

Philosophy of History and the Historiography of Manipur

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This paper is a brief review of the epistemology of history and historiography. The history, historical knowledge, the philosophy of history, the mode of rational analysis or the scientific method constitute what is popularly known as the Historical Method. The basic tenets of Historical Method are the definition of history, nature and objective of historical studies, discovery of the historical facts, the reconstruction of the historical past, conceptualization, interpretation, generalization and periodization of the historical events.

The study of history has gone through many ages and stages. As regards the definition of history, it started with the classical historians of the ancient Greece. The term "History" originated with the Greek word, "Historia" whose literal meaning was "inquiry". The great pioneer historians were Herodotus and Thucydides. Herodotus who wrote *The Histories*¹ was regarded as the father of history and Thucydides, the author of the great classic, *History of the Peloponnesian War* was another great historian². The Graeco-Roman historians more or less adopted the Greek method of writing history based on the available sources of information. Such Greek historians were described as "original historians" by Hegel, the great philosopher of history in his "Lecture on the Philosophy of World History (1822-1830)"³. The original historians were the participant recorders of the historical events. The Graeco-Roman historiography was universally accepted in the ancient European world.

Whether the term "History" can be equivalent with Sanskrit, Itihas-Purana was debated among the ancient Indian historians. Many scholars thought that Itihas-Purana should mean the history. An etymological analysis of the two terms gives us a clear picture. According to the great Sanskrit grammarian, V.S. Apte⁴, the word "History" means "Itihas". Iti meaning what it was or what had happened. Regarding "Purana", it has

been described as "the sacred and mythological poem" derived from Hindu religious myth and belief. Purana cannot cover History⁵. Itihas is the more appropriate word for history. Another Sanskrit word "Vansavali" meaning the genealogy of the ruling families of principalities or kingdom is widely used.

THE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY AND ST. AUGUSTINE: HISTORY AS A DIVINE PLAN

What is the purpose of History? The Christian theological historiography of Europe strongly emphasized that the purpose of history which proceeds according to the divine plan is the ultimate realization of the eternal will of God for spiritual redemption of man or punishment of man in the hands of God. Christian historiography of the Middle Ages represented by St. Augustine was a type historical determinism. St. Augustine (354-430) was the greatest thinker of the Christian political philosophy and Christian historiography of the medieval ages. It is said that medievalism began with St. Augustine. Christianity had destroyed Paganism. Roman empire had accepted Christianity as its official religion. And Christianity had given a religious unity to the Europe and Roman empire. St. Augustine lived in an extremely critical period for Rome and Christianity because of the Barbarian attack on Rome. Their leaders Alaric and Visigoths sacked Rome in 410 A.D. The destruction of the city of Rome and many things which the Roman civilization stood for appeared to be complete. There was a big debate on why the city of Rome had been destroyed? Why did the Roman empire decline? Many non-Christian leaders and writers attributed the fall of Rome to the acceptance of Christianity by the Roman empire. Rome under the protection of her ancient gods had grown up from a mere city state to a world wide empire. Rome threw away its

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ancient religion and Christianity had brought ruin to Rome. Many lamented that Christianity could not save Rome from destruction. The criticism of this kind provoked St. Augustine to take up the defence of Christianity. And he wrote his famous classic, *De Civitate Dei* (The city of God) in 22 volumes between 413 A.D and 426 A.D. The first 10 volumes were devoted to the defence of Christianity and the remaining 12 volumes to the explanation of the City of God.

THE ETERNAL WILL OF GOD

St. Augustine developed the concept of the Eternal will of God to explain the historical development of the world. The fall of Rome was the part of the divine plan to create a new city of God on earth. According to St. Augustine, God had ordained order, regularity and beauty in nature. And the story of mankind depends not upon chance but upon the eternal will of the creator. There is divine will behind everything. The history of mankind was struggle between the forces of evil and forces of good. The forces of the evil were represented by the secular empires. But they were non permanent and they must give place to the city or kingdom of God. Thus, St. Augustine and following him the Christian thinkers adopted a purely theologically approach to history writing. They composed a universal history based on chronology of the Old Testament and New Testament. They adopted a single chronological frame, based on the birth of Jesus Christ as the historical marker before Christ and after Christ. A prominent place was given to the idea of providence in the evolution of human history which is predestined to be redeemed or punished by Eternal will of God of the Christian historiography dominated the European historiography till the coming of the historiography of the Rationalist school of the 18th Century. This is a classic example of the historical determinism in historiography. God as the creator of the universe and maker of empires and nations was accepted in the Oriental countries. The Graeco-Roman historiography was abandoned by the Christian theological historiography which adopted the theological method to explain and predict the ultimate victory of Christianity. As noted above, there are inadequacies of historical determinism in the ideas of St. Augustine. There is no philosophy of history in the writings of St. Augustine, only Christian theology. However, among the Arab historiography was scientific and quite modern. We may refer to Ibn Khaldun an Arab historian of Tunis who wrote the *Introduction of History* in 1377, refers to the cultural, geographical and ecological factors in the evolution of history of the Arab world.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Is there a philosophy of History? The term, "Philosophy of History" was coined by the famous Enlightenment philosopher of France, Voltaire⁶ who is regarded as the best representative of the Age of Reason and the rationalist resurrection against the orthodox theological Christian historiography in the middle ages. To Voltaire, "Philosophy of History" meant the idea of a critical and scientific history as distinct or differentiated from the Christian theological interpretation of history which was current in Europe since the Middle Ages. It requires a philosopher of Voltaire's scholarship, repute and influence to stand up against the Christian historiography with its strong belief in the divine providence as the motive force of history. Voltaire was a versatile writer whose views were highly respected contemporaries.

It was Hegel who developed his concept of philosophy of history in his famous "Lectures on the Philosophy of World History" (1822-30). Hegel was a great philosopher and he studied many histories of different countries. Hegel in his lecture of 1830 on the "Philosophical history of world" said, "The philosophy of history is nothing more than the application of thought to history". He divided history into three modes (a) original history, (b) reflective history and (c) the philosophical history.

Being the foremost philosopher of the early nineteenth century Hegel's views were widely accepted in the Western Europe. His philosophy of history was a part of his philosophical system to him, the idea or reason in the motive force of universal history or cosmic change. It develops in a dialectical process according to which one idea or proposition which he calls thesis is posed against another proposition which produces an anti thesis, out of which emerges a proposition which is common to both the opposing propositions in the form of a synthesis. And Hegel's philosophy of history is taken as thinking about the world as whole. It is also a critical and scientific appreciation of the process of change. Hegel raised the speculation on history as a distinct branch of philosophy.

Auguste Comte of France who founded the Positivist school of thought gave great importance to the study of history in the Europe. The Positivists tried to discover the uniform laws governing the societies and the social activities of men added a dimension to the philosophy of history and made it a branch of social science. History is turning toward the social science.

