



ANCIENT MANIPUR IN THE LINE OF ECONOMY: REASSESSMENT AND EMPIRICAL INTERPRETATION

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ABSTRACT

Manipur, which is located strategically in North Eastern part of India represents a land of immense variety of climate, land-scape, inhabitants, culture and tradition. Known through various names in the region between South Asia and South-East Asia, history records its existence as a Sovereign Asiatic kingdom since ancient time. Known as Kathe to the Burmese, Meklee to the Ahoms, Mooglei to the Cacharies, Cassey to the Shans, the people of this land have undergone several ordeals in the course of its long drawn civilizational history.

KEYWORDS: *land-scape, inhabitants, culture and tradition.*

INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that the history of Manipur begins from 33/34AD. According to Sanamhi Laikan, the name Manipur was first officially coined during the reign of Garibaniwaz (1709-48) (Oinam Bhogeswar Singh1973, 50). Her indigenous names are Kangleipak, Poireipak and Meitrabak. The area of Manipur was much bigger than that of the present but due to the gradual fluctuation at different historical periods it become a very difficult task to trace out exact boundary line of the ancient historical period. According to R.B Pemberton, "The territories of Manipur have fluctuated at various times with the fortune of their princes, frequently extending for three or four days journey east beyond the Ningthee and Khyendwen river and west to the plains of Cachar"(R.B.Pemberton1966, 21) James Johnstone writes, "Sometimes Manipur extended her political boundaries up to Chindwin River and put a considerable territories under their rule and at other times Kabaw Valley was the only boundary of Manipur"(James Johnstone, 1974, 81). W.McCulloch said, "To the north-east and south, the boundary is not well defined and would much depend upon the extent to which the Manipur Government might spread its influence amongst the hill tribes in those directions" (W.McCulloch 1980, 1). E.W. Dun also furnished that, "Since the time when Manipur much more powerful than now, materials on Burma and carried their arms to the Irrawaddy (E.W.Dune 19811-2). Lairenmayum Iboongohal Singh draw the attention of the other opinions and stated that, "From these above quotations read with the various portions of Cheitharol Kumbaba, the most authoritative Palace Diary and Manipuri history, it is quite clear that Manipur was extending to the north up to Potkai Pass to the South as far as the Manipur Government could extend its influence and to the East up to, at least, the Chindwin river. As for the west it was extending up to the Gwai (Borak) or Jiri River or Ahorang hill (Phulator) and it is certain that Manipur government extended its influence up to Chandrapur, at Sylhet border as was clear from the 1st (First) clause of the treaty of 1833 which runs"—"The Raja will.....remove his Thana from Chandrapur, and establish it on the eastern bank of the Jeeree" (Lairenmayum Iboongohal Singh 1987,3).

Historically evolved practices over the centuries exhibit unique civilizational trends in its socio-economic and cultural milieu. Confluence and convergence of various cultural crosscurrents vis-à-vis the interactions with neighbouring civilizations produced an economic system, which included trade and commerce, with neighbouring kingdoms or countries. Its geographical location provided the basis of a functional standpoint in terms of the historic Silk Route traversing China, Myanmar and present Bangladesh. Economically, Manipur was self-sufficient and self-reliant in the long span of time from Pakhangba's reign to Khagemba's.

The economy of Manipur in the early period of its development has been an area of concern for many scholars involved in studying the history of this ancient Asiatic kingdom. It is an interesting area, which still remains to be explored critically. It deserves the attention of the scholars for a systematic study. In this paper an attempt has been made to present a picture of the economic profile of Manipur in the period preceding contact with the British especially from the reign of Pakhangba to Khagemba (33-1652AD) on the basis of available sources.

