

S.M.A.W. CHISHTI

Political Development
in

Manipur

1919-1949



POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN MANIPUR 1919-1949



Dr. S.M.A.W. Chishti



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Preface

The thesis deals with the political and constitutional developments in the erstwhile princely state of Manipur from 1919 till its merger with India in 1949. Based on an intensive analysis of the available source-materials and interviews with the surviving members of the power-elite of the era under study, it constitutes, perhaps, the first systematic, objective and critical analysis of the political history of Manipur as well as the genesis, growth and rise of the democratic movement in the region.

Apart from unpublished documents, such as the files of the Foreign and Political Department, I have considerably relied on some of the available published material such as various pamphlets and reports published by the Manipur State Congress. But I have been handicapped in my research by lack of access to certain important Government of India files on deposit with the National Archives of India, and certain files of the All-India Congress Committee on deposit with the Nehru Memorial Library and Museum at New Delhi. The concerned authorities did not allow me to consult such documents, which related to past-1945 events.

The method of analysis is the 'old-fashioned' historical descriptive, as there was no other way for me to present my material and analysis in a coherent manner. I hope this study of Manipur's rise to political democracy coinciding with her merger with the Indian Union constitutes not only an original contribution to the exiting knowledge about the politics of the erstwhile princely states but also ipso facto constitutional history of the Indian Union.

The first chapter introduces the Manipuri society and politics in a historical setting and depicts how Manipur underwent changes under several dynasties through ages.

The second chapter analyses the genesis and growth of political consciousness among the Kuki tribesmen. The Kuki rebellion broke out during 1917-1919 when they were compelled by the local

Government to provide labourers to be sent to Mesopotamia. The rebellion put the state in turmoil throughout a whole year, then, gradually, normalcy was restored.

The third chapter studies the development of the semi-religious, semi-political movement led by Jadonang in 1930s, which aimed at the eventual overthrow of the British Government and annihilation of the Kukis and the Meiteis and, therefore, the establishment of a 'Kabui Naga Raj'. The political cult of Jadonang spread to the far-flung areas of Manipur and the Naga Hills. The movement died away as the leader was killed by the Government before it could get out of control.

The fourth chapter is the continuation of the Kacha-Naga movement led by Jadonang. After him the movement was spear-headed and intensified by Gaidinliu. She popularized the non-cooperation movement among the highlanders. In no time it spread over to the areas inhabited by the Nagas. The movement was soon suppressed by the Government of India. On the whole, it played its role in the politicization of the Naga tribals.

The fifth chapter discusses the problem of Manipur's accession to the erstwhile proposed Indian federation. The Maharaja of Manipur came out with certain reservations and desired to introduce some of his own reforms in the state, which were not in conformity with the Government of India Act, 1935. He was unwilling to join the proposed federation as it entailed the limitation of his own administrative authority.

The sixth chapter focuses on the Women's Bazar Agitation of 1939, caused by the scarcity of foodgrains. As the price of rice rapidly rose, the poor people faced starvation. The consequent agitation soon assumed political overtones. The movement subsided as soon as the price of rice went down and economic condition improved.

The seventh chapter deals with the political activities of the Bengali elites for the creation of a north-east Indian frontier province composed of Manipur, Cachar, Cooch-Bihar, Tripura, etc., who were apprehensive of the possible Assamization of the Bengalis in Assam. The movement fizzled out as it could not mobilize the support of the general public; moreover, the Central Government turned down the demand for the creation of the so-called 'Purbachal Pradesh'.

The eighth chapter deals with the political factors which led to the constitutional movement in Manipur during the late 1940. This was the period when the people of Manipur aspired to replace the

present autocracy by a limited constitutional monarchy. This resulted in a movement for the establishment of a representative government. Ultimately the Maharaja had to introduce a constitution and establish a nominal Assembly.

The ninth chapter describes the further intensification of the merger of Manipur with the Indian Union. Undoubtedly the Maharaja was not in favour of Manipur's merger with the Indian Union, rather, he preferred to be grouped with Sikkim and Khasi States. Since the political leadership of the Congress Party was in favour of the merger, the Maharaja was obliged to sign the instrument of Manipur's accession to the Indian Union in 1949.

The conclusion provides an overview of the political developments in Manipur during the years 1919-1949, and makes one feel that the process of democratization in British Indian territories had an impact on the people and politics of Manipur, particularly during the thirties and the forties. The accession of Manipur to the Indian Union was a landmark in the political development of the Manipuris and, later on, the granting of full statehood to Manipur gave it a status of equality with other constituents of the Indian Union.

S.M.A.W. Chishti

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I am really indebted to the staff of the National Archives of India, the Nehru Memorial Library and Museum, the National Library, Calcutta, and the Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh, for their invaluable help. I am beholden to the teaching and non-teaching staff of the Department of Political Science for their encouragement.

The University Grants Commission's support is most sincerely acknowledged. The Junior Research Fellowship that the Commission awarded to me made it possible for me to devote four years and six months to this research work. Last but not the least, I am all praise for Mr. M.A. Khan Afridi of the Department of History for his meticulous typing of the manuscript.

S.M.A.W. Chishti

1

The Manipuri Polity in Historical Setting

Introduction

Manipur, with an area of 22,327 sq. kms. and a population of about 1.1 million*, occupies a strategic position in east India. Surrounded by Nagaland in the north, Mizoram in the south and Assam in the west, Manipur has an international boundary with Burma in the east. The territory has had a variety of names in the past. In the memoirs of Rennel it is called 'Meckley'.¹ The Burmese and Shan tribes, knew it as 'Kase' or 'Kathe'.² Lord Irwin once compared Manipur to 'Switzerland' because of her scenic beauty and richness in natural resources.³ Manipur is also referred to as the 'jewel of India'.⁴

Manipur was a princely state of India before 1947. On October 15, 1949, she became a Chief Commissioner's Province. Under the Indian constitution, Manipur was initially placed in category 'C' of States. An Advisory Council was formed in 1950 to advise on its administration.

It was replaced in 1957 by a Territorial Council composed of thirty and two nominated members. Manipur was made a Union Territory on November 1, 1956. Later, under the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, a Legislative Assembly of thirty elected and three nominated members was established. On December 19, 1969, the chief executive was designated Lieutenant Governor. Manipur became a full-fledged State of the Indian Union on January 21, 1972.

* 23,88634 (Source: North East Council)

The Ethnic Structure, Culture and Religion

The population of Manipur mainly consists of hill tribes and plain people. Some of the clans namely Meitei, Khoomal, Looang and Moirang came from different directions and settled in Manipur. The Khoomal clans was initially most powerful. After its decline the Meitei clans dominated all other clans to such an extent that they came to be known as sub-clans of the Meitei.⁵ About the origin of tribal structure of Manipur, T.C. Hudson remarks that "... there is far more ground to conclude them to be descendants of the surrounding hill tribes.⁶ He highlights similarity in language to prove his contention. R. Boileu Pemberton contends Manipuris "... to be the descendants of a Tartar Colony, which probably migrated from the northwest borders of China during the sanguinary conflicts for supremacy which took place between the different members of the Chinese and Tartar dynasties in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries."⁷

There is yet another theory about the origin of the Manipur tribes. William Shaw traces the relationship between Manipuris and Thais during 707-717.⁸ It may also be of interest to note that the Thais or Twangs of southern part of China had penetrated into Manipur and Burma (now Myanmar) in 1250 A.D. They were more Chinese than Thais. In the frequent skirmishes with the ruler of Manipur, some of them were taken as captives. Gradually they became part of Manipuri society by marrying local women. This introduced elements of Chinese-Thai culture in Manipur. The Chinese influence is evident in the royal insignia of the Manipuris which is winged lion which was the insignia of the Chinese T'sang dynasty.

The complexion of population in the islands on the Eastern Archipelago with adjoining portions of the mainland depicts fusion of cultures and races of the east, the west and the north. Apart from this, there has been vivid manifestation of the fusion of the Austric, the Bodo, the Dravidians, and the Aryans. Due to the situation of Manipur as a route for the migration of various races and cultures, the Manipuris appear to be Mongolians by features, Chinese by culture, Aryans by tradition. Naga by observance and Mithraic by faith.⁹

Among the hill tribes, the Kukis and Nagas are the only important ones. The Kukis largely live in the south hill portion of Manipur. The Nagas are found in the north and north-east hill areas. There are a number of sub-tribes about twenty-nine among the Nagas and Kukis.

Hinduism is claimed to be the oldest religion in Manipur.¹⁰ It was at its highest during the reign of Gopal Singh or Garib Newaz (1714-49) as he was popularly known. When he got converted to Hinduism under the influence of some 'wandering Fakir'.¹¹ his subjects were made to follow willingly or unwillingly the same faith. Hinduism was declared as official religion and any religious dissent was severely punished. The advent of Hinduism and some of the traditions, which were established under its influence, resulted in a cleavage in Manipur society. The entire social structure of the plains was recast into Kshatriyas, Brahmins and other Hindu varnas. The Brahmins dominated all other castes and intermarriage was strictly prohibited. Untouchability was practiced. The distinction between the hill tribes and the people living in plains also became more apparent. The Marwaris and the Punjabis who were mainly engaged in business, were dubbed by the Manipuris as *Mayang* (foreigners). There is a minority of native Muslims forming about 6.62* percent of the population. Various views have been expressed regarding the arrival of Muslims in Manipur. The origin of Manipuri Muslims could be traced to the reign of Meitei King Khagee-gama (1579-1651), whose brother Shelungba, tired of unjust treatment by his brother fled to Sylhet. With the help of Muslim soldiers, he invaded Manipur. The raid was not successful; for whatever reason might be some of the Muslim Soldiers had stayed behind after the incident. These Muslims soldiers got married to Manipuri women and this was the beginning of a new race, Manipuri Muslims. It was in 1622 that the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb, sent three ambassadors to Manipur. This was reciprocated by the Maharaja of Manipur. This indirectly encouraged immigrants from outside.¹² Majority of Muslims came from Bengal and Assam.¹³ Some of them also came from the western areas of the sub-continent with the sole purpose of preaching Islam. In the early days, as we have already seen, intermarriages between Meiteis and Muslims were very common. The population of Manipur was affected by the Burmese raids on Manipur. Many of them were taken as captives by the Burmese.¹⁴ At present the Muslim population of Manipur has adopted itself to Manipur culture and they are known as 'Panggans', the corrupt form of 'Bengal'.

Political Evolution

To trace the political history of Manipur is very difficult since ancient records are not fully available. Since the advent of the Christian

Era about forty-seven native kings have reigned till 1714. Only one important happening worth mentioning during all these years is the conquest of Khumbat by the united forces of Pong and Manipur in 1475. This followed the annexation of the Kabaw Valley in the territory of Manipur.¹⁵ It is said that a king named Pakhangba reigned some 300 years before 1714. Edward Gait terms the accounts of this period as 'merely legendary'.¹⁶ The present political history of Manipur started from 1714 with the rule of Garib Newaz (patron of the poor). He has been considered one of the most powerful kings of Manipur. During the years 1725 and 1749, he was able to capture many important towns of Burma. It would not be any exaggeration to say that Manipur owes her present shape to him. His influence in the west extended up to Cachar; to the south, as far as the water-shed flowing seawards; and to the north for about nine days journey from the capital.¹⁷ As has already been mentioned – the remarkable event of his reign was the introduction of Hinduism. He was a peace-loving Raja. He was murdered by his second son, Jit Shai, on the bank of Ningthee river, while returning from the Burmese campaign with his eldest son, Sham Shai who also shared the fate of the father. Jit Shai immediately ascended the throne.

Jit Shai succeeded his father but after a short reign of five years, he was expelled from Manipur by his own brother Barut Shai. Barut Shai was on the throne of Manipur for about two years. After his death, Goura Sham, the eldest son of Sham Shai took over the administration. He being crippled was unable to perform his functions properly and so he took the help of his brother Jai Singh or Chingthungkhamba in ruling the country. Jai Singh took the throne after the death of Goura Sham in 1764.

During these years an active hostility developed between Burma and Manipur. The Burmese were unhappy with the murder of Garib Newaz by his son. In 1755 the Burmese king Alaungpaya attacked Manipur, and took away many captives. It was the 'first devastation' inflicted by the Burmese on the Manipuris. The Burmese could occupy Manipur for not more than nine days, as they were pushed back by the Manipuris. The second invasion, one of the 'worst disasters' in the history of Manipur,¹⁸ resulted in the occupation of Imphal by Alompra in 1758.¹⁹ This could have serious consequences but for the timely intervention by British. An agreement was signed between the Governor of the Bengal Presidency and Manipur. The former agreed

to help the latter in expelling the Burmese from Manipur. This agreement, however, was never put into practise. During the reign of Shemhegwen, the Burmese crossed the Hiroke Range and there was a ferocious battle at Tamu. Jai Singh escaped to Cachar. The Burmese put Kalembe, a descendant of the former Moirang Rajas, on the throne of Manipur as a nominal king. He reigned under the protection of Burma for three years. With the help of the Cachar king Jai Singh expelled Kalembe from Manipur. Kalembe immediately fled to Burma.