LEOPOLD VON RANKE AND EMPIRICISM

Hegel's philosophy of history gained a great respectability on the philosophical world. At the same

time in Germany a very scientific and critical school of history based on empiricism was developed by the great historian, Leopold Von Ranke (1795-1886). Ranke and school of historians dominated the history writing in Europe. Ranke followed and developed a historical methodology adopted a German scholar Reinhold Neibuhr. The critical technique developed through sheer industry and intensive research, a new and more refrained historical methodology was created. Ranke performed a yeoman's service to historical science which just entitled him as the founder of modern discipline of history. He tried to divorce the study of the past from the passion of the present. He insisted that the strict presentation of facts is the supreme law of historical writings. He also played a significant role in the teaching of history at the university level through the seminars at the University of Berlin. He published the first historical journal, *Historische Zeitschrift* containing the true method of historical research. Ranke also developed the science of the evidence of historiography. He was the greatest historian of the nineteenth century.

Hegelian philosophy and dialectics was applied by Karl Marx in his *Communist Manifesto*, 1848 in the economic interpretation in the evolution of human civilization from primitive communism to slave based empire to feudalism to capitalism and ultimately communism. Through Marx's writing, particularly, economic interpretation of history has become an important tool of Marxian philosophy. However, with the growth of empirical data made available to by empirical historian, the philosophy of history was overwhelmed by the empiricism of Ranke and his followers.

In the beginning of the 20th century, eminent historians with the original knowledge of historical methodology started a scientific study at the universal and at the national level. In the eighteenth century, Gambattista Vico (1688-1744) had adopted the scientific method. Vico contributed to the scientific methodology in history writing. Lord Acton in Britain, Beneditto Croce in Italy (*History as a story of Liberty*), Oswald Spangler (*The decline of the West*) are great historians. Three philosophers of History may be noted, R.G. Collingwood (*The Ideas of History*, 1945), Marc Bloch (*The Historian's Craft*, 1946) and E.H. Carr (*What is History?*, 1962). The philosophy of History and the Historical Method are well integrated in the writings of these historian-philosophers.

We may quote the remarkable statements of R.G. Collingwood, Marc Bloch and E.H. Carr. R.G. Collingwood observes, "All history is history of thought and therefore all history is reenactment in the historians thought whose history he is studying". History is a re-

enactment of the past experience thought through the mind of the historian. Collingwood's view of history is more concerned with the mode of reasoning or the thinking of the historian on the past. It is more a philosophical inquiry of the past. The reenactment or reconstruction of the past in the historian's mind is dependent on the empirical evidence. History is to be located in time and space. The historian's evidence necessitates that history has to deal with the facts of the past which are reenacted in the mind of the historian.

Marc Bloch whose incomplete *The Historians Craft* has made purely a scientific work. He made the historical reasoning as the philosophy of history. He raised History to a stage of science. He said, "We have called history the science of man". He continues, "This is still far too vague. It is necessary to add of men in time". History is a science of man in time.

E.H. Carr thinks that, "history is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and past". According to Carr, history is also a study of the causes of the facts of the past and interpreting them. Collingwood is more abstract and philosophical while Carr is more empirical and interpretative as they represent the two trends in the historiography of modern times. These two thinkers have raised the study of history to a higher philosophic level.

It is in this context that history is now not only a true account of what really happened in the past, how and why of the past happenings. History means more an approach, a mode of inquiry to find the truth and interpret the truth to the relevance of the present. It has become more a question of method. Hence, our concern with the historical method. How the historian reenacts the past in his mind, and how the historian conducts his interaction with his facts of historical evidence and how he carries on the dialogue between the past and present, how the interpretation of the past facts is done, what is the role of reason or reasoning, historical thinking or reasoning facts or historical evidence, these are the issues of historical method.

Thus, the philosophy of history has been concerned with the investigation and discovery of the past, meaning and interpretation of the historical phenomena, speculation about the nature and use of history. What will be the procedure of the historical thinking or reasoning has to be located in the method which has become popularly known as the historical method.

THE HISTORICAL METHOD

In short, Historical Method is the answer to the question

'what is history'? The historical method has assumed a great importance with the development of the scientific history. After a long debate, history has been put rightfully in the category of science, or to be precise of social science. Science is both an accumulator of knowledge and a method of approach in the search of the truth and knowledge. It is also a rational mode of analysis to arrive at and find out the truth. History, being a mode of rational inquiry is science and real history is a scientific history. And history adopts a scientific method which means a rational and logical mode of inquiry, analysis and generalization. The historical method is a tool to answer the question of history, like what happens, how it happens and why it happens.

Historical method is the mode of historical reasoning adopted by the historian. It covers the following phases and process.

- (i) The location and selection of the historical facts, evidence of process relevant to the objective of the historical investigation.
- (ii) Construction or reconstruction of the past based on the analyses of the facts and evidences.
- (iii) Interpretation of the historical facts.
This method is more or less explained by Marc Bloch in his *The Historian's Craft*.

THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Primacy of facts in the historical study has been well established. Historical enquiry starts with the location and selection of facts which are essential for the construction of a phenomenon of history. All facts are not necessarily history evidence; it is relative to the objective, theme and manner of the historical evidence has been now called the source of history.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION

In the location and identification of facts, the mode of historical observation is applied. Here the scientific observation which is carried out directly by the scientist who is working with hypotheses. In the case of historical observation, it is not possible for a historian to observe the happenings which constitute history. His observation is an indirect one, following on the facts or observation. He is of course, required to have a wide knowledge of human activists, past and present. Peculiarity of historical observation is that it has to observe the events through document by reading or examining which are evidences for a historical reconstruction.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE EVIDENCE

Once a fact has been located and identified as historical evidence, the authenticity of the particular evidence is scrutinized, tested and finally proved. There are many instances in which books, chronicles, inscriptions and other historical evidences are forced. The crucial test of the reasoning faulty of the historian is on the establishment of the historical evidence.

The principle of historical criticism, according to Marc Bloch requires the asking the following questions:

- (i) Are the evidences forgeries or deceptive.
- (ii) Do the evidences speak the truth?
- (iii) How are the evidences to be subjected to scientific and rational scrutiny?

After the establishment of the authenticity of the evidences the historian, after close observation and scrutiny, will assemble the documents which may be literary and archaeological. He can criticize, reject or accept the evidence based on his findings.

SELECTION OF EVIDENCES

It is the prerogative of the historian to select the evidences needed for his construction of the history of his field of study. But a practicing historian, following the historical method, he cannot indulge in the irrational and irrelevant evidences. Otherwise, his work will lack, the rationality, consistency and relevance.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PAST

The facts, thus, selected, will be subjected to the historical analysis and utilized for the reconstruction of the past. In this process of historical analysis, the historical impartiality is to be rigorously applied for an objective judgement and understanding of the phenomenon of history. It calls for rational organization of the facts which Marc Bloch calls the raw materials of history.

However, different schools of history writing have adopted different approaches in the construction of the past. For the determinist school of thought like the Marxian's, the evidences of economic problem are utilized for the writing of history based on the economic determinism. This is greatly linked up another question of interpretation. Reconstruction and interpretation are dependent on the model of history writing which is adopted in a particular case. However, the historian's supreme duty is to explain the cause of the happenings in the past in this construction.

