protection of the foresters employed by the Corporation, had been assigned to him, Morgan decided not to leave

26. Ibid., No. 191; Foreign Secretary to C.C., Assam, File. No. 428 E.P., 10 March, 1882.

27. F. Extl. A. Progs., September, 1884, No. 5, Protter to C.C., Assam, 8 July, 1884.

28. Ibid., August, 1885, No. 60, Johnstone to Secretary to the C.C., Assam, 23 June, 1885.

29. F. Sec. E. Progs., August, 1886, No. 801; Morgan to P.A. Manipur, 10 January, 1886.

the place. Ruckstuhl and Britto also decided to stay. Allen and Ross, therefore, left the Valley without them, on 16 November, 1885³⁰. Morgan further reported that upto 19 November, 1885, everything was quiet in the Kendat Division of the Valley but on the 20th, he and his two friends (Ruckstuhl and Ross) were put in irons ^{under} ~~on the~~ orders of the Burmese Government and all the properties of the Trading Corporation were confiscated. An official from Mandalay, Thundawssin, came to the valley and killed Allen, Roberts, Poncur and took Ross, Hill, Bates and Ruckstuhl prisoners and demanded huge sums of money, from each of them, before their release. Britto was released on payment of seven hundred rupees and the other British subjects were also released on payment of huge sums of money ranging from one hundred and fifty to five hundred rupees. Morgan and Ruckstuhl waited for their turn. By that time the Kendat Woon came and informed the official the possibility of British troops arriving from Manipur under the Political Agent at the country. This made the latter very angry and the Woon, suspecting that the official intended to murder Morgan and Ruckstuhl, refused to allow them to be taken with him on board. Thus Thundawssin left Kendat for Mingin and Kalay without the above British subjects³¹.

On receipt of the above news Johnstone immediately left for Burma in December, 1885, with fifty sepoy of the Bengal Infantry and nine hundred Manipuri troops under the

30. Ibid., No. 804; Junior Under Secy. to C.C., Assam, 23 June, 1886.

31. Ibid.

command of Balaram Singh, who was by that time, the Minister for Burmese affairs. On his arrival in the Kabaw Valley Johnstone found the situation more difficult. He wrote to Chandrakirti Singh to send him one thousand Manipuri soldiers under Thangal, with instructions to await events at Moreh, and another five hundred soldiers to reach him immediately at Kendat. Chandrakirti Singh sent his Manipuri troops so as to reach Johnstone in right time and the latter, with the help of the troops was successful in occupying Kendat. Within twenty days of the declaration of the Third Burmese War, Mandalay, the Capital of Burma, fell and, subsequently, ~~after the end of the war~~, the whole of Burma was annexed to the British Empire.

After the annexation of Burma, Major W.F. Trotter, the Political Agent at Manipur, was appointed as the Deputy Commissioner Upper Chindwin Districts, while continuing to be the Political Agent at Manipur³², so that the problems in the Manipur-Burma frontier could be decided satisfactorily. With this object in view the Agent appointed Myothoongyee of Tamu to be the officer in-charge of the villages, under his direct control, but the appointment was not well received by the inhabitants of the valley who had till then exercised near-independent authority, subject only to the order of the Woon of Kendat³³. Trotter decided to march to Kendat for a discussion with the Woon, with an escort party of one hundred rifles of the detachment of the 4th Bengal Infantry.

32. F. Sec. E. Progs., November, 1886, No. 133, Hailes to Q.V.G., 11 May, 1886.

33. Ibid., No. 182, Narrative of the events which led to and of the action at Pantha on 12 May, 1886.

Although he received information of the arrival of the 18th Bengal Infantry at Kendat, he did not know the exact date of their arrival and therefore, marched to Pantha, two marches' distant from Kendat, with Morgan and Britto of the Bombay-Burma Corporation, accompanied by two Native officers, Jamadars Kedar Kitchit and Ram Singh, five Havildars, six Naikes and eighty-seven sepoy of the 4th Bengal Infantry under Major Haile's command and reached there on 11 May, 1886.

On 12 May, 1886 Pantha Camp was attacked by six hundred dakait³⁴, who came from the Burmese side of the Kabaw Valley. Trotter and his small force fought bravely against them continuously for ten hours and were successful in driving them out of the stockade. However, in the encounter, Trotter was severely wounded, one Havildar was killed along with two sepoy, and several other sepoy were wounded. Examining the weak position of the Camp, the Governor-General in Council asked three hundred Manipuri troops to march, immediately, to Pantha and also ordered one hundred men of the 42nd Regiment from Kohima to march in that direction with two mountain guns and a detachment of the 44th Assam Regiment from Tezpur and sixty-eight men from Shillong³⁵. Transport mules and ponies were further asked to push through from Golaghat, to Manipur via Kohima³⁶ and the General Officer Commanding, Mandalay, was allowed to send as much re-enforce-

34. Ibid., No.122, G.O.C.Eastern Frontier to G.M.G.,
19 May, 1886.

35. Ibid., No.133, G.O.C.Eastern Frontier to G.M.G.,
21 May, 1886.

36. Ibid.

ments as he deemed it advisable to Kendat³⁷. Seeing all these developments, the dakaits also stockaded their position strongly and it was reported that two thousand of them were ready to face the British forces at any moment³⁸. Thus the situation in that frontier drifted from bad to worse. It was probably because of the fact that the Queen's Proclamation regarding the annexation of Burma was never published in that Valley and the dakaits believed that Mandalay was upto that time under the control of the Burmese authorities³⁹.

Before the arrival of the troops mentioned above to Pantha, Trotter found out that he could not effectively stand against the dakaits. To make the situation worse, pestilential disease spread among the soldiers mainly due to bad climate and want of adequate food supplies. He, therefore, decided to withdraw the troops from the Valley. But it was also evident that the withdrawal of the troops would certainly lead to the murder of women, children and the sick in the valley⁴⁰ and all the fourteen villages of the Upper Kabaw Valley would be, at once, exposed to the attacks of the dakaits. The Tsawba of Thungdoot, the ruler of those villages, had hitherto been loyal; but no one could foretell what effect the destruction of those villages might produce on his attitude towards the British. The probable result in the event of withdrawal of the troops was that the loyal inhabitants of the Valley would be exposed to the mercy of the rebels⁴¹.

37. Ibid. No.143, G.O.C. Eastern Frontier to Q.M.G., 29 May, 1886.

38. Ibid. No.151, C.C., Assam to Secy. Military Dept., 4 June, 1886.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid. No.204, Secy., C.C. to Secy., India, 28 July, 1886.

41. Ibid. No.205, Stevens to P.A., Manipur, 14 July, 1886.

The question that arose before the Governor-General in Council was whether the Valley be given to Chandrakirti Singh for his protection or not. The cession of the Valley to Manipur in the opinion of the Chief Commissioner of Assam was inexpedient, because the Raja of Manipur would not be able to establish a good administration in that area without help from the British Government, specially in keeping strong military outposts at Kendat and Tamu. Johnstone, the former Political Agent desired to take over the Valley to the Raja of Manipur in recognition of the good services the latter had rendered in the Kohima Revolt of 1878-79⁴² and in the Third Burmese War⁴³. The Governor-General concurred in the opinion of the Chief Commissioner, Assam; because His Lordship felt that the Manipuri troops could not, without the help from the British Government, be able to keep the people of the Kabaw Valley under control⁴⁴. He, therefore, invited opinion from the man on the spot, Captain Raikes, the Deputy Commissioner of the Chindwin Valley. The latter held the view that the Valley should not be handed over to the Raja of Manipur, but it might safely be given to the Samjok and the Kale Tsawbas temporarily to administer on behalf of the British Government⁴⁵. Mr. Fryer, Commissioner,

42. *Infra.*, p.180.

43. F.Sec.E.Progs., March 1887, No.150, Bernard to Cunningham, 17 January 1887.

44. F.Sec.E.Progs., July 1886, No.218, Secretary to the C.C., Assam to the Chief Secretary, Government of India, 14 April 1886.

45. *Ibid.* March 1887, No.151, C.C., Assam to C.C., Burma, 16 January, 1887.

Central Division also concurred in the opinion of Rikes. Captain Stevens, Commander of the Kabaw Force and General Gordon, Commanding the Kabaw Valley Field Force, also agreed to the transfer of the administration of the Valley to the above Tsawbas to be governed temporarily on behalf of the British Government. So, the Supreme Council decided to accept the advice of the above persons provided the people of the Valley did not have a different view. These people, however, strongly objected to the rule of the above Tsawbas. Since the Supreme Government did not desire to wound the sentiments of the people of the Valley, it was decided to rule the Valley through a Myooke, who had to be placed under the Magistrate of the Chindwin Valley⁴⁶ with three hundred military Police at the Valley and sufficient British troops at Manipur to help him in an emergency⁴⁷, and four hundred men of the Assam Regiment, two hundred at Kendat and another two hundred at Tamu to his aid⁴⁸. Thus, the Valley was temporarily placed under the Myooke with the above arrangements.

Nevertheless, the Chief Commissioner of Assam suggested that the Valley, instead of being kept under the Myooke, should better be put under the jurisdiction of the Political Agent at Manipur, because he believed that such an arrangement provided the best solution to the problems of the Valley. However, the Palace Revolt of 1890 and the events subsequently followed deferred the settlement of the intricate border problem of Manipur till the year 1891.

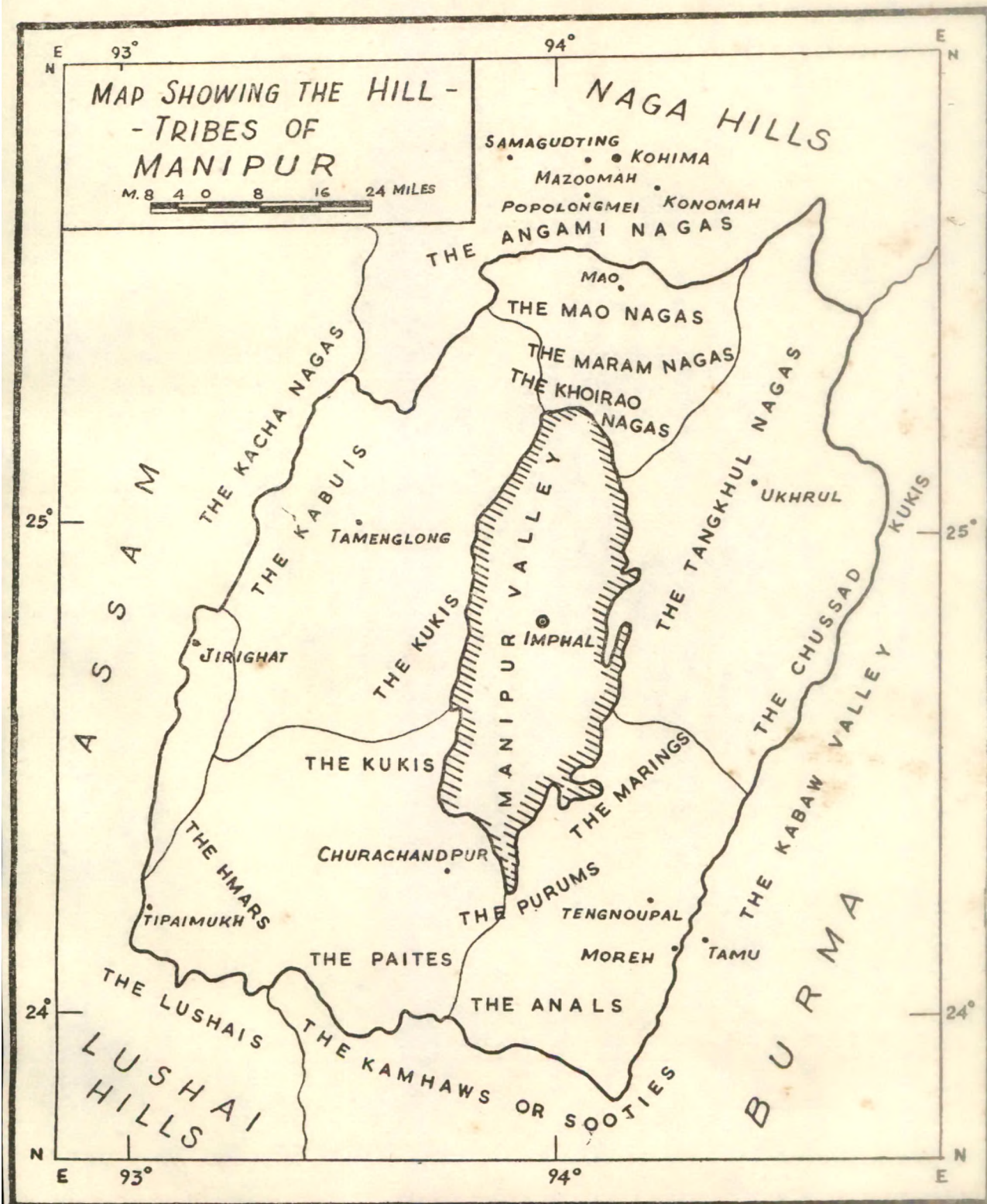
46. Ibid., C.C., Burma to Foreign Secretary,
26 February 1887.

47. Ibid.

48. F.Sec.E.Progs., May 1887, No.238.

The problem of Burma border was not the only problem that Manipur faced during the period under review. She was confronted with other problems - problems of the hill tribes that settled in and around her territory. There are reasons to believe that the Manipuris had often penetrated into the tribal areas bordering her frontiers and has exacted tributes. Before the introduction of modern fire arms, the Government of Manipur, however, had very little control over these tribal people and sometimes their marauding bands used to come down to the Manipur Valley. But they were both unwilling and unable to stay in the Valley for a long time in the face of strong Manipuri Cavalry charge. During the First Burmese War, the little influence she had if any, was weakened. Nevertheless, when Gambhir Singh became the Raja of Manipur he turned his attention to the subjugation of the hill tribes and with the help of the British Government he steadily brought them once again, under his control.

As already discussed, Manipur, after Gambhir Singh, passed through a series of Succession Wars, revolts and conspiracies which inevitably weakened the administrative control of the ruling Chiefs over the tribal areas. The difficulties in communication and the impossibility of establishing direct and immediate passage through those tribes, again produced more troubles from that quarter. Naturally, if an outrage was committed by any of the tribes, the Government of Manipur had to suppress them ruthlessly, to prevent



recurrence of such incidents. This policy alienated many tribal people under Manipur who persistently tried to shake off the yoke of the repressive Manipuri Chiefs. Thus, after Gambhir Singh's death, they began to create lot of troubles, which involved the Government of Manipur and its ally, the British Government, in more expensive and tiresome engagements, which did not end till they were suppressed permanently.

THE LUSHAIS :

The tribe that first came into contact with Manipur was the Lushais. The word 'Lushai', according to McCable, who was for some time the Political Officer of the North Lushai, is a compound word consisting of two component words, 'Lu' meaning 'head' and 'Shai' to cut, and therefore, the full meaning of the word is 'head cutter'.

The Lushais inhabited the country south-west of Manipur. They invariably created troubles to the inhabitants, bordering to that frontier territory of Manipur. The Government of Manipur took all pain to drive them out of that frontier. However, the Supreme Government instructed the Political Agent at Manipur to impress on the Raja of the State, in the most emphatic manner, not to undertake any action against the above tribe while the Chief was adopting measures for the protection of his frontier in that direction⁴⁹.

49. P.C., July, 1870, No.275, Letter from the Government of India to the P.A., Manipur, No.1127, p.3, June, 1870.

In July, 1853 the Lushais made an attack on the Kamai Naga Village, in the territory of Manipur, and killed eleven persons, made twenty-two captives and burnt down the whole village⁵⁰. After having destroyed the above village they again descended on the Manipuri Thanna in the Kala Naga Village. On their approach the guards of the Thanna fled, abandoning the village. When the news reached Manipur, Chandrakirti Singh sent a large Manipuri force in that direction to intercept their further advance. In the encounter they made with the raiders, the Manipuri troops captured Belging Raja, one of the great chiefs of the Lushais, together with five others. Since Belging Raja was a person of great consequence, the Political Agent suggested that the Manipuri subjects, who had been captured recently from the above village, might possibly be recovered through him. The Lushai Chief also expressed his confidence that if his villagers were informed of his capture, the Manipuri prisoners would be handed over to Manipur in exchange for his and the other Lushai captives' release. With this object in view, two of the Lushai captives were escorted upto the Kala Naga village and thence despatched to their village. The two Lushais, before leaving for their village promised that they would be back at Kala Naga in six week's time and begged the officer, who escorted them, to be present there by that time. However, they never came back⁵¹. when the liberated Lushais

50. P.C., 13 April, 1855, No.120; Verner to Secy., Government of Bengal, 12 March, 1855.

51. P.C., June 1, 1855 No.79, McCulloch to Beadon, 7 May 1855.

did not come to Manipur as promised, Belging Raja and the other captives gave up their hopes of being ransomed by their co-villagers and, therefore, attempted to escape. They managed their escape, but three of them were killed while running through the hills and Belging Raja was found close by and he was brought back, once again, to Manipur.