Between 1770-71, Kalembe's brother tried to recapture the throne of Manipur. This time Jai Singh could not resist their attack, and fled to Cachar. Between 1775 and 1782 Jai Singh repeatedly attempted to regain his throne. But he was always unsuccessful. Following this, there was an interval of political anarchy, during which period many princes, Burmese and Manipuri, would appear to have alternately held Manipur. Meanwhile, the year after 1782, a Manipur prince Eremba could bring a peaceful atmosphere for a period of three years. But this state of affairs was not permanent. Once again when Burmese attacked Manipur, but suffered heavy loss. Eremba handed over the administration to Jai after his return from Cachar.

Jai could rule only for one year when suddenly he was forced by the Burmese invasion to leave the country. He was compelled to flee from the country as he was unable to face the powerful Burmese army. There was complete disorder in the country and many important changes took place.²⁰

Jai, shortly after he returned in 1798, apparently tired out by his constant wars against Burma, stepped down from the throne in favour of his eldest son Rabino Chandra. After the death of Jai in 1799, Manipur was once again plunged in a state of chaos and confusion. Rivalry among the princes was one of the main sources of political disorder in the country. This continued till 1819. During the regime of Marjit Singh, one of the brothers of the former king Rabino Chandra, a strained relationship developed between his country (Manipur) and Burma. Marjit appeared to have meditated throwing off the yoke of Burmese supremacy at the first opportunity. With change of kings occurring in Burma, the new ruler Bagyidaw (1819-37) sent a message to Marjit, demanding his presence as a feudatory. Marjit refused to obey the order of the Burmese king. This led to another invasion by the Burmese in 1819. The Manipuris strongly resisted for seven days,

but were at last overpowered, and Marjit fled to Cachar. During this invasion the Burmese army almost completely devastated the country. The houses of the villagers were extensively demolished, and the walls of the king's enclosures leveled with the ground. G.E. Harvey writes, "... it is now impossible to tell what their social and political conditions were like."²¹ The great disaster of 1819, was followed by a period of anarchy and political instability. 'From this period the history of Muneepore (*sic*) presents an unvarying scene of disgusting treachery, between the numerous sons of Jai Singh, who in their contests for supremacy, arrayed the unhappy people of the country in hostile warfare against each other and inflicted miseries upon them..."²²

During the ascendancy of Chourajit Singh, one of his brothers, Marjit conspired against him. But it was an unsuccessful attempt and he had to flee to Ava. With the help of Burma, Marjit once again attempted to overthrow his brother Chourajit, but he failed to do so. He fled to Cachar. Then he reached Burma. This time the king of Ava helped him with a large and strong force, which could defeat Chourajit who escaped to Cachar. Finally, Marjit was placed on the throne of Manipur in 1813. As a token of friendship, Marjit had given the Kabaw Valley to the Burmese.²³

Marjit reigned for a period of five years and the Manipuri had a peaceful state of affairs. A problem started when he refused to pay tribute to the Burmese king, a promise he had made during the Burmese help in overthrowing Chourajit. Hpagyidoda, the king of Burma, determined to punish Marjit, sent an army under the command of General Maha Bandula to depose Marjit. Burmese raided Manipur during the rainy season, and defeated Marjit in 1819. The Burmese this time destroyed a number of Manipuri villages. Marjit escaped to Cachar. He was received by his brother there. The Burmese placed Manipur under the rule of Jagu Singh, a son-in-law of Garib Newaz. He was succeeded by a brother of Nar Singh. Both these rulers were never really accepted by Manipuris and were regarded as stooges of Burma.

Before the outbreak of the Anglo-Burmese War in 1822, repeated attempts were made unsuccessfully to free Manipur from the control of Burma. In the meanwhile Gambhir Singh, a prince of Manipur, implored British help for his country. The British were ready to help

him as they were opposed to the Burmese policy of expansionism. This resulted in the Anglo-Burmese War. On March 5, 1824 the Burmese invaded Manipur and Cachar simultaneously. After a number of engagements at different places, the Manipur forces repulsed the Burmese from the territory of Manipur. The war was brought to close by the treaty of Yandaboo, in 1826.²⁴ Manipur was declared as an independent State. Gambhir was installed as the Maharaja. By the treaty of January 25, 1834, between the (British) Government of India and Manipur, Kabaw Valley was transferred by the former to Burma. As a compensation a monthly subsidy of five hundred rupees was granted to Manipur.²⁵ This continued till the death of Gambhir. Later it was withdrawn, and a Political Agent was appointed for preserving friendly relationship with the State of Manipur.

After the death of Gambhir, the administration passed on to his son, Chandra Kirti. As Chandra Kirti was minor the whole burden of administration was borne by his Senapati, Nar. Chandra Kirti's mother was sceptical about the loyalty of Nar and conspired against him. As she failed to get Nar murdered, she with her son fled from the country. She took shelter in a British camp. In spite of her best endeavours, the Chief Commissioner of Assam refused to give her help in overthrowing the Manipur Regent, Nar.

After the death of Nar in 1850, his brother Debendra Singh ascended the thrones. When Chandra Kirti became major, he successfully revolted against Debendra, who fled to Cachar. During the reign of Chandra Kirti several attempts were made to overthrow him by Debendra's brother and three sons of Nar. But always they were pushed back by the army of Chandra Kirti. And they had to take refuge in Cachar.

Chandra Kirti, the young Raja, assumed the title of Maharaja by virtue of his strength and popularity. He established a strong government. The British also seemed to be satisfied with his rule. Slowly however, some misunderstanding developed over the Maharaja's demand for the resumption of the payment of Kabaw Valley compensation, which had been suspended after the death of Gambhir. He threatened to forcibly take back the Kabaw Valley if they did not fulfill his demand. This was not liked by the British Government. The Political Agent characterized this demand as '... unbecoming from the court of the son of the man who owed his throne to the British

Government.’²⁶ Analyzing the situation, the Political Agent wrote to the British Government of India, ‘I have met with some petty acts of annoyance indicating a bad spirit in the authorities, who (at least many of them) seem to think the presence of the representative of the British Government ought to be no check on them; that by their prowess they gained the throne for the young Raja in spite of the British Government, and now they have got it, they may do exactly as they choose. I trust, however, as they cool down they may understand their positions. The young Raja, I believe, does’.²⁷ The British Government in India in reply warned the Raja of serious consequences if he did not stop the campaign against the British. This calmed down the Maharaja. The British Government promised to extend all help to him on demand.²⁸ Thus silenced, as a gesture of goodwill Chandra Kirti helped the British during the outbreak of Indian Mutiny in 1857 by putting his troops at their disposal.²⁹ For this act the Maharaja was highly honored by the British Government of India.

Chandra Kirti was succeeded by his son Sur Chandra in May 1886. But his ascendancy was challenged by Bara Chauba Singh, the eldest son of Nar. He was not successful and Bara Chauba was taken into custody by Sur Chandra. Sur Chandra was a weak ruler. This encouraged rivalries among his eight brothers, which later on resulted in the emergence of two groups³⁰—the Maharaja (i.e. Sur Chandra Singh), Pucka Sena, Samoo Hangaba, and the Dolairoi Hangaba formed one side; whilst the Jubraj (i.e. Kula Chandra Singh), Senapati (i.e. Tikendrajit Singh), Angau Sana, and Zilla Singh all combined together. It reached a climax when the group of Tikendrajit attacked the palace in September 1890. The Senapati Tikendrajit and two of his other brothers (i.e. Zilla Singh and Angau Sana) took possession of the palace. Panicked, Sur Chandra abdicated the throne and sought asylum at the residence of the Political Agent whose advice to the contrary he disregarded.

In the meanwhile Jubraj Kula Chandra Bhaja was installed on the throne as the king of Manipur, with the help of the Senapati, Tikendrajit, who was the chief architect of the uprising. The British government recognized the new king. But they developed bitterness against Senapati for his illegal acts against the former king. A small military force was sent to Manipur by the Assam Government, to carry out the decision of the Government of India, including the arrest of Senapati.³¹ The party which included Chief Commissioner, Quinton, reached Imphal on

March 22, 1891. The Senapati had sensed the British designs and so he avoided attending the Durbar held in the honour of the British. When the Chief Commissioner decided to arrest the Senapati at his residence, it resulted in serious hostilities in which the Chief Commissioner and his four officers were brutally murdered by the Manipuris. The remaining British officers fled to Silchar (Assam) as they found the situation beyond their control. On 27 April, 1891, a big military force arrived at Imphal to control the Manipuri uprising. The Manipuris were completely overpowered. The Jubraj, Senapati and other brothers who had taken part in the rebellion were arrested. Tikendrajit was convicted of waging war against the Queen Empress, and abetment of the murder of the British officers. He was sentenced to death; Consequently, he (along with General Thangal) was executed by hanging on August 13, 1891. Kula Chandra and his brother with thirteen others were transported for life.

After the sudden political upheaval of 1891, Manipur lost her identity for the time being. In September 1891, plans for future administration were finalized, and Chura Chand Singh, a great grandson of Nar Singh was nominated to be the future king of Manipur. By Sanad No. LXXII, the State of Manipur was made brought under the complete control of the British Government. Manipur was made to pay a subsidy of Rs. 50,000 to the British Government with effect from 21 August, 1891.³²

Since Chura Chand Singh was a minor, the administration in fact was in the hands of the Political Agent. In May 1907, the State Administration was handed over to Chura Chand Singh. The Lieutenant Governor formally installed him as Raja. A council of six persons was nominated to help him run the affairs of the country. Beside this he was assisted by an officer of Indian Civil Service in his day to day administration. The hereditary title of Maharaja was bestowed on him on 1 January, 1918. The Maharaja, with the help of the British, efficiently ruled the State and abolished the system of slavery and *Pothang*.³³

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2. R.B. Pemberton, *Report on the Eastern Frontier India* (Gauhati: The Government of Assam, 1966), p. 21.

3. *Manipur: A Decade of Progress*, August 15, 1962, p. 46.
Sir William Birdwood found Manipur to be a place of beauty – ‘a Kashmir in miniature’. *The Times* (London), December 24, 1926, p. 9. It is also described as a ‘little paradise on earth’ Sir Geoffrey Evans, Antony Brett-James, *Imphal* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1962), p. 6.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
5. Mac Cullock, *Munnipore and the Hill Tribes* (Calcutta: 1859), p. 4.
6. T.C. Hudson, *The Meitheiis* (London: David Nutt, 1908), p. 5, Supporting the theories of T.C. Hudson and R. Brown, B.C. Allen shows the close relationship between Nagas and Meiteis, as in the coronation ceremony the kings were dressed in Naga fashion ‘rimchaw’.
7. R.B. Pemberton, *Report on the Eastern Frontier India* (Gauhati: The Government of Assam, 1966), p. 37.
8. W. Shaw, “The Manipuris”, *Eastern Sentinental*, June 17, 1959, p. 4.
9. R. M. Nath, *The Background of Assamese Culture* (Assam: A.K. Nath, 1948), p. 86.
10. According to Manipuri pundits and authorities, Hinduism can be traced back to the ancient time. They claimed that it existed even before the reign of Garib Newaz. But for some time its popularity seems to have been eclipsed. It was revived only during the reign of Garib Newaz. The proof of the revival is so meager, and the statements in support of the idea that the Hindu religion existed in the country at a very ancient period are so contradictory and unsatisfactory, that there is no hesitation in stating that in all probability, although a spurious and imperfect form of Hinduism may have existed in individual cases previous to the reign of Garib Newaz, about 1750, it was during his reign that the Hindu religion became general, and was adopted by him and by the majority of people.
11. Santidas Goswami, an enterprising Vaishnava of the Chaitanya Mahaprabhu School of Narsingha Akhara of Sylhet (Bangladesh), crossed the hills of Jirighat and reached Manipur and within a short time bewitched as it were, the king including the whole population, with his melodious *Kirtana* bearing on the life story of Lord Krishna and Radha. Thus the Meities gradually converted to Hinduism.
12. R.M. Nath, *The Background of Assamese Culture* (Assam: A.K. Nath, 1948), p. 90.
13. E.W. Dunn says, ‘The Mussalman are the descendants of Bengali immigrants, retain a knowledge of Hindustani and Bengali, and are hardly distinguishable in appearance from the Bengali, who have never left Cachar’. Similarly T.C. Hudson writes at one place, ‘The Panggans (Muslims-mine) were believed to have originated from Cachar...’ R. Brown also infers that Manipuri Muslims are ‘chiefly from the districts