INTERPRETATION OF THE PAST

The real testing of the historical method is on the question of interpretation. Sometimes the historical method and the mode of historical interpretation are almost taken as one method. Whether a history is a critical history or traditional history or scissors and patch History (of Collingwood) or scientific history or determinist history, it is dependent on the category of historical interpretation. The usual issues of the objectivity and generalization in history are engrained in this interpretation of the past.

The scholars of different disciplines, ranging from the Enlightenment, the philosophers and political thinkers had interpreted history in different way. One school known as "Historicism" has grown up to explain that every aspect of literature, culture, philosophical thought can be explained by history. Historicism was meant for the explanation and interpretation of history in relation to specific issues. Historicism is a wide field of historical interpretation. It is not proposed to deal with Historicism but it has become a wide field of study.

HISTORICAL OBJECTIVITY

Objectivity in history, in a negative sense, is not taking side by the historian in the interpretation of history. The historian is both rational and passionate. Based on reason and historical reasoning, the historian is expected to produce a rational and objective history. But the subjectivity is an outcome of human passion and the historian is likely, very often to fall a prey to this subjective pressure. The colonial or imperial historiographer defends the imperial actions while the nationalist historian eulogizes the patriotic acts and condemns the imperial authorities. A scientific historian is supposed to give an objective history. How does one achieve objectivity? For example, when a fact passes through the historian's mind, the fact is coloured by his own prejudices and bias in his mind. The fact is likely to be biased. When the fact is constructed into a historical canvass, the choice of the fact is not objective but has become subjective. Objectivity demands that when the fact passes through the historian's mind, his judgement should be free from prejudices and biases. While objectivity is definitely an ideal in historical method; total objectivity cannot be fully achieved. This is due to the very nature of history which is as somebody said, not an exact science. We may refer to Ranke who is of the opinion that once the facts are subjected to criticism and cured of their dross by the historian's craftsmanship, the facts become pure and unalloyed historical gold.

GENERALIZATION

It was Auguste Comte, of the Positivist school who tried to locate the uniform laws and of the empirical historical data to explain the growth of the structure of the society. The historian applies the principle of generalization to find the uniformity in the historical data to discover the universal laws. Historical generalization means that after the analysis of the historical data, an abstraction is deduced to show certain common pattern or patterns in the historical development. The process of abstraction may be called generalization. As history is now a social science, out of the historical data, generalized pattern of history emerges through the abstraction. The abstraction of the historical data is the generalization of history.

PERIODIZATION

History deals with time and space; so, chronology and geography are important parts of a historical inquiry with the new approach to history. The study of human history in term of period has been increasingly discarded and study of specific problem of history, in the word of Lord Acton has become fashionable. Marx's economic interpretation of history in the evolution of human civilization from primitive communism, slavery based empire, to feudalism, capitalism and to communism has almost destroyed the chronological history. But so long, history has to deal with the past of man, it is concerned with time and "Periodization" in history continues to exist in the historical method.

Different schools of historiography grew up in different countries. Of these, Marxian historiography developed by Karl Marx and his followers forms a distinctive method of history writing universally. The Annalist School of France which is based on solid empirical foundation is important school of Europe. In India there grew up a group of brilliant historians who founded the school of subaltern history or history from below. This had become a very popular school of historiography adopted in almost all countries. The periodization of history was adopted on the basis of theme. So schools like the post colonial historiography and ethnic historiography have come up. A survey of these schools of history writing cannot be covered by the present paper.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MANIPUR

Manipur was an ancient kingdom with a long history and rich culture. Manipur means the land or city of the gems. It was named so in the early eighteenth century (1724)

by the Hinduised king Garibniwaz (1709-1748). The pre-Hindu names of the kingdom were Poireipak, Meitrabak and Kangleipak. The dominant communities are the Meiteis who live in Manipur valley; the others are the hill tribes, the Nagas and the Kuki-Chins who dwell in the surrounding hills.

Manipur valley is a cradle of human civilization and culture. Different ethnic groups migrated to Manipur in search of land, resources, fame and glory. The Meitei kingdom grew up in the Manipur valley while in the hills, the tribals did not build up polity formation beyond the village polity.

The ancient Meiteis developed the knowledge of writing quite early. They possess strong sense of history. And as we are all aware historiography is the art of writing history; the historiography of Manipur may be divided into the following categories.

- (i) Traditional Meitei historiography
- (ii) Colonial historiography
- (iii) Post colonial historiography
- (iv) Tribal historiography

In terms of periodization these four categories cover four periods of history of Manipur; pre-colonial, colonial, post independence including post colonial and historiography of the tribes.

1. THE TRADITIONAL MEITEI HISTORIOGRAPHY

The traditional concept of history is expressed by the Meitei word Puwari (the story of fore fathers). This term is nearer to the Sanskrit "Itihas" rather than the English "History" or Greek "Historia". The Meitei Puwari consists of the myths, legends and historical accounts of their country. The creation myths or cosmological traditions, origin and genealogies of the clans, the religious accounts, the dynastic accounts of the clan chieftains are given prominent place. We may refer to another word "Puya" which is like the Sanskrit Purana. Puya is a historical text which records the myths, genealogy, historical tradition etc. Chronicles with or without chronology formed the core of Meitei historical literature. However, history as a separate academic discipline did not exist. It was a part of the whole gamut of knowledge. For example, a literary text of the eighteenth century, Leithak Leikharol which is a compendium of myths, legends, genealogy, folklore, religious practice and social accounts, is not a history in the modern sense, but a standard book of knowledge which is expected to be mastered by a traditional Meitei scholar known as the Maichou.

In the early stage of Meitei civilization the record keeping or chronicle keeping was started. There were

literary texts dealing with historical events since the beginning of Christian era as claimed by ancient writers. Education and scholarship were controlled by the royalty and nobility. This had led to the monopoly of knowledge by a very few scholars patronized and utilized by the monarch. The king-controlled writing was reflected in the chronicle keeping. The Meitei view of the past was a holistic approach. Naturally it was difficult to separate what was historical from what was myth, legend, tradition, religion and theology.

History writing was dominated by the interests or considerations of the royalty and priestly class. There was no separate discipline of history as such. History or historical knowledge was part of the whole knowledge. As mentioned above a Meitei Maichou was a scholar, a priest, an astrologer and an advisor to the royalty or nobility. Practical necessity required the Maichous to look at society, state and religion as a whole. And the knowledge of the Maichou became a generalized and comprehensive one or with some great scholars encyclopedic. Historical particularism or special differentiation of history did not develop in the ancient period.

Chronicles and puyas were not only the "historical pieces" but they were used as manuals of administration, religious rites, social and judicial dispensation and cultural affairs. Perhaps, it was due to this reason that history as a distinct and separate branch of knowledge did not develop in ancient Manipur. And the objective of history of the ancient Meitei was to know the past, use the knowledge of the past for the present needs; and the action and achievement of the past should be kept for the knowledge of posterity. The king and nobility had a strong concern for the posterity. They tried to preserve what was achieved by the monarch in the past for perpetuation of their fame. The idea of the past was greatly influenced by the need of the present and by a desire for glorification by the posterity. Hence, the great concern for control over event recording chronicles. The greatest chronicle of this type is the royal chronicle known as the "Cheitharol Kumbaba".

