

Poetry Corner

The measuring Tape

Aha! What a gloomy day, it was
When her boundary loosen, still brittle
I never thought it would be safe again; to heed
This frightening body; her frozen feet;
Holding upon her, measuring
Measuring undoubtedly, what fate brings
This imperil measuring tape, into sixteen different shades
When her boundary loosen, still brittle

This joyless day; the shadowy shots of gun
Upon the uninviting grove,
And the murky suspicious night; measuring undoubtedly
Friends becoming foe; rivals to friends
Suspicion! Suspicion!
Oh! What a gloomy day, it was
Emulating wariness;
Holding upon her, measuring
This imperil measuring tape, into sixteen different shades
When her boundary loosen, still brittle

She struggled, struggled to fit in;
Colors; she noticed no one
All Brighten and greenery as ever; no mark
No taint could ever smear her Temple;
Holding upon her, measuring
Measuring undoubtedly, what fate brings
This imperil measuring tape, into sixteen different shades
When her boundary loosen, still brittle

Behold! Hold her frontier;
Cut in and cut out; survey her valuation
Make her no move, no uncertainty be marginalize
Touch her wrist; leave her no uncertain bodily lines
Sure of her feeling, as she welcomes your hazy breath;
Holding upon her, measuring
Measuring undoubtedly, what fate brings
This imperil measuring tape, into sixteen different shades
When her boundary loosen, still brittle

Stop waring; stop her hunting
Let her Clad, let her bloom green, red, blue, Black and white
Let her sing color chorus, cherish her desires
Make no wrinkle, make no ripples
Too Worth her bodily line, stop bewildering
Behold! Hold her frontier;
Holding upon her, measuring
Measuring undoubtedly, what fate brings
This imperil measuring tape, into sixteen different shades
When her boundary loosen, still brittle

Judge not, conclude not;
Her strength still firm, her feet still holding strong;
Complain not her worries; she's still breathing
Fresh, swinging her wavy hair;
Terminate not; her stretching palm
Too bloody tears could emerge her temple, still
Unfurling her unbending ménage;
Holding upon her, measuring
Measuring undoubtedly, what fate brings
This imperil measuring tape, into sixteen different shades
When her boundary loosen, still brittle

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National News

Army a public institution, nation needs answers on 'supersession': Congress on new Chief of Staff

ANI
New Delhi, Dec. 18: With the Centre announcing the name of Lieutenant General Bipin Rawat as the new Chief of the Army Staff superseding two seniors for the coveted post, the Congress on Sunday demanded an answer from the government over the decision, while asserting that the Army is a public institution and the nation deserves an answer. Speaking to ANI here after taking to Twitter to voice his annoyance with the decision, Congress leader Manish Tewari assured that this was not a personal attack on the new Chief of Staff but a legitimate question. "With all due respect to General Rawat's professionalism and brilliance as a soldier and no personal animosity to anybody, there is a legitimate question as to why has this supersession taken place. After all, Lt. Gen Praveen Bakshi who commands the Eastern Command, the Southern Army Commander Lt. Gen

Mohammed Ali and the Central Army Commander are all senior to the gentleman who is being designated," Tewari said. Reiterating his demand for an answer to the legitimate question as to why this supersession has taken place, the Congress leader added that the government's defence saying the grand old party superseded in the 80s and therefore the ruling dispensation has the right to do so is complete "non sequitur". "Every situation has its own context and therefore nothing can be extrapolated out of context in order to justify supersession. Why were these three senior army commanders superseded? Did the government have anything against them? Was their professionalism in question? What was the reason that the fourth incumbent was picked and I guess the Army being a public institution the country deserves those answers," Tewari stated.

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Significance of the Anglo-Kuki war 1917-1919 AD

At the same time, many hill dwellers were illiterate and lambus, acted as middlemen between the British and the chiefs. There is ample evidence that they, talked in favor of the chiefs, thereby giving room for revolt against to the former. Perhaps, they favored the chiefs for security reasons. By this time however, there was only a single government school in Mao region and a mission school at the present Ukhrul district headquarters.