- of Sylhet and Kachar'. E.W. Dunn (comp), *Gazetteer of Manipur* (Calcutta: Government of India, 1886), p. 14.
14. From great antiquity Muhammadans, have formed part of the population of the Manipur Valley. Naturally, during Burmese invasion, Muslim population was affected considerably, as they chiefly reside to the east of the capital of Manipur.
 15. E. Gait, *A History of Assam* (Calcutta: Thacker Spink & Co., 1933), p. 321.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 263.
 17. Before the arrival of Britishers in Manipur the roads connected with the neighbouring states were not motorable, rather they were only way ferring by bullock-cart, or on feet or horse, and so the journey could be measured by the time.
 18. D.G.E. Hall, *Burma* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950), p. 85.
 19. G.E. Harvey, *Outline of Burmese History* (Calcutta: Bose Press, 1925), p. 133.
 20. After 1786 there was a rapid succession of rajas in Manipur. There was instability in the country. It led to a state of chaos and confusion. Moreover, during this period, in the reign of one Wankai, a great flood in the valley of Manipur, caused great loss to life and property.
 21. G.E. Harvey, *Outline of Burmese History* (Calcutta: Bose Press, 1925), p. 133.
 22. R. Boileau Pemberton, *Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India* (Calcutta: Bagchi & Co. 1966), p. 45.
In 1801 Rabino Chandra was fatally murdered by his step brother, when he was watching a hockey match. The killer faced the same fate when he was killed by his brother Chourajit Singh in a battle in 1806.
 23. Arthur P. Phayre, *History of Burma* (London: 7 A High Street, Wanstead, 1967), p. 229.
 24. C.U. Aitchison (comp.), *A Collection of Treaties*. Vol. XII (Calcutta: Government of India, 1931), p. 230.
 25. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
 26. R. Brown, *Statistical Account of the Native State of Manipur* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent, Government Printing, 1874), p. 68.
 27. *Ibid.*
 28. In 1851, 1859, 1862 and between 1864 and 1866 several attempts were made by rival princes to overthrow the Government of Chandra Kirti, but all of them were made unsuccessful with the British help.
 29. *Ibid.* p. 69.

30. Ethel St. Clair Crimwood, *My Three Years in Manipur and Escape from the Recent Mutiny* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1891), pp. 133-34.
31. Sir Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1893-1914* (Shillong: Assam Government Press, 1942), p. 56.
32. C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties ...* Vol. XII (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1931), p. 106.
33. Under this old custom of *Pothang* every village was compelled to repair roads and school buildings and carry the luggage of touring officials within its boundary.

2

Manipur at the End of the Kuki Insurgency: 1917-19

Since the Manipur Uprising of 1891 against the British Government, the Kuki Insurgency during 1917-19 was the first of its kind during the entire period of British rule in Manipur. The Kukis who constitute one of the most powerful tribes of Manipur, revolted against foreign domination. Disturbances in the hills upset the state administration. The British Government felt considerably annoyed with frequent troubles which often resulted in losses of life and property. A number of disobedient villages were burnt down to ashes. Some of the Kuki chiefs were arrested in connection with the uprising and punished after a fair trial.

The British Government could, however, bring the situation under control only in 1919. The experience of the Kuki rebellion made the British Government realise the inadequacy of the rules which were framed for the administration of Manipur State in 1916.

Before we go into the details of the British actions, it would be worthwhile if we briefly probe into the causes of the Kuki Insurgency.

Immediate Causes

The year 1917 marks a landmark in the political history of Manipur tribals. It was in the year of Bolshevik Revolution of Russia, that the Kukis of Manipur revolted against the British Government of India.

The immediate causes of the Kuki Rebellion was the partial recruitment of forced labour from the Kuki tribe for the service of Labour Company in Mesopotamia during the First World War.¹ In the beginning of 1917, the Assam Government was asked to provide labourers for employment with Army in Mesopotamia. The Assam

Government requested the Maharaja of Manipur through the Political Agent. The Maharaja immediately started recruiting labourers with an aim to secure about 4000 labourers.

The British Officers never realised the likely difficulties in the recruiting process. The Kuki tribe strongly opposed the British system of recruitment. The Kuki chiefs or *Pibas* adopted an obstructive attitude.²

Regarding the delicacy of the situation the Political Agent of Manipur wisely propose a dialogue between the Government and village chiefs. But the Kuki leaders flatly refused the proposal, and did not turn up for talk with the Political Agent. As the situation became somewhat serious, the Political Agent requested the higher authorities to send force to control the unruly tribals. A small force was sent from Aizawl in the month of March 1917, for the purpose of preventing village heads from interfering with recruitment process.³ This force was able to bring under control the Tangkhuls – one of the sub-Naga tribes of Manipur and south-western Kuki section.⁴ Thereafter, it was reported that Colonel Cole was able to enrol about 736 labourers in the beginning of April. The number increased further and thus a labour corps could proceed to Mesopotamia.⁵

The Maharaja expressed regret for his inability in raising up the wanted number of labourers. When the Chief Commissioner of Assam was asked a second time for raising a Second Labour Corps, the local officers including the Maharaja were confident about doing so.⁶ The Chief Commissioner was of the opinion that the Maharaja's proposal of leading a Second Corps to France should be accepted so that the Maharaja himself could have an opportunity to see the outside world. At the same time the Chief Commissioner was doubtful whether the conservative Hindu Brahmins would allow the Maharaja to leave his home state during the war time.⁷

The offer was, however, declined by Chelmsford, the Governor-General of India, who wrote to the Maharaja of Manipur, thanking him for his keen interest in raising the Second Labour Corps. He further added that the Maharaja might be asked if any such corps were needed for service (in France) in the near future.⁸ After sometime, however, the British Government changed her policy, and the Assam

Government was asked for raising a Second Labour Corps. A political conference was held in Shillong in August to discuss the matter.⁹ The Political Agent of Manipur was confident about raising up a Second Labour Corps from Manipur. With a view to understand the prevailing situation, and to convince the tribals, he arranged some meetings between the Government and the tribals. The tribal chiefs at this conference declined to supply labourers but they offered money.¹⁰ The Political Agent, not fully conscious of the tribal feelings, threatened those defiant Kuki chiefs with punishment if labourers were not supplied within a fixed time. The Political Agent thought that he would be able to get a large number of coolies from the north-east of the Manvum village of Mombi.¹¹ It was in view of the fact that Ngulkhup, Mombi chief had promised to him to supply the required labourers whenever needed. Subsequently, however, his attitude changed and it was learnt that Ngulkhup had asked the villagers to burn their villages and to kill their women and children, if they were asked to send labourers to the Government.¹² The Political Agent was surprised to find the change in the attitude of Ngulkhup. He decided to teach a lesson to the defiant Kuki chiefs by taking up punitive measure against them.

Before we discuss details about the punitive steps taken by the Government, it would be worthwhile to know why the Kuki chiefs were unwilling to supply labourers on demands from the Government, and how far their objections were justified.

First, the Kukis were afraid of going to an unknown place off their villages.¹³ Besides, it was rumoured that following the outbreak of the Great War the Maharaja and Political Agent had been killed in the field. And the British force was defeated in the war. The garrison which was stationed in Manipur was also withdrawn. As Higgins said, 'A garbled version of the retreat from Mons and the substitution of the Darrang Military Police battalion for the regular regiment in Manipur were probably responsible for the stories of disaster and the withdrawal of the garrison'.¹⁴ Probably the ignorant tribals might have been afraid of going to France, and facing dangerous consequences. It was also felt that Kamhaos of the north Chin Hills were planning to attack suddenly the Manipur State. The Kamhao tribe had always been a source of trouble on the border areas of Manipur. This was undoubtedly one of the important reasons for the opposition by tribal chiefs to the proposal for second recruitment. At the same time the Kukis also

apprehend that if they left their homes for France at such a critical juncture, the Angamis taking the advantage of their long absence would surely kill their women-folk and children.¹⁵

Another reason for opposition to the recruitment was its resemblance to the old system of forced labour.¹⁶ C.C. Watson, a British Officer, Home Department, expressed similar views when he wrote: 'The requisition to the tribal chiefs to supply coolies looks rather like a revival of the system (force labour).'¹⁷

Finally, the riotous and superstitious Kuki chiefs became a victim of Chinga Khamba Sana Chaoba Singh. He claimed himself to have supernatural power.¹⁸ He openly incited the Kukis of Manipur to revolt against the regime of Maharaja, Sir Chura Chand Singh. The Charlatan, Chinga Khamba Sana Chaoba Singh, propagated that rule of British Government was going to end very soon, and so, their loyal subject should be annihilated.¹⁹ He went from village to village for this. He was at least to some extent successful in creating a stir among the Kukis.²⁰

Chinga Khamba Sana Chaoba Singh was arrested in Burma.²¹ The Advisory Committee was of the opinion that he should not be allowed to return to Manipur. The Maharaja held the same view. He was tried by a special tribunal like other Kuki chiefs, and deported under Regulation 111 of 1818 and sentenced to life imprisonment.²²

Punitive Measures

As the Kuki movement took a serious turn, the local Government felt the need for punitive measures. The disturbances among the Kukis also had an impact on the adjacent areas. In Burma, Chin Hills north of Haka and all other parts except Upper Chindwin, and including unadministered Somra Tract, were affected by the influence of the Kuki unrest in Manipur.²³ The Kukis of Tuzu river or Nantaleik situated east of the Naga Hills, were also agitated.²⁴ In January 1918, it was quite apparent that Kukis of Burma were ready to help their brethren Kukis of Manipur in their fighting to overthrow the Government. The Kukis of Naga Hills were also prepared to help them. Pachai, an old Kuki leader of Chassad, in the unadministered area of Somra Tract, also pledged to support with men and arms the Kuki insurgents of Manipur.²⁵

Encouraged by this in most of the villages, the Kuki rebels in Manipur posed a serious threat to the Government. The Government was alarmed. On October 14, 1917, the Political Agent with an escort of Fifty Rifles of the Darrang Battalion set out for Mombi village with the intention to arrest its leader, Ngulkhup who was the first Kuki chief to commit an offence against the Government. He asked Ngulkhup to meet him. But he failed to come. The Political Agent in anger burnt the Mombi village on October 17, 1917.

The news of the burning of Mombi village alarmed the Kukis. Now onwards they became more aggressive. Finding the situation tense once again, Higgins arranged a meeting with some leaders of Uktal village, situated in the west of Manipur Hills, some twenty-six miles away from Imphal. The discussions did not produce any results. Meanwhile, the Political Agent learnt that twenty-two Kuki chiefs were meeting in order to mobilize opposition against the Government.

The Government of Assam had never contemplated the use of force for the purpose of enlisting labour for the establishment of a Second Labour Corps.²⁶ The Political Agent, however, argued that in view of the changing attitude of the Kuki chiefs it had become necessary to take a few punitive measures which could teach them a lesson. When the matter came to the notice of the Government of India, it was decided to abandon further recruitment. But at the same time it also passed an order to punish the recalcitrant Kuki chiefs.²⁷

Arrangements were made to send out a column in order to arrest the unruly Kuki chiefs, as they did not turn up in compliance with the summons.²⁸ By this time the Kukis had already prepared to attack the valley of Manipur. Before any action was taken by the Government, the Kukis from Hinglep, Ukha and neighbouring villages, raided and looted the Manipur State Forest Toll Station at Ithai in December 1917.²⁹ It was learnt that this incident took place at the instigation of Chinga Khamba Sana Chaoba Singh who had also planned with the help of the Kukis an attack on Imphal.³⁰ This however did not take place since the Assam Rifles had been employed to defend Imphal.

As a precautionary measure several outposts were opened at different hill areas of Manipur, when disturbance was expected.³¹ The Government was under the impression that the Kuki trouble would subside as soon as a few of the defiant chiefs were brought to book. But it did not happen. The Kukis became more violent after the

military operation.³² But they had never anticipated the consequences of their armed revolt against a mighty British Empire. The news of the Kuki raids and infiltrations had been very often coming to the Headquarters.