Subsequent to the above proceedings Chandrakirti Singh desired to send an expedition against the Lushais. McCullock, the Political Agent, also concurred in the opinion of the Raja. By that time the Lushais, though aware of the fact that Belging Raja was a prisoner in Manipur, and that the Raja of Manipur wished to make a deal with them, suddenly came down to the valley of Manipur and attacked the village of Solyang, near Moirang, in October, 1854. When the news of this unprovoked attack reached Cachar, the Superintendent of that district desired to establish communication with the Lushais for a peaceful settlement with Manipur and invited co-operation from the Political Agent of the State⁵². McCullock begged Chandrakirti Singh to send Belging Raja with him so that he might be able to send a message to the Lushais, through the above Superintendent to the effect that the Government of Manipur was always ready to negotiate with them. The Raja sent Belging Raja with the Political Agent but to no purpose. Though Chandrakirti Singh, on his part, desired to settle the Lushai problems permanently, the latter never extended friendly offers. Under these circumstances, the Government of India also did not intend to act as an arbiter and as such the Lushai problem remained unsolved⁵³.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

In November, 1862, the Lushais renewed their attack on certain Naga villages under the territorial jurisdiction of Manipur. By that time a large party of Manipuris from Cachar, under Kanhai Singh, a refugee prince of Manipur at Cachar, assembled near the eastern frontier of Cachar and tried to invade Manipur, as mentioned in the previous chapter. The Lushais, after burning down the tea gardens of Loharbund in Cachar, attacked Monierkhal and then marched towards Manipur along with the Kanhai Singh⁵⁴. No precise information about the intentions of the Lushais was received, but it was not unlikely that they were, in some measure, connected with the movements of Kanhai Singh, who actually tried to capture the throne of Manipur with their help⁵⁵. But their advance was intercepted by the Manipuri troops before they could reach the Manipur Valley. In early February, 1869, they made another attack on the Kala Naga stockade and killed one Manipuri officer and some other sepoys.⁵⁶ Though a contingent of Manipuri troops was immediately sent there they could not reach the stockade in time mainly due to bad communication and weather. The Lushais, therefore, after plundering the surrounding villages made their escape.⁵⁷

54. Chakravarty, B.C., *British Relations with the Hill Tribes of Assam since 1858*, p.47.

55. *Ibid.*

56. Woodthorpe, R.G., *The Lushai Expedition*, p.25.

57. *Ibid.*, p.31.

McCulloch was successful in influencing the Eastern Lushais under Vanolel, whom he induced to come to terms with Manipur and establish ^{good} friendly relations with the State. Subsequently, friendly relations had been established between the above Lushais and the Ladoes and the Kuki Nagas, in the territory of Manipur. These Naga subjects of Manipur thus began to use the hunting grounds of the Lushais, in the neighbourhood of the salt spring of Chiboo⁵⁸. But in the spring of 1870, the Lushais lost seven of their men, at the above place, in an affray with some Ladoes. This incident once again, destroyed the friendly relations that had been established between the tribes. It was generally believed that the bad feelings, thus established, between the Manipuris and Lushais were, principally, due to the incapacity of the Political Agent at Manipur to influence the Lushai tribes. If the Agent was keen enough to establish a strong force at Chiboo, it was probable that the Eastern Lushai Chiefs would not have dared^k commit such raids on the frontier of Manipur.

In 1871, the Lushais again committed raids on Cachar, Sylhet, Manipur and Tipperah and were at the same time at feud with the Kamhows or Sooties, a tribe that settled to the south of Manipur⁵⁹. Since they had been violent, the Governor-General in Council decided to send an expedition against them with two columns, one from Chittagong and the

58. Ibid., pp.46-47.

59. Mackenzie, Alexander, North East Frontier of Bengal, p.160.

other from Cachar⁶⁰, and invited co-operation from the Raja of Manipur. In response, Chandrakirti Singh sent a contingent of two thousand Manipuri Sepoys and four hundred ~~men~~ porters to assist the British Government in their expedition against the Lushais. Major General Nuthall, an officer of great experience, was appointed to accompany the Manipuri troops. His Lordship in Council further requested Chandrakirti Singh to establish Manipuri outposts along the hills, east of Tipaimukh and south of the Manipur Valley, and send his other forces to the south of Moirang, in the direction of Chiboo, with instructions to intercept the possible advance of the Lushais in that direction. While the expedition was thus carrying on in full swing, Dambhung, the headman of Taikum, and the ministers of the Chief of Poiroi came to the British Camp and reported the difficulties that were being faced by the Manipuri soldiers, mainly from want of adequate food supply and other medical facilities to those who were suffering from pestilential diseases⁶¹. On the receipt of this news, the Manipuri troops were allowed to withdraw from Chiboo⁶²; and on their return journey, they made an encounter with the Kamhows or Sooties in which they made fifty six men of the latter prisoners and seized fifty two muskets.

The British expedition to the Lushai Hills was successful. The tribes of Vompilal, Poiroi and Vonolel were

60. Woodthorpe, op.cit., p.39.

61. Ibid., p.230.

62. Ibid., p.256.

subsequently reduced to submission and tributes were exacted from them. Before complete withdrawal of the Manipuri troops from the Lushai country, the British Government compelled these Chiefs to enter into an agreement with the Government of Manipur for a peaceful settlement. In October, 1872, the Government of India also instructed the Political Agent, Manipur, to take the initiative in establishing friendly relations with the Lushais⁶³. In the following year Damboon, the Lushai Chief, paid a visit to Manipur. The Manipuri authorities tried to keep that visit a secret, but the Political Agent, having heard of the Chief's arrival, sent for him privately. Though he promised to meet the Agent, Damboon did not turn up. However, Chandrakirti Singh brought the Lushai Chief to Dr. Brown, the Political Agent at Manipur. In their meeting Damboon and Brown discussed the peaceful settlement of the Lushai-Manipuri relations.

Several Lushai Chiefs followed Damboon and visited the Capital of Manipur. In one of their visits to Manipur, Chiefs of Poiboi, Lenkoon, Lalkoop, Lairuk, Konga, Pungchoohi and Dalkoon swore before the Raja and the Political Agent at Manipur that mutual friendship would always be maintained by them towards the British Government and the Government of Manipur and agreed, for that purpose, to conclude a

63. P.Progs., November 1872, No.104.

treaty with Chandrakirti Singh⁶⁴. Under the terms of the treaty, they agreed not^{to} commit acts of aggression against the British and the Manipuri subjects and promised not to hold communications with any tribes, hostile to the aforesaid powers. They also promised to give due notice of any inimical intentions, from any tribes, against the aforesaid powers. They further assured^{to} to afford support and encouragement to the traders from the countries of the aforesaid powers. The Maharaja of Manipur, on his part, promised to forgive all acts of aggressions that had been committed against his subjects by the above Lushais. He also assured them of his support should they be unjustly attacked by any of the neighbouring tribes and agreed to assist them in the event of drought and famine⁶⁵.

However, the terms of the above treaty were not respected by the Lushais themselves. In 1877 it was reported that the Lushais who were subjects of Poiroi, Lalbura and Lengkham, made severe and repeated raids on some Kabui Naga villages in the territory of Manipur. Though the news of the attack reached him in time, Chandrakirti Singh adhered to his friendly relations with them. With this object in view he proposed, in March, 1877, to send a deputation to Tipaimukh to discuss the matter, but to no purpose. Thus the Lushai problem remained unsolved for many years beyond the period under review. ~~Peace was temporarily restored to that frontier for thirteen years only.~~

64. Annual Administrative Report of the Manipur Political Agency, 1873, pp.7-9-

65. Mackenzie, op.cit., p.162.

THE KAMHAWA OR THE SOOTIES :

The next tribe that came into contact with Manipur, as early as the Lushais, was the Kamhaws or Sooties. This tribe settled in the South of Manipur and east of the Manipur River, i.e., between the country inhabited by the Lushai proper and the territory of the Raja of Kule, who was a tributary of Burma⁶⁶. The Manipuris considered the Kamhaws to be more formidable than the Lushais and they were terribly afraid of their raids.

In general appearance and language they resembled the Lushais, but they were usually taller and stronger, and had the notoriety of being much more turbulent as foes. They were unfriendly with the Lushais and had frequently come into contact with them. It was believed that they had a fighting force of two thousand strong, armed with muskets⁶⁷, supposed to be procured from Burma⁶⁸.

The Kamhaws or Sooties were old enemies of Manipur. During the time of Nar Singh, several raids had been committed by the Kokatung section of this tribe on Mombee and Heeraway villages, in the territory of the Raja. In 1855 they again attacked Numfow and burnt down the village⁶⁹ and in 1856 they committed a serious outrage on the village in the bordering areas of the State. When the news reached

66. Administrative Report of the Manipur Political Agency, 1873-74, p.9.

67. Ibid., 1874-75, p.7.

68. Mackenzie, Alexander, op.cit., p.163.

69. Administrative Report of the Manipur Political Agency, 1874-75, p.7.

Chandrakirti Singh he himself advanced with a large force, consisting of one thousand and five hundred Manipuri soldiers, to intercept their further advance. But the latter failed to secure their line of communications, and after some skirmishing with the enemy, they fled, leaving the Raja behind and the operation ended in failure. On his return from the above unsuccessful expedition, Chandrakirti Singh, however, established a Thanna at Numfow and placed there two hundred sepoy to guard the frontier⁷⁰.

In 1858 the Kamhaws made another attack on the Sitol villages, but were repulsed by a Manipuri troop under Subadar Moyna Singh. In that year an engagement ~~also~~ took place between the tribe and a Manipuri force at Kubalok Village. In the encounter a Kamhaw Chief and twelve other men were killed. Anticipating further troubles from the tribe, in ¹⁸⁵⁹ Chandrakirti Singh, strengthened Mombee and Longya villages with supply of arms and ammunitions to its villagers so as to defend any future incursions from them. By that time, two serious acts of aggression were committed by the tribe; one on the Manipuri subjects of a Haukip village near Shugnu, and the other at Saitol. In the Haukip village the raiders killed fifteen men and carried away forty-five into captivity with their flocks and herds; and in Saitol, they burnt down the village but none was killed or captured. Three years later Kykole, a Kamhaw Chief and one of his followers were arrested by Oina and Athokpa

70. Mackenzie, Alexander, op.cit., p.164.

Subadars, who were at that time in the Nimfow and Shugnu Thannas respectively, and brought them to the Capital as prisoners. With one of their chiefs in Manipur, the Kamhaws had lost their strength to a considerable degree. In 1865 the Chief of the tribe deputed two of his Muntries with seven men to Chandrakirti Singh to beg pardon from the Raja for the raids that had been committed on the villages in his State and for the release of Kykole and his men. Since Chandrakirti Singh desired to establish peaceful relations with the tribe, Kykole and his men were released⁷¹. But in 1869 the Kamhaws again committed a raid on Bombang Village, in the territory of Manipur, and killed eleven men and carried away ten captives. Thus the relations between the Manipuris and the tribe were far from ^{being} cordial, and the attempts that had been made by Chandrakirti Singh for establishing peace with them failed.

While the Manipuris were returning from the Lushai Expedition, as stated above, they met a party of the Kamhaws and made fifty six of them prisoners along with their leader Kokatung. On receipt of the news, the Chief of the tribe sent Kykole, with some followers, to Manipur to seek for the release of the captured leader and his men. When the embassy reached the State they were informed that no proposition of any kind could be entertained whilst a single Manipuri subject remained in the hands of the tribe, and that if the

71. Administrative Report of the Manipur Political Agency, 1874-75, pp.5-6.

aforesaid captives were not released, the Raja would not listen to them⁷². Kykole and his followers complied with the demand and peace was restored between the Kamhaws and the Manipuris. However, immediately after they left the State it was reported that the tribe required one hundred human heads for the performance of the funeral obsequies of their late Chief. This led Chandrakirti Singh to believe that the villages in his territory would certainly be exposed to immediate raids from the tribe, if timely protection was not given to them. Instead of waiting for the arrival of the Kamhaws in his territory, the Raja desired to launch an attack on them as far as their territory. With this object in view, he sought co-operation from the British Government. The latter, however, thought it impolitic to authorise such an expedition against the tribe and instructed the Raja that while taking all necessary measures for the protection of his frontier, he should not commit any act of unprovoked aggression against that tribe. The Government of India being indifferent to him, the Raja abandoned his idea of launching an attack on the Kamhaws. However, no immediate threat or raid as anticipated by Chandrakirti Singh was ever committed and peace was restored temporarily in that frontier.

In 1874 the tribe again committed attacks on the Makoong and the Kumsol villages in the territory of Manipur.⁷³ Dr. Brown, the Political Agent, who visited and inspected the

72. Mackenzie, Alexander, op.cit., p.167.

73. Administrative Report of the Manipur Political Agency, 1874-75, p.8.

villages, recorded that he found both the villages partly burnt and abandoned, their survivors taking refuge in Chai-rel and Wangoo Villages respectively⁷⁴. When the above details reached the Capital, the Manipuris desired to punish the tribe for their wanton raids and sought the opinion of the Political Agent. Brown recommended in favour of the Manipuris. After consideration of all facts, the Government of India also concurred in the opinion of the Agent and allowed the Raja to punish the Kamhaws with the following propositions to be observed (i) that the villages in and around Mombee only, had to be attacked; (ii) that the Manipuris had to send a sufficient force to obviate all chances of defeat and (iii) that reprisals on women and children had to be strictly avoided.

Thus, on 19 February, 1875, a strong force, consisting of two thousand Manipuri soldiers and four hundred Khonglais, under the command of Thangal and Sawaijamba marched for Shugmu, the base camp for the operation⁷⁵. The force reached Mombee on the 26th and made an attack on the Kamhaws. After a gallant resistance that covered one and a half hours' fighting, the latter gave away and abandoned the field⁷⁶. On 27 February, 1875, the troops made further preparations for an attack on the Kamhaw Villages. By that time

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid., p.11.

76. Ibid.

a deputation from Noogeah, consisting of Kumteh and Thangjeeloom came to the camp of the Manipuris, made clear their unwillingness to continue the fight. The two Manipuri commanders asked them to surrender the captives they carried away from Kumsol. The delegates agreed to surrender the prisoners and also promised to pay tribute to the Raja of Manipur. Athokpa and Nungsang Subadars, with twenty two soldiers, were sent along with Kumteh and Thangjeeloom to rescue the prisoners⁷⁷. The party returned with the wife and children of the Chief of Kumsol, who had also been captured in the last raid. Dr. Brown observed : "To conclude, although I am disappointed at no hostages having been brought in, I think the expedition has been fairly successful. Whether or not the prisoners will now be given up is uncertain and as to the continuance of peace, time only can show. The Manipuris, I may add effected the whole operation without losing any of their number."⁷⁸

After the above expedition and subsequent establishment of four new Thannas in that frontier, no raid had been committed by the Kamhaws on Manipur. However, they ~~once again~~, became more aggressive during 1877 and 1878. But after 1878, the tribe had remained comparatively quiet with little of the aggressiveness which they had shown in the earlier years except the one that they committed, in January 1883, on the Tipaimukh Bazar, in the Southern border

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., p.12.

of Cachar district⁷⁹. After the suppression of the above attack, the Kamhau problem was settled permanently and peace was, once again, restored in that frontier of Manipur.

THE ANGAMI NAGAS

It is probable that the Manipuris had penetrated into the area now included in Nagaland and exacted tributes. During the time of Gambhir Singh several Angami villages were subdued, including Kohima, the largest of all⁸⁰. Since then the Angami Nagas had commercial traffic with Manipur and whenever a Manipuri visited a Naga village he was treated as an honoured guest at a time when a British subject could not venture into the interior without risk of being murdered. They regarded Manipur as the greater power of the two, because her conduct was consistent; if she threatened she acted.

The Angamis settled in the northern boundary of the territory of Manipur. None can say from where they came. The probability is that they came, originally, from the south-eastern corner of Tibet⁸¹. British acquaintance with them began in 1832 when Captain Jenkins and Lieutenant Pemberton,

79. F.A. Polt. E. Progs., September 1883, No. 262, Lyall to Secretary, Government of India, 22 June 1883.

80. Johnstone, Sir James, My Experiences in Manipur and Naga Hills, p. 23.

81. Ibid., p. 28.

escorted by Gambhir Singh's Manipuri troops, forced a passage through the hills with a view to discover a practicable route upto Assam. Next year, Gambhir Singh and Lieutenant Gordon with a large force, subdued Kohima and other villages as stated in a previous chapter. Subsequently, a kind of vague boundary, between Manipur and the Naga Hills, was laid down in 1842 by Lieutenant Bigge from the British side and Captain Gordon as the representative of the Government of Manipur. But, the Angamis had little regard for the Bigge-Gordon line. The Supreme Government also by that time were not very particular about enforcing laws on their side of the border. There was, therefore, a long standing boundary dispute between Manipur and the Naga Hills.