The causes: The Anglo-Kuki war broke out due to the expansion of colonialism into the territory of the Kuki. Before the Kuki of Manipur has direct confrontation with the British, many other Kuki who lived in Chittagong, Tripura, and the Lushai Hills have encountered the British. Encounter with the British by the Kuki took for the first time in 1777AD.⁵ This shows that the Kuki and the British were enmity as soon as the British expanded their unpopular colonialism and ceases sophisticated weapons setze from the Kuki. The Kuki, who kept weapons almost proportionate to all the able men, were forced to surrender or deposit their weapons to the government authority before the outbreak of the war that further widen the enmity between the two.

For second, recruitment of labour corps hurt the sentiments of the Kuki who prided themselves as 'people who never bowed down before others'. Lieutenant Colonel, H. Cole, the political agent, supporting the view of JC Webster, commented: "I am convinced that the present rebellion is due primarily to the unpopularity of recruiting for the labour corps, and therefore the cost of suppressing the rebellion should be paid from Imperial Revenues."⁶ A clear assertion of the priorities can be seen in these statements with regard to the British policies.

Besides, the Kuki religious system was also another big factor. It was the head of the family alone who could worship, the good Lord on his behalf and also on behalf of all his family members during the Hun ceremony that took seven days in the last week of the month of May or first week of June, of the Christian era. Recruiting almost all the able men for labour corps in other words would mean all the heads of the family. So, sending them to overseas, without certain dates of their return would have surely dismantled the Hun ceremony. Thirdly, the tribal feud sustained by head hunting tradition, or land dispute- dispute over land boundaries between villages and tribes- developed fear psychosis among the Kukis that gave big setback to the idea of recruiting labor corps among the Kuki of Manipur. Besides, the economic pressure was increasingly becoming overwhelming upon the masses of the Kukis.

Important events: At Lonpi Battle that was fought at Chakpi River crossing point, in September 1917, the Kuki warriors and the British have a prolong pitched battle. Here, three British soldiers died and several have were wounded. The British troops numbering 80 marched towards Lonpi to Punish the Kuki but the Kuki attacked them. As stated above Higgins's mission to convince the chief failed. When Higgins went to Lonpi, with an escort of Fifty Rifles, to study the situation, he found the village deserted. **Lonpi** village was burnt down on the 17th October, 1917.⁷ The War between the Kuki and the British was set into motion after these events. Chingakhamb Sanachaobao Singh, who professed to have supernatural powers went to Wakha (Ukha) a Kuki village, called ten Kuki and looted the forest toll station at Ithai on the 19th December, 1917.⁸ The Kuki planned to attack Imphal on the 22nd December, 1917 certainly causes considerable anxiety among the people of Imphal. Longya battle followed Lonpi and Ithai incidents. The kuki troops under the leadership of Ngulbul and British, under the command of Captain Montifiere show down another battle in February 1918.

Ngulbul was killed while trying to escape from the stocked with his little son on his arm.⁹ The mid March, 1918, witness another show down at Chassad-Kamjong. In the encounter, several casualties inflicted and Lt. Molesworth was killed and Lt. Kay Mauyatt, who came from the Burma, was seriously wounded.¹⁰

The Kuki directed their action towards the British and their supporters and vice-versa. The Kuki chiefs murdered Khopum Chaudikar and in retaliation, the British under the leadership of Cloete consisting of 150 rifles burnt down, eleven villages. Durbar president and his team burnt down two villages between March 5 and 10. On the 18 May, the Kuki raided Pangsang Chingmai, a Chiru village. Twenty one lost their lives and five persons were missing. At **Khongakuhl**, twenty six were killed on the 22 May and thirteen were found missing. On the 23 May, the Kuki burnt down a suspension bridge built over the Thoubal River. At the Kasom village, thirty-five died after they refused to supply rice and coolies to the rebels. Angered upon the loyalty of the Manipuri Raja, **Khutinthang**, chief of **Jampi** village proclaimed himself the Maharaja of Manipur. Collections of guns and terrorizing different villages followed his proclamations. On June 3, 1918, the rebels killed seven Muslims of Kwaka, after receiving reports that the latter had nexus with the British. They also shot dead twenty persons from the **Kharang** village and forty were found missing after gun shots. It is believed that some might have succumbed to death after getting wounded. On the 16 June, **Khongde**, Kuki village chief was shot dead for guiding Hutton on his visit to **Sapvomi**. The Kuki opened fire at some cultivators of **Iringbam** villagers on the 18 June.¹¹

