



## Chapter 15

### Manipur Under British Rule

#### **NOTES:**

##### **The Khongjom War of 1891 and its aftermath**

- In 1886, Surchandra became the king of Manipur which led to the division of his brothers into two group – one consisting of his own brothers and the other consisting of his step brothers.
- On 21 September 1890, Zila Ngamba and Angousana revolted against Surchandra. Surchandra fled to the Residency of the then British Political Agent, Grimwood.
- Surchandra left Manipur for Vrindavan after staying in the British residence for some time.
- Surchandra's brother Kulachandra ascended the throne and Tikendrajit became the Yubaraj.
- In Kolkata, Surchandra requested the government of India to reinstate him on the throne.
- The British sent Mr. James Wallace Quinton, the Chief Commissioner of Assam with 400 strong escort to Manipur.
- On arriving at Imphal on 22 March 1891, Quinton organised a Durbar to arrest Tikendrajit but ended in a failure as Tikendrajit didn't attend the Durbar citing illness.
- At 3:30 am of 24 March 1891, the British attacked the Palace Compound from three points – the southern gate, the western gate and the Yuvaraja's residence to capture Tikendrajit but it was unsuccessful.
- Quinton, Grimwood, Colonel Skene, Lieutenant Simpson, Mr. Cossins and a bugler went to the palace of Kulachandra but Mr. Grimwood was speared to death by Pukhrambam Kajao. Quinton and others were subsequently executed in front of Kangla Sha under the order of Thangal General.

- As soon as the news of execution reached the Government of India, three columns of troops from Kohima, Silchar and Tamu under the command of Major General Henry Collett, Col. R.H.F Rennick and Brigadier General T. Graham respectively were sent to Manipur.
- The column moving from Tamu faced the strongest resistance from Manipur and a major hand-to-hand combat took place at Khongjom on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, where many Manipuris including Paona Brajabashi, Maipak Sana, Wangkheirakpa, Chinglen Sana lost their lives. This Battle came to be known as the Khongjom War.
- After the war, the royal family fled the palace and Manipur lost its independence to the British on 27<sup>th</sup> April.

### **How Naol Singh came to be known as Paona Brajabashi**

- In 1823, on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of December, Paonam Naol Singh was born to Paonam Tulsiram and Haobam Kunjeswari.
- After his father's death in 1850, Naol left Imphal for Vrindavan and then proceeded to Banaras to learn the art of fighting.
- In 1856, he began his military career by joining the king's army as a junior officer.
- The king promoted Naol Singh to the post of Subedar and rewarded three hectares of revenue free land along with Ningthou phi for his bravery during the uprising Akam of Chin Hills.
- After seeing his bravery and sincerity, Chandrakirti, the king of Manipur affectionately called him Brajabashi. Henceforth Paonam Naol Singh came to be known as Paona Brajabashi.

### **Manipur Post 1891**

- Tikendrajit and Thangal General were hanged to death on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1891 and Kulachandra along with the other members of the royal family were exiled from Manipur.
- The Imperial British installed a five years old Churachand, grandson of Nara Singh, who ruled Manipur between 1832-1851, as the new king of Manipur on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1892.
- As the new king was very young, Maxwell was appointed as both the Political Agent and Superintendent of Manipur.

- Maxwell brought many administrative changes in Manipur like introducing of House tax, Land revenue, the system of Pothang, etc.
- The British also allowed the export of rice outside Manipur which led to scarcity of rice by the turn of the century.

### **Nupilal of 1904**

- On 6<sup>th</sup> July 1904, the market sheds of Khwairamband were burnt down.
- On 15<sup>th</sup> July 1904, the Bungalows of Captain Nattal and Dulop were destroyed by fire in the middle of night.
- When another bungalow was also burnt down on 4<sup>th</sup> August, Maxwell suspected it to be the handiwork of some Manipuri, so he ordered the men folks of Imphal to procure teak from the Kabaw valley in Myanmar and reconstruct the burnt bungalows.
- On 30<sup>th</sup> September 1904, a meeting was held at Cheirap Court where the British forces dispelled the assembly and arrested suspected leaders.
- The men-folk of Imphal had no choice but to procure teak from Kabaw valley and rebuild the bungalows.
- The actions of the British enraged the women folk of Manipur as a result thousands of women launched a big demonstration.
- The British authorities finally withdraw the order to reconstruct the burnt bungalows.
- This event is known as the 1<sup>st</sup> Nupilal of Manipur.

### **Nupilal of 1939**

- The deep- rooted cause of the movement was directly related to the irregularities and malpractices in the administration of the state.
- In 1939, due to excessive rainfall and hailstorm in the state, all the crops were destroyed which led to scarcity of rice in the market.
- Around four thousand women requested T.A. Sharpe, the President of Manipur State Durbar, to issue an order to stop both working of the mills and export of rice.
- T.A. Sharpe along with the women went to the telegraph office to telegraphed Churachand, the king of Manipur, who was at Nabadwip.
- Unfortunately, a clash broke out between the women agitators and the Assam Rifles soldiers called by Sharpe for reinforcement.
- Many women agitators were injured in the bayonet charge.

- On 13<sup>th</sup> December 1939, Churachand replied the Durbar to immediately banned the export of rice from Manipur. This incident is known as Second Nupilal.

### **Kuki Rebellion, 1917-19**

- In May 1917, during the First World War, Churachand, donated Rs. 1,34,000 as a war loan to Britain and sent two thousand Nagas and Kukis as Manipur Labour Corps to France.
- Higgins, the then Political Agent demanded more labour force but the Kuki's did not accepted his demand.
- On the advice of Chingakham Sanajaoba, who professed to have supernatural power, the Kukis started the Kuki Rebellion on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1917 by attacking the forest toll station at Ithai.

### **Zeliangrong Revolt**

- In 1930's, the Zeliangrong movement under the leader of Jadonang started as a socio-religious movement which objective was to bring all sections of Zeliangrong under one single and uniform custom.
- Jadonang was arrested on charge of murdering four betel leaf traders from Manipur valley at Kambiron and was sentenced to death. He was hanged on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1931 at Imphal.
- After Jadonang' s death, the movement was carried on under the leadership of Gaidinliu. She was arrested in Pulomi Village of Naga Hills district in October 1932 and sentenced to life imprisonment.
- After India got Independence, Jawaharlal Nehru released Gaidinliu from jail and called her “Rani”. Rani Gaidinliu passed away on 17<sup>th</sup> Feb 1993 at Ningkhao Village of Tamenglong District.