The Government intensified the military operation. During the month of January, Cosgrave, Political Agent, Manipur, with an escort of the Assam Rifles proceeded to Tammu to burn nine hostile villages and destroy their properties.³³ Higgins also destroyed fourteen rebel Kuki villages after fairly continuous fighting. Hutton with the help of the Column of the Naga Hills Rifles conducted an operation in the western hillside of Manipur. There he occupied a Kuki village, Chongjan on February 12, 1918. As a result of this operation, Laipi, chief of the Senting Kuki village, surrendered to Hutton. It was proposed to send further force, from Silchar to Imphal to suppress the Kuki rebellion.

On February 20, 1918, Colonel Cloete led a force from Silchar for Imphal. During the same time Cosgrave with another force had marched on to the south-west of Manipur. Cloete's operation in Maphitel Hills resulted in success.³⁴ With the exception of one Kuki chief, all surrendered before the British forces. The forces which were operating in the southern hills faced a strong opposition but the party at last emerged victorious. Next they launched attack on Manchangs in the south-hills. On March 14, 1918, Higgins and Cloete left Imphal to join Burmese Column in fighting against Chassad which was supposed to be the strongest, and most disobedient Kuki village. Reaching Kongal Thana they compelled nine villages to surrender to them. Sixteen Ayuparel villages situated between the areas of Tammu and Chassad were also ready to surrender.³⁵ On the Upper Chindwin, Captain Patrick's column had commenced its advance on Chassad in Manipur from the South. The military operations were expected to stop in April, i.e., before the start of rainy season, to be resumed if necessary in the next winter.

In the meanwhile, the British Government was keen to find out why the force was comparatively weak in dealing with the Kuki rebels.³⁶ One of the factors was to be the lack of modern equipment. Military was also not well organised.³⁷ There was also lack of efficient trainees in Manipur.³⁸

For the next military operation, the Chief Commissioner of Assam felt the need of complete re-armament of the Assam Rifles because in his opinion the integrity and security of the North-East Frontier of

India depended on its success. A Home Department communication dated the 28th May 1918 approved the proposal made by the Assam Chief Commissioner.

As soon as the rainy season ended in Manipur, the military operation again started. There were reports of fresh attacks by the Kukis in several villages. One Kuki leader Khuthinthang of Jampi claimed himself as Maharaja. According to his instructions some of his followers started collecting revenues and guns from weaker villages. In the meantime, it was reported that out of dissatisfaction with the Maharaja of Manipur, Moirang had established some unauthorised courts.³⁹ The Political Agent said that they were in touch with the Charlaton Chinga Khamba Sana Chaoba Singh.⁴⁰

In June, the Kuki rebels renewed their attack on Khwakta, Khongda and Iringbam villages. Immediately an outpost was established to deal with these rebels. The Kuki insurgents even threatened to attack neighbouring areas beyond Manipur boundary. It was reported that seventy-five Kukis had entered the North Cachar Hills from Manipur side.

The political situation in Manipur became very serious as the Kuki movement could not be fully crushed. The Government decided to stop active military operation since it realized that the military operation in the hills were not as successful as expected. Describing the development in Manipur, in a letter to Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy commented, 'operations against Kukis in Manipur and Burma and Chins have already been a failure and we are considering advisability of putting operations next cold weather under one military control....'⁴¹

The administration confined itself to protected valley, Imphal. Eight police outposts were established at different places for the security of the valley.

On May 18, 1918, Beatson-Bell, Chief Commissioner of Assam, arrived at Imphal in order to have consultations with the local officers in connection with the suppression of Kuki rebellion and further continuation of military operation in the next winter. Later in July 1918, he visited Simla where he discussed the problem of Kuki rebels in Manipur with the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief.⁴² Therefore, the Political Agent and Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, were summoned to a conference in Shillong to decide further measures

pending the renewal of operations next winter under the command of General Keary.⁴³

At the close of August General Keary who had to command the military operation in Assam (and Burma), came to Shillong in order to discuss the situation with the Chief Commissioner of Assam, and plan military campaign. It was decided that in accordance with the usual procedure the General Officer Commanding would assume complete political as well as military control of area of operation.⁴⁴ He would inform the local Government regarding any development having political implications, so that the Government of India could be posted with the latest developments.

Before the planned military operation in the winter could materialise, the Assam Rifles were badly affected by influenza which spread in Assam.⁴⁵ As a result of this, the Government of India even thought of suspension of active military expedition.⁴⁶ Yet the military operation started in January and continued up to February 13, 1919. These were undoubtedly among the most active military expeditions against the defiant Kuki rebels of Manipur.⁴⁷ During the operation, Longya, the village of the Kuki chief, Ngulbul, was occupied. His brother and fifty-five persons were arrested. His son died during the operation. The Chief of Ukha was also captured. Two hundred persons including women and children of Umdum had also surrendered. Among the captured were Ngulkhup, Chief of Mombi, and Tinthong, Chief of Longya, with his henceman Enjakhup.⁴⁸ Lt. Goldsmith, in his operations in the Chassad area, captured Bongmul and his twenty-six men. All the Mombi area chiefs had surrendered with the exception of Loothang of Gobok. In a combined expedition of Broome and Goldsmith led to the capture of five Kuki rebels. South-west and north-west areas became the victim of harassment by the military police.⁴⁹ Further surrender of Chiefs of Makan, Phunjong, Asang, Khulen and Malhang was also reported. In the south-east area Loothang of Gobok surrendered at last on February 22, 1919. Semkhupao of Simol followed him.

General Officer Commanding, Kuki punitive measure, Imphal, telegraphed to the Chief of the General Staff, Delhi, on March 1919, that Pachei had submitted to the military force this morning.⁵⁰

Following that, Pachei's lieutenant Nokhao also surrendered on the next day. The last of the special list was completed with the submission of Ngukhuka to Montifiore. During the operation in the

Chassad area Montifiore burnt and destroyed several villages. The submission of Pachei together with the capture of Tinthong and Enjakhup in Jampi area, marked the end of active rebellion.⁵¹ His followers were left without a leader to guide them during the rebellion.

By the middle of 1919, the active military punitive operation was over, as almost all the recalcitrant Kuki chiefs had been either captured or surrendered. They were tried by Special Tribunal, and awarded punishments under Regulation 111 of 1818.

Gradually, the troops were withdrawn from north-west, south-west, south-east and western areas. The rebels were completely disarmed. Some seventeen permanent posts were established at different places in Manipur (including Assam area). Important roads which were closed during the Kuki insurgency were opened. Demobilization was nearly completed, and civil power was handed over to the local administrations.⁵²

The old system of administration to which we would now refer, was found inefficient to deal with the situation and many changes were made in it.

The Nemesis of Local Maladministration

Of the factors responsible for the Kuki rebellion the most important was their accumulated dissatisfaction with the local maladministration. The British officers were mainly responsible for the outbreak of the rebellion. Had they realized the strong feelings of the Kukis on labour enrolment, there would have been possibly no such revolt. Here we would highlight the drawbacks in the administrative machinery which failed to check the rebellion.

First, the method of recruitment was not justified from the point of view of 'fair selection'. The Home Department, Government of India, had already advised the local Government not to use force against the persons who were unwilling to become labourers. It had further warned that action should be taken only if peace and tranquility within the state were threatened. The Political Agent made a mistake by giving warning to the Kukis that they would be punished if they did not enlist themselves in the Labour Corps to be sent to Mesopotamia. With regard to the raising of the Second Labour Corps both the Political Agent and the Maharaja committed a mistake by whole-heartedly enclosing the proposal, even-though they had the

previous experience of the Kukis (and Nagas) offering resistance at the time of the first such recruitment. The use of force by the Political Agent ultimately led to the Kuki rebellion. Similar feelings were expressed by S.R. Hignell, Army Department, Government of India, who felt that the recruitment procedures adopted by the local administration officers seemed to have been extra-ordinarily ill-advised.⁵³

When the hostilities actually opened the administration further proved itself incompetent for dealing with the situation. It was highly unimaginative to leave the entire administration covering about 7000 sq. miles of tribal area in the hands of the one British Officer designated as 'president' of the Manipur State Durbar. It was more serious particularly, in view of the fact, that the President was busy with the valley administration, and could not devote full time to the affairs of the hills. He was understandably not able to frequent visit the hill areas for administrative purposes. Such visits were highly essential for good administration. Naturally the people of hill areas felt neglected. The Political Agent, who shared the responsibility for the administration of the hills, abstained from action which might have weakened the President's authority.⁵⁴ Thus, lack of 'direct contact' aggravated the situation further and made a compromise difficult. The British Administration later admitted the lacunae in the administration before and during the Kuki rebellion.

Lastly, the *lambus* or interpreters employed as intermediaries during the first recruitment of labourers were largely responsible for creating a misunderstanding between the British officers and the Kukis. These *lambus* played a sinister role in inciting the Kukis to revolt against the British Rule.⁵⁵ At the same time they took money from those Kukis who did not like to enlist themselves as members of the Labour Corps.⁵⁶ It was a crime committed by the *lambus* against the Government. Thus the role of *lambus* 'as most unsatisfactory intermediary',⁵⁷ was one of the factors in the Kuki insurgency.

Ensuring Political and Administrative Reforms

The Maharaja and British Officers, thus, were made fully aware of the drawbacks in the State administration which had led to the Kuki uprising of 1917. It was realized that one officer was not sufficient to look after the hilly areas as well as the valley of Manipur.

Even before the completion of the Kuki punitive action, the British Government in India felt the necessity of reform in the administrative machinery of the Manipur State. The Chief Commissioner of Assam himself went to Manipur, to discuss with the Maharaja and local British officers the arrangements regarding the future administration of the hill tribes.⁵⁸ The Maharaja and the Chief Commissioner agreed to establish three sub-divisions in three separate areas of the hills. It was further agreed that each of the sub-divisions would be administered by one European Officer designated as 'Sub-divisional Officer'. The three sub-divisions were as follows:

1. The South-West Area with headquarters at Chura Chandpur.
2. The North-West Area with headquarters at Tamenglong.
3. The North-East Area with headquarters at Ukhrul.⁵⁹

The hill areas in the north of Manipur including the Mao and Maram Naga groups, the whole of the Mombi areas in the south-east, and the various tribes bordering the valley were to be administered directly by the Durbar President.⁶⁰

The new scheme was likely to be a burden on the State economy as it would involve an amount of Rs. 1,25,000 on the hill administration. This was facilitated by the declaration of the President in an open Durbar that the Government of India had offered certain 'financial concession.'⁶¹ The annual subsidy of Rs. 50,000 payable by the State was reduced to Rs. 5,000 for a period of ten years. The Government also announced to forego the annual contribution of Rs. 30,000, which had been paid hitherto towards the upkeep of the Kohima-Imphal road, and deferred the payment of annual instalments towards the repayment of annual instalments of the loan taken by the Durbar from Rs. 60,000 to 30,000.⁶²

The question of jurisdiction of the Maharaja on collection of revenue was also taken up and after prolonged discussions the Governor-in-Council agreed to the Maharaja being given the power of revision in the revenue matter, as it was given in the civil and criminal cases under the sub-heading 'Administration of Justice' of the 'Rules for the Management of the State of Manipur.'⁶³ This was approved by the Government of India.

One more revision was brought in the rules which governed the administration of the Manipur State. The Rule 18 initially described the Maharaja as only a forwarding agent. Regarding this point the

Governor-in-Council proposed with the approval of the Maharaja to abrogate this clause as it sometimes had resulted in causing unnecessary delay. With regard to the interpretation of the rule 9 which allowed the Maharaja to record his own opinion only with reference to any suggestions made by the Durbar for the modification in the President's draft budget; and took away the Maharaja's right to extend his own suggestions, the Maharaja protested because he considered this as curtailment of his authority. The Governor-in-Council agreed to give to the Maharaja the right to place before the Durbar any observations or criticisms on the budget which he thought fit.⁶⁴

The Governor-in-Council also agreed to the proposal of the Maharaja to restore the power of magistrate to him whereby he could punish any one violating the discipline in the police.⁶⁵ Recommendations were made to this effect to the Government of India in the following words:

'The Commandant of the State Military Police shall exercise powers corresponding to the powers of a 1st Class Magistrate, and an officer temporarily officiating as Commandant shall exercise powers corresponding to the powers of a 2nd-class Magistrate, for the purpose of inquiring into or trying any offence committed by a member of the Military Police Act, 1861 (V of 1861), or Under the Assam Rifles Act (Assam Act 1 of 1920), and any offence committed by a member of the Military Police against the person or property of another member and punishable under any law in force in Manipur.'⁶⁶

The effects of revisions in the 'Rules for the Management of the State of Manipur' could not be felt immediately. It helped in bringing to an end the after-effects of the Kuki rebellion. The travelling British officers were greeted in a friendly manner and extended due hospitality. In May 1920, Sir Nicholas Beatson-Bell made a long trip, unaccompanied by any escort, through the hill areas which had been in rebellion. He visited also the sub-divisions, and was thoroughly satisfied with the manner in which the new system of administration had been introduced in the hill areas.⁶⁷

References

1. Home Department, Political File No. 34, July 1917, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

2. Chengjapao of Aishan village, head of the Thado Kukis, opposed the recruitment of labourers. He informed all the village chiefs not to obey British Orders, and to resist enrolment of labours, if necessary by force. Foreign Department, Political File No. 4-12, NAI, New Delhi.
3. *Ibid.*
4. J.C. Higgins, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1916-17* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1917), p. 2.
5. Foreign Department, Political File No. 4-12, 1920, NAI, New Delhi.
6. To Viceroy of India, as Maharaja wrote, 'In view of the size and frequency of the drafts required for the first Corps of hillmen, I regret that I shall be unable to raise a Second Corps of hillmen. But I hope to raise a second Corps, when required, from any valley Manipuri subjects (i.e. Meities-mine), and it is my desire to accompany it on active service.' Foreign Department, Political File No. 54, 1917, NAI, New Delhi.
7. Foreign Department, Political File No. 40, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
8. Foreign Department, Political File No. 54, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.