The situation turned from bad to worse. Fear Psychosis, tensions, rumors and nervousness shook the valley and also the hilly regions. Anarchy that developed in Manipur was now extended to the Naga Hills, in the North, North Cachar Hills in the North west, Lushai Hills in the South and South West, Chin Hills and Chindwind valley in Myanmar and the Somra tracts in the North east of Manipur.¹² The development of anarchy almost in the entire north East India compelled the British Government to hand over the Administration from the civil authority to the Army to curtail the Kukis who defended the Independence that they had.

The Army took over the war on November 7, 1918 with 5400 combatant force both from India and Myanmar, following the meeting of the chief Commissioner of Assam, Colonel Shakespeare and the commander-in-chief of the British Indian Army in June 1918 at Shimla.¹³ The combined force of two countries, British India and British Burma (now Myanmar), after modification and transferring powers and administration to the Army revised their mighty campaign against the Kukis from November 25, 1918. With this the war entered the second phase. The formation of the British Army area wise much resembled that of the Kuki strategy during the second phase. By deploying various ranks of military officers not below the rank of 2nd lieutenant numbering 118 in Manipur and Myanmar, who commanded five thousand four hundred troops, crushed the Kuki movement for independence within a short time. The mighty military campaign against the Kuki came to an end on 20 May 1919 after the subjugation of the Kuki. Therefore, following the Great-Anglo-Kuki War, the hill people who were independent were for the first time brought under the intensive political and administrative control of the imperial power.

Perhaps, during the military campaign under the civil administration, the British had underestimated the war strategy of the Kuki causing several

casualties, death and shame in the hands of the Kuki whom they thought as barbaric and uncivilized. Yet, they came to know how the Kuki chiefs could command, lead and protect their people since time immemorial. The search to identify the head clans of the Kuki remind us how the British admired and respected the Kuki traditions, the base of their chieftainship.

Based on the sources available so far we are certain that the Great Anglo-Kuki War 1917-1919 AD was the greatest war directed against the British colonialism, in the North-East India, whose epicentre was rooted in Manipur's Hilly regions. We are certain today that the war was part of the great Indian National movement and partly it was a part of First World War. According to Sir Robert Reid, "The most serious in the history of Manipur...".¹⁴ And to DK Palit the war broke out due to the influence of the Bengali Nationalists. "Mention has been made earlier that the Kukis had been encouraged by emissaries from Bengali Nationalists in Assam...".¹⁵ According to H.K. Borpujari "... the German spies had a secret hand in fomenting the war... and that the Kukis were under the influence of the activists of the revolutionaries of Bengal."¹⁶

The war exposed to the world how the hilly regions of Manipur in particular and other areas in general were much neglected by the government. One can see that the annual expenditure of the hill areas was below 18,000, eighteen thousand, which is about a quarter of the house tax paid by the tribal of Manipur.