The British occupied Naga Hills area was under the administration of a Political Agent, stationed at Samagudting, but his rule was confined only to a few villages in the neighbourhood of the headquarter. In 1851 the affairs in the above area had reached such a state that the Supreme Government strongly desired, to hand over its administration entirely to the Government of Manipur⁸². Johnstone later observed : "..... failing any intention on the part of the British to annex the hills, it would have been good policy to have reorganised the Manipur territory and to have aided the Maharaja to annex and subdue as much as he could under certain restrictions." "Had this been done", he continued, "the British should have saved themselves much trouble."⁸³

82. Administrative Report of the Manipur Political Agency, 1874-75, p.13.

83. Johnstone, op.cit., p.36.

By that time, two Nagas from Phoulong came to Manipur and reported that their villages had been threatened by the Angami Nagas of Popoolong, Mozumah and Poojing villages and sought protection from the Government of Manipur⁸⁴. Chandrakirti Singh expressed his desire to protect them. McCullock, the Political Agent, also concurred in the Raja's opinion and reported the matter to the Agent to the Governor-General. The latter turned down the request but established a British outpost at Popoolongmai to check further Naga incursions. In spite of the measure, they made an attack on Nong village in October, 1852, killed and took away the heads of eighteen persons and carried off three captives⁸⁵. On receipt of the above news, McCullock appealed to the Supreme Government that Chandrakirti Singh should be allowed to send a detachment of his troops to Renda so that the Raja would be able to afford protection of the loyal villages in that quarter. Since the Nagas in question were not British subjects, the Supreme Council held a different view and intimated that the Government of Manipur must be left to adopt its own measure in punishing the perpetrators of the aggression⁸⁶. His Lordship in Council, nevertheless, instructed the Manipuri Chief that he was forbidden to make any retaliatory expedition into the Naga Hills and while adopting his measures to redress any outrages, committed by the Angami Nagas in the territory of his State, he should consult the officer in charge of Samagudting⁸⁷.

84. P.C., 2 March, 1851, No. 241, McCullock to Vincent, 13 Dec. 1851.

85. P.C., 26 Nov. 1852, No. 55, McCullock to Allen, 26 Oct. 1852.

86. Ibid., No. 56, Allen to McCullock, 26 November, 1852.

87. Chakravarty, B.C., op.cit., p. 86.

In March, 1854, a large Manipuri force, consisting of one thousand and five hundred soldiers, invaded the Angami country⁸⁸ and destroyed the Mozuma village and threatened to bring all the hills under complete subjugation. One of the causes of the invasion was that some of them had been guilty of plundering Naga villages within the territorial jurisdiction of the Government of Manipur⁸⁹. The Mozuma Nagas and other headmen, Heekalay and Nephoo, appealed to the Supreme Government for their protection from the Manipuris⁹⁰, but their request was turned down because the Supreme Council opined that Manipur, being an independent kingdom could act independently.

McCulloch induced the Angami Nagas to come down to Manipur and visit him. The latter obeyed him and thus he obtained certain amount of influence over them⁹¹. But after the Agent left the State, these Nagas were ill-treated by the Manipuris at the foot of their hills. They descended in a body on their tormentors, murdered some of them and carried off some as slaves. Chandrakirti Singh desired to send an armed body to punish the tribe. The Political Agent consented to the Raja's wish but held the view that the latter should ^{advise} order his soldiers not to kill women and children. Thus the Manipuri troops attacked the Angami Nagas and successfully drove them out of the territory of the State.

88. P.C., 5 May, 1854, No.63, Anand Ram Phukan to Jenkins, 21 March, 1854.

89. Ibid., Jenkins to Beadon, 24 March, 1854.

90. P.C., 25 May, 1855, Petition of Heekalay and Nephoo to the Agent to the Governor General, 2 January, 1855.

91. F.Polit. A.Progs., February, 1863, No.50, Dr.Dillon to Aitchison No.60, 20 Jan. 1863; Report of Manipur.

The aggressive attacks of the Manipuris on the Angami Nagas were a source of cruel irritation to those tribes, and their baneful effects, in most instances, extended to those Angamis who were under the protection of the British Government⁹². The Government of Manipur, was therefore, instructed to desist from acts of aggression on them, but was allowed to carry on trade provided it maintained friendly relations with the aforesaid Nagas⁹³. In spite of this, in 1863, Secumba, the Chief of the Konomah villages reported to the Supreme Government that a troop of Manipuri soldiers came and attacked his people and killed thirty two. The Supreme Council refused to interfere in his favour.

In 1863, one Mr. Monterio, a British subject of Portuguese extraction, had been killed near the village of Mao by one of the hill tribes who was under the general denomination of the Angamis⁹⁴. Monterio came to Manipur from Cachar with his wife and family. He was in the employment of Mr. Schiller, a Tea-Planter in Cachar. Before he left for Mao, Chandrakirti Singh warned him not to go there in the face of the turbulent nature of the hill tribes of that area, but he paid no attention. The village he went was within the boundary of Manipur

92. F. Polt. A. Progs., November, 1863, No. 11, P.A. to Secretary, No. 54, 20 May, 1863.

93. Ibid., No. 44, Dillon to officiating Secretary, 13 October 1863.

94. F. Polt. A. Progs., January 1864, No. 162, Beveridge to officiating Secretary, No. 2, 13 December, 1863.

but he never cared to take a pass from the Raja. But even if he had gone there with a pass from the Chief, it probably might have been of little use to him⁹⁵. On receipt of the news, Chandrakirti Singh made an immediate expedition against the above Nagas and H.Beveridge, the officer on Special Duty at Manipur, also accompanied him. When Beveridge reached Iao area, he made an enquiry in which he found out the fact that Monterio had about one thousand rupees in his possession, and it was for the possession of that money that the Naga was tempted to kill him. Schiller charged the Raja of Manipur for the murder of his agent⁹⁶ and appealed to the Supreme Government, but His Lordship in Council turned down his appeal and informed the Tea Planter that Chandrakirti Singh was in no way a party to the above murder⁹⁷.

In September, 1875 Fogmemah village in Manipur was attacked by the Angami Nagas of Popoolongmai, Konomah and Mozuma villages. Many of them were armed with muskets and two men and ten women were killed and four men wounded⁹⁸. On 31 January, 1876, another attack was made on Mukocolong village⁹⁹ and towards the end of October of same year Gwelong was once again attacked by a party of the Sereneah clan of Angami Nagas of Konomah Village¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁵. Ibid., Feb., 1864, No. 156, Memorial from Schiller to Secy. to the Govt. of India, 16 January, 1864.

⁹⁷. Ibid., Durand to Schiller, 19 February, 1864.

⁹⁸. Administrative Report of the Manipur Political Agency, 1875-76, p.2.

⁹⁹. Ibid.

¹⁰⁰. Ibid., 1877-78, p.10.

The Angami Nagas had long been considered powerful and warlike; and a threat from one of its members was almost a death sentence to a man from a weak village. Early next year Mozuma Nagas unfurled the standard of revolt against the British Government. On receipt of the news, Johnstone marched against the rebels with one hundred men of the 35th Native Infantry and a Manipuri force under Balam Singh¹⁰¹. Before his arrival news reached that the Manipuri Thanna at Kongal, in the Kabaw Valley, had been surprised by a party sent by the Raja of Samjok. Johnstone retreated to Manipur leaving behind major portion of his army to the aid of the Political Agent, Naga Hills, with instructions to stay in that frontier till peace and order was restored in the village. In the meantime, a delegation of the rebel Nagas came to Chandrakirti Singh and sought for the latter's aid against the British; the Raja declined and warned them that if they refused to ~~xxx~~ surrender to the British immediately a strong Manipuri force would be deployed against them¹⁰².

101. Johnstone, op.cit., p.99.

102. Ibid., p.102.

Troubles started afresh with the Angamis. On 14 October, 1879, Damant went to Merema Angamis of Kohima to try and enforce some demands on them. The Agent had long been informed that the tribe meant mischief and, therefore, several loyal Nagas had implored him not to go there. Finding him deaf to their entreaties they even begged him to proceed through the quarters of friendly Sememas of Kohima. Damant insisted on having his own way and went upto the gate of the Meremas¹⁰³; and while demanding an entrance, he was shot¹⁰⁴ death along with a large number of his followers. The Angamis invaded the administrative headquarters, killed a large number of the British subjects and besieged the remaining along with Cawley, the Assistant Political Agent, Naga Hills¹⁰⁴. On receipt of the news, Johnstone hastened to Kohima with an escort of 34th Bengal Infantry. Chandrakirti Singh extended his help both in men and money. He sent a force of two thousand Manipuri soldiers under the command of his eldest son Surachandra Singh, accompanied by Tikendrajit Singh and Thangal. On reaching Mao, near Kohima, Manipuri army found that the Angami rebellion had spread far and wide and anti-British feelings affected quite a large number of Naga villages in and around that area.

103. Ibid., p.157.

104. Ibid., p.150.

The arrival of reinforcement from Manipur had its immediate effect¹⁰⁵. Since then no major raids and counter-raids occurred in that frontier and friendly relation restored with the Angamis and continued till the end of the period under review. Johnstone writes : "It is difficult to over-estimate our obligation to the Maharaja for his loyal conduct during the insurrection and subsequent troubles The Nagas asked him to help them and promised to become his feudatories if only he would not act against them. The temptation must have been strong, at least to serve us as we deserved, by leaving us in the lurch to get out of the mess as best as we could. Instead of this, Chandrakirti Singh loyally and cheerfully places his resources at our disposal, and certainly by enabling me to march to its relief, prevented the fall of Kohima, and the disastrous result which would have inevitably followed."¹⁰⁶

THE CHUSSAD KUKIS :

The Kukis were a wandering race consisting of several tribes. In all probability they came from south Burma and had pushed their settlements as far as the Naga Hills. They came into Manipur in search of new homes. Though tribes of the same race had long been subject to the Raja

105. Ibid., p.174.

106. As quoted by J.Roy in his book 'History of Manipur', pp.99-100.

of Manipur, they were first heard as Kukis between 1830 and 1840. They were closely related to the Sooties or Kamhaws, but not so closely as to have prevented the usual tribal feuds, which made it unpleasant for them to live near to one another.¹⁰⁷ In order to avoid possible attacks from the Kamhaws, the Chussad Kukis left their homes in the south of the Valley of Manipur, and settled in the hills near the Kongal route to Burma.

Nar Singh and McCulloch, with great generosity and kindness won over and settled the early Kuki immigrants. As might be expected, jealousy sprung up in the minds of many of the Manipuri officials and when the Agent first established relations with the Chussads, effort was made to obstruct his arrangement. When the Chief of that tribe came to Manipur under safe conduct from the Political Agent, he was murdered by a high official, the brother-in-law of Chandra-kirti Singh¹⁰⁸. That abominable act alienated the Chussads, and though they settled near the Manipur Valley, they never appeared to have been satisfied with their lot and always complained against the oppressions, committed^{on} them, by the Manipuris. They, therefore, decided, in 1877, to leave the State for good. Their tributary off-shoots, the Chooneyangs,

107. F.A.Poltl.E., February 1883, No.175, Johnstone to Secretary to the C.C., Assam, 28 January 1882.

108. Ibid.

the Chungles, the Moonoyes and the Koomeyangs also followed them. The Choomeyangs went first from Manipur, and after crossing the Ungoching Range, They settled down in the ~~xxx~~ Burmese territories. The Chussad Kukis, thus settled in the area lying between the Chattik and the Kongal Thannas to the north and the south, and between Ungoching and the Malain Ranges to the west. Some of their villages, therefore, were in the area of the Kabaw Valley, in the territory of Burma. Tonghoo's Chussad, Pungong, Nowkeet, Koomeyang, Choomeyang, Chungle, Moonoye, Chunbo, Phunghe and Powchong villages were within the territory of Manipur; and Tookoopa, Waife and Chungse within the Burmese territory. Tonghoo was the Chief of all the above villages, but each village also had its own Chief.

During the early part of 1877 some inroads had been made into the territory of Manipur by small parties of this tribe and several Manipuris had been killed¹⁰⁹. After the Kongal outrage of 1877, the authority of Manipur was, for some time, not exercised on that frontier. Taking advantage of the situation, the Chussad Kukis became a terror to the peaceful Tangkhuls and Lahoopas in their neighbourhood. When the news reached Chandrakirti Singh, a strong force was immediately sent there to intercept their further advance.

109. Administrative Report of the Manipur Political Agency, 1877-78, p.11.

By the end of December 1879, it was reported that Tonghoo, at the instigation of the Sanjok Raja, declared himself to be independent of Manipur, but his revolt was suppressed.

Shortly after the above outrage, a raid was again committed, in February, 1880, by a party of Chussad Kukis, on a Chingsaw village, in the territory of Manipur¹¹⁰ in which forty five men of the village were murdered, three carried off as captives and the village itself burnt down to ashes. With a view to suppress the Chussad Kukis permanently, Chandra-kirti Singh desired to send an expedition against them. He, therefore, sought opinion from the Government of India. The latter concurred in the opinion of the Raja and Chandra-kirti Singh suppressed the Chussad Kukis. With the subjugation of the aforesaid tribes peace was restored to the frontiers of Manipur till the early decades of the twentieth century.

It is evident from the above that if strong military or police outposts had been located in the frontiers, and good communications established between the Capital and the border villages, much of the troubles that Manipur faced, during the period under review, could have been avoided and many of the innocent lives of women

110. F.Poltl.A.Progs., January 1882, Nos.1-2; Secretary, C.C., Assam to Secretary, Govt. of India, 31 March, 1880.

and children would have been saved. The ruling Chiefs of Manipur, however, learnt that the security of the State could not be assured without a powerful army backed by the British Government.

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CHAPTER VI

BRITISH PARAMOUNTCY IN MANIPUR

The last attempt to dispossess Chandrakirti Singh from the throne was made by one Irengba Thundangba, on 23 June, 1881¹. The latter announced himself to be the Raja of Manipur^{and} vested his followers with highest ranks. He collected a party of men in the neighbourhood of the salt wells at Nigel, Chandrakhong and Andro, in the eastern part of the valley of Manipur, and marched towards the Capital. The detachment that was sent under command of Balaram Singh and Samoo Singh succeeded in suppressing the rebels. The ring leader, including his followers, making a total of one hundred and seventy nine men, were taken captives; of these, eighteen were executed, ten imprisoned, nine sent to work in the salt springs and the rest were whipped and let off².

After a long reign^{of} thirty five years Chandrakirti Singh expired on 20 May, 1886³. He was a strong and capable ruler. He was of an inquisitive mind and had a great taste for mechanical arts of all kinds. In spite of all the difficulties he had confronted, he had consolidated his kingdom and brought about a series of reforming measures for the welfare of his subjects. However, his commitments to the British Government were not befitting to an independent ruler. From the very beginning he was entirely depended on them for what-

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1. F.Poltl.A.Progs., March 1882, Johnstone to Secretary, C.C., Assam, No.20, 25 January, 1882.
 2. F.Poltl.A.Progs., September 1881, No.12, Secretary, C.C., Assam to Secretary, Government of India, 8 August 1881.
 3. Ibid., August 1886, No.79, Secretary, C.C., Assam to Secretary, Government of India, 23 June 1886.

ever he did. His acceptance of presents⁴ and titles⁵ from the Government clearly indicates that his status was not different from other subordinate States under British Government. Johnstone writes : " at the entrance of the Capital I was met by the Maharaja himself, surrounded by all his sons. A carpet was spread with chairs for him and myself. After a day's rest I paid a visit to the Maharaja, having first stipulated as to my proper reception. I was received by the Jubaraja (heir apparent) at the entrance to the private part of the Palace and by the Maharaja a few paces from the entrance to the Darbar room (Hall of reception) I read the Viceroy's letter, informing the Maharaja of my appointment I took my leave and was escorted back to the place where I was met on my arrival"⁶. Whereas in the Court of Ava, the British Resident when attending Court had to remove his shoes and kneel before the King⁷.

Chandrakirti Singh had ten sons from his six queens. In accordance with his wishes, his four sons namely, Surachandra Singh, Kulachandra Singh, Fike³drajit Singh alias Koirang and Jhalakirti Singh, born of the first four queens in order of seniority, became the Maharaja, Jubaraja, Senanayak (Commander) and Senapati (Commander in-Chief) respectively.

4. A robe of honour, a sword and a belt as Mutiny rewards; a gold signet ring, a many-bladed knife, a silver medallion and a portrait of His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII; Annual Administrative Report of Manipur Political Agency, 1876 1875-76, p.9).

5. Knight Commander of the Star of India on 20 February, 1880; James, My Experiences in Manipur and Naga Hills, p.179.

6. Ibid., pp.66-67.

7. Mazumdar, R.C. etc., An Advanced History of India, p.838.

Of the three uterine brothers of Surachandra Singh, Bhairabjit Singh alias Paka Sana held the office of Sagolhanjaba (Commander of the Horse), Keshorjit Singh Shamuhanjaba (in-charge of elephants) and Padmalochan Singh Dolairoilhanjaba (in-charge of doolies). Prince Angou Sana, son of ^{the} fifth queen, was officer in-charge of roads and Zillangamba Singh was the A.D.C. to the Raja. From official records, it is not known whether Prince Gandhar Singh, son of the second queen and uterine brother of Kulachandra Singh, held any office. In all probability, he might have been a minor which debarred him from such an assignment. Jhalakirti Singh died within a few months and Tikendrajit Singh succeeded to his office of the Senapati.

