
**POLITICAL EXPLOITS OF MANIPUR IN THE CHINDWIN VALLEY
(1467-1748)**

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ABSTRACT

The erstwhile kingdom of Manipur (now in India) had its political relations with the Shans of the Chindwin/Ningthee Valley (in Burma /Myanmar) even before 1467 A.D. This river valley covers a distance of about 1200 km from Cachin State of Upper Burma to Monywa region. During the time of King Kyamba of Manipur (1467-1508), the Raja of Pong (Shan kingdom of Upper Chindwin Valley) ceded Kabaw Valley/Kubo Valley (comprising Samjok/Thoungdut, Khambat and Kule) to Manipur in return for the latter's political support. During the period under study, the valley became a hot spot of politics in which the Manipuris, Shans and Burmese involved repeatedly. In order to maintain sovereignty over Kabaw Valley, Kyamba's successors sent Manipuri army many times to the region. The kings of Manipur also had matrimonial alliances with the ruling families of Pong and Burma. It was during the time of King Garibaniwaza (1709-1748) that Manipur reached the peak of its exploits in the river valley. The king's lightning raids devastated famous Burmese towns like Myedoo/ Myedu, Debarayn and Sagaing which were in the proximity of Ava (Burmese capital). As consolidation works also went on, there developed social relations resulting in the establishment of Manipuri villages in the region. With the vast territory Manipur possessed in the valley, its revenue also increased.

Keywords: Brave and hardy race, treaty of friendship, consolidations and Manipuri settlements.

INTRODUCTION

Manipur (a state of India) was, at one time, one of the most powerful kingdoms which had its political control over a vast valley of the Chindwin/Ningthee River (a tributary of the Irrawaddy River in Myanmar). Although Manipur was a tiny mountainous kingdom, yet its people were brave and united. It was because of this bravery that the kings of Manipur had not only expanded their territory over a vast area of the said valley but also influenced over other powers of the region. Recognizing the erstwhile status of Manipur in the eastern region of British India, George Swinton, the Chief Secretary to the Government, expressed: "The Munneepore country, which is

inhabited by a brave and hardy race, who have frequently opposed a noble resistance to their Burmese invaders would thereby accrue to the security and tranquility of our North-E Frontier.”¹

During the period, Manipur was under powerful kings like Kyamba (1467-1508), Kabomba (1523-1542), Mungyamba (1562-1597), Khagemba (1597-1652), Khunjaoba (1652-1666), Paikhomba (1666-1697), Charairongba (1697-1709) and Garibaniwaza (1709-1748). By the middle of the fifteenth century A.D., there was a powerful Shan kingdom of Pong in the upper Chindwin valley. After the Pong Manipur Treaty (1475), the latter became an undisputed owner of a vast territory in the river valley. R.B. Pemberton wrote in *The Eastern Frontier of India*: “In the records of Muneepoor...we have but one event of any importance recorded, which is said to have taken place in the year 1475, during the reign of the Rajah Kyamba; when the refractory tributary of Khumbat, at that time dependent upon the kings of Pong, was attacked and expelled from his territory by the united forces of Pong and Muneepoor, and the Kubo valley (Kabaw Valley) was formally annexed to the latter country (Manipur)...”² On the political exploits of Manipur under Raja Garibaniwaza, Maung Hting Aung wrote in *A History of Burma*: “The entire western bank of the Irrawaddy lay at their mercy and finally the king (Mahadammayaza of Burma) had to send all available troops to the troubled regions. But these troops lacked a supreme commander with an imaginative plan and they took up isolated defensive positions, which the fierce Manipuri horsemen merely bypassed.”³ D.G.E. Hall also wrote in *A History of South-East Asia*: “Under Gharib Newaz (Garibaniwaza)... its expert horsemen became the terror of Upper Burma. They destroyed villages and pagodas and got away with their loot before they could be intercepted.”⁴ But these scholars did not highlight a clear picture of political developments on the area under study and the Manipuris’ consolidation works done in Kabaw Valley. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to fill up the missing part of the study. The source materials are archival, Chronicles and secondary source books.