The Army Department of the Government of India, also was of the same opinion because already there were four Manipuri Labour Companies serving in France. Foreign Department, Political File No. 40, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.

9. Foreign Department, Political File No. 320, 1922, NAI, New Delhi.
10. Foreign Department, Political File No. 4-12, 1920, NAI, New Delhi.
11. Office of the Political Agent, Special File No. 388, 1919, Secretariat Library & Record Branch, Manipur.
12. Foreign Department, Political File No. 7-131, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
13. J.C. Higgins, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1916-17* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1917), p. 2.
14. J.C. Higgins, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1914-15* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1915), p.2.
15. As to how these rumours spread the Political Agent in Manipur said, 'The sources of the rumours could not be traced. They were probably attributable to the ignorance of the people'. *Ibid*
16. Under the system of forced labour every male citizen above sixteen years of age had to perform the assigned work for ten days in every forty days. They would be given wages for their service. In certain case if any one failed to pay taxes, one had to give labour instead of taxes. E.W. Dunn (Com.), *Abridged Gazetteer of Manipur* (Simla: Government Central Printing Office, 1891), p. 33.
17. Foreign Department, Political File No. 7-131, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
18. Robert H. Henderson, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1917-18* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1918), p. 1.

19. Foreign Department, Political File No. 4-12, 1920, NAI, New Delhi.
20. Most of the Kuki chiefs admitted that they were instigated by Chinga Khamba Sana Chaoba Singh to rise against the British Government and Maharaja. A Government report also stated that Chinga Khamba Sana Chaoba Singh claimed himself as the elder brother of the present Maharaja. The report charged him with the responsibility of incitement of the Kukis and others to make war on the local Government with a selfish motive of establishing himself as the Raja of Manipur. Office of the Political Agent, Special File No. 388, 1919, SLRS, Manipur.
21. Robert H. Henderson, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1917-1918* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1918), p.1.
22. G. Cimson, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1919-20* (Imphal: State Press, 1920), p.1.
23. Foreign Department, Political File No. 7-131, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
24. *Ibid.*
In the Upper Chindwin, the trouble was '...due to no local grievance but solely caused by rebellion in Manipur since Kukis on Burma side are off-shoots of Chassads in Manipur'. Home Department, Police File No. 181-184, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. Foreign Department, Political File No. 4-12, 1920, NAI, New Delhi.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Office of the Political Agent, Special File No. 388, 1919, SLRB, Manipur.
30. Robert H. Henderson, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1917-18* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co, 1918), p.1.
31. Since December 22, 1917, the Column of Assam Rifles and Burma Military Police were on duty. Foreign Department, Political File No. 4-12, 1920, NAI, New Delhi.
32. After the Military Operation, they had expanded their areas of raids. First, they launched raids on friendly and neighbouring Naga villages. Secondly, the plain people became a target to be attacked. Lastly, they did not spare the Government Force.
33. Home Department, Political File No. 40, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
34. Home Department, Political File No.181-184, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Beatson-Bell, Chief Commissioner of Assam, said, 'Our casualties have been heavier than those of the enemy. Of we have inflicted 'Punishment' and a good many chiefs and their villages have 'come in'. Foreign Department, Political File No. 7-131, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.

37. Home Department, Police File No. 134-135, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
38. Home Department, Police File No. 190-191, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
39. Home Department, Political File No. 29, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
40. Foreign Department, Political File No. 7-131, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
41. Home Department, Political File No. 251, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
42. Home Department, Political File No. 31, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
43. Home Department, Political File No. 185, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
44. Home Department, Political File No. 221, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
45. Home Department, Political File No. 42, 1919, NAI, New Delhi.
46. Home Department, Police File No. 47, NAI, New Delhi.
47. On January 15, 1919, General Officer Commanding in Manipur summarising the progress report of the operations, informed the Assam Government that forty-four persons were killed and burnt forty-eight villages and destroyed forty mithuns and large quantities of foodgrain. Fifty-four Kuki rebels also surrendered to the Government.
48. Home Department, Police File No. 8, 1919, NAI, New Delhi.
49. Foreign Department, Political File No. 94-161, NAI, New Delhi.
50. Home Department, Police File No. 135, 1919, NAI, New Delhi.
51. Col. L.W. Shakespeare, *History of the Assam Rifles* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1929), p. 235.
52. Home Department, Political File No. 47, 1919, NAI, New Delhi.
53. Foreign Department, Political File No. 7-131, 1918, NAI, New Delhi. W.S. Mevar, President of the Central Recruiting Board, held the same view of Hignall. As the method of labour enrolment was 'injudicious', the Kukis of 'Unadministered Area'—Somra Tract—rebelled out of brotherly fellow-feeling. Foreign Department, Political File No. 350, 1922, NAI, New Delhi.
54. Foreign Department, Political File No. 4-12, 1920, NAI, New Delhi.
55. Cole, wife of the late Political Agent in Manipur, having an opportunity to know well about the Kuki uprising, once said, '... the interpreters used when the first endeavours were made to recruit in the Kuki country were to a large extent responsible for the trouble that they themselves did not want to be sent overseas as interpreters. Foreign Department, Political File No. 7-131, 1918, NAI, New Delhi.
56. It was a fact that when the Kuki chiefs were against the enrolment of labourers the *lambus* used it unscrupulously as an opportunity to make money for themselves. Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam* (Shillong: Assam Government Press, 1942), p. 5.
57. Robert Reid, *op.cit.*, p. 4.
58. Foreign Department, Political File No. 135, 1919, NAI, New Delhi.

59. C. Gimson, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1919-20*. (Imphal: State Press, 1920), p. 2.
60. *Ibid.*
61. Foreign Department, Political File No. 190, 1919, NAI, New Delhi.
62. Foreign Department, Political File No. 105-107, 1920, NAI, New Delhi.
63. Foreign Department, Political File No. 1011, 1923, NAI, New Delhi.
64. The revised draft Rule 10 was given approval by the Government of India in its letter No. 1089/1011, dated July 5, 1923.
65. Foreign Department, Political File No. 419, 1924, NAI, New Delhi.
66. *Rules for the Management of the State of Manipur*, p. 4.
67. Foreign Department, Political File No. 105-107, 1920, NAI, New Delhi.

3

Naga Unrest: I. Jadonang's Movement

Unrest among the Kacha Nagas and the Kabui Nagas' of the north-west of Manipur during the early 1930's was a turning point in the political history of the tribals of Manipur. Initially, the movement had a religious colouring. Subsequently, it partially assumed political overtones. The progenitor of this movement was one Jadonang, a Rongmai Naga of Puilon (Kambiron) village in Tamenglong sub-division of Manipur. He was an ordinary soldier enlisted during the First World War, who had served in Mesopotamia (Iraq). On his return to his village, he started preaching a new cult from early 1925 onwards. He was arrested in 1928 on orders of the then Sub-Divisional Officer, S.J. Duncan, for prophesying the imminent replacement of the British Raj by a "Kabui Naga Raj"¹ and was imprisoned in Tamenglong.²

Jadonang's cult was based on animistic beliefs. It was a form of 'debased Hinduism'.³ Like Hindus he constructed a temple and installed beside others an image of the Hindu god, Vishnu. The new cult was contrary to the ancient beliefs and customs of the Nagas. He justified it on the ground that he had been ordained in a dream by the god of Bhubon Hills (in Lakhipur) to build a temple for the prosperity and good health for every one.⁴ By posing as a medicine-man he got a chance to meet the villagers at large, whenever he went he preached his religion and political cult. His popularity went on increasing day by day and soon people were to regard him as a god.

The movement of Jadonang had two motives—annihilation of the Kukis and overthrow of the British Rule. The Jadonang movement aimed at the suppression of the Kukis who had made the Nagas their staunch enemies from the time of their rebellion in 1917-1919. The origin of the enmity between the Nagas and the Kukis lay in the fact that the Nagas did not join the rebellion, and at the same time they

were loyal to the British Government. Jadonang thought that time had come to take the revenge on the Kukis for their wiping out of a considerable number of Kabui Naga village during the Kuki Rebellion of 1917-1919. He reminded the Nagas of the tragic story of two young Naga girls, who had been murdered during the Kuki Rebellion. He knew that this would pinch the hearts of the Nagas. By this story he deliberately incited them for vendetta.⁵

Secondly, Jadonang predicted the end of the British Rule and advent of the Kabui Naga Raj. This was purely political. He whispered to the Nagas that it should be kept very secret from the Kukis and the Government. He threatened that his miraculous powers were such that he could hear from his house everything that was said, and would kill anyone, who gave the secret away to the Government or to the Kukis.⁶ He would not allow the Kukis to walk about the earth.⁷ He further advised them not to hit the Kukis first unless they committed any hostile act against them, otherwise it would be better to keep peace. A Naga revolt against the Kukis would mean the suppression of the Kukis by force. He wanted the Angami Nagas also to join the Kacha Nagas in their war against the Kukis. He talked of the common origin of the Kacha Nagas and the Angamis even though they lived in different countries and spoke different dialects, and were brothers of the same stock, who drank *pita modhu* or rice beer. It was only a political approach to the Angamis to get cooperation and help from them. He sent word to the Angamis that he would visit them in the form of a bird or snake. There would be war against those persons who were unwilling to join him. The war might begin in 1930-31 or next generation when the rice plant reached a foot in height. All the Kukis would be wiped out within three years.⁸ To prove himself possessing supernatural powers Jadonang said that he would reign for three years, and then would become a bird and fly about, and see exactly all the Kacha Nagas were doing. If Kacha Nagas wanted to speak to him, they must come forward without delay.

Jadonang ordered all the Nagas not to cooperate with the British Government in any way. He gave out word that the revenue for that year could be paid to the Government but it should be paid to him in the following year, 1931-32.⁹ He further said no cotton should be sold, as he wanted all the cotton available to make an airship with. It was an open challenge to the powerful and mighty British Empire and was soon to bring its nemesis. Referring to an English translation from

an Assamese Report (June 5, 1931), J.P. Mills, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills (now Nagaland), reported the further development of the political situation to J.C. Higgins, Political Agent in Manipur. Jadonang expressed the intention of all the Nagas who had been desirous of independence from British Rule.¹⁰ It was learnt that all the Kacha Naga villages of the Naga Hills were going to welcome him with many *mithuns* as presents. The report said that Jadonang has secretly told the Nagas that on hearing a sound in the air following a white cloud they should know that the war was on and they should prepare themselves for it. Only then they should be ready for defence.¹¹ Another report from the Sub-Divisional Officer said that about four hundred Nagas had gathered at Lunkao village and Jinam river (in North Cachar Hills) where they decided that, before attacking the Government, they should first of all raid Saipimol, one of the richest villages of the Kukis. This news had alarmed the Kukis. The State Kuki servants of Tamenglong were not in a position to move out for their census work, road works, vaccination and serving of *parwanas* and summons. The Kukis of Saipimol complained that Jadonang had collected guns with the intention to go to war against the Kukis, and the British Government.¹² They confirmed the contemplated plan of Jadonang of a mass massacre of the Kukis. The Angamis were coming in three batches to fight against the Kukis in the south. This corroborated the information gathered by Higgins and Mills.¹³ The Political Agent, received information from a Naga Christian of Taningjam (a Kacha Naga village) reporting that the Nagas planned to murder the Kuki road *Mohurrier* who had been working there.¹⁴ In the meanwhile, Jadonang intentionally spread a rumour of victory of the Kabui Nagas in their war against the Kukis. The Deputy Commissioner had also received as many as fifty letters conveying that Jadonang had threatened to launch a war.