Surachandra Singh was a weak ruler. He was more dependent upon the British Government than his father. He firmly believed that he could not rule even for a day without the latter's support. In his character and views he was entirely different from those of Tikendrajit Singh who had already distinguished himself by his own valour and military skill, and this made him the most powerful and prominent member of the Court. His ability and popularity drew the wrath of the British Political Agents, particularly Johnstone, who in 1888 prepared a list of his crimes, some of which were committed as far back as 1877 and 1881. The latter believed that the

S. F. Polt. A., June 1881, Nos. 28-30, Johnstone to Elliot, 7 May 1881.

presence of such a bold, resourceful and domineering prince would certainly be detrimental to the interest of British in Manipur.

Tikendrajit Singh was hostile to the British influence and he tried to convince the Raja that Manipur could exist independently without any support from an alien government. Tikendrajit Singh, however, realised that no useful purpose would be served by adopting a hostile attitude towards the British Government. He, therefore, remained friendly with the British authorities at Manipur.

The very day on which Chandrakirti Singh died, a prince commonly known as Barachauba with fifteen titular princes revolted⁹ at Buri Bazar, a place about seven miles from the Capital. When the news reached Surachandra Singh, he sent a party of two hundred sepoy's under the command of Shamu Singh to disperse them¹⁰. Barachauba, by that time, had collected about six hundred men from the neighbouring villages. An encounter took place between the two parties in which the rebels fell back to Heibi Makhong between Buri Bazar and Jai-pur. The Raja sent reinforcement of one thousand and five hundred sepoy's under the command of Tikendrajit Singh and General Phangal¹¹. The rebels were attacked and dispersed by *the troops* and one of the fifteen princes and ten followers were captured.

9. F.Extl.A.Progs., August 1886, No.179, Secy. to the C.C., Assam to Secy. to the Govt. of India, 23 June 1886.

10. Ibid., April 1887, No.207, C.Maculay to Secy. to the Govt. of India, 11 December 1886.

11. Ibid., No.210, Secy. to the C.C., Assam to Secy. Govt. of Indian, 3 January, 1887.

Shortly afterwards he made another attempt to seize the throne but was arrested and sent to Hazaribagh as a Political prisoner.¹²

Hardly had one year passed when Wangkheirakpa who was in-charge of the Tangkhul Nagas, unfurled the standard of revolt on 12 September, 1887¹³. Surachandra Singh sent a large force under his brother Tikendrajit Singh to suppress the revolt. By that time ^{Wangkheirakpa} ~~the latter~~ also collected a group of his followers and under cover of darkness he and his followers attacked the palace at about ten O'clock the same night and forced their way in. While attempting to make a rush at the gate of the Raja's private residence, Wangkheirakpa was killed in action along with his son and brother, and his revolt came to an end¹⁴.

PALACE REVOLT OF 1890 :

The death of Chandrakirti Singh was a signal for scramble for power amongst his sons who were divided into two groups - headed by Surachandra Singh and Kulachandra Singh. The enmity between the two was high-lighted by open rivalry between Tikendrajit Singh and Bhairabjit Singh, commonly known as Paka Sana. Bhairabjit Singh was an able and educated

12. Ibid.

13. F.Ext1.A.Progs., October 1887, No.235, Private to Secy. to the C.C., Assam, 13 September 1887.

14. Ibid., Confidential, 19 September 1887.

man. But according to the contemporary evidence he was mean and jealous of others, and as such, was never liked by his followers. He was the sworn enemy of Tikendrajit Singh since the day when the latter as Senapati became his superior officer. Mrs.Grimwood observed the relation between Paka Sana and Tikendrajit Singh as 'jealousies that the weak will ever have for the strong in whatever country or community it may be'¹⁵. The ill feeling between the two rose to its height when both asked for the hands of a girl, supposed to be the prettiest maid in Manipur. The Raja at first remained neutral and held the balance between the two but was gradually won over by Paka Sana. Besides, Surachandra Singh created a new judicial post and appointed Paka Sana as its head though the whole department of administration of justice was hitherto in-charge of the Jubaraaja. This made the relation between the Raja and Kulachandra Singh far from ^{being} cordial. By that time, Paka Sana also quarrelled with Angou Sana Singh and Zillangamba Singh over several issues, and at length Paka Sana got the Raja to forbid Zillangamba and Angou Sana Singh to sit in the Durbar. The two princes also lost some of their offices, rights and privileges, and had good reason to fear that they would either be banished or punished. The young princes lost no time in consulting their powerful brother and ally Tiken-drajit Singh. The result was that at the midnight of September 21, 1890, Angou Sana Singh and Zillangamba Singh accompanied

15. Mrs.Grimwood, My Three Years in Manipur, p.130.

by a number of attendants scaled the walls of the Zanana Mahal with the help of a ladder and proceeded towards the bed chamber of the Raja and began firing ~~the rifles~~ into the windows. The Maharaja had never much reputation for courage, and on this occasion instead of rousing his men to action and beating off the intruders he rushed out for safety at the back of the palace and fled to the Residency. Tikendra-jit Singh was not present at the time of this occurrence, but joined his two step brothers shortly afterwards; and the palace was occupied without any bloodshed. For reasons not definitely known Kulachandra Singh had left the palace on that very night, but returned in the morning and was proclaimed Raja. However, the movement of the Jubaraia suggested that he was aware of the coming revolution and decided to sit on the fence without compromising himself in any way so that if the revolution failed he could claim no part in the whole affair.

In the meantime, Surachandra Singh had found shelter in the Residency along with ~~with~~ his brothers, ministers and a number of armed retainers. The ex-Raja expected that Mr. Grimwood, the Political Agent, would help him to reclaim his position but to no purpose. From this moment, the relation between Surachandra Singh and the Political Agent has been a matter of keen controversy¹⁶. It is not easy to disentangle the truth from the conflicting versions of what actually took

16. Mazumdar, R.C., British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, p.171.

place on that eventful day¹⁷. Surachandra Singh reported that he had asked for the Political Agent's assistance and sanction to fight ^{the} rebels. But Grimwood denied and held the view that the former never asked ^{his approval} him for sanction to fight. By that time, the Chief Commissioner of Assam instructed the Political Agent to try to mediate between the parties. But before any decision could be taken, Surachandra Singh expressed his desire to leave Manipur and to go on a pilgrimage and settle at Brindaban, ~~in the United Provinces~~. Mrs. Grimwood writes: "My husband brought every argument to bear upon the Raja to induce him to brave the matters out and allow some efforts to be made to regain his throne; but he would not listen to any reason, and after some hours' spent in fear and terror signified his attention to my husband of making a formal abdication of the throne."¹⁸ After a careful study of the official ^{correspondence} records the Government of India expressed its view: "We consider that in his conduct of this affair the Political Agent showed some want to judgement. He should have exerted his influence more strongly to uphold the authority of the Maharaja and he should not have accepted the Maharaja's abdication, and allowed him to leave the State, without reference to the Government of India by whom Surachandra had been recognised as Chief of Manipur. A Political officer has no power to accept the abdication of a Native Chief. Mr. Grimwood's action greatly prejudiced the case and

17. Misc. papers, F. Sec. E. Progs., April 1891, Nos. 3-55, pp. 8-11.

18. Mrs. Grimwood, op. cit., p. 142.

was the cause of much subsequent trouble."¹⁹ "On the whole" it was added, "it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Grimwood for some reason or other was sympathetic to the new regime and unwilling to see Surachandra Singh restored to the throne. The latter seems to insinuate that this was due to Grimwood's friendship for Tikendrajit Singh."²⁰

Surachandra Singh, finally, made up his mind to go to Brindaban. He wrote a letter to this effect to Tikendrajit Singh informing him that he had no desire to contest the throne. He had also returned the royal dress and sword and other paraphernalia requesting him that preparation be made for his journey²¹. On completion of necessary arrangements by ^{Tikendrajit} Surachandra Singh left for Brindaban. The ministers who had accompanied him to the Residency returned to the Palace where they were all received by Kulachandra, who had meanwhile come back to Manipur and proclaimed himself Maharaja. The new Raja made Tikendrajit Singh his Jubaraia, Angou Sana Singh, the Senapati and Zillangaba Singh the Sagolhanjaba (Commander of the Horse) respectively. On 29 September, 1890 Kulachandra despatched letter to the Government of India announcing that he had ascended the throne in consequence of his elder brother's abdication²². The departure of the ex-Raja from Manipur for made the Palace Revolution completely successful without any bloodshed.

19. F.Sec.Ext1.E., October 1891, No.807, No.186 of 1891.

20. Misc.papers, F.Sec.S.Progs. April 1891, Nos.3-55, pp.8-11.

21. Mazumdar, R.C., op.cit., p.714.

22. F.Sec.Ext1.E., October 1891, No.300, No.186 of 1891.

It is evident from the above that the real cause of the Palace Revolt of 1890 was mutual jealousy amongst the brothers of Surachandra Singh. Kulachandra Singh who occupied the throne valued his newly acquired office more than ~~the~~ anything else. He agreed to keep three hundred British soldiers in the Residency and to administer Manipur according to the dictates of the British Political Agent. It seems that he was even prepared to give his consent to the exhumation of Tikendrajit Singh if the Political Agent so desired. Evidently, no anti-British feeling could be traced to this revolt. Everything went on smoothly, and freed from internecine strife, the new administration brought peace and prosperity which the country had never seen during the time of Surachandra Singh. Roads had been repaired, bridges were constructed and the people seemed to be happier and more contented²³. Greenwood himself did not take the Palace Revolution of 1890 seriously. He observed : "Manipur has witnessed many Palace revolutions - that of 1890 is merely a repetition."

DECISION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA :

Though the people of Manipur accepted ^{the new regime} ~~without demure~~ Surachandra Singh never gave up hope of recovering his kingdom.

23. Mrs. Greenwood, My Three Years in Manipur, pp.149-150.

At the time of the ex-Raja's departure from Manipur Grimwood gave him a permit in which it was stated that the former had voluntarily abdicated. Surachandra Singh had no knowledge of English and he came to know of it after he reached Cachar. He telegraphed to the Viceroy asking for help; "Just now opening Political Agent's pass learn that I abdicated, wholly untrue. Political Agent misunderstood me, shall submit full representation later on, solicit reconsideration and help."²⁴

At Silchar, Surachandra Singh wanted to meet the Chief Commissioner of Assam. But as the latter was then away from Silchar, the ex-Raja went to Calcutta and arrived there on 12 October, 1890; and on 14 November, he submitted a detailed statement to the Viceroy. The Government of India was not unwilling to restore Surachandra Singh to the throne, but Grimwood strongly objected to such a course of action ~~being taken and pointed out~~ ^{in consideration of} the difficulties which the Government would have to face if the ex-Raja was allowed to return to Manipur. The Chief Commissioner of Assam also concurred in the opinion of the Political Agent. The Government of India, however, expressed considerable doubt as to whether the course recommended was advisable; and observed that if they acquiesced in the coming to power of Kulachandra Singh, Tikendrajit Singh, a man who was known to be hostile to the British, would be the power behind the throne. In view of the difference of opinion between the Government of India on the one hand and the Chief Commissioner and the Political Agent on the other, there was

24. Correspondence relating to Manipur, 1891, p.8.

on the subject

a prolonged discussion. After a good deal of correspondence, the Government of India issued its final order, in February 1891, to the effect that Kulachandra Singh would be recognised as the Raja of Manipur if he agreed to the following conditions : (a) he should allow the Political Agent to keep 300 soldiers in the Residency, (b) he should administer the country according to the advice of the Political Agent and (c) he should agree to the exentment of Tikendrajit Singh from Manipur and help the British Government in this respect.²⁵ Lord Lansdowne, the then Governor-General of India, believed that Kulachandra Singh would agree to all these proposals. At the same time, Surachandra Singh was informed that he would not be restored to his throne; but he would be allowed to reside at a place selected by the Government, receiving only a pension. "The decision of the Government of India" R.C. Mazumdar writes, "to say the least of it is very curious. It accepted the revolution as a fait accompli and condoned the person who got the greatest benefit of it, but banished another who was not known to have been taken any actual part in it but whom they held without any positive evidence as its chief instigator."²⁶ ~~It is curious to note that~~ Though Tikendrajit Singh had every chance of occupying the throne, he never attempted to overstep his elder brother Kulachandra Singh. In all probability he supported the cause of the rebels not for his personal gain but because of his hostility

25. Mazumdar, R.C., op.cit., p.717.

26. Mazumdar, R.C., ibid.

to Surachandra Singh, who was always sympathetic to the cause of his uterine brothers. Kulachandra Singh who derived the greatest benefit was allowed to enjoy his ill gotten gain and the Senapati was singled out for punishment, though according to all evidence it was his younger brothers who made the coup.

Nonetheless, the Government of India suggested that the decision about Manipur should be kept a close secret until it was announced by Mr. Quinton, the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The latter was advised to take sufficient force with him even though no resistance was apprehended. The Chief Commissioner left Calcutta on 21 February 1891, and started for Manipur from Golaghat on 7 March by the Kohima route with an escort of four hundred Gurkha soldiers under the command of Colonel Skene and a few civilians. An additional body of two hundred Gurkhas was directed to proceed from Cachar to Manipur.

Quinton's intention was to require Kulachandra Singh and Tikendrajit Singh to meet him at a Durbar on his arrival to announce the decision of the Governor-General and to arrest the latter prince and take him away into exile in India. The Government of India concurred in the plan of the Chief Commissioner mainly because they took the Durbar as a meeting between the Raja and his courtiers²⁷. On 21 March 1891, Grimwood went to Sekmai, twelve miles from the Capital, to meet the Chief Commissioner and only then he came to know about the

27. F. Sec. Extl. Oct. 1891, No. 300, No. 186 of 1891, Final Report on Manipur Rebellion from the Viceroy to the Secy. of State, 14 October 1891, para 16; Tele. from Viceroy to Secy. of State, June 5, 1891.

plan to arrest Tikendrajit Singh. The visit of Quinton caused great consternation in Manipur as it was generally believed that he was bringing Surachandra Singh with him in order to restore him to the throne. This eventuality was anticipated to the authorities in the Capital of Manipur and preparations were made to resist the ex-Raja should he return to Manipur.

QUINTON'S PLAN :

Quinton arrived at the Capital on the morning of March 22, 1891, and the Durbar was scheduled to be held on the same day. The Chief Commissioner asked Kulachandra Singh to attend it with all his brothers. In the meanwhile the doors of the Durbar ^{hall} ~~room~~ were all closed with the exception of the front door and guards were stationed in the adjoining rooms and also around the Residency²⁸. According to Mrs. Grimwood, the Head Clerk of the Agency, ^{namely} Rashik Lal Kundu was engaged to translate the orders of the Government of India into Manipuri. Before the translation was completed, Kulachandra Singh and all his brothers arrived at the Residency gate at the appointed hour. There was no one at the gate to receive them. Besides, they were not allowed to go beyond it and thus kept waiting at the gate before the translation was completed. Mrs. Grimwood rightly observed that if the princes were not kept waiting at the gate, things might have ended differently.

28. Mrs. Grimwood, op.cit., pp.182-183.

While Tikendrajit Singh was standing at the gate he was informed as to the arrangements of guards posted at different corners in the Residency. The former, who already had some suspicion about the motive of the Chief Commissioner, was convinced that the Durbar was only a trap to arrest him, and, Therefore, ^{he} left for the Palace along with prince Angu Sana Singh. When the translation was ready, the Chief Commissioner was not prepared to have the Durbar without Tikendrajit Singh²⁹. He refused even to see the Maharaja without Tikendrajit Singh. Grimwood, persuaded Kulachandra Singh to send for the latter; but the messenger came back with the information that Tikendrajit Singh was too ill to leave the Palace. Accordingly, the Durbar was adjourned till 8 A. M. of the following day.

Next day, at the appointed hour, a message reached from Kulachandra Singh that Tikendrajit Singh could not attend the Durbar as he was indisposed³⁰. After the failure of his plan to capture Tikendrajit Singh in the Durbar Hall, Quinton decided to send Grimwood, along with another officer Mr. Simpson, to the Palace and communicate to the Raja the decision of the Government of India. With this object in view, the Political Agent and Simpson left the Residency at about 4 P.M. of the 23rd March and communicated decision of the Government to Kulachandra Singh. The latter expressed his appreciation for the recognition accorded to him, but expressed his inability to arrest and hand over Tikendrajit

29. Ibid., pp.184-186.

30. Ibid., p.190.

Singh. However, when Grimwood sought an interview with Tikendrajit Singh he was allowed to meet him, but to no purpose.

On the failure of his plans, Quinton was much aggrieved. He decided to arrest Tikendrajit Singh on the same night by suddenly invading the Palace. He called a secret meeting of the military officers and expressed his desire to effect the arrest of the prince by force. Though the officers were rather hesitant in view of the paucity of British troops in Manipur at that precise moment, the will of the Chief Commissioner ultimately prevailed. He ordered Lieutenant Brackenbury, Captain Butcher and Lieutenant Lugard to seize Tikendrajit Singh at his Palace.