Agriculture: Since the agriculture was the backbone for the sustenance of life, it was the primary occupation and mainstay of the people of Manipur. In the early period of its civilizational ontology, the mode of cultivation was primitive and production was for local consumption. Traditions and myths recorded in a number of literary texts indicate that the ancient Manipuris practiced shifting cultivation. The evidence of shifting cultivation is found from *Naothingkhong Phambal Kaba*, an ancient text which stated that the Shelloi Langmai tribe of Nongmaiching Hill carried out shifting cultivation. Not only the shifting cultivation, the ancient Manipuri also adopted wet rice cultivation which is mentioned in *Loyumba Shilyen*, the edicts of King Loyumba (1074–1122 AD). During his reign the Meitei had acted upon the technique of wet rice cultivation. *Panthoibi Khongul*, another ancient text, made a refer to the plantation and cultivation of varieties of crops and paddy by Nongpokningthou and Panthoibi (*Panthoibi Khongul*). The chronicles also have furnished information referring to several irrigation works by dredging the rivers and making drainages to drain out the water from low-lying marshy areas. It is remarked that King Taothingmang was well known for his task of draining the marshes of valley and dredging its rivers and stream (Singh (b) and N. Khelchandra Singh 1967, 2). Located in the tropical region, endemic to heavy rainfall, rains would cause flood as the marshes could not be drained away by the narrow rivers and streams, thus affecting agricultural production (Kabui 1991, 97).

Prior to the coming of Muslims in Manipur the method and practice of transplantation (*Lingthokpa*) of cultivation was limited in Manipur as it is believed that this knowledge was brought by Muslim to soil of this land. The traditional methods viz. '*Punghul*' and '*Pamphe*l' were widely applied in the valley of Manipur (Ali 1988, 66–7).

Under the '*Punghul*' method, the land was to be tilled first and the seeds were strewn over it, and finally the seeds were covered with soil through tilling. This method was generally pertained in dry land in the month of May and June (Ali 1988, 66–7).

'*Pamphe*l' was applied in the wetland mainly in the month of June and July because these months are the suitable for the practicing the method '*Pamphe*l'. In this method, land was first tilled to make it muddy and the field was to be properly leveled. Seeds were packed into an air-tight bag and soaked with water till they were germinated. After the seeds were germinated, they were sown properly in the paddy field (O.Ranjit Singh & E Nixon, 2013).

'*Lingthokpa*' (transplantation) was introduced by the Muslim immigrants from Bengal during the reign of Khagemba, the then king of Manipur. Agricultural technology was improved in a large scale with the introduction of transplantation of paddy cultivation by the Muslim. Under this method, the seeds were to be made to grow in paddy nursery and then transplanted them to the fields when they were fit for transplantation (Ali 1988, 66–7).

While the '*Punghul*', '*Pamphe*l' and '*Lingthokpa*' methods were practiced in the valley areas, *Pamlou Uba* (shifting cultivation) was the commonly practice in the hill areas. *Jhum* cultivation, under this method,

trees, bamboos, shrubs, etc. whichever were grown in the cultivation areas were cut down and they were burnt down and reduces to ashes when they were dried. In tilling the area neither plough nor cattle could be employed. They scratched up the surface with little hoes and mixed the soil with the ashes (Brown 1975, 17–8). Terraced cultivation method of farming was also followed by the hill people. Under this method, strips of leveled plots were arranged, which were embanked with mud and trunks in parallel lines (Ali 1988, 69). The method was a less popular process of farming.

Multiplicity of rices which were included early (*Anganphou*) and late crops were grown in Manipur. *Sajikhong*, *Tumai*, *Kabaw Phou* and *Phourel Anganba* were varieties of early crops. Late crops included *Phourel*, *Luning* and *Yenthik* (Sharma (a) 2002, 86). A new variety of paddy known as *Taothabi* was introduced by King Khagemba and plantation was carried out in the swamps in 1634 AD (Kabui 1991, 219). The people of Manipur had been cultivating varieties of crops since the ancient times. In addition to the cultivation of rice, the people of Manipur also indulged in cultivation of other crops. Numbers of food crops such as chili, pumpkin, ginger, millet, sweet potato, cucumber, onion, cabbage, cauliflower, beans, pulses, peas, etc. were grown for domestic consumption. But later on, these crops were farming on a large scale for commercial and export purposes (Jhalajit 1965, 245). Traditional commercial crops cultivated by the Manipuris were mainly confined to cotton, tea, sugarcane, tobacco, etc. The import of these items during the early phase of Manipur's history was not known much.