Ramifications of the Jadonang Cult

Jadonang's movement did not remain confined to the north-west of Manipur but soon spread out to the neighbouring Cachar Hills and Naga Hills.¹⁵

The Government realized the necessity of dispatching a force to control the Naga disturbances and to bring confidence among the Kukis. The Deputy Commissioner sent a small force of three sections

of the Assam Rifles to Henima to forestall the possible disorder. He requested the Political Agent of Manipur to arrest Jadonang, who had just left for Bhubon. The Political Agent, J.C. Higgins, employed some *Lam Sabedars* and interpreters as he saw no need of dispatching an expedition for the time being. Duncan was to follow the *Lam Subedars* but Higgins thought an European Officer would not be so much helpful. But the Deputy Commissioner wanted to deal with the Naga unrest with a strong hand. As requested by the Deputy Commissioner, the Political Agent agreed to the sending of a military expedition to the Naga Hills,¹⁶ under the command of one Dallas Smith.

The Political Agent informed the Deputy Commissioner that Jadonang had left for Binnakandi, a Naga village, some days ago with thirty men taking the presents and offering with him. He was well guarded by his followers. Higgins advised the Deputy Commissioner to send an armed force to arrest him immediately.¹⁷ It was reported that Jadonang had been a frequent visitor to Lakhipur. The Political Agent also informed the *Mauzadar* of Jiribam that the Nagas should be warned that their villages would be burnt if any of them created trouble.¹⁸ Higgins was not in favour of the withdrawal of the armed force from the trouble-spots until the Naga unrest was controlled.¹⁹

Mills reported that all the Kacha Naga villages were affected by the movement of Jadonang with one exception. Dallas Smith reported from Henima that Jadonang's movement had been increasing rapidly. He suspected that his movement had spread over Khonoma or portions of Khonoma. But he could not collect definite information that how they had been affected. The Political Agent was doubtful whether Mao and Maram areas might have been affected. The interpreters seemed to be ignorant of the development. Probably the Kabuis kept everything secret. The Manipuris were also supposed to be blind about the Naga unrest. He wrote to W.A. Cosgrave, Chief Secretary, Government of Assam: 'I shall also send a detachment up to Tamenglong, to occupy the fort there, to reassure the Kukis and Kacha Nagas. It is possible that the trouble may fizzle out if Jadonang is arrested....'²⁰ The Kukis were nervous whether they would be attacked by the Nagas. The Nagas had threatened that they would continue the movement even if Jadonang was arrested.²¹

The news of Kabui Naga unrest was brought by Harvey from Kohima relating that with exception to Lakema all the villages of

Kacha Nagas in the Naga Hills were also affected. Jadonang had taken a large number of *mithun* from the villagers as a fee of his treatment of the sick and ill persons, and for the improvement of crops and keeping off rats. When some of the Khonoma men tried to see him who flatly refused to meet them on the ground they were innately suspicious being as they were pretty traders. However, there was no restriction, when they saw his sisters. The Sub-divisional Officer of North Cachar wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills informing the Nagas of this area particularly from the villages of Thinge, Hejaichak, Laisong, Lonkai and Asalu were sending deputations to Rangkombe, a Manipuri Naga.²²

All of a sudden Higgins received a telegram (dated 20.2.31) from J.P. Mills informing him that Jadonang had been captured.²³

The Deputy Commissioner asked to send a police escort and extradition warrant.²⁴ Jadonang was captured on February 19, 1931, and kept under the custody of the Cachar authorities until taken over by the Political Agent on March 8. In reply to the telegram (dated 20.2.31), the Political Agent informed that the warrant had already been posted. And a column might reach Jirighat, probably on March 6, to take over Jadonang.²⁵ On February 24, 1931, Higgins left Imphal with a column consisting of one platoon of the 4th Assam Rifles and one British and one Gurkha officers with a view to bring Jadonang to Imphal.²⁶ At last, Higgins reached Jirighat and he brought Jadonang to Imphal via Tamenglong on March 29, 1931.²⁷

The Kacha Naga unrest did not subside even after the arrest of Jadonang. Several *maibas* (medicine-men) had sprung up in different villages. They posed themselves as villages leaders in their respective villages. One Naga girl named Gaidinliu became the chief follower of Jadonang cult. She continued the Jadonang cult.²⁸ About this lady we will have to say something in the next chapter. In Cachar after Jadonang's arrest there was considerable alarm for some days as it was believed that the Nagas were coming down to the plains to raid villages and tea gardens. A detachment of the Assam Rifles under the command of Manipur and Cachar so as to watch the Kacha Naga villages close to the Manipur border.²⁹ The Political Agent received a report from Haflong that the Kacha and Kabui Nagas were collecting arms to attack the Kukis.³⁰ As a security measure, the Political Agent sent out a contingent to Tamenglong, and going out with the Cachar

Road column of one platoon. He was already well apprised of the rumour that the Kacha Nagas and Angamis were intending to attack the Kukis of Saipimol. As a matter of fact not a single Angami was issued pass for an entrance into the Manipur territory since February 6. The Political Agent, in the meantime, kept in contact with the Maharaja of Manipur about the developments of the Naga movement. The Sub-divisional Officer reported that the Nagas and the Kukis of Hungrum Mauzas and Changsen were in a state of unrest or tension.³¹ The Nagas had started moving in a large group. And in the night all the Naga villages were barricaded and the whole night they kept vigil. They seemed to apprehend danger from across the State of Manipur. There were chances of clash between the Nagas and the Kukis. The Sub-divisional Officer took timely action to prevent the two tribes from going in a group with spears and daos or daggers. He ordered them to go to their *jhums*. In order to restore confidence in the Government, he informed the Nagas about the arrest of Jadonang.

By the end of March 1931, the movement of Jadonang seemed to have died down barring some occasional reports of unrest or tension in some affected areas of Manipur and neighbouring hill region of North Cachar and Naga Hills. The Officer Commanding found the Nagas of Mogulong, Impa and Katon villages of Tamenglong area, showing friendly attitude towards the Kukis.³² The prolonged tour of the Political Agent in Manipur and Deputy Commissioner's in Naga Hills, with escorts of the Assam Rifles through the effected villages immediately resolved tension between the rival tribes.³³

The Trial and Execution of Jadonang

The Manipur State Government awarded a sum of hundred rupees to the Cachar Police as a record for the arrest of Jadonang. Some charges of serious nature then were framed against Jadonang for the murder of four Manipuri *pan* or betelnut dealers some time in March 1930.³⁴ The murder took place in the servant quarters of the rest-house in the village of Kambiron, at the instigation of Jadonang. First, the news of murder was brought to the road *Mohori* by Muktikhulen village on March 30, 1931. And later on it was reported to the Sub-Divisional Officer.³⁵

Immediately after the arrest of Jadonang, the criminal investigation was begun. In the Court of Political Agent of Manipur, he and his five

associates were convicted for the murder of four Manipuri *pan* dealers. All in all there were twenty-four accused persons directly or indirectly involved in the murder case.³⁶

Jadonang was ultimately sentenced to death in the Court of Political Agent, Manipur, in the Criminal Case No. 10 of 1931.³⁷ And his four associates were treated under sections 302, 109, 201, and 202 of the Indian Penal Code. However, Jadonang was allowed to appeal to the Governor-General. He pleaded his innocence and ignorance. He said that he had no personal benefit or motive in killing those four Manipuri *pan* dealers. He said that he was at Nungkao village when the murder took place. He asserted that he had never advised the villagers to murder the four Manipuris. He pleaded that the other accused when they could find no person, who could be held guilty for the offence (as they lost their leader Gaidinliu) they just tried to pass on the guilt to him. He requested the Governor-General to examine the case, apportion the blame to those really guilty and waive the sentence of death awarded to him.³⁸

After a detailed study of the petition of Jadonang, the Governor-in-Council did not find any reason to reconsider his case and upheld Jadonang's death sentence. His Order read: '...His Excellency the Governor-in-Council has heard Srijut Rohini Kumar Choudhary, Advocate, on behalf of the six accused sentenced to death and has examined the evidence carefully.

'It is open to the obvious objection that almost entirely the evidence is that of accomplices in the murder, most of the witnesses trying to exculpate themselves. Under the circumstances however no other kind of evidence was available and His Excellency in Council is disposed to accept the Session Judge's findings as to the facts.³⁹

Concludingly, the Governor-General-in-Council said: 'The Session Judge, who had the advantage of seeing this witness and hearing him depose regarded his evidence as unreliable and His Excellency sees no reason to differ from this view. But at the same time on the evidence as a whole. His Excellency-in-Council is not prepared to say that various detailed acts of certain individuals can be proved to the extent of justifying such discrimination as would make it right to impose the death sentence, even when they pleaded guilty. All took part in the riot. It was a dark night and there must have been confusion. It is true these men have confessed though only admit actual killing.⁴⁰ The Governor, therefore, converted the death sentence of other five

convicts namely, Luntong, Machungnong, Dulungpau, Mpuongpsu and Siphai, to transportation for life, whereas in the case of Jadonang the former decision was not altered. Moreover, the Governor-General did not like to interfere with the case of condemned prisoner Jadonang. He said that the 'law must take its course.'⁴¹ Eventually, Jadonang was executed by hanging on August 29, 1931.

References

1. Foreign Department, Political File No. 144, 1931, NAI, New Delhi.
2. Office of the Political Agent in Manipur, File No. 12, 1931, SLRB, Imphal.
3. R.C. Johnson to the Editor of *The Living Age* (New York).
4. First, Jadonang came forward as a *maiba* (medicine-man). He also claimed to be divinely 'healer'. He went from door to door and from village to village treating the ill. Often people came to him for treatment. He took three rupees for treatment, a bottle of *zu* (wine) for interpreting dreams and four rupees for praying to god for the welfare of the dead. It is noteworthy that he was very considerate towards the patients whom he could not cure and refunded their money. He told the Nagas to sacrifice more *mithuns* (sacrificial animals) to the gods to gain prosperity. Jadonang displayed mystical qualities by performing magical tricks such as water came out whenever he drew his sword from its case, and whosoever drank that water was to receive the blessings of god. He had two pet pythons also under the plinth of his house. He said that these pythons could talk to him. Thus he impressed the Naga villagers that he had supernatural power.
5. Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills to Commissioner of Surma Valley, 24 March 1931, Foreign Department File No. 144/-P/31-Poll, 1931.
6. Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills to Commissioner of Surma Valley, 16 March 1931, *Ibid*.
7. Office of the Political Agent in Manipur, File No. 12, 1931, SLRB, Imphal.
8. Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills to Commissioner of Surma Valley, 18 March 1931, Foreign Department File No. 144/-P/31-Poll, 1931.
9. Chief Secretary to the Governor of Assam, to Political Secretary of Government of India, 25 February 1931.
10. J.P. Mills to Political Agent, 5 June 1931, Office of the Political Agent, File No. 12, 1931, SLRB, Imphal.
11. *Ibid*.
12. Office of the Political Agent in Manipur, File No. 12, 1931, SLRB, Imphal.

13. Chief Secretary to the Governor of Assam, to Political Secretary of Government of India, 31 March, 1931, Foreign Department File No. 144-P/31-Poll, 1931.
14. The Political Agent was of the opinion that there would have been mass killings of the Kukis and Nagas if the road *Mohurrier* would have been fatally victimized. *Ibid.*
15. Henima, Sarema, Injoma, Intema, Jawna, Laloi, Dupema, Insung, etc., were some of the affected villages of the Naga Hills.
16. Foreign Department, Political File No. 144, 1931, NAI, New Delhi.
17. Telegram from Political Agent of Manipur to the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, 14 February 1931, Political Agent File No. 12, 1931 (Tel. No. is not mentioned).
18. *Ibid.*
19. Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills to Political Agent of Manipur, 14 February 1931, *Ibid.*
20. Political Agent of Manipur to Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, 18 February 1931. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. Sub-Divisional Officer of North Cachar Hills, to Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, 17 February 1931, *Ibid.*
23. A Manipuri described the story of Jadonang's arrest, as he narrated to the Sub-Divisional Officer. A large and long procession of the Kabui Nagas and 'Haos' including persons of both sexes went to the temple of Bhubneswar in Cachar. The party was headed by an 'old Kuki', who was regarded as their god. He rode on a pony. On their return way, they were stopped by Cachar sepoy to find out whether Jadonang was among them. Jadonang was arrested on the spot.
24. Telegram from Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills to Political Agent of Manipur, 20 February 1931, Political Agent File No. 12 (Tel. No. is not mentioned).
25. Telegram from Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills to Political Agent of Manipur, 20 February 1931, Political Agent File No. 12 (Tel. No. is not mentioned).
26. They marched down hundred miles on the bridle path from Imphal to Cachar visiting on their way several Naga villages. On reaching Kambiron Village the Political Agent found a decorated temple erected by Jadonang. He destroyed the temple and shot the pet python of Jadonang. Village elders did not raise objection to the Political Agent, because it was not a tradition among the Nagas to have a temple. It was his own style to build a temple. Rather they appreciated the Political Agent. A.C. McCall, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1930-31* (Imphal: State Printing Press, 1931), p. 28.