With the Sanskritization of Manipur, deliberate attempt was made by the Hindu scholars to imprint an Aryan and Hindu origin and identity on the Hinduised Meitei. The identification of religion and race had led to the emergence of a distinct sense of origin and a view of history on the part of the ruling dynasty. History was given a sanskritized orientation which was reflected in the chronicles and genealogy of the ruling Ningthouja dynasty of Manipur. The keeping of chronicles which was an indigenous Meitei practice was given a chronological frame by the adoption of Hindu calendars; for instance the celebrated Cheitharol Kumbaba, the royal chronicle

of Manipur adopted three eras, Kalyabda, Sakabda and Chandrabda. The Ningthourol Kumbaba and other genealogical chronicles do not have chronology. The absence of time frame of chronology is a reflection of the Meitei concept of past which intermingles with the present. The past and the present exist side by side in the Meitei psyche. Since, there was no technology of printing before the British rule the chronicles or historical texts were not printed or published but kept in the Pandit Loishang (royal college of priest). The Cheitharol Kumbaba was an official diary; the royalty's view and version were recorded.

We give below a few historical texts which may be described as the part of the traditional Meitei historiography.

Historical Chronicles: they are the royal chronicles, especially *The Cheitharol Kumbaba*, *Ningthourol Kumbaba*, a royal chronicle without chronology which gives more detail than the Cheitharol Kumbaba. They have been already published.

1. Kangbalon: The genealogy of Kangba, the first ruler of the Meiteis in the proto-historical period.
2. Pakhangba Phamban: The coronation of Pakhangba, the founder of the Ningthouja dynasty of the first century A.D.
3. Pakhangba Nongkarol (death of Pakhangba)
4. Poireiton Khunthokpa, the immigration of Poireiton, a colonizer in Manipur Valley in the first century A.D.
5. Naothingkhong Phamban: coronation of Naothingkhong of the eighth century.
6. Loyamba Shilyen, the administrative decree of King Loyamba (1094-1122 A.D.). It is regarded as the first written constitution of Manipur. The decree was issued on 1110 A.D.
7. Pong Meitei Lamyen Lairik. Treaty on demarcation of boundary between Mau Shan kingdom of Pong, Upper Burma and Meiteis in the year 1471.
8. Thiren Layat, an account of the religious belief of the Meitei written in the reign of the King Khagemba (1597-1652). No name of the author was given.
9. Ava Ngamba (war against Burma written by Nungambam Govindaram). It was an account of Manipur war against Burma during the reign of Garibniwaz.
10. Takhel Ngamba (an account of the war against Tripura written by Govindaram).
11. Khahi Ngamba (conquest of Khasi by Maharaja Ghambir Singh in 1829).
12. Telainlanda Nara Singh (King Nara Singh in the battle of Telain; Nara Singh's role in the battle of Telian against the Burmese during the 1st Anglo-Burmese war).

13. Zilla Darbar. The durbar between Maharaja Chandrakriti Singh and Lord Northbrooke, Viceroy of India at Silchar on the Barak river in 1872.

The following works were written by Manipuri scholars based on indigenous historical sources of information

1. Haodeijamba Chaitanya. Manipur Itihas 1890, published in Sylhet, Bengal. It was a first book on history of Manipur published before British conquest of Manipur printed in Bengali script.
2. The second one was Manipur Purabrita which was written by Pukhrabam Parijat published in 1917. It was published with the permission of Raja Churachand Singh of Manipur. It was supposed to be a reply to T.C. Hodson's book 'The Meiteis' regarding ethnic and linguistic identity of the Meiteis.
3. The next work was Manipur Itti britti written by Khumanthem Kaomacha Singh (1938).
4. Another one was Bijoy Panchali by Mutum Jhulon Singh.
5. Panditraj Atombapu Sharma, the great scholar of Manipur wrote Manipur Itihas in 1940.

These works though written during the colonial period are traditional in style. So they are part of the traditional Meitei historiography.

2. COLONIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

The British conquered Manipur in 1891; and the colonial era in the history of Manipur was started but Manipur had more than a century of relation with the British since 1762. The first trade treaty between the East India Company and Raja Jai Singh (Bhagyachandra Singh) was signed in that year. But the treaty failed. The deep engagement between the British and Manipur was carried out during the first Anglo-Burmese war (1824-1826). The Burmese conquered Assam, Manipur, Jaintia and Cachar and the Burmese force posed a great threat to the British Province of Bengal. Manipur wanted the British help to drive away the Burmese from Manipur. At the same time the British wanted allies among the fugitive princes of Manipur to drive away the Burmese from Assam, Jaintia and Cachar. There was a convergence of interest between the British and Manipur. By an alliance between David Scott, the Agent to the Governor General and Raja Gambhir Singh of Manipur, the Manipur Levy of five hundred soldiers recruited by Gambhir Singh in 1824 drove the Burmese out of Manipur beyond the Kabaw Valley. By the treaty of Yandabo (1826) which concluded the Anglo-Burmese war, Burmese were driven out of whole north east India. British conquered Assam, Jaintia and Cachar. The Treaty of Yandabo recognized Raja

Gambhir Singh as an independent king of Manipur. Manipur was liberated and the country was reconstructed. A close Anglo-Manipur relationship was developed.

The British officers who participated in the Anglo-Burmese war and who helped Manipur in the reconstruction of the country were capable officers. Most of them were not only bold soldiers and capable administrative officers; they were great writers who left behind excellent reports on geography, history, culture and many ethnological accounts for the benefit of the posterity. The names of David Scott, first commissioner of Assam, Francis Jenkins, another commissioner, R.B. Pemberton, F.J. Grant who helped the Manipur Levy of Gambhir Singh are among the British officers who participated in the negotiation with the Burmese over Kabaw Valley.

For the whole north east India, we have the excellent account of R.B. Pemberton, the Report on the north east frontier of British India published in 1835. This report devoted a sizeable portion on Manipur, history, geography, economy and ethnography. R.B. Pemberton as a young officer volunteered to accompany Gambhir Singh in the liberation of Manipur. He was a pioneer of modern historical studies. Pemberton's report was based on the style of James Mill's History of India published in the year 1819 which was the first history of India in English language. Pemberton's report is still relevant to the states and people of north east frontier and Upper Burma.

There were official reports and accounts published by British officers posted as Political Agents in Manipur. Mention may be made of Major W. McCulloch's Account of the Valley of Munnipore and surrounding Tribes published in 1859 at Calcutta. McCulloch was in Manipur for nearly 23 years from 1844-1867. He was engaged by Maharaja Nara Singh in the settlement of the Kuki influx in Manipur. He married a Manipuri princess and helped Nara Singh and his successors particularly Maharaja Chandrakriti Singh for political stability in Manipur. Later on he settled in Shillong and died in 1885. McCulloch's account is a brief report but it is mostly authentic and reliable. His account deals with early history of Manipur particularly 18th and first half of 19th century. His knowledge of the hill tribe was quite profound. He classified the tribes of Manipur as Nagas and Kukis. His description of Meitei society is even now relevant. He also studied languages of the tribes and communities of Manipur. So the ethnographic account of the tribes and community is helpful for the reconstruction of the social history of Manipur.