Silk weaving was an ancient agro-related art and manufacturing of it was a continuation of the popular tradition in Manipur. Silk was considered an important item for export. Remarking the significance of the silk industry Brown observed that "About 300 persons are employed in the silk culture, and they pay for the privilege some 300 rupees annually; they are for this payment excused from the operation of lallup, or forced labour. The raw silk is disposed of by ... a weaver class called 'Kubbo' – they having originally, it is said, emigrated from the Kubbo Valley in Upper Burmah ... the Burmese traders who frequent Munnipore, buy up greedily all the raw silk they can get; this speaks well for the quality of silk, as the silkworm is plentiful in and near the Kabbo Valley" (Brown 1975, 25ff).

The excellence of Manipuri art and manufacture Cotton, another important crop for manufacture has been given testimony by several observers. "Silk, iron, kupass, dammer, black thread, wood oil, wax, elephants' teeth, agar, sandal wood, camphor, red ditto, blue ditto, white ditto, black coss, Meklee cloths, Meklee gold rupees" find mentioned as the products of the country in the treaty concluded in 1762 with Governor Verelst (Pemberton 2005, 42). Indigo, bixa and alba, etc. were also cultivated in the villages and homesteads (Brown 1975, 1). The Manipuris grew a rich variety of garden crops such as tobacco, opium, and different types of plantain, vegetable and a few varieties of spices. Mangoes, pineapples, apples, peaches, jackfruits, etc. were cultivated. The agrarian landscape of Manipur was enriched with the coming of the migrant Muslims popularly known as Pangals or Meitei Pangals. Acknowledging their expertise in gardening skills, the then king of Manipur inducted them into the larger Manipuri population by bestowing Manipuri *Sagei* (surname) names such as Hawaii-Ingkhol-Mayum. The Pangals introduced varieties of fruit seeds. They opened a garden called Ningthem Inkhol at Khumidok Heinou Khongnembi by the order of king for cultivation of fruits and vegetables (Singh (c) and M.A. Janab Khan 1973, 52–3).

Granary: Historical testimonies reveal the establishment of several granaries by King Mungyamba to store food grains at different places of Manipur. The state godown or granary was called as *Kei*. The objective for the establishment of the *Keis* was to distribute the food grains to the needy people during famine or lean seasons (Kabui 1991, 208). King Khagemba also constructed state godowns (*Keis*) at various places to store food grains to meet the requirements of the people during famine, drought or other calamities. The places where King Khagemba established granaries were Kakyao, Langpok Leihao, Tingri, Koireng Kei, Mongsang Kei, Kiyam Kei, Wangoo and Yihari Kei (Kabui 1991, 9). The chief of the village was appointed as *Keirakpa* (keeper of granary).

Handloom: From the earliest times down to the 17th century, there was a slow but steady development of technology in Manipur, which is testified by archaeological findings and historical evidences. People of

Manipur were efficient and skillful in the art of spinning, weaving and dyeing. *Panthoibi Khongul* speaks about spinning and weaving of varieties of clothes. King Naothingkhong innovated coronation costumes such as *Leiruthak* (a head dress), *Chareiningkham* (a triangular piece of cloth with a brocade hanging on the back from the waist), *Phirel Phurit* (a long and loose shirt) for the king and *Leiren Leichao* (ornament of the hair), *Kumshang Phanek* (a skirt dark in colour) and *Kabrang Phanek* (a cloth made of silk) for the queen (Singh (d) 1983, 42–3). Handicrafts witnessed immense development during the period of king Loiyumba. Majority of the people of Manipur were traditional weavers. The task of weaving involving as many as 32 different designs of clothes was assigned to thirty families. The clothes were *Mung Phi*, *Chinphi*, *Lai Phi*, *Wana Kadeng Phi*, *Lai Phi Tangkap*, *Phirel*, *Langdom Phi*, *Yarongphi*, *Leirumph*, *Dolaitanaphi*, *Purumph*, *Taraophi*, *Pumthitphi*, *Phimmu*, *Phinin Lanphi*, *Leiyekphi*, etc. (Kabui 1982, 23).