27. Foreign Department, Political File No. 144, 1931, NAI, New Delhi.
28. C.W.L. Harvey, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1931-32* (Imphal: State Printing Press, 1931), pp. 3-4.
29. Foreign Department, Political File No. 144, 1931, NAI, New Delhi.
30. Political Agent of Manipur to the Maharaja of Manipur, 23 February 1931, Political Agent File No.12, 1931.
31. It was also reported that there was tension between the Nagas and Kukis in the north-west hill areas of Manipur. The Officer Commanding, Captain W.K. Phillips, Fourth Assam Rifles, communicated with the Political Agent that there was sign of hostilities between the two rival tribes in some areas of Tamenglong and beyond the boundary of Manipuri, i.e., Kohima, Haflong, Silchar boundary and to the south as far as Aegui and Alauba. But the village heads denied such fictitious report. However, it was a fact that the Nagas refused to talk with the Kukis. And they never visited the Kuki villages. Letter from the Political Agent of Manipur to the Maharaja of Manipur, dated 23.2.31, *Ibid.*
32. In some areas of North Cachar Hills the Naga unrest was subsided just after the arrest of their leader, Jadonang. In Manipur, the last meeting of the Nagas, which held at Laishang or Laijang (Tamenglong) was broken up at once because of the information of Jadonang's arrest and demolition of his two temples at Kambiron. Moreover, the Kukis had started jhuming as before the trouble begun. Personal Tour Notes of C. Gimson, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, dated 21.3.31, *Ibid.*
33. A.C. McCall, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1930-31*, (Imphal: State Printing Press, 1931), p. 2.
34. The names of the deceased *pan* dealers were namely, (1) Thounaojam Mera Singh, (2) Waikhom Thamban Singh, (3) Waikhom Pheijao Singh, and (4) Waikhom Sajau Singh.
35. Foreign Department, Political File No. 18(7), 1931, NAI, New Delhi.
36. Some of the accused were charged with murder under v/s 302 I.P.C. and a few of them were convicted for the abetment of murder under v/s 109/302 I.P.C. and certain person under v/s 201, I.P.C. for causing evidence of the murderer to disappear. C.W.L. Harvey, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1931-32* (Imphal: State Printing Press, 1932), pp. 3-4.
37. The petition of Jadonang was rejected by the Political Agent on the ground that it did not disclose any new fact which was not before the session and the Governor of Assam when the sentence was confirmed. Moreover, the offence was deliberate and brutal. The petitioner took the main part in the murder and in arranging it. The Political Agent was under the impression that a lesson should be given to put off the tribal traditional head-hunting by giving them punishment. A counsel defended

the petitioner in the proceedings before the Governor. In the prosecution, nineteen persons were produced in the Court. All of them threw blame upon Jadohang. The Governor commented that this seemed to be a clear case for the death penalty or there were no extenuating circumstances. Foreign Department, Political File No. 18(7), 1931, NAI, New Delhi.

38. Jadohang to Governor-General-in-Council, 30 July 1931, *Ibid.*
39. Foreign Department, Political File No. 18 (7), 1931, NAI, New Delhi.
40. Telegram No. 862-1 from Political Secretary to the Governor-General-in-Council, 18 August 1931, *Ibid.*
41. C.W.L. Harvey, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1931-32* (Imphal: State Printing Press, 1931), pp. 3-4.

4

Naga Unrest: II. Gaidinliu's Movement 1932-33

After the execution of Jadonang, the Government of India thought peace would reign in the tribal areas of Manipur and adjacent areas. But contrary to their expectations, a Naga Joan of Arch by the name of Gaidinliu emerged to revive the Jadonang cult adding to it elements of her own cult.¹ This Jadonang-Gaidinliu cult was confined to the Kacha and the Kabui Nagas. Her pseudo-religion soon assumed political overtones and was to breed unrest again.

The Government, unaware of the implications of the new cult, did not immediately try to arrest the Sorceress who kept alive and continued to nurture the movement of Jadonang even after his death. Had the Government closely followed the activities of Gaidinliu, the 'witch-doctor', and suppressed her in time, the commotion in the hill areas of Manipur (and the Naga Hills) would have gradually subsided. As a matter of fact, the Government of India did not take any notice of the *laisabi* (unmarried girl) before Jadonang's arrest. A British administrator comments, 'Gaidiliu (*sic*),.... here is comparatively small fry: she is a girl, and I am not taking her along. We can get her later, if we want her, without sending an army for her.'² She became prominent and popular only after the arrest of her master Jadonang.

She started her pseudo-religious and semi-martial political movement after the death of Jadonang. The political aims of her movement were (i) the subjugation of the Kukis, (ii) the overthrow of the British Government, and (iii) the establishment of the 'Naga Raj'.

She aimed at the subjugation of the Kukis whom the Nagas envied for the last many years. During the Kuki Rebellion of 1917-1919, the Kukis plundered and looted several houses of the Nagas. They also took many heads of the Nagas. Naturally, it developed in

the form of hatred and enmity between the Nagas and the Kukis, even though they lived side by side in many villages of the north-west hill region of Manipur. She thought that the right time had come to take revenge from the Kukis when her movement was in zenith. On the other hand, the Kukis opposed the Jadonang-Gaidinliu cult.

Secondly, Gaidinliu aimed at the elimination of British administration. The Government was supposed to be a hindrance against achieving her objectives. Her no-tax campaign was the first kind of political disobedience to the British rule. This made it difficult for the British Officials to collect house-taxes from the tribal villages. Lastly, Gaidinliu's aim was to establish a 'Naga Raj' in Manipur. She calculated that this could be fulfilled only when the first three were materialized.

The fulfillment of Gaidinliu's will was not so easy; she had to establish herself as a champion of the Naga cause. And she had to face the might of the British Raj. In order to achieve her plan she practiced the same policy once adopted by her lord, Jadonang. Superstition was the main political weapon which she used to bring the Kacha and the Kabui Nagas under her loyalty. In every village, she took jointly an oath of secrecy and allegiance from the Nagas that they should not reveal her plan to the Kukis and the Government.³ She threatened the villagers that if anyone disclosed the matter to anyone, she would bring death to them. And those who disobeyed her would meet devastation and ruin in their life-time. But, on the other hand, with her triumph everybody would be blessed and glorified. She claimed herself not only as a goddess but also a magician. This was nothing but a political manouvre to establish herself as a spiritual leaders. Her propaganda of Jadonang's coming back to life was only a device to keep her hold on the movement. It was even rumoured that Jadonang had been traveling among them in spirit, and seeing them what they had been doing. She talked on the impersonation of Jadonang in some person who had been working with her.⁴

At her order, Jadonang's death anniversary was celebrated in the early spring of every year.⁵ During the ceremonies, all the Kukis were barred from entering into the villages where the death anniversary of Jadonang was performed. The Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills reported that there was a fanatical determination to honour and obey Jadonang at all costs, fanaticism is always dangerous, and in this case it is particularly so owing to its definitely anti-Kuki tone'.⁶

Gaidinliu continued the practice of human sacrifices to the god. She told her people to sacrifice more human heads so that they could get happiness. Like Jadonang she constructed some temples at Nungkao and other places, where sacrifices of human heads and *mithuns* were performed. She advised the Nagas to offer more presents to the god for a better rice harvest.

A study of the inner core of the movement of Guidinliu reveals her political ambitions. Her movement coincided with the Indian civil disobedience movement during the 1930s. Her no-tax campaign was a political manifestation of her disobedience of the British Government in India.⁷ She advised the villagers not to pay taxes to the government. At the zenith of her movement, she often used to remember the name of Mahatma Gandhi. She asked the villagers to believe in one 'god Gandhi'. She regarded Gandhi as the son of Jadonang.⁸ W.A. Cosgrave, Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam says: 'Apparently the common people had been told that the day of the Kacha Nagas was coming, further they were to believe in a god Gandhi, about whom some vague information had filtered through from the outer Hills, to retain their faith in Gaidinliu and to be ready for war in the autumn'⁹ If it were not so, the Nagas would not be coming to pay homage to the Congress President (Name is not mentioned).

In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, '...I heard a story which India ought to know and to cherish. It was the story of a young woman...she was about nineteen about six years ago when civil disobedience blazed over the length and breadth of India. News of Gandhi and the Congress reached her in her hill abode and found echo in her heart. She dreamed of freedom for her people and an ending of the galling restrictions they suffered from, and she raised the banner of independence and called her people to rally round it. Perhaps she thought, rather prematurely, that the British was fading out. But that Empire still functioned effectively and aggressively and it took vengeance on her and her people. Many villages were burnt and destroyed and this heroic girl was captured and sentenced to transportation for life....And India does not even know of this brave child of her hills, with the free spirit of the mountains in her. But her own people remember their *Gindallo Rani* (*sic*) and think of her with love and pride. And a day will come when India also will remember her and cherish her, and bring out of her prison cell.'¹⁰

Whether Gaidinliu's movement was really political, and for that she was in favour of the Indian National Congress. The answer to the questions is to be found from her interview by Sarabala Devi, Secretary of the Sylhet Mahila Sangha, when Gaidinliu was in the jail. The Secretary wrote: '...At first she declined to talk to me but when I gave her my credentials as a Congress worker her face beamed with delight...' ¹¹ It was learnt that she had indicated her desire to see Gandhi as soon as she was set free. When Sarabala further enquired Gaidinliu whether she would remain under the custody of the Mahila Sangha if she be released conditionally, she very happily agreed on Sarabala Devi's proposal. ¹²

Containment of Gaidinliu's Movement

As soon as Gaidinliu established herself as a Naga leader, her movement spread far and wide in the tribal areas of Manipur and Naga Hills. The tribal areas of the north-west of Manipur were the main centre of her movement. Particularly, the village of Leng was the most disturbed spot, where, generally, religious ceremonies were performed. Gradually, it expanded up to other areas neighbouring Manipur. ¹³ In Manipur all the Kacha Naga villages in the Barak Valley, west of Barak river and a few localities in the east were affected. The Rengloma and the Khungpung villages were not touched as those were closed to some bigger Kuki villages.

As the movement of Gaidinliu spread, it created a problem for the administrative machineries of the two Governments of Manipur and Naga Hills. The Government decided to take punitive measures to put down the movement. The Government ordered all the army headquarters that 'Every effort should be made to arrest the accused Gaidinliu who is absconding.' ¹⁴ Once she was arrested by the *lambus* who left her under the custody of her village elders who helped her to escape easily on the same day. ¹⁵ The village elders were severely punished but she could be never traced out. As a result, Gaidinliu's movement spread like anything.

One of the rather disheartening consequences of her reappearance as a leader was that the estrangement between the Nagas and the Kukis became more widespread. On January 19, 1932, it was reported that Nohanrami and Bopungwami villages just north to Henima were in a very excited state. The Sub-Divisional Officer of Haflong informed

the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills that the Kukis were about to be massacred by the Nagas.¹⁶ The Deputy Commissioner rushed to the spot and warned the Nagas about serious consequence that would follow such an eventuality.