Another Political Agent, Dr. R. Brown, a surgeon by profession wrote *A Statistical Account of Manipur* and it

was published in 1874. It was perhaps modelled after a guideline given by Sir W.W. Hunter, the Director General of Statistics, Government of India. Sir W.W. Hunter was the editor of two volumes Account of Assam. Brown's *Statistical Account* was written after the gazetteer type. Brown's account includes geography, history, religion, social account and ethnography. Though it is not history, it contains valuable historical information.

After Brown's Statistical Account, there was the Gazetteer of Manipur compiled and published by Captain E.W. Dun in 1886 (an abridged edition was published in 1891). Captain Dun was an intelligence officer. His gazetteer was published as a secret document from Shimla. Dun's account deals with the history of Manipur since the Anglo-Burmese war. He also gives a narrative of Anglo-Manipur relation. He declares that Manipur was an independent kingdom. He describes the politics in Manipur, the monarchy, the nobility and the army. Dun's original document with authentic maps is an extremely important work for the reconstruction of the history of Manipur. A great landmark in the history of colonial historiography of north east India occurred in 1884 when *A History of the Relations of the Hill Tribes with the Government of British Bengal* was published by Alexander Mackenzie. Mackenzie was a competent member of the Indian Civil Service in the Government of Bengal. He had in 1869 published a highly documented report known as the Memorandum of the North Eastern Frontier. This report was highly praised by the Foreign Department of the Government of India. There was a pressure on him to publish any new edition of this memorandum. But Mackenzie who was the Home Secretary of the Government of Bengal who had access to the documents and correspondences both in the home, judicial, revenue and foreign proceedings decided to make a review of British Government policies towards the hill tribes of the north east India. A group of hill tribes of Eastern Himalayas to the north bank of Brahmaputra were completely reviewed. Another group of tribes mostly the Nagas of the Patkoi hills, Sibsagar areas and Southern Naga Hills was covered. The tribes of Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Lushai hills and Chittagong hill tracts were covered. With regard to Manipur, Mackenzie wrote that Manipur was an independent state; therefore Manipur state was outside the scope of his book. However, Manipur was a protected state and Manipur occupied a special place in the politics of North East India.

Many scholars had praised Mackenzie's work as a great work of the colonial historiography. He was a great chronicler of events dealt by the then British Government with full facts at his command and with great responsibility in deciding policy affairs. He had written very nicely. His book had been praised as a great ethno

history of the hill tribes. No student of history can ignore his work. Mackenzie as an analyst of historical events of the hill tribes of north east perhaps could not do justice. It was beyond the perview of his work.

Another semi historical account based on personal experiences dealing with expansion of the British Political Agency and administration was *My Experience in Manipur and Naga Hills* written by Sir James Johnstone published posthumously in 1896 in London. Sir James Johnstone (1841-1896) was a Political Agent in Manipur. He served in the Keonjar district of Orissa. He acted as a Political Officer in the newly established Naga Hills district. James Johnstone's book makes a pleasant reading full of facts dealing with military operation, diplomatic relation, administrative affairs and keeping boundary affairs with Burma in peace. This book is not history but contains a lot of historical information. His views on men and affairs of Manipur are of great interest. He had a great vision for Manipur. Though it is semi historical it can be grouped under the source of history.

After the British conquest of Manipur, British officers wrote on Manipur. B.C. Allen's *The Gazetteer of Naga Hills and Manipur* (1905) makes a useful and informative reading on history, geography, society and culture of Manipur.

Last of the works on the colonial historiography was a *History of the Areas Bordering Assam*. It was written by Sir Robert Reid, a Governor of Assam in 1942. Reid's book is supposed to be a continuation of Mackenzie's history ending in 1884. Like Mackenzie, Reid had access to all the official documents. He divided the history by political units. Manipur state constitutes a chapter of the history. Unfortunately, Reid's book is a compilation of documents. The author was not a historian. He was a mere documenter. His work lacks a central theme. This is not a history. However, for Manipur and other areas the information is very important. This book contains the historical narratives of Anglo-Manipur war of 1891, the execution of Chief Commissioner of Assam and his officers, and ultimate conquest of Manipur. It deals with the anti-British colonial movement like the Kuki Rebellion (1917-1919), the movement of Jadonang and Gaidinliu (1930-1933), the Women Agitation of Manipur Valley (1939-40). The narrative ended in 1940.

T.C. Hodson's *The Meiteis* (1908) was a classic anthropological study on the Meiteis. This is the best work on the Meiteis in the twentieth century. Hodson was the great writer with the knowledge of anthropology, history and linguistic. This work made the Meiteis known in the English speaking anthropological world. Hodson supplemented his study with his knowledge of Meitei language. Hodson clearly shows on the ethnological and linguistic ground that the Meiteis are Tibeto-Burman.

Abdul Ali was the first Indian historian to write on Manipur. His *Notes on early history of Manipur* deals with the early contact of Manipur with the East India Company and subsequent relation between the two.

An important work of the colonial period is the *History of Assam Rifles* written by L.W. Shakespeare and published in 1929. This history traces the glorious exploits of this famous Assam Rifles which was born out of a para military force known as the Cachar Levy of 1835. This history deals with the Anglo-Manipuri conflict of 1891 and the suppression of Kuki Rebellion (1917-1919) which are an important aspect of colonial history of Manipur.

The colonial historiography is not enormous and it does not contain much of history. The colonial writers did not deal with the central theme of history of Manipur. Subsequent writers of the post independence historiography or post colonial period are supplied with the information whatever sketchy it may be in the reconstruction of history of the north east region including the state of Manipur.

The Meitei polity, society, religion, culture and folklore have been fully studied. The racial and ethnic identity was again raised. The colonial writers did not accept the Aryan origin of the Hinduised Meitei.

During the colonial period, the study of archeology was begun. W. Yumjao Singh was the pioneer archeologist of Manipur. The *Report on Archeological Studies Vol.I*. 1935 was a comprehensive report on inscriptions, historical monuments and numismatics. Yumjao Singh, discovered the Phayeng Copper Plates of King Khongtekcha. He gave critical comments on the royal chronicle of Manipur known as the Cheitharol Kumbaba.

An issue which was raised by the Brahmanical scholars was their effort to refute the alleged statement by Pandit N.N.Vasu in Bengali encyclopedia, Viswakosh that the Hindu Meiteis were non-Aryan and Mongoloid. The debate was carried over in post independence period. The pioneer of the school was the great Pandit Raj Atombapu Sharma.