Accordingly, at about 3-30 A.M. the British troops made a surprise attack on Tikendrajit Singh³¹. Not finding the latter in his house the raiders killed some of the guards and other inmates of the house, seized the household god³² called Brindabanchandra and the jewels dedicated to the deity. Another body of the troops entered the village lying east of the Palace and burnt down ten or twelve houses.

The Chief Commissioner's attack on the Senapati's residence changed the whole situation. It threw Tikendrajit Singh on the ^{de}offensive. To save the lives of the excited subjects he took up arms³³, and fighting continued for the whole day. At night fall, the British troops had exhausted

31. Progs. of the Indian Historical Records Commission, Vol. XXXV; Appeal to the Governor-General in Council by the ladies of the Royal family of Manipur.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

all their ammunitions. The hope of arresting Tikendrajit Singh was long given up; even the safety of so many lives at the Residency appeared to be in great peril. When the position of British troops thus became extremely critical they sounded the bugle. Though the Manipuris were in a position of vantage and under no obligation to cease fire, they did so without any parley. This showed that the Manipuris were not inspired by their thirst for vengeance upon the British for their treacherous attack in the morning³⁴.

Quinton wrote to Kulachandra Singh proposing a cessation of hostilities: "On what condition will you cease fire on us and give us time to communicate with the Viceroy and repair the telegraph?"³⁵ Shortly a message came from the latter stating that "I had never any intention to fight with you, but as your troops attacked the Palace my men had to fight in self defence. There is none in my Palace who can read and understand English. But as I received your letter immediately after cease fire I take it that you want to conclude peace. If your soldiers give up arms I shall conclude peace with you in a moment."³⁶ On receipt of this letter, the Chief Commissioner wanted to discuss about the terms directly with Kulachandra Singh and Tikendrajit Singh for further clarification. With this object in view Quinton, Colonel Skene, Mr. Cossins, Lieutenant Simpson and Greenwood went to the Palace

34. Mrs. Greenwood, op.cit., p.216.

35. Ibid., pp.214-215.

36. As quoted by Mazumdar in British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, p.725.

along with a Gurkha bugler³⁷ without seeking safe conduct either from Tikendrajit Singh or Kulachandra Singh.

In the Palace, the British officers and the Manipuris could not arrive at a final decision as to the terms of the agreement. By that time a large crowd, including some soldiers, were anxiously waiting outside to know the result of the conference. Tikendrajit insisted upon the British officers surrendering their arms. He said : "Your conduct has made us afraid. So unless you give up arms we cannot rely on your oral assurances," but the latter refused. On the failure of negotiations, Tikendrajit asked his brother Angou Sana Singh to escort the British officers and see them safely out while he himself returned to the Top-Garod. While coming out of the Palace the British officers were attacked by the excited crowd. Though Angou Sana Singh tried to save them Grimwood was speared to death and Lieutenant Simpson was struck on the head with a sword and wounded severely. To save the remaining officers, Jatra Singh, a store-keeper of the Raja, at once forced open the door of the Durbar Hall and put them inside. On hearing the noise, Tikendrajit Singh personally came to the place, and at his instance some guards were posted around the Hall for their protection.

By that time Thangal³⁸ also came to the spot and had a long discussion with Tikendrajit about the fate of the British officers. The former pointed out that since the afore-

37. Mrs.Grimwood, op.cit., p.217.

38. General Thangal was one of the important ministers of the State. For some time he was minister, Burnese affairs. He occupied a high position in the Court of Manipur.

said officers were guilty of waging war against the Government of Manipur they should be punished, but the latter held a different view. In the course of their discussion Tikendrajit fell asleep out of sheer exhaustion. Availing of the opportunity Thangal, called in Yeng Karba (Yeng Khoiba), the Chief orderly, and told him that Tikendrajit Singh had ordered that the British officers be handed over to the executioner. Accordingly, they were chained and beheaded by the public executioner. The Gurkha bugler who accompanied them was also not spared. As Quinton and his party did not come and the firing from the Palace began, everybody in the British Residency thought that all chances of peace had gone and the Chief Commissioner and his party must have been arrested. There was no question of defending the Residency, because the British troops had exhausted their ammunition including the usual reserve ammunition kept in the Government Treasury and subsequently Mrs. Grimwood and a few British officers with two hundred Gurkha soldiers left the Residency on the night of 25 March, 1891. Orders were issued to all the Police outposts at Bishenpur, Leimatak and Khoubum to check their escape; Mrs. Grimwood was to be spared. Mr. Melville, the then Superintendent of Telegraphs, who came to Manipur and left the State on 23 March, 1891, was pursued and killed at Mayangkhang, on the Imphal-Dimapur Road, along with Mr. O'Brien, his companion. But Mrs. Grimwood and her party effected their escape and reached Cachar by the old Cachar route.

The manner in which Quinton handled the situation was a subject of considerable controversy both in England and in India, especially in respect of his action in inviting the Senapati (i.e., Tikendrajit Singh) to the Durbar with the intention of arresting him. Lord Lansdowne supported the Chief Commissioner. He reported to the Secretary of State :

"..... It is the right and duty of the British Government to settle succession in subordinate Native States Manipur is a subordinate Native State. We render it independent of Burma. We have recognised successions in Manipur and have asserted suzerainty in many ways we could not permit a revolt against a chief recognised by us to remain wholly successful and unpunished and virtual authority in Manipur to pass into the hands of Senapati the real leader of the revolution of September 1890 Under the circumstances we decided that Senapati should be removed from the State As to the merits of Quinton's proposed action (the decision to arrest the Senapati in a Durbar) there was certainly nothing unusual in announcing our orders in a formal Durbar, including the order for removal of Senapati"³⁹ The British Government, though lending their support to the policy of the Government of India and exonerating Quinton from any imputation of treachery, condemned the Chief Commissioner for summoning the Manipuri Princes to the Durbar which was almost universally understood to be held for ceremonial purposes only⁴⁰.

39. Viceroy's Telegram to the Secy. of State, 5 July, 1891.

40. Secretary of States' Despatch No.9, 24 July, 1891.

The reason for the contemplated removal of Tikendrajit Singh was his suspected complicity in the Palace Revolt of 1890. Quinton did not explain it to the Senapati before 23 March, 1891. The Chief Commissioner, therefore, blundered seriously in the mode of executing the decision of the Government of India. The internment of Tikendrajit Singh was also not for life, because His Lordship in Council held the view that he should be given an allowance and be permitted to return to Manipur and succeed to the throne after the death of Kulachandra Singh. The Chief Commissioner did not convey this decision to Tikendrajit Singh in time; on the contrary, he made an unprovoked attack on the house of the latter, killed the guards and other inmates and burnt down the adjoining villages. Evidently, had Quinton arrested Tikendrajit Singh in a more straight forward way, perhaps, the disaster of 1891 could have been averted.

MANIPUR WAR OF 1891 :

The news of the murder of the Chief Commissioner and his party was reported to Lieutenant Grant, who was by that time posted at Tamu, by a Jenadar of the Gurkha Rifles from Manipur⁴¹. On receipt of the news, Grant wired the Government of India to this effect and he himself marched towards Imphal on 28 March 1891 with fifty soldiers of the 12 Madras Infantry and thirty of the 42nd Gurkha Rifles. His advance was intercepted by a strong Manipuri force at Thoubal,

41. Grant's own narrative reproduced by Mrs. Grimwood in her book, *My Three Years in Manipur*, pp. 289-315.

fourteen miles from the Capital. While making a serious encounter with the latter, Grant received a communication from the Government of India to withdraw his force and to await further reinforcements of British troops from Burma⁴².

Accordingly, he began to retreat; but he was followed and attacked by the Manipuris. The timely arrival of Major Leslie and Cox with four hundred Gurkhas and two mountain guns, however, saved him from total destruction. The British troops drove Manipuri sepoys and stockaded themselves at Palel, twenty six miles from the Capital, till the arrival of General Graham, the Commander of the Tamu Column.

When the news reached the Government of India, three Columns of British troops were immediately sent to Manipur from Kohima on the north, Silchar on the west and Lamu on the south. General Collett was appointed as the overall Commander of the whole operation and the Kohima Column was led directly by him.

On receipt of the news of the advance of British troops the Manipuris inside and outside the State became agitated and felt greatly concerned over the fate of the State. The Manipuris in Cachar, Dacca, Shillong, Golaghat, Nabadwip and other places in and around Assam tried to enter the State and fight in defence of the ruling family. However, before any help from them could reach Manipur General Collett's soldiers entered the Capital without any opposition. Shortly

42. Shakespear, Colonel, History of the Assam Rifles, pp.178-180.

after it the troops from Cachar also converged on the Capital. The only serious opposition to the march of the British troops on Manipur was offered at Palel under the command of Major General Paona Brajabasi⁴³. On 23 April, 1891, a decisive battle was fought at Khongjom, near Palel, in which the Manipuris were utterly defeated. When this news reached the Capital, Tikendrajit Singh volunteered to advance towards Khongjom. But the War Council, headed by Kulachandra, did not approve of his leaving the Capital at that critical moment. The local sources suggest that he went underground and planned to seek help from China against the British. With this object in view, he went upto the Chussad Kuki villages and sought asylum there. The British troops, in the meantime, assembled at the Palace and hoisted, on 27 April, 1891⁴⁴ the Union Jack over the Capital.

THE TRIAL :

Before the fall of the Capital, Kulachandra Singh, General Thangal, along with others went underground. General Collett set up a price upon their heads and by 23 May, 1891 some of them were arrested and others surrendered voluntarily. When the news reached the Chussad Kukis, they betrayed Tikendrajit Singh. The latter came down to the Valley and surrendered voluntarily to Khelendra Subadar, a Manipuri Police Officer.

43. The memorial stone of Major General Paona Brajabashi at Khebaching, 19 miles to the south of Manipur records : "Major General Paona Brajabasi, age 58 years, the valiant Hero of Manipuri died for Fatherland on Thursday, the 23rd April, 1891 Superhuman in battle devoted unto death."

44. Reid, Sir Robert, History of Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam, p.58.

After the surrender of Tikendrajit Singh the Government of India set up a Special Tribunal with two military officers and one Civil Officer under the Presidentship of Lieutenant Colonel St. John Mitchel to try Kulachandra Singh, Tikendrajit Singh and Angou Sana Singh. They were charged with (1) waging war against the Empress of India; (2) abetment to the murder of four British officers and (3) murder. The Tribunal did not allow the accused to produce lawyers from outside the State. Tikendrajit Singh appointed one Janaki Nath Basak, a resident of Imphal, who in his own admission said that he was not a lawyer and never had any experience of how criminal trials were conducted. Thus fifteen witnesses were examined on behalf of the prosecution and six for the accused persons⁴⁵. The Tribunal found Tikendrajit Singh guilty on the first and second count and not guilty on the third; he was sentenced to death. Kulachandra Singh and Angou Sana Singh were found guilty of waging war against the Queen Empress and both of them were sentenced to death⁴⁶. Thangal, Niranjan Subadar, an ex-soldier of the 34th Native Infantry, and Kajao, who actually killed Mr. Grimwood were tried and found guilty and were sentenced to death and the other thirteen accused persons were sentenced to transportation for life.

It is not unlikely that the Government of India had already decided upon the punishment to be meted out and the Tribunal sat only for the sake of legal formality. Both Kulachandra Singh and Tikendrajit Singh appealed to the Governor-

45. Mamundar, op.cit., p.729.

46. Ibid., pp.732-739.

General against the decision of the Tribunal, but they were allowed to submit written petition only. Man Mohan Ghosh, a Barrister from Calcutta, filed the written petition on behalf of Kulachandra Singh, Tikendrajit Singh and the other accused. Ghosh contended that the British forces had attacked the house of Tikendrajit Singh and the palace of Manipur without a formal declaration of war and the palace guards had returned the fire in self-defence. Regarding the charge of murder, he also pointed out that definite responsibility of issuing the order had not been assessed beyond doubt either upon Kulachandra Singh or Tikendrajit Singh. "As regards the charge of abetment of murder" Ghosh further contended that "the evidence adduced by the prosecution entirely fails to establish the complicity of the Jubaraja, and that, on the contrary, there is enough on the record to raise a strong presumption in his favour, that he was entirely opposed to the murder of the British officers, and that the orders of the Fongol (Thangal) General were carried out in spite of his protests and without his knowledge."⁴⁷

The Governor-General, nevertheless, confirmed the death sentences passed on Tikendrajit Singh, Thangal, Niranjana and Kajao and commuted the sentences of Kulachandra Singh and Angou Sana to transportation of life^{47a}. The order was announced on August 13, 1891 and in the evening of the same

47. As quoted by R.C. Mazumdar in his book, British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, p.738.

47a. Home Pub.B, August 1891, No.53, Foreign Secretary to Collett, Tele.No.1603E, 10 August 1891.

day Tikendrajit Singh, Phangal, Niranjan and Kajao were publicly hanged in the Polo ground. Kulachandra Singh and Angou Sana were taken out of Manipur and deported to Andaman along with the other thirteen accused persons.

The trial of the Manipuri princes by the Special Tribunal is open to severe criticism. Article 2, of the Treaty of Yandaboo did not define very clearly the exact status of Manipur; there was no subsequent treaty to indicate that it was a vassal state either of Burma or the British. Theoretically, the British Government had no suzerainty over Manipur, but the State acted as a subordinate ally. However, this position was not "based in legal right but from the natural right of the strong over the weak fortified by the prerogatives of a Paramount Power, a role assumed by the British in India since 1818"⁴⁸. No doubt a certain amount of protection under certain conditions were entered into in certain treaties but it does not mean that Manipur was a vassal State of the British Government in the true sense of the term. In clause 7, of the Agreement of 18 April, 1833 it was laid down that "in the event of anything happening on the eastern frontier of the British territories the Raja (of Manipur) will assist the British Government with a portion of his troops." Jan Mohan Ghosh, in his appeal, again pointed out that "in 1865

48. Mazumdar, R.C., op.cit., p.733.

and again in 1867 the High Court of Calcutta held that the Raja of Manipur was an Asiatic sovereign in alliance with the Queen."⁴⁹

The accused persons were, therefore, "not British subjects and the Tribunal set up by the Government of India had no jurisdiction to try them, and the section of the Indian Penal Code under which they were charged with waging war against the Queen was not applicable to them." Moreover, the judges who tried the case, including Lieutenant Colonel St. John Mitchell himself, had no legal training, and had no knowledge of judicial procedure to be followed during the criminal trial. Partha Singh, who acted as the interpreter had no knowledge of English. He translated the Manipuri version of the depositions of the witnesses into Urdu and Major Maxwell, who conducted the case on behalf of the Government translated it again into English. There were, therefore, a series of mistakes and omissions in noting down the depositions of the witnesses. Jatra Singh in his evidence said : "As soon as Jubaraja (Tikendrajit) began to talk with Thangal about the order said to have been given by the General (Thangal) to kill the Sahibs (Quinton and his party), I came away without waiting to learn what reply the Jubaraja made to the General."⁵⁰ But the Special Court recorded as "Jubaraja did not say anything." Similarly, Usurba Singh in his deposition said : "Jubaraja told Thangal that the Sahibs must

49. Ibid., p.734.

50. As quoted by Mazumdar, R.C., op.cit., p.736.

not be killed on any account."⁵¹ But this was not recorded by the Court. Since Janaki Nath Basak, who was not a lawyer and who never had any experience of how criminal trials were to be conducted, could not cross examine the witnesses and no pleader from outside the State was allowed to engage in the trial, the real facts of the case could not be brought before the Court.

Tikendrajit Singh had to pay extreme penalty not because he was waging ~~xx~~ a war against the ^{Queen} Government of India but because of his domineering personality, something, which the British Government could not tolerate in any native ruler⁵². This was revealed by the Under Secretary of State for India in his speech in the British Parliament. After referring to his ability, good character and popularity of Tikendrajit Singh he expressed, "Governments have always hated and discouraged independent and original talent, and they have always loved and promoted docile and unpretending mediocrity. This is not a new policy. It is as old as Tarquinus Superbus; and although in these modern times we do not lop or cut off the heads of the tall poppies, we take other and more merciful means of reducing any person of dangerous pre-eminence to a harmless condition."⁵³

51. A Ibid.

52. Mazumdar, R.C., op.cit., p.731.

53. Speech by Sir John Gorst, Under Secy. of State for India, in the Manipur Debate in the House of Commons on June 16, 1891, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates Series 3, Vol.354, p.567.