In fact, the war broke out and peoples of past and the present share the negative and positive aspects of the war. Here we are concerned more about the significance of it. The War had brought drastic changes in the colonial history and post colonial history of Manipur in the form of administrative reforms besides many others. The most significant result of the War was the overall reorganization of the administration and the kind of concession made to the state, Manipur. After the war, Cosgrave, political Agent of Manipur, wanted to put the hill administration exclusively under his office. But the chief commissioner of Assam thought it to be too drastic, and proposed to put under the personal management of the Maharaja, who was guided by the political agent. He suggested for "reconstruction". His scheme of reconstruction to improve the Government and Hill people relations was accepted by the Government of India.¹⁷ Accordingly under the new scheme, three new Subdivisions were formed.¹⁸ Each subdivision was under the charge of a European Sub divisional officer who was directly accountable to the president of the Durbar. These officers were appointed from the Association of Provincial Civil Service whose designations were equal to that of Sub-Divisional magistrate, who were first class magistrate under the Indian Criminal procedure code, 1898.¹⁹ Once appointed they were entitled to receive similar allowances, provided the total pay and allowances did not exceed Rs.800/- per month.²⁰ Accordingly the South-west area with headquarters at Songpi, later changed to Churachandpur after the name of Maharaja Churachand Singh was placed under BC Gasper's charge. For the Tamenglong Subdivision or the northwest area with temporary headquarter at Tamenglong itself, William Shaw was appointed and for the north east area, with headquarter at Ukhrul, L.L. Peter was appointed.

To implement the new administration-scheme the following concessions were made to Manipur so that the durbar could meet the increased cost to run hilly region not covered under the Headquarter, Imphal. Some scholars and the Kukis feel that these concessions were granted for the loyalty shown by the

durbar and the ruler to the British. However, the following measures had been adopted.

I) That the annual installment of Rs. 60,000 towards the liquidations of the loan of Rs.2,75,000 granted to the state in 1917 was reduced to 30,000 II) That the annual tribute of Rs. 50,000 payable by the durbar was reduced to 5000 only from the current financial year.

III) The state Manipur was relieved from the contribution of Rs. 30,000 per annum towards the maintenance of Mao Imphal Road.

In addition to these concessions separate budget for the hilly region was introduced for the first time in Manipur by the local authorities. The legacy of the Anglo-Kuki results can be still felt in the Manipur State Assembly, in the form of setting up of Hill Area Committee, headed by a Chairman, not below the rank of Cabinet. Its historical significance lies in the fact that it established strong and valuable local custom and tradition of resistance to the British. The British learned the social structure of the Kuki's, which was based on the clans and kinship. The importance, power and position that the Kuki chief, had enjoyed by this time gave an ample room to the British to split and divide the Kuki society along the line of genealogy, based on clans thereby causing confusion over the head clan. It also consolidated the Kuki traditional chieftainship by issuing land rights to the chief. It is now difficult to up root them from the society by modern government. The Manipur legislative Assembly had passed chief-ship acquisition Acts but they are still not effective.²¹

The war had both negative and positive impact among the people of Manipur. Negative impacts were much on the Kuki community and positive impacts go to the general population, particularly who have shown loyalty to the British during the war. It shattered the Kuki society into pieces, disintegrating and fragmenting them to the extent that they never come together as they did during and before the war. It germinated spirit of nationalism to the people of Manipur. We are also certain that the kind of administrative reforms that the British had introduced did not satisfy the people of Manipur in general and the Hill population in particular. The tribal's unsatisfactory upon the colonial regime came to light again in the form of Kabui rebellion, the Nupial and also during the Second World War again, when many people from Manipur join INA and fought the British once again. This time more determined to drive out the perpetrators of crime against the community of Manipur. Despite all the sufferings said and unsaid, the Great Anglo-Kuki War of 1917-1919 laid the foundation for fighting the colonial administration in Manipur in the form of armed struggle. We feel the core value of the Great-Anglo-Kuki War should be focused on the younger generation for political posterity of the next generation. It will not be possible to hide away its significance in the age of information technology and also when the world is moving toward a global village. The great Anglo-Kuki war was purely anti-Imperialism, defending their political rights- independently. This war has also reflected how the Kukis were very advanced in technology at least in making gun powder and some sophisticated weapons. It lays the foundation in the history of arm struggle against the British. But one of the saddest parts of the movement was that, no man came forward or shared sufferings of the prisoners during this time many of whom were humiliated, brutalized and consequently killed by the British. The significance of the Kuki war will keep beaconing the youth for greater and yet greater sacrifice for the Kuki nationality.

(Concluded)