1. The Burman-Shan relations and the kingdom of Manipur

The valley of the Chindwin River, where the Shans mainly live in, was not an integrated entity during the period under study. Therefore, the making of modern Burma (Ava as capital) was a later development. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Lower Chindwin Valley and also Lower Burma of today were ruled over by the Mons and the Tibeto Burmans. These Burmans were known as the Pyu by the Arakanese. Before the stated period, these Tibeto Burmans made their capital at Prome. But it was overthrown by internal dissensions among the tribes. Later, they erupted into the Central Irrawaddy Valley in the mid-ninth century and, in the fifties of the 11th century A.D., Aniruddha created the Pagan Empire at a place called Pagan. This dynasty came to an abrupt end after 1287 A.D. and for some two and half centuries following the fall of Pagan, Burma was in a state of confusion. The Burmese eventually

emerged again as a unifying political factor in the 1540s under the leadership of the princes of Toungoo. In 1635, they shifted their capital to Ava withdrawing from active commercial and diplomatic contacts with the outside world. During this time in Ava, “the kings were mere figure heads almost palace prisoners; a coterie of royal ministers dominated the government.”⁵ The Toungoo Dynasty was in power till 1752.



Courtesy: Waba Publications-Mainland South-East Asia in 1832 (an extract)

Among the immigrants in the valley under study, the Tai Shans were the last. These races came owing to causes such as drought and ethnic pressure, in successive infiltrations, each driving the predecessor further south.⁶ Later a powerful Shan Kingdom of Pong was established in the Upper Chindwin Valley. From the Shan chronicle procured by Pemberton, the first king of Pong was "Kool-lee" whose reign is dated as far as the 80th year of the Christian era.⁷ In the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, this Pong kingdom possessed a vast territory "occupying the country between the frontier of Yunnan and the hills separating the Kubbo valley (Kabaw/Kubo Valley) from Manipur, extending north apparently to the mountains which bound Assam on the south-east and south, as far down as the parallel of 23°35'."⁸ To the Manipuris, this Shan principality was known as the kingdom of Pong having its capital at Mogaung/Mongmaorong. The people, they generally called Kubo, and distinguished them, as they were dependant on Munneepoor or Ava, by the terms Mieethiee Kubo, or Awa Kubo, which expressions are synonymous with the names Kasi Shan and Mrelap Shan, applied by the Burmahs (Burmese) to the same people and country.⁹

In 1364 the Shan King of Pong Thokyenbwa invaded and demolished Zakaing (Sagaing). The king also captured Penya which was on the eastern side of the Irrawaddy River. The Burmese chronicle Maha Yazwen is told to have mentioned in its sixth volume about the destruction of the two cities effected by the Shan king Thokyenbwa.¹⁰ By 1445 A.D., the Pong kingdom comprised of Manpha, Moonjeet, Moongyang, Kaksa and Khambat. Later, the people of Khambat, under its local chief, tried to throw off their allegiance to the king of Pong. Consequently, a joint army of Pong King Kingkhomba/Soohoongkhum and the Manipuris under King Kyamba invaded Kyang Khambat, and, defeating it, a large part of the valley became a part of Manipur from 1475 A.D. It shows that there had been a cordial relationship between Manipur and the Pong kingdom. The Pong King died about the year 1512 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Soopengpha. It was during Soopengpha's reign that the Burmese (Burmans) first attacked and defeated the Pong Kingdom. Later, in retaliation, the kingdom of Pong invaded the Burmese territory in 1526 and destroyed their capital, killed the king, and over-ran the whole country as far as Toungoo and Prome. But in the last part of the 16th century A.D., when Sookopha was ruling over the kingdom of Pong "his territories were subsequently invaded by the Burmahs (Burmese), his capital taken, and himself compelled to fly to Khumpti, where he was discovered and betrayed to the Burmese by two of his slaves, Tooyang and Sieerang..."¹¹ Between 1662-1672, a son of the king of Ava reigned the Pong Kingdom. After whom the succession reverted to the ancient ruling family till 1734. Pemberton wrote: "About this time, two princes of Pong, called Mongpo and Kyathon, fled to Rajah Gureeb Nuwaz (Garibaniwaza) of Muneepoor... and solicited his protection against the Burmahs: he (Garibaniwaza) attacked and destroyed the town of Meetoo (Myedu) and established the two princes at Moongkhong (Moonkhom), in the month of May, bestowed his daughter Yenjeejoyaee in marriage to the eldest."¹² In conformity with the ancient Shan