The trial of the Manipuri princes hardly deserves to be called a trial and the punishment meted out to Tikendrajit Singh had been regarded by many as judicial murder. The authority which the British Government undoubtedly exercised over Manipur was, therefore, not based on any legal right but was mainly derived from the natural right of the strong over the weak. Man Mohan Ghosh observed : "..... having regard to the nature of the tribunal and the manner in which the trial was conducted, the accused belonging to the royal family of Manipur were practically undefended and had not received any fair and impartial trial which the humblest British subject would have claimed as a 'matter of right'. The trial, naturally, created a great sensation in all ^{over} Assam and Bengal. In a letter to Lord Cross, the then Secretary of State for India on 8 and 10 August, 1891⁵⁴, even Her Majesty Queen Victoria expressed Her sincere regret on the death sentence passed on Tikendrajit Singh. Captain Hearsey, a Military official of the ~~mt~~ time, rightly observed : "The trial of the accused princes had been one of the most outrageous farces and parodies of justice that have ever yet been exhibited to the Indian nation."⁵⁵

With the execution of Tikendrajit Singh Manipur lost her independence and the Government of India appointed Chura-chand Singh, son of Chowbi Yaima and a great grandson of Nar Singh, a boy of five, as the Raja of the State and a

54. From the letters of Queen Victoria, as quoted by Iazumdar in his book British Paramountcy etc., pp.738-39.

55. Hearsey, A.H., Manipur, p.7.

Sanad was given to him to this effect. The Sanad provided that⁵⁶ (1) he (Churachand Singh) would get the title of the Raja of Manipur and a salute of eleven guns : (2) the Chiefship of Manipur, the title and salute would descend in his family according to the law of primogeniture, provided the succession was approved in each case by the Government of India : (3) the permanence conferred by the Sanad was subject to ready fulfilment by him and his successors of all orders of the British Government regarding the administration of the State, the hill tribes, the armed forces of the State and any other matter in which the British Government might be pleased to intervene : (4) so long as his House was loyal to the Crown and faithful to the conditions of the Sanad, he and his successors would get the protection and favour of the British Government. The Sanad provided for the complete subordination of the Manipur State, and for the payment of a yearly tribute, which was fixed in 1892 at Rs 50,000 payable from 2 August, 1891⁵⁷. And for the treacherous attack on British officers a fine of Rs 2,50,000 was also imposed in 1892 and this was allowed to be paid off in five yearly instalments. Thus, the year 1891 marked a turning point in the history of Manipur. Whatever might be his earlier status, under the Sanad, the Raja was relegated to the position of a tributary vassal.

56. See Appendix G.

57. Notification No. 1862-E, Govt. of India, Foreign Dept., Aitchison, Treaties etc., Vol. II, p. 269.

Hereafter, he could not wage war nor negotiate peace with any power without the consent and approval of the British Government. Even in his internal administration and in relations with neighbouring hill tribes he was subjected to the supervision of the British Political Agent, permanently stationed at Imphal. Any maladministration or oppression on his part was sure to be visited with serious consequences. The Sanad of the year 1891, thus, established British Paramountcy in Manipur.

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Appendix-G

The Sanad given to Churachand Singh, son of Chowbiyaima and great grandson of Raja Nar Singh of Manipur (Notification No.1862-E, 18 September, 1891) :

"With reference to the notification in the Gazettee of India No.1700E, dated 21st August, 1891, regarding the regrant of Manipuri State, it is hereby notified that the Governor General in Council has selected Churachand, son of Chowbiyaima, and great grandson of Raja Nar Singh of Manipur, to be the Raja of Manipur.

The Sanad given to Churachand is published for general information.

The Governor General in Council has pleased to select you, Chura Chand, son of Chowbi Yaima, to be Chief of the Manipur State; and you are hereby granted the title of Raja of Manipur and a salute of eleven guns.

The Chiefship of the Manipur State and the title and salute will be hereditary in your family, and will descend in the direct line by primogeniture, provided that in each case the succession is approved by the Government of India.

An annual tribute, the amount of which will be determined hereafter will be paid by you and your successors to the British Government.

Further you are informed that the permanence of the grant conveyed by this Sanad will depend upon the ready fulfilment by you and your successors of all orders given by

the British Government with regard to the administration and your territories, the control of the hill tribes dependent upon Manipur, the composition of the armed forces of the State, and any other matters in which the British Government may be pleased to intervene. Be assured that so long as your House is loyal to the Crown and faithful to the conditions of this Sanad you and your successors will enjoy favour and protection of the British Government."

CHAPTER VII

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND MATERIAL PROGRESS

Monarchy was the prevalent form of Government in Manipur. The Raja was the pivot of the whole system. He was the owner of the land and also the master of his subjects. The general belief among the Manipuris was that no man outside the ruling family could be the Raja. Complaints of any kind - whether miscarriage of justice or maladministration could be made to the Raja ^{at} any moment. He was the executive, legislative and judicial head of the State. The administration was conducted by a regular hierarchy of officials who were in-charge of various departments. They did not exceed their authority, but carried out their respective duties according to the Raja's orders. The brothers or the sons of the reigning chief held the offices; the eldest son was the Jubaraja or heir apparent to the throne; the next to that was the Senapati (Commander in-Chief); then came the Kotwal or head of the Police, the Sagol Hanjaba or master of the horses, the Samu Hanjaba or master of the elephants and the Dolaroi Hanjaba or master of coolies.

For general administration, the whole country was divided into four parts called the 'Pana' viz., the Khabam Pana, the Ahallup Pana, the Naharup Pana and Laipham Pana. The Panas were kept under the charge of a separate minister.

There were also other ministers in-charge of the Angons, the Moirangs, the Luangs and the Khumans, the small principalities in Manipur which were formerly supposed to be independent with honorary title of 'Ningthou' or 'Raja'. Besides, the Raja appointed a separate revenue minister and another minister in-charge of the Royal granary. It is not unlikely that these ministers formed the Council of Ministers and discharged their duties in the day to day administration of the State. These ministers also acted as Raja's Councillors, but the latter on important occasions consulted and took advice from his chief Councillor 'the Ningthou Ngamba Angamba' or 'the person who can check the whims of the Raja'. The Ningthou Ngamba Angamba had by law no authority to issue order, but it was his duty to advise the Raja if and when that was considered necessary. He had a certain number of men to work for him and no officer of the Government had any jurisdiction over him. This dignified office was not a hereditary one. The Raja could appoint any man or change them at his pleasure.

The village administration was carried on by the local clubs known as the 'Singlup' or wood clubs. Like the Panchayats, these clubs exercised general control over the villages and adjudicated in petty cases. The hill administration was kept in a completely different footing; mainly because the boundaries of Manipur never enclosed cultural unity; the population consisted of different ethnic groups

under varying degrees of the authority of the Raja. Administration in the hill was entrusted to the head man—or the Khullakpa of each tribe. The Khullakpas had to attend the Court once a year only. The hill administration was, therefore, under a loose control and each Khullakpa was a Raja in his own village. The hillmen were required to render personal service to the Raja, but those in the interior paid a house tax of Rs 2/- each.

The Raja of Manipur had no direct hand in the administration of his country. His ministers and other officers, had ample opportunities to oppress the weak or innocent. Even when he knew of cases of oppression, the Raja could not check the offenders individually or collectively for fear of a probable threat of revolt from them. This was because the aspirants to the throne always watched for all possible support to overthrow the reigning Chief. If one or two ministers of the State joined hands with any of the pretenders, it was a sufficient threat to the guddi. This considerably weakened the Raja's control over the ministers and other dignitaries causing thereby serious maladministration in the State.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS :

Immediately after his accession, Gambhir Singh, realised the paramount importance of consolidating his kingdom firstly by remaining as a friendly ally of the British Government and secondly^{by} overhauling the administrative struc-

ture. Besides the four Panas which existed before, the villages near and around the Capital were divided into four more divisions viz., the Khwai, the Yaiskul, the Wangkhei and the Khurai divisions and each one was placed under the charge of a prince. Examining the growing importance of the Burmese affairs, a separate office was created under a minister called the Aya Pural or the minister in-charge of the Burmese affairs.

The succession laws of Manipur always left room for disputed succession, since all the sons of the reigning Chief had equal right to succeed to the throne. Chandrakirti Singh who had himself experienced it, desired that succession after him should be settled in favour of his eldest son Surachandra Singh¹. But, he did not agree to the idea of introducing the law of primogeniture in Manipur during his life time². The Government of India respected the wishes of the old Raja and declared publicly the appointment of Surachandra Singh as his successor³.

MILITARY REORGANIZATION :

The Raja of Manipur had always to confront with enemies, within and without. He was, therefore, required to maintain a strong army to meet any emergency. Every able-bodied man, in Manipur, from sixteen to sixty years of age

1. F.Poltl.A., January 1881, Nos.115-116.

2. Ibid., April 1881, Nos.302-306.

3. F.Sec.E., August 1886, Nos.811-815.

serve as a soldier for a prescribed period.

The army consisted of two branches, the Cavalry and Infantry. The Manipuri Cavalry was famous for its chivalry. They received extensive as well as intensive training in the use of 'dao', besides spear, swords, bows and arrows. In addition they resorted to a type of weapon known as 'Arambai'⁴. Each horseman had two quivers full of these 'Arambais' fixed on either side of his saddle. In pursuing the 'Arambai' was thrown in front and in retreating behind to impede the enemy. As regards the Infantry, since the soldiers were recruited under the 'Lalup System', they received limited training for ten days in every forty days.

The soldiers received no pay except two or three acres of rent-free land per head. This was not sufficient to give them two-square meals a day. On the other hand, besides their military duties, they were employed in building houses, in constructing bridges, in cutting timber and in various other ways all the year round without any pay or allowances for the extra work they performed. No wonder, therefore, they plundered villages and extorted money whenever an opportunity presented itself.

4. This 'Arambai' was consisted of two parts - the outer one was formed of long quills of peacock feathers bound together so as to form a narrow cylinder. At one end was fastened a heavy pointed piece of iron into the sheath thus formed a bamboo rod was placed, projecting outwards about five inches and forming a handle, to this handle, to give a better hold, a piece of cord was attached. In using them the handle of the person's rod which fitted the sheath flung leaving the bamboo core in the hand : the heavy iron on the point made the Arambai fly true.

The Anglo-Burmese War brought about remarkable changes in the organisation and discipline of the Manipuri Army. The Manipur Levy, trained and disciplined by British officers not only used modern arms but also received regular pay from the British Government. Even after the withdrawal of British support, the sepoys of the Levy served under the 'Lalup System'. As early as 1836 Colonel McCulloch suggested to the Government of India the necessity of improvement in training and drill, and some pay during the training period of the Manipuri Army. The proposal was received favourably, and drill masters, buglers and other instructors were appointed under the pay of the Government; sepoys were also granted some pay during the training period. Modern muskets, ammunitions and other requirements were supplied to them and by the middle of the nineteenth century the Manipuri Army was well provided with arms and accoutrements.

The reformed army was divided into eight Tulis or Regiments, each ~~xx~~ consisting of several companies⁵. Each regular Tuli was commanded by a Major and a Poila (an officer in Manipur Army corresponding to a Captain). One Havildar

5. The Tulihaan Regiment consisted of twelve companies; the Tuliyaia Regiment consisted of eleven companies; the Tulinaha Regiment consisted of twelve companies; the Bhitna Regiment consisted eight companies; the Bisnu Sunya Ahan Regiment consisted of nine companies; the Bisnu Naha Regiment consisted nine companies; the Top Tuli Regiment of Artillery consisted of twelve companies and the Aya Pural Tuli, chiefly for foreign relations. There were less important Tulis also, namely, the Kang Tuli, the Kangnao Tuli, the Dinam Nong Tuli and the Nawa Tuli.

Major and two Kuts were attached to it. In a company there were one Subadar, one Jemadar, one Agari Holder, one Havildar and one Amandar. These regular regiments had a fighting force of 5,000 strong. Besides, there were irregulars of about 1,200 men. During the regime of Chandrakirti Singh a Poila company, with the Maharaja himself as Major, was introduced. The officers and sepoys of this unit were recruited from the noble and middle class families.

The Government of India fondly hoped that in the event of a war with Burma, it could safely rely upon the zeal and fidelity of the Manipur Army. These expectations were actually fulfilled in the Kohima Revolt of 1879 and in the Burmese War of 1885.

JUSTICE AND POLICE :

For purposes of the administration of justice, the Valley was divided into four circles, in each of which there was a Panchayat Court. These courts tried civil suits in which the subject matter in dispute did not exceed Rs 50/- and criminal offences of a minor degree i.e., simple hurt, assault, trespass, adultery and minor thefts. The Panchayats in rural areas could impose a fine not exceeding to Rs 50/-. The town Panchayat at Imphal could impose fines upto Rs 100/- and decide civil and criminal cases of an equal importance. There were several special courts; for instance the Patcha tried cases connected with women, i.e., cases of adultery, divorce,

disputed paternity, marriage rights and the like. The Garod used to try cases connected with the militia.

The Cheirap was the high court of Manipur. It was both the court of appeal as well as of primary jurisdiction for serious cases. The highest civil and criminal court in the State was the court of the Raja. The Raja was the supreme judge. He could change any decision of the Lower Courts. But there was no court in Manipur in which decisions and orders were passed involving application of the Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure⁶. Some influential members of the Court had the power of arresting and ironing the weaker subjects in their own house and forcing him to pay money as the man in power might demand and if he did not comply, he was beaten or he was brought before the nominal court of justice where a false charge was frequently made against him⁷. Every one in authority, on the most trifling charge, had the power to imprison and iron in his house any man of inferior grade, even for owning him one rupee⁸. Chandrakirti Singh felt the injustice in the system; but he could do nothing on account of the predominant influence of ignorant and very debased ministers who were guilty of the greatest acts of oppression and cruelty. However, on the advice of the Political Agent the Raja issued a proclamation directing that no man was to imprison another in his own house under any pretence, whatever the circumstances might be. Appeals from his Parliament

6. F.Judicial B.Progs., November 1863, No.9, Dillon to Asstt. Secy., 10 October 1863.

7. F.Poltl.A., September 1862, No.131, Dillon to offg.Under Secretary, Government of India, 12 August 1862.

8. F.Poltl.A.Progs., November 1863, No.6.

to the Political Agent for the penalty of imprisonment and a fine of rupees five hundred or transportation were allowed in order to ensure that justice was administered properly. One court called the Top Garod was established during his time consisting of four sons of the Raja including the Jubararaja and four dignitaries of the State. This court had both original and appellate jurisdictions. The Raja, though he did not sit in the court, heard every statement, every discussion and every decision of the court.

In 1885, the Chief Commissioner of Assam heard many complaints about the irregularities of procedure in the Court of Justice. This was because the court in Manipur did not sit everyday. No man knew when it would sit nor, what cases would be heard. A man came about his case and was told to come again next day. The Chief Commissioner, therefore, suggested definite days and hours of sitting, and wanted list of cases hung up for public information by which it might be known when a case would come on. The Political Agent at Manipur was not however, instructed that he should become a Court of Appeal or interfere in the judicial action of the court; but it was suggested that he should be authorised, after the Jubararaja's accession, to attend the court occasionally and see how justice was administered. It was further suggested that the Court of Justice should be open to all. One of the Manipuri prejudices was that no European or Mohammedan or Hillman could enter one of their buildings without

defiling it, and Mussalmans, Nagas or Kukis had to stand outside to give evidence or make their statements. The Chief Commissioner was, therefore, of the opinion that the Government of India could not interfere with that prejudice as to private houses, but the Government should make it understand that these private prejudices must not be extended to a Court of Justice⁹. On receipt of the reported reforms the Government of India instructed to the Chief Commissioner that unless British subjects failed to get the redress he should not be too particular regarding the precise conditions under which justice was administered¹⁰.

To ^{protect} prevent the lives and properties in the State, there existed a police establishment. This establishment was placed under the Kotwal or the Head of the Police. A brother or a son of the reigning Chief always occupied the post. The Phanna, the unit of the organisation, was in-charge of a Phanadar or a Daroga, who was empowered to arrest suspected persons, to detain them and even to hold preliminary trials before sending them to the headquarters. Police specially meant for the protection of the frontiers and bringing in law and order in those areas. Police outposts were, therefore, established at suitable places in the frontiers of the State.

9. F.Sec.F., April 1885, No.126, Eliot to Durand, July 1885.
 10. Ibid., Nos.1-7, Durand to Ward, 17 March 1885.

The criminal law of Manipur was very severe. There was no police investigation before the trial by the court. When the accused were produced before the court, trial commenced at once with torture or oral examination. Penal laws were extreme even during the period under review. Many offences which are according to the Indian Penal Code punishable with imprisonment for a term of two or three years or with fine or with both, were made punishable with death or cutting off a limb.

The gravest offence was high treason viz., rebellion against the Raja¹¹. It was punishable with death. But the Raja could pardon any offence including high treason. The next crime in order of magnitude was murder¹². Its punishment was also death. There was no uniform mode of executing a death sentence. The condemned prisoner was executed in a manner, as close as possible, to that in which he killed the victim. When Johnstone came to Manipur as the Political Agent; he persuaded the Government of Manipur to prescribe decapitation as the sole mode of execution. The advice was accepted, and from about 1879, decapitation as a mode of executing a death sentence was in practice¹³. Stealing of fire-arms was a serious offence. It was punishable with imprisonment of an indeterminate period¹⁴. For assault and petty theft imprisonment for a specified term or exposure at the market place or whipping was the punishment. Cow killing was

11. Dr. Brown, Statistical Account of Manipur, p.93.

12. Ibid.

13. Johnstone, Sir James, My Experiences etc., p.139.

14. Dr. Brown, Statistical Account of Manipur, p.93.

punishable with fine¹⁵.