The Deputy Commissioner once again tried to capture Gaidinliu at Henima but she escaped hurriedly to the North Cachar Hills District. On February 16, 1932, a section of the Assam Rifles met with stiff opposition from Gaidinliu's party who took to their heels after opening fire on them.¹⁷ A report received from the North Cachar Hills described the presence of Gaidinliu at Guilong, a Naga village. The Sub-Inspector with two constables and two interpreters hurried up to the spot. The party met with stiff opposition from the villagers. The Nagas attacked them with daggers and spears and wounded three policemen. On receipt of the news, the Sub-Divisional Officer (North Cachar Hills) accompanied by two sections of Assam Rifles marched on to Guilong on February 18, 1932, and seized all the spears and the daggers from the villagers. But they failed to arrest Gaidinliu. The movement of Gaidinliu seemed to be getting out of control. By an order of the Government of India, all authority was centralized in one person designated as Deputy Commissioner who established military outposts in the affected areas of Manipur, Cachar Hills and Naga Hills.¹⁸ As a result, the disturbed Naga villages of Manipur, Cachar Hills and Naga Hills were brought under control very soon. The Nagas were heavily fined and their arms were confiscated. The villages where the Gaidinliu movement was active were burnt down by the Government columns with a view to suppress the movement.¹⁹ The Deputy Commissioner also threatened to punish and burn down all the Naga villages if they failed to produce Gaidinliu.²⁰

The Manipur Government offered a reward of Rs. 500 and guns, and any villager, either in the State or in British India, which gave reliable information leading to her capture, would be granted ten years full remission of house tax. But no village turned up as an informer. The Deputy Commissioner was of the opinion that the movement of Gaidinliu could be easily suppressed if she was captured.²¹

The End of the Gaidinliu Myth

On October 17, 1932, Gaidinliu was arrested at Pulomi village in the Naga Hills. C.P. Mills, Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills,

described Gaidinliu's last action in this way, 'Gaidiliu (*sic*) was at Pulomi for about ten years before she was captured. She was clearly desperate, for she was at the end of the Kacha Naga country and had nowhere to go. She said openly that in the next two months either she or Government would win. All she could do was to stage a theatrical stand. Apparently she hoped that an 'army' would collect round her. Meanwhile she made Pulomi build an amazing Palisade,It ran all the way round the village except the ground is precipitous, and to make it Pulomi worked like slaves and destroyed a great deal of their valuable firewood reserve to provide the thousands of tree trunks required. Four thousand men with rifles behind it would have been formidable, but a few hundred Nagas inside it could either have thrown a spear over it nor wielded a *dao*. It had not been quite completed when she was captured. Her orders on what was to be done when an attacking force were remarkable. She would strike the *Shahibs* dead with her magic and her supporters were then to use daos only, for they would be enough. When Captain Macdonald made his attack at dawn on information brought to Kohima by a Pulomi *gaonbura* her 'army' melted away and there was no magic. Pulomi shouted and brandished daos according to her orders, but were careful not to go beyond then. No blow was struck and the village was clearly relieved when sepoy ignominiously hauled out of a house the biting, scratching girl whom they had uselessly worked so hard and killed so many cattle though any mistake on the part of the commandant would probably have led to an attack in desperation by her supporters....'²²

In the court of the Political Agent of Manipur, she was convicted for abetment of murder, and sentenced for transportation for life. Her petition of appeal was also rejected by the Governor-in-Council. The suggestion of transferring her outside British India was brushed aside.

As a first reaction to the capture of Gaidinliu some of her followers from the Leng and the Bopungwemi villages conspired to murder the Kuki *Choukidar* of the Lakema Inspection Bungalow in the Naga Hills. The *Choukidar* was suspected by the Naga to be the informer of Gaidinliu's presence at Pulomi which led to her arrest. On December, 1932, the *Choukidar* along with his wife and children were murdered by the followers of Gaidinliu. It was reported that even on the eve of her arrest her followers were so much agitated that they had stopped their daily work.²³

It was definitely thought that the movement of Gaidinliu might subside soon, but the unrest continued even after her arrest. Numerous fanatic and self-styled *maibas* sprang up as her successors. J.P. Mills once rightly said: 'The capture of Gaidinliu (*sic*) will not end the agitation...She will be succeeded by one or more 'mediums'. To be 'mediums' is not an offence under any law. Yet they will continue to keep the people in a state of constant excitement, and Nagas will continue to be set over against Government and Kukis. The result from the administrative point of view will be serious.'²⁴

During 1933, the movement of Gaidinliu gradually subsided when the Naga ring leaders Dikeo and Ramjo were arrested. Besides, some of the minor *maibas* were also captured. Subsequently, the tension between the Nagas and the Kukis also subsided and disappeared.

Release of Gaidiliu under Political Pressure

There could be no question of releasing Gaidiliu so long as the country was ruled by the British. She was strictly guarded during her detention. For some time even an interview with her was not allowed. A Mac-Donald, President of the Manipur State Durbar, thought that 'The immediate release of Guidallo (*sic*) is both undesired and undesirable, whether the Mahasabha (The Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha) agrees or not, no amount of agitation will procure the release of Guidallo...'²⁵ The Political Agent of Manipur was also of the same opinion. Further, the State authorities were apprehensive of another movement breaking and if she were immediately released, and that she was a potential threat to the peace of Manipur and Assam.²⁶

The man who was most considerate towards Gaidinliu was Jawaharlal Nehru. He never failed to understand the underlying political core of her. Nehru was apprised of her movement during his tour in Silchar in 1935. He was greatly shocked by the story of her detention. He discussed the matter with Congress leaders. At the Congress Session held at Haripur in 1936, a resolution was adopted for the immediate release of Gaidinliu.²⁷ The Assam Mahila Samity at the eleventh session of their conference held in Gauhati in January, 1939, also adopted a resolution of the early release of Gaidinliu.²⁸

The long silence of the Government of India regarding the release of Gaidiliu made some of the political minded persons more impatient. They started exposing the wretched health condition of her in the

Shillong jail so that it might draw the sympathy of people. But the Indian Government seemed to be indifferent to the request of different political organizations for the release of Gaidinliu. In pursuance of the resolution adopted at the Surma Valley Women's Conference, Saralabala Devi, Secretary of the Sylhet Mahila Sangha, appealed to the Government of Assam to release Gaidinliu unconditionally pending the decision of the Government of India.²⁹ She further insisted the Assam Government to place Gaidinliu under the custody of the Sylhet Mahila Sangha.

Referring back to the movement of Gaidinliu, Biresh Chandra Misra, Secretary of the Sylhet District Congress Committee and a member of the All India Congress Committee, criticized the repressive military measures adopted by the Provincial Government of Assam to suppress the no-tax campaign of Gaidinliu in the Naga Hills and the North Cachar Hills. Disapproving the policy of the British Government of India towards Gaidinliu, R.C. Johnson, a scholar of the University of Melbourne, wrote: '.....This rather sentimental story (of Gaidinliu) implies that British rule in India is not only tyrannical but also unjust....'³⁰

Sometime in 1944, the case of Gaidinliu was reviewed. Thereafter, she was interned in a village in Naga Hills under strict vigilance.³¹ Later, leniency was shown to her as she belonged to the weaker sex. Otherwise she would have met the same fate as Jadonang. In 1945, the question of withdrawal of ban on Gaidinliu received active consideration of the Central and Provincial Government.³² Gaidinliu was released in 1945 after having undergone fourteen years' imprisonment and was then interned in her native village. All in all, she spent fourteen years' imprisonment in the British Government jails: one year at Gauhati, Assam; six years at Shillong, Meghalaya; three year at Aizwl, Mizoram; and four years at Tura, Garo Hills. With the independence of India she was given her full liberty at the behest of Nehru.³³ All restrictions on her residence and movement were also removed.

References

1. Gaidinliu had come into contact with Jadonang at an early age of thirteen. He found her a promising disciple. Around 1930, first, she met him when she went to him for an interpretation of her dreams. At that time she was ill. She once again met him for the same after two or three months. Then she came under the complete influence of her master Jadonang. She then became a *maibi* (medicine-woman). Gradually, she stepped into the shoes of the master.

2. Political Agent to Captain of the Fourth Assam Rifles, 13 March 1931, Political Agent File No. 12, 1931.
3. Foreign Department, Political File No. 189, 1932, NAI, New Delhi.
4. *Ibid.*
5. On the occasion of Jadonang's death anniversary there would be drumming and singing in a state of delirium. In honour of their god (Jadonang) the Nagas would dig a tank in spite of the warnings of the Deputy Commissioner, at an incident of Bopungwemi village (Naga Hills), that they should be punished. Rangkilang was the chief leader of the Bopungwemi incident. He was a ring leader and sooth-sayer who claimed to be the mouthpiece of Jadonang. He was already arrested by the Naga Hills police force.
6. Foreign Department, Political File No. 189, 1932, NAI, New Delhi. The Deputy Commissioner was afraid of such death anniversary of Jadonang as there had been chances of clash between the Nagas and the Kukis. He further said that ceremonies meant excitement, and, in this case, excitement meant anti-Kuki feelings.
7. Political Prisoners File No. C. 46, 1930, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
8. Foreign Department, Political File No. 459, 1933, NAI, New Delhi.
9. Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, to Political Secretary to the Government of India, 14 July 1933, *Ibid.*
10. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), June 2, 1939, p. 16.
11. *The Hindustan Standard* (Calcutta), October 12, 1946, p. 5.
12. But the British authorities never considered Gaidinliu as a political leader. She was regarded as a head-huntress. When she was in the jail she was never considered as a political prisoner and was given a 'C' class. A. MacDonald, President of the Manipur State Durbar said: 'The cult was suppressed because its chief and most essential rite was human sacrifice....' Political Prisoners File No. 46, 1939, NMML, New Delhi.
13. In the Naga Hills, with exception to a few villages, all the Kacha Naga villages were not free from the influence of the Gaidinliu cult. Bopungwemi village was the place where her movement was quite active. In the North Cachar Hills almost all the Kacha Naga villages were affected. Foreign Department, Political File No. 189, 1932, NAI, New Delhi.
14. Foreign Department, Political File No. 18 (7), 1931, NAI, New Delhi.
15. Last year (1931) Gaidinliu came into contact with the Government column which set out in search of Jadonang, the leader of the politico-religious movement, but she was freed after a thorough interrogation as she was not a person to be counted as a trouble suitor. Political Agent to Officer Commanding, 13 March, 1931, Political Agent File No. 12, 1931.

16. Foreign Department, Political File No. 189, 1932, NAI, New Delhi.
17. *Ibid.*
18. C.W.L. Harvey, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1931-32* (Imphal: State Printing Press, 1932), pp. 3-4.
19. The burnt villages were Yang-Khulen, Hungrum, Guilong, Makui, etc.
20. C.W.L. Harvey, *Administration Report, Manipur State, 1931-32* (Imphal: State Printing Press, 1932), pp. 3-4.
21. Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, to Chief Secretary to the Government of India, 21 June, 1932, Foreign Department File No. 189-Poll 1932.
22. Sir Robert Ried, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam, 1883-1941* (Shillong: Assam Government Press, 1942), p. 171.
23. Gopinath Bordoloi to Jawaharlal Nehru, 22 May, 1939, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, NMML
24. Foreign Department, Political File No. 189, 1932, NAI, New Delhi.
25. *The National Herald* (New Delhi), 13 June 1939, enclosed in Political Prisoners File No. C. 46, 1939.
26. Gopinath Bordoloi to Jawaharlal Nehru, 4 June, 1939, Political Prisoners File No. C. 46, 1939.
27. *The Hindustan Standard* (Calcutta), August 28, 1949, p.11. Since Nehru learnt about Gaidinliu, he was giving advice to Gopinath Bordoloi, Premier of Assam, in connection with Gaidinliu's release. As suggested by Jawaharlal Nehru, he took interest in finding out records about Gaidinliu. Eventhough he got the chance to go through the Government files, he was not allowed to publish it without further knowledge of the Governor of Assam. Nehru was well apprised of it. But he never failed to publicize about the tragic story of Gaidinliu.
28. A Shillong report dated October 22, 1938, said that a memorandum had been sent by the Shillong District Youth League to the Secretary of State for India through Elen Wilkinson, the Labour representative of House of Commons, urging the early release of Gaidinliu. Further in another meeting held in Shillong on October 21, 1930, decided that an intensive India-wise agitation would be launched until Gaidinliu was released. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), October 23, 1938, p. 4.
29. *Ibid*, June 2, 1939, p. 16.
30. R. C. Johnson to Editor of the *The Living Age* (New York), Political Prisoners File No. C. 46, 1939, (Date is not mentioned).
31. *The Hindustan Standard* (Calcutta), October 18, 1946, p. 5.
32. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), July 19, 1949, p. 10.
33. After Gaidinliu's release on July 18, 1949 after rigorous imprisonment, Nehru presented her a sum of Rs. 500 to enable her to build a home

for herself. The Assam Government also sanctioned her a pension for life of Rs. 75/- per month. *Ibid*, July 19, 1949, p.10.

The author met Gaidinliu in Kohima, on August 30, 1979. She lives in a Nagaland Government quarters. She is about sixty-five years old and gets, at present, a pension of Rs. 800/- excluding allowances and contingent grants.



Neta Irabot Singh
(1896-1951)

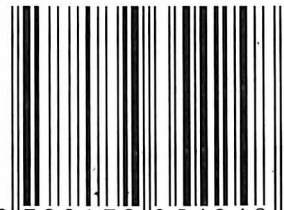


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