chronicle, Cheitharol Kumbaba (a chronicle of Manipur) expressed, "On 29 Lamda, Tuesday, the king of Pong requested Manipur to invade Ava."¹³ Garibaniwaza promptly responded to it and, by invading and reaching Sagaing in 1739, the Pong kingdom was freed from the pressure of Ava. After the successful invasion, on 11 Fairen, Monday, 1740, the elder brother of Pong (Mangpo) was enthroned by Garibaniwaza. The gifts presented to the new king of Pong were the king's robe and a palanquin (Taprang Ngamba). To the younger brother (Kyathon), Garibaniwaza gave the traditional Manipuri robe of king's brother.¹⁴ On 22 June, 1740, the king and the queen of Pong came to Manipur, and on Friday, the 30th instant, there was an entertaining boat race in which the main deity, the priest, Raja Garibaniwaza and the Raja of Pong were on different boats. Thus, Manipur not only defeated the then Toungoo kings but also enjoyed the regard of being a superior power from the ruling family of Pong kingdom.

2. Political exploits of King Kyamba in the river valley (1467-1508)

Political design of the Manipuris in the Chindwin Valley started apparently before completing their own integration in Manipur. Before the reign of Kyamba, his father Ningthoukhomba conquered Kabaw Akla. Cheitharol Kumbaba mentioned: "In 1365 Saka (1443 A.D.) king Ningthoukhomba conquered Kabaw Akla. Chengchari Changchakang, Khekchari Khekchakang, Kharairong Mantang Lakpa Meekhekpasung and Khompasung were the prisoners of war."¹⁵ Thangwai Ningthouba (Kyamba) ascended the throne of Manipur in 1467. It was because of the power and capability of Manipur that the Pong king (Choupha Khekhomba/Kingkhomba) proposed Kyamba to participate in a military expedition to the trans-Chindwin basin which was the home of several Shan principalities. It was also the ambition of Thangwai Ningthouba to conquer Kyang Khambat. *Pong Meitei Lamyen Lairik* (a book of Pong-Meitei territorial distribution) is told to have mentioned, that "both the forces of Manipur and Pong would come to an appointed place for the expedition when the orchid, Khongan Melei bloomed."¹⁶ Accordingly, the allied forces, thereafter, invaded Kyang Khambat which was in the Kabaw Valley. In this joint invasion Ningthouba showed his strength and courage. K. Yaikul Singh wrote, "In the war one hundred Manipuri cavalymen, marching ahead, demolished Kyang Khambat and the joint army won the war."¹⁷ Its chief Chaosengba was captured along with other female members of his family.¹⁸ The victory over Kyang Khambat/Khambat was celebrated by re-naming king Ningthouba as Kyamba which meant the conqueror of Kyang. There was a great celebration for the victory in which both the kings participated. They shared their seat on a golden throne placed on a golden mat, ate on a single golden plate and had water from one common golden vessel.¹⁹ The Pong king presented a mouth organ player to Kyamba in exchange of a drummer named Sekta.²⁰ Among the gifts given by Choupha Khekhomba, as Yumjao Singh mentioned, there were an image of the Bishnu and a golden container called Kwagok (container for chewing Pan).²¹

After the conquest of Kyang Khambat, the two parties signed a treaty of friendship which fixed the boundary between Manipur and the Pong kingdom. Cheitharol Kumbaba mentioned the territorial boundaries of the two independent kingdoms:

“Moongkhong Muwai was to be the northern border of Manipur and the land of dwarf mango groves was for Pong; in the east, the territory of Manipur limits to the Loichari Hills and in the south- the Miyotung dwarf mango hills. Regarding Samsok (Thoungdut), the eastern portion was for Pong and the western portion was for Manipur.”²²

Hence, Kabaw Valley, consisting of west Samsok, Khambat and Kule of the Chindwin Valley, became the territory of Manipur. It was the first treaty concluded between sovereign Manipur and a foreign sovereign power which was recorded in the chronicles and the *Pong Meitei Lamyen Lairik*.