Neither a Brahmin nor a woman was sentenced to death. In case of the former the maximum punishment was banishment from the kingdom for good. When a woman was convicted of any heinous or disgraceful offence she was awarded a peculiar mode of punishment called 'Khungoinaba'. Under this system the guilty was stripped naked save for a tiny apron of cloth. Her breasts were painted red and a sweeper's brush was fastened between her thighs. A rope was then put around her waist and she was led through the crowded afternoon Bazar.¹⁶ Over her naked buttocks was suspended a small drum and a man followed behind beating the drum. This proved not only a deterrent punishment to that particular woman but an example to other women also¹⁷.

Almost all the Political Agents, not to speak of Johnstone alone, tried their best to reform the penal code; but they did not receive support from the ruling chiefs nor from their ignorant nobles. The age-old penal laws were, therefore, continued in Manipur many years even after she lost her independence.

JAIL ADMINISTRATION :

During the early years of our period under review, Jail administration in Manipur was highly defective. Even in 1882, when the Chief Commissioner of Assam visited the Manipur Jail he found that no one could tell him how many men

15. F.Poltl.A.Progs., November 1863, No.6.

16. F.Poltl.A.Progs., February 1863, No.26, Dillon to Atchison, 20 January 1863, No.6, Report on Manipur.

17. F.Poltl.Progs., March 1866, No.106.

were imprisoned or what each man's offence and sentence was. He, therefore, suggested the maintainance of a simple Jail-Register which could include informations regarding the offence, and the sentence. He also suggested that the Political Agent should be allowed to visit the Manipur Jail¹⁸. The Government of India on receipt of the report instructed ~~in~~ that the Political Agent might visit the Jail but that there was no need for him to insist upon the keeping of the Register. Any improvement which he might think necessary should be suggested as coming from himself. The Government would not care to exercise a greater measure of control than was required for the protection of the subjects and the prevention of gross wrong.

The Jail at Imphal continued to be the only Jail in the State. Conditions of Jail buildings were later improved and sanitary matters were placed under the supervision of the Civil Surgeon of the State. As a result on an average of one hundred prisoners only five died¹⁹. The prisoners were freely employed on the roads outside, which might help to account for the low mortality. The internal discipline of the Jail was looked after by the guards. Breaches of discipline were punished by flogging, increased weight of irons, lengthened terms of imprisonment etc.²⁰.

18. F. Sec. F., April 1885, No. 126, Eliot to Durand, 2 July 1885.

19. Dr. Brown, Statistical Account of Manipur, p. 93.

20. Ibid.

SLAVERY :

Slavery of a mild form existed in Manipur²¹. It was a custom in Manipur that a man could sell himself, his wife and his children for a debt, or they could be sold by a decree of court for a debt or if a man was fined for an offence of theft or adultery and was unable to pay he and his family could be sold²². The children of persons in a state of slavery were born into the same state. However, the condition of a slave, was not ordinarily one of such hardship; he or she was fed and cared for. But the slave might come under a harsh master; and in any case, he could very rarely, by his work pay off the debt and regain his liberty.

The practice of selling into slavery was of frequent occurrence²³. Johnstone reported that a mother sold herself and her daughter to pay her husband's funeral expenses. In 1884 the Chief Commissioner of Assam, proposed that the Raja should be induced to exert his influence for the discontinuation of the system. The Government of India decided not to go further lest it would be unsafe to insist on immediate abolition of the system and there was uncertainty as to the attitude of the Manipuris in the matter. From the time of Surachandra Singh no sale into slavery was allowed, except by a male adult who willingly entered into such a contract; but even then, his wife and child could not be sold

21. Johnstones, Sir James, op.cit., p.119.

22 F.Sec.F., April 1885, No.126, Elliot to Durand,
2 January 1885.

23. Ibid.

into slavery and no infant could be born into a state of slavery. After 1891 slavery was abolished altogether, no doubt, it was hastened by the British occupation of Manipur.

REVENUE :

All the land in the valley belonged to the Raja and every holding paid a small quantity of rice each year. The Manipuris paid very little revenue in money and none in direct taxes. The chief payment was in personal service known as the 'Lalup'²⁴. Under this system every man from sixteen to sixty years of age worked ten days out of forty for the Raja. It could be evaded on payment, but few people were wealthy enough to afford this²⁵. Women were exempted from 'Lalup', but among men the blacksmith, the goldsmith, the carpenter etc. pursued their different crafts in the Raja's workshops for the stated time; while the bulk of the population^{who} were field workers, served as soldiers and made roads or dug canals and in fact executed public works for the benefit of the State.

However, under this system revenue in cash was very small. Dillon pointed out the necessity for a change in the revenue administration of Chandrakirti Singh's rule. The latter also expressed his desire for a change, but did not know how to effect it. The Political Agent, pointed out that it could be easily done by relieving from 'Lalup' 10,000 of

24. Johnstone, Sir James, op.cit., p.113.

25. F.Poltl.A., September 1862, No.131, Dillon to offg. Under Secretary, Government of India, 12 August 1862.

his subjects who would be required to pay Rs 5/- per year in lieu of the compulsory labour so abhorrent to them, and who could be guaranteed that profits should not be seized or no additional tax should be levied on them²⁶. He also pointed out that the sepoys who were enrolled by that time but whose services were not required should not be allowed to retain their grant of land, but pay a small tax. The Raja was agreeable to the proposed measure, but it was stoutly opposed by the ministers who had vested interests in the continuation of the system.

Slowly, however, duties were levied on all exports and imports. In 1873-74 specific duties were levied on imports like betel-nut, American cloth, Long cloth, Mull Mull, Satin, soap, iron pan, nails, velvet, Shantipur dhoti, Joyporee Chadar, wollen chadar (ektari), umbrella etc.²⁷ There was an ad valorem duty of one anna per rupee on import of looking glass, hooka, hooka-stand, dyes, spices, pepper, sandal wood, cards, lace, buttons, sugar, tamarind, wollen box, iron dao, axe, knife, padlock, saw, hammer and needles. No import duty was levied on books, bottles and phials, shoes, namabali, Brindaban brass stamp and conches.

In 1873-74, the Government of Manipur received Rs 1,975-7-9 as import duty on goods coming via Cachar and Rs 3,533-1-9 as export duty on goods to Cachar and beyond²⁸.

26. F.Poltl.A., September 1862, No.131, Dillon to offg. Under Secretary, Govt.of India, 12 August 1862.

27. Dr.Brown, Annual Administrative Report of the Manipur Agency, 1873-74, pp.14-16; see also Dr.Brown, Statistical Account of Manipur, pp.84-89.

28. Ibid.

In the same year Rs 100/- was realised as export duty on silk exported to Burma, Rs 405-2-6 as license fee for cutting woods, bamboos and cane and Rs 7,000 on sale of elephants caught in the Jiri forest. The sum total received in the year, therefore, amounted to Rs 13,014-0-0²⁹.

CURRENCY :

In former times both gold and silver pieces were coined in Manipur³⁰. Princep, the then Secretary to the Government of India, stated that a square silver coin existed in Manipur from at least 1712 A.D.³¹. But there is no evidence showing the existence of gold or silver coinage in the State. Every attempts to keep them in circulation ended in failure and a kind of small coin made of bell-metal was in circulation in Manipur. It was known as the 'Sel' and the whole trade was carried on through the medium of this 'Sel'. These coins were small in size weighing eight to eighteen grains and varying in market value. The process of mintage consisted in the metal being first cast in little pellets which were then softened by fire. The pellets were next flattened by a blow of the hammer into an irregularly rounded figure, and stamped by a punch with a Nagri letter cut in the obverse but kept blank on the reverse³². Captain Gordon, the Political Agent, was

29. F.A.Politi.Progs., February 1863, No.50, Dillon to Aitchison, 20 January 1863, No.60, Report on Manipur.

30. P.C., 8 August 1838, Nos.145-149, Gordon to Princep, 8 July, 1838.

31. Botham, A.W., Catalogue of the Provincial Coin Cabinet Assam, p.548.

32. Ibid.

of the opinion that there was no meaning attached to the letter thus stamped on the coin. His opinion was that when a Raja came on the throne, the pandits assembled to fix upon a fortunate syllable to be stamped on all the 'Sels' made during his reign and that the Nagri syllable in question had been fixed upon as the lucky one for the Raja³³. The authorities in Manipur would not, therefore, wish it to be changed. Gordon cared little to examine the coins in detail. If he had taken some pains to examine those 'Sels' he should have been convinced that the letter cuts on those coins certainly bore some meaning. The letter cuts on them were the initial letters of the regnant Raja's names. Thus, in the 'Sel' circulated during the time of Bhagya chandra (1759-1798), Bha - as the initial of Bhagya chandra in raised letter in incuse was written; La - in Labanya chandra's coin (1798-1800); Ma - in Madhu chandra's (1801-1803) coin; Cha - in Chourjit's (1803-1812) coin; Ma - Marjit's (1812-1814) coin; Ra - in Raghav Singh's (1823-1824) coin; Ga - in Gambhir Singh's (1826-1833) coin and Na - in Nar Singh's (1843-1849) coin respectively³⁴.

Soon after the commencement of relations with the British Government, attempts had been made for introducing³⁵ of the Company's coins in Manipur; but it was unsuccessful. The whole trade of the country continued to be carried

33. P.C., 8 August 1838, Nos.145-149, Gordon to Princep, 8 July 1838.

34. Bothan, A.W., op.cit., pp.552-53.

35. Finance A. October 1862, No.13, Dillon to the offg. Secy. to the Government of India, 3 September 1862.

through the medium of the 'Sel'. The Bazar people purchased rupees either to melt down ^{for} at ornaments or to sell them at a profit to Burmese or Cachar traders, because the feelings of the people were all strongly in favour of the 'Sel' as a circulating medium³⁶. The circulation of the 'Sel' on the other hand, caused heavy loss to the British Government, because the usual rate at which they were exchanged for the rupee was 480³⁷ or about six annas per rupee instead of 1280 'Sels' or 16 annas per rupee. The Government of India, therefore, pressed for the introduction of copper coinage. But this was vehemently opposed by the people who feared that the new coins would eventually supercede the old money. In 1866, another attempt was made by McCulloch to introduce the ordinary Indian copper coin and a large number of these were circulated in Manipur. The experiment again ended in total failure as the women in the Bazars refused to accept them³⁸. However, after 1891, the ordinary English coins of silver and copper were introduced and indigenous coinage ^{ceased} to be in circulation except in the outlying parts of the State.

EDUCATION :

The people of Manipur were not at all keen for English education. The rulers of the State were quite indifferent to the spread of foreign education. They encouraged their indigenous system of education, learning the use of

36. P.C. 8 August, 1838, Nos.145-149, Gordon to Princep, 8 July 1838.

37. Johnstone, Sir James, op.cit., p.123.

38. Botham, A.W., op.cit., p.548.

weapons, riding horses, physical exercises etc. When Captain Gordon came to Manipur as its first Political Agent, he tried to establish one English school at his own expense³⁹. Though he tried his best and even compiled one English-Bengali-Manipuri Dictionary⁴⁰, the institution died for indifference of the ruling authority. During the infancy of Chandrakirti Singh the Government of India paid an allowance of fifty rupees per month for his education⁴¹. But the Raja's family did not consent to his being educated under European⁴² superintendence; he was taught Bengali by a Manipuri teacher.

In 1872, a school was once again established at Imphal on the suggestion of the Political Agent⁴³ and the Government of Bengal presented books, maps and other requisition to the value of about Rs 500/-. But it also shared no better fate than the earlier one. With the approval of Chandrakirti Singh, Johnstone established an English school in 1885. On this occasion, the attempt was successful. Gradually other schools began to appear in different parts of the country and the beginning of English education in the State may be said to be inaugurated in that year.

39. F.Poltl.A.Progs., November 1863, No.6.

40. P.C. 7 August 1837, Nos.141-142, Gordon to Macnaghten, 26 March 1837.

41. P.C. 12 July 1841, Nos.88-91.

42. F.Poltl.A.Progs. November 1883, No.6.

43. Ibid.

HEALTH :

In those days, cholera and small-pox took away heavy toll of human lives in Manipur⁴⁴. When Major Grant came to Manipur, he felt immediate necessity for the introduction of vaccination in the State. The Government of India concurred in the Political Agent's views and appointed one Dr. Mohammad Nazim on a monthly salary of Rs 30/- as the native Doctor of Manipur⁴⁵.

The Manipuris were, however, sceptical about this innovation. Moreover, the lymph often turned inert during the long transit from Calcutta to Imphal. Some of the vaccinated, getting no immunity contracted the deadly disease and died.⁴⁶ This naturally shook the belief of the people in the efficacy of vaccination. All these, however, were a passing phase. Within a decade of its introduction, vaccination became popular and the fight of men against this mortal enemy began. Before long a Civil Hospital was also established in Manipur⁴⁷. Dr. Dillon, the Political Agent at Manipur, ~~was~~ himself being an M.D., did surgical operations. ~~and~~ The admiration expressed by the Raja in the presence of a large number of his subjects had, in a great measure, caused the poor from miles around and even from Burma, to bring their sick to him⁴⁸. This experiment, indeed, cast ^a magic spell on

44. India Political Despatch to Court of Directors, No.17. of 1830.

45. P.C., 2 October, 1829, No.65.

46. Administrative Report of Manipur, 1873-74, p.17.

47. F.Poltl.A., October 1862, No.151, Dillon to the Secy. to the Govt. of India, 18 September 1862.

48. Ibid.

the people of Manipur and the whole population of the State began to rely more and more on the new inventions of the Medical sciences. After 1891, more Hospitals and Dispensaries were opened at Imphal and at other far off places of the State; and all possible medical facilities were extended to the people. A member of the State Darbar was placed in-charge of the Medical Department; and a junior officer of Indian Medical Service used to be loaned to the State for employment as the Civil Surgeon.

MATERIAL PROGRESS :

Manipur has always been an agricultural country. Of the important products, mention may be made of rice - the finest quality in India, indigo, mustard oil, linseed oil and potatoes⁴⁹. Cabbage, cauliflower and other varieties of English vegetables and some English fruits were introduced in during the time of Gordon⁵⁰. Apple, pear, plum, peach, apricot, cherry, currant, etc. were introduced during the time of Johnstone⁵¹. Wheat was introduced only during the time of Chandrakirti Singh. Since then the Government of Manipur paid much attention to its cultivation and the area under it was also extended.

The Manipuris never understood the economic value of silk and tea industries. The treatment of the silk-worm

49. F.A. Polt. Progs., February 1863, Dillon to Aitchison, 20 January 1863, No. 6.

50. Annual Administrative Report of Manipur, 1873-74, p. 13.

51. Administrative Report of Manipur, 1877-78, p. 18.

was not properly cared for; and yet, the silk, even rudely made, was of very superior quality⁵². Dillon was desirous of establishing silk industry in Manipur. He found that *Morus multicaulis* (a species of mulberry) grew luxuriently in Manipur and tea bushes also grew in abundance⁵³. He promised to assist Chandrakirti Singh to grow these two profitable articles of commerce. The Raja had misgivings about these projects; for he feared that success in these experiment might tempt the British to annex Manipur as they had already done in case of the country of the Muttocks.⁵⁴ When Johnstone thought of growing a little tea for his own consumption the Raja sent his messenger ^{who told him;} ~~also said~~, "The Maharaja will supply you with all tea you want free of cost, but begs you not to think of growing it"⁵⁵. So the idea of establishing tea industry in Manipur was dropped. Dillon planted cinchona in the hills of Manipur⁵⁶ and the Government of India calculating the rich vegetable resources of Manipur deputed Dr.G.Watt, a Botanist, to explore the forest and vegetable resources of the State⁵⁷. The result of the exploration was a success. Many valuable trees were discovered, and necessary measures were taken for their preservation; some rare collection were sent to the Botanical Garden of Calcutta.

52. F.Poltl.A., October 1862, No.151, Dillon to Secy. to the Govt. of India, 18 September 1862.

53. F.Poltl.A., January 1863, No.100.

54. Johnstone, op.cit., p.71.

55. Ex Ibid.

56. F.Genl.B.Progs., May 1863, No.15, Dillon to Aitchison, 20 January 1863.

57. F.Genl.A.Progs., October 1863, No.17.

INDUSTRY :

Manipur has never been an industrial State in the modern sense of the term. Nevertheless, she had her indigenous industries in small scale, ~~xx~~ with an output enough ^{meet} to her peoples' demand. Thus, she had cotton grown and harvested by the males and weaved by the females for their own consumption; she had silk industry in a small scale. Besides, she had also salt, iron and copper industries.

The impact of the British was felt in the industrial activities as well. In 1881, when Chandrakirti Singh wanted to send four of his subjects to the Leather Factory at Kanpur for the purpose of training them in leather work, the Government of India ^{readily} kindly agreed ⁵⁸. On their return the trainees started making first rate carpets, boots, shoes and saddles of English pattern for the Raja. Their workmanship in all cases were highly creditable ⁵⁹. Similarly, Johnstone wanted to send some Manipuris to Bombay to learn the art of pottery and the Raja was also in favour of it ⁶⁰. Chandrakirti Singh had a taste for European articles and he owned a large assortment of them ⁶¹. He tried his best for the improvements in the making of cooking pots of brass, copper, bell-metal etc. and he had glass manufactured at his own workshop.