Dyeing in eight different colours, based on colours of flowers was assigned to eight families. Historical records indicate silver crowns adopted during the reign of Mungyumba (1562–1697) (Kabui 1991, 207). A popular belief mentions that Queen Laisna, wife of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba had created several designs of clothes based on the pattern of python. Nongmainu Ahongbi, wife of Khuyoi Tompok discovered *Leimatil* (the mulberry silk-worm). The handloom industry was further developed with the introduction of shuttle locally known as *Pangandem*. Among the Muslim immigrants there were many skilled weavers who made great contributions to the development of handloom and handicrafts in the kingdom. King Khagemba assigned *Phisabam Yumnak* (lineage or clan indicating the profession of weaving) to those Muslims who were skillful in the art of weaving.

Pottery: In 1929 only Shri W. Yumjao Singh did excavation at a site called Sangaiten, an old palace site (Wahengbam Yumjao Singh: 1935: 29). His findings included pottery of various shapes and sizes, one iron spear head, a bullet, a bar of lead and some sundry things. In 1932 Kameng Village was excavated and potteries were collected. All these findings were forwarded to the Indian Museum Calcutta for expert's opinion vide political agent's letter no. 1507 dt 30-7-32 (Imoba & et al:1999:3). These findings were the first proto-historic antiquities in Manipur. Later on O.K. Singh in early seventies started explorations and excavations at several prehistoric, proto-historic and historical sites of Manipur. Some of the important sites are Khangkhui cave, Machi cave, Tharon cave, Napachik and Nangpok Keithelmanbi (Okram Kumar Singh: 1988:25). Some of the later discoveries of proto-historic sites are Nongpok Keithelmanbi, Mongjam, Panjaophallum Ching, Phunan, Napachik, Sekta, Thoubal, Khamaram, Koutruck, Andro Khangabok etc. Studies of these sites have revealed interesting aspects of the cultural dynamism of ancient Manipur. They incorporate not only pre and proto-history but also elements of historical traditions. Pottery culture is an old art which has been in existence in Manipur since time immemorial and the techniques and methods applied by the potters of Manipur give some notion of the influence of South East Asian culture (Imoba & et al, 1999:11). Prehistoric sites and cultural objects found in different parts of Manipur are by no means insignificant. The challenge is to collect and correlate the discovered cultural materials for the reconstruction of history of the early society and the elements of continuity and change in the region (O. Ranjit Singh,2010:39).

The exploration and excavation of prehistoric and archaeological sites in the Manipur have brought to light the specimens of earthen Jars and pots in almost all the site. The earthen pot has an important role in social, economic, cultural and religious life of the Manipuri people and the myths and beliefs related to pottery are man (S. Amal Singh,2010:89). Various motifs are depicted on the pots which discovered from different archaeological sites of Manipur. The graffiti marks at the bottom of its innermost burial pots are sometimes seen as mystical. The Manipur culture although fundamentally displaying a Vaishnavite maturity, showed signs of continuity of the previous culture particularly in areas located at the periphery of the state of Manipur and possible contacts with the traditions from South East Asian countries resulting from its origin. Hence, the proper treatment of the pottery object found from different places of Manipur became so important and needed as they indicate social, economy, cultural and religious life of the people of Manipur at a point of time and different stages of human civilization in this region.

The people of Manipur knew the art of pottery since very early times. The immigrant Muslims introduced improved technology of pottery by using wheels in Manipur. They were given local *Yumnak* (surname) known as *Phusam* by the then king (Sanahal 1985, xv; Sharma (b) and Badar-ud-din 1991, 27). T.C. Hodson observes as "The household utensils consist of earthen pots manufactured for the most part by the *Lois* of Chairel and Shuganu, who also produce stone bowls ... which is blackened by lamp black and then wrought to a high polish. Brass, copper, and bell-metal cooking pots are in common use but are imported from Cachar. Plates, both of metal and cheap earthenware, are found in many houses" (Hodson 1989, 39).