Historiography of the Second World War in Manipur has been studied by the British army officers, the leaders of Indian National Army and followers of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and by the military officers of the Imperial Japanese Army. While Field Marshal William Slim's book *Defeat into Victory* was an over view of the exploits of British 14th Army, the work of George Evans and Anthony Brett-James entitled, *Imphal: A Flower on Lofty Heights* gave an independent version, *The Springing Tiger* by Hugh Toy gave the military history of the Japanese invasion, S.C. Bose's *The History of the Indian National Army* is an important account of the war.

3. THE POST COLONIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

The contemporary historiography was started after British departure from Manipur. However, the post independence period may be taken as the beginning of post colonial historiography. Post colonialism is initially an approach of English language literature in those countries which were under the British colonial rule. A huge literature on post colonial theme was produced by scholars of literature, sociology, political science and now by the scholars of history. It was a reaction on things colonial from the scholars of post colonial times. We may now locate post colonial in the historiography of Manipur. Manipur has had a colonial experience. The colonial historiography was incomplete and did not have a balanced view of the people and their history. They created a hiatus between the inhabitants on religious consideration, Hindu Meitei and non Hindu tribes. They projected themselves as the savior of the tribes from the dominant Meities. The colonial historiography refused to accept the Meitei traditional views on their origin, and history which were influenced by the Brahmanical scholars. They did not try to give any credence to the indigenous Meitei historiography.

However in the post colonial period, an attempt was made by the historians to write a composite history of Manipur. They were two trends. One was the continuation of the writings of the Brahmanical school; the other was more or less a scientific historical school. The reassessment of history and historical events was carried out. The historians tried to glorify the history of the pre colonial and the colonial period. Under the post colonial historiography, the hill tribes start demanding a place in the history and historiography of Manipur.

Between 1947 and 1991 four works on history of Manipur were published. R.K. Sanahal Singh published *Manipur Itihas* in Manipuri in 1947. It was a pioneering history with a scientific method based on chronicles of Manipur and British archival information and Bengali sources. This book is a contribution to post colonial historiography. The second one was J. Roy's *History of Manipur* published in 1958. It was a first history of Manipur in English language and widely circulated in India. The scope of his book was limited, starting from the 18th century only. The author did not have much access to the indigenous sources in Manipuri. The third one, R.K. Jhalajit Singh's *A Short History of Manipur* published in 1965 was a comprehensive history based on royal chronicle of the Ningthouja dynasty. The history covers all the periods of history, ancient, medieval and modern from first century to the Merger of Manipur to the Dominion of India (1949). He utilized the indigenous sources in Manipuri language and the British archival

sources. His objective was to record the expansion of Aryan culture and Hinduism to Manipur. He was under the influence of Brahminical School of history writing that the Meiteis are ethnically and linguistically Indo-Aryan. Gangmumei Kamei's *History of Manipur Pre-Colonial Period* was published in 1991 in the last decade of the 20th century. This work is a well researched history. It covers the ancient and medieval period. He based this history on the original sources. This is a widely circulated work. The author applied the scientific method of historiography in this book.

A category of writings dealing with specific aspects of history and polity were published between 1953 and 1970. They are Atombapu Sharma's *Pakhangba* (1953) dealing with religious history, Nandalal Sharma's *Meitrabak* (1960) dealing with ancient Manipuri literature, the political system of Manipur and last days of independence of the state, N. Iboi Singh's *Manipur Administration* (1966) which describes the political system of Manipur in the 18th and 19th centuries and *Manipur Itihas* (1970) written by L. Chandramani Singh dealing with Anglo Manipur relation upto the 19th century. The books of N. Iboi Singh and L. Chandramani Singh's were the works of their doctoral research.

PUBLICATION OF CHEITHAROL KUMBABA, THE ROYAL CHRONICLE (1967)

The pandits of Manipur who had connection with the Pandit Loishang of the royal court had examined the royal chronicle in ancient Meitei script. The manuscripts of the chronicle were kept in the royal college of priest (Pandit Loishang) but the common man scholars could not get access to it. Some attempts were made to publish this chronicle. Mention may be made of the abridged version of Cheitharol Kumbaba published by Pandit Thongam Madhab Singh in 1939. But it was L.M. Iboongohal Singh who was a Judge and member of the Manipur State Durbar during Maharaja Churachand Singh's rule took the initiative of collecting the manuscript from the court with the help of Maharaja himself. And this chronicle was written out in Bengali script with the help of some pandits. The chronicle was edited by L.M. Iboongohal Singh and Pandit N. Khelchandra Singh. For authenticity and public respectability, the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, the apex body of Manipuri literature published Cheitharol Kumbaba in 1967. This publication was a great landmark in the historiography of Manipur.

Cheitharol Kumbaba is a compound of two words, combination of two practices of the Meitei royal court. Cheithaba is a system of counting of years of the Meitei Calendar under the lunar system. The year of the calendar

was named after an individual who volunteered to be a scape goat of the evils of the king, country and people for a particular year. In return he was given a reward of one pari (hectare) of tax free land. He was called the Cheithaba of the year. The system of Cheithaba was started in 1484 A.D. during the reign of King Kyamba. All the names of the Cheithaba are even today recorded by Pandit Loishang. Kumbaba means counting of years (kum- year, paba- counting). So Cheitharol Kumbaba literally means counting of years according to the name of Cheithaba. The keeping of the chronicle was started from the 15th century. The chronicle gives a genealogy of kings of the Ningthouja dynasty from Nungdalairon Pakhangba to Bodhchandra Singh (33 A.D. to 1955). The Cheitharol Kumbaba gives a list of 78 kings of Manipur. There were 37 kings of Manipur recorded before King Kyamba who started the chronicle keeping. So the reconstruction of the accounts of the chronicle before 1484 must have been carried out by the royal scholars and astrologers by collecting information from many other sources.

There have been many instances of rewriting the chronicle due to repeated foreign invasions particularly the Burmese and the British. There are many valid questions to be put on the recordings in the chronicles. Unless scrutinized properly the authenticity of the contents cannot be completely accepted. The Cheitharol Kumbaba edited by Pandit N. Khelchandra Singh has gone into several editions 1967, 1987 and 2009. A large number of chronicles mostly of the clans had been published since 1967.

In 1995, an English version of Cheitharol Kumbaba was published with a new title the Lost Kingdom. This chronicle was translated from the original Cheitharol Kumbaba by Bamacharan Mukherjee who was a clerk in the British Political Agency. After British conquest in 1891, Bamacharan Mukherjee was commissioned to translate the chronicle into English. Mukherjee took the help of 14 pandits in collection of the different versions of Cheitharol Kumbaba and translating it to English. It took six years to complete translation. L. Joychandra Singh, a journalist and a polo enthusiast discovered a copy of the Kumbaba in British Library and Record Office in London. He published the Lost Kingdom in 1995. The English version was very brief and different in details from Manipuri version.