58. F.Poltl.B., February 1881, No.69.

59. Johnstone, op.cit., p.220.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid., p.71.

TRADE AND COMMERCE :

The presence of a Political Agent had considerably extended trade between Manipur and the neighbouring British provinces. However, Manipur-Burma Trade was a monopoly of the Raja himself who carried on the transactions with the aid of a number of his advisers. Although such a system was detrimental to the interest of the British and the Manipuris themselves, the Government of India considered it inexpedient to resort to any strong means. In 1863, the Raja was however, informed that the Government of India expected that he would extend co-operation in establishing trade with Burma; and any neglect on his part in that direction might lead to serious displeasure of the British Government and might be followed by the withdrawal of all support that was being extended to him⁶².

No British subject could enter or leave Manipur for purposes of trade without a pass. He was charged annas eight for it. A Manipuri could not leave the country without depositing Rs 80/- as security for his return; and if it was suspected that he did not intend to return; he would not get a pass at all; and in any case he could not take his wife and children with him⁶³. In 1885, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, therefore, desired to abolish the system altogether. He was of the opinion that any Manipuri who chose to appear

62. F.A.Poltl.A.Progs., February 1863, No.50, Dillon to Aitchison, 20 January 1863, Report on Manipur.

63. F.Sec., April 1885, No.126, Elliot to Durand, 2 July 1885.

before the Political Agent and declared his intention of quitting Manipur and adopting a British domicile should obtain permission to do so. As to trade, passes for British subjects were given by the Political Agent alone. The Treaty of 1833⁶⁴ provided that trade should be free; but there were complaints against the Raja's monopolies⁶⁵. The Chief Commissioner held the view that if passes were abolished, trade would prosper; and even if the system of passes had to be continued, it was to be under the supervision of the Political Agent. All complaints of ill-treatment, extortion etc. made by either party should be heard and disposed off by him only. On receipt of these proposals, the Government of India held the view that the pass system obstructed trade and as such wholly undesirable. They urged that the Raja⁶⁶ should abolish these 'motives of enlightened self-interest'. As to trade, it was pointed out that the agreement of 1833 merely provided for freedom of trade between Manipur and India. But with regard to the Burmese trade direct interference might be exercised on the ground that the Government of India kept Manipur out of the difficulties. The imposition of burdensome transit duties on goods passing through Burma and Manipur almost ceased to exist after the annexation of Upper Burma in 1885⁶⁷.

64. See Appendix 'C'.

65. F.Sec.F., April 1885, No.126, Elliot to Durand, 2 July, 1885.

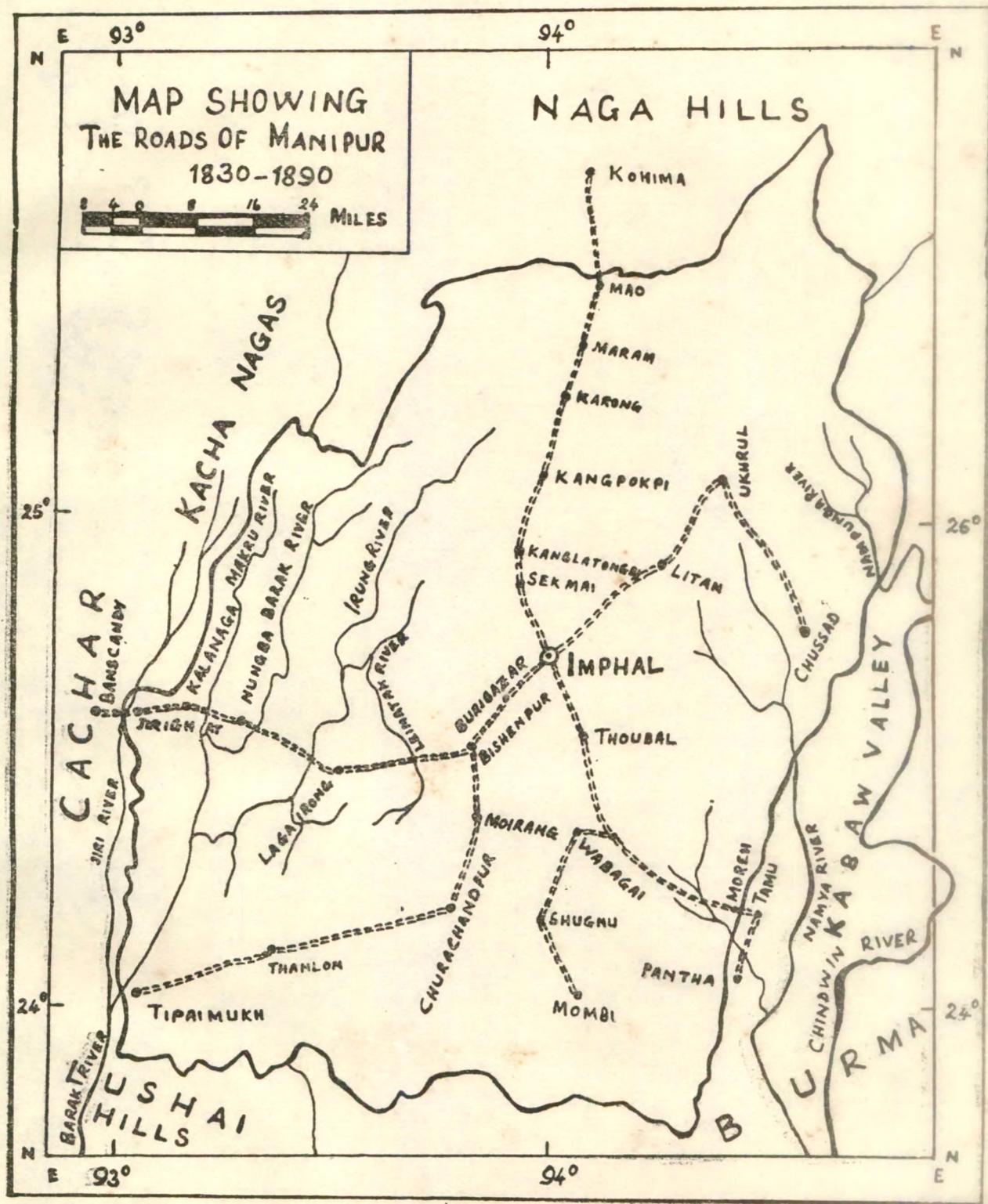
66. Ibid., No.127, Durand to Ward, 17 March, 1885.

67. F.Sec.E., August, 1886, No.816, Durand to C.C. of Assam, 3 August 1886.

COMMUNICATION :

Manipur was almost isolated from the rest of the world save for a small foot path that connected her with Cachar and a few other hill tracks around her frontiers. The unfavourable conditions of these routes has already been discussed. After the end of the First Burmese War, it was felt that the construction of a main road through Cachar to Manipur was the only means that could render Manipur accessible to the British troops. The Government of India felt the importance of establishing direct communication upto Manipur for the purpose of defending North Eastern Frontier from the depredations of the Burmese. Though the Treaty of 1833⁶⁸ contemplated the construction of a road along this route, there were a lot of difficulties in the execution of the work; because, the road had to be constructed through a number of ranges of hills. Pemberton suggested some advantageous points in changing the line of the road that had existed before and subsequently Gordon reported that the construction of a road which might serve for laden cattle might be carried out along the changing line as suggested by Pemberton. His Lordship in Council concurred in^{the} latter's opinion and entrusted Captain (afterwards Colonel) Guthrie, Executive Engineer 18th Division, with the construction work of the road. Accordingly the construction of the road, began in right earnest in

68. See Appendix 'C'.



1837 in the direction as suggested by Pemberton⁶⁹ i.e., from Banskandi to Bishenpur, passing on its way the south the junction of the Makru and the Barak rivers, avoiding the Kalanaga and the Koupua Hills, at the joint expense of the Government of India and the Government of Manipur. After facing a series of difficulties, the line of communication was completed in 1844 at a cost of Rs 90,163-9-1⁷⁰.

This new road was excellent for pedestrian traffic and packed animals, it was too narrow and too steep for large scale wheeled traffic⁷¹. Realising the importance of the road, the Government of India sanctioned another amount of Rs 10,000 for repairing it and for the construction of a bridge across the Irung River⁷². Later it was found that without constructing bridges on the Jiri, the Makru and the Barak rivers, the bridge on the Irung River alone would not help much. Therefore, the construction work of the bridge on the Irung was also given up⁷³; and Mr. Craig, to whom the construction work had been entrusted, was recalled.

69. P.C., 16 January 1834, Nos.39-40, Pemberton to Macnaghten, 16 December 1833.

70. P.C., 30 January, 1847, Nos.87-88.

71. Johnstone, op.cit., p.63.

72. F.Genl.B.Progs., October, 1863, No.60, McCulloch to Durand, 28 May 1863.

73. Ibid., No.87, Extract from the proceedings of the Government of India in Foreign Dept. General, 30 June, 1864.

In 1842, Captain Gordon, the Political Agent pointed out the necessity of opening up a road between Assam and Manipur besides a permanent post in the Angami country.⁷⁴ Lieutenant Bigges, officer in-charge of North Cachar, however, thought that the huge amount of Rs 40,000 that had been estimated as the cost for the construction of the road would be an insuperable objection for the execution of such an undertaking⁷⁵. Since then the question was not raised until 1880 when Johnstone tried his best for the construction of the road from Manipur to Mao. He appealed to Stewart Bayley, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, to depute Lieutenant Raban, Royal Engineer, for finding out a practicable route from the valley to the north.⁷⁶ Raban arrived at Manipur in December 1880 and under his supervision the construction work of the Imphal-Mao road began and was completed in January 1881; subsequently this road was improved and extended upto Dima-pur.

The existing route between Manipur and Tamu was not properly maintained. It went along the top of hills with successive ascents and descents and served partly as defence against the Burmese invasions. In 1886, Mr. Mitchel, Assistant Engineer, traced out a cart road from Manipur to Tamu it was found out to be invaluable in successive military operations

74. F. Peltl. A., October 1862, No. 151, Dillon to Secretary to the Govt. of India, 18 September 1862.

75. Ibid.

76. Johnstone, Sir James, op.cit., p. 63.

and, therefore, efforts were made for its further improvements⁷⁷. Thus, when the aforesaid roads were constructed and improved, Manipur was made easily accessible to all the people of her neighbouring States.

POST AND TELEGRAPH :

Dak runners were introduced in Manipur soon after the First Anglo-Burmese War. But the dak carried by men sometimes took six weeks to reach Manipur from Bengal⁷⁸ and four days from Cachar⁷⁹. At a time when there occurred a series of succession wars and revolts and British assistance was always necessary, a telegraph communication would have been of immense help to the Manipur Government. In 1881, the Chief Commissioner of Assam proposed that Cachar and Manipur should be connected by a telegraph line⁸⁰. Considering the cost of construction, and also of its maintenance, the Governor-General in Council turned down the proposal⁸¹. Nonetheless, in 1886, a daily postal service was arranged between Cachar and Manipur and the construction of a telegraph line from Kohima to Manipur and thence to Tamu was also taken in hand⁸². Since then Manipur was put in constant touch with the outside world and the British headquarters at Cachar and Kohima could easily receive any news of emergency from the State.

77. F.Sec.E.Progs., March 1887, No.148, H.Gordon to Lyall, 18 December 1886.

78. F.Politi.A.Progs., November 1863, No.14.

79. Ibid., August 1882, No.528, Grant to C.C., Assam, 20 January 1882.

80. Ibid., No.526, Gramentzki to Grant, 5 December 1881.

81. Ibid., No.528, Grant to C.C., Assam, 20 January 1882.

82. F.Ext1.B., July 1886, No.155, Ward to Durand, 14 June 1886.

It will be evident, from what has been stated above, that Manipur felt the impact of the West during the period under review. On the eve of Gambhir Singh's accession, this little State was thoroughly devastated by years of foreign invasions and political upheavals during which population dwindled, agriculture collapsed, trade and commerce came to a standstill. In less than three decades of her connection with the British, signs of a good Government was visible even in the remotest hill & village. Manipuris who had left their hearths and homes, repaired back to their villages. Improvements were made in agriculture, trade and industry and got a new impetus, and ~~to the~~ Western education caught the imagination of the people. Blessed with a fertile soil, hitherto, the Manipuris had limited wants and were generally satisfied with the humblest of food, plainest of cloths and smallest of habitation. Before long, there developed a feeling of dissatisfaction with what ^{they had} possessed. A revolt of mind against the tyranny of dogma and traditional authorities, beliefs and customs began to advance more and more and consequently they desired of having better foods, better cloths, better houses and better knowledge of things outside the State. The impact of the ~~west~~, ^{English}, therefore, produced a regeneration of the people on an

entirely new line which put an end to her narrow minded and medieval outlook and placed her in closer touch with the modern civilization.

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G L O S S A R Y

Agari Holder, a non-commissioned officer corresponding to a quarter master sergeant.

Ahallup Pana, Ahallup division, one of the four divisions in the Valley of Manipur.

Angom, Angom clan, one of the seven clans in the society of Manipur.

Arzee, representation.

Atta, flour.

Aya Purel, a minister in-charge of the Burmese affairs.

Baree, a residence.

Bazar, a daily market.

Brindaban, name of a place in U.P.

Brindaban Chandra, another name of Lord Krishna.

Chadar, a shawl.

Car Festival or Rath Yatra, a festival of the Hinus centred around the worship of Lord Jaganath.

Cheirap, High Court of Manipur.

Dak, the mail-post.

Dakait, one of a gang of robbers in India and Burma.

Dao, a dagger.

Daroga, Superintendent of Police.

Deka Bhundari, Officer in-charge of royal granery.

Dewan, chief executive.

Dhobi, a washerman.

Dhoti, loin cloth of a man.

Dolairoi Hanjaba, officer in-charge of doolies.

Durbar, an audience chamber.

Garod, a military court in Manipur.

Gosta Astami or Gopa Astami, a festival of the Hindus
centred around the worship of Lord Krishna.

Govindaji, an image of Lord Krishna.

Haomacha, an attendant.

Havildar, a non-commissioned officer corresponding to a
sergeant.

Havildar Major, a non-commissioned officer corresponding
to a Sergeant Major.

Higok Phanek, a blue black loin cloth of a woman.

Hunjaba, a civil officer in Manipur.

Ilaka, a jurisdiction.

Jagir, an assignment.

Jamadar or Jemadar, a junior commissioned officer.

Joyporee chadar, a shawl made in Joypore.

Jubaraja, the heir apparent.

Khabam Lakpa, officer in-charge of Khabam division.

Khabam Pana, Khabam division.

Khamen Chatpa, printed silk loin cloth of a man.

Khongjais, Kukis, a Naga tribe in Manipur.

Khullakpa, head man of a hill village.

Khuman, Khuman clan.

Khungoinaba, a form of punishment awarded to a woman who
was guilty of some heinous crime.

Khwairakpa, officer in-charge of Khwai sub-division.

Kotwal, Head of the Police.

Kumlang Phurit, a cotton shirt.

Kut, an officer in Manipur Army.

Laipham Pana, Laipham division.

Laiphi, a cotton cloth used by the Manipuris at the time
of worshipping gods.

Lai yeng, a cotton cloth.

Lalup, a kind of revenue paid in personal service in which
every able man from 16 to 60 years worked 10 days
in 40.

Lamthang Khullak, a laced turban.

Lashing phi, a cotton cloth.

Luang, Luang clan.

Maisnam Ningol, a lady of Maisnam family.

Maharaja, King.

Maring phi, a cotton cloth weaved by the Maring Nagas.

Moirang, Moirang clan.

Muntri, a minister.

Nagri, devanagari, the character in which Sanskrit is
usually written and printed.

Naharup Pana, Naharup division.

Namabali, a printed silk shawl.

Ningthou, King.

Ningthou Ngamba Angamba, a noble who can check the whims
of the King.

Ningthou phi, a shirt like garment.

Pana, a division.

Panchayat, a democratic institution in local self Government in rural areas.

Patcha, a court where cases connected with women were tried.

Phanek, loin cloth of a woman.

Poila, a officer in Manipur Army.

Pugri, a turban.

Pukhraaba, minister in-charge of royal granery.

Sagolhanjaba, Commander of the horse.

Saloophanek, cotton loin cloth of a woman.

Samuhanjaba, Commander of the elephants.

Sawaree, a mount.

Sel, a bell-metal currency circulated in Manipur.

Selungba, a civil officer in Manipur corresponding to a Sub-Deputy Collector.

Senanayak, Commander.

Senapati, Commander in Chief.

Shantipur dhoti, Loin cloth of a man made in Shantipur.

Singlup, a wood club, a village organisation in Manipur.

Sipahee, a soldier.

Sirdars, leaders.

Sirkar, Government.

Subedar or Subadar, a junior commissioned officer.

Thakur, a priest.

Thanna, a police station.

Thannadar, an officer in-charge of a police station.

Thouniphi, a dress used at the time of attending the King.

Top Garod, a high military court in Manipur.

Tuccavee, a distressed loan.

Tuli, a regiment.

Zanana Mahal or Zenana Mahal, royal apartment in which
women lived.

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