3. Political exploits during the period of Raja Kabomba to Charairongba (1523-1709)

Kabomba ascended the throne of Manipur in 1523. During his reign the people of Samsok revolted. W. Yumjao Singh wrote that king Kabomba marched to Samsok in 1534 and suppressed it.²³ The people of the said valley again revolted in 1542, but it was put down without much difficulty.²⁴ Mungyamba/Thangwai Ningthem Kyamba (1562-1597) was another important king of Manipur who had marched many times in the said river valley to maintain the political control of Manipur. He invaded Moongkhong Mungyang in 1565. *Meitei Ningthourol* (a chronicle of Manipur) mentioned that on the issue of border with Ava (Burma) he invaded Shenbi Moongkhong Kabaw Mungyang crossing the river Ningthee and defeated it. For this reason the Raja was named Mungyamba.²⁵ G. Kabui also expressed, “He (Mungyamba) captured several guns, a golden statue of a cock and five chiefs including two with the title of Chaopha (Sawbwa of Shan) like Chaopha Mangtra and Chaopha Womsing.”²⁶ The guns captured could have been procured by those Shans from the Portuguese. It was also told that Mungyamba “captured one-hundred chiefs including the chief of Akla.”²⁷ The king also killed the Raja of Kabaw Mangsha in 1568.²⁸ On the invasion of Bayinnaung (Toungoo king) G. Kabui expressed: “It is possible that during his (Mungyamba) early rule, Bayinnaung defeated some Shan states. But in 1565, Manipur invaded Kabaw valley and defeated the rulers of these principalities in Kabow valley: this indicating Manipur’s sovereignty over them.”²⁹ In this way Manipur was an independent and powerful Kingdom till the second half of the sixteenth century.

Khagemba (1597-1652) was another important ruler of Manipur during the period under study. The Raja’s campaigns in Kabaw Valley directed against tributary states which wanted to remain free from the control of Manipur. Invading Kyang Khambat in 1602, the Raja made 177 prisoners capturing its chief Chou Seng and his wife Chou Soi along with stone masons who

knew the art of temple building. The Raja also marched to Khambat subsequently in 1624 and 1647 A.D. These military campaigns had quelled the Shan principalities; but Khagemba came into conflict with the kings of Toungoo dynasty as they were trying to establish their hold over the Shan territories of Kabaw Valley. These Burmese invaded the eastern frontiers of Kabaw Valley in 1648 and 1651 A.D. The invading Burmese Army were defeated and repulsed. In the years 1653 and 1659 Raja Khunjaoba (1652-1666) marched to Samsok and captured cattle, buffaloes and elephants as the spoils of the war. He also made punishing raids to Chakpa Angoching Village near the Chindwin River. G. Kabui wrote: "The king defeated the Ava (Burmese) and captured their chief Choupha Mangtra. He also raided Mangsa, a small Shan village in Kabaw valley in 1657 which was completely destroyed."³⁰

During the time of Paikhomba (1666-1697), the Manipuris suppressed a rising of the people of Samsok in 1692. They captured fifteen prisoners and seized many shields, swords, guns and horses. In the following year a group of Manipuris was sent to gather paddy from Samsok. The Burmese invasion across the river Chindwin in 1692 was also repulsed. In 1697, Raja Charairongba (1697-1709) ascended the throne of Manipur. As Kabaw Valley had been in the possession of Manipur since the fifteenth century A.D., there had been some sort of trade and social relationship between Manipur and Ava. In 1702, the king of Ava, Chephong Leimaba/Sanay (1698-1714), sent emissaries asking for the hand of a Manipuri princess. *Meitei Ningthourol* mentioned- during the time of king Charairongba his daughter Chakpa Makhongambi was betrothed to Chephong Leimaba, the king of Ava. Thus Manipur developed a cordial relationship with the Burmans. After giving birth to a son, Chakpa Makhongambi was removed from the status of chief queen and, accordingly, Charairongba prepared for an invasion of Ava in 1709.³¹

4. Exploits of Raja Garibaniwaza in the river valley (1709-1748)

Raja Charairongba was succeeded by his son Garibaniwaza in 1709. The new king's contemporary Burmese Toungoo kings were Sanay (1698-1714), Taninganway Min (1714-1733) and Maha Dhammaraza Dipadi (1733-1752). Garibaniwaza fought wars against the Burmese even in the heart of Ava. On his invasions and lightning raids over the region G.E. Harvey wrote:

"The country bred famous ponies; in those days every man had two or three, and polo, played forty aside throughout the villages, produced a race of horsemen. Under their raja Gharib Newaz 1714-54 (?) the Manipuri raiders became a terror; from 1742 till his death they came nearly every other year, sweeping the country up to Ava and carrying off loot, cattle, and thousands of people. Once they massacred two-third of a royal army including the commander who was drunk."³²