Another version of the *Cheitharol Kumbaba* was published in 2005. It was entitled, *The Court Chronicle of the Kings of Manipur The Cheitharon Kumpapa*, translated by Saroj Nalini Arambam Parrat. Saroj Nalini Parrat was an anthropologist by training. She worked in Birmingham University along with her husband Professor John Parrat. She had already done research on religion, history and

culture of Manipur. She knew Manipuri as her mother tongue. She studied manuscripts of Cheitharol Kumbaba in the custody of several scholars of Manipur like Pandit Ngarianbam Kulachandra, Thongam Madhab, Nameirakpam Dinachandra, Kharaibam Deba, of course, the 1967 edition of Cheitharol Kumbaba published by Manipuri Sahitya Parishad. It was published by Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London. The second volume came out in 2009. Saroj Nalini Parrat's versions contain the chronicle in the Meitei script. She gives the English translation. It also contains the list of kings. The first volume covers the period 33 A.D. to 1763 A.D. The second volume covers the period 1764 to 1955. There is also glossary of Manipuri words which makes the reading of the archaic word easy. It was supplemented by the specimen of Government approved Meitei Mayek script. Saroj Nalini Arambam Parrat had done a yeoman service to the oriental historiography particularly historiography of Manipur by publishing this chronicle.

During the post colonial period, there were a lot of interests in the history of Manipur which are an outcome of the several historical controversies. The first question which has been debated for more than 300 years was whether present Manipur was the Manipur of Mahabharata, secondly did the Pandava hero Arjuna visit Manipur and married a Manipuri princess Chitragada and a son named Babrubahan was born of the union of Arjuna and Chitragada? The Brahmin priests and scholars of Brahma Sabha presided by the Maharaja strongly argued that Arjuna visited Manipur and the ruling dynasty was descended from the Pandava hero and the ruling family was of Aryan origin. This was not accepted by the British scholars during the colonial period. This issue came up during the post colonial period. The scholars of the indigenous Meitei Sanamahi religion argued that present Manipur was not Manipur of the Mahabharata and there was no Aryan connection of Manipur. This view is gaining more support. There are a large number of scholars of the Sanamahi School who wrote both in English and Manipuri (Meitei-lon) on their version of history, origin and culture which are gaining popularity and respectability. We may mention the names of Kangjia Gopal, S. Nilbir and K.C. Tensuba.

Archaeology, epigraphy and numismatics had made progress since the time of W. Yumjao Singh. The contributions of O.K. Singh, Matuwa Bahadur, L. Kunjeshwari, P. Gunindro, Gourachandra Singh, K. Sobita and S. Bheigy Singh to these fields are really great. The recent restoration of the Kangla Fort is well documented by Pandit N. Khelchandra Singh, Rupabon Singh and S. Bheigy Singh in the book, *Kangla, ancient capital of Manipur* (2008).

Another historical issue was concerned with the Anglo-

Manipuri war of 1891 particularly the Battle of Khongjom. After conquest of Manipur by British in 1891, British did not encourage any glorification of the princes of Manipur who were either executed or sentenced to life imprisonment. The conqueror did not like the conquered's sacrifices to be known to the people. But a Manipuri soldier who participated in the battle of Khongjom composed a ballad comprising every stage and style of fighting between the British soldiers and the Manipuri soldiers. True, the battle of Khongjom marked the end of the war and independence of Manipur. So this ballad known as Khongjom parva was sung throughout the country. The ballad replaces the history. After independence and after the Merger of Manipur into India, historians, intellectuals, political leaders, common men started having a fresh look at the Anglo-Manipur war particularly the heroes, Jubraj Tikendrajit Singh, Thangal General and Paona Brajabashi who lost their lives. People started observing 13th August of every year as an anniversary of execution of Jubraj Tikendrajit Singh and Thangal General as both of them were hanged to death on 13th August, 1891. It was observed as the Patriot's Day. There was another date which was observed as the anniversary of the battle of Khongjom. This day was observed as Paona Day of Khongjom Day. There were opinions on the date of the day of Khongjom. According to the Cheitharol Kumbaba this date was on 23rd April 1891. There is another opinion of the scholars based mostly on British sources that the battle was fought on 25th April 1891 at Khongjom. The matter became so hot that the Speaker of the Manipur Legislative Assembly appointed an expert committee to decide. The expert committee on the basis of Cheitharol Kumbaba and other local sources recommended that 23rd April 1891 was the day when the Battle of Khongjom was fought and the Government of Manipur observed 23rd April of every year as the Khongjom day.

There was another group of competent historians who pointed out that the military proceedings in the National Archives of India concerning the military conflict between British forces and Manipur forces of 1891 particularly reports of Captain Rundall who commanded the British forces at the battle of Khongjom clearly recorded that the battle was fought on 25th April 1891. A question has arisen that which date was the true one? It is a methodological issue. Cheitharol Kumbaba was an official document; it was not a primary source. The recording of the event was done several months after. It had lost its status of a primary source of information. The military proceedings and the report of Captain Rundall was official and primary source. Captain Rundall was a witness of the battle and he did the fighting himself. This controversy is going on. Whom shall we trust, the primary source of

information or the official source of information? The scholars procured records of the military proceedings of 1891 from India Office Library, London. The scholar who did all the research work is a person not less than Pandit N. Khelchandra Singh, the editor of the 1967 edition of Cheitharol Kumbaba. He published all these documents in the Documents of Anglo-Manipur War 1891 Part I and II (1984,1991), Part III of the book was published by L. Basanti Devi. *The Queen Empress vs. Tikendrajit Prince of Manipur: The Anglo-Manipur Conflict of 1891* was written by Dr. Saroj Nalini Parratt and John Parratt (1992). This controversy raises the role of the historian and his sources of information. Historian trusted the primary source of information in history.

A very thoughtful work on the life of Mrs. Ethel Grimwood was written by Belinda Morse in her *Calamity and Courage: A Heroine of the Raj: The Story of Ethel Grimwood in Manipur* published by Book Guild Publishing, Sussex, England in March, 2008. The author revisited all the places referred to by Mrs. Ethel Grimwood in her book, *My Three Years in Manipur (1891)*. This is an unknown story of Mrs. Ethel Grimwood after the war of 1891 in Manipur.

Another set of writings on modern history of Manipur were carried out by a group of young and modern scholars. They are N. Joykumar's book *From Feudalism to Democracy, History of Modern Manipur, The Social Movement of Manipur and the Revolutionary Movements in Manipur*, K. Manimohan's *Hijam Irabot and his Political Movements*, N. Lokendra's *Unquiet Valley dealing with history of Manipur Valley during the colonial period*, Lal Dena's *Colonial British policy towards Manipur, Christian Mission and Colonialism etc.*

Learned articles were collected and published by enterprising editors. Mention may be made of *History of Modern Manipur* written by Gangmumei Kamei, Lal Dena and Joykumar Singh under the editorship of Lal Dena. This contributed book had become quite popular. Another contributed work was carried out by Naorem Sanajaoba of Gauhati University who published four volumes of *Manipur: Past and Present*. It was a massive attempt made by scholars of Manipur of different disciplines to write on history, civilization, religion, polity, law and culture of different peoples of Manipur under the hard working editorship of Naorem Sanajaoba. We may also refer to his *Kunmathoi suba satabdigi Kangleipak puwari (History of Kangleipak of the 21st century)*. These works have introduced Manipur to India and to the outside world.

Another hot historical controversy was the question of merger of Manipur state to Dominion of India. According to a view, Maharaja of Manipur, Bodhchandra Singh was coerced to sign the agreement and Manipur

became a part of the Indian Republic. Another view was that it was a popular movement for the merger. There are two works on the subject. Haobam Bhubon Singh, a military officer, administrator and political leader published the Merger of Manipur. Another counter work known as the Annexation of Manipur was published by an activist group. Merger continues to be debated. M. Anandamohan Singh's Shillong 1949 is autobiographical account of the signing of the Merger Agreement between Maharaja Bodhchandra Singh and the Governor of Assam.

Historical scholarship has been confronted by an extraordinary state of activist interpretation. It is a part of the phenomenon of the intellectual activism which has engulfed the socially conscious elite of Manipur. Historical study has become a multi disciplinary study. Manipur's history has been examined from different angles by the scholars of non-history discipline. This has added new dimensions to historical introspection. One of the consequences of this massive historical exercise is the emerging controversies on almost all landmark historical event, be that Sanskritization or Desanskritization, the Kabaw Valley issue, the chronology of the Battle of Khongjom, Merger Agreement and the Communist movement of Irabot Singh.

We may refer to a well written *The Wounded Land* of John Parratt of Birmingham University. He has written with sympathy on the political, social and economic problems faced by the people of Manipur in the 20th century. He was a passionate spokesman for Manipur in the academic world. I. Mohendra Singh's *The Origin of Meiteis of Manipur and the Meitei-lon* is not Tibeto-Burman (2009) has propounded new theories based on biological findings on origin of man in relation to racial origin of the Meiteis. He also deals with an important chapter on the national character of the Meiteis. His formulation on the origin of the Meiteilon being a distinctive and indigenous language not related with the century old theory of Tibeto-Burman origin will definitely raise eyebrows among the well established linguistic authorities. One cannot but commend the intellectual efforts of the author.

Ideology in terms of religious and political background has been given a position of primacy. History, historical event and personality have been interpreted to suit the ideology of the different social and political actors. However, the current debate on Merger of Manipur to India in 1949, the political status and the consequences of the merger, the perceived or imagined has gone the beyond the parameter of historical enquiry. However, the historical interpretation of events cannot be abandoned by the historians to the activists alone. The truth or facts

in historical terminology have to be stated and made known to all concerned Truth cannot be hidden for all time.

Manipur is passing through a critical phase of her history. Historical scholarship is facing a crisis of historical interpretation. There can be use or misuse of history. Historian shall not be and cannot be neutral. He is to be objective and shall stand by the side of the truth. The latest publication is Rajkumar Somorjit Sana's *The Chronology of Meitei Monarchs From 1666 to 1850* (2010).

4. TRIBAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

There is a reasonable resentment among the hill tribes of Manipur that their history is not written properly. During the pre-colonial or colonial period, the history of the tribal people was not written as they had not developed the art of writing. However, the tribes Nagas and the Kuki-Chins have had their oral tradition, myths, legends and genealogy. The tribes belong to, as Levi Strauss says "the society without history". One may not agree with the great French sociologist to describe the tribal or primitive society as society without history. The clan and family genealogies are the important sources of information to reconstruct their history. There is also methodological problem to write the tribal history. Origin, migration and settlement are reconstructed by oral history. The tribes did not develop beyond village level polity. The Naga villages were described by W. McCulloch as the village republics whereas the Kuki-Chin developed village level chieftainship. The history of the relation of these tribes with Meitei state, the Burmese state and British colonial government provided a basis for reconstruction of their history. These relations are recorded in the Meitei chronicles and British administrative records. Many anthropologists and ethnographers reconstructed the history of tribes concerned by using ethno historical method.

In the nineteenth century British officers and historians recorded the ethnography of the tribes, military expedition against the Nagas and influx of Kukis, Lushais and Kanhows in the territory of Manipur. We may refer to R.B. Pemberton, W. McCulloch, Alexander Mackenzie, Robert Brown, Sir James Johnstone who wrote on the Nagas and Kukis. It was McCulloch who gave the classification of the tribes- Nagas and Kukis. However, it was only in the 20th century that the Director of Ethnography of the Government of Assam conducted a systematic ethnographic study of hill tribes of north east India including that of Manipur. We have already referred to the Meiteis of T.C. Hodson (1908) regarding the hill tribes, Naga tribes of Manipur was published in

1911 by T.C. Hodson. It was followed by John Shakespeare's *Lushai Kuki Clans* (1912). Christopher Gimson wrote on *Maring Nagas* (1927). William Shaw wrote on *Notes on Thadou Kukis* (1929). The ethnology of the tribes during Colonial period was not so rich. During the post colonial period several monographs were written both by European and Indian scholars. We may mention *Naga Path* written by Ursula Graham Bower (1950). The Naga, Kuki and Meitei scholars of Manipur wrote on several tribes. Mention may be made of M. Horam's *Naga Polity and Socio and Cultural lives of Nagas*. T.S. Gangte's *Kukis of Manipur and Understanding the Kukis*. But history of the tribes on the historical method or ethnohistorical method was written by few scholars. A.S. Shimray wrote a *History of Tangkhul Nagas* utilizing the Meitei chronicles as sources of history. The most significant work of history of a tribe was written by Gangmumei Kamei. His work *A History of the Zeliangrong Nagas From Makhel to Gaidinliu* was written in a true historical form (2004). He also wrote on *Anal- A transborder tribe of Manipur, Ethnographic Account of the Koireng tribe more or less on ethnohistorical method*. Lal Dena's *Quest for Identity is a good work on the Hmar people*. H. Kamkhenthang wrote on *Paite- A transborder tribe*.

Reconstruction of the history of the tribes during the colonial period has been attempted while dealing with the Kuki Rebellion and the Naga Raj Movement. The hill tribes have accepted Christianity and western education had come to Manipur. After the World War II, there was emerging political consciousness among the hill tribes to protect their interest. The tribal communities started forming their tribal organization like Tangkhul Long, Kabui Samiti, Manipur Zeliangrong Union, The Kuki National Assembly, The Gangte Tribal Union, The Paite National Council, Khul Union etc. the educated hill tribes got the opportunity to participate in the political process. They entered in the Civil Services and became professionals as teachers, doctors, and engineers. Modernization had set in tribal society. The tribal scholars started writing in the tribal dialects and English language on their culture, custom, language, religion and history. There is now developed an incipient historiography and tribal studies.

There grew insurgency among the Nagas, the Mizos and Kukis. The insurgents started writing history of their movements. Tribal insurgency has become a part of the tribal history. Tribal politics in the democratic process is an aspect of tribal history.

A historiography of the hill tribes could be written both at the state level and tribal level. There are a lot of research going on in the Universities and research institutes. A multi disciplinary method based on anthropology, sociology, ethno-history and purely historical method may be utilized to write the tribal history.

NOTES

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