Carpentry & Others: Carpentry works played an important role in the traditional economy of the land. Khuyoi Tompok introduced the drum, which was used during wartime, dance, music and other social and religious events (Singh (b) and N. Khelchandra Singh 1967, 1). Carpentry works including boat making, canoes, *kangpots*, beds, stools, spinning wheel, shuttle, hookas, other agricultural implements, making of bridges across the rivers and streams were done by the carpenters (Hodson 1989, 33; Singh (f) 1976, 120). *Hijan Hirao* refers to boat making in Manipuri. The immigrant Muslims in Manipur also played a big role to the enhancement of carpentry work. They used *Phundrei* (lathe) for polishing of wood. According to their skill in the carpentry work, the then king of Manipur (xyz which) allotted their *Sagei* (clan or lineages) or *Yumnak* (surname) as *Phundreimayum* (Sharma (b) and Badar-ud-din 1991, 28).

The art of making paper was brought by the Chinese to Manipur during the reign of King Khagemba (Sharma (b) and Badar-ud-din 1991, 62). The Manipuris learnt the art of manufacturing gun powder from the Chinese merchants who visited Manipur in circa 1630 at the time of Khagemba (Hodson 1989, 21). It is stated that Khagemba, in 1627 AD, "experimented to make big guns, and prepared one mental gun of big size" (Hodson 1989:21). The people of Manipur knew the technology of brick making since the time of Khagemba. This art was learnt from the Chinese. The Chinese called brick as *Chek*, which was included in the Meitei vocabulary (Kabui 1991, 221). British records mention two brick-built walls called *Hogaibi* constructed during the reign of Khagemba. Bricks were used for building only royal houses and temples (Hodson 1989, 26).

Mineral Ore and Salt: Mineral resources such as iron, copper, salt, lime, silver, gold, tin, etc. were found in Manipur. Many historical texts refer to these mineral resources. According to historians, the reign of Khuyoi Tompok appears to be an age of several technological developments. Technical innovation in metallurgy was also recorded in the chronicle that bronze was smelted and bell-metal was cast. There was a reference to a bridge (Kabui 1991, 115) over the Naga River constructed with tin and copper. Iron, gold and silver were also used. *Senbung* or bell-metal gong was manufactured during his period (Kabui 1991, 96–7). During his reign iron was discovered at Kakching, gold at Kongba and copper at Sibong (Sharma (a) 2002, 88). *Poireiton Khunthokpa* refers to the use of iron implements for the first time in the history of Manipur. British records mention that the Manipuris knew the art of metallurgy and produced metal works for domestic purposes (Dune 1886, 7). Accounts of the coronation of Naothingkhong speak of iron weapons and metals like silver, gold, etc. The earlobes of Naothingkhong were bore by goldsmith and earrings of gold were put on. The introduction of bell metal currency (Kabui 1991, 221) by Khagemba proved the development and prosperity of the kingdom.

Manipur produced salt abundant enough to meet the demands of the people and the Meiteis made systematic arrangements to procure salt which was mainly obtained from the brine wells situated in the valley. Salt wells are situated at the villages of Ningen, Chandrakhong, Sikhong and Waikhong (Sharma (a) 2002, 91; Hodson 1989, 33–6). Records indicate that nearly the whole of the salt consumed by the people of Manipur was obtained from salt wells situated in the valley (Brown 1874:22).

Food habits: Next to rice, fish constituted one of the most important food items of the people of Manipur. Fishery was an immensely important profession since the early times. The ancient text *Khongchomnupi Nongkarol* mentions six girls of the Luwang clan, who were intimate friends, going to Haoku Soy Lake to purchase fish. The same text also mentions of six youths known as Haoku Pakhang who used to catch fish in the lake and sell them to fishwives. Colonel McCulloch furnishes interesting particulars about the method of fishing employed by the fishermen at the Loktak Lake as "The Logtak, the great resort of these aquatic birds,

is covered with floating islands. Under these, amongst the roots of the vegetation of which they are formed, fish, in the cold weather, collect in great numbers, and are caught in the following manner: An island, having been cut into a manageable size, is pushed to a part of the lake where the water is not very deep, and where the bottom has been paved with stones. There it is fixed by means of long bamboo stakes; and when the fish have collected in sufficient quantity, a long strip sufficient to surround it is cut from some other of these floating masses of vegetation. With this the asylum of the fish is surrounded, and a row of stones being placed on the edge nearest the island, that edge sinks down to the prepared bottom, whilst the rest remains upright in the water and thus forms a wall all round. The fish are now driven out of their sanctuary; if small they are taken in nets, if large they are speared" (McCulloch 1980, 30–1).

T.C. Hodson also observes the significance of fish for the Manipuris. "As a large portion of the valley is still underwater, and as fish forms an article of food of the Meitei community, the gentle art gives employment to many people. At present, the state enjoys a large revenue from the fisheries" (Hodson 1989, 44).

SYSTEMATISED ECONOMY:

Operation of traditional economy existed in Manipur during the period between Pakhangba and Khagemba. The ancient text *Naothingkhong Phambal Kaba* mentions of better economic conditions during this period. Use of *Sangbai*, basket for measuring paddy, is also mentioned. It is stated that the king was strict about the paddy seedlings. A slave was killed by tying him to a pole under water for spoiling paddy seedlings kept at the crown land which was tilled by the slaves. People husked the paddy by use of mortar and stick. The women did weaving with spinning of cotton yarn and silk. Animal husbandry was also developed with substantial poultry maintained in almost every household both in the hill and valley (Kabui 1991, 114). Rearing of cattle like cows and buffaloes was widespread. During the period of King Loiyumba, handicrafts made rapid strides. Agriculture made substantial improvements during Khagemba's reign. A number of technological changes took place during his reign.

The ancient text, *Nongsamei Puya*, refers to the contribution made by Muslim immigrants to a number of technological developments in different fields. For example, the Muslim immigrants during Khagemba's period introduced transplantation of paddy, plough drawn by the bullock and buffalo, etc. King Khagemba took interest in providing irrigation facilities to the farmers and cultivators. Rivers and streams were dredged, canals were dug and bunds were constructed to control flood. Marketing centres were established at different places which facilitated the selling and buying of commodities. The emergence and establishment of markets in Manipur testified existence of surplus produce. There are references to the existence of many artisans of different occupations in the period under survey.

LAND TENURE SYSTEM:

In the pre-colonial period all the land in the state belonged to the king. Lands in the valley were classified into two categories i.e. *ingkhoh* (home-stead land) and *Lou* (cultivable/agricultural land). These *ingkhohs* were distributed in a number of villages. The cultivable lands were classified as i) Taonalou ii) Ningthoulou or Sarkari, iii) Phumlo (Ihamlou), iv) Sepoys (Siphailou), v) Manaro (Manalou), vi) Brahmins (Lugun-lou), vii) royal family, and viii) Maharani and Temple (Lairou) etc. (Howell: 9). It is asserted that he is to give away or retain as he pleases. Under the Raja is an official named the Phoonan Saloomba, whose The whole land system of the valley starts with the assumption that all the land belongs to the Raja, and the duty is to superintending all matters connected with land cultivation; he looks after the measurement, receives the rent in kind, and transacts all business matters connected with the land on behalf of the Raja. The land is sub-divided into villages and their surroundings; the head man of each division or village looks after the cultivation, and is responsible for the realization of the tax payable by each cultivator; he holds no interest in the land, and is merely an agent of the Raja (Brown 1874: 11-13).

It is said that a member of one community was not allowed to cultivate any part of the land owned by another community (Hodson 1982: 105). Touna Lou may be regarded as land brought under fresh

cultivation. People were allowed to bring land under cultivation with the permission of the king. Touna Lou holding was generally divided into two: i) holding through purchase and ii) holding through clearing of jungles or forests with permission. The person who possessed Touna Lou through the later mode was exempted from payment of tax for one year (Sharma a 2002: 78 -79). Under normal circumstances the king could not evict the land holders without paying proper compensation.

Sarkari Lou was government land. The lands were cultivated by the slaves or free man. If a landholder failed to pay the land tax, he could be deprived of the same (Ali 1988: 62). Pham Lou was the service land. It was granted to the state officials. Those people who got land by virtue of their service could get rent for the land given in their name. Siphai Lou was the land of the sepoys. The sepoys were not entitled to any regular payment in those days. It is stated that the sepoys who were in the service of state were not paid in cash and in lieu were given lands, the size of land holdings varied according to their rank (Sharma a 2002: 79)

Mana Lou was the landed reward. The king use to grant land to those who rendered valuable service to the state. This type of land grant was known as Mana Lou and was granted for a period covering only the life time of the recipient.

Brahmins (Lugun Lou) – It is stated that Brahmins on taking the sacred thread (Lugun) were entitled to get one *pari* of land from the king. The land received under this system could not be disposed off or sold out to any other person (Sharma a 2002: 80).

Land for the royal family – This land consisted of the landed property granted by the king to his sisters, brothers, children and relatives. They owned such land, more or less, permanently. Another land tenure system in Manipur was assignment of lands to the temples and Sylvan deities. Govindaji, an important deity of the royal family was assigned one hundred *pari* (it is a measure equivalent to two acres) of land. These lands were cultivated by the slaves of the temple who dwelt in the village of Charangpat, Thinunggei, and Uyan (Howell : 9). The king also gave lands to those who rendered distinguished service in war. These land grants were called Pangal Lou i.e. land acquired through merit and strength.

Touna Lou, the Raja's own Lou and Pham Lou were taxed. Each household cultivator had to pay tax in kind to the Raja from 2 to 13 baskets of paddy for each *pari*. According to British records, two baskets of paddy was the normal tax to be collected, at this rate only from his favourites and from others, it was set down at twelve baskets annually; this was seldom exceeded, except in rare emergencies such as war *etc.* In cases where lands are held by officials *etc.*, as middlemen, the burdens are more severe, running as high as 24 baskets per *pari* (Brown 1975: 11-13). Brown says that no one is prohibited from cultivating, but rather the contrary, for every male who comes on duty is entitled to cultivate one *pari* of land, paying a rent for the same. The state rent is nominally 2 baskets of rice in the husks, the basketful weighing 50 or 60 pounds; but usually 12 or 13 baskets are taken. Considering, however, that the worst *pari* of land yields 100 baskets and the best from 160 to 200, the 13 baskets is not a high rent; but so long as the rent taken by the state is given out as two, every basket over this is an exaction, and may be made a matter of grievance, as it is now. But this grievance can only be one as long as the *pari* of the cultivator is of the standard measure, which is very seldom the case indeed, it has sometimes been found nearer two, and until a survey has been made, neither the Raja nor the people can be satisfied (Brown 1975: 11- 13).

The rate of rent of Sarkari Lou was very high as compared with other tenures. The cultivators had to pay sixty baskets of paddy as rent. The rent of Pham Lou per *pari* was 24 baskets of paddy as the officers in turn gave revenue of 2 baskets to the state (Howell: 9)

The systematization of Lallup system by king Loiyumba (1074 – 1122 AD) had drawn the kingdom towards a more stable and organized polity. Lallup (Lal = war, Lup = organization) means war organization. This system emerged during the reign of Taothingmang (264-364 AD), while he engaged labour service of his subject in dredging the Imphal River. Lallup covered all the work relating to the state i.e. both military and civil.

CONCLUSION:

We find a good account of Manipur's economy in ancient times in *Naothingkhong Phambal Kaba*. In retrospect, several technological developments also appeared during the reign of King Khuyoi Tompok (154 – 264) AD. Invention of silk rearing, boat making with the help of Luwang chief and exploration of minerals were also ascribed to his reign (O. Bhogeswar Singh 1967:196-201). The Ningthouja kings took up major irrigation works in the kingdom. King Taothingmang was well known for his work of draining the swamplands of the valley of Manipur and dredging its rivers and streams (Singh e 1967:4-6 ;17-21). Cheitharol Kumbaba refers to the dredging of the Imphal and the Iril rivers by Taothingmang and his brother. *Ningthourol Lambuba* refers to the abundant harvest of paddy. During the reign of King Loiyumba (1094 – 1122) AD handicrafts had greatly prospered. The period of Khagemba (1597 – 1652) AD was a landmark in the history of Manipur for a number of technological transformations. No doubt, the prevalence of growth and development in various economic fields could be witnessed in Manipur in ancient days as there was remarkable development in the field of agricultural and industrial life with the rise of sundry arts, crafts and improved technologies.

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