Becoming the king of Manipur, Garibaniwaza planned to fulfill the last wish of his father for avenging the Burmese. On it, Cheitharol Kumbaba recorded, "In 1716 a Burmese envoy of 156 members led by six persons from Samsok arrived at the capital of Manipur seeking the hand of a princess of Manipur."³³ The clever Raja thought it a good chance of teaching a lesson to the Burmese, and eschewing a conspiracy, accepted the betrothal of the princess. W. Yumjao Singh expressed, "The Manipuris arranged so many palanquins covered with long curtains, where, instead of the bride, brave Manipuri warriors with weapons were carried."³⁴ According to the agreement, the Burmese party with many nobles arrived in Samsok on their boats. When the palanquins were brought near the party of the Burmese king, those Manipuri warriors who were in the palanquins came out and there ensued a terror of killing many Burmese nobles and warriors. On the side of Manipur, ten including Hidang Khagokpa were shot dead. The Manipuris captured 90 men and 110 women alive.³⁵ This rebuff was an act to show that the power and capability of the Manipuris should be honored by the Burmese.

King Taninganway Min, without any delay, invaded Manipur. At that time, the Manipuri cavalry wing, equipped with a deadly sling known as Arambai, easily defeated the invading force. Famous Arambai expert of Manipur- Lamthok Poliba (a man of Polem clan), who had shown extraordinary valor was duly rewarded for the success.³⁶ In the month of March, 1718, under the instruction of the king, all the Tangkhul chiefs were made friends with court nobles and prepared for a punitive expedition to Samsok.³⁷ Raja Garibaniwaza, therefore, marched to Kabaw Valley many times to clear the infiltrating Burmese army. G. Kabui expressed: "... Garibaniwaza defeated the Burmese at Khoukep Loupathong. He captured a Shan Buddhist Pagoda, 1000 boats, 10 horse saddles, 200 muskets, Chinese carpets and swords."³⁸ In 1719 king Garibaniwaza himself went to Kabaw valley and reached the border and in a day's war Manipuris including Akhanba Hidang and Lairen Muba lost their lives. The Raja captured 25 Burmese.³⁹ In 1721 Raja Garibaniwaza also led his army to Tongdoi Mawao. Both the Commissioners of Tumu and Mangsha betrothed their daughters to the reigning king.⁴⁰ Cheitharol Kumbaba also recorded:

"In the month of November 1722, the queen's father Yaiskul Lakpa went to control Samsok. Next year in March, Garibaniwaza invaded Chanta. The Manipur army under Yumlembam Kopen controlled Samsok and the king, invading Chanta, devastated it by burning and then captured 460 prisoners. The king then marched to Samsok and besieged it. In June 1723, the Raja came back after suppressing Samsok."⁴¹

In the month of December 1723, the Burmese, in retaliation, invaded Manipur, but they were defeated by the Manipuris. In 1724, Garibaniwaza made an invasion of Burma repulsing the latter's army which had crossed the Chindwin River.⁴² E.W. Dun also expressed: "In 1725, he (Garibaniwaza) attacked and defeated a Burmese force at the mouth of the Maglung river; the

following year repulsed an army of 30,000 men, which had penetrated into the valley, and captured three divisions."⁴³ For about ten years after this, there was no Burmese invasion and, therefore, Manipur put its extra labor in consolidating its territories in the Chindwin valley. In 1735, Garibaniwaza crossed the Ningthee River, attacked and destroyed the town of Myedoo (Myedu) on the bank of the Moo River, and carried off numerous captives. Two years subsequently, he successfully defeated two Burmese armies amounting to 7000 foot, 700 horses, and 20 elephants, and devastated the whole country from the bank of the Khodoung Khyoung to Deebayen (Debarayn).⁴⁴ Therefore, from this year, the political exploits of Manipur in the said river valley reached a new horizon. E.W. Dun again made this statement:

‘In 1738 he (Garibaniwaza) crossed the Ningthee river, attacked and dispersed a Burmese army of 15,000 foot, 3000 horse, and 30 elephants; and at the termination of the rains of the same year, at the head of a force of 20,000 men, marched between the Burmese army, three divisions of which occupied the towns of Matsen, Dabayen, and Myedu, and, to use the language of the Burmese historians, “without stopping” attacked and carried the stockaded positions around the ancient capital of Sagaing, of which he obtained possession.’⁴⁵

On the invasions of Raja Garibaniwaza to this Doab region between the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy Rivers, G.E. Harvey stated:

“In 1738 they (Manipuris) burnt every house and monastery under the walls of Ava and stormed the stockade built to protect the Kaunghmudaw Pagoda, slaughtering the garrison like cattle in a pen and killing a minister of the Hluttaw Council; the old door-leaves of the Pagoda’s eastern gateway shew a gash made by the sword of Garib Newaz when he was forcing the entrance.”⁴⁶

On it Cheithrol Kumbaba expressed: “On Tuesday, 26 Firen, 1740 A.D., the king invaded Burma, reaching Chekang (Sagaing), captured huge spoils. He also captured the Kongmatu Pagoda (Kaunghmudaw Pagoda) and entered it with lightening speed through its four main doors. The Burmese were sacked, and they had sleepless nights.”⁴⁷ Hence the king’s political exploits in the River valley scaled the highest watermark. It seems that Raja Garibaniwaza invaded Burma repeatedly because he wanted to defend the territorial integrity of Manipur and friendly Pong kingdom in the river valley; secondly, he also wanted to convince Burma to respect the power and sovereignty of Manipur to maintain peaceful co-existence in the region.

5. Consolidation works of Manipur in Kabaw Valley

Indeed Manipur, becoming the undisputed owner of a vast territory in the valley, took up works of consolidation. Some facts relating to the works of consolidation in Kabaw Valley are given

below- First, during the time of Khagemba, the king posted officials at important places like Tammu and Angoching Hills. He also sent his forces time and again to suppress any act of rebellion. Secondly, in 1693, Raja Paikhomba sent an expedition to Samsok to gather paddy. The paddy gathered was kept at the royal granary at Mangsha.⁴⁸ It shows that the consolidation of Manipur in Kabaw Mangsha was complete. Thirdly, in 1716, when a Manipuri princess was betrothed to the king of Ava, the marriage party of Manipur escorted the bride up to the western bank of the Chindwin River. It shows that the said river was the boundary between Manipur and Burma. Fourthly, Cheitharol Kumbaba recorded, "In October 1721, under the command of Ngangbam Keirungba, the people of Kabaw Valley invaded Samsok."⁴⁹ It shows that the Kabaws (the people of Kabaw Valley) were loyal to Manipur. The same source also expresses that, in November 1721, Sapam Moiramba Shelungba and some Manipuris went to Samsok to harvest paddy, and in December, so many Manipuris under Yaiskul Lakpa (queen's father) went to Samsok to harvest paddy.⁵⁰ Fifthly, in 1724, when the invading Burmese army was repulsed by the Raja of Manipur beyond the Ningthee, "the people of Samsok who fled were asked to come back, and on Sunday, the 13th March, 1725, the king of Manipur, after performing funeral rites of those killed, went up to the Ningthee to have rest."⁵¹ It justifies that Samsok was under the direct administration of Manipur. Accepting it G. Kabui also wrote, "Samsok was a great source of revenue because of the tribute in form of paddy."⁵² Sixthly, Cheitharol Kumbaba again records: "On Tuesday, the 2nd January, 1738 (Leipakpokpa, 3rd Wakching), Moirang Yumthangba, who had gone to Samsok to improve irrigation canals also came back."⁵³ Lastly, the same source also expresses: "On 9th Lamda, 1738, Nongthonba Yumthangba left for the Kabaw Valley to develop land."⁵⁴ These statements justify that Kabaw Valley was an undisputed territory of Manipur for years and it was also consolidated by the kings of Manipur. It could be the reason why Manipur had higher revenue in the form of money before 1819. J.C. Robertson reported in 1832: "Before the subjugation of Manipur by the Burmese (before 1819), the money revenue alone was estimated to amount to thirty thousand rupees per Annum."⁵⁵

From the above discussion it is concluded that Manipur had a firm political hold over the territories of the Chindwin valley for centuries. R.B. Pemberton rightly expressed:

"...emerging from their mountain strongholds, they wage successful war in the fertile valley of the Irrawatee, attacked and reduced the most important Burmese towns and villages, on the banks of the Moo, Kyendwen (Chindwin), and Irrawatee rivers, and at last plant their standards in the capital (Ava) itself. The truth of this portion of their (Manipuris) historical annals receive most unexpected and satisfactory corroboration, from the records of Ava, in which all the principal circumstances are narrated, nearly as we find them in the chronicles of Muneepoor, with a trifling variation of 3 or 4 years in the dates assigned to the different events..."⁵⁶

The Kingdom of Manipur, thus, possessed a vast territory in the Chindwin valley during the period under study. It is because of this political control that till today there are many Manipuri settlements in the